



# FEṬRAT ZARDŪZ SAMARQANDĪ, SAYYED KAMĀL

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**FEṬRAT ZARDŪZ SAMARQANDĪ, SAYYED** (also, mistakenly, Saʿīd; Miklukho-Maklaī, No. 2825) **KAMĀL** (b. about 1070/1660 in the Zardūzān quarter of Samarkand; d. after 1110/1699, probably in Bukhara), Tajik poet. Little is known about his life. Our main source on his biography is Malīḥā Samarqandī, according to whom (fol. 93b) Feṭrat was born into the family of a gold-thread embroiderer (hence his designation Zardūz). In 1098/1687 he went to Bukhara to study and got married there (Malīḥā, fol. 94a). Two years later, in 1100/1688-89, when Malīḥā approached him for biographical data, Feṭrat was already a father. There is no reliable information about Feṭrat's life after the period covered by Malīḥā's *taḍkera*. There are various expressions in Malīḥā's *taḍkera* and Feṭrat's own work which hint at his adherence to the Naqšbandīya *ṭarīqa* of Sufism. Malīḥā's mention (fol. 94a) of Feṭrat's attention to "solving the subtle essences (*nokāt*) of *Šabestān* and *mo'ammā*" shows that the poet, while relatively young at the time he met Malīḥā, had already been regarded as an expert both in the *Šabestān* of Fattāḥī (q.v.), a work held in great esteem by Central Asian literati, and in solving *mo'ammās* (riddles), a skill highly valued by them since its cultivation in the literary circles of Herat in the 15th century.

Feṭrat owes his place in Tajik poetry to a short allegorical *maṭnawī* (986



distiches in the Solaymānī edition) in the *hazaj-e mosaddas-e maḥdūf* or *maqṣūr* meter, which was written, as indicated in its chronogram, in 1109/1697-98 (ed. Solaymānī, p. 65, v.930). The poet himself entitled his work (*Qeṣṣa-ye*) *kādor-pesar* (Story of the washer-boy; *ibid.*, p. 22, v. 206; for the spelling variants *gāzor-pesar* and *gādor-pesar*, see Mirzoev and Zand, p. 61 and the Soleymānī ed., *passim*). However, in the Central Asian literary tradition it is known as *Ṭāleb o Maṭlūb* (lit., “seeker and sought”), after the names of the two main characters—a poor washer-boy and a princess. Ṭāleb falls in love with Maṭlūb without ever seeing her. His mother brings home dresses from Maṭlūb’s palace for laundering. While washing the princess’ clothes, Ṭāleb feels that his love for her is growing more and more. Maṭlūb, too, after receiving her neatly-laundered, sweet-smelling dresses, gradually develops a longing for the person who washes them. She asks Ṭāleb’s mother who he is and also falls in love with the washer-boy. Brought by his mother into the garden of Maṭlūb’s palace, Ṭāleb is overwhelmed by passion, dies, and is buried there. Maṭlūb, who leaves the palace for a walk in the garden, disappears and is later found together with Ṭāleb, in his grave, which becomes their common grave. Thus, metaphorically, the seeker of the divine truth is united with object he seeks.

The plot of the poem has not yet been traced back to any known source; the assertion that it originated in folklore (Mirzozoda, p. 23) seems to lack any sound foundation. The lucid style of the poem, the author’s mastery in building the plot, depicting the *dramatis personae*, and using tropes, seem to justify Malīḥā’s remark that “his poetry is superior (*momtāz*) to the poetry of the rest of the poets” (fol. 94a). The language of the poem contains few lexical Tajikisms.

Feṭrat explicitly states (ed. Solaymānī, p. 20, vv. 173-77) that before composing his *maṭnawī* he had mastered such poetical genres as the *qaṣīda*, *ḡazal*, *robāʿī*, and *šahrāšūb* (then very popular in Central Asia) as well as prose. Malīḥā gives nine specimens (one to three distiches long) of Feṭrat’s lyrical poems, all of which seem to be excerpts from *ḡazals* (fol. 93a-b), and a prose satire interspersed with verses (fols. 94a-95b). Various Central Asian miscellany manuscripts contain *ḡazals* with the pen-name Feṭrat (see, e.g., Yunusov, p. 114, no. 74/13). However, one has to be cautious in attributing to Feṭrat Zardūz *ḡazals* with this pen-name; some of them may belong to his contemporary, the Indian poet of Persian origin Mīr Moʻezz-al-Dīn Moḥammad Feṭrat Mūsawī (b. Qom; d. 1106/1697-98), who was quite popular in Central Asia, as attested by



the presence of three copies of his *dīvān* in the Tashkent mss. collection (Semyonov, II, nos. 1028, 1466; VI, no. 4587), or, if the miscellanies are from the late 19th-early 20th centuries, to Mollā Qorbān Khan Feṭrat Vardānzehī Bokārāī (d. 1305/1888) or Loṭf-Allāh K̄'āja Feṭrat Darvāzī.

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