

Poetic Meters of Afghan Persian Folk Couplets

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ABSTRACT

Folk couplets are considered to be one of the most important parts of our oral literature, which were formed over many centuries among the people of Khorasan, and were passed down orally from generation to generation. For the reason that the composers of the couplets were common people; in terms of prosody, there are many differences in these couplets. Scrutinizing this point can help us in understanding these folkloric couplets and future research in this field. The purpose of research in the field of vernacular couplets is to clarify the quality and prosody of vernacular couplets in the Persian language in Afghanistan. In this study, firstly, the issue of short initial vowel tension: inflectional v, and added fraction in the Persian dialect of Afghanistan is discussed and then the different rhythms of these folk couplets such as couplet scale, prosody of quatrain, and scale of syllable, were comprehensively investigated. And with we have shown it by example. For this purpose, the couplets that had been written, are collected by the field research method and books. Thus, songs of the kosher (Asadullah Shour), Tajik couplets (Enayatullah Shahrani), Sangardi hai Panjshir (Nilab Rahimi), folk couplets of the people of Ghor (Nabi Saqi) and Couplets of the people of Hazara (Mohammad Jawad Khavari) have been analysed.

Keywords: Folk couplets, Afghanistan, the prosody of couplets, Syllable, Metre, Rhythm

1-Introduction

The folk couplets (Do-bayti or Fahlaviyat) are prominent components of folk and oral literature and are one of Afghanistan's precious spiritual and cultural heritages. This rich cultural legacy, which often incorporates lyrical themes and whose author is primarily unknown, was formed across many centuries and has been handed down orally from one generation to the next. Folk couplets originate from our forefathers' beliefs, experiences, and emotions about various facets of life and are composed in straightforward language. Folk couplets are formed from twelve-syllable quatrains that have evolved into prosodic poetry. This

kind of poetry is exemplified by couplet songs such as Sorūd-e Kūdakān-e Balkh or Balkh kid's hymn (az khotalan āmazya...: He's arriving from Khotalan), which relate to the events that took place between 726-736 (108-119 A.H). Another example is a couplet by Abbās Bin Tarkhān, a poet from the second century A.H., lamenting the demolition of Samarkand (samarghand kand mand...: O! my lovely Samarkand) (Zolfaghari, 2015: 70). Folk couplets are regarded the most popular folklore poems because they have a brief metric and a suitable pattern that is useful for communicating a mood and describing emotions and sentiments and because less effort is required for rhyme-meditating as well as applying prosodic meters (Mahjoub, 2015: 86). Thirty-three percent of Iran's 302 Persian folkloric poetry patterns are composed using the folk couplets form (Zolfaghari, 2015: 86). In Badakhshan and some parts of Takhar, the couplets are called "Falak"; in Panjshir, they are referred to as "Sangerdi"; in the Uzbek language they are known as "Qsūhagh," and in Pashto, they are called "Lanadi" (Shahrani, 1991: 509).

2- Literature Review

Compared to other countries, Afghanistan's researchers have conducted a minimal number of studies on oral literature and, specifically, folk couplets. The earliest compilation of oral literature in Afghanistan was in a publication called "*Seraj al Akhbar*." Nevertheless, the first scientific effort in this regard was made by the "Kabul Literary Academy" in 1939 (1318 A.H), when it issued a handbook entitled "Folklore Guide," authored by Sarvar Guya E'temadi. After the closure of this literary academy and its transformation into "Pashto Tulneh," written publications on oral literature were generated randomly. For instance, in 1950, Dr. Javid acquired vital data with the assistance of pupils from a Kabul school named "Habibie School" and published them in the journal "Ariana" (Bakhtariani, 2010). However, Dr. Asadollah Sho'ur was the first to collect and research folk couplets from Afghanistan. In this regard, he penned a book entitled "*Tarneh-hāye Kohsār*" (Songs from Mountains), which was published by the Ministry of Information and Culture (Afghanistan Folklore Collection). In addition to discussing various literary topics in the introduction of this book, the author examines the meters of folk couplets. In a subsequent work titled "Compilation and Analysis of Herat Folk Couplets," Raheleh Hosseini, a Ph.D. graduate in Persian Language and Literature from Tehran University, evaluated the couplets' meters. In their literary works, Mohammad Javad Khavari and Nabi Saqi have merely mentioned the folk couplet meters.

Other works regarding Afghan folk couplets that we might mention include the following: "Tajik Folk Couplets in Badakhshan" (1991) by Enayatollah Shahrani, "The Gharchistan Lyrics" (2003) by Asadollah Shou'r, "Sangardis from Panjshir" (1986) by Gholam Faruq Nilab Rahmi, "Tajiki Folk Couplets" (1994) by Enayatollah Shahrani, "Hazaragi Folk Couplets" (2003) by Mohammad Javad Khavari, "The Popular Folk couplets of Ghor" (2009) by Nabi Saqi, "A Bouquet of Poems" (2008) by Mohsen Hasan-e Samangani, "The Folk Culture of Andarab" (2010) by Abdol-Hafiz Behrouz, "The Folk Culture of Panjshir" (2011) by Fazl Ahad Ahadi, and Hazaragi Folklore (2015) by Abbas Deljou. We may also include these works to the abovementioned: "Dari Folk Literature in Takhar" by Abdol Qayum Qavim; "Afghanistan's Folk Literature Compared to its Contemporary Literature" by Dr. Niloufar Hashemi, and "The Hazaragi Folk Literature" by Ali Akbar Shahrestani.

There are only a few publications on this particular subject, and no one has explicitly studied the meters in Afghan folk couplets. The present paper is regarded as the first ongoing effort to fill this study gap.

3- The Meter in the Folk Couplets

Rhyme and poetic meters are commonly regarded as the foundation of all poems (Zolfaghari, 2016: 13). As a result, ordinary people refer to any melodious sentence as a poem. In this regard, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi considers these two poetic elements to be the underpinning of poems (2014:7). Most folk couplets are composed using a prosodic meter called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaddas-e Mahzuf* or *Maqsur*¹ which has six *arkān* (prosodic pillars): *Mafāilon-Mafāilon-Fa'ulon/ Mafāil* (×2). These prosodic meters are used explicitly in folk couplets and in Masnavi (a poem written in rhyming verses) and folk couplets. These meters are widely used in Baba Tahir's Do-baytis, Nizami's Khosro va Shirin, Golshan-e Rāz by Shabestari, Shirin va Khosro by Amir Khosro Dehlavi, Vis va Rāmin by Fakhruddin As'ad Gurgani, Farhad va Shirin by Vahshi Bāfqi, and Yousof va Zulikhā by Jāmi (Mahyar, 2017: 96-97). According to modern poetic prosody rules, the overlong syllable is equal to a long syllable, so it is called *Mahzuf* rather than *Maqsur* (Hadi, 2016: 46). This poetic meter is used in the bulk of Afghan folk couplets. The most significant aspect of Afghan folk couplets to notice is the lengthening of two vowels, /e/ and /o/: These short vowels become long vowels via elongation, and this transformation influences the meters and rhythm of the couplets.

1-3- Ezāfe Particle (ē)

In most instances, the short vowel /e/elongation in Afghani Persian results in it being heard as /ē/. In poetic prosody handbooks, the mark [-] is appended to the short syllable, which creates a saturated Ezāfe, and is classified as a long vowel (Mahyar, 2017: 27). Concerning this subject, Abbas Mahyar quotes a verse from a sonnet by Hafiz:

Boti Dāram Ke Gerdē Gol Ze Sonbol Sāyebān Dārad
Bahārē Ārezash Khatti Be Khunē Arghavān Dārad
[I have an idol whose flower-like face is surrounded by a canopy
And her spring of cheeks has a purplish blood line]

The saturated Ezāfe can be noticed in the following syllables inside the stanza above: *dē*, *rē*, *nē*, which are components of the words *Gerdē*, *Bahārē*, and *Khunē*. It is worth mentioning that in Afghanistan, the verse is pronounced as follows (i.e., by applying the saturated Ezāfe rule):

Boti Dāram Ke Gerdē Gol Ze Sonbol Sāyebān Dārad
Bahārē Ārezash Khatti Be Khunē Arghavān Dārad

If the verse is pronounced in this mode, the meter will be patterned on Hazaj's complete or basic meter (*Mafāilon-Mafāilon- Mafāilon-Mafāilon*). Another example is seen in a half-verse by Hafiz:

¹ Each half-line of verse contains three *arkān* (metric pillars), making each verse six *arkān*. As a result, the meter is referred to as *Mosaddas*, or sixfold. The final *rokn*, *Mahzuf* /*Maqsur*, is a shortened version of the basic meter.

Shabē Tārik- o Bimē Moj-o Gerdabi Chonin Hāyel

[The dark nightfall, the terrifying waves, and the roaring whirlpool]

The second and seventh syllables in this half-verse look short at first appearance, but according to the principle known as "poetic license," we must lengthen these short syllables as long. The syllables above are indeed pronounced identically in the Persian variant of Afghanistan: *Shabē Tārik- o Bimē Moj-o Gerdabi Chonin Hāyel*. Here, the meter follows the fundamental poetic meter of Hazaj (*Maḥāilon-Maḥāilon- Maḥāilon-Maḥāilon*). This discussion has led me to conclude that the "saturated Ezāfe " essentially refers to a "close-mid front unrounded vowel". Persian poets used short vowels instead of long vowels because, like the Persian speakers in Afghanistan, they pronounced the short vowels as "close-mid front unrounded vowels." For example, according to the following, the Ezāfe in the *Mē, Tē, and Mē* in words *Zakhmē, Dastē, and Mardomē* contain a close-mid front unrounded vowel.

Namak Shuras Be Zakhmē Tāza Nandāz
Mara Koshti Be Shahr Āvāza Nandāz
Mara Koshti Be Dastē Khod Kafan Kon
Be dastē Mardomē Bigana Nandāz

[Don't put salt on a fresh wound; it's salty / If you murder me, don't tell anybody in the city. If you murdered me, put your hands around me and bury me/ Don't permit the poor to get near m].

This poetry is recited in this manner: *Maḥāilon-Maḥāilon-Fa'ulon*.

2-3- Coordinating Conjunction (ō)

The coordinating conjunction /ō/ is elongated in the Persian accent of Afghans and is akin to the close-mid back rounded vowel, and, when coupled with the short syllable preceding it, creates a long syllable, which some literary scholars consider a poetic license (Hadi, 2016: 35). In my opinion, such literary academics had solely addressed the Iranian Persian spoken in Tehran. However, when we study the Afghan accent, we see that they are entirely incorrect. In the following folk-couplet, we can see that the vowel after the word *Sayl* is a coordinating conjunction, but it has been combined with the consonant "L" and has formed the long syllable, *Lō*. The second half-verse of the poem is pronounced as: "*Chara Saylō Tamasha Mikuni Yār.*"

Chara Orsi ra Bāla Mikoni Yār
Chara Saylō Tamasha Mikuni Yār
Nemitarzi Ze Fardāye Qiyāmat
Chara Qatle Jovana Mikoni Yār

[Why are you removing the sash, love?
Why are you staring at the flood, love?
You who are not afraid of the afterlife's judges
Why are you seeking the murder of young lovers, love?]

Consider the following folk couplet, in which /ō/ is pronounced as the close-mid back rounded vowel in the second and third half-verses and is not removed during chunking: *Gharibō Bi Kasō Āvāre Tar Nist or: Ghamō Dardē Do Ālam Āzmudam.*

Ze Āsheq Hichkas Bichare Tar Nist
Gharibō Bi Kasō Āvāre Tar Nist
Ghamō Dardē Do Ālam Āzmudam
Cho Darde Āsheqi Dardē Degar Nist

[No one is more wretched than the lover.
No one is more homeless, lonely, or exiled than a lover.
I've witnessed all the miseries or pains in the universe
No pains compare to that of a lover]

This poetry is recited in this manner: *Mafāilon-Mafāilon-Fa'ulon.*

In such instances, the reciters extend the folk couplets' meters to conform to the prosodic standards. Dr. Shafiei Kadkani believes that the practice of prolonging the words in poems dates back to the ancient past and has been carried on to the present day; it was apparently a characteristic of pre-Islamic poetry (2007: 479). Some academics who were unfamiliar with Afghanistan and ancient Iranian Persian ascribed this characteristic to the Persian that was widespread during the early years of Islam until the 7th century A.H. They mistakenly claimed that the features of vowels and syllables in Middle Persian were such that the main difference between /ē/ and /e/ (Ezāfē) and the difference between /ō/ and /o/ (close-mid back rounded vowel) was the duration of pronunciation. As a result of the lengthening, these vowels became close-mid front unrounded vowels or close-mid back rounded vowels (Vahidiyan Kamiyar, 1978: 65-66).

According to Dr. Shou'r, there are three meters in Afghan folk couplets: the standard folk couplet meter, the quatrain meter, and the semi-prosodic meter (1974: 44-47). Based on the preceding, he gives an example of a semi-prosodic or syllabic meter that agrees with the folk couplets' typical meter (*Mafāilon-Mafāilon-Fa'ulon*).

De in Kuchah Cheto Miri Be Daw Daw²
Marā Bā Labz-e Awghani Zadi Daw
Age Bā Labze Awghani Befāmam
Sari Sini³ Safīdat Mikonam Khaw
(Sho'ur, 1974: 45)

[How are you rushing down this alley?
You addressed me in your Afghani dialect
If I could grasp the Afghani language
I could put your white face and breast to sleep]

² Running

³ Chest

According to Dr. Vahidiyan Kamiyar, "some scholars think that Persian folk poetry is based on syllabic meters, while others claim that they are semi-syllabic or semi-prosodic." Some experts, on the other hand, believe the Persian folk meters are syllabic, despite the fact that there are pauses between the half-verses. Others contend that the Persian folk poem's poetic meters are both prosodic and multiplicative, with stress being the most crucial component. Others, in addition to emphasizing the syllabic elements of Persian folk poetry meters, cast doubt on prior ideas and emphasize the possibility of viewing these poems as prosodic." (1978: 21). Per the Khanlari, "the meters of folk songs, which are now prevalent in Tehran and other Iranian provinces, are neither syllabic nor prosodic, but folk poetry's meter pursues two principles: the principle of syllable quantities (this principle is the foundation of Persian official poetry) and the principle of stress" (2017: 73). These Iranian researchers' hypotheses are based primarily on their research of Iranian or local folk lyrics. I believe these Dr. Vahidiyan Kamiyar's comments are false: "in any case, the patterns of folk couplets, comparable to today's folk couplets, were totally prosodic and had nothing to do with syllabic meters." (1978: 25). In his work "the study of meter in folk poetry," he attempted to demonstrate that Persian poetic meters have been prosodic from the beginning of civilization. He also sought to characterize the early Persian songs, such as Sorūd-e Kūdākān-e Balkh, or the Balkh kid's hymn, as prosodic, although other experts believe this lyric is syllabic. Despite this, some historians believe that the Persian folk couplets may be studied by adopting Turkish poetry's syllabic meters. This is because Persian folk poetry meters are pretty close to Turkish poetry meters (syllabic-pausal-stressed meter) and share many norms (Arzhang Pour Azari, 2015: 72). According to our study, Afghan folk couplets feature two meters: prosodic and syllabic.

4- Prosodic Meter

The majority of Afghan folk couplets feature prosody meters. Many of them have been written in couplet meters, such as *Mafāilon-Mafāilon-Fa'ulon*, or *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaddas-e Mahzuf*, while others have been created in quatrain meters.

1-4- Folk Couplet Meters

Most Afghan Persian folk couplets are composed using this meter (*Mafāilon-Mafāilon-Fa'ulon*, or *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaddas-e Mahzuf*). For example, Hazaragi couplets (Khavari, 2015: 11), Ghor folk couplets (Saqi, 2009: 12), and the majority of Afghan folk couplets are composed in this meter. This is why Shams Qais Rāzi writes regarding the couplet meters in *al-Mu'jam fi Ma'ayir Asha'r al-Ajam*: "In essence, none of the designed meters and poetry composed after Khalil are more pleasant and attractive than this meter" (2009: 142).

Hamu Khā-el Bar Ruyat Manam Yār

Hamu Nāranj-e Kosh Buyat Manam Yār

Cherā Bihude Migardi Be Sārā⁴

Bezan Tiri Ke Āhuyat Manam Yār

⁴ Desert or the wilderness

[I'm the mole on your cheeks, love.
I'm the orange on your chest, love.
Why are you seeking, in vain in the wild, love?
Throw me an arrow; I'm your wounded deer, love]

Sefidasti Napush Rakhtē Siyā Rā
Be Jelve Mikoshi Zālem To Mā Rā
Be Jelve Mikoshi Khundār Mishi
Javān Astam Bebin Ruye Khodā Rā

[Your face is white, avoid wearing anything black.
You're killing me by flashing that face.
You become a blood bearer if you murder me.
I'm young; look at me, for god's sake]
(Sho'ur, 1974: 69).

Marā Khban Ze Ghamhā Khaste Kardand
Be Dāme Eshq Pāyam Baste Kardand
Ze Ghelmin⁵ Shur-o Afghānsm Be Dar Shod
Delam Rā Seyde Yek Goldaste Kardand

[The sweeties wounded me by sorrows
They captivated me in their love trap
My sighs and whines traveled beyond Ghelmin
The sweeties hunted my heart with their bouquet-like faces]
(Saqi, 2009: 40)

Agar Afsāne-am Kardi To kardi
Ze Del Bigane-am Kardi To Kardi
Javān-e Āqel-o Farzāne Budam
Agar Divāne-am Kardi To kardi

[You did it if you shared the legend of my love.
You did it if you made me a stranger to my heart.
I used to be a wise and sensible guy.
You did it if you drove me out of my mind]
(Shahrani, 2016: 38)

Agar Āhi Kasham Panju⁶ Besuze
Tagubargu Qlāye Naw⁷ Besuza
Agar Āhi Kasham Az Suze Sina
Bachey Sheytu Tahe Jamkhaw Besuza

⁵ A location in Ghor, Afghanistan

⁶ Punjab, a province in Afghanistan

⁷ Both are places in Afghanistan

[If I sigh now, Panju will burn
So will Tagubarg and Qalay Naw.
If I sigh passionately
The naughty kid would ignite in his sleeping suit]
(Khavari, 2016:440)

Due to the fact that the poets of these folk couplets are ordinary people who are unfamiliar with prosodic meters, there are phonation disparities in several of these couplets. This form of poetry is often read while hearing music; hence, many of these prosody flaws are addressed when reading (Sho'ur, 1974: 75). Some of these couplets could well be adjusted to conform to the prosody standards. According to Dr. Vahidiyan Kamiyar, "...they recite couplets without prosody standards and totally following couplet meter, and if a long vowel violates the poem's rhythm, they pronounce it short and, depending on the context, prolong the short vowel" (1978: 21).

Mosāferi Ajab Delgir-o Zār As
Agar Shāzadeh Bashe Khār-o Zār As
Hazārān Tushak-o Qlāiche Bāshe
Be Zire Pāykayash Mānande Khār As

[Being a traveler is a sad and miserable life.
Even if the traveler is a royal, he is ignored and left to weep.
Even if hundreds of carpets are under his feet,
he is still treading on thorns].

Dar Khāna Rumāl Andākhta Maryam
Kajak Hrāa⁸ Bistu Char⁹ Andkāhta Maryam
Berin Bā Mādar-e Maryam Boguin
Hama Re Az Kār Andākhte Maryam

[Maryam has removed her scarf while at home
She has loosened a strand of her locks.
Go and warn Maryam's mom:
She has diverted everyone's mind]
(Saqi, 2009: 97).

Pishe Khāna Biyā Shabtal Draw Ku
Do Sibe Sine Ra Dar Mah Graw Ku
Do Sibe Sine Ra Dar Mah Graw Ku
Biyā Yak Lāze Da Baghal Ma Khaw Ku

⁸ The locks of hair

⁹ She has loosened her hair

[Come and pick the clovers next to the house.
Come and pledge apple-shaped breasts to the Moon.
Come and pledge apple-shaped breasts to the Moon.
Come and lie in my arms for a while]
(Khavari)

2-1-4- Quatrain Meters:

Various Afghan Persian folk couplets, such as "Sangerdis" and often "Falaks," are composed in standard meters, particularly those relating to the Akhrab baseline. According to Dr. Sho'ur, the couplets of the central regions, including the "northern" part, adhere to the couplet prosody; nevertheless, "Falaks" and "Sangerdis" are formed using quatrain meters (1974: 43-46). Yet, our research indicates that Falaks not only adhere to the prosodic principles of quatrains but are also composed using the meters of folk couplets:

Alā Dokhtar Kōja Hasti To Mehmān
Be Lewhāyat Zadi Sorkhi Farāvan
Sare Rāyat Neshinom Mesle Majnun
Mara Ay Āsheqi kardi Pashimān

[O, girl! Where are you a guest?
You've got lipstick on your lips.
I'll sit like Majnoon on your pathway.
You've made me regret being a lover]
(Shahrani, 1991: 517)

On the other hand, the examination of meters in "Northern" folk couplets reveals the presence of quatrain-based poems among them (Khorasani, 2019: 26):

The following is composed in a meter called *Bahre Hazaj-e Mosaman-e Akhrab-e Abtar* (*Mafū'lo, Mafāi'lo, Mafā'ilon Fa'*)

Dandāne Sadaf Darune Dānat Bāsham
Har Gap Bezani Sar-e Zabānat Bāsham
Gar Khāb Shavi Be Jāye Khābat Bāsham
Bidār Shavi Ke Dar Kenārat Bāsham

[I wish to be one of those pearly teeth in your mouth
I wish to be on your tongue when you talk
I wish to be in your bed when you go to sleep
I wish to be by your side when you wake up]

Or consider the following Northern couplet, which is composed of a prosodic meter that is called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaman-e Akhrab-e Makfouf-e Majbub* (*Mafo'ulo Mafāi'lo, Mafāi'lo Fa'al*):

Ruzi Ke Delam Pish-e Delat Bud Graw

Daman-e Mara Sakht Gerefti Ke Naraw
Ruzi Ke Delat Jaye Degar Mayel Shod
Gush-e Del-e Man Rast Nahadi Ke Boraw
[As my heart was still a hostage of your heart
You implored me, even begging me not to go
But when your heart was drawn to others
You murmured to my heart, "now go"]

The meters of the above couplets derive from the quatrain poetry and Akhrab's basis (Shams Qais Razi, 2009: 144). Although one of the characteristics of oral literature is its worldwide unifying factor, and determining the geographical origin of these poems is difficult, it is possible to argue that Falaks and Sangerdis more often replicate the prosody rules from other regions of Afghanistan's quatrains and folk couplets. Here are some examples of folk couplets composed in quatrain meters:

The following is a folk couplet composed in a prosodic meter called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Akhrab-e Maqbuz-e Abtar* (*Mafo 'ulo, Mafāe 'lon, Mafāi 'lon Fa ')*:

Emshab Delakam Hawāye Delbar Dārad
Morghe Delakam Hezār-o Yek Par Dārad
Har Kas Ke Marā Be Pish-e Yāram Bebarad
Guyā Ke Savab-e Haj-e Akbar Dārad

[My heart yearns to see the beloved tonight.
My heart's bird has hundreds of wings.
One who sends the beloved to me
Is like someone rewarded the Hajj-e Akbar]

The following is composed in a prosodic meter called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaman-e Makfouf-e Abtar* (*Mafo 'ulo, Mafāi 'lo, Mafāi 'lon Fa ')*:

Abr Az Del-e Daryā-ye Kurasan Khizad
Dor Az Lab-o Dandān-e Javanān Rizad
Yazdan Begire Morgh-e Sahar Faryade
Yār az Baghal-e Jure¹⁰ Be Nālān Khizad

[The cloud is ascending from Daryāye Khorāsān.
The pearl is dripping from the youth's lips and teeth.
I wish God would silence the rooster's sing and sound
It wakes the beloved up from the lover's arms by yelling]
(Sho'ur, 1974: 98)

Man Bolbol-o Shedāye To Tā Key Bāsham
Dar Mehnat-o Sodāye to Tā Key Bāsham

¹⁰ The beloved or lover

Pisham Nayāi Ke Malāmat-e Khalqāni
Az Dur Tamāsha-ye To Tā Key Bāsham

[I'm like a bulbul who is madly in love with you.
How long shall I suffer and obsess about you?
You wouldn't come to me because others scolded you.
How long should I stare at you from afar?]
(Nilab Rahimi, 1986: 87)

The following is a folk couplet composed in a prosodic meter called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Akhrab-e Maqbus-e Majbub/ Ahtam (Mafo 'ulo, Mafāe 'lon, Fa 'al/ Fa 'ul)*

Dar Kuh-e Boland Setize Kardan Che Alāj
Āsheq Shodim Ze Dur Didan Che Alāj
Āsheq Shodim Ze Dur Didan Sabr As
Sabrash Nakoni Be Gheyr-e Mordan Che Alāj

[What's the point of battling over a high mountain?
What's the point of falling in love from afar?
Because of my patience, I see the love from afar.
The only choice if I am not patient is to die]
(Shou'r, 1974: 76)

The following folk couplet is composed in a prosodic meter called *Bahr-e Hazaj-e Mosaman-e Akhrab-e Maqbus-e Abtar (Mafo 'ulo, Mafāe 'lon, Mafāi 'lon, Fa ')*:

Tā Az To Jodā Shodam Nadāram Hāli
Ān Kist Ke Āvarad Be Man Ahvāli
Ahvāl-e Torā Kabutarān Miārand
Ku Kaftar-e Maleqi-ye Zibā Bāli

[I'm not in a good mood since I broke up with you.
Who is the volunteer who delivers your news to me?
I get your news from the pigeon.
Where is the pigeon post with its gorgeous wings?]
(Nilab Rahimi, 1986: 25)

5- Syllabic Meters

Short Folk Couplets (*Midah Do-bayti*) in Afghan Persian are popular among ordinary people. These poems are composed in syllabic meters. This sort of folk couplet relates to the same couplets that Tabari's History narrated from Balkh children and are among the early works of Dari Persian poems:

Az Khotalān Āmaziya
Baru Tabāh Āmaziya

Āvāre Bāz Āmaziya
Khoshk-o Nazār Āmaziya

[He's just arrived from Khotalān.
He's coming upset.
The homeless man is returning.
The lover is returning.]

Short couplets have been popular among people from the beginning of the Dari Persian language in their original form and with the same syllabic rhythms. Short couplets are often four half-verses with seven syllables, like in Balkh's folk song (according to the above narration). These couplets are more frequent in northern Afghanistan and among children and adults. Children recite these songs during games, and adults chant them together with music (Sho'ur, 1974: 389-392).

The following is an example of such couplets composed for children:

Raftam Be Bāghe Peste
Didam Shoghāl Neshasteh
Yak Sang Zadam Da Gushesh
Didam Gushesh Shekaste

[I walked to the pistachio farm
I saw jackal was sitting there
I smacked its ear with a rock
I saw its ear got hurt]
(Shou'r, 1974: 391)

Folk couplets, according to some scholars, are the continuance of the same syllabic poetry that have developed into prosody through time (Zulfaqari, 2016: 70). Although folk couplets are an advanced version of these syllabic poems, they remain popular in Afghanistan and are frequent among children and adults in their original form. The employment of rhyme in contemporary couplets is the only alteration to this traditional pattern.

Seven Syllabic Folk Couplets

Az Bālā Aw Miyāye
Buy-e Palaw Miāye
Khāna Re Jāru Koni
Ārus-e Naw Miāye

[Rain is falling from the sky.
The aroma of a meal from above
Now is the time to sweep the home.
The new bride is on her way]
(Shou'r, 1974: 390)

Āmadim Az Rāye Shina
Āzān Dāda Pishina

In Kortay-e Siyāyet
Be Jānakat Mishina

[We came through the Shina route.
The prayer hour has already commenced.
This black outfit you're wearing
Flatters your lovely figure]
(Shahrani, 2016: 19)

Az Bālā Bārān Āmad
Yāram Be Dālān Āmad
Khāstam Yak Māch Begiram
Cheshmash De Geryān Āmad

[The rain rained from the sky.
My beloved walked to the hallway.
I begged her to give me a kiss
She broke into tears quickly]
(Sho'ur, 1974: 391)

Chashm-e Siyāye Zāghat
Mādar Nabine Dāghat
Mādar Bine Nabine
Āshoq Nabine Dāghat
[You got crown-like black eyes.
I hope your mom never weeps for you.
Whether she weeps or not
The lover is the one who should see your mourning.]
(Shahrani, 2016: 26)

Sometimes the short folk couplets use six syllabic meters. For instance:

Az Dur Didam Torā
Por Nur Didam Torā
Ātash-e Jānam Shodi
Ākhar Migirm Torā

[I saw you from afar
Glowing such a glowing
You've lit a fire in my heart
And one day I'll marry you.]
(Sho'ur, 1974: 395)

Some folk couplets can be recited as ten-syllabic or twelve-syllabic:

Āmad Joft-e Kabutarāy-e Khayl Jodā
Pārsāl Qati¹¹ Budim Emsāl Jodā
Pārsāl Qati Budim-o Yakjā Gashtim
Emsāl Jodā Shodim-o Porghamdel Mā

[The pigeon duo split up.
We were together last year but split up this year.
We were together last year and only together.
We've been split up and sad this year.]
(Sho'ur, 1974: 75)

Māh Ra Bebin Dar Āsemān Khāne Kade
Kāfar Zanake Zolf-e Khoda Shāne Kade
Shāne Kade Yagān Yagān Bāna Kade
Sorkhi Sha Bi¹² Āshnāsha Diwāna Kade

[Look at how the moon has nested in the sky
This unbeliever's gorgeous idol has combed her hair.
She has combed and trimmed her locks.
Just look at her crimson cheeks, which derive us crazy]
[Shahrani, 2016: 278]

6- Conclusion

Afghan folk couplets typically include two sorts of meters: prosodic meters (couplet meters and quatrain meters) and syllabic meters. Most of them are composed in couplet meters, while others are composed in *Akhrab* quatrain meters. Sangardis and Falaks are generally recited based on quatrain meters. However, quatrain meters are not limited to these two, and couplets with the same meter could be found in poetry from different locations. The second form of the couplet is one with syllabic prosody. These are the same syllabic couplets as in "Balkh kids' folk song," that is, the couplets that have survived among our people from the beginning to the present in the same form as the first and are known as short couplets (Midah Do-bayti). Because the couplet composers are common people unfamiliar with the norms of prosody, several of these brief couplets have prosody flaws. Of course, these prosodic flaws can be remedied with a little modification. Lengthening short vowels (e and o) in Afghan Persian turns the coordinating conjunction and Ezafe marker to close-mid back rounded vowel and close-mid front unrounded vowel, and specific prosody inadequacies (known as the poetic license in other dialects of the Persian language) can be eliminated in this way.

¹¹ Together

¹² Look, See

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