

OSMANLI ARAŐTIRMALARI VII-VIII

EDITORS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE
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THE JOURNAL OF OTTOMAN STUDIES VII-VIII

İstanbul - 1988

SHEYKH BĀLĪ EFENDI'S REPORT ON THE FOLLOWERS
OF SHEYKH BEDREDDĪN

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The late Professor W. Minorski, in his article on Sheykh Bālī Efendi, the cađi of Sofia (d. 1553), - «Sheykh Bālī-Efendi on the Safavids», *BSOAS*, vol. 20 (1957), 437-450 - treats in detail the Sheykh's letter to the Grand Vezir Rüstem Pasha on the history, beliefs, and practices of the Kyzylbash; but on p. 448 he also briefly mentions Bālī Efendi's report on the followers of Sheykh Bedreddīn of Simavna, who according to this report at that time were still continuing their activities in the remote area of Deli Orman. This memorandum had been mentioned, and a section from it had been published, by Köprülüzāde Mehmed Fu'ād in his «Bemerkungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasiens» (*Mitteilungen zur osmanischen Geschichte*, vol. 1 [1921/22], 203-222), written at the occasion of the appearance of Franz Babinger's article «Schejch Bedr ed-dīn» in *Der Islam*, vol. 11 (1921), 1-106. In a footnote on p. 212 ff. Köprülü quotes the document after a printed commentary of Yazıcızāde Mehmed's *Muhammedīye* (Isma'īl Hāqqı Brüsevī, *Ferahı r-rūh*, Bulaq, 1256/1840). Since the document has - to my knowledge - never been published in extenso, it may be useful to publish it here from an early 17th century copy in a codex of mixed collectanea (University of California at Los Angeles Research Library, Special Collections Division, codex 898, T 6-325).

Text (no pagination)

Sofyali Bālī efendi merhūmun ba'zı melāhıde haqqında ve zenādiqa haqqında päye-i serir-i a'lāya gönderdikleri 'arzuñ şüretidür.

Çün selâfîn-i nâmdâr
 ve xavâqîn-i 'âli-miqdâr
 fi nefsi l-emr hâfız-i dîn-i mübîndür
 ve hâmi-yi sünen-i Seyyidü l-mürselîndür.
 her-gâh-ki hâbl-i metîn-i şer'-i mübîn
 der ta'aruz-i küffâr
 ve melâhide-i bed-kirdâr/dan
 nev'an bir 'uqde vâqi' ola
 benân-i rumh u sinân ile ol 'uqdeyi hâll eylemek
 ve her vaqt-ki dâyire-i fesîha-i 'arşa-i islâmdan
 a'mâl-i qabiha-i erbâb-i bed' ü küfr u zalâlden
 fi l-cümle noqta-i tağayyür bula,
 tiğ-i tiz
 ve xancer-i xûn-rîz
 ile ol noqtayı hakk edüb gidermek
 serdâr-i zi-qadr
 ve pâdişâh-i üli l-emr
 olanlara lâzîmdur.
 Eyle olsa,
 şeyx Bedreddîn-i Sîmâvî el-maşlûb
 ve 'inde llâh el-mağzûb
 neslinden Çelebî Xalife demeg-ile meşhûr bir kimesne
 ki zâll u muzil
 ve muxtell u muxil
 serdâr-i melâhide-i bed-kirdâr
 ve ser-çeşme-i zenâdiqa-i zalâlet-âşâr
 qâfi'-i hâbl-i metîn-i şer'-i mübîn,
 râfi'-i dîn-i zalâlet-âyîn,
 ser-leşker-i gümrâhân
 ve ser-xayl-i ehl-i bağy u tuğyân/dur,
 vilâyet-i Dobrice ve Deli Orman ahâlisi -
 bil-'umûm la'netü llâh 'aleyhim! -
 şeyx-i mezbûrdan inâbet
 ve tarîqa-i bâtilasına irâdet
 getirüb
 her-gâh bir yere gelüb
 cem'iyet qıldıqlarında meclislerinde şarâb u rubâb,
 ixvân u axevât,

zenān u gilmān
hāzīrūn olub

şeyx-i gümrāh-i xōd-perest
bādeden evgār [u] mest
qadeh der dest

naş u pend[e] āgāz itdükde
ve ser-firāzlıq idüb

«Cennetde şarāb gelür didükleri şarāb
bu şarāb-i gam-zidā
ve feraḥ-baxşā/dur
ve Kevşer didükleri leb-i dilber
ve şeyxün kelimāt-i tayyibesi
ve enfās-i qudsiyesi/dür
ve ḥūrī didükleri
işbu gelinler ve duxterlerdür
ve gilmān didükleri
işbu civānlar ve emredlerdür
ve cennet didükleri
işbu dünyādur-ki süfre-i Ḥaqqdur,
cemī'-i ni'am-i ilāhī bundadır.

Umūr-i āxiret ve 'ulemā ve rūsüm

fehmi itdükleri gibi degüldür
çürüb-i emşāl idüğinden gāfillerdür"
deyü nice hezelīyāt
ve mühmelāt
ve küfrīyāt / söyleyüb

"Ve bu saqf-i mīnā sanmañuz kim fenā bulacaqdur
ve bu mülkūn şāhibi daxı mülkinden taşra olacaqdur,
belki insādadur,

her kim insāni bildi, [Köprülü: Ḥaqqı bildi.]

Er Ḥaqqdur! [Köprülü: Ana l-Haqq!]"

didükleri [Köprülü: didükde]

ol furuq-i zālle ve müfsidīn ve mürīdīn cümlesi "Er Ḥaqq" deyüb
şeyx-i bī-sedāda sücūd idüb

"Pīr-i men xudāy-i men, dervīş u dervīşān

[Köprülü : dervīş dervīşāne] deyüb

şam'lara yūf denilüb

derūn-i zulemātda meh [Köprülü: md, with question mark]

çanaq, beri çanaq olub
 sedd-i şer'ati yıqub
 Ye'cüc u Me'cüc mişal nice fesād u fitneye bā'is
 ve nice sāde-dil ehl-i hevānun 'aқidesi nā-pākligine
 sebeb olurlar
 ve bil-cümle o ser-xalqa-i müfsidīn
 ve ser-pence-i mülhidīn/ūn
 noqta-i vücūdların şafha-i 'ālemden hākk etmek
 gayretü d-dīn lillāhi l-metīn
 ve hāmīyetü ş-şer'i l-mübīn,
 farz-i 'ayn, belki 'ayn-i farzdur.
 Bā xuşuş emr-i pādīşāhī
 ve fermān-i şehensāhī / ile
 bir cāmi'-i şerīf binā qıl[ın]mişdur,
 evqāt-i xamse edā olunmadığından gayri
 şalāt-i cum'a daxı qılınmayub
 gāv u xer-xāne olub
 mücerred gendülere serā-perde-i 'ayb-püş qılmışlardur,
 ne ān-ki ol cāmi'-i şerīfūn bināsi hāsbeten lillāh
 vāqi' olmuş ola
 "wa min an-nāsi man yattaxıdu min dūni llāhi andādan
 yuḥıbbūnahum ka-ḥıbbi llāhi" (Sura 2:165)
 hāsb-i ḥālleri vāqi' olmuşdur,
 Ol gümrāhuñ xōd xālīfeleri cihānı tutmuşdur,
 ne ān-ki ancaq Dobruca vilāyetine maxşuş ola.
 Vel-ḥāşıl-i kelām, pādīşāh-i dīn u qadr
 ve şehensāh-i ūli l-emr
 olanlara vācib ve lāzım ve ehemdür-ki
 "yā ayyuhā llađīna āmanū künū anşāra llāhi" (Sura 61:14)
 emrine şāmīm-i dilden im[ti]şāl idüb
 maḥżan ihyā-yi merāsım-i şerī'at - 'azze ve a'lā -
 kelimetü llāhi l-'ulyā için bu muqaddime-i zālāl u ixtilāle
 bā'is olanlaruñ muqtezā-i şer'-i şerīf üzre ḥaqlarından
 gelmesine emr-i şerīf-i 'ālī-şān vārid ola.
 Xuşuş-i qıssanuñ vuqū'ına itlā'-i tām
 ve yaqīn-i temām / olunmağın
 izhār-i mā hüve l-ḥaқ olunub
 'alā vechi l-icāz ve l-icmāl

xavfan 'ani t-taşdı' ve l-implâl,
 hamiyeten ve ğayreten,
 lâ ğarażan ve marażan
 turāb-i bāb-i sa'ādete 'arż olundi.
 Bāqī emr u fermān der-i 'adluñdur.

Translation

Copy of a memorandum (*'arz*) concerning certain apostates and atheists, which the late Bāli Efendi of Sofia sent to the foot of the lofty throne.

Since the renowned sultans and mighty emperors are par excellence the preservers of the revealed faith and the protectors of the practices of the Lord of the Prophets, whenever there occurs - so to speak - a knot in the strong rope of the revealed sacred law from the opposition of the evil-doing Infidels and apostates, it is the duty of the mighty commanders and disposing rulers to undo this knot using lances and spearheads as their fingers, and whenever hideous dots of revolutionary, impious, misguided acts disparage the wide expanse of the world of Islam, to erase these spots with the sharp sword and the blood-shedding dagger.

Therefore [be it known that] a certain Chelebi Khalife, the [spiritual] descendent of Sheykh Bedreddin of Simayna, the one punished by execution and hit by God's wrath, [has appeared], a misguided man misguiding others, subverted and subversive, the commander of the evil-doing apostates, the fountain-head of the maleficent atheists, the tearer of the strong rope of sacred law, the crime-addicted abolisher of pious living, the fieldmarshal of those who have gone astray, the leader of the gang of uproar and revolt. The inhabitants of the province of Dobrudja and Deli Orman - may God's wrath be upon them all! - take the afore-said sheykh's blessing and join his false order. Whenever they meet and hold a congregation, wine and rebeck, brothers and sisters, old and young, women and youths are all present. The gone-astray, self-seeking sheykh, bemused and intoxicated from the wine, the cup in his hand, begins his haughty sermon and admonitions :

"The wine which they say will come in Paradise is this wine, this sorrow-chaser and joy-producer... and what they call Kauthar are the lips of the beloved and the sheykh's wholesome speech and sacred breath... and what they call the houries are these young women and girls [over here] ... and what they call the youths [of Paradise] are those young men and beardless boys [over there] ... and what they call Paradise is this world, God's table filled with divine delicacies. Those matters as afterlife, doctors of law, taxes are not as they think; they don't know that these are mere parables..."

Thus he speaks spreading obscenities, nonsense and blasphemies. "...and don't believe that this azure dome will not last forever... and that the Ruler of this kingdom should be outside of His kingdom, nay, He is in man [s heart] ... whoever knows man knows God... man is God..."

Thereupon all of those misguided crowds, those evildoers, [his] disciples, shout: "Man is God!" and prostrate themselves in front of that deceitful sheykh: "My sheykh (*pir*, head of the order) is my God... the beggar (dervish) and the beggars (dervishes)!"

[At this instant] the candles are blown out. In the [ensuing] darkness they play Take-the-Bowl-Return-the-Bowl [tentative translation of unknown expression], the bulwark of the holy law is knocked down and [rushing forth] like Gog and Magog, countless crimes and abominations take place and the morals of many simple-hearted ones, victims of their senses, are corrupted.

In short, to erase the dot of existence of that main link of the evildoers, that fist of the apostates, from the page of the world is [a manifestation of] firm religious ardor and of zeal for the revealed sacred law, an individual religious duty, nay, religious duty itself.

In particular, a noble mosque was built [there] upon Imperial order, [obeying] the Sultan's firman. [Yet] not only are the five daily ritual prayers not performed there, not even the Friday service is held. It has become a shed for cattle and asses. Far from being [an edifice] erected out of religious motives, this noble mosque was to them but a curtain behind which to hide their disgraceful

attitude of which it has been said (Sura 2:165): "But there are some people who have taken unto themselves rivals to God, loving them with a love due only to God".

The deputies (khalife) of these apostates have spread over the entire world; alas, they are not limited to the province of Dobrudja.

To conclude: It has become imperative, a necessity and a duty, for those who are the rulers of the religious and worldly state, the power-wielding Sultans, from the depth of their heart to conform with the [divine] order (Sura 61:14) "O you who believe, be God's helpers!" by issuing a noble command to punish, in the manner prescribed by the noble sacred law, those who have been the cause of this incipient aberration and subversion, in particular, in order to restore the holy law - may God honor and exalt it! - and the Divine word.

The truth of this report has been stated through thorough investigation and with absolute certainty. [This information] is being submitted to the dust of the Gate of Felicity as an expression of the real facts, [formulated] in concise and abridged manner out of fear to importunate and to aggrieve, inspired by public spirit and religious zeal, not by self-interest and morbidity.

[The matter is now up to] the order and command of the Gate of Justice.

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Minorski seems to have assumed that the leader of the sect described in the document is Sheykh Bedreddin himself. The text, however, makes it clear that the person in question is a later successor (khalife) to the founder-sheykh. Bālī Efendi, who lived more than a century later than Sheykh Bedreddin, is asking the Sultan to take action against the sect. His report proves that the remote area of Deli Orman, once the center of Bedreddin's activities, still housed his adherents under the leadership of a khalife in the first half of, or middle of, the 16th century. The fact that Bālī Efendi's report was copied by someone about 60 years after his demise indicates that the matter still was of concern and importance though it would be going too far to see in it conclusive proof that the sect had survived until that time.

