



## HAŠTRUDI, MOḤSEN

**HAŠTRUDI (Hachtroudi), MOḤSEN**, (1907-1976; [Figure 1](#)) contemporary Iranian mathematician and popular lecturer. He was born in Tabriz on 22 Dey 1286 Š./12 January 1907 and received his primary education in that city. He then moved to Tehran, where he finished his secondary education at the Dār al-fonun school (q.v.) in 1925. He studied medicine in Tehran for a few years before being sent to France as a government-sponsored student to pursue his studies in mathematics.

Upon his return to Persia, he registered to study mathematics at the newly founded Dār al-mo‘allemīn-e markazi (later called Dānešsarā-ye ‘āli). He then went to France to continue his studies and enrolled at the science faculty of the Sorbonne. He received his Bachelor’s degree in 1314 Š./1935 and his *d’etat* doctorate in 1316 Š./1937. His thesis, entitled “Les espaces d’éléments à connexion projective normale,” was supervised by Élie Cartan, one of the major figures in mathematics of the 20th century.

Once back in Tehran, he was appointed assistant professor at the Faculty of Science of the Dānešsarā-ye ‘āli and became full professor in 1941. He was also appointed the Director of Tehran’s Department of Education, President of the University of Tabriz (1951), and the Dean of the Faculty of Science at the University of Tehran (1957).

Haštrudi’s mathematical research was in the area of differential geometry. In his doctoral thesis he greatly generalized the work of Cartan on constructing a projective connection used in studying systems of differential equations.



Today this is known to the mathematical community as the *Hachtroudi Connection*. He later used intrinsically defined affine and Weylian connections to study the invariants of differential systems relative to various groups of transformations.

Haštrudi spent much of his time giving public lectures, championing the cause of critical thinking, and popularizing scientific and technological advances. He loved philosophy, poetry, and music and wrote poetry himself. By presenting scientific ideas in a literary fashion, he succeeded in reaching out to a wide audience who would otherwise be alienated by such discussions.

Haštrudi was committed to the principles of logical positivism and exaggerated the importance and the centrality of the exact sciences, to the extent that he considered social sciences and humanities to be unscientific and so of little value. Yet he believed that philosophy, art, and mysticism could complement science. For him, science was the only form of knowledge that could be taken seriously, while art was the tender and subtle understanding of life, and philosophy was the grand *episteme*. None of these was worth much, unless it was based on originality and innovation.

Haštrudi's main mathematical contributions consist of his doctoral thesis, published in 1937 in Paris, and three pamphlets published in Tehran between 1945 and 1956. As a pioneering Iranian mathematician of modern times and a tireless advocate of critical and scientific thinking, however, Haštrudi had an important symbolic and moral significance for an entire generation of Iranians and an influence that transcends judgments based on his published works.

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