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Carol E. Ross 16 April 2012

Unveiling Identity

Discovering ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs in *al-Nūr al-sāfir ʻan akhbār al-qarn al-ʻāshir*

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Abstract

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By Carol E. Ross

The subject of this thesis is the eclectic sixteenth-century Arabic-language chronicle *al-Nūr al-sāfir ʻan akhbār al-qarn al-ʻāshir*, by the Yemeni-Gujarati scholar ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs. Purporting to be an account of the events of the tenth Islamic century (roughly equivalent to the sixteenth century C.E.), *al-Nūr al-sāfir* has encountered criticism for not presenting an adequate picture of the main geopolitical events of that time period, which include the first Portuguese incursions into the Indian Ocean and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire under Suleiman the Magnificent. Instead of focusing on discovering what *al-Nūr al-sāfir* has to say about its era, however, this project explores what *al-Nūr al-sāfir* has to say about its author. Through textual analysis and historical research, this paper assembles clues to ʻAbd al-Qādir's identity in order to reconstruct a portrait of a man who died 400 years ago. The diverse collection of anecdotes and obituaries in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* contain hints as to how ʻAbd al-Qādir thought about himself and his place in the world. Seen as the product of these hints, ʻAbd al-Qādir emerges as a Muslim, Sufi, Yemeni, and Gujarati; he takes pride in his status as a scholar, writer, public figure, and descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad.

This study builds upon existing scholarship concerned with Yemeni migrants in the Indian Ocean region during the Middle Ages while questioning assumptions about what makes a historical text important or meaningful. By getting to know ʻAbd al-Qādir as an individual revealed in his writings, we gain insight into the world in which he lived. Although his chronicle is eccentric in its subject matter, it nonetheless reveals an image of the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century, as seen through the very specific lens of one very interesting man.

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Finally, thanks to Medhini Kumar for being my thesis-writing buddy all year! I would never have finished this project if we hadn't spent all those late nights at the library encouraging each other—and occasionally wasting a lot of time. It was unexpectedly fun.

Table of Contents

Note on dates and transliteration

All dates are given according to both the Islamic calendar (A.H.) and the Julian/Gregorian calendar (C.E.). Islamic dates are provided because of the significance of chronology to *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. Julian/Gregorian dates are provided to guide readers unfamiliar with the Islamic calendar. Islamic calendar dates are listed first, followed by Julian/Gregorian equivalents.

All Arabic terms have been transliterated, except for widely recognized geographic terms such as Hormuz and Aden. Arabic words other than proper nouns are italicized.

Because several editions of *al-Nūr al-sāfir* exist, I have appended to each citation the year for which the passage in question was recorded, except where the year is stated in the body text.

Introduction

Reading a book can be an uncomfortably intimate experience. I have always felt that reading someone's words transports me into their shoes; this is why I enjoy primary sources and microhistories, works that immerse me in another individual's perspective and make history personal and more deeply felt. That ever-present danger of "getting too close to your subject"[1] is only heightened when you are the one doing the writing rather than the reading, as I learned this year when I began researching *al-Nūr al-sāfir ʻan akhbār al-qarn al-ʻāshir*, or *The Light Unveiling the Reports of the Tenth Century,* completed in 1012 A.H./1603 C.E. At first, I thought *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* a hefty Arabic-language tome, would be unbelievably dull. However, eight months later—after reading bizarre animal stories, tender tales of family, and irritatingly self-aggrandizing autobiography—I am forced to admit that it grew on me, to the point that I became fascinated by and chose to write about its author, the elusive ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs, a Sufi scholar living in Gujarat.

*Al-Nūr al-sāfir'*s 600-pages are divided into chapters for each year beginning with 901 A.H., the first day of which corresponds to September 21, 1495, in the Gregorian calendar; the book ends with 1000 A.H., or early October, 1592 C.E. For each year, ʻAbd al-Qādir assembled passages varying in length from one line to twenty pages and describing what he regarded as the year's important events in his geographic region, which spanned from the fading Mamlūk sultanate in Egypt to the blossoming Mughal Empire in South Asia. These passages run the

[1] Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (June 2001), 129.

gamut of topics; many of them offer biographies for individuals who died during the year, but others describe the year's political events, natural disasters, and completion of major buildings.

The title of the work, with its direct reference to the "reports of the tenth century," conveys the impression of a straightforward history text listing important occurrences of the tenth Islamic century. Indeed, the word *akhbār* from the title is a technical term in Islamic historiography indicating a brief account, or a "self-contained building block of historical narrative."[2] *Akhbār* (sing. *khabar*) are anecdotal reports written in a variety of styles, from stories to aphorisms and poetry, and those individuals who gathered and compiled them are best described as historians.[3] *Al-Nūr al-sāfir* comprises many such reports, but it does not read like a history book. It pays tribute to other genres, defying categorization as any one of them. If its biographical segments comprised the entire content, it would resemble a work of *ṭabaqāt*, often called a biographical dictionary in English translation, a genre that appeared in the third/ninth century.[4] Biographical dictionaries comprise a vast genre containing valuable contemporary biographies of thousands of prominent figures in Islamic history, often selected from a "particular tradition of religious affiliation or scholarship"; the biographies in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* differ from this model because they relate to one another only on the basis of time of death, instead of falling into the kind of "linear narrative" of learning and scholarship observed in most biographical dictionaries.[5] Through its descriptions of natural disasters and the movements of stars, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* also brushes up against the almanac tradition, wherein authors recorded information on seasonal changes, calendars, and meteorological events, primarily for the benefit

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[2] Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 126.
[3] Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 17.
[4] R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 188.
[5] Ibid.; Jawid A. Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism: The ṭabaqāt genre from al-Sulamī to Jāmī* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), 1-2.

of scholars who studied agricultural practices.[6] *Al-Nūr al-sāfir*'s 15-page introduction, in turn, provides a theological perspective by presenting a biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, including accounts of each of the first ten years of the Islamic calendar, which began after Muḥammad's migration from Mecca to Medina.[7] The introduction also discusses the relationship between God and the Prophet, described through the concept of *al-nūr al-muḥammadī* or "the Muḥammadan Light."[8] This passage introduces elements of theological texts like those written by Muḥammad b. ʻAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-ʻArabī (560/1165 – 638/1240), a Sufi intellectual whose ideas influenced ʻAbd al-Qādir centuries later.[9] In other parts of the book, ʻAbd al-Qādir focuses intensely on his kin and clan, suggesting a work of genealogy or family history. In short, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* contains quite a diverse set of "reports."

Scholarly criticism

A remarkable work—part religious treatise, part autobiography, part biographical dictionary—*al-Nūr al-sāfir* has received astonishingly little academic attention in the centuries since its completion. The eminent Arabist R. B. Serjeant consulted *al-Nūr al-sāfir* while writing *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, a collection and analysis of historical descriptions of the first century of Portuguese presence in the Indian Ocean, from 904/1498 to 984/1577. Serjeant mined contemporary Arabic chronicles to gather the passages for his book; he looked at *al-Nūr al-sāfir* but uses it only for background and context, determining it to be "disappointingly

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[6] Daniel Martin Varisco, *Medieval Agriculture and Islamic Science: The Almanac of a Yemeni Sultan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 7-8.
[7] ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir ʻan akhbār al-qarn al-ʻāshir* (Beirut: Dar Sader Publishers, 2001), 23-7.
[8] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 22.
[9] Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn ʻArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 6-9.

uncommunicative of the great events" that he researched.[10] Serjeant refers to *al-Nūr al-sāfir* at least twice more, once to cite "an oblique reference to the rapacity of the Turks" and once to describe a political intrigue that Serjeant regards as "unhistorical."[11] All three of these references suggest that Serjeant regards *al-Nūr al-sāfir* as an unreliable or inadequate historical source based on the unverifiable nature of its content.

Engseng Ho, who conducts the only in-depth English-language examination of *al-Nūr al-sāfir* to date, studies the text in an entirely different light from Serjeant. In his book *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean,* Ho uses *al-Nūr al-sāfir* as a primary example of a literary process by which migrants from the Ḥaḍramawt—a region of south-central Arabia, modern-day Yemen—created an enduring, value-laden, discursive expression of identity that bound them to their ancestral homeland and to one another.[12] Ho cites *al-Nūr al-sāfir* as a critical link in the development of a literary canon that focused on the genealogy of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s (descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad) and engaged far-flung Ḥaḍrami émigrés in maintaining connections with their place of origin. According to Ho, ʻAbd al-Qādir wrote *al-Nūr al-sāfir* at a pivotal time in Ḥaḍrami migration, at the moment when the diaspora began to take an institutional shape through the textual chronicles of its participants.[13] Ho asserts that *al-Nūr al-sāfir* focuses specifically on the migration of scholars across the Indian Ocean and the lives of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s at the expense of political figures, with the result that the book helped maintain a common identity among members of the Ḥaḍrami diaspora despite their broad geographic

[10] R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 39.
[11] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, 28-30.
[12] Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 116-7.
[13] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 53, 116.

dispersal and the passage of generations.[14] This Ḥaḍrami literary canon contributed to popularizing visits to various locations of ancestral significance to diasporic Ḥaḍramis; these sites gained importance through the texts that referred to them, structuring pilgrimage destinations as locations of return and creating physical and emotional links to the homeland.[15]

In search of ʻAbd al-Qādir

Serjeant and Ho approach *al-Nūr al-sāfir* from very different perspectives, and although they share at least one conclusion, their overall attitudes toward the book have very little in common. Serjeant's work seeks the history of large-scale political interactions, which he does not find in *al-Nūr al-sāfir*.[16] Ho, in turn, traces the expression of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid* identity as it contributed to the development of a literary genre integral to the Ḥaḍrami diaspora. To Ho, migration is the central theme of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. He reveals his single-minded interpretation of the book through the way he translates the title: "*The Travelling Light: Accounts of the Tenth Century.*"[17] Both Serjeant and Ho arrive at the conclusion that *al-Nūr al-sāfir* is essentially unconcerned with politics; to Serjeant, this is a disappointment that appears to diminish the book's value, while Ho cites this alleged bias in support of his thesis about genealogy, scholarship, and mobility.[18]

Both of these men begin their analysis of *al-Nūr al-sāfir* with preconceived notions as to the type of "reports of the tenth century" it will or should contain. Serjeant criticizes *al-Nūr al-*

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[14] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 120, 153.
[15] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 197-8.
[16] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, 39.
[17] Although "unveil" and "travel" share the same root in Arabic, s-f-r, the adjective *sāfir* is derived from the first form of the verb—*safara*—which means "to unveil," whereas the adjective "travelling" would be written *musāffir* and would be derived from the third form of the verb—*sāfara*—which means "to travel." Furthermore, the preposition '*an* suggests a transitive function of the verb, "to unveil, uncover, or disclose" *something*.
[18] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 120.

sāfir for its lack of attention to the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean, while Ho's intense focus on religious scholarship leads him to represent—misrepresent, as we shall see—the book as purely contributing to Ḥaḍrami diasporic literature centered around *sayyid* migrants like ʻAbd al-Qādir, the book's author. My attitude toward *al-Nūr al-sāfir* bears a closer resemblance to Ho's in that I view the book as a value-laden expressive project rather than an inadequate collection of objective facts. However, the lack of agenda (some might say lack of direction) with which I first approached the book allowed me to discover a plethora of themes that Ho overlooked. In my estimation, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* describes the events of the tenth/sixteenth century from a more expansive perspective than either Serjeant or Ho appreciated. Although the collection of material seems haphazard and eclectic, casting patchy light on multiple topics, its illumination of one area is amply clear. Amid the passages about scholars, Mughals, coffee, plagues, and more, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* paints a perfectly coherent portrait of its author, the otherwise obscure ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-'Aydarūs.

ʻAbd al-Qādir's perspective provides the essential logic that lends clarity to *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. He writes about the things he values and finds important, creating a chronicle of the tenth/sixteenth century according to himself. As Serjeant and Ho point out—albeit without fully appreciating the significance of the revelation—*al-Nūr al-sāfir* does not reveal a comprehensive, objective view of the tenth/sixteenth century, because ʻAbd al-Qādir is so obviously subjective in choosing its content. Everything that appears in the book has been filtered through his lens, yielding a view of the world specific to his perspective. Metaphorically, ʻAbd al-Qādir is standing in place describing his surroundings, meticulously recording the details he sees. The images he produces in this creative process convey some sense of the overall scene, even if it is impossible to gain a bird's-eye view from reading his descriptions alone. Thus, although we

cannot recreate the world beyond his vantage point, we can use his descriptions to retrace his steps and pinpoint the spot on which he stood—a much more fruitful and unambiguous endeavor. It is easier and more productive to focus on interpolating ʻAbd al-Qādir from his book than on extrapolating the main events or themes of the tenth/sixteenth century.

In my research into *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* I have focused on locating ʻAbd al-Qādir within the world he describes and reconstructing the lens through which he viewed that world. As a *sayyid* and a scholar with connections across the Indian Ocean, ʻAbd al-Qadir held a high opinion of his own importance. At first glance, it is difficult to see how this could be justified; little is known about ʻAbd al-Qādir aside from what he wrote himself, and both he and his work could probably pass into oblivion without more than one or two scholars being any the wiser. However, as Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya wrote in his book *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims*, texts are important not only "because they contain authentic historical material" but also for the clues they offer as to the contexts in which they were written.[19] Although *al-Nūr al-sāfir* may not expose hitherto-unknown tidbits about Mughal rule or Ottoman expansionism, it does reveal a surprisingly complete sketch of its author's perspective on the world. By writing about things that he considered important, ʻAbd al-Qādir left us hints about how he thought of himself and his location in the world. By uncovering the threads of his identity and the processes that constructed it—whether or not his records of events are factually false, as Serjeant charges—we can learn about the world in which he lived, and the boundaries, or lack thereof, that he believed to exist between himself and those he encountered.

Methods

[19] Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya, *Representing the Other? Sanskrit Sources and the Muslims (Eighth to Fourteenth Century)* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), 23.

In my quest to uncover ‘Abd al-Qādir’s identity and the lived reality within which it was shaped, I decided to engage *al-Nūr al-sāfir* as a record of its author’s personality and values. I began by exploring the book, searching for clues about ‘Abd al-Qādir’s life. After a cursory perusal of the work, I researched ‘Abd al-Qādir’s social, political, and cultural contexts to help me interpret his writings. Returning to *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* I discovered themes that reveal some of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s interests and concerns; focusing on these themes, I studied the connections between him and the people and events about which he wrote, which allowed me to draw conclusions about his conception of self in relation to other people and his world. I looked for signs of his connection to land, family, politics, and religion. Some of the topics I expected to see—women’s roles, the status of religious minorities, the Portuguese encroachments of the early tenth/sixteenth century—were absent or nearly absent. In their place, I found a wealth of information about ‘Abd al-Qādir’s bonds of kinship, religion, scholarship, and political loyalty in India. Drawing on the themes I observed, I was able to discuss ‘Abd al-Qādir’s identity with reference to three concepts that undergird much of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*: rootedness, kinship, and authority, the latter of which spans the closely-connected religious, political, and intellectual power structures.

The difficulty inherent in separating ‘Abd al-Qādir’s identities with regard to his religious commitments (Sunni Islam and Sufism), his scholarly pursuits (studying Sufism and biographies of the Prophet and the Islamic martyrs), and his political status within the Mughal court serves as a warning not to attempt to separate fully the threads of his identity.[20] ‘Abd al-Qādir’s personality was fully integrated, as was his sense of self; his identity as a member of the ‘Aydarūs family did not end where his identity as a Sufi began. My study should not be seen as

[20] Translated in Shawkat M. Toorawa, “The Autobiography of al-‘Aydarūs (1570-1628),” in *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, ed. Dwight F. Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 212.

an attempt to delineate disparate regions of identity; rather, I am interpreting ‘Abd al-Qādir’s unitary identity from several different perspectives, drawing on the topics he found most important in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.* Nor are these the only topics he focused on; I did my work on a short timeline, and I do not have the academic background to speak to every feature of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s world. This study is far from comprehensive, but it serves as an introduction to a unique work of literature perched at a historically significant moment in the development of the Indian Ocean region.

Context

The turn of the first Islamic millennium—roughly equivalent to the sixteenth century C.E.—was a crucial juncture in global history. During the tenth/sixteenth century, royal families in Europe and the Indian Ocean littoral zone consolidated power, and seaborne empires came into ever-closer contact with one another. Imperial expansion gathered most of the Muslim world into several spheres of influence, with centers in Egypt, the Indian subcontinent, Iran, and Anatolia.[21] At the same time, European expeditions began to venture ever deeper into the territories traditionally traversed by civilizations existing around the Indian Ocean. These grand historical milestones heralded a period of great change in the lands surrounding the Indian Ocean, a region already intimately bound by ties of trade, migration, and religion.

‘Abd al-Qādir was born into this milieu of great political changes and increasing cross-cultural contact in 978/1570. He grew up in Gujarat, a region of north India, as the child of a Ḥaḍrami *sayyid* father and an Indian mother. A Ḥaḍrami-Gujarati scholar, Sufi, and writer, he in many ways exemplifies the complexities of a world characterized by overlapping loyalties and blurred boundaries. ‘Abd al-Qādir was a member of an orthodox Muslim family descended from

[21] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 207.

the Prophet, but he was also a Sufi participating in charting the innovative course of mystical Islam. He was a scholar who carefully mapped intellectual lineages, but he was also a political figure bound by ties of patronage to Mughal India. He was both Arabian and Gujarati, simultaneously Sunni and Sufi, and he wore the hats of a chronicler, historian, philosopher, and teacher. Like his book, ʻAbd al-Qādir straddled lines of loyalty, defying easy analysis.

Despite their move to India, ʻAbd al-Qādir's immediate family maintained contacts in Arabia who kept ʻAbd al-Qādir apprised of events in Yemen; in addition to receiving news and visitors at his home in Gujarat, ʻAbd al-Qādir travelled widely throughout the lands surrounding the Indian Ocean, studying and collecting books.[22] His upbringing in Gujarat earned him the nickname *al-Hindī* (the Indian) by which his few biographers refer to him. His writings earned him accolades that he enumerates proudly in his autobiography, saying, "praises reached me from the ends of the earth, including Egypt, remote Yemen, and other distant lands."[23] He inducted many men into Sufism, including "princes, merchants, and people of other classes," and rulers of distant lands sent him gifts.[24] He died in 1038/1628, leaving behind a corpus including historical writings, theological commentaries, and poetry, but only a brief autobiography included in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.* While tracing his and his family's movements through history, ʻAbd al-Qādir simultaneously creates a geographic framework that privileges certain locales and draws many others into a conversation about connections and hybridization. ʻAbd al-Qādir's collection of disparate events in a wide variety of locations demonstrates the connections of trade, family, and learning that were shared across a wide geographic area. Ho's comment that *al-Nūr al-Sāfir*

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[22] O. Löfgren, " ʻAydarūs." *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Volume I: A-B. Ed. H.A.R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 781; al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 446-7 (Year 978).

[23] Translated in Toorawa, "The Autobiography of al-ʻAydarūs," 212; original in al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 447 (Year 978).

[24] Translated in Toorawa, "The Autobiography of al-ʻAydarūs," 211-2; original in al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 447 (Year 978).

has "the feel of a newspaper" suggests the existence of a readership that sprawled across the Indian Ocean and maintained ties in a variety of interconnected locales; although it is difficult to say how widely *al-Nūr al-sāfir* was actually read, ʻAbd al-Qādir claimed it was "well-loved and appreciated … greeted with unanimous acclaim" by a variety of important men.[25]

The great Ottoman and Mughal dynasties have been the subjects of extensive study, but humble proto-cosmopolitans like ʻAbd al-Qādir have received much less attention. *Al-Nūr al-sāfir* still speaks in his voice, and by studying it I have reconstructed a rough sketch of his personality. In the following chapters, as I describe certain facets of his identity I examine the world within which he positioned himself, learning how it operated and how he operated as a part of it. ʻAbd al-Qādir was an astute observer and eccentric chronicler of the tenth Islamic century; he lived within and wrote about a world that, although its inhabitants considered it highly significant, no longer exists. Understanding his writings can reveal to us his perspective, formed by the intersection of systems of political, familial, and religious relationships; in turn, knowing his perspective can help us understand his world in greater detail.

[25] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 120; translated in Toorawa, "The Autobiography of al-ʻAydarūs," 212-4; original in al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 447 (Year 978).

Chapter 1 • Rootedness: ʻAbd al-Qādir in Space

Born in 978 A.H./1570 C.E. to a Ḥaḍrami *sayyid* recently settled in Gujarat, ʻAbd al-Qādir grew up with one foot in India and one in Arabia. Most members of his immediate family were unquestionably Ḥaḍrami; like his father, his two elder half-brothers, whom he greatly admired, moved to Gujarat as adults.[26] ʻAbd al-Qādir maintained an active interest in his family's Yemeni homeland, as is evident from the sheer amount of material in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* that specifically pertains to Ḥaḍrami towns and Arabia in general. His mother, however, was an Indian woman, and he also speaks highly of her virtues, suggesting her influence over him. He himself remained in India throughout his life, having "become established in Gujarat as a distinguished Sufi and an eminent author," and he acquired the nickname *al-Hindī*, "the Indian."[27]

While he was personally rooted in Gujarat, ʻAbd al-Qādir was very conscious of his family's roots in the Ḥaḍramawt. *Al-Nūr al-sāfir* reflects his dual Ḥaḍrami-Gujarati identity by featuring each region frequently, albeit in different contexts that underscore the different aspects of his life that he associated with each place. Serjeant appears to resent ʻAbd al-Qādir's lack of interest in the power struggles in Arabia[28]; however, this omission cannot be attributed to generalized political apathy, as ʻAbd al-Qādir pays close attention to political dynamics in Gujarat. The types of events he chooses to highlight in the Ḥaḍramawt reveal the pieces of his identity that he traces back to its ancestral soil, while the events he discusses in the context of Gujarat indicate the more immediate concerns of his daily life.

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[26] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 312 (Year 949).
[27] Richard Maxwell Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur 1300-1700: Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 127.
[28] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, 39.

ʿAbd al-Qādir the Ḥaḍrami

The Ḥaḍramawt: Geography and social structures in ʿAbd al-Qādir's time

ʿAbd al-Qādir's paternal relatives hailed from the Ḥaḍramawt, a region in the southern Arabian Peninsula to the east of what contemporary sources generally refer to as "the Yemen"[29] (See Appendix A). The Ḥaḍramawt lies on an arid plateau to the south of the peninsula's Empty Quarter, and its climatic cycle is affected by the southwest monsoon pattern characteristic of the Red Sea region, which causes annual summer floods. Agriculture is possible only because of Wadi Ḥaḍramawt and its tributaries, which together form the largest river system in the Arabian Peninsula.[30] These largely seasonal waterways allow for careful irrigation based on flood cycles.[31] In the modern day, floods can cause violent disputes among villagers over the distribution of the floodwater for irrigation, as Serjeant describes in an article about Ḥaḍrami irrigation systems.[32] Ho describes another social aspect of the rain cycles through the vital connections between local religious ceremonies and weather patterns. The annual pilgrimage to the graveyard at Tarim—which he describes as being a central effect of the Ḥaḍrami diasporic literature of which *al-Nūr al-sāfir* is part—"takes place in a period of intense interaction between sky and earth"; pilgrims pray for rain alongside the wadi, and the interred ancestors are seen as having the power to bring on the floods.[33]

Ḥaḍrami towns along the wadis were made up of mud-brick buildings that lined the walls of the canyons through which the wadis flow. Tarim, the home city of the Bā ʿAlawī clan to

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[29] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, 6.
[30] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 31-2.
[31] Linda Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire: Hadhramawt, Emigration, and the Indian Ocean, 1880s-1930s* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 11-3.
[32] R. B. Serjeant, "Some Irrigation Systems in Ḥaḍramawt," in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1964), 33.
[33] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 218-9.

which ʻAbd al-Qādir belonged, exemplified this structure, which protected residents from the wadi's floods while saving "the fertile silt of the wadi bottom" for use in agriculture.[34] Tarim and cities like it in the central Ḥaḍramawt also sit atop underground wells, permitting the growth of large populations. The Ḥaḍramawt also possesses a broad coastal region along its southern end, abutting the Arabian Sea. Land in the coastal plain lies below the inland plateau, and towns have grown up around groundwater springs.[35] ʻAbd al-Qādir knew al-Shiḥr and Ẓufār as the main port towns that connected the Ḥaḍramawt to the wider world, most notably the Yemeni port of Aden.[36]

Ḥaḍrami society has historically been shaped by a system of social groups that "affected a person's prospects in terms of marriage, education, occupation, and role in religious, economic, and political life."[37] Group identity was expressed externally by attire, honorific titles, and participation in rituals, and the difference in prestige among groups was fairly rigid.[38] ʻAbd al-Qādir belonged to a social group specific to the Bā ʻAlawī clan of *sayyid*s, who claimed descent from a common ancestor, ʻAlawī b. ʻAbd Allāh b. Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā (d. early fifth/eleventh century) for whom the line was named; ʻAlawī, in turn, claimed descent from the Prophet Muḥammad through the Prophet's son-in-law and first cousin ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[39] Members of this group had renounced armed combat three hundred years before ʻAbd al-Qādir's lifetime, instead holding religious occupations as judges, jurists, prayer leaders, and heads of endowments.[40] They "prided themselves on piety and on the acquisition of religious education," explaining some of the values

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[34] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire*, 13-4.
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast*, 7.
[37] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire,* 11.
[38] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire,* 17-8.
[39] ʻAlawī's claim to this lineage—and therefore, his descendents' claim to it—is clearly declared in his name, which is the adjectival form of ʻAlī. Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 28, 39.
[40] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire,* 19-20.

that ‘Abd al-Qādir tends to emphasize in his relatives’ biographies. This group held the most prestige, followed by the group addressed as *shaykh*s, who held religious positions without claiming descent from the Prophet. Despite Boxberger’s contention that members of the *sayyid* group were held distinct from the *shaykh* group by adopting the titles *sayyid, sharīf,* and *ḥabīb*, ‘Abd al-Qādir refers to many of his *sayyid* relations using the term *shaykh* as a general term of respect; he never, of course, gives anyone outside a Prophetic bloodline the title of *sayyid.*[41] Below these two groups in the social hierarchy sat tribal pastoralists, townspeople, tradesmen, slaves, and others of low social status, few of whom appear in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.*[42]

Yemeni and Indian Ocean politics in the tenth/sixteenth century

External powers fought over Yemen, particularly her port cities, during this period. The Mamlūks in Egypt took the Red Sea port of Zabīd in 922/1516 and attempted to seize Aden, another great port city, as well.[43] The rise of the Ottoman Empire—the first of the three major Muslim empires of the sixteenth century and “the last great expression of the universality of the world of Islam”—altered the political, social, and cultural fabric of the Islamic world, most profoundly in regions close to the imperial capital of Istanbul, but also as far away as Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.[44] The Ottomans, after conquering the Cairo-based Mamlūks in 923/1517, gained authority over Egypt and swept down the Red Sea coast to absorb Arabia, including Yemen.[45] Southern Arabia passed in and out of direct Ottoman control, with local imamates reasserting control in the seventeenth century after a period of siege by powerful outsiders.[46] The

[41] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire,* 20-4.
[42] Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire,* 24-36.
[43] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 17.
[44] Hourani, *A History*, 207, 227.
[45] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 119.
[46] Hourani, *A History*, 243, 251.

Ottomans finally took Aden through treachery and looted it in 945/1538.[47] The tenth/sixteenth century was also remarkable for the entry of the Portuguese onto the Indian Ocean scene; these new players successfully conquered Socotra, Goa, and Hormuz between 912/1507 and 921/1515. They sat outside the city of al-Shiḥr, the center of the Ḥaḍramī Kathīrī dynasty (early ninth/fifteenth-late thirteenth/nineteenth centuries); from this vantage point, the Portuguese marauded and plundered trading vessels headed for the poorly defended city.[48]

Politics in sixteenth-century Arabia existed in an unsettled state of semi-vassalage to the larger-scale powers of the surrounding empires. Despite frequent scuffles and close ties of blood and trade, Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt stood out in this period for their on-again, off-again independence from the imperial ambitions of the Ottomans and the Portuguese. Aden weathered two Portuguese attacks in 919/1513 and 923/1517.[49] In between these two attacks, the city resisted an attempted bombardment by the Mamlūks, who had already felled Zabīd.[50] As the Ottomans advanced south, the Mamlūks fled to the newly-conquered Zabīd, although they did not hold out for long.

Yemeni rulers had long submitted to the local Rasūlid kings—influenced by the Egyptian Mamlūk sultanate—and their successors in the Ṭāhirid dynasty.[51] By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the local Kathīrī sultans had taken control of much of the Ḥaḍramawt, including the port city of al-Shiḥr, having wrested control of it from the Ṭāhirids.[52] The most prominent Kathīrī figure of the time was Badr Bū Ṭuwayriq (r. 922/1516 – 977/1569-70), who

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[47] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 19.
[48] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 27; G.R. Smith, "Kathīrī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. by P. Bearman et al. (Brill, 2012).
[49] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 16.
[50] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 17.
[51] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 7-8.
[52] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 25.

appears in *al-Nūr al-sāfir*'s reports of Portuguese activity in al-Shiḥr.[53] Badr played a double game with the Portuguese and Ottomans, paying tribute to the Ottomans but garnering military assistance from both the Ottomans and the Portuguese in his various wars against other local rulers.[54] From its base in al-Shiḥr, Badr's Kathīrī state struggled to fight off local rivals like the Mahrī rulers of Socotra, while simultaneously keeping the Portuguese and Ottomans at bay.[55] Badr's degree of success varied; at times he was an Ottoman vassal, at times a Portuguese ally, but to this day he is considered the exemplary Ḥaḍrami sultan.

Despite all the international excitement of this period, ʻAbd al-Qādir hardly touches upon any of these great events in *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. Although ʻAbd al-Qādir does not mention Alfonse de Albuquerque's 913/1507 conquest of the island of Socotra, he briefly describes the Portuguese conquest of the city of Hormuz during the same year, saying simply, "In this year the Franks attacked the city of Hormuz and took it."[56] He describes the Portuguese attempts to seize Aden—which he dates to 917/1511-2, slightly earlier than Serjeant—with similar brevity, saying: "In this year, the Franks entered Aden, and their leader, the man named 'Eye of the Cow' [*ʻayn al-baqar*], was killed by Prince Marjān, the same man who built the ʻAydarūs Mausoleum in Aden and is buried with him in it."[57] In this passage, he spends as much time discussing the tomb of his famous relative, Abū Bakr b. ʻAbd Allāh al-'Aydarūs (d. 919/1513), the patron saint of Aden and ʻAbd al-Qādir's great-great-uncle, as he does describing the actual Portuguese attack.[58]

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[53] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 8; Al-Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 280 (Year 942).
[54] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 28-9.
[55] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 28-30.
[56] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 101. See Appendix B, passage 1.
[57] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 144. See Appendix B, passage 2.
[58] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 38, 51.

In comparison to the way in which he described the Portuguese conquest of Hormuz, ʻAbd al-Qādir is more verbose in describing Badr Bū Ṭuwayriq's expulsion of the Portuguese from al-Shiḥr in 942/1535-6:

> In this year, the Sultan Badr executed the Franks in al-Shiḥr, may God abandon them, after they had decided to murder him. He was with them in a room drinking, they having locked the doors on him. One of their neighbors … informed him, and he found no means of exit except through the lavatory. So he went out by it, and God delivered him. On the morning of that day he attacked them and killed them to the last man, sending their heads to Sultan Suleiman.[59]

As entertaining as this anecdote is, Serjeant considers it fictitious, because no other sources mention it.[60] These three passages comprise the only mentions of the Portuguese in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.* ʻAbd al-Qādir is similarly taciturn about the Mamlūks, only including a few passages describing their defeat in Egypt at the hands of the Ottomans in 923/1516-7. In contrast, the Arab chroniclers cited by Serjeant provide detailed accounts of the Portuguese and Ottoman attacks on Yemeni cities; they refer to the Portuguese as "the infidel Franks" and consistently call down God's vengeance upon them, but they seldom seem any fonder of the Turks.[61] Held up against these colorful accounts, Serjeant's contention that *al-Nūr al-sāfir* has little to offer makes some sense. However, contrary to Serjeant's judgment, ʻAbd al-Qādir is not "disappointingly uncommunicative of the great events on the coast" because of his overriding concern with the interior and the Ḥaḍramawt[62]; indeed, he carefully documents political upheavals in Gujarat, as we shall see. His lack of interest in the Portuguese, Ottoman, and Mamlūk assaults on Yemeni

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[59] ʻAbd al-Qādir is referring to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman. Although the story is fictitious, the act of sending the heads to the Ottoman Sultan recalls the strategy of the Kathīrī sultans like Badr to form and break alliances with the Portuguese and the Ottomans in order to maintain power. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 27-8; al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 280; trans. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 175-6.
[60] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 30.
[61] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 43.
[62] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 39.

port cities cannot be credited to a general apathy toward great-power politics in the Indian Ocean region.

Natural phenomena

Although he does not focus on the events that drew Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt into the large-scale politics of the Indian Ocean region, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes dozens of events of local significance to Yemen and the Ḥaḍramawt, like natural disasters, plagues, and celestial signs. Indeed, for the years between 904/1498 and 920/1514, ʻAbd al-Qādir records many such occurrences, all of which take place either in the Yemeni cities of Zabīd and Aden, in which members of his family lived. After 920/1514, records of natural and celestial phenomena disappear until 969/1561-2, after which point ʻAbd al-Qādir records similar events in the Ḥaḍramawt, Gujarat, and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. During the period between 904/1498 and 920/1514, Aden and Zabīd experienced at least three major windstorms, three floods, one drought, three plagues, and two huge fires.[63] Although ʻAbd al-Qādir does not provide a consistent level of detail on these occurrences, some of them markedly resemble others.

The two fires, which occurred in the years 908/1502-3 and 914/1508-9 in Aden, affected the same area of the city; in both cases, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes damage to a part of the city that held the Ethiopian quarter and the major market, between the Sufyānīyah Law College and the Jewish quarter.[64] The first fire was particularly devastating, destroying 900 houses, including those of a group of traders whom ʻAbd al-Qādir mentions by name. The second fire killed thirty people and destroyed "an incalculable amount of money and properties."[65] These two fires in

[63] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 72, 75, 85, 86, 99, 109, 135, 137, 138, 148.
[64] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 85, 135.
[65] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 135.

Aden during the space of six years—both of which appear to have affected minority communities, including the Jews—distinctly resemble each other, and they might be a duplicate recording of the same event, since ʻAbd al-Qādir relied on several different sources for his information about these years. Alternately, that part of the city might simply have been prone to fires.

In contrast to his similar presentation of the two fires, ʻAbd al-Qādir exerts himself to distinguish the plagues from one another by describing whom they affected and what their symptoms were. The first plague, which began in Zabīd in 906/1500-1 before spreading to other areas, killed sixty people each day, largely women and children.[66] The second, in 908/1502-3, struck "the joints and appendages, preventing (victims) from moving for three days"; however, after a bout of fever victims recovered.[67] The third plague, which occurred a decade after the other two in the year 918/1512-3, killed many elders, with the death toll in Zabīd approaching 100 each day.[68] ʻAbd al-Qādir also records at least seven celestial phenomena, including unusual movements in the stars and a solar eclipse. His descriptions of these events suggest that he was educated in astronomy, because he cites constellations by name and appears to track time by their movements. Some of these occurrences verge on the supernatural, as in his description of a shooting star in 916/1510-1 that "lit the world with a great light."[69]

The same 20-year period also contains a few events that were neither large-scale natural disasters nor clear miracles. For instance, one of his first entries describes a man who was struck by lightning while plowing in Zabīd "near the grave of the jurist Abu Bakr al-Ḥaddād."[70] The man and his two oxen died, possibly implying that he was punished for plowing too close to the

[66] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 75.
[67] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 86. See Appendix B, passage 3.
[68] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 148.
[69] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 138. See Appendix B, passage 4.
[70] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 70. See Appendix B, passage 5.

grave. In another passage, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes an event that does not seem noteworthy at all: in 905/1499-1500, a group of farmers were caught outside Zabīd in a rainstorm, and they took refuge under a large arch. From this vantage point, they noticed a group of sheep dropping dead from mysterious circumstances. Investigating, they discovered a "great serpent" preying upon the sheep, one of which "stepped on its head with its cloven hoof and killed it."[71]

Although ʻAbd al-Qādir's inclusion of some of these incidents seems entirely unexplainable, his logic may fit into Ho's analysis of the importance of "home" to diasporic Ḥaḍramis. According to Ho, Ḥaḍrami migrants and their children, despite settling in new places, never lost their feeling of connection to southern Arabia. Places where ancestors had lived, died, and been buried became destinations of pilgrimage and return.[72] In ʻAbd al-Qādir's case, Aden—although not in the Ḥaḍramawt—belongs in this framework because a number of members of the ʻAydarūs family, including his father and grandfather, lived there for many years, and one of his relatives was regarded as the city's patron saint.[73] The connection between ʻAbd al-Qādir and Zabīd is more difficult to explain; however, his inclusion of accounts of the deaths of scholars and rising prices in the city, added to the shared status of Zabīd and Aden as regional trading hubs, suggest that his family was tied to Zabīd through business and scholarship.[74] ʻAbd al-Qādir appears to have paid close attention to occurrences—such as floods, fires, disease, and movements of the stars—that might have affected the physical lands from which his father had come and to which his family was connected. If ʻAbd al-Qādir believed that the land of the Ḥaḍramawt, and Yemen in a broader geographic sense, held a special meaning to his family—for instance, because it preserved their footsteps or housed their bones—he may have looked for

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[71] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 73. See Appendix B, passage 6.
[72] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 14-5.
[73] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 124, 284.
[74] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 89, 135.

signs of that connection in unusual or unexplained events. He may have seen in these events signs of God's greatness, indications that Yemen occupied a blessed place in the world.

ʻAbd al-Qādir the Gujarati

Migration and conquest in Gujarat

East of the Arabian Peninsula from which the ʻAydarūs family emerged lies Gujarat, the region of India to which ʻAbd al-Qādir's father Shaykh would migrate as an adult. This area spans the coast of northwest India, including the Saurashtra peninsula and the land surrounding the Gulf of Cambay.[75] The port cities of Cambay, Diu, and Surat connected the region to trade centers around the Indian Ocean. Ho traces the prominence of Cambay especially to the rerouting of transoceanic trading routes following the fall of Abbasid Baghdad in 656/1258; by that time, vital trade routes linking north India to the coast traversed Gujarat's interior, facilitating the transportation of merchandise to be sold overseas.[76] The region became known for its fertile soil, which grew cotton, fruit, and indigo; its natural beauty led Arab visitors to wax eloquent about its gardens, exotic birds, and religious centers for Hindus and Muslims.[77]

The history of Gujarat as a region stretches back before 100 C.E., at which time the Gurjaras or Gujjaras—clans of cattle-herders and soldiers—settled the area and left it their name.[78] Muslims first arrived in Gujarat in small numbers at the end of the first/seventh century; travelling via trade routes, they raided areas of Gujarat but did not set down roots until the third/ninth century.[79] Gujarat weathered repeated invasions by various groups intent on gaining

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[75] Samira Sheikh, *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders, and Pilgrims in Gujarat 1200-1500* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 27.
[76] Engseng Ho, "The Two Arms of Cambay: Diasporic Texts of Ecumenical Islam in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50 (2007): 351.
[77] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 28-9.
[78] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 25.
[79] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 52-3.

their share of the riches derived from the thriving trade routes; in the early eighth/fourteenth century, the army of the Delhi sultans (602/1206 – 933/1526) swept through and took over the region, which had been under the control of local families since the precipitous decline of the Caulukya dynasty (sixth/twelfth – late seventh/thirteenth centuries) over the previous century.[80] ʻAlāʼ al-Dīn Khaljī of Delhi (r. 695-6/1296 – 716/1316) cemented his rule of the region in 706-7/1307 and began to appoint governors to administer Gujarat and collect tribute.[81]

The Delhi sultanate lost control of Gujarat in the first years of the ninth/fifteenth century, at which point their governor in Gujarat, Ẓafar Khan, declared independence and established his own sultanate in 809-10/1407.[82] The new Gujarat sultanate invested in economic development and founded the city of Aḥmadabad, in which ʻAbd al-Qādir would later live.[83] These sultans ruled an independent Gujarat for more than 150 years, at which point they became embroiled in a power struggle with the rising Mughal Empire under Akbar (r. 963/1556 – 1014/1605).[84] Akbar finished his conquest of Gujarat in 981/1572, in a series of battles that ʻAbd al-Qādir discusses in detail in *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* as we shall see shortly.

Scholars and Sufis in court

The absorption of the region into the Mughal Empire sparked changes in the already-vital port cities of Gujarat. The overseas trade that passed through the bay of Cambay became the central supply route for the center of the Mughal realm in Delhi and Agra; integration with Akbar's empire increased traffic in the port cities, with regard to both imports and exports.[85]

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[80] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 4-5.
[81] Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, 5.
[82] Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, 6.
[83] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 63.
[84] Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, 114.
[85] Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation, and Trade in Mughal India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 290-1.

Aḥmadabad grew until it was considered "comparable to London and its suburbs" by eleventh/seventeenth century European travelers.[86] An already cosmopolitan region welcomed many more migrants from southern Arabia, and the Sufi landscape became yet more diverse.[87] At the same time, many aspects of life in Gujarat remained the same; bureaucrats from the previous sultanate played roles in the new government, and Sufis enjoyed the same status and respect from rulers as they had before.

Prominent Sufis retained their influence through the regime change. The habit of kings, sultans, and bureaucrats patronizing holy men—often Sufis—in order to lend their rule legitimacy spread until it was practiced by dynasties across the region. Eaton describes the early roots of this system of patronage in the Indian subcontinent in his *Social History of the Deccan 1300 – 1761*. Beginning with the Delhi sultanates like the one that had previously conquered Gujarat under 'Alā' al-Dīn Khaljī of Delhi in 706-7/1307, South Asian ruling families exerted considerable effort to gain the sanction of influential Sufis. In Eaton's words, "certain Sufi *shaykh*s could 'entrust' royal sovereignty (*ḥukūmat)* to future kings, whose rule was understood as dependent on such *shaykh*s."[88] This type of relationship, beginning in Delhi, spread to other parts of India; in Gujarat before the Mughal conquest of the seventeenth century, Sufis "became important counterpoints to the sultans' courts at Aḥmadabad," drawing parallels to the situation of the Chishti Sufis in Delhi.[89]

These religious leaders served as arbiters of public opinion, sometimes predicting the trajectory of power with eerie accurateness, as with Gisu Daraz (721/1321 – 825/1422) in ninth/fifteenth century Gulbarga, an area south of Gujarat that was also ruled for a time by the

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[86] Moosvi, *People, Taxation, and Trade*, 130.
[87] Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, 10.
[88] Richard M. Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan 1300-1761: Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 45.
[89] Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, 66-7.

Delhi sultans. Gisu Daraz's presence in the Bahmani court sanctioned Sultan Firuz's rule (r. 799/1397 – 825/1422); Firuz's reign ended after he fell out with Gisu Daraz, who then aligned himself with Firuz's brother Aḥmad and supported his bid to gain the throne.[90] In return for their blessings, court Sufis received financial support and other perks of power.[91] Persian Sufi Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (603-4/1207 – 671-2/1273) famous for founding the Mevlevi order of dervishes, immortalized the relationship between Islamic thinkers and rulers in this proverb: "The worst of scholars is he who visits princes, and the best of princes is he who visits scholars."[92]

The inimitable fourteenth-century world traveler Ibn Baṭṭūṭa serves as another example of the relationship between men of religion and men of power. In his discussion of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, Vincent Cornell describes the relationship expressed in Rūmī's quote as "a trope that has been a fundamental part of Islamic ethics since the era of the Umayyad caliphate" in the seventh century.[93] Cornell explains the power structure of medieval Islamic states in terms of a "circle of equity," in which royalty supports and is supported by the military and scholarly establishments, in pursuit of a system that will allow the masses to produce the wealth necessary to keep the circle intact.[94] Ibn al-'Arabī rather cynically characterized such patron-client relationships as "mutual exploitation."[95]

Learned men like Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the fourteenth century thrived under this system. No sooner had Ibn Baṭṭūṭa arrived in a new city than he ingratiated himself with the ruling dynasty,

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[90] Eaton, *Social History of the Deccan*, 54.
[91] Eaton, *Social History of the Deccan*, 34.
[92] Quoted in Vincent J. Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism: The Networks and Loyalties of a Medieval Muslim Scholar," in *Muslim Networks: From Hajj to Hip Hop*, ed. miriam cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence (The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 41.
[93] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 41.
[94] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 34.
[95] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 35.

gaining a powerful position before moving to his next port of call.[96] He was well known in many courts, and he managed to form a wide network of powerful connections throughout his travels. However, his broad political connections did not lend themselves to enduring ties so much as to what Cornell terms "opportunism," begging the question of where his loyalties and citizenship lay.[97] Ibn Baṭṭūṭa lived before the concept of the nation-state, and in his time group identification and citizenship coalesced around kinship, religion, and city of origin.[98] Relationships between patrons and clients could serve to tie individuals to the state, but in the absence of a unifying concept of nation, these bonds were tenuous at best. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa privileged religious and regional identity over national or state-based identity in his habit of seeking out Muslim communities—particularly those tied to his home in the Maghrib—wherever he went; in contrast, he showed his lack of national or state-based identity by never settling in one court.[99]

Like Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, the al-'Aydarūs family in Aḥmadabad played political roles and built relationships through their contacts at royal courts; however, also like Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, the al-'Aydarūses do not seem to have identified exclusively with any one state, despite years of service. 'Abd al-Qādir's father, the Ḥaḍrami migrant Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh al-'Aydarūs, arrived in Aḥmadabad in 974/1566-7, bringing with him the respect and commendation of government officials in the nearby city of Bharuch (Broach), in which he had lived in previous years.[100] Shaykh became one of a group of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s who found patrons in the courts, sponsored by the "foreign slave nobility of Gujarat."[101] Possibly owing to his growing reputation in the

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[96] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 31.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 32.
[99] Cornell, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Opportunism," 49.
[100] The length of Shaykh's tenure in Bharuch is unspecified, but he is credited with building a mosque in Surat, another Gujarat port city, in 971/1563-4. He first migrated to India in 957-8/1551. al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 376, 403; Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 106.
[101] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 108.

region's ruling circles, Shaykh gained a position as a well-paid Sufi court official in Ahmadabad, then the capital of Gujarat under the independent sultanate before the Mughal conquest.[102]

In this respected role, Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh made a great impression on slave-administrators in the ruling class.[103] Samira Sheikh recounts the story of 'Abd Allāh Ḥājjī al-Dabīr al-Ulugh Khānī, a scribe who served one of the Gujarat sultanate's generals, Muḥammad Ulugh Khān, during the last battles against the Mughals. Under the new government, al-Ulugh Khānī was given the task of delivering offerings to the poor in Arabia near the holy cities, after which he served the Mughals in central India.[104] Other slave-bureaucrats found placements in the new administration as well, including al-Ulugh Khānī's companion Rayḥān Badr al-Dīn Jahāngīr Khān, a high-ranking official who "associated closely with Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s."[105] In fact, Rayḥān was a close friend of Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh in the decades after Shaykh's 1551 migration to India.[106] After Shaykh's death in 990/1582, his son Aḥmad ('Abd al-Qādir's elder brother) gained a position in Aḥmadabad similar to his father's, and Rayḥān and al-Ulugh Khānī honored him just as they had Shaykh.[107] Despite the political transition from the Gujarat sultans to the Mughal emperors and their regional governors, the positions of the slave-bureaucrats and their relationships with Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s remained unchanged.

A nephew of Aḥmad and 'Abd al-Qādir, also called Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh (993/1585 – 1041/1631), followed his family's path into a political life, and he became a revered Sufi teacher who "was honored by the sultan" Burhān Niẓām Shāh (r. 915-16/1510 – 939-40/1533) of Aḥmad Nagar in the Deccan, another example of the mobility of this system of patronage between rulers

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[102] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 106.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] Sheikh, *Forging a Region,* 9-10.
[105] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 105-6.
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 106-7.

and Sufis.[108] Aḥmad and Shaykh took more active role in politics than ʻAbd al-Qādir did, but ʻAbd al-Qādir nonetheless benefitted from the patronage of the Mughals in his scholarly and literary endeavors. In *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* ʻAbd al-Qādir makes it clear that although his family is Ḥaḍrami, his daily life takes place in Gujarat; his loyalty to this region and its rulers is evident in the types of segments he includes about them and in the language he uses to describe them.

ʻAbd al-Qādir's accounts of Gujarat in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* go back as far as 916/1510, forty years before his father first moved to India. This first passage describes the death of a famous ruler:

> In this year, in the last hours of Sunday the second of Ramaḍān, the just and valiant Sultan Abū al-Fatḥ Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad, the ruler of Gujarat, died in Aḥmadabad and was buried there. … He [became Sultan in] the year 863[/1459], when he was a boy of 15 years, and his reign continued until now. He seized the castle of Champaner from the unbelievers and built a city, which he named Muḥammadabad.[109]

ʻAbd al-Qādir goes on to discuss Maḥmūd Shah's famous grandfather, Muẓaffar, who became "enchanted" by Gujarat; another passage for the year 932/1525-6 praises Maḥmūd's son, Muẓaffar Shah, who ruled Gujarat after Maḥmūd. ʻAbd al-Qādir's nostalgic, laudatory biographies of these three rulers raise the question of why he admired these figures so much. Maḥmūd Shah and Muẓaffar Shah had no connection with the ʻAydarūs family, and they died before ʻAbd al-Qādir or his father lived in Gujarat. Furthermore, his descendants were conquered by the Mughals, who were in power during most of ʻAbd al-Qādir's life. Most likely, ʻAbd al-Qādir felt an affinity for Gujarat that led him to describe events there as far back as the earliest years of his chronicle. The relative continuity of social and religious structures despite regime changes may explain why ʻAbd al-Qādir seems just as fond of this distant ruler as he is in his descriptions of Akbar later on in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.*

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[108] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 111.
[109] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 137-8. See Appendix B, passage 7.

Most of the passages ʻAbd al-Qādir includes about Gujarat are similar to this one, describing the lives and deaths of rulers and the great battles during the Mughal conquest. Unlike in the discussion of Yemen, he does not spend much time discussing natural disasters. He mentions a flood in Aḥmadabad, followed by the appearance of blood in the city's water, both during the year of his birth[110]; aside from these two very brief passages, he only lists one tempestuous wind and one swarm of locusts in Gujarat. We will discuss in detail in chapter 3 the many Gujarati political events ʻAbd al-Qādir lists. For now, it is sufficient to point out that his emphasis on natural phenomena over politics in the Ḥaḍramawt is utterly reversed in Gujarat, suggesting the different aspects of each place that he valued.

It is difficult to name a "setting" for *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. The events it describes cover a broad swath of the world, and the people it features played roles over an even broader area. ʻAbd al-Qādir was a child of two worlds, the son of a Yemeni migrant growing up in Gujarat. His proud family history took place in the Ḥaḍramawt and coastal Yemen, an ocean away from his own life as a prominent Sufi in Aḥmadabad. His brothers and nephews never lost their Yemeni identities, but his beloved mother was an Indian slave—and his father, after living in Gujarat for 15 years, was laid to rest in a magnificent mausoleum in Aḥmadabad alongside the young son he had buried a decade earlier. With ʻAbd al-Qādir's life thus divided between two locales of identity, it makes sense that his chronicle of the tenth century would take place on a split stage as well.

However, there is a pattern to the events ʻAbd al-Qādir found noteworthy in each place. In Yemen, he took note of changes to the land like floods or fires and mystical occurrences like miracles or omens. In Gujarat, he dwelt on the political landscape, the power struggles that occupied the Mughal conquerors, and the rise and fall of leaders. His connection to Yemen lay in his family's physical history on the land and in the spiritual presence they had left behind; his

[110] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 453 (Year 978).

connection to Gujarat was one of immediacy, where temporal interests played a greater role, and he gained respect through his interactions with power. No matter the setting, however, he maintained a consistent focus on the lives of his family members and the deaths of influential scholars. His identities as an ʻAydarūs *sayyid* and a Sufi scholar transcended his physical location—and it is to these identities that we turn now.

Chapter 2 • Kinship: ʻAbd al-Qādir, the Family Man

ʻAbd al-Qādir's family had a long and illustrious history in the Ḥaḍramawt, during which they produced a number of spiritual luminaries, some of whom we will introduce shortly. However, the ʻAydarūs family's claim to holiness was based on more than an unusual number of notable theologians: They belonged to the Bā ʻAlawī clan, a branch of South Arabian *sayyid*s ultimately descended from the Prophet Muḥammad. Honored for their connection to the Prophet, the ʻAydarūs family garnered esteem as pious men and religious leaders in the Ḥaḍramawt and beyond. Their most prominent sons became well known in far-flung areas[111]; for instance, Ḥusayn b. Abī Bakr al-ʻAydarūs (d. 1212-3 A.H./1798 C.E.) gained fame as a saint in Indonesia, where his gravesite continues to attract pilgrims.[112]

Throughout *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, ʻAbd al-Qādir attaches special dignity and privilege to his kin, within both the ʻAydarūs family and the larger Bā ʻAlawī clan—and his sentiments extend beyond familial fondness. ʻAbd al-Qādir greatly values his family's identity as Bā ʻAlawī *sayyids*, who first appeared in the Ḥaḍramawt in 354/965 when a ninth-generation descendant of the Prophet, Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā—known as "the Migrant"—left his birthplace in Iraq to settle near Tarim.[113] Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā's great-grandson ʻAlawī b. ʻAbd Allāh, as we saw in chapter 1, passed on his name—the adjective form of the name of ʻAlī, the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin—to his descendents, who adopted it as the name of their clan and thereby cemented their connection to the Prophet's family. Ten generations later, the family began influencing the mystical practices of the region when ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saqqāf (d. 818-9/1416) and his son developed a formal set of Sufi practices which have since provided Ḥaḍramis with a common religious

[111] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 43-4, 166-7.
[112] Löfgren, " ʻAydarūs," 782.
[113] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 38.

vocabulary.[114] Al-Saqqāf initiated a ritual that continues to be performed in Tarim twice a week known as the *ḥaḍrat al-Saqqāf*, which Ho translates (rather clumsily) as the "Saqqāf presencing." This ritual is a type of *dhikr,* a mystical Islamic practice in which participants seek union with God through the repetition and focus on a specific sound or set of words; the Saqqāf presencing in particular combines music and actions performed in a specific space, the mosque endowed by al-Saqqāf.[115] Having laid the foundation for the development of the 'Alawī pathway of Sufism, al-Saqqāf and his son became patrons of mosques named after them in Tarim, establishing an indissoluble link between family, religion, and place.[116] One of al-Saqqāf's great-grandsons, Abū Bakr al-'Aydarūs (d. 919/1513[117]), came to be regarded as the patron saint of Aden, to which he migrated from Tarim, the town of his birth (See Appendix A).[118] Abū Bakr's move to Aden was probably pivotal to the subsequent dispersal of his descendants; a vital center of Indian Ocean trade since the third/tenth century, Aden remained integrally connected to other major points of trade around the Indian Ocean littoral, including Gujarat, where 'Abd al-Qādir's father ended up.[119] By relocating to Aden, Abū Bakr connected his descendants with networks that facilitated the subsequent migrations that allowed the family to plant deep roots in multiple locations.

The clan continued to spread from southern Arabia across the Indian Ocean, with particular family members gaining acclaim as prominent Sufis, historians, and government officials as far as Indonesia. The dispersal of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s over this time period proceeded

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[114] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 206, 210.
[115] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 43-4.
[116] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 45.
[117] Ho cites Abū Bakr's year of death as 919/1513, but 'Abd al-Qādir records the event in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* in 922/1516.
[118] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 14, 51.
[119] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco Da Gama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 101-5; Roxani Eleni Margariti, *Aden & the Indian Ocean Trade: 150 Years in the Life of a Medieval Arabian Port* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 2-3.

hand in hand with the growth of long-distance trade throughout the Indian Ocean and its surroundings, which enabled people of diverse origins to build webs of wide and deep transoceanic connections with one another.[120] The migrations of diasporic Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s created long-enduring, far-flung kin networks around the Indian Ocean, with members of the Bā ʻAlawī clan becoming public officials and political potentates across the region. Even one thousand years after Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā's migration to Tarim, during World War I, the British found themselves confronting a wide-ranging network of powerful Arabs across the Indian Ocean and its surroundings; the colonial power struggled to determine who in this extended family was "on their side."[121]

By the tenth/sixteenth century, five generations distant from al-Saqqāf, the ʻAydarūs branch of the Bā ʻAlawī clan had established a place for itself in Indian courtly society.[122] This moment in the family's history gave rise to ʻAbd al-Qādir, whose life fell halfway between the fourth/tenth century of Aḥmad b. ʻĪsā and the fourteenth/twentieth-century Ḥaḍrami network noticed by the British. In *al-Nūr al-sāfir* ʻAbd al-Qādir shows a remarkable prescience with regard to the transregional significance of his family; he allots special attention to his kin network and locates himself within it, acknowledging (and perhaps exaggerating) the family's geographic spread and their influence throughout the Indian Ocean world. ʻAbd al-Qādir displays his partiality toward the Bā ʻAlawī clan and ʻAydarūs family in the segments he writes commemorating their births, deaths, and other important milestones. In both their structure and their content, these passages suggest the special consideration attached to their subjects by the author.

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[120] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 99.
[121] Engseng Ho, "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Volume 46 No. 2 (April 2004): 212; Ho, "The Two Arms of Cambay," 355.
[122] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 106.

ʿAbd al-Qādir the ʿAlawī

ʿAbd al-Qādir's network of Bā ʿAlawī kin is omnipresent in *al-Nūr al-sāfir.* His descriptions paint a picture of a group of illustrious jurists, widely acknowledged for their superiority and possessing enviable scholarly pedigrees. The excerpt below is representative of Bā ʿAlawī obituaries in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* in its demonstration of three characteristic marks: a list of the individual's teachers, a description of a miracle, and a dearth of personal details.

> In this year, the scholar and jurist Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Asqaʿ Bā ʿAlawī died in Tarim in [Shawwāl 917/December 1511 – January 1512]. He was among the most superior of jurists and the most cultured of scholars. He absorbed a variety of learning and he excelled and became a master and adhered to diligence and independent religious questioning in knowledge and in practice….
> Among his masters were his maternal uncle, the righteous jurist Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh Bā Faḍl, who was great in conferring benefits upon him; and others among them were the *shaykh* ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr Bā ʿAlawī; and the judge Ibrahīm b. Ẓahirah al-Qarshī; and the jurist ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Bā Faḍl; and al-Hāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī, from whom he got an *ijāza*[123]….
> Among his miracles is this: the home of one of his servants was robbed, and he said to the servant: "Go to so-and-so's place and find there what was taken from you," and he did this and found the stolen property in the place that he had designated.[124]

In the example above, ʿAbd al-Qādir carefully enumerates the scholars with whom his Bā ʿAlawī relatives had studied. A similar listing of scholarly lineage is typical of Sufi biographies known as *ṭabaqāt*, a genre familiar to ʿAbd al-Qādir and his predecessors, as discussed earlier. Considered "one of the most productive genres of the Islamic literary tradition," the *ṭabaqāt* genre consists of works that describe the history of a specific type of Sufism by tracing

[123] Scholars distributed certificates called *ijāza*s to students who had completed a course of study under their supervision.
[124] al-ʿAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 142. See Appendix B, passage 8

practitioners from the movement's genesis to the author's time.[125] For each successive generation, a *ṭabaqāt* work enumerates the most prominent individuals among the generation's scholars, listing as their teachers members of the previous generation. Establishing connections between consecutive generations builds a firm chain of authority that often stretches back to the Prophet or his followers. The same strategy of tracing reliable sources functions as an essential part of the transmission of *ḥadīth*, authoritative Islamic teachings that arise not from the Qur'ān but from traditions and stories associated with the life of the Prophet. Since ʻAbd al-Qādir is only connecting his Bā ʻAlawī relations with their immediate forebears, he is not providing a full scholarly lineage to establish each one's authority; however, he is setting them up as links in the chains that connect their teachers to previous authorities. This is especially important because some of the men he mentions as instructing his relatives are famous in their own right, like Shams al-Dīn Abū al-Khayr Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī (830/1427 – 902/1497), mentioned in the excerpt above, a famous scholar and biographer in Mamlūk Egypt. In listing his relatives' scholarly connections, ʻAbd al-Qādir is incorporating his relatives into established chains of religious authority. He is pointing out the importance of the circles in which the Bā ʻAlawī moved, indirectly enhancing his own prestige; he may also be emphasizing the approval with which the scholarly community welcomed his relations in order to make indirect evaluations of their spirituality.

Another characteristic component of ʻAbd al-Qādir's Bā ʻAlawī obituaries is descriptions of miracles or prophetic foresight. In the case of Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān, he relates a story of a time when his relative exposed a thief who had preyed upon one of his servants. Muḥammad b. ʻAbd al-Raḥmān was able to "see" the thief and tell his servant where to look. His piety in this situation is on display not only because of his clairvoyance, but also because of his

[125] Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism*, 1.

action to combat a wicked deed (the theft) and his charity toward a social inferior (his servant). Another individual of the Bā ʿAlawī clan, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Hinduwān Bā ʿAlawī, prophesied to ʿAbd al-Qādir's brother ʿAbd Allāh about an incident that would befall one of his acquaintances before it happened.[126] ʿAbd Allāh discovered the truth of his prediction when the incident occurred after ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh's death in 987/1579.[127] This trait of foresight and miracles proves the piety of ʿAbd al-Qādir's relatives, their charity toward others, and their distinction as mystics.

ʿAbd al-Qādir the ʿAydarūs

In contrast to the detail to which ʿAbd al-Qādir goes in describing the scholarly lineages and miraculous works of his Bā ʿAlawī relations, he is surprisingly silent on details of their lives. His general descriptions of the individuals rarely extend beyond a fairly sparse account of their scholarly and juridical accomplishments. This point distinguishes Bā ʿAlawī obituaries from the birth and death notices he writes for his closer ʿAydarūs relatives, for whom he is far more likely to provide detailed biographies, lists of works, and names of family members.

> On the eve of Wednesday the 14th of Sha'ban in 944 [January 16, 1538], my grandfather the *sharīf* ʿAbd Allāh b. Shaykh b. the *shaykh* ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAydarūs died in Tarim and was buried there. Born in 887 [1482], he was among the greatest of the saints…. He had good manners, and was generous with charity. He demonstrated noble qualities, the "Marshal of the Nobility," with abundant intelligence, showing excellence, rich in spirit, satisfied with the bare minimum, luminous of face, dark in complexion,[128] tall of stature, of many virtues, great of gifts, peerless in his time, and the sea of his virtues was abundant. While he was in the noble sanctuary in Mecca, a man entered with a boy, rushing him along.

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[126] ʿAbd al-Qādir provides no details as to the nature of the incident. The entire description reads thus: "Among his miracles, he informed my brother the *sayyid* ʿAbd Allāh about a thing that would befall certain people before it happened. The very same person mentioned [the occurrence], and it was just as [ʿUmar b. ʿAbd Allāh] had said after his death, as if it were nothing."
[127] al-ʿAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 477.
[128] The original Arabic reads a*khḍar al-lawn*. In modern Arabic, we would translate this as "green in color," but the word for green was a general term for "dark" during this time.

> The man presented the boy, and lo and behold, he had a congenital disease that left his leg twisted. With his blessed hand, [my grandfather] stroked the leg, and it returned to be like its counterpart, straight, so that there was nothing wrong with it, through his blessing. [129]

In this passage, taken from ‘Abd Allāh b. Shaykh’s obituary, ‘Abd al-Qādir clearly illustrates the devotion, admiration, and love he feels for his grandfather, who had died more than 30 years before ‘Abd al-Qādir’s birth. He describes his grandfather’s many virtues, as he does in many obituaries; this one is unusual, however, in the extent of the praise he lavishes upon the subject. He extols ‘Abd Allāh’s intellect, morals, asceticism, and even physical appearance, although the two never met. Furthermore, he describes him as “among the greatest of the saints,” a leader among holy men by virtue of his status as a *sharīf*, or descendent of the Prophet. ‘Abd al-Qādir describes a miracle his grandfather performed in the sacred area of Mecca, suggesting that he was highly favored by God and widely recognized as a saint. By specifying that the boy with the twisted leg was crippled because of “a congenital disease,” ‘Abd al-Qādir emphasizes the miraculous nature of his cure; the boy’s disability was long-standing, and his recovery could not be explained by nature. By offering anecdotal evidence of his grandfather’s holiness, ‘Abd al-Qādir proves that he was indeed a well-known and widely recognized saint, whose virtues cannot be denied. As if to provide a second opinion, ‘Abd al-Qādir appends a verse of poetry written by “the very erudite” ‘Abd al-Qādir b. Muḥammad b. Abd al-Qādir b. Aḥmad al-Ḥayyānī in honor of ‘Abd Allāh, who “possessed sovereignty in his time.”[130]

These testimonials show that even while focusing on his family history, ‘Abd al-Qādir does not lose sight of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*’s equally prevalent emphasis on spiritual and intellectual genealogy. As he does with regard to his Bā ‘Alawī relations, ‘Abd al-Qādir lists prominent

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[129] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 284-5. See Appendix B, passage 9.
[130] *Ibid*.

scholars who taught his ‘Aydarūs relatives and enumerates prominent scholars who were friends of his immediate family. He often includes these men’s poetry commemorating important events in his family’s history, contributing to the relative length of these passages. For instance, ‘Abd al-Qādir also mentions in his grandfather’s obituary that he learned from “the great *shaykh* Fakhr al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Aydarūs, the master[131] of Aden.”[132] ‘Abd al-Qadir also enumerates the many people who studied Sufism under ‘Abd Allāh, further emphasizing his spiritual importance.[133] His grandfather bestowed a *khirqa,* or Sufi cloak, on his students as a mark of their induction into a mystic order under his tutelage; ‘Abd al-Qadir went on to title one of his books *al-Futūḥāt al-quddūsīya fi al-khirqat al-‘Aydarūsīya*, or “Holy Revelations, on the ‘Aydarūs Sufi Cloak,” further cementing his place as an heir to his family’s traditions.[134]

Although the passages devoted to more distantly related ‘Alawīs tend to be death notices, ‘Abd al-Qādir’s entries on members of the immediate ‘Aydarūs family include births, deaths, significant moves, and the publication of writings—and the obituaries of these individuals tend to be much longer than other death notices in the book. In addition to including a lengthy obituary memorializing his grandfather ‘Abd Allāh, ‘Abd al-Qādir wrote two passages about ‘Abd Allāh’s *hajj*, his obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca. ‘Abd Allāh travelled to Mecca with his son—‘Abd al-Qādir’s father, Shaykh—in 937/1530, returning two years later. En route to Mecca, ‘Abd Allāh passed through al-Shiḥr on the southern coast of the peninsula; while there, he was visited by the Turkish commander Muṣṭafā Bahrām, who gave him special permission to enter the blockaded port of Aden. Aden’s ruler had agreed to become a vassal to the Portuguese in 935-6/1529, and by 937/1530 the city was chafing under an Ottoman siege aimed at driving

[131] The Arabic word used here, *ṣāḥib*, can also mean “lord” or “commander,” but this passage seems to connote moral or intellectual authority rather than political power.
[132] *Ibid*.
[133] *Ibid*.
[134] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 569.

out the Portuguese; in 937-8/1531, Aden's sultan finally submitted to the overlordship of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman (r. 926/1520 –974/1566) and arrested and imprisoned the Portuguese men remaining in the city.[135] 'Abd Allāh's arrival in Aden became an occasion for celebration, and 'Āmir b. Dāwūd, Sultan of Aden and the last Ṭāhirid ruler according to 'Abd al-Qādir, welcomed him personally and treated him with great generosity and respect during his stay.[136] On the way back from the pilgrimage to Mecca, 'Abd Allāh sent his son Shaykh to Ethiopia to take care of a debt incurred to the Imām Aḥmad al-Jawād during the pilgrimage; with God's help, the debt was settled in short order even though it amounted to 1500 gold pieces.[137] The level of detail in which 'Abd al-Qādir describes these incidents reveals their importance to him; he viewed his grandfather's *hajj* as a noteworthy event of comparable importance to the assassination of the Ottoman commander Salmān—a prominent figure in the Ottoman campaign in Yemen, charged with disposing of an insubordinate Yemeni governor—two years earlier in 935/1528-9.[138]

For the year 945/1538, 'Abd al-Qadir begins to record births in his family as well as deaths. 'Abd al-Qādir writes very few birth notices, and nearly all of them are for men born into his immediate family. The first two of these, for his two older brothers 'Abd Allāh and Aḥmad (known as 'Afīf al-Dīn and Shihāb al-Dīn), include lengthy sections of verse written to commemorate the births, as well as words in praise of their mother, Fāṭima bt. 'Abd al-Raḥmān.[139] The fact that these are the first figures whose births he memorializes, while with regard to other individuals he merely mentions their year of birth in their obituaries, is self-

[135] Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast,* 57-9; Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 47-8.
[136] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 270.
[137] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 273.
[138] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 267; S. Soucek, "Selmān Re'īs," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IX: S. Ed. H.A.R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 136.
[139] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 296, 311.

explanatory on account of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s close personal knowledge of his brothers’ lives. Neither ‘Abd Allāh nor Aḥmad are the subject of obituaries later on, but in a parenthetical addition to the end of ‘Abd Allāh’s birth announcement ‘Abd al-Qādir cites his date of death as the thirteenth of Dhū al-Q‘ada 1019/January 27, 1611, almost twenty years after the final year chronicled in *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 1000/1592.[140]

Most of ‘Abd al-Qadir’s entries about the ‘Aydarūs family revolve around his immediate family, including a lengthy segment on the occasion of his own birth. He also discusses his father Shaykh on multiple occasions, including his migration to Ahmadabad and his restoration of a mosque in Surat, as well as the publication of a book he wrote, which we will revisit later.[141] When Shaykh died on the twenty-fifth of Ramaḍān 990/October 23, 1582—barely a week after the Western world switched to the Gregorian calendar—he was buried next to a son who had died thirteen years earlier during his youth. ‘Abd al-Qadir built a domed mausoleum over their burial site in the courtyard of their house.[142]

However, ‘Abd al-Qādir does not limit his praise to his closest ‘Aydarūs kin. Marking the death in 953/1546 of a more distant relative, he writes,

> In 953, the magnificent *sayyid* ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alawī b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Aydarūs, master (*ṣāḥib*) of Aden, the husband of the holy saint Muzna bt. Abū Bakr al-‘Aydarūs, died in Tarim. He was buried in his father’s tomb. He was the father of the saintly *sayyid* matchless in his age, unique in his epoch, the sun among suns ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Aydarūs …[143]

Several aspects of this obituary stand out from among the many others ‘Abd al-Qādir wrote in honor of the dead. Although ‘Abd al-Qādir does not offer much detail about this cousin, he is unusually enthusiastic about ‘Abd Allāh’s relations. His son ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh is not the only

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[140] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 300.
[141] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 403, 469.
[142] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 432, 488.
[143] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 322. See Appendix B, passage 10.

person ‘Abd al-Qādir refers to as “the foremost saint of his age” or “the sun among suns,” but he is among the few. Even more unusually, ‘Abd al-Qādir mentions ‘Abd Allāh’s wife; ‘Abd al-Qādir writes obituaries for only six women, and he mentions women only rarely in other entries. Terming Muzna bt. Abū Bakr a “holy saint” clearly indicates that she was a special lady in ‘Abd al-Qādir’s mind. Her father was most likely Abū Bakr b. ‘Abd Allāh al-’Aydarūs, the patron saint of Aden mentioned in chapter 1, who died in 919/1513. Lacking more detail about Muzna’s life, it seems likely that her relationships with these holy men lent her a degree of distinction. Her family connections to prominent members of the ‘Aydarūs line made her stand out enough that ‘Abd al-Qādir included her in her husband’s obituary, praised more highly than ‘Abd Allāh himself.

Although ‘Abd al-Qādir generally has little to say about women, the women in his family are the exception to his rule. The devotion ‘Abd al-Qadir felt toward his mother becomes apparent in the section of his autobiography that he devotes to her. An Indian slave, she was a gift to his father from one of the women of the royal family, who loved her as a daughter and sent her to her new home with furniture and gifts.[144] A virgin when received by his father, she bore him only one child. ‘Abd al-Qadir extols her many virtues, calling her “great in humility and integrity, pure in morals, and amply generous.”[145] She was also notable for her piety, as her last words before her death in 1010/1602—mentioned although it is beyond the temporal scope of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*—were “There is no god but God.”[146] ‘Abd al-Qadir also devotes significant descriptions to his half-sister Salmā and his father’s wife Fāṭima. He describes Fāṭima as a virtuous woman “among the holy worshippers of God,” and asks his brother ‘Abd Allāh, her son,

[144] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 445-6.
[145] *Ibid*. See Appendix B, passage 11.
[146] *Ibid*. See Appendix B, passage 11.

to request her prayers on his behalf.[147] However, although ‘Abd al-Qadir describes the birth of his son Shaykh in 998/1590, and although he includes verses written in honor of the birth, he never mentions the boy’s mother.[148]

A genealogy of *sayyid*s

In his *Graves of Tarim* Ho conducts the only in-depth English-language examination of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, and his conclusions focus on ‘Abd al-Qādir’s identity as a member of a *sayyid* family. Ho analyzes two main sources, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* and *al-Mashra‘ al-rawī fī manāqib al-sāda al-kirām āl Abī ‘Alawī*,[149] a genealogical chronicle of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s written by Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Shillī (d. 1093/1682) in Mecca during the seventeenth century, about half a century after ‘Abd al-Qādir lived.[150] Using these two works, Ho examines overarching themes and values of the Ḥaḍrami diaspora through the literary output that gave it a discursive structure. He cites ‘Abd al-Qādir and al-Shillī as the forerunners of a “diasporic canon” that focused on Ḥaḍrami *sayyid* genealogy and engaged far-flung Ḥaḍrami émigrés in maintaining connections with their homeland. Ho locates ‘Abd al-Qādir and al-Shillī at a vital crux in the development of Ḥaḍrami identity, after the beginning of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid* movements across the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century and at the moment when diasporic Ḥaḍramis began to create a discursive structure for their community though the production of literary works.[151] These two works and others like them, Ho believes, “helped the Ḥaḍrami diaspora persist despite its great mobility, and reproduce itself abroad.”[152] Ho credits this Ḥaḍrami literary canon with

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[147] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 566-8.
[148] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 582.
[149] Trans.: *The thirst-quenching watering station on the virtues of the blessed lords of the ‘Alawī family*
[150] Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 117-8.
[151] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 53, 116.
[152] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 153.

popularizing visits to various locations of ancestral importance to diasporic Ḥaḍramis; these sites gained importance through the genealogical texts that referred to them, structuring pilgrimage destinations as locations of return.[153] In this way, Ho emphasizes the importance of ʻAbd al-Qādir's bloodline both to him and to others, essentially expressing that as a *sayyid* ʻAbd al-Qādir—with some degree of self-awareness—promoted his family as a unifying feature of Ḥaḍrami life beyond the Ḥaḍramawt.

In one area in particular, Ho's analysis is valuable in contextualizing the apparently haphazard collection of events that ʻAbd al-Qādir gathers in his text. *Al-Nūr al-sāfir* lists major events in the ʻAydarūs family alongside natural disasters, dynastic struggles, and the deaths of highly influential scholars, and Ho posits that ʻAbd al-Qādir essentially exalts his family—and through it the line of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s—by including their milestones in this list of major world events.[154] As Ho puts it, "the apparent subordination of genealogy to the steady march of the years … underscores its historicity."[155] This juxtaposition provides insight into the way ʻAbd al-Qādir located himself and his family in the wider world. Although *al-Nūr al-sāfir* is not a straightforward biographical dictionary or family genealogy, it demonstrates the centrality of the ʻAydarūs line by embedding it "in a plural world of places, dates, and persons … beginning with God's earliest creations."[156]

According to this analysis, ʻAbd al-Qādir identified first and foremost as a *sayyid,* and his work is properly contextualized in the context of an emerging genre based around the movement of Prophetic bloodlines around the Indian Ocean littoral. However, ʻAbd al-Qādir devotes only a fraction of *al-Nūr al-sāfir* to talking about his family; Ho's single-minded focus on the topic of

[153] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 197-8.
[154] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 125.
[155] *Ibid.*
[156] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 152.

*sayyid*s impairs his broader analysis of *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* a work that also has much to say about scholarship, religion, geography, and politics. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that Ho pinpointed an important aspect of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s self image. ‘Abd al-Qādir placed great stock in his family’s *sayyid* line: the numerous entries he writes about his family members read like a history of the saints, complete with adulations, testimonies of piety and wisdom, records of prophetic dreams, and even tales of miracles. By describing the notable characters and milestones of his *sayyid* patriline, ‘Abd al-Qādir emphasizes the value he places on this facet of his identity. He discusses the achievements of distant relatives and details the miracles and holy works attributed to the luminaries of the ‘Aydarūs clan, including women. Connected to them by bonds of blood and spirituality, ‘Abd al-Qādir highlights their nobility and religious wisdom.

Chapter 3 • Authority: Intellectual, Spiritual, and Political Lines

In *The Graves of Tarim,* Ho presents religious scholarship as one of the threads that connected the people and events ʻAbd al-Qādir cared most about. As Ho posits, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* details a spiritual and intellectual genealogy that interweaves with the genealogy connecting the Bā ʻAlawī *sayyid*s over chronological and geographical distance. However, Ho's analysis of ʻAbd al-Qādir as an essentially apolitical actor more concerned with piety than power oversimplifies the complex relationship between religion, scholarship, and politics within which ʻAbd al-Qādir existed. ʻAbd al-Qādir does indeed eulogize many scholars and Sufis whom he admires, just as he enumerates the pious deeds of his relatives and connections; nonetheless, he does not neglect to describe his place within the political milieu that encompassed his life as a Muslim scholar.

Scholarship

ʻAbd al-Qādir frequently eulogizes scholars who were intellectual luminaries or friends of his family, and he includes these men's poetry to commemorate important events in his family's history. For instance, in the biography marking his grandfather's death in 944 A.H./1538 C.E., ʻAbd al-Qādir mentions the great scholars with whom his grandfather studied, and he includes a segment of a poem written by a respected *shaykh* in honor of his grandfather.[157] In the section on the year 983/1575, while discussing his father's book *al-Fawz wa al-bushrā fī al-dunyā wa al-ukhrā sharḥ al-ʻaqīda al-zahrā*,[158] ʻAbd al-Qādir calls it "among the best of its age" and cites "some of the holy ʻ*ulamā'* " as comparing it to the work of Abū

[157] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 284-5.
[158] Trans.: *Triumph and Glad Tidings in the World and the Elucidation of the Beautiful Faith*

Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111),[159] the influential Sufi theologian of the fifth Islamic century, high praise that emphasizes his father's wisdom and piety.[160]

Ho traces the legacy of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (560/1165 – 638/1240) in 'Abd al-Qādir's theology, citing Ibn al-'Arabī's influence on 'Aydarūs forebears and the development of the 'Alawī Way, a collection of Sufi practices developed by Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s that descended to 'Abd al-Qādir.[161] Ibn al-'Arabī was an "outstanding exponent of Islamic mysticism"; he was highly influential in medieval Yemeni Sufism.[162] His place in scholarship in Yemen was cemented by the support of the local Rasūlid kings, predecessors of the Kathīrīs about whom we learned in chapter 1.[163] As was the case in many relationships between states and scholars across the Indian Ocean region, "royal patronage played a critical role in the brief but vigorous efflorescence of Ibn al-'Arabī's teaching."[164] Ibn al-'Arabī's broad influence in Yemen waned in the ninth/fifteenth century with the decline and fall of the Rasūlid dynasty, but he never yielded his power over the imaginations of Sufis like 'Abd al-Qādir and his family.[165] Ho points out that 'Abd al-Qādir's participation in a conversation about reason, imagination, and emanations of divine light that bears the unmistakable stamp of Ibn al-'Arabī's ideas.[166] 'Abd al-Qādir's theological prologue about the attributes of the Prophet Muḥammad and the "Muḥammadan light" echoes Ibn al-'Arabī's ideas, as does the title of 'Abd al-Qādir 's work, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir* or *The Light That Unveils*.

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[159] Probably *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn,* or *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, a four-volume masterpiece written in the fifth/eleventh century.
[160] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 469. See Appendix B, passage 12.
[161] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 51.
[162] Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition,* 1, 228-9.
[163] Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition,* 268.
[164] *Ibid.*
[165] Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition,* 269.
[166] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 127.

Signs of Piety

In addition to detailing Sufi lineages and discussing his relatives' connections to great Islamic thinkers, ʻAbd al-Qādir documents pious endowments in *al-Nūr al-sāfir*. These endowments, known as *waqf* in Arabic, fulfilled an important role in Islam as practiced by the wealthy and functioned as charitable donations in perpetuity. Individuals could build a public fountain or open a school and endow it with properties or other assets, the revenue of which was earmarked for the upkeep and operations of the institution. The endower could then dictate some of the terms under which it would operate after their death. In some situations, the originator of the *waqf* could stipulate a role for his or her descendants in administering the endowment, lending the *waqf* aspects of nonliquid property in trust. Institutions created as *waqf* have been omnipresent in the history of the Islamic world; one of the most notable *waqf*s remaining today is the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem, upon which sit the al-Aqṣā Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

ʻAbd al-Qādir's family participated actively in this tradition of endowing charitable institutions; for example, his father Shaykh restored a mosque in Surat (See Appendix A) in 971/1563-64, leading a scholar of the noble Kathīrī family of Ḥaḍramawt to record the event in verse. The scholar, ʻAbd al-Muʻṭī b. Ḥasan Bā Kathīr of Mecca, calls the mosque a spot "honored in eternity," and he plays on ʻAbd al-Qādir's father's given name, Shaykh, by calling him "the noble Shaykh, first shaykh among shaykhs."[167] In another passage, a judge in Mecca provided a public service by sponsoring the construction of a fountain in Mecca: "In this year, the judge Ḥusayn (God have mercy on him) built a public fountain in most holy Mecca, may

[167] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 376. See Appendix B, passage 13.

God exalt it. One of the saints dated this [event][168] …" [169] This judge, like ʻAbd al-Qādir's father Shaykh, was exalted for his undertaking by an honored individual; the saint who wrote about Ḥusayn described "the history of that which he built—my king, who possesses glory that glorifies God, his lord."[170] In a similar case, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes the Ottoman Sultan Murād III's (982/1574 – 1003/1595) undertaking of a building project in 995/1587, in which he built a public drinking fountain for the Ṣafā Gate.[171] A Meccan shaykh wrote a poem in celebration of the event, beginning "I am a fountain; Murad, the king of all mankind, praised my glory."[172] ʻAbd al-Qādir records other pious endowments in a similar fashion, listing the name of the patron, the type of structure, and its location; following the uniformly sparse description of the actual event, he invariably includes a poetic commemoration, written by a luminary scholar, that easily exceeds the prose section in length.

By listing pious endowments in his chronicle of the sixteenth century, ʻAbd al-Qādir demonstrates the value he places upon them, not only as structural additions to a community but also as proofs of piety and character for individuals. The patrons he names are generally leaders of their communities—rulers, officials, and members of the *ʻulama,'* the Islamic scholarly establishment—and their endowments serve as evidence of their piety and good works. ʻAbd al-Qādir drives home his point about each patron's character by appending a poetic tribute composed by an individual noteworthy in his own right for scholarship, learning, or closeness to God. These lines of verse function as independent testimonials, supporting ʻAbd al-Qādir's approbation of the individual in question. The fact that these testimonials regularly outstrip in

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[168] The Arabic word used, *arrakha*, conveys that the aforementioned saint wrote a poem about the event in which he encoded the date of the fountain's completion using the *ḥisāb al-jummal* system, according to which each Arabic letter is assigned a numerical value.
[169] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 388. See Appendix B, passage 14.
[170] *Ibid.*
[171] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 564.
[172] *Ibid.* See Appendix B, passage 15.

length any description of the project they commemorate demonstrates that ‘Abd al-Qādir saw pious endowments first and foremost as important good works to be weighed when judging an individual’s expressions of piety, above and beyond their artistic merit or usefulness to the community.

‘Abd al-Qādir also records other indicators of Muslim piety, including at least three instances of individuals undertaking of the pilgrimage to Mecca. In addition to his grandfather’s and father’s shared pilgrimage between 1530-32, described in chapter 2, he relates the story of a judge—Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ of Mecca—who sets out from India to Mecca only to have his ship sink.[173] ‘Abd al-Qādir offers little more detail about Muḥammad b. Aflaḥ’s life, saying only that he was eloquent and learned. This simple jurist appears to be a friend of the ‘Aydarūs family and someone whom ‘Abd al-Qādir admired because of his father’s and brother’s good opinion of him and his death in pursuit of the *ḥajj*. ‘Abd al-Qādir also documents the 1514 *ḥajj* of the Egyptian sultan’s son and his wife, who “gave extravagant alms and performed works of piety, knowledge, and holiness beyond description” in the holy city.[174] This journey may have been in part a diplomatic effort, as the prince of the Hijāz saw the couple off after their pilgrimage, returning them along the road to the Sultan with “his good will and blessings.”

Mystical Experiences

In addition to discussing pious endowments and the *ḥajj*—relatively commonplace signs of piety—‘Abd al-Qādir also describes more sensational signs such as miracles and prophetic dreams. For instance, he details an unexplained occurrence around 1503, when the figure of a man “as tall as a minaret” appeared before a group of townspeople:

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[173] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 388.
[174] al-‘Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 153. See Appendix B, passage 16.

> There was an apparition to the people, between the wall of Dār al-Shajara and the Mosque of Huma, of a man whose height exceeded that of the minaret of the mosque in the Jewish quarter. He was black in color and abundant [in girth], and one of his strides exceeded thirty cubits. Some of the people saw him and some didn't. He may have been seen by the Road of Palms that is between the Masjid al-Zayd and Dar al-Shajara.[175]

This curious passage, describing an unknown being appearing to the people of a certain town, stands out as one of the strangest occurrences ʻAbd al-Qādir mentions in *al-Nūr a-sāfir.* He clearly considers it to be a supernatural event; the man was an "apparition," impossibly tall, seen by only some of those present. Additionally, the fact that ʻAbd al-Qādir describes him in relation to sacred landmarks—taller than a minaret, seen next to the Mosque of Huma—suggests his connection to the religious world. In another anecdote, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes a miracle that occurs when a sultan tries to manipulate a religious leader. In 917/1511, ʻAbd al-Qādir writes, Sultan ʻĀmr b. ʻAbd al-Wahhāb brought an elephant into the Sufi *zāwiya*—a devotional center or boarding house in which individuals could study under Sufi masters—of Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn in an attempt to extort money from the Shaykh. The sultan told Shihāb al-Dīn that the elephant would stay in the *zawiya* until he received a bribe; at that moment, the elephant miraculously sank in quicksand.[176] Apparently, God did not approve of the sultan's attempt to extort the holy Sufi; by including this passage, ʻAbd al-Qādir suggests divine approval of Shihāb al-Dīn and his mission, clearly establishing his respect for Sufism.

Another mysterious story revolves around ʻAbd al-Qādir's birth. About a month before his birth, his father had a visionary dream in which he was greeted by a number of holy Shaykhs. One of them, Shaykh ʻAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (470/1077-8 – 561/1166)—the twelfth-century Sufi

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[175] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 87. See Appendix B, passage 17.
[176] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 144.

who founded the Qādiri order[177]—requested that the author's father name his soon-to-be-born son in his honor, so that the author's accomplishments might reflect well upon the dead Sufi. As a small child, 'Abd al-Qādir lived up to this auspicious beginning, demonstrating his potential by reciting from the Qur'ān in front of a group of ministers who had come to consult with his father. By reiterating this story, in which his father announced that the young boy's speech was "practically a revelation from God," 'Abd al-Qādir situates himself firmly within the family's tradition of religiosity and foreshadows his future greatness; he also demonstrates the early affinity for mystical Islam that led him to pursue Sufism as an adult.[178]

This revelation about his early life, combined with the descriptions of various unexplainable events like the apparition and the sinking elephant, suggest that 'Abd al-Qādir identified with a type of mystical Islam that acknowledged miracles and folk beliefs more readily than did strictly orthodox Sunni Islam. In his book *Sufis of Bijapur*, Eaton discusses the development of mystical Islam in the Indian subcontinent between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. "Sufi" is a fairly nebulous term; Eaton defines it as "any person integrated into the organizational structure of the Islamic mystical tradition," focusing on the type of institutions in which 'Abd al-Qādir and his family participated and to which they contributed.[179] According to Eaton's analysis, which draws on the work of J.D. Trimingham, Sufism went through three phases of development. In the first, it took the form of a loose, unstructured association of Muslims seeking "spiritual affinity with God" through devotional practices, study, and asceticism. By the thirteenth century, Sufis began to organize into distinct "schools" in which learning passed from master to pupil in the form of a spiritual lineage. Finally, beginning in the

[177] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, xxix.
[178] Toorawa, "The Autobiography of al-'Aydarūs," 210.
[179] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, xxvii.

fifteenth century, Sufi devotion coalesced around individuals who became foci of devotion and veneration.[180]

Eaton details specific social roles Indian Sufis filled and practices that they helped to popularize. In particular, he discusses the role of Sufis in reconciling "formal Islam with the various non-Muslim beliefs and practices that are found throughout the Muslim world."[181] He describes Indian Sufism as employing types of popular religious practice to mediate between Islamic orthodoxy and folk religion; for instance, the tombs of prominent Sufis became pilgrimage sites in many parts of the Islamic world, a phenomenon that Ho discusses with particular reference to the Bā 'Alawī clan of *sayyid*s.[182] These burial sites, called *dargah*s in much of South Asia, lie at the center of localized rituals and holidays. According to both Ho and Eaton, Sufi practices like grave visitations have sometimes brought Sufism into conflict with fundamentalist or orthodox strains of Islam, a conflict that Eaton describes in terms of the relationship between prominent Sufis and the *'ulama'* as upholders of orthodoxy.[183]

Although Eaton's sphere of reference is the 'Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, south of 'Abd al-Qādir's home in the Mughal Empire, the 'Aydarūs family appears in his research through the person of Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh al-'Aydarūs (993/1585 – 1041/1631)[184], 'Abd al-Qādir's nephew, who appeared in chapter 1. Shaykh migrated to Bijapur after living in Arabia and spending time in Gujarat with 'Abd al-Qādir. Eaton describes him as encouraging the growth of Arab culture and "promot[ing] Islamic orthodoxy in Bijapur."[185] Despite his support of

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[180] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, xxviii-xxx.
[181] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, 165
[182] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, xxiv; Ho, *The Graves of Tarim,* 10-1.
[183] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, xxiv
[184] Eaton calls him "Shaikh 'Abd Allah 'Aidarus," with "Shaikh" used as an honorific; however, he is the same figure Ho and *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* discuss under the name Shaykh b. 'Abd Allāh. Ho, *Graves of Tarim*, 111; Löfgren, " 'Aydarūs," 781.
[185] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, 128-9.

orthodox Arab Islam, however, Shaykh was a Sufi inducted into several orders, and he performed miracles such as healing the ʻAdil Shahi Sultan Ibrahīm II (r. 988/1580 – 1035-6/1626). Thus, Eaton demonstrates the falsity of a simple Sufi/orthodox dichotomy by showing a member of the ʻAydarūs family embodying aspects of both systems of practice.

Ho also provides evidence that the ʻAydarūs family and its parent Bā ʻAlawī clan straddled the line between orthodox and mystical practices of Islam. Popular lore in Tarim, the Bā ʻAlawī's home city in the Ḥaḍramawt, holds that ʻAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law, was sent by the Prophet to convert the Yemenis; with ʻAlī thus held in the highest regard as the original channel through which Islam arrived in the region, it is difficult to imagine a stronger symbol of Islam's enduring authority in the Ḥaḍramawt than the Bā ʻAlawī, descendants of ʻAlī.[186] When Bā ʻAlawī *sayyid*s like the ʻAydarūs family migrated to other areas of the Indian Ocean littoral, like Surat and Gujarat, they remained influential and prestigious, carriers of the Prophetic bloodline who could wield immense public influence.[187] Juxtaposed with this venerable, imposing orthodoxy, however, is another side to the family's legacy: Muḥammad b. ʻAlī, known as *al-faqīh al-muqaddam* or "the preeminent jurist,"[188] was the first to bring organized Sufism to the Ḥaḍramawt.[189] As Ho puts it, Muḥammad b. ʻAlī marks the juncture of Prophetic descent and mysticism, "the point at which the transmission of religious piety in its organized Sufi form converged with patrilineal descent from the Prophet."[190] His descendants built upon the Sufi legacy he began, creating a particular ʻAlawī brand of Sufism characterized by particular practices, institutions, and lore.[191]

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[186] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 217.
[187] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 112-3.
[188] Ho translates this as "the First Jurist," but this does not fully capture the meaning of the term
[189] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 40-1.
[190] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 43.
[191] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 28-9.

The history of ʻAlawī Sufism—of which ʻAydarūsi Sufism was a branch that Eaton describes as fairly orthodox—sheds light upon the ways in which ʻAbd al-Qādir discusses mystical events and Islam more broadly.[192] He prizes his Prophetic lineage and pursues traditional Islamic learning embodied in the works of great scholars. He values conventional indicators of Muslim piety like pious endowments and pilgrimage to the holy cities. However, he also credulously reports signs and miracles, and he proudly reports the Sufi networks in which his family takes part through initiating others at home in the Ḥaḍramawt and abroad. Like many members of his family who created the ʻAydarūsi path of Sufism Eaton describes, ʻAbd al-Qādir is both orthodox and mystical in his outlook on Islam.

The Coffee Controversy: ʻAbd al-Qādir weighs in

In today's world of instant coffee, specialty blends, and a Starbucks on every corner, coffee exerts a near-universal appeal that belies its origins as a controversial concoction from along the shores of the Indian Ocean. During ʻAbd al-Qādir's lifetime, coffee was still a novelty. It had been in use for less than two hundred years, spreading first from Ethiopia to southern Yemen, from which it spread through the Arabian Peninsula and north to Egypt; when the Ottomans conquered Mamlūk Egypt in 923/1517, coffee began to spread across the Ottoman Empire.[193] Coffee migrated to Gujarat only later, when participation in the Red Sea trade led traders from Gujarati firms to exchange cloth and salt for coffee, which they hulled before selling to other merchants at port cities around the Indian Ocean.[194] During this period of coffee's growing popularity, judges and scholars carried on a lively debate over its true nature, its

[192] Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur*, 274.
[193] Michel Tuchscherer, "Coffee in the Red Sea Area from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century," in *The Global Coffee Economy in Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 50-1.
[194] Tuchscherer, "Coffee in the Red Sea Area," 54.

properties, and its permissibility. The origins of coffee are murky, but modern researchers believe its use had been well established by the mid-fifteenth century.[195] Precise dates in the history of coffee are difficult to come by, because contemporary chroniclers regarded the beverage's entrance onto the world stage as "a rather insignificant incident in the history of things as a whole."[196] This lack of early sources addressing the beginnings of coffee leaves researchers with little to go on until legal authorities and religious began debating the topic at length during the sixteenth century.

By piecing together and analyzing various primary sources, historians have been able to outline a probable story about coffee's introduction to the Islamic world. The coffee plant appears to have originated in Ethiopia, but the practice of roasting its berries and brewing them into a beverage arose in Yemen.[197] Several accounts exist of coffee's migration across the Red Sea, most of which were gathered by the scholar 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jazīrī (fl. 965-6/1558) when he wrote about coffee in the mid-sixteenth century.[198] Al-Jazīrī relates stories crediting three different men—all of them practitioners of Islamic mysticism, suggestive of coffee's early popularity within Sufi orders—with bringing coffee to Yemen, after which it spread to the rest of the Islamic world: the reclusive Jamāl al-Dīn al-Dhabḥānī (d. 875/1470-1), the *shaykh* 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Shādhilī (d. 821/1418), and a close paternal uncle of our very own 'Abd al-Qādir, Abū Bakr b. 'Abd Allāh al-'Aydarūs, the patron saint of Aden.[199]

Regardless of who specifically transported the coffee plant to Yemen and began using it in beverage form, an early connection between coffee and Yemeni Sufism is undisputed. These

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[195] Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 11.
[196] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 8.
[197] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 13-4.
[198] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 13.
[199] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 14, 18,

Sufis came together for *dhikr*s, gatherings in which they focused on God with almost hypnotic intensity in order to experience the divine presence.[200] The earliest users of coffee seem to have been mid-fifteenth century Sufis, who found it useful as a stimulant during these late-night *dhikr*s.[201] Although these individuals used coffee to aid their worship, the beverage's "mind-altering properties" also attracted considerable censure from other contemporary religious thinkers.[202] Some critics connected coffee with alcohol; indeed, the Arabic word for coffee, *qahwa*, was originally used to indicate wine.[203] In addition to its intoxicating properties, coffee's status as an innovation made it a target for religious objection, as did its physical makeup, preparation by roasting, and its allegedly harmful physical effects.[204] Later on, as coffee drinking became more widespread, it began to be connected to political activism, gambling, and sexual deviancy that were perceived to occur among patrons of coffeehouses.

By the time period covered in 'Abd al-Qādir's chronicle, disputes were raging over the permissibility of coffee use. In 917/1511, about a half century after its introduction in Mecca, the holy city issued a ban on coffee.[205] The Mamlūk ruler of Mecca enforced this ruling with alacrity, burning coffee in the streets and beating those caught using it, until an order came from Cairo disapproving of coffee but not forbidding it.[206] Two decades later, coffeehouses in Cairo came under attack, leading to considerable civil unrest, and the Ottoman sultan attempted to forbid coffee in the tenth/sixteenth century. Despite the controversy, however, many Sufis

[200] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 24.
[201] Tushscherer, "Coffee in the Red Sea Area," 51.
[202] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 25.
[203] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 18.
[204] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 6.
[205] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 35.
[206] Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, 36.

considered drinking coffee to be a good work because it "facilitated the performance of their religious ceremonies."[207]

'Abd al-Qādir entered the debate in *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, supporting the pro-coffee camp. In one entry for the year 928/1522 he records a dialogue with the court physician to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Qūṣūnī , in which al-Qūṣūnī answers questions about the use of coffee:

> The doctor Badr al-Dīn Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Qūṣūnī was asked about his views: What do you … say about coffee? Is its use harmful or beneficial? Is its natural state hot or cold or dry or wet?[208] If you say that its use is beneficial, to what degree is it beneficial, and to what degree is it harmful? Is an excessive amount of it harmful or not? Does it increase sexual potency or not? Is its use on a full stomach harmful or beneficial? Similarly, is its use on an empty stomach harmful or beneficial? Does it aid in digestion? It its use hot better than its use lukewarm, or vice versa? Are there additives that should be added while it is cooked, or not? Give us a decision, may God reward you.[209]

The dialogue leaves out questions of coffee's religious permissibility; the first question, instead of asking whether it is *ḥarām* or *ḥalāl*, asks whether its use is beneficial.[210] In response, al-Qūṣūnī cites his extensive medical readings, declaring that there is "no mention of a bean better than coffee" in any of them. Nonetheless, al-Qūṣūnī declines to assert that coffee is either wholly beneficial or wholly harmful, reiterating a proverb, "The doctors agree that the antidote is the greatest medicine, but even so it is not possible to say that it is absolutely beneficial in every

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[207] C. van Arendonk and K. N. Chaudhuri, "Ḳahwa," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition.* Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. Brill, 2012. Brill Online.
[208] The four characteristics of hot, cold, dry, and wet mirror the four bodily humors that formed the basis of Islamic medicine
[209] al-'Aydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 190. See Appendix B, passage 18.
[210] *Ibid*.

situation."[211] Like other things, al-Qūṣūnī says, coffee is beneficial in many situations; however, he stops short of issuing a blanket approval of the beverage.

Al-Qūṣūnī discusses coffee from the perspective of a physician, not a religious scholar; his insights relate to the physical qualities of coffee, not its spiritual effects. He qualifies his judgments so as to leave room for difference of opinion or experience. He hedges about the best way to consume coffee, stating that although its "nature" may be cold, its consumption hot is "not unlikely" to help with digestion. Furthermore, he cannot testify to the magnitude of the benefit to be derived from coffee, because it "varies on account of the constitution of the user."[212] Warning readers about the dangers of consuming too much coffee, he echoes a common truism that remains in use today, saying, "doctors have said that too much of anything is an enemy to the health."[213] Overall, his opinion of coffee is one of qualified approval.

ʻAbd al-Qādir clearly respects al-Qūsūnī's professional assessment, since it comprises the only passage of significant length in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* that focuses on coffee, even though the conversation in question took place a full fifty years before ʻAbd al-Qādir's birth. ʻAbd al-Qādir makes no effort to provide alternate views of the topic or engage in a debate on the merits of coffee; in fact, he ignores the issue of permissibility along with al-Qūsūnī. ʻAbd al-Qādir's treatment of this topic suggests that he considers al-Qūṣūnī to be an authoritative voice in the coffee debate. To ʻAbd al-Qādir, the permissibility of coffee consumption was a settled question, and all that remained was to determine the most advantageous or healthful methods of preparation. This opinion clearly announced ʻAbd al-Qādir's identity as a Sufi and his agreement with more liberal authorities within Islam; he was on the cutting edge of a phenomenon that "was

[211] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* 191.
[212] *Ibid*.
[213] *Ibid*.

still restricted to small social groups" and would continue to be religiously and politically debated for decades.[214]

ʻAbd al-Qādir as political figure

Medieval Muslim scholars like ʻAbd al-Qādir gained renown for their religious knowledge and opinions, but as we saw in chapter 1, they also played important roles in the political circles in which they moved. In *The Graves of Tarim,* Ho asserts that ʻAbd al-Qādir valued scholars over rulers and political figures, citing a year in which he gave a longer obituary to a pious woman than to an Egyptian sultan.[215] However, Ho seems to be drawing conclusions that are supported by only a narrow portion of the text. The year in question, 904/1498-99, was the fourth year of al-'Abd al-Qādir's chronicle[216]; in subsequent years ʻAbd al-Qādir devotes considerable space to discussing the deaths of various royals, while he commemorates fewer than five other holy women. He certainly recognizes many more scholars and Sufis than any other population, but that may also be an indicator of the circles in which he moved and the news that reached him. Although ʻAbd al-Qādir carefully recorded the movements of scholars and acquisition of *ijāzas,* he also observed the actions of kings and conquerors; he does not appear to view scholars over political figures in a "hierarchical superiority," as Ho posits.[217] Indeed, as a member of a Sufi family deeply involved in political life in Gujarat, it is difficult to say whether ʻAbd al-Qādir would even have drawn such sharp distinctions.

The 904/1498 death of the Egyptian Sultan al-Nāsir that Ho cites as evidence of ʻAbd al-Qādir's indifference to temporal authority is in fact very short. It reads simply, "In this year, in the middle of Rabīʻ al-Awwal, the Sultan of Egypt, the king al-Nāṣir b. Qaitbay was killed, God

[214] Tuchscherer, "Coffee in the Red Sea Area," 52.
[215] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 120.
[216] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 69-70.
[217] Ho, *Graves of Tarim,* 121.

bless him."[218] However, ʻAbd al-Qādir recorded the death of the previous Egyptian Sultan in 901/1496—the first year of *al-Nūr al-sāfir*—and this king's death notice took up much more space than his son's. King Qaitbay was a Mamlūk king of Egypt whose death caused "a great spectacle on his account like nothing else" in the land.[219] According to ʻAbd al-Qādir, "none among the kings remained who could match his length of rule, because it was near thirty years."[220] ʻAbd al-Qādir records details of Qaitbay's life; born around 820/1417, he was a manumitted slave who rose through the ranks of administration until he became king in 872/1468. ʻAbd al-Qādir suggests that Qaitbay's ascendency was divinely ordained, saying, "One of God's saints looked down and urged him on to the throne a long time before he attained it, and said to him in a waking vision, 'Stand up, oh you most noble king Qaitbay.' "[221] ʻAbd al-Qādir's treatment of this king, father of the relatively ignored al-Nāṣir, is not only lengthy but also full of admiration and the belief that a saint sanctioned his reign.

If Ho is incorrect in claiming that al-Nāṣir received such brief coverage because of ʻAbd al-Qādir's indifference to temporal authority, what explains the brevity of his death notice? Several explanations present themselves as plausible. ʻAbd al-Qādir might not have had a good source for al-Nāṣir's life, or he may simply not have been interested in his story, since it lacked the elements of social mobility, divine intervention, and political prominence that Qaitbay's story possessed in spades. Al-Nāṣir may have been widely considered to be unpopular or unexceptional, although the vague, passive voice verb used to describe his death, *qutila*—translated "was killed"—lends an air of mystery to at least one part of his life. Most likely, al-Nāṣir simply did not have time to foster a legacy that would have reached ʻAbd al-Qādir across

[218] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 69. See Appendix B, passage 19.
[219] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 36. See Appendix B, passage 20.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid.

geographic and temporal distance; his rule ended less than three years after it began, and his father appears to have been a difficult act to follow. The combined weight of these alternative explanations and ʻAbd al-Qādir's lengthy praise of Sultan Qaitbay detracts considerably from Ho's argument about *al-Nūr al-sāfir* marginalizing worldly authority.

ʻAbd al-Qādir certainly makes space in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* to discuss political transitions and military campaigns. He records the 922/1517 conquest of Mamlūk Egypt by the Ottomans, and several years later in 926/1520 he marks the conquest of Tarim, his family's home city, by Sultan Badr, who drove out the previous ruler, Sultan Aḥmad b. Muḥammad.[222] He discusses in greater detail battles that occurred during his lifetime, in particular the Mughal conquest of Gujarat. In 981/1573, Akbar (r. 963/1556 – 1014/1605) personally swept through Gujarat, completing his victory; when he left the region in the hands of certain government ministers, rebellious princes tried to reconquer it. Hearing this, Akbar returned and "fought them with great ferocity until he killed them."[223] Ten years later in 991, Sultan Muẓaffar b. Maḥmūd (r. 968-9/1561 – 981/1573, 991-2/1583-4; d. 1001/1593), a scion of the dynasty displaced by Akbar, reconquered Gujarat and "seized many of its cities, including Ahmadabad, Bharuch, Baroda, and Cambay."[224] Muẓaffar's rule over Gujarat did not last long; the Mughals regained control in 992/1584.

Not only does ʻAbd al-Qādir discuss the power struggle between Akbar and Muẓaffar, but he also gives clues as to his partisanship. When he first mentions Akbar, he describes his illustrious lineage, four generations distant from the great Timur; according to ʻAbd al-Qādir, Akbar was "the sustainer of good fortune in his days … just and patient, intelligent and wise."[225] ʻAbd al-Qādir describes Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in terms that highlight his valor and suggest

[222] Hourani, *A History*, 215; al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 169, 185.
[223] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 463. See Appendix B, passage 21.
[224] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 521-2. See Appendix B, passage 22.
[225] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 460. See Appendix B, passage 23.

treachery on the part of the rebellious princes who rose against him once he had left the region. When Muẓaffar retakes Gujarat, ʻAbd al-Qādir describes him as looting the Mughal army, "killing the chief minister and taking his money."[226] His eventual defeat at the hands of the Mughals, according to ʻAbd al-Qādir, was foretold in a dream by a *shaykh* who predicted exactly how long his rebellion would last.

Although ʻAbd al-Qadir devotes much of his work to eulogizing scholars and Sufis, he does not neglect temporal powers to the degree that Ho claims in *The Graves of Tarim.* In fact, ʻAbd al-Qadir shows a marked interest in political movements and conquests, and his partisanship is on display for readers, especially when he discusses events that took place during his own lifetime. When analyzing ʻAbd al-Qadir's identity as a Sufi scholar, I find it difficult to separate his political views from his spirituality or intellectual interests; as Eaton points out, his time was one of increased religious institutionalization, and his identifications with Sufi orders and political movements sometimes overlap. The milieu of patronage within which ʻAbd al-Qadir lived created in him a close connection between the religious beliefs he espoused and his position in public life. He traced his spiritual roots back to Muslims of bygone generations, prized the approbation of other scholars, and advocated for the rulers and causes in which he believed. His brand of Islamic mysticism formed a bridge between the inner world of the soul and the outer world of power, patronage, and political arguments, belying the dichotomy Ho draws between his views on holy individuals and on political dynasties.

[226] al-ʻAydarūs, *al-Nūr al-Sāfir,* 522.

Conclusion

In writing *al-Nūr al-sāfir ʻan akhbār al-qarn al-ʻāshir*, ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs looked back over the tenth Islamic century and highlighted the events he considered important. The chronicle he produced blends genres, combining aspects of biography, autobiography, theology, meteorology, and fable. By amalgamating all of these genres and more, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* unites disparate elements of topic, geography, history, and form to produce a fascinating, complicated work deserving of deeper research than it has so far received. Consulting *al-Nūr al-sāfir* in the course of his research on Portuguese exploration of the Indian Ocean, R. B. Serjeant found he could only use it to establish context, considering it underwhelming and unreliable as a source for historical facts about great-power politics; Engseng Ho, on the other hand, looked beyond its apparent lack of interest in major historical events to explore its function as an early expression of Ḥaḍrami identity. His conclusions, although limited by the focus of his research into the Ḥaḍrami diaspora, hint at the depth of ʻAbd al-Qādir's personal connection to his work.

The range of topics that ʻAbd al-Qādir peruses in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* seems bewildering at first glance. Confronted with 600 pages of apparently haphazardly-assembled reports, the casual reader can be forgiven for feeling overwhelmed—as I did when I first faced what seemed to be a vast mountain of ʻAbd al-Qādir's random stories. I dove further into *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, searching for a logic that would make sense of the thousands of disparate pieces. Ultimately, I discovered that the book's primary organizing principle was the author himself; *al-Nūr al-sāfir* narrates a history of the tenth Islamic century built upon the foundations of ʻAbd al-Qādir's values and identity. It is a personal statement disguised as a historical chronicle.

Much of what ʻAbd al-Qādir wrote about in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* can be sorted into three broad categories based on what it reveals about his identity. He hints at his sense of rootedness, of belonging in certain places, through reports about natural disasters, political events, and the physical traces his family left behind on the towns and regions they passed through. In passages concerned with memorializing members of his family and clan, he asserts the pride he takes in his status as a Bā ʻAlawī *sayyid* and a successor to the wise theologians and scholars from whom he is descended. Finally, in his discussions of scholarship, piety, mysticism, and politics, he places himself within a web of authority that guides his actions and beliefs. By describing his identity in these terms, he traces out a position of authority for himself as well; the implicit and explicit connections he draws between himself and the individuals he lauds and eulogizes combine to distinguish him as a well-connected, educated, wise, and noble man with influence across the Indian Ocean.

ʻAbd al-Qādir's position and self-image can be briefly described as that of a celebrated member of the Yemeni *'ulama'* in India. In this regard, he was part of a tradition dating back to the seventh/thirteenth century of religious scholars located in South Asia but maintaining close connections with the sultans who ruled Yemen from Aden.[227] While he clearly saw himself as being embedded in the public life of Gujarat, ʻAbd al-Qādir remained closely connected with his family's homeland in Yemen and wrote his books in Arabic, acknowledging that he was ultimately rooted in Arabia. He followed his father into this role, as his father had followed previous ʻAydarūses like Abū Bakr the Adeni, who dispersed from their places of origin to form a network of interconnected Islamic scholars across the Indian Ocean. His identity as a Yemeni

[227] Elizabeth Lambourn, "India from Aden: *Khuṭba* and Muslim Urban Networks in Late Thirteenth-Century India," in *Secondary Cities and Urban Networking in the Indian Ocean Realm, c. 1400-1600*, ed. Kenneth R. Hall (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2008), 62.

Sufi scholar in India illustrates his overlapping intellectual, spiritual, and political loyalties, as well as his sense of the significance of his position.

Although I have gathered most of what I consider to be true about ʻAbd al-Qādir's identity from inference and interpolation, it is nonetheless the most complete image of him that exists. Despite the thread of self-aggrandizement that runs through *al-Nūr al-sāfir,* ʻAbd al-Qādir's life merits only brief segments in biographical dictionaries; Muḥammad b. ʻAlī al-Shawkānī (ca. 1173-1255/1760-1839), who included dozens of Bā ʻAlawī *sayyid*s in his collection of biographies entitled *al-Badr al-ṭāli' bi-maḥāsin man b'ad al-qarn al-sābi'*[228] writes this of ʻAbd al-Qādir:

> The learned sayyid ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs, the blessed Yemeni, was born in 978 in the city of Ahmadabad in India. He was the creator of many literary works, among them *al-Nūr al-sāfir* ʻ*alā akhbār al-qarn al-*ʻ*āshir* and [he lists three of ʻAbd al-Qādir's other books] and others like these. He died in 1038, God rest him.[229]

In this passage, al-Shawkānī identifies ʻAbd al-Qādir as a Yemeni, although we know from other sources that he was often called *al-Hindī* or "the Indian," and he lived most of his life in Gujarat. Al-Shawkānī's brief biography illustrates the potential differences between ʻAbd al-Qādir's presentation of himself—in this case, living and acting primarily in India—and others' impressions of him.

The research summarized in this paper has contributed not only to discovering the identity of this one man, but also—more broadly—to exploring methods of reconstructing historical figures who left little behind in the way of biography or autobiography. By analyzing

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[228] Trans.: *The Rising Moon Illuminating the Good Deeds of Those Who Came After the Seventh Century*

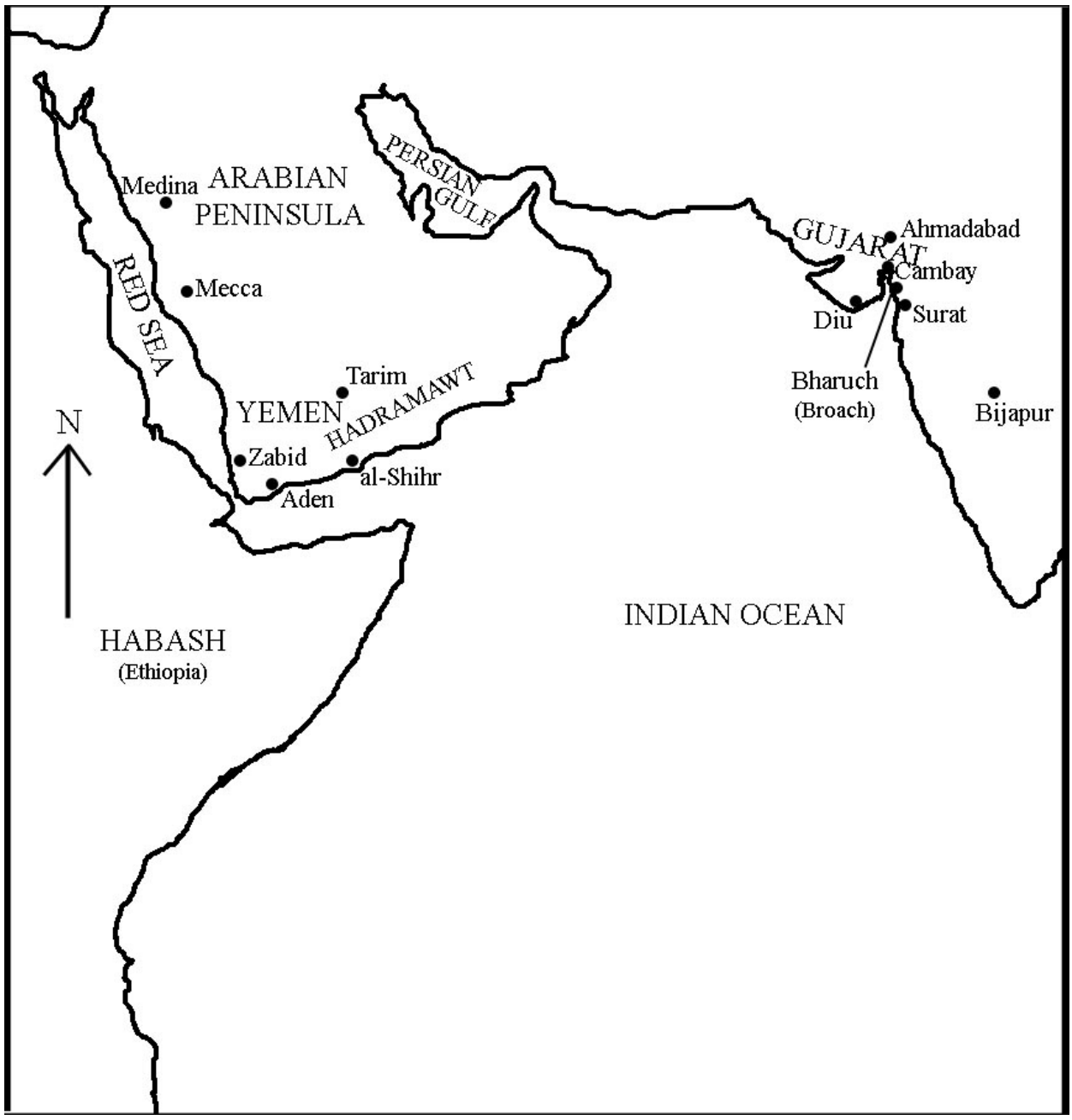
[229] J.J.G. Jansen, "al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad b. ʻAlī b. Muḥammad," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Volume IX: S. Ed. H.A.R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 378. Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī al-Shawkānī, *al-Badr al-ṭāli' bi-maḥāsin man b'ad al-qarn al-sābi'* (Cairo: 1930), 123. See Appendix B, passage 24.

the identities of individuals from the past, we can learn more about their contexts and the worlds in which they lived; as I was able to in the case of ʻAbd al-Qādir, we can draw conclusions from their writings about their self-conceptions, and from there we can assess the spheres of authority that they acknowledged and claimed for themselves. Nonetheless, construction and performance of identity is a complicated topic. However confident I feel in hypothesizing about how ʻAbd al-Qādir might have thought about himself, he may have a completely different (and even unrecognizable) idea of what the "self" entailed. This paper undoubtedly raises questions as to whether we can truly place ourselves in the shoes of long-dead people who lived in vastly different contexts from out own.

Al-Nūr al-sāfir purports to "unveil" reports of events in the tenth/sixteenth century through numerous passages listing and detailing various occurrences, from floods in Yemen to conquests in India to births and deaths in the author's immediate family. As Serjeant points out, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* does not present an objective, well-organized historical chronicle of international relations; instead, as Ho demonstrates, it narrows in on a certain population, highlighting the history and values of Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s. Nonetheless, *al-Nūr al-sāfir* describes more than just Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*s—its frame of reference is simultaneously broader, in terms of geography and culture, and narrower in that it reveals primarily the life and perspective of one man, ʻAbd al-Qādir b. Shaykh b. ʻAbd Allāh al-ʻAydarūs. ʻAbd al-Qādir was a Ḥaḍrami *sayyid*, to be sure, but he was also a Gujarati, a Sufi, a scholar, an author, and a public figure. He was fascinated by events and personalities from across his world, and he presented all of them as he saw them through his distinct lens. In my research, I have extended Ho's discussion of identity in *al-Nūr al-sāfir* by analyzing it not as an expression of diasporic Ḥaḍrami identity writ large, but as a self-portrait of its author specifically. Between the lines of *al-Nūr al-sāfir* lie the clues necessary

to expose the contours of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s personality, revealing how he thought about himself; these conclusions about his identity in turn become “the light that unveils” the logic behind *al-Nūr al-sāfir*’s apparent disorder.

Appendix A: Map of ‘Abd al-Qādir’s world



Appendix B: Arabic text excerpts

1. ● وفيها : غلب الإفرنج على مدينة هرموز[٢] وأخذوها .

2. ● وفيها : كان دخول الإفرنج عدن ، وقتل كبيرهم المسمى عين البقر على يد الأمير مرجان ، وهذا مرجان هو الذي عمّر قبة العيدروس بعدن ، ودفن معه فيها .

3. ● وفيها : حصل بمدينة زبيد ونواحيها وبمدينة عدن والجبال مرض يعرف بشمندله[١] وهو ريح يأخذ المفاصل والأعضاء ، ويمنع من الحركة ثلاثة أيام ، يكون معه حمى ثم تزول وهو سليم ، ولا حول ولا قوة إلاّ بالله .

4. ● وفيها : انقض كوكب عظيم من نصف الليل آخذاً في الشام ، وأضاءت الدنيا كذلك إضاءة عظيمة ، حتى لو أن الإنسان حاول رؤية الذر بذلك لم يمتنع عليه ، ثم غاب في الجهة الشامية ، وبقي أثره في السماء ساعة طويلة .

5. ● وفيها : حصل برق عظيم ، أصاب رجلاً يحرث على ثورين له خارج مدينة زبيد قريباً من تربة الفقيه أبي بكر الحداد بمجنة باب القُرْتُب[٥] فأحرق الثورين بالتهما ، وسلم الرجل بعد أن أصابه منه لفح كاد أن يهلكه ، فسبحان القادر على كل شيء!

6. ● وفيها : وقع مطر بمدينة زبيد وما حواليها ، وكان جمع من الرعاة في البادية خارج باب الشبارق[١] فلما وقع عليهم المطر لجأوا إلى المعقد الكبير الذي هو غربي دار الطويلع قبالة بستان حائط لبيق ، واكتنُّوا عندهم جماعةً من الناس الذين كانوا بالحائط وغيرهم ، فبينا هم كذلك إذ رأوا الغنم تجول بعضها في بعض وتتساقط ميتة ، حتى سقط منها نحو ستة رؤوس ، ثم سكنت بعد ذلك ، فنظروا فإذا ثعبان عظيم تحت أرجلها ميتاً ، وقد وطئت إحداهن بظلفها رأسه فقتلته ، ودفع الله شره ، فسبحان القادر على ما يشاء!

7. ● وفيها : في آخر يوم [الأحد][٢] ثاني رمضان توفي **السلطان العادل المجاهد أبو الفتح محمود**[٣] **بن محمد صاحب كجرات**[٤] بأحمد آباد ، ودفن بها .

ذكره السخاوي في «ضوئه» وقال : ولد سنة ثمان وأربعين تقريباً . أسلم جدُّه مظفر على يد محمد شاه صاحب دلي ، وكان عاملاً له على فتن من كجرات [فلما وقفت الفتن في مملكة دلي وتقسمت البلاد كان الذي خص مظفراً كجرات][٥] ، ثم وثب عليه ابنه وسجنه ، ولم يلبث أن استفحل أمر الأب بحيث قتل ولده ، ثم بعد سنين انتصر أحمد لأبيه وقتل جده واستقر في كجرات ، وخلفه ابنه غياث الدين ، ثم ابنه قطب الدين ، ثم أخوه داود ، فلم

8. ● وفيها : **توفي العلامة الفقيه محمد بن عبد الرحمن الأسقع با علوي**[١] بتريم في شوال ، وكان من الفقهاء البارعين والعلماء المتفننين . أخذ أنواع العلوم وبرع وتفنن ولزم الجد والاجتهاد في العلم والعمل ، وأقبل على نفع الناس إقراء وإفتاء مع الدين المتين ، وترك ما لا يعنيه وشدة الورع والزهد والعبادة والخمول ، وكان حسن التقرير في تدريسه ، وأخذ عنه غير واحد .

ومن مشايخه : خاله الفقيه الصالح محمد بن أحمد بن عبد الله با فضل ، وكان جل انتفاعه عليه ، ومنهم الشيخ علي بن أبي بكر با علوي ، والقاضي إبراهيم بن ظهيرة القرشي ، والفقيه عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن با فضل ، والحافظ السخاوي وله منه إجازة ، ومكث في مكة مدة لطلب العلم . ومن محفوظاته « الحاوي » في الفقه ، و « منظومة البرماوي » في الأصول ، و « ألفية بن مالك » في النحو ومقرراته كثيرة جداً ، وحكي أنه قرأ « الإحياء » أربع مرات . ومن كلامه : « كُلْ قرصك والزم خلصك » . إشارة إلى القناعة والعزلة . ورآه بعضهم في المنام بعد موته فسأله عن حاله فقال : ﴿ فِي مَقْعَدِ صِدْقٍ عِندَ مَلِيكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ ﴾ [القمر : ٥٥] .

ومن كراماته : أن بعض خدامه سُرِقَ داره فقال له : اذهب إلى المكان الفلاني تجد فيه ما أخذ منك ، ففعل فوجد سرقته في ذلك المكان الذي عينه رحمه الله .

9. ● وفي ليلة الأربعاء رابع عشر شعبان سنة أربع وأربعين توفي جَدّي **الشريف عبد الله بن شيخ ابن الشيخ**[1] **عبد الله العيدروس** بتريم ، ودُفِن بها ، وكان مولده سنة سبع وثمانين[2] وثمانمائة ، وكان من كبار الأولياء . صحب صاحب عمه الشيخ الكبير فخر الدين أبا بكر بن عبد الله العيدروس صاحب عدن ، واختص به ، وكذا صحب عمه الشيخ حسين وأباه الشيخ شيخ وغيرهما من الأكابر ، وأخذ عنهم ، وتخرج بهم إلى أن بلغ المرتبة التي تعقد عليها الخناصر . وكان له جاه عظيم في قطر اليمن ، وقبول كثير عند الخاص والعام خصوصاً في ثغر عدن ، ولبس منه الخرقة جماعة من أعيان مكة .

وذكر الشيخ ابن حجر الهيتمي في معجم مشايخه : أنَّ له في لبس الخرقة جملة طرق يرجع بعضها إلى العيدروس . والظاهر أن الشيخ ابن حجر لبس من المذكور بلا واسطة ، أو لبس من بعض أولئك الجماعة الذين لبسوا من يده الشريفة والله أعلم .

وكان حسن الأخلاق ، كثير الإنفاق ، شريف الأوصاف ، نقيب الأشراف ، وافر العقل ، ظاهر الفضل ، غني النفس ، قانعاً بالكفاف ، وضيء الوجه ، أخضر اللون ، طويل القامة ، كثير المناقب ، عظيم المواهب ، ليس له في زمانه نظير ، وبحر فضائله غزير . وبينما هو ذات يوم في الحرم الشريف بمكة إذ دخل رجل بصبي وهو يهرول به وألقاه بين يديه فإذا برجله مرض واعوجاج خلقي ، فمسح بيده المباركة عليها فعادت كأختها مستقيمة ليس بها شيء ببركته . وكراماته كثيرة رحمه الله تعالى .

وقد نظم صاحبنا العلامة عبد القادر ابن الشيخ الإمام العلامة محمد ابن الشيخ الإمام العلامة عبد القادر بن أحمد الحياني كتابي « الفتوحات القدوسية » فقال لما انتهى في النظم إلى ذكر هذا السيد العظيم ، وأتى من ذلك بما يفوق الدر النظيم : [من الرجز]:

أمـــا أبـــوه الشيـــخ عبـــد اللهِ ذو العقـل والفضـل وسيـعُ الجـاهِ
قَـدْ حـازَ فـي زمـانـهِ السِّيـادهْ والعلـم والـزهـد مـع العِبـادهْ
عليـه أنـوارُ الجمـالِ البَـاهِـرهْ تَخـافُـه الملـوكُ والجَبـابِـرَهْ
كـريـمُ نفـسٍ مُكثـر الإنْفـاقِ مهـذّبٌ وحَسَـنُ الأخْـلاقِ
أوصـافـه كثيـرةٌ عـديـدهْ شـائعـةٌ بيـن الـورى حَميـدهْ

10. ● وفي سنة ثلاث وخمسين بعد التسعمائة توفي **السيد الجليل عبد الله بن علوي بن الشيخ عبد الله العيدروس** (زوج السيدة الولية مزنة بنت الشيخ أبي بكر العيدروس)[1] صاحب عدن بتريم ، وقُبِر في قبر أبيه ، وهو والد السيد الولي وحيد عصره وفريد دهره شمس الشموس عمر بن عبد الله العيدروس الآتي ذكر بعض محاسنه البهية وطرف من أوصافه الرضية .

11. وكانت أمي أم ولد هندية وهبتها بعض النساء من أرباب الخير وبيت الملك المشهورة بالصّدقات الجليلة والهبات الجزيلة والكرم والإحسان والفضل والامتنان لأبي رحمه الله ، وأعطتها حينئذ جميع ما تحتاج إليه من أثاث وحسن الأخلاق ، وكثرة الإنفاق . توفيت ضحى يوم الجمعة لعشرين خلت من شهر رمضان سنة عشر بعد الألف ، وكان آخر كلامها لا إلّه إلا الله ، وقبرُها بجوار سيدي الوالد خارج قبته الشّريفة رحمها الله تعالى ، وقرأت القرآن

12. وفيها : في شعبان فرغ والدي رحمه الله من كتابه « الفوز والبشرى في الدنيا والأخرى شرح العقيدة الزهرا » ، وهذا الكتاب من محاسن الدهر لم يسبق إلى مثله فيما علمت ، ولما سمعه بعض العلماء الصلحاء قال : كنت أدور الأشياء من جهة المعتقدات فما شفانا شيء مثله فيها لا من كتب الغزالي ولا اليافعي .

13. ● وفيها : عمر والدي رحمه الله مسجده « بسرت » . فقال الشيخ الأديب عبد المعطي بن حسن با كثير المكي في تاريخ ذلك هذه الأبيات وهي : [من المتدارك]:

هـذه بقعـةٌ شَـرفـت فـي الأزَلْ ... قـد حَـوَتْ قبـة نـزهـت عـن مثـلْ
شَقّ فيها ضريح الشريف الأجلّ ... ميم حاميم ذا مصطفى فيه حلْ[2]
الـولـيُّ الكبيـرُ للجنـانِ انتقـلْ ... نجلُ من قد سَما فوق هام القُللْ
الشريف شيخ شيخ الشيوخ الأولْ ... سيّدي العيدروس غيثُ فضْل هَطَلْ
الصّفـيُّ الـولـي سـرّ خيـرِ الـرّسـلْ ... قطـبُ هـذا الـزّمـان الـرّفيـعُ المحـلْ
يـا لهـا بقعـة سـرّهـا قـد حصـلْ ... وبهـا مسجـد فضلـه لـم يَـزَلْ
جـاء تـاريخـه رافـلاً فـي حلـلْ ... « مسجد خالص لوجه الله جَلْ »[1]

14. ● وفيها : عمَر القاضي حسين رحمه الله سبيلاً بأعلى مكة شرفها الله ، وأرّخ ذلك بعض الفضلاء فقال هذه الأبيات : [من الخفيف]:

عين هذا الزمان أنشا محلاً ... وسط رَوْضِ الجنانِ عالِيَ مَكّهْ
فيه كرمٌ وروض أنس ووِرْدٌ ... ومياهٌ كالبَحْرِ تحمل فُلْكَهْ
وقلال تجري بوسط سبيل ... سلسبيل لا يسع الناس تَرْكَهْ
هو بدْرُ العُلا حسين بن طه ... مالكي المكيّ سيد مكّهْ
المنى والأمان بين يديه ... فلكم معسر من العسر فكّهْ
جانا تاريخُ ما بناه مَليكي ... يملكُ المجدَ خَلّدَ اللهُ مُلْكَهْ

15. ● وفي سنة خمس وتسعين : أحدث السّلطان مراد بن السّلطان سليم بن السّلطان سليمان على باب الصّفا سبيلاً للشّرب ، فجعل الشّيخُ الفاضل علي بن عبد الكبير با حميد الحضرمي أصلاً المكي وطناً لذلك تاريخاً لطيفاً ، ونظمه في أبيات فقال : [من مخلع البسيط]:

أنا سبيل أشاد مجدي ... مليك كل الورى مُرادُ
مليكُ كل الملوك طرّاً ... عُجْماً وعُرباً له تُقادُ
فاقَ على قيصَر وكسرى ... بعدله قرّتِ البلادُ
بأمنه عزّ كلُّ قُطرٍ ... الغور والسّهل والنّجادُ
مدّ على الخلق فيْض برٍّ ... فعاش في فضله العبادُ
صارَ به للإله جاراً ... وجاره الدّهر لا يكادُ
يعمّ كلَّ الأنام نفعاً ... كأنّه للورى عهادُ
فكان للخلقِ من نداه ... ماء بأمّ القرى وزادُ
له منَ الله سلسبيل ... وكوثر ما له نَفادُ
جاء بلا غايةٍ لمجدٍ ... تاريخ بنيانه المُشادُ
« أسّسني بالصّفا سبيلاً ... للهِ سلطاننا مُرادُ »

16. ● وفيها : حجَّ ولد سلطان الديار المصرية الملك الأشرف قانصوه الغوري وامرأته ، وتصدقا بمال عظيم ، وفعلا من البر والمعروف والإحسان في الحرمين الشريفين ما يجلّ عن الوصف ، ولما رجعا إلى الديار المصرية بعد الحج والزيارة تجهز معهما أمير الحجاز الشريف بركات بن محمد بن بركات باختياره ورضاه ، وتوجه صحبتهما إلى باب السلطان ، فقابله بالإحسان الجزيل والبر العريض الطويل ، وأكرم نزله ، وأعلى محله ، ولم يزل عنده مجللاً محترماً مقضي الحوائج أول داخل وآخر خارج إلى أن رجع إلى الحجاز متولياً أمورها ليس لأحد معه كلام ، والحمد لله .

17. ● وفي سنة تسع : كان يتراءى للناس في ما بين حائط دار الشجرة ومسجد الحمّا رجل طويل يزيد طوله على منارة جامع الملاح ، أسود اللون ذو وفرة ، الخطوة الواحدة منه مقدار ثلاثين ذراعاً ، وكان يراه بعض الناس دون بعض ، وربما رؤي بطريق النخل ما بين مسجد الزيد ودار الشجرة .

18. ● وفيها : سُئل الحكيم بدر الدين محمد بن محمد القوصوني بما صورته : ما قولكم ـ رضيَ اللهُ عنكم ونفع بعلومكم المسلمين ـ في القهوة ، هل استعمالها مضرٌّ أم نافع؟ وهل طبعها الحرارة أم البرودة أم اليبوسة أم الرطوبة؟ وإذا قلتم بأن استعمالها نافعٌ فما القدر النافع منها وما المضرُّ؟ وهل الإكثار منها ضار أم لا؟ وهل فيها تقوية للباه أم لا؟ وهل استعمالها على الشبع مضر أم نافع ؟ وكذلك استعمالها على الجوع هل هو مضرٌّ أم نافع؟ وهل فيها هضمٌ؟ وهل استعمالها حارة أولى من استعمالها فاترة أم عكسه؟ وهل يضاف إليها شيء من الأشياء عند طبخها أم لا؟ أفتونا مأجورين ، أثابكم الله الجنة .

فأجاب : الحمد لله ، لم أجد ذكراً للبن فضلاً عن القهوة في شيء من كتب الطِّبِّ التي طالعتها واطلعت عليها ، والذي نتكلم فيه الآن إنما هو بحسب ما ظهر لنا من آثارها بطريق التجربة ، فأما هل استعمالها مضرٌّ أم لا ، فنقول : إنّه ليس يمكننا الحكم على دواء من الأدوية بأنه نافع مطلقاً ، ولا بأنه ضار مطلقاً في كلِّ حالٍ ، بل إنْ أثبتنا له نفعاً في بعض الأحوال فلا ينافي ذلك أن يكون له مضرة في حالة أخرى ، وأن يكون غيره أنفعَ منه في تلك الحال ، ونوضح ذلك بمثال فنقول : الدرياق الفاروق قد أجمع الأطباء أنه أعظم الأدوية ، ومع ذلك لا يمكن أن يقال بنفعه مطلقاً وفي كل حال ، بل بعض الأدوية المبردة كبزر قطونا للمحموم مثلاً أنفع منه بكثير ، فبقي أن يقال : إنَّ القهوة كغيرها من الأدوية لها نفع في بعض الأحوال .

فأما طبع القهوة ، فنقول : إن في الكيفيتين الفاعلتين ـ أعني الحرارة والبرودة ـ فالظاهر أنها معتدلة ومائلة إلى البرد قليلاً ، ولا يبعد أن يكون لها جزء حار به يكون الهضم ونحوه من أفعالها ، فإن كثيراً من الأدوية كذلك ، وأما في الكيفيتين المنفعلتين فتجدها مائلة إلى جانب اليبس ؛ لأنا نجدها تجفف الأبدان وتغيّر أصحاب الأمراض اليابسة .

وأما القدر النافع منها ، فهو مختلف بحسب مزاج مستعملها .

وأما هل الإكثار منها مضرٌّ ؟ فقد قال الأطباء : إنَّ كلَّ كثرةٍ عدو للطبيعة ، ولا شك أن الإكثار من القهوة مضرٌّ خصوصاً بذوي الأمزجة اليابسة .

19. ● وفيها : في منتصف ربيع الأول قتل سلطان الديار المصرية الملك الناصر بن قايتباي[1] رحمه الله .

20. ● وفيها : عند غروب الشمس يوم الأحد سابع عشر ذي القعدة توفي **سلطان الديار المصرية الملك قايتباي**[٢] **الجركسي المحمودي الأشرفي ثم الظاهري** ، وصلي عليه يوم الاثنين ، وكان له مشهد عظيم ، ولم يخلفه مثله في الجراكسة ، بل قيل : إنّه لم يمكثْ أحدٌ في المملكة قدر مدته ، فكانت قريب ثلاثين سنة ، وصلي عليه في المساجد[٣] الثلاثة ، وختم له فيها بعدة ربعات . أحد ملوك الديار المصرية ، والحادي والأربعون من ملوك الترك البهية ، بقية الملوك العظام ، وخاتمة النظام ، ولد تقريباً سنة بضع وعشرين وثمانمائة ، وقدم مع تاجره محمد بن رستم في سنة تسع وثلاثين ، فاشتراه الأشرف برسباي ، ثم صار إلى الملك الظاهر فأعتقه ، ولم يزل عنده يترقى من مرتبة (إلى مرتبة)[٤] إلى أن صار الملك ، وذلك في سنة اثنتين وسبعين . وكان بعض أولياء الله تعالى قد أشار إلى ملكه قبل أن يفضي إليه الملك بزمان ، فقال له في واقعة : قم أنت أيها الملك الأشرف قايتباي . وحكي مثل ذلك عن

21. ● وفيها : جاء السّلطان أكبر إلى كجرات ، وذلك أنه بعد أن أخذها ترك فيها بعض الوزراء ورجع ، فحاول من بقي من أمراء كجرات أنْ يستنزعوها من يد ذلك الوزير وحاصروه بجموع عديدة ، وكادوا أنْ يظهروا عليه ، فلما سمع السّلطان بهذا الخبر دهمهم بجنود كثيرة ، ووصل إليها في مدة قليلة ، وحاربهم أشد المحاربة حتى قتلهم عن آخرهم .

22. ● وفيها : استعاد السّلطان مظفر بن السّلطان محمود كجرات من المغول ، وذلك في آخر شهر شعبان ، وقبض أكثر بلادها مثل أحمد آباد و بروج وبرودلة وكنباية.

23.

● وفيها : أخذ السّلطان أكبر بن همايون كجرات ، وهو من أولاد تيمورلنك بينه وبينه أربعة آباء ، وكان عظيمَ الشّأن ، ورزق السّعد في أيامه ، وطالت مدة ولايته واتسع ملكه جداً ، وكان عادلاً حليماً عاقلاً حكيماً . والكلام فيه يطول والمسائل في شأنه تعول ، فلنقبض العنان والله المستعان . وكانت مدة سلطنته خمسين سنة ، وتوفي في شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة أربع عشرة بعد الألف ، وتاريخ العام يجمعه « غدي » بالياء وهي لغة غير فصيحة في غدا ـ بالألف ـ أي ذهب ، وقلت في ذلك :

غـــدي أكبـــر فـــي الـــذاهبيـــن وذي سنّـة الله فـي الغـابـريـن[1]

وتولى بعده ولده سليم شاه .

٢٢٠ ﴿ السيد عبد القادر العيدروس ﴾ 24.

السيد العلامة عبد القادر بن شيخ بن عبـد اللهبن شيخ بن عبد الله العيدروس الحسنى اليمنى ولد سنة ٩٧٨ ثمان وسبعين وتسعمائة بمدينة أحمد أباد من الهنـد وهو صاحب المؤلفات العديدة منها (النور السافر عـلى أخبار القرن العاشر) و (الحـدائق الخضرة فى سيرة النبى عليـه السلام وأصحابه العشرة) و (المنتخب المصطفى فيأخبار مولد المصطفى) و (الدر الثمين فى بيان المهم من أمور الدين) وغـير ذلك ومات فى سـنة ١٠٣٨ ثمان وثلاثين وألف رحمه الله تعالى وإيانا والمؤمنين آمين .

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