



ḤAZIN LĀHIJĪ

ḤAZIN LĀHIJĪ, SHAIKH MOḤAMMAD ‘ALI B. ABI ṬĀLEB (1103-1180/1692-1766), Persian poet and scholar, who emigrated to India in 1734. Ḥazin came from a family of scholars and landowners in Gilān and traced his descent back to Shaikh Zāhed Gilāni (q.v.). His father came to Isfahan as a student in the reign of Shah Solaymān I, and MoḤammad grew up at the Safavid court as a precocious polymath and poet. He also traveled widely in Iran and to India and Arabia. In 1135/1722, when the rebellious Afghan army defeated the Safavid forces and blockaded Isfahan, Ḥazin tried in vain to persuade Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn and his own remaining family and friends to flee the famine-stricken capital before it was too late; finally, having sold all but his books (he gave away two thousand volumes and left the rest to be plundered), he escaped in peasant attire only days before the Afghans under Maḥmud entered in triumph (Belfour 1830; idem, 1831, chs. XX-XXI). For two years he taught in Korramābād, organizing a militia to defend the town against the advancing Ottoman troops. On leaving Lorestān, he made several voyages in and beyond the Persian Gulf, including to Yemen. He resided at Najaf for three years, then followed his wanderlust through Russian-occupied Gilān to Mašhad. Returning via Tehran to Isfahan, he found the former capital devastated (Belfour, 1830; 1831, chap. XXXIV). After further adventures in Lār and voyages in the Gulf, during which he completed the hajj by way of Bandar ‘Abbās and Surat, he was so horrified by the continuing oppression under the regency of the future Nāder Shah that he left Iran for good.



Of his subsequent life and travels in India his memoirs (completed in 1154/1742) tell us comparatively little; though treated as a celebrity, he disliked the country and its people, and wrote satires on them (Khatak, pp. 32-36, 54-55). He was for some time patronized by the Mughal court of Moḥammad Shah in Delhi, and he hid during Nāder Shah's occupation of the capital in 1739. He later engaged in a literary feud with Ārzu (q.v.; Khatak, pp. 36-48) and moved to Agra and Benares (Varanasi), where he died and is buried. Ḥazin (his *takalloṣ* means "sorrowful") claims to have compiled four *divāns* of verse, of which only the fourth survives (ed. B. Taraqqi, Tehran, 1350 Š./1971); all forms are represented, including several *matnavis*, though he excelled in the *ḡazal* (Serešk, 1342 Š./1963). His panegyric *qaṣidas* are addressed mainly to the Imams. His poetic diction is generally less elaborate than that of contemporary poets of the *sabk-e Hendi* school, such as Šā'eb, whose work he dismissed (Khatak, p. 31). Ḥazin's prose style is remarkably simple and direct (Bahār, III, p. 304).

After his autobiography, the *Taḍkerat al-aḥvāl*, also known as *Tāriḳ-e aḥvāl* (Belfour; also as preface to Ḥazin, 1350 Š./1971; Storey, I, p. 847), which has been used by Lockhart and others as a historical source, his second most valuable work is the *Taḍkerat al-mo'āṣerin*. Composed in 1165/1751, the latter work is a biographical dictionary of a hundred contemporary poets (Ḥazin, 1334 Š./1955; Storey, I, pp. 848-49). Ḥazin also composed scores of specialized treatises in both Persian and Arabic on a variety of topics, from horses to pearls, most of which are no longer extant (Khatak, pp. 156-234; Rieu, II, p. 483). Ḥazin is emblematic of the urbane, cultivated, and cosmopolitan Shi'ite *mirzā* of Safavid and post-Safavid Iran who fled a politically dangerous and economically depressed milieu for the courts of Muslim India, there to contribute to the Persianization of the ruling élites. Open-minded and tolerant, he sought out fellow scholars among Christians, Jews, and Sabians, and in return was "equally admired and esteemed by the Muselmān, Hindoo, and English inhabitants of India," (Belfour, 1830, p. v, citing Ouseley). Several folk legends have evolved around the figure of Ḥazin in India (Khatak, preface).



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