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A Kurdish creed

Reprinted from

A LOCUST'S LEG

Studies in honour of

S. H. TAQIZADEH

1962
London

1032

Institut kurde de Paris

1962

Institut kurde de Paris

A KURDISH CREED

By D. N. MACKENZIE

Kurdish poets of the seventeenth century and earlier, Aḥmadē Xānī, Malāē Jizrī, Malā Aḥmadē Bātē and others, wrote in a Kurdish which may be called "North-eastern". This was a literary language bearing a heavy load of Arabic and Persian vocabulary, but still recognizable as basically the Kurdish of Bohtan and Hakari and the regions lying to the north. But little information about the separate dialects of these regions can be culled from the literary sources. For the first prose "dialect" Kurdish text we must wait until the beginning of the nineteenth century. As it is a comparatively short text its reproduction in full may not be without interest. That it is here dedicated to H. E. Seyyid Hasan Taqizadeh must, I regret, do it greater honour than it can impart.

In one manuscript of the *Nūbār* and '*Aqāid* of Aḥmadē Xānī, published in facsimile by A. von Le Coq,¹ the last four folios are filled by a prose text entitled *Fī bayāni arkāni l-islām*. It is written in the same hand, and as liberally and ambiguously vowelled, as the preceding poems, but there is nothing concrete to connect it with Aḥmadē Xānī beyond the similarity of language. We are on firmer ground, however, with a similar work published soon after. This is the *Xulāṣa-y 'aqāid* by Šēx 'Abdullāh of Nahrī, Šamdīnān.²

Šēx 'Abdullāh was one of the celebrated Sayyids of Nahrī descended from Šēx 'Abdul'Azīz, son of Šēx 'AbdulQadir Gīlānī.³ One of the disciples who acquired the Qādirī Path from him was a certain Malā Xālid (b. 1779) of Šārazūr, later to acquire fame as Mawlānā Xālid, "a personage of great importance in the history of the dervish orders for it was he who first introduced the Naqshbandi Path into Southern Kurdistan".⁴ Šēx 'Abdullāh, with many other

¹ *Kurdische Texte*, Erster Teil, Anhang 1, Berlin, 1903.

² Published by Aḥmad Rāmiz, Istanbul, 1911, 32 pp. For my knowledge, and the loan, of this pamphlet I have to thank Professor W. B. Henning.

³ B. P. Nikitine, *Les Kurdes*, Paris, 1956, p. 212.

⁴ C. J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, London, 1957, p. 77.

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Qādiri teachers, later became a disciple of his own former pupil and, having accepted the Naqšbandī Path from him, returned to Nahrī to propagate it. After his death his nephew and successor, Sayyid Ṭaha I, also received his licence to teach from Mawlānā Xālid. Since Xālid only taught at Suleimaniye from about 1808 until his final departure in 1820¹ we may assume that Šēx ‘Abdullāh died shortly after 1810. As there is no indication in his *Xulāṣa* of when it was composed we are at liberty to date it about the year 1800.

In 1911 the great-grandson of Ṭaha I, Sayyid Ṭaha II, had a fair copy of the work made by one 'Umar ibn Ḥarjīs, a teacher at the *takya* of Nahrī, and sent it to Aḥmad Rāmiz for him to publish.²

When the *Xulāṣa* is compared with the text in Le Coq's manuscript the close connexion between them becomes obvious. If we suppose the text in the manuscript to be the work of Aḥmadē Xānī, or to have been generally attributed to him, then it will have had considerable currency, and is the more likely to have been Šēx 'Abdullāh's direct model. His purpose in paraphrasing it was evidently to make its contents more immediately comprehensible to those in his cure, and this we may suppose he did by "translating" it into the vernacular Kurdish of Nahri itself.

Fortunately confirmation of this hypothesis lies at hand. During his tenure of the Russian consulship at Urmiye, in the First World War, the late Basile Nikitine enjoyed the services of one Malā Sa'id *inter alia* as teacher of Kurdish. The mullah was a native of Nahrī and had previously been a teacher at the *takya* there in the time of Šēx Muḥammad Siddīq, father of Sayyid Taha II.³ He wrote for his new pupil a number of texts in his mother tongue, of which a few examples have since appeared in print.⁴ These two sources for the

¹ Edmonds, *op. cit.*, pp. 72, 77.

^a In print the date of the colophon is given as "14th Muḥarram 339 ≡ 3rd Kānūnu šāni 326", but as Rāmiz states (p. 28) that five years had passed since his first publication (viz. *Mawliḍā kurḍī*, Egypt, 1906) this evidently contains at least one misprint, and should probably read "14th Muḥarram (1)329 ≡ 3rd Kānūnu šāni (1)326" [= 16th January 1911], assuming the Muḥarram date to differ by one day from the tables.

⁸ See "Kurdish stories from my collection", *BSOS*, 4, 121, and "The tale of Suto and Tato", *BSOS*, 3, 76.

⁴ Beside those mentioned above, "Une Apologie Kurde du Sunnisme", *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 8, 116. M. Nikitine also very kindly placed all the surviving MSS. of Malā Sa'id's texts at my disposal and these are now nearly ready for publication, in transcription, with translation. [donnés à Julien Bled de Wassy]

study of the dialect of Nahrī, separated by more than a century, supplement and confirm each other.

A justification of the transcription used for the text below must be reserved for another occasion. Suffice it to say that the dialect differs but little from that of Akre, in Northern Iraq.¹ It belongs to the group in which *ō*, *ū* have become *ū*, *ū̄* (here written *ō*, *ū̄*) respectively. Yet it does not appear to have the phoneme *v* found in other Northern dialects. The letter *v* occurs only once in the text, perhaps as an inadvertent borrowing from the original. It is noteworthy that the writer began with a phonetic representation of the modal prefix in *t-dam*, *na-t-dā*, yet used the Persian spelling *همه* for *hamī* and omitted the Izafe form *-ī*. Later he reverted to the traditional spelling of the prefix in *dī-kat*, *dī-niwīsīt*, etc., and wrote the Izafe more consistently.

In their "secondary" forms, i.e. those following the indefinite suffix *-ak*, the oblique case endings and the Izafe appear as *ی* for both genders. This is reminiscent of the Zakho dialect, which has obl. *-ē* and Izafe *-ī* in these contexts. There is evidence from other texts, however, to support my interpretation of this *ی* as *-ī* in all cases, though elaboration of it is precluded here.

There remains but one puzzle. Is it simply coincidence that in both texts, in the sentence *rukne čārān* (MS. *čārē*) *bāwirā bi pēyam-barān-a*, the preposition *bi* is omitted?

Text²

Xulāsa-y 'aqāid <ī> islāmīa bi lisānē kurdī, ašarā šēx sayyid 'abdullāh afandī šamdīnī, quddisa sirruhu, . . .

Bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm.

Bizāna ruknēt islāmē pēnġ-in. ruknē awwil kalimē šahādat-a.
ašhadu—*az šahidīē tdam*

an lā ilāha—*kō nīnīn ču ma'bōdak <ī> dī*

illa-llāha—*γayr <ī> ẓātak <ī> pāk, bē-misl, azalī ō abadī, muta-hayyir-in dī fikrā wī-dā hamī^a maxlōq, nāwē wī allāh, ma'bōdē bi-ḥaq; har aw-a, hayiā wī har bi xō-ya, hayiā hindī maxlōqā bi wī-a; xāliq ō ḥakimē hamīān-a; hamī 'ālam muḥtāġ <ī> wī-a, aw muḥtāġ <ī> kas nīa, fā'ilak <ī> muxtār-a; bē jē^b ō bē makān-a, li*

¹ Described in my *Kurdish Dialect Studies I*, London, 1961.

² Underlined letters represent separate, emphatic, phonemes. *š*, *ẓ*, with subscript dots, represent Ar. ث ُ respectively, not different from *s*, *z* in Kurdish.

hamî jîân hâzîr-a, zî rûhê nîzîktîrî mirô-ya; tē-dā hana hindî şîfatê kamālê, zî şîfatê wî haft şîfat qadîm-in—hayât-a, 'îlm-a, irâda-ya, qudrat-a, bihîstin-a, dîtin-a, takallum-a—aw şîfata azalî-na, zî zâtê xudê judā nābin; pāk-a zî hamî 'ayb ê kēmāsîân; wa aşhadu—az wê şahidîê zî tdam

anna muḥammadan—kô muḥammadê 'arabî, qurayşî, hâşimî, çaw-řaş, birô-řā-kişyāy, anî-guşād, şîkl sôr ê sipî ê nôrânî, şorat wakî âynay<ā>^c şaffāf kô dar ê dîwār tē-řā diyār, maḥbûbtîr zî hamî awlādê ādam; başnā wî tamām li bar tawê sēbar natdā arşî; li makkê bi walad hâtî, li wê bōya pēyambar; zî bar kāfirān çōya madîne, li wê mutawafā bōya wa hâtîa wa-şarin; nāwê bâbî 'abdullāh kuřê 'abdułmuttalibê kuřê hâşimê kuřê 'abdułmanāf, nāwê dāê āmina kičā wahbê zuhray;

rasûlu-llāhi—qāşidê xudê-ya li sar jîn ê insānān, kô řiā haq nişā bidat ê ḥukmê xudê bi jê binin.

řuknê dô^yê kirinā niwêşêf farg-a. řuknê sêê dānā zakātê-ya. řuknê çārê bi-řôş<î> bônā řamazānê-ya. řuknê pēnjê ḥařak-a, agar māl habîf ê duşmin li sar řê nabin.

Řuknêf îmānê řaş-in.

řuknê awwil bâwirîā bi xudê-ya, kô zātakî pāk-a, bē-mişl-a, azalî-a, har wakî ma gôti.

řuknê dô^yê bâwirîā bi malāikahê xudê-ya; wa řismêf lařîf-in, di nôrânî ê pāk-in; zî nāfarmāniā xudê ê zî xawê ê zî x^wārinê pāk ê tamîz-in; zî hindî maxlûqî pêkwa bôştîr-in, hatā qatrêf bārānê ê tātêf <gyāy> ê balgêf dārān; har yakê malakak li sar musallat-a, bi amrê xudê taşarufê tē-dā dikat; kasbā^d wān dāim tāt-at-a, zî har haft ṭabaqêf āsmānî jîe pēyakî nîa kô malakak di řukô'ê-dā yān di şîjdê-dā nabîf, hindak har wê di řukô'ê-dā, hindak har wê di şîjdê-dā, hindak yarq-in di şuhôdā řamālā xudê-dā, na āgāh li 'ālāmî haya ê na li ādamî; yêk wê li sar milê ma ye řāstê xayrān dinîwîsîf, yak<ê> wān li sar milê ma ye çapê řarān dinîwîs-<î>t; sardārêf wān, řibrāil-a, wahî bô hamî pēyambarān wî ināya, wa isrāfil-a, nafxā şorê wā-ya di dast-dā, wa mikāil-a, ḥukmê daxl ê dān ê şînātîet arşî di dast-dā, wa 'izrāil-a, qabzā řôḥān di dast-dā; wa ḥamalatû l-'arş aw nōka çār-in, di qiyāmatê-dā dē bîna ḥaşt, muqarab-in, nîzikî dargahê xudê-na; wa kařôbî-na, kô malakêf 'azābê-na, wa řôḥānî-na, kô malakêf řaḥmatê-na.

řuknê sêê bâwirîā bi kitābêf xudê-ya; řad ê çār-in—řad hamî kāyaz-in, dah zî wān řadā nāzil bōna zî bô ādamî, dah zî bô ibrahîm ê

sih *xi* bō idrīsī ō pēnjah *xi* bō šīšē, tawrāt nāzil bōya *xi* bō mōsā, injil *xi* bō 'isā, zabōr *xi* bō dāōd, qur'ān *xi* bō muḥammad al-muṣṭafā (ṣalātu-llāhi wa salāmuḥu 'alayhi wa 'alayhim aḥma'in); hamī ḥaq-in, kalāmēt xudē-na, balē ḥukmēt yēt dī battāl bōna; ḥukmē qur'ānē ḥatā āxir<i> zamān dē mīnūt^f bē kēm-ō-zēdāi.

rukne čārān bāwirīā <bi> pēyambarān-a, kō har zamānakī xudē insānakī pāk *xi* gunāhān, *xi* hindī xalqē 'asrē xō kāmiltir, bi karamā xō kirīa pēyambar; mu'jiza dīnī, kasē quwwat-dā barābar wī nabōya; wahī *xi* bō hināria kō amrē xudē bigahinūt-a nāw xalqī wa ḥukmēt xudē bi jē binin; *xi* hindī maxlōqī pēkwa fāziltir-in; ṣad ō bīst ō čār hizār-in, ūlu l-'azm pēnj-in—nōh, ibrahīm, mōsā, 'isā, muḥammad al-muṣṭafā (ṣalātu-llāhi wa salāmuḥu 'alayhi wa 'alayhim aḥma'in). xudānēt ummatān sēsad ō sēzda-na, yēt mašhūr ādam, šīš, idrīs, nōh, hōd, sālih, ibrahīm, lōt, ismā'il, ishāq, ya'qōb, yōsuf, ayōb, šu'ayb, mōsā, hārōn, yōša', ilyās, yasa', ʒu l-kaf, šam'ōn, išmawīl, yōnus, dāōd, sulaymān, zakaryā, yahyā, 'azīz, ʒarfīs, 'isā, muḥammad al-muṣṭafā (ṣalātu-llāhi wa salāmuḥu 'alayhi wa 'alayhim aḥma'in).

rukne pēnjē bāwirīā bi qiyāmatē-ya, harčī pēyambarē ma gōtī *xi* nišānān—wakī rā-bōnā mahdī ō nāzil bōnā 'isā pēyambar ō rā-bōnā daʒʒāl ō dābbatu l-arʒ ō yaʒūʒ ō māʒūʒān-a, wa ḥalātina rōžē-ya *xi* mayribē, wa rō-čōnā arʒī-a, ʒārakī li mayribē, ʒārakī li mašriqē, ʒārakī li ʒazīra-y 'arab, wa kēmīā 'ilm ō dīnī-a, wa zōriā fisq ō xiyānatē-ya, wa sardāriā bad-ašlān-a—wa harčī pēyambarē ma gōtī *xi* wāqī'ātēt ḥašrē—wakī nōka hūr bōnā čyān-a, wa kiřakiř bōnā āsmānān-a, wa tēkal bōn ō hišk bōnā baḥrān-a, wa riʒyānā stērān-a, wa bē-nōr bōnā rōž ō haywān ō ʒayrēt wān-a—hamī ḥaq-in, bē-šik dē qawmin. maxlōq dē rā bin ō dē wēk kawin li arʒē šāmē, kāyazēt xayr ō šarān dē dan-a dastī, 'amal dē hēn-a ḥisāb kirin, su'ālā 'amalān dē hēt-a kirin, bi tarāzū'ē dē hēn-a kēšān, ču 'amal bē ʒazā nābin. bi farmānā xudē pirē dē dā nēn-a sar ʒihannamē, bihištī dē darbāz bin, čin-a sar ḥawzā kawšarē, ʒihannamī dē zalīn, kawin-a āgirī. šifā'atā misilmānān dē bar kan pēyambar, mašāix, sulahā. kasē misilmān abadī nābūt di 'azāb-dā^h. ʒihannam haft ṭabaq-in, wā-ya di bin arʒ-dā; bihišt ḥašt ṭabaq-in, wā li sar āsmānān-dā.

rukne šaše bāwirī-a kō xayr ō šar bi taqdīrā xudē-na; hamī ḥaraka ō 'amalēt maxlōqī di azal-dā niwīsi-na wa ma'lōm-in li nik xudē, *xi* awwil ḥatā āxir harčī wāqī' bibūt dē muwāfiqī wē niwīsinē ō ma'lōmīē bīt; xāliqē 'amalān aw-a, maxlōq sabab-a *xi* bō 'amalēt ixtiyārī, har wakī āgir sabab-a *xi* bō šōtinē; lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-llāhi l-'aliyi l-'azīm. tamma.

Aw-a xulāṣa-y 'aqāidēt islāmī li sar maḡhabē šēxē aš'arī, raḥimahu-llāhu ta'ālā, aṣar<ā> mubārakā ḡātē řašādat-simātē marḥôm šēx sayyid 'abdullāh afandī<ē> nahrī-a, ṣi bô ta'līmā bičûkân ô 'awāmmī čē-kirīa. . . .

a هه *throughout, but pl.* ههيان b جه *but obl.* جيهي pl. جيان c آينى
d كسپا e شيشى f بمىيت g هيفان (*i.e.* هيفان). h عزابدا

Translation

A Compendium of Islamic doctrines, in the Kurdish language, by Sheikh Seyyid Abdullah effendi of Shemdinan (hallowed be his grave), . . .

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Know that the Pillars of Islam are five. The first Pillar is the Confession of Faith.

(Arabic) *I bear witness*—I bear witness

that there is no god—that there are no other deities

but God—than the one holy Person, peerless, existing from all eternity to all eternity, in contemplation of whom all creatures are astonished, whose name is Allah the True God; there is only He, and His being is independent, while the being of all creatures is dependent on Him; He is the creator and governor of all; all the universe is in need of Him, but He needs no one, and is a free agent; He has no place and no dwelling, but is present in all places, being nearer to man than his soul; there are in Him many attributes of perfection, and of His attributes seven are prime—that is, life, knowledge, will, power, hearing, sight, and speech—these attributes exist for all eternity, and are not separate from the person of God; He is pure of all faults and failings;

and I bear witness—and I bear this witness also

that Muhammed—that Muhammed the Arab, Qureishite, Hashimite, of the black eyes, the slender brows, the broad forehead, the face pink and white and luminous, the form like a lustrous mirror in which gate and wall are visible, more lovable than all the sons of Adam; whose figure in full sunlight would cast no shadow on the earth; born in Mecca and there become Prophet; who went to Medina on account of the infidels, and there passed away and was buried; the name of his father Abdullah, son of AbdulMuttalib, son of Hashim, son of AbdulMenaf, the name of his mother Amina, daughter of Wahb of the Zuhra clan;

is the Prophet of God—is the messenger of God to the jinn and mankind, who points out the right way (that) they may carry out the commandments of God.

The second Pillar is the performance of the obligatory prayers. The third Pillar is the giving of the prescribed alms. The fourth Pillar is the fasting of (the month of) Ramazan. The fifth Pillar is (the performance of) a pilgrimage (to Mecca and Medina), if one has (sufficient) wealth and there are not enemies on the road.

The Pillars of Faith are six.

The first Pillar is belief in God, that He is a holy Person, peerless, eternal, just as we have said.

The second Pillar is belief in God's angels; and they are delicate bodies, luminous and pure; they are pure and innocent of disobedience to God and of sleep and of eating; they are more abundant than all (other) creatures together, even the drops of rain and the stalks of grass and the leaves of trees; every (creature) has an angel set over it, who holds sway over it by God's command; their occupation is constantly worship (so that) in all the seven layers of Heaven there is not the space of a footprint in which there is not an angel either bowing or prostrating himself, some being always bowing, some always prostrating themselves, and some absorbed in bearing witness to the beauty of God, aware neither of the world nor of (the sons of) Adam; one is on our right shoulder recording good deeds and one of them is on our left shoulder recording evil deeds; their leaders are Gabriel, who brought the revelation to all the prophets, and Israfil, who is responsible for the sounding of the last trump, and Michael, who is responsible for the ordering of the crops and green things of the earth, and Ezrail, who is responsible for the seizing of souls; and the bearers of the Throne (of God) are now four, and at the Resurrection they will be eight, and they are proximate and near to God's gate; and there are cherubim, who are angels of punishment, and there are (other) spirits who are angels of mercy.

The third Pillar is belief in God's books; they are one hundred and four—one hundred are all paper, ten of these hundred came down for Adam, ten for Abraham and thirty for Idris (Enoch) and fifty for Seth, the Pentateuch came down for Moses, the Gospel for Jesus, the Psalms for David, and the Koran for Muhammed, the chosen one, *may the mercy of God and His peace be upon him and upon them all*; they are all true, being the words of God, but the commandments of

the others have been abrogated; the commandments of the Koran will remain until the end of time without addition or subtraction.

The fourth Pillar is belief in the prophets, that in every age God, in His benevolence, has made a man, free from (all) sins and more perfect than all the people of his time, to be a prophet; he performs miracles and nobody has (ever) rivalled him in power; the revelation has been sent to him that he may convey God's command to the people and they may carry out His precepts; they are more excellent than all creatures together; they are one hundred and twenty four thousand (in all, but) the great ones are five—Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammed, the chosen one, *may the mercy of God and His peace be upon him and upon them all*. The leaders of communities are three hundred and thirteen, the famous ones being Adam, Seth, Idris (Enoch), Noah, Hud (Heber), Salih, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Shoaib, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Elias, Yasa, ZulKeff, Simon, Ishmawil, Jonas, David, Solomon, Zachariah, John, Aziz, George, Jesus, and Muhammed, the chosen one, *may the mercy of God and His peace be upon him and upon them all*.

The fifth Pillar is belief in the Resurrection; whatever our Prophet has said of the signs—as there is the rising of the Mahdi and the descent of Jesus the prophet and the rising of the Antichrist and the Beast of the earth and Gog and Magog, and the coming up of the sun from the west, and the dipping of the earth, once to the west, once to the east, and once towards the Arabian peninsula, and the deficiency of knowledge and of religion, and the abundance of deviation and of treachery, and the rule of the base-born—and whatever our Prophet has said of the occurrences of the Resurrection—as, now, there is the crumbling of the mountains, and the rumbling of the heavens, and the mixing and drying of the seas, and the falling of the stars, and the extinction of the sun and moon and the rest (of the heavenly bodies)—all these are true and will surely come to pass. All creatures will rise and come together in the land of Syria, and will be given the papers (recording their) good and evil deeds, and their actions will be accounted, and will be put to the question, and will be weighed in the balance, and no actions will go unrequited. At God's command they will set a bridge over Hell, and those destined for Paradise will pass over it and go to the pool of Kausar, (while) those destined for Hell will slip and fall into the fire. The Prophet, the

patriarchs and the pious will intercede for the Moslems. No Moslem will be punished eternally. There are seven layers of Hell, which is beneath the earth; Heaven has eight layers, above the skies.

The sixth Pillar is the belief that good and evil are ordained by God; all the movements and actions of creatures have been written since eternity past and are known to God, and everything that may happen, from beginning to end, will be in accordance with that writing and that knowledge; He is the creator of actions and the creature is the medium for the chosen actions, just as fire is the medium for burning; *there is no power and no strength but in God, the High, the Mighty. Finis.*

That is the Compendium of Islamic doctrines according to the sect of Sheikh Ash'ari, *may Almighty God have mercy upon him*, being the blessed work of that just person the late Sheikh Seyyid Abdullah effendi of Nehri, made for the instruction of children and of the commonalty.

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2 OCT. 1962

THE STAR OF THE EAST

قَدَحُكْ : صَبْرُكْ

A Journal dealing with the Syrian Church in India
and the other Eastern Churches.

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