

Subject:- PERSIAN

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Unit-II

Topic- Firdausi

Online Class Materials

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Firdausi

Firdausi's name occupies a highest and prominent place, if his services to the glorification of Iran, preservation of the national history and traditions and the revival of Persian language are to be taken into consideration. Undoubtedly, he is the greatest poet of Iran not only of earlier times but of the whole of Persian literature, and no other Persian poet can claim equality with him.

It is really unfortunate that the life of Firdausi is surrounded with legends, even his name and date of birth is not actually known to us. Daulat Shah and the author of Maqaddama-e-Shah Nama have fabricated several stories about him. They presume that Firdausi was a court poet of Mahmud Ghaznavi. To enter the court, he had to contest with the other three poets Unsuri, Farrukhi and Asjadi, who in course of discussions were surprised at Firdausi's knowledge of history and they introduced him to Sultan Mahmud. He was assigned the task of versifying the national epic of Iran on the condition that he would be paid one dinar for every couplet. Firdausi laboured for 30 or 35 years at the court of Mahmud and compiled the Shah Nama consisting of 60,000 verses but the Sultan did not fulfil his promise. Firdausi wrote a satire for him and left for his native place at Tus.

According to Nizami 'Uruzi, Firdausi's real name was Abdul Qasim Mansur bin Hasan. He was born at the village Baz near Tabaran, a part of the city of Tus. Though his exact date of birth is not known, yet it may be calculated from the fact that he was 58 at the time of Mahmud's accession to the throne in 387 A.H. It gives his date of birth as 329 A.H. This date is accepted by Zabihullah Safa, an authority on Firdausi. But a verse at the end of two old manuscripts preserved in the library of Holland and Germany, gives 76 his age at the time of compilation of the Shah Nama.

Noldeke (German philosopher) in his 'National epic of Iran' calculates that that Firdausi was born in 320-324/932-6 A.D. and this date is accepted by Sayeed Nafisi of Iran.