

**TASTE OF
MODERNITY:
Sufism, Salafiyya,
and Arabism in Late
Ottoman Damascus**

Itzhak Weismann

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*Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism
in Late Ottoman Damascus*

BY

ITZCHAK WEISMANN



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To Gerda for your endurance
And to Tomer, Maya, and Shay

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This is the gravest danger that to-day threatens civilization: State intervention; the absorption of all spontaneous social effort by the State, that is to say, of spontaneous historical action, which in the long run sustains, nourishes, and impels human destinies.

The mass-man does in fact believe that he is the State, and he will tend more and more to set its machinery working on whatsoever pretext, to crush beneath it any creative minority which disturbs it—disturbs it in any order of things: in politics, in ideas, in industry. Jose Ortega Y Gasset. *The Revolt of the Masses*.

Yā ayyuhā alladhīna āmanū aṭī'ū Allāh wa-aṭī'ū al-rasūl wa-ūlī al-amr minkum.

O believers, obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.

Qur'an, al-Nisā' (4), 59.

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In the deepest sense, my interest in Sufism and its interaction with modernity probably lies in a certain disposition toward mysticism and in a parallel definite dissatisfaction with the apparently opposite path trodden by modern Western civilization. More practically, it was awakened over a decade ago during a research project on Saʿīd Ḥawwā, the principal ideologue of the Muslim Brethren Movement in Baʿthist Syria, in which I was surprised to reveal that behind his basically Salafī formulations lay a deep commitment to the principles and practice of the Naqshbandī sufi order. Delving into the roots of this affinity in 19th-century Damascus resulted in a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Haifa in 1997, now further expanded in a book.

During the preparation of this study I could consult four of today's leading experts in the field. First among them was Professor Butrus Abu-Manneh of the University of Haifa, who shared with me his unique understanding of Islamic reform and his wide knowledge of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya order. In addition, I am indebted to Professor Nehemia Levtzion of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with whom I could discuss pre-modern sufi reformism, Professor Michel Chodkiewicz of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris who encouraged me with my Akbarī undertaking and, last but not least, Professor Michael Cook of Princeton University, whose vast erudition and his familiarity with Wahhābī matters saved me from many pitfalls. I would like to express my deep gratitude to them all.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern Islamic movements in the Arab world generally subscribe to the ideal of a return to the way of the pious forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*). This Salafī ideal, though it has always been part of the Muslim creed, became the hallmark of religious reform in the latter part of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the growing challenge of modernity. Through it, the reformist men of religion of that time sought to dissociate themselves from latter-day traditions, which they had come to regard as the main cause of the decline of Muslim civilization and of the failure to establish clear criteria for the introduction of useful Western innovations. The Salafī trend thus employed the model of the forefathers as a means to sharply criticize both the rigid scholarship of the ‘ulama within the established jurisprudential and theological schools and, even more so, the theosophical meditations and ecstatic popular rituals of the sufis within their various mystical orders. The political aspect of this model likewise served to censure the subservience of the ‘ulama and the sufis to the rulers, which facilitated the drift of the Muslim states towards the path of uncontrolled Westernization and obstructed the reassertion of the unique role of the Arabs in Islam.¹

Yet despite the increasing rigidity of religious learning, and the immense spread of popular mystic practices, in the later centuries, the degeneration of Islam had never been universal. Moreover, with the political decline of the great Muslim Empires in the pre-modern era, there evolved among conscientious men of religion an evident revival, aimed at consolidating Muslim society in the face of growing anarchy and at reinstating the rule of the shari‘a in its life. The leaders of this revival normally combined wide erudition (‘ilm) with a deep commitment to the mystic path (*taṣawwuf*). They thus constituted part of a long tradition that in relation to the superficial ‘ulama who did not delve into the mystic thought and path, on the one hand, and to the popular sufis who neglected religious learn-

¹ For the ideas of the early modern Islamic movements see H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago, 1947); Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley, 1968); Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā* (Berkeley, 1966); Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (2nd. ed., Princeton, 1977); Albert H. Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Reissued. Cambridge, 1983), chs. 4-6, 9.

ing, on the other, represented both a more profound orthodoxy and a reformist middle way. Prominent among the later sufi 'ulama belonging to this tradition to appear in this study were Aḥmad Sirhindī, the founder of the Mujaddidī branch in the Naqshbandī order, and Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī, a central figure in the revival of hadith studies, in the seventeenth century, as well as 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, Shāh Walīallāh and Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī, their successors in the following century. These were joined at the beginning of the nineteenth century by the two most outstanding religious reformers of the pre-modern era of Islam, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and Shaykh Khālid.² As we will see, in earlier periods the orthodox reformist tradition had included both Ibn Taymiyya, on whom the Salafis have generally relied as the model of reformist thought and action, and Ibn 'Arabī, whom they have vehemently denounced as the archetype of latter-day sufi degeneration. The first Islamic responses to the challenge of modernity were formulated within this tradition.

The fundamental approach of this book thus conforms to the view that traditional factors played an important part in determining the course of modernization in non-Western societies, and that their modern transformation should not be confused with Westernization, an all-out adoption of the Western model. This, however, is not to deny that modernity, or rather the various types of modernity, to which Islam had to adapt itself under overwhelming political, economic, and cultural pressures from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, originated in the West. Here its major components, as observed already by the founders of modern sociology, revolved around the three large clusters of rationalism, capitalism, and the bureaucratic state. Max Weber saw modernity as rooted in "Occidental rationalism", the process of disenchantment which in Europe led to a disintegration of religious world-views and resulted in a secular culture. From this basic principle derived, according to him, the new structures of society which were marked by the differentiation of the two functionally intermeshing systems that had taken shape around the capitalist enterprise and the bureaucratic state

² For a general discussion of Islamic reform trends in latter-day Islam see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (2nd. ed. Chicago, 1979), pp. 201-211; Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, 1987), pp. 3-20. For a critical examination of the characteristics of these reform trends see R. S. O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, "Neo-Sufism Reconsidered," *Der Islam*, 70 (1993), pp. 52-87.

apparatus. Emile Durkheim, observing rationalism from a more psychological point of view, added to the definition of modern man the reflective treatment of traditions that have lost their quasi-natural status, universalism of norms of action, and individualism.³ Almost a century later, in spite of the growing postmodernist critique, rationalism, capitalism, and the bureaucratic state are still largely regarded as the principal features of modernity. Alain Touraine, one of today's leading French sociologists, while casting serious doubts on the ability of reason to guide society toward freedom and happiness, defines modernity as the diffusion of the products of rational activity: scientific, technological and administrative.⁴ In a similar vein his British counterpart, Anthony Giddens, who has paid special attention to institutional developments, refers to modernity as a worldwide project of production and control, which includes four major elements: industrialism, capitalism, the industrialization of war, and state surveillance.⁵

The same tripartite combination can be discerned in theories regarding the formation of nationalism, the ideology that almost completely replaced religion as the basis of identity in the modern West. Benedict Anderson, in his celebrated *Imagined Communities*, traces the origins of the national consciousness to print-capitalism, later to be taken up by intellectuals who developed the concept of nation-ness based on a common language, and finally to be crystallized by state administrations into the international system of nation-states.⁶ Anthony Smith, while attaching more importance to the ethnic origins of the national idea, nonetheless attributes its modern formulation to the impact of three revolutions: the transition to capitalism, the transformation of military and administrative methods of control, and the cultural and educational standardization.⁷

The Western "project of modernity" has accordingly been executed by three major social forces: the intelligentsia which provided it with its underlying rationalist ideology at the expense of tradition, the entrepreneurial bourgeois class which developed the capitalist

³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 1-2.

⁴ Alain Touraine, *Critique of Modernity* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 9-10.

⁵ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 55-63.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. ed. London, 1991), esp. chs. 3, 5-6.

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 130-134.

economic system by applying science and technology to the industrialization of production, and the state officialdom which created an increasingly ramified bureaucracy to control the civil society on the basis of an impersonal law. The inter-relationships between these three agents of modernity were not free from tension. The capitalist's interest in the autonomy of the market was incompatible with the state's tendency to intervene, while the Enlightenment intellectual's criticism of the operations of the state challenged the officials' monopoly of rule. Nevertheless, due to the peculiar historical circumstances in which it arose in the cities of Medieval Europe, the bourgeois class proved strong enough to take control of the state and direct it in accordance with its own needs. Using the philosophical formulations of the intelligentsia, which it also subsequently subdued, the bourgeoisie restructured the state as a legal-rational organization, which is bound to defend its borders against outside threats while leaving to its citizens an almost free hand in pursuing their diverse private interests. The interests of the bourgeoisie were guaranteed by the constitutional system of government, in which it posed as the favored representative of the civil society. Gradually throughout the nineteenth century, by the inner logic of both capitalism and constitutionalism, the political and economic privileges of the bourgeoisie were extended to incorporate the whole of civil society, in what Jose Ortega Y Gasset forcefully described as the revolt of the masses.⁸ This internal democratization coincided with the new external imperialist drive, which by the end of that century brought almost the entire world under Western domination.⁹

In the Muslim countries on the eve of modernization there was no secular intelligentsia, no entrepreneurial bourgeois class, and no state officialdom in the European sense of these words. In the Ottoman Empire, as elsewhere, the intelligentsia was represented first and foremost by the men of religion. Commerce and other urban economic activities normally related to the bourgeoisie, albeit considerable, were largely regulated here by communal, corporative, and state structures. The official bureaucracy, though elaborated, governed the subjects of the Empire through the various regional, religious, and functional communities to which they were affiliated rather than directly. Even more divergent from the European model were

⁸ Jose Ortega Y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York, 1932).

⁹ Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (Stanford, 1978), chs. 4-6.

the inter-relationships between these three social forces. In the Muslim world it was the state which from an early stage had gained the upper hand against the indigenous versions of both the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. Thus commercial activity, though clearly favored by Islam, was subservient to the political and landed interests of the military elites which had come to dominate the Muslim countries from the 'Abbāsid period onwards. The Muslim men of religion, whose work was markedly rationalistic, were subsequently incorporated into the state apparatus by the Mamluks, and more thoroughly by the Ottomans, who created thereby a hierarchically structured religious establishment under the leadership of the Shaykh al-Islām.¹⁰ These different circumstances of a decentralized state bureaucracy, a restrained bourgeoisie and a religious intelligentsia, and their mutual relationships, shaped the course of modernization in the Muslim world. More particularly, my contention is that in striving to protect Islam from the officially-sponsored Ottoman policy of Westernization, reformist men of religion in the Arab provinces sought to forge an alliance with an emerging Western-bound local middle class. The state responded to this challenge by enticing this new class into its apparatus and by mobilizing the masses as a weapon against its religious rivals. In this struggle also lay the Islamic roots of Arabism, as it drew these reformist men of religion away from the Ottoman central government and closer to alternative indigenous foci of identity. The conflict between an ever-increasing state authority, on the one hand, and an alliance between a recurrently rising entrepreneur middle class and a progressively radicalized Islam, on the other, has become ever since a key factor in the inner political evolution of the Arab countries of the Middle East. It remains so to this day.

In this study I seek to trace the emergence of modern Islam from its roots in the latter-day reformist tradition. I concentrate on Damascus, which during the nineteenth century became an important center of the pre-modern reformist combination of *'ilm* and *taṣawwuf*, while toward its end it came to play a pivotal role in the formulation and dissemination of the Salafī ideas.¹¹ In fact, in the course of the last

¹⁰ See especially Hamilton A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (2 vols. London, 1957).

¹¹ David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York, 1990); Antonino Pellitteri, *Il Riformismo Musulmano in Siria (1870-1920)* (Naples, 1987); Joseph H. Escovitz, "'He was the Muḥammad 'Abduh of Syria' A Study of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī and his Influence," *IJMES*, 18 (1986), pp. 293-310.

Ottoman century Damascus witnessed three consecutive reform trends. The first of these was inaugurated with the arrival of Shaykh Khālīd in the city in 1823, which marks the starting point of my investigation. Khālīd's view of the Ottoman weakness of his day was shaped within the framework of the Naqshbandiyya order, especially its Mujaddidī branch, and within it he founded, as an organizational tool to support the Sultan in regaining his strength, his own Khālīdī branch. In the following generation he was succeeded by Amir 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, the defeated leader of the resistance movement against the French occupation of Algeria. Selecting Damascus as his seat of exile in 1855, 'Abd al-Qādir proved to be the most influential interpreter of Ibn 'Arabī in his time. He established in the city an elect study circle that engaged under his guidance in adapting the Great Master's teaching, the Akbariyya, to the reality of European supremacy. His local disciples were mainly the offspring of Shaykh Khālīd's adherents. Most leading figures of the emerging Salafiyya, such as 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, were shaped, in their turn, in the study circle of 'Abd al-Qādir. Later, in the 1880s, they were to espouse in their own circles the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, as a reaction to the political and religious policies adopted by the heads of the modernizing Ottoman state.

In the examination of the processes of continuity and change among the three major religious reform trends in late-Ottoman Damascus, from the Khālīdiyya through the Akbariyya to the Salafiyya, I employ two complementary disciplines.¹² The first is the history of religious thought. My purpose in this sphere is twofold, the one to analyze the conceptual framework within which the adherents of each reform trend formulated their ideas, the other to detect the emerging of a special stress upon the rational faculty from within the reformist tradition to which they all belonged. This examination is based on a detailed analysis of contemporary religious writings, many of which have appeared from the 1880s in print. The major difficulty of such an analysis lay in the need to understand these writings "from within", from the inner viewpoint of the authors, which was rooted in the religious heritage of Islam in general, and for most of them in the mystical experience of Sufism in particular.

My principal vantage point in this conceptual analysis is, how-

¹² For a discussion of the problems and prospects in the research of the 'ulama (and sufi shaykhs), the subject of this study, see R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (rev. ed. Princeton, 1991), pp. 187-208.

ever, the two Western notions of orthodoxy and reform, particularly the changes that occurred in the relationships between them under the impact of modernization. The concept of orthodoxy, the accepted belief and praxis, is applied in this study in a relative sense. It refers to the extent to which the shari'a provides the criteria of conduct, as against other dogmas and customs which, in the absence of a more suitable term, might be designated as non-orthodox or popular. As we have seen, in the pre-modern period this concept was basically synonymous with that of reform. The Khālidiyya, the last traditional reform movement in Ottoman Damascus, accordingly preached a return to the path of orthodoxy. It was only with the dawn of the modern era that these two concepts began to denote different paths. At that time orthodoxy became identified with the official viewpoint of the state, even at the expense of the shari'a, while reform turned into a quest to adapt the shari'a to the new circumstances by an essentially rationalist reinterpretation of the Islamic sources or by directly borrowing from the West. This distinction was blurred by the tendency of the orthodox group to emphasize its loyalty to the reform efforts of the state, while the reformists obviously continued to regard themselves as orthodox. In late Ottoman Damascus, the reformist tendency was adopted initially by the Akbariyya and then, more thoroughly, by the emerging Salafiyya. It was only at a subsequent stage that modern religious reform trends would turn against orthodoxy, as was increasingly the case with the later Salafiyya under the leadership of Rashīd Riḍā and his colleagues in the first half of the twentieth century, and much more emphatically with the radical Islamic movements of today under the inspiration of Sayyid Quṭb's teachings.

The second discipline I employ in this study is that of socio-religious history. In this sphere I seek to chart the evolution of the principal reformist families of Damascus during the period under investigation in general, and the two stages of their embarking upon the path of modernization, the alliance with the incipient middle class and the appeal to wider strata of society, in particular. This part of the study consists mainly of an examination of the biographies of the leading 'ulama and sufis of Damascus during the last Ottoman century, mainly of the reformist families but also of their adversaries. The quality of this examination was largely determined by the nature of the biographical dictionaries of the city, which are exten-

sive in their scope but incoherent and idealizing in their contents.¹³ They therefore produce a complex and fragmented picture, rendering the reconstruction of the social evolution of the religious reform trends in Damascus as difficult as the “inner” analysis of the writings of their proponents.

My point of departure in the examination of the social background of these reformist men of religion was Albert Hourani’s famous model of “the politics of notables”. Relying on Max Weber too, Hourani described urban politics in the Ottoman period as a constant striving of the city leaders to strike a balance between the two factors from which they drew their power: access to political authority on the one hand, and a social power of their own, based in the case of the ‘ulama on descent, control of religious endowments (*awqāf*), and connection to the commercial bourgeoisie, on the other. This system, he pointed out, tended to divide the urban leadership, and its religious component, into two or more rival factions.¹⁴ In Damascus, as in Syria in general, Ottoman authority was always firmly present, while the power of the notables was also particularly strong. Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, under the impact of modernization, the division within the ranks of the city leadership, and particularly among its men of religion, was perceptibly accentuated, creating two distinct groups. One comprised those religious men whose position came to depend on their relations with the Ottoman centralizing administration; the other included their counterparts who became more attached to the emerging local middle class. This division among the ‘ulama of Damascus thus constituted the social basis of their doctrinal split between orthodox and reformists. In this respect too the distinction was not complete. It allowed for a considerable degree of overlapping, and easy shifting, since all positions in the mosques and schools depended, in the last resort, on the approval of the Ottoman government, while the holders of senior administrative positions normally served also as teachers in local religious institutions. On the other hand, these distinctions did not necessarily correspond to political affiliations. In fact, throughout most

¹³ For a detailed survey and appreciation of the major biographical dictionaries written during this period see ch. 7.

¹⁴ Albert H. Hourani, “Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables,” in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds.), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 41-68, esp. pp. 45-49. For an assessment of the application of this model to Syria see Philip S. Khoury, “The Urban Notables Paradigm Revisited,” *REMMM*, 55/56 (1990), pp. 215-228.

of the period the local—reformist ‘ulama were loyal to the Ottoman state as were their Ottoman—orthodox colleagues, while the latter obviously belonged to the local notable families. Moreover, when in the last years of the Empire resistance arose against the intensified centralization of the Ottoman government under the banner of Arabism, ‘ulama of both groups could be found among its ranks.

The major contentions and methods of this study dictated a thematic rather than a simply chronological structure. It is accordingly divided into three parts, each devoted to one of the three principal reform trends of the period. The first two parts open with an analysis of the basic teachings of the religious trends they deal with, the Khālidiyya and the Akbariyya. The parallel discussion in the third part is designed to identify the various sources of the Salafiyya. In the subsequent chapters of each part I examine the shaping and evolution of the ‘ulama families that adopted these reformist teachings, as well as of their integration into the larger contemporary currents in Damascus. In the course of this socio-religious discussion I continue to analyze the writings of their members, with special emphasis on the modifications they made in the basic teachings of their trend in order to adapt it to the changing circumstances. At the head of each part I have added a review of the principal source that inspired the corresponding reform trend: the Naqshbandī–Mujaddidī order, Ibn ‘Arabī, and Ibn Taymiyya. In this review, as in the study as a whole, I have sought to stress the context within which the activities and teachings of these sources were shaped, as well as the changes that their legacy underwent through the ages. These introductory reviews are designed to locate the religious reform trends of late Ottoman Damascus within the larger framework of the major currents of Islam, and thus to provide an Islamic “depth” for their understanding.

As part of the larger process of the modern transformation of Muslim societies, the modernization of Islam must be viewed in conjunction with the evolution of the two other factors that participated in its shaping, the centralized bureaucracy and the emerging middle class. Seen from the Syrian point of view, these were the products of the two major processes that in their interaction had determined the course of its history during this period. One was the attempt of the Ottoman central government to revive the Empire, beginning in earnest in the wake of the destruction of the Janissary corps by Sultan Maḥmūd II in 1826. The other was the integration of the

Syrian economy into the European-dominated world system, greatly stimulated by its occupation by Egypt in 1832 and the subsequent conclusion of the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention in 1838. These processes steadily accelerated until the dismemberment of the Empire at the end of the First World War, though both witnessed considerable vicissitudes. In the case of the Ottoman reform, the latter represented the different, and often contradictory, conceptions adopted by the successive rulers of the Empire—Sultans, Viziers and army officers—as to the nature of the required regeneration of its government and the desirable extent of borrowing from the West. Concerning the economic development of Syria, these vicissitudes reflected primarily changing world market conditions and Ottoman—European relations. Relevant details on the impact of these two processes on the Damascene men of religion will be given in the appropriate places in the work itself. What follows here is an attempt to sketch the fundamental principles that underlay their evolution throughout the period.

The most visible aspect of the comprehensive scheme of reforms that Maḥmūd II had initiated in the aftermath of the destruction of the Janissaries, like of the reform attempts of his less fortunate forerunners in the previous century, was the borrowing from the West.¹⁵ This did not imply, however, any fascination with Western civilization as such. For these Ottoman reformers it was rather a necessary means to modernize the army of the Empire in order to ward off the increasing European encroachment on its borders, and a useful instrument to centralize its government for a more efficient administration of its inner resources. In adopting Western measures, Maḥmūd was careful to avoid the mistakes of his precursor, Selīm III. Reflecting the example of Muḥammad ‘Alī, his vigorous viceroy in Egypt, his program of reforms was preceded by a ruthless campaign to eliminate all autonomous centers of power in his realm, both locally established rulers and rebellious agents of the central government. These he sought to replace with a new set of institutions staffed by men with some knowledge of Europe, primarily

¹⁵ The following analysis draws on the major general descriptions of late Ottoman history, particularly Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, 1961); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964); Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge, 1977), vol. 2. Additional information and modifications will be specifically referred to in the footnotes.

Sublime Porte bureaucrats who served in the Translation Chamber and in the embassies abroad. In the course of these changes Maḥmūd was faced with two interconnected basic dilemmas which as an autocratic ruler he was unable to solve. One was that the more he asserted his absolute power, the more he became alienated from the mainstays of his government, the 'ulama and the Muslim population. The other was that the further he advanced with his reforms, the stronger became the power of the bureaucrats to whom he entrusted their implementation to challenge him. These dilemmas were reflected in the occasional turns of Maḥmūd II against the men of religion who, mostly under Naqshbandī influence, supported his drive to reform,¹⁶ and against the civil bureaucracy that he himself created to realize it.¹⁷

With the ascension of 'Abdūlmecīd to the throne in 1839, the high ranking 'ulama were able once again to advance their views on the desirable course for the modernization of the Empire. Alarmed by the march of Muḥammad 'Alī's army on the capital, they had little difficulty in bringing the young Sultan, who was himself given to strong Naqshbandī influences, to pledge himself to put an end to the arbitrary rule of his father and abide by the shari'a. The promulgation of the Hatt-i Sherif Gülhane, the founding document of the Tanzimat period, thus represented the last major effort undertaken by an Ottoman Sultan to revive the power and prosperity of the Empire by a return to the Muslim ideal of the reign of justice.¹⁸ In accordance with 'Abdūlmecīd's pledge, the civil bureaucracy, now under the leadership of Muṣṭafā Reshīd Pasha, was allowed a freer hand in pursuing the goal of centralization, mainly in the legal and financial fields. They were still largely unable to extend it to the

¹⁶ Uriel Heyd, "The Ottoman 'Ulema and Westernization in the Time of Selīm III and Maḥmūd II," in *idem* (ed.), *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization* (Jerusalem, 1961), pp. 63-96; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya in the Ottoman Lands in the Early 19th century," *WI*, 22 (1982), pp. 29-32; and below, ch. 2.

¹⁷ Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 140-147.

¹⁸ Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," *WI*, 34 (1994), pp. 173-203; Richard L. Chambers, "The Ottoman Ulema and the Tanzimat," in Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), pp. 33-46; and below, ch. 3. For a succinct description of the traditional Ottoman view on the ideal functioning of the state see Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago, 1972), pp. 88-89.

provinces, where they had recourse to the local councils of notables as the principal check upon unruly governors.¹⁹ In the capital too, the reform measures of the civil bureaucracy in the Sublime Porte were often reversed by their more traditional counterparts in the Palace, who resisted the increasing resort to Western rules and institutions. For both parties, however, compatibility with the sacred Law in general, and loyalty to the Sultan and to the intentions he expressed in the *Gülhane Rescript* in particular, remained the ultimate criteria for the adoption or rejection of such devices.

The proclamation of the *Hatt-i Humāyūn* of 1856, which inaugurated the second and final phase of the *Tanzimat*, was largely the result of European pressure to define the Ottoman course of reform. Under its sway 'Abdūlmecīd was compelled, against both imperial tradition and the *shari'a*, to promise the full equality of all his subjects, thereby marking the turn of the Empire toward the course of Westernization. Concomitantly, the Sultan's compliance precipitated the ascendancy of the civil bureaucracy, his primary instrument in dealing with the West. Led by 'Ālī Pasha and Fu'ād Pasha of the younger generation, this was able after the ascension of 'Abdūlazīz in 1861 to consolidate its hold on the Sublime Porte and to turn it into the real center of the government.²⁰ For 'Ālī and Fu'ād, therefore, Westernization was not only the most efficient means to preserve the Empire, but also an ideological tool in their political struggle against the Palace. On the basis of the new rescript, these late *Tanzimat* statesmen pursued the constant goal of centralization, particularly through the reorganization of the *millet* system and the provincial administration. These reforms were part of their larger scheme, propagated primarily by the extended school system, to transfer the loyalty of the subjects from the person of the Sultan to the state, and from religious communal identities to an all-embracing Ottoman nation (the idea of Ottomanism).²¹ The Westernizing

¹⁹ Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840-1861* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 34-38. For the antecedents of these councils in the Ottoman provincial administration see Halil Inalcik, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," in Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (eds.), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1977), pp. 27-52.

²⁰ Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 152-154; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Roots of the Ascendancy of Ālī and Fu'ād Paşas at the Porte (1855-1871)," in *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu'ndan Ayırbaşım* (Ankara, 1994), pp. 135-144.

²¹ The most detailed and valuable account on the late *Tanzimat* period is Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876* (Princeton, 1963). For

measures of the late Tanzimat statements provoked the resistance not only of the traditional men of religion, but even of those religiously inclined bureaucrats who espoused the cause of reform. It was from among the latter, mostly protégés of Reshîd Pasha who still bore the Naqshbandî spirit of open orthodoxy, that the Young Ottoman movement emerged. Not averse to Western ideas as such, Nâmîk Kemâl and his colleagues countered the Porte's authoritative imposition of the principles of equality and loyalty to the nation with their liberal counterparts which could be more easily reconciled with the shari'a, freedom and love of the fatherland.²²

In the wake of the successive deaths of Fu'âd Pasha in 1869 and 'Âlî Pasha in 1871, the Ottoman Empire entered a period of instability in which religious sentiment against their Westernizing policies, and against European pressures in general, came to the fore. This sentiment was harnessed by the Palace loyalists, who under the direction of the new Grand Vizier, Maḥmūd Nedîm Pasha, sought to restore actual conduct of the state to the hands of 'Abdülazîz as the Sultan—Caliph.²³ To restrict the latter's growing autocratic manner of rule, the protagonists of the late Tanzimat reforms, now under the leadership of Midḥat Pasha in the civil bureaucracy and Ḥuseyin Avnî Pasha in the army, had recourse to the ideas of the Young Ottomans, their erstwhile opponents, suggesting a constitutional regime and a federal organization of the Empire. The struggle reached its climax in 1876, with the military coup that led to the deposition and death of 'Abdülazîz and to the convening of the parliament. The failure of the conspirators to restrict the prerogatives of the Sultanate, however, allowed the new incumbent, 'Abdülhamîd II, to exploit the first opportunity to prorogue it and follow the path delineated by his unfortunate predecessor.²⁴

the provincial reorganization in the Vilayet Laws of 1864 and 1871 see Carter V. Findley, "The Evolution of the System of Provincial Administration as Viewed from the Center," in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 3-15.

²² On the Young Ottomans see Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, 1962); Davison, pp. 172-233.

²³ Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Sultan and the Bureaucracy: The Anti-Tanzimat concepts of Grand Vizier Mahmud Nedim Paşa," *IJMES*, 22 (1990), pp. 257-274.

²⁴ Davison, pp. 261-end ; I.E. Petrosyan, "On the Motive Forces of the Reformist and Constitutionalist Movement in the Ottoman Empire (Some Social Transformation Processes)," in Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont and Paul Dumont (eds.), *Économie et Sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman (fin du xviii-début du xx siècle)* (Paris,

The system of government that was devised by Sultan ‘Abdülhamîd in the aftermath of the constitutional events combined, and brought to fruition, the major features of the previous Ottoman regimes of reform, subject to the peculiarities of his own complex personality. Threatened by new European conquests in North Africa in the first years after his ascension and by constant anarchy in the Balkans, ‘Abdülhamîd II greatly accelerated the Tanzimat program of reforms, particularly in the judicial and educational fields. To ward off the separatist tendencies that were spreading among his Christian subjects, he also professed to cherish the idea that underlay the later phase of these reforms, Ottomanism. At the same time, ‘Abdülhamîd was determined to follow the example of his grandfather, Maḥmūd II, in leading the modernization of his Empire in person. His own centralized autocratic rule was buttressed by an expanded network of communications, as well as by elaborate systems of espionage and censorship. The solution he conceived for the two interconnected dilemmas which distressed Maḥmūd, and the danger of which was demonstrated by the alliance between the civil bureaucracy and the religious liberal opposition leading to the deposition of ‘Abdülazîz, was a return to the old tradition of patrimonial rule. Thus to prevent the Sublime Porte from regaining its power, ‘Abdülhamîd subjugated it to the large group of personal protégés he assembled around him in the Palace.²⁵ To neutralize the appeal of the liberal religious ideas of the Young Ottomans, he fostered his image as the Caliph of the entire Muslim community, to whom obedience is legally ordained, and patronized the popular sufi orders as a direct link to the common people. These related policies of autocracy, centralization, and populism were aimed particularly at Syria, the key to his Asiatic provinces in general, and to the Hijaz, the source of his religious legitimacy in particular. Syrians were accordingly promoted to unprecedented influential positions in the Palace, as the careers of Abū al-Hudā al-Şayyādī, the “chief sufi shaykh” in the Empire, and of Aḥmad ‘Izzat al-‘Ābid, the Sultan’s second secretary, exemplified.²⁶ When Turkish nationalism began to gain currency among the core element of the Empire, ‘Abdülhamîd did not hesitate to

1983), pp. 13- 24; Robert Devereux, *The First Ottoman Constitutionalist Period: A Study of the Midhat Constitution and Parliament* (Baltimore, 1963).

²⁵ Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, pp. 227-239.

²⁶ Butrus Abu-Manneh, “Sultan Abdulhamid II and Shaikh Abulhuda al-Sayyadi,” *MES*, 15 (1979), pp. 131-153; *idem*, “The Establishment and Dismantling of the Province of Syria,” in John Spangolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in*

patronize this ideology too as a means to maintain his rule.²⁷

The Young Turk revolution of 1908 was the outcome of the mounting discontent among the graduates of ‘Abdülhamîd II’s civil and military schools at the discrepancy between his modernizing policy, which they were trained to implement, and his reactionary manner of rule, which excluded them of a share in shaping its course. Largely Westernized in their outlook, these successors of Midhât Pasha and Hüseyn Avnî Pasha followed them also in employing the ideals of the Young Ottomans against the Palace while ignoring their liberal religious foundation. Yet behind the consensus to restore the constitution, ‘Abdülhamîd’s opponents were deeply divided as to the means of realizing the idea of Ottomanism in an era of growing European intervention and separatist nationalism. One group, led by disgruntled members of the Sultan’s own family and elements from the ethnic minorities of the Empire, stressed the principle of equality to be secured, with European assistance, through a decentralized monarchy. The other group, consisting of Turkish and other Muslims and loosely organized in the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), by contrast, favored the creation of a unified nation under a centralist government of their own making.²⁸ The army officers, who took the lead in the execution of the revolution, generally subscribed to the latter view. The successive challenges they faced once in power, on the part of the Palace loyalists in 1909 and of the liberal parliamentary opposition in 1912, drove them toward an increasingly authoritarian military government. The continuous loss of territories in the Balkans, and the growing resentment against their centralizing measures in the Arab provinces which precipitated the emergence of the Arab nationalist movement, led these officers to progressively supplant Ottomanism with Turkish nationalism.²⁹ Like

Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani (Reading, 1992), pp. 8-26; Engin Akarlı, “‘Abdülhamîd II’s Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System,” in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 74-89; and below, ch. 4.

²⁷ Stanford J. Shaw, “Sultan Abdülhamîd II: Last Man of the Tanzimat,” in *Tanzimat’ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu (Bildiriler)* (Ankara, 1991), pp. 179-197; David Kushner, *The Rise of Turkish Nationalism, 1876-1908* (London, 1977). For the question of Hamîdian state ideology see also Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London, 1998).

²⁸ Ernest Edmonson Ramsaur, *The Young Turks, Prelude to the Revolution of 1908* (New York, 1969); M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York, 1995).

²⁹ For the scholarly debate concerning the rift between Turks and Arabs in the

their detested predecessor, ‘Abdülhamîd II, however, the leaders of the CUP did not hesitate to exploit traditional Islam as a means to enhance the legitimacy of their rule and enlist the support of the masses for their autocratic and centralist policies. These tendencies reached their climax in the First World War, before the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.³⁰

The most perceptible result of the integration of the Syrian economy into the European-dominated world market from the 1830s onward was a growing deficit in its foreign trade balance, creating an acute shortage of hard currency. This reflected primarily the dumping of the local market with cheap European cloth, which severely affected the textile industry, the largest in the country. At the same time, European interest in cash crops, particularly cereals, significantly increased their export from the early 1850s. These developments had significant implications for the organization of the Syrian economy in general, and for the social order of Damascus in particular, during the Tanzimat period. In Syria at large they facilitated the emergence of a new, mostly Christian, middle class, whose center was in Beirut and the other coastal ports in which the trade with Europe was concentrated. In Damascus itself they brought about a shift in the balance of power between its two factions of notables, those of the inner city who had flourished under the rule of the ‘Aẓms in the eighteenth century,³¹ and their counterparts of the southern Maydān quarter who had increasingly challenged them from the days of Aḥmad al-Jazzār.³² Thus while the inner city merchants and ‘ul-

last decade of the Ottoman Empire, see especially Zeine N. Zeine, *Arab—Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (Beirut, 1958); Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeve S. Simon (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York, 1991); Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997).

³⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics 1908-1914* (Oxford, 1969).

³¹ The three standard works on the ‘Azm era are Shimon Shamir, “The ‘Azm Walis of Syria 1724-1785” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1960); Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus, 1723-1783* (Beirut, 1966); Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708-1758* (Princeton, 1980). For an overview on the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the time see Albert H. Hourani, “The Fertile Crescent in the Eighteenth Century,” in *idem*, *A Vision of History* (Beirut, 1961), pp. 35-70.

³² On Aḥmad al-Jazzār’s governorship of Acre and Damascus see Peter M. Holt, *Egypt and the Fertile Crescent 1516-1922* (London, 1966), pp. 129-132; Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 36-40.

ama, who dominated the inland trade, farming the adjacent Ghūṭa oasis and financing the textile industry, were the hardest hit by European imports, it was the Maydānī chieftains (*aghawāt*) who managed to capitalize on the export of the high quality grain from the Ḥawrān.³³ This socio-economic shift, along with the Muslim resentment against the equality promised to the Christians in the Hatt-i Humāyūn of 1856, were the principal causes behind the serious riots that broke out in Damascus in 1860. Consequently, whereas the inner city notables were implicated in the massacre of foreign representatives and local Christians in the old city quarters, their rivals of the Maydān, who collaborated with the European merchants and their protégés, did their utmost to protect them against the mob.³⁴

The 1860 riots provided the Ottoman central government of the late Tanzimat with the opportunity to intervene more effectively in the expanding agricultural production of the Syrian provinces. Seeking to improve its balance of payments vis-à-vis the European financiers, it made a determined effort to increase the area of cultivable land and capitalize on the rural economy. Cognizant of the limited ability of the state to affect such changes directly, the Sublime Porte and its provincial governors sought to promote them by a multifaceted policy. Firstly, in Damascus itself, they favored the Maydānī faction and other notables of the outer ring already engaged in agricultural production. Secondly, concerning the city—hinterland relationships, they encouraged cooperation between these agricultural entrepreneurs and the more established inner city faction, largely to the detriment of the peasants. Finally, in Syria at large, they established Damascus as the capital of an extended province bearing

³³ Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914* (London, 1981), pp. 83-99; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 60-86; Dominique Chevallier, "Western Development and Eastern Crisis in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Syria Confronted with the European Economy," in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds.), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 205-222; Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "The Impact of Europe on a Traditional Economy: The Case of Damascus, 1840-1870," in Jean-Louis Bacque-Grammont and Paul Dumont (eds.), *Économie et sociétés dans l'Empire Ottoman (fin du XVIII-début du XX siècle)* (Paris, 1983), pp. 419-432; James A. Reilly, "Damascus Merchants and Trade in the Transition to Capitalism," *Canadian Journal of History*, 27 (1992), pp. 5-12.

³⁴ Of the considerable, though largely inconclusive, literature on the events of 1860 see especially Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War* (Berkeley, 1994); Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, 231-240; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 87-100.

the name of the country, in an endeavor to promote its position at the expense of Beirut and the coastal towns. Using this strengthened position as brokers between the state, the European merchants, and the peasants, many notable families of Damascus, both old and new, were able to exploit the particularly high prices of agricultural products in the world market of the period to accumulate large fortunes and, consequently, political power.³⁵

The decline of world grain prices from the late 1870s enabled the reinvigorated Ottoman Sultanate under ‘Abdülhamîd II to tighten its hold on the Syrian economy and direct it toward its own political ends. Unlike in Beirut, which could better accommodate itself to the changing conditions of the world market, in Damascus, and in the other inland cities of Syria, the ensuing depression unleashed a new factional struggle. This was ultimately decided in favor of those notable families that were better placed to exploit two interconnected means offered by the state to the urban leadership already in the previous period. One was the Land Code of 1858, which allowed them to invest their mercantile capital in land. With governmental support they thus could capitalize on the growing hardships of the peasants and establish legal rights over large landholdings. The other was the expanding bureaucratic machinery, in which they were able to buy the high posts, primarily in the administrative councils. These they used to build extensive patronage networks to control both urban society and the rural hinterland. These developments resulted in the emergence of a new landowning—bureaucratic elite, consisting of both established and upstart families, which was more dependent on and, consequently, more identified with the Ottoman State. As against them, those notables who lost their positions in the factional struggle of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, or who rejected dependence on the state in principle, tended to espouse the cause of decentralization. The diminishing prospects for appropriate official posts under the centralizing policy of the CUP augmented their opposition with a growing number of young members of the landown-

³⁵ Owen, pp. 167-173; Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Grain Economy of Late Ottoman Syria and the Issue of Large-Scale Commercialization," in Faruk Tabak and Caglar Keydar (eds.), *Landholding and Commercial Agriculture in the Ottoman Empire* (Albany, 1991), pp. 173-195; *idem*, "The Hauran Conflicts of the 1860s: A Chapter in the Rural History of Modern Syria," *IJMES*, 13 (1981), pp. 159-179; and below, ch. 6.

ing—bureaucratic elite itself. Both groups increasingly tended to articulate their disaffection through the new ideology of Arabism.³⁶

³⁶ Owen, pp. 253-264; Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, "The Impact of the Great Depression on Late Ottoman Syria," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 5-6 (1991), pp. 167-189; *idem*, "Violence in Rural Syria in the 1880s and 1890s: State Centralization, Rural Integration, and the World Market," in Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury (eds.), *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami, 1991), pp. 50-84; Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 26-74; Ruth Roded, "Tradition and Change in Syria during the last Decades of Ottoman Rule: The Urban Elite of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs and Hamah, 1876-1914 (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Denver, 1984); and below, ch. 7.

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PART 1: IN SUPPORT OF THE SULTAN—THE
NAQSHBANDIYYA—KHĀLIDIYYA

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Rijāl lā tulhīhim tijāra wa-lā bay‘ ‘an dhikr Allāh.
 Men whom neither commerce not trafficking diverts from the
 remembrance of God.
 Qur’an, al-Nūr (24), 37.

The Naqshbandiyya order,¹ and its nineteenth century offshoot, the Khālidiyya, traces its origins to the tradition of the spiritual masters of Central Asia, the *khwājagān*. The beginning of this tradition is generally attributed to Yūsuf al-Hamadānī, who in the end of the eleventh century migrated from Iraq, the center of classical Sufism, to Khurasan, establishing his lodge in Merv. Under his successors the activity of this chain of masters was farther transferred to Transoxiana, where it could enjoy the patronage of the Qarakhanid Turkish dynasty. Hamadānī’s foremost deputy (*khalīfa*), Aḥmad al-Yasavī, the eponym of the Yasaviyya order from which subsequently the Bektāshiyya sprang, preached Islam among the Turkish tribes of the steppe. In the following generation, in the face of the decline of the Qarakhanid State and the increasing Mongol menace, another outstanding *khwāja*, ‘Abd al-Khāliq al-Ghujduwānī (d. 1220), laid in his “eight words” and silent *dhikr* (recollection of God’s name), to be discussed below, the foundations of the Naqshbandī path (*ṭarīqa*). A century and a half later, as Transoxiana was recovering from the havoc inflicted upon it by the Mongol invasion, Ghujduwānī’s path was revived by Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband, who accomplished the spiritual foundation of the Naqshbandiyya and gave it its name. Shāh Naqshband (1318-1389), the epithet of Muḥammad al-Uwaysī al-Bukhārī, trod the sufi path under the guidance of two prominent *khwājagān* of his time, but claimed to have been initiated into the *ṭarīqa* directly by the spirituality of Ghujduwānī. Under the latter’s inspiration he adopted the silent *dhikr* and the “eight words”, adding three of his own. These roots determined the distinct path of the Naqshbandiyya as an elitist order that strictly adheres to orthodox tenets and actively participates in worldly affairs. They also provided it with a measure of continuity which sufi orders normally lack. The branches

¹ The best introduction to the history of the Naqshbandiyya is Hamid Algar, “A Brief History of the Naqshbandī Order,” in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), pp. 3-44. See also J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders of Islam* (London, 1971), pp. 62-64, 92-96.

that emerged from the Naqshbandiyya generally preserved the name of the mother order and regarded themselves as part of its tradition.

Khawāja Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband, like the eponymous founders of most other sufi orders, was basically a spiritual master guiding his circle of disciples in his hometown, Bukhara. The task of consolidating and spreading the *ṭarīqa* was left, therefore, mainly to his successors. Most outstanding among them in the early generations was undoubtedly Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Ubaydallāh Aḥrār (1404-1490) of Tashkent, who in his activity embodied the political power inherent in the mystical principles of the Naqshbandiyya. For forty years Aḥrār served as the spiritual guide of the Timurid amir of Samarqand, becoming thereby the virtual ruler of the country. He was also the first master in the Naqshbandī chain to spread the path outside Transoxiana, dispatching his deputies westwards to Iran, Anatolia and the Hijaz, eastwards as far as the borders of China, and southwards to Afghanistan. From the latter, the Naqshbandiyya extended by the end of the sixteenth century to India, producing the even more prominent figure of Aḥmad Sirhindī. Sirhindī (1563-1624) regarded himself as the renovator of the second millenium in Islam (*mujaddid-i alf-i thānī*) and founded his own branch in the *ṭarīqa*, the Mujaddidiyya. His impact on the course of Naqshbandī history was such that most of its subsequent shaykhs, including Khālīd, were counted among the Mujaddidī tradition. Sirhindī was one of the leading opponents of the *ḍīn-i Ilāhī*, the syncretistic religion that was devised and headed by the Mughal Emperor Akbar as a means to consolidate his rule over northern India. He was likewise averse to all manifestations of Hindu and Shi'ī influence upon Sunni Islam. As against them, Sirhindī strove to fortify the orthodox aspect of the Naqshbandiyya. The main thread throughout his writings, especially the large collection of his letters, the *maktūbāt*, is the stress on following the sunna (exemplary conduct) of the Prophet and complying with the precepts of the shari'a (the divine Law), as the two foundations of the sufi path. Concomitantly, he emphasized the duty of the Naqshbandī master to approach the ruler in order to lead him into the straight path.²

² For Sirhindī's teachings see Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī: An Outline of his Thought and a Study of his Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal and London, 1971); Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Sharī'ah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī's Efforts to Reform Sufism* (London, 1986); J.G.T ter Haar, *Follower and Heir of the Prophet: Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindī (1564-1624)* (Leiden, 1992). For the spread

The Naqshbandī–Mujaddidī legacy of Aḥmad Sirhindī was perpetuated in India in the next three generations by his descendents, whom he himself had designated. Again, it was the successors, foremost among them his son, Muḥammad Maʿšūm (d. 1668), who engaged in consolidating and spreading the order. Maʿšūm founded the central lodge of the *ṭarīqa* in Delhi and ordained a large number of deputies, in India and beyond. Two of them revived Naqshbandī activity in the regions incorporated by now in the domains of the Ottoman Empire. The first was Aḥmad Jārallāh Jūryānī, nicknamed Yakdast (d. 1704), who settled in Mecca and ordained numerous disciples of his own among both the city inhabitants and the pilgrims. He was followed by Muḥammad Murād al-Bukhārī (d. 1720), who traveled extensively between Istanbul and the Arab provincial cities, mainly Damascus, where his descendents established themselves as a leading notable family, the Murādīs. Here joined the order the celebrated sufi scholar ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (1641-1731). In India itself Sirhindī's descendents yielded the conduct of the order to Maḥzar Jān-i Jānān (d. 1781), who sought to adapt its path to the new circumstances of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire by stressing the role of the shaykh as the spiritual guide of his community.³ His more illustrious contemporary, Shāh Walīallāh, to whom I shall return later, was also a Naqshbandī adherent. Maḥzar's successor at the head of the central lodge in Delhi was Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī (d. 1824), known in Arabic as ʿAbdallāh al-Dihlawī.⁴ Ghulām ʿAlī was the spiritual guide of the founder of the Khālidi branch in the Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya, Shaykh Khālidi.

Shaykh Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Khālidi (1776-1827)⁵ was a Kurd from the

of the Naqshbandiyya in India see Athar Abbas Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (2 vols. New Delhi, 1983), vol. 2, pp. 174-263; Arthur F. Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Meditating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, 1998).

³ On Maḥzar Jān-i Jānān see Warren Fusfeld, "Naqshbandi Sufism and Reformist Islam," in Bruce Lawrence (ed.), *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Ideology* (Leiden, 1984), pp. 91-95; Annemarie Schimmel, *Pain and Grace* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 18-20; ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *Al-Hadāʾiq al-Wardiyya fī Haqāʾiq Ajillāʾ al-Naqshbandiyya* (Cairo, 1308 A.H.), pp. 201-206.

⁴ On Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī see Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 30-33; ʿA. Khānī, *Al-Hadāʾiq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 209-218.

⁵ On Shaykh Khālidi see Albert H. Hourani, "Sufism and Modern Islam: Mawlana Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order," in *idem*, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East* (London, 1981), pp. 75-89; Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," pp. 1-12.

Shahrizūr district of northern Iraq. Acquiring a broad religious education in his native country, he began to teach in Sulaymāniyya, the capital of the rulers of the Bābān House. Although aspiring to follow the sufi path as well, Khālid refrained from joining the local branch of the Qādiriyya, the leading order among the Kurds at the time. The search after more genuine spiritual instruction probably contributed to his decision to perform the hajj in 1805, passing on his way for the first time via Syria. During his stay in Mecca Khālid became witness to the Wahhābī takeover of the city and here, as he himself related, he received an indication to pursue his goal in India. He set out on his way three years later and trod the path under the guidance of Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī in Delhi. Recognizing Khālid’s virtue, the shaykh ordained him within a year in the highest degree and assigned him the task of spreading the order in the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Khālid accomplished his mission with remarkable success, ordaining numerous deputies, many of them also prominent ‘ulama. These became active throughout Kurdistan, as well as in the major urban centers of the Empire. Moreover, in Istanbul, some of these deputies took part in the events that led to the destruction of the Janissary corps by Maḥmūd II in 1826, thus helping to open the Ottoman Empire’s path to reform.⁶

Shaykh Khālid resolved to move to Damascus in 1823 in the face of mounting difficulties in Iraq. Here he generated a considerable religious awakening on the two foundations of strict adherence to the *shar‘a* and following the *ṭarīqa*. Khālid dispersed the deputies that accompanied him from Iraq in some abandoned mosques of the city, turning them under his inspiration into active centers of prayer and recollection. Most ‘ulama and notables of the city supported him, and many among them also took from him the Naqshbandī path. As Butrus Abu-Manneh has shown, Khālid’s success must be viewed against the sense of insecurity that prevailed among the inhabitants of Damascus under the increasing oppression and violence of Syria’s governors, culminating in the infamous rule of Aḥmad al-Jazzār. He alludes in addition to the constant threat of the Druze—Maronite army of Bashīr II, the amir of Mount Lebanon, and to the outbreak in 1821 of the Greek revolt, which arose religious fervor all over the Empire. In view of these distressing circumstances, the Naqshbandī principle of strict adherence to the precepts of the shari‘a proved

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 23-29.

especially attractive, implying the demand to observe the law against the arbitrariness of the governors and to secure Sunni superiority over the heterodox and non-Muslim communities. Shaykh Khālid's activity in Syria lasted for only four years, till his untimely death in an outbreak of an epidemic in 1827. Nevertheless, the Khālidi branch of the Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya managed to strike deep roots in Damascus and influence its religious evolution through the nineteenth century, and to this very day.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MYSTICAL PRAXIS

In reviewing Shaykh Khālīd's teachings, Abu-Manneh based himself on the collection of his letters to his deputies and supporters, edited and published by his nephew, As'ad al-Šāhib, the head of the order in Damascus at the end of the Ottoman period.¹ In this chapter I undertake a wider analysis of the Naqshbandī principles, as these were presented by Khālīd and his successors in the city during the nineteenth century, in an effort to anchor the "theology" of the order in its mysticism. The fundamental exposition of Khālīd's views, apart from his collection of letters, is to be found in the treatise that was compiled by his disciple Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī, probably under his own supervision, in 1818.² The thrust of this book is largely polemical, and it is divided, accordingly, into three main chapters: a general demonstration of the necessity of mastering the esoteric sciences; a biography of Khālīd, supplemented by As'ad al-Šāhib who edited and published this work as well; and a presentation of the stipulations and practices that befit the adherents of the order. These are introduced by a survey of the Naqshbandī chain of initiation (*silsila*) and fundamental principles. More systematic in its exposition is another treatise composed by Muḥammad al-Khānī, the foremost Syrian deputy of Shaykh Khālīd and the head of the *ṭarīqa* in Damascus at an early stage of its development, in 1837.³ This book too opens with an introduction to the Naqshbandī principles, and then proceeds to describe in detail its practices and forms of recollection. Later Khālīdī writers generally rely on these three early works.

The Khālīdī sources, owing to the remarkable continuity in the course of the Naqshbandiyya throughout the ages, make no clear distinction between the principles of the mother order, as it emerged

¹ Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya," p. 12; As'ad al-Šāhib (ed.), *Bughyat al-Wājid fī Maktūbāt Mawlānā Khālīd* (Damascus, 1334 A.H.).

² Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya fī Ādāb al-Ṭarīqa al-Naqshbandiyya wal-Bahja al-Khālidiyya* (Cairo, 1313 A.H.).

³ Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya fī Ādāb al-Ṭarīqa al-'Aliyya al-Khālidiyya al-Naqshbandiyya* (Cairo, 1303 A.H.).

from the tradition of the *khwājagān*, and those of its ramifications, the Mujaddidiyya and their own Khālidiyya. Accordingly, and since the purpose of my analysis is to present the place of the Khālidi teaching within the larger tradition of the order as it developed up to their time, I employ in my analysis an essentially dichotomous terminology. The unqualified term Naqshbandiyya as used in the following pages covers the original *ṭarīqa*, its Mujaddidi branch, and the latter's Khālidi branch insofar as it followed its antecedents. The term Khālidiyya or Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya, by contrast, is used mainly in the discussion of those respects in which this branch developed its own features within the general framework of the mother order, thus justifying its distinct name. Alternatively, I use the latter term in those cases in which it is important to stress that the Khālidiyya did adhere to the legacy of the Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya.

The Sufi Roots

The Naqshbandiyya defines itself as *ṭarīqat al-ṣaḥāba*, the path of the Prophet's Companions, observing this root without adding or omitting anything thereof. Thus it constantly embodies the state of servitude to God (*'ubūdiyya*), which it regards as the sufi's goal. This state of servitude has two aspects: external and internal. Outwardly it is expressed by strict adherence to the sunna, observance of the precepts of the shari'a, and avoidance of innovations (sing. *bid'a*) and dispensations (sing. *rukḥṣa*); inwardly, by constant presence in God (*ḥudūr*) through amortization (*istihlāk*). A parallel, though more personal definition, states that the two fundamental principles of the Naqshbandiyya are the exact following of the Prophet (*kamāl ittibā' al-nabī*) and love of the accomplished master (*maḥabbat al-shaykh al-kāmil*).⁴ These are the two aspects that characterize its path: orthodoxy based on religious knowledge (*'ilm*), on the one hand, and mystical quest through a master's guidance (*taṣawwuf*), on the other. As an orthodox teaching, the Khālidiyya fully approves Aḥmad Sirhindī's assertion that the mystic experience is subordinated to the precepts of the shari'a and that if it negates them it becomes nothing but unbelief. As a sufi order, it endorses his view that without treading the mystic path (*sulūk*), leading to the purification of the heart

⁴ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 14; M. Khānī, *Al-Baḥja al-Saniyya*, p. 9. This definition returns to Murād al-Bukhārī, see Algar, "A Brief History", p. 4.

from what is not God, it is impossible to achieve a complete and genuine obedience to the shari'a.⁵ Hence, the Naqshbandiyya recognizes no contradiction between *'ilm* and *taṣawwuf*. On the contrary, from its viewpoint they are the two complementary aspects of the path of the Prophet's Companions.

As a sufi order, the Naqshbandiyya stresses that it is incumbent upon every believer to acquire the esoteric sciences (*'ilm al-bāṭin*).¹² However, the Khālidi authors do not imply by this concept the speculative truths revealed to those who attained direct perception of God (*ma'rifa*). These are almost completely absent from their manuals, since in their teaching theosophy is superseded by Sunni orthodox theology. The Khālidi also do not mean by this concept the love of God (*maḥabba*), as in their path this constitutes only an expedient for the novice.⁷ Out of a basic practical approach toward mysticism, they regard the esoteric knowledge rather as the science of the heart (*'ilm aḥwāl al-qalb*), designed to elucidate the rules and the means necessary for the follower of the mystic path toward the Truth (*ḥaqīqa*). Accordingly, the Khālidiyya explains the latter term as the realization (*taḥaqquq*) of things by deeds and their flowing from the shari'a.⁸ Esoteric science is acquired by way of experience, by the mere treading of the path, since mystic knowledge and practice are actually identical. This science is divided into four principal branches. The first two relate to the means to remove the faults of the heart (*muhlikāt*) and save it from temptations (*munjiyāt*), while the other two expand upon the manners of treading the path (*ādāb al-sulūk*) and the binding relations between those who share it (*mu'āmalāt*).⁹ As part of the same practical approach, the Khālidi writers devote a conspicuous place in their expositions to the details of the various *dhikr* ceremonies, as well as to the moral conduct of both guides (*murshids*) and novices (*murīds*). The principles that underlie these rules, purification of the heart from what is not God and spiritual training under a proper shaykh, are shared by the other sufi orders as well, though in the details each order follows its own method.

Moreover, the Naqshbandiyya refrains from claiming that its spiritual guides are necessarily superior. Thus the Khālidi authors of-

⁵ Friedmann, pp. 41, 46.

⁶ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 17.

⁷ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁹ Baghdādī, *ibid.*

ten cite, besides their own masters, the classical authorities of Sufism, whom they depict as integrating the mystic path with the Law. These authorities include not only Junayd and Ghazālī, whose loyalty to orthodox Islam most ‘ulama have recognized, but also the more controversial Ibn ‘Arabī and Sha‘rānī. The eponyms of the other major orders of Islam also figure in these writings, especially ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Aḥmad al-Rifā‘ī and Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. Considering all the orders as essentially equal in their orientation toward God, the Naqshbandiyya, out of the same characteristic practical approach, views its only advantage over the rest in its efficiency. Relying on its own experience, it argues that its path is the shortest and easiest way to reach spiritual perfection.¹⁰ This advantage, particularly stressed by Sirhindī, is explained by the fact that the Naqshbandī path is inverted in relation to the paths of the other orders. In these orders the novice strives along the path in order to attract God’s favor and be able to faithfully follow His Prophet’s example. The Naqshbandī path, in contrast, begins with the casting of spiritual attraction (rapture) on the part of God in the heart of the novice (*taṣarruf wa-ilqā’ al-jadhba*), and with the adherence to the sunna and shunning of *bid‘a* on the part of the novice who seeks to reach God. Those who enter the mystic path from the state of divine attraction, it is reasoned, will reach perfection sooner than those who enter the path without it.¹¹ The Naqshbandī path begins in the world of divine command (*‘ālam al-amr*) and proceeds by descending through the mystical states (*manāzil al-sulūk*) to the world of creatures (*‘ālam al-khalq*), while ascending through the states of divine attraction (*ma‘ārij al-jadhba*). In contrast to the other orders, the treading of this path is circular rather than straight. It begins where they end, since its beginning is enfolded in its end and its end is enfolded in its beginning.¹²

These complex formulations ultimately imply that the Naqshbandī path is not designed for every Muslim who seeks mystical guidance, but only for the spiritual elite, those who are attracted to this guidance by force of the mystical inclination implanted in them by nature. Only those possessing such inborn inclination can experience the divine attraction *before* treading the path. It is a heavenly gift that God bestows upon whoever He wishes and, therefore, the endeavor

¹⁰ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 6; Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹² M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 6-7.

to attain it by one's own efforts is denounced as disbelief. The claim to represent the path of the pre-elected elite is expressed by the notion that the Naqshbandiyya is the mother of all mystical paths and the source of all their secrets and truths.¹³ Its spiritual precedence is symbolized by the fact, stressed especially by the Khālidiyya, that in its main chain of initiation the first link after the Prophet is Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, his direct heir, while in most other orders the chain begins with 'Alī, the fourth Caliph. Consequently, it is also called *al-ṭarīqa al-ṣiddīqiyya*.¹⁴ From the complementary external aspect, the reliance on Abū Bakr rather than on 'Alī reflects the Naqshbandī claim to represent also the path of the orthodox erudite elite, those who interpret and implement the shari'a on the basis of the sunna. From here derives its sobriquet *ṭarīqat al-ʿulamāʾ*. Historically however, the origins of the reliance on Abū Bakr lay in the *khwājagān* tradition of Central Asia and, therefore, the non-orthodox Bektāshīyya adheres to it as well.¹⁵

This inversion of the mystical path is the essence of the Naqshbandiyya. From it derive, and in it are reflected, the characteristics that determine the integrity and distinctiveness of this order within the general framework of the sufi current in Islam. This inversion shaped its organizational structure as a *ṭarīqa*; determined its close affinity to orthodoxy and to its bearers, the 'ulama; and defined its active involvement in social and political affairs to facilitate good Muslim life as delineated by the shari'a. These were also the foundations of its offshoot, the Khālidiyya, in the nineteenth century.

The Organizational Structure

The Naqshbandiyya, like sufi orders in general, emphasizes that the mystic path should not be trodden without the guidance of an accomplished master. The knowledge and experience of the master, acquired in the course of his own spiritual training, is essential for the seeker of the path (*murīd*) in order to heal the diseases of his heart and overcome the seductions of his soul. In its practical instruction, the Naqshbandiyya urges the novices to be faithful to a single guide,

¹³ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 14-15, 17.

¹⁴ Algar, "A Brief History", pp. 4-5. On the three chains of the Naqshbandiyya see 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 6-8.

¹⁵ Trimmingham, p. 149n. 5.

to fully obey him, and to execute his orders without reservation or delay. In relation to his master a disciple should be, according to a famous sufi saying, like a corpse in the hands of its washer. Annihilation (*fanā'*) in the words, deeds, quality, and substance of the master is a precondition to annihilation in God.¹⁶ Concomitantly, it requires from its shaykhs exemplary conduct that befits their position and mission. They must carefully examine the sincerity and readiness of those who apply for their guidance, to shun their money and signs of admiration, and always comply with the precepts of the shari'a.¹⁷ Without the complete submission of the disciple to his accomplished guide, his efforts will be fruitless and the spiritual perfection will elude him. As another famous sufi saying put it: he who has no master, the devil becomes his master.

These general considerations are amplified, however, in the Naqshbandiyya, which, as we have seen, regards the love of the accomplished master as its inner essence, externally reflected by the exact following of the Prophet. Practically, the total obedience that this *ṭarīqa* requires from the disciples toward their guides serves as the foundation of its inner organization. Observing the unbounded loyalty of the novices to their masters in Kurdistan, Van Bruinessen ascribed this phenomenon to the effect of the Naqshbandī form of *dhikr*, which more than in any other order stresses the shaykh's role as an intermediary between man and God.¹⁸ In my opinion, this loyalty is required rather as a result of the inversion in the Naqshbandī path, of the inclusion of its end in its beginning. Since divine attraction precedes here the treading of the path, the follower is likely to encounter profound mystical states (*ahwāl*) already at an early stage, before his annihilation in God (*fanā'*). These might mislead him into believing that he had reached spiritual perfection, the subsistence in God (*baqā'*). Regarding himself then as worthy of becoming a sufi guide, he acquires his own disciples that will go astray after him.¹⁹ These dangers of the Naqshbandī path, relating to both the individual and the entire order, seem to be one of the important reasons for its emphatic orthodox posture, as well as for the central role

¹⁶ Baghdādī, *Al-Hadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 82-86; M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 24-26; 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 6-8.

¹⁷ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 30-37.

¹⁸ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaykh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London, 1992), p. 244.

¹⁹ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 44.

it attaches to the shaykh, depicting him as the seeker's gate to God (*bāb*).²⁰ From this point of view, the two fundamental principles of the Naqshbandiyya constitute two particularly strong restrictions against the dangers inherent in its path. The adherence to the sunna is designed to assure the rejection of mystical states that contradict the shari'a, while the love of the accomplished master is intended to create full obedience toward the person that is capable of realizing their true meaning and avoiding their misinterpretation. Naturally, only the master is entitled to confirm the disciple's attainment of spiritual perfection, which qualifies him to guide.

The central role attributed to the shaykh in the Naqshbandī order is clearly discernible in two of the four methods it delineates to reach God. The most elevated and effective among these methods is *ṣuhba*, the accompanying of an accomplished master who guides by way of divine attraction. The effectiveness of this method derives from the fact that the heart of the master is directly bound to the heart of his disciple and leads him to God without intermediaries.²¹ The Naqshbandiyya distinguishes, accordingly, between *shaykh al-ṣuhba*, the genuine guide, on the one hand, and *shaykh al-khirqa* or *shaykh al-dhikr*, who guide through the sufi frock or the recollection of God's name, on the other hand. The latter two are regarded only figuratively as guides. This distinction reflects the Naqshbandī censure of those sufi shaykhs who turn their inherited frock or *dhikr* formula into a status symbol and a means to acquire wealth and influence.²² The method of *ṣuhba* also helped to bestow on the path and principles of the Naqshbandiyya their remarkable integrity and continuity. It led Naqshbandīs to display great respect toward their *silsila*, believing that through the uninterrupted contact between the links of the chain of spiritual guides, the heart of the follower of the path is bound to the Prophet, and through the Prophet to God.²³

In the Khālidiyya, the second major method of reaching God, the *rābi'a*—binding the heart to the accomplished master and constantly preserving his figure in the imagination, whether he is present or

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²¹ Baghdādī, *Al-Hadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 86-87; M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 41-42.

²² M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 30.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 10. On the problem of the identity of a sufi order see Hamid Algar, "Political Aspects of Naqshbandī History," in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), pp. 123-124.

absent—became the more prominent. Sirhindī regarded this method as a connection of love on the part of the disciple toward his guide, enabling him to reflect his nature and lights even when he is far away.²⁴ Khālīd, however, introduced in it a special novelty. Claiming that none of his deputies had attained the appropriate degree of perfection, he demanded that all the Khālīdī disciples raise in their imagination his own figure, even if they have never seen him, rather than the figure of their immediate guide. This novelty was designed to turn the *rābiṭa* into an instrument for the inner consolidation of Khālīd's newly founded branch of the order, as well as for the imposition of his central authority over all its members.²⁵

Nevertheless, the fundamental Naqshbandī principle of the love of the accomplished master, by generating, more than in the other orders, excessive admiration and unreserved faith on the part of the disciples toward their guide, harbors also a less orthodox dimension. Under the guidance of masters of lesser stature, and these constitute the majority in every order, these traits might easily degenerate into saint worship, which by its nature tends to collide with the second fundamental Naqshbandī principle of strictly following the Prophet. Moreover, some orthodox circles seem to have condemned such complete submissiveness on the part of the disciples even when it was directed toward a master with higher stature such as Khālīd. Their arguments are echoed in the words of Baghdādī, who was compelled to admit that the practice did not always conform with the shari'a. "This love [of the disciples for Khālīd]", he writes, "is a matter that springs from the heart and must not be judged by reason, *although there is decisive evidence against it.*" He tries to justify it by the deep respect that had been shown by disciples such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, whom he defines as the pious forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), to their masters. Baghdādī also sees no fault in the practice of kissing the shaykh's hands and asking his blessing.²⁶ [my emphasis]

The orthodox criticism becomes even more forceful when it is directed against the *rābiṭa*, in the novel form it received in the hands of Shaykh Khālīd, since here saint worship appears to be especially

²⁴ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 42.

²⁵ For the *rābiṭa* see Fritz Meier, *Zwei Abhandlungen Über die Naqshbandiyya* (Istanbul, 1994), part I: Die Herzensbindung an den Meister, pp. 17-241; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Khalwa and Rabiṭa in the Khālīdī Suborder," in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), pp. 289-302.

²⁶ Baghdādī, *Al-Hadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 41-42.

concentrated. Later on, the Salafiyya would use this practice as a leverage against the Naqshbandī claim of orthodoxy. In the time of Khālīd and his immediate successors, however, the main opposition to the *rābiṭa* sprang from among his own deputies in the order. These raised two essential reservations, implying that it contradicted the two fundamental principles of the Naqshbandiyya. They pointed out that the Prophet did not instruct his Companions to raise his figure in their imagination, and that this is an unfounded innovation in the *ṭarīqa* as well.²⁷ Unprepared to sacrifice the usual independence of shaykhs within their orders for the sake of a more unified organization, these Khālīdī deputies preferred to follow previous Naqshbandī masters who taught that disciples should bind their hearts to their immediate guides. Their focus on the inner—organizational dimension of the *rābiṭa* is evidenced by Shaykh Khālīd's rejoinder to this challenge to his authority, his Epistle in Verification of the *Rābiṭa*. In it, Khālīd strove to demonstrate that this was a customary practice in the Naqshbandiyya, as well as in other orders and in the sufi tradition in general. He felt no need to treat the more fundamental claim that the *rābiṭa* contradicts the sunna of the Prophet.²⁸

The other two methods that the Naqshbandiyya delineates to reach God concern the *dhikr* practices. The first is the unceasing repetition of its formulas as dictated by the master (*iltizām al-adhkār*), the second is concentration and contemplation (*tawajjuh wa-murāqaba*). Together they constitute the practical expression of the inversion in the mystic path of the *ṭarīqa*, as well as of the resulting paradoxes regarding its orthodoxy. The sufis make a distinction between two modes of recollecting God's name, the one uttered by the tongue (*dhikr al-lisān*, *dhikr jahrī*), the other whispered in the heart (*dhikr al-qalb*, *dhikr khafī*). The second is generally considered as the more elevated.²⁹ Most sufi orders use the vocal *dhikr*, especially at the beginning of the path, when its follower is in need of external aids for his progress. In some of them, he is required in due course to interiorize it into his heart. In the Naqshbandiyya, in contrast, the silent *dhikr* is practiced right from the beginning of the path through to its end.³⁰ The name of the Naqshbandī order is a reflection of the

²⁷ Abu-Manneh, *ibid.*, pp. 297-299; Meier, pp. 172-174.

²⁸ Khālīd al-Naqshbandī, "Risāla fī Ithbāt al-Rābiṭa," in Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 72-79, and 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 295-297.

²⁹ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 171.

³⁰ This fact is frequently emphasized in the Naqshbandī expositions. See for

strong effect of this type of recollecting God's name. It is derived from the combination of the Persian words *naqsh* and *band*, meaning binding the imprint of God's name in the heart of His seeker.³¹

Naturally, the silent *dhikr* stresses the orthodoxy of the Naqshbandiyya, distancing it from the more popular forms of the ceremonies that are practiced among other orders, which normally include music and dance and at times also intoxication and physical pain. The *dhikr* formulas that the Naqshbandī guides inculcate in their disciples are generally the name of the divine essence (*ism al-dhāt, Allāh*) or the first part of the *shahāda* (attestation), "there is no god but God." The concentration and contemplation are also pointed at the name of the divine essence.³² These, however, cannot conceal the fact that regarding the form of the *dhikr*, the Naqshbandiyya too does not draw its example from the Prophet's sunna. It was clearly influenced by the Buddhist practices of Central Asia, its place of origin, as the "eleven words" of 'Abd al-Khālīq al-Ghujduwānī and Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband, the underlying principles of the Naqshbandī sufi path, testify. They include the repetition of the *dhikr* formula thousands of times, as with the mantra, watching the steps, and awareness while breathing.³³

The inversion in the mystic path of the Naqshbandiyya results in yet another paradox concerning its character and spread. On the one hand, this inversion implies, as we have seen, that the *ṭarīqa* is primarily designed for the elect, those necessarily few upon whom God has bestowed the inclination toward the mystical quest. On the other hand, it underlies its characteristic practical approach, stimulating many Naqshbandī masters to encourage as large an affiliation as possible to the ranks of their order. Thus, in contrast to the general practice of sufi shaykhs of heaping difficulties and humiliation on the seeker in order to test his sincerity and readiness to tread the

example Baghdādī, *Al-Hadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 10; M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 37; 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *Al-Sa'ada al-Abadiyya fīmā jā'a bihi al-Naqshbandiyya* (Damascus, 1313 A.H.), pp. 28-34; as well as in the scholarly literature, for example Trimmingham, pp. 201-202.

³¹ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 41; 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 8.

³² For a detailed description of the practical aspects of these methods to reach God see Baghdādī, *Al-Hadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 88-91; M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 47-53.

³³ For the list of the eleven principles see Trimmingham, pp. 203-204; and their analysis from a Naqshbandī point of view in M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 53-57. For a description of a Naqshbandī *dhikr* ceremony which he attended and its resemblance to Buddhist practices, see Van Bruinessen, pp. 223, 240-244.

path, in the Naqshbandiyya, according to the instructions of Sirhindī, the shaykh is satisfied with the seeker's general repentance, leaving the particulars for a later stage, when the divine light is reinforced in his heart. Moreover, Sirhindī believed that even novices that are not honest and sincere should be given guidance, in the hope that while treading the path they would amend their ways.³⁴ Following in his footsteps, Shaykh Khālīd proved particularly attuned to the elite. Eager to attract those holding positions of influence to his order, he was prepared to be lenient even regarding their general duty of repentance as ordained by Sirhindī. Khālīd was severely attacked by his opponents for this attitude of favoring the office holders and wealthy people of this world and for accepting them into his order merely by blessing (*tabarruk*), while knowing that they have no intention of following the path. His rejoinder was that for some of them this is the appropriate conduct (*siyāsāt al-irshād*), since asking them to abandon the affairs of this world and give up their status as a condition for their acceptance into the *ṭarīqa* would cause them to despair of mending their ways and to shun repentance altogether. On the other hand, there were also the opposite accusations that he imposed the most difficult works on disciples from good families in order to break their spirits.³⁵

The same lenient approach underlies the second central organizational novelty of Shaykh Khālīd in the path of the Naqshbandiyya, the *khalwa arbaʿīniyya*. In clear contradiction to the general opinion of the great masters of the *ṭarīqa* in the past, Ghujduwānī, Shāh Naqshband and Sirhindī alike, Khālīd referred the initial instruction of the Khālīdī disciples to his deputies, concluding it with a forty-day period of seclusion under his own concentrated spiritual guidance. In this way he was able to ordain a large number of deputies and disciples much faster than the practice of *ṣuḥba* would allow. These were dispersed throughout the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire and greatly enhanced the influence of the order.³⁶ Khālīd's innovation regarding the *rābiʿa* may be seen, in this respect of sufi training, as a countermeasure, and a complement, to this

³⁴ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 39-40.

³⁵ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 109-112.

³⁶ Abu-Manneh, "Khalwa and Rabi'a," pp. 290-293. Algar counts 116 deputies of Khālīd, each responsible for a strictly defined geographical region, see Algar, "Political Aspects," p. 138. For the manner of performing the *khalwa* see Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 88-90; M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 48-52.

concentrated form of the *khalwa*. By it he sought to safeguard the loyalty of his deputies and disciples despite their swift ordination, which was not always sufficient to ensure genuine assimilation of the path. It is noteworthy that, unlike the *rābiṭa*, the practice of *khalwa arbaʿīniyya* raised no serious objections among the members of the order, even though its basis in the Naqshbandiyya was much weaker. On the contrary, it was willingly embraced by Khālīd's deputies, who through the swift ordination of disciples were able to enhance their influence in their respective regions of activity.

A third organizational novelty introduced by Shaykh Khālīd in the path of the Naqshbandiyya was "the closing of the door" (*ghalq* or *ighlāq al-bāb*). This instruction was originally given while Khālīd was still in Sulaymāniyya, after his Qādirī rival, Ma'rūf al-Barzinjī, had sent one of his followers to take part in his gathering and try to slander him before his disciples.³⁷ More generally, "closing the door" was designed to prevent the presence of outsiders, who might deride the *dhikr* in view of the blatant manifestations of rapture that usually accompanied it. This novelty was directed, therefore, not only against the orthodox 'ulama who rejected Sufism, but also against members of other orders, in which the divine attraction occurs only at the end of the path and is less pronounced because of their use of the vocal recollection. Thus the practice of "closing the door" helped to stress the unique character of the Naqshbandiyya among the sufi orders of Islam. It too raised no objections and was used both during the recitation of *khatm al-khwājagān*, the concluding prayer in the Naqshbandī gathering, and in the initiation ceremony.³⁸

The Affinity to Orthodoxy

By preaching to follow the sunna of the Prophet in the footsteps of his Companions, as the external aspect of its definition requires, the Naqshbandiyya casts into relief its ideal perception of the time of the forefathers (*al-salaf*). Yet, nowhere in the Khālīdī writings does this imply a return to the example of the ancestors in order to de-

³⁷ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 166-168. On Ma'rūf al-Barzinjī and his animosity toward Khālīd see also C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs: Politics, Travel and Research in North-Eastern Iraq 1919-1925* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 71-78.

³⁸ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 41. On the meaning and practice of the *khatm al-khwājagān* see Meier, pp. 188-213.

part from the legacy of their successors (*al-khalaf*), as would later be suggested by the Salafiyya. On the contrary, this is the general preaching of the orthodox men of religion, those who follow the path of the Prophet and his Companions in every generation, and it is directed at their contemporaries who deviate from this path. Generations differ from each other in the extent and strictness of following the sunna, and Khālid was of the opinion that in his time the deviation of the Muslim community had become particularly severe, yet in every generation there are exemplary orthodox figures who fully realize this ideal. Thus Khālid generally felt no need to explicitly state that he followed the path of the ancestors. The only occasion that he did so, in his theological epistle on the particular will (*al-irāda al-juz'īyya*), is an exception that proves the rule. Khālid's stress on the way of the *salaf* in this case served to justify a deviation from it as the need arouse. "For this poor servant", he explains, "whose path (*madhhab*) is the very path of the forefathers and whose way (*tarīqa*) is the very way of the Companions and their immediate successors, it was difficult to engage in what they interdicted. Nevertheless, seeing that many confusions, errors, and inaccuracies had crept in concerning this most important religious question and source of many certain doctrines, I undertook [to discuss] it following the example of the imam al-Ash'arī and the latter-day [theologians of the] Ash'ariyya and Māturīdiyya schools."³⁹

From the Naqshbandī point of view there is thus no distinction between the sunna, the exemplary life of the Prophet and the way of the early generations, and the shari'a, as elaborated by the jurists (*fuqahā'*) throughout the ages in the framework of the legal schools. The Khālidīyya emphasizes, in addition, that the sunna reflects also the Muslim faith (*aqīda*), as clarified by the '*ulamā'* *al-tawhīd* within the theological schools. Accordingly, the Naqshbandīs regard the fulfillment of the religious precepts in the manner prescribed in Islamic jurisprudence, and the acceptance of the dogmas as formulated in its theology, as the best expression of adherence to the sunna. "The faith of our Naqshbandī masters", Muḥammad al-Khānī states at the opening of his exposition, "is the faith of the *ahl al-sunna wal-jamā'a*", namely the Sunnis, who adhere to the example of the Prophet and the consensus of the community, "and their path is based on maintaining the commandments of the purified shari'a".⁴⁰ Sim-

³⁹ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 96. See the analysis of this epistle below.

⁴⁰ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 3.

ilarly, Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ al-Ḥaydarī, a leading figure of the order in the following generation in Iraq, declares that “it is based on acting in harmony with the book of God [the Qur’an]... and the exemplary life of the Prophet (sunna)..., *without transgressing the consensus of the community (ijmāʿ) in any matter*”.⁴¹ [my emphasis] These formulations echo Khālīd’s urging of his disciples to amend their beliefs according to the opinions of the Ashʿarīs and Māturīdīs and become familiar with the practical precepts of the Law according to the rulings of the Shāfiʿīs or the Ḥanafīs, or indeed one of the other two extant madhhabs.⁴²

Regarding itself from this point of view as *ṭarīqat al-ʿulamāʾ*, the Naqshbandiyya fosters among its shaykhs the ideal of integrating the sufi path with scholarly erudition, *ʿilm* with *ʿamal*. Few among them, however, could equal Shaykh Khālīd in the realization of this ideal, epitomized in his sobriquet, *dhū al-janāḥayn*—the possessor of the two wings, the scholarly and the mystic. Khālīd’s stature as an ʿalim is evidenced by his comprehensive library,⁴³ erudite treatises, and above all the readiness of the leading ʿulama of Baghdad and Damascus to become his disciples, not only in the sufi path but also in the various exoteric sciences. From these he drew the authority to discuss the problem of the “particular will” despite the interdiction of the *salaf*. This scholarly bent has generated among the Naqshbandīs in general, and the Khālīdīs in particular, an attitude of great respect toward the ʿulama, even those among them who possess no mystic inclination. Shaykh Khālīd defined the ʿulama as the guides of the community and the transmitters of the knowledge inherent in the scriptures. Accordingly, he ascribed particular importance to the study of *fiqh*, the science of the Law, and *ḥadīth*, the science of the Prophetic traditions. Honoring the scholars constituted in his eyes the embodiment of the orthodoxy of the Naqshbandiyya, as well as a reflection of its definition as *ṭarīqat al-ʿulamāʾ*.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ al-Ḥaydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid fī Manāqib al-Shaykh Khālīd* ([Istanbul], 1292 A.H.), p. 12.

⁴² Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 82, 96; Šāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wāḥid*, pp. 105-106.

⁴³ Frederick de Jong and Jan Just Witkam, “The Library of al-Šaykh Kālīd al-Šahrazūrī al-Naqshbandī: A Facsimile of the Inventory of his Library (MS Damascus, Maktabat al-Asad, No. 259),” *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, 2 (1987), pp. 68-73.

⁴⁴ Šāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wāḥid*, p. 162; M. Khānī, *Al-Baḥja al-Saniyya*, p. 96. In his diploma to Muḥammad Amīn ʿAbidīn, Khālīd added Qurʾan exegesis, see Šāḥib, *ibid.*

The integration between mysticism and erudition underlies the Naqshbandī definition of the sufi saints (*awliyā'*, lit. the friends of God). These are the '*ulamā'* *al-āmilūn*, who combine the "external sciences" and the hidden wisdom, the *sharī'a* and the *ḥaqīqa*, the two wings that the believer must seek in order to ascend to the world of sacredness ('*ālam al-quds*). Regarding their function, the saints may be defined as scholars of the community that are also healers of hearts.⁴⁵ The *awliyā'* are those who realize in the most perfect way the path of the Prophet's Companions in its both external and internal aspects.

This emphatic orthodox character of the Naqshbandiyya, and its consequent special respect toward the religious scholars, ultimately derive from the same inversion in its mystic path. Seen from this point of view, the *sharī'a* constitutes not only the beginning of the sufi path, when the seeker is required to repent his sins, but also its end. The rapturous state of annihilation of one's self in God (*fanā'*), the goal of the other orders, is considered in the Naqshbandī path as a necessary yet dangerous state that must be negated (*fanā' al-fanā'*) on the way to the state of subsistence in one's self through God (*baqā'*), in which he becomes protected from offending the *sharī'a*. This is the state of descending upon the creatures in order to call them to God, and its attainment qualifies the disciple to guide, after receiving the required permission from his shaykh.⁴⁶ In this respect of the mystic inversion, the Naqshbandiyya follows in the footsteps of Junayd, the great tenth century sufi of Baghdad, who regarded the intoxication of the mystic experience (*sukr*) as a stage that must be superseded by the following spiritual sobriety (*ṣaḥw*).⁴⁷ This orthodox bent permeates the Naqshbandī path as its external aspect:

The great masters of this path established that the mystic states are subordinated to the precepts of the *sharī'a*, and that the spiritual experiences and perceptions are subservient to the religious sciences. They do not seek like children to substitute the precious pearls of the *sharī'a* with the nuts of the ecstatic passion of God and the wine of the mystic state. They are not seduced by the vanities of the sufis, and their hearts are not captured by them. They neither desire nor

⁴⁵ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 9, 20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62. For an analysis of Sirhindī's teaching on this subject through the mystic experiences of separation (*farq*), union (*jam'*) and separation after union (*farq ba'da al-jam'*), see Ansari, pp. 36-46.

⁴⁷ Ali Hassan Abd al-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writings of Al-Junayd* (London, 1976), pp. 88-95; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 58-59.

accept mystic states attained by acts that are prohibited by the shari'a and contradictory to the exalted sunna. Therefore, they do not permit singing and dancing (*samā' wa-raqs*) and do not immerse themselves in vocal recollection of God.⁴⁸

A particularly careful approach is adopted by the Naqshbandiyya toward the subject of miracles (*karāmāt*). While not denying their validity, it emphasizes the quality of the saint as an 'ālim 'āmil, the religious scholar that adheres to the sunna and shuns innovation, at the expense of his miracle-working. The Naqshbandīs further maintain that miracles occur normally to beginners in the path who need confirmation, disappearing when they reach the goal and feel confident in their attainment. Moreover, rather than boasting of miracles one should be apprehensive toward them, since they often prove to be temptations and constitute the principal cause of disruption to the presence of God.⁴⁹ Hence, the Naqshbandiyya concurs with Ibn 'Arabī's distinction between palpable miracles (*ḥissiyya*), which impress the common people but might lead them astray, and spiritual miracles (*ma'nawiyya*), which are longed for by the virtuous and are nothing but fulfilling the precepts of the shari'a and purifying the heart.⁵⁰ 'Abdallāh al-Dihlawī, Khālīd's master, conveyed the same meaning by distinguishing between miracles of the material world (*kawniyya*), the supernatural events, and those of the spiritual knowledge (*irfāniyya*), being the constant vision and presence in God.⁵¹ Out of the same approach, the Naqshbandiyya warns against excessive faith in the influence of the saint's spiritual power (*ḥimma*) over God's acts. Replying to his follower 'Abdallāh Pasha, the governor of Acre, who asked him to plea God on his behalf to grant him offspring, Khālīd made a distinction between two kinds of divine decrees. One is a conditional decree (*qaḍā' mu'allaq*), which a saint's intercession might revoke, the other an absolute one (*qaḍā' mubram*) that even a prophet cannot alter. Referring to saints who argued otherwise, Khālīd maintained that these were in a state of intoxication and that therefore their arguments must be rejected. In his view, a fault in a spiritual illumination (*khaṭa' kashfī*) is equivalent to a fault in a legal judgment (*khaṭa' ijihādī*). Therefore, one must avoid denouncing the

⁴⁸ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Baghdādī, *Al-Hadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁰ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 59-60.

⁵¹ Ḥaydarī, *Al-Majid al-Tālid*, pp. 16-17.

saints, but at the same time also refrain from exaggerating in his faith in them.⁵²

Finally, on the basis of this orthodox attitude, the Naqshbandiyya strongly attacks the sufis who deviate from the shari'a. It is particularly harsh against those among them who profess to be shaykhs by right of their fathers or pretend to be saints while possessing neither 'ilm nor 'amal. In commensurate harshness the Naqshbandīs assault the 'ulama who completely reject *taṣawwuf*, depicting their refusal to recognize the shari'a-minded sufis as a deadly poison. In reliance on 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābuluṣī, they maintain that this refusal derives mostly from those pretended jurists who lack real understanding. Accustomed to look for blemishes in the behavior of others and to censure whatever goes against their opinion, even if it is only a question of interpretation, their only purpose is to become famous and to rejoice in catching others in their disgrace. The genuine jurists, by contrast, consider the precepts of the shari'a as general rules, and they inculcate them in their lessons and preaching without mentioning anybody by name. Their hearts are removed from the affairs of the world and their attention is directed mostly to their own faults. Thus Abū Ḥanīfa and Shāfi'ī, the progenitors of the two madhhabs that Khālīd particularly favored, are recorded to have said that but for the scholars who were friends of God (*al-'ulamā' al-awliyā'*), He would have no friends.⁵³ From the Naqshbandī point of view, the sufis who deviate from the shari'a and the 'ulama who totally reject Sufism are the two religious currents in Islam that failed to combine the external and the internal aspects of the path exemplified for them by the Prophet and his Companions.

Involvement in Social and Political Affairs

The historical course of the Naqshbandiyya was largely determined by another aspect of the inversion in its mystic path, phrased concisely in the eighth of the "eleven words" of its founders in Central Asia as *khalwa fī jalwa*, seclusion within the crowd. Mystically, this principle reflects the deep concentration that the follower of this path is capable of attaining, so that even in the company of men he spir-

⁵² Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 85-88.

⁵³ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 98-99.

itually continues to be present in God and absent from them.⁵⁴ The presence of the Naqshbandī in God is constant and independent of external circumstances, as the internal aspect of the order's definition indicates. He is inspired by the divine attraction from the outset and is affected by the silent *dhikr*, which completely overpowers the heart and leaves place for nothing but God. Among the members of other orders, by contrast, the presence in God occurs only in flashes, since the divine attraction constitutes for them the end of the path and because they use the vocal *dhikr*, which exerts less influence upon the heart. Therefore, they must attain concentration in God by their own powers, as well as by using additional devices, in particular keeping away from the company of people.

There are two modes of *khalwa*. The first, external seclusion, is when the follower retires to an empty house and resides there, so that the contemplation in the sphere of sovereignty (*'ālam al-malakūt*) and the vision in the sphere of might (*'ālam al-jabarūt*) will descend upon him.⁵⁵ [This is so] because if the function of the external senses is arrested, the internal senses are set free to contemplate the signs of sovereignty and to envision the secrets of might. The second mode, the internal seclusion, is when a man's interior is in a state of beholding the secrets of the Truth (*mushāhadat asrār al-ḥaqq*), while his exterior is associating with people (*mu'āmalat al-khalq*), in such a manner that the external association does not distract attention from the internal vision. [This sufi] is the absent present (*al-kā'in al-bā'in*). This is genuine seclusion, as God most exalted indicates by saying: "men whom neither commerce nor trafficking diverts them from the remembrance of God".⁵⁶ This mode of seclusion is peculiar to the Naqshbandī path.⁵⁷

Thus by this principle of *khalwa fī jalwa*, which constitutes another expression of Junayd's spiritual sobriety, the Naqshbandiyya stresses beyond the other orders its members' duty to take part in public affairs, associating with people. As we have seen, many of its masters have been involved in the social and political affairs of their countries, leaving their mark on their histories. This legacy was reinforced by Shaykh Khālīd and consequently became an impor-

⁵⁴ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 55.

⁵⁵ These are the two spheres that are placed above the material world according to the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī. The world of sovereignty is the sphere of the angels and the superimposed world of might is the sphere of the divine command. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 270.

⁵⁶ Qur'an, *al-Nūr* (24), 37. All Qur'an citations follow the translation of A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York, 1996).

⁵⁷ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 56.

tant trait of his branch in the order, the Khālidiyya. For him, the ‘*ālim* ‘*āmil*, the Naqshbandī definition of the genuine master, was one that combined not only legal and theological knowledge with the mystic path, but also religious knowledge in general with practical life. This was, after all, the sunna of the Prophet, whose strict following is the external definition of the Naqshbandiyya.

As an ‘*alim*, Khālīd based his demand for an activist attitude in this world on the theological concept of *kasb* (man’s acquisition of his action). This concept constitutes the subject of his above-mentioned treatise on the “particular will,” composed at the request of his disciples among the leading ‘*ulama* of Damascus.⁵⁸ In this treatise, Khālīd depicts the *ṭarīqat al-ṣaḥāba*, and the Naqshbandiyya that follows it, as a middle course between predestination (*jabr*), which results in the fatalistic belief that man has no part in his actions and therefore is also not responsible for them, and free will (*qadar*), which implies a limitation of God’s omnipotence. His purpose was to defy the prevalent opinion of his time that the Ash‘ariyya, the dominant theological school in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, stood for predestination. He argues that the Ash‘arī view in this matter is close to that professed by the Māturīdiyya, the dominant theological school in Central Asia and India, the places of origin of the Naqshbandī order and its Mujaddidī offshoot, namely, that man possesses partial choice of his actions, the *kasb*. According to this view, the creator of the action (*al-khāliq*) is almighty God, but its perpetrator (*al-fā‘il*) is man, who acquires the responsibility for it and is therefore worthy of reward or punishment. In Khālīd’s eyes, the main difference between the two schools touched only upon the timing of the acquisition. While the Ash‘arīs claim that God and man participate in the source of the action, the Māturīdīs are of the opinion that God created the action in pre-eternity and man acquires it at the actual time of its perpetration as a compliance with or a violation of God’s command.

This activist attitude of the Naqshbandiyya toward public affairs molded its character as a practical order, one which takes into account human nature as well as temporal and local circumstances. It shuns not only sufi practices that are incompatible with the shari‘a,

⁵⁸ Khālīd al-Naqshbandī, “*Al-‘Iqd al-Jawharī fī al-Farq bayna Kasbay al-Māturīdī wal-Ash‘arī*,” in Ṣāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 88-104. For a comprehensive treatment of the question of *kasb* see Daniel Gimaret, *Théories de l’acte humain en théologie musulmane* (Paris, 1980).

but all manifestations of excessive piety such as fasting and keeping vigils.⁵⁹ The Naqshbandīs express this practical attitude by ascribing their order to the Malāmātiyya tradition, whose adherents concealed their piety and behaved outwardly in a way that invited reproach (*malāma*) in order to ensure that their deeds of devotion were performed solely for the sake of God.⁶⁰ It is certainly far removed from the extremist tendency that developed under this name, which turned the desire for reproach into its main object, violating thereby both sharī'a and social etiquette. In the Naqshbandī understanding, the Malāmātiyya embodies the principle of *khalwa fi jalwa*, to associate with people in the body while being isolated from them in the heart, since in this respect the outward activity of the master in the crowd conceals his inner state of seclusion. Thus the adherents of the Naqshbadiyya, and particularly of the Khālidiyya, can be magnificently dressed and well fed, reflecting the wealth that God has bestowed upon them. Leaving no discernible indications as to their real identity, it is only their hearts that are permanently engaged in recollecting God's name.⁶¹ Conversely, the Malāmātiyya is defined as Abū Bakr's sober Sufism (*al-ṣaḥw al-Ṣiddīqī*), which seeks the state of the fullest subsistence in God by way of preaching and guiding the people, and by taking part in the conquests of Islam.⁶²

Yet, this ideal of the Malāmātiyya harbors another of the paradoxes that checker the path of the Naqshbandiyya. The activism that it requires from its shaykhs as a device to conceal their sainthood and secure their sincerity is ultimately nothing but spreading the order and getting involved in the affairs of society and state. However, this involvement in itself casts into relief their public mission, and is liable to raise the suspicion that they are motivated by worldly concerns. It was particularly claimed against Shaykh Khālīd, whose numerous deputies were spread all over the country, that his fame as a spiritual master and guide sprang from his desire for leadership (*ḥubb al-riyāsa*). This was the other side of the argument against the total submissiveness of his disciples toward him, mentioned above, and Baghdādī's answer opens with the same justification: this is a matter that springs from the heart and should not be judged by

⁵⁹ Baghdādī, *Al-Hadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 10; Haydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, p. 13.

⁶⁰ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 13. On the Malāmātiyya see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 86-87; Trimingham, pp. 264-269.

⁶¹ Haydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, p. 25.

⁶² M. Khānī, *ibid.*

reason. More to the point he maintains that a spiritual guide that delved into the sciences of both *sharī'a* and *ḥaqīqa* is not allowed to withhold his benefits from the Muslim community at a time when its life is permeated with innovations and temptations.⁶³

Indeed, the organizational novelties introduced by Shaykh Khālīd in the Naqshbandī path were motivated by his profound feeling that the umma was in a state of serious regression, requiring a commensurate vigorous operation of renewal. This feeling, as we have seen, was well founded in the political reality of the Ottoman Empire, and of the Muslim world at large, in his time. Khālīd, like other contemporary Muslims, regarded this regression as a result and reflection of the community's deviation from the path of the shari'a. Inasmuch as he paid attention to the increasing European penetration, he was confident, in harmony with the traditional Muslim attitude of contempt toward the infidel countries, that it could take place only because of the internal regression. From his point of view, therefore, the renewal of the Muslim world was tantamount to the return of the community to the path of the shari'a. In moments of despair, such as that which probably overcame him on his arrival in Damascus in 1823, Khālīd felt that nothing more could be done and that the end of the world would be soon heralded. When the idea that the *mahdī* was about to appear came to him, he sent his brother to anticipate him in the Hijaz.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Khālīd's sense of a mission to work among the community and bring about its renewal always prevailed. His acute sense of regression underlay the urgency he attached to the rapid ordination of '*ulamā*' '*āmilīn*, in both meanings of this concept. These would spread far and wide and guide the Muslims under his leadership back to the sunna of the Prophet and the strict fulfillment of the shari'a, and consequently to stable government and peaceful society. Hence, the Khālidiyya should ultimately be regarded as an attempt that sprang from within the civil society to organize itself in order to fill, at least partially, the vacuum left by the decline of political government.

Adopting Sirhindī's view that "the righteousness of the kings and ministers... is the righteousness of the people, and their corruption... is the corruption of all the subjects," Shaykh Khālīd lay the blame

⁶³ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 102, 115-116.

⁶⁴ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 190-191; As'ad al-Ṣāhib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya wal-Manāqib al-Ṣāhibiyya* (Cairo, 1311 A.H.), p. 55.

for the decline of the Muslim umma on its rulers.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, for him the idea that it is lawful to rise up against rulers who deviate from the straight path was inconceivable. He remained completely faithful to the traditional political attitude of both the 'ulama and the sufis, which depicted any resistance to the government as a sin. Instead, Khālīd stressed the Naqshbandī teaching that it is incumbent upon the '*ulamā' al-ʿāmilīn* to seek influence among the rulers in order to guide them back to the shari'a. The purpose of his work was, therefore, to reinforce the wielders of political power, as a means to improve the state of the umma in general. On the other hand, Khālīd's reform was restricted to the traditional sphere of interest of the Muslim scholars, the shari'a. Again in harmony with the traditional political theory of Islam, he regarded the implementation of practical measures to fortify the state as the prerogative of the rulers, through the ordinances they were authorized to issue, the *qānūn*. Thus in his letters to his deputies, Khālīd emphasizes mainly their duty to treat rulers with respect and pray on their behalf. Responding to another request from 'Abdallāh Pasha, the governor of Acre, he wrote that "prayer for Sultan al-Islam... and for the ministers, notables and princes, and even for the judges and jurisconsults, is among the most important duties falling to the sufis, since the interests of the country depend on them and the security of the subjects is bound with their righteousness and correction." The increasing oppression of the local governors in his time led Khālīd to stress beyond his predecessors this practical aspect of his guidance, arguing that the religious duty of the rulers to govern in accordance with the shari'a includes the worldly duty to treat their subjects with justice. He warns 'Abdallāh that the prayer of the sufis on behalf of rulers will remain unanswered if opposed by the prayers of their unjustly treated subjects.⁶⁶

The political aspect of Shaykh Khālīd's religious outlook must be seen, then, against the background of conditions in the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His eagerness to attract to his order the local governors in the regions in which he was active derived from his aspiration to guide them back to the straight path of the shari'a. These included Da'ūd Pasha of Baghdad, Walī al-Dīn Pasha of Damascus, and the afore-

⁶⁵ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 188.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 244-245.

mentioned ‘Abdallāh Pasha of Acre.⁶⁷ Khālīd’s interest did not stop in the provinces, however. He also sent a number of outstanding deputies to Istanbul, enlisting some of its leading ‘ulama and notables in the order under the leadership of the Shaykh al-Islām, Muṣṭafā ‘Aṣīm Mekkīzāde.⁶⁸ Khālīd’s awareness of the Empire’s decline probably dated from the period of his formation in Iraqi Kurdistan under the local Bābān dynasty.⁶⁹ But, in the main it ripened outside his homeland, during the pilgrimage he made at the age of thirty. On his way Khālīd could grasp at first hand the situation in Damascus, which was only beginning to recover from the tyrannical rule of Aḥmad al-Jazzār, and in Mecca, which was occupied then by the Wahhābīs. He seems to have been one of the first religious men in the Ottoman Empire to intuitively comprehend not only the dangers inherent in these processes, but also the potential inherent in the sufi framework of organization to check them. This primacy helps to explain Khālīd’s failure to find an appropriate spiritual guide in any of the cities of its Asian provinces, leading him to wander for that purpose as far as India. The decline of the Mughal Empire preceded that of its Ottoman counterpart by a century. At the time of Khālīd’s arrival in Delhi, the Sultan was already under the sway of the British, and his realm had almost completely disintegrated. Here, therefore, he could learn from the experience of the indigenous religious men, who beginning with Shāh Walīallāh in the first half of the eighteenth century became aware of their regression and thought of ways to bring about a renewal. The strong sense of mission that Khālīd carried back with him from India as a Naqshbandī–Mujaddidī master certainly derived from his desire to prevent a similar fate from overtaking the Ottoman Empire.

The rulers that Shaykh Khālīd instructed his disciples to pray for were, therefore, primarily the Ottoman Sultan and his government, whose centrality in contemporary Islam was further emphasized by the decline of their Mughal counterparts. Thus at the conclusion of the epistle he sent to his deputies in Istanbul concerning the *rābiʿa*, composed probably after the outbreak of the Greek revolt in 1821, Khālīd enjoins them “to pray constantly [lit. morning and evening] for the perpetuation of the [divine] assistance to the lofty Ottoman

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 108–111, 181–182, 188–189.

⁶⁸ Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya,” pp. 23–24.

⁶⁹ On Bābān rule in Kurdistan see Van Bruinessen, pp. 171–174; Edmonds, pp. 52–59.

State, the axis of Islam, and for its victory over the enemies of religion.”⁷⁰ These words allude to a special version of a prayer that he compiled at that time to be recited at the end of the *khatm al-khwājagān*. In view of the prime importance of this prayer, I translate it here in full:

God, protect our master the venerable and dignified Sultan, support him with the invisible armies and assist him in defending the land of Islam. Grant him capable offspring to ever follow him for many generations. Award his armies victory on the land and in the sea and lead aright his ministers, assistants and delegates. Make them the cause of the upbuilding of the country and the tranquillity of the people. Revive through him and through them the exalted and noble sunna, and elevate through him and through them the Prophet’s radiant minaret of the shari’a. Bring failure upon his enemies, since his enemy is the enemy of the Muslim religion. [Destroy the Jews, the Christians, the Zoroastrians (*majūs*) and the Persian Shi’is (*rawāfiḍ al-a’ājim*)]. Devastate the innovating heretics and the accursed Khawārij. Eradicate them one after the other and bring security and health to us and to your servants the pilgrims, the warriors, those staying in their place and those travelling, those living in your land and your sea among the community of Muḥammad, God bless and save him and all his family and Companions. Praise be to God, the lord of the worlds.⁷¹

The wide range of elements that Shaykh Khālīd considered, according to this prayer, as enemies of the Ottoman Sultan and State conveys the intensity of his sense of danger. Most of these enemies are not specified by name, but their identity is not difficult to discern. The defense of the land of Islam by the Sultan’s armies is certainly directed, at least partially, against the external enemies of the Empire, the European powers that came to dominate increasing portions of its territory. By destroying the Jews and the Christians Khālīd meant, first and foremost, the members of these communities who were subjects of the Empire and lived within its boundaries. His animosity toward them may have originated in his youth in Kurdistan, but in the main it reflects his recent rage at the Greek subjects of the Empire, who by their revolt against the Ottoman ruler lost their legal right to protection (*dhimma*).⁷² The hatred of the Persian Shi’is, and perhaps also of the Zoroastrians, was

⁷⁰ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 79.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-171. The addition in square brackets was dropped by the editor, but appears in the manuscript of the letters in the Istanbul library used by Abu-Manneh.

⁷² See Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya,” pp. 15-16.

imbibed by Khālīd principally during his training as a Naqshbandī in Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī’s lodge in Delhi. The latter’s predecessor, Maẓhar Jān-i Jānān, was renowned for his struggle against the Shi‘is and was assassinated by one of their zealots. This is evidenced also by the choice of the name *rawāfīd*, which stresses their rejection of the three first Caliphs of Islam, including Abū Bakr to whom the Naqshbandiyya claims descent, as well as most of the Prophet’s Companions, whose way it purports to embody. In this usage Khālīd followed in the footsteps of Sirhindī, who in his treatise *Radd-i Rawāfīd* warded off the Shi‘i assault on Sunni Islam in his time.⁷³

The internal Muslim enemies, however, designated as the innovating heretics and the accursed Khawārij in this prayer, posed in Shaykh Khālīd’s eyes an even greater menace to the Ottoman Empire. These were also the principal enemies of orthodox Sufism. By “innovating heretics” Khālīd meant, in my opinion, the non-orthodox Bektāshiyya order, which in its mystic path integrated popular practices, Christian beliefs, and deep reverence toward the ‘Alid family. The Bektāshiyya was the ally of the moribund Janissary corps, and was outlawed by Sultan Maḥmūd II immediately following its destruction.⁷⁴ The term Khawārij is directed, undoubtedly, at the ultra-orthodox Wāḥḥābī movement, which in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century openly challenged the Ottoman government, conquering the holy places in the Hijaz and terrorizing Syria and Iraq. The Wāḥḥābīs rejected the erudition of the ‘ulama as based on blind imitation within the framework of the madhhabs rather than on the Qur’an and sunna, and even more so the practices and teachings of the sufis, regarding them as innovations and superstitions. Moreover, on the basis of these views they charged all Sunnis except themselves with disbelief (*takfīr*), leaving their lives and property open to attack.⁷⁵ Khālīd’s letters convey concern at the advance of the Wāḥḥābīs, and it seems that he received regular information on their movements through his net of deputies in Basra and Baghdad. He felt relief when the reports on their defeat by the armies of Muḥammad ‘Alī began to pour in.⁷⁶ The Bektāshiyya and the

⁷³ Ansari, p. 20.

⁷⁴ On the Bektāshiyya see John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (Repr. London, 1994); Trimmingham, pp. 80-83.

⁷⁵ On the contemporary equation of the Wāḥḥābīs with the Khawārij see the analysis of Ibn ‘Abidīn’s teaching in the next chapter.

⁷⁶ Ṣāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wāḥid*, p. 183.

Wahhābiyya were the salient representatives in Khālīd's time of the two religious wings of Islam that he so emphatically attacked: the sufis who deviate from the shari'a and the 'ulama who reject Sufism in its entirety.

Khālīd's emphasis on the obligation to work among rulers, however, must not lead us to infer that in his opinion the '*ulamā'* '*āmilūn* should be on intimate terms with them. On the contrary, the very task that the Naqshbandiyya assigned to these religious men to guide the rulers implied a position of distance based on superiority over them. This superiority derived from their knowledge of the shari'a as 'ulama and from their spiritual perfection as sufis, that is, from their embodiment of the combination of '*ilm* and '*amal*. Shaykh Khālīd seems to have endeavored to realize throughout his life this paradox of working among the rulers while keeping distance from them, which constitutes the political aspect of the principle of seclusion within the crowd (*khaḥwa fī jakwa*). From the little information we have on Khālīd's economic resources, it appears that he financed his activities from properties he held in Iraq and from contributions received from his followers,⁷⁷ while avoiding dependence on the government and its offices. He was not so confident in the competence of his deputies, whom he did not regard as '*ulamā'* '*āmilūn* in the full sense of the word, to work among the rulers without being damaged. His fear was twofold. On the one hand, these *khulafā'* might surrender to the temptations of posts and allowances and be attracted to the pursuit of worldly interests. On the other hand, they might develop a sense of spiritual superiority that would corrupt their souls. In view of these apprehensions, Khālīd repeatedly warned his deputies to be prudent in their contacts with rulers, and to shun them altogether when their position was weak. Thus in a letter to the *khulafā'* he left behind in Baghdad after leaving for Damascus, he urged them, in sharp contrast with his own manner, not only to shun rulers but also to reject office holders and wealthy people in general who wished to join the order for worldly rewards.⁷⁸

The religious awakening that was generated by Shaykh Khālīd in the Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire in general, and in Damascus in particular, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was deeply rooted in the special path of the Naqshbandiyya. Khālīd

⁷⁷ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 261; Ḥaydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, p. 39.

⁷⁸ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 111-114.

drew his power from the *ṭarīqa*'s typical combination of the mystic path and strict adherence to orthodoxy, further fortifying it by stressing its descent from Abū Bakr and its close affinity to the legal and theological sciences. The activist tendency of this order provided him with the theoretical foundation for an involvement in the social and political affairs of his time, as well as with the organizational framework, to which Khālīd could add his own improvements to facilitate its implementation. These included both his novelties in the path—the *rābiʿa*, *khalwa arbaʿīyya*, and *ghalq al-bāb*—which were designed to centralize his sub-order, spread it swiftly and emphasize its uniqueness, and his particularly lenient attitude toward the powerful and wealthy of the community. These novelties enabled him to realize the Naqshbandī ideal of working among the rulers in order to bring the umma back to the way of the shariʿa, which in his eyes was the foundation to the internal strength of the Muslim state and the guarantee of its triumph over internal and external enemies. Many among the ʿulama and notables of Damascus regarded Shaykh Khālīd as the renovator (*mujaddid*) of the thirteenth century of Islam. From these outlines it appears that the religious awakening he headed was indeed the last major effort, at least in Damascus, to generate a religious renewal in the traditional sense of the term—*tajdīd*.

CHAPTER TWO

SHAYKH KHĀLID'S LEGACY (1823-1832)

The movement of religious renewal aroused by Shaykh Khālid in Damascus at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century reflected the characteristic Naqshbandī combination of adherence to the *sharī'a* and following the *ṭarīqa*. In propagating this reformist combination among the city population, Khālid tended to rely on the Iraqi deputies and disciples that accompanied him. He could not have been successful, however, without the ready acceptance of his authority by the Damascene men of religion. Many established 'ulama in the city, who held senior posts in its religious administration and in its central mosques, as well as the younger 'ulama who acquired their religious status by their own merit, were among his supporters. The various positions adopted by the Damascene 'ulama toward Shaykh Khālid, and toward the orthodox principles that he came to represent, were to last after his death, shaping their attitudes toward religious reform under the regimes of Ibrāhīm Pasha and of the early Tanzimat, when the traditional character of the city remained basically intact. In the first part of this chapter I present the principal groupings of 'ulama in Damascus that joined the movement of religious renewal under Shaykh Khālid. Thereafter, I analyze the teachings of the mouthpiece of the younger 'ulama, who accepted Khālid's leadership the most unequivocally, the eminent Ḥanafī jurist Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn. The consecutive religious reform trends that sprang up in Damascus through the end of the Ottoman period are rooted in the conduct and outlook of this generation.

In the Naqshbandiyya order itself, the fervor that characterized Shaykh Khālid's activity in Damascus in the 1820s gradually subsided under his successors. Nevertheless, the Khālidī branch continued to spread in the city, and in other parts of Syria, establishing itself as the most widespread order in the country to this day. Moreover, the chains of all present active Naqshbandī masters in Syria go back to Shaykh Khālid. This expansion took place in two principal waves. The first, the subject of the first part of this study, was

a direct continuation of Khālīd's work in Damascus, and preserved its vitality till the middle of the nineteenth century. Its decline lasted through the demise of the Ottoman Empire. The second wave began toward the end of this century under the inspiration of Shaykh 'Īsā al-Kurdī. Its impact was felt mainly during the period of the French Mandate and therefore requires a separate study. On the other hand, the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya failed to preserve the basic unity that its founder tried to provide it with, in its overall organization in general, and in Damascus in particular. Despite the great number of deputies ordained by Khālīd, none of them had the required stature to command the recognition of the rest after his death. Thus in Syria, as in the other regions of the order's activity, independent shaykhs came to conduct their own *zāwīyas*, without any central authority to supervise them. The dividing lines between the *khulafā'* were personal, normally within the framework of family lineages, and local, with little connection between the deputies of different cities.¹ In Damascus itself, where the Khālīdī shaykhs still tended to regard themselves as heads of the entire order, the splitting was characterized by particularly deep animosities and bitter struggles.

The organizational development of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya in the last century of Ottoman rule in Syria, with both its successes and limitations, can be described on the basis of the fundamental tension between the two principal novelties that Shaykh Khālīd introduced in its path, in the practices of *khalwa* and *rābi'a*. Apparent already during Khālīd's lifetime, this tension was fully developed after his death, when his concentrated form of *khalwa* facilitated the further spread of the order while rejecting the centralist direction that his intensified form of the *rābi'a* was designed to provide. In Damascus, this was exacerbated by a second tension between the desire of the Khālidiyya to strike roots within the indigenous population, especially among the 'ulama, and the foreign provenance, mostly non-Arab, of its shaykhs. The weakness resulting from these two tensions for the organizational continuity of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya cast into relief a third one, concerning its relation to the

¹ On the development of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya in Syria see Frederick De Jong, "The Naqshbandiyya in Egypt and Syria. Aspects of its History, and Observations Concerning its Present-Day Condition," in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), pp. 593-595.

state. Sufi orders, as De Jong pointed out, generally were able to sustain a measure of internal unity and central leadership only when maintaining a functional connection with the state.² In the Khālidiyya, however, the attempt to create such a connection was prone to clash with the founder's instruction to maintain distance from rulers. The examination of these tensions in the path of the principal Khālidi shaykhs in Damascus, against the background of the political and religious history of the city in the last Ottoman century, can also clarify the ideas they developed to solve the most fundamental tension of all in the teaching of the *ṭarīqa*. This was the tension between its orthodox thrust, which was so emphasized by Shaykh Khālīd and constituted its most distinctive feature, and its mystical practices, which could serve as a bridge to the other, less orthodox sufi orders. In the second part of this chapter I discuss the early manifestations of these tensions among Khālīd's followers, after his succession arrangement collapsed and Sultan Maḥmūd II turned against them.

The Support of the Local 'Ulama

The Khālidi sources stress that most of the 'ulama of Damascus supported Shaykh Khālīd in the four years in which he was active among them. This wide support crossed boundaries that normally divided the local men of religion, encompassing members of all the legal schools then practiced in the city, experts in all the sciences taught in its religious institutions, and members of the various components in its social elite. Khālīd appealed to these 'ulama both as head of an activist order that worked for religious and political renewal and as an important 'alim by his own right. Nevertheless, this support was by no means general, and for many others there is no evidence for any interest in his activity or for significant contacts with him and his movement. Moreover, among the 'ulama who joined Khālīd themselves the motives, quality and sincerity of their support greatly varied. This diversity is a key to the understanding of the social composition of the Damascene religious elite at the time.

In the course of the eighteenth century, under the relatively stable and prosperous rule of the 'Aẓm family, the religious elite of Dam-

² *Ibid.*, p. 599.

ascus tended to increase its attachment to the Ottoman central government.³ This "Ottomanization" was reinforced at the beginning of the nineteenth century, following the 'Aẓms' decline, when the local leadership, and urban society at large, sought the protection of the state against both its increasingly unruly agents, particularly Aḥmad al-Jazzār and Bashīr II, and its emboldened rivals, the Wahhābīs.⁴ However, an examination of the biographies of the religious men in the city who joined Khālid after his arrival in 1823, as well as of those who avoided him, reveals that two fundamental distinctions should be drawn within the contemporary Damascene religious estate. The first is the distinction between established 'ulama, those who belonged to the older religious families of Damascus and inherited their status and positions from their ancestors, and upstart 'ulama, who had entered the religious ranks by their own merit and effort. The second distinction is between 'ulama who fulfilled various functions in the Ottoman administration in the city and those who served as teachers in its main mosques and colleges. This double distinction in fact creates three relatively separate groups of 'ulama within the general framework of the Ottoman tendency that prevailed in Damascus at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and is thus useful in the analysis of the different attitudes they adopted toward Shaykh Khālid. The first group comprises the established 'ulama who held the higher administrative posts in the city. These tended to regard themselves as Khālid's patrons, but the support they lent him, and his successors, was ultimately contingent on the general attitude of the state toward the Naqshbandiyya. The second group encompassed the established 'ulama who occupied teaching positions in Damascus' mosques and colleges. Their attitude toward Khālid was determined largely by their familial and personal interests. The third group included the upstart 'ulama who occupied similar positions in the local mosques and colleges. These were inclined to accept the religious authority of Khālid most unequivocally, since they were the most attentive to the plight of the Damascene population of the time, and the most articulate in their demands for the restoration of security and justice in their city.

For the established 'ulama who held the high administrative posts, the main attraction of Shaykh Khālid lay in the political implica-

³ John Voll, "Old 'Ulama' Families and Ottoman Influence in Eighteenth Century Damascus," *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, 3 (1971), pp. 48-59.

⁴ Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 36-40.

tions of his religious call. His importance in their eyes derived first and foremost from his tendency to support the Ottoman central government against its unruly agents both in the capital, where his adherents precipitated Maḥmūd II's turn against the Janissaries, and even more so in the Syrian provinces, where he was able to exert his influence upon local governors, particularly 'Abdallāh Pasha, Jazzār's successor in Acre. These 'ulama were among the first to join the Naqshbandiyya, in some cases even through the deputies that Khālīd had sent to Damascus prior to his own arrival. Their adherence, however, generally did not reflect an inner conviction regarding his teaching or a readiness to undergo the pains of the mystic path, but only a realization that the religious path he propagated could help reinforce the central government, to which they were affiliated. The two most outstanding figures in this group of 'ulama were Ḥusayn al-Murādī (1786-1851), the Ḥanafī mufti of Damascus, and Ḥasan Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī (d. 1848), for one short period its *naqīb al-ashraf* (doyen of the Prophet's descendents), and at another time, following a temporary disgrace of Murādī, likewise its Ḥanafī mufti. Murādī was a scion of the principal Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī family of Damascus, which was founded by Murād al-Bukhārī at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He inherited his post from his ancestors, two of whom, as he must have well remembered, lost their lives under the governorship of Aḥmad al-Jazzār.⁵ Murādī took the path from Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Irbīlī, who was sent by Khālīd from Baghdad, and probably had a hand in his invitation to Damascus.⁶ Ḥiṣnī is portrayed as a wealthy and influential notable, as well as a great 'alim who was generous toward the poor. He received the path from Khālīd himself.⁷ Shaykh Khālīd had followers who enjoyed a

⁵ On the Murādī family see Karl K. Barbir, "All in the Family: The Muradis of Damascus," in Heath W. Lowry and Ralph S. Hattex (eds.), *Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey* (Istanbul, 1990), pp. 327-335; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 190-195.

⁶ On Ḥusayn al-Murādī see 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar fī Ta'rikh al-Qarn al-Thālith 'Ashar* (3 vols. Damascus, 1380-1383/1961-1963), p. 533; Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar fī A'yān Dimashq fī al-Qarn al-Thālith 'Ashar* (Damascus, 1365/1946), pp. 75-76; Muḥammad Adīb Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī, *Muntakhabāt al-Tawārikh li-Dimashq* (2nd ed. 3 vols. Beirut, 1399/1979), p. 652. On his relationship to Shaykh Khālīd see 'A Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 242; Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, *Sall al-Husām al-Hindī li-Nuṣrat Mawlānā Khālīd al-Naqshbandī* (Damascus, 1302 A.H.), p. 4.

⁷ On Ḥasan Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī see Ḥiṣnī, p. 648; Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 488-489. On his relationship to Khālīd see Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājīd*, pp. 269-270.

similarly high status in other cities of Syria, such as Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī and Muḥammad al-Jundī, the Ḥanafī muftis of Jerusalem and Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, respectively, and Khalīl al-Thamīn, the naqib al-ashraf of Tripoli.⁸ There is no evidence that after Khālīd's death these 'ulama maintained contact with his successors, and it seems that they withdrew their support from the Khālidiyya when Sultan Maḥmūd II turned against it.

The other two groups of religious men in Damascus, the established and the upstart 'ulama who occupied teaching posts in the local mosques and colleges, are usually lumped together in the Khālidi sources. The esteem of both groups toward Shaykh Khālīd derived principally from his urging upon the rulers to follow the shari'a and treat their subjects with justice, as well as from his high rank in the second "wing" of the Naqshbandī path, his wide erudition in the various exoteric sciences. These 'ulama took part in the reception of Khālīd upon his arrival in Damascus, but after he had established himself in the city and his influence spread twelve of them decided to pay a second visit and test his knowledge. Khālīd, we are told, answered the complicated questions that each one of them had prepared in advance even before he could ask them, and they departed perplexed, concurring that he is one of the great luminary imams who combine "inner" wisdom with the "outer" sciences.⁹ Most of these 'ulama joined the advanced lessons that Khālīd gave in his home on the various religious sciences—hadith, Qur'an exegesis, jurisprudence, and above all theology, in which he composed his epistle on the particular will at their request.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the impression conveyed by the Khālidi report of this episode is that the motive behind the decision of this group of 'ulama to examine Shaykh Khālīd was not just an appreciation of his extensive work but also a certain measure of apprehension about it. As the social and religious status of these 'ulama was related to the positions they held in the mosques and colleges of Damascus, the vigorous activity of Khālīd and his deputies, the newly arrived foreigners, in these institutions and the flocking of many students to their cause could not but raise their anxiety. Those among them who functioned also as guides in the various orders that were active then in the city—principally the Qādiriyya and the Khalwatiyya—were

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 219, 243-244, 268-269.

⁹ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 47-49.

¹⁰ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wajid*, p. 88.

certainly further concerned by the swift expansion of the Naqsh-bandiyya, which attracted many of those desiring to tread the sufi path. These considerations, which affected mainly the established 'ulama in this group, led some of them to deny their support from Khālīd. Their upstart counterparts, by contrast, had no reservations in acknowledging his preeminence and became his foremost disciples.

The diversified range of attitudes, from enthusiastic support to complete detachment, that emerged among the group of established 'ulama toward Shaykh Khālīd was thus ultimately determined by the extent to which they felt threatened by his activities in Damascus. His most substantial supporters in this group were 'Umar al-Ghazzī (1786-1861), the Shāfi'ī mufti of the city, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī (1771-1846), the holder of its most prestigious teaching post, that of Bukhārī's collection of traditions under the Nasr dome in the Umayyad mosque. Both were already acquainted with Khālīd at the time of the encounter, and may have organized it in order to allay the apprehensions of the others. The Ghazzīs were the leading Shāfi'ī family in Damascus for centuries. Their heads took Khālīd under their aegis soon after his arrival and married him to their sister, 'Ā'isha. Subsequently 'Umar was honored to serve as the shaykh's assistant instructor (*mu'īd*), while his younger brother, Ismā'īl (1792-1832), who was more politically inclined and held for a while the post of naqīb al-ashraf, became his intimate companion toward the end of his life.¹¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī held the title of the foremost hadith scholar in the Syrian provinces. His acquaintance with Khālīd probably went back to the latter's passage through the city on his way to the hajj twenty years earlier, when the two studied hadith with his father. Kuzbarī's support of Khālīd was likewise of a scholarly nature, though he is also mentioned as a Qādirī shaykh and as qualified to teach works of Ibn 'Arabī.¹² Their principal col-

¹¹ On 'Umar al-Ghazzī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1133-1135; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 188-190. On his relationship to Khālīd, Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 65; 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardīyya*, p. 263. On Ismā'īl al-Ghazzī see Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 52-53; Ḥiṣnī, p. 645; and section three of this chapter.

¹² On 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 833-836; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 139-141; Aḥmad Taymūr, *Ā'lām al-Fikr al-Islāmī fī al-'Asr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo, 1967), pp. 226-227; 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-Fahāris wal-Aḥbāt* (6th ed. 3 vols. Beirut, 1982-1986), pp. 485-488; 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, *Thabat* (Manuscript, Princeton University, Garret—Yahuda collection, no. 245 and 3804, 1260 A.H.); *Idem*, *Intikhab al-'Awālī wal-Shuyūkh al-Akhyār min Fahāris Shaykhinā*

leagues who tended to detach themselves from Shaykh Khālīd were Ḥāmid al-ʿAṭṭār (1772-1846) and Ḥāshim al-Tājī (d. 1848), the respective heads of the Qādiriyya and Khalwatiyya orders in Damascus. ʿAṭṭār, who was a close associate of Kuzbarī, guided novices in his *ṭarīqa*, taught Ghazālī's great compendium, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, in the Umayyad mosque, and was an adherent of Ibn ʿArabī. Besides Sufism he specialized in hadith, and taught the same collection of Bukhārī in the prestigious Sulaymāniyya lodge, for long under the superintendence of his family.¹³ Likewise Tājī (d. 1848), who was entitled the principal master of the Khalwatiyya-Bakriyya in the province of Damascus, specialized in jurisprudence, teaching it in the Umayyad mosque and serving as assistant mufti (*amīn al-fatwā*) of Murādī.¹⁴

The position of the upstart ʿulama in Damascus toward Shaykh Khālīd was much more unified. Many of these religious men hailed from the commercial circles of the city, which were particularly vulnerable to the political and social afflictions of the time. This background rendered them more aware to the consequences of the weakening of the Ottoman central government and more sensitive to the oppression of its local governors. The upstart ʿulama engaged particularly in jurisprudence, since they regarded the demand to comply with the Holy Law as the only means to keep the governors in check. For them, Khālīd's orthodox teaching had therefore a particularly strong appeal. A prototype of this group of ʿulama was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭībī (1770-1848), a descendent of a wealthy family from ʿAjlūn in the south who at the age of fifteen renounced his share in the family inheritance and came to study in Damascus. Distinguishing himself as a scholar, Ṭībī acquired an equal religious status to that of Kuzbarī and ʿAṭṭār as well as a teaching post in the Umayyad mosque.¹⁵ Another outstanding immigrant of this period was Saʿīd al-Ḥalabī (1774-1843), who arrived from Aleppo in 1792 and completed the group of the four senior religious teachers in the city during the early nineteenth century. Ḥalabī specialized in both *fiqh* and hadith, teaching Ḥanafī jurisprudence at his home and

al-Imām al-Musnid al-ʿAṭṭār Aḥmad ʿUbaydallāh al-ʿAṭṭār (Damascus, 1994), pp. 9-11.

¹³ On Ḥāmid al-ʿAṭṭār see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 462-463; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 62-63; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 646-647.

¹⁴ On Ḥāshim al-Tājī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1575-1576; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 256; Ḥiṣnī, p. 699.

¹⁵ On ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭībī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 841-842; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 142-143; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 666-667.

Bukhārī's collection of traditions in the Umayyad mosque. For some reason, Ḥalabī did not participate in the encounter with Khālīd, and is not mentioned in any of our sources in connection with the Khālidiyya.¹⁶

Historically, however, the most important religious men who joined Shaykh Khālīd in Damascus were the upstart 'ulama of the younger generation. These founded five of the families that led the religious reform trends in the city during the last Ottoman century—the Bīṭārs, the Qāsimīs, the Shaṭṭīs, the 'Ābidīns and the Khānīs. Their biographies must, therefore, be explored in some more detail, the first four here, and the fifth, who was the principal local *khatīfa* of Khālīd, in the next chapter. Ḥasan al-Bīṭār (1791-1856) was born to a wealthy merchant family that lost its fortune during the governorship of Aḥmad al-Jazzār.¹⁷ His religious inclination was revealed already in his youth, when he joined the Khalwatiyya order and studied with the leading Egyptian reformist 'alim of Muḥammad 'Alī's time, Ḥasan al-'Aṭṭār, who stayed in Damascus in 1810-1815.¹⁸ However, Bīṭār's principal teacher, "from whom he benefited most", was Shaykh Khālīd, who initiated him into the Naqshbandiyya order as well.¹⁹ Upon concluding his studies the inhabitants of the Maydān quarter offered Bīṭār a position as prayer leader of the Karīm al-Dīn (al-Daqqāq) mosque. He tended to reject the offer, claiming incompetence, but after they turned to his teachers, and perhaps to Shyakh Khālīd himself, he concurred.²⁰ The move to the Maydān proved to have decisive implications on the course of Bīṭār's life, as well as on the evolution of the religious reform trends in Damascus in general. He settled in the quarter, establishing his status as a scholar and becoming the focus of a local reformist-oriented group of young 'ulama. Ḥasan al-Bīṭār was proficient in the traditional sciences of

¹⁶ On Sa'īd al-Ḥalabī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 667-668; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 110-111; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 662-663; Kattānī, pp. 984-986; Muḥammad Munīr al-Dimashqī, *Numūdḥaj min al-A'māl al-Khayriyya* (Riyadh, 1988), pp. 436-437.

¹⁷ Ḥasan's father, Ibrāhīm al-Bīṭār, was also inclined to religious studies and was a disciple of Muḥammad, the father of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī; see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 6-7.

¹⁸ For Bīṭār's diploma in the Khalwatiyya order see Muḥammad Riyāḍ al-Mālīḥ, *Fihris Makhṭūṭāt Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyya* (Damascus, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 31-32.

¹⁹ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 585.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 463-464; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 153, who claims that Bīṭār accepted the offer in 1826. At this time he was under the influence of Shaykh Khālīd.

his time and remained a Naqshbandī sufi for the rest of his life.²¹

Qāsim al-Ḥallāq (1806-1867) hailed from a more modest background, earning his living initially, as indicated by his name, as a barber. Ḥallāq turned to religious studies in 1825, during the awakening that was generated in Damascus by Shaykh Khālīd. He studied with Šālīḥ al-Dasūqī (d. 1831), who is depicted as the reviver of religious studies in the prestigious Sināniyya mosque,²² and as one of Khālīd's disciples. Too young to become a disciple of Khālīd himself, Ḥallāq took the Naqshbandī path from Irbīlī, who after encouraging the shaykh to migrate to Damascus remained to conduct the *khatm al-khwājagān* in one of the local mosques. Specializing in the traditional sciences, Ḥallāq moved after Dasūqī's death to the senior circle of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, taking from him also the Qādirī path. Kuzbarī's patronage secured him a modest position as leader prayer and teacher in the southern part of the city.²³

Hasan al-Shaṭṭī (1790-1858), the founder of the leading Ḥanbalī family in Damascus during the last two centuries, descended from a wealthy merchant family that arrived from Baghdad in 1766, twenty-five years before he was born. Choosing the religious vocation, Shaṭṭī studied with the principal 'ulama of the city, as well as with some of their senior counterparts in Baghdad and the Hijaz. From the latter he probably acquired his specialization, besides Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, in the sciences of inheritances (*farā'id*), arithmetic and geometry, whose study he is said to have revived among the 'ulama of Damascus. Excelling in his studies, Shaṭṭī received the teaching post in the Ḥanbalī prayer niche of the Umayyad mosque, as well as the superintendence and teaching in the Bādhura'iyya college in the northern 'Amāra quarter, which lodged many of the foreign students in the city. On the other hand, he distanced himself from political affairs and administrative posts, preferring to earn his living in his family's tradition from trade. For the same reason he avoided actual practice of the science of inheritances, preferring to entrust it to those among his disciples who specialized in this subject.

²¹ Bīṭār, *ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. 275.

²³ Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 194, quoting Ḥallāq's grandson, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī; Ḥiṣnī, p. 694. He received the path between 1825, when he turned to religious studies, and 1828, when Irbīlī left Damascus with the other non-Syrian Khālīdīs under the Sultan's order, see 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 244, 259.

Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī was faithful to the local later Ḥanbalī tradition of cooperation with the other legal schools, as well as with the sufi orders, and of integration into the general trends prevailing in the Muslim society of Damascus.²⁴ This faithfulness is clearly evident in his Epistle on *Taqīd* and *Talfīq*, in which he argued, in reliance on the opinions of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, that there is no obligation to emulate in all matters the rulings of one specific madhhab, and that in case of necessity it is permissible to apply those of other madhhabs as well. This authorization of *talfīq* had become particularly vital in these latter days, Shaṭṭī explains, since otherwise we would be obliged to declare that the worship of all believers is invalid and sinful. Almost no one performs the commandments according to one legal school, and the common people cannot be expected to know all the details of the law when even the ‘ulama fail to do so. As the aim of the shari‘a is to relieve our burden, he concludes, *talfīq* is permissible when the need arise.²⁵

Like Shaykh Khālīd, Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī emphatically rejected the Wahhābī movement. When the Wahhābīs sent him a detailed epistle presenting their argument that whoever seeks intercession from the Prophet or the saints and turns them into his intermediaries with God is an unbeliever who should be put to the sword, Shaṭṭī avoided answering. On the margin of the epistle he wrote, however, that offences committed out of ignorance do not necessitate charges of unbelief, and certainly not those motivated by good intentions. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s permission to shed Muslim blood, he determined, derived from a misunderstanding of the letter of scripture and is an evidence of his own ignorance and bad faith. By declaring the believers infidels he had himself become an infidel.²⁶ In a Ḥanbalī interpretation of the Muslim orthodox heritage, Shaṭṭī maintained that the *madhhab* of the *salaf* is whatever the Prophets’ Companions and their distinguished successors had professed. When the Mu‘tazila, the Muslim rationalist trend, appeared Ibn Ḥanbal fought it to defend the way of the *salaf*, and so his name became associated with this way. Nevertheless, the people of truth in his time and thereafter,

²⁴ John Voll, “The Non-Wahhābī Ḥanbalīs of Eighteenth Century Syria,” *Der Islam*, 49 (1972), pp. 277-291.

²⁵ Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, “Al-Taqlīd wal-Talfīq,” in *idem*, *Majmū‘ Mushtamil ‘alā Thalāth Rasā’il* (Damascus, 1328/1910), separate pagination.

²⁶ Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, *Al-Nuqūl al-Shar‘iyya fī al-Radd ‘alā al-Wahhābiyya* (n.p, n.d), pp. 10-11.

including the imams of the other three legal schools, relied on him and therefore they have all believed in one traditional *salafī* creed.²⁷ In contrast to this deep involvement of Shaṭṭī in matters of Law and faith, there is no evidence in our sources of any interest on his part in Sufism. His biographers nevertheless emphasize that he was a disciple of Shaykh Khālīd.²⁸

The most eloquent exponent of the views of the religious men who joined Khālīd in Damascus, and the most prolific 'alim in Syria in the first third of the nineteenth century in general, was, however, Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, Ibn 'Ābidīn. His biography contains many of the features that represent the standing and activities of the Damascene reformist 'ulama in this period. Ibn 'Ābidīn (1784-1836)²⁹ too was a scion of a merchant family, from the lucrative Qanawāt quarter where Khālīd himself settled after his arrival. In compliance with his erstwhile teacher Ibn 'Ābidīn passed from the Shāfi'ī to the Ḥanafī school, before pursuing his studies with Sa'īd al-Ḥalabī. Thereafter he turned to teaching, but soon his vast knowledge of Ḥanafī law attracted the attention of Ḥusayn al-Murādī, the mufti, who nominated him as his assistant. Ibn 'Ābidīn clearly surpassed Murādī in his religious proficiency. He was considered the source of authority in legal matters (*marjī*) in Damascus, and his opinion was sought after by Muslims from other countries as well. A later historian described Ibn 'Ābidīn as "the pole of the regions of Damascus and the pillar of the countries of Syria and Egypt",³⁰ and those who asked a diploma from him included 'Arif Ḥikmet Bey, the future Shaykh al-Islām in Istanbul, and Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, the prominent Ḥanafī mufti and Qur'an commentator of Baghdad, a disciple of Khālīd himself. His comprehensive legal compendium, the "*Ḥāshiya*", which was completed by his son, is a source book for the Ḥanafī jurists to this day and has appeared in numerous editions.³¹ Yet, Ibn 'Ābidīn

²⁷ Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, *Mukhtaṣar Lawāmi' al-Anwār al-Bahiyya li-Sharḥ al-Durra al-Muḍiyya fī 'Aqd al-Firqa al-Murḍiyya lil-Isfarā'ni Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad* (Damascus, 1350/1931), pp. 8-9.

²⁸ Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 64-65; *idem*, *Mukhtaṣar Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila* (Damascus, 1339 A.H.), pp. 157-159; Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Al-Na't al-Akmal fī Aṣḥāb al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Damascus, 1982), pp. 367-370.

²⁹ A modern source that summarizes most of the information on Ibn 'Ābidīn is Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiz, *Faqīh al-Ḥanafīyya Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn: Ḥayātuhu wa-Āthāruhu* (Beirut and Damascus, 1994).

³⁰ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1230.

³¹ Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, *Radd al-Muḥtār 'alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār Sharḥ Tan-*

excelled Murādī also as a sufi adept, despite the fact that the latter was the head of the leading Naqshbandī family in Syria. By his nature he was humble and austere, and first became an adherent of the Qādiriyya.³² After Khālīd's arrival in Damascus, Ibn 'Ābidīn associated with him and became his disciple in both the religious sciences, especially theology and hadith, and the Naqshbandī path.³³ The shaykh greatly esteemed his erudition, referring to him in his diploma as "the 'alim whose merit everyone acknowledges and who is regarded as unique in his generation."³⁴ Ibn 'Ābidīn, on his part, took it upon himself to defend Khālīd when some of his deputies, who were expelled from the order following their refusal to accept his innovation regarding the *rābi'a*, tried to slander him.³⁵ Very close to Khālīd at the end of his life, he is said to have told him after the eruption of the epidemic in 1827 that he saw in a dream that the third Caliph 'Uthmān died and that he, Ibn 'Ābidīn, prayed after him in his funeral at the head of the congregation. For Shaykh Khālīd, who traced his descent to 'Uthmān, this was the divine sign that his time had come.³⁶

Ibn 'Ābidīn's Reformism

Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn was the mouthpiece of the Damascene 'ulama who lived through the afflictions of their time and sought ways to improve the situation. In his writings he focused, characteristically, on the Muslims' religious degeneration, both the rigidity that overtook the legal scholars and the innovations that permeated the community in general, and the sufis in particular. He was also aware, however, of the harsh political conditions of his day, the oppressive conduct of the local governors and the menace of the Wahhābiyya.³⁷

wir al-Abṣār fī Fiqh Madhhab al-Imām al-A'zam Abī Hanīfa al-Nu'mān. The edition I used is Beirut, 1966-1969.

³² Nu'mān Qasāṭīlī, *Al-Rawḍa al-Ghannā' fī Dimashq al-Fayḥā'* (Beirut, 1879), p. 142.

³³ Haydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, pp. 37, 47-48, emphasizes that Ibn 'Ābidīn studied theology with Khālīd.

³⁴ For the text of the diploma see Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 157-158; reprint in Ḥāfiz, *Faqīh al-Hanafīyya*, pp. 18-19. On Khālīd's esteem for his legal writings see also Ṣāhib, *ibid.*, pp. 271-272.

³⁵ Ibn 'Ābidīn, *Sall al-Husām*, p. 4.

³⁶ Ghazzī, *Huṣūl al-Uns*, p. 51. For a full reference see n. 57. See also Ibn 'Ābidīn, *ibid.*, p. 56.

³⁷ For the various religious aspects of Ibn 'Ābidīn's teachings see Tilman Na-

Ibn 'Ābidīn's criticism of the practices that were prevalent among the jurists and the sufis derived from his basic reformist outlook toward the legal science and the mystic path. An examination of the reformist principles that are dispersed in his books and epistles will help us, therefore, to realize the nature of the tremendous appeal that Shaykh Khālīd, and the Naqshbandī teachings that he propagated, had for Ibn 'Ābidīn and for the 'ulama of Damascus whose views he represented.

At the root of Ibn 'Ābidīn's outlook lay his perception of the pre-eminence of the religious sciences, and of their bearers the 'ulama, in the life of the community. Among these sciences jurisprudence (*fiqh*) held in his view the paramount place, producing God-fearing and piety in the hearts of the believers and leading to the other beneficial sciences. The phrase *ūlī al-amr*—those in authority—in the Qur'anic command that we shall encounter more than once in the course of this study: "O believers, obey God, and obey the messenger and those in authority among you,"³⁸ refers in Ibn 'Ābidīn's opinion to the 'ulama. In this context he also quotes Ghazālī's saying that "nothing is more precious than knowledge; the kings rule the people, but the 'ulama rule the kings."³⁹ This lofty esteem did not prevent Ibn 'Ābidīn, however, from observing the degeneration that afflicted the religious sciences in general, and jurisprudence in particular, in the later generations. "Know", he writes, "that most rulings of the legal scholars of our days are unreliable. These are content with considering one of the books of the later [scholars], particularly those that are unrevised... which, being merely summaries and abridgements, are replete with obscure expressions, as well as omissions in numerous quotations and preferences (*tarjīh*) for the less acceptable, or even for [rulings] of another school." Moreover, when an error creeps into a quotation in a book of the later scholars, they copy it from one another without noticing it.⁴⁰

gel, "Autochtone Wurzeln des islamischen Modernismus: Bemerkungen zum Werk des Damaszeners Ibn 'Ābidīn (1784-1836)," *ZDMG*, 146 (1996), pp. 92-111; Haim Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture 1600-1840* (Leiden, 1999). For their political implications see Fritz Steppat, "Kalifat, Dār al-Islām und die Loyalität der Araber zum Osmanischen Reich bei 'anafitischen Juristen des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Correspondance d'Orient* (Brussels), 11 (1970), pp. 443-462.

³⁸ Qur'an, *al-Nisā'* (4), 59.

³⁹ Ibn 'Ābidīn, *Radd al-Muhtār*, vol. 1, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰ Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, "Sharḥ al-Manzūma al-Musammāh bi-'Uqūd Rasm al-Muftī," in *idem*, *Majmū'at Rasā'il* (Damascus, 1301-1302 A.H.), vol. 1, pp. 5-6; the pagination is separate for each epistle.

Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s design of reforming the science of *fiqh* is implied in the method he used in his great legal compendium, *Radd al-Muḥtār ‘alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār*. This book was compiled in the customary manner of latter-day writers as a supercommentary (*ḥāshiya*) on a previous compendium composed by the seventeenth century Damascene scholar Muḥammad ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Ḥaṣkafī, who became the principal authority among the Ḥanafīs of the time. Though Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s work is basically a collection of quotations from earlier scholars, his underlying tendency was not to accept blindly (*taqlīd*) Ḥaṣkafī’s rulings, but on the contrary, to examine them critically in the light of the sources.⁴¹ In his numerous legal treatises, the reformist approach of Ibn ‘Ābidīn was even more pronounced. These treatises reveal, moreover, that he did not accept blindly even the opinions of the founders of the madhhabs. By stressing the importance of custom (*urf*), generally considered as merely a secondary source for legal rulings, Ibn ‘Ābidīn strove to validate decisions that the circumstances of his time called for, even when these were incompatible with the rulings of these hallowed authorities. “Know”, he explains, “that many of the legal decisions made by the leading mujtahid of the school in accordance with the practice of his days changed with the passing of time, owing either to the spread of corruption (*fasād*) or to the rising of a general necessity (*darūra*).”⁴² Thus for example, past muftis, going against the rulings of mujtahids from their own school, had used these grounds to allow remuneration for teaching the Qur’an or to acknowledge the coercive force of usurpers. In Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s opinion, ruling in harmony with custom is, therefore, the correct way to emulate (*iqtidā’*) the method of the schools’ founders, who likewise ruled according to the practice of their time, and not the blind imitation (*taqlīd*) of their specific rulings, which in many cases are no longer valid. Such emulation requires a particular type of reformist ‘ulama, who combine a profound knowledge of the principles of the shari‘a with a comprehensive acquaintance with the existing circumstances and the prevailing customs. This was a totally different type from the superficial ‘ulama against whom he took his stand.⁴³

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 49. See also his more detailed tackling of this problem in “Nashr al-‘Urf fī Binā’ ba’d al-Aḥkām ‘alā al-‘Urf,” in *ibid.*, vol. 1. Both epistles were concluded at the end of 1827, a mere five months after Khālid’s demise, so that they

Ibn 'Ābidīn was particularly pungent in his criticism of the permission given by latter-day jurists to ask for remuneration for reciting the Qur'an, as against its teaching, or for uttering the first part of the *shahāda*: "there is no god but God" (*tahlīl*). This practice seems to have epitomized in his eyes the religious and social malaise that afflicted Damascus in his time. After much vacillation, he resolved to devote an epistle to this matter following an epidemic that broke out in the city in 1813, when it became a fashion to provide special allocation for such recitations in one's testament.⁴⁴ Ibn 'Ābidīn was afraid of the fury of the scholars who allowed such testaments,⁴⁵ and perhaps even more so of the rage of the multitudes who found consolation in them. Only the increasing spread of this practice, with the encouragement he drew from an epistle that had been composed on this subject by the zealous sixteenth century Turkish reformist scholar Mehmed Birgewī, which he read with his "brethren", convinced him to compose it.⁴⁶ His purpose was to demonstrate that Qur'an reciting for the sake of profit was compatible with neither the principles of the Ḥanafī school, which considers asking remuneration for fulfilling a commandment to be illegal, nor with the rulings of the other legal schools, which declare reciting for a worldly reward to be invalid and sinful. Ibn 'Ābidīn regarded the expansion of this practice in Damascus with great apprehension. Turning the reciting of the Qur'an into a source of profit and a profession rather than a pious deed, it threatened to damage the sincerity of the believers' religious feeling. By granting priority to the allocation of money for this purpose over obligatory commandments, it also precipitated the social disintegration of the community:

Many of them do not spend a single dinar or dirham on alms. They do not perform the pilgrimage to the sacred house of Allāh although they are capable of doing it... They do not bequeath a single dirham

are likely to reflect the latter's influence on Ibn 'Ābidīn. For a general discussion of Ibn 'Ābidīn's practice of *'urf* see Gerber, p. 106ff.

⁴⁴ Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, "Shifā' al-'Alīl wa-Ball al-Ghalīl fī Ḥukm al-Waṣīya bil-Khatamāt wal-Tahlīl," in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 2.

⁴⁵ A rejoinder against him was indeed composed in 1817 by his colleague, Ṣāliḥ al-Dasūqī, and was praised by some of his teachers, including 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī; see Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 125; Ḥiṣnī, p. 664.

⁴⁶ Ibn 'Ābidīn, *ibid.*, pp. 3-4, 31. On Mehmed Birgewī see Kasim Kufrevi, "Birgewī Mehmed," *EI2*, vol. 1, p. 1235; Madeline C. Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis, 1988), pp. 143-146.

for the needs of their relatives, their poor neighbors and the people of their quarter... It is not considered reprehensible in our time, which is a time of temptations and trials (*al-fitan wal-miḥan*), of rampant lawlessness and treachery, and of diminishing loyalty and religiosity. The permissible has become disgraceful and the disgraceful permissible. It is rare to find a person whose heart is attuned to God.⁴⁷

Ibn ʿĀbidīn was less confident in his attempt to explain this religious and social deterioration. "The reason for this problem and for the spread of this plight", he wrote, "might be the fact that most of our wealth, or all of it, is attained in unlawful ways. These testaments are an addition to the reprehensible things I have mentioned... Their cause is often hatred toward the heirs and relatives, with all the concomitant evils such as the plunder of the money of helpless orphans and of poor and needy heirs."⁴⁸ Nowhere in his writings does Ibn ʿĀbidīn suggest how to remedy the situation.

A similar practice lay, in Ibn ʿĀbidīn's view, at the root of the even more grave degeneration in the second aspect of the religious life of the community, its mysticism. This was the practice which had become prevalent among the sufi shaykhs to ask for remuneration for conducting the *dhikr* ceremonies. In this way many of them acquired unlawful wealth and caused no less damage to society. Moreover, while in jurisprudence the degeneration derived merely from the rigidity that overtook the ʿulama and drove them to accept blindly the rulings of latter-day authorities, in Sufism it was reflected in outright transgression of many religious precepts. Ibn ʿĀbidīn's assault on sufi practices that marked a deviation from the shariʿa was extremely harsh. Singling out the mystic audition (*samāʿ*), which "includes music, cursing, dance and going wild, the meeting with handsome lads and forbidden singing that stimulate the passions of the young", he declared that, "we set out against the vulgar people, the accursed offenders, who turn the *dhikr* sessions into a net to capture this inferior world and to satisfy their wicked and base desires."⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the degeneration of the shaykhs did not lead Ibn ʿĀbidīn to denounce Sufism in its entirety, just as the degeneration of the legal scholars of his day could not raise in his mind the idea

⁴⁷ Ibn ʿĀbidīn, *ibid.*, p. 28. See also *idem*, "Sharḥ al-Manzūma", pp. 6-7.

⁴⁸ *Idem*, "Shifāʾ al-ʿAlīl", pp. 28-29.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

of denouncing the entire science of jurisprudence. In the same breath with his denunciation of sufis that deviate from the *sharī'a* he explains that he does not mean the sincere sufi masters or those who take example from them, taste their experiences, and find in their hearts that desire for God. On the contrary, Ibn 'Ābidīn's inclination toward Sufism, in its orthodox thrust, is clearly discernible throughout his writings, in which he often quotes both Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī.⁵⁰ His attitude toward the latter is that one should believe in his sainthood but not study his books, since if he is not familiar with the particular meanings that the sufis attach to their terms he might be driven to unbelief.⁵¹ Ibn 'Ābidīn maintains that *ḥaqīqa*, the mystic truth, is the heart of the *sharī'a*, and that *ahl al-ḥaqīqa*, the people of truth, are those who combine the *sharī'a* with the *ṭarīqa*.⁵² On the relation between them he writes:

The *ṭarīqa* and the *sharī'a* necessitate each other, since the path to God consists of an external aspect and an internal aspect. Its externality is the *sharī'a* and the *ṭarīqa*, and its internality is the *ḥaqīqa*. The internality of the *ḥaqīqa* in the *sharī'a* and the *ṭarīqa* is like the internality of butter in milk. It is impossible to reveal the butter in the milk without churning it. The aim of the three—the *sharī'a*, the *ṭarīqa*, and the *ḥaqīqa*—is to fulfil the state of servitude to God (*'ubūdiyya*).⁵³

The only explicit reference to the events of the time that I have encountered in the writings of Ibn 'Ābidīn, except in his treatise in defense of Shaykh Khālīd, relates to the Wahhābī movement. He elucidates his attitude toward the Wahhābīs in the "*Hāshiya*" through the legal concept of the Khawārij, applying the same critical deliberation that characterized his whole method. Ḥaṣkafī had maintained that the Khawārij are a powerful group that rebel because their interpretation (*ta'wīl*) leads them to assert that the ruler (*imām*) is illegitimate and must be fought against. They deem lawful the blood and property of the Muslims, curse their wives, and declare that the Companions were infidels. This last point, Ibn 'Ābidīn claims, is not a condition for being a Khārijī, but only a part of the description of

⁵⁰ Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn, "Ijābat al-Ghawth bi-Bayān Ḥāl al-Nuqabā' wal-Nujabā' wal-Abdāl wal-Awtād wal-Ghawth," in *Majmū'at Rasā'il*, vol. 2. The editor entitles him *shaykh al-ṭarīqa wal-ḥaqīqa al-'arīf bi-rabbihi tā'ālā*. This epistle deals with the hierarchy of the sufi saints. For the role of Sufism in Ibn 'Ābidīn's thought see also Nagel, pp. 105-108.

⁵¹ Ibn 'Ābidīn, *Radd al-Muhtār*, p. 294.

⁵² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 26.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 295.

the historical group that rebelled against ‘Alī. For him,

Sufficient is their belief in the infidelity of those whom they set out against, as happened in our time with the followers of [Ibn] ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, who set out from Najd and took control of the holy places in the Hijaz. They subscribed to the Ḥanbalī school, but claimed that they are the only Muslims and that those who oppose their claim are infidels. Thus they allowed the killing of the *ahl al-sunna* and of their ‘ulama, till God most exalted broke their sway, devastated their country and gave the victory to the Muslim armies... The legal status of the Khawārīj according to the opinion of all scholars of jurisprudence and hadith is that of rebels (*bughāh*).⁵⁴

Ibn ‘Ābidīn’s assertion that there is no fault in visiting the tombs of saints (*ziyārat al-qubūr*), and that this is indeed a commendable act, seems to have been intended as a defiance of the Wahhābīs’ outlook. He also approved of setting out to visit distant tombs, like those of the Patriarchs in Hebron or of Aḥmad al-Badawī in Tanta, a practice that in the footsteps of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya they specifically condemned. Ibn ‘Ābidīn gave preponderance in this case to the opinion of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, the celebrated sixteenth century jurist, who in his collection of fatwas wrote that one should not avoid visiting tombs because of the improper and corrupt deeds that are perpetrated there. He must visit the holy tomb and condemn those innovations, and, if it is in his power, also remove them.⁵⁵

The comparison between the teachings of Muḥammad Amīn ‘Ābidīn and the Khālidi expositions indicates how broad was the common ground between him and Shaykh Khālidi. Like Khālidi, Ibn ‘Ābidīn sought, though from the standpoint of the legal scholar, to combine an orthodoxy that is responsive to the afflictions of the time and a Sufism that is bound by the shari‘a. In his eyes too, the standing of the ‘ulama, as the bearers of religious knowledge, was superior to that of rulers. Ibn ‘Ābidīn, like Khālidi, was impelled by an acute perception of a religious and social degeneration in the condition and morale of the umma, and by a firm conviction that its reform is contingent upon a return to the path of the shari‘a. Like him, he regarded the Wahhābī movement as a menace to Islam and rejoiced in its destruction. The explanation of the enormous appeal that Shaykh Khālidi had in the eyes of Ibn ‘Ābidīn, and of the reformist-inclined ‘ulama of Damascus, was not therefore in the details of his

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 604.

teaching, but rather in the vision he provided them as a Naqshbandī master. These local 'ulama could find in Khālīd's teaching a comprehensive politico-religious outlook with which to analyze the afflictions of their society and to delineate the required ways to regenerate it. Moreover, in the manner in which Khālīd conducted his order he embodied for them the ideal of the religious man who actively strives toward such a renewal. An echo of that appreciation for his work is found in Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn's introduction to his defense of "the great imam, my honorable master Shaykh Khālīd, who became the pole of the sufis (*quṭb al-ʿarīfīn*) in all the Muslim countries and spread the Naqshbandī path. He received the confidence of all, including the notables of the Ottoman State, *on the right of the great Caliph*, who fortified the foundations of religion, destroyed the armies of the infidels, defended the land of Islam and the Muslims, and hoisted the banner of the laws and rulings *with the help of this great imam*."⁵⁶

The Collapse of the Succession Arrangement

The first fissures in the integrity of the Khālīdiyya became apparent already in the first weeks following Shaykh Khālīd's demise in the epidemic that broke out in Damascus in 1827. Striking many of the principal deputies who accompanied Khālīd from Iraq as well, this epidemic shattered the succession arrangement that he had devised, and aroused controversies and conflicts between those among them who survived. The historical question as to the content of the arrangement and the extent to which it was ever implemented by his successors is further compounded by the role it came to play in the renewed struggle over the leadership of the order in Damascus under the regime of 'Abdülḥamīd II. This struggle was waged between two local branches, one consisting of the Khānī family which led the order in the city during the nineteenth century, the other of Khālīd's nephew, As'ad al-Şāḥib, who challenged the leadership of the Khānīs toward the end of that century. Most of the sources we possess concerning the succession problem were written in this later period by members of the two contending branches, or in relation to the conflict between them, and must therefore be treated with great

⁵⁶ Ibn 'Ābidīn, *Sall al-Ḥusām*, pp. 2-3, my emphases.

caution. Nevertheless, we do have one treatise that is devoted in its entirety to the last days of Khālīd and the first weeks after his death, written very close to the events themselves by his brother-in-law and associate, Ismāʿīl al-Ghazzī.⁵⁷ This book seems to have served as a kind of official version of the *ṭarīqa*, as it crystallized in the wake of the resolution of its first organizational crisis.

Shaykh Khālīd was much troubled by the question of the succession to his leadership of the order. Confronted with growing difficulties in controlling the large number of deputies he ordained through the concentrated *khaliwa*, ominously surfacing in the challenge that many of them imposed on him regarding his complementary intensified *rābiʿa*, Khālīd realized that announcing his successor would further impair the integrity of the *ṭarīqa*. This was perhaps another reason for his assertion that none of his followers had attained the appropriate degree of perfection. He was obliged to reach a decision, however, when the epidemic that erupted in Damascus awakened his apprehension that his end was imminent. According to the testimony of Ghazzī, Khālīd summoned him at that time and enumerated before him four consecutive deputies who were to head the order, and also to be trustees of his children and library, after his death. The first among them was Ismāʿīl al-Anārānī, Khālīd's foremost disciple; following him were two other deputies that had accompanied the shaykh from Iraq; and lastly came Ismāʿīl al-Ghazzī himself.⁵⁸ The latter's inclusion in the list seems suspicious since, as rightly commented by Asʿad al-Šāhib, he was not regarded as a deputy at all, and it is unlikely that Khālīd would have nominated him in preference to genuine *khulafāʾ*.⁵⁹ After Khālīd fell ill he assembled his deputies and senior adherents in Damascus and disclosed his decision to them. At that farewell meeting he stressed for the last time the importance of preserving the integrity of the Khālidiyya also after his death. He declared Anārānī to have authority over the other deputies, warning that anyone who opposed him would be expelled from the order.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ismāʿīl al-Ghazzī, *Huṣūl al-Uns fī Intiqāl Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Khālīd ila Ḥaẓīrat al-Quds* (Damascus, 1970).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43. On Ismāʿīl al-Anārānī see Ḥaydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, pp. 56-57; ʿA. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadāʾiq al-Wardiyya*, p. 260. On the other two deputies, Muḥammad al-Nāṣih and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ al-ʿIqrī, see Ḥaydarī, *ibid.*, pp. 58, 63.

⁵⁹ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 65 (editor's addition). See also Šāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 259-264.

⁶⁰ Ghazzī, *Huṣūl al-Uns*, p. 53.

In view of Shaykh Khālīd's explicit wish, the leadership of Ismā'īl al-Anārānī was accepted by the other deputies in the order without objection. Nevertheless, when he himself, as well as the two following successors designed by Khālīd, were also infected a mere two weeks later, the succession arrangement completely collapsed. Anārānī, feeling that his end was near, decided to assemble the deputies and principal adherents once more for consultation concerning the new candidate to head the *ṭarīqa*. Soon a sharp dispute broke out among those present, each regarding himself as the most suitable to undertake the position. The solution to the ensuing crisis was finally hammered out by Ismā'īl al-Ghazzī. Instead of proposing himself as successor, as his report on Khālīd's testament implied he should, Ghazzī told Anārānī of a second will that the shaykh had handed him before departing on the pilgrimage in 1825, in which he ordained 'Abdallāh al-Herātī (Harawī) as Anārānī's successor, only then to be succeeded by the other three. The fact that Ghazzī presented himself as the only witness to this will, while Anārānī was completely unaware of it, makes its existence highly doubtful. It is more probable that his intention was to suggest a compromise candidate to head the order, since as Khālīd's deputy in Iraq Herātī was not involved in the dispute that broke out in Damascus. Anārānī embraced this solution and again summoned the *khulafā'* to announce his decision. This time many of them refrained from attending and, therefore, he prepared a written document nominating Herātī. Trying nonetheless to preserve the integrity of the Khālidiyya, Ismā'īl al-Anārānī reiterated Shaykh Khālīd's declaration on the duty to completely obey his nominee.⁶¹

The Khālīdī sources concur that Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Herātī was one of the most important deputies of Shaykh Khālīd. He was also one of the first among them to accept his call. He met Khālīd even before the latter became a Naqshbandī master, when he passed through Herat on his way to Shāh Ghulām 'Alī in Delhi. Much impressed by Khālīd's religiosity, Herātī asked to accompany him, and when refused set out to wait for his return in Kurdistan. Here he trod the sufi path under his guidance, receiving at its end a full authorization (*khilāfa muṭlaqa*).⁶² Herātī's main strength lay in orga-

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

⁶² Ḥaydarī, *Al-Majd al-Tālid*, p. 57. He is the source of Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1016-1017.

nizational work. Khālīd nominated him as head of his lodge in Sulaymāniyya, where he was in charge of the material needs of the shaykh and the brethren.⁶³ Later, when Khālīd left for Syria, Herātī remained behind to supervise his properties in Iraq. Upon receiving the news of his appointment by Anārānī to head the order, ‘Abdallāh al-Herātī departed to Damascus in order to undertake the task. As the last residence of Khālīd, and the main concentration of his closest *khulafā’*, Herātī knew that to preserve the integrity of the Khālīdiyya it was imperative that its leadership should stay in that city. He also certainly hoped to continue to enjoy the wide support of the local ‘ulama in the *ṭarīqa*. In complete loyalty to the path of Khālīd, Herātī soon engaged in instructing the advanced novices, conducting the *khatm al-khwājagān*, and sending deputies to other regions of the Ottoman Empire. By force of his position in the order he also served as the guardian of Khālīd’s widow and son, to whom he attended with much care.⁶⁴

Sultan Maḥmūd II’s Turn against the Khālīdiyya

The activities of ‘Abdallāh al-Herātī were interrupted not long after he undertook the leadership of the Khālīdiyya in Damascus. In April 1828, less than a year after Shaykh Khālīd’s demise, Sultan Maḥmūd II sent an imperial decree to the governor of Damascus to expel him, together with all other members of the *ṭarīqa* who did not originate from the province, back to Iraq. The governor of Baghdad received a parallel decree to ensure that after their arrival the Khālīdīs would not return to Syria, and that they should dispatch no deputy to Istanbul or to any other city of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵ Herātī was thus obliged to leave Syria, taking with him Khālīd’s family. At first he stayed in Baghdad, but subsequently he was allowed to return to Sulaymāniyya.⁶⁶

Maḥmūd II justified the decree to expel the foreign Khālīdīs from Damascus by the claim that two deputies sent by ‘Abdallāh al-Herātī

⁶³ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 69.

⁶⁴ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 261.

⁶⁵ Abu-Manneh, “The Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya,” pp. 31-32.

⁶⁶ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 261; Şāhib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālīdiyya*, p. 57. These sources avoid mentioning the Sultan’s order of expulsion and merely relate that Herātī and Khālīd’s family left Damascus.

to spread the order in Istanbul had offended against the public order and acted in contradiction to his own will, as had already happened in the past. This last expression implies that the roots of the Sultan's aversion to the Khālidiyya lay back in the time of Shaykh Khālīd himself. In the eyes of Maḥmūd II, the very activism of the Naqshbandiyya, and the orthodox revival which it sought to generate, constituted a threat to the autocratic rule which he strove to impose on his Empire. Already at the beginning of the 1820s, as Khālīd's first emissaries began to spread the order in Istanbul, Maḥmūd banished some of them from the city, and when hostile Aleppine shaykhs warned him against the rising influence of Khālīd in Syria, he planned a vigorous attack on him. Submitting to the advice of Shaykh al-Islām, Muṣṭafā 'Āṣīm Mekkīzāde, who was Khālīd's adherent, the Sultan was finally persuaded to content himself with sending two secret agents to report on the Shaykh's activity.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Maḥmūd II soon realized that the same activism of the Naqshbandiyya, and its general orthodox attitude, were bent to support the central government against its rebellious agents. He did not hesitate to exploit this bent in fortifying his centralist rule, as the events that led to the destruction of the Janissary corps, the army that more than any other force in the Empire challenged his authority, clearly demonstrated.

The ambivalent attitude of Maḥmūd II toward the activity of the Khālīdīs in the Ottoman Empire was analogous to the ambivalence that underlay the political aspect of the teaching of the Naqshbandiyya, which determined their attitude toward him. Shaykh Khālīd, as we have seen, urged his disciples to express their full loyalty to the Sultan, but concomitantly stressed the duty of the Khālīdī shaykhs to guide the rulers on the path of the shari'a. This later aspect was incompatible with Maḥmūd II's ambition to rule his Empire in an autocratic manner. Therefore, at times of distress, when the Sultan was wrestling with decentralist forces, he tended to accept the Khālīdīs, and the orthodox elements in general, as his allies. Thus, following the destruction of the Janissaries he outlawed the Bektāshī order, executed or banished its heads, and passed their properties into Naqshbandī hands.⁶⁸ In a series of declarations and ordinances which he published at that time, he stressed the duty incumbent upon

⁶⁷ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 233.

⁶⁸ Birge, pp. 77-78.

all his subjects to comply with the shari'a, and upon the rulers to apply justice. At times of relief, however, when Maḥmūd felt that the reigns of power were firm in his hands, he did not hesitate to turn against the Khālidiyya and rule, while respecting the shari'a, according to his own considerations. Paradoxically, the destruction of the Janissary corps in itself generated such a period of relief for the Sultan, turning the Naqshbandiyya itself into the major element that in his eyes strove to limit his powers.⁶⁹ Shaykh Khālīd's death presented him with a propitious opportunity to check this order's influence.

ʿAbdallāh al-Herātī certainly tried to continue to conduct the Khālidiyya from Sulaymāniyya, but the turn of the Sultan against him seems to have helped in intensifying the split within the order's ranks. Of particular importance for our purposes were the far reaching implications of his expulsion under the Sultan's decree, together with the other *khulafā'* that accompanied Khālīd from Iraq, for Damascus. On the one hand, this seriously reduced the strength of the order in the city and slowed its spread throughout Syria in general. On the other hand, it cleared the way, unintentionally, for the rise of the only deputy that Khālīd had ordained from among the inhabitants of the province of Damascus, though not of the city itself, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Khānī. Herātī was allowed to return to Damascus four years after his enforced departure, as Maḥmūd II's struggle with Muḥammad ʿAlī of Egypt drove him to seek again the support of this orthodox *ṭarīqa*, but he was already on the verge of death, and all he could do was to nominate Khānī as his successor.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Abu-Manneh, "The Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya," pp. 29–31.

⁷⁰ ʿA. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadāʾiq al-Wardiyya*, p. 261.

CHAPTER THREE

FRAGMENTATION DURING THE REFORM ERA (1832-1880)

The fact that during his four years of activity in Damascus Shaykh Khālīd did not ordain any deputy from among his disciples in the city, and at most three deputies from Syria at large, is indeed striking. It stands in sharp contrast to his previous practice of ordaining as many *khulafā'* as possible. As to Damascus, the considerable number of deputies that arrived with Khālīd from Iraq and were subsequently dispersed in the mosques of the city may have left little room for the activity of new ones. As to the rest of Syria, this span of time was perhaps too short to let him engage intensively in spreading his order outside of Damascus. Yet, the main reason for this avoidance is, in my opinion, Khālīd's desire to preserve the city as the organizational center of the Khālīdiyya without identifying it with local interests. When he felt that the assistance of local religious men would be useful to his work Khālīd preferred, therefore, to summon his principal disciple from Hamah, Muḥammad al-Khānī, and train him as his deputy, rather than to appoint one of his Damascene disciples. In other cities of Syria, by contrast, Khālīd did not hesitate to nominate *khulafā'* when he could find suitable candidates. Taking into account the different versions in our sources, it seems that among his Syrian deputies we can count, besides Khānī himself, on whom he relied also in Hamah, Aḥmad al-Ṭīzkilī in Homs¹ and Aḥmad al-Urwādī in Tripoli.² Once Sultan Maḥmūd II turned against Khālīd's successors in Syria after his death, this meager number of deputies, and particularly the absence of any deputy with local roots in Damascus, became an obstacle to the further expansion of the Khālīdiyya in that country.

¹ On Aḥmad al-Ṭīzkilī see Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 197; 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṭahmāz, *Al-ʿAllāma al-Mujāhid al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ḥāmid* (Damascus and Beirut, 1971), p. 206.

² On Aḥmad al-Urwādī see Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 77; Muḥammad al-Rakhāwī, *Al-Anwār al-Qudsiyya fī Manāqib al-Sāda al-Naqshbandiyya* (Cairo, 1344 A.H.), pp. 263-264.

The collapse of the succession arrangement of Shaykh Khālīd was also detrimental to the status of Damascus as the organizational center of the order. Indeed, many of his deputies, in the Ottoman Empire in general and in Syria in particular, continued to regard Damascus with special reverence, in deference to Khālīd's legacy and to the site of his tomb. Yet, only few among them were prepared to acknowledge Muḥammad al-Khānī's right to the leadership. After all, he was one of the last deputies of Khālīd, and at the time of his nomination as successor by 'Abdallāh al-Herātī, whose nomination was in itself controversial, only thirty-four years of age. Khānī, however, persisted in his claim to head the entire order by stressing the validity of Herātī's appointment by Ismā'īl al-Anārānī, as well as his own status as the principal *khalīfa* of Khālīd to remain in Damascus. His claim came to reflect, thus, an ever deepening gap between the ideal of preserving the integrity of the order under one central leadership, which Khānī expressed by adhering to Khālīd's novelty in the practice of *rābi'a*, and the reality of its continuing expansion under independent deputies through Khālīd's parallel novelty in the practice of *khalwa*.

At the same time, the disintegration of the Khālidiyya leadership enabled the Ottoman central government to tighten its grip over the activity of its various shaykhs. In Damascus this intervention in the affairs of the order was postponed for almost a decade owing to the Egyptian conquest of Syria in 1832. Under Ibrāhīm Pasha's rule, Muḥammad al-Khānī was able to retain his position as the foremost Khālīdī shaykh since his colleagues were again denied the right to settle in the city. Paradoxically, Khānī's own activity was tolerated thanks to his relatively weak position among the local elite, which provoked no apprehension on the part of the authorities. The ascension of 'Abdūlmecīd to the throne in 1839 and the Egyptian evacuation of Syria a year later precipitated a split in the leadership of the Khālidiyya even in Damascus itself. At that time Khālīd's brother and deputy in Sulaymāniyya, Maḥmūd al-Şāhib, arrived in the city and received the patronage of the Sultan against Khānī. The linkage of the two rivals to the Ottoman government, and their attitude toward the reforms it implemented in Damascus, certainly reflected their personal interests. They also derived from the different ways in which they applied Khālīd's teaching to the new circumstances of a government that was influenced by the orthodox principles that the Naqshbandiyya itself propagated. Thus Khānī was

of the opinion that, in order to avoid corrupting the souls of the adherents of the *ṭarīqa*, it was necessary to shun posts and decorations even when bestowed by rulers who followed the shari'a. Ṣāḥib, in contrast, claimed that the Khālidi shaykhs should serve under such rulers in the name of the shari'a. In this, both regarded themselves as followers of the orthodox reformist way of Shaykh Khālidi.

The split in the leadership of the Khālidiyya order in Damascus was attached to the larger division that emerged among the 'ulama of the city under the rule of 'Abdūlmecīd, and greatly intensified toward the end of the Ottoman Empire. The early Tanzimat reforms, which were founded on the pledge of the new Sultan to restore security of life, honor, and property to his subjects in accordance with the precepts of the shari'a, fortified the power of the 'ulama, and of the urban notables in general, and assigned them an important role in the administration of the province.³ The reforms benefited mostly the established 'ulama who occupied the senior religious-administrative posts in the city, and—even more important from a historical standpoint—a considerable number of lesser men of religion who joined the Ottoman administration through its various councils.⁴ The latter, who thus may be defined as the new Ottoman tendency, were able to preserve, and even advance, their positions during the late Tanzimat period, after the traditional leadership of the city was banished for its involvement in the massacre of the Christians in 1860. They seized the highest religious posts in the time of 'Abdūlḥamīd II and his successors, the Young Turks. Against them there emerged in Damascus of the early Tanzimat period a smaller group of 'ulama who preferred to distance themselves from the state administration and rely on the teaching positions they held in the mosques and colleges of the city. This group is the subject of the second part of this study.

In consequence of the disintegration of the central leadership of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya in general, and its local split in Damascus in particular, the religious fervor of the order gradually subsided. The heads of its two principal branches died during the late Tanzimat period, and with them the entire generation of Khālidi's disciples passed away. The lapse in the Khālidi activity in Damascus lasted until the beginning of the 1880s, when Sultan 'Abdūlḥamīd

³ Moshe Ma'oz, "The Ulama and the Process of Modernization in Syria during the mid-nineteenth Century," AAS (7), 1971, pp. 77-88.

⁴ Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 53-56.

II consolidated his power and began to implement his policy of nurturing the sufi orders in Syria.

Leadership and Power Base under the Egyptian Rule

The principal sources at our disposal for the life of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Khānī are the biographies that were composed by his son and namesake on the occasion of the publication of his book,⁵ and, more extensively, by his grandson, ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī, in his important dictionary of Naqshbandī masters.⁶ Both biographies were written in the 1880s, and the non-Khālidi historians of Damascus generally rely on them. The Khānīs present the founder of their family as the embodiment of the Naqshbandī ideal of the ‘ālim ‘āmil and the accomplished sufi who strictly adheres to the shari‘a. Though partial, this characterization must have been basically correct; otherwise his selection as the principal deputy of Khālidi in Syria would hardly have been conceivable. A critical examination of Khānī’s biography against the background of the history of Damascus in his time will thus enable us to evaluate his contribution to the spread of the Khālidi order, as well as its limitations.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Khānī (1798-1862) was a scion of a notable family from Khān Shaykhūn, a small town to the north of Hamah in which Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī was to be born half a century later. His father died in his youth and his mother, a daughter of a local sufi shaykh, took him with her to Hamah. Here Muḥammad turned to religious studies, specializing in Shāfi‘ī jurisprudence. At the same time he became attached to a rigorous local man of religion who was famous for “enjoining good and forbidding evil”, and took the Qādiri path from Muḥammad al-Kaylānī of the major notable family in the city. Thereafter, he established himself in the lodge mosque of the sixteenth century local saint and scholar, ‘Alwān al-Ḥamawī.⁷ These early influences combined to shape Khānī as a teacher of jurisprudence, an ardent sufi, and a zealot fighting

⁵ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, pp. 1-2.

⁶ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 262-272.

⁷ His son describes the relationship between them in a Naqshbandī manner, claiming that the residence with ‘Alwān gave Khānī much help from the saint’s “spirituality”.

for the revival of the Prophet's sunna and the suppression of the innovations that permeated Islam. It is recalled that he used to force people into the mosques in order to teach them the religious precepts, a practice that earned him the nickname of *mahdī al-zamān*, the rightly-guided (also the messiah) of his time.

Muḥammad al-Khānī first met Shaykh Khālīd when the latter passed through Hamah on his way to settle in Damascus. A little later he appeared at the shaykh's lodge to take from him the Naqshbandī path. Three days after commencing his spiritual training under the guidance of Khālīd, Khānī was already experiencing divine rapture (*jadhba*), and shortly thereafter he attained the state of annihilation in God (*fanā*). He thus proved to be among the mystically inclined elect to whom the Naqshbandiyya is particularly attuned. Upon completing the forty-day seclusion, Khānī returned to Hamah and proceeded assiduously in the new path. Following two more visits to complete his spiritual training, he was ordered by Khālīd to move with his family to Damascus in 1825.⁸ The shaykh appointed him as his assistant in his jurisprudence class in place of 'Umar al-Ghazzī, and subsequently made him his deputy in the Murādiyya mosque, in the southern Suwayqa quarter.⁹ Here Khānī engaged in the initial guidance of the novices that Khālīd assigned to him, becoming his close associate toward the end of his life. According to his grandson's claim he also drafted many of Khālīd's letters to his disciples.

After Shaykh Khālīd's demise the Murādiyya mosque remained the basis of Muḥammad al-Khānī's power in Damascus. He enjoyed a high status in the order at this critical juncture, and was appointed by Ismā'īl al-Anārānī to take charge of the execution of his will.¹⁰ Following the expulsion of 'Abdallāh al-Herātī and the other deputies from the city by the Sultan's order a year later, the number of his own disciples grew, though the Khānī sources stress the continuous loyalty of their father to Herātī. By force of his nomination by the latter as his successor in 1832, Muḥammad al-Khānī came

⁸ Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger writes that Shaykh Khālīd asked him to come (*talabahu ilayhi*) and that he settled in Damascus on his instructions (*bi-ishārat shaykhihi*). 'Abd al-Majīd writes that an order (*amr*) was received from the shaykh.

⁹ For the text of the permission see 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 263; Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 171-172. According to the text Khālīd authorized him to perform concentration (*tawajjuh*), instruct (*irshād*) and initiate disciples (*talqin al-dhikr*). Khānī interprets this as a full authorization (*khilāfa mutlaqa*).

¹⁰ Ghazzī, *Huṣūl al-Uns*, p. 63.

to regard himself as the paramount head of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya *ṭarīqa*, despite the fact that many of Khālīd’s deputies did not recognize his supremacy, some severing their connections with him altogether. Like his predecessors, Khānī engaged in conducting the *dhikr* ceremony, training novices in Damascus, and sending his deputies to other parts of the Ottoman Empire. To fortify his position among the Kurds of Damascus, he married his son Muḥammad to the daughter of Aḥmad al-Khaṭīb al-Irbīlī, the first major deputy that Khālīd had sent to the city. To establish his authority in other regions he undertook a number of journeys, mostly on the hajj, but also to Palestine in 1850 and to Istanbul via Beirut in 1854. As part of the Khālīdī inheritance Khānī also took upon himself the guardianship of the founder’s family, tutoring his son privately at his home. Alongside his multiple occupations in the order, and in harmony with the ideal set forth by Khālīd, he did not neglect the teaching of the various exoteric sciences, particularly jurisprudence and hadith.

The principal means employed by Muḥammad al-Khānī to fortify the integrity of the Khālidiyya under his own leadership was the continuation of the practice of *rābiṭa*, in the new form it had received under Khālīd. Yet correctly assessing his actual strength as one of the latest deputies, and a not very charismatic one, Khānī avoided demanding from the adherents of the order that he himself be the object of their *rābiṭa*. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, Anārānī and Herātī, he urged them instead to continue to raise in their imagination the figure of Shaykh Khālīd. Khānī based his demand on two specific stresses in the Khālīdī notion of *rābiṭa*. The first is the assertion, which in essence appears already in Khālīd’s writings, that its practice is useful only when directed toward a perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). This basically Akbarī concept Khānī defines as the master who works through his proximity to God (*walāya*) and reflects Him (*mir’āt al-ḥaqq*), so that those who internally contemplate his spiritual form actually envision God. The second stress, which represents Khānī’s adjustment of the notion to the circumstances of the order in his day, is that the *rābiṭa* may be conducted also toward a deceased saint, whether at his tomb or by mentally directing oneself toward him. Through these two stresses Khānī articulated his criticism of those deputies of Khālīd who instructed their disciples, during his lifetime and particularly after his death, to raise in their imaginations their own figures. He reminded these *khulafā’* that owing

to the inversion in the Naqshbandī path, and the danger it entails, the confirmation of the accomplished guide is necessary for becoming an object of *rābiṭa*. Khālīd, he pointed out, confirmed the perfection of none among his deputies. The argument that a dead man no longer interests himself in worldly affairs was even more ominous in Khānī's eyes, since it undermines the foundations of the order. The work of the masters after their demise is the cornerstone of the spiritual transmission of the Naqshbandī path, without which its chain of initiation, as well as its characteristic silent form of *dhikr*, would lose its validity.

Moreover, in his defense on the practice of the *rābiṭa* itself, Muḥammad al-Khānī was not content with the evidence produced by Shaykh Khālīd regarding its extensive use among the sufis in his Epistle in Verification of the *Rābiṭa*. Khānī's attempt to demonstrate its firm foundations also in the Qur'an and the sunna, which Khālīd could avoid in his time, may reflect the growing orthodox criticism of this practice outside the ranks of the order. Thus, for example, he finds a basis for it in the notion of *wasīla* (means) in the Qur'anic commandment: "seek the means to come to Him."¹¹ Khānī explains that this is a general notion, in which the *rābiṭa*, as the best way to reach God, is undoubtedly included. Another basis is the hadith in which Abū Bakr complains to Muḥammad that he does not leave him even when he is alone. According to Khānī's interpretation, these words are aimed at the spiritual presence of the Prophet, from which Abū Bakr, the first link following him in the Naqshbandī chain, has never separated.¹²

On the other hand, Muḥammad al-Khānī continued to employ the second novelty of Shaykh Khālīd in the Naqshbandī path, the *khalkwa arba'īniyya*, as a means to spread the *ṭarīqa* in Syria and beyond. In complete loyalty to the legacy of Khālīd, he adopted the same lenient approach toward the seekers of the path, in order to enlarge its ranks as much as possible.¹³ Khānī ordained throughout his life a considerable number of deputies, though he could in no way equal his master in the extent of his activity and influence. His grandson counts nineteen deputies, in addition to his three sons, coming from different parts of the Ottoman Empire and even beyond. Most of these *khulafā'* returned to their places of origin or settled in other areas

¹¹ Qur'an, *al-Mā'ida* (5), 35.

¹² M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Samiyya*, pp. 43-46.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

to which they were assigned to spread the order. A relatively large number of Khānī's deputies operated in Istanbul, including in their ranks the senior preacher in the Aya Sofia mosque, testifying to a certain interest in his work among religious men in the capital. He also had a certain success among the Kurdish Khālīdīs, despite the large number of *khulafā'* that Khālīd had ordained among them. In one case, Khānī was involved in an internal conflict that erupted following the attempt of one of their adherents to establish an independent branch of the order under his own leadership. According to 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī's report, his grandfather ordered the dissident to desist, and appointed his principal opponent as his own deputy in these areas.¹⁴

In Syria itself, however, and particularly in Damascus, Muḥammad al-Khānī failed to create a firm basis of power. His principal local successes were in Hamah, his hometown, where his deputies ran a local lodge to the end of the 1860s, and in Safad, in which another deputy is said to have been very active. Among the *khulafā'* he ordained in Damascus, most were Kurds and Turks rather than natives of the city. The most active among them was Aḥmad al-Zamalkānī (d. 1882), a Kurd who after his authorization settled in the Ghūṭa village of Zamalkā and dedicated himself to spreading the order in Damascus and its vicinity. Khānī's relations with the senior 'ulama of Damascus, including other disciples and adherents of Khālīd, were also limited. The only consequential connection we know about was his relationship with 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, the foremost hadith instructor in Syria. Khānī's attendance at Kuzbarī's advanced lessons coincided with his emergence as the principal Khālīdī shaykh in Damascus, following the expulsion of the foreign adherents of the order in 1828.¹⁵ His special interest in hadith studies thus reflected not only the central place of the Prophet and the Companions in the Naqshbandī teaching, but also his eagerness to preserve the attachment of this prestigious 'alim to the Khālīdiyya. Subsequently Khānī began to teach hadith himself, in addition to Shāfi'ī jurisprudence in which he had specialized in Hamah. Asking Kuzbarī to bless his elder son, Muḥammad, when he was merely five years old, the boy later attended Kuzbarī's lessons in the Umayyad mosque, receiving a full authorization from him in 1846.¹⁶

¹⁴ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardīyya*, pp. 272-276.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 265.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 276, 278.

Our information on the economic circumstances of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder is extremely meager, and we can only glimpse them from some incidental references in his biography. We do not know what property he had when he arrived in Damascus from Hamah, or what was the size of the waqf that supported his lodge in the Murādiyya mosque. It is evident, however, that in the 1840s he was involved in agriculture, and probably also in trading with the Hijaz. His frequent pilgrimages may have been connected with this commercial activity, and at times he sent his son as his agent.¹⁷

The only echo of the political teaching of Shaykh Khālid to appear in the writings of Muḥammad al-Khānī is a short statement that the Naqshbandī master must avoid visiting rulers, lest his disciples follow him and stray from their path.¹⁸ He completely refrains from mentioning the complementary duty of working among rulers in order to guide them on the path of the shari'a. Khānī's shunning of any involvement in political affairs must be understood against the background of the Egyptian occupation regime, under which he composed his book. The reforms that Ibrāhīm Pasha introduced in Syria provided the country with a certain measure of efficient government and economic expansion; they nonetheless caused much resentment, as they were enforced in the autocratic manner that characterized Muḥammad 'Alī's rule in Egypt, and were often incompatible with the precepts of the shari'a. Moreover, the reforms were basically intended to undermine the local bases of power of the urban notables, including the 'ulama.¹⁹ In the face of this policy Muḥammad al-Khānī chose, again out of a realistic appraisal of his power, to avoid any contact with the Egyptian rulers, in order to prevent their turning against the Khālidiyya. There is no reference to his attitude toward them in his biography, although most of his first decade as the principal Khālidi shaykh was spent under their government. Instead, the biographers focus on Khānī's activity for the sake of the *ṭarīqa*. Their descriptions give the impression that as a newcomer in

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 271, 278.

¹⁸ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Samiyya*, p. 37.

¹⁹ See the harsh judgment of Ibrāhīm Pasha in Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 15-29, which probably originated in his father, Ḥasan al-Bīṭār. On the Egyptian administration in Syria see especially Yitzhak Hofman, "The Administration of Syria and Palestine under Egyptian Rule," in Moshe Ma'oz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 311-333. For a testimony to the loyalty of the 'ulama of Damascus to the Ottoman state see Steppat, "Kalifat", pp. 445-446, 460-461.

Damascus, his activity did not awake the apprehensions of the Egyptians. On the contrary, the fact that most of his Turkish deputies were ordained toward the end of the 1830s might indicate that they even sought to use him at that time in the political struggle between the Sultan and the Egyptian Pasha over the hearts of the population of Anatolia.²⁰ Khānī, however, like most of the Damascene ‘ulama, must have felt relief when Ibrāhīm Pasha was compelled to withdraw from Syria in 1840 and restore its government to the Ottomans under the new Sultan, ‘Abdūlmecīd.

The Split under the Aegis of the Early Tanzimat Regime

The biographers of Muḥammad al-Khānī continue their silence over his activity during the first years after the return of the Ottomans to Syria and the introduction of the Tanzimat regime. This silence seems to imply that the new Ottoman government regarded Khānī with a similar indifference, or even with suspicion owing to his work under the previous Egyptian regime. ‘Abdūlmecīd’s disregard of Khānī is particularly salient in view of the Sultan’s general sympathy with the Khālidiyya and his tendency to incorporate its orthodox principles into his reform policy. ‘Abdūlmecīd’s support for the order was epitomized in his undertaking to erect a dome and a lodge over Khālīd’s grave in Damascus, thus responding to a special request made by one of the latter’s principal deputies, Muḥammad al-Farāqī (d. 1865), immediately following the promulgation of the Gülhane Rescript.²¹ ‘Abdūlmecīd in 1842 entrusted the initial construction to the acting governor, Najīb Pasha, who was himself a follower of the Khālidiyya, and financed it from his private treasury. Upon the completion of the project four years later he allocated it ample awqaf and appointed Farāqī as its head. The tomb *zāwiya* in the northern Šālīhiyya quarter became an important center of the Khālidiyya in Damascus and in the Ottoman Empire in general.²² Muḥammad al-Farāqī, however, did not claim to head a distinct branch in the order, regarding himself rather as a servant of all its adherents. He main-

²⁰ On this struggle see Abu-Manneh, “The Gülhane Rescript”, pp. 180-181.

²¹ On Muḥammad al-Farāqī see Šāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 193; Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 80-81.

²² Šāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 194-195; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 586; ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 257.

tained good relations with both Muḥammad al-Khānī, who used to perform the *khalwa* for himself and his disciples at Khālīd's tomb, and with his rival, Maḥmūd al-Ṣāḥib, whom Farāqī frequently visited.²³

Muḥammad al-Khānī's position was improved in the mid-1840s, when he succeeded in securing the support of Mūsā Safvetī, the governor of Damascus in 1846-1847 and a follower of the Naqshbandiyya. Perhaps it was at this period that Khānī began to receive an allowance from the state.²⁴ Concluding his term of office by conducting the annual pilgrimage caravan, Safvetī showed his great respect to the shaykh who accompanied him by performing the rites according to his special prescriptions. On his return to Istanbul, he erected a Naqshbandī-Khālīdī lodge at his private expense, and nominated a deputy of Khānī as its head. It is interesting to note that in the endowment charter Safvetī explicitly specified that the head of the lodge must not be a Kurd.²⁵ Muḥammad al-Khānī's visit to Istanbul in 1854 was at the request of his patron, who lodged him at his home and spread his name in the capital. For Khānī, this was an important opportunity to strengthen his claim to head the Khālīdiyya among its Turkish adherents by inspecting the work of his deputies and disciples, giving counsel, and guiding on the path. He had also had the chance to meet Sultan 'Abdūlmecīd, while the latter was on his way to attend the recital of the Prophet's birthday poems (*mawlid*) in his mosque. This encounter caused him, as his grandson relates, a strong spiritual experience (*ḥāl 'azīm*) and uncharacteristic weeping. Six years later, Khānī was opposed to the massacre of the Christians in Damascus. Consequently, Fu'ād Pasha, the Ottoman foreign minister who was sent as a special envoy to handle the rioters, explicitly excluded him and his followers from punishment. Muḥammad al-Khānī died two years later, in 1862.²⁶

In his eulogy of his grandfather, 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī asserts that "God bestowed upon him success on earth, great respect and a voice that the rulers would listen to, despite the fact that he was careful to avoid them. They would often come to visit him, receive his blessing and take the exalted path from him."²⁷ This ideal es-

²³ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 74; Ṣāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wāḥid*, p. 195; both As'ad al-Ṣāḥib's additions and notes.

²⁴ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1038.

²⁵ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 272.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 271.

teem of Muḥammad al-Khānī as a Naqshbandī shaykh who was involved in social and political affairs may have seemed true from the retrospective standpoint of a later member of the Khānī branch in the order, which was excessively weakened toward the end of the nineteenth century. The appraisal of his achievements against the background of his own day reveals a more complex reality. Khānī succeeded perhaps in generating a measure of respect on the part of some governors of Damascus, particularly Safvetī Pasha, but he failed to integrate himself into the upper strata of the city's 'ulama, and certainly had no influence over the central government in Istanbul. This is most evident in the report on his encounter with 'Abdūlmecīd. During his four months stay in the Ottoman capital Khānī was not invited even once into the presence of the Sultan, while the encounter on the way to the mosque was merely accidental and issued in no conversation between them either. On the other hand, Khānī was able to a great extent to preserve his independence vis-à-vis the Ottoman government. He was certainly glad to receive a state allowance to finance his work in his lodge, but his economic basis lay mainly in the lands he held and in trading its produce with the Hijaz. This point signified the essential difference between Khānī and the other major leader of the Khālidiyya in early Tanzimat Damascus, Maḥmūd al-Şāhib.

In the examination of Şāhib's life and claim to succeed Shaykh Khālīd we are compelled to rely on sources that are no less partial than those which deal with Muḥammad al-Khānī. These are basically two biographies composed by his son, As'ad al-Şāhib; the one as part of the editor's addition to Baghdādī's fundamental exposition of the Khālidiyya,²⁸ the other being a more detailed rejoinder to 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī's biographical history of the order.²⁹ Like the sources on Muḥammad al-Khānī, these two biographies were composed during the 1880s, and most historians of Damascus depended on them. Yet, they must be treated with double caution, since As'ad al-Şāhib could not count in his writing on a profound acquaintance with his father, who died when he was merely eleven years old. A considerable part of his account consists, therefore, of anecdotes on the spiritual merits and exemplary acts (*manāqib*) of Maḥmūd al-Şāhib as related in retrospect by his disciples and acquaintances.

²⁸ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 70-75.

²⁹ Şāhib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, pp. 47-92.

Even more important is the fact that As'ad tended to use the figure of his father as a means to advance his own claim to lead the Khālidiyya. Lacking other sources to verify his version, we are obliged to resort to our own, at times arbitrary, deliberation in an attempt to sort out the authentic details of his life, which concern our present discussion, from the additions that allude to the circumstances of his son, to be dealt in the next chapter.

Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib (1783-1866) was the younger brother of Shaykh Khālīd. Their father died when he was still young, and the elder brother, Muḥammad Khān, undertook his education. Şāḥib learned Qur'an and the fundamentals of jurisprudence,³⁰ but was not attracted to study, and as far as I know wrote nothing. Rather, he trod the sufi path under the guidance of Khālīd after the latter's return from India as a Naqshbandī master. Reaching illumination, he became his deputy in 1815 and was authorized to guide his own disciples.³¹ Şāḥib's later biography, as well as the letters that Khālīd wrote him, however, reveal that also as a sufi shaykh he was far inferior to his brother. He was more influenced by ecstatic states, on the one hand, and was particularly concerned with his own well-being, on the other. Nevertheless, when Shaykh Khālīd left Sulaymāniyya, first for Baghdad and then for Damascus, he left Şāḥib as his deputy in the lodge he established in that city. Faced with many opponents among the adherents of the order, Şāḥib decided to join Khālīd shortly after his arrival in Damascus, and then left for the hajj. Subsequently, Khālīd ordered him to return to Sulaymāniyya, where he resumed his position in the following years.³² In 1828, Şāḥib accommodated 'Abdallāh al-Herātī, together with Khālīd's widow and his recently born son, who reached Sulaymāniyya after their expulsion from Syria. On that occasion they informed their host that his brother had bequeathed him all his property in Kurdistan.

Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib left Sulaymāniyya for the last time in 1831,

³⁰ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1455.

³¹ For the text of his permission, in the Naqshbandiyya and Qādiriyya orders, see Şāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 160-162.

³² This is a summary of the contradictory versions produced by his son, As'ad al-Şāḥib. In *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, pp. 54-55, As'ad maintains that his father came to Syria, and Khālīd sent him to the Hijaz and then ordered him back to Sulaymāniyya; in *Al-Hadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 71-72, he asserts, by contrast, that Khālīd summoned him, and that it was Şāḥib who asked to return and resume his work there, a less plausible version. In *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 138-141, he produces a letter from Khālīd to Şāḥib, which he argues to be a reply to the latter's request to perform the hajj.

shortly before Sultan Maḥmūd II allowed the foreign Khālīdīs to return to Syria. It seems, thus, that it was his troubles in the city that drove him to depart, rather than a desire to succeed his brother in Damascus or to lead the order. Following a prolonged stay in Diyārbakr, he reached Damascus at the end of that year, or at the beginning of the next (the *hijrī* year 1247), undoubtedly after the permission was given. Establishing himself in the ‘Addās mosque, which had been the center of Khālīd’s activity, he began to instruct novices and demanded his brother’s property. Šāḥib’s claim to head the order naturally met with the opposition of Herātī, who had returned to the city at the same time, and of his followers. Shortly thereafter Šāḥib departed to the Hijaz, where he is said to have spent the next seven years in spiritual devotions and worship. His son does not specify the reasons that prompted him to leave Damascus, but the timing indicates that he was compelled to make this move after the conquest of the city by Ibrāhīm Pasha. He returned immediately following the evacuation of the Egyptian army from Syria in 1840.

Under Sultan ‘Abdūlmecīd’s reign Maḥmūd al-Šāḥib was actually recognized by the state as the senior Khālīdī shaykh in Damascus. Upon his return to the city Šāḥib resumed the instruction of novices and tried to send deputies to other regions as well. His name reached the ears of the Sultan, who decided to extend him his patronage. In a firman of 1843 he appointed Šāḥib as shaykh and teacher in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, with an allowance that permitted him to lead a comfortable life. This position in one of the leading religious institutions of Damascus secured him a much stronger basis than Khānī’s in the Murādiyya mosque, and he retained it till his death. A series of anecdotes in his biography alludes to the influence that Šāḥib is supposed to have exerted on the Ottoman rulers under the reign of ‘Abdūlmecīd and to the high status he acquired in the city. One of them relates that a man arrived at the lodge and asked the shaykh’s help in procuring an official post, promising in reward half of his salary. He was nominated successively as financial officer (*defterdār*) in Aleppo and Baghdad and as finance minister in Istanbul, but each time he failed to send the promised money and was consequently dismissed.³³ To ‘Alī Riḍā, who lost his post in Baghdad, Šāḥib predicted according to another anecdote that within three months he would become the governor of Syria,

³³ Šāḥib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, pp. 73-74.

as actually happened. In his three years of tenure this governor supervised the construction of the lodge on Khālīd's tomb, at the same time devotedly serving Šāhib and asking his counsel.³⁴ Toward Safvetī Pasha, the governor who sponsored Muḥammad al-Khānī, Šāhib was evidently hostile. One anecdote relates that Safvetī's brother, who served as the provincial *defterdār*, promised Šāhib to cover the lodge walls with lead if he was appointed as governor of Damascus. Safvetī duly received the post, but his brother declined to fulfill his promise. Therefore, when he departed at the head of the hajj caravan, another governor arrived to replace him. In another anecdote Safvetī and the commander of the army stationed in the province are described as Naqshbandī adherents who obey the shaykh's demand that they supply the needs of the lodge.³⁵ A last anecdote alludes to Maḥmūd al-Šāhib's position toward the massacre of the Christians in 1860. It relates that his spirit was troubled by Aḥmad Pasha's conduct, and that he invoked the spiritual power (*himma*) of Shaykh Khālīd, "the sharp sword", against him. Forty days later the governor was executed by Fu'ād Pasha.³⁶

Sultan 'Abdūlmecīd's patronage and the lucrative base in the Sulaymāniyya lodge could have helped Maḥmūd al-Šāhib to advance his position in the leadership of the Khālidiyya. There is no evidence in the sources that he devoted much effort to attaining this purpose. Šāhib corresponded with some of Khālīd's deputies, especially those from the Kurdish regions, but in this period he authorized few deputies of his own. His son counts in his biography eleven deputies,³⁷ most of them ordained prior to his arrival in Damascus. Only two among these *khulafā'* were active in Syria. One of them, a native of Herat, was sent by Šāhib to Aleppo and subsequently to the adjacent town of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, but in both he met with very limited success. The other, Abū Bakr al-Kilālī of Kurdistan, was by far the most outstanding religious figure that As'ad al-Šāhib reckons as a deputy of his father. Yet, none of the other sources at our disposal confirm this relationship, and it seems that Kilālī was in fact closer to the section of 'ulama to which Khānī belonged.³⁸

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 74; Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 74.

³⁶ Šāhib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 77.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59, 63-65. A shorter list of deputies appears also in Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 84.

³⁸ On Abū Bakr al-Kilālī see ch. 6.

Possibly a disciple of Khālīd himself,³⁹ he might have taken the path from Maḥmūd al-Šāḥib as a token of respect toward his brother, while As‘ad may have inflated the importance of this discipleship in order to show the affinity of the leading ‘ulama of late Tanzimat Damascus, who were Kilālī’s disciples, to his father. According to the testimony he puts in his mouth, Kilālī decided to join the Naqshbandiyya in 1846, after he sought God’s direction (*istikhāra*) and was ordered to approach Maḥmūd al-Šāḥib.⁴⁰

Instead of working within the framework of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya order, Šāḥib chose to dedicate his efforts to enhance his position among the religious men of Damascus. The anecdotes that are dispersed in his biography allude to his connections with many of Khālīd’s great disciples, who preserved their affinity to the Khālidiyya while now joining the local tendency in the city. These included ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī and Ḥāmid al-‘Aṭṭār, who themselves held teaching posts in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, ‘Umar al-Ghazzī, who thanks to the marriage of his sister to Khālīd was also Šāḥib’s relative, as well as Muḥammad al-Khānī himself. These connections, however, seem to have been founded on the respect that these ‘ulama showed toward Maḥmūd al-Šāḥib as the brother and deputy of Shaykh Khālīd, rather than on any appreciation on their part of his personality or work. Kuzbarī and his colleagues certainly did not regard themselves as Šāḥib’s disciples either in ‘ilm or in the *ṭarīqa*. Maḥmūd al-Šāḥib, on his part, was more attuned toward members of the younger generation of religious men in Damascus who had no direct acquaintance with the legacy of Shaykh Khālīd.

The rise of the New Ottoman Tendency

A close examination of the biographical dictionaries of Damascus reveals that none of the ‘ulama that As‘ad al-Šāḥib counts as disciples of his father actually studied the religious sciences with him or, in most cases, trod the path under his guidance. There is no doubt that this list of “disciples” was compiled in order to elevate Maḥmūd’s status, and thus to demonstrate that the ancestors of As‘ad’s own colleagues were also attached to the Khālidiyya. Nevertheless, his

³⁹ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 103.

⁴⁰ Šāḥib, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 73.

list supplies us with a glimpse into the roots of the 'ulama group which chose to remain attached to the Ottoman administration through all its vicissitudes almost to the end of the Empire, the group to which Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib, and following him his son As'ad, belonged.

Like the most faithful Damascene adherents of Shaykh Khālid in the disturbed period that preceded the Egyptian occupation of Syria, most of his brother's "disciples" after the restoration of Ottoman rule were upstart 'ulama who hailed from families engaged in trade. This background rendered them more capable of exploiting the new opportunities opened before the religious estate of the city with the introduction of the Tanzimat reforms. Similarly to Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib, their goal was to join the ranks of the established 'ulama, who up till then kept the senior religious positions in the Ottoman administration exclusively for themselves. Accordingly, most of these upstart 'ulama focused on acquiring the religious sciences that were most instrumental for their advancement, particularly the official Ḥanafī jurisprudence. The centers of their activity were in the new provincial council (*majlis*) and in the Umayyad mosque. Thus, on the basis of Albert Hourani's model, Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib's "disciples", who joined the ranks of the urban notables by strengthening their attachment to the central government, can be seen as part of the new Ottoman tendency in Damascus. As I have already stressed, this definition does not relate to the degree of political loyalty of these 'ulama to the Ottoman government, indeed not even to the program of reforms that made possible their own rise, but only to their new functioning within the Ottoman administration.

The elder members of the new Ottoman tendency among the 'ulama of Damascus were the heads of the Uştuwānī and the Jābī families. Sa'īd al-Uştuwānī (1821-1888) traveled to Istanbul immediately following the ascension of 'Abdūlmecīd in 1839, returning with an appointment as preacher (*khaṭīb*) and Ḥanafī prayer leader (*imām*) in the Umayyad mosque, though he was only nineteen. His main promotion occurred after 1860, when he was appointed to the provincial council in 1863 and subsequently as qadi of Damascus in 1869, a post which was normally reserved for Turks. However, toward the end of his life Uştuwānī seems to have changed his tendency. He resigned from all his posts in 1873, following a dispute with the governor on the question of agricultural land acquisition by foreigners. Subsequently, under the Ḥamīdian regime, he even refrained from competing for the post of Ḥanafī mufti, which became vacant

in 1887, because he was unwilling to humiliate himself before those who were forwarded by the government. Uṣṭuwānī was exceptional among Ṣāḥib's "disciples" also in possessing a clear sufi inclination. He was initiated into the 'Alawiyya path in Istanbul and, at a later period, into the Rashīdiyya in the Hijaz.⁴¹ The success of 'Arif al-Jābī (d. 1886) was even more spectacular, and he was nominated qadi in a number of provinces of the Empire. The rise of the family to high religious status began already under his father, Muḥammad al-Jābī (1793-1881), a merchant who traveled more than once to Istanbul till he secured a position in the provincial council in 1844. Becoming very influential, he was himself appointed qadi in various principal cities of the Empire, including in Damascus immediately following the 1860 riots and later in Istanbul, receiving unprecedented high decorations. His son 'Arif followed in his footsteps and returned to Damascus only in his last years.⁴²

For the history of religious reform trends in late Ottoman Damascus, however, more important were the junior "disciples" of Maḥmūd al-Ṣāḥib, the heads of the Munayyir and the Khaṭīb families. Muḥammad al-Munayyir (c.1806-1874) was a scion of a Shāfi'i family of 'ulama that was engaged in commerce and agriculture. His father died in his youth, but he was nonetheless able to devote himself to religious studies, specializing in hadith, Qur'an exegesis, and jurisprudence, in which he converted to the Ḥanafī school. Munayyir taught these subjects in the Umayyad mosque, as well as in the Sināniyya mosque in the south of the city, and while on a pilgrimage was honored to give a lesson in the Prophet's mosque in Medina. He acquired much influence in the administration of Damascus after 1860, and following a visit to Istanbul in 1866 he was appointed president of the educational council of Syria (*majlis al-ʿilm*).⁴³

'Abd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb (c.1806-1871) was claimed by As'ad al-Ṣāḥib as a disciple of his father not only in the religious sciences but also in the Naqshbandī path. Khaṭīb was born into a Qādirī family

⁴¹ On Sa'īd al-Uṣṭuwānī see Muḥammad Muṭī' al-Ḥāfiẓ and Nizār Abāza, *Ta'rikh 'ulamā' Dimashq fī al-Qarn al-Rābi' 'Ashar al-Hijrī* (3 vols. Damascus, 1986-1991), pp. 47-49; Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Uṣṭuwānī, *Mashāhid wa-Aḥdāth Dimashqiyya fī Muntashaf al-Qarn al-Tāsi' 'Ashar, 1256-1277H/1840-1861M* (n.p., 1993), p. 49-52.

⁴² On Muḥammad al-Jābī see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1347-1350; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 207-208; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 692-693; Uṣṭuwānī, p. 209. On 'Arif al-Jābī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 41.

⁴³ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1346-1347; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 234; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 678-679.

of 'ulama, and earned his living as a drug merchant before turning to religious studies. Unlike most of his colleagues, he was not content with the lessons of the Damascene 'ulama and completed his studies in Egypt. Excelling in various sciences, he was appointed to a teaching post in the Umayyad mosque, as well as in the adjacent Khayyāṭīn college. Khaṭīb developed a genuine reformist approach toward religious matters, revealed above all in the unusual step he took in the education of his four sons, entrusting each one of them to a teacher from a different madhhab. Although severely criticized, he persisted in this for four years before returning them to his own Shāfi'ī school.⁴⁴ All four followed in his footsteps and taught in the Umayyad mosque. Three were allegedly also disciples of Maḥmūd al-Şāhib, the fourth preferring to join the Shādhiliyya–Yashruṭiyya order.⁴⁵ The most outstanding son was Abū al-Khayr al-Khaṭīb (1831-1889), the first in the family to be nominated in 1870 to the lucrative post of preacher in the Umayyad mosque, alongside members of the Uşṭuwānī and Manīnī families. The subjects toward which he was most inclined were Sufism and hadith.⁴⁶

Though clearly ambitious, the 'ulama of the new Ottoman tendency in Damascus of the early Tanzimat period seem to have been careful to maintain good relations with their senior colleagues, the established 'ulama who became the foremost component among the city leadership. Considerably promoted under the late Tanzimat regime, they also kept good relations with their counterparts of the local tendency, into whose hands the religious leadership of the city now passed. In this respect too they were reminiscent of Maḥmūd al-Şāhib. The latent contradiction between the "Ottoman" and the "local" 'ulama of Damascus thus became evident only in the next generation, when some of their successors turned their administrative affinity for the Ottoman government into a politico-religious loyalty to the Islamic policy of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II. These heirs, along with As'ad al-Şāhib, proved to be the sworn enemies of the Salafiyya trend. The 'ulama of the new Ottoman tendency of Damascus left no notable writings that would enable us to analyze their thought during the Tanzimat period. Dedicating most of their energies to the struggle for appointments in the renewed Ottoman

⁴⁴ Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 158-159; Hışnī, pp. 669-670.

⁴⁵ On the Shādhiliyya–Yashruṭiyya order see ch. 6.

⁴⁶ Hāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 98-99.

administration, the task of formulating their views was left therefore largely to their sons and successors under the Ḥamīdian regime.

The Lapse during the Late Tanzimat Period

With the passing away of the first generation of Khālīd's deputies, it became evident that the Naqshbandī–Khālīdī order had succeeded in striking roots in Damascus, and to a large extent also in its satellite provincial towns, Hamah and Homs. It was unable to leave a permanent mark in Tripoli, where the activity of Khālīd's local deputy, Aḥmad al-Urwādī, remained limited, and ceased altogether with his death. However, even in Damascus itself there was a noticeable weakening in the activity of the second generation Khālīdī shaykhs. Concomitantly, the internal rivalry in the order also abated, principally because Maḥmūd al-Ṣāḥib declined to appoint any successor. It was thus only among the Khānīs that some of the original drive to unify the Khālidiyya under their leadership, and to consolidate their position as the leaders of the *ṭarīqa* in Damascus, persisted.

The heir of Muḥammad al-Khānī as head of the Naqshbandiyya order in Damascus was his elder son, Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger (1831-1898).⁴⁷ Family succession was a common practice among the sufi orders of the time, just as among the senior office holding 'ulama, though in both cases it often resulted in corruption. Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, however, was very punctilious in the education of his son and regarded him a worthy heir. He himself taught him the traditional religious sciences, mainly jurisprudence, hadith and Sufism; but through one of his senior disciples, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, he enabled him to become familiar also with the more modern sciences which the latter had acquired while studying in Egypt in the 1840s.⁴⁸ In addition, he bestowed upon him the Naqshbandiyya, as a blessing, already at the age of seven. Attracted to Sufism, Khānī the younger began to tread the path a few years later under his father's guidance. He accompanied him on his visit

⁴⁷ The main sources on Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger are 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 276-290; Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Ta'ṭīr al-Mashāmm fī Ma'āthir Dimashq al-Shām* (personal collection, 1901), pp. 22-24; Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 152-155.

⁴⁸ on Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī see pp. 204-206.

to Istanbul in 1854, and upon their return he performed the *khalwa* several times, both in the Murādiyya mosque and at Khālid's tomb, before reaching perfection. Consequently, his father accorded him complete authorization (*khilāfa mutlaqa*), promoting him over the rest of the deputies and permitting him to engage in guidance. Two years later, on his deathbed, Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder nominated his son as his successor and enjoined the other *khulafā'* to obey him. In view of this explicit testament, his son had no difficulties in consolidating his leadership over the family branch of the Khālidiyya. Following in his father's footsteps Khānī the younger guided novices, conducted the *khatm al-khwājagān* sessions, and taught various religious sciences. He kept his seat in the Murādiyya mosque, where his allowance was also continued.

Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger began to consolidate his position, in Damascus and in the order in general, already upon his authorization as the principal deputy of his father in 1859. Immediately thereafter he departed to Istanbul to secure the continuity of the family's connection with its patron, Mūsā Safvetī, and perhaps also to receive the allegiance of the other Khālidi deputies in the capital. In 1861 Khānī set out in the company of his teacher, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, for Egypt, where he was anxious to obtain certificates from the leading 'ulama of al-Azhar and to visit the tombs of its saints. A year later, already as the head of his family branch of the Khālidiyya, he passed again through Egypt on his way to the hajj. Khānī the younger's struggle for recognition was further buttressed by his marriage to Fāṭima, the daughter of Shaykh Khālid and 'Ā'isha al-Ghazzī, in 1863.⁴⁹ It fortified his position both in the *ṭarīqa*, by relating him to the family of the founder, and among the upper strata of 'ulama and notables in Damascus, by binding him to one of the leading families of the city at the time.⁵⁰ The fact that this marriage took place shortly after the death of 'Umar al-Ghazzī in 1860 and of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder two years later, when Fāṭima was already thirty-eight years old, may indicate that the relationship between these two disciples of Khālid was far from cordial. Ghazzī may have remained bitter over Khālid's nomination of Khānī as his deputy over himself, and subsequently may have refused to recognize his leadership in the order.

⁴⁹ On Fāṭima bint Khālid see 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 258.

⁵⁰ On the Ghazzīs see Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 169-174; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 32.

Muḥammad al-Khānī's strengthened position in Damascus during the late Tanzimat period had repercussions also in other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly striking was the invitation extended to him by the rulers of Mecca to transfer the center of his order to their city in 1867. Like his father, Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger held agricultural lands in the Ghūṭa,⁵¹ and traded in their produce with the Hijaz. He often joined the Syrian hajj caravan, first as his father's representative and subsequently as head of the family. In his first visit to Mecca following his ordination as a Khālidi deputy in 1859, Khānī still attracted no special attention, but five years later, according to the description of his son, the 'ulama and notables flocked to him, and he received the highest marks of honor that the city could offer. The gates of the Ka'ba were opened for him every morning by a respectable local 'alim, and his name was registered in the prestigious book of *'ulamā' al-ḥaramayn*. These were followed by the suggestion of the Sharifs of Mecca, amir 'Abdallāh and his brother and later successor amir Ḥusayn al-'Awn, that he stay in the city and head a Naqshbandī lodge, to be built specially for him. The two seem to have attached importance to sufi reformist activity under their aegis in general, as part of their struggle to preserve their autonomy vis-à-vis the Ottoman government.⁵² Indeed, Muḥammad al-Khānī frequented the circle of the great reformist sufi masters who had established their seat in the city at the time. These included Muḥammad al-Fāsī, who headed his own branch of the Shādhiliyya–Madaniyya,⁵³ and Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd, a major disciple of Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and the founder of the Rashīdiyya order.⁵⁴ Khānī's affinity to these masters must have stimulated 'Abdallāh and Ḥusayn al-'Awn to attempt to attract him to the city

⁵¹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, vol. 3 (suppl.), p. 342.

⁵² William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control, 1840-1908* (Columbus, Oh., 1984), pp. 153-185; Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Sultan Abdūllāhid II and the Sharifs of Mecca (1880-1900)," *AAS*, 9 (1973), pp. 2-5.

⁵³ On Muḥammad al-Fāsī see pp. 197-198.

⁵⁴ On Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd see R. S. O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition* (Evanston, Ill., 1990), pp. 154-169; Mark J.R. Sedgwick, "The Heirs of Ahmad Ibn Idris: The Spread and Normalization of a Sufi Order, 1799-1996." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Bergen, 1998), pp. 74-92. Rashīd's principal deputy in Damascus was Muḥammad 'Ayyid al-Safarjalānī (1838-1931) noted as the first reformist educator in the city for the exemplary schools he founded there in the 1870s with improved methods of instruction. On Safarjalānī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 450-453.

as well. For Khānī, however, this was a too far-reaching offer. He had no intention of leaving Damascus, especially as the head of the rival Khālīdī branch in the city, Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib, had died a year earlier, and he had no reason to transfer the center of the order from Khālīd's place of burial.

Yet, despite the conspicuous improvement in the social position of the Khānīs in Damascus during the late Tanzimat period, the family did not succeed in attaining notable status. Moreover, its economic base proved too precarious to observe Shaykh Khālīd's instruction to keep distance from the rulers. The lands that it held and the modest allowance it received for maintaining the Murādiyya mosque, were sufficient to finance the activity of Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger at the head of the order, but not to sustain additional members of the family as well. Thus his brother Aḥmad (1836-1899), who was also ordained as deputy by their father and assisted him in the lodge, turned reluctantly to state employment. This entailed moving from his own Shāfi'ī to the official Ḥanafī school. Aḥmad al-Khānī fulfilled modest functions as assistant judge (*nā'ib qaḍā'*) in Damascus itself and in neighboring towns, and is said to have administered justice strictly and in accordance with the shari'a. Resigning once because of his qualms about working in the service of the rulers, he was soon obliged to resume his office.⁵⁵ The same resort to official employment became the rule among his younger brothers and other members of the family.

As far as I know, apart from the short biography of his father mentioned above Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger also has left no writings. To examine his views we must therefore satisfy ourselves with the brief notes in which his son, 'Abd al-Majīd, sums up his biography. Like his father, Muḥammad al-Khānī regarded himself as the head of the entire Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya order. Accordingly, he allowed no one to perform the *rābi'a* without directing himself to the figure of Shaykh Khālīd and severely reprimanded those shaykhs who instructed their disciples to raise their own figures in their imaginations. Khānī apparently also continued to conduct the *khalwa*, though unlike his father he ordained only a handful of deputies, non of them from among his disciples in Damascus, not even his own sons. 'Abd al-Majīd refers this small number of deputies to his father's excessive strictness in observing the principles of the order. More preci-

⁵⁵ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 163-164; 'A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 275-276; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 184-185.

sely, it derived from Khānī's engagement, beyond his practical guidance on the Naqshbandī path, in the theosophy of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī. This engagement was the result of his participation in the circle of Amir 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, who arrived in Damascus toward the end of Khānī's term of discipleship. Moreover, the recognition Khānī received in Damascus and beyond in the 1860s, during his most active period, derived to a large extent from his membership in this circle. The later part of Khānī's biography must, therefore, be discussed in Part Two, within the wider framework of the religious awakening generated in Damascus by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī in the late Tanzimat period.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY UNDER THE AUTOCRATIC REGIMES (1880-1918)

The activity of the Khālidiyya in Damascus, which had been so weakened during the late Tanzimat period, received, along with most other sufi orders in the Ottoman Empire, a new impetus under the Islamic policy of Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II. The foremost figure in this sufi awakening was Shaykh Abū al-Hudā al-Şayyādī, his principal religious propaganda vehicle toward the Arab provinces, and particularly Syria. ‘Abdülhamīd drew this undistinguished Rifā’ī to his entourage in Istanbul at the beginning of his reign, nominated him as head of all sufi shaykhs of the Empire, and accorded him the highest ranks and decorations. Abū al-Hudā constructed and renovated many Rifā’ī lodges at the Sultan’s expense, appointed his protégés as their heads, took under his aegis various family sub-orders, and obtained for all those who joined him the exemption from military service which was the prerogative of the religious students. These lodges turned under his guidance into centers for mobilizing Muslim public opinion in favor of the absolute rule of the Sultan. The main propaganda material to be used in them was the numerous books published by Abū al-Hudā himself, in which he defended ‘Abdülhamīd II’s claim to the Caliphate and stressed the duty to unite behind him and unreservedly obey him. In addition, he was much engaged in proving his own genealogy as a Rifā’ī shaykh and a sharīf, as well as in spreading his order. The strict censorship of the Ḥamīdian regime was designed to ensure that books advancing other opinions would not be published.¹

The support of the Sultan in sufi activity was not confined, however, to Abū al-Hudā al-Şayyādī of the Rifā’iyya, and to Zāfir al-Madanī of the Shādhiliyya who filled for him a similar function in the capital in respect of the North African provinces. It was extended to many local sufi shaykhs of various orders throughout the

¹ Abu-Manneh, “Abdulhamid and Abulhuda,” pp. 131-142. On the Ḥamīdian censorship see also Donald J. Cioeta, “Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876-1908,” *IJMES*, 10 (1979), pp. 387-407.

Ottoman Empire, and especially in its Arab provinces, who were willing to serve the autocratic rule that he established in the name of Islam. In Damascus, where the impact of Abū al-Hudā was less conspicuous than in northern Syria or in Iraq,² one of the foremost figures among these shaykhs was Asʿad al-Šāhib of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya. Traveling to Istanbul after ʿAbdülhamīd II's Islamic policy was introduced in Damascus at the beginning of the 1880s, he managed to secure his father's position in the lucrative and well-endowed Sulaymāniyya lodge, despite the fact that Maḥmūd al-Šāhib had died fifteen years earlier without appointing any successor. In his attachment to the Ottoman central government Asʿad followed in the footsteps of his father under the Tanzimat regimes, though his model was rather Abū al-Hudā al-Šayyādī. Like Abū al-Hudā he proved willing, to the best of his ability, to harness the Khālidiyya, and its orthodox principles, in the service of ʿAbdülhamīd. In this, Šāhib's conduct marked a further deviation from the Naqshbandī principle that Shaykh Khālīd had so emphasized, namely to maintain a superior distance from the rulers. The patronage Šāhib received as a reward from the Ottoman state helped him to overcome his lack of roots in Damascus and acquire an influential position in the city, one which far exceeded that of his father during the Tanzimat period.

Asʿad al-Šāhib's attachment to the Islamic policy of Sultan ʿAbdülhamīd II thus renewed, and greatly aggravated, the split that had become apparent among the Khālīdī leaders in Damascus of the previous generation over the question of the attitude to be taken toward the rulers. The established branch of the Khānī family, though economically stressed, sought to remain detached from the Ottoman administration.³ Šāhib, by contrast, did not hesitate to exploit the influential position he had acquired under the patronage of the Ḥamīdian regime to claim the leadership of the order in Damascus for himself. This was essentially a local struggle, but Šāhib's challenge to the Khānīs was formulated, parallel to their own claims, as pertaining to the leadership of the *ṭarīqa* in general. His challenge rested on his status as Khālīd's nephew, and on his endeavors to

² We have information on only one Rifāʿī lodge that was founded in Damascus during the reign of ʿAbdülhamīd II; see Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *Khīṭaṭ al-Shām* (6 vols. Damascus, 1343-1347/1925-1928), vol. 6, p. 143. On the Damascene ʿulama who were attached to Abū al-Hudā see below.

³ See ch. 7.

defend the founder's novelties in the path, above all in the *rābiṭa*, against its detractors. Thus, in the successors' generation, the gap between the ideal of preserving the integrity of the Khālidiyya under one leadership, which could be surmised from their writings, and the reality of an inner struggle between two weak local branches, reached absurd proportions. The outcome of the struggle was ultimately determined in favor of the branch that was ready to rely on the power of the state. With its backing, As'ad al-Şāhib was able to exploit the rivalries within the extending Khānī family to secure its leadership for his own candidate. The reliance on the support of the government, however, reflected his recognition that the organizational novelties of Shaykh Khālīd in the order had lost much of their validity. Şāhib's writings betray, therefore, despite his defense of the form of these practices, an increasing tendency to compromise their substance.

The struggle which developed within the Naqshbandī-Khālīdī order of Damascus in the shadow of the Ḥamīdian regime, like the split in its ranks during the preceding era of reforms, was interwoven with the wider polarization that emerged among the 'ulama of the city, and among the Ottoman elite in general, as the late Tanzimat faded away. The roots of this polarization lay in the opposing attitudes adopted then by the statesmen of the capital toward the two interrelated subjects of reform and the ideal system of government. One group favored the continuation of the Western-inspired reforms introduced by the Grand Viziers 'Āli and Fu'ād Pashas. It espoused the granting of equal rights to all subjects of the Empire on the basis of territorial identity and loyalty to the state (the principle of Ottomanism), and was prepared to allow for some measure of decentralization to secure its implementation. The other group strove to restore actual power into the hands of the Sultan in accordance with the orthodox political teaching of Islam. It stressed the supremacy of the Muslim element in the Empire and the subjects' duty of loyalty to the person of the Sultan, which implied his right to establish a centralized government under his own control.⁴ The Islamic policy of 'Abdülhamīd II, in which mobilizing the support of the popular sufi orders constituted only one facet, was designed to ensure such a rule.⁵ In Damascus those who became attached to it were principally second generation 'ulama of the Ottoman ten-

⁴ Abu-Manneh, *ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵ Deringil, pp. 44-67.

dency. The position of these 'ulama in the city depended upon their connections to the central administration, and it was only natural that they would transfer their loyalty to the Sultan when he imposed himself as its actual head. Concomitantly, they adopted the official view that the absolute rule of the Caliph of the Muslims was a precept of the shari'a, as propagated by Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī, and that the Sultan's main concern was with the welfare of his subjects, as Aḥmad 'Izzat al-Ābid sought to demonstrate.⁶ These men of religion, whom we may thus characterize as belonging to the Ottoman—orthodox tendency, could accomplish under the patronage of the central government the path inaugurated by their fathers during the early Tanzimat regime, and to seize the senior religious positions in Damascus. The second generation 'ulama of the local tendency, who basically supported the continuation of the Tanzimat reforms, were consequently driven into a stand of opposition in the city. From among this group of local—reformist 'ulama gradually emerged the Salafī trend, which will be dealt in the last part of this study.

In the wake of the Young Turk revolution of 1908, and the failure of the conservative counter-revolution in the following year, it seemed that in Damascus, as in the entire Ottoman Empire, the 'ulama and sufi shaykhs who served the autocratic regime of 'Abdülhamīd II had been defeated. This was symbolized by the arrest and humiliation of Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī, who died shortly thereafter. Yet, after the initial excitement subsided, and, more particularly, after the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) gained the upper hand in the government, it became apparent that the new regime sought to harness to his service the same elements that its predecessor had. After all, the basically nationalist and secular ideology of the Young Turks notwithstanding, in their commitment to centralization they proved to be the loyal successors of 'Abdülhamīd.⁷ Among the 'ulama of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency in Damascus, this centralizing policy caused a new split. As resistance to the methods of the CUP intensified, especially under the harsh military rule it imposed on Syria during the First World War, many chose to change sides

⁶ For the role of 'Izzat al-Ābid in the Sultan's court see Abd al-Latif Tibawi, *A Modern History of Syria including Lebanon and Palestine* (London, 1969), p. 183; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, pp. 37-39; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, p. 231.

⁷ Kayali, pp. 208-212.

and join the religious opposition of the Salafiyya, and even more so the nationalist opposition of the Arab societies. Some of the sufi shaykhs who belonged to this trend, however, felt more than ever the need for the ruler's protection, both because of the strengthening of the rationalist tendencies in the Empire and because of the consolidation of the Salafī trend against them. The foremost religious man in this group was again As'ad al-Şāhib, who remained in consequence the leading Khālīdī shaykh in the city also under the Young Turk regime. His loyalty to the Ottoman government reached its peak during the First World War, when he did not hesitate to back even the stiff policy of Jamāl Pasha, the military governor of Syria, toward the leaders of the nascent Arab nationalist movement. In his writings of this period, As'ad set out to defend the mystic way against its modern assailants, both Westernizers and Salafīs. At the same time, he was driven to relinquish entirely the organizational novelties of Shaykh Khālīd in the Naqshbandiyya and, with them, its unique path within the general Sufi framework.

Challenging the Leadership under the Ḥamīdian Regime

As'ad al-Şāhib (1855-1928) inherited his father's position as the Naqshbandī-Khālīdī shaykh in the Sulaymāniyya lodge in Damascus fifteen years after his death, following 'Abdülḥamīd II's consolidation of power. He fitted in with the Sultan's sufi policy throughout his reign and was able to preserve, and even fortify, his position in the days of the Young Turks. Under these two regimes Şāhib edited and published the fundamental expositions of the Khālīdiyya sub-order, as well as his own writings. These appeared in two separate periods, one during the first half of the Ḥamīdian regime, when he was establishing his position within the order, and the other during the First World War, when the opportunity arose again to demonstrate his loyalty to the Ottoman rulers. Şāhib's rivals in Damascus contended that his books were written for him by others, and the enormous gap between the traditional, and at times unintelligible style, of his early writings and the readable modern style of the later ones suggests that their claims were not unfounded.⁸ In any case,

⁸ Qāsimī, *Ta'fir al-Mashāmm*, p. 57—on the biography of his father from the beginning of the Ḥamīdian period; Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Al-Mudhakkirāt* (4 vols. Damascus, 1948-1951), vol. 3, p. 979—on his later writings.

all the writings that carry Ṣāhib's name reflect his opinions, thus enabling us to examine in detail his views on the course of the Khālidiyya in the last part of the Ottoman period. They also contain many allusions to his struggle against the Khānīs and to his attitude toward the Ottoman Sultan and State. On the other hand, the information we have on As'ad al-Ṣāhib's life is extremely limited. There is no genuine biography and almost no references to him in the biographical dictionaries of Damascus or of the Khālidiyya. Therefore, we are obliged to rely on the haphazard details that appear in the historical writings of the period and, especially, on those that are found scattered in his own writings. We must also not forget that Ṣāhib's statements need to be treated with special caution since, like those of his model, Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī, they were intended to prove his genealogy and virtues, as well as the merits of the order he claimed to head, rather than simply to record his life and teachings.

As'ad al-Ṣāhib based his authority within the Naqshbandī order first and foremost on his father, who died when he was merely eleven. He mentions his affinity to him on the two occasions in which he discusses his sufi guides. In the first, written at the beginning of his career in the 1880s, As'ad relies on the Naqshbandī principle of spiritual transmission to claim that he was educated by the "spirituality" of his father.⁹ In his writings from the First World War, by contrast, he maintains that he eventually took from him the path.¹⁰ This discrepancy becomes even more pronounced when Ṣāhib refers to his actual guides in the Khālidiyya. According to his early version, he took the path from Shaykh 'Alī al-Kharbūtī of Kurdistan.¹¹ In the later writings, however, Ṣāhib claims to have had six masters, two of them acting as his practical guides and the other four adding their blessing. According to this version, Kharbūtī belonged only to the second type, while the two Khālidi shaykhs on whom Ṣāhib came now to rely were those who worked in Damascus. These were Aḥmad al-Zamalkānī, whose authority he ascribes directly to Shaykh Khālīd rather than to Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder,¹² and 'Īsā al-Kurdī, who won much respect after his immigration to the city in 1878. Almost all the Khālidi shaykhs whom Ṣāhib mentions

⁹ As'ad al-Ṣāhib, *Nūr al-Hidāya wal-'Irfān fī Sirr al-Rābi'a wal-Tawajjuh wa-Khatm al-Khwājagān* (Cairo, 1311 A.H.), p. 25.

¹⁰ Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 43.

¹¹ Ṣāhib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, *ibid.*

¹² See p. 88.

as his guides were Kurds, and about none of them does he claim that he had authorized him as his deputy.¹³

It is difficult to determine the exact date on which As'ad al-Şāhib was nominated to his father's position in the Sulaymāniyya lodge. We do know, however, that in 1880 Şāhib visited Istanbul and resided in one of its Naqshbandī lodges, apparently to demonstrate his loyalty to the Sultan and secure that position for himself.¹⁴ In 1885 he was already depicted by an independent source as the shaykh of the Naqshbandī lodge in Damascus.¹⁵ During his visit in the capital Şāhib became acquainted with Aḥmad Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Gümüşhānevī, the deputy of Aḥmad al-Urwādī of Tripoli, whose views regarding the course of the Naqshbandiyya in the Ḥamīdian era were close to his own. Three years later Şāhib visited Tripoli himself, paying homage to Urwādī's tomb.¹⁶ In 1886 he acquired the friendship of the head of the Qādirī order in the city, a local notable who spread his name in the Syrian littoral.¹⁷ Şāhib also maintained some connections with Naqshbandī shaykhs from the Kurdish areas of Iraq and Anatolia, but his base remained the lucrative and well-endowed Sulaymāniyya lodge, where he would conduct the *khatm al-khwājagān*.¹⁸ Nevertheless, he does not mention in his writings any engagement in spreading the order or in instructing novices. The impression we get is that, like his father, As'ad was more inclined to the ecstatic aspects of Sufism, and that he too was particularly concerned with his worldly interests.¹⁹

As'ad al-Şāhib decided to openly make his claim to the leadership of the Khālidiyya in Damascus in 1890, following 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī's publication of his biographical dictionary of the Naqshbandī masters, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*. Maḥmūd al-Şāhib was not mentioned in the book at all, and his son, regarding it as a humiliation, severed his relations with the Khānīs. All attempts at recon-

¹³ Şāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 44-45.

¹⁴ Şāhib, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 31.

¹⁵ Muḥammad 'Abd al-Jawād al-Qāyātī, *Nafḥat al-Bashām fī Riḥlat al-Shām* (2nd. ed. Beirut, 1401/1981), p. 128.

¹⁶ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 77. On Gümüşhanevi and his relation to Urwādī see Abu-Manneh, "Shaykh Ahmed Gümüşhanevi", pp. 107-109.

¹⁷ 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Zu'bī, *Urjūzat al-Ādāb al-Murḍiyya fī al-Tarīqa al-Naqshbandiyya al-Khālidiyya* (Beirut, 1313 A.H.); Zu'bī defines himself in this epistle as *nāshir 'alam al-nisba al-Mujaddidiyya al-Khālidiyya fī al-sawāḥil al-shāmiyya*.

¹⁸ Şāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 239; *idem*, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 18.

¹⁹ Şāhib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, p. 74; Ḥişnī, p. 952.

ciliation between them failed.²⁰ As‘ad al-Şāhib strove to establish his right to the leadership in two parallel ways. On the one hand, he reopened the old question of Shaykh Khālīd’s succession in order to refute the claim of the Khānīs. On the other hand, he elevated the status of his father, Maḥmūd al-Şāhib as the deputy most deserving to succeed his brother, and concomitantly demonstrated his own direct link to him.

Şāhib opened his attack on the Khānīs by challenging the right to the leadership of ‘Abdallāh al-Herātī, who, as will be remembered, had been nominated as head of the Khālidiyya during the epidemic of 1827 and subsequently had appointed Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder as his successor in 1832. Şāhib argued that Ismā‘īl al-Ghazzī’s testimony about Khālīd’s naming of Herātī as second to Anārānī in his list of successors before his departure to the Hijaz was contrary to his explicit testament and therefore unreliable. He pointed out that a single witness is unacceptable from the shari‘a point of view, and that the testimony of Ghazzī, who presented himself as the fourth successor even though he was not a deputy, was particularly suspect. In Şāhib’s opinion, Anārānī did not nominate any *khatīfa* to succeed him, since Khālīd had already fixed the order of his successors, and it was unlikely that his foremost deputy would defy him. Şāhib could thus conclude that Herātī had no right to head the *ṭarīqa* and that, consequently, the claim of the Khānīs, who relied on him in their chain, was invalid.²¹ He further maintained that Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder was not a *khatīfa* of Shaykh Khālīd himself, but only of Anārānī. Accordingly, he poignantly assailed Ibrāhīm Faṣīḥ al-Ḥaydarī, his contemporary from Baghdad, for maintaining that Khānī filled the place of Khālīd (*qā’im maqām*) in Damascus. Şāhib stressed the fact that in the testament only four successors were mentioned and Khānī was not among them. He also rejected Ḥaydarī’s claim that Khālīd nominated trustees (*awṣiyā’*) rather than successors, which in Şāhib’s view was designed only to elevate the status of his uncle, ‘Ubaydallāh al-Ḥaydarī, who was not mentioned in the testament.²²

Since his father was not mentioned among the successors in Shaykh Khālīd’s testament either, As‘ad al-Şāhib sought to establish his right to head the order mainly on their family connection. He claimed

²⁰ Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 57.

²¹ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 62-65.

²² Şāhib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, pp. 82-83.

that Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib was the first, and favorite, deputy of his brother, and that he had vigorously defended him against his rivals in Sulaymāniyya. After receiving from Khālīd full authorization (*khilāfa mutlaqa*) the other deputies had acknowledged Maḥmūd's high rank and many came to study with him.²³ At the same time, As'ad tried to bring into relief his father's superiority over 'Abdallāh al-Herātī. According to him, when Herātī arrived with Shaykh Khālīd's wife and son in Sulaymāniyya, after his banishment from Damascus, Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib accommodated them and let Herātī replace him in his lodge.²⁴ A little later As'ad went on to argue that before his death Khālīd had sent to his father his sufi frock, explicitly nominating him as his substitute (*nā'ib manāb*) in the order.²⁵ Finally, to demonstrate his own status in the Khālidiyya, As'ad al-Şāḥib argued that his father had nominated him as his successor three days before his death.²⁶ The need to emphasize the relationship between them underlay his above-mentioned contention that his education was continued thereafter spiritually. On another occasion As'ad further maintained that in this same manner he completed the sufi path under his father's guidance, as he had promised him at the age of nine. As'ad's claim that the first appearance of his father to him occurred during his stay in the Naqshbandī lodge in Istanbul in 1880 indicates that this "discipleship" was connected with his efforts to regain Maḥmūd's position in the Sulaymāniyya lodge.²⁷

As a contender for the leadership of the Khālidiyya, As'ad al-Şāḥib too was much occupied with the *rābiṭa*. Unlike his predecessors, however, he dealt with this practice not as an instrument for the consolidation of the *ṭarīqa*, in accordance with Shaykh Khālīd's original intention, but rather in order to defend the very legitimacy of its use. The assault on the practice of *rābiṭa* originated at this time among the adversaries of the Khālidiyya, who sought to exploit it as a means of undermining the order's claim to strictly adhere to the Prophet's example. The attack began in 1881, when Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī, the founder of the Salafī trend in Baghdad, raised a tendentious question concerning its validity to Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān, the leader of the Ahl-i Ḥadīth movement in India, with whom

²³ Şāḥib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, p. 25; Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 71.

²⁴ Şāḥib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 57.

²⁵ Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadīqa al-Nadiyya*, p. 72, including the text of the letter in Persian.

²⁶ Şāḥib, *Al-Fuyūdāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 84.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-33.

he had become acquainted three years earlier.²⁸ Is the *rābiṭa* sanctioned by the Qur'an and the sunna, Alūsī asked, or is it merely an invention and a discretion amounting to a kind of idolatry and misleading. Ḥasan Khān's response was unequivocal. He argued that this is a reproachable innovation which must be treated like all other innovations introduced into Islam by the sufis without a basis. In his view, any intermediary placed between man and God injures the purity of belief in His unity.²⁹

In the book he compiled in defense of the *rābiṭa* against its new detractors, As'ad al-Şāhib depicted this practice as the essence of the *khatm al-khwājagān* prayer, which was the focus of his own activity as a Naqshbandī shaykh. "The secret of the meeting", he maintains, "is the binding of the hearts (*irtibāt al-qulūb*) to one another, starting from an authorized master, hand on hand, and concluding with the stringer of the pearls of this chain... Abū Bakr al-Şiddīq, who received it from the Master of the Two Worlds [Muḥammad], closing his eyes and kneeling in the famous cave" [during the *hijra*]. In this way "human perfection constitutes a mirror of the Prophet's perfection and this constitutes a mirror of the divine perfection. God does not manifest himself even to the most perfect but through the veil of the perfection of Muḥammad, the great intermediary (*al-wāsiṭa al-ʿuẓmā*), without whom it is impossible to attain... This perfection can be realized by following in his footsteps and by the love of his Companions, deputies and inheritors of his states."³⁰ The purpose of the *rābiṭa* is thus to draw power through the accomplished master from the Prophet, and consequently from God. The essence of As'ad al-Şāhib's rejoinder to the criticism of Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān is, therefore, that binding the heart directly to God is impossible. In Şāhib's opinion, the belief in a direct connection implies that God resembles men somehow, as the anthropomorphist (*mujassim*) claims, or that He is everywhere, as those who espouse incarnation or pantheism (*ḥulūlī* or *jahmī*) maintain. However, for the believers who regard God as unrelated to place, similar to nothing, and the opposite of whatever occurs to the mind, the *rābiṭa* is essential. After all, it is nothing but absorption (*istighrāq*) in the vision of something which has no equal and cannot be conceived or imagined. Thus, man cannot

²⁸ On Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān and Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī see pp. 272-273.

²⁹ Şiddīq Ḥasan Khān, *Al-Tāj al-Mukallal min Jawāhir Ma'āthir al-Ṭirāz al-ʿAwwal wal-Ākhar* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 515-516.

³⁰ Şāhib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, pp. 22, 26-27.

attain the pure unitary belief without an intermediary between him and God.³¹

Yet, in this discussion of the *rābiṭa* Asʿad al-Ṣāḥib virtually retreats from the novelty that Shaykh Khālīd introduced in this practice as a means to consolidate his sub-order. Acknowledging its abandonment by most Khālīdī shaykhs, Ṣāḥib avoids mentioning that the only accomplished guide is Khālīd himself, and that it is incumbent upon them to instruct their disciples to raise in their imaginations his figure alone.³² This withdrawal apparently derived from his appreciation that the conventional understanding of spiritual attachment to a shaykh would be easier to defend. Moreover, in plain contradiction to Khālīd's teaching, Ṣāḥib goes on to argue that the *rābiṭa*, and the entire *khatm al-khwājagān*, is not an integral part of the path, but only a recommended practice that is beneficial in removing sinful thoughts and preventing distraction from God. Therefore, it is essential only for the beginner on the sufi path, who still has not released himself from the fetters of temptations and wicked thoughts that impede the presence of his heart during the *dhikr*.³³ Ultimately Ṣāḥib even agrees that the *rābiṭa* itself is a distraction from God. Raising the figure of the accomplished master in the imagination is a means to remove all other worldly things, before fleeing from this image too. Thus there is no fault in practicing the *rābiṭa*, since means are judged by the ends and since what the shariʿa does not forbid is allowed.³⁴ In a similar manner, Ṣāḥib retreats from the second organizational novelty introduced by Shaykh Khālīd in the Naqshbandī path, the *khalwa*. He reduces it to the seclusion in a separate place for concentration that is practiced among the sufi orders in general. Ṣāḥib remains faithful only to the novelty of *ghalq al-bāb*, which in his view turns the Khālīdī prayer into a kind of seclusion in itself and secures its purity.³⁵

However, despite this retreat from the obligation to perform the *rābiṭa*, Asʿad al-Ṣāḥib spared no effort in defending this central practice of the Khālīdiyya against its detractors. He sought to provide it with the broadest foundation, both in the sayings of the great sufi mas-

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 65.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 23. On the withdrawal from the practice of *rābiṭa* see Meier, pp. 180-187.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 28; *idem*, *Bughyat al-Wājīd*, pp. 147-148.

³⁴ Ṣāḥib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, pp. 28-29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

ters, the method adopted by Shaykh Khālīd in his Epistle in Verification of the *Rābiṭa*, and in the Qur'an and the sunna, to which Muḥammad al-Khānī subsequently applied. Ṣāḥīb's main evidence for the validity of the *rābiṭa* was drawn, however, from the principle of *ijmā'*. As there is a general consensus that the Naqshbandī order is part of orthodox Islam, he contends, its practices must also be accepted. In apparent contradiction to this reasoning Ṣāḥīb also states that "we must not seek evidence for the noble *rābiṭa* at all, since the example of the practicing 'ulama and knowing saints whom we imitate (*qalladnā*) is a sufficient and complete proof, just as in the case of the great mujtahids... Those who imitate them must not examine their proofs."³⁶

This apparent contradiction leads us to the core of As'ad al-Ṣāḥīb's response to the critics of the *rābiṭa*, and of his entire religious outlook. Ṣāḥīb frequently stresses the orthodox character of the Naqshbandiyya by reiterating Shaykh Khālīd's call to learn the precepts of the Law and the doctrines of belief within the framework of the schools. His endeavor to base the validity of the sufi path itself on the jurists' practice of *taqlīd*, however, clearly contradicts the Naqshbandī reformist spirit, which allowed Khālīd not only to introduce novelties in the spiritual methods of his master in the order but even to deviate from the way of the forefathers when the need arose. Realizing that the criticism of the *rābiṭa* was directed not only against the Khālidiyya, but against later Muslim tradition in general, sufi and legal alike, Ṣāḥīb retorted by stressing its orthodoxy to the exclusion of reform. From such a restrictive viewpoint of the latter-day heritage, quoting the opinions of early authorities became in itself the evidence. Thus, like Khālīd, Ṣāḥīb sought to forge an alliance between the 'ulama and the sufis. In the realities of his time, however, the purpose of this alliance could no longer be to guide the rulers on the traditional path of the shari'a. It was rather designed to enlist the support of the state in defending that notion of the shari'a that sustained the traditional men of religion against pressures to accommodate it to the modern world.

Ṣāḥīb's arguments against the emerging Salafi trend were then representative of what under the Islamic policy of 'Abdülḥamīd II came to be regarded as the orthodox view. At the root of the controversy lay the question of whether the 'ulama in their schools and the sufis in their orders reflect the original path of the Prophet, or

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

rather a deviation that must be corrected by a return to the sources themselves, the Qur'an and the sunna. Viewed from another angle, this was the question of whether the latter-day men of religion are capable of properly understanding the sources, or are they rather bound to accept the judgements and guidance of the authoritative 'ulama and sufis of the past. The *rābiṭa*, as a practice of the most orthodox order epitomized the larger debate that only began to be formulated between the orthodox and the reformers in Islam. In Ṣāhib's view, the criticism of Alūsī and Ḥasan Khān "derived from their excessive self-esteem and from their claim to exert ijtihad... those who make such a pretentious argument will listen to no one, not even to the knowing ('*arif*). On the contrary, they are accustomed to vainly blame the Muslims in what they are not, and believe that they thus will win God's favor."³⁷ Ṣāhib depicts Ḥasan Khān as a fanatic polemicist, and misses no opportunity to remind Nu'mān that his father, Maḥmūd Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī, was a faithful adherent of Khālīd and unreservedly supported the *rābiṭa*.³⁸ The son's turning against the Naqshbandiyya, Ṣāhib adds, betrays his Wahhābī tendencies, which are tantamount to a war with God.³⁹

The doctrinal roots of As'ad al-Ṣāhib's struggle with the Khānīs lay in their affinity to the Damascene group of 'ulama who had adopted the opinions of Ḥasan Khān and Alūsī, though in the case of the *rābiṭa* itself Muḥammad al-Khānī certainly could not share their criticism. On the other hand, Ṣāhib's reliance on the power of the state was ultimately destined to fill the place of the *rābiṭa* as the means to secure his supremacy over the Khānīs in the Khālidiyya, theoretically in the entire order, though practically only in Damascus itself. Under the autocratic regimes of 'Abdülḥamīd II and, following him, the Young Turks, his call met with a welcome response.

The Decline of the Local Branch

Despite As'ad al-Ṣāhib's challenge, Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger remained the principal Khālīdī shaykh in Damascus even after the

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

³⁸ See especially *ibid.*, pp. 8, 17-18, 83-84; *idem*, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 82. On Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī see ch.8; and the letter of Shaykh Khālīd to him in Ṣāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājīd*, pp. 255-256. See also Maḥmūd Abū al-Thinā' Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī, *Al-Fayḍ al-Wārīd 'alā Rawḍ Marthiyat Mawlānā Khālīd* (Cairo, 1278 A.H.).

³⁹ Ṣāhib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, p. 67.

consolidation of 'Abdülḥamīd II's regime. The *dhikr* sessions he conducted in the Murādiyya mosque continued to attract a considerable number of novices, who came not only from Damascus but from other parts of Syria as well.⁴⁰ Like his father, Muḥammad the younger regarded as his successor his own son, 'Abd al-Majīd, who stayed with him and managed his affairs. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī (1847-1901) received the Naqshbandī path from his grandfather, Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, who in view of the frequent travels of his son on the commercial business of the family, took upon himself his grandson's education. Subsequently, 'Abd al-Majīd pursued his studies with his father and with the latter's two outstanding teachers, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, specializing in the sciences of Sufism and hadith.⁴¹ He was also a talented poet, who composed not only praise songs for the mighty in the traditional manner but also poems on themes of the Muslim past which betrayed his own views.⁴² 'Abd al-Majīd began to teach in the Murādiyya mosque during his father's lifetime, serving also as his deputy in the family lodge and as a preacher.

Following the ascension of the new Sultan to the throne in 1876, 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī set out to Istanbul, apparently at his father's instruction, to ensure that the position of the family would not be compromised. During his stay in the capital, he strove to meet the notables, and composed in their honor praise poems to acquire their support. He returned to Damascus a short time later with assurances that the family's hold on the Murādiyya mosque and its allowance would be continued. Nevertheless, in accordance with Shaykh Khālīd's teaching, and his own family's tradition, 'Abd al-Majīd was careful to shun official posts, with the sole exception of serving briefly under a qadi who had befriended his father.⁴³ He preferred to dedicate his energies to the affairs of the *ṭarīqa* and to writing. In 1886 'Abd al-Majīd edited and published his grandfather's fundamental work, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, partly as a reaction to the appointment of As'ad al-Ṣāḥib to the Sulaymāniyya lodge. Five years later he pub-

⁴⁰ See the testimony of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, who was his disciple in the second half of the 1880s in Qāsimī, *Ta'fir al-Mashāmm*, p. 23.

⁴¹ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, last page; this is a short biography of the author written by his nephew, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Khānī. For a general biography see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 181-183.

⁴² Adham al-Jundī, *A'lām al-Adab wal-Fann* (2 vols. Damascus, 1954-1958), vol. 2, pp. 116-117.

⁴³ Qāsimī, *Ta'fir al-Mashāmm*, p. 57.

lished his own most important work, the biographical dictionary of the Naqshbandī masters, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, which was designed, *inter alia*, to present its rich tradition and vitality to his Salafī colleagues.

‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī’s first doctrinal work, however, *Nūr al-Hudā* (The Light of Guidance), was designed above all to demonstrate his loyalty to Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II, and to express his support for the efforts of the central government to tighten its hold on the province. Appearing in 1894, the book was specifically directed toward the Bedouin, presenting them with the basic precepts of Islam. It also included a discussion of jihad, which Khānī proclaimed was a fundamental element of the religion. He exhorted the believers to undertake it, stressing that when the enemy dominates a Muslim country, as was the case with an increasing number of Ottoman provinces in ‘Abd al-Majīd’s time, it becomes a duty incumbent upon each individual. In Shaykh Khālīd’s footsteps, he concluded his epistle with a prayer for the victory of the Commander of the Faithful (*amīr al-mu’mīnīn*), Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II, and his army.⁴⁴

The other works of ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī were dedicated to expounding and further developing the doctrines of the Naqshbandiyya order. Already at the conclusion of his biographical dictionary, Khānī asserts that the three major foundations of the path are silent recollection (*dhikr*), binding of the heart (*rābiṭa*), and closing the door (*ghalq al-bāb*).⁴⁵ Thus, with the two organizational novelties that Khālīd introduced into the *ṭarīqa* to strengthen its integrity and uniqueness, he lists not the *khalwa*, the third novelty which was designed to facilitate its spread, but rather the special form of *dhikr* used in the spiritual training of those who already belong to it. The absence of the forty-day seclusion in this list, and eventually in all of ‘Abd al-Majīd’s writings, testifies to the shift that had occurred in the activity of the Khānī branch of the Khālidiyya under his father, from spreading the path among all Muslims to a spiritual engagement in the sufi teaching among the elect. Moreover, in his discussion of the silent *dhikr*, ‘Abd al-Majīd is not satisfied, like his grandfather, with demonstrating its great effectiveness. Rather, he adds detailed evidence, particularly from the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī and his school, that this, and the use of the name Allāh without any

⁴⁴ ‘Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *Nūr al-Hudā* (Damascus, 1312 A.H.).

⁴⁵ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 290.

addition, are indeed *dhikr*.⁴⁶ In the face of the growing power of the popular orders, which practiced the vocal *dhikr*, under the Ḥamīdī-an regime, this additional proof seems to have become essential.

Khānī's presentation of the *rābiṭa* reflects his reaction to the debate it aroused between As'ad al-Šāhib and the Salafīs. Against Šāhib he maintains that this practice is more effective than the *dhikr* in generating divine rapture (*al-jadhba al-ilāhiyya*) and ascendance on the path of perfection (*ma'ārij al-kamāl*). Thus he places it on a higher level than the *dhikr* in general and the *khatm al-khwājagān* in particular. Against Šiddīq Ḥasan Khān and Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī Khānī reiterates the evidence produced by his predecessors, from Shaykh Khālīd to Šāhib, for the compatibility of the *rābiṭa* with the shari'a. Like the latter, he is prepared to compromise on the validity of the *rābiṭa*, while in regard to the Salafīs he prefers to consider their arguments against it as a scientific mistake in this particular matter rather than as an all-out attack on the Naqshbandī path.⁴⁷ Khānī's emphasis on the practice of closing the door reflects, by contrast, his criticism of those Khālīdī shaykhs who tended to abandon it. Avoiding specifying them by name, he focuses his attack instead on the descendants of Abū Sa'īd al-Mujaddidī, the successors of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī in Delhi, who migrated to the Holy Cities in the wake of the Indian Mutiny of 1857.⁴⁸ Here they performed the *dhikr* in the open, often provoking the indignation of spectators. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī himself did not practice the *ghalq al-bāb*, Khānī admits, but only because in his special lodge no stranger was allowed to intrude.⁴⁹ From his point of view it was thus the Mujaddidīs who strayed from Ghulām 'Alī's path and not Khālīd.

In his manual for the Khālīdī "brothers" published in 1896, 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī reasserts his adherence to these three major foundations of the Naqshbandiyya. While discussing the *rābiṭa*, however, he attacks a related practice that is not mentioned in any of the other Khālīdī sources, namely, observance of the form of the living shaykh who stands between the disciple and the figure of Khālīd (*mulāhaza*). Refraining from specifying in this case too who were the Khālīdī

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 290-295

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 295-297.

⁴⁸ David W. Demarel, "The Spread of Naqshbandi Political Thought in the Islamic World," in Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic and Thierry Zarcone (eds.), *Naqshbandis* (Istanbul and Paris, 1990), p. 275.

⁴⁹ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 297-298.

shaykhs that adopted the practice, Khānī nonetheless stresses that this is nothing but binding the heart (*murābaṭa*), which if directed toward an unaccomplished master might lead to ruin. The *rābiṭa* is a connection between man and God and any additional intermediate connections could only damage the disciple.⁵⁰

The decline of the Khānī family began between 1890, following As'ad al-Ṣāḥib's decision to openly press his claim to the leadership of the Khālidiyya, and 1896, when 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī's second visit to Istanbul fully revealed the extent to which his family had lost favor with the authorities. Applying for an increase in the allowance assigned to the Murādiyya mosque, which had shrunk to almost half its original value, 'Abd al-Majīd succeeded in securing, after spending more than a year in the capital, only a special addition for the lifetime of his father. Even this achievement proved to be worthless when Muḥammad al-Khānī died shortly after his son's return to Damascus.⁵¹ When 'Abd al-Majīd dispatched his younger brother to Istanbul to collect the last allowance due to their father, he found that it had already been transferred to somebody else.⁵²

Muḥammad al-Khānī's death in 1898 further exposed the weakness of the Khānī branch of the Khālidiyya. It led to fierce struggles among members of the family over his succession in the next two years, and revealed their growing dependence on the state. This weakness was fully exploited by As'ad al-Ṣāḥib to realize his claim to head the Khālidiyya in Damascus. As the elder son and a close assistant of his father, 'Abd al-Majīd seemed to be the most suitable candidate to inherit his position in the Murādiyya mosque. As a token of continuity he commenced his hadith lessons from the point at which his father stopped, and invited many dignitaries, including the newly-appointed Ḥanafī mufti, Ṣāliḥ Qaṭanā, to the first lesson. At the same time, 'Abd al-Majīd presented an official application for his father's position and allowance. Duly confirmed by the provincial council and the qadī, the application was sent to Istanbul for approval. At this point it became known, however, that his uncle Aḥmad, who had been forced to serve for many years outside Damascus in the shari'a court system, had returned claiming the position for himself. In a meeting with the governor Aḥmad argued that as

⁵⁰ 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī, *Al-Sa'āda al-Abadiyya fīmā Jā'a bihi al-Naqshbandiyya* (Damascus, 1313 A.H.), esp. pp. 25-26.

⁵¹ Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1038.

⁵² Qāsimī, *Ta'fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 52-53.

a Naqshbandī shaykh he excels ‘Abd al-Majīd, and that as the son of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder his right to the succession is also superior. The governor referred him to Istanbul, where an examination of the original deed in the Ministry of Awqaf revealed that the appointment was indeed due to him, as the closest relative of the first beneficiary. An acute conflict ensued between these two contenders, and ‘Abd al-Majīd began to conduct the *dhikr* early in the morning before Aḥmad would arrive to perform it during the prescribed time. Finally, with Qaṭanā’s mediation, the two reached a compromise according to which they divided the administration of the lodge and its allowance between themselves.⁵³

When shortly after reaching this solution Aḥmad al-Khānī died too, ‘Abd al-Majīd was confident that the appointment in the Murādiyya mosque would finally pass into his hands. He soon discovered that there was another contender for the position, his uncle ‘Abdallāh. Unlike Aḥmad, ‘Abdallāh was not a Khālidi shaykh, but on the basis of his brother’s precedent he too could claim that, as a son of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, his right surpassed that of his grandson. The man who encouraged ‘Abdallāh to make this claim was the head of the rival branch in the order, As‘ad al-Ṣāḥib. The latter sought to exploit the recently uncovered stipulation of the waqf deed to interfere in the internal affairs of the Khānī branch and prevent the leadership from his detested adversary, ‘Abd al-Majīd. The interference of Ṣāḥib, who had considerable influence on the governor and his men at that time, proved decisive. He helped ‘Abdallāh to apply officially for the appointment, attaching the signatures of some like-minded dignitaries and ‘ulama, who testified to his ability and integrity. With such support it was ‘Abdallāh who won the position. When ‘Abd al-Majīd appealed to Istanbul, arguing that his uncle was unfit to function as a Naqshbandī shaykh, Ṣāḥib retorted by nominating him as his *khalīfa*. Concomitantly, he arranged for ‘Abdallāh’s examination by the qadī, who was apparently also under his influence. The provincial council accepted the qadī’s testimony and the Shaykh al-Islām in Istanbul duly issued the required approval.⁵⁴ Thus, the outcome of the succession struggle was that a deputy of As‘ad al-Ṣāḥib became the head of the Khānī branch in the Khālidiyya!

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54; Bīṭār, *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 54-55.

As'ad al-Şāhib's domination of the lodge in the Murādiyya mosque signified the actual end of the Khānī branch in the Khālidiyya order. 'Abd al-Majīd, who seems to have resigned himself to his defeat, departed once again to Istanbul to seek compensation for the lost appointment. This time he encountered an attitude of evasion on the part of the officials, and only with difficulty did he manage to obtain a meager allowance, equivalent to no more than the addition he had secured for his father on his previous visit, two years earlier. 'Abd al-Majīd died shortly thereafter while still in Istanbul. 'Abdallāh al-Khānī, the uncle who usurped his position with the assistance of Şāhib, remained head of the Khānī branch of the Khālidiyya for the next twenty-four years, but despite this long term the biographers of Damascus found nothing worth noting about him.⁵⁵ 'Abd al-Majīd's sons, as well as other members of this extended family, abandoned the order altogether and engaged in official employment, mainly as judges in various districts of Syria.⁵⁶

The Consolidation of the Ottoman—Orthodox tendency

In As'ad al-Şāhib's early writings there are no references to Abū al-Hudā al-Şayyādī, or to the Islamic policy of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II in general. His attachment to them can be inferred only from the high position he enjoyed in Damascus during the Ḥamīdian period, and from the arguments he used to establish his right to lead the Khālidiyya, which are reminiscent of Abū al-Hudā's methods of "proof". Neither does Şāhib mention any close associates from among the religious men of Damascus. It seems that to a large extent he remained a foreigner in the city, and that he derived his status mainly from the patronage of the governors. Nevertheless, as the analysis of Şāhib's writings has shown, there was in late-Ottoman Damascus a group of men of religion who shared his views. These were the 'ulama and sufi shaykhs who, thanks to their readiness to be harnessed to the Islamic policy of 'Abdülhamīd in the name of or-

⁵⁵ See the short note on 'Abdallāh al-Khānī in Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, vol. 3, p. 98.

⁵⁶ On 'Abd al-Majīd's sons see *ibid.*, p. 622; vol. 3, pp. 101, 130-131. On the family in the twentieth century see de Jong, "The Naqshbandiyya," p. 214. An exception to this retreat from the Naqshbandī path is noticeable among the women of the family, headed by 'Abd al-Majīd's daughter, Şafiyya al-Khānī, who was active during the Mandate period.

thodoxy, now gained the senior religious positions in the city. Most of them were descendents of those religious men whom Ṣāhib referred to as the disciples of his father.⁵⁷ Like him, they also proved to be avowed opponents of the Salafīyya.

The most conspicuous date in the rise of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency in Damascus was 1887, when the post of the Ḥanafī mufti of the city was assigned to Muḥammad al-Manīnī (1836-1898). The youngest member in the first generation of the new Ottoman tendency that emerged in Damascus under the Tanzimat regime, Manīnī was the scion of a religious family which had traditionally held the prestigious post of teaching hadith under the Nasr dome in the Umayyad mosque. In the beginning of the nineteenth century his father was obliged to surrender the post, owing probably to incompetence, and it was transferred to Saʿīd al-Ḥalabī, who had arrived in the city a few years earlier.⁵⁸ Manīnī was able to regain it in 1860, after ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥalabī, the son and successor of Saʿīd, had been banished for his alleged part in the massacre of the Christians. Like other ʿulama of the Ottoman tendency, he was not content with this appointment, aspiring to complement it with one of the new positions created by the Tanzimat. Manīnī therefore joined the state judiciary, first as a member in the court of appeals and subsequently as head of the criminal court. In the latter capacity he served for fifteen years, until his appointment as mufti of Damascus following the demise of his predecessor, Maḥmūd Ḥamza, one of the leading reformist ʿulama in the city during the late Tanzimat period. The new appointment indeed caused great disturbance among the local religious circles, and the controversy did not abate even after its confirmation by the Shaykh al-Islām.⁵⁹ For the Ḥamīdian regime, however, Ḥamza's death supplied with an opportunity to tighten its central authority on Damascus and to consolidate the position of the supporters of its policy against those who favored the continuation of the late Tanzimat reforms. Manīnī served as mufti for a decade, until his death, and he duly received state decorations, though his intelligence and religious learning were far inferior to those of his predecessor in the office.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See ch. 3.

⁵⁸ On the father, Aḥmad al-Manīnī, see Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 238-239; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 640-641; on Saʿīd al-Ḥalabī see pp. 63-64.

⁵⁹ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 311, 1185.

⁶⁰ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 157-161.

Muḥammad al-Manīnī's name appears at the head of the list of 'ulama who lent their praise to As'ad al-Şāḥib's book in defense of the *rābi'a*.⁶¹ He also played a central role in the "mujtahids incident" of 1896, the first encounter between the orthodox and the Salafis in Damascus, to be discussed in Part Three. In his regular functioning as a mufti, Manīnī relied heavily on Muḥammad al-Bīṭār (1816-1895), who had been appointed as *amīn fatwā* already in the early 1860s. The son of Ḥasan al-Bīṭār and a disciple of Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn in Ḥanafī jurisprudence, Muḥammad belonged in his views to the local tendency of Damascus, but since he declined luxury and publicity it was convenient for Manīnī to retain him in his office.⁶² Of the other four 'ulama whom he appointed as his assistants three belonged to the Uṣṭuwānī family, whose reviver, Sa'īd, is mentioned by As'ad al-Şāḥib as a disciple of his father. The fourth, 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Murādī (d. 1913), was the last notable scholar in this illustrious family.⁶³ To this group of Ottoman—orthodox 'ulama may be added here the only Damascene 'alim whom Şāḥib explicitly refers to in his writings as his friend, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (1867-1918), the son of Abū al-Khayr who "studied" with his father too. Jamāl al-Dīn acquired his education mainly with the 'ulama of his family, and excelled in the sciences of shari'a and Arabic, as well as in Turkish. He succeeded his father as preacher in the Umayyad mosque after his death in 1890, and is reported to have frequently visited Istanbul.⁶⁴

Yet, the emergence of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency in Damascus returns to the beginning of the 1880s. Its earlier and most eloquent exponents, along with As'ad al-Şāḥib, were two brothers, Şāliḥ and 'Ārif al-Munayyir, the nephews of Muḥammad al-Munayyir, who had also been included in the list of Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib's "disciples". Their father, Aḥmad (1812-1885), was a prominent 'alim in late Tanzimat Damascus, who owing to his vast knowledge of Shāfi'ī jurisprudence, acquired partially at the al-Azhar mosque and in Mecca, gained the honorific title of "the small Shāfi'ī" and a teaching post in the Umayyad mosque. In addition, in 1864 he revived the Ikhna'iyya college in the northern part of Damascus after it had

⁶¹ Şāḥib, *Nūr al-Hidāya*, p. 1 in separate pagination for the eulogies.

⁶² On Muḥammad al-Bīṭār see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 119-120.

⁶³ For the list of Muḥammad al-Manīnī's assistant muftis see *ibid.*, p. 158n. 2.

⁶⁴ Şāḥib, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 77. On Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb see, Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 353.

been overtaken by foreigners, and remained its supervisor and teacher until his death. Unlike his brother Muḥammad, Aḥmad al-Munayyir was disposed to piety and asceticism, and he distanced himself from government positions. He was also engaged in the sufi path, though it is not recorded to which order he belonged.⁶⁵

Aḥmad's path seemed to be followed by the most promising of his sons, Ṣāliḥ al-Munayyir. Ṣāliḥ (1850-1903) studied with his father and with other prominent reformist 'ulama of the late Tanzimat period and, as a token of their appreciation, he began to teach during their lifetime when he was merely twenty, in both the Umayyad mosque and in the Ikhna'iyya college. Later, he joined the educational society that Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī headed under the patronage of the reformist governor Midḥat Pasha in 1878-1880, and took part also in laying the foundation to the Ṣāhiriyya library.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, in 1882 Ṣāliḥ al-Munayyir decided to abandon the path of his father and, following his uncle Muḥammad, link his fortunes with the Ottoman administration. Like As'ad al-Ṣāhib, he departed for Istanbul and returned with a new appointment in the Umayyad mosque, that of teaching the hadith collection of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ. This collection, which focused on traditions enumerating the duties of the believers toward the Prophet, seems to have been particularly suitable for the religious propaganda of his "*khatīfā*", 'Abdülḥamīd II.⁶⁷ Ṣāliḥ visited Istanbul on a few more occasions, forging connections with its notables, and gaining decorations and an allowance from the Sultan. Moreover, while in the capital he contacted Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī and became his deputy in the Rifā'iyya order in Damascus.⁶⁸ Ṣāliḥ's loyalty to the Ḥamīdian policy was expressed also by studying the principal tenets of Judaism and Christianity, with the object of demonstrating the superiority of Islam over them. Versed in the Bible and the New Testament, he would frequently visit synagogues and churches to argue with those assembled.⁶⁹

'Arif al-Munayyir (1848-1923), who was two years older than his brother, received a more traditional education. He studied the religious sciences and Arabic principally with his father and uncle, was

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37; Qāyātī, p. 149.

⁶⁶ See p. 284.

⁶⁷ On Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ and his book, *Kutāb al-Shifā' fī Ma'rifat Huqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, see M. Talbi, "Iyāḍ b. Mūsā," *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 289-290; Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (Austin, 1998), pp. 204-205.

⁶⁸ Abu-Manneh, "Abdulhamid and Abulhuda," p. 147.

⁶⁹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 209-211.

a shaykh of the Rifā'iyya, and also joined the Rashīdiyya and Shādhiliyya orders.⁷⁰ He was likewise anxious to receive authorization from the leading 'ulama of Mecca and Medina while on the hajj in 1877, as well as from the muftis of Hebron when he visited the holy places of Palestine in 1880. Little is known of 'Ārif's activities over the next twenty years, but his nomination as vice president of the provincial council of education indicates that he had followed in the footsteps of his brother.⁷¹ 'Ārif was also a prolific writer, though most of his works remained unpublished. They included refutations of works by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, the mouthpiece of the Salafī trend in Damascus, as well as polemics against the Christians and non-Sunni Muslim sects, mainly the Shi'is and the Qādiyanīs.⁷² 'Ārif al-Munayyir's position was greatly enhanced after 1900, following a half-year sojourn in Istanbul in which he managed to present the Sultan with two of his works. The first was a defense of the Hijaz Railway project, which was promoted by Aḥmad 'Izzat al-'Ābid, the Damascene close confidant of 'Abdūllahmīd at that time. The second work was a collection of Prophetic traditions arguing the duty to fully obey the Caliph, largely on the model of Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī. Following his brother's death two years after his return from Istanbul, 'Ārif succeeded him as instructor of the hadith collection of Qāḍī 'Iyād in the Umayyad mosque and in the Ikhna'iyya college.

'Ārif al-Munayyir's defense of the Hijaz Railway project sought to refute the religious and economic arguments which had been raised against it by residents of Mecca and Medina, as well as by Bedouin tribes along the Damascene hajj route. The rejoinder, which constitutes the second part of the treatise, is supported by numerous quotations from the Qur'an and the sunna. Landau, who published the manuscript, suggests that the idea to compose it came from the Ottoman authorities rather than from Munayyir himself, thus explaining the detailed information which he incorporated in the description of the hajj caravan in the book's first part.⁷³ The heart of

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118; Mālih, *Fihris Makhtūṭāt*, vol. 1, p. 14.

⁷¹ Yūsuf Aliān Sarkīs, *Mu'jam al-Maṭbū'āt al-'Arabiyya wal-Mu'arraba* (Cairo, 1342-1347/1923-1929), pp. 1258-1259.

⁷² For a list of 'Ārif al-Munayyir's works see Ḥiṣnī, pp. 756-759.

⁷³ Jacob Landau, *The Hejaz Railway and the Muslim Pilgrimage: A Case of Ottoman Political Propaganda* (Detroit, 1971), pp. 22-23. The title of the Arabic manuscript is *Al-Sa'āda al-Abadiyya al-Nāmiyya fī al-Sikka al-Hijāziyya al-Ḥadīdiyya*.

the treatise, however, is the middle chapter, in which Munayyir clarifies what is, in his opinion, the logic behind the commandment to perform the pilgrimage and to visit the Prophet's tomb. He maintains that at the root of the hajj lie two factors—first, the various advantages (*manāfi*) it brings by fostering connections between Muslims from all over the world and by encouraging economic cooperation between them; and second, the high merit of recollecting God's name (*dhikr*) along its course.⁷⁴ Thus he can demonstrate, in an echo of the Naqshbandī-Khālīdī spirit, that Sufism is fully compatible with mundane considerations, and accordingly give religious sanction to modernization. Munayyir is highly critical of those Sufis who believe that trust in God (*tawakkul*) implies avoidance of work and of seeking livelihood. For him such an interpretation was merely a disguise for idleness and hypocrisy, though he by no way rejects trust in God as such, nor spiritual effort, asceticism, or seclusion. On the contrary, Munayyir greatly admires those sufis who practice them sincerely, those who “cut off their hopes in what is not God and adhere to His firm bond (*al-ʿurwa al-wuthqā*), until God releases them from the need for other than Himself.” The combination of trust in God and work was the path of the forefathers (*al-salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*) who, according to Munayyir's definition, are the sufi shaykhs and their like, who worked for their living and shunned the public treasury.⁷⁵

The second treatise which ʿĀrif al-Munayyir composed in Istanbul was designed to support ʿAbdülhamīd II's claim to the Caliphate.⁷⁶ He directed it specifically against the Young Turk opposition, depicting them as rebels who strive to bring division and disintegration among the Muslims, though his object was undoubtedly more comprehensive, to discredit all of the Sultan's adversaries. This treatise also reveals that Munayyir's sufi attachment was above all to the teaching of Ibn ʿArabī. His combination of scripture and Sufism becomes apparent right from the outset in his discussion of the nature of the Caliphate. On the one hand, Munayyir relies on the Qur'an and the hadith to maintain that the Caliph, as the deputy of the Prophet, is deputy on behalf of God. On the other hand, he reverts

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 226-229; pp. 84-89 in the manuscript.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220; pp. 97-98 in the manuscript.

⁷⁶ ʿĀrif al-Munayyir, *Al-Haqq al-Mubīn fī Ahādīth Arbaʿin fīman Kharaja ʿan Tāʾat Amīr al-Muʾminīn wa-Shaqqa ʿAṣā al-Muslimīn* (Asad Library, manuscript no. 8618, 1318 A.H.).

to Ibn 'Arabī's assertion that the visible Caliph (*ẓāhirī*) is the deputy of the hidden one (*bāṭinī*), who is the pole of his time (*quṭb al-waqt*). There must always be such a pole, since by its merit the world exists, and therefore there must always be a Caliph. The two may be united in one person, as was the case with the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, but they may also be two different persons, the visible Caliph representing the hidden one without even knowing it. The visible Caliph is for Munayyir the imam of the Muslims, their Sultan, and their commander.

The scriptural "divine appointment" and the Akbarian "external Caliphate" are the two foundations of 'Ārif al-Munayyir's arguments in favor of the various aspects of 'Abdülhamīd II's Islamic policy. The very right of the Sultan to the Caliphate is based upon the dominant principle in the traditional political theory of Islam that it is incumbent upon Muslims to appoint an imam in order to secure the implementation of the shari'a. Munayyir is more emphatic in justifying 'Abdülhamīd's pan-Islamic policy, stating that the umma must have only one imam. For that purpose he uses the notion of *tawḥīd al-imām*, which naturally raises the connotation of the unity of God, and claims that political plurality, like polytheism, generates corruption and inner strife, thus leaving the Muslims prey to their enemies. The might of the European powers he explains, accordingly, by their unification behind their rulers.

The main part of Munayyir's exposition is dedicated, however, to demonstrating the obligation of all believers to absolutely obey the Caliph, the ultimate object of 'Abdülhamīd II's Islamic policy. On the basis of his concept of the divine appointment, he claims that the pledge of allegiance to the Sultan (*mubāya'a*) is tantamount to a pledge of allegiance to God. It is binding on every individual in the community, and does not depend on the imam's application of justice. Quoting sufi sources, Munayyir adds that it is moreover obligatory to glorify the imam, since he is a manifestation (*mazḥar tajallī*) of God's rule, as demonstrated by the famous hadith which asserts that "the Sultan is God's shadow on the earth." Therefore, it is incumbent upon all members of the umma to obey the imam, with the condition that his orders do not contradict the shari'a. This obligation, Munayyir claims, is explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an and the sunna, particularly by the phrase *ūlī al-amr* in the verse: "O believers, obey God, and obey the messenger and those in authority among you." Unlike Ibn 'Ābidīn, who believed that "those in

authority” refers to the ‘ulama, or As‘ad al-Šāhib, who regarded them as the sufis, Munayyir argues that these are the rulers themselves, the imams and their representatives. His principal authority is again Ibn ‘Arabī, who included in this category both the sufi poles (*aqṭāb*), and the political rulers (*khulafā’* and *wulāh*), claiming that in legal terms obedience to them is merely permissible, but that after accepting their authority their orders become binding. Thus, the conclusion that Munayyir sought to convey was that “obedience to the amir is obedience to God and His messenger, and rebellion against him is rebellion against God and His messenger.”

‘Arif al-Munayyir’s demand for full obedience to Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II was fortified by considering two complementary obligations which supported his measures of centralization. One is the injunction to avoid actions that fall under the authority of the imam without obtaining his authorization; the other is the call to serve him honestly and sincerely. Both obligations are directed toward the functionaries of the state, revealing thereby that Munayyir was not unaware of the faults of the Ḥamīdian centralized system of government. Thus, in parallel with his general demand of obedience, he declares that deceiving and betraying the Sultan is tantamount to deceiving and betraying God and His messenger, as well as the entire umma. Returning at the conclusion of his treatise to the Young Turks and other adversaries of ‘Abdülhamīd, Munayyir maintains that delivering state secrets to foreigners is one of the gravest forms of treason, and that the capital punishment inflicted on some of them is, therefore, fully justified.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, and particularly the deposition of ‘Abdülhamīd II in the following year, drove the ‘ulama of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency in Damascus to close their ranks and exploit the new freedom of expression to issue their own journal, *al-Ḥaqā’iq*. Appearing monthly for three years (1910-1912), the journal served as the mouthpiece of these men of religion in their defense of traditional practices and beliefs, and in their struggle against the Salafī and Westernizing trends.⁷⁷ *Al-Ḥaqā’iq*’s owner and editor was ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Iskandarānī (d. 1943), a prolific writer and an instructor in the Umayyad mosque who belonged to the extended Kaylānī family.⁷⁸ The list of its contributors included sons

⁷⁷ The following analysis is based on Commins, pp. 104-105, 118-122.

⁷⁸ On ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Iskandarānī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 573-574; Muḥam-

to the families of Munayyir, Uṣṭuwānī, and Khaṭīb, who continued to head the Ottoman—orthodox tendency of Damascus even in this period. Commins regards the struggle against the Salafiyya trend as the principal object of *al-Ḥaqāʾiq*. His analysis focuses on the journal's assimilation of some of the Salafīs' symbols, its points of divergence with them, and its conflation of the Salafīs with the Westernizers. Thus, according to him, two of the central symbols borrowed by the Ottoman—orthodox 'ulama of the Young Turk era from their Salafī rivals were the call to adhere to the path of the *salaf* and their advocacy of progress. Our examination of the activities and writings of these 'ulama has shown, however, that the ideas which underlie these symbols had become prevalent among them already at the turn of the century, concomitant with 'Izzat al-Ābid's rising to prominence in Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II's court. In their orthodox interpretation, these symbols were nothing but the call to rely on the Qur'an and the sunna as practiced in traditional Muslim learning, on the one hand, and to unreservedly confirm the course of modernization as defined by the state, on the other. The claim of the orthodox 'ulama to adhere to the path of the *salaf*, or to have adopted the ideal of progress, as well as their depiction of Islam as a religion of civilization (*madaniyya*) and consultation (*shūrā*), therefore, points to their integration into the modern discourse, rather than to any change in their basic outlook. Their use of this new discourse merely served to reaffirm their readiness to harness orthodoxy to the service of the state also under the Young Turk regime.

This continuity in the thought of the 'ulama of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency becomes even more striking when their main points of controversy with the Salafīs are scrutinized. These 'ulama continued to preach an Islamic unity embodied in the person of the Sultan—Caliph, despite his loss of actual rule over the Empire. They were also adamant in rejecting *ijtihād*, ceaselessly calling for the imitation of the rulings of one of the four established legal schools, which in their view supplied suitable solutions for the modern situation too. In one particular sphere, however, the orthodox 'ulama clearly deviated from their path in the Ḥamīdian period. According to Commins' analysis, it seems that Sufism was conspicuously absent from the pages of *al-Ḥaqāʾiq*. This absence reflected the bad

mad Riyāḍ al-Mālih, *Al-ʿAllāma Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Burhānī: Arbaʿūn ʿĀman fī Miḥrāb al-Tawba* (Damascus, 1967), p. 34.

reputation that the orders in general, and the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabī in particular, received at that time owing to the role they had played in the autocratic regime of ‘Abdülhamīd II. On the other hand it pointed to the increasing hold of the Western-inspired rational mode of thinking among the elite of the Empire following the Sultan’s downfall. Some of the most virulent attacks published in *al-Haqā’iq* against the Salafīs were indeed related to their depiction as partners in a destructive plot to impose Western culture and practices on Muslim society, revealed above all in their campaigns in favor of foreign education and the removal of the veil. From their point of view, the Ottoman—orthodox ‘ulama saw no substantial difference between the trends that adopted rationalism, the Westernizers and the Salafīs.

In the Service of the Committee for Union and Progress

The centralist policy which the Committee for Union and Progress pursued following the deposition of ‘Abdülhamīd II in 1909, and particularly the rigid military regime that Jamāl Pasha imposed on Syria during the First World War,⁷⁹ drove many ‘ulama of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency to adopt Arabism and, in some cases, also to join the Salafīyya. This trend was clearly discernible in the case of the Khaṭīb and Uṣṭuwānī families. First among them to adopt the new course was probably Jamāl al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, As‘ad al-Ṣāhib’s closest friend in the 1880s. Visiting Istanbul, Khaṭīb was shaken by the policies adopted by the CUP, and began to incite the young Arabs who were then studying in the capital, including some of his nephews, to insist on their freedom and rights. During the First World War, he was charged with agitation against the state and was banished to Basra.⁸⁰ Most prominent among the nephews who were influenced by his call was Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb (1886-1969), who subsequently immigrated to Egypt and became a leading figure in both the Salafīyya and the Arab nationalist movement.⁸¹

More conservative members of these families also gradually shifted to the Arabist cause. This was the case with ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb (1874-1932), who was appointed already as a young man to the

⁷⁹ Kayali, pp. 113-115, 192-196.

⁸⁰ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 353-355.

⁸¹ On Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb see *ibid.*, 847-862.

lucrative post of hadith instruction in the Umayyad mosque. 'Abd al-Qādir was among the chief agitators against Rashīd Riḍā during the latter's visit to Damascus in the wake of the Young Turk Revolution, as well as a leading figure in the Muḥammadan Union of the city, a religious association which sought to restore actual government into the hands of 'Abdülḥamīd.⁸² Subsequently he seems to have been reconciled to the CUP, receiving a number of senior administrative posts, in addition to his preaching in the Umayyad mosque. Yet, at the same time he is reported to have associated with Amir Fayṣal, then preparing the ground for the Arab Revolt. Following the entrance of the latter to Damascus in 1918, Khaṭīb was appointed as the city's mayor, and subsequently as second president of the Congress which proclaimed Fayṣal King of Syria.⁸³ A similar shift is discernible in the case of 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Uṣṭuwānī (1859?-1963), who had held the post of assistant mufti since the days of Muḥammad al-Manīnī. 'Abd al-Muḥsin was elected to the parliament on the CUP ticket in the elections of 1912, and participated in the religious mission that departed for Istanbul in 1915 to study the condition of Arab soldiers on the Dardanelles front.⁸⁴ We have no information concerning the exact date of his adoption of the Arab cause, but it was certainly during the war too, since after it Fayṣal nominated him as a member of the Syrian parliament, and later he was even elected as its head.⁸⁵

Only few among the 'ulama of Damascus were prepared to unreservedly maintain their loyalty to the Ottoman government once the centralist policy of the CUP became fully apparent, and even fewer when Jamāl Pasha began to execute young Arabists during the First World War. It is not easy to identify the 'ulama who nonetheless chose to remain loyal to the Ottoman central government even under these circumstances, particularly in view of the biographers' tendency to conceal what they regarded as their faults. This group may have included 'Ārif al-Munayyir, who continued his work against

⁸² See p. 303.

⁸³ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 460-464. For his involvement with the CUP see also Ḥaqqī Al-'Aẓm, *Ḥaqā'iq 'an al-Intikhābāt al-Niyābiyya fī al-'Irāq wa-Filasṭīn wa-Sūriyya* (Cairo, 1912), p. 10.

⁸⁴ For the elections of 1912 see Rashid Khalidi, "The 1912 Elections Campaign in the Cities of Bilād al-Shām," *IJMES*, 16 (1984), pp. 461-474. For a participant's description of the Dardanelles mission see Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Al-Ba'tha al-'Ilmiyya ilā Dār al-Khilāfa al-Islāmiyya* (Damascus, 1916).

⁸⁵ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 770-776. See also 'Aẓm, p. 17n.

the non-orthodox sects,⁸⁶ but now it was As‘ad al-Şāhib who distinguished himself as the most prominent figure. Şāhib’s later writings, which began to be published in 1915, faithfully reflect the various characteristics of the orthodox thought in its new form, as revealed on the pages of *al-Ḥaqā’iq*. These are clearly evident in the series of articles which he published in 1915-1916 under the title “Announcement of the Hidden Secret.” Şāhib’s stated purpose in those articles was to contribute to the war propaganda of the Ottoman State, and to arouse the Muslims, particularly the Arabs, to join the jihad proclaimed against the Entente Powers. In one article he states that when the Muslim nation is attacked “the blood of Islamic zeal and patriotic fervor (*al-ghayra al-Islāmiyya wal-ḥamiya al-waṭaniyya*) must gush in its veins.” The object of the enemy, Şāhib exclaims, is to destroy Islam and the Muslims, to silence the voice of the Qur’an, and to penetrate Mecca and Medina, as well as Istanbul, the last bastion. In such circumstances every believer must sacrifice himself in the army of “the deputy of God’s messenger, the constitutional warrior Sultan (*al-ghāzī al-dustūrī*) [!]... The defender of the abode of Islam, and the guardian of the religion and the pure shari‘a... Who takes pity on his subjects like a compassionate father toward his only child.”⁸⁷

The major theme that engaged As‘ad al-Şāhib in his later writings, however, was again the defense of latter-day Muslim tradition, and particularly its sufi component, against its modern detractors. Here too, Şāhib reformulated his essential opposition to the Salafiyya in accordance with the new form adopted by the orthodox ‘ulama in the Young Turk era. “In the same manner that God conferred his favor upon the forefathers (the *salaf*)”, he asserts, “He conferred His favor upon their successors (the *khalaf*). The divine bounty has not ceased and the divine munificence can never end... Those who limit the favor of God to certain people and to a certain generation without basis in the Qur’an and the sunna deny the undeniable favor of God.”⁸⁸ Şāhib’s enmity toward his Salafi rivals was indeed unbounded. “You who designate yourself as the proponents of religious reform (*rijāl al-işlāḥ al-dīnī*)”, he addresses them in another article, “the example of whom do you want us to follow? Shall we abandon the four distinguished imams [of the legal schools] and the knights

⁸⁶ Ḥişnī, p. 759.

⁸⁷ As‘ad al-Şāhib, *Bayān Hāmm li-‘Ālam al-Islām* (Damascus, 1333 A.H.), pp. 3-5.

⁸⁸ Şāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, p. 198, editor’s note.

of Islam, on whose righteousness and honor four hundred million unifiers, who have lived on earth in all periods and places for eleven centuries, have unanimously agreed, and imitate you?... In what shall we take example from you, in neglecting the prayer, the fast, the pilgrimage, and the alms; in the pretentious boasting to practice *ijtihād* which is so difficult, and in rebelling against both the state and the religion?"⁸⁹

Yet, the stress laid on the validity of the orthodox attitude in the later writings of As'ad al-Šāhib was not provoked solely by the Salafī attacks upon it. In his eyes, as in the eyes of the 'ulama who contributed to *al-Haqā'iq* before him, it seemed to be part of the larger rationalist assault which the imitators of Western civilization were mounting against Islam particularly after the rise to power of the Young Turks. Šāhib too saw no real difference between the Salafīs, who integrated the rationalist attitude into their religious thought, and the Westernizers, who compromised their religion in the name of rationalism. Therefore, again in the footsteps of the other conservative 'ulama, he appropriated in his argument against both groups the notion of adherence to the path of the *salaf* and the ideal of progress. These elements are particularly conspicuous in a long article which Šāhib dedicated to this subject under the title "On Civilization" (*al-Madaniyya*). Ostensibly a rejoinder to Lord Cromer's offensive contention that Islam is averse to civilization, he seeks to demonstrate that no religion equals Islam in its drive to improve the condition of men.⁹⁰ Šāhib's wrath is focused on those Muslims who grew up on imitating Western ways and despising their own culture:

Look at these young Westernizers, who pretend to support culture and pose as noble and comely intellectuals, those philosophers of history, great sociologists, and conceivers of outstanding opinions and ideas. They place glasses on their noses, knock with their sticks, dip in perfumes, and adorn themselves with chains and watches of pure gold... When they accept an invitation to a meal and the time for prayer arrives, they amuse themselves by smoking cigarettes and putting one leg over the other. If one of them is admonished, he shows his revulsion and behaves haughtily [toward the admonisher], regarding him as a burdensome person and attributing to him fanaticism, rigidity, and crudeness (*ta'aṣṣub wa-jumūd wa-khushūnat al-ṭab'*).⁹¹

⁸⁹ As'ad al-Šāhib, *Al-Madaniyya* (Damascus, 1334 A.H.), pp. 86-87.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

This was also the basis of As'ad al-Şāhib's criticism of the Arab nationalists, which enabled him to prove once again his complete loyalty to the Ottoman State. He depicts them as hypocrites who profess to love their fatherland, but nonetheless serve the European powers which seek to dominate it. In Şāhib's view, the Arab nationalists bring about division in the Muslim community, using sometimes the name of Arab brotherhood and, at others, those of administrative decentralization or religious reformism. He remonstrates against them that, although they are aware of the Islamic prohibition to preach racial and tribal solidarity, they prefer to overlook it in their quest for posts, salaries, and ranks from the enemies of the state and the fatherland. In Şāhib's view, Arabism was thus just another expression of the Westernizing and Salafi trends.⁹²

The reliance of the Westernizers and the Salafis on rationalism leads As'ad al-Şāhib to examine theology, the branch of orthodox scholarship that has applied it the most. Şāhib's discussion of this science constitutes an important component in his introduction to Shaykh Khālid's collection of letters, which he published in 1916. Theology, it will be recalled, played a major role in the teaching of Khālid, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century had sought to base the activism of his sub-order on the concept of *kasb* (acquisition). Şāhib returns to it, almost a century later, for the more basic object of demonstrating the validity of the fundamental tenets of the faith. The principal role of theology in the rationalist era has become for him to protect the hearts of the followers of the path from the doubts and temptations that this has generated. Şāhib thus follows in Khālid's footsteps in his demand from the sufi adepts to amend their beliefs and fortify their certainty in the *unity of God* in accordance with the opinions of the orthodox theologians, the Ash'arīs and the Māturīdīs. Yet, in the face of the rationalist assault, he extends this basic demand to include the amending of the belief in the *existence of God* according to the law of the forefathers (*qānūn al-salaf al-Şālih*), as those authoritative scholars had interpreted it. In this respect, Şāhib confronts the theologians who formulated the orthodox doctrines with the Mu'tazila, the historical expression of the rationalist trend in Islam which Muḥammad 'Abduh, the leader of Islamic Modernism in Egypt, revived at the end of the nineteenth

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

century, rather than with the Wahhābīs, whom he generally regards as the forebears of the Salafiyya.⁹³

Another important element in the teaching of the Naqshbandiyya–Khālidiyya that As‘ad al-Şāhib emphasizes in his polemics against the rationalists is the Malāmātiyya. He employs this tradition in an effort to conceal the activity of the sufis not only to ensure their sincerity, as its original object had been, or to direct them toward social and political affairs, as the Naqshbandiyya understood it, but also to hide them from the eyes of their modern opponents. Thus in harmony with the traditional Naqshbandī stress on the importance of ‘ilm, and with his own desire to ally with the ‘ulama, Şāhib admits that the masters of the order regarded religious scholarship as the best cover for the follower of the path. Yet in the face of the contemporary rationalist attack on Sufism, which greatly intensified his tendency to rely on the government, he makes the claim that an even better cover for the follower of the Naqshbandī path is the robe of the rulers. The ‘ulama may be suspect of treading the sufi path, Şāhib writes, but no one would harbor such suspicions about rulers. Therefore, whoever takes up the form (*şūra*) of a ruler, while conducting a life (*sīra*) of piety and imitation of the saints, combines the two favors and only God shall know his secret.⁹⁴

This argument in favor of a combination of the sufi path and political authority had precedents in the activity of the original Naqshbandiyya of Central Asia. In As‘ad al-Şāhib’s case, however, it merely reflected his unreserved readiness to harness the Khālidi sub-order to the service of the CUP even under the military regime of Jamāl Pasha. In reward for his services, Şāhib gained official support in his claim to head the order in principle, and for his activity in Damascus in practice. This support is evidenced in his conclusion to Shaykh Khālidi’s collection of letters, in which he beseeches God to bestow victory in the war to the Sultan—Caliph, Muḥammad Rashād, and to help his ministers, “particularly the Head of State (*Şāhib al-dawla*), Aḥmad Jamāl Pasha, the commander of the Fourth Army and of the exalted fleet, *who exerted much effort to encourage the scholars to publish such a book.*” [my emphasis].⁹⁵ At that time, and despite the hardships of the war, Şāhib’s seat in the Sulaymāniyya

⁹³ Şāhib, *Bughyat al-Wājid*, pp. 32-33, 52-53, 61.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

lodge was lavishly renovated.⁹⁶ This striving to acquire the patronage of the state was indeed the most salient feature in As'ad al-Şāhib's career as a Naqshbandī-Khālīdī shaykh, though by adopting it he clearly deviated from the injunction of Khālīd to maintain a superior distance from rulers. Its roots lay in the failure of the *rābiṭa*, in the sense that Khālīd accorded it, to serve as a means to integrate the order, on the one hand, and in Şāhib's own foreign status in Damascus, on the other. To compensate himself for these weaknesses he sought to establish a functional connection with the state. This course was delineated for him already in the early Tanzimat period by his father, Maḥmūd al-Şāhib, who advocated service to rulers who seek to implement the orthodox principles that the Naqshbandiyya propagated. In the hands of his son, who was acting under the autocratic regimes of 'Abdülhamīd II and the Young Turks, regimes which turned orthodoxy into a tool for building their state, what remained of this functional bond was nothing but service to the rulers for personal benefit.

The other side of As'ad al-Şāhib's reliance on the patronage of the autocratic regimes of the late Ottoman Empire was his readiness to abandon the organizational novelties of Shaykh Khālīd and, eventually, the emphatic orthodox path of the Naqshbandiyya in its entirety. This readiness amounted to betraying the distinctive features of his order within the general sufi framework. Şāhib expressed his desire to seek a common denominator with the other orders, particularly the popular ones that were patronized by 'Abdülhamīd II and, after a brief interlude, also by the Young Turks, by placing the sufi path on a higher rank than the acquired sciences of jurisprudence and theology. He thus violated the fundamental combination, which Shaykh Khālīd embodied, between the "two wings" of the external sciences (*'ilm*) and the mystical practice (*'amal*). The axis of the Naqshbandī path, Şāhib maintained, was the realization of a perfect belief in God, His messenger, and what was transmitted from them. This genuine belief, he claims, is divided in the teaching of the Naqshbandiyya into three parts: first comes the belief that God inscribed with a spiritual light in the hearts of the faithful upon creating them (*īmān i'tāṭ*), to be followed by confirmation (*taşdīq*) of the reality of God's unity and the Prophet's words, and finally by

⁹⁶ Kurd 'Alī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. 6, p. 142; Aḥmad Qudāma, *Ma'ālim wa-A'lām fi Bilād al-'Arab* (Pt. 1: al-Quṭr al-Sūrī, Damascus, 1965), p. 186.

the confession (*iqrār*) with the tongue rendered by the testimony of faith. Ṣāḥib emphasizes that only the combination of these three kinds of belief makes it genuine, but their order, and the use of the term *īmān* solely for the first kind, make it clear that in his eyes the truth revealed by the sufi path supercedes the others. Knowledge without spiritual work (*‘ilm bilā ‘amal*), and such work without sincerity (*‘amal bilā ikhlās*), he concludes, are useless and might even do harm.⁹⁷

As‘ad al-Ṣāḥib was well aware of his deviation from the teaching of Shaykh Khālīd. This is clearly evident in the contrary path he took in his writings from the Young Turk period to prove his right to head the order. In plain contradiction to the position he had adopted in his earlier writings, Ṣāḥib now claimed that Khālīd had refrained from specifying who should succeed him, and that the four deputies who were mentioned in his will were nominated only to secure its implementation. Khālīd’s only expressed wish, according to Ṣāḥib, was that the deputies would not diverge from the opinion of Ismā‘īl al-Anārānī.⁹⁸ This new argument implied that the right to lead the order must be derived from other sources, thus enabling Ṣāḥib to bypass the will altogether and attach his father in an independent way to Khālīd’s master, Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī. He now asserted, accordingly, that Maḥmūd al-Ṣāḥib received the path from Abū Sa‘īd al-Mujaddidī, Ghulām ‘Alī’s successor in the Naqshbandī lodge in Delhi, who appointed him as his brother’s deputy at the head of the Khālīdī sub-order. Abū Sa‘īd, As‘ad added, supplied his father with a written authorization, urging him to treat Khālīd’s other deputies and disciples properly and to take care of his son’s education.⁹⁹ It is reasonable to assume that Maḥmūd al-Ṣāḥib met Mujaddidī while in Mecca, when the Indian shaykh performed the pilgrimage in 1834,¹⁰⁰ and it is also possible that the latter gave him his blessing. Yet, it is highly improbable that Abū Sa‘īd chose to interfere in the affairs of the Khālīdiyya, contrary to the will of Shaykh Khālīd himself, and, moreover, that Ṣāḥib would have refrained till then from exploiting such a strong argument in his struggle against the Khānīs, if indeed it was true. The attachment of his father to Abū Sa‘īd al-Mujaddidī was tantamount to a claim of superiority over the other shaykhs of the Khālīdiyya. To further establish his own

⁹⁷ Ṣāḥib, *Bughyat al-Wāḥid*, pp. 11-14, 25-26.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-262.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁰ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 218-219.

right to the leadership, Şāhib finally declared that he himself had followed in the footsteps of his father and had received the path from the great-grandson of Abū Saʿīd, Muḥammad Maʿşūm, in Medina.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, the establishment of an independent link to Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī reflected the readiness of Asʿad al-Şāhib to abandon the special path that Shaykh Khālid delineated in the *ṭarīqa*. This tendency was already evident in Şāhib's early writings, where he compromised the obligatoriness of Khālid's organizational novelties in the *rābiʿa* and the *khalwa*. By connecting his father with Abū Saʿīd al-Mujaddidī and his successors soon thereafter, Şāhib retreated also from the third novelty of "closing the door". It was thus to him that ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Khānī's denouncement of the Mujaddidīs for performing the *dhikr* ceremony in Mecca in the open was directed. Unlike Khānī, Şāhib was ready to admit that *ghalq al-bāb* was an innovation in the path. He justified Khālid's introduction of this practice with his typical reference to the religious sciences, claiming that he had followed the jurists' method in adjusting the rulings of the great mujtahids to the circumstances of their own time.¹⁰² This justification implied, however, that with the change of circumstances another great master might introduce other novelties in the path of the Khālidiyya. There is no doubt that Şāhib, at least by force of his claim to be Shaykh Khālid's successor in the leadership of the order, regarded himself as entitled to make such amendments. The favorable conditions under which the sufi orders were allowed to operate during the autocratic regimes of ʿAbdülhamīd II and the Young Turks supplied him with the opportunity to implement them. The changes that Şāhib claimed to effect in the Khālidi order amounted however, paradoxically, to a withdrawal from its distinctive path within the sufi framework in general, and from the Naqshbandiyya–Mujaddidiyya in particular, on the one hand, and to its unconditional harnessing to the service of the Committee for Union and Progress, on the other. The Ottoman defeat in 1918 only left him wondering after new masters.

¹⁰¹ Şāhib, *Bughyat al-Wajīd*, p. 45.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167, in reliance on Ibn ʿĀbidīn's epistle "*Nashr al-ʿUrf*".

PART 2: FACING THE WEST—THE AKBARIYYA

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Rabb zidnī 'ilman.
O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.
Qur'an, Ta Ha (20), 114.

Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī,¹ the Great Master (*al-Shaykh al-Akbar*) from whose epithet the name of the Akbarī teaching is derived, was born in 1165 to a family of high standing in Murcia in Muslim Spain. He grew to maturity in Seville under the rule of the Almohads, a Berber puritanical movement that temporarily succeeded in arresting the advance of the Christian Reconquista. Attracted to the mystic sciences and practice at an early age, Ibn 'Arabī traveled extensively in his homeland and in North Africa to study with their saints and scholars. His numerous visions, as well as his claim to have been initiated into the path directly by the prophets, from Jesus through al-Khaḍir² to Muḥammad, implanted in him a sense of a unique spiritual position. It was in such a vision, in 1200, that Ibn 'Arabī was ordered to depart for the East, where he spent the rest of his life. After performing the pilgrimage he wandered between Cairo, Konya and Baghdad, being honored by various local Seljūq and Ayyūbī rulers and attracting a growing number of disciples. Ultimately he settled in Damascus, in 1223, where he compiled his writings and continued to teach until his death in 1240.

Ibn 'Arabī's work was closely connected with the appearance of the sufi orders in the lands of Islam. This transition from free personal practices to collective and formal ones, which began to take shape toward the end of the twelfth century, reflected the need felt by rulers and common people alike for unity and security in an era of growing internal disintegration and ominous external threats. For the emerging *ṭuruq*, Ibn 'Arabī's comprehensive synthesis of the mys-

¹ The most detailed biography of Ibn 'Arabī, based primarily on his own evidence, is Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur, The Life of Ibn 'Arabī* (Cambridge, 1993). Shorter biographies, also mostly sympathetic, can be found in Henri Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sūfism of Ibn 'Arabī* (Princeton, 1969), pp. 38-73; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Sufi Sages: Avicenna—Suhrawardī—Ibn 'Arabī* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 92-97; R.W.J. Austin's introduction to Ibn al-'Arabī, *The Bezels of Wisdom* (New York, 1980), pp. 1-16. For a critical analysis based on the early sources see Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabī in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany, 1999), pp. 25-47.

² On al-Khaḍir see A.J. Wensinck, "al-Khaḍir (al-Khidr)," *EI2*, vol. 4, pp. 902-905.

tical sciences of the time came to represent the common heritage underlying their distinctive practical paths. He himself acknowledged this role in his claim to be the "seal of the saints", whose mission it was to preserve the spiritual deposit of sacred knowledge and blessing for future generations destined to live under even harsher conditions.³

Ibn 'Arabī was one of the most prolific writers the Muslim world has ever produced.⁴ Among his hundreds of works two hold a special place: *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations), his *magnum opus* which was conceived during the hajj from the vision of a "young man" (*fatā*) representing his own essential being; and *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom), a resume of his ideas written toward the end of his life in Damascus with the inspiration of Muḥammad.⁵ Any study of al-Shaykh al-Akbar's writings is bound to encounter formidable difficulties. These derive not only from Ibn 'Arabī's wide-ranging peculiar synthesis of earlier intellectual and spiritual traditions, but also from the paradoxical and enigmatic language he used, which was ultimately meant to function as a mirror for each individual reader.⁶ Among Muslim scholars, these writings provoked also a deep controversy. The attack on Ibn 'Arabī, launched in earnest by Ibn Taymiyya and amounting to his denunciation as a heretical monist, concentrated on the condensed and elusive *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.⁷ A close examination of the more comprehensive and diffuse *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, however, reveals that his thought was basically a meticulous, though unbound by reason, literal interpretation of the scriptures. Ibn 'Arabī regarded the Qur'an as a source of infinite divine secrets that are revealed in an unceasing flow to

³ Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 13-14; *idem*, *Ocean Without Shore: Ibn 'Arabī, the Book, and the Law* (Albany, 1993), pp. 17-18.

⁴ The fundamental inventory of his works is Osman Yahia, *Histoire et classification de l'oeuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī* (2 vols. Damascus, 1964). For general surveys on the expanding research on Ibn 'Arabī see James Winston Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī and his Interpreters," *JAOS*, 106 (1986), pp. 539-551, 733-756, 107 (1987), pp. 101-120; William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of the Imagination* (Albany, 1989), pp. xvi-xx; Knish, *Ibn 'Arabī*, pp. 17-24; and the issues of the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society*.

⁵ Addas, pp. 201ff, 277ff.

⁶ James Winston Morris, "How to Study the *Futūḥāt*: Ibn 'Arabī's Own Advice," in Stephen Hirtenstein and Michael Tiernan (eds.), *Muhyiddīn Ibn 'Arabī: A Commemorative Volume* (Shaftesbury, 1993), p.73; Michael A. Sells, "Ibn 'Arabī's 'Polished Mirror': Perspective Shift and Meaning Event," *SI*, 67 (1988), pp. 121-149.

⁷ Knish, *Ibn 'Arabī*, pp. 10-13, 87-111.

those believers who are able to read it without resorting to rational deliberation and judgment.⁸ Revelation (*kashf*) was for him also the only sure way to verify a saying attributed to the Prophet, as opposed to the external criterion of authenticating the chain of transmitters (*isnād*), as applied by the hadith scholars.⁹ Ibn 'Arabī's jurisprudence, which constituted an integral part of his teaching, was derived from the same literal experiential interpretation of the Qur'an and the sunna. He therefore refused to accept any limitation on the exertion of *ijtihād*, and rejected the legal experts' resort to the contrary method of *taqlīd*. Though clearly influenced by the Zāhirī school, which had a considerable following in the Muslim West at the time and which relied on a strictly literal understanding of the Qur'an, Ibn 'Arabī regarded the rulings of all legal schools as equally valid. He himself was actually an independent mujtahid, whose two guiding principles were that whatever the sharī'a does not explicitly forbid is permissible, and that when various solutions are possible there is no harm in choosing the most accommodating one. The legal experts of his day, al-Shaykh al-Akbar depicted as restricting and forbidding within their schools actions that God in His mercy had allowed to be performed in various ways (*ittisā'*).¹⁰

The polemics against his ideas notwithstanding, Ibn 'Arabī's teaching left a profound mark upon the development of latter-day Sufism, in both its "intellectual" and "popular" forms. The initial dissemination of the works of al-Shaykh al-Akbar owed much to his early chain of disciples, from Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274) to 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) who, still in the shadow of the Mongol catastrophe, continued to address the elect in their learned expositions of the various aspects of his thought.¹¹ Subsequent followers, such as 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 1565), Muḥammad al-Burhānpūrī (d. 1620), Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1690), and 'Abd al-Ghanī

⁸ Chodkiewicz, *Ocean Without Shore*, esp. ch. 1; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp. xv-xvi, 199-202; James Winston Morris, "Ibn 'Arabī's "Esotericism": The Problem of Spiritual Authority," *SI*, 71 (1990), pp. 37-64.

⁹ Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 61.

¹⁰ *Idem*, *Ocean Without Shore*, pp. 54-57. For examples of his treatment of legal questions see Eric Winkel, "Ibn 'Arabī's *Fiqh*: Three Cases from the *Futūḥāt*," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabī Society*, 13 (1993), pp. 54-74.

¹¹ For an overview of these early disseminators of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching see the works of William C. Chittick, particularly "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qūnawī to al-Qaṣṣārī," *MW*, 72 (1982), pp. 107-128; and "The Perfect Man as a Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmī," *SI*, 49 (1979), pp. 135-158.

al-Nābulusī (d. 1731), writing under the more propitious conditions of the Ottoman and Mughal Empires, helped to popularize this teaching with simplified summaries and commentaries.¹² Others, generally more difficult to identify, restricted the study of Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings to their elect disciples while concealing it from the less qualified, who might misunderstand them and be led to heresy. In addition to the written word, Ibn ‘Arabī’s legacy was also transmitted through a chain of authority (*silsila*) of its own. Although never a *ṭarīqa* in the organizational sense of the term, the Akbariyya too developed a tradition of bestowing the frock on initiates as a symbol of al-Shaykh al-Akbar’s spiritual power. Many joined it discreetly while keeping more visible affiliations to other orders.¹³

Circumstances of place and time determined not only the mode and scope of the dissemination of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching, but also the ways of understanding it. Thus under both the military slave sultans of the post-‘Abbāsid period and the great empires that succeeded them, the doctrine of “the unity of being” (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), which the philosophically inclined Qūnawī posed as the cornerstone of the Akbarī system,¹⁴ tended to approach pantheism. The mystic path was described as a personal striving to become one with the only Being, while from the all-pervasiveness of God it was derived that every man,

¹² For the representatives of this trend see Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha’rānī* (New Brunswick, 1982), pp. 160-172; Michel Chodkiewicz, “‘L’Offrande au Prophète’ de Muḥammad al-Burhānpūrī,” *Connaissance des Religions*, 4 (1988), pp. 30-40; Alexander D. Knysh, “Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (d. 1101/1690), An Apologist for Waḥdat al-Wujūd,” *JRAS*, 3rd series, 5 (1995), pp. 39-47; Dina Le Gall, “The Ottoman Naqshbandiyya in the Pre-Mujaddidī Phase: A Study in Islamic Religious Culture and its Transmission” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1992), pp. 224-227; Bakri Aladdin, “‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī, oeuvre, vie, doctrine” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Université de Paris, 1985); Barbara Rosenow von Schlegell, “Sufism in the Ottoman Arab World: Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California—Berkeley, 1997).

¹³ Chodkiewicz, *Ocean Without Shore*, pp. 1-18. For the political periodization see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (3 vols. Chicago and London, 1974), Books Four and Five.

¹⁴ On the “Unity of Being” see Su‘ād al-Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu‘jam al-Ṣūfī: Al-Ḥikma fī Ḥudūd al-Kalima* (Beirut, 1401/1981), pp. 1145-1157. On the historical development of this doctrine see particularly the following works by William C. Chittick: *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-‘Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany, 1994), pp. 15-29; “Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī on the Oneness of Being,” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 (1981), pp. 171-184; “Mysticism versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: the al-Ṭūsī al-Qūnawī Correspondence,” *Religious Studies*, 17 (1981), pp. 87-104; “Waḥdat al-wujūd in Islamic Thought,” *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, 10 (1991), pp. 7-27.

whatever his religion, necessarily worships Him in the manner that He had predisposed him to. This immanent interpretation of the mystic experience entailed shunning public affairs, which were left to the care of the rulers, blurred the distinction between Islam and other religions, particularly in those areas where it was continuing to spread through the work of sufi missionaries, and generally undermined the notion of heresy. In the seventeen and eighteenth centuries, as central authority in the great empires progressively declined, groups of reformers came to stress other aspects of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching. For them, the focus of "the unity of being" shifted to "the reality of Muḥammad" (*al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*), another important element in al-Shaykh al-Akbar's thought, signifying the Prophet's place in the one Being as the Perfect Man, through whom all creatures emanate and through whom they can draw near to God.¹⁵ With this new emphasis, the mystic path tended to become identified with the duty to follow the sunna of the Prophet and to adhere to the shari'a which God had conveyed through him. This transcendental interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching reflected the growing inclination among contemporary men of religion to be more involved in public affairs, as the example of the Prophet required, and to stress the distinction between Muslims, who accepted his mission, and followers of other religions, who rejected it. Concomitantly, these men of religion developed a renewed interest in the works of Ghazālī.¹⁶

This new stress in the interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching was congruent with the views of the Khālidiyya, the leading reformist order in Damascus in the first half of the nineteenth century. Naqshbandī interest in the doctrines of al-Shaykh al-Akbar goes back to the mother order in fourteenth-century Central Asia.¹⁷ Aḥmad Sirhindī, however, who was disturbed by the pantheistic interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, substituted it with *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, the testimony

¹⁵ For the notion of the Muḥammadan Reality in the Akbarī teaching see Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, pp. 60-73; Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī*, pp. 347-352; Cornell, pp. 205-211. For the Perfect Man see Reynold A. Nicolson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1921), pp. 77-142; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 218-283; Matasaka Takeshita, *Ibn 'Arabī's Theory of the Perfect Man and its Place in the History of Islamic Thought* (Tokyo, 1987); Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī*, pp. 158-168.

¹⁶ Levtzion and Voll, Introduction.

¹⁷ See Hamid Algar, "Reflections of Ibn 'Arabī in Early Naqshbandī Tradition," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, 10 (1991), pp. 45-66.

that God is one despite the diversity of being. Yet, Sirhindī too acknowledged the immense contribution of Ibn ‘Arabī to the development of Sufism in general, and to the shaping of his own ideas in particular. He tried to defend his more controversial expressions by demonstrating their compatibility with orthodox views, or at times by comparing them with the errors of the mujtahids in their legal rulings.¹⁸ In the Mujaddidī sub-order, Sirhindī’s *Maktūbāt* largely came to replace the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī. This was probably also the attitude of Shaykh Khālīd, who generally ignored al-Shaykh al-Akbar’s theosophy, though his library contained works by him and by Qūnawī.¹⁹ Among Khālīd’s deputies in Syria, where the tradition of Ibn ‘Arabī had remained alive since the days of Nābulusī, al-Shaykh al-Akbar’s influence was much more pronounced. Thus Muḥammad al-Khānī quoted him often in his exposition of the Khālīdī path, and Aḥmad al-Urwādī of Tripoli belonged to the Akbarī chain of authority.²⁰ In the second half of the nineteenth century, moreover, a genuine Akbarī awakening became noticeable among the ‘ulama of Damascus. This awakening was associated with the name of Amir ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī, the leader of the resistance movement to the French occupation of Algeria, who in the last part of his life chose Damascus as his place of residence.

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī belonged to the spiritual chain of Ibn ‘Arabī. The Akbarī frock had been transmitted in his sharīfian family since the time of his grandfather, Muṣṭafā, who in 1791 received it from Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī while passing through Egypt on his return from the hajj.²¹ During the same journey, Muṣṭafā also joined the Qādiriyya order, and back in Algeria he founded in the interior the religious center of Qayṭana, from where he began to

¹⁸ Friedmann, pp. 63-67; Rizvi, vol. 2, pp. 209-213; Ansari, pp. 101-117; Haar, pp. 117-131; William C. Chittick, “Notes on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Influence in the Sub-continent,” *MW*, 82 (1992), p. 232.

¹⁹ De Jung and Witkam, p. 71. Chodkiewicz, *Ocean Without Shore*, p. 132n. 16, and Algar, “Reflections of Ibn ‘Arabī,” tend to regard Khālīd as more faithful to the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabī. The evidence for such a view, however, comes from later nineteenth century sources, which were influenced by the revival of al-Shaykh al-Akbar’s teachings generated by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī.

²⁰ Aḥmad ibn Sulaymān al-Urwādī, *Al-‘Iqd al-Farīd fī ‘Ulūw al-Asānīd* (Princeton University, Manuscript, Yahuda, 821; Garrett, 793h, 1268 A.H.).

²¹ Michel Chodkiewicz, *The Spiritual Writings of Amir ‘Abd al-Kader* (Albany, 1995), p. 8. On Zabīdī see Stefan Reichmuth, “Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1791) in Biographical and Autobiographical Accounts. Glimpses of Islamic Scholarship in the 18th Century,” *WI*, 39 (1999), pp. 64-102.

spread the path. His son, Muḥyī al-Dīn, an eminent 'alim and leader in his own right, consolidated his enterprise, becoming the principal Qādirī shaykh in Western Algeria. Qayṭana was the birthplace, in 1807, of Muḥyī al-Dīn's own son, 'Abd al-Qādir, who was thus raised in a pious sufi—religious atmosphere, blended with an animosity toward the Turkish rulers of the coast.²² 'Abd al-Qādir accompanied his father on the pilgrimage in 1826-1827. Joining the returning caravan for Damascus, the two met Shaykh Khālīd, who performed the hajj that year too. Khālīd let them enter the Naqshbandī path, passing them on in his usual manner to one of his deputies, Muḥammad al-Khānī. They stayed in the Murādiyya mosque for the next four months, the father spending part of the time in seclusion. He did not perform the forty-day seclusion with Shaykh Khālīd himself, however, and if he took the Naqshbandī path at all it was more by way of blessing. Thereafter the two continued to Baghdad, to visit the tomb of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and renew their attachment to his order.²³ Upon their return to Algeria it became evident that 'Abd al-Qādir was attracted to the sufi theoretical expositions, particularly those of Ghazālī, rather than to the practical aspects of the path. The other field of study that drew his particular interest was hadith.²⁴

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's sufi—religious background was clearly evident in the way he led for fifteen years the jihad against the French invaders. In the independent state that he established in the interior of the country, 'Abd al-Qādir strictly enforced the shari'a and sought to bring about moral regeneration by returning to the spirit of the Qur'an and to the simple ways of the forefathers. He ordered to perform the five daily prayers in public and entirely prohibited gambling, drinking, and smoking. To the tribes that had surrendered to the French, he issued a fatwa, urging them to immigrate (*hijra*) to areas that remained under Muslim control.²⁵ At the root of 'Abd al-Qādir's conduct of jihad lay his unmistakable ascetic propensity. He showed disregard for worldly gains and dedicated much

²² Raphael Danziger, *Abd al-Qadir and the Algerian Resistance to the French and Internal Consolidation* (New York and London, 1977), pp. 52-54.

²³ M. Khānī, *Al-Bahja al-Saniyya*, p. 2, separate paging for the biography of the author; 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 263, 281.

²⁴ 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif fī al-Wa'z wal-Irshād* (3 vols. Cairo, 1911), vol. 1, p. 39.

²⁵ For the text of the fatwa see Muḥammad al-Jazā'irī, *Tuhfat al-Ẓā'ir fī Ta'rīkh al-Jazā'ir wal-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir* (Beirut, 1384/1964), pp. 268-276.

of his time to supererogatory acts such as a weekly fast and vigils, as well as to the study of theology and to meditation.²⁶

The decisive period in the spiritual development of Amir 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī was deferred, however, until after his surrender to the French in 1847. Contrary to the stipulations of the treaty signed with him, 'Abd al-Qādir was taken under guard to France. Here he initially enjoyed a certain amount of freedom, thanks to which he became one of those few Muslim reformers, such as the Young Ottomans and the Egyptian Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī, who were able to realize at first hand the material progress attained by Europe through its new rationalist—scientific approach. In the wake of the 1848 revolution 'Abd al-Qādir's situation deteriorated, as his large entourage was separated from him and he was allowed almost no contact with the outside world. In this period of disillusionment and despair he went through an acute spiritual crisis, which led him to the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī.²⁷ The new attitude that 'Abd al-Qādir adopted toward Western civilization in consequence of his experience in France became apparent after his release by Napoleon III in 1852. He now participated in various official events and enjoyed conversing with generals and scientists. To Louis Napoleon he promised that, "now I am among those who use the pen, not those who use the sword."²⁸ While on a visit to Paris during the Crimean War, 'Abd al-Qādir took part in a prayer of thanksgiving in the Church of Notre Dame, and expressed his admiration for the technical innovations he saw in the international exhibition then taking place in the French capital.²⁹ On the other hand, in Bursa, where it was agreed that 'Abd al-Qādir would settle after his landing in the Ottoman Empire, he began to teach along with hadith also the ideas of Ibn 'Arabī.³⁰ This new occupation was fully revealed after his immigration to Damascus at the end of 1855.

²⁶ Pessah Shinar, "Abd al-Qādir and 'Abd al-Krīm: Religious Influences on their Thoughts and Actions," *AAS*, 1 (1965), pp. 139-160.

²⁷ Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ḥazā'ir*, pp. 514-530; Jawād al-Murābiṭ, *Al-Taṣawwuf wal-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ḥasanī al-Jazā'irī* (Damascus, 1966), p. 18.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 562-566.

²⁹ Charles Henri Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abd al-Qādir, al-Sulṭān al-Sābiq li-'Arab al-Jazā'ir* (Tunis, 1971), pp. 275-276.

³⁰ The book 'Abd al-Qādir taught in Bursa was "*Kitāb al-Ibrīz*", which records the discussions between the Moroccan shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Dabbāgh and the author, his disciple, Aḥmad ibn Mubārak al-Lamṭī. See Trimmingham, p. 114n. 4; Chodkiewicz, *Ocean Without Shore*, pp. 12-13.

Amir ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī was received in Syria with great honor as the leader of the jihad in Algeria, as a dignitary with connections at the highest levels in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe, and as a scholar and sufi who traced his descent from the Prophet. In addition, he had at his disposal a generous pension from Louis Napoleon, which was augmented by a special allowance from Sultan ‘Abdūlmecīd. ‘Abd al-Qādir invested this fortune primarily in agriculture. Arriving in Damascus shortly after the boom in the grain export of the mid-1850s had begun, he immediately joined the group of outer-ring entrepreneurs that had engaged in exploiting the wheat-growing areas on its south, particularly the Ḥawrān.³¹ The large entourage that accompanied ‘Abd al-Qādir was united with the considerable Algerian exile community which had already been settled in the city, mainly in the southern quarters, and which further expanded in the following years. The members of this close-knit community regarded him as their undisputed leader, and he served as their patron, their representative to state officials and foreign consuls, and their arbitrator in internal disputes. ‘Abd al-Qādir himself chose to settle, with his family, in the northern ‘Amāra quarter.³²

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s international prestige was further enhanced as a consequence of his heroic stand during the severe anti-Christian riots that broke out in the inner city of Damascus in 1860.³³ ‘Abd al-Qādir tried to use his influence among the Druze, as well as with the governor and the local notables, in an attempt to prevent the spread of violence from Lebanon. He claimed that attacking the Christians was not only contrary to the precepts of the shari‘a, but was also liable to provide the French with a pretext for taking control of Syria, as they have done in Algeria. After the massacre had begun, ‘Abd al-Qādir organized his compatriots and supplied them with arms to protect the survivors and lead them to safety in Beirut. His conduct won him decorations from many European rulers, while Shaykh Shāmīl, the Naqshbandī-Khālīdī leader of the resistance

³¹ Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, p. 215; *idem*, “The Hauran Conflicts,” p. 163; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 34.

³² Pierre Bardin, *Algériens et Tunisiens dans l’Empire Ottoman de 1848 à 1914* (Paris, 1979), pp. 11-14.

³³ On the massacre of 1860 see Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 78-100; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 87-100; Ma‘oz, *Ottoman Reform*, pp. 231-239.

movement to the Russian occupation of Daghestan, praised him for acting in compliance with the shari'a.³⁴ In Istanbul, by contrast, the European sympathy toward 'Abd al-Qādir, and his independent status as a French protégé, provoked apprehensions, particularly in view of the reports published in European newspapers about Napoleon III's plans to install him at the head of an Arab kingdom.³⁵ In Damascus too, he alienated many among the Muslim population who were shocked by the severe punishments meted out by the government.³⁶ 'Abd al-Qādir, who generally preferred to shun politics, paid a visit to Sultan 'Abdülazîz in 1865, where his intercession on behalf of the Damascene notables that had been banished in the wake of the massacre helped them return to the city, and to the French Emperor, who increased his pension. Nevertheless, during the Russian—Ottoman War of 1877-1878 he agreed to participate in the plans of a group of notables centered in Beirut to make him King of Syria in case that an Ottoman defeat jeopardize the independence of the country. 'Abd al-Qādir's conditions were that any such kingdom maintain its spiritual attachment to the Ottoman Caliphate and that the inhabitants swear allegiance to him (*bay'a*).³⁷

Yet the primary interest of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī during the last part of his life in Damascus was undoubtedly in religion, most particularly the teaching of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī. The first visit he made in the city, immediately after his arrival, was to the tomb of al-Shaykh al-Akbar in the Ṣālīhiyya quarter.³⁸ Shortly thereafter

³⁴ Jazā'irī, *Tuhfat al-Ẓā'ir*, pp. 662-664. 'Abd al-Qādir and Shāmil, who shared a similar fate, corresponded regularly. Before 'Abd al-Qādir's visit to Napoleon III, Shāmil requested that he ask the Emperor to intervene with the Russian government for his release from prison in order to immigrate to Mecca. *Ibid.*, pp. 725-727; Marius Canard, "Chamil et Abdelkader," *AIEO*, 14 (1956), pp. 231-256. On Shāmil's struggle see Moshe Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London, 1994).

³⁵ Charles-Robert Ageron, "Abd el-Kader souverain d'un royaume arabe d'orient," *Revue de l'Occident Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, Numéro Spécial, 1970: IIe Congrès International d'Études Nord-Africaines, pp. 15-30.

³⁶ For the view of the traditional Muslim elite of the city on the massacre see Kamal S. Salibi, "The 1860 Upheaval in Damascus as seen by al-Sayyid Muhammad Abu'l Su'ud al-Hasibi, Notable and Later *Naqib al-Ashraf* of the City," in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds.), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 185-202.

³⁷ 'Adil al-Ṣulh, *Suṭūr min al-Risāla: Ta'rīkh Ḥaraka Istiqlāliyya Qāmat fī al-Mashriq al-'Arabī Sanat 1877* (Beirut, 1966); Fritz Steppat, "Eine Bewegung unter den Notabeln Syriens, 1877-1878," *ZDMG*, Suppl. 1 (1968), pp. 631-649; Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (London, 1993), pp. 10-14.

³⁸ Jazā'irī, *Tuhfat al-Ẓā'ir*, p. 597.

‘Abd al-Qādir was invited to teach in the Umayyad Mosque, as well as in the adjacent Jaqmaqiyya college. A group of ‘ulama had soon assembled around him, meeting daily for the study of Qur’an and hadith according to the Akbarī method. In 1862 ‘Abd al-Qādir departed for the pilgrimage, passing on his way through Egypt, where he was a special guest of the Khedive. In Mecca he received a similar welcome by the Sharīf, ‘Abdallāh Pasha, before turning to the main purpose of his journey, to tread the sufi path.³⁹ ‘Abd al-Qādir chose as his guide Shaykh Muḥammad al-Fāsī of the Madanī branch of the Shādhiliyya, and under his guidance dedicated himself to a strict spiritual training. Swiftly traversing the stages and states of the path, he reached the goal on Mount Ḥirā’, in the cave in which Muḥammad himself made his retreats before receiving the mission.⁴⁰ Subsequently, ‘Abd al-Qādir continued to Medina, spending another period of seclusion at the Prophet’s tomb, during which his visions intensified. He made a second pilgrimage to Mecca and then returned to Damascus, again via Egypt, this time also joining the Alexandria lodge of the Free Masons.⁴¹ In 1870 ‘Abd al-Qādir sent two of his senior disciples to collate the copy of *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* he used with the manuscript of the author preserved in Konya. He continued to teach it according to their findings until the end of his life. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī was then buried, according to his own wish, at the side of al-Shaykh al-Akbar in the Ṣālihiyya cemetery.⁴²

For a fuller understanding of the significance of the spiritual change that ‘Abd al-Qādir underwent during his captivity in France, and particularly for an explanation of the Akbarī awakening which he generated in Damascus, we must now turn to the analysis of his writings.

³⁹ ‘Abd al-Qādir, Like his spiritual master, Ibn ‘Arabī, was among those sufis that the Naqshbandiyya defines as the elect by whom the rapture (*jadhbā*) precedes the treading of the path (*sulūk*). ‘Abd al-Qādir agreed with the Naqshbandīs that the path of *jadhbā* is shorter, but regarded the path of *sulūk* as superior and more complete and therefore decided to undertake it at such a late phase of his life. See Jazā’irī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, vol. 1, no. 18, pp. 49-50. See also the analysis of Michel Chodkiewicz, ‘*Abd al-Kāder*’, pp. 8-9. For Ibn ‘Arabī’s attitude toward this question see Addas, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Jazā’irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ẓā’ir*, pp. 694-699; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 897-899.

⁴¹ On ‘Abd al-Qādir’s relation to the Free Masons see Xavier Yacono, “Abdelkader, franc-maçon,” *Humanisme*, 57 (1966), pp. 5-37.

⁴² Ḥiṣnī, pp. 741-742.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE THEOSOPHICAL EXPERIENCE

A comprehensive analysis of the thought of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, who like his master, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī, sought to integrate the various scientific branches of his time, from the natural sciences through psychology to metaphysics, is beyond the scope of this study. Michel Chodkiewicz, the eminent scholar of Ibn 'Arabī, has already given us a preliminary survey of 'Abd al-Qādir's spiritual biography and some guidelines to his mystical teaching, including translation of excerpts from his writings. In this chapter I attempt to examine this teaching more systematically through the prism of 'Abd al-Qādir's main contribution to the modernization of the Akbarī thought, namely his redefinition of the relationship between mysticism and rationalism in Islam.

The principal source for the examination of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's teaching is his three published books, to which can be added his replies to questions of various Muslim scholars and French scientists. These writings are divided into two entirely different types. The first two books, which 'Abd al-Qādir had completed before his arrival in Damascus, are of a rationalist character. The first was composed while he was still confined in France as a rejoinder to the accusations of a Catholic priest who worked in Algeria concerning the supposed immorality of Islam. The main part of this treatise, however, is its extensive introduction, which was designed to prove the existence of God and the reality of prophethood by way of reason.¹ The second treatise was composed four years later in Bursa in response to the request of a French scientific committee that had designated him as representative of the Muslim nation. Reiterating contentions made in the previous book, 'Abd al-Qādir added a new introduction arguing in favor of rational thinking and a conclusion enumerating the merits of scientific writing.² Both books are writ-

¹ 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, *Al-Miqrāḍ al-Hādd li-Qaḍ Lisān Muntaqish Dīn al-Islām bil-Bāṭil wal-Ilhād* (Beirut, n.d.).

² *Idem*, *Dhikrā al-'Āqil wa-Tanbīh al-Ghāfil* (Beirut, 1966). This work appeared in French as early as 1855, and in a reedition in 1858, under the title *Rappel à l'intelligent, avis à l'indifférent*.

ten in simple language and pursue logical arguments. 'Abd al-Qādir relied in them on Muslim scholars who had shown a propensity for rationalism, particularly Ghazālī, and occasionally also on classical Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle.

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's third book is focused entirely on Sufism. This is a vast collection of mystical interpretations of Qur'an verses and hadith sayings that bears unmistakably the imprint of Ibn 'Arabī. Its last part contains in addition elucidation of difficult points in the writings of al-Shaykh al-Akbar in response to disciples' queries. These interpretations were experienced by 'Abd al-Qādir as mystic revelations, and they reflected the ripening of his spiritual conscience during the last part of his life in Damascus. He depicted them as *mawāqif*, the stops between the stations on the sufi path. Not designed for publication, a first edition of this book appeared only twenty years after 'Abd al-Qādir's death. The passages have no titles, normally opening with a quotation of the Qur'anic verse, the hadith, or the phrase of Ibn 'Arabī, that is to be interpreted. There is also no logical sequence between them, and they contain numerous repetitions, and even contradictions, since as mystical experiences they were not bound to logical consistency. These passages are all written in associative language, deriving from the ecstatic states 'Abd al-Qādir was experiencing at the time of their giving. The *Mawāqif* constitute thus unique evidence for his sufi thought in its making.³

Yet, despite the very different character of the rational and the mystical writings of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, they were basically two aspects of the same teaching. 'Abd al-Qādir evidently regarded his two first books as an explanation suitable for the level of understanding of the common people, Muslims as well as adherents of other religions, as to the merits and limitations of the rationalist approach underlying Western civilization. These writings constitute, therefore, the external aspect of his teaching. 'Abd al-Qādir's collection of mystical passages, on the other hand, reflect the task he felt to have been imposed on him to shape the religious elite that would preserve the fundamental truths of the Muslim faith in the developing crisis of European supremacy. These writings thus constitute the inner aspect of his teaching. As a sufi of the Akbarī school, 'Abd al-Qādir viewed these two aspects as the two opposite standpoints from which the truth may be beheld: the divine standpoint, which is attained by

³ Jazā'irī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*.

means of mystical experience, and the human standpoint, which is acquired through logical judgment based on perception. As Western historians trained in a rational mode of inquiry rather than in one of mystical experience, we can thus conclude that his sufi teaching in the *Mawāqif* is an elaboration and completion of the ideas which he expressed at the onset of his new path in his rationalist writings. We may, therefore, turn first to an examination of the rationalist dimension in the thought of ‘Abd al-Qādir, in the light of which we will then proceed to analyze the parallel aspects in his mystical teaching.

The Rationalist Challenge

By proving the existence of God and the veracity of the teachings of the prophets by way of reason, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī sought to integrate his profound religious faith with the rationalist mode of thinking underlying the achievements of the West. This object had two aspects. On the one hand, ‘Abd al-Qādir strove to demonstrate to the French rationalists and their Muslim followers that man as individual, and human society at large, cannot attain perfection solely by reason, and that the teachings handed down by the prophets are, therefore, indispensable. This aspect is predominant in the treatise he wrote while still in prison in France. On the other hand, ‘Abd al-Qādir was anxious to convince his coreligionists of the necessity to abandon the practice of blind imitation which so pervaded their scholarship in the latter generations and to make use of their own reason, as the Europeans did. To this end he attempted to demonstrate the basic unity of all religions and the universality of science. This aspect appears first in the treatise he wrote after his settlement in the Ottoman Empire.

‘Abd al-Qādir’s point of departure is to explain the essence and nature of rational thinking. Attributing great importance to the intellect (*‘aql*), he defines it with four interrelated meanings. According to the first and most fundamental of them, *‘aql*, the quality which distinguishes man from all other creatures, represents his predisposition (*istīdād*) to comprehend theoretical sciences and acquire practical skills. Using sufi imagery, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī likens it to a light which is cast into the heart and make it capable of perceiving. The following two definitions view *‘aql* as knowledge, either of

self-evident facts which man perceives intuitively or those he acquires by experience. The final meaning of *‘aql*, which refers to its object, establishes its relation to faith. This is man’s inner recognition of the consequences of his deeds and his suppression of the instinct to seek immediate gratification. ‘Abd al-Qādir was of the opinion that all knowledge exists *a-priori* in the mind, though it needs a specific cause to be revealed. Along with the merits of rational deliberation, however, he also dealt with its deficiencies. Like light produced by fire, reason mixes with the smoke of doubt and is easily extinguished.⁴

Turning to the notion of knowledge (*‘ilm*), ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī regards it in its various aspects as the fruit of rational thinking, the object of man’s creation, and his greatest and purest pleasure. In accordance with Muslim tradition, he describes man as holding a middle position between the angels and the animals. The pursuit of knowledge and good deeds (*‘ilm wa-‘amal*) elevates man to the first, while turning his energies to satisfy his bodily desires brings him down to the level of the second. ‘Abd al-Qādir vigorously attacks those who turn entirely to this world. In his view, they will never attain their goal since it is a bottomless sea and since every achievement only awakens the desire for yet another one. On the other hand, ‘Abd al-Qādir objects to a complete shunning of worldly affairs. The various sects that have followed this course, he explains, have gone to extremes such as suicide and self-mortification, or permissiveness and heresy. The recommended path is the middle way of taking from this world as much as one needs while subjecting his desires to the guidance of reason and law.⁵ The middle way should also govern human social order. ‘Abd al-Qādir maintains that, “the goals of men are attained by integrating their religious and worldly affairs (*intizām al-dīn wal-dunyā*).” Society’s multiple needs produce a division of labor under a leadership (*siyāsa*), which is essential for cooperation in the pursuance of livelihood. ‘Abd al-Qādir, like Ibn ‘Ābidīn before him, accepts accordingly Ghazālī’s division of leadership into two kinds: one of kings and sultans, who govern the external matters of all their subjects; the other of the ‘ulama, who govern the inner lives of the elite.⁶

Having clarified the importance of rational thinking for man and

⁴ Jazā’irī, *Al-Miqrād al-Hādd*, pp. 10-18; *Idem*, *Dhikrā al-‘Āqil*, pp. 49-51, with omission of the last sentence.

⁵ Jazā’irī, *Al-Miqrād al-Hādd*, pp. 26, 39-40; *Idem*, *Dhikrā al-‘Āqil*, pp. 39-45.

⁶ *Idem*, *Dhikrā al-‘Āqil*, pp. 46-47.

society, ‘Abd al-Qādir proceeds to demonstrate the existence of God and explain how He should be conceived. His basic argument is that the many manifestations of creation in the universe point to their creator. A special place is dedicated in ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s argument to man, the microcosm, in which there is a parallel to every part of the large world. In this review he generally relies on the ideas of ancient Muslim scholars rather than on the findings of modern European science, the details of which he barely knew. At the root of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s discussion lay his admission, again following Ghazālī, of the principle of causality. “We do not admit that causes bring about effects by their own nature or abstract power”, he declares, “but in any other manner [that is compatible with the unitary belief], they are recognized.”⁷ From this also derives ‘Abd al-Qādir’s demonstration of the validity of prophethood. When the soul comprehends God’s greatness, he explains, it seeks a guide to show it the way to Him. Reason cannot fill this task, since it possesses no knowledge about divine reward and punishment and, therefore, is unable to distinguish between obedience and rebelliousness. For this purpose the prophets were sent by God’s mercy. Nevertheless, in accepting the message of the prophets, ‘Abd al-Qādir again assigns a central role to reason as the only organ capable of grasping its logic. Between the rational and religious sciences there is thus not only complete harmony, but also interdependency. He can accordingly conclude that, “those who preach sheer blind imitation and avoid reason are ignorant, while those who confine themselves to reason alone to the exclusion of the sharī’a sciences are arrogant.”⁸

In ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s second book, which was directed primarily to Muslims, these demonstrations are preceded by a new introduction designed, in his words, “to encourage deliberation (*nazar*) and denounce blind imitation (*taqlīd*).” He thus explicitly set out against those men of religion who made emulation the foundation of their scholarship, declaring that “the intelligent must examine what is said rather than who said it.” ‘Abd al-Qādir’s criticism of the ‘ulama who practiced *taqlīd* was indeed harsh. He accused them of depriving themselves and their coreligionists of their most important privilege as human beings, that of thinking. Turning to another sufi simile, ‘Abd al-Qādir likened the relationship between the heart, the

⁷ *Idem*, *Al-Miqrād al-Hādd*, pp. 41-48.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-157; *idem*, *Dhikrā al-‘Āqil*, pp. 81-84.

seat of intelligence according to the traditional Muslim view, and the rational truths, to that between a mirror and the images it reflects. Like the deficient image found in a mirror, lack of knowledge might derive from a shortcoming in the heart itself, such as being young; from the stains that build up on its surface in consequence of engagement in worldly pursuits; from the veil of tradition acquired in youth by imitation; and from its direction away from the sciences. Accordingly, it is by shunning distractions that one polishes and purifies the heart and acquires the sciences which will enable it to be directed toward the truth. For ‘Abd al-Qādir, like for Ghazālī before him, the paramount obstacle to attaining the truth was beliefs absorbed by way of tradition. From this point of view, the entire book was designed to show how to remove this veil.⁹

Another central theme that ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī sought to convey to his Muslim readers was that there is a fundamental harmony between Islam and Western—Christian civilization. While presenting his arguments for the existence of God and the reality of prophethood, ‘Abd al-Qādir repeatedly claims that the truth possessed by the monotheistic religions is basically one. He thus defines the sciences of the shari‘a as “what was taken from the prophets by the study of the scriptures (*kutub Allāh al-munazzala*)—the Torah, the Gospels, and the Qur’an”, while referring consistently to “the prophets” in the plural and avoiding any particular reference to Muḥammad. Furthermore, ‘Abd al-Qādir explicitly writes that:

Religion is one by the consensus of the prophets... who are like people that have one father and different mothers. The claim that they are all false, or that some of them are false and others true, is short-sightedness. If the Muslims and the Christians were listening to me their differences would be removed and they would have become inwardly and outwardly brothers. But if they do not listen to me... only the Messiah will remove their differences when he comes... and even he will not succeed in bringing about accord, though he will be able to resurrect the dead and heal the blind and the leper, but with the sword.¹⁰

Likewise, ‘Abd al-Qādir emphasizes the suitability of modern science, and of the progress it generates, to all the religions. The prophets’ sciences as the common people understand them, he maintains, concern what is beneficial in this world and the next. They had no

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-38.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

intention to argue with the philosophers or to reject sciences such as medicine, astronomy and geometry. The prophets' message is, thus, perfectly congruent with such scientific findings as the roundness of the earth or the solar movements that cause a lunar eclipse. The purpose of the prophets in this respect, 'Abd al-Qādir asserts, was merely to demonstrate that the world, whatever its details, was created by God. Whoever claims otherwise, he admonishes the conservative 'ulama, sins against religion and harms the shari'a more than do those who reject them. In language which reveals the close affinity between science and mysticism in his mind, 'Abd al-Qādir further argues that:

The fruits of thought are limitless and the uses of reason are boundless. The spiritual world is as wide as an overflowing sea and the Divine Emanation never ceases or ends. It is neither impossible nor unreasonable that God reserved for some successors what he kept back from most predecessors. The claim that the first left nothing for the later is an error. The proper question is how much the first left for the later... The first was rewarded in finding the roots and preparing the foundations, and the later in deriving conclusions from these roots, strengthening the foundations and adding their own constructions.¹¹

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'iri's new attitude toward France is best expressed in the last part of his first book, when he finally arrives at his declared intention to refute the accusations leveled at Islam by that Catholic priest. This rejoinder seeks to justify the amir's struggle against the French in Algeria, but is of particular interest because it also helps elucidate his cooperation with them in his exile in Syria. 'Abd al-Qādir stresses that the Prophet Muḥammad was sent as a mercy to all humanity, both those who accepted his message and those who did not. In his view, the precept of jihad does not contradict this claim, since its object is not to kill unbelievers, devastate their country, or plunder their property, but only to stave off the enemies of Islam and prevent them from harming its interests. This may be done by means of war, he admits, but as far as possible fighting should be avoided by allowing unbelievers to pay the poll tax (*jizya*). Moreover, 'Abd al-Qādir does his utmost to demonstrate the subordination of jihad to moral considerations, as well as the many restrictions on its conduct. They are as follows: there is no duty to perform jihad in time of security; if the enemy is obviously stronger, the Muslims must conclude peace with him (*sulḥ*); agreements

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

concluded with infidels must be respected; a Muslim prisoner of war must not try to escape; if the enemy releases a Muslim on the condition that he avoid fighting in the future, he must fulfill that obligation; if one of the Muslims promises not to hurt the enemy, all of them are bound to uphold that promise. 'Abd al-Qādir assures his French readers that this was the conduct of the great Muslim warriors of the past, as the example of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn most clearly demonstrated, and that it is particularly true in regard of the Arab people. Citing Ibn al-Muqaffā's praise of the Arabs, he claims that their merits were evident already at the time of the *Jāhiliyya*, before these were fortified by their acceptance of Islam. On the other hand, 'Abd al-Qādir does not refrain from mentioning the negative attitude of this eighth-century man of letters toward the Turks,¹² thereby revealing the hatred for them he imbibed in Algeria. In the book he wrote in Bursa, he was careful of course to omit such offending references.¹³

The Fundamentals of Sufi Thought

A convenient point of departure for the analysis of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's sufi thought is the set of visions he had in Medina following his attainment of the goal and a subsequent dream. Regarding the visions, 'Abd al-Qādir relates that upon reaching the tomb of the Prophet and addressing him in prayer, he heard his voice saying: "you are my son and your supplication is accepted." Not content with this, 'Abd al-Qādir beseeched God to supplement it with a vision (*ru'yā*). He sat himself down at the foot of the tomb and performed the *dhikr* until, after losing consciousness, he saw Muḥammad. Following this vision the word of God came into his heart: "Give thou good tidings to the believers that they have a sure footing (*qadam ṣidq*) with their Lord."¹⁴ 'Abd al-Qādir realized that this sure footing was the Prophet and that God had appointed him, 'Abd al-Qādir, to be the means (*wasīla*) of carrying the message to His people. The next vision occurred to 'Abd al-Qādir while in seclusion in the vicinity of the tomb. A sufi shaykh who came in counseled

¹² Jazā'irī, *Al-Miqrād al-Hādd*, pp. 188-254.

¹³ *Idem*, *Dhikr al-Āqil*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁴ Qur'an, *Yūnus* (10), 2.

him to direct himself to the Messenger of God through one of the great masters: ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī, or Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. ‘Abd al-Qādir promised to ask permission for that, but when he performed the *dhikr* and once again lost his consciousness, the verse “The Prophet is nearer to the believers than their selves”¹⁵ came down upon him. ‘Abd al-Qādir then informed the sufi shaykh that the Messenger of God desired no intermediary between them, since he was nearer to him than anyone else, including himself. Another vision mentioned by ‘Abd al-Qādir in this context, the first revelation he had “in the world of good and light”, was an encounter with Abraham while circumambulating the Ka’ba. Abraham was telling a large audience how he had demolished the idols. ‘Abd al-Qādir perceived that his love for all creatures came from this prophet, since most religions and sects share a love for Abraham, and this is his unique feature among the prophets.¹⁶

The dream, accompanied by its interpretation, serves to complete and clarify this set of visions in Medina. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī relates that he saw Ibn ‘Arabī in the form of a lion holding a large chain in its hand. The lion commanded him to put his hand into its mouth and he, despite his fear, complied. Thereafter, Ibn ‘Arabī returned to human form, recognized by ‘Abd al-Qādir from many previous dreams, though this time al-Shaykh al-Akbar was like a madman (*majdhūb*) uttering confused words. Reiterating a number of times that he was going to perish, he finally fell on the ground, before ‘Abd al-Qādir woke up. The interpretation of this dream is very clear. Ibn ‘Arabī’s appearance as a lion alludes to his status among the saints, while the chain in his hand symbolizes the shari‘a. Putting his hand into the lion’s mouth signifies ‘Abd al-Qādir’s reliance on the teaching of al-Shaykh al-Akbar, for he regarded all that he wrote as deriving from him. Ibn ‘Arabī’s confused state represents the troubles of the time, in which great changes were taking place and moderation was lost. When he said that he is going to perish, he meant to express his deep sorrow that the Muslims had reached the point of disobeying the commandments of God and His messenger, and of shunning their religion.¹⁷ In another place ‘Abd al-Qādir testifies that he saw Ibn ‘Arabī often in his dreams, and that

¹⁵ Qur’an, *al-Aḥzāb* (33), 6.

¹⁶ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 83, vol. 1, pp. 143-146.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 346, vol. 3, pp. 68-69.

through this medium he studied *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* directly with its author.¹⁸

The foundation of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s Akbarī thought lay, thus, in his strong sense of mission. The visions in Medina are adduced as part of his interpretation of the verse frequently revealed to him, “As for thy Lord’s blessing, declare it”.¹⁹ ‘Abd al-Qādir defines this blessing as outward and inward knowledge (*‘ilm wa-mā’rifā*) of God and of the concealed precepts of the prophets that ought to be spread among those capable of understanding them. Being the Prophet’s heir (*wārith Muḥammadi*), and receiving like him inspiration from God by means of the Qur’an, ‘Abd al-Qādir regarded himself as ordained to undertake this work.²⁰ This explains why he rejected the mediation of the eponymous founders of the two orders that played the central role in his spiritual life, the Qādiriyya, the order of his fathers, and the Shādhiliyya, within which he trod the path. The same reason led ‘Abd al-Qādir to refrain even from seeking the mediation of Ibn ‘Arabī, upon whose theosophy he so closely relied. He also viewed himself as one of the *abdāl*, the seven “substitutes” who are at the feet of the prophets and sustain the seven regions of the earth.²¹ Thus, like Shaykh Khālīd in the previous generation, ‘Abd al-Qādir was motivated by a profound feeling that the umma was in a state of serious regression and needed vigorous renovation. Yet unlike Khālīd, he realized that this regression could not any more be explained solely by the internal weakness of the Muslim world, but rather was principally due to the undeniable superiority achieved by the European Powers.

However, as a man of religion ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī saw the principal danger not in the political domination of the West over Muslim countries, but rather in the rationalist challenge it posed to Islamic religious thought. In his view, the confusion that led many Muslims to shun their religion, as alluded to in his dream of Ibn ‘Arabī, was caused by the disregard of the conservative ‘ulama for the implications of Western rationalism. ‘Abd al-Qādir himself came to the conclusion that the preservation of Islam in an age of West-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 372, vol. 3, pp. 367, 370-371.

¹⁹ Qur’an, *al-Duḥā* (93), 11.

²⁰ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 83, vol. 1, pp. 142-143.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 372, vol. 3, pp. 365-366. On the *abdāl* in Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought see Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints*, p. 103; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, p. 370. The first among the *abdāl* is on the foot of Abraham.

ern supremacy required, as implied by his vision of Abraham, a closer relationship with the West. The object of such a relationship was twofold. On the one hand, it was necessary to acquire the practical sciences which provided the West with its power, and on the other hand, rationalism had to be kept out of the religious sciences, lest like in Europe it would lead to unbelief. 'Abd al-Qādir's view was, thus, that the Islamic response to the Western rationalist challenge must begin with reforming Muslim orthodoxy from within. The means he suggested for this reform was a fresh interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's legacy which, while maintaining its more recent transcendental stress to safeguard the integrity of the faith, revitalized its older immanent bent to facilitate openness toward the West. This was to be assimilated by a religious elite capable of perceiving the significance of the changing circumstances, and of freeing itself from the traditional chains of *taqlīd*. Unlike Shaykh Khālīd, 'Abd al-Qādir's main interest was accordingly in the divine truth (*ḥaqīqa*) and its "knowers" (*ʿarīfūn*), rather than in the mystic path (*ṭarīqa*) and its followers (*sālikūn*).

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī lay out the foundations of the Akbarī system already in the first "stop", as the necessary background for explaining his own mystic experiences. The sufis of our path, 'Abd al-Qādir states, do not claim to bring anything new to religion, though they do possess a new understanding of it. Furthermore, they neither revoke the literal meaning of the scriptures, nor do they maintain that their interpretation is the only valid one. Yet, while confirming the literal meaning of the scriptures, they also find in them additional inner meanings. This is supported by the prophetic traditions which testify to the many faces of the Qur'an, by the sufi path, and by reason. As the word of God corresponds to His all-encompassing knowledge, 'Abd al-Qādir argues, He may mean in His words not only what the scholarly and the sufi commentators understood it to be, but also that which did not even cross their minds. Hence, a man may, by means of a mystic experience, generate a new interpretation of a verse or a tradition, to which no one else had previously been guided. In 'Abd al-Qādir's eyes, the Qur'an thus constitutes a source of perpetual renewal in Islam, facilitating ever new interpretations that do not annul the tradition, but rather add to it new layers, according to the revelations of the sufi saints in every generation. The *Mawāqif* of 'Abd al-Qādir are themselves such experiential interpretations, as his interesting testimony about this mental process

demonstrates. God accustomed me so that in each message, he writes, “He takes me from my self, despite the remaining of the [external] form, and then casts on me (*yulqī ilayya*) what He wishes by alluding (*ishāra*) to a noble verse of the Qur’an. Thereafter, He returns me to my self and I meditate on the verse with delight and satisfaction until He inspires me (*yulhimmī*) to what He meant in the verse. I receive the verse with neither letter nor voice nor direction.”²²

The concept of *ilhām*, the inspiration that God bestows upon sufi saints in their understanding of the Qur’anic verses, is complemented in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s thought by the concept of *kashf*, His revelation to the rightly guided of the object of their faith and the secrets of the commandments they perform. In this case too he emphasizes that revelation does not add new truths, but rather deepens the existing faith. The knowledge revealed to the saints also contains no precepts or prohibitions beyond those handed down by the Prophet, but only the inner secrets and essence of his teaching.²³ Among those rightly guided believers, ‘Abd al-Qādir observes three degrees, a typical sufi tripartition that we will meet in various forms. The lowest comprises those who received rational guidance (*al-dalīl al-‘aqlī wal-burhān*); above them stand those who were guided by their faith in the Prophet (*taṣdīq al-rasūl*); and at the highest degree are those who attained guidance by revelation and vision (*kashf wa-‘yān*). These degrees are paralleled, according to ‘Abd al-Qādir, by the three states of certainty (*yaqīn*) in the sufi path. Thus, *‘ilm al-yaqīn* requires proof and may be doubted, *‘ayn al-yaqīn* requires proof but cannot be doubted, and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* requires no proof at all. On the other hand, the three degrees of guidance are contrasted with three degrees of straying (*dalāl*), to which we will return later.²⁴ *Kashf* is the attribute of the prophets, but it may be attained also by the most perfect saints, though by the latter its certainty may be doubted in those rare cases when they have confounded the divine revelation with their own human understanding and judgment.²⁵

The first “stop” of the *Mawāqif* elucidates not only the mystical system of Ibn ‘Arabī, but also the structure of his teaching. On the basis of his divine inspiration, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī finds the foundations of all the sciences in the verse “You have had a good example

²² *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 1, vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

²³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 222, vol. 1, pp. 436-437.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 118, vol. 1, pp. 235-236.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 327, vol. 3, p. 11.

in God's messenger."²⁶ According to him, it is incumbent upon the novice (*murīd*), as well as upon the Gnostic (*ʿārīf*), to turn this verse into his *qibla* (the direction to which one turns in prayer) in every place, time, and circumstance. Thus in line with the transcendental interpretation of the Akbarī teaching, ʿAbd al-Qādir places Muḥammad at the center of his thought. The Prophet's relationship with God, on the one hand, and with humanity, on the other, determines the division of the sciences into four types. The attitude of God toward the Prophet, which is expressed in oppositions such as success and failure or proximity and remoteness, constitutes the basis for the theoretical science of theology. The attitude of the Prophet toward God, which is a realization of the state of servitude to Him (*ʿubūdiyya*) and maintenance of His rights of lordship (*rubūbiyya*), is the basis for the practical religious sciences of Sufism and the Law. The attitude of men toward the Prophet, which finds expression in such oppositions as faith and denial or love and enmity, reflects the theoretical worldly science of the Prophet's merits and of the history of him and of the other prophets and saints. The attitude of the Prophet toward men, which is nothing but love and good wishes, is the model for the worldly practical sciences of morals and conduct (*siyāsa*) that secure the order (*niẓām*) and edifice (*ʿimāra*) of the world. This division conveys the fundamental difference that ʿAbd al-Qādir sees between the theoretical sciences, which are dialectical in their nature, and the practical sciences, whose instruction must be plain and unequivocal.²⁷

At the center of Ibn ʿArabī's teaching stands, as we saw, the controversial concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (the unity of being), which Aḥmad Sirhindī tried to supersede with his concept of *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (the unity of perception). ʿAbd al-Qādir accepts Sirhindī's distinction, though by inverting the meaning of the two concepts. In his view, *waḥdat al-shuhūd* is the mystic state (*ḥāl*) of union (*jamʿ*), in which God alone is perceived to the exclusion of His creatures. Those who enter this state, ʿAbd al-Qādir emphasizes, are outside themselves and should not be denounced even when transgressing the precepts of the shariʿa. *Waḥdat al-wujūd*, on the other hand, is the mystic station (*maqām*) of separation (*farq*), in which the creatures are perceived as subsisting in God. In this station, the divine attributes and the relative diversity are present, and it is again obligatory to fulfill the

²⁶ Qur'an, *al-Aḥzāb* (33), 21.

²⁷ Jazā'irī, *Mawqif* 1, vol. 1, pp. 23-25.

commandments and be concerned with worldly affairs (*al-asbāb*), as required by the shari'a.²⁸ On the basis of this distinction, 'Abd al-Qādir again divides the believers into three degrees. For the common people, God is internal and concealed (*bāṭin khāfin*), while His creatures are external and visible (*ẓāhir bādin*). Unable to perceive God, they grasp Him only by their intellects beyond the veil of attributes, which reflect the world of creation (*al-khalq*). To the people of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, God reveals Himself in the name *al-Ẓāhir*, so that they regard everything they perceive as Him (*al-ḥaqq*). Against these two groups, "the people of *waḥdat al-wujūd* perceive both God and creation (*al-ḥaqq wal-khalq*), the internal things in the external and the external things in the internal, without concealing each other."²⁹ For 'Abd al-Qādir, the inner knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) therefore means to perceive the reality from a combination of these two perspectives, the divine and the earthly.

The principle of *waḥdat al-wujūd* gives rise in this way to a concept of mutual relationship between God and His creatures. Ibn 'Arabī maintained that the possible entities, namely the creatures in potential, and God in His degree of divinity (*martabat al-ulūha*), namely not as Himself but in His manifestation as Creator, are as if mutually dependent (*kal-mutaḍayifīn*). Just as we need God to realize (*wujūd*) our prototypes (*ʿyān thābita*) so He needs us to make manifest His manifestations (*ẓuhūr mazāhirihi*).³⁰ Nevertheless, for Ibn 'Arabī this existential mutuality is entirely vested in God, the only One who really exists as the prefix "ka" indicates. 'Abd al-Qādir follows in his footsteps and, in the introduction to *mawqif* 248, which is essentially a Neoplatonic essay treating the various degrees of reality, he defines the world as the shadow of God, His external name, and His specific manifestations, definitions and particularizations.³¹ In the same vein, 'Abd al-Qādir explains the command "Be" in the sense of "Receive your specific character through my existence and manifestation (*wujūdī wa-ẓuhūrī*) in you and thus be my manifestation (*mazhar*), not that you become existent (*mawjūd*)."³² From this it follows that whatever is found on earth is in a state of non-existence.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 192, vol. 1, p. 377.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 250, vol. 2, pp. 200-201.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 198. On the notion of *ʿayn thābita* see Izutsu, pp. 159-196; Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī*, pp. 831-839.

³¹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 248, vol. 2, pp. 3-4.

³² *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 93, vol. 1, pp. 178-179.

The perception of existence is an illusion of the senses and the intellect, since there is no real existence but to God. According to this view, the sufi concept of *fanā*' is the annihilation of the sense and presumption of existence rather than of existence itself, which *a priori* has no reality. For the Gnostics the world is a phantom (*khayāl*) though its interior is a truth or, in the opposite formulation, it is a truth perceived through imaginary forms.³³ This is the real meaning of the unity of God.³⁴

Like Ibn 'Arabī, however, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī makes a distinction between two degrees of non-existence, the one relative (*fanā*' or *thubūt*) and the other absolute (*'adam maḥd*). By maintaining that the entire world is imaginary, 'Abd al-Qādir clarifies, "the sufis do not mean that it does not exist at all, as the Sophists claim, or that it exists only in the subjective imagination (*khayāl muttaṣil*), as many who were unfamiliar with the path of the people of God, such as Ibn Khaldūn, believed... The meaning of the people of God is that in reality the world is different from what the common people perceive it to be, since its appearance is creation and its essence is God, or [as you may also] say, its appearance is God and its essence is creature. The world is like the imagination that every intelligent being finds within himself." Moreover, in the Akbarī system imagination itself has existence as one mode of reality. "God's spirit (*al-'amā*'), which constitutes the substance of the world and the source of its types and particulars, is the objective imagination (*khayāl munfaṣil*), absolute in itself (*muṭlaq*) and realized (*muḥaqqaq*) in its capability to be shaped in the forms of the creatures."³⁵ These are revealed in the world just as images are reflected in a mirror directed toward them. It is called imagination because whatever appears in it is different from what it [really] is, and whatever is described as existent does not [exist], be it the world or God as manifested in a specific form. Regarding [God] as the combination of opposites (*jam' al-diddayn*) is the correct. One must say neither that the world is the essential truth (*'ayn al-ḥaqq*) nor that it is untrue (*ghayr al-ḥaqq*). All reality is true, yet within the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) a part is depicted as created and another as God." This is thus but another formulation of the principle of the mutuality vested in God, since the relative non-existence of the world

³³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 46, vol. 1, pp. 86-88.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 15, vol. 1, pp. 43-45.

³⁵ On the notion of *al-'amā*' and the different types of the imagination see Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī*, pp. 448-450, 820-826.

as creation is derived from the relative existence of God as a creator, or in a reversed definition, the relative existence of the world is derived from the relative non-existence of God. Beyond that there is the absolute existence of God within Himself, which cannot be grasped and against which stands the naught. Therefore, “in the true reality (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqīqī*) there is nothing but His exalted essence, while all the world is in the imaginary reality (*al-wujūd al-khayālī*).”³⁶

The world was created in the “imaginary reality” “as if” by a mutual act between the creating God, the active principle, and the created potentialities, the passive principle. Ibn ‘Arabī expressed this idea by distinguishing between two stages in the manifestation of God in the world. The first stage is *al-fayḍ al-aqdas* (the most holy effusion), His revelation to Himself in the world of the unseen (*‘ālam al-ghayb*) in the form of immutable essences yearning to be realized (*al-a’yān al-thābita*). The second is *al-fayḍ al-muqaddas* (the holy effusion), His revelation in the visible world (*‘ālam al-shahāda*) through these immutable essences in the form of actual appearances (*maẓāhir*). The shape of each such actual appearance is determined by the capability (*istiḍād*) of its immutable essence to reflect God.³⁷ ‘Abd al-Qādir emphasizes in his writings the implications of this two-stage revelation for the phenomenon of the visible world, and particularly for mankind. The God (*al-ḥaqq*) that reveals Himself through the immutable essences is unbounded, he explains, but the divine reality (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqq*) “appears only in accordance with the pre-eternal capability of each immutable essence... such as belief and heresy, obedience and rebelliousness, knowledge and ignorance, righteousness and corruption, good and evil, and their like.”³⁸ In this respect, the concept of *istiḍād* may be rendered as the predisposition of men in the world of the unseen before their creation, or as their inclinations in the visible world thereafter. These renderings reflect the two aspects which determine man’s peculiar existence.³⁹ The most important implication of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s description, however, is that from the human point of view it is not God as the Creator, in the second stage of His revelation, that determines a man’s character, but rather the capability of his own immutable essence as a creature, as determi-

³⁶ *Jazā’irī*, *Mawqif* 248, vol. 2, pp. 73-75.

³⁷ Corbin, p. 195; Izutsu, pp. 43-44; Ḥakīm, *Al-Mu‘jam al-Ṣūfī*, pp. 888-890.

³⁸ *Jazā’irī*, *Mawqif* 23, vol. 1, pp. 58-60. See also *Mawqif* 34, vol. 1, pp. 69-71.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 94, vol. 1, p. 180.

ned already in the first stage of God's revelation to Himself. By extension, this means that in its worldly aspect reality is not determined by the Creator, but rather by the combined capabilities of the immutable essences of the pre-existing creatures that emanated from God Himself, namely by nature. 'Abd al-Qādir's best formulation of this view occurs in his interpretation of the verse in which Moses says to Pharaoh: "Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation, then guided it."⁴⁰ He explains that in this verse "God announced that he gave every thing in the created world, in its aspect of external existence, its quality (*khalq*), that is, its comprehensive predisposition which is neither unknown nor created, and which is nothing but the thing itself in its aspect of non-existence."⁴¹ The practical significance of this view for Islam in the age of Western supremacy will be discussed in the last section of this chapter.

Another conclusion which arises from the principle of the mutuality vested in God is that human beings, and actually all creatures, are necessarily impregnated with an instinctive knowledge (*ma'rifat fiṭriyya*) of their Creator. Sufis in general regard this knowledge as the primary object of creation, in accordance with the widely-circulated hadith in which God is made to say: "I was a hidden and unknown treasure. I longed to be known and therefore I created the creatures in the creation and made myself known to them. Through me they know me." In this divine respect, no one is ignorant of God and everyone worships Him alone. Nevertheless, in the worldly aspect, the cognition of God differs from one man to another according to his intellect and perceptiveness, as determined by his predisposition. 'Abd al-Qādir regards these differences as the cause of the diversity of religions and denominations in the world. The manifestations of God are many, he states, and each person worships a form—the sun, the stars, nature, or an imaginary creature—which he believes to be God (*tashbīh*). For 'Abd al-Qādir, worshipping these forms is indeed worship of God, though not of His internal essence (*al-ḥaqīqa*), but rather of His reduced and limited manifestations in them. Much sharper is his criticism of the theologians, who circumscribe and limit God to fit their rational judgments and doctrines. The intellect is only capable of abstraction (*tanẓīh*), he declares, and the theologians' statements on the essence and attributes of God

⁴⁰ Qur'an, *Ta Ha* (20), 50.

⁴¹ Jazā'irī, *Mawqif* 369, vol. 3, pp. 335-336.

only stem from the rational form they have of Him in their imagination (*ṣūra ‘aqliyya khayāliyya*).

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s criticism of the rationalist theologians will be further discussed in the next section. Here it suffices to say that he goes so far as to assert that were it not for the Lawgiver’s permission to imagine God while worshipping Him, he would have argued that there is no difference between the anthropomorphists who shape God with their hands and those who imagine Him by abstraction in their minds! God is present in everyone’s imagination, ‘Abd al-Qādir writes, but is not restricted to any particular imaginer, imagined form or act of imagination. He is the restricted absolute (*al-muṭlaq al-muqayyad*) since he is both absoluteness and restriction in themselves, as indeed the essence of all opposites. In accordance with his general tripartite division of the believers, ‘Abd al-Qādir depicts the faith of the Gnostics, who combine abstraction and anthropomorphism (*tanzīh wa-tashbīh*), as the genuine belief in the unity of God. These recognize God in this world in true absoluteness (*al-iṭlāq al-ḥaqīqī*), going even beyond the notion of absoluteness, which in itself poses a restriction. They know that in every form, be it sensual, mental, spiritual, or imaginary, it is God who is being revealed. “He is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward.”⁴² This recognition ‘Abd al-Qādir expressed in an impressive conversation he experienced with his Lord:

God most exalted asked me: What are you? I said: I have two truths from two aspects, from the aspect of You I am the pre-eternal, necessarily existent and revealed... from the aspect of me I am the naught that did not breathe the smell of existence, the accident that is absent in its occurrence. As long as I am present in You for You I exist, and as long as I am concealed in my self from You I am an absent present. Then He asked me: And who am I? I said: You are the necessarily existent in Your self, unequaled in perfection of essence and attributes, nay, You are far above (*al-munazzah*) the perfection of attributes in Your perfection of self. You are the perfect in every state, the elevated above whatever crosses the mind. He said: You do not know me. I said without fear or disobedience: You are the likened (*al-mushabbah*) to every created accident. You are the lord and servant, the proximity and remoteness, You are the many one, the humble noble, the poor rich, the worshiped worshiper, the witnessed

⁴² Qur’an, *al-Hadīd* (57), 3; Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 8, vol. 1, pp. 32-36. For *tanzīh* and *tashbīh* in Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching see Izutsu, pp. 48-67.

witness. You are the combiner of opposites and all sorts of contradictions... You are the truth and I am the truth, You are the created and I am the created, You are not the truth and I am not the truth, You are not created and I am not created. He said: Enough, you know Me. Conceal Me from those who do not know Me, because divinity (*rubūbiyya*) has a secret the revelation of which will render *rubūbiyya* ineffective, and servitude (*‘ubūdiyya*) has a secret the revelation of which will render *‘ubūdiyya* ineffective.⁴³

Another important respect in which ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī divides the believers into three categories is their attitude toward the shari‘a, thereby expressing his basic faithfulness to Muslim orthodoxy. The first category comprises those who interpret the Qur’an literally and are consequently led to anthropomorphism (*tajsīm wa-tashbīh*). In their case, ‘Abd al-Qādir merely states that it is a blameworthy and invalid way. Next come those whose fulfillment of the precepts of the shari‘a is accompanied by an adequate understanding of its language. This is for him the commendable middle way, which the Akbariyya follows. The last category consists of those who interpret the Qur’an allegorically and symbolically and espouse the abstraction of God’s unity (*tajrīd al-tawḥīd*, as against the *tanẓīh* of the rationalists). ‘Abd al-Qādir’s criticism is principally directed toward this last group, the views of which he regards as leading to the annulment of both religious commandments and current social conventions. He ascribes this attitude to the heretics, atheists, licentious, and pantheists, all of whom espouse in his view the pure unity of the stage of concentration (*jam‘*) and reject the shari‘a of the stage of separation (*farq*). They pretend to attain to the degree of divinity and maintain that, since their essence has become God and their vision is focused on Him alone, they are no more bound by the commandments. This is not the path of the people of God, ‘Abd al-Qādir stresses. When God bestows upon the latter the experience of unity He protects them from transgressing the commandments, and when He returns them to their selves He shows them that the world exists only in Him. Yet for his disciples, who were trained on the principle of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, ‘Abd al-Qādir added that pure unity is the human inward state (*bāṭin al-īnsān*), even if in his external form (*ẓāhirihi*) man must distinguish between the Lord and the servant (*al-rabb wal-‘abd*). The last statement is accompanied by a strict warning not to

⁴³ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 30, vol. 1, pp. 65-66.

disclose this secret to the common people, for whom it constitutes a fearful temptation and error.⁴⁴

This danger leads ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī to stress the importance of worship, however imperfect it may be. Thus, in his view the verses “Proclaim thy Lord’s praise and be of those that bow, and serve thy Lord, until the Certain comes to thee,”⁴⁵ are directed to the common people (*min warā’ al-ḥijāb*), enjoining them to praise God in their way and to worship Him in accordance with the manner He was revealed to them. When such believers hear the sufis’ secrets, ‘Abd al-Qādir warns, they may try to imitate their mystic states and talk like them about “the unity of being”. Yet, as they have not followed the path, and thus lack an inner understanding of these states and secrets, they are prone to neglect the shari’a and perish. For this reason, ‘Abd al-Qādir claims, God commanded His servants to adhere to the path they have. Furthermore, fulfilling the precepts of the shari’a and persevering in supererogatory actions is the key to understanding the divine secrets, or as ‘Abd al-Qādir frames it through another popular sufi hadith, God loves those who obey Him and becomes their hearing, sight, tongue, and hand. This is for him the meaning of the coming of certainty, alluded to at the end of the verse. By realizing that the purpose of the shari’a is to facilitate the removal of the veil (*raf‘ al-ḥijāb*) the believer’s appreciation, and adherence to, the shari’a should only increase. Thus, in full harmony with orthodox Sufism, and with the Akbariyya as its most exalted manifestation, ‘Abd al-Qādir could conclude that those claiming to have attained the sufi goal without increasing their praise of the shari’a are merely impostors.⁴⁶

On the other hand, the principle of mutuality vested in God entails that, in effect, men are necessarily predisposed not only toward knowing God, but also toward obedience to Him. In his interpretation of the verse “We sent not ever any Messenger, but that he should be obeyed, by the leave of God,”⁴⁷ ‘Abd al-Qādir maintains that *everyone* to whom the messenger was sent obeyed him, whether accepting his message or rejecting it. The obedient are divided into the rightly guided (sing. *muhtadī*), who obey the external commandments, and the erring (sing. *ḍāll*), who obey only the inner ones. The

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 358, vol. 3, pp. 185-186.

⁴⁵ Qur’an, *al-Ḥajar* (15), 98-99.

⁴⁶ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 3, vol. 1, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁷ Qur’an, *al-Nisā’* (4), 64.

mission of the prophets is to clarify the difference between the two types of obedience and to discover who follows the straight path and who strays from it.⁴⁸ From this it follows that those adhering to other religions worship God as well. ‘Abd al-Qādir distinguishes in this respect between two types of paths: the *ṣirāt*, a manifestation of the inclusive name *Allāh*, which is commended by Muḥammad and the other prophets, and the *subul* (pl. of *sabīl*), manifestations of His particular names, which should be avoided as they lead to straying and division. However, in reality every *sabīl* is also a path to God, for there is nothing but His names. God can mislead whomever He pleases in the capacity of His name *al-muḍill*, just as He can guide whomever He wishes to in the capacity of His name *al-hādī*. Hence, those who are infidels and rebellious from the viewpoint of the shari‘a, are obedient and followers of God’s path from the viewpoint of His will.⁴⁹ On the basis of this distinction ‘Abd al-Qādir can conclude, in accordance with the immanent interpretation of the Akbarī teaching, that, “we all obey God (*Muslimūn*) and believe in him, and there is no absolute denier of God in the world... all the infidelity in the world is but relative.”⁵⁰

The Criticism of Traditional Learning

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s criticism of the traditional learning of his day derived from the unbridgeable contradiction between the open and ever-renewing interpretation of the scriptures, which he adopted from the Akbarī system, and the ‘ulama’s practice of restricting their meanings by blind acceptance of what the ancient commentators taught. The contrast that ‘Abd al-Qādir saw between the conservatives and the group of elect reformist men of religion that he sought to shape on the basis of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching is presented in the introduction he added to the *Mawqif*. In his words, “I wrote these down for the sake of our brothers who believe in our signs. Even if they have not [yet] arrived to picking their fruits, they will remain with them at hand till they reach their full [spiritual] strength, and then they will benefit from the treasure they possess. I did not write them down for those who claim that this is an old falsehood and

⁴⁸ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 36, vol. 1, p. 73.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 139, vol. 1, pp. 283-284. See also *Mawqif* 254, vol. 2, p. 209.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 246, vol. 1, p. 496.

ancient tales.” ‘Abd al-Qādir scornfully refers to the traditional men of religion as ‘*ulamā’ al-rasm*, a term which may be rendered as “the formal scholars”, or as he himself defines them, those who are content with the mere name of knowledge. ‘Abd al-Qādir instructs his disciples to avoid any argument with such ‘*ulamā*, even if they are full of indignation and seek conflict. Instead, he recommends feeling pity for them and justifying their behavior, since “we bring them things that contradict what they have received from their previous masters and what they have heard from their ancestors... Our path of unity (*ṭarīqat tawḥīdīnā*)”, ‘Abd al-Qādir concludes, “is the unitary path of the revealed books and the sunna of the messengers, the path that was followed by the interiors (*bawāṭin*) of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, the Companions, the following generations, and the sufis.”⁵¹

Yet, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī accepts the view, articulated already by Ibn Khaldūn, that the sufis and the ‘*ulamā* share a common origin. He makes a distinction between, on the one hand, *ahl al-Qur’ān*, the people of God who are close to Him and summon others to know Him and tread the path toward Him, and on the other hand, *ahl al-furqān*, the people of the Prophet who call upon others to fulfill the shari’a and follow his sunna. The difference between them lies in the experience of the divine presence, ‘Abd al-Qādir clarifies, immediately adding that this does not mean that they are distinct groups, since both the Qur’an and the *furqān* were revealed by God. Therefore, the bearer of the Qur’an who lacks the *furqān* is a deviating heretic, while the bearer of the *furqān* without the Qur’an is a rebellious sinner. Initially these two were fused, but the passage of time and the spread of vanity had produced two groups (*ḥizbayn*) and erected walls between them. In consequence, *ahl al-Qur’ān* became known as *ahl al-ḥaqīqa*, *ṣūfiyya* and *fuqarā’*, and *ahl al-furqān* as *ahl al-sharī’a*, ‘*ulamā’* and *fuqahā’*.⁵² In his fundamentally orthodox viewpoint, ‘Abd al-Qādir acknowledges the right of those who faithfully follow the shari’a to denounce the sufis’ actions that seem to contradict its literal meaning. He reserves this right, however, to those cases in which there is a general consensus and requires that such criticism will be accompanied by a belief in the sufis’ inner perfection.⁵³

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī is more demanding in regard to the le-

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 159, vol. 1, pp. 321-323.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 195, vol. 1, pp. 383-384.

gal scholars of his day, though he refers to them only occasionally. Thus, for example, while discussing the permission to add a prostration after the prayer, which Ibn 'Arabī allowed and some jurists forbade, 'Abd al-Qādir writes that the view of the *fuqahā*' was adopted owing to the belief that they know the shari'a better than the sufis and that their judgments are based upon evidence. Yet, in his opinion this argument is unfounded since nine-tenths of the jurists' judgments rely on discretion (*istihsān*), only the remaining one-tenth having grounds in the four "roots" of Islamic jurisprudence.⁵⁴ Even more serious in 'Abd al-Qādir's eyes is the use by the *fuqahā*' of legal stratagems (sing. *hīla*) to circumvent the precepts of the shari'a. In a sufi vein, he emphasizes that God accepts no word or deed unless they are accompanied by good intention (*niyya*). He expresses bewilderment at those legal experts who can rule that a man who transfers his money to his wife shortly before the fixed time for paying alms in order to evade it is indeed exempted, and believe their ruling will benefit them on the Day of Judgment. Such stratagems may deceive the sultan who sees only the externals, Abd al-Qādir declares, but not the Greatest Sultan who also observes the internals. It would be better for such a jurist if he were conscious of his disobedience, because then it could be hoped that he might repent.⁵⁵

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's main criticism in the *Mawqif*, however, is directed at the rationalist theologians (*mutakallimūn*). His attitude toward them is most clearly formulated in his interpretation of the last two verses of the al-Fātiḥa, the text of the Muslim prayer. *Al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (the straight path), which the believer is commanded to seek in each section (*rak'a*) of the prayer, is explained by 'Abd al-Qādir as the infinite path of God's gnosis. *Al-mun'am alayihim* (the blessed) are the messengers of God and their heirs, the sufis, to whom God has revealed the reality of things and given certain knowledge of Him and His creatures. *Al-maghḍūb alayihim* (those who are objects of wrath) are the heathens, who imagine God in concrete forms. *Al-dālīn* (the straying) are the philosophers and the rationalist theologians, those perplexed who seek to understand God's essence with their intellects. Their logic leads them only to doubt and fruitless effort, 'Abd al-Qādir asserts, as was admitted by their own leaders,

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 281, vol. 2, p. 288.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 125, vol. 1, pp. 251-252.

Juwaynī and Rāzī.⁵⁶ This interpretation is further elaborated by classifying those straying into three degrees, as against the three degrees of the rightly guided mentioned above. The rationalist theologian, who espouses absolute anthropomorphism or the abstraction of God, is at the lowest degree of straying. Above him stands the idolater, who represents God with a perceptible form. The third, and most dangerous, degree is reserved for the atheist, who completely abandons his God. To the latter degree belong the sects of the *Dahriyya* and the *Ṭibāʿiyya*, the materialists and the naturalists, which in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s time came to denote the Westerners and their Muslim imitators.⁵⁷

These degrees of guidance and straying, however, are relative notions. Thus, the straying of the theologians is, according to ‘Abd al-Qādir, nothing but their tendency to seek guidance from their intellects rather than from God. Congruent with the views he advanced in his rationalist writings, he repeatedly reiterates in the *Mawāqif* that reason can lead only to the point of acknowledging God’s existence and unity, beyond which divine guidance, as handed down by the prophets, becomes necessary. In this respect, ‘Abd al-Qādir distinguishes between two types of guidance, the one divine and the other human. The divine guidance (*hidāyat al-ḥaqq*) is the profession of unity and the commandments delivered by the prophets. It must be accepted whether the intellect approves it or not. If the believer follows them, God will teach him His sciences and let him understand what at first he accepted by imitation. Furthermore, through experiential revelation and divine emanation the believer will also comprehend the truths delivered by the prophets which the intellect rejects. Human guidance (*hidāyat al-khalq*), by contrast, the guidance of the intellect, is either partial or complete straying. The highest rational knowledge, ‘Abd al-Qādir asserts, is abstraction from the attributes of the creatures, the claim that God is not this or that. This is not the knowledge we are seeking, he clarifies, and it is imperative to abstract God from the knowledge of the intellect. Thus, what the intellect believes to be the abstraction of God is really anthropomorphism, while the real God, as revealed to the sufis, is He who combines abstraction and anthropomorphism.⁵⁸ From a

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 14, vol. 1, pp. 41-43.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 118, vol. 1, p. 236.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 96, vol. 1, pp. 186-188.

different angle, 'Abd al-Qādir argues that what the rationalists regard as their God is something bounded and limited by their own logical principles. The God of the prophets and their followers, by contrast, is unbounded, unlimited, and capable of doing whatever He wishes, even that which the rationalists claim to be impossible. To know the God of the prophets and their heirs it is necessary to adhere to His sunna and adopt the measures proposed by the great sufi masters.⁵⁹

The best testimony for the straying of the theologians is the divisiveness pervading their ranks. Grouping them together with the philosophers, the Mu'tazila, and the Ash'arīs, 'Abd al-Qādir claims that the doctrines of all these rationalist schools are more erroneous than correct. He attributes their divisiveness, as described above, to the tendency of each school to limit God according to its own teachings and to reject the possibility that He fits other doctrines as well. Their adherents cling obstinately to their own views, more so than any other group of believers, often cursing and charging one another with unbelief (*takfir*). Furthermore, disagreements are prevalent not only between the rationalist schools, but also within each particular school. Among the sufis there are no such controversies, since they realize that God is compatible with all the beliefs. Nevertheless, 'Abd al-Qādir emphasizes that the sufis do not reproach the thinkers (*ahl al-naẓar wal-fikr*) for contemplating God, since they know that this is their natural disposition. Their only objection is to deeds deriving from the deception (*talbīs*) which is caused by their thoughts. There is no theoretical science, he claims, that cannot be attained with certainty by way of revelation. Plato himself received the truth in this way, and the sufis accordingly regard him as possessing divine knowledge. This stress on the difference between the two types of sciences leads 'Abd al-Qādir to make a parallel distinction between two types of *taqlīd*. The elect, the genuine believers, imitate the Prophet and the sufi saints, while the common believers imitate the rationalists and are led by them into confusion.⁶⁰

An even graver consequence of applying the rationalist approach to the Divine is the tendency to turn reason into the criterion for the accuracy of the scriptures. "Those who rely on their intellect", 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī asserts, "do not accept what the prophets

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 173, vol. 1, p. 345.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 358, vol. 3, pp. 193-201.

have handed down unless it is congruent with their logic. Otherwise they interpret it allegorically (*ta'wīl*) or, failing to find an allegorical explanation, reject it altogether.”⁶¹ This approach pervaded all the religious sciences. With respect to the Qur'an, 'Abd al-Qādir warns against it in his interpretation of the verse “And We sent down, of the Koran, that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers.”⁶² According to him, this verse points to the healing of the heart's diseases, namely vain beliefs and shaky faith. Those who seek their Lord with their intellect will not be cured, however, for when they hear a verse whose literal meaning appears to be anthropomorphic they doubt it. Thus the Qur'an actually aggravates their disease.⁶³ Turning to the science of hadith, 'Abd al-Qādir exclaims, “How many Propehtic traditions the formal 'ulama rejected merely because they were unable to interpret them allegorically. For them, the sign of fabrication of a hadith is its being contrary to reason and defies allegorical interpretation... These turned their intellects into a source of the Qur'an and the sunna.” He traces the origins of this approach to the rationalist theologians' treatment of the obscure verses of the Qur'an (the *mutashābihāt*) and prophetic reports about God's attributes (*aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*).⁶⁴ Concerning the legal sciences, 'Abd al-Qādir remarks in the same vein that “this affliction has become universal, so that today you cannot find a jurist who does not follow this method”!⁶⁵

'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's severe criticism of the rationalist approach reflected his perception of the danger it posed for the religious belief, which he developed as a result of his encounter with the West. During his forced stay in France, 'Abd al-Qādir could witness the spread of skepticism and atheism that the unrestricted application of reason, important as it was for the practical sciences, was prone to generate. In these circumstances, the lesser straying of the rationalist theologians seemed to him as the doorway to the greater one, that of the materialists and the naturalists. Once in the Ottoman Empire, 'Abd al-Qādir could not fail to observe the beginnings of the application of this rationalist approach by the Westernizing reformers of the late Tanzimat period. The first part of the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶² Qur'an, *al-Isrā'* (17), 82.

⁶³ Jazā'irī, *Mawqif* 106, vol. 1, pp. 209-211.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 22, vol. 1, pp. 57-58.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 106, vol. 1, pp. 211-212.

task he assigned to himself, and to the religious elite he sought to shape, was thus to reassert against these reformers the supremacy of faith over reason, and of the divine over worldly concerns.

A Bridge to the Modern World

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s call to apply the rationalist approach to worldly affairs is anchored in the Akbarī solution to two central dilemmas debated in Islam almost from its inception. The first is the dilemma of the divine decree as against human free will, a question that preoccupied the theologians and which, as will be remembered, also held an important place in the teaching of Shaykh Khālīd. The other is the dilemma of striving in this world (*al-akhdh bil-asbāb*) as against complete trust in God (*tawakkul*), which engaged mainly the sufis. The two dilemmas are naturally interconnected. In ‘Abd al-Qādir’s teaching, moreover, both are approached through the concept of *isti’dād*, which served him as the key to the integration of the Muslim peoples in the modern world.

From Ibn ‘Arabi’s assertion that the forms of the actual manifestations in the visible world are determined by the capability of their immutable essences (*isti’dād al-a’yān al-thābita*) in the world of the unseen, it could be concluded that he accepted the doctrine of predestination (*al-qadar*). Yet, in contrast to the theologians’ notions, from the Akbarī teaching of the two-stage manifestation of God it follows that the pre-eternal decree is not given by God in his capacity as Creator, but rather by the immutable essences which emanate from Him in Himself. For ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī, who stressed this principle by maintaining that the Creator is revealed in the immutable essences according to *their* predisposition, it meant that God conducts the visible world through the laws of nature. From this ‘Abd al-Qādir proceeds to the even more far-reaching conclusion that God is prevented from changing the predestined inclination of His creatures. “The natural inclination”, he writes, “is the necessarily answered seeker (*al-tālib al-mujāb*), the caller whose call cannot be refused.” ‘Abd al-Qādir emphasizes that this call emanates from a man’s inner nature rather than from his conscious will. The natural inclination will be complied with, he contends, whether the tongue agrees or not. The full practical significance of this view is revealed in the complementary argument that man must not seek from God that

which contradicts his nature, since He is prevented from responding to such a request. A mere utterance by the tongue that does not correspond to the nature of the requestor is in vain, 'Abd al-Qādir claims, since a subsequent request cannot be the cause of a previous decree. The object of the plea to God (*du'ā'*), as ordained by Him and institutionalized by the shari'a, is according to this reasoning only to remind believers of their need of their Lord implanted in their nature.⁶⁶

Hence, in 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's view, the meaning of the worldly aspect of God's revelation in accordance with the capacity of the immutable essences is the inverse vested in Him of its meaning in its divine aspect. His conclusion is thus that free will is inherent in the pre-eternal decree of nature. This is valid of course only in the case of man, whose peculiar potential disposition, or natural capability, it is to acquire the worldly sciences by his intellect. From the human aspect this is a dynamic divine decree of free will. Therefore, in the "imaginary reality" in which man lives, he must acquiesce to his nature which demands him to rely on himself, rather than ask God for what does not suit him. By extension, this principle may be formulated thus that, since man must accept reality as it is, it is incumbent upon him to work within it rather than ask refuge from it in God. 'Abd al-Qādir's behavior was largely determined by this principle. "This visioner", he writes of himself, "when a saying or a deed grieves him in the external world, he does not say "this is the truth and I deserve it", but rather returns to his soul and examines it, since man is responsible for himself. The actor or the speaker, though in fact it is God from behind the veil of the forms, does not do or say anything but what the immutable essence, which this form reflects, requires."⁶⁷

In his discussion of suffering from the divine angle, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī shifts the stress between the apparently contradictory beliefs of acquiescing to reality while acting to amend it to the first. Those whom God afflicts and tries, he writes, must understand that their own natural disposition requires it and avoid complaining to Him. If God were to compel them to something else, they would have declined since they lack the potential capability of accepting it, whether it fits them outwardly, namely is considered by them to be

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 94, vol. 1, pp. 180-182.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 23, vol. 1, pp. 58-59.

good, or not.⁶⁸ This assertion is indeed revealing of the psychological mechanism which led 'Abd al-Qādir to adopt the theosophy of Ibn 'Arabī. In al-Shaykh al-Akbar's double-aspect doctrine of *wahdat al-wujūd* he could find consolation for the crisis he underwent during his captivity. People cannot remove the natural psychic pain, 'Abd al-Qādir says, but they are capable of removing the spiritual pain. Thus, the sufis are happy and satisfied in their interiors, confident that whatever God chooses for them is good, and they remain calm even when afflicted by calamities and anguish. Nothing is inappropriate or bad in itself, it is so only in relation to physical aptitudes and dispositions. As for the hidden inner truths, whatever happens to them is appropriate since it necessarily corresponds to what they require.⁶⁹

The same stress on the necessity of acquiescing to reality helps 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī to justify the growing European supremacy over the Muslim peoples. This is discernible in his reply to the question of why Muslims praise whatever comes from the Christians and imitate them in all their manners and habits. 'Abd al-Qādir first gives the traditional answer that since the Muslims had neglected the shari'a God abandoned them, and that the Muslim rulers—kings, ministers, and amirs—who came to believe that the defeats of their armies stemmed from the customs and conduct of the unbelievers, proceeded to imitate them. Because the questioner was not convinced by this external explanation, 'Abd al-Qādir adds an inner one: The reason for the changes in the situation of the world is the changes in the manifestations of the divine names. Divinity in Itself needs these changes, be they for the good or for the bad. The divine names act upon and influence the creatures, each one of them in its own way. All the affairs of the creatures depend upon the laws of the divine names, symbolize them, and constitute their consequences. Beyond that nothing can be said or asked. It is impossible to explain the actions of God in His creatures, and all that can be said is that generally every thing receives its share.⁷⁰

The more dynamic quality of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's notion of *istiḍād* can be detected in his treatment of another traditional Mus-

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 369, vol. 3, pp. 335-336.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 220, vol. 1, pp. 434-435.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 364, vol. 3, pp. 255-257. For the notion of divine names in Ibn 'Arabī's teaching see Izutsu, pp. 99-109; Chittick, *Sufi Path of Knowledge*, pp. 33-46.

lim expression of the dilemma of divine decree and human free will, the question of the source of man's action. Here again, 'Abd al-Qādir seems to adopt predestination when he warns against misunderstanding the phrase "thee alone we pray for succor" in the text of the prayer.⁷¹ The external aspect of this phrase appears to imply, he admits, that man is capable of performing part of the action and, therefore, that each one of the two partners, God and man, has a share in it. Yet, this interpretation fails to take into consideration the circumstances in which it was given. God's word was delivered in the scriptures and through his messengers, 'Abd al-Qādir asserts, in accordance with the degree of understanding of the common believers. These imagine that their existence is independent and distinct from the existence of God, and since they are unable to conceive of more than that, He spoke to them as if it were true, ascribing actions, abilities, and will, to men and giving them the impression that He only succors them. For the same reason the Qur'an is replete with commandments and prohibitions which the believers seem to be free to obey or not, and with beliefs which they seem to be allowed to accept or reject. From the divine point of view, however, it is utterly impossible that such choices should be attributed to men, who as accidents with no independent existence cannot be acting, choosing, and willing.⁷²

But, from the worldly aspect of the shari'a the situation is different. In this respect, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī follows the accepted definition of man's actions as either obedience or rebelliousness, for which he is rewarded or punished.⁷³ To explain their possibility for those who have no existence but in God, 'Abd al-Qādir makes a distinction between two types of divine will (*irāda*), parallel to the distinction Shaykh Khālīd made concerning the divine decree (*qaḍā'*).⁷⁴ One is the absolute will (*irāda muṭlaqa*), in which His command is carried out inevitably and without intermediary, the other is the bounded will (*irāda muqayyada*), in which God is "as if" willing the intermediary to carry out His command. The latter type is, of course, unique to men. This division of God's will is justified logically on the ground that part of humanity does not believe and obey Him, though He certainly wish all His servants to do so. In this case 'Abd

⁷¹ Qur'an, *al-Fātiḥa* (1), 5.

⁷² Jazā'irī, *Mawqif* 2, vol. 1, pp. 24-25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 4, vol. 1, p. 30.

⁷⁴ See p. 44.

al-Qādir refrains from adding an explanation of the sense of “as if”, which as in Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching, implies that in reality the creature’s will itself also derives from God. Instead, he prefers to emphasize that man obeys or rebels in accordance with what his intellect and will require, and that he is therefore responsible for his deeds.⁷⁵

The full significance of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s stand in this question is revealed during his debate with the different Muslim theological schools. Reviewing their various solutions to the problem, each one of them constituting according to him a part of the truth, ‘Abd al-Qādir refutes them by using their own rational methods. The Jabriyya believe that the action is carried out by God alone. This view is ruinous, he asserts, since it leads one to abandon the commandments and prohibitions of the shari‘a. The Mu‘tazila claim that the action is performed by man alone. By this they completely separate God and man, in his opinion, regarding the first as an entirely abstract entity and the second as possessing an entirely free will. The rationalist theologians, both the Ash‘arīs with their concept of *kasb* (acquisition) and the Māturīdīs with their concept of *jazā’ ikhtiyārī* (voluntary reward), the opinion that Khālīd adopted, believe that the action belongs to God while man has a share in it. In ‘Abd al-Qādir’s view, these are closer to the truth, though they are still limited by the use of a pure rationalist approach which prevents them from comprehending the divine disclosures in their manifestations as creatures. Consequently, they too lead to the abstraction (*tanẓīh*) of God to the exclusion of His personification (*tashbīh*). For the sufis, on the other hand, the action is suspended between God and man, attached neither to God alone, as the reality in itself (*al-wujūd al-dhāt*), nor to man alone, as the form (*ṣūra*) thereof. In a practical sense, this Akbarī view attaches the action to man when it is externally reproachable according to the shari‘a or custom, and to God when it is praiseworthy. Nevertheless, in their root both kinds of action are related to God, since nothing really exists or acts but Him.⁷⁶

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s view on the question of the source of man’s action is thus rooted in the principle that underlies his entire thought, the mutuality vested in God. Every action may be attributed to four factors or aspects: to God in His capacity as the reality—truth and the real actor; to the creature in his capacity as the

⁷⁵ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 5, vol. 1, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 266, vol. 2, pp. 238-242.

action's source in the perceptible world; to God in the creature in His capacity as the instrument of action; and to the creature in God in his capacity as His manifestation and particularization. Therefore, "the action is from God most exalted in the sense of being the action of the creature, and the action of the creature by force of being the action of God. In effect, there is nothing but the reality—God who manifests Himself according to the requirements of the immutable essences."⁷⁷ From the human point of view, 'Abd al-Qādir clarifies, men possess the potential disposition to ask God that they be obedient or rebellious, and He responds accordingly. The deed belongs essentially to God, but in its manifestation it becomes the deed of the legally capable believer.⁷⁸ Thus, every human action has three aspects: in his own perception man acquires it through his power of will and choice; internally there is no acquisition and no choice; and with regard to his immutable essence he is neither compelled nor choosing since what comes from him is merely his predisposition, which is his nature.⁷⁹

The major conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that in the external perceptible world man is the actor. This world is, for 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, that aspect of reality which is governed by the principle of causality. As will be remembered, 'Abd al-Qādir had already claimed in his rationalist writings that Islam, rather than rejecting causality in itself, accepts it in a manner compatible with God's unity. In his mystical writings, he further elucidates through it the implications of the concept of *istī'dād* for worldly affairs. The prophets and their heirs enjoined to reject the self-power of causes, 'Abd al-Qādir asserts, but not to deny their existence, since it is God Himself who established them. Those who reject the occurring benefits and ordinary causes are, therefore, ignorant and rebellious. The sufis, by contrast, see God in the causes, knowing that every existent thing is His manifestation. The internal truth, 'Abd al-Qādir continues, is that causes have no effect, and that it is God who acts in the specific form in which He reveals Himself in every creature according to its predisposition. Thus, it is obligatory to view God as acting through the causes, and to rely on Him rather than on them. Yet concomitantly, 'Abd al-Qādir emphasizes that the causes should not be abandoned altogether. God conceals His actions in the forms

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 50, vol. 1, p. 92.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 362, vol. 3, pp. 250-251.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 366, vol. 3, pp. 293-294.

of His creatures, he maintains, both out of mercy for them, so that they would not feel compelled, and to protect His sanctity, when their deeds are externally incompatible with His command. In the Akbarī system, this concealment implies that the causes are necessary for the existence (*wujūdān*), though they must be withdrawn in God's vision (*shuhūdān*).⁸⁰ 'Abd al-Qādir completes this discussion with a clarification of the relationship between causality and God in His capacity as Creator. "God produces the effects from their causes through wisdom and free will, rather than through inability and compulsion, *except when the cause is considered from the standpoint of the Divine face and Lordly secret*, according to which the form of this cause was shaped. *Then, the effect is produced by and through the cause...* in the sense that it is as a tool in the hands of a carpenter, for example, and the actor is the artisan, not the tool." [my emphasis]⁸¹

Moreover, in 'Abd al-Qādir's eyes, causality stands at the root of the existence of all religions. Were God not concerned with maintaining the wisdom of the causes, he writes, He would have sent no messenger, no shari'a would have been handed down, and there would be no commandments and prohibitions. Referring to the sufi distinction between the world of divine command (*'ālam al-amr*) and the world of creation (*'ālam al-khalq*), 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī explains that the latter, "God does not bring into existence except by a cause; the practice and wisdom of God necessitate it. Therefore, each atom of the created world has two aspects, one faces God the most exalted, its Creator, and the other faces its cause. The world of divine command has only one aspect." From this 'Abd al-Qādir deduces the nature of the assignment given to prophets. In accordance with the traditional Muslim view, he emphasizes that they were sent to help men both in this world and in the hereafter, and that for that purpose they were endowed with the most perfect knowledge of their material and spiritual needs. Yet, for 'Abd al-Qādir this implies that the prophets were familiar with all the worldly sciences, including those which they had no opportunity to practice. He is willing to exclude only those sciences which, from the shari'a point of view, bring no benefit, such as the details of astronomy and mathematics and most philosophical sciences which do not involve educating and refining the soul. This interest in the sciences was one point in which

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 44, vol. 1, pp. 84-85.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 45, vol. 1, p. 86.

‘Abd al-Qādir acknowledged that his opinion differed from that of Ibn ‘Arabī.⁸²

Accepting causality as God’s action or manifestation in the created world informed ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s view of the complementary concept of complete trust in God, *tawakkul*. He defines it as the confidence of the heart and the peace of the mind which come from knowing that the pre-ordained fate of man will come about, be it good or bad, beneficial or harmful. This trust emanates, then, from the belief that God will not break His promise, rather than from a rejection of causality. The trust in God that the sufi masters instruct their disciples to adopt, including the rejection of causes, ‘Abd al-Qādir explains, is merely a temporal means to achieve certainty and calmness. Subsequently they will return to their reliance on ordinary causes to attain their needs. Only sufis in a state of rapture, or those ignorant of the mystic path and the Prophet’s sunna, may reject causality, according to him, since it is tantamount to defying the wisdom of God and negating one of His attributes. The sufis who have reached perfection, on the other hand, experience a complete integration of the opposites of *tawakkul* and *al-akhdh bil-asbāb* as another aspect of their internality and externality. Thus, “those who observe the interior of the sufi find that he is an unmoving mountain, firm and indestructible. He is not distracted by the causes and pays no attention to them. Those who observe his exterior see him as flitting from branch to branch and from tree to tree.”⁸³ ‘Abd al-Qādir also alludes to this station in his interpretation of the verse which was the foundation of the activist attitude of the Naqshbandiyya: “men whom neither commerce nor trafficking diverts from the remembrance of God.” In all his actions man should be for God, in God, and through God, always in a state of presence, awareness, and good intention.⁸⁴

This state is again best illustrated in the tripartite distinction among the believers. In this case, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī distinguishes between the two extremes of the pure *mutasabbib*, whose view is limited to the causes and blinded to God, and the pure *mutawakkil*, whose view is diverted from the causes and immersed in the vision

⁸² *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 279, vol. 2, pp. 280-282; *Mawqif* 286, vol. 2, pp. 310-311; *Mawqif* 44, vol. 1, pp. 84-85.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 165, vol. 1, pp. 331-332; see also *Mawqif* 282, vol. 2, pp. 292-294.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 12, vol. 1, pp. 38-39.

of God. Between them stands the perfect believer, the outward *mutasabbib* and inward *mutawakkil*, “whose hand is in the cause while his heart is joined to its Creator.” In defining the causes, however, ‘Abd al-Qādir makes additional significant distinction between their three types, the ordinary, the rational, and the *shar‘ī*. His main concern is in the latter type, implying that the *shar‘a* contains itself a rational dimension. The commandments and prohibitions, ‘Abd al-Qādir contends, are themselves causes, as the meaning of a commandment is that if you fulfill it you will reach paradise, while the meaning of a prohibition is that if you transgress it you will end up in hell. All religious dispensations, from Adam to Muḥammad, were given in consideration of both ordinary and *shar‘ī* causes. The sufis comply with all of them, so that outwardly there is no difference between them and other believers, though internally the difference between them is as “between the heaven and the earth, the east and the west.” Those to whom the real Actor was revealed, ‘Abd al-Qādir says, realize the essence of the commanded, the commander, and the commandment. Their exteriors comply with the commandments and prohibitions, while in their interiors they know that they are merely receptacles of their existence rather than their performers. They expect no reward or punishment and their hearts are calm.⁸⁵

It was that combination of striving in this world and complete trust in God that determined the economic pursuits of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī in the last part of his life in Damascus. ‘Abd al-Qādir’s attitude toward wealth is primarily articulated through another central station in the sufi path, asceticism (*zuhd*). Most sufis wrongly regard it as avoiding the bounty of this world, he claims, while it really means the removal from the heart of aspirations for what is other than God, or for what does not bring one closer to Him.⁸⁶ Like Shaykh Khālīd before him, ‘Abd al-Qādir testifies that he abstains from nothing, since he sees God in everything. Purity of the heart is to be found rather in awareness of Him, and in this state worldly delights and joys can do no harm. Moreover, when the heart is present in God, it does not notice the passions at all.⁸⁷ Regarding the apparent contradiction between his own wealth and success and what is expected from a sufi, ‘Abd al-Qādir writes, alluding to the animosity toward him in Damascus, that after beseeching God for

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 77, vol. 1, pp. 135-137.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 165, vol. 1, pp. 332-333.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 138, vol. 1, p. 282.

a sign of his happiness, he received this answer:

You are happy in this world and in the next. Most people reject you because they see the favors God has bestowed upon you. He granted to you wealth, children, might, great glory, a good name that spread all over the world, as well as your association with high worldly dignitaries and dressing like them. It seems to them unreasonable that you should gain happiness in both worlds and, moreover, that you belong to the exalted community and the saved [the sufis]... This is but divine providence and a sign of favor from God, who singles out for His mercy whomever He wishes.⁸⁸

To the poor, ‘Abd al-Qādir recommends not to humiliate themselves before the rich by begging from them, lest they lose not only their dignity in this world but also most of their reward in the next.⁸⁹

The same practical considerations governed ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s political attitudes. As in his rationalist writings, ‘Abd al-Qādir does not deny the duty of jihad against the opponents of Islam, until they pay the poll tax and are humiliated, although he describes it as the most difficult commandment for the sufis to endure.⁹⁰ Against it, ‘Abd al-Qādir stresses the duty to have special compassion for “the people of the book”. Moreover, he describes a dream in which Ibn ‘Arabī himself reprimanded him for greeting some Christians in a Muslim manner, thus indicating to the second point in which he differed from the opinions of his great master.⁹¹ ‘Abd al-Qādir also reiterates his praise of the Arabs, and goes even further to justify their living in a state of ignorance in the time of the *ḡhīliyya*. There were certainly polytheists (*mushrikūn*) among them, he writes, but God ignored that and pardoned their ignorance because he had sent them no messenger since the days of Abraham and Ishmael. They were actually convinced that their fathers’ idolatry was the religion of Allāh.⁹²

Yet, the most important aspect of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s political teaching during his exile in Damascus, and the third point on which he differed from the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabī, was his attitude

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 265, vol. 2, p. 237.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 318, vol. 2, pp. 458-459.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 80, vol. 1, pp. 139-140.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 250, vol. 2, pp. 191-192; *Mawqif* 372, vol. 3, p. 365. For Ibn ‘Arabī’s attitude toward the Christians see Addas, pp. 234-236.

⁹² *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 37, vol. 1, p. 75; *Mawqif* 332, vol. 3, pp. 26-27; *Mawqif* 354, vol. 3, pp. 118-119.

toward the government. This ‘Abd al-Qādir expressed through his interpretation of the famous Prophetic saying: “He among you who observes an evil shall remove it by his hand; if this is beyond his power, [he shall remove it] by his tongue; if this is beyond his power, [he shall remove it] by his heart; and this is the minimum of faith.” The removal by hand, ‘Abd al-Qādir asserts, is incumbent upon the ruler and his governors; by tongue, upon the ‘ulama who profess to be knowledgeable; and by heart, upon common believers who recognize the evil. Action by the first two is beneficial for the community, and action by the last is beneficial for him. The Sufis, however, do not belong in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s eyes to any of these three categories and, therefore, are not obliged to remove evil at all! They behold of the Real Actor and realize that creatures are mere accidents into which He supplants actions, things, and intentions, without their participation.⁹³ This was clearly a call to completely shun politics, which reflected ‘Abd al-Qādir’s readiness to overlook the Westernizing thrust of the late Tanzimat statesmen for the sake of modernization.

The movement of religious reform inaugurated by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī in Damascus in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was deeply imbued with the theosophy of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī. Possessed, like his spiritual master, of a profound sense of mission, ‘Abd al-Qādir took it upon himself to redefine the relationship between mysticism and rationalism in Islam on the basis of the two-pronged Akbarī doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. In the reality of European supremacy, this redefinition amounted to a call to adopt the Western rationalist approach to worldly affairs while, at the same time, barring it from the religious sciences, particularly theology. Within the Muslim community it also meant a break with the traditional men of religion, who by adhering to the practice of *taqlīd* had failed to protect the fundamental truths of the Muslim faith against the dangers inherent in rationalism. The three points on which ‘Abd al-Qādir departed from the teaching of al-Shaykh al-Akbar—the interest in worldly sciences, the tolerant attitude toward Christians, and the complete shunning of political affairs—reveal that practically within the Akbarī tradition ‘Abd al-Qādir’s thought tipped toward the inclusive immanent interpretation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s

⁹³ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 133, vol. 1, pp. 270-271; *Mawqif* 362, vol. 3, p. 254.

teaching at the expense of the exclusive transcendental one. Yet in his entire system these deviations were designed to serve as a means to the integration of Islam within the modern world. Thus, while the reformist teaching of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī was formulated within the traditional framework of Islamic renewal, its content marked the beginning of a shift toward a new form characterized by the search for accommodation with the West.

CHAPTER SIX

AMIR 'ABD AL-QĀDIR AL-JAZĀ'IRĪ'S CIRCLE (1855-1883)

The new type of religious reform proposed by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī to the men of religion of Damascus in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was based upon his adaptation of Ibn 'Arabī's theosophy to the new reality of European supremacy over the Muslim world. Unlike Shaykh Khālīd's movement of renewal in the previous generation, however, which had sought to include all of the 'ulama, and through them the entire population, of a city suffering from the weakness of the Ottoman government, 'Abd al-Qādir's Akbarī teaching was designed for an elect group of conscientious men of religion who shared his belief that the conduct of the traditional 'ulama had become the primary impediment to the regeneration of Islam. These men also proved more ready to accept 'Abd al-Qādir's view that the key to the preservation of their religion lay in its integration into the modern world.

The elect circle that 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī gathered around him in Damascus consisted mostly of the sons of 'ulama belonging to the chief reformist sufi orders then active in the city. Some of these young men of religion succeeded their fathers in leading their respective branches of these orders, but for all of them the teaching of al-Shaykh al-Akbar became the focus of interest. After the amir chose Muḥammad al-Fāsī as his guide on the sufi path, many of them followed suit and also joined the latter's order, the Shādhiliyya. These disciples of 'Abd al-Qādir came from two principal groupings which were particularly receptive to his ideas. The first was the immigrant 'ulama and sufi shaykhs from Algeria, who had shared his plight at the hands of the French and continued to regard him as both their spiritual and their political leader. The core of the Algerian group was made up of adherents of the Raḥmānī branch of the Khalwatiyya order. 'Abd al-Qādir himself and his family, which also produced a number of prominent scholars, belonged, as mentioned above, to the Qādiriyya. The second group was the Damascene 'ulama who had maintained reformist inclinations from the time of Shaykh Khālīd

within the framework of the Naqshbandiyya order. For them, the main appeal of ‘Abd al-Qādir lay in his teaching, in which they found a suitable formulation of the views they were coming to hold under the new circumstances of the early Tanzimat regime. In the first part of this chapter I present the leading disciples in the circle of ‘Abd al-Qādir from among these two groups.

The Naqshbandī-Khālīdī ‘ulama of early Tanzimat Damascus were deeply concerned about the obstruction of these religiously motivated reforms by their colleagues of the Ottoman tendency. The latter, and urban notables in general, had been harnessed to the efforts of the Ottoman government to impose a more centralized rule on the province, while at the same time they diverted the new burden of taxation and conscription onto the middle and lower strata of society. Since their economic interests were concentrated in the traditional textile industries and in the agriculture of the Ghūṭa,¹ these men were also anxious to withhold from non-Muslims their promised rights, which enabled them to take advantage of the new European-dominated trade, and may have been behind many of the violent incidents against them.² The Khālīdī ‘ulama, by contrast, as we have seen in the case of Muḥammad al-Khānī, remained loyal to the teaching of their master, preferring to shun administrative office and to base their social standing upon posts they inherited from their fathers in the mosques and colleges. They may thus be described, over against their “Ottoman” counterparts, as the ‘ulama of “the local tendency”. Moreover, these “local” ‘ulama, mostly residing in the Maydān and the adjacent southern quarters of Damascus, seem to have drawn nearer to the chieftains who, in cooperation with the local Christians, controlled the booming export of the Ḥawrān grain to Europe. The ties were then strengthened by their attachment to ‘Abd al-Qādir, who himself participated in this trade and from whom most of them received substantial stipends. This connection helps explain the tolerant attitude of the reformist ‘ulama toward the non-Muslim communities in general, and their endeavor to protect European nationals and local Christians during the riots of 1860 in particular.

¹ Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 71-75; James A. Reilly, “Status Groups and Property Holding in the Damascus Hinterland, 1828-1880,” *IJMES*, 21 (1989), pp. 520-521.

² Ma‘oz, *Ottoman Reform*, pp. 92-100, 151-157.

During the late Tanzimat period the Naqshbandī–Khālidī 'ulama of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's circle were joined by a larger segment of the Damascene men of religion who had become convinced of the necessity to modernize their country along European lines. Following the banishment of the city's traditional leadership for its alleged role in the riots of 1860 by Fu'ād Pasha, who arrived in Syria to obviate foreign intervention and restore order, the heads of this group, having no inhibition against official positions, took over. The foci of activity for the 'ulama of the local tendency, who were closely associated with 'Abd al-Qādir, were the office of Ḥanafī mufti and the Sulaymāniyya lodge. It was among these "local" 'ulama that the first formulations of a rationalist reform of the traditional sciences appeared, especially in the fields of hadith and jurisprudence. These are analyzed in the third section.

I conclude this chapter with a discussion of a more traditional Akbarī awakening that developed on the margin of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's circle, within the framework of the Yashruṭī branch of the Shādhiliyya. Although the center of this branch was in Acre, where its founder, 'Alī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī, was located, its influence was felt throughout Syria. Yashruṭī himself maintained personal contact with 'Abd al-Qādir and strictly adhered to the shari'a, yet among his lower-strata followers, especially in the smaller towns, there developed antinomian inclinations. These represented a revulsion at the social polarizaton and hardening economic situation which afflicted Syria with the inauguration of the Ottoman era of reform.

The Algerian Emigration

The Algerian emigration to Syria in the wake of the French occupation began almost a decade before 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī settled in Damascus at the end of 1855. The first wave of immigrants, comprising more than four hundred people, arrived in the city as early as 1847, the year of 'Abd al-Qādir's surrender. It was headed by Aḥmad ibn Sālīm, one of the amir's five senior military commanders, whose area of responsibility had included the Berber-populated high Kabylia mountains. He was the last commander to surrender to the French, in February 1847, mere ten month before 'Abd al-

Qādir himself did so. Ibn Sālīm was a pious man of maraboutic lineage, though in Syria too he continued to fill military functions.³ He was accompanied by a large group of men of religion from the Kabylia mountains who, in line with ‘Abd al-Qādir’s fatwa, preferred to migrate to a Muslim-governed country rather than live under infidel rule. This group was headed by Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Siklāwī (al-Zawāwī) and Muḥammad al-Mubārak, two local shaykhs of the Khalwatiyya–Raḥmāniyya order.

The Raḥmāniyya bears the name of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjūrī (1715-1793 or 1720-1784), a native of the Kabylia who, owing to his studies in Egypt, gained the additional epithet of al-Azharī.⁴ There he trod the Khalwatī path under the guidance of Muḥammad Sālīm al-Ḥifnī, the disciple and associate of Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī who headed the renewal activity of this order in Egypt in the later half of the eighteenth century.⁵ Returning to Algeria at the behest of his master, Jurjūrī was successfully engaged in spreading the Khalwatī path among the Berber tribes of the Kabylia, as well as in the principal cities of the coast, Constantine and even Algiers. Under his successor, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā (d. 1837), the Raḥmāniyya developed into a distinct branch, while at the same time loosing its centralized character, its numerous lodges turning to independent centers of activity according to the local interests of their heads. Consequently, most of them were not involved in resisting the French invasion of Algeria in 1830.⁶ One of the few exceptions was ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā himself, with whom were associated Aḥmad ibn Sālīm, his counselor and confidant,⁷ and Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Siklāwī (1786-

³ Bardin, p. 6.

⁴ For Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jurjūrī see Julia A. Clancy-Smith, “Between Cairo and the Algerian Kabylia: the Raḥmāniyya *Ṭarīqa*, 1715-1800,” in Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatory (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination* (London, 1990), pp. 200-216; B. G. Martin, “A Short History of the Khalwati Order of Dervishes,” in Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East Since 1500* (Berkeley, 1966), p. 303.

⁵ This is the order that was represented in Damascus in the first half of the nineteenth century by Hāshim al-Tājī. See p. 63.

⁶ For the spread of the Raḥmāniyya order in Algeria and its part in the resistance to the French invasion see Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994), pp. 39-91.

⁷ Ahmed Nadir, “Les ordres religieux et la conquête française (1830-1851),” *Revue Algérienne des Sciences Jurisdiqes*, 9 (1972), pp. 822-825.

1861), his principal deputy. Muḥammad al-Mubārak (1808-1852) began to tread the Raḥmānī path under Ibn 'Īsā's guidance, and completed it after his death under Siklāwī, who had given him his daughter in marriage. Mubārak was particularly active in spreading the order and, after the French invasion, supported Amir 'Abd al-Qādir in preaching jihad and in organizing supplies for the warriors.⁸

Upon arriving in Damascus, this new Algerian community settled mostly in the southern Suwayqa quarter, which bordered on the Maydān. Siklāwī, who became the principal guide (*muqaddam*) of the Khalwatiyya order in the city, took over the nearby Khudayriyya college, where he began to conduct *dhikr* ceremonies and guide disciples. His success was considerable, and many 'ulama and notables sought his advice, including Aḥmad Pasha, the provincial governor during the 1860 riots. When Siklāwī died a year later, he was honored with prayers in the Umayyad mosque and a large funeral.⁹ Mubārak, who died prematurely almost a decade earlier, also gained the respect of both the religious men and the common people of Damascus, though in his last years he preferred to live in solitude.¹⁰

The legacy of Siklāwī and Mubārak as religious leaders of the Algerian community in Damascus was perpetuated in the late Tanzimat period by two sons of the latter, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib and Muḥammad al-Mubārak the younger. These two joined 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī after his arrival in the city and were among his closest disciples. They continued to conduct the *dhikr* ceremony of the Khalwatiyya-Raḥmāniyya as had their fathers, but most of their activity was transferred to the Shādhilī-Fāsī order, which they took under the amir's inspiration. The founder of this order was Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd al-Fāsī (d. 1872), a deputy of Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza al-Madanī, himself one of the outstanding deputies of the reformist Moroccan sufi Abū Aḥmad al-'Arabī al-Darqāwī,¹¹ as well as a disciple of Aḥmad ibn Idrīs.¹² Muḥammad al-Fāsī is described as an

⁸ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1371-1373.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1326-1327. On the Khudayriyya college see Kurd 'Alī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. 6, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1373-1374.

¹¹ On the Darqāwiyya order and its branches see Trimmingham, pp. 110-114.

¹² On Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza al-Madanī and the Madaniyya order see Josef Van Ess, "Libanesische Miszellen, 6: Die Yaśruṭiya," *WI*, 16 (1975), pp. 5-8. On his affinity to Aḥmad ibn Idrīs see, O'Fahey, p. 71.

erudite scholar, who combined in his path the *sharī'a* with the *ḥaqīqa*. He spent eighteen years in Madanī's lodge in Miṣrāta in Tripolitania, interspersed with frequent travels throughout the area to spread the order, a practice enjoined particularly by this master. Following Madanī's death, Fāsi departed for Mecca, where he established his own lodge and engaged in guidance. Concomitantly, he continued his travels and added lodges in the Hijaz, the Yemen, Egypt, and even India. 'Abd al-Qādir was undoubtedly Fāsi's most celebrated disciple, and in 1868 the shaykh visited the amir in Damascus, ordaining many members of his circle into the Fāsiyya order.¹³

Despite the common traits in their biographies, Muḥammad al-Mubārak's two sons differed considerably in their character and sufi manners. The elder, Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib (1839-1896), studied the Akbarī teaching with 'Abd al-Qādir, as well as Mālikī law and various non-religious sciences with two of his disciples. He succeeded his grandfather as the principal Khalwatī shaykh in Damascus, but achieved high position only after he became a guide in the Shādhiliyya-Fāsiyya. Ṭayyib conducted its *dhikr* ceremonies in the Khudayriyya college and, in his master's footsteps, traveled frequently to spread the order.¹⁴ His influence reached as far as Yemen, where the mufti of the Ottoman battalion stationed there was his deputy. In Syria itself, he established two additional lodges in al-Mizza and in the Ḥawrān. Nevertheless, Ṭayyib was a sociable man who delighted in sufi music (*samā'*), fine clothes, and women.¹⁵ His younger brother and successor, Muḥammad al-Mubārak the younger (1847-1912), by contrast, was predisposed to asceticism, spending much of his time in seclusion and distributing his money to the poor. He was also more devoted to his studies, specializing in Arabic grammar and literature, besides his engagement in the Akbarī teaching and the Khalwatī path of his ancestors. Mubārak had the closest ties with 'Abd al-Qādir among the Algerian exiles. He admired the amir, who reciprocated by entrusting him with the education of his sons and by supporting him with a monthly stipend. Mubārak shunned the rulers and adamantly rejected the official rank and grant which were offered to him. Instead, he is said to have preferred the company of

¹³ Al-Ḥasan al-Kūhin, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shādhiliyya al-Kubrā* (Cairo, 1347 A.H.), pp. 197-200. Trimmingham, p. 113, fixes Fāsi's death to 1878.

¹⁴ See the collection of prayers he received from his shaykh: Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib, *Majmū'at Awrād Saniyya lil-Sāda al-Shādhiliyya* (Damascus, 1301 A.H.).

¹⁵ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 122-125.

merchants, whom he would teach the fundamentals of the religion. Following a premature attempt in his youth, he also established, with the help of some disciples, a popular private elementary school. Mubārak's activity and views as a teacher and as a writer and grammarian belong to the cultural revival of his time and hence will be discussed in the next chapter.¹⁶

The emigration of Algerian religious men to Damascus continued long after the settlement of the first wave led by Siklāwī and Mubārak the elder in 1847. Many of them either belonged to the Khalwatiyya–Raḥmāniyya order, or took it from these shaykhs as part of their integration into the exile community. Like Ṭayyib and Mubārak the younger, these later arrivals subsequently accepted the leadership of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, most of them also adopting Ibn 'Arabī's teaching and joining the Shādhiliyya–Fāsiyya order. The most outstanding figure among these immigrants, at least from the standpoint of the subsequent development of religious reform in Damascus, was Ṣāliḥ al-Sam'unī (1824-1868), who had arrived already in 1847, shortly after the Kabylia shaykhs.¹⁷ A native of Waghlīs in Western Algeria, Sam'unī had acquired an extensive religious education in his hometown, and was also learned in the non-religious sciences, primarily astronomy. He took the Khalwatī path from Siklāwī after his settlement in Damascus, and it was that shaykh who chose the name Ṭāhir for his son. Due to his vast knowledge, Sam'unī was honored to serve as assistant of Aḥmad Muslim al-Kuzbarī, the chief hadith instructor in the Umayyad mosque, and acquired many disciples of his own, both Algerians and Damascenes. He was later appointed to be the Mālikī mufti of the city, a position restored in the wake of the Algerian emigration, and also wrote extensively, including a history of the Ottoman Empire and an epistle on differences between the legal schools. Sam'unī did not hesitate to enroll his son in the first state school (*maktab rushdī*) to be opened in Damascus immediately following the 1860 riots, and thus helped in shaping the Salafī orientation of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, to be analyzed in Part Three.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-279. For his diploma see 'Abd al-Ḥafīz al-Fāsī, *Mu'jam al-Shuyūkh al-Musammā Riyāḍ al-Janna aw al-Mudhish al-Muṭrib* (2 vols. Rabat, 1350/1931), vol. 1, p. 73.

¹⁷ Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, *Ta'rīkh Hijrat Wālidīhi wa-Ba'd Masā'il* (Damascus, Asad Library, Manuscript no. 11613, 1317 A.H.).

¹⁸ 'Adnān Khaṭīb, *Al-Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī Rā'id al-Nahḍa al-'Ilmiyya fī Bilād al-*

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s own family continued to adhere to the Qādirī tradition, with the reformist bent it held since the time of his grandfather. This tendency was combined with religious erudition, far exceeding that of the Raḥmānī shaykhs of the High Kabylia. ‘Abd al-Qādir himself occasionally ordained disciples from among the Algerian community, but his main concern was with the Akbarī teaching, which he saw as the common foundation for all the orders. The mission he believed to have been entrusted upon him was designed for all the conscientious religious men of Damascus, not only for his own compatriots. This was perhaps one reason for ‘Abd al-Qādir’s decision to settle in the central ‘Amāra quarter, rather than among the Algerian community in the south.¹⁹ The original Qādirī path of the family was maintained however by his brothers, who joined him two years later. Although one of them soon left for Istanbul, the rest chose to settle in the southern Bāb Sarīja quarter, in the vicinity of the other immigrants from their country. There they conducted the ceremonies of the order in the ‘Annāba mosque, which bears the name of the Algerian town in which they stayed before departing for Syria. They were headed by ‘Abd al-Qādir’s elder brother, Muḥammad Sa‘īd (d. 1861), their father’s successor as the principal shaykh of the Qādiriyya in Algeria and an outstanding ‘alim in his own right.²⁰ Sa‘īd was then succeeded by his son, Muḥammad Murtaḍā (1829-1902), who was close to ‘Abd al-Qādir and took the path directly from him. He also visited ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī’s tomb in Baghdad and received authorization from the current head of its lodge. Muḥammad Murtaḍā was obliged to leave for Beirut in 1877 because of bad health, where he soon proved to be a zealous opponent of the innovations that pervaded the city much ahead of the more conservative Damascus. He secluded himself in his home, refusing to have any contact with the authorities or the city notables.²¹ The lodge in the ‘Annāba mosque was left to ‘Abd al-Qādir’s younger brother, Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī, whose activities belong to the period following the amir’s death.

Along with the Algerian religious men who joined ‘Abd al-Qādir’s circle, there arrived in Damascus at this time another immigrant ‘alim

Shām wa-A‘lām min Khirrijī Madrasatihi (Cairo, 1971), pp. 91-92; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 733-734; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 130; Ḥiṣnī, p. 664.

¹⁹ Bardin, p. 14.

²⁰ Ḥiṣnī, p. 696; Sarkīs, p. 695.

²¹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 189-192; Qāsimī, *Ta‘fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 60-65.

from Egypt, who in many respects surpassed them all. Yūsuf al-Maghribī (d. 1862),²² as his name indicates, had family roots in Morocco, but he himself was born and raised in Cairo. Like 'Abd al-Qādir, he claimed descent from the Prophet, adhered to the Mālikī school of law, and belonged to the Qādiriyya, as well as to other orders. Maghribī received his education at al-Azhar, where he was particularly influenced by Ḥasan al-'Aṭṭār, one of the first Egyptian 'ulama to recognize the potential value of European science,²³ and Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī, the most outstanding of the Khalwatī shaykhs who preserved the legacy of Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī in that time.²⁴ He took from Ṣāwī the path, later joining the Naqshbandiyya and the Shādhiliyya too.²⁵ After completing his studies in Cairo, Maghribī became an itinerant 'alim, wandering through the cities of the Ottoman Empire in quest of knowledge. The exact chronology of his travels is difficult to establish, though he seems to have spent a long period in Medina, before departing for Istanbul. Thereafter Maghribī visited Baghdad, where he took the Qādirī path at its founder's tomb. In the first half of the 1840s we find him in the country of his ancestors, studying mainly in Fez and Tunis, before returning to the East. Our sources are unanimous on Maghribī's prodigious erudition, as well as on his literary abilities. Owing to his frequent trav-

²² Many sources deal with Yūsuf al-Maghribī, both within the general biographical dictionaries of the Damascene 'ulama and as background to the biography of his son, Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, the leading 'alim in Damascus during the first part of the Mandate period. Principal among these are: Maḥmūd al-'Aṭṭār, *Tarjamat al-Shaykh Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (Manuscript, personal collection, n.d.), pp. 4-9; Yusrā Darkanzlī, *Al-Muḥaddith al-Akbar al-Shaykh Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (Damascus, n.d.), pp. 25-28; Muḥammad Riyāḍ al-Māliḥ, *'Ālim al-Umma wa-Ẓāhid al-'Aṣr al-'Allāma al-Muḥaddith al-Akbar Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (Damascus, 1986), pp. 8-14; Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Farfūr, *Al-Muḥaddith al-Akbar wa-Imām al-'Aṣr al-'Allāma al-Ẓāhid al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Shaykh Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī* (Damascus, 1986), pp. 17-26; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1602-1608; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 700-702; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 260-264; Ziriklī, vol. 9, pp. 313-314; Munīr al-Dimashqī, p. 439; Kattānī, pp. 1142-1146; 'Abd al-Qādir Badrān, *Munādamat al-Aṭlāl wa-Musāmarrat al-Khayāl* (Damascus, 1960), pp. 30-31.

²³ See p. 64.

²⁴ On Aḥmad al-Ṣāwī see Gilbert Delanoue, *Moralistes et politiques musulmans dans l'Égypte du xix^e siècle (1798-1882)* (2 vols. Cairo, 1982), pp. 188-246.

²⁵ On Maghribī's Khalwatī connections see 'Aṭṭār, *Tarjamat al-Shaykh*, p. 5; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1608; on his adherence to the Naqshbandiyya, *Ijāzat al-Shaykh Yūsuf al-Maghribī bil-Ṭarīqa al-Naqshbandiyya min al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Sharīf al-Bukhārī* (Leiden University, manuscript no. 680A), dated Dhū al-Hijja 1257 (January 1842); on his affiliation to the Khadīrī branch of the Shādhiliyya see Farfūr, p. 18.

els he was little engaged in teaching, though he compensated for it by writing extensively.

Yūsuf al-Maghribī spent two periods of his life in Damascus. The first was in the days of Sultan Maḥmūd II, probably during the 1820s, when he attended the lessons of prominent ‘ulama of the city, including ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, Sa‘īd al-Ḥalabī, and Muḥammad Amīn ‘Ābidīn. We have no evidence that he ever met Shaykh Khālīd. Thereafter, Maghribī probably continued on to Istanbul, where he studied with ‘Ārif Ḥikmet Bey, an outstanding ‘alim with a Naqshbandī background who gave his support to the early Tanzimat reforms.²⁶ With ‘Ārif’s recommendation, he was nominated to be the Arabic teacher of the Sultan’s son, ‘Abdūlmecīd, and for a time frequented the palace.²⁷ The second stay of Maghribī in Damascus was under the very different circumstances of ‘Abdūlmecīd’s reign. Having gained the respect of many religious men in the city, he was given the honor of delivering a lesson in the Umayyad mosque, and then was assigned a position in the adjacent Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya. In the latter position, however, Maghribī soon became caught up in a bitter struggle that lasted for almost a decade. This struggle reflected the power accumulated by the ‘ulama of the Ottoman tendency in Damascus under the early Tanzimat regime, the criticism raised by the “local” ‘ulama at their conduct, and finally the changes that ‘Abd al-Qādir brought to the city on the eve of the introduction of the late Tanzimat reforms.

Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya was one of the most ancient and hallowed religious institutions in Damascus. Nevertheless, when Yūsuf al-Maghribī arrived to undertake his teaching position, he was dismayed to find out that a Christian merchant had opened a wine shop in front of it and, even worse, had acquired part of the college itself, even though it was a waqf property, to be used as a warehouse. Stunned, Maghribī complained to the governor and sought the help of the ‘ulama. He soon discovered that the religious notables not only refused to support him, but also blocked any action. Unwilling to concede, he set out for Istanbul, where he enlisted the aid of his old acquaintance, ‘Ārif Ḥikmet Bey, who had meanwhile been named Shaykh al-Islām, and with great effort obtained a Sultanīc firman

²⁶ See R. Mantran, “‘Ārif Ḥikmet Bey,” *EI2*, vol. 1, p. 630; Chambers, “The Ottoman Ulama,” pp. 38-40.

²⁷ ‘Aṭṭār, *Tarjamat al-Shaykh*, p. 6.

ordering the removal of the Christian. The governor, however, refrained from carrying out even this order. In a letter he sent to 'Abd al-Qādir, Maghribī recounted how the heads of the council, the 'ulama, and the qadi had argued that since the Christian was under consular protection and had paid the poll tax ten years in advance, he could not be ousted from the college. In the course of this letter he leveled fierce criticism at the conduct of the 'ulama, "who earn their living by reciting the Qur'an, uttering the first part of the *shahāda*, representing in the courts, and reconciling between people in a manner which enables them to earn from both sides", instead of fulfilling their vocation. Rather than engaging in the major sciences, he went on, they concentrate on secondary books in some subjects without expertise or serious deliberation. The letter gives the clear impression that Maghribī had been persecuted by the leading 'ulama of Damascus, and that, devoid of livelihood, he was forced to leave for Medina.²⁸

It was 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī who finally rescued Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya. Yūsuf al-Maghribī first met the amir in Istanbul after the latter's release from France. Recognizing his erudition and reformist inclination, 'Abd al-Qādir treated him with great respect, and Maghribī even accompanied him to Bursa. Before his return to Damascus, he told the amir about the situation of the Dār al-Ḥadīth and his efforts to rescue it. Maghribī continued to correspond with 'Abd al-Qādir about this affair from Medina, and when the amir arrived in Damascus he summoned the Christian wine seller and purchased his warehouse in Dār al-Ḥadīth at full price. He renovated the college at his own expense and, inviting Maghribī back to Damascus, assigned it to him and his descendents as a waqf. Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya was reinaugurated in 1858 with a hadith lesson taught by 'Abd al-Qādir himself. Thereafter, Maghribī undertook instruction, in addition to frequenting Damascus' outlying quarters and villages to preach among the inhabitants. On the occasion of the reopening of Dār al-Ḥadīth he composed a long poem which betrayed his bitterness toward his rivals, calling them honor-seeking notables who ignore God's word, and praised those who had sided with him. Maghribī does not specify who the first were, but the identity of two of them may be inferred from their reaction to his return. These were 'Abdallāh al-Ḥalabī, the leader of the 'ulama of

²⁸ Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ẓā'ir*, pp. 610-612.

the Ottoman tendency in Damascus, who expressed indignation at the attacks on his colleagues,²⁹ and Ṭāhir al-Āmidī, the Ḥanafī mufti, who made an effort now to avoid him.³⁰ Both were among the city notables banished to Cyprus in the wake of the 1860 riots. On the other hand, Maghribī did not hesitate to mention the religious men who supported him. These were mostly ‘ulama of the local tendency who belonged to ‘Abd al-Qādir’s circle.

The Attachment of the Naqshbandī–Khālidi ‘Ulama

The connection of the Damascene ‘ulama who were associated with the Naqshbandī–Khālidi order to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī was established shortly after his arrival in the city at the end of 1855. First among them were Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, the foremost disciple of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, and two of his senior disciples—Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger and ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Biṭār, the son of Ḥasan al-Biṭār. These three assiduously devoted themselves to the study of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching under ‘Abd al-Qādir’s guidance, and the notes they had been allowed to take during his lessons later became the nucleus of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*. A sincere friendship was forged between them and the amir, which lasted to the end of his life, and they competed in composing praise poetry in his honor.³¹ Other ‘ulama from Damascus, whose fathers had also been ardent adherents of Shaykh Khālidi in the previous generation, followed in their footsteps. Most of these religious men resided in the southern quarters of the city, where the Algerian immigrants also concentrated after their arrival, and close relations were soon to develop between the two groups.

Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī (1825-1882)³² was one of the outstanding reformist ‘ulama in Damascus during the Tanzimat period. An

²⁹ Ḥiṣnī, p. 700. On ‘Abdallāh al-Ḥalabī see *ibid.*, pp. 667-669; Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1008-1010; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 163-165; Uṣṭuwānī, pp. 81-86.

³⁰ ‘Aṭṭār, *Tarjamat al-Shaykh*, p. 7. On Ṭāhir al-Āmidī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 28-30; Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 748-749 (under the entry of Kharbūṭlī); Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 2-3. For evidence on his corruption see Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, pp. 167-168.

³¹ Murābiṭ, pp. 23-26.

³² The principal sources for the biography of Ṭanṭāwī are Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 73-77; Biṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1284-1288; ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 276-277; Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 8-10; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 765-766.

Egyptian by origin, as his name indicates, he had been born into a local religious family in Tanta and raised as an orphan by his elder brother. Following family tradition, Ṭanṭāwī attended lessons in the local Badawī mosque before his brother, who enrolled in the Egyptian army, took him along to Syria. After a short stay in Anatolia, they were stationed in Aleppo, where he was able to renew his studies. In 1839, on the eve of the Egyptian evacuation, the two brothers moved to Damascus, and Muḥammad joined the lessons of the senior 'ulama in the city. The decisive factor in shaping his course at that time, however, was his encounter with Muḥammad al-Khānī, under whose inspiration he decided to remain in Damascus and tread the Naqshbandī path. He gained the shaykh's full confidence, taking his place in the lodge during his absence, though he was not formally ordained as a deputy. Ṭanṭāwī returned to Egypt with Khānī's approval in 1844, to pursue his studies at al-Azhar. Apart from the sciences of hadith, exegesis, and jurisprudence, which the Khālidiyya stressed, he also studied astronomy, arithmetic, and philosophy (*ḥikma*), sciences practically unknown then in Damascus. Ṭanṭāwī attributed his success in these sciences to the Naqshbandiyya, often repeating the assertion that, "I would not have reached this enlightenment (*fath*) so swiftly without the blessing of engaging in this exalted *ṭarīqa*."³³

Returning to Damascus via Aleppo in 1848, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī settled in the Maydān quarter and began to teach in the humble Ṣhayb al-Rūmī mosque. His reputation grew owing to the new sciences he had mastered, and Damascenes, especially from the southern quarters, flocked to his lessons. Among Ṭanṭāwī's disciples were the sons of Muḥammad al-Khānī, as well as 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, who turned to him for guidance after his father's death in 1856. 'Abd al-Majīd al-Khānī sums up his activity at the time by writing that, "he began to unfold the banner of the sciences and imbue the worn-out minds with the spirit of understanding."³⁴ In the wake of the 1860 riots, Ṭanṭāwī moved to the old city at the request of 'Abd al-Qādir, who rented a house for him, assigned him an allowance, and sent his own sons to study with him in the Bādhura'iyya college. He also taught in the Umayyad mosque, but when offered a pension by one of the governors of Damascus he

³³ 'A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā'iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 276.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 278; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1286.

vigorously declined. Ṭanṭāwī visited Egypt again in 1861, this time in the company of Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger.³⁵ In 1870 he was sent by ‘Abd al-Qādir to Konya, together with Muḥammad al-Ṭayyib, to collate the oldest preserved manuscript of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* with the first printed edition which had recently appeared in Egypt. It was a great honor for him that upon his return ‘Abd al-Qādir himself, at the head of his circle, came to hear him report his findings. The two found numerous errors, and their corrections were incorporated into subsequent editions.³⁶ Ṭanṭāwī composed a number of epistles on the new sciences, though none of them have come down to us. All we have are experts from an interpretation of a hadith in which he demonstrates his mastery of the Akbarī system while seeking to prove that religion is not opposed to science.³⁷

Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger and ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, Ṭanṭāwī’s two most faithful disciples, associated with the circle of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī undoubtedly with the blessing of their fathers. ‘Abd al-Qādir’s acquaintance with Khānī the elder went back, as we have seen, to the 1820s, when he and his father stayed in the Murādiyya lodge. Upon the amir’s return to Damascus thirty years later, he renewed his contacts with the shaykh and showed him great respect. Furthermore, probably under ‘Abd al-Qādir’s inspiration, Khānī himself now became infatuated with sufi books, particularly those of Ibn ‘Arabī and Ghazālī.³⁸ With Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger, however, the Akbarī influence upon the Khānī branch of the Naqshbandiyya became decisive. Befriended by ‘Abd al-Qādir as a spiritual brother, he too received from him a monthly pension, in addition to his income from the lands he inherited from his father and the government allowance for the lodge.³⁹ Concentrating in his studies on the Akbarī theosophy and hadith, Khānī the younger ordained almost no deputies in the Naqshbandī path. He accompanied the amir during his hajj journey in 1862, though as the principal shaykh of the Khālidiyya order in Damascus he refrained from following him in taking the Shādhilī path. Khānī began to teach Ibn ‘Arabī’s books to his foremost disciples in 1878, adding a little later the *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*. At the same time, he continued to seek his

³⁵ On this journey see also p. 101.

³⁶ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 288.

³⁷ Qāsīmī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 10-14.

³⁸ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Hadā’iq al-Wardiyya*, p. 271.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 280; Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 153.

master’s guidance on vague points in the Akbarī teaching, as evidenced by the *Mawāqif*.⁴⁰ Toward the end of his life, ‘Abd al-Qādir nominated Khānī as the guardian of his children, and it was he who prayed for the amir at his funeral.⁴¹

Ḥasan al-Bīṭār, whose position in Damascus was far superior to that of Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, died only few months after ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s arrival in the city, and there is no evidence in our sources that the two ever met. Nevertheless, they clearly shared a reformist outlook. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār relates that, when the amir’s scribe, who had been released before him, visited Damascus, his father frequently met with him to discuss the fate of Algeria and the lessons to be drawn in this context from the path of the *salaf*.⁴² It was the French occupation of Algeria that drove Bīṭār shortly thereafter, at the end of 1853, to write a treatise in favor of jihad, in the wake of Sultan ‘Abdūlmecīd’s declaration of war on Russia in the Crimea. Bīṭār bases the legitimacy of jihad on the consensus of the community (*ijmā’*), though he refers almost exclusively to the Qur’an and the sunna. He depicts the situation in Algeria as exceedingly gloomy, and warns that the infidels covet the other Muslim lands too. Nevertheless, in harmony with the orthodox Naqshbandī view, Bīṭār put the blame for Europe’s increasing greed on the Muslims themselves, who neglected the shari’a, ignored the Prophet’s way, and became absorbed in the affairs of this world. Aware of the new thrust toward the West, he attacks particularly association with non-Muslims, describing it as contrary to the hallowed custom and as the cause of madness and disease in the umma. Bīṭār calls upon his coreligionists to repent and adopt the course of “enjoining the good and forbidding the evil”. Only in this way will the Muslims regain their strength and overcome their enemies under the command of their Caliph. Bīṭār concludes his essay with a practical advice to prepare quickly the armies and surprise the enemies to achieve victory.⁴³

Little is known about the activity of Ḥasan al-Bīṭār in the two de-

⁴⁰ Muḥammad al-Khānī is the only ‘alim in Damascus to appear in the *Mawāqif* by name. See for example *Mawqif* 124, vol. 1, p. 250; *Mawqif* 367, vol. 3, p. 311; as well as *Mawqif* 372, vol. 3, p. 369, in which he appears to ‘Abd al-Qādir in a dream.

⁴¹ ‘A. Khānī, *Al-Ḥadā’iq al-Wardīyya*, pp. 281-282, 288-289.

⁴² Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1303-1304.

⁴³ Ḥasan al-Bīṭār, *Irshād al-‘Ibād fi Faḍl al-Ḥijāb* (Damascus, Asad Library, Manuscript no. 7122, 1270 A.H.).

cedes between his settlement in the Maydān in 1826 and the stormy events of 1846-1850, at which point the intensity of the new split among the 'ulama of Damascus was fully uncovered. It seems clear, however, that during this period Bīṭār was integrated into the leading stratum of the quarter, intermarrying with the Mahāynī wealthy grain-merchant family of chieftains, and probably engaging himself in the business of safe keeping (*amāna*) the savings of the inhabitants.⁴⁴ In 1846, at the beginning of the month of Ramadan, Bīṭār was summoned by the qadi, who accused him of seducing the people to rely on him rather than on the government. The qadi and his aids (*a'wān*) severely reprimanded Bīṭār and then ordered his arrest. When the news of this reached the Maydān, his son relates, a commotion (*fitna*) ensued. An armed crowd gathered in the streets to release him, and the frightened qadi appealed to the notables (*al-sādāt al-akābir*) for help. These rebuked him for his rash action and for putting them in trouble, but he justified himself by saying that his aids induced him to do so. The 'ulama and the notables, led by the naqib al-ashraf, then set out to release Bīṭār, who after receiving the apology of the qadi returned home escorted by his supporters. 'Abd al-Razzāq refrains from mentioning who was responsible for the arrest of his father, but his description leaves little room for doubt that it was the 'ulama and notables themselves, who came to regard unfavorably the independent activity of their Maydānī counterparts. The qadi's action, undertaken without consulting them, revealed how strong the position of Bīṭār, and of the local tendency 'ulama in general, had become.

A year after this power struggle, Ḥasan al-Bīṭār's prestige was further advanced by his invitation to represent Damascus at the circumcision ceremony of Sultan 'Abdūlmecīd's sons, along with 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭībī, now the doyen of the religious men of the city. In Istanbul, Bīṭār greatly impressed the reformist Shaykh al-Islām, 'Arif Hikmet Bey, with whom he exchanged diplomas. Summoned a number of times into the presence of the Sultan, he nonetheless declined the generous pension offered him with the pretext that he was too old to make use of it.⁴⁵ Bīṭār's status in Damascus reached its apex in 1850, when the post of Ḥanafī mufti was offered to him. 'Alī al-Murādī, the son and successor of Ḥusayn al-Murādī, who had

⁴⁴ Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 108n. 57; Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, p. 65n. 26.

⁴⁵ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 465-470.

held the position almost without interruption since Khālīd's time, had probably felt incompetent and had promptly resigned. The governor and the head of the provincial council agreed that the post should be passed to Bīṭār, despite the fact that he adhered to the Shāfi'ī school. But Bīṭār, loyal to Shaykh Khālīd's legacy, rejected the offer, claiming that he was not interested in a post from which he could be dismissed. When the two promised to procure an imperial order guaranteeing that it would remain in his family, he retorted that he meant to the only post that even the Sultan could not dismiss him from, the post of *'ilm*. Following this adamant rejection the position of Ḥanafī mufti was given to Ṭāhir al-Āmidī.⁴⁶

Ḥasan al-Bīṭār's main assistant in his religious activity was 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī (1807-1881), a prolific writer who like him combined wide erudition with a sufi disposition.⁴⁷ Over the course of three decades Bīṭār, with Ghunaymī and other colleagues, shaped generation after generation of reformist 'ulama in the Maydān and the southern quarters of Damascus. Foremost among them was his own son, 'Abd al-Razzāq. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār (1837-1916) acquired his religious education in his family, primarily from his father whose lessons he regularly attended, but also from his elder brothers, Muḥammad who was an expert in Ḥanafī law, and 'Abd al-Ghanī (1824-1897), who excelled in Qur'an recitation.⁴⁸ The other outstanding 'ulama with whom he studied were 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī, Yūsuf al-Maghribī, and above all Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭawī, who became his principal teacher after his father's death. With him Bīṭār completed his mastery of the religious and Arabic sciences, also adding the new sciences in which Ṭanṭawī specialized. There is no evidence that Bīṭār took the Naqshbandī path, from his father or from the Khānīs, but we do know that he was a deputy in

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 748-749. On the other hand, it was Ḥasan al-Bīṭār who caused his son Muḥammad to study jurisprudence and cross over to the Ḥanafī school, and thus the latter could serve as assistant mufti during the late Tanzimat period.

⁴⁷ On 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī see Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 867-872; Ḥiṣnī, p. 670; Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir bi-Sīrat al-Shaykh Ṭāhir* (Damascus, 1339/1920), p. 73; Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād* (Damascus, 1984), p. 7; 'Abdallāh Ḥannā, *Harakāt al-'Āmma al-Dimashqiyya fī al-Qamayn al-Thāmin 'Ashar wal-Tāsī 'Ashar* (Beirut, 1985), pp. 85, 124n. 16. Ghunaymī's major works are, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiyya al-Musammāh Bayān al-Sunna wal-Jamā'a* (Damascus, 1992), a work of theology completed in 1840, and, *Al-Lubāb fī Sharḥ al-Kitāb* (Beirut, 1980), on Ḥanafī law, completed a decade later.

⁴⁸ On 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Bīṭār see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 142-143.

the Khalwatiyya.⁴⁹ Very talented, ‘Abd al-Razzāq succeeded his father in the Karīm al-Dīn mosque, the principal mosque of the Maydān, retaining this position to the end of his life. Bīṭār’s affinity to ‘Abd al-Qādir was even stronger from that of Muḥammad al-Khānī. He used to imitate the amir’s manners and habits, a practice which won him the title of “his second in his lifetime”. He studied the Akbarī teaching with him, as well as public affairs, since the amir entrusted him with various cases of arbitration.⁵⁰ Unlike Khānī, Bīṭār did not hesitate to take the Shādhiliyya path from Muḥammad al-Fāsī.⁵¹

‘Abd al-Razzāq was the youngest of Ḥasan al-Bīṭār’s sons, and he joined ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s circle when he was only nineteen. His elder brothers also belonged to this reformist circle. Muḥammad al-Bīṭār showed no disposition for the sufi quest but, as described above, he was nominated as assistant mufti after the introduction of the late Tanzimat regime in Damascus. ‘Abd al-Ghanī, by contrast, took the Shādhilī path from Muḥammad al-Fāsī, engaging in severe asceticism and seclusion. He was also proficient in the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabī. Thanks to him, one of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s early treatises is at our disposal. This is a short sufi epistle written at his brother’s request, in which he explains Aḥmad ibn Idrīs’ claim that uttering the formula of unity, “there is no god but God”, only once with perception is better than uttering it ceaselessly for one’s entire life. In this epistle Bīṭār demonstrates both his proficiency in the Akbarī teaching and his loyalty to traditional orthodoxy.⁵²

The most ardent Damascene supporters of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī were, thus, the ‘ulama of the Maydān and the adjacent southern quarters, the leader of whom was Ḥasan al-Bīṭār. An investigation of the religious men from other parts of the city who joined the amir shows that foremost among them were descendents of the other close disciples of Shaykh Khālīd in the previous generation—Muḥammad Amīn ‘Ābidīn, Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭībī. In the ‘ulama families founded by these men the tendency was to combine an engagement in jurisprudence inherited from their fathers with the sufi quest adopted under the inspiration of ‘Abd al-Qādir. Thus,

⁴⁹ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1007.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11. This biography was written by his grandson, who was the editor of his biographical dictionary, Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār. Much of it appeared already in *idem*, “*Tarjamat al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār*,” *al-Manār*, 21 (1919), pp. 317-323.

⁵¹ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 718.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 873-881.

Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn's son, 'Alā' al-Dīn (1828-1889), who completed his father's great legal compendium, specialized in Ḥanafī law and, like Muḥammad al-Bīṭār, was nominated assistant mufti at the beginning of the late Tanzimat period. Subsequently, he took part in the compilation of the *Majalla*, the Ottoman civil code,⁵³ and filled a number of other religious functions, finally being appointed as a second president of the educational council in Syria.⁵⁴ On the other hand, 'Alā' al-Dīn was a deputy of Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Siklāwī in the Khalwatiyya order and, as his cousin and collaborator in the completion of the "*Hāshiya*", Abū al-Khayr 'Ābidīn relates, it was that shaykh who instructed him (*amarahu*) to join the administration. By assiduous engagement in spiritual training, seclusion, and asceticism, he also attained superior mystic states.⁵⁵ 'Alā' al-Dīn's cousin, Aḥmad 'Ābidīn (1823-1889), was also an expert in the Law and served as an assistant mufti during the late Tanzimat period. In his youth, Aḥmad trod the Naqshbandī path under the guidance of Muḥammad al-Khānī, and when Siklāwī arrived in Damascus at the head of the Algerian emigration, he took from him the Khalwatī path as well. Aḥmad 'Ābidīn wrote numerous epistles, one of them dealing with the practices of the Naqshbandiyya and two other with the teaching of Ibn 'Arabī.⁵⁶

Muḥammad and Aḥmad al-Shaṭṭī, the sons of Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, shared their father's scientific interests as Ḥanbalī jurists and experts in the sciences of inheritances and geometry. They also succeeded him as supervisors of the Bādhura'iyya college, and were employed in the municipality as authorities on land allocation and water distribution. It was the younger brother, Aḥmad (1835-1898), who succeeded his father as teacher in the Umayyad mosque and attained the senior positions of the Ḥanbalī school in the city, as mufti from 1871 and qadi from 1880, though the latter post was abolished shortly after his nomination.⁵⁷ The elder brother, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī

⁵³ On the preparation and content of the Ottoman civil code see S.S. Omar, "The Majalla," in Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny (eds.), *Law in the Middle East* (Washington D.C., 1956), vol. 1, pp. 292-308.

⁵⁴ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 63-67. 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Ābidīn's compendium is entitled, *Al-Hidāya al-'Alā'iyya* (Istanbul, 1984).

⁵⁵ Taymūr, p. 253; Qāsimī, *Ta'fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 83-85, including a list of his works. One of these epistles was recently published from the manuscript collection of al-Azhar: Aḥmad 'Ābidīn, *Ma'nā "Nuṣṣat al-Dā'ira"* ([Cairo], 1987).

⁵⁷ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 144-145; Shaṭṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, pp. 175-178; Qāsimī, *Ta'fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 21.

(1832-1890), occupied more modest positions in the awqaf and education councils of the province, as well as in the court system. He was also disposed to Sufism, taking the Shādhilī path from Muḥammad al-Fāsī and writing a commentary on one of Ibn ‘Arabī’s books.⁵⁸ The reformist inclination of the Shaṭṭīs was expressed, however, primarily in the field of jurisprudence. Aḥmad, who devoted himself to instruction, used in his lessons to deduce evidence from the Qur’an and the sunna to support each of the four schools of Law. Muḥammad, by contrast, engaged himself principally in writing. He is depicted in the sources as meticulously studying the judgments of ancient mujtahids and seeking to revive the abandoned legal schools and the judgments of forgotten ‘ulama. His writings will be analyzed in the next chapter, as part of the emerging opposition to Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II’s policies. Muḥammad al-Ṭībī (1830-1900), the grandson of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭībī, studied the religious sciences with his grandfather, and the renewed sciences of arithmetic and geometry with Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī. Specializing like the latter’s sons in the fields of inheritances and water distribution, he served for a while as the province’s engineer. Ṭībī spent the last part of his life in the Ḥawrān, where he was appointed mufti in 1873. He accepted the post only reluctantly, but exerted much effort to develop the area, establishing schools in the villages and erecting mosques.⁵⁹

Finally, affinity for the religious reform trend led by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī in Damascus was discernible even among members of the established ‘ulama families whose fathers had been among Shaykh Khālīd’s disciples in the previous generation. Members of the Ghazzī and Kuzbarī families took advantage of the early Tanzimat reforms and attained positions of influence in the city, but during the riots of 1860 they nonetheless actively participated in defending the Christians. Their status was generally not harmed, and at times was even strengthened, during that period of crisis. The most salient exception to this was ‘Umar al-Ghazzī, the Shāfi‘ī mufti of Damascus and Shaykh Khālīd’s patron in the city, who was banished to Cyprus along with the other leading ‘ulama of the city, dying there a few months later. Ghazzī sat in the provincial council throughout the early Tanzimat period and is described as the foremost figure

⁵⁸ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 93-95; Shaṭṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila*, pp. 166-169; Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, *A’yān Dimashq fī Nisf al-Qarn al-Rābi‘ ‘Ashar al-Hijrī* (Damascus, 1367/1948), p. 37.

⁵⁹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 173-177.

in shaping its decisions, fearing neither the governors nor the Sultan.⁶⁰ One source, however, asserts that he gave shelter to many Christian families during the massacre, and therefore was unjustly banished.⁶¹ Moreover, his son, Muḥammad al-Ghazzī (1818-1875), succeeded him as mufti upon his death and thus preserved this prestigious position for the family.⁶² Riḍā al-Gazzī (1818-1870), the son of Ismā'īl al-Ghazzī, helped Christians during the riots too, and in consequence was allowed to keep the influential position of supervisor of the Umayyad mosque, which he had held since 1849.⁶³ Aḥmad Muslim al-Kuzbarī (1826-1881), the youngest son of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī and his successor as the teacher of Bukhārī's hadith collection in the Umayyad mosque, also became close to the rulers. In the wake of the 1860 riots he gained the lucrative appointment of naqib al-ashraf of Damascus, even though his family had not until then been considered as belonging to the Prophet's descendants. The current opinion was that he gained this appointment because he locked the iron gate of his house in the Shāghūr quarter and thus prevented the mob from attacking its Christian residents.⁶⁴

The correspondence between the Damascene 'ulama who joined the religious reform led by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī under the inspiration of the Akbarī teaching after 1855, and the group that belonged to the renewal movement headed by Shaykh Khālid within the framework of the Naqshbandī order in 1823-1827, is indeed striking. It can be seen both in the family affiliations of the 'ulama of the two generations and in the nature of their relationship to the heads of these two consecutive reform trends. Thus, Muḥammad al-Khānī and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, who figured prominently in 'Abd al-Qādir's circle, were the sons of Khālid's most faithful adherents in the order in Damascus, his local deputy and his representative in the Maydān. The members of the 'Ābidīn, Shaṭṭī and Ṭībī families, who often combined high position in the legal field with the sufi path of the Khalwatiyya or the Shādhiliyya, were the descendants of the three leading legal scholars in the city who responded to Khālid's

⁶⁰ Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 189; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1134.

⁶¹ Ḥiṣnī, p. 672.

⁶² Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 226-227.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 629; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 659-660. See also Uṣṭuwānī, pp. 142-146.

⁶⁴ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 146-147, 166-167; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 691-692; Uṣṭuwānī, p. 210.

call. The members of the Ghazzī and Kuzbarī families nominated in the late Tanzimat period to senior positions in the city, were the sons of Khālīd's principal patrons, along with Ḥusayn al-Murādī, whose son proved incapable of taking his place. Socially, this correspondence points to the measure of continuity in the reformist inclination among this group of 'ulama families, which undoubtedly reflected their basic interests. Ideologically, it shows that, to a large extent, the Akbarī theosophy replaced the Naqshbandī path as the most adequate articulation of these families' distresses and desires in the new circumstances emerging in Syria as a result of the two processes of the Tanzimat reforms and European economic penetration. This correspondence also raises the curious paradox that, in both cases, the local 'ulama of Damascus only managed to consolidate their reformist inclinations through religious leaders who came from outside.

The Rise of the Local Tendency

Along with the local Naqshbandī–Khālīdī 'ulama and the sufi shaykhs of the Algerian community, there emerged in Damascus another group of men of religion whose fathers had not accepted the leadership of Shaykh Khālīd in the previous generation, but who now became attached to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī. This group of local tendency 'ulama resided mostly in the old city, around the 'Amāra quarter in which the amir himself settled. Like the Kuzbarīs and the Ghazzīs, they came from established religious families and had held influential positions in the city during the early Tanzimat period. Most of these 'ulama had studied with Abū Bakr al-Kilālī (d. 1863), who in many respects was Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī's counterpart in the northern part of Damascus. Like Ṭanṭāwī, Kilālī was a Naqshbandī sufi and an erudite scholar, who dedicated himself to teaching in the humble Wird mosque. His subjects included not only the religious sciences, but also those sciences in which local interest was rekindled during the early Tanzimat period, such as logic, philosophy (*hikma*), and "foreign sciences."⁶⁵ Most prominent among the rising local tendency 'ulama were Salīm al-'Aṭṭār, who used his fam-

⁶⁵ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 103; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 695-696; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 18-19.

ily's position in the Sulaymāniyya lodge as his base of power, and Maḥmūd Ḥamza, who was nominated to be the Ḥanafī mufti of the city a few years later. Both 'Aṭṭār and Ḥamza were close associates of 'Abd al-Qādir, and were considerably influenced by his thought. It was in their circles that the first expressions in Damascus of reform in the religious sciences, principally in jurisprudence and hadith studies, appeared.

Salīm al-'Aṭṭār (1817-1890) was the preeminent leader of the local tendency in Damascus during the late Tanzimat period. The grandson of Ḥāmid al-'Aṭṭār, he had been raised in the Bāb al-Salām quarter, in the house his grandfather had received from Ibrāhīm Pasha. The family's wealth derived from the positions of its heads in the major mosques of the city, as well as from the agricultural lands they held in the vicinity.⁶⁶ 'Aṭṭār acquired extensive religious education with the leading 'ulama of his time, completing his studies with the rational sciences under Abū Bakr al-Kilālī.⁶⁷ His distinction won him his grandfather's position as the instructor of Bukhārī's hadith collection in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, and he also taught it and Qur'an exegesis in the Umayyad mosque. 'Aṭṭār's status was greatly enhanced after the 1860 riots, during which he had taken an active part in defending the Christians.⁶⁸ Like many high-standing 'ulama before him, he is described in the sources as being venerated by the population and as having a say with the rulers. Yet, 'Aṭṭār went beyond this type of traditional leadership, and was deeply involved in the political and social affairs of Syria. In his house a large group of notables, including not only religious scholars and students but also merchants, met regularly to hear his lessons and to discuss the current events of the country.⁶⁹

There is no evidence in the sources that Salīm al-'Aṭṭār was active in his ancestors' order, the Qādiriyya, yet like most 'ulama of the local tendency he showed keen interest in the sufi teaching. 'Aṭṭār taught Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, as had his grandfather, and delved into the Akbarī expositions, including the *Mawāqif*, under 'Abd al-Qādir's inspiration. He consulted the amir on difficult questions, and toward the end of his life even taught one of Ibn 'Arabī's books

⁶⁶ Ḥiṣnī, pp. 715, 841-842; Shaṭṭī, *A'yān Dimashq*, p. 33; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 113n. 59.

⁶⁷ Ṣāhib, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 63.

⁶⁸ Kurd 'Alī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. 3, p. 92.

⁶⁹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 90.

himself.⁷⁰ ‘Aṭṭār’s main concern, however, was the instruction of hadith in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, in which he departed from the traditional method of teaching. Instead of reading the Prophetic sayings and elucidating them according to the authoritative commentators, he would examine each hadith in the light of the various religious sciences, particularly Sufism and jurisprudence. In the latter field ‘Aṭṭār was, moreover, not content with the rulings of his own Shāfi‘ī school, but would adduce the arguments of all the schools for each given problem. ‘Ulama of the different schools were attracted to his lessons, and he encouraged debate between them, in the end choosing the best supported ruling. Ḥiṣnī boasted that this was the first scientific teaching in the Arab countries, bringing great honor to Damascus. Though an exaggeration, this assertion underlines the reformist thrust inherent in ‘Aṭṭār’s instruction. Its two pillars were the combination of the sciences of hadith and Sufism, and the weakening of the authority of *taqlīd* by seeking proofs for the rulings of the law schools in the Qur’an and the sunna.⁷¹ ‘Aṭṭār’s teaching thus reflected the reform that ‘Abd al-Qādir suggested through sufi theosophy from the viewpoint of the science of hadith.

Salīm al-‘Aṭṭār’s rise to a position of religious leadership in Damascus after 1860 was paradoxically facilitated by Fu’ād Pasha’s striving to weaken the hold of the ‘ulama on the city. To this end, the Ottoman minister had entrusted the post of Ḥanafī mufti to an outsider, Muḥammad Amīn al-Jundī (1814-1878) from Ma’arrat al-Nu’mān, the Arab scribe of the Turkish army in Syria. Jundī shared the background and reformist outlook of the local tendency ‘ulama of Damascus. He was the son of Muḥammad al-Jundī, whom we met as an adherent of Shaykh Khālīd, and was himself proficient in the Akbarī teaching, as well as in the new sciences of the time. After ‘Abd al-Qādir had settled in Damascus, he became one of his close associates, and also took part in the rescue of Christians.⁷² Upon his nomination as mufti, Jundī chose two members of the “local” ‘ulama families, ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Ābidīn and Muḥammad al-Bīṭār, as his assistants.⁷³ Yet, despite his reformist bent and his connection with

⁷⁰ Jazā’irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ḥazā’ir*, pp. 823-840; Ṣāhib, *Al-Fuyūḍāt al-Khālidiyya*, p. 70; Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 16.

⁷¹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 89-92.

⁷² See his poems in praise of ‘Abd al-Qādir in Jazā’irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ḥazā’ir*, pp. 619-621, 626-627. For his role during the riots see, *ibid.*, pp. 650-651.

⁷³ On Amīn al-Jundī see especially Muḥammad Salīm al-Jundī, *Ta’rīkh Ma’arrat al-Nu’mān* (3 vols. Damascus, 1961-1963), vol. 2, pp. 268-291; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*,

'Abd al-Qādir, Jundī's appointment was resented by the leading 'ulama of Damascus, who in 1867 managed to bring about his replacement by Maḥmūd Ḥamza, a city notable who joined the local tendency after 1860.

One of the old religious families of Damascus, the Ḥamzas resided in the 'Amāra quarter and are reported to have been extremely wealthy.⁷⁴ Maḥmūd's father, Nasīb Ḥamza (1787-1849), adhered to the Khalwatiyya order and showed interest in literature and poetry. Nasīb joined the provincial council during the early Tanzimat period, though his sons later insisted that he had been inclined to shun official posts and only reluctantly took his seat. They also claimed that he had declined offers to serve as Ḥanafī mufti and naqib al-ashraf of the city, though he did hold the latter position for a short while.⁷⁵ Maḥmūd Ḥamza (1821-1887), his most talented son, acquired a thorough religious education with the principal 'ulama of the city, as well as arithmetic with Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī and the new sciences with Abū Bakr al-Kilālī.⁷⁶ Like his father, Maḥmūd took an interest in literature and Sufism, and also mastered the Turkish language. Joining the administration in his footsteps, he was nominated in 1844 to the post of assistant qadi. Five years later, Maḥmūd succeeded his father in the provincial council, and during the 1850s filled a series of administrative positions in the departments of awqaf, taxation, land registration, and finally as president of the agricultural council. These positions brought him nearer to the entrepreneurs of the south, and after 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī settled in his quarter, the two became close friends. In the wake of the 1860 riots Fu'ād Pasha appointed Ḥamza to the committee he set up to assess the losses, and his name appeared on Napoleon III's list of those who received decorations for protecting Christians. Bīṭār however, who witnessed these events, suggests that 'Abd al-Qādir testified in his favor merely to save him from the fate of the other notables. Ḥamza's position on the committee, he adds, compelled him to slander the inhabitants of the city and blame all of them for what happened in order to prove his own innocence.⁷⁷

pp. 343-364; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 54-56; Adham al-Jundī, *A'lām al-Adab*, vol. 1, pp. 31-33; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 643-645; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 54-56.

⁷⁴ Ḥiṣnī, pp. 810-813; Khoury, *Urban Notables*, p. 113n. 59.

⁷⁵ Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 251-254; Khalīl Mardam, *A'yān al-Qarn al-Thālith 'Ashar fī al-Fikr wal-Siyāsa wal-Ijtimā'ī* (Beirut, 1971), pp. 24-26.

⁷⁶ Ḥiṣnī, p. 769; Munīr al-Dimashqī, p. 442.

⁷⁷ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1469-1472. On Ḥamza's friendship with 'Abd al-

Maḥmūd Ḥamza held the office of Ḥanafī mufti of Damascus for twenty years, until the end of his life. During this period he enjoyed tremendous prestige and was very influential, holding a position which largely equaled that of Salīm al-ʿAṭṭār. Renowned for his sharpness of mind, legal questions were referred to Ḥamza not only by the inhabitants of Damascus, but also from other parts of the Empire, and even beyond. As assistants he employed mainly ʿulama of the local tendency, such as Muḥammad al-Bīṭār and Aḥmad ʿĀbidīn, but also Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī, the son of ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥalabī.⁷⁸ Like ʿAṭṭār, Ḥamza was depicted as a leader to whom many would turn for help, and to whose intercession governors would favorably respond. Unlike most of his colleagues, however, he refrained from wearing in public the numerous decorations he received for his services to the Ottoman state.⁷⁹

Maḥmūd Ḥamza was not a sociable man. He preferred to dedicate most of his time to reading, above all the legal compendiums. He also wrote much, including a large Qurʾan commentary which earned the praise of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī, and various treatises on legal matters, as well as a commentary on the prayer of Ibn Maṣhīsh, a forebear of the Shādhiliyya. Ḥamza's interest in Sufism lasted to the end of his life,⁸⁰ and perhaps as in the case of Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, it was this engagement that generated his openness toward science. Once, when criticized by the more conservative ʿulama for letting himself be photographed, as did ʿAbd al-Qādir himself, he wrote beneath the photograph a stanza justifying his action in sufi terms:

You looking at the shadow of	it is me from the standpoint of my
my shape	self
If you have noticed my figure	I will abide (<i>bāqin</i>) and have no ruin
	(<i>fanā</i>) ⁸¹

Maḥmūd Ḥamza's main concern, however, was with the reform of

Qādir see his letter to him during the latter's pilgrimage in Jazāʾirī, *Tuḥfat al-Ẓāʾir*, pp. 673-675, and his questions to him on religious matters, *ibid.*, pp. 840-841. Kurd ʿAlī counts him, and his brother Asʿad, as the principal defenders of the Christians at the side of ʿAbd al-Qādir. See Kurd ʿAlī, *Khīṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. 3, p. 92.

⁷⁸ On Aḥmad al-Ḥalabī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 40. One of his main teachers was Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī; see Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 246-247.

⁷⁹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 51-58.

⁸⁰ See Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1476.

⁸¹ Ḥiṣnī, p. 772.

the field to which he had dedicated most of his life, jurisprudence. The two fundamental principles that guided his thought were the supremacy of hadith over the rulings of the imams of the legal schools, and the possibility of exerting ijtihad in those cases in which no clear ruling existed or when the imams of the schools disagreed.⁸² Through these principles Ḥamza seems to have completed from the legal standpoint the religious reform propagated by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī from the sufi viewpoint and by Salīm al-'Aṭṭār from the viewpoint of the science of hadith.

Antinomianism on the Edge

Apart from Muḥammad al-Fāsī, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's guide in the Shādhilī order, two other deputies of Muḥammad ibn Ḥamza al-Madanī exerted influence in the Ottoman Empire and in Syria during the last decades of the nineteenth century. One was the master's own son, Muḥammad Zāfir al-Madanī (d. 1906), who had settled in Istanbul shortly before 'Abdülhamīd II's accession and was harnessed to his Islamic policy. He was put in charge of disseminating the Sultan's propaganda among the inhabitants of the North African provinces of the empire, much as Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī was doing in the Asian provinces.⁸³ In Syria much more important was the influence of 'Alī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī (ca. 1815-1899), who had founded his own branch in the order, the Yashruṭiyya. Born into a high-standing sharīfian family in Bizerta, Tunisia, Yashruṭī served Madanī in his lodge in Miṣrāta for thirteen years, and after his death came to regard himself as his successor to the rank of "the pole of his age". He spent several years travelling to spread his master's order, before landing in Acre around 1850. Yashruṭī was able to form a circle of disciples from among the notables of the city, including the mufti and one of the leading merchants, while at the same time pointedly avoiding the rulers. His first lodge was established in 1862 in the small town of Tarshiḥa in the Upper Galilee, where he was obliged to move because of bad health. Two years later Yashruṭī was banished by the Ottoman authorities to Rhodes for reasons that are

⁸² Maḥmūd Ḥamza, *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Wāḍiḥa ilā al-Bayyina al-Rājiḥa* (Damascus, 1300 A.H.), pp. 245-246. See also Commins, p. 70.

⁸³ Trimmingham, p. 126; Abu-Manneh, "Abdulhamid and Abulhuda," p. 139.

not entirely clear. He was pardoned a year later, partly due to the intercession of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, and before returning to Acre he stayed with the amir in Damascus and married his own daughter to one of his brothers. In the following years Yashruṭī managed to spread his order throughout Syria, from Aleppo in the north to Gaza in the south. He himself undertook journeys to various towns and sent his propagandists to others, while many admirers flocked to the lodge he now established in Acre. His success was continued, and even increased, during the reign of Sultan 'Abdülḥamīd.⁸⁴

'Alī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī's list of disciples reveals that outstanding 'ulama from almost every Syrian city joined his order.⁸⁵ He himself was learned in the religious sciences and taught in his lodge jurisprudence, hadith, and Qur'an exegesis, besides sufi thought. The latter was centered on the books of Ibn 'Arabī. In his guidance, Yashruṭī was faithful to the path of the Shādhiliyya, which like the Naqshbandiyya stresses reliance upon the Qur'an and the sunna, claims to be the shortest way to God, recommends active engagement in this world, and rejects excessive asceticism. He was even inclined toward the silent *dhikr*, though in the lodge he used for the benefit of his disciples the vocal *dhikr* accompanied by music.⁸⁶ Numerous 'ulama, including Salafīs like 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Rashīd Riḍā, testified that Yashruṭī fully adhered to the shari'a.⁸⁷ Among his disciples, however, the situation was often different. Groups of Yashruṭī's followers who deliberately transgressed shari'a commandments and social customs sprang up throughout Syria, more in the small towns than in the larger cities, claiming to have attained the sufi goal and to have been released from the obligations binding upon the common believers.⁸⁸ Moreover, a perusal of the biographical dictionaries of Syria in the second half of the nineteenth century shows that the phenomenon of unorthodox sufis was found almost exclusively among the adherents of this order. The Yashru-

⁸⁴ Van Ess, pp. 40-50.

⁸⁵ Fāṭima al-Yashruṭiyya, *Rihla ilā al-Ḥaqq* (Beirut, n.d.), pp. 346-357.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 245-247. This affinity is admitted by Naqshbandī authors, see Baghdādī, *Al-Ḥadiqa al-Nadiyya*, pp. 111-112.

⁸⁷ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1066; Rashīd Riḍā, "*Tarīqat al-Shādhiliyya al-Darqāwiyya*," *al-Manār*, 13 (1910), pp. 192-194.

⁸⁸ See for example for Safad, Ṭubās and Umm al-Faḥm—Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'* (2 vols. Beirut, 1991), vol. 2, p. 385, and for Aleppo—Muḥammad Rāghib al-Ṭabbākh, *I'lām al-Nubalā' bi-Ta'rīkh Ḥalab al-Shahbā'* (2nd ed., 7 vols. Aleppo, 1412/1991), vol. 1, p. 469.

ṭiyya was eventually split by this question, the struggle reaching its apex in the beginning of the 1880s, when some of these deviators attacked the shaykh in his own lodge. Yashruṭī announced publicly that he would dismiss from the order anyone who neglected adherence to the Qur'an and the sunna, but groups of his followers who did so continued to exist in Syria until the end of the Ottoman Empire. This split in the Yashruṭiyya was no less evident in Damascus.

Damascus was an important center of the Yashruṭiyya in Syria. The order became active in the city at the beginning of the 1860s, attracting 'ulama and merchants of the city, as well as common people from the surrounding villages. Following this early success, Yashruṭī nominated two local deputies. One of them was As'ad Ḥamza (1822-1890), the brother of Maḥmūd Ḥamza and like him a close friend of 'Abd al-Qādir. As'ad specialized in the sciences of arithmetic, geometry, and inheritances with Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, and held his first administrative posts in the committees appointed by Fu'ād Pasha in the wake of the 1860 riots. Some time later he set out for Yashruṭī's lodge in Acre and, after treading the path, received from him authorization to guide. Returning to Damascus, Ḥamza tried to conduct the *dhikr* ceremonies in various mosques, but apparently with little success. He then rejoined the Ottoman legal administration in 1869, two years after his brother's nomination as mufti, and specialized in representing people's cases against the government. Large profits from this work led him into a life of luxury, despite the concern of his colleagues. This did not prevent As'ad from seeking the post of Ḥanafī mufti following his brother's death in 1887, though the Ottomans chose Muḥammad al-Manīnī.⁸⁹ The other deputy of Yashruṭī in Damascus, Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt (1849-1922), was a generation younger. The scion of a wealthy merchant family from the south of the city, Abū al-Shāmāt had been attracted to the Yashruṭiyya already as an adolescent. He set out for Tarshiḥa and trod the path together with Yashruṭī's son, who became his close friend. Upon attaining the goal, the shaykh ordained Abū al-Shāmāt as his deputy and assigned him to spread the order in Damascus. He established himself in the Sināniyya mosque where, concomitantly with his sufi activity, he began to study with the 'ulama working there,

⁸⁹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 86-87; Biṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 310-311; Yashruṭiyya, p. 349.

Saʿīd al-Qāsimī and Amīn al-Bīṭār,⁹⁰ as well as with ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī in the Maydān.⁹¹ Much more successful than Ḥamza, Abū al-Shāmāt became the principal Yashruṭī shaykh after the founder himself during the reigns of ʿAbdülḥamīd II and his heirs. His activity during this period will be discussed in the next chapter.

On the other hand, members of the Uṣṭuwānī and Khaṭīb families belonging to the Ottoman tendency were also to be found among the adherents of the Yashruṭīyya. These apparently joined the order due to the efforts of a deputy who was spreading its path in the township of Ḥarastā. The outstanding figure among them was Saʿīd al-Uṣṭuwānī, who was responsible for the revival of the family's power in the early Tanzimat period and owned agricultural lands in the area.⁹² His second was Abū al-Naṣr al-Khaṭīb (1837-1906), the youngest among the four sons of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb, who was assigned by his father to study Mālikī law in the circle of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī.⁹³ For years the senior religious man of Ḥarastā, Abū al-Naṣr later served as qadī in other provinces of the Empire, returning to Damascus only toward the end of his life. Upon the death of Manīnī in 1898, Khaṭīb sought to attain the post of Ḥanafī mufti of the city too, but again to no avail.⁹⁴

The head of the Damascene Yashruṭī group that deviated from the shariʿa was Saʿīd al-Khālīdī (1806-1877), the preacher of the township of Kafr Sūsiyā. Our principal source of information about him is Bīṭār, who knew him personally and was alarmed by his actions. Khālīdī, who had studied with the leading reformist ʿulama of Damascus, particularly with Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, was depicted by bīṭār as an exceptionally erudite and pious ʿalim who engaged fearlessly in “enjoining the good and forbidding the evil”, but then underwent a complete transformation under the influence of the Yashruṭīyya. Khālīdī, who had taken the path initially from one of Yashruṭī's deputies, subsequently set out to Acre to tread the path under the

⁹⁰ On Amīn al-Bīṭār, the nephew of Hasan al-Bīṭār, see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 237-238. On Saʿīd al-Qāsimī see pp. 229ff.

⁹¹ Van Ess, pp. 77-78; Yashruṭīyya, pp. 153, 170, 361.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 365.

⁹³ His teacher was Muṣṭafā al-Tuhāmī, a deputy of the amir during his jihad against the French, who subsequently accompanied him to prison and in his travels till his settlement in Damascus. Here Tuhāmī served as the Mālikī imam in the Umayyad mosque. On him see Taymūr, pp. 236-240; Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 248-249; Ḥisnī, p. 677.

⁹⁴ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 222-225.

shaykh’s own guidance, attaining with him the goal. This led him, however, to abandon the religious sciences and to mock the ‘ulama who practiced them. He also neglected many religious precepts, claiming that these are incumbent upon the common believers (*‘āmmat al-mahjūbīn*), but not upon those who are befriended by God (*maḥbūbīn*). Khālīdī gathered a group of followers who openly and intentionally committed sinful acts, and when Yashruṭī sent them a letter of reproach they interpreted it as a blessing. Many joined this group, and they became a powerful and zealous band that caused considerable alarm. Bīṭār maintains that Yashruṭī was banished in 1864 because of the deeds of Khālīdī and his men, who were banished along with him. Upon returning to Kafr Sūsiyā, Khālīdī reverted to his old ways, though now his band’s activities were restricted by the authorities. The inhabitants of the town finally expelled him from their midst and, after he was also humiliated in Damascus, he returned to the town of his birth, Dārāyyā, where he earned his livelihood as a teacher. Despite these tribulations Sa‘īd al-Khālīdī stuck to his antinomian ideas to the end of his life.⁹⁵

It is difficult to know why it was particularly among the adherents of the Yashruṭiyya that this deliberate deviation from the shari‘a was manifested. There seems little room for doubt, however, that it derived from a monistic interpretation of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Bīṭār offers as an example Khālīdī’s claim that “those who enter the path and ascend through the stages, their essence become divine essence (*‘ayn al-dhāt*) and their attributes divine attributes (*‘ayn al-ṣifāt*). Is it incumbent upon God to perform the prayer or to fast? Can it be said in relation to His truth that a thing is permitted or forbidden?” Yashruṭī himself certainly did not espouse such an interpretation of “the unity of being”, but his readiness to accept disciples from all strata of society, in contradistinction to the prudent approach ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī was so careful to maintain, resulted in teaching Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought to the unqualified.

The scope of this antinomian eruption in Syria was large enough to concern ‘Abd al-Qādir, who referred to it a number of times in the *Mawāqif*. Transmitting the secrets of Lordship (*asrār al-rubūbiyya*), he wrote in one place, is likely to generate two sorts of harm. The transmitter of these secrets may be accused of heresy, while the one receiving them may be tempted, become perplexed, or simply mis-

⁹⁵ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 669-673.

understand, and thus to lose his way. This, in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s opinion, is the explanation for what happened in the Yashruṭiyya. “We have seen in our time disciples who have heard some divine secrets and truths from their shaykhs and begun to speak about them in public. They have exhibited abominable recklessness, ignominy, and abasement of the exalted God, and uttered expressions which they have by no means understood or tasted. It seems to us, and God knows, that their shaykhs picked them from books, or from others, without experiencing and comprehending their reality. If they knew their reality, they would have guarded them and been as stingy with them as with gold.”⁹⁶ The shaykhs to whom ‘Abd al-Qādir was referring were the heads of the deviant bands, such as Sa‘īd al-Khālīdī, rather than Yashruṭī himself. For him these followers of the Yashruṭiyya represented the most compelling contemporary example of those holding a *bāṭinī* view, whose belief in the absolute unity of God leads them to maintain that since they reached the degree of Lordship (*maqām al-rubūbiyya*) they are no longer bound by the commandments of the shari‘a.⁹⁷ According to Abd al-Qādir’s understanding of the Akbarī teaching, they turned their mystical experience of *waḥdat al-shuhūd*, in which the sufi sees God as the one reality to the exception of His creatures, into a sober teaching that distorts the true meaning of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, in which he again perceives the difference between the Lord and his servants in their relationship of mutuality vested in God within the unity of being.

⁹⁶ Jazā’irī, *Mawqif* 158, vol. 1, pp. 318-320.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Mawqif* 358, vol. 3, pp. 185-186.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LOCAL RENAISSANCE UNDER THE CENTRALIZING REGIMES (1883-1918)

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s call to formulate an adequate response to the challenge of the West stimulated among his disciples, along with the mystic quest, also a new interest in fields which traditional Muslim learning had considered as auxiliary sciences, and which in the early Tanzimat period had almost disappeared. Central among them were history and Arabic language and literature. This renewed interest became much more pronounced after the amir’s death, in reaction to the centralized autocratic regime of ‘Abdülhamīd II. The special attention that the Sultan paid to the affairs of Syria derived from his concern about the sense of a local supra-confessional identity that had developed during the late Tanzimat period, with the encouragement of the government, among its inhabitants, particularly the growing middle class of Beirut. To counteract this Syrian-Arab patriotic feeling, ‘Abdülhamīd dismantled the extensive province of Syria which had been created by the Vilayet Law of 1864, leaving Damascus the capital of a truncated strip of land on the edge of the desert. This was also the principal aim of his Islamic policy, as propagated by Shaykh Abū al-Hudā al-Şayyādī.¹

The leading ‘ulama in the cultural renaissance of Damascus during the Ḥamīdian, and Young Turk, periods were local men of religion whose fathers had joined the renewal movement of Shaykh Khālīd in the first part of the century before they themselves joined the circle of ‘Abd al-Qādir. Their main interest was in local history, though unlike their counterparts in Beirut, they emphasized the Islamic heritage of their city rather than of Syria at large. The Algerian disciples of ‘Abd al-Qādir who participated in this cultural regeneration tended to engage more in Arabic language and literature studies. They included both those members of the Jazā’irī family who had chosen to shun the Ottoman administration and sons of the sufi shaykhs who had led the emigration from the High Kabylia moun-

¹ Abu-Manneh, “The Province of Syria,” pp. 8-26; *idem*, “Abdulhamid and Abulhuda,” pp. 143-148.

tains. The writing of the reformist 'ulama in 'Abd al-Qādir's circle lagged perceptibly behind their ideas, reflecting the wide gap between the traditional mode of thinking on which they were raised and the new outlook they were gradually acquiring. In the latter, they were particularly influenced by two developments affecting Syria since the late Tanzimat period. One was the new Ottoman educational system being gradually introduced by the modernizing state.² The other was the emergence of the Arab press, through which these men could draw inspiration not only from the sense of local patriotism radiating from Beirut, but also from the freer cultural atmosphere of Egypt.³ The first part of this chapter is dedicated to an examination of the activities and writings of the 'ulama belonging to these two groups.

The special interest in the local heritage among 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's disciples was, however, part of a larger response by Damascene reformist 'ulama to the new realities of 'Abdülhamīd II's rule. These men of religion were alarmed by the ascendancy in Damascus, and throughout the Empire, of 'ulama and sufi shaykhs whose merit lay more in their readiness to be harnessed to the Islamic policy of the Sultan than in religious piety or erudition. They were further concerned about the inability of this new religious leadership to cope with the new Westernizing elite then emerging in the city as a result of the accelerated pace of modernization. The strength of this local—reformist tendency in Damascus shrank during the Ḥamīdian period under pressure from their Ottoman—orthodox rivals. At the same time, the leading families among them tended to be reconciled to the state by their integration into its emerging landowning—bureaucratic elite. The Ḥamīdian regime thus managed increasingly to isolate the 'ulama raised in 'Abd al-Qādir's circle, the only

² On the new Ottoman educational system and its implementation in Syria see Deringil, pp. 93-111; 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad 'Awaḍ, *Al-Idāra al-'Uthmāniyya fī Wilāyat Sūriya, 1864-1914* (Cairo, 1969), pp. 252-265; Roded, pp. 129-136; Commins, 14-16.

³ For the emergence of Syrian patriotism among the middle class of Beirut see Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus al-Bustani," *IJMES*, 11 (1980), pp. 287-304; Fruma Schreier-Zachs, "From Communal to Territorial Identity: the Emergence of the Concept of Syria, 1831-1881" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Haifa, 1997). For the development of the Syrian press and its first Muslim representatives see Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East: A History* (New York, 1995), pp. 28-51; Hisham Nashabi, "Shaykh 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani and *Thamarat al-Funun*," in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939* (Beirut, 1981), pp. 84-91.

opposition group remaining within the framework of the local—reformist tendency, which eventually produced the Salafiyya.

On the other hand, lesser branches of the religious families of the local tendency, as well as the lower strata of Damascene society and peasants from nearby villages, were also inclined to align with the Ottoman—orthodox tendency. This trend represented both a protest against the oppressive conduct of the new upper class of the city and a desire to benefit from the perceived benevolence of ‘Abdülhamīd II’s regime. Renewed loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan—Caliph was expressed by adherence to the traditional interpretation of the Akbarī teaching, as articulated by ‘Arif al-Munayyir, which stressed the duty to obey rulers. Some of these men of religion accordingly became committed opponents of the Salafiyya. This traditionalist Akbarī trend was represented in Damascus primarily by the Yashruī branch of the Shādhiliyya—Madaniyya order, which had been active there since the late Tanzimat period, and by the Dandarāwī branch of the Rashīdiyya, which began to spread in the city during the Ḥamīdian period. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of this traditionalist Akbarī revival, before turning to the Salafiyya itself in Part Three.

Fostering the Local Heritage

The first stirrings of a cultural regeneration among the local disciples of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī were manifested in a renewed interest in the history of Damascus, particularly in its men of religion, though there was also a large harvest of literary and poetical works. Some of the major biographical dictionaries consulted for this study were produced by this group of ‘ulama, and the following pages include a brief review and appraisal of their style and contents.⁴ As

⁴ For the historical importance of this genre see Hamilton A.R. Gibb, “Islamic Biographical Literature,” in Bernard Lewis and Peter Malcolm Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London, 1962), pp. 54–58; Tarif Khalidi, “Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: a Preliminary Assessment,” *MW*, 63 (1973), pp. 53–65; Ibrahim Hafsi, “Recherches sur le Genre “Ṭabaqāt” dans la Littérature Arabe,” *Arabica*, 23 (1976), pp. 227–265, 24 (1977), pp. 1–41, 150–186; Wadād al-Qādī, “Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance,” in George N. Atiyeh (ed.), *The Book in the Islamic World* (Albany, 1995), pp. 93–122. For a positive use of this literature in another period that is highly relevant for this study see Michael

for their literary works, I confine myself to the evaluation made by Arabic literature critics. Some of these religious reformists also developed interest in the field of music, while separating it from the *samāʿ* as practiced in the sufi *dhikr*. The style of ʿAbd al-Qādir’s disciples remained basically traditional, though the youngest among them gradually acquired new methods of research and expression influenced by the journalistic mode of writing and drawing on the expanding vocabulary of the Arabic language.⁵ In this respect, the place each of them held in the religious reform movement of Damascus was determined by his ability to combine the traditional culture in which he had been trained with the new ideas to which he was increasingly being exposed.

The combination of interest in history and literature is clearly discernible in the writings of two of the closest Damascene disciples of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazāʾirī, ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Khānī and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār. Khānī’s historical writing focused on the biographies of the masters of the order to which he belonged, the Naqshbandiyya. According to his own testimony in the introduction to *Al-Ḥadāʾiq al-Wardiyya*, he had longed to study their lives since he first received the path from his grandfather, before reaching maturity, being motivated by the Naqshbandī principle of binding one’s heart to the Prophet and to God through the shaykh.⁶ Resolving in 1882 to undertake this task, Khānī made use of a long list of Naqshbandī and non-Naqshbandī sources, after having mastered the Persian language specifically for this project.⁷ He maintained throughout his work a measure of scientific rigor that makes his book an important source of information not only about the Khālidi sub-order, but also about the Naqshbandiyya in general from its inception within the mystical tradition of Central Asia. Khānī’s reputation, however, lay principally in the literary field, and he was considered one of the leading poets of Damascus in his time. His first practice was in the circle of ʿAbd al-Qādir, who greatly encouraged him. Later, under the Ḥamīdian regime, he maintained connections with various men

Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. pp. 11-21.

⁵ See especially Ami Ayalon, *Language and Change in the Arab Middle East* (New York, 1987).

⁶ Khānī, *Al-Ḥadāʾiq al-Wardiyya*, pp. 2-3, 5-6.

⁷ Jundī, *Aʿlām al-Adab*, vol. 2, p. 116.

of letters in Syria and beyond, and published many of his poems in the local journals.⁸

‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār’s interest in history was broader. His principal work, and the only one to be published, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, is an encyclopedia of the religious men, and notables in general, of the thirteenth *hijrī* century, principally in Damascus but also in other parts of the Muslim world. It is occasionally interlaced with narration of important events he witnessed in Damascus, such as the Egyptian regime and the riots of 1860. Like Khānī, Bīṭār was attracted to history at an early age, after joining ‘Abd al-Qādir’s circle, and he continued to collect material for his biographies for most of his life. The book includes a considerable amount of material of a legendary character, but in some of the later parts, written during the Ḥamīdian period, the beginnings of a more critical attitude become discernible.⁹ Alongside this biographical dictionary, Bīṭār is reported to have authored about ten other books, some of them legal or theological expositions, and the rest literary works. He also hosted a scholarly—literary circle in his house, frequented by numerous ‘ulama and literatures, and was fond of Arab music and singing.¹⁰

A close friend and ally of these two ‘ulama, though less conspicuous in the circle of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī, was Sa‘īd al-Qāsimī (1843-1900), the son of Qāsim al-Ḥallāq, who like Ḥasan al-Bīṭār and Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder took the Naqshbandī path under the direction of Shaykh Khālīd.¹¹ Ḥallāq’s attitude towards ‘Abd al-Qādir is not specified by our sources, but it is clear that his position was considerably improved after the riots of 1860, when he was appointed to be Shāfi‘ī imam of the prestigious Sināniyya mosque, renewing there the hadith and jurisprudence studies. His increased income enabled him to purchase a spacious house in the affluent

⁸ See p. 118, and Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 51-52, 56.

⁹ See the introduction of the book’s editor, his grandson Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār, Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, vol. 1, pp. 3-7 in separate pagination. Bahjat relates that his grandfather allowed him to edit and amend the manuscript, clearly with the intention that he omit or ameliorate the biographies written in his early career which were no longer compatible with his later Salafī outlook and standards. Nonetheless, after many consultations Bahjat decided to publish the book as it was. ‘Abd al-Razzāq himself mentions in his introduction that he followed in the footsteps of Muḥibbī and Murādī, the principal biographers of the notables of Damascus in the eleventh and twelve *hijrī* centuries respectively, and that his object was to preserve their memory. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

¹⁰ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 328; Jundī, *A’lām al-Adab*, vol. 1, pp. 220-222.

¹¹ See p. 65.

Qanawāt quarter and to leave a handsome legacy to his sons.¹² Saʿīd al-Qāsimī, the most prominent among these sons, followed his colleagues in exhibiting a keen interest in the fields of letters and history and, like them, he was considered as one of the best poets of his time. Acquiring his religious education initially with his father, Qāsimī completed it under the tutelage of two associates of Abd al-Qādir, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī and Salīm al-ʿAṭṭār. Moreover, one of the six copies of the amir’s *Mawāqif* preserved in the Asad Library, the one on which the second printed edition is based, was copied in 1891 by him together with his more illustrious son, as the signature “Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Ḥallāq Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī” testifies.¹³ Saʿīd succeeded his father in the Sināniyya and Ḥassān mosques after his death in 1867. Like Bīṭār, he also assembled in his house a circle of religious and literary men, who along with their discussions were encouraged to sing during their meetings.¹⁴ For his living Qāsimī maintained, besides his posts, a business of importing utensils, though later, probably during the Ḥamīdian period, he was obliged to abandon it.¹⁵ Referring to this later period his son, Jamāl al-Dīn, stresses that his father emphatically shunned the company of notables and office holders. He did not seek government posts, denounced those ʿulama who accepted them, and in general preferred to shut himself in his home. Qāsimī’s bitter criticism of the official ʿulama of Damascus, and of its new Westernizing elite, was clearly expressed in the poems he composed in his later years.¹⁶

The “historical” works of Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Qāsimī were also composed toward the end of his life, largely with the encouragement of Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī and of his own son, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī. Outstanding among them is *Qāmūs al-Ṣināʾāt al-Shāmiyya*, an encyclopedic work on the handicrafts practiced in Damascus during his time. This constitutes a major source for the economic history of the city on the eve of the great changes it underwent with its fuller integra-

¹² Commins, p. 43.

¹³ Mālīḥ, *Fihris Makhṭūʿāt*, vol. 1, p. 816.

¹⁴ Aḥmad al-Ḥallāq al-Budayrī, *Ḥawādiṭ Dimashq al-Yawmiyya* (Cairo, 1959), p. 21.

¹⁵ Zāfir al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī wa-ʿAṣruhu* (Damascus, 1965), p. 20; Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Qāsimī, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī and Khalīl al-ʿAẓm, *Qāmūs al-Ṣināʾāt al-Shāmiyya* (Paris, 1960), p. 8.

¹⁶ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 169-172; Qāsimī, *Taʿfīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 27. For his poems, collected by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Bayt al-Qaṣīd fī Tarjamat al-Imām al-Wālid al-Saʿīd* (manuscript in the family possession), see Commins, pp. 43-44.

tion into the international market.¹⁷ Beginning his compilation around 1893, Sa'īd al-Qāsimī died before he had the chance to complete it, but the work was subsequently carried on jointly by his son, Jamāl al-Dīn, and son-in-law, Khalīl al-'Aẓm. The introduction of the book clearly shows that Qāsimī shared the reformist outlook of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī and his circle. He opens with the assertion that the order of the world (*nizām al-'ālam*) depends upon the crafts, and that the practice of the *salaf* had been to combine them with the religious sciences and with letters. Drawing upon Ibn Khaldūn, Qāsimī further claims that livelihood and profit are a necessity, as well as a measure of men's actions. He quotes Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions which encourage their pursuance and, in the footsteps of Ghazālī, he exempts from them only manual laborers, primarily peasants, genuine sufīs, practicing religious scholars, and rulers. Qāsimī's subsequent discussion of the relevant shari'a precepts, however, shows that behind his attitude toward livelihood and profit stand moral concerns; he emphasizes that these activities should not distract one from recollecting God's name or lead him to the temptations of this world.¹⁸ It was also Sa'īd al-Qāsimī who edited the *Yawmiyyāt* of Aḥmad al-Budayrī, a personal historical narrative about Damascus in the mid-eighteenth century, during the 'Aẓm period.¹⁹

In these same years Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī was working on his own history of Damascus. This work has remained in manuscript form and only a section of it, the part containing biographies of contemporary 'ulama, is at my disposal. This collection is written in a lucid and matter-of-fact style, far superior to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār's narrative. Qāsimī's *Ta'ṭīr al-Mashāmm fī Ma'āthir Dimashq al-Shām* originally filled four volumes and it took him twelve years to complete the work. The first two volumes are dedicated to the biographies of important Damascene not only in the Muslim era, but also in the previous *Jāhiliyya* period. The third volume treats the rulers of the city, as well as its religious and social institutions through the ages, and the last volume discusses its gardens, and concludes with poetry composed in its praise.²⁰ Later, as his Salafī tendencies crystal-

¹⁷ A parallel source on the traditional social and cultural situation of the city is Aḥmad Ḥilmī al-'Allāf, *Dimashq fī Maṭla' al-Qam al-'Ishrīn* (Damascus, 1976).

¹⁸ Qāsimī *et al*, *Qāmūs al-Šinā'āt al-Shāmiyya*, pp. 3-27.

¹⁹ Budayrī, pp. 14-21. For an appreciation of the book see George Meri Hadad, "The Interests of an Eighteenth Century Chronicler of Damascus," *Der Islam*, 38 (1963), pp. 258-271.

²⁰ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 651-652.

lized, Qāsimī became increasingly dissatisfied with the biographies, though he claimed to have spared no effort in examining every detail when preparing them.²¹ The numerous corrections in my copy of the manuscript indicate that he spent considerable time editing them.

A similar interest in the local heritage was evident among the other reformist 'ulama families which had become attached first to Shaykh Khālīd and subsequently to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, though this was usually less pronounced and slower to develop. The 'Ābidīns, for example, continued the engagement of the founder of their family, Muḥammad Amīn, with Ḥanafī jurisprudence. As we have seen, in the late Tanzimat period they again accepted posts in the fatwa office; and in the Young Turk era one of Amīn's grandsons, Abū al-Khayr 'Ābidīn (1852-1925), even managed to secure the position of mufti. 'Abū al-Khayr, however, also compiled a history of the family, and he is depicted in the sources as a man of letters.²² The Shaṭṭīs likewise remained faithful to the tradition established by their grandfather, Ḥasan, combining religious learning with specialization in the fields of inheritances and geometry. This tradition was followed particularly by three of Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī's sons who, in addition, studied in state schools and were assigned to relevant administrative and judicial posts in the province.²³ The most promising among them was Murād al-Shaṭṭī (1872-1897), who was also the first member of this family to show an inclination for history and literature. Murād compiled a draft of the biographies of later Ḥanbalī scholars, and composed poetry as well. He became attached to Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, who greatly encouraged him, but died prematurely and left his works unfinished.²⁴

In consequence of Murād's death, the Shaṭṭī family joined the cultural regeneration in Damascus only in the next generation, when his course was adopted by his nephew and disciple, Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī (1882-1959). Like his predecessors, Jamīl acquired his education among the 'ulama of his family, though later he became attached to Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī. Following his father, he began his career in the religious courts of Damascus, his principal advancement coming during the Mandate period when he was nominated

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

²² Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 403-404.

²³ On 'Umar al-Shaṭṭī (1861-1918) see *ibid.*, pp. 361-362; On Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī (1880-1962) *Ibid.*, pp. 763-764.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 1516-1517.

as the city's Ḥanbalī muftī. Shaṭṭī composed a large number of books and articles, primarily in the fields of jurisprudence and inheritances. Nevertheless, he was also attracted to history and literature. In 1899, at the age of seventeen, he compiled his first treatise, consisting of biographies of one of the religious families of Damascus, and in 1904 he published a book of poetry. A year later, Shaṭṭī began collecting material for his biographical dictionary of the 'ulama of the thirteenth *hiJR* century. This compilation, though, generally lacks originality and consists mainly of citations from previous sources. It was published only after independence, along with a continuation volume dealing with the men of religion of the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁵ The same lack of originality is perceptible in Shaṭṭī's biographical dictionary of his own Ḥanbalī school, which was published in 1920. It comprises mainly excerpts from two older compilations, with an elaboration of the draft study prepared by his uncle, Murād. To Jamāl al-Shaṭṭī, however, we owe the publication of numerous family manuscripts, works analyzed throughout this study.²⁶

The last of the historian 'ulama to emerge in Damascus at the end of the Ottoman period was Muḥammad Adīb Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥiṣnī (1874-1940), though his book, *Muntakhabāt al-Tawārīkh li-Dimashq*, was compiled mainly during the Mandate era. Unlike his colleagues, Ḥiṣnī was not part of the Akbarī circle of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī. Nevertheless, his father was the son-in-law and disciple in the Naqshbandī order of Abū Bakr al-Kilālī, the teacher of many of the reformist 'ulama of the city. The son of an important notable family, in 1908 Ḥiṣnī secured for himself the post of naqīb al-ashraf, following a journey to Istanbul. Discredited by the French authorities, he then turned to writing. His extensive book, which appeared in three volumes between 1927 and 1934, is not confined to biographical sketches; like Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī's work, it is a comprehensive description of Damascus. Ḥiṣnī reviews the history of the city from its beginnings in the pre-Islamic era, enumerates the prominent men who lived there after the Arab conquest, and describes its cultural, social and economic conditions in his time. In the introduction he writes that his love for his native city had long ago created in him the desire to study its history, and that for this purpose he had through

²⁵ See the criticism of the first book, which is also valid for the second, by Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī in *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī*, 22 (1947), pp. 272-273, and Shaṭṭī's rejoinder on pp. 474-475.

²⁶ Ḥafīz and Abāza, pp. 704-709.

the years collected a large library. The principal disadvantage of Ḥiṣnī's otherwise impressive undertaking is its lack of accuracy.

The Contribution of the Algerian Community

Among the Algerian members of 'Abd al-Qādir's circle the first manifestations of a cultural regeneration can be seen primarily in their interest in the Arabic language and its literature. As heirs to the amir's religious leadership of their community, these immigrant 'ulama were also more anxious to preserve his sufi reformist heritage after his death. Their new leaders were Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī, 'Abd al-Qādir's younger brother, who continued to work within the framework of the family branch of the Qādiriyya, and Muḥammad al-Mubārak the younger who, following the death of his own brother in 1895, became the senior shaykh of the Shādhiliyya-Fāsiyya in Damascus. In evaluating the literary and linguistic works of the Algerian 'ulama I continue to rely on contemporary and later critics, but my main concern in this section will be with the development of their sufi thought under the regime of 'Abdülḥamīd II. More specifically, their work must be understood against the backdrop of the central government's attempt to exploit the crisis of 'Abd al-Qādir's death in 1883 to remove the Algerian community from French patronage, break its coherence, and bring its members into the Ottoman fold. This policy met with partial success, particularly among the amir's sons in the 'Amāra quarter, who were already largely assimilated into the local elite. Yet most Algerian exiles, who continued to live in the southern quarters, rejected the efforts of the Ottoman administration and preserved their internal solidarity.²⁷ Furthermore, the active propaganda they carried on among their compatriots, praising Syria and urging them to come and live under a Muslim rule, resulted in continuing growth for the Damascene Algerian community until the end of the Ottoman Empire.²⁸

The Ottoman policy of assimilating the Algerian community was thus successful primarily in the family of 'Abd al-Qādir himself. After his death the family split into two parts, one preferring to continue its economic and political ties with France, the other transferring its

²⁷ Bardin, pp. 11-12.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132; Charles-Robert Ageron, *Les Algériens musulmans et la France (1871-1919)* (Paris, 1968), vol. 2, pp. 1079-1083.

loyalty to the Ottoman government in exchange for high office and rank. The latter group was headed by Muḥammad al-Jazā'irī (1840-1913), whose detailed biography of his father was frequently consulted during the preparation of this study. According to his account, the sons and relatives of 'Abd al-Qādir assembled on the day after his death and chose him, Muḥammad, as their head. With this authorization, he applied to the governor to confirm the family's standing, and this referred the matter to the Sultan who assigned appropriate allowances to its members. He admits that this application caused some members of his family who preferred the French patronage to challenge him.²⁹ Muḥammad al-Jazā'irī subsequently became lieutenant in the Ottoman army and advanced to the rank of Pasha.³⁰ His younger brother, Muḥyī al-Dīn (1843-1917), established contacts with the Ottoman government even earlier, during his father's lifetime. He set out secretly for Algeria after the break of the 1871 revolt against the French, in which the Khalwatiyya-Rahmāniyya order of the Kabylia played a central role, and took part in several battles.³¹ He returned to Damascus at the demand of his father, who for a long time refused to forgive this act of disobedience. Muḥyī al-Dīn, however, received an allowance from Sultan 'Abdülazīz as a token of appreciation and, subsequently, 'Abdülhamīd II awarded him the lucrative rank of *amīr al-umarā'* (chief commander) and summoned him to Istanbul to serve on the palace council of military inspection. Alongside his political activity Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Jazā'irī, like many members of his family, was proficient in the religious sciences and literature, and also harbored sufi inclinations.³²

The rival group in the Jazā'irī family, which preferred the continuation of French support to Ottoman patronage, consisted principally of 'Abd al-Qādir's relatives in the southern quarters of Damascus, under the leadership of his younger brother, Aḥmad (1833-1902). Born in Algeria shortly before his father's death, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī was raised by his elder brothers, Muḥammad Sa'īd and 'Abd al-Qādir. He accompanied the latter during his period of con-

²⁹ Jazā'irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ẓā'ir*, pp. 761-762.

³⁰ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 294-295; Ziriklī, vol. 7, p. 82.

³¹ Bradford G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth Century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 120.

³² Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 356-359; Zakī Muḥammad Mujāhid, *Al-A'lām al-Sharqiyya fī al-Mi'a al-Rābi'a 'Ashara al-Hijriyya* (4 vols. Cairo, 1368-1369/1949-1950), vol. 1, pp. 40-41; Muḥammad al-'Arabī al-'Azūzī al-Idrīsī, *Ithāf Dhawī al-'Ināya* (Beirut, 1950), p. 49.

finement in France, and then joined the rest of the family in the Algerian town of ‘Annāba before the reunion in Damascus. Once there, Aḥmad completed his studies with Muḥammad al-Ṭaṇṭāwī, whom he followed for many years, as well as with other members of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s circle like Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder and Yūsuf al-Maghribī, and with Qāsim al-Ḥallāq. Under the amir himself he specialized in Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching and in hadith studies. Aḥmad showed a clear predilection for the sufi quest. He eagerly read the mystic expositions and took the Qādirī path from his brother and from Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Kaylānī, the order’s shaykh in Hamah.³³ As the last living son of Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Jazā’irī, Aḥmad regarded himself as designated to succeed ‘Abd al-Qādir as head of the family and of its branch in the Qādiriyya. His main treatise, published a mere two years after the amir’s death, should be read against this background. In this essentially sufi exposition, Aḥmad sought to demonstrate that he was loyal to the legacy of his brother, but also to express his concern about the two elements that Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II’s regime promoted—the ‘ulama of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency and the Westernizers. His treatise was greatly praised by the reformist ‘ulama of Damascus, especially Maḥmūd Ḥamza, who had encouraged him to write it in the first place.³⁴

Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī’s treatise was written as a commentary on the saying attributed to ‘Alī that “knowledge is one (lit. a point) and only the ignorant divide it.” In the spirit of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s rationalist books, Aḥmad opens his exposition with an examination of the nature of knowledge. Defining it as the soul’s realization of the essence of things, he claims that this essence is indivisible just like a point, the underlying substance (*al-jawhar al-fard*) of all existing things. The diversity and changes of our world pertain to the accidents rather than to the substance, again like a point, which is formless by itself yet comprises the basic element of all forms. Aḥmad further follows ‘Abd al-Qādir in attributing the variety of perceptions, the division of knowledge by the ignorant in ‘Alī’s saying, to the varying capacities (*istīḍādāt*) of the perceiving. For God’s people there is only one knowable object, “the Reality of the Prophet” (*al-ḥaqīqa al-Muḥam-*

³³ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 193-196; Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 65-67.

³⁴ Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī, *Nathr al-Durr wa-Bastuhu fī Bayān Kaww al-‘Ilm Nuqta* (Beirut, 1324 A.H.), pp. 143-144. The other eulogies were written by Salīm and Bakrī al-‘Aṭṭār, ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Biṭār, Muḥammad al-Khānī, Muḥammad Sa’īd ibn Qāsim al-Ḥallāq, but also ‘Arif al-Munayyir and Muḥammad al-Manīnī.

madiyya), which is the essential source of all things, but which manifests itself in different forms. All the sciences are therefore its particularization. Existential reality (*al-wujūd al-kawnī*) is merely imagination, while real existence (*al-wujūd al-ḥaqīqī*) belongs to God alone. 'Alī's saying is thus, in Jazā'irī's eyes, but another expression of the doctrine of "the unity of being", the axis of the sufi science.³⁵

Yet unlike 'Abd al-Qādir, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī stresses the need to teach Sufism not only to a mystically-inclined elite, but to all believers. Aḥmad is no less aware of the danger for the unqualified inherent in the teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and more than once in his treatise he asks that its secrets be concealed from them. At the same time, however, he recommends the reading of sufi books on right conduct (*ādāb*), as a means of refining morals (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) and of learning how to behave before the Lord.³⁶ This shift of emphasis from theosophy to the practical and moral sides of Sufism ultimately reflected Jazā'irī's acute sense of danger to religion in general, and to the sufi quest in particular, in the face of the increasing pace of modernization under the reign of Sultan 'Abdülḥamīd II. He accordingly attaches special importance to choosing a sufi guide on the basis of his religious correctness (*istiḳāma*) rather than of his miracles (*karāma*), and to the practice of seclusion (*khakwa*), as a means to avoid the temptations of this world.³⁷ Today, Jazā'irī complains, very few tread the path to God, and even these seek Him with their tongues rather than with their hearts. Thus, only few are the sufis who attain the exalted goal.³⁸

The blame for the decline of the umma is to be laid on the leading men of religion of the time, the official 'ulama and the false sufis. More pungent than 'Abd al-Qādir, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī's criticism against the 'ulama is twofold. On the one hand, he censors them for introducing innovations in traditional scholarship, thus deviating from the original path of the Prophet. On the other hand, he attacks their social and political conduct as a betrayal of their vocation. Jazā'irī's principal complaint about the scholarly method of the contemporary 'ulama is that they rely increasingly upon reason. Returning to the question of the division of knowledge in 'Alī's saying, he maintains that the habit of the orthodox 'ulama of augmenting their le-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-27, 43-46.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-92.

gal discussions and multiplying their explanations had nearly changed jurisprudence from a traditional (*manqūl*) to a rational science (*ma'qūl*) with philosophical flavor. The danger inherent in adopting the rationalist approach toward the faith, against which 'Abd al-Qādir had already in the 1850s so eloquently warned in the wake of his encounter with the West, seemed thus to have become a reality for Aḥmad under the Ḥamīdian regime of the 1880s. Legal precepts should not be explained, he declares, for they are essentially matters of devotion to God, and if an explanation may occasionally be found, this is simply a matter of convention and reflection. The true reason for a ruling is the shari'a, nothing else, and it is obligatory to fulfil its precepts even if we see no meaning in them at all. Reason is not a measure for justifying religious precepts. Jazā'irī is surprised to discover such a rationalist approach in the teaching of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, thereby alluding to a renewed interest in him in Damascus at the beginning of the Ḥamīdian period:

Strange and amazing is what I have heard from some students of our time, that the most erudite scholar (*al-'allāma al-muḥaqqiq*), the shaykh Ibn Taymiyya, may God Most Exalted have mercy upon him, wrote a book in which he tried to explain legal problems that the greatest 'ulama were unable to explain, and that he found acceptable explanations for all of them. I thought this to be completely unlikely for him, considering it impossible or almost impossible, since one cannot solicit acceptable explanations for these things except through revelation (*quwwa kashfiyya*) or divine gift (*malaka wahbiyya*)... [Ibn Taymiyya] did not breathe the odor of the sciences of revelation and the secrets of the Divine, nor was he introduced to them. He was a pure literalist (*ḡāhirī maḥd*) ... as his books, writings, decisions, and works testify.³⁹

Turning to the social sphere, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī's critique is clearly directed against those Damascene men of religion who had attained high standing through loyalty to the Ottoman official policy rather than by their erudition. Among the religious students of our time, he writes, some are lacking in knowledge and understanding. When a legal question is raised before such an 'alim, he prefers to reply in a casuistic manner rather than admit his ignorance. His arrogance and eagerness to keep his false honor lead him to disregard the warnings of the Prophet and the expected punishment of God.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-103.

Against them Jazā'irī poses the ideal 'ulama. These scrutinize each problem before delivering an answer, and control themselves by shunning the property of others, avoiding boasting in their learning, and setting an example in the fulfillment of the commandments.⁴⁰

Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī's criticism against the conduct of the "false sufis" is more direct and sharp, and his comments show that little has changed in the nature of popular religion in Damascus since the time of Ibn 'Abidīn at the beginning of the century. Most sufis who claim to be guides in our day, Jazā'irī writes, are ignorant, neglect the quest of God, and concentrate on miracles or on the imaginary forms that appear in their dreams. Others concern themselves with the delicious food and drink served at social events, contenting themselves simply with the recitation of the sayings they learned by heart from their masters. It is rare to find among them one who dedicates his time to spiritual training, to the divine sciences and secrets, to the purification of the impure soul, or to following the Prophet's path. Yet others make empty and misleading utterances to give the impression of having attained the high mystical degrees and states of the great masters, concerning which they have no knowledge. The support which such manifestations had received under the Islamic policy of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II caused Jazā'irī to declare desperately that the sufi path was lost. Woe to the people who have turned plain religion into idolatry for the sake of this world, he exclaims, and yet still regard themselves as the elect. They imitate the masters externally and imagine that this is the way to attain their desires. All they want is to seize the people's money and eat their food. They pretend to be ascetics, yet they are nothing but disguised wolves.⁴¹

This consideration of the faults of the official 'ulama and the false sufis ultimately leads Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī to the traditional reformist claim that the remedy for the decline of the umma lies in the return of its men of religion to genuine scholarship. Expanding upon the high value ascribed to knowledge by the Qur'an and the sunna, which for him however includes the worldly sciences, Jazā'irī then opposes it to the tendency apparent among his contemporaries to shun religion. Even more revealing is the religious hierarchy he adopts, which suggests the remedy he would prescribe for this shunning. The

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-113.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

best 'ulama in Jazā'irī's eyes are the *'arīfūn bi-Allāh*, the mystics with pure hearts. After them he puts first the *muḥaddithūn* and only then the *fuqahā'*. This hierarchy constitutes thus another expression of the emerging tendency among the reformist 'ulama of the early Ḥamīdian period to reformulate jurisprudence on the basis of the sunna. The last point that separated Jazā'irī from the Salafis at this stage was that for him *hādīth* and *fiqh* were still included within the sufi framework, hence his ambivalent appreciation of Ibn Taymiyya's legacy. On the other hand, he defines Sufism as following the path of the *salaf*, which was nothing but complete obedience to the shari'a and diverting one's attention from the created to the Creator. From the basically Akbarī assertion that every Qur'anic verse has infinite meanings, Jazā'irī further deduces the basically Ḥanbalī conclusion that their understanding should be referred to God. Thus did the righteous forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), who preferred to endure any affliction rather than discuss the meanings of the Qur'an. All they were prepared to say was that this is the word of God, with which one must comply. Later on the forefathers' example was followed by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his struggle against the rationalist trend of his day, the Mu'tazila.⁴²

Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī could not acquire the prestige and influential position that 'Abd al-Qādir had held in Damascus in the previous generation. Nevertheless, he did become a prominent leader of the Algerian community in the city, and of the local—reformist tendency in general. Like his brother, Aḥmad served as an arbitrator in conflicts between members of the community, as well as giving religious lessons to the public in the 'Annāba mosque and to elect disciples in his home. He also continued the family tradition in conducting the *dhikr* ceremony of the Qādirī order. On the other hand, Jazā'irī too distanced himself from the company of the Ottoman—orthodox 'ulama who largely dominated religious life in Damascus under the patronage of 'Abdülḥamīd II. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, who first met him a year after he published his treatise and soon became his close associate, stresses his inclination to hadith, as well as his frequent exertion of ijtihad when debating adversaries. He adds that Jazā'irī based his teaching on the Qur'an and the sunna, and that in the legal opinions he issued he used to bring proofs from rare books. He also had a special sensitivity for the Arabic language, and possessed

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116, 122-128.

considerable knowledge of the geography and history of North Africa. Above all, until the end of his life Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī remained a faithful admirer of his brother, 'Abd al-Qādir.⁴³

The position of Muḥammad al-Mubārak the younger, the other prominent leader of the Algerian community in Damascus during the Ḥamīdian period, was based primarily on administering his school and heading the Shādhiliyya-Fāsiyya order in the city.⁴⁴ Mubārak adhered to the traditional methods of teaching, but was not averse to the non-religious sciences.⁴⁵ He specialized in Arabic grammar and literature, though his works were written in the customary rhymed prose (*saḡ*). His linguistic proficiency was modeled on the classical grammarians on the separate terms of the language, finding it difficult to weave it into a unified framework. Nonetheless, after joining the Arabic lessons of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, Mubārak began to collect and edit rare manuscripts, teaching some rediscovered literary works. He even did not hesitate to associate with Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, who studied with him before becoming a distinguished disciple of Ṭāhir, to whom many of the conservative 'ulama were hostile.⁴⁶ It was to Kurd 'Alī that Mubārak once admitted the essential tension between the two axes of his life: "You are fortunate because you freed yourself from the rhymed prose", he told him, "while I remained shackled in its fetters and could not free myself." The same tension is discernible in Mubārak's sufi path. In the tradition of his fathers he healed epileptics and distributed amulets to women who sought his help, but he himself did not believe in their efficacy. To his disciples Mubārak taught the classical sufi expositions, primarily Ibn 'Arabī's *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*; yet his emphasis, like that of Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī, was on the moral aspect of Sufism, and he assailed the idleness and vanity that had become associated with it. Mubārak's Sufism, as his mostly Salafī biographers stress, was tempered by the spirit of the sunna and combined with *adab*.⁴⁷

Muḥammad al-Mubārak ordained two deputies in the Shādhī-

⁴³ Qāsimī, *Ta'fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 67-71; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 304-305.

⁴⁴ See p. 199.

⁴⁵ On Mubārak's school see Fakhrī al-Barūdī, *Mudhakkirāt al-Barūdī* (2 vols. Beirut, 1951), vol. 1, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī (1876-1953) was a reformist educator and newspaper editor, who founded the Arab Scientific Academy under Fayṣal's government and subsequently served as Minister of Education under the French Mandate.

⁴⁷ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 274-279; Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, *Al-Mu'āshirūn* (Damascus, 1980), pp. 367-372.

liyya–Fāsiyya order, both members of the Algerian community of Damascus, who perpetuated his sufi path during the Young Turk era. One was ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Jazā’irī (1850-1916), the son of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s elder brother, Muḥammad Sa‘īd, who served as the Mālīkī mufti of the city.⁴⁸ The other, who succeeded Mubārak as head of the order, was Muḥammad Sharīf al-Ya‘qūbī (1865-1943), like him a grandson of the religious leader of the 1847 emigration from the Kabylia mountains.⁴⁹ His own son, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Mubārak (1878-1945), by contrast, preferred to concentrate on his scholarly legacy and apparently abandoned the sufi path of the family altogether. Specializing in grammar, he showed a particular interest in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, as well as in unusual phenomena of the language. Like his father, ‘Abd al-Qādir opened a private school, in the ‘Amāra quarter, in 1905. Five years later he was appointed teacher of grammar in the first secondary school in Damascus, Maktab ‘Anbar.⁵⁰ These heirs of Muḥammad al-Mubārak in the sufi tradition that his family brought with it from the Kabylia, and in the contemporary cultural regeneration in which he had taken part, helped to preserve the vitality of the Algerian community of the city also in the next generation under the French Mandate.

The Withdrawal of the Local—Reformist Tendency

Salīm al-‘Aṭṭār and Maḥmūd Ḥamza continued to lead the local tendency in Damascus throughout most of the first decade after the establishment of ‘Abdūḥamīd II’s rule. Yet their religious position was increasingly eroded as the grip on the city of men of religion harnessed to the Ḥamīdian policy tightened. At the same time, their families were allowed to enhance their socio-economic interests, and thus were integrated into the landowning—bureaucratic elite of the city. The weakening of the local tendency in Damascus was particularly apparent in the case of Maḥmūd Ḥamza, who as holder of the official post of Ḥanafī mufti was more dependent on the Otto-

⁴⁸ On ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Jazā’irī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 346; for a diploma he gave in 1915 see ‘Azūzi, pp. 163-165.

⁴⁹ On Muḥammad Sharīf al-Ya‘qūbī see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 579-585.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 605-608. For a personal account of the studies and atmosphere in this school see Zāfir al-Qāsimī, *Maktab ‘Anbar: Suwar wa-Dhikriyāt min Ḥayātīnā al-Thaqāfiyya wal-Siyāsiyya wal-Ījtīmā’iyya* (Beirut, 1964).

man administration. Ḥamza was nominated to the educational council of the province in 1882, but a dispute with the governor in the following year led him to shut himself in his home. Possibly disappointed with the limitations imposed by the council on the activities of the educational societies that were formed in the city in the previous years,⁵¹ this step nonetheless expressed a broader displeasure with the policies of 'Abdülḥamīd. Ḥamza's position in Damascus was too strong, however, for the Ottoman government to dismiss him. Until the end of his life the notables of the city assembled weekly in his house, and the decisions of the provincial council, of which he was *ex officio* a member, continued to be sent to him for approval.⁵² As we have seen, only after Ḥamza's death in 1887 was the post of Ḥanafī muftī of Damascus transferred to one of the 'ulama willing to serve 'Abdülḥamīd II's ends, Muḥammad al-Manīnī.

As the holder of the highest official religious post in Damascus, Maḥmūd Ḥamza could not fully articulate the changes in his thought, and in that of many other local tendency 'ulama in the city, in opposition to the Islamic policy of Sultan 'Abdülḥamīd II. The articulation of these ideas was thus left to one of the leading figures of this tendency who held a lesser position in the Ottoman administration, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī.⁵³ They are clearly discernible in two of Shaṭṭī's treatises which were written at the early 1880s though published only posthumously, both basically collections of rulings of past authorities, the first of Da'ūd ibn Khalaf, the founder of the extinct Zāhirī school, and the second of the great Ḥanbalī jurist and theologian, Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya. The analysis of these two treatises will sum up the views that the 'ulama of the local tendency in Damascus came to adopt in the course of the nineteenth century, and point the way to the beginnings of the Salafiyya toward its end.

Da'ūd ibn Khalaf's collection of rulings, gathered by Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī from the Ḥanbalī law books, reflects the tendency that became apparent among the "local" 'ulama of the Tanzimat period to seek new legal methods to deal with the problems raised by the changing circumstances of their time. In his introduction, Shaṭṭī strives to demonstrate that it is by no means obligatory to refer solely to the four established schools. He points out that all the Compa-

⁵¹ Shatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics*, p. 199.

⁵² Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 57.

⁵³ Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, *Risāla fī Masā'il al-Imām Da'ūd al-Zāhirī* (Damascus, 1330 A.H.), front page, pp. 27-28.

nions were mujtahids, as were most legal scholars in the first three centuries of Islam, until the consolidation of the legal schools. More than forty of these men were, according to Shaṭṭī, respected enough to have had their rulings compiled in books and to have acquired imitators. The numerous schools they founded vanished only in the wake of the havoc brought by the Mongol invasion, so that under Mamluk rule it was decided to refer only to the four that survived. Though Shaṭṭī expresses the hope to gather the rulings of all the schools, it is highly significant that he actually collected only those of the Zāhiriyya, which in its adherence to the literal meaning of the scriptures resembled both his own Hanbalī school and Ibn ‘Arabī’s jurisprudence. Shaṭṭī’s declared aim in this treatise, and in the entire project, was twofold. On the one hand, he wanted to enable concessions in religious observance (*taysīr al-‘ibādāt*) when the need arose, on the other hand, he sought to ensure that the state laws (*al-mawādd al-nizāmiyya*) would remain within the bounds of the shari‘a. In the first book Shaṭṭī concentrated on the former object by enumerating the various rulings of Da‘ūd ibn Khalaf, arguing for an expansion of the rules among which the shari‘a allows one to choose. In the second book he turned to the even more essential task of redefining the *shar‘ī* foundation of state legislation.⁵⁴

The state laws Shaṭṭī referred to in his Introduction to the Compatibility of the Nizāmī laws and the Shari‘a Precepts were those enacted or codified in the Ottoman Empire since the inauguration of the era of reform. Apart from justifying modernization, however, the treatise implicitly criticizes the policies of Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd II by raising in unprecedented clarity the question of the relationship between religion and state in Islam. Not incidentally, this is also one of the first instances of a special interest among the ‘ulama of Damascus in the writings of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya. Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī justifies his reliance on him by arguing that not only were there many mujtahids in the first three centuries of Islam, but ‘ulama who satisfied the conditions for exerting it continued to appear also *after* the crystallization of the schools. Those conditions are the knowledge to derive rulings from the Qur’an, the sunna, and by *qiyās* (analogy), though significantly not by *ijmā‘* (consensus).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5.

⁵⁵ Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, *Muqaddimat Tawfiq al-Mawādd al-Nizāmiyya li-Aḥkām al-Shari‘a al-Muḥammadiyya* (Cairo, n.d.), pp. 3-6. For the continuity of the practice of ijtihad throughout the ages see the works of Wael B. Hallaq, in particular, “Was

To demonstrate the fundamental affinity between government and the Law in Islam, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī follows ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s method of combining religious arguments derived from orthodox political theory with social considerations drawn from Ibn Khaldūn. His main novelty lies in the new concepts he applies testifying to the new discourse that had become established in Damascus by the Ḥamīdian period. The honor of men lies in the knowledge and perception that God has granted them, Shaṭṭī writes, but in their sustenance they must cooperate with one another in order to satisfy their needs. Civilization and society (*al-tamaddun wal-ijtimā’*) are predicated upon such cooperation, and for that purpose God sent His messengers with His books. These clarify the permitted and the forbidden, in harmony with the laws of justice, the interests of men, and the circumstances of the time, thus bestowing perfect order on society (*nizām al-hay’a al-ijtimā’iyya*). For both the execution of God’s will and the smooth cooperation of men, it is essential to have political leadership. The dual existence of religious and state laws, Shaṭṭī explains rather vaguely in the pressure that some ‘ulama exerted on the rulers in the past. Yet he emphasizes that there are no grounds for the impression that the two are mutually contradictory; all state laws in Islam are derived from the teachings of Muḥammad. Thus in his final conclusion Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī proves to be diametrically opposed to the quietist teaching of ‘Abd al-Qādir, since for him the separation of government from religion, or of religion from government, is the principal cause for the decay of society.⁵⁶

Moreover, the primary theme in the rulings Shaṭṭī chose to include in this collection is the duties of the ruler and his officials toward their subjects, based upon the fundamental obligation to govern in justice. Already at the beginning of the work he gives voice to the desire of the ‘ulama of the local tendency in Damascus to participate in shaping the administration of Syria. “It is appropriate for those who have attained leadership”, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī writes, “to take counselors (*ahl mashwara*) from among the legal experts and the virtuous, to ask their opinion in every matter, particularly concerning the complex events that take place among the local population, or when customs and manners vary between the countries, and to act

the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?” *IJMES*, 16 (1984), pp. 3-41; “On the Origins of the Controversy about the Existence of Mujtahids and the Gate of Ijtihad,” *SI*, 63 (1984), pp. 129-141; and his comprehensive analysis in *idem*, *A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Cambridge, 1997).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-15.

upon the counsel of these ‘ulama.” Shaṭṭī further asserts that the rulers must act in accordance with the general welfare (*maṣlaḥa*), since it is their duty to protect their subjects’ honor, life, and property.⁵⁷ Another obligation he emphasizes in reflection of the Syrian realities of his time is the protection of minorities. The imam should fight for *ahl al-dhimma* as he fights for Muslims and, moreover, he must not enslave them even if they break their contract. He should also not impose upon them a burden which they are unable to bear. Underlying all these duties is that of employing the most competent in government offices, which points to the main critique of Shaṭṭī, and the ‘ulama he represented, against the autocratic regime of Sultan ‘Abdülḥamīd II. The reason for the ruin and break up of the country lay, in his opinion, in the habit of granting posts to the ignorant and neglecting appropriate reward and punishment.⁵⁸

Most significantly, the other major theme which Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī included in this collection of rulings pertains to landholding. Classifying the Syrian territories as *kharāj* lands, on which annual tax is due, Shaṭṭī defines the mutual rights of the government and the tenants over them in a way that would enhance production. Thus while the first is entitled to collect the *kharāj* even if the land was not cultivated, the latter may bequeath or sell their rights to it without interference. Moreover, maintaining that local custom in Syria follows the Ḥanbalī principles, which allow the purchase of facilities (*manāfiʿ*) separately from the land itself, Shaṭṭī also establishes the legitimacy of private property (*amlāk*). These constitute for him the principal means for developing waqf lands, which otherwise might have fallen into ruin. The most important distinction made by Shaṭṭī on the basis of the Ḥanbalī law, however, is between irrigated (*mus-hajjara*) and rain-fed (*salā’ikh*) lands. It had long been established in Damascus that the first category, which refers primarily to the gardens and orchards of the Ghūṭa oasis, was subject to sale and rent. The main novelty of Shaṭṭī was that also in the case of the latter category, which refers to remoter lands, the same property rights could be attained by the mere act of ploughing the land. For the ‘ulama of the local tendency in Damascus, this was the religious basis for the exploitation of the grain producing area of the Ḥawrān, to which their economic interests were since the 1840s attached.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 26, 37, 50-51.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-84.

Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī regarded this Introduction, like the collection of Daʿūd al-Zāhirī's rulings, as part of a larger project to examine all of the precepts of the shari'a "in the works of Qur'an exegesis, hadith commentaries, and the rulings of the mujtahids in the books of jurisprudence, particularly those of *shaykh al-Islām* Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya." Yet despite his expansion of the range of usable legal sources, and his heavy reliance on Ibn Taymiyya, Shaṭṭī sought not to authorize ijtihād, but rather to preserve the opposite principle of *taqlīd*. It is permissible to imitate any reliable imam, he maintains, as indeed has been done in certain cases with Daʿūd al-Zāhirī, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn Taymiyya, "especially because of changing times and deteriorating conditions, since if there is a ruling of an 'alim on the problem, it is better [to imitate him] than to do without *taqlīd*."⁶⁰ This clinging to blind imitation was the only feature that separated Shaṭṭī from the Salafī trend. Nonetheless, the first stirrings of the latter's ideas are already discernible in the tripartite division Shaṭṭī uses to define the concept of the shari'a. Its first meaning refers to what is firmly established by the Qur'an and the sunna, that which must be obeyed unreservedly. The second includes the rulings arrived at by the 'ulama through ijtihād. In this case, it is lawful to follow any one of them. The third sense covers all false hadiths, incorrect interpretations, and misleading innovations that had been inserted into the shari'a. Shaṭṭī does not specify how these last should be treated, but his intention is clearly to sift them out. This is corroborated by the tripartite division he makes in the concept of the *ḥaqīqa*. It comprises the existential truths (*kawānīyya*) in which it is obligatory to believe, the legal truths (*shar'īyya*) that must be obeyed, and the innovative truths (*bid'īyya*) that must be rejected. By defining the latter as treading the path of God without adhering to the scriptures, Shaṭṭī makes it clear that along with the increasing interest in Ibn Taymiyya he, and the other local tendency 'ulama in Damascus, remained faithful to the orthodox sufi legacy of Shaykh Khālīd and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī even after the inauguration of the Ḥamīdian regime.⁶¹

On the other hand, the new ideas found in Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī's treatises help to explain the breach which developed between 'Abd al-Qādir and Maḥmūd Ḥamza in the course of the 1870s. It first

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

surfaced in 1876 over the seemingly insignificant event of repairing the sundial in the Umayyad mosque. This ancient sundial had begun to lag and, when Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī tried to fix it, broke into two pieces. Ṭanṭāwī built a new, more precise, sundial, but many in Damascus were still angry with him. Their feeling was expressed in a contemptuous poem composed by ‘Abd al-Salām al-Shaṭṭī (1840-1878), a popular poet and a member of a different branch of the Shaṭṭī family.⁶² ‘Abd al-Qādir sided with Ṭanṭāwī and humiliated Shaṭṭī in front of some of the leading ‘ulama. Ḥamza, who was among those present, rebuked him for his interference and severed contact with him. He remained reserved even after the amir repented and tried to appease Shaṭṭī with money, and shunned him for the rest of his life.⁶³ Ḥamza’s attack on ‘Abd al-Qādir in this affair reflected a difference in their views that arose during the decline of the late Tanzimat. Ḥamza’s concept of ijtihad, as represented by Shaṭṭī’s treatises, remained much more limited than ‘Abd al-Qādir’s, but in applying it to the political sphere he had clearly departed from the quietist approach preached by the amir in the *Mawāqif*. In the new circumstances prevailing in the Ottoman Empire after Sultan ‘Abdülaziz turned against the late Tanzimat statesmen in 1871, and especially when ‘Abdülhamīd II’s Islamic policy began to be fully implemented in Damascus after 1880, Ḥamza, and other ‘ulama of the local tendency, felt that such attitude was no longer adequate. Under the Ḥamīdian regime some of them accordingly shifted the emphasis in their religious reform from the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī to the jurisprudence and theology of Ibn Taymiyya. ‘Abd al-Qādir himself, the great interpreter of the Akbarī teaching in Damascus, naturally could not follow such a course. In his last years he even corresponded with the main instrument of the Sultan’s Islamic propaganda in Syria, Abū al-Hudā al-Ṣayyādī.⁶⁴

Salīm al-‘Aṭṭār, the other leading man of religion of the local tendency in late Tanzimat Damascus, was better able than Maḥmūd Ḥamza to maintain his position under the reign of ‘Abdülhamīd II.

⁶² On ‘Abd al-Salām al-Shaṭṭī see Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, pp. 146-148; ‘Abd al-Salām al-Shaṭṭī, *Dīwān* ([Damascus], 1324 A.H.), pp. 2-4; Mardam, pp. 58-60.

⁶³ On this event, which stirred up Damascus, see Hāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 74-76; Shaṭṭī, *A’yān Dimashq*, pp. 25-27; *Idem*, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, pp. 162-164; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 1286; Ḥisnī, pp. 764-765; Badrān, *Munādamat al-Aṭlāl*, p. 365.

⁶⁴ Jazā’irī, *Tuhfat al-Ẓā’ir*, pp. 27-28. It should be remembered, however, that the book was written during the Ḥamīdian period by ‘Abd al-Qādir’s son who joined the Ottoman tendency, and may have overstated this point.

In one case, we are told, 'Aṭṭār even brought about the dismissal of a qadi whom many Damascene 'ulama came to dislike.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, he too was certainly not happy with the establishment of As'ad al-Ṣāḥib in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, his own base of power. Moreover, after Salīm's death in 1889, the Ottoman government tried to interfere also in this appointment and transfer it to members of the family more receptive to its policies, though finally it was forced to entrust the post to the deceased's younger uncle, Bakrī al-'Aṭṭār. A comparison between the paths of these two consecutive heads of the 'Aṭṭār family exemplifies the integration of the local—reformist 'ulama families into the emerging landowning—bureaucratic elite of Damascus during the Ḥamīdian period.

Bakrī al-'Aṭṭār (1834–1903) began his studies with his father, Hāmid al-'Aṭṭār, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, the two luminaries of their age. His principal teachers thereafter were Salīm al-'Aṭṭār in hadith, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bayāzīd in grammar,⁶⁶ and Abū Bakr al-Kilālī in logic. Bakrī's first position, undoubtedly during the late Tanzimat period, was the instruction of hadith and Qur'an exegesis in the Umayyad mosque, in addition to lessons he gave in his home. The number of his disciples increased considerably during the Ḥamīdian period, following the introduction of the exemption from military service for religious students. After the death of Salīm, Bakrī considered himself the most worthy to succeed him as the hadith instructor in the Sulaymāniyya lodge. The Ottoman authorities, however, gave precedence to Salīm's two sons, and only when it became evident that both were unqualified did they agree to nominate him on their behalf. Bakrī al-'Aṭṭār's lessons too attracted many of the 'ulama, notables and merchants of Damascus. Nevertheless, in his teaching method he proved more faithful to the traditional style of instruction, relying above all on his excellent memory. He impressed his disciples by having memorized the books he taught and with his lucid explanations, but he refrained from critically examining the judgments of the various legal schools or from considering sufi thought, and completely avoided discussing current events. On the other hand, Bakrī combined the science of hadith, which family tradition made the center of his teaching, with the two fields which most attracted him, like the other 'ulama of the local—reformist

⁶⁵ Hāfīz and Abāza, p. 149.

⁶⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥmān Bayāzīd is referred to as the greatest grammarian of his time. On him see Shaṭṭī, *Rawḍ al-Bashar*, p. 144; Qudāma, p. 157.

tendency, Arabic language and logic.

Like Salīm, Bakrī al-ʿAṭṭār also harbored an evident inclination toward Sufism, though his emphasis, again in line with the ʿulama of the local—reformist tendency, was on its practical and moral respects. He took the Qādirī path in 1846, at the age of twelve, from Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Kaylānī of Hamah, the shaykh who subsequently ordained Aḥmad al-Jazāʾirī. Until the end of his life, ʿAṭṭār would perform the *dhikr* in his home with a small group of mystics, and he was always mindful to wear the Qādirī headgear as a token of loyalty to his shaykh. Inclined to asceticism, he also performed night vigils, distributed alms lavishly, and associated with the poor. Yet he showed no interest in the intricacies of the Akbarī teaching which so occupied his predecessor. On the other hand, ʿAṭṭār did not avoid the company of notables and government officials, to whom he often applied on behalf of those asking for his intercession. The authorities' esteem for him increased over the years, until toward the end of his life the qadi would pay him great respect by having him precede himself during official ceremonies. This position of intermediary between the government and the people, a traditional role for the religious men in the city, allowed ʿAṭṭār, as we will see, to lend his support to the emerging Salafis of Damascus against their orthodox persecutors. Their sense of loss at Bakrī al-ʿAṭṭār's death was given poignant expression by Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, who concluded his biography with the assertion that he was the last of his generation accomplished in erudition, piety and teaching, and that no one was able to take his place.⁶⁷

Aligning with the Sultan's Servants

The members of the reformist ʿulama families of Damascus who were prepared to accommodate themselves to the Islamic policy of Sultan ʿAbdülḥamīd II did so by returning to a conventional interpretation of Ibn ʿArabī's teaching. Their inspiration came from sufi shaykhs who lived outside Damascus, particularly ʿAlī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī in Acre and Muḥammad al-Dandarāwī in the Hijaz. Both Yashruṭī and Dandarāwī were strictly orthodox. Yet their open propa-

⁶⁷ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 197-203; Shaṭṭī, *A'yān Dimashq*, pp. 92-96, quoting a biography written by Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Bānī; Qasīmī, *Taʿfīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 71-78; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣāʾir*, pp. 23-24.

gation of the Akbarī teaching tempted them to seek the support of the Ḥamīdian regime on the one hand, and to appeal to those hardest hit by the economic hardships which modernization brought to the country on the other. The principal difference between the two orders derived from the timing of their spread to Damascus. Thus while in the Yashruṭiyya, which had become active there already in the early Tanzimat period, socio-economic dissatisfaction tended to degenerate into sheer antinomianism, in the Dandarāwiyya, which appeared during the Ḥamīdian period itself, it sometimes consolidated into radical conservatism. It was among these Dandarāwī deputies that one of the most acrimonious attacks on the original Salafiyya of Damascus was formulated.

An early manifestation of the tendency to return to the traditional interpretation of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teaching appeared in the ‘Aṭṭār family. Like other members of his family, ‘Umar al-‘Aṭṭār (1826-1891) studied with the leading reformist ‘ulama of his time, including his uncle, Ḥāmid al-‘Aṭṭār, Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, Qāsim al-Ḥallāq, and Abū Bakr al-Kīlālī, with whom he specialized in logic and the Arabic language. When the itinerant ‘alim Akram al-Afghānī (d. 1899) visited Damascus for a short period, however, ‘Umar became attached to him, and under his guidance immersed himself in sufi studies. He then accompanied Afghānī to Egypt, visiting it thereafter often. ‘Aṭṭār was a prolific writer who engaged mainly in the Akbarī teaching.⁶⁸ His major treatise is a defense of Ibn ‘Arabī, composed at the beginning of the Ḥamīdian period. Apart from explaining the doctrine of “the unity of being” and the legal teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī, he conveys in this book a sense of concern about the position of Sufism in the modern world. Many did not understand the sufi utterances in the past, ‘Aṭṭār writes, but the situation has become particularly grave today, when the number of ‘ulama is decreasing while innovations and passions are widespread. He singles out for his attack the concept of progress, which according to him has no foundation in the Qur’an and the sunna, and which both reason and perception reject. Relying particularly on the Prophet’s saying that, “the best century is my century, then the following...”, ‘Aṭṭār could conclude that the ancestors (*salaf*) are always superior to the successors (*khalaf*).⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 102-103; Ziriklī, vol. 5, p. 207; Munīr al-Dimashqī, p. 441.

⁶⁹ ‘Umar Al-‘Aṭṭār, *Al-Faṭḥ al-Mubīn fī Radd F’tirād al-Mu’tariḍ ‘alā Muḥyī al-Dīn* (Cairo, 1304 A.H.), esp. p. 67. See also the other printed works of ‘Aṭṭār: *Ma’nā*

Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt, the principal deputy of the Yashruṭiyya order in Damascus studied, as we have seen, with reformist ‘ulama of the Maydān. Shortly after ‘Abdülḥamīd II’s accession, he was sent to Istanbul by ‘Alī Nūr al-Dīn al-Yashruṭī, where he managed to enroll in the order ‘Alī Riḍā Pasha, the first secretary of the palace, and after him other senior administrators and notables of the capital. Through ‘Alī Riḍā the name of the Yashruṭiyya reached the ears of the Sultan, who endowed Abū al-Shāmāt with the Balṭajīyya lodge and a lavish monthly allowance.⁷⁰ Abū al-Shāmāt frequently visited Istanbul during the Ḥamīdian period and served as Yashruṭī’s link to the Ottoman court. The regime’s support helped him to further spread the order in Damascus, and the number of his disciples increased enormously, compelling him to divide them among three centers, in the old city, in the Maydān, and in the Šālīḥiyya quarter. Abū al-Shāmāt remained popular during the Young Turk era, when multitudes attended his *dhikr*.⁷¹ He also corresponded with ‘Abdülḥamīd II after his exile to Salonika, when the ex-Sultan sent him the famous letter in which he claimed that the Young Turks had overthrown him because of his adamant refusal to let the Jews establish a national home in Palestine.⁷² However, despite his contacts with high officials in Istanbul, and certainly also with Abū al-Hudā al-Šayyādī and Muḥammad Zāfir al-Madanī, the heads of the sufi establishment in the capital, Abū al-Shāmāt kept his affinity for the reformist ‘ulama of Damascus. One of his sons is reported to have studied with Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī,⁷³ and the leading singer in his *dhikr* session, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qaṣṣār (1860-1930), participated in the circle of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār. Qaṣṣār called for jihad and helped to collect money for the Ottoman army when the Balkan wars broke out in 1910, but changed his direction during the First World War and immortalized in his poetry the Arabists executed by Jamāl Pasha.⁷⁴

al-Waḥda (Damascus, 1302 A.H.); and *Ma’nā al-Wujūd* (Damascus, 1302 A.H.).

⁷⁰ Yashruṭiyya, pp. 153-159; Kurd ‘Alī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām*, vol. 6, p. 143.

⁷¹ Van Ess, pp. 76-78.

⁷² For the text of the letter and a German translation see *ibid.*, pp. 96-99. For the use of this document in discussions of the Palestine question see Werner Ende, “Sayyid Abū al-Hudā, ein Vertrauter Abdülhamid II. Notwendigkeit und Probleme einer Kritische Biographie,” *ZDMG*, Suppl. 3, pt. 2, to xix Deutscher Orientalistentag (1977), pp. 1146-1147.

⁷³ This was ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Abū al-Shāmāt. See Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, vol. 3, p. 340.

⁷⁴ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 437-440; Jundī, *A’lām al-Adab*, vol. 1, p. 233-235.

Apart from his activity as the head of the Yashruṭīyya order in Damascus, Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt also wrote much. His works, both in prose and poetry, were all concerned with sufi teachings and practices and showed his fervent adherence to Ibn ‘Arabī. This is clearly evident in his commentary on the Shādhilī prayer, composed in 1883. Abū al-Shāmāt’s elucidation of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, like that of Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī writing at about the same time, revolves around the Reality of Muḥammad. Prayer, he claims, is a plea to God to glorify the Prophet in this world by commemorating his name, granting victory to his religion, and preserving his shari‘a, as well as in the hereafter by rewarding those who believe in him and interceding in favor of his umma. The prayer of God for Muḥammad mentioned in the Qur’an is, accordingly, His mercy for the world, of which the Prophet is the source (*‘ayn al-rahma*). The Muḥamadan Reality is also the source of all truth, upon which the existence of the world depends. It may be attained solely by those who follow the Prophet’s path; for others it is concealed behind the veil of their beliefs and rites.⁷⁵ This emphasis on Muḥammad’s role as an intermediary (*wāsiṭa*) determines Abū al-Shāmāt’s practical view of the sufi path. Again as was the case with Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī, its two pillars are the perfect guide and the shari‘a. The traveler on the path may see God only through the mirror of the Prophet, a veil of light which prevents the burning of the creatures’ perception. Yet, all the visions and spiritual states that lead to it, he can see only through the mirror of his own shaykh. On the other hand, Abū al-Shāmāt never tires of reminding his readers that attaining the divine Truth, and its realization in the Prophet, depends upon strict adherence to the shari‘a. Muḥammad guides the perplexed with the lights of the Law, and any other way one takes to reach God will lead him to destruction.⁷⁶

Similarities in the fundamental principles stressed by Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī and by Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt in their Akbarī interpretations stemmed from a shared desire to defend Sufism against its detractors. The two differed, however, in their understanding of the lessons to be drawn from these principles. While Jazā’irī, like ‘Umar al-‘Aṭṭār, regards the main danger to be the emerging tendency in

⁷⁵ Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt, *Al-Ilhāmāt al-Ilāhiyya ‘alā al-Waṣīfa al-Shādhiliyya* (Damascus, 1356/1937), pp. 12-16.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-22, 26-28.

their day to shun Islam, Abū al-Shāmāt still formulates his polemics within the framework of the traditional Muslim controversy between sufis and their opponents. He asserts that Sufism is the most distinguished science and defines it as the comprehensive wisdom and beneficial knowledge capable of granting perpetual happiness. Though Abū al-Shāmāt discusses at length the various charges made against sufis, this is only as a means of immunization against them, and he accordingly quotes past authorities who had regarded these denunciations as a grace of God to purify their souls. Opponents attack Sufism simply out of ignorance, bigotry, and blindness, all of which prevent them from sharing in the divine bounty.⁷⁷ This traditional point of view leads Abū al-Shāmāt to stress the metaphysical position of the Prophet, and the duty to love him and concentrate on him in the *dhikr*, rather than as a moral example. Referring to the perfect guide, he emphasizes the obligation to remain faithful to him even after reaching the goal, while avoiding mentioning any difficulty in finding him. Even when the image of Muḥammad replaces that of the shaykh in the disciple's vision, his soul will behold the divine truth together with the shaykh and his link to him will not be broken.⁷⁸ What Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī and Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt agreed upon was thus ultimately limited to the obligation to follow the shari'a, showing only that both operated within the bounds of orthodox Sufism.

In the biography of another Damascene deputy of the Yashruṭiyya order, Sa'īd al-Ghabrā (d. 1886) a hint of a more hostile attitude toward the reformist tendency becomes discernible. A nephew and disciple of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kuzbarī, Ghabrā became a Khalwatī adept in his youth, and later conducted the order's *dhikr* in the Jaq-maqiyya college in the 'Amāra quarter. He is depicted in our sources alternately as a staunch fighter against innovations and as a sufi shaykh whose success detracted him to worldly affairs.⁷⁹ The latter development may have taken place after he received the order from 'Alī al-Yashruṭī. It is related by Fāṭima al-Yashruṭiyya, in a rather dramatic fashion, how Ghabrā had sharply criticized the adherents of the *ṭarīqa* in Damascus, and how for this reason he set out for Acre to encounter her father. Upon seeing the shaykh, however, he became enraptured, and because of this experience decided to tread

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-5, 57-62.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22, 28-29.

⁷⁹ Ḥiṣnī, p. 721; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 651.

the path under his guidance. Ghabrā then eventually became one of the outstanding propagators of the Yashruṭiyya in the city.⁸⁰ He distinguished himself most of all during the Ḥamīdian period by his efforts to stop the activities of the founder of the Syrian theater, Abū al-Khalīl al-Qabbānī, with whom the reformists sympathized. Ghabrā traveled to Istanbul several times for this purpose, until he obtained an imperial decree ordering the theater to be closed, thus compelling Qabbānī to leave for Egypt.⁸¹

The Dandarāwiyya order is named after Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dandarāwī (1839-1910), a deputy of Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd, who himself was one of the prominent disciples of Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and later a part of the sufi reformist circle active in Mecca during the 1860s. Very little is known with certainty about Dandarāwī, not even whether he clearly broke with the Rashīdiyya. A native of Upper Egypt, he seems to have spread his order principally in Somalia and to have been in Sudan during the period of the Mahdi.⁸² The biographies of the Damascene ‘ulama who were associated with him indicate that toward the end of the 1880s Dandarāwī too arrived in Mecca, where he ordained some of them as deputies or adherents of the order. Encouraged by his success, Dandarāwī paid a number of visits to Damascus during the 1890s, where he was able to draw a following principally in the small towns and villages of the area. Like ‘Alī al-Yashruṭī, some of whose followers he now attracted, Dandarāwī also established connections with the Ottoman administration and probably was received by Sultan ‘Abdülḥamīd himself while on a visit to Istanbul.⁸³

Among the Damascene ‘ulama who became affiliated with the Dandarāwiyya, the most striking example is that of Muḥammad Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Bīṭār, the nephew and son-in-law of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, though the circumstances are not clear. Bahā’ al-Dīn (1848-1910) followed the regular course among the ‘ulama of his family. He studied with his father, ‘Abd al-Ghanī, and with his uncles Muḥammad and ‘Abd al-Razzāq, as well as with Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī. Like many of them, he took the Shādhilī path from Muḥammad al-Fāsī, immersing himself in it and in reading sufi expositions. Bahā’ al-Dīn specialized in the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and would consult with ‘Abd

⁸⁰ Yashruṭiyya, pp. 358-359.

⁸¹ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 39.

⁸² Sedgwick, pp. 104-121; O’Fahey, pp. 165-166.

⁸³ Sedgwick, pp. 122-127; Barūdī, pp. 18-19; ‘Allāf, p. 125n. 4.

al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī on difficult questions. Apart from Sufism he also excelled in literature.⁸⁴ The later parts of Bahā' al-Dīn's life are obscure. His son, Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār, the Salafī editor of *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, avoids mentioning his father's adherence to the Dandarāwiyya, offering only the anecdote that upon turning to Sufism his father sold his considerable property and spent the proceeds on the poor, thus earning the nickname of *abū al-fuqarā'*.⁸⁵ According to Fāṭima al-Yashruṭiyya, he was one of the disciples of her father, evidently before joining the Dandarāwiyya.⁸⁶ Bahā' al-Dīn was a prolific author, primarily of commentaries on the works of Ibn 'Arabī and his school. His only printed treatise is an Akbarī exposition on the "fourteen prayers" of Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, which he completed in 1896. Incidentally, this is the only evidence we have for Bahā' al-Dīn's connection with Dandarāwī. It seems that it was the shaykh who asked him to compose this commentary in recognition of his proficiency in al-Shaykh al-Akbar's teaching, and who saw to its publication that same year in Beirut.⁸⁷

Muḥammad al-Dandarāwī's principal deputy in Damascus, however, was the Ḥanbalī Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī (1855-1929), the only son of Aḥmad al-Shaṭṭī to be attracted to religious studies. Like Bahā' al-Dīn al-Bīṭār, Muṣṭafā followed the family tradition in his youth, acquiring his education with his father and his uncle, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, as well as with Salīm and Bakrī al-'Aṭṭār. He started preaching and instruction in 1877 in the Bādhura'iyya college, which his family continued to supervise, and five years later was nominated as a clerk in the religious court. Nevertheless, unlike his three younger cousins, Muṣṭafā failed to secure for himself an official administrative or judicial post. His work in the court ended after a short period for unspecified reasons, a little before he was attracted to Sufism under the inspiration of Muḥammad al-Dandarāwī. Shaṭṭī became acquainted with the shaykh while on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1888, and under his influence became a sufi adept and an ardent admirer of Ibn 'Arabī. Dandarāwī ordained him as his deputy in Damascus, and upon his return he began to conduct the order's *dhikr* sessions in his college. We do not know the extent of Muṣṭafā's success, but

⁸⁴ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 380-400.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 381, editor's note.

⁸⁶ Yashruṭiyya, p. 350.

⁸⁷ Muḥammad Bahā' al-Dīn al-Bīṭār, *Kitāb al-Nafahāt al-Aqdasiyya: Sharḥ al-Ṣalawāt al-Aḥmadiyya al-Idrīsiyya* (Beirut, 1314 A.H.), pp. 3-4.

it seems that at least among his family his new course met with little sympathy. His position further deteriorated after his father's death in 1898, when he left the post he had inherited from him as supervisor of inheritance problems in the city. The hostility of the Shaṭṭī family may have convinced Dandarāwī in 1901 to order him to stop conducting the order's *dhikr* in the Bādhura'iyya college. A year later Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī published together two treatises, one being a virulent attack on the Salafiyya and the other a staunch defense of Sufism. After the Young Turk Revolution he was appointed to be a teacher, and subsequently also mufti, in the town of Dūmā, where he spent the rest of his life.⁸⁸

The main propositions of Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī's book were his rejection of the possibility of exerting *ijtihād* in legal questions, his defense of popular customs that had become attached to Sufism, and his re-presentation of the Akbarī teaching. Shaṭṭī regards the Salafīs' claim to be able to exert *ijtihād* as part of a tendency to adopt the rationalist approach, which in his eyes induced them to deviate from the path of the shari'a. Against them, he purports to be reasserting the traditional view of the imams who had preserved it through the ages. Admitting that the experts of the four legal schools had agreed that every generation must have its mujtahids, and that the existence of such is a collective duty, Shaṭṭī notes that these experts also specified the conditions which a man must meet in order to be recognized as a mujtahid. Stressing the number and difficulty of these conditions, he proceeds to demonstrate how hard it is to attain this level and, moreover, to claim that for many generations, as Islam became pervaded by corruption, there was no one who actually met all of them. Shaṭṭī is thus able to agree with latter-day legal experts who were maintaining that *ijtihād* had practically come to an end, and to reject those among them who professed its continuation as basing themselves upon unfounded assumptions. Among the latter, he counts the Salafīs. "There is no doubt that those who profess [to exert *ijtihād*] in our time make a false claim, as happened in the case of this profession on the part of a deviating group (*firqa shādhda*) which attached itself to the Ḥanbalīs of Najd... Sometimes out of principle they do not seek proof in the general consensus and analogy, but restrict themselves to seeking proofs in the Qur'an and the sunna without understanding the above aspects and without acquain-

⁸⁸ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 445-446; Shaṭṭī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, pp. 176-178.

tance with the principles of the sciences, and certainly not with their objects and roots.”⁸⁹

Alongside this direct assault on the Salafis, Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī also takes aim at the two seeming sources of their doctrines, Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya and the Wahhābiyya, about which as a Ḥanbalī scholar he was particularly well-informed. This group, he writes, often foregoes its claim for the possibility of *ijtihād* and relies solely on the works of Ibn Taymiyya. According to Shaṭṭī, that Ḥanbalī scholar departed from the position of his school in several matters, which paved the way for the Salafis to advocate absolute *ijtihād*. Most of the judgments of Ibn Taymiyya he mentions pertain to his attacks on the popular practices attached to Sufism, the ultimate reason for Shaṭṭī’s rejection of *ijtihād*. These are the prohibition on performing pilgrimage to anywhere except the three mosques (in Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem), and the interdiction against seeking intercession from the prophets and the pious (*istighātha*). Reliance on the Wahhābī teaching, by which Shaṭṭī means again mainly its anti-sufi ideas, is even more damaging in his eyes because of its practical implications. This can be seen in the Wahhābīs’ central concept of *shirk*, association of others to God. Shaṭṭī makes a distinction between two meanings of this concept, the great and obvious form of *shirk*, idolatry, and a lesser covert one, such as immersing oneself in this world and forgetting its Creator. Referring to a legal ruling approved by *ijmāʿ* that it is forbidden to declare a Muslim an infidel (*takfir*) even if he commits a grave offence, Shaṭṭī maintains that this is certainly the case with those who merely seek the intercession of a prophet or a saint while knowing that the real actor is the Lord. We must not declare a man infidel without verifying his belief, he concludes, nor spy on him in order to incriminate him. The Wahhābīs deviated from the scriptures and from the general consensus in overlooking this distinction and in shedding the blood of Muslims. Similarly, Shaṭṭī makes a distinction between two meanings of the concept of *bidʿa* (innovation). In its more general sense this is anything new, while its limited *sharʿī* meaning is an addition or omission in religious matters which has no basis in the Holy Law. A *sharʿī* innovation concerns matters of belief and worship and is fundamentally wrong, he asserts, but the more general sense of innovation pertains to custom and may be commendable or even obligatory. To overlook this

⁸⁹ Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, *Al-Nuqūl al-Sharʿiyya*, pp. 2-6.

distinction between the two types of *bid'a* is, in Shaṭṭī's opinion, again characteristic of the Wahhābīs' ignorance, and that of their followers, as well as of their hypocrisy, since they themselves cannot escape the innovations of the time.⁹⁰

The various aspects of the Salafiyya teaching must have perplexed Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, and other orthodox 'ulama whose views he echoed, as to its true nature. "We are still uncertain about their [the Salafīs'] true position, because of their confusion (*iḍṭirāb*)", he writes. "Are they mujtahids, as is evident from their practice of deriving proofs from the literal meaning of the Qur'an and of the hadith, imitators of *shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyya or of their aforementioned imam Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, or are they followers of the school of imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. The most obvious would be to regard them as being none of these, since they contradict all at once." Indeed, in his defense of popular sufi practices attacked by the Salafīs, Shaṭṭī adopts, alongside his reliance upon traditional sources, a method of presenting the contradictions inherent in the various sources on whom they rely. His point of reference is his own Ḥanbalī school, within the general framework of orthodoxy, and he is inclined to try to rehabilitate Ibn Taymiyya, who after all was one of the outstanding 'ulama of that school. His wrath was directed, therefore, principally at Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, and he often refers to the Salafīs as the Najdī or the Wahhābī group.

The principal subjects that Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī treats in his defense of Sufism against the Salafīs are miracles (*karāmāt*), particularly the belief that the prophets and the saints are alive in their graves; the asking for their intercession and help (*tawaṣṣul wa-istighātha*), during their life and after their death; and visits to their tombs (*ziyārat al-qubūr*). These are naturally interconnected, and his twofold line of defense is seen already in the case of the first. After producing evidence for the reality of miracles and for the afterlife of prophets and saints from the four sources of the Law, Shaṭṭī proceeds to claim that Ḥanbalī 'ulama concur with those of the other legal schools in confirming them. This position was basically shared by Ibn Taymiyya and by Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, he suggests, though in deviation from their school they only allowed one to set out for the Prophet's tomb (*shadd al-raḥl*) in order to visit the mosque and pray there. The Salafīs, too, do not deny the validity of saints' miracles, but some of them

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-14.

limit it to their lifetime, thus denying the value of visiting their tombs and there asking for help.⁹¹

Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī's second treatise was meant to illuminate the Salafīs, who thus attacked Sufism, and to prevent others from following their example, by explaining the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* and by demonstrating its full compatibility with the shari'a. Like with the case of 'Umar al-'Aṭṭār and Maḥmūd Abū al-Shāmāt, Shaṭṭī's presentation follows the conventional interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching. All genuine sufis have held this doctrine, he claims, both the classical masters like Bisṭāmī, Junayd and Ghazālī, and the eponyms of the orders such as Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshband and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī.⁹² In his desire to defend Sufism against the growing rationalist tendencies of his day, however, Shaṭṭī comes closer to Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī's arguments. Like him, he claims that though direct spiritual experience is superior, it is possible to comprehend the sufi science by reading its expositions, on the condition that this is done with God's help, or under the guidance of a qualified shaykh. Moreover, Shaṭṭī promises that this science, by its very nature, contains no secrets and conceals no truths. Sufi authors have written nothing that contradicts the common sense or the straight path. Their source was simply knowledge received from God (*'ilm ladunī*), delivered through the Qur'an and the sunna, and revealed to those for whom the Lord had opened their inner vision or sounded the message in their hearts.⁹³ Belief in "the unity of being" does not contradict the shari'a; on the contrary, it is its source and heart. For Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, thus, all sufis profess a Muḥammadī salafī belief which they have gained from the source of the shari'a by means of revelation, after being convinced by speculative proof and deliberation.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 37-40.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-49.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

PART 3: RESISTANCE TO THE EMERGING MODERN
STATE—THE SALAFIYYA

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Khayr ummatī al-qarn alladhīna bu'ithu fihim thumma alladhīna yalūnahum thumma alladhīna yalūnahum.

The best of my nation is the generation to whom I was sent, then those who follow them, then those who follow them.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥāba, 213.

Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya,¹ from whose call to follow the path of the forefathers the Salafīyya derived its name, was born in 1263 into a learned Ḥanbalī family of Ḥarrān, five years after the destruction of Baghdad and the actual end of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate. At the age of six, his family moved to Mamluk Damascus, there seeking refuge from the advancing Mongol armies. Ibn Taymiyya acquired an extensive religious education, centered on Ḥanbalī jurisprudence and theology, but including also the jurisprudence of the other three legal schools, as well as philosophy and mysticism. In the latter field, he not only immersed himself in sufi expositions, particularly those of Ibn 'Arabī, but was also affiliated to the Qādiriyya order.² Ibn Taymiyya went on to distinguish himself as one of the most original religious men of his day. At the same time he proved to be an uncompromising advocate of the absolute unity of God, as well as an untiring fighter against innovations threatening it. At times he was supported in his struggles by the Mamluk amirs, especially in periods of external threat when they benefited from his exhortations for jihad against the infidel, but for most of his life Ibn Taymiyya was persecuted by the leading 'ulama and sufi shaykhs, who incited these rulers to act against him. He died imprisoned in the citadel of Damascus in 1328.

Like Ibn 'Arabī, Ibn Taymiyya too authored a large number of books, encompassing most of the fields studied in his time. He has

¹ The most detailed biography of Ibn Taymiyya is still Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Taqī-d-Dīn Aḥmad b. Taymīya* (Cairo, 1939), pp. 7-150. See also Donald Little, "The Historical and Historiographic Significance of the Detention of Ibn Taymiyya," *IJMES*, 4 (1973), pp. 311-327; *idem*, "Did Ibn Taymiyya have a Screw Loose?" *SI*, 41 (1975), pp. 93-111; Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor* (Chico, Cal., 1983), pp. 21-29; Sherman Jackson, "Ibn Taymiyyah on Trial in Damascus," *JSS*, 29 (1994), pp. 41-85.

² George Makdisi, "Ibn Taymīya: a Sūfī of the Qādiriyya Order," *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, 1 (1973), pp. 118-130; Thomas Michel, "Ibn Taymiyya's *Sharḥ* on the *Futūḥ al-Ghayb* of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī," *Hamdard Islamicus*, 4/2 (1981), pp. 3-12.

aroused considerable interest among Western students of Islam since the 1920s, owing to the central place that his teachings hold in the thought of the Salafis and, following them, in that of contemporary radical Islamic trends. This extensive research allows us to form a rather detailed picture of Ibn Taymiyya's views, from which we can better understand in what lay his attraction for the reformist 'ulama of late Ottoman Damascus.

Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya's religious fervor should be viewed against the background of the deep political crisis the Muslim umma was experiencing in the wake of the fall of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate and the unrelenting Mongol threat on those lands that remained under Muslim control. He wholeheartedly supported the Mamluk rulers of Egypt, and in his political thought attempted to supply their state with the religious legitimization they needed. He thus remained loyal to the orthodox view which stressed the necessity of using coercion for the sake of both religion and social prosperity, as well as the duty to obey one's ruler, even if he is oppressive. Ibn Taymiyya deviated from the traditional doctrine only in those cases where it was necessary to adapt it to the new political circumstances created by the actual dissolution of the Caliphate. He argued that this institute's existence is not necessary, that it is permissible to have several imams at the same time, and that Islam does not require their designation by election. This reliance on power was contrasted in Ibn Taymiyya's teaching with the duty of the imams to rule in justice (*'adl*) and, even more important, in cooperation with their subjects. He emphasized the importance of the oath of allegiance (*mubāyā'a*) and of advice (*naṣīḥa*) as constituting reciprocal consent and contract between ruler and ruled, reflecting their shared desire to follow the path of God and His messenger, and designed to ensure the implementation of the shari'a. Ibn Taymiyya thus regarded the holding of power as an act of religious piety, and viewed rulers as deputies of God to his Creatures, as well as their representatives before Him. Consequently, he also attached great importance to the ruler's obligation of appointing the most suitable candidates for public positions and critically denounced office holders who disregarded religion and attempted to exploit it for their own ends.³

³ Laoust, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 278-317; Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: An Introductory Outline* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 51-61; Ann L.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (New York, 1981), pp. 145-151; Makari, pp. 133-157.

The effort to legitimize Muslim government in the post-Caliphate era, however, was only one aspect in the comprehensive endeavor of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya to reformulate the fundamental tenets of the religion, in order to allow the umma to reunite and successfully cope with the new realities. His aim was to find the middle ground (*wasat*) between the various fields of study that had evolved within the framework of Islam, giving each one of them its proper place in the overall teaching. Ibn Taymiyya sought to restore the fundamental unity between theology, which relies on reason (*ʿaql*), the sciences of hadith and jurisprudence, which derive their authority from tradition (*naql*), and Sufism, which is based upon the quest for spiritual experience (*irāda*). In interweaving these elements into a coherent doctrine, Ibn Taymiyya displayed remarkable openness towards views developed within each of these sciences, as well as those of others rejected by Sunni Islam, such as the rationalist trends of the Muʿtazila and the philosophers, being ready to adopt truth whatever its origin. His criterion for verifying the findings of each science was compatibility with the Qurʾan and the sunna. Subject to this criterion, he relied heavily upon reason, which in his eyes would never contradict the shariʿa, principally as a method of defending religious truth against its detractors.⁴ In Ibn Taymiyya's view this was the path of the forefathers of Islam (*al-salaf*), the Prophet's companions (*ṣaḥāba*) and their immediate heirs (*tābiʿūn*), the model to be followed.

In this criterion of compatibility with the Qurʾan and the sunna, and in its essentially rationalist application, ultimately lay the failure of the unity that Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya sought to create, as well as the turning of the majority of contemporary ʿulama against him. For Ibn Taymiyya, the call to return to the sources was designed to purify Islam of the innovations that had accrued to it through the centuries and to reassert the essential profession of unity upon which the religion was based. His faithfulness to the path of the *salaf*, therefore, meant not only the integration of the religious sciences but also the critical examination of each of them in an effort to sift out those elements which had been added over successive generations. Advocating this in the most uncompromising manner, Ibn Taymiyya was driven by a sense of crisis and certainly also by the nature of his own personality. The hostile ʿulama obviously agreed to the supremacy

⁴ George Makdisi, "Hanbalite Islam," in M. Swartz (ed.), *Studies in Islam* (London, 1981), pp. 251-262; Binyamin Abrahamov, "Ibn Taymiyya on the Agreement of Reason with Tradition," *MW*, 82 (1992), pp. 256-273.

of the Qur'an and the sunna, but nonetheless rejected the demand that these sources be approached directly and used critically to examine their traditional knowledge. They rather preferred to rely unreservedly upon the formulations arrived at by the founders of the various theological and legal schools to which they belonged, regarding their interpretations of the Qur'an and the sunna as those which best reflected the way of the *salaf*. In the eyes of most religious men of his time, Ibn Taymiyya's call to approach directly the sources thus was seen as a sharp assault on orthodoxy, as it had crystallized and sanctified during those late generations which they claimed to represent.

The internal contradiction inherent in the teaching of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya is clearly recognizable in his criticism of the jurisprudence of his time. Rejecting the practice of blind imitation (*taqlīd*), he maintained that deriving legal rulings directly from the Qur'an and the sunna (*ijtihād*) is essential for the continuing vitality of the shari'a under changing circumstances. Alongside these two basic sources of Islamic Law, Ibn Taymiyya left wide room for the use of analogy (*qiyās*), which is based upon reason, and for consideration of the public good (*maṣlaḥa*), which addresses actual conditions of life. On the other hand, he significantly reduced the scope of the general consensus (*ijmā'*), which sanctifies the tradition. Nevertheless, he did remain faithful to the Ḥanbalī school and refrained from claiming that he himself had attained the rank of mujtahid. In his critique of the rationalist theology of his day (*kalām*), Ibn Taymiyya maintained, again in the spirit of Ḥanbalism, that God may be described only as He described himself in the Qur'an or as the Prophet described Him in the sunna. He therefore opposed the concern of this science with God's essence and attributes, stressing instead the obligation to obey Him and the Prophet. Ibn Taymiyya was particularly critical of the dominant Ash'arī school, which in his opinion tended to overemphasize the omnipotence of God at the expense of man's freedom of action and his responsibility for his deeds. He regarded the idea of predestination as a great injury to the moral fabric of Islam.⁵

The most pungent criticism of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya on the basis

⁵ Laoust, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 153-178, 226-250; Rahman, pp. 111-115; Joseph Norman Bell, *Love Theory in Late Hanbalite Islam* (Albany, 1979), pp. 46-91; Makari, pp. 33-112. For his treatment of Philosophy see Wael B. Hallaq, *Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians* (Oxford, 1993).

of the way of the *salaf*, however, was reserved for Sufism, both as a science that by his time relied heavily on Ibn 'Arabī's teaching and as a practical path becoming increasingly organized through the orders and tainted by popular practices. Ibn Taymiyya accepted mystical revelation (*kashf*) as a valid source of religious knowledge, but in accordance with his general view, he subjected it to the criterion of compatibility with the Qur'an and the sunna. He even admitted that sufis may discern new meanings in the scriptures, and consequently in the precepts of the shari'a, though they could not abrogate them. Nonetheless, despite this implicit validation of Ibn 'Arabī's method, Ibn Taymiyya waged an unrelenting war against his teaching, primarily because of its practical implications. He vehemently rejected the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, comparing it with Ash'arī theology and the damage it had caused to the moral order of Islam. Ibn Taymiyya offered a tripartite critique of what he regarded as being the Akbarī deviation from an authentic profession of God's unity. First, he maintained that by endorsing the possibility of identification with God (*ittiḥād*) or annihilation in Him (*fanā*), this teaching blurred the distinction between Lord and creature. Second, in the teaching about the immutable essences (*a'yān thābita*) the Akbariyya lent its support, according to Ibn Taymiyya, to a belief in predestination, since it implies that the course of every creature is determined by the predisposition of its potential essence. Finally, he blamed Ibn 'Arabī's teaching on sainthood (*walāya*) for giving strong encouragement to the incorporation of saint worship into Islam, based on the belief in their infallible knowledge and in their ability to perform miracles. Ibn Taymiyya was especially hostile toward the widespread Rifā'iyya order, which used such practices as eating glass, walking on fire, and handling snakes to demonstrate one's sanctity. This doctrine of sainthood, in his view, also led to the incorporation into Islam of originally foreign popular practices, above all the visiting of saints' tombs and the seeking of help from their deceased residents.⁶

Despite the acute animosity showed by most 'ulama of the Mamluk domains toward Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, his influence upon con-

⁶ Muhammad Umar Memon, *Ibn Taymiyya's Struggle against Popular Religion* (The Hague, 1976), pp. 24-87; Rahman, p. 147; Th. Emil Homerin, Ibn Taimīyah's *al-Ṣūfiyyah wa-al-Fuqarā'*, *Arabica*, 32 (1985), pp. 219-244; Knish, *Ibn 'Arabī*, pp. 87-111. For his denouncement of the Rifā'iyya see Donald Little, "Religion Under the Mamluks," *MW*, 73 (1983), pp. 177-178.

temporaries was nonetheless considerable and he acquired numerous disciples, Ḥanbalī and non-Ḥanbalī alike. Most prominent among them was Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, a great ‘alim in his own right, who faithfully spread his teachings.⁷ In the course of time this influence seems to have diminished, especially in the face of the expanding activity of the sufi orders and the increasingly wide acceptance of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought. Nonetheless, followers of Ibn Taymiyya continued to transmit his legacy through the centuries, both because of its remarkable reformist thrust and as part of late Ḥanbalī jurisprudence, thriving mainly in Damascus and Baghdad.⁸ In the eighteenth century this tendency gained a new importance in the well-known movement encountered more than once in this study, the Wahhābiyya. Its founder, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792), was the scion of a family of Ḥanbalī ‘ulama from the ‘Uyayna oasis of the central Najd. His principal inspiration came from reading the books of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, before travelling to the neighboring centers of learning, mainly in Medina and Basra.⁹ On the basis of Ibn Taymiyya’s concept of *tawḥīd*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb condemned the practices of most inhabitants of the Arab Peninsula as a pre-Islamic legacy (*jāhiliyya*). Applying it more broadly, he attacked almost the entire Muslim society of his time. By adopting Ibn Taymiyya’s concept of adherence to the path of the *salaf*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb was able to reject the innovations that were attached to Islam during the succeeding generations, as seen from his point of view. These included a jurisprudence that increasingly neglected the exertion of *ijtihād* in favor of *taqlīd*, a theosophy that revolved around the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, sufi orders that were organized on the basis of the absolute authority of the shaykh, and the all gamut of popular practices centered on saint worship, visiting their tombs and seeking their intercession with God. All these necessarily implied a challenge to the Ottoman State, whom he regarded as the embodiment and mainstay of the deviations of late orthodox Islam.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb departed from Ibn Taymiyya’s

⁷ On Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya and his work see Laoust, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 489-492; Bell, pp. 92-181.

⁸ Laoust, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 477-505.

⁹ Michael Cook, “On the Origins of Wahhābism,” *JRAS*, 3rd series, 2 (1992), pp. 191-202; John Voll, “Muḥammad Ḥayyā al-Sindī and Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb: an Analysis of an Intellectual Group in Eighteenth-Century Madīna,” *BSOAS*, 38 (1975), pp. 32-39.

teachings in some highly significant aspects. He restricted the definition of the *salaf* to the first generation of Islam, thus discrediting the reliance on the heads of the legal schools and even on the compilers of the canonical hadith collections. In his exertion of *ijtihād* he acknowledged solely the Qur'an and the sunna as sources for deriving rulings, adding at times the precedents of the Companions. Thus Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb rejected the application not only of the *ijmā'*, which Ibn Taymiyya would approve, but also of *qiyās*, which he actually encouraged. The sharpest deviation of the Wahhābīs from Ibn Taymiyya's teaching pertained, however, to their readiness to impose their views by force. Charging their adversaries of unbelief (*takfīr*) they implied letting the blood and property of most Muslims. In the face of such principles, and the general challenge inherent in them to the Muslim state, the Wahhābī teaching could encounter only opposition on the part of the 'ulama in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰ In Damascus we met such criticism in the writings of Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn of the official Ḥanafī school, as well as by Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī the Ḥanbalī. The alliance with Ibn Sa'ūd in 1744 supplied the Wahhābīs with the basis to the establishment of the "theocratic state" that could realize their aims. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb himself propagated his message mainly by the letters he dispatched to various 'ulama and Muslim rulers, dedicating himself mostly to instruction in Najd, which was unified under the Sa'ūdī emirate. It was only after his death that the movement began to spread beyond its core area, to the Hijaz, south Iraq and Syria where, posing a tangible menace to the urban centers, it was destroyed by the armies of Muḥammad 'Alī.

Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb was not the only one to espouse the teachings of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya in the eighteenth century. Indeed, in several of the more established centers of learning in the Muslim world other reformist thinkers emerged whose views were more in line with the original teaching, drawing their inspiration from the similar circumstances of the time, rather than from the Wahhābīs. Most outstanding among them were Shāh Walīallāh of Delhi (1702-1763), a Naqshbandī sufi and adherent of Ibn 'Arabī who strove to

¹⁰ The analysis of the Wahhābiyya and its teachings is based on Laoust, *Ibn Taymiyya*, pp. 506-540; H. St. John Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia* (Beirut, 1968), pp. 33-146; Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 37-38; Rahman, pp. 196-201; Esther Peskes, *Muḥammad b. Abdalwahhāb (1703-92) im Widerstreit: Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der Frühgeschichte Wahhābiya* (Beirut, 1993).

check the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in India,¹¹ and Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Shawkānī of Yemen (1760-1834), the culmination of a series of indigenous Zaydī reformist scholars who as chief qadī sought to fortify the declining Qāsimī Imamate.¹² Both Shāh Walīallāh and Shawkānī stressed the central importance of the science of hadith, regarding it as a means to reunite the Muslim umma and as the criterion to integrate the various religious sciences into a coherent whole. From this outlook also derived their active involvement in political affairs, their urging of qualified jurists to exert ijtihād in accordance with the principles of reason and the public interest, as well as their acceptance of orthodox Sufism. Both objected to *takfīr* against those professing Islam.

The views of the Salafī circles in Damascus at the end of the nineteenth century were closer to the moderate and peaceful reformist attitudes of Shāh Walīallāh and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī than to Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s belligerence. The Salafis were exposed to the teachings of Walīallāh through the Naqshbandī tradition Shaykh Khālīd brought with him from India at the beginning of the century. Shawkānī’s teaching reached Syria at that time directly from the Yemen, which had again been placed under direct Ottoman rule in 1872. We know that it was being taught in Tripoli in the early 1880s by ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Rāfi‘ī, a reformist sufi who had been attached in his youth to ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī’s circle, and who had become familiar with Shawkānī’s ideas during his service as qadī in Sanaa.¹³ The principal channel through which the ideas of Walīallāh and Shawkānī reached Damascus, however, was in India and Iraq.¹⁴ In India, their teachings were incorporated into the Ahl-i Ḥadīth movement, which emerged out of the crisis of the disastrous Mutiny of 1857 and was led by Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān (d. 1889), the Naw-

¹¹ On the life and thought of Shāh Walīallāh see J.M.S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shāh Walī Allāh Dihlawī, 1703-1776* (Leiden, 1986); G.N. Jalbani, *Teachings of Shāh Walīyullāh of Delhi* (3rd. ed. Lahore, 1979). On his Naqshbandī affiliation see also Algar, “A Short History,” pp. 25-26; on his affinity to Ibn Taymiyya see Baljon, pp. 200-201.

¹² On the life and thought of Shawkānī see Husayn b. ‘Abdulla al-‘Amri, *The Yemen in the 18th and 19th Centuries: a Political and Intellectual History* (London, 1985), pp. 103-192; Bernard Haykel, “Al-Shawkānī and the Jurisprudential Unity of Yemen,” *REMMM*, 67 (1993), pp. 53-66.

¹³ [Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā], “Al-‘Īd al-Dhahabī li-Shaykh al-Shu‘arā’... ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Bek al-Rāfi‘ī,” *al-Manār*, 30 (1929), pp. 66-68; Jazā’irī, *Tuḥfat al-Ẓā’ir*, p. 623.

¹⁴ Commins, pp. 24-26.

wab of Bhopal in central India, whom we encountered above in his denunciation of the Khālidi practice of *rābiṭa*.¹⁵ The Ahl-i Ḥadīth movement became acquainted with the works of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya through Shawkānī, and began to publish them in Urdu.¹⁶ Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī from Baghdad, who raised the question of the *rābiṭa* in the first place, contacted the Khān in 1878, after he learned of his activities. Nu'mān's father, Maḥmūd Abū al-Thinā' Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī, who was a disciple of Shaykh Khālidi, studied also with the Wahhābī-influenced 'Alī al-Suwaydī.¹⁷ Khayr al-Dīn himself became a key figure in the revival of Ibn Taymiyya's legacy in the Arab lands, publishing in 1881 a defense against his detractors. Two years later, Alūsī visited Damascus on his way to Istanbul, where he could meet like-minded 'ulama and discuss with them his new views.¹⁸

¹⁵ See pp. 113-114.

¹⁶ On the Ahl-i Ḥadīth movement and its teachings see Barbara Dali Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 268-285.

¹⁷ On Abū al-Thinā' Shihāb al-Dīn al-Alūsī see Muḥammad Bahjat al-Atharī, *A'lām al-'Irāq* (Cairo, 1345 A.H.), pp. 21-43. On his affiliation to Khālidi see his own testimony in his, *Gharā'ib al-Ighirāb wa-Nuzhat al-Albāb* (Baghdad, 1327 A.H.), pp. 17-19. On his and Suwaydī's attitude toward Ibn Taymiyya see Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī, *Jalāl al-'Aynayn fī Muḥākamat al-Aḥmadayn* (Cairo, 1300 A.H.), pp. 29-30.

¹⁸ Atharī, pp. 57-68, esp. 60-61.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

REMOLDING RELIGION AND IDENTITY UNDER THE POPULIST REGIMES (1883-1918)

Unlike the two previous religious reform trends in nineteenth-century Damascus, the Salafiyya emerged there in the first half of the 1880s without any notable leader from outside. Though aware of the work of their counterparts in India and Iraq, these 'ulama were even better placed to become acquainted with the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya. The theological views and legal rulings of this scholar were part of the tradition of the Ḥanbalī school, for which Damascus was one of the most important centers in the Ottoman Empire, and in the Muslim world in general. Most Salafīs did not belong to this school but, as we have seen, the leading Ḥanbalī family in the city, the Shaṭṭīs, was attached to the same reformist circles from which they emerged. We observed that Ḥasan al-Shaṭṭī, the founder of that family in the first half of the nineteenth century relied on Ibn Taymiyya's jurisprudence in confirming the principle of *taḥfīq*, and that for his son, Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, his political doctrine became in the 1880s the basis of his critique of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II's regime. Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, the sharp opponent of the Salafiyya, demonstrated no less acquaintance with Ibn Taymiyya's teachings in his effort to stress the difference between the great 'alim and his modern followers on the two cardinal questions of *ijtihād* and popular Sufism.¹⁹ In addition, many manuscripts of works by Ibn Taymiyya, who spent most of his life in Damascus, were kept in the endowed mosque libraries of the city. At the beginning of the Ḥamīdian period, the Salafīs began to collect and catalogue those collections in one central library, the Zāhiriyya, which thus became an important center for the renewed study of his legacy.

The Salafī trend of Damascus constituted a religious response to the political alliance forged between the Ottoman State under the modernizing autocracy of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II and orthodox sufi shaykhs and 'ulama who were willing to mobilize the masses in his

¹ See chs. 2, 6, and 7.

support. At its inception the Salafiyya was divided into two distinct branches, reflecting the different shaping and sources of inspiration through which its members arrived at the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya. The first branch comprised of 'ulama who were shaped in 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's Akbarī circle; the second, also associated with this circle, consisted of graduates of the first state schools opened in the city who were inspired by the ideas of the Young Ottoman movement in Istanbul. The leaders of the first branch, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī, and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, whose sight was limited to the conduct of the orthodox men of religion, tended to focus, in their own circles, on the problem of adapting traditional jurisprudence and theology to the needs of the modern era. In this task they were assisted by the rationalist thinking of the leaders of Islamic Modernism, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and, more profoundly, Muḥammad 'Abduh.² The prominent figures of the second branch, Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī and Salīm al-Bukhārī, who were more attentive to the workings of the Ottoman state, and particularly of its educational system, engaged themselves in addition in reviving the Arabic heritage, thus forging an alternative basis of identity for their society. The affinity between these two branches of the emerging Salafiyya of Damascus became more pronounced as the pressure amounted against them in the last years of 'Abdülhamīd II's reign, and even more so in the era of the Young Turks.

Unlike the previous sections of this work, this part is not a detailed examination of the history and teachings of the Salafiyya in Damascus. Here we can rely on Commins' comprehensive work, which analyzed the development of this trend from its beginnings in the 1880s to the First World War, with a special focus on the figure of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, its foremost exponent. My aim in this chapter is to examine the Salafiyya within the broader framework of the previous sufi reform trends that operated in Damascus, from which it emerged, and against the backdrop of the populist regimes of the late Ottoman Empire, to which it constituted a response.

² See my forthcoming article, "Between Sufi Reformism and Modernist Rationalism—A Reappraisal of the Origins of the Salafiyya from the Damascene Angle," *Die Welt des Islams*, 41 (2001).

Returning to the Model of the Forefathers

The first 'alim in Damascus to adopt the religious reform trend which was later to become the Salafiyya was 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's foremost disciple in the city. Around 1885, at the age of fifty, Bīṭār began to preach to rely solely on the Qur'an and the sunna and to avoid approving any opinion or ruling without evidence.³ As we have seen in the writings of Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī and Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, this was indeed the period when a renewed interest in the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya appeared in Damascus. This was also the time when Bīṭār, and other reformists of the city, first met Muḥammad 'Abduh, then an exile in Beirut.⁴ Thus under the inspiration of Ibn Taymiyya's legacy, further fortified by the Modernist thinking of 'Abduh, Bīṭār became inclined toward the use of a rationalist sort of ijtihad, as a means to adapt the religious law to modern needs, and toward a purified form of Sufism, whose principal role in the new circumstances was to preserve the spirit and morality of Islam. The reliance on hadith meticulously examined for its authenticity, the use of reason, and the rejection of traditional opinions at variance with modern science, henceforth became the dominant traits of Bīṭār's religious writings.⁵

As in the case of Ibn Taymiyya, the new reformist awareness of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār aroused opposition from those 'ulama and sufi shaykhs who followed the practice of *taqlīd* and cherished the popular belief in the power of saints. The animosity of these orthodox men of religion surfaced mainly through their endeavors to implicate their reformist rivals with the authorities. Thus at the beginning of 1896, they persuaded the governor that meetings initiated by the reformists two months earlier had been related to the spread of the Young Turk movement to Syria. After consulting with the mufti, Muḥammad al-Manīnī, the governor decided to interrogate them together with Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, the influential son of Yūsuf al-Maghribī who was sharply criticizing the authorities in his sermons, and even the Sultan himself, claiming that the Caliphate had

³ Bahjat al-Bīṭār, "'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār," pp. 318-319; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 11-12.

⁴ Bīṭār visited Beirut in April 1886, though he had become acquainted with 'Abduh already the previous year; see Qāyātī, p. 154, and his letter to him on pp. 199-201.

⁵ Bīṭār, "'Abd al-Razzāq," pp. 323-324; Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 340; Lūyis Shaykhū, *Ta'rikh al-Ādāb al-'Arabiyya fī al-Rub' al-Awwal min al-Qarn al-'Ishrīn* (Beirut, 1926), p. 35.

become a vile monarchy (*mulk ‘aḏūḏ*). The governor avoided summoning Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī since he enjoyed French patronage. The charges leveled against the reformists were nonetheless purely religious. They were accused of regarding themselves as mujtahids, meeting to read hadith, and demanding proofs for the rulings of the jurists. Ḥasanī and Bīṭār did not appear at the interrogation, which was harshly conducted by Manīnī himself under orthodox pressure. Though the accused denied engaging in ijtihad, the mufti demanded to banish them from Damascus, and only because of the intervention of the qadi, who saw no foundation for the charges, and certainly no political grounds, they were finally released. Only Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, the youngest of the group, was kept in custody as a warning to the rest. His family’s protest, and that of the Maydān inhabitants who crowded outside the court, together with the qadi’s recommendation, secured also his release the following day. Thus, in the first attempt to silence the new reformist trend, which became known as “the mujtahids incident”, the orthodox ‘ulama were defeated. Bīṭār and his associates continued to hold their meetings despite Manīnī’s interdiction, and the latter was finally obliged to sacrifice face and seek reconciliation.⁷

“The mujtahids incident” allows us for the first time to identify the religious men who followed ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār in adopting the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, our sole source of information about this incident, mentions ten ‘ulama who were involved in the meetings that precipitated it. They were all ‘ulama shaped in the circle of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī, or their disciples. Most of them had a clear sufi background, generally including both training in the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī and affiliation with one of the reformist orders active in Damascus at the time. The core of the group consisted, along with ‘Abd al-Razzāq himself, of Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī and Salīm Samāra (1838-1909), the latter being a close associate of Bīṭār and the successor of their teacher, Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭāwī, as well as the principal Shādhilī-Fāṣī shaykh in the Maydān.⁸ In subsequent meetings these men were joined by ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Bīṭār, ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s brother, and by Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Qāsimī, his close associate. The entire group gained the support of Bakrī al-‘Aṭṭār, the leader of the ‘ulama of the local—reformist

⁶ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 43-69.

⁷ On Salīm Samāra see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 250-251; Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 684-685.

tendency in Damascus in the Ḥamīdian period, who accepted their invitation to attend some of the meetings and testified in their favor. Conspicuous for their absence from these meetings were the other two outstanding Damascene disciples of ‘Abd al-Qādir, Muḥammad al-Khānī and Muḥammad al-Mubārak, though concerning the first Qāsimī relates that he had come to encourage him after his release. It seems that Khānī and Mubārak’s leadership of the two, now more traditional, reformist orders in Damascus, the Khālidiyya and the Raḥmāniyya, prevented them from fully adopting the teaching of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya.

The remaining four ‘ulama mentioned by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī in conjunction with the meetings leading to “the mujtahids incident” belonged to the next generation of religious men in Damascus, a generation shaped under the Ḥamīdian regime. One was Muṣṭafā al-Ḥallāq (1859-1911), a nephew of Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Qāsimī and a member of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Biṭṭār’s circle. It is reported of him that upon realizing that offices are passed on by inheritance rather than by merit he decided to change his course, studied law, and became a successful advocate in Damascus.⁸ Ḥallāq was followed by two disciples of Salīm Samāra, Amīn al-Safarjalānī (d. 1916), known primarily as the author of textbooks in various religious fields,⁹ and Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Farrā’ (d. 1926), a grandson of ‘Alā’ al-Dīn ‘Ābidīn and, like him, an active shaykh in the Khalwatiyya–Raḥmāniyya.¹⁰

The outstanding figure among those ‘ulama of the younger generation who had taken part in the meetings of the reformist religious men of Damascus, however, was Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī himself, Muḥammad Sa‘īd’s son. During the “mujtahids incident” he was specifically accused of advocating the “Jamālī madhhab”, that is, his own legal method, though he was careful to deny it. Qāsimī (1866-1914) began his religious education with his father, at their home and in the Sināniyya mosque, completing it thereafter mainly with Salīm and Bakrī al-‘Aṭṭār, in the science of hadith, and with Muḥammad al-Khānī, with whom he studied during the years 1885-1891. Qāsimī depicts Khānī as the greatest sufi of his time, and with him he not only immersed himself in the teachings of Ibn ‘Arabī and in

⁸ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 269-272; Qāsimī, *Ta’fīr al-Mashāmm*, pp. 81-86.

⁹ On Amīn al-Safarjalānī see the short note in Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 332; on his education see his teachers’ index, Amīn al-Safarjalānī, *Uqūd al-Asānīd* (Damascus, 1316 A.H.). For his textbooks see the bibliography.

¹⁰ On Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Farrā’ see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 419.

‘Abd al-Qādir’s *Mawāqif*, but also tread the Naqshbandī path, participating for a while in its *dhikr* ceremonies. He later left the order for unspecified reasons (*li-amr mā*), probably for lack of interest, as the rationalist attitude gained ground among the younger generation. Nevertheless, the relations between the two remained cordial and, according to Qāsimī, he continued to visit Khānī, who loved him and paid him increasing respect. He became much more inclined to the study of hadith, a field that connected him with Aḥmad al-Shaṭṭī, and through him probably also to the teachings of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya. Qāsimī received a diploma from Shaṭṭī, as the Ḥanbalī shaykh of Damascus, and the two met frequently to discuss scholarly matters. In addition to the religious sciences, Jamāl al-Dīn was encouraged by his father to read literary and historical works in the family’s splendid library. He also sought diplomas from the leading reformist ‘ulama of the older generation in Damascus, men like Maḥmūd Ḥamza and Muḥammad al-Ṭanṭawī, as well as of his own generation outside the city, such as Nu‘mān Khayr al-Dīn al-Alūsī. In a later stage of his life, Qāsimī did not hesitate to study the modern sciences of geography and geometry with younger teachers who had learned them in the state schools.¹¹

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī began to teach jurisprudence in the Sināniyya mosque at the age of fourteen, in addition to reciting the hadith in his father’s lessons. In 1886, when he reached the age of twenty, Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī chose him as prayer leader for the ‘Annāba mosque, where he himself conducted the Qādirī *dhikr*. They soon became close friends and would meet in the mosque to discuss religious, as well as historical and literary, subjects. Probably under Jazā’irī’s inspiration, Qāsimī composed a poem to be recited on the Prophet’s birthday (*mawlid*) concentrating on the details of his biography rather than on the usual imaginative and miraculous descriptions. This work, composed in 1888, was also the last time that he signed his name with the titles Naqshbandī, as well as Ash‘arī and Shāfi‘ī. Subsequent works are signed simply with his name. At the same time Qāsimī seems to have joined ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār’s circle. He studied some astronomy with him, though as in case of Aḥmad al-Jazā’irī, he is described in the sources as his close associate rather than as a disciple. Qāsimī himself always referred to Bīṭār

¹¹ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 23-31; Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 302-304. See also his diploma dated 1902 in *ibid.*, pp. 309-311. On his studies with Khānī see also Qāsimī, *Ta‘fīr al-Mashāmm*, p. 23.

as “our shaykh” and regarded him as the greatest ‘alim in Damascus. When Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Qāsimī died in 1900, his son succeeded him as imam and hadith teacher in the Sināniyya mosque without any objection on the part of the orthodox. At his first lesson there were present the leading ‘ulama of the local—reformist tendency, including Bakrī al-‘Aṭṭār and Šālīḥ Qaṭanā, the latter being Manīnī’s successor as mufti of Damascus.¹²

The success of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and his colleagues in the “mujtahids incident”, and the general sympathy they received from ‘ulama of the local—reformist tendency did not lead them to give their path a more organized form or to try to spread their teaching among wider circles. They continued to operate basically in the traditional manner as an intellectual group which convened privately in the homes of its members, on the example of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s circle in which they had been raised. They did not even call themselves Salafīs, since they had not yet developed a clear notion of a distinctive identity. Moreover, in the following years the group gradually dissolved, as most ‘ulama of the older generation passed away and the younger ones turned to their own ways. The only representatives of this reformist group who continued to exert some influence in Damascus at the beginning of the twentieth century were ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār himself at the head of his circle and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī with his writing. Only a handful of other ‘ulama in the city followed their example or adopted the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya independently.¹³

It was largely owing to this organizational weakness and meager following that ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī were allowed in the years following the “mujtahids incident” rela-

¹² Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 30, 35-42; Qāsimī, *Tā‘fir al-Mashāmm*, p. 70.

¹³ The most outstanding such independent thinker who adopted the way of Ibn Taymiyya in Damascus was ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān (1848-1927). Badrān, an erstwhile editor of the provincial paper, had a philosophical disposition, and he is said to have decided to adopt the Ḥanbalī doctrine after comparing the law books of the four schools and becoming convinced that Ibn Ḥanbal was the most knowledgeable in hadith, and his school the closest to the literal meaning of the Qur’an and the sunna. Unlike members of Bīṭār’s circle, Badrān distinguished himself by his virulent attacks upon religious innovations and popular practices, leading the orthodox to regard him as an infidel (*zindīq*) and as “the Wahhābī of his time.” On ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān see Muḥammad al-‘Ajamī, *Allāmat al-Shām ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Badrān al-Dimashqī: Ḥayātuhu wa-Āthāruhu* (Beirut, 1996); Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 422-424; Badrān, *Munādamat al-Aṭlāl*, introduction by the editor, Muḥammad Bahjat al-Bīṭār, pp. k-n; Ghazzī, *Al-Na‘t al-Akmal*, pp. 411-413; Ḥiṣnī, pp. 762-763; Jundī, *‘Ālām al-Adab*, vol. 1, pp. 224-225; Qudāma, p. 113.

tive freedom in their work in Damascus, and in establishing contacts with comrades in other Arab cities of the Empire, though their orthodox rivals occasionally tried to harass them. Thus when ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī, a radical ‘alim from Homs who was being kept in house arrest in Damascus, published his controversial treatise, *Al-Fiqh wal-Taṣawwuf* in 1901, they feared that the resultant excitement would be used by the orthodox to implicate them once again. Bīṭār and Qāsimī did not agree with Zahrāwī’s unbridled assault on these two central pillars of traditional Islam, but there was a certain affinity in their opinions, and he had associated with them after his arrival in the city. Yet the excitement finally calmed down, and Qāsimī merely had to hand over his copy of Zahrāwī’s book.¹⁴ It was during this incident that As‘ad al-Šāḥib first came to the fore as a determined opponent of the Salafīs. A year later appeared Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī’s virulent attack which depicted them as Wahhābīs. In 1903 Bīṭār and Qāsimī visited Egypt. They met openly with Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā, despite their known opposition to ‘Abdūllahmīd II’s regime, as well as with Damascene reformers who had left for Egypt to escape its censorship. Qāsimī participated in ‘Abduh’s lessons at al-Azhar and, upon his return to Damascus, prepared at his recommendation a summary of Ghazālī’s *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* as a manual for teachers.¹⁵ Even more interesting in relation to this visit is the testimony of Salīm al-Bīṭār that ‘Abduh treated his brother, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, with such respect that many came to believe that he had studied with him while in exile in Syria.¹⁶ Bīṭār and Qāsimī continued to correspond with ‘Abduh, Riḍā, and other reformists, also after they returned to Damascus. Nevertheless, when one of their Egyptian colleagues visited the city, they were not able to reciprocate with such hospitality, since the governor had warned them not to see him, thereby alluding to their “sin” of ijtiḥād.¹⁷

¹⁴ Commins, pp. 55-59; ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī, *Al-Fiqh wal-Taṣawwuf* (Cairo, 1319/1901). After 1908 Zahrāwī became a leading figure in the incipient Arab movement and was executed by Jamāl Pasha during the First World War. On him, and his articles, during this period see Jawdat al-Rikābī and Sulṭān Jamīl, *Al-Irth al-Fikrī lil-Muṣṭafā al-Ijtīmā’ī, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Zahrāwī* (Damascus, 1963); Ahmed Tarabēin, “‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Zahrāwī: The Career and Thought of an Arab Nationalist,” in Rashid Khalidi et al. (eds.), *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* (New York, 1991), pp. 97-119.

¹⁵ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 126-160, letters on pp. 495, 579; Rashīd Riḍā, *Ta’rīkh al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Abduh* (3 vols. Cairo, 1323-1350/1905-1931), p. 549.

¹⁶ Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, p. 16.

¹⁷ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 206-207.

At the end of 1906 The Ottoman—Orthodox ‘ulama of Damascus renewed their efforts to turn the authorities against their rivals, this time with As‘ad al-Şāhib at their head. Şāhib was enraged by a collection of epistles on “the roots of jurisprudence” (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) published by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī earlier in the year, a collection which included Ibn ‘Arabī’s advocacy of *ijtihād* and rejection of *taqlīd*. Probably unaware of the identity of the author, Şāhib claimed at a meeting convened in the house of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Yūsuf, a Damascene notable who sympathized with the Salafis,¹⁸ that only the four accepted schools should be recognized and denounced the incorporation of a Zāhiri view in the collection. Then he turned to the governor maintaining that the book and its compiler were bringing harm to Islam. Yūsuf, who happened to be present in this meeting too, sharply criticized Şāhib, declaring that he was ignorant, corrupted, and accustomed to slandering the ‘ulama.¹⁹ Refusing to give up, a month later Şāhib reported to Istanbul that ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār was transmitting secrets to the Egyptians to help severe Syria from the Ottoman Empire and annexing it to Egypt. The governor was asked to carry out an investigation, but again on the basis of Yūsuf’s testimony Bīṭār’s name was cleared.²⁰

The orthodox assault led by As‘ad al-Şāhib against ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī coincided with a conflict that erupted among the reformist ‘ulama themselves in September 1906. This conflict began when Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, who during the “mujtahids incident” had distinguished himself as a strong opponent of the autocratic regime of ‘Abdülḥamīd II, accused Bīṭār of spreading the Wahhābī teachings in Damascus.²¹ Bīṭār and Qāsimī became very

¹⁸ On him see ‘Abd al-Qādir Badrān, *Al-Kawākib al-Durriyya fī Ta’rīkh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bāshā al-Yūsuf* (Damascus, 1920). On the connection of his family to the Maydānī faction see Schatkowski Schilcher, “The Hauran Conflicts,” pp. 162-163. In the Young Turk era Yūsuf seems to have changed course. He was elected to parliament in 1912 on the CUP ticket and supported its policies against the Arabists; see ‘Azīm, pp. 15, 18n.

¹⁹ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 429-431.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-385. In the context of these incidents, Qāsimī names Şāhib as the greatest corrupter and deviator in the city. Kurd ‘Alī connects Bīṭār’s interrogation with the Wahhābiyya charge and maintains that the accusation against him was that he was corresponding with Ibn Sa‘ūd and seeking to seize the Caliphate from the Ottomans and pass it to the amir of Najd; see Kurd ‘Alī, *Al-Mudhakkirāt*, vol. 1, p. 54.

²¹ On this incident, according to the version of Qāsimī, see Commings, pp. 111-112. Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī later tried to reduce the significance of the confrontation, claiming that he had not calumniated Bīṭār at all. Among his numerous biographers this affair is only briefly mentioned by Farfūr, pp. 109-110.

concerned by the various charges leveled against them, and the former even initiated meetings with Ḥasanī to effect a reconciliation, and with the governor to prove his innocence. Nevertheless, the harassment continued, and in March 1908 a search was conducted of Qāsimī's room in the Sināniyya mosque and in his home. Three cases of books were confiscated and handed over to the religious court for scrutiny. Fortunately for Qāsimī, the policemen had been satisfied with checking his living room and overlooked his library, which contained many books published in Egypt and banned by the Ḥamīdian censor.²² Similar searches were conducted a number of times after 1906 in Bīṭār's house. Visiting Istanbul the same year, he was offered the office of mufti or qadi in one of the other cities in Syria, probably to keep him away from Damascus. Like his father before him 'Abd al-Razzāq rejected the offer, claiming that he wished only to serve 'ilm.²³

The year 1906, which witnessed this intensified assault by the orthodox 'ulama on 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, was also decisive for the internal consolidation of the Salafi trend in Damascus. In this year, a strong relationship was forged between Qāsimī and Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, the head of the other reformist branch in the city, who was engaged in reviving the Arabic heritage. To understand the nature and significance of this consolidation we must now turn to examine the path and ideas of Jazā'irī and his colleagues.

Reviving the Arabic Heritage

Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī's roots, too, lay in the milieu of 'Abd al-Qādir's Akbarī circle. Ṭāhir (1852-1920) acquired his education first with his father, Ṣāliḥ al-Sam'unī al-Jazā'irī, the mufti of the Algerian community in Damascus and the disciple of Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Siklāwī in the Khalwatiyya-Raḥmāniyya order.²⁴ After his father's death in 1868, he contacted 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī, the amir's associate, and completed his religious studies with him, principally in the fields of jurisprudence and Arabic language. To the end of his life, he had a deep reverence for Ghunaymī, depicting him as a

²² Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, p. 209.

²³ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 17-18.

²⁴ See p. 199.

distinguished 'alim who understood the secrets of the shari'a and shunned the innovations and vanities that had accreted to it in latter-day generations. Yet, unlike the other 'ulama in 'Abd al-Qādir's circle, Ṭāhir also enrolled in the Jaqmaqiyya school, the first state school to be opened in Damascus, and this set him on a unique path. There he studied the primary Islamic languages—Arabic, Persian, and Turkish—and some elements of the modern sciences, thus acquiring practical knowledge that his contemporaries among the 'ulama of the city usually lacked. Under these influences Jazā'irī dedicated himself to reading, especially in the natural sciences and in history, as well as Arabic literature. To better understand the roots of the latter, he also learned the ancient Semitic languages Syriac, Hebrew and Ethiopic, later in his life adding French. Most consequential, though, was Jazā'irī's mastery of Turkish, which facilitated his contact, after the ascension of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd II and the prorogation of the parliament, with several Young Ottoman activists, and following them with Midḥat Pasha, the leader of the constitutional movement, who were dispatched to Damascus as governors to keep them away from the Ottoman capital.²⁵

Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī's first acquaintance with the Young Ottoman association and its ideas on freedom and love of the fatherland goes back to Ziyā Pasha's short governorship at the beginning of 1877, when he was already teaching in the official Zāhiriyya school. There is no evidence for any contact between Jazā'irī and Ziyā himself, who was a leading figure in the association and a member of the commission that drew up the constitution in Istanbul. He did meet, however, Ziyā's secretary who had accompanied him to Syria, Bahā' Bey, and the latter was impressed by his erudition and energy. It was Bahā' who introduced Jazā'irī to Midḥat Pasha after his arrival in Syria at the end of 1878, convincing him thereby of the benefits of allying with favorable rulers.²⁶ Midḥat, who had already become a keen supporter of the principle of federalism, inaugurated with his characteristic vigor a comprehensive set of reforms, designed to consolidate local government in Syria and improve the standard of living of its inhabitants.²⁷ Reserving a special place in this plan for ed-

²⁵ Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 5-6; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 73-75; Khaṭīb, p. 94.

²⁶ 'Isā Iskandar Ma'lūf, "Al-Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī," *Al-Hilāl*, 28 (1920), p. 452.

²⁷ For a description and evaluation of Midḥat's governorship in Syria see Gross, pp. 259-314; Shimon Shamir, "The Modernization of Syria: Problems and Solu-

ucation, he chose Jazā'irī as his right hand in its implementation. The two worked through al-Jam'īyya al-Khayriyya, the Benevolent Society which had been founded a few years earlier at the initiative of some Damascene 'ulama and notables under the leadership of 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Ābidīn.²⁸ Jazā'irī himself had joined it before Midḥat's arrival, but with the governor's support he became the group's leading figure. Funded by contributions, the Society took control of deserted colleges and mosques, establishing in them a number of schools, for boys and for girls. Its considerable success allowed Midḥat to nominate Jazā'irī as General Inspector of Education in Syria. In this capacity, he trained teachers, persuaded parents to send their children to the new schools, composed textbooks, and supervised their publishing in the Society's press. In addition, Jazā'irī attached primary importance to assembling the manuscript collections that had been endowed as waqf in the colleges and mosques of Damascus into a central library, where they would be better preserved. For this purpose he founded the Zāhiriyya Library, the core of the national library of Syria, obliging the recalcitrant administrators of these endowments, with the backing of the authorities, to hand over the collections in their possession.²⁹

Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī was determined to continue with his educational reform activities in Syria even after the dismissal of Midḥat Pasha during the summer of 1880. Yet, in the following years he came under increasing pressure from his orthodox rivals in Damascus, who around 1886 managed to obtain an imperial edict ordering the abolition of his post.³⁰ Our sources do not specify who these rivals of Jazā'irī were, but Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī, his close disciple and biographer, informs us that his teacher detested most of all the two brothers Ṣāliḥ and 'Ārif al-Munayyir. This hostility, according to Kurd 'Alī, came from the endeavors of these two to discourage the younger generation from studying in order to secure the chief religious positions in the city and the rich awqaf of its colleges and

tions in the Early Period of Abdulhamid," in William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (eds.), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 351-381; Najib Elias Saliba, "The Achievements of Midḥat Pasha as Governor of the Province of Syria, 1878-1880," *IJMES*, 9 (1978), pp. 307-323.

²⁸ Shamir, p. 376, relying on documents in the British archives, maintains that Midḥat founded this society, but it seems more accurate that he only directed its activities toward the field of education.

²⁹ Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 6-7; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 15-20, 24-26; Khaṭīb, pp. 104-111; Gross, pp. 273-274.

³⁰ Commins, pp. 166-167n. 9.

mosques for themselves and their associates. We have already seen how Ṣālīḥ, who joined the Benevolent Society and helped found the Zāhiriyya Library, decided in 1882 to change course and serve the Ḥamīdian regime, being followed by ʿĀrif who thereby secured himself a seat on the provincial education council.³¹ Jazāʾirī's bitterness toward them must have originated in this period, and it seems that this experience led him to urge religious students to learn a craft so that as ʿulama they would remain independent and capable of defending their honor and religion, and of fulfilling their task of commending good and forbidding evil.³²

It was the bitter experiences of these years that led Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī, in the footsteps of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, to the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya. He immersed himself in Ibn Taymiyya's books that he found in the Zāhiriyya Library and, realizing their value for the struggle against the orthodox, began to distribute copies he had made of them cheaply and without naming their author. Such ruses had become necessary once his rivals understood the challenge posed for them by Ibn Taymiyya's thought.³³ An echo of the new demarcation line between reformist and orthodox ʿulama in Damascus may be found in the biographical note that appeared about Jazāʾirī in Rashīd Riḍā's *al-Manār* following his death in 1920. Though mostly critical, the author did say that Jazāʾirī had stopped the government from destroying Ibn Taymiyya's tomb in Damascus by raising public opinion against it. He placed this episode during the administration of Miḍḥat Pasha but, in view of Ṭāhir's special relationship with this governor, it seems more likely that it occurred somewhat later.³⁴

Under the inspiration of the Young Ottoman patriotic and liberal ideas, this interest in the works of Ibn Taymiyya became in Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī's thought part of a larger scheme which, beyond the local cultural renaissance among his more traditional counterparts, was designed to revive the heritage of the Arab homeland at large. Working now in a state school for his living, Jazāʾirī nonetheless dedicated most of his time to examining the manuscripts he collect-

³¹ See pp. 126-127.

³² Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣāʾir*, p. 80; Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, p. 17; *idem*, *Al-Mudhakkirāt*, vol. 3, p. 720.

³³ Kurd ʿAlī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, p. 9; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣāʾir*, p. 38.

³⁴ Ṣālīḥ Mukhlīṣ Riḍā, "Al-Shaykh Ṭāhir al-Jazāʾirī al-Dimashqī: Ḥayātuhu wa-Mawtuhu wa-Nashʾatuhu al-ʿIlmiyya," *al-Manār*, 22 (1921), p. 640.

ed in the Zāhiriyya Library. In the years that followed he expanded this activity, undertaking travels in search of rare manuscripts to other Syrian cities, to neighboring Arab countries, and later even to Europe. He thus established himself as one of the leading Arabic bibliographers of his time. Jazā'irī gained the recognition of Arab writers and European Orientalists alike, and he regularly corresponded and exchanged information with many of them. Among his acquaintances he could count Ignaz Goldziher, whom he befriended during the latter's visit to Damascus.³⁵ These scholarly concerns did not prevent Jazā'irī from continuing his political engagement, and after the emergence of the Young Turk movement he established contacts with its activists in Syria.³⁶ Nevertheless, during periods when it was less active, the Ḥamīdian regime allowed Jazā'irī relative freedom and he did not hesitate to rely again upon government assistance to advance his projects. In 1898, when Young Turk activities seemed to have been completely suppressed, he even received a new official appointment, this time as the supervisor of public libraries in Syria. In this capacity he traveled throughout the province, encouraging the establishment of new libraries in its cities, including the Khālidiyya Library in Jerusalem. With the resurgence of Young Turk activity four years later, Jazā'irī's initiatives were again restricted.³⁷

Since Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī was one of the first religious students in Damascus to deviate from the traditional course of lessons from the 'ulama and guidance from the sufi shaykhs, he found few partners among his generation. His main associate during these early years was Salīm al-Bukhārī, the second major figure in this branch of the Salafiyya. Bukhārī (1848-1928) was the son of a Kurdish officer stationed in Damascus and a mother from a family of Bukhārian origin, whence his name. Enrolling first in the Jaqmaqiyya school, he was also attracted to religious studies under the influence of a maternal uncle. His main teachers were the leaders of the local—reformist tendency of late Tanzimat Damascus, Salīm al-ʿAṭṭār and Maḥmūd Ḥamza, as well as Šālīḥ al-Jazā'irī, Ṭāhir's father, and 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Ghunaymī, his influential teacher. Subsequently, Bukhārī

³⁵ Raphael Patai, *Ignaz Goldziher and his Oriental Diary. A Translation and Psychological Portrait* (Detroit, 1987), pp. 119-128; Yūsuf As'ad al-Dāghir, *Maṣādir al-Dirāsa al-Adabiyya* (Beirut, n.d.), pp. 264-265; Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 14-15.

³⁶ Gross, pp. 462-464; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 128-129.

³⁷ Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, p. 12; Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 24-25; Khaṭīb, p. 111.

began to teach the religious and rational sciences and also joined the Benevolent Society under 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Ābidīn. He thus shared the background of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī in many respects, though our sources do not clarify when exactly they became partners on the path of reform. However, we do learn that like Jazā'irī, Bukhārī began to develop a keen interest in the rare manuscripts assembled in the Zāhiriyya Library, particularly in those of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. He also met Muḥammad 'Abduh in Beirut and Damascus, and expressed a deep appreciation for his erudition and views. In the footsteps of Jazā'irī, Salīm al-Bukhārī adopted the same combination of opposition to the traditionalism of the orthodox 'ulama, assimilation of the modern sciences he was exposed to in school, the political ideas of the Young Ottomans, and the revival of the Arabic heritage.

Salīm al-Bukhārī also followed Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī in seeking an official post favorable for the work of reform. Thanks to his mastery of the Turkish language and his considerable religious knowledge, he was thus able to secure himself in the late 1880s an appointment as mufti of the Fifth Ottoman Army, stationed in Syria. This position, in which capacity Bukhārī was responsible for a quarter of a century for the exemption of religious students from military duty, enabled him to become acquainted with most of the 'ulama of Syria. His travels with the army, mostly to Istanbul and the Hijaz, and his encounters with men of religion from other countries passing through Damascus on the hajj, spread his name well beyond its borders. In his encounters with other 'ulama, and in his instruction of religious students, Bukhārī could express his views with relative freedom, at least regarding the religious reforms that he preached. His position in the army also led him to political activity and, like Jazā'irī, he joined the Young Turk association. Bukhārī remained an influential member of that association until after the revolution of 1908.³⁸

With the enormous expansion of the state school system during the Ḥamīdian period, in Damascus and in Syria in general, Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, too, began to acquire an increasing number of followers among the younger generation. Many of his disciples were the sons of religious families which, while retaining their scholarly traditions, had also tried to take part in the general trends of the period by train-

³⁸ Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Bānī, "Tarjamat Salīm al-Bukhārī," *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī*, 9 (1929), pp. 742-744.

ing for the new professions being taught in the high schools of Istanbul.³⁹ These young men sought in Jazā'irī's circle a complement to their official education, which would provide them with elements that the Ḥamīdian regime wanted to deny them. Under his guidance they assimilated religious values which corresponded with the modern scientific thought they were acquiring in the state schools, discussed political and social ideas coming from the West, and celebrated the local Arabic heritage. Under Jazā'irī's inspiration, many of them also became affiliated with the Young Turk opposition.⁴⁰

Thus, despite his acceptance of official employment, in his study circles and research Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī exhibited a spirit of independence from state authority which he had imbibed in the local—reformist milieu of Amir 'Abd al-Qādir. When he decided to remove the white headgear of the 'ulama, seeking to avoid being considered one of the opportunist jurists of the time, he accordingly replaced it with the green headgear which characterized the merchants.⁴¹ Jazā'irī proved faithful to the local—reformist tendency also in his maintaining of good relations with members of the non-orthodox and non-Muslim communities. He regarded association with them as an important asset and espoused a general religious tolerance on the basis of common values.⁴² But, beyond such established modes of elite activity, Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī proved to be one of the first reformist men of religion in Damascus to realize, in the face of the populist policies of Sultan 'Abdülḥamīd II, the importance of reaching out to the masses. Jazā'irī began accordingly to frequent the study circles of the 'ulama and particularly the *dhikr* sessions of the sufi shaykhs in order to attract them to rational investigation and discussion. To the shaykhs he would suggest sufi books that corresponded with his own reformist views, in an effort to curb the irrational beliefs and popular practices prevalent among them. Furthermore, through his simple and lucid method of teaching Jazā'irī was able to appeal directly to the common people, who were normally prevented from political and religious deliberation by the high language of the learned scholars.⁴³ At the same time Jazā'irī began to encourage his disciples to

³⁹ For a discussion of innovation and adaptation among the 'ulama, and the urban elite in general, see Roded, pp. 129-147.

⁴⁰ Commins, pp. 92-95.

⁴¹ Kurd 'Alī, *Al-Mu'āṣirūn*, pp. 272, 276; *idem*, *Al-Mudhakkirāt*, vol. 3, p. 720.

⁴² Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 78-79; Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 16-17; *idem*, *Al-Mudhakkirāt*, vol. 3, p. 721.

⁴³ Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 75-77, 131-134; Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, p. 15.

establish newspapers and magazines to further spread the reformist ideas. In these he recommended to include extensive translations, arguing that since the Arabs were still not fully mature, they must draw (*iqtibās*) from those more advanced. While in Egypt Jazā'irī himself participated in editing *Al-Majalla al-Salafiyya*; and his recommendation was faithfully adopted by Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī who began publishing *Al-Muqtabas*.⁴⁴

As was the case with 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and his circle, the orthodox men of religion in Damascus continued to harass Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī and Salīm al-Bukhārī, too, whenever an opportunity arose. Time and again the two were summoned to an interrogation by the Ottoman authorities on the basis of complaints lodged against them by these 'ulama, though their connections with the Turkish administration always helped them to escape punishment.⁴⁵ This persecution intensified from 1902 onwards, following the renewal of Young Turk activity after its first congress in Paris. A thorough search was conducted in Jazā'irī's house and office while he was in Jerusalem, as well as in twenty other houses in Damascus. This time the Ottoman government itself targeted both him and Bukhārī, suspecting that they were corresponding with Young Turk activists in Europe.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, over the following four years, Jazā'irī continued his work in the libraries of Syria, and it was only in the summer of 1906 that he decided to flee. He sold most of his books and, under the pretext of a working tour along the coast, sailed to Egypt with three chests of valuable books he had decided to keep.⁴⁷

Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī's departure from Syria was certainly motivated by his displeasure with the constant surveillance of the Ottoman government and by his desire to be reunited with associates and disciples who had earlier left for Egypt to enjoy its relatively free atmosphere. His timing, however, seems to be related more to his disappointment with the increasing power of the centralist wing within

⁴⁴ Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 62-63; Henri Laoust, "Le réformisme orthodoxe des 'Salafiya' et les caractères généraux de son orientation actuelle," *REI*, 6 (1932), p. 178; Samir Seikali, "Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd 'Ali and *al-Muqtabas*," in Marwan R. Buheiry (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939* (Beirut, 1981), pp. 125-153.

⁴⁵ Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, p. 10; Bānī, "Salīm al-Bukhārī," p. 746.

⁴⁶ Commins, p. 92.

⁴⁷ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Ḥamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 437-438.

the Young Turk association. This development first became noticeable in Damascus, where the first revolutionary cell of the CUP had been established in 1906 among the field officers, including Muṣṭafā Kemāl, who two years later were to lead the revolution.⁴⁸ For Jazā'irī, the strengthening of the Turkish "nationalists" in the opposition camp meant an end to his hopes that deposing 'Abdülhamīd II would guarantee general political freedom in the Ottoman Empire, and allow the inhabitants of the Arab provinces to cultivate their distinctive identity within its framework.⁴⁹ It was apparently this disappointment which convinced Jazā'irī to take the final step of substituting the idea of local patriotism, which he derived from the Young Ottoman teaching, with the nationalist idea which, although less amenable to the precepts of Islam, could be justified by stressing that the *salaf*, to whose example Ibn Taymiyya preached to return, were Arabs. In 1906 disciples of Jazā'irī were clandestinely organizing for the first time under the nationalist banner in the Arab Renaissance Society.⁵⁰

This new Arabist interpretation of Ibn Taymiyya's legacy led Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī to approach the leaders of the more traditional branch of the Salafiyya in Damascus, who by that time became increasingly identified with the Wahhābiyya. The teachings preached by the Wahhābī scholars of the nineteenth century were more moderate than the original ones, especially with regard to *takfīr*, and thus were better suited to attract religious reformists in the urban centers of the Ottoman Empire. More significant still was the Wahhābī revival which began in 1902 with the conquest of Riyadh by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Sa'ūd, offering these reformists an alternative Arab focus of identity as against the Ottoman. Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī, the nephew and successor of Nu'mān Khayr al-Dīn as head of the Salafī trend in Baghdad, compiled shortly thereafter a history of the Najd, concluding it with a biography of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ramsaur, pp. 95-96.

⁴⁹ See Jazā'irī's letter to Kurd 'Alī reproduced in *idem*, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁰ Commings, pp. 95-98; Eliezer Tauber, *The Emergence of the Arab Movements* (London, 1993), pp. 43-50.

⁵¹ Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī, *Ta'rīkh Najd* (Cairo, 1343/1925). On him and his work see Atharī, pp. 86-end; Peskes, pp. 152-164. As'ad al-Ṣāhib's attack on Qāsimī's collection of epistles about "the roots of jurisprudence" began indirectly with a criticism of this book; see Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, p. 429-430.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī set out to defend the founder of the Wahhābiyya, too, arguing that the extremist stand he had adopted in his struggle against innovation was designed merely to attract common people to the middle way and thus protect them from sin.⁵²

It was thus the dawning conviction that a revival of the Arab “national” heritage was the only adequate religious response to Ottoman populist centralism, and the resultant intensifying state persecution designed to prevent their turn to an alternative Arab focus of identity, which brought about the final consolidation of the Salafī trend in Damascus. A particularly strong association was forged by 1906 between Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, who more than the elderly ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār was prone to accept the political and scientific ideas he preached. Through this association Qāsimī became attached to the “nationalist” graduates of the official education system, among whom was now his own younger brother, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.⁵³ Moreover, under Jazā’irī’s inspiration he set out in the following years to formulate the Salafī teaching in a way that would appeal not only to the learned elite but also to the common people.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī’s Reformism

Like other leaders of the local—reformist trend in Damascus those who adopted the Salafī path were often unable to transcend traditional ways of writing. A recurring assertion in their biographies is that their writing failed to match their vast knowledge, or that they were mujtahids in their religious activities but *muqallids* in composition. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, as already mentioned, left us no treatise to testify of his new orientation, and he admitted before Qāsimī that owing to his advanced age he no longer had the strength to spread his ideas.⁵⁴ Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī’s works are mostly textbooks for elementary schools, written in the early 1880s, when he was the supervisor of education for Syria. He continued to write thereafter, but very irregularly, dedicating his energies instead to the research and publication of the ancient books.⁵⁵ The same holds true for Salīm

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-96, 468-470.

⁵⁴ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, pp. 340-341.

⁵⁵ Kurd ‘Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 27-28.

al-Bukhārī, whose literary yield consists of two epistles, one on conversational manners and the other on the beliefs of the Druze.⁵⁶ These religious reformists, as a transitional generation, seem to have suffered from the gap between a rationalist mode of thinking adopted under the inspiration of modernization and a style of writing which remained bound to the conventions of the traditional scholarship in which they had been educated. This gap could be bridged only by Salafī leaders of the following generation, whose more modern upbringing enabled them to better express their ideas in writing. The only major expression of the Salafī views in Damascus at the end of the Ottoman period thus appears in the writings of their youngest leader, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī. His writings may be seen as initially representing the views of Bīṭār, the founder of the legal— theological branch of the Salafiyya, and at least after 1906, also those of Jazā'irī and Bukhārī, the heads of the branch emphasizing the Arabic heritage. In the analysis of these writings I rely largely on Commins' findings, and on the detailed biography compiled by Qāsimī's son.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī's mature thought rested on two fundamental principles, reason and unity. The central importance that the Salafīs attached to reason was basically a response to the challenge posed by the scientific achievements and philosophical ideas of the West. Like 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī in the previous generation, Qāsimī advocated adopting the fruits of Western science in order to integrate Islamic civilization into the modern world and satisfy its growing needs. However, in view of the increasing disinterest of students of the state schools in religion, the dangers for Muslim society inherent in Western rationalist philosophy became for him, as for Muḥammad 'Abduh, more acute. In his *Dalā'il al-Tawḥīd* (Proofs of God's Unity), completed in July 1908, Qāsimī followed 'Abduh in reviving traditional dialectical theology as a defense of religion against European thinkers and their Muslim followers, who since the assault of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī on their foremost protagonist in India, Aḥmad Khān, had become known as Materialists (*dahriyyūn*).⁵⁷ He opens the book with a series of quasi-scientific proofs for the existence of God, and then seeks to demonstrate that European notions

⁵⁶ Bānī, "Salīm al-Bukhārī," p. 744.

⁵⁷ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 124-127; Keddī, *Islamic Response*, pp. 73-84, and the English translation of his essay in pp. 130-174.

are merely uncertain hypotheses and that the call to reject religion threatens to disintegrate society by undermining its moral basis. Qāsimī gives to reason a broader scope for activity than did ‘Abd al-Qādir, largely corresponding to the ideas of Afghānī and ‘Abduh. He not only believed in an underlying harmony between reason and revelation, but also regarded it as a natural human faculty which allows one to discern good from evil, and as a tool to interpret the scriptures. Unlike the tendency of more Westernized students of the new state schools, Qāsimī also maintained that scientific discoveries could serve to strengthen faith, since they uncover additional signs (*āyāt*) of the existence of God, rather than diminish it. On the other hand, in accordance with the Ḥanbalī approach, and especially with Ibn Taymiyya’s view, he denied the capability of reason to comprehend the nature of God and argued that one must accept the attributes ascribed to Him in the Qur’an without trying to understand.⁵⁸

The central position of unity in the Salafī teaching derived, by contrast, from the longstanding and poignant feeling that Islam had regressed and that internal dissension was the fundamental cause for the Muslims having become easy prey to foreigners. In reliance on Ibn Taymiyya’s teaching, the Salafis sought to reestablish a unified umma on the basis of the original form of the religion, as it had been taught by the Prophet and implemented by the forefathers of Islam, *al-salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. They clearly preferred a moderate and peaceful interpretation of this teaching to the original Wahhābī one. Thus Qāsimī denounces in his writings the practice of ‘ulama to charge their peers with misleading others (*taḍlīl*), and calls for unity on the basis of generally accepted fundamental religious precepts. He was even more averse to the practice of *taḳfīr* which, as he points out, was introduced into Islam by the Khawārij, asserting that those who turn toward Mecca in their prayers and fulfil the precepts of the shari‘a must not be declared heretics. For the sake of unity he even sought compromise, in the footsteps of Shāh Walīallāh and Muḥammad al-Shawkānī, between Sunnis and Shi‘is.⁵⁹ As part of the same moderate approach, Qāsimī tried to prove the validity of his own way, rather than attacking the views of his rivals. In the face of hostile jurists he claimed that he had no intention of creating a new madh-

⁵⁸ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Dalā’il al-Tawḥīd* (Damascus, 1908); Commins, pp. 66-68.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

hab or of deviating from the opinions of the founders of the accepted legal schools, but only wanted to stimulate an examination of their methods and sources to better understand the intentions of the shari'a.⁶⁰ Thence stemmed his objection to 'Abduh's opinion in favor of creating one common madhhab from among the existing legal schools, which in Qāsimī's view would have done harm to the roots of Islamic jurisprudence. Similarly, he refrained from denouncing the Ash'arī and Māturīdī theological schools, which indulged themselves in reflections upon God's attributes, despite his espousal of the opposite Ḥanbalī stand. Qāsimī did not hesitate to reproach Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya themselves for asserting that members of these schools were heretics.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī criticizes Ibn Taymiyya and his disciples even more explicitly for declaring Ibn 'Arabī to be heretic. Agreeing that one might denounce Ibn 'Arabī in cases where he practiced unlawful allegorical interpretation (*ta'wīl*), Qāsimī nonetheless maintains that the theological thought and legal method of al-Shaykh al-Akbar show that he did not belong to this category. The best would be to avoid the difficult points in his teaching while regarding his belief as firm and his intentions as sincere.⁶¹ The emphasis on Ibn 'Arabī's merit as a theologian and jurist, who espoused views that generally corresponded with those of the Salafīs' in the matters of *tawhīd* and *ijtihād*, rather than as a sufi, epitomizes well the essence of their divergence from 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī's teaching. It is complemented by Qāsimī's presentation of the Akbarī teaching as an Islamic philosophy. Viewing the sufis with the same moderate approach that characterized his entire thought, he seeks to delineate a middle way between their opponents, who conclude from their utterances that they are infidels, and their admirers, who regard their path as the essence and goal of Islam. Those who examine their works, Qāsimī maintains, notice that Sufism constitutes a branch of philosophy (*fann al-ḥikma*), though since the authors are people of spiritual training (*riyāda*), self-deprivation (*tajrīd*), and asceticism (*tazāhhud*), theirs is not a pure Greek philosophy, but a mixture of ideas unique to Islam. Moreover, although modern science had detected some errors in this teaching, it should be remembered that in those ages they were part of the accepted truth. On the other hand, though one may conclude from the apparent meaning of sufi utterances that

⁶⁰ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 244-245.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-274.

they espouse incarnation or pantheism (*ḥulūl* or *ittiḥād*), a careful scrutiny of their intentions clarifies that this is contrary to their principles.⁶² Such a positive view of Ibn ‘Arabī and his thought allows Qāsimī to include him along with philosophers like Fārābī and Ibn Rushd, the Zāhirī theologian Ibn Ḥazm, and the major ‘ulama whom the Salafīs relied upon—Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, and also Ghazālī—in the group of noble thinkers who had been attacked by blind fanaticism as they sought the truth.⁶³

For Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, and the Salafīs in general, *ijtihād* was the main instrument for the reform of Islam, to restore the unity of the umma and lead it in a rational way toward prosperity in the modern world. The significance of this concept in his teaching, however, differs perceptibly from its use among jurists of the first centuries of Islam, and from how it was later used by their successors who increasingly applied to the practice of *taqlīd*. The two principles underlying Qāsimī’s application of *ijtihād*, which he imbibed from ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, were the provision of proof for each ruling and the rejection of any prejudgment based upon the traditions of a sect or legal school. In reliance on Ibn Taymiyya’s teaching he claimed that truth is not limited to one school, and that mujtahids had never ceased to exist in the umma. In the face of conservative opposition, he also tried to justify *ijtihād* by quoting the heads of the various legal schools forbidding anyone to imitate their rulings without verifying the sources. These great jurists of the past, like Ibn Taymiyya and religious reformists in general, had turned directly to the Qur’an and the sunna for their rulings, and it was to these same sources that Qāsimī now called scholars to return. Nevertheless, for him the principal advantage of *ijtihād* lay in its value for deciding matters for which the Qur’an and the sunna do *not* provide explicit solutions, when proof would have to be based on reason. Such a concept again betrays Qāsimī’s affinity to Muḥammad ‘Abduh, whose aim was to bring free investigation into the religious sciences as a means to adopt Western innovations for the benefit and advancement of Muslim society. Qāsimī knew that the rational use of *ijtihād* could lead to disagreement and dissent, but he believed that these might be limited by ensuring the erudition of the mujtahids in both the roots of jurisprudence and in the manner of argumentation.⁶⁴

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304; Commings, p. 80.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 629-631.

⁶⁴ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Al-Fatwā fī al-Islām* (Damascus, 1911); *idem*, *Irshād*

Reason and unity were also the two pillars of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī's criticism of the Salafiyya's opponents, the 'ulama and sufi shaykhs of the Ottoman—orthodox tendency. Though he was deterred by their strength from expressing it openly, his deep animosity toward them appears in his diary, where his sharp words against them clearly contrasted with his characteristic moderation. Like other Salafis, Qāsimī calls these men of religion either *jāmidūn*, "frozen ones" or *hashwiyya*, "populists." He describes them as pretenders unworthy of their positions, and as the cause of Islam's decline in the eyes of the younger generation. These were evident from their inaction in the face of the spread of religious innovations and the increasing imitation of European culture.⁶⁵ Such criticism of the orthodox 'ulama was formulated, on the basis of Ibn Taymiyya's teaching, by rejecting the practice of *taqlīd* which underlay their entire erudition. In one instance Qāsimī wrote that "blind imitation is leprosy which spread among the people and began to eradicate them. This is a terrifying disease, a general paralysis, and a perplexing madness that throws man into apathy and idleness."⁶⁶ *Taqlīd* was, in his opinion, also the cause of school partisanship (*ta'aṣṣub lil-madhhab*), whether legal or theological, which spread dissension in the umma, as well as the obstacle to free inquiry and the efficient adaptation of the shari'a to the changing circumstances of the modern age. Thus Qāsimī echoes the words of 'Abd al-Qādir half a century earlier in writing that for the imitator the criterion for establishing the truth is the imam of his school rather than reason or the scriptures, so that there is no use in arguing with him.⁶⁷ Just as sharp, and again in the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyya, is Qāsimī's condemnation of the popular sufi shaykhs, who are "like electric poles, spreading madness in the heads of the people and leading them to exhibit symptoms that seem like epilepsy and mental disease. The ceaseless reiteration of the name Allāh leads to spiritual madness or melancholy."⁶⁸ Qāsimī also sets out against practices that had become associated with Sufism, such as asceticism and self-mortification which he depicts as narcotic ideas contradicting both reason and the shari'a, and especially against the visit of saints' tombs to seek their intercession with God. The

al-Khalq ilā al-'Amal bi Khabar al-Barq (Damascus, 1911); Commins, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77. For this rendering of the term *hashwiyya* see Hodgson, vol. 1, pp. 391-392n. 12.

⁶⁶ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, p. 357.

⁶⁷ Commins, pp. 70-72.

⁶⁸ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, p. 353.

Salafis irreverently nicknamed the conservative men of religion who defended this practice *qubūriyya*, “tombs people”.⁶⁹

As opposed to the strong animosity he harbored against the Ottoman-orthodox men of religion, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī displayed conspicuous sympathy for the educated young, the graduates of the modern schools, despite their aloofness from religious studies. His attitude clearly reflects the influence of Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī, which became so crucial for him by 1906. Referring to a question put to him regarding these young people after the Young Turk revolution, Qāsimī elucidates the factors that made them dear to him under the conditions prevailing in the city during the autocratic regime of ‘Abdülhamīd II:

Be content now that they are the supporters of truth, the adversaries of “the tombs people”. If a question seems logical to them, they accept it, otherwise they reject it. They are a group of intellectuals, clever, prudent, authors, creators, up to this point. As for the logical and traditional sciences, their discussions and investigations do not concern them. The cursed Ḥamīdian policy generated revulsion against ‘ilm and decreed that it be slain by the frequent persecution of its people. In my opinion, the ‘alim who excelled during his reign (*mulk*) in his country is one of the wonders of the world, since those who endured the persecutions and sought ‘ilm for its own sake, knowing that their vast knowledge would lead to every disgraceful accusation of them, and that the greatest shame and sin would be a book they would publish or an idea they would mention, those who endured all these nothing is more astonishing than them. Therefore, do not wonder at those who do not know the way of the *salaf*, nor indeed of the *khalaf*, nor what is theology.⁷⁰

The Ḥamīdian and Young Turk centralized regimes also led Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī to show sympathy for the Arab nationalist views emerging among this younger generation. Qāsimī emphasizes in many of his books that Islam had been delivered to the Arabs in their own tongue, and that it was they who disseminated it in the time of the *salaf*. Nevertheless, here too, this sympathy does not imply that he shared all of their opinions. Until the end of his life, Qāsimī remained faithful to the Ottoman State, stressing its basic religious identity and its importance as the principal defender of the Muslim countries, including the Arab ones, against Western assault.⁷¹

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 351; Commins, p. 81.

⁷⁰ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 603-604.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 469. For an analysis of the differences between the Salafī and the Arabist thought see Commins, pp. 98-102.

Like Ibn ‘Ābidīn two generations earlier, Qāsimī and the Salafīs whose views he represented, sensed that the religious men of their time had betrayed their vocation and thus enabled the enemies of Islam to humiliate it. Yet, in contrast to the great jurist of Shaykh Khālīd’s time, who professed the traditional tenet that the ‘ulama are the *ulī al-amr*, those in authority over the rulers, the Salafīs realized that under the new circumstances of the Ḥamīdian regime it was the state which harnessed the ‘ulama to its Westernizing autocratic project. In their quest after a new, more independent, basis for involvement in the affairs of their society the reformists turned to the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya. Thus in the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyya, Qāsimī sought to restore the unity of the Muslim umma upon the foundation of the way of the forefathers, *al-salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*, and like him, he regarded reason as an important tool for defending Islam against its assailants. These two basic principles led him to follow Ibn Taymiyya in rejecting both *taqlīd* and popular Sufism, and in adopting *ijtihād* and, at least to a limited extent, a moderate form of Sufism which was primarily a practical—moral system of worship. Nonetheless, Qāsimī lacked the religious zeal of Ibn Taymiyya and the synthesis which he strove to effect was much more tolerant than that of his model. He included within it not only the legal madhhabs, but also the theological schools and sufi thought. In the latter sphere, most salient was his defense of Ibn ‘Arabī, whom Ibn Taymiyya vehemently attacked, an attempt that undoubtedly reflects the heritage left in Damascus by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī. The greatest deviation of Qāsimī from the teaching of Ibn Taymiyya, however, concerned the limits set by the latter on the use of reason. In the face of the increasing impact of Western thought and science, this became for him the main tool for assimilating their fruits and thus preserving the vitality of Islam in the modern world. In view of the centralizing and populist policies of the Ḥamīdian regime, this rationalist application of the way of the *salaf* also determined the friendly attitude of Qāsimī and his Salafī comrades toward the new generation of secular intellectuals then emerging in Syria in the shadow of Western influence, and ultimately also toward the Arab nationalist movement that sprang therefrom.

The Suppression by the Young Turk Regime

Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī did not share the enthusiasm which took hold of his fellow Syrians, and many subjects of the Ottoman Empire, in the wake of the Young Turk revolution of July 1908. To the surprise of his friends and disciples, the Salafis and the Arabists, who celebrated the restoration of the Constitution and believed that an era of freedom was being ushered in, he refused to return to Syria with the other exiles, expressing distrust for the Committee for Union and Progress. Based on his acquaintance with the elements behind the revolution, Jazā'irī is said to have claimed that this is merely a transition from personal to collective autocracy. His indignation mounted in the following years, as the CUP tightened its grip on the reigns of power in Istanbul and its centralist policies came to the fore. Visiting Syria two months before the First World War broke out, Jazā'irī was summoned to interrogation promptly upon landing in Tripoli, on the suspicion that he sought to annex the Syrian provinces to Egypt on behalf of the British.⁷² At that time he was maintaining that the Young Turk regime was doomed and that the Arabs should prepare to exploit the coming opportunities. Returning to Egypt after the assassination of the Austrian crown prince Ferdinand, Jazā'irī was spared the fate that awaited many of his colleagues and disciples under the military rule established in Syria by Jamāl Pasha. Among those executed by the latter in 'Aley in 1915-1916 was his nephew, Salīm al-Jazā'irī, whom he himself had reared and had enrolled in the military school in Istanbul, and who had served during the war as an Ottoman officer. When the Arab revolt broke out Jazā'irī expressed great satisfaction and called on others to support it, but it was only after the conquest of Syria from the Ottomans that he would be consoled on the death of Salīm and his comrades.⁷³

The absence of Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī from Syria during the Young Turk era prevented him from directly participating in shaping at this critical juncture the course of the Salafī—Arabist opposition movement. Jazā'irī decided to return to Damascus only at the end of 1919, feeling that his death was near. Under the Arab government of Fayṣal, he received an impressive welcome and was honored by being nomi-

⁷² For Jazā'irī's description of this episode see his letter in Kurd 'Alī, *Kunūz al-Ajdād*, pp. 45-46.

⁷³ Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, pp. 116-126; Khaṭīb, pp. 79-86.

nated to be director of the Zāhiriyya Library, which he had founded forty years earlier, and member of the Arab Scientific Academy just established by his faithful disciple, Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī. Allowed once again to propound his views in Damascus, Jazā'irī called upon the government and upon his disciples to adhere to the shari'a and to work jointly for the building up of the Arab State. His days were numbered, however, and he died four months after his return to Syria, at the beginning of 1920.⁷⁴

The attitude of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī toward the Young Turk revolution of 1908 was initially much more favorable. After a few days of confusion about the significance of the events unfolding in Istanbul, two camps emerged among the men of religion in Damascus. The orthodox 'ulama faithful to 'Abdülhamīd II, who still reigned as Sultan, began to preach against the new regime, claiming that its goal was to seduce Muslims from their religion and to replace the Qur'an and the sunna with a man-made constitution. The reformist 'ulama, by contrast, supported the constitution, which they thought would put an end to the Ḥamīdian autocracy and usher in, in Syria and the entire Empire, a regime of freedom.⁷⁵ They gathered twenty days after the revolution in support of the Young Turks in the house of Salīm al-Kuzbarī (d. 1912), the hadith teacher under the Nasr Dome in the Umayyad mosque.⁷⁶ Qāsimī composed a special speech for the occasion, in which he asserted that the constitution is not only compatible with the shari'a, but that religion actually necessitates it. He likened the provisions of the constitution to legal rulings deriving from the four "roots of jurisprudence" by way of ijtihad, and claimed that *al-salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* had anticipated the makers of all constitutions in their concern for the interests of the nation in their time! On the other hand, Qāsimī warned against any freedom not bound by the precepts of the shari'a and moral principles.⁷⁷

During the following months it became evident that the power of the orthodox 'ulama, whose call to adhere to the shari'a in its traditional form was more intelligible for the masses than the new ideas

⁷⁴ Bānī, *Tanwīr al-Baṣā'ir*, p. 140; Khaṭīb, pp. 115-116.

⁷⁵ Gross, pp. 518-525.

⁷⁶ On Salīm, the son of Aḥmad Muslim al-Kuzbarī, see Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 282; Bīṭār, *Hilyat al-Bashar*, pp. 682-683. Kuzbarī was later to become a supporter of the CUP against the Arabists; see 'Aẓm, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁷ Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 215-226.

of freedom and a constitution, had not been weakened by the revolution. These men of religion, assisted by the many officials of the Ḥamīdian administration who had lost their posts under the new regime, took advantage of the new freedoms of assembly and speech to establish their own association, The 'Ulama Club. They decided to display their strength on the eve of the parliamentary elections of October 1908, exploiting the visit of Rashīd Riḍā to Syria to stir up the crowd against their adversaries, the CUP and its Salafī supporters. Riḍā was honored to give a public lecture in the Umayyad mosque, which many attended. He promised another lecture on the next day, but then Ṣāliḥ al-Tūnisī, a conservative 'alim who had arrived in Damascus only shortly before him and had been recruited for this purpose, began railing against him, being joined by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Khaṭīb. They accused Riḍā of rejecting the legal schools and supporting the Wahhābiyya. The infuriated crowd besieged him, and only with great difficulty was he rescued from the mosque. Riḍā hastily left Damascus the following day, at his friends' advice, while Bīṭār and Qāsimī, who were charged with having invited him to the city, were forced to shut themselves in their homes for fear of the furious mob. Their rivals further tried to remove them from their positions in the Daqqāq and Sināniyya mosques, and only the imperial certificates of their possession prevented that. Both preferred to let the situation calm down, rather than enter into conflict with the orthodox. It was only four months later that they dared to return to their mosques. This was a harder blow than any Bīṭār and Qāsimī had experienced under the Ḥamīdian regime.⁷⁸

The counter-revolutionary attempt of 'Abdülhamīd II's loyalists in April 1909, a mere two months after Bīṭār and Qāsimī had re-emerged from their houses, prompted the orthodox 'ulama once again to stir up the Damascene public against the CUP and the Salafīs. Enlisting adherents for the Muḥammadan Union, a religious organization that had just been established in Istanbul, they tried to contribute to the success of the insurrection. This time, however, the orthodox suffered a severe setback, which brought in its wake the deposition of Sultan 'Abdülhamīd.⁷⁹ Their leader in Damascus, accused of membership in the Muḥammadan Union, was obliged to

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-462; Rashīd Riḍā, "Riḥlat Ṣāḥib al-Manār," *al-Manār*, 11 (1909), pp. 936-950; Ḥiṣnī, p. 280; 'Aẓm, pp. 47-48.

⁷⁹ David Farhī, "The Şeriat as a Political Slogan—or the Incident of the 31st Mart," *MES*, 7 (1971), pp. 275-299.

flee and hide from the authorities.⁸⁰ The triumph of the Young Turks in the capital gave the Salafis a short respite. At this point ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār was made part of the Damascene delegation dispatched to Istanbul to swear allegiance and congratulate the new Sultan, Meḥmed V, echoing his father’s selection sixty-two years earlier as the city’s representative for the circumcision ceremony of the future Sultans, ‘Abdūlazīz and ‘Abdūlḥamīd II.⁸¹ Once back in Damascus, Bīṭār was honored by being asked to recite the traditional *mawlid* of the Prophet in the Sulaymāniyya lodge, this time in a Salafi spirit.⁸² At this period Qāsimī, certainly with the encouragement of his elder comrade, turned to the search for, and publication of, the works of Ibn Taymiyya and his disciples. In letters he exchanged with his colleagues, Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Alūsī of Baghdad and Muḥammad Naṣīf of Jedda, there is a sense of urgency, undoubtedly rooted in their bitter experience with the conservative persecution, and in the desire to disseminate, against them, the spirit of rational enlightenment.⁸³

‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī’s sense of relief lasted for only a few months. As the CUP consolidated its reign over the Empire and began to implement the centralizing policy espoused by its leaders, it soon discovered the advantage of support from the orthodox men of religion, the same element used by the Ḥamīdian regime it had deposed. These ‘ulama and sufi shaykhs, who had demonstrated their sway over the common people, were now ready to transfer their loyalty to the new rulers of the Empire. At the same time, they carried their struggle against the Salafis to the pages of their magazine, *al-Ḥaqā’iq*, analyzed in Chapter 4. As early as September 1909, Bīṭār and Qāsimī were summoned, together with a group of like-minded notables and young intellectuals, to an official interrogation, the likes of which again they had not experienced even under the Ḥamīdian regime. This time the charges were explicitly political. They were accused of founding and heading the Arab Renaissance Society as the branch of a movement with counterparts

⁸⁰ [Rashīd Riḍā], “Fitan Ramaḍān fī Dimashq al-Shām, *al-Manār*, 12 (1909), p. 720. See also the letters on this affair in Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 523, 594-595.

⁸¹ Bīṭār, *Ḥilyat al-Bashar*, p. 19; Jundī, *A’lām al-Adab*, vol. 1, p. 221.

⁸² Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, p. 228.

⁸³ See the letters of Qāsimī to Muḥammad Naṣīf in Z. al-Qāsimī, *Jamāl al-Dīn*, pp. 585-628.

in Yemen and the Najd, of seeking administrative autonomy and Arab government, of connections to the Wahhābiyya, and, in seeming contradiction to all these, of serving the interests of ‘Izzat al-‘Ābid, Sultan ‘Abdülhamīd’s confidant who escaped to Paris.⁸⁴ This interrogation seems to have persuaded Bīṭār and Qāsimī that Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irī’s judgment against the Young Turks was basically correct. Though clearly sympathetic with the young Arabists, the two decided to shun politics altogether. In the remaining years of their life they concentrated on the scholarly work of reviving Ibn Taymiyya’s legacy. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī succumbed to typhoid fever at the beginning of 1914, thus avoiding the darkest hours of persecution by the CUP in Syria under the military rule of Jamāl Pasha. ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār, nearing his eightieth year, was very upset by the premature death of his closest friend, as well as that of his own two sons, and in his last years he abandoned all activity. He died in 1917.⁸⁵

Among the leaders of the Salafī trend in Damascus, the full might of the CUP regime was thus felt only by Salīm al-Bukhārī. Having close ties with the Young Turks during the Ḥamīdian period, Bukhārī had left the army and joined their list of candidates for the 1908 elections.⁸⁶ Three years later he was already chosen to head the Damascene branch of the Liberty and Entente Party, which combined most forces opposed to CUP rule. Bukhārī was not deterred by the persecution conducted by the CUP following the elections of 1912, which its leaders had manipulated in their favor. He distinguished himself by agitating for a decentralized government and by demanding that Arab rights be fulfilled within its framework. During the war, Jamāl Pasha turned against him, too. Held for two months in the fortress of Damascus, where he was tortured, Bukhārī was then sent to the court martial in ‘Aley. There his son, Maḥmūd Jalāl, was among the Arabists who were executed, while he himself was banished to Anatolia after he refused to forswear denouncing the government. Bukhārī returned to Damascus at the end of the war to join Fayṣal’s Arab government. He was elected to the State Council and, when the Arab Scientific Academy was founded, he enrolled in it as one of the first members. Following the French occupation of Syria Bukhārī and his Salafī colleagues were soon to

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 202-204, 470-476. For subsequent persecutions of Bīṭār, in connection to the elections of 1912, see ‘Aẓm, pp. 63-64, 75.

⁸⁵ Ḥāfiẓ and Abāza, p. 353.

⁸⁶ Commins, p. 129.

learn that the religious policy of the Mandatory authorities would not differ substantially from that of their Ottoman predecessors.⁸⁷

Summing up the course of the Salafiyya of late Ottoman Damascus shortly after its demise Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, the Ḥanbalī jurist and historian, characterized this trend as constituting a middle way (*wasīṭ*) between two extremes. He contrasted them with the supporters of the Wahhābiyya, against whom he repeated the arguments of his relative, Muṣṭafā al-Shaṭṭī, and with the orthodox ‘ulama, whom he criticized for adhering to the practice of blind imitation, and for ignoring both reason and the path of the *salaf*. This Salafī “middle way” was epitomized for Shaṭṭī above all in the way and fate of his teacher, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī,

who was often criticizing the extremists of both groups and pointing out to us their good and bad sides... When something concerning the religion and the public interest came up, he would weigh it with the scales of the shari‘a and of reason, examine it according to truth and justice, and decide on the basis of his knowledge and understanding... No one equaled him, though most [of the ‘ulama] denounced him and turned their backs on him. There is no power and no strength save in God.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Bānī, “Salīm al-Bukhārī,” pp. 745-749.

⁸⁸ Muḥammad Jamīl al-Shaṭṭī, *Al-Wasīṭ bayn al-Ifrāṭ wal-Tafrīt* (Damascus, 1340 A.H.).

CONCLUSION

Wa-kadhālika ja‘alnākum umma wasaṭ.
Thus we appointed you a midmost nation.
Qur’an, al-Baqara (2), 143.

The three consecutive reform trends which were active in Damascus during its last century under Ottoman rule—the Khālidiyya, the Akbariyya, and the Salafiyya—drew their inspiration from different sources in the Muslim tradition and followed different paths to realize their different objects. The first of them, the Khālidiyya, was a branch of the Naqshbandī–Mujaddidī order which sought to reinvigorate the weakening central government. Its founder, Shaykh Khālīd of Kurdistan, received his authorization in the mother order in India and spread its teachings in the Asiatic regions of the Ottoman Empire. Basing himself in Damascus in the last four years of his life, 1823-1827, Khālīd generated in the city a considerable religious awakening on the two pillars of strict adherence to the precepts of the *sharī‘a* and activity within the framework of the *ṭarīqa*. These reflected the two faces of the Naqshbandiyya—*‘ilm* and *taṣawwuf*, united at their root by a mystic inversion in which spiritual experience precedes the treading of the path. From this inversion derived the *ṭarīqa*’s organization around the guiding shaykh, its strong affinity to orthodoxy and to its bearers, the ‘ulama, and its involvement in social and political affairs. Khālīd himself was motivated by a deep feeling that the umma lived under a serious regression, calling for a vigorous regeneration. This feeling derived from the decline of the Ottoman central government and the strengthening of its internal enemies, especially the ultra-orthodox Wahhābī movement, which defied it from the Arabian Peninsula, and the non-orthodox Bektāshī order, the patron of the Janissary corps in Istanbul, which obstructed its way to reform. As a Naqshbandī shaykh, Khālīd regarded it as his duty to influence the rulers and, through them the entire umma, to return to the path of the shari‘a and thus restore its vitality. The Khālīdī sub-order constituted the organizational tool for his activity, and in this sphere lay the principal novelties Khālīd introduced in the Naqshbandī path he had inherited. These consisted of the *khalwa arba‘iniyya*, a concentrated seclusion of

forty days which allowed him to authorize with great speed deputies to spread his message; the *rābiṭa*, a mystical binding to his image designed to centralize their activity under his leadership; and *ghalq al-bāb*, the closing of the door during the *dhikr* ceremony, which helped him to stress the uniqueness of his path.

Despite the short duration of Shaykh Khālīd's work in Damascus, the Khālidiyya continued to spread in the city to the end of the Ottoman period, and beyond till our own time. Nevertheless, its organizational evolution was characterized by a number of fundamental tensions that determined its relationship with the succeeding trends of reform in Damascus, and the religious standing of its heads in the city in general. The first tension was revealed already in the weeks following Khālīd's death in consequence of the collapse of the succession arrangement he had devised. I depicted it in Naqsh-bandī terms as the tension between his two principal organizational novelties, the *rābiṭa* and the *khalwa*. The deputies Khālīd left behind failed to preserve the unity of the order, which the spiritual binding to the shaykh was designed to secure, tending instead to stress their independence by applying the concentrated seclusion to swiftly authorize numerous deputies of their own. Consequently, there developed an increasing gap between the Khālīdī ideal of a unified order under one leadership, and the reality in which it continued to spread without a guiding hand. The fragmentation of the Khālidiyya was exacerbated a year after Khālīd's death by the decision of Sultan Maḥmūd II to turn against it, ordering the expulsion from Damascus of all the deputies who accompanied the Shaykh from Iraq and Kurdistan.

Maḥmūd II's decree of expulsion uncovered a second fundamental tension which was inherent in the activity of Shaykh Khālīd in Damascus, that between the endeavor of the order to strike roots among the local population, particularly the 'ulama, and the foreign, mainly non-Arab, provenance of its shaykhs. Khālīd refrained from authorizing deputies from among the inhabitants of Damascus during his period of activity there because he sought to preserve the city as the organizational center of the Khālidiyya, which would not be identified with any local elements. Seen in this light, the Sultan's move against the order was doubly harmful. On the one hand, it considerably weakened the ability of the Khālīdīs to continue leading the renewal movement initiated by Shaykh Khālīd in Damascus itself, and, on the other hand, it prevented them from retaining the city

as the order's general center of activity. The only deputy of Khālīd to remain in Damascus after the expulsion decree was Muḥammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Khānī, whom he had summoned from Hamah. Khānī regarded himself, by this merit, as the head of the entire Khālīdī sub-order, but as an outsider his position remained precarious even in Damascus itself. The Khālīdīs were permitted to return a few years later and fully renewed their activity in the city after the accession of 'Abdūlmecīd, but they could not restore to the Naqshbandiyya the vitality it had possessed under Khālīd.

The introduction of the reforms of the early Tanzimat period by Sultan 'Abdūlmecīd disclosed a third fundamental tension in the path of Shaykh Khālīd, this one concerning the attitude of the Khālīdiyya toward the Ottoman government. In Damascus, this tension further weakened the order by sowing dissention among its leaders. Muḥammad al-Khānī and his successors emphasized Khālīd's instruction to keep distance from the rulers, regarding it as binding even when the latter follow the shari'a. Maḥmūd al-Şāḥib, Khālīd's brother who settled in the city under the patronage of the Sultan, by contrast, claimed that it is obligatory to serve such rulers in the name of the shari'a. This split between the heads of the Khālīdiyya in Damascus degenerated into open conflict during the Ḥamīdian period, when As'ad al-Şāḥib was enlisted in the service of the autocratic regime of 'Abdūlḥamīd II and his Islamic policy in the name of the same adherence to the shari'a. His reliance on the Ottoman government enabled Şāḥib to assume a dominant position in the order in Damascus at the expense of the Khānīs. In his polemic against them he claimed to head the Khālīdiyya in general, but his very turn to the rulers reflected an acknowledgement that its major characteristics, the organizational novelties of Shaykh Khālīd, had lost their efficacy. Hence his readiness to compromise on the validity of these novelties, and ultimately to abandon them altogether. Şāḥib's subsequent harnessing to the service of the Young Turk regime, particularly of the stiff military rule imposed by the CUP on Syria during the First World War, led him to further forsake the distinctive orthodox path of the Naqshbandiyya within the general framework of Sufism.

The second trend of religious reform in late Ottoman Damascus, the Akbariyya, was a reinterpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's theosophy in response to the challenge posed by the West. It was conceived by Amir 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, the leader of the resistance movement to the French occupation of Algeria, who became an adher-

ent of al-Shaykh al-Akbar during his captivity in France. At that time he underwent an acute spiritual crisis, but also realized the achievements of the rationalist approach that underlies modern Western civilization. Choosing Damascus as his residence after release, ‘Abd al-Qādir headed there in the last part of his life, the years 1855-1883, an elect circle of disciples who engaged in studying the teaching of Ibn ‘Arabī under his guidance. Motivated, like Shaykh Khālīd before him, by a deep sense of mission, ‘Abd al-Qādir’s experience nevertheless led him to conclude that the regression of the umma could no longer be explained solely in terms of an internal decline of the Muslim world, but rather reflected the increasingly undeniable supremacy of the West. His main interest shifted, accordingly, from the practical path of the *ṭarīqa* to the quest for the divine truth of the *ḥaqīqa*. Ibn ‘Arabī’s system of thought, which ‘Abd al-Qādir set out to adapt to the new realities of the time, was founded on a literal interpretation by way of mystic experience (*kashf*) of the Qur’an and the sunna. At the root of the reality thus revealed to him stood the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the unity of being, embodying a relationship of quasi-mutuality between God and His creatures. ‘Abd al-Qādir differed from Ibn ‘Arabī in his experiential interpretation of this doctrine in three principal points—his interest in science, his tolerant attitude toward Christians, and his overlooking the government’s Westernizing thrust. These supplied him with the basis for criticizing the traditional mode of learning with its reliance on blind imitation, which he had come to regard as the cause of the regression of Islam, and for adopting the Western rationalist approach to worldly affairs, as the key to its preservation in the modern world.

The Akbarī teaching, as interpreted by ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irī, found a strong echo among the reformist ‘ulama of Damascus who in the previous generation had joined the Naqshbandī renewal movement of Shaykh Khālīd. It was also embraced by the leaders of the Algerian community, most of them belonging to the Raḥmāniyya order, who had immigrated to the city following the final defeat of the amir. The sons of the religious men of these two groups constituted the core of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s elect circle in late Tanzimat Damascus. Yet, as with the previous reformist trend, a number of fundamental tensions gradually became apparent in this teaching, most of them already in the last years of ‘Abd al-Qādir himself. One tension derived from the perennial problem of balancing

the *ẓāhirī* aspect of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which stressed its compatibility with the precepts of the *sharī'a*, and its *bāṭinī* aspect, which could be understood as superseding it. To offset the tendency inherent in 'Abd al-Qādir's teaching toward the internal inclusive interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's legacy, the members of his inner circle were always careful to follow him in emphasizing their strict adherence to the external commandments of the One Being. On the periphery of this circle, particularly within the framework of the Yashruṭiyya order, however, there emerged a tendency to transgress these commandments out of the experience of being one with Him. Under the increasing pace of modernization of the Ḥamīdian and Young Turks periods, this tension in 'Abd al-Qādir's Akbarī teaching gradually merged with an even more profound one, that between the sufi mysticism with which his entire thought was permeated and the Western rationalism that he now advocated. First formulated two years after the amir's death in the writing of his young brother and heir, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī, this second tension came subsequently to mark a major dividing line between orthodox and reformists in Damascus. Thus the conservative adherents of the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* were inclined to defend Sufism to the exclusion of the rationalist thrust of the age; while for its more innovative adherents, who became increasingly convinced of the need to apply the rationalist mode of thinking even to the religious sciences, Sufism was reduced to a practical-moral system of worship.

In view of the autocratic nature of 'Abdülḥamīd II and the Young Turk regimes, however, the most critical tension inherent in the Akbarī interpretation of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī proved to be, as has been the case with the previous reform trend of the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya, the question of the attitude to be taken toward the government. Regarding the centralizing aspect of these regimes, during the Ḥamīdian period 'Abd al-Qādir's successors had to choose between full obedience to the Ottoman Sultan—Caliph and concentration in the local affairs of Syria. Again, some men of religion on the margin of the amir's circle, relying on the quietist political teaching of Ibn 'Arabī and working through the Yashruṭiyya and the Dandarāwiyya orders, tended now to align themselves with the orthodox in serving the Ottoman State. Among the foremost members of 'Abd al-Qādir's circle, by contrast, there developed a sense of local distinctiveness, accompanied by a renewed interest in the

history of Damascus and in the Arabic language and literature.

It was resistance to the populist aspect of ‘Abdülhamîd II, and the Young Turk, regimes that above all turned the reformist adherents of Ibn ‘Arabî to the teaching of Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya. Lacking a leader from outside, as was the case with its two predecessors, the Salafiyya, the third and last trend of religious reform in late Ottoman Damascus, was divided at its inception into two branches. The more traditional one, which included the most faithful adherents of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā’irî, turned its attention under the leadership of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Biṭār and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimî to adapting traditional theology and jurisprudence to the new knowledge and needs. The other branch, which comprised graduates of the first government schools in the city, also imbibed the Young Ottoman ideas of freedom and love of the fatherland, and consequently dedicated itself, under the guidance of Ṭāhir al-Jazā’irî, to reconstructing an Arab basis for their society. Both branches of the Salafiyya adhered to Ibn Taymiyya’s ideal of a return to the way of the forefathers, *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, and to his extensive application of reason. Through these means they sought to defy the rigid adherence of the orthodox ‘ulama and sufi shaykhs to the latter-day tradition, which made them servile to the Westernizing state, on the one hand, and an impediment to the ability of Islam to adapt itself to the modern world, on the other. Both branches of the Salafiyya coalesced at the beginning of the twentieth century in the face of the increasing persecution of the Ḥamîdian regime, and even more so the strengthening of the “nationalist” wing within the opposition movement which was soon to replace it, the Young Turks. Concomitantly, their local sense of patriotism was superseded by the national ideal of Arabism.

In terms of the history of religious thought, the differences between the teachings and paths of these three trends of religious reform in late Ottoman Damascus can be epitomized in the three modes of human cognition upon which the major approaches of every religion are based—authority, sentiment, and reason. The Khālidiyya, the orthodox sufi order, stressed the legal and theological tradition of Islam, *naql*; the theosophical Akbariyya resorted to visions attained through the mystical experience, *kashf*; for the Salafiyya, in its quest to revive the spirit of the forefathers, the application of logical thinking came to the fore, *aql*. Nevertheless, our analysis of the writings of the heads of these religious reform trends has plainly demonstrated

that despite the differences they all shared a common ground. All three regarded themselves as a middle way, the way of the divine shari'ā and the prophetic sunna, posed between the two extremes of those who deviate from it. Each one of them articulated this view according to its basic epistemology. The Khālidiyya delineated its path between the sufis who consider themselves above the shari'ā and the 'ulama who entirely reject Sufism. The Akbariyya set out against the rationalist 'ulama who subject God to their abstract judgments and against the ecstatic sufis who see God in everything. The Salafiyya rejected the orthodox men of religion, 'ulama and sufis alike, who adhered to their traditions while ignoring modernization, as well the Westernizers who adopted modern rationalism to the point of neglecting their religion. This common ground shows that, despite the contradictions between them, the three trends of reform, each according to its own system, perpetuated the Islamic tradition of combining *'ilm* and *taṣawwuf*. From this combination they drew their very reformism, and this was clearly reflected in the central place that each one of them accorded to the teaching of Ghazālī.

A measure of continuity in the course of these three reform trends of late Ottoman Damascus was clearly discernible also from the second approach taken in this study, their social history. The leading 'ulama in each of the three trends belonged to consecutive generations of a relatively small group of local families of religion which were founded at the beginning of the nineteenth century. I concentrated in this study on five of them, the families of Bīṭār, Qāsimī, Shaṭṭī, 'Ābidīn and Khānī. In the second half of the century these were joined by another group of religious families consisting of the leadership of the contemporary Algerian emigration to Damascus. Among the latter I focused on the two leading families, those of Jazā'irī and Mubārak. In each trend of religious reform some members of these families distinguished themselves as the inner circle, but their colleagues in the larger group normally shared their views. Thus the most faithful disciples of Shaykh Khālīd in the Naqshbandiyya order and in his religious lessons were Muḥammad Amīn 'Ābidīn and Ḥasan al-Bīṭār, as well as Muḥammad al-Khānī the elder, his local deputy. The sons of the latter two, 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Bīṭār and Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger, became in the next generation the closest local disciples of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī in his Akbarī circle. Their most distinguished colleagues from among the Algerian exiles were his brother, Aḥmad al-Jazā'irī, and Muḥammad al-

Mubārak. Bīṭār and Jazā'irī became in the following generation the leaders of the traditional wing of the Salafī trend. At their side stood the younger Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, in whom the evident continuity between the three trends of religious reform in Damascus may be epitomized. Qāsimī took the Naqshbandī–Khālīdī path from Muḥammad al-Khānī the younger, studied with him Ibn 'Arabī's teaching according to the interpretation of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, and preserved his appreciation of both despite turning to the Salafiyya. The leader of the more modern wing of this trend, Ṭāhir al-Jazā'irī, received his initial religious education in the Akbarī circle of 'Abd al-Qādir, as well.

The continuous reformist tendency among these religious families of Damascus was determined by their basic attitude toward the two fundamental processes which combined in shaping the evolution of Syria in their time, European economic penetration and Ottoman state formation. Using the terminology of Albert Hourani's "politics of notables", I have argued that under this twofold impact of modernization their leaders were driven to dispense with maintaining a balance between access to political authority and a separate base in society, upon which the power of the urban elite formerly relied. Members of the reformist religious families of Damascus shunned the new posts created by the expanding Ottoman administration from the early 1840s, contenting themselves with their positions in the mosques and colleges of the city. To compensate for their loss of access to political authority they sought an alliance with the incipient local Muslim middle class engaged in the new grain export under European aegis. They became thereby part of a larger group of Damascene notables and men of religion, the local tendency, which constituted the wider circle of the religious reform trend in the city. The decline of international grain prices from the late 1870s, and the consequent success of the state in accommodating this incipient middle class by incorporating its heads into a new landowning—bureaucratic elite, was one reason for the turn of the reformist families to seeking support among the lower strata of society. It was an opposite reaction to these two fundamental factors shaping the evolution of Syria that posed against them a rival faction of men of religion, whose view was increasingly turned toward Istanbul. These 'ulama, the Ottoman tendency, attained the highest religious positions, as well as the new administrative posts created by the successive Ottoman regimes of reform, and thus became

more identified with the imperial point of view.

The shift of the heads of the Damascene reformist 'ulama families from one religious reform trend to another must be understood against the backdrop of the frequent vicissitudes in the character and direction of the Ottoman attempts at reform throughout the period. The affiliation of the founders of these families with the Khālidiyya reflected their distress in the face of the decline of Ottoman central government and the consequent oppression by its local governors, in cooperation with local forces, on the eve of the introduction of the reforms. Many of them originated in the merchant estate, which was particularly hard hit by the general loss of security of life and property caused by these developments. For them, Shaykh Khālīd's call to strictly implement the shari'a was thus tantamount to demanding the rule of law against the arbitrary practices of the governors and their allies. Sultan 'Abdūlmecīd sought to comply with this demand in the reforms of the early Tanzimat period. The turn of the next generation of the reformist religious families to the Akbariyya reflected their awareness of the need to adopt, in conjunction with the incipient middle class they allied themselves with, Western ideals of progress and prosperity underlying the reforms of the late Tanzimat. In 'Abd al-Qādir's interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's teaching they found an Islamic basis for recognizing the European supremacy, for integrating the rationalist approach with Islam, and for applying it to worldly affairs. The elaboration of the Salafiyya by the third generation of these reformist 'ulama families reflected their revulsion at the centralizing and populist policies adopted by the autocratic regimes of 'Abdūlhamīd II and the Young Turks. Through Ibn Taymiyya's call to follow the example of the *salaf*, strengthened at times with the rationalist Modernism of Muḥammad 'Abduh, they sought to reassert the role of reformist men of religion in guiding the Ottoman State on the course of modernization in general, and in conducting the local affairs of Syria in particular. Frustrated by these regimes, they turned to stress the ethnic identity of the *salaf* in an effort to appeal directly to the masses, thereby according religious legitimation to the new ideology of Arabism.

To fully understand the dynamics of continuity and change among these three religious reform trends in late Ottoman Damascus, however, we cannot be content with the examination of the objective consequences of the reform efforts undertaken by the central government, or of the effect of the European economic penetration upon

the city. We must also see them from the subjective viewpoint of the proponents of these trends, which was neither socio-economic nor political, but first and foremost Islamic. Thus, in the eyes of the founders of these reformist religious families at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the prevailing insecurity in their province resulted from the deviation of the umma from the path of the shari'a. Their enrollment in the ranks of the Damascene 'ulama constituted a protest against the leading contemporary jurists of the day, who let the science entrusted to them stagnate and consequently failed to fulfill their vocation of making the judgments required by changing circumstances and influencing the rulers to implement them. Hence their enthusiastic response to the call of Shaykh Khālīd, who within the activist framework of the Naqshbandiyya strove to return the umma, through its rulers, to the path of the shari'a. The Khālidiyya should thus be viewed as a movement of religious renewal in the traditional orthodox meaning of the term—*tajdīd*.

The turning of the next generation of these families to the Akbariyya was rooted in the implications of the early Tanzimat reforms. It reflected their disappointment with the upper strata of 'ulama, which had exploited its domination of the city under the aegis of the reforming Ottoman government to divert its efforts to implement the orthodox principles propagated by the Naqshbandiyya in favor of the personal interests of its members. Hence derived their affiliation with the circle of 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā'irī, who in his interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's theosophy gave expression to their feeling that the conduct of the traditional 'ulama had become the primary factor in the decline of Islam. Consequently, they were prepared to selectively adopt the rationalist approach, which he depicted as the foundation of European scientific and political supremacy. The reformist 'ulama of Damascus reached the apex of their power during the late Tanzimat period, when the central government turned against their rivals who obstructed the realization of its Western-inspired reforms. The Akbariyya thus constituted an interim stage in the religious reform tendency in Damascus. In its ideas it took the first steps toward modern religious thought, but in its method it remained anchored within the framework of the sufi aspect of traditional orthodoxy.

The emergence of the Salafiyya among the last generation of the reformist families of Ottoman Damascus derived from their indignation at the rise to religious preeminence in the city of popular 'ulama and sufi shaykhs whose merit lay more in their readiness to

harness orthodoxy to the service of the rulers than in erudition or piety. This alliance between the State and popular Islam was the second, and more fundamental, cause that led the Salafis to exceed the bounds of the "politics of notables" and appeal directly to the masses. In their eyes, the orthodox men of religion had turned Islam into a means of satisfying their desire for posts and decorations through the patronage of the government. Hence came the reformist 'ulama's adoption of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, whose call to return to the ideal of the forefathers, *al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, gave them the leverage to amend the late orthodox tradition, both legal and mystic, that had become so distorted in their eyes, and to reestablish the supremacy of religion over the state in Islam. By combining the quest to unite the umma on the basis of the Qur'an and the sunna with the wide application of reason in their interpretation to suit contemporary needs, the Salafiyya became the first religious reform trend that may be regarded as modern. The fundamental principle which epitomized its new approach was *ijtihād*.

The foundations of modern Islam in the Arab world thus lie in the late Ottoman period. Impressed by the achievements of Western rationalism, Islamic modernizers have ever since been given to a deepening critique of traditional learning and particularly of mysticism. Concerned by the inability of the indigenous bourgeoisie to challenge the autocratic tendencies of the state, they have concomitantly been seeking after effective checks on its Westernizing thrust. In both endeavors the original Salafis could draw upon the reformist tradition of Islam, which consisted of a vigorous combination of *‘ilm* and *taṣawwuf*, as well as an activist approach toward political and social affairs. Late Ottoman Damascus, which attracted two outstanding examples of this pre-modern reformist tradition, the Naqshbandiyya-Khālidiyya and the Akbariyya, accordingly played a seminal role in the formulation and dissemination of the Salafī ideas. The locus of a particularly vigorous "politics of notables", its reformist men of religion were best qualified to articulate the dissatisfaction of civil society with the increasing pressure of the Ottoman State. This contest over the course of modernization precipitated the entrance of the masses into the public arena, and with it the rise of the ideology of Arabism. Unlike the West, however, where the masses have gradually come to dominate society, in the Muslim world they have remained subordinate to political and religious elites. In the inter-war period, the Muslim masses were mobilized by both gov-

ernments and Islamists in a common national struggle against foreign domination. With the establishment of revolutionary military regimes after independence, they were turned once again into pawns in that formidable battle underlying all politics in the modern Middle East—the battle between the oppressively omnipresent secular Arab State and a sometimes violently defiant Islam.

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