



ĀQĀ KHAN II. ĀQĀ KHAN II

Āqā 'Alī Šāh Āqā Khan II (1246-1303/1830-85), son of [Āqā Khan Maḥallātī](#) by Sarv-e Jahān Kānom, a daughter of Fath-'Alī Shah. He spent the early years of his life in Maḥallāt before being taken to Karbalā by his mother to study Arabic and the doctrines of Nezārī Isma'īlism. Despite his father's record of rebellion and flight, Āqā 'Alī Šāh was permitted to take up residence in Iran in the late 1840s, and he assumed responsibility, on behalf of his father, for the affairs of the Isma'īli faithful in Iran and Syria. In 1294/1877, Āqā 'Alī Šāh married for the third time, taking a Qajar princess, Šams-al-molūk, as his wife, and soon after he moved to Karachi. After a few years, he moved to Bombay, where in 1298/1881 he succeeded to the wealth and authority of his father. Evidently he was able to repair the breach between the Nezārī Isma'īli imamate and Iran, for he was appointed official representative of Iran to the government of British India (according to M. Ġāleb, *Ta'rīk al-da'wa al-Esmā'īliya*, p. 270). He also maintained links with Iranian masters of the Ne'matallāhī order to which both his father and more distant ancestors had been linked. While still in Iran, Āqā 'Alī Šāh had been initiated into the order by Raḥmat-'Alī Šāh, and after the death of his master, Āqā 'Alī Šāh sent money from India for the recitation of the Koran at his tomb in Shiraz. In addition, he was visited in India by a number of Ne'matallāhīs from Iran, including Ma'sūm-'Alī Šāh, who spent a year as his guest, and Šafi-'Alī Šāh, the founder of the Ne'matallāhī suborder that bears his name. More importantly, however, Āqā Khan II continued the close association of the Nezārī Isma'īli imamate with the British that his father had inaugurated, and was appointed to the Bombay City Council. At the same time, he began to expand the institutional



basis of the Isma'ili community, opening a number of schools in Bombay and elsewhere. The growing prosperity of the sect, together with the manifest favor shown it by the British, earned the Āqā Khan a certain prestige among the Muslim population of India, so that he was elected head of a body called the Muhammadan National Association, the forerunner of more important political groupings. In addition, he expanded the regular contacts with the Isma'ili communities elsewhere that his father had begun, showing particular interest in his followers in the Hindu Kush (the so-called Mawla'is), Burma and East Africa. With British support, he petitioned the Ottoman authorities to permit the Isma'ilis of Syria to emerge from their desert communities and take up residence in Salamīya, a small town in the region of Ḥomṣ. The petition was successful, and the Isma'ilis were even granted exemption from taxation and military service. Āqā Khan II's heir apparent to the imamate was Šehāb-al-dīn Šāh, a son born him by his second wife who grew up to be a man of some erudition in Isma'ili doctrine (see his *Resāla dar ḥaqīqat-e dīn*, Bombay, 1955; Eng. tr. W. Ivanow, *True Meaning of Religion*, Bombay, 1956). Šehāb-al-dīn Šāh predeceased his father, however, in a riding accident in 1303/1885. When later in the same year Āqā Khan II died of pneumonia contracted after a day's duck hunting, it was, therefore, another son, Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Šāh, a child of Šams-al-molūk, that succeeded him. Āqā Khan II was taken to Najaf for burial.

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