

Abu Madyan Al-Ghawthi: Founder of the Qadiriyya Order in Algeria**أبو مدين الغوثي: مؤسس الطريقة القادرية في الجزائر****Hamed Lamine Ibrahim ¹, Rezzag Messaouda ^{2*}**¹ University of Adrar, ibrahim.historien@gmail.com² University of Ghardaia, masoudaze@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Abu Madyan al-Ghawthi, originally from Andalusia and buried in Algeria, is considered one of the most important Sufi figures. Despite the hardships of his early life—losing his father and working as a shepherd for his brothers while remaining illiterate in his childhood—his love for knowledge drove him to pursue education by any means necessary, most notably through migration and seeking knowledge from scholars. He eventually achieved this, becoming one of the most renowned religious scholars. He is credited with founding the Qadiriyya Sufi order in Algeria specifically, and in the Maghreb region in general, which has since become one of the most prominent Sufi orders in Algeria.

This research employed historical, analytical, and descriptive methods to examine the life of Abu Madyan al-Ghawthi and his efforts in spreading the Qadiriyya order in Algeria. The findings revealed that Abu Madyan succeeded in achieving his goals by employing the Qadiriyya methods in his preaching, which were based on knowledge, conduct, and preaching.

Keywords: Abu Madyan Al-Ghawthi, Sufism, Qadiriyya, Bayt al-Maqdis, Al-Ubbad, Bejaia

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1. INTRODUCTION

Abu Medin Al-Ghawthi, of Andalusian origin and buried in Algeria, is regarded as one of the prominent Sufi figures credited with establishing the Qadiriyya order in Algeria. After embracing its teachings in the East from its founder, Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani, he dedicated himself to spreading the Qadiriyya order throughout Algeria. Over time, it became one of the most important Sufi orders in the country, attracting a large number of followers. But who was Abu Medin Al-Ghawthi? What distinguished his life, and how did he spread the Qadiriyya order in Algeria?

1. Abu Medin Al-Ghawthi:

1.1. Biography and Early Life

Shu'ayb ibn Ahmad ibn Ja'far ibn Shu'ayb Abu Medin, also known as ibn Hussein Al-Ansari Al-Bujayi, was born in Qutniyana, a village near Seville. Historians differ in pinpointing the exact date of his birth. Some sources suggest the year 492 AH/1099 CE, while others propose 520 AH/1126 CE or even 627 AH/1230 CE. The historian Al-Madioni, however, places his birth in 727 AH/1327 CE. Regarding his physical characteristics, Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi described him as **"a fair-haired man with blue eyes"** (Al-Tilimsani, 1907,p.115; Murtadh, 2021; Al-Timbukti, 2000,p.20). He lived as an orphan, having lost his father at a young age. He did not attend school because his siblings assigned him the task of tending the sheep left by their father, considering him the youngest. Despite his inability and the difficulties of shepherding, his siblings insisted that he fulfill this duty (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320; Imam Abdul Halim, n.d., p. 23).

As a young boy, Abu Medin was ambitious and eager for knowledge. However, circumstances prevented him from achieving his aspirations. His determination to learn was further fueled by his encounters with various groups. At times, he saw groups reciting the Quran, which fascinated him with the scene and the voices of the reciters. At other times, he

observed people praying, which deeply impressed him. He reflected, "When I saw someone praying or reciting the Quran, I was amazed and drew closer to them, feeling distressed because I did not memorize any part of the Quran nor did I know how to pray..." (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320; Imam Abdul Halim, n.d., p. 23).

His siblings, due to their responsibilities towards the sheep, deprived him of the opportunity to pursue education, forcing him to remain a shepherd. Consequently, he often decided to run away from home. However, his brother would catch him and return him, threatening to beat him if he tried to escape again. Despite these threats, Abu Medin remained determined and continued to attempt escaping. On one occasion, his escape marked the beginning of a new chapter in his life, centered around learning. A miraculous event occurred that caused his brother to cease pursuing him. Abu Medin recounts the incident: **"My brother caught up with me, drew his sword, and said he would kill me and be done with me! He struck at me with his sword, but I defended myself with a stick I was holding, causing his sword to break into pieces..."** (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320). This incident led to his brother abandoning the pursuit and allowing him to go wherever he wished (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320).

1.2. His Academic Life

His desire for acquiring knowledge led Abu Medin to decide to emigrate from Andalusia to the scholarly cities of Morocco. He found a ship heading to Tangier and used it as a means to enter Morocco. From Tangier, he traveled to Ceuta, where he worked for a fisherman to earn some money to support his journey. He then proceeded to Marrakech, which was home to a group of Andalusians. He joined them, and they, in turn, enlisted him in their military. However, Abu Medin's primary goal for this journey was to seek knowledge, not to engage in military work. This led to his dissatisfaction and frustration, prompting a Moroccan to advise him that if he was serious about pursuing knowledge, he should head

towards Fes (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320).

Abu Medin traveled to Fes and enrolled in its mosque, where he received instruction in various religious sciences, particularly related to prayer and ablution. He did not hesitate to attend the lessons conducted by scholars, especially those of Sheikh Abu al-Hasan ibn Harzhem. He then continued his studies with Sheikh Abu Yazid al-Nur, one of the notable figures in Moroccan mysticism. Abu Yazid is credited with prophesizing Abu Medin's great future, stating, "**...he will have a great destiny...**" and granted him the cloak of Sufism (Al-Tadli, 1984, p. 320; Imam Abdul Halim, n.d., pp. 320-156; Imam Abdul Halim, n.d., p. 53; Al-Madioni, n.d., p. 115; Al-Qasanti, n.d., pp. 27-26). Abu Medin also studied under Sheikh Abu Abdullah al-Daqaq, one of the early scholars from whom he learned Sufism, and al-Harith ibn Asad al-Muhasibi. He studied various intellectual and traditional sciences, including jurisprudence, grammar, arithmetic, and language, under the scholar Abu al-Husayn Ali ibn Ghalib (University Center for Scientific Research Publications, n.d., pp. 27-26).

After acquiring knowledge from various Moroccan scholars renowned at the time, and like many other Muslims, he decided to undertake the pilgrimage (Hajj).

1.3. Abu Medin's Journey to the Hijaz:

1.3.1. Performing the Pilgrimage (Hajj):

The pilgrimage of Abu Medin to the Hijaz is noted by many historians as being shrouded in mystery due to the scarcity of sources that describe it. There is little information available about his journey to the East and the events he encountered there (Mertad, n.d., pp. 20-21; Younes Mwaasim & Abdel-Samad Hamza, 2023, pp. 258-259). The reasons for Moroccan emigration to the Hijaz varied, including performing the pilgrimage, seeking knowledge, engaging in jihad, trade, and other reasons (Saadallah, 2007, p. 177). Abu Medin al-Ghawthi's journey combined both religious and educational objectives. He sought permission from his teacher, Abu Yazid, to travel to the holy sites to perform the pilgrimage,

which was granted. His teacher also provided him with advice to help him navigate the dangers of the journey. After performing the Hajj, Abu Medin took advantage of his time there to meet some of the scholars and Sufis renowned at the time, "**...learning from the prominent scholars and benefiting from their asceticism and piety...**" (Al-Timbukti, 2000, p. 195).

1.3.2. Beginning of Embracing the Qadiri Order:

During his pilgrimage, Abu Medin met Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the founder of the Qadiri Order, in Arafat. He began attending Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani's lessons at the Haram, becoming deeply immersed in his teachings and eventually joining his followers. Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani honored Abu Medin by bestowing upon him the Sufi mantle and confiding many of his secrets, adorning him with "**the garments of light**" ("...he clothed him with the Sufi mantle and entrusted him with many of his secrets, and adorned him with the garments of light..."). Abu Medin was also present at a gathering held by Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani at his Qadiri monastery in the Hilla region of Baghdad, where over 50 of his disciples were in attendance (Al-Timbukti, 2000, p. 195; Mohamed Salabi, 2015, p. 346).

And awarded the title Al-Ghawth: In the Qadiriyya order, the men of God are categorized into various ranks: al-Aqtab (the Poles), al-Ghawth (the Helper), and two Imams who serve as the ministers of the Pole, as well as the Awtad (Pillars), Abdal (Substitutes), Akhyar (the Good), Abrar (the Pious), Nuqaba (Leaders), Nujaba (Nobles), the Amda (Chiefs), Maktumun (the Hidden), Afrad (the Unique), Mahbubun (the Beloved), and Nuqaba (the Helpers). Al-Ghawth is a single individual known as 'Abdallah; upon his death, one of the Amda takes his place (Al-Jilani, n.d., pp. 14-15).

2. Nature of the Qadiri Order:

The Qadiri Order is a Sufi path that holds its followers as "**possessors of Sufism and empowerment through divine delegation**," meaning they dedicate themselves to obeying God and adhering to His commands by avoiding His prohibitions as prescribed by Islamic law. Their commitment is also directed towards spreading and defending Islam through various means (Kilani, 2014, pp. 11-12).

The Qadiriyya method is based on three basic pillars:

2.1. Knowledge:

The Qadiriyya method views knowledge as not limited to the memorization of texts but as a test for its bearer, requiring them to embody it through action and vigilance, while maintaining sincerity and honesty. It stresses that one should not be content with the knowledge they have acquired but must delve deeper into religious sciences until they become well-versed in all aspects of jurisprudence, making it easier to distinguish between what is lawful, unlawful, and ambiguous. They cite the following saying: "Many of the people of God have fallen along the way due to claims and innovations. Had they possessed solid knowledge, they would have been able to escape these claims and innovations" (Kelani, 2014, p. 27).

2.2. Conduct:

The Qadiriyya method asserts that knowledge alone is insufficient; it must be refined through proper conduct, guiding the human soul towards sincerity, honesty, and faith. "Knowledge by itself is not enough, for something must penetrate deep into the human soul and the folds of the heart" (Kelani, 2014, p. 28).

For this reason, conduct is considered one of the most important factors contributing to the spread of the Qadiriyya order throughout the Islamic world, Its preachers and followers met with people and behaved in ways that led many to follow their example, adopt

their ideas, and gather around them. "It begins from the heart, and loyalty and obedience are rooted in love" (Kelani, 2014, p. 30).

2.3. Preaching

is the third pillar of the Qadiriyya method. The founder, Imam Abdul Qadir Kelani, encouraged his followers to rely on preaching as a means of spreading the Qadiriyya order. This was done using various methods, including Sharia, knowledge, and Sufism, in addition to presenting truths that affect listeners in a way that leads them to readily believe and trust what they hear. His followers were also urged to spread both Sharia knowledge and rational knowledge in an accessible manner, making it easier for people to understand religion. He emphasized the importance of addressing both intellect and spirit, using textual evidence and rational argument, as well as simplifying the interpretation of religious texts to facilitate understanding (Kelani, 2014, p. 33).

4. Participation of Abu Madyan al-Ghouti in Jihad and the Defense of Jerusalem: Between Fact and Legend

Historians differ on the accuracy of Abu Madyan al-Ghouti's participation in the Battle of Hattin alongside Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi and the liberation of Jerusalem. Some scholars argue that he was involved in other battles against the Crusaders in Palestine, and that his association with Salah ad-Din is merely a legend. Others, however, support the account of his participation with Salah ad-Din, noting that he lost his right hand in the battle—a narrative that has been passed down among Algerians. As historian Mertad states, "....And as the biography of Abu Madyan neared its end, we became ignorant of many crucial facts about his life...." (Mertad, 2021, p. 19), Consequently, we will leave it to time and sources to verify this.

Abu Madyan was on his way to perform the Hajj. While in the Levant, he heard about the jihad declared by Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi to counter the Crusader campaign on Jerusalem.

He decided to join the fighters with his fellow Moroccans. Abu Madyan fought valiantly, showing remarkable bravery until he sustained numerous injuries to his right hand, which led to its amputation. He buried it in a place in Jerusalem that later became known as the Shrine of Abu Madyan, Abu Madyan's and his companions' contributions to the jihad and the liberation of Palestine led Salah ad-Din al-Ayyubi's son to grant them a place to reside, known as the Moroccan Quarter, which encouraged many Moroccans to move to and settle in Jerusalem (Saqni & Tiqa, 2019, p. 167; Boukliha, 2020, p. 2; Saadallah, 2007, p. 175; Mouden & Taha, 2019, p. 44; Taybawi, 1981 ;Arab World Archaeology Studies, n.d., p. 839).

3. Return of Abu Madyan to Fes:

After a brief stay in the Hijaz and acquiring knowledge, Abu Madyan returned to Fes, where he settled in the Ramila neighborhood in the Andalusian district (Kettani, 2007, p. 413; Younes & Hamza, 2023, p. 261).. He began teaching there, which led to his reputation spreading among Moroccan scholars and particularly Sufis. Many came to him to benefit from his knowledge. However, the increasing number of students caused him to face pressure from the authorities and some local inhabitants. Consequently, he decided to leave and expressed his discontent with the injustices of the city's people, heading towards Béjaïa.

5. His Settlement in Béjaïa:

During this period, Béjaïa was a prominent center of scholarship due to its flourishing cultural activity. It became a destination for many students of knowledge and also a refuge for persecuted individuals, such as those from Andalusia who fled their homelands. They found safety and stability there, making it their new home. This environment influenced Abu Madyan to choose Béjaïa as his permanent residence, especially since it was far from the Almohad authority, which had been burdening him with surveillance. As an elderly scholar unable to tolerate criticism and cope with disturbances, he settled there for a year and a half, dedicating himself to teaching. He served as a teacher at one of its mosques, and among his

notable students was Hamad al-Sanhaji (Kettani, 2007, p. 263; Younes & Hamza, 2023, p. 263).

6. Abu Madyan: Founder of the Qadiri Order in Algeria:

Abu Madyan is considered the first to spread the Qadiriyya order in the Maghreb (Al-Aluri, 2013, p. 63).

The Qadiri Order is one of the Sufi paths that originated in Baghdad through Abdul Qadir al-Jilani. Abu Madyan al-Ghouti, deeply influenced by Sufi thought through his teacher Abu Ya'zi, met and studied under him. His profound fascination and interest in Abdul Qadir al-Jilani's ideas led the latter to bestow upon him the "Sufi mantle and impart many of his secrets and garments of light..." (Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti, 2007, p. 195). Abu Madyan al-Ghouti adopted the Qadiri thought, which he greatly admired, describing his teacher Abdul Qadir al-Jilani as "...the Imam of the Sincere and the Proof of the Gnostics, and the Spirit of Knowledge..." He then spread this order in Algeria and the Maghreb region, making him the founder of the Qadiri Order in Algeria. Due to his dedication to preserving and continuing the Qadiri Order in Algeria, he instructed his disciple before his death to maintain and propagate it. He considered it a legacy to be inherited, passing it on to his disciples, particularly to his student Abd al-Salam ibn Mishish, whom he advised to continue its propagation and transmission from generation to generation. Thus, Abd al-Salam also passed it on to his disciple Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili, who then transmitted it to Mustafa ibn Mukhtar al-Ghrisi al-Qadiri, who passed it to Muhyiddin, the father of Emir Abdelkader of Algeria. The Qadiri Sufi order, (Kettani, 2007, pp. 264-265; Saqni & Tiaqa, 2019, p. 169)

Abu Madyan Al-Ghawthi adhered strictly to the principles of the Qadiriyya order, which led to a large following and significant influence. He mentored approximately a thousand students, each of whom became a sheikh, deeply imbued with his ideas. This influence caused concern for the Almohad authorities, as the number of his followers grew.

"He remained in Bejaia, with his status increasing in dignity and reverence over time. People flocked to him from distant places, seeking his guidance both individually and in groups... He was reported to the ruler, with a warning that this man could pose a threat to the state's authority, for he resembles Imam Mahdi, with many followers across different regions..." (Boudaoud, 2011, p. 58; see also Tlemceni, n.d., p. 176).

Abu Madyan received the mantle of Sufism first from Abu Ya'zi, then from Abdul Qadir Al-Jilani (Tlemceni, n.d., p. 176). One of the factors contributing to the spread of his ideas in the Maghreb was his adherence to the Maliki madhab, the dominant school of thought in the region. He combined Sunni Maliki jurisprudence with Sufism, and one of the core methods of the Qadiriyya order in his teachings was preaching. Most of his scholarly sessions focused on addressing people's issues through persuasive rhetoric and clear truths, to the extent that some of his audience would be deeply affected, even dying from the intensity of their emotional responses (Tlemceni, n.d., pp. 177-178, 318).

which Abu Madyan embraced and worked to propagate, caused the Almohad authorities to become increasingly concerned about him, especially with the growing number of his followers, as it conflicted with their own Sufi ideas. This led the Almohad Sultan to summon him (Kettani, 2007, pp. 264-265; Saqni & Tiaqa, 2019, p. 169) to assess whether the principles of this order were aligned with or opposed to their own practices.

7. His Death:

Despite Abu Madyan al-Ghouthi's migration from his homeland in pursuit of stability and the dissemination of knowledge, the influx of students towards him aroused the suspicion of the Almohad Sultan Abu Ya'qub al-Mansur, who feared that he might be the Mahdi. Consequently, he ordered the governor of Béjaïa to bring Abu Madyan to the palace for a meeting to discuss his ideas and to verify the claims and accusations against him, instructing them to ensure his comfort during the journey, "...by providing him with the best

transport..." (Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti, 2007, pp. 197-198; Kettani, 2007, p. 264).

Abu Madyan accepted the invitation of the Almohad Sultan. Feeling that his end was near, he said to his companions, "...may Allah provide someone to carry me to my place of burial..." When the caravan carrying him reached a place called al-'Abad, and as his deathly illness worsened, he asked his companions the name of the place and upon being told it was al-'Abad, he remarked, "...suitable for resting..." Upon reaching Wadi Yasir, his condition deteriorated further, and he breathed his last in the year 594 AH (1197 CE) (Bin Qanfadh, 2019, p. 103).

Conclusion:

Based on the above, we can conclude that:

- Abu Madyan al-Ghouti, of Andalusian origin, lived as an orphan tending sheep.
- His desire to acquire knowledge led him to migrate to Morocco, where he studied various sciences under its scholars.
- Not content with his previous knowledge, Abu Madyan furthered his religious studies with scholars in the Hijaz after performing the pilgrimage.
- The incident of Abu Madyan's participation in the Battle of Hattin and the burial of his hand there remains a subject of historical debate between fact and legend.
- Abu Madyan settled in Bejaia, which was a cultural hub and a safe haven for scholars and Andalusians, distinguished by its security and respect for intellectuals.
- His increasing activity concerned the Almohad authorities, leading them to summon him. However, he passed away before meeting the Almohad Sultan, dying in Al-'Abad near Tlemcen, where he was buried.

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