



BAĦRĪ, MAĦMŪD

BAĦRĪ, MAĦMŪD B. BĀQER QĀDERĪ, Sufi and poet of the Deccan who flourished in the late 11/17th century. The son of a provincial qadi, Baḥrī spent his first twenty years in his native Gogi, a small town in the ‘Ādelšāhī kingdom of Bijapur (895/1490-1097/1686). There he studied Sufism with a certain Shah Bāqer and developed ties with the Češtī order. During the reign of Sultan Sekandar ‘Ādelšāh (1083/1672-1097/1686) Baḥrī settled in the capital city Bijapur; after the collapse of the dynasty in 1097/1686 at the hand of Awrangzēb, he moved to Hyderabad, and then back to Gogi, where he died in 1130/1717-18.

From the time he took up residence in Bijapur, Baḥrī adopted the life of a Sufi recluse and an anti-establishment poet, a style that he maintained for the remainder of his life. Much of his lyrical poetry reflects the outlook of an ecstatic Sufi. Notable in this respect is his Dakhnī poem *Man lagan*, translated by the author into Persian as ‘*Arūs-e ‘erfān*, which in point of its combination of anecdotes, short stories, and didactic verses, recalls the *Golestān* of Sa’dī. Another such work is his *Bangāb-nāma*, a Dakhnī poem of a dozen cups (*jām*) which eulogizes *bangāb*, a greenish drink made from milk and *bang* (hemp). The poet’s advocacy of the narcotic drink seems to have been both allegorical and literal, for he identified its use with those ecstatic Sufi dervishes with whose values and lifestyles he openly sympathized. On the other hand, the poet scorned the urban establishment of Sufis who had accommodated themselves comfortably with orthodox Islam, citing their low literary standards, their concern merely with expanding their circles of Sufi clients,



and their compromises with the court—although he himself eulogized Awrangzēb in his poetry—and the men of the world (*ahl-e donyā*). Living in a climate of political instability and religious conservatism, Baĥrī thus emerges as a social critic as well as a Sufi. In fact, he even compared Bijapur of his own day with the Baghdad of Ḥosayn b. Maṣṣūr Ḥallāj, probably hinting that he himself would suffer Ḥallāj's fate should he be placed at the hands of the authorities of Bijapur. He is also the author of a *maṭnawī* in Dakhnī and a short Persian commentary on the poems of Nāṣer(-e) Kōsrow (*Šarḥ-e ġazal-e Ḥakīm Nāṣer-e Kōsrow*). His *dīvān* contains *ġazals* and *qaṣīdas*.

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