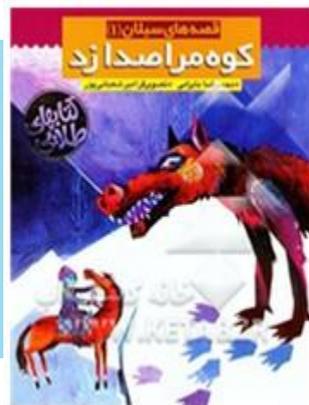


The Mountain Called Me



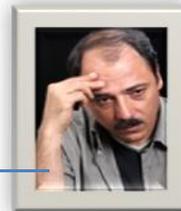
Literary & Translation Agency

Author: MohammadReza Bayrami
Publisher: Soore-ye Mehr Publications
Year of Publication: 12011/3rd Edition
No. of Pages: 118
Size: 21×14

- **Sample English text is available**

- ▣ *Right Sold: Iran (Soore-ye Mehr)-Amrica (Mazda Publications)- Swiss*
- ▣ *The book was honored in Iranian literary festivals,won Bern Golden Bear Prize in Swiss.*

MohammadReza Bayrami



MohammadReza Bayrami(1957-Ardabil) is one of the most successful Iranian authors of memoirs, fiction and war novels for young adults and adults. He has written more or less 40 novels, story collections and novelettes for children, teenagers and adults. He has always been a mainstream Iranian figure and has won tens of national awards - including IRI Year Book- and two international awards, namely Most Valuable Bear and Blue Glass wearied snake from Switzerland. He has been a nominee for Swedish Astrid Lindgren Award for two rounds. The Children & Teenagers Authors' Association in Iran has selected him as one of five top authors of the country. Some of his books have been translated into German, English and Arabic and published in some countries. Feelings, images and imagination in the works of Bayrami enjoy special tenderness and honest that can be visualized in the mind of the reader. His works involve beautiful fantasies that often consisting the union of art and great image. If this images and rich imagination are formed in the significant structure, then they take special beauty. His works have received several prestigious literary awards to date.

Some of his Works:

- 1- *'The Last 7 Days'* (literary reminiscence), ,Soore-ye Mehr Publications,1390.
- 2- *'The Hanging Bridge'*.(novel),Ofoq Publications,2002.
- 3- *'Eagles of the 60's hill'* (novel), Soore-ye Mehr Publications, 2009.
- 4- *'Mountain called me'* (novel), Soore-ye Mehr Publications, 1392.

- 5- *'On the edge'*, (novel), Soore-ye Mehr Publications, 2009.
- 6- *'In the Summer-quarters'* (trilogy of Sabalan stories)
- 7- *'Smoke behind the Hill'*, Ghadyani publications, 1396.
- 8- *'Shadow of a Cricket'*, Soore-ye Mehr Publications, 1398.
- 9- *'The Myth of Dragon and Water'* (novel), Ghadyani publications, 1393.
- 10- *'Naneh Mahtab's Kind bird'* (novel), Souroosh Publications, 1988

Awards:

- *'The Mountain Called Me'* has bagged several literary awards such as 'Golden Bear' Award, 'Blue Cobra' Award and 'Switzerland Book of the Year' Award.

- *'Hello Stone'* has received an Honorary Diploma from the Best Book Design awards in Germany, an international award competition.

- His 7 books have been honored in Iranian literary festivals such as Ghani poor, Anjoman-e Ghalam, Kanoom. Ketab-e sal..... during recent years.

About the book:

This book is the story of a young boy named “Jalal”. In winter and in the mountainous and snow-covered village of Sabalan heights, Jalal’s father dies following a hard illness. Since his family is in poor financial conditions, he takes the responsibility of them. He had to grown-up before his time and helps his family. But he knows that all his efforts are no use. While snow-sweeping, he becomes sick and also cuts his hand when shattering the fodders. So his character and potential has been stabilized in this way. This book is the first volume of “Sabalan Stories Collection “which has received many domestic and foreign awards.

Expert of the Book:

As we come out of the valley, Qashoqa snorts. I raise my head and see the village: a gray spot that looks black next to the endless white snow lying happily on both sides of the river. This is not the first time I've come to Vargehsaran, but it is the first time I've come at this time of year. Maybe that's why the village looks completely different to me. The village looks like a person crouched up from the cold weather with his legs to his belly, looking very small. The houses seem to have shrunk. The alleyways seem narrower.

I let Qashoqa's reins loose on the saddle and rub my hands together; they are numb from the cold. Qashoqa turns toward a row of bare leafless poplar trees. As we pass by the trees, I can hear cawing. I raise my head. A lone black crow is sitting on a branch, looking at me. In the sky above it the clouds are coming together, expanding, spreading out, and gradually coming down. The crow takes off flying. I follow it automatically as far as I can see it. I can tell from the way it flies that the weather will soon turn bad. I tug on Qashoqa's reins, forcing him to go faster. We come out of the cane field. I can hear the sound of the waterfall at the mill. The mill is downstream from the village. The water from the river pours from some height on the large old wheel and sets it in motion, and then it goes and turns and passes below the cane field. There is a crowd in front of the mill. Some men from the surrounding villages have come and tied their animals to the trees by the river and are sitting there talking, smoking cigarettes, and waiting their turn.

Qashoqa crosses the bridge and turns in front of the mill. A donkey that is watching us starts braying, drawing the men's eyes toward us. They stop talking and gaze at

one another. Their looks are intense and bothersome. I want to pass them as quickly as I can. With my heels I kick Qashoqa's side. He speeds up and passes rapidly in front of the men and turns their eyes.

"Now which one is Doc's house?"

Mama said the house was next to the river, the gate opens toward it, and the upstairs is whitewashed and can be seen from a distance. But I can't see it and I don't know what to do. I decide to ask someone. I take a look around. On the other side of the river, a man is chopping hay on a roof and a little boy is dropping the chopped hay into a storage room through a hole in the roof. A red rooster is standing motionless at the edge of the roof. Suddenly I feel that two eyes are looking at me from behind a window. I turn my head in that direction to ask where Doc's house is, but the woman behind the window turns away. I say nothing... We pass under the window. I have a bad feeling. I suddenly realize that I'm a stranger here and I can't just stop anyone I want to and ask a question.

As we move slowly, all of a sudden something like thunder bursts above our heads. I'm startled. Qashoqa neighs and rises on his legs. As he rises, I get swung and in order not to fall I grab the saddle horn. At the same time I see a large black dog bending over us from the roof, barking at us. In excitement, it wags its tail and growls as if we have been enemies for a hundred years. I say to myself, "I hope it doesn't go crazy and jump on my head!"

Qashoqa has calmed down. I nudge him on the side with my knee and he starts walking. I keep my eyes on the dog. He is so close to my head that I feel the warmth of his breath on my face and see the steam coming from his mouth.

We are moving forward and the dog is following us from roof to roof, scratching the surface of the mud and straw roofs. I say to myself, "I wish I had a stick and could come face to face with you somewhere to see whether you're really what you pretend to be or you're just full of hot air."

Its growling is driving me mad, when suddenly a head appears on one of the roofs and in the blink of an eye the dog gets hit on the chest with a large stone.

"Get away, you stupid dog; get lost!"

The dog howls in pain and almost topples off the roof. Then it stops its threatening noises, tucks its tail between its legs, and runs back howling in the same direction it came from. Then I hear the laughter of the one who threw the stone, and just then I can see his face clearly. It's a boy about my own age who is laughing deviously. Obviously he enjoyed throwing the stone. When he sees me, he comes toward me.

"I gave him what was coming to him, didn't I?"

"What can I say?"

Apparently he just noticed that I'm a stranger. He asks, "Where do you come from?"

"From the village on the other side."

"Whose house are you going to?"

"Doc Jahangir's; but I don't know where it is."

"What do you want at Doc's house?"

"I want to take him to our village."

"Is someone sick?"

"Yes."

"May God grant him a speedy recovery?"

"Bless you!"

"Come on, I'll show you."

He swings from the beam of the roof and jumps down into the alleyway. I follow him. When we turn around the corner, he stops and says, "There it is, Doc's house."

I recognize the house. It is just as my mother said, a large house with a blue gate and whitewashed upstairs with closed windows that can be seen from over the wall of the courtyard.

In front of the house, I hop off the horse and sink up to my ankles in mud. Melted snow washes away the mud and carries it to the river. Doc's house smells stale; the gate doors are full of silver-colored ornamental pegs. I touch the door knocker. The door knocker is a lion's head with its mouth open, as if roaring, but it doesn't make a sound. When I knock with it, a dog barks from behind the door, and I say to myself, "This is a lion that makes the sound of a dog!"

A little later the door opens and a girl somewhat older than Sadaf sticks her head out and looks at me.

"What do you want?"

The dog is restless and claws at the back of the gate wanting to get to me. The girl turns around, calms the dog down, and looks at me again. I ask, "Isn't this Doc Jahangir's house?"

"Yes."

"Is your father home?"

"You mean my grandfather." She nods, turns around, and looks at the upstairs. "Wait here a minute!"

Without closing the gate, she walks through the courtyard and disappears in the staircase going upstairs. I look around the courtyard. The snow has been shoveled off carefully and the chickens and roosters are pecking in the dung that covers the ground. The dog is sitting and gazing by the wall of the upstairs building. Above his head the sparrows have nested in the ceiling beams, chirping, and keep going in and out of their nests. From a hole in the roof on the right side of the upstairs, black smoke spirals upward and carries with it the smell of bread.

I rub the side of Qashoqa. "You're not tired, are you?"

A window upstairs opens with a cracking sound. I raise my head. A man with an old cloak on his shoulders looks at me through the glass window. I greet him with a

nod. He nods back, turns his head, and his lips move. Before long the same girl comes to the door.

"Grandpa says to come in."

I turn around and look at Qashoqa.

"My horse..., what should I do with my horse?"

She says, "Well, bring him in as well." She opens one gate door all the way and holds it. I take Qashoqa's reins and pull him inside. Qashoqa hits the gate and the latch makes a sound. It doesn't sound like a dog any more. The hens and roosters behind the gate move away when they hear the sound, and the dog stands up. I slow down. The girl says, "Don't be afraid! He won't bother you."

"Where should I tie my horse?"

She points to a door on the other side of the courtyard. "Take him and tie him to the latch of the stable door."

I take the horse and tie him there. Next to the room is a staircase. I take my boots off right there and walk upstairs. The stairs lead into a small dark vestibule on the other side of which are still more stairs, and then a door through the crack of which light can be seen. I stop for a moment in order for my eyes to adjust to the dark. The girl passes by me and opens the door. The smell of decaying, termite-infested wooden beams fills my nose.

"Hello."

Sitting next to the heater on a sheepskin, Doc responds to my greeting. He is a thin man with a drawn face and eyes that seem to look at you from somewhere far away.

"Come, sit-down! Why are you standing?"

I reply, "I'm fine."

He says, "If you've come to take me, it will take some time for me to get ready. You're not going to stand all this time on your feet, are you?"

I move forward and sit by the window. He says, "Heating this place up in the winter is a real chore, but whenever the women start making smoke, I have to run away. Here in winter there is no difference between people and chickens."

I look around the room. In a niche is a brass samovar and a tray of the kind Mama calls Warsaw silver and a nice looking water pipe along with a couple of old dusty books. Next to the books is a jar of alcohol with a coiled garden snake with an open mouth staring out through the glass.

Doc turns to the door. "Tea..., bring a glass of tea!"

I am about to say that I don't want tea, but then I think that maybe he wanted it for himself and I say nothing. He says, "Well, did say you have someone who's sick?"

Even though I have not said anything yet, I say, "Yes, my Papa..."

"Who is your Papa?"

"Mash Heydar."

"Which Mash Heydar?"

"The one whose house is behind Dadeh Kishi's mill, next to Mash Eshaq's orchard."

His face lights up.

"Oh yes, now I know. I know your father. We have broken bread together. Mash Eshaq is an old friend of mine. You're related, aren't you? Isn't he your uncle?"

"Yes. He's my father's stepbrother."

"Is that so? Then you must be the son of Mash Heydar. What did you say is wrong with my acquaintance?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't know. That is, no one knows."

He squints and says, "How is that?"

I say, "Well, to tell you the truth, he's been like that for a long time. That is, since spring. But so far none of the medicines and treatments has done any good. And every day someone prescribes something, but it doesn't do any good. Early on his condition wasn't too bad, he only said that he had a stomachache and once in awhile he vomited; but recently he's gotten worse."

The door opens and the same girl comes in with a tray of tea. Doc takes the tray. The girl brings the sugar bowl from the niche. Doc places one glass of tea in front of me and pulls the tray towards him.

"What did you say his condition is like recently?"

I reply, "He can't eat anything. Whatever he eats he throws up right away. He can't keep anything down."

"How long has he been like that?"

"About a month."

He raises his voice. "And you haven't had him treated yet?"

I say, "No, Mama has just given him some herbal medicine a couple of times."

He turns to the girl. "Go fetch me my woolen socks. Tell them I'm going to see a patient."

The girl goes out. Doc takes his sheepskin hat from the nail on the wall and begins to shake off the dust.

"This year we have to get through a very bad winter. Still no more than two or three days have passed since winter began and it's so cold. God only knows how cold it will be during the winter solstice."

I say, "Yes, it's very cold," and stare at the flames in the heater. Dried cow dung crackles as it burns in the heater.

The girl returns with Doc's colorful woolen socks. Doc takes the socks, puts one on, and says, "What did you say was your father's condition now? Is he on his feet?"

I answer, "No, he's in bed. When he gets up, he gets dizzy. He's very weak."

"And he's probably lost a lot of weight."

"A lot. Only in his belly he hasn't lost it. "

He looks at me surprised. "He hasn't lost it in his belly?"

I say, "Or maybe it's swollen."

He starts wrapping the string of his stock around his leg. "Your tea is getting cold."

I pick up the glass of tea and drink it slowly. I don't enjoy it at all. I've always liked to slurp my tea, but Mama says that it's not polite and I shouldn't drink tea like that in front of others.

"Is it yours?"

I raise my head and look. Doc is looking at the corner of the courtyard. I say, "Yes."

"Is it easy-going?"

"Not bad."

"I don't have a horse; you know that."

I say yes for no reason.

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