

## The History of Education in Old Tabriz City and its Philosophy in the Qajar Era (from the Maktab to formation of the new schools)

Mehri Basnas 

Assistant Professor, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran. E-mail: [m.basnas@tabrizu.ac.ir](mailto:m.basnas@tabrizu.ac.ir)

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### ABSTRACT

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Education in the Qajar era had been considered in Iran, especially in Tabriz. Most kind people tried to help scientific development and performed many educational and cultural efforts. The establishment of printing, translation skills, publishing the newspapers, and new schools were the first efforts that had been made in Tabriz. Education was in maktab forms until Nasereldin Shah and had many limitations, but there were more than 100 maktab in Tabriz; most of the people were poor, the number of pupils was a few, and the lessons were religious. The classes in maktab were held in houses and mosques. Every maktab had characteristics. The methods of teaching were not equal. The teachers in maktab had some notable qualifications. The maktab in that period had many problems. The curriculum in maktab involved Quranic instructions, Arabic grammar and some religious passages. In that period, some new schools were established by Iranian Muslims, such as Roshdieh, Mozafari, Loghmanieh, Mellieh, Kamal and Sanaye Mostazrafe.

#### Keywords:

philosophy, new schools,  
Maktab, Qajar, Tabriz, history.

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## **Introduction**

Education is one of the most critical factors in society and human beings that shows his/her interaction with the environment, and it transfers from one generation to the other by education. The history of humanity begins with education, and man learned knowledge in several ways from the beginning of creation because he knew that he could solve many problems through it.

In Iran, education was performed traditionally until the middle of Hejira's 13th century. There was not any organisation just for education.

Herodotus, a Greek historian, says; Education had been allocated for Maji and Zoroastrian priests, and their centre was in Azerbaijan. It can be said that the oldest Iran higher institutions were in Azerbaijan, and Maji had been sent to other places after passing the educational courses. The existence of the Azargoshnasb fire temple confirms this issue.

Hence, schools in Iran continued in the form of Maktab; in this case, in every district, one person established one place as a maktab gathered some pupils, and began to teach them by his method. His method depended on how he learned. The students sat on the floor and imitated their teacher. Most of the lessons were religious, and most schools specialised for boys. It shows that sending the girls to school was not good, and the parents preferred them to stay home and help their mothers. The improvement of these Maktab was not coordinated with the improvement of science and technology.

Because Iran does not fall behind foreign countries, especially its neighbours, some cultural movements have been done, such as: sending some students abroad to observe their transformations and their acquaintance with foreign languages and opening foreign schools in Iran that had impacts in forming new schools in Iran.

In this paper, we will discuss the formation of new schools in Tabriz because the school is the place of learning knowledge and science. It is a phenomenon that has roots in the history of countries, and it has been for long centuries, such as Academy.

Tabriz is one of the most important and influential cities in Iran now, and the people of this district try a lot to educate their children and provide excellent services to society.

In Iran, the foreign missionaries tried to open some schools, and the Iran government confirmed them, and they tried to come nearer to the governors to propagandise their religion. They chose Tabriz because, at that time, the crown prince was living and educating in Tabriz.

## **Background Research**

In this paper, many books and articles have been studied. However, an expanded and comprehensive subject had not been found and nearly had pointed briefly to some schools in Tabriz like Roshdieh, Zahirieh, Akbarieh, Toomanian, etc. So that the writer of this article tried to find more information from the book's pages to introduce a complete recognition of education in Tabriz, so I used books about historical Tabriz schools and higher education centres in Tabriz, which resulted in dedicated to you.

### **Tabriz political and social situations in Qajar era**

Qajar tribe resided in Damascus during the Mongol invasion, and Amir Teimoor Goorkani brought them to Iran, and some were settled in other places. Agha Mohammad Khan could govern after 16 years of invasion, which lasted for 129 years. His government coincided with significant industrial and technical translations in European countries, so he called himself the successor of the Safavid Empire and introduced himself as the leader of the Shiism religion. He chose Haj Ebrahim Khan Kalantar as his grand vizier.

Agha Mohammad Khan did not have a particular service, but he prevented some titles, rubrics and exaggeration in letters (Safavi, 2004: 36). He was killed after two years, and Baba Khan, his nephew, became his successor and was crowned with the Fath Ali Shah title from 1212 to 1250 H. After his death, Mohammad Mirza became the king of Iran; he went from Tabriz to Tehran and was crowned (Shamim, 1996: 159). He chose Mirza Abolghasem Farahani as his grand vizier, but by the intrigue of his opponents, his killing order was signed, and Haj Mirza Aghasi was appointed instead of him (Shamim, 1996: 129). Mohammad Shah died of gout, and Naseredin Shah came from Tabriz to Tehran with the protection of Amir Kabir. He was crowned in 1264 H, chose Amir Kabir as his grand vizier, and ruled for about 50 years, and finally, Mirza Reza Kermani killed him in Abdolazim Shrine, and Mozafaredin Mirza was crowned when he was 44. He put a good memory of himself in history because of the donation of the constitution order, because we can say that it prepared the public and governmental education. Every Iranian could educate by approving the constitutional law (Zamiri, 1992: 127). He died ten years after signing the constitutional law, and Mohammad Ali Mirza became his successor after his death. Because of the opposition between Shah and Majlis, Majlis was bombarded, and after this, the people of Tabriz raised and Sattar Khan and Bagher Khan organised an association to return the national government and advertised that they would attack Tehran; therefore, the king became a refugee in Russia embassy and his child, Ahmad Mirza became Shah, he travelled three times to Europe during his monarchy. However, in 1343 H, the members of parliament dethroned him, and Reza Khan started a new monarchy.

### **Tabriz cultural and educational situations in Qajar era**

Chardonay writes in his travel account about Tabriz:

Iranian call this city “Tabriz” and Europeans according to local literally “Tavriz” and concerning greatness, crowd, wealth and commerce is the first city in Iran (Chardonay, 1995, Vol. 2: 487).

Modern education in the Qajar era began in Iran and was supported by compassionate people. The people of Iran, especially Azerbaijan and Tabriz, had paid much attention to culture and education. Higher education in Azerbaijan in the Ilkhanid era was famous, and Tabriz was one of the most famous scientific poles in the world (Nasiri, 1992: 14). Tabriz governor was titled “Biglar Beigi” means the great of greats (Chardonay, 1995, Vol. 2: 487). In the last century, Tabriz was one of Iran's most important cities and even in the world.

“Tabriz Darolfonun School” was counted as a governmental and higher school after old religious schools, and its results were the doctors and educated scholars dedicated to the world.

From last till now, Iranian scholars have been essential in creating philosophy and education. In the middle of the 13th century, great attention was paid to the new culture and education in Azerbaijan by Mirza Isa and his son Mirza Abolghasem. The most important cultural works in the Qajar era were:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| a) Maktabs         | b) Old schools                                   |
| c) New schools     | d) Religious minorities Schools                  |
| e) Foreign schools | f) Press   |
| g) Translation     | h) Newspapers                                    |
| i) Art and culture | J) Dispatching the students to foreign countries |

Since the main point of this paper is about Maktabs and Schools, but is necessary to point briefly to some of the artistic works in the Qajar era.

### Press

The first time the printing industry was imported to Iran was in 1199 H, but there is no available rumour. In 1227 H, a livid press was established in Tabriz and published “Fathname”. Another press was stony in Tabriz in 1250 H, and its first publishing was Quran.

In 1240 H Abbas Mirza, regent, sent Mirza Jafar Tabrizi to Moscow to learn printing techniques, but it is not specified why both stony press machines were set up in Tabriz (Niknam, 1995: 325).

The first picture printing was set up in Tabriz, and its first book was “Leili va Majnoon”, and Fozuli Baghdadi’s book (Divane Torke) was published in Tabriz in 1264 H (Niknam, 1995: 324).

### Translation

In 1228 H, James Camel, an English teacher in Azerbaijan, translated “the history of Alexander” from English to Persian, and it may be the first book which was translated from European languages to Persian (Arianpour, 1993, Vol 1: 259).

### Newspapers

In 1253 H, in the Fathali Shah era, when Mirza Saleh Shirazi had been sent to Europe to educate, after coming back, he published a newspaper with the tile “Kagaze Akhbar” or “Gazet”, and its English equivalent meaning was “newspaper”. The most important newspapers published in Tabriz were:

1. Mellati Newspaper: in 1275 H
2. Alhadid Newspaper: in 1323 H by Seyed Hossein Khan
3. Ehtiaj Newspaper: in 1316 H by Mirza Aligholi Sarraf (Niknam, 1995: 314)
4. Adab Newspaper: in 1316 H (stony printing)
5. Kamal Newspaper: in 1316 H by Mirza Hossein Khan Tabib Zadegan
6. Azerbaijan Newspaper: in 1325 H by Haj Mirza Agha Bolouri.

7. Mojahed Newspaper; in 1325 H by Seyyed Mohammad Abu Zia.
8. Shafagh Newspaper: in 1328 H by Haj Agha Reza Zadeh (Doctor Shafagh)
9. Tajadod Newspaper: in 1335 H by Abolghasem Fiuzat, Taghi Rafat and Sheikh Mohammad Khiabani. (Arianpur, 1993: 224)

### **Maktabs in Tabriz**

Until the Naseredin Shah era, the school had not been in Iran like today. The government did not know its responsibility to engage in educational affairs; therefore, parents sent their children to Maktabs to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. There was no organised education in Iran (Navaei, 1998: 35).

In every Parish, there were some Maktabs, and there the students repeated the lesson with a loud voice after the teacher, and if they were noiseless, their teacher punished them with his twig. Wealthy families did not send their children to these Maktabs, and they hired a teacher to teach them at home, and their children did not go out of home except for hunting and shooting before 18 or 20 (Ravandi, 1994: 122).

### **The locality of Maktabs**

The locality of Maktabs was a shop or large room in lanes, houses or mosques where Molla or a man teacher and Mollabaji or a woman teacher, handled them and began to teach. In each maktab, there was a mat, an old coarse carpet or a felt, a temporary table and a small mattress which the teacher sat on and put some black cherry tree twigs or jujube on the ground near his table and a bastinado instrument by the room. The students' carpets were mats, old rugs, felt, short-napped or gunny, which were brought from their houses.

### **The Characteristics of Maktabs**

1. The amount of maktabs and teachers was small, and according to the economic situation, most families could not send their children to maktabs.
2. Parents sent their children to any maktabs that they tended.
3. Every maktab had a kind of educational system, and its curriculum did not like today and depended on the teachers' knowledge.
4. The government did not have any obligation to educate in maktabs, so the government did not have any supervision over the maktabs.
5. The high city clergy members had direct interference on this issue.
6. Age, season and duration of education did not have criteria. The season of education depended on the student's strengths.

### **Instruction Course**

The period of education in maktabs was 5 or 6 years and the pupils began learning 5 or 6 years ago and until 10 or 11 years old, they memorised either all or part of the Quran (Magazine, 1959: 51).

Some of the pupils began their instruction when they were ten years old. The philosophy of maktab was the ability to read and write; according to this issue, the pupil can begin his/her instruction. For learning, no time is late, and no factor cannot deprive the boy/girl of instruction (Shariati, No date, 2).

Maktab was closed on Thursdays, and Fridays, festivals at the end of the fasting month and feast of sacrifice. The pupil returned home for lunch or ate in maktab and afternoon praying; his/her classes continued to the evening.

### Instruction Rule

The students began their lesson with “Bismillah...” and “Hoval Fatah ol Alin”, then reviewed the alphabet that the teacher read them, and the pupils repeated them with a loud voice; after that, the lessons knew the sounds, writing the letters, the mark put over a letter to indicate that it is to be pronounced, nunnation, word and sentence. The day was spent like this in maktab. After these issues, Abjad's letters were taught. In this method, the letters were taught by numbers, such as Ali equals 110 in Abjad letters, A is 70, I is 30, and I am 10 (Kumar Singh, 1992: 69).

### Curriculum

In maktab, some lessons been taught, like Quranic instructions, Arabic grammar, religious passages, and other lessons such as: “Moosh and Gorbeh” from Obeid Zakani, Golestan from Saedi, Hafez, Jame Abbasi, Abvabul Jonan, Nader History, Mojam history, Nan o Halva from Sheikh Bahaie, Pandnameh from Attar and Herlyat Mottagin from Molla Mohammad Bagher Majlesi (Sarmad, 1993: 96).

### Educational instruments

The educational instruments were an inkpot, pen and paper. Reed pen and paper were the main tools in maktab.

### The Method of Education

The teacher first read a verse from Quran or other subjects, then the students repeated them over and over until the pupils memorised it and then other verses or subjects; and at the end, what have written on the board was washed with pure water and poured into a clean place.

### Punishment in Maktab

Punishment and penalty have been done by male maktabdars (Mirza, Molla, and Akhund) and female maktabdars (Molla Baji, Mirza Khanoom, and Mirza Baji) who undertook the educational affairs. Some believed children's punishment must be advised, and others believed in bodily punishment. So punishment was divided into two parts:

A) **Moral punishment:** the teacher showed his anger state, advice, reproach, and stern reprimand, and if he failed, he had punished bodily.

B) **Bodily punishment:** Bodily punishment was done differently: there were two long and short

sticks near the teacher. Short stick for the student sitting near the teacher and long for the apart student. The teacher gave the bastinado the students 'pelmas with a black cherry stick. They were putting the pencil between the students' fingers. The teacher persuaded the students to stand in the sunshine and look at the sun. The teacher slapped the nape of the students' necks. The teacher put tiny sand under the auricle and pressed it or sent the delinquent student to the dungeon (Ravandi, 1994: 125).

### **Maktab Teachers' Qualifications**

The people prescribed the following qualifications for the teachers:

1. The teacher must teach and educate for the sake of God and not greed for property and position.
2. He must try to teach religious ceremonies and remove superstitions.
3. The teacher must not do cupping and tanning in his free time.
4. The teacher has to be continent in his clothes, food and residence.
5. The teacher does not interfere in governors' and kings' affairs.
6. His body and his clothes should be clean, and his nails should be pared.
7. He should favour benefiting sciences.
8. He should teach if he has the capacity and competence to teach.
9. He should not go to the students' houses, although he has a great position
10. He should love his students and look after them.
11. He should excuse his students' faults and guilt.
12. He should encounter his students with an open face.
13. If somebody asks him a question and does not know the answer, he should say I do not know.
14. He should know the student's level of understanding and behave according to it.
15. He should not teach if he is sick, tired, unhappy, hungry or angry.
16. He should choose a competent and polite assistant (Khalife) (Magazine, 1959: 53).

### **Maktab Problems**

Maktab had many different problems, and the most important of them were:

1. Maktab was open for six months and closed for six months too.
2. The beginning of the classes was Arabic, and obliged the students to learn by rote.
3. The number of students was small, and the number of educated persons before the prevalence of new education was 2 percent.
4. The number of students and teachers became less at high levels.
5. Parents managed maktab, and the people and government did not help.
6. This kind of maktab education was not coordinated with the transformation of Iran and the world.
7. According to their parents' mentality, a few girls went to maktab (Magazine, 1959: 53).

### New Schools in Tabriz

The middle of Hejira's 13th century coincided with Iran's political, cultural, social and economic transformation. One of them was an adaption of new education from Europe, and the governor's and kings' efforts in Iran in developing and expanding this affair caused to establishment "Darolfonun" school. After that, the other schools opened in many cities, especially in Tabriz, because Tabriz was one of the most important cities in Iran that had excellent and topic experiences in opening and establishing schools before the constitutional revolution. It was natural to be the first to open schools after the constitutional revolution; some of these schools were so good and important that they were the best schools then. They improved so that those schools could help with festivals, meetings and conferences.

Augen Boreh, a French priest, opened the second school in Tabriz; he wanted to open a Darolfonun that Iranians from every nation and religion to make acquainted with new sciences and the French language. Mohammad Shah supported him, and Mahd Olia Naser edin Shah's mother sent him to his school to learn (Noruzi, 1969: 34).

In this part, I want to name some schools whose founders were from Iran:

#### Roshdieh School

Haj Mirza Hassan Tabrizi (Roshdieh), Akhund Molla Mehdi Tabrizi's son and his mother Sara (Sadegh Khan Shaghaghi's son) was in Tabriz in 1267 H. when he was five years old; he went to maktab. At twenty-second age, he became Imam of Moslem prayer in one mosque in Tabriz. When he was 31, he entered the teacher training centre in Beirut and studied for about two years; after that, he thought of establishing a school. He came to Iran in 1300 H, and the circumstances in Iran were not suitable for opening the school, so he left for Yerevan and opened the first Roshdieh school with Haj Akhund's help for Muslim students in Caucasia with vocal alphabet principles. This school was open for four years. When he returned to Iran, he tried to open a school several times. He wrote the "Vatan Dili" book in Turkish and successfully taught reading and writing in 60 days (Ajudani, 2005: 261).

Roshdieh knows comprehension is more important than memorising by rote, and sometimes he asks some questions to gain confidence from the student's level of knowledge. He also tried to teach the teachers (Kooshafar, 2003: 224).

His prosperity with this method threatened traditional teachers and maktabas, so they disagreed with him, and his school was dissolved. One of his supporters was Mozafareldin Mirza, and his best defender in Tabriz was Mirza Ali Khan Aminoldoleh, the Tabriz governor. He wanted him to open a primary school in Sheshgilan in Haj Agha Bozorgi's house (Sardarinia, 2003: 41).

Hassan Ali Khan Amirnezam Garousi (Azerbaijan governor) went from Tehran to Tabriz because some of Tabriz's learned men complained about Roshdieh School. Amirnezam met Roshdieh in Tabriz. He argued with him about his methodology and philosophy in teaching and asked some questions about some like holies; at last, he was satisfied with his answers and told



him:

It is your right; we should learn from you, go and manage your school, and God is your support (Roshdieh, 1983: 32).

In Roshdieh School, when the bell rang, his opponents compared it with the chime of the church (Ajudani, 2005: 265-267).

Finally, Roshdieh had a car accident in GOM in 1363 H. He died and was buried in a new graveyard (Abu Hossein). We can name him the "Father of Iran's new culture". He has written in his testament:

Please bury me in a place which everybody the students pass over my grave and I get happy (Ajudani, 2005: 237).

Roshdieh's written works were: "Bedayat ol Talim", "Hedayat ol Talim", "Nahayat ol Talim", "Tohfah ol Sian", "one hundred lessons", "Tanbih ol Gafelin va Ershad ol Gafelin".

### **Francopersan School**

In 1341 H, Reza Gholi Khan Roshdieh opened Francopersan Schools like French Saint Vensal, where he studied. In the first year, it had 465 students. After some years, it was named "Roshdieh" because of Haj Mirza Hassan Roshdieh's services. This school was one of the most tidies high schools in Tabriz. In 1358 H, this school had primary classes, three classes of first high school in 4<sup>th</sup> high school.

In 1372 H, when a foreign army occupied Tabriz, and after evacuation, the high school began to work, and Hassan Kaveh was its principal. From 1373 H Roshdieh himself managed there.

In 1388 H, the number of students was more than 817, and the high school had a library, laboratory and a working place for manual work (Amin Sobhani, 1958: 41).

### **Mozzafari School**

This school was first established in 1293 H, and after that, Darolfonun was the second school in Iran. In "Maaser Valasar" and other books of Hedayat, in 1294, this school was mentioned as "Tabriz Governmental School", and its principal was Mirza Javad Khan Sartip, who was financial administer in succession to the crown Mozaffareldin Shah and the agency Fathhali Khan.

In Nasser newspaper, no 6, 1st year, in 15 Zihaja 1311 H, we read:

Mozaffarieh felicitous School, in where Mirza Jafar Khan Malek al Shoara Hakim Bashi is the principal, and Mehdigholi Khan Sarhang is the assistant, is managed very carefully and Persian, Arabic, medical, mathematics, arithmetic, geography, French language and Nastaliq calligraphy teachers present every day in their room and begin teaching to the students (Magazine, 1959: 12).

### **Loghmanieh School**

This school was established in Tabriz in 1312 H by Mirza Zeinolabedin Loghmanol Molk. Ettela newspaper in Zighadeh 1317 writes about Loghmanieh School:

Some days ago, our historiographer wrote that" at the end of Zighade month, it was an exam meeting in Loghmanieh School. In this short period, some students from seven to 20 years studied very well. They gave the exam excellently, which surprised the audiences-After exam Mr Loghmanol Molk delivered a speech about lacking welcome and financial help (Magazine, 1959: 13).

#### **Tabriz Mellieh School**

Mirza Ali Khan Aminoldoleh opened a school in Tabriz in Safar 1315 H, the first national school in Iran, and after that, the others followed him (Sepehr, 1989: 125).

#### **Kamal School**

This school was opened in Tabriz in Zihaja 1316 H, and its principal was Mirza Hossein Khan Tabibzadeh.

#### **Tabriz Sanaye Zarif School**

Abbas Adham established this school, and it had both primary and high school (Ezam Ghods, 1963: 407). In this age, the first printing house, the first cinema, the first kindergarten and even the first deaf-mute school were opened in Tabriz. The first street, which included electricity, was in Tabriz.

Expanding new literature and even writing a play in Turkish and Persian language began in Tabriz.

#### **Conclusion**

In this article, the philosophy of establishing the maktab and following it, the opening of new schools in Tabriz, had survived. Maktab were opened in scattered forms all over Iran by clergy members. Spiritual lessons were taught there, especially Quran, which the students had to present in class with complete purification and frequently held in mosques. These maktab encountered many problems concerning the parents, instruction methods, educational problems and instruction courses. Other intricate in maktab were punishment and the teachers' challenging circumstances so that in the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> H century, some Iranian wealthy and state persons began to establish new schools after the arrival of foreign religious missionaries to Iran and follow that some cultural efforts were made in that era such as printing, translation, newspaper, foreign schools, religious minorities schools and sending students to foreign countries. New schools were opened in Iran, especially in Tabriz; the founders were learned persons like Roshdieh School by Hassan Mirza, Francoperson School by Reza GholiKhan Roshdiyeh and Mozaffarieh School by Mirza Javad Khan Sartip. Starting and forming these schools caused to prevent the influence of religious missionaries (American, French ...) in Iranian language, culture and education and became more successful in registering the students in Tabriz rather than other schools. Some of these schools were even open until many years. Moreover, they continued their educational and cultural activities.

## Recommendations

Whereas the establishment of new schools in Iran was concordant with foreign schools, which American, French, and English opened, German, Russian and Ottoman religious missionaries all over Iran, especially in Azerbaijan and Tabriz. These schools played an essential role in the acquaintance of the Iranian with their culture, religion and language of European countries. I hope the other researchers survive carefully and clear up the ambiguous and unknown points in entering the foreign missionaries to Iran.

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