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AMĪNĪ, SHAIKH ʿABD-AL-ḤOSAYN

AMĪNĪ, SHAIKH ʿABD-AL-ḤOSAYN, also known as ʿAllāma-ye Amīnī (1320-90/1902-70), Shiʿite scholar and author of the encyclopedic *al-Ḡadīr fi'l-ketāb wa'l-sonna wa'l-adab*. He was born in Tabrīz to a family celebrated for religious learning; his grand-father, Mollā Naǰaf-ʿAlī, had borne the title Amin-al-šaṛʿ ("guardian of the law"), and his father, Ḥoǰǰat-al-Eslām Mīrzā Aḥmad Amīnī (d. 1370/1950), was among the leading *faqīh*s of the city. After completing his early education, ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn went to Naǰaf and studied under a wide variety of teachers, gaining certificates of *eǰtehād* from Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Nāʾīnī, Shaikh ʿAbd-al-Karīm Ḥāʾerī, and Shaikh Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Kompānī. Coming back from Naǰaf to Tabrīz, he found himself heir to the influence and standing of his father, but he preferred the scholarly atmosphere of Naǰaf; returning there, he embarked on a career of research and authorship. Despite his competence in *feqh*, he was primarily interested in the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams; all he wrote was inspired by an intense devotion to the Shiʿite concept of *welāya*. His first book, *Šohadāʾ al-faẓīla*, published in Naǰaf in 1355/1936, was received with great acclaim, and he began to be called *ʿallāma* at the early age of thirty-five. But the work that occupied more than forty years of his life and definitively assured his fame was *al-Ḡadīr*, a massive examination of the tradition according to which—in Shiʿite belief—the Prophet appointed ʿAlī as his immediate successor. Drawing upon the entire corpus of Hadith literature, both Shiʿite and Sunni, as well as a wide variety of historical and literary

sources, Amīnī sought to present the successorship of ʿAlī and, beyond that, the exalted status of the entire family of the Prophet as a pervasive and unifying theme in the history of the two sectors of the Islamic community. The work has been well received in Sunni as well as Shiʿite circles, and has served as an adjunct to various efforts underway at effecting a Sunni Shiʿite rapprochement. The first nine of the twenty volumes of *al-Ḡadīr* were published in Naǰaf between 1364/1945 and 1371/1952; a new edition, embracing the first eleven volumes, was published in Beirut in 1372/1953. A Persian translation of the first two volumes, made by Moḥammad-Taqī Wāḥedī, appeared in Tehran in 1381/1961; another translation, by Ḥasan Ḥabībī, including all eleven volumes of the Beirut edition, awaits publication.

In the course of gathering material for *al-Ḡadīr*, Amīnī traveled widely, not only in Iran and the Arab countries but also India, giving lectures on his chosen theme wherever he went. The texts of some of these lectures have been published (e.g., *Sīratonā wa sonnatonā sīrato nabīyenā wa sonnatoho*, Tehran, 1386/1966, a series of lectures given in Syria in 1964). During his travels, Amīnī also collected a vast number of books, both printed and manuscript; these formed the nucleus of the library he founded at Naǰaf, the Maktabat Amīr-al-moʾmenīn al-ʿĀmma. Falling ill in 1388/1968, he came to Tehran for medical treatment, and lay bedridden until his death on 30 Rabīʿ II 1390/3 July 1970. His body was returned to Naǰaf for burialnext to the library he had founded.

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