



'ABD-AL-NABĪ

'**ABD-AL-NABĪ**, SHAIKH, Mughal traditionist, for a time much esteemed by the emperor Akbar. He was a grandson of the noted Češtī saint, Shaikh 'Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangōhī (d. 944/1537). He visited the Hejaz several times and pursued Hadith studies there. He spurned his family's tradition of mysticism, adopting the ways of externalist scholars ('*olamā'-e zāher*) even to the extent of criticizing his father, who had written a *resala* in support of Sufi musical gatherings (*majāles-e samā*'). Akbar appointed him head of religious endowments and charities (*šadr al-šodūr*) in 973/1564-65, a position which allowed him to exercise supreme control over religious affairs in the Mughal empire. His power was resented and resisted by Maḳdūm-al-molk (q.v.) 'Abdallāh Solṭānpūrī, who wrote a *resāla* against him, holding him responsible for the executions of Keẓr Khan and Mīr Ḥabšī on charges of heresy (Badā'ūnī, *Montaḳab*, tr., II, p. 262). 'Abd-al-Nabī was one of the signatories to the declaration which invested Akbar with a limited power to interpret Muslim law (ibid., II, pp. 278-80). Akbar originally had profound respect for him, and for a time he employed the shaikh to instruct Prince Salīm (the future Jahāngīr) in Hadith. The king, however, wearied of 'Abd-al-Nabī's arrogance and his disputes with Maḳdūm-al-molk; in 986/1678-79 he sent them both on pilgrimage to Mecca (ibid., II, p. 275) and appointed a new *šadr al-šodūr*, Solṭān Kṽāja. 'Abd-al-Nabī, on his return, was arrested after a dispute arose over his allocation of some charitable funds. He was put to death, either in 991/1583 (*Ā'in-e Aḳbarī*, tr., I, p. 283) or in 992/1584 (*Montaḳab*, tr., II, p. 321).

The disparaging portrait of 'Abd-al-Nabī provided by Badā'ūnī may have been



motivated by their personal conflict (see, e.g., *Montakab*, tr., II, p. 176). Several other writers regarded him as an eminent scholar: the author of *Sanawāt al-atqīā* (cited by Moḥammad Ekrām, *Rūd-e kawṭar*, Karachi, 1968, p. 87); ‘Abd-al-Şamad, *Akbār al-aşfīā* (Ind. Off., no. 641); Moḥyi’l-dīn ‘Abd-al-Qāder al-‘Aydārūs, *al-Nūr al-sāfer ‘an akbār al-qarn al-‘āşer* (Aḥmad, *Ind. Arab. Lit.*, p. 178); and Moḥammad Ġawṭī, *Golzār-e abrār* (in the account of Shaikh ‘Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangōhī).

Works attributed to ‘Abd-al-Nabī are: 1. A lost *resāla* against *samā*. 2. *Resāla dar vażā’ef va ađ’īā* (also known as *Wazā’ef al-yawm wa’l-laylat al-nabawīya*; see Brockelmann, *GAL S. II*, p. 602), written during his confinement. 3. *Sonan al-hodā fī motāba’at al-Moştafā* (described in detail in M. Hidāyat Ḥusain, *Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts in the Būhār Library*, Calcutta, 1923, II, pp. 446-50). A lost Arabic treatise refuting Qaffāl Marvazī Şāfe’ī’s criticism of Imam Abū Ḥanīfa, from whom ‘Abd-al-Nabī traced his descent. He had a mosque constructed in Delhi which still stands (Mesjed-e ‘Abd-al-Nabī, see MASI, 9, Calcutta, 1921).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Moḥammad Ḥosayn Āzād, *Darbār-e Akbarī*, Lahore, 1947, p. 397.

Raḥmān ‘Alī, *Tadkera-ye ‘olamā’-e Hend*, Lucknow, 1914, p. 134; Urdu tr., with notes by Qāderī, Karachi, 1961, pp. 325-27.

‘Abd-al-Ḥayy, *Nozhat al-ḳawāṭer*, Hyderabad, 1954, IV, pp. 219-22.

Aḥmad, *Ind. Arab. Lit.*, repr., 1968, pp. 116, 178, 349-50.

Muhammad Ishaq, *India’s Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature*, Dacca, 1955, pp. 130-31.

A further reference to ‘Abd-al-Nabī occurs on the reverse side of a *farmān* from Akbar relating to the shrine of Shaikh Mo’īn-al-dīn Češtī in Ajmer (‘Abd-al-Bārī Ma’ānī, *Asnād al-şanādīd*, Ajmer, 1952, p. 3).