

## THE HUMANISM OF EMIR ABDELKADER: BETWEEN MILITARY LEADERSHIP AND MORAL VALUES

**Naima BOUKHARI**

Laboratory of Islamic and Linguistic Studies, University of Laghouat, Algeria

Email : [n.boukhari.sh@lagh-univ.dz](mailto:n.boukhari.sh@lagh-univ.dz)

**Dr. Boumediene KAABOUCHE**

Laboratory of Islamic and Linguistic Studies, University of Laghouat, Algeria

Email : [bo.kaabouche@lagh-univ.dz](mailto:bo.kaabouche@lagh-univ.dz)

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### ABSTRACT

Emir Abdelkader represents an exceptional chapter in the modern history of Algeria—one that time cannot erase from the cultural and intellectual consciousness. He embodied the highest levels of awareness, offering exemplary lessons in dialogue and tolerance while remaining steadfast in his national and humanistic principles. Combining his leadership capabilities in the military domain with a commitment to sublime moral values, he proved to be a seasoned military leader against French colonialism. Concurrently, he firmly established humanistic principles, vividly manifested in his solicitude for civilians, recognition of captives' rights, and remarkable humanitarian posture during the 1860 Levant crisis (*Fitnat al-Shām*). Renowned for his tolerance across diverse circumstances and his advocacy for interfaith dialogue, his thought contributed significantly to entrenching the principles of human rights and peaceful coexistence.

**Keywords:** Emir Abdelkader, Humanism, Tolerance, Humanitarian Postures, Humanistic Dimensions.

### INTRODUCTION

Emir Abdelkader ibn al-Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn stands out as one of the most prominent figures not only in the Maghreb and the Islamic world, but globally during the nineteenth century. He was characterized by piety, valor, diplomatic acumen, religious devotion, and noble character. Most remarkably, he steadfastly rejected ignominy regarding his faith, honor, dignity, and rights, dedicating himself instead to Islamic humanistic principles—most notably in his treatment of captives and his intervention in quelling the 1860 civil strife in Damascus (*Fitnat Dimashq*).

At the outset of his ascension to the emirate following his allegiance (*Bay'ah*) by the tribes, his response to his father, Muḥyī al-Dīn, regarding how he intended to govern the realm provided a profound testament to his political vision and commitment to Islamic principles. He declared: "...With justice and truth as commanded by the Lord of the Worlds, I shall carry the Quran in one hand and an iron staff in the other, and I shall walk according to the guidance of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger..."

Through this study, titled "The Humanism of Emir Abdelkader: Between Military Leadership and Moral Values," we aim to highlight the key humanistic values embodied by Emir Abdelkader in both his military leadership and broader ethical conduct.

Accordingly, this paper addresses the following central problem: What were the key military humanistic principles and moral values that defined Emir Abdelkader's leadership? To thoroughly examine the dimensions raised by this problem, this study relies on an analytical historical approach, structured along the following axes:

**1. An Overview of His Lineage and Upbringing:**

- Lineage and Birth
- Major Works and Writings

**2. Humanism in Military Practice:**

- The Ethics of War According to Emir Abdelkader
- Treatment of Captives and the Wounded

**3. Humanism in Peace and Exile:**

- Postures Upon Surrender
- Humanitarian Role in Damascus (Protection of Christians).

**1. AN OVERVIEW OF HIS LINEAGE AND UPBRINGING**

**Lineage and Birth**

He is 'Abdelkader ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad ibn Mukhtār ibn 'Abdelkader ibn Aḥmad al-Mukhtār ibn 'Abdelkader ibn Aḥmad (famously known as Ibn Khaddah) ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Qawī ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Qawī ibn Khālīd ibn Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashshār ibn Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd ibn Ṭāwūs ibn Ya'qūb ibn 'Abd al-Qawī ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Aṣghar ibn Idrīs al-Akbar ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Maḥḍ ibn al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā ibn al-Ḥasan al-Sibt ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib<sup>1</sup>.

His mother was Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', and his father was Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn, who presided over the Qādiriyyah *Zāwiyah*—a leadership he inherited from his father, Muṣṭafā<sup>2</sup>. Emir Abdelkader was born on Friday, 23 Rajab 1222 AH (1807 CE) in the village of Guetna (El-Guetna), specifically in the Eghris region along Wādī al-Ḥammām, located approximately 20 kilometers from the city of Mascara<sup>3</sup>. He was initially educated by his father within the Guetna *Zāwiyah*<sup>4</sup>. By the age of five, he could read and write<sup>5</sup>, and by twelve, he had memorized the Holy Quran and mastered the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and *Ḥadīth*<sup>6</sup>. At

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *Kifāh al-sha'b al-Jazā'irī dīdda al-iḥtilāl al-Faransī wa-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: Tārīkh al-Jazā'ir ilā mā qabla al-ḥarb al-'ālamīyyah al-ūlā*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifaḥ, n.d., p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-nahḍah al-'Arabiyyah bi-al-Jazā'ir wa-Bilād al-Shām bayna al-naẓarī wa-al-taṭbīqī 1832M–1860M," PhD diss., Faculty of History, Oran 1 University Ahmed Ben Bella, 2017–2018, pp. 82–84.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad Surīj, "Ra'y al-Kūlūnīl Skūt fī al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl Mudhakkirātih 'an iqāmatih fī Zmālāt al-Amīr 'ām 1841M," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-'Arabiyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā'iyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *Aṣr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'rī, 2000, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-nahḍah al-'Arabiyyah," p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> Farīdah Qāsī, "Qaḍāyā al-fikr al-insānī 'inda al-Amīr 'Abdelkader," *Majallat al-Ādāb wa-al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2007, p. 62.

fifteen, he performed the Hajj pilgrimage alongside his father in 1825 CE<sup>1</sup>. By the age of seventeen, he had become an unequaled equestrian and master of martial arts<sup>2</sup>.

Emir Abdelkader possessed a personality marked by piety and devoutness<sup>3</sup>. His father remarked of him:

"...My son 'Abdelkader is an intelligent, righteous young man suitable for resolving disputes and maintaining steadfast horsemanship, all while having been raised in the worship of Allah..."<sup>4</sup>

The Emir bore several honorifics and epithets, including *al-Jazā'irī* (The Algerian), *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* (Commander of the Faithful), *Ibn al-Rāshidī*, *Nāṣir al-Dīn* (Defender of the Faith), and *Ibn Khallād*<sup>5</sup>.

Emir Abdelkader witnessed the onset of French colonial rule, beholding firsthand the massacres perpetrated against his people, alongside the desecration of mosques and destruction of properties<sup>6</sup>. Regarding the circumstances surrounding his assumption of leadership<sup>7</sup>, it was noted that:

"...when the dire need arose for a leader to command the Jihad... the notables, scholars, and prominent figures gathered... and approached Sayyid Muḥyī al-Dīn, the father of Emir Abdelkader, urging him to accept their pledge of allegiance [Bay'ah] for leadership. He declined due to his advanced age... and presented his son, Emir Abdelkader, recognizing in him the qualifications of leadership, righteousness, and lofty ambition..."<sup>8</sup>

Describing these conditions, Maḥmūd ibn Ḥawwā al-Muhājirī stated:

"\*...When the Algerian authority collapsed throughout the Central Maghreb, and the enemy occupied the cities of Algiers and Oran, aspiring to conquer the plains, mountains, wastes, and hills, the people fell into chaos and turmoil. Thereupon, those whom Allah guided among the tribal chiefs, elders, and leaders conferred to appoint an Imam to whom they would pledge allegiance upon the Book and the Sunnah. They found no one suited for this sublime office save the man of pure lineage and flawless perfection, the son of our master Sayyid Muḥyī al-Dīn. Thus, they pledged allegiance to him upon the Magnificent Book of Allah and the noble Sunnah of His Prophet..."<sup>9</sup>

The allegiance sworn to Emir Abdelkader bore a legitimate, national character, encompassing numerous tribes. The document of allegiance was penned by Muḥammad ibn Ḥawwā al-

<sup>1</sup> Rābiḥ Barkānī and Muḥammad Amīn Barkānī, "Alāqāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader bi-al-Dawlah al-'Uthmāniyyah (1823M–1883M)," *Majallat Abḥāth*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2021, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Muḥammad Bin Mūsā and Najāt Bayyah, "Al-Tanzīm al-'askarī li-jay sh al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1832–1847," *Majallat Uṣūr*, Vol. 20, No. 2, July 2021, pp. 112–113.

<sup>3</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *Waraqāt Jazā'iriyyah: Dirāsāt wa-abḥāth fī tārikh al-Jazā'ir fī al-'ahd al-'Uthmānī*, Algiers: Dār al-Baṣā'ir, 2009, p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Hind Fakhri Sa'd, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī za'im al-muqāwamah al-mantūr," *Al-Ḥiwār al-Mutawassiṭ*, Vol. 12, No. 2, May 2021, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Lamyā Shirbāl, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader mu'assis al-dawlah al-Jazā'iriyyah al-ḥadīthah: Ḥayātuh wa-injāzātuh wa-sikkatuh li-al-'umlah al-waṭaniyyah," *Majallat al-Ḥikmah li-al-Dirāsāt al-Tārikhiyyah*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 2013, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Al-'Arabī Minnawwar, *Tārikh al-muqāwamah al-Jazā'iriyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi 'ashar*, Algiers: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2006, p. 145.

<sup>7</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *Aṣr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, p. 204.

<sup>8</sup> Al-'Arabī Minnawwar, *Tārikh al-muqāwamah al-Jazā'iriyyah fī al-qarn al-tāsi 'ashar*, p. 146.

<sup>9</sup> Al-'Arabī Minnawwar, *Tārikh al-muqāwamah al-Jazā'iriyyah*, p. 147.

Muhājirī on 13 Ramadan 1248 AH (February 4, 1833 CE)<sup>1</sup>. On that occasion, Emir Abdelkader delivered an address to tribal leaders, representatives, scholars, and notables, declaring:

"...I am not the best among you in character, courage, or wisdom, nor did I ever aspire to this office. However, I was compelled to accept it, as you know. It is a responsibility before Allah and before you. I pray to the Almighty for success and aid to cleanse the country of invaders and raise the banner of Islam high in the sky of our homeland..."

His address resonated with unprecedented fervor, eliciting resounding cries of "*Allāhu Akbar*" from those present<sup>2</sup>. Following the transfer of leadership, his father remarked:

"...My son's assumption of the emirate is more resolute and proper than my own would have been. I ensured there was neither neglect nor excess, knowing that he is better equipped to handle both your elders and youths, and is more steadfast and capable than I of enduring hardships, exhaustion, and vigilance. Therefore, stand by him as one hand and one body..."<sup>3</sup>

In 1843 CE, Marshal Soult declared:

"...There are today only three figures in the world who deservedly merit the title of 'Great', and all three are Muslims: Emir Abdelkader, Muhammad Ali, and the Chechen hero Muhammad Shamil..."<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, Buṭrus al-Bustānī described him as "...among the greatest men of the sword and statecraft..."<sup>5</sup>

Immediately upon assuming leadership, Emir Abdelkader hastened to organize the Algerian state—establishing the army<sup>6</sup>, unifying the tribes<sup>7</sup>, dividing the country into administrative provinces (*Muqāṭa'āt*)<sup>8</sup>, organizing finances<sup>9</sup>, and structuring social, economic, cultural, and administrative affairs. He formally proclaimed resistance and Jihad against French colonialism, driven by his Islamic and scholarly upbringing, while fully assuming the immense responsibilities thereof<sup>10</sup>.

## **Major Works and Writings**

- *Kitāb Waddāniyyat Allāh* [The Book of the Uniqueness of Allah]

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<sup>1</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *ʿAṣr al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> ʿAlī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader: Qā'id rabbānī wa-mujāhid islāmī*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 2015, pp. 111–112.

<sup>3</sup> Hind Fakhrī Sa'd, "Al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader al-Jazā'irī za'im al-muqāwamah al-mantūr," p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Muḥammad Dirā'ū and Ma'mar La'āyib, "Shakhṣiyyat al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader fī al-kitābāt al-Faransiyyah khilāl al-qarn 19M," *Majallat al-Fikr al-Mutawassiṭ*, Vol. 11, No. 2, December 31, 2022, p. 696.

<sup>5</sup> Farīdah Qāsī, "Qaḍāyā al-fikr al-insānī 'inda al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader," p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Fāṭimah Dir'ī, "Al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader min khilāl kitāb Tuḥfat al-zā'ir fī ma'āthir al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader wa-akhbār al-Jazā'ir," *Majallat Ab'ād*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2023, p. 418.

<sup>7</sup> ʿAbd al-Qādir Dūḥah, "Al-Ta'sīs al-dustūrī li-dawlat al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader," *Majallat al-Mawāqif li-al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt fī al-Mujtama' wa-al-Tārīkh*, No. 9, December 9, 2014, p. 305.

<sup>8</sup> ʿAbd al-Hādī Husayn, "Al-Idārah fī dawlat al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader: Al-Istrāṭijīyyah wa-al-injāzāt (1832–1847)," *Majallat al-Qirās*, No. 7, January 2018, p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> ʿĀmāl Hāshimī, "Al-Nizām al-markazī alladhī ṭabbaqah al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader ba'da mu'āhadat Tāfnah (1837–1839)," *Al-Majallah al-Jazā'iriyyah li-al-Makhtūṭāt*, No. 15, December 2016, p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rīkh li-sīrat al-Amīr ʿAbdelkader (1808–1883M)," *Al-Majallah al-Jazā'iriyyah li-al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Tārīkhīyyah*, Vol. 5, No. 10, December 2019, p. 121.

- *Kitāb Dhikrā al-‘āqil wa-tanbīh al-ghāfil*<sup>1</sup>
- *Al-Fārūq wa-al-tiryāq fī ta‘addud al-zawjāt wa-al-ṭalāq*
- *Nuzhat al-khāṭir fī qarīd al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader ‘Aqd al-ajyād fī al-ṣāfināt al-jiyād*
- *Tuḥfat al-zā‘ir fī ma‘āthir ‘Abdelkader wa-akhbār al-Jazā‘ir*<sup>2</sup>
- *Bughyat al-ṭālib ‘alā tartīb al-tajallī bi-kulliyyāt al-marātib*
- *Al-Mawāqif fī al-taṣawwuf wa-al-wa‘z wa-al-irshād*
- *Al-Miqrād al-ḥād li-qaṭ‘ lisān muntaqis dīn al-Islām bi-al-bāṭil wa-al-ilḥād*<sup>3</sup>
- *Ḥusām al-Dīn li-qaṭ‘ shubah al-murtaddīn*<sup>4</sup>

## **2. HUMANISM IN MILITARY PRACTICE**

### **The Ethics of War According to Emir Abdelkader**

Emir Abdelkader was profoundly committed to upholding the noble principles of Islam<sup>5</sup>. Among his foremost values was exercising tolerance from a position of strength and victory—a quality that elevates the leader<sup>6</sup>. This was distinctly manifested when he sought a truce with French colonialism. Although met with opposition from some of his followers, he persuaded them of the necessity to distinguish between a desired peace and an acceptable peace. Consequently, the Treaty of Tafna was concluded on May 30, 1837 CE between General Bugeaud and Emir Abdelkader, through which the sovereignty of the Algerian state was recognized<sup>7</sup>.

Regarding his military and administrative studies, Adīb Ḥarb observed:

"...I find it unsurprising that ‘Abdelkader ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn, an adherent of the Qādiriyyah order, spent a portion of his life in worship and asceticism at the Guetna Zāwiyah, and concluded his days with humanitarian deeds aligned with the principles of faith and Sharia even under the most dire and critical circumstances. He possessed a profound faith in Allah and religion, coupled with an unyielding adherence to ethics and humanistic principles...<sup>8</sup>"

Notably, he demonstrated immense compassion toward his followers, establishing dispensaries and hospitals to treat both military personnel and civilians alike, while recruiting physicians even from abroad. In this regard, Qaddūr Bin Rūblah noted in his book *Washā‘ih al-Katā‘ib*:

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<sup>1</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Hayāt al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa‘d Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Fāṭimah Dir‘ī, "Al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader min khilāl kitāb Tuḥfat al-zā‘ir fī ma‘āthir al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader wa-akhbār al-Jazā‘ir," *Majallat Ab ‘ād*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2023, p. 415.

<sup>3</sup> Waddān Būghafālāh, *Al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader: ‘Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> Bāy Bin Zayd, "Al-Is hāmāt al-‘ilmiyyah wa-al-da‘awiyyah li-al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader wa-āthāruhā fī binā’ al-dawlah al-ḥadīthah," *Majallat al-Fikr al-Mutawassīṭī*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2023, pp. 697–700.

<sup>5</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-naḥḍah al-‘Arabiyyah bi-al-Jazā‘ir wa-Bilād al-Shām bayna al-naẓarī wa-al-taṭbīqī 1832M–1860M," PhD diss., Faculty of History, Oran 1 University Ahmed Ben Bella, 2017–2018, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab‘ād fikr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader al-Jazā‘irī," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-‘Arabiyyah fī al-‘Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā‘iyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Hayāt al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa‘d Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab‘ād fikr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr ‘Abdelkader al-Jazā‘irī," p. 154.

"...The Emir showed great compassion toward his soldiers, to the extent that he enacted explicit laws regarding the wounded, the sick, and the families of martyrs. One clause regarding war-disabled soldiers stipulates: '...if he is rendered entirely incapacitated, his salary shall continue to be paid until his death'...<sup>1</sup>"

Johann Karl Berndt, a native of Germany who lived within his emirate, remarked of him:

"...The Emir combined Arabian shrewdness, courage, and ambition; yet, he was characterized by forbearance and justice to the extent his circumstances and aspirations permitted. His conduct on every occasion underscored his tolerance and total freedom from prejudice against those who held differing views...<sup>2</sup>"

It is worth emphasizing that humanism—rooted in the teachings of Islam—served as one of the foundational pillars upon which Emir Abdelkader established his state<sup>3</sup>.

### **Respect for Treaties and Covenants**

Emir Abdelkader was renowned among allies and adversaries alike for his strict adherence to treaties and covenants, as well as his refusal to deceive emissaries or envoys dispatched to him. A paramount example of this virtue is demonstrated in his commitment to his agreement with General Desmichels, to whom he addressed a letter on October 30, 1833 CE, stating:

*"...The establishment of mutual affection and goodwill with you is governed by specific conditions in our Sacred Law, and any condition imposed upon us cannot lawfully be breached, even if we were to perish to the very last man. Indeed, so absolute is the fulfillment of covenants that under our Law, a Muslim captive in the hands of the Christians—if granted safe conduct and released from his fetters—is not permitted to escape without their permission..."*

Historical records consistently demonstrate that the French colonizers were invariably the first to violate these agreements<sup>4</sup>.

Furthermore, in a correspondence with the French military leadership, the Emir affirmed:

"...You can rest assured that any commitment I make may be relied upon, for I have never reneged on my word...<sup>5</sup>"

Thus, Emir Abdelkader's unwavering commitment to the terms of treaties and conventions concluded with the French colonial authorities stemmed directly from his high moral character and his profound respect for international norms that obligate warring parties to abide by signed agreements<sup>6</sup>.

### **Clemency Toward Opposing Tribes**

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<sup>1</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-nahḍah al-'Arabiyyah," p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Muṣṭafā Awshāṭir, "Shakhṣiyyat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-ustūriyyah fī al-mukhayyilah al-sha'biyyah al-Jazā'iriyyah," *Majallat Buḥūth Sīnīmā'iyyah*, Vol. 7, No. 12, May 15, 2017, pp. 266–267.

<sup>3</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīkr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-'Arabiyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā'iyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīkr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīkr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 156.

<sup>6</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 134.

Emir Abdelkader's magnanimity was further evidenced by his willingness to pardon insubordinate tribes, as demonstrated in several key historical episodes:

- **The Titteri Tribes:** Certain tribes in the southern region of the Titteri province (including the Banū 'Antar, Banū Nā'il, Banū 'Ubayd, Banū Mūsā, Zna khrah, and Banū Mukhtār)—led by Ibn al-Mukhtār—refused to provide financial support to the Emir. Although he initially sought to engage them through conciliation to avoid bloodshed, a armed conflict ultimately ensued. Following their defeat, Ibn al-Mukhtār approached Emir Abdelkader in person to entreat his pardon. The Emir granted him clemency and appointed him as his deputy (*Khalīfah*) over the defeated tribes. This act of magnanimity prompted numerous other tribes to submit voluntarily to his authority<sup>1</sup>.
- **The Banū 'Arrāsh of Laghouat:** During an engagement with the Banū 'Arrāsh tribes located in Laghouat, the Emir explicitly instructed his soldiers: "...Do not harm the womenfolk; as for those who fought, treat them as they deserve..." However, moved by compassion for their plight, he ultimately spared them from punishment and granted a general amnesty. Subsequently, these tribes became among the Emir's most loyal followers<sup>2</sup>.

Charles-Henry Churchill noted:

"...Abdelkader held a profound conviction in the imperative of absolute unity among his compatriots to achieve their collective independence. He was resolved to confront with his sword any who doubted or attempted to resist his authority..."<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, the Emir consistently pardoned scholars who opposed him, owing to his own status as an accomplished scholar. It was observed that:

"...on one occasion, he demonstrated immense compassion toward intellectuals and teachers, particularly when they committed errors; he exercised forbearance toward them, believing that it would be extraordinarily difficult to replace them if they were eliminated..."<sup>4</sup>

Churchill further echoed this sentiment, quoting the Emir:

"...Knowledge appeared to me of paramount importance, and I sought to encourage it to the extent that I repeatedly pardoned condemned criminals sentenced to death simply because they were students..."<sup>5</sup>

Emir Abdelkader governed his conduct in warfare by two fundamental maxims: first, that an enemy, regardless of his power, must be respected once disarmed, for he reverts to his fundamental status as a human being; second, that whenever clemency is possible, one must grant it, for human life is the most precious possession one holds. Consequently, the soldiers

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<sup>1</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa'd Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, pp. 127–128.

<sup>2</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, pp. 129–134.

<sup>3</sup> Jamāl Ḥarīshah and 'Alī Ṭālibī, "Shakhṣiyyat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader fī al-mukhayyilah al-sha'biyyah bayna al-ḥaqīqah wa-al-khayāl (1807–1883)," *Al-Majallah al-Jazā'iriyyah li-al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt*, Vol. 6, No. 1, January 2023, p. 242.

<sup>4</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fikr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat al-Ḥiwār al-Thaqāfi*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fikr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-'Arabiyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā'iyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, pp. 154–155.

of the Emirate were strictly bound to respect their adversaries under three specific conditions: if the adversary surrendered, acknowledged defeat, or laid down his weapons<sup>1</sup>.

From these principles, it is evident that Emir Abdelkader recognized that constructing a modern state, forging a resilient nation, and securing victory over the colonial power could only stem from solidifying domestic ranks, maintaining unity, and overcoming internal fragmentation<sup>2</sup>.

### **Treatment of Captives and the Wounded**

Among the most prominent moral qualities characterizing Emir Abdelkader was tolerance—a direct reflection of his Islamic orientation and the Sufi upbringing he received within his family. The Emir repeatedly set aside grievances to serve the cause of peace. Similarly, he demonstrated profound magnanimity on the battlefield, particularly in his treatment of French captives, attesting to his lofty Islamic values and sublime moral character<sup>3</sup>.

Indeed, he issued a national decree regarding the treatment of captives, which was copied and distributed across all provinces. The decree stipulated:

*"...It has been decided that every Arab who brings a French or Christian soldier safe and sound shall receive a reward of eight dollars for a male and ten dollars for a female..."*

It further decreed:

*"...Every Arab in whose custody a Frenchman or Christian is held shall be deemed personally responsible for their humane treatment. He is hereby commanded to lead his prisoner, without delay, either to the nearest Khalīfah or to the Sultan himself. Should he fail to do so, he shall face the harshest punishments; if he complies, he shall receive the promised reward..."*

This decree was promulgated after his brother-in-law, Muḥammad, executed 500 enemy soldiers after their surrender. Thereupon, the Emir convened the *Aghās*, tribal chiefs, commanders, and *Khalīfahs* to deliver an address rebuking his brother-in-law's actions<sup>4</sup>.

The Emir treated captives as honored guests, explicitly instructing his troops to treat them with kindness and provide them with proper sustenance. His solicitude reached such a degree that he wrote to the Bishop of Algiers, requesting that a priest be dispatched to his camp to conduct religious services and spiritual ministering for the captives, stating:

*"...Send a priest to my camp. He shall lack for nothing, and I will ensure that he is held in the highest honor and reverence, for he will fulfill a dual role as a man of religion and your official representative..."*

He further specified that the priest should:

*"...pray daily with the prisoners, offer them solace, and correspond with their families, thereby serving as a conduit to secure funds, clothing, books, and everything else they may require or desire to alleviate the severity of captivity. All that we shall ask of him upon his arrival is an*

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<sup>1</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-nahḍah al-'Arabiyyah bi-al-Jazā'ir wa-Bilād al-Shām bayna al-naẓarī wa-al-ṭabīqī 1832M–1860M," PhD diss., Faculty of History, Oran 1 University Ahmed Ben Bella, 2017–2018, pp. 190–191.

<sup>2</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Ya'qūb Hīmī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnāsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs: Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1808–1883M," *Majallat Maṣādir*, Vol. 20, No. 35, August 2025, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa'd Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, pp. 207–208.



inviolable word of honor that his correspondence will refrain from discussing my military camps and troop movements...<sup>1</sup>"

This conduct elicited profound admiration from Churchill, who described the Emir as "...the hero of the Islamic idea who knew no compromise toward the Bishop of Algiers...<sup>2</sup>"

The captives themselves viewed Emir Abdelkader as an adversary of noble character. One captive, remarking on the Emir's humility and the freedom of movement granted within the camp, recorded:

"...When I passed by the Sultan, he greeted me with unique grandeur and a striking smile, gesturing with his hand for me to sit. He then asked my opinion on the construction of the fortifications, to which I replied that they appeared excellent to me...<sup>3</sup>"

It was similarly observed of him that "...the noble care and merciful compassion he displayed toward captives are without parallel in the history of warfare...<sup>4</sup>" and that:

"...whenever 'Abdelkader was present, the Frenchmen who fell into his hands were treated as guests rather than prisoners of war. He frequently sent them secret monetary sums ranging from five to twenty dollars from his personal funds, personally ensuring they were well fed and cared for...<sup>5</sup>"

In a notable 1841 exchange with Antoine-Adolphe Dupuch, the Bishop of Algiers, regarding the release of a French captive named Massot<sup>6</sup>, Emir Abdelkader responded:

"...Allow me to say to you: as a servant of God and a friend to men who are also your brothers, you should have requested from me the release not merely of one man, but of all the Christians who have been taken captive since the resumption of hostilities...<sup>7</sup>"

On another occasion, Emir Abdelkader personally bestowed an order of honor upon a French captive, awarded by the captive's own officer in recognition of his sacrifice and bravery in safeguarding his superior officers<sup>8</sup>.

This ethic of mercy toward captives was a family tradition. His mother, Lalla al-Zahrā', actively protected female Christian captives, providing them with food and daily gifts—including butter, oil, meat, and other provisions each morning—alongside tea, coffee, and sugar to comfort them in their illness<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, his wife personally oversaw the security, sustenance, and medical care of female captives<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fikr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat al-Ḥiwār al-Thaqāfi*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-naḥḍah al-'Arabiyyah bi-al-Jazā'ir wa-Bilād al-Shām bayna al-naẓarī wa-al-taṭbīqī 1832M–1860M," PhD diss., Faculty of History, Oran 1 University Ahmed Ben Bella, 2017–2018, p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fikr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-'Arabiyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā'īyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> Waddān Būghafālāh, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, pp. 217–218.

<sup>7</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-naḥḍah al-'Arabiyyah," p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> Fātimah Dir'ī, "Al-Naz'ah al-insāniyyah 'inda al-Amīr 'Abdelkader," *Al-Ḥiwār al-Mutawassiṭī*, Vol. 12, No. 2, May 2021, p. 140.

<sup>9</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, pp. 204–205.

<sup>10</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-naḥḍah al-'Arabiyyah," p. 192.

Regarding his posture toward civilians and property protection, the Emir imposed strict code-of-conduct conditions upon his army: prohibiting the killing of monks, priests, artisans, women, children, the infirm, and non-combatants, while mandating that food and clothing be provided to them whenever needed<sup>1</sup>.

### **3. HUMANISM IN PEACE AND EXILE**

#### **Postures Upon Surrender**

Following years of sustained resistance against French colonialism, Emir Abdelkader resolved to surrender due to the grave deterioration of his military and economic conditions, and out of a compelling desire to preserve the lives and safety of his people and family<sup>2</sup>. In his view, continuing the armed struggle under those dire circumstances had become a suicidal endeavor for the Algerian population<sup>3</sup>.

Furthermore, he had grown despondent over betrayal and treachery within the ranks of some of his followers. Expressing his anguish with a sorrowful heart, he declared:

"...Throughout all my days, I have chosen death over humiliation. I strained every nerve and tendon, fulfilling the duty of Jihad with sword and spear, until I lost all supporters and helpers, and my wealth—both newly acquired and inherited—was exhausted. Serpents crept among those of my own faith, and their plot encompassed them. Now, the torrent has reached the precipice; so glory be to Him who cannot be outwitted, whose dominion never perishes, while all else is transient...<sup>4</sup>"

He also expressed his sentiment in verse:

*My death was not delayed out of a desire for humiliation or submission,  
Nor did I ever march into battle with the hope of returning.*

Such are the virtues of those who came before me, and the branch follows its root<sup>5</sup>.

Reaffirming his unyielding devotion to his principled struggle for Algeria, he remarked:

"...I know my religion full well, and I know that an hour spent fighting the disbeliever is better than seventy years spent in Mecca...<sup>6</sup>"

The treaty of surrender was signed with the French General Lamoricière in exchange for guarantees of safety for the Emir and his followers<sup>7</sup>. However, the French military authorities failed to honor their pledge, placing him under house arrest in France—initially at Toulon and subsequently at the Château d'Amboise<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Ya'qūb Hīmī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnāsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs: Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1808–1883M," *Majallat Maṣādir*, Vol. 20, No. 35, August 2025, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rīkh li-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader (1808–1883M)," *Al-Majallah al-Jazā'iriyyah li-al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Tārīkhiyyah*, Vol. 5, No. 10, December 2019, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rīkh li-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader," p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 168.

<sup>6</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rīkh li-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader," p. 122.

<sup>7</sup> Ya'qūb Hīmī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnāsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs," p. 54

<sup>8</sup> 'Abd al-'Azīz Shuwayṭ, "Ma'ālim fann al-sīrah al-adabiyyah al-dhātīyyah 'inda al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: Dirāsah fī Mudhakkirātih bi-al-muwāzanah ma'a Tuḥfat al-zā'ir," *Ḥawliyyāt al-Ṣawtiyyāt*, Vol. 13, No. 18, 2017, p. 244.

On December 25, 1848 CE, he departed Algeria aboard the vessel *L'Asmodée*, accompanied by 102 individuals, including members of his family, scholars, military commanders, and attendants<sup>1</sup>. On 2 Muharram 1269 AH (October 17, 1852 CE), Prince Louis-Napoléon visited Emir Abdelkader in captivity and granted him his freedom on the condition that he would never return to Algeria. The Emir solemnly bound himself to this pledge, declaring:

"...I swear to you by Almighty God... that I shall do nothing contrary to the trust you have placed in me, and I am religiously bound by this oath never to return to Algeria...<sup>2</sup>".

### **Humanitarian Role in Damascus (Protection of Christians)**

Following his release on December 2, 1852 CE<sup>3</sup>, Emir Abdelkader proceeded directly to Constantinople before settling in Broussa (Bursa) due to its climate and geographic resemblance to Tlemcen<sup>4</sup>. In 1856 CE, he relocated to Damascus, establishing strong ties with its inhabitants, scholars, and students, thereby gaining a prestigious position among them<sup>5</sup>.

When sectarian turmoil erupted in Damascus in 1860 CE<sup>6</sup>—ignited by disputes over agricultural rents between Maronite peasants and Druze feudal landowners<sup>7</sup>—the Emir assumed a heroic and humanitarian posture as a symbol of justice and tolerance<sup>8</sup>. Anticipating the crisis and its colonial undertones, he convened the notables and elders of Damascus, delivering a famous address in which he warned against inciting sectarian strife and bloodshed<sup>9</sup>:

"...Religions—foremost among them Islam—are far too exalted and sacred to serve as a dagger of ignorance, an axe of recklessness, or a cowardly shout echoing from the mouths of the rabble... I warn you against allowing the devil of ignorance any share among you, or permitting him any path to your souls...<sup>10</sup>"

Furthermore, he dispatched urgent correspondences to scholars in Hama and Homs<sup>11</sup>, as well as to the Ottoman Governor, Aḥmad Pasha<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, pp. 267–268.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq Bin al-Sab', *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī wa-adabuh*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'rī, 2000, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *ʿAṣr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'rī, 2000, p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq Bin al-Sab', *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī wa-adabuh*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'rī, 2000, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Rābiḥ Barkānī and Muḥammad Amīn Barkānī, "Alāqāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader bi-al-Dawlah al-'Uthmāniyyah (1823M–1883M)," *Majallat Abḥāth*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2021, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rīkh li-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader (1808–1883M)," *Al-Majallah al-Jazā'iriyyah li-al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Tārīkhiyyah*, Vol. 5, No. 10, December 2019, p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: Qā'id rabbānī wa-mujāhid islāmī*, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 2015, pp. 337–338.

<sup>8</sup> Ya'qūb Ḥimī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnāsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs: Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1808–1883M," *Majallat Maṣādir*, Vol. 20, No. 35, August 2025, p. 54.

<sup>9</sup> Rābiḥ Barkānī and Muḥammad Amīn Barkānī, "Alāqāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader bi-al-Dawlah al-'Uthmāniyyah," p. 176.

<sup>10</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuh wa-ab'āduh fī fikr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Bruno Étienne, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, trans. Michel Khoury, Beirut: Dār 'Aṭīyyah li-al-Nashr, 1997, pp. 308–309.

<sup>12</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq Bin al-Sab', *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī wa-adabuh*, p. 57.

Recognizing the imminent danger threatening Christians and Europeans, Emir Abdelkader personally intervened alongside loyal Algerian followers to ensure their protection, securing arms and funds to counter the threat<sup>1</sup>. He opened his home to shelter Christians from violence and deployed armed forces to safeguard their residences and places of worship<sup>2</sup>. The number of individuals he rescued reached approximately 15,000, including Christian notables, foreign consuls, monks, and nuns<sup>3</sup>. Among the key figures rescued were the consuls of Great Britain, Russia, Greece, and the United States (who had sustained injuries), alongside the French Vice-Consul<sup>4</sup>.

When a hostile crowd attempted to attack the Christians sheltered within his residence, the Emir confronted them, declaring:

"...You accursed ones! Is this how you honor the Prophet? May Allah cast His curse upon you! Shame on you, shame! You shall live to regret your actions. Do you imagine that you may do as you please with the Christians? A day of reckoning will surely come when the Franks will transform your mosques into churches. I shall not surrender a single Christian to you; they are my brothers! Fall back, or I will order my men to open fire!"<sup>5</sup>

To incentivize rescue efforts, the Emir went so far as to offer a personal reward of five piasters for every living captive brought safely to him<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, Emir Abdelkader effectively dismantled the pretext for French military intervention in Damascus, which Paris sought to justify on grounds of protecting Christians on behalf of European powers. In his meeting with General Beaufort, the Emir affirmed that any French military intervention would nullify his covenant with Louis-Philippe (regarding his non-return to Algeria) and that he would be among the first to oppose their campaign. This warning subsequently led to the withdrawal of French forces<sup>7</sup>.

Subsequent cooperation between the Ottoman Empire—represented by Foreign Minister Fu'ād Pasha—and Emir Abdelkader, supported by Algerian emigrés, successfully quelled the crisis<sup>8</sup>. The migration of Algerians to the Levant proved instrumental in extinguishing the flames of conflict<sup>9</sup>. (The casualties of this civil strife were estimated at nearly 20,000 Christians, alongside the destruction of over 560 churches and 380 villages, while Muslims also sustained heavy losses)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Étienne, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Ya'qūb Hīmī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnīsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs," p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fikr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa'd Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, p. 285.

<sup>6</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup> 'Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, pp. 340–341.

<sup>8</sup> 'Alī Muḥammad Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī, *Sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, p. 341.

<sup>9</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader fī rubū' al-Shām wa-maw qifuh min al-fitnah al-ṭā'ifiyyah 1856M–1860M," *Majallat Uṣūr*, Vol. 19, No. 1, June 2020, p. 51.

<sup>10</sup> Karīmah Ḥarshūsh, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader wa-is hāmātuh fī al-nahḍah al-'Arabiyyah bi-al-Jazā'ir wa-Bilād al-Shām bayna al-naẓarī wa-al-taṭbīqī 1832M–1860M," PhD diss., Faculty of History, Oran 1 University Ahmed Ben Bella, 2017–2018, p. 192.

Ultimately, Emir Abdelkader succeeded in restoring security, quelling sectarian violence, and safeguarding Damascus from colonial designs. In doing so, he rendered a profound service to the Islamic world in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular, demonstrating to the entire world the inherent tolerance of Islam<sup>1</sup>.

### **International Recognition of His Humanitarian Actions**

Following the heroic exploits that impressed the world regarding the history of religious coexistence and tolerance, the events of 1860 CE thrust the figure of Emir Abdelkader back onto the global stage, prompting certain European figures even to propose him as "Emperor of the Arabs."<sup>2</sup> Through these humanitarian postures, he earned the praise of numerous global figures, including Queen Victoria and Napoleon III<sup>3</sup>.

Indeed, letters of commendation poured in from sovereign rulers. The King of Italy wrote to him:

*"...Your noble conduct toward the Christians during the Levantine events has proven before Europe that you possess sublime martial virtues, particularly during the Damascus crisis wherein you saved countless lives—a deed that serves as an adornment to your noble and chosen soul. Furthermore, there exists between us, dear Emir, a bond I rejoice to recall: a shared love of freedom that inspires its followers to uphold true justice..."*

Similarly, the Tsar of Russia addressed him:

*"...To Emir Abdelkader: It is our desire to express our recognition of your gallantry and your actions dictated by humanity, as well as your earnest efforts in saving thousands of Damascus Christians who found themselves in grave peril. Accordingly, we have named you a Commander of our renowned Imperial Order of the White Eagle..."*<sup>4</sup>

Queen Victoria of Great Britain likewise sent a message:

*"...From Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland to His Highness Emir Abdelkader, in commemoration of the charitable assistance rendered to the Christians in Damascus in the year 1860..."*<sup>5</sup>

On this basis, major global powers sought to honor him with decorations and commemorative gifts in expression of esteem, reverence, and gratitude for his deeds<sup>6</sup>. He was awarded the French Legion of Honor, the Russian Order of the White Eagle, the Prussian Order of the Black Eagle, and the Greek Order of the Redeemer, while the Queen of Great Britain presented him with a gold-inlaid shotgun<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Naṣr al-Dīn La'waj, "Is hām 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ḥājiyyāt fī al-ta'rikh li-sīrat al-Amīr 'Abdelkader (1808–1883M)," p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, Mascara: Publications of the Social and Historical Research Laboratory – University of Mascara, 2014, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Ya'qūb Ḥīmī, "Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader min khilāl dirāsāt kitāb Aqnīsiyān Yūlī Stībānūfīs: Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1808–1883M," *Majallat Maṣādir*, Vol. 20, No. 35, August 2025, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Dirāsāt wa-Abḥāth: Al-Majallah al-'Arabīyyah fī al-'Ulūm al-Insāniyyah wa-al-Ijtīmā'iyyah*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 2022, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> Waddān Būghafālah, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fīr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat al-Ḥiwār al-Thaqāfi*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 5.

Additionally, the United States presented him with two gold-inlaid shotguns, the Ottoman Empire conferred upon him the Order of the Medjidie (First Class)<sup>1</sup>, and King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy sent him the Grand Cordon of the Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus<sup>2</sup>. He also received an ancient chivalric decoration inscribed by Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq Bey of Tunis (1859–1882 CE), alongside numerous letters from international societies—such as the American Oriental Society, Freemasonry lodges, and the Society for the Relief of the Wounded on Land and Sea<sup>3</sup>.

Responding to the latter society, Emir Abdelkader modestly remarked:

"...I have done nothing more than fulfill the duties prescribed by religion and the imperatives of humanity..."<sup>4</sup>

Reflecting on his legacy, the French anthropologist Gilbert Durand described him as "...the highest peak in Arab-Islamic thought..."<sup>5</sup>

It is notable that Emir Abdelkader explicitly articulated principles of human rights long before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948 CE, affirming the equality of all human souls in honor, dignity, and origin by declaring: "...The human reality runs through every human being..."<sup>6</sup>

In recognition of his noble endeavors to promote tolerance, Emir Abdelkader continues to be honored to this day. He was posthumously awarded the 3rd annual prize by the Swiss-based Alliance-Sumi Foundation (OSEMI), which was received by his descendant, Idriiss al-Jazā'irī (former Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations in Geneva)<sup>7</sup>.

The poet Amīn al-Jundī eulogized him in verse, saying:

*To you belongs the loftiest, well-founded glory,  
And from you, tales of noble deeds are transmitted.  
In the Levant, when people transgressed and committed aggression  
Against one another in ways that are unacceptable,  
You rose to extinguish the corruption with a resolve  
That could sever heads and fell lions.  
You spared lives whose shedding the Sacred Law forbade,  
And safeguarded honor that must not be violated.  
You bestowed vast wealth, the likes of which  
Even the generous and affluent would withhold.  
Your noble deed is beyond measure,*

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<sup>1</sup> Charles-Henry Churchill, *Ḥayāt al-Amīr 'Abdelkader*, trans. and ed. Abū al-Qāsim Sa'd Allāh, Tunis: Al-Dār al-Tūnisiyyah li-al-Nashr, 1974, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> Nāṣir al-Dīn Sa'dūnī, *Aṣr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'irī, 2000, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Waddān Būghafālāh, *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader: 'Abqariyyah fī al-zamān wa-al-makān*, pp. 75–76.

<sup>4</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Karkab, "Ab'ād fīkr al-tasāmuḥ al-insānī ladā al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," p. 163.

<sup>5</sup> Far'ūn Ḥammū, "Anthrūbūlūjiyā al-tasawwuf al-Islāmī wa-tajalliyātuh 'inda al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat 'Ulūm al-Insān wa-al-Mujtama'*, Vol. 13, No. 3, October 2024, p. 241.

<sup>6</sup> Far'ūn Ḥammū, "Anthrūbūlūjiyā al-tasawwuf al-Islāmī wa-tajalliyātuh 'inda al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat 'Ulūm al-Insān wa-al-Mujtama'*, Vol. 13, No. 3, October 2024, p. 242.

<sup>7</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fīkr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," *Majallat al-Ḥiwār al-Thaqāfi*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2017, p. 5.

*And truly no one can match its worth.*

*Through it, you sought solely the pleasure of your Lord with sincerity,*

*And never fails a servant who acts for the sake of Allah<sup>1</sup>.*

Emir Abdelkader passed away on Saturday night, 19 Rajab 1300 AH (May 24, 1883 CE), at seven o'clock, following a kidney and bladder illness and testicular swelling<sup>2</sup>, in Damascus at the age of 76<sup>3</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Emir Abdelkader was the undisputable hero of Algerian popular resistance, a symbol of national struggle, and a source of pride for every Algerian, leaving behind ethical and humanistic principles that served as timeless lessons for the entire world. His legacy is anchored in two pivotal historical moments: first, his courageous military leadership and dignified stance during victory and surrender in the history of the modern Algerian state; second, his decisive intervention in 1860 CE that saved Damascus from sectarian strife and massacres targeting the Christian population.

This humanitarian action earned Emir Abdelkader widespread admiration and international recognition across major European nations, praising his steadfast adherence to ethical values. Through these deeds, Emir Abdelkader demonstrated to the world the benevolent and tolerant essence of Islamic Sharia alongside the true image of a Muslim. He offered exemplary lessons in interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence, entrenching the core principles of human rights in both word and deed long before their formal codification in modern international human rights law.

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<sup>1</sup> Nābī Bū'alī, "Al-Tasāmuḥ wa-ab'āduḥ fī fikr al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī," pp. 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-Razzāq Bin al-Sab', *Al-Amīr 'Abdelkader al-Jazā'irī wa-adabuh*, Kuwait: Mu'assasat Jā'izat 'Abd al-'Azīz Sa'ūd al-Bābṭīn li-al-Ibdā' al-Shi'rī, 2000, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad Bin Mūsā and Najāt Bayyah, "Al-Tanzīm al-'askarī li-jay sh al-Amīr 'Abdelkader 1832–1847," *Majallat Uṣūr*, Vol. 20, No. 2, July 2021, p. 113.

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