



E'TEŻĀD-AL-SALṬANA, 'ALĪQOLĪ MĪRZĀ

E'TEŻĀD-AL-SALṬANA, 'ALĪQOLĪ MĪRZĀ, first minister of sciences (*'olūm*, meaning education) of the Qajar period and a scholar (b. 23 Rabī' I 1238/7 December 1822; d. 10 Moharram 1298/14 December 1880). He was the forty-seventh son of Fath-'Alī Shah by Gol-pīrahan Kānom, an Armenian *kanīz* from Tbilisi (E'teżād-al-Salṭāna, *Eksīr*, p. 228). After receiving the customary princely education (and possibly some rudiments of modern sciences) while serving as an attendant in his father's court, he was appointed in the early 1840s by his nephew, Moḥammad Shah (r. 1835-48), as the agent (*pīškār*) and later minister (*wazīr*) to Malek Jahān Kānom (better known by her later title Mahd[-e] 'Olyā), the shah's chief wife and 'Alīqolī's half-sister. He was responsible for administering her affairs, including the governorate of the Kalkāl region in Azarbaijan, the income of which was earmarked for the expenses of Malek Jahān's household (Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-ṣafā* X, pp. 102, 171, 561; cf. 'Azod-al-Dawla, p. 36, comm., p. 234). Upon Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's accession in 1264/1848, 'Alīqolī was instrumental in advising Mahd 'Olyā, the mother of the new shah, when she presided for several months over the council of the notables (known as *majles-e jomhūrī*, "representative council") in Tehran. Mīrżā Naẓar-'Alī Ḥakīm-bašī Qazvīnī, the council's candidate for premiership and an influential Sufi, was 'Alīqolī's brother-in-law (Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-ṣafā* X, p. 353; see also Amanat, pp. 95-100). Soon after the shah's arrival in the capital and Mīrżā Taqī Khan Amīr(-e) Kabīr's appointment to the premiership, Ḥakīm-bašī was sent into exile and Mahd 'Olyā's official role was severely curtailed, but 'Alīqolī



continued to serve as her agent. Less than two years later, in February 1850, when an alleged Babi plot to assassinate the premier and the Emām-e Jom'ā (q.v.) of the capital was uncovered by Amīr Kabīr's agents, 'Alīqolī came under suspicion because of his association with Babi figures, including a philosophy teacher, Mollā 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Heravī. To absolve himself, he was pressured not only to turn in Mollā 'Abd-al-Raḥīm but to organize a raid by his servants on a Babi meeting place in Tehran. The episode led to the arrest and public execution of seven Babi figures, including the Bāb's uncle, Ḥājji Sayyed 'Alī Šīrāzī. However, Mollā 'Abd-al-Raḥīm's death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment because 'Alīqolī pleaded with the shah, and he later took refuge in Ottoman Iraq (E'tezād-al-Saltāna, pp. 95-106). As a confidant of Mahd 'Olyā, 'Alīqolī may have collaborated with the premier's opponents, but there is no evidence implicating him in the 1851-52 dismissal and subsequent execution of Amīr Kabīr. In 1295/1878 he even confided to Ḥājji Moḥammad-'Alī Sayyāḥ that Amīr Kabīr's murder was a source of misfortune for the country and that with his death "Persia, too, died," a statement which indicates a sense of remorse (Sayyāḥ, p. 95).

In 1269/1852-53, during Mīrzā Āqā Khan Nūrī's premiership, 'Alīqolī first became involved with the educational institution initiated by Amīr Kabīr, serving as the chief examiner and inspector to the newly-built government college, the Dār al-fonūn [q.v.]. At this time he was no longer in Mahd 'Olyā's service, though he apparently enjoyed the support of his powerful patron. Apparently with her blessing, he married Māh-Solṭān Khanom, a dancer and musician in the service of Mahd 'Olyā and once a favorite of Naṣer-al-Dīn. He also received the land tenure of the Tārom region previously assigned to Mahd 'Olyā (E'temād-al-Saltāna, *Mer'āt al-boldān* I, 534). During the Herāt crisis, he wrote a brief history of Afghanistan and, in 1272/1856, received the title of E'tezād-al-Saltāna (assistant to the monarchy) from the shah. Later, in 1275/1858, he was formally confirmed by the shah to the directorship (*rīāsāt*) of Dār al-fonūn, responsible for examinations and accreditation, a tenure he maintained until the end of his life. Under him Reżāqolī Khan Hedāyat, a protégé of the prince, served as the college's principal and manager of day to day affairs (Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-ṣafā* X, pp. 621, 631; E'temād-al-Saltāna, *Montazam-e nāsĀerī*, ed. Reżwānī, III, p. 1802). Encouraged by some early experiments in telegraphic communication by Mīrzā Malkom Khan and Dār al-fonūn's European teachers and motivated by the financial prospects, E'tezād-al-Saltāna proposed in 1275/1858 to the shah to build Persia's first government-operated telegraph line between Tehran and Tabrīz, parallel to



the recently-erected British-owned Indo-European line. In *Ḍu'l-ḥejja* 1275/July 1859, when the shah arrived in the *Soltānīya* summer camp (near *Zanjān*), the Persian line was operational between the camp and the capital, and soon after it reached *Tabrīz*.

On the same occasion, and as part of the shah's attempt to create new governmental departments, *E'tezād-al-Saltāna* was appointed as the Persia's first minister of sciences (*wazīr-e 'olūm*) in charge of government-sponsored education, communication, and publication. His scholarly interests, acquaintance with literary and learned figures, experience in *Dār al-fonūn*, and princely status offered a mix of modernity and tradition acceptable to the shah, who was weary of the conservative backlash. By 1283/1866-67, a decade later, his diverse responsibilities included supervision of education and crafts (*ṣanāye*); *Dār al-fonūn*; Persia's first European-modeled public hospital (*marīz-kāna-ye dawlatī*), which was a subsidiary of *Dār al-fonūn*; government newspapers; printing houses in *Tehran* and in the provinces; the telegraph lines; and modern factories as well as the governorate of *Malāyer* and *Tūyserkān* regions, the income of which was allocated for *Dār al-fonūn*'s expenditure (*E'temād-al-Saltāna*, *Montaẓam-e nāsĀerī*, ed. *Reẓwānī*, III, pp. 1812, 1815, 1885). In 1283/1866-87, under *E'tezād-al-Saltāna*'s supervision, a second telegraphic line was built between *Būshehr* and *Jolfā* connecting Persian lines to those of the British from *Būshehr* to *India* and to Russian lines in the *Caucasus*. With the growth of telegraphic communications and the increasing income from this source, the shah decided in 1291/1874-75 to reorganize the telegraph office under *E'tezād-al-Saltāna*'s chief assistant, *Āliqolī Khan Moḳber-al-Dawla*, whose position was later upgraded to the ministerial level. Responsibilities for trade, mines, and industries were also assigned to new ministries, although for a time in 1293/1876-77 *E'tezād-al-Saltāna* regained control of the mines. Supervision of the *Tehran* public hospital was assigned after his death to *Moḳber-al-Dawla* (*E'temād-al-Saltāna*, *Montaẓam-e nāsĀerī*, ed. *Reẓwānī*, III, p. 1887; *M. Hedāyat*, p. 59; *Maḥbūbī*, *Mo'assasāt* II, pp. 220-228 and other sources cited there).

Among *E'tezād-al-Saltāna*'s early initiatives as minister of sciences was the dispatch to *France* in 1275/1858-59 of a group of forty-two students, mostly graduates of *Dār al-fonūn*, for further education in scientific, technical, and medical fields. Placed under the supervision of Persia's envoy to the French court, *Ḥasan-Āli Khan Garrūsī*, this group of government-funded students, the only one organized in the *Nāṣerī* period, was selected primarily on the basis of



scholarly merits rather than family status (Maḥbūbī, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 320-55 and sources cited there). E'tezād-al-Saltāna's wishes to broaden modern education beyond the privileged classes may also be discerned in an 1859 public announcement setting the admission procedure for Dār al-fonūn and for the Tabrīz military academy as well as preliminary plans for establishing new schools in other provinces (*Waqāye'-e ettefāqīya* 458, 19 Jomādā II 1276 [13 January 1860]; also cited in Maḥbūbī, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 311-14).

The slowdown, and at times abandonment, of such initiatives, may be attributed both to the shah's fears of a backlash among the clergy and E'tezād-al-Saltāna's own conservative proclivities. Although he was among the signatories of the famous 1872 Reuter concession (Teymūrī, p. 112) and accompanied the shah on his 1873 trip to Europe, E'tezād-al-Saltāna pursued a cautious approach towards reform. Upon his return to Tehran he even took part in the protest movement orchestrated by the Qajar princes, some of the ulema, and the harem against Ḥosayn Khan Mošīr-al-Dawla, the shah's reform-minded premier and the man responsible for negotiating the Reuter concession. E'tezād-al-Saltāna's opposition to Mošīr-al-Dawla may have originated in his fear of losing his office under the new administration. Not surprisingly, when he felt secure in his post, he was prepared to collaborate with Mošīr-al-Dawla. Previously a member of the Government Consultative Council (Majles-e dār al-šūrā-ye dawlatī) in the early 1860s, he was appointed by the shah in Šafar 1291/March 1874 as the head of the new "Council of Benevolent Reforms" (Majles-e tanzīmāt-e ḥasana), which was set up by Mošīr-al-Dawla on the Ottoman model to enforce a comprehensive code for overhauling all aspects of provincial administration. The council's work, however, was effectively brought to a halt in September 1875, primarily because of clerical resistance to its reforms but also because of the shah's habitual capriciousness (Bakhash, pp. 168-70; Nashat, pp. 101-7).

In 1277/1860-61 E'tezād-al-Saltāna appointed the renowned artist Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Ġaffārī Kāšānī (q.v.) as the editor of Persia's official gazette, *Rūz-nāma-ye dawlat-e 'alīya-ye Īrān*, a successor to *Waqāye'-e ettefāqīya*, known for its remarkable lithographic illustrations. Ġaffārī's editorship ended with his death in 1283/1866-67 but the paper continued to appear until 1287/1871-72 when Mošīr-al-Dawla took charge of the press and reorganized the gazette. E'tezād-al-Saltāna also oversaw publication of Persia's first scholarly journal, *Rūz-nāma-ye 'elmīya-ye dawlat 'alīya-ye Īrān*, published monthly at the Dār al-fonūn press with French and Arabic supplements and using for the first time



the Persian (Jalālī) solar calendar and Gregorian calendar in addition to the Islamic lunar calendar. A number of Persian and European teachers of Dār al-fonūn contributed to this journal, of which fifty-three issues were published between Ša'bān 1280/January 1864 and Šawwāl 1288/November 1871. It reappeared after a lapse of five years as *Rūz-nāma-ye 'elmī* from Dhu'l-ḥejja 1293/February 1876 until Rabī' I 1297/March 1879 with Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E'temād-al-Salṭana (q.v.) as the editor but still under E'tezād-al-Salṭana. Another weekly publication during E'tezād-al-Salṭana's tenure, *Rūz-nāma-ye mellat-e sanīya-ye Īrān*, otherwise known as *Rūz-nāma-ye mellatī*, was published under the editorship of Ḥakīm Sāmānī (son of the poet Mīrzā Ḥabīb Qā'ānī) between Rabī' I 1283/July 1866 and Jomādā II 1287/September 1870. Originally intended to reflect public opinion, it soon turned into a literary journal to which E'tezād-al-Salṭana himself contributed biographical articles on classical and contemporary Persian poets. Among its critics was Mīrzā Fatḥ-'Alī Ākūndzāda, who questioned the symbols on its masthead, its format, and its contents (Šadr Hāšemī, *Jarā'ed o majallāt* IV, p. 237; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, pp. 64-65; Maḥbūbī, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 251-53, II, pp. 24-25).

E'tezād-al-Salṭana's most important scholarly contribution was his supervision and patronage of the first modern Persian encyclopedia, *Nāma-ye dānešvarān*, a multi-volume alphabetically-ordered work containing biographical articles about Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, poets, physicians, mystics, and others from the rise of Islam to the Qajar period based on original sources and the information gathered from around the country. Inaugurated by the royal decree of 1294/1877, the four original authors of *Nāma-ye dānešvarān* began their work under E'tezād-al-Salṭana's supervision. His guidelines defined the objective of the project and emphasized religious and denominational impartiality, consistency, conciseness, eloquence, and accessibility; final editorial judgment was reserved to E'tezād-al-Salṭana himself. Under the editorship of Shaikh Moḥammad-Mahdī Šams-al-'Olamā 'Abd-al-Rabbābādī, only the first and most extensive volume appeared during E'tezād-al-Salṭana's lifetime (Tehran, 1296/1879; see the introduction for details). Except for Mīrzā Ḥasan Ṭāleqānī (Adīb), who was dismissed after E'tezād-al-Salṭana's death because of his Babi-Bahai beliefs, other authors of the *Nāma* continued working on the project (and others joined them) and another six volumes, up to letter *šīn*, were published under Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E'temād-al-Salṭana and his successors by 1324/1906-7, when the project was abandoned (Mošār, *Fehrest* II, cols. 3234-35; Āryanpūr, *Az Šabā tā Nīmā* I, 196-200).



E'tezād-al-Salṭana's scholarly interests, as diverse as astronomy, history, and poetry, were primarily grounded in the traditional sciences of his time although he had acquainted himself with Western sciences through translations by Dār al-fonūn's European teachers (see E'temād-al-Salṭana *Rūznāma-ye kāṭerāt*, p. 75 for his French books). He studied the philosophy of Mollā Ṣadrā with 'Abd al-Raḥīm Heravī and taught him in exchange medieval Islamic mathematical and astronomical texts based on Hellenistic sources (E'tezād-al-Salṭana, p. 95). He invited to the capital a mathematician, Mollā 'Alī-Moḥammad Eṣfahānī, to be his aide in the ministry of sciences and to collaborate with him on various projects. 'Alī-Moḥammad's son, Mīrẓā 'Abd-al-Ġaffār Najm-al-Molk, a distinguished graduate of Dār al-fonūn and subsequently a teacher of mathematics and astronomy there, was also among E'tezād-al-Salṭana's protégés (E'temād-al-Salṭana, *Ma'āṭer wa'l-ātār*, p. 268). Among E'tezād-al-Salṭana's own works, the most important is *Falak al-sa'āda* (Tehran, 1278/1861-62), an attack on astrology as a pseudo-science and dismissal of belief in the auspicious or ominous influences of celestial bodies. His criticism of astrology followed the model of such classical Islamic scholars as Bīrūnī, Fārābī, and Avicenna (Ebn Sīnā; qq.v.), but E'tezād-al-Salṭana also discussed modern astronomical discoveries at length and made what was probably the first published assault in Persian on the still widely accepted Ptolemaic theory. Publication of the *Falak al-sa'āda* had adverse repercussions in conservative scholarly circles and gave rise to some criticism to which the author responded. Earlier in 1277/1860 he had arranged for astrological references to be eliminated from the official calendars (*Ādamīyat*, pp. 21-24). His *'Arz al-boldān*, written in 1270/1854 but unpublished, was a short treatise on geodesy produced in collaboration with 'Alī-Moḥammad Eṣfahānī. His more comprehensive *Raṣad-kāna-ye Marāḡa* in 1278/1861, also unpublished, surveyed the history of the famous Il-khanid observatory and gave a description of its ruins as well as an account of the important astronomical tables up to his own time (*Monzawī, Noskaha* I, pp. 293, 329). E'tezād-al-Salṭana's interest in astronomy also prompted him to commission a translation into Persian of Bīrūnī's famous *al-Āṭār al-bāqīa 'an al-qorūn al-kālīa* to which he also added an introduction. He also encouraged the translation into Persian and publication of Descartes' *Discours de la methode* as *Ḥekmat-e nāṣerīya* (Tehran, 1279/1862), in the introduction to which E'tezād-al-Salṭana was acknowledged (*Ādamīyat*, p. 18).

E'tezād-al-Salṭana's association with a number of Babi scholars and his witnessing of the rise of the Babi movement encouraged him to produce a



work on heresiography, entitled *al-Motanabbīyīn*, which surveyed claimants to prophethood up to his own time on the model of Biruni's *Ātār* (and named after the chapter "pseudo-prophets" in that work). On the Babis, except for a short section, his account is taken from Moḥammad-Taqī Sepehr's *Tārīk-e qājārīya* (also known as *Nāseḵ al-tawārīk*) and suffers from the same biases and inaccuracies as its source. E'tezād-al-Salṭana's other historical work, *Eksīr al-tawārīk*, a manuscript in two volumes (Monzawī, *Fehrest* VI, p. 4221), surveys Persian history from mythical dynasties of the *Šāh-nāma* to the year 1258/1842, the date of its compilation (the volume dealing with Qajar history has been edited by J. Kayānfār, Tehran, 1370 Š./1991). On the eve of the Herat crisis and the subsequent Anglo-Persian war, he also wrote a history of Afghanistan called *Tārīk-e waqāye' wa sawāneḥ-e Afġānestān* (Tehran, 1273/1856-57) highlighting Persia's claim to sovereignty over Herāt province. Other short articles and treatises by E'tezād-al-Salṭana appeared in *Rūznāma-ye mellat-e sanīya*, among them a critique of Daqīqī's poetry in which the author blamed Ferdowsī for unacknowledged borrowing from his predecessor. Specimens of his poetry, mostly *gazals*, with the pen name *Fakrī* (or *Fakrī-e Qājār*) appeared in several literary biographical dictionaries of the period (Dīvānbeygī Šīrāzī, II, pp. 1291-96; *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* I, p. 84) but his short *dīvān* known as *Jawāher-e manẓūm* (or *Dīvān-e Fakrī*) remains unpublished (Monzawī, *Fehrest* III, p. 2460). His other works on religious and scientific topics (including a treatise on balloons) also remain unpublished (on manuscripts of his works, see Anwār, I, pp. 343, 462; Maḥbūbī, *Mo'assasāt* II, p. 23). E'temād-al-Salṭana makes use of E'tezād-al-Salṭana's *Eksīr* in his *Mer'āt al-boldān* (e.g., I, pp. 63-68, on the origins of the Qajars) and cites his responses to the author's numerous queries (e.g., I, pp. 824-25 on Tehran). After his death, E'tezād-al-Salṭana's valuable library, including rare manuscripts in astronomy and heresiography, were purchased by Mošīr-al-Dawla for the library of his own endowment, the Madrasa-ye nāṣerī (also known as the Sepahsālār library and recently renamed after Mortazā Moṭahharī; for its catalog see *Fehrest-e ketāb-kāna-ye Madrasa-ye 'ālī-e Sepahsālār*, 4 vols., Tehran, 1315-46 S./ 1936-67; vol. 5 not yet published).

E'tezād-al-Salṭana's circle in the 1850s and 1860s included among others the poet Mīrzā Ḥabīb Qā'ānī; the essayist Mīrzā Ṭāher Eṣfahānī, known as Dībāčā-negār; and Mīrzā Aḥmad Ṭabīb Kāšānī, a teacher of traditional medicine in Dār al-fonūn. Despite a facade of religiosity, E'tezād-al-Salṭana was known for his nocturnal gatherings and hedonistic proclivities. Among titles published with E'tezād-al-Salṭana's patronage is the *Dīvān* of Yaġmā Jandaqī (Tehran,



1283/1866), the celebrated poet and member of E‘tezād-al-Salṭana’s literary circle known for his essays in pure (*sara*) Persian as well as for his satirical invective, his erotica, and his obscene poems.

E‘tezād-al-Salṭana’s contribution as a minister presiding over the government’s educational, scientific, and cultural endeavors for more than two decades is significant in two respects. First, although conforming with the cultural and political strictures of his time, he was nevertheless able to appreciate aspects of modern European technological and educational advances, without losing sight of the achievements of his own culture, and apply them with tact to the Qajar environment. As an influential prince who enjoyed the shah’s confidence, he could withstand conservative pressure and himself display anti-orthodox views, especially in the areas of modern sciences and the study of religion. He patronized a generation of literary and cultural figures and even harbored non-conformists in his circle. Though by the standards of Amīr Kabīr’s statesmanship the achievements of his long tenure as minister were meager, he nevertheless was a realistic conduit for modernization at a time when external and internal conditions were not favorable for such change. Second, his career traits of indigenous cultural nationalism are visible in his patronage of *Nāma-ye dānešvarān* and publication of historical and scientific works about Persia as well as in his implicit support in the early 1860s for dissident figures such as Jalāl-al-Dīn Mīrzā and the *Fāramūšī-kāna* circle (qq.v.).

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