« Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī (d. 1883): Mystical Hermeneutics, Theology and Metaphysics in His *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* (“The Book of Mystical Halts”) »

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the Sufi revivalist theology of Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī (d. 1883) through a close study of his magnum opus, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿḍ ishārāt al-Qurʾān ilā'l-asrār wa-l-maʿārif* (“The Book of Mystical Halts Concerning Some Subtle Qurʾānic Allusions to The Esoteric Mysteries and Divine Truths”). Although considerable research has been conducted on ʿAbd al-Qādir’s political resistance against the French colonial invasion of Algeria, his enormous influence on nineteenth-century Sufi revivalist discourse remains understudied and poorly understood. Over the past decades, however, a small but growing niche of scholars begun to pay closer attention to ʿAbd al-Qādir’s Sufi mystical teachings. The literature on *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, however, is conspicuously scarce. We only have scattered essays on some salient themes that emerge in *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* or the influence of Ibn ʿArabī’s (d. 1249) mystical doctrines on ʿAbd al-Qādir’s thought. As the first in-depth study of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* my dissertation fills a long-existing gap in modern scholarship. By closing examining the Sufi Qurʾānic hermeneutics, mystical theology and revivalist discourse of ʿAbd al-Qādir, I offer a deeper glimpse into his mystical universe and his unique contributions to early modern Sufi revivalist discourse.

As I argue, ʿAbd al-Qādir develops his Sufi revivalist discourse against the backdrop of his critique of Ashʿarī scholastic rationalism (*kalām*). Rather than turning to rationalism for answers, he seeks to curb what he considers a subversive Islamic rationalism that competes rather than submits to the authority of Revelation and Sufi mystical knowledge.

I dedicate this thesis to my dearest and loving Papa, Djamel-Eddine Taleb, who returned to the Light of God in the month of *Rabīʿ al-anwār* (*rahimahu'Llāh*), just a few months before its completion in the holy month of Ramadan.

"You and all your possessions belong to your father."
(*a ḥadīth*)

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Lā uḥṣī thanāʾan alayk anta kamā athnayta ʿalā nafsik.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1.

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation is the first in-depth study of the Sufi Qurʾānic hermeneutics, theology and metaphysics of Amīrʿ Abd al-Qādir Ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Jazāʾirī al-Hasanī (1223/1808-1300/1883), the renowned leader of the armed resistance against French colonial invasion of Algeria.[1] My investigation of ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical teachings is based on a close study of his *magnum opus*, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿd ishārātal-Qurʾān ilā'l-asrār wa'l-maʿārif* ("The Book of Mystical Halts Concerning Some Subtle Qurʾānic Allusions to The Esoteric Mysteries and Divine Truths"). A deeper glimpse into this magisterial oeuvre of ʿAbd al-Qādir reveals a thinker of remarkable philosophical sophistication and profundity. While committed to the foundational insights of classical Sufi discourse, ʿAbd al-Qādir critically engages with not only the classical Sufi-Ashʿarī theological traditions, but also with contemporary realities of colonial modernity. As I try to demonstrate in the following chapters, the limitation of discursive reason (*ʿaql*)[2] forms

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[1] Tim Winter, "Emir Abdel Kader", in: *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500 - 1900*, General Editor David Thomas. Consulted online on 06 March 2023 http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/2451-9537_cmrii_COM_30485.

[2] The term "*ʿaql*" is variably translated in English as "intellect," "reason" or "mind." I translate it as "discursive reason" in order to highlight the distinction that Sufis sometimes make in their discussion of the limitation and fallibility of theoretical reasoning vs. the infallibility of the intellective heart (*qalb*) which is associated with prophetic and mystical intellection. In the Qurʾān, there is no clear-cut distinction between *ʿaql* and *qalb*; the latter is used more frequently, while the verbal noun (*ʿaql*) only appears as a verb (usually in the plural form). It occurs as a verb (i.e., *ʿa-qa-la*) forty-nine times in the sense of deep thinking, pondering, contemplating God's "signs" (*ayāt*) in His creation: "*surely there are signs for a people having understanding* (*la-āyātin li-qawmin yaʿqilūna*)" (Q. 2:164; 13:40, 16:20). The term "*fikr*" (comprehension), "*tafakkur*" is also used in the Qurʾān almost interchangeably with the *taʿa-qul?*: *"God makes clear to you His signs in hopes you will think deeply* (*tatafakkarūn*)*"* (Q 2:219). In the Islamic intellectual traditions, the term *ʿaql* gained wider currency among the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and Islamic philosophers (*falāsifah*). By and large, the *ʿaql* was understood as the core principle/faculty by which humans gain knowledge of God and the truths of revelation. For the Islamic philosophers of the *ʿaql* corresponded to what the Hellenistic philosophers (esp. Aristotelian and Platonists) called the *νοῦς* (*Nouse*), that is, the uncreated Intellect or individuated human intellect. For the *mutakallimūn*, the *ʿaql* is an instrument by which one can rationally ascertain the truths of revelation. In contrast, the Sufis have generally conceived the *ʿaql* as a discursive and fallible human

integral part of ʿAbd al-Qādir's of Sufi revivalist discourse. While he is not completely dismissive of the speculative reasoning of the Ashʿarī scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and the philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*), he is adamant that discursive reason is incapable of grasping the enigmatic truths and paradoxes of Revelation.[3] In one key statement, he states that "discursive reason (*ʿaql)* has a limit (*ḥadd*) and a *terminus* (*nihāya*) that it cannot trespass (*la yataʿaddāha*) insofar *as it is* discursive reason (*min haythu huwa ʿaql*). The merit and perfection of discursive reason," he continues, "is to accept what the Messengers of God (peace be upon them) convey from their Lord and what is inspired upon the spiritual inheritors of God's Messengers (i.e., Sufi mystics) by the mediation of 'the angel of inspiration' (*malak al-ilhām*) or other spiritual entities. In this respect, there is no end or finality to discursive reason."[4] His fundamental conviction about the scope of discursive reason and mystical knowledge, as we shall discover in this study, is expressed in these terms: "intimate knowledge of God (*maʿriftu'Llāh*) cannot be attained save through His bestowal of it (*bi taʿrīfihi*), not through the rule of theoretical reason *(lā bi-ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī).*"[5]

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faculty. Too often, Sufis often cite the *ʿaql* in their discussions of different orders of knowledge, the climax of which is revealed and mystical knowledge. The *ʿaql* is often associated with the discursive rationalism of the *mutakallimūn* and *falāsifah*. The Sufis consider their rational epistemology a subordinate and fallible domain of knowledge. While it has it plays an important function in the realm of demonstrative proofs, it falls short in grasping the paradoxical truths of revelation. See Boer, Tj. de and Rahman, F., "ʿAḳl", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0038.

[3] See *Mawqif* 8 for his discussion of what calls "a rational imaginative form" (*ṣurat ʿaqliyya khayāliyya*) that the scholastic theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and philosophers impose on the unbounded Reality of God.

[4] *Mawqif*. 124, p. 241.

[5] *Kitab al-Mawāqif,* p. 407.

Writing within the context of modern colonial discourse, ʿAbd al-Qādir is unfazed by the materialistic rationalism of colonial Europe. Surprisingly, this is not even a concern in *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*. ʿAbd al-Qādir is more alarmed by the surge of a subversive Islamic rationalism that may competes rather than submit to the authority of Revelation and mystical knowledge. While situating his mystical thought within the teachings of the prolific Andalusian mystical philosopher, Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1249), dubbed the "Shaykh al-Akbar" (The greatest spiritual master), and his school (the Akbarian tradition), ʿAbd al-Qādir is not a mere exegete. He goes beyond a theoretical exposition of Akbarian doctrines. He repeatedly asserts his intellectual and spiritual autonomy from his Sufi predecessors and the wider Sunni intellectual tradition. His revivalist thought differs substantially from other prominent Muslim reformists of his time, namely, Muḥammad al-Shawkānī (d. 1839), Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī (d. 1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), Syed Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Kawākibī (d. 1902), Rachid Rida (d. 1935), among others. ʿAbd al-Qādir does not turn to rationalism or Salafi literalism for answers. His Sufi revivalist discourse is mediated through his esoteric hermeneutics on the Qurʾān, the Sunni *ḥadīth* corpus, and the metaphysical teachings of the Sufi Akbarian school.

1.2 A Survey of Nineteenth-Century Biographies of ʿAbd al-Qādir

ʿAbd al-Qādir's legendary resistance against the French colonial invasion of Algeria has been extensively covered in both Western and Arab Muslim scholarship. The fascination with ʿAbd al-Qādir and his exploits has only intensified since the nineteenth century. According to Houari Touati, "in the modern history of Arabs nations, ʿAbd al-Qādir is the personality about whom we have written the most." A cursory glance at the staggering scholarly output on ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to corroborate Touati's estimation. For over a century now, scholarly studies,

symposiums, conferences, and archival studies on ʿAbd al-Qādir attest to his abiding importance to early Modern and Contemporary Islam.

ʿAbd al-Qādir's chivalrous treatment of French prisoners and his protection of religious minorities has left an even greater mark on his contemporaries and posterity. To this day, his protection of thousands of Syrian Christians and European civilians during the anti-Christian riots of 1862 has immortalized his name. His valiant act sent shockwaves across the world as many Muslim and Western heads of state, religious leaders, dignitaries, and prominent newspapers rushed to honor the magnanimity of the Algerian religious leader. At a time when European colonial brutality was sweeping across the Muslim world, ʿAbd al-Qādir devoted his post-resistance life to promoting civilizational coexistence, interfaith dialogue and humanitarian initiatives aimed to usher a more tolerant and peaceful world.

The biographical literature on ʿAbd al-Qādir dates to his lifetime and shortly after his death. In Arabic, the biography of his eldest son, Muhammad Saʿīd Bāshā (d. 1913) entitled *Tuḥfat al-zāʾir fi maʾāthir ʿAbd al-Qādir wa-tārīkh al-Jazāʾirī* ("The Gift to the Pilgrim Concerning the Exploits of ʿAbd al-Qādir and the History of Algeria") remains one of the most valuable sources on the political, intellectual and spiritual life of the Algerian leader.[6] Muhammad Saʿīd was an eyewitness to the armed struggle of his father and his close confidant. In many respects, the *Tuḥfat* can be considered the autobiography of ʿAbd al-Qādir. Apart from the *Tuḥfat,* the "*sīrah al-dhātīyah lil-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir*" (The Autobiography of Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir) was co-authored

[6] Muḥammad Saʿīd Ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī, *Tuḥfat al-zāʾir fī tārīkh al-Jazāʾir wa'l Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Yakdah al-Arabīyah, 1964) [henceforth, *Tuḥfat*). Muhammad Saʿīd was born during the initial phases of ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Jihad* and accompanied him until his death in Damascus.

with ʿAbd al-Qādir's cousin, Muṣṭafa Ibn al-Tuhāmī, during their imprisonment in France. [7] With the *Tuḥfat,* the *sīrah al-dhātīyah* is a key biographical source that offers intimate details about ʿAbd al-Qādir's origins, religious education and armed struggle against the French.

In European languages, the English biography of the British colonial officer, Charles H. Churchill, which bears the title "*The Life of Abdel Kader, Ex-Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria: Written from His Own Dictation, and Comp. from Other Authentic Sources*, stands out from other European biographies of the Algerian religious leader. [8] To begin with, the British colonial biographer lived with ʿAbd al-Qādir for a year in Damascus to write his biography from dictation. No other European biographer of ʿAbd al-Qādir had this privilege. In French, the biography of Alexandre Bellemare, entitled "*Abd-el-Kader, sa vie politique et militaire*" is another political biography that was completed in ʿAbd al-Qādir's lifetime. To these two sources, we can add "*Trente-deux ans à travers l'Islam, 1832-1864*" of Leon Roches (d. 1901), a French spy who lived in ʿAbd al-Qādir's military camp for many years.[9]

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[7] Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir*, al-sīrah al-dhātīyah lil-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir*" (al-Jazā'ir: Dār Nūr Shād, 2013). The Dār Nūr Shād is a printed facsimile of the original manuscript [henceforth, *al-sīrah al-dhātīyah*]. The printed edition identifies Ibn al-Tuhāmī, Muṣṭafa, ʿAbd al-Qādir's cousin and chief lieutenant (*khalīfa*) and is entitled *sīrat al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir wa-jihāduh* Al-Ṭabʿah 1 (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1995) [hereafter, *Sīrat al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir wa-jihāduh*]. The *sīrah al-dhātīyah* was translated into French by Hacène Benmansour as *L'émir Abdelkader: Autobiographie: écrite en prison (France) en 1849 et publiée pour la première fois,* trans. Hacène Benmansour (Paris: Dialogues éditions, 1995) [henceforth, *Autobiographie*]. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bayṭār (d. 1916), who was a close member of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi circle in Damascus and one of the compilers of the *Mawāqif*; He devotes in his *Ḥilyat al-bashar fī tārīkh al-qarn al-thālith 'ashar,* vol. 2 (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣadir, 1963), pp. 883.894 a long biographical entry to ʿAbd al-Qādir.

[8] Charles H. Spencer-Churchill, The *Life of Abdel Kader, Ex-Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria: Written from His Own Dictation, and Comp. from Other Authentic Sources* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1867). Churchill lived for a year stay with ʿAbd al-Qādir in his Damascene residence to compile his biography. It seems that the dictation was mediated through a translator since H. Churchill does not affirm his fluency in Arabic.

[9] Léon Roches, *Trente-deux ans à travers l'Islam, 1832-1864* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1884).

Notwithstanding their ideological biases, the colonial biographers provide valuable information on the origins, education, and political resistance of the Algerian leader.[10] As more archival material became accessible to modern historians, the biographical literature on ʿAbd al-Qādir grew exponentially and so did our understanding of his thought and personality.[11] It is worth noting that the *Tuḥfat* is the only biography that include an intellectual and spiritual biography ʿAbd al-Qādir. Most importantly, it explicitly attributes the *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* to ʿAbd al-Qādir and gives pertinent details about his encounter with his Sufi master, Shaykh Mas'ūd al-Fāsī al-

[10] Alexandre Bellemare's *Abd-El-Kader, Sa Vie Politique et Militaire e* (Paris: Hachette, 1863). The major problems with Western biographers of ʿAbd al-Qādir are the inherently Eurocentric interpretations of ʿAbd al-Qādir's political leadership and motives. For instance, the colonial political ideology tainted the political image of the Algerian religious leader. Many would portray ʿAbd al-Qādir as an Arab political nationalist who used his faith to legitimize his leadership. Churchill's reference to ʿAbd al-Qādir as an *Ex- Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria* speaks to the Arab nationalistic construct that colonial writers attached to political resistance in the Muslim world. For a critical assessment of the ideological interpretations of ʿAbd al-Qādir's life and resistance, by both Western biographers and Algerian nationalist writers, see Touati, "L'Emir ʿAbd al-Qādir et les Enjeux de la Biographie," pp. 158-160.

[11] Several bio-political studies of ʿAbd al-Qādir have appeared throughout the twentieth century and well into the present time. Many French colonial generals continued to write historical biographies of ʿAbd al-Qādir such as the study of Paul Azan, *L'Émir Abd el Kader 1803-1883: du fanatisme musulman au patriotisme français* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1925). In Anglophone scholarship, the political resistance of ʿAbd al-Qādir was examined in the work of Wilfrid Blunt, *Desert Hawk: Abd El Kader and the French Conquest of Algeria* (London: Methuen, 1947) and Danziger, Raphael, *Abd Al-Qadir and the Algerians : Resistance to the French and Internal Consolidation* (New York : Homes & Meier Publishers, 1977); Once again, the aforementioned studies focused on the political career of ʿAbd al-Qādir and understated the Islamic theological backdrop of his armed Jihad. Cf. Philippe d'Estailleur-Chanteraine, *L'émir Magnanime Abd-El-Kader Le Croyant*, Les Temps et Les Destins (Paris: A. Fayard, 1959); Muḥammad Ṣallābī, *al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jazāʾirī: qāʾid rabbānī wa-mujāhid Islāmī*, al-Ṭabāʿa al-ūlā (Bayrūt, Dār Ibn Kathīr lil-Ṭibāʿah wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1963); Notwithstanding some limitations with Bruno Étienne's *Abdelkader: Isthme des Isthmes* (Barzakh al-Barazikh) (Paris: Hachette, 1994), his biographical study remains one of the most comprehensive archival study of his ʿAbd al-Qādir's political life. B. Etienne was primarily a historian and had therefore very limited knowledge of the Sufi Akbarian theology of *Mawāqif*. That said, he gives serious consideration to the Sufi spiritual heritage of ʿAbd al-Qādir throughout his biography; cf. The biography of John W. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd El-Kader*, 1st ed (Rhinebeck, N.Y: Monkfish Book Pub, 2008). In recent years, Ahmed Bouyerdene's *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraires* (Paris: Seuil, 2008) [Henceforth, *l'Harmonie des Contraires*. Bouyerdene broke new grounds in the biographical literature on ʿAbd al-Qādir. His bio-historical study of ʿAbd al-Qādir, he put the Sufi spiritual dimension at the forefront of his analysis of the Algerian leader's political and intellectual life. He also weaves, more than others, the teachings of the *Mawāqif* into his investigation of ʿAbd al-Qādir's life and thought.

Shādilī (d. 1872),[12] his mystical practices and retreat in the Cave of Hera where he reached the climax of his mystical life.

1.3 The Significance of This Study

As stated from the outset, the present study is concerned with the Sufi philosophical theology of ʿAbd al-Qādir as articulated in his *Kitāb al-Mawāqif.*[13] To date, we have not comprehensive study of this major mystical Summa of ʿAbd al-Qādir. We mainly have French translations (one complete and selective chapters) and scattered essays on salient themes from this work. [14] My in-depth analytical study will therefore be the first investigation of the Sufi theological worldview of ʿAbd al-Qādir as expressed in his mystical hermeneutics, theology, metaphysics and revivalist discourse. As I will attempt to show, one of the defining features of his Sufi philosophical system is his preemptive critique of Ashʿarī scholastic rationalism. While ʿAbd al-Qādir does not outright reject the speculative reasoning of Sunni scholastic theologians, he criticizes them for making concessions to discursive reason when they are unable to rationally grasp the enigmatic truths of Revelation.

1.4 The Structure of This Study

My study will proceed as follows: **Chapter I** (Introduction)attempts to situate the scholarly narrative against the backdrop of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi mystical life and work. After listing and

[12] See below, The Catalytic Master.

[13] ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Jazā'irī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿḍ ishārāt al-Qurʾān ila 'l-asrār wa 'l-maʿārif*, ed. Bakri ʿAlā al-Din, 3 vols (Dimashq, Ninawi l'il al-Ṭabāʿa wa'l Nashr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2014). Henceforth, this work will be abbreviated as *al-Mawāqif.*

[14] See below: *Mawāqif*: Literature Review.

briefly discussing the scope and content of his three works, I offer an overview of the genesis, scope, and doctrinal content of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif.* I then survey (below) the current state of scholarship on his *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* and the gap that my study aims to fill. **The Second Chapter** (Formation) begins with a sketch of al-Jazāʾirī's origins, formative education, mystical life, and teachers. **The Third Chapter** is divided into two parts: **Part I (Sufi *tafsīr:* Sources, Foundations and Evolution)** surveys the origins, sources, and evolution of Sufi Qurʾānic hermeneutics from the formative era to the modern period (fifteenth to the early twentieth century).

Part II assesses the development of Sufi *tafsīr* in the early modern era, which historians typically situate from the thirteenth/nineteenth century to the present. I revaluate some of the assumptions regarding this period based on both recent scholarship and a revised inventory of post-classical Sufi exegetical literature. One of the main arguments I challenge in this section is the claim that early modern Sufi *tafsīr* did not produce a substantive and/or creative Sufi exegetical output. By providing an updated list of several Sufi exegetical works from this period, I hope to challenge both the conventional periodization of Sufi *tafsīr* and the claim that early modern Sufi *tafsīr* is a period of exegetical stagnation. To support my view, I gloss through the exegetical discussions of two prominent Sufi exegetes, namely, Aḥmad Ibn ʿAjība (d. 1809) and Abū al-Thanāʾ Shihāb al-Dīn Alūsī (d.1854). Their insights will shed much needed light on the Sufi mystical hermeneutics of al-Jazāʾirī and his original contributions to early modern Sufi Qurʾānic commentary. To add contest to my analysis of al-Jazāʾirī's mystical hermeneutics, I situate it first against the backdrop of classical Sunni and Sufi exegetical literature, that is, his reflections on the

literal and mystical meanings of the sacred Text.[15] I conclude by illustrating how al-Jazāʾirī envisages the regenerative source of Sufi scriptural interpretation, that is, the new scriptural meanings that God inspired upon Sufi exegete.

The **Fourth Chapter** analyzes al-Jazāʾirī's ontology of the Divine speech (*kalāmu'Llāh),* as developed in the 209th *Mawqif* and other passages from the *Mawāqif.* The fundamental question that ʿAbd al-Qādir takes up is the Ashʿarī doctrine of the uncreated Qurʾān. The central issue pertains to what H. A. Wolfson termed "the problem of inlibration, that is, the embookment of the pre-existent Koran (i.e., the uncreated Divine Attribute of Speech) in the revealed Koran (i.e., recited speech of the Qurʾān)."[16] Siding with Ibn Ḥanbal, ʿAbd al-Qādir contends that the Ashʿarī doctrine of inlibration does not do justice to the scriptural and *ḥadith* prooftexts. His objection is that the Ashʿarīs defer to reason when they cannot rationally explain the uncreated nature of the Qurʾān. The contentious point in this chapter hinges on the essential identity between what the Ashʿarī call "the inner qualifier [or speech of God] subsisting through [God's] Self" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi dhātihi*),[17] and the revealed speech of God — i.e., the codified *musḥaf.*

AsʿAbd al-Qādir sees it, the Ashʿarīs' overreliance on rational proof is the source of their theological oversight. Rather than submitting to the revealed texts and prophetic reports, he accuses the *mutakallimūn* of making concessions to discursive reason (*ʿaql*) when attempting to

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[15] For a typology of trends of Qurʾānic exegesis, see Walid Saleh*, The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition: The Qurʾān Commentary of al-Thaʿlabī* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 14-16.

[16] Wolfson, Harry Austryn. *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), Chapter III, p. 246. Wolfson's study on *kalām* has not lost its significance. To this day, it is the most comprehensive treatment of Ashʿarī *kalām*.

[17] *Mawqif* 209, p. 391. For a Ashʿarī's theological conception of the Divine attributes, see Allard, Michel. *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Aš'ari er de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beyrouth : Imprimerie Catholique, 1965) ; Cf. Daniel Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* (Paris : Cerf, 1990).

rationally explain the uncreatedness of the codified speech of God. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, however, the version of inlibration that the Sufis and Ḥanbalīs uphold is the soundest version. They both recognize the inherently enigmatic nature of this doctrine and refrain from questioning its truth. They believe that the codified speech of God is identical with the uncreated, inner speech, of God' Self, as taught by the Prophet and transmitted by the "pious forbear" (*al-salaf al-sālih*). This truth, however, challenges the foundation of discursive reason. It cannot be explained rationally. Though ʿAbd al-Qādir agrees with the Ashʿarīs in upholding the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān, he maintains that the identity between the "inner qualifier [or speech of God] ?? and the codified speech of God (i.e., the *musḥaf*) is unfathomable. The Ashʿarīs' attempt to soften this ontological identity is the major point of disagreement in this chapter.

In the **Fifth Chapter**, I analyze the fundamental principles of al-Jazāʾirī's metaphysical epistemology. This chapter draws primarily upon his elaborate commentary on a key chapter from Ibn ʿArabī's "Ringstones of Wisdom" (*Fūṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*), which bears the title of "A Ringstone of the Wisdom of the Heart in the Word of Shuʿayb" (*Fass ḥikma qalbiyya fī al-kalima al-shuʿaybiyya*). al-Jazāʾirī proceeds with an elaborate elucidation of the ontological principles of Divine Mercy and the metaphysical order of the Heart-Intellect (*qalb*),[18]the epistemic roots of

[18] The Sufi understanding of "*qalb*" is derived from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth.* It designates the seat of spiritual intelligence (Q. 7:179), insight (22:46), prophetic revelation (Q. 2:97, 26:194), and certitude (Q. 2:270 and 28:10). It is also the meeting point between God and the innermost reality of human being: "and know that God stands between a man and his heart" (Q. 8:24). The term "heart" is also used once in the Quran with the verb (*ʿa-qa-la*) to denote the intellection or contemplation of the heart: "What, have they not journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with (*qulūbun yaʿqilūna bihā*) (22:46)." The distinction between *ʿaql* and *qalb* is not clearly stated in the Qurʾān. Some Sufis have distinguished between them to highly the strictly discursive dimension of rational analysis from the inspirational (prophetic and mystical) intellection of the *qalb*. In Sufi metaphysical epistemology of "the heart" is a principle of the human essence that transcends the individuated limitation of discursive reason. This conception is rooted in a sacred *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth qudsī*) — a statement where God speaks through the Prophet in the first Person — which states: 'Neither My heaven nor My earth embrace Me, but the heart of My believing servant embraces Me." This *ḥadīth*, we should note, is not found in the major concordances. In another *ḥadīth*, the term "*qalb*" is used by the Prophet in these terms: "there is a piece of flesh in the body, if it is sound, the holy body becomes sound:

creedal beliefs, the scope and limitation of discursive reason (ʿ*aql*), among others. As with the previous chapter, al-Jazāʾirī states that discursive reason generates a reductive conception of the unbounded reality of God. Accordingly, it constructs a dualistic account of God and the created order. The "Heart-Intellect" dissolves this duality, however, by virtue of its identity with God's Self. The premise behind this in al-Jazāʾirī's metaphysical ontology is the essential identity between "the Selfhood of God" (*huwiyyat al-ḥaqq*) and the transcendental reality of "the Heart-Intellect," which he identifies with the "the ipseity of the servant" (*huwiyyat al-ʿabd*).[19] The key point we gather from this chapter is that the Heart-Intellect unified God and His disclosures (*tajaliyyāt*) on all levels of Being — i.e., all realms and modes of existence.

The Sixth chapter situates al-Jazāʾirī within the Sufi cultural Renaissance (*nahda*) of his time. In the context of the Arab Ottoman regions, ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi revivalist thought was mediated through the doctrinal teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and addressed to a niche of Sufi scholars in Damascus who were members of different Sufi orders. There are, however, two prominent Sufi reformers who paved the terrain for ʿAbd al-Qādir, namely, Shaykh Khālid al-Naqshabandī (d. 1242/1827) and Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī al-Shādilī (d. 1872). The former had a lasting impact on

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it is the "*qalb*" (Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, *Kitāb al-imān*, 1, no. 4875. In the Qurʾānic moral psychology , the "heart" is the site of reverential fear for God (*taqwā*) (Q. 50:33, 22:32), virtue, guidance (Q. 64:11), and purity, "save for him who comes to God with a pure heart" (26:89); Sufi spiritual psychology is also modeled after the Qurʾānic psychology which locates the spiritual illness in "the heart" (Q. 33:32), heart-blindness (22:46) misguided heart (Q. 45:23) and vices of the heart (40:35). The serenity of the heart is also connected in Sufi praxis to practice of God-remembrance (*dhikr*): "those who believe, their hearts being at rest in God's remembrance" (Q. 13:28). Unlike the common translation of the term, I translate "qalb" as "Heart-Intellect" for reasons I will discuss in more details in Chapter 5 (The Ontology of the Intellective-Heart). In a nutshell, my translation attempts to capture both the metaphysical and moral dimensions of the Qurʾānic conception of the heart in Sufi mystical literature. On the conception of "*qalb*" in Sufi literature, see Gardet, L. and Vadet, J.-C., "Ḳalb", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0424.

[19] *Mawqif* 358, 145.

Sufi revivalist currents in Damascus, the Arab world and many regions of the Ottoman world.[20] Many distinguished Sufi scholars who became associated with ʿAbd al-Qādir's Akbarian circle were still attached to the Naqshabandī- Khālidiyya order. Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī, who became ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi master later in life, was another prominent Moroccan Sufi Shaykh from the Shādhilīyah-Darqāwī order whose teachings spread across North Africa, Syria, Egypt and the Hijaz.[21] Though Shaykh Masʿūd did not leave any writings, ʿAbd al-Qādir was instrumental in in spreading his order among the Sufis scholarly elite in Damascus and other regions of the Arab Ottoman world. One of the key arguments of this chapter concerns the unique revivalist ideas that ʿAbd al-Qādir formulates in key chapters of his *Mawāqif.* As I argue, his revivalist theology was deeply embedded in his Sufi metaphysics of the Divine Names. His perception of Muslim spiritual, political and intellectual decline is framed against his critique of reason. He does not seem too fazed by the materialistic rationalism and hegemony of colonial Europe.[22] He accords almost no

[20] See Chapter 2 (Formation), "Mystical Life and Teachers" for more information on ʿAbd al-Qādir's encounter with Sh. Khālid al-Naqshabandī during his first trip to Mecca at age of seventeenth. ʿAbd al-Majīd ibn Muḥammad Khānī, *al-Kawākib al-durrīyah ʿalá al-Ḥadā'iq al-wardīyah fī ajillā' al-sādah al-Naqshabandīyah*. Al-Ṭabʿah 1 (Dimashq: Dār al-Bayrūtī, 1997) is a valuable nineteenth-century hagiographical work of the Naqshabandīyah order. He furnished many biographical details on Sh. Khālid and his revivalist activities. It also contains valuable information on ʿAbd al-Qādir, his *Mawāqif* and his Naqshabandī Akbarian scholarly entourage in Damascus. For more information on Shaykh Khalid and his Sufi revivalist movement, Cf. Albert Hourani, "Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order", in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, ed. Vivian Brown, Samuel Miklos Stern, Albert Habib Hourani (Oxford: 1972), 89-103 and his "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 75–89.

[21] On Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī's impact on the mystical life and thought of ʿAbd al-Qādir, see Chapter 2 (Formation), "Mystical Life and Teachers." For a short biographical notice on Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī, see Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Kūhin al-Fāsī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhilīyah al-kubrā* (Cairo, Maktabat al-Fāsīyah al-Miṣrīyah, 1928), pp.197-230. See also Sidi Mohammed Abu Zayan al-Gharīsī al-Maʿaskarī, *Kanz al-Asrār fī Manāqib Mawlana al-ʿArabī al-Darqāwī wa baʿḍ asḥābihi al-akhyār: Ṭabaqāt asḥāb Mawlana al-ʿArabī al-Darqāwī, ed.* Nur al-Din Maḥī (Dar al-sadāt al-Mālikiyya, Mascara, 2021), 264.

[22] For ʿAbd al-Qādir, the transcendental epistemology of the Qur'an revelation offers an antidote to the materialistic rationalism so long as one is aware of the limited scope of discursive reason. Unlike the materialist rationalism of Europe, ʿAbd al-Qādir was aware that the Ashʿarī theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and Muslim philosophers (*falāsifah*) employ demonstrative reasoning to affirm, not to challenge, the truths of Revelation. What the Sufis object to is the claim that rational knowledge is the only method of validating revealed truths or knowing God.

importance to rationalism when explicating the perceived decadence of the Muslims of his time. ʿAbd al-Qādir explicates the cyclical regression of Muslims and the advent of colonial modernity against the backdrop of the Akbarian theology of the Divine Names. While the moral deviance from the Divine Law (*sharīʿa*) and the Sunnah of the Prophet may explain the subjugation of Muslims by colonial Europe, the metaphysical causes of this human condition, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, are ultimately "the alternating disclosures of the Divine Names" (*ikhtilāf tajaliyyāt al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya*).[23] He concludes by noting that the Divine decree is ultimately the source of human and cosmic destiny. Human agency has virtually no causal efficacy over the changes and condition of human affairs. As I conclude, ʿAbd al-Qādir hold that we cannot rationally explain the mysterious unfolding of God's decree. There is no rationale for why things unfold they way they do, for better or worse, save the conviction that God's will and wisdom transcend causal laws.

1.5 Al-Jazāʾirī's Works

ʿAbd al-Qādir authored four theological works, one of which is a juridical treatise, which differ from one another in their subject-matter, scope, and structure.[24] Listed in chronological order, they are as follows:

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[23] *Mawqif.* 364, p.230.

[24] He has also penned a short work on his military code and administration entitled *Wishāḥ al-katāʾib wa-zīnat al-jaysh al-Muḥammadī al-ghālib: wa-yalīhi dīwān al-ʿAskar al-Muḥammad al-Milyānī*, ed. Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm (al-Jazāʾir: al-Sharikah al-Waṭanīyah lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ,1968); this work was translated in French as *Règlements et Codes Militaires de l'armée Musulmane* (Alger: Éd. Alpha, 2009); he also has a commentary on a French ethnographical study of Algerian Desert Horses and mœurs. See Daumas, Eugène, *Les Chevaux du Sahara, et les moeurs du désert, par le général Daumas,* 3e édition*, revue et augmentée, avec des commentaires, par l'émir Abd-el-Kader* (Paris: Michel Lévy frères. 1855). We can include in this list his treatises on the juridical obligation on colonized Muslims to migrate to Muslim-ruled country (reproduced in the *Tuḥfat*) and entitled *Risālat f'il Hijra* (examined by Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus,* Chap Two); he also has a long correspondence with the Mufti of Morocco on various questions pertaining to his *Jihad*, ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Salām Tusūlī, *Ajwibat al-Tusūlī ʿan masāʾil al-Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir fī al-jihād*, al-Ṭabʿah 1. (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1996).

1. *"Miqrāḍ al-ḥadd li qatʿ lisān muntaqiṣ dīn al-Islam bi-l bāṭil wa l-ilḥād"* (*The Sharp Scissor for Chopping off the Tongues of Those who Diminish the Religion of Islam by Defamation or Heresy*). This short text was a reply to the bigoted attacks of a French priest who defamed the Islamic moral code and the Prophet Muhammad.[25]
2. *Ḥusām al-dīn li-qaṭʿ shubah al-murtaddīn (The Sword of Religion for Cutting the False claims of the Apostates).* This short treatise was composed in 1842 when ʿAbd al-Qādir was spearheading the *Jihād* against the French. It is a refutation of Muslim jurists who attempted allow Muslims to live under French colonial rule. ʿAbd al-Qādir fervently rejects this ruling and argues instead for the religious obligation of Muslims to migrate (*hijra*) to Muslim ruled lands.[26]
3. "*Dhikrā al-ʿāqil wa tanbīh al-ghāfil*" (*Reminding the Intelligent and Notifying the Unmindful*) This text was penned during his stay Bursa (Turkey) for the Société Asiatique and translated into French by A. Dumas, a French colonial consul in Damascus. This work addressed for French academics was an elementary introduction to the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, history, anthropology, language, virtue ethics, the relationship of reason to science, prophetic knowledge and revealed scriptures.[27]

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[25] ʻAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn. *al-Miqrāḍ al-ḥādd: li-qaṭʻ lisān muntaqiṣ dīn al-Islām bi-al-bāṭil wa-al-ilḥād* (al-Jazāʾir: Dār al-Ṭāsīlī, 1989).

[26] The full text is reproduced in the *Tuḥfat al-zāʾir*. For an analysis of this treatise, see Tom Woerner-Powell, "ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī, Migration, and the Rule of Law: 'A Reply to Certain Persons of Distinction'", *Studia Islamica* 106, 2 (2011): 214-240, doi: https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/19585705-12341259.

[27] ʻAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn, *Dhikrá al-ʻāqil wa-tanbīh al-ghāfil*. Edited by Mamdūh Haqqī (al-Jazā'ir: Dar al-Thaqāfah al-ʻArabīyah, 2007). This text was translated soon after it publication by a French academic as *Le livre d'Abd-el-Kader intitulé : Rappel à l'intelligent, avis à l'indifférent: considérations philosophiques, religieuses, historiques, etc. / par L'émir Abd-el-Kader ; traduites avec l'autorisation de l'auteur, sur le manuscrit original de la Bibliothèque impériale, par Gustave Dugat ; avec une lettre de l'émir, une introd. et des notes du traducteur* (Paris: B. Duprat, 1858).

4. *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿḍ ishārāt al-Qurʾān ila ʾl-asrār wa ʾl-maʿārif*.[28] As the title suggests, the *Mawāqif* is essentially a Sufi esoteric commentary on the mystical allusions and metaphysical truths of the Qurʾān. It belongs to the genre of Sufi scriptural commentary known as "allusive exegesis" (*tafsīr bi-l-ishāra*) of the Qurʾān.[29] Two third of the *Mawāqif* consists of a scriptural commentary on select verses/chapters of the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*, while one third consists of commentaries on the works of Ibn ʿArabi and other Sufis. It is worth noting that while a few editions of this work were published in the last few decades, A. Bakri is the first to conduct a critical edition of this work. Bakr's edition is based on all available manuscripts and offers new details about the genesis, compilation, and chronology of the *Mawāqif* as well as its diffusion among Sufi scholars in Ottoman Syria.[30] The *Mawāqif* was addressed for the Damascene Sufi *ʿulamā* who were immersed in the doctrinal teachings of Ibn ʿArabi and his school and the practices of Sufi orders. Many parts of the *Mawāqif* were transcribed by key Sufi scholars who were instrumental in preserving and diffusing its

[28] For scholars who have not consulted the critical edition of Bakri (e.g., Powell, Bouyerdene, Weisman, among others), they retained the outdated title of Dar al-Yaqaẓah edition (1966-67), namely, "*Kitab al-Mawāqif fi al-Waʿd wa al-Irshad*" instead of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿḍ ishārāt al-Qurʾān ila ʾl-asrār wa ʾl-maʿārif*, which is the title 'Abd al-Qādir gave to his *Mawāqif*. The critical edition of A. Miftah is surprisingly not consulted by the many scholars despite having been published in 2007. See Abd al-Qādir Ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Jazā'irī. *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi baʿd ishārāt al-Qurʾān ila al-asrār wa ʾl-maʿārif*. ed. 'Abd al-Bāqi Meftah. 3 vol. (Alger: Dar al-Huda, 2007).

[29] See Ṣāliḥ Dāsī, *al-tafsīr al-ishārī 'inda ahl al-Sunnah* (Dimashq: Dār 'Alā' al-Dīn, 2010), pp. 336- 360 and his *al-Muʾallafāt al-raʾīsah fī al-tafsīr al-ishārī 'inda ahl al-Sunnah* (al-Manhal lil-Nashr al-Iliktirūnī, 'Ammān, 2021). For a historical survey of Sufi Qurʾānic exegesis, see Gerhard Bowering, "The Scriptural 'Senses' in Medieval Sufi Qur'an," in *With Reverence to the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, eds. Jane Dammen McAulif, Barry D. Walfish and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford, 2003), 346-365. See also Alexander Knysh, "Sufism and the Qurʾān" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Kristina Sand, *Sufi Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam* (London, Routledge, 2006); A. Godlas, "Ṣūfism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009); Toby Mayer, "Traditions of Esoteric and Sapiential Qur'anic Commentary," in *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, eds. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner Dagli, Maria Dakake, Joseph Lumbard, and Mohammed Rustom (New York: HarperOne, 2015),1819–1855.

[30] Bakri's scientific edition was based on 20 existing manuscripts of the *Mawāqif* and filled many lacunae found in earlier editions of this text. A very helpful chronology of the chapters of the *Mawāqif* situates its composition between 1848 to1883.

teachings among the Sufi scholarly communities in Syria, Egypt, Lebanon-Palestine region and wider Ottoman Arab world. The most prominent Sufi Akbarian scholars who formed the inner circle of ʿAbd al-Qādi are Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al-Khānī (d. 1862), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bayṭār (d. 1916), Muhammad al-Ṭanṭāwī (d. 1882), Muhammad al-Ṭayyib (d. 1896) and his younger brother, Muhammad al-Mubārak (d. 1912).

1.6 *Kitāb al-Mawāqif:* A Literature Review

Regarding the academic study of the *Mawāqif*, the late M. Chodkiewicz was the first French specialist of North African Sufism to introduce this monumental text of ʿAbd al-Qādir to a Western academic audience. His seminal translation (1982) of short chapters of the *Mawāqif* (prefaced with an elaborate introduction and extensive footnotes) inspired a whole generation of scholars who began to explore this understudied facet of the Algerian leader.[31] Besides the complete French translation of the *Mawāqif* by M. Lagarde, we have a handful of partial translations of this work that have been produced since Chodkiewicz's translation was first published. [32] In terms of collected essays, the edited volume of E. Geoffroy, *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* contains a separate section on the mystical teachings and metaphysics of the *Mawāqif*.[33] In English, Sanna Makhlouf has published three valuable essays on ʿAbd al-Qādir's

[31] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Écrits spirituels*: *Traduction partielle du kitâb al-Mawâqif de l'Emir Abdelkader* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982).

[32] M. Lagarde (2000-2002), the translations of select chapters by Khurshid (1996), A. Penot (2008, 2020), and the ongoing translations of Max Giraud (2012-2021). Some of these translations are prefaced by long introductions, extensive annotations, and cross-textual commentaries, which helps the reader situate the discussions of the translated *Mawqif* within the Sufi Akbarian tradition.

[33] Geoffroy, *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* contains an many valuable essays on *K. al-Mawāqif.* Cf. Houberdon, Jean-François. *La doctrine islamique des états multiples de l'être : dans les Haltes spirituelles de l'émir Abd al-Qâdir* (Beyrouth: Albouraq, 2017). Cf. Michel Lagarde. "Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī et sa vision Akbarienne du

spiritual hermeneutics of the Qur'ān and his Sufi revivalist discourse.[34] The studies of Woerner-Powell (2017)[35] and Itzhak Weisman (2001) also dealt with some themes from the *Mawāqif*, though their interpretations of some of its doctrines are questionable. A lack of familiarity with the Sufi Akbarian theology of the *Mawāqif* is sometimes reflected in their mistranslation of technical terms and/or misunderstanding of its philosophical content.[36]

In Arabic Muslim scholarship, studies on the *Mawāqif* were relatively scarce too. The first author to mention this work was Shakīb Arslān (1933).[37] The teachings of the *Mawāqif* would be once again briefly explored by Murābiṭ Jawād (1966)[38], Barakāt Muḥammad Murād (1990),[39]

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monde." *Studia Islamica* 2: 203-221. See also the fine study of Jean-François Houberdon, *La doctrine islamique des états multiples de l'être : dans les Haltes spirituelles de l'émir Abd al-Qâdir* (Beyrouth: Albouraq, 2017) where he examines ʻAbd al-Qādir's chapter on the ontological degrees of Being (*marātib al-wujūd*).

[34] Sanna Makhlouf, "Remarks concerning the Spiritual Hermeneutics of ʻAbd al-Qādir." *Studia Islamica* 2: 225-226; "The Legacy of Shaykh al-Fāsī in the Spiritual Journey of Amir ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī" In *La Shādhilīya: Une Voie Soufie dans le Monde* and her "Reform or Renewal: The Debate about Change in Nineteenth-Century Islam," In *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* ed. Eric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005) pp. 127-138.

[35] Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus: an Integrative Approach to "Abd Al-Qādir Al-Jazā"irī (1808-1883)* (Berlin ;Walter de Gruyter, 2017).

[36] I will address some of these issues below (Critical Remarks on Worner-Powell's Reading of the *Mawāqif*) and Chapter 6 (where I deal with Weisman's reading of the revivalist character of *Mawāqif*).

[37] Shakīb Arslān, *Ḥāḍir al-ʻālam al-Islāmī* (Maktabat ʻIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, Cairo: 1933)This book deals with the state and condition of the Muslim community at the turn of the twentieth-century. The reflects on different the intellectual and spiritual methods that Muslims have adopted to deal with the challenges and threats of colonial modernity. He cites several passages from the *Mawāqif*, focusing especially on ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi account of the relationship God, humans and the created order. The author considers ʿAbd al-Qādir a paragon for Muslims seeking immanent answers to the changing circumstances of the Muslim community in the modern world.

[38] Murābiṭ Jawād. *Al-Taṣawwuf wa-al-Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir* (Dimashaq: Dār al-Yaqaẓah al-'Arabīyah, 1966). This is one of the first books to discuss the centrality of Sufism to al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī's life and thought. The author's uncle was allegedly a close associate of ʿAbd al-Qādir in Damascus. The author relates many details regarding the Sufi practices and affiliation of al-Qādir which he allegedly gathered form several letters and notes that his uncle left bequeathed to him.

[39] Barakāt Muḥammad Murād, *al-Amīr ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī: al-mujāhid al-ṣūfī* (Madīnat Naṣr [Cairo: al-Ṣadr li-Khidmāt al-Ṭabāʻah, 1990). This is a book deals with both the heroic Jihad that Abd al-Qādir waged against the French colonial invaders and his Sufi spiritual heritage.

Aḥmad Kamāl Jazzār (1997)[40], ʻĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī (2004)[41] and Muḥammad ibn Jaᶜfar Kattan (2004).[42] Recently, the studies of ʻAbd al-Bāqī Miftah (2005, 2017)[43] have paid greater attention to the doctrinal significance and influence that the *Mawāqif* exerted on the Sufi Akbarian tradition in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Syria and beyond. Miftah's prolific scholarship on Ibn ʿArabī has been instrumental in tracing the doctrinal foundations of many concepts in the *Mawāqif*. His comparative essays on Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Qādir also cast light on the theoretical refinements that our Algerian thinker introduces to later Akbarian thought. [44]

As for historians like and D. Cummins (1990)[45] and especially I. Weismann (2001, 2007, 2011)[46] their studies have been narrowly focused on the impact of ʿAbd al-Qādir on nineteenth-

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[40] Aḥmad Kamāl Jazzār, *al-Mafākhir fī ma'ārif al-Amīr al-Jazāʾirī 'Abd al-Qādir wa-al-sādah al-awliyā' al-akābir*, al-Ṭab'ah 1(Cairo: sn, 1997).

[41] ʻAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn, *Bughyat al-ṭālib alā tartīb al-tajallī bi-kullīyāt al-marātib* . Al-Ṭab'ah 1. ed. ʻĀṣim Ibrāhīm al-Ḥusaynī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2004).

[42], Muḥammad ibn Ja'far Kattānī, *Jalā' al-qulūb min al-aṣdā' al-ghaynīyah bi-bayān iḥāṭatihi 'Alayhi al-Salām bi-al-'ulūm al-kawnīyah*. 2nd. ed. (Cairo, 2004). This voluminous monograph was authored by a prominent Moroccan Sufi in 1919. It is hagiographical and a doctrinal exposition of the teachings of prominent nineteenth-century Sufi figures, including ʿAbd al-Qādir. The author cites many passages from the *Mawāqif* and comments on many mystical themes that Abd al-Qādir discusses in his *Summa*.

[43] See his collection of essays (translated from Arabic to French) : *Lumière Soufie: Gnose, Herméneutique et initiation chez Ibn 'Arabî et l'Émir 'Abd al-Qâdir* (Algiers, Algeria: Librairie de Philosophie et de Soufisme, 2017).

[44] For an extensive discussion of the doctrinal perspectives and host of sources with which ʻAbd al-Qādir is engaged in his *Mawāqif*, see the Introduction to ʻAbd al-Bāqī Miftāḥ, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fi ba'ḍ ishārāt al-Qur'an ila 'l-asrār wa 'l-ma'ārif*, ed. ʻAbd al-Bāqi Miftah, 2 vol., (Alger: Dār al-Hudā, 2005).

[45] David D. Cummins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[46] I. Weismann's scholarship has delved more deeply than other scholars into the question of Sufi Reform in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Syria. He devoted more attention to the influence ʿAbd al-Qādir on the Sufi Syrian reformist circle and how his *Mawāqif* played a key role in shaping the Sufi revivalist theology of his time. For an profitable discussion of the implications of some of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi doctrines on Sufi Revivalist thought, see Chapter 5 of Weismann's *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in late Ottoman Damascus* (Vol. 34) (Brill Academic Pub, 2001), 156-192. Cf. Itzchak Weismann. "Between Ṣūfī Reformism and Modernist Rationalism - a Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene angle," *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (2001), pp. 206-237; "Modernity from Within: Islamic Fundamentalism and Sufīsm," *Der Islam* 86 (2009), pp. 142-170; "God and the Perfect Man in the Experience of ʿAbd Al-Qādir Al-Jazāʾirī." *Journal of the Muhyiddīn Ibn ʿArabī Society* 30 (2001), pp. 55-72.

century Sufi and Salafi reformist discourse. While furnishing many valuable details on the Sufi entourage of ʿAbd al-Qādir in Syria, their scholarship is not a full-fledge analysis of the theological worldview of the *Mawāqif*. In the case of Weismann, his historical survey remains the most comprehensive treatment of this topic to date. That said, his interpretations of the Sufi revivalist ideas of ʿAbd al-Qādir has many inconsistencies that I will address in the last chapter of this study.[47] While improving our understanding of the *Mawāqif*, the literature has generally been limited to concepts or themes that are treated in some chapters of the *Mawāqif*. It goes without saying that a selective treatment cannot replace an in-depth analytical investigation of the Sufi philosophical worldview of ʿAbd al-Qādir. This is what I hope to accomplish in this study.

1.7 Critical Remarks on Woerner-Powell's Reading of the *Mawāqif*:

The reservations I raised above concerning the historicist scholarship of the *Mawāqif* need further elaboration. As a case in point, I wish to turn my attention to Woerner-Powell's recent work on ʿAbd al-Qādir political and theological thought, particularly chapter 5 where he tackles some intricate doctrines in the *Mawāqif*. The author selectively examines the themes of *Mawāqif* that he chose to discuss. While ʿAbd al-Qādir's indebtedness to Ibn ʿArabī is acknowledged, there is no engagement with the doctrinal sources that underpin the themes that Woerner-Powell chose

[47] As I will discuss in Chapter 6 (The Sufi Akbarian Intellectual Renaissance), the classical Sufi epistemological paradigm of the *Mawāqif* is critical of many aspects of Ashʿarī rational theology. I cannot see how this epistemological perspective towards indigenous Islamic rationalism would be favorable of the predominantly secular rationalism of colonial Europe. Weismann's claim that ʿAbd al-Qādir sought "the modernization of Akbari thought" by reconceptualizing "the relationship between mysticism and rationalism Islam" (*Taste of Modernity*, p. 155) contradicts ʿAbd al-Qādir's critique of Ashʿarī rational theology, to say nothing of the materialistic rationalism of colonial Europe.

to examine. There are also many mistranslated terms that require a firm grasp of the Sufi-Ashʿarī and theological traditions in which they are embedded.[48]

Before tackling his reading of the *Mawāqif*, let us first consider the methodological framework and aim of his recent work on ʿAbd al-Qādir. In a nutshell, his monograph was primarily aimed at undermining what he termed "the narrative of conversion", that is to say, the claim that ʿAbd al-Qādir underwent "an acute inflection point, a dramatic conversion event contemporaneous with ʿAbd al-Qādir's defeat and imprisonment by France."[49] Put otherwise, the author rejects the claim that ʿAbd al-Qādir's post-*Jihād* life was marked by a spiritual crisis that provoked his conversion to Sufi spirituality.[50]

While making a compelling case, however, Woerner-Powell was certainly not the first scholar to dispel the so-called narrative of conversion. M. Jawād, M. Murād, M. Chodkiewicz, Bakry, Miftah, A. Bouyerdene, among others, have long before Woerner-Powell argued that 'Abd al-Qādir was immersed in Sufi spirituality from his formative years till his death.[51] The difference

[48] I cannot treat here every theme or notion that the author examines in chapter 5, for this goes beyond the scope of this study. Below, I will limit myself to one or two examples.

[49] Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus,* 6.

[50] Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus,* 5.

[51] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'Harmonie Des Contraire,* was precisely aimed to redress this narrative in question. Bouyerdene's whole study sought to demonstrate that the Sufi vocation of ʿAbd al-Qādir goes back to his formative years and his familial heritage. The Sufi vocation, as Bouyerdene maintains throughout his study, shaped every aspect of ʿAbd al-Qādir's personality and thought. Powell did not serious engage with Bouyerdene' study, particularly how his arguments against the conversion narrative differs in any fundamental way from Bouyerdene's. As for Arabic-Muslim scholarship, Powell does not give any serious consideration to scholars like Murābiṭ Jawād. *Al-Taṣawwuf wa-al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir* and *Aḥmad Kamāl Jazzār, al-Mafākhir fī ma'ārif al-Amīr al-Jazā'irī 'Abd al-Qādir,* for whom the question of separating ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Jihad* from his Sufi vocation was not even entertained since they were well aware of their mutual implications in the history of Sufi political engagement. Cf. Murād, *al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī*; Cf. Fahd Sālim Khalīl Rāshid and Zaïm Khenchelaoui, *al-Ribāṭ wa-al-murābaṭah: tafīrāt dalālīyah wa-muqāribah Ṣūfīyah farūsīyah li-masār al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥasanī al-Jazā'irī*, al-Ṭab'ah 1 (al-Jazā'ir: Dār al-Jā'izah, 2011).

between Woerner-Powell and other scholars lies in the sources and arguments they deployed to disprove "the narrative of conversion".

Woerner-Powell states, for instance, that he adopts "an integrative, inter-disciplinary approach, attempting a holistic presentation of the man (i.e., ʿAbd al-Qādir)"[52] He characterizes earlier scholarship as "more narrowly-focused"[53] on either the political or spiritual facet of ʿAbd al-Qādir. In contrast, his inter-disciplinary line of inquiry, so he argues, offers a more coherent narrative of ʿAbd al-Qādir.[54] His assessment of earlier scholarship and theoretical framework, he further informs, "follows in the long tradition of Orientalism, which has always combined elements of historical, political, theological, and philosophical discussion with a context heavily informed by philology and textual study."[55] He qualifies his approach as "a post-Orientalism orientalism."[56]The difference between the old and the new Orientalism is not clearly defined or demarcated.[57] I am uncertain how the methodological framework of the post orientalist scholar

[52]Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus,* 5

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid. Note again that this is not necessarily true. The study of Bouyerdene is as cross-disciplinary as Powell's. The same can be said, though perhaps to a lesser a lesser degree, of the above cited Arab/Muslim scholars.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid, 6.

[57] For an instructive discussion of what a post-orientalist approach to Islamic may consist of, see the Introduction to Richard C. Martin and Carl W. Ernst, eds., *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, Studies in Comparative Religion (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 2010). While promoting a de-colonial, inter-disciplinary and methodological approach, the theoretical considerations of post-orientalist approach to Islamic studies retain some features of orientalist scholarship, particularly the claim that "the best of post-Orientalist scholarship in Islamic studies is based on solid training in the languages, texts, and history of premodern Islam… as a necessary basis for discourse about Islam and Muslims today" (*Rethinking Islamic Studies*, p. 13). While useful, the methodological approach of Orientalist scholarship of Islam suffers from many limitations, including a poor understanding of the unified intellectual paradigms that underpin the broader Islamic religious worldview and the communities that shape it. There is an internalist perspective that cannot be brushed aside under the pretense of outsider scholarly 'objectivism'. For a critical study of Orientalism and Orientalist scholarship of Islam, see Wael Hallaq, "On Orientalism, Self-Consciousness and History." *Islamic Law and Society* 18(3–4) (2011): 387–439.

conforms and transcend the limitations of the old orientalist. Philosophically, however, Woerner-Powell's understanding of some complex doctrinal notions from the *Mawāqif* suffers from some interpretive issues. [58] Woerner-Powell's interdisciplinary approach to the study of ʿAbd al-Qādir does not compensate for the lack of training in the classical Islamic sciences that guide the internal discussions of the *Mawāqif.*

The interdisciplinary approach of Woerner-Powell has its merits. It attempts to present a unified, wholistic, narrative of the Algerian religious leader. The Orientalist interdisciplinary approach, however, is not without limitations. The life and thought of ʿAbd al-Qādir requires first and foremost a firm grasp of the most fundamental elements of Sufi theological metaphysics.

Take, for instance, Woerner-Powell's characterization of the *Mawāqif* as "a large collection of un-ordered lecture notes."[59] This observation is true if we consider the informal structure of this text, but it is untrue if we are unable to perceive the doctrinal unity that binds the parts to its whole. Moreover, while some chapters were transcribed orally, many chapters of the *Mawāqif*

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[58] For instance, the author does not go elaborate on the ontological underpinnings of the Sufi conception of the Muhammad Reality (*al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiyah*), that is, the ontological determinations that it assumes through the different existential realms — as the First Intellect, Universal Soul, The Supreme Spirit, down to the embodied nature of the Prophet. ʿAbd al-Qādir has an elaborate exposition of this doctrine in 248th *Mawqif*. The term 'ahistorical' that Powell employ does to explain the anthropocosmic conception of the Muhammad Reality captures only one determination of this universal ontological reality. Powell states "that the imitation Muḥammadī merges with a mystical ontology to give rise, drawing on the lexicon of Ibn ʿArabī, to an ahistorical Muhammadan Reality (*ḥaqīqa Muhammadiyah*)" (p.163). The cultivation of the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad is better understood as the actualization of the ontological perfections of the Muhammadan Reality. The latter is the principle of human spiritual perfection, not the other way around. ʿAbd al-Qādir or other Sufis never use the term "give rise" to explain how the Universal Reality of the Prophet Muhammad manifests within the human soul. There are also some errors in Powell's translations. I can only pick one example here. In his translation of *Mawqif.* 14 (p. 169). He translates the following passage as follows: "Not so with the people of God (most High). His knowers (*ʿarifūn*) whose words are one in the unity of the True God (*tawhīd al-Ḥaqq*). All their concern is as said by the most High: "Remain steadfast in religion, and make no division therein." (p.169). His translation does not quite follow the structure of the text and misses some technical nuances. A more accurate rendition would be as follows: "Contrary to the folk of God, the knowers of God (*ʿārifīn*), whose discourse concerning the Oneness of the Real (*tawhīd al-Ḥaqq*) is unified and all-embracing (*jāmiʿ*)." Powell incorrectly breaks the last construction (i.e., All their concern is as said...), which is completes the former clause and should instead be rendered as "that their affairs are mutually inclusive."

[59] Ibid, 160.

were written by ʿAbd al-Qādir as a complete chapter over an extended period. In his edition of *K. Mawāqif*, Bakri has provided many details on the collection and chronology of each chapter of the *Mawāqif.* Woerner-Powel did not consult this edition which would have filled many gaps in his knowledge of both the formal structure and doctrinal sources of the *Mawāqif.*

Woerner-Powel also noticed "a great deal of repetition" and the lack "of continuity between different chapters of the *Mawāqif,* making it impossible "to summarize or systematize ʿAbd al-Qādir's teachings."[60] Highlighting this feature of his thought, the author alerts the readers that ʿAbd al-Qādir "does not argue like a rationalist philosopher, by systematically layering inferences on specific premises." [61] For Woerner-Powel, the *Mawāqif* reads more like "a magnificent jumble of discussion."[62] While acknowledging a "sense of coherent metaphysical structure," the *Mawāqif* does not yield itself to some systematic philosophical system. These remarks miss a crucial aspect that shapes virtually all works of Sufi theological teachings, namely, the internal unity that binds a supra-discursive epistemological paradigm. In fact, the chapters of the *Mawāqif* are intimately bound to the Ash worldview and paradigms of knowledge (canonical sources, praxis, thinkers, and schools) that guide and inspire ʿAbd al-Qādir's reflections.

On a different front, Woerner-Powell is right to assume that one cannot systematize the teachings of the *Mawāqif*, lest one "runs the risk of falsifying his project by presenting him as propounding an a priori metaphysical scheme anterior to his reading of the Qurʾān: the reverse of

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid, 162.

[62] Ibid, 162.

this situation as he himself portrays it."[63] The question of systematization is not within the purview of Sufi philosophical expression, as I alluded to earlier. Systemization only holds for a system of thought that is guided by demonstrative reasoning and arguments. With Sufi mystical theology, the mystery of revealed knowledge lies beyond reason's horizons, inasmuch as it seeks to reveal a domain of knowledge that unifies paradoxes and epistemic polarities. Woerner-Powell notes that ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical epistemology "involves a complete internalization of God's nature and God's intentions, at once both metaphysical and ethical, spiritual and social."[64] I find no explicit evidence verbatim of this purported vision. Nowhere does ʿAbd al-Qādir state that the nature (*ḥaqīqa*) of God, by which we mean His Essence (*dhāt*), can be internalized by a human being. ʿAbd al-Qādir explicitly affirms in *Maw*. 248, that "it is impossible to embrace the [Divine] Essence, for the Essence, according to the definition of the eminent Sufi masters of this community, is what cannot be apprehended save with respect to our knowledge that we cannot apprehend It."[65]

Lastly, Woerner-Powell criticizes Chodkiewicz for his view that the *Dhikrā* and *Miqrāḍ* are of comparable significance to ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif*. This view is justified. While these short works are valuable form part of ʿAbd al-Qādir's corpus, they do not express the definitive expression of his Sufi intellectual thought, as it emerges in the *Mawāqif*. Chodkiewicz rightly noted that these two works were intended for a specific audience. The *Miqrāḍ* was a refutation of bigoted attacked of a French priest against Islam and its moral code, while the *Dhikrā* was

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid, 166.

[65] *Maw*. 248.

addressed to French academics. In this respect, Chodkiewicz was right in thinking that they have no real bearing on the Sufi doctrinal teachings of the *Mawāqif*. The latter work was addressed, as we said earlier, to the Sufi intellectual elite in Ottoman Syria who were immersed in the spiritual practices and doctrinal teachings of the Sufi mystical tradition.

CHAPTER 2.

Origins, Formation and Mystical Life

"All my life I should have been – at least, I wish to return to being so before I die – a man of study and prayer; it seems to me, and I say this from the bottom of my heart, that henceforth I am as though dead to all the rest."[66]

2.1. Origins

ʿAbd al-Qādir was born into a sharifian family (descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) highly regarded for its scholarship and piety.[67] His ancestral lineage was also traced back to ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī[68] (d.1066), the patron saint of Baghdad and eponymous founder of the Qādiriyya Sufi order. Hailing from the religious aristocracy, ʿAbd al-Qādir and his ancestors gained a high standing in the Ottoman Maghrib society of the day. Al-Jazāʾirī's father, Muḥyī al-Dīn (d. 1833), was the spiritual deputy (*muqaddam*) of the Qādiriyya Sufi order and the tribal chief of the Beni Hachem clan in the district of Guetna (Oued al-Hammam) — an Ottoman regency in Northwestern Algeria. The religious erudition and sanctity of Muḥyī al-Dīn invested him with considerable political authority over the local Arab tribes and the Ottoman ruling authorities.[69] As ʿAbd al-Qādir would later state, he was destined for a life of spiritual devotion and scholarship. Even when called

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[66] From a letter sent by ʿAbd al-Qādir from French prison to Bishop Dupuch Antoine Adolphe of Algiers, *Abd-El-Kader Au Chateau D'amboise. Dédié À Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte Président De La République Française. Par Ant.-Ad. Dupuch* 2. ed. (Bordeaux: Impr. et lithographie de H. Faye, 1849), pp. 21-21.

[67] Bellemare, *Abd-El-Kader, Sa Vie Politique et Militaire Par Alex. Bellemare*; A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'Harmonie Des Contraire,* 24, 27. For biographical information, I mainly rely on Ahmed Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraires,* since his biographical study sums up and supplements the biographical literature on ʿAbd al-Qādir.

[68] Anwar Etin. "Jīlānī, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. (Oxford University Press, 2009).

https://www.oxfordreference.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780195305135.001.0001/acref-9780195305135-e-1183

[69] Ibid, 12-13, Bouyerdene, 30

to lead the armed resistance, the spiritual vocation of ʿAbd al-Qādir would only change garb. In the socio-political context of pre-colonial Ottoman Maghrib, the Sharifian-Qādiri Sufi credentials of ʿAbd al-Qādir was a key factor in legitimizing Qādir's leadership of the *Jihad*. [70] Only this time, the virtues and vocation of the Sufi mystical Path of "the commander of the faithful" (*Amīr al-Muʾminīn*) would manifest themselves in the sphere of Sufi spiritual chivalry (*futuwwa*)[71] before returning the torch to his pen some years after his withdrawal from combat.

2.2. Formative Education

The Qādiri "*zāwiya*" (pl. *zawāyā*)[72] of Muḥyī al-Dīn was the epicenter of the Guetna settlement (*douar village?*). It served multiple functions: it was a site for congregational worship, judicial arbitration, Sufi gathering, but above all, an institution of traditional religious learning.[73] Nestled between the Plain of Ghriss, the mountainous landscape of the *zāwiya* was an optimal setting for the young ʿAbd al-Qādir to pursue his religious education. The students who flocked to the *zāwiya* of Muḥyī al-Din, ʿAbd al-Qādir recounts, came from "Marrakech, Sousse, Shanqīṭ, and

[70] For a comprehensive historical study of the socio-political authority of Sharifs and Sufi in pre-modern Maghrebi geopolitics, see Kamel Filali, *L'Algérie mystique: des marabouts fondateurs aux khwân insurgés, XVe-XIXe siècle*, Collection "Espaces méditerranéens" (Paris: Publisud, 2002). Cf. Jacques Berque, *L'intérieur du Maghreb: XVe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), 144, 508 ; Cf. Bennison, Amira K. "ʿAbd al-Qādir's Jihād in the Light of the Western Islamic Jihād Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 106, 2 (2011): 207-8 and her *Jihad and Its Interpretations in Pre-Colonial Morocco: State-Society Relations during the French Conquest of Algeria* (London ; RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

[71] For the notion of spiritual chivalry in Sufi ethics and mystical theology, see Lloyd Ridgeon, "Futuwwa (in Ṣūfism)", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 3rd ed., eds. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Devin J. Stewart. Consulted online on 06 March 2023 http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27218. See also his *Jawanmardi. A Sufi code of honour* (Edinburgh, Oxford University Press, 2011).

[72] Sheila Blair, Katz, J. G. and C. Hamès, "Zāwiya", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1384.

[73] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire*, 24, 31-40.

surrounding regions of Africa (*nawāhḥī ifriqya*) — (*ifriqiya* is the region of Tunisia usually)[74]; it even had students from Alexandria…sometimes welcoming five to six hundred pupils; the study sessions were held in the courtyard, with about seven teaching circles."[75]

Concerning his formation in the traditional Islamic sciences, the sources do not supply us with enough information on the Maghrebi *madrasa* curriculum that ʿAbd al-Qādir followed. From what we can gather, his first teacher was his mother, Lala Zohra, an educated women who taught her young son how to read and write and the fundamental moral etiquettes (*adab*) of the Islamic faith.[76] Soon after he turned seven, Muḥyī al-Dīn took charge of his son's education. Recognizing the prodigious aptitudes of his son, Churchill notes, ʿAbd al-Qādir's father was "compelled by a secret and indefinable impulse to give special attention and care to him."[77] Muḥyī al-Dīn schooled ʿAbd al-Qādir in the classical Islamic disciplines such as "Qurʾānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth*, Maliki jurisprudence (*fiqh*), grammar and the principles Sunni creed."[78] Besides his religious learning, ʿAbd al-Qādir was initiated into the traditional art of horsemanship (*furūsiyya*) and warfare.[79]

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[74] The editor of *Sīrat al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir wa-jihāduh* has "*nawāhḥī ibriqya"* which is a misreading of the facsimile edition. There are no regions by the name of *ibriqya,* so far as I know. The correct reading seems to me "*nawāhḥī ifrīqya"* (surrounding regions of Africa), which would make more sense if ʿAbd al-Qādir meant by this that African Muslims living in different regions of Africa came to his father's *zawiya* to seek knowledge of the traditional Islamic sciences. It is also probable, but unlikely, that he also meant by *ifrīqya* the whole region of present-day Tunisia. It seems to me that ʿAbd al-Qādir had in mind students who came from African regions like West and East Africa.

[75] *Autobiographie*, p. 34.

[76] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire,* 34; Bruno Étienne, *Abdelkader: Isthme des Isthmes*, 28, 48. ʿAbd al-Qādir had the deepest veneration for his mother who was a source of consolation throughout his *Jihad* and during their detention in France. She lived the rest of her life with him in Damascus. See, *Autobiographie*, p. 55.

[77] Churchill, The *Life of Abdel Kader, Ex-Sultan of the Arabs of Algeria,* 47.

[78] *Autobiographie*, 55. Bruno Étienne, Abdelkader *: Isthme des Isthmes,* 34.

[79] John Kiser, *Commander of the Faithfull,* 16. For a profitable overview of the Islamic art of Horsemanship, see Douillet, G. and Ayalon, D., "Furūsiyya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2 ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0226.

During this initial phase of his formation, ʿAbd al-Qādir "would discover universe of books and the appetite for knowledge."[80]

Close to his fourteenth years of age, Muḥyī al-Dīn decided to further ʿAbd al-Qādir's education by sending him to study with his close friend and prominent scholar, Ahmed b. Ṭahar al-Rīfī, the Judge (Cadi) of Arzwe.[81] With Ahmad b. Ṭahar, ʿAbd al-Qādir refined his knowledge of grammar, philology, "mathematics (*riyāḍiyyāt*), geography, astronomy *(ʿilm al-falak*), philosophy (*falsafa*)[82], history (*tarīkh*), and even "plant pharmacology and veterinary medicine."[83] He was introduced to prominent Ashʿarī theologians like Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936)), Ibn Ḥazm (d.456/1064), Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d.606/1209), Ibn Taymiyya (d.728/1328), Saʿd al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390), and Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. 895/1490), to name but a few**.** We also learn that ʿAbd al-Qādir immersed himself in the thought of Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406), the prominent Maghribi theoretician of civilization whose work was a major inspiration for ʿAbd al-Qādir's political and military philosophy.[84]

After finishing his residence with Ahmad b. Tahar, ʿAbd al-Qādir was sent to study with Ahmed b. Khoja, a scholar of considerable repute who instructed him in "poetics, rhetoric and the art of Qur'anic recitation."[85] By the nineteenth century, the longstanding Maghribi intellectual culture profited from a rich and mature scholarly tradition that would have been of comparable

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[80] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader : L'harmonie Des Contraire,* 31.

[81] The sources do not provide any details about the year of his birth, death, or his scholarly output.

[82] It is not impossible that ʿAbd al-Qādir may have had access to some of the philosophical works of prominent Muslim philosophers like Ibn Sīna (d.428/1037), Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185.), Ibn Bajja (d.1139), Ibn Rushd (d.595/1392), among others.

[83] Bruno Étienne, Abdelkader *: Isthme des Isthmes,* 50 *;* J. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithfull,* 15.

[84] Bruno Étienne, Abdelkader *: Isthme des Isthmes,* 49-50, 77.

[85] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader : L'harmonie Des Contraire,*56; Bruno Étienne, Abdelkader *: Isthme des Isthmes, 56;* J. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithfull,* 19.

caliber to other prominent institutions of religious learning like the Azhar (Cairo), Qayrawān (Morocco), or Zaytuna (Tunis), among others. [86] Besides his shorter works (see below), the erudition of ʿAbd al-Qādir is most evident in the inter-disciplinary spectrum and breadth of sources he quotes in his *Mawāqif*. He was conversant in "the transmitted sciences (*ʿulūm al-naqliyya*)," "rational sciences" (*ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya)* (i.e., Ashʿarī *kalām* and *falsafa*),[87] and the wider Sufi intellectual tradition.[88]

2.3. Mystical Life and Teachers

Unlike his political career, the Sufi mystical life of ʿAbd al-Qādir is not well-documented in Western biographical sources. In his *Mawāqif*, on the other hand, ʿAbd al-Qādir documents somewhat sporadically the main trajectory of his mystical journey. He relates many dream-visions (*ruʾyā*) and wakeful visionary experiences (*wāqiʿa*) that inspires the content or the commentaries of a *Mawqif* (chapter). As for his earlier years, we can safely assume that his father inculcated in his son the foundational practices and teachings of the Qādiri Sufi order.[89] The Qādiri Sufi training was probably as important as Abd al-Qādir's formation in the intellectual sciences.[90] The other

[86] For a profitable study on 17th century Maghrebi intellectual history, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (Cambridge: University Press, 2015).

[87] For the post-classical Maghribi curriculum in the rational sciences, see Khaled El-Rouayheb's chapter, "Maghrebī 'Theologian-Logicians' In Egypt and the Hejaz" in his *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*.

[88] The doctrines of Muʿtazilite theologians typically survived through Ashʿarī works. There are no records to prove that later Sunni theologians had direct access to the Muʿtazilite theological corpus. The *Mawāqif* is replete with references and commentaries on the teachings of major Sufi figures like Junayd, Hallāj, Qushayrī (d. 1072), al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Abū Madyan (d. 119), Abu Hasan al-Shādilī (d. 1258), Ibn Ataʾ Allah al-Iskandarī (d. 1309), and above all, Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240) and his Akbari school — from Sadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) to 'Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī (d. 1731).

[89] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Écrits Spirituels de 'Abd al-Kader*, 25.

[90] For some details on the Qadiri spiritual rites that would have been practiced at the zawiya of his father, see Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire*, 37-40

facet of his education came through the channel of a long caravan journey from his local village to Mecca with the intention to perform sacred Pilgrimage (*Hajj*).[91] It was in 1825, when ʿAbd al-Qādir was seventeen years of age, that the caravan set off from Oued el-Hammad to Mecca and traversed many cultural regions of the Muslim world (Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta, Damascus, Baghdad).[92] The voyage was punctuated by visits to the shrines of venerated Sufi saints and encounters with distinguished religious scholars, Sufis, and dignitaries. This transformative journey would leave a lasting imprint on the young ʿAbd al-Qādir. Recounting the deep impressions that some of the religious scholars of Damascus left on him, ʿAbd al-Qādir likened them to towering Sufis of the past like "al-Junayd (d. 298/910)[93], Shiblī[94] (d. 344/946), Bisṭāmī[95],

[91] Arin Salamah-Qudsi, " Crossing the Desert: Siyāḥa and Safar as Key Concepts in Early Sufi Literature and Life," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 2, 2 (2013): 129-147, doi: https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/22105956-12341252.

[92] Charles H. Spencer-Churchill, The *Life of Abdel Kader*, 53. A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire,*41.

[93] Arthur Arberry, "al-Djunayd" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2117.

[94] Shiblī, Abū Bakr (861-946). Sobieroj, F., "al-Shiblī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6926.

[95] Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (al-Basṭāmī) (d. 261/874–5 or 234/848–9). Jawid Mojaddedi, "Bisṭāmī, Bāyazīd," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 3rd ed., ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24343.

Ibn ʿIyād (d. 803)[96], al-Maʿarrī[97] (d. 1057), Ibn Adham (d. 161/777-8)[98] and Ghazālī."[99] It was in Damascus that ʿAbd al-Qādir and his father encountered Sh. Khalid al-Naqshabandī (d. 1242/1827), the prominent Kurdish Sufi Shaykh whose revivalist teachings spread widely among Sufis in the Ottoman Arab world and the Subcontinent.[100] We do not have sufficient details to determine the extent to which Shaykh Khālid influenced the mystical life and thought of ʿAbd al-Qādir, for we do not find any references in the *Mawāqif* to the teachings of the Kurdish Naqshabandī Shaykh. It is plausible, however, that both ʿAbd al-Qādir and his father were informally attached to Shaykh Khālid through what Sufis call an attachment of grace (*baraka*) rather than Sufis disciples *per se*.[101] Even if we were to assume a formal relationship, it would have

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[96] Fuḍayl Ibn 'Iyad (d. 187/803). Deborah Tor, "al-Fuḍayl b. ʿIyāḍ," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 3rd ed., ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson.

http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27202.

[97] Sharafoddin Khorasani and Translated by Farzin Negahban, "Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī," in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, ed. Farhad Daftary. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_0038.

[98] Jones, Russell, "Ibrāhīm b. Adham", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

[99] *Autobiographie*, p. 34. In the *al-sīrah al-dhātīyah,* pp. 66), the passage reads as follows " and we found in it [Damascus] other distinguished folks who were the likes of Junayd…"(*min aʿyān ʾukhar fiʾa bihā qawmun lahum shibh*).

He does not identify all of them as Sufis of the past, as the passage was rendered in the French *Autobiographie* and quoted by Bouyerdene biographical study. We we do not otherwise understand why ʿAbd al-Qādir would identify al-Maʿarrī, the prominent Arab poet, with the Sufis given that the latter was not known for his attachment to the Sufi tradition. In *Sīrat al-Amīr ʿAbd al-Qādir wa-jihāduh* (p .118), the editor has "*min aʿyān asdiyafutuhu*", the latter word seems to be an editorial error or a misreading, as this word does not have any coherent meaning. The word "*ukhar"* from the construction *"min aʿyān ʾukhar"* is also missing from this printed edition, through it can be discerned" from the facsimile edition.

[100] For a brief biographical notice on Sh. Khālid al-Naqshabandī, "Naqshbandı, Khālid al-." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*
http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/article/opr/t125/e1713.
See also Itzchak Weismann, "Modernity from Within: Islamic Fundamentalism and Sufism," 156-7 and his *Naqshbandiyya:Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London and New York, 2007); Albert Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," in *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 75–89.

[101] This took place a few years before assuming the leadership of the *Jihad* against the French. See Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Livre des Haltes,* 23 and A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire,* 41-43.

been relatively short-lived since Shaykh Khālid died two years after they met. Concerning ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical itinerary, he provides in the *Mawāqif* explicit details about his mystical vocation and his meeting in later life with his only Sufi master, Shaykh Mas'ūd al-Fāsī al-Shādilī.[102]

2.4. The Way of Divine Rapture (*tarīq al-jadhba*)

While Sufi spiritual praxis was integral to ʿAbd al-Qādir's lifelong vocation, his mystical evolution did not go through the normative channels of Sufi spiritual guidance.[103] While his father played a foundational role in ʿAbd al-Qādir's spiritual development, Sidi Muḥyī al-Dīn was not a Sufi Shaykh per se but a spiritual deputy (*muqaddam*) of the Qādirī Sufi branch in Northwestern Algeria. His function was the transmission of the Qādirī spiritual litanies (*awrād*) that he inherited from his father, Sidi Mustafa. ʿAbd al-Qādir offers many indications concerning the absence of a formal Sufi guide until later in life. In key passages of the *Mawāqif*, he identifies himself with this exceptional category of saints known in the Sufi literature as "the divinely enraptured" (*majdhūb*), namely, those who are placed under the direct guidance of God and may not, therefore, require the guidance of a living Sufi Shaykh until later in life. He writes:

> I am of those whom God has favored through/by His all-encompassing Mercy by making Himself known to them and making them know the essential nature of the cosmos by way of spiritual rapture (*ʿalā tarīqat al-jadhba*), not by way of spiritual wayfaring (*lā ʿalā tarīq al-sulūk*).[104]

[102] See below, The Catalytic Master.

[103] A. Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contrair,*72-80.

[104] *Mawqif* 18, p. 58.

For ʿAbd al-Qādir, there is a fundamental difference between someone whose knowledge of God is mediated "by way of divine rapture" (*ʿala tarīqat al-jadhba)* and someone who gains knowledge of God "by way of spiritual wayfaring" (*ʿala tarīq al-sulūk).* The former, ʿAbd al-Qādir explains, "attains knowledge of God without treading the Sufi Mystical Path step by step or anything of this sort but through the enrapturing leverage of God and His Mercy…this [spiritual] type effortlessly transcends all the [cosmic] forms and the stages of the Path."[105] The "wayfarer" (*sālik*), he explains, will encounter many obstacles "during his wayfaring and will remain among those who are veiled so long as God has not made Himself known to him and has not lifted the veil from him." [106]

It is worth noting, however, that while ʿAbd al-Qādir considers "the modality of spiritual wayfaring" to be "more elevated and complete, it is nonetheless more arduous and exposes [the wayfarer] to grave pitfalls,"[107] whereas "the way of the divinely enraptured is shorter and safer, and the wise person does not find anything more precious than safety [on the path]."[108] An important caveat is added by ʿAbd al-Qādir. The preeminence of the "wayfarer" (*sālik*) only applies to those who reach the final term of the spiritual Path and "turn away from anything save their ultimate Object (i.e., God), only such a person will be delivered and truly felicitous."[109]Hence, while not all spiritual wayfarers will necessarily attain this goal, ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains "the divinely enraptured" (*majdhūb*) attains it without exertion.

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[105] Ibid, 58.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid, 59.

[109] Ibid.

From the many statements that we looked at above, we can better appreciate the rationale behind ʿAbd al-Qādir's autonomy from a spiritual guide, at least for a considerable part of his mature life. As a *"majdhūb*," ʿAbd al-Qādir identified himself with a category of saints that the Sufi tradition recognizes as a legitimate exception, notwithstanding the primacy placed on the master-disciple spiritual relationship. It was not until his mid-fifties that ʿAbd al-Qādir became a disciple of a Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī who left an indelible mark on the mystical life of his distinguished Algerian pupil.

2.5. The Catalytic Shaykh: Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī al-Shādhilī (d. 1872)

After settling in Damascus, ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical vocation intensified, but the decisive point of his mystical life would occur in Mecca in 1863, where he met Sh. Masʿūd al-Fāsī. Despite his spiritual prominence in the Sufi Shādilī tradition of the time, Sh. Masᶜūd al-Fāsī is not widely known to historians of 19th-century North African Sufism. He is better known in the Sufi Shādhilī Darqāwī order as a distinguished Sufi Shaykh with a large following in the Maghrib and the Arab Muslim world. In the *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhilīyah al-Kubrā*, a hagiographical work, the author supplies more details about the life and legacy of Sh. Shaykh Masʿūd.[110] As for ʿAbd al-Qādir's attachment to Sh. Mas'ūd, this information is documented by his son in the *Tuḥfat* where he informs of his father's attachment to Shaykh Masᶜūd. The following passage offers a glimpse into the

[110] Kūhin al-Fāsī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhilīyah al-kubrā*, pp.197-230, supplies more biographical information than Abu Zayan al-Gharīsī al-Maʿaskarī, *Kanz al-Asrār,* 264. Incidentally, Sh. Masʿūd al-Fāsī is briefly mentioned in *Kanz al-Asrār* as the Sufi Shaykh of ʿAbd al-Qādir and the spiritual successor of Sh. Muhammad b. Hamza Ẓafir al-Madanī (d. 1846). The latter was one of the successors of Moulay al-ʿArabi al-Darqāwī (d.1823), the founder of the Darqāwīyya-Shādhilīyah branch in Morocco and one of the most influential revivers of al-Shādhilīyah Sufi order in the seventeenth century.

circumstances of their encounters and the spiritual practices that ʿAbd al-Qādir undertook under his Moroccan Shaykh:

> He (i.e., ʿAbd al-Qādir) cut himself off from worldly concerns and people and chose Shaykh Mohammad al-Fāsī as a guide who was residing in Mecca then. He adopted his spiritual method and submitted all his spiritual affairs to him: he was engaged in spiritual exertion (*riyāda*) and retreat (*khalwa*) with a heightened fervor (*ijtihād*); he assiduously conformed to the spiritual rites and litanies of this eminent Sufi order (*tarīqa*) — i.e., The al-Shādhilīyah-Darqāwiyya order. [111]

After observing the spiritual regiment of Shaykh Masʿūd, ʿAbd al-Qādir's son informs, he began to swiftly cross [the stations] of the Mystical Path "through the spiritual force of the one who delighted him (i.e., Sh. Masʿūd …the climax of his mystical life was attained in the Cave of Hira, where he was in retreat for many days till he was blessed with "the supreme mystical attainment" (*al-rutba al-kubrā*) and achieved "the luminous spiritual opening" (*al-fatḥ al-nūrānī*).[112] That Sh. Masʿūd marked a turning point in the mystical life of ʿAbd al-Qādir is attested by a mystical poem that he penned "from the site of his spiritual retreat extolling his eminent master and glorifying God for what He unveiled to him under his guidance; the poem concluded with a description of the beginning and end [of his mystical] ascension."[113] This quote from the *Tuḥfat* leaves no doubt to the reader about the catalytical impact of Shaykh Masʿūd on ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical life.[114] While it is understandable that the Western biographers of ʿAbd al-Qādir

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[111] *Tuḥfat*, 210. The encounter and spiritual attachment of ʿAbd al-Qādir to Sh. Mas'ūd is also mentioned in *Ḥilyat al-bashar,* vol. 2, p. 898.

[112] Ibid. 210

[113] Ibid.

[114] *Tuḥfat* al-*zāʾir*, vol. II, p. 209; Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Livre des Haltes,* 25-6; for more details on Mas'ūd al-Fāsī and his significance in ʿAbd al-Qādir's Mystical journey, see Sanaa Makhlouf. "The Legacy of Shaykh al-Fāsī in the

were not even aware of the significance of this Sufi Shaykh on the spiritual life of the Algerian leader, the fact that many modern scholars do not mention this encounter or appreciate its significance in the life of ʿAbd al-Qādir is problematic. [115]

It is worth noting that ʿAbd al-Qādir's attachment to Sh. Masʿūd puzzled even his close relatives, notably, his cousin al-Ṭayyib b. Mukhtār who seemed baffled by this development in his spiritual life. He was perplexed that an accomplished Sufi (*ʿārif*) like ʿAbd al-Qādir would submit himself to the spiritual guidance of an incognito Shaykh. Expressing his amazement, he wrote to ʿAbd al-Qādir: "word has reached us that you met a realized Shaykh (*shaykh ʿārif*) from whom you have taken [the Sufi oath of allegiance]. I could hardly believe this! Your station is that of an accomplished Sufi (*ʿārif*) not that of a disciple (*murid*)! Someone of your spiritual stature benefits others (*yufīd*), he does not profit from them (*la yastafīd*)! If the matter should be [truly] so, then, it is verily from the marvels of the times (*ʿajāʾib al-dahr*).[116] The matter was perceived quite differently by ʿAbd al-Qādir, however. He expressly states in the *Mawāqif* that a Sufi Shaykh who traversed all the mystical stations of the Sufi Path is indispensable for the spiritual wayfarer (*sālik*) and even a "*majdhūb*" like him. As we have seen, ʿAbd al-Qādir readily acknowledges that if the

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Spiritual Journey of Amir Abd al-Qadir al-Jazā'irī." In *La Shâdhiliyya : Une Voie Soufie dans le Monde*, ed. Eric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2005).

Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire,* 182-192.

[115] Powell, for instance, does not seem to take seriously what ʿAbd al-Qādir's relates about his father encounter with Sh. Masʿūd and the details concerning the mystical breakthrough he experienced under his guidance. Moreover, he does not acknowledge or give any serious consideration to the poem [Reproduced in *Tuḥfat* al-*zāʾir*, vol. II, p. 210-] that ʿAbd al-Qādir dedicates to his Moroccan Shaykh. The spiritual eminence and popularity that ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to contradict for Powell and other like-minded scholars the necessity for the Algerian leader to take a Sufi guide who was unknown to Western colonial biographer and who remains relatedly unknown in modern scholarship. This neglect showcases a misunderstanding of the enterprise of Sufi spiritual discipleship, but it also deliberately ignores what ʿAbd al-Qādir states concerning the necessity of a Sufi spiritual guide in the *Mawāqif*.

[116] *Tuḥfat* al-*zāʾir*, vol. II, p. 714. Slight modified from S. Makhlouf's translation in "The Legacy of Shaykh al-Fāsī in the Spiritual Journey of Amir Abd al-Qadir al-Jazā'irī," p. 271.

sālik attains the final term of the Sufi spiritual Path, his knowledge of God is "more elevated and complete" than the way of the "*majdhūb*." The reason for this is that the latter bypasses the stations of the Sufi Path and does not therefore have intimate knowledge of the spiritual sciences of each mystical station. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī was that accomplished Shaykh who crossed all the stations of the Sufi mystical Path and was divinely elected to guide others to this goal, including himself.[117]

To recap, ʿAbd al-Qādir hailed from a prominent sharifian family with ancestral affiliation to the Sufi Qādirī order. From a young age, ʿAbd al-Qādir pursued a rigorous formation in the religious sciences of his day and the spiritual vocation of his forefathers. At about the age of twenty-three, the young Amir was delegated by his father and the Arab tribes in Northwestern Algeria to lead the armed *Jihād* against the invading French. Compelled to answer this call, the *Jihād* was guided by a strict adherence to the ethical and moral code of the Sharīʿa.[118] The concept of nationalism, as conceived in colonial political institutions and modern Arab history, would not

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[117] As Sufis understand it, "*majdhūb*" is a type of realized saint (*ʿārif*) who profits from the direct guidance of God. That said, he does not have the spiritual authority to guide others on the Sufi Path until he has been guided by a living Shaykh through the different stations of the Path. For a discussion of this theme, see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Livre des Haltes*, 25.

[118] Amira K. Bennison, "ʿAbd Al-Qādir's Jihād in the Light of the Western Islamic Jihād Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 106, no. 2 (January 1, 2011): 204-208; see also another study by the same author, "The New Order and Islamic Order: the Introduction of the Nizami Army in the Western Maghrib and its Legitimation (1 830-1873), *International of Middle East Studies,* 36/4, 2004, p. 591-612. Cf. Benjamin Claude Brower, "The Amîr ʿAbd Al-Qâdir and the 'Good War' in Algeria, 1832-1847," *Studia Islamica* 106, no. 2 (2011): 169–95; For a fine study of the centrality of Sharīʿa-centered foundations of ʿAbd Al-Qādir's *Jihād,* see Amira K. Bennison, "ʿAbd Al-Qādir's *Jihād* in the Light of the Western Islamic Jihād Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 106, no. 2 (January 1, 2011): 204-208. Cf. Fait Muedini, "Sufism and Anti-Colonial Violent Resistance Movements: The Qādiriyya and Sanussi Orders in Algeria and Libya," *Open Theology* 1, no. 1 (January 3, 2015); Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus.* Kamel Filali, *L'Algérie mystique*, offers one of the most comprehensive treatments of the history of Maghrebi Sufi political engagement. Unlike many western studies of AQ's political resistance, Arabic scholars widely acknowledge the Sufi backdrop of AQ's *Jihad*: see Muhammad Ṣallābī, *al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jazā'irī: qā'id rabbānī wa-mujāhid Islāmī;* 'Ashrātī Sulaymān, *Al-Amīr 'Abd-al-Qādir al-Siyāsī: Qirā'ah Fī Firādat al-Ramz Wa-al-Riyādah*, al-Ṭab'ah 1 (al-Jazā'ir: Dār al-Quds al-'Arabī lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī' : Aṭfālunā lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2011); Abdelkader Djeghloul, *al-Isti'mār wa-al-ṣirā'āt al-thaqāfīyah fī al-Jazā'ir*, al-Ṭab'ah 1(Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-Ḥadāthah, 1984).

have been a theologically coherent ideology for religious leader who was deeply immersed in the Sufi spiritual and military tradition of the Maghrib.[119] Modern political scholarship of ʿAbd al-Qādir persistently ignores this nuance.[120] Ignoring these fact, not to speak of the lasting impact of Shaykh Masʿūd al-Fāsī remains a major lacuna in both the biographical literature and modern scholarship of the *Mawāqif*.

[119] As Touati illustrates (note 70), while colonial biographers A. Bellemare, Churchill, P. Azan*, L 'Émir Abd el Kader 1808-1883. Du fanatisme musulman au patriotisme français,* (Coulommiers ; Paris, Hachette, 192), among others, furnish many valuable details about AQ and his political life, their ideological commitment to the European colonial ideals perpetuated flawed and stereotypical assumptions about AQ and Islam. On the Algerian Nationalist front, see François Pouillon, "Abd el-Kader, icône de la nation algérienne," in Anny Dayan Rosenman and Lucette Valensi, eds., La Guerre d'Algérie dans la mémoire et l'imaginaire (Paris: Bouchène, 2004), 87–102 ; Jan C. Jansen, "Creating National Heroes: Colonial Rule, Anticolonial Politics and Conflicting Memories of Emir 'Abd al-Qadir in Algeria, 1900–1960s," *History and Memory* 28, no. 2 (2016): 5.

[120] For a critical assessment of the nationalist and ideological representations of ʿAbd Al-Qādir in colonial and Algerian sources, see H. Touati, "L'Emir ʿAbd al-Qādir et les Enjeux de la Biographie," *Studia Islamica*, 2 (2011), p. 18-24; Cf. Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus,* 93;Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire,* Chap. III (Un saint Combattant).

CHAPTER 3.

The Sufi Mystical Hermeneutics of ʿAbd al-Qādir in Context

Part. I: Sufi *Tafsīr*: Sources, Foundations and Evolution

The academic study of Sufi *tafsīr* has witnessed in recent decades considerable scholarly output. [121] The seminal studies of L. Massignon and P. Nwiya have critically contributed to the emergence of this field and to dispelling long-held myths about the syncretic origins of Sufism. They have, above all, convincingly shown that the Qurʾān is the ultimate source and inspiration of Sufi mystical theology and terminology.[122] In a word, the Qurʾān is the epicenter of the Sufi creed, spiritual devotions, doctrines, and literary forms. The omnipresence of the Qurʾān never subsided in the Sufi literary tradition. From the classical Sufi authors to early modern Sufis, an intensive a

[121] For book-length studies (in European languages) which are exclusively devoted to individual Sufi *tafsīr*s, as well as English translations of some of these *tafsīr*s, see G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*: *The* Qurʾānic *Hermeneutics of the Sūfī Sahl at-Tustarī* (d. 283/896) (Berlin and New York, de Gruyter, 1980); Jamal Elias, *Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of ʻAlā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī* (d. 736/1336) (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); R. Gramlich, *Abu l-ʿAbbās b. ʻAṭā'* (d. 309/921): *Sufi und Koranausleger* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995); Annabel Keeler, *Ṣūfī Hermeneutics*: *The Qur'an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (d. ca. 520/1126) (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2006; partial tr. Chittick, *The Unveiling of the Mysteries and the Provision of the Pious = Kashf Al-Asrār Wa ʻuddat Al-Abrār* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2005); ; M. Nguyen, *Sufi Master and Qur'an Scholar: Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and the Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2012) (Qushayrī, d. 465/1072; partial tr. Sands, *Subtle Allusions*); Laury Silvers, *Soaring Minaret: Abu Bakr al-Wāsiṭī and the Rise of Baghdadi Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010); Yousef Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus: Ibn Barrajān and Islamic Thought in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[122] See P. Nwiya *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique : nouvel essai sur le lexique technique des mystiques musulman* (Paris and Beirut : Dar el-Machreq ,1970) and Louis Massignon, *Essai sur Les origines du Lexique Technique de la Mystique Musulmane* (Paris : Librarie Orientalist, 1922).

preoccupation with the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* animated the Sufi scholarly tradition. If we confine ourselves to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many noteworthy Qurʾānic commentaries were produced in this early modern period. Prominent examples include the magisterial Qurʾānic commentary of the prolific Moroccan Sufi scholar, Aḥmad Ibn ʿAjība (d. 1809), entitled "*al-Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd"* (The Immense Ocean in the exegesis of the noble Qurʾān),[123] the Qurʾān commentary of Qādī Thanā'ullāh Uthmani Fānī Fatī (known as Pānīpatī) (d. 1820), another prolific Naqshabandī scholar, who penned a voluminous Sufi *tafsīr* which he called "*Tafsīr-i maẓharī"* (*The Exegesis dedicated to Maẓhar*);[124] In Iraq, Abū al-Thanā' Shihāb al-Dīn Alūsī (d.1854), the Naqshabandī scholar and judge from Baghdād, left a massive Qurʾānic commentary entitled "*Rūḥ al-maʿānī fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-sabʿ al-matānī"* (The Spirit of Meanings in the Exegesis of the noble Qurʾān and the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses (i.e., Seven verses of *Ṣūrat al-Fātiḥa*).[125] One may add to this countless partial and interspersed Sufi *tafsīrs,* notably, the *Mawāqif* of ʿAbd al-Qādir.[126]

Our knowledge of the history of early modern Sufi *tafsīr*, however, is severely underdeveloped. The *Baḥr al-madīd* of Ibn ʿAjība has only in recent years begun to receive some attention from scholars.[127] Meanwhile, the *tafsīrs* of Qādī Thanā'ullāh's "*Tafsīr-i maẓharī"* or

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[123] Ibn ʿAjība, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad*, al-Baḥr al-madīd fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd,* ed. 'Abdallāh al-Qurashi Raslān, vols. 5, (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Ḥasan ʿAbbās Zakī, 1999). This voluminous tafsir is missing from Böwering's list.

[124] Thanā'ullāh Pānīpatī, Qāzī, *Tafsīr-i maẓharī*. ed. Abduddā"im Jalālī, 13 vols (Delhi: Nadvatul Musannifin, 1962).

[125] Alūsī, Abū al-Thanā' Shihāb al-Dīn, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī fī tafsīr al- Qurʾān al-karīm wa-sabʿ al-matānī,* ed. Māhir Habūsh, 30 vols., Beirut, 2010

[126] For more examples of early modern Sufi *tafsīr* (complete and incomplete), see below (Early Modern Sufi *Tafsīr*: Nineteenth to Early Twentieth centuries).

[127]The doctoral dissertations of Ibrahim Omneya Ayad, "Divine love in the Moroccan Sufi tradition: ibn 'Ajība (d 1224/1809) and his oceanic exegesis of the Qur'ān" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Exeter University, 2018) will undoubtedly advance our knowledge of the *Baḥr al-madīd,* so does the fourth chapter of (on the Sufi allusive exegesis of ibn 'Ajība) of Florian A.G. Lützen, " Sufitum und Theologie bei Aḥmad Ibn 'Aǧība : eine Studie zur Methode des

Alūsī's *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* still awaits serious and full attention. A comprehensive and updated inventory of Sufi works of *tafsīr*, which include both partial and complete *tafsīr,* is indispensable for painting a fairly accurate picture of the rich body of Sufi exegetical works that were produced in this critical period of Islamic history. I divide this chapter into two parts. The first part (**Part I**) revisits the scholarly debate on the conceptual features and spectrum of Sufi 'genre' of *tafsīr*. I discuss the foundational role of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) in the emergence of Sufi *tafsīr*; I then briefly assess the trajectory of Sufi *tafsīr* from the formative to the later period, with particular attention to the different schools of Sufi Qurʾānic commentaries that foreshadowed the post-classical Sufi exegetical traditions. To set the stage for later sections of this chapter, I survey two hermeneutical notions that have guided and shaped different interpretive approaches in the conventional Sunni and Sufi *tafsīr* traditions, namely, the parameters of *tafsīr, taʾwīl*, and *ishāra* (scriptural allusions).[128] I gloss through the exegetical discussions of Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī on the scope of these three exegetical approaches to illuminate my investigation of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi allusive hermeneutics.

Part II investigates the Sufi hermeneutics of ʿAbd al-Qādir. S. Makhlouf is the only scholar who briefly examined this topic.[129] While casting some light on the significance of ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical hermeneutic, her essay did not explore his exegetical method in greater depth.

Religionsbegriffs", *Sapientia Islamica* 2, (Hamburg: Mohr Siebeck, 2020); see also Omneya Ayad, "Ibn ʿAjība's 'Oceanic Exegesis of the Qur'an': Methodology and Features," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 23, no. 3 (2021): 1–35 and Ruggero Vimercati Sanseverinio, "Commentaire coranique, enseignement initiatique et renouveau soufi dans la Darqāwiyya: *Le Baḥr al-madīd fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-majīd* d'Aḥmad Ibn ʿAjība (m. 1223/1809)," *Studia Islamica* 107, no. 2 (2012): 214-234.

[128] This allusive exegesis of the Sufis is commonly referred to as *tafsīr ishārī or bi-l-ishāra* (exegesis through allusion or allusive exegesis). I will define and discuss their esoteric modality and application below.

[129] Sanna Makhlouf, "Remarks concerning the Spiritual Hermeneutics of 'Abd al-Qādir." Makhlouf's essay is, to my knowledge, the only essay devoted to salient features of ʿAbd al-Qādir's scriptural hermeneutics. Her essay does not examine other chapters of the *Mawāqif* where our hermeneut discusses his interpretive approach.

For my part, I attempt to bring out different features of ʿAbd al-Qādir Sufi's mystical hermeneutics as they emerge in different chapters of his *Mawāqif.* I investigate (1) the canonical sources, hermeneutical principles and tropes that guide ʿAbd al-Qādir's interpretive approach; (2) the ontological underpinnings of his Sufi esoteric hermeneutics as encapsulated in his commentary on Q 18: 109. I then try to elaborate on the esoteric modality that ʿAbd al-Qādir claims to inform his mystical hermeneutics of the sacred text, which operates through what he terms "divine projection" (*ilqāʾ*) I turn afterward to his readings of the hierarchical dimensions of the Qurʾānic discourse, as expressed in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652).[130] I conclude with some remarks on the interpretive principles that ʿAbd al-Qādir adduces from his ontology of polysemic scriptural meanings and their corresponding hermeneutics registers. While he expresses his resolute commitment to the literal interpretations of Scripture, ʿAbd al-Qādir insists on the regenerative meanings of Scripture that are inspired upon Sufi exegetes at every epoch. [131]

[130] This division is derived from the so-called *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652) (discussed below) which enumerated four different meanings within the Qurʾān, among which features the "back" (*ẓahr*) and "belly" (*baṭn*), the "limit" (*ḥadd*) and "the transcendental point" (*maṭla/muṭṭalaʿ*). For the different iterations and chain of transmission of this *ḥadīth* , see Halim Calis, "The 'Four Aspects of the Qur'an' Ḥadīth and the Evolution of Ṣūfī Exegesis until Shams al-Dīn al-Fanārī (d. 834/1431)," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22, no. 3 (2020): 1–34.This *ḥadīth* is also quoted and commented upon by major exegetical authorities in Sunni Islam like Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āyāt al-Qurʾān* (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 2003), vol. 1, p. 22 and al-Baghawī, al-Ḥusayn b. Masʿūd, *Maʿālim al-tanzīl* (Riyadh: Dār Ṭayba, 1997), vol. 4, p. 311. For the mainstream interpretation of the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd, see Calis, "The 'Four Aspects of the Qur'an," p.9.

[131] Even Sufis who undertook a largely esoteric exegesis of scripture, the likes of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), Ibn ʿArabī and his followers (e.g., Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 730/1329), ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī), ʿAlā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī (d. 736/1336), are adamant about their commitment to the literal interpretation of scripture. See the editors' 'Introduction' to *The Spirit and the Letter: Approaches to the Esoteric Interpretation of the Quran,* eds. Annabel Keeler and Sajjad Rizvi (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2016), 1-21.

3.1. Sufi *Tafsīr*: The Spectrum of a Genre

Sufi *tafsīr* as a distinct genre is a question that has been much debated in the broader field of Qurʾānic studies. The criteria scholars have devised to define distinct or shared features of Sufi and other genres of *tafsīr* are too often determined by a subjective analytical taxonomy. No agreement has yet been achieved by scholars regarding the quintessence of the Sufi genre of *tafsīr*, however.[132] Indeed, the ongoing debates oscillate between the constitutive features of a so-called normative *tafsīr,* marginal, sectarian, and ideological, to name but a few elements that are variably invoked by scholars to draw the lines between Sufi and other interpretive approaches in the Sunni and wider Islamic exegetical tradition. [133] The analytical guidelines that different scholars have used to highlight the sources, methods, tools, and theological persuasions that are constitutive of a genre have certainly been helpful in forming a general idea of where to fit a given work of *tafsīr.*[134] It seems quite clear, however, that the spectrum of any genre of *tafsīr,* not least Sufi, may overlap with other genres of *tafsīr*, including traditional Sunni and Twelver Shīʿī exegesis (See

[132] For a critical discussion of Sufi *tafsīr* as a distinct genre of exegesis, see Jamal Elias, 'Ṣufi *Tafsīr* Reconsidered: Exploring the Development of a Genre," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010): pp. 41–42.

[133] See Karen Bauer, "Justifying the Genre: A Study of Introductions to Classical Works of *Tafsīr*," in *Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qur'anic Exegesis* (2nd/8th-9th/15th Centuries), ed. Karen Bauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2013), pp. 39-67. Cf. "Introduction," to *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre,* eds. Andreas Gorke and Johanna Pink (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2015), 1-23.

[134] A. Gorke and J. Pink, *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History*, 4-8. Lists a few possible categories: an inclusive approach – a tradition of *tafsīr* that includes all genres of exegesis, partial and complete, cross-disciplinary, formal and informal; A self-identified genre: an exegete explicitly defines his exegetical approach and his membership within a defined tradition *tafsīr*; an essentialist genre of *tafsīr,* limited to a timeline and a number of mainstream commentators, as proposed by Norman Calder, "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr: Problems in the Description of a Genre, Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'an,"* Gerald R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader A. Shareef, eds, (London, Routledge, 1993), pp. 101–40; Walid Saleh*, The Formation of the classical Tafsīr tradition: the Qurʾān Commentary of al-Thaʿlabī* (d.427/1035) (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004), pp. 14–16.

section on Sufi and Shīʿī *taʾwīl*). The categorization of any given *tafsīr* is too fluid to "fit into one mould," as Saleh has argued.[135] In the Sunni tradition, the hybridity of Sufi *tafsīr* dates to the formative phases of the Sufi exegetical tradition. This is certainly the case with the wider Sufi interpretive tradition.

This is exemplified in works of Sufi *tafsīr* that scholars have labeled as "a moderate" style of Sufi Qurʾān commentary.[136] By moderate, scholars mean a *tafsīr* that includes literal and Sufi esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾān. Though this approach was already followed by Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896) in his proto-Sufi *tafsīr*, *Tafsīr al-* Qurʾān *al-ʿaẓīm* (the Commentary on the Mighty Qurʾān).[137] Al-Qushayrī consolidated this trend in his major Sufi-inspired *tafsīr,* entitled *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt* ("The Subtle of Allusions"). Qushayrī's solid formation in Ashʿarī speculative theology (*kalām*), Shāfiʿī *fiqh,* and other traditional sciences were instrumental to gaining the recognition of the exoteric Sunni scholars.[138] Maybudī's Persian Sufi *tafsīr, Kashf al-asrār wa ʿuddat al-abrār* ("The Unveiling of the Mysteries and the Provision of the pious*),* followed a similar interpretive line. Meanwhile, Abū Ḥafs ʿUmar al-Suhrawardī's (d. 632/1234) adopted in his *Nughbat al-bayān tafsīr al-Qur'ān* ("Gulps of elucidations concerning the interpretation of the Qurʾānic") a predominantly literal interpretation of the sacred Text.

This "moderate style" of Sufi Qurʾān commentary was adopted by later Sufi exegetes as well, among whom we can list Kamāl al-Dīn Husayn Kāshifī (d. 910/1504-5), an eminent

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[135] Walid Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010): 20.

[136] Alexander Knysh. "Ṣūfism and the Qurʾān," 143, 146.

[137] see G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*: *The* Qurʾānic *Hermeneutics of the Sūfī Sahl at-Tustarī* (d. 283/896) (Berlin and New York, de Gruyter, 1980).

[138] Martin Nguyen, *Sufi master and Qurʾan scholar*. *Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and the laṭāʾif al-ishārāt* (Oxford and London, 2012).

Naqshabandī scholar from Herat who wrote a Persian *tafsīr* entitled *Mawāhib-i-i aliya* ("The Sublime Gifts") or *tafsīr-i Ḥusaynī*. Kamāl al-Dīn's *tafsīr* combines an exoteric interpretive line with the Sufi interpretations. "*Rūḥ al-bayān fī tafsīr al- Qurʾān (*The Spirit of Elucidation in the interpretation of the Qurʾān) of Ismāʿīl Ḥaqqī Burūsawī (d. 1137/1725), the prolific Turkish Sufi scholar, is another encyclopedic Sufi *tafsīr* that follows a similar course. The *Baḥr al-madīd* of Ibn ʿAjība and *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* of Alūsī are also notable examples of a hybrid genre of Qurʾānic exegesis in the early modern era. The symbiosis of exoteric and Sufi exegesis was integral to the formation and evolution of Sufi *tafsīr.* The examples I listed above share one key feature, that is, that they fit within the category of *tafsīr* that are known as 'encyclopedic' *tafsīrs* (*muṭawwalāt*) — voluminous works of *tafsīr* which incorporate multiple exegetical sources, interpretations, and hermeneutical methods.[139]

Though we may can classify some Sufi *tafsīrs* under the rubric of "madrasa-style commentary"[140] on the Qurʾān, as Saleh proposed, which are theme-based scriptural commentary on sacred Text, we can also explain this category to include works of Sufi *tafsīrs* that are not intently meant to explain Sufi doctrines or concepts through the lens of Scripture. The spectrum should include the different methods, tools, and scopes that are distinctly developed by an exegete or a Sufi school of thought. Even the strictly esoteric works of Sufi *tafsīrs* such as *Haqāʾiq al-tafsīr*[141] ("The Inner Realities of Exegesis") and *Ziyādāt al-Haqāʾiq*[142] ("Supplement to the Inner

[139] Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr," 21.

[140] Ibid.

[141]Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn Sulamī, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr: tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīz,* 2 vols., ed. Sayyid ʿUmrān (Beirut, 2001).

[142] Sulamī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn, *Ziyādāt ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*. ed. and Gerhard Böwering (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-Mashriq, 1995). For the sources of the *Ziyādāt*, see Böwering, Gerhard. "The Major Sources of Sulamī's Minor Qurʾān Commentary", Oriens 35, 1 (1996): 35-56.

Realities") of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021), *ʿArāʾis al-bayān* ("The Brides of Elucidations) of Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), *Iʿjāz al-bayān* fī *tafsīr Ummu al-Kitāb* ("The Exegesis of the Mother of the Book") of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ("Esoteric interpretations of the Qurʾān) of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 730/1329), *Tafsīr Najm al-Qurʾān* (The Exegesis of the Star of the Qurʾān)) of ʿAlā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī (d. 736/1336), have a diverse and broader interpretive orientation. The 'esoteric' content is not sufficient to fit all Sufi exegetical works into the "madrasa-style commentary." From the foregoing remarks, it remains extremely difficult to essentialize Sufi and indeed other genres of Sunni exegesis. There are overlapping but also distinct features that define the method and scope the wider Sunni and Sufi *tafsīr* exegetical traditions.[143] One must account for the diverse interpretive elements and traditions that shape the exegetical work of an exegete or a community of exegetes. It is impossible to dilute one genre of Qurʾānic commentary from another when many works of *tafsīr* appropriate features of other genres. To avoid schematic essentialization of *tafsīr*, we should instead inquire about "the whole tradition worked as a genre and how different exegetes related to that tradition."[144]

3.2 The Parameters of Sufi Esoteric Exegesis

The spectrum of Sufi *tafsīr*, by which I mean the tradition of Sunni mystical exegesis and the exegetes who form this tradition, is irreducible to one single genre of exegesis. For some scholars, the taxonomy of *tafsīr* is guided by canonical sources, exegetical methods, and tools that

[143] For a critical review of the scholarly conception of Sufi *tafsīr* as a homogenous genre and Böwering's periodization, see J. Elias, 'Ṣufi *Tafsīr* Reconsidered, pp. 41–42.

[144] Saleh*, The Formation of the classical Tafsīr, 17.*

inform the interpretive approach of an individual interpreter or community of exegetes.[145] The integrity of the letter of Scripture informs the debate over the normative and marginal trends of Qurʾān, at least within the Sunni exegetical tradition. The notion of 'genre' has no cognate conceptual category in the Sunni exegetical tradition. When some mainstream Sunni exegetes expressed reservations or condemned some or all aspects of Sufi *tafsīr*, their criticism has been primarily judged against what they deemed the perversion of the literal meaning of Scripture.[146]

Having said that, we need to meaningfully reassess the conceptual parameters of the Sufi exegetical enterprise (e.g., sources, guidelines, themes, doctrines, and so forth) to better grasp some of the intricate issues that inform this debate. We noted earlier that cross-disciplinary exegetical approaches challenge any attempt to rigidly separate between Sufi and other trends of Sunni *tafsīrs.* Be that as it may, there is a hermeneutical baseline that guides virtually all works of Sufi *tafsīr,* namely, the conviction that the Qurʾān has an outward/exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and inward/esoteric (*bāṭin*) dimension. The division between the "exoteric" and "esoteric" level of the sacred Text, we should add, is rooted in the so-called *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd which is also quoted in conventional Sunni and Shīʿī exegetical literature.[147] To be sure, the category of "esoteric" is a highly contested issue. It has a wide-ranging epistemic boundary within the Sunni and Shīʿī exegetical traditions. In the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd, the Prophet uses the term "*baṭn"* (lit. belly) to designate the hidden dimension of the Qurʾān. The "belly" of Scripture cannot refer to a physiological feature of the Qurʾān but merely point to the depth and inward facet of the sacred

[145] For the different methodologies that have been devised by scholars to classify different genres of *tafsīrs,* see note 13.

[146] See Sands, *Sufi Commentaries*, chap. 5, for a discussion of the main criticism that Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) levelled against certain trends and premises of Sufi *tafsīr*.

[147] See note 10 and Section below : "Sufi and Shīʿī Taʾwīl: Convergences and Divergences."

Text. For this reason, the English term "esoteric" is a poor translation of the term "*bāṭin*" and can certainly not be used for Sufi esoteric exegesis only. For Sufis, like other interpretive communities who acknowledge a "*bāṭin*" dimension to the Qurʾān, the connotation ranges from scriptural polysemy, allegory, symbolism, and allusions, among others.

To complicate matters, many Sufis exegetes consider the exoteric (*ẓāhir*) and esoteric (*bāṭin*) as mutually dependent, that is to say, that one cannot uncover the esoteric without affirming the literal meaning first. It was crucial for the Sufi interpretive tradition to express itself on the interdependence of the literal and mystical dimension of the Qurʾān. The interrelationship between them was critical to the Sufi exegetical enterprise as it strived to claim a legitimate place within the wider Sunni exegetical tradition. Having said that, we cam can deny that "the esoteric" dimension of the sacred Text animated the exegetical activity of Sufi Qurʾān commentators. What I mean by this is that Sufis were subconsciously aware of a deeper scriptural meaning that was not readily discerned through the letter of Scripture. The debate among Sunni exegetes, among whom features many Sufis, has been less about the normativity of Sufi *tafsīr* and more about their commitment to the literal meanings of Scripture. Some prominent Sunni exegetical authorities did not question this commitment, even when the interpretations of the Sufi may not be readily reconciled with the exoteric interpretations of certain verses of Scripture. Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035) and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 606/1209), for instance, sanctioned and incorporated Sufi Qurʾān interpretations into their *tafsīrs*.[148] Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d. 793/1390), a major

[148] For Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī's appropriation of the Sufi interpretations of Sulamī's *Haqā'iq al-Tafsīr,* see Saleh, *Formation*, 151-153. Rāzī's voluminous *tafsīr*, *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* ("Key to the Unseen") is an eclectic *tafsīr* that brings together many interpretive streams, including the interpretations of the Sufis, but also of other theological and philosophical schools. For more, see Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2015), 10.

Ashʿarī philosophical theologian and critic of Ibn ʿArabī, surprisingly defended the legitimacy of the Sufi interpretive enterprise.[149] Our schematization of Sufi *tafsīr* requires therefore careful theoretical elaborations. We must revisit our conceptual frameworks in order to reflect the tension and complementarity between Sufi, conventional Sunni and even Shīᶜī interpretive traditions. As Saleh noted, the parameters of Sufi *tafsīr*, like other streams of Sunni exegesis, "shows both its indebtedness to the tradition and its variance from it."[150]

3.3 The Sources Sufi *Tafsīr*

Turning to the origins and sources of Sufi *tafsīr*, I can only offer here a synoptic treatment of this topic, given that his subject was been extensively covered by other scholars.[151] Before the term Sufi gained wider currency, it was the mystical *tafsīr* of Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896), "*Tafsīr al-* Qurʾān *al-ʿaẓīm* (the Commentary on the Mighty Qurʾān)," which epitomized the earliest proto-Sufi commentary on the Qurʾān.[152] Though this work seems to have gained prominence among formative Sufi, it was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) played a foundational role in the transmission of Tustarī's *tafsīr* and the consolidation of the Sufi "genre" of Qurʾānic exegesis. Put

[149] He states: "as for what some of the [spiritual] verifiers (i.e., Sufis) have stated, namely, that the scriptural texts must be read outwardly, but that they nonetheless contain subtle allusions [*ishārāt*] concerning certain truths that are unveiled to those masters of spiritual wayfaring [*arbāb al-sulūk*] and which are concordant with the outward meaning of the text, this approach is the hallmark of faith and the utmost degree of gnosis [*ʿirfān*]." Cited in Meftah, *Ishārāt al-qurʾān fi ʿālam al-insān,* 18.

[150] see Saleh, *Formation*, 15.

[151] See note 1.

[152] see G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*: *The* Qurʾānic *Hermeneutics of the Sūfī Sahl at-Tustarī* (d. 283/896) (Berlin and New York, de Gruyter, 1980).

together, his *Haqāʾiq al- tafsīr*[153] and *Ziyādāt al-Haqāʾiq*[154] compiled a substantial body of mystical exegetical material that were purportedly attributed to the oral or written exegetical commentaries of venerated forebears from the second/eight century (e.g. Hasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728), Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), the sixth Shīʿī Imam, Sufyan al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), Abd Allah b. Mubarak (d. 181/797)) and prominent Sunni mystics from the third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries (e.g. Dhul al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246/861), Sahl at-Tustarī (d. 283/896), Abu Saʿīd al-Kharrāz (d. 286/899), al-Junayd (d. 320/932), Ibn ʿAtaʾ (d. 311/923), Abu Bakr al-Wāṣiṭī (d. 320/932), and al-Shiblī (d. 334/946).[155]

Al-Sulamī's initiative was hence a pioneering figure in the Sufi exegetical tradition. He consciously tried to officiate a Sunni exegetical trend that was still in a gestative state. His initiative was to compensate for the proliferation of "the exoteric sciences" (*ʿulūm al-zāhira),* by which he meant the body of Sunni exoteric exegesis and theology.[156] Al-Sulamī characterized the Sufi interpretive insights as "the divine discourse in the language of the folk of inner truths (*fahm kitābihi ʿala lisān ahl al-ḥaqīqa*)."[157] For Sulamī, the Sufi mystical exegesis reflected a precedent that pre-dated 'Sufi' exegesis proper. His project was to merely compile the oral exegetical and scattered written mystical interpretations that "the folk of inner truth" had discretely diffused among themselves. The Sufi Qurʾānic compendium that Sulamī compiled enjoyed wide diffusion

[153] Sulamī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr: tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīz,* 2 vols., ed. Sayyid 'Umrān (Beirut, 2001).

[154] Sulamī, *Ziyādāt ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr*. For the sources of the *Ziyādāt*, see Böwering, Gerhard. "The Major Sources of Sulamī's Minor Qurʾān Commentary," 35-56.

[155] Böwering, The Qurʾān commentary of al- Sulamī," in *Islamic studies presented to Charles J. Adams*, W.B Hallaq and D.B Little (eds.), (Brill, Leiden, 1991), 42.

[156] Cited in P. Nwiya's Introduction to *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr, Trois oeuvres,* 33-35.

[157] Ibid.

among successive generations of Sufi commentators, as evidenced in the *tafsīr* of Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465/1074), ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī al-Harawī (d. 481/1089), Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī (d. 520/1126), Abū Thābit Al-Daylamī (d. 598/1193), Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1209), Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī-i Gīsūdirāz (d. 825/1422), Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Kāshifī (d. 910/1504-5), Ḥaqqī Burūsawī down to Ibn ʿAjība.[158]

While some marginal exoteric theologians characterized Sulamī's *tafsīrs* as blasphemous, his pupil, Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī incorporated many interpretations from the *Haqāʾiq.*[159] Thaʿlabī's student, al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076), a Qurʾān exegete in his own right, reportedly declared in one of his public lectures that "if Sulamī believes that his *Haqāʾiq* is a *tafsīr* of the Qur'an, then he is a heretic (*kāfir*)."[160] A similar stance was expressed by Ibn Jawzī (d. 595/1201) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), al-Dhahabī (d.748/1328).[161] Their views, however, represent a marginal perspective and should therefore not be overstated. The predominant view of the Sunni exegetical authorities seems more favorable of the *Haqāʾiq* than critical. For this reason, we must not consider the view of a handful of theologians as a binding verdict on the significance and abiding legacy of the *Haqāʾiq* within the Sunni and Sufi exegetical traditions.

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[158] Gerhard Bowering, "The Scriptural 'Senses' in Medieval Sufi Qur'an," in *With Reverence to the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, eds. Jane Dammen McAulif, Barry D. Walfish and Joseph W. Goering (Oxford, 2003), 349. A. Godlas, "Ṣūfism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 353-58.

[159] Walid Saleh*, The Formation of the classical Tafsīr*, 16.

[160] As Saleh notes, Wāḥidī's condemnation of Sulamī's *Haqāʾiq* was presumably made during one of his public lectures. While there are no prooftexts to verify his critical appraisal of Sulamī, Saleh contends that Wāḥidī's stringent exegetical standards did not easily concede to "the traditional Sunni exegetical tradition, let alone the mystical approach." See Walid Saleh, "The Last of the Nishapuri School of Tafsir: Al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1076) and His Significance in the History of Qur'anic Exegesis," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 223–44.

[161] Alexander Knysh. "Ṣūfism and the Qurʾān." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane McAuliffe (Leiden, 2006), 143.

3.4 Trajectory and Periodization of Sufi *tafsīr:*

The *Haqāʾiq al-tafsīr*, as Bowering and other scholars have noted, was a defining moment in the history of Sufi mystical exegesis. This work was the genesis and the "crowning event," as Böwering put it, of a period of exegetical gestation that Sulamī's efforts brought to fruition.[162] While Sulamī's compendium was largely a compilation of mystical Qurʾānic commentaries, his initiative has been instrumental in charting a rough idea of the major development of Sufi *tafsīr* from the formative to the early modern era. The periodization of Sufi *tafsīr* that Böwering and S. Ateş offer general indications on the evolution of Sufi exegetical history.[163] My schematization calls into question their assessment of the final phase (fourth) of Sufi *tafsīr*, spanning from the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. Böwering characterized this phase of Sufi *tafsīr* as a period of exegetical inertia.[164] This view was based on his comparative assessment of Sufi exegetical ouput in the formative and early modern period. He concluded based on what was accessible to him back then that early modern Sufi *tafsīr* tradition was not nearly as productive as their forerunners. We should note that his inventory did not include *al-Baḥr al-madīd* and other partial Sufi *tafsīrs* that I will list below.[165] Moreover, the decline thesis mirrors a historiographical narrative of post-classical Islamic thought that has been called into question by many historians recently. We should stretch our typological frontiers to include any Sufi theological work that

[162] Böwering, "The Qurʾān commentary of al-Sulamī," 56.

[163] Böwering The Qurʾān commentary of al- Sulamī.". Süleyman Ateş, *İşârî tefsîr okulu* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi, 1974).

[164] Böwering The Qurʾān commentary of al-Sulamī," 43.

[165] See below: Later Sufis *tafsīr*: Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century.

comments systematically on the sacred text like *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* which belongs to the tradition of Sufi *tafsīr* that Böwering and other identified with schools of exegesis.[166]

3.5 The Sufi Schools of Qurʾānic Exegesis

The Sufi interpretive tradition must account not for complete exegetical works but also all forms of Sufi literary expressions which engage systematically with the esoteric meanings of the Qurʾān. Sometimes, the theological corpus of a single Sufi author or a school of Sufi thought can be grouped under Sufi *tafsīr.* Ibn ʿArabī's corpus, which includes his multivolume opus, *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* ("The Meccan Openings") and his *Fūṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* ("The Ringstones of Wisdoms"), is nothing short of a running esoteric commentary on verses or chapters of the Qurʾān. The diffusion and lasting impact of his teaching on his followers and wider Sufi tradition conceived a whole exegetical tradition named after his school: the Ibn ʿArabī school (the Akbarian) of Sufi Qurʾānic exegesis.[167] The Akbarian school was comprised, in other words, of works of Sufi *tafsīr* (complete and selective) which either adopted his esoteric scriptural interpretations or who mediated their Qurʾānic commentary through his doctrinal teachings.[168] This trend is epitomized in the works of his foremost disciple Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) and later followers like Abī'l Barakāt al-Ṣafadī (d. 696/1296), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 730/1329), Burūsawī, al-Nābulusī, down to ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī .

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[166] As an example, K. al-*Mawāqif* is not listed in A. Godlas' list of early modern Sufi *tafsīrs* or the recent study of A. Knysh. See A. Godlas, "Ṣūfism," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009). Cf. Alexander Knysh, "Sufi commentary. Formative and later periods," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies,* eds. Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem, (Oxford 2020), 747-767.

[167] Böwering, "The Qurʾān commentary of al- Sulamī," 43.

[168] Ateş, *İşârî tefsîr okulu,* 130-1.

The Kubrāwiyya is another prominent Sufi school of Qurʾānic commentary. This school is named after Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 618/1221), the eponymous founder of the Kubrāwiyya Sufi order. The Kubrāwiyya school of Sufi exegesis produced a collaborative *tafsīr* entitled *al-Taʾwīlāt al-najmiyya* ("The Constellation of esoteric Interpretations).[169] The *Taʾwīlāt al-najmiyya* is believed to have been co-authored by Najm al-Dīn Kubrā and his disciple Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Dāya (d. 654/1256). Their *tafsīr* ended on Q. 51:19.[170] We do not know which parts was composed by the Najm al-Dīn al-Rāzī after the death of his master. Another key figure in the Kubrāwiyya school is ʿAlā' ad-Dawla as-Simnānī (d. 736/1336). His *Tafsīr Najm al-Qurʾān* (The Exegesis of the Star of the Qurʾān) was meant, it seems, to complete the *Taʾwīlāt al-najmiyya* of his predecessors. Based on different manuscripts that scholars have consulted, the N*ajm al-Qurʾān* starts on Q. 52 and ends on the last chapter of the Qurʾān, whereas other manuscripts seem to indicate that as-Simnānī begun where his predecessors left off (i.e., Q. 51.19)[171]

The legacy of Kubrāwiyya is a topic awaiting further investigation, especially its symbiosis with Twelver Shīʿī mystical theology and hermeneutics.[172] This is a unique feature that has not been sufficiently explored and would be indispensable for appreciating the gradual fusion of Sufi and Shīʿī esoteric exegesis in the later period of Sufi exegetical history.[173] This topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, however. My aim here is to merely offer some indications on the comparative

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[169] Rāzī, Najm al-Dīn. *Baḥr al-ḥaqā'iq wa-al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr al-sab' al-mathānī, al-musammá bi-al-Ta'wīlāt al-Najmīyah,* eds. Muvaḥḥidī, Muḥammad Riẓā and Maḥmūd Yūsuf Ṯānī (Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Pizhūhishī-i Ḥikmat va Falsafah-i Īrān, 1392 [2013 or 2014]).

[170] A. Godlas, "Ṣūfism," 355.

[171] Jamal Elias, *Throne Carrier of God,* 203-12. Cf. *Muqaddima tafsīr al-Qurʾān li-ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla al-Simnānī*," ed. Paul Nwyia, *al-Abḥāṯ* 26 (1973–77): 141–57.

[172] Algar, Hamid. "Kobrawiya ii. The Order." *Encyclopaedia Iranica.*

[173]Marijan Molé. "Les Kubrawiya entre sunnisme et shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l'Hégire." *Revue des études islamiques* 29 (1961): 62–142

development of different schools of Sufi Qurʾān exegesis. As I argued above, this school 'trend' of Sufi exegesis introduces a new feature into the so-called 'genre' of Sufi *tafsīr.* The schools of Sufi *tafsīr* may indeed be shaped by doctrinal teachings of their founders, but there were nonetheless diffused and appropriated by other Sufi orders and exegetes who may not be directly attached to the Kubrāwiyya or Akbarian school per se.

3.6 Early Modern Sufi *tafsīr*: Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century

The academic study of Sufi *tafsīr* has largely been limited to the formative and classical period (roughly from the fourth/tenth century to the seventh/thirteenth century).[174] According to the four stages of Sufi *tafsīr* that Böwering and Süleyman Ateş proposed, the third and fourth phases mark the later period in the history of the Sufi interpretive tradition – spanning from the seventh/ thirteenth century to the middle of the twelfth/eighteenth century.[175] The final stage in this historical timeline, following Böwering and Ateş's periodization, spans from the thirteenth/nineteenth century to the present. Böwering described this period as "a phase of a certain decline that seems to continue today."[176] As I mentioned above, his view was based on the inventory he compiled twenty years ago and which names *Tafsīr-i maẓharī,* Alūsī's *Rūḥ al-maʿānī fī tafsīr* Alūsī's (d.1854), *Bayān al-saʿāda fī maqāmāt al-ʿibāda* (*"The Elucidation of Felicity*

[174] Böwering, The Qurʾān commentary of al-Sulamī," 43.

[175] Ibid. Ateş, *İşârî teſsîr okul*). Ateş's classification, however, includes Sufi *tafsīrs* that were not mentioned by Böwering such as Ibn ʿAjība's *Baḥr al-madīd.*

[176] Böwering The Qurʾān commentary of al-Sulamī,"43.

concerning the Stations of Servitude") of Sulṭān Muḥammad Sulṭān ʿAlī Shāh Junābādī (Gunābādī), (d. 1327/1909) the Sufi-Shīʿī Shaykh of the Niʿmatallahi order.[177]

Since then, Godlas added other titles missing from Böwering's list, among which I have already mentioned Aḥmad Ibn ʿAjība's al-*Baḥr al-madīd*, the Persian rhymed *tafsīr* of Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥasan Iṣfahānī (Ṣafī Alī Shāh) (d. 1899), a Shīʿī Sufi Shaykh of the Ni'matullāhī/Ṣafāʾiyya order which bears the title of *Tafsīr-i Ṣafī* (the *Tafsīr* of Ṣafī) or the *tafsīr-i manẓūm-i Qurān-i Karīm* (The *tafsīr* in verse of the Noble Qurān)[178] as well as the *tafsīr* of Sayyid Muhammad Huwaysh b. Mahmud Al-Ghāzī al-ʿĀnī (d. 1978) (known as Mullā Ḥuwaysh), entitled *Bayān al-maʿānī ʿalā ḥasb tartīb al-nuzūl* ("The Elucidation of the Meanings of the Qurʾān according to the Order of Revelation"). We can add to this list ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* the Sufi *tafsīr* of short chapters and verses of the Qurʾān by Shaykh Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī (d. 1934) [179] and the incomplete Sufi *tafsīr* of Abū al-ʿAzāʾim Muḥammad Māḍī (d. 1937), entitled *Asrār al-Qurʾān* ("The Secrets of the Qurʾān").[180] This list is by no means exhaustive. There are good reasons to suspect that there are many other Sufis *tafsīrs* from the period that have not been critically edited or cataloged. Judging from the works we have discovered since Böwering wrote his essay, we have good reasons to revisit his decline thesis. Indeed, it seems that a Sufi exegetical revival went hand in hand with the nineteenth century "the Sufi intellectual Renaissance" (*nahda*) that began to take shape in this period of Islamic history.

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[177] Gunābādī Sulṭān Muḥammad, ʿAlī Shāh. *Bayān al-saʿādah fī maqāmāt al-ʿibādah*. Al-Ṭabʿah 2 (Tihrān: Ḥaqīqat, 2002).

[178] ʿAlī Shāh Ḥasan Ṣafī, *Tafsīr-i Ṣafī: tafsīr-i manẓūm-i Qurān-i Karīm*, ed. ʿAlī Riẓā Qūjah'zādah and Bihrūz Sarvatīyān (Tihrān : Sāzmān-i Tablīghāt-i Islāmī, 2014).

[179] See Khalid Williams, *The Qur'an and the Prophet in the Writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-ʿAlawī* (Cambridge: Islamic Text Society, 2013).

[180] Muḥammad Māḍī Abū al-ʿAzāʾim,.*Asrār al-Qur'ān*. Al-Tabʿah 1 (Miṣr: Dār al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah, 1950).

3.8 *Tafsīr* and *Taʾwīl*: Guiding Interpretive Methods

It would be instructive to preface our discussion with an analysis of two key hermeneutical terms that were widely employed by formative and later Muslim exegetes, namely, *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl*. For brevity's sake, however, I will limit myself to the Sunni exegetical tradition. To begin with, the term *tafsīr* (pl. *tafāsīr*) is the verbal noun of the tripartite root *fa-sa-ra* which means the explanation or elucidation of the meaning of a word. The word *tafsīr* did not acquire a disciplinary application within the field of Qurʾānic exegesis until the third century of Islamic intellectual history.[181] The term "*tafsīr*" is only used once in the Qurʾān. The verse where the term is used evokes the rhetorical challenges that God put before the Meccan polytheists: "*They do not bring to you any similitude, but what we bring to you [is] the truth, and better in exposition* (*wa-aḥsana tafsīran*)" (Q. 25:33).

The term *taʾwīl*, on the other hand, stems from the tripartite root *ʾ-wa-la* (pattern II), denoting "the act of returning[something] to its origin/source (*awwal*)].[182] The term *taʾwīl* is mentioned 18 times in the Qurʾān with different denotations. It is used to speak of the spiritual authority of God and the Prophet Muhammad (4:59), the interpretation of future events (12:6,21) and dreams (12:36, 44-5), but in one key verse (Q. 3:7), it is used in the context of interpreting a category of verses that the Qurʾān calls the "symbolic/ambiguous" verses (*mutashābihāt)*:

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[181] Andre Rippin, A., "Tafsīr", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7294.

[182] Poonawala, I., "Taʾwīl", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. http://dx.doi.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7457

> It is He Who sent down the Book upon thee; therein are univocal verses (*muḥkamāt*), they are the mother of the Book, and others are symbolic (*mutashābihāt*). As for those whose hearts are given to swerving, they follow that of it which is symbolic, seeking temptation and seeking its interpretation (*taʾwīl*) And none knows its interpretation (*taʾwīl*) save God and those firmly rooted in knowledge, they say, "We believe in it; all is from our Lord" (Q 3:7).

This verse has been the subject of copious interpretations from various exegetes within the Sunni and Sufi tradition. It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to examine the countless exegetical discussions that have shaped the debate over the nature of "the symbolic" verses and whether they are strictly known to God or not. In brief, the verse differentiates between two categories of verses, the "univocal" (*muḥkamāt*) and the "symbolic" (*mutashābihāt*), each of which have its corresponding mode of interpretation. The "*muḥkamāt*" verses of the Qurʾān have not been a source of dispute among the Sunni exegetical authorities. [183] By and large, they have come to designate self-explanatory verses, that is, verses with univocal meanings. The "*mutashābihāt*" were far more problematic inasmuch as they refer to verses that admit many alternative meanings.[184]

What is more, the *taʾwīl* of the "symbolic" verses of the Qurʾān depended on what seems to be a trivial matter, but which had far-reaching exegetical implications, namely, the punctuation of the verse. This was alone a source of dispute between different exegetical communities. The Qurʾān exegetes who placed a full stop after "none knows its interpretation (*taʾwīl*) save God," which seems to be the majoritarian position among mainstream Sunni exegetes, infer from this

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[183] A compelling discussion of Ibn Barrajān's atypical interpretation of the *muḥkam* and *mutashābih* is found in Y. Casewit, *The Mystics of al-Andalus,* 226-230.

[184] Michel Lagarde, "De L'ambiguïté (*mutaṣhābih*) dans le Coran: Tentatives d'explications des exégètes Musulmans." *Quaderni Di Studi Arabi* 3 (1985): 45–62. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25802567.

punctation that the *taʾwīl* of the *mutashābihāt* verses is only known to God. By omitting the stop, as the Sufis and many Shīʿī esoteric exegetes go, they adduced from this that the *taʾwīl* of the "*mutashābihāt*" is known to God and "*those firmly rooted in knowledge*."[185] For the Twelver Shīʿī exegetes, the "firmly rooted in knowledge" refer to the Twelve Imams from the "household of the Prophet" (*ahl al-bayt*) and Shīʿī mystics, while the Sufis take "the firmly rooted in knowledge" to be a reference to any mystic or saint whom God inspires with the *taʾwīl* of the Qurʾān.

In terms of the hermeneutical guidelines of *taʾwīl,* then, the *taʾwīl* of Sufis and Shīʿī was embedded in the creed and theology that the exegete adhered to.[186] Hence, whereas a Sufi *taʾwīl* is foregrounded in the mystical epistemology and praxis of the Sufi, the *taʾwīl* of *a* Twelver Shīʿī was enshrined in the creed and theology of Twelver or Sevener Ismāʿīlī Shīʿīsm.[187] The *taʾwīl* of some strands of the Ismāʿīlī tradition would thus mirror the doctrinal teachings and institutional hierarchy of Ismāʿīlī esoteric mission (*daʾwa*).[188] Though not all, the Sunni and Sufis were highly critical of Ismāʿīlī *taʾwīl,* which they pejoratively described as the *taʾwīl* of "the esotericists" (*bāṭiniyya*) in reference to their alleged disregard for the literal meanings of Qurʾān and thus the legal prescriptions of the Sharīʿa.

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[185] Diana Steigerwald,"Twelver Shīʿī *Taʾwīl,"* in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān,* eds A. Rippin and J. Mojaddedi), (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell,2017),453-4.

https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1002/9781118964873.ch30

[186] While Sufi and Shīʿī mystical theologies share many things in common, the formative period of their respective exegetical traditions seems much less hybrid than the period following the emergence of Akbarian and Kubrāwiyya school of Sufi/mystical exegesis. The Akbarian school alone included among its most prominent Twelver Shīʿī thinkers scholars like ʿAbd al-Razzāq Qāshānī (d. 1330), Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī (d. 1385), Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1641), Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī (d. 1881). See Nicholas Boylston, "Qur'anic Exegesis at the Confluence of Twelver Shiism and Sufism: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's al-Muḥīṭ al-Aʿẓam," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 23, no. 1 (2021): 1-35.

[187] Mahmoud Ayoub, "The Speaking Qurʾān and the Silent Qurʾān: A study of the principles of and development of Imāmī Shīʿī *tafsīr,"* in *Approaches to the History of the interpretations of the Qurʾān,* ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Claredon, 1988), 177-98.

[188] See Ismail Poonawala, "Ismāʿīlī Scholarship on Tafsīr," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, ed. Shah Mustafa and Abdel Haleem Muhammad (Oxford Univerity Press, 2020), 819-831.

However, the mainstream Sunni exegetical authorities take *taʾwīl* as a subdomain of *tafsīr*, meaning that the former requires more theoretical elaborations from the exegete who seeks to determine the preponderant meaning of a verse that admits multiple interpretations.[189] All told, the terms *taʾwīl* and *tafsīr* designated in the earlier stage of Sufi mystical interpretation of Scripture. The terminology was not consequential until the formative period. If we take Sahl at-Tustarī and Sulamī, for instance, these two foundational figures of Sunni mystical exegesis used the term *tafsīr* in the title of their mystical *tafsīrs*. [190] While they both used other terms such as "comprehension" (*fahm*), "subtleties" (*laṭāʾif*) and allusions (*ishārāt*) to describe the esoteric *tafsīr* of what Sulamī call "folk of inner truths" (i.e., the Sufis), we don't have an explicit discussion of the esoteric interpretive apparatus of Sufi and non-Sufi exegesis until al-Qushayrī. The different esoteric tropes (*tafsīr*, *taʾwīl, ishārāt*, *laṭāʾif*) in Sufi *tafsīr* are more systematically developed in his *Laṭāʾif al-ishārāt*, especially the term "*ishāra*" (allusion) or "*tafsīr bi-l-ishāra*" (exegesis through allusion) (See below: Sufi Allusive Exegesis).

3.9 Glossing through Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī

The exegetical discussions and principles on *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl* evolved over the centuries and gained more technical application within different exegetical streams. I want here to briefly survey the exegetical discussions of Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī on the interpretive application and scope of *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl*. Having authored a complete *tafsīr,* their exegetical discussions illuminate many questions that we have tried to address so far. While belonging to the same exegetical tradition, we nonetheless encounter slight divergences in their respective analyses of *tafsīr* and

[189] See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī,, *Al-Durr al-manthūr fī l-tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr.* 6 vols (Ṭahrān: al-Maṭba'ah al-Islāmīyah).

[190] P. Nwiya's Introduction to *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr, Trois oeuvres,* 33-35.

taʾwīl. Following other exegetical authorities before him, Ibn ʿAjība proceeds etymologically when probing the word *tafsīr*. He reproduces the definition that other exegetical authorities have formulated before him, which is that the verbal noun of *tafsīr* "is to clarify and elucidate."[191] As such, he states that *tafsīr* is an attempt "to give the word its outward meaning as known in the customs of the Arabs."[192] Alūsī follows a similar line. He states verbatim the definition of *tafsīr* that Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) which features in his classical work, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qur'ān* ("The Perfect Guide to the Sciences of the Qur'ān"):[193]

> *Tafsīr* is the verbal noun of the form *tafʿīl* (actualization) from the word "*al-fasr*", which is the language of elucidation (*bayān*) and unveiling (*kashf*) …the meaning of *tafsīr* goes back then to uncovering (*kashf*).[194]

As for the subject matter of *tafsīr* qua a discipline of Qurʾānic exegesis, Ibn ʿAjība cites the definition of Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 745/1344), the prominent grammarian and commentator of the Qurʾān, who defined it "as a science that inquiries into the articulation of the words of the Qurʾān, its denotations, the rules pertaining to its isolated or composite expressions, and the sense in which they are employed and other such matters"[195] Combining the etymological and disciplinary definition, the classical Muslim exegetes conceived *tafsīr* as a hermeneutical science that aims to elucidate the literal meanings of the sacred text: from word formation to its

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[191] Ibn ʿAjība, *Tafsīr al-fātiḥah al-kabīr*, edited by ed. Bassām Muḥammad Bārūd (Abu Dhabi,1999), p. 149.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, ed. Zamarlī, Fawwāz Aḥmad Al-Ṭabʿah 1 (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1999)

[194] Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī*, vol.1, 102.

[195] Ibn ʿAjība, *Tafsīr al-fātiḥah al-kabīr*,149.

syntax structure, grammar, philology, rhetoric, and so forth, constitutive elements that uncover the elemental denotations of the Qurʾān.

Ibn ʿAjība treats *taʾwīl* along more conventional lines than Alūsī, however. Like other mainstream exegetical authorities, Ibn ʿAjība envisages the hermeneutical reaches of *taʾwīl* as the exegetical exercise that must be undertaken to determine the alternative meanings of a scriptural word. He writes:

> As for the scope of *taʾwīl*, it consists of determining the different possible significations of one word, that is, if it admits multiple meanings; if it has one meaning only, this is called "*tafsīr*.[196]

To distinguish the domain of *taʾwīl* from *tafsīr,* Ibn ʿAjība explains that *taʾwīl* is applies in the context of scriptural polysemy (i.e., the range of meanings one word may have) and *tafsīr* in relation to monosomy — a word that admits "one meaning only." This distinction represents the standard Sunni exegetical perspective. Unlike Alūsī, *Taʾwīl* does not assume in Ibn ʿAjība's hermeneutical discussion an esoteric interpretive approach.

Alūsī offers a slightly different account of *taʾwīl*. While highlighting the interchangeability between *tafsīr and taʾwīl*, he alerts his readers to the evolving interpretive vistas these two terms accrued for different interpretive communities. He notes, for instance, that the distinction reflects the hermeneutical guidelines that an exegete or an exegetical community employed when probing the meanings of Scripture. He concludes that the distinction or equivalence between this two hermeneutical nomenclature reflects "the exegetical custom" (*ʿurf*) that an interpreter/exegetical tradition followed at a certain juncture in the history of *tafsīr.*[197] This "exegetical norm" evolved

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[196] Ibid.

[197] Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* ,103

over time and did not necessarily reflect "the custom of our days," he rejoins.[198] What Alūsī seems to say is that the application of these two terms (*tafsīr* with *taʾwīl*) has acquired a specific application in his time:

> For it is indisputably known that *taʾwīl* is [in truth] a holy allusion (*ishāra qudsiyya*) and transcendental truths (*maʿārif subḥāniyya*) that are unveiled behind the curtains of expressions (*min sujūf al-ʿibārāt*) to the spiritual wayfarers (*sālikūn*) and stream forth from the clouds of the unseen upon the hearts of the Sufi gnostics (*qulūb al-ʿārifīn*); as for *tafsīr*, it differs from this"[199]

As it emerges in his discussion, Alūsī situates *taʾwīl* within the purview of esoteric Sufi exegesis. This becomes evident in how he ties *taʾwīl* to the Sufi exegetical trope of "allusion" (*ishāra*). He conceptualizes *taʾwīl* as the mystical hermeneutics that illuminates the symbolic truths that are concealed "behind the curtains of expressions" (*min sujūf al-ʿibārāt*), by which Alūsī means the outward meanings of the Qurʾān. The practical foundations of the Sufi mystical Path is another feature that underpins Alūsī's account of the mystical premises of Sufi *taʾwīl.* Hence, the *taʾwīl* of Sufi wayfarers (*sālikūn*) and Sufi gnostics (*ʿārifīn*) consists of a contemplative experience of the inner truths of the Qurʾān. Stated differently, the mystical life and evolution of the Sufi is itself a *taʾwīl* of the esoteric truths of Scripture. As we shall see below, this is how a scriptural *ishāra* is envisaged in Sufi esoteric hermeneutics. In other words, the interpretive allusions of the Sufi exegete are anchored in the mystical anthropology of the Sufi mystical Path. In contrast, Alūsī sees *tafsīr* as restricted to the mainstream Sunni *tafsīr* and cannot thereby be conflated with the Sufi esoteric paradigm of *taʾwīl*.

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[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid.

3.10 The Principle and Scope of Sufi Allusive Exegesis (*tafsīr bi-l-ishāra*)

Alūsī used the term "holy allusion" (*ishāra qudsiyya*) to describe the esoteric foundations of Sufi *taʾwīl.* He situates this exegetical trope within the hermeneutical apparatus of Sufi *taʾwīl.* For Alūsī, *taʾwīl* is an allusive scriptural intimation about "transcendental truths" (*maʿārif subḥāniyya*) that the Sufi exegete discerns through "the curtains of expressions" (*sujūf al-ʿibārāt*). Just how scriptural allusions fit within the broader framework of *tafsīr* became a question of capital importance to the Sufi exegetical tradition.[200] The clarifications that Ibn ʿAjība offers on this matter will help us gain a sound understanding of the order and scope of scriptural allusions. Ibn ʿAjība distinguishes between "allusive exegesis" and the conventional *tafsīr* of mainstream Sunni exegesis.

As we have seen earlier, *tafsīr* proper seeks to unearth the semantic meanings of a word. *Taʾwīl,* on the other hand, is an attempt to uncover the alternative senses that one word may signify. Ibn ʿAjība states that "*tafsīr* inquires into the outward meanings (*al-maʾāni al-zāhira*) of the Qurʾān" and cannot thereby be conflated "with the comprehension of the folk of allusions (*ahl al-ishārāt*)."[201] He contends that the comprehension of "the folk of allusions," by which he means the Sufis "cannot be conveyed through linguistic expression (*ʿibāra*)."[202] This conforms to what Alūsī stated earlier regarding the transcendental order of "a holy allusion" (*ishāra qudsiyya*),

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[200] For a treatment of different interpretive notions in Sufi tafsir, including a comparative analysis of "*ishāra*" and "*tafsīr*", see Zine, Mohammed Chaouki. "Herméneutique et symbolique : le *taʾwīl* chez Ibn ʿArabī et quelques auteurs antérieurs." *Bulletin d'études orientales*, no. 58 (2009): 351–84.

[201] Ibn ʿAjība*, Tafsīr al-fātiḥah al-kabīr,* 43.

[202] Ibid.

which is concealed "behind the curtains of expressions (*min sujūf al-ʿibārāt*) to the spiritual wayfarers (*sālikūn*) and stream forth from the clouds of the unseen upon the hearts of the Sufi gnostics (*qulūb al-ʿārifīn*)."

We should evoke in passing a key statement that Sufis attribute to Jaʿfar al-Sādiq (d. 148/765), the sixth Shīʿī Imam and the paragon of Sufi-Shīʿī mystical exegesis. He is reported to have delineated four levels of scriptural meanings within the Qurʾān, among which features the category of "allusions" (*ishārāt*):

> "The Qurʾān is comprised of linguistic expressions (*ʿibārāt*), allusions (*ishārāt*), subtleties (*laṭāʾif*), and realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*). The linguistic expressions are for the common people (*ʿāmma*); the "allusions" are intended for the elite (*khawāss*); the "subtleties" are for the saints (*awliyāʾ*), and the "realities" are for the prophets (*anbiyāʾ*).[203]

The one thing we can gather from his statement is that the "allusions" of the Qurʾān are reserved for the spiritual elite (*khawāss*), whereas the *ʿibārāt* is intended for "the common people" (*ʿāmma*), which Sufis take to be the mainstream exegetes. Notice how both Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī use the same term "*ʿibārāt"* when discussing the allusions of Sufi esoteric exegesis. Nowhere does Ibn ʿAjība suggest that an allusive meaning is not grounded in the literal words of scripture, however. What he says, however, is that an allusive interpretation is ineffable *strictu sensus*. It stands on a higher epistemic order than the "outward meanings" (*al-maʾāni al-zāhira*) of scripture. Ibn ʿAjība ties "the allusions" of the Sufis, so does Alūsī, to the contemplative experience and knowledge of the Sufi. Ibn ʿAjība goes on to say that the Sufi lexicon itself is enshrined in the discernment of "the concealed secrets" (*asrār*) and "subtle allusions of the Qurʾān (*laṭāʾif*

[203] Cited in *al-Tafsir al-Ṣufi leʾl-Qorʾān*, edited by Paul Nwyia as "Le Tafsīr mystique attribué à Ǧaʿfar Sādiq," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 43/4, 1968, p.188.

ishārātih)."[204] He affirms that the Sufi mystical terminology such as "annihilation (*fanāʾ*), subsistence (*baqāʾ*), inward presence (*ḥudūr*), absence (*gībah*), intimacy (*uns*), constriction (*qabḍ*), expansion (*basṭ*), so forth" stem from the Qurʾānic language itself.[205]

.This Sufi contemplative immersion in the teachings of Qurʾān, Ibn ʿAjība explains, is what Sufis call "the science of *taṣawwuf* and refer to their interpretation of God's speech and the discourse of His Messenger (peace and blessing upon him) 'exegesis by allusions' (*tafsīr bi-l-ishārāt*)."[206] As expressed by his forerunners, Ibn ʿAjība ties the allusive exegesis of the Sufis to the notion of "spiritual taste" (*dhawq*), meaning the internalized experiences that a Sufi has in his mystical wayfaring. [207] There is in this sense an ineffable dimension to an allusive meaning that a Sufi intimately experiences via Qurʾānic narrative and teachings about his/her own mystical life. Thus, when the term 'allusion' appears in the exegetical work of a Sufi, it signals to the audience that the interpreter finds an inner Qurʾānic intimation of the truths and experiences of his/her mystical life and realizations.

[204] Ibn ʿAjība*, Tafsīr al-fātiḥah al-kabīr,* 131

[205] Ibid.

[206] Ibid.

[207] see Gril. "Dhawq." *EI*[3]

PART II. ʿABD AL-QĀDIR'S MYSTICAL HERMENEUTICS

3.11 The Eternal Words of God: Hermeneutical Implications

In the Sufi tradition, the ontology of God's speech (*kalāmu'Llāh*) underpins the foundations of their esoteric hermeneutics of the sacred text. We will see in the next chapter how ʿAbd al-Qādir's higher ontology of the Qurʾān is developed against the backdrop of his critique of the Ashʿarī doctrine of the uncreated Qurʾān — i.e., the doctrine of inlibration. [208] In this section, we explore the scriptural method and premises of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi allusive hermeneutics via his commentary of Q 18:109:

"*Say, if the sea were ink for the words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the words of my Lord are spent, even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it*" (18:109).

In their interpretive framework, Sufis who commented on this verse before ʿAbd al-Qādir reveals the inextricable link between the uncreated nature of the Qurʾān and the inexhaustible meanings that it generates within its scriptural prototype. For his part, ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on the above verse is articulated through the prism of Akbarian ontology of "being/existence" (*wujūd)*. He writes:

> The exoteric exegetes (*ʿāmmat al-mufassirūn*) have interpreted 'His words' as the objects of His power (*maqdūrāt*) inasmuch as God's omnipotence (*qudrah*) is attached to every possible existent (*mumkin*) and the possible existents (*mumkināt)* are infinite. For me, however, and through the vantage point of scriptural allusion (*min bāb al-ishāra*), the real meaning of 'His words' is the essential and transcendental words of God, the plural of the singular 'word' (*kalimah*). For God is the Speaker behind every form to which speech is ascribed…His speech is infinite because it does not enter

[208] About this term, see Chap. II (Introduction).

> in toto into [contingent] existence (i.e., the physical world); if it did enter in totality, it would necessarily be finite. In contrast to the sea, which is delimited by virtue of its subsistence within the realm of contingency, God's speech is non-delimited (*ghayr munḥasar*). It follows that anything that subsists through the contingent realm of existence is necessarily finite (*mutanāhī*). Hence, if the finite '*sea were ink'* for the infinite '*words of my Lord*, *the sea would be spent'* and exhausted '*before the words of my Lord are spent*,' for God's words are infinite and '*even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it,'* that is, even if We brought about another sea like it.[209]

ʿAbd al-Qādir begins by highlighting the ontological polarity between the uncreated words of God (i.e., His eternal speech) and the contingent realm within which His words manifest themselves, namely, the finite sea of ink. As we will elaborate on in the next chapter, ʿAbd al-Qādir subscribes to the normative Sunni-Ḥanbalī doctrine of the uncreated Qurʾān. He takes the standard Ashʿarī position which postulates an eternal speech that they term "the inner speech subsisting through His Essence (*al-maʿnā-qāʾim bi dhātihī*) and the revealed speech of God, which corresponds in this scheme to the Qurʾānic codex (i.e., *muṣḥaf*).

In the above passage, he approaches this question from a different interpretive angle. He notes that "His speech is infinite because it does not enter in totality into the realm of contingent existence." Notice that he states that it does not enter in totality into the realm of contingency, not that it does manifest therein at all. This premise here is about the intrinsic infinitude of God's speech or His words. It would be finite if it were to unfold in totality within the realm of contingency, namely, the perishing realm of physical existence. But since God's words are qualified by His eternality, they have no delimitation.

[209] *Mawqif* 8 vol. 1, pp. 72-3.

By contrast, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that the "sea of ink" which subsists through the realm of contingency is qualified by its delimitation, that is, by its finitude.[210] This line of reasoning can be put in the following terms: whereas the eternal words of God embrace 'the sea of ink' in totality, the sea of ink cannot embrace the eternal words of God in the same manner. By "the sea of ink," ʿAbd al-Qādir has in mind the sheer incapacity to uncover all the intelligible meanings that are generated perpetually by the eternal words of God within the Qurʾān. In short, the ink of all scriptural interpretations could not exhaust the infinite words of your Lord.[211] In the next segment, we gain a more concrete sense of the hermeneutical implications of this higher ontology of God's words guides al-Qādir's allusive hermeneutics of the Qurʾān.

3.12 Divine Projection (*ilqāʾ*) and Scriptural Allusion (*ishāra*)

In the opening chapter of his *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* ʿAbd al-Qādir offers a firsthand description of his mystical hermeneutics of the Qurʾān. The details feature through his commentary on the following verse: "*You have in the Emissary of God the most excellent model*" (Q. 23:21). This is what he says about the transcendental source of his mystical exegesis:

> I have received this verse through a transcendental divine projection (*talaqiyan ghaybiyan rūḥāniyan*), for whenever God commands me, prohibits him, delights me, warns me, when He has something to teach me, or when I beseech Him for an answer to a problem that preoccupies me, He strips me

[210] For an extensive discussion of the nature and eternity of God's speech, see Abū-Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Moderation in Belief* (*al-iqtiṣād fī al-iʿtiqād*), Translated, with an interpretive essay and notes, by Aladdin M. Yaqub (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), Seventh Attribute: Speech, 143-155. See also Ibn Arabī's account of God's eternal speech in W. Chittick, *Self-Disclosure of God,* 34-36. See also, ʿAbd al-Qādir's extensive treatment of the eternality of God's speech in the next chapter.

[211] See Shaykh Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī (d. 1934) for a brief account of the relationship between the metaphysical nature of God's speech and its codified prototype (*muṣḥaf*) in Khalid Williams, *The Qur'an and the Prophet in the Writings of Shaykh Ahmad al-ʿAlawī* (Cambridge: Islamic Text Society, 2013), 99.

> from my self-awareness (*yaʾkhudunī ʿanī*) whilst keeping my physical form intact. He then casts into me/ projects (*yulqī ilayya*) on me what He intends with *an allusion* (*ishāra*) to a noble verse of the Qurʾān.[212]

The term "*ilqāʾ*" (divine projection) is of capital importance to the passage. This notion corresponds in Sufi mystical epistemology to an inspirational mode of knowledge, where God Himself is the source of instruction. Ibn ʿArabī evokes this term in the discussion of his mystical epistemology.[213] It is, in short, a non-discursive epistemological order of mystical intellection.[214] The transcendental projection of knowledge or the esoteric meaning of a scriptural verse precludes any form of cognitive ratiocination or speculation. The content of knowledge is directly inspired by God. The details that ʿAbd al-Qādir reveals about this trans-phenomenal experience need some elaboration. The "divine projection" of the verse into his innermost consciousness suggests that our hermeneut is not cognitively involved in the process of inspiration. When God "strips me of my self-awareness" (*yaʾkhudunī ʿanī*), ʿAbd al-Qādir relates, his physical constitution does not undergo any change. One of the ramifications that ensue from this account is the integrity of his esoteric hermeneutics. The cognitive operations of the mind are suspended during this state of consciousness, safeguarding our hermeneut from any marginal intervention in the process of interpretations. When discussing the different modalities that provoke this transcendental projection of a scriptural allusion (a Divine command, a prohibition, a warning, instruction, and so forth), ʿAbd al-Qādir ties them to a certain juncture in his mystical life. This echoes what Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī stated earlier about the experiential underpinning of Sufi allusive exegesis.

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[212] *Mawqif* 1, p. 33

[213] Ibn al-'Arabī, al-*Futūḥāt al-Makkīyah*,75.

[214] See chapter 5 (The Ontology of Heart-Intellect).

Similarly, ʿAbd al-Qādir explains that after receiving a verse in this mode, God restores his awareness and inspires him through a scriptural with the meanings He intends for him specifically.

Tellingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts in the next line that the transcendental projection of a Qurʾānic verse is not mediated through "a letter, a sound, or a direction."[215] It neatly conforms to what Ibn ʿAjība affirmed earlier about the ineffability of Sufi allusive hermeneutics: "it's a comprehension that cannot be conveyed through linguistic expression (*ʿibāra*)."[216] This premise issue undergirds another principle that ʿAbd al-Qādir invoked about the altered state of consciousness that prefigures the allusive interpretation he put forth. There is no discursive exegesis involved in this entire process, a point of capital importance to many epistemological discussions that we will repeatedly encounter in this study. In another passage ʿAbd al-Qādir informs that all his scriptural interpretations proceed through "a divine projection":

> "I received half of the Qurʾān in this manner (i.e., *ilqāʾ*), and I beseech God not to die until I receive the whole Qurʾān in this way, for I am, by the grace of God, protected in my inspiration. I know their source and their intents and Satan has no power over me since no demonic force can withstand the words of God: '*Not by the satan has it been brought down; it behooves them not, neither are they able* (Q. 26:210-211*)*. With rare exceptions, I have received all the verses in this Book in this transcendental method.[217]

Infringingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that he received through a Divine transcendental projection about half of the Qurʾān. It is worth pausing for a moment to reconsider the implication of his statement on both his exegetical corpus (i.e., the *Mawāqif*) and his mystical life per se. To

[215] *Mawqif* 1, p. 33.

[216] Ibn ʿAjība*, Tafsīr al-fātiḥah al-kabīr*, 43

[217] ʿAbd al-Qādir, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* 33.

begin with, the number of Qurʾānic verses upon which ʿAbd al-Qādir comments in the *Mawāqif* makes up less than a third of the Qurʾān. This means that a substantial body of exegetical material is missing from the *Mawāqif* or that he refers to oral commentaries that have not been kept in writings.

Alternatively, he may simply mean the transcendental projection of scriptural verses punctuated by many events and experiences of his mystical life. We can only speculate, but it is likely that ʿAbd al-Qādir is referring to his oral exegetical lessons and intimate personal spiritual experiences that were mediated through this transcendental hermeneutics of "*ilqāʾ*." At any rate, we gain from his remarks a more tangible idea of the contemplative foundations of his Sufi allusive hermeneutics. While his allusive interpretive method is embedded in the longstanding Sufi interpretive tradition, as evinced in the exegetical discussions of both Ibn ʿAjība and Alūsī, the interpretive content of his exegesis reflects his intimate contemplative apprehension of the deeper meanings of the sacred Book.

3.13 The Intelligible Plenitude of the Qurʾān

The scriptural "allusions" mirror, as we have attempted to illustrate, the unique and inimitable interpretive of ʿAbd al-Qādir. There is, as it were, an exegetical junction between the intelligible truths of Revelation and their mystical apprehension by the Sufi hermeneut. While the literal interpretations go as far as the shore of Scripture, the scriptural allusions reveal the intelligible abundance and vitality of the Qurʾān. The Sufis ground their whole exegetical vision on this fundamental insight: scriptural allusions perpetually replenish the exegetical mind of the Sufi exegete. They are ineffable but intimately accessible to those plunged in the shoreless ocean of Scripture at any given time.

In the next segment, ʿAbd al-Qādir offers further elaboration on the intelligible plenitude of Qurʾān. He rests this argument on the ontological infinity of God's speech, a foundational premise to his hermeneutical vision of the internal hierarchy of the Qurʾānic discourse. This legitimizes, in his view, the credibility of Sufi interpretive insights, that is, the extrapolation of new scriptural meanings that heretofore have not been uncovered by anyone else before:

> The folks of our Way (i.e., Sufis) – may God be pleased with them – never claimed to bring something new in matters of religious convictions but merely affirmed that they beheld a new comprehension (*fahm*) of certain revealed truths of the faith. they found support for this claim in the report saying, 'that a man's intelligence is not perfected until he discerns the countless facets of the Qurʾān,[218] and the other report, which states that 'the Qurʾān has a back (*ẓahr*) and a belly (*baṭn*), a limit (*ḥadd*) and a transcendental point (*maṭla/muṭṭalaʿ*). Ibn Ḥibbān reports this in his authentic collection.[219]

ʿAbd al-Qādir seeks first to situate the interpretations of the Sufis within a well-established Sunni exegetical tradition. He thus maintains that the esoteric interpretations that some Sufis put forth are not arbitrary but conform to a fundamental conviction about the infinite storehouse of meanings that overflow from the Qurʾānic revelation. Like other Sufis, he cites a key *ḥadīth* that bolsters the claim of Sufis regarding the consummate trait of intelligible self-fulfillment, namely,

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[218] In his classical work, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qur'ān,* al-Suyūṭī states that Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d.767), the earliest author of an exoteric *tafsīr*, considered this statement a *ḥadīth marfūʿ* ("connected") in the chain of transmission going back to the Prophet Muhammad; Another version attributes this *ḥadīth* (hence, *mawqūf*) to Abū l-Dardāʾ (d. the early 30s/650s?), one of the companions of the Prophet. See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿulūm al-Qur'ān*, 214.

[219] *Mawqif*. 1, p. 34. The *ḥadīth* appears in the collection of Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad, *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān*, *Kitāb al-ʿilm,* vol. 1 (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1988), p.276. The division is derived from the so-called *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652) (discussed below) which enumerated four different levels within the Qurʾān: the "back" (*ẓahr*) and "belly" (*baṭn*), the "limit" (*ḥadd*) and "the transcendental point" (*maṭla/muṭṭalaʿ*). For the different iterations and chain of transmission of this *ḥadīth*, see Calis, "The 'Four Aspects of the Qur'an," p.9; See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 1, p. 22. and al-Baghawī, *Maʿālim al-tanzīl*, vol. 4, p. 311.

the ability to "discerns the countless facets (*wujūh*) of the Qurʾān." The *ḥadīth* of Ibn Ḥibbān that ʿAbd al-Qādir quotes harbors this idea that the measure of spiritual intelligence is first and foremost measured by the interpreter's ability to behold the infinite depths of the sacred Text. What else can this spiritual discernment be, ʿAbd al-Qādir explains, if not "a new comprehension" (*fahm*) that the Sufis are divinely-inspired with. It is in this spirit that ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts that "the fold of our ways never claimed to bring something new in matters of religious convictions but merely affirmed that they beheld a new comprehension (*fahm*) of certain revealed truths of the faith."

3.14 The Four Intelligible Domains of the Qurʾān

In just mentioned passage, ʿAbd al-Qādir cites another key *ḥadīth*, dubbed the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd (d. 32/652). This *ḥadīth* lurks in virtually all Sufi's exegetical discussion, for it contains many foundational premises that further elucidate the belief in the intelligible hierarchy of the Qurʾānic discourse. The *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd set the tone for ʿAbd al-Qādir's deliberation on the epistemic degrees and corresponding interpretive boundaries between the mainstream Sunni and Sufi exegetical traditions. Four degrees characterize the internal hierarchy of the sacred text: the "back" (*ẓahr*) of the Qurʾān, as ʿAbd al-Qādir and other Sufis interpret it, is the outward/exoteric (*ẓāhir*) meaning, its "belly" (*baṭn*) is the inward/esoteric (*bāṭin*) dimension. ʿAbd al-Qādir does not elaborate on the "limit" (*ḥadd*) and the "transcendental point of ascension" (*maṭla*), for the "limit" (*ḥadd)* is generally understood as the legal or moral prescriptions of Scripture, while transcendental point of ascension" (*maṭla*) is more enigmatic. Some mainstream Sunni exegetes take the *maṭla* to be a reference to eschatological events, while some Sufis interpret it as a transcendental comprehension of the sacred text. By and large, the Sufis discussed "*maṭla"* along the same esoteric line as the "*bāṭin*" dimension of the Qurʾān.

As has been already noted by other scholars, the *ẓāhir-bāṭin* dyad was a more fundamental hermeneutical baseline in Sufi Qurʾānic exegesis. Whatever terms came to be used by Sufis exegetes, the point that ʿAbd al-Qādir wants to get across is that Sufi esoteric hermeneutics forms part and parcel of the four intelligible domains that are enumerated in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd. What is deduced from this hermeneutical framework is that the exoteric and esoteric domains of the Qurʾān presuppose an exoteric and an esoteric interpretive method. To illuminate this point, ʿAbd al-Qādir cites two prominent examples who gained from the lifetime of the Prophet who gained a reputation for their mystical knowledge and exegesis of the Qurʾān, notably, ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, and Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/668), his other cousin.

ʿAbd al-Qādir cites a famous prayer that the Prophet reportedly made for Ibn ʿAbbās: "O Lord grant him knowledge of the religion and teach the interpretation (*taʾwīl*) [of the Qurʾān]."[220] The fruit of this prayer, as the exegetical authorities interpreted it, conferred upon Ibn ʿAbbās a theological and exegetical erudition that earned him the epithet of "the interpreter" of the Qurʾān (*tarjumān al-Qurʾān*) and "the doctor of the community" (*ḥibr al-Umma*). Sufis have interpreted this prayer for Ibn ʿAbbās in this light too while highlighting a key phrase, namely, that the Prophet beseeched God to teach Ibn ʿAbbās the *taʾwīl* of the Qurʾān. This entailed for the Sufis that Ibn ʿAbbās was divinely instructed in the science of esoteric interpretation (*taʾwīl*) of the Qurʾān.

ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib was another prominent figure in the Sufi mystical tradition. Virtually all Sufis orders trace their mystical lineage (sanad) to him. He is considered the mystic par excellence

[220] *Mawqif*, vol. 1, p.34.

after the Prophet, first and foremost in the esoteric exegesis of the Qurʾān.[221] ʿAbd al-Qādir reinforces this distinction by quoting a statement Sufi attribute to ʿAlī about the spiritual science that Prophet bequeathed to his household (*ahl al-bayt*) — ʿAlī, Fatima (the Prophet's daughter, and their two sons, Hasan, and Husayn:

> There is in the sound narration which mentions that ʿAlī, may God ennoble his face, was once asked: 'did the Messenger of God (God's Peace and blessing upon him) transmit to you, his household (*ahl al-bayt*), a science that has not been bestowed on others?' to which ʿAlī replied: 'No — by Him who has split the seed and created the breath of life — we have nothing else save a [deeper] comprehension (*fahman*) of God's Book which He inspires to a man, and what is found in this scroll (*saḥīfa*). You must know that what is found in these *Mawāqif* is of this order and God speaks the truth and guides us to the Right path.[222]

The statement of ʿAlī sheds further light on the scriptural and prophetic sources that Sufis typically cite to legitimize their interpretive approach. ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores the statement that ʿAlī makes concerning "a deeper comprehension of God's Book which He inspires to a given man." This was not only a mark of the spiritual eminence of the Prophet's household, but also a vindication of this heritage for later generations, that is, the Sufis. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, this sanctions the claims of the Sufis and his own regarding the inspirational provenance of their hermeneutics. He closes this passage by explicitly affirming that his interpretations of the Qurʾān are of this order, namely, "a [deeper] comprehension (*fahman*) of God's Book which He inspires to a man."[223]

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[221] In one key statement where ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) he elaborates on the four levels of the Qurʾān that are delineated in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Masʿūd), he defines the "*maṭla*" as "a comprehension (*fahm*) that God intends for the servant."

[222] *Mawqif*, vol.1, 34. This statement of Alī is reported in the major Sunni concordances. Cf. Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb al-ʿilm,* 39, no. 111. Tirmidhī, Sunan, *Kitāb al-dayāt,* 16, 1474 (this has a longer and slightly different iteration).

[223] *Mawqif*, vol. 1, p. 34.

The next line of discussion takes up a classical exegetical issue that engaged the minds of Sufis and their mainstream Sunni counterpart: the complementarity and/or tension between the esoteric and exoteric meanings of the Qurʾān. While many prominent Sufi exegetes have grappled with this question in their *tafsīrs*, particularly those who have penned what has been classified as a 'moderate' style of Sufi *tafsīr,* one that undertakes both a literal and Sufi esoteric interpretation of the Qurʾān. While ʿAbd al-Qādir follows a largely esoteric interpretation of select verses of the Qurʾān, he offers some preliminary remarks that acknowledge the integrity of the exoteric meaning of scripture while reasserting the place of inspiration in the enterprise of *tafsīr*. He puts the matter in the following terms:

> If someone wishes to test their veracity, let him follow their spiritual Path; the tribe [i.e., Sufis] never revoke the exoteric meanings [of scripture] (*al-ẓawāhir*) nor do they say that their interpretation of a verse is the only meaning that can be affirmed. On the contrary, they confirm the exoteric meaning according to the outward signification of the verse while affirming that they discerned an additional meaning to what is understood literally (*shayʾan zāʾidan ʿala mā yaʿtīhi zāhiruha*). This follows from a well-known principle, namely, that the speech of the Real [God] conforms to His knowledge – glorified is He – which embraces everything: the necessary (*al-wājib*), the possible (*mumkin*) and the impossible (*al-mustaḥīl*); It is not, therefore, far-fetched that the intent of God – glorified is He – in any given verse is everything that has been understood by the exoteric folk, the esoteric folks, and what they both did not understand.[224]

ʿAbd al-Qādir begins by noting that the foundation of Sufi allusive is rooted in the practical aspects of their spiritual regiment. This motif is omnipresent in Sufi exegetical literature.[225] ʿAbd

[224] Ibid.

[225] Sufi exegetes are adamant that their esoteric exegesis is the fruit of their Sufi mystical practices (i.e., spiritual disciplines, contemplative listening, spiritual retreats, litanies, and so forth). Abū Nasr al-Farrāj (d. 988) is among the

al-Qādir's hermeneutics, as we have seen earlier, is the fruit of his Sufi spiritual discipline and contemplative experience. His opening statement leaves no doubt that Sufi esoteric exegesis is grounded in the mystical *praxis* of the Sufi Path. While theoretical knowledge and formal training in the auxiliary sciences of *tafsīr* were deemed beneficial by many Sufi exegetes, they were not indispensable for the esoteric comprehension of the sacred text.

To put his discussion in context, he points to the overlapping intelligible registers of the Qurʾānic discourse. The letter of Scripture is the backbone and the unifying substrate of higher levels of scriptural meanings. The Sufis does not negate the literal "the outward signification of the verse," ʿAbd al-Qādir emphatically notes. That being said, the outward meaning of the letter of Scripture is forms part and parcel of many possible meanings that are discerned within the sacred Book. The interpretation that Sufis put forth, he asserts, is a deeper interpretive comprehension that transcends the literal horizons of the Qurʾān. It is, as ʿAbd al-Qādir, "an additional meaning to what is conveyed literally."[226]

The ontological underpinnings of God's speech are again brought to bear upon this Sufi hermeneutical framework. The Divine speech, as he puts it, is ultimately an articulation of the all-embracing knowledge of God. The hermeneutical implications of this ontology of speech are that the intelligible spectrum of Scripture comprises all the possible interpretations that are uncovered by the interpreters, "the necessary" (*wājib*), "the possible" (*mumkin*) and "the impossible" (*al-*

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earliest Sufis to devote a section of his *Kitāb al-Lumaʿ* to discussing the necessity of internalizing the outward and inward Sunna (practices) of the Prophet for Sufis who seek a mystical comprehension of Qurʾān. For more on this topic, see Kristina Sand, *Sufi Commentaries,* Chapter Three (Uncovering Meaning: Knowledge and Spiritual Practice). Cf. Sara Sviri, "*On Istinbāṭ*, *Mystical Listening and Sufi Exegesis*."; T. Richard**,** "Qūnawī's Scriptural Hermeneutics," in *The Spirit and the Letter,* 300.

[226] *Mawqif*, vol. 1, p. 34.

mustaḥīl). It is unclear what ʿAbd al-Qādir means by the impossible meanings of Scripture unless he has in mind interpretations that may seem impossible for one interpreter but not for another.

Conclusion:

ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains that the Qurʾānic discourse operates on different intelligible planes and generates thereby multiple meanings. The different interpretive methods and communities reflect this epistemic structure of the sacred text. The Sufi hermeneutical model, as he envisages it, is ultimately concerned with the regenerative meanings that are perpetually conceived by the Qurʾān. The Sufi allusive interpretations bespeak the infinite vitality of God's revealed speech. He put it this way:

> For this reason, you will find that when God opens and illuminates the heart of someone, He will discern in a verse and the *hadīth* a meaning that no one else has perceived before him; this is how the matter shall be until the last Day, for it is necessitated by the infinite nature of God's knowledge, for it is Him who instructs and guide them. [227]

This passage resumes the major premises of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi esoteric hermeneutics, namely, that the esoteric meanings are unveiled anew and perpetually to a Sufi interpreter stem from the intelligible fecundity of scripture. As he puts it, the inspirational provenance of Sufi exegesis is inextricably tied to its illuminative epistemology. The hermeneutics of the Sufis, ʿAbd al-Qādir explains, proceeds from a direct mystical conjunction between the Author of revelation (i.e., God) and the Sufi hermeneut. Unlike the discursive and textual interpretive approaches, there is no theoretical or sequential apprehension of the textual content of the sacred text. ʿAbd al-Qādir is wont to stress the divine origin of this intuitive hermeneutics that underpins the Sufi allusive

[227] *Mawqif*. 1, p. 35.

exegesis. It is God who unveils to the heart of the mystic the deeper meaning of a verse of a *hadīth*. To put it differently, it is not the Sufi hermeneut who cognitively opens the sacred Text or *hadīth*, but God Himself who opens the inner insight of the Sufi to contemplate the hidden truths of His Word.

This dialectic epistemology entails that the Sufi discerns "a meaning which no one else has perceived before him." This is precisely what ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts about his mystical hermeneutics. He characterizes his exegetical insights as the fruit of divine inspiration — i.e., "a transcendental divine projection '*ilqāʾ*.' This esoteric modality is an intrinsic feature of Sufi inspirational epistemology and exegesis. stems itself from "the *infinite* nature of God's knowledge." It entails, in short, that divine instruction and guidance generate a fecundity of scriptural meaning *ad infinitum*. The Sufi esoteric hermeneutics of ʿAbd al-Qādir eschews the sort of speculative exegesis that subjects and binds the meanings of Scripture to the rule of reason. This objectional form of exegesis stems from a rationalist Ashʿarī epistemology that ʿAbd al-Qādir engages within many chapters of the *Mawāqif.* In the next chapter, I turn my attention to a specific issue that he takes up concerning the epistemological errors that feature in the Ashʿarī rationalist ontology of the Qurʾān.

CHAPTER 4.

Ontology of God's Speech (*kalāmu'Llāh*):

The Enigma of the Uncreated Qurʾān

4.1 Introduction

The ontology of God's speech (*kalām Allāh*) holds a preeminent place in Ashʿarī scholastic history.[228] The conviction that the Qurʾān is God's verbatim word which He revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the intermediacy of the Angel Gabriel forms the backbone of the Sunni theology of Scripture.[229] Muhammad's infallibility (*ʿisma*)[230] was an auxiliary premise to the Sunni ontology of the Qurʾān, though it was not this article of the creed that became the source

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[228]For a brief survey of Islamic conception of God's Word/speech, see Matthias Radscheit, "Word of God." In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 541-548. Vol. 5 (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006); O'Shaughnessy, Thomas J. *The Koranic Concept of the Word of God* (Roma: Pontificio Istituto biblico, 1948). For a list of the main tenets of the Islamic creed, se Montgomery Watt, "Creeds: Islamic Creeds," In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed., ed. by Lindsay Jones, 2062-2065. Vol. 3. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3424500675/GVRL?u=utoronto_main&sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=89af712f.

[229] For a helpful survey of the notion of "Revelation" (*waḥy*) in Islam, see Daniel Madigan, "Revelation and Inspiration," In *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 437-448. Vol. 4. (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004); Hinrich Biesterfeldt, " Verbal Inspiration?,"In *Kleine Schriften by Josef van Ess* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2018). Cf. Yahya Michot, "Revelation," in Timothy O'Conner and Constantine Sandis (eds.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of Action* (Malden, MA: Willey-Blackewell, 2010), 180-96. For a discussion of the centrality of *ḥadīth* to scriptural interpretation, see Aisha Y. Musa, *Ḥadīth as Scripture: Discussions on the Authority of Prophetic Traditions in Islam* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[230] Gerald R .Hawting, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Infallibility (*ʿisma*) of Prophets and the Interpretation of Qur'an 8:67-69," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 39, (2012): 141-163; David Kerr, A. "Prophethood," In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*.

http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/article/opr/t236/e0647. Rubin, U. "Prophets and Prophethood," In *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'ān*, ed, A. Rippin (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 234-247. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1002/9780470751428.ch15

of dispute between the formative Sunni theologians.[231] The impetus was the polemic that erupted between Ahmad Ibn Ḥanbal, the preeminent traditionist theologian and founder of the Ḥanbalī juridical school, and proponents of the Muʿtazilite school of *kalām.* The ideological and political repercussions of this debate are well documented in modern scholarship.[232] In brief, Ibn Ḥanbal strongly rejected the Muʿtazilite arguments for the createdness of the Qurʾān. Basing his arguments on scriptural prooftext, the *ḥadīth*, and the transmitted reports of the pious forbears (*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), Ibn Ḥanbal professed the uncreated nature of the Qurʾān in all its aspects — i.e., the recitable, audible, and written features of the codified speech of God (*muṣḥaf*).[233] Any of these features were

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[231] Sebastian Günther, "Muḥammad, the Illiterate Prophet: An Islamic Creed in the Qur'an and Qur'anic Exegesis," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2002): 1–26. https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2002.4.1.1.

[232] For a detailed study of the formative period of Sunni philosophical theology (*kalam*), see Richard M. Frank, *Early Islamic Theology: The Muʿtazilites and al-Ashʿarī. Texts and Studies on the Development and History of Kalam, Vol. II*, ed. Dimitri Gutas (Aldershot: Ashgate, Variorum, 2007); For more on the origins of the Muʿtazilite school of *Kalam*, see, Racha el-Omari, "The Muʿtazilite Movement (I): The Origins of the Muʿtazila," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); David Bennett, "The Muʿtazilite Movement (II): The Early Muʿtazilites in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, 142-158.

https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199696703.013.32.

[233] For Ibn Ḥanbal's refutation (attributed to him, at least) of the Mu'tazilite's belief in the createdness of the Qurʾān see Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, *al-Radd ʻalá al-jaḥmīyah wa-al-zanādiqah*, ed. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān ʻUmayrah (al-Rīyād: Dār al-Liwā', 1977). See also Ibrāhīm Ḥarbī, *Risālah fī anna al-Qur'ān ghayr makhlūq wa-yalīh, Risālat al-Imām Aḥmad ilá al-khalīfah al-Mutawakkil fī mas'alat al-Qur'ān*. Al-Ṭabʻah 1(al-Riyāḍ: Dār al-ʻĀṣimah, 1995). For a translation of the short creed of Ibn Ḥanbal on the uncreated nature of the Qur'an, see Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Creeds: A Selection*, Islamic Surveys. (Edinburgh: University Press, 1994), 37-38. See also Andrew McLaren, "Ibn Ḥanbal's Refutation of the Jahmiyya: A Textual History," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 140, no. 4 (2020): 901–26. The work of ʻAbd al-Bāqī al-Ḥanbalī Mawāhibī, *Al-ʻayn wa-al-athar fī ʻaqā'id ahl al-athar*, ed. ʻIṣām Qalʻajī, al-Ṭabʻah 1 (Dimashq: Dār al-Maʾmūn lil-Turāth, 1987) highlights the growing criticism of Hanbali-Sufi theologians of the later trends of Ashʿarī rationalism. Al-Bāqī al-Mawāhibī (d. 1660/1) and Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1019/1690) represent the Ḥanbalī-Sufi alliance contra the philosophizing Ashʿarīsm in the postclassical period. This was still the dominant trend in the Damacene scholarly milieu of ʿAbd al-Qādir. For an essay on the synthesis of Ḥanbalī creed and Sufi Akbari theology in the teachings of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1019/1690), see Harith Ramli. " Ashʿarism through an Akbarī Lens: The Two "Taḥqīqs" in the Curriculum Vitae of Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1019/690)," in *Philosophical Theology in Islam*, eds. Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020), 371-396; Alexander Knysh ,"Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690), an Apologist of *waḥdat al-wujūd,*" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 5, 1 (1995): 39–47.

the uncreated speech of God.[234] Abū Hasan al-Ashʿarī, a former Muʿtazilī theologian, played an instrumental role in consolidating Ibn Ḥanbal's view *contra* his Muʿtazilī foes.[235]

The debate continued to shape Sunni theological deliberation for centuries thereafter.[236] The elaborate treatment this topic receives in ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Summa* speaks to its enduring relevance to early modern Islamic thought. In the 209th *Mawqif* and other relevant chapters of the *Mawāqif*, the central theological issue that engages ʿAbd al-Qādir's mind is the Ashʿarī version of the uncreated nature of God's speech. In a word, how they conceptualized the '*trans-inherence'* of Divine speech unto the codified speech of God (i.e., *muṣḥaf*) —i.e., the inlibration of the eternal speech of God into the revealed Qurʾān.[237] ʿAbd al-Qādir sides with Ibn Ḥanbal in professing a doctrine of inlibration that posits the uncreated nature of every aspect of the revealed speech of God. ʿAbd al-Qādir reproaches the Ashʿarīs for differentiating between the eternal speech of God and His revealed speech qua Qurʾān. While the theoretical elaboration on the nature of eternal

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[234] See Christopher Melchert, "Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Qur'an," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 6/2 (2004): 22–34; see Ansari, Hassan Pakatchi, Ahmad, and Umar, Suheyl, "Aḥmad B. Ḥanbal," in *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, ed. Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_0207.

[235] For a comparative study of the debate over the nature of the Qur'an in Sunni *kalām* traditions, see 'Abd Allāh Ḥamad Shīrwānī, *Mushkilat khalq al-Qur'ān al-Karīm 'inda al-mutakallimīn* ('Ammān: Dār Dijlah, 2010) and Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge [Mass]: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[236] For a study of the development of Ashʿarī *kalām* up to al-Ghazālī and the latter's refinements some Ashʿarite theses, see Richard Frank. *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); Cf. Oliver Leaman, "The developed *Kalām* Tradition," In *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology,* ed. T. J. Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 77–90.

[237] The term inlibration, namely, the incarnation of God's eternal Word into the revealed Qurʾān, features in H. Wolfson's treatment of the analogy between the Christian's dogma of the Christ as the eternal, incarnate Word of God and the Ḥanbalī-Ashʿarī dogma of the incarnation of God's eternal Word as a Qurʾān. See Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* ("The Unraised Problem of Inlibration").

divine attributes yields such a distinction, ʿAbd al-Qādir does not endorse this view. He sides with Ibn Ḥanbal in upholding the belief that the Qurʾān is *unqualifiedly* God's uncreated speech.[238]

Instead, ʿAbd al-Qādir affirms that the Qurʾān doctrine of inlibration is inherently enigmatic. It cannot be grasped rationally but must nonetheless be accepted based on what has been transmitted in the canonical sources and by the "pious forbears" (*al-salaf al-ṣālih*).[239] It must be accepted on this basis alone, as Ibn Ḥanbal did. The point of divergence between ʿAbd al-Qādir and the Ashʿarīs centers on the notion of "the inner qualifier [or speech of God] subsisting through [God's] essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi dhātihi*). [240] Abū Hasan al-Ashʿarī deployed this principle to demonstrate the eternality of the Divine attribute of speech. ʿAbd al-Qādir highlights a major oversight in the Ashʿarī conception of the eternal inner speech of God, however.

How can the Ashʿarīs maintain that the "inner speech of God" (*al-kalām al-nafsī*) is "a simple, non-multipliable and indivisible reality" (*ḥaqīqa wāhida la tataʿdad walā tatajazaʾ*); meanwhile he also affirms that "the inner speech of God 'Self" (i.e, *al-kalām al-nafsī)* modulates

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[238] The Ḥanbalī creed on the uncreated Qurʾān was already championed by al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857), a foundational figure in the Sufi tradtion, who opposed Ibn Kullāb's (d. 240/855) theories of the divine attributes and his distinction between a transcendent and temproal features of God's speech. See Harith Bin Ramli, "The Predecessors of Ashʿarism: Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī and al-Qalānisī," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 215-224.

https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199696703.013.005.

[239]The critical stance of many Ḥanablīs and Sufis (many of whom were Ḥanablīs) toward the discursive rationalism of the *Mutakallimūn* is fundamentally premised on their insistence on the epistemic supremacy of Revelation over speculative human reasoning. The point here is that discursive reason is subservient to revealed knowledge and cannot thereby be measured by it. ʿAbd al-Qādir, like many Sufis before him (e.g., Qushayrī, ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Abū Ḥāmid Ghazālī, Ibn ʿAta Allah al-Iskandari, Ahmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) to 'Abd al-Ghanī Nābulusī, to name but a few) was trained as in Maliki fiqh and Ashʿarī scholastic theology. These sciences were beneficial to the extent that they affirmed and conformed to teachings of the Qurʾān and of the Prophet.

[240] *Mawqif* 209, p. 391. For a detailed study of Ashʿarī's conception of the of Divine attributes, see Michel Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Aš'ari er de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beyrouth : Imprimerie Catholique, 1965) ; Cf. Daniel Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* (Paris: Cerf, 1990). For recent studies on later Ashʿarī philosophical theology, see Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele (eds.), *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later* (Boston: Brill, 2020).

into a Divine command, prohibition, glad tidings and menace, an uttered report and other aspects of revealed speech?"[241]

There is a contradiction in this line of reasoning, ʿAbd al-Qādir reckons. According to him, the Ashʿarīs "seem unaware that the principle of diversification (*tanawuʿ*) pertains to the word (*al-kalima*) that stems from a unitary source (*maṣdaran wāhid*), meaning, "the pre-eternal and sempiternal speech" (*al-kalām al-azalī al-abadī*); the latter is simple, undelimited and eternal, whereas the [scriptural] words are complex and delimited by time and space."[242] Stated differently, if the inner speech of God is indivisible, it cannot be identical to the divisible properties of the revealed speech of God (i.e., the Qurʾān). Failing to address this point, the Ashʿarīs doctrine of inlibration cannot circumvent this subtle theoretical complexity. Yet, if the distinction between the uncreated speech of God (His inner speech) and His revealed speech is postulated, the Ashʿarī doctrine of the uncreated Qurʾān is vulnerable to a serious refutation. [243]

He contends that the Sufi-Ḥanbalī version professes an essentialist version of inlibration, that is, the view that the uncreated speech of God is the self-same as the speech Muslims read and recite from the codified script of Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*). ʿAbd al-Qādir follows Ibn Ḥanbal in holding that this perspective is consistent with the teachings that the Prophet transmitted to "the companions" (*saḥābah*) and "the pious forebears" (*al-salaf al-ṣālih*).[244]

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[241] *Mawqif*, 209, p. 394.

[242] Ibid, 394.

[243] For a discussion of classical Sunni theology of the Qurʾān, as expressed in the teachings of the Muʿtazilīs and Ashʿarīs *mutakallimūn*, see Chapter 3 of Omar Farahat, *The Foundation of Norms in Islamic Jurisprudence and Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 96-128.

[244] *Mawqif*, 209, p. 391.

As we delve deeper into this *Mawqif*, we gain a better idea of how ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical epistemology grapples with this paradox of Revelation. [245] For one thing, he is adamant that the Qurʾānic doctrine of inlibration cannot be grasped rationally. It must be accepted on the authority of scripture and the Prophetic teachings. Like other questions that ʿAbd al-Qādir ponders in the *Mawāqif*, he regards the supra-discursive principles of Sufi mystical epistemology as the most fitting perspective for untangling the doctrine of inlibration and other enigmatic truths of revelation.

That said, ʿAbd al-Qādir offers an interpretive clue that sheds some light on the inherently enigmatic doctrine of inlibration. According to him, the scriptural "significations*"* (*dalālāt*) of the revealed Qurʾān can be envisioned as the ontological "shades" (*ẓilāl*) of the pre-eternal Divine speech (*al-kalām al-qadīm*), not the pre-eternal speech in and of itself. These so-called "shades" of the eternal Divine speech are mirror-like refractions of the intrinsically unified inner speech of God (*al-kalām al-nafsī).* Thus conceived, the "shades" of the revealed speech cannot be intrinsically differentiated from the simple, unified, principle from which they emanate, namely, "the inner speech" of God. This is how ʿAbd al-Qādir construes this intrinsic co-identity between them without upholding the softer version of inlibration that the Ashʿarīs promulgates.

[245] There are many overlaps between the ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153) expounds a similar account, See T. Mayer. "The Cosmogonic Word in Al-Shahrastānī's Exegesis of Surat Al-Baqara," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 2 (2014): 1–41. See also his "Paradoxes in al-Shahrastānī's Lexicological Methodology," in *The Meaning of the Word. Lexicology and Qurʾanic Exegesis,* ed. S.R. Burge (Oxford:Oxford University Press in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2015), pp. 255–279.

4.2 Hermeneutical Considerations on the Sunni Theology of the Divine Speech:

To contextualize the history of Sunni theological deliberation on the Qurʾān, ʿAbd al-Qādir prefaces this *Mawqif* by listing scriptural references that ascribe speech to God. Like other theological streams, the credibility of any doctrine and creed rests on scriptural prooftexts and/or the *ḥadīth*. When these sources are either silent or do not explicitly endorse one or another theological position, the Sunni theological establishment defers to the transmitted reports of the companions, their successors down to the "pious forbears." ʿAbd al-Qādir sets out by quoting key verses that unequivocally predicate speech of God, among which he lists the following:

> "*And unto Moses God spoke directly*" (Qurʾan 4: 164)
>
> "*And those Messengers, some We have preferred above others; some there are to whom God spoke*" (Q. 2:253)
>
> "*We called unto him, 'Abraham"* (Q 37:104)
>
> "*And when We said to the angels*" (Q. 2:34)[246]

The different schools of Sunni scholastic theology did not question the belief that the Qurʾān is God's speech. The source of dispute, as it emerges in Sunni sources, stems from a divergent conception of the nature of His speech. Put differently, how does the revealed speech relate to the Divine Speaker? Reflecting on this matter, ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

[246] *Mawqif* 209, p. 429.

> Know that the time of the companions [of the Prophet] and the righteous forbears *(al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) elapsed while they unanimously believed that God is a speaker (*mutakallim*) and that the Qurʾān — which is enclosed between the two covers of the scriptural codex (*muṣḥaf*) —is the literal speech of God (most glorified). For them, it [Qurʾān] is like other revealed scriptures (*kutub munazzala*); they did not further deliberate on this matter. They did not say: (1) God speaks *through* His essence (*bi dhātihi),* or (2) through an existential attribute added to His essence (*sifāt wujūdiyya zāʾida ʿalā dhātihi*)[247]; or (3) that the meaning of [being] a Speaker is that He creates speech in the created through which He intends to Speak with what He wills to communicate (*khāliq al-kalām fīman yurīdu bihī al-takallum bimā yurīdu mina al- kalām*); (4) that His Speech is one of the relations (*nisba mina al-nisab*), nor did they differentiate between the recitation (*tilāwa*) and recited (*matllū*), the reading (*qirāʾa*) and the read (*maqrūʾ*), the writing (*al-kitāba*) and the written (*al-maktūb*).[248]

From what we can gather, the relation of the Qurʾān *qua* God's revealed speech was not a theological problem for the earlier generation of Muslims. As noted earlier, the theological implication of this question became the source of intensive debate among the formative theologians, especially the rivalry between the Muʿtazilite and Ibn Ḥanbal. Before then, ʿAbd al-Qādir claims that the first generations of Muslims did not introduce any distinction between the revealed speech of God and His speech proper. The different theoretical issues and notions that the Muʿtazilite and Ashʿarīs *mutakallimūn* raised to defend their respective positions reflect a later development in the history of Sunni theology. ʿAbd al-Qādir contends that "the pious forbears" made no distinction whatsoever between the uncreated and revealed speech. The Qurʾān was simply the uncreated speech of God and in every respect.

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[247] For Ashʿarī's notion of a superadded Divine attributes, see Michel Allard, *Le problème des attributs.* For a comparative account, see Nader El-Bizri, "God: Essence and Attributes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. by Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 121-40.

[248] *Mawqif*, 209, p. 391.

Many issues arose in the minds of the *mutakallimūn* who began to ponder different aspects of the revealed speech of God in its scriptural prototype. Is Divine speech made of the same qualities and properties as human speech? Is God's speech mediated through letters, sounds, words? Is God's speech identical to Him or a separate attribute? Does His speech unfold in space and time, and what would the implication of this be for the Muslim creed?

According to ʿAbd al-Qādir, some of these questions are not documented in the transmitted creed of the first generations. He means that their consensus absolved them from deliberating over these divisive theological issues. What fundamentally defines the creed "of "the companions" and "the pious forbears" is the belief "that God is a speaker and that the Qurʾān, which is between the two covers of the scriptural codex (*muṣḥaf*), is the literal speech of God." Since they did not distinguish between God *qua* Speaker and the Qurʾān *qua* His speech, no distinction should be uphled between them. As ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets it, the unanimity of the first generations of Muslims was breached by the *mutakallimūn* who first questioned the intrinsic nature of God's speech.

ʿAbd al-Qādir lists a few conceptual terms that the *mutakallimūn* devised to explicate the nature of God's speech, among which are the following:

i) "God speaks through His essence" (*bi dhātihi*)
ii) God speaks "through an existential attribute added to His essence (*sifāt wujūdiyya zāʾida ʿalā dhātihi*)
iii) The meaning of Speaker is that "He creates speech in the created beings endowed with speech) (*khāliq al-kalām fīman yatakallam mina al-makhluqāt)*
iv) His speech "is one of the relations (*nisba mina al-nisab*)."[249]

[249] Ibid.

The listed theoretical formulations are explained in different parts of this *Mawqif*. ʿAbd al-Qādir contends that they are in no way an indication of the theological sophistication of the *mutakallimūn.* Indeed, the conflicting notions and arguments reflect for ʿAbd al-Qādir a theological deviance from the unified creed of "the companions" and "*salaf al-ṣāliḥ*". If what reached later generations from these eminent generations is the conviction that the Qurʾān is God's literal speech *strictu sensus*, this theological perspective should be the precedent against which later views are judged. With these preliminary remarks in mind, ʿAbd al-Qādir turns his attention to the prominent dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and the Muʿtazilite over the ontological status of the revealed Qurʾān. [250]

ʿAbd al-Qādir's engagement with the Muʿtazilite is somewhat brief. He nonetheless offers critical points of discussion that have been foundational to their arguments for the createdness of the Qurʾān:[251]

> The Muʿtazilite school, which emerged at the beginning of the third century, professed that God (glorified is He) is a speaker in the sense that He creates 'speech' in the thing through which *He wills* [my emphasis] to speak (*khāliq al-kalām fīman yurīdu bihi al-takallum*) with what He wills to

[250] On the origins and a discussion of the theological dispute between Muʿtazilite theologians and Ibn Ḥanbal, see Wilfred Madelung, "The Origins of the Controversy Concerning the Creation of the Koran," in *Orientalia Hispanica: Sive Studia F. M. Pareja Octogenario Dicata, J. M. Barral*, ed. J. M. Barral (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 404-25; C. Melchert, "The Adversaries of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal," *Arabica* 44, 2 (1997): 234-253. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1163/1570058972582461.
On the state-enforced Muʿtazilī doctrine of the created Qur'an by the Caliph Maʾmūn (d. 833) and the persecution of Ibn Ḥanbal for his refusal to endorse this view, see M. Hinds, '*Miḥna'*,"in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, P.J. Bearn (Volumes X, XI, XII), Th. Bianquis (Volumes X, XI, XII), et al.

[251] ʿAbd al-Qādir's knowledge of Muʿtazilī theology was mediated through Ashʿari texts. As mentioned in the *Tuhfa* (vol. 2, p. 484), ʿAbd al-Qādir read and taught the Ashʿarī theological corpus of al-Sanūsī (d. 895/1490). For an analysis of two Muʿtazila theologians' doctrine of the created speech of God, see J. R. T. M. Peters, *God's Created Speech : a Study in the Speculative Theology of the Muʿtazilī Qāḍi l-Quḍāt Abūl-Hasan 'Abd Al-Jabbār and Ahmad al-Hamadānī* (Leyden: Brill, 1976), especially Chapter 3 (The Qur'an and God's Other Speech) and section 4. (God's Speech and His Revelation, 417-420).

> communicate (*bimā yurīdu mina al-kalām*). According to them, then, Moses heard the speech of the tree, that is, the speech that God created in it [i.e., the tree]; he [Moses] did not, therefore, hear the Speech of God (glorified is He) *per se*. They [Muʿtazilite] did not, therefore, *ascribe* speech or any other divine attribute to God, unlike the attributists (*ṣifātiyya*) among the Ashʿarites and others who predicate them [attributes] of Him; the exception [among the Muʿtazila] is Abu Hāshim[252] who attributed to God 'five [inner] states' (*aḥwāl*)[253]… they [Muʿtazilīs] claim then that the Qurʾān — referring to what is between the two covers of the scriptural codex (*muṣhaf*) — that we read with our tongues and that we memorize in our hearts is a created (*makhlūq*) and originated (*muḥdath*) entity like other originated entities (*muḥdathāt*).[254]

As ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, while the Muʿtazilite believe that God is a Speaker (*mutakallim*), they do not believe that his speech is an attribute but that He "creates speech" (*khāliq al-kalām*) in some existential entity which channels His speech. As ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets it, the Muʿtazilite maintains that the intermediary that channels God's speech is the speaker proper which conveys God's will. Stated differently, it is through some substratum that God's will *is verbalized*. In this vein, speech is not for the Muʿtazilite an attribute of God. God *speaks accidentally* through a created medium not *essentially* through Himself. To justify their theological conception of Divine speech, the Muʿtazilite cite the Qurʾānic verse where God is reported to have spoken directly to the Prophet Moses through a tree: "*When he [Moses] came to it, a voice cried from the right of the*

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[252] For an overview of the life and theological thought of Abū Hāshim Jubbāʾī (d. 321/933), a prominent Muʿtazilī theologian, see Shabestari, Mohammad Mojtahed, and Gholami, Rahim, "Abū Hāshim Al-Jubbāʾī," In *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, edited by Wilferd Madelung and Farhad Daftary. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_COM_0080.

[253]. For a comprehensive analysis of Al-Jubbāʾī's theory of "states", see Ahmed Alami, *L'ontologie modale : étude de la théorie des modes d'Abū Hāšim al-Ǧubbā'i* (Paris: Vrin, 2001). Cf. Richard Frank, *Early Islamic Theology: The Muʿtazilites and al-Ashʿari,* Chap. V (Abu Hashim's Theory of "States": Its Structure and Function), 85-100.

[254] *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, *Mawqif* 209, p. 429.

watercourse, in the sacred hollow, coming from the tree: 'Moses, I am God, the Lord of all worlds." (Q. 28:30).

The Prophet Moses, the Muʿtazilite remark, "did not hear the speech of God per se" but the speech God created in the tree. So conceived, God's speech is believed to be an originated entity *(muḥdath) "*like other 'originated entities (*muḥdathāt*). In this sense, the speech that was heard by the Prophet Moses was the speech that emanated from the tree which one of "the originated entities" (*muḥdathāt*). Should speech emanate from God, the Muʿtazilite object, God would be *qualified* by the temporal properties of speech. Stated differently, the speech of the Qurʾān is analogous for the Muʿtazilite to the voice that God created in the tree. [255]

This is the basis of the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān. As ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks, the Muʿtazilite "do not predicate speech or any other divine attribute of God, unlike "the attributists" (*ṣifātiyya*) by whom he means the Ḥanbalīs and Ashʿarīs theologians who affirm the attributes that God ascribes to Himself in the Qurʾān.[256] For the Muʿtazilite, then, the Prophet Moses heard the speech God created in the tree, not the speech of God *per se*. Most Muʿtazilite based their argument on the createdness of the Qurʾān on this line of reasoning. ʿAbd al-Qādir briefly alludes to a slightly different conception of the divine attributes that Abū Hāshim Jubbāʾī's

[255] In the Qurʾān, the notion of "a guarded Tablet" (*lawḥ mahfūẓ*) has been used by the theologians to endorse their view that God's revealed speech is created within a transcendental tablet: "*Nay, but it is a glorious Koran, in a guarded tablet*." (Q. 85, 20-21).

[256] For the Muʿtazilī doctrine of the divine attributes, see Albīr Naṣrī Nādir, *Le système philosophique des Muʿtazila, premiers penseurs de l'Islam* (Beyrouth : Les Lettres orientales, 1956), Chap. 2 (Les Attributs Divins), 50-62. For a discussion of a formative Muʿtazilī theologian's conception of God's attributes (Abū'l Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf's (d. 841), see Richard Frank: *Early Islamic Theology: The Muʿtazilites and al-Ashʿari,* Chap. II (The Divine Attributes According to the Teachings of Abu'l Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf), 451-506 and his *Beings and their Attributes: The Teaching of the Baṣrian School of the Muʿtazila in the Classical Period* (Albany, NY: Suny Press, 1978). For the Muʿtazilite, the co-existence of divine attributes violates the absolute oneness of God, the cardinal tenet of the Islamic monotheistic conception of God. This argument forms the basis of their denial of an uncreated speech of God, as postulated by the Ḥanbalī and Ashʿarīs. See R. Frank: *Early Islamic Theology*, 466-473.

notion (d. 321/933), the prominent Muʿtazilī theologian, devised to explicate the notion of divine attributes. Jubbāʾī listed "five inner states" (*aḥwāl*) of the Divine essence, which he conceived as modalities of God's essence rather than distinctive attributes in themselves.[257] In sum, ʿAbd al-Qādir gives a broad exposition of the main premises that underlies the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the created Qurʾān. Though they believed that it was created by God, the features of Scripture that Muslims read, recite and inscribe are created (*makhlūq*) and "originated" (*muḥdath*).

4.3 The Ashʿarī Dialectic Loophole: "The Speech of the Self " (*al-maʿnā al-nafsī*)

Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, a former Muʿtazilite and the eponymous founder of Ashʿarī school, became the paradigmatic figure in the history of Sunni *kalām*.[258] After renouncing his Muʿtazilite convictions, he devoted himself to disproving their theological errors, notably, their doctrine of the created Qurʾān. His accomplishment, as ʿAbd al-Qādir notes below, was to consolidate the traditionalist creed of Ibn Ḥanbal within the Sunni theological establishment. [259] ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

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[257] Frank, R. M, "Abū Hāshim's Theory of "States": Its Structure and Function," In *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos Arabes e Islāmicos. Coimbra-Lisboa 1 a 8 septembro de 1968* (Leiden: Brill, 1971a), 85–100.

[258] Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law 9th-10th Centuries C.E,* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). For a helpful survey of pre-Ashʿarī theology, see pre-Harith Bin Ramli, "The Predecessors of Ashʿarism: Ibn Kullāb, al-Muḥāsibī and al-Qalānisī'," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 215-224.

https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199696703.013.005;

Richard Frank: *Early Islamic Theology*, pp. 490- 506.

[259]al-Ashʿarī's creed is found in two important texts, his *Kitāb Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Naʿīm Zarzūr, al-Ṭabʿah 1 (Bayrūt : al-Maktabah al-ʿAṣriyah, 2005) and his *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Maktabat Dār al-Bayān, 1999). For a summary of al-Ashʿarī's doctrine of the uncreated speech

> Then came Ashʿarī, the Imam of the Sunna and the established consensus (*al-jamāʿa*); He professed that the uncreated speech of God (most glorified) is "the speech of the Self subsisting through His essence" (*al-maʿnā al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi dhātihi*) [260] and that the codified speech of the Qurʾan — which is between the two covers of the codex (*muṣḥaf*) — is the uncreated speech of God (*kalāmu'llāh ghayr makhlūq*).He introduced thereby a third proposition.[261]

ʿAbd al-Qādir picks out the key notion of "an inner qualifier subsisting through His essence" to set the tone for his discussion of the Ashʿarī account of the uncreated nature of God's revealed speech — i.e., the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān. The basic premise behind this notion goes as follows: The notion of "an inner speech subsisting through His essence" (*al-maʿnā al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi dhātihi*) was deployed to prove that God's speech is qualified by the nature of God. Hence, if God is eternal, as stipulated in the Islamic creed, so must the attributes that qualify Him and subsist through his eternally.

The Ashʿarī adduced from this line of reasoning the identity between "the inner speech or qualifier" and the revealed speech of God, that is, the codified scripture (*muṣḥaf*). ʿAbd al-Qādir endorses this thesis. It merely adds some theoretical elucidation to Ibn Ḥanbal's stance on the

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of God, see Ibn Fūrak, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Mujarrad maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī'l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī: exposé de la doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī*, ed. D. Gimaret (Beyrouth: Dar el-Machreq, 1987), pp. 59-69; see also

Chapter Two (Discussion of the Qurʾān and the Divine Will) of Richard McCarthy, *The Theology of al-Ashʿarī: The Arabic Texts of al-Ashʿarī's Kitāb al-Lumaʿ and Risālat istiḥsān al-khawḍ fī ʿilm al-kalām* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1953).

[260] I follow Jane Peters in translating the Arabic term *maʿna* as "qualifier" instead of "meaning" or "entitative determinants", as other scholars have done so. For the variant translation of these terms, see *God's Created Speech,* p. 157, note 234, and p. 308.

[261] *Mawqif* 209, p. 391.The first is that God's speech is created (i.e., Muʿtazilī); the second is that Abū Hāshim Jubbāʾī's conception of God's attributes (including speech) as 'states' (*aḥwāl*) of the Divine essence; the third position is one that Ashʿarī expounded through the notion of "an inner qualifier subsisting through the essence."

uncreatedness of the Qurʾān, which the Sufis, Ḥanbalīs, and Ashʿarī attribute to the transmitted creed "of the pious forbears" (*al-salaf al-sālih*). Consider this passage:

> Know that the pious forebear (*al-salaf al-sālih*) affirmed the eternity *a parte ante* (*qidam*) and eternity *a parte post* (*azaliyya*) of what is between the covers of the codex (*muṣhaf*) and did not inquire further about this matter and its quintessence; the Muʿtazilite affirmed the createdness (*khalqiyya*) of the Qurʾān, meaning the content comprised between the two covers of the *muṣḥaf* without delving too much into this matter. Thereafter, however, dissension multiplied and competing voices within the Muhammadan community rang louder: with different [theological] fractions accusing and cursing each other …In response, I say I am neither an imitator (*muqallid*) nor limited (*muqayyad*) by one perspective. I only affirm what I was taught by God – glorified is He – from His sacred Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger – peace and blessings upon him through a lordly instruction (*tafhīm al-rabbāni*). [262]

As ʿAbd al-Qādir contends, "the pious forebear" presumably believed that the codified speech of God (*muṣḥaf*) is qualified by the "eternity" (*qidam*) and pre-eternity (*azaliyya*) of God.[263] According to ʿAbd al-Qādir, this was the normative creed of the first generations of Muslims until the emergence of new schools of Sunni speculative theology (*kalam*). For ʿAbd al-Qādir, the unanimity of the "*salaf*" justifies the lack of deliberation over this question. This is a key point that he will further develop in his defense of the unified theology of the "*salaf*" and the Sufis. How the codified Qurʾān is qualified by eternity (*qidam*) and pre-eternity (*azaliyya*) would only become a theological problem for the formative *mutakallimūn* and successive generations. At this juncture

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[262] *Mawqif* 209, pp. 429-430.

[263] Thought there is no codified teachings of the "*salaf*", Ibn Ḥanbal and Ashʿarī and their followers include in addition to scriptural prooftexts, *ḥadīth* and oral reports from the successors (*tābiʾūn*) which lend support to the belief in the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān. See, *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna* (section on what the transmitters *ḥadīth* say about the Qurʾān).

of the *Mawqif*, ʿAbd al-Qādir states that his insights on this contested issue stem from "a lordly instruction" (*tafhīm rabbāni*) and that he neither imitates nor is he conditioned by any theological perspective.[264] By declaring that his account of God's revealed speech is the fruit of "a lordly instruction, ʿAbd al-Qādir is reasserting his intellectual autonomy by grounding it in divine inspiration.[265] This motif is encountered repeatedly in the *Mawāqif* to reassure his audience of the inspirational provenance of his mystical insights.

4.4 The Unspoken Creed of the Pious Forebears

Returning to his reflections on the origins of the dispute over the nature of God's speech, ʿAbd al-Qādir offers some preliminary remarks on Ibn Ḥanbal and his vigorous defense of the presumed creed of "the companions" and "*salaf*" on the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān. He writes:

> Our pious forebears *(al-salaf al- ṣāliḥ),* such as Imam Ahmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] and his likes, were subjected to all sorts of hardship and persecution: they patiently endured imprisonment, banishment, and degradation, yet they did not proclaim the createdness of the Qurʾan (*khalq al-Qurʾān*) based on what became established for them in the sacred Book, the Sunnah and the consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the companions *(al-ṣaḥaba)* and the successors (*al-tabiʿūn*), namely, that the Qurʾan that is between the two covers of the scriptural codex *(muṣḥaf*) is in every respect (*min jāmiʿ al-aḥkam*) congruent with the (ontological) nature of Him to whom it is ascribed and attributed, meaning, God (glorified is He). This [ontological congruence with [Him] is determined by (His) eternity *a parte ante (qidam)* and eternity *a parte post (azaliyya),* holiness (*taqdīs*), and his

[264] The possibility of an inspirational hermeneutics of Scripture or knowledge has been not gone unchallenged by non-Sufis. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, Sufi esoteric exegesis does not dwell on this dispute, given that many of his Sufi forerunners, notably, Imam al-Ghazālī, have shown the scriptural and *ḥadīth* foundations of Sufi esoteric exegesis. The standards and criterion of Sufi exegesis have been extensively discussed by Sufis who were also recognized authorities in the exoteric religious sciences.

[265] *Mawqif* 209, pp. 429-430.

> incomparability (*tanzīh*) with the attributes of contingent beings (*awṣāf al- muḥdathāt*).[266]

For ʿAbd al-Qādir, Ibn Ḥanbal represents a paradigmatic example of "a pious forbear" who resiliently endured physical and mental torture for refusing to sanction what he considered the heretical innovation of the Muʿtazilite theologians on the createdness of the Qurʾān. Ibn Ḥanbal fervently defended his conviction about the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān, basing his arguments, as ʿAbd al-Qādir contends, on scriptural prooftexts, the *ḥadīth* and the transmitted consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the companions *(al-ṣaḥaba)* and their successors (*al-tabiʿūn*).[267]

As ʿAbd al-Qādir sees it, Ibn Ḥanbal intuitively grasped from his deeper reflection on the canonical sources and the compiled reports of the companions *(al-ṣaḥaba)* and their successors (*al-tabiʿūn*) that God's revealed speech must in every respect (*min jamīʿ al-aḥkam*) be congruent (*muḥkam*) with His nature. If God is qualified by "eternity a parte ante*" (qidam), "*eternity a parte post" *(azaliyya), "*sacrality" (*taqdīs*), and "transcendence" (*tanzīh*), his speech and any other attribute must necessarily be qualified by these essential predicates. ʿAbd al-Qādir presupposes that the earlier generations intuitively applied this principle on the nature of the revealed speech of God, namely, the scriptural codex (*musḥaf*), which they knew was from the attributes of contingent beings (*awṣāf al- muḥdathāt*).

As we mentioned earlier, it was Ashʿarī who consolidated the Ḥanbalī perspective in the Sunni *kalām* tradition. The notion of "an inner qualifier" was of capital importance for proving the uncreated nature of the Qurʾān. Though it is ontologically distinct from the temporal features of

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[266] *Mawqif* 209, p. 430.

[267] Ibn Ḥanbal. *al-Āthār al-wāridah 'an al-salaf fī al-'aqīdah min khilāl kutub al-Masā'il al-marwīyah 'an al-Imām Aḥmad*, compiled by As'ad ibn Fatḥī Za'tarī. Al-Ṭab'ah 1 (al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2010); Cf. See Melchert, Christopher. "Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the Qur'an."

revealed speech, the identity between them is still maintained. This is a theological paradox that challenges the rational articulation of "the inner speech" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī*). ʿAbd al-Qādir expresses this point as follows:

> The same holds concerning the inner speech subsisting through the Divine essence (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi'l dhāt*), as warranted by a divine ruling prescription (*ḥukman ilāhiyan sharʿiyan*). Similarly, there is *no correspondence* [my emphasis] (*munāsaba*) between "the inner qualifier subsisting through the essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi'l dhāt*) and what we recite, memorize, and write. There is no *similarity* (*mushāhada*), *analogy* (*mumāthala*), or inherence (*ḥulūl*) between them, nor is any proof to this effect, (*dalāla mina al-dalālāt*), as it is usually believed. Just as God is not questioned over what He does, He is not questioned over what He judges: "*the command rests with none but God"* (Q. 6: 56); "*the command is for none but God*." (Q. 12:40).[268]

At this juncture, ʿAbd al-Qādir states that the attributional predication of "the inner qualifier subsisting through His essence" is transposed on the revealed speech of God (i.e., the codified Scripture). The enigmatic identity between "the inner speech" and the revealed speech is the fundamental point of disagreement between ʿAbd al-Qādir and the Ashʿarīs.[269] Though there are no symmetry between "the speech of the Self subsisting through the [Divine] essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi'l dhāt*) and the recitable speech of the Qurʾānic codex, their identity should nonetheless be upheld. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, this truth rests son a divine ruling prescription (*ḥukman ilāhiyan sharʿiyan*) and must be accepted on these terms. This paradox cannot be deciphered rationally.

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[268] *Ibid*.

[269] For a comprehensive study of al-Ashʿarī's theology, see Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿari,* especially the chapter 7 on "Divine Speech."

Abd al-Qādir turns in the next segment to other features of this puzzling theological problem. He outlines a host of notions that shed further light on the cosmogonic configuration of revealed speech. He writes:

> Our pious forebears– may God be pleased with them – are those whose understanding is sound and whose intellects are illumined, attained this truth [about the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān through their sincere acts of obedience [to God], abstention from evil and scrupulousness. It is inconceivable that what has been reported regarding the intrinsic nature of the Qurʾān – what is between the two covers of the scriptural codex (*muṣḥaf*) – would elude them; The were fully cognizant of the principle of its descent (*al-inzāl*), sending down (al-*tanzīl*)[270], bestowal (*al-ītāʾ*), so forth, etc…that [the Qurʾān] was sent down from a created being (*makhlūq*) [Gabriel] to another created being (the Prophet Muhammad), that it was brought down from an originated being (*muḥdath*) to an originated being (*muḥdath*). Yet, the prescriptive rule of the Law (*al-ḥukm al-shārʿī*) and the divine clause (*al-ḥukm al-illāhī*) conjoined (*shāraka bayna*) conjoined between [the recitable] speech of the two covers of the codex (*muṣḥaf*) and the inner qualifier (*al-maʿna al-nafsī*) with respect their sacrality and transcendence (*bi'l taqdīs wa al-tanzīh*).[271]

ʿAbd al-Qādir invokes once more the authority of "the pious forbears" concerning the nature of revealed speech. He observes that they were aware of the cosmological principles that underpin the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān: its "descent" (*inzāl*), "sending down" (*tanzīl*), and bestowal (*al-itāʾ*), among others. He remarks that they were also aware that the Qurʾānic revelation was transmitted by a created being (*makhlūq*), the Angel Gabriel, and received by a created being,

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[270] For an essay on the Qurʾānic concepts of "*inzāl*" and "*tanzīl*" and other cognate terms, see Stefan Wild," We have sent down to thee the book with the truth …': Spatial and temporal implications of the Qur'anic concepts of *Nuzūl, Tanzīl, and 'Inzāl*," in *The Qur'an as Text*, ed. by Stefan Wild (Leiden: Brill,1966), 137– 153.

[271] *Mawqif* 209, p. 392.

namely, the Prophet Muhammad, both of whom are originated being (*muḥdath*). With these considerations in mind, he states that the prescriptive rule of the Law (*ḥukm al-shārʿi*) and the divine clause (*al-ḥukm al-ilāhi*) have "conjoined between" (*shāraka bayna*) the codified speech of the Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*) and "the inner qualifier" (*al-maʿna al-nafsi*). They are both qualified by transcendence and incomparability (*bi'l taqdīs wa al-tanzīh*).[272] This theological enigma, as ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to say, was presumably known to "the pious forbear" who intuitively grasped it.

4.4 The 'Trans-Inherence' of "the Speech of the Self" (*maʿnā al-nafsī*) of God

-There are further premises that ʿAbd al-Qādir has yet to develop. This principle of "an inner speech subsisting through God's essence" was deployed to the uncreatedness of God's attribute of speech. Considering its co-eternity with God, how does the "inner qualifier that subsists through the divine essence" relate to the verbal features of the Qurʾānic discourse? These questions are taken up by ʿAbd al-Qādir in the following passage:

> Just as it did not elude their [i.e., the pious forbear] illumined hearts– may God be pleased with them – that the Divine speech that is attributed to Him (*al-manṣūb ilayhi)* [glorified is He] is one of the qualifiers (*maʿna mina al-maʿāni*) like Divine knowledge and other similar [attributes]; However, if the transference of qualifiers (*maʿāni*) from their substratum is impossible (*intiqāl al-ma'āni ʿan maḥalihā muḥāl*) in the case of an originated being (*muḥdath*), how could it be possible concerning the eternal [glorified is He]? The speech of someone does not transpose into someone else's speech, nor does the knowledge of some person transpose in and of itself (*bi ʿaynihī*) and essentially (*dhātihi*) into someone else. What happens is that God [glorified is He] creates in the hearing and learner (*al sāmiʿ wa'l al-mutaʿallim)* another

[272] *Ibid*.

> intelligible (*maʿna ʿākhar*) that is like a shade (*ẓil*) to what within the speaker (al-*mutakallim*) and the knower (*al-ʿālim*). These shades (*ẓilāl*) that are ascribed to the eternal speech [of God] (*al-kalām al-qadīm*) are its significations (*madlūlāt*).[273]

ʿAbd al-Qādir begins by noting that the Divine attributes are interchangeable with what the Ashʿarite term "inner qualifiers" (*maʿāni*). He notes thereafter that "the pious forebears" were aware that Divine speech, one of the "inner qualifiers" of God, is analogous to other attributes of God that are ascribed to God. What ʿAbd al-Qādir seeks to establish next is as follows: if one of the attributes of an originated being (*muḥdath*) *x* cannot inhere in or be transposed to another originated being (*muḥdath*) *y*, the Divine attributes of God cannot conceivably subsist in other substrata or be transposed to other beings. To grasp this principle, one should conceive this argument along these lines: the speech of Amr cannot be transposed in and of itself (*bi ʿaynihī*) of Zayd, for if the speech of Amr is essentially predicated of Amr, that same attribute cannot qualify Zayd (*fi dhātihi*); if this were conceivable, the speech of Amr and Zayd would be identical in every respect, which is impossible unless Amr and Zayd are the same. ʿAbd al-Qādir argues accordingly that the transferal of "the inner qualifiers" (*attributes*) that subsists through God eternally cannot be transposed into other substrata or qualify other being essential.

Given this antecedent, then, how does one account for the mediation of speech and knowledge from one hearer to a listener?

ʿAbd al-Qādir explains this as follows: he states that God creates "another intelligible" (*maʿna ākhar*) in the listener-learner that he likens to a shade, that is, a medium, between him/her the speech and knowledge that inheres in the speaker-instructor. The mediation of speech and

[273] *Mawqif* 209, p. 392-93.

knowledge is a central premise in ʿAbd al-Qādir's ontology of revealed speech. Conceived along the backdrop of his ontology of Divine attributes, the scriptural "significations" (*madlūlāt*) are the projection, so to speak, of "the inner qualifier that subsists through the Divine essence" and which he identifies with the pre-eternal speech (*al-kalām al-qadīm*). These "significations" of the revealed Qur'an are symbolically construed as "the shades" that mediate the intelligible truths of the speaking-knowing subject, whether God or a human being.

Moving from the foregoing considerations, ʿAbd al-Qādir moves next to the principle of co-identification between the qualifying attribute and the qualified subject. He argues that any divine attribute, or "inner qualifier" is co-identical with God insofar as it cannot be differentiated (*tufāriq*) from the qualified subject (*mawṣufuha*).[274] This applies to all attributes (*ṣifāt*) without exception. Concerning the instantiation of these intrinsic qualifiers are extrinsic to (*khārij ilā*) the intellect (ʿ*aql*), the imaginative faculty (*khayāl*) or the [bodily] senses (*ḥiss*), they are the "the shades of the intelligible realities" (*ẓilāl al-maʿlūmāt*).[275]

Applied to the attribute of speech, then, "its significations" are its shades, not the speech itself (ʿ*aynuhu*). Based on this fundamental distinction, he states that the "inner qualifier alone is eternal (*lā qadīm ila al-kalām al-nafsī*). Is ʿAbd al-Qādir saying then that there is no ontological identity between the scriptural significations and the eternal speech of God? Is he implying that the "inner speech" of God alone is uncreated, whereas the scriptural "significations" of the revealed Scripture are created? His position conforms to the normative Ḥanbalī position, which is to affirm the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān as adduced from the sacred text, the *ḥadīth* and the transmitted

[274] *Mawqif* 209, p. 393.

[275] Ibid.

consensus of "the companions" and "their successors." ʿAbd al-Qādir is adamant that the identity between the revealed speech and "inner qualifier" is affirmed by the legislator (*al-shāriʿ*) (i.e., the Prophet) based on some truth "that is known to him exclusively" (*istaʾthara bihī al-shāriʿ*).[276]

4.5 The Enigma of Inlibration: Binding The Uncreated Speech to the Temporal Word

The belief in the created nature of God's revealed speech, as Mu'tazila construed it, followed by? a key scriptural verse that states the following: "*but there comes not to them a newly- originated (muḥdath) Message from (Allah) Most Gracious, but they turn away therefrom."* (Q. 26: 5). Prima facie, this verse seems to indeed to validate the Mutazilites' doctrine of the created nature of the Qurʾān, that is, the originated nature of the revealed Speech of God. It is in the 128th *Mawqif* that ʿAbd al-Qādir tackles this Muʿtazilite line of interpretation, particularly what conceptual errors contributed to their misinterpretation of the above-cited verse. His critique of Muʿtazilite's phenomenological conception of Divine speech rests on a fundamental distinction they seem to ignore between the intrinsic unity of God's speech and its phenomenological expression.[277] He writes:

> The real speech [of God] corresponds to the pre-eternal speech of the [Divine] Self (*al-kalām al-nafsī al-azalī*) …and the Qurʾān is in and of itself (*haqīqatan*) the speech of God. It is stated with regards to it [the Qurʾān as His speech]: "*But there comes not to them a newly-revealed Message from (Allah) Most Gracious, but they turn away therefrom* (Q. 26: 5)". What this signifies is that it [the Qurʾān] is temporally revealed with respect to its descent (*ḥādith al-nuzūl*) not intrinsically temporal (*ḥādith al-*

[276] Ibid.

[277] At the forefront of this 'exegetical' debate is the essential and/or 'virtual' identity between the Divine Speech and its codified prototype (*muṣḥaf*).

> *dhāt*).We have an example of this when we say: on this night, a newly arrived guest came to us. (*ḥadatha al-laylā ʿindanā ḍayf*). What is originated (*ḥādith*) is the event of being hosted by us (*dhiyāfatuhu*) not his [the guest's] essence (*dhātihi*)… The speech [of God] is accordingly a unitary reality (*haqīqah wāhida*). The Divine speaker is one (*mutakallim wāhid*), whereas the thing to whom His [Speech] is disclosed (*al-mutajallī lahū*) is differentiated and conditioned by time and space.[278]

To better appreciate ʿAbd al-Qādir's critique of the Mu'tazila's ontology of the Qur'an, we must consider the rapport between the transcendental and phenomenological order of Divine speech. ʿAbd al-Qādir draws a fundamental distinction between "the temporal descent" (*ḥādith al-nuzūl*) of the Qurʾān and the intrinsic reality of Divine speech itself, that is to say, the essential reality of God's Speech *in divinis*. The newly-revealed Speech is perceived thus "from the relative perspective of the subject for whom it occurs temporally (*man ḥadatha ʿindahu*) not in its intrinsic reality (*lā fī haqīqatihi*).[279] This point is crucial for understanding the notion according to which "God's speech is immutable in every respect.

An example may help us understand ʿAbd al-Qādir's point. Suppose that a mathematical truth (2+2=4), a geometric notion (the angles of a triangle are congruent), or a logic concept such as unity are verbally articulated to an individual who apprehends such truths sequentially, meaning, through the mediation of time and space. While these truths are intrinsically simple, the apprehension of these realities is determined by the relative, spatiotemporal, perspective of the person who grasps them sequentially. This is analogous, as I understand it, to how ʿAbd al-Qādir conceives of the temporal apperception of God's speech. The phenomenological modality is

[278] *Mawqif* 128, p. 252.

[279] *Mawqif* 346, p. 962.

determined by the relative vantage point of the person "for whom it occurs temporally (*man ḥadatha ʿindahu)*. The Divine speech, as he puts it, is intrinsically (*fī haqīqatihi*) one and simple insofar as it is qualified by the unity (*waḥdah*) of the Divine speaker (*al-mutakallim*). These sets of premises address some of the interpretive errors that he associates with the Muʿtazilite conception of the createdness of the Qurʾān.

4.6 The Interfusion of Divine Speech and Knowledge

ʿAbd al-Qādir turns next to the ontological correspondence between Divine speech and knowledge. ʿAbd al-Qādir's concern here is the intrinsic immutability of the epistemic "significations" (*dalālāt*) of the revealed speech. He gives a compelling account of the two respective orders within which the attributes of Divine speech and knowledge operate respectively and correlate with one another.

> We thus say that the outward form of His speech *is the inward* content of His knowledge (*zāhir kalāmuhu huwa bāṭin ʿilmuhu*). All the created beings (*al-mukawwanāt*) are the words of God (glorified is He) with respect to the ontological degree of outward manifestation (*martabat al-ẓuhūr*), meanwhile, they [*al-mukawwanāt*] are His objects of knowledge in the ontological degree corresponding to inward realities (*maratabat al-buṭūn*). The relation of speech to Him (glorified is He) is unknown (*majhūla*) like His other relations (*nisab*) (glorified is He). There is no correspondence between God's Speech (glorified is He) and the speech of others except in one thing: it is in the act of communicating (*iṣāl*) what is in the self of the speaker (*nafs al-mutakallim*) to the person spoken to (*al-mukhātab*).[280]

[280] *Mawqif* 128, p. 302-303.

What we can gather from this passage is that Divine speech is the verbalization of the intelligible content of God's knowledge. In this regard, ʿAbd al-Qādir considers Divine speech as a formal articulation of the inward reality of God's knowledge. To better illustrate this principle, ʿAbd al-Qādir distinguishes two degrees of manifestation: the outward and inward domain of reality. The outward order of manifestation (*martabat al-ẓuhūr)* corresponds to any existential reality that can be verbalized (i.e., speech) or brought into the created domain of reality. The Divine speech is similar in this scheme to any created being brought forth into the order of "formal manifestation" (*martabat al-ẓuhūr*). The premise that he sets out here is that the Divine speech exteriorizes the objects of God's knowledge which subsist in "the degree of inward realities/non-manifestation" (*maratabat al-buṭūn*). ʿAbd al-Qādir further notes that the relation to speech and other relations (*nisab*), by which he means the Divine attributes, are unknown (*majhūla*) to us insofar as there is no analogy between His Speech and the speech of other beings. What the speech of God and other forms of speech share, as he notes, is "the act of communicating (*iṣāl*) what is in the self of the speaker (*nafs al-mutakallim*) to the person spoken to (*al-mukhātab*)."

Returning to the principle of ontological correspondence, the next passage offers additional remarks on the eternal and temporal modalities of Divine speech and knowledge and the order that accords with them respectively. ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

> Thus, if He (glorified is He) wills to bring forth an intelligible (*iẓhār ma'lūm*), He does so through the eternal Speech (*al-kalām al-qadīm*). While His knowledge is eternal (*qadīm*), the intelligibles are both eternal (*qadīm*) and temporally originated (*ḥādith*). His speech is eternal, while the significations are both eternal (*qadīm*) and temporal (*ḥādith*). Also, just as the intelligibles intrinsic to His knowledge have no anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*ta'khīr*) and arrangement (*tartīb*), when they become manifest (*ẓaharat ilā*) externally (*al-wujūd al-ʿaynī*),

> conceptually (ʿ*aqlī*), linguistically (*lafẓī*) or typographically (*rasmī*), they acquire anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*ta'khīr*) and arrangement (*tartīb*). The same holds concerning the *signification* of eternal speech. There is no anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*ta'khīr*), and structure (*tartīb*) in the inner Speech. His inner speech designates the significations that have no finitude (*la nihāya lahā*) in one single instant (*fi ānin wāhid*). When they manifest through the eternal speech unto formal existence, the same principle [as that of the intelligibles] unfolds.[281]

What we can gather from this passage is that the eternal speech of God articulates on the plane of manifestation the intelligible truths that God wills for them to be known. As he construes it, it is the Divine will that mediates between God's knowledge and His speech. For analytical reasons alone, we should note ʿAbd al-Qādir is classifying the different orders in which each attribute operates, though there is no intrinsic division between the Divine attribute as they subsist through the Unity of God. He is therefore suggesting that there is an ontological split or lapse between how these attributes correlate with one another.

When ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks that God's eternal speech translates the intelligible (*maʿlūm*) that God wills for it to be known, that is, become knowable, he notes from the outset that His knowledge and speech are pre-eternal (*qadīm*), as qualified by the eternality of God, his Unity, and immutability. Any level of contingency and origination (*ḥudūth*) must be considered in light of the order of reality in which they become manifest. Hence, ʿAbd al-Qādir distinguishes between the eternality (*qidam*) of knowledge and two categories of intelligibles: eternal and temporal. The same scheme is transposed on the eternality of the Divine speech: there is an eternal and temporal order of signification.

[281] *Mawqif* 209, p. 393.

But how is this ontological division reconciled with the fundamental principle of Divine unity and simplicity?

4.7 The Shades of Simplicity: Manifesting Complexity

How does ʿAbd al-Qādir account for the emergence of temporal orders of intelligibles and significations from the eternal, essentially indivisible, attributes of God?

The key premise lies in the order of reality in which the content of Divine knowledge, will, and speech become manifest. Whereas the content of knowledge (*maʿlūmāt*) is simple *in divinis,* they assume complex features in accordance with the order of reality within which they appear. Considered in light of the essential unity of God, he states that "the intelligibles intrinsic to His knowledge have no anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*ta'khīr*) and arrangement (*tartīb*)." [282] It is when these intelligibles become manifest (*ẓaharat ilā*) "externally (*al-wujūd al-ʿayni*), conceptually (ʿ*aqlī*), linguistically (*lafẓī*) or typographically (*rasmī*)" that "they acquire anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*ta'khīr*) and arrangement (*tartīb*). To put it differently, this structural arrangement (*tartīb*) of simple intelligibles accrue an order of complexity determined by the domain of exteriorized manifestation — sensorial existence, cognitive, linguistic, and typographic.[283]

The same principle, ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains, applies to the scriptural "significations" of the eternal speech. Considered in light of its subsistence through God's essence, the eternal speech of

[282] Ibid.

[283] The two propositions in ʿAbd al-Qādir 's commentary are: (1) The intrinsic simplicity of God's eternal Speech – i.e., the ontological indistinctness of the significations prior to their manifestation outside of Himself. (2) The degrees of variation of his eternal Speech – i.e., the ontological divisibility of His signification after their manifestation outside of Himself (that is, His eternal inner speech).

God is qualified by the unity and simplicity of God, meaning that it has no internal "structure" (*tartīb*) such as "anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*taʾkhīr*). Lacking any order of divisibility and complexity, the Divine speech, as ʿAbd al-Qādir states, is identified with a virtual infinity (*la nihāya laha*) of "significations" that subsists in one single instant (*fi ānin wāhid*). The last point seems to add more complication than clarity to this matter, but this principle is no different from the differentiation of the eternal intelligibles of God. Hence, if we consider the Divine unity that qualifies the eternal speech of God, the infinity of "significations" subsists through God in a simple and unitary mode, but when God wills for a "signification" to manifest within the outward domain of existence, it assumes a temporality and internal structure (*tartīb*).

ʿAbd al-Qādir shifts his attention more narrowly to what he calls the different orders of specification (*takhṣīs*) that are configured by the foregoing divine attributes (will, speech, knowledge). He continues:

> The eternal speech is the specification (*takhṣīs*) of a particular object of will through another object of will (*murād bi murād*) in view of elucidation and unveiling (*takhṣīṣan bayāniyan kashfiyan*). Just as Divine will is the specification (*takhṣīs*) of an intelligible (*maʿlūm*) by another intelligible in view of discernment (*takhṣīṣan tamyīziyan*). [God's] speech is nothing but a translation (*tarjamā*) of His will and knowledge, which means bringing forth the willed intelligible. However, God's speech is an eternal reality like other divine realities; for His speech does not follow from silence, for He is and has always been speaking, and nothing else preoccupies Him from something else. For just as His knowledge (glorified is He) is bound by the content of His knowledge in one instant (*fī ʿānin wāhid*), the same holds for His speech insofar as it signified all his significations that are in [reality] the content of his knowledge (*maʿlūmātih*) in one instant.[284]

[284] *Mawqif* 209, p. 393.

From what we can gather, there is ontological coordination between God's speech, His Will, and his knowledge. Any theoretical deliberation on Divine speech must by force consider, in ʿAbd al-Qādir's hermeneutical framework, the interplay between each of these aforementioned attributes. While earlier discussion hinged on the onto-cosmological hierarchy (*tartīb*) of Divine speech and knowledge, in the cited passage, ʿAbd al-Qādir uncovers another feature of this correlative unity. ʿAbd al-Qādir indicates that God's eternal speech specifies, or if we wish conditions any reality that God wills for it to be known and elucidated. I take this Asharī principle of "specification" (*takhṣīs*) that our thinker invokes to mean that whatever God wills must be articulated through His speech. His speech specifies, that is, unveils to the hearer what is this specific reality He wills for him/her to know. In a similar vein, ʿAbd al-Qādir states that the discernment (*tamyīẓ*) of one Divine intelligible from another intelligible is specified through God's will. The differentiation of *x* intelligible from *y*, I take him to say, is mediated by His Will, that is, by willing *x* intelligible to be discerned from *y* intelligible.

There is, as we have stated earlier, ontological coordination that underpins ʿAbd al-Qādir's higher ontology of Divine Speech: the integral unity between them, as ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains, is explained by the following principle: "His speech is nothing but the translation of His will and knowledge, by which I mean bringing forth the willed intelligible."[285]The coordination between these Divine attributes, as we mentioned, is virtual, not essential. Given their essential predication of God, they subsist through God in a simple and unified mode. When we consider the intrinsic

[285] Ibid.

unity between the Divine attributes, ʿAbd al-Qādir holds the "significations" of Divine speech translate the content of His knowledge essentially.

4.8 Taking the Ashʿarīs to Task: The Blind Spot of Reason

Turning now to his disagreement with the Ashʿarite doctrine of inlibration as articulated through the notion of "an inner speech subsisting through the Divine essence," ʿAbd al-Qādir finds a major conceptual error in their supposition that it (i.e., inner eternal speech of God) is identical with the scriptural speech of the Qur'anic codex (*musḥaf*). There are certain concomitants of "the inner speech" that cannot whatsoever be associated with the phenomenological features of revealed Speech. He remarks:

> The inner speech (*al-kalām al-nafsī*), as we have mentioned, has no structure (*tartīb*), anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*taʾkhīr*), cause (*sabab*) or condition (*sharṭ*). The condition and the conditioned (*al-mashrūṭ*), the cause (*al-sabab*), and the effect (*musabbab*) become manifest within the external domain of existence (*al-ijād al-ʿaynī al-khārijī*). The Ashʿarīs claimed that Moses – upon him be peace and blessings – heard "the inner qualifier that subsists through the Divine essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim biʾl dhāt*). I do not know how they conceived this plausibility when they hold that "the inner speech" is a single unitary reality (*haqīqah wāhida*) that is not multipliable (*tataʿdad*) or divisible (*tatajazʾ*)? For, if Moses heard "the inner speech", it would entail that he heard what has no beginning (*bidāya*) or finitude (*nihāya*).[286]

This passage follows from the premises that ʿAbd al-Qādir sets out earlier in the *Mawqif*: that there is no ontological congruence between the eternal "inner qualifier" (*al maʿna al-nafsī*) and

[286] *Mawqif* 209, p. 394.

the phenomenal discourse of the codified speech of the Qur'an. The "inner speech," as discussed earlier, is indivisible, unitary, and simple in every respect. It does not, therefore, share those temporal features of audible discourse — anteriority (*taqdīm*), posteriority (*taʾkhīr*), a cause (*sabab*), condition (*sharṭ*) and conditioned (*mashrūṭ*), the cause (*sabab*) and the effect (*musabbab*), so forth. As such, "the inner speech of God" does not have any structural arrangement (*tartīb*), ʿAbd al-Qādir argued. If so, ʿAbd al-Qādir objects, how can the Ashʿarīs maintain that the Prophet Moses heard "the inner speech subsisting through the Divine essence", given that they hold this "inner speech" of God "a single unitary reality (*ḥaqīqah wāhida*) that is not multipliable (*tataʿdad*) or divisible (*tatajazaʾ*)?

If "the inner qualifier" has no "beginning" (*bidāya*) or finite (*nihāya*), as the Ashʿarites themselves maintain, how can the Prophet Moses hear a speech that has no beginning or finitude? There is a major short sight in the Ashʿarī account of "the inner speech", as ʿAbd al-Qādir put it:

> The [Ashʿarīs] even hold that the inner speech [of God] can be categorized into a command and prohibition, promise and a threat, information and interrogation and other kinds of features of an originated speech (*kalām ḥādith*). What they overlooked is that the diversification (*tanawuʿ*) entails that the [uttered] word (*kalima*) is itself *derived* from the single, eternal and sempiternal speech [of God] [*al-kalam al-azalī*). The latter is unitary, absolute, and eternal, whereas the other [forms] of speeches are conditioned by time and space, multipliable, innumerable, diversified in accordance with the [scriptural] sense, namely, if it indicates a command, prohibition, etc.[287]

[287] *Ibid*.

ʿAbd al-Qādir draws attention to a key point over he disagrees with the Ashʿarīs, namely, their supposition that the eternal "inner speech of God" assumes features that are otherwise identified with originated speech (command, prohibition, promise, so forth). If the Ashʿarīs hold that the "inner speech" is eternal and qualified by the unity of God, how can they maintain that it becomes differentiated and divisible? For ʿAbd al-Qādir, the Ashʿarīs account overlooks a critical premise, namely, that the principle of verbal diversification (*tanawuʿ*) can only stem from a unitary source (*maṣdaran wāhidan*) that becomes variegated (*mutanawiʿan*) in a domain of existence conditioned by time and space (*muqayyadan bi-l- zamān wa al-makān*).[288]

To put it differently, it seems that ʿAbd al-Qādir is saying that the Ashʿarīs did not differentiate the transcendental unity of Divine speech from the phenomenal modality of revealed speech. Therein lies one of the major points of divergence between ʿAbd al-Qādir's ontology of the Qurʾān and Ashʿarīs's version. The Ashʿarīs's notion of an eternal "inner speech" of God was irreconcilable with the postulation that it is identical to the revealed speech of the Qurʾān. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, the essentialist co-identity between the eternal speech of God (i.e., "the inner qualifier) and the revealed speech of Scripture is one of those enigmatic truths that cannot be grasped rationally. The speculative method of the Ashʿarīs cannot untangle this paradox, in other words.

We saw earlier how ʿAbd al-Qādir construed the relation of "the inner speech of God" to the scriptural "significations" of the Qurʾān: he differentiated between them by affirming that the "significations" of the revealed words of scripture (*musḥaf*) are like "the shades" (*ẓīlāl*) of "the inner speech of God" (*al maʿnā al-nafsī*), not the "the inner speech" in itself (*fī ʿaynihī*); the latter

[288] *Ibid.*

alone was qualified by the sacrality (*taqdīs*) and transcendence (*tanzīh*) of God and was thereby "devoid of the attributes of originated beings." (*awṣāf al-muḥdathāt*)[289]

4.9 If God and the Prophet Say So, It is So

But how does our Sufi hermeneut reconcile this conception with his espousal of an essentialistic version of inlibration, namely, his conviction that the Qurʾān is the uncreated speech of God verbatim?

For ʿAbd al-Qādir, this theological puzzle cannot be grasped rationally, for its truth contradicts the finding of reason. Nonetheless, the uncreated nature of God's revealed speech is a belief that is affirmed in scripture and the teachings of the Prophet. On the authority of these two sources of Islamic knowledge, ʿAbd al-Qādir insists that its truth must be accepted as such:

> Yet, the divine legislative ruling and divine ruling (*al-ḥukm al-sharʿī wa al-amr al-ilāhī*) has identified what is between the covers of the Qur'anic codex (*musḥaf*) with the inner speech [of God] with respect to their transcendence (*tanzīh*) and sacrality (*taqdīs*). Consider, for instance, the sacred and lordly reports (*ahādīth al-qudsiyya al-ruhbāniyya*); they are undeniably the speech of God (glorified is He), for they are related by the Emissary of God (peace be upon Him) from His Lord, without the intermediation of an angel, but from an unmediated inspiration (*wajh khāṣṣ*). But since the Legislator did not identify [the sacred Hadith] with "the inner speech [of God]", it does not acquire this ruling (*ḥukm*). [290]

[289] *Maw*. 209, p. 392.

[290] Ibid.

It is in this passage that ʿAbd al-Qādir explicitly reveals the content of his doctrine of inlibration. ʿAbd al-Qādir invokes above a central principle in his mystical epistemology, namely, that revealed knowledge supersedes any epistemic method and perspective, not least of all discursive reason. He notes above that it is "the divine legislative ruling and divine ruling" (*al- ḥukm al-sharʿī and amr al-ilāhī*), corresponding to the authority of the Prophet and Scripture, that determine the truth regarding the doctrine of inlibration that he subscribes to. He does not distinguish one ruling from the other. If these two sources of revealed knowledge have determined that the revealed speech of the codified Scripture is identical to "the inner speech of God", one must unequivocally accept this perspective even if it does not concur with what is established rationally regarding this matter.

As we have seen earlier, ʿAbd al-Qādir himself states that there is no "correspondence" (*munāsaba*), "similarity" (*mushābaha*), similitude (*mumāthala*) between "the inner qualifier subsisting through the [Divine] essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi'l dhāt*) and the recitable content of the *muṣḥaf*; nevertheless, he subscribes to the uncreatedness of the revealed speech by virtue what he takes the revealed sources to say, namely, that the transcendental speech of God is identical with its revealed prototype. To better grasp this epistemological perspective that ʿAbd al-Qādir espouses, which we may provisionally call an epistemic resignation to the authority of revelation, we should probe his next statement.

He tells us that the doctrine of inlibration is judged on the sheer authority of the Prophet and the Scripture. He tells us that this co-identity does not apply to "the sacred *ḥadīth*" (*ḥadīth qudsī*), though this category of *ḥadīth* is also considered in the Islamic creed God's speech that the Prophet Muhammad hears without the mediation of angle. ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, however, that since the

Prophet has not identified this Divine speech with the "inner speech of God," it does not acquire the same ruling (*ḥukm*) as the revealed speech of the Qur'an.

4.10 Conclusion

Though the ontology of Divine speech that ʿAbd al-Qādir develops in this *Mawqif* is characterized by theoretical sophistication and analytical rigor, the sources that justify his commitment to a hard version of inlibration are in the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*. ʿAbd al-Qādir considers these two sources of truth the supreme authority of knowledge. Thus, even if the revealed statements on the uncreated nature of revealed speech do not confirm what is deduced rationally about this disputed issue, ʿAbd al-Qādir defers to the authority of revelation.

Like other epistemological issues he discusses in the *Mawāqif*, he repeatedly speaks of the inherently enigmatic truths of revealed knowledge. Far from dismissing the merit of the discursive reason, however, ʿAbd al-Qādir is merely alerting his readers to its relative scope and limitation when confronted with some of the supra-rational truths of revelation. This manifest paradox is not an expression of some epistemic inconsistencies in revealed knowledge, but it speaks above all of a domain of knowledge that cannot be deciphered rationally.

Hence, when ʿAbd al-Qādir established through a host of premises that "the eternal speech [of God] alone is eternal" and that the revealed significations (*madlūlāt*) of the codified speech are merely its "shades" (*ẓilāl*), he subscribes to their essential co-identity based on what is established in the canonical sources and unanimously professed by "the companions", "their successors" and "the pious forbears". He thus boldly concludes that "what the legislator (*shāriʿ*) has judged to be

eternal such as the Qurʾān and the other revealed scriptures, he has established this based on [some] truth that is exclusively known to him (*istaʾthara bihī al-shāriʿ*)."[291]

[291] *Maw*. 209, 393.

CHAPTER 5.

The Ontology of The Heart-Intellect (*qalb*): Glossing "The Ringstone of the Wisdom of the Heart in the Word of Shuʿayb" (*Fass ḥikma qalbiyya fī kalima Shuʿaybiyya*

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter explores ʿAbd al-Qādir's higher epistemology, which means the ontological underpinning of his doctrine of knowledge. A full-fledged treatment of all features of his mystical epistemology cannot be undertaken here. That would require a separate and more detailed investigation than I am attempting to accomplish here. I chose instead to analyze the 358th *Mawqif*, which consists of a commentary on the twelve chapters of Ibn ʿArabī' s *Fūṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (the Ringstones of Wisdom), entitled "The Ringstone of the Wisdom of the Heart: Concerning the

Word of Shuʿayb" (*Fass ḥikma qalbiyya fi kalima Shuʿaybiyya*).[292] In this chapter, I focus on the ontological, epistemological discussions that guide ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on this *Fass*.[293] The critical point we take from al-Jazāʾirī's commentary on this *Fass* is his claim that "the Heart-Intellect" (*qalb*) *qua* "the essence of humanity" (*haqīqat al-insān*) is ontologically identical with "the Selfhood of the Real (i.e., God)" (*ʿayn huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*).[294] ʿAbd al-Qādir identifies the *qalb* with "the Divine Light" (*al-nūr al-ilāhī*) and "the transcendent secret" (*al-sirr al-ʿalī*) that God "deposited within the innermost reality of the human being (*ʿayn al-insān*)."[295]

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[292] There are a handful of translations of the *Fuṣūṣ* into a European language. Unless otherwise indicated, I use the English translation of Caner K. Dagli (transl. and intro.) *Ibn al-ʿArabī: The Ringstones of Wisdom: Fuṣūs Al-Ḥikam* (Great Books of the Islamic World, 2004) [Henceforth, The *Ringstones*] and the French translation of Charles-André Gilis. *Le livre des Chatons des Sagesses (Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam)* (Beyrouth, Liban: Al-Burāq, 1997) [Hereafter, *Le livre des Chatons.* For my translation, I use Afīfī's edition of the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. Afīfī, Abū al-ʻIlā. al-Ṭabʻah 2. (Ninwā, al-ʻIrāq: Maktabat Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1989). It is worth noting that ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentaries on the *Fuṣūṣ* have received the attention they deserve. To my knowledge, A. Bakri, "Amir Abdelkader : un lecteur des *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* de Ibn ʿArabī, " in *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* ed. Eric Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005) pp. 223–34, is the only essay explores some aspects ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on *Fass* of Ismāʿīl.

[293] Ibn al-ʿArabī held the *Fuṣūṣ* in high esteem within his large corpus, citing its alleged reception from the Prophet Muhammad during a dream-vision; for an account of his vision, see, *The Ringstones of Wisdom*, p. 1. The emergence of a commentarial tradition around the *Fuṣūṣ* is another indication of the preeminent place of this work with the school of Ibn al-ʿArabī — dubbed the Akbarian school. In his now outdated bibliographical reference, O. Yahya documented 120 commentaries on the *Fuṣūs;* see his *Histoire et Classification de l'Oeuvre d' Ibn al-ʿArabī* (Damascus: Institut Francais de Damas, 1964), pp. 241-56. For a survey of Western scholarship of Ibn ʿArabi and some of the prominent interpreters of his school, see James Morris, "Ibn ʿArabi and His Interpreters Part I: Recent French Translations," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 3 (1986): 539–51, and his "Ibn ʿArabi and His Interpreters Part II (Conclusion): Influences and Interpretations," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 107, no. 1 (1987): 101–19. Unlike his voluminous *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya* (the Meccan Openings), the *Fuṣūs* was a short exposition of the fundamental Sufi doctrines of Ibn ʿArabī. As Dagli remarked in the introduction to his translation, the brevity and doctrinal conciseness of the *Fuṣūṣ* was one the main reasons behind the genesis and proliferation of *Fuṣūṣ* commentarial tradition. See the "Preface and Translator's Introduction" (*The Ringstones*) for the historical and doctrinal significance of the *Fuṣūs* on later Sufi intellectual culture.

[294] *Mawqif* 359, pp. 146. See note 18 (Introduction) for the Qurʾānic and *ḥadīth* references to the term "*qalb*" and its theological and epistemological connotations. For an anthology of classical Sufi texts on mystical epistemology (e.g. knowledge of the heart vs. discursive knowledge; experiential vs. theoretical knowledge, spiritual "taste" (*dhawq*) and "unveiling" (*kash*), and so forth), see Jon Renard, *Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism : Foundations of Islamic Mystical Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004).

[295] *Mawqif* 359, pp. 145-146.

A long discussion unfolds in this chapter on the various ontological orders of the *qalb*. There are many qualifications that ʿAbd al-Qādir introduces to distinguish between a heart-centered intellection and a discursive-based knowledge of God.[296] One crucial caveat we encounter is that the '*qalb'* is not universally predicated of all human beings, but only of some types of human beings who conform to the mystical epistemology of the Prophets. ʿAbd al-Qādir insists that the *qalb* of the *ʿārif* (the realized knower) alone embraces God and is itself embraced by Him. This unitive epistemology stands in sharp contrast to the dualistic epistemology of the rational *mutakallimūn* and philosophers. A clearer picture of this mystical epistemology of the "*qalb*" emerges in ʿAbd al-Qādir's discussion of the disclosures of the Names and Attributes of God. Unlike the conceptual apprehension of discursive reason (*ʿaql*), "the Heart-Intellect" dissolves the apparent duality between God and His disclosures (*tajaliyyāt*) in all levels of Reality. In this respect, ʿAbd al-Qādir places greater importance on the cataphatic (*tashbīh*) than the theology of the apophatic (*tanzīh*) knowledge of God.

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[296] I have discussed in the Introduction the reasons for translating the term "*qalb*" as the intellective heart. See note 18 (Introduction). For Sufis, the "*qalb*" represents a higher spiritual faculty that is distinctly able to apprehend the symbolic and enigmatic truths of revelation. Discussions of the preeminence of heart-centered knowledge abounds in formative era and classical Sufi theological literature. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996) devoted a whole text to this subject. See his Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Kitāb Qūt al-Qulūb*. Al-Ṭabʿah 1 (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Rashīd, 1991); cf. Abu Hamid al-Ghazzālī, *Kitāb Sharḥ 'ajā'ib Al-Qalb = The Marvels of the Heart : Book 21 of the Iḥyā' 'ulūm Al-Dīn, the Revival of the Religious Sciences*. trans.Walter James Skellie (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2010);

For Makkī's treatment of the mystical epistemology of the heart, see See for instance, Saeko Yazaki, *Islamic Mysticism and Abū Ṭālib Al-Makkī : the Role of the Heart* (Abingdon, Oxon ;: Routledge, 2013); cf. For Ibn ʿArabī's epistemology of on "the intellective heart" in his *Futūhāt al-Makkiyya,* J. Morris translates it as "the reflective heart." See his James Winston Morris, *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn 'Arabī's Meccan Illuminations* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2005).

5.2. Filling the Gaps: ʿAbd al-Qādir's Contributions to the *Fūṣūṣ* Commentarial Tradition

Chodkiewicz was the first scholar to discuss at some length the historical and doctrinal significance of ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentaries on the *Fūṣūṣ*. A few years later, J. Morris dedicated a brief entry on ʿAbd al-Qādir's contributions and standing within the school of Ibn ʿArabī; therein, he underscored the historical and doctrinal significance of ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif* to later Akbarian thought. It is worth mentioning that his commentary on *Fass* of Shuʿayb has never been studied before. To my knowledge, Bakri's short essay on ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on the *Fass* of Ismāʿīl is the only essay that throws light on his contribution to the *Fūṣūṣ* commentarial tradition. The lack of interest is surprising given how comprehensive ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentaries are compared to the classical Akbarian commentaries — e.g. Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī (d. 637/1274), Muʿayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. 700/1300), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335), Dawūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), and Bālī Efendi (d. 960/1553).[297] If the classical commentators on the *Fūṣūṣ* have been valuable for the Akbarian audience, the commentaries of postclassical Akbarian thinkers like ʿAbd al-Qādir and Nābulusī make no reference to them. They explicitly claim, like the author of the *Fūṣūṣ* himself, that their insights are written under divine inspiration.[298]

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[297] Chodkiewicz provides a comparative assessment of the length and breadth of ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentaries on three chapters of the *Fuṣūṣ* compared to the commentaries of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī, Muʿayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. 700/1300), ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d. 736/1335), Dawūd al-Qayṣarī and Bālī Efendi (d. 960/1553). ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on the *Fass* of Shuʿayb, for instance, covers about 80 pages, whereas it only receives 12 pages in Qāshānī's commentary, 19 pages in Qayṣarī's commentary, 19 pages in Bālī Efendi. ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on Chapter 8 (*Fass* of Ismāʿīl) takes up 34 pages, whereas it takes up 8 pages in Qāshānī's commentary, 16 pages in Qayṣarī's, 10 pages in Bālī Efendi. See Chodckiewicz, *Écrits Spirituels*, pp. 28-30.

[298] ʿAbd al-Qādir attribute his interpretations of many passages of this *Fass* to his own spiritual insights. He does not quote or paraphrase any of the earlier commentators. His intellectual autonomy is a recurrent motif in the *Mawāqif*, as we have seen in earlier chapters. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d.1143/1731), ʿAbd al-Qādir's most distinguished

While expounding the same Sufi philosophical teachings as Ibn ʿArabī and his followers, ʿAbd al-Qādir repeatedly asserts his intellectual autonomy from his Akbarian forerunners.[299] His mystical visions and experiences form an integral part of his interpretive authority. While exhibiting a wide-ranging knowledge of the Qurʾānic and prophetic sources that underpin the teachings of the *Fass*, ʿAbd al-Qādir's glosses showcase a remarkable philosophical sophistication and rigor.[300] Mention should be made of the interpretive method that characterizes the teachings of the *Mawāqif*. Even when articulating his doctrinal stance or commenting on other Sufi sources, it is through the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* that ʿAbd al-Qādir mediates his thought. This approach was crucial for Sufi revivalist thinkers like him who sought to reinvigorate the Sufi theological discourse for their audience.

5.3. Commenting through the Divine Effusion (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*)

With these considerations in mind, let us turn to the opening lines of this *Mawqif,* where ʿAbd al-Qādir speaks of the impetus that compelled him to write his commentary in the first place:

> The dear brother who once asked me to clarify for him the [problematic] terms of the *Fass* of Ismāʿīl has asked me to explain for him the [complex] teachings of the Shuʿaybian *Fass*, for the latter is indeed abstruse and puzzling. It is characterized by many intricacies and obscure issues

predecessor, also claims that his commentaries do not depend other *Fuṣūṣ* commentators. See Denis Gril, "ʿAbd Al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's Commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*," in *Early Modern Trends in Islamic Theology: 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and His Network of Scholarship (Studies and Texts)*, ed. Lejla Demiri and Samuela Pagani, *Sapientia Islamica*, 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 50.

[299] A similar claim is made by Qunawī and his disciple, Āfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 1291). See Richard Todd, *The Sufi Doctrine of Man: Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Metaphysical Anthropology* (Brill, 2014), 45.

[300]As Meftah has shown in his studies, the doctrines of the *Fuṣūs* are intimately developed from key Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīth* statements, which are the sources of the esoteric sciences that Ibn ʿArabī develops in each chapter of the *Fuṣūs* (ontology, epistemology, numerology, Divine-Names theology, so forth), See *al-Mafātīḥ al-wujūdīyah,* p.11.

> (*masāʾil mutashaʿiba*).[301] I have answered him showered by the Divine effusion (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*) of the Sustainer and Sovereign Lord; so I supplicate Him: Oh God, there is no ease in anything except what You make east to bear, and You make sorrow easy if so You will. I write this knowing that what I will say about the discussion of our master [i.e., Ibn ʿArabī] is analogous to the relation of the shell to its kernel.[302]

Mention must be made first of the abiding importance of the *Fūṣūṣ* to the Sufi intellectual community in 19th century Ottoman-Syria. Moreover, from what we know, the *Mawāqif* were primarily addressed to a private circle of Sufis, many of whom were attached to the Naqshabandī Khālidiyya Sufi order or became later attached to Sh. Masʿūd al-Fāsī through ʿAbd al-Qādir himself. In the opening statement, we are informed that the brother who solicited this commentary found this *Fass* particularly puzzling.[303] The same individual, we are told, requested from ʿAbd al-Qādir a commentary on the *Fass* of Ismāʿīl.[304] These details bespeak the intellectual prominence of ʿAbd al-Qādir among his Akbarian coreligionists in Damascus. Assuming that some of the classical commentaries would have been accessible, at least in manuscript form, to the Damascene

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[301] Proceeding from an etymological analysis of tripartite root *sh-ʿ-b,* denoting "ramification", branching off", Ibn ʿArabī takes this meaning to reveal the metaphysical affinity between the name of the Prophet Shuʿayb and the Heart-Intellect. The *ḥikma* is of Shuʿayb is qualified by the Heart (q*a*lb), whereas the *kalima* (Divine Word) by the name of Shuʿayb. The correspondence Ibn ʿArabī establishes between the different terms of this title are explained as follows: "Realize, my friend, that what I have recalled for you in this Wisdom of the Heart. As for its being particular to Shuʿayb, this is due to the ramifications (*tashaʿub*) contained in it. That is to say, these ramifications are not constricted since every belief is a ramification, and so all of them are ramifications." (*Ringstones*, 125).

[302] *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* p. 406. The commentaries of Abd al-Qādir are under the 358th *Mawqif*. All translations of the *Mawāqif* are mine.

[303] As Bakri indicates in his critical edition, one marginal notes in the manuscript of the *Mawāqif* that ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Khāni transcribed by hand indicates that the 'brother' who solicited ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentaries this and other chapters of the *Fuṣūṣ* is none other than Muhammad al-Khāni, a close Sufi associate of ʿAbd al-Qādir and the transcriber of many *Mawāqif*.

[304] As noted earlier, Bakri examined some aspects of this commentary. See note 5.

Sufis of the time, the compelling need for a living commentator was considered the norm from Ibn ʿArabī himself down to ʿAbd al-Qādir.

After acknowledging the perplexing nature of this *Fass*, ʿAbd al-Qādir cites the notion of "Divine effusion" (*al-fayḍ al-ilāhī*), which designates in the mystical epistemology of the Sufi the bestowal of knowledge from God.[305] This inspirational source of his knowledge is a recurrent motif in the *Mawāqif*. ʿAbd al-Qādir suggests that his interpretations of this *Fass* and the doctrines expressed therein stem from divine inspiration. With that in mind, he adds a telling caveat. He states that his commentary cannot exhaust the meanings packed in this *Fass*. Despite its comprehensiveness, ʿAbd al-Qādir affirms that his gloss on this chapter is "analogous to a shell vis-à-vis the kernel."

5.4. Unlocking the *Fass*: The Visionary Context of ʿAbd al-Qādir's Commentary

Turning to the context of his commentary, ʿAbd al-Qādir begins by recounting "a glad tiding dream" (*mubshira*) that foreshadowed the composition of his commentary. The details of his vision and their symbolic meanings are conveyed in the following passage:

> I had seen a glad tiding dream when I was about to write [a commentary] on this *Fass*: I saw myself standing in front of a house whose door was fastened with an iron lock with no key. I turned the knob a few times, which unlocked the door. I entered [through the gate], and I found the key to the lock inside the house. I held it in my hand and wondered at that [matter]. I interpreted the house to be the Fass of Shuʿayb and the fastening of the door as an indication that none of those who had attempted to explain it had accessed [its hidden] meanings. My finding of the key inside the house meant

[305] The notion of spiritual knowledge through Divine effusion" (*al-fayḍ*) was articulated in the work of Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, who penned one of the earliest works on Sufi mystical epistemology. See his ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, *al-Fatḥ al-rabbānī wa-al-fayḍ al-raḥmānī*, al-Ṭabʻah 1., Maktabat al-Jīlānī 5 (Dimashq: Dār al-Sanābil, 1996).

> that I had been permitted to enter this house, which is the *Fass* off Shuʿayb.[306]

Like other chapters of the *Mawāqif*, "dreams" and "visions" often set the tone for the ensuing discussion. Incidentally, Ibn ʿArabī opens the *Fūṣūṣ* by claiming that this was handed to him by the Prophet Muhammad himself during "a glad tiding dream" (*mubahira*).[307] We should note that "a dream" (*ruʾya*), "an awakened vision" (*mushāhada*) "unveiling" (*mukāshafa*), among others, are standard notions in classical Sufi theology.[308] They represent some of the cognitive modes of mystical knowledge. They loom large in the writings of Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Qādir. Some of the "visions" often report punctate key events in their spiritual journey or introduce the doctrinal teachings they seek to expound. Their Sufi coreligionists and pupils did not question these claims; indeed, they seemed to solidify the spiritual authority and esteem in which they were held. As a commentator of the *Fūṣūṣ*, the dream that foreshadows al-Qādir's commentary is first and foremost perceived as a divine permission to reveal the esoteric meanings that have not been uncovered by his predecessors. It goes without saying that for his Sufi associates, ʿAbd al-Qādir was regarded as a divinely inspired commentator on his own right.

Let us glance at the symbolic motifs in this dream and the interpretations of its segment by ʿAbd al-Qādir. We have a house whose front door was "fastened with an iron lock that had no key." ʿAbd al-Qādir turns the nob multiple times before unlocking it. Upon entering the house, he

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[306] Ibid.

[307] See, *The Ringstones*, pp. 1-2, for the details of his "dream". IA suggests from his dream that he is a second order author of this book, for he attributes its authorship to the Prophet Muhammad. For more, see Suad al-Hakim, *al-Mu'jam al-Sufi*: *Al-ḥikma fi ḥudud al-Kalima* (Beirut: Dandara, 1981), p. 232.

[308] ʿAbd al-Qādir relates many of his visions and spiritual experiences in the *Mawāqif*: see, for instance, *Mawqif*, 13, 29, 176, 169, 251, 188, 231. As for the spiritual encounters that ʿAbd al-Qādir claims to have with Ibn ʿArabī in what the Sufi call "the imaginal realm" (*ʿālam al-mithāl*), see *Mawqif* 346 and 255 (his commentary on *Fass of Ismāʿīl*).

finds the key that would otherwise be used to open the iron lock. Paradoxically, he finds the key inside rather than outside the house or in the doorknob. The interpretation that ʿAbd al-Qādir gives of each segment is intimately tied to the interpretive authority he bestows on his commentary on this *Fass*. The house symbolized for him the *Fass* of Shuʿayb, whereas the locked door symbolized access to the meanings that earlier commentators on this *Fass* did not heretofore decipher. ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets finding the key inside the house as indicating that he was the first commentator to have received "permission to enter this house (i.e., the *Fass* of Shuʿayb)."

ʿAbd al-Qādir claims his commentary uncovered meanings not unveiled to other commentators. As bold as this assertion may have sounded to his contemporaries and historians of the *Fūṣūṣ*, ʿAbd al-Qādir blatantly assumes his interpretive authority and intellectual credentials. The commentaries ʿAbd al-Qādir offers on key passages of this *Fass* will hopefully convince readers of their historical and doctrinal significance. If the authority ʿAbd al-Qādir confers upon his commentary may be disputed by other scholars of the *Fūṣūṣ*, their interpretive rigor and analytical sophistication rival his forerunners.

5.5. The Heart of the Realizer Knower (*ʿārif*)

Turning to the content of the *Fass*, the issues that Ibn ʿArabī first discussed in this chapter pertain to the ontological root of the "Heart-Intellect." As expressed in the following passage, "the Heart-Intellect" (*qalb)* is intricately tied to Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of Divine mercy. As we delve deeper into the ontological foundations of "*qalb*," we will uncover shifting epistemic considerations on the order and scope of the "*qalb*." In many respects, epistemic circularity challenges the theoretical linearity of discursive reason. Consider this passage from Ibn ʿArabī:

> Know that the heart, meaning the *qalb* of the realizer knower (*al-ʿārif bi-Llāh*), is of the Mercy of God, yet it

> is vaster than it [His mercy], for it [the Heart] embraces the Real, illustrious is His Majesty, while His Mercy does not [embrace Him]. This is the language of the common folk by way of allusion, for indeed, the Real shows mercy but is not shown mercy. Indeed, His mercy has no authority (*ḥukm*) over Him. [309]

Notice the caveat that Ibn ʿArabī makes at the outset: he specifies the category of humans whose "heart" originates from God's Mercy. He expressly states that "the heart of the knower through God" (*al-ʿārif bi-Llāh*) is engendered from Divine mercy. Not only does this typology preclude some humans, but it gives crucial indications of the epistemic features that qualify "the heart of the realized knower." Furthermore, there is no indication that this "intellective heart" is a human faculty per se or a strictly noetic feature of discursive reason (*ʿaql*). We will better understand these intricacies in ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary. We should mention in passing the following line in the above passage. The statement about the ontological scope of "the heart of the realized knower" (*ʿārif*) seems to contradict flatly what Ibn ʿArabī states about its transcendental origin (i.e., that it originates in God's mercy). He maintains that "the heart of the knower" "is vaster than" God's mercy. We should, at this juncture, turn to ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary, as it brings out many hidden premises that Ibn ʿArabī presupposes from his readers.

5.6. Probing "Thingness" (*shayʾiyya*)

To grasp some of the intricate elements that feature in Ibn ʿArabī's ontology "of the intellective heart," we should turn to basic notions that ʿAbd al-Qādir unearth in his commentary,

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[309] *The Ringstones*, p. 125. The canonical sources that Ibn ʿArabī has in mind, so tells us 'Abd al-Qādir, are a *ḥadith qudsī* (sacred divine saying) and a Qurʾānic verse respectively. The Qur'anic verse which sets the tone for the ontological origin of the Heart is: "*My Mercy encompasses everything* (*kullu shay'*)" (Q.7:156)

notably, the ontology of "thingness" (*shayʾiyya*). He discusses this principle in the context of the Qur'anic verse where God declares: "*My Mercy embraces everything* (*kullu shayʾ*)" (Q.7:156). This verse would have been in Ibn ʿArabī's mind when he discussed the origination of the heart through the mercy of God and the encompassment of God by "the heart of the realized knower." ʿAbd al-Qādir comments:

> He [Ibn ʿArabī] says: though "the heart of the knower" is created *through* the Mercy that embraces all things (*kullu shayʾ*), it is vaster than His mercy. For the heart is "a thing like" among other things (*shayʾ mina al-ashyāʾ*), and "thingness" designates the most universal category (*aʿamm al-ʿāmm*), meaning anything that can be known or spoken of. Indeed, God (glorified is He) has created the heart of the knower through it [i.e., *shayʾ*] and made it more embracing than His mercy, for the heart of the believing knower of God embraces the Real (God), as narrated in the sacred *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth qudsī*) where God declares: 'My heavens and my Earth do not encompass Me, but the heart of my believing, soft-hearted, scrupulous, servant encompasses Me."[310]

Commenting on Ibn ʿArabī, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that "the mercy of God embraces the heart of the knower" since His mercy embraces "all things" (*kullu al-ashyāʾ*), among which is the "heart of the knower." But in what sense is the heart a thing "*shayʾ*," as ʿAbd al-Qādir construes it? He answers by affirming that "a thing" is whatever can be qualified as such. He has this in mind when he asserts that "it is the most universal category" (*aʿam al-ʿāmm),* and whatever is subsumed under

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[310] *Mawqif* 358, p. 145.

This *ḥadīth qudsī* belongs to a category of prophetic statements where God speaks directly through the Prophet. Cited in Morris, *The Reflective Heart*, p. 52. There is, however, a supplication attributed to the Prophet wherein he enjoins on his followers to say upon breaking their fast "Oh God, I ask you by your mercy that embraces all things to forgive me." See Ibn Māja, Sunan, *Kitāb al-ṣiyāam,*48, no. 1825,

this category is embraced by God's mercy. The sense in which His mercy embraces all things are understood by our thinkers as entailing that they are created from it.

The puzzling issue that ʿAbd al-Qādir will attempt to untangle is Ibn ʿArabī's assertion that the heart of the *ʿārif bi'Llāh* is "is vaster than" God's Mercy. A sort of contradiction emerges here. How can the heart of the *ʿārif bi'Llāh be* created *from or through* His mercy while being vaster than it?

The first step that ʿAbd al-Qādir takes in his interpretive approach is to probe the principle of "thingness" (or to be more idiomatic: what it means to be a thing) (*shayʾiyya*) closely. Only then can we grasp the sense in which Divine mercy is said to *embrace* the heart while maintaining that the heart's scope is greater than it. He points out that "thingness" as such is "the most universal category," meaning that it designates any conceivable reality, be it nominal, sensory, imaginal, or intelligible.[311] Based on this elemental ontology, ʿAbd al-Qādir considers "the heart of the *ʿārif bi-Llāh*" an instantiation of "a thing," by which he means that this principle we call "the heart-intellect" is first and foremost a "a thing." Against what has thus far been established, Divine mercy embraces "the heart of the knower" since it *is a thing* and insofar as His mercy, as the Qur'anic verse states, "embraces all things" (Q. 7:156). The premises conjured by ʿAbd al-Qādir are as follows:

i. 1: Divine mercy embraces all things.
ii. 2: the 'heart' of the knower is a thing.
iii. 3: the heart of the knower is therefore embraced by Divine mercy.

[311] For an analysis of the philosophical principle of "thing" and "thingness" in Islamic philosophical theology and Avicennian philosophy, see Robert Wisnovsky, "Avicenna and the Avicennian Tradition." Chapter 6. In *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, edited by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), especially, pp. 105-113.

We must turn next to Ibn ʿArabī's statement that "the heart of the knower" is vaster than His mercy. At this juncture, ʿAbd al-Qādir shifts his interpretive angle. He indicates that "thingness," as an unqualified universal genus, is the substratum of any created reality. It is not clear why he states that "the heart of the realized knower" is "created through it and made it vaster than His mercy" when he maintains earlier "it is 'created through the Mercy that embraces all things.'"

I take him to mean that while God's mercy is the creative source of anything that came into being, any instance of a thing (i.e., the heart of the knower) is an ontological qualification of this indeterminate genus that ʿAbd al-Qādir designates as "the most universal category" (*aʿam al-ʿāmm).* Now, ʿAbd al-Qādir casts some light on Ibn ʿArabī's statement that "the heart of the realized knower" is vaster than God's mercy.

5.7. Embraced by the Heart of the Servant, Conditioned by Reason

This theological perspective is enshrined in the sacred *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth qudsī*) that ʿAbd al-Qādir quotes at the end of the passage: God states therein, "*My heavens and my Earth do not encompass Me, but the heart of my believing, soft-hearted, scrupulous, servant encompasses M*e." It is this *ḥadīth* that forms the basis of Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of the "the heart of the believing knower as more embracing in scope than God's mercy. Accordingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir explains that "the heart of the knower" is considered vaster since the heart of the believing knower of God encompasses the Real (God)."

The following line of inquiry in ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary is the ontological order and scope of "the heart of the knower." He offers many illuminating explanations of some principles not explicitly developed by Ibn ʿArabī, notably, the order of knowledge that qualifies the encompassment of "the heart of the knower of God." ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

> He [the Shaykh] limited this encompassment (*wusʿ*) to the heart of the believer, which is a qualified encompassment (*wasʿ al-khuṣūṣ*), not a universal encompassment (*wasʿ al-ʿumūm*), a point we shall soon clarify (God willing). Note that the heart of the unbeliever cannot be a locus (*maḥall*) of intimate knowledge of God (*maʿrifa bi-Llāh*) – glorified is He – and cannot, therefore, be the seat of encompassment that is restricted to the knowers of God (*ʿārifūn*); this is the case since the attainment of intimate knowledge of God (glorified is He) cannot be acquired save through His bestowal of [this knowledge] it (*bi taʿrīfihi*), not by way of discursive reasoning (*bi ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī*)[312].

ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores first the qualification that Ibn ʿArabī makes when discussing the scope of "the Heart-Intellect." He observes that it is "the heart of the knower" (*ʿārif*) that the *hadīth qudsī* identifies with the "believing servant" which embraces "the Real" (i.e., God). This constitutes "a qualified encompassment" (*wasʿ al-khuṣūṣ*), by which ʿAbd al-Qādir means that God is not embraced unqualifiedly. Ibn ʿArabī has expressly limited this encompassment to the heart of the *ʿārif.* This entails by implication that the stated qualification precludes, ʿAbd al-Qādir comments, "a universal encompassment" (*wasʿal-ʿumūm*). ʿAbd al-Qādir expounds this injunction when he says that the "heart of the unbeliever" is disqualified insofar as their hearts "cannot be a locus of intimate knowledge of God" (*maʿrifa bi-Llāh*). What ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores here is the epistemic criterion that determines this classificatory scheme. Suffice it to say, for now, that the encompassment of "the heart of the *ʿārif bi-Llāh"* is determined by order of knowledge that qualifies its scope, that is, the intimate knowledge of God (*maʿrifa bi-Llāh).* ʿAbd al-Qādir will tackle this intricate issue in due course.

[312] *Kitab al-Mawāqif,* p. 407.

The concluding statement requires us to pause for a moment. ʿAbd al-Qādir makes a critical claim concerning the mode and order of knowledge that qualifies "the Heart-Intellect" of the *ʿārif.* He remarks that this order of heart-knowledge of God is imparted through *"*the bestowal of God" *(bi taʿrīfihi),* not by way of discursive reasoning (*bi ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī*). As we have argued throughout this study, this is a capital premise in the epistemological system of ʿAbd al-Qādir. This preeminence of inspirational knowledge, whether revealed or mystical, is reiterated repeatedly. Concerning knowledge of God, ʿAbd al-Qādir adds this clause to reassert his stance on the limitation of reason. Stated differently, he claims that the knowledge that the *ʿārif* gains of God is inspired by God and is not derived from discursive reasoning.

As for Ibn ʿArabī's statement that Divine mercy cannot ontologically encompass God, ʿAbd al-Qādir has this to say about this doctrine:

> Despite its vastness (*itisāʿ*), God's Mercy cannot, rationally, embrace Him. But according to the revealed Law (*sharʿan*) and spiritual unveiling (*kashfan*), His Mercy embraces Him. This perspective does not contradict the former. Rationally, His Mercy is not bind Him (*la tataʿalaq bihī*) and does not, therefore, embrace Him (*la tasiʿuhu*). This follows from on this principle: God shows Mercy toward others but He(glorified is He) cannot be shown mercy to; For while His Mercy originates from Him, it cannot be turned toward Him (*lā taʿūdu ilayhi*).

Two different perspectives are entertained concerning the relation of God to His Mercy: rationally, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, His mercy cannot embrace God, for this entails, as I understand him, that a divine attribute qualifies God, but it cannot delimit Him. In other words, a predicative attribute qualifies the subject, but it is not itself the subject that is qualified by it. Though God's mercy encompasses all things, that is, the created realities, it does not embrace God since God is

not “a thing” to begin with, and He is the subject qualified by His mercy, not the object embraced by it. To put it differently, whatever qualifies as a thing is encompassed by God’s mercy, which is all the created order save God Himself.

Now, if His mercy “encompasses all things,” and since “there is *nothing* like unto Him” (Q. 42:11), God’s mercy cannot embrace what is not a thing proper. This interpretive line is developed in ʿAbd al-Qādir argument from the following premises: insofar as God is unbounded, meaning that He is non-delimited, His mercy *qua* His attribute “cannot bind Him” (*la tataʿalaq bihī)*, otherwise it would delimted Him as it delimits the things that it embraces — i.e., whatever qualifies as a thing. Lastly, if we closely analyze the predicational nature of a divine attribute such as mercy, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, we must distinguish between the subject and object of this predication. God is qualified by an attribute, meaning that it is an intrinsic quality of His essence or Self (*dhāt*). He is the subject, not the object of this intrinsic quality. This is what ʿAbd al-Qādir has in mind when he affirms that “while His mercy originates from Him, it is not turned towards Him (*lā taʿūdu ilayhi*).”

5.8. The Transcendental Nature of the Intellective Heart

In the next segment of this *Mawqif*, ʿAbd al-Qādir turns more narrowly to the ontology of the intellective heart. The fundamental question that guides his reflection is this: is the intellective heart a reference to the physiological heart — the bodily organ shared by humans and animals alike?

If so, what implication does this conception have on the encompassment of God by “the heart of the realized knower”? Does God dwell in the physiological heart? Is He spatially located within the bodily organ we call the heart, that is to say?

ʿAbd al-Qādir provides clear explications to these questions. Our commentator offers an elaborate treatment of the ontology of the Heart-Intellect as conceptualized by Ibn ʿArabī in this *Fass*. Consider the following passage:

> The "heart"[313] that is mentioned in the sacred *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth qudsī*) does not refer to the coned-shaped piece of flesh that is located on the left side of the abdomen. This piece of flesh is also found in animals and has no [spiritual] significance. What is meant [in the *ḥadīth*] is the subtle, lordly, spiritual entity (*al-laṭīfa al-rabbāniyya al-rūḥāniyya*), which has some relation to the physiological heart. This [subtle] entity is, in fact, the true essence of humanity (*haqīqat al-insān*), namely, the core human reality that is addressed and retributed. To be sure, the relation of this subtle reality to the vegetative, physiological heart has bewildered most people.[314]

Commenting on the *ḥadīth qudsī,* where the "heart of the believing servant" is said to encompass God, ʿAbd al-Qādir indicates that this "heart" in question is not the "'coned-shaped piece of flesh' that is situated in the left side of the abdomen." This cone-shaped organ is found in animals and humans alike. This physiological heart does not designate a transcendental principle that embraces the non-delimited Reality of God — i.e. "The heart of the knowing believing servant."

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[313] Etymologically, the Arabic word "*qalb*" (*heart*) stems from the tripartite root *q-l-b*, which denotes the sense of "fluctuation" and "turning" (*taqallub*). In the Sufi and Akbarian thought, the perpetual "fluctuation" of the *qalb* has a direct bearing on their transcendental epistemology. Unlike reason, the "heart" fluctuates between Divine incomparability (*tanzīh*) and similarity (*tashbīh*), meaning, that it contemplates both facets of God and does not therefore delimit Him to His utterly transcendental nature. See below for a more elaborate discussion on this notion.

[314] Ibid.

Let us briefly further probe the reasons for this view: why does ʿAbd al-Qādir maintain that the physiological heart cannot be intended by the "heart of the believing servant" that encompasses the Real?

If that were so, the *ḥadīth qudsī* would not specify "the heart of believing servant" but include instead any species that possess a physiological heart. But that is not the case; the heart that is said to embrace the Real is characterized by belief and servitude, which ʿAbd al-Qādir and Ibn ʿArabī take to be the qualities of the knower of God (*ʿārif*). The *ḥadīth* discriminates between a heart that embraces the Real by identifying it with the site of belief (*imān*) and servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*). The *ḥadīth qudsī* would have explicitly identified it with the physiological heart if this principle was universally predicated of all species with a physiological heart.

On the theological front, the physiological heart cannot embrace God properly insofar as God is considered an immaterial Being in the Sunni Ashʿarī creed that cannot inhere in space and time. If so, how can a transcendent, immaterial, Being dwell in a physiological organ (the bodily heart)?

This normative Sunni creed rejects this possibility, for it entails a spatial and hence material conception of God and compromises the foundational Islamic article of *Tawhīd* (the oneness of God), meaning the stipulation that the Unity of God is simple in every respect. To put it differently, if God inheres within a physiologically delimited organ, He must be divisible and spatially delimited. He would in turn be finite and hence delimited.

. Having ruled this out, ʿAbd al-Qādir states that "the heart" in the *ḥadīth qudsī* alludes to "the subtle, lordly, spiritual entity (*al-laṭīfa al-rabbāniyya al-rūḥāniyya*)," which bears some relation to the physiological heart but *is not itself* of a physical nature. As ʿAbd al-Qādir indicates, the "heart" designates the "true essence of the human being (*haqīqat al-insān*)."

As he puts it, the essential reality of the human being is what is "addressed and retributed" by God. I take to him to mean it is this "subtle, lordly, spiritual entity" that designates the "heart" as the transcendental nexus between God and the "knower," but also the inner reality that is morally accountable before the Divine Law. This statement opens an array of other theological issues that would require a separate study. At any rate, what we can retain from his account is that the "heart" is an ontological principle that defines the innermost reality of the human self. As for the relation of the intellective heart to the bodily heart, ʿAbd al-Qādir merely states that it is a puzzling matter that has bewildered many thinkers.

5.9. The Orders and Modes of Heart-Encompassment

Turning now to the encompassment of God by "the heart of the realized knower," ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that there are three orders of heart-intellective encompassments (*anwāʿ al-wasʿ*), each of which corresponds to different domains of contemplative knowledge of God. These are:

i. the encompassment of knowledge and gnosis (*wasʿ al-ʿilm wa-l maʿrifa*).

ii. the encompassment of the unveiling of the splendors of His Beauty (*wasʿ al-kashf ʿalā maḥāsin jamālihi*).

iii. the encompassment of vicegerency (*wasʿ al-khilāfa*).

a. The Encompassment of Knowledge and Gnosis (*wasʿ al-ʿilm wa-l maʿrifa*).
Commenting on the first order of encompassment of the heart-intellect, he writes:

> The first is the scope of intellective and intimate knowledge of God (*wasʿ al-ʿilm wa'l maʿrifa bi-Llāh*), for there is nothing in existence that contemplates the traces of the Real (*yaʿqilu āthār al-ḥaqq*) and knows what they [– i.e., the traces] demand like the human being. Other beings besides

> humans know their Lord in one respect and ignore him in another (*min wajhin dūna wajh*).[315]

ʿAbd al-Qādir divides the first order of heart-encompassment into two planes: the scope of intellection (*wasʿ al-ʿilm*) and the scope of intimate knowledge of God (*maʿrifa bi-Llāh*). It is not entirely clear if these two modes are mutually implied or if they constitute two orders of intellective knowledge. At any rate, he remarks that this scope of the heart is distinctly associated with noetic contemplation of "the traces of the Real" (*āthār al-ḥaqq*). Our thinker seems to have in mind that the human knowledge of God is more comprehensive and encompassing than any other being. In principle, at least, the human heart-intellect has the intrinsic disposition to recognize the omnipresent reality of God, that is, the macrocosmic and microcosmic "traces of the Real." The human intellective contemplation is accompanied by an awareness of the order of reality within which His traces manifest. Other beings, he contends, have a relative degree of discernment, meaning that they know one facet of God and ignore other aspects of His reality — i.e., (*min wajhin dūna wajh).* In contrast, the knower has an all-inclusive contemplation of the different facets of God's reality.

b. The Encompassment of the Unveiling of the Splendors of His Beauty (*wasʿ al-kashf ʿalā maḥāsin jamālihi*).

Turning now to the second order of heart-intellective encompassment, dubbed the "the encompassment of the unveiling of the splendors of His Beauty (*wasʿ al-kashf ʿalā maḥāsin jamālihi*), ʿAbd al-Qādir unearthed another feature of contemplative knowledge of God. This order of heart-intellection is primarily defined in the following terms:

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[315] *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, p. 140

> The second order is the encompassment of unveiling the splendors of His [divine] Beauty (*maḥāsin jamālihi*), glorified is He, of which the [intellective heart] [spiritually] savors [the qualities] of the Divine Names. For instance, when someone apprehends God's knowledge (*taʿaqqala ʿilmu'Llāh*) within the existent entities (*fi'l mawjūdāt*), they [concretely] taste [the spiritual quality of this divine Attribute [i.e., Knowledge] and knows the ontological order (*makānat hādhihi al-ṣifa*). Accordingly, you measure any other knowledge in his way.[316]

The notion of "spiritual unveiling" (*kashf*)[317] is central to Sufi epistemology. ʿAbd al-Qādir identifies this mode of heart-knowledge with the noetic contemplation of "the splendors" (*maḥāsin*) of God's Beauty (*jamālihi*). As we shall see, what he has in mind here is the experiential knowledge of the Beautiful Names of God (*asmāʾ Allah al-ḥusnā*). In a nutshell, the "unveiling" (*kashf*) of the heart-intellect consists of a visionary witnessing of the qualities of God's Beautiful Names. The notion of "spiritual unveiling" conveys the noetic immediacy of this mode of heart-intellective epistemology. With discursive reason, knowledge of God's attributes is strictly of a conceptual order, by which he means a descriptive knowledge of the significations of a divine attribute. In other words, reason can only convey a theoretical understanding of the qualitative entailment of a divine Name or attribute of God. This mode of apprehension cannot substitute an experiential and visionary knowledge of the Heart-Intellect.

Returning to ʿAbd al-Qādir's discussion, he construes the "spiritual unveiling" of the heart intellect as a "spiritual savoring (*dhawq*) of the intelligible qualities of God's Names. This spiritual mode of knowledge is analogous to sense-perception, given that the latter is of a qualitative

[316] Ibid, 145.

[317] See *Mawqif* 39,98,151.

perception. To state it otherwise, the knowledge one acquires through sense-perception (taste, touch, smell, see, hears) is of the immediate nature of the qualitative properties of the objects. There is a manifest difference between the qualitative knowledge of the heart and the senses and the theoretical knowledge of these qualities. ʿAbd al-Qādir provides a tangible example of what "a spiritual savoring" of the qualitative nature of a divine attribute consists of.

This occurs when one "contemplates God's knowledge (*taʿaqqala ʿilmu-Llāh)* within the existent entities (*mawjūdāt*)." The emphasis is on discerning the intelligible content of God's knowledge within the existent entities (*mawjūdāt),* that is, the immanent disclosures (*tajaliyyāt*) of divine attribute *x* (knowledge) within the loci of existence. This qualitative contemplation of God's attributes, ʿAbd al-Qādir observes, is knowledge of "the ontological order" (*makāna*) of the Divine Name, by which he means the order of reality within which it becomes manifest. Hence, when ʿAbd al-Qādir speaks of "the encompassment of unveiling the splendors of God's divine attributes," "spiritually savoring" the qualities of a divine attribute must be understood as a noetic contemplation of the immanent qualities of a Divine Name.

c. The Encompassment of Vicegerency

Turning to the encompassment of vicegerency (*khilāfa*), Abd al-Qādir offers a more comprehensive account of this order of the intellective heart. As we shall see, he considers this encompassment of the heart the climax of mystical knowledge. The order of vicegerency is tied to the metaphysical identity of the heart-intellect ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

> The encompassment of vicegerency (*wasʿ al-khilāfa*) consists of the [inward] internalization (*taḥaqquq*)of the Divine Names until the [knower] becomes aware that his [true] *essence* (*dhātihi*) is [my emphasis] the *essence of the Real* (*dhāt al-ḥaqq*), glorified is He, and that ipseity of the servant (*huwiyyat al-ʿabd*) is identical with the ipseity of the Real (*ʿayn huwiyyat*

> *al-Ḥaqq*). This [knower] will after that administer his affairs in existence as a vicegerent; this follows since "the heart" is the divine Light (*al-nūr al-ilāhī*) and the transcendental secret (*al-sirr al-ʿalī*) that was deposited within the innermost reality of the human being (*ʿayn al-insān*) so that one may gaze through it at Him. This [heart] is the spirit that God insufflated into Adam; this is the perspective of the elite (*lisān al-khuṣūṣ*).[318]

The encompassment of vicegerency (*wasʿ al-khilāfa*), from what we can gather, designates the supreme order of intellective knowledge of the heart. We should bear in mind that ʿAbd al-Qādir is painting a hierarchical scheme of the intellective knowledge of the heart. The "encompassment of vicegerency" presupposes in this epistemological account the foregoing two, namely, "the encompassment of "intellective and intimate knowledge of God (*wasʿ al-ʿilm wa'l maʿrifa bi'Llāh*) and "encompassment of unveiling the splendors of His [divine] Beauty (*maḥāsin jamālihi*)." The encompassment of vicegerency marks the culmination of contemplative knowledge of the heart. ʿAbd al-Qādir describes it as "the [inward] internalization (*taḥaqquq*) of the Divine Names," a central idea that classical Sufi authors have described as the "spiritual stations" (*maqamāt*) of the spiritual Path — the spiritual virtues that that mirrors the qualities/attributes of God.

ʿAbd al-Qādir observes that when the knower, or the true vicegerent, has internalized the divine Names, he "becomes aware" of the transcendental nature of his essence (*dhātihi).* He states that this vicegerent realizes that his innermost identity, or essence, is not distinct from the essence of God. This statement seems to profess a pantheistic ontology, namely, the claim that God's being

[318] Ibid, 145-146

is ontologically identical with the created entities of the world.[319] ʿAbd al-Qādir is not making this claim, as I interpret it. As I read it, he seems to say that God alone is intrinsically qualified by the Divine Names, that is to say, that His Names and Attributes subsist through His Essence not through the human essence.

How should we then interpret this assertion that the internalization of the divine Names by the knower provokes an awareness "that his real essence (*dhāt*) is the essence of God (*dhāt al-Ḥaqq*) and that the ipseity of the servant (*huwiyyat al-ʿabd*) is identical with the ipseity of the Real" (*ʿayn huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*)?

As I read it, our thinker seems to say that the *impression* of self-subsisting identity and ontological distinction from God's Being is lifted for the knower. Stated differently, the knower who becomes *qualified* by the Divine Names of God does so *virtually*, not essentially, meaning that only God's essence is intrinsically qualified by His Names. Note that ʿAbd al-Qādir says "the essence" (*dhāt*) and "ipseity" of the knower, which he identified earlier with the "true essence of humanity" (*haqīqat al-insān*) is indistinct from the ipseity of the Real.[320] He nowhere states that the physical form (*ṣūra*) or accidental attributes of the knower are identical to the Real's ipseity/Selfhood (*huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq).*

Moreover, note how ʿAbd al-Qādir states that the knower who has realized this matter concretely governs "his affairs in existence as a vicegerent." The idea behind this is that the

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[319] This so-called ontological monism is associated with the doctrine "the oneness of Being" (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) that Muslim and Western scholarship traces to the Akbarian school of thought. For an extensive discussion of this controversial doctrine, see A. Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the later Islamic tradition : the making of a polemical image in medieval Islam* (State University of New York Press, 1999).

[320] As may be recalled, the true essence of the human is identified ʿAbd al-Qādir's ontologgy to the heart (*qalb*) of the realizer knower/or servant Of God. This "*qalb*", as he tells us, "is a subtle, lordly, spiritual entity (*al-laṭīfa al-rabbāniyya al-rūḥāniyya*)".

vicegerent mediates the affairs of his existence through the Divine Names of God. He becomes both the site and point of disclosures of God's Names. Returning to the initial point of inquiry, ʿAbd al-Qādir adds further details. He notes in the last segment of the cited passage that the intellective heart is "a divine light" (*nūr ilāhī*) and "the transcendental secret" (*al-sirr al-ʿalī*) that God placed unto "the innermost reality of the human being (*ʿayn al-insān*). It is through this "divine light" and "transcendental secret," he adds, that the vicegerent can "gaze through it" at God. In other words, it is both the mirror through which God contemplates His Names and the matrix through which the knower contemplates God. He concludes by stating that the *qalb* is none other than the "spirit (*rūḥ*) that God insufflated into Adam. He tells us that this reading reflects the theological perspective of the spiritual elite without explicitly telling us whether he and Ibn ʿArabī subscribes to it or if there are other elements to ponder.

5.10. He Only Embraces Himself Through Himself

ʿAbd al-Qādir returns once again to the initial line of inquiry, namely, the sense in which the heart, according to Ibn ʿArabī, is said to embrace God, whereas His mercy does not. As noted earlier, there seems to be a manifest contradiction in this statement, considering that Ibn ʿArabī asserts that the heart of the realized knower is created from Divine mercy.

The commentary that ʿAbd al-Qādir offers on this statement offers many clarifying explanations:

> As for the language of the elite of the elites (*khuṣūṣ al-khuṣūṣ*), the heart of the knower of God is identical with the ipseity of the Real (*ʿayn huwiyyat al-ḥaqq),* whereof He is embraced by none but Himself (*mā wasiʿahu ghayruh*). Indeed, His spirit that He insufflated into Adam is His essence (*ʿayn dhātihi*), not something other than Himself. As such, nothing embraces the Real save the Real. He is (glorified is He) the abode of the

> existents (*dār al-mawjūdāt*), and the intrinsic reality of the heart of His believing knowing (*ʿārif*) servant is His abode.
> Our master (Ibn ʿArabī) – may God be pleased with Him – said:
> *Whosoever is the abode of the Real *** the Real is his abode*
> *For, the intrinsic existence of the Real is identical to the existentiated realities (kawāʾin*).[321]

Earlier, ʿAbd al-Qādir identified the transcendental nature of the heart-intellect with the spirit that God insufflated unto Adam, noting that this reflects the perspective of the spiritual elite. In the just above passage, we encounter a more explicit articulation of the co-identity of the Heart-Intellect with God. ʿAbd al-Qādir notes right from the outset that this interpretation reflects the doctrinal teaching "of the elites of the elites." He notes the that the transcendental heart — i.e., the heart of the knower — is "identical with the ipseity of God. The perspectives of both the "elite of the elites" are no different from the teachings "of the spiritual elite," considering that ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts that the heart of the knower, or his essence, is identical with the "ipseity" of God. The interpretive perspective that ʿAbd al-Qādir introduces in this passage is narrowly concerned with the ontological principles that underpin the co-identity of the heart of the knower with the ipseity of God.

Here, the concern is not strictly speaking the transcendental origin of the heart/the human essence, but the sense in which the heart is considered more embracing than God's mercy. This doctrine, as we noted, raises a more perplexing metaphysical problem insofar as it considers the heart of the knower to be more encompassing than the divine attribute of Mercy. There is, in other words, no objective duality distinction between the heart of the knower and the ipseity of God.

[321] *Mawqif*, p. 358, p. 146.

Unless the heart of the knower is identified with the ipseity of the Real, Ibn ʿArabī's statement to this effect would be inconsistent. ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary brings out the fuller implication of Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of the heart: God "is embraced by none other than Himself." In other words, for the heart to embrace God, the ipseity, or essence, of the heart must be identical with the ipseity of God. If we consider what the sacred *ḥadīth* says about the heart of the believing servant, or knower, we gain a better sense of how Ibn ʿArabī envisaged his higher ontology of the heart. God proclaims in the *ḥadīth* that *"*neither my heavens nor my earth embraces Me, but the heart of my believing servant encompasses me."

Unless a presupposed identity between the ipseity of God and the heart of the knower is assumed, we cannot adequately interpret Ibn ʿArabī's declaration that the heart is vaster than God's mercy. ʿAbd al-Qādir adds another qualification. He states that the "spirit that God insufflated into Adam" is identical to God's essence (*dhātihi*). He maintains that there is no ontological distinction between the insufflated spirit of God and His essence, wherein the spirit must "itself [be] His essence." Accordingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that God embraces Himself by Himself.

The doctrine of God's Self-encompassment is articulated in the poem of Ibn ʿArabī cites at the end of the passage. In the first line: "*Whosoever is the abode of the Real, the Real is His abode,"* ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets this to mean that God's existence is the ontological ground, "the abode," as he puts it, of the existents (*mawjūdāt*). He affirms this after he contends "that nothing encompasses the Real save the Real." I interpret this statement to mean that the Being of God, His existence, is the ground of all the entities that He brings into existence. In this respect, whatever being is brought into existence is embraced by the existence of God, meaning that God's existence is the *ground* of all existent entities that proceed from Him. To put it in other words, whatever acquires any mode of existence subsists through God's existence.

How must we understand the second line of this poem since Ibn ʿArabī states that "whosoever is an abode of the Real's existence, the Real is His abode." There is an explicit qualification here: he does not say everyone, but whosoever "is an abode of the Real's existence, God is His abode."

5.11. The Heart Is He, He is It

Part of the answer is encapsulated in ʿAbd al-Qādir's assertion that "the heart of the knower of God is identical (*ʿayn*) with the ipseity of the Real (*huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*)." As I read it, this statement seeks to illuminate the second line of Ibn ʿArabī's the poem: "For, the intrinsic existence of the Real is identical with the created realities *(kawāʾin*)." This statement can be easily misconstrued if we do not pay closer attention to the terms Ibn ʿArabī uses in his poem. If we probe the opening statements of ʿAbd al-Qādir, we gain a better understanding of what Ibn ʿArabī and his commentator are trying to convey. ʿAbd al-Qādir remarked that the spirit that God insufflated into Adam "is identical with His essence" (*ʿayn dhātihi*). Having identified the spirit of God with the heart of the knower, he established that the latter is "identical with the ipseity of the Real (*ʿayn huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*)." The implication that he draws from this is that God "is embraced by none but Himself (*mā wasiʿahu ghayruhu*)."

Ibn ʿArabī seems to say that there is a fundamental identity between "the intrinsic existence of God," His Being, that is to say, and the existence of all things that subsist through His Being. If the heart of the knower is virtually indistinct from the ipseity of the Real, as ʿAbd al-Qādir holds, it seems to follow that it embraces all the existents that are embraced by the existence of God.

5.12. The Names, the Named, and the Breath of the All-Merciful

Having probed the three orders of encompassment of the heart, the next segment returns to Ibn ʿArabī's teachings on the order and scope of Divine mercy. In the opening passage of this *Fass*, Ibn ʿArabī proclaimed that God's mercy does not embrace Him while the heart of the knower does. The commentaries of ʿAbd al-Qādir that we have analyzed offered many interpretive insights on this puzzling point. ʿAbd al-Qādir highlights the doctrinal demarcation between what Ibn ʿArabī calls "the language/discourse of the spiritual elites" (*lisān al-khuṣūṣ*) and "language of the common folk "(*lisān al-ʿumūm*). ʿAbd al-Qādir identifies the former "as the folk of unveiling and being" (*ahl al-kashf wa al-wujūd*)[322] and the latter community "as the scholars of the letter who are veiled from the spiritual nuances and subtleties."[323]

As we have seen earlier, Ibn ʿArabī characterizes "the language of the common folk" "as holding that "the Real shows mercy but is not shown mercy, for [His] mercy has no determination over Him." [324]This line of reasoning is predicated on the premise that God is the subject, not the object of His mercy. As for "the language of spiritual elites," their doctrinal perspective on the scope and order of Divine mercy takes a different interpretive line. Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of Divine mercy cannot be adequately grasped without reference to "the Breath of the All-Merciful" (*nafas al-Raḥmān*). To better understand how he conceptualizes this ontological principle, it is worth quoting the entire passage from the *Fass* of Shuʿayb. Ibn ʿArabī writes:

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[322] *Maw*. 358, 146

[323] Ibid.

[324] See note 21.

> As for the allusive reading in the language of the elite (*khuṣūṣ*), God describes Himself (*nafsuhu*) by the word "breath (*nafas*)," which denotes the act of "exhalation" (*tanfīs*); it must be borne in mind that the Divine Names are identical with the Named (*ʿayn al-musamma*) and there in this respect no distinction between the Named and the Name]. The Divine Names demand the realities (*ḥaqāʾiq*) that are necessitated by their nature, and these realities are nothing but the cosmos (*al-ʿālam*). Hence, Divinity (*ulūhiyya*) demands a divine thrall (*maʾlūh*), and lordship (*rubūbiyya*) demands its object (*marbūb*). The Divine Names cannot therefore manifest themselves existentially or determinatively (i.e., any ontological degree) save through their objects… Note that Lordship was the first order relieved through the Breath (*nafas*) of the All-Merciful which originates the cosmos that is demanded by it (i.e., Lordship) and all the Names of God. It is in this respect that His mercy is said to embraces *every thing* and embraces in turn the Real. Thus understood, His mercy is *vaster* than the heart or *equal* [my emphasis] to it in scope.[325]

Ibn ʿArabī prefaces his discussion by noting the interconnectedness between God's Self (*nafs*) and His exhalation (*tanfīs*), the verbal noun of the word "breath" (*nafas*). The ontological implications of God's exhalation will only emerge when we probe the ensuing discussion on the identity between God and His Names. ʿAbd al-Qādir brings out many hidden premises and offers crucial indications on how Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of the heart and mercy fits into the broader context of his metaphysics.

ʿAbd al-Qādir turns his attention first to the intrinsic identity between God and His Names. This line of inquiry is critical for grasping other intricate principles that Ibn ʿArabī articulates in the above passage, notably, the "realities" (*ḥaqāʾiq*) that are demanded by the Divine Names and

[325] *The Ringstones*, pp. 125-6 [translations slightly modified].

the cosmic existentiation "of the breath of the All-Merciful" (*nafas* al-Raḥmān). Let us first consider how ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets the essential unity of God's Names. He notes:

> It is established that the Divine Names are identical with the Named (i.e., God); this [intrinsic identity] can be conceived in two respects: in one respect, God pre-eternally names Himself insofar as He is [eternally] a speaker (*mutakalliman*); His Names are eternal and therefore unqualified (*ghayr mukayyafa*), nondelimited (*lā maḥdūda*), underivable (*lā mushttaqa*) and is thereby identified with the Named (*ʿayn al-musamma*). Here, the essential unity (*waḥdāniyya*) [of the Divine Names] is in all respects (*min jamīʿ al-wujūh*) and does not, therefore, admit any multiplicity whatsoever.[326]

From what we can gather, the intrinsic identity between God and His Names is first envisaged with respect to His pre-eternal verbal predication of these Names.[327] What he seems to say here is this: God self-predicates His Names eternally, meaning that He names Himself with all His Names eternally and by virtue of being an eternal speaker. Since it is God who names Himself or knows eternally all the Names that are essentially identical with Him (i.e., the Names), this Self-reflexive predication is intrinsically simple and unitary. What he means by this is that there is no objective or virtual duality between the Subject (i.e., the Named) who names and the Names by which He names Himself eternally. It is vital to remember that this Akbarian doctrine supposes, *contra* the Ashʿarīs, that God's Names are not added to His essence. Conceptually, however, the essential identity between the Names and the Named cannot be expressed without analytical distinction. The ontological distinction between the subject and object of attributes is an inevitable result of analytical reason. As ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks, the co-eternal identity between God and His

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[326] Ibid.

[327] As we will later, ʿAbd al-Qādir will develop from this interpretive line his account of the all-embracing scope of Divine mercy.

Names does not entail any degree of ontological complexity. The intrinsic unity of God is not compromised on any ground when we consider reflexive predication of His Names. As he notes, the "essential unity" (*waḥdāniyya*) of the Names "is in all respects" (*min jamīʿ al-wujūh*), for His Names "are eternal and therefore unqualified (*ghayr mukayyafa*), nondelimited (*lā maḥdūda*), underivable (*lā mushttaqa*) and is thereby identified with the Named (*ʿayn al-musamma*)."

5.13. The Ontology of the Names in The Language of 'The Most Elite

As for the second interpretive line on the intrinsic identity of the Names, ʿAbd al-Qādir offers further details on what he considers the perspective "of the most elite" (*khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣa*), presuming from this indication that he counts himself and Ibn ʿArabī among those who subscribes to this theological account. He notes:

> The other perspective over this question holds that these Names of God we utter [through our language] designate those [Divine] Names; these [uttered] Names are those that *demand* a meaning through verbal denotation (*bi ḥukm al-dalāla*) since they are words and nouns. These [articulated] Names *are not* the Named (al-*musammā*) – i.e., God. These Names are derivable (*mushttaqa*). This is the perspective of the elite of the elites (*khāṣṣat al-khāṣṣa*)

The second perspective, ʿAbd al-Qādir continues, corresponds to the linguistic designation of the Divine Names of God. They should not be confused, as he states, with the intrinsic reality of God's Names which subsists through Him co-eternally. The nouns which define the meanings of each Divine Name (e.g., the all-Merciful) are denotations of those Divine Names. This point requires further clarification. As I interpret it, ʿAbd al-Qādir is saying that the *nouns* that we use to define the *meaning* of a Divine Name are distinct from the *intrinsic reality* of the Divine Names,

what they are in and of themselves. ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to say are merely *nominal descriptions* of the effective qualities of the Divine Names. Hence, they do not indicate the eternal Names that subsist through God and are qualified by His nature. ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to have this in mind: while the unity of God qualifies the intrinsic features of His Names, the *nouns* which designate these Names conceptually cannot be ontologically identical with the objective reality of the Names (i.e., God) without compromising His intrinsic Unity and simplicity.

Lastly, ʿAbd al-Qādir brings out another theological perspective on the co-identity of the Names with the Named, one he ascribes to the "spiritual elite" (*al-khāṣṣa*). He notes that they consider the "Divine Names to be identical with the Named with respect to the verbal denotation (*dalāla*) of the Named" (*min ḥaythu al-dalāla ʿala al-musammā*).[328] Unlike the perspective of "the elite of the elites," which distinguishes between the verbal denotations of the Divine Names and the Named, the perspective of "the elite" (*al-khāṣṣa*) establishes a relation between the verbal denotation of a Divine Name and its intelligible reality. ʿAbd al-Qādir introduces a critical caveat. He maintains that this supposed identity only holds if "we do not consider what is denoted by these [Divine] Names, for the Named is One whereas the meanings understood by the Names multiple."[329] There are other principles underpinning the ontology of the Divine Names, especially the order of multiplicity entailed by their predicative designation.

ʿAbd al-Qādir writes:

> The Divine Names have not multiplied randomly. There ought to be an intelligible principle for their multiplicity; this matter is subject of bewilderment: is the *name* Name Him, glorified is He, or is it a *name* of what is entailed [by the *name*]? Or is it a *name* for

[328] Ibid.

[329] Ibid.

> both? But there is nothing that truly exists extrinsically save He (glorified is He); the Divine Names are relations (*nisab*), considerations (*iʿtibārāt*), and degrees (*marātib*) of the Divine essence with respect to what is demanded and necessitated (*limā huwa al-ḥaqq wa al-taḥqīq*); they [the Divine Names] are not super-added entities, as most of the *mutakallimūn* maintain.[330]

As ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks right from the outset, there ought to be an intelligible principle for the diversification of the Divine Names. It is unclear if the Arabic words used to designate a Divine Name reveal something intrinsic about the Name of God or if it is merely a conceptual denotation of the meaning of a given Name of God. In other words, is the uttered Name designates itself the Name of God or is it merely a descriptive denotation of the transcendental reality of His Name. The alternative is that a Divine Name is both, that is, that the Name of God is a nominal designation of the ontological nature of a Name.

ʿAbd al-Qādir believes that the Names cannot designate ontological realities that co-exist with God. This is what he means by the statement that "there is no extrinsic and concrete existence save He (God)." If that is indeed the case, he notes, the Divine Names are nothing but "relations, considerations, and degrees of the Divine essence." In the Akbarian ontology, these notions entail that the Divine Names are nothing but relational modalities of the one Divine essence. Therefore, they do not subsist distinctly of the Divine essence, as conceived by the *mutakallimūn*. A lengthy discussion unfolds after that on how the Divine essence modulates according to the cosmic realities demanded by its Names. Examining this topic goes beyond the scope of the present section. Let

[330] Ibid.

us turn next to the second principle in Ibn ʿArabī's above-cited passage, namely, the scope of Divine mercy.

5.14. Breathing His Names Through His Mercy

I turn next to ʿAbd al-Qādir's glosses on Ibn ʿArabī's comparative ontology of Divine mercy and the intellective heart. As may be recalled, Ibn ʿArabī noted that God's mercy "embraces all things and encompasses thereby the Real. Indeed, [it is] vaster than the heart or equal to it in scope." The principle behind this Akbarian doctrine is tightly connected to Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of the Divine Names, as articulated in the passage from the *Fass* of Shuʿayb that we cited earlier. ʿAbd al-Qādir offers in the following passage an analytical treatment of the central metaphysical issues that underpin Ibn ʿArabī's teachings on Divine mercy. He comments:

> It is through His act of breathing (*tanfīs*) which is attributed to the "breath" of the all-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) which He insufflated upon His lordly Names (*al-asmāʾ al-rabbiyya*); the Messenger (blessing and peace upon him) informed us of this when he stated: "the breath of the All-Merciful comes forth to me from the direction of Yemen." His breathing over the divine Names consists of permitting the intrinsic nature of each Name of God to become manifest. It follows from this perspective – that is, from the standpoint of His breathing over the presence of Lordship (*al-ḥadra al-rabbiyya*) – that His Mercy embraces all things. Still, it does not embrace the Real (glorified is He) in light of its universal encompassment of all things (*ashyāʾ*), for the Real is not a thing (*shayʾ*). [His mercy] embraces Him since it encompasses His Names. It could be said that It embraces His essence insofar as His essence necessitates the existentiation of the external world. For He (glorified is He) states in some of the revealed books: 'I was an unknown treasure and I loved to be

known, so I created the creatures and made myself known to them.'[331]

We gather from this lengthy passage that the divine act of breathing (*tanfīs*), as Ibn ʿArabī conceptualizes it, consists of bringing the Names of God into the domain of manifestation. As ʿAbd al-Qādir explains, this ontological act of breathing is attributed to "the breath of the All-Merciful," meaning that the All-Merciful brings the other Divine Names of God from unmanifest to actualized manifestation. We have seen earlier how ʿAbd al-Qādir explains the universal scope of Divine mercy, that is, how it encompasses all created things whatever reality they become qualified by, including the heart of the knower.

In the above-quoted passage, the interpretive perspective shifts this time towards the encompassment of God by His mercy. In the relevant passage that ʿAbd al-Qādir is commenting on, Ibn ʿArabī underscored that this interpretive line reflects the "allusive reading in the language of the elite" (*al-ishāra min lisān al-khuṣūṣ*). Accordingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir notes that this doctrinal perspective holds that God is embraced by His mercy. ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks that the breathing of the All-Merciful actualizes "the lordly Names" (*al-asmāʾ al-rabbiyya*) or what he calls the "the presence of lordship" (*al-ḥadra al-rabbiyya*). This statement may not be entirely clear at first glance unless we invoke another passage where he elucidates the interplay between specific Names of God and "the cosmic realities that are understood from each one of them."[332]

He explains this intricate doctrine of Ibn ʿArabī by noting that the Divine Names "necessitate by an intrinsic preparedness the manifestation of the traces demanded by each Divine

[331]Ibid, 49.

[332] Ibid, 147.

Name."[333] As he further explains, "the cosmic realities demanded by the Divine Names is the universe, namely, everything other than God (glorified is He)."[334] The Divinity (*ulūhiyya*) of God "is the degree of worship and demands thereby a divine thrall (*maʾlūh*) — an object of divinity (i.e.,the servant).[335] As for the Name Lord and degree of lordship (*rubūbiyya*), which he informs 'is more specific than the degree of divinity, it demands a vassal (*marbūb*), the one whose affairs are subjugated to this degree and whose authority manifest upon him."[336]

5.15. God's Mercy Embraces His Names, Not His Essence

Now, concerning the all-encompassing scope of God's mercy, namely, the actualization of these Names through "the breath of the All-Merciful," this should be understood in light of the intrinsic identity with the Divine essence; what ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores is the identity that is presupposed between God and His Mercy, not God *qua* a thing embraced by His mercy. He notes that divine mercy "does not embrace the Real (glorified is He) in light of its universal encompassment of all things (*ashyāʾ*), for the Real is not a thing (*shayʾ*). It embraces His Names." The emphasis is on the intrinsic identity between God and His Names *qua* essential divine attributes, not with respect to the extrinsic realities demanded by His Names.

This must be understood, as he notes, from the perspective that it is ultimately the Divine essence that "necessitates the existence of the world." This affirmation makes sense if we consider that the Names of God, including the All-Merciful, as ʿAbd al-Qādir notes elsewhere, are "relations

[333] Ibid.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid.

(*nisab*), conceptual considerations (*iʿtibārāt*) and degrees (*marātib*) of the Divine essence with respect to what is demanded and necessitated (*limā huwa al-ḥaqq wa al-taḥqīq*)."[337]

ʿAbd al-Qādir discusses next the theoretical considerations that must be considered when attempting to elucidate the encompassment of God by His mercy and the intellective heart. He writes:

> What has thus far been stated holds if His mercy is considered an attribute (*ṣifa*), in which case it is identical with the Divine essence; this follows insofar as a thing [in and of itself] can neither embrace nor be too narrow for itself. If His mercy is envisaged as an attribute, it is *vaster* than the heart, for it [mercy] embraces the Real insofar as it relieved Him (*naffasat ʿaynuhu*), whereas the intellective heart did not relieve the Real. We may say that His mercy is equal to it [the heart] in scope – for His mercy encompasses all things (*kullu shayʾ*) while the heart encompasses the Real (glorified is He) and encompassed thereby all things. Therefore, the heart embraces the Real (glorified is He) just as His mercy does.[338]

The passage adds crucial clarifications to Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of Divine mercy. ʿAbd al-Qādir notes first that the scope of Divine mercy is vaster than the heart of the knower if we envisage mercy as an attribute of God. If Divine mercy is an intrinsic qualification of God's essence, ʿAbd al-Qādir adds, it must be on this account identical to His essence. If so, mercy embraces God in the same respect as His essence embraces Him. It is more proper to say, ʿAbd al-Qādir reckons, that this intrinsic identity between the essence of God and His mercy entails that He is self-encompassing. This is how I interpret his statement that "a thing [in and of itself] can neither

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid, p. 149.

embrace nor be too narrow for itself." Hence, we gather from this interpretation that mercy *qua* Divine *attribute* is vaster than the heart of the knower, as Ibn ʿArabī stated.

ʿAbd al-Qādir ties the foregoing premises to Ibn ʿArabī's doctrine of "the breath of the All-Merciful." It is by virtue of this cosmogonic "exhalation" (*tanfīs*) that God's Self (*nafs*) is relieved (*naffasa*) by His mercy. It is with respect to this ontological identity between the Self of God and the relief obtained through "the breath" (*nafas*) of the All-Merciful that God is embraced by His mercy, ʿAbd al-Qādir argues. The heart of the realized knower does not embrace God in the same respect that His mercy *qua* His attribute relieves the Real's creative breath (*nafas*). These key points underpin Ibn ʿArabī's assertion that His mercy is vaster than the heart, as ʿAbd al-Qādir interprets it.

On another front, however, the scope of mercy is analogous to the scope of the heart of the realized knower. The interpretive perspective reflects two ontological considerations: 1) how His mercy embraces "all things" (*ashyāʾ*), and (2) how the heart that embraces the Real embraces "all the things" that are embraced by His all-encompassing Mercy.

To sum up, we should bear in mind that the encompassment of God is conceptualized in two fundamental respects: the intrinsic identity between Divine mercy *qua* attribute and the essence of God, and, secondly, the intrinsic identity of the heart of the knower with the Divine essence. Regarding the scope of the heart, we should recall that ʿAbd al-Qādir identifies it as a metaphysical reality that defines the true nature of the human self. According to the perspective of "the elites of the elites," the view I take him and Ibn ʿArabī to espouse, the essence of the human self is "the spirit" (*rūḥ*) that God "breathed unto Adam." This spirit that stems from the Divine Self, he maintains, is itself "the ipseity of the Real (*huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*) and His essence" (*ʿaynu dhātihi*).

5.16. The Heart Embraces the Real, and All Things Thereby

The implication of these doctrinal teachings, as we shall see below, is brought out in the following passage where ʿAbd al-Qādir discusses the encompassment of all things by the heart of the realized knower:

> He (glorified is He) is envious that something other than His Lord dwells in the heart of believing knower. For this reason, he unveiled to their hearts that He is the form (*ṣura*) and the essential reality (*ḥaqīqa*) of everything. The heart of the realized knower thus embraces all things, for everything is (objectively) the Real (*Ḥaqq*); thus conceived, it (the heart) is solely embraced by the Real. Anyone, then, who discerns the Real within the reality of a thing *knows all things*; with that said, not everyone who *knows a thing* has necessarily discerned the Real [within it]. In truth, such a person does not truly know what he thinks he knows, for if he truly knows it, he would have known that *it is* the Real. Since he does not know that *it is* the Real, we said: he does not have true knowledge of God.[339]

The cited passage offers critical insights into Ibn ʿArabī's ontology of the heart-intellect. ʿAbd al-Qādir explains that the heart of the realized knower cannot simultaneously embrace God and something else. He rules this out based on what he calls Divine envy, namely, that God does not permit something else to dwell alongside Him within the heart of the realized knower. We must first bear in mind what ʿAbd al-Qādir stated earlier concerning the encompassment of all

[339] *Maw*. 359, 150-51.

things by God's mercy. He noted that His mercy does not embrace Him insofar as God is not "*a thing*" (*shayʾ*).[340] The same principle should be considered when he says that the heart of the realized knower embraces the Real. Here, we cannot say that the Real *is a thing* that dwells in the heart of the knower when the latter becomes divested of all things. ʿAbd al-Qādir is not saying, as I understand it, that the knower of God does not perceive or apprehend the *things* he encounters and ponders. He points out that the heart of the knower becomes aware that God "is the *form* (*ṣūra*) and the essential reality (*ḥaqīqa*)" of *all things*.

The heart of the realized knower embraces *all the things* insofar as he contemplates them as formal and essential disclosures of the Real. This is what he seems to have in mind when he states the heart of the realized knower "discerns the Real within the reality of a thing." Stated differently, whatever one perceives and ponders is only "real" and "true" inasmuch as its form and nature reveal the objective reality of God. In this vein, the heart of the realized knower embraces none but God. As ʿAbd al-Qādir puts it, the heart that contemplates things in this light embraces all things. Conversely, he contends that someone who does not discern the Real within the things does not have true knowledge of their intrinsic reality, for they otherwise would be aware that they are the Real. The ontological underpinnings of this doctrine of the heart have far-reaching implications on the Akbarian higher epistemology.

5.17. The Bondage of Reason

I close this chapter with a critical issue I grapple with throughout this study: the supremacy of heart-intellection and the limited scope of discursive reason in ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical epistemology. In one passage that we have quoted at the outset of this chapter, ʿAbd al-Qādir

[340] See note 32.

maintained that the heart of the knower gains "intimate knowledge of God" (*maʿriftu'Llāh*) "through God's bestowal of it (*bi taʿrīfihi*), not through the rule of discursive reason (*bi ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī)*.[341] This epistemic perspective reflects a central concern in this *Fass*. A key passage from this chapter of the *Fuṣūs* provides critical indications on the supremacy of heart-centered intellection over discursive reason. Commenting on the following Qur'anic verse: "*surely this is a reminder to whosoever has a heart"* (Q. 50:37), Ibn ʿArabī underscores the fact that the verse "says for him who possesses a heart *(qalb)."* This has to do with the limitation that reason imposes on the absolute Reality of God. He notes, "reason binds and delimits the [divine] Reality (*ḥaqīqa*) to one facet; meanwhile, it does not accept delimitation."[342]This discussion forms part of an elaborate doctrinal discussion on what Ibn ʿArabī terms the "delimited deity" (*al-ilāh al-muqayyad*) shaped by the power of reason.

Instead, let us turn to a passage where ʿAbd al-Qādir offers a systematic treatment of this doctrinal issue. He writes:

> The word "bondage" (ʿ*aqala*) is taken from the cord used for "tying the camel" (ʿ*iqāl al-baʿīr*); it denotes the cord that prevents [the camel from standing or evading. This is how reason binds the Divine Reality (i.e., God) to one conception and belief. It rejects any creed concerning God (glorified is He) that contradicts its conception [of God]. However, the Divine Reality scorns and rejects any [imposed] delimitation that binds it to one conception or creed. This is, however, utterly impossible as a matter of truth. God is the totality of existential considerations (*umūr wujūdiya*) projected unto the different orders of reality and modes of perceptions (*idrākāt*), whether they are intelligible and sensible realities. What has been expressed concerning the wisdom of this heart is not a reminder for him who

[341] *Kitab al-Mawāqif,* p. 407.

[342] *Ringstone*, 172.

> possesses *reason*. This is because what ensues for the folk of discursive reason in their cognition of God (glorified is He) is the enclosure, definition, and delimitation of His Reality. For whosoever believes that his God is distinct and separate from him, such person delimits Him. True knowledge of God, however, is grounded on witnessing his attributes and this *cannot be* attained *through discursive reason*. The "sound heart" alone is capable of apprehending this. It [the heart intellect] transmits to reason only what it can accept. Indeed, the only thing that the rational thinker can acquire regarding God is His existence (*wujūd*) and Unity (*waḥdāniyya*) and nothing else.[343]

In this passage, we gain a more explicit understanding of the fundamental distinction between the intellective heart and discursive reason in the epistemological system of Ibn ʿArabī and ʿAbd al-Qādir. He prefaces his discussion with an etymological analysis of the word "*ʿaql*" (discusrive reason). The denotation of this term in Arabic, as he notes, stems from the act of binding (*ʿaqala*) and "tying the camel" (*ʿiqāl al-baʿīr*). When applied to the power of human reason (*ʿaql*), it designates the cognitive binding of the non-delimited reality of God "to one conception and belief." The epistemological implication of this cognitive binding of reason, he explains, is its rejection of other beliefs or conceptions about God.

According to ʿAbd al-Qādir, this cognitive conditioning of the Divine Reality reveals the inherent limitation and scope of reason. It cannot admit a conception of God that transcends the scope of reason or is not congruent with it. Why does ʿAbd al-Qādir say that God cannot be limited to one belief and conception, as reason would have it? The objection follows from the proposition that the Absolute Reality of God transcends any form of conceptual or creedal limitation. While one conception or belief can reflect one facet of His Reality, it cannot embrace His Being in every

[343] Maw. 359, 173.

respect. ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains instead that the absoluteness and unboundedness of God are reflected in "the totality of existential considerations that are projected unto the different orders of reality and modes of perceptions (*idrākāt*)" that underly the different creeds about God. This entails that the unbounded Reality of God is reflected in all orders: cognitive, imaginative, and even sensible perceptions.

5.18. Conclusion

In this chapter, we encountered in ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fass* of Shuʿayb a more elaborate and explicit ontology of the intellective heart. Following Ibn ʿArabī's lead, he adds many crucial clarifications on some of the most abstruse epistemological issues that Ibn ʿArabī hinted at in his higher ontology of the heart intellect. ʿAbd al-Qādir argues that God's unbounded reality challenges the conceptual horizons of discursive reason, which can only apprehend the existence and unity of God. We should note that the apophatic epistemology of discursive reason is not denied in ʿAbd al-Qādir epistemological system. What ʿAbd al-Qādir is highlighting is its incapacity to embrace the unbounded reality of God. One inevitable pitfall of discursive reason, ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains, is its inherently reductive and dualistic conceptualization of God's unbounded Reality. This is fundamentally reflected in the *ontological duality it* constructs of God and His disclosures (i.e., all things). As ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, "God is the totality of existential considerations (*umūr wujūdiya*) projected unto the different orders of reality and modes of perceptions." While discursive reason can only admit from this totalizing perspective God's "existence (*wujūd*) and Unity (*waḥdāniyya*)," the Heart-Intellect can perpetually witness the unbounded disclosures of God's Names and recognize their respective orders of cognition (*idrākāt*). By virtue of its intrinsic identity with "the Divine Self" (*huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*), the Heart-Intellect, then, dissolves the *dualistic* impression that discursive reason generates

between God and His disclosures. In the previous chapter, as we may recall, the ontological underpinnings of ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical epistemology highlighted the incapacity of reason to grapple with the enigmatic doctrine of inlibration. One more, one of the main arguments of this chapter is his claim that objective knowledge of God is strictly reserved for the realized knower inasmuch as he discerns *the Real* in all things. Unlike someone who cannot witness God within *the things* that he perceives or cognizes, "the heart of the realized knower embraces all things," for everything, as ʿAbd al-Qādir notes, "(objectively) the Real (*ḥaqq*)." As we can recall from the previous chapter, this "intimate knowledge of God (glorified is He) cannot be attained save through His bestowal of it (*bi taʿrīfihi*), not through the rule of theoretical reason *(la bi ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī).*"[344]

[344] *Kitab al-Mawāqif,* p. 407.

CHAPTER 6.

The Sufi Akbarian Renaissance

6.1 Introduction

In Damascus, ʿAbd al-Qādir became a prominent figure in the Sufi intellectual milieu of Ottoman Syria.[345] His scholarly activities were primarily among the Sufi *ulamā* of the Naqshabandī-Khālidiyya order.[346] As ʿAbd al-Qādir's intellectual circle grew, his scholarly nucleus included scholars from different Sufi orders and regions of the Arab Islamic world. As we have noted in the introduction, Muhammad al-Khāni, ʻAbd al-Razzāq al-Bayṭār, Muhammad al-Ṭanṭāwī (d. 1882), Muhammad al-Tayyib (d. 1896) and his younger brother, Muhammad al-Mubārak (d. 1912) played an instrumental role in the compilation and diffusion of his *Mawāqif*.[347]

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[1] For a comprehensive survey of Sufi reformist currents in nineteenth-century Ottoman Syria, see Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus*, Islamic History and Civilization, v. 34 (Leiden : Boston: Brill, 2001). Cf. Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond, Surrey, 1999).

[346]Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2007); Alexandre Papas, "Refonder plutôt que réformer: La Naqshbandiyya non mujaddidī dans le monde turc (XVI e-XVIII e siècle)," in *Le Soufisme à l'époque ottomane/Sufism in the Ottoman Era*, ed. Rachida Chih and Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2010); Dina Le Gall, *A Culture of Sufism: Naqhsbandīs in the Ottoman World, 1450–1700* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004). Butrus Abu-Manneh, " A New Look at the Rise and Expansion of the Khālidī Sub-Order, " in *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society.* ed. Ahmet Yasar Ocak (Ankara, 2005), 279 – 314.

[347] See Weisman, *Taste of Modernity*, Chap. Six cf. See Hamid Algar, "Reflections of Ibn Arabi in Early Naqshabandī Tradition," *Journal of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, 10 (1990), 45-66. Sh. Khalid al-Kurdī played a key role in the revivalism of Sufism among the Damascene Sufis and other wider Ottoman world. He prepared the terrain for ʿAbd al-Qādir who forged a spiritual alliance with his surviving disciples.

Weisman produced the most comprehensive historical survey of the network of Sufi scholars who became associated with ʿAbd al-Qādir's Akbarian circle.[348]

Though we have today a better idea of the Sufi "intellectual Renaissance" (*nahḍa*) that ʿAbd al-Qādir sparked among the Damascene Sufi scholars, we do not have a coherent picture of the doctrinal teachings that underpin this revivalist discourse. Before developing this line of inquiry, however, I want to briefly retrace the historical trajectory that inspired other scholars to seriously examine the critical contribution of ʿAbd al-Qādir to the Sufi revivalist discourse of his time. In 1978, Jacques Berque, the eminent historian of the Maghrib, stumbled on the *Mawāqif*. Astonished by "the literary splendor" of this major oeuvre of ʿAbd al-Qādir, Berque alerted his fellow historians of the *intellectual tour de force* this work must have had among its audience.[349] Berque questions the conventional assumptions that modern historians had long held regarding the origins and authors of the *Nahḍa.* He argued that the Intellectual Renaissance that the *Mawāqif* sparked calls for a serious revision of the narrative surrounding modern Islamic reform.

It is worth noting, in passing, that Berque did not go beyond a passing observation. He did not study the *Mawāqif,* likely because he was trained as a social historian rather than in philosophical theology and ideas of the Sufi tradition. We had to wait a few more years for Chodkiewicz to publish his seminal French translation of select chapters of the *Mawāqif.* An expert of Ibn ʿArabī*,* Chodkiewicz readily recognized the Sufi Akbarian provenance of the *Mawāqif*. He also uncovered many details about the discrete Sufi revivalism that eluded, by its esoteric nature

[348] See especially Chapter Six of Weisman's *Taste of Modernity* for the Sufi reformist scholars who diffused ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi Akbarian thought in Damascus and other regions of the major centers of Sunni religious learning, notably, among the Azharī Sufi scholars in Egypt.

[349] Jacques Berque*, L'Intérieur du Maghreb*, Paris, 1978, Chapter XV, pp. 512 513.

and audience, "the intelligentsia observable to the chronicler or, later on, to the historian."[350] Chodkiewicz, and other scholars who followed suit, have since confirmed what Berque had suspected from the outset.[351] ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif* indelibly impacted the Sufi reformist elite in Damascus and adjacent regions. As different studies have illustrated, ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif* mediated his Sufi revivalist discourse through the doctrinal teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and his school.

In many respects, ʿAbd al-Qādir would further consolidate the Akbarian revivalist teachings of his predecessor, ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī. A prolific Sufi scholar, al-Nābulusī was the foremost exponent of Ibn ʿArabī's teachings in eighteenth-century Ottoman Syria.[352] There are many parallels between him and ʿAbd al-Qādir. They enjoyed a spiritual affinity with Shaykh al-Akbar who allegedly initiated them to his mystical teachings and instructed them through spiritual visions. They also claimed to write under divine instruction when commenting on Scripture, *ḥadīth*, and the works of Ibn ʿArabī. It is also worth recalling that both Nābulusī and ʿAbd al-Qādir do not cite other *Fuṣūṣ* commentators in their respective commentaries.[353] Lastly, they played a

[350] Michel Chodkiewicz, *Ecrits spirituels,* p. 37.
[351] S. Makhlouf, "Reform or Renewal: The Debate about Change in Nineteenth-Century Islam," In *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité, ed. Eric* Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005) pp. 127-138; Michel Lagarde. "Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī et sa vision Akbarienne du monde." Alladin Bakri, "Abd el-Kader, Lecteur des *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* d'Ibn ʿArabī," In *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* ed. *Eric* Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005); see also the "Introduction" to A. Meftah's edition to the *Kitāb al-Mawāqif.* Weismann, *Taste of Modernity,* especially Chap. Six.
[352] Bakri Aladdin, ʿAbd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī, oevure, vie, doctrine" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Université de Paris, 1985); Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascusa: 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731*, RoutledgeCurzon Sūfī Series (Abingdon, Oxfordshire ; RoutledgeCurzon, 2005). Lejla Demiri and Samuela Pagani, eds., *Early Modern Trends in Islamic Theology: Abd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī and His Network of Scholarship (Studies and Texts)*, Sapientia Islamica 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019).ʿAbd al-Qādir mentions him on several occasions in the *Mawāqif* and comments on many issues he tackles in his corpus.
[353] See A. Bakri's article, "ʿAbd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī, the Doctrine of the Unity of Being and the Beginnings of the Arab Renaissance," In *ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī and His Network of Scholarship*, pp. 40-44, for a brief discussion of the continuity between ʿAbd al-Qādir and *Nābulusī* and their respective contributions to Akbarian revivalist discourse. See also, D. Grill, "Jawāhir al-nuṣūṣ fī ḥall kalimāt al-Fuṣūṣ, ʿAbd al-Ghānī al-Nābulusī's Commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*," In *ʿAbd al-Ghani al-Nābulusī and His Network of Scholarship*, 49-57.

central in the revival of Ibn ʿArabī's teaching among the Sufi intellectual elite in Damascus and the wider Ottoman world.

Going back to the scope of this chapter, my investigation is primarily concerned with ʿAbd al-Qādir's theology of Muslim deterioration in the context of colonial modernity. This question is treated in the364th *Mawqif*. His reflections are timely and unique, in the sense that he attempts to offer a metaphysical account of the dire condition that afflicted the Muslim world at this juncture of human history. I approach this question on three fronts: I first probe the philosophical premises, cultural norms and ideals of Western Modernity. I then attempt to reassess the historiographical framework that Orientalist and Western historians have used to define the Islamic modernist discourse. Based on my finding, I try to revise the scholarly debate surrounding ʿAbd al-Qādir's presumed modernist Sufi reform. I conclude with a textual analysis of the 364th *Mawqif*, where I tackle what I provisionally call ʿAbd al-Qādir's theology of Muslim emulation of colonial European customs. ʿAbd al-Qādir envisions this question from two vintage points: the moral and spiritual violation of the Sharīʿa and the Prophetic paradigm and the Akbarian anthropocosmic doctrine of human and cosmic destiny.

ʿAbd al-Qādir goes beyond the moral deviance from the Sharīʿa to explain the subordination of Muslims to the cultural hegemony of colonial Europe. When pressed by one of his Sufi brethren for a metaphysical account, ʿAbd al-Qādir attributes the deterioration of Muslims to the shifting disclosures of God's Names. According to ʿAbd al-Qādir, the affairs of Muslims reflect their subjugation to the Divine Name, "the Foresaker" (*khādhil*). The state of humans and the universe merely mirrors the traces (*āthār*) of the Divine Names over their condition (Maw. 364, 230). Though there is a particular relationship between the traces of the Divine Names and the deeds of humans, a vertical cause governs this relationship. The moral deviance from the

Sharīʿa may shift the dynamic of God's Self-disclosures, say from the Divine Name "The Bestower of honor (*al-muʿizz*) to the "humiliator" (al-*mudhill*), but ʿAbd al-Qādir accords no causal efficacy to human will. In Ashʿarī terms, he maintains that God alone acts and determines human and cosmic destiny. A deterministic picture transpires through this Akbarian doctrine.

ʿAbd al-Qādir is nonetheless adamant that reason cannot truly decrypt the intrinsic nature of Divine Providence and Decree. Disclosing Itself through His Names, he states that God's Decree is unfathomable. We cannot rationally pinpoint the working of God's disclosures, for better or worse, for "the acts of the Real (i.e., God) upon His creatures have no extrinsic cause" (*afʿāl al-Ḥaqq fī makhlūqātih lā tuʿallal*).[354] The metaphysical answer, as we shall see, goes beyond the strictly moral deviance of Muslims from the Divine Law and prophetic Sunnah. It explicates the subjugation of Muslim by invoking the Akbarian theology of the Divine Names. The state of Muslims under colonial rule mirrors the effects of the Divine Names on human affairs. Human agency has no real causal efficacy in this metaphysical system. Only the Will and the decree of God determines and governs human affairs and cosmic destiny. This is the perspective that ʿAbd

[354] *Maw.* 364, 230. This theological issue goes back to the formative period of *kalām* and evolved out of two major school: the "Jabriyya" (the compulsionists) and "Qadariyya" (the defenders of human free will). The "Jabriyya", as described in the Shahrastānī's (d. 1153) classical work, "The Book of Theological School and Sects" (*Kitāb al-milal wa al-niḥal*), is a school that held that God pre-determines the moral choices of God, subscribing thereby to a determinist doctrine of human moral choice. The "Qadariyya", sometime associated with the Muʿtazilite, hold the opposing view, namely, that human are free moral agents and are the solely accountable for their choices. For a brief explanation of their respective positions, see Shahrastānī's entry on "the Muʿtazilite" and "Jabriyya in John Renard, *Islamic Theological Themes: a Primary Source Reader* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014), 138-142. For an overview of the classical Ashʿarī treatment of human will (*irāda*), power (*qudra*), Divine omnipotence (*qudra*) and decree (*qadar*). See Book XXXV of Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. 6 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d. [*c.*1990]). Cf. Thérèse-Ann, Druart, "Al-Ghazālī's Conception of the Agent in the *Tahāfut* and the *Iqtiṣād*: Are People Really Agents?" In *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy. From the Many to the One. Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank.* Edited by James E. Montgomery (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 427–40; R. Frank, M. *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 42-47; Michael Marmura, "Ghazali's Chapter on Divine Power in the *Iqtiṣād*." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1994): 279–315. Cf. Chapter 2 "Coercion and Moral Agency in Ashʿarism" Syed, Mairaj U. In *Coercion and Responsibility in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

al-Qādir upholds while recognizing that it is pointless to seek a rational justification things that are beyond the ken of human cognition.

6.2 Probing The Philosophical Foundations of Western Modernity

Before turning my attention to the doctrinal articulation of ʿAbd al-Qādir's revivalist ideas, I would like to begin with some preliminary discussions on the notion of 'Modernity.' The abundant scholarly literature on the topic absolves me from a comprehensive analysis. All discussions must begin with some notional issues: what theoretical and methodological frameworks underlie the cultural premises of Western Modernity? It would be instructive to call upon the reflections of experts who have probed this subject. Here, I will limit myself to the conceptual considerations that throw light on the philosophical foundations of Western Modernity.

Saurabh Daube, who has pondered the topic from a postcolonial analytical framework, states that "the idea of modernity rests on rupture." [355] This rupture refers to the ideological break in Western cultural history from a medieval Christian past to a modern secular era. She further noted that "as an idea, ideal, and ideology of modernity and the modern appear as premised upon fundamental ruptures: a surpassing of tradition, a break with the medieval.".[356] The gradual

[355] Saurabh, Daube, "Enchantments and Incitements: Modernity, Time/Space, Margins," In *SpaceTime of the Imperial*, eds. Holt Meyer, Susanne Rau, Khatarina Walder (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 25.

Modernity and its Enchantments: An Introduction, 1. White, Stephen K. "Reason, Modernity, and Democracy." Chapter. In *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, edited by Stephen K. White, 3–16. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Cf. Sherry, Vincent. "Introduction: A History of 'Modernism.'" Chapter. In *The Cambridge History of Modernism*, edited by Vincent Sherry, 1–26 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[356] Saurabh, Daube, "Enchantments and Incitements," 27.

dethroning of the Church from the public sphere had wide-ranging repercussions on virtually all facets of Western cultural identity — sociopolitical, intellectual, and literary, among others.

Astradur Eysteinsson stated that the notion of 'Modernity' became "a legitimate concept broadly signifying a paradigmatic shift, a major revolt, beginning in the mid-and late nineteenth century against the prevalent literary and aesthetic tradition of the Western world."[357] The ideological rupture shifted from the dominant religious worldview of medieval Christianity to "the progressive triumph of reason."[358] As Tourain further notes, “modernity has always defined itself by its conflict with what it considers as irrationality, from customs to privileges, from all forms of ascriptions to religion.”[359]

6.3 Through The Looking-Glass: Islam and Western Modernity

There is considerable scholarly output on the topic of Islam and Modernity.[360] The study of modern Islam or Islamic modernism was first undertaken by colonial and orientalist historians whose motives were deeply entrenched in the imperialist ideology of colonial Europe.[361] The

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[357] Eysteinsson, Astradur. "Introduction" In *The Concept of Modernism*, 1-7. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), 2. https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.7591/9781501721304-002; There are of course no essential features that one can invoke to tease out ‘one’ single definition of modernity. Since the encroachment of European colonialism on Muslim lands, the ideology, construct, and philosophical articulations of modernity have given rise to evolving, divergent, overlapping layers and versions of modernity. For more on this topic, see Safdar Ahmed, *Reform and Modernity in Islam: The Philosophical, Cultural and Political Discourses among Muslim Reformers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 10–11.

[358] Alain, Tourain, “A Critical View of Modernity,” in Nico Stehr and Richard V. Ericson, eds., *The Culture and Power of Knowledge: Inquiries into Contemporary Societies* (De Gruyter, 1992), 29.

[359] Ibid.

[360] Ibid, 29.

[361] also Ivan Kalmar, Early *Orientalism: Imagined Islam and the Notion of Sublime Power* (London: Routledge, 2012); See Anouar Abdel-Malek, “Orientalism in Crisis,” Diogenes 11, no. 44 (1963): 103–40; for a recent and philosophically engaging critic of Orientalism as a methodological, structural, and systematic establishment of Western colonial modernity, see Wael B. Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

construction of a Modern Islamic discourse or a modernized Islamic experience has been conceived in Orientalist and academic scholarship through the polarized paradigms of post-Enlightenment Europe— tradition vs. Modernity, reason vs. faith, civilized vs. primitive.[362] The colonial experience staged this juxtapositional worldview to define the specter of Modern Islam. The early studies on Modern Islamic thought did not fare better than its colonial counterpart. Take, for instance, historians like H. A. R. Gibb, A. Hourani, H. Bowen, and Charles Adams, to name a few. Their studies of Islamic Modernity could not transcend the Eurocentric cultural paradigms. Their impressions and narrative were embedded in the Orientalist analytical framework. Accordingly, they construed Modern Islam as an assimilation of the value system of Western Modernity, underlying such features as rationalist vs. traditionalist Islam, liberal vs. conservative, reformist vs. regressive, and so forth.[363]

This dichotomy emerges in Hourani's seminal work, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age,* whose title already assumed the thesis its author sought to advance. In a nutshell, Hourani took Islamic modernism as the byproduct of Western Modernity.[364] Even when recognizing the Islamic provenance of Modern Islamic thought, he essentially conceived Modern Islam in Western terms.

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[362] S. Daube, *Stitches on Time: Colonial Textures and Postcolonial Tangles* (London, Duke University Press , 2004)

[363] For a compelling study of the ideological foundations of Western modernity and its "the colonial matrix of power", as Mignolo puts, see his Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentrism and Modernity (Introduction to the Frankfurt Lectures)," *Boundary 2* 20, no. 3 (1993): 65–76. For a recent critical study of Orientalist scholarship of Islam, see Wael Hallaq, *Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge* (Columbia University Press, 2018).

[364] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983). By his own admission, Hourani positioned his *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* along the perspective of his predecessor, H.A.R. Gibb, who frames in his *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947) the modernity of Islam along the cultural assimilation of Western modernity. Similar perspective is explicitly developed in H. Bowen*, Islamic Society and the West: A study of the impact of Western civilization on Moslem culture in the Near East, vol. I: Islamic society in the eighteenth century, parts 1 and* 2 (London, 1950–7); Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muḥammad ʿAbduh* (London: Oxford University Press / Humphrey Milford, 1933); For a critical response of Hourani's Westernized Islamic modernity thesis, see Donald M. Reid, "Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age Twenty Years After," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14, no. 04 (1982): 545, 550.

He regarded the pioneers of Modernist Islam (e.g., Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī , Muhammad??, Rifāʿah Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Kawākibī) as thinkers who sought to adapt "certain traditional concepts of Islamic thought with the dominant ideas of modern Europe."[365] Highlighting this limitation, revisionist scholars challenged the Orientalist historiographical framework and cultural prejudices on many grounds. Chief among them is the underlying ideological essentialization of Islamic Modernity. In a word, the Western experience of Modernity defined the Orientalist narrative of Modern Islam.

While underlining some lacunas, the revisionists were not entirely free from certain methodological limitations that imposed themselves by default or subconsciously on the academic conceptualization of Islamic Modernity proper.[366] As Voll observed, the methodological shortcomings with the studies of H. A. Gibb, A. Smith, and Hourani lie in the conceptualization of modern Islam "within the framework of a Westernizing modernity."[367] There seems to be no acknowledgment of indigenous Islamic articulation of Modernity or lack thereof from the theological ideas of Muslim thinkers who came in contact with or critically rejected the ideological premises of colonial Modernity altogether. As A. Katemann put it, "modernization was conceptualized" in the theoretical framework of modern Islam scholarship as "as the influence of

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[365] Hourani, *Arabic Thought,*154.
[366] Some of the revisionist scholars include Fazlur Rahman, John O. Voll, Reinhard Schulze, "Revival and Reform in Islam," in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Peter M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton, and Bernard Lewis, vol. 2 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970); idem., *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982).
[367] Voll, John O. "Modernism". In *obo* in Islamic Studies. https://www-oxfordbibliographies-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/view/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0051.xml.

the West."[368] In other words, what historians who followed this interpretive line meant by modern Islam are the "modernization-as-Westernization."[369]

We have today a better conceptual appreciation of the diverse and evolving parameters of Western and Islamic 'Modernity'. There are fundamental ideological differences and overlapping articulations of this notion in the Western and modern Islamic world. The historical and cultural context in which this notion emerged in the West cannot be overlooked. We cannot either simplistically project many of these cultural values on Islamic concepts and ideas without critically assessing their ideological underpinnings. One aspect of colonial Modernity that looms large in post-Enlightenment European thought is the paradigmatic emphasis on human reason. The cultural hegemony of rationalism features prominently in the Western narrative of modernist Islam discourse. For this reason, the taxonomy and typologies of modern Islam in Western scholarship have often long been measured against the medium of Western rationalism, namely, science, secularism, and liberalism, among others. This orientation seems to persist in academic circles where modern Islam, Muslims, and ideas are typically fashioned in the image of Western cultural history.

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[368] Ammeke Kateman, *Muḥammad 'Abduh and His Interlocutors: Conceptualizing Religion in a Globalizing World*.(Leiden : Brill, 2019), p. 19. Kateman joins a new wave of historians (e.g., Samira Hamzah Dyala Hamzah, and Dallal Ahmed, Mohammed Haddad, Roxanne Eubane, among others) who offer a new line of criticism of both the Orientalist and revisionist (J. O. Voll, F. Rahman) scholarship of modern Islam. The central argument these scholars put forward by these authors in their studies is that modern Western scholarship fails to truly appreciate the fundamental Islamic persuasion of so-called modernist Muslim thinkers such Jamāl al-Dīn Afghānī, Muhammad Abduh, who situated their reformist ideas within the longstanding traditional Sunni reformist schools of the past. See Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750–1850," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113, no. 3 (1993); Mohamed Haddad, "Les oeuvres de Abduh. Histoire d'une manipulation," *Revue de l'Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes* 60, no. 180 (1997): 197–222; Mohamed Haddad, "Abduh et ses lecteurs: Pour une histoire critique des 'lectures' de M. Abduh," *Arabica* 45, no. 1 (1998): 22–49; Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009); Dyala Hamzah, ed., *The Making of the Arab Intellectual: Empire, Public Sphere and the Colonial Coordinates of Selfhood* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2013)

[369] A. Kateman, *Muammad Abduh and His Interloctutors*, p. 19.

6.4 Filling the Gaps: Western Narratives of Modern Islam

The tradition and principles of Islamic "renewal"/ "reform" (*tajdīd/iṣlāḥ*) "reflect a longstanding dimension of Islamic tradition."[370] The modern Muslim reformers, designating in this context thinkers who theologically confronted Western colonial modernity, did not depart from this tradition in significant terms. While different iterations of Islamic reform have emerged throughout Islamic history, the foundational sources of Islamic reform have always consistently been the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet.[371] As Anjum remarks, Western scholarship has naively assumed all along that "Islam is inevitably the object of reform and critique whereas the West the source of history and the paradigm to be (however "cautiously") emulated."[372] Dallal further notes the prevalent assumption of modern Islamic reform has either been "a reaction or a response to Europe."[373] As S. Haj aptly notes, this narrative results from "a peculiar reading of the experience of post-Reformation Europe, an uncritical self-understanding of the emergence of European modernity."[374] As other scholars have put it, the presumption is that "Islam did not

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[370] Voll, John O. "*Tajdīd*." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, 2004. Nehemia Levtzion et al., eds., *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, 1st ed (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 32.

[371] Recent reassessment of the reformist ideas of Muhammad Abduh, who is regarded as a prominent voice of modernist Islam, have challenged many of the assumptions that scholars have made about his presumed modernist theological ideas. See, for instance, Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009); A. Kateman, *Muammad Abduh and His Interloctutors.*

[372] Ovamir Anjum, *Whither Islam?: Western Islamic Reform and Discursive Density* (Brill, 2019), 255. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004391710_015.

[373] Dallal, Ahmad. "The Origins and Early Development of Islamic Reform." Chapter. In *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, edited by Robert W. Hefner, 6:107–47. *The New Cambridge History of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107.

[374]Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 1.

undergo the process of self-renewal that the West had been through since after the Protestant Reformation."[375]

This explains the myth of pre-modern Islamic intellectual atrophy that has long been perpetuated in Western scholarship. Historians who subscribed to this view dismissed any creative intellectual activity before the Muslim encounter with colonial Europe. [376] As the above scholars remarked, this narrative only recognized modern Western thought as the source of modern Islamic reform.[377] We have today many new studies on pre-colonial Islamic thought that have definitively dispelled this myth of Islamic decline.[378] By and large, historians of modern Islam have been either aloof to or dismissive of pre-colonial Islamic reformist discourse. Indeed, the historical and textual evidence shows that post-classical Islamic thought was one of the most creative intellectual periods in Islamic history. Scholars who have worked on this topic have rightly questioned the

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[375] See Masud, Muhammad Khalid and Armando Salvatore. *Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates: Part 1, Chapter 2: Western Scholars of Islam on the Issue of Modernity*, edited by Van Bruinessen, Martin, Armando Salvatore and Muhammad Khalid Masud (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 49.

[376] T. Darling, "*The Myth of Decline*" in: Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection Finance and Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560–1660* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 1–21.

[377] Talal Asad has undertaken many critical studies of the Western anthropological and philosophical approaches to the study of Islamic *qua* a religious discursive tradition. His criticism of the their methodology and analytical framework has primarily been focused on the uncritical projection on Islam of a conceptual and cultural worldview that originate and evolved distinctly in post-Reformation Europe (i.e., categories of religion, tradition, secularism, reform), see Asad, T. (1993) *Genealogies of Religion: Disciplines of Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); see also his *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London: Ithaca Press, 1973) and *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington, D.C: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986).

[378] The unbroken tradition of Islamic reform is a motif that can be traced to the classical era. This continuum was highlighted in the study of Ella Landau-Tasseron, "The 'Cyclical Reform': A Study of the Mujadid Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 70 (1989). For more recent studies on pre-colonial Islamic reformist discourse, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) and his "Opening the Gate of Verification: The Forgotten Arab-Islamic Florescence of the 17th Century.";; R. S. O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990); John Obert Voll, "Abdallah ibn Salim al-Basri and 18th Century Hadith Scholar-ship," Die Welt des Islams 42, no. 3 (2002); Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, 1641–1731* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005); Ahmad S. Dallal, *Islam without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought*, Islamic Civilization and Muslim Networks (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

historiographical thesis that have long guided Western scholarship of pre-colonial Islamic reformist thought.

The studies that have been produced on pre-colonial Islamic reformist thought raise another issue with the conceptual and historiographical framework of Orientalist scholarship of modern Islam. What makes a theological thought modern or modernist? Western scholars have often assumed that virtually that a modernist Muslim reformer is someone who tried to adapt Islamic to the ideals of Western modernity. This perspective envisages Islamic reform as a reform of the traditional paradigm of Islamic religious thought. This view, however, seem to ignore the fact that many so-called modernist Muslim reformers conformed to the longstanding principles of Islamic reform that pre-dated the colonial era.[379] There are inevitably theoretical complications in qualifying some Muslim thinkers as modern or anti-modern, especially when this qualifier is judged against the prevalent Western conception of modernism.[380] There are theoretical elaborations on the notion of modernity. That said, there are patterns of theological thinking in Modern Islamic thought that assimilated more than others the ideals that defined modern Western thought — e.g. Syed Ahmed Khan[381], Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, Kawākibī, Muhammad Iqbal (d.

[379] Mohamed Haddad, "Les oeuvres de Abduh. Histoire d'une manipulation,"

[380] New approaches are emerging in contemporary scholarship which seek to transcend the theoretical framework of Western historiography as well as the thematic conceptualization of Islamic reform/modernism. This approach is best described as an internalist analytical approach, namely, one in which the Islamic discursive tradition is evaluated based on its own epistemic models, paradigms and value system. This method is typified in the work of Mosaad, Walead, *Islam Before Modernity* : *Aḥmad Al-Dardīr and the Preservation of Traditional Knowledge* (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, LLC, 2022); Spannaus, Nathan. *Preserving Islamic Tradition : Abu Nasr Qursawi and the Beginnings of Modern Reformism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019); cf. Dallal, *Islam without Europe*.

[381] Qidvā'ī, Shāfe'. *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: Reason, Religion and Nation* (London ;: Routledge, 2021).

1938).[382] Granting that Muslim reformers formulated different answers to the colonial threat, none questioned the normative Islamic religious establishment in the name of Western Modernity.

Sweeping assumptions about the modernist persuasion of a Muslim thinkers tend to ignore this fact and point instead to their presumably defiant stance toward traditional religious institutions. In the case of ʿAbd al-Qādir, the debate over his Modernity is not an exception to this. He has often been portrayed as a modernist Muslim who "strove to adapt Islam to the modern era through a reinterpretation of the teaching of the medieval mystic, Ibn ʿArabī."[383] This is the issue that I want to examine in the next section in the hope of situating the Sufi philosophical worldview against the ideological worldview of colonial Modernity.[384]

6.5 ʿAbd al-Qādir: Sufi Akbarian Theology and Colonial Modernity

Following theoretical discussions about the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of Western Modernity, we can now turn to a more straightforward but highly disputed question: was ʿAbd al-Qādir a modernist Sufi thinker? By that, we need to question the congruency with the ideals of Western Modernity and Sufi Akbarian theology of ʿAbd al-Qādir.

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[382] See Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam, 1840-1940: A Sourcebook* (Oxford University Press, 2002) for a comparative introduction to their respective modernist Islamic thought. Kurzman's anthology, which include a long list of Muslim thinkers, subsumed under the rubric of modernist Islam, reiterates many of the problematic assumptions about 'modernist' Islam that I have highlighted above.

[383] Charles Kurzman, *Modernist Islam,* 133.

[384] The historical timeline is ideologically charged, considering that the temporal conception of modernity is intimately embedded in the ideological 'birth' of modernity in Western cultural history. For this reason, it becomes even more difficult to translate these intricacies when attempting to situate or fit a Muslim thinker or an Islamic religious concept within this pre-constructed Euro-Western notion of modernity.

Given the supremacy of empirical reason in 19th-century Western European thought, how did ʿAbd al-Qādir envisage this epistemological perspective vis-à-vis the normative Islamic Sufi epistemological paradigm?

Scholars who pondered this question disagree over the features of colonial Modernity that ʿAbd al-Qādir rejected or may have assimilated. The disagreement stems from the diverse and sometimes opposing conceptual frameworks that guide their interpretations of ʿAbd al-Qādir's life, statements, deeds, and especially his writings. I limit myself here to his theological convictions as they emerge through his *Dhikrā al-ʿāqil (Reminder of the Intelligent)* and selective discussions in his *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*. Scholars who attempt to read the *Dhikrā* in light of the *Mawāqif* believe that the *Dhikrā* is a rationalist theological work where ʿAbd al-Qādir is sympathetic to modern European rationalism. ʿAbd al-Qādir sought to reconcile the rationalism of the *Dhikrā* with the mystical theology of the *Mawāqif.* This view is expressed, albeit in different manners, by Itzchak Weisman, Cummins, and Kurzman.

Since Weisman has devoted more attention the Sufi intellectual milieu in Ottoman Syria and the central role that ʿAbd al-Qādir played in revitalizing the Sufi Akbarian teachings, I want to engage with his interpretations. While recognizing the rationalist character of *Dhikrā al-ʿāqil* and the mystical scope of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif,* Weisman's reading of ʿAbd al-Qādir's revivalist project does not coherently align with the philosophical doctrine of ʿAbd al-Qādir. Weisman argued that ʿAbd al-Qādir's project was "the modernization of the Akbari thought, namely his redefinition of the relationship between mysticism and rationalism in Islam."[385] By this, he further explains, ʿAbd al-Qādir "sought to integrate his profound religious faith with the rationalist mode

[385] Weisman, *Taste of Modernity*, 155.

of underlying the achievements of the West."[386] Weisman takes it for granted that ʿAbd al-Qādir's encounter with colonial Europe convinced him of "the undeniable superiority achieved by the European powers."[387] While promoting similar Sufi revivalist ideas as Sh. Khālid, Weisman argues that ʿAbd al-Qādir differed from Sh. Khālid's revivalist thought in his conviction that "it was necessary to acquire the practical sciences which provided the west with its power, on the other hand, rationalism had to be kept out of the religious sciences, lest like Europe it would lead to unbelief."[388]

Woerner has raised many valid objections to Weisman's readings.[389] He aptly notes that no textual evidence indicates that ʿAbd al-Qādir "engaged with any thinkers, rationalist or otherwise, from European Enlightenment nor the 19th-century France of his day." [390] Weisman seems to infer from ʿAbd al-Qādir's writings certain positions that the Algerian leader does not express anywhere. To better appreciate ʿAbd al-Qādir's perspective on discursive reason, Sufi theology and the rationalism of modern Western science, we only have to reevaluate his critic of the discursive reasoning of the *mutakallimūn* and the *falāsifa.* Time and time again, ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores the limitation of reasoning in virtually all domains of revealed knowledge — Qur'anic mystical hermeneutics, the ontology of the Qur'an, and the metaphysics of the heart-intellect. This epistemological model has incontrovertible implications on his theological impressions of colonial rationalist discourse.

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[386] Ibid, 157.

[387] Ibid, 164-165.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Woerner, *Another Road to Damascus,* 131-137

[390] Ibid, 132.

The rational tone the *Dhikrā al-ʿāqil* cannot be conflated with the secular rationalism of colonial Europe of his day. The *Dhikrā* was written for the French Asiatic society, an orientalist academy, that requested from the Algerian leader his philosophical reflections on the Islamic faith, theology, anthropology, and other religions, among others. The work derives its content from classical Islamic sources. There are, to be sure, some illuminating insights that ʿAbd al-Qādir adds concerning the domains of discursive and practical sciences, the scientific and technological accomplishments achieved by his contemporaries, and so forth. They do not modify his theological convictions about Revelation, prophecy, faith, reason, Divine law, or the purpose of human life and the afterlife. It is more accurate to say that ʿAbd al-Qādir had a pragmatic appreciation for some of the innovations and inventions of modern Europe than that he sought to incorporate its underlying rationalist paradigm into his Sufi theology. If one of the defining features of ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif* is its critique of Ashʿarī rational theology, I do not see how ʿAbd al-Qādir would reconcile his Sufi Akbarian theology with the agnostic rationalism of Western Europe.

Scholars who have greater familiarity with the Sufi Akbarian doctrines of the *Mawāqif* challenge this interpretation on several fronts. They generally believe that the Akbarian theology of the *Mawāqif* is irreconcilable with the predominant rational agnosticism of colonial Europe. I join the latter view, though I supply here more argumentative content to illustrate how ʿAbd al-Qādir grapples with Western colonial hegemony and discourse from a strictly Sufi metaphysical standpoint. Like other questions in this study, ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores the limitation of reason when discussing the transcendental sources of Muslim subjugation to European military and cultural dominance. Chodkiewicz maintained that the *Dhikrā* should be distinguished from the doctrinal teachings of the *Mawāqif*. As many scholars have noticed, the *Dhikrā* develops a classical Islamic account of the relationship of human reason vis-à-vis revelation. Like the traditionist

schools and Sufis, however, ʿAbd al-Qādir accords to reason a subservient role to Revelation (i.e., prophetic knowledge). In this respect, we can say that he departs from the normative Ashʿarī or Muslim Peripatetic philosophers who typically accord greater epistemic authority to discursive reason.

Chodkiewicz held that the *Dhikrā* does not have the doctrinal significance of the *Mawāqif*, which I believe is correct. Woerner misconstrues Chodkiewicz's views when he claims that the latter undermines the intellectual relevance of the *Dhikrā.* For Chodkiewicz, the *Dhikrā* is an expository text of some broad notions and concepts in Islamic history, creed, and anthropology that ʿAbd al-Qādir introduced to a European academic audience. It substantially differs from the expressly metaphysical and authorial tone of the *Mawāqif.* The latter work is the most explicit testament of ʿAbd al-Qādir's doctrinal convictions, aimed at an elitist Sufi audience steeped in the praxis and doctrinal teachings of classical Sufi thought. We should look in the *Mawāqif* for Abd al-Qādir's theological convictions and revivalist ideas. Abd al-Qādir does not depart from his position in the *Dhikrā* concerning the subordination of reason to revealed knowledge. In the *Mawāqif,* however, he highlights the preeminence of mystical Sufi epistemology over discursive reason.

The continuity between Sufi mystical epistemology and revealed knowledge forms the bedrock of ʿAbd al-Qādir's *Mawāqif.* While not entirely dismissive of discursive reason, ʿAbd al-Qādir is even more critical of theoretical reasoning in the *Mawāqif* than he is in the *Dhikrā.* There is greater emphasis in the *Mawāqif* on the impotence of discursive reasoning before the enigmatic truths of Revelation. In light of the preceding considerations, there are more reasons to believe that ʿAbd al-Qādir would be even more critical of the rationalist paradigms of modern colonial Europe than that he sought to harmonize it with his Sufi Akbarian theology.

So what might better translate the theological perception of ʿAbd al-Qādir vis-à-vis colonial modernity?

The editor of the volume "*Abdelkader*, *Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité*," opened their introduction with this question: "Was ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Ḥasanī a Modern?" I believe they offer more compelling answers to this question than historians who have limited knowledge of the theological teachings of Ibn ʿArabī and his school. The editor raises a question about the ideological connotation of the so-called Modernity of ʿAbd al-Qādir. If by modernist, we mean "the prevalent definition of modernity in the West, the answer is, a priori, no."[391] That is to say, ʿAbd al-Qādir would not be modern if by this we mean his espousal of the ideals that defined Western European Modernity.

In ʿAbd al-Qādir's time, the ideological underpinnings of Modernity, as conceived in Western Europe, translated into "rupture with the past and tradition" and "in keeping religion at bay."[392] In the 19th century, the scientific positivism of Western Europe is defined by "progress and individualism."[393] As we have seen earlier, the nineteenth century witnessed "the triumph of reason over faith." If Modernity stood for the supremacy of reason over Revelation, as the editors asserted, this conception of modernity "contradicts everything that ʿAbd al-Qādir was."[394] This sharply contradicts the theological positions that ʿAbd al-Qādir upholds in both the *Dhikrā* and even more so in the *Mawāqif*.[395]

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[391] Geoffroy, *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* 7.

[392] Geoffroy, *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* 7.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Ibid.

[395] Ibid, 8.

Is there, however, a pragmatic reception of "the prodigious inventions of modernity," as Geoffroy put it.[396] On the military front, the Algerian religious commander undertook many administrative and political reforms to consolidate his powers. He quickly recognized the necessity of adopting modern European military technology to confront the French colonial superpower.[397] After his imprisonment, ʿAbd al-Qādir visited many exhibitions of modern European inventions. He took a genuine interest in the revolutionary character of the locomotive train, the printing press, and holographical photography.[398] For a contemplative thinker like ʿAbd al-Qādir, his admiration of the technological innovations of modern Europe was sober and perspicacious. He was not blind to the subversive side of modern inventions, especially their destructive side. Consider, for instance, his impressions of the military innovations he observed during his guided visits to the Museum of Artillery and the Government Printing. With a visionary tone, ʿAbd al-Qādir remarked, "yesterday I saw the house of canons with which ramparts are toppled; today I saw the machine with which kings are toppled."[399]

ʿAbd al-Qādir never lost sight of the metaphysical force that animates even the most 'profane' human creativity. Upon his visit to the Universal Exposition of 1855, which displayed the most revolutionary industrial achievements of modern Europe, ʿAbd al-Qādir's amazement at

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[396] Ibid, 9.

[397] Ahmed Bouyerdene, *L'harmonie Des Contraires,* 65, 151. Cf. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful,* Chap. Seven (The Islamic Nation); Jean-Louis, Marcot, "Abd el-Kader et la Modernité," In *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité, ed. Eric* Geoffroy (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005),290.

[398] ʿAbd al-Qādir was photographed on several occasions by European and Turkish photographers in his lifetime. For a brief discussion on his reception of modern European photography see See Ahmed Bouyerdene, *L'harmonie Des Contraires*, 141-144. For his remarkable account of the metaphysical symbolism of photography, see E. Geoffroy, "Metaphysique et Modernité Chez Abd el-Kader: La Photographie Comme Théophanie," in *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* 155-166.

[399] Alexandre Bellemare's *Abd-El-Kader, Sa Vie Politique*, 400.

these feats of modern science was still seen through a transcendental vantage point, declaring that "this place is the palace of intelligence animated by the breath of God."[400] There is no indication that ʿAbd al-Qādir subscribed to the secularized ideology of colonial Europe. Meanwhile, the Algerian religious leader was not dismissive of some of the undeniable accomplishments of modern Europe. Nonetheless, his pragmatic assimilation of some scientific and technological innovations of modern Europe was in light of his theological vocation. Nowhere does the pursuit of material gains or progress feature in his theological ideas. We instead maintain the proper comportment (*adab*) of someone who is deeply attuned to the disclosures of God in the human affair, for as the *hadith* states, "the son of Adam curses Time (*al-dahr*), and I (God) am Time, and all matter is in my hands, I turn the night and the day as I will."[401] In light of this, I turn next to ʿAbd al-Qādir's insights on the precarious state of Muslims in his time, in the hope of gaining a more tangible idea of what he considered the true causes of their demise under colonial rule.

6.6 The Theology of Muslim Imitation of Europeans

In 364th *Mawqif*, we have one of the only discussions where ʿAbd al-Qādir addresses the causes of Muslim emulation of the customs and values of their European invaders.[402] A certain coreligionist asks ʿAbd al-Qādir his theological reflections on the Muslim imitation of the customs and norms of their European conquerors. ʿAbd al-Qādir's first answer tackles the psychological dimensions of this phenomenon. He writes:

> A friend has asked me to explain why Muslims admire the affairs of non-Muslims and imitate their norms,

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[400] Alexandre Bellemare's *Abd-El-Kader,* 415.

[401] Bukhārī, *Sahīh*, *Kitāb al-tafsīr*, 1, no. 4875.

[402] Denis Grill analyses in same facets of this *Mawqif*, in his "*La théophanie des noms divins, d'Ibn 'Arabī à Abd el-Kader*," in *Abd El-Kader, Un Spirituel Dans La Modernité,* 167-188.

> dress code, manners of eating, drinking, riding, and indeed all their acts and rest, their rules, and religious beliefs. I answered him: know that most people, nay all of them, save the elite from among the servants of God [glorified is He] think that if the unbeliever overcame the Muslim, that it is God who granted victory to the unbeliever over the Muslim. This is not the case, however. God has forsaken the Muslims because they have violated His commands and deviated from the norm of his Prophet. Hence when the Muslim and the unbeliever faced each other, the Name of God, the Forsaker (*al-khādhil*), overpowered the Muslim and cast fear (*ruʿb*) into his heart, whereof the unbeliever defeated the Muslim.[403]

Like other prominent Muslim revivalists, ʿAbd al-Qādir was a firsthand witness to the unprecedented impact of colonial Europe on Muslim society and culture. He contends that only a small minority, by which he typically means the Sufis, are immune from this cultural subjugation. He offers an illuminating account of *the psychological theology of imitation* that underpins the Muslim imitation of their European conquerors. He remarks that the masses of Muslims who assimilate all facets of European beliefs and culture virtually misleadingly believe that "God granted victory to the unbeliever over the Muslim" (i.e., Europeans over Muslims). This drives Muslims to admire their European rivals and imitate their customs.

The subjugation of Muslims is attributed in ʿAbd al-Qādir's theology to their violation of "the commands of God and revealed Law of his Prophet." For ʿAbd al-Qādir, however, this is a false impression. The victory of 'unbelievers' does not ensue from the support of God to the 'unbeliever,' as ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains. As ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks, the Muslims were not forsaken by God because they deviated from the moral code of the Qur'an. In other words,

[403] *Mawqif.* 364, p.229.

Muslims were not defeated because their adversaries were aided by God but were forsaken because they violated the moral laws instituted by the Prophet. Bringing his ontology of the Divine Names to bear upon his moral theology, ʿAbd al-Qādir underscores the inextricable interplay between the moral deviance from the revealed Law of God and the Name of God "the Forsaker" (*al-khādhil*). As he construes it, this Divine Name of God "overpowered the Muslim and cast fear (*ruʿb*) into his heart and was thus overpowered by the unbeliever."

Commenting on the false impression that Muslims conjure up regarding the superiority of European powers, ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks that "monarchs and their advisors, ministers, and leaders" suppose that the cause of their military defeat is the superior forces and achievements of their invaders. He writes:

> Muslims mistakenly believe that the [defeat of their armies] was due to the unbelievers' grandeur, achievements, and virtues. For this reason, they admired and imitated them in all their affairs and customs; even those in power followed suit. Everyone seeks proximity from someone who is above him by following his leadership. This poison spread across the masses – from those with weak faith to those who are infinitely more fragile.[404]

What ʿAbd al-Qādir tried to convey in his first answer is that the Muslims imitated the customs and assimilated the ideals of Europeans because they ignored the true cause of their downfall. From what we have been able to gather, ʿAbd al-Qādir envisages the question of Muslim imitation of European culture against the backdrop of his moral theology. He contends that God forsook Muslims because they abandoned His Law and deviated from the ethical conduct of their

[404] Ibid.

Prophet. Contrary to what they supposed, then, the victory of the Europeans over Muslims was not the result of God's support but because of their spiritual deviance.

What ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to say, then, is that Muslims attributed their defeat to the seemingly superior military forces and achievements of colonial Europe. He is saying that Muslims supposed that God inspired Europeans with the resources and tools to overcome Muslim forces. ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts that this conviction drives Muslims to imitate European in all their affairs (military, political, cultural, and so forth). He says that "this imitation with the victorious (i.e., Europeans) may go as far as embracing their religious creed and beliefs if the victor did have a religion."[405]

6.7 The Divine Names: Roots of Anthropocosmic Destiny

Following his theological account of the phenomenology of Muslim *imitation* of Europeans, ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks that "the questioner was not entirely satisfied with this answer."[406] The questioner sought "a deeper insight" from ʿAbd al-Qādir over this question. This time ʿAbd al-Qādir will shift the tone and register of his theological reflection to the ontological foundations of cosmic and phenomenal changes. He invokes in this context the Akbarian ontology of Divine Names to explicate the cosmic devastation brought about by colonial Europe on Muslims. He writes:

> I answered him: the real cause of the changing states of the cosmic order is "the alternating disclosures of the Divine Names" (*ikhtilāf tajaliyyāt al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya*), inasmuch as the degree of Divinity necessitates by itself the perpetual variations of cosmic states, either from good to evil, from beneficial to

[405] Ibid, 230.

[406] Ibid.

> felicitous, or from harmful to worse. This is how the Divine Names act upon and perpetually impress the creatures in accordance with what has been inscribed for each creature "in the Preserved Tablet" (*ummu-l-kitāb*).[407]

Pressing him to provide a metaphysical account of Muslims' emulation of Europeans, ʿAbd al-Qādir deploys the Akbarian doctrine of Divine Self-disclosures to illuminate the turmoil afflicting his Muslim contemporaries. This time, the emphasis is turned toward the cosmological underpinnings of human and cosmic destiny. As he states from the outset, the "real causes of cosmic changes are the changing disclosures of the Divine Names" (*ikhtilāf tajaliyyāt al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya*). The interplay between the Names determines and shapes human affairs and cosmic events. This principle is invoked to cast light on the dramatic impact of colonial Modernity on virtually all facets of the Muslim world.

He adds a crucial caveat: he notes that the changing disclosure of God's Names is an intrinsic feature of God's Divinity (*ulūha*). This point requires further clarification. In classical Akbarian theology of the Divine Names, each Divine Name/Attribute of God requires a locus within which it manifests its effects (*āthār*). Otherwise stated, the Divine Names manifest their qualities through cosmic and human states. [408] As ʿAbd al-Qādir states, the degree of Divinity (*ulūha*) engenders "the perpetual variations of cosmic states," whether these states alternate between from bad to worse, good to better, from evil to good, and so on. It is worth noting that the

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[407] Ibid.

[408] We have briefly seen how ʿAbd al-Qādir develops this Akbarian doctrine of the Names in his commentary on *Fass* of Shuʿayb, (The Scope of Mercy and the Heart-Intellect). This doctrine is developed *Mawqif* 144; For Ibn Arabī's ontology of the Names and their hierarchical disclosures, see his *Futūhāt*, vol. I, p. 216, vol. II, p. 9, 355, 487, 651; vol. III, p. 74, 278, 399.

degree of Divinity corresponds in the Akbarian theology of the Names to the Essence (*dhāt*) of God.

By virtue of its identity with the Name of Essence, which is the Name "Allah," the degree of "*ulūha*" (divinity) constitutes the synthetization of all the Names and Attributes of God. It is through the Divine Names that the Divine Essence acts on human and cosmic affairs. The complementary and contrary effects of the Divine Names generate in turn agreeable and disagreeable changes within the world. The anthropological implication of this doctrine assumes a predestinarian line in his theology of Divine Names. As ʿAbd al-Qādir puts it, the Divines Names "which act upon and impress the creatures in accordance with what has been inscribed for each one of them in the Preserved Tablet (*ummu'l-kitāb*)."[409] In the next segment, we will gain a better idea of his understanding of the determining role of the Divine Names on human destiny.

6.8 The Human Margin: Between Fatalism and Theodicy

ʿAbd al-Qādir deploys this doctrine to illuminate his perception of the changing states of the world. Consider this passage:

> When we witnessed the changing events and states of the world from evil to good and vice versa, we knew that there is a source for this, which ought to be the changing disclosures of the Divine Names.

[409] The expression "Mother of the Book" appears in several verses of the Qur'an. In one verse (Q. 43, 4), the "Mother of the Book" denotes the Divine decree (*qadar*), that is, what has been pre-eternally determined by God. A long *hadith* narrated by Tirmidhi, *Sunan*, *Kitāb al-qadar*, *bāb* 17, 2308, cites an explanation of this "expression" by the Prophet who informs one of his companions that "it is a Book upon which God has written before the creation of the heavens and before the creation of the earth. It is inscribed that Pharaoh is among the dwellers of the Hellfire, and "Perish the hands of *Abū Lahab,* and perish he! (Q. 111:1) " The narration ends with an anecdote of a companion who is questioned about the advice that his father, a companion of the Prophet, gave him before his death, to which he answers "my father summoned me and told me: oh my son, you must fear God and know that you cannot fear God until you believe in Him and His decree in its entirety, both good and evil. If you die disbelieving in this, you will be among the dwellers of Hellfire. I have also heard the Prophet say: that the first thing God created was the Pen. He then commanded it to write, to which the Pen asked: 'what shall I write?' God instructed the Pen to write His decree, what has been and what will be, everlastingly."

> Since each Name of God manifests a specific effect, all creatures' affairs are determined by the governing qualities of the Divine Names.[410]

What we gather from this reflection is the contention that the Divine Names are the determining causes of any condition that characterizes the current state of any given epoque. We can see how ʿAbd al-Qādir is moving his audience in a different direction than the one we encountered originally. Initially, the deviation from the moral Law of the Qur'an forms a key premise of his assessment of the Muslim imitation of Europeans. This time, he leaves an infinitely smaller margin to human agency. He is certainly not denying or dismissing the role of moral choice in this metaphysical equation.

Nonetheless, he emphasizes the transcendental causes that determine the course of human history, namely, "the changing disclosures of the Divine Names." Whether the changing disclosure works concurrently or independently of the moral choices of Muslims is a question that ʿAbd al-Qādir tackles later. What is clear, however, is that the condition of creatures, as he notes above, manifests the effect of one or a set of Divine Names. To compensate for what seems like a strictly theoretical articulation of the theology of the Divine Names, ʿAbd al-Qādir changes his interpretive register to the perceptible qualities that the Divine Names manifest within the creatures:

> In fact, the creatures are the marks (*ʿalāmāt*) and the loci of the acting Names of God, for they [the creatures] are the traces (*āthāriha*) that unveil their qualities. The creatures are thus the marks of disclosures of the Real (may He be glorified) in accordance with how He reveals Himself. He is the One who misguides (al-*muḍill*), the Bewilderer (*al-muḥayyir*), the Guide (al-*hādī*), the One who grants success (*muwaffiq*), the

[410] Ibid.

> bestower of honor (al-*muʿizz*), the Humiliator (al-*mudhill*), and other such Names of disclosures.[411]

Inverting his analytical lens, ʿAbd al-Qādir approaches the interdependence of the Divine Names and their anthropocosmic disclosures in a different light. We learn that the creatures reveal the qualitative features of the Divine Names. The creatures are "the marks," the "loci," and "the traces" of these qualities. In other words, we perceive the qualities of the Divine Names by the impressions they manifest within the creatures. As noted earlier, the disclosures of the Divine Names are none other than the disclosures of God. Thus conceived, ʿAbd al-Qādir affirms that "the creatures are thus the marks of disclosures of the Real (glorified is He) in accordance with how He reveals and manifests Himself." If we follow his reasoning, the Divine Names he enumerates (e.g., One who misguides (*muḍill*), the bewilderer (al-*muḥayyir*), the Guide (*al-hādī*), the bestower of honor (*al-muʿizz*), the Humiliator (*al-mudhill*), so forth), impress creatures with their qualities. This last point requires further clarification.

6.9 Reason Has no Say over God's Way

From what we have gathered, it is worth asking this question: are the cosmic events and states of creatures passively determined by the Divine Names, as ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to suggest? If indeed the creatures are merely the "traces" of the acting Names of God, this reading seems to say that human have an infinitesimal, if any role, to play in shaping their destiny. Before answering this question, let us cite another statement where ʿAbd al-Qādir offers more explicit indications on the performative function of the Divine Names over human affairs and destiny: He writes:

> The Divine Names manage and govern creatures' affairs, whether this pertains to praiseworthy or

[411] Ibid.

> blameworthy matters, what may/may not transpire in their outward or inward affairs by overpowering and embracing them. In so doing, they make some felicitous and others wretched. Beyond this, however, no one can express himself or ask anything about this matter, for asking why things are this way is like probing the Divine decree. The answer to this is: it is the way it is. The acts of God upon his creatures have no extrinsic causes, since there is no compulsive cause for the existence of something save to say in the broadest possible terms: "He gave to each thing its nature" (Q. 20.50)[412]

In this passage, ʿAbd al-Qādir's theological tone seems deterministic. We must not forget that ʿAbd al-Qādir attempts to furnish a metaphysical account of Muslims' imitation of their colonial invaders. Tackling this phenomenon from the ontology of the Divine Names, ʿAbd al-Qādir leaves virtually no margin for human intervention in the affairs of the world. As he envisages it, the Divine Names "govern the affairs of the creatures." He abstracts human agency from the changes and the outcome of human history. Notice how ʿAbd al-Qādir construes this performative function of the Divine Names on all planes of human affairs: the virtues and vices (i.e., the praiseworthy and blameworthy) qualities of human subjects, their social and cultural behavior (i.e., outward affairs), but also their psychic and cognitive states (inward affairs). As ʿAbd al-Qādir asserts, the transcendental gravity of the Divine Names, so to speak, overpowers and embraces all the conditions of human affairs. In other words, the impressions of the Divine Names over creatures are irresistible. The Divine Names' acting qualities thus determine the creatures' felicity and misery.

[412] Ibid.

ʿAbd al-Qādir is aware of the fatalistic overtones of his doctrine. This perspective was not the first of its kind, however. Virtually all Sufis, Muslim philosophers, and the majority of Ashʾarīs subscribed to some version of determinism when discussing human will and Divine decree. As far as ʿAbd al-Qādir is concerned, the Divine decree remain inscrutable. As he starts, "asking for why things are this way is like probing the Divine decree (*qadar*)." The only answer ʿAbd al-Qādir one can provide to this question is that "this is the way it is" (*bal huwa huwa*). Concerning the unfolding of God's decree, ʿAbd al-Qādir makes a critical observation: "God's acts upon his creatures have no extrinsic causes." This is a major premise of his theology of Divine decree. Contrary to human acts, no extrinsic cause would compel God to act in one way or another. Had there been an extrinsic cause behind God's act, I take ʿAbd al-Qādir to say that God would depend on it to effectuate His Will. It contradicts the basic Islamic conception of a self-sufficient and omnipotent God. In this case, ʿAbd al-Qādir invokes the scriptural verse to justify the inscrutable Wisdom of God: *"*He gave to each thing its nature" (Q. 20.50*).*

The foregoing considerations leave his audience with a theological enigma that cannot be grasped rationally. But as we have seen throughout this study, this forms part and parcel of his mystical theology of Revelation. As ʿAbd al-Qādir argues on many occasions, certain revealed truths transcend rational analysis. Like other revealed truths, there is a facet of cosmic and human destiny that lies beyond reason. Is ʿAbd al-Qādir dismissing human free will and moral accountability by embracing what seems an outright determinism? Yes and no. His concluding remarks on Q. 20:50 juxtaposes two possible meanings:

> If you wish, you understand by this verse that God gave man freedom of choice. You may interpret it this way according to conventional knowledge. But you may also understand by [this verse] that the Divine Essence (*al-dhāt*) necessitated that the creation of each thing is consonant with its intrinsic

> nature, namely, its concomitant and accidental traits; glory to the all-knowing and mighty is the all-wise.[413]

With this concluding statement, ʿAbd al-Qādir proposes two alternative interpretations of the verse. If my understanding is correct, ʿAbd al-Qādir seems to say that one may attribute historical events to human choice. In the context of the European invasion of Muslim lands, ʿAbd al-Qādir is perhaps suggesting to his audience that God gives humans a choice to shape their destiny. This interpretation is more in line with the first answer to the question posed by his interlocutor. The second reading of this verse offers a different interpretive line. The first interpretation has a more pragmatic tone. ʿAbd al-Qādir justifies the perspective of free choices based on the conventional conception humans may have of human choice and history. To be sure, ʿAbd al-Qādir concedes this perspective on moral grounds, meaning that humans cannot be morally accountable if they are not free to choose. In this respect, Islamic moral law can only be meaningful for ʿAbd al-Qādir if Muslims are ethically responsible for their acts.

While recognizing this perspective, it does not reflect the perspective that ʿAbd al-Qādir espoused over this question. The second interpretation is far more consistent with his metaphysical epistemology. According to ʿAbd al-Qādir, one may envisage cosmic and human destiny (i.e., creation) as an ontological disclosure of the Divine Essence. As I understand it, ʿAbd al-Qādir envisages the decree of God in light of, not apart from, the intrinsic nature He imparts on each created reality. Put differently, the destiny of every created being can only manifest its intrinsic nature — the essential and accidental features. Ultimately, ʿAbd al-Qādir conceives the configuration of cosmic destiny as the manifestation of Divine omniscience and Wisdom.

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[413] Ibid.

6.10 Conclusion

My analytical inquiry was guided by the question that an interlocutor put before ʿAbd al-Qādir: what are the theological and metaphysical reasons for the Muslim emulation of their European invaders? This question elicited a response from ʿAbd al-Qādir that throws light on his reception of the ideology of colonial Modernity. For someone who confronted the European colonial powers militarily, culturally, and intellectually, we might assume that the Algerian religious leader sought to harmonize his Sufi theological worldview with the ideological paradigms of Western Modernity. We find little indication of this in his *Mawāqif*, however. When we critically assess the philosophical premises, cultural norms and ideals that conceived Western Modernity, there is a manifest tension between the Sufi Akbarian universe of ʿAbd al-Qādir and the materialistic rationalism of colonial Europe. In this chapter, I attempted to reevaluate the presuppositions of Orientalist and early modern scholars of Modern Islam. There are, as I argue, deep-seated problems with some views that suggest that a Sufi metaphysician like ʿAbd al-Qādir uncritically appropriated the cultural values of colonial Modernity. Such a view understates the irreconcilable differences between the Sufi doctrinal teachings of the *Mawāqif* and the materialistic paradigms of modern colonial discourse.

As I have tried to show in my analysis of 364th *Mawqif*, ʿAbd al-Qādir develops two different interpretive perspectives on the question of Muslims' imitation of their colonial invaders. The first perspective offers a moralistic diagnosis of Muslim deterioration: ʿAbd al-Qādir attributes the causes of Muslim subjugation to European forces to their deviation from the moral code of the Sharīᶜa and Prophetic teachings. The deeper reasons for Muslim decline, however, receives a more elaborate treatment from ʿAbd al-Qādir. He turns to the Akbarian metaphysics of the Divine Names for answers. He creatively redeploys the Akbarian doctrines of Anthropocosmic

disclosures of the Divine Names of God to explicates the transcendental sources of Islamic cyclical history. His theodicy within the colonial context is articulated through the classical Ashʿarī-Sufi doctrine of human agency, God's omnipotence, and His Decree. Unlike the first answer, human agency has no ontological efficacy on cosmic or human destiny.

As we have seen, creatures are no merely the "traces" or "marks" of the Divine Names, meaning that the human state and condition are ultimately governed by the qualitative disclosures of the Divine Names. ʿAbd al-Qādir maintains that the pitiful condition of Muslims under colonial rule indicates they are subjugated to the Name "the Forsaker" (*khādhil*) and "Humiliator" (*muḍhill*). ʿAbd al-Qādir concludes that it is impossible to find an extrinsic or intrinsic rationale that can rationally explain the governing authority of the Divine Names over human affairs. This matter of Divine decree is inscrutable. The enigmatic nature of Divine decree looms large in his theodical insights on the condition of Muslims under colonial rule. Commenting on the Qurʾānic verse: "He gave to each thing its nature" (Q. 20.50), ʿAbd al-Qādir concludes by stating that every created being is merely disclosing its innermost nature, whatever that nature may necessitate or manifest in his/her lifetime. The answer, as he remarkably put it, is to synthesize these two seemingly opposing perspectives. One might say that human free choice does not contradict the principle that a human agency can only manifest one's "intrinsic nature." To be sure, the intrinsic nature of *each thing* is created in accordance with the wisdom and benevolence of God. As ʿAbd al-Qādir remarks, it is futile for human reason to seek an intrinsic cause for why things are the way they are, since "the acts of the Real upon His creatures have no extrinsic cause" (*afʿāl al-Ḥaqq fī makhlūqātih lā tuʿallal*).

CONCLUSION: NARRATIVE, IMAGES AND MYSTICAL VOCATION

In this dissertation, I tried to fill a long-existing gap in modern scholarship on ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi theological thought. Going beyond a selective investigation of some of the major themes in the *Mawāqif*, my analytical study sought to offer a deeper glimpse of the Sufi mystical hermeneutics, theology and metaphysics of ʿAbd al-Qādir. My line of inquiry was guided by a central question: how does ʿAbd al-Qādir deploy the principles of Sufi of Akbarian epistemology to illuminate some of the thorniest issues that engaged his Sufi audience?

As I have tried to illustrate throughout this study, an interlacing theological thread runs through ʿAbd al-Qādir's Sufi epistemological discussions. Though ʿAbd al-Qādir did not systematically or even consciously formulate a response to the challenges posed by colonial modernity, his Sufi theological insights in the *Mawāqif* grapple with the concerns and preoccupations of Sufi and other Muslim reformists. Our Algerian Sufi thinker did not advocate any form of institutional reform within the Sunni scholarly establishment, as Muhammad Abduh and other modernist reformers have proposed. He did not turn to either Islamic rationalism, to say nothing of Western materialist discourse, for answers either. As he envisaged it, discursive reason (*ʿaql*) is the source of many theological and philosophical errors. According to him, the limitation of reason is most evident when it is challenged by the enigmatic teachings of Revelation. For this reason, notions of "divine inspiration" (*ilhām*), "unveiling" (*kashf*), "spiritual savoring" (*dhawq*), and "spiritual witnessing" (*mushāhada*) loom large in the Sufi epistemological paradigm that ʿAbd al-Qādir and other Sufis adhere to. We encountered this motif in his Sufi esoteric hermeneutics of the Qurʾān (Chap. II). There is a foundational method that guides his Sufi exegetical method. In

keeping with the classical Sufi interpretive paradigm, ʿAbd al-Qādir explicitly states that his esoteric interpretations of Scripture are the fruit of Divine inspiration. While he explicitly accepts the literal interpretations of the sacred Text, ʿAbd al-Qādir confers a higher epistemic value on the God-inspired interpretations of the Sufis. Rational Qurʾānic exegesis (*al-taʾwīl al-ʾaqlī*) is even less credible than the transmitted exegesis of the Sunni exoteric scholars and the inspired interpretations of the Sufis. Not that *ʿaql* has no legitimate place in scriptural interpretation. It \ does not enjoy the epistemic immunity of literal and God-inspired exegesis. For ʿAbd al-Qādir, the transcendental provenance of his Sufi interpretations preserves him from the interpretive deviations of reason and simultaneously attest to the regenerative vitality of the Qurʾānic Text.

In his ontology of the Divine speech (Chap. III), ʿAbd al-Qādir turns to a topic over which Sunni scholastic theologians and Sufis have spilled so much ink. As different streams of Islamic reform began to emerge in the nineteenth century, the scriptural and prophetic teachings were foundational for the legitimization of their reformist discourse. A revision of the Sunni ontology of the Qurʾān gained new momentum, as evinced in the elaborate philosophical treatment this subject receives in the examined *Mawqif*. ʿAbd al-Qādir proceeds on several analytical fronts. While upholding the normative Ashʿarī doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān, he challenges the Ashʿarī version of inlibration. His departure from the Ashʿarī doctrine hinges on their theoretical articulation of the 'trans-inherence' of "the inner speech of God subsisting through the Divine essence" (*al-maʿna al-nafsī al-qāʾim bi dhātihi*) unto the revealed Qurʾānic codex (*muṣḥaf*).

ʿAbd al-Qādir does not dispute the ontological asymmetry between the temporally revealed speech of the Qurʾānand the eternal (uncreated) inner speech of God. He instead challenges the softer tones of the Ashʿarīte doctrines of inlibration. Their version does not conform

to the hard version of inlibration that Ibn Ḥanbal and the pious forbears (*salaf*) were committed to. Siding with Ibn Ḥanbal, ʿAbd al-Qādir believes that scriptural prooftexts and the *ḥadīth* endorse the Sufi-Ḥanbalī version of inlibration, which postulates an essential identity between the uncreated "inner speech of God" and His revealed speech *qua muṣḥaf*. The Ashʿarī did not go this far, as they could not quite rationally reconcile the ontological polarity between the uncreated and codified speech of God. Despite the absence of a rational justification, however, the hard version of inlibration that ʿAbd al-Qādir subscribes to unqualifiedly accepts this identity. The Ashʿarīs, as our Algerian thinker holds, makes too many concessions to reason at the cost of accepting the authority of Revelation at face value. This line of reasoning is the source of many of their theological errors, as ʿAbd al-Qādir reckons.

ʿAbd al-Qādir's commentary on "The Ringstone of the Wisdom of the Heart in the Word of Shuʿayb" (*Fass ḥikma qalbiyya fi al-kalima al-shuʿaybiyya*) (Chap. IV) is the most elaborate elucidations of Sufi Akbarian epistemology (Chap. IV). The ontology of the Heart-intellect (*qalb*) prominently features in his commentary. He explains the cognitive reaches of this transcendental faculty and its intrinsic identity with the Selfhood of God. He highlights the distinction between *ʿaql* and *qalb* in these terms: discursive reason is analytical, dualistic, and hence reductive of God's unbounded Reality. The *qalb qua* innermost reality of the knowing servant (*huwiyyat al-ʿabd*) is identical to the ipseity of the Real (*ʿayn huwiyyat al-Ḥaqq*). Its cognitive reach is thus undelimited, unitive, and absolute. Accordingly, ʿAbd al-Qādir rules out the possibility of rationally embracing the unbounded Reality of God. He expressly states that "intimate knowledge of God (glorified is

He) cannot be attained through the rule of theoretical reason" *(lā bi ḥukm al-naẓar al-ʿaqlī)* but through "God's bestowal of knowledge (*bi taʿrīfihi*)."[414]

This motif features under a different guise in the fifth and concluding chapter (Chap V). Discussing the ethical and metaphysical sources of the civilizational deterioration of Muslims, ʿAbd al-Qādir throws light on the origins of Muslim subjugation to the ideological hegemony of colonial Europe. He develops a highly creative theology of the metaphysical roots of cosmic and human destiny, for better or worse. He deploys the principles of Akbarian theology of the Divine Names to explicate the psychological, cultural, and cosmic roots of Western colonial domination of Muslim lands, minds, and culture. He invokes the principle of perpetual alternation of the cosmic disclosures of God's Names (*ikhtilāf al-tajaliyyāt al-asmāʾ al-ilāhiyya*) to explain the state and condition of Muslims at this juncture of human history.

In ʿAbd al-Qādir's view, the Divine Names shape macrocosmic and microcosmic destiny. He expressly notes that "the Divine Names administer and govern the affairs of creatures, whether this pertains to praiseworthy or blameworthy matters…they [the Divine Names] make some humans felicitous and others wretched."[415] A fatalistic tone undergirds this doctrinal perspective. While underlining the benevolence of Divine Wisdom and Omniscience in the unfolding God's decree, ʿAbd al-Qādir opts for a metaphysical resignation over this question. He maintains that it is futile to seek a rationale for "why things are the way they are." Once again, this is the threshold of discursive reason. Seeking a rational explanation for why things are the way they are is tantamount to "probing the Divine decree" which remains mysterious and inscrutable. To my

[414] *Kitab al-Mawāqif,* p. 407.

[415] *Maw*. 364, 230.

knowledge, ʿAbd al-Qādir's anthropocosmic theology of Muslim decline has no precedent in nineteenth-century Muslim reformist thought. Casting his Akbarian gaze on the dramatic deterioration of the Muslim world, ʿAbd al-Qādir envisioned the forces of colonial modernity through the portal of Akbarian theology of the Divine Names.

ʿAbd al-Qādir: Between Popular Images and Ideological Narratives

In the Muslim and Western world, the Algerian religious leader has borne many garbs: a symbol of anti-colonial resistance, a military genius, a saintly warrior, a paragon of human perfection, a champion of interfaith and civilizational dialogue, an ecstatic poet, a Sufi contemplative, mystic, a modernist, and so forth. The life, exploits, and thoughts of this prominent Muslim luminary seems to lend themselves to all kinds of images and narratives. This is perhaps the inevitable fate of legendary figures like ʿAbd al-Qādir. Having said that, the colonial and modern Arab and Western scholarship have idealized ʿAbd al-Qādir's political career at the expense of his lifelong Sufi spiritual vocation, to say nothing of the prominent place that he accorded to his Sufi mystical writings. [416] Though a small niche of scholars and historians have attempted to recover this aspect of his personality, the absence of an in-depth study of his Sufi theological convictions cannot give us an accurate picture of ʿAbd al-Qādir's thought and worldview. My analytical study of major themes of *K.al-Mawāqif* was precisely aimed to fill this gap and contribute to a greater understanding of his Sufi theological worldview.

[416] For a very helpful overview of the political and cultural representations of ʿAbd al-Qādir's imagery in European and Algerian sources, see Nora Achrati, "Following the Leader: A History and Evolution of the Amir 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jazairi as Symbol," *The Journal of North African Studies* 12, no. 2 (2007): 139–52; Tom Woerner-Powell, *Another Road to Damascus*, 2-3; Bouyerdene, *Abd El-Kader: L'harmonie Des Contraire*, 8.

ʿAbd al-Qādir: The Muhammadan Heir

Leaping to his exiled life in Damascus, ʿAbd al-Qādir's mystical vocation and intellectual life reached their climax. Until recently, however, the intellectual magnitude of his *Mawāqif* remained obscure save within the small network of Sufi scholars in the Arab Muslim world. This major oeuvre of ʿAbd Al-Qādir is a treasure trove of centuries of Islamic learning. The West and modern-day Arab historians have for some time been utterly aloof to the Sufi mystical thought of ʿAbd al-Qādir. In many respects, the *Mawāqif,* like its author, had its own esoteric life and legacy. Even today, we are still unable to truly gauge the Akbarian Renaissance that ʿAbd al-Qādir sparked in thenineteenth-century and posthumously.

By and large, the significance of the *Mawāqif* has been judged in light of its doctrinal continuity with the teachings of Ibn ᶜArabī. While some scholars rightfully highlighted the originality of ʿAbd al-Qādir, no single study has attempted to reveal his unique contributions to Sufi intellectual discourse. This is what I hope this study was able to accomplish. As I have tried to illustrate, even when wearing the garb of a commentator, ʿAbd al-Qādir goes beyond a theoretical exposition of Ibn ᶜArabī's doctrines. While conforming to the Akbarian epistemological paradigm, ʿAbd al-Qādir stands out from both his Akbarian predecessors and Ibn ʿArabī when grappling with theological issues peculiar to his own time and context. He also distinguishes himself from other Muslim reformist thinkers who grappled with colonial modernity through the prism of Islamic rationalism.

How did ʿAbd al-Qādir perceive, envision, and confront the intellectual hegemony of European colonial modernity? This was the compelling question that animated many facets of this dissertation.

ʿAbd al-Qādir was neither indifferent nor fazed by the materialistic rationalism of colonial Europe. He shows a certain sobriety toward the revolutionary innovations of Western Europe. While adopting a pragmatic stance toward the technological innovations of colonial Europe, ʿAbd al-Qādir casts a critical eye on the materialistic pursuits of Western civilization. For a Sufi contemplative like him, the value of any science is determined by its relationship to God. This is the ultimate *telos* (end) of human self-realization. Divorced from this telos, ʿAbd al-Qādir sees no merit in its pursuit. Indeed, his systematic criticism of the Ashʿarī *kalām* would seem to be a pre-emptive measure against the subversive materialistic rationalism of modern Europe. During his imprisonment in France, ʿAbd al-Qādir made a telling remark to one of his French visitors. While acknowledging the material achievements of European civilization, ʿAbd al-Qādir declared: "you may (Europeans) have civilization, commerce, arts, but you do not have the Way of Heaven."[417]

Now it would be worthwhile to turn ʿAbd al-Qādir's gaze inwardly to see if we can find any indication of how he perceived himself rather than how his non-Sufis biographers portray him. In the 83rd *Mawqif*, ʿAbd al-Qādir offers through his esoteric commentary on Q. 93:11 a vivid portrait of his spiritual stature and the election that God accorded to him. Therein he speaks of the science he inherited from the Prophet Muhammad and the honor conferred upon individuals who attain it. He writes:

> What was divinely projected on me through this verse is that the stated blessings of your Lord refer to the blessing of intimate knowledge of God (*maʿrifatu'Llāh*) [glory be to Him] and the sciences that the Prophets transmit to us (blessing and peace upon them); these prophetic sciences are, among others, the ethical conduct and the beliefs in the Unseen. There is no doubt that these are the supreme blessing and attributing

[417] Cited in Bouyerdene, *L'harmonie des contraires,* 202.

> blessings to other things is metaphorical… Ever since God has shown me His mercy [glory be to Him] by making me know my inner self (*bi maʿrifati nafsī*), among the blessings that He conferred on me is that He only discourses with me through the sublime Qur'an, which "*falsehood comes not to it from before it nor from behind it; a sending down from One All-wise, All-laudable* (Q. 41:42)." For, it is known that the Divine discourse through the Qurʾān is among the clear signs of the Muhammadan esoteric inheritance; For the Sufi tribe, the masters of this science, have said: 'Anyone whom God addresses through the esoteric language of a Prophet inherits this science from him. Hence, if someone is addressed through the Qur'an, he is an heir to all the Prophets and is therefore a Muhammadan heir (*wārith Muḥammadī*). This is so because the Qurʾān gathers all the revealed languages just as the station of Muhammad, peace be upon him, gathers all the spiritual stations.

This is part of a long passage where ʿAbd al-Qādir relates several visions of the Prophet Muhammad outside of his tomb in Medina. Each vision is punctuated by a verse of the Qurʾān where ʿAbd al-Qādir is reassured repeatedly of his intimate proximity and inheritance from the Prophet Muhammad. Whilst different narratives and images continue to fuel the debate around ʿAbd al-Qādir and his legacy, the above testimony would perhaps be sufficient to dissipate all disputes about who ʿAbd al-Qādir truly was. By his admission, he saw himself first and foremost as a Muhammadan heir (*wārith Muḥammadī*).

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