



MEYBODI, MIR ḤOSAYN

MEYBODI, QĀẒI MIR ḤOSAYN (Kamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn b. Mo'in-al-Din; d. 910/1504), scholar and judge of the Šāfi'i legal school in Yazd.

Kamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn Meybodi was probably born in the early 1450s into a family of prosperous urban notables. His father, K̄vāja Mo'in-al-Din 'Ali, was a political figure and community benefactor in Meybod, a town in the vicinity of Yazd, when the area was under Qara Qoyunlu control. Like many promising young scholars, Meybodi left his native town for further studies. In Shiraz, by then within Aq Qoyunlu (q.v.) territories, he studied under the rationalist philosopher Moḥammad b. As'ad Jalāl-al-Din Davāni (q.v.; d. 1503), who had personal connections to students, scholars, and rulers from Anatolia to India. Davāni's relationships with Qara Qoyunlu leaders had led to his appointment as *šadr* (religious supervisor) in Shiraz; subsequently, his ties to Aq Qoyunlu rulers as well as his scholarly reputation resulted in his becoming the chief judge of Fārs. Meybodi remained linked to Davāni in both scholarship and politics, thus situating him within the wider Ottoman, Timurid, and, eventually, Safavid worlds, where Davāni's reputation was solidly established and where his many illustrious students pursued their careers.

Meybodi's early writings were commentaries in Arabic and Persian on standard works of logic, grammar, and philosophy, such as the philosopher Aṭīr-al-Din Abhari's (d. 1264) *Hedāyat al-ḥekma* (The guidance of philosophy; completed 880/1475) and Najm-al-Din Kātebi's (d. 1276) *al-Resāla al-šamsiya* (The principles of logic [for Šams-al-Din]; completed 886/1481-82). Meybodi also wrote poetry under the *nisba* (adjectival name) al-Manṭeqi (the Logician)



and penned riddles (*mo'ammā*, q.v.; Naṣrābādī, 2: 736-37).

Meybodi's ongoing interest in philosophical cosmology is evident in his longest and most important work, the *Šarḥ-e Divān-e 'Ali* (Commentary on the poetry of 'Ali; completed 890/1485). The book's lengthy introduction, often copied as a self-standing work known as the *Fawāteḥ* (Prologues), takes up a quarter of the complete manuscript. It situates the figure of the fourth caliph, 'Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb (q.v.; d. 40/661), within contemporary historical, cosmological, and esoteric concepts, many of which are further developed in the poetic exegesis that follows. The seven chapters of the introduction discuss the mystical path, God's essence, the names and attributes of God, the macrocosm, the microcosm, prophecy and sainthood, and 'Ali's history and virtues. In addition to demonstrating the author's mastery of a wealth of philosophical and theological texts in Persian and Arabic, which he quotes extensively, the *Šarḥ* reveals the profound influence of the philosopher Abu 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad Ebn al-'Arabi (q.v.; d. 638/1240) on his thought. Furthermore, the engaging text presents a nuanced picture of the 'Alid loyalism widespread at that time, explicitly adhering to the order of caliphates accepted by the Sunnis (*Šarḥ*, pp. 175, 189-90, 209-11) and criticizing extremist groups (*Šarḥ*, p. 31), while honoring through a sophisticated selection of anecdotes 'Ali's mystical and political importance for all Muslims (*Šarḥ*, pp. 169-211). Meybodi acknowledges the existence of *kofr* (unbelief; *Šarḥ*, pp. 47-48), but is cautious in applying the term, in part because of his sensitivity to the difficulty of articulating religious concepts and experiences. In his view, committed believers come to knowledge of God along different paths of the intellect, all of which use different lexicons.

In the commentary proper, Meybodi proceeds through 'Ali's collected poetry, commenting on a few lines at a time. Almost every group of lines is treated with the same technique. A rhyming couplet in Persian composed by Meybodi precedes several lines of 'Ali's Arabic verses, crystallizing their theme. The Arabic verses are followed by an explanation in Persian of various words and phrases, often with longer historical explanations, then a translation of those verses into Persian prose, finishing with a verse in Persian written by Meybodi. Thus, the author is aphorist, grammarian, translator, historian, legist, philosopher, and poet.

Mentored by Davāni, who was influential in the Aq Qoyunlu court then in Tabriz, Meybodi was appointed *qāẓi* of Yazd by Sultan Ya'qub (r. 883-96/1478-90) in the 1480s (Šuštari, pp. 347-48). He left a collection of over



seventy letters, his *Monša'āt* (Letters), which is the main source for details of his life, mention of him in contemporary chronicles being scarce. The letters date primarily to late 1480s and early 1490s and show the complexity of his religious and administrative responsibilities. Meybodi wrote to men in four categories of public life: military figures connected to the Aq Qoyunlu court, bureaucrats, provincial ulama, and ulama at the court of the Timurid Solṭān-Ḥosayn Bayqarā (see ḤOSAYN BAYQARĀ; r. 875-911/ 1470-1506). Among the most notable were the vizier Ṣafi-al-Din 'Isā Sāvaji (d. 896/1491) and several of his relatives, Davāni, the Naqšbandi spiritual leader K̄vāja Aḥrār (d. 896/1490; see AḤRĀR K̄VĀJĀ 'OBAYDALLĀH), and the poet Nur-al-Din 'Abd-al-Raḥmān Jāmi (q.v.; d. 898/1492). Meybodi also cultivated ties to members of the Nurbakšiya and Ne'mat-Allāhi Sufi orders. Whether members of the Aq Qoyunlu ruling family or high-ranking amirs, administrators or scholars, his correspondents were all part of an extensive network of loyalty and patronage. Meybodi uses a variety of literary techniques to congratulate addressees for military victories and recovery from illness, mention his literary endeavors, send gifts, request financial assistance for the repair of buildings in Yazd, give moral advice, and complain about the state of education in religious institutions. Most of the letters lack dates, but references to events, such as Sultan Ya'qub's prohibition of wine in Ramaẓān 893/August 1488, allow some to be situated within certain parameters (*Monša'āt*, p. 196; *Ḳonji Eṣfahānī*, p. 73/317).

The letters provide insight into the position of *qāzi*. In addition to his duties as adjudicator of legal cases and supervisor of charitable foundations (*waqf*), Meybodi coped with natural disasters (*Monša'āt*, pp. 124-26), public immorality (*ibid.*, p. 59), communal demands (*ibid.*, pp. 89, 191), and personal rivalries (*ibid.*, pp. 153, 162, 172). The scholarly community expected him to advocate for them, and the local population looked to him to obtain assistance and tax relief from his patrons at court in times of drought, flooding, and famine. With his own income dependent on agriculture (*Monša'āt*, pp. 57, 63), Meybodi himself benefited when the government provided relief for the agricultural population of his area. A persistent theme in the correspondence is Meybodi's unhappiness with the relentless opponents who slandered him both in Yazd and in the centers of Aq Qoyunlu power. He was defensive about charges of theological aberration, judicial malfeasance, and financial dishonesty (e.g., *Monša'āt*, pp. 135-39), accusations that may have contributed to the loss of his job in the 1490s. He considered himself to be in an impossible position, for as he saw it, in trying to act justly, he inevitably acted against the



interests of unscrupulous, powerful men in his community. The letters show that officials at the center of government paid attention to their representatives in the provinces. Although Meybodi grew up far from the centers of power, he was incorporated into a broad scholarly and administrative structure that depended on powerful provincial families. The correspondence also shows that administrators throughout Aq Qoyunlu territory were apprised of events that took place far from them, such as Sultan Ya‘qub’s ban on wine (*Monša‘āt*, p. 196) and his campaigns in Georgia (*Monša‘āt*, p. 109). The collection includes a *Fath-nāma* to an unknown addressee, which is tantalizing in its usage of Shi‘i verse and terminology, and an equally elusive fragmentary letter to Shah Esmā‘il Ṣafavi (q.v.; r. 906-30/1501-24).

Meybodi’s last known work was a brief introduction in Persian to philosophical principles, the *Jām-e giti nomā* (The world-revealing cup). It was completed in 897/1492 in Shiraz and dedicated in all likelihood to Qāsem Beg Pornāk (d. 907/1501), son and eventual successor of Manṣūr Beg as governor of Shiraz in 900/1494-95 (Pourjavady, 2017, p. 310; Ḥasan Rūmlū, p. 27). It presents the views of philosophers in the Greek-Avicennan tradition (*ḥokamā*), Illuminationist philosophers (*eṣrāqiān*, see [ILLUMINATIONISM](#)), and Sufis, in a much more abbreviated form than in the *Fawāteḥ*. Not only was it popular in its own day, as shown by many extant manuscripts, but it also was translated into two independent Latin versions in the first half of the 17th century, one by the Scottish traveler and scholar George Strachan (d. after 1634) and the other by Abraham Ecchellensis/Ebrāhim Ḥāqelāni (1605-64), a Maronite linguist and philosopher from Lebanon (Pourjavady, 2017, pp. 311, 318).

During the campaign of Shah Esmā‘il Ṣafavi in 1503 to consolidate power in the southwestern provinces of Iran and to suppress Aq Qoyunlu holdouts, Meybodi was caught up in the rebellion of the Aq Qoyunlu garrison commander in Yazd, Ra‘is Moḥammad Karra (d. 909/1504). When the citadel fell to Safavid forces, he was reportedly executed (*Jahāngoṣā-ye kāqān*, pp. 224-25). Our main source for his death was written over a century after the event, more contemporary sources saying little about him. That has led to speculation on how much weight should be assigned to sectarian and political causes for his involvement in the rebellion and subsequent execution. At least one son, Mirzā ‘Abd-al-Rašid Monajjem, survived him.



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