



MO'AYYERI, MOHAMMAD HASAN

MO'AYYERI, Mohammad Hasan, better known as Rahi (Moḥammad Ḥasan Mo'ayyeri, b. Tehran, 1 April 1909; d. Tehran, 14 November 1968), prominent poet and lyricist.

Born six months after his father's untimely death, Mo'ayyeri was named for the departed Moḥammad Ḥasan Mo'ayyad Kalvat. His family resolved, however, to call him Biyuk through his adolescent years (Namini, p. 62). He adopted Mo'ayyeri as his surname, reflecting his lineage to his paternal grandfather Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek Neẓām-al-Dawla, treasurer to Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's court. On his mother's side, he was the grandson of 'Abbās Mirza Khan Qavām al-Dawla Tafreši, Minister of Foreign Affairs during the Nāṣer-al-din Shah era (Mo'ayyeri, 1965, p. 20; Dastḡayb, p. 34). He took Rahi as his pen name at the age of twenty five (Amiri Firuzkuhi, p. 527).

In 1933, after the completion of his studies at Dār al-fonun (q.v.), Rahi took employment at the Municipality of Tehran. He would work, successively, at the Ministry of Culture and Art, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Economy, and, after retirement, at the Royal Library, holding high level professional positions throughout (Afšār, p. 478).

Mo'ayyeri's love of poetry commenced in his youth and continued to grow through his contact with literary figures and poets and his participation in



literary societies, a feature of Persian urban literary life that began in the 18th century and became widespread after the Constitutional Revolution. His membership in the Ḥakim Neẓāmi Literary Society, founded by Ḥassan Vaḥid Dastgerdi in 1932 (see [ANJOMAN iii](#)), and his participation in editing and annotating Neẓāmi Ganjavi's *Panj Ganj* or *Ḳamsa* further contributed to his fascination with Persian classical literature (Dastġayb, p. 34).

He also participated, along with his friend 'Abd-al-Karim Amiri Firuzkuhi, in the Qodsi Society, a literary and decidedly religious organization presided over by Mir Sayyed 'Ali Sādāt Aḳavi. His early *qaṣidas* in praise of Shi'ite Imams, in the manner of Soruṣ Eṣfahāni, did not escape the attention of poets and literary figures like Taqī Dāneš (Ziā'-laṣkar, 1250-1346) and 'Ebrat Nā'ini (1247-1321), who were impressed by his poetic sensibilities (Amiri Firuzkuhi, p. 521-22). Mo'ayyeri's interest in religious themes continued throughout his career, and towards the end, he intended to bring into verse segments of *Nahj al-balāġa* (The road of eloquence), the anthology of dissertations, letters and testimonials, traditionally attributed to 'Ali b. Abi Ṭāleb, the first Imam in the Shi'a tradition (Mo'ayyeri, 1969, pp. 1-18). It was a project that was to remain unfulfilled.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Rahi rarely departed from the conventions of Persian classical prosody (see 'ARUŽ'). His poems are marked by the innovative employment of similes and metaphors, and a harmony of rhythms and rhymes with the poem's content. Nature, human desire, solitude, sorrow, flowers and wine are recurrent motifs in his poetry:

*"Hamčo nilufar be šāk-e nastaran pičida-am
Nāzok andāmi bovad emšab dar āqušam, Rahi"*

(Like a climbing lily curling around an eglantine branch
Tender and delicate she rests in my embrace tonight, Rahi)
(*Bārān-e šobḡāhi*, p. 35)

His familiarity with music is well reflected in his skilful employment of internal rhyme and alliteration in his poetry:

*"Ān ke piš-e lab-e širin-e to ey češma-ye nuš
Āfarin gofteh va došnām šenuda ast, manam"*

(The one who by your sweet lips, O spring of life
Has sung your praises and heard reproach, am I)
(*Sāya-ye 'omr*, p. 33)



The repetition of 'š' and 'n' in various arrangements works to create a melody in the poem that is further bolstered by the use of words commonly paired with, and therefore serving to evoke, other words employed elsewhere in the poem. Many of his ghazals (*ghazal*), not too far from the masterpieces of Persian classic poetry (Dašti, pp. 491-95), are among the most popular and the most appreciated verses of his period:

*“Dar piš-e bidardān čerā faryād bi hāšel konam
Saqi beda peymāna-i zān may ke bik^{vi}šam konad”*

(Why should I lament in vain amidst the sober and the wide-eyed,
O wine bearer, bring me a glass strong enough to lose myself)
(*Bārān-e šobḡāhi*, p. 38)

He also joined the ranks of many of his contemporaries—[Fereydun Tavallali](#) (1919-1985), Abu'l-Qāsem Ḥālat (1919-1992, q.v.), and Moḥammad 'Ali Afrāšta (1908-1959, q.v.)—who, albeit from different political backgrounds, delighted in composing humorous, burlesque and satirical poetry during the short-lived period of freedom of expression which followed the invasion of Iran by the Allied Forces and the subsequent abdication of Reza Shah in 1941.

His satirical poems, under such pen names as Zāḡča, Guša-gir, Ḥaq-gu, and Šāh-e pariyun, appeared in the weekly *Tehrān-e mošavvar* and, more significantly, in *Bābā Šamal* (q.v.), a weekly satirical periodical founded by Režā Ganja'i in April 1943. In one such poem, Mo'ayyeri exercises his wit in describing the election of women representatives to the Parliament, alluding throughout to the names of prominent male representatives, who, as the poem goes on to satirize, were mesmerized by the beauty of their newly-arrived counterparts (Dastḡayb, p. 37; see also Moḥammad Ebrāhim Bāstāni Pārizi, *Ḳatun-e Haft-Qal'a*, Tehran, 1977, p. 17). His talent for nuance, the art of ambiguity and the double entendre was also exercised, as held by Amiri Firuzkuhi, to a degree of perfection in both his humorous and serious verse, and indeed, on friend and foe alike.

His biting and considered verses, directed at Iranian collaborators during the occupation of Azarbaijan (q.v.) by the forces of the USSR, which reflect his penchant for patriotism, remain remarkably poetical. Some of these verses were set to music and aired by Radio Iran for several years to come:

*“To ey por gohar kāk-e Irānzamin
ke vālātari az sepehr-e barin*



*honar zenda az partow-e nām-e tost
jahān sarḳoṣ az jor'a-ye jām-e tost
bar o bum-e in molk pāyanda bād"*

(Oh, jeweled soil of Iran,
more prized than the sublime skies
art shines under the brightness of your name
the world, drunk with a sip of your cup
long live this land)
(*Bārān-e ṣobḡāhi*, pp. 369-70)

Rahi's appointment as the literary director of Radio Iran's musical program (see [GOLHĀ, BARNĀMA-YE](#)) in the later years of his life gave him the greatest professional satisfaction and was most in keeping with his artistic inclination. Rahi exhibited both artistic fervor and skill in composing lyrics to be set to music for the Golhā program that brought quality performances by the best performing artists to a vast audience. Some commentators have pointed out his debt to his predecessor 'Āref Qazvini (q.v.). As noted by a critic, however, the incongruous repetitions and breaks in flow at times encountered in 'Āref Qazvini's verses are absent from Rahi's work (Yusofi, pp. 510-11). His verses are recognized for their elegant and delicate language (Šafi'i Kadkani, p. 777), and for the highly informed coordination of lyrics and melody (Kāleqi, p. 250-51; Dašti, p. 495). Rahi's compositions, often exemplary, were emulated by many and played an instrumental role in extracting lyrical poetry from the worn out rut into which it had fallen (Pirniā, pp. 32-35).

Throughout his years with the Radio, Mo'ayyeri enjoyed the friendship and collaboration of such eminent composers and vocalists as Morteżā Maḡjubi (1900-1965; q.v.), Ruḡ-Allāh Kāleqi (1906-1965; q.v.), 'Ali Tajvidi (1919-2006), 'Abd-al-'Ali Vaziri (1887-1979; q.v.), and Ġolām-Ḥosayn Banān (1911-1986; q.v.). Rahi's poetical sensibilities, and his ability to fit words to music, combined with his deep understanding of Persian music made him the poet of choice for many great composers of his time (A selection of his verses that were set to music is recorded and published as *Yādbud-e Rahi: barnāma-ye 485 golhā-ye tāza*, n.d.). He had an extensive following, not only in Iran, but also in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where his cassettes were circulated hand to hand, including the following famous composition that began:

*"Hama šab nālam čon ney
ke qami dāram, ke qami dāram"*



(All night I weep, like the reed,
I bear a sadness, I bear a sadness).
(*Āzāda*, p. 278)

Mo'ayyeri has been described as a tall, well-groomed and attractive man, characteristics that were not lost on the opposite sex (Šahbāz, p. 25: Dastgāyb, p. 47). Much has been written of his romantic affairs. Moḥammad Hejāzī (Moṭī'-al-Dawla, 1901-1974; q.v.) who was distantly related and shared an office with him at the Ministry of Culture and Art, found inspiration for a number of his stories, in particular *Āyena* (Mirror, Tehran, 1937), in Mo'ayyeri's romances and romantic escapades (Farhād-Mo'tamed, p. 316; Dastgāyb, p. 36-37). The noted historian Moḥammad Ebrāhim Bāstāni Pārizi has also alluded to the love between Mo'ayyeri and Maryam Firuz (daughter of 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā Farmānfarmā, q.v.), for whom, Bāstāni Pārizi goes on to say, Mo'ayyeri composed some of his most celebrated *ghazals* (Bāstāni Pārizi, 1985, pp 431-50). This romance was short lived, however, as soon thereafter, Maryam Firuz met Nur-al-Din Kiyānuri, the prominent member, and sometime leader, of the Hezb-e Tudeh (Tudeh party; see [COMMUNISM iii](#)), the man she would eventually marry.

Rahi died of cancer the morning of November 14, 1968, and was buried in the Zahir-al-dawla Cemetery in Tehran. At the time of his death, Rahi was at the height of his fame, both in Iran and abroad. Just before his death, he was praised by Kalil-Allāh Kalili, the notable Afghan poet, in a long and eloquent Qaṣida:

*“Dar sepehr-e soḡan čō badr-e monir
ghazal tābnāk-e tost, Rahi”*
(In the heaven of words, your ghazals,
are like the shining moon, Rahi)
(*Sāya-ye 'omr*, p.182)

His loss received wide coverage in Iran and the Persian-speaking countries. A memorial service was held at the Sepahsālār Mosque, attended by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Prime Minister Amir 'Abbās Hoveyda (q.v.), Minister of Court Amir Assad-Allah 'Alam, and the political and social elite. He was remembered as “one of the most eminent poets of the period” (Yaḡmā'i, p. 518), whose life and death imitated his poetry (M.'A. Mo'ayyeri. pp. 524-28). Several poets wrote eulogies in his memory, including his old friend Amiri Firuzkuhi (*Yaḡmā*, 21/8, p. 525), Ra'di Ādarakṣi (*Negāh*, p. 449), and Aṣef Fekrat,



the noted contemporary Afghan poet (*Yağmā*, 21/8, p. 520).

Rahi's poems, songs, compositions, satire and humor have been brought together in a number of collections, of which *Sāya-ye 'omr* (Tehran, 1965) is the only collection edited under the supervision of Mo'ayyeri himself. The list of publications includes:

Āzāda (poetry collection), Tehran, 1969.

Bārān-e Şobhgāhi, Tehran, 1999

Divān-e kām-e Rahi, ed., Omid Majd, Tehran, 2005

Divān-e Rahi Mo'ayyeri, ed., Bahman Kālifā Banārvāni, Tehran, 2009

Kolliyāt-e Rahi, ed., Rezā Sajjādi, Tehran, 2001

Majmu'a-ye aš'ār, ed., Sa'id Qāne'i, Tehran, 2000

Rahāvārd-e Rahi, ed., Dāryuš Şabūr, Tehran 1996

Sāya-ye 'omr, Tehran, 1965

Tanzhā-ye Rahi, ed., Moḥammad-Bāqer Najafzāda Bārforuš, Tehran, 1997

Tanzhā-ye Rahi Mo'ayyeri, ed., Raḥim Čāvoši Akbari (Yasnā-ye Tabrizi), Tehran, 2003

Rahi also contributed to *Eṭṭelā'āt-e haftagi* and other periodicals, at times selecting from other poets' works, and describing their lives. He has also contributed articles on the poets who composed in Persian in the Indian subcontinent. His writings are published in two collections under the same title *Golhā-ye jāvidān* (Yusof Kān'ali, Tehran, 1984), and *Golhā-ye jāvidān* (Sayyed Ḥosayn Elhāmi, Tehran 1988).

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See also:

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Moḥammad Ḥassan (Rahi) Mo'ayyeri, "Towżih" *Yaḡmā*, 4/1, Farvardin 1330Š./1951, p. 46.

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