



## NATIONALISM IN THE THOUGHT OF THE FIRST MODERN THINKERS OF IRAN

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**ABSTRACT:** *The present paper, with an emphasis on the analytical-descriptive method, is a response to the question, how nationalism was formed in the thought of the first modern thinkers of Iran, what does it mean and what its implications are. Nationalism is one of the central components of the political thought of Iranian classical modern thinkers. On the basis of the concept of nationalism, they attempted to apply a concept of nationality. Therefore, in context of modern political concepts, they have interpreted the old concept of Iran and some of its realities, Iranian ancient identity, and they also revolutionized the concept of nation, nationality and national identity. Classical moderns of Iran have attempted to introduce a new concept of Iranian nationality based on the definition that nations are cultural entities, groups of people who have been united by common values and traditions, and, particularly, language, religion and history. The Persian language, Zoroastrianism, and Iranian nationalism, which boast ancient ancestors and remnants of past glory, are regarded as constituent elements of nationalist thinking*

**KEYWORDS:** *nationalism, modern, Persian language, Zoroastrianism , ancient Iran.*

## INTRODUCTION

The term nationalism in the word is “nationalism”, “patriotism” and “independence” (Sussansiavoshi, 1990). The French word “nationalisme” or in English “nationalism”, was made from the combination of the national and the suffix “ism” (national, nation). Stanley Benn considers five meanings for nationalism in the encyclopedia of philosophy: A sense of loyalty to a particular nation, in terms of politics and in the sense of desire to observe the interests of its people, the importance of giving special attributes to each nation, promising the necessity of preserving national culture and, ultimately, there is a belief in the theory of politics and anthropology that humanity is divided into nations, and there are certain criteria for the identification of each nation and its individuals, and each nation has the right to have their own sovereignty (Stanley Benn 1967). Ashoori sees nationalism as a kind of collective awareness, which means, awareness of belonging to a nation that they call



“national consciousness”. National consciousness often generates a sense of loyalty, passion, and attachment of individuals to the constituent elements of the nation (race, language, traditions and habits, social values, ethics, and general culture) (Ashoori, 2005,p. 319).A person's or group's strong attachment to race, culture, language, and all manifestations of nationality and ethnicity is called nationalism. In Persian, nationalism is translated into nationality, national tendency, and nation-worship (Moein, 2008,p. 3276).

Historically, nationalism has emerged as an ideology from the 18th century among European thinkers.Ahmad Naqibzadeh cited two sources for the formation of nationalism in Europe, one the Great French Revolution (1789), which inspired national sentiment and the idea of national sovereignty, the other a source of traditionalism and reference to the past and ethnic affiliations. In his view, the latter is a state of romanticism and alienated by the ideas of freedom and democracy.He considers French nationalism influenced by the French Revolution, to be different from the traditional nationalism that he calls German nationalism.In his view, French nationalism had a philosophical content, based on respect for the rights of nations in determining their own destinies and at the same time possesses a progressive content, but German nationalism had a racist flavor from the beginning(Naghibzadeh,2005,p.84). He further explains two factors that exacerbate nationalism in Europe.In addition to the French Revolution, which exacerbated the sense of liberation and patriotism, the other factor was the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which he regarded it as a barrier against the sense of liberty and nationalism of the small European countries, and believed that the great powers in this congress divided thesmall nations among themselves, regardless oftheir ideas and feelings (Ibid, p. 84 and 85).

However, nationalism, along with other thoughtful components of modern Europe, came into being as a concept in the 19th century, at the same time as the Russia-Iran war, as a consequence of Iran's encounter with the Western world. Different views were raised on how the concept of nationalism was shaped or entered into Iran. Some like Ali Gheysari, Homa Nategh, Mohammad Tavakoli and others believe that nationalism is entering Iran from the West. Ali Gheysari believes that the entrance of nationalism thought to Iran was from the West and the Ottoman (Gheysari,2004,p.28-31). Mohammad Tavakoli believes that the travelogues of Mirza Saleh Shirazi and Mirza Fattah Gharmroudi and Reza Gholi Mirzawere were essential in the introduction of political concepts such as the nation,



government of Iran and Iranians did not understand these concepts from the Ottoman Empire, but they became familiar with it through the Persian speakers of India (Tavakoli,2003,p.214-215). Homa Nategh also believes Iranians became familiar with Islamic nationalism through the Ottoman Empire (Nategh,1979,p.132, in GhadimiyeGheydari,2012,p.5).But others believe that there were some elements of nationalism known or unknowingly among Iranians before nationalism came to Iran as a modern concept. Fereydoon Adamiat believes that nationalism was not a phenomenon that came to Iran from the West completely, like anew science and technology. Before the emergence of the philosophy of nationalism in Europe, there were all the constituent elements of nationalism existed in Iran: The conception of Iran as a land and Aryan nation, the common pride of language and creed, and most importantly the historical consciousness and common Iranian vision, were not the things submitted to Iran from the outside. These are nurturing elements of our ancient history and culture and have had very important manifestations in the course of history and the emergence of various political and religious movements. Of course, with the confrontation of Iran with the modern Western world, new factors were introduced, and the combination of these elements formed an ideology that gained a new functional power. (Adamiat,1998, p.264 and 1970,p. 113).Javad Tabatabaii also has this idea and believes: Nationalism is from the West and we have nothing to do with it, we had a historical reality before the rise of nationalism, we had facts, but we had no concepts to express them. We had the reality of the nation, but we lacked the concept to understand that reality, so there were such realities that had to be conceptualized (Tabatabaii(lecture): 2017/01/15 and Revayat: 2014,p.144to 165).Or, Reza Davari believes that Iran's nationalism is not influenced by European nationalism in the 19th century, but derived from the discussion of Iranian history and Iran's identity (Davari's(lecture): 2017/01/15). With a slight reflection on the opinions of individuals such as Adamiat, Tabatabaii, Davari or the second source of nationalism in Europe (traditionalism and referring to the past and ethnic belongings), we accept in the thinking of the Naghibzadeh, which says in the Iranian society, before entering the concept of nationalism, the facts and elements such as nation, language, race, and religion, common history, etc, existed and the first modern Iranian thinkers or classical moderns are trying to introduce a new concept based on this definition of nations, which are cultural entities and groups of people that



have been interconnected by common values and traditions, language, religion, history, and geographic region. They tried to introduce the concept of Iranian nationality based on concepts such as the Persian language, Zoroastrianism, and Iranian ancient nationalism. Accordingly, they defined the consistency of the Iranian nation primarily on the basis of Persian language, and the Persian language was introduced as a reflection of the thoughts and experiences of the nation so that the racial structure and mentality of the Iranian nation was reflected in it. Zoroastrianism is praised and honored as an ancient Iranian religion and a factor in the identification of Iran and ignores another part of Iran's culture and identity, that was based on the foundations of Islam. From the point of view of these thinkers, alienated from the slaughter and fanatical Arabs of Iran, and as a result of the sovereignty of Islam and the Arabs over Iran, the morality, the magnanimity and the honor of the Iranians was suppressed, and the way out of this self-alienation is to return to the pre-Islamic Iran, which is named the Zoroastrianism, the ancient religion (Adamiat,1979,p.203). Another aspect of Iran's nationalism, which prides itself on its ancient and glorious past. According to this heritage, the conquests of Cyrus the Great, or Darius the First, or the glory of Persepolis, are commemorated and honored with ancient religion language. Praising Aryan race and kings, the praise of Iranian historical characters such as Kaveh Ahangar and Fereydoon Nik Sirat and the revival of Persian language have all been the cornerstones of the activities of the first modern Iranian thinkers to revive Iranian nationalism.

### **The first modern thinkers of Iran and the idea of nationalism**

The first modern thinkers of Iran, or classical modernists, are those who, influenced by the modern world, attempted to introduce the components of modernity into Iran. They included Iranian students, businessmen, explorers, or Iranian diplomats who traveled to the Western world and got familiar with the west and the elements of the modern world and transferred those elements to Iranian society. The first modern thinkers of Iran, called westerners, supporters of secularism, or modernist and nationalism proponents, were the first group of Iranian thinkers who defended modernity. In their view, the institutions and culture of Iran suffered from a recession during the Qajar period that prevented any change. This group of thinkers, who were influenced by the discourse of modernity, distinguished between tradition and modernity, confronted the tradition and negated it in



shaping identity. They believed that the cultural and historical heritage of traditional discourse belonged to the past and has to be abandoned. On the other hand, it was necessary to reach the norms and elements of the modern world, and on the basis of these elements, it has acquired a kind of modern consciousness and identity. They considered the structure of the modern world to be stable and believed that it was necessary to review the traditional world based on the components of the modern world and worked towards the establishment of components of the modern world. What was their concern was the acceptance of Western civilization and its adaptation to that culture? They believed, the path of Iran's progress was in accepting modernity, so they tried to design a pattern by understanding the mysteries of the progress of Western civilization for the advancement of Iranian society. They considered the main cause of the downfall and social decline of the Iranian society to be the ignorance of the people and their old thoughts and believed that the only way to confront such ignorance was to acquire the scientific knowledge and Western civilization. The earliest modern Iranian thinkers saw themselves as a kind of messenger of wisdom, liberty, advancement, anti-religious and anti-metaphysical thinking of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries to Iran (Bayat, 1981, p.5). The rejection of despotism, the establishment of parliament, progressivism, freedom, equality, superstition, citizenship, secularism, constitutionalism, intellect, and scientism were the central concepts of the early modern Iranian thinkers. Alongside these notions of nationalism, especially ancient nationalism, they were also in their interest (Abrahamian, 1979, p.3). They include Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh, Agha Khan Kermani, Talbuf Tabrizi, and Jalaluddin Mirza Qajar, whose thoughts on nationalism will be discussed by the author.

Akhundzadeh is one of the first modern Iranian thinkers who discussed nationalism. Fereydoon Adamiyat considers Akhundzadeh, an innovator of the philosophy of the new nationalism and pioneers of the Iranian, Egyptian and Ottoman thinkers (Adamiyat, 1970, p.109). Akhundzadeh has written the pamphlet of Kamal al-Dowleh, with the motive of raising historical awareness of the past, creating national thinking, and reforming society. In his description of the concept of nationalism, he believes: Over time, religious beliefs do not have the same effect as people were eager to testify; thereby maintaining the authority of the nation and the glory of the state remains. Then in this age, political strategy for protecting the homeland from foreign domination must be the spreading of knowledge



in the whole nation and the cultivation of seeds of honor, patriotism, and nation-worship in their existence(Ibid,p.116).Akhundzadeh had a romantic way of expressing love to the homeland, and believed that, as the intellectual need of human being requires studying science and the study of the laws of nature, the human need for mental health demands the affection of the family and the homeland, and the effect of the love for the homeland is in such seriousness that some would perish from homeland separation (Ibid).It is inferred from the above statement that Akhundzadeh was well aware of historical origins of the emergence of the new Western patriotism as well as its political and moral aspects, and it is obvious to him that by establishing new political systems and Independency in Europe, how nationalism and political unity based on the religion of Christianity, established themselves on the basis of liberalism by obsolete of Christian religion, And on the other hand, his understanding of nationalism is so profound that, despite opposition to despotism, he prefers it to xenophobia, which is reflection of his nationalism, so in his belief: our king, however tyrant or cruel, thanks to God, is one of us (Ibid,p.117).Fereydoon Adamiat believes that Akhundzadeh uses the word "homeland" and "nation" in their new political meanings; in his view, the word Patriot is one who would give his wealth and life for the sake of his home land and does anything to see the freedom of his nation and country (Ibid).Akhundzadeh used various words for Patriot: the fanaticism of homeland, country lover, country-worshipper, and honor-based nationality, offspring of Iran, and our symbolic paradise Iran (Ibid).Akhundzadeh, in love with his homeland, believes that although I am a Turkman, my race is from Persia and our country is Iran, and our language is the sweetest language in the world. He further goes on and talks about the racial and ethnic solidarity of Iranians and Zoroastrians: Zoroastrians are our brothers, our compatriots and we share one language. We are the children of Persia and Persian spirit is important for us (Ibid,p.118).Akhundzadeh was fascinated by Ancient Iran, and, in a pity for the present and goodness of the past, says: "I wish I did not come to Iran and I did not see the condition of this nation, O Iran, where is the splendor and bliss of the ancient kingdom of your great kings?"... At a time when the East and the West obeyed your kings, and in that age in which science and industry were not yet advanced ... The rules of the Persian dynasty were enormous, and they were prepared for every principle.The rulers were not able to kill anyone, and the kings avoided bloodshed as much as possible, the people lived in peace



(Ibid,p. 122).Akhundzadeh continues in contrast with the past and the ruin of that era: “pity for you, Oh Iran!Your land is ruined, and your people are ignorant, and are unaware of the world’s civilization, and deprived of the blessing of liberty, and your king is a tyrant (Ibid,p.123).Akhundzadeh claims that the reason for this decline is the despotic or the tyranny of politics and government, and the fanaticism of the clergy ... (Ibid).He believes that the beginning of this political and spiritual decline of Iranians is domination by the Arabs, and he thinks that the naked and hungry Arabs destroyed Iran's civilization. These bandits ruined Iranians well-being and brought a bunch of empty imagination and ideas for us (Akhundzadeh, 1963)... wild nature Arabs... They destroyed works and deeds of the well-doing and wiped out their righteous laws of justice, and established their tyranny and improper traditions in Iran ... (Akhundzadeh, Molhaghat,p.162-161).

But Akhundzadeh does not just read stories about the factors that caused Iran's spiritual decline, but also looks at the future and advises on future reform. He believes that: What has happened is past. After this, we must try to solve our future problems, which are the result of the deeds and religions of these people. We must save our compatriots from the past misfortune. What can console us now is to understand our duty and to know that we have been in error for one thousand, three hundred and eighty years... After this, let’s look at our remnants and ancestors, and consider everyone Iranian as our compatriots, and every Zoroastrian as Iran’s offspring, and attempt for each other’s well-being. We also have to imitate the ethics of praiseworthy ancestors and free-spirited ones in our own lives (Akhundzadeh,1871,p.221). In another part of his discussion,he discusses the necessity of cleaning up the Persian language from Arabic words and removing Arabic culture from Iranian culture, andIn a letter to Jalal alddin Mirza, he praises his effortsto erase Persian from Arabic words and the liberation of Persian language from Arabic domination in the “NamehKhosravan”book(Akhundzadeh,1979,p.172).He also paid attention to the signs and symbols of ancient Iran and made the Iranian government aware of these issues.In his view, the official emblem of the Iranian government should represent the identity and history of Iran, the Iranian symbol must signifythe ancient Persian monarchs and the Safavi government, including symbols of Persepolis, Estakhr castle and the shape of the crown of the Twelve Qizilbash(Akhundzadeh,1972,p.44-45). But despite the above-mentioned issues, Akhundzadeh is not a man of imagination and his intellectual aspect is strong, and despite



the fact that he opposes Islam and wants to revive the culture of ancient Iran, he does not see it come true and believes that: Revival of the covenant of Mahabadian culture and laws and reviving the Zoroastrian religion and laws and restoring the Kiyaniyan government in Iran is not possible anymore. Because the governments and religions have a life like the human beings, the life of your religion and your government has come to an end, and in another point of view, Islam remains in Iran, for the Islamic religion has not yet reached to its end (Adamiat,1970,p. 128).But Akhundzadehis not disappointed and he advises Jalaluddin Mirza Qajar: After the 13th century, the prince, Jalaluddin Mirza Qajar and the author of Kamal al-Dowleh (Akhundzadeh) are responsible for revealing the mysteries of the truth, which are covered in this period (13 centuries) and aware their compatriots from their neglect (Akhundzadeh,1871,p.222).Another thinker who was interested in the discussion of Iranian nationalism and the ancient nationalism was Jalaluddin Mirza Qajar, who considered this debate in writing the "NamehKhosravan" book. He wrote the book of "Nameh Khosravan" in three volumes (Divan Beigi,1986,p.1,370). He was the first Iranian prince of the Qajar era, who rationally criticized the existing intellectual order directly and indirectly.Jalaluddin Mirza is considered to be the founder of Persia's archaism thought in the new era of Iran (Abadian.2008,p.3).He was influenced by the opinions of two of his contemporaries: First, Monkji Limji Hooshang Hatria and the other Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (Ibid,p.12).Jalaluddin Mirza's meeting and association with Monkji and the Minister of the United Kingdom and Akhundzadeh led him to the compilation of the book "NamehKhosravan"(Ibid,p.13). Though "NamehKhosravan" is written in pure Persian, there's no use of strange words and it is understandable.The historical story of Jalaluddin Mirza begins with the legend of Mahabadian and continues through their Iranian historical eras. Jalaluddin Mirza wrote three chapters of his history from ancient Iran to the Zandyeh period, but the fourth part, which was related to the Qajar period, was not written and he believes: "I am thinking about what to write, I hope that things will be changed, or the destiny takes me out of this fallen Iran, so I can write this fourth letter truly and arbitrarily." (Ibid).

Paying attention to the Persian language in the "NamehKhosravan" and breaking the Arabic language mastery in Iranian art and literature is one of the most prominent features of this book.It is written on the cover of the book:" "NamehKhosravan", the story of the kings of



Pars in Persian, which is beneficial to people, especially children". In general, Jalaluddin Mirzapaid attention to two issues in his nationalist thoughts: One is the familiarity of Iranians with the ancient Iranian history and the other is, the removal of the Arabic vocabulary from Persian language, and in the first volume of "NamehKhosravan" it's also aimed to revive the Persian language on the basis of the story of the kings of Pars (Jalaluddin Mirza, 1285 AH:Cover 1,p.8-10), which reflects the nationalist foundations of his thinking. Among the components of nationalism, the element of language, especially the erasing of the Persian language from alien vocabulary, particularly Arabic, was of main interest to him, and in his opinion, the Persian language was the most important feature of Iranian culture. From Ajudani's point of view, the tendency of Jalaluddin Mirza to write in pure Persian originates from his nationalist and predominantly anti-Arabs' beliefs (Ajudani,2004,p.66).Moreover, the purification of Iranian culture from the foreign language by Jalaluddin Mirza is in line with Iran's cultural independence, for in the views of nationalists such as Jalaluddin Mirza, cultural cleansing, especially erasing Persian language and returning to the ancient roots, was a necessary step toward cultural independence of Iran (GadimiyeGheydari,2012,p.11).The history of ancient Iran was another issue of interest for Jalaluddin Mirza, and his attention to this is due to his Iranianism. "NamehKhosravan" is a text that has been influenced by works such as Charchaman Sharistan, Dasateir, DabestanAl-Mazaheb, and Mirror of the rite. In the Khosravi ritual, the roots of ancient Iran are attributed to the far-gone past, and dynasties such as Abadian, Jiyan, Yasaeyan, and Golshaeen are mentioned in it. Iranians and especially the Iranian kings of these dynasties, the Pishdadian, the Kianian, the Parthians and the Sassanids, are known to be the pillar of the whole world and its creatures, and all inventions and discoveries, as well as Sami prophets, have appeared in their era, and they mostly have such prominent traits and virtues such as Wisdom and arts and knowledge ability and justice. (Jalaluddin Mirza,1285 AH:Cover 1,p.73).

Jalaluddin Mirza, in writing the continuation of Iranian history in the Islamic era, disregards the emergence of Islam and the Arab invasion of Iran and does not place an emphasis on the history of Islam and the arrival of Islam in Iran. As well as the commemoration of the languishing history of ancient Iran, in line with its nationalist ideas in clearing the history of Iran from the existence of historical realities and in the quest for cultural independence and



national identity, his thoughts has changed from patriotism and the concern for the restoration of elements of historical and social identity to radical nationalism.

Mirza Agha Khan Kermani is another one of Iran's first modern thinkers to practice nationalism. His thoughts centered on opposition to tyranny, reformism, rationalism, religious facilitation and liberalism, romantic beliefs about Iran, pre-Islamic Iran praise, and the attention to the nation and nationalism. Agha Khan Kermani had several intellectual origins around the nationalism issue. He was most impressed by Akhundzadeh and wrote his three-volume pamphlets under the influence of Akhundzadeh. Another source which influenced his mind was European nationalism, and also, the idea of the superiority of the Aryan race on the Sami race also affected his mind. Another very important factor that, according to Fereydoon Adamiyat was his mental complexion, was the social lag of Iran behind the new world (Adamiyat, 1978, p. 270). The main goal of Agha Khan Kermani was national awareness and revival of Iran. He accounted for all the elements of the philosophy of nationalism and acted very effectively in the development of Iranian nationalism. Agha Khan's nationalism contains elements like country, religion, race, language, and history. Agha Khan used the word "homeland" (or country) in the broad sense of Iran, and in its full political sense, intertwined with historical and national ties. Agha Khan has a romantic description of homeland and calls it as goddess, bride, father, and mother, and according to Iran he says: its borders are ambers of breeze, its soil is more precious than gold and silver, lands all verdure, fresh air, and its rivers flow with freshwater, unless the British blueprints intend to capture the Iranian rivers (Ibid, p. 271). Agha Khan praises the Zoroastrianism as another element of nationalism in Iranian Religion and believes that the law of Zand is the most complete and progressive creed of the Ancient eras. According to Agha Khan, the only person who truly served the Iranians was Ferdowsi, who revived Zoroastrianism and restored the national honor (Kermani, 1326 AH, p. 577). The race is another element of Agha Khan's nationalism. He praises the Aryan and the Iranian ethnicity and describes the greatness ritual and heroism of Persia and its kings (Adamiyat, 1978, p. 275). Agha Khan, in the Iranian national solidarity, says this ancient and honorable nation has passed successive eras, but unlike many other ancient nations that disappeared from the page, they re-emerged and stayed strong (Kermani, 1326 AH, p. 366). But regret of Agha Khan is that we have forgotten our own race and greatness, and we reached the point where we have



accepted every disdain and disgrace. He goes on saying: where are those great men who freed Iran's lands from bondage and oppression and left happiness and facility for themselves? (Ibid,p.366).Kaveh Ahangar and Fereydoon Nik Sirat, who rose up with honor and national endeavor, and overthrew the tyrants. We can be proud of all nations because we first taught the world the way of repelling the oppression with the national rebellion (Ibid,p.368). He eventually blames Iranians and says that this creed of superiority has been cut off from Iran and an empty pride has filled its place (Kermani: sad khatabeh, in Adamiat,1978,p.274-275).Another element of Agha Khan's nationalism is the national language.According to Agha Khan,consistency of a nation is for the language, and the nation is a people, speaking one language (Kermani: 1287 AH, in Adamiat,1978,p.276).A nation whose language disappears will lose its ethnicity.The language of each nation represents its soul, as the Shahnameh is the epitome of the Iranian soul (Ibid).If there was no Shahnameh, the language and breed of the Iranian nation would have become Arabic, and Iranians, like the people of the Sham, and Egypt and other African countries, would have lost their nationality (Kermani,1326 AH,p.14).Following the Akhundzadeh, Agha Khan Kermani strongly opposed the current Persian script and considered their way of writing as one of the most important reasons for the Muslims lack of progress, and demanded its evolution and reformation. He believed that once the Persian script was clearly written with separated letters and the Vowel was also in words, and there was no wrong place for a word or a letter in the words, by accepting the Arabic alphabet, the letters of the Persian became joined letters ... people still do not know how much of the difficult Arabic alphabet has thrown them back through the progress. In addition, the simple and sweet Pahlavi language with Arabic language supremacy faded and gross words and Arabic expressions came instead. If Iranians knew what damage the Arabic language had to do with Iran, they would not use a single Arabic word in the Persian language (Ibid).In Adamiat's view, Agha Khan poses the set of elements of nationality in the form of unity and culture and history of Iran and founded the philosophy of Iranian nationalism. He says: The honor and authenticity of every nation, must be recognized from its history and surely, its history has guarded the nationality, ethnicity, and breed of Iran against the storm of events. A nation whose history rests on a true basis, the magnanimity of the hearts of its people becomes firmly established, and such a nation would root in every direction like a strong tree. Also, national legends and national



stories influence the survival of the nationality and the restoration of its life (Ibid,p.14-15 in Adamiat,1978,p. 278). In the end, it should be said that the aim of Agha Khan was to revive Iran and establish a national government, and through this way, he paid tribute to the great aspects of ancient Iran and praised its greatness, but it must be taken into account that he did not merely consider Iran's greatness and grandeur but he also discussed Iran's disorganization and decline. Around that, he says: O Iran, where is that glory when the breadth of your borders was so much that the sun could not cover on a day. At that time, Your kings behaved like civilized people, and you would live in peace and harmony, and you'd have God's forgiveness and salvation. The Persian Empire had many rules, and they would counsel in the great affairs of parliament and had a strong fundamental law. What a pity on you Iran, what happened to that heavenly power, where did that noble ritual and magnanimity go, and where is all that success? A bunch of Arab came by and caused this miserably for one thousand two hundred and eighty years. Your land was destroyed, your towns were ruined, your people ignorant, and unaware of all the advances of the world and the progress of the world's civilization (Chubineh, 2000,p. 126-128).

Abdul Rahim Talbuf was one of the first Iranian modern thinkers to consider the issue of nationalism. The modern scientific issues and the philosophical foundations of the modern world are the main basis of his thoughts. Based on what he learned from modernity, he commented on political issues and came up with new ideas on cultural, social and political issues. He emphasized the rights of freedom and rule of law, and insisted that people must determine their fate and crier of their nation's domination, and opposes the aggression and domination of the West, and sees the salvation of Asia in overthrowing colonialism and western sovereignty (Adamiat,1984,p.3).Talbuf lived in Russia for half a century, but he never forgot his Iranian identity and always loved Iran (Haeri,1985,p.47).Based on the concepts of the modern world, he recognized the pivotal position of reason in the system of thought, and follows the Iranian pioneers of Iran, dealt with researching and thinking around political and social matters, based on empirical sciences and non-metaphysical philosophy. His work is full of intellectuality, ideological experience and constitutional politics, social criticism, defense of freedom and liberalism ... (Haghdar,2008,p.123).One of the topics discussed by Talbuf was the issue of nationalism, and as he has already stated, he opposed the aggression and domination of the West on Asia. He pursues nationalism on



issues such as patriotism and confrontation with colonialism, alphabet reformation, public military service system, and so on. Patriotism was one of the components of his nationalism, and although he lived in Russia for half a century and his thoughts were formed there, he was a passionate patriot who never forgot his Iranian identity. Talbuf's efforts to write numerous works for the establishment of the rule of law and freedom in Iran and the removal of economic and social problems and the teaching of some new sciences to children and people of his country, all demonstrate his patriotism. Talbuf believes in living in own country and serving its people (Talbuf: Safar name Abegarm Qafqaz. Afshar, 1997, p. 422). He believed, through patriotism we should teach our children that they are Muslims, Iranian and fearless; before any science. (Talbuf, 1324 AH, p. 129), And in the community, the love of the homeland, the children, and the religion should be the same and everyone must be ready to sacrifice anything for the sake of the homeland, such as protection of children and preserving religion (Talbuf, 1311 AH, p. 143). Talbuf expresses his feelings about his homeland as follows: My homeland is my beloved, it's my idol, the true God is needless of praise by its servants, but the homeland needs the worship of its inhabitants. First, I am a friend of the world and then a friend of Iran and at last a friend of the clean soil of Tabriz (Talbuf, 1906, p. 14-181). Based on this thinking, Talbuf considers all those who are fighting for the country and keeping the honor of their homeland are Nobel patriots, and further he believes that to encourage those honorable patriots, their birthday and death-day should be regarded (Talbuf, 1312 AH, p. 101). Talbuf considers the love of the homeland from the homeland, and he claimed that honor, dignity and human spirit are only in maintaining the dignity and honor of the homeland, and the increase of the wealth of the homeland and the education of the children and enterprising of the religion and the customs of the homeland (ibid, p. 89-92). Talbuf was such a patriot that he reacted to the criticism of others against Iran and believed that if the fruit is bitter, it's on the tree ... The Iranians defect should be said not by others, but by the Iranians themselves (Jarideh Melli, 1326 AH, No. 33). He has been affected by the fact that many parts of Iran have been isolated and taken over by foreigners. He says: we lost our heritage property, Herat, and half of Baluchistan was separated from our country by a friend (Britain), now independency has been weakened (Talbuf, 1312 AH, p. 77). He goes on to say to the Iranians that they should be aware that if national independence and authority falls apart, then its revival might not be possible, even after six



centuries. He believes that it must be understood that a nation with no homeland, is not human (Shajari,2000,p.156).

Colonization and its prevention are other components of Talbuf's nationalism. Regarding the issue of colonialism, Talbuf, in light of his patriotic sense, is trying to clarify the issue of colonialism and depredation of Iran by colonialist governments. Especially the colonialism of the two countries, Britain and Russia in a book "Talebi's policy", the dialogue between the two ministers of the Russian and British parliaments in Iran are mentioned, in which the British ambassador indicates the Russian ambassador about Russia's policy in Iran, that your goal to strengthen the status quo in Iran, is supporting despotism. A situation in which nation will oppose and hate the tyranny of government and as a result, the nation will invite you to repulse the misrule without bloodshed, raise your flag and the nation will be your subordinate. Which is a reflection of the Russian interference in Iran (Talbuf,1357 AH,p.41-42).Talbuf also strongly criticized the use of the goods of the Westerns and imitation of them with his patriotic spirit and believed that instead of watching the people of a foreign country, we could learn from them and move forward (Ibid,80).

The alphabet reformation was another issue of interest to Talbuf. He considered one of the causes of Iran's backwardness, neglecting educational and cultural issues, and in addition to various aspects such as the enhancements of new schools and educational materials and trained teachers, he did not miss to mention the issue of the alphabet and the extension of Persian language. He had identified the existing alphabet as one of the obstacles to Iran's progress. Talbuf mentioned the illiteracy of the Iranian people as a result of difficulty and hardness of the Persian alphabet and favored the reformation of this alphabet.Talbuf considers the alphabet of the Islamic nation, the reason for their ignorance (Talbuf, 1336 AH, 10). Talbuf believes that our alphabet is so hard and unreadable that, after fifty years of education, words cannot be read right without the imagination of its pre and post meaning. To solve the problems of the Persian alphabet, Talbuf suggests omitting the points (dots), putting the Vowels back in the words, draw angles, then our children will know what they learn in ten years just in four months, and our students, could success in eight years, instead of thirty (Ibid,p.103).Another of Talbuf's ideas was the issue of public military service system, which he considered necessary for the preservation of his country and religion (Ibid,p.96). By understanding the fact that in the present world, preventing the invasion of



foreigners and preserving religion and homeland and honor, is not possible with a number of tribal and seasonal forces, Talbuf proposes a permanent and organized army. He believes that the law on the generalization of military service to all the inhabitants of the homeland is one of the major achievements in the past three hundred years of humanity that is praised admirable (Talbuf,1311 AH,p.143).

## **CONCLUSION**

The entrance of modernity into Iran in the context of the Iran-Russia war caused a crisis and disappearance of the traditional system. This situation brought a huge crisis in the foundations of Iranian society and created a concern for the intellectuals and states men, so they tried to establish some thoughts or take some actions to create a nationalized community, in order to obviate the pressure and crisis applied to Iran's society. The purpose of these thinkers and statesmen was to preserve the unity and independence of Iran and strengthen the state in the critical conditions of the nineteenth century. These thinkers and statesmen, in order to cope with the crisis, inevitably undertook modernistic ideas and actions that were taken from the modern world. In their innovative efforts, statesmen have been paying more attention to the objective and confirmative aspects of the modern world, but the thinkers and open-minded addressed the more cultural or democratic figure of the modern world. These intellectuals and thinkers of the Iranian society, referred to as earliest modern Iranian thinkers, were a disorganized set of thinkers who fostered opinions and ideas for the establishment of a national community, national sovereignty, the rule of law, and rejection of colonialism and tyranny. They have put nationalism in their pace and have considered it as a nation-making ideology. They sought to define the concept of Iranian nationality for the sake of unity, independence, and preservation of Iranian identity. The Iranian nationality to them consisted of concepts such as Persian language, Zoroastrianism, and archaism nationalism. They praised the Persian language as a manifestation of the thoughts and aspirations of the Iranian nation and praised the Zoroastrian religion as an ancient Iranian religion, which is the national identity factor of Iran's nationalism, and the admirer of the ancient times. Therefore, they have tried to present a new concept of Iranian nationality, based on this definition that nations are cultural entities, and groups of people who have been linked by common values and traditions, particularly, common language, religion, and history.



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