

H. Maksudi's First-Reader "Məgallim əyvəl" ("The Former Teacher") (The End of the XIX – The Beginning of the XX Century): Origin, Text and Interpretation

Dilyara M. Galiullina¹

¹ Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia

Correspondence: Dilyara M. Galiullina, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, 420008, Kazan, Kremlevskaya Street, 18, Russia. E-mail galiullinadm@mail.ru

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Abstract

The topic under study is vital due to the fact that interest in the history of Tatar people has recently increased and, first of all, attention is drawn to the problems connected with formation and development of national cultural traditions. The report investigates the ABC-book as a special type of a narrative on studying history of childhood and the traditions of the Tatar national pedagogics. The object of studies as a historical source is the analysis of the Tatar first-reader by a famous public figure of the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX century H. Maksudi. The paper presents a new secular system of teaching at Tatar schools, the importance of the first ABC-books in training and educating younger generation. The principle approaches in the research are comparative historical and logical methods. Primarily, research is based on the texts of Tatar first-readers by H. Maksudi. Therefore, the main results of the research lie in the analysis of information opportunities of the texts on history of Tatar childhood of Jadidism period. Language specification of the reflection of "nursery" and "adult" daily life in the verbal and visual text of the ABC-book by H. Maksudi are revealed, the role of the Tatar first-reader in formation of national consciousness of children is shown. Research materials, except theoretical, are of applied significance and can be used in classrooms in higher education institutions and schools when studying the history of Tatar national ABC-book.

Keywords: Tatar ABC-book (first-reader), Jadidism, history, culture, Tatar language, national consciousness

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Studying of pedagogical experience of previous periods is important for the development of modern educational system. At the moment, preservation of national educational traditions of the peoples of Russia is a matter of topical interest. Studying educational literature helps to understand the system of material and spiritual values that guided the teachers of various periods in their educational experience of teaching and instruction. In this context pre-revolutionary study guides, especially textbooks of national regions, are allocated. They had not only linguistic features, but also differed in a structure and contents of the texts. Therefore, studying the first school textbooks for children of the Kazan Tatars - ABC-books or first-readers helps in the research of the problems connected with the history of New-method Tatar schools before the revolution of 1917.

1.2 Status of a Problem

Nowadays, an interest in the history of education is constantly growing, that's why the ABC-book as a special historical and cultural phenomenon, has become an object of increased attention and is given the highest priority not only in Russia, but also abroad. It is necessary to place some emphasis on the materials of E.A. Legotina (2010), V. G. Bezrogov (2010), K. Kelly (2008), V. Srok (2011), etc. The works of the Kazan Tatars devoted to an educational system considered the issues connected with school textbooks. Among them are the research by R. U. Amirkhanov (1992), T.A. Biktimirova (2003), F.I. Ibragimov (1994), L.R. Murtazina (2002), etc. However, so far there isn't a lot of individual researches of the ABC-books of various national regions devoted to the verbal and visual analysis of the text in Russia (Vlasova, 2011; Ilyukh, 2010; Legotina, 2010; Salnikova & Galiullina, 2014, etc.).

1.3 The Research Hypothesis

The carried out analysis showed that studying school textbooks helps to understand educative and formative fundamentals of the epoch. It is necessary to emphasize that Tatar national ABC-books of the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX century were specially created for New-method schools and taught children to read and write in the native language. The emergence of new schools was connected with the distribution of Jadidism. They became alternative to the Old-method schools where the preference was given to theological subjects, and the Tatar language wasn't included into the educational programme. However, even new secular ABC-books and their founders were a product of Muslim environment and Muslim culture and therefore they can't be considered out of national and cultural educational traditions of the Tatar people of the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX century.

2. Methodological Framework

Analysis of the first-readers' texts is not an easy task as it is important to "read" the text and interpret it properly. In addition, the visual imagery of the primer is of significance. Methodological analysis tools are borrowed from the works of well-known researchers Roland Barthes (1989), M. M. Bakhtin (2000), J. Derrida (1999), and others. Tatar primers are considered to be part of the social and cultural environment when seen through the perspective of the history of national education. The study is based on the first-readers' texts themselves, some of which have not previously been introduced into the scientific use from the Research Library n.a. N.I. Lobachevsky of the Kazan (Volga region) Federal University and the National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan. ABC-book of I.Gasprinsky (1890) as well as Russian and Tatar primers of that period were used for relative and comparative analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Specific Features of the Pre-Revolutionary Tatar "Əlifba" (ABC-Book) and National Educational System of the Kazan Tatars

The history of the Tatar ABC-book - "əlifba", according to the majority of historians, begins in the time of the Volga Bulgaria when Bulgars accepted Islam and came under strong influence of the Oriental culture. First of all, together with the religion the Arabic writing spread among the population. First ABC-books appeared at this period. Most likely, these textbooks were used in the Golden Horde and the Kazan khanate. There is some data on the distribution of hand-written "əlifba" by Murtaza Kotlygysh and Ishniyaz bin Shirmiyaz (Sabirzyanov, 2002) in the second half of the XVIII century. However, it remains unknown what these ABC-books looked like. There is only a printing version of the ABC-books of the beginning of the XIX century. The first edition of the Tatar printing house, opened in 1800, was Tatar first-reader "Attagodzhi" ("Reading syllables and spelling") with prayers for reading. The book was very popular and appeared in a large amount almost annually. Later it was often published under the names "Əlifba iman sharta belən" ("The ABC with prayers"), "Shariətel iman" or "Iman sharti" ("Faith prerequisite"). The Kazan Tatars called it simply "Əlifbi" (on the first letters of the alphabet – "əlif" and "bi") or "Əlebbi", "Əlpi". The book issues appeared before 1928 without significant changes. The additions made to the subsequent editions represented only new prayers. It was a religious ABC-book where fundamental principles of Muslim dogma were stated in the way of conversation between two Muslims in a form of short questions and answers (Ibragimov, 1994). However, at the end of the XIX century the religious ABC-book didn't satisfy the advanced Tatar national intellectuals either with its structure or with the contents.

Distribution of Jadidism and appearance of New-method schools led to the emergence of new textbooks and teaching materials. All educational institutions felt a lack of textbooks. During this period, the government rigidly controlled educational process at national schools. For example, madrasahs (Koran schools) had to have an official permission to teach secular subjects (Biktimirova, 2003). Tatar educational institutions could be only religious, according to a strict instruction of the authorities (Amirkhanov, 1992). Even, after the revolution of 1905 – 1907 it was strictly forbidden to establish schools of secular character. But, indulgence of certain requirements and concessions concerning national school were made. Introduction of a new sound method of training at national schools demanded improvements of the Tatar ABC-book.

3.2 The First New-Method ABC-book "Hodzha – and – sibjyan" ("The Teacher of Children") by I. Gasprinsky

The famous public figure and publisher Ismail Gasprinsky introduced the first New-method ABC-book in "Turki" published in Bakhchisaray in 1890 - "Hodzha – and – sibjyan" (Gasprinsky, 1890). The language style of the ABC-book was close to the Ottoman one though it widely used Volga–Priuralsky dialect. The editor and publisher of the "Tardzhiman" ("Translator") newspaper I. Gasprinsky developed a special style of the Turkic – Tatar language based on the simplified Turkish language, exempted from the Arabic and Persian borrowings

(Benigsen, 1993). Literary style and the "Tardzhiman" language influenced many "advanced" Tatar books, which appeared before the revolution of 1905 (Gubaidulin, 1997).

From the ABC texts it is clear that the textbook was created, first of all, for the Crimean Tatars' children – it described in details the beauty of the Crimean nature and reproduced the way of life of its people. These texts were less suitable for the Kazan province with its severe and strikingly different climate. Names of many southern fruit were, in general, unfamiliar to the Kazan Tatars' children, and the literary language used in texts wasn't always clear. However, the ABC-book of I. Gasprinsky (1890) became a sample for the creation of ABC-books of this kind. In many Tatar first-readers the structure of the textbook offered by I. Gasprinsky as a unified teaching material on two languages – native and Arabic, and on mathematics and "World around us" (history and geography) was reproduced. However, the structure offered by I. Gasprinsky was not completely reintroduced. Texts on history and geography remained unclaimed. To the Tatar teachers it, most likely, seemed, that I. Gasprinsky offered a very complicated material to children. The ABC-book included small texts on the ancient history of Turkic peoples. The texts on Russia history were missing though the author considered studying the Russian history necessary. The information on geography had an informative character. I. Gasprinsky recommended to use the maps and schemes at lessons more widely, and also reported about the achievements of Muslim scientists in this area (Gasprinsky, 1890).

Instead of texts in the Arabic language the author used prayers. They were short, convenient for memorizing and important in Muslims' everyday life religious texts (Gasprinsky, 1890). Not only I. Gasprinsky, but also all Tatar teachers, despite their advanced views, were devout and passionately believing people. In addition, it is impossible to forget that the society continued to live under Shariah laws, and it was necessary to reckon with the opinion of Muslim clergy. Therefore, the national intellectuals supported a reasonable combination of secular and religious content. Many Tatar New-method ABC-books were structured on the basis of these principles. Most likely, the structure of the Tatar textbooks was borrowed from the Russian ABC-books. One of the most widespread teaching materials of the end of the XIX century was a textbook by famous teachers D. Tikhomirov and E. Tikhomirova "The ABC-book for coeducation of reading and writing with pictures and articles for initial exercises in explanatory reading for national schools". The authors included folklore material, A.S. Pushkin's verses, Krylov's fables, etc., in the form of texts. Also, they offered stories about Jesus Christ's life and the Mother of God for reading. The third section provided Old Church Slavonic alphabet, texts of the Holy Writ and prayers (Tikhomirov, Tikhomirova, 1912). Many Tatar ABC-books of the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX century, relied on a similar structure. Based on the same principle H. Maksudi structured his ABC-book (1897, 1898 and others).

3.3 Specific Features of the ABC-book "Mögallim əyvəl" ("The Former Teacher") by H. Maksudi

The famous researcher of the Tatar first-readers F. Ibragimov considers H. Maksudi "Mögallim əyvəl" one of the first secular ABC-book for Jadid schools. The first version of the textbook based on a syllabic method had been prepared by the end of the 1880s when H. Maksudi was a shakird. "From edition to edition, - F. Ibragimov writes, - he introduced innovations, searched, made mistakes and, at last, came closer to the sound method" (Ibragimov, 1969). "Mögallim əyvəl" had become one of the most widespread teaching materials in the Tatar educational institutions before 1917. From 1892 – till 1918 the ABC-book had 31 editions and was published with a circulation of 1 million 200 thousand copies (Valiullin, 2004). The KFU Research Library named after N. I. Lobachevsky contains about ten editions of different years. All of them differ from each other in both the contents and design. But, even in this, apparently, perfect ABC-book, the critic of the Tatar first-readers G. Akhmarov found a number of grammatical mistakes and stylistically incorrect structures. In his opinion, this ABC-book did not correspond to any of the known methods – it had its own method and its own "imlya" (spelling) (Akhmarov, 1909). Despite the criticism, H. Maksudi's ABC-book was used at many Turkic national schools of Russia. Turkic roots of the textbook promoted public awareness (Sabirzyanov, 2002). In 1896 – 1898 H. Maksudi taught in madrasah "Zyndzhirla" in Bakhchisaray and probably communicating with the local people, H. Maksudi apprehended a way of life and language of the Crimean Tatars who came under influence of the Ottoman Turkic peoples' language and culture. H. Maksudi's views were influenced by I. Gasprinsky's ideas, including pedagogical and educational ones. "Mögallim əyvəl" was based on the model of the ABC-book "Hodzha – and – sibjyan" by I. Gasprinsky whom H. Maksudi considered the teacher and the mentor (Gafarova, 2006). In the local history and ethnographic works I. Gasprinsky called the Crimean Tatars "kjrymla" or "the Crimean Muslims", and to give a name to the Turkic population of Russia he used the terms "Russian Muslims", "Turk-Tatar", "Russian Turkic peoples" (Gankevich, 2000). H. Maksudi didn't support the ethnonym "Tatars". However, there were also disagreements between them. If I. Gasprinsky was the supporter of thinking about a "uniform language" for the Turkic population of Russia, H. Maksudi supported the creation of an independent

national language on the basis of the Kazan dialect, but didn't call it Tatar, he used the term "Turki" (Gafarova, 2006).

In H. Maksudi's ABC-book special attention is paid to New-method schools, education of a younger generation according to the national traditions and traditions of Islam. The author conveyed the meaning of national traditions, first of all, through Islam. The national culture remained as long as a religion. According to the famous orientalist V. V. Bartold, the concept "national" and "religious" was perceived by the Turkic population of Russia "identically", i.e. synonymous, and therefore the special attention was paid to an education of children under the Shariah law (Arapov, 2008). In everyday life, the Kazan Tatars were guided by the words of the prophet Muhammad: "The best heritage given from the father to a child is a good education" (Fazylov, 2005). H. Maksudi, following these precepts in the ABC-book, offers a behavior model of a good and a bad child. A good child is an obedient, diligent, modest boy. He studies well at school, respects seniors, plays only in the yard or in the garden and only with shakirds (pupils). He never plays in the street and at school, does not communicate with the "street" boys. As shakird, he has to behave decently – to "ədəple" (Maksudi, 1903). A counterbalance to the image of a good child the author creates the description of a bad child "ədəpsez". First of all, it is a hooligan, the child who studies badly, doesn't listen to the teacher, says indecent words, is insolent to seniors. The distinctive feature of a bad child is his communicating with illiterate children, he eats much, sleeps a lot, etc. (Maksudi, 1903). If a child didn't follow the ordered norms, he could be subjected to punishment. Besides some punishment a "bad" shakird some other educational measures could be applied. In the text "The word of shakird" the pupil reports about a certain dark room where disobedient, shirking school pupils were locked (Maksudi, 1903). It is difficult to tell whether there really was such a practice. Nevertheless, in family life corporal punishment and "dark" rooms, were seemingly present. Otherwise, they would not appear on the pages of ABC-books. H. Maksudi urges children to adhere to the basic rules of behavior at school and at home. Shakird is a special status in "the world of children". Shakird is allocated with the behavior and education. Moreover, quality education was considered as basis of a happy and comfortable life of the Muslim.

Almost every edition of the ABC-book contained texts about Islam explaining basic provisions of Muslim doctrine about a doomsday, about paradise, about hell. At first, such texts were published in I. Gasprinsky's textbook (Gasprinsky, 1890). H. Maksudi presented them in his ABC-book in a new version. In one of the texts it described the revival after death in details: "Once this world will die. People, animals and all the living-beings will die. Then people will revive. This day is called "kjamət" (revival after death). This day, at Allah's will, all people will leave graves, there will come the Doomsday. The people who made good acts will get to paradise. Let Allah create each of us "sacred" and good ..." (Maksudi, 1902). This text, was offered for the 7-8 old children and these statements didn't shock a society. The doctrine about death is a part of the religious education system and education of children. The book "Akhiyri zaman kitabi" ("The book about the doomsday") was one of the widespread among the Kazan Tatars books. E. Malov wrote that the Muslims living on the territory of Russia heard about the contents of this book since childhood (Malov, 1897). It was difficult to separate or delete Islam from a school education. The religion was not simply ideology, but a part of everyday life and national culture.

Rural life, habitual for children, is presented in H. Maksudi's ABC-book. The "world" surrounding children is very limited and familiar since childhood. The bulk of the population lived in the village and ABC-books, first of all, were addressed to the local people. In the text "Our village" a small shakird tells about the advantages of a new system of training: "It's been a year since they started teaching in our village in a modern way. We started studying one and a half months ago. Earlier we did not know any letter. Now, praise to Allah, we know all Turkic letters. We are able to read and write. Before that nobody was able to write, except one or two rich children who graduated from the madrasahs in the city. In our village, everybody was educated a little. But, nobody could read or write well..." (Maksudi, 1898). The story of a small shakird touches upon an issue of inefficiency of the old methods of training. At "new" schools 7-8 year old children are trained. From texts it is evident that children sit on benches, the teacher (həlfə) sits at a table and writes with a piece of chalk on a board. The lessons were organized according to the timetable. There was a break each hour (Maksudi, 1898). It was "unusual" and "new" to the Tatar society of the end of the XIX - the beginning of the XX century.

The emergence of visual images in ABC-books was also an innovation. In general, in Tatar ABC-books there were no drawings for a long time. Among Tatar teachers, there was a brisk discussion on this matter. Some of them considered drawings a help to a child to acquire the training material better, others, on the contrary, thought that images distract attention, and the third group did not see a sense in representing objects when it was possible to see them "alive" (Ibragimov, 1994). Tatar ABC-books design corresponded to the main canons of Islam. According to the standard oriental tradition, Tatar printed editions were decorated only with calligraphical

drawings where the vegetable ornament was the main part (Dulsky, 1930). However, at the beginning of the XX century, there appeared first Tatar illustrated ABC-books (Alparov, 1913; Zabiri, 1907; Tagirov, 1914, etc.). H. Maksudi's ABC-books became illustrated as well. The author of numerous works on Muslim articles of belief and one of the future leaders of liberal and democratic party "Ittifak of al-muslimin" ("The union of Muslims"), had drawings of people and animals (Tatar encyclopedic dictionary, 1999). Visual aid is presented in black and white, sometimes in indistinct blurred images. There were no complicated composition drawings. Illustrations occurred only in two editions. The first one, dated to 1914, includes only two drawings (Maksudi, 1914). In the second one there are more illustrations, but they are not dated (Maksudi, year is not indicated). Researcher F.G. Vagapova considers that compiling "Mögallim әvәl" H. Maksudi used illustrations from Sh. Takhiri's ABC-book "Rәsemle әlifba" ("The ABC-book with drawings", 1914) which can not be denied. After all, Sh. Takhiri was the first Tatar artist who got permission to teach drawing in the Imperial Academy of Arts. In the ABC-book he placed the drawings of a city and rural landscapes, genre drawings with the images of the tiniest household details (Vagapova, 2008). Really, H. Maksudi's ABC-book included many drawings from this ABC-book, in particular, the image of a woman at a stone fencing, the father and son, etc. (Maksudi, year is not indicated; Maksudi, 1914; Takhiri, 1914).

In H. Maksudi's first-reader, there isn't a lot of people images, but every drawing bears a deep meaning and value, displays national traditions. Thus, one of the drawings depicts a woman, most likely, rural, getting water from a well. She is enfolded in a shawl or a scarf that completely hides the outlines of her figure. As a rule, young women and girls went to fetch water from the well. Religious customs forbade them to show their face to strangers and outmen. In that case a scarf and a shawl could serve as a "cover" (Maksudi, year is not indicated). In the visual aid of the ABC-book by H. Maksudi the influence of European tendencies on the Tatar national suit is also evident. One of the illustrations of the textbook shows the father and the son dressed in a "new", "Europeanized" fashion of that time. The main symbols of their national identity are headdresses. But, if the boy wears a tubeteyka (Tatar skullcap), the man has a fez (tarboosh). The inscription accompanies the drawing: "baba rәsemle" (instead of "әti rәsemle" ("the image of the father")). "Baba" is not the Tatar, but the Turkish word (Maksudi, 1914). And the man in the drawing is more like a Turk, than a Tatar. H. Maksudi lived in the Crimea for a long time; therefore, emergence of a tarboosh is quite explainable. In addition, in the XIX century the Kazan Tatars were strongly influenced by Oriental culture. It was reflected in clothes, everyday objects and household items. H. Maksudi, first of all, wanted to show an "updated" item – object world of the new era. "Mögallim әvәl" became the guide to a new mentality and new life.

4. Discussions

H. Maksudi's life and work has become the subject of study and research in recent years. Special mention should be made of the volume monographs in the Tatar and Russian languages of G. Batal - Taymas (1999) and F. Gaffarova (2006). The authors pay more attention to his biography and political activities in the pre-revolutionary period. At the same time, they emphasize the importance of educational activities of H. Maksudi. G. Batal - Taymas writes that tens of Turkic peoples enjoyed his books, "received knowledge of the native language and religion" (Batal-Taymas, 1999). The book of F. Ibragimov (1994) and the article of L.K. Taziev (2001) contain a linguistic analysis of "Mögallim әvәl", but none of the above-mentioned works has been devoted to the analysis of visual and verbal texts of H. Maksudi ABC-book.

5. Conclusion

Summing up, Tatar "Alifba" wasn't one of the elements of a purpose-oriented educational policy of the state at that time. One of the advantages of jadid schools was an introduction of education in the Tatar language, instead of the so-called Turkic or Arab. Like the authors of other Tatar ABC-books, H. Maksudi pursued one aim – to teach children to read and write in the native language. "Mögallim әvәl" by H. Maksudi is a valuable source of the history of Tatar school and childhood history. The author pays special attention to education of younger generation within the requirements of the epoch.

6. Recommendations

The report can be of interest to those who study the history of childhood, daily life of Tatar people, history of formation and development of national pedagogics.

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