



ḤĀLAT, ABU'L-QĀSEM

ḤĀLAT, ABU'L-QĀSEM (b. Tehran, ca. 1298/1919 [1912/1913 in most sources, see Ḥālat, in Farajīān and Najafzāda, p. 212]; d. Tehran, 3 Ābān 1371 Š./23 November 1992; [Figure 1](#)), poet, writer, translator, songwriter, and scholar. He received all his formal education in Tehran and was a graduate of the University of Tehran with a B.A. in literature. He was initially interested in music and painting, but his father, Karbalā'i Moḥammad-Taqi, prevented him from pursuing the arts. His career as a poet began in 1935 and received encouragement when he joined the literary society, *Anjoman-e adabi-e Irān*. He began collaborating with the satirical weekly *Tawfiq* in 1938, and remained as one of its regular contributors until the journal closed in the early 1970s (Ḥālat, in Farajīān and Najafzāda, I, pp. 212-13). He later had his satires published in other magazines as well.

Ḥālat is considered by some observers to be the greatest contemporary Persian satirical poet. His enormous success and mastery of satirical prose and, especially, poetry have sometimes earned him the titles of *Malek-al-šo'arā'*, *Sayyed-al-šo'arā'*, and *Amir-al-šo'arā'* (Kas-mā'i, p. 94).

Ḥālat was a master of the style *baḥr-e ṭawīl* (q.v.), a rhythmic prosodic form, not unlike metrical prose, which has occupied a special position in Persian satirical writing ever since ("Dargodašt," p. 81). In *Baḥr-e ṭawīl*, the feet of the meter continue without change and a caesura or period comes after several lines. He wrote his *baḥr-e ṭawīls* under the pen-name "Hodhod Mirzā" and his satirical verses under the pen-names "Ḳorus-e lāri (Long-legged Rooster)," "Šuḳ (Jokester)," "Fāzel-ma'āb (Scholarish)," and "Abu'l-'Aynak (Bespectacled),"



which appeared regularly in *Tawfiq*. After the end of Reżā Shah's reign in September 1941, his writings also appeared in such weekly magazines as *Omid*, *Tehrān-e moşawwar*, *Qiām-e Irān*, and *Ḳabardār*. He also wrote matter-of-fact, serious verses, including versified translations of aphorisms attributed to Imam 'Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb for the religious weekly *Ā'in-e eslām*.

ḤĀlat also wrote funny satirical songs (*tarāna*) with social and political overtones, that soon became popular, as well as songs with more serious themes, together totalling well over one hundred. These songs were often sung on stage by well-known actors (e.g., Ḥamid Qanbari and Majid Moḥseni) and professional singers (e.g., Maleka Ḥekmat-Şe'ār) in Tehran or the Gohar theaters.

In 1946 he published the first collection of his satirical works, *Fokāhiyāt-e ḤĀlat*, in two volumes. In the same year Evergreen Pictures of India invited him and two Persian actors to go to India in order to dub a number of films. He was stationed in Bombay for twenty months and used the occasion to improve his English. Upon his return, he was employed by the Publication Department of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Ābādān, where he joined the staff of the two Persian papers, the weekly *Aḳbār-e hafta* and the daily *Ḳabarhā-ye ruz*, published by the company. In 1959 he was transferred to Tehran and was appointed manager of the magazine *Şan'at-e naft*, and later became the director of the NIOC's Department of Public Relations. Simultaneously, he collaborated with Radio Iran and continued his literary activities, retiring in 1973. ḤĀlat was also the author of the national anthem of the Islamic Republic (ḤĀlat, in Farajīān and Najafzāda, I, pp. 212-16).

ḤĀlat was very skillful in composing various types of verse, including the *qaşida*, *qeṭ'a*, *robā'i* and *ġazal* forms, and humorous and satirical poems. He was also a talented writer and an energetic translator, particularly of Arabic and English. He employed novel expressions in his works, but avoided far-fetched metaphors and analogies. His critical style is fluent and simple (Sohayli Ḳvānsāri, pp. 251-52).

ḤĀlat's satires mirror Persian society, its recent history, and the mentality of its people. Some of his satirical verses are quite noteworthy for their direct and oblique allegorical references to social realities. He wrote with great ease, but, in the view of 'Ali-Akbar Kasmā'i, his predominant preoccupation with social problems and humorous situations prevented him from creating pure, deeply-felt and passionate poetry in the proper Persian tradition (Kasmā'i, p.



95).

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