



## ALLĀHDĪĀ ČEŠŤĪ

---

**ALLĀHDĪĀ ČEŠŤĪ**, SHAIKH, Mughal author of *Sīar al-aqtāb*, a biography of the masters of the Šāberī Češtī Sufi order. Born at Kayranah (near Panipat) in the early 11th/late 16th century, he died sometime after 1069/1659, probably in Ajmer; his paternal uncle and grandfather were physicians, the former in the service of Jahāngīr (Storey, I, p. 1003). Allāhdīā (“God-given,” *dīa* being the past part. of the Hindi verb *denā* “to give”) traced his spiritual descent from Shaikh Jalāl-al-dīn b. Maḥmūd Češtī Oṭmānī of Panipat (d. 765/1363, or, according to Digby, “Abd-al-Qoddūs,” p. 4, after 785/1384), who originally came from Kāzerūn in Fārs. At Kayranah Allāhdīā received his early education and acquired proficiency in Persian and Arabic. He led a reclusive life, devoting himself to the study of books on the lives of Sufi saints. For practical instruction in *taṣawwof* he traveled the twenty miles to Panipat, where he became the disciple of Shaikh ‘Abd-al-Salām, better known as Shah ‘Alā’; while in his service he made a collection of his conversations (*malfūzāt*), *Jawāher-e ‘alā’*. In 1036/1627, three years after the death of Shah ‘Alā’, Allāhdīā began a book on the lives of the early Šāberī Češtī saints, each of whom was said to have attained the supreme rank of *qoṭb al-aqtāb*; he completed the work twenty years later, though it is only 200 printed pages in length. *Sīar al-aqtāb* contains biographies of twenty-seven saints, beginning with ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb and ending with Shah ‘Alā’. The distinctive biographies concern the Šāberī branch of the Češtī *selsela*; the work gives fuller details on Shaikh ‘Alā’-al-dīn ‘Alī Šāber (d. 691/1291) and his successors at Panipat and elsewhere in western Uttar Pradesh than can be found in any other medieval source. But as in most such works legends are intermingled with facts, while critical questions such



as gaps in the *selsela* between Farīd-al-dīn Aĵodhānī and Jalāl-al-dīn Pānīpatī are left unanswered. *Sīar al-aqṭāb* is frequently cited by both late Mughal and contemporary scholars of Indian Sufism (e.g., Ġolām Moʻīn-al-dīn ʻAbdallāh K̄v̄ēšgī, *Maʻārej al-walāya*, passim; K. A. Neẓāmī, *Tārīk-emašāʻek-e češt*, Delhi, 1372/1953, pp. 215-16); it exists in numerous manuscripts (Storey, I, p. 1004), several lithograph editions (Neval Kešūr, 1877, 1881, 1889 and 1913), and at least one Urdu translation (Neval Kešūr, 1888).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

C. Rieu, *Cat. Pers. Man.*, pp. 358-59.

D. N. Marshall, *Mughals in India*, p. 68.

Ġolām Sarvar Lāhorī, *Ķazīnat al-ašfīāʻ*, Lahore, 1284/1867, pp. 456-58.

S. Digby, “Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangohī,” *Medieval India—a Miscellany* III, Aligarh, 1975, pp. 4-5.