



## FARHĀD MĪRZĀ MO‘TAMAD- AL-DAWLA

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**FARHĀD MĪRZĀ MO‘TAMAD-AL-DAWLA** (b. 1233/1818, Tabrīz; d. 1305/1888, Tehran; [Figure 1](#)), Qajar prince-governor, author, and bibliophile. He was the fifteenth son of ‘Abbās Mīrzā (q.v.), younger brother of Moḥammad Shah, uncle of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah, and a learned and influential Qajar prince known for his firm governorship over several provinces of Persia. He spent some of his adolescence in Tabrīz, where he was instructed not only in traditional Persian and Islamic subjects but also in the English language, geography, and astronomy, some of which were taught by British subjects in the service of ‘Abbās Mīrzā (q.v.) at the time. In 1250/1835, at the age of only seventeen, he was assigned to attend to the affairs of Lorestān and Kūzestān by his brother Bahrām Mīrzā, who himself had recently been put in charge of that area by the newly crowned Moḥammad Shah (E‘temād-al-Salṭana, *Montaẓam-e nāṣerī*, ed. Reżwānī, III, p. 1631; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 183). Farhād Mīrzā’s stay in the south of Persia lasted about two years (Madāyeḡnegār Tafrešī, p. 53) but was successful enough (Watson, p. 287, cites the aid of the young Lieutenant Henry Rawlinson in reinstating order in the area) to make Moḥammad Shah summon him to Tehran to be in charge of the capital during his absence on two critical occasions: in Rabī‘ II 1253/July-August 1837, when he was setting off to capture Herat, and in Šawwāl 1255/December 1839-January 1840, when he marched to Isfahan to settle with the powerful cleric, Sayyed Moḥammad-Bāqer Šaftī, who had renewed his perennial opposition to the state, promoting unrest and rebellion against the local government. Moḥammad Shah and his grand vizier,



Hājj Mīrzā Āqāsī (q.v.), ultimately returned to the capital sixteen months later and observed, to the former’s delight, that Farhād Mīrzā had ably managed to maintain peace and order in the capital (Dīvānbeygī, II, p. 1349).

Hājj Mīrzā Āqāsī did not have the close relationship with Farhād Mīrzā that he did with Moḥammad Shah or Fereydūn Mīrzā Farmāfarmā (q.v.), Farhād Mīrzā’s older brother, both of whom he had personally tutored earlier in his court career. The affection that Moḥammad Shah expressed for Farhād Mīrzā must to some extent have disturbed the manipulating vizier, who was trying hard to have some measure of control over the shah’s ties with his dependents. Furthermore, Āqāsī probably viewed Farhād Mīrzā’s capable and somewhat assertive disposition as a source of potential trouble in the future. Still, as a grand vizier who “meant well to his country” (Watson, p. 354), he must also have felt some gratification to see Farhād Mīrzā’s efforts bearing results. This may have contributed to his nomination of the young prince to the post of the governor of Fārs following the dismissal, by the shah, of Fereydūn Mīrzā from that position in 1256/1840, and the death of Fereydūn Mīrzā’s successor, Naṣr-Allāh Khan Kīšīkčī-bāšī, in Rajab 1257/September 1841. Āqāsī encouraged the appointment of Farhād Mīrzā because he wanted to put Farhād Mīrzā’s capabilities to a test more challenging than any he had experienced before. He also hoped that such a move, if it turned out to have no effect on the chaotic situation in Fārs, would in due time exculpate his favorite former student Fereydūn Mīrzā. Moḥammad Shah accepted the suggestion of his vizier and put Farhād Mīrzā in charge of Fārs as a delegate of the crown prince, Nāṣer-al-Dīn Mīrzā, formally giving him the title Nāyeb-al-Eyāla (early Ša‘bān 1257/late September 1841). As far as the vindication of Fereydūn Mīrzā was concerned, Farhād Mīrzā’s rather brief term in Fārs (about 17 months) disappointed Hājj Mīrzā Āqāsī. Immediately after taking on his new responsibility, i.e., even before the arrival of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Mīrzā in Shiraz in Ramazān 1257 /October-November 1841, Farhād Mīrzā launched a military campaign which aimed, among other things, at establishing him as a strong figure worthy of greater recognition than he had yet received and which lasted about eight months, encompassing Kūhgīlūya to Borāzjān, then to Bušeher, and finally to Fasā district. Drawing on help from some local commanders, he punished those Mamasanī Lors who were robbing the Qašqā’ī tribes and defying the government, collected a large amount of overdue taxes (100,000 tomans of which he turned over to Moḥammad Shah’s special tax collector), and made the roads safe again. In enumerating Farhād Mīrzā’s achievements during this period, Ḥasan Fasā’ī (q.v.) was particularly



impressed by the prince's apparent resistance to corruption and greed (Fasā'ī, *Fārs-nāma*, ed. Rastgār, I, p. 782, tr. Busse, p. 272). Contrary to some previous or later administrations where governors and their deputies often took sides with rival groups in the area, Farhād Mīrzā seems to have had Nāṣer-al-Dīn Mīrzā's support in this phase of his career, at least initially. However, it is not certain whether the crown prince participated, towards the end of 1258/1842, in a plan to discredit Farhād Mīrzā. Those who did participate included Mahd-e 'Olyā, Nāṣer-al-Dīn Mīrzā's mother, who is said to have been quite fond of the previous governor Fereydūn Mīrzā, and Hājj Mīrzā Āqāsī, who did so by planting doubts in Moḥammad Shah's mind about Farhād Mīrzā's loyalty, citing a history of growing close ties with the British (Sepehr, III, pp. 29, 38; Farhād Mīrzā, *Monšā'āt*, pp. 314-15). Moḥammad Shah succumbed to the pressure and Farhād Mīrzā was soon summoned to Tehran.

With the death of Moḥammad Shah in Šawwāl 1264/September 1848, and until the arrival of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Mīrzā, now the new shah, in Tehran, Mahd-e 'Olyā became the most powerful figure at the court. She immediately asked two of her brothers to arrest and blind Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's younger half-brother, 'Abbās Mīrzā Molkārā, whom she considered a potential source of trouble. Farhād Mīrzā found out about the plan and informed his nephew at once, urging him to seek British protection. He personally took 'Abbās Mīrzā's written request for political asylum to the British envoy, Colonel Francis Farrant (q.v.), who immediately approved it and declared that 'Abbās Mīrzā was under the protection of the British government ('Abbās Mīrzā Molkārā, p. 44). Farhād Mīrzā's active participation in this episode did much to isolate him further in the court. He was now an easier mark for his enemies' next attack, which occurred in Šawwāl 1268/August 1852 when he was implicated in the Babi assassination attempt against Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's life. As his punishment, he was to be kept under house arrest in Ṭālaqān, his *toyūl* (Nawwāb-e Šafā, p. 86). But before the shah's men could arrest him, he took refuge at the British legation, where Justin Sheil, the British minister plenipotentiary, received a guarantee from the grand vizier Mīrzā Āqā Khan Nūrī to the effect that Farhād Mīrzā's life and possessions would be protected if he left the legation and accepted his punishment, which he eventually did, leaving for Ṭālaqān on 14 Šafar 1269/27 November 1852. There he spent his time reading, which he considered one of his favorite pastimes (Farhād Mīrzā, *Monšā'āt*, p. 46), but the harsh climate of Ṭālaqān must have bothered him greatly, for in 1855 he requested from Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah that he be allowed to return to Tehran. His request, which had the support of the British chargé d'affaires, William



Taylor Thomson, was turned down. Farhād Mīrzā's unyielding character manifested itself again, and he left Tālaqān for the British legation in Tehran anyway. The shah reacted by ordering the seizure of his possessions, while Thomson himself threatened to shoot the men who had come to take the prince (Browne, pp. 116-17). In an exchange of diplomatic notes that ensued between the two governments, the Persian side firmly insisted that the shah had the right to reprimand and punish any Persian subject without the interference of any foreign government. Disappointed by the outcome of the confrontation, but more than that, fearful of losing his wealth and prestige permanently, Farhād Mīrzā found it best to leave the legation and beg forgiveness of the shah, which he did on 18 Rabī' II 1271/8 January 1855 (Moḥaddet, ed., pp. 71-72). However, in Ramazān 1271/May-June 1855 news of an imminent cutback in his salary prompted another asylum at the British legation (Qā'em-maqāmī, p. 101). The new British minister in Tehran, Sir Charles Murray, who had arrived only about a month earlier to make sure that British interests were not jeopardized by any Persian move against Herat, and who had already managed to provoke the shah's rage over comments made about him and the shah in the London *Times*, added more tension to the situation. In a letter to Mīrzā Āqā Khan dated 12 Šawwāl 1271/28 June 1855, Murray officially announced that Farhād Mīrzā was under the protection of the British government. Responding to that letter, Mīrzā Āqā Khan declared the protection null and void. His tone in referring to Farhād Mīrzā had visibly changed from respectful to derogatory. He dismissed him as altogether ignorant and unfitted for the high office. It is not clear exactly how much longer Farhād Mīrzā stayed in the British Legation. But, until the departure of Richard Stevens, the British consul in Tehran, and the break of diplomatic relations between the two countries in early December 1856, the British still considered him formally under their protection (Sepehr, II, pp. 227-28). With Persia officially at war with Britain, Farhād Mīrzā immediately wrote a letter to the French chargé d'affaires, Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau, who was now responsible for defending the interests of the British in the country, denying that he was a British protégé and pledging his full allegiance to the shah (Ešfahānīān and Rowšanī, eds., I, pp. 181-82; II, pp. 67-68, 82-83).

It took Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah about five years to consider giving Farhād Mīrzā a notable post. In Ša'bān 1278/February 1862, he bestowed on him the title Mo'tamad-al-Dawla, and assigned him the governorship of Lorestān and Kūzestān, only to summon him back to Tehran in late 1279/early 1863 for a seat in the Consultative Council of the Government (Dār al-šūrā-ye kobrā),



which he had established in early Şafar 1275/September 1858 as part of a new set of bodies replacing the institution of the prime ministership (Ḳormūjī, pp. 284, 302; Ādamīyat, pp. 54-57). Farhād Mīrzā served nearly four years in that less than effective council, siding, presumably, with its more conservative faction. In late 1284/early 1868 he was sent to Sanandaj as the governor of Kurdistan. Determined to make an impressive and unforgettable entrance, he cunningly lured the most feared rebel of the area into a trap, and hung him in front of his stunned soldiers. This incident, and many more like it, earned him an everlasting reputation for brutality. He himself is quoted by E‘temād-al-Salṭana as telling Nāşer-al-Dīn Shah that he had killed six hundred people (E‘temād-al-Salṭana, *Rūz-nāma-ye kāterāt*, p. 584). A British secret agent, who was a witness to Farhād Mīrzā’s second term as governor of Fārs during 1293-98/1876-81, i.e., the period right after his return from the hajj, gives a chilling report of widespread torture, ruthless reprisals, and executions by Farhād Mīrzā’s men (Sa‘īdī Sīrjānī, ed., pp. 67-68, 72, 75, 80, 99, 109-10). The agent also reports on prevalent corruption, bribery, and virtual extortion in the name of tax collection (*ibid.*, pp. 69-74, 99, 119-20, 129). The shah was happy to see revenues coming in. In mid-1296/1879 he wrote to Farhād Mīrzā, “It is enough for us that you are maintaining order in the area, and you send your taxes on time or early, and you do not owe [us anything] for the three years that you have been the governor [of the area]” (*ibid.*, p. 110). If there were ever questions about Farhād Mīrzā’s methods of control, or if mechanisms were introduced to ascertain people’s concerns (however lightly they might have been viewed in the scheme of the workings of the Persian government), Farhād Mīrzā would react with total negativity. Such was the case when, in 1295-96/1878-79, Mīrzā Yūsof Mostawfī-al-Mamālek implored Farhād Mīrzā to be more tolerant of his subjects and more receptive to suggestions from the shah about the affairs of the region. Farhād Mīrzā’s response that he was “a governor (*ḥākem*) not the president of a republic (*ra‘īs-e jomhūr*)” typifies his regressive approach to the rule of law in Persia. Another case involved installation of “justice boxes” (*şandūq-e ‘adālat*) in the main mosque of all major cities of the country for people to write to the government concerning their problems. Farhād Mīrzā’s initial emphatic rejection of the idea took a more serious turn when he asked to be relieved of his duties if the government insisted on installation of the boxes in Fārs (Sa‘īdī Sīrjānī, ed., pp. 75, 105-6).

With the premiership of Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan Sepahsālār in late Şa‘bān 1288/November 1871, a new chapter began in the political career of Farhād Mīrzā. The grand vizier’s progressive ideas and plans for the country stood in



contrast to Farhād Mīrzā's highly conservative religious views on the administration of Persia. Farhād Mīrzā himself saw the reformist vizier as an obliterator of the "foundation of the Muslim *šarī'a*," who was guilty of spreading the word "liberty" among the people (Afšār, 1965-70, II, p. 297). He even wrote to Sepahsālār that "it would take a long time before European principles (*qawā'ed*) can be applied to Persia" (Farhād Mo'tamad, p. 150). Adding more to the animosity that Farhād Mīrzā had begun to develop against Sepahsālār was the vizier's questioning of, and occasionally overturning, Farhād Mīrzā's rulings on claims brought to his Fārs court in 1288/1871-72. Neither Sepahsālār's admonition of Farhād Mīrzā nor Farhād Mīrzā's offended reaction to Sepahsālār's ideas, however, seems to have negatively changed Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's impression of Farhād Mīrzā, for in late 1289/1872, when he and his grand vizier were about to set out for his first European trip soon after the signing of the Reuter Concession (see CONCESSIONS ii), he called upon Farhād Mīrzā to act as the head of the cabinet (Majles-e darbār-e a'zam), watching over Kāmran Mīrzā the regent (*nāyeb-al-salṭana*). Both Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah and Sepahsālār, however, were cautious enough to impose some limitations on Farhād Mīrzā's power by carefully delineating his and Kāmran Mīrzā's responsibilities for various functions of the state in a manual (*dastūr al-'amal*) which was supposed to be followed "without dissent" (*bedūn-e taḳallof*; Ādamīyat, pp. 185, 212-14; Kasrā). The five months or so that the shah and his vizier spent in touring Europe provided ample opportunity for Farhād Mīrzā and other opponents of Sepahsālār (who also had the support of the Russians) to unite and request from the shah as soon as he returned from his trip in Rajab 1290/September 1873 the dismissal of Sepahsālār (Sepahsālār himself believed that Farhād Mīrzā had even plotted to murder him, see Neẓām-al-Salṭana Māfī, p. 55). Farhād Mīrzā's triumphant reaction to the news of Sepahsālār's resignation was quite evident in a jotting made on the first leaf of a manuscript from his library, in which he compared the "obliterating" effect of Sepahsālār's tenure with that of the Mongols, noting, with his usual self-righteous tone, that all who contributed to the vizier's downfall would be rewarded by God (Afšār, 1965-70, II, p. 297). What those conspirators received before any divine compensation, however, was reprehension from the shah, who had now realized his mistake in accepting his vizier's resignation. Farhād Mīrzā was sent back to Kurdistan and before long was removed from his post.

In Ša'bān 1292/September 1875 Farhād Mīrzā performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in 1876 he accepted Sepahsālār's offer to become the governor of Fārs, provided the central government did not interfere with his rule. Eager to



establish order in the region, Sepahsālār secured Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's approval, and for the next five years Farhād Mīrzā became the supreme ruler of Fārs for the second time (Neẓām-al-Salṭana Māfī, pp. 55-56). In 1881 he was summoned to Tehran to become a member of the Dar al-šūrā-ye dawlatī, a position he held until his death in 1305/1888.

A fine writer of the Persian language, with an excellent knowledge of Arabic, Farhād Mīrzā also knew enough English to translate, albeit freely, William Pinnock's *A Catechism of Geography* (London, 1826) under the title *Jām-e jam* (Tehran, 1272/1855; 2nd ed., Bombay, 1273/1856). His other works include a travel journal about his pilgrimage to Mecca entitled *Hedāyat al-sabīl wa kefāyat al-dalīl* (Shiraz, 1294/1877; ed. E. Nawwāb-e Ṣafā as *Safar-nāma-ye Farhād Mīrzā Mo'tamad-al-Dawla*, Tehran, 1366 Š./1987; ed. Ğ.-R. Ṭabāṭabā'ī Majd as *Safar-nāma-ye Farhād Mīrzā*, Tehran, 1366 Š./1987); a book on Emām Ḥosayn called *Qamqām-e daqqār wa šamšām-e battār* (Tehran, 1305/1887; ed. M. Moḥammadī Zarandī, Tehran, 1363 Š./1984); a commentary on Bahā-al-Dīn 'Āmelī's *Kolāṣat al-ḥesāb*, called *Kanz al-ḥesāb* (Tehran, 1279/1863); and an anthology of interesting pieces of prose and poetry called *Zanbīl* (Tehran, 1329/1911; 2nd ed., Tehran, 1345 Š./1966). He also arranged for publication of Abu'l-Qāsem Qā'em-maqām's letters (*Monša'āt-e Qā'em-maqām*, Tehran, n.d.). But Farhād Mīrzā's most polished work, for which he is best remembered, is his own *Monša'āt* (Bombay, 1318/1900; 2nd ed., Tehran, 1327/1909; ed. Ğ.-R. Ṭabāṭabā'ī Majd, Tehran, 1369 Š./1990). It is a sample collection of letters he wrote to friends and dignitaries; they have genuine historical and literary value. A seemingly well organized and meticulous administrator, Farhād Mīrzā relied heavily on writing letters to issue instructions and orders. His almost compulsive habit of making a copy of his letters for himself (they are most often illegible to others) probably stemmed from his firm belief in accountability and scrutiny, and produced one of the most interesting sources for the study of Qajar provincial government operations (in 1983, acting as an arbiter, Īraj Afšār divided most of this collection of documents between two of Farhād Mīrzā's descendants, see Afšār, 1997, pp. 585-87; the Princeton University Library and the Mar'ašī Najafī Public Library each own other portions of these documents). Farhād Mīrzā's love of collecting Persian and Arabic manuscripts was well known and comparable to that of his brother, Bahman Mīrzā (q.v.). Over the years, he built one of the finest (if not the finest) personal libraries in Persia, but his collection was gradually scattered after his death (Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 164). The third oldest Persian manuscript known, a copy of Aḳawaynī Bokārī's *Hedāyat al-mota'allemin fi'l-ṭebb*, dated



487/1085-86, belonged to his manuscript collection before it was given to the Bodleian Library. Farhād Mīrzā's great-grandson, Maḥmūd Farhād Mo'tamad, inherited some of his books and made several successful attempts to regain possession of many others (Dānešpažūh; Afšār, 1997, pp. 576-87).

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**Figure 1.** Farhād Mīrzā Mo'tamad-al-Dawla. After Hedāya t al-sabīl, frontispiece.