

the teachers' pedagogic skills and took charge of the first-grade class himself in order to correctly lay the foundation of the children's education. He tried to implement the pedagogic methods he so ardently described in his book. His advanced ideas, however, were too much for those who professed to be the best in the trade. He was persecuted and he wrote about it in his letters to my mother, calling her the only spark of hope worth living for. Obviously, his unhappy childhood and his struggle against life's obstacles from a very early age had left a deep psychological impression, and the unfriendly atmosphere of resentment, unfounded criticism and gossip didn't help.

The love letters stopped for a few months and then picked up again after Baghdik had been transferred to Tehran, but now they struck a more positive note. Paranzem had reciprocated his love.

Parik and Baghdik were married on March 21, 1934, in a Catholic church in Tehran. The Armenian Apostolic Church would not wed them since they were cousins, the children of two sisters, Yeghissabet and Tamam.¹² Of course, this had been a topic of gossip and slander all along, making my mother hesitant to accept my father's persistent appeal to set a wedding date as soon as possible. She kept finding excuses to postpone her final decision. His desperate letters speak of this.

My father was now teaching chemistry and physics

12 My mom used to tell us a funny story about her mother who was born the seventh daughter of her parents. Having tried hard for a boy, they were disheartened, so they named her Tamam (meaning "finished" in Persian and Turkish): no more trying, it was hopeless. But as my mom recalled, Tamam was not their last child after all. I never saw my Grandmother Tamam. She died when my mom was very young.