

Navid Zarrinnal

The Origins of *Dabestān*: Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh and the Quest for New Education

Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh (1860(?)–1944) was a lower-ranking Azeri-Iranian cleric, constitutionalist, and educational reformer who was a major pioneer of new (jadīd) primary schools in Iran. This article shows that in 1889 Rushdīyeh, through training he had received in Beirut, introduced new schools into Iran based on changed pedagogy and modern disciplines. It argues that although the schools drew fierce opposition from maktab custodians and certain Qajar courtiers, they gradually increased in authority until the Reza Shah state appropriated them, with some modifications, as normative schooling called the dabestān. In English and Persian scholarship, we lack a substantial history of Rushdīyeh's new schools. Drawing on previously unexamined sources, including his Iran and Ottoman diaries, this article examines Rushdīyeh's educational work in the broader intellectual and political history of the period.

Keywords: Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh; Iranian Intellectual History; History of Education; New Schools; *maktab*; *dabestān*; Functional Literacy; Modern Disciplines

Introduction

In contemporary Iran, to be literate is to attend the *dabestān*. A new institution with an approximately hundred-year history, the name *dabestān* emerged, or more precisely was revived from old nomenclature, in the first Pahlavi period and was used to designate state-administrated primary education.¹ The pedagogical and disciplinary qual-

Navid Zarrinnal is a PhD candidate at the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asia, and African Studies at Columbia University.

The author would like to thank his dissertation committee members Hamid Dabashi, Ervand Abrahamian, Wael Hallaq, and Sudipta Kaviraj for fruitful conversations on this project. Gratitude is also due to Aria Fani and Saeed Honarmand for their feedback. Further thanks to Tehran-based scholar and archivist Muhammad Baghāyī Shīreh'Jīnī for generous direction, and Behdokht Roshdieh for providing her archival material. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author.

¹For early usage of the term, see the Ministry of Education's annual report in *vizārat-e ma'ārif, awqāf va ṣ-anāye'-e mustazafeh, Statistical Annual Report, 1932–33 (1311–12)*, 2. Under the primary education (*t'alīmāt-e ebtedāyī*) heading, the document reports that in the year 1313 (1934), "97 *dabestān* were established in the capital and provinces." For naming conventions, with primary school designated as *dabestān*," see *ibid.*, 124.

ities associated with the *dabestān* preceded the Pahlavi dynasty, however; they dated back to about 1889 when the first new primary school opened in the city of Tabriz. Surprisingly perhaps, the *dabestān* was neither a direct colonial intervention nor a political project of the state in its origins—in contrast to much of Asia and Africa, new primary education in Iran began through the initiatives of lower-ranking ulema who later transformed into the new intellectuals of the Pahlavi period. In the late Qajar period, they, in alliance with individual courtiers of a reformist disposition, gathered around the cause of education reform. The reformists were motivated by an intellectual discourse that linked collective salvation to education reform, and did not benefit from an *organized* scheme by the Qajar court. A key agent of this reform was a lower-ranking *‘ālim* from the city of Tabriz by the name of Mīrzā Ḥasan Tabrīzī (later Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh). A critical examination of his educational work allows me to trace the origins of the *dabestān* and make three major arguments. First, I emphasize its new character: the *dabestān* was different from the *maktab* that preceded it, in terms of spatial organization, demographics, curriculum, pedagogy, and discipline and punishment.² Rushdīyeh implemented new pedagogy in furtherance of mass, functional literacy, and also took an interest in the disciplinary power of modern life to manage teaching and learning. His new pedagogy and disciplines were inspired by his travels in the world surrounding Iran, Russian-administrated Armenia and Ottoman Beirut in particular. Second, I argue that the *dabestān*'s formation was not an amicable transition but a contested one. Reformers disputed with the pro-*maktab* ulema and conservative courtiers on the right manner of educating children—disputes that were to become violent and deadly at times. Third, I emphasize the intellectual initiative behind new education and a concurrent absence of an organized modernization program by Qajar political power. Political power did not organize primary schools as a state program. However, it aided, appropriated, or obstructed intellectual initiatives towards new education, and new schools were either facilitated or hampered depending on the turning tides of the Qajar court.

In English and Persian scholarship, we lack a substantial empirical history of Rushdīyeh's new schools.³ Drawing on previously unexamined sources, including his Iran and Ottoman diaries, the article examines Rushdīyeh's educational work in the broader intellectual and political history of the period, including the history of the

²I use new, instead of modern, in fidelity to the period's primary sources, which use the phrase "new schools" (*madāres-e jadīd*) as opposed to modern schools.

³The most substantial scholarly work on Rushdīyeh is Baqāyī Shīreh'jīnī, *Zindagīnāmeḥ*. This is an edited compilation of his diaries with an introduction, published in 2015 for the National Archives. Non-scholarly biographical works written by his family are Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*. Both works border on hagiography, and must be read with caution. In modernist historiography, he receives marginal but celebratory mention. See as an example Kasravī, *Tārīkh-e Mashrūteḥ-ye Irān*. English-language historiography also covers Rushdīyeh, but briefly and without reliance on his diaries. For one of the more complete accounts, see Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*, 155–60.

transition from the *maktab* to the *dabestān*.⁴ Following Rushdīyeh inevitably brings the *dabestān* to the center of the narrative. However, unlike previous studies this article does not treat the *dabestān* as an “enlightened” successor to the “underdeveloped” *maktab*.⁵ Rather, via a study of Rushdīyeh’s travels, pedagogy, and school administration, it attempts to explain, without modernist value-judgments, his break from the *maktab*.

My data is based on visits to several national and private archives. They include his diaries, letters to/from newly established Qajar ministries, school textbooks, and internal school documents on records like finances and daily schedule. In addition to Rushdīyeh-centered sources, I consulted memoirs by his contemporaries, Persian newspapers from the period, Persian-language secondary sources on the *maktab*, and Persian and English secondary literature on education reform in Iran and the surrounding world. Using as my central sources the diaries of Rushdīyeh is not without methodological challenges. In contested cases where other sources are unavailable for cross-reference and confirmation, we are left only with our skepticism as to whether Rushdīyeh’s account holds—this skepticism is particularly warranted as Rushdīyeh’s contemporary, Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī, regarded him as overestimating his role in educational (and we might add political) reform.⁶ I therefore alert the reader to my skepticism when Rushdīyeh’s account cannot be confirmed. However, Rushdīyeh’s occasional pomp is not without justification either; as we shall see below, he pioneered the first new primary school in Iran and remained a consistent advocate of new education in turbulent times.

This article is written chronologically. It begins with Rushdīyeh’s own education as a child, and then examines the events that transformed his vocation from a local preacher to cosmopolitan educator, setting him on his Ottoman travels. It narrates his acquisition of new pedagogy in Beirut, after which he instituted new primary schools in Yerevan, Tabriz, Mashhad, and Tehran, with the aid of reformist allies. It discusses the opposition he faced from *maktab* custodians, and demonstrates the new qualities of the schools—in particular the use of disciplinary power in the

⁴This article does not discuss Rushdīyeh’s political activities in any detail. Rushdīyeh was also a supporter of the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 and kept a diary of his activism during the interim constitutional period. This diary is held at the National Archives but is also printed in Baghāyī Shīreh’jīnī, *Zindagīnāmeḥ*. Part of the political events diary appears to have been lost and is not available in manuscript or printed form.

⁵Three previous studies in English must be noted. Ordered by date of publication from oldest to newest, they are: Arasteh, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*; Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*; and Matthee, “Transforming Dangerous Nomads” .” Matthee brands the *maktab* as “underdeveloped.” See Matthee, “Transforming Dangerous Nomads,” 314. Arasteh calls it “limited” in *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*, 6. And, Menashri writes that “students were not prepared for any useful occupation. The syllabus was totally irrelevant to the country’s needs.” See Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, 41–2. For use of awakening and enlightenment language, see as an example Arasteh, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*, 99.

⁶Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 226.

management of teaching and learning, and the phonetic method for teaching the alphabet, which, in contrast to the *maktab*, generated rapid and functional literacy. It concludes with the last years of his educational activities in the two constitutional periods.

The Early Years

Available sources provide different dates for Rushdīyeh's birth. Two family biographies provided the dates 27 March 1860 (5 Ramadan 1276 AH) and an unspecified day in 1851 (1267 AH).⁷ Rushdīyeh himself recorded his birthday as 6 March 1862 (5 Ramadan 1278 AH).⁸ Elsewhere in the diary, he implied that he was born in 1854.⁹ The contradictions make the setting of an exact date difficult, but we do know that Mīrzā Ḥasan Tabrīzī (later Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh) was born near the middle of the nineteenth century into a clerical family in the city of Tabriz. His forefathers had lived in Ṭalish, Gīlān. Once Ṭalish fell to the Afsharid king, Nadir Shah, the family was held captive until they fled to near Tabriz, where they settled.¹⁰ Rushdīyeh's childhood coincided with the rule of the fourth and longest-ruling Qajar king, Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh. The Qajar monarchs shared their political power with the social and epistemic authority of the Shia ulema, a collective that had consolidated its power in the Safavid period and had become more secure under the more congenial rule of Fath'Ali Shāh (d. 1834).¹¹ As epistemic authority, they operated the educational system that taught and schooled those across all social classes who chose to learn. Rushdīyeh's father, a quietist (*gūshbeh-nishīn*) mujtahid by the name of Ākhūnd Mullāh Mehdī Tabrīzī, sent Rushdīyeh to a public *maktab* by the age of six—the *maktab* (short for *maktabkhāneh*, plural *makātib*) was the traditional institution of primary learning in Iran. Muslims used the term *maktab* in a number of contexts, but all in reference to knowledge production, teaching, and learning, including the place where children were educated.¹² The Persian variations on the Arabic word, *maktab*, were the *maktabkhāneh*, (*a*)*dabestān*, and, in some sources like *Tārikh-e Bay-*

⁷Compare Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, with Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*. Fakhr al-Dīn Rushdīyeh does not provide the day or month of the year, but since other accounts provide Ramadan as the birthdate, the Gregorian equivalent would be 1851 (not 1852).

⁸Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 15 June 1915, in National Library and Archive Organization of Iran, Tehran, Iran, 998/4311, p. 86, in Baqāyī Shīreh'Jīnī's printed edition. For the reader's ease of access, the remaining page citations are to the printed edition. The editor of the diaries, Baqāyī Shīreh'Jīnī, argues that Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh's date must be the correct one but he seems to make a mathematical mistake in rejecting the date given by Rushdīyeh, see *ibid.*, 26. For this narrative, I assume Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh's 1860 as the date of birth.

⁹Rushdīyeh dated the composition of the diary to 15 June 1915 or 2 Sha'ban 1333 and then wrote that "I am 63 today," which would mean he was born in 1270 or 1854. See Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 85.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 85–6.

¹¹For an excellent account of Shia ulema power consolidation under the Safavids see Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam*. For a history of ulema under the Qajars see Algar, *Religion and State in Iran*.

¹²Ṣafā, *Tārikh-e ulūm va adabīyāt-e irānī*, 7.

haqqī, dabīrestān.¹³ Under the Reza Shah administration (1925–41), *dabestān* and *dabīrestān* came to designate primary and middle schooling respectively.¹⁴ Despite terminological variations, Persian sources up until the end of the Qajar period generally referred to the space where children learned to read and write as the *maktab*. For example, the twelfth-century Persian poet, Nezāmī Ganjavī, describing the early development and childhood of Khusraw in *Khusraw u Shīrīn*, wrote:

پس از نه سالگی مکتب رها کرد
حساب جنگ شیر و اژدها کرد

After turning nine, he left the *maktab*

Going in battle with the lion and the dragon.¹⁵

In nineteenth-century Iran, three forms of *makātib* educated children: the sister-mullah *maktab* (*makāteb-e ākhūnd bāji*), the “public” *maktab*, and the “private” *maktab* for the children of prominent ulema and aristocracy.¹⁶ Sister-mullahs, loosely comparable to teachers in English dame schools, were generally of limited learning and taught children aged four to seven in mixed-gender settings.¹⁷ Yahyā Dawlatābādī (b. 27 December 1862) described them as women who were mostly in urban areas and their job was to nurse children either in their own homes or in the houses of elites (*muhtaramīn*). He added that these “women could read simple expressions and had, based on religious belief, painstakingly acquired the Qurʿan, [while] most of them were unable to write, and [he] wasted away his life not knowing what he had learned from them.”¹⁸ Sister-mullah *maktab* served anything between a few to over a hundred students, with more experienced students serving as aids to the teacher—for example, by teaching the alphabet (orally) to an incoming student. All ages and levels of learning assembled in the same room and received individualized instruction. The educational mission was to acquaint students with the alphabet, the Qurʿan, social etiquette, and Shariah obligations such as the performance of ablution and prayer. Writing was not part of the curriculum, and everything was taught orally. Material for writing was thus not made available to students. Each day, students gathered around the instructor in a simple, carpeted room as she lay against a large, hard pillow (*tushakcheh*) with a small table in front of her. Students were instructed to memorize their readings, kneel before the teacher’s desk, and repeat what they had committed to memory.¹⁹ Rote memorization was the routine

¹³Zū al-Faqrī and Haydarī, *Adabīyāt-e maktab/khāneh-yī dar Īrān*, 16–17. The Arabic word *kuttāb* was also used occasionally in Persian literature to mean *maktab*, see *ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴See the Ministry of Education’s annual report in *vizārat-e maʿārif, awqaf va ṣanāyeʿ-e mustazrafeh*, *Statistical Annual Report, 1932–33* (1311–12), 124.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 15 (quoted here).

¹⁶Qāsimī-pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 45.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁸Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e Yahyā*.

¹⁹Qāsimī-pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 47–8.

examination method in sister-mullah schools, as it was in their more elaborate counterparts, the public *maktab*. Students would either start their education at the public *maktab*, as Rushdīyeh had done, or would go there after some schooling in the sister-mullah schools. The public *maktab* met at mosques, shops (*dukkān* in the singular), and private homes. There, students would make the transition from oral learning to writing and benefit from a more comprehensive curriculum.²⁰ The textbooks children read were not authored by the teachers themselves or written specifically for children. They were fragments from existing texts or personal writings. Dawlatābādī recounts that their teacher would give them his own transactional writings (*sanad-hā-ye mu'āmelātī*) that he had produced for his patrons but were no longer needed.²¹ Teachers at the public *maktab* were lower-ranking mullahs and although they were supposed to be more learned than their sister-mullah counterparts, modernist memoirs hold them in contempt; their teaching incompetence and harsh use of physical punishment are described—although some are praised. The reformer Ākhūndzādeh, for instance, praised his teacher Mullāh 'Alī Asghar, because when the mullah taught him, his “hatred for reading was fully eliminated.”²²

Motivations for schooling were not uniform. Learning the Qur'an was the primary reason for many parents who sent their children to school, especially those who came from more indigent ranks. Merchant families wanted their children to learn more, such as writing and basic math for everyday use—for instance, to take an accounting of family income and expenses. Some went to the *maktab* with the intention of becoming a madrasa student, and thus a mullah or a mujtahid. After the *maktab*, there was the possibility to study further and become a mullah in the locality.²³ Those with higher ambition would go to prominent centers like Najaf and study for many years to become a mujtahid. Aristocratic families (*amīr*, *mustufī*, and *dīvānī*) sent their children to private *maktab*, which was spatially and demographically segregated but had a pedagogy and curriculum similar to the public *maktab*. In the Qajar period, some parents hoped that after the private *maktab* their children would travel abroad to study new sciences.²⁴

At the *maktab*, the young Mirzā Hasan displayed impressive abilities; the mullah therefore selected him as his aid (*khalīfeh*) so he could help other students.²⁵ His classmates met Rushdīyeh early in the morning and sought help with their subjects, in an attempt to mitigate the mullah's frequent application of physical punishment due to their lack of comprehension.²⁶ Physical punishment was routinely applied without complaint from pupils' parents. This practice instilled in the young Rushdīyeh an

²⁰Ibid., 49.

²¹Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e Yahyā*.

²²Qāsīmī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājārīyeh*, 52–3 (quoting Akhūndzādeh).

²³Examples from the period under study are Rushdīyeh himself, as we will see later, and Kasravī. See Kasravī, *Zindagānī-ye man*, 50.

²⁴Qāsīmī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājārīyeh*, 60.

²⁵Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*.

²⁶Ibid., 16.

early dislike for the *maktab*, an aversion he shared with his intellectual contemporaries, including in newspaper articles that argued against the compatibility of physical discipline on the one hand, and good teaching and upbringing on the other.²⁷

From Local Preacher to Cosmopolitan Educator

Rushdīyeh studied at the *maktab* for five years and then continued his studies for another eleven in subjects such as *fiqh* until he gained the authority of a local preacher at the age of twenty-two (in 1882).²⁸ With his father's permission, he became a preacher (*vā'ez*) at the local Imāmzādeh mosque, named Charandāb. While preaching, his life trajectory changed after a supposed encounter with the crown prince (*valī 'ahd*), Muzaffar al-Dīn Shāh. The crown prince liked to spend leisure time in a garden north of the capital and would occasionally choose Tabriz as his return route. When the prince was returning via Tabriz, he decided to visit the Imāmzādah where Rushdīyeh was preaching against the injustice of "the oppressor." Upon seeing the crown prince, Rushdīyeh immediately changed the content of his speech, thinking to himself that he "must be the most hypocritical of people, that [in fear of] a certain oppressor he has abandoned the application of God's command to him and has interrupted his speech to talk about something else."²⁹ After this incident, Rushdīyeh left off preaching altogether for a brief period of solitude and inactivity, until, with parental permission, he decided to leave for a pilgrimage to Mashhad. Before going to Mashhad, Rushdīyeh went to Yerevan, Armenia and spent Ramadan there.³⁰ Prior to the nineteenth century, the Safavid dynasty controlled Yerevan. In 1828, the Qajars surrendered control to Russia, according to the Treaty of Turkomančay. Iran's past political power over Yerevan and the geographic proximity between Yerevan and Tabriz connected the two cities together, and many from Tabriz would reside or visit there.³¹ While in Yerevan, Rushdīyeh reported that he was spending time in a public park (*bāgh-e 'umūmī*) when he saw a door open. Several hundred students wearing hats and backpacks exited and dispersed in different directions. Two of them passed Rushdīyeh, and he heard them speaking in Turkish. Calling them over to inquire where it was that they were coming from, they replied: "we study." The subjects they studied included Islamic jurisprudence. Rushdīyeh asked the children a few questions and was astonished at their level of comprehension—superior to what children of Tabriz would learn at the same age.³² This

²⁷See as an example, "Short Discourse on Children's Upbringing (*Sukhanī chand dar tarbiyat-e kūdakān*)," *Akhtar*, vol. 7, p. 5323.

²⁸Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*. This level of education is confirmed in Yahyā Dawlatābādī's account as well. He wrote that "Rushdīyeh [had] roughly elementary level knowledge among the ulema." See Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e Yahyā*.

²⁹Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 86–7.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 87.

³¹For a description of some of these connections, see the 1811 travelogue by Shīrāzī, *Safarnāme*, 104.

³²Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 87.

raised Rushdīyeh's curiosity, and he arranged a meeting with the teacher of religious sciences, Hājī Mullāh Bāqer Ākhūnd, with whom Rushdīyeh had previous acquaintance. Mullāh Bāqer had been a student of Rushdīyeh's father for eight years prior to his residence in Yerevan. He informed Rushdīyeh of the children's program, and although it remains unspecified in his diaries, it must presumably have included new pedagogy. Hearing of the school's program, the former preacher found new inspiration and decided to act in "God's path" and establish something comparable for the "children of Islam." Mullāh Bāqer then advised Rushdīyeh that he must go through several steps: he must first acquire new pedagogical principles. Then he must receive a certificate from Russia's teachers' college, learn Russian, and become a Russian subject.³³ According to Russian regulations, he would then be permitted to teach Islamic subjects to Muslim children at public schools for one hour per week. Muslims, Rushdīyeh was then informed, were not permitted to institute independent schools in the city because Russian authorities wanted to keep Muslims mixing with non-Muslim students.³⁴ It appears these regulations were not fully enforced or that Rushdīyeh was able to receive exemption from them by instituting his school as one for foreign (Iranian) subjects, because when in 1884 he returned from his Ottoman travels he established a school exclusively for Iranian-Muslim children, and without meeting the specified conditions.

After this conversation, Rushdīyeh abandoned earlier plans to go to Najaf for further studies, and instead decided to acquire new pedagogy and turned to the reformist newspaper *Akhtar* for direction.³⁵ *Akhtar* was a Persian-language paper edited and produced by exilic intellectuals in Istanbul and sent into Iran, where it had a sizable audience. The young Rushdīyeh had learned via the newspaper that in Tabriz each *maktab* would only produce one literate student for every ten it trained.³⁶ This was in sharp contrast to Europe, where almost all students would become literate.³⁷ Rushdīyeh's aim was to find a teachers' association that was suited to and accepted Muslim teachers and trained them in new pedagogical principles. He wrote to the editors of *Akhtar* with his query, and they informed him of

³³According to the Educational Act of 1873 imposed on Armenia in 1874, the teachers in public schools were required to be citizens of Russia. See Sarafian, *History of Education in Armenia*, 265.

³⁴Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 88.

³⁵Ibid. Cf. Shams al-Din Rushdīyeh's account that does not record the Yerevan inspiration but does mention Rushdīyeh's interest in reformist newspapers motivating the quest for new pedagogy. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*.

³⁶Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, Behdokht Roshdieh's private archives, 1936, 5. A separate study, examining the period's Persian journals in particular, is needed to contextualize Rushdīyeh's interest in mass literacy. There was an intellectual interest in mass literacy before literacy became a project of the Pahlavi state. Iranian studies scholarship has not looked at mass literacy in any detail, in contrast to Ottoman studies scholarship. As an example, see Yousef, *Composing Egypt*.

³⁷For a survey of literacy in Europe, see Vincent, *The Rise of Mass Literacy*. This study confirms *Akhtar's* information at the time. In 1880s England, for example, both male and female illiteracy was slightly under 20 percent. By the final third of nineteenth century, in much of northern and western Europe, illiteracy was driven down to 10 percent and below, see *ibid.*, 9–10.

a soon-to-be instituted association by the British in Cairo. Thereafter, Rushdīyeh set out on his Ottoman travels.³⁸

Iranian Educator in the Ottoman Center

Traveling via Tiflis, Rushdīyeh began with the capital, Istanbul. He journeyed to the Ottoman Empire in about 1882, thirteen years after an imperial decree on education reform.³⁹ Before this decree, education for Muslim subjects of the empire consisted of the *sibyan mektebi* (“Qur’an school”) at the elementary level and madrassas at higher levels. Responsibility for providing education to children of common people was left not to the imperial center, but to persons within the community acting on their own initiative, as was the case in Qajar Iran. A typical *sibyan mektebi* consisted mostly of one room, which was often located in the vicinity of a mosque and directed by a member of the lower ulema, called hoca. Wealthy Muslims mainly founded these schools, and their maintenance was secured by religious foundations for public purposes (*vakif*), as well as by the weekly payments of parents to the *hocas*, and there is no evidence that these institutions were controlled or inspected by a central organ, but in many cases the donors monitored the qualifications of the *hocas*, such as ensuring that they were informed about *fiqh* and led a righteous life. As in Iran, Ottoman *sibyan mektebi* had a diverse student body all in the same room with varying ages and degrees of knowledge.⁴⁰ In 1869 an imperial decree on education, based on French models, attempted to modify the character of premodern education. Broadly, the decree provided for centralization, discipline, and compulsion in education for all subjects.⁴¹ It attempted to undo the mixture of students, separating them based on age and knowledge under several tiers all the way from primary education to higher education. The primary level carried the same name of the *sibyan maktab*s but had to operate under new rules. In addition to being compulsory for all and under the general supervision of Istanbul, the *sibyan* was reserved for girls aged 6–10 and boys aged 7–11 with a duration of four years where the alphabet, among other subjects such as Ottoman history and the Qur’an, was to be taught.⁴² As was the case previously, non-Muslim communities would have their own religious instruction. The second tier was the *rusdiye* schools. Children would enroll at the *rusdiye* schools at age ten (girls) and eleven (boys), also for four years. They were to be introduced to “religious” subjects, Ottoman grammar, orthography and composition, Arabic and Persian through new methods, bookkeeping, arithmetic, drawing/drafting, introduction to geometry, general history and Ottoman history, geography, gymnastics, and

³⁸Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 88. Rushdīyeh does not mention Beirut or Istanbul in this diary and simply says he went to Egypt for two and a half years. Cf. the *Ottoman Diaries* where he goes to Istanbul, Cairo, and Beirut (in that order) and spends the most time (about two years) in Beirut. See below for details.

³⁹The *Ottoman Diaries* do not provide an exact date.

⁴⁰Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*, 17–29.

⁴¹For a translation of this decree, see Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans*, 206.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 208.

the language commonly used in the school's vicinity. Certain "motivated" students living in trade zones could also study French in their fourth year. Rushdīyeh's assessment of the Ottoman schools he visited was mixed. He commended the children for their efforts, writing that they applied themselves to learning and all enjoyed their time at school. He opined that this was because of the teachers' approach: they treated children with extraordinary compassion and kindness. However, his opinion was otherwise negative. He found the supposedly reformed schools of Istanbul to be in an inferior state. He found no principles of pedagogy for generating functional literacy.⁴³ This assessment was probably true in the context of Rushdīyeh's interests, because early attempts at educational reform in the Ottoman Empire did not meet expected goals. For example, the intent of reformers was for children to acquire functional literacy at the *sibyan* level to spare the *rusdiye* schools this task. But in practice, many children would come to the *rusdiye* schools still illiterate.⁴⁴

The Baladīyeh school of Cairo. Having lost hope in the Ottoman center, Rushdīyeh traveled to Cairo. There, he visited the manager of the Persian-language *Hikmat* newspaper, Mīrzā Mehdi Khān Tabrīzī. He desired to be introduced to those known in the organization of schools and the arts of pedagogy. Mīrzā Mehdi Khān Tabrīzī took Rushdīyeh to what he claimed was the new, reputable Baladīyeh school the next day.⁴⁵ At the primary level, the school consisted of fourth through sixth grades. According to Rushdīyeh, children spent the first through third grades at the *maktab* (in Ottoman nomenclature *sibyan mektebi* and in Arabic *kuttāb* in the plural), after which they enrolled at the Baladīyeh.⁴⁶ The Iranian traveler soon learned that in terms of pedagogy, the Baladīyeh school was not terribly different from its *maktab* counterpart. Rushdīyeh thought instruction in the fourth grade was deficient. Most children, he wrote, had memorized prayers written in their textbook, but could not recognize the letters or read the prayers. Even though most of their texts had short vowels (*mu'arab būd*), students were unable to read because of the teacher's failure to teach the alphabet.⁴⁷ Rushdīyeh tried his luck with the sixth grade at the school as well. Students read a text on etiquette (*akhlāq*). Even with the use of short vowels, they made plenty of mistakes. The teacher did not seem to care, Rushdīyeh wrote, and incorrect reading and writing even at higher grades were thought to be how things were and always would be. In fact, one teacher told Rushdīyeh that children were "accustomed to" incorrect writing.⁴⁸ What Rushdīyeh had failed to find at the Baladīyeh school, rapid and functional literacy, began to appear in Egypt a few decades after his visit. Egyptian schooling at the turn of the twentieth century was differentiated from previous educational projects in its unrelenting focus and success in achieving basic, functional literacy.⁴⁹ Rushdīyeh seemed to have

⁴³Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 12.

⁴⁴Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*, 46–7.

⁴⁵Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 15.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 16.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁹Yousef, *Composing Egypt*, 83.

recognized this change in his diaries at the time of its writing. Citing 1915 statistics on schools in Egypt, he wrote, “today [i.e. 1936], Egypt is known as the abode of knowledge.”⁵⁰

Overall, in Istanbul and Cairo Rushdīyeh learned nothing on principles of pedagogy. He thought that the children who do become literate and continue with their education achieve this only because of the mutual compassion between teachers and students.⁵¹ The mutual compassion he saw during his Ottoman travels was absent in schools in Tabriz, and he adds that physical punishment and mutual enmity were the norms in his city.⁵² As mentioned previously, in *makātib* of Tabriz and Qajar Iran more broadly physical punishment was routinely applied without complaint from parents. Popular idioms would even celebrate this practice:

چوب معلم گل است هر که نخورد خل است

The teacher’s stick is a flower, whomever is not hit is a lunatic

از ضرب چوب خرس ملا می شود

From the stick’s hit, the bear becomes a mullah.⁵³

Though corporeal punishment of children was an accepted fact of life, some restrictions did exist. According to one source, teachers would generally not punish children under the age of ten. In most cases, contact with head and face was to be avoided, although there are reports of children losing eyes or ears because of excessively hard punishment applied to their face and heads.⁵⁴ Students were beaten with thin pieces of wood, or were subjected to *bastinado* (*falak*)—being struck on their feet. Alternatively, children were imprisoned for brief durations in dark basements (*siyāh’chāl*) of the homes in which classes were held.⁵⁵ Punishment was sometimes gendered; pinching and inserting nails into skin were applied to girls only. A less physical method of punishment was for the teacher to join voices with students and curse the wrongdoer.⁵⁶ Iranian novelist Mu ḥ ammad ‘ Alī Jamālzādeh (b. 1892) recounted corporeal punishment in some detail in his memoirs. He wrote that the teacher would have the children recite the following: “I must say the *tashdid* roughly. I must recognize the *hamza* on *alif* as an *alif*. If I do not, I shall be hit on my palm and feet a hundred times to know it as such.”⁵⁷ He added:

⁵⁰Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 31.

⁵¹Ibid., 28.

⁵²Ibid., 19, 28.

⁵³Zū al-Faqārī and Ḥaydarī, *Adabīyāt-e maktab’khāneh-yī dar Īrān*, 62 (quoting the idioms).

⁵⁴Ibid., 64.

⁵⁵Qāsimī’pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 51.

⁵⁶Zū al-Faqārī and Ḥaydarī, *Adabīyāt-e maktab’khāneh-yī dar Īrān*, 67.

⁵⁷Jamālzādeh, *Sar va tab-e yak karbās*.

From that very first day I set foot in the *maktab*, I was like a bird in a cage. My heartbeat had not slowed down yet, when the *akhund*, in enmity and anger ... as if he had a prolonged grudge against me, an innocent child, asked my name. I said, with a shaky voice, "Sayyid Muhammad Ali." He said to me, "Sayyid Muḥammad Ali, know that they call this place *maktab*. It's not a place for fooling around or for playing. If you move an inch, I will put your nails on the bastinado ..." Hearing this, I became speechless; I lost my breath and began to cry.⁵⁸

Soon after this directive, Jamālzādeh was punished by bastinado for not understanding what homework was expected of him. "In that hour," he wrote, "at once I became fearful and uninterested in knowledge, literacy, and writing."⁵⁹ This lack of compassion was reciprocated by children, who would punish their teachers in calculated ways. Rushdīyeh wrote that a few of the *makātib* in Tabriz were known for students forming into a group, two or three times per year, to beat their teacher with his own stick. The animosity between teachers and children would go so far, he wrote, that children would bury a jar of explosives (*bārūt*) under the teacher's seat, which would be set off in order to injure the teacher.⁶⁰ The Qajar diplomat and Rushdīyeh's reformist rival in education reform, Mīrzā Mehdī Khān Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh, wrote that he was severely punished for another child's inattention. In retaliation, the young Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh managed to purchase some fireworks. Before the teacher entered the room, he created a large hole (*gudāl*) under the teacher's seat, hid the fireworks there and connected them to their head-string (*fitīleh*), which he had control over. When the teacher came in and was about to sit, Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh set it off, causing the teacher to be thrown upwards, hitting the ceiling and breaking his hand. The circle of violence continued, with the teacher punishing both children so severely that they attempted suicide—one by stabbing his stomach and the other by jumping off the balcony—but failed. Their failed attempt compelled their fathers to replace the *ākhund* with another teacher.⁶¹ Rushdīyeh converged with his intellectual contemporaries in his conviction that corporal punishment is antithetical to learning. In Istanbul and Cairo, he had seen how the lack of punishment and mutual compassion enabled some learning even in the absence of principles of pedagogy. Not having found these principles, or, as he put it, not having found "the medicine for his sickness" in Cairo, Rushdīyeh set out for Beirut.⁶²

Principles of pedagogy in Beirut. Rushdīyeh spent two years (1882–84) in Beirut, where he acquired his new pedagogy, which he would then introduce to Muslim children in Armenia and Iran. In Beirut, Rushdīyeh met with a former acquaintance, Mīrzā Javād Khān, who was employed at the Iranian consulate (*qunsūl*). Mīrzā

⁵⁸Ibid., 51.

⁵⁹Ibid., 52.

⁶⁰Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 19.

⁶¹Qāsimī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājārīyeh*, 86–8 (quoting the memoirs of Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh).

⁶²Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 32.

Javād Khān recommended a French-instituted school, which was established via local requests to train teachers for the reform of primary education.⁶³ Rushdīyeh did not seek foreign or missionary schools like the Alliance Française or their teachers in Iran, and instead looked to the Ottoman world. In fact, memoirs of Iranian educational activists, including Rushdīyeh, made no significant mention of missionary and foreign schools in Iran.⁶⁴ Rushdīyeh did not clarify why he went to the Ottoman world instead of seeking new pedagogy at Iran's missionary schools. Based on our incomplete information about missionary schools around the year 1882, two reasons may be suggested.⁶⁵ First, these schools appeared to have primarily taught Christian subjects to Iranian Christians, and when Muslims enrolled, their curriculum was heavily focused on foreign languages and sciences, such as French language and literature.⁶⁶ It is not clear if, in the period at issue, these schools were teaching Persian or Arabic alphabet, language, literature, and Islamic subjects. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, Rushdīyeh may have believed that association with missionary schools would imperil his already precarious plan to go against *maktab* education. Acquiring new pedagogy by Ottoman Muslims (even if mediated by the French) and for Muslims, without a missionary connection, was less of a liability.

Rushdīyeh did not seek mission educators in Iran or elsewhere, but he did receive the tutelage of French educators in a Beirut school intended for Muslim children. The school's French director (*ra'īs*) was perplexed that locals needed instructions on how to teach their native (Arabic) alphabet. His hope was that when the French alphabet was taught to children, local teachers would gradually apply the same method to teaching the Arabic alphabet.⁶⁷ Appearing anti-colonial in his view, the director thought educating young children in a foreign language first would have a negative impact on their body (*jism*), soul (*rūh*), and manners (*khulq*).⁶⁸ Rushdīyeh told the director that he wanted to apply their methods to the teaching of the Arabic alphabet, and he was provided with a contract and an eight lira salary per month, subject to an increase.⁶⁹ Before the first day of instruction, the director conversed patiently with Rushdīyeh on the first-grade program and the principles of pedagogy. Rushdīyeh saw this opportunity as "God-sent," although he was anxious as much of what heard was in French. Still, he was informed of what went on (presumably a translator was present).⁷⁰

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ringer, *Education, Religion*, 143. Ringer does not make specific mention of Rushdīyeh.

⁶⁵For a study of missionary schools (those operated by the French in particular) in the Qajar period and after, see Nāṭiq, *Kārnāmah-i farhangī-i farangī dar Irān*. See also Arasteh, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*, 114.

⁶⁶For an explanation of the curriculum in Alliance Française in the constitutional years, with "the most important" subjects being French language and literature, see *ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁷Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 33.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 34.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 35.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 36. He mentions a translator (no name is given) who accompanies him in Beirut, see *ibid.*, 51.

On opening day, in addition to 700 students in other grades, thirty students aged between five and seven enrolled in the first grade.⁷¹ The thirty students entered the classroom and took their seats (*nimkat*) facing two blackboards, one of which had horizontal lines and the other slanted lines.⁷² The boards were used for interactive teaching of the alphabet, not seen in the *makātib* of Tabriz. An English teacher speaking in Arabic taught the class. He had an understanding of pedagogy, Rushdīyeh wrote, and spoke simply and slowly.⁷³ On the first night of school activity, Rushdīyeh claimed to have suggested to the director that he teach the Arabic alphabet as follows: he wanted to teach one letter and its writing one day, and another letter the next, which students would then combine to create words that they would write and pronounce. The sounding of Arabic letters was crucial; Rushdīyeh thought that if they were sounded out and pronounced correctly, students would make no mistake in writing them. He intended to break up words into their sound constituents, so the child knew which letters were pronounced and how. The director and other teachers approved of this method, and informed Rushdīyeh about phonetic approaches to learning the French alphabet invented years before.⁷⁴ In this context, Rushdīyeh learned the effectiveness of teaching the Arabic alphabet phonetically as opposed to the name-based method used at the *maktab*. In the *maktab*, the alphabet was taught based on the names of the vowel and the letter. The word *bār* (meaning load), for example, was taught as follows: صدای الفی با و به صدای جزمی ر میشود B by the sound of alif, bā, and by the silent r becomes bār. In contrast, the phonetic method approached the word based on how each individual letter *sounded*. The b sound combined with the ā sound becomes bā, combined with the r sound becomes bār (با میشود بار-میشود بار).⁷⁵ Rushdīyeh wanted to change the *maktab* approach to the phonetic method he had learned (or, in his own estimation, discovered in conversation with the director). He believed that the phonetic teaching of the alphabet would enable rapid and functional literacy. This proved true, he wrote. In one week, five lessons were completed and students were able to break up a word, distinguish the sounds, and spell it when the word was read out clearly. Rushdīyeh then arranged a public exam for students in front of the director, other teachers, and guests that included the children's parents and notables of the city, among them the modernist mufti Muḥammad 'Abduh. They were to ask students to read and write any word from the following taught letters: ا ء ذ ر ز و . On examination day, the attendees dictated certain words to students which they first pronounced and then wrote down, all correctly.⁷⁶ Rushdīyeh later became known for the phonetic method upon his return to Iran. The method was widely adopted, including in the emerging teachers' colleges. Dawlatābādī, who was otherwise critical of Rushdīyeh's

⁷¹Ibid., 37.

⁷²Ibid., 39.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 42.

⁷⁵Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*. For similar examples, see Qāsimī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājārīyeh*, 72, 201.

⁷⁶Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 46–8.

claim to senior status in education reform, did concede that it was Rushdīyeh who pioneered the new, phonetic teaching of the alphabet.⁷⁷

Although Rushdīyeh was very much committed to the phonetic method of teaching the alphabet toward rapid literacy, he did not show an interest in changing the form of the Arabic-Persian script. Intellectual arguments that connected the alphabet to higher literacy, and, more broadly, to large-scale reform of society, were common in the late nineteenth century. The Georgia-based intellectual Mīrzā Faṭḥ ‘Alī Khān Ākhūnd’zādeh, who directed his critical energies towards Qajar Iran, was the most radical advocate of alphabet change, connecting its transformation to Iran’s salvation. Arguing that the Arabic script hinders literacy, thus obstructing the spread of new sciences and ideas, which in turn prevents large-scale reform, he invented a new script and presented it to a certain educational association (*anjuman-e dānesh*) in Istanbul, but it was never pursued seriously via either intellectual consensus or educational initiatives.⁷⁸ Newspapers too had occasional entries on the reformation of the “Islamic script,” arguing that the supposedly easier “Western script” was tied to the children’s effective learning and broader civilizational progress. Others tried to provide for the legitimacy of change in the so-called Islamic script from the perspective of Shariah, relying on the historical precedent of the Kufi script. The Qur’an was initially committed to writing in this script, but the Abbasid official and calligrapher ibn Muqla, with juristic approval, changed the Kufi script to *khatt-e naskh*, from which many other calligraphic forms emerged. If the original script of the Qur’an could change substantially, the argument went, so could the Arabic script.⁷⁹ Rushdīyeh did not share the same anxiety over the form of the script; nor did he, as far as our evidence suggests, partake in the conceptual debate. His concern was the *manner in which the alphabet was taught* and he believed sound-based teaching of the alphabet would enable early and functional literacy irrespective of what the script looked like.

As the term progressed, Rushdīyeh authored his own lessons, a practice that was entirely foreign to the *maktab* teachers who selected existing texts for children. In three months, he taught fifty lessons from his self-authored textbook, *The Foundations of Learning* (*bedāyat al-t’alīm*).⁸⁰ After the program, students took three months off. Rushdīyeh took this time away from the school in the flower-filled Levant countryside, Mount Lebanon, along with the director and his family.⁸¹ Rushdīyeh returned to teach functional literacy to elementary students and also added lessons from S’adī’s *Gulistān*. In one year, students read three chapters from *Gulistān* that included about a hundred stories. Rushdīyeh reports, probably with some exaggeration, that students memorized the stories, recited them from memory, and translated them from Persian into Arabic.⁸² Once the year ended, Rushdīyeh asked for a “recommendation”

⁷⁷Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e yahyā*.

⁷⁸See Akhūndzādeh, *Alifbā-ye jadīd*.

⁷⁹As an example of this argument, see “The Reform of Script and Writing (Islāh-e khaṭṭ va kitābat),” *Akhtar*, vol. 3, 1785–86.

⁸⁰Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 48.

⁸¹Ibid., 50.

⁸²Ibid., 53.

(*shahādat*) from the director before his planned return to Iran. The director wrote one on his behalf stating that the Iranian educator entered the “*dār al-mu‘alimīn*” in Beirut—which must be a reference to the French-run school and not a state-run teachers’ college comparable to those that gained prominence a few decades later—to learn principles of school management and pedagogy, that he spent two years there, and that he was qualified to manage a school at the elementary and middle levels.⁸³ Rushdīyeh intended to put his training and the new pedagogy into use upon his return to Tabriz, but fearing *maktab* opposition at home he first established a school in Yerevan.⁸⁴

The First Yerevan Schools

In about 1884, Rushdīyeh met with his brother Mīrzā Hājji Aqā, who had moved to Yerevan where he led a simple life. Rushdīyeh sought his brother’s help in opening a school. Fearing communal opposition to the new-style education, Mīrzā Hājji Aqā agreed reluctantly and began recruiting his connections to have their children study there. Meanwhile, Rushdīyeh sought permission for his educational enterprise not from Russian authorities but from the local Muslim judge (*qādī*). Mullāh Bāqer had advised him that he must visit the *qādī*, but refrain from informing him about the specifics of what he intended to do. Maintaining an air of innocence, Rushdīyeh submitted his request along with sweets, and obtained written permission to begin work.⁸⁵

Rushdīyeh combined reading with writing instruments from the first day of instruction—this puzzled the residents because the old *maktab* would teach students orally for five or six years before they had any engagement with the pen.⁸⁶ Rushdīyeh saw a link between literacy and directing children to write words from their mother tongue, which for the Iranian children at his school was the same Turkish as spoken in Tabriz.⁸⁷ Principals (*mudīr* in the singular) of other *makātib* complained to local authorities about the unconventional teaching of Turkish, saying that Rushdīyeh had been sent by the Ottomans to convert their children from Shia to Sunni Islam. City inspectors (*muftishīn*) thus came and saw that the writings were in Azeri Turkish and not Ottoman Turkish. One inspector, who appeared most senior in age, refused to side with the residents, telling them that they should thank Rushdīyeh as he was eliminating the need for government-operated and regulated schools—which were seen in many localities as intruding upon age-old ulema and

⁸³Ibid., 54. In his diaries, Rushdīyeh wrote that the letter was dated 1281 (1864 CE). This date is incorrect because Rushdīyeh was a child at that time.

⁸⁴Rushdīyeh also reports that he stopped in Istanbul where, through contact with the Iranian ambassador, he experimented with his new method and successfully taught reading to thirty elementary Iranian students, see Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 54.

⁸⁵Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 88–9.

⁸⁶Ibid., 89.

⁸⁷According to Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh, the children in attendance were Iranian. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*.

communal ways of life. He thus wrote a report that would not alarm his superiors; but the local *qādi* had a different opinion. He sent an agent (*ma'mūr*) to inform Rushdīyeh that his teaching methods constituted innovation (*bed'at* in Persian) under Islamic law and were thus illegal, telling the educator he must either teach according to old principles or close his school.⁸⁸ Thereafter, Rushdīyeh voluntarily closed his school but began to rent properties for new schools in adjacent lands. He hired teachers who had graduated from public Russian schools and asked them to teach in Turkish until he was able to hire Persian-speaking teachers and write textbooks in Persian, which along with Arabic were lettered languages in Iran where he intended to establish new schools. He employed his brother for religious studies, and, at his suggestion, named the new school “Rushdīyeh”—an Ottoman term (*rusdiye*) used for reformed middle schools of the *tanzimat* period—which Mīrzā Ḥasan Tabrīzī later adopted as his own surname. In contrast to the mixed *maktab*, the Rushdīyeh school had three separate grades and he provided students with leisure time in between classes. Rushdīyeh was careful not to provide his agitators with easy cause for attack. As it was considered unbelief (*kufṛ*) to ring a bell, he came up with poems that students would sing in a rhythm mimicking the music of the *adbān*, to declare the beginning or end of the period, and to implement order, for instance to alert students that the break was over and it was time to form a queue and return to class. Students would thus sing as follows: “whoever seeks knowledge and wisdom / know that it’s time for queues to be formed.”⁸⁹ The song substituted for the bell.

Rushdīyeh’s newly opened school increased its enrollment, which meant additional tuition fees. With the extra revenue, Rushdīyeh subsidized indigent children. The school became popular across the Caucasus, he wrote. Russian, Armenian, and Muslim parents visited and examined the program. They would test children’s learning during break times and were very pleased.⁹⁰ One day, Rushdīyeh wrote, the Russian science minister (*vazīr-e ‘ulūm*) visited the school, the result of which was a personal invitation, with the carriage provided, to a nearby city for a meeting with the minister, during which he applauded Rushdīyeh’s pedagogical achievements.⁹¹ Rushdīyeh spent long hours devising the curriculum and his passion took him all the way through the night until he heard the morning call to prayer. He authored two books in Turkish for teaching the alphabet, one designed for students and the other for teachers. The new textbook fanned fear in the community

⁸⁸Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 89.

⁸⁹Ibid., 90.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Rushdīyeh had the benefit of local translators in this meeting. See *ibid.*, 92–3. Rushdīyeh was also invited to and attended a tsar crowning ceremony before he opened the first Tehran school. The invitation came from his Caucasian friend, the intellectual ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ṭālibūf. It is narrated at length in Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 97. Later, Ṭālibūf donated to the cause of education reform. It is reported that Ṭālibūf had arranged for a monthly donation of 20 *tuman* starting on 8 March 1905, to be sent to Rushdīyeh (after the educator had a falling out with Amin al-Dawleh’s son and opened the new school named *maktab*). See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*.

because of the use of the Turkish language. Just as reformers (*mutejadedin*) praised him, so the “fanatics” (*fanatik-hā*) cursed him.⁹² The textbooks’ publications costs were taken care of by the Russian minister of science. Furthermore, the minister is said to have ordered the Yerevan ministry representative to provide the school with operational support in the form of teachers in Russian language, mathematics, and natural sciences, as well as a hundred chairs and tables.⁹³ How the official support for what appears to have been a private school for Iranian Muslim subjects squared with the aforementioned Russian regulations is not clear. The curriculum consisted of Persian, Turkish, Arabic, Russian, literature (unspecified), Shariah obligations, geometry, algorithmic, geography, natural history, painting, and calligraphy.⁹⁴ The school operated successfully for three years. In the fourth year, Rushdīyeh began to implement measures that resembled new schools elsewhere and a modern disciplinary regime. He required students to wear uniforms, without which entry to the school was not permitted. The uniform included an Iranian hat, *labbādeh*, *qabāy-e rāsteh*, and low-heeled shoes.⁹⁵ When the school opened for the fourth year, 250 students wearing identical uniforms entered. Twenty indigent students were admitted for free, and the rest were asked to pay five *menta* (Russian currency) in tuition. After completion of the fifth year, fifty students received diplomas, either going in search of work or entering governmental schools in the disciplines of sciences, political science, medicine, engineering, crafts, and philosophy.⁹⁶ The practice of granting diplomas became standard at future Rushdīyeh schools, in contrast to the *maktab*, where no certificates or diplomas were awarded.

Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh visits Yerevan. An important event took place at the end of the fifth year, when Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh visited the school. From Rushdīyeh’s perspective, this visit was especially significant because his ultimate aim was to bring the new schools to Iran.⁹⁷ The king had decided to visit several regions in Iran and also took three trips to Europe, which he documented in his diaries. The end of the fifth school year coincided with Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh’s third and last trip to Europe.⁹⁸ He was traveling through Yerevan on the way back to Tehran when he noticed the front steps of the Iranian school, which Rushdīyeh had decorated with

⁹²Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 95.

⁹³Ibid., 94.

⁹⁴Ibid., 95.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid. Cf. Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh, who wrote that the school operated for four years. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*.

⁹⁷The second half of the *Ottoman Diaries* narrates the events that unfolded once Rushdīyeh went on to establish schools in Yerevan and Tabriz, including the shah’s visit to the Yerevan school. See Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 70. For the Yerevan events, there is significant overlap between the two diaries. For the Tabriz events, there is overlap with Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh’s biography but with additional mundane details.

⁹⁸For a diary of this trip, see Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh, *Rūznāmeḥ-ye khātirāt-e Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh*. Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh wrote that the shah was returning from his second European trip, see Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*.

an Iranian carpet, flags, and a picture of the shah.⁹⁹ This display was intended to lure the shah, and succeeded. Rushdīyeh explained to the king the school's accomplishments in rapid, functional literacy and informed him of his wish for a comparable school to be instituted in Iran. Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh then ordered Rushdīyeh to travel with his entourage and establish a school in Tabriz. A delighted Rushdīyeh did not hesitate and put his affairs in order, asking his brother to supervise the Yerevan school, and left for Tabriz with the shah. On their way to Tabriz, Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh inquired more about the school and Rushdīyeh spoke at length of the benefits it would have for the people and polity of Iran. Once they reached Nakhchivan, a region between Yerevan and Tabriz, Rushdīyeh was left with the director of the post office (*chapar'khāneh*). The director told the educator that he must stay until the shah left Tabriz for Tehran, and upon hearing this, Rushdīyeh realized his mistake. Reflecting back, he wrote:

It became apparent to me that when I was before the king as he was asking me about the impact the school would have, my inexperience and ignorance of the king caused me to describe its benefits at length, that indeed it won't be long until, under his highness, the God's shadow, schools would be instituted all over to liberate Iranians from ignorance, the masses would gain in knowledge and wisdom, learn of their rights, acquire profession and industry, possess wealth and property, each person acquiring, according to his or her ability, politeness and principles of good manners, free of need for police or city inspectors. Knowing their rights, as they do in civilized nations, they would gain in respect and salvation and be forever grateful to the king.¹⁰⁰

We do not have an account from Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh's perspective on what occurred between the two and why he left Rushdīyeh behind. But given the shah's broader approach to reformist activities, Rushdīyeh's belief that the reformist implications of his educational enterprise alarmed the shah is plausible. So much so that, if the diaries were true, the shah secured the closure of the Yerevan school. When Rushdīyeh returned, the school was closed and its properties were confiscated by an Iranian representative (*kārguzār*) in Yerevan who presumably had authority over Iranian subjects there.¹⁰¹ A distraught Rushdīyeh returned to his hometown of Tabriz. Although Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh had opposed his educational mission, Rushdīyeh decided to act against the shah's wishes. Remaining quiet about the shah's disapproval, he began to pursue his original mission of educating Iranians in his hometown of Tabriz, instead of Tehran. Rushdīyeh opened the first school in rooms owned by a mosque in the Sheshgelān neighborhood, which he considered most prepared and least likely to declare someone an unbeliever for education reform, as "most [residents]

⁹⁹Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*.

¹⁰⁰Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 98 (my translation).

¹⁰¹This closure is not recorded in Rushdīyeh's diary, but is documented in secondary sources, see for instance Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*.

were social elites [*a 'yān*] and well-educated.”¹⁰² In the year 1889, a long-held vision turned into a reality.¹⁰³

The Tabriz Schools

Tabriz residents were informed about the new school by a public notice (*i 'lān*). The posting took note of the poor state of existing education, claiming that only three out of a hundred students were literate when they left the *maktab*, and that most children had a deep dislike of the *maktabkhāneh*. It stated Rushdīyeh's teaching qualifications and the conditions for admission, which were more restrictive than the existing *maktab* system that opened its doors to students of different ages and abilities. Students had to be beginners and thus illiterate, and between the ages of seven and ten. Moreover, they had to meet certain health conditions, be free of balding, chickenpox, contagious diseases, and be circumcised (thus males). The tuition was between five *qirān* and one *tuman* per month—a clear departure from the old ways of the *maktabkhāneh*.¹⁰⁴ Unlike some of the prominent ulema, the mullahs who ran and taught at the *maktab* led simple lives. They would not charge a fee to students, or if they did it was on a “sliding scale” and as little as five to ten *qirān*. Instead of fixed tuition, teachers would receive gifts from the students' families, which were given at the end of the year or when the student had finished reading the Qur'an in its entirety. The gifts included foods, sweets, money, or wood intended for physical punishment.¹⁰⁵ The new curriculum and scheduling too were very different from what went on in the *maktab*. Under the old system, students went to school all year without a summer break. They attended the *maktab* from morning until evening without any short breaks, but had an extended period for lunch. Some went home to eat, while others brought their lunch with them. Students had days off on Fridays and on religious and *Nawrūz* (New Year) holidays. Moreover, school was not in session when certain women in the community gave birth, or when families left to spend time in their gardens and villages.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, Rushdīyeh held classes for 250 days and summers were free. Classes met for four hours per day with thirty-minute breaks between classes. The curriculum covered the following subjects, although not equally as more time was allotted to certain subjects: the phonetic alphabet in Azeri Turkish, reading in Turkish and Persian, grammar lessons in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic, Qur'an, Islamic jurisprudence, arithmetic, oral history, geography based on

¹⁰²Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 99.

¹⁰³Rushdīyeh gives the date 8 May 1883 (1 Rajab 1300 AH) in his diary and on letterheads for letters he would send for official purposes to indicate the beginning of his educational enterprise in Iran. This date must be incorrect because he had just left his role as a local preacher in 1882, had traveled for two years in the Ottoman world, and had worked in Yerevan for another five. The correct date therefore must be 1889. See also Shīreh'Jīnī's estimation of the date, which is the Muharram of 1889, in Baqāyī Shīreh'jīnī, *Zindagināmeḥ, Ārā'*.

¹⁰⁴Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 99–100.

¹⁰⁵Qāsimī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājārīyeh*, 56.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 70–1.

the map of Tabriz, calligraphy, dictation in Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, drawing and painting, and physical wellbeing.¹⁰⁷ The curriculum differed from the *maktab* where students were taught, based on the teacher's preference, some of the following: the alphabet, Qur'anic readings, Shariah obligations, social etiquette literature, Arabic language, Persian literature, and Islamic and Iranian history, writing composition (*tar-assul*), calligraphy (*khatt*), basic math, and *sīyāq*.¹⁰⁸ Local languages were generally not taught, and new sciences like physics and chemistry were not taught at all. Creative arts, with the exception of singing and poetry composition in a few schools, were not part of the curriculum.¹⁰⁹ Texts were not uniform and their selection depended on the instructors, but some were widely used in the subject of history; for example, the preferred text was *Nāsikh al-tavārikh*, a Qajar-commissioned nine-volume text on world history authored by Muhammad Taqī Sipīhr Kāshānī. The selected texts did not match the learning abilities of young students.¹¹⁰ As we saw, Rushdīyeh attempted to distinguish his approach by authoring textbooks specifically intended for children.¹¹¹

The Tabriz school began its first day of instruction with roughly 150 students. Rushdīyeh began instruction, all the while seeking teachers and drafting textbooks. Meanwhile, he had to go against his critics. In Tabriz too, the custodians of the old *maktab* system and the ulema to whom the community had complained were putting up resistance against Rushdīyeh's unfamiliar enterprise. In Yerevan, the teaching of Turkish led to charges of imposing Sunni over Shia Islam. In Tabriz, the charges were different. Public notices were posted claiming that the new teacher was an agent of American freemasons. Even though the Qur'an was part of the curriculum, others claimed he was neglecting the Qur'an in favor of Turkish.¹¹² Responding to these accusations, Rushdīyeh asked for the school to be allowed to reach its ninth-month anniversary, after which students would be publicly tested on their religious knowledge. When the public test was performed at a mosque and the students displayed superior comprehension of religious studies, the prayer leader (*pīshnamāz*), who appeared to have run out of options to condemn Rushdīyeh, cried that the extraordinary progress had only one explanation, that Satan was inspiring and dictating these children's speech. The school must close, he said. Rushdīyeh responded to this, saying that these children must be compared to Jesus, instead, who spoke in the cradle

¹⁰⁷Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 100–1. Six hundred hours of homework (*vazā'f-e shab*) was also assigned for a thousand hours of instructions throughout the year. See *ibid.*, 101.

¹⁰⁸Qāsimī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 62–3. Īsā Šadīq defined *sīyāq* as being the same subject as accounting (*'ilm-i ḥisāb*), which was created for court administration and written using abbreviated Arabic words based on Pahlavi signs. At the time of his writing (1957), *sīyāq* was still in use by merchants (*kasabeh*) but defunct in the primary school curriculum. See Šadīq, *Tārikh-i Farhang-i Irān*, 364.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 63, 68.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 64.

¹¹¹Writings that were intended for children continued well into Rushdīyeh's later years. For the original text of an excerpt written some two years before his death, see Gheissari, "Maktūbī az Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh."

¹¹²Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 102.

inspired by the Holy Spirit. He asked the *pīshnamāz* that they speak further to resolve the misunderstanding, so as to reverse the ruling and not jeopardize the nation's salvation, which for Rushdīyeh was firmly linked to functional literacy. Once the *pīshnamāz* heard the Jesus analogy, he said that Rushdīyeh was elevating children to the status of prophets, and refused any further discussion, declaring Rushdīyeh a *bābī*—an adherent of the messianic movement of *bābīyat* considered illegitimate by the Shia ulema. The *pīshnamāz* forbade future interactions by the community with the educator.¹¹³

This compelled Rushdīyeh to close the Tabriz school.¹¹⁴ Rushdīyeh then spoke to his sympathetic father, telling him that he could bear the burden of opposition, and that he would persist even if they hanged him and burned his body. His father advised him to be patient and provided his blessing; he then left Tabriz.¹¹⁵ After a six-month visit to Yerevan and Mashhad, he returned to Tabriz and discovered that the *pīshnamāz* had died. This gave him the opportunity to open a school near the bazaar.¹¹⁶ But opposition came anew: students (*tullāb*) of the Ṣādeqīyeh madrasa attempted to dismantle the school, engaging in acts of vandalism and threatening the school principal (*mudīr*). Rushdīyeh escaped to Mashhad and returned to Tabriz after a few months.¹¹⁷ In the Charandāb neighborhood, whose residents “were all impoverished” and where he used to preach, he opened another school where admission for indigent children was free. Rushdīyeh enrolled 370 students and employed twelve teachers. Now, the managers of old *makātīb* went after Rushdīyeh and warned his father that Rushdīyeh must close the school. He complied, leaving for Mashhad, but returning yet again.¹¹⁸ To avoid another attack on his school, Rushdīyeh tried a new approach. He maintained his pedagogical principles but kept the spatial organization of the *maktab* intact. For instance, he had children sit on the ground as opposed to chairs and tables and avoided new subjects that were not taught at the *maktab*.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, students (*tullāb*) of the Ṣādeqīyeh madrasa that had vandalized the

¹¹³Ibid., 102–3. Abbas Amanat suggested that Rushdīyeh may have been *bābī*. However, there are clear indications in his diary that he was a Twelver Shia, see *ibid.*, 144, 159, 164, 175, 183, 186. At one point, Atābak sent a female spy into the Rushdīyeh residence to find evidence that he was *bābī* and present this evidence to the ulema in an attempt to eliminate the educator's political opposition to him. But nothing emerged, and in the words of Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh, “Atābak becomes certain that Rushdīyeh is Muslim.” See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*. Scholar on Iranian educational history Qāsimī’pūyā also remarked that Rushdīyeh was Muslim despite early accusations of *bābīyat* because of his reformist enterprise. See Qāsimī’pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 205.

¹¹⁴Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 103. Rushdīyeh wrote that he distributed the school furniture and supplies among six of its teachers and asked them to open separate schools but it is not clear whether these schools became operational, and if they did, whether they were practicing new pedagogy.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 104–5.

¹¹⁶Rushdīyeh's *Diaries* end at the Yerevan and Mashhad visit, and do not record the activities after his return to Tabriz. Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh, who does not mention the Yerevan visit. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*, 31.

¹¹⁷Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*. Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh's account of the Tabriz school openings and closures are borrowed into Qāsimī’pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 192.

¹¹⁸Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e ‘umr*, 31.

school before were agitated and Rushdīyeh left for Mashhad again, to return for a fifth time, reopening the school in the bazaar neighborhood.¹²⁰ Vandals attacked again, this time throwing a child down the stairs and killing him.¹²¹

Seeing little hope of a stable enterprise in Tabriz, Rushdīyeh went to Mashhad, where he established the city's first new school. Although the governor of Mashhad appeared supportive of Rushdīyeh, word of his new approach to primary schooling had reached Mashhad. Vandals were quick to act, attacking the school and breaking his hand.¹²² Mashhad appeared no safer than Tabriz, so Rushdīyeh returned to Tabriz.¹²³ Prior opposition had made renting a place difficult, since landlords feared the destruction of their properties. Instead, Rushdīyeh sold a property he owned to a Qajar official, and bought a mosque across from the *Dār ul-funūn* of Tabriz. With permission from the ulema of Najaf, he repaired the mosque to create a space suitable for teaching children.¹²⁴ After two years of teaching, Rushdīyeh felt secure enough to hold a public examination. Local residents seemed very impressed by students' progress, but they were interrupted by an attendee who complained that this rapid learning was dangerous, since it would distance children from religion.¹²⁵ A crowd of vandals from Aqā Sayyid Alī Aqā Yazdī's mosque appeared with clubs and batons. Children and school staff left before the vandalism began, and Rushdīyeh escaped to the roof of the *Dār ul-funūn* building across from the school, where he stood watching, along with an aid (*pīshkār*) of the crown prince, Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh. The vandals threw a grenade inside the building, causing bricks to scatter around. Rushdīyeh laughed at this and the man accompanying him, bewildered, inquired about the cause of his laughter, to which he responded: "Each one of these bricks will become part of a school. I am laughing at that day, and I hope that I am alive to see it."¹²⁶

A question deserving of consideration is why it was that new education, rapid literacy in particular, caused so much anxiety for certain ulema, and, by extension, their *tullāb* and the community. A careful study of ulema writing against new education, if available, would bring us closer to a more satisfactory response than simple ideological explanations that juxtapose (enlightened) modernism against traditional stagnation.¹²⁷ I make two initial suggestions as alternative hypotheses. The most immediate

¹¹⁹This was also the strategy at the *Sharaf* school of Tehran established for indigent children in 1898. In fear of opposition, children were made to follow customary ways of sitting on the ground, instead of using chairs and desks. The school was thus carpeted. See Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*.

¹²⁰Rushdīyeh records this pattern of school operation and closure in the *Ottoman Diaries* as well, and in the context of negotiating with hostile pro-*maktab* ulema and *tullāb*. See Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 91.

¹²¹Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 32.

¹²²Ibid.; and Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 94.

¹²³Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 96.

¹²⁴Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 32.

¹²⁵Ibid., 33.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Printed writings of anti-constitutionalist ulema deal primarily with the political question of constitutional government, and arguments against new education are on the periphery. Shaykh Fazl Allah

one is a material explanation, having to do with the ulema's financial interest. In fact, this is how the reformer Yahyā Dawlatābādī saw it, writing that madrasa students (*tullāb-e dīnī*) opposed new education because the movement of the social elite's children to the new schools meant loss of income for them.¹²⁸ The less obvious but I think more interesting explanation belongs not to the material realm but the realm of ideas. Rapid literacy for all meant that everyone had quick access to *'ilm*. There would arise the danger of the masses gaining the confidence to read and learn on their own. They would then do away with the guidance of the learned ulema, misread the text, and disseminate false knowledge in the community. In other words, mass illiterates guided to the truth by the learned ulema were preferable to mass literates (mis)reading on their own. This is a hypothesis that requires testing in a separate study. For now, we shall content ourselves with the observation that many among the ulema were adamantly opposed to mass and rapid literacy as advocated by educational reformers like Rushdīyeh and did not shy away from confrontation.

In Tehran, from Patronage to Exile

After this incident, a patient Rushdīyeh left for Mashhad again and returned after some time. Although Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh had opposed his enterprise earlier, reformists within the Qajar court were increasingly sympathetic and extended their support for a new school. The Tabriz schools had received some support from the crown prince but more substantially from the soon-to-be prime minister, Amīn al-Dawleh.¹²⁹ The crown prince provided for some children's tuition, and during his Azerbaijan stay Amīn al-Dawleh provided school supplies, clothes, and food to the students.¹³⁰ Going against convention, he also encouraged aristocratic families to remove their children from the private *maktab* and enroll them in the Rushdīyeh school. Mixing was not practiced previously, since the elite thought the public *maktab* would have a corrupting influence on their children's etiquette. This perception of corruption turned on social class, not pedagogy or curriculum that were quite similar; the only difference was that private teachers generally had a higher level of learning and

Nūrī, for example, in his broader argument on the allegedly un-Islamic character of constitutional government, references new schools, Dawlatābādī's Sādāt among them, which he says would cause children to leave Islam. However, neither an argument nor a polemic is developed on why new schools are such a threat. See Nūrī's *Tadbkarat al-ghāfil va irshād al-jābil*, printed in Ābādīyān, *Mabānī-ye nazāri-ye*, 156. Archival research is needed to see if the conservative ulema had more developed arguments against new education, based on which a history of their perspective can be written. Such a study would balance the disproportionate use of modernist sources in the historiography.

¹²⁸Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e Yahyā*.

¹²⁹Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 143.

¹³⁰In his political diaries that say very little on education reform, Amīn al-Dawleh makes a single reference to his relationship with Rushdīyeh, writing that the minister was "in the beginning, the first person to bring about the establishment of the Rushdīyeh school in Tabriz." See Amīn al-Dawleh, *Khāṭirāt-e siyāsi-ye Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawleh*, 243.

received more substantial pay.¹³¹ When in 1897 Amīn al-Dawleh was appointed prime minister by the now king Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh, he became a committed patron of Rushdīyeh. He invited the educator to Tehran, where they established the capital's first new primary school a year later in 1898 (Ramadan, 1315 AH).¹³² Enrollment reached 200 students in the first few days, and in later years it was estimated at 270 to 330.¹³³ The student body was mixed: Amīn al-Dawleh enrolled forty orphans at the school and took care of their tuition, lunch, and uniforms. The rest were children of middling families (*mutivasiṭīn*) and the elites (*a'yān*); the latter's carriages would form a queue in the evenings to take their children back to their residences. These families paid anywhere between 15 *qirān* and 3 *tuman* in tuition, but also had to pay for the school-provided lunch.¹³⁴ According to one source, teacher-training courses were also provided at 25 *qirān* per class.¹³⁵ The school was composed of six grades, with nine classes in total, each having about 25–30 students. The curriculum included the study of the Qur'an, Sa'dī's *Gulistān*, ritual duties (*Shar'iyāt*), calligraphy, dictation, ethics, *fiqh*, grammar, composition (*tarassul*), *sīyāq*, introduction to accounting (*maddhal al-hisab*), geography, history, Russian, and French. Some of these subjects, in the first grade in particular, were taught through textbooks written by Rushdīyeh himself.¹³⁶

Tehran reformists instituted several other new schools, and these were heavily enrolled.¹³⁷ Four months after the Rushdīyeh school, the Ebtedāyīeh school was established under the direction of Mukhbar al-Saltāneh, grandson of Rezā Qolī Khān Hedāyat, who had returned from nine years of study in Berlin and in this period held posts in the telegraph office and Azerbaijan customs.¹³⁸ At the same time as Ebtedāyīeh, the 'Elmīyeh school was instituted by Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, a Qajar courtier who served in several official positions. Two months after this pair, the Sharaf school was set up, and later in that same year of 1898 the Eftitāhīyeh and Muẓaffarīyeh schools were instituted under the direction of two reformists, Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khān Meftāh al-Mulk and Hājj Shaykh Mehdī Kāshānī respectively. The Khiyriyeh school was also established in 1898 and, under the direction of Hājj Shaykh Hādī Najmābādī, a prominent cleric and strong ally of Rushdīyeh, its purpose was to provide new schooling for orphans. In 1899, Dānesh, Adab, and Eslām schools were instituted as well as Sādāt under the direction of Dawlatābādī.¹³⁹ All these schools were connected to an organization that came to be known as the Education Association

¹³¹ Qāsimī'pūyā, *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh*, 85.

¹³² Dawlatābādī, *Hayāt-e Yahyā*.

¹³³ Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 50; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 40.

¹³⁴ Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 41.

¹³⁵ Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 43.

¹³⁶ For the curriculum and names of these textbooks, see Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 67.

¹³⁷ Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātīrāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 325; and Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 52.

¹³⁸ Alavī, *Rijāl-e 'aṣr-e mashrūṭīyat*, 99.

¹³⁹ Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 53. Fakhr al-Dīn Rushdīyeh listed a few more schools in this period. See Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*.

(*anjuman-e ma'ārif*).¹⁴⁰ The Education Association was one of the earliest attempts to organize around the cause of education reform. Although certain courtiers were members and funded the association, it came into existence as a “bottom-up” intellectual effort and a reaction to the conservatism and perceived ineffectiveness of the official Science Ministry (*vizārat-e 'ulūm*).¹⁴¹ In addition to instituting the aforementioned new Tehran schools, the Education Association was responsible for fundraising and financial administration of these schools.¹⁴² Lack of uniformity and discipline in how primary schools operated was a common complaint among reformists, and the Education Association attempted to regulate them, by, for example, drafting a twenty-chapter bylaw on how the schools ought to operate.¹⁴³ Our sources conflict on the emphasis they give to Rushdīyeh's centrality to the formation of this association. Family biographical sources claimed it came into formation under his leadership and its original name was the “Association of Rushdīyeh School's Aiders” (*anjuman-e emnā-ye madreseh-ye Rushdīyeh*).¹⁴⁴ Rushdīyeh himself did not claim leadership in his diaries, and gave the impression that it was a collective effort.¹⁴⁵ Rushdīyeh's contemporaries agreed. According to Dawlatābādī, Rushdīyeh, based on his Tabriz efforts and the sponsorship he had received from the prime minister, viewed himself as the foremost pioneer in new education when he entered Tehran. Dawlatābādī, however, saw Rushdīyeh as a player among many others in new education and in the association. He opined that many were in fact superior to him in their knowledge and experience.¹⁴⁶ Our sources converge on one point regarding the association: the first meeting took place on Rushdīyeh school premises in 1898, the same year the school opened.¹⁴⁷ The attendees were Rushdīyeh, the Qajar science minister, Neyr al-Mulk, Dawlatābādī, Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, Meftāh al-Mulk, Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh, and 'Alī Khān Nāzīm al-Dawleh.¹⁴⁸ Additional courtiers and intellectuals were invited and joined in future meetings.

Soon after the Education Association formed, discord broke out between Rushdīyeh and others on the right manner of operating new schools. Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh became agitated with Rushdīyeh spending the association's budget on daily school lunches and high salaries, and tried to limit and eliminate the

¹⁴⁰For a history of this association in English, see Ringer, *Education, Religion*, 187.

¹⁴¹For reformist dissatisfaction with the Science Ministry, see Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātirāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 323.

¹⁴²For fundraising and financial administration in the association, see Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 230; Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātirāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 325; Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 39; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 43.

¹⁴³Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 43.

¹⁴⁴See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 39; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 53.

¹⁴⁵Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 154.

¹⁴⁶Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 226.

¹⁴⁷The date was Shawwal of 1315. See *ibid.*, 230.

¹⁴⁸See Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 43. Dawlatābādī further includes Mirzā 'Abbās Khān Muhandis'bāshī. See Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 230. Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh only listed himself, Rushdīyeh, Dawlatābādī, Miiftāh al-Mulk, Mumtaḥin al-Dawleh, and added Muhandis al-Mamālik. See Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātirāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 325.

lunches.¹⁴⁹ The collective decision of the association was to limit Rushdīyeh's spending.¹⁵⁰ The meetings were also transferred from the Rushdīyeh school to the residence of Neyr al-Mulk.¹⁵¹ Moreover, Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh acted against Rushdīyeh by using his power as foreign minister to divert 2,000 *tuman* sent specifically to Rushdīyeh, adding it to the funds of the association.¹⁵² Amīn al-Dawleh, though not resisting these decisions, remained supportive of Rushdīyeh until the very end of his service. Before leaving his post as prime minister, he provided the association as well as the science minister with a letter recommending that they treat him as superior with respect to affairs of primary education.¹⁵³

The real challenge in Tehran, however, did not come from Rushdīyeh's reformist colleagues, but from Amīn al-Dawleh's successor, Mīrzā 'Alī-Aṣḡar Khan Amīn-al-Sulṭān (later he was known as Atābak for the title of Atābak-e 'Azam conferred on him by the shah in December 1900).¹⁵⁴ The new minister ended court support for Rushdīyeh and withdrew funding from his school, which caused him to fall into debt.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he took over the Education Association, placed it under the direction of the Science Ministry, and gradually purged it of reformists, including Rushdīyeh and his reformist rival Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, who was sent off on a mission to Kurdistan.¹⁵⁶ Atābak's opposition to Rushdīyeh frightened elite parents, who withdrew them from the school.¹⁵⁷ Part of the reason for Atābak's enmity with Rushdīyeh was the latter's political activities for the constitutional cause and against the person of Atābak. Four of the school staff, including Shaykh Yaḥyā, teacher of grammar (*naḥv*) and logic and later editor-in-chief of *Iran* newspaper, had gathered after work and on school premises. With Rushdīyeh's knowledge, they composed constitutionalist

¹⁴⁹For different accounts of the conflict over Rushdīyeh's spending, see Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 230. Cf. Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e umr*, 47. Shams al-Din Rushdīyeh even believed that the raised budget belonged to the Rushdīyeh school alone, and was appropriated by the association to be spent for all the new schools, see *ibid.*, 47. For a detailed account of the conflict, from a perspective favorable to Rushdīyeh, see Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e Ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 45. It is noteworthy that in his diaries Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh is neutral on his relationship with Rushdīyeh, and does not record anything about the quarrels between the two found in other sources, perhaps in fear of appearing obstructive to education reform. Contrast this with his castigation of Amīn al-Dawleh, writing that "inwardly, the Shah and the minister didn't have the slightest interest in the education and upbringing of the people." See Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātirāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 326.

¹⁵⁰For decisions made against Rushdīyeh in these meetings, see Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 232–3, 236.

¹⁵¹See Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 45.

¹⁵²Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 233.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 291.

¹⁵⁴See Atābak-e A'zam, Amīn-al-Sulṭān (by J. Calmard), <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/atabak-e-azam>

¹⁵⁵Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e umr*, 46.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 52. For another example of this purge, see the diaries of Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh where the reformist courtier is removed from the association and sent on a mission to Kurdistan. See Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh, *Khātirāt-e Eḥtshām al-Saltāneh*, 338, 345.

¹⁵⁷Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e umr*, 46. Elite children were reenrolled when Atābak's second exile attempt failed. See *ibid.*, 59.

propaganda called night-letters (*shabnāmeḥ*) against Atābak's premiership. Atābak traced this activity back to the Rushdīyeh school when the school's *nāzīm* had a falling out with Shaykh Yaḥyā and reported their activity. Atābak arranged for the "police" (*nazmīyeh*) to issue an order for the arrest of those involved. Two of the staff suspected of authoring night-letters were captured and imprisoned.¹⁵⁸ Another was struck on the head and his body was thrown onto the street from the school's roof (it was also reported that he fled the police chase to the rooftop, and jumped, committing suicide).¹⁵⁹ Shaykh Yaḥyā was captured and exiled to Ardabīl. Rushdīyeh was more fortunate. He sought refuge with prominent cleric Shaykh Najmābādī, who had established the first new school for orphans. The cleric refused repeated requests from the court to send Rushdīyeh to Atābak.¹⁶⁰ Thereafter, Rushdīyeh left for Hajj, while his school continued to function.¹⁶¹ Upon his return from Hajj, Atābak's previous intimidation did not deter him from his political activities; he continued to produce and distribute night-letters. In response, Atābak decided to exile Rushdīyeh. The educator was informed about this decision through his court connections and fled to Qom, while Atābak forced the school's closure.¹⁶² While in Qom, Rushdīyeh was able to communicate with Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh by telegraph. The reform-friendly shah reportedly expressed concern about the educator's absence from the capital, contrary to Atābak's wishes, and demanded that he return. Rushdīyeh complied and reopened the school. A second exile attempt by Atābak, this time to Ardabil, failed when Rushdīyeh outmaneuvered the prime minister, again through communications with the shah.¹⁶³

Atābak's efforts to exile Rushdīyeh thus failed twice. Still, Rushdīyeh's fortunes turned to the worse. A few years before the constitutional order was issued by Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh, two of Rushdīyeh's key supporters died: Amīn al-Dawleh and Shaykh Najmābādī.¹⁶⁴ Amīn al-Dawleh had willed his son, Muḥsen Khān Mu'īn al-Mulk, to continue the supervision of the Rushdīyeh school after his death. The son transferred the school to a property known as Amīn ad-Dawlah's Ḥuseynīyeh, with the intention of constructing a new building.¹⁶⁵ Soon thereafter, Rushdīyeh found himself in conflict with Mu'īn al-Mulk, who was allegedly persuaded by Shaykh Yaḥyā to elevate him from the position of teacher to co-principal. Rushdīyeh refused to share his authority and left the pioneer school he had started when

¹⁵⁸These were Musmar al-Mamālik and Mīrzā Sayyid Ḥasan Kāshānī, brother to the manager of reformist *Habl al-matīn* paper, who was reportedly put in chains and sent off to Mubārakābād, Fars province. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 48. Dawlatābādī does not mention Musmar al-Mamālik in the list of those arrested. See Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 348.

¹⁵⁹This was a school-teacher by the name of Sayyid Mīrzā Muḥammad 'Alī-Khān, aged twenty-five. For the two accounts of his death, see respectively Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 48, and Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā*, 348.

¹⁶⁰Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 49.

¹⁶¹Ibid.; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e Ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 90.

¹⁶²Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 54.

¹⁶³For the full story of Rushdīyeh's strategy, see Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 58–9.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 61.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 65.

he first came to Tehran.¹⁶⁶ Rushdīyeh opened another school and simply called it *maktab*. The school carried on with new pedagogy and free admission for the poor, with enrollment reaching about a hundred students in the first month.¹⁶⁷

The second turn towards misfortune resulted from pressure by Atābak's similarly anti-constitutionalist successor, 'Ayn al-Dawleh. The new prime minister became agitated with Rushdīyeh for his continued writing and distribution of night-letters, this time against his premiership. However, Rushdīyeh's opposition to 'Ayn al-Dawleh was not simply something distributed in the secrecy of the night. It was communicated in a tense personal exchange between the two. Rushdīyeh informed the minister of the people's dissatisfaction with him, and also suggested that he undertake financial reforms and fire the notoriously unpopular head of Iranian customs, the Belgian Joseph Naus.¹⁶⁸ A displeased 'Ayn al-Dawleh ordered the closure of the Rushdīyeh *maktab*, and, unlike Atābak before him, his attempt to exile the educator succeeded. He sent Rushdīyeh to Kalāt, Khurāsān shortly before the triumph of constitutionalism, along with fellow constitutionalist Majd al-Islām, the manager of the *Adab* newspaper.¹⁶⁹ Accompanied by a colonel (*sarhang*), they were taken to Kalāt, where they were received by Āsef al-Dawleh, who supervised them while in exile.¹⁷⁰ A few months later, a telegraph reached Kalāt that Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh had issued a constitutional order and the prisoners had to be released. Thus heartened, Rushdīyeh returned to Tehran and continued his educational activities. Starting in 1907, he briefly worked with a new school named Hayāt-e jāvid, which the nascent Education Ministry instituted as an alternative to the American missionary school.¹⁷¹ The constitutional order of affairs was soon put in a hiatus when the sympathetic king was replaced by his anti-constitutionalist son, Muḥammad 'Alī Shāh. Rushdīyeh left Tehran, and attempted to organize against the shah from the northern provinces where the constitutionalists had gathered. In his diaries, he claimed a central role for himself in the organization that led to the restoration of the constitutional order, even claiming that he united nomads (*ilāt*) to rise against the anti-constitutionalist Rashid-Mulk, and persuaded commander Sipahdār to give up his alliance with 'Ayn al-Dawleh and the shah in favor of the constitutional cause.¹⁷² In the interim constitutional period, Rushdīyeh

¹⁶⁶For a partisan account of this conflict, see Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 65, 75–6; and Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e Ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 104, 113.

¹⁶⁷He could not choose the name Rushdīyeh for this school over Mu'īn al-Mulk and the Science Ministry's objections on name duplication. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 81.

¹⁶⁸Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 112–13.

¹⁶⁹Shams al-Dīn Rushdīyeh gives the date of 21 June 1906 for the exile order. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 97. Fakhr al-Dīn Rushdīyeh wrote that the departure date from Tehran to Kallāt was 13 June 1906. See Rushdīyeh, *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 152.

¹⁷⁰Incidentally, Rushdīyeh was also warmly received by a former orphan-student, Farajullāh Najjārzādeh, whom he had schooled free of cost in his childhood. See Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 132.

¹⁷¹The American school's Muslim students complained about the exclusion of Islamic subjects and the teaching of the Bible, as well as their day off being on Sunday as opposed to Friday. The ministry therefore established a different school for 123 students without interruption to their studies. See Rushdīyeh, *Savāneh-e 'umr*, 132–3.

¹⁷²Rushdīyeh, *Diaries*, 212.

became for the first time in his life primarily occupied with politics over education, although he did undertake a few educational activities in this period such as procurement of teachers for and revision to a program for a school in the city of Lankirān on the Caspian sea.¹⁷³

When the constitutional order was restored, Rushdīyeh continued his activities but now under the shadow of a new government that was attempting to regulate education and transform its spontaneous, bottom-up intellectual leadership into a project of the state.¹⁷⁴ Rushdīyeh accepted provincial assignments by the Education Ministry in Qazvīn in 1914 (1332 AH) and in Gīlān in 1918 (1336 AH).¹⁷⁵ Eventually, under the rule of Reza Shah, Rushdīyeh settled in Qom, where living costs were lower than Tehran. In 1926, Rushdīyeh asked Reza Shah's American appointment to the Ministry of Finance, Arthur Millspaugh, to establish a bank to fund a proposed educational foundation in Tehran. Although Millspaugh was sympathetic, he denied the request because of its impracticality.¹⁷⁶ In the same year, Rushdīyeh also solicited a number of western companies for free supplies for his schools, such as typewriters, and all these requests were denied as well.¹⁷⁷ In 1936, with aid from the increasingly expanding Education Ministry, he established a primary school in Qom composed of six classes.¹⁷⁸ Rushdīyeh taught there in his old age, on one occasion even falling sick while teaching. He died in Qom in 1944.¹⁷⁹

Conclusion

Under Reza Shah's rule, the *dabestān* became the normative institution of schooling in the nation with the gradual disappearance of the *maktab* in the second Pahlavi period. Political power appropriated what had begun as an intellectual project of new education. The Pahlavi state tasked itself with public education (*t'alīm va tarbiyat-i 'umūmī*) and the generation of mass, functional literacy.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, the disciplinary order of education Rushdīyeh had introduced to Iran via French-instituted

¹⁷³Ibid., 178.

¹⁷⁴As an example of increase in government management of education, see 1913 document from the newly instituted teachers' college on requirements for teacher certification. Certificate of Tehran Teacher's College (*tašdīqnāmeḥ-ye dār al-mu'alimīn-e Tebran/ Certificat De L'École Normal De Téhéran*), 1913, in National Library and Archive Organization of Iran, Tehran, Iran. 280/4314.

¹⁷⁵Rushdīyeh, *Zindigināmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 229. These posts are not mentioned in Shams al-Din Rushdīyeh's account.

¹⁷⁶Administrator General of the Finances, Arthur Millspaugh, to Rushdīyeh, 23 June 1926, in Library, Museum, and Document Center of Iran Parliament (not yet archived).

¹⁷⁷As an example see Seidel and Naumann to Rushdīyeh, 24 August 1926, in Library, Museum, and Document Center of Iran Parliament (not yet archived).

¹⁷⁸Rushdīyeh, *Savāneḥ-e 'umr*, 146. The same source also reports that in the same school he offered a class for the blind to acquire literacy. See *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹See Rushdīyeh, *Zindigināmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma'ārif Rushdīyeh*, 236; and Rushdīyeh, *Savāneḥ-e 'umr*, 147.

¹⁸⁰For statistics on primary education growth in numbers of schools and pupils under Pahlavi administration, see Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 84.

training in Beirut was intensified under Reza Shah; Rushdīyeh, who had instituted one of the first bylaws (*nizām-nāmeḥ*) for the uniform administration of primary schools, had to comply with new, expanding disciplinary regimes. A Ministry of Education report from 1932 listed forty rules (*qavānīn*) and bylaws, from those regulating minor affairs such as renewing teacher contracts to those on general affairs like teacher training or school administration, including orders (*dastūr*) on implementation of particular subjects such as physical wellbeing (*varzish*).¹⁸¹ Similar to Rushdīyeh, the state drafted textbooks intended specifically for primary education.¹⁸² Moreover, students were ordered according to their age, similar to Rushdīyeh schools, not in mixed-age settings as was the case with the *maktab*. The curriculum and schedule too resembled changes implemented by Rushdīyeh; for example, new subjects like physical wellbeing were included and the long break was scheduled for summer months. As with Rushdīyeh's approach, the state schools required students to meet registration requirements and wear uniforms. Up to the fifth year boys uniformly wore shorts. Like Rushdīyeh, who emphasized examination to measure student performance, on functional literacy in particular, the Ministry of Education scheduled examinations for all students. The examination regulation of 1933 specified that a committee should be appointed for each school to supervise tests in the first six grades.¹⁸³ But the *dabestān* also broke from Rushdīyeh in certain respects. For example, it became more nationalistic and monolingual in character and Rushdīyeh's practice of teaching students in their local languages like Turkish was eliminated. Despite praise for Pahlavi administration of education, Rushdīyeh was critical of the supposedly irreligious subjectivity produced by Reza Shah's education policies.¹⁸⁴ In his diaries, he rebuked Iranian schools and students in the 1930s. Students, he claimed,

lack knowledge [and] are enemies of religion and religiosity ... [t]heir knowledge rests on breaking from Arabs and Arabic; their names are devotees of homeland but their deeds produce harm for the same homeland and its inhabitants, outwardly they're European-like but inwardly are simpletons ... if they ask a student what is your religion, the student is either compelled to say I am without one or that I have this or that religion, which is anything but Islam.¹⁸⁵

The *dabestān* also gained favor with religious power and remained the normative institution under the Islamic Republic. A 1916 letter documented a conversation between the principal of a new school in Isfahan (the school was named Rushdīyeh) and a pro-

¹⁸¹Ministry of Education's annual report in *vizārat-e ma'ārif, awqaf va ṣ-anāye'-e mustazrafeḥ, Statistical Annual Report, 1932–33* (1311–12), 11–14. These bylaws cover other levels of education in addition to primary education.

¹⁸²Arasteh, *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*, 56.

¹⁸³Ibid.

¹⁸⁴For this praise, see Rushdīyeh, *Ottoman Diaries*, 25.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., 29.

minent mujtahid in the city of a more conservative disposition. He applauded the curriculum and approved of the school.¹⁸⁶ Despite some talk of reviving the institution of the *maktab* in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution of 1979, the *dabestān* remained firmly intact and a prerequisite to studies at the seminary (*hawzeh*). Rushdīyeh's remark to Muẓaffar al-Dīn Shāh's aid in Tabriz, that each brick from his school shattered by the pro-*maktab* vandals will one day be re-laid to become part of a new school proved true—the *maktab* was replaced by the *dabestān*.

Bibliography

- Ābādiyān, Ḥusayn. *Mabānī-ye naẓarī-ye ḥukūmat-e mashrūteh va mashrū'eh* [The theoretical principles of constitutionalist and Shariatist government]. Tehran: Nashr-e Nay, 1995-96.
- Abrahamian, Ervand. *A History of Modern Iran*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Ākhund'zādah, Faṭḥ 'Alī. *Alifbā-ye jadīd va maktūbāt* [New alphabet and writings]. Tabriz: Nashr-e Iḥyā', 1978.
- 'Alavī, Abū al-Ḥasan. *Rijāl-e 'aṣr-e mashrūṭīyat* [Notables of the constitutional period]. Tehran: Intishārāt-e Asāṭīr, 1984-85.
- Algar, Hamid. *Religion and State in Iran, 1785–1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Amīn al-Dawleh, Mīrzā 'Alī Khān. *Khātirāt-e siyāsī-ye Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawleh* [Mīrzā 'Alī Khān Amīn al-Dawleh's political memoirs]. Ed. Hāfez Farmān-farmā'iyān. Tehran: Kitābhā-ye Īrān, 1962-63.
- Arasteh, A. Reza. *Education and Social Awakening in Iran*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1962.
- Arjomand, Said Amir. *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- Baqāyī Shīreh'jīnī, Muḥammad. *Zindagīnāmeḥ, āra', naẓarāt va khātirāt-e Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh* [Biography, ideas and memoirs of Mīrzā Ḥasan Roshdīeh]. Tehran: Sāzmān-e Asnād va Kitābkhāneh-ye Millī-ye Jumhūrī-ye Islāmī-ye Īrān, 2015-2016.
- Dawlatābādī, Yahyā. *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā* [Life of Yahyā]. Ed. Mujtabā Farahānī. 5 vols. Vol. 1. Tehran: Firdawsī, 2008-2009.
- Education, Endowments, and the Arts Ministry (*vizārāt-e ma'ārif, awqaf va ṣanā'ī-ye mustazrafeḥ*). *Statistical Annual Report of the Education Ministry*. Tehran, Iran, 1932–33 (1311–12).
- Eḥteshām al-Saltāneh. *Khātirāt-e Eḥteshām al-Saltāneh* [Eḥteshām al-Saltāneh's memoirs]. Edited by Muḥammad Mahdī Mūsavī. Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Zavvār, 2013-2014.
- Evered, Emine Önhan. *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.
- Gheissari, Ali. "Maktūbī az Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh" [A transcript by Mīrzā Ḥasan Rushdīyeh], ed. with an introductory note and additions. *Ketāb-e Māh Tārīkh va Joḡhrāfiyā* [History and geography], 17, no. 11 (185) (Mehr 2013): 82–9; revised edition, *Bukhārā* (forthcoming).
- Jamālzādeh, Muḥammad 'Alī. *Sar va tab-e yak karbās, yā, Isfahānāmeḥ* [Book of Isfahān]. Tehran: Ma' refat, 1956.
- Kasravī, Aḥmad. *Tārīkh-e mashrūteh-ye Īrān* [History of Iranian constitutional revolution]. Tehran: Muāssaseh-ye Intishārāt-e Amīr Kabīr, 1984-85.
- Kasravī, Aḥmad. *Zindagānī-i Man: Az Kūdakī Tā Sī Sālaḡī* [My life: From childhood to thirty]. Bethesda, MD: IbeX Publishers, 2009.
- Matthee, Rudi. "Transforming Dangerous Nomads into Useful Artisans, Technicians, Agriculturists: Education in the Reza Shah Period." *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 313–36.

¹⁸⁶Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Najafī to the Rushdīyeh school and its principal, Eṣfahān, 1916/*ṣafar* 1335, in National Library and Archive Organization of Iran, Tehran, Iran, 297/26012.

- Menashri, David. *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh. *Rūznāmeḥ-ye khāṭirāt-e Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh dar saḡar-e sivvum-e farangestān* [Daily diary of Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh in his third trip to Europe]. Ed. Muḡammad Ismā‘īl Rizvānī. Tehran: Rasā, 1990-91.
- Nāṭiq, Humā. *Kārnāmah-i farhangī-i farangī dar Īrān* [The cultural history of the West in Iran]. Pāris: Khāvarān, 1996-97.
- Qāsimī’pūyā, Iqbāl. *Madāris-e jadīd dar dawreh-ye Qājāriyeh: bānīyān va pīshrawān* [New schools under the Qajars: founders and pioneers]. Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Dānishgāhī, 1998.
- Ringer, Monica M. *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran*. Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001.
- Rushdīyeh, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Zindigīnāmeḥ-ye pīr-e ma‘ārif Rushdīyeh: bunyānguzār-e farhang-e nuvīn-e Īrān* [The biography of education veteran, Rushdīyah: pioneer of Iran’s new culture]. Tehran: Hīrmand, 1991-92.
- Rushdīyeh, Shams al-Dīn. *Savāneh-e ‘umr* [Life events]. Tehran: Nashr-e Tāriḡh-e Īrān, 1983-84.
- Ṣadiq, ‘Isā. *Tāriḡh-i farhang-i Īrān* [The cultural history of Iran]. Tīhrān: Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1336/1957.
- Ṣafā, Zabīḡ Allāh. *Tāriḡh-e adabīyāt dar Īrān* [Literary history in Iran]. Tehran: Intishārāt-e Firdaws, 1988-89.
- Sarafian, Kevork Avedis. *History of Education in Armenia*. La Verne, CA: Press of the La Verne Leader, 1930.
- Shīrāzī, Mīrzā Sāleh. *Safarnāmah’hā* [Travelogues]. Tehran: Nashr-e Nigāh-e Mu‘āser, 1387/2008–09.
- Somel, Selçuk Akşin. *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline*. Boston, MA: Brill, 2001.
- Vincent, David. *The Rise of Mass Literacy: Reading and Writing in Modern Europe*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2000.
- Yousef, Hoda A. *Composing Egypt: Reading, Writing, and the Emergence of a Modern Nation, 1870–1930*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Ẓū al-Faqāri, ḡasan, and Maḡbūbah ḡaydarī. *Adabīyāt-e maktab’khāneh-ye dar Īrān* [Maktab literature in Iran]. Tehran: Rushd’āvarān, 2012-2013.