

Subject:- PERSIAN

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Unit-II

Topic- Firdausi

Online Class Materials

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Firdausi

Works

Firdausi's Shahnameh is the most popular and influential national epic in Iran and other Persian-speaking nations. The Shahnameh is the only surviving work by Firdausi regarded as indisputably genuine. He may have written poems earlier in his life but they no longer exist. A narrative poem, *Yūsof o Zolaykā* (Joseph and Zuleika), was once attributed to him, but scholarly consensus now rejects the idea it is his. There has also been speculation about the satire Firdausi allegedly wrote about Mahmud of Ghazni after the sultan failed to reward him sufficiently. Nezami Aruzi, Firdausi's early biographer, claimed that all but six lines had been destroyed by a well-wisher who had paid Firdausi a thousand dirhams for the poem. Introductions to some manuscripts of the Shahnameh include verses purporting to be the satire. Some scholars have viewed them as fabricated; others are more inclined to believe in their authenticity.

Firdausi is one of the undisputed giants of Persian literature. After Firdausi's Shahnameh, a number of other works similar in nature surfaced over the centuries within the cultural sphere of the Persian language. Without exception, all such works were based in style and method on Firdausi's Shahnameh, but none of them could quite achieve the same degree of fame and popularity as Firdausi's masterpiece.

Firdausi has a unique place in Persian history because of the strides he made in reviving and regenerating the Persian language and cultural traditions. His works are cited as a crucial component in the persistence of the Persian language, as those works allowed much of the tongue to remain codified and intact. In this respect, Firdausi surpasses Nizami, Khayyám, Asadi Tusi and other seminal Persian literary figures in his impact on Persian culture and language. Many modern Iranians see him as the father of the modern Persian language.

Firdausi in fact was a motivation behind many future Persian figures. One such notable figure was Rezā Shāh Pahlavi, who established an Academy of Persian Language and Literature, in order to attempt to remove Arabic and French words from the Persian language, replacing them with suitable Persian alternatives. In 1934, Rezā Shāh set up a ceremony in Mashhad, Khorasan, celebrating a thousand years of Persian literature since the time of Firdausi, titled "Firdausi Millennial Celebration", inviting notable European as well as Iranian scholars. Firdausi University of Mashhad is a university established in 1949 that also takes its name from Firdausi.

Firdausi's influence in the Persian culture is explained by the Encyclopædia Britannica:

The Persians regard Firdausi as the greatest of their poets. For nearly a thousand years they have continued to read and to listen to recitations from his masterwork, the Shah-nameh, in which the Persian national epic found its final and enduring form. Though written about 1,000 years ago, this work is as intelligible to the average, modern Iranian as the King James Version of the Bible is to a modern English-speaker. The language, based as the poem is on a Dari original, is pure Persian with only the slightest admixture of Arabic.

The library at Wadham College, Oxford University was named the Firdausi Library, and contains a specialised Persian section for scholars.