

SEVEN MANUSCRIPTS ATTRIBUTED TO BAHÁ'U'LLAH

In two letters to Anton Graf Prokesch von Osten,¹ Artur Comte de Gobineau mentions corresponding with Bahá'u'lláh during His sojourn in Adrianople and 'Akká. The Gobineau collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg (BNUS) contains six Persian manuscripts which are held to have been authored by Bahá'u'lláh: e.g. "Lettre de mirza Housayn Ali dit Baha'ullah : elle a été dictée à un secrétaire et ne porte pas de signature." Furthermore, there exists in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris a Turkish manuscript which is also said to be from Bahá'u'lláh.

Although various scholars and students of the Bahá'í Faith have previously dealt with individual manuscripts, all seven are reproduced here--together with a brief English description--to provide the reader with the opportunity to compare the manuscripts as to content, style and handwriting.

Ⓐ The earliest letter seems to be that preserved in the BNUS, Ms 3534, No. 6, which Schemann states Gobineau received in the early summer of 1868.² In this letter, the author states that he does not know Gobineau personally, but that he has heard much of the qualities and the goodwill which Gobineau exhibited in Persia. The letter then goes on to describe Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Baghdád, Constantinople and finally to Adrianople, "where I have resided for the past five years," and the intrigues of the Persian government against the Bahá'ís, carried out with the collusion of the Ottoman authorities. As an example thereof, the author refers to the arrest of four Bahá'ís--citizens of the Ottoman Empire--by the Persian consul in Manşuriyyh (Egypt) and the refusal of the Ottoman authorities there to intervene. The author then requests that Gobineau forward the enclosed petition to the "Throne of the Monarch of the Century" in order that a number of people be able to live quietly in the shadow of his protection.

Gobineau's translation of the manuscript, contained in Ms 3534, No. 7, was published by Schemann.³ The seal was translated as reading: "He who is well known (among the Faithful)."

Ⓑ The second manuscript, a petition in Turkish dated 9 August 1868, is contained in the Archives of the French Foreign Ministry, Dossier d'Adrinople. The French Vice-Consul in Adrianople, Ronzevalle, sent this petition, along with a translation and a report explaining the situation, to Nicolas Bourée, the French ambassador to the Sublime Porte, who in turn forwarded it to the Foreign Ministry in Paris.⁴ It has not been possible to ascertain if this petition is identical with the petition mentioned in the previous letter.

- Ⓒ The third, undated letter acknowledges a letter from Gobineau, thanks him for forwarding the petition, and states that the writer has contacted no other government in this matter.
- Ⓓ The fourth manuscript, also undated, acknowledges a further letter from Gobineau and states that nothing new has happened.
- Ⓔ This letter was, according to the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre, "written from 'Akká, fifty days after the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh, presumably around 20 October."⁵ It describes the tribulations of the Bahá'u'lláh and His companions during the exile from Adrianople to 'Akká and their condition in 'Akká, states that they have committed no offense other than being Bábís, and mentions the arrest of thirty other believers in Baghdád. Gobineau refers to this letter in his letter dated 18 November 1868 to Prokesch-Osten, mentioning that the author of the letter thanked Prokesch-Osten for his efforts on behalf of the Bahá'ís.
- Ⓕ This manuscript--contained, in the BNUS, MS 3516, "Pieces relative to Gobineau's work on Oriental languages"--is addressed to Gobineau as the French plenipotentiary minister in Brazil. It refers to the earlier letter from 'Akká, states that the prisoners' conditions are worsening, and thanks Gobineau for his and his government's efforts on their behalf. Schemann published Gobineau's translation of a letter very similar, but not identical to this one and stated that it was received on 4 January 1869.⁶
- Ⓖ The final manuscript is undated and does not mention the place from which it was written, although internal evidence points to the fact that it was written in Adrianople: "it is now sixteen years since we arrived in Baghdád." It points out that although the group was not at fault--"Earlier the disciples resisted every attack. We have forbidden this."--seventy are held prisoner without any provisions, and asks the matter be brought to the attention of the "Kings of the World".

Unfortunately, Gobineau's responses to these manuscripts are not available, with the exception of one included in a letter to Prokesch-Osten.⁷ This letter, written at the end of August 1868, describes Prokesch-Osten's intervention on behalf of Bahá'u'lláh with the Sublime Porte, which is referred to in manuscript E.

As is evident from this and other correspondence, Gobineau believed that the above letters and petitions were from Bahá'u'lláh and intervened with both the French and the Ottoman authorities on the basis of this assumption. However, the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice has stated that "the handwriting is not that of Bahá'u'lláh or of any of His known amanuenses; and the seal does not correspond with impressions of any of His authentic seals available at the World Centre."⁸

Furthermore, as Moojan Momen has also noted,⁹ these letters do not compare in style or content with other known writings from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh.

These seven manuscripts--which would seem to contradict the eyewitness accounts of both Aqá Muhammad-Riḍá-y-i-Qannád-i-Shirázi and Aqá Husayn-i-Ashchí¹⁰ which state categorically that Bahá'u'lláh did not turn to any person or government regarding His banishment--raise two basic questions:

- just who did author these letters--Bahá'u'lláh Himself, one or more of His followers, one of the Covenant breakers, a Muslim enemy of the Faith or even a member of the Christian community of Adrianople, which had originally called the attention of the European consuls to the impending exile--and
- what were the motives for these letters?

The reasons which speak against Bahá'u'lláh's authorship have been previously noted; furthermore, it is extremely unlikely that one of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh would have dared forge a document in His name, even in an attempt to attain foreign assistance. On the other hand, internal evidence leads to the assumption that the author--or authors--were members of the party which accompanied Bahá'u'lláh to 'Akká, which would exclude both the Muslim enemies and the Christian supporters of Bahá'u'lláh.

Therefore at the present time, it would seem most likely that the author or authors of the manuscripts are to be found among the followers of Mírzá Yahyá, Ṣubḥ-i-Azal, who attempted to gain assistance for Bahá'u'lláh and His companions, and thus for themselves, in this manner. This, however, is merely a hypothesis which must be confirmed or revised through further research by qualified scholars.

I wish to thank the Research Department at the Bahá'í World Centre, Peter T. Terry Jr., and Dr. Moojan Momen for providing photocopies of the manuscripts; Mag. Elisabeth Gamlich, Dr. Darius Ma'ani, and Dr. Baghá'u'lláh Wossough for assisting in their translation; and Mme. Lucrèce Reynaud for providing invaluable material on Gobineau.

Kent D. Beveridge

NOTES

- ¹ 31 August and 18 November 1868. The exchange of letters between Gobineau and Prokesch-Osten was published as Correspondence entre le Comte de Gobineau et le Comte de Prokesch-Osten (1854-1876), ed. Clément Serpeille de Gobineau, (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1933); see also K.D. Beveridge, "Anton Graf Prokesch von Osten and the Bahá'í-Faith: the Adrianople Episode," Bahá'í Studies, forthcoming.
- ² Ludwig Schemann, Quellen und Untersuchungen zum Leben Gobineaus, (Strasbourg: Verlag Trübner, 1914), p. 433.
- ³ Quellen, pp. 430-433.
- ⁴ Cf Moojan Momen, The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts, (Oxford: George Ronald, Publishers, 1981), p. 190.
- ⁵ Letter to the author dated 31 January 1982.
- ⁶ Quellen, pp. 434-435.
- ⁷ Correspondence, pp. 334-335.
- ⁸ The Research Department to Mme Lucrèce Reynaud, 23 March 1976:
 "Mme Reynaud has asked about the authenticity of the Tablet which Count Gobineau is said to have received from Bahá'u'lláh (ms A above, K.D.B.). This Tablet came to the notice of Shoghi Effendi shortly before his passing, and he received a copy of it in October 1957 from Strasbourg, through a personal representative whom he sent to investigate it.
 He never authenticated it, and since only Tablets bearing the seal or signature of Bahá'u'lláh can be considered authentic, we cannot state that it is in this category."
 and 14 June 1976:
 "Since the Guardian did not authenticate the document received by Count Gobineau as a Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh, the Research Department is not prepared to pass such a judgement, unless in the future additional evidence is found to substantiate this view.
 There are certain indications which cast doubt on its authenticity. For example the style does not resemble Bahá'u'lláh's normal style in His Tablets; the handwriting is not that of Bahá'u'lláh nor of any of His known amanuenses; and the seal does not correspond with impressions of any of His authentic seals available at the World Centre."
- ⁹ Bábí and Bahá'í Religion, p. 191
- ¹⁰ H.M. Balyuzi, Bahá'u'lláh: The King of Glory, (Oxford: George Ronald, 1980), pp. 255-257.

Letter of Sheikh Muja Kharazmi
aly. - 4 Dab. -

Ms 3539, No 6(2)

A

عرض شود اگر چه حرب ظاهر لافت شده و گن از صحت پسندیده مسکاره ای بسیار شسته که هم حق کمال است

از مرت و ذکر کس که از دستهای رضاعی داشته و دارند و در این صفت و الطاف سرگردان اجابت کرده اند و الا لام ششم که همگی از آن

شاید از توبه کس که هم آمده شود و در نظر حاجت سلطان زمان و دیگر دوران شاهنشاهی امیر المومنین هم تمام است که از آن

ایران با زن و اجازت سلطان و اطلاع سفرای دولت ایران عرب رفتند و در آن زمان هم در آن وقت نشد و آن نوشته که از آن

که از آن اجازت رفتند و در وقت عراق از امری ناشایسته بخار از آن بعد و به قده و تسلو سالی دولت که در آن بود و

شاه و گویند دولت ایران نظر کنگی از ازل ایران داشته و دارند این سبب صد بنده افتادند و کار در آن زمان بود

با ولایای دولت کجایت عینیت و در این حدیث آمده بود که این امور بالاخره سبب فیما و می شود شیخ عراق تمام شایسته است

مصلحت و عینیت دولت عثمانیه دیدند لهذا همی از دوستان این عینیت دولت عثمانیه خواستند و در آن وقت که در آن

واقع شد و این سبب که کمال جهده در صد بنده افتادند و از دولت عثمانیه خواستند و در آن وقت که در آن

عراق کمال محبت را نموده و تفصیل با این سبب اظهار شدند این هم هم دولت را طاعت نموده همی از احوال در داخل دستایل

و این سبب و لکن بعد از در دوستان قبول شاه شد که آنچه سبب ایران بود که در آن وقت که در آن

سجای زنده نفسی رعایت نمود بعد از چهار ماه صا که باید با در بر و سبب دولت را جوییم صبی صانع و در آن وقت که در آن

شد که تصور باطنی اجرای خواستند و این عباد طاعت نمود آرم با در پنج سینه میورد که در آن وقت که در آن

و این سبب که این عباد طاعت نماید از قسوس مساکه که این امر سبب استفسار شود معلوم شود صدق این امر یا می شود

ایران این قدر با طاعت نمود و راضی شد هر چه امری تنگ شد حضرت اولیای دولت عثمانیه کجایت نمود و آنچه گفت خواست



فرانسہ دولت فخر سند تو نوروس بکینہ

رتبہ

اللہ ایچون وانسا پنجه دولت علیہ قباحتسرا ولد یغیر حاله بنه انداکی شیری سزه پونستو ایدر
 التی سند اول بزى تبعیته دعوت ایندی لیر قبول ایتدک صکر بلا تصویر ایران اسند عا سیدلر
 بغداد دن استنبول سرکون ایتدی لیر واستنبول دن در دای سکره ادر نه به منفی ایندی لیر
 و شمدی کنه ادر نه دن سرکون اولدک لکن نریه کد جکیز بلی دکل در و حال بو کده هیچ بر
 بقدر و جمیع مالتر بر باد اولدی شمدی اگر دولت علیہ بزى استقر سه چونکه اصله مملکت
 عثمانیه دن دکلز بنه اجازت ورسونلر که باشقه بر پادشاهک مملکت کدلم و اور پاد
 پادشاهلرک که از اولقه سور لوز انلرک بر حمت لر نندن بونی رجا ایدلر ز که
 بونیقر الری قور تار سونلر ایشندم

حسینعلی



۱۸۶۸
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Sir

in the name of God & humanity we protest to you against the plight which we have been subjected to from the Turkish government.

Six years ago we were invited at the Ottoman suggestion & we have accepted. Later, without having committed any fault & at the request of Persia we were sent from Baghdad to ~~Adrianople~~ ^{Cons^{ple}} Adrianople. After a stay of 4 months, we were exiled to Adrianople.

Now, once again, we are being exiled from Adrianople without the knowledge of where we are destined & without any reason, all our possessions were disposed of. If the Turkish government does not welcome us anywhere, & as we are not of this country let us be free to go into a country of another power. It is to the sovereigns of Europe who like to help the oppressed that we plead, supplicating them to release us from this bondage.

Aug 9th 1868

signed: ~~Muz~~
Hussein-Ali

Introduction: Au V. Consulat de France à Constantinople.

M^r. le V. Consul,

Au nom de Dieu et de l'humanité,
nous protestons auprès de vous contre
toutes les misères dont nous sommes
l'objet de la part du gouvernement
turc. Il y a dix ans, on nous avait
invités à la suggestion Ottomane, mais
à nous acceptés, persistés, dans avoir
commis aucune faute, et sur la
demande de la Perse, on nous a
envoyés de Bagdad à Constantinople,
et après un séjour de quatre mois,
on nous a exilés à Andrinople.

Maintenant, le nouveau on nous
 exile à Andrinople sans savoir
où nous allons, et on a, sans raison,
gaspillé tout notre bien. Si le
gouvernement turc ne veut plus
de nous, et puisqu'on nous ne sommes
pas originaires d'ici, qu'on nous laisse
libres d'aller dans le pays d'une
autre puissance. C'est aux
Souverains de l'Europe, qui
viennent à secourir les malheureux,

que nous aurons recours, les suppléant
de nous en libérer.

Le 9 Août 1858.

M. M. M. M. M. M. M.

مواضع

C

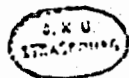
عرض شود که دستخط عالی در شهر بر ملاطفت گزینی بود رسید و کمال فرح و نشاط در دسترس و ابراهیم
مسلو در آنجا بود

عالی بر آید که گویای نخواهد فرسود و بی اختیار و توغای شایسته زمان هم در اینست و که گویای بر جای دوام است
است تمام

و اقبای دیگر نیز سلطان زمان و آن سرکار در جمیع ممالک ایران قیامت آبی خواهد یافت و این با عیال
تاریخ

نموده لذا امیدواریم که از توجیه سرکار عالی این امر انجام پذیرد تا کمال شایسته نام بر اقبای دولت
مستند گردد

و عرض از اینکترت اظہار عنونیت از سرکار عالیست که کمال محبت را فرموده اند و در نظیر دار سازند



غرض میبود خدمت سفیر اعظم اکرم و وزیر فخری دامت اقبال العالی از کتب حضرت عالی رسیده و نسخه های
شماره اول و دوم

در باره از قداحها از آنحضرت ممنونیت دست داد خدای دادنده شایسته که دعای عمر درود و قابل کلام

درب و دروز در زبان این اسیران و مجوسان کشته و در کل آن از حق مسئلت می نمایم که بر عمر درود

و عزت آنحضرت بیفزاید و عادت نازده واقع شده امور بر همان حال سابق باقیست

و فی الحقیقت هر وقت که دستخط حضرت عالی میرسد سرد و فرج بی اندازه دست میدهد

لیکن کمال خجالت از این حاصل است که آنحضرت عالی را بر رحمت انداختیم

امید داریم که این رحمت و شفقت سبب نیک نامی و ابقای ذکر خیر آنحضرت گردد

زیرا آن جسمی بدل و جان بدعا کونی سرکار شتونند باقی امر کم احوالی مطاع در اسلام



عرض این بنده در خدمت حضرت وزیر اعظم و سفیر المحکم اکرم دام انبلا انکه امور این بنده نسیمی واقع شده که قلم و لسان و تلمیح بر زبان
 قاصرات محل گذرت شش سینه در ادره حسب الامور دولت علیّه عثمانیه سابق بودیم و ابد از این عبده و سلطان خلاف اصول ظاهر نشد
 چنانچه جمیع اهل ادره شاهد گردانند مع ذلک سه ماه قبل بعت نامورین دولت عثمانیه در درخانه را گرفتند و آنچه از سلطان این عبده
 که در بازار دکان داشتند جمیع را گرفته بدرخانه حکومت بردند و بعد آدمی از حکومت آمد اخبار کرد که حب الامر پادشاهی باید شایه
 و اطفال بکلیسولی بروید و دیگر بهیچ وجه فرصت ندادند جمیع اسباب متعلقان تحت حکم ضابطان لشکر بقیمت بسیار کم فروخته
 و اندر فرصت ندادند که پول آن گرفته شود بیدای بنده را اجتناف از زن و مرد و اطفال کوچک بکلیسولی آوردند بعد از ورود
 ناموری مخصوص عرفندی بین باشی با پنج چادش از استانبول وارد شد مذکمی بیرون آوردند که حب الامر شش نفر بنگاه
 برنده پنج نفر بقبرص و من بباتی رجوع ندارم خود مختارند و بعد معلوم شد که تدبیر کرده بود زیرا پول و اچورا از همه گرفت و کل را بنگاه
 که بد آب و هوای ترین روی زمین است آورد و آنجا نفرزاک بقلعه خرابه در جزیره قبرص بردند بمجره ورود در عکاج جمع را در سر باز خانه نوا
 جسین کردند حتی زنهار و اطفال شش ماهه را و ابواب دخول و خروج را با لوله بستند و حال پنجاه روز است که در عکاج در سر باز خانه
 خرابه محبوسیم و جمیع از بدی آب و هوای خوش شده باغوشبهای صعب بقیمیکه در دروز سر نفر ترند بی طیب و غذا و دو و تا حال
 این عبادند انسته ایم که تقصیر چه بوده و چیت ابد سوال و جوابی شده و ابد از این عباد تقصیر و حرف اصول ظاهر شده اگر تصور و گناه
 این عباد است این از اول معلوم بود و اولیای دولت علیّه عثمانیه مطلع بودند که این عباد ابدی هستند این امری مستور نبود مع ذلک این عبده
 دولت خواسته با جمعی از متعلقان از بقعه ابد کمال خلوص بدر بار حضرت پادشاهی آدمیم مع ذلک بر روز بلانی وارد شد تا آنکه منتهی شد
 باین بلا بزرگ اگر تقصیر دیگر این عباد نسبت میدهند مجلس کنند و استفسار شود بعد از تحقیق واضح و بر سرین خواستند که ابد این عباد خارج
 از اصول حرکتی نگردد و جمیع توفی که ما که در ادره از جانب دولت خیر است کنند مطلقه و جمیع شهادت دادند که این عباد متصرف نیستند
 و آنچه خواستیم بقیمیکه تقصیر این عباد چه چیز است ابد ذکر نمودند که اطلاع حاصل شود هستند عای این عباد از آنحضرت عالی آنست که توبه
 فرایند که نام غایت و الطاف علیحضرت شاهنشاهی بر این عباد مرد و فایده متصرف اصلی این عباد است که شاید ابد بای ستواتره و دل
 حمایت امیر الطور اعظم فخر المحکم اکرم دام ظلها آسوده شوند و دعای دولت ابد متفق شوند و از همه اخبار که بتلفظ خبر رسیده انکه
 در بقعه ابدی نفر از معارف دوستان این عبده را به درون جرم و تقصیر بجزیره سکون کردند و الاک این عبده را جمیع ضبط کردند هستند عا
 آنست از قبول بنده استفسار فرمایند تا معلوم گردد که جمیع این امور به درون ذمه تقصیر وارد شده جمیع این عباد منتظرند که از آنحضرت
 و عدالت شاهنشاهی زمان و امیر الطور اعظم دوران توبه سه کار عالی آفتاب عثمانی پسران نماید بآمر اشرف عالی مطاع

Letter received
 from Sultan
 August Oct. 20
 1868



Ma 3516

Handwritten scribble or signature

میرزا

خدمت حضرت وزیر اعظم مغیر الختم اکرم دام ابوالساعص میبود که عیضه معروض شد و او درین حال

عالی دستخط عالی آنحضرت بجهت بخش خواطر بزرگان شد که اگر کار مجربان را مستحق بود بسیار

عالی رفقه احوال این مجربان مسرور فرزند بسیار بسیار این عبد در آنحضرت عالی شکرم

زیاده از حد ذکر و بیان حاصل شد و اسرار این مظلومان در هریم در پشته است و درین

شد از خدا آئیم که در کل این و اجماع بر سر دولت و عزت آنحضرت میزاید بسیار

از انبیا آنحضرت عالی را بزرگتر انداختم و لکن این را امید دارم که این دولت و عزت

ذکر خیر آنحضرت شود و در دنیا و آخرت بستانمال برسند باقی امر که الله اعلم



MS 3516

عرفیہ تفصیل و قایح مجتہد اشرف اور حضرت قزاق قومی وزیر مختار دولت بہینہ
فرانسہ برازیل

با ولایای دولت علی بن ابی طالب

غرض این بنده خدمت سفیر عظم و وزیر کرام اگر برای این عبادتجاری رسیده که قلم و مراد از تحریر آن عاجز و این ^{در این حدیث}

و آنچه وارد شد سوگند علی اند صابر بکره راضی و شاکر بودم خدای واحد شاه است که همیشه منتظر شهادت برده ام و لکن چون ^{چون} ^{شاید} ^{گویی} ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

مشغولند و از مسواحه متقطع در هر بار انانما و ذکر و اغصیر و کبیر استلا و مظلومند مع آنکه شاه نزرده سینه شود از روز این عبید از ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

تقصیری سز زده و آنحضرت البته شنیده اند که قبل از شاه نزرده سینه این طایفه محل ظلم نمیشودند و مکانات نمیشودند و این ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

بشمیکه در هر یک گشته شدند مع ذلک متعرض نفسی نشدند و حال شاه نزرده سینه میشود که آنچه از این طایفه گشته اند ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

و حال آنکه حال قوی ترند از قبل و در هر بلندی از بلاد ایران بیشتر از پیشترند مع ذلک آنچه از ظلم بر ایشان وارد شده ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

بوده و هستند و حال مظلوم ترین اهل ارضند بر این عبد لازم شد که عرض این مظلومان را پیشگاه حضور شاهنشاه جهان مهر فرود ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

و همین قدر استدعا مینمایم که عنایای شود که با این مظلومان مثل سایر باس و قمار کنند و از قواعد اصول دین تهاجم باز نمانند ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

شان خورشید اشراق و اعطای انوار است و لایق محاب امطار در این مقام بر حضرت شاهنشاه رعایت جمعی مظلوم لازمست ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

و در این روزها امر این سجونان بسیار شدید شده و ساعت بساعت در شدت است قریب بمقتاد نظر بس ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

جمیع ناخوش و مریض و نمیکند از آنکه بجهت دوا و غذا کسی بیرون برود و دیناری مصارف تا حال ندادند ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

قبل پاشا آمد نزدیکه زاده و ذکر نمود که لغراف زده اند که بعضی راز وری یک فرنگ و بعضی را نیم فرنگ ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

نقره هم گویا مقصود اقتضای این بنده بوده چندی قبل تفصیل امور را خدمت سفیر کبیر دولت فخریه ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

و ایشان هم اگر فی الجمله توجه فرمایند امور اصلاح بسیار بد چه که قصوری از این عباد ظاهر نشده و ابداً بقاعده اصول ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

خطائی ثابت نگشته و هنوز نگفته اند که سبب این بلا چه بوده و علت چه شده البته آنحضرت بقدر وسع در امور ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

این عباد توجه خواهند فرمود خدای واحد شاه است که از آنحضرت کمال استنان حاصلت همین قدر که بدین ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}

وقتی این عبد را یاد فرمودند فی الحقیقه کافیت و هرگز از نظر مخوشو ابد شد و از حق جل جلاله استدعا مینمایم که بر ما فرود ^{چون} ^{از} ^{تو} ^{گفته} ^{است}



مرکز عزت و دولت آنحضرت سفیر ایله بنی امرکم العالی مطاع

Letter A

He is God, the Exalted

I wish to say that, although we have never met, I have heard much of your excellency's praiseworthy qualities, that you behaved with kindness towards all the people, especially my followers, when you were in Tehran. They were and are most grateful for your excellency's kindness and beneficence, and have mentioned to me the details of your grace and bounty. I, therefore, considered it necessary to give you a short account of what has taken place, the perhaps through your excellency's attentions some may find peace and dwell in the shade of the protection of the Prince of the Age, the Monarch of the Era, the King of the World, the Most Mighty, Most Noble, and Most Great Emperor.

What I have to relate is as follows: I went from the capital of the kingdom of Iran to Iraq, with the permission and approval of the King and the awareness of the foreign ambassadors, and for twelve whole years I resided in Iraq. Even now I have in my possession the document (issued by) the government of Iran, (stating that) we left with (their) permission and approval. During the period of my residence in Iraq, not one unworthy or untoward action was manifested by me; all the foreign consuls who were then in Iraq will bear witness and attest to (the truth of) what I say. The government of Iran, seeing that some Iranian citizens showed and still show affection towards me, determined to act against me. Every day, the Iranian consul (? kārpardāz-i Īrān -- Mirza Buzurg Khan?) would write a complaint to the (Ottoman) government officials. Since I observed that such developments would lead to mischief, I explained things to the Governor of Iraq, Namiq Pasha. He felt that it would be wise to adopt Ottoman citizenship, and so some of my friends chose to become Turkish citizens. This, however, was contrary to the wishes of the government of Iran, and it was for this reason that they started in earnest to take action against me. They made a request of the Ottoman government, and the latter summoned me to Istanbul. The Governor of Iraq showed great affection and gave me a full account (of the affair). I for my part obeyed the decree of the government and went to Istanbul, together with some of my family, children, and servants.

After arriving in Istanbul, however, it became apparent that they were doing whatever the Iranian ambassador wished. We stayed four months in Istanbul and (during that time) I never went anywhere or associated with anyone. After four months, a decree was issued to the effect that we must go to Edirne. We sought to know the reason for this, and various pretexts were advanced, but it became known to us that the real purpose was to carry out the wishes of the Iranian ambassador. I complied (with the decree) and we arrived in Edirne.

We have been living in Edirne for five years now, and nobody has anything to complain of from me or my relatives. Let enquiries be made of the consuls resident here, that the truth of what I say may be made known. In spite of this, the Iranian ambassador has not rested content with what has been done, nor has he been satisfied. Every day, he has involved himself in some affair and lodged a complaint with the Ottoman state officials. They have accepted and continue to accept whatever he says or wishes.

Things reached such a pitch that, in Mansuriyya in Egypt, the Iranian consul arrested four Ottoman citizens who had committed no offence. However much they protested they were Ottoman citizens, no heed was paid to them. They even took their passports and tore them up, after which they assembled them and banished them in chains and fetters. A certain Hajji Abu 'l-Qasim, who was a well-known merchant there, simply on account of the fact that he had gone to Edirne to see me, was, on his return to Mansuriyya, made the object of the hostility of the Iranian consul and, although he had committed no crime or offence, he was arrested. They impounded all he possessed then entered his house, dragged forth his daughter, and carried her to the street and the market-place. But the Ottoman government paid no heed. It is obvious that, whether out of friendship or for other reasons, the Ottoman government undoubtedly carries out and implements whatever the Iranian ambassador says, nor do

they neglect his wishes or his good-pleasure. But it is far from clear what the reason for this may be.

Since your excellency is informed as to how things are in Iran, I beg of you to present my petition before the throne of the King of the Age, that perchance he may perform an act of grace whereby the hearts of some people may be put at rest, that all may find ease in the cradle of the protection and security of the Monarch of the World and in the shadow of his bounty. The one God is witness that I have not entertained and do not entertain any thought of myself. I am content with whatever has been written down by the supreme Pen on the Tablet of Fate. From the first day that I recognized the Truth, I have set aside both life and property. May, at every moment I hope and pray that I may offer up my soul as a sacrifice in the path of the Beloved of the Worlds. But since a large number of individuals have been oppressed, I have felt it necessary to explain how matters stand. I beg you to let no-one know of this until the purpose of this petition has been achieved.

(I remain) obedient to your command.

Letter C

He is God, the Exalted

Your excellency's letter has been received. It showed great kindness and was productive of the utmost joy and happiness, gladness and delight. It is obvious that, whatever is done by your excellency, it will not be deficient. In reality, what you are doing involves good-will towards the King of the Age (and something? -- word unclear), for a large number (of people) will arise to pray for the continuation of his rule; in all the provinces of Iran, there shall endure until the resurrection continual, well-wishing for the King of the Age and for yourself. I have not until now referred to any matter before any government. We hope, therefore, that, through your excellency's attention, this matter may come to a conclusion, that all may, in the utmost ease, devote themselves to speaking of the continuation of (the king's) rule.

(I remain) obedient to your command.

The purpose of this letter is to show gratitude to your excellency for having shown the greatest kindness and having delivered the petition.

Letter D

He is God

Most mighty and noble ambassador, most great minister, may your prosperity continue, I wish to say that your letter has arrived and that it was productive of the greatest joy and happiness. We are more grateful to you than can be estimated. The one God is witness that the tongues of these prisoners and confined ones are occupied night and day in praying for your excellency's life, felicity, and prosperity. At every moment, we beseech the True One to increase your life, your felicity, and your glory.

Nothing fresh has occurred; things are just as they were before. But, in truth, whenever the letters of your excellency are received, we experience unlimited exaltation and happiness. Yet we are, at the same time, extremely embarrassed to be the cause of inconvenience to your excellency. We hope that, God willing, this trouble and inconvenience may result in a good reputation and a perpetuation of goodly remembrance for your excellency, for at this moment a great many are busied with heart and soul in praying for you.

I remain obedient to your command. Salutations.

Letter E

Heading (not copied fully)

Most mighty minister, most great and noble ambassador, may your prosperity continue, I wish to say that my affairs have so fallen out that pen and tongue, writing and utterance are alike powerless to (describe them? -- not copied).

To give a brief account, we resided for six years (sic) in Edirne on the orders of the Ottoman government; nothing contrary to the laws (of the state) was ever manifested by me or my followers, as all the people of Edirne bear witness and confess. Nevertheless, three months ago, officials of the Ottoman state suddenly surrounded our house, seized all the belongings of my followers in the bazaar, and took them to the government building. After this, a man came from the governor and informed us that, on the orders of the Sultan, I had to go with (my wives? -- not copied) and children to Gallipoli. They gave us no further notice than that. All the belongings of my followers were sold for a paltry price at the decree of the military commanders, but they did not even give us an opportunity to collect the money. After this, they brought me to Gallipoli, along with seventy men, women, and small children. Following our arrival, a special official, ^cUmar Effendi Bīnbāshī (= bigbāshī; major), arrived from Istanbul with five sergeants. They issued a decree to the effect that **orders had been given** for six individuals to go to Acre (with us? -- not copied), and for five to go to Cyprus; I had no claim on the rest -- they were to be free to choose for themselves. It afterwards became apparent that he had arranged things, for he took the money for the steamer from everyone and brought all of us to Acre, which has the worst water and the worst air in the world -- except for four individuals, who were taken to a ruined fortress in Cyprus.

No sooner had we arrived in Acre than they imprisoned us in a ruined barracks, even the women and six-month old children, and they forthwith shut the doors of entry and exit. We have now been imprisoned in the ruined barracks for fifty days, and, on account of the badness of the water and air, we have all been stricken by serious illnesses, such that, after two days, three people died without a physician or food or medicine. Up until now, we have not learnt the nature of our crime. There has been no enquiry. But neither wrongdoing nor acts contrary to the laws have ever been witnessed from us.

If it be supposed that our crime is that of being Babis, this was known from the start, and the Ottoman government officials were aware that we were Babis. It was not something that was kept concealed. Nevertheless, I was summoned by the government (reading in ^cabd-rā: rā not copied), and I came with a number of my followers from Baghdad to the court of his highness the Sultan, in the utmost sincerity. In spite of this, a new tribulation befell us every day, until things culminated in this mighty ordeal.

If they accuse us of some other crime, let them hold a tribunal and question us. When investigations have been held, it will be clear and apparent that we have not transgressed the laws. All the consuls resident in Edirne on behalf of the great powers are aware (of this) and all have borne witness that we have not committed any wrong. What we want is to know just what our crime has been, but they have not once mentioned it so that we might be informed. We beseech your excellency to turn your attention towards us, so that the breezes of the grace and bounty of his imperial highness the Sultan may blow upon us. Our fundamental aim is perchance to find shelter from these widespread tribulations in the shade of the protection of the most mighty, great, and noble Emperor, may his exalted shadow endure, and that we may occupy ourselves in prayer for his eternal rule.

Among the news which has reached us by way of the telegraph is that in Baghdad thirty of my well-known adherents have been sent to Jazira without (having committed) any crime or offence, and my property has all been impounded. I ask you to make enquiries of (your) consul in Baghdad, that it may be made known that all these things have happened without the slightest explanation. We all wait expectantly for the sun of bounty to rise up from the horizon of the grace and justice of the Monarch of the Age, the most great Emperor of the Era, through the attention of your excellency.

I remain obedient to your command.

Letter F

He is God

Most great minister, most mighty and noble ambassador, may your prosperity endure, I wish to mention that a petition was written and that, at the time it was sent, your excellency's second letter brought joy to the hearts of these withered souls. God be praised that the (something unclear) news of your blessed and exalted existence and your investigation of the circumstances of these prisoners, rendered joyful these sad ones. I am very, very grateful to your excellency; our gratitude is more than can be rendered by either speech or utterance.

The affairs of these oppressed ones have worsened every day -- I have already given you the details. We hope that God may increase your excellency's life, prosperity, and glory at all times. I am most ashamed to have put your excellency to such trouble. But we hope that, God willing, this trouble may prove the cause of the goodly mention of your excellency, and that you may attain to all your hopes in both this world and the next.

I remain obedient to your command.

(Address)

Petition detailing events, addressed to his noble and illuminaed excellency Count Gobineau, Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Government in Brazil.

Letter G

He is God, the Exalted (? -- partly copied)

Most mighty ambassador, most noble minister, allow me to say that the tribulations of these servants have reached such a point that pen and ink are powerless to record them. During these (last) few years, I have (several words illegible) to the officials of the Ottoman government. Whatever has befallen me, I have endured it patiently, relying on God, nay I have been contented and grateful. The one God is witness that I have at all times expected martyrdom, but since I observed that a number of poor ones occupied with the mention of God and detached from all save Him were oppressed and downtrodden in every land, both men and women, young and old... (sic -- the sentence does not have a complement for chūn, 'since'). And this despite the fact that, in the sixteen years from my arrival in Baghdad until now, no offense has been committed by anyone. Your excellency will have heard that, before those sixteen years, this sect did not endure oppression, but took revenge. I forbade all (to do so), so that they were put to death in every land, yet opposed none. It is now sixteen years that, although members of this sect have been killed, they have not shown opposition, despite the fact that they are stronger than before and are greater in numbers in every part of Iran. Nevertheless, whatever oppression has befallen them, they have remained and remain silent and patient, and are the most oppressed of the people of the earth.

It is, therefore, incumbent on me to present the plea of these oppressed ones before the King of the World. I pray he may show such grace that men will behave towards these downtrodden ones as they do towards others and may not transgress the basic laws of the nations. It befits the sun to rise up and shed its light, and it behoves the cloud to pour down rain. It is, therefore, necessary for his highness the King to look after the interests of an oppressed people.

In these days, the case of these prisoners has become extremely serious. Hour by hour, the severity of our condition increases. They have imprisoned nearly seventy individuals, all of whom are in discomfort and ill, yet they will not allow anyone to go out to obtain medicine or food, nor have they yet given us even a dinar for our expenses. A few days ago, a pasha came to my son and said they had telegraphed to say that some (of us) would be given one

franc per day, others half a franc. It seems that the purpose of this was to bring dishonour on me.

Some time ago, I sent a report of what had happened to the Austrian ambassador. If he should pay heed, things will improve, for there has been no fault on our part. They have never proved legally that this sect has committed wrong, nor have they explained the reason for this affliction. Undoubtedly, your excellency will pay attention to our affairs as far as lies within your capacity. The one God is witness that your excellency has shown the greatest favour, to such a degree that you remembered me at such a time. That, in truth, is in itself sufficient, and it shall never be erased from my memory. I pray that God may increase your life and glory and prosperity every day.

I remain obedient to your command.