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Interactions of Christians and Evangelists of Yazd with Muslims in the Qajar Era

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Abstract

The history of Yazd in Qajar era shows several political-social incidents in different periods which have greatly affected the social, cultural, economic and even physical historical-ancient life of the city. Investigating the interaction between Iranians and the residents from different religions during the aforementioned era is interest of the study. This interaction has experienced some fluctuations including peaceful friendships as well as brutal conflicts. The present research is a scientific-investigative effort to perform a historical, periodical, and at the same time documentary and analytical study on the extent, type and method of interactions of the majority of Yazd residents such as Shia Muslims, with the religious minority living in Yazd or non-local Christians temporary living in Yazd for the purpose of performing preaching and advertising programs in Yazd during the Qajar era. The researchers' hypothesis is as follow: in the Qajar era there was a mutual communication, conflicts and correspondence between Christian minorities (evangelists) and Shia Muslims in Yazd most of which proves a relationship and peaceful co-existence between them. This study applies a comparative-historical methodology as well as examines the academic literature and field studies.

Keywords: Christians in Iran, Evangelist, Yazd, Qajar era, Church Mission Society, Religious minority.

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Introduction

It is important to know that the historical investigations about the situation of religious minorities and their interactions with the majority of Muslims living in Iran are mainly based on the information they had and also collected from some western sources and information available from itineraries.

We can say for sure that the history of people of Yazd and the social revolutions and evolutions of them i.e. their social, economic, political, cognitive, cultural and artistic life of people living in Yazd have never been studied through scientific-analytical-historical method and such investigations are almost new and this makes this study more valuable. Moreover, the historians, sociologists and influential figures in the broad field of social—historical science have not done any influential job toward writing the life history of the majority of Yazd's population and thus no study has been carried on investigating the social, religious and cultural situation of religious minorities in this somehow traditional society.

Another challenge which the contemporary researcher faces is that the information and news about the minority of Yazd's population are mainly focused on the Zoroaster minorities living in this city who were the biggest and most important religious minority of this area. Also as they had influential role in the economic changes of the area due to their internal and international economic efforts, most of the information about the minorities and the events revolves around them and the other two minorities -Jewish and Christian- are almost ignored. Therefore, inevitably the researcher faces shortage of resources and information and historical evidence about these minorities.

What deserves attention in this matters is to consider this scientific-investigative truth which every logical, fair and holistic researcher acknowledges that in materializing of a scientific investigation we inevitably have to use these discussions which involve some kind of mental and spiritual argues and it is natural that in order to have a fair criticism and comment, we first have to gain a true understanding of the viewpoints and to delicately compare these viewpoints to get to the true and beneficial conclusion.

Despite the fluctuations in interactions between majority of Yazd Muslim population and Jewish and Christians living there in Qajar era, there are factors which made their interactions more peaceful and compromising in comparison with pre-Qajar era. These factors include foreign intervention, the pressure on the Qajar reign, and Mashrooteh revolution. These situations help the minorities of Jewish and Christian become immune against humiliations, pressures and inappropriate behavior and even murder, plunder, physical, spiritual, and financial harm and injuries.

The other important point is that in addition to true understanding of relations, communication, conflicts and interactions with the majority of population in each Era, -especially the history of as nation- increasing the religious understanding is necessary and we hope that the present study can give the audience a deep understanding of different religious viewpoints of different religions and nations.

The present study is going to investigate the historical aspects of type and method of interactions of Yazd residents with the two immigrant minorities of Jewish and Christians in Qajar era. There was a group of Jewish people who emigrated centuries ago from Palestine, Egypt, and far areas of Mesopotamia to Yazd for different reasons and they reside there and start interaction with Yazd residents. On the other side there exists a foreign immigrant minority called Church Preaching Association who were emigrated to Yazd early in Qajar era, trying to develop and advertise their thoughts and beliefs and their school of thoughts between Jewish and Christian minorities and later between Muslim majorities living in Yazd. They had many communications, interactions, and even conflicts with Yazd residents during the rest one hundred years of Qajar Reign and even in Pahlavi era.

This study aims to get a vast and developed insight into this issue as well as provide a perspective for the Yazd residents and their history in Qajar era. The study suggests that applied policies and to some extent the political and social interactions were successful.

Better understanding of Yazd people in Qajar era

This study investigates Yazd in an era during which this area remained immune against the 18th century of the Christian (lunar 12th century) wars and insecurities and without going under any harm during 19th century (13th century). The city had about 60,000-to-70,000 population and

there are some sources which estimated its population as 100,000 people (Isavi 1991: 38). This population in that era is considerable especially because these people were active in industrial, agricultural, and traditional animal husbandry in Iran.

Also it is important to note that in addition to considering the political, social, economic and religious changes in Qajar era under each of the kings of this dynasty we have to pay attention to a widespread issue in Yazd history and that is the situation of religious minorities in this area and the interaction, cooperation, and even conflicts with them—especially when there was a turmoil in the government (Tashakori Bafghi 1998: 39-40).

Beside Islam, which was the religion of the majority of Yazd residents, there were three other main ecclesial religions –Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Judaism- who were living in Yazd during Qajar and other eras as active or semi active cults. Among them the Zoroastrians were more populated in comparison to Jews and Christians. In this section the researchers investigate the communication and interaction of some other minorities namely Christians and evangelists (Christian protestant preachers) with Yazd residents.

Parallel to development, continuation and establishment of Shia Islam in Yazd in Qajar era, Jewish minorities who after Zoroastrians were the second important minority in this area, were active and based on the information contained in historical reports and information, they continued their existence an influence depending on different internal and international situations and they had many interactions and conflicts with majority Muslim population and even with minorities.

What is important about the minority Jewish people living in Yazd is that in their interaction with majority Muslim population and other minorities in Yazd they didn't interfere with religious activities of other religions and this was part of their social and personal feature. This behavior roots in their being proud of their race and religion and the fact that Judaism is for Israelites and nobody from any other generation is allowed to enter this group ad this religion. The other important thing about them is that they were always very conservative and were cautious almost next to fear in their interactions with followers of other religions especially with the majority Muslim population of Yazd. However we should note that their personality and behavior and their interest and dependence on materiality and their focus on economic and efforts to have income, and their conservative method in saving their life and money, have influenced their choosing their residents in the center of the city near to the economic, business

and trading center –namely near to Yazd bazars and near to Jame Kabir masque in Yazd, although there are no documentary information or analysis to prove this perception.

Jewish people preserve their conservative personality in Yazd as well. Even Zoroastrian who were the most peaceful and indifferent people in facing the social political changes had some reactions during the Mashrooteh events and turmoil; however, the Jewish are conservative and cautious and did not interfere in these events either inside Yazd or in Iran.

There is another important characteristic about Yazd people which didn't slip the attention of contemporary writers: Yazd experienced the most peaceful inter religion interactions. In a small room which is apparently an ancient holy place, we had the followers of three different religions of Islam, Judaism and Christianity. They very much valued that place and depending on their own internal intention, they did charities there and they lighted candles, prayed and asked their wishes. Even more interesting, they caused the least interfere, restraint, and sensitivity to each other comparing to previous centuries. This small holy room is located in one of the allies in Enghelab street in the center of Yazd today (Popli Yazdi 2010: 127).

Limitations of the study

After discussing these interaction, we may say: Although Yazd is less important and smaller than its big and important neighbor city, namely Isfahan, the issue of interactions of Yazd people with minorities is relatively considerable and important. There is a historical shortcoming and weak point in this regard: rarely any writer in Yazd or even in Iran did write any information and special news about these communications and social, economic interactions and this fact make the situation difficult for the researcher in terms of availability of enough resources and it made the researcher to refer to scattered information contained in historical books or in book of memories or oral information in subsequent eras and conservative rely on the report of itineraries in the corresponding era with keeping a critical eye on the information and its historical interpretation and analysis.

Dhimmis and Shia Muslim in Yazd

Dhimmis in jurisprudence (Figh) terminology is a contract between Muslims and non-Muslims (Mostalahatol Fighh, 264, quoted in Dictionary of Quran 2003: 910). Based on the contract,

these people have to pay poll (tax anciently paid in lieu of conversion to Islam) to Islamic government and Islamic government in turn was responsible for guarding their life, property, and their other rights (Alfighhol Islami, quoted in Dictionary of Quran 2003: 911).

There are different decrees (commands) in Quran about the Dhimmis. These decrees are about the mutual responsibilities of Dhimmis and Islamic government and Muslim's responsibilities to them. The major condition in having peaceful coexistence of Muslim with other religious minorities have been indicated at the very beginning of Islam and that is the issue of right of residence of Dhimmis which has been documented in Quran verses and in teachings of Islam. Based on these decrees, those of religious minorities who were not willing to convert to Islam, were came into contract with Islamic government as Dhimmis. Following the result of the contract, the minorities have to pay poll to Islamic government and have to accept some conditions. Islamic government in turn have to protect them, their life and properties. The main purpose behind having such contracts was to end the enmity and conflict between the followers of different religions and to establish a peaceful coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Islamic territories. The other purpose behind establishing this peaceful relation and coexistence was to introduce Islam to these minorities and make them familiar with Islam so that they gradually convert to Islam.

At the first glance, it seems that Dhimmis and Muslims had a perpetual peaceful interaction without any conflict or pressure. However, conditions, changes and personalized behaviors done by both parties, specially Muslims, caused some conflicts and events which will be investigated and discussed under the subject of the interactions, conflicts and oppositions of Muslims and Dhimmis.

Activities of Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Yazd during Qajar era

Activities of Church Missionary Society (CMS) is among the first evangelist associations established at the end of 18th century (lunar 12th century) in England to develop and advertise the protestant beliefs and ideas and they are still one of the main and most active advertising associations around the world (Boroumand 2001: 8).

It seems that the primary activity of this association is to strengthen and advertising Christianity in European countries and to answer the questions of people in this regard. Several decades after the establishment of the association and from the mid-19th century (13th century) which

corresponds to the last years of Fath Ali Shah reign and the increase of England presence and influence in Iran, the CMS sending its first official preacher to Iran, tried to get people from different regions like Isfahan, Kerman, Shiraz and Yazd convert to Christianity.

They did their best to hide their activities and not to disclose their intention. Therefore, their members tried to enter these cities not as preachers but as educational, medical and clinical institutions where they could have the close interaction with people who inevitably had to visit those institutions. Their advertisement took different forms and were not explicit. For instance, the advertisements were in the form of doing works of public utility and apparently acts of kindness. The members and preachers of this association who came to Iran during the first decades of Qajar's reign remain in Iran till the end of this dynasty and even after it till the Islamic revolution and continued their infrastructural activities. In fact they are considered England's religious-cultural agents and representatives.

The main purpose of these Christian preachers in focusing on Yazd for performing their duties was to locate Zoroastrian living in this city. They believed that by establishing ties with them and pretending doing humanitarian works they can convert the Zoroastrian of Yazd to Christianity. The first preachers who came to Iran for preaching among the Zoroastrians in Yazd, were two German doctors named Houker and Roufer whose entering to Iran coincides with the death of Nader Shah Afshar – 1747. However, they were not successful and on their way to Yazd they faced different accidents like the invasion of rubbers and bandits and couldn't achieve their pre-specified goals (Boroumand 2001: 83). Meanwhile, their adventurous action paved the way for other preachers and protestant delegates and showed them that Iran can be a good place for them to center and locate their religious activities and advertisements and as the situation gets favorable. Finally, in the beginning of Ghjar reign, the preliminary actions were done. Although it was at the mid of Fath Ali Shah reign that the situation gets prone for their activity, the persistent and continued activities of advertising groups starting by establishment of cultural-religious and advertising institutions in Iran starts in the mid of 18th century (lunar 13th century) and they continued their activities till the subsequent century (Boroumand 2001: 131).

Yazd was regarded as one of the four grades of borderlines between activity regions of English and American missionaries in terms of programming and purpose of the assembly. The presence of religious minorities in Iran and Yazd provides large grounds of propaganda activities for this association (Ghaffari 1989: 131). The decision was made in church missionary association in

Jolfa and consequently the assembly decided to found another branch in the major cities of its missionary domain including Yazd. Therefore, Yazd was included as one of the areas under religious-culture and missionary influence of this Protestant assembly. The decision was made by assembly which sent letter to headquarter and pointed to the essentiality of the presence of new members for propaganda activities in southern cities including Yazd (Boroumand 2001: 146).

Subsequent to the headquarter agreement, a number of English, Irish and Australian missionaries initiated their activities in target cities such as Yazd as well as surrounding towns and villages. These cities were counted as the most active Protestant missionary associations in Iran until few decades after that date, i.e. the beginning of World War I (1332 A.H./ 1914 A.C.) (Ibid).

Each of these church propaganda associations in every city of Iran were regarded as a specific unit of church propaganda associations while they had identical missionary practices and instruments (Ibid). According to this instruction, although Yazd unit initiated its activities several decades after foundation of the first unit, however it continued its working procedures independent from other units in the early years of Mozafaredin Shah Monarchy in 1898 A.C. The main reason for assembly to select the city of Yazd in order to provide missionary grounds and locations, which were apparently hospital, school or public recreational centers but in fact had the purpose to advertise and publicize protestant beliefs, was that the major programmers of this assembly were informed about significant number of Zoroastrians in this city. Although they directly did not point to this purpose and did not allow restrictions for invitation of social and religious groups (Ibid) and the residence place of their different institutes were centralized in Yazd, since they made efforts to advertise in secret far from the public eyes, their purpose of secret propaganda movement was both not confronting fanatical Muslims and also revealing of their main purpose. To implement the plans and objectives of assembly, the missionaries travelled to surrounding areas of Yazd in any possible way and even publicized their beliefs in villages along with practicing medicine or training and specialized affairs through preaching and religious stories (Boroumand 2001: 168-169). Regardless to the point that major parts of the efforts by these Christian missionaries to communicate with target society had no impacts, their activities in different parts of Yazd brought about serious hazards for them. They were frequently attacked and ransacked by brigands. These problems caused them to restrict their activity regions in order to confront such financial and life risks less frequently. Such restrictions and less

communication of Christians with Yazd residents in affairs such as charity activities, attending poor people and certain training and medical affairs caused the missionaries to leave their propaganda activities unfinished (Ibid, 169).

Foundation of this assembly, subsequent to the expedition of the first Christian missionary in the apparel and occupation of medical practice was initiated by the supervisor of this unit named “Dr. White” in Yazd. The main activity base of Dr. White and his missionary colleagues in Yazd in the first year of foundation was initiated from a doctor’s house in a place similar to a hospital in which two missionary activities of medicine practice and preaching were performed. Because of the need of this unit to a specialist in religious activities, a missionary named as “Napier Malcom” joined the members as the clerics and the teacher. Consequently, the assembly members requested for expedition of more Christian missionaries to Yazd to work in institute in order to develop cultural activities and after a while more number of English missionaries were added to the group. After completion of the group members, church missionary assembly initiated its organized activities in Yazd (Boroumand 2001: 166-167).

Complete establishment and settlement of Christian missionaries were initiated in one of the old quarters in Yazd. The missionaries of this assembly prepared the grounds for establishment of proper social relations through certain strategies and in-advance programming with society and Yazd residents especially Zoroastrians minorities in this city. They also made efforts to encourage the Zoroastrians to accept Christianity by alluding to their special documents which had mentioned Zoroastrians and ancient Iranians, however they were less successful (Boroumand 2001: 167).

Prior to the arrival of the group members to Yazd, there was no Christian or foreigner residing in Yazd but simultaneous with the arrival of foreigner Christians’ religion, only two European, one who was the member of kingship bank and the other who was commercial representative, resided in Yazd. However, after the foundation and development of this assembly, Muslim people in Yazd suddenly confronted a group of foreigner religious minorities who were residing in their city and the number of Christians suddenly increased in this city as though this group was the third group of minorities residing in Yazd after Zoroastrians and Jewish.

This group of foreigners who included the preachers of church missionary assembly in Yazd could be regarded as the foremost group and European and Christian assembly especially English who were permanently inhabited in Yazd for the first time in Qajar era. The majority of

Muslim population in Yazd were communicated with this group from different aspects, in different forms and manners and in different time and places. Accordingly, their residence in this region and specially their activity in the domain of medical, cultural and training affairs which were extensively required by people in deprived regions in Yazd attracted the attention of the people in these regions to the members of this society (Boroumand 2001: 167). However, more knowledgeable classes of society such as clergies and some tradesmen and religious people who were following and obeying the clergies became aware of the concealed plans of this assembly- although they were sometimes in great need to their specialty and equipment- and avoided close and intimate relation and interaction with the members.

The assembly members included different social groups of men, women, girls, young boys and old people who behaved with apparent and delusive kindness with different individuals of Yazd society who came to assembly location through in-advance plans and programs and made efforts to attract them. In the meantime, Christian members of this assembly who were somehow regarded as Christian minority residing in Yazd could organize conspiracy with ruling government and so strived to make spiritual and material benefits for themselves. Jala Al-Dolleh- elder son of Zello Al- Soltan- was one of the Qajar rulers who patronized one of the Christian missionaries in return for supervision of “Estabroy” and Christian educations in a way that he visited their hospital every year and paid the officials an amount of charity (Boroumand 2001: 234).

The presence of religious minorities in each Muslim region including Yazd was always one of the motivations of religious missionaries. Therefore, the church missionary assembly openly announced its intention to pay attention to religious minorities residing in Yazd such as Jewish and Zoroastrians (Boroumand 2001: 191).

The location which was provided by the assembly in Yazd included religious centers (church), treatment center (hospital) and training centers (school). These centers ceaselessly continued activities i.e. implementing treatment, training and religious activities which were in fact coordinated with their main purpose of publicizing Christianity.

Another part of Christian minority’s interactions residing in Yazd with public citizens was devoted to training affairs and several students’ families and more importantly the young and adolescent students themselves were interacting with officials of training centers and religious officials of Napier Malcom association. He found a boy’s school in Yazd in the last years of the

nineteenth century (1897 A.C./ 1315 lunar year) simultaneous with early years of Muzaffar al-Din Shah's reign and endeavored to dictate the missionary programs of Christianity to children and adolescents in Yazd in the guise of teaching English. In the point of view of this its founder, this school was amongst the most important missionary institutes of this assembly in Iran as though even if the members were ill, their activities were not interrupted. Outside the school, the parents heard the news that foreigners (Christian missionaries) have founded a school only to teach English language to students, however other subjects were taught in this school including math and geography while its low tuitions raised the doubt of some parents. In addition to these three subjects, the institute obliged the students to recite Evangel every morning and night in order to enforce its religious demands (Boroumand 2001: 169).

The schedule made by Malcom Napier to educate and advertise in his school was continued after him. After replacement of Mr. Boyland in succession to Napier as the school principal and continuance of advertising-education programs in these years and the years following to the foundation of school, 60 persons of young and adult boys, Muslim and non-Muslim were studying under the supervision of several native officials in church missionary assembly (Ibid, p.261).

In addition to advertising programs which were implemented by church missionary assembly in Yazd for interaction of boys and men's familiarity with Christianity, the assembly members were thinking about a program through which they could interact with Muslim and non-Muslim young girls and ladies. Since the Muslim young girls and ladies in Yazd were rarely allowed to traverse out of home, the assembly firstly concentrated on interaction with Zoroastrian young girls and ladies and so the assembly members found a girl's school for Zoroastrians girls by "Ms. Brighty" (Boroumand 2001: 170). Contrary to Boy's school which mainly included Muslim boys in Yazd, due to the traditional conditions for Muslim young girls and ladies which did not allow them to go out of home, the girl's school founded by church missionary assembly had no Muslim student and so its Christian officials, in addition to their schedule, taught some religious practices for almost forty Zoroastrians girls in this school. After a short time of the beginning of activities of this girl's school in Yazd which was later named "Izad Peyman", it was regarded as one of the most active schools in this city (Ibid, p.170).

English missionaries of this association in Yazd, after a short time of foundation the school which mostly covered Zoroastrian students, founded another school for Muslim girls in Yazd and

endeavored to publicize their missionary programs amongst this group of people in Yazd who were less traversing out of home in public places. Continuance of this process led to more important and fundamental measures. They established a relatively large building with fund raising with an educational complex consisting of a kindergarten, junior and senior school and so they somehow provided the ground for interaction with the parents of students studying in these three grades and developed the level of social relations and interactions of Christian missionary minority with Muslim citizens in Yazd. This kind of educational locations all across Qajar reign and even after it continued its activities in Yazd and other regions in Iran (Ibid, p.170).

The members of church missionary assembly in Yazd, in addition to continuing their missionary activities behind the scenes, pretended that they conduct welfare measures in public opinion. Therefore, some benevolent people from Yazd and many of Zoroastrian minorities offered material and spiritual support.

Godarz Mehraban—one of the rich Zoroastrian minorities—was one of these donors which had good interaction with Dr. White—the first representative of church missionary assembly in Yazd and the member of medical group of association who devoted the land of a large inn along with its interior building after a period of interaction. The association welcomed this act of Godarz and altered the building so that the association hospital was established in this form with the support of Zoroastrian minority (Malcolm 2015: 261). To establish more interaction between the members of this association and people in Yazd and provide a ground for more interaction between missionary group and women in Yazd, a small building next to the hospital was allocated to treatment of women. Moreover, to satisfy the men, the physicians and hospital staffs were also selected amongst the women of missionary group while the women nurses also supervised them. They also completed their hospital related activities and established an autopsy room and a pharmacy in the building next to the hospital while another part of the hospital was allocated to treatment of patients. They benefited from such apparently kind and sympathetic behaviors as well as new treatment methods and attracted the attention of patient and their families in Yazd. Hospital is one of the welfare and social institutions which will directly or indirectly affect the entire people in a city during a year and this was the strategy of Christian missionaries to create more interaction with citizens in Yazd so that they could feed these citizens with Christian beliefs. To complete their missionary activities amongst patients, they made use of emotional and psychological methods by reciting religious songs and prayers which

were mostly translated into Persian (Boroumand 2001: 171) and endeavored to establish spiritual-emotional environment amongst patients in need which were mostly from poor classes of society and distracted them towards their opinions and beliefs and complete their advertising condition. As quoted by the late Iraj Afshar (1969: 803), the Yazd archeologist of the last decade, the hospital building was standing till 1975 A.C/ 1354 A.H. Although it was replaced by Tadayon school, however the stone tablet which was built on the entrance of the building as “Sick Home of English Marceline, 1899 A.C.” still revives the residence memory of the first European groups and Christian minority and missionary residing in Yazd and establishment of the first foreigners in Yazd in new style.

Christian Missionary Women in Yazd

The other strategy used by the Christian minority to develop their advertising job was exclusion of women along with men to increase the effect of their advertisements. The facilities raised by the presence of women in their advertising affairs for Christian minority were significant since, based on these programs, the women unlike men could communicate with housewives who could not even go to the entrance of their house and attract their attention to Protestant religion. On the other hand, these women entered into the houses of Yazd citizens far from the eyes of opponents and criticizers of advertising affairs who caused incontinences for missionaries and made their advertising affairs defective. These women could make the housewives more inclined to their beliefs (Boroumand 2001: 176).

The activity domains of these women were different however the association mostly in girls’ school was active as teacher or crafts instructor or those who were familiar with medical and hospital affairs (Boroumand 2001: 178). They could perform their responsibilities without exciting the religious emotions of women especially traditional clergies in Yazd. One of these missionary women who had travelled to Yazd was “Ms. Mary Board” who was mostly inclined to communicate with women and children in Yazd (Boroumand 2001: 179-180).

Apart from the aforementioned woman, other women missionaries in Iran were not satisfied with their work and did not have much interaction with citizens of Yazd and even considered them among low classes (Boroumand 2001: 180). This inappropriate interaction of Christian minority women with citizens of Yazd and also their heterogeneity with traditional community and also

their barren activities and the fact that they were forced to do these activities of Community programs to change the tradition of Yazd citizens (Including Muslims, Jews and Zoroastrians) led to having the efficacy of minority women in Yazd to be somewhat less than expected.

At the same time, about forty Christian minority women were active in Iran until the late Qajar period and the first decades of the twentieth century (Boroumand 2001: 181) and a few of them were in Yazd. Although the level of communication and interaction of this minority and evangelical group has been at a high level compared with other foreigners who had economic and political mission in Iran, these interactions which have not been effective have been in religious term in the range of everyday language and have been apart from any religious influence (Boroumand 2001: 183)

Analysis of results of activities of Presbyterian missionaries in Yazd

If we want to think about the results of activities and level of interactions between foreign Christian communities with Yazd citizens, it must be said that: despite extensive efforts by Christian missionaries in order to attract the attention of public opinion to accept Christianity which have sometimes been favorable, the results of activities of this Christian group has been at the lowest expected level in Iran and Yazd.

On the other hand, level of interaction and proactive and reactive activities of Yazd citizens toward the activities of these missionaries have been different. People did not trust them and considered them as forefront of colonization and as barbarians and had complete disagreement with their beliefs and opinions and did not show any eager and enthusiasm to have interaction with them. Great reluctance of Yazd citizens to use their social services as well as undisputed opposition of Scholars and Clergymen of Yazd increased the rate of the decline and fall of the level of relations and interaction with this minority group. In addition, serious and permanent opposition of Jews and Zoroastrians Clergymen and greatly Muslim scholars and clergymen along with lack of reception from Yazd citizens for missionaries not only did not allow them to have success but also made them face a lot of problems and their dissatisfaction has always been a major factor in reducing the activities of missionaries specially missionaries in the church missionary society of Yazd (Boroumand 2001: 184).

Christian missionaries in Yazd focused their activities on two major points and expected success: one was a Cultural scientific – teaching center named school and since the people in these schools were children who still did not have full recognition of concepts and procedural implications of their parents' traditions and they spent half of their daily time with missionaries and their teachings. This interaction and close relation of teaching staff with children and adolescents had various effects and children and even their families showed a different kind of reaction to the missionary activities and these reactions were derived from their character and education as well as their family background. Accordingly, most children who were raised in families with a solid foundation and education based on religious paid less attention to views and beliefs of missionaries and even disagreed with them and Mirza Mohammad Farrokhi Yazdi (Yazd poets of the last century) was among them who revealed the activities of these Christian missionaries in schools in his poems during his youth (Divane Farokhi 1991). In addition to Farokhi, others were students of these schools who publicly opposed the events in Christian propaganda in the schools.

Also the orphan students were trained by missionaries and were willing to accept the trainings of teachers and staff since they had no families with firm belief. Some other students were also affected by these missionaries due to the fact of having parents with no firm belief and followed their beliefs according to prevailing atmosphere in their family to support the training of missionaries. Hassan Dehghani Tafti who was later selected as the first Bishop of Iran was among these students (Boroumand 2001: 219).

In addition to the comfort that the missionaries had about the support of citizens about their activities, they tried to keep their social status in Qajar era by expanding their cultural-training activities in the Court and for the rulers to have good conditions in Iran and considered the support of English government agencies in Iran (Boroumand 2001: 234).

Factors and barriers for activities of missionaries in Yazd

In a proportionality between the level of political influence of western government and expanded scope of activities of Christians, the prominence of England in Iran's power structure was not only a supporter for this Community in competition with others but also the missionaries considered English citizenship important in a way that for example, reactions of Yazd

seminarians abusive behavior of doctor White (entering the mosque on horseback) led to his complaint to the English Consul and this was resolved only after the mediation of Navab Razavi. In the years before the Constitution, the Church Missionary Society faced many changes. At this time, especially the time of the occurrence of Constitutional movement and year of the reign of Mohammad Ali Shah (1324 to 1327 AH) (1907 to 1909), occurrence of problems arose in Iranian cities including Yazd which was naturally the area of activity of English missionaries in central area of Iran and led to uncertainty of these missionaries to continue their activities in Yazd. Insecurity and banditry between cities forced this group to give up the missionary activity. Fear of risks to life and property also increased this stagnation.

In such situation full of fear and anxiety in late Qajar era, the start of the First World War in 1332 AH / 1914 contributed to the problem and the activities of this group in Iran and Yazd stopped. Germany's progress at the beginning of the war and increasing power of German brokers in center of Iran increased the fear of missionaries and the British government which considered their life to be in danger suggested them move from Yazd to southern areas such as Ahvaz or England's war fronts in the Middle East. Thus, due to this matter, the institutions of missionaries became empty. Then, by further progress of Germans and their dominance over parts of Iran including Yazd, their institutions in Yazd were also occupied and were closed for two years (Boroumand 2001: 241). The collapse of German power and increasing dominance of Russia over parts of Iran including the main cities gave them the chance to return to Iran and resume their activity.

At the same time with shaken kingdom of Ahmad Shah Qajar in Iran, England considered the use of Persian Language in the eastern lands in order to have a more practical missionary activity and tried to test the possibility of having activities in Iran after teaching Farsi to the missionaries. (Boroumand 2001: 244).

Conclusion

The author believes that the assumptions in this article can be proven if political, economic and social history of Yazd in Qajar is deeply evaluated and studied:

- Based on different preferences of the kind, rulers and governors of Yazd in history of the Qajar period, many ups and downs can be observed in transactions and interactions.

- Apart from the events which were caused by the activities of Christian missionaries from the church missionary society in Yazd, the result of these efforts and costs that were incurred by this group of foreigners in Yazd did not lead to them spreading their beliefs even though these were the source of several different developments and cultural, educational, medical, economic, commercial changes.
- An overview of actions and planning of this community in Yazd to achieve their expectations shows that due to actions of this community along with the spread of English, Yazd citizens met with new teaching methods and were sometimes attracted to jobs which required literacy as educated people even though some believed that transformation occurred in them. Also, the Qajar society in Yazd became familiar with some new sciences including medical science which is considered as a transformation in educational and medical situation in the region.
- Even though the community of missionaries did not have significant efficiency for them, the community of Yazd and people took advantage from its training and medical and therapeutic services and interaction with them was not bad for people. On the other hand, there were other groups in Yazd community which became familiar with the main objectives of this group and were trying to turn the thoughts of the society and oppose the advertising and activities of this group.
- If we take a look at results and the positive or negative effects of activities of this community and the type of interaction and communication and their relationship with the community of Yazd, their presence and different reactions to their presence in Yazd led to changes in various social organs of Yazd and its structure.
- Final thoughts: religious activities of Church's missionary community in Iran do not seem to be totally inconclusive. Even though some (Ghaffari, 1989) believe the activities of this community to be a kind of value and service to perceived community but was remembered by historical memory of people in Yazd and Iranians made many people to critically and carefully think about their activities and use their Iranian—Islamic zeal and try to solve deficiency and equip themselves with facilities which their gap may be used by colonialism and its agents to counter their influence.

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