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## Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition

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### al-Samʿānī<sup>(268 words)</sup>

Chittick, W.C.

, ABU ʿL-KĀSIM AḤMAD B. MANṢŪR b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Djabbār (487-23 Shāwḥāl 534/1094-11 June 1140), author of *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ fī sharḥ asmāʾ al-malik al-fattāḥ* (ed. N. Māyil Harawī, Tehran 1368/1989), a long (600 pp.) Persian commentary on the divine names. His father Abu ʿl-Muzaffar Manṣūr (426-89/1035-96) wrote books in *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiḥ*, and other subjects. Aḥmad studied with his eldest brother, Abū Bakr Muḥammad, the father of ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Samʿānī [*q.v.*], author of *al-Ansāb*, as well as several other teachers. In 529/1135 he travelled with ʿAbd al-Karīm to Nishāpūr to study *ḥadīth*. His nephew does not mention his writings but, in praising his virtues, speaks of his "elegant" (*malīḥ*) sermons and good poetry (*al-Ansāb*, ed. ʿA. al-Bārūdī, iii, Beirut 1988, 299-301). His elegance is clear in *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*, a work of extraordinary beauty that was certainly meant to be recited aloud. The prose ranks with that of contemporary classics such as Ḡhazālī's *Kīmiyā-yi sa ʿadat*, but its main importance lies in its fresh interpretations of standard Islamic teachings on human salvation. Al-Samʿānī pays little attention to the divine names themselves; instead, he uses each name as a starting point for a series of meditations on the relationship between human beings and God. The extraordinary emphasis on love prefigures the teachings of Rūmī and reflects the same spiritual ambience as Maybudī's Ḳurʿān commentary *Kashf al-asrār wa-ʿuddat al-abrār* (begun in 520/1126).

(W.C. Chittick)

### Bibliography

W.C. Chittick, *The myth of Adam's fall in Aḥmad Sam ʿānī's Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*, in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism: from its origins to Rumi*, London 1993, 337-59.

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