

Persian poetry

Persian (also known as Farsi) is a Western Iranian language from the Indo-European language family. It is an official language in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Poetry forms a significant part of the rich Persian literature. In this problem you will encounter verses from famous poets Ferdowsi (circa 940—1020), Baba Tahir (11th century), Nezami (circa 1140—1210), Saadi (circa 1210—1290) and from the singer Googoosh (born 1950). Your task will be to understand the metres used in their works.

The first part of the problem is devoted to a metre called *motaqāreb*. Below are two lines written in *motaqāreb*. First comes from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, the second one from Saadi's *Golestān*.

be nāmē Xodāvande jān ō xerad
našāyad ke nāmat nahand ādamī

These two lines would be divided into syllables as follows:

be/nā/mē/Xo/dā/van/de/jā/nō/xe/rad
na/šā/yad/ke/nā/mat/na/han/dā/da/mī

Task 1: The following six lines come from Saadi's works, *Golestān* (first four lines) and *Bustan* (the remaining two lines). All six lines are written in *motaqāreb*. Complete the lines by putting the words in parentheses in the correct order. There is only one 'rhythmically correct' rearrangement possible for five of the lines. For the remaining line there are two possible 'rhythmically correct' rearrangements; either of these two rearrangements will be considered correct.

_____ *peykarand* (a'zāye, yek, banī'Ādam)

ke _____ *gowharand* (dar, yek, ze, 'āfarīnesh)

čo _____ *rūzgār* (āvarad, be, dard, 'ozvī)

degar _____ *qarār* (namānad, 'ozvhārā)

be _____ *āfarīd* (jān, ke, nāmē, Xodāyī)

soxan _____ *āfarīd* (andar, goftan, zabān)

Task 2: This task concerns a metre called *hazaj*. The following four lines were originally written in it, but in one of them a word was changed which caused a disruption of the metre. Find out the line which contains a changed word causing a disruption to the rhythm.

- A. *Nezāmīrā rahē tahqīq benmāy*
- B. *begū 'ey bīvafā, 'ey bīmorovvat*
- C. *gerībānam ze farsang čāk čākū*
- D. *komak kon bestarī 'az gol besāzīm*

Line A. was written by Nezami, lines B. and C. are due to Baba Tahir and line D. is by Googoosh. The remaining tasks concern a third meter which was used, for example, in Nezami's story of *Leyli and Majnun*.

bīnāme to nāme key konam bāz

Task 3: The following three lines come from Saadi's various works, and are written in the same metre as the Nezami's line above. Rearrange the words in correct order. There is only one possible 'rhythmically correct' rearrangement.

(bar, barg, deraxtān, pīrāhane)

(damī, daryāb, ke, mītavānī)

(čun, jāmeje, nīkbaxtān, 'īde)

Task 4: Recall Nezami's line *bīnāme to nāme key konam bāz*. Which of its words could be changed to *bar* without changing the metre?

Task 5: Which of the words in *bīnāme to nāme key konam bāz* could be changed to *barg* without changing the metre?

Note: Metre is the basic rhythmic structure of a verse. *w, y* and *'* are consonants. Vowels with lines above them are long.