



BĀFQĪ, MOḤAMMAD-TAQĪ

BĀFQĪ, AYATOLLAH MOḤAMMAD-TAQĪ (1292-1365/1875-1946), a religious scholar known for his forthright opposition to Reżā Shah Pahlavī. Born to a merchant, Ḥājj Moḥammad Bāqer, in the small town of Bāfq near Yazd, Bāfqī, began his religious studies at the age of 14 when he went to Yazd to study *feqh* and *oṣūl* with Ḥājj Mīrzā Sayyed ‘Alī Labkandaqī. Fourteen years later, he proceeded to Najaf, completing his study of those subjects with such masters as Ākūnd Moḥammad Kāzem Ḳorāsānī and Ākūnd Moḥammad Kāzem Yazdī and studying Hadith with the great traditionist, Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥosayn Nūrī. After seventeen years in Najaf, he went to Karbalā to study ethics with Ḥājj Sayyed Aḥmad Mūsawī Karbalā’ī before returning to Iran in 1336/1917-18 or 1337/1918-19. He settled in Qom, taking up residence in the Bāḡ-e Panba quarter, and began attempts to revive the religious teaching institution (*ḥawza*) of the city, in collaboration with Shaikh Abu’l-Qāsem Kabīr and Ayatollah Fayż.

These efforts bore fruit in 1340/1922, when Shaikh ‘Abd-al-Karīm Ḥā’erī arrived in Qom and was persuaded by a number of ‘*olamā*’, headed by Bāfqī, to remain there and devote himself to the revival of the *ḥawza*. Bāfqī became one of Ḥā’erī’s chief aides, with particular responsibility for providing the growing number of *ṭollāb* with clothing. In addition, he presided over the building of three new mosques, sometimes participating himself in the labor of construction. He also made his presence felt in Qom by engaging energetically in *amr be ma’rūf wa nahy az monkar* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil); he was able, for example, to exact from the barbers of Qom an



undertaking not to shave anyone's beard (beardlessness being traditionally regarded as reprehensible, particularly for religious students and scholars). At one point, the government attempted to prohibit such activity on the part of Bāfqī and other 'olamā', but when he responded with an angry sermon denouncing Reżā Shah as comparable to the pharaohs, the government temporarily retreated. Not content with such oral condemnation, Bāfqī is said to have written to the monarch several times, demanding that he change policies viewed by the 'olamā' as incompatible with Islam.

The conflict between Bāfqī and Reżā Shah came to a head in 1346/1928 when a party of women from the court came bareheaded to the shrine in Qom to watch the Nowrūz ceremonies of that year. Informed of their presence, Bāfqī—who was preaching in the shrine courtyard at the time—sent the women a message objecting to their presence in the shrine in that state and demanding their withdrawal. News of the incident was telegraphed to Tehran, and Reżā Shah came immediately to Qom, together with an armored unit led by Teymūrtāš, minister of the court. The shrine was surrounded, and Teymūrtāš was sent inside, still wearing his boots, to drag Bāfqī down from the pulpit and arrest him. Reżā Shah personally kicked and reviled him, and he was sent off to prison in Tehran. After a few months he was released, but compelled to reside in the shrine of Shah 'Abd-al-'Azīm in southern Tehran. However, he was able to visit Mašhad in 1353/1935-36.

Bāfqī regained his freedom of movement with the deposition of Reżā Shah in 1941. Returning briefly to Qom, he was instrumental in preventing the opening of a liquor store in the city. From Qom he proceeded to the shrine cities of Iraq for a stay of eleven months, but it was in Shah 'Abd-al-'Azīm that he spent the last years of his life. He died on 12 Jomādā I, 1365/3 August 1946, and was buried in Qom next to Shaikh 'Abd-al-Karīm Ḥā'erī.

Bāfqī's angry response to the presence of bareheaded women in the shrine at Qom in 1928 is held by some to have helped delay for some eight years the unveiling of women. In general, his fearlessness in confronting Reżā Shah made a considerable impact on the ḥawza in Qom; thus Ayatollah Komeynī, in the lectures on ethics he gave there in the 1930s, would hold up Bāfqī as an example to be emulated.



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