

THE MOST FAMOUS ENLIGHTENER OF THE CAUCASUS IN THE
MEMOIRS

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Abstract:

Mahammad Taghi Sidgui, who took a particular place in the history of the literature and enlightenment of Azerbaijan during 19th century was one of the famous enlightener of the Caucasus. In the Institute of Manuscripts of ANAS after named M. Fuzuli is preserved a rich found of his personal archives. Here are preserved various documents, manuscripts and letters. Sidgui's life and activities are more comprehensive analyzed in the memoirs which had been written about him. In these memoirs have been spoken about Sidgui's pedagogical activity, "Akhtar" and "Maktabi-tarbiyyah" - important schools in the Caucasus which he opened and about obstacles he met in the opening of these schools. Sidgui was a connoisseur of the classical Iranian literature and used to read and analyze Sadi's, Hafiz's, Firdovsi's and Nizami's poems to the pupils. By this way, he used to create interest and love for the literature. Besides, he used to buy newspapers – "Nassiri" from Iran, "Tarjuman" from Bakhcharay, "Akhtar" from Istanbul, watching the events happened in the world, especially, in the Caucasus read attentively them and write articles in "Shargui-Russ" and "Hablulmatin" newspapers.

Among the well-known intellectuals of the Caucasus – G.Sharifov, Dj.Mammadquluzadeh, N.Sheykhov, A.Kangarlinskiy, P.Soultanov and others were Sidgui's closest friends. They used to organize literary parties together and just at these parties used to read the newspapers come from the different parts of the world, analyze literary and political events, in general, the Caucasus region.

Key words: Sidgui, Akhtar, Tarjuman, A.Kangarlinskiy, "Nassiri" from Iran.

Mahammad Taghi Sidgui (1854-1903), who took a particular place in the history of the literature and enlightenment of Azerbaijan during 19th century was one of the famous enlightener of the Caucasus. His father *Karbalayi Safar* used to support his family working as a cobbler in the bazaar of Ordubad. His mother *Tutu Khanim*, who was *Nabati's* (Khan Choban, a famous poet) own sister (Sharif, 1986, code preserved 170) was from Ushtibin village of Iran's Garadagh region. Tutu Khanim's relatives used to visit Ordubad very often. Sidgui, who had gotten his primary education in *Shah Sultan Hussein* religious school in Ordubad, went to Iran in his youth, visited Khorassan, lived in Sabzivar and Nishapur. Sidgui had been to many places of Iran and during this period he studied the Persian language

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and classical Iranian literature perfectly. His various documents, manuscripts and letters preserved in the found of his personal archives of the Institute of Manuscripts of ANAS after named M. Fuzuli affirm this fact once again. It is notable that, in the memoirs written about Sidgui were given more detailed description about his educational activities in Ordubad and Nakhchivan, a part of the Caucasian region. So, the authors of the memoirs had close and constant relations with him. That's why, the all facts and events described in these examples have been given without exaggeration and guided by the reality. Among these, Mammadali Sidgui's (Mahammad Taghi Sidgui's son) memoirs differ from the other ones according to their maintenance and contents. In these memoirs have been spoken about Sidgui's pedagogical activity, "*Akhtar*" and "*Maktabi-tarbiyyah*" - important schools in the Caucasus which he opened and about obstacles he met in the opening of these schools. Mammadali Sidgui had written that, "Formerly, the intellectuals of Ordubad used to gather to my father's tea-house. My father was an inspired man, besides, he had known the oriental literature well, therefore, in that tea-house Sadi's, Hafiz's, Firdovsi's and others poems were being read and analyzed. At the same time, he used to buy and read newspapers from Iran, Russia and Turkey. For example, he used to buy newspapers – "*Nassiri*" from Iran, "*Tarjuman*" from Bakhchasaray, printed by *Ismayil Bey Gaspirinskiy*, "*Akhtar*" from Istanbul. These newspapers were often being read secretly by the persons held the same views as my father. "*Tarjuman*" had influence on my father. Because, *Gaspirinskiy*, the former editor-in chief of "*Tarjuman*" had struggled a long time for opening new schools for Moslems lived in Russia... "At last, my father and *Hussein Souldan Kangarlinskiy*, who had helped directly him in this way decided to open a school in a new method in Ordubad under the impact of "*Tarjuman*" newspaper." (Sidgui, f. 20, c. p. 4)

Hussein Souldan Kangarlinskiy was considering one of the enlighteners of the Caucasus. Therefore, anybody couldn't be against his thoughts. All important needs for the school – benches, desks and other things were ordered to make. For lack of textbooks in the Caucasus, Sidgui asked to bring a lot of textbooks from Istanbul, at the same time, he was preparing lessons for pupils himself. The school was named "*Akhtar*" and situated on the upper storey of the religious school *Ibrahim Khan*. Most of the time Sidgui was spending in the school and during a certain period he had taught the children alone. Within 6-7 months children became educated, so, people were showing more interest for the school and number of children growing day by day. Every day, besides the other lessons the children were being taught the Koran and they used to have ablution in the pool of the religious school and perform namaz in the mosque of the same one. It is important to note that, Sidgui was *Hussein Djavid's*, *Mammad Said Ordubadi's*, *Aligulu Gamkussar's*, *Ali Sabri's*, *Ibrahim Abilov's* – famous poets, writers and revolutioners of Azerbaijan and others teacher. In his memoirs Ordubadi wrote: "The children who hadn't been able to get fifty copecks per month to pay the

teacher's fee went to this school first of all. Because, there were not any fee and expenses in this school" (Ordubadi, 1967: 331).

In 1896 M. T. Sidgui opened a new school in Nakhchivan and continued his pedagogical activity there. Nakhchivani people constructed a new building on their account. At the party organized on the occasion of opening the school Sidgui spoke about the importance of such schools. During his speech he noted that "According to the demands of the century, it is important to build schools in a new method in each town, even they might be done in each village for the Moslems' education and enlightenment lived in the Caucasus. Turkish, Persian, Arabian and Russian languages are intended to be taught in these schools. We are going to organize such schools in every village" (Sidgui, 20, c. p. 179).

Beside Sidgui, three men were invited to school as teachers. In this school were mainly being teaching native language, Persian, mathematics, geography, history, syntax of Arabian, besides, Russian an hour per day. The lessons were being taught in the Azerbaijani and Persian languages. The poor pupils were free of tuition fee in this school, too. Appreciating the role of the school Sidgui wrote about it in the textbook "*Numuneyi-akhlak*" ("*Moral example*") compiled by himself: "Knowledge and propriety are like a treasure and the key of this treasure is a school. A school saves us from the ignorance and elucidates. Because, a human is appreciated according to his knowledge. So, the real appreciation of the human is based on his knowledge and it is acquired in the school (Sidgui, 1967: 16).

M. T. Sidgui was one of the minded and watchful men of the Caucasus. During the arrears times as a result of tsarist regime in all places of the Caucasus, including in Ordubad Sidgui used to read papers and journals attentively which he had gotten from Iran, Turkey, Bakhchasaray and other places. He was closely connected with *Soultan Madjid Ganizadeh*, *Habib Bey Mahmudbeyov*, *Ali Iskandar Djafarov* and *Nariman Narimanov*. *Mashadi Gurbanali Sharifov*, *Mirza Nasrullah Amirov*, *Bakhshali Aga Shahtakhtinskiy*, *Karbalayi Nasrullah Sheykhov*, *Djalil Mammadguluzadeh*, *Mahammad Aga Shahtakhtinskiy*, *Shahbaz Aga Kangarlinskiy* – famous intellectuals of the Caucasus and other ones were Sidgui's closest friends. They used to organize literary parties together and just at these parties used to read the newspapers come from the different parts of the world, analyze literary and political events, in general, the Caucasus region.

M. T. Sidgui, famous enlightener was regularly representing with his paragraphs and scientific articles in "*Shargui-Rus*" and "*Hablulmatin*" newspapers. "*Hablulmatin*" printed in Calcutta was popular among the men of religion. They used to read the paragraphs and articles printed in this newspaper in the mosques. One of Sidgui's articles printed in this paper was about *Mirza Ali Mahammad Khan* written in Persian. Sidgui had written this article on the occasion of his death who was one of the Iranian patriots and had fought for the liberty of Iran from shah's regime. He was sent into exile, after that, he printed a journal in Persian titled "*Parvarish*" in Egypt. Then, the printing was stopped by Iran and

Mirza Ali Mahammad Khan went to France and died in Paris (Sidgui, f. 20, c. p.4). Sidgui was a subscriber to “*Alhilal*” journal printed in Arabian by *Zeydan brothers* in Egypt. Even, the editorial board of this journal sent a letter to Sidgui and asked for him to be a correspondent from Nakhchivan. M. A. Sidgui wrote in his memoirs: “My father Sidgui used to be in correspondence with the progressive intellectuals from India, Iran, Turkey, Russia and other countries. On one of the Fridays of the winter of 1902 or 1903 year I remember very well, how my father had burnt many letters in the fire-place and put the ashes under snow on the roof. I was 14-15 years, then. I couldn’t understand why he had burnt those letters. Later, I found that, this daily correspondence with the far countries had created doubts among the local tsarist government officials, so he had lost all the letters. Because, they could conduct a search of the house, but if, they did it, they would not find any signs (What a pity, for those letters)” (Sidgui, f. 20, c. p.4).

M. T. Sidgui, who was one of the active members of “*Anjumani-shuara*” – popular literary party in the second half of the 19th century in the Caucasus used to perform with his poems written in Azerbaijani and Persian in this party. *Assad Aga Kangarli*, his closest friend expressed Sidgui’s love to the poetry and literature in the memoirs: “During a long time Sidgui was a workman in Ordubad, Caucasian cities and Iran. But he was given talent from the God. He was working in the mornings and writing poems and odes with his horny hands at nights (Kangarlinskiy, f. 20, c. p.173).

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Sidgui was an author of philosophical and social-political works as “*A look to the statue man*”, “*A paper dealing admonitions*”, “*Interpretation of the thoughts*”, “*Wise sayings*” and “*Sorts of plants*”. In these works he had developed and continued the enlightenment ideas spread in the Caucasus, too.

All these facts once more show us that, Mahammad Taghi Sidgui, a well-known representative of the Azerbaijani literature of 19th century was one of the most famous Caucasian enlighteners and took a particular place in the Caucasian literary environment.

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