

The Efforts of Emir Abdelkader and His Literary and Intellectual Contributions.

Dr.Smahi Rafika*

The Higher School of Teachers in Béchar
(Algeria)

Email: rafikahope@gmail.com

الاستلام: ٢٠٢٥/٠١/١٢ القبول: ٢٠٢٥/٠٤/٢٢ النشر: ٢٠٢٥/٠٦/٠٢

Abstract :

This research paper aims to reveal the efforts of Emir Abdelkader and his literary and intellectual contributions that had a profound impact on the history of Algerian literature, leading it towards advancement and revitalization after periods of regression and setbacks. His varied poetic and prose creations carried messages and meanings loaded with humanity, chivalry, and the affirmation of national and Arab identity. His pen, alongside his sword, became a beacon of freedom.

Emir Abdelkader was intellectually influenced by Ibn Arabi and expressed admiration for Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. He was deeply attached to heritage, manuscripts, and historical records; he cared for, studied, and analyzed them in a fluent and robust style. In his poetry, he relied on the traditional 'Al-Mu'allaqat' structure and the Khalilian meter in terms of form, while in terms of content, he focused on traditional themes such as pride, description, enthusiasm, romance, and praise.

Key Words: Emir Abdelkader's efforts, literary contributions, poetry, prose.

* Corresponding author:
Dr. Smahi Rafika

Introduction :

The period from ١٨٣٢ to ١٨٤٧ witnessed a cultural movement and a civilizational and intellectual development in the history of Algerian literature. Significant intellectual efforts emerged from scholars and leaders who wielded the pen alongside the sword. Among them was Emir Abdelkader, a valiant leader who was vocal through his voice, pen, thought, and jihad. His literature became a beacon enlightening the path for those thirsting for knowledge then and thereafter, with his diverse productions in poetry and prose.

Emir Abdelkader's character was distinguished by his vast culture. He was a leader of both the sword and the pen, a brave Algerian knight, known for his high cunning, literary and intellectual superiority, and broad perspective. He was also distinguished by his patriotism and humanity. He was not only the pride of Algerian generations of his time but also earned the admiration of contemporary leaders and kings of major countries, becoming a legend of his era, thus rightfully earning the title "Emir."

This study aims to elucidate Emir Abdelkader's efforts and his literary and intellectual contributions that propelled Algerian literature towards revival and rejuvenation, highlighting their significance and role in the advancement and development as a realistic reference for authors. They draw inspiration from his heritage and express their contemporary reality.

This study adopted the following descriptive-analytical methodology appropriate to the nature of the subject and addressed several issues including: What distinguished Emir Abdelkader's era? What were his literary and intellectual efforts? What were his contributions to poetry and prose? What position did these contributions occupy in the history of Algerian literature?

This research paper followed the following methodology:

Introduction.

I Introducing Emir Abdelkader.

II The Poetic Contributions of Emir Abdelkader.

III The Prose Contributions of Emir Abdelkader.

conclusion .

I. Introducing Emir Abdelkader:

Emir Abdelkader was born on September ٦, ١٨٠٧, the son of Mahi al-Din, near the city of Mascara in Algeria. His family belonged to the Idrisids, who trace their lineage back to the Prophet of Islam and were rulers in North Africa and Al-Andalus. His father, Mahi al-Din, was a leader of the Qadiriyya Sufi order in Algeria.

In ١٨٢٣, his father went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and took Abdelkader with him, who learned much during this two-year journey. After their return, Abdelkader devoted himself to reading and contemplation. In ١٨٣٠, Algeria faced French occupation, and the Algerian people began their struggle against the occupiers.

In November ١٨٣٢, two years after the French occupation of Algeria, the Algerians pledged allegiance to Abdelkader ibn Mahi al-Din as their Emir. He made the city of Mascara his capital and began forming an army and state, achieving victories against the French (Badran, ٢٠١٨).

Abdelkader's victories forced the French to negotiate a truce, resulting in the Treaty of Tafna in ١٨٣٨. This treaty acknowledged his sovereignty over western and central Algeria. After this agreement, Emir Abdelkader started forming a government, organizing the state, and combating corruption.

However, this treaty allowed France to regroup and subsequently continue fighting against Abdelkader's forces. With reinforcements from France, his strongholds fell one after the other. After a bitter resistance, Emir Abdelkader and his followers were forced to surrender to the French forces in ١٨٤٧, on the condition that he be allowed to move to Alexandria or Acre. However, he was taken to France and imprisoned there.

Later, the President of the French Republic, Louis Napoleon, decided to release him, and he traveled to Turkey in ١٨٥٢ and then to Damascus in ١٨٥٥. In ١٨٦٠, during a sectarian conflict in the Levant between the Druze and Maronites, Emir Abdelkader played a prominent role in resolving the crisis and mediating between the parties.

Emir Abdelkader was known for his encyclopedic cultural knowledge. He was a jurist, an avid reader, a poet, a writer, a diplomat, and had a Sufi inclination (Badran, ٢٠١٨).

The light of Emir Abdelkader was extinguished on May ٢٤, ١٨٨٣, at his palace near Damascus at the age of ٧٦. He was buried next to Sheikh Ibn Arabi, as per his will. In ١٩٦٥, his remains were transferred to Algeria and buried in El Alia Cemetery. He left behind a substantial body of poetic and prose work, including his poetry collection, "Kitab al-Mawaqif," and "Al-Muqarrad Al-Had," a rebuttal against those who slandered the religion of Islam from among the people of falsehood and atheism.

II. The Poetic Contributions of Emir Abdelkader:

Emir Abdelkader is considered a pioneer of the modern literary movement in the Maghreb, similar to Mahmoud Sami al-Baroudi, who led the movement in the

Arab East. Both represented the revivalist school, endured exile and alienation, and shared qualities of heroism in both poetry and war.

Emir Abdelkader had numerous verses expressing pride in his chivalry and glory. As a brilliant leader in his revolutions and numerous battles against the French colonizer, he was a victorious hero. In his poem about the battle of Khénifra (Emir & Dahou, ٢٠٠٧, p. ٥٣), he proudly states under the title "I exerted a Hashemite force upon them":

Have you not seen in Khénifra our confrontations

On the day we met, how many a brave man collapsed?!

And how many a noble head I severed that day

With the edge of my sword and the piercing of my spear?

My steed, a blonde, bore their spears' strikes

Eight times, yet he complained not of the pain or weariness.

And no herald after the march and the struggle said:

"Rest in the cradle of peace, for the struggle has passed."

(Emir & Dahou, ٢٠٠٧, pp. ٥٣-٥٤)

These verses reflect the Emir's poetic talent, his excellent choice of words and phrases, and his sharp expression, demonstrating his bravery, chivalry, and acumen in battle.

The Emir also composed verses about description, praise, and romance. In his poem "Lend Me a Heart," which he recited, depicting his state after being left alone as a prisoner in France while his brothers sought refuge in Marrakech, he says:

Alack! My heart, when you built and departed

Became a roaming bird, trailing the unsteady, flying.

It endures the bitterness of death, from the pain of longing

For I have nothing but the grief and the sobs.

You left, and you walked, if only you had pity!

Between you and me, a day of calamity; heavy and hard.

If only you had lent me your hearts on the day of parting

Surely, I am patient!

(El Jazaery & Haqqi, ١٩٦٠, p. ١٠٤)

These lines are laden with sorrow and grief, heartache from separation and reproach. Alone in the land of exile (France), he endures the bitterness of leaving his loved ones and the separation from his brothers.

How could he live and continue life without them? His heart aches more with each passing day for their departure. How could he be patient when their hearts have abandoned him?

Emir Abdelkader received acclaim from writers and poets, among them Ahmed Kamal Al-Jazzar, who described the Emir as composed, patient, tolerant, forbearing, and self-controlled (Al-Jazzar & Mohamed Zaki, ١٩٩٧, p. ٣٣). Saleh Kharfi believed that there is no dispute over Emir Abdelkader's worthiness of being considered the beginning of a literary renaissance in Algerian history. Even if his style lacked the polish of refinement, his content, laden with heroic deeds, distinguished him from others of that period (Kharfi, ١٩٨٣, p. ١٠٢).

Hassan Al-Sandubi, in his book "A'yan Al-Bayan," spoke of Emir Abdelkader: "The hero of Algeria, though a master of the sword, was also a brother of the pen, never sheathing one without unsheathing the other, using the first to sever heads and the second to cure souls from the illness of delusions" (Al-Sandoubi, ١٩١٤, p. ١٧٥).

The period of Emir Abdelkader witnessed a qualitative intellectual movement and a literary shift with his varied poems that he composed on numerous themes, compiled in his poetry collection.

His most prominent works were those expressing pride in his chivalry and bravery; for him, chivalry "was not mere pretense, but bitter experiences, realistic suffering, and his boasting was not empty noise but the echo of his weapons' clashing" (Boufellaga, ٢٠٢٠), in addition to his Sufism and influence by the mystic Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi.

Several poets admired Emir Abdelkader's qualities and bravery, praising and lauding his deeds and the victories he achieved in battles. Among them were Kaddour Ben Guelloula and Ali Abu Talib (professors & Belghith, ٢٠١٤, p. ٣٢١). The former, Kaddour Ben Guelloula, Emir's private secretary, longed for the Emir during his exile and wrote poems expressing his longing and loyalty, saying:

Oh, my despair! My loss! My disappointment!

If I am not sacrificing myself for you.

(Bin Qaina, ٢٠٠٩, p. ٢٠)

The latter, Ali Abu Talib, composed a poem in praise of valor and chivalry following the "Battle of El-Maqtaa" (Basha, ١٩٠٣, p. ١٥٣), in which he participated, congratulating the Emir and extolling his heroism:

Congratulations to you, victorious over the enemies,

Demolishing the army of disbelief with killing and downfall.

With a great army, unparalleled in battle

Its might and majesty beyond description.

(Basha, ١٩٠٣, p. ١٥٦)

Among the poets was also Mohammed El-Mubarak Al-Hassani, an Algerian, who composed poems on various subjects, including one in praise of Emir Abdelkader. He says:

A beauty has emerged between Al-Udhayb and Hajr

Captivating the hearts of those smitten with her glances.

My times become serene with her sweet companionship

As praising Abdelkader sweetens the discourse.

A lord whose virtues in their gentleness

Revealed the paths of breezes in the gardens of flowers.

With him, the sun of knowledge arose after its setting

Guiding every bewildered wanderer.

No praising historian could ever articulate

The profound existence embodied in Abdelkader.

(Taymour Pasha, ٢٠١٧, p. ٢٠٦)

Thus, Emir Abdelkader left a unique imprint on human history in general and particularly in the history of Algerian literature. Known to both the general public and the learned, he was a decisive poetic figure. He was the Emir, the warrior leader, and the poet. His valor was acknowledged by both the distant and near, and the enemy before the friend.

When the French Marshal Soult was asked in ١٨٤٠ about his opinion on the greatest men of the ١٩th century, he stated: "Currently, there are no men in the world who deserve to be called the greatest, except for three, all of whom are Muslims:

Emir Abdelkader, Muhammad Ali Pasha, and Sheikh Shamil of Dagestan (Al-Sandoubi, ١٩١٤, p. ١٧٤).

III. The Prose Contributions of Emir Abdelkader:

Emir Abdelkader made numerous contributions to prose literature, including (Ben El-Seba A. , ٢٠٠٠, p. ١٩٥):

"Wishah al-Katib wa Zinat al-Askar al-Muhammadi al-Ghalib": This book deals with matters of war and the organization of soldiers, compiled by some of his scribes.

"Al-Muqarrad Al-Had" (To Cut the Tongue of Those Who Belittle the Religion of Islam with Falsehood and Atheism (Jazaery, ١٩٨٩): In this response, Emir Abdelkader addresses the enemies of Islam during his captivity, imprisonment, and exile in France. Discovering a different side of Europeans through his interactions with the ruling French authorities and other Europeans who differed from those he had encountered during his resistance to colonialism, he engaged in discussions with them.

This book, originally a letter, was written in response to a priest who falsely accused Islam of condoning treachery and deceit. Composed in the Ambroise prison, it reflects his recognition of his initial ignorance about these Frenchmen and opens a dialogue on religious beliefs.

His spiritual and Sufi orientation did not make him a politician constrained by exile; rather, his exile became a productive retreat. He became a debater and a pioneer in early dialogues on religious and cultural interactions (Belghras & abdellaoui, ٢٠١١).

"Al-Safinat al-Jiyad": A book highlighting the virtues, characteristics, and types of horses.

"Dhikra al-Aqil wa Tanbih al-Ghafil": A letter sent to the Society of Scholars in Paris, containing various sciences and truths. In addition to these, he wrote:

"Al-Mawqif Al-Ruhaniya wa Al-Fuyudat Al-Subuhiya" (Abaza, ١٩٩٤, p. ٢٩) (The Spiritual Stations and Divine Outpourings): This is among his most famous books, in which he interprets certain Quranic verses and noble Hadiths, blending jurisprudence and history with a Sufi approach. He used to present these stations in his private gatherings (Abaza, ١٩٩٤, p. ٢٩).

In "Al-Mawqif," he discusses his Sufi approach, characterized by an apparent interpretation of the Quranic text and presenting the sayings of mystics, especially Ibn Arabi. In the introduction to the book, he mentions, "He understands the truth about the Noble Quran and the Noble Prophetic Sunnah through divine comprehension." (El Jazaery & Ibrahim Al-Kayali, Al-Mawqif Al-Ruhaniyawa Al-Fuyudat Al-Subuhiya., ٢٠٠٤, p. ٨٢).

He clarifies his approach, saying, "The people, may God be pleased with them, did not invalidate the apparent meanings, nor did they say that the meaning of the verse is only our understanding. Rather, they acknowledged the apparent meanings and said our understanding adds something beyond the apparent... Thus, whenever someone, enlightened by God, extracts from a verse or hadith a meaning previously undiscovered, this will continue until the end of time." (El Jazaery & Ibrahim Al-Kayali, *Al-Mawqif Al-Ruhaniyawa Al-Fuyudat Al-Subuhiya.*, ٢٠٠٤, p. ٤٤).

He also touches upon the difficulty he faced in his youth when trying to understand the works of mystics, as his positions were like those of an ordinary Muslim, not yet having reached the level of Sufism. He recalls, "I was fond of reading the books of the people (meaning the Sufis) since my youth, though not following their path..." (El Jazaery & Ibrahim Al-Kayali, *Al-Mawqif Al-Ruhaniyawa Al-Fuyudat Al-Subuhiya.*, ٢٠٠٤, p. ٥٩)

In addition to being influenced by Ibn Arabi, the Emir was also influenced by Sufi sheikhs like Sheikh Khalid al-Naqshbandi al-Sahrawardi, Sheikh Mahmoud al-Qadiri al-Kilani, Sheikh Muhammad al-Fasi, and others. (Baraka, ٢٠١٣, p. ٣٥).

"The best Arabic biography of Emir Abdelkader and the history of Algeria is 'Tuhfat al-Zair fi Ma'athir al-Amir Abdelkader wa Akhbar al-Jaza'ir' by Muhammad bin Emir Abdelkader, although it lacks methodological rigor." (Cherchar, ٢٠٠٣, p. ٢٧).

Thus, it can be said that Emir Abdelkader significantly contributed to enriching the history of Algerian literature with his poetic and prose productions. He was a poet, writer, mystic, and a just and strict leader who governed by Sharia law. He did not tolerate serious mistakes and did not hesitate to punish even his son, as described by Kaddour Ben Rouila. (Baraka, ٢٠١٣, p. ١٧)

His resistance was characterized by forgiveness, even towards enemies, and good treatment, especially of prisoners, stemming from the magnanimity of the true religion (Barakat, ٢٠١٩, p. ٤٦٢). All these qualities shaped his poetic experience and were reflected in his works.

Conclusion :

In summary, the era of Emir Abdelkader represented a literary and intellectual renaissance that pushed the wheel of history towards development after stagnation and regression.

The main results of this study include:

- Emir Abdelkader was a poet, writer, author, warrior, and a valiant leader.
- Colonial France, with its policies of ignorance and impoverishment, sought to annihilate the Algerian people, against whom Emir Abdelkader firmly stood.

- Emir Abdelkader's poetry collection encompasses various poetic themes, including pride, romance, praise, and description.
- His poetic language was traditional, robust, and solid, marked by precise and eloquent wording, infused with Islamic spirit, religious, and popular heritage.
- Emir Abdelkader was well-versed in ancient poetry, from pre-Islamic eloquent poetry to Abbasid poetry, and he relied on traditional meter and Khalilian rhyme in his musical compositions.
- Emir Abdelkader was culturally rich due to his extensive knowledge. He was also distinguished by his patriotism and humanity, recognized for his virtues and achievements by both distant and near, enemy and friend.
- Emir Abdelkader's diverse prose writings include letters and books in which he responded to misguidance. His philosophical Sufi approach, doctrinal inclination, and influence by his teacher Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi were prominent.
- His prose language was eloquent, suggestive, and symbolic, with divine spiritual effusions, reflecting his Sufism.

Finally, we propose that researchers should focus on studying, analyzing, critiquing, and scrutinizing Emir Abdelkader's works, as they are a beacon that illuminates the path of researchers in the darkness of ignorance. We also suggest that scholars study Algerian literature, focusing on its great figures, especially during Emir Abdelkader's period, exploring names that have not yet been highlighted and analyzing their works.

From the suggestions and recommendations:

- Organize awareness and educational campaigns in the academic environment to revive Algerian heritage, especially the works and achievements of Emir Abdelkader, and to highlight this remarkable figure.
- Encourage literary critics and scholars to revisit and analyze Emir Abdelkader's prose works.
- Motivate university students to explore Algerian heritage, cling to its figures, and emulate them.

Bibliographic References :

١. Abaza, N. (١٩٩٤). Emir Abdelkader El Jazaery: The Scholar Warrior (Vol. ١st). Damascus, Syria: Dar AL-Fikr.

٣. Al-Jazzar, A. K., & Mohamed Zaki, I. (١٩٩٧). Al-Mafakhir fi Ma'arif Al-Amir Al-Jazairi Abdelkader wa Al-Sada Al-Awliya Al-Akabar. (A.-O. O. Printing, Éd.) Giza, Egypt: Egypt.
٣. Al-Sandoubi, H. (١٩١٤). A'yan Al-Bayan from the dawn of the ١٣th Hijri century to today (Vol. ١st). Egypt: edition, Al-Jamaliya Printing Press in Harat Al-Rum.
٤. Badran, W. (٢٠١٨, ١١ ١٦). Get to Know Emir Abdelkader El Jazaery, Who Led the War Against the French Occupation. Consulté le ٠٩ ١١, ٢٠٢١, sur bbc: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-٤٦٢٢٢٥٢>.
٥. Baraka, M. M. (٢٠١٣). Emir Abdelkader El Jazaery, The Sufi Warrior. Ain shams: Ain Shams University Electronic Publishing House.
٦. Ammar, Barakat, (٢٠١٩) "The Role of Sufi Experience in Establishing Human Dimensions: Emir Abdelkader and Mahatma Gandhi as Models," Al-Nasiriyah Journal for Social and Historical Studies, University of Mascara, Algeria, Volume: ١٠, Issue: ٠٢, December, p. , ١٠ (٠٢).
٧. Basha, M. A. (١٩٠٣). Tuhfat al-Zair fi Ma'athir Al-Amir Abdelkader waAkhbar Al-Jaza'ir (Vol. ١). Alexandria, Egypt: Commercial Printing Press.
٨. Belghras, A., & abdellaoui, m. (٢٠١١). The Historical Event in the Sufi Moment through the Experience of Emir Abdelkader. unpublished doctoral thesis in philosophy . Oran, Algeria.
٩. Ben El-Seba, A. (٢٠٠٠). Emir Abdelkader El Jazaery and His Literature. Algeria, Algeria: Abdul Aziz Saud Al-Babtain Prize for Poetic Creativity Foundation. Ben El-Seba, B. E.-S.
١٠. Bin Qaina, O. (٢٠٠٩). In Modern Algerian Literature: History... Types, Issues... and Figures (Vol. ٢). Ben Aknoun, Algeria: University Press Publications.
١١. Boufellaga, M. S.-i. (٢٠٢٠, ٠٩ ٠٩). The Poetic Experience of Emir Abdelkader El Jazaery - Highlights and Observations. Consulté le ١١ ١٥, ٢٠٢٣, sur [raialyoun: https://www.raialyoun.com/index.php/%D8%A7%D9%A4%D8%AF%D9%A2%D8%AA%D9%A8%D8%B1-%D9%A5%D8%AD%D9%A5%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%AA%D9%A1-%D8%A7%D9%A4%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%A4%D8%A7%D9%A5-%D8%A8%D9%A0%D9%A8%D9%A1%D9%A0%D9%A4%D8%A7%D9%A2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%A4/](https://www.raialyoun.com/index.php/%D8%A7%D9%A4%D8%AF%D9%A2%D8%AA%D9%A8%D8%B1-%D9%A5%D8%AD%D9%A5%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D9%AA%D9%A1-%D8%A7%D9%A4%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%A4%D8%A7%D9%A5-%D8%A8%D9%A0%D9%A8%D9%A1%D9%A0%D9%A4%D8%A7%D9%A2%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%A4/)
١٢. Cherchar, A. (٢٠٠٣, ٠١ ١٩-٢٠). The Personality of Emir Abdelkader from the Perspective of the Other, Translation of Abdelkader's Book by Gustave Ducan as an Example. Insaniyat Magazine .
١٣. E. A., & Dahou, A.-A. (٢٠٠٧). Al-Diwan. Algeria: Thala Publication.
١٤. El Jazaery, E. A., & Haqqi, M. (١٩٦٠). Al-Diwan. Damascus, Syria: Dar Al-Yaqaza Al-Arabia.

١٥. El Jazaery, E. A., & Ibrahim Al-Kayali, A. (٢٠٠٤). Al-Mawqif Al-Ruhaniyawa Al-Fuyudat Al-Subuhiya. (Vol. ٢ volumes). Beirut, lebanon: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, Mohamed Ali Baidoun Publications.
١٦. Jazaery, A. E. (١٩٨٩). Al-Muqarrad Al-Had. Algeria, Algeria: Dar Al-Tassili for Publishing and Distribution.
١٧. Kharfi, S. (١٩٨٣). Introduction to Modern Algerian Literature. Algeria: The National Company for Publishing and Distribution.
١٨. professors, A. g., & Belghith, M. A. (٢٠١٤). Encyclopedia of Algerian Scientists and Writers (Vol. ٠٢). Bir touta, Algeria: Al-Hadara Publications.
١٩. Taymour Pasha, A. (٢٠١٧). A'lam Al-Fikr Al-Islami Fi Al-Asr Al-Hadith. Cairo, Egypt: Hindawi Foundation.