



KĀŠEF ŠIRĀZI

KĀŠEF ŠIRĀZI, MIR MOḤAMMAD-ŠARIF B. ŠAMS-AL-DIN MOḤAMMAD, Persian writer on ethics and poet of the Safavid period (b. Karbalā, ca. 1001/1592; d. Ray, ca. 1063/1653). Variants of his pen name are Kāšef, Kāšef-e Komeyt and Šarifā Kāšef. His father, Šamsā of Shiraz, was an expert in account keeping.

While he was still at a tender age, Kāšef's family returned to Persia, settling down in Isfahan, where he spent twenty-three years devoting himself to the study of scholarly subjects such as Arabic grammar, theology, and logic, and to writing. Other literary talents in the family were his brothers, the poets Esmā'il Monšef and Moqīma. Later in life, Kāšef was for fifteen years a judge in Ray. An autobiographical notice is found in the epilogue of his prose work *Ḳazān o bahār*.

Kāšef's best known works are two prose compositions, *Serāj al-monir* and *Ḳazān o bahār*, interspersed with poems after the model of Sa'di's *Golestān*. In spite of the highly ornate language, they found their readers for at least two centuries after the author's demise. They were still frequently copied and printed in the 19th century, when lithographic editions appeared in Persia and on the Indian subcontinent (cf. Mošār, I, col. 1263; II, col. 1953). In both cases the subject is the teaching of ethical ideas on the basis of Islamic principles. In the twenty sections, or "flashes" (*lom'a*), of *Serāj al-monir* (The shining lamp), Kāšef treats of moral virtues of a general kind, such as good manners (*šarāyeṭ-e adab*), modesty (*ḥayā*), fairness (*'adl*), generosity (*ḡotowwat*), beneficence (*eḥsān*), love (*'ešq*), courage (*šajā'at*), and contentment (*qanā'at*), condemning



vices like greediness (*ṭama*), tyranny (*ẓolm*), deception (*koḏ'a*), and jealousy (*ḥasad*). His precepts are illustrated by words of the Prophet Moḥammad and anecdotes, mainly derived from the lives of the prophets and other holy men. This work was probably written in 1024/1615 or 1030/1621 (Rieu, II, pp. 861-62). A lithograph of the *Serāj al-monir* was published at Bombay in 1848.

Another, similar work is *Ḳazān o bahār* (Autumn and spring). According to the introduction the tales were derived from *al-Faraj ba'd al-šedda* by Abu 'Ali Tanuḳi (329-84/941-94), a famous Arabic collection of anecdotes dealing with the topic of delivery from an oppressive situation. The author states that the glorification of the virtues of the Imam 'Ali was a prominent incentive for writing this work. In fourteen chapters, styled "principles" (*asās*), again the central themes of moral behavior are discussed (for further descriptions of the contents, see Rosen, pp. 285-86; Rieu, 1895, pp. 250-51). This work was lithographed in Tehran in 1869.

In the final chapter (*kātema*) of *Ḳazān o bahār*, two other works in prose, under the titles *Dorr al-maknun* (The hidden pearl) and *Ḥawāss-e bāṭen* (The inner senses), are mentioned, which seem to deal with ethical themes as well. He further wrote lyrical poetry in all the standard forms and composed two *maṭnawis* in imitation of Neẓāmi Ganjavi's *Ḳamsa* (a *Laylā o majnun* and a *Haft peykar*), as well as a *maṭnawi* called *'Abbās-nāma*, presumably a historical epic.

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