

Subject:- PERSIAN

M.A. IInd Semester

Course No. Per 203

Unit- I

**Topic- (i) History of Modern Persian Literature Prose in
Iran**

Online Class Materials

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History of Modern Persian Literature Prose

The Persian prose, although it has attracted less attention than Persian poetry, is not negligible. In its early development it was subject to certain limitations. After the Muslim conquest of Persia, the Arabic language enjoyed enormous prestige and scholars wrote their learned books in Arabic language.

The earliest specimen of prose works in Persian which have been hitherto known to us dated from the beginning of the 4th century A.H., even before that some Persian prose works are said to have existed in the second century A.H. for a few such works are mentioned by the Arab writers in Iran in their Arabic works. Thus for instance an inhabitant of Nishapur named Bah Afrin son of Mah Farvardin who before the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty in 122 A.H. had invented a new religion, wrote a book in Persian prose in which he had discussed the seven prayers (Haft Namaz). After that a physician of the same period called **Manka** translated into Persian a Sanskrit work on Astronomy entitled **Kitab-i-Shana** and **Abu-Hatim-Balkhi** wrote that book in Persian script for Yahya Barmaki between 170-177 A.H. Besides these two books no other instances are still found out, nor is there available any specimen of Persian Prose work belonging to third century A.H.

At the very outset of the nineteenth century the political and social contacts of Persia with the Western Europe especially Russia had its profound effects in stimulating the minds of progressive thinkers of Iran. They not only encouraged the movement of reforms in Persian prose literature but introduced a simple and easily intelligible Persian in their writings.

The first step in the modernization of prose-literature was taken up by the two of the greatest Prime-Ministers Qaim-Maqam Farahani (1779-1835) and Mirza Taqi Khan, the Amir Kabir who tried to simplify the style of official correspondence. As their position in political and literary circle was exalted, their writings soon set fashion for the younger generation. After these two distinguished ministers the famous innovator Malkom Khan is considered as the real fore-runner of modern Persian prose. He was a prolific essayist mostly on political and social issues. The ease and simplicity of his style stirred the readers of his time. A host of young progressive authors, especially journalists regarded his style as the model of effective writing.