



## DARD, K̲VĀJA MĪR

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**DARD, K̲VĀJA MĪR** (b. Delhi, 19 Du'l-Qa'da 1133/13 September 1721; d. Delhi, 29 Šafar 1199/11 January 1785), poet and author of prose works on mystical theology.

Dard's father, *Nāṣer-Moḥammad 'Andalīb*, was a retired Mughal officer, scion of a family of *sayyeds* (claiming descent from the Prophet Moḥammad) from Bukhara, descended from both *Bahā'-al-Dīn Naqšband* and *'Abd-al-Qāder Jīlānī*. He was a disciple of Pīr Moḥammad Zobayr, great-grandson of *Aḥmad Serhendī*, as well as of Shah Sa'd-Allāh Golšan (d. 1140/1728), a prolific poet in Persian who spent his last years in 'Andalīb's house. In about 1735 'Andalīb had a vision of Imam Ḥasan, and Dard became his father's first disciple; it was he who elaborated the *ṭarīqa moḥammadiya*, the Moḥammadan Path, on the basis of this vision. At the age of fifteen years he wrote his first religious book, *Asrār al-ṣalāt*.

After the death of Pīr Moḥammad Zobayr in 1153/1740 'Andalīb consoled his friends by reciting an allegory in Hindi; Dard wrote it down in Persian as *Nālaye 'Andalīb* (lit., "Lament of the nightingale"), a "novel" of some 1,600 printed pages in large folio. In it the adventures of the "nightingale" are recounted, with many digressions on music, yoga, and Islamic theology and practice, reflecting the refined culture of the Mughal aristocracy; in the end the nightingale emerges as the Prophet Moḥammad himself. For Dard the identification of his father with the Prophet remained the central truth (1310/1892b, p. 90).



Dard never left Delhi despite the confused political situation there. He participated in meetings in the Zīnat al-Masājed mosque, where the rhetorical rules of Urdu poetry, based on those of classical Persian, were discussed. Later a number of Urdu poets became his pupils. After 1161/1748 he wrote 111 Persian quatrains, which became the core of his *ʿElm al-ketāb*, composed after his father’s death in 1172/1758. In this work he interpreted the verses, demonstrating his erudition by quoting widely from classical Islamic texts, in particular those of Jalāl-al-Dīn Rūmī. He described in detail his own mystical experiences, recounting how God had granted him all the stages of the previous prophets until he had become completely absorbed in Moḥammad, his ancestor, and felt himself to be his true *kalīfa* (vicegerent). He expressed the idea that after the stages of *fanā’ fi’llāh* (annihilation in God) and the *baqā’ bi’llāh* (remaining in God) there were two loftier stages, “remaining in the Prophet” and “remaining in the spiritual guide,” claiming that the last stage had been granted to him alone, as his master and father had been both a *sayyed* and one who had attained “annihilation in the Prophet.” This idea was, however, unacceptable to most of his contemporaries.

Dard attacked the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wojūd* (unity of existence) and the popular “shopkeeper shaikhs,” refusing to be identified as a Sufi. His creed was not the usual Sufi *hama ūst* “everything is He” but the Naqšbandī *hama az ūst* “everything is from Him.” He thus preferred *qorb al-farā’ēz*, proximity reached through observance of religious duties, to *qorb al-nawāfel*, proximity reached by “intoxicated” mystics through supererogations. Nonetheless, his language was permeated with Ebn ‘Arabī’s “pantheistic” terminology, and his works were efforts to describe the human being as mirror of the divine names, seeking the permanent essence behind shifting manifestations. These ideas are expressed in his *Čahār resāla*, four collections of aphorisms and meditations, each containing 341 pieces, reflecting the numerical value of the letters in Nāṣer, the name of his father and also one of the epithets of God, the Prophet, and ‘Alī. This name permeated all his thought and writings; even the servants of the house had names like Nāṣerqolī. Some aspects of the text reflect the misery in Delhi, for the inhabitants of which he considered the *ṭarīqa moḥammadīya* the only solace.

Although Dard had been raised in the sober Naqšbandī tradition, he was, like his father, extremely fond of music and wrote a booklet, *Ḥormat al-ġenā* (The dignity of music), which was printed but seems unobtainable. Even the Mughal emperor Shah ‘Ālam II Āftāb (1173-1203/1760-1806, with interruption)



attended musical sessions in his home.

There is as yet no thorough study of Dard's theological work. In his Persian poetry he followed the traditional style, whereas in his fragile Urdu verse, for which he is now best known, he developed the language of the heart. His prose works were written in long, rolling sentences with sophisticated imagery.

Dard died at the age of sixty-six years and was buried in a modest graveyard outside the Turkoman Gate in Delhi. His younger brother Aṭar, long his faithful assistant, succeeded him as leader of the *ṭarīqa m oḥammadīya*. Dard's veneration of the luminous Prophet, the true guide of his community, reflected a trend also visible in other parts of the Muslim world, one that inspired the political movement of the *ṭarīqa moḥammadīya* a few years after Dard's death.

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