



GISU-DARĀZ

GISU-DARĀZ (or Gēsu-darāz; b. Delhi, 4 Rajab 721/30 July 1321; d. Gulbarga, 16 Du'l-qa'da 825/1 November 1422), the popular title of Sayyed MOḤAMMAD b. Yusof Ḥosayni, the most important transmitter of Sufi traditions from North India to the Deccan plateau. He was born in Delhi, where his ancestors had migrated from Herat. He accompanied his father to Dawlatābād in 727/1327, when Sultan Moḥammad b. Toḡloq declared that city the co-capital of the Dehli Sultanate. In 735/1335-36 he returned to Delhi with his family and the next year became a follower of the great Češti shaikh, [Naṣir-al-Din Maḥmud Čerāg-e Dehli](#) (d. 768/1356), who gave him the title Gisu-darāz (long locks). He remained for many years in Delhi as Naṣir-al-Din's spiritual successor. When Timur's army approached Delhi in late 800/1398, Gisu-darāz, then eighty years old, left that city and returned to Dawlatābād. Later, he accepted an invitation from Sultan Tāj-al-Din Firuz to settle in Gulbarga, the Bahmanid capital.

Although the sultan warmly welcomed Gisu-darāz when he reached the city in 1400, three years later a rift developed between the shaikh and the court, initially over issues of mystical theology. Though himself sharply critical of the ideas of [Ebn al-'Arabi](#), Gisu-darāz used the works of the great mystic to expound his own mystical teachings of *waḥdat al-šohud* (unity of witnessing), which opposed Ebn al-'Arabi's teaching of *waḥdat al-wojud* (unity of existence). When word of the shaikh's teachings reached the [Gulbarga](#) court, scholars close to Sultan Firuz deputed an official to learn what Gisu-darāz had been saying about passages of Ebn al-'Arabi's *Foṣuṣ al-ḥekam*, which they felt deviated from Islamic law. The man sent to investigate the matter, however,



himself fell under Gisu-darāz's spiritual influence, which greatly displeased the court. Somewhat later, around 1407, the shaikh was ordered to move his hospice several kilometers east of its former location near the royal palace, ostensibly because of the large and unruly crowds of people it attracted. In 1415 the rift between shaikh and court widened further when Gisu-darāz refused to bless Firuz's son as royal successor and instead openly predicted kingship for the sultan's brother, Aḥmad. These tensions ended only with Firuz's death in late 825/1422, followed several months later by Gisū-darāz's own demise. Firuz's successor, Sultan Šehāb-al-Din Aḥmad Bahmani, built an imposing shrine over Gisu-darāz's hospice and tomb, which has thenceforth remained the Deccan's principal Muslim pilgrimage site.

The influence of Gisu-darāz has been immense. Writing in the early 17th century, the historian Moḥammad-Qāsem Ferešta noted that a Deccani, when asked whom he considered the greater personage, the Prophet Moḥammad or Gisu-darāz, replied "with some surprise at the question" that although the Prophet was undoubtedly a great man, Gisu-darāz was a far superior order of being (tr. Briggs, II, pp. 245-46). Ever since its patronage by Sultan Aḥmad, the tomb of Gisu-darāz was patronized by royalty, in particular by the subsequent Bahmanid kings, the 'Ādelšāhi kings of [Bijāpur](#), the Qoṭbšāhi kings of Golkonda, the Mughals, and the Neẓāms of Hyderabad. The administration of the tomb, controlled by hereditary descendants of Gisu-darāz, manages a sizable endowment that is used to run a library, a school, a hostel, and a mosque.

Works. Unlike his predecessors, whose thoughts were recorded by their followers, Gisū-darāz was among the first Češti Sufis of India (see [ČEŠŤIYA](#)) to engage in active writing, which he did on topics ranging from Sufism to jurisprudence, to the life of the Prophet, to commentaries on the Qur'ān and Hadith. Among the more important of his surviving works, all in Persian, are, in order of composition, *Šarḥ-e Tamhidāt*, a commentary on the *Tamhidāt* of 'Ayn-al-Qożāt Hamadāni (q.v.), composed in Delhi before his permanent move south (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1364/1945); *Ḥaẓā'er al-qods*, treating mystical love, completed in 803/1401 (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1359/1940); *Kātema*, a supplement to a commentary on the work of Žiā'-al-Din Abu'l-Najib Sohravardi, composed in 806/1404 in Gulbarga (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1356/1937); *Šarḥ-e 'Awāref al-ma'āref*, a commentary on the work of Šehāb-al-Din Abu Ḥafs 'Omar Sohravardi, completed in 810/1407 (MS at the Gulbarga shrine); *Asmār al-asrār*, 114 chapters on Sufism and mystical interpretations



of Hadith, koranic verses, etc., composed in 811/1408 (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1350/1931); *Tarjama-ye Ādāb al-moridin*, a translation of the work of Abu'l-Najib Sohrawardi, composed in 813/1410 (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1358/1938); *Yāzdah rasā'el*, on miscellaneous topics (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1360/1941); *Anis al-'oṣṣāq*, Gisu-darāz's poetry collected by one of his followers (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1360); and *Maktubāt*, a collection of sixty-six letters written to various followers, compiled by one of them in 852/1448 (ed. S. A. Ḥosayn, Hyderabad, 1362/1942).

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