



## ABŪ 'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN SOLAMĪ

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**ABŪ 'ABD-AL-RAḤMĀN SOLAMĪ**, MOḤAMMAD B. ḤOSAYN B. MŪSĀ AZDĪ NĪSĀBŪRĪ (325-412/937-1021), Sufi, traditionist, and hagiographer. His *nesba* Solamī derives from the Arab tribe of Solaym (Sam'ānī, *Ansāb* [Leiden], fols. 303b-304a) through his maternal grandfather (Solamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-šūfiya* [Cairo], p. 454). The above derivation has to be maintained against the one offered by R. Hartmann, who would rather derive it from *sollam* ("klimax, scala perfectionis"). Hartmann also implies the possibility of Solamī being the Arabian *nesba* given in adoption to a Persian family, as often happened in Iran ("Sulamī oder Sullamī?", *OLZ* 15, 1912, cols. 127-29; cf. R. Hartmann, "Zur Frage nach der Herkunft und den Anfängen des Sūfītums," *Der Islam* 6, 1916, pp. 63-64). It may be argued, however, that Abū 'Abd-al-Raḥmān's father, Ḥosayn b. Moḥammad b. Mūsā Azdī, came from the famous Arabian tribe of Azd which had settled in Khorasan (see G. Strenziok, "Azd," *EI*<sup>2</sup> I, pp. 811-13; 'A. Zarrīnkūb in *Camb. Hist. Iran* IV, pp. 28-29). The Arab origins of Solamī, therefore, can hardly be disputed. (See also Šorayba's intro., Solamī, *Ṭabaqāt*; A. 'Afīfī, *al-Malāmatīya wa'l-šūfiya wa ahl al-fotūwa*, Cairo, 1364/1945; intro. to *Resālat al-malāmatīya*, pp. 71-73).

*Life.* There is but scanty information about the life of Solamī. In 325/937 (most likely 330/942, see Šorayba, p. 18), Solamī was born in Nišāpūr to a pious family of Sufis and ascetics. He was the eldest son, and his father distributed all that he possessed among the poor at the birth of his son. Both his father



and mother are reported to have been Sufis. His maternal grandfather, Ebn Noĵayd, was regarded as one of the eminent Malāmatī shaikhs of his time. Solamī received his training initially from his parents, but after his father's death Ebn Noĵayd brought him up. As Ebn Noĵayd did not have a son, Solamī inherited from him not only material wealth (the Solamī family in Nīšāpūr was wealthy and famous) but also his knowledge and scholarship. Basically it was the training he had from his parents and his grandfather that initiated Solamī into Sufism. He traveled widely to Iraq, Hamadān, Ray, Marv, Ḥeĵāz, and other places, and met with scholars and Sufis. During the latter part of his life Solamī built a small Sufi hospice (*kānaqāh*) which became renowned in and around Nīšāpūr. His library contained many works on Sufism and tradition. Solamī died on 3 Ša'bān 412/12 November 1021, and was buried in his *kānaqāh*.

Solamī was a follower of the Shafe'ite school. (For a list of his teachers, see Šorayba, pp. 19-24.) Besides his father and grandfather, among his teachers were Abu'l-Qāsem Našrābādī, the Sufi traditionist and historian of Nīšāpūr, from whom he received the cloak of initiation (*kerqa*); Abū Bakr Šebġī (d. 342/953) and Abū 'Abdallāh Šaybānī (d. 344/955), both from Nīšāpūr; Abu'l-'Abbās Ašamm; Abū Sahl Šo'lūkī (d. 369/979), who is also said to have bestowed a *kerqa* on Solamī (see M. J. Kister, ed., *Ketāb ādāb al-šoḥba*, Jerusalem, 1954, intro., p. 1); and Abū Našr Sarrāj, the famous Sufi of Ṭūs (d. 378/988).

Solamī trained a number of scholars in Sufism, history, and Hadith. Among his students were the eminent Sufi Abu'l-Qāsem Qošayrī (d. 465/1072), who quotes Solamī very frequently in his *Resāla*; the Shafe'ite jurist Abū Bakr Bayhaqī (d. 458/1065); Abū No'aym Ešfahānī (d. 430/1038), the author of *Ḥelyat al-awlā'*; Abū Sa'īd b. Abu'l-Ķayr (d. 440/1049), who was sent by his preceptor to Solamī in order to receive a *kerqa* from him (R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge, 1921, repr. 1967, p. 14; for doubts regarding the possibility of this affiliation, see F. Meier, *Abū Sa'īd i Abū l-Ḥayr (357-440/967-1049)*, Acta Iranica, Tehran and Liège, 1976, p. 45); Ebn al-Bayye' (d.405/1014), the author of *Ta'riḳ Nīsābūr* and of other works on traditions; and many others (for a list, see Šorayba, pp. 24-28).

*Works.* Solamī was a prolific writer. According to his biographers, he has about 100 works to his credit, most of which are lost (cf. Brockelmann, *GAL* I, pp. 218-19, S. I, pp. 361-62; Sezgin, *GAS* I, pp. 671-74; Šorayba, pp. 31-42; and 'Afīfī, *al-Malāmatīya*, pp. 82-85). Beginning about 350/961, he spent more than fifty years in composition of works on Sufism, exegesis, Traditions, and history



(essentially of Sufism). Among the most important is *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiya* (or *ṣūfiyīn*; ed. Šorayba, Cairo, 1953; ed. J. Pedersen, Leiden, 1960). This compilation of Sufi hagiography laid the foundation for the later *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiya* by ‘Abdallāh Anṣārī (d. 481/1088), which influenced Jāmī’s *Nafahāt al-ons*. Parts of what is perhaps an earlier work by Solamī on the history of Sufism have been published by L. Massignon (*Quatre textes, inédits, relatifs à la biographie d’al-Ḥosayn ibn Maṣṣour al-Ḥallāj*, Paris, 1914, pp. 9-25) under the title “*Ta’rīk al-ṣūfiya*,” on the basis of quotations from al-Ḳaṭīb (cf. also Pedersen’s intro. to *Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 50-62). *Ḥaḳā’eq al-tafsīr*, an important compilation of Sufi Qur’ān exegesis, has only been edited in part. For a general analysis of the whole *tafsīr*, see A. Ateş, *Sülemî ve tasavvufî tefsîri*, Istanbul, 1969. It is a very controversial commentary, the contents of which were attacked by the jurists. His *Resālat al-malāmatīya*, also known as *Oşul al-malāmatīya* (ed. A. ‘Afīfī, Cairo, 1945) deals with the principles of the Malāmatīya (q.v.) sect of Sufis; this treatise has been analyzed in detail by R. Hartmann (*Der Islam* 8, 1918, pp. 157-203). *Ketāb ādāb al-ṣoḥba wa ḥosn al-‘eşra* (ed. M. J. Kister, Jerusalem, 1954) deals with the moral character and manners and behavior that become a Sufi, taking the Prophet Moḥammad as the model to be followed. *Jawāme’ ādāb al-ṣūfiya* and *‘Oyūb al-naḥs wa modāwātoḥā* were edited by E. Kohlberg, Jerusalem, 1976.

*Orthodox criticisms of Solamī.* Scholars, especially of the Hanbalite school, have severely criticized Sufis and Sufism itself. Solamī was also one of the targets of such attacks. Basically there were two objections against him: his method of exegesis and his fabrication of prophetic traditions for the Sufis. His commentary on the Qur’ān was severely criticized by some jurists and historians alike because of his use of symbolic interpretation (*ta’vīl*) (for details see Šorayba, pp. 44-45). The earliest source which accuses Solamī of fabrication of traditions seems to have been his contemporary Moḥammad b. Yūsof al-Qaṭṭān (see *Ta’rīk Baġdād* II, p. 248). Ḳaṭīb Baġdādī and Sobkī (*Ṭabaqāt*<sup>2</sup> IV, pp. 144-45), on the contrary, refute Qaṭṭān by saying that Solamī was indeed trustworthy and held a high position among the Sufis. Sam‘ānī, Abū No‘aym, and Ḳaṭīb emphasize that he was an adept in the science of Hadith (*Ansāb* [Leiden], fol. 303b; *Ḥelya*, Cairo, 1351-57/1932-38, II, p. 25; *Ta’rīk Baġdād* II, p. 248; see also Sobkī, *Ṭabaqāt*<sup>2</sup> IV, p. 145). Šorayba (pp. 45-47) and Kister (*Ketābādāb*, pp. 3-5) point out that there is exaggeration in the accusations against Solamī, because all he did was to narrate the traditions already mentioned in earlier literature.



Solamī's importance and significance to scholars of history and Sufism is obvious from extensive quotations of his works by the later writers. Qoṣayrī's *Resāla* is full of sayings he learned from Solamī. He is also quoted by Ġazālī (d. 505/1111), Ḥoḣvīrī (d. 465/1072), Abū Ḥafṣ Sohravardī (d. 632/1234), Ebn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), Kaṭīb Baġdādī, Yāqūt, and others.

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