



ĀTAŠ, K̲VĀJA 'ALĪ ḤAYDAR

“ĀTAŠ,” K̲VĀJA 'ALĪ ḤAYDAR B. K̲VĀJA 'ALĪ BAKŠ, late eighteenth-early nineteenth-century Indo-Muslim poet in Persian and Urdu. He belonged to a respectable family of Delhi which claimed descent from K̲vāja 'Obaydallāh Ahrār (fl. 806-96/1404-90, q.v.), the noted Naqšbandī saint of Khorasan. His father moved from Delhi to Fayzabad in the time of Nawab Šojā'-al-dawla (1754-75) and settled in Maḥalla Moḡolpora. Ātaš was born in Fayzabad in 1192/1778. His father died when Ātaš was only a boy. His education neglected, he became a *bānka* (leisure companion) of Nawab Moḥammad-Taqī, who brought him to Lucknow sometime after 1815. Following the death of the nawab, Ātaš resigned his post.

From early youth Ātaš was poetically inclined and submitted his neophyte efforts to Ġolām Hamadānī Mošḥafī (d. 1240/1824) for correction. According to the vogue of the day, he started writing verses in Persian even though not a learned man. Later he also composed verses in Urdu.

Ātaš led an unaffected life, free from all conventions and formalities. A lover of beauty he was himself a handsome, fair-complexioned man. He dressed like a soldier and carried a sword with him even in poetical gatherings. Disdaining patronage and wealth, he led a life of resignation and contentment. On his death in 1263/1847 he left behind a host of pupils, some of whom later attained the rank of poetical master. The most famous among them were Nawab Mirzā Šawq, Dayā, Šankar Nasīm, Wājed-'Alī Šāh Aqtar, Mīr Dōst-'Alī Kālīl, Āḡā, Ḥajjū Šaraf, Nawab Moḥammad Khan Rend, and Wazīr-'Alī Šabā. His own son, Moḥammad-'Alī Još, was a poet of moderate distinction.



Ātaš also left behind three *dīvāns*, two in Urdu and one in Persian. He wrote only *ġazals*, eschewing *qaṣīdas* and all other forms of composition. The great merit of his work is its vivid portrayal of emotions in elegant and attractive phrases.

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