



FARZĀN, SAYYED MOḤAMMAD

FARZĀN, Sayyed Moḥammad (b. near Brijand, 1273 Š./1894; d. Bābolsar, 23 Farvardin 1349 Š./11 April 1970), an eminent scholar of classical literature. Farzān received his elementary education from his father, who died while Sayyed Mohammad was eleven years old. Farzān and his mother and brother left their village for Brijand, where Sayyed Moḥammad went to the Šowkatiya elementary school and studied Farzān there for four years. He, however, decided to take his mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca before could graduate. His mother died on the route to Mecca in Ḥalab, but he finished the pilgrimage, returned to Brijand, and continued his education for four years at Ma'sÂumiya school. Then he left for Mashhad and spent a year there studying with Adib Nišāburi (q.v.), Āyatollāhzāda Korāsāni, and Ḥājj Āqā Ḥosayn Qomi.

He was sent in 1918 to Sistān to set up new schools. As the head of the newly established Department of Education (Edāra-ye ma'āref) of Zābol, he was instrumental in developing the city's educational system and, therefore, became popularly known in the town as Spayed Mohammad-e Modir, (Sayyed Moḥammad, the school principal), a reputation that lived on for a long time after he had left Zābol.

Having lived and served in Sistān for about ten years, Farzān announced his candidacy for the seat in the parliament from the province, but he was



arrested before the voting day and sent on internal exile, first to Mashhad and then to a town on the Persian Gulf. He seems to have been pardoned in 1930, when he became the head of the Department of Education for the Persian Gulf region. The intense humidity and heat of the Persian Gulf region, coupled with the spread of malaria in the area, forced him to leave the place for Šāhrud. He stayed in Šāhrud for about two years, where he served as the head of the Department of Education before he was transferred to Makrān to serve as the deputy head of the Department of Education. He was returned to Briĵand to head of the Education Department in that town. He remained there for close to sixteen years, during which time he played an important part in the expansion of the local schools and educational facilities. Farzān, however, remained unknown to the scholarly and intellectual circles of the capital until he published an erudite review of school textbooks, which caught the attention of the scholar and politician Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda, who is often credited with having “discovered” Farzān. Taqizāda arranged for Farzān’s transfer to Tehran, where he served in the Ministry of Education as the surveyor of publications. Besides, he began teaching at the Faculties of Theology (Dāneškada-ye Ma’qul o manqul, later called Elāhiyāt) and Literature (*Adabiyāt*) and also cooperated with The [Royal] Institute of Translation and Publication (*Bongāh-e tarjoma wa našr-e ketāb*, q.v.). In the capacity of the surveyor of publications, he was once asked to review and edit the elementary-school textbooks. It is said that, when he returned the texts, the margin of almost every single page had been covered with his significant comments and corrections of various linguistic errors that he had identified, which prompted the ministry to ask him to edit the high school textbooks in the same manner. He served as the official reviewer of school textbooks until his retirement.

Farzān taught at the University of Tehran until old age without attaining professorial rank. A few days after he died, the university held a meeting in his honor, where distinguished scholars such as Jalāl-al-Din Homā’i and Mojtabā Minovi praised him as a man of impeccable integrity and almost unmatched erudition. Farzān spent the last two years of his life living with his only daughter and son-in-law in Bābolsar, where he died.

Farzān was a scholar in the true sense of the word, although, despite his great erudition, his scrupulous attention to ascertaining all details prevented him from engaging himself in the production of a substantial work. His entire



output, all articles and essays, were published posthumously as *Maqālāt-e Farzān* (ed. Aḥmad Edārači Gilāni, Tehran, 1977).

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