



KHATIBI NURI, HOSAYN



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KHATIBI NURI, HOSAYN (ḤOSAYN QAṬĪBI NURI; b. Tehran, 31 Tir 1295/22 July 1916; d. Tehran, 31 Šahrivar 1380 Š./21 September 2001), scholar and administrator.

Early life and education. Qaṭibi's father, Sheikh Moḥammad-'Ali Nuri, originally from Nur in the province of Māzandarān, was both a teacher and the deputy-custodian of Madrasa-ye Marvi, the well-known traditional religious seminary in Tehran. Ḥosayn was the eldest of the five children from his father's third wife.

He received his early education at Torayyā elementary school, and part of his secondary education at Aqdasiya, before entering Dār al-fonun (q.v.) polytechnic college. Subsequently, he studied Persian literature at the



Teachers' Training College (Dānešsarā-ye 'āli; see EDUCATION xviii). This was followed by graduate studies at the newly created Ph.D. program in Persian literature at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities of the University of Tehran. His doctorate, on medieval Persian prose ("Naṭr-e fanni-e fārsi az āgāz tā pāyān-e qarn-e haftom-e hejri"), supervised by the poet and scholar Moḥammad-Taḳī Bahār, was awarded with distinction in 1945 (Ḳaṭībi, 2003, pp. 33, 38, 100-101). While working on his thesis, Ḳaṭībi also taught as an instructor at the Teachers' Training College as well as at a secondary school. In 1951, when Bahār passed away, Ḳaṭībi occupied his chair at the Faculty of Letters, a position he held until 1978.

Academic, social, and political activity. Ḳaṭībi was also engaged by the Faculty of Law and Political Science. In 1939, he was appointed as director of its library. Here too his abilities impressed the dean of the Faculty, 'Abd-Allāh Mo'azzami, who later became deputy-speaker of the Majles and was instrumental in transferring Ḳaṭībi to the Majles as assistant manager of the official parliamentary gazette (*Ruznāma-ye rasmi*). Later he was promoted and became the gazette's director, a position he held until he was elected to the parliament as the representative from Lār in 1963. A major concern of his as the director of the gazette was the retrieval and compilation of the parliamentary proceedings for publication. Under his personal supervision, the proceedings of the parliament to the end of the sixth Majles were compiled and published (Ḳaṭībi, 2003, pp. 111-18).

Publication of the Loḡat-nāma. Ḳaṭībi was also involved in the publication of 'Ali-Akbar Dehḳodā's (q.v.) *Loḡat-nāma*. He brought to Mo'azzami's attention the urgent need to ensure the completion of Dehḳodā's lifetime endeavor. Following parliamentary approval, a committee was set up, which included Ḳaṭībi, to make the necessary preparations for the continuation of the project, and employ scholars to assist in organizing the numerous files and notes. The first volume of the *Loḡat-nāma* was published in 1946 with a foreword written by Ḳaṭībi but signed by Moḥammad-Şādeq Ṭabāṭabā'i, the speaker of the Majles at the time (Ḳaṭībi, 2003, pp. 118-21).

Red Lion and Sun Society. On Mo'azzami's recommendation, Ḳaṭībi began working with the charity organization, Red Lion and Sun Society (Jam'iyat-e šir o ḳoršid-e sork, renamed Jam'iyat-e helāl-e aḳmar-e Irān, 'Red Crescent Society of Iran,' after the 1979 Revolution). He embarked on a fund-raising campaign, which collected an unexpectedly large sum of money, prompting the Society to invite him to continue his cooperation with it as an unpaid member. In March



1948, he was appointed director of publicity at the Society. He also set up the Society's periodical, *Majalla-ye jam'iyat*, with the help of Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad (q.v.) and with the literary scholar Dabīḥ-Allāh Şafā as its editor. In May 1949, Kaṭibi was appointed managing director (*modir-e 'āmel*) of the Society, a post he held up until 17 February 1978. Here too his administrative capabilities were in full display. Kaṭibi was able to expand its scope quickly, building dozens of hospitals, clinics, orphanages, and relief and charity centers for the needy throughout the country (Āqeli, I, p. 620). To ensure the continuity and enhancement of relief work all over the country, he helped to set up the Youth Organization (*Sāzmān-e javānān*) as part of the Red Lion and Sun Society, to train young students, with effective cooperation of the Ministry of Education. His energetic leadership also resulted in substantial private sector assistance in cash, land, various endowments, expertise, and technology (Kaṭibi, 2003, pp. 166-75).

Moşaddeq's premiership (1951-1953). During the latter part of Moḥammad Moşaddeq's two years in office as prime minister, Kaṭibi was appointed chief director of one of the premier's main offices, handling the prime minister's official correspondence with ministries and foreign legations. The exact date of this appointment is not known; the royal decree formally appointing Kaṭibi to the new office was signed on 16 July 1953 (Kaṭibi, 1998, apud Rasuli), just over a month before the overthrow of Moşaddeq. However, as Kaṭibi was Moşaddeq's own choice, he might well have started the new job much earlier, the royal decree serving as a formal acknowledgment. Kaṭibi would go to Moşaddeq's residence on a daily basis, and his last visit was on the very day of the coup d'état of 1953 that led to Moşaddeq's fall. Wary of the conflict between the shah and Moşaddeq, Kaṭibi went into hiding for a few days; but, despite his great concern, he returned to work after a few days and continued working with the Red Lion and Sun Society (Kaṭibi, 1998, apud Rasuli, pp. 232-33).

Organization of Volunteers (Sāzmān-e dāvṭalabān). Kaṭibi was also the driving force behind the expansion of the Organization of Volunteers, affiliated to the Red Lion and Sun Society. Those in the Organization worked pro bono and even paid a monthly membership fee. Those who had donated considerable sums or endowed pieces of land would become honorary members. The Organization had more than 260 branches throughout the country. During his long public service, Kaṭibi took effective measures to increase the number and enhance the standards of the Society's centers for blood transfusion by



training qualified nurses. He also did a great deal to make the Relief Organization, also affiliated to the Society, as effective as possible (Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 163-82). For example, in 1971, when relations between Iran and Iraq became strained, thousands of Iranian residents in Iraq were expelled in a humiliating manner. The government directed the Red Lion and Sun Society to take care of this serious forced exodus, and this was carried out efficiently under Ḳaṭibi's supervision (Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 184-87). The Society undertook a similar task for the Bārzanī Kurds who had taken refuge in Iran, setting up camps in several cities. Under Ḳaṭibi's directorship, the Society performed some remarkable medical services (including the construction of well-equipped hospitals) in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms (Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 190-95, 208-12).

During the premiership of Amir-ʿAbbās Hoveydā, dissatisfaction with the Ministry of Health's poor management of the state-run hospitals throughout the country prompted a royal decree by the shah: almost all such hospitals and other non-private medical centers were to be entrusted to the Red Lion and Sun Society. Despite the enormity of the task, Ḳaṭibi carried out the responsibility competently (Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 213-21).

Mahd-e kudak. One of Ḳaṭibi's innovative services was to introduce what came to be known as Mahd-e kudak, the name Ḳaṭibi coined for day care centers, an idea that had occurred to him after an official invitation to visit France by the French Red Cross. Ironically, his only source of income during his last years of life was the day care center that his wife had set up at a northern suburb of Tehran (Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 200-201).

His career as member of Parliament. As pointed above, Ḳaṭibi was elected in 1963 to represent the southern city of Lār in the 21st Majles (ʿĀqeli, p. 620; Ḳaṭibi, 2003, pp. 237-38). He was re-elected to the 22th-24th terms of the Majles, this time from Tehran. In the 21st Majles (early 1964), he was chosen as deputy-speaker (*nāyeb-ra'is*), a position he held as long as he was a Majles representative (Ḳaṭibi, apud Rasuli, pp. 238-39).

Scholarship. Ḳaṭibi's full-time involvement with the Red Lion and Sun Society did not leave him sufficient time for academic research and scholarly publications. His only literary productions in book form were *Tāriḳ-e taṭawwor-e naṭr-e fanni* (1965) and the first volume of *Fann-e naṭr dar adab-e pārsi* (1985, repr. 1996), basically an expanded version of his 1945 dissertation. The first of these books consisted of two parts. In the first part, Ḳaṭibi



described the history of the changes in and features of Persian prose from its beginning (4th/10th cent.) to the end of the 7th/13th century; and, in the second part, he presented a critical study of prose and its three main genres: epistolary, narrative, and *maqāma* (lit. “séance,” “assembly,” a particular kind of thematic narrative and stylistically ornate rhymed prose) in those four centuries. He had planned to extend his study to the end of the 19th century in the second volume, and to complete his critique by concentrating on other prose genres (Ḳaṭibi, 1996, pp. 15-17). However, he did not live long enough to finalize the second volume, whose manuscript he had already prepared in the course of more than thirty years as a professor of stylistics (Ḳaṭibi, 1996, p. 14). Ḳaṭibi’s other book, *Fann-e naṭr*, is an instructive manual for both teachers and students of Persian literature. It demonstrates the author’s extensive and critical reading of Persian prose classics, and bears witness to his sound literary judgment and admirable command of prose. His well-structured and lucid prose also points to his poetical talent, borne out by the poetry he has left behind (including a large number of prison poems), only a fraction of which have so far been published (Qanbari, I/2, p. 174). He also produced more than twenty articles, most of them on stylistics, an area that constituted his main focus of academic interest.

Ḳaṭibi’s last scholarly contribution was a lecture on Bahār, his mentor and model in many ways (Torābi, pp. 317), delivered at a commemoration ceremony held in Paris (May, 2001; *Ketāb-e māh*, no. 46-47, p. 113). It was later published in his posthumous *Ranj-e rāygān* (pp. 363-90).

Final years. In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1978-79, Ḳaṭibi was arrested and sentenced to six-years imprisonment, later commuted to four and half years. He was eventually released, physically weak and spiritually broken. In 1991, he was invited to teach graduate students and supervise their theses by two newly founded post-revolution universities in Tehran (Rasulipur, Introduction to Ḳaṭibi, 2003, p. 13). Almost a decade later, he was diagnosed with cancer of the liver and died in 2001. He was buried in Emānzāda Ṭāher cemetery on the Tehran-Karaj road.



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