



# ḲALKĀLI, SAYYED 'ABD-AL-RAḤIM

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**ḲALKĀLI, SAYYED 'ABD-al-RAḤIM** (b. Ḳalkāl, ca. 1872; d. Tehran, 20 June 1942), well-known constitutionalist, journalist, government official, bookseller, and publisher, and the editor of one of the oldest available manuscripts of the *Divān* of Hafez (Figure 1).

*Early life and education.* Ḳalkāli was born ca. 1872 in the town of Ḳalkāl, southeastern Azarbaijan, where he received his early education. Later he went to Rasht to continue his studies in Arabic, Persian literature, logic, and philosophy for several years (Ḳalkāli's dates of birth and travel to Rasht are not available; the date of ca. 1872 for his birth is an approximate calculation based on two plausible estimates by Qazvini, 1946-47, p. 44; and 'Alavi, p. 74). Ḳalkāli moved to Tehran to join the [Constitutional Revolution](#) around 1905 with Ebrāhim Purdāvud, his student and later his comrade in the Iranian Nationalist Committee of Berlin (*Komita-ye Melliyun-e Irāni dar Berlan*; q.v.), under the leadership of Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizādeh during World War I ('Alavi, p. 74; Etteḥād, II, p. 27).



*A constitutionalist and journalist.* Ḳalkāli cooperated with Sayyed Moḥammad Širāzi (known as Mosāvāt) as co-editor of the influential newspaper, *Mosāvāt* (Equality), in Tehran from October 1907 to May 1908. With a circulation of 3,000 during this critical period, *Mosāvāt* served as one of the main newspapers of the Constitutional Revolution (Şadr Hāşemi, III, pp. 205-10). Ḳalkāli also began publishing a “scientific, literary, and ethical” magazine, *Parvin*, in October 1915; at that time he was operating a bookstore (idem, II, pp. 66-67). But publication was discontinued after its editor left Tehran to join the democratic-nationalist movement during World War I (see below; *ibid.*).

Ḳalkāli remained, to the end of his life, a loyal member of the democratic current and a close confidant of Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizādeh, the leader of the Social Democratic Party (Ferqa-ye ejtemā’iyun-e ‘āmmiyun) in the First Majles (1906-08), and later of Iran’s Democrat Party (Ferqa-ye demokrāt-e Irān) in the Second Majles (1909-11; see constitutional revolution v. political parties; see also Etteḥādiyeh, 1982, pp. 68-74, 199-225; Ādamiyat, II, 1976, pp. 107-10).

In June 1908, when Moḥammad-‘Ali Shah bombarded the Majles and began to detain and execute leading constitutionalists, Ḳalkāli along with Taqizādeh, ‘Ali-Akbar Deḥkodā, ‘Ali-Moḥammad Tarbiat, Amir Ḥeşmat, and Mirzā Maḥmud Şarrāf (the father of Abu’l-Ḥasan and Bozorg ‘Alavi) took sanctuary at the British Legation in Tehran (Taqizadeh, pp. 76-78; Kasravi, II, quoting Ḳalkāli, pp. 655-56). Ḳalkāli was exiled to his hometown, and from there he went to the Caucasus, where he stayed for a while with ‘Abd-al-Raḥim Ṭālebof (1834-1910), one of the pioneering ideologues of modernization and nationalism in Iran. In early 1909 Ḳalkāli traveled to Rasht via Eşqābād to join the constitutionalists, who were gathering their forces to reinstate the constitutional regime. He was sent to Hamadan to coordinate the constitutionalist activities of the city with those in Rasht (‘Alavi, p. 74).

*A reformer of the financial system.* Ḳalkāli returned to Tehran and served as one of the leading figures of the Democratic Party after 13 July 1909, when the Constitutionalist forces marched to Tehran, forced Moḥammad-‘Ali Shah to abdicate, and formed the Second Majles (1909-11). Democrats who rose to



prominence at this time intended to launch an anti-corruption campaign in the Ministry of Finance (Wezārat-e Māliya) by establishing the Auditing Chamber (Divān-e Moḥāsebāt). They appointed a number of trustworthy democrats to this Chamber and other important offices, including Kalkāli, Mirzā Isā Khan Fayz, Montaqab-al-Dawla, Mošir Akram, and Sayyed Moḥammad Kamare'i. 'Amid-al-Ḥokamā', who was a confidant of Voṭuq-al-Dawla, the Minister of Finance (1 December 1909-24 July 1910), became Director of the Auditing Chamber, with Kalkāli as his Deputy. Later, 'Amid-al-Ḥokamā' was promoted to deputy minister and Kalkāli was appointed to the position of Acting Director of the Chamber (Mostawfi, II, pp. 319, 324, 334). But in August 1912, when the Chamber intended to audit the cabinet members, 'Amid-al-Ḥokamā' dissolved the Chamber ("from Kalkāli to Taqizādeh, 18 August 1912," in Afshar, 2006, p. 294; see also p. 291). As a result, Kalkāli lost his job and was later demoted to a position in the Treasury; in 1915 he was appointed as the head of the tax collection office of the district of Ġār o Fašāfuya near Tehran ('Alavi, p. 74; for a critical evaluation of the performance of reforming democrats at the Ministry of Finance, given by a moderate conservative, see Mostawfi, II, pp. 319, 324, 329, 333, 334; cf. 'Abbās Eqbāl Aštiāni, p. 73).

*Committee of national defense.* Despite Iran's declaration of neutrality at the outset of World War I (1914-18), both the Central Powers and Allies invaded Iran in 1915. The Democrat Party supported Germany from the beginning of the War, whereas a section of the Moderate Party (Ejtemā'iyun-e E'tedāliyun) supported the Allies. But when the Russian forces threatened to enter the capital city of Tehran, most Democrats, and a number of the moderates and independents among Majles deputies as well as other groups decided to leave Tehran in order to protest and/or organize a resistance movement against the Russian invaders. They formed a Committee of National Defense (Komita-ye Defā'e Melli) in collaboration with the Central Committee of the Democrat Party (Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār, pp. 8-20). Kalkāli actively joined the democrat-nationalist camp and left Tehran for Qom, Kermanshah, and Istanbul on 15 November 1915 along with a number of leading democrats, including Vaḥid-al-Molk Šaybāni, Moḥammad-Rezā Mosāvāt, Moḥammad-'Ali Khan Kolub (Farzin), Sayyed Jalil Ardabili, Adib-al-Salṭana Sami'i, Solaymān Khan Meykadeh, and [Solaymān Mirzā Eskandari](#) (the latter became a founding leader of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party in 1941). Dissatisfied with Solaymān Mirzā's radical and eccentric moves in exile, Kalkāli challenged him on a number of occasions, and as a result Solaymān Mirzā left Istanbul for Tehran



(Šaybāni, pp. 21-25, 101, 386, 419).

*Kāveh bookstore and publisher.* After 28 months in exile, Kałkālī returned home on 20 October 1917 (Kamare'i, I, p. 88; 'Alavi, p. 74). The Ministry of Finance frequently delayed the payment of his salaries and his request to reinstate him in a suitable position (apparently he returned to the ministry in the late 1910s as the head of the State Lands Department (*kālešajāt*; the exact date of his reappointment is not available to the author). To support himself, and to establish a venue for his political meetings, Kałkālī re-opened his bookstore in Tehran's Nāšeriya Avenue; he named the bookstore Kaveh after the journal of that name published by Taqizādeh in Berlin (Parvin, pp. 187, 190). The bookstore was a regular meeting spot (*pātoq*) of democrats, littérateurs, and scholars, including Mojtabā Minovi, Shaikh Aḥmad Sigāri, and Sayyed Moḥammad Kamare'i (Kamare'i I and II, various pages). The bookstore continued its activities after Kałkālī's death in 1942 through his son Šams-al-Din, under the name, "Kāveh-ye Now" (Afshar, 2000, pp. 319, 369).

*The last hope of democrats.* Kałkālī resumed his political activities among democrats after returning from exile in late 1917, when the collapse of the Czarist regime and the rise of a socialist republic in Russia brought hope to the Democrat Party, which had undergone a dormant phase following the exile of its leadership during World War I. Disorganization in the party during the war years led to factional politics and a schism within the party. The key issue for the party during the post-war period was reorganization with a new charter. A group of democrats under Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār, who supported the idea of the Party's reorganization, were known as "Demokrāt-e Taškili" ("Democrats for organization"), whereas another group, who opposed the idea, were mobilized by Sayyed Moḥammad Kamare'i under the banner of "Demokrāthā-ye Žedd-e Taškili." With the hope of unifying the party, Kałkālī made a number of ill-fated attempts to work out a compromise between the two factions by delivering speeches and organizing various gatherings with both groups. The two factions won the majority of seats in the Fourth Majles from Tehran, but increasing factional animosities deterred the completion of the elections and the formation of an independent government by the democrats (Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār, pp. 27-41; Kamare'i, I, pp. 109, 115, 439, 448, 614; II, pp. 961, 973, 996, 1003, 1075, 1100, 1437).

*Progressive Party.* Intending to form a democratic-nationalist party in due course, Kałkālī continued to cooperate covertly with a group of well-known statesmen and politicians during the Reza Shah period (1925-41), in order to



maintain the core of the Democrat Party among the loyal friends and followers of Taqizādeh. These included Kalkāli, Ebrāhim Ḥakim-al-Molk (q.v.), Abu'l-Qāsem Najm-al-Molk, Naṣr-Allāh Moqtār-al-Molk Ṣabā, 'Ali Aṣḡar Zarrin Kafš, Aḥmad Farāmarzi, and Bāqer Kāzemi (Moḥaḍab-al-Dawla; later a leading figure in the National Front). Eventually, they formed an independent political party, Ḥezb-e Taraqqi (Progressive Party) in 1941. Other political parties formed in this period were the pro-Soviet Ḥezb-e Tudeh (Mass Party; see [communism iii](#)) and the pro-British Ḥezb-e Āzādi (Freedom Party; see "Nāmāhā-ye Bāqer Kāzemi be Taqizādeh," 26 October 1941, in Afshar, ed., 2000, pp. 407-15).

*Literary works.* Kalkāli devoted himself to literary activities during the Reza Shah period. He was a frequent contributor to the biweekly literary journal *Ṭufān* (Storm), edited by Farroḡi Yazdi during 1927-29. Other contributors to the journal included Malek-al-Šo'rā' Bahār, Aḥmad Kasravi, Sayyed Faḡr-al-Din Šādmān, Esmā'il Yegāni, Mehdi Bahrāmi, Tāherzādeh Behzād, 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Hażir, 'Ali Javāher Kalām, Šādeq Sarmad, and Adib-al-Mamālek Farāhāni (Šadr Hāsemi, III, pp.184-86). Kalkāli also edited and published K'āja Neẓām-al-Molk's *Siāsat-nāma yā Siar al-moluk* (Tehran, 1931) and K'āja Naṣir-al-Din Ṭusi's Persian translation of *Adab al-wajiz le'l-walad al-ṣaḡir* of 'Abd-Allāh b. Moqaffa' (Tehran, 1933). Kalkāli also translated a few works from Turkish and Arabic, including a short work by Tolstoy, translated as *Be yakdigar moḥebbat konid* (Tehran, 1910); Jerji Zaydān's *Šārl wa 'Abd-al-Raḥmān* (four vols., Tehran, 1915); and another work from Arabic as *Dāstān-e kunin yā sargozašt-e Barmakiān* (Tehran, 1921). But his monumental work was editing and publishing the *Divān* of Hafez.

*Hafez's Divān.* Kalkāli is best remembered for his edition of Hafez's *Divān* (Tehran, 1927) based on one of the oldest manuscripts dated 1424, only thirty-five years after the death of the poet. Kalkāli used this manuscript as the main source for his edition of the *Divān*, which was considered the most reliable published edition until 1941, when Moḥammad Qazvini and Qāsem Ġani published their meticulously edited critical work. They used Kalkāli's edition as the principal text of their work and praised Kalkāli for his valuable service to the field. Although Kalkāli identified about 100 printing errors in the corrigenda of the work, Qazvini identified 15 cases of error in the manuscript, 30 more cases of printing errors in addition to numerous cases of misplacing or displacing of the letter "vāv" in the published version due to weakness of Kalkāli's sight during that period (see Qazvini's introd., *Divān-e Hafez*, ed.



Qazvini and Ġani, pp. mj-st; idem, 1946-47, p. 44). Later on, doubts were raised about the accuracy of the colophon date of the text, on the evidence of the illumination and calligraphic style of the manuscript (Sohayli Ḳ<sup>v</sup>ānsāri). Ḳalkāli's edition, which was published in 1927, set in motion a search that continues to this day for the authentic version of Ḥāfeẓ's poems (see [hafez v. manuscripts](#)). In 1941, a year before he died, Ḳalkāli published a booklet in 110 pages entitled *Ḥāfeẓ-nāma* (Tehran, 1941), which was a study of Hafez's biography, his poetry, and the numerous poems added to his *Divān* by other poets, and a comparison between his poetry and that of other poets. Moḥammad Qazvini praised Ḳalkāli for this work in an obituary published in *Yādgār* (see Qazvini, 1946-47, pp. 43-44). The facsimile of the *Divān* was also published later by Ḳalkāli's son, Šams-al-Din (Tehran, 1990).

Ḳalkāli passed away in Tehran on 20 June 1942 at the age of approximately 70 (Qazvini, 1946-47, p. 44).

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