

# Beliefs and Superstition during the Qajar Era

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## **Abstract:**

Believe is one of the components of any culture. Some of these beliefs are real, and based on proven and convincing foundations. But some of them are baseless and without reason; they have been accepted by people throughout history, which are called superstitions. Sometimes Anthropologists prefer to use social beliefs term to avoid value orientation. In other words, an action and understand a matter or relationship cannot be considered baseless and unreal simply because we are unable to explain it. The existence of superstitions among people all over the world, including Iran, is an undeniable fact. Some of them may be considered superstitious because science is not yet able to explain or prove them. Today, however, most of them seem unrealistic to the average knowledge of people. Some of these beliefs are rooted in myths. Some are derived from specific interpretations of religious principles and some have been quoted and accepted person to person without any research or doubt in their accuracy (Shahnoushi, 2009).

**Keywords:** superstitions, Qajar, public culture.

## **Introduction:**

Iranian society in the Qajar period, despite its ancient and brilliant civilization and culture, was an almost medieval society with most of the characteristics of the medieval. Extreme national and religious prejudices dominated the spirit and mind of the vast majority of this society. The people of this society strictly adhered to their national customs and religious rites and were far from any influence of Western lifestyle and civilization. The majority of the Iranian society, about 97% of the people, were illiterate, and except for those who dealt with new sciences and were familiar with Western civilization, the rest of literates, learned about reading, writing, and accounting. From the very beginning of entering the school, they studied the Holy Qur'an and religious laws. In general, there was no means of intellectual development for the majority of society, and the world of this majority was surrounded by a strong fence, the pillars of which were formed by public beliefs. Beliefs can be divided into three categories: religious beliefs, superstitions beliefs, superstitions and illusions (Shamim, 1996). Superstitions and customs in any society are born of ideas, thoughts, imaginations and aspirations and can clarify many social points and historical events for researchers. During the Safavid and Qajar periods, there were beliefs and customs, some of which represent the weakness of the general culture of society. Some of those superstitious ideas have been abandoned and destroyed with the advancement of science and the enlightenment of public opinion, and some of them, although people have realized that they are not true, are sometimes considered (Tajbakhsh, 2003). Superstitions in various periods of Iranian history were mixed with sciences such as astronomy, astrology, and uranology. But in the Qajar era, superstitions, using some religious and Islamic principles, found a way to penetrate into the

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religion and minds of Muslim Iranians, and prayer writing, substitution writing, and magic penetrated deep into the minds of the people during this period. The tendency to magic was one of the main manifestations of the tendency to superstition in Qajar society. Various aspects of marital and family life, relationships with relatives, livelihood and economy, and even medicine and treatment, were all surrounded by superstitions. The combination of these superstitious beliefs with religious beliefs had provided a more suitable platform for their acceptance (Taftian, 2014). The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of superstitions in the Qajar period and to address some superstitions among different segments of society. The research method is a historical method in a descriptive-analytical way.

### **An Overview of Folk Beliefs and Superstitions**

Folk beliefs are spreading among various communities. This influence is more or less ancient and reflects the culture of the people of that community in the priori and somewhat a posteriori time periods. The stability of these beliefs in different eras indicates their social function; and it indicates that beliefs as a social reality have been experienced beyond the level of thought and even symbols and rituals. These facts are not merely false and illusory, but should be considered as the secret of survival in human interaction, the living world, and human endeavor for life through domination of nature. Not referring any unknown action to human ignorance and error of previous centuries makes us aware of the need to examine the objectivity of postmodern life. It is on this basis that we realize the knowledge of man in every age, his abilities, possibilities and challenges. We find explanations of the guideline and strategic thinking of pre-modern man in order to enter and occupy the world while emphasizing his understanding of his livelihood. This approach analyzes and interprets the attitudes and values of popular culture based on the requirements of the respective era by accepting the effective connection between spells, amulets, superstitions and magic with the active mind. It also examines the relationship between the means of achieving the goal, and the goal itself in accordance with the role and functions of folk customs and traditions. With this approach, pre-modern human works have not been studied from the perspective of external observers and, on the contrary, have been considered agent-oriented and with normative functions (Shafiee, 2016). Human lives in the world of his beliefs, and his behavior, actions, thoughts, and customs are influenced by the beliefs that are embedded in his mind and conscience. Beliefs are a set of mindsets and thoughts that a person considers to be true. Beliefs express lifestyles and ways of thinking and are the most important source of human do's and don'ts. It is our beliefs that determine our way of life. Beliefs are the result of human effort and search. To justify and interpret phenomena and events, the result of human personal and collective experiences throughout history, when people were confronted with events and happenings, they tried to explain them with the help of experiences. When human could not find a logical connection between extraordinary events and phenomena, he used to mention utterances and whispers to get rid of it. In this way, it reduces the disasters and achieves the desired results. This gradually led to the formation of beliefs in his mind. Folk beliefs are a manifestation of popular culture or folklore that flows in the context of life and culture of nations and peoples and manifests itself in various forms. Important aspects of human life consciously or subconsciously links with popular culture. The prevalence of popular culture among nations and nations that have a longer history is far greater than nations with a short history (Zolfaghari, 2014). Popular culture, that human learns, is a part of traditions and beliefs and the social heritage of his society. Despite the fact that its bearers come and go as history goes by; but popular culture itself, as a group or ethnic identity of

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society, remains open and continues. Popular culture is not a phenomenon independent of culture and society, but depends on them. This culture, like other aspects of material and non-material culture, spreads from one society to another. Publication of this matter may be done through migration or borrowing, imitation, etc. Which is useful in recognizing some of the spirits and characteristics of other nations. One of the types of popular culture is superstition, or in other words, superstitious beliefs that are an integral part of all civilizations and cultures. Whether the advanced and so-called modern civilizations of today or the primitive and marginal civilizations, every group, ethnicity or nation believes in aspects of such beliefs that are present and reflected in the context of their lives. This is not specific to an ethnic or a nation. It is possible that in today's industrial, civilized, and advanced societies, the manifestation and adherence to these beliefs is more obvious (Amiri Khorasani, 2003). One of the topics that is introduced in the field of beliefs and has occupied many minds is a special category of beliefs that are referred to as superstitions. These kind of ideas, due to their intuitive nature, have always been controversial and have had pros and cons orientations. Some of these beliefs have a local and ethnic aspect and are known within a specific geography, while others have an international aspect. What is certain is that a large part of popular culture is devoted to these concepts, and it is closely related to the fundamental ways of thinking and feeling and how human beings respond to the environment in general. The important point about superstitions is that due to the connection of such beliefs with the underlying forms of "infrastructure", the sense of ethnics and the sense of inner security have gained such value and prestige that it accepts almost no contradictory beliefs. "David Hume" believes that the tendency to superstition can never be eliminated. The main point here is that superstitions are an integral part of those human mechanisms without which human cannot survive (Foroughi, Asgari Moghadam, 2009). The source of superstitions is the human soul. The origin of superstitions or falsehoods is the confrontation of wild human thousands of years ago with the dark nature of those years. The effects that nature and the environment had on the human soul could not be ineffective. Earthquakes, storms, floods, lightning, solar eclipse, lunar eclipse, and hundreds of other sights and events were all terrifying and astonishing to man, who was like a child. In the face of these strange events, mankind had three great weaknesses. First, he was afraid, second he was quick to stare and wonder, and third he was ignorant. So, fear, astonishment and ignorance were the three most important factors in his superstitious thoughts and fantasies. He was both afraid and astonished at the occurrence of some events, such as an earthquake, and was ignorant of its cause. On the other hand, in the occurrence of good events such as the product abundance thanks to the rain, he was not afraid, but he was ignorant and did not know the real cause of rain (Rezazadeh Shafagh, 1940). Superstition manifests in somewhere that human beings relate even the smallest phenomena to transcendental factors and ignore the way of thinking, reasoning and scientific reasons (chain of cause and effect). Superstition may manifest in science or religion or anything else (Nasrollahi, 2009). There are several definitions of the word superstition. "Khorafe" is equivalent to the English word Superstition, and is an Arabic word whose root "Khorf" means picking fruit. Perhaps the "kharif", which is said to autumn, is the occasion of the ripening of fruit. In the book "Borhane Ghate" the author states that superstition is "disturbing and irrelevant words." Allameh Dehkhoda, in his notes, has defined it as "illusions", "inaccuracies" and "false hadiths". The Oxford Dictionary has also defined superstition as any kind of irrational and baseless belief (Shahnoushi, 2009). Any kind of irrational belief or action and irrational fear or fear of something unknown,

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mysterious, imaginary, an opinion, doubt or habit etc. that is rooted in fear or ignorance (Jahoda, 2014).

Superstition can be defined as: "baseless and unreasonable material that has emerged with various causes and motives and has become popular and enduring among human beings based on imitation of the past also with the same causes and motives." For example, we pay attention to sneezing or divination from previous generations (Yasrebi, 2014). The single definition of superstition is difficult because different perspectives have defined superstition as a social matter according to their intellectual-social contexts. In general, superstitions are "beliefs, beliefs, or actions that have no rational root." These beliefs are a set of news, ideas, thoughts, habits and impractical and illogical actions that arise in relation to natural and objective issues and phenomena (Doroudi, 2009).

### **Causes of Being Superstitious**

Ignorance can be considered as the basis of human superstitious approach. Ignorance in this sense will be against mind, and the superstitious are those who have not reached the necessary rationality. Therefore, a wise person can be interested in superstition and accept superstitious; so, just being wise cannot break the spiritual molds of superstition. Societies that are culturally poor and sick will be a ground for the creation and growth of superstition, and this trend is increasingly seen in the poor, helpless, illiterate and needy classes of society. Inner emotions, especially hope and fear, are stimulated by fantasies and in some cases, force people to accept superstitions. Maybe transferring these feelings to another human being, and their spreading leads to a superstitious tradition. The negligence of religious scholars can also open the way for the presence of superstitious solutions. The diligence of the scholars regarding the duties and prohibitions has provided immature rulings due to the sensitivity of the mandatory rulings. However, regarding non-mandatory rulings, their emphasis on "tolerance in the arguments of traditions" has inadvertently provided the ground for superstitious perceptions. Meanwhile, abusers are provoking this trend. On the one hand dominant politicians, and on the other hand opponents of Sharia, use this opportunity, because superstition is a golden opportunity to rule the minds and hearts of the people; and they easily lead people in the direction they want by promoting superstitions. The efforts of the opponents of Sharia are another area of producing superstitions. In fact, the general problem of societies should be considered the rejection of reason and its requirements, and vice versa, the tendency to blind worship and superstition among common people. The general public prefers to accept the blind beliefs instead of referring to reason and religious rational requirements (Nasrollahi, 2009). Psychologists attribute superstitions to a number of issues: First, they result from visual errors. Many people, because they do not understand the cause of an event, attribute the causes to unusual and supernatural things. The second error is a memory error. There is usually a gap between the time of occurrence of an event and the time of its reporting, and this gap provides an opportunity to create distortions. The third error is due to indoctrination. Another factor considered by psychologists is the effect of a person's expectations on his observations. When people expect an event to occur, they attribute some sudden events to it. For example, when you believe that you should stop after sneezing, if they do not do so and something happens, they attribute it to sneezing. According to psychologists, superstitions are born at critical times and moments when there is uncertainty about the future. For example, in the face of events such as death, birth, disease, famine and poverty, which as a result of human failure and anxiety, fulfills their desires and emotions in the world of imagination and superstition (Shahnoushi, 2009). In a sociological



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approach, everything that exists in society and is in the field of sociological studies is considered as social phenomena and a construct of collective life and collective phenomena are the product of society. Superstitions are also formed as a social phenomenon in the context of society. Also, they are result of the type of relationships that have prevailed over time and for social reasons. In the sociological approach to the phenomenon of superstition, factors such as society, its popular culture, religions in that society, the doctrines that govern them and the processes of development and progress in it, are referred to as valuable superstitious factors (Doroudi, 2009).

### **Factors that cause emergence of superstitions in society**

- 1) Fear and environmental pressures
- 2) Not having enough knowledge
- 3) Inherent characteristics of the human soul
- 4) Blind imitations and childhood indoctrination
- 5) Deviation from nature (Afshani)

### **The Origin of Superstitions**

Nolson, a well-known historian, says in his book entitled "The Origin of Superstition and Public Tradition": "The true origins of superstition must be sought in the first human endeavors and in the following matters":

- 1) Explain the secrets of nature and existence
- 2) Having the desire to make one's destiny desirable and to see future events in the present
- 3) The desire to stay away from the influence of incomprehensible devils
- 4) Inevitable efforts to influence the future (Shoaybi, 2013)

It is obvious that the masses of the nation all over the world are only thinking about life and never invent anything, but at any time, even in very primitive environments, among the negative masses that form the majority, there are those who think and invent. In other words, they take the thoughts and feelings of the masses into decisive sentences. And the masses take their knowledge and beliefs from this class (Hedayat, 2004).

### **Typology of Superstitions**

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, different types of superstition are: indecent worship of the true God, idolatry, soothsaying, false believes "black magic." Also, after classifying superstitions in detail, this encyclopedia includes other types of superstitions: astrology, divination by air, talisman, divination or palmistry, divination by mirror, divination by salt, divination by paper, sand and astrolabe, divination by water, worship of the sun, moon, etc. Satanism, animal worship, divination, summoning the dead, spiritualism and divination through sleep, talisman, love, black magic (Foroughi, Asgari Moghadam, 2009).

### **Characteristics of Superstitions**

Numerous features of superstition have been mentioned in various sources and in the opinion of scientists and experts:

- 1 Permanence and inseparability of human life; superstitions are an integral part of those human mechanisms without which he cannot survive.
- 2 Substitution, soothing, and creating domination. According to Jung, if society fails to offer common themes to our beliefs, we will have to resort to other things instead.

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3 Persistence. Superstitions arise easily but are difficult to eradicate. Maybe spells that came about as a result of an accident.

4 Rootlessness. The study of superstitions shows that the philosophy of the emergence of many superstitions has disappeared after their emergence and they have remained alone (Afshani, Ahmadi, 2009).

One of the considerations that scientists have made in research and the issue of human superstitions is whether superstitions are declining and disappearing due to the emergence of science, or old superstition and falsehoods are replaced by new superstitions. It should be noted that we saw in historical research that new eras bring new superstitions. As if superstition is one of the properties of the human soul, it eventually changes over time. In Iran, as in other countries, superstitions are naturally renewed from time to time, for example, sleeping under a lion statue in Hamedan, or a pearl cannon in Tehran should not be too old. However, it is certain that what is more widespread in the intellectual and experimental sciences reduces superstitions. Therefore, maybe the day will come when human beings will get rid of superstition (Rezazadeh Shafaq, 1940).

### **Tendency to Superstitions in Iran in the Qajar Era**

There are many reasons why superstitions spread in Qajar society. But two factors were most influential in these tendencies:

First, environmental fears and pressures: Throughout history, when a society suffers from anxiety, helplessness, despair, and finds no way to escape or prosper, the tendency towards superstitions was recognized as the only way to reduce the suffering of the dominated societies. In Qajar society, there was helplessness and anxiety in different levels of society. The defeat of the Iranians in the war with Russia and the loss of parts of the country, the presence of foreigners, especially Britain and Russia, the despotism of the Qajar kings who oppressed the people. In addition to the cases of discrimination, violence and behavior men in the society of that day also felt insecure and anxious. In fact, in Qajar society, the rights of women were largely ignored and this was an important factor for their greater tendency to magic and superstition (Taftian, 2014). Mirza FathAli Akhoundzadeh believed that the main reason for the tendency of Iranian women to superstitions, magic and talisman was due to ignorance and illiteracy, not inherent, and also due to violence, behavior and moral corruption of men, which forced women to take refuge in superstitions and talisman. He spoke about the losses and harms that the general public sees in the dire situation of women, and called for the rectification of the status of women, and in particular the prohibition of polygamy. Mirza Malkam Khan also spoke in a similar approach about the harms of polygamy among men. They especially emphasized on women's education and considered avoiding superstitions and resorting to magic and talisman as the first results of literacy (Rahmanian, Hatami, 2012). The women of the Qajar court were no exception, especially the women of the royal harem. Especially since they suffered from severe mental wounds caused by the orgies of the Qajar kings and found themselves trapped in the harem. This issue played an important role in the tendency of harem women to superstitions, which can be seen in resorting to talisman and amulets to attract the attention and love of the king, getting help from prayer leaders to destroy their rival wife's children, and so on. Second, lack of knowledge. One of the main causes of superstitions in society is ignorance. One of the main reasons for the prevalence of superstitions in society is ignorance and lack of knowledge. The more a person is unable to understand the truth, the logical relationship of phenomena, the law of cause and effect, the recognition and understanding of facts, equally he suffers from superstitions (Taftian, 2014).

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Ordinary people in Iran still believe in magic and the existence of fairies, demons and giants, and they tell strange stories about them and leave no doubt about the veracity of these anecdotes. Also, their belief is reinforced by street and bazaar narrators who tell magical stories related to the demons of Shahnameh, Eskandarnameh, Tootinameh and other stories. People in Iran, like other eastern countries, attach great importance to spells and amulets (Bruges, 1995). A brief look at the social and cultural history of different countries of the world shows that beyond scientific thoughts and ideas, there are ideas that no scientific and rational basis can be found for them. That is why they take the name of superstition, that is, something absurd and baseless. Interestingly, sometimes these superstitions have gained such power that they have turned their backs on all scientific constraints and caused strange acts among the believers. In different periods of Iranian history, the traces of superstition can be seen; the Qajar period is no exception. In Qajar period in Iran, the tendency to superstitions and the use of talisman and amulets was public and widespread. However, resorting to such methods was mostly defined as feminine work. Because women were more prone to superstition than men for various reasons, and this was abundantly observed even among court and harem women (Taftian, 2014). After Islam the state of thought and life changed in general and the situation of women in particular; because they became captives of men and lived at home. Polygamy, injecting thoughts of fate, mourning, sorrow and grief, made people think of magic, talisman, and prayers and jinn and reduced their work and seriousness. It is good to know that the worshipers and wizards also had a tremendous influence on the souls and bodies of the women of the harem, and they did not do anything without the permission of the sorcerer and the prayer-writer. The king was also a superstitious man. The sorcerers, prayer leaders, and astronomers had a strange influence on him and even divided his daily work schedule into hours of lucky and unlucky. In this regard, the instincts of Mahd Oliya should not be forgotten, because she also played an important role in accepting the advice of sorcerers and wizards. The Upper Nursery, with the help of witches and sorcerers, poisoned several sons and daughters of his son and made them sick and crippled. Geomancers also deceived fanatical and believing people with special titles from time to time in order to extort and spend their parasitic life (La'l, 1993). In a report on the death of Nasser al-Din Shah's beloved son, doctor Toulouzon secretly points out that an innocent child has been poisoned by poisonous and contaminated drugs prescribed by illiterate women and prayer leaders. The conspirators skillfully killed the child, and as soon as they heard that no one had heard about it, they were very happy. For several days, countless letters and gifts went out of the house and were taken by the child slaves to the house of geomancers, fortune tellers, and prayer leaders. Those gifts were from women who had killed Qasem Mirza with the help of wizards and geomancers (same). Fortune-telling, astrology, drinking wine, opening books, pea horoscope, and astrolabe were flourishing in King's harem. Women were entertained by superstitions. The king's mother is a first-rate witch. The wives of the king resort to prayer, medicine, black magic, snake bead, and mandragora to attract the attention of their valued husband (Motazed, Tafazoli, 2010). Mandragora is a plant that resembles a human and grows in China. It is in the form of a slope, the root of which represents human hair. The male and female are tied around the neck and the legs are held together, it is said that whoever uproots it will die in a few days. The method of digging it is to empty it around, so that it is pulled out a little by force. After that a string is tied on it and the head of the string is fastened on the back of a dog and leave a prey in front of that dog. When a dog goes hunting, the plant is uprooted, and for this reason it is called a "dog-breaker." The dog dies after a few days and is also called the "People plant ". Its males and females roots can be separated, and if someone

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eats some of it with cow's milk, a woman who is infertile, of course will have a child. If she eats from a male root, her child becomes a male, and if she eats from a female root, her child becomes a female (Hedayat, 2004). Iranian physicians, like our physicians, have not discovered some of the secrets of this vast science that, despite the research and discoveries of scientists, are still obscure. Iranian doctors do not create the slightest trust in the patient's heart. Most patients trusted magic and the herbalist much more than doctors which they called them Loghman of the age. Many treatments are due to naivety; a piece of paper with a verse from the Qur'an written on it should cure the fever. A boiled egg with a prayer written on its skin and kept under its armpits for twenty-four hours is a medicine for pain. Seeing a female donkey or a pregnant goat is enough to ward off some suffering and discomfort. A small piece of wolf skin, if be with a woman, prevents her from becoming pregnant. Diamonds hanging around the neck strengthen the body. Contact with this gemstone eliminates fear. It protects people from epileptic seizures. It also causes tooth decay without pain; and also it helps infertile women, who want to become mothers, to become pregnant.

### **Superstitions among different sections of society in the Qajar Era**

The medical situation in Iran is quite rudimentary and backward. Iranian physicians, like our physicians, have not uncovered some of the secrets of this vast science that, despite the research and discoveries of scientists, are still shrouded in mystery. Women who suffer from labor pains should pass a thread through the root of "Anastatica hierochuntica" flower and tie it under their abdomen. A cure for colic is obtained by mixing wolf feces with white wine. If they add some honey to the same concoction and gargle it, it will eliminate angina and sore throat (Serna, 1983). René Dalmani, a tourist who has visited Iran, writes: "If a child has a seizure during the teething period, the solution is for the mullah to write verses from the Qur'an on a piece of canvas exactly the size of his stature and hang it around his neck for treatment; "Because this drug costs so much, it is not used for girls." "When someone dies in a house, it is beneficial to throw away any water that is next to the dead person, because anyone who drinks from that water will suffer from stomach ache." It is also said that visiting the patient on Sundays and Tuesdays doesn't have good omen (Dalmani, 1999). Wales believes: "According to the diagnosis of famous Iranian physicians, all diseases affecting the human body are divided into two separate groups, hot or cold temperaments. Suppose an Iranian doctor is taken to treat a patient. The medicines he prescribes often include old herbal and traditional medicines. Most of them are produced in Iran. Occasionally, relatives of the patient make a vow or seek help from a local fortune teller, astrologer, and prayer writer in order to be cured as soon as possible. After leaving the first astrologer, they immediately go to the other astrologer to follow the order of the two if they apply the same theory. Usually, these fortune-tellers do not pay much for each stage of their divination, and while concluding a contract of commitment, the responsible person or the patient's nurse gives him half of the fortune-teller's salary at the beginning and the other half is held hostage. If the patient recovers, he will come and take the remaining half; but whenever he does not recover and dies, remaining money will not be paid. In this way, the responsibility for the recovery or severity of the illness is out of prayer writer."

Also, he writes: "When the crisis of the disease intensifies and the patient expresses his discomfort with moans and noises, sometimes dangerous treatment methods are performed on him, which is quite basic. Methods like lie down the patient (or a part of his or her limbs) in the middle of a fresh, hot cowpat, or placing his or her body (or one of his or her limbs) inside a freshly peeled warm animal skin and sewing the skin around it. In Iran, ordinary



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people do not have much trust in European doctors and they are usually brought to their patient's bedside when the patient is taking his last breath "(Wales, 1989).

Haji Baba is suffering from back pain in Semnan. In Semnan city, there is two people to whom the medical quote goes: masseur and horseshoe maker. There was another white hair. All three came to him. All three agree that: This back pain is due to the cold, and because the heat is anti-cold, there is no cure for it other than heat. "The horseshoe maker was placed as the surgeon because he knew about iron. He brought a charcoal basket with a few tails and a skewer and fried the skewers in the corner of the tomb, and then turned him on his back, then with so much etiquette and love for "fourteen Innocents heat fourteen places on his back. When the red skewers were attached to his neck and he screamed from the bottom of his heart, the audience held their mouths and said, "Stop making a sound, its property will go away." Everyone believes that his recovery became infallible due to the agreement of the number of skewers with the numbers of fourteen, and no one doubted that red iron is also one of the instruments of miracles (Moreau, 2016).

Different evidences suggest that the widespread use of talismans in medicine has almost narrowed the field of medical work and somehow replaced it. For some diseases, especially infectious diseases, there were special prayers and amulets and spells. Amulet writers of this period prayed not only for all kinds of human diseases, including abdominal diseases, enuresis, hemorrhoids, paralysis of the limbs, but also for diseases of livestock and repulsion of agricultural pest (Rahmanian, Hatami, 2012). After returning Nasser al-Din Shah from Europe, the Dar ul-Funun School was established, where medicine was taught. Iranians rarely went to the doctor and used old procedures and took local medicines. The most common way to treat diseases was cupping or taking blood from the body. Dry cupping was also one of the ways to treat pain. The Iranian people did not believe much in medical treatment when they became ill. They relied more on God and asked him for their treatment. Nasser al-Din Shah tried to expand the method of medicine and treatment of diseases in Iran that was common in Europe. But people adhered to their old ways of healing. But some intellectuals knew that new drugs were useful and curable. Later, most rural people also had become aware of modern medicine (Tajbakhsh, 2003). The dervishes were also skilled in prayer and divination. Although the dervishes pretend to be ascetic and pious and thus influence the people, they do not really have the right faith. But in spite of all this, people think that they have miracles. Therefore, they pray for them to meet their needs and they are honored when they enter any house. Women who often give birth to a girl and want a boy, girls who do not have a suitor, old men who want a young woman, or men who want to be safe from the wound of a sword or the bullet of an enemy gun, or families who suffer from eye pain all refer to dervishes. By writing a few lines of prayers in the name of prayer and amulet, they also pretend that they have a cure for all pain in their sleeves. They are influential among the people of Iran from every social class and even find their way inside houses (Layard, 1988). In "The Story of Haji Baba Isfahani", James Moreau quotes a dervishes who accompanied Haj Baba as a fellow traveler. After that, he talked about astronomy, magic, and astrology, and gave me a few versions that these are enough for you all your life, and with these, you will become rich in everything. He said "If you put a rabbit's tail under a child's bed, it will make him sleep; if you give the rabbit's tail to the horse to eat, it will become thin and emaciated so runs fast; if you tie the wolf's eyes and bones to a child's arm, he will dare. If wolf oil is rubbed on a woman's clothes, her husband will be bored of her; wolf venom repels female infertility. The blood of a rooster is good for potency; the hooded nail is tongue-tied and the bat eye is suitable for sleep-tied. But the best version of love and affection is the

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hyena and it is bought a lot in harems, especially inside the king's court. Mandragora has nothing to say in front of it, and cannot grow green in its presence (Moreau, 2007). People in Iran believe that having an amulet neutralizes the effect of the so-called "evil eye". Verses from the Qur'an are written, usually on a piece of paper or cloth, with mysterious motifs and sewn into a leather bag and tied to the arm or neck or other part of the body. Children and adults, horses, mules, donkeys, camels and even some cats have this type of amulet. These spells are usually tied to the animals' necks with a string of colored beads. Some stones are also used as a defense against "evil eye". In this regard, we can name Nephrit and koraalin stones (Bruges, 1995). The use of turquoise and blue stones like it in order to keep from "evil eye" is widely used, especially in children. The artist spells make beautiful talismans decorated with turquoise or other blue stones, and the parents of the children sew them in front of the child's hat or in front of his clothes. Even horse riders who are very interested in their excellent horses, in order to protect the animal from the evil eye, tie a number of these blue beads and special beads called "Dooni" to the mane or tail of the animal. But talismans are prayers or writings from the verses of the Qur'an wrapped in a special, often metal, cover to attach to the arm called an "armband." These armbands are usually fastened to children's arms. However, a number of famous heroes have special bracelets made of agate and silver (Wales, 1989). Fear of evil eyes causes women to commit naive acts. For example, a young mother wears poor and ridiculous clothes to her child so that others do not envy her child and as a result he is protected from the evil eye, which is neither appropriate for her gender nor for her family (Dalmani, 1999). To protect from the evil eye, the top of the egg is marked with charcoal and the bottom is marked with the name of the baby's father or ill, then mark on the egg the names of all those who have seen the baby. Then, they put the egg in a piece of the baby's dirty shirt, with money and some salt and charcoal on top of his head, repeating the names of the same people again, and pressing the egg, in the name of whoever broke the egg, she has evil eye. A little of the egg yolk is rubbed on the soles, and the brain of the child, and the money is given to the beggar (Hedayat, 1933). When a child is shown to others at the beginning of his birth, a few threads of his cloth are given to each of the attendees to burn pecans and throw it in the fire to blind the evil eye. This Pecan burn is mostly done around sunset. They take a piece of cloth, for example, a piece or cotton from trousers or from the soil that was on the suspect's shoes, and add a little pecans to it and burn it. This combination is then rotated around the head of the child or patient and this word is read: Pecan and Pecan seeds, Thirty-three Pecans, from relatives and strangers, whoever goes out of the gate, whoever comes out of the gate, jealous and stingy eyes becomes blind (Mase, 2008). According to Heinrich Bruges, most Europeans considered Iranians to be a generous people. They believed that if you told an Iranian person that your object was beautiful, he would donate it. Bruges rejects their theory. He believes that Iranian do this because they believe in the power of the evil eye. He says Iranians believe that the eye has a detrimental power that, when focused on an object, can cause harm to its owner. For this reason, they prefer to remove the object as soon as possible in order to avoid harm. In the Eastern view, any person or object can be called beautiful, but it should not be mentioned directly, but praise should be given to its owner in order to avoid the evil eye and its consequences. Therefore, when you see a beautiful little girl it should be said that "well done to the tree that produced such a fruit" or "God saves this child for her mother" (Bruges, 1995). Just like in ancient Rome, the issue of good luck and bad luck of hours plays an important role in the lives of people in the eastern countries, including Iran. Even the coronation of the king does not take place before the special astronomer of the court has determined the day and hour of good luck (Dalmani,

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1999). In the Qajar era, people believed in the arrival of the right time or, as they say, the hour of good luck, to start anything. This was very important to them. This was not only among the general public but also clearly seen among courtiers and rulers. The astronomer was always present at the court to predict the good and bad results of actions by calculating the omen and seeing the position of the stars. For military campaigns, confronting enemies and even for very simple tasks, they determined the time of good luck (Taei Hatam, 2014). Another thing that people used to do when doing something was to do Istikharah. Sometimes istikharah is performed with Tasbih. The Tasbih is divided into three parts, and each part is separated by a bead of a different type, size, or color that may be called a witness. They hold the Tasbih with one hand, recite Surah Al-Fatihah al-Kitab, and blow on the Tasbih. Then they take one of the seeds by hand and from there they start counting towards the witness and say God, Muhammad, Abu Jahl, Adam, Eve, snake, respectively. If the counting of seeds ends with the first word, the decision to be made is good; if it ends with the last word, it is bad. If it ends in the middle word, they usually recite it again because there is no certainty about it. For example, to go to a hospital run by foreigners, they use this method. If the istikharah is good, the patient should go to the hospital, if there is the possibility of surgery or medication, before reaching an agreement, they must do istikharah again. Sometimes the medicine bottles stay on the shelf for weeks, because istikharah has not allowed them to be consumed (Collier, 2004). Carla Serena writes about istikharah: "Most Iranians constantly have Tasbih in their hands. Every time they want to visit someone or take medicine, or give an answer, or buy something of little value, they first recite. There is another type of istikharah in which the subject is written on paper and sealed it; without anyone knowing about its contents, they send it to the mullah. The mullah recites a prayer under lips and slips the text randomly across the Qur'an, and after reciting another prayer, she opens the same page of the Qur'an and reads the first sentences from the left page of the book. If these words are related to pleasant events, Mullah writes "do" on the stamped paper, otherwise he writes "do not" there. The paper was returned to the petitioner, to act according to divine providence. Whatever the outcome of Istikharah, it is sacred to them. They become less obsessed and hesitant, because at any stage of life, the final decision depends on the Istikharah (Serna, 1983). Spells also play a key role in Iran because people attribute different properties to them. For example: it repels diseases, protects a person from the evil eye, and dares the timid. Finally, they provide the happiness and prosperity of their carriers. Iranians use various amulets to fight evil spirits. Verses from the Qur'an are written on thin strips of paper and hung around the neck in a small box (Dalmani, 1999). There were various types of natural and artificial talismans and amulets, from precious stones and components of wood and plants and human and animal organs, to tablets, statues and ornaments of wood, metal, wax, paste, skin, hair and fabric. (Boloukbashi, 2002).

Iranians think that some metals such as iron, silver, bronze, lead, and even jade have souls. For this reason, at birth time, a large pair of scissors or another steel or iron object is placed on the bed and then it is tied to the baby's crib. I have seen a woman who had a large lock with two keys on her waist in the hope of repelling evil and giving birth to a baby boy as soon as possible. This is why spells are made of metal or jade. Spells are actually mysterious signs and symbols that are engraved on these objects. The symptoms are related to astrology, such as the signs of planets or constellations. They think that these signs have a magical power. Various people, especially women, cast spells to ward off evil and protect themselves from magic and harm. Not only do they cast spells and amulets, but they also think that they will have the greatest effect if they throw it in the fire, immerse it in a sweet liquid such as tea and

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syrup, or place it under the ground to preserve hidden treasures (Collier, 2004). To ward off sore eyes, patterned stones and pearl, coral or turquoise beads are used as a ring jewel in the form of a necklace. They use the teeth of wolves or tigers, which are used as necklaces or bracelets, as well as deer antlers and land lizards, etc., as evil disposer. There are other spells that are especially popular with women. These include parts of the owl's backbone, cheetah hair, and dried hyena skin. One of the most common elliptical spells is an octagonal prayer, which is placed in a small box in the same way and tied under the elbow. These boxes should definitely be iron because it is the only metal that causes the presence of the heart due to its humility (Dalmani, 1999). Iranians wear a turquoise ring (spherical turquoises are more expensive than flat turquoises), Ceylon ruby, or diamonds. What will never be forgotten is the gold watch, which is displayed with ostentation. Although from the Islamic point of view, gold has an evil power and they keep away golden objects and ornaments when praying, however, most Iranians prefer jewelry to silver and do not obey religious laws in this regard. They attribute amazing power and characteristics to some gemstones. On the contrary, fading the color is considered as a sign of decrease in the love and affection of the donor. In the case of the so-called cat's eye (Ayn al-Har) is said to prevent some diseases (Bruges, 1995). A variety of charms and spells are used. Especially green or blue beads and shells are useful for keeping from the evil eye. Often one of them wears long, braided strands of women's hair in the hope that if there is an injury on the way she will be enchanted instead. Sometimes these charms are tied to their precious jewelry in the same way. Children's clothes are full of spells; especially the dried eye of a sheep sacrificed on the day of Eid al-Adha in Mecca preserves one's abilities. An open claw made of silver and attached to a necklace is very visible, the fingers of this hand are the symbol of the five members of the Prophet Mohammad's family. The number five is considered a powerful protective agent. Amulets are used a lot. The correct amulet is made from the Qur'an or its excerpts. The amulets are placed in small boxes or silver boxes or leather covers and tied around the arm or leg, or around the neck. Also, the evil eye repellent are hung on the necks of the victims. In addition to verses from the Qur'an, these evil eye repellent are decorated with green or blue beads (Collier, 2004).

When the flu spread in the neighborhoods of Tehran and reached the inside of the royal palace, Nasser al-Din Shah also contracted the disease. When the king recovered, Feuvrier visited him. "I noticed a piece of diamond known as the Daria-i-Noor" says Feuvrier. The king, who has just recovered from the flu but is still weak, took it out of his pocket and said that because having it strengthens the temper, I put it in my pocket "(Feuvrier, 2009). The Eastern people attribute properties to real stones that have a great influence on their choice for a seal or a ring jewel.

Ruby: It strengthens the heart, protects a person from plague and lightning, and if someone put it under the tongue, it quenches thirst.

Emerald: It is an excellent medicine for snake bites. If it is rounded and swallowed with water, it cures any poisonous wounds. If they show it to a snake, its eyes will burst.

Diamond: If it is tied under the abdomen, it cures colic and stomach pain and is an anti-epileptic drug.

Turquoise: strengthens the light of the eyes and is generally useful for the eyes and is a treatment for scorpion stings.

The properties of carnelian varies according to its color: the red carnelian eliminates anger. Pink carnelian with white grooves stops nosebleeds and other bleeding, and the third type repels toothache.



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Red or brown iron rust cures gout and makes it easier for women to give birth. If the powder is poured into milk or hot water and swallowed, it eliminates the effect of the poison.

Jade and crystal: protects a person from bad dreams (Dalmani, 1999).

One of the ceremonies that has been common in Iran for several thousand years is the celebration of Nowruz. The Nowruz ceremony begins on Chaharshanbe Suri. After all the family members jumped from the fire that were in their backyard, the men left the house and went to have fun. The women adorned their mature daughters, who are in the age of marriage and had not yet been proposed to; and took them out of the house with chadors, pants, veils, shagreen shoes, and they walked towards the door of the timpani home. Women believe that if when the first drumsticks hit the drum, they go under the entrance and go this way and that way once, their daughters would get married soon; and someone will act as suitor immediately. But provided that they are under the entrance just at the same time as the first stick is drummed (Motazed, Tafazoli, 2010). But provided that they will be under the entrance just at the same time as the first stick hits the drum (Motazed, Tafazoli, 2010). On Nowruz, they went to the pearl cannon, which was one of the spoils of war, which had been brought to Tehran from the southern ports several years ago during the war with the Portuguese. The women believed that this device would meet their needs. They used to go to this pearl cannon to treat their children, or to get pregnant, and girls to get marry ((Jacques Herodan, 1945).

If something bad happens on this day, it will be a sign of ominousness throughout the year. The festivities begin after sunset in the east, that year (during the reign of Nasser al-Din Shah) many officials were present at the palace to congratulate the Shah, and it was announced that there would be no greetings tomorrow. Because in the Royal Palace, no action was taken without the prior consultation and approval of the astronomers. The king had asked his astronomer for the command of the stars in the evening before Nowruz. The astronomer's answer was not favorable and the greetings were postponed to the second day of the New Year, which was a lucky day (Razi, 2004). Ways to correct the beliefs and save the Iranian people from superstition are to make them aware of the facts. Superstition shortens people's minds, confuses the mind, and darkens the intellect. But this action has conditions. Without conditions, not only may the result not be achieved, but the opposite may happen. First, knowledgeable people must distinguish superstition from non-superstition. Second: they must know the type of superstition and the degree of public interest in it. If superstitions are popular and believed, such as religious superstitions, they must be cautious in correcting them. Third, people must be taught the right ideas, more than rejecting superstitions; because if a superstition goes out of the mind of an ignorant person, it will turn into another superstition. Therefore, rejection will not be the only solution, but people should be instilled with the right thoughts based on rational and empirical arguments and principles. This should be started from primary schools to the elderly. Religious people should understand that the truth of religion is other than superstition; and make it clear to the public that the laws of health are the laws of nature. The claimants of history should be told that falsifying false information or strange claims about the past is false and may lead the nation astray. Opponents and proponents of ancient literature should be told that men should be impartial in their judgment. Do not blindly exaggerate the order and prose of the past, do not misunderstand the position that really exists, and do not rely on a bunch of common and false illusions. And by imagining that he is a modernist and reformer, he should not exceed the limits of reason and the amount of wisdom. And he advised exaggerators the nation, homeland and culture to avoid exaggeration and lies. Word makers should be advised to

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avoid playing with words. Western superstitious descriptors should be advised not to exaggerate in praise and do not fabricate superstitious tales, and to the followers of goblins, ghosts, spells and magic ... it must be said that they have lost their way. All of this should be instilled in people by explicit expression and rational reason and mentioning facts and with the conditions of literature (Rezazadeh Shafaq, 1940).

### Conclusion

One of the components of culture is beliefs. Some of these beliefs are real but some are baseless, and have been accepted by people throughout history that we call them superstitions. Old nations have more vulgar beliefs and superstitions than new nations. Especially those who have been in contact with different races. Iran, with several centuries of history behind it, is like an inn where all the civilized and savage nations have been loaded or in contact with these nations. As a result of this contact, newer thoughts and superstitions have emanated from their habits, ethics and religion. The superstitions and customs of any society are the product of ideas, thoughts and imaginations and can clarify many social points and historical events for researchers. During the Qajar period, there were beliefs and customs, some of which represent the weakness of public culture. With the advancement of science, some of those ideas were abandoned, and some are still popular. In the Qajar Era, superstitions, by using some religious and Islamic principles and foundations, found their way to penetrate the religion and minds of Muslims, and prayer writing, black magic, etc. penetrated deep into the minds of the people of this period. This tendency to superstition, various aspects of family life, livelihoods, and economics, even medicine and treatment, were all surrounded by superstitions. The combination of these superstitions with religious beliefs had provided a better platform for their acceptance. In the Qajar Era in Iran, the scope of belief in superstitions was very wide and included different sections of society. Meanwhile, women in the society and women in the harem were more prone to accept superstitions than other sections of the society; and as a result were exposed to its harms. Environmental pressures and scientific ignorance were the two main factors that played an important role in the tendency of Qajar women to superstition. One of the ways to save the Iranian people from superstition is to guide them to the truth. Insightful people must distinguish superstition from non-superstition. They should know the type of superstition and the degree of public interest in it. Also, they should be careful in correcting some superstitions, including religious superstitions. More than rejecting superstitions, they should teach people the right ideas. The right thoughts must be instilled in people based on rational and empirical arguments and principles. This should be started from primary schools to the elderly.

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