



AMĪNĪ, SHAIKH 'ABD-AL-ḤOSAYN

AMĪNĪ, SHAIKH 'ABD-AL-ḤOSAYN, also known as 'Allāma-ye Amīnī (1320-90/1902-70), Shi'ite scholar and author of the encyclopedic *al-Ġadīr fī'l-keṭāb wa'l-sonna wa'l-adab*. He was born in Tabrīz to a family celebrated for religious learning; his grand-father, Mollā Najaf-'Alī, had borne the title Amin-al-šar' ("guardian of the law"), and his father, Ḥojjat-al-Eslām Mīrzā Aḥmad Amīnī (d. 1370/1950), was among the leading *faqīhs* of the city. After completing his early education, 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn went to Najaf and studied under a wide variety of teachers, gaining certificates of *ejṭehād* from Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Nā'inī, Shaikh 'Abd-al-Karīm Ḥā'erī, and Shaikh Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Kompānī. Coming back from Najaf to Tabrīz, he found himself heir to the influence and standing of his father, but he preferred the scholarly atmosphere of Najaf; 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 Shi'ite concept of *welāya*. His first book, *Šohadā' al-faẓīla*, published in Najaf in 1355/1936, was received with great acclaim, and he began to be called 'allāma 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-Ġadīr*, a massive examination of the tradition according to which—in Shi'ite belief—the Prophet appointed 'Alī as his immediate successor. Drawing upon the entire corpus of Hadith literature, both Shi'ite and Sunni, as well as a wide variety of historical and literary



sources, Amīnī sought to present the successorship of 'Alī 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 Shi'ite circles, and has served as an adjunct to various efforts underway at effecting a Sunni Shi'ite rapprochement. The first nine of the twenty volumes of *al-Ġadīr* were published in Najaf 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-Taḡī 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-Ġadīr*, 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 sonnatoḥo*, 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 Najaf, the Maktabat Amīr-al-mo'menīn al-Āmma. Falling ill in 1388/1968, he came to Tehran for medical treatment, and lay bedridden until his death on 30 Rabi' II 1390/3 July 1970. His body was returned to Najaf for burial next to the library he had founded.

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