

1308/1890 he began corresponding with Mirza Malkom Khan, the former Iranian ambassador to London who published a Persian political newspaper, *Qanun*, in the British capital. Malkom's ambition was to set up secret cells fashioned on the freemasonry model in order to "awaken the Iranian masses from their intellectual and political torpor," and Mirza Aqa Khan was soon helping to distribute the paper and to establish an "Adamiyat lodge" in the Turkish capital. He also collaborated in promoting and organizing the pan-Islamic movement with the famous reformer Sayyed Jamal-al-din Afgani (Asadabadi), who had come to Istanbul in 1310/1892. These actions along with his writings and Babi affiliation outraged the Iranian government. The pan-Islamic, anti-shah activity of Afgani and his followers was brought to light when some of their letters addressed to the Shi'ite mojtaheds residing in Iraq came to the attention of the Iranian consul in Baghdad. Ottoman authorities first resisted the demand of the Persian government for the arrest and extradition of Asadabadi and Mirza Aqa Khan, but the revolt of the Armenians in 1312-13/1894-95 changed the situation and Mirza Aqa Khan and two of his close companions, Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi and Mirza Hasan Khan Kabir-al-molk, were charged with conspiracy, arrested, and sent to Trebizond (Rajab, 1312/January, 1895). A few months later, following the assassination of Naser-al-din Shah (1313/1896) at the hand of an alleged Babi closely associated with Afgani, the three men were also charged with murder; in Du'l-hejja, 1313/May, 1896, they were extradited to Iran and executed in Tabriz in Safar, 1314/July, 1896.

Aside from his articles in *Aktar*, Mirza Aqa Khan wrote many political pamphlets, poems, and philosophical and theological treatises, all of which propounded Babi, Islamic, and more often, modern scientific ideas, in a rather disorderly fashion. As a Shi'ite Muslim, he asserted the universal validity of the Koranic revelation and his faith in the expected return of the Twelfth Imam. As a Babi, he defended the claims of the Azali leader Mirza Yahya Sobh-e Azal. Though in his Muslim and Babi statements he asserted that religion is one of the greatest foundations of human thought, in his more scientific exposés he denounced all religions as mere superstitions and fantasies that originate from humanity's fear and sense of helplessness in a wild physical environment. Wholeheartedly adopting Darwin's theory, he discussed the origins of the world in materialistic terms novel to Muslim and Babi thought. But a careful analysis of Mirza Aqa Khan's religious ideas reveals him to be not so confused or inconsistent as one might, at first glance, believe (see *Adamiyat*, *Andišaha*, pp. 118-35). His diplomatic choice of terms and formulation of ideas reflects the desire to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, be it Muslim or Babi, and to avoid any accusation of heresy; in this light, his Babi and Muslim pronouncements may be seen as masks of expediency that he could put on and take off according to the situation.

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His main goal seems to have been the upholding of reason and modern science, both of which he viewed as directly and unavoidably opposed to religion. His lifetime struggle was in the name of Iran rather than Islam, which he came to blame for the political downfall and cultural decline of the Iranians. A chauvinistic, anti-Arab, and anti-Islamic color pervades his major works. He scornfully assailed the religious, educational, and political systems prevailing in Iran. Denouncing the Islamic legacy within Iranian culture, he claimed that Iran's authentic identity could be sought only in the pre-Islamic past; contrasting the "noble Aryan nation" that belonged to the "civilized Aryan people of good extraction" with the "savage, lizard-eaters," the Semitic Arab "desert-dwelling nomads," he vehemently asserted that Zoroastrianism was the religion most suited to the nature of Iran's inhabitants. In glorifying the ancient past, Mirza Aqa Khan more often than not viewed it in the light of his contemporary western liberal ideal. He believed that revolution was necessary to regenerate the nation, but he did not offer a systematic program, nor did he propose a sound, consistent ideology. Essentially, he called for the establishment of a constitutional parliamentary system of government to eliminate the power of the Qajars and for an "Islamic Protestantism" to crush the power of the *ʿolama*. Such a "liberation," he argued, would turn popular attention to "national problems" and convert religious fanaticism into patriotic zeal. It would also bring about the reform of the educational system and the study of "meaningful" sciences. This dissemination of true knowledge would then lead to national strength.

Mirza Aqa Khan genuinely wished to see Iran modernize, so that its people would enjoy better living conditions and a better intellectual environment. He was one of the first Iranians to judge Iran by European standards and thus to perceive intellectual and social backwardness in the country. Unlike some of his contemporary statesmen and fellow revolutionaries in the 1880s and 1890s, he openly denounced Muslim institutions, the political regime, and the educational system as the real causes of national stagnation. At that point, very few were prepared to agree with him; a quarter-century later, his words found an echo in the works of Ahmad Kasravi.

The following is a list of Kermani's works: (1) *Ketab-e rezwan*, his first work, begun in 1295/1878 in Kerman, continued in Isfahan, and completed in Istanbul in 1304/1886-87, with later additions. An imitation of Saʿdi's *Golestan*, it contains proverbs, sayings, anecdotes, poems, and biographical notes. (2) *Aʿina-ye Eskandari*, a history of Iran from earliest times to the rise of Islam. Begun in 1307/1889, it was probably finished in 1891 (published in 2 vols., Tehran, 1324-26/1906-08). The second part dealing with the history of Iran from the advent of Islam down to the Saljuqs is apparently lost. (3) *Hârekmat-e nazari* and *Hašt behešt* (Tehran, 1339 Š./1960, including a biographical introduction by M. Afzal-al-molk Kermani), two undated Babi metaphysical treatises inspired by western and Muslim philosophical and theological concepts. Both volumes, intended as two parts of a single work, were written in collaboration with Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi in Istanbul.

Although the authors state their intention to expound and analyze Babi religious and philosophical concepts, they have, in fact, added ideas inspired by modern western secular thought. The second work can be confidently dated to 1892; E. G. Browne (*Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion*, Cambridge, 1918, p. 78) indicates that he received a recently completed manuscript of *Hašt behešt* in that year; the last chapter of that book refers to Baha'Allah's death "a few months ago," and the Baha'i leader died in May, 1892. (4) *Haftad o do mellat*, a short essay largely based on a direct translation of Bernadin de Saint Pierre's *Café de Surat*, to which Mirza Aqa Khan added a few of his own ideas. A critique of the fanaticism and narrow-mindedness of all religions and sects, it was meant to be a preface to *Hekmat-e nazari* (*Adamiyat*, *Andišaha*, pp. 49-50), but was published separately as *Jang-e haftad o do mellat* (Berlin, 1924). (5) *Resala-ye en ša? Allah ma ša? Allah*, a short pamphlet criticizing both Sunnite and Shi'ite 'olama' for their fruitless and pedantic scholarship. It was written in Istanbul in Rajab, 1310/January, 1893 as a refutation of a treatise by Hajj Mohammad Karim Kermani, the leader of the Shaikhis; published (*Adamiyat*, *Andišaha*, p. 53). (6) Translation of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, not completed, unpublished. Aqa Khan's articles for *Aktar* appeared in a column entitled "Dar fann-e goftan o neveštan," which was contributed from vol. 15, no. 37 to vol. 16, no. 11. His *Divan* was published in lithograph edition by 'Abd-al-Hosayn Mirza Farmanfarma (Tehran, n.d.). (7) *Se maktub* and (8) *Sad kataba*, two volumes on Iranian history and society following 19th-century European natural sciences and socio-anthropological theories. They are written in the form of letters from a fictional Persian prince living in India, to another fictional prince in Persia; in spite of the titles, vol. I includes one letter, and vol. II, forty-two. *Se maktub* is similar to Akundzada's book of the same title, though with major differences (see F. Adamiyat "Se maktub-e Mirza Fath-'Ali, se maktub o sad kataba-ye Mirza Aqa Khan," *Yagma* 19, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 362-67, 425-28). This work is undated, but given the references to western writers and their ideas, it was probably written in Istanbul. E. G. Browne states that *Se maktub* was written in 1280/1863-64 in an obvious confusion with Akundzada's work; at that time, Mirza Aqa Khan was barely ten years old. (Selections published by M. Mohit Tabataba'i, "Ostandari-e Susmar-al-dawla," *Mohit* 2/9, 1326 Š./1947, pp. 18-22; 10, pp. 18-21; 11, pp. 20-22; 12, pp. 7-11; 13, pp. 18-19; 14, pp. 13-14, and R. Rezazada Malek, *Susmar-al-dawla*, pp. 125-29, 132-65). (9) *Takwin wa tašri?*, a philosophical essay, heavily influenced by western natural scientists and empirical theories. It is undated but the subject again suggests that it was written in Istanbul; unpublished. (10) *Tarik-e šanzman-e Iran*, eighteen sheets of an unfinished critical essay on the impact of the Omayyad Caliphate and the coming of the Mongols. It was probably written in Trebizond (*Adamiyat*, *Andišaha*, p. 46); unpublished. (11) *Nama-ye bastan*, a verse epic relating the history of pre-Islamic Persia in imitation of Ferdowsi's *Šah-nama*. The last part contains an essay on literary criticism and a few patriotic poems. It was

written and completed in Trebizond in 1313/1895; a second volume (Salar-nama) was added by a former classmate, Shaikh Ahmad Adib Kermani, to relate the history of Islamic Iran. Both volumes were published under the second title (Shiraz, 1316/1898), without the last part of volume one; this was published by Nazem-al-eslam Kermani in his *Tarik-e bidari-e Iranian* (Tehran, 3 vols., 1324-32 Š./1945-53, I, pp. 177-88). (12) *Ketab-e rayhan*, his last work, written in Trebizond a few months before his death and not completed. It is essentially a critique of Persian literature in general and a call for a new genre of *littérature engagée*; unpublished. (13) *Tarjama-ye ?ahd-nama-ye Malek Aštar* (Tehran, 1321/1903). A number of his works have been lost, probably due to the confiscation of his papers by the Ottomans at the time of his arrest. For a list and discussion of them see *Adamiyat* (*Andišaha*, pp. 37-57). He is also credited with assisting Mirza Habib Esfahani, in whose house he lived for some two years, in his Persian translation of Morier's *Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan*.

Bibliography : See also F. *Adamiyat*, *Andišaha-ye Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1967. *Bamdad*, Rejal II, pp. 253-57. R. Padidar, "Si sal pas az rajol-e ejtema'i-e bozorg-e Iran Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani," *Farhang* 3/8-9, 1305 Š./1926, pp. 1-28; 10-11, pp. 29-60; 12, pp. 61-70. Kasravi, *Mašruta* 2, pt. 1, pp. 187-93. M. Dabestani Kermani, "Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani," *Yagma* 2, 1328 Š./1949, pp. 255-59; 3, 1329 Š./1950, pp. 82-87. N. Fathi, "Tarik-e šanzman-e Iran," *Negin* 2/9, 1344 Š./1965, pp. 33-37. *Idem*, "Tarik-e šanzman-e Iran," *Barg-e ?ayš*, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 123-46. M. Golbon, "Majara-ye qatl-e Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani . . .," *Yagma* 24/4, 1350 Š./1971, pp. 232-38. Y. Aryanpur, *Az Saba ta Nima I*, Tehran, 1351 Š./1972, pp. 250, 378, 390-94. N. Keddi, *Sayyid Jamal-al-din "al-Afghani"*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972, pp. 377-78, 417-18. R. Rezazada Malek, *Susmar-al-dawla*, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975, pp. 91-125. M. Bayat-Philipp, "Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani: a Nineteenth-Century Persian Nationalist," *Middle Eastern Studies* 10, 1974, pp. 36-59. *Idem*, "The Concepts of Religion and Government in the Thought of Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, a Nineteenth-Century Persian Revolutionary," *IJMES* 5, 1974, pp. 381-400. M. Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Sociological Thought in Qajar Iran*, Syracuse, 1982, pp. 140-42.

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