



ĀŠTĪĀNĪ, ḤASAN

ĀŠTĪĀNĪ, ḤAJJ MĪRZĀ ḤASAN (or MOḤAMMAD ḤASAN) B. MĪRZĀ JA'FAR (d. 1319/1901), late nineteenth-century *mojtahed* who played an important role in the campaign against the tobacco concession of 1309/1891. Like most scholars of the period, he received his higher religious training in Naḡaf, where his teachers were Shaikh Moḡsen b. Ḳanfar, Shaikh Moḡammad Ḥasan Bāqer, and, most significantly, [Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī](#) the great *faqīh* who was sole *marja'-e taqlīd* of the time. The closeness of Āštīānī to Anṣārī is indicated by the fact that Āštīānī acted as his scribe (*taqrīrnevīs*) and named his eldest son Mortazā after him (see Šarīf Rāzī, *Ganḡīna* VII, p. 95). Having completed his studies at a date that can not be precisely fixed, Āštīānī took up residence in Tehran, and soon became one of the leading 'ulamā' of the city. When [Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī](#), Anṣārī's successor as sole *marja'-e taqlīd*, began from his place of residence in Samarra his campaign against the tobacco concession, it was therefore to Āštīānī that he turned to act on his behalf in Tehran (see his letter to Āštīānī quoted in E. Teymūrī, *Teḡrīm-e tanbākū*, p. 97). In early Jomādā I, 1309/December, 1891, a *fatwā* began to circulate in Iran, attributed to Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī, which forbade the consumption of tobacco as long as the concession was in place. Āštīānī lent his authority to the authenticity of the *fatwā* and assisted in its wide dissemination. Angered by the resulting boycott of tobacco, Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah addressed a threatening and angry letter to Āštīānī, demanding that he withdraw his support from the boycott on pain of expulsion from Tehran (text in Teymūrī, *op. cit.*, p. 135). Āštīānī was adamant in his stance and made preparations to leave the capital. When, however, news of his impending departure spread through Tehran, his house was



surrounded on Jomādā II 1309/4 January 1892 to prevent him from being expelled and the whole city took on an insurrectionary aspect. After violent clashes in which a number of people were shot by government troops, Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah realized the impossibility of maintaining the tobacco concession and sent 'Alī-Rezā Khan Sālār 'Azod-al-molk to negotiate with Āštīānī (E'temād-al-salṭana, *Rūznāma*, p. 786). The expulsion order was rescinded and gifts were offered, but Āštīānī refused all conciliation, insisting on the abolition not only of the tobacco concession but also all other economic privileges granted to foreigners; the paying of blood money for those killed in the riots; and the granting of immunity to all who had been involved in them. All these demands were met, with the exception of rescinding concessions other than the tobacco concession, but it was not until 25 Jomādā II 1309/26 January 1892 that Āštīānī—again acting on the authority of Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī—became fully convinced that the tobacco concession had been withdrawn and issued a proclamation declaring it permissible to smoke (*ibid.*, pp. 790-91). Contemporary foreign observers suggested Russian involvement in the successful campaign against the tobacco concession (the concession having been granted to a British corporation), but the evidence is inconclusive. In any event, the chief interest of the episode is the way in which Šīrāzī and Āštīānī led a closely coordinated and highly determined movement of popular resistance, prefiguring later and more significant uprisings and revolutions.

It is said that after the cancellation of the tobacco concession, a certain rapprochement took place between Āštīānī and Mīrzā 'Alī-Aṣqar Khan Amīn-al-solṭān, the prime minister under whose auspices the concession had been granted ('Alī Khan Amīn-al-dawla, *Kāṭerāt*, p. 253). Here again, however, the evidence is inconclusive; according to a different source (Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī, *Tārīk-emo'āṣer yā ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā*, Tehran, n.d., I, pp. 120-21), Amīn-al-solṭān persisted in his hostility to Āštīānī to the extent of having rumors circulated that Āštīānī was taking bribes from Z̄ell-al-solṭān, the governor of Isfahan. When in 1314/1897 Amīn-al-solṭān was replaced as chief minister, after a brief interval, by his chief rival, Mīrzā 'Alī Khan Amīn-al-dawla, Āštīānī again played a political role of importance, although its precise nature is difficult to discern. Amīn-al-dawla himself accuses Āštīānī of plotting against him, on behalf of Amīn-al-solṭān (*op. cit.*, p. 253) and Āštīānī was vocal in his opposition to the Rošdīya schools organized by Amīn-al-dawla (Mahdī Malekzāda, *Tārīk-eeṇqelāb-e mašrūṭiyat-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1327 Š./1948, I, p. 151). On the other hand, Āštīānī is accused of accepting bribes from the government in order to withdraw his support from agitation aimed at securing the



dismissal of the governor of 'Arabestān (i.e., Kūzestān), an agitation aimed obliquely at Amīn-al-dawla (see Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914*, New Haven, 1968, p. 309).

However these ambiguities may be resolved, it seems that Āštīānī's prestige in Tehran declined after the cancellation of the tobacco concession, and his visit to Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī shortly before the latter's death may have been intended to help restore his position. When Āštīānī himself died on 28 Jomādā I 1319/12 August 1901, he was, in any event, mourned as one of the chief 'olamā' of the capital, and his body was dispatched with great pomp for burial in Najaf.

He wrote a number of works on *feqh*, some of them original compositions, others commentaries on the writings of his master, Shaikh Mortazā Anṣārī. The following belong to the first category: *Ketāb ehyā' al-mawāt*, concerning the legal aspects of cultivating previously uncultivated land; *Aḥkām al-awānī men al-feẓza wa'l-dahab*, on the permissibility or impermissibility of using silver and gold vessels; *Ezāḥat al-šokūk 'an ḥokm al-lebās al-maškūk*, concerning various legal problems connected with clothing; and *Ketāb al-ejāra*, a summary of regulations concerning the rental of property or labor. Āštīānī's main commentary on the works of Anṣārī was *Baḥr al-fawā'ed fī šarḥ al-farā'ed* (first published in Tehran in 1315/1897).

Āštīānī left behind four sons, the eldest and most important of whom was Shaikh Mortazā Āštīānī (1281-1365/1864-1964). After studying in Najaf, Shaikh Mortazā settled in Mašhad where he attained great influence. He suffered a period of imprisonment during the time of Reżā Shah. (Concerning Shaikh Mortazā, see Šarīf Rāzī, *Ganjīna* VII, pp. 95-97). Another son was Shaikh Moṣṭafā, known as Eftekār-al-'olamā'. He played a role of some importance in the events of the Constitutional Revolution. Thus, in late Ramażān, 1323/November, 1905, he was instrumental in securing the destruction of a new building for the Russian Bank that was situated opposite the Madrasa-ye Marvī. The following year he was one of those authorized by the 'olamā' who had emigrated to Shah 'Abd-al-'Azīm to negotiate on their behalf with the prime minister, 'Ayn-al-dawla. Shaikh Moṣṭafā was murdered at his home in Shah 'Abd-al-'Azīm in 1327/1909. (Concerning Shaikh Moṣṭafā, see Kasravī, *Mašruṭa*⁵, pp. 56-57, 64, 68, 103). His chief literary legacy was *Eftekār-nāma-ye ḥaydarī*, a versified account of the battles of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb, written in the style of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma* (see *al-Darī'a* IX/2, p. 622). The third son of Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥasan Āštīānī was Mīrzā Aḥmad (1300/1883-?), a *faqīh* who spent most of his life teaching in Tehran and writing a large number of glosses and



original treatises (see Rāzī, *Ganjīna* IV, pp. 364-66). The fourth son was Ḥājj Mīrzā Hāšem Āštīānī who not only cultivated learned interests (although to a degree inferior to his brothers) but also entered political life, sitting in the third, fifth and eighth sessions of the Majlis. He died at the age of ninety-three, and was buried in Mašhad next to Shaikh Mortazā Āštīānī.

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