

Afghani's critique of the "materialists"

(الانكليز) احسوا ان المسلمين ما داموا على دينهم وما دام القرآن يتلى بينهم فمحال ان يخلصوا في الخضوع لسلطة اجنبي عنهم خصوصاً ان كان ذلك الاجنبي خطف الملك منهم بالخديعة والمكر تحت ستار المحبة والصدقة. فطفقوا يتشبثون بكل وسيلة لتوهين الاعتقاد الاسلامي وحملوا القسس والروساء الروحانيين على كتب الكتب ونشر الرسائل محشوة بالطعن في الديانة الاسلامية مفعمة بالشتم والسباب لصاحب الشريعة (يراه الله مما قالوا) (...) وما قصدهم بذلك الا توهين عقائد المسلمين وحملهم على التدين بمذهب الانكليز هذا من جهة. ومن جهة اخذوا في تضيق سبل المعيشة على المسلمين وتشديد الوطاة عليهم والاضرار بهم من كل وجه فضربوا على ايديهم في الاعمال العامة وسلبوا اوراق المساجد والمدارس ونفوا علماءهم وعظماهم الى جزائر "اندومان" و"فلفلان" رجا ان تفيدهم هذه الوسيلة ان لم تفدهن الاولى في رد المسلمين عن دينهم باسقاطهم في اغوار الجهل بعقائدهم حتى يذهلوا عما فرضه الله عليهم. (ص 136)

The English thought that as long as the Muslims insisted on practicing their religion, as long as they read the Quran, they would never wholeheartedly submit to a foreign authority, especially if that authority had deprived them of their sovereignty by low cunning dressed up in friendship and sincerity. Accordingly they strove to weaken their faith in Islam by all means possible. They encouraged their religious leaders to write and publish treatises full of calumny towards the Muslim religion and of insults towards the Law-giver (may god release him from these words) [...] They sought only to demean the Muslims' beliefs and to lead them to profess the English's religion for one thing.

فاتفق ان رجلا اسمه احمد خان بهادور "لقب تعظيم في الهند" كان يحوم حول الانكليز لينال فائدة من لديهم فعرض نفسه عليهم وخطا بعض خطوات لخلع دينه والتدين بالمذهب الانكليزي وبدا سيره بكتابة كتاب يثبت فيه ان التوراة والانجيل ليسا محرفين ولا مبدلين لينال بذلك الزلفى عندهم ثم راجع نفسه فرأى ان الانكليز لن يرضوا عنه حتى يقول اني نصراني (...). (ص 137)

[The English] perceived that as long as the Muslims persisted in their religion, and as long as the Qur'an was read among them, it would be impossible for them to be sincere in their submission to foreign rule, especially if that foreigner had wrested the realm from them through treachery and cunning, under the veil of affection and friendship. So they set out to try to weaken belief in the Islamic faith in every way. They encouraged their clergymen and religious leaders to write books and publish tracts filled with defamation of the Islamic religion, and replete with abuse and vilification for the Founder of Islam (may God free him of what they said!). [...] With that they aimed only, on the one hand, to weaken the beliefs of the Muslims, and to induce them to profess the English religion. On the other hand, they began to restrict the means of livelihood available to the Muslims, and to intensify their oppression and disadvantages in every respect. [...] They plundered waqfs set aside for mosques and madrasahs, and exiled their ulama and leaders to the Andaman and Filfilan [?] Islands, hoping to use this means, if the first one did not work, to alienate the Muslims from their religion, and to reduce them to the depths of ignorance concerning their faith, so that they would neglect what God had ordained for them.

احمد خان ومن تبعه خلعوا لباس الدين وجهروا بالدعوة الى خلعه ابتغاء الفتنة بالمسلمين وطلباً لتفريق كلمتهم وزادوا على زيغهم انهم يزرعون الشقاق بين اهل الهند وسائر المسلمين وكتبوا عدة كتب في معارضة الخلافة الاسلامية. هولاء الدهريون ليسوا كالدهرين في اوربا فان من ترك الدين في البلاد الغربية تبقى عنده محبة اوطانه ولا تنقص حميته لحفظ بلاده من عاديات الاجانب (...). (ص 138)

It happened that a man named Ahmad Khan Bahadur (an honorary title in India) was hovering around the English in order to obtain some advantage from them. He presented himself to them and took some steps to throw off his religion and adopt the English religion. He began his course by writing a book demonstrating that the Torah and the Gospel were not corrupted or falsified, in order to ingratiate himself with the English. Then he considered, and saw that the English would not be satisfied with him until he said, "I am a Christian,"

Ahmad Khan and his followers removed the garb of religion and publicly called for its abandonment, desiring discord among the Muslims and seeking to divide them. They compounded their error, sowing discord between the inhabitants of India and the other Muslims. They wrote a number of books in opposition to the Islamic caliphate. Those materialists are not like the materialists of Europe; for whoever abandons religion in Western countries retains love for his country, and his zeal to guard his country from the attacks of foreigners is not diminished.

As quoted in Kedorie, Elie, *Afghani and Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (London-Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997) (originally published in 1965) (translation not attributed)