



## FARHANG, MĪRZĀ ABU'L-QĀSEM ŠĪRĀZĪ

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**FARHANG, MĪRZĀ ABU'L-QĀSEM ŠĪRĀZĪ** (b. Shiraz, Ramaẓān 1242/April 1827, d. Shiraz, 1309/1891), poet, scholar, and calligrapher. In his youth Farhang, the fourth son of the renowned poet Mīrzā Moḥammad-Šafī' Weṣāl Šīrāzī (d. 1262/1846), studied literature, mathematics, divination (*jafr*), and geomancy (*raml*). Inspired by the example of the poet Ḥabīb-Allāh Qā'ānī (d. 1270/1854), he also studied French.

In 1277/1860 Farhang, accompanied by his brothers Mīrzā Aḥmad Weqār and Mīrzā Esmā'īl Tawḥīd, traveled to Tehran, where he remained for a year and gained some reputation among scholars there. Upon his return to Shiraz he married into the family of Ḥājj Ma'ṣūm-'Alīšāh (d. 1212/1797-98), a former leader of the Ne'mat-Allāhī Sufī order. From this union he had two daughters and two sons, Maḥmūd (whose pen name was Awrang) and Moḥammad (Āhang).

Farhang was an accomplished poet and master of rhetoric. Following his father and his elder brother Dāvarī Šīrāzī (q.v.), he set himself to master seven different styles of calligraphy, though he was never satisfied with his *nasta'liq* (see [CALLIGRAPHY](#)). He was especially adept in *tolṭ*, following the style of Yāqūt Mosta'ṣamī. Like his father, he made copies of the Qur'ān in four different scripts (*tolṭ*, *naskò*, *reqā'*, and *šekasta*), a fact that attracted considerable attention in Persia and India. People began to seek these Korans,



often sending him gifts in advance in hopes of receiving one.

Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah awarded Farhang a farm called Hanā (lit., wholesome) to show appreciation for Farhang's services in tutoring his grandson, Solṭān-Ḥosayn, the son of Zell-al-Solṭān. The official (*mostawfi*), however, refused to sign the deed because of a *qāṣīda* written by Dāvārī in which he had mocked the long beards of *mostawfis*. Farhang himself composed a *qāṣīda* about this dispute, in which he explained that Hanā was quite a different thing from the wild shrub *ḥannā* (henna), the dye from which could be applied to the officials' long beards. The man was thus embarrassed into giving up his opposition. This show of poetic wit had become quite well known in Tehran even before Farhang's second visit, which he made in 1298/1881. While there, Farhang became a devotee of the Ne'mat-Allāhī master Ṣafi-'Alīšāh (d. 1316/1899) and an intimate of the latter's deputy Nāyeb-al-Ṣadr.

Edward G. Browne described his own meeting with Farhang in Shiraz in 1308/1888, praising the latter's appearance, soft voice and unassuming manner, breadth of knowledge, and quickness of apprehension (pp. 119, 267-68). Browne discussed certain literary and philosophical issues with Farhang, recording the latter's interest in Indian philosophy and his desire to learn cuneiform script. Later Browne noted that, a year before meeting Farhang in Shiraz, he had seen two *qāṣīdas* by him. One celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign; Browne was asked to translate it and present it to the queen, but apparently he never did so. The other was an ode in praise of the beauties of Paris, with many French words inserted into the Persian verses (Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia* IV, pp. 322-25); it differs greatly from Farhang's other published *qāṣīdas*, and, according to some members of the Weṣāl family, it is not one of his own compositions.

Among Farhang's most important literary compositions are a commentary (*ṣarḥ*) on Rašīd Waṭwāṭ's *Ḥadā'iq al-seḥr*, modeled on Neẓāmī 'Arūzī Samarqandī's *Čahār Maqāla* (q.v.); a translation of and commentary on the Arabic astronomical text *al-Bāre' fi'l-taqwīm wa aḥkām al-nojūm* by Nāṣer-al-Dīn Ṭūsī; and the dictionary *Farhang-e Farhang* (MS Tehran, Ketāb-kāna-ye mellī, no. 97; Monzawī, *Nosḳahā*, III, p. 2011). His other works include a treatise entitled *Ṭebb al-bolh* or *Resāla-ye sekanjabīnīya* and a *dīvān* of about ten thousand couplets in Persian and Arabic, incorporating *qāṣīdas*, *ġazals*, *robā'īs*, *maṭnawīs*, *mosammatās* and *marāṭīs*. Of these works only a selection from *Resāla-ye sekanjabīnīya* and a few poems devoted to the history of the mirror decorations on the shrine of Aḥmad b. Mūsā Šāh-e Čerāġ, brother of



Imam Rezā, in Shiraz (1306/1888) have been published by Rūhānī Weṣāl in *Golšan-e Weṣāl* (Tehran, 1319/1901, pp. 400-431). Another brief selection of poems was published by Reżāqolī Khan Hedāyat in the second volume of his *Majma' al-foṣaḥā'* (pp. 807-17).

Farhang died in 1309/1891 and was buried in the mausoleum of Mīr Sayyed Moḥammad in Shiraz. Forṣat-al-Dawla's claim that he died in 1308/1890 (pp. 354-55) is incorrect since it is not consistent with the evidence in extant chronograms composed about the date of his death.

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