



ČERĀĠ-E DEHLĪ

ČERĀĠ-E DEHLĪ (b. at Avadh, ca. 675/1276-77; d. at Delhi, 18 Ramaẓān 757/14 September 1356), the title of Shaikh Naẓīr-al-Dīn Maḥmūd, the last of the five great early saints of the Indian Češtī order (see [češtīya](#)). He was the son of Shaikh Yaḥyā b. ‘Abd-al-Laṭīf Yazdī, a prosperous wool merchant (Kermānī, p. 238), who had emigrated from Khorasan to Lahore. Later the family settled down at Avadh. Čerāġ-e Dehlī was only nine years old when his father passed away (Ḥamīd, p. 282), and his mother supervised his education (Kermānī, p. 92). His teachers included ‘Abd-al-Karīm Šervānī, Qāzī Moḥyi’l-Dīn Kāšānī, Efteḵār-al-Dīn Moḥammad Gīlānī, and Šams-al-Dīn Yaḥyā, an eminent scholar and disciple of the Češtī Shaikh Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’ (d. 725/1324; Baranī, p. 353; Habib, p. 129; Ḥamīd, pp. 150, 282; Jamālī, p. 92; Kermānī, p. 225). After years of contemplation and solitude in the forests of Avadh (Ḥamīd, pp. 170-71), at the age of forty-three Čerāġ-e Dehlī went to Delhi, where he was interviewed by Shaikh Neẓām-al-Dīn and admitted into the Češtī order (Habib, pp. 129-31). His piety and spiritual excellence soon earned him the respect of his colleagues, as well as of the Shaikh, who referred to him as “our Ebrāhīm-e Adham” (q.v.; Ḥosaynī, p. 87), gave him the title Čerāġ-e Dehlī, and eventually, in 724/1323, a few months before his death, chose him as his successor (Kermānī, pp. 91, 248; Jamālī, p. 91). After the death of his master, Čerāġ-e Dehlī moved his headquarters to an area in Delhi now known as Čerāġ-e Dehlī, where he led his order for more than thirty years. Čerāġ-e Dehlī had strained relations with the contemporary ruler, Sultan Gīāṭ-al-Dīn Moḥammad (r. 725-52/1325-51), who had little sympathy for the order and forced some of its members to move to provincial towns (*EI*² II, p. 51), but his successor, Fīrūzšāh



III (r. 752-90/1351-88), who had more faith in the mystics (Baranī, p. 560), did not interfere with ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī and his activities.

ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī died after being stabbed by a certain Torāb, a qalandar (Ĥamīd, p. 286; Kermānī, pp. 242-47). His disciples buried him according to his instructions, along with the mystic regalia that he had received from his master (the *kerqa* “robe,” *aṣā* “staff,” *moṣallā* “prayer rug,” etc.; Ĥamīd, p. 287). His tomb is in Delhi in the area known as ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī and stands in an irregular oblong enclosure of 180 x 104 feet, the greater portion of which, according to the inscription on the tomb, was built in 1142/1729 by Moḥammad Shah (d. 1161/1748), the Mughal ruler.

Among ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī’s disciples were Sayyed Jalāl-al-Dīn Bokārī, popularly known as Maḳdūm-e Jahānīān (d. 785/1384), Sayyed Moḥammad Gīsū-Darāz, Qāzī ‘Abd-al-Moqtader, a distinguished scholar and poet in Arabic, Mawlānā Aḥmad Thānīsārī, an outstanding scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, and Ṣadr-al-Dīn Ḥakīm, a distinguished scholar of his time (‘Abd-al-Ḥaqq, pp. 142, 146, 148-49).

The record (*malḡūzāt*) of ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī’s assemblies, *Ḳayr al-majāles*, is regarded as superior to other such

collections of the period in form and content (Neḡāmī, p. 2). It was compiled by Ĥamīd Qalandar, a disciple of Shaikh Neḡām-al-Dīn, and read and approved by ĀerāĒ-e Dehlī himself.

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