

## The Rahmani Sufis between religious practice and resistance to French colonialism

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### Abstract:

In this research paper, I try to shed light on one of the Sufi orders that was widely spread in Algeria and even outside it (= Tunisian countries), and this is by researching how it was established, its founder, its sources, its areas of spread, and mentioning the various angles affiliated with it. The Kabylie region in Algeria, which had many angles and followers, so that it was widely known and spread in different regions of Algeria, and I try in this study to show the role played by the Rahmanians in the face of French colonialism, especially in the Kabylie region.

**Keywords:** The Rahmaniya Order - Angles and Meridians - Algeria - Kabylie - French Colonialism.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Algeria has enjoyed many cultural, civilizational and spiritual sources, which have contributed greatly to the refinement of its ancient history, and perhaps the Sufi methods are one of those influences and cultural and spiritual sources, given that Sufism enjoys an important position among the Sufis, and many Sufi methods have spread in Algeria that contributed In highlighting the spiritual and cultural aspect of Algeria, extending its influence outside Algeria, and among those Sufi methods is the Rahmani method that appeared in the Algerian country and spread in it to a large extent and extended its influence even to some areas of the Tunisian country, and on this basis the Sufi Rahmani experience formed one of the spiritual sources in Algeria, in addition to building a bridge of communication between different groups and even peoples within the framework of civilized communication (= the Algerian people and the Tunisian people).

And speaking of the Rahmani method, it is not enough to talk about it because it is a Sufi method only that took upon itself an attempt to bring the creation to the truth, the Blessed and Exalted, but it was distinguished by other great works, regardless of accommodating the passers-by, taking care of orphans and the needy, and teaching the Book of God Almighty and the Sunnah of His Prophet, peace and blessings of God be upon him. This method has also taken upon itself the task of confronting French colonialism, which prompts us to research the problem of the Rahmani Sufis between religious practice and resistance to French colonialism.

## **2. Linguistic and idiomatic rooting of Sufism and Sufism:**

### **2.1 linguistic definition:**



Those interested in Sufism tried to reach the exact and original meaning of Sufism, and to define it linguistically and determine its source and derivation, so that opinions differed in that and conflicted among them, and what we find in this regard is that Sufism is the source of the five-word verb “saffa” to denote the wearing of wool (boughdiri, 2014, p 149), and Sufism is the word for Sufism. Derived from "wool", and a mystic is the one who wears coarse clothes of wool. (Larbi, 1979, p 68)

Among the linguistic definitions we find as well, is that the mysticism from the “saffa” denotes the first row in prayer and is derived from it (= from the first row) on the grounds that its owner (= the mystic) is standing before God Almighty and in front of him (Es-sahroudi, 1998, p 64), and some of the scholars have referred Derivation of the word Sufism to “the saffa,” which means the seat, the shed, or the corner in which it is located It was at the back of the Prophet’s Mosque, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, in which the people of the sufficiency, who were known to be the guests of the Most Merciful, were sheltering (Larbi, 2020, p 3)

Some have seen that Sufism is attributed to one of the men or the name of his tribe, which is “Sofa Abu Hayy from Mudrou”, and this person is “Al-Ghaouth bin Mor Al-Jahili”, and he was one of those who were famous for maintaining the honorable Kaaba in the days of the pre-Islamic era, when he presented and dedicated himself to serve The honorable Kaaba and serving its visitors, as this person was famous for his worship and isolation from the pleasures of life, asceticism, and distance from the world. (Boughdiri, 1979, p68)

The word Sufism refers to “the wool,” which was the dress of the worshipers, the ascetics and the pious, whose lives are based on self-conqueror and repression, in addition to that contempt for this world and asceticism in it. "Safa", which indicates the state of purity, and nobility that this Sufi enjoys. (Laadjili, 1992, p 25)

And there are researchers who have attributed Sufism to the approach followed in religion, and this is through sincerity in performing all acts of worship, obedience and prayers, and on this basis, some linked its concept (= the concept of Sufism) to the worshipers and ascetics who went along and lived with the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, among the honorable Companions, may God be pleased with him. upon them, so that they were characterized by many virtuous qualities and commendable qualities with which they were elevated to lofty ranks. (Zineb Bent Ettaleb Ahmed, 1995, p 33)

Sufism is a religious phenomenon and a specific concept of the Islamic religion as it was defined in Islamic history. Induce her to obedience, which in turn contributes to her growing and educating (= that soul) and rising to higher levels of faith' (Laadjili, 1992, p 25)

## **2.2 Idiomatic definition:**

Some believe that Sufism is in the practices that lead to the truth, and these practices combine devotional practices through the practice of austerity and fulfillment of duties in the fullest manner, in addition to showing virtuous morals and avoiding all pitfalls and ambiguities, while others see it as reaching inspiration, revelation, visions and joy in worlds Mysterious secrets, but the result is almost the same, which is transcendence, purification, transcendence from all impurities, and reaching higher levels by drawing closer to God Almighty. (Saad Allah , 1998, p 09)

In this regard (= the conventional definition of Sufism), many researchers, historians, and those interested in Sufi studies see that Sufism is neither a formal nor a science, but a creation, given that Sufism as they see it is complete literature, and this is based on

entering into every Sunni creation and leaving every vile creation, and therefore Whoever increases in character increases in mysticism and purity, and this increases until reaching the highest levels, as they considered that Sufism is a break from creation and a connection with the Creator. (Jade Allah, 1992, pp 115- 116)

As many have defined it as a break with God Almighty and acquainted with Him with the heart, the mind and all the limbs, and this is in order that no hope from any of the creatures is complete except by resorting to the Creator, Blessed and Exalted, and not fearing except from Him and from sins, and thus hope is from God, and this is what Contributes to the consolidation of the love of God Almighty, and accordingly, Sufism here is the abstraction of the heart to God, and contempt for everything else. (Bouzidi, 2005, p 22)

Also, Sufism is evaluating morals, cultivating souls, taming them with the actions of religion, attracting them to it, making it affectionate to them, and gradually introducing its wisdom and secrets.(Al- khatib, sd , p 36)

Purified and what the righteous predecessors were upon, and therefore Sufism is standing with the legal ethics in form and content, that is, in terms of the outward and inward, which contributes to the collection of noble morals and avoidance of despicable morals. (Ibn Arabi, sd, p 17)

However, there is no doubt that some of the Sufis and mystics have deviated from this foundation and this approach, and innovated in religion and exaggerated it, and the dread, heresy and superstition spread. The Sufi method and Islamic Sharia, in addition to the contempt of the world that was made for human beings and in that exaggeration, so that God Almighty said in the noble verse : ﴿ **And he sought what God has brought you the last house, nor do you forget your share of the world, and God bless you He loves the**

**corrupters**﴾ (Quran, Al- kasas, verse 71), in addition to instilling negativity in people's hearts, and this is based on the consideration that many people are a path without a choice, and this is what led to the implantation of defeatism in the souls. (Bouzidi, 2005, p 28)

As for its origins and roots, Sufism received the first theoretical formulation that lays its foundations and defines its features at the hands of an Arab woman called Rabea al-Adawiya and this woman was a righteous, hermit, and devotee woman, and from what came from her words regarding the worship of the Most Merciful, the Blessed and Exalted, that she does not worship God for fear of Torment and fire, nor greed for heaven, but they worship God Almighty with love and devotion to Him, the Blessed and Exalted, and therefore, this theory (= love of God Almighty) was the basis of Sufism, despite the differences in the quality and nature of this love. (Larbi, 1979, pp 68- 69)

There are those who trace their roots back to the era of the Abbasid state, and this is on the grounds that Sufism is not an outsider to Islam, considering the human blending that occurred as a result of the widening circle of Islamic conquests, and the entry of new races into peace like the Persians and Indians and their civilizational tributaries, which cast those civilizational tributaries its shadow over their religious behavior and practices. (Laadjili, 1992, p 25)

This is considered Sufism as a general phenomenon that appeared tangibly at the end of the second century of migration, and continued to grow and spread during the third century AH, and thus (= Sufism) returns to the trend that prevailed in the second century of migration and beyond of the demand for the world and immersion in its pleasures, which called for the emergence of An opposite trend to this trend, represented in devotion to worship and detachment from



God Almighty and turning away from the adornment and adornment of this world in the pleasures that people accept and singling out to worship. (Ben Mekla and Jab Allah, 2017, p 247)

Many who are familiar with the mysteries of Sufism and its poles also gather that this movement (= Sufism) has begun to spread for the first time in the Islamic Murhab since the fifth century of migration during the rule of the Almoravids, so that the views of Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali spread through his book *The Revival of Religious Sciences*, which met strong opposition Ali bin Yusuf bin Tashfin ordered his burning in 503 AH, and it seems that the Sufism movement had taken root and penetrated the days of the Almohads, where the Sufi movement flourished under the influence of the Andalusian ascetic Abu Madyan Shuaib bin Al-Hussein around (about 520 AH - 590 AH, corresponding to 1126 AD - 1197 AD). (Bellah, 2007, p 84)

While some researchers and historians, such as Louis Rinn, have denied that this (= means in terms of origin and roots) is Islamic, Indian or Christian mysticism, but rather it is just a way through which one is approached to the idol and turns away from everything related to trivial matters, On the grounds that Sufism began as an intellectual core that represents a sublime stage of the development of religious and moral thought for humans. (Rinn, 1884, p 22)

The basic principle in Sufism is to fear God Almighty in secret and openly, and to follow the Sunnah in words and actions, in addition to turning away from creation in turning away and turning to the Creator, the Blessed and Exalted, in addition to being satisfied with God in little and a lot. In prosperity and adversity, and in ease and hardship. (Bouzidi, 2005, p 28)

### **3- The Rahmania method and its angles, a study of the origins and origins:**

Before delving into the research on the Rahmánya method, it is necessary to clarify the concept of the method in itself, so that the method appeared in the days of organized collective Sufism, and it became called the Brotherhood clan groups that are known as the Sufi method, and the method is the path that the Sufi takes, and the Sufi paths were associated with chokes and ties. And the angles that some rulers and leaders encouraged to form. (Boughdiri, 2014, pp 198- 199)

Also, the Sufi way is the approach that the traveler follows in order to reach God, that is, to reach his obedience, worship and obtain his pleasure. This approach includes the creation of virtuous and benign morals, in addition to perseverance and maintaining the performance of a number of acts of worship accompanied by a righteous sheikh who guides him in the stages of his journey. (Mortadh, 2016, p 20)

The method according to the Sufis and the Sufis is: **“God Almighty’s decrees and legal mandates for which there is no license, for following concessions is a reason to vent the nature necessitating stopping and stopping on the way”** or it is: **“The biography of the Sufis who walk to God Almighty, for it is a journey to God Almighty.”** (Al-kasimi Al- hassani, 2013, p 24)

As for the Rahmani method, it is a Sufi religious method that originated in Algeria at the end of the twelfth century AH corresponding to me the eighteenth AD, at the hands of its founder, Sheikh Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman al-Azhari, from whom it took its name. And from it, the Rahmani method, which was initially called the Khalouti way (Al-kasimi Al- Hassani, 2006, p 139), was launched,





which was (= the Khalouti method) among the most famous methods in Turkey, Azerbaijan and Eastern Europe. (Coppolani and Depont, 1879, p 381)

The Rahmánya method is considered among the largest and most prevalent religious methods in Algeria in the nineteenth century AD, and this is by returning and based on the statistics related to following this method and its sheikhs and followers, so that the number of its followers in 1851 AD exceeded 225,299 followers who follow the Rahmánya method, and this is from The origin of 718,691 disciples from all the Sufi orders in Algiers only, this is with regard to the followers and the followers, as for the number of the Rahmani angles, their number reached 349, including 177 angles for the Rahmanians and this is in some areas only without counting all the angles belonging to the Rahmánya method in Algeria As a whole, this indicates that it was among the most widespread and largest Sufi orders in Algeria. (Al-kasimi Al- Hassani, 2013, p 25)

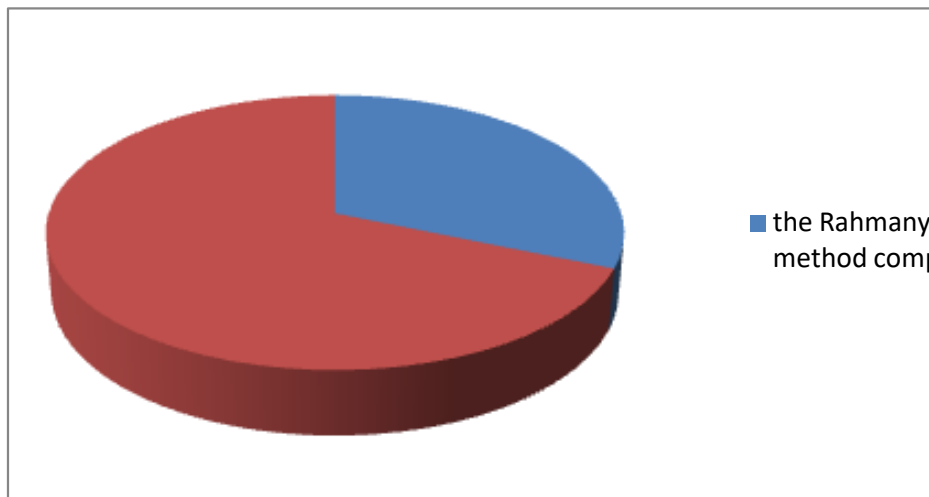
**Table 1.** Those who follow the Rahmánya method compared to those who want other methods

year	the Rahmánya method compared	other methods	Total
1851	225299	493392	718691

**Source:** Al-kasimi Al- hassani, 2013

In this regard, we show the number of followers of the Rahmánya method in comparison with those who follow other methods in the following relative circle:

**Fig.1.** those who follow the Rahmánya method compared to those who want other methods



**Source:** compiled by the researcher based on some of the statistics provided.

Through the graph (= the relative circle) that we have for the followers of the Rahmani method compared to the followers and followers of other methods, we notice that the percentage of followers of the Rahmánya method is very large compared to those who follow the other methods, and perhaps the reason for this is the simplicity of its sheikhs and their distance from the methods that represent the authority Al-Hakim (= the ways in which the Ottoman Turks contributed to its spread).

The Rahmánya method had several angles (Shergui, 1994, p 24, and Shehbi, 2007, pp 25- 26), which we summarize in:

A- Zawiyas of the Zwawa region: It consists of many corners located in the Kabylie region.

B - The corners of Constantine: some of them are located in Constantine, and some are located in the vicinity of the city of Constantine, such as Al-Talaghmech and others.

C- The corners of the Aures: The angles in the Aures that belong to the Rahmaniya way also include many angles such as the Zawiya of Beni Abd al-Samad and the Zawiya of al-Sadiq in al-Haj, in addition to the Zawiya of Sheikh Ali Dardour.

D- Zawiya of the South: We find many Rahmaniya in the south of Algeria, such as the zawiya of Tolka and the zawiya of Ben Azzouz al-Burji. It should be noted that the Rahmaniya of the south are spread to a very large extent in the cities of Biskra.

E- Zawiya of Tunisia (Tunis, the capital): where we find many Rahmaniya Zawiya in Tunisia, which Algerians who immigrated to the region contributed to spreading and building.

And about its wirts (see; Bouksiba, 2007, p 81), the murid daily mentions many wirts, and what he mentions after the dawn prayer: (Hennaie and Mayetta, 2017, pp 5- 6) “Oh, O live, Qayyum. (100 times), then the complete prayer, which is: “O God, bless our master Muhammad and his family, the prayers of the people of the heavens and the earth, and reward, O Lord, your hidden kindness in my affairs” (03 times).

Then: “Oh God, Lord of Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, Azrael and Muhammad, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, save me from the fire” (03 times), and after the morning prayer, and after the obstacles, he says: “There is no god but God” (300 times, and after the afternoon as well), but after the afternoon prayer one day Thursday, the disciple leaves the halala, and moves to the prayer of the Prophet, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, in the form: “O God, bless our master Muhammad and his family and companions” (300 times).

After the Friday prayer, the disciple prays in this role: “O God, bless our master the illiterate Prophet and his family and peace” (80 times), and then “There is no god but God.”

And after each prayer and after the obstacles, the disciple prays to the Prophet, may God’s prayers and peace be upon him, with the formula: “O God, bless and bless our master Muhammad and the family of our master Muhammad and peace be upon him” (10 times).

#### **4- Rahmanians and their role in the face of French colonialism:**

There is no doubt that the Sufi orders have a great role in confronting colonialism in all its forms and in different regions of the world without talking about the methods that colonialism contributed to establishing in order to deceive and in order for those methods to deviate from their origin for which they were established, the Qadiriya played ( The role of confronting the French in Algeria, and the same for the Senussi (see; Saad Allah, 1998, pp 42- 43) who faced the Italians in Libya, and the Shadhilia who faced the English colonialism in Egypt. (see; Saad Allah, 1998, pp 247- 255)

Among those ways that took upon themselves to confront French colonialism was the Rahmani method. The Rahmani Sufis confronted colonialism in various ways, as they worked to preserve the teachings of the Islamic religion that the French tried to erase, in addition to spreading the education that the colonial administration fought against within the framework of the policy of ignorance, There were many ways to confront French colonialism on the part of the Rahmanians, to the extent of the revolution and the military confrontation embodied by the Kabylie revolution.

#### **4-1 The role of the Rahmanites in the face of cultural colonialism:**

The Rahmani Sufis worked to confront the French occupation culturally, and this is through many activities. Its zawiyas (= Rahmaniya zawiyas) played an active role in this, through:

\* Preserving the teachings of the permissible Islamic religion through teaching and memorizing the Holy Qur'an, in addition to working on teaching the Arabic language and its principles to all segments of Algerian society, and this is in response to the colonial policy of ignorance, spreading illiteracy, fighting the Arabic language and trying to strike the Islamic religion, which remained an outlet for the Algerians.

\* The corners of the Rahmani way were not limited to teaching and memorizing the Arabic language and the Holy Qur'an only, but the matter went beyond it to teaching and clarifying everything related to religion and the Holy Qur'an from sciences, such as jurisprudence and hadith, in addition to the science of readings, recitation, interpretation and other sciences.

\* The Rahmanians were not only interested in preserving the teachings of the Islamic religion, but rather in spreading Islam in itself, as they contributed to spreading Islam in different regions of the south (= areas of sub-Saharan Africa), which Islam has not yet reached.

\* It was also among the roles played by the Rahmani Order, the preservation of Arab and Islamic culture, so that they achieved great success in maintaining cultural and civilizational ties between Algeria and the Arab and Islamic world, and thus they contributed to confronting the policy of colonialism that linked Algeria to France and that also led to the dissolution of the element The Algerian in French society (= confronting the policy of naturalization). (Shehbi, 2007, p 45)

\* Work to spread virtuous and benign morals and correct behaviors, in addition to working to preserve the components of society and its unity in light of the rejection of social and ethnic differences, given that these corners include different segments, spectra, and individuals from all regions. (Boualem, 2001, p 467)

\* Preserving the identity and identity of Algerian society, its components, customs and traditions, by preserving the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity (= Twiza), in addition to holding religious ceremonies such as commemorating the Prophet's birthday and Laylat al-Qadr.

\* Commitment to what God Almighty commanded and avoiding His prohibitions, so that these corners represented impregnable fortresses of faith and faith, and thus worked to preserve the principles of the Arab Islamic personality and resist the policy of Christianization. (Shehbi, 2007, pp 46- 47)

#### **4-2 Rahmanians and their role in confronting colonialism militarily:**

The Rahmani corners in the country of the tribes have faced French colonialism since it entered the region, and the Rahmani leaders of this region did not spare much in seizing every opportunity to raise their voice against the French presence, and despite their simple capabilities, their determination was strong and their morale was very high, and there is no doubt that the most important From the body of the revolution against the French occupation of the Rahmani Sufis, Sheikh Al-Haddad (Nouihedh, 1980, p 110) Moqaddam Al-Zawiya Al-Rahmaniya in Sadouq Bejaia, who is considered one of the leaders of the 1871 revolution.( Si Yousef, 2000, pp 23- 24)

On this basis, the centers of Sheikh Al-Haddad's corners were places to organize the cells of the Mujahideen, and therefore these corners represented a means for instilling enthusiasm among the citizens, inciting the believers to fight and calling them to holy jihad and for the sake of God, so that once Sheikh Al-Haddad headed the revolution after the martyrdom of Al-Muqrani (Bellah, 2007, p 341), Until it took a more violent character than before, and its scope expanded, and the Mujahideen made great progress, and this is the testimony of the French generals. (Al- khatib, sd, pp 186- 187)

More than 120,000 Mujahideen from the followers of the Rahmani method advanced to jihad, these belong to 250 tribes, distributed across many regions, including the Babur Mountains, the north of Constantinople and the eastern region of Wadi al-Sumam, and as a result (= the spread of the resistance) the Rahmaniya corners turned into centers for jihad and revolution. And the resistance, and that resistance in these areas was led by the two sons of Sheikh Al-Haddad, namely Si Aziz and Muhammad Al-Haddad. (Bouaziz, 1996, pp 250- 251)

The revolution of Sheikh Al-Haddad erupted on April 08, 1871 AD, under the military leadership of Al-Haddad and his two sons, as mentioned above, and under the leadership of a spiritual and religious Rahmaniya (= relative to the Rahmaniya role). and Minor, where they achieved great victories over the enemy. (Daumas, 2011, p 220)

The revolution of Sheikh al-Haddad in 1871 was the revolution of the Rahmani brothers, who were in the eyes of the French one of the most important and biggest obstacles and problems they faced in the revolution, and that revolution almost swept the French presence due to the large number of these (= Rahmaniya), in addition to the effective and wide role which They did it, and the clear, noble and

lofty goals that they sought to embody, which is to achieve national independence. (Bouaziz, 1979, p 35)

The Rahmani's revolutionary movement has extended outside its framework (Al- Aaloui, sd, pp 86- 87), as it included areas of Aures, and this is out of the religious and spiritual links of the Rahmanians, and given the impact of the revolution on the inhabitants of Aures even indirectly, the followers of this religious sect did not take any effort in organizing the ranks of the resistance And the revolution in the face of French colonialism, and the events (= revolution) covered some areas such as Batna, Belzema and Mastawa. (Bouaziz, 1977, p 12)

Despite the arrest of Sheikh Al-Haddad, the leader of this bull, the Rahmani brothers continued the jihad movement against the French colonialism (Ageron, 2011, p 23), In suppressing the residents of the villages, so that he burned those villages and dispersed their people, so that Si Aziz surrendered and his brother Muhammad al-Haddad was arrested, and thus the French were able to put down the revolution. (Al- Aassali, 2010, p 159)

What can be said is that the greatest burden in the revolution of al-Muqrani and Sheikh al-Haddad was borne by the Rahmani brothers, in addition to the toiling popular classes, which is the class that has no privileges or special interests to defend, but rather the national goals that prompted them to take up arms, and these goals are mixed with the religious idea that At that time, it represented an integral part of patriotism. (Bouaziz, 1979, p 37)



## **5- Conclusion:**

At the conclusion of our study of the subject of the Rahmánya Sufis between religious practice and resistance to French colonialism, we conclude the following:

\* Sufism represented a religious phenomenon and a specific concept of the Islamic religion, and Sufism is based on spiritual philosophy that is based on remembrance and seclusion according to educational methods that are stressful for the soul and the body, and this is in order to make it obey, which in turn contributes to being elevated to higher ranks of faith.

\* Sufism is also the method followed in religion, and this is through sincerity in performing all acts of worship, obedience and prayers.

\* The origin of Sufism is the piety of God Almighty in secret and in public, in addition to turning away from creation by turning away and turning to the Creator, the Blessed and Exalted, in addition to being content with God in little and a lot, in addition to returning to God in prosperity and adversity and in ease and hardship.

\* As for the Sufi way, it is the approach that the traveler follows in order to reach God, that is, to reach His obedience, worship and obtain His pleasure. This approach includes the creation of virtuous and benign morals, in addition to perseverance and maintaining the performance of many acts of worship accompanied by a righteous sheikh who guides him in the stages of his journey.

\* The Rahmánya Order was one of the most widespread Sufi orders in Algeria, given the huge number of followers and followers of this method and its angles that are widely spread in various regions of the country.

\* The extension of the Rahmánya Order was not limited to Algeria only, but its scope extended to include regions outside it, and this is in Tunisia.

\* The work of the Rahmánya Order was not limited to religious practices and work to win the largest number of followers, but its work transcended various fields culturally, socially and even militarily by confronting French colonialism.

\* The Rahmanians worked to confront French colonialism culturally by confronting the French policy and integration that included the entry of Algerians into the French fold, in addition to their attempts to preserve the Islamic religion that the French worked to strike, distort and eliminate.

\* The Rahmanians took it upon themselves to confront French colonialism militarily, and this was by carrying out many battles against it, within the framework of the 1871 revolution.

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