



AḲŪND ḲORĀSĀNĪ

AḲŪND MOLLĀ MOḤAMMAD-KĀẒEM ḲORĀSĀNĪ (1255-1329/1839-1911), Shi'ite religious leader.

i. Life and Political Role.

ii. His Importance in Oṣūl.

i. Life and Political Role

Āḳūnd was the fourth and youngest son of Mollā Ḥosayn, an itinerant preacher from Herat who finally settled in Mašhad; there Āḳūnd was born, received his early education, and married. In 1277/1860 he left Mašhad for Sabzavār, where he studied Islamic philosophy under Ḥājjī Mollā Hādī Sabzavārī; later he continued this study under Mollā Ḥosayn Ḳo'ī at the Madrasa-ye Ṣadr in Tehran. He arrived in Najaf “two years and a few months” before Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī's death (1281/1864), i.e., in 1279/1862 (Sayyed Hebat-al-dīn Šahrestānī, “Āyatallāh al-Ḳorasānī, akbar 'olamā' al-dīn wa ra'īs al-mojtahedīn,” *al-Elm* 2, 1912, pp. 290ff., 339ff.), and he was able to benefit from Anṣārī's teaching for some time (M. 'A. J. Tamīmī, *Mašhad al-Emām* II, Najaf, 1954, pp. 13-14). He also studied both *feqh* and *oṣūl* for over a decade under Sayyed Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ḥasan Šīrāzī (d. 1312/1894, q.v.), well known for his 1309/1891 declaration against the tobacco concession.

In 1291/1874 Šīrāzī moved from Najaf to Sāmarrā', providing Āḳūnd an ample



opportunity to demonstrate his mastery of *feqh* and *oṣūl* in Najaf while receiving support from Širāzī (M. Modarresī, *Tārīḵ-erawābeṭ-e Īrān va ‘Erāq*, Tehran, 1351 Š./1972, pp. 259-63). Although hundreds of Širāzī’s disciples followed him to Sāmarrā’, Ākünd probably never left Najaf to join him (M. Amīn, *A’yān al-šī’a* XLIII, Beirut, 1958, pp. 92ff.; but see Tamīmī, op. cit., II, p. 13). After Širāzī’s death, Sāmarrā’ lost its importance, and Ākünd was recognized as a great religious leader. This is perhaps the reason a number of authors such as ‘A. Davvānī (*Zendagānī-e za’īm-e bozorg-e ‘ālam-e tašayyo’ ‘allāma-ye ‘alīqadr ḥaẓrat-e Āyatallāh Borūġerdī*, Qom, 1961, pp. 18-38) and Šahrestānī (*al-‘Elm* II, 1912, pp. 340-41) have ranked Ākünd as sole *marġa’-e taqlīd* immediately after Širāzī (see also A. Hairī, *Shī’ism and Constitutionalism in Iran: A Study of the Role Played by the Persian Residents of Iraq in Iranian Politics*, Leiden, 1977, pp. 62-65). The presently available sources, however, question this line of succession. Ākünd attracted an unparalleled number of students from different regions of the Muslim world to his daily lecture on *oṣūl* (M. R. Ṭabasī, *Darā’e’ al-bayān* II, Najaf, 1957, p. 174; *al-Darī’a* IV, p. 111; ‘A. al-Šarqī, *al-Ahlām*, Baghdad, 1963, p. 82; ‘A. Moḥammad-‘Alī, *al-Moṣleḥ al-mojāhed al-šayḵ Moḥammad Kāẓem al-Ķorāsānī*, Najaf, 1972, pp. 35-63). It appears that he was recognized as an unquestionable master of *oṣūlal-feqh* before Moḥammad Fāẓel Šarabīānī’s death in 1322/1904, and from then on as the sole *marġa’-e taqlīd* in the Shī’ite world.

The earliest known documents relevant to Ākünd’s anti-government activities concern the 1321/1903 unrest following the two Russian loans to Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah (F.O. 416/14, 17 September 1903, no. 286, p. 362). During the constitutional revolution he appeared as a powerful supporter of the establishment of a parliamentary form of government. Together with two other high ranking *mojtaheds*, [Mīrzā Ḥosayn Tehrānī](#) and [Shaikh ‘Abdallāh Māzandarānī](#) he issued many manifestos and *fatwās* and sent telegrams to tribal chiefs, prominent national and political leaders, and heads of state in England, France, Germany, and Turkey (*Waḥīd* 1/10, 1343/1964, p. 69). When Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah ascended the throne in 1325/1907, Ākünd sent him a ten-point directive, which included instructions to protect Islam, to promote both domestic industries and modern science, to put an end to intervention by foreign powers while retaining diplomatic relations, and to establish justice and equality (*al-‘Erfān* 2, 1910, pp. 119ff.). When the shah shelled the parliament building (Jomādā I, 1326/June, 1908) and executed many constitutionalists, Ākünd intensified his campaign against his rule.



Āḳūnd believed that in the absence of the Imam the best possible political institution would be a constitutional form of government, which might not be at variance with Islam. On more than one occasion he and his supporting colleagues asserted that participation in the Persian revolution was a holy war incumbent upon all Moslems, and warned that opposing it was to wage war against Islam (Hairi, “Why did the ‘Ulamā Participate in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909?”, *Die Welt des Islams* 17, 1976-77, pp. 127-54, and S. Jāvīd, *Nahzat-e mašrūṭiyat-e Īrān va naqš-e āzādīk^vāhān-e jahān*, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 30ff.). In order to depose the shah and to restore the constitution, Āḳūnd launched his most enduring campaign: He asked Iranian revolutionaries residing in Istanbul to prepare an expedition of ‘*olamā*’ to Iran (M. Malekzāda, *Tārīk-eenqelāb-e mašrūṭiyat-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1327-35 Š./1948-56, V, pp. 105-09; *Ḥabl al-matīn*, 3 October 1910). Misled by British statements in favor of democracy and constitutionalism, and perhaps unaware of the Anglo-Russian common cause in Iran especially after the 1907 convention, on 4 August 1908, Āḳūnd made an attempt to attract British support for the constitutional revolution, but his request was turned down (F.O. 416/37, 16 September 1908, no. 548). In Ramažān, 1326/October, 1908, Āḳūnd and his two colleagues submitted a note to the official French representative at Baghdad complaining bitterly about Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah’s actions (*Manifest* 1, Spring, 1974, pp. 80-81, cited from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives). Āḳūnd decreed that Iranians should remove the shah and not pay taxes to his government (Kasravī, *Mašrūṭa*², p. 730). At the same time he publicly condemned the royalist clerical leader, Shaikh Fażlallāh Nūrī (q.v.), who in support of Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah’s regime had attacked the constitutionalists (Hairi, “Shaikh Fażl Allāh Nūrī’s Refutation of the Idea of Constitutionalism,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 13, 1977, pp. 327-39).

During this period, the revolutionaries of Transcaucasia, many of them Persian emigrants mobilized by the Social Democratic Party, were actively fighting against Tsarist Russia (L. Beria, *On the History of the Bolshevik Organization in Transcaucasia*, Proletarian Publishers, n.d.). Being fully aware of the willingness of the Caucasians to extend their support to the Persian revolution (M. Pavlovitch, “Le Caucase et la Revolution Persane,” *RMM* 13, 1911, pp. 324-33), Āḳūnd and Shaikh ‘Abdallāh Māzandarānī, in Du’l-ḥejja, 1326/December, 1908, sent a joint letter to “all brothers in the faith in Caucasia, Tiflis, Batum, and other territories” and invited them to unite with the revolutionaries of Tabrīz and put an end to Qājār despotism (Moḥammad-‘Alī, *al-Moṣleḥ*, p. 217). M. Maschkow, the Russian representative at Baghdad



admitted that “Mullah Mohammad Kadhem Khorasani had great influence in Baku which . . . [was] a centre for revolutionary propaganda” (F.O. 416/41, 4 August 1909, no. 387).

Ākünd welcomed the Young Turks’ revolution of 1908 by sending Sultan ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd II a telegram concerning the necessity of enforcing the Turkish constitution (‘A. al-Fayyāz, *Al-Ṭawra al-‘Eraqīya al-kobrā sanat 1920*, Baghdad, 1967, p. 95). He found it expedient to cooperate with the Young Turks’ pan-Islamic policy (*RMM* 13, 1911, pp. 385-86), and even threatened to declare ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd II dethroned after his counter-revolution in 1909 (S. M. Ḥ. Najafī Qūčānī, *Sīāḥat-e šarq*, Mašhad, 1972, pp. 474-76). However, Ākünd sent a number of telegrams to the sultan urging him to help the Persians rid themselves of Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah (F.O. 416/37, 16 September 1908, no. 548, and *al-‘Erfān* 1, 1909, pp. 240-41; for an English translation of the telegrams and two related documents, see Hairi, *Shī‘ism and Constitutionalism*, pp. 88-89, 242-46).

Both the British and the Russian ministers at Tehran now personally insisted that the shah declare a constitutional regime (F.O. 416/40, 22 April 1909, no. 399). The shah promised as much, and sent a telegram to the ‘*olamā*’ of Najaf and Karbalā informing them of the reestablishment of a constitutional system. Ākünd and his colleagues refused to believe him, declaring that firm commitments had to be made (F.O. 416/41, 16 June 1909, no. 53). Meanwhile, the two great powers jointly submitted a “Draft Anglo-Russian Identical Communication” to Ākünd and other constitutionalist leaders in Iraq asking them to end their political activism and to advise the Persian parties to exercise moderation. By doing so the *mojtaheds* would be acting to their own benefit (F.O. 416/40, 23 May 1909, no. 529). It seems that the ‘*olamā*’ paid no heed to this

advice. The uncompromising position of Ākünd towards the two powers seems to have been the reason for the negative remarks repeatedly made about him in the British official correspondence of this period (see inter alia F.O. 371/1243, 1911, p. 10).

While Ākünd was fighting against British interests in Iran, he was also on the payroll of the Oudh Bequest, a charitable fund assigned by the king of Oudh in 1825 to be distributed to the poor by the Shi‘ite ‘*olamā*’ of Najaf and Karbalā. Arthur H. Hardinge, the British minister at Tehran, called the bequest a powerful lever helping to promote good relations between himself and the



Persian ecclesiastics (*A Diplomatist in the East*, London, 1928, pp. 323-24). No doubt some of the *'olamā'* were aware of the British intentions, since a number of them, including Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī, refused to accept an allowance (M. Maḥmūd, *Tārīk-erawābeṭ-e Īrān va Engelīs VI*, Tehran, 1953, pp. 1741-45). Ākūnd's response to a letter of 20 September 1909 from the British consul shows clearly that he believed he had the right to use the fund at his own discretion. He writes that the only responsibility of the British government is to take care in selecting recipients who are then free to spend the money as they see fit (F.O. 371/1244, p. 7).

In order to offer more effective support to the Persian revolution, the *'olamā'* of Naḥaf, led by Ākūnd, set out for Karbalā, whence they planned to proceed to Iran. But the expedition was never completed, since soon afterwards, on 26 Jomāda I 1327/15 July 1909, the constitutionalist forces occupied Tehran (Hairi, "Estebdād-e ṣaḡīr va faṭḥ-e Tehrān," *Rāhnamā-ye ketāb* 19, 1976, pp. 30-40, 325-31). Certain secularist measures were adopted by the new government which were not to the liking of the *'olamā'*; and because of the propaganda campaign launched by the anti-constitutionalist forces headed by Shaikh Faẓlallāh's followers in Iran and by Sayyed Kāẓem Yazdī in Naḥaf, Ākūnd and his constitutionalist colleagues suffered a loss in reputation and popularity. Consequently they complained bitterly against the functioning of the constitution ("Ṣūrat-e teleḡrāf-e mobārak," a telegram to the Persian authorities published in Naḥaf in 1330/1910).

Despite these setbacks, Ākūnd again raised his voice in favor of the Iranian constitutionalists who were resisting the 1911 Anglo-Russian invasion of Iran and the Russian ultimatum to the Persian government, and once again he sought the Ottoman sultan's intervention. He decided to move to Iran to oppose the foreign invasion, but he died suddenly in his house on 20 Du'l-ḥejja 1329/13 December 1911 (S. Ḥ. Neẓām-al-dīn-zāda, *Tārīk-ehojūm-e Rūs be Īrān va eqdāmāt-e ro'asā'-e dīn dar ḥefẓ-e Īrān*, Baghdad, 1331/1913, passim). Anglo-Russian elements were suspected in his death, as well as Sayyed Kāẓem Yazdī and the governor of Naḥaf (F.O. 371/1490, 3 January 1912, p. 7). On an earlier occasion, Māzandarānī had clearly indicated that both his life and that of Ākūnd had been threatened (*Ḥabl al-matīn*, 26 September 1910; see also F.O. 371/1243, 1911, p. 9).

In Iraq Ākūnd established three religious schools (M. Mūsawī, *Aḥsan al-wadī'a I*, Naḥaf, 1968, pp. 147-48) and a number of modern schools; he also helped found a number of periodicals in Naḥaf, such as *al-Ġorā* and *Naḥaf-e ašraf*



(Moḥammad-‘Alī, *al-Moṣleḥ*, pp. 135-45). He believed in the development of domestic trades and industries; on more than one occasion, he seriously discouraged the consumption of foreign goods. In 1316/1898, when a “*šerkat-e eslāmīya*” was established to undertake the production of textiles and to promote their trade in Iran, Ākünd declared it the duty of all Muslims to boycott clothes made in foreign factories and to wear clothes produced domestically (S. J. Eṣfahānī, *Lebās al-taqwā*, Šīrāz, 1318/1900, pp. 2-15).

In the field of *oṣūlal-feqh*, Ākünd has been referred to as a renovator (*moḥadded*). His most important contribution is *Kefāyat al-oṣūl* in two volumes, dealing respectively with verbal proofs (*al-adella al-lafzīya*) and rational proofs (*al-adella al-aqliya*); it has been used as a textbook in Shi‘ite circles since its first appearance in 1303/1885 and numerous commentaries have been written upon it; a list of 104 of them is given by Moḥammad-‘Alī (*al-Moṣleḥ*, pp. 123-33).

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(A. Hairi)

ii. His Importance in Oṣūl

Ākünd’s *Kefāyat al-oṣūl* is considered the most advanced work in *oṣūl-e feqh* and is employed in the final stage of study in Shi‘ite *madrāsas*. Before Ākünd, *oṣūl*’s subject matter was said to be the “sources of *feqh*” (*adellat al-feqh*), i.e., the Koran, the Sunna, *eġmā‘* or the consensus of the ‘*olamā‘*, and ‘*aql* or reason



(Sayyed Mortazā ‘Alam-al-hodā [d. 436/1045], *al-Darī‘a elā oṣūl al-šarī‘ā*, ed. A. Gorjī, Tehran, 1346-48 Š./1967-69, I, p. 7; Shaikh Abū Ja‘far Ṭūsī [d. 460/1068], *al-‘Odda fī oṣūl al-feqh*, Tehran, 1314/1934, preface); but according to Ākūnd, *oṣūl* also deals with any general topic (*kollī*) related to any of *oṣūl*’s individual problems (*Kefāya* I, p. 6). In defining *oṣūl* he gives an important position to *al-oṣūlal-‘amalī* “principles concerned with action,” since he considers *oṣūl* “an art (*šanā‘a*) through which one comes to know the rules (*qawā‘ed*) that can be employed in deriving prescriptions (*estenbāt*) or that can become the basis for action” (*ibid.*, p. 9). Ākūnd devotes almost 200 pages or one-fourth of *al-Kefāya* to principles of action (II, pp. 165-361); in earlier periods, these were dealt with only briefly (e.g., *al-Darī‘a*, pp. 827-37; Shaikh Ḥasan [d. 1011/1602-03], *Ma‘ālem al-oṣūl*, Tehran, 1324/1873, pp. 217-22). Ākūnd did not deal with subjects that pertain specifically to Sunni *oṣūl*, such as *qīās*, *esteḥsān*, or *maṣāleḥ morsala*, though these were usually discussed by his predecessors (*al-Darī‘a*—the first independent work on Shi‘ite *oṣūl*—discusses *qīās* and *ra‘y* in detail, pp. 656-791; *Ma‘ālem al-oṣūl*, the first work on *oṣūl* with a thoroughly Shi‘ite color, still used in introductory courses, discusses *qīās*, pp. 213-17; Mīrzā Qomī [d. 1231/1815] in *Qawānīn al-oṣūl*, Tehran, 1324/1906, the first volume of which is still used to teach *al-oṣūl al-lafẓīya* or principles concerned with linguistics and semantics, deals with *qīās*, *esteḥsān*, and *maṣāleḥ morsala*, pp. 79-93). Ākūnd’s treatment of both major branches of *oṣūl*, *‘amalī* and *lafẓī*, is so comprehensive that after him no one has attempted to write an independent text; scholars have limited their efforts to explaining and commenting on *oṣūl*’s subject matter and the opinions of the great *‘olamā’*. Among Ākūnd’s most important students, who in turn taught most of today’s *mojtaheds*, were Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Nā‘īnī (d. 1355/1936-37), Āqā Zīā‘-al-dīn ‘Erāqī (d. 1361/1942), and Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Kompānī (d. 1361/1942). Of particular importance is Nā‘īnī; two major transcripts of his lectures (known as *Taqrīrāt-e Nā‘īnī*) were published with his approval, one by Moḥammad-‘Alī Kāẓem (*Fawā‘ed al-oṣūl*, Qom, 1368/1948) and the other by Abu’l-Qāsem Ḳo‘ī (*Ajwad al-taqrīrāt*, Tehran, n.d.). Both these works focus on the subjects discussed in *al-Kefāya* and compare the viewpoints of Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī (d. 1281/1864) and Ākūnd.

The tendency to ignore Sunni discussions and concentrate on those connected specifically to Shi‘ism resulted from the conflict between the Akbārī and Oṣūlī (qq.v.) schools. It was developed by such Oṣūlīs as Waḥīd Behbahānī (d. 1207/1792) and Shaikh Anṣārī. Although the latter’s *Farā‘ed al-oṣūl* (or *Rasā‘el*, Tabrīz, 1373/1954; summarized as *al-Rasā‘el al-jaḍīda*, Qom, 1390/1970) is the first work completed with these objectives in mind, it deals only with *oṣūl-e*



'*amālī*, while Ākūnd discusses *oṣūl-e lafzī* as well. The Oṣūlī movement also attempted to base the derivation of prescriptions on rational ('*aqlī*) rather than transmitted (*naqlī*) sources; as a result their arguments are presented with especial care and rigor. Ākūnd expended much more effort than his teachers in applying the categories and methods of logic; his readers can easily be led to believe that philosophical arguments are among *oṣūl*'s most important subjects.

See also M. Šehābī, *Taqrīrāt-e oṣūl*, Tehran, 1380/1960-61, pp. lvi-lxii.

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