



ḲAYRḲVĀH HERĀTI

ḲAYRḲVĀH HERĀTI, Moḥammad-Rezā b. Solṭān-Ḥosayn Ġuriāni, Nezāri Ismaʿili *dāʿi*, author, and poet. He was born into a prominent Nezāri Ismaʿili family in Ġuriān near Herat, in present-day western Afghanistan, in the final decades of the 15th century and died not long after 960/1553, the latest date cited in his writings. ḲayrḲvāh thus lived during the first century of the so-called *Anjedān* revival in Nezāri Ismaʿili *daʿwa* activities after the collapse of the Nezāri centers of power in Persia in 654/1256.

By the middle of the 15th century, the Nezāri imams had established themselves in the village of Anjedān, near Maḥallāt, initiating the Anjedān revival in Nezāri Ismaʿilism that lasted for about two centuries. During this period, the Nezāri imams and their followers continued to disguise themselves under the mantle of Sufism, but, with the adoption of Twelver Shiʿism as the official religion of the Safavid realm, the Nezāris and other Shiʿite communities in Persia could now reduce the extent of their *taqiya* (precautionary dissimulation of one's faith) practices. The Anjedān period also witnessed a renaissance in literary activities in the Persian Nezāri community. Doctrinal works now began to be composed for the first time in the post-Alamut Persian Nezāri Ismaʿili community. ḲayrḲvāh Herāti may be considered as one of the most important Nezāri literary figures of the early Anjedān period in Persia, second in significance only to Abu Eshāq Qohestāni (d. after 904/1498). ḲayrḲvāh's few extant works are extremely valuable for understanding the Anjedān revival in post-Alamut Nezāri Ismaʿilism and the contemporary Nezāri doctrines, which were essentially rooted in the Nezāri



teachings of the late Alamut times, when Ḳvāja Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi lived in the Nezāri fortress communities of Persia and synthesized the Nezāri doctrines in the *Rawza-ye taslim* attributed to him (see editor's Preface, pp. xv-xvi).

In the autobiographical part of his *Resāla* (pp. 35 ff.), ḲayrḲvāh relates how his father, Ḳvāja Solṭān-Ḥosayn, a *dā'i* in the region of Herat, was murdered by brigands whilst on a journey to visit the Nezāri imam at Anjedān. Subsequently, the contemporary Nezāri imam, probably Mostanṣer Be'llāh III (d. 904/1498), better known under his Sufi name of Šāh Ġarib, apparently designated ḲayrḲvāh himself, then only nineteen years of age, to the position of the chief *dā'i* or *hojja*, then more commonly called *pir*, of Khorasan and Badakṣān. In that capacity, the youthful ḲayrḲvāh made the hazardous journey to Anjedān to see the Nezāri imam of the time. ḲayrḲvāh has preserved unique details in his *Resāla* on how the imam managed the affairs of the Nezāri *da'wa* and *dā'is* from his secret headquarters in Anjedān. In his *Resāla*, ḲayrḲvāh also expounds his own views on the status and high attributes of the rank of *pir* in the Nezāri *da'wa* hierarchy.

ḲayrḲvāh was a prolific writer (see Ivanow, pp. 142-44; Poonawala, pp. 276-77; Daftary, 2004, pp. 123-24), and his works, all written in Persian, have been preserved mainly by the Nezāri Isma'ili communities of Badakṣān (now divided between Afghanistan and Tajikistan), as well as Hunza and other northern areas of Pakistan. ḲayrḲvāh also composed poetry under the pen name (*taḳalloṣ*) of Ġaribi, after the epithet of the contemporary Nezāri imam. His works include *Faṣl dar bayān-e šenākt-e emām* (1922, pp. 3-49), which was composed around 1545. This work contains a summary of the author's views on the imamate and other contemporary Nezāri teachings. ḲayrḲvāh's other writings include the *Resāla*, his *Qeṭa'āt*, and selections of his poetry, all edited and published by Wladimir Ivanow in a collection entitled *Taṣnifāt-e ḲayrḲvāh* (pp. 1-75, 77-111, 113-32, respectively). As argued by Ivanow (1963, pp. 142-43), ḲayrḲvāh also produced a plagiarized version of Abu Eshāq Qohestāni's *Haft bāb* (pp. 3-8) under the title of *Kalām-e pir*, attributing it to the Isma'ili poet Nāṣer-e Ḳosrow (d. after 462/1070) in order to enhance its popularity within the Nezāri communities of Afghanistan and Central Asia.



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