



MOḤAMMAD KHAN KERMĀNI

MOḤAMMAD KHAN KERMĀNI, ḤĀJJ (b. Kerman, 1262/1846; d. Langar, 1324/1906; [Figure 1](#)), a master of the Kermāni Shaikhis and author of important Shaikhi religious literature (see also [SHAIKHISM](#)).

Ḥājj Moḥammad Khan Kermāni succeeded his father Ḥājj Moḥammad-Karim Khan Kermāni (q.v.; d. 1288/1871) as head of the Kermāni branch of Shaikhism (Hermann, 2017). Moḥammad Khan was a member of the Qajar royal family, the grandson of Moḥammad-Ebrāhim Khan Ḥājj al-Dawla (q.v.; d. 1240/1824), a nephew of the ruler Fath-‘Ali Shah (q.v.; r. 1797-1834), and a disciple of Sayyed Kāẓem Rašti (q.v.; Moḥammad-Karim Khan, *Tadkerat al-awliā’*, pp. 55-58). Ḥājj al-Dawla was governor of Kerman Province and Baluchistan for twenty-two years (1218-40/1803-24; Bāmdād, I, 21).

Moḥammad Khan was born in Kerman in 1846 and died in 1906 in Langar, a rural area near Kerman. He studied with his father, Moḥammad-Karim Khan, and collaborated with him on several books. He also received an *ejāza* (q.v.) from him. Unlike the first three masters of the Shaikhi school, he did not live in the *‘atabāt* (q.v.). He studied and taught in Kerman at the Ebrāhimiya School with his brothers Moḥammad-Qāsem Khan and Raḥim Khan. This school (*madrasa*), which was devoted to the study of Shaikhism, was part of a large multifunctional complex known as the Majmu‘a-ye Ebrāhim Khan or Ḥājjiriya built by his grandfather in the center of the Kerman bazaar (Hermann, 2017, pp. 127-29, 132; Hermann and Rezai, p. 94). His father Moḥammad-Karim Khan made this place the center of the Kermāni Shaikhi community in Iran thanks to a significant endowment deed (*waqf*), and he established a very rich



library there (Hermann, 2017, pp. 62, 137).

It may thus be supposed that Moḥammad Khan initiated many inhabitants of Kerman into Shaikhism. For this reason, Abu'l-Qāsem Khan Ebrāhimi (d. 1389/1969), his nephew and master of the order between 1942 and 1969 and the author of the first history of Shaikhism composed by a teacher of the school, insisted on the very good reputation he enjoyed among the people of the city (Ebrāhimi, p. 57). Notably, Moḥammad Khan trained Sayyed Ḥosayn b. Sayyed Ja'far Yazdi (d. ca. 1917) and Mirzā Maḥmud Kāfri (d. after 1885), who played an important role in the expansion of Shaikhism in their respective regions of origin. Sayyed Ḥosayn Yazdi was the author of some fifty books, most of which concerned the Hadith, and the most famous among them is *Ebda' al-moqātel*. Moḥammad Khan also took under his wing his younger brother Zayn-al-Ābedin Khan Kermāni (d. 1360/1942), who succeeded him after his death as the head of the Kermāni Shaikhi school, and to whom he issued an *ejāza*.

It seems that the violence against Kerman's Shaikhis was more common when Moḥammad Khan was directing the Shaikhi school than it had been in previous decades. This was particularly the case in 1295/1878 (Najmi, I, p. 472). In 1905, Moḥammad Khan was forced to flee to Langar, where his father had regularly isolated himself in order to meditate, pray, and write. Several religious leaders hostile to Shaikhis and determined to eradicate their presence from Kerman launched a violent campaign. Those clerics were called *balāṣari* (q.v.), a term originally used to distinguish ordinary Shi'ites from the members of the Shaikhi school and that became used mostly to refer in particular to Shi'ites hostile to the Shaikhis. It originally referred to those who, in Imam Ḥosayn's mausoleum at Karbala (q.v), "advanced to a position above the head of the Imam in order to pray" (MacEoin, p. 583; Rafati, p. 48). Their activities were directed by a Turkmen cleric from Khorasan, called Šamširi, who surrounded himself with armed henchmen (Scarcia, pp. 225-26). Mirzā Moḥammad-Rezā, the grandson of a city cleric who challenged the right of Moḥammad-Karim Khan and the Shaikhis to use the Ebrāhimiya School, joined the fight against them. He called for *jehād* against the Shaikhis and against the city government, which was accused of heresy because of the protection it offered to the Shaikhis (Hermann, 2017, pp. 195-99). The violence reached its peak in Jomādā I 1323/July 1905 (Scarcia, p. 228) and Moḥammad Khan was even assaulted on 4 Ramaẓān 1323/2 November 1905 in Kerman before returning to Langar (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, p. 341).



Works. Moḥammad Khan's works are relatively unknown to researchers. Naturally, more attention has been paid to the doctrinal statements of the co-founders of the order, Shaikh Aḥmad Aḥsā'i (q.v.; d. 1241/1826) and Sayyed Kāẓem Rašti (q.v.; d. 1259/1843). Moḥammad Khan is the author of an impressive corpus of about 180 volumes divided into several categories (Ebrāhimi, pp. 578-670). He focused in particular on further clarifying the status of the *nāṭeq-e wāḥed* (the unique speaker), the highest authority of the occult hierarchy of the companions of the Imam of Time. The knowledge of this hierarchy was introduced by Moḥammad-Karim Khan as the fourth pillar (*rokn-e rābe'*; see Moḥammad-Karim Khan, *Eršād al-'awāmm* IV, pp. 427-508; idem, *Rokn-e rābe'*; Amir-Moezzi, 2001; Hermann, 2007b; idem, 2017, pp. 82-95; idem, "Moḥammad-Bāqer Hamadāni"). It is precisely the question of *nāṭeq-e wāḥed* that crystallized certain tensions within the Shaikhi school, resulting in a new branch founded by Moḥammad-Bāqer Hamadāni (q.v.) and known as *jandaqi*, *eşfahāni*, *mirzā bāqeriya*, or *hamadāni* (Hermann, 2007b; idem Moḥammad-Bāqer Hamadāni). Moḥammad Khan and Moḥammad-Bāqer composed a work on the *nāṭeq-e wāḥed* in answer to the questions of a certain Shaikhi disciple, Mirzā Eşḥāq Khan, in which the main points of contention are explained (Moḥammad-Bāqer Hamadāni, *Eşḥāqiya ...*; Moḥammad Khan, *Eşḥāqiya*).

Moḥammad Khan was also the author of a monumental compilation of Hadith entitled *Ketāb al-mobin*. The structure of the work itself reveals the centrality of the doctrine of *rokn-e rābe'* in Shaikhism. Moḥammad Khan also composed four refutations of Babism (*Resāla dar radd-e tā'wilāt-e bābiya*; *Resāla dar jawāb-e ba'ż-e ekwān-e Şirāz*; *al-Şams al-mauẓe'a*; and *Taqwim al-'ewaj*; Figure 2). Noteworthy also is his *Ḥosām-al-din dar etbāt-e taḥrif ...*, a work in response to the activity of Christian missionaries in Iran during the Qajar period, which is particularly interesting regarding the concept of *taḥrif al-Qor'an* (falsification of the Qur'an) in Shi'ism. He also wrote a few Qur'anic commentaries.

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