

## Nund Rishi

Nund Rishi (1378–1440) is considered one of the most important Sufi poets from Kashmir. He is revered as the ‘flag-bearer of Kashmir’ (*‘Alamdār-e Kashmir*), and his poems draw upon the hyperlocal imagery of the Kashmiri literary universe. Despite his popular status as a spiritual successor of Lal Ded, Nund Rishi’s poetry has received next to no attention in modern scholarship.

This book embodies Abir Bazaz’s enduring engagement with the poetic corpus of Nund Rishi. By unpacking the cryptic philosophical and philological riddles in the poems, Bazaz unearths a negative theology in Nund Rishi’s mystical poetry. He argues convincingly that the themes of Islam, Death, the Nothing and the Apocalyptic in these poems reveal an existential politics. Bazaz further suggests that the apophatic style of Nund Rishi’s poems is in turn mirrored in mystical poetry across South Asia and the larger Indo-Persian world.

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# Nund Rishi

Poetry and Politics in Medieval Kashmir

**Abir Bazaz**



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*For  
Haneefa, Shamsbad, and Trilok*

*Hachivih hārinji petsiyuv kān gōm*  
*Abakh chān pyōm yath rāzdānāy*  
*Manz bāg bāzaras qulphu' ros vān gōm*  
*Tīrthu' ros pān gōm kus māli zānāy*

A grass arrow to a lightwood bow I have become  
An unskilled carpenter fell upon this capital  
A shop without a lock, in the middle of the bazar, I have become  
A self without a future, who knows my state?

—Lal Ded

You could not be born at a better period than the present, when we have lost everything.

—Simone Weil

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