



BĀBĀ SAMMĀSĪ

BĀBĀ SAMMĀSĪ, K̲VĀJA MOḤAMMAD, Central Asian Sufi of the line known as *selsela-ye k̲vājagān* (line of the masters) which was inaugurated by K̲vāja Abu Ya'qūb Hamadānī. Born in Sammās (or Sammāsī), a village in the region of Rāmītan, three *farsaks* distant from Bukhara, Sammāsī became a follower of K̲vāja 'Alī Rāmītanī ("Hażrat-e 'Azīzān") early in his life. Most of Rāmītanī's life was spent in the environs of Bukhara, but he migrated to K̲vārazm at a date that can not be precisely determined. Sammāsī appears to have stayed in the area of Bukhara, although he must have visited his master in K̲vārazm at least once, for he was present when Rāmītanī, on his death bed, appointed him his sole successor in 721/1321.

The most important figure initiated into the "line of the masters" by Sammāsī was his own principal successor, Amīr Kolāl. Before entering the Sufi path, Amīr Kolāl was much given to wrestling, but he abandoned this pursuit and turned to Sufism when one day in Rāmītan he felt the powerful gaze of Bābā Sammāsī fixed on him during a bout. Thereafter Amīr Kolāl remained almost constantly in Sammāsī's company.

Bābā Sammāsī's main title to fame lies in his having adopted as his spiritual son K̲vāja Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqšband, the eponym of the Naqšbandī order. It is said that when passing by Qaṣr-e Hendovān, a suburb of Bukhara, Bābā Sammāsī was in the habit of remarking that he could perceive a strong fragrance emerging from its soil, interpreting this to presage the birth of a great spiritual master. One day in 718/1318, he observed that the fragrance was stronger than ever before, and it turned out that Bahā'-al-Dīn had been born three days



earlier. Bahā'-al-Dīn's grandfather, who was a *morīd* of Bābā Sammāsī, brought the infant to him to receive his blessing, whereupon he adopted him as his spiritual progeny. At the same time, however, he entrusted Amīr Kolāl with training Bahā'-al-Dīn when he attained maturity, and it is not clear whether Bahā'-al-Dīn saw Sammāsī again before the age of eighteen. It was then that Bahā'-al-Dīn's grandfather—evidently the foremost influence in his life—decided it was time for him to marry, and he dispatched him to Bābā Sammāsī to obtain his approval. Bahā'-al-Dīn witnessed a number of miraculous feats during this visit to Sammāsī, but it was not until Sammāsī himself paid a return visit to Qaṣr-e Hendovān that a bride was chosen and the marriage performed, under his direct supervision.

None of the early Naqšbandī sources give a date for Bābā Sammāsī's death, but the celebrated thirteenth/nineteenth-century hagiographical compendium, Ġolām Sarvar Lāhūrī's *Ḳazīnat al-aṣfīā*, places it in 755/1354, and adds that he was buried in his native village.

After the death of his spiritual father, Bahā'-al-Dīn was taken by his grandfather to Samarkand to benefit from the Sufi masters of that city before being entrusted to Amīr Kolāl for his formal initiation and training, in accordance with Bābā Sammāsī's instructions.

In addition to Amīr Kolāl, Bābā Sammāsī left behind three successors: Ḳvāja Maḥmūd Sammāsī, his eldest son; Ḳvāja Šūfī Sūkārī; and Mawlānā Dānešmand 'Alī. All that is known about Bābā Sammāsī, in addition to what has been related above, is that he was frequently subject to states of ecstasy that came upon him while he was working in his vineyard. No writings are attributed to him, and it appears that his importance in the history of the *selṣela* is purely that of a transmitter, with the luster of his name enhanced by its proximity to that of Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqšband.

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