



ḤAIM, SOLAYMĀN

ḤAIM, SOLAYMĀN, outstanding twentieth-century lexicographer (b. Tehran, 1886; d. Tehran, 1970). His father, Ḥaim Eshāq, was a quilt-maker by profession; both he and Solaymān's mother, Kānom, were born in Shiraz and had migrated to Tehran. Solaymān Ḥaim received his elementary schooling at a traditional primary school (*maktab*) and then at the Christian missionary school Nur, which was run by the Mirzā Nur-Allāh family, Jews who had converted to Christianity. Solaymān Ḥaim later attended the American College directed by Dr. Samuel Martin Jordan (see alborz college). Here, he improved his English and seems to have been drawn further toward Christianity, and may even have converted. He alludes to his possible conversion in the introduction to the book *Deirekh Hayim* (pp. 2-3) by [Ḥaim Moreh](#), in which Solaymān Ḥaim thanks the author for encouraging him to abandon Christianity and return to the Jewish faith. He married in 1923 and had six children. He worked as a translator in the Ministry of Finance and in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Tehran.

Solaymān Ḥaim became known as one of the first serious lexicographers to prepare Persian-language dictionaries into and from English, French and Hebrew (see below). His Persian-Hebrew dictionary has yet to be published. The methodology of his lexical work is explained in the introductions to his dictionaries. He often had to find out for himself technical terms not available in dictionaries at his disposal by visiting workplaces and factories and asking the workers and technicians there about the names of their instruments. His dictionaries still remain indispensable works of reference and his overall



lexicographic contribution to the field of education in Persia is undeniable.

Solaymān Ḥaim was also a poet and playwright whose plays, based on biblical stories, were performed in Tehran. His plays are: (1) *Yusof o Zolaykā*, based on the Book of Genesis; (2) *Ardašir o Ester*, based on the [Book of Esther](#); (3) *Davud o Goliāt*, based on the second Book of Samuel; (4) *Ruṭ o Na'omi* based on the Book of Ruth. They were all performed at the Grand Hotel in Tehran (1920-46). The play about Ruth and Naomi received poor critical reviews (*Ālam-e Yahud*, no. 42, p. 705, and Solaymān Ḥaim's response in issue 43, p. 724). Several of his poems were published in the weekly newspapers and periodicals of Iranian Jewry, including the weeklies *ha-Ge'ula* (Tehran, 1920-23), and *he-Ḥayim* (published in Tehran 1922-26), *Ālam-e Yahud* (Tehran, 1945-47) and *Sināy* (Tehran, 1949-50). A collection of his poetry is preserved in the family archives. He was interested in music and studied the *tār* with musicians of the period. Solaymān Ḥaim also published articles in the above-mentioned publications, often defending the poor and emphasizing that he himself was born and raised in economic hardship, and fought bravely against what he deemed as unacceptable superstition in religious custom. In his will he left his library to the Association of Iranian Immigrants in Israel.

His lexicographic works include the following dictionaries, all published by Beruḵim Press: Persian-French, Tehran, n.d.; French-Persian, 1316 Š./1937; Persian-English, 1312 Š./1933; English-Persian, 1320 Š./1941; *Persian-English Proverbs*, Tehran, 1334 Š./ 1956, with several reprints and abridged editions. He also published a Hebrew-Persian dictionary (Jerusalem, 1966).