



## KAHAK

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**KAHAK**, Markazi Province (lat 34°10'53" N, long 50°19'60" E) , a village located about 35 km northeast of [Anjedān](#) and northwest of Maḥallāt in central Iran. Kahak was an important locality in the late medieval period for the Qāsemšāhi Nezāri Ismā'ili community in Iran, but now it is a small and isolated village with a Twelver Shi'ite population of about 500 persons.

Kahak evidently enjoyed greater importance in Safavid times as a stage between Qom and [Arāk](#) (former Solṭānābād), as attested by the ruins of a fairly large caravanserai there. By the end of the Anjedān revival in [Nezāri Ismā'ilism](#), which lasted some two centuries from the middle of the 15th century, the Nezāri imams had established deep roots in central Persia around Qom, especially in Anjedān and Kahak.

Ḳalil-Allāh II, the 39th Qāsemšāhi Nezāri imam, was the last imam of his line to reside in Anjedān; he died in 1680 and was buried there. His son and successor, Šāh Nezār, for unknown reasons transferred his residence and the headquarters of the Nezāri *da'wa* to Kahak during the earliest decades of his imamate. Anjedān, separated from Kahak by a number of shallow ranges, was then abandoned permanently by the Nezāri imams.

Šāh Nezār died in September 1722, according to the inscription of his tombstone, shortly before the Afghan invasion of Persia that extended to Kahak. He was buried in one of the chambers of the building that served as his residence and which is still *in situ* in Kahak. Šāh Nezār's son and successor, Sayyed 'Ali (d. 1754), also lived in Kahak, and his grave is located in Shah



Nezār's mausoleum. Preserved at the western end of Kahak, this mausoleum has several chambers, each one containing a few graves. In the compound and its adjacent garden there are also several tombstones with inscriptions in *Ḳojki* Sendhi characters, attesting to the pilgrimage of the Nezāri *Ḳojās* who regularly embarked on the long and dangerous journey from India to see their imam in Kahak. In fact, Kahak is mentioned in several *genāns*, the indigenous devotional poems of the *Ḳojās*, as the place of residence of the imams (see Hooda, pp. 75, 109-10). Shah Nezār's mausoleum, first described in modern times by [Wladimir Ivanow](#) (pp. 56-59), was restored in 1966 without any attention to restoration principles, resulting in the destruction of its original carved wooden doors and other fixtures. A stone platform discovered by Ivanow (p. 59) in 1937, in the gardens of Shah Nezār's former residence, on which the imam used to sit when receiving his followers, was no longer *in situ* when the present author visited Kahak in 1976.

By the middle of the 18th century, the Nezāri imams had transferred their residence and headquarters to Šahr-e Bābak and Kermān, in the province of Kermān, probably to be nearer to the pilgrimage route of their Indian followers, but they continued to maintain their roots in Kahak at least until the early decades of the 19th century. Shah *Ḳalil-Allāh* III, who succeeded to the Nezāri imamate in 1792 after his father Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Ali, known as Sayyed Kahaki who governed Kermān under the Zands for almost half a century, re-established himself in Kahak soon after his accession. In 1794, [Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār](#), who had by then gained possession of Kermān, permitted a number of Nezāri Sayyeds, relatives of the imams, to move from Šahr-e Bābak to Kahak, also giving the Nezāri imam new landed properties in Kahak in compensation for what had been left behind in Kermān. Shah *Ḳalil-Allāh* III remained in Kahak until 1815 when he moved to Yazd, where he was murdered two years later (Daftary, p. 504). Jean Baptiste L. J. Rousseau (1780-1831), a member of a French mission sent in 1807 to the court of Faṭḥ-'Ali Shah Qājār, is the earliest European to supply information on Shah *Ḳalil-Allāh* III and his place of residence in Kahak (Rousseau, pp. 279-80; see also de Sacy, p. 84; tr., p. 182). It was also at Kahak that Shah *Ḳalil-Allāh* III's son and future successor as the 46th Nezāri imam, Ḥasan-'Ališāh Āqā Khan I, was born in 1804. The Nezāri imams maintained some landed interests in Kahak for a while longer until they next established themselves firmly in Maḥallāt.



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(Farhad Daftary)

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