

## CHAPTER 2.

### SCANSION. ( . تقطیع . )

1. The word taqti<sup>۴</sup> is derived from قطع and means, literally, "cutting into pieces."

The basic principle of Urdu scansion is the distinction between "movent"—متحرک and "quiescent"—ساکن letters.

2. The three short vowels are collectively called حرکات and are written thus: —; —; —. In Arabic they are called fatha, kasra and zamma and in Persian and generally in Urdu:—zabar, zer and pesh, and a letter accompanied by one of them is termed متحرک-mutaharik or movent, e.g. the ک kaf in the word کب is movent as it is accompanied by the حرکات fatha or zabr.

3. When a consonant is unaccompanied by a حرکات, that is to say when it occurs at the end of a shut syllable it is termed ساکن, sakin = quiescent, e.g., the س in مسجد masjid is quiescent as is the د but both the م and the ج are movent being accompanied by the حرکات zabr and zer respectively.

4. This distinction is so vital that before proceeding further the student would be well advised to scan the following few words into movent and quiescent letters, using as he will find used throughout this work, the ˆ sign for movent and ˆ for quiescent letters, as in the example given above

مسجد

میں  
تب

بلبل  
قطع

بخت  
عشق

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قصہ	گیا
دریافت	جائیگا
مارنا	میرا
ظلم	چلن
چمن	دوست

5. وزن wazn = measure. If the wazn of one word agrees with that of another word then it means that the حرکات and سکون of the one agree with the حرکات and سکون of the other, i.e. there are the same number of mutaharik and sakin letters in both the words and that they occur in the same order but not necessarily that the حرکات is the same i.e., zabr in both words. Hence we say that بلبل is of the same measure as مسجد meaning that each contains four letters, two mutaharik and two sakin and occurring in the same order, i.e. mutaharik, sakin, mutaharik, sakin; but not that the حرکات are the same for, as will be seen from this example the حرکات of bulbul are pesh, pesh, while of masjid zabr, zer.

6. بحر Bahr = metre. Metre is the rhythmical arrangement of mutaharik and sakin letters into lines. The system of notation in Urdu is much more complicated than in English, taking into consideration, as it does, letters and not only syllables. Consequently, where in English certain prosodians give as the formula of an Iambic Tetrameter the signs ax, ax, ax, ax (counting "a" an unaccented and "x" an accented syllable) the Urdu prosodians, having to account for every letter, have standard words as the models, e.g. فعلوں  
فعلوں فعلوں فعلوں فعلوں فعلوں, with which the line will have to agree i.e., to contain 20 letters which must occur in the following order mutaharik, mutaharik, sakin, mutaharik, sakin.

The various kinds of metre Arabic, Persian, common and uncommon, regular and irregular, simple and compound will be treated of in the chapters devoted to metre and catalexis.

7. ارکان Arkan (plural of رکن) = feet into which a line of poetry is divided. They are, but infrequently, also termed افاعيل or افاعيل. The parts into which ارکان are divided are known as اصول.

8. If an asul is composed of two letters it is called سبب; if of three letters وتد.

The سبب is of two kinds:—

(a) سبب خفيف when the first letter is mutaharik and the second sakin as in the word دل where the د is mutaharik and the ل sakin.

(b) سبب ثقيل when both the letters are mutaharik. There is no word in the Urdu language which may be cited as a pure example of a sabab-i-saqil but a noun in the "halat-i-izafat" of the Persian may scan as such, e.g. دل من where, in certain cases, the ل is mutaharik.

9. Similarly وتد is of two kinds:—

(a) وتد مجموع when of the three letters the 1st and 2nd are mutaharik and the last sakin e.g. چلن.

(b) وتد مفروق when the first letter is mutaharik, the second sakin and the third mutaharik.

Here again the remark about the sabab-i-saqil applies. The Persian izafat alone will supply an example, e.g. جان من.

10. Some prosodians have further extended this classification to include asul containing four, five and even six letters. These further divisions are as follows:—

(a) فاصله صغرى, of four letters of which the first three are mutaharik and the last sakin e.g. حرفى harafi "literary."

(b) فاصله كبرى, of five letters, the first four being "mutaharik" and the fifth "sakin"—of which I doubt if any example exist unless the shortened form of the negative be compounded with a verb: as نگرى.

(c) فاصله عظمى, of six letters, the first five "mutaharik" and the sixth "sakin."

It is unnecessary for the student to worry his head over these three last "asuls" the فاصله صغرى, the فاصله كبرى and the فاصله عظمى. Nor is it quite clear why the prosodians sought to classify these since each of them can be subdivided into سبب and وتد.

For example متفاعلين and متفاعلين are the only two standard feet (excluding those effected by catalexis) in which three consecutive movent letters occur and they can be divided easily enough without the employment of the فاصله at all as follows:—

مت = Sabab saqil

نا = ,, khaff

علن = Watad-i-majmua.

11. بيت Bait—plur. ابیات, (not بيوت which is the form reserved for the meaning "house") = a line of poetry which is composed of two مصرعين hemistiches (dual مصرعين).

12. A line of eight feet (4 per hemistich) is termed مثنون.  
A line of six feet (3 per hemistich) is termed مسدس.

13. Feet are named as follows :—

The first foot	صدر
The second foot	حشو
The third foot	حشو
The fourth foot	عروض
The fifth foot	ابتداء
The sixth foot	حشو
The seventh foot	حشو
The eighth foot	عجز or ضرب

Having grasped the meaning of the technical terms given above, the student is now in a position to study the rules of scansion.

14. The first and most important rule is that only those letters which are pronounced are taken into account and not those which though written are not vocalized. For example بالکل contains five letters; but, because it is pronounced as though it were written بَلْکَلْ in scansion only these four articulate letters are taken into account. The following are the letters most commonly dropped in scansion.

(a) *aliph* in Arabic words such as فی الواقع which is scanned as if spelt فِلاواقع.

(b) *h* in aspirated consonants (هَاءِ مَخْلُوطَةٍ) e.g. گِہز is scanned as گِز.

(c) *ba* in بائیے kya meaning what? which is scanned as کِا.

(d) *wa* as in واو معدولہ as in خود; خوش etc. which are scanned as if spelt خُود; خُوش.

(e) *nasal "n"* if preceded by حروف علت i.e. نون غنّہ e.g. چھونکا which is scanned as if spelt جوکا for the dropping of "h" see "b" above.

*N.B.*—If not preceded by a; i or u this ن will not be dropped e.g. رنگ rang is scanned as written, i.e. of 3 letters.

(f) Final *h* as in دودھے is not counted.

(g) *of* of کا; *ki* of کی; *o* of کو or in fact حروف علت occurring at the end of Hindi words are usually dropped but serve to make the preceding consonant mutaharik by depositing on it its harakat as کو = کُ.

The second rule (of letters counting double)—

(a) *doubled* (مشدّد) letters are of course counted as two e.g. فَعولن = مَشْدَد دَد = مَشْدَد دَد.

(b) *alf madduda* counts as two: the first being mutaharik the second sakin as انا to come انا.

(c) *hamzated wa* counts as two as in the word رُوْف which is scanned as رُوْف.

(d) The Persian *izafat* is counted in scansion, e.g. عروسِ چمن = عروسِ چمن.

In this case it will be seen that the "i" of the izafat is made "sakin"; but in some cases it is scanned as having made the preceding letter, otherwise "sakin," "mutaharik" e.g. مَقاعِلن - عروسِ من. The same applies to the conjunction "و", e.g. آب و هوا.

The third rule.—If two "sakin" letters occur together except at the end of a line (in which case they are both scanned as "sakin") the first is counted "sakin" and the second "mutaharik."

*The fourth rule.*—If three “sakin” letters occur together—as in the word سوخت or دوست—(but not at the end of a line for such a position is impossible for them) the first remains “sakin” and the fate of the other two is governed by poetic licence. If the second and third sakin letters are preceded by ی or و; ا (as in the examples given above) the second “sakin” is not counted and the third becomes “mutaharik” i.e. دوست will scan as دَسْت.

But, if the standard foot in the line requires two “mutaharik” letters, then the two “sakin” letters (provided that they are not preceded by ی or و; ا) become “mutaharik.”

*The fifth rule.*—Sometimes a “sakin” letter is made “mutaharik” (the reverse never) for metrical purposes—an indefensible piece of poetic license which might be termed a prosodical niblic to get the poet out of a bad lie.

Any further attempt to regularize scansion or to enumerate the exceptions to such rules would, at this juncture only serve to perplex the student.

Any peculiarities that may appear will be readily understood when the student has gained a little practice in scansion.

15. The following simple example (taken from the Taqwimul aruz wal qafia) will serve to illustrate the principles of scansion enumerated above.

مرے خونِ ناحق کی دیگی گواہی

Let us take this hemistich letter by letter and scan it.

م	is mutaharik
ر	„ mutaharik
ی	„ sakin

خ	„ mutaharik
و	„ sakin
ن + izafat	„ mutaharik, see rule 2(d)
ن	„ mutaharik
ا	„ sakin
ح	„ mutaharik
ق	„ sakin
ک + harkat of ی	„ mutaharik, see rule 1(g)
د	„ mutaharik
ی	„ sakin
ی	„ mutaharik
ی	„ sakin
ی	„ mutaharik
و	„ mutaharik
ا	„ sakin
ہ	„ mutaharik
ی	„ sakin.

Let us now write the line, with every letter marked, thus:—

م رے خ و ن ا ح ق ک ی د ی گ ی گ و ا ہ ی

and we see that the line divides itself into four portions each scanning alike, e.g. . . . . for which the standard foot is فَعُولُن. Hence we can now write the line in this way

مرے خو | ن ناحق | کی دیگی | گواہی  
فَعُولُن | فَعُولُن | فَعُولُن | فَعُولُن

and that is the way (shewn in all its stages) in which scansion is done in Urdu Verse.

Recalling my own difficulties when I arrived at this stage leads me to sum up the information contained in this and

the preceding chapters and to endeavour to dispel those doubts (at whose existence and nature I can make a fairly accurate guess) by a system of question and answer or, more naturally, I think, by an imaginary dialogue between the Teacher and the Student.

*Student:* From a perusal of this book I have, so far, realized that scansion depends on "mutaharik" and "sakin" letters and that the Urdu prosodians compose their feet of "wataḍ" and "sabab" where we would call them iambus or trochee or dactyl or spondee.

I can, with difficulty, scan any word and say which letter is "mutaharik" and which "sakin" but my real difficulty is this: in the specimen line given above I see why certain letters are "sakin" and others "mutaharik" but when it comes to scanning the line as a whole, *i.e.* grouping the various "mutahariks" and "sakin," I fail to see how the author knew where to draw his dividing lines. He says it is <sup>فَعُولُنْ</sup> - faulun, four times. He knew it was faulun (or whatever the metre is called) and therefore chopped off the feet to fit the metre. That is, in my opinion, begging the question. It is like "cribbing" at school—looking up the answer to a sum and then working it out always keeping an eye on the answer to make sure one is not going wrong.

*Teacher:* He knew how to divide it into feet because he saw that <sup>فَعُولُنْ</sup>, four times over, fitted the line. That metre is called . . . . .

*Student:* I don't care what it is called—he will explain all that in the chapter on metres, and you are evading the question. Why shouldn't I draw the lines and divide it up differently?

*Teacher:* Try it.

*Student:* How about this? <sup>مَرَّ خُونِ نَا</sup> which equals <sup>فَعُولُنْ فَعُو</sup>.

*Teacher:* Go on.

*Student:* <sup>حَق كِي دِيگِي</sup>.

*Teacher:* Does that also scan as <sup>فَعُولُنْ فَعُو</sup>.

*Student:* No! It equals <sup>لَنْ فَعُولُنْ</sup>.

*Teacher:* Exactly! It took you two feet to find your feet so to speak. The first foot is no guide.

No man living can scan a line of verse by scanning one foot only. It is by "breaking down" at the second or third feet that he realizes that he has gone wrong and must start again at the beginning and chop his feet off differently till he discovers a division which fits and leaves no letters unaccounted for at the end.

*Student:* Yes, I see that, but I still say that your method is laborious. Why, in an extreme case I might go chopping at the line with all the 150 odd metres in turn till I found the right one! And no one could ever carry 150 metres in his head.

*Teacher:* No! I don't think that that would ever be necessary for two reasons. Firstly you will see that the author recommends to your notice six metres which he says are much more common than others. Secondly the method illustrated above (I admit it is laborious) is only for beginners. You will be discarding it in a few days time and adopting the only possible practicable method *i.e.* by ear. Select one metre (most teachers select <sup>مَفَاعِيلُنْ</sup>—and a very good choice too) and saturate yourself in its rhythm saying

it over again and again <sup>مفاعیلن</sup> mufa ilan mufailan tanan tan tan-tanan tan tan and then while it yet echoes in your ears, work through the specimen lines in the appendix (this metre is given first) and, when you can fit this metre on to the words in a line without hesitation, work through any book of poetry trying to fit this measure tanan tan tan on to every line. Don't stop if you are doubtful—haste is everything at this stage—but mark every line you suspect of being in this metre, and check them over next day going carefully and if necessary employing your old, discarded, laborious method to settle the question finally.

## CHAPTER 3.

### METRE.

1. Metre, the rhythmical arrangement of syllables into lines, is called in Urdu بحر bahr plural بحور bahur.

All metres in Urdu are compounded of one or more of the following eight standard feet of which two are known as خماسی (five lettered) and six as سباعی (seven lettered):—

(i) <sup>فَعُولُن</sup>, faulun. Example, حراست. The bacchius of Latin prosody.

(ii) <sup>فَاعِلُن</sup>, failun. Example, منحصر. The amphimacer of Latin prosody.

(iii) <sup>مُفَاعِلُن</sup>, mufailun. Example, برے مودی. The epitritus primus of Latin prosody.

(iv) <sup>فَاعِلَاتُن</sup>, failatun. Example, اصفہانی. The epitritus secundus of Latin prosody.

(v) <sup>مُسْتَفْعِلُن</sup>, mustafilun. Example, گلزارِ تر. The epitritus tertius of Latin prosody.

(vi) <sup>مُفَعُولَات</sup>, mafulato. Example, عثمانان. The epitritus quartus of Latin prosody.

(vii) <sup>مُفَاعِلَاتُن</sup>, mufailatun. Example, پری بدنی = iambus + anapaest.

(viii) <sup>مُتَفَاعِلُن</sup>, mutafailan. Example, کہ خزان کا = anapaest + iambus.