

AFGHĀNĪ ON THE DECLINE OF ISLAM: A POSTSCRIPT *

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The problem of the decline of Islam which had engaged Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Asadābādī, "Afghānī" (1838-1897) in his essay, "*Chirā Islam Zā'if Shud?*" was treated in our previous article.¹ There Afghānī had raised the question, but his answers, though implied and reasonably understood, were not very clear or concrete in the discussion. This fact led us to a further investigation and consequently to new findings while on a research visit to Iran in the summer of 1970.

The essay in question was reproduced in a Persian journal entitled *Tazakkur* in the following manner: the first fragment appeared on September 6, 1922, pp. 76-79; the second fragment on September 23, 1922, pp. 105-107; and the third fragment on October 7, 1922, pp. 138-140. At the end of this last section the editor of the *Tazakkur*, Ḥusayn Zubdah, pointed out that in future issues, Afghānī's well-known treatise on the Naturalists would be published. Thus beginning with the next issue the *Refutation of the Materialists*² was reproduced except that it

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¹ Abdul-Hadi Hairi, "Afghānī on the Decline of Islam", *Die Welt des Islams*, XIII (Leiden, 1971), pp. 121-25.

² The Persian text of this work bears a different title, viz., *Naychariyyah yā Nātūrālism*. It was first published in Bombay in 1881. This book has been translated into various Islamic languages. It has also been translated into French by A. M. Goichon, entitled *Réfutation des matérialistes* (Paris, 1942) and into English by Nikki R. Keddie and Hamid Algar in Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn "Afghānī"* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 130-74. For more details consult A. Albert Kudsi-Zadeh, *Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī: An Annotated Bibliography* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 3-5.

carried the essay title, "*Chirā Islām Za'if Shud?*". Eleven years later this essay was reproduced from the *Tazakkur* in a collection of Afghānī's writings.¹ Then from this collection the essay again was reproduced in Afghānī's *Islam va 'Ilm bi Zamīmah-yi Risālah-yi Qazā va Qadar*, edited and translated into Persian by Sayyid Hādī Khusraw Shāhī (Tehran, 1969), pp. 157-170. It was also translated into French in Homa Pakdaman, *Djamal-Ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani* (Paris, 1969), pp. 268-274.

It is clear that the only source from which the essay was repeatedly reproduced or translated was the *Tazakkur* whose own source is not yet known to us. Our recent findings, however, show that the Journal did not publish the essay in its complete form. Rather the full essay was published in Persian in a Tehran newspaper called *Habl al-Matīn* (May 16 & May 20, 1907), about sixteen years before it appeared, in part, in the *Tazakkur*. In 1884, namely twenty-three years before its publication in the *Habl al-Matīn*, an Arabic version of the essay entitled "*Sunan Allāh fī al-Umam wa Taṭbīquhā 'alā al-Muslimīn*" was published in Paris in *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, edited by Afghānī and Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh.² Thus neither of the two earlier reproducers, Zubdah and Asadābādī, seems to have known of the publication of the essay in a fuller form some years earlier. Even later investigators did not notice that this was a part of the essay, an Arabic version of which had appeared in *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*.

What remains to be examined is the question we raised in our previous note as to whether the essay was a speech given or an article written by Afghānī.³ We tend to believe that it was written because in the second part of the essay Afghānī called himself the writer.⁴ It is also quite reasonable to assume that the essay was first written in Persian by Afghānī and then translated and paraphrased into Arabic by 'Abduh.

Due to his being a Persian, Afghānī must have naturally felt more at home with Persian than with Arabic, although his vast knowledge of the Arabic language was beyond question. This point

¹ Consult Afghānī, *Maḡālāt-i Jamālīyyah*, ed. Mirzā Lutf-Allāh Khān Asadābādī, (Tehran, 1933), pp. 164-70.

² Cf. Afghānī & 'Abduh, *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā* (Cairo, 1957), pp. 128-34.

³ Hairī, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

⁴ Afghānī, "Illat-i Za'if-i Islam", *Habl al-Matīn*, May 20, 1907.

is supported by a report, though an overstatement, given by Rashīd Riḍā. According to him, 'Abduh had said to Shakīb Arslān the following:

"The thought in *Al-Urwah al-Wuthqā* belonged to the Sayyid and I did not have any part in it, [but] the phraseology was entirely mine without the Sayyid's share in any single word."¹

Rashīd Riḍā seems to have believed in the genuineness of the statement ascribed to 'Abduh, because he again stresses this point by relating the popularity and effectiveness of the Journal to the fact that it contained Jamāl al-Dīn's thoughts, *al-afkār al-Jamālīyyah*, and 'Abduh's expression, *al-'ibārāt al-'Abdīyyah*.²

This report, though quoted to support our point, cannot be accepted in its entirety. It is reasonable to hold that 'Abduh undertook the task of phraseology only because of his mastery of the Arabic language. Our collation of the two texts suggests that although the subject matter touched upon by both authors were of the same nature, the Arabic writer, 'Abduh, was not strictly limited only to phraseology as it is held by Rashīd Riḍā. To 'Abduh we shall attribute some of the thoughts found only in the Arabic version. The Persian text is longer, almost twice as long as the Arabic one; nevertheless, in the Arabic version, a number of Qur'ānic verses are quoted but are absent in the Persian text.³ On the other hand, there are quotations from the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* which do not appear in the Arabic version.⁴ There are other differences in the two texts which indicate the authors' different sources of information. For example, the Muslim population is estimated at "more than than 300 millions" in the Persian text,⁵ and "some 400 millions" in the Arabic text.⁶ It is to be noted that the first part of the Persian essay (which has so far been known as a complete one) is closer to the Arabic translation, but the second part is more of a paraphrase and commentary than a translation. The Arabic paraphraser, 'Abduh, at one point addresses his audience as *yā ahl al-Qur'ān*. This address is not noted by the

¹ Sayyid Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Ta'rīkh al-Ustādh al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad 'Abduh* (Cairo, 1931), I, p. 289.

² *Ibid.*, I, p. 304.

³ *Al-Urwah al-Wuthqā*, p. 128.

⁴ *Maqālāt-i Jamālīyyah*, pp. 166-67.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁶ *Al-Urwah al-Wuthqā*, p. 129.

Persian writer.¹ Both writers, however, conclude their discussions with the same verse of the Qur'ān.

At this point another question needs to be raised: would it be logical to apply the story of this essay to all of the articles published in *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*? In other words, should we assume that the whole contents of this periodical were 'Abduh's paraphrases and translations of Afghānī's Persian articles? If so, then where are the original articles?

As for the subject matter of the Persian text, Afghānī in the second part of the essay gives concrete answers to the problem of the decline of Islam, keeping the pious approach that he had in the first part. The reason for the backwardness of the Muslims as he asserts here, should be sought in the Qur'ān. The strength and glory of Muslims vanished because they divorced religion and the Divine Tradition, lost their Islamic characteristics, and did not fulfill their covenant with God. Afghānī also touches upon some political matters by questioning the lack of diplomatic relations amongst the Islamic countries, but this question is also approached with pietism which served one of his principal points: religious brothers from various lands should think of one another. Finally Afghānī expresses the hope for the restoration of the past glory under the leadership of the *'ulamā* and because of God's kindness to the faithful. In sum, in this essay Afghānī appears as a pious defender of Islam. This fact strongly questions the theory which establishes him as merely a political figure whose cause in defense of Islam was political.²

It is worth noting that the Persian version of the essay was published during the Persian Constitutional Revolution, in which the *'ulamā* were playing the most effective role. By then the Persian people had been enjoying a constitutional form of government since one year. The fact that the *'ulamā* had a leading part in the Revolution seems to have inspired the newspaper editor to publish Afghānī's essay at that particular time, because, as it is apparent from the text, Afghānī urges the *'ulamā* to take steps toward the improvement of the Muslim condition.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

² Cf. Keddie, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Afghānī considers the ‘ulamā’s participation in building a movement for reforms as the only solution to all the difficulties in which the Islamic people had been involved. Therefore the editor of the *Habl al-Matīn*, in a footnote, ascribes the political success of the ‘ulamā and the Persian Muslims in the Revolution to the result of Afghānī’s exhortation. The editor points out that “the action taken by the ‘ulamā shows that how kind God is to the Muslims and, as it was predicted by this philosopher [Afghānī], the movement of the Muslims [under the leadership of the ‘ulamā] astonished the mind of the wise men of the world”.¹

As a matter of fact one of the important tactics of Afghānī in his anti-imperialist activities was to encourage, and at times antagonise, the religious leaders, simply because he had found them the most influential amongst the Muslims especially in Iran.² The best example of Afghānī’s appeal to the ‘ulamā against foreign encroachments in Iran was his several letters concerning the Tobacco Concession.³

Afghānī’s correspondence with Sayyid Muḥammad Ṭabāṭabā’ī is another good example of the special tactics used by him. While in London, Afghānī had correspondence with Ṭabāṭabā’ī in Sāmarrā’. Afghānī seems to have seen him as a potential leader for conducting a serious campaign against the tyrannical governments,

¹ *Habl al-Matīn*, May 20, 1907.

² Concerning the power, authority, and activities of the ‘ulamā in modern Iran as well as their effective role in power politics there appeared several studies during the last decade. Cf. Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, 1969); ‘Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā’ī and others, *Baḥthi darbārah-yi Marja’iyyat va Rūhāniyyat* (Tehran, 1962); an outline of this study has been examined in Ann K. S. Lambton, “A Reconsideration of the Position of the Marja’ al-Taqlid and the Religious Institution”, *Studia Islamica*, XX (Paris, 1964), pp. 114-35. See also Nikki R. Keddie, “The Roots of the ‘Ulamā’s Power in Modern Iran”, *Studia Islamica*, XXIX (Paris, 1969), pp. 31-53, and “The Origins of the Religious-Radical Alliance in Iran”, *Past & Present: A Journal of Historical Studies*, 34 (Oxford, 1966), pp. 70-80. These two articles are also thought provoking; F. R. C. Bagley, “Religion and the State in Iran”, *Islamic Studies*, X (Islamabad, 1971), pp. 1-22; Charles F. Gallagher, “Contemporary Islam: The Plateau of Particularism: Problems of Religion and Nationalism in Iran”, *American Universities Field Staff Report Service* (New York, July, 1966).

³ For detailed treatments of the Tobacco movement which can be safely considered as a turning point in the history of modern Iran, consult the following: Ibrāhīm Taymūri, *Qarārdād-i 1890 Régie: Taḥrīm-i Tanbākū: Avvalīn Muqāvat-i Manfi dar Iran* (Tehran, 1949); Ann K. S. Lambton, “The Tobacco Régie: Prelude to Revolution”, *Studia Islamica*, XXII (Paris, 1965), pp. 119-53 and XXIII (Paris, 1966), pp. 71-90; Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-1892* (London, 1966).

because in one of his letters Afghānī wrote to Ṭabāṭabā'ī as follows:

"The *ummah* has fixed its eyes on the huge number of the people whom you rose to help and secure from [their] critical condition. Who is more deserving than you for this duty? You are a wise man, intelligent by nature, high-aspiring with a high lineage. I would like to inform you that the stability of the 'ulamā in the Iranian cities has exalted Islam, has strengthened its position, and has elucidated its proof. All the Europeans have been standing in awe of such a great power which had often been thought to have completely vanished. They [now] have become certain that there is an effectiveness in this religion by which [the Muslims] do not fear from the might of the tyrants; may God give them the reward of Islam."¹

These words no doubt had their influence on Ṭabāṭabā'ī, because upon his return to Tehran in 1894 this liberal *mujtahid* undertook his long effective campaign against the arbitrary rule of the Qājār Shāhs. He finally took part in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 as a most influential leader.² Needless to say, Afghānī neither wrote about much nor particularly fought for a modern constitutional regime. On the contrary, following his Pan Islamic policy, which seems to have been his ultimate line, he even at a time turned against the Turkish constitutionalists.³ However, due to his serious fight for political and social reforms partly by encouraging the ruling class and the 'ulamā, he can be considered, as we have discussed it elsewhere,⁴ as one of the important factors leading to the Persian Revolution.

¹ Muḥammad Nāẓim al-Islām Kirmānī, *Tārīkh-i Bidārī-yi Irāniyān* (Tehran, 1953), pp. 49-50.

² The constitutional activities of Ṭabāṭabā'ī have formed a considerable part of the histories written on the Persian Revolution. Amongst other references the following sources are highly recommended: A. K. S. Lambton, "Dustūr", iv-Iran, *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition, 11, pp. 649-57; Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910); Nāẓim al-Islām, *op. cit.*; Aḥmad Kasravī, *Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭah-yi Iran* (Tehran, 1951); Mahdī Malik-Zādah, *Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Mashrūṭiyyat-i Iran*, seven volumes (Tehran, 1949-53). On the background to the Revolution consult Nikki R. Keddie, "Iranian Politics 1900-1905: Background to Revolution", *Middle Eastern Studies*, V (London, 1969), pp. 3-31, 151-67, 234-50.

³ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), p. 267.

⁴ Abdul-Hadi Hairī, "The Constitutional Theory in Iran", a paper read in the Fifty-fourth Annual Meeting of The Middle West Branch of The American Oriental Society and The Midwest Section of The Society of Biblical Literature, held in Toronto, Canada, on October 7-9, 1971.

رفت کسی را بجانب ما قدرت
 دراز دستی نبود و احدی را جرات
 مقابلی و برابری با ما در خاطر
 نمیگذشت، از روم و فرنگ اسیر
 میاوردیم، از حبشه غلام و کنیز
 میگرفتیم، بتان هند را سرنگون
 میکردیم، بتخانه ها را خراب
 مینمودیم، علماء جلیل، سلاطین مقتدر،
 عساکر جرار داشتیم — دیگر صاحب
 ثروت و مکتب بودیم، باجانب
 محتاج نبودیم، لوازم زندگانی
 را خود فراهم داشتیم — بیک کلمه
 جامعه همه اسباب کار را صحیح و
 تمام نعمت های خداوندی را
 بوجه اکمل داشتیم.

لکن جملگی از دستان بدر رفت
 و در عوض فقر و پریشانی، ذلت
 و نکبت، احتیاج و مسکنت، بندگی
 و عبودیت درما زیاد شد چرا که
 حالات خود را تغییر دادیم و از
 سنت خداوندی کناره کردیم.
 اولاً عقل را که راهنمای سعادت
 و نجات است متابعت نکردیم و زنگار
 جهل تیره ساختیم. ثانیاً در اقوال،
 صدق و راستی که لازمه دین اسلام
 است پیشه نکردیم. دروغ و بهتان،
 کذب و افتراء عادت و ملکه ما شد
 — سلامت نفس بدل بشرارت و
 خباثت گردید — اتحاد و همدستی را
 بنفاق و دورویی مبدل ساختیم، مروت
 و انصاف را با بیزحمی و ستم
 معاوضه نمودیم، غیرت و حمیت

The Persian Text of Afghānī's Essay

(علت ضعف اسلام)

راجع بشماره (۱۶)

(ما کان ربك ليهلك القرى بظلم
 واهلها مصلحون) چرا مسلمانان
 ذلیل شدند؟ چرا دین اسلام ضعیف
 شد؟ کفار چرا غالب گردیدند؟ این
 پریشانی از کجاست و خرابی از چه
 راه است؟ باید حل این مسئله مشکل
 را از قرآن مجید پرسش نمود در آن
 آیه که فرموده (ان الله لايغير
 ما بقوم حتی یغیروا ما بانفسهم)
 معنی آیه چنان است که خداوند
 متعال هیچ قوم را از عرش عزت
 و رفعت بزیر نیاورد و از آسایش
 استقلال و حریت بقعر چاه ویل
 بندگی و عبودیت نیفکند مگر بعد از
 آنکه از سنتهای الهی که بر اساس
 حکمت نهاده است انحراف جستند.
 خداوند بر نمیدارد نعمتی را که
 بقومی عنایت فرموده مگر بعد
 از آنکه انقوم حالات خود را تغییر
 بدهند.

نعمت قدیم ما چه بود؟ یکی
 بزرگی و سیادت که تمام ملوک روی
 زمین از نام اجداد گرام ما بر
 خود میلرزیدند و در حضورشان
 تحاذل و فروتنی میکردند. دیگر
 امنیت و راحت، آزادی و حریت و

را با خونها و مالهای خود فروخت
کنند. اگر امر دائر شد که سکتہ بر
اسلام وارد شود یا جان مسلمانان
البته باید جان بدهند و از دین
دست نکشند.

از کلمات سخت نویسنده نباید
برنجید یا حمل بر مبالغه و خیالات
شاعرانه کنید. اندکی در پیش
خود نشسته و وجدانرا حاکم و قاضی
قرار داده تفکر و تأمل کنید و
بحال ملل و دول اسلامی نظر عبرتی
ببفکنید تا صدق قول ما بر شما ظاهر
شود. اولاً بطرف پادشاهان
اسلامی متوجه شده می بینیم
سلاطین اسلام بطرف یکدیگر جز
بنظر عدوان و دشمنی نظر نمیکند
و از احوال اتفاق سایر دول
پند نمیگیرند. کو دوستی و مراوده؟
چه شد اتحاد و یکرنگی؟ این
ملوک مسلمانان بحدی از هم دوری
و نفرت میکنند که گوئی پدر کشته
اند و مسالمت شان محال است. چرا
ایران بمراکش سفیر نمی فرستد؟
چرا مراکش بعثانی وزیر
مختار روانه نمیکند؟ کو دوستی
ایران و افغان؟ آخر اینهمه قهر
لازم ندارد. انقدر بی اعتنائی بهم
واجب نیست. قسمت بزرگ این
مسامحه و غفلت راجع بدولت
عثمانی است که امروز محل توجه
تمام مسلمانان عالم است. خیلی جای
افسوس است که در این حالت که

رفت، کسالت و بیحالی جایگیرش
شد، عفت و حیا رفت، بیشر می و
بیعصمتی آمد، نوع خواهی و ملت
پرستی مبدل بیخلف و حسد، اتفاق
بنفاق، اتحاد باختلاف، رحم بقساوت
تبدیل یافت — قبیحی نبود که
مر تکب نشدیم، فسادى نماند
که بر پا نکردیم — فتنه‌ای نیافتیم
که احداث نمودیم، گناهی نبود
که مرتکب نشدیم منکری ندیدیم،
که اقدام نکردیم — مختصراً مجمو —
عه اخلاق رذیله، منبع اعمال شنیعه،
مرکز افعال قبیحه گشتیم، از حق
اعراض کرده طرفدار باطل شدیم.
عهدیکه با خدا نمودیم وفا
نکردیم و معامله‌ای که با کردگار
عالیان نمودیم بر همزدیم پس
در عوض بغضب الهی دوچار
شدیم و باتش قهر آسمانی سوختیم
خواهید فرمود چه معامله و چه
عهد؟ همان معامله‌ای که خداوند در
این آیه کریمه میفرماید (ان
الله اشتری من المؤمنین انفسهم
واموالهم) یعنی خداوند از
مسلمانان خریده است جان و مال
انهارا، چطور خریده؟ باید در راه
کلمه الهی از جان عزیز صرف نظر و
از مال دنیا اعراض کنند. جان
بدهند تا احکام الهی را جاری
و مجری سازند. مال و منال را
بجهت ترویج کلمه الهیه دریغ
و مضایقه ننمایند یعنی دین اسلام

با اینهمه تنزل و انحطاط بازم عقیده ما آنستکه بزودی اسلام ترقی خواهد نمود و مقامات اولیه خود را نایل خواهد شد چرا که خداوند بر مسلمانان رؤف است و مهربان چنانکه فرماید (والله ذو فضل علی المؤمنین) و امیدواریم که این انحراف و تنزل عارضی و موقتی باشد و بزودی رفع گردد بشرط آنکه علماء اعلام و پیشوایان اسلام قیام بوظائف واجبه خود کرده تکلیف خود را در نصیحت و خیر خواهی اداء نمایند و هرآینه اگر علماء این مسلک را پیش گیرند بزودی حق بلند خواهد شد و باطل سرنگون خواهد گردید و چنان نوری ساطع شود که چشمها را خیره سازد و اعلالی صادر گردد که عقول و افکار اهل عالم را متحیر نماید. این حرکتی که امروز از مسلمانان در اغلب اقطار عالم مشاهده میکنیم ما را بشارت میدهد که عن قریب کلمه اسلامیان بلند گردد و خیر و سعادت از آسمان و زمین بطر — فشان رو آورد. خوشا بحال عالمی که پای همت درمیدان نهد و قد مر — دانگی علم کند و سردار این فوج گردد که شرف و افتخار اینکار راجع باو خواهد بود (من یرشد الله فهو المهتد و من یضلل فلن یجد له ولیا مر شداء).

کشتی اسلامیان گرفتار نهنگها است دست از حالات سابقه بر نمیدارد. باز از گریبان ایران دست نمیکشد. اما ملت اسلامی یعنی ما مردم که دعوی مسلمانی میکنیم آیا هیچ در فکر برادران خود هستیم؟ آیا از همسایه گرسنه یاد میکنیم؟ آیا مصلحت مسلمانان را بر مصلحت خود مقدم میداریم؟ آیا در دفاع از اسلام بذل جان و مال میکنیم؟ آیا شعائر دین را احترام مینمائیم؟ آیا بیضه اسلام را محافظت میکنیم؟ آیا در اعلاء کلمه الهی کوشش و بذل جهد مینمائیم؟ آیا بحیات دنیا پشت پا زده ایم؟ اگر مؤمن هستیم علامت مؤمن باید در جبین ما هویدا باشد. مگر نه مؤمن معتقد است که هر کس در راه خدا کشته شود زنده جاوید و در نزد کرد — گار جلیل است؟ مگر نه مؤمن نیمتر سد مگر از خداوند؟ مگر نه مؤمن جان و مال را نثار اعلاء کلمه الهی میکند؟ مگر نه مؤمن اصلاح و صلاح را طالب است؟ بخدا قسم ایان بقلب احدی وارد نمیشود مگر آنکه اول عملش گذشتن از جان و مال در راه خدا است بدون آنکه عذری بتراشد و داشتن زن و بچه را بهانه قرار دهد که این حرفها آثار نفاق است و علامت دوری از کردگار

Translation of the Essay:

In truth your Lord destroyed not the township tyrannously while their folk were doing right (11 : 117).

Why did Muslims become abject? Why did the religion of Islam become weak? Why are the infidels [so] predominant? Where is this disturbance and [this] ill-founded [state of affairs] from? The solution to these problems should be asked from the Glorious Qur'ān, in the verse that reads: "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves". (13:11) The meaning of the verse is that God, exalted, will not bring down any people from their high glory and dignity. He will not take [any people's] independence and freedom to [throw them] into the depth of disastrous slavery unless after they have deviated from the Divine Traditions which are based upon wisdom. God will not take the affluence (ni'mat) He has given to a people unless they change their condition.

What were our past affluences? First, our supremacy; all the kings on Earth were shuddering [with fear] by [hearing] the names of our venerable ancestors (*ajdād-i girām*) and humbled themselves in their presence. Furthermore, [we had] security, tranquility, liberty, and grandeur. No one had the power to be aggressive toward us and no one was courageous [enough] to [even] think about standing against us. We used to import captives from Asia Minor and Europe, and slave boys and girls (*ghulām va kanīz*) from Ethiopia. We used to turn upside down the Indian idols and destroy idol temples. We used to have great learned men, powerful kings and numerous and well-equipped armies (*'asākir-i jarrār*). We were enjoying wealth and power and needed not foreigners. We ourselves fulfilled our needs of life. In sum, we had sound equipments and enjoyed perfectly all of God's given affluences.

Everything, however, is lost and instead poverty, distress, abjectness (*zillat*), adversity (*nakbat*), indigence (*ihtiyāj*), and servitude grew amongst us. Why? Because we changed our conditions (*hālāt-i khudrā*) and kept ourselves aloof from the Divine Tradition.

First, we did not follow the wisdom which has been the guide to happiness and darkened it with ignorance. Second, in [our] talks we did not habituate ourselves to honesty which is an integral part

of the Islamic religion. Lying and false accusation became our habit and our second nature (*'ādat va malikah*). Our healthy mind changed to evil and wickedness. We replaced [our] unity and collaboration by discord and hypocrisy, magnanimity and justice by ruthlessness and oppression, zeal and fervency by indisposition (*kisālat*) and debility, chastity and modesty by impudence and immodesty. Philanthropy and patriotism (*millat parastī*) gave their places to stinginess and jealousy, alliance (*ittiḥād*) to discord, unity to diversity, and compassion to ruthlessness. There remained no shameful action that we did not perform, no corruption that we did create, no calamity to which we did not give birth, and no sin and unlawful thing that we did not commit. In brief, we became a miscellany of wicked characters, a source of obscenities and a center of ugly practices [to the extent that] we turned from the truth and became followers of falsehood.

We did not fulfill the covenant we had with God and we cancelled the transaction we had with creator of Mankind. Therefore, in return we were seized by the Divine Wrath and were burnt in its heavenly fire (*bi ālash-i qahr-i āsimanī sūkhtīm*). You will ask: "Which transaction and which covenant?" [The answer is that], the same transaction that God explained in this noble verse: "Verily God has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth . . ." (9:111), which means that God has bought the life and wealth of Muslims. How has He bought [them]? [The explanation lies in the fact that Muslims] should sacrifice their dear lives and wealth on the Divine Word; they should give [their lives] to enforce the Divine Commands. In order to give currency to the Divine Word they should not be stingy about [their] wealth, meaning that they ought to give currency to the religion of Islam by their blood and wealth. If there comes about a choice between a paralysis in Islam and [an end to] the lives of Muslims, they should definitely sacrifice themselves and should not desert the religion.

You ought not be offended of the writer's rough remarks or to take them as exaggerations and poetical imagination. Sit down by yourselves a little, make your conscience a judge; think, deliberate, and pay a lesson paying attention (*nazar-i 'ibratī biyafkanid*) to the situation of the Islamic peoples and Islamic governments in order

to see the truth in our remarks. First, we direct our notice to the Islamic kings whom we see as one another's enemies. They do not take lessons from the unity [existing amongst] other states. Where are friendships and amicable relations? What happened to the unity and sincerity? These Muslim kings are keeping themselves aloof from one another and hate one another in such a way as if they have murdered one another's father; peace amongst them appears to be impossible. Why does Iran not send an ambassador to Morocco? Why does Morocco not dispatch a plenipotentiary to the Ottoman [Empire]? What happened to the friendship between Iran and Afghanistan? After all, it is not necessary to be on such ill terms and to be careless about one another's [affair]. For this carelessness the Ottoman Government is mainly responsible, because today it is the center of attention of all Muslims in the world. It is very remorseful that in such a dangerous situation in which Muslims are involved, [the Ottomans] do not abandon the old habits [hostility?] and do not leave Iran alone.

As for the Islamic people, that is, we people, who claim to be Muslims, do we ever worry about our [religious] brothers? Do we think of [our] starving neighbors? Do we prefer the interests of Muslims to ours? Do we sacrifice our lives and wealth for defending Islam? Do we have respect for the cultic practice (*sha'ā'ir-i dīn*)? Do we protect the territory of Islam? Do we make any effort to exalt the Divine Word? Have we set aside this worldly life?

If we are believers, it should be apparent from our forehead. Does a believer not believe that anyone who sacrifices his life for the Divine Path he will be eternally alive and honored by God? Does a believer not fear only from God? Does a believer not sacrifice his life and wealth for the exaltation of the Divine Word? Does a believer not seek improvement and virtue (*iṣlāḥ va ṣalāḥ*)? I swear to God that faith will not enter anyone's heart unless his first action is to forget about his life and wealth for the sake of God without making any excuse [such as] having wife and children, because these pretexts are the symptoms of disunity and remoteness from God.

In spite of the decline and decadence [that we have been suffering], our opinion is still that Islam will soon progress and will regain its early position, because God is kind to Muslims as He says [in the

Qur'ān]: "... and God is merciful (*dhū faḍl*) to the faithful". (3:152)

I hope this deviation [from the early position] and this decline are accidental and provisional, and will soon disappear provided that the distinguished *‘ulamā* and the Islamic leaders perform their obligatory duties by giving exhortation and being benevolent. If the *‘ulamā* follow this principle, truth will soon triumph and falsehood will fall; a light will shine in such a way that it will dazzle the eyes; certain acts will be performed which will astonish the intellects and thoughts (*‘uqūl va afkār*) of the inhabitants of the world.

These movements which we see today amongst Muslims in most of the regions [of Islam] give tidings that the powerful position of the Islamic people will rise and welfare and happiness will come to them from the Heaven and Earth. Good for such learned man who would take a manly ambition to lead these movements; it would be [only] him who will receive the honor of this [leadership]:

"He whom God guides, he indeed is led aright, and he whom He leads astray, for him you will not find a guiding friend." (18 : 17).