



## From Benjamin David to Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud: the Story of a Chaldean Christian's Conversion to Islam in the Early 20th Century

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### Abstract

Benjamin David is a Christian convert to Islam, born in Iran in Urmia in 1866 and died in 1950 in the United States. He was a Chaldean-Assyrian Christian and later became a Catholic, after his primary education at an American college, run by Protestant missionaries in Urmia, he studied theology and philosophy at Propaganda Fide College in Rome and became a priest. He served as a Catholic priest to his own community in Urmia, where different missions rivalled each other to convert an already Christian community. Missionaries' activities were directly controlled by the Colonial interests of their respected countries. They opened up several schools, hospitals and centers of social work. Benjamin David was very much involved in the missionary work, and the nascent nationalism among Assyrian Christians. However, later on he realized that these enterprises and nationalism would eventually bring nothing but collapse to his own community. Dawud converted to Islam in Istanbul in 1905. After his conversion, he changed his name to Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud, meaning the servant of the One God. He stayed in Istanbul until late twenties, writing articles in prominent journals in Istanbul, including *Beyanu'l Hakk*, and *Sebilürreşad*. He made contact with prominent intellectuals in Istanbul such as Ahmad Midhad, Mehmet Akif and Eshref Edip. He also published two books. In 1930 Dawud went to US and stayed there until his death, in an elderly home in Yonkers, New York. He is a fine biblical scholar who knows several ancient and modern languages. As a prolific writer and activist both before and after his conversion, he wrote several articles and books; most of which deal with the unity of Christians and anti-Christian polemics. He is a prominent polemic writer; his *İncil ve Salib* (The Gospel and the Cross) is a famous refutation of Christianity; which prompted a Christian response by Muallim Kirkoryan, *İzah-i Hakikat*. Some of the major themes of his thought prior to his conversion are 1. Unity of Christendom; 2. Assyrian Church; 3. Biblical studies. As for the topics after his conversion, we can mention 1. Islam as the final revelation and Muhammad's being foretold in both the Old and New Testaments (*Tabshirat*); 2. Issues and problems of Islamic world. Using a dossier of new documents compiled by a voluntary research team led by Mr Ulvi Asan on his life and works, and the current scholarship that appeared in Turkey, this paper will make a reconstruction of his life and works and a critical review of his views.

## Keywords

History of Religions, Conversion to Islam, Abd'ul-Ahad Dawud, Colonialism, Polemics against Christianity.



## Citation

Baş, Bilal. "From Benjamin David to Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud: the Story of a Chaldean Christian's Conversion to Islam in the Early 20th Century". *The Journal of Near East University Islamic Research Center* 11/1 (June 2025), 97-123. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neu.istem.2025.11.1.05>

Date of Submission	17.02.2025
Date of Acceptance	14.05.2025
Date of Publication	30.06.2025
Peer-Review	Double anonymized - Two External
Ethical Statement	Ethics Committee Permission is not required for this research. It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.
Plagiarism Checks	Yes - Turnitin
Conflicts of Interest	The author(s) has no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support	The author(s) acknowledge that they received no external funding in support of this research.
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## Benjamin Davud'dan Abdulahad Davud'a: Bir Keldanî Hristiyanının 20. Asır Başlarındaki İslam'a Giriş Öyküsü

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### Öz

Benjamin David İran'ın Urmiye şehrinde 1866 yılında doğmuş ve 1950 yılında Amerika'da vefat etmiş olan ve bir Keldani Hristiyanı iken İslam'a giren bir mühtedir. Önceleri Keldani-Asûrî hristiyanı iken Katolik mezhebine girmiştir. Urmiye'de American Protestan misyonierlerinin açtığı okullarda ilk öğrenimini tamamladıktan sonra Roma'daki Propoganda Fide College'da teoloji ve felsefe tahsili almış ve papaz olmuştur. Urmiye'de kendi milletine papazlık yapmıştır. Bu misyonierler çok sayıda okul, hastane ve sosyal yardım kurumu açmışlardır. Davud da onların bu iyiliksever çabalarına katkı vermiştir. Ayrıca yine onların getirdiği bir fikirle yeni uyanmakta olan Asuri milliyetçiliği hareketine de aktif olarak katılmıştır. Ancak zamanla bu farklı misyonier gruplarının geldikleri sömürge ülkelerinin çıkarlarına hizmet ettiklerinin farkına vararak, onların kendi milletine yıkımdan başka bir şey getiremeyeceklerini anlamıştır. Maalesef onun öngördüğü bu elim hadiseler gerçek olmuş ve Urmiye'deki Asuri halkı Rus kilisesine intisap edip Rusya'nın siyasi çıkarlarının peşine takılınca büyük katliam ve zulümlere maruz kalmışlardır. Dolayısıyla Prof. David'in hayatı kolonyalizmin acı dolu tecrübelerine ışık tutan bir örnek hadisedir. Bu elim hadiseler ve hayal kırıklıkları kendisinin tefekküre dalarak kendi dini üzerine düşünmesine yol açacaktır. Benjamin Davud 1904 yılında İstanbul'da Müslüman olmuş ve Abdulahad adını almıştır. Bu isim kendisi için çok önemli olan Tevhid akidesini vurgulamak için seçilmiştir. Yirmili yılların sonlarına kadar İstanbul'da yaşamıştır. Bu sırada *Beyanül Hakk* ve *Sebilürreşad* gibi önemli dergilerde makaleler yazmış ve başta, Ahmed Mithad Eşref Edip ve Mehmet Akif olmak üzere zamanının seçkin münevverleri arasında çalışmıştır. Bu sırada iki kitap basmıştır. 1930'da Amerika'ya gitmiş ve orada 1950 yılındaki vefatına kadar kalmıştır. Bir yaşlılar evinde vefat etmiş ve New York'un Yonkers şehrinde defnedilmiştir. Kendisi Müslüman olmadan önce ve sonra önemli bir eylem adamı hem de velut bir yazardır. Pek çok makale ve kitap yazmıştır. Müslüman olmadan önce yazdıkları genellikle Hristiyanların birliği konusuyla alakalıdır; İslam'a girişinden sonrakiler ise Hristiyanlık karşıtı polemliklerden oluşur. Prof. Dawud önde gelen bir reddiye yazarıdır. *İncil* ve *Salib* adlı reddiyesi Hristiyanlığa karşı önemli bir polemiktir. Eser Muallim Kirkoryan adlı bir papazın cevap mahiyetinde *İzah-i Hakikat* adlı kitabı yazmasına neden olmuştur. Her iki eser de Türkçedir. Dawud'un düşüncesindeki temel konular arasında şunlar sayılabilir: Müslüman olmadan önce, 1. Hristiyan aleminin birliği; 2. Asuri kilisesi; 3. Kitab-ı Mukaddes'le ilgili çalışmalar. İslam'a girdikten sonra ise, 1. İslam'ın son ve hakk din olduğu ve Muhammaed'in Eski ve Yeni Ahit'lerde müjdelenen peygamber olduğu

(tebşirat); 2. İslam aleminin sorunları. Bu makale Türkçe dilinde yapılmış yeni çalışmaları ve onun hakkında el değmemiş yeni bilgi ve belgelerden oluşan ve Sayın Ulvi Asan'ın önderliğinde bir gönüllü takım tarafından titizlikle toplanan belgelere, Fuat Aydın'ın katkılarıyla daha da zenginleşen bir dosyayı kullanmak suretiyle, Abdulahad Davud'un hayatını ve fikirlerini ortaya koyacaktır. Bu haliyle makalemiz İngilizce'de konuyla ilgili ilk çalışma olacaktır.

## Anahtar Kelimeler

Dinler Tarihi, ihtida, Abdülahad Davud, Kolonyalizm, Reddiye.

## Atıf Bilgisi

Baş, Bilal. "Benjamin Davud'dan Abdulahad Davud'a: Bir Keldanî Hristiyanının 20. Asır Başlarındaki İslam'a Giriş Öyküsü". *Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi İslam Tetkikleri Merkezi Dergisi* 11/1 (Haziran 2025), 97-123. <https://doi.org/10.32955/neu.istem.2025.11.1.05>

Geliş Tarihi	17.02.2025
Kabul Tarihi	14.05.2025
Yayın Tarihi	30.06.2025
Değerlendirme	İki Dış Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körleme
Etik Beyan	Bu araştırma için Etik Kurul İzni gerekmemektedir. Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.
Benzerlik Taraması	Yapıldı - Turnitin
Finansman	Bu araştırmayı desteklemek için dış fon kullanılmamıştır.
Telif Hakkı & Lisans	Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmalarının telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmaları CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.

## Introduction

On the 6th day of July, 1950, at 2.50 AM, a gentlemen, Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud died in Yonkers, New York at an old-age home. He was 85 at the time and was buried two days later.<sup>1</sup> It so seems that he had quite a lonely death. However, this gentlemen was no ordinary man. He was a prominent Catholic priest and theologian of Iranian origin, who later converted to Islam. Mr Dawud mastered several languages, ancient and contemporary, and produced several publications both prior to and after his conversion; as he was an important activist all throughout.

44 volumes of Turkish Diyanet Encyclopedia of Islam has a 700 words article on Abdulahad Dawud with the subtitle “A theologian and a priest who later converted to Islam and wrote a refutation against Christianity”.<sup>2</sup> It provides a brief biography of Davud and a list of his published works. However, several important events in his life, including the date of his death is missing for the lack of information.

In recent years, a remarkable team of amateur researchers in Turkey and in the States took pains to find every possible peace of information about his life and works; this resulted in an astonishing collection of documents, related to Dawud's life, his published books and articles as well as several studies on him.<sup>3</sup> The results of this dossier is now in the process of publication. Thanks to their efforts, we now have documented information on most of his life and achievements. In this essay, we aim to tell the story of his life and conversion to Islam and to give a brief analysis of his works and his major views. Since it is the first study in English on Prof. Dawud's life and works, we aim to focus more on his life and conversion to Islam and on his published works.<sup>4</sup> As for his views on the Bible and

<sup>1</sup> For his official death certificate see Doc. No.6. Sadiye Bakır formerly published this document: *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Abdülhad Davud'un Hayatı ve Fikirleri* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, MA Thesis, 2019), 89.

<sup>2</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, “Abdülhad Dâvûd”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1988), 1/177-178.

<sup>3</sup> Special thanks to Ulvi Asan, who dedicated so much in this cause, as well as to his teammates from Turkey and United States, including Ahmet Tan, Mustafa Tutar and Ibrahim Sınmazışık. Upon a recommendation and encouragement by the late Prof. Dr. M. Esad Coşan, to study the reasons and conditions for conversions of such prominent scholars and theologians to Islam, they all worked hard to trace every bit of information available for Prof. Dawud's life and works. The team also includes some family members of Prof Dawud, Julianne Hoffenberg and Doris D. Hoffenberg. Special thanks to them as they helped acquiring some important data and documents.

<sup>4</sup> There is a biographical essay on Dawud; Betül Avcı, “Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud”, *Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History Volume 18. The Ottoman Empire (1800-1914)*, ed. David Thomas - John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 229-236.

Christianity, we will only make some general remarks, leaving detailed elaborations for future studies.<sup>5</sup>

Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud deserves scholarly attention for many reasons. First of all throughout his life, he was a sincere seeker of truth who was always ready to pay any price for it. This alone makes his personality worthy of serious consideration. Second, as his writings reveal, he is an able theologian who could discuss the most difficult issues of Christian theology with remarkable ease and erudition; as well as a fine Biblical scholar with his mastery of several ancient Biblical languages. He seems to be aware of the findings of modern Biblical studies. Therefore, his in-depth analyses in both venues deserve to be treated seriously. Third, his conversion to Islam is motivated by conflicts of interest among different missionary groups who all worked to convert an already Christian community, the Assyrian-Chaldeans in Persia. So his story is implicated in colonialism and the Western missionary groups whose work were intricately connected to the colonial interests of their respective countries. Fourth, Prof. Dawud had a thorough education in the *Propoganda Fide College* in Rome on philosophy and theology. As a Catholic priest he represented his Chaldean-Assyrian community at the highest level both as a productive writer and as an activist. After his conversion in 1905, he made contacts with many prominent Muslim scholars and intellectuals in Istanbul; and later with Woking Muslim community in London, which published the highly acclaimed journal of *the Islamic Review*.<sup>6</sup> Therefore he was a remarkable figure and a prolific writer and activist both before and after his conversion. In addition, upon publication of Dawud's *İncil ve Salib* (the Gospel and the Cross)<sup>7</sup> in Istanbul in 1913, a polemical work against Christianity, a Christian scholar Muallim Kirkoryan penned a defense of Christianity against Dawud's claims.<sup>8</sup> Both books are in Turkish.

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<sup>5</sup> I presented an earlier draft of this paper at the American Academy of Religions (AAR) Conference, held between 17-20 Nov. 2018 in Denver, Colorado. Since then, a few studies have been made. Under my supervision Sadiye Bakır wrote an MA thesis on Dawud's life and works, utilizing some of the documents mentioned above; Bakır, *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Abdülehad Davud*; In addition, see Muhammed Salih Sefiloğlu, *Son Dönem Osmanlı'sında Bir Mühtedi: Abdülehad Davud* (İstanbul: Ibn Haldun University, MA Thesis, 2020); Hasan Darcan, *Bir Osmanlı Mühtedisi Olarak Abdülehad Davud*, (Sakarya: Sakarya University, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, MA Thesis, 2008); Betül Avcı, "Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud", *Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History Volume 18. The Ottoman Empire (1800-1914)*, ed. David Thomas - John Chesworth (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 229-236.

<sup>6</sup> This is the official magazine of the Woking Muslim Mission in London. The Journal was published from 1913 until 1971 in England, and from 1980 to 1989 in USA.

<sup>7</sup> Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud, *İncil ve Salib* (İstanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1913).

<sup>8</sup> Mu'allim Ohannes Kirkoryan, *İzâh-ı Hakikat, İncil ve Salib Nam Esere Cevab* (İstanbul: Keşişan Matbaası, 1914).

## 1. Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud's Life and Conversion to Islam:

On Abdulahad Dawud's life we have information from these sources: 1. A brief anonymous (muhtemelen kendisi tarafından kalame alınmış) biography of Prof Dawud, published in *the Islamic Review*, in February 1929; it continues until his conversion in 1905 in Istanbul.<sup>9</sup> 2. Turkish Diyanet Encyclopedia of Islam has article on Abdulahad Davud, with a brief biography, though some important information such as the date of his death missing. 3. Newly-found dossier of documents, including 29 documents related to his life in Istanbul, and 5 documents related to his stay in the States from 1930 until his death in 1950.<sup>10</sup> The following reconstruction of his life and works utilizes all of the above.

Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud is the former Father David Benjamin Keldani, a Roman Catholic priest of the Uniate-Chaldean sect, was born in 1866 in a village named Digala near Urmia. Situated accross the eastern border of Turkey, Urmia was one of the largest cities of Iran at the time, with a large Assyrian community of about 100,000 people. He was a member of Uniate-Chaldean community; these are the Assyrian Christians who became Catholics in the 16th century.<sup>11</sup>

19th century was the heyday of Christian missions in Persia, and Urmia seems to be the hub for missionary societies. Anglican, French Catholic, and American Presbyterian missionary societies were active. Towards the end of the century, a Russian Orthodox mission was also established in Urmia. Missionaries were engaged in proselytising, education, and health care. By the time Father Benjamin David (of Digala) was born, there were several foreign schools run by different missionary organizations; he had his primary education in an American college in Urmia.<sup>12</sup> Father Benjamin worked as a teacher from 1886-89 at the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission school. He got married Miss Gozel in 1887, who was from his Assyrian community and later had two children, both girls. Priscilla was born on May 5th, 1898, and Angelina was born on April 4th, 1901.<sup>13</sup> At the age of 26, in

<sup>9</sup> This Anonymous biography is republished as part of the front matter for *Muhammad in the Bible*, which is a compilation of his articles in *the Islamic Review*. See; Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible* (Doha: Presidency of Shariyah Courts and Religious Affairs, 1980), 7-10.

<sup>10</sup> I especially thank Mr Ulvi Asan to provide me full access to these documents. The entire collection of the documents related to his life will be published at Fuat Aydın - Habib Kartaloğlu, *İttihad-ı İslamcı Bir Mühtedi, Abdülahad Davud (Hayatı ve Eserleri)* (Ankara: Server Yayınları, 2025). We will refer to the following documents (their copies are attached at the end of the essay): MŞH.SAİD.13.7.1 (Doc. No. 2); MŞH.SAİD.13.7.6 (Doc. No.3).

<sup>11</sup> For detailed information See Heleen I. Murre- van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language: The Introduction and Development of Literary Urmia Aramaic in the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 33-38.

<sup>12</sup> For the 19<sup>th</sup> century missions in Urmia see, Murre- van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language*, 43-86.

<sup>13</sup> See Doc. No. 4.

1892, Father Benjamin was sent by Cardinal Vaughan to Rome, to the *Propaganda Fide College* to study philosophy and theology. During this period he wrote a series of articles in *The Tablet* and the *Irish Record*. These articles were on “Assyria, Rome and Canterbury” and on the authenticity of the Pentateuch. He also made translations of *Ave Maria* in different languages, which were published in the *Illustrated Catholic Missions*. He was ordained as Catholic priest in 1895.<sup>14</sup>

After his ordination in 1895 he returned to Persia, and on his journey to Urmia he visited Istanbul, during which he penned articles in the daily paper *The Levant Herald* in English on the Eastern Churches. On his arrival in Urmia he joined the French Lazarist mission and published a journal in Syriac called *Qâlâ d-Srârâ* (i.e. the voice of truth).<sup>15</sup> In 1897 he represented the Eastern Catholics in the Eucharistic Congress held at Paray-le-Monial in France under the presidency of Cardinal Perroud. He read a paper in the congress which was called “Le Pellerin” of that year and published in the *Annals of the Eucharistic Congress*; he criticized the Catholic system of education among the Nestorians, and informed the participants about the imminent danger of a Russian mission in Urmia. A year later he returned to Urmia and opened up a free school for children in his native village Digala, about a mile from the city. In 1899 he was sent by ecclesiastical authorities to take charge of the diocese of Salmas, to solve the conflict between the Eastern Church Archbishop Khudabash and the Lazarist Fathers. In 1899, Russian Orthodox missionaries came in the region in addition to Catholic, German, Anglican and American Protestant missions. Apparently they all fought against each other to win over the Assyrians to their respective churches. These conflicts, which were always to the detriment of his own people, seems to be the main cause that triggered Dawud to ponder on the truthfulness of his own religion.<sup>16</sup>

In the new year of 1900, Prof. Dawud read his last sermon to a large congregation in the Cathedral of St. George's Khorovabad, Selmas. In the sermon titled “New Century and New Man” Prof. Dawud stated that the Anglican, American Protestant, and Catholic missions contributed to the well-being of the Assyrian-Chaldean nation by providing them with primary education and health care services. However, they also divided the nation, already a handful, in Persia and Mesopotamia into numerous hostile sects. He warned his people to try to stand on their own and do not depend on foreign missions. A new Russian Mission was established in Urmia in 1899 and the Nestorians were now embracing the religion of the Tsar. With the coming of the Russians, five missions -Americans, Anglicans, French,

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<sup>14</sup> Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> This journal is published between 1897 and 1915. Only a few issues from the second and third year came down to us. R. Macuch presents an overview of these sections: *Geschichte der spät- und neusyrischen Literatur* (New Jersey: Georgias Press, 2009), 194-201. See also Murre-van den Berg, *From a Spoken to a Written Language*, 113.

<sup>16</sup> Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible*, 9.



Germans, and Russians- were struggling to convert about 100,000 Assyrian-Chaldeans from the Nestorian religion into their own. In this last sermon, Father Benjamin warned his people that if they continued to follow the propaganda of the missionaries, it would lead them to catastrophies and collapse.

Professor David Benjamin suffered much from inter-denominational conflicts and it is understandable that the issue of the unity of Christian churches often occupies his writings.<sup>17</sup> After this last sermon, he went for a retreat in his own village for a month during which he made intensive readings of the Bible from their original languages. He resigned from his position as priest with a formal resignation which he sent to the Uniate Archbishop of Urmia, Mar Touma Audu. Following his resignation, he worked for a few months for the Belgian post company, and then was employed by the Crown Prince Muhammad Ali Mirza as teacher and translator where he worked until 1903. He then went to England, where he joined the Unitarian Community. A year later the British and Foreign Unitarian Association sent him to Urmia to educate and enlighten his own people. On his way to Persia, he visited Istanbul where he met Sheikh al-Islam (Minister of Religious Affairs) Cemaleddin Efendi and other scholars of Islam; and upon conversation with them he officially converted to Islam and took a new name: Abdulahad (servant of the One). This was a symbolic choice by him stressing his belief in the absolute unity of God against the Trinity.<sup>18</sup>

For the next 22 years or so, Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud stayed in Istanbul. The period of his life we have plenty of documents. It so seems that he had a very difficult time in Istanbul with brief employments and mostly in poverty. He was appointed by the Ottoman government to some jobs as teacher, translator and secretary, among which he was unemployed as a free-lance author.<sup>19</sup> It was a very difficult time for Ottoman State as well. For it faught three wars consecutively between 1911 and 1913: Tripoli war against Italians, and then two Balkan wars against Greece, Bulgaria, and Serbia. After all of these wars, Ottoman state was yet to engage in 1914 in the First World War against England and allies in side with Germans; which ended with its total collapse in 1918.

Accordig to the documents, Sheikh al-Islam Cemaleddin Efendi (1848-1919)<sup>20</sup> wrote a petition to the ministry of education to employ Dawud as a teacher or translator. From 1905

<sup>17</sup> For instance, Abdülâhad Davud, "Kiliselerin İttiahadı Mümkün Müdür", *Sebilürreşad* 16/398-9 (20 Mart 1335), 88-90.

<sup>18</sup> Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> For his employments in Istanbul see Doc. No. 3.

<sup>20</sup> He was a prominent statesman who served as the minister of religious affairs (Shaikh al-Islam) of Abdu'l-Hamid II from 1891 until 1909. On July 21, 1905, after friday prayer, Sultan Abdu'l-Hamid spend a few minutes with him, and this brief conversation saved sultan's life from a suicide plot organized by Armenian terrorists. Cemaleddin Efendi was always supportive of Prof. Dawud, and through him Dawud met various prominent scholars and intellectuals in Istanbul. For Cemaleddin

he worked as a teacher in Darussafaka School for about one year. His mastery of languages of French, Italian, Latin and Persion made him to get employed as a servant in the committee of inspection and examination on April 10, 1906. Later he left his position as teacher on Oct 14, 1906. He was laid off on Aug 14 from the committee of inspection and examination in 1908 for which he received a compensation payment on Oct 2, 1909, in the amount of 4031 kuruş. He was re-employed at Meşihat on May 26, 1914 and as a servant in Ceride-i Aliyye on August 30, 1914. But he was dismissed on Jan 14, 1915.<sup>21</sup> According to our sources, after this last incident, Abdulahad Dawud had to leave Istanbul. However we think that he might have spent another ten years until 1925, but we have no evidence to prove that except for a brief editor's note at the beginning of his article in *the Islamic Review's* October 1927 issue which states that he was in Istanbul until previous year.<sup>22</sup>

During this time Abdulahad Dawud made contacts with many prominent intellectuals and scholars in Istanbul and became a quite well-known scholar with his knowledge of Christianity and the Bible. He published two books<sup>23</sup> and several articles in the well-known *Sebil-ur Rashad*, a journal published by Eshref Edip<sup>24</sup> and Mehmet Akif<sup>25</sup>, who was later to become the national poet of the Turkish Republic, as his poem won the great prize for national anthem.

From his departure from Istanbul until 1930 when he traveled from Marsaille to the United States by a vessel called *Patria*, Abdulahad Dawud might have lived in England or perhaps Marsaille. For he wrote several articles in the well-known journal of the *Islamic Review* in 1920's and early thirties. This journal was published by the Woking Muslim Mission & Literary Trust which was situated in the Shah Cehan Mosque, Surrey, London.<sup>26</sup> This was one of the very first Muslim societies in England, established early in the 20th century. The same community published catalogues of the British Muslim converts to Islam

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Efendi see the following article Mehmet İpsirli, "Cemaleddin Efendi, Halidefendizade", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1993), 7/309-310.

<sup>21</sup> See Doc. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Abdu'l-Ehad Davoud, "Ahmad in the Old Testament", *Islamic Review* (October 1927), 354-358.

<sup>23</sup> *İncil ve Salib (The Gospel and the Cross)* (İstanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1913); Dawud, Abdu'l-Ahad, *Esrâr-ı İseviye- Allah Bir midir, Üç müdür? (The Secrets of Jesus-Is God One or Three?)* (İstanbul: Maarif Kütüphanesi, 1916).

<sup>24</sup> See Sadık Albayrak, "Eşref Edip Fergan", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 11/473-474.

<sup>25</sup> See M. Orhan Okay and M. Ertuğrul Düzdağ, "Mehmed Akif Ersoy", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2003), 28/432-439.

<sup>26</sup> For detailed information on the Woking Muslim Mission See Jamie Gilham, *Loyal Enemies: British Converts to Islam, 1850-1950* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 123.

with the title *Islam Our Choice*, a photo and a brief biography of each convert followed by a short quotation from their own description of their conversion take place on each page.<sup>27</sup>

Of his life in the United States we know little. He moved from Marsaille on the vessel named Patria of Atlantic Ports Company on May 30th, 1930 and arrived in Rhode Island port on September 11th, 1930.<sup>28</sup> We know that he applied for the American citizenship on December 3rd, 1938 and became an American citizen on December 4th, 1941. On July 6th, 1950 he passed away and buried in Yonkers, New York.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud's Works

Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud was a prolific writer both prior to and after his conversion. Before his conversion, he normally used his name as Benjamin David, under which he penned a series of articles in *The Tablet* in 1892-1893, titled "Assyria, Rome, and Canterbury".<sup>30</sup> This ten-part article gives a sketch of the present state of Chaldeo-Assyrian Church. Prof Davud wrote a two-part scholarly essay titled "The Authenticity of the Pentateuch" in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*.<sup>31</sup> They are penned to defend the authenticity of the Pentateuch against several attacks launched by the modern Biblical scholars of the 19th century. The essays reveal the indepth knowledge of the author on the intricate issues and problems raised by modern Biblical scholarship. Prof. Benjamin David stayed for some time in Istanbul on his way from Urmia to England, during which he published a series of articles in an English newspaper *The Levant Herald* on the topic of the Eastern Churches. The anonymous biography indicates the year of this journey as 1895. However, Fuat Aydın traced those articles from the issues published between August to December, 1894.<sup>32</sup> Dawud presents detailed information on the history, rites and present state of the Assyrian and Syrian churches. We already mentioned that he was instrumental in publishing a journal in Syriac

<sup>27</sup> Dawud's portrait and a short info about his conversion appears in one of their catalogues, See S.A. Khulussi (comp.), *Islam Our Choice (Unabridged)* (London: The Woking Muslim Trust and Mission, 1961), 144.

<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the efforts of Mr Ulvi Asan we have a copy of his ticket. See it attached at the end of the essay (Doc. No. 1 and Doc.2 is his document of arrival).

<sup>29</sup> Docs No. 4 to 7.

<sup>30</sup> All of his articles are diligently traced from the archives of which were missing in the previous studies) by Fuat Aydın, they are in the process of publication in Turkish translation. See Fuat Aydın-Feyza Betül Aydın, *İttihad-ı İslamcı Bir Mühtedi: Abdülahad Davud (Makaleleri)* (Ankara: Server Yayınları, 2025). I hereby thank the authors for special permission to use some of Dawud's writings as well as their publication info. For Dawud's writing see also Darcan, *Bir Osmanlı Mühtedisi Olarak Abdülehad Davud*, 9-13; Bakır, *Yeni Belgeler Işığında Abdülahad Davud*, 9-14; Sefiloğlu, *Son Dönem Osmanlı'sında Bir Mühtedi* 7-15; and Avcı, "Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud".

<sup>31</sup> The first part, August 1894, pp. 682-694; the second part, September 1894, pp. 769-787.

<sup>32</sup> See Aydın *Abdülahad Davud (Makaleleri)* (Ankara: Server Yayınları, 2025). I thank him for letting me seeing the copies of the articles.

named *Qâlâ d-šrara* (i.e. the Voice of Truth) in 1895, however we cannot get hold of his writings in this journal, except for the information mentioned above.

Following his conversion to Islam, Abdu'l-Ahad Dawud penned several articles in various journals in Istanbul and later in England. He also published he two books in Istanbul:

**Beyânülhak<sup>33</sup> Articles:** Prof. Dawud wrote 20 articles in the *Beyânülhak* between 1908 and 1910. All of the articles are written with a unity of the Islamic world (Ummah) perspective and mostly about the conditions of the Muslims in different parts of the World and major political developments related to the Muslims.<sup>34</sup>

**İncil ve Salib (The Gospel and the Cross):** This is his first book. It is published in 1913 in Istanbul in Turkish. The cover page states that the book is the first volume of the two; but the second volume probably never appeared. It is a polemic against Christianity and has the aim of proving that Gospels and Jesus came to foretell the coming of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. It has a fine critical edition in contemporary Turkish by Kudret Buyukcoskun, published in 1999.<sup>35</sup>

**Sebîlürreşad Articles:** During his stay in Istanbul, Dawud wrote nine articles between 1914 to 1919 in the journal of *Sebîlürreşad*. The journal was published by prominent Muslim intellectuals such as Eşref Edip and Mehmet Akif from 1908 until 1925.<sup>36</sup> Among their topics the unity of Christian churches (4), spread of Islam in England (2), Christian missionaries (1), Churches position on the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine (1) and a book review.<sup>37</sup>

**Müslüman Olan Papaz: Esrar-ı İseviyye, Allah Bir Midir, Üç Müdür? (The Priest who converted to Islam. The Secrets of Jesus, Is God one or three):** It is first published in Istanbul in 1916<sup>38</sup> in Ottoman Turkish; and has a critical edition published in Latin letters published

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<sup>33</sup> This journal was published between 1908 and 1912, with a total 182 issues. Muslim Scholars close to the unity and progress (*İttihad ve Terakki*) and pan-Islamist ideologies published this journal. Prof Dawud seems to be among the prominent authors. For more information about the journal See Ekrem Bektaş, “Beyânülhak”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1992), 6/34-35.

<sup>34</sup> For a full list of the articles see, Fuat Aydın-Habib Kartaloğlu, *İttihad-ı İslamcı Bir Mühtedi: Abdülâhad Dâvûd (Hayatı ve Eserleri)* (Ankara: Server Yayınları, 2025).

<sup>35</sup> See Mehmet Aydın, “İncil ve Salib”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2000), 22/276-277.

<sup>36</sup> For more information for the history, authors and content of this journal See Adem Efe, “Sebîlürreşad”, *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2009), 258-261.

<sup>37</sup> For a list of their titles and publication dates See Darcan, *Bir Osmanlı Mühtedisi Olarak Abdülehad Davud*, 11-12.

<sup>38</sup> Abdulahad Davud, *Müslüman Olan Papaz: Esrar-ı İseviyye, Allah Bir Midir, Üç Müdür?* (İstanbul: Kader Matbaası, 1332 (1916).

in 2003.<sup>39</sup> It contains the story of a Nigerian black missionary, Fano who was trained by the Anglican priests to proselyte his own people. The story ends with Fano converting to Islam. It so seems that Fano represents the author himself. In the form of a story, the book describes various controversial issues between Christianity and Islam. It also provides the reader with a critical view of the works of missionaries, who were closely connected to the colonial interests of their respected countries. The deep ethnic prejudices of both the missionaries and their colonial associates against the local people seems to persist even if they convert to their own religion.

**Muhammad in the Bible:** This book is a compilation of his articles published at the journal of *the Islamic Review* at intervals between October 1926 and August 1931. The book was first published in Doha in 1980. It is translated into Turkish<sup>40</sup>, Arabic and Albanian.<sup>41</sup> The overall theme of the articles is that Muhammad's coming is foretold in both the Old and the New Testaments. The book is divided into two parts, the first is called Muhammad in the Old Testament and contains 10 articles; and the second is called Muhammad in the New Testament and contains 11 articles. The book excludes the very first article of October, 1926 titled "Why the Devil is called "Iblis" in the Qur'an."

### 3. Major themes in Dawud's thought

Prof. Dawud was an active priest before his conversion to Islam. He was also a prominent agent within the story of Western missionary activities among his Assyrian people, in Urmia and its environments. He could write and speak with fluency and erudition in English, French, Persian, Turkish and Syriac. Missioanary activities often brought to the ancient minorities of the Eastern countries ideas of nationalism, unity of Christians and progress, and Assyrians of Urmia was no exception. American Protestant mission as well as French Lazarist mission established printing presses in Urmia, and began translating the Bible into Syriac language. Ancient Syriac language is retrieved and was turned into a written language. Therefore within this process of reviving the ancient Syriac language, Prof Dawud was active, and we can say that one major occupation of his writings is the revival of the Syriac language and culture, both before and after his conversion.<sup>42</sup> His granddaughter Julianne Hoffman informed us, through Mr Asan that Prof Dawud began writing a Syriac-English lexicon in the late 1930's, and completed in the year 1948. It is unpublished, handwritten in MS form in 20 notebooks.

<sup>39</sup> Abdulahad Davud, *Müslüman Olan Papaz: Esrar-ı İseviyye, Allah Bir Midir, Üç Müdür?* (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınları, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> Abdulahad Davud, *Tevrat ve Incil'e Göre Hz. Muhammed*, trans. Nusret Cam (İzmir: Nil Yayınları, 1988).

<sup>41</sup> Abdulahad Davud, *Muhamedi ne Bibel* (Botimi: Erasmus, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> For his engagement in this process see Adam H. Becker, *Revival and Awakening: American Evangelical Missions in Iran and the Origins of Assyrian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 313 ff. The author mentions Prof Dawud's name as "Priest David Benjamin of Digala".

In relation to the missionary enterprise, Prof Dawud often wrote about the history, theology and rites of his own Assyrian church to the Western audience, as well as the developments brought by missionary activities. He apparently had high hope for a universal unity of Christians. Therefore unity of churches occupied his writings all throughout his writings. Lastly, since he mastered many ancient and modern languages and had a thorough higher education in Western schools and universities, he was well acquainted with the modern Biblical scholarship. So the Bible occupies a major place in his writings.

After his conversion, Abdulahad Davud's major occupation became to prove to the Jews and Christians, that what Qur'an proposes on the Deity and his last messenger is perfectly congruent with the teachings of the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments.<sup>43</sup> This subject falls within the category of "tabshirat" (telling the good news), that is to prove the Qur'anic claim that the God who sent all the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and Jesus is the same God who sent Muhammad with the Qur'an. Muhammad is foretold and heralded openly in the Bible, a reality which was overlooked by the Jewish scholars and scribes and misinterpreted by Christians as to refer to Jesus. This theme is quite common in most of the apologies against Judaism and Christianity written by previous Muslim scholars. Prof. Dawud differs from them by his deep knowledge of the Bible, Biblical history and culture and modern studies of Biblical criticism and historical Jesus. For he constructs his arguments on detailed etymological analyses that is supported/supplanted by his deep Biblical culture as well as the findings of modern Biblical studies. Although his findings might sound quite controversial, as they start from Qur'anic propositions that are already given—a fact of which the author himself is cognizant—he suggests that once the books of the Bible are seen in their own Semitic languages, many issues become clearer. He has a very high hope that once the obstacles created by the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible are avoided, a common terminological ground between the Bible and the Qur'an would certainly arise:

If the Christian priests and theologians knew their Scriptures in the original Hebrew instead of in translations as the Muslims read their Qur'an in its Arabic text, they would clearly see that Allah is the same ancient Semitic name of the Supreme Being who revealed and spoke to Adam and all the prophets.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, through lengthy linguistic analyses of the prophetic passages in the Bible, he reveals how Muhammad's coming is clearly foretold. From a critical point of view, his

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<sup>43</sup> Qur'an states that the last prophet Muhammad is foretold in the Tora and the Gospel. "Those who follow the Apostle, Prophet, the 'Ummi' whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel (who) enjoins them good, and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the Shackles which were upon them... A'raf 7/157".

<sup>44</sup> Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible*, 12-13.

findings cannot claim conclusiveness, yet they might well be quite suggestive. As it is beyond our aims in such a brief paper to give a thorough analysis of Dawud's thought, we can mention only one example of his method. The book of Hagai 2:7-9, reads "I will shake all nations and the desire (*himada*) of all nations will come...and in this place I will give peace (*shalom*), says the Lord of hosts". English versions of the Bible render the original Hebrew words *himda* and *shalom* into "desire" and "peace" respectively. Dawud suggests that if this prophecy be taken in the abstract sense of these words as "desire" and "peace" it becomes unintelligible. However, it is much more intelligible and reasonable to understand *himda* as a concrete idea, a person and a reality. As for *shalom* it is to be understood not as a condition, but a definitely established religion; he thus concludes that *himda* refers to Ahmad the prophet of Islam and *shalom* refers to the establishment of Islam as a universal religion of peace.<sup>45</sup>

Depending on his readings from a copy of Assyrian Bible, Prof. Dawud finds proof for much of Qur'anic propositions mentioned above. He claims that all prophets, including Jesus, foretold the coming of Muhammad and the establishment of Islam. All the prophets from Adam to Muhammad preached the same religion of the absolute unity of God (*tawhid*), that is Islam.

As for the critique of Christianity, Prof. Dawud claims that Jesus came to preach his Gospel of the absolute unity of God and the His kingdom (*Melekutullah*) which is Islam itself. The Gospel was not a binded book, but "a spiritual idea and a transitional way of life" (*fikr-i manevi and tarikat-i muvakkate*); for Jesus never claimed that he possessed or brought a full-fledged new religion. He was always content himself with proclaiming a kingdom and a hope, that was to be expected in a definite future. Prof. Dawud believes that the Gospel of Jesus was only oral and that the existing four Gospels do not belong to Jesus, but as the *Peshitta* calls them *kazusura*'s i.e. sermons about Jesus. In addition, Prof. Dawud makes critiques of some major Christian doctrines, including the cross, the incarnation, the trinity on the grounds that they are not found in the Gospels, as they represent later inventions of church fathers and monks. Prof. Dawud explains each point mentioned here in detailed and exacting treatises, however they are certainly subjects of other papers.

## Conclusion

The valuable set of documents meticulously collected by Ulvi Asan and his friends, some of which are added here, provide us with new information about Abd'ul-Ahad Dawud, a significant Biblical scholar, cleric, and a man of action, who converted to Islam in 1904. He lived as a well-known intellectual figure in Istanbul during the last years of the Ottoman state; he was also connected to the British Muslim communities in London. Some of the new documents are related to his life in America, which was not known before. With hindsight, we now know that Prof. Dawud's major occupation was the unity of Christian

<sup>45</sup> Dawud, *Muhammad in the Bible*, 22-27.

churches before his conversion, and the unity of Islamic ummah after he became a Muslim. We surmise that the great calamities and oppressions brought by the colonial powers, through the agency of several Christian missions located in Urmia, in his country to his own people, caused him to interrogate his own religion. This was probably the main motivation that led him to convert to Islam.





Figure 2. Doc. No. 2. Certificate of Arrival, issued by U.S. Department of Labor, issued on Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE No. 2 594597

**CERTIFICATE OF ARRIVAL**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the immigration records show that the alien named below arrived at the port, date, and in the manner shown, and was lawfully admitted to the United States of America for residence.

Name: Abdul-Ahad Davoud  
Port of entry: Providence, Rhode Island  
Date: September 11, 1930  
Manner of arrival: SS Patria

I FURTHER CERTIFY that this certificate of arrival is issued under authority of, and in conformity with, provisions of the Act of June 29, 1906, as amended, solely for the use of the alien herein named and for naturalization purposes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this certificate of arrival is issued  
AUG 6 1938

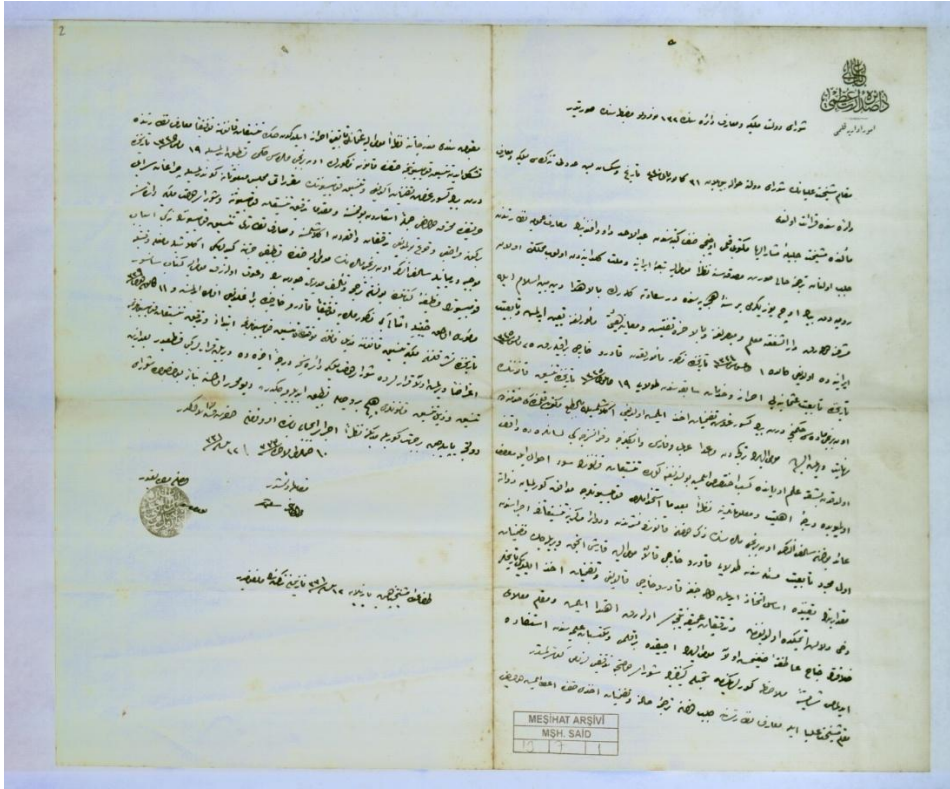
mc

*James L. Houghteling*  
JAMES L. HOUGHTELING  
Commissioner.

IMMIGRANT IDENTIFICATION CARD ISSUED  
14-2601

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

Figure 3. Doc. No. 3<sup>47</sup>. Document by the Ottooman Government on Dawud's employment history and its transliteration.



Bi-Hî

Bâb-ı 'Âlî

Dâ'ire-i Sadâret-i 'Uzmâ

Ümûr-i İdâriyye Kalemi

**Şûrâ-yı Devlet Mülkiyye ve Me'ârif Dâ'iresi'nin 132 Numara'lı Mazbatası'nın Sûretidir:**

Makâm-ı Meşihat-i 'Ulyâsı'nın Şûrâ-yı Devlet'e havâle buyurulan 31 Kânûn-i Sânî Sene 1330 Ta'rîh ve Seksen beş 'Aded'li Tezkiresi, Mülkiyye ve Me'ârif Dâ'iresi'nde kırâ'et olundu:

Me'âlinde, Meşihat-i Celîle-i müşârun ileyhâ Mektûbî Kalemi Üçüncü Sınıf Ketebesi'nden Abdülehad Dâvûd Efendi'nin Me'ârif-i 'Umûmiyye Nezâreti'nden celb olunan terceme-i hâlî sûret-i musaddekasına nazaran mûmâ ileyh, Teb'a-i İrânîyye ve Millet-i Keldâniyye'den olup, memleketi olan Rûmiyye'den Bin üç yüz yigirmi bir Sene-i Hicriyyesi'nde Der-Se'âdet'e gelerek bi'l-ihitidâ, Dîn-i Mübîn-i İslâm ile müşerref olarak

<sup>47</sup> MŞH.SAİD.13.7.1

Dâru'-ş-Şefeka Mu'allim ve Mubassırlığı'na ve bi'l-âhire, Teftîş ve Mu'âyene Hey'eti Me'mûrluğu'na ta'yîn edilmiş ve Tâbi'iyet-i îrânîyye'de olduğu hâlde 1 Ağustos Sene 1324 Ta'rîhi'nde mezkûr me'mûrlukdan kadro hârici bırakılarak 25 Mâys Sene 1325 Ta'rîhi'nde Tâbi'iyet-i Osmâniyye'yi ihrâz ve hıdemât-ı sâbıkasından dolayı 19 Eylûl Sene 1325 Ta'rîhi'nde Tensîk Kânûnu'nun On birinci Mâddesi hükmünce Dört bin kûsûr Gurûş tazmînât ahz eylemiş olduğu anlaşılmasıyla, bi't-tab' Mektûbî Kalemî'ndeki hıdematine de nihâyet verilmiş olduktan başka, ilm-i edyânda kisb-i ihtisâs eylemiş bulunduğuna göre, Tensîkât Kânûnu'nun su'-i ahvâl ile ma'rûf olmayıp da derece-i ehliyyet ve ma'lûmâtlarına nazaran ba'de-mâ istihdâmları komisyonlarca muvâfık görülmeyen zevâta â'id bulunan sâlifü'z-zıkr On birinci Mâddesi'nin, zıkr olunan kânûnun neşrinden ve devâ'ir-i me'mûriyye tensîkâtının icrâsından evvel mücedded tâbi'iyet mes'elesinden dolayı kadro hârici kalan mûmâ ileyhe karşı ancak verilecek tazmînât mikdârının ta'yîninde esâs ittihâz edilmiş olacağına, kadro hârici kaldığı ve tazmînât ahz eylediği ta'rîhler dahî delâlet etmekde olduğundan ve tedkîkât-ı amîka netîcesi olarak, ihtidâ eylemiş ve Makâm-ı Mu'allâ-yı Hilâfet'in cenâh-ı âtîfetine sığınmış olan mûmâ ileyhın açıkda bırakılması ve müktesebât-ı 'ilmiyyesinden istifâde edilmemesi, şâyeste-i mülâhaza görüldüğünden bahsle, keyfiyyetin Şûrâ-yı Devlet'çe tedkîkî lüzûmu görülmüştür.

Makâm-ı Meşihat-i 'Ulyâ ile Me'ârif Nezâreti'nden celb olunan terceme-i hâline ve tazmînât ahzı hakkında i'tâ eylemiş olduğu [2] makbûz senedi mündericâtına nazaran, mûmâ ileyh, Osmânî Tâbi'iyeti'ni ihrâz eyledikten sonra, Tensîkât Kânûnu'na tevfikân Me'ârif Nezâreti'nde teşekkül eden Tensîk Komisyonu'nca, hakkında kânûn-ı mezkûrun On birinci Mâddesi hükmü tatbîk edilmesiyle 19 Mâys Sene 1325 Ta'rîhi'nde Dört bin kûsûr Gurûş tazmînât aldığı ve Tensîk Komisyonu'nun mukarrarâtı, Meclis-i Meb'ûsân'a gönderilmesiyle, Çırâğân Serâyı harîkında muhterik olduğu cümle-i iş'ârdan bulunmasına ve mukaddem Tedkîk-ı Tensîkât Komisyonu'na ve Şûrâ-yı Devlet Mülkiyye Dâ'iresi'ne bir güne mürâce'atı vukû' bulmadığı tedkîkât-ı vâkı'adan anlaşılmasına ve Me'ârif Nezâreti Tensîk Komisyonu'nun ne gibi esbâb-i mûcibe der-miyânıyla sâlifü'z-zıkr On birinci Mâddesi'nin mûmâ ileyh hakkında tatbîkî cihetine gidileceği anlaşılamamağla ve Tensîk Komisyonu'nun vazîfe-i kifâyetinde bulunan Terceme ve Te'lîf Müdîri Cevdet Beğ da'vet olunarak, mûmâ ileyh, Kitâb Sansür Me'mûru olmak hasebiyle, emsâlî gibi mezkûr maddede tevfikân, kadro hârici bırakıldığı ifâde edilmesine ve 11 Kânûn-i Evvel Sene 329 Ta'rîhi'nde neşr kılınan Mülkiyye Tensîk Kânûnu'nun Müzeyyel Kânûn-ı Muvakkate'de Tensîk Komisyonları'nca ibtidâ' ve Tedkîk-ı Tensîkât Komisyonları'nca i'tirâzan verilmiş olan karârlarda Şûrâ-yı Devlet Mülkiyye Dâ'iresi'nce derece-i ahîrede verilen karârlar gibi kat'îdir. Ba'd ez-în, Tensîk ve Zeyl-i Tensîk Kânûnları hiçbir vechile tatbîk edilemeyecektir." diye muharrer olmasına binâ'en, bu husûsda Şûrâ-yı Devlet'çe yapılacak bir cihet görülemediğine nazaran, icrâ-yı îcâbı bâbında emr u fermân, Hazret-i men le-hü'l-emrindir.

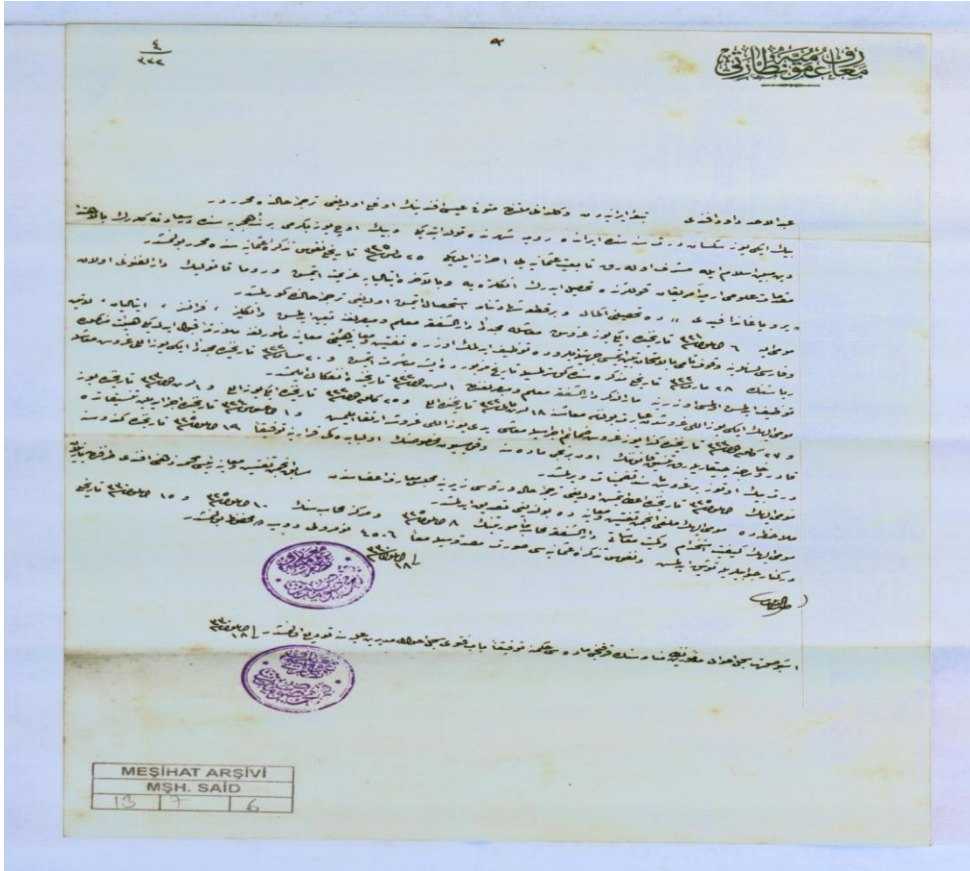
**10 Cemâzi'l-Âhîr Sene 333 ve Fî 12 Nisân Sene 331**

**Mukâbele olunmuştur ve aslına mutâbıktır.**

## [Mühr]: Dâ'ire-i Sadâret-i 'Uzmâ Ümûr-i İdâriyye Müdîriyyeti

Taraf-ı 'Âlî-i Meşihat-penâhî'ye yazılan 12 Nisân Sene 331 Ta'rîhli Tezkire'nin melfûfudur.

Figure 4. Doc. No. 4.<sup>48</sup> Document issued by the Ottoman Ministry of Education, containing information on the life, education and employments of Prof. Dawud and its transliteration.



Bi-hî

Ma'ârif-i Umûmiyye Nezâreti

4/332

Abdülehad Dâvûd Efendi teb'a-ı İrânîyye'den ve Keldânî milletinden müteveffâ İsâ Efendi'nin oğlu olduğu terceme-i hâlinde muharrerrdir.

<sup>48</sup> MŞH.SAİD.13.7.6.

Bin iki yüz seksen dört senesinde Îrân'da Rûmiyye şehrinde tevellüd ettiği ve bin üç yüz yirmi bir sene-i hicriyyesinde Der-Sa'âdet'e gelerek bi'l-ihtidâ dîn-i mübîn-i İslâm ile müşerref olarak tâbi'iyet-i Osmâniyye'yi ihrâz eylediği 25 Mayıs Sene 325 târîhli Nüfûs tezkire-i Osmânî'sinde muharrer bulunmuştur.

Mukaddemât-ı ulûmu Ermiyye Amerikan Koleji'nde tahsîl ederek İngiltere'ye ve bi'l-âhire İtalya'ya azîmet etmiş ve Roma Katolik Dârü'l-fünûnu olan "Propaganda Kaydı" da tahsîlini ikmâl ve bir kıt'a şehâdet-nâme istihsâl etmiş olduğu terceme-i hâlinde görülmüştür.

Mûmâ ileyh 6 Eylül Sene 321 târîhinde iki yüz gurûş ma'âşla müceddeden Dârü's-şafaka mu'allim ve mubassırlığına ta'yîn edilmiş ve İngiliz, Fransız, İtalyan, Latin ve Fârîsî lisânlarına vukûf-ı tâmmı bi'l-imtihân tebeyyün etmesi cihetiyle ileride tavzîf edilmek üzere Teftîş ve Mu'âyene Hey'eti Mu'âyene me'mûrluğuna mülâzemeten kabûl edildiği hey'et-i mezkûre riyâsetinin 28 Mart Sene 322 târîhli müzekkeresinde gösterilmesiyle târîh-i mezbûrda işe mübâşeret etmiş ve 20 Nisan Sene 322 târîhinde müceddeden 250 gurus ma'âşla tavzîf edilmiş olması üzerine mârru'z-zikr Dârü's-şefaka mu'allim ve mubassırlığından 1 Teşrîn-i Evvel Sene 322 târîhinde infikâk eylemiştir.

Mûmâ ileyhın 250 gurusdan ibâret bulunan ma'âşına 18 Teşrîn-i Sâni Sene 322 târîhinde 50 ve 25 Kânûn-i Evvel Sene 322 târîhinde 250 ve 1 Teşrîn-i Evvel Sene 323 târîhinde 100 ve 27 Kânûn-i Evvel Sene 323 târîhinde kezâ 100 gurûş zamâyin icrâsiyla ma'âşı 750 gurûşa irtikâ eylemiş ve 1 Ağustos Sene 324 târîhinde icrâ edilen tensikâtta kadro hâricine çıkarılarak tensik kânûnunu 11.mâddesine ve komisyon-ı mahsûsunun ol bâbdaki karârına tevfiikan 19 Eylül Sene 325 târîhinde kendisine dört bin otuz bir gurus bâ-sened tazmînât verilmiştir.

Mûmâ ileyhın Eylül Sene 325 târîhinde i'tâ etmiş olduğu terceme-i hâl varakası zîrine Meclis-i Ma'ârif a'zâsından sâbık encümen-i teftîş ve mu'âyene re'îsi Muhammed Zihnî Efendi tarafından yazılan mülâhazada mûmâ ileyhın mülgâ Encümen-i Teftîş ve Mu'âyene'de bulunduğu tasdik edilmiştir.

Mûmâ ileyhın keyfiyyet-i istihdâm ve kemniyyet-i ma'âşı Dârü's-şefaka Muhâsebe me'mûriyyetinin 8 Eylül Sene 325 ve merkez-i muhâsebesinin 10 Eylül Sene 325 ve 15 Eylül Sene 330 târîhli derkenâr cevâblarıyla tevsik edilmiş ve Nüfûs Tezkire-i Osmâniyye'si sûret-i musaddakkasıyla ma'an 4506 numaralı dosyada mahfûz bulunmuştur.

Fî 18 Eylül Sene 330

[Mühr]: Ma'ârif-i Umûmiyye Nezâreti Kalem-ı Mahsûs Müdîriyyeti

İşbu sûret Sicill-i Ahvâl Me'mûriyyeti Nizâmnâmesi'nin 40. mâddesi hükmüne tevfiikan Bâb-ı Fetvâ Sicill-i Ahvâl müdîriyyet-i Aliyyesi'ne tevdi' olunmuştur.

Fî 18 Eylül Sene 330.

[Mühr]: Ma'ârif-i Umûmiyye Nezâreti Kalem-ı Mahsûs Müdîriyyeti



Figure 5. Doc. No. 5. Abdulahad Dawud's petition for naturalization to the US, dated Dec. 3rd, 1938.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 50141

76th Cong.)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Supreme Court

Declaration of Intention

(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

State of New York

County of Westchester

In the Supreme Court

Westchester County, White Plains, N. Y.

of

Devoud Abdulshad

98 Jefferson St., Yonkers, Westchester, New York

unemployed

gray, color white, aged 72 years, do declare on oath that my personal description is: color of eyes brown, height 5 feet 2 inches; weight 130 pounds; visible distinctive marks

Assyrian

Iran, Persia (Iran); nationality Iran

ON Sept. 15-1886

Sept. 1887

The name of my wife or husband is Cozel

Urmia, Iran

1871

entered the United States

for permanent residence therein, and now

Priscilla born 5-21-1898 and resides

both born at Urmia, Iran

heretofore made a declaration of intention: Number

Marseille, France

Marseille, France

Abdul-Ahad Davoud

September 11-1930

Patris

before being admitted to citizenship, renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, and particularly, by name, to the prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of which I may be at the time of admission a citizen or subject; I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my good faith to become a citizen of the United States of America and to reside permanently therein; and I certify that the photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of me.

I swear (affirm) that the statements I have made and the intentions I have expressed in this declaration of intention subscribed by me are true to the best of my knowledge and belief: So help me God.

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the form of oath shown above in the office of the Clerk of said Court, at White Plains, NY

3rd day of Dec. anno Domini, 1938

2-594597

from the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization showing the lawful entry of the declarant for permanent residence on the date stated above, has been received by me. The photograph affixed to the duplicate and triplicate hereof is a likeness of the declarant.

Supreme Court

Deputy Clerk.

Form 252-I-A

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

14-2628

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Figure 6. Doc. No. 6. Dawud's Oath of Allegiance, Dated Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 1941

**AFFIDAVIT OF WITNESSES**

The following witnesses, each being severally, duly, and respectively sworn, depose and say:

My name is Isaac Merritt Kellogg, my occupation is Auto painter  
I reside at 114 Landscape Ave., Yonkers, N.Y.  
My name is Khoona Shomon, my occupation is Painter  
I reside at 156 Hawthorne Ave., Yonkers, N.Y.

I am a citizen of the United States of America; I have personally known and have been acquainted in the United States with Abdulhad, the petitioner named in the petition for naturalization of which this affidavit is a part, since Jan. 1, 1935 to my personal knowledge the petitioner has resided, immediately preceding the date of filing this petition, in the United States continuously since the date of filing this petition and at New York in the State of New York continuously since Jan. 1, 1935 and at New York in the State of New York continuously since Jan. 1, 1935 well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States, and in my opinion the petitioner is in every way qualified to be admitted a citizen of the United States, and I do swear (affirm) that the statements of fact I have made in this affidavit of this petition for naturalization subscribed by me are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. SO HELP ME GOD.

Isaac M. Kellogg Khoona Shomon  
Subscribed and sworn to before me by the above-named petitioner and witnesses in the respective forms of oath shown in said petition and attached to the same, and I have signed the same as the Clerk of said Court at White Plains, N.Y. this 17 day of June 1941.  
Anne Domini 1941 hereby certify that Certificate of Arrival No. 2-594597 from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, showing the permanent residence of the petitioner above named, together with Declaration of Intention No. 50141 of such petitioner, has been received and attached to, and made a part of this petition on this date.

**OATH OF ALLEGIANCE**

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. SO HELP ME GOD. In acknowledgment whereof I have hereunto affixed my signature.

Dawud Abdulhad  
Sworn to in open court, this DEC -4 1941 day of DEC -4 1941, A. D. 1941.

Walter R. R. R.  
By Walter R. R. R.

NOTE.—In renunciation of title or order of nobility, add the following to the oath of allegiance before it is signed: "I further renounce the title or order of nobility (titles) which I have heretofore held." or "I further renounce the order of nobility (give the order of nobility) to which I have heretofore belonged."

Petition granted; Line No. 9 of List No. 1023 and Certificate No. 5425352  
Petition denied: List No. NOV 12 1941  
Petition continued from NOV 12 1941 to REASON

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE. 16-10120





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