

UMM ʿALĪ [FĀṬĪMA]

The Wife of Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh of Balkh¹²⁵

Umm ʿAlī was one of the daughters of the leaders and the high elites. She was very rich and spent all of her wealth on the Sufis. She helped Aḥmad [ibn Khaḍrawayh] in all matters pertaining to his spiritual practice.¹²⁶

She met both Abū Ḥafṣ an-Nīsābūrī and Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī. She consulted Abū Yazīd on doctrinal matters.¹²⁷

It was reported that Abū Ḥafṣ said: "I used to dislike stories about the practitioners of female chivalry until I met Umm ʿAlī, the wife of Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh. Then I learned that God Most High bestows His knowledge on whomever He wishes."

Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī said: "Whoever practices Sufism should do so with the spiritual motivation (*himma*) of Umm ʿAlī, the wife of Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh, or with a state similar to hers."

It was reported that Umm ʿAlī said: "God Most High calls humanity to Him through charity and kindness, but they do not respond to Him. Then He afflicts them with misfortune in order to bring them back to Him through misfortune, because He loves them."

125. Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh al-Balkhī (d. 240/854) followed the path of blame (*malāmatiyya*) and wore the dress of a soldier. He was famed as a specialist in Sufi chivalry (*futuwwa*). He said: "Kill your lower soul (*nafs*) so that God may bring it back to life." He also said: "He who serves the Sufis is honored by three things: humility, good conduct, and generosity." See as-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt aṣ-ṣūfiyya*, 103-6; al-Qushayrī, *ar-Risāla*, 410; al-Isfahānī, *Hilyat al-awliyāʾ*, vol. 10, 42-43; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifāt aṣ-Ṣafwa*, vol. 4, 147-48.

126. According to al-Hujwiri, Umm ʿAlī was the daughter of the Emir of Balkh. When she wished to leave her former life and embrace Sufism, she asked Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh to petition her father for her hand in marriage. When he refused, she sent another letter to Ibn Khaḍrawayh, saying: "Oh Aḥmad, I thought you would have been too manly to attack those who travel on the way to God. Be a guide, not a brigand!" Idem, *The Kashf al-Mahjāb*, 119-20.

127. Al-Hujwiri is one of the first to recount the following well-known story of Umm ʿAlī's encounter with al-Biṣṭāmī: When Aḥmad went to visit Bāyazīd she accompanied him, and on seeing Bāyazīd she removed her veil and talked to him without embarrassment. Aḥmad became jealous and said to her: "Why dost thou take this freedom with Bāyazīd?" She replied: "Because you are my natural spouse, but he is my religious consort; through you I come to my desire, but through him to God. The proof is that he has no need of my society, whereas to you it is necessary." She continued to treat Bāyazīd with the same boldness, until one day he observed that her hand was stained with henna and asked her why. She answered: "Oh Bāyazīd, so long as you did not see my hand and the henna I was at my ease with you, but now that your eye has fallen on me our companionship is unlawful." Ibid., 120. In *Hilyat al-awliyāʾ* al-Isfahānī reports a very different story: Umm ʿAlī asked Aḥmad ibn Khaḍrawayh to take back his bride-price so that she could marry al-Biṣṭāmī. Upon arriving before Bāyazīd, she unveiled her face. When asked by her husband why she had done so, she replied, "When I looked at Abū Yazīd I lost all sense of self. But when I look at you [Aḥmad], I return to my awareness of self." Ibid., vol. 10, 42.

أم علي

امراة أحمد بن خضرويه البلخي

كانت من بنات الرؤساء والأجلاء.

وكانت موسرة، فأنفقت مالها كلها [كله] على الفقراء، وساعدت أحمد علي ما هو عليه.

لقيت أبا حفص النسابوري، وأبا يزيد البسطامي. وسألت أبا يزيد عن مسائل.

حكى عن أبي حفص النسابوري أنه قال: مازلت أكره حديث النسوان حتى لقيت أم علي، زوجة أحمد بن خضرويه. فعلمت أن الله تعالى يجعل معرفته حيث يشاء.

وقال أبو يزيد البسطامي: من تصوّف فليتصوّف بهمة كهمة أم علي، زوجة أحمد بن خضرويه، أوحال كحالها.

حكى عن أم علي أنها قالت: دعا الله تعالى الخلق إليه بأنواع البر واللطف، فما أجابوه. فصب عليهم أنواع البلاء، ليردهم بالبلاء إليه، لأنه أحبهم.

FĀṬĪMA BINT AḤMAD IBN HĀNĪ³

From Nishapur

Fāṭima was a companion of Abū °Uthmān [al-Ḥīrī]¹⁵⁶ and spent much of her wealth on him and his companions.

Abū °Uthmān used to say: "Fāṭima's open-handedness towards the Sufis was the same as the open-handedness of the practitioners of Sufi chivalry (*fiṭyān*). She never sought anything in return for it, neither from this world nor from the Hereafter."

Fāṭima asked Abū °Uthmān: "What is the way to the knowledge of God the Glorious and Mighty?" He replied: "Through complete forgetfulness of yourself and humankind, and through the renunciation of everything but God, until you attain the reality of the knowledge of God."

Fāṭima said: "The world is a snare for the insane. No one stumbles into it except he who has neither good sense (*'aql*) nor good fortune (*tawfiq*)."

156. This information places Fāṭima in the first half of the fourth/tenth century.

فاطمة بنت أحمد بن هاني

نيسابورية

صحبت أبا عثمان فأنفقت عليه وعلى أصحابه مالا كثيراً.

وكان أبو عثمان يقول: إرفاق فاطمة للفقراء إرفاق الفتيان، لا تطلب به عوضاً في الدنيا والآخرة.

وسألت فاطمة أبا عثمان: كيف السبيل إلى معرفة الله عز وجل؟ فقال لها: ينسيانك نفسك والخلق، وإنكارك كل شيء سوى الله، حتى تبلغني إلى حقيقة معرفة الله.

وقالت فاطمة: الدنيا شبكة للحمقى، لا يقع فيها إلا من لا عقل له ولا توفيق.

Also Known as Hawra (the Foolhardy)

Hawra was one of the female Sufis (*aṣ-ṣūfiyyāt*), gnostics (*al-ʿarīfāt*), and masters of spiritual states (*arbāb al-aḥwāl*). She was one of the most altruistic practitioners of female chivalry in her day (*min aṣṭā waqtiḥā fi an-niswān*).

I heard Abū Naṣr ibn Abī Ishāq b. Abī Bishr b. Mārawayh say: A woman visited Hawra. The woman was wearing a *jubba* [a long outer garment, open in the front, with wide sleeves] and a blouse made of wool. Hawra said to her: "The person who wears wool must be the purest person of his age, the best person in morals, the noblest of humankind in his actions, the sweetest person in his nature, the most generous of them in spirit, and the most open-handed in his liberality. Just as he is distinguished from humanity in general by his clothing, he must also be distinguished from them in his spiritual characteristics."

180. *Amat al-ʿAzīz* is the feminine form of *ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz* (Slave of the Glorious). This person should not be confused with the famous philanthropist, *Amat al-ʿAzīz* (d. 216/831), the wife of the ʿAbbasid caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd. Also known as Zubayda, she was originally the slave of ar-Rashīd's father al-Hādī (r. 169–70/785–86) and distinguished herself by building roads, wells, and even a school for women in the city of Mecca. Zubayda was an associate of the jurist Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 161/777–78) and the Sufi Bahlūl al-Majnūn and was said to have kept a hundred slave-girls whose sole occupation was chanting the Qurʾān in successive relays. See Nabia Abbot, *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd* (Chicago, 1946), 137–264.

أمة العزيز

المعروفة بهورة

كانت إحدى الصوفيات والعارفات، وأرباب الأحوال. وكانت من أفتى وقتها في النسوان.

سمعتُ أبا نصر بن أبي اسحاق بن أبي بشر بن مارويه، يقول: دخلت امرأة عليها، وعليها جبة صوف وقميص صوف. فقالت لها: من لبس الصوف يجب أن يكون أصفى الناس وقتاً، وأحسن الناس خلقاً، وأكرم الخلق حركةً، وأعذب الناس طبعاً، وأسخاهم يداً، كما تميّز عن الخلق بلباسه، كذلك يتميّر عنهم بأوصافه.

MALIKA THE DAUGHTER OF
AḤMAD IBN ḤAYYAWAYH

Malika was the wife and paternal cousin of al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī b. Ḥayyawayh.¹⁸⁸ Her father [Aḥmad ibn Ḥayyawayh] was the ruler of Damaghan. She experienced spiritual states (*ṣāhibat ḥāl*).

Her husband al-Ḥasan took her with him on the pilgrimage to Mecca and took her to visit [Abū Bakr] ash-Shiblī. When ash-Shiblī saw her he said to al-Ḥasan, "You are a man and this is a woman, but she is greater than you in her spiritual state."

Al-Ḥasan said: "This statement did not enter my heart until we reached Medina, the City of the Messenger of God (may God bless and preserve him). She had with her only a few dirhams [a silver coin based on the Persian *drahm*] left over from our Ḥajj allowance, and nothing else. She saw some people from sub-Saharan Africa sitting by the head of the Prophet [i.e., at the Prophet's tomb], so she passed out all of the money to them." I remonstrated with her about this two times, saying: 'Only some of that money would have been enough for those blacks, or even less than that!' She replied: 'How long will you go on with your words, oh Ḥasan? It is as if you see nothing but blacks!'"

188. Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥayyawayh was personally known to as-Sulamī. No other information about him is given in *Ṭabaqāt as-sūfiyya*. This indicates that Malika and her husband flourished at the end of the fourth/tenth century. Ibid., 69.

مَلِكَةُ بِنْتِ أَحْمَدِ بْنِ حَيَّوِيَه

امرأة الحسن بن علي بن حيويه، وبنّت عمّه. كان أبوها رئيس دامغان.
وكانت صاحبة حال.

حملها زوجها الحسن إلى الحجّ، وأدخلها على الشبلي. فلما رآها
الشبلي قال للحسن: أنت رجلٌ وهذه امرأة، لكنها أكبر منك حالاً.

قال الحسن: فلم يدخل ذلك في قلبي، حتى دخلنا مدينة رسول الله
صلّى الله عليه وسلّم. قال: وكان معها درّتهمات من نفقته، لم يبق لنا
غيرها. فرأت قوماً من السودان قعوداً عند رأس النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلّم، فنشرت عليهم تلك الدراهم. فكلّمتها في ذلك مرتين، وقلت لها:
كان يكفي لأولئك السودان ببعض ذلك، أو أقلّ من ذلك. فقالت لي: إلى
متى تقول يا حسن؟ كأنك لم تر غير السودان!