



TAVALLALI, FERAYDUN

TAVALLALI, Fereydun (b. Shiraz, 1919; d. Shiraz, 30 May 1985), noted poet and writer.

Tavallali's father, Jalāl Khan, was a descendant of the Tavallali clan from the 'Amala branch of Qašqā'i tribe whose family had migrated to Shiraz. He lost his mother when he was six years old. He attended Namāzi Primary School and Solṭāni Secondary School in Shiraz. Bahā' al-Din Pāzārgād, Moḥammad Javād Torbati, and Mehdi Ḥamidi, were among his teachers; while Rasul Parvizi, Moḥammad Bahmanbeygi, Moḥammad Bāheri, Mehdi Parhām, were among his friends and classmates. He graduated from Tehran University with a degree in archaeology in 1941, and was subsequently employed in the Notary Public Office of Shiraz. In 1943, he married a novice writer, Mahindoḡt Farbod (b.1930), the author of a collection of short stories, entitled *Sanjāq-e morvārid* (The Pearl Pin, 1959). They had three children: Nimā, Faribā and Rahā.

Tavallali started writing poetry and prose at a young age, and was involved with the period's politics of dissent from early on. Much of his early work displays the hallmarks of left-leaning thought, which had gained ground among the youth and intellectual communities of the period (see [COMMUNISM](#) ii, iii). During the initial decade that followed the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces in 1941, and the subsequent abdication of Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1925-1941), the Iranians enjoyed a rare and short-lived period of freedom of expression, which proved to be a strong stimulus to the world of arts and letters (Yarshater, 1984, p. 45), and had a powerful and lasting effect on Iran's



intelligentsia. In 1943, Tavallali and a group of his friends, including Ḥamidi Širāzi, Ja'far Abṭaḥi, Rasul Parvizi, Mehdi Parhām and Moḥammad Bāheri, established Anjoman-e āzādegān-e Fārs. It was dissolved, however, when the Tudeh (Tuda) Party opened its first branch in Shiraz in April 1944, and all its founding members (aside from Ḥamidi Širāzi) joined the Party (Abrahimian, p. 301; Emdād, 1985, p. 487).

It was during this period that Tavallali began experimenting with satirical pieces that were known and later published under the title of *al-Tafāšil*. In these pieces, he criticized the traditional social values and ridiculed such well-established political figures as Aḥmad Qavām and Sayyed Ziā' al-Din Ṭabāṭabā'i. *Al-Tafāšil*, reminiscent of the *maqāma* genre in classical Persian literature, was composed in a mixture of poetry and prose. The eloquent language of these satirical pieces, which were inspired by social discontent, found an eager audience and earned the praise of many, including Qavām and Ṭabāṭabā'i, who were subjected to Tavallali's poignant critiques, to the extent that they even helped to shield him against state censorship (Parhām, 1985, pp. 765-6). **Moḥammad-Taqi Bahār** (Malek-al-šo'arā', 1886-1951), the prominent poet and scholar, praised the skill exhibited in these pieces and commended Tavallali as a rising star in Iran's literary scene (Bahār, p. 869). In 1945 Bahār was appointed as the Minister of Culture and helped Tavallali secure a job in the archaeology department of the Ministry's office in Fars (Parhām, 2004, p. 35). A year later, Tavallali was assigned to oversee the excavations carried out in the Šuš region by Roman Ghirshman (1895-1979), the French archeologist and one of the pioneers of archeological research in Iran (Eskandari, pp. 52-66).

Tavallali was amongst the poets who participated in the First Iranian Writers Congress, a gathering with predominantly leftist sympathies, sponsored by the Perso-Soviet Society of Cultural Relations (Anjoman-e ravābeṭ-e farhangi-e Iran va Etteḥād-e Jamāhir-e Šowravi) in 1946. The Congress provided a forum for airing various opposing views and contributed significantly to the development of engagé literature in Iran, which attracted a large group of writers in later years (Ricks, pp. 8-25). The poem Tavallali recited in the Congress was entitled "Fardā-ye enqelāb" ("The Day After the Revolution"). It earned him immediate fame as a leftist poet.

In 1947, as the conflicting interests within the Tudeh Party's leadership unfolded, Ḳalil Maleki and a number of other staunch dissenters resigned from the Party. The separatists (*enše'ābiyun*), as they were labeled (Maleki, p.



122), included nine prominent figures, four of whom—Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad, Rasul Parvizi, Nāder Nāderpur, and Fereydun Tavallali— were poets or writers of eminence (Abrahimian, p. 311).

After leaving the Tudeh Party, Tavallali, became increasingly involved in the political movements that culminated in the nationalization of Iran’s oil industry, led by Moḥammad Moṣaddeq, who later became prime minister. After the fall of Moṣaddeq in 1953, Tavallali, whose residence was looted by his political opponents, was forced into a period of hiding, and subsequently fled to Tehran. Several years later in 1959, however, with the gradual ebbing of political turbulences he assumed the directorship of the Department of Archaeology of Fars.

Despite his education and career, it was always literature that most fascinated Tavallali (Sāmi, p. 845; Negahbān, pp. 243-6). Beginning his literary career in a time in which the nature and pace of change in Persian poetry were the subject of a heated debate, Tavallali joined a number of his contemporaries who tried to articulate a middle position between the traditionalists, who adhered to age-old rules of meter and rhyme of Persian poetry (see ‘ARUZ), and the modernists, who “not only dispensed with the necessity of rhyme and consistent meter, but also rejected the imagery of traditional poetry and departed noticeably from its mode of expression” (Yarshater, 1998, p. 31).

Although varied from one another in the degree to which they departed from the Persian classics, most of these modern-traditionalists— notable among them Majd-al-Din Mirfaḵrā’i (also known as [Golčīn Gilāni](#)), Parviz Nātel Ḳānlari and later, Hušang Ebtehāj (known as Sāya), Fereydun Tavallali, Nāder Nāderpur and Fereydun Moširi— acknowledged the significance of Nimā Yušij as the founder of modern poetic discourse in Iran. Well versed, albeit to different degrees, in classical Persian literature, and familiar with Western literature and literary modernism, they strove to demonstrate the capacity of modern Persian poetry to maintain imperative and perceptible connections with the classical tradition, and at the same time, to enlarge its capacity to incorporate images perceived as belonging to the modern world (Ḳānlari, 1986, p.1035; Karimi Hakkak, pp. 101-21). Since all of these poets were affiliated with the journal *Soḵan*, founded and edited by Parviz Nātel Ḳānlari, they were later known as the poets of the *Soḵan* School; a term coined by Nāder Nāderpur. The poets of *Soḵan* School, with Nāder Nāderpur as its most noted representative, were also known as the “New Romantics,” (Farzan, p. 342), or “New Classicists,” (Langerudi, p. 316; Nuri’alā, p. 147). The *Soḵan*



School of poetry was enthusiastically received by many and, at the same time, stirred harsh criticism. It was criticized as a reactionary movement that had impeded the fruition of modern Persian poetry (Barāhani, pp. 217-312; Hoquqi, p. 51), and was commended as a significant current in the history of Persian poetry (Dastgheyb, pp. 85-6; Šafi'i Kadkani, pp. 135-6).

At the first stage of his literary career, Tavallali was fascinated by some of Nimā's early poems, in particular "Afsāna" (Myth, 1921) and "Ey šab" (O, Night, 1922). His acquaintance with Nimā, through Rasul Parvizi (Tavallali, *Šegarf*, pp. 17-8), developed into a short-lived period of friendship between the two poets. Tavallali named his first daughter after Nimā, who had dedicated his poem "Kār-e šab-pā" to Tavalloi (Jannati 'Aṭā'i, p. 188). It should be noted, however, that Nimā's dedicatory note "Be Tavallali-e 'azizam" ("To my Dear Tavallali"; Jannati 'Aṭā'i, p. 412) was omitted in his *Collection of Poems*, published in 1992.

Despite his early intimate association with Nimā, Tavallali soon distanced himself from the new literary movement brought on by such poems of Nimā as "Gōrāb" (Raven), published for the first time in *Majalla-ye musiqi* (Journal of Music, 1939). In his introduction to his first collection of poetry, *Rahā*, Tavallali, though not explicitly mentioning Nimā's name, comments negatively on his school of poetry. "[This group of modernists] have forgotten all about Persian grammar and, by using such erroneous phrases as 'ruzān-aš zemestāni' (his days wintry) instead of 'ruzhā-ye zemestāni-aš' (his wintry days), complicate their novel ideas so much that they could not be understood unless explained and clarified by the poet himself" (Tavallali, *Šō'la-ye kabud*, p. 23).

In his elaboration on the essential characteristics of a good poem, Tavallali, although in favor of a studied breakaway from the traditional prosodic rules, emphasizes the harmony of rhythms and rhymes with the poem's content and spirit; its innovative similes and metaphors; its being devoid of obsolete rhythms, rhymes and rhetorical devices; its being open to new melodious phrases and the extant but forgotten words; and its precise description of emotions, scenes and events (Tavallali, *Šō'la-ye kabud*, pp. 23-30).

Tavallali's early poems, mostly romantic depictions of human desires and needs, benefit from his studied choice of descriptive compound imageries and his awareness of the music of the words. Although at times he speaks of "the cry of the people," "the uproar of the workers," and "the cheers of the



oppressed,” (Tavallali, *Šo’la-ye kabud*, p. 51) in his more successful poems such concepts as love, nostalgia and death prevail. The smooth blend of Persian lyricism and European romanticism in most of these poems, that often follow a storyline, and by which his poetry is distinguished, influenced many modern-traditionalist poets throughout the 1940s and 1950s, most notable among them Fereydun Moširi, Nāder Nāderpur, Sohrāb Sepehri, Siāvaš Kasrā’i, Nošrat Raḥmāni, and **Foruḡ Farroḡzād**. The opening lines of four of his poems in *šo’la-ye kabud* —“Maryam,” “Bāstān-šenās,” “Nā-āšenā-parast,” and “Kārun”— read as follows:

Dar nimahā-ye šāmgahān ān zamān ke māhzard o šekasta midamad az ʔarf-e kavarānestāda dar siyāhi-e šab maryam-e sepidārām o sar gerān

(In the midst of dusk, when the moon yellow and broken, rises from the East Half way through nightfall is white Salvia quiet and pensive, p. 54)

Dar žarfnā-ye kāk-e siah bāstān-šenāsdar jost-o-ju-ye maš’al-e tārik-e mordegāndar ārezu-ye maš’al-e garmi, be gur-e sardkākestar-e qorun-e kohan midahad be bād.

(Delving deep in the black soil, the archeologist in search of the dark torch of the dead Pining for a warm torch in the cold grave gives the ashes of ancient centuries to the wind, p. 67)

Balam ārām čon qu-yi sabokbālbe narmi bar sar-e Kārun hamiraftBe naḡalestān sāhel qorš-e korsid ze dāmān-e ofoq birun hamiraft.

(The boat, gently, like a graceful swan moved steadily on the Karun Into the palm grove on the shore the sun on the edge of the horizon sunk in, p. 85).

Although Tavallali, in this period of his literary career, often experiments with the classic forms of *mostazād*, a variant of the ghazal (*ḡazal*) or qasida, with an additional phrase repeating the same pattern as the main meter, and *mosammaʔ*, in which the couplet basis is abandoned and the stanza consists of a number of hemistiches with a rhyme that usually changes at a fixed point, most of his poems are in *čahār pāra*, a four line stanza. His polished and lyrical language in these poems earned the praise of many critics who commended him for achieving a distinct style in love poetry (Kānlari, p. 757; Yusofi, p. 613), and a poet whose relax experimentation with rhymes and rhythms spares his poems from the rigidity of Nimāic modern style (Zarrinkub, p. 242).



Moḥammad Bāheri and Rasul Parvizi, Tavallali's old friends in the Tudeh Party, were also the close friends of Asad-Allāh 'Alam, a confidant of Moḥammad Reżā Shah Pahlavi (r. 1941-1979), who occupied such key positions as minister of interior, prime minister, and later, Minister of Court for many years. The friendship earned them high positions in the government. Moḥammad Bāheri was appointed as the Minister of Justice, while Rasul Parvizi was first elected as a deputy in the parliament (*majles*), and then was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister. In 1965, when Amir Asad-Allāh 'Alam was appointed as the Dean of Pahlavi University in Shiraz, he assigned Tavallali to the advisory board of the university; a position he held till his retirement (Emdād, 1993, p. 487).

Tavallali's poems in this period, while at times implicitly critical of the Shah's policies and sprinkled with praise for those who fought against dictatorship (Tavallali, *Šo'la-ye kabud*, pp. 345, 417-21), are, for the most part, marked by the sorrows and disappointments of a self who is entangled in harsh criticism. The indelible print of betrayed hopes, although visible in some poems of the collection *Nāfa*, appears as the central motif in the poems he composes throughout these years:

Boro ey mard boro čon sag-e āvāra bemirke ḥayāt-e to be joz la'n-e kodāvand nabud.

(Go, O man, go and die like a stray dog for your life was naught but the curse of God; *Šo'la-ye kabud*, p. 141)

Čon bum-e par šekasta dar in 'eid-e bi omidbenšasta-am be daḡma-ye andouhbār-e k'viš.

(Like an owl with broken wings, in this hopeless feast I sit in my sorrowful cave; *Šo'la-ye kabud*, p. 181).

The macabre overtone and the frequency of words and images that in Tavallali's poetry revolve around death, soil, grave, and grave-digging, to mention a few among many, has led a critic to notice a profound relationship between his field of study and professional career as an archeologist, on the one hand, and his poetry, on the other (Yusofi, pp.608-14).

In this period of his life Tavallali shuns political engagements and turns to farming in a village he had inherited from his father (Kā'efi, p. 802). Getting closer and closer to 'Alam he praises him in such poetic appellations as the



“Sire of Idols,” and addresses him as the “Great Man” and the “Emir,” in his third collection of poetry, entitled *Puya* (pp. 3-5, 26, 112-115; see also ‘Alam, vol. 4, pp. 48-53; idem, vol. 5, pp. 218-271). Tavallali’s shift from communism in his early adolescence to supporting the political movements that led to the nationalization of oil industries in 1950s, and on to enjoying close ties with the Pahlavi court dignitaries in the last decades of his life, subjected him to harsh verbal and, to a lesser extent, written criticism (Sāḥeb al-Zamāni, pp. 491).

However, Tavallali composed some of his most celebrated poems in this period. Drawing on his earlier experimentations with literary techniques, in particular compound imageries, he returns to the genre of ghazal, a traditionally apt mode for depiction of love, description of nature, and remembrance of the bygone joyful days of life:

Be bāḡ-e ḡamzada ātaš gereft barg-e čenārān

kalāḡ-e ḡasta ḡabar midahad ze rizeš-e bārān

ḡariv-e šivan-e zāḡān-e del-fesorda bar-āmad

be jā-ye naḡma-ye širin-e qomriān o hazārān

marā be dāman-e pā’iz-e dāḡ-dida rahā kon

ke mast-e bāda-ye margam konad čo bāda gosārān

(In the sorrow-stricken garden, the maple leaf is on fire
The tired crow heralds the coming rain.
The cries of the down hearted ravens have mounted instead
of the sweet song of doves and nightingales
Release me to the lap of the mourning
Fall so that it makes me drunk on the wine of death) (*Šo’la-ye kabud*, pp. 245-7).

Tavallali develops an increasingly critical approach toward modernist poetry in these years (Tavallali, *Šegarf*, pp. 34, 73, 218; Idem, *Šo’la-ye kabud*, pp. 425-8), and even describes the poetry of Nimā Yušij as a half-formed fetus (*jenin-e nim-band*, *ibid.*, p. 320). In contrast to his earlier poems, this period of Tavallali’s poetry is characterized by his sensual expressionism and his description of physical love bordering on erotica. The sexual overtone of the *Puya* collection, described by a commentator with psychoanalytic bent as ‘Puyaesque sexual anarchism,’ (Sāḥeb al-Zamāni, pp. 499-506), earned Tavallali harsh criticism. In his later poems, however, sensuality and sexual



aspirations gradually faded away, and were substituted by a fascination for opium.

Tavallali' life and literary career have journeyed and changed shape in parallel with the dominant social, political, and literary trends of the mid decades of the 20th century Iran. His poetry, in which personal experiences are inseparably interwoven with political and historical events, exhibits the major characteristics of a period of transition in Iran's modern literature. The most enthusiastic admirers of his poems, however, were the traditionalists and modern-traditionalists (Yusofi, p. 612-15). Little is known regarding his poems from 1980 until his death in 1985.

Tavallali was in poor health throughout the last decade of his life and died of a heart failure. He was buried next to his father in Hāfeziya (Šāhāni, p. 844). One year after his death, his wife established a literary center in their residence, calling it Anjoman-e Fereydun (Emdād, 1993). Tavallali was an amateur player of *tār*, *setār*, and piano (Parhām, 1985, p. 763).

His loss was widely reflected upon in the literary circles of the period. As commented by Kānlari, with the "silence of this great man of letters, modern Persian poetry has lost one of its pillars." (Kānlari, 1986, p. 757).

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