



NAKŠABI, ŽIĀ'-AL-DIN

NAKŠABI, ŽIĀ'-AL-DIN (d. 751/1350), 14th-century Češti mystic and author. Though originally from Nakšab (or Nasaf, in Transoxiana), his family emigrated to India at the time of Mongol incursions (Rizvi, I, p. 132). A follower of the Češti Skaikh Farid-al-Din Nāguri (d. 752/1351), Žiā'-al-Din Nakšabi lived a reclusive life in Badā'un, disregarding whether or not people accepted or rejected him. He may have been practicing as a physician in this city (Moḥaddet, p. 204; Badaḳši, p. 971; Ġolām Sarvar, p. 351; Āryā's introduction to Nakšabi's *Selk al-soluk*, p. xxi).

Being of Sunni persuasion, Nakšabi may well have been a Hanafite, since he would describe Abu Ḥanifa as "the grand Imam" and "the founder of the foundations of the truth," although he would not fail to pay respect to Shafi'ite imams and the Shi'ite Imams (Nakšabi, *Selk al-soluk*, pp. 12, 86, 109, 116, 130, 141). Modarres (VI, p. 132) has counted Nakšabi among the disciples of Neẓām-al-Din Awliā' (d. 725/1324), but sources contemporary with them (e.g., Kermāni's *Siar al-awliā'*) are silent about such a relationship. This presumption of a connection might have been caused by the fact that Nakšabi lived at the same time and had the same first name as Žiā'-al-Din Barni (d. 758/1356, see [BARANI](#)), a follower of Neẓām-al-Din Awliā' as well as of his opponent, Žiā'-al-Din Sanāmi (Moḥaddet, p. 204; Dehlavi, p. 88; Badaḳši, p. 971). Besides, some sources have referred to his collaboration with India's Ḳalaji sultans, including 'Alā'-al-Din (Badaḳši, p. 970). Nakšabi had apparently written some books for Qoṭb-al-Din Mobārakšāh (r. 716-21/1317-21), who maintained a strained relationship with Neẓām-al-Din Awliā' (Šafā, III, p. 1294; Ġolām Sarvar, p. 331;



Hendušāh, p. 394; Āryā, 2004, p. 148). Naḳšabi died at Badā'un in 1350. His tomb received visitors at least until the time of Mir Ḥosayn Dust of Sanbhal, who was still alive in 1788 (Sanbhali, p. 342).

Naḳšabi's reputation is mainly due to the books he either wrote in Persian or translated from Sanskrit, masterfully expounding in them the basic Sufi teachings in a charming style. Generally classified, his works fall into: (1) mystical writings, including *Selk al-soluk* (Course of spiritual progression) and *Šarḥ-e qašida-ye soryāni* (A commentary on the Syriac ode); (2) religious works, including *'Ašara-ye mobaššara* (The ten to whom Paradise was promised; Moḥaddet, p. 204; Badaḳši, p. 970); (3) literary works, *Ṭuṭi-nāma* and the story of *Golriz*; and (4) medical writings, including *Čehel nāmus* (Forty sections) and *Laddat al-nesā'* (Pleasure from women). His works are described below.

1. *Selk al-soluk* can be regarded as Naḳšabi's most important work; its reputation can be understood from the remarkable number of its manuscripts (over 40) copied posthumously (see Blochet, I/71; Bašir, II, p. 228; Monzawi, 1984, III, pp. 1153-56; idem, 2003, p. 488) and from the references and citations made by the well known Indian and Persian mystics (e.g., Moḥaddet, pp. 204 ff.; Badaḳši, pp. 971 ff.; Kāšefi, p. 68). The book consists of an introduction and 151 *selks*. In writing it, the author, among other things, uses the language of "direct intuition" (*zabān-e ḥāl*; see Pourjawādi, 2006, pp. 772 f.). The first few *selks* deal with mystical terminology, then with some moral issues. The final *selks* present the life stories and sayings of a number of Sufi sheikhs. *Selk al-soluk* has a didactic tone, each *selk* ending with two verses of the author. Naḳšabi's most important sources in writing this book were Hojviri's *Kašf al-maḥjub*, Ġazāli's *Kimiā-ye sa'ādat*, and Persian translations of Ġazāli's *Eḥya' 'olum al-Din*, Meybodi's *Kašf al-asrār*, Mobārakšāh's *Raḥiq al-taḥqiq*, 'Aṭṭār's *Taḍkerat al-awliā'*, and Sohrawardi's *Loḡat-e murān* (Āryā, p. xxxiii; Purjawādi, 2006, p. 773; idem, 2007, p. 52; Karimi, p. 22). Moreover, certain resemblances can be seen between some of the *selks* and Sejzi's *Fawā'ed al-fo'ād*, which point to their common sources (cf. i.a. *Selk al-soluk*, pp. 18-19, 70-71, 76-78, with *Fawā'ed*, pp. 26, 60, 93).

2. *Šarḥ-e qašida-ye soryāni*, a Persian commentary on a prayer that apparently Ebn 'Abbās had selected from Psalms and translated into Arabic poetry. The commentary begins with eleven distiches by Naḳšabi followed by a short introductory note. The author then provides a syntactic analysis for each distich, translates it into three Persian distiches, and finally writes a mystical explanation about it (see *Šarḥ-e qašida*, MS fols. 13a-20b; for other MSS, see



Bašir, III/446; Monzawi, 1980, III, p. 1713).

3. *‘Ašara-ye mobaššara*, a treatise on ten of the Prophet’s associates to whom he had promised entry into Paradise. No manuscript of this treatise has been found as yet (Bağdādi, I, p. 429; Şafā, III, p. 1296).

4. *Ṭuṭi-nāma*, Naḳšabi’s most celebrated work, of Indian origin, and styled in Sanskrit as *Śuka-saptatī* (The parrot’s seventy tales), a title used as such by Hema Čandra in the important Jain book *Yogaśāstra*, in 1160 CE. This book is a collection of Buddhist *Jatakas* of an unknown author. However, we do know that Hema Čandra made some changes in the original structure of the book, including in it some stories of his own. Of this collection there are two versions available, the more detailed one having been compiled by a Brahman named Čintamani-Bhāṭṭa (Mojtabā’i, pp. 482 f.). The two versions have 52 stories in common. It is these two versions that are contained in the two classical Persian translations of *Śuka-saptatī*: *Jawāher al-asmār* and *Ṭuṭi-nāma*.

Ṭuṭi-nāma was translated into Persian and designated *Jawāher al-asmār* by ‘Emād b. Moḥammad Ṭağri, a secretary at ‘Alā’-al-Din Ḳalaji’s court, around 1213-18 (Āl-e Aḥmad’s introduction to Ṭağri’s *Jawāher al-asmār*, pp. 32 f.). Ṭağri omitted some of the stories that did not appeal to him, or stories with similar versions already in the Persian *Kalīla wa Demna* and *Sandbād-nāma* “The book of Sinbad,” drawing on other Sanskrit sources as well (Ṭağri, pp. 17 f.). As Ṭağri’s prose was exceedingly ornate and too difficult to comprehend, in 1330, at the request of a certain eminent person (Naḳšabi, *Ṭuṭi-nāma*, p. 4), Naḳšabi produced a simpler version of the book, adding to it a number of stories from *Sandbād-nāma* and *Vetalapančavimšati* (Mojtabā’i, p. 484). Of course, he had modified the end of the story, giving it an Islamic tone. In the original Sanskrit, the story is concluded by the account of a man returning from a journey, listening to his wife’s confession regarding to her decision to be disloyal to him, and their eventual reconciliation, while in Naḳšabi’s account, upon its lord’s return, the parrot informs him of his wife’s decision; the husband kills his wife and then puts on Sufi clothing. In Bürgel’s opinion (p. 161), *Ṭuṭi-nāma*, while written in epic prose, has also a romantic characteristic.

Naḳšabi’s version of *Ṭuṭi-nāma* soon was translated into Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu. In 1660, Şari ‘Abdallāh Efendi turned Naḳšabi’s work into Turkish, and later on, via Ḥamid Lāhuri’s versified translation, its stories were included in the Mongolian collection *Ardeshi Bordeshi*. In 1858, L. Rosen translated the



Turkish translation into German. Available are also several epitomes of the book, including that made by Abu'l-Faẓl 'Allāmi in the time of the emperor Akbar I (r. 1542-1605; Rieu, p. 753b) and Moḥammad Qāderi's abridgement in the 18th century, which contained only 35 stories and was the basis of Gladwin's English translation in 1801 and C. I. L. Iken's German rendition in 1822. It was after reading Iken's translation that Goethe persuaded Kosegarten to translate the book from its Sanskrit original. V. Zhukovskii also quoted the introduction and five stories of this work in the book *Mabda' al-lesān* (Petersburg, 1901). It has also been translated into French and Russian.

5. *Golriz*, is the story of Ma'ṣumšāh and a girl called Nušāba. Lacking in charming variety of theme and written in an affected prose, the book has drawn on some Koranic verses, traditions (*aḳbār*), *ḥadith*, and poetry (for its manuscripts, see Monzawi, 1974, VI/961-963). *Golriz* was published with an English introduction in Calcutta (1912).

6. *Čehel nāmus* or *Nāmus-e Akbar*, also called, in its introduction, *Joz'iyāt o kolliyāt*, is a very exceptional work in Persian literature, dealing, in prose and poetry, with the human body as the best and most beautiful among God's creatures and a sign of his greatness. Written in 1317-21 for Qoṭb al-Din Mobārakšāh (Naḳšabi, *Joz'iyāt o kolliyāt*, p. 4), the book consists of 40 *nāmus* or sections, each dealing with one part of the human body. Precision in the use of medical terminology, from the very first line of the treatise, demonstrates the author's familiarity with the science of medicine. The author begins each *nāmus* with a few lines in ornate, formalist prose and then continues in a simple but poetical prose style. His main sources include some mystical works, such as Najm-al-Din Rāzi's *Meršād al-'ebād*, Sa'di's *Golestān*, and Rumi's *Maṭnawī*, also a number of Islamic as well as Indian medical books (Mo'adḍeni's introduction, pp. xxxi-xxxv).

7. *Laddat al-nesā'*, a Persian illustrated book composed of ten chapters, on the outward physical features of women and how to benefit by sexual enjoyment. Its Indian origin is assumed to have been *Koka-śāstra*, whereas Naḳšabi's original source was *Rati-rasīh* by Koka-pandīta, translated into Persian on the orders of the then sultan (Rizvi, p. 133); Monzawi, 1983, I, pp. 704-6).



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