

Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi and his Scientific Journey to the Arab Mashreq during the First Half of the 19th Century

الشيخ محمد بن علي السنوسي ورحلته العلمية إلى المشرق العربي خلال النصف الأول من القرن التاسع عشر

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• Abstract:

The aim of this study is to shed light on one of the models of scientific communication between the Arab Mashreq and the Arab Maghreb; through the journey of Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi, as the founder of the Senoussi method; seeing that he is the Algerian scientist originating from Mostaganem, whose journey is one of the Hejazi pilgrimage trips, which was at the same time a scientific trip that helped him to visit many countries for scientific benefit and gain, in respect such as Tunisia, in which is located the Zitouna mosque, and Egypt whereat the Al-Azhar mosque is located, and then to finally settle down in Hejaz in 1925, where he stayed in the vicinity of the Mecca Sanctuary for approximately 15 years, the fact of which allowed him to come into contact with the scholars, jurists and thinkers of the nation, at the top of which Sheikh Ahmad Ibn Idris, from who he took up the Sufi path. More to the point, his trip allowed him to closely get acquainted with the movement of Mohammed Ibn Abdelwahhab, who has alike consciously studied the Salafi movement in its political positions and scientific jurisprudence, which enabled him to build his first prayer room in the Hejaz in Mecca on Mount Abu Qubays in 1837, and this had a great impact on the development of his Da'wah-related personality together his own Sufi method, the fact of which foreshadowed the emergence of the Senoussi reform movement in Libya, being the greatest event known to the Islamic world in the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Scientific journey; Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi; Egypt; Hejaz; Prayer room "Zawiya" of Abu Oubavs.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على أحد نماذج التواصل العلمي بين المشرق العربي والمغرب العربي، من خلال رحلة الشيخ محمد بن علي السنوسي، مؤسس الطريقة السنوسية، باعتباره عالماً جزائرياً من أصول مستغانمية. وقد كانت رحلته في الأصل رحلة حج إلى الحجاز، لكنها شكّلت في الوقت نفسه رحلة علمية أتاحت له زيارة عدد من البلدان للاستفادة العلمية، مثل تونس حيث يوجد جامع الزيتونة، ومصر التي تحتضن جامع الأزهر، قبل أن يستقر في الحجاز سنة 1825، حيث أقام بجوار البيت الحرام لمدة تقارب خمس عشرة سنة. وقد مكنته هذه الإقامة من التواصل مع العلماء والفقهاء والمفكرين، وعلى رأسهم الشيخ أحمد بن إدريس الذي أخذ عنه الطريقة الصوفية. كما أتاحت له وجوده في الحجاز التعرف عن قرب على حركة محمد بن عبد الوهاب، فدرسها بوعي من حيث مواقفها السياسية وفقهها العلمي، مما ساعده لاحقاً على بناء أول زاوية له في الحجاز بمكة على جبل أبي قبيس سنة 1837، وهو ما كان له أثر بالغ في تكوين شخصيته الدعوية وتطوير منهجه الصوفي الخاص، الأمر الذي مهد لظهور الحركة السنوسية الإصلاحية في ليبيا، التي تُعد من أبرز الحركات التي شهدها العالم الإسلامي في القرن التاسع عشر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرحلة العلمية، محمد بن علي السنوسي، مصر، الحجاز، زاوية أبي قبيس.

• Introduction:

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the Arab and Islamic world witnessed two major reform movements; the first of which is the movement of Sheikh Ibn Abdelwahhab in Nedjd – Hejaz, whilst the second is the Senoussi movement, which grew up in Mecca and moved to Libya, as it spread in central and western Africa, which is attributed to Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi, being considered a model of the Algerian reformer Sufi, as he had a great impact in west and east of the Islamic nation, and he was alike amongst the elite being affected by the situation of Muslims during the nineteenth century, and studied their status, who had then conducted regenerative reform attempts, through which he succeeded in creating the Senoussi movement, which was an implementation of his ideas in reform, and played a role in the advancement of Muslims in Libya together with other parts of the Arab Maghreb, in spreading Islam in the western Africa. Further, Al Senoussi lived a full of activity life, through which he moved among several parts of the Islamic world. Nonetheless, this was amid of the most important factors that contributed to the formation of his personality during his scientific journey to the Arab Mashreq, specifically towards the Hejaz as a model of the scientific and spiritual communication between the Arab Mashreq and the Arab Maghreb, thus being the focus of our study, through which we endeavoured to provide answers to the problem hereunder: **-How much does the journey of Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi contribute to the strengthening of scientific links between the Arab Mashreq and the Arab Maghreb during the first half of the nineteenth century?**

1. Introducing the personality of Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi:

1.1. His upbringing:

In actual fact, the lineage of Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi is traced back the ancestry of Al Hassan Ibn Ali, may Allah be pleased with both of them, as he was born in 12th Rabie El Aouel 1202 Ah, corresponding to the 17th of December 1787 AD in Mostaganem – Algeria ¹, as his reputation of Al Senoussi came into view by his grandfather Mohamed Ben Abdelkader, who was famous as the imam of the most prominent narrators, and one of the memorizers of the Islamic Maghreb, seeing that he nicknamed himself as such asking the blessings of the Imam Mohamed Ibn Youssef Al Senoussi ². Besides, Ibn Al Senoussi grew up in a family that was famous for sciences, religion and righteousness, as the sons of Al Senoussi house were all affiliated with sciences. Additionally, his father Mister Ali was a man of knowledge and righteousness, who was good at horseback riding and archery, taking into consideration that his parents died while he was young, then his aunt Fatima Zohra took care of him, as she was amongst the honourable people of her age, she was a pioneer in sciences, teaching and guidance; further, she took in person care of his education, development of mind, upbringing correctly. As

¹ Abdelkader Ibn Ali, “**The obvious benefits in the history of the family of Al Senoussi**”, V.1, Dar El Djazzair Al Arabia, Damascus – Syria, 1966, p.8.

² Muhammad Bin Othman Al Hashashi, “**The journey of Al Hashashi to Libya 1895**”, Verified by Ali Al Musrati, Dar Lebanon, 1965, p.144.

consequence, she can be considered his first teacher; however, after her death and joining the great majority, his cousin named Al Sharif took care of him, as he was a man of knowledge and virtue, who kept on taking care of him, then Ibn Al Senoussi began combining sciences whereat he mastered the holy Quran in terms of memorizing and awareness, he gained knowledge of jurisprudence, Sufism and the prophetic Hadeeth under supervision of his cousin ³.

In addition to sciences, Ibn Al-Senoussi was raised in his youth on horseback riding. In this respect, the King Idris says that his grandfather used to divide his day into two halves, one for sciences and study, and the other for horseback riding ⁴. On the other hand, Ibn Al-Senoussi illustrated signs of cleverness at an early age; seeing that he tended to seclusion and aloneness, as he spent his time contemplating and thinking, along with finding solutions to the deteriorated reality of the Islamic world, whereat Professor Fouad Shoukry narrates that: “it happened once that some sheikhs found him sitting on top of a dune of sand, showing signs of deep thinking, but when he asked him about the reason of being as such, he answered that he was thinking about the state of the Islamic world, which is nothing more than a herd of sheep with no herdsman although the existence of its sultans, princes and sheikhs of its doctrines and scientists... as the Islamic world still most sever lacks a true guide whose goal is to bring the entire Islamic world to one end... the reason for which is that the lack of religious jealousy among scholars and sheikhs and their adherence to the differences existing between them have divided them by divisions, parties and groups, thus they are not concerned with the dissemination of sciences and knowledge, and do not act upon the orders of the True Religion ...that’s what I am thinking”. Above and beyond, when they asked him about the solutions for such mysteries, he answered that: “**Surely, I will become hardworking, even be assiduous**” ⁵, thus we can understand therefrom that the state of the Islamic world is the one pushing Al Senoussi to think and gather knowledge in quite a lot of Islamic countries, with the intention of conducting attempts of Islamic reforms aiming at advancing the nation and diagnosing the disease affecting the same.

1.2. His gathering of knowledge:

Indeed, Ibn Al Senoussi studied under supervision of a large number of sheikhs who were local scholars, thus he was able to study the Holy Quran under their supervision, who was proficient in reading all its narrations, together with jurisprudence, the prophetic Hadeeth and Sufism. More to the point, in the midst of the prominent scholars he studied with in the city of Mostaganem, were: Sheikh Mohieddine Ben Chahla, Mohamed Ben Abdelkader, Abdelkader Ben Amor and Muhammad Al Kandouz. Likewise, he obtained some of his sciences in Mazouna from the scholar Mohamed Ben Ali Charef Al Mazouni, Sheikh Abu Talib Al Mazouni and Sheikh Abi Ras Al Nasri⁶.

³ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, “**The religion and the State of Al Senoussi**”, Dar Al-fikr, Beirut –Lebanon, 1948, p.11.

⁴ Ahmad Sedki Dajani, “**The movement of Al Senoussi – emergence and growth in the nineteenth century**”, Dar Al-Bayan, Beirut – Lebanon, 1967, p.39.

⁵ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, Op. Cit, p-p.12-13.

⁶ Miloud Missoum, “**Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi – the sources of his knowledge and the approach of his method**”, Journal of the Academy for Social and Humanitarian Studies, Issue 20, University of Chlef, June 2018, p.136.

More to the point, Al Senoussi was not satisfied with the sciences he had learned in his country, nevertheless, he went to Fez in Morocco, which was then the capital of the honourable Alawite State and a scientific capital amongst the capitals of the Islamic world, whereat he found one of the most important scientific centres, which is the mosque of Al Quaraouiyine, in which Ibn Al Senoussi gathered knowledge under the supervision of its best scientists, in respect such as Sheikh Hamouda Ben Al Hadj, Hamdoun Ben Abderrahmane, Tayeb Al Kirati, Sheikh Larbi Ben Ahmed Al Darqawi and others, from whom he took accreditation in various sciences. Moreover, he was focused on studying the Sufism and the spread methods thereof at that time in the Maghreb, in respect such as: Qadiriyya, Chadhiliyya and Nasiriyya, the fact of which qualified him to obtain the great sheikdom of Al Quaraouiyine; moreover, he was appointed a teacher at the Great Mosque in the city of Fez, all of this made him very famous among the students of science, thanks to his lessons and his Da'wah-related method. Nonetheless, this missionary work had in next to no time instigated the government of Sultan Moulay Slimane ⁷, during which he took the risk that it would turn into a political missionary activity that would beset the Kingdom of Morocco; consequently, he tightened control over him, the fact of which forced Ibn Al Senoussi to leave Fez.

Definitely, one of the reasons that encouraged Ibn Al Senoussi to leave Fez was the fact that he had taken enough of studying from its scholars and became interested in gathering knowledge from new scholars, in addition to the emergence of the idea of travelling to Mecca for him; nonetheless, on his return from Fez, he entered into the Sahara of Algeria, whereat he made the acquaintance of the most famous prayer rooms, as he arrived at Aine Madi, and studied therein the Al Tijaniyya method, and then at Laghouat whereat he stayed for some time to give his lessons in jurisprudence and Sharia'ah. Afterwards, we pursued his trip to Bou Saâda with the intention of gathering knowledge and providing lessons ⁸. Subsequently, we find that Al Senoussi took the ancient road of pilgrimage, being the Sahara pathway, as made by the travellers of Hejaz, in respect such as: Al Ayachi and Al Darai, whereat he travelled through the hills and inland cities; besides, he stopped on several occasions at the sheikhs he found on his road, as made by Sheikh of Kenadsa and Sheikh of Kerzaz, whereat he learned the method from both of them ⁹. For that reason, we notice three main directions that formed the personality of Al Senoussi in the first stage during the period preceding his journey to the Arab Mashreq; i.e., before his personality knew some kind of integration; which directions are represented in:

-Sufism, which Ibn Al Senoussi studied in Fez due to the fact that this city became the home of many Sufi groups and a fertile field for their activity; accordingly, we are sure that his Sufi

⁷ Louis Rinn states that Moulay Slimane sent a manuscript to Ibn Al Senoussi to kindly write a commentary thereon, but the Sheikh was not naturally royal, thus he apologized and then left Fez to go to Mecca. Vide: Louis Rinn, **Marabouts et Khouan – Etude sur l'Islam en Algérie**, Adolphe Jourdan, Alger, 1884, p-p. 483-484.

⁸ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, Op. Cit, p-p.13-15. vide also: Louis Rinn, Op. Cit, p.484.

⁹ Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, “**Cultural history of Algeria 1830 – 1954**”, V.4, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, Beirut – Lebanon, Ed1, 1998, p.248.

orientation was found in his first stage thanks to his staying in Fez; whereat he got acquainted with Al Tijaniyya, Qadiriyya, Chadhiliyya, Al-Gazoulya, Al Darqawia and others.

-His interests in the study of jurisprudence, as he continued his study of jurisprudence in Fez on the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence, which is the prevailing school in the Arab Maghreb. Besides, he stated in the preface that he wrote for the sake of his students, for the book of Al Muwatta by Imam Malik, that he took the Muwatta based on the approaches of the Orient and Maghreb people, who had then continued to consider himself of Maliki approach, even if he strove therein and disagree with the Maliki principles in several matters. Therefore, he had attained, through these two directions, the sense of balance in his personality, as he did not misappropriate in his Sufism, nor in his jurisprudence; likewise, he was not locked in his understanding of the jurisprudential provisions, but mixed the two directions, then he made his Sufism gain a character of Sunna and restrained the same with the limits of divine law, along with making his jurisprudence gain the character of radiant spiritualism.

-With regards to the third direction, it was interested in political movements, or the so-called reform movements aiming at reforming the deteriorating conditions and facing the rulers when they diverge ¹⁰.

1.3. His most important works:

In fact of matter, Ibn Al Senoussi is again a modernizer Muslim missionary involved in Da'wah and a scholar of art in many divine law sciences. In light of that, he was forced from time to time to write his opinions and jurisprudence in various sciences related to jurisprudence, Hadeeth and Sufism; although, historians have not been able to count the number of books written by Ibn Al Senoussi, as many of them were lost, whilst some of them were printed, but some others are still manuscripts. In any case, the most important written books are:

-The book of ten questions called "Boughiatio El Makassid Fi Kholassoti Al Maqassid" (The intent of purposes in the abstract of the observer).

-The book of "Alslsbyl Alm'ayn Fy Altra'q Al'arb'ayn (The springhead fountain in the forty modalities).

-The book of "Al Manhal Al Rawi Al Rawi Al-raik fi Asanid Al-oloum wa Ousol A-taraik" (Al Manhal Al Rawi Al Rawi in the Chains of Science and the Origins of Methods).

-The book of "Iqadh Al-wasnan fi Al-amal Bi-al-hadith Wal-Quran" (Awakening Al Wasanan at Work with the Hadith and the Quran).

-The thesis of "Mokadimat Al Muwatta by Imam Malik" (The Introduction of Muwatta by Imam Malik).

¹⁰ Ahmad Sidki Dajani, Op.Cit, p-p. 49-51.

In addition to many manuscripts that have not been verified to be printed as books, which have been mentioned in printed books, in respect such as: The manuscript of “Chomous Charika Fi Assanid Chyoukhina Al Maghariba Wa Al Macharika” (The shining suns with the support of our Maghreb and Orient Sheikhs)¹¹, through which all sheikhs with whom he gathered knowledge in the Arab Maghreb and Arab Orient were mentioned.

2. His scientific journey towards the Orient:

2.1. The reasons for his journey to the Orient:

Unsurprisingly, the thought of Ibn Al Senoussi to travel to Mecca was natural, as he must, on the one hand, have set his mind on going to the Sacred House, and dreamed for a long time to live in the Holy Land and perform the pilgrimage duty; likewise, he considered staying in Mecca a great opportunity to meet with the leading scholars of the Islamic world and was inspired by the advice of one of his sheikhs, who told him: **“If you want to increase your knowledge, all you have to do is travel to Mecca, where the gathering of Islamic scholars meets”**. In light of which, Ibn Al Senoussi decided to travel to Mecca¹², thus he left Algeria, entered Tunisia on his way and settled down for a while at the Zitouna mosque, he took advantage of its sheikhdom and the students benefited from him and asked him to teach, hence granted their request; afterwards, he continued his walk and entered Tripoli from the West, the moment of which was during the reign of Yusuf Karamanli, who was independent from the Ottoman State, then he honoured this latter with his Inn, and stayed in the city of Tripoli and its surroundings for a period of preachment, guidance and education, hence he provided benefits to worshippers, who had been providing lessons in the entire known mosques. Doing so, he was able to gain followers from Misrata, Tripoli and Zliten¹³.

2.2. His entrance to Egypt:

In 1824, Al Senoussi entered Egypt, as the ruling at that time was ensured by Mohamed Ali Pasha, who had strongly captured the reins of affairs in Egypt since 1805, so it was an opportunity for Al Senoussi to get to know the experience of Ali Pasha closely, as Al Senoussi noticed several issues that made him feel at ease about the ruling type established by Mohamed Ali Pasha, together with his way to reform; later, Ibn Senoussi became highly convinced of the dangerousness of the movement of Mohamed Ali Pasha; likewise, he noticed the status of the Al-Azhar mosque at that time, seeing that it had been unable to accomplish its scientific duty that had previously been ensuring, as it was in total inaction, because sciences that had been thought therein were very ancient and lost their brightness and brilliance for lack of innovation and due to commitment of imitation. However, with regards to the scholars of Al-Azhar mosque, Mohamed Ali Pasha

¹¹ Miloud Missoum, Op. Cit, p.140.

¹² Ali Muhammad Al Sallabi, **“The fragrant fruits of Al Senoussi Movement in Libya”**, V.1, Dar Al-Tabyine, Cairo, Ed1, 2001, p.33.

¹³ Abdelkader Ibn Ali, Op. Cit, p-p.15-17.

endeavoured to weaken their role and competition malevolence raised between them to the extent that some of them recourse to rulers ¹⁴.

Obviously, it is worth mentioning that Ibn Al Senoussi has gathered knowledge from some of the scholars of Al-Azhar mosque, in respect such as Hassan Al-Attar, Al Mili Al Tounsi, Sheikh Al Sawi, Tha'ilab and others. As consequence of the impudence of Al Senoussi in his opinion and his lack of closeness to the rulers together with his lack of interest in attracting their satisfaction, this brought him the enmity of the scholars loyal to the rulers of Egypt. Therefore, Ibn Al Senoussi did not stay for long in Egypt, and the doubts were probably swirling around him, seeing that some of the scholars of Al-Azhar mosque accused him of condemnable innovation in the religion, thus he left Egypt and went to Hejaz. Besides, the French historian Louis Rinn mentions that the reason for his rapid departure is the shortage of spiritual activity and mystical study in Al-Azhar mosque ¹⁵. Nonetheless, there are some people who attribute that fact to his discomfort as pointed out for the method of Mohamed Ali Pasha in ruling ¹⁶. On his side, Sheikh Ibn Al Senoussi states that the reason of his departure from Cairo was the fact that when he accomplished his ablution, after losing the same, he unintentionally collided at the Al-Azhar mosque with a poor farmer who said: **“Oh Al Senoussi, why are you doing this to me, then that man was surprised by being called by his name by that man; then, he asked him how did he know him as he never met him, the farmer answered with some wording meant that he is among the pious worshippers of Allah, but when that man said that it concerns the pole that he has been seeking to meet him for a long time, the man answered: “Absolutely not, the one you mean exists in Mecca, you should do there ¹⁷”**, the fact of which is widely known to the poles of Sufism and its followers, as was narrated by Abd Al-wâhid Ibn Achir in his text called: **“Al-Murshid al-Mu'een Ala Adarouri Min Oloum Eddine”** (The Adviser Assistant to the Necessary Sciences of the Religion), when he said while mentioning the principles of Sufism:

He accompanies a sheikh who knows the paths * * who protects him on his perishing path

He reminds him of Allah if he sees him * * and brings worshiper to his Lord ¹⁸.

Subsequent to this short experimentation in Egypt, Al Senoussi decided to continue his travel to the Hejaz after staying one year in Egypt. In this respect, the Turkish historian Ahmed Helmy confirms that his journey thereto had left traces in his spirit, such as the fact that he had grown to believe that the Ottoman Caliphate was on the way of degenerateness and disappearance ¹⁹.

2.3. His settling in Hejaz:

¹⁴ Ali Muhammad Al Sallabi, Op. Cit, p-p.35-36.

¹⁵ Louis Rinn, Op. cit, p.486.

¹⁶ Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p.64.

¹⁷ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, Op. Cit., p-p.19-20. vide also: Louis Rinn, Op. Cit, p.487.

¹⁸ Abd Al-wâhid Ibn Achir, **“Al-Murshid al-Mu'een Ala Adarouri Min Oloum Eddine”** (The Adviser Assistant to the Necessary Sciences of the Religion), Dar Al-Qahera for publishing, Cairo, N.D, p.24.

¹⁹ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, Op. Cit, p-p.16-17.

-His gathering of knowledge:

Actually, Ibn Al Senoussi entered the venerable Mecca in 1825, which was at that time under the ruling of Mohamed Ali Pasha, ruler of Egypt, who eliminated the influence of the Wahhabi movement. In Mecca, Al Senoussi began to get acquainted with scholars at gathered knowledge from them, mainly that those scholars represent different doctrines and schools of thoughts, in respect such as Sufism and Malikite, in addition to Salafi and Wahhabi, the fact of which gave him the opportunity to get acquainted with these trends; conceivably, among the scholars that Al Senoussi was influenced by and gathered knowledge from:

-Sheikh Abu Salman Abdelhafid Al Ajmi, expounder of Islamic law (mufti) and judge of Mecca.

-Abu Hafs Omar Ibn Abderassoul Al Attar, as he mentioned them in his text he wrote as an introduction to Muwatta by Imam Malik, as the two scholars that Al Muwatta refers to from Orient sheikhs.

-Ahmed Ibn Muhammad Al Dajati, as Al Senoussi learned from him a number of Sufi ways.

-Ahmed Ibn Idris, nicknamed Abu Al Abbas Al Araishi, who is of Maghrebi origins, and the most important personality that caught the attention of Ibn Al Senoussi with whom he found his long sought goal. Besides, Ibn Idris was famous for righteousness and deepening in the study of jurisprudence and Sufi ways, seeing that in addition to being the sheikh of the Qadiriyya method, and among the sheikhs of Chadhiliyya and Khoudayiriyya, he had Salafi orientations, whereat he combined the Sufi and Salafi trends ²⁰.

More to the point, Ibn Al Senoussi was very attached to this sheikh, and considered him the sheikh referred to by the farmer of Al-Azhar mosque ²¹; above and beyond, Al Senoussi acquired from this sheikh a number of Sufi ways, learnt from him the rules of Hadeeth and Sunna. On the other hand, it seems that after Ibn Senoussi being satisfied with the sciences he collected, he began to think about the need for Da'wah for the purpose of monitoring and spreading his ideas in Mecca, the fact of which is demonstrated after he received permission from his sheikh Ibn Idris to give pledges and teaching remembrance, then he authorized him and ordered him to: **“Lead people to the way of Allah and attract seekers to Allah ²²”**. In reality, Chakib Arslan states that sheikh Ibn Senoussi was inclined to Wahhabi principles ²³, but it revealed clear to us that he was influenced by the movement of Mohamed Ibn Abdelwahab in the Salafi orientation. However, with regards to the difference between them is clear, as Wahhabi movement was adhered to the doctrine of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the jurisprudential judgment of Ibn Taymiyya; as for the Senoussi movement, it had been following the Malikite school even if it disagrees with the same in the jurisprudential

²⁰ Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p-p.66-68. vide also: Ali Muhammad Al Sallabi, **“The history of Al Senoussi Movement in Africa”**, Dar Al-Maarifa, Beirut – Lebanon, Ed3, 2009, p.36.

²¹ Louis Rinn, Op. Cit, p.488.

²² Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p.70.

²³ Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, Op. Cit, p.250.

judgment in some obligatory acts, whilst Wahhabi movement followed the strictness principle in responding to those who disagree with its directives, the fact of which led to collision with its opponents inside and outside Nedjd, whereas the Al Senoussi movement adopted the way of clemency in the working principle, but this did not stand firm before its holy warfare dimension against the Christian invaders ²⁴.

During his stay in Hejaz, Ibn Al Senoussi got married with his second wife, Khadija Al Habashia, upon the instructions of his Sheikh Ibn Idris, who saw him living single after his divorce to his first wife, as his wife Khadija was characterized by piety and righteousness, and she accompanied him on his travels, she was satisfied with his difficult lifestyle being characterized by constant moving and hard work, and she died about twenty years later ²⁵.

Naturally, the scholars of Mecca, being loyal to the Ottoman State, were fed up with Ibn Idris, where they complained about him to the rulers who oppressed him, thus forcing him to emigrate to the Sabya area, whereat the supporters of the Wahhabi movement exist, and he was accompanied by Ibn Al Senoussi, who remained with him until his death in 1835.

-The creation of the praying room “Zawiya” of Abi Qubays in Mecca and his propagation of Islami Da’wah:

After the death of his Sheikh Ibn Idris, Al Senoussi returned to Mecca whereat a significant number of followers gathered around him, thus he strove to teach them jurisprudence and the sciences of Islamic religion, the fact of which enabled him to build his first praying room “Zawiya” in Hejaz in Mecca on Mount Abu Qubays in 1837, in which he began to give lessons in Mecca to students of sciences, which made him accepted by many people who admired his knowledge and piety, thus his praying room was for him a centre for those who advanced to worship and praise, as is the case of Sufism in several areas. Though, the Sheikh began to direct his followers to what is good for them and for the good of their society by building praying rooms and mosques, together with endeavouring to spread Islam and establish an Islamic society ²⁶; as the strength of his personality and the abundance of his knowledge, together with his independence in terms of opinion, moving apart from rulers and politics, provided him with great help, notwithstanding the fact that it brought him a lot of disagreements with rulers, particularly after attracting independent scholars like him, who supported his praying room and his specific method ²⁷.

In fact, this experience in the Hejaz had a great impact on the development of his personality for Da’wah and his own Sufi way to provide teaching thereof, the fact of which was enlightened by the emergence of the Al Senoussi reform movement, which was the greatest event known to the Islamic world in the nineteenth century ²⁸. In consequence, his visit to Mecca had a great impact

²⁴ Miloud Belalia, “**Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi 1787 – 1859**”, Ossour Journal, Issue 5, University of Oran 1, December 2006, p.128.

²⁵ Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p.72.

²⁶ Miloud Missoum, Op. Cit, p.138.

²⁷ Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, Op. Cit, p.251.

²⁸ Mohamed Fouad Choukri, Op. Cit, p.23.

on the establishment of the Al Senoussi Da'wah and the appearance of its affairs, and was helped by a set of reasons, the main of which are:

- He was able to obtain great news about the conditions and morals of Muslims arriving in Mecca.
- He had the opportunity to come into contact with the agents, jurists and intellectuals of the nation; whereat he exchanged opinions and ideas with them with the intention of rising up and restoring the glory of the nation.
- The Mecca was an important platform for Da'wah; therefore, Ibn Al Senoussi was engaged in the dissemination, collection and discussion of sciences, who worked hard in the study of Islamic doctrines so that he was able to address many Muslims of the Islamic world.
- We was allowed to closely get acquainted with the movement of Mohammed Ibn Abdelwahhab, he accompanied the followers and lovers of Salafi Da'wah, he was thought by its scholars and sheikhs, and consciously studied the the Salafi movement in its political positions and scientific jurisprudence ²⁹.

More to the point, Ibn Al Senoussi did not forget his duty to his homeland, which had suffered from the scourge of French colonialism; hence we find that he endeavoured to ignite the spirit of Jihad in the souls of Algerian nationals against France. Further, when Moheiddine Al Djazairi, accompanied by his son Abdelkader and the nobles of his society, came to Mecca just before the French campaign on Algeria, Al Senoussi met them and treated them with generosity. Later on, after they wanted to travel, he bid them goodbye and told them: **“The Islamic religion obliges every Muslim to defend the same as much as he can, and forbids Muslims to surrender to the usurping enemy who violates the sanctities of religion and Islam and disrupts the provisions of Allah, and I entrust you to take good care of our son Abdelkader because he will wish for the sanctities of Islam and raise the banner of Jihad** ³⁰”.

-His departure from Hejaz:

Categorically, there were several reasons that prompted Ibn Al Senoussi to leave Mecca after staying therein for about fifteen years; as his teacher Ahmed Ben Idris died, and this also brought him the enmity of the sheikhs of Mecca and its scholars with regards to the lessons and thoughts that Al Senoussi had been providing, in addition to the fear of the Ottoman State of his relationship with the sons of Sheikh Ahmed Ben Idris in Sabya Asir, being a land belonging to the followers of the Wahhabi movement, which is an invitation of the adherents from the people of Maghreb to visit their country, in addition to the desire of Ibn Al Senoussi to Jihad in his country against the French. At this juncture, he set his intention and determined to travel and a great number of followers and brothers joined his ride, who appointed Sheikh Abdallah Touati in the prayer room of Abi Qubays in Mecca to carry out the affairs of the followers. Nevertheless, on his way back, he returned to

²⁹ Ali Muhammad Al Sallabi, “The fragrant fruits of Al Senoussi Movement”, Op. Cit, p-p.40-41.

³⁰ Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p.44.

Egypt at the end of 1840, visited Al-Azhar mosque and gave useful lessons, then one of the senior sheikhs of Al-Azhar stood up and said: “**Oh scholars! Listen, you have a guest being the Scholar of the nation of Mohamed, the lamp of the purifying Sharia and the sun of the sky of divine knowledge**”³¹.

Afterwards, he left Egypt towards his homeland Algeria, but he learned in the Algerian-Tunisian borders that he followed by the French colonial authorities, whereat they were looking for his movements with the Algerian pilgrims and Maghreb delegation in general after realizing the dangerousness of the movement of Al Senoussi³², mainly after his spiritual role in discouraging the mission of spy “Leon Roche”, who issued a fatwa to convince the Algerians not to fight France on the pretext that it allows them to practice their religious rites, that the said spy accompanied by some sheikhs of the Sufi ways transported to Hejaz³³. Furthermore, “Leon Roche” confirmed in his memoirs “**Thirty-two years within Islam**” the strong opposition expressed by Ibn Al Senoussi to this fatwa, to the point that he described him as the narrow-minded sheikh in comparison with the Mashreq scholars who agreed with the content of the fatwa³⁴, the fact of which pushed Ibn Al Senoussi to settle down at Tripoli, specifically in “Djebel Akhdar” (*The Green Mount*), whereat he created the “White praying room “Zawiya” as the number of his adherents had greatly increased, and his way had widely spread; then he moved to the oasis of Al Jaghub far from the eyes of the French colonial authorities, the Ottoman State and the Egyptian State, whereat he settled down in its and created a big religious school therein with the intention to teach the origins of the Al Senoussi Da’wah to his followers, who graduate from the same to spread its principles in the neighbouring country, seeing that he stayed in Al Jaghub until he joined the great majority and died in 1859, who was then succeeded by his son Ahmed El Mahdi in the leadership of the Al Senoussi movement³⁵.

• Conclusion

After studying the issue of “Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi and his scientific journey to the Arab Mashreq during the first half of the 19th century”, I came up with the results listed below:

-Ibn Al Senoussi is considered a model of the reformer Algerian Sufi who had a great influence on the Maghreb and Orient of the Islamic nation, as his journey to Hejaz had a great impact on the establishment of the Al Senoussi Da’wah, whereat it gave him an opportunity to come into contact with scholars, jurists and sheikhs of the moderate way, whereat he formed the idea of the manner to promote the nation.

³¹ Ali Muhammad Al Sallabi, “The history of Al Senoussi Movement in Africa”, Op. Cit, p.39.

³² Ahmad Sedki Dajani, Op. Cit, p.47.

³³ Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, Op. Cit, p.254.

³⁴ Leon Roche, “**Thirty-two years within Islam**”, Translated by Mohamed Kheir Mahmoud Al Bikai, Dar Al Jadawil, Kuwait, Ed1, 2011, p-p.147-148.

³⁵ Sabah Lakhdari, “**Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi, the reformer**”, Journal of Cultural, Linguistic and Technical Studies, Issue 12, V.3, the Arab Democratic Centre in Berlin – Germany, March 2020, p.299.

-The long sought goal of this trip was to gather knowledge, and to accompany a the sheikh of the moderate way, as Sheikh Mohammed Ben Ali Al Senoussi found his long sought goad in accompanying Sheikh Ibn Idris Al Araishi with whol Al Senoussi stayed and got authorized by him to disseminate his sciences, his Sufi method and approach, which converges with the approach of the approach of Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdelwahhab, the fact of which made Ibn Al Senoussi widely famous within the followers of Sheikh Idris, and allowed him to teach, preach and guide inside and outside Mecca, thus his Al Senoussi Movement was created in Hejaz before he settle down in Libya.

-Ibn Al Senoussi was characterized as one of the divine preachers, he fact of which made him accepted by the scholars in Mecca, and allowed him to establish a scientific institution, under form of by his prayer room “Zawiya” in the Mount Abu Qubays, Mecca in front of Mecca. Besides, this prayer room was used to spread his moderate Sufi approach, or the so-called positive Sufism, as he was nicknamed by the Tunisian Sheikh Tahar Ben Achour as the modernizer imam. Besides, it will be historically recorded for him that he had a heroic attitude due to his insightfulness and refusal of the fatwa of “Leon Roche” to defeat jihad in Algeria, notwithstanding its acceptance by the Mashreq scholars.

-His trip to the Hejaz resulted in the building of an Islamic educational force in the Libyan desert, which is the Al Senoussi movement whose support was based on the Zawiya community; likewise, it had impact on the rise of preachers to disseminate Islam in central and western Africa, as well as confronting the Christianization in Chad and the Italian occupation in Libya.

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