



'ĀLĪ, NE'MAT KHAN

'ĀLĪ, MĪRZĀ NŪR-AL-DĪN MOḤAMMAD NE'MAT KHAN, satirist, historian, and Persian poet of Mughal India (d. 1121/1709-10). Both his father, Ḥakīm Faṭḥ-al-dīn, and his son, Ḥakīm Ḥādeq Khan, were famous physicians. Born in India, 'Ālī accompanied his father to their ancestral city of Shiraz (according to K̄vošgū, Mašhad; see Storey, I, p. 589), where he received his early education. He entered government service during the reign of Shah Jahān (1037-68/1628-57). Anṣārī (*Fārsī adab*, p. 128) speculates on the basis of some of 'Ālī's verses that his first employment under Awrangzēb (1068-1118/1658-1707) was with Princess Zēb-al-nesā'. Later he was superintendent (*dārūgā*) of the royal kitchen, receiving the title of Ne'mat Khan in 1104/1692-93; he was then promoted to keeper of the crown jewels, with the title Moqarrab Khan. At the accession of Shah 'Ālam I (1119-24/1707-12) he was given the title Dānešmand Khan and appointed official historian.

'Ālī wrote both poetry and prose; for a time he employed the *taḳalloṣ* Ḥakīm. The bulk of his poetry is made up of *gāzals*, where his penchant for light-hearted lampooning makes room for morally lofty verse in a simple, graceful style; complexity and intricacy, which abound in his satires, are kept to a minimum. 'Ālī composed a *maṭnawī* of approximately 4,000 couplets, identified by Belgrāmī as *Soḳan-e 'Ālī* (*Sarv-e āzād*, p. 137) but popularly known as *Maṭnawī-e Ne'mat Kān 'Ālī*, in which he expounds his moral and religious views through parable and allegory. A freer and more self-conscious poetic personality emerges from his satirical compositions (*hajwīyāt*); he often directed these at people whose bruised egos might have cost him dearly, but



he escaped unharmed because of his absence of ill-will and jealousy. Though he never directed his satire against a fellow poet or writer, Bidel dubbed him the satirizing *ḥājjī* (Anṣārī, *Fārsī adab*, p. 127). A *qeṭ‘a* about the impending marriage of Kāmgar Khan, son of the Mughal minister Ja‘far Khan, is so riddled with allusions to Arabic grammar, geometry, and medicine that the comic material is transformed into a work of great literary value, as attested to by the fact that it gave rise to three separate textual explications, including one by Āzād Belgrāmī (*Kezāna-ye ‘āmera*, pp. 336-47).

A less extravagant but by no means less humorous vein pervades much of ‘Ālī’s prose, which includes: *Rūz-nāma-ye waqā‘e‘-e ayyām-e moḥāṣara-ye dār-al-jehād-e Ḥaydarābād*, also known as *Waqā‘e‘-e Ne‘mat Kān-e ‘Ālī* or *Waqā‘e‘-e Gūlkonda*, a satirical account of Awrangzēb’s siege of Hyderabad in 1098/1687; *Jang-nāma* or *Razm-nāma*, an account of the war of succession between the princes Mo‘azzam and A‘zam, prefaced by a description of Awrangzēb’s war against the Mahārāṇā of Udaipur, the rebellion of Prince Akbar, and the conquest of the Deccan (published several times in Lucknow and Cawnpore; tr. Agra, 1909, and Lucknow, 1928; See Storey, I, p. 592); *Bahādoršāh-nāma* (also appears under different titles; see Storey, I, p. 600), a fairly comprehensive official record of the first two years of the reign of Bahādor Shah I; *Resāla-ye ḥosn o ‘ešq*, a love story which underscores ‘Ālī’s critical attitude towards many societal ills; *Resāla-ye ḥajw-e ḥokamā‘* or *Monāzara-ye aṭebbā‘*, a satire on the incompetence of physicians; and *Ne‘mat-e ‘oẓmā*, exegesis of the Qur‘ān completed in 1115/1703-04 and dedicated to Awrangzēb.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Ne‘mat Khan ‘Ālī, *Dīvān*, Lucknow, 1881; Cawnpore, 1894.

Nūr-al-ḥasan Anṣārī, *Fārsī adab be ‘ahd-e Awrangzēb* (Urdu), Delhi, 1969, pp. 127-42, 428-33, 485-96.

Āzād Belgrāmī, *Kezāna-ye ‘āmera*, 2nd ed., Cawnpore, 1900, pp. 336-47.

Idem, *Sarv-e āzād*, Lahore, 1913, pp. 136-39.



Marshall, *Mughals in India*, pp. 62-64.

Storey, I, pp. 589-92.