

'(Mecca). There, the exercises of a pilgrim at an end, he embarked on another course 'of intrigue. While at Isfahan he had observed how weak the whole Persian structure had 'become, and had formed plans for his own personal aggrandizement. So he proceeded 'to sound the 'Ulama at Makkeh, like himself Sunnis, on what purported to be two scruples 'of conscience—whether in the existing oppression in Persia, whereby the exercise of 'religion was hampered and its laws neglected, it was legitimate to seize an opportunity 'to seek freedom from such a yoke, and whether the oath of allegiance extracted could be 'disregarded in view of the heretical tenets of the Persians, their traffic with the infidel 'Georgians, for instance.'

Fr. du Cerceau's edition of Fr. Krusinski's memoirs, in explaining how bitter by 1700 was the feeling the Sunnis entertained for the Shiah sectaries—

“they hate them to such a degree that, they commonly say, 'tis not so great a sin in the ‘case of wilful murder to kill forty Persians as to kill one Christian, and that in lawful war ‘tis more meritorious to kill one of those than forty Christians’ ”

—refers to the denunciation or manifesto which the Sunni 'Ulama at the Holy Places published when Shah 'Abbas I was encouraging Persian Shiah to make Mashhad in Khurasan their main place of pilgrimage, not Makkeh and Madineh, quoting from *The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire in 1670*, chap. 10, book 2:

'By virtue of the authority I have received from Muhammad himself . . . I publicly 'pronounce that it is lawful for any believer of whatsoever nation, to destroy and root you 'out. If he that killeth a rebel Christian doeth a thing agreeable to Allah, he that killeth 'a Persian doeth one that deserves a reward seventy times greater. I hope also from the 'divine majesty that in the day of judgment he will make you serve in the place of asses 'for the Jews that that miserable race, which is the contempt of the world, may mount and 'trot with you to hell. . . .'

Such sentiments were reciprocated with interest by 'Abbas I, who caused his Shaikh-ul-Islam to include in an excommunication of the Sunni Turks the hope that the 'excrements of the Armenians might fall on the head of the Khalif 'Umar': and, wrote Fr. du Cerceau/Krusinski:

“this imprecation is continued even to this day” (i.e. 1722) “in Persia and, as often as the ‘Mullas call the people from the top of the mosques to come to prayers, they finish their ‘invitation with that pious ejaculation”.

A statement well nigh incredible!

It was a light matter, then, for the 'Ulama consulted at Makkeh to furnish a Fatwa in writing, legitimating any rebellion in such circumstances: and with that Mir Wais returned to Isfahan, where by presents from Arabia and politic behaviour he strengthened his influence.

At this point a digression has to be made because the strange case of Israil Ori comes into the picture. Fr. du Cerceau's book states:

'This Armenian adventurer was born at Kupanlu in Persia: and, after travelling through 'France, Italy, Germany, selling coffee to the armies, he enlisted as a soldier in the troops 'of the Emperor Leopold, and obtained the rank of a subordinate officer. An intriguer, 'he got access to the officials of the Court of Vienna and, with his knowledge of oriental 'languages, contrived to be sent to Constantinople to sound the disposition of Turks for 'the peace later concluded at Carlovitz. Thence he passed into the service of the Czar 'of Muscovy, and was made a colonel of his troops, and also dispatched to Constantinople