



ḤAMID-AL-DIN KERMĀNĪ

ḤAMID-AL-DIN KERMĀNĪ, ABU'L-ḤASAN AḤMAD b. 'Abd-Allāh b. Moḥammad (d. after 411/1020-21), a prominent Isma'ili *dā'i* (q.v.) and one of the most accomplished Isma'ili theologians and philosophers of the Fatimid period. As in the case of other prominent *dā'is*, who observed strict secrecy in their activities while living in hostile milieus, few biographical details are available about him, although it is known that he flourished during the reign of the Fatimid Caliph-Imam al-Ḥākem be-Amr-Allāh (q.v.; 386-411/996-1021). Kermāni is not mentioned in any contemporary Muslim historical sources, but highlights of his life and career can be gathered from his own numerous extant works as well as the writings of the later Mosta'li-Ṭayyebi Isma'ili authors of Yemen.

Ḥamid-al-Din Kermāni's date of birth remains unknown, but he was of Persian origin and his *nesba* suggests that he was born in the province of Kerman. Later in his life he maintained his contacts with the Isma'ili community of that province and corresponded with subordinate *dā'is* there (see Kermāni's *al-Resāla al-ḥāwia* and *al-Resāla al-kāfia*, in the *Majmu'at rasā'el al-Kermāni*, pp. 102-12, 148-82; and Ivanow, 1942, pp. 142-45). He seems to have spent the greater part of his life as a Fatimid *dā'i* in Iraq, having been particularly active in Baghdad and Basra: the title of his lost *al-Majāles al-Baṣriya wa'l-Baḡdādiya* (cited in his *Ketāb al-riāz*, p. 108) indicates that he delivered lectures (*majāles*) in these two cities.

In Iraq, Kermāni successfully concentrated his efforts on local rulers and influential tribal chiefs, with whose support the Isma'ilis aimed to bring about



the downfall of the ‘Abbasids. As a result, in 401/1010-11 Qerwāš b. al-Moqallad, the ‘Oqaylid ruler of Kufa, Mawṣel and several other towns, acknowledged the suzerainty of the Fatimid al-Ḥākem. In the same year, ‘Ali al-Asadi, chief of the Banu Asad, declared his loyalty to the Fatimids in Ḥella and other districts under his control. Alarmed by the successes of the Fatimid *da’wa* in Iraq, the ‘Abbasid Caliph al-Qāder took retaliatory measures. In 402/1011, he sponsored the so-called Baghdad manifesto to discredit the Fatimids, also refuting their ‘Alid ancestry (see Ebn Jawzi, VII, pp. 255-56; Ebn Taḡriberdi, IV, pp. 229-31; Ebn Ḳaldun, I, pp. 45-46). The honorific title *Ḥojjat al-‘Erāqayn*, meaning the *ḥojja* or chiefdā’i of both Iraqs (al-‘Erāq al-‘Arabi and al-‘Erāq al-‘Ajami), which is often added to Kermāni’s name and may be of a late origin, implies that he was also active in central and western parts of Persia.

Kermāni rose to prominence during the reign of al-Ḥākem, when the central headquarters of the Fatimid *da’wa* in Cairo considered him as the most accomplished Isma‘ili theologian of the time. It was in that capacity that Kermāni played an important role in refuting the ideas of some dissident dā’is in Cairo, such as al-Aḳram, Ḥamza and al-Darazi, who were then founding what was to become the Druze movement and religion. As part of the official Fatimid campaign against the dissident dā’is, who had also proclaimed al-Ḥākem’s divinity, Kermāni was summoned to Cairo in 405/1014-15, or shortly before then, where he produced several works in refutation of their doctrines. Having already elaborated the Fatimid understanding of the doctrine of the Imamate (see his *al-Maṣābiḥ fi eṭbāt al-emāma*), Kermāni now wrote a short treatise, the *Mabāsem al-beṣārāt*, (included in *Majmu‘at rasā‘el*, pp. 113-33; also ed. M. Kāmel Ḥosayn in *Ṭā‘efat al-Doruz*, pp. 55-74) dealing with the Imamate in general and al-Ḥākem’s Imamate in particular; he maintained that al-Ḥākem, like his predecessors, was only divinely-appointed, and not himself divine. In another treatise called *al-Wā‘eẓa* (*Majmu‘at rasā‘el*, pp. 134-47; also edited by M. Kāmel Ḥosayn, pp. 1-29), composed in 408/1017 as a reply to a pamphlet written by al-Aḳram, Kermāni rejects the proclamation of al-Ḥākem’s divinity and accuses the dissenters of exaggeration (*ḡo-loww*) and infidelity (*kofr*). In these and other works, Kermāni also refuted the view of the Druze dissidents that the resurrection (*qiāma*) had already occurred with the appearance of al-Ḥākem, and that therefore the era of Islam had ended. Kermāni argued that the era of Islam and the validity of its sacred law, the *ṣari‘a*, would continue under al-Ḥākem’s many Fatimid successors as Imams. His writings were widely circulated and to some extent succeeded in checking



the spread of the doctrines associated with the initiation of the Druze movement. Subsequently, Kermāni returned to Iraq where, in 411/1020-21, he completed his last and major work, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, shortly before his death.

Ḥamid-al-Din's prolific scholarship was informed by the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Syriac version of the New Testament, and the post-Biblical Jewish writings (Kraus, 1931, pp. 243-46; repr. 1994, pp. 3-23). He expounded the Ismaʿili Shiʿite doctrine of the Imamate extensively. In a few treatises, particularly his *Tanbih al-hādi wa'l-mostahdi*, which remains unpublished, Kermāni refutes the theological views of the Zaydis, Eṭnāʿāsharis and other Muslim opponents of the Fatimid Ismaʿili Imams. In his *al-aqwāl al-dahabiya*, he refutes the ideas of Abu Bakr Rāzi (d. 313/925) on the therapy of the mind which he had written in *al-Ṭebb al-ruḥāni*, defending the earlier criticisms of the (Carmathian; see CARMATHIANS) Ismaʿili dāʿī Abu Ḥātem Rāzi (d. 322/934), who had argued for the necessity of revelation and prophethood while tracing all sciences to revelational origins (see Rāzi, 1977).

Ḥamid-al-Din Kermāni also belonged to that select group of Ismaʿili dāʿīs from Persia who amalgamated in an original manner their Ismaʿili theology (*kalām*) with philosophical traditions, in particular the type of Neoplatonism then current in the Muslim world. Kermāni was fully acquainted with Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophies as well as the metaphysical systems of the Muslim philosophers (*falāsefa*; q.v.), notably Fārābi (q.v.) and Avicenna (q.v.), who was his contemporary. In his *Ketāb al-riāz*, Kermāni acted as an arbiter in a philosophical debate that had taken place earlier between some Iranian dāʿīs, including Moḥammad Nasafi, Abu Yaʿqub Sejes-tāni and Abu Ḥātem Rāzi (Ivanow, 1955, pp. 87-122). Kermāni developed his own elaborate metaphysical system in his major philosophical treatise *Rāḥat al-ʿaql*, which is written for adepts. In this book, Kermāni also propounded what may be regarded as the third stage in the development of Ismaʿili cosmology in medieval times. He replaced the Neoplatonic dyad of the Intellect (*ʿaql*) and Soul (*nafs*) in the spiritual world, which had been adopted by his Iranian Ismaʿili predecessors, with a series of ten separate Intellects, in partial adaptation of Fārābi's Aristotelian cosmic system. However, Kermāni's cosmology, which represents an original synthesis of different philosophical traditions, was not adopted by the Fatimid *daʿwa*; instead, it later provided the basis for the development of the fourth and final stage of Ismaʿili cosmology at the hands of the Mostaʿli-Ṭayyebi thinkers in Yemen.



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