



## ‘ALĪ HAMADĀNĪ

‘ALĪ B. ŠEHĀB-AL-DĪN B. MOḤAMMAD **HAMADĀNĪ**, MĪR SAYYED, surnamed ‘Alī-e Tānī, Šāh-e Hamadān, and Amīr-e Kabīr, major 8th/14th century Sufi saint. He was born at Hamadān on Raġab 714/22 October 1314 into an influential family claiming descent from Imam Ḥosayn. He was initiated into Sufi practices by Maḥmūd Mazdaqānī (d. 766/1365) and ‘Alī Dōstī (d. 734/1334), disciples of the Kobrawī shaikh ‘Alā’-al-dawla Semnānī (d. 736/1336). Hamadānī led the life of an itinerant Sufi, traveling extensively in the Asian parts of the Islamic world (Ḥeġāz, Syria, Anatolia, Iraq, Iran, K̲v̲ārazm, and Transoxiana), where he allegedly met 1,400 Sufi saints (obtaining the *ejāza* from some thirty of them) before he reached the climax of his career in Badaḡšān and Kashmir. Setting out in 734/1334, he journeyed for approximately twenty years, for a time in the company of Ašraf Jahāngīr Semnānī (d. 808/1405). In 754/1353 he married, settled down at Hamadān, and reorganized Mazdaqānī’s *kānaqāh*. Possibly fearing for his life at Balk when Tīmūr conquered Khorasan (772/1370), Hamadānī migrated to Kottalān in Badaḡšān, where his son Moḥammad was born in 774/1372 and Ja‘far Badaḡšī became his disciple in 774/1373. Although Hamadānī may have visited Kashmir as early as 774/1373 during the reign of the Šāhmīrī sultan Šehāb-al-dīn (760-80/1359-78; cf. C. E. Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, Edinburgh, 1967, pp. 196-98), it was only in 781/1379 during the reign of Sultan Qoṭb-al-dīn (780-96/1378-94) that he came to settle at Srinagar. In 784/1383 he traveled to Turkestan and Khatay, returning to Kashmir in 785/1384. He died near Kūnār on Du‘l-ḥeġġa 786/19 January 1385, while on a journey. His body was transported to Kottalān (Kuliab in Soviet Tajikistan), where his shrine is still



extant.

Hamadānī’s influence greatly contributed to the spread of Islam in Kashmir under his followers, known as the Hamadānīya. Their main centers were the *kānaqāh-e maymūn* at Kottalān and the *kānaqāh-e mo‘allā* at Srinagar (built in 798/1395, destroyed by fire but rebuilt in 885/1480); they had minor *kānaqāhs* at Rostabazar, Tral, Vachi, and Matan. Hamadānī’s chief disciples were Nūr-al-dīn Ja‘far Badaḳṣī, his biographer, who negotiated with Tīmūr’s camp in 801/1398 as emissary of Sekandar Botšekan, sultan of Kashmir (796-819/1394-1416); his son Mīr Moḥammad Hamadānī (d. 854/1450 in Kottalān), who settled in Srinagar about 805/1402 and wielded considerable influence during Sekandar’s reign before leaving Kashmir in 817/1414; his son-in-law Eshāq Kottalānī (executed in 826/1423 by order of Šāhroḳ), whose disciples split into the followers of Sayyed Moḥammad Nūrbakš (d. 869/1464), the later Nūrbakšīya, and the followers of ‘Abdallāh Barzīšābādī (d. 872/1468), the later Dahabiya; Qawām-al-dīn Badaḳṣī, his companion on the journey to Kashmir; and, according to Qoššāšī (*al-Semṭ al-majīd*, Hyderabad, 1327/1909, p. 77), ‘Abdallāh Šaṭṭārī (d. 832/1428-29), the founder of the Šaṭṭārī *selsela*. Hamadānī’s biography, *Kolāṣat al-manāqeb*, was compiled immediately after his death in 787/1385 by Ja‘far Badaḳṣī, while a biography based on it, *Manqabat-e jawāher* (also known as *Masṭūrāt*), was written in Kashmir in the middle of the 9th/15th century by the Shi‘ite Ḥaydar Badaḳṣī, who had belonged to the Šaṭṭārī *selsela* before becoming a disciple of Barzīšābādī.

Hamadānī was the author of some 100 works, most of them brief Sufī treatises, written chiefly in Persian but occasionally in Arabic. Many of them still exist only in manuscript form (Brockelmann, *GAL* II, p. 221, S. II, p. 311; Storey, I, pp. 36, 946ff.). His best known works are: *Daḳīrat al-molūk* (Amritsar, 1321/1903, Lahore, 1323/1905; Urdu tr. Ġolām Qāder, *Nahī al-solūk*, Lahore, 1333/1915), an ethical code in Persian on personal and political conduct, which was translated several times into Turkish with commentary for the benefit of Ottoman rulers during the 10th-11th/16th-17th centuries; *Čehel asrār* (Amritsar, 1303/1886, 1333/1915; ed. S. A. Boḳārī, Tehran, 1388/1968), a Persian *dīvān* on mystical themes also known as *Ġazliyāt*, employing the *taḳalloṣ* of ‘Alī or ‘Alā‘ī (in deference to ‘Alā‘-al-dawla Semnānī; *Awrād-e faṭḥīya* (Lahore, 1289/1872, Cawnpore, 1300/1882, Lucknow, 1293/1876 with a commentary by Moḥammad-Ja‘far Ja‘farī; Urdu tr. Ḥakīm Moḥammad Eshāq, Karachi, 1389/1969), a popular Arabic collection of Sufi invocatory prayers; and *al-Mawadda fi’l-qorabā’* (Bombay, 1310/1892-93, Lucknow, 1370/1950; cf. J. N.



Hollister, *The Shi'a of India*, London, 1953, p. 143), an Arabic collection of Hadiths in praise of the Prophet's family.

Less well-known, yet crucial for Hamadānī's Sufi doctrine, are his short treatises, a number of which have been published in little-known journals and collections: *Resāla-ye dah qā'eda* (ed. M. Molé, *FIZ* 6, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958, pp. 38-66); a Persian translation of *al-Oṣūl al-aš'ara* by Naǧm-al-dīn Kobrā (cf. F. Meier, *Der Islam* 24, 1937, pp. 15-19); *Resāla-ye fortūwatīya* (ed. Molé, *Šarkīyāt Mecmuasi* 4, 1961, pp. 33-72), according to which Moḥammad b. Aḥmad Aḍkānī (d. 778/1376) was the master and Aḳī Ṭūṭī 'Alīšāhī Kottalānī the pupil of Hamadānī in *fortūwa*; two succinct professions of faith, *al-Resālat al-e'teqādīya* (ed. M. Molé, *Bulletin d'études orientales* 17, 1961-62, pp. 138-49), an Arabic epitome of the principles of Islamic theology and the nature of faith, and *Resāla-ye bayān-e e'teqād* (ibid., pp. 150-83), a Persian treatise on the metaphysical qualities of God and Moslem religious practice; *Rasāla-ye darvīšīya* (= *faqīrīya*; included in Aḥmad b. Moḥammad Karīm Tabrīzī, *Awṣāf al-moqarrabīn*, Shiraz, 1338/1920), a tract on questions of mystical anthropology; *Resāla-ye manāmīya*, on the interpretation of dreams according to a theory of emanation (cf. German tr. by F. Meier in *Eranos Jahrbuch* 18, 1950, pp. 143-72); *Ketāb asrār al-noqta* (in the margin of, and wrongly ascribed to, Mollā Šadrā Šīrāzī, *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*, Tehran, 1314/1896-97, pp. 153-83), a fine Arabic treatise expounding a monist mysticism through the symbolic interpretation of the point, on which Barzīšābādī wrote a commentary (*Rīāz al-awlīā'*, discussed in V. Ivanov, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Curzon Collection, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1926, no. 704); *al-Wāredāt al-ḡaybīya wa'l-laṭā'ef al-qodsīya* (Delhi, 1333/1915), a compendium modeled on the *Monājāt* of Kāvāja 'Abdallāh Anšārī (d. 481/1089); *Resāla-ye dekrīya* (included in Ḥasan b. Ḥamza Palāsī Šīrāzī, *Taḍkera-ye Šayḳ Moḥammad b. Šeddīq Kojoǧī*, Tehran, 1367/1948, pp. 53-66), on mystical union inspired by the sayings of Jonayd (d. 297/910); and *Resāla-ye qoddūsīya*, also known as *Resāla-ye 'aqabāt* (ibid., pp. 71-78) on four principal flaws of character, addressed to the ruler of Kashmir. There are also two pamphlets, *Resāla-ye čehel maqām-e šūfīya* (ibid., pp. 67-70; also attributed to Abū Sa'īd b. Abī'l-Ḳayr; cf. S. H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, London, 1972, pp. 77-82, where the work is translated; F. Meier, *Abū Sa'īd-i Abū Ḥayr*, Leiden, 1976, pp. 36-37) on the stages of the Sufi path, and *Menhāj al-ārefīn* (appendix to *Daḳīrat al-molūk*, Amritsar, 1321/1903, reprinted in Ḥosām-al-dīn Rāšedī, *Taḍkera-ye šo'arā-ye Kašmīr*, Karachi, 1387/1968, II, pp. 915-17), an enumeration of the guidelines of good counsel.



Hamadānī’s personality and thought are marked by a harmony of contrast that permeates his religious practice and his Sufi outlook. Although he considered himself a scion of *sayyed* stock, accorded ‘Alī an exceptional position in his Arabic Hadith collections, and was later surnamed ‘Alī-e Ṭānī by his followers, he nonetheless professed a typically Sunni creed and successively belonged to two Sunni *madhabs*: He began as a Ḥanafī but changed to the Šāfe‘ī school after dream visitations by Imam Šāfe‘ī and the Prophet Moḥammad (cf. M. Molé, “Les Kubrawiya entre Sunnisme et Shiisme aux huitième et neuvième siècles de l’hégire,” *REI* 29, 1961, p. 114). By investiture with the garment of *fotūwa* and the mantle of *taṣawwof*, he was initiated into two parallel lines of affiliation (*selsela*) that had previously converged in Najm-al-dīn Kobrā (d. 618/1221; cf. F. Meier, *Die Fawā’ih al-ḡamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-ḡalāl des Naḡm ad-dīn al-Kubrā*, Wiesbaden, 1957, p. 34). Hamadānī adopted Kobrā’s fundamental principles of the Sufi path (*dah qā’eda*), followed the Khorasanian tradition of Sufism and compiled *Resāla-ye manāzel al-sālekīn* in emulation of Anšārī’s *Manāzel al-sā’erīn* (ed. S. Laugier de Beaurecueil, Cairo, 1382/1962). In his mystical philosophy Hamadānī was influenced by Ebn al-‘Arabī (d. 638/1240); he summarized *Foṣūṣ al-ḥekam* in a Persian abstract, *Hall-e foṣūṣ*. In addition, he wrote a Persian commentary, *Resāla-ye mašāreb al-adwāq*, on thirty-two verses of the famous *Qaṣīda mīmīya kamrīya* by ‘Omar b. Fāreż (d. 632/1235) (ed. M. Rīāż, *FIZ* 20, 1353 Š./1974, pp. 266-315; cf. R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Cambridge, 1921, pp. 183-88).

Hamadānī’s metaphysical speculation, as it emerges from the philosophical sections of his works that are accessible in print, is marked by a duality of aspects integrated into a monistic system. God, the necessary being (*wāḡeb al-wojūd*), is one and unique in His eternal and sublime essence (*dāt-e mota’ālīa*). He is the Omnipotent, the Creator, and the Everlasting Presence. The universe, from the divine throne to the planet earth, subsists through His majesty and power; it is at once the subject of His knowledge and the object of His will. All thought and activity, potential as well as actual, are governed by His statute and subordinated to His decree. In passing from the world of ideas (*ma’ānī*) through spirits and archetypes (*meṭāl*) to the physical world, indeterminate being receives its manifold forms and is made articulate in concrete existence. The microcosm of man, reflecting the macrocosm of the universe, is composed of subtle, luminous substance (*ḡawhar-e laṭīf-e nūrānī*) and coarse, tenebrous substance (*ḡawhar-e kaṭīf-e ḡolmānī*). Man is endowed with an inner scale of organs of consciousness (*nafs, qalb, serr, rūḡ*) leading to the innermost core



(*kaft*, *akfā*), where the attributes of the divine presence are made manifest through the experience of ecstasy. It is at the point of gnosis (*ma'refat*) that man discovers his “descent” from the divine presence as the basis of theosophy (*asās-e 'erfān*), at the same time that he realizes his “ascent” to the divine presence as the scale of certitude (*me'rāj-e īqān*). Yet mystic experience is rooted in a double outward observance: 1. Submission (*eslām*), i.e., the practice of purification (*ṭahāra*) on the basis of the pillars of religion (*arkān al-dīn*); and 2. faith (*īmān*), i.e., profession (*eqrār*), assent (*taṣḍīq*), and works (*amal*) founded on belief in the eschatological realities of the Qur'ān.

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