



## AWRANGĀBĀDĪ, SHAH NEZĀM-AL-DĪN

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**AWRANGĀBĀDĪ, SHAH NEZĀM-AL-DĪN**, the celebrated Češtī saint said to be a descendant of Abū Bakr, the first caliph, in the line of Šehāb-al-dīn Sohrawardī (Raḥīmbaḡš, Šajarat al-anwār, fol. 383a). According to Mawlawī Elāhbaḡš (Kātam-e solaymānī, Lahore, 1325/1907) he was born in 1076/1665-66 while Najm-al-dīn Češtī (Manāqeb al-maḡbūbīn, p. 47) implicitly puts it at 1060/1650. Controversy shrouds his original home as well. Contemporary and near-contemporary works mention both Kakorī and Nograon (Najm-al-dīn Češtī, op. cit., p. 47; Moḡammad Ḥosayn Morādābādī, Anwār al-‘ārefīn, p. 430) while K̄vāja Gol Moḡammad Aḡmadpūrī (Takmela-ye sīar al-awlīā’, p. 180) avers that he or his ancestors hailed from Ġūr.

After finishing elementary education in his home town, Awrangābādī went to Delhi in pursuit of higher learning and attended the lectures of Shah Kalīmallāh on theology. Subsequently the latter initiated him in the mystic discipline as his disciple in fulfillment of the prophecy once spoken by Shah Kalīmallāh’s mentor, Shaikh Yaḡyā Madanī (Raḥīmbaḡš, Šajarat al-anwār, fol. 384b).

Upon the completion of his study with Shah Kalīmallāh, Shah Nezām-al-dīn was deputed by him to propagate the doctrine of the Češtī selsela (order) in the Deccan with particular stress to concentrate his efforts in the Imperial forces in operation there (Moḡammad-Qāsem Kalīmī, Maktūbāt-e Kalīmī, p. 26;



Raḥīmbakš, Šajarat al-anwār, fol. 415a). He traveled a great deal in search of a permanent abode, and finally established his headquarters at Aurangabad, where he drew a large number of disciples from all classes of people (Raḥīmbakš, op. cit., fol. 422b; ‘Emād-al-molk, Manāqeb al-fakriya, fol. 3a). With the establishment of his k̄anaqāh at Aurangabad, Deccan became the focal point of the efflorescence of the Češtī selsela in south India, and on Shah Kalīmallāh’s death on 17 October 1729, Awrangābādī became the head of the central organization of the selsela which now moved from Delhi to the Deccan. His efforts to revitalize the Češtī selsela turned his k̄anaqāh into the rallying center of the devotees from far and near in the peninsula. He paid much attention to building up the moral and spiritual personality of his disciples. They were trained as a disciplined band of dedicated votaries of the order, undergoing penances and self-abstemious exercises to attain piety, resorting to the arduous practice of dekr-e johr (vocal and loud recollections) by night in the company of two to three hundred disciples either in a mosque or in wilderness with a view to arousing ecstatic love of God and fervor among the devotees (Kalīmī, op. cit., pp. 25, 34, 37; Raḥīmbakš, op. cit., fol. 388a). Other practices such as divine recollection with control of breath, keeping night vigils in devotions, etc., were also recommended (Raḥīmbakš, op. cit., fols. 388-93). Another point of emphasis was the need to control the emotional life rather than attaching too much importance to the external forms of behavior. As an individual, Awrangābādī was amiable in manners, lavish in hospitality, and humane in disposition and demeanor (K. A. Nizami, Tārīk-e mašā’eq-e Češt, pp. 439, 440, 443, 445; Gol Moḥammad Aḥmadpūrī, op. cit., p. 101; Kāmgār Khan, Aḥsan al-šamāyel, fols. 75, 77).

Awangābādī’s mentor, Shah Kalīmallāh, ceaselessly urged on him to expand the order and attempt to gain more adherents, even from among the rich and the powerful whom he first preferred to avoid. Eventually a number of them became his disciples. His k̄anaqāh is said to have had ten gates, over each of which a scribe was posted to write down the supplications of the needy which were affixed with Awrangābādī’s seal. The bearers of such notes would take them to the nobles who would respond to their need in order to earn religious merit (Fakrī, Fakr al-ṭālebīn, fol. 88; Gol Moḥammad Aḥmadpūrī, op. cit., fol. 88; Mawlānā Emām-al-dīn, Nāfe’ al-sālekīn, Lahore, 1286/1869, p. 107; Kāmgār Khan, op. cit., fol. 77).

Awangābādī is also author of a book NeẒām al-qolūb (Delhi, 1309/1891) in which he made a systematic exposition of the doctrines and the ritualistic



practices of the selsela. Its contents embody the metaphysical postulates and the basic tenets of the mystic ideology of the order. Another important work on the ideology of the selsela and the life and work of Awrangābādī, entitled *Aḥsan al-šamāyel*, was composed by one of his chief deputies, K̄vāja Kāmgār Khan. A similar work, *Rašk-e golestān-e eram*, by his disciple Neẓām-al-molk Āṣafjāh I (*Raḥīmbaḳš*, fol. 305b) seems to be lost.

Shah Neẓām-al-dīn married twice and had five sons and one daughter. One of his sons, Shah Faḳr-al-dīn Dehlavī, became his successor and attained celebrity as one of the eminent saints of India (*Tārīḳ-e mašā'eḳ-e Češt*, p. 428).

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*Search terms:*



اَورَاق اَبَدِيَّةٌ اَشْرَاقِ اَبَدِيَّةٌ    awrang abadi, shah orang abady,    orang aabdi, shaah  
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