



ČEŠTĪYA

ČEŠTĪYA, the name of an influential Sufi order in India, derived from a village east of Herat on the river Harirud called Češt.

History. The beginnings of the Češtī Sufi tradition are accounted for in Amir K̲vord's (d. after 728/1328) *Sīar al-awlīā'* (pp. 40-44) and in Jāmī's *Nafahāt* (pp. 322-30, 340-42) written in 881/1476. K̲vāja **Abū Eshāq Šāmī**, an obscure Sufi of Syria, is said to have settled at Češt for some time, allegedly at the direction of his Persian Sufi master Mamšāḍ Dīnavarī (d. 299/912). Abū Eshāq's line of spiritual affiliation (*selsela*) is traced to Ebrāhīm b. Adham (d. 160/777) by Jāmī and later, by the sources of the Češtīya in India, from Ebrāhīm b. Adham to the Prophet in the historically flawed chain: Abū Eshāq—Mamšāḍ Dīnavarī—Abū Hobayra Bašrī (d. 287/900)—Ḥoḍayfa Mar'ašī (d. 276/890)—Ebrāhīm b. Adham—Fożayl b. 'Īlāz (d. 187/803)—'Abd-al-Wāḥed b. Zayd (d. 177/793)—Ḥasan Bašrī (d. 110/728)—'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb (d. 40/661)—Moḥammad. Before returning to his native region, where he died at 'Akkā (Acre) on the Palestine coast in 329/941, Abū Eshāq is said to have educated a local Sufi, Abū Aḥmad Abdāl (d. 355/966), as his successor at Češt. In the latter's extended family the local Sufi tradition passed on to K̲vāja Yūsof b. Moḥammad b. Sam'ān (d. 459/1067), believed to have been in contact with K̲vāja 'Abd-Allāh **Anṣārī** (d. 481/1089) of Herat and to have appointed as successor his son K̲vāja Qoṭb-al-Dīn Mawdūd Češtī (d. 527/1133). From Mawdūd the succession passed to his son Aḥmad (d. 577/1181 in Multan), whose authority was challenged by Rokn-al-Dīn Moḥammad of Sanjān (d. 597/1201) and Ḥāji Šarīf Zandanī (d. 612/1215). The struggle for succession among these disciples during the



ascendancy of the Ghurid capital Fīrūzkūh in the neighborhood of Češt under Sultan Ġiāt-al-Dīn Moḥammad (r. 558-99/1163-1203) seems to have contributed to the dispersion of the local Sufī tradition. The Češtī tradition continued at Harvan in the district of Nīšāpūr with a certain K̲vāja ‘Oṭmān, a successor to Ḥājī Šarīf and leader of a group of dervishes said to have died in 617/1220. It was this man who was met by Mo‘īn-al-Dīn Ḥasan Sejzī, the alleged founder of the Češtīya in India, and thus the association of Mo‘īn-al-Dīn with the Češtī tradition rests on the tenuous link of K̲vāja ‘Oṭmān alone (Amir K̲vord, pp. 40-44; cf. Moinul Haq, 1974a and b).

K̲vāja Mo‘īn-al-Dīn Ḥasan Sejzī is said to have been born in Sejestān (i.e., Sīstān) in 536/1141-42. After his father’s death Mo‘īn-al-Dīn left Sejestān, possibly as early as the invasion of Khorasan by the Ġozz against Sultan Sanjar in 548/1153 or later during their incursions into Sejestān in 564/1169 and 574/1178 (*Tārīk-e Sīstān*, pp. 391–92; tr. Gold, pp. 319–20). He first came to Bukhara and Samarkand and then to Nīšāpūr, where he joined K̲vāja’s ‘Oṭmān’s group as an errant dervish (*qalandar*). He traveled with the group of his *pīr* for a number of years (said to have been as many as twenty), until he made himself independent. His alleged visits to such prominent Sufis of his time as ‘Abd-al-Qāder Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), Najīb-al-Dīn Sohravardī (d. 563/1168), and Najm-al-Dīn Kobrā (d. 618/1221) cannot be substantiated (See Lāhawrī, I, p. 257). Some time after the capture of Lahore in 582/1186 (which meant the end of Ghaznavid control there) by Mo‘ezz-al-Dīn Moḥammad, the Ghurid Sultan of Ġaznīn since 568/1173, Mo‘īn-al-Dīn is said to have journeyed to India, visiting the shrine of Abu’l-Ḥasan Hojvīrī (d. 465/1072 or 469/1077) at Lahore. When Mo‘ezz-al-Dīn finally defeated the Hindu Rājput Čawhāns, led by Prithvīrāja, in the second battle of Tarā‘īn in 588/1192. Mo‘īn-al-Dīn is said to have traveled as far as Ajmer (Ajmīr) in Rajasthan (according to some accounts via Delhi after the city had been captured in 589/1193). According to some sources Mo‘īn-al-Dīn came to Ajmer after the death of Sultan Mo‘ezz-al-Dīn in 602/1206, according to others he arrived there before the conquest of the city in 588/1192 and delivered the local ruler into the hands of the Ghurid army. At Ajmer, though he was getting on in years, he is said to have married twice, first a Muslim, then a Hindu woman, to have had three sons and a daughter, and to have been revered as a holy man performing fantastic miracles that attracted many pilgrims to his tomb after his death on 6 Rajab 633/16 March 1236. The main purpose of the hagiographical accounts about Mo‘īn-al-Dīn appears to be the concern of his followers to link the immigrant Sufi tradition of an errant dervish from Sejestān with the indigenous tradition



of a holy man of Ajmer and thus to build a bridge between the Iranian beginnings of the Češtī Sufī tradition and the Češtīya order that flourished in India.

In contrast to the Sohrawardīya order, which spread mainly in the Punjab and Bengal along the edges of the Indian subcontinent, the Češtīya spread all over India keeping in step with the Muslim advance. The early development of the Češtīs in India is closely connected with the names of outstanding Sufis; some of them came as immigrants, such as Qoṭb-al-Dīn Baḳtīār Kākī (d. 633/1235), who was influential in the urban environment of Delhi, while others appear to be rooted in indigenous traditions of holy men, such as Ḥamīd-al-Dīn Moḥammad Nāgawrī (d. 673/1274), who lived in rural Rajasthan; and Farīd-al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj-e Šakar (d. 664/1265), called Bābā Farīd, who established a Sufi *kānaqāh* at Ajūdhan (today Pākpattan), a strategic staging post on the main road from Multan to Delhi on the Sutlej river. Qoṭb-al-Dīn Baḳtīār came to India from UÚŠ in Farḡāna as a wandering dervish and after a brief stay at Multan during the rule of Našīr-al-Dīn Qabāča (d. 625/1228) settled at Delhi during the reign of Šams-al-Dīn Eltotmeš (İltütmiš; 607–33/1211–36). He declined the office of Šayḳ-al-Eslām offered to him by the Sultan and died in ecstasy during one of the performances of *samā'*, the mystical states induced by listening to music that he cultivated (see Böwering, in EI2 V, pp. 546–47). His grave at Mehrawlī was the principal shrine (*mazār*) in the Delhi area when Ebn Baṭṭūṭa visited India in 734–43/1333–42 (tr. Māzandarānī, II, p. 482). Ḥamīd-al-Dīn was born in India, lived on his *eḥyā* (unclaimed land) in the village of Sowāl outside Nāgawar and adhered to strict vegetarianism. He is the first (Češtī credited with a treatise on *samā'*, the *Resāla-ye samā'*). Also born in India, Bābā Farīd received his early education in Multan and lived many years at Hānsī before moving to Ajūdhan. There he trained disciples using the *'Awāref al-ma'āref* of Abuī Ḥafṣ 'Omar Sohrawardī (d. 632/1234) as manual of instruction and attracted Muslims and Hindus alike to his *kānaqāh*, where *samā'* was practiced. The novices shaved their hair upon entering the *kānaqāh* and completed their initiation (*bay'a*) by clasping hands with the pīr. The Češtī *kānaqāh* was also known as a *jamā'at-kāna* (community hall) since the group used to sleep, work, and live in one large room (Schimmel, p. 26). Bābā Farīd observed long prayer vigils, including the *čella-ye ma'kūsa* (praying suspended by the feet during a period of forty days), and regular fasting, including the *šawm-e dā'ūdī* (fasting on alternate days). The sayings attributed to Bābā Farīd in the Ādī-Granth of the Sikhs, compiled by Guru Arjun Dev in 1604, actually may have their author in the Češtī Ebrāhīm (d. 960/1553), known as Farīd-e



Tòānī (see Nizami, 1976, pp. 121–22).

The most celebrated early Češtī Sufi in India, however, was Moḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Badā’ūnī (d. 726/1325) of Delhi, known as Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’. His Turkish ancestors had migrated from Bukhara to Badā’ūn where he was born in 636/1239. After years of education at Delhi, he became Bābā Farīd’s disciple at Ajūdhan in 655/1257 and according to a dubious *kelāfat-nāma* (written authorization of succession) was appointed his successor (kalīfa) in 663/1265. Some time after his master’s death Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’ returned to Delhi and established his kānaqāh in the village of Ġiātpūr outside Delhi and near the new palace built at Kīlokhari on the bank of the Jamnā (Jumna) by Sultan Mo’ezz-al-Dīn Kayqobād (686–89/1287–90). Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’s disciples were known for carrying leather pouches and wearing four-cornered conical caps (*kolāh*) and a toothbrush (*meswāk*) attached to their turbans. Among his disciples at Ġiātpūr were two poets who had left the court of Multan after 683/1284 and accepted the patronage of ‘Alā’-al-Dīn Moḥammad Ḳaljī (696–716/1296–1316) at Delhi. They were [Amīr Ḳosrow](#) (651–725/1253–1325), the most celebrated Muslim poet of his time in India, who was buried next to Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’s tomb, and Amīr Ḥasan b. ‘Alā’ Sejzī Dehlavī (655–737/1275–1336), who kept a record of his master’s sayings between 707/1307 and 721/1321 in the *Fawā’ed al-fo’ād*. Other disciples of note were the historian [Ẓīā’-al-Dīn Baranī](#) (684–758/1285–1357) and Faḳr-al-Dīn Zarrādī (d. 748/1347), the author of the Arabic *Oṣūl al-samā’*. Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’ enjoyed the favor of Sultan ‘Alā’-al-Dīn Moḥammad Ḳaljī and counted his son and heir-apparent Keẓr Khan among his disciples. However, he fell in disfavor during the rule of the latter’s rival Qoṭb-al-Dīn Mobārakšāh (716–20/1316–20) and that of Ġiāṭ-al-Dīn Toḡloq (720–25/1320–25). Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’ remained unmarried until his death in 725/1325 and outlived a dozen rulers in turbulent times, while his disciples spread the Češtīya in many parts of India.

Naṣīr-al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Yaḥyā Yazdī Awadhī (d. 757/1356), born at Ajūdhyā and known as [Čerāḡ-e Delhī](#), became Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’s disciple at Delhi at the age of forty-three, remaining celibate like he. In 724/1324 his master designated him successor by passing on to him the *kerqa* (Sufi mantle) he had himself received from Bābā Farīd. At Delhi, Naṣīr-al-Dīn gave a Češtī *kerqa* to Maḳdūm-e Jahānīān Jalāl-al-Dīn Bokārī (d. 785/1384), a Sohrawardī Sufi of Očḥ who was a trusted adviser of Sultan Fīrūzšāh Toḡloq (752–90/1351–88). Later, on the instigation of the ‘*olamā*’ of Delhi, the same Sultan executed Aḥmad b.



Maḥmūd Šīr Khan, known as Mas'ūd Beg/Bīg (d. 789/1387), a Sufi with tenuous Češtī links renowned for his daring poetry and mystic utterance. Naṣīr-al-Dīn died without appointing a successor, and the insignia (*tabarrokat*) he had been given by his shaikh (the *kerqa*, a staff, a prayer rug, and a begging bowl) were buried with him. This symbolized the end of the classical phase of great Češtī Sufis in India.

The policy of Sultan Moḥammad b. Toḡloq (725–52/1325–51) diverted Sufi influence from Delhi, the center of the sultanate, to the provinces and induced or forced many Češtī Sufis to settle in different parts of the country. The arrival of Češtī Sufis in provincial towns coincided with the rise of provincial kingdoms. Borhān-al-Dīn Ġarīb (d. 741/1340) appears to have been the first to introduce the Češtīya in the Deccan, settling at Dawlatābād (the former Deogiri). There his disciple Zayn-al-Dīn became the spiritual guide of 'Alā'-al-Dīn Ḥasanšāh (748–59/1347–58), the founder of the Bahmanid kingdom (see [BAHMANIDS](#)). The honor of having crowned the latter in 748/1347, however, is accorded to Serāj-al-Dīn Jonaydī (d. 782/1380), another Češtī who settled in Bijāpūr (Eaton, p. 50). The most prominent Češtī of the Deccan was Sayyed Moḥammad Ḥosaynī Ġisūderāz (721–825/1321–1422), who migrated with his father Rājū Qattāl, one of Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā's disciples, from Delhi to Dawlatābād but returned to Delhi some time after his father's death in 731/1330. In 736/1336 he became a disciple of Naṣīr-al-Dīn Čerāḡ-e Dehlī and later claimed to have been nominated by him as his successor. About the time of Timur's invasion of India Ġisūderāz left Delhi for good, possibly in 801/1398, and lived at Golbarga in the Deccan until his death. There he enjoyed the favor of the Bahmanid kings, symbolized by the magnificent tomb erected over his grave by Aḥmad Shah Bahmanī (825–38/1421–35). Ġisūderāz was a prolific author, known for his Persian commentaries on the principal Arabic and Persian Sufi sources and credited with having been the first Sufi to write in Dakhnī Urdu.

In Malwa the order spread through the activities of Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā's disciples Wajīh-al-Dīn Yūsof (d. 729/1328–29) at Čandīrī and Kamāl-al-Dīn at Mandū. Serāj-al-Dīn Aḳī Serāj (d. 759/1357–58) brought the Češtī order to Bengal, where it spread, also into Bihar, especially through the activities of Ašraf Jahāngīr Semnānī (d. 808/1405) and Nūr Qoṭb-e 'Ālam (d. 813/1410). In Gujarat the Češtīya was spread by Ḥosām-al-Dīn Moltānī (d. 755/1354) at Nahrwālā and Serāj-al-Dīn (d. 814/1411) at Aḥmadābād, the former deriving his Češtī lineage directly from Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā' and the latter indirectly



from Naṣīr-al-Dīn Čerāg-e Dehlī. Three centuries later Serāj-al-Dīn's line of Češtī affiliation was continued by Shah Kalīm-Allah Jahānābādī (d. 1142/1729), who revitalized the floundering Češtīya at Delhi and reformed its Neẓāmīya branch through a centralized organization. He had a significant indirect successor in Shah Faḡ-al-Dīn (d. 1199/1784–85) at Delhi, after whom the Neẓāmīya branch spread in Bareilly and Mahārān and from there into Multan and throughout the Punjab. With Shah Moḥammad-Solaymān (d. 1267/1850) it reached the Frontier Provinces at Tawnsa near Dera Ghazi Khan.

A branch of the Češtīya, known as the Šāberīya, traces its origins from Shaikh 'Alā'-al-Dīn 'Alī b. Aḥmad Šāber (d. 691/1291–92) of Kalyar in Uttar Pradesh, known as Šāber-e Pāk, in whose alleged succession Aḥmad 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq (d. 837/1434) organized a Češtī k̄anaqāh at Rodawli. There 'Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangūhī (d. 944/1537) received his Sufi training before becoming influential during Lodi rule and settling at Gangūh. 'Abd-al-Qoddūs counted among his disciples not only 'Abd-al-Aḥad, the father of the famous Aḥmad Serhendī (d. 1034/1624), but also Jalāl-al-Dīn Moḥammad Fārūqī (d. 989/1581) of Thānīsār, through whose successors the Češtīya spread in Uttar Pradesh. The Mughal ruler Jahāngīr (1014–37/1605–27) forced one Šāberī shaikh, Neẓām-al-Dīn Fārūqī (d. 1036/1626), to leave India, while another, 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Fāṭemī, was killed in 1247/1831 at Balakot after he had joined the *jehād* movement of Aḥmad of Bareilly. The Deoband school of 'olāmā', founded by Moḥammad-Qāsem Nanawtawī (d. 1295/1878), lays claim to its spiritual ancestry through the Šāberīya.

It is a questionable, yet often repeated, assertion that the Češtīya principally avoided collaboration with the state and refused grants in land from the court, in distinction to the Sohrawardīya, who avidly embraced government service. Though they generally refused stipends offered by the Sultans, the Češtīs accepted unsolicited gifts (*fotūḥ*). In fact, Mo'īn-al-Dīn's sons owned large lands, for which their father had to intercede in Delhi. Ḥamīd-al-Dīn Nagawrī had his eḥyā'. Qoṭb-al-Dīn Baḳtīār came to Delhi at the request of Sultan Eltotmeš. Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā' accepted a large sum of money from Kosrow Khan, when the latter usurped the throne of the sultanate in 720/1320. The oath of office was administered to Sultan Fīrūzšāh Toḡloq by none other than Naṣīr-al-Dīn Čerāg-e Dehlī. When Češtīs moved to the provinces acceptance of land grants from the rulers became their frequent practice.

Literature. The literature of the Češtīya is known for its distinctive *malḡūzāt*, that is, conversations of the shaikhs collected by their disciples. The first



genuine malfūz is the *Fawā'ed al-fo'ād* of Amīr Ḥasan Sejzī Dehlavī. The conversations of Naṣīr-al-Dīn Čerāġ-e Dehlī were collected by Ḥamīd Qalandar in the *Ḳayr al-majāles*, while the sayings of Ḥamīd-al-Dīn Nāḡawrī were collected by his grandson Farīd-al-Dīn, known as Čāk Parrān, in the *Sorūr al-šodūr*. The conversations of Borhān-al-Dīn Ġarīb (collected by Ḥammād Kāšānī in *Aḥsan al-aqwāl*), Ġisūderāz (collected by Sayyed Moḥammad-Akbar Ḥosaynī in *Jawāme' al-kalem*), Aḥmad 'Abd-al-Ḥaqq (collected by 'Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangūhī in *Anwār al-'olūm*), and 'Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangūhī (collected by his son Rokn-al-Dīn in *Laṭā'ef-e qoddūsī*) provide genuine insight into Češtī thought and practice, next to other, often spurious malfūzāt. The collections of letters (*maktūbāt*) written by Češtīs are later than the beginnings of the malfūzāt but offer valuable specimens in the letters written by Ġisūderāz, Ašraf Jahāngīr Semnānī, 'Abd-al-Qoddūs Gangūhī, and Kalīm-Allāh Jahānābādī. Typically Češtī poetical works, other than those compiled by poets such as Amīr Ḳosrow, are rare but include some fine specimens in the *Dīvān* attributed to Jamāl-al-Dīn Hānswī (said to have died before 664/1265), the popular dīvān of Mas'ūd Beg, and the *Toḥfat al-naṣā'ih*, a verse treatise compiled in 795/1393 by Yūsuf Gadā (Digby, p. 96). Ġisūderāz's *Asmār al-asrār* and Mas'ūd Beg's *Mer'āt al-'ārefīn* are fine expositions of Češtī thought. The most important of the numerous hagiographical accounts (*taḍkera*) of the Češtīya include Amīr Ḳ'ord Moḥammad b. Mobārak Kermānī's *Sīar al-awliā'*, compiled in the 8th/14th century (to which Ḳ'āja Gol-Moḥammad Aḥmadpūrī, d. 1243/1827, wrote a *Takmela*), Jamālī's *Sīar al-'ārefīn*, a 9th/16th-century source, Neẓām-al-Dīn Ḥājī Ġarīb Yamanī's *Laṭā'ef-e ašrafī*, 'Alī-Ašġar Češtī's *Jawāher-e farīdī*, and many others, some of them extant in manuscript only.

Doctrine. It is an erroneous, though widely accepted, claim that the early Češtī Sufis of India adhered to Ebn 'Arabī's doctrine of the unity of being (*waḥdat al-wojūd*) as their “cornerstone” (Nizami, 1965, p. 55) or “sheet-anchor” (Ahmed, p. 38) and that Mo'īn al-Dīn's “firm faith in waḥdat al-wojūd provided the necessary ideological support to his mystic mission” (Nizami, 1965, p. 50). In fact, the works of Ebn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) were hardly disseminated in India during the lifetime of the early Češtīs. The *Fawā'ed al-fo'ād* and *Ḳayr al-majāles* make no mention of Ebn al-'Arabī, and Češtī commentaries on his Foṣūṣ al-ḥekam were not compiled prior to Ġisūderāz; even his commentary, now lost, is said to have been critical of Ebn al-'Arabī (Moḥaddet Dehlavī, pp. 244–45). It appears that Ebn al-'Arabī's ideas became controversial in the Češtīya through the letters Ġisūderāz exchanged with Mas'ūd Beg and Ašraf Jahāngīr Semnānī. Also, Jalāl-al-Dīn Rūmī's *Maṭnawī* is not quoted in Češtī

sources before the Sufi assemblies of Naṣīr-al-Dīn Čerāg-e Dehlī. Rather than *waḥdat al-wojūd* Češtī views of pre-Mughal India resemble a type of Sufism that places the Češtīya of India as a link between the Kobrawī teachings in 7th/13th century Persia and the notion known as *waḥdat al-šohūd*, elaborated in Mughal times by the Naqšbandīya, and [Aḥmad Serhendī](#) in particular. It seems that the most distinct teachings of the Češtīya in pre-Mughal India focus on 1. the nature of mystic experience (the theory of *walāya*) and 2. the means of obtaining ecstasy (the practice of *samā*).

Walāya. This is a fundamental notion of Islamic social, political and spiritual life, which denotes the authority of a walī(y) (a kinsman or ally; a patron or ruler; a friend or saint). The Sufis preferred the name “friends of God” (*awlīā*’ Allāh, Qur’ān 10:62) for themselves and distinguished between spiritual authority (*walāya*, also *welāya*) and prophetic authority (*nobūwa*). The main Sufi ideas on *walāya* spread among the Češtīs of India through Hojvīrī, who saw in *walāya* the very principle of Sufism itself and differentiated between the *walāya* of divine lordship (*robūbiyat*) and the *walāya* of divine love (*moḥabbat*). In the *Kašf al-maḥjūb* (pp. 265–311) Hojvīrī draws on the seminal teachings of Ḥakīm Termeḍī (d. between 295/907 and 310/922), according to whom Moḥammad is “the seal of the prophets” (*kaṭm al-anbīā*’), because he is divinely protected against error and sin, not because he is the last in time. There are two kinds of prophets: messengers (*rasūl*), who are sent by God to bring a revealed law to a people; and prophets (*nabī[y]*), who do not proclaim a new law but summon people to follow the divinely revealed law. The nabīs are assisted in the world by a spiritual hierarchy of God’s friends (*awlīā*’), who receive divine friendship by grace and are the true successors of the Prophet—his “family” by spiritual, not genealogical descent. The mystic (*walī*) possesses insight into the hidden (*al-‘elm be’l-ġayb*), control of souls (*taṣarrof*), the gift of miracles, and the power to drive off Satan. There also is a seal of God’s friends (*kaṭm al-awlīā*’), who is the most perfect man and the prince of the other *awlīā*’—in Termeḍī’s thought none other than he himself (Radtke, pp. 89–94). This last point, left out in Hojvīrī’s summary, was developed by Ebn al-‘Arabī, who distinguished between the prophet Jesus (seal of universal *walāya*) and himself (seal of particular *walāya*)—both subject to the law of Moḥammad, the seal of prophecy and primal logos. For Ebn al-‘Arabī special prophecy came to an end with Moḥammad, but general prophecy continues to exist in the highest mystics on account of their *walāya* (cf. Izutsu, pp. 263–74). Criticizing Ebn al-‘Arabī and following the Kobrawī distinction of Moḥammad’s mystical experience (*walāya*) and prophetic authority (*nobūwa*),



‘Alā’-al-Dawla Semnānī (d. 736/1336) assigned *walāya* to the prophets and *welāya* to the mystics and compared the spirit of the mystic to the eye of the Prophet, which is capable of beholding the ultimate oneness of God (Landolt, *Correspondence*, p. 72).

Following Hojvīrī, Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā’ (Sejzī, pp. 14, 93, 253) distinguished between *walāya* as the shaikh’s education and guidance of disciples and *welāya* as the mystic’s relationship to God explained in terms of divine love. When a shaikh dies he takes his *welāya* with him but leaves his *walāya* behind and bestows it on one of his disciples. Thus each shaikh has a spiritual *walāya* over a group of disciples in a geographical region. In their nature, Gīsūderāz (*Asmār al-asrār*, pp. 181, 209) ranks *walāya* above *nobūwa*, as *walāya* is nearness to God and prophecy a mission from God. Using a play of words afforded by Sa’dī’s *Golestān* (p. 74), he compares *nobūwa* to being at the Friend’s door (*bar dar*) and *walāya* to being inside (*dar bar*). *Walāya* is the foundation on which prophecy rests or the sword hidden in the sheath. *Walāya* is total worship of God (*koḏāparastī*) while prophecy is an effort to please God (*reżājū’ī*). When Moḥammad, archetypal lover of God (*‘āšeq*), was sent as a prophet he had to abandon the stage of *walāya*, turn his glance from the One, and leave divine companionship (*hamnešīnī*) so as to summon people to the Beloved (*maḥbūb*). This separation from union (*jam’*) with the divine source, however, renders *nobūwa* higher than *walāya* in the order of creation. To demonstrate this perspective Gīsūderāz expanded the teaching of ‘Azīz-al-Dīn Nasafī (Kašf, pp. 95–105), and distinguished between five stages in ascending order: *bār* (burdens), *kār* (works), *ḥekma* (wisdom), *walāya*, and *nobūwa*, correlating them with the five stages of *šarī’a* (law), *ṭarīqa* (path), *ḥaqīqa* (reality), *ḥaqq al-ḥaqīqa* (absolute reality), and *ḥaqīqat al-ḥaqq* (reality of the Absolute), representing the speech (*goft*), action (*kard*), sight (*dīd*), existence (*būd*), and ultimate nonexistence (*būd-e nā-būd*) of the Perfect Man (*ensān-e kāmāl*), respectively (*Asmār al-asrār*, p. 28). Gīsūderāz (*Šarḥ*, pp. 284–88) uses the same fivefold pattern to break open Qoṣayrī’s (but not Ebn al-‘Arabī’s) concept of ecstasy (*wajd*, *wojūd*, and *tawājod*) by correlating five phases of mystic experience (*qoṣūd*, *worūd*, *šohūd*, *wojūd*, and *komūd*) to five layers of the human soul (*nafs*, *qalb*, *rūḥ*, *serr*, and *kaft*). This fivefold pattern, similar to, yet not dependent on, the structure of ‘Alā’-al-Dawla Semnānī’s thought, serves Gīsūderāz as theoretical foundation for *samā’*.

Samā’. Though a controversial practice for normative Islam, *samā’* was justified by the Češtīya on the basis of a statement recorded on the Prophet’s

authority in Sohravardī's *ʿAwāref al-maʿāref* (p. 178), according to which Moḥammad approved samāʿ in a dream of Mamšāḍ Dīnawarī as long as it was introduced and concluded with a Qurʾān recital. This justification is frequently mitigated in Češtī sources by the view of Abū ʿAlī Daqqāq (d. 406/1015) that samāʿ is forbidden for the common people, yet permissible and lawful for the Sufis, for whom it is the closest path to God (Qoṣayrī, p. 644). Mawdūd Češtī is said to have given preference to samāʿ over ṣalāt, the Muslim ritual prayer, because in his opinion it was assured of divine acceptance without fail (Amīr K̲vord, pp. 42–43). Moʿīn-al-Dīn allegedly organized samāʿ sessions and listened to music every night (Rizvi, 1941, p. 331). Like other Sufis before him, Bābā Farīd is reported to have understood samāʿ as a transconscious reactualization (*bīhūšī*) of man's state at the *mīṭāq*, God's covenant with mankind before creation, when the divine speech transported the human souls into a state of ecstasy (*wajd*; Amīr K̲vord, p. 499). The Češtī practice of samāʿ, however, appears to have been popularized at Delhi by Qoṭb-al-Dīn Baḳtīār during the time of Eltotmeš, in whose reign Menhāj-e Serāj Jūzjānī (d. after 658/1260), *qāẓī* of Delhi and author of the important chronicle, *Ṭabaqāt-e nāṣerī*, gave a legal opinion in its favor (Amīr K̲vord, p. 519).

Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā's *kānaqāh* became known for its night-long samāʿ sessions, including dancing, led by skilled singers (*qawwāl*), who recited Persian poetry, the most popular medium of samāʿ accompanied by percussion instruments, such as drums, timbrels, and tambourines, but not by flutes or pipes. He laid down basic conditions for the performance of samāʿ, namely that the singer should be an adult, not a boy or woman; the recited verses neither lewd nor trivial; the listener a true participant in samāʿ, not a spectator; and that the instruments should not include the *čang* (harp) or *robāb* (short-necked guitar; Sejzī, p. 246; Amīr K̲vord, pp. 491–92). Though he discouraged the use of string and wind instruments because they obviated the experience of taste (*dawq*) and pain (*dard*) in the mystic, he encouraged singing and dancing (*raqṣ*) during samāʿ as equal to meditation and recollection (*dekr*) in inducing mystical union. Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā, as other Češtīs after him, permitted Hindus to take part in samāʿ and initiated them into the Češtīya without formal conversion to Islam. The ʿolamāʿ of Delhi opposed Neẓām-al-Dīn Awlīā's practice of samāʿ and tried unsuccessfully to obtain an official edict against it at a notorious meeting (*maḥẓar*) with the shaikh before Sultan Toḡloq (Amīr K̲vord, pp. 525–30). Half a century later, upon a report that the participants prostrated themselves before Gīsūderāz, Sultan Fīrūzšāh Toḡloq ordered the Češtīs to practice samāʿ in seclusion.



The formulation of precise rules regulating Čestī samā' can be traced to Gīsūderāz (*Kātema*, pp. 20–48), who compared samā' to a form of lovemaking (*šūrat-e 'esq-bāzī*), accepted Hendovī verses during samā', and had novices take part in it for the purpose of inner purification. According to Gīsūderāz the practice is not ordinary prayer but an extraordinary power overcoming the practitioner as a visitation (*wāred*) from the Unseen. Samā' should be performed at night rather than during the day, with only disciples of the same shaikh taking part. It should not take place in a mosque or a public place but in a closed hall perfumed with incense of aloes and sandalwood. The participants should be dressed in white and perform ablution beforehand, yet not observe the qebla (direction of ritual prayer). They should have the goal of samā' clearly in mind, keeping their eyes on the singer (*qawwāl*), who should never be a woman. Though garments may be torn or thrown off in ecstasy, one should remain conscious of one's movements and conform to others in the dance. During samā' one should practice *dekr-e kafi*, the silent recollection, not *dekr-e jalī*, the *dekr* concluding with the loud utterance of *ella'llāh*. There are three principal ways of inducing the samā' experience: it can overcome the listener as a sudden uncontrollable agitation, develop gradually in his inner being as a feeling of total harmony, or be assimilated by conforming to the routine of the movements of other. It may result in dance, with or without movements having beat (*žarb*) and rhythm (*wazn*). The Sufi may go around in circles in ecstasy, leap about, beat the ground in his place with his feet, or lift his hands over his head twisting them together and rotating them before bringing them down again. At the climax of the experience the Sufi may utter *howa'l-ḥaqq* (He is God) or simply aspirate the *h*, as if he were giving expression to the still point of divine oneness, the dot (*noqta*), which is pure He-ness symbolized by the aspirated *h* (*Asmār al-asrār*, p. 101).

With the establishment of shrines (*dargāh*) at the tombs of well-known Čestīs venerated as saints, such as the shrine of Mo'in-al-Dīn at Ajmer built by the Sultans of Malwa shortly after 859/1455, devotion was transferred from living shaikhs to dead pīrs, that is, saints. This transfer led to the development of hereditary succession among patrilineal descendants of a saint's family, occupying the position of *sajjādanešin* next to the institution of spiritual succession of shaikhs appointed as *kalīfa*. Family control over a shrine turned the Čestī samā' into a routine that adopted the features of a ritual. Performed as a spectacular ceremony on the anniversary ('ors) of a saint, but also on other occasions, this ritual was eventually called *qawwālī*. The word derives from its principal performers, who were professional musicians led by solo-



singers (qawwāl) and accompanied by the portable harmonium, the barrel-shaped drum, and the clapping of hands. Qawwālī par excellence is performed as a *maḥfel-e samāʿ*, an assembly led by an experienced shaikh to induce ecstasy in the individual listeners—the musicians themselves are not participants. Today as in the past it begins and ends with a Qurʾān recital. It includes a praise of God (*ḥamd*), a eulogy to the Prophet (*naʿt*), a praise of the saint (*manqaba*), a recital of the order's spiritual genealogy, and the extensive repertoire of a series of mainly Persian but also Hindi and Urdu Sufi poems recited as mystical songs (*ḡenā*). The Češtī maḥfel-e samāʿ is related to the invisible spiritual hierarchy of Sufi saints (*darbār-e awlīāʾ*) which is seen as visibly manifest in the leader and members of the assembly, the counterpart of the royal court of Muslim rulers (Qureshi, p. 108).

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