

5 **The States of the Predicate** **(*aḥwāl-i musnad*)**

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5.1 Types of Predicates (*musnad*)

The chapter on the states of the predicate (*aḥwāl-i musnad*) considers the values of the *musnad* ‘predicate’ in an informative utterance. It also considers how various operations affect the predicate and how particular optional elements (*quyūd*) can restrict its scope. As shown in §§ 2.3 and 3.1, the term *musnad* in the science of meanings applies indifferently to nominal and verbal, positive and negative predicates. Although in Persian grammar *musnad* as a term generally refers to the nominal part of a nominal predicate, the science of meanings uses the term in a broader way to encompass both nominal and verbal predicates (Šamīsā 1994, 93). Accordingly, this unit deals with nouns (insofar as they form nominal predicates) and with verbs. The elements associated with the verb will be considered more closely in chapter 6.

The science of meanings considers and classifies predicates from different perspectives. On the one hand, it accepts the syntactic distinction between *ism* ‘nominal (predicate)’ and *fiʿl* ‘verbal (predicate)’. On the other hand, a distinction is made between the possible values of the predicate. The predicate expresses either a state, the beginning of an action or the continuation of an action. In *ma'ānī* terms, the

predicate is considered to mark either *ṭubūt* ‘stability’, *tağaddud* ‘renewal, beginning of a new action’ or *istimrār* ‘continuation, duration, repetition (of a state or an activity)’. The first one, *ṭubūt*, is the typical function of nominal predicates: the predicate merely records an inherent state or a condition of the predicand. The predicate *niwīsanda ast* ‘is a writer’ in *Bahrām niwīsanda ast* ‘Bahrām is a writer’ is an example. In *Bahrām niwišt* ‘Bahrām wrote’, on the other hand, the function of the predicate *niwišt* ‘wrote’ is to indicate that the action began at a certain point in time. Since the action described by the predicate has replaced a previous one, and the action is new compared to the previous one, it is called *tağaddud*. Meanwhile, *istimrār* concerns those cases where the verbal predicate records the continuation of the action expressed, as in *Bahrām miḥandīd* ‘Bahrām was laughing, Bahrām used to laugh, Bahrām habitually laughed’. The difference between the three values of the predicates is assumed in the manuals without explicit reference to the role of grammar: morphological features, verb modes and tense are not considered in the description of the values of the predicates.

5.2 Ellipsis, Definiteness and Preposing

In chapter 4, we introduced several linguistic operations in relation to the predicand. Many of them may also affect the predicate. In this chapter, attention is given to whether or not a predicate occurs, to the definiteness of the reference, and to the position relative to the predicand. The principal operations considered are, thus, *ḍikr-i musnad* ‘occurrence of the predicate’, *ḥaḍf-i musnad* ‘ellipsis of the predicate’ (also called *tark-i musnad* ‘omission of the predicate’), *ta’rif-i musnad* ‘definite reference in (the nominal part of) the predicate’, *tankīr-i musnad* ‘indefinite reference in (the nominal part of) the predicate’, *taqdīm-i musnad* ‘preposing the predicate’ and *ta’ḥīr-i musnad* ‘postposing the predicate’. These operations are often granted separate sections in the manuals, though they generally have less space than do the operations on the predicand.

As for the occurrence (*ḍikr*) and ellipsis (*ḥaḍf* or *tark*) of the predicate, the former is considered the standard. The need for intelligibility generally involves mentioning the predicate. Ellipsis of the predicate is allowed when there is a frame of lexical or non-lexical references that help the addressee to recover the omitted element. In these cases, ellipsis of the predicate is allowed or, in some cases, even preferred. Below I will list situations in which the ellipsis of the predicate is preferred.

The predicate is omitted to avoid saying banalities (*iḥtirāz az ‘abaṭ* ‘avoid being pointless’) or, to put it in more modern terms, to not lack informativeness. This happens especially when the predicate is identical to a previous one. In this case, the lexical context (*qarīna-yi lafẓī*)

is specific enough to suggest what the predicate is. Ellipsis is also suitable in cases that do not allow expressing the predicate at length. The following line is often quoted as illustrating both:

*dīda-yi ahl-i ṭama' ba ni'mat-i dunyā
pur našawad hamčunānki čāh zi šabnam¹*

The eye of the greedy, with the wealth of the world,
Is not filled. Likewise the well with the dew of the night.

An intended predicate *pur našawad* 'is not filled' is omitted after the predicand *čāh* 'the well'. There are two reasons for this ellipsis. First, an identical predicate had previously occurred in the first part of the line in connection to the predicand *dīda-yi ahl-i ṭama'* 'the eye of the greedy'. Since it is possible to retrieve the predicate earlier in the discourse there is no need to repeat it. Second, the poetic meter was completed with the word *šabnam* 'dew of the night', and no space was left to insert more words. This latter case is referred to as *ḡayq-i maqām* 'situational narrowness', that is, a lack of space.

Ellipsis of the predicate is possible even in cases in which the predicate changes in person or number. If two successive predicates are two different inflected forms of the same verb, the second one can be omitted. For example, the following line shows two different instances of a null copula after the copula *-st* 'is':

*'išq durrđāna-st u man ḡawwāš u daryā maykada
sar furū kardam dar ānḡā tā kuḡā sar bar kunam²*

Love is the pearl-grain, I [am] the diver, and the sea [is] the tavern.
I have plunged in there. Let us see where I bob up.

In addition, one can omit the predicate in the answer to a question. If the question contains the predicate, the answer can omit it. For example, in the second half-line below, the predicate *mīrawad* '(he) will be going' has been deleted because it had already appeared in the question before:

*guftam ki ḡwāḡa kay ba sar-i ḡiḡla mīrawad
guft ān zamān ki muštariy u mah qirān kunand³*

¹ Quoted in Āq-Iwlī n.d., 84, Riḡānižād 1988, 184, and Šamīsā 1994, 93. Sa'dī 1937b, 172.

² Quoted in Kazzāzi 1991, 150. Ḥāfiž 1983, 692-3, *ḡazal* 338, v. 5. Adapted from Avery 2007, 417.

³ Quoted in Āq-Iwlī n.d., 84. Ḥāfiž 1983, 402, *ḡazal* 193, v. 8. Avery 2007, 253.

I asked: “When will the master be going to the bridal chamber?”
He answered: “The time when Jupiter and the moon are in conjunction.”

Up to this point, cases have been listed where ellipsis is preferred to occurrence. The opposite can also happen. Sometimes the conditions for the ellipsis are met, but the speaker prefers to express the predicate. Such redundancies are allowed only in case the choice of mentioning the predicate allows for further refinement. In an example, Kazzāzī (1991, 155) suggests how a superfluous predicate can subtly underline the obtuseness of the listener (*ḡabāwat-i sāmi‘* or *kundfahmī-yi šinawanda*). He considers the following question-and-answer exchange: [Speaker-A] *pidar-i tu kī-st?* ‘Who is your father?’ | [Speaker-B] *Siyāwaš pidar-i man ast* ‘Siyāwaš is my father’. In this case it would have been sufficient to answer the question by saying ‘Siyāwaš’, as the ellipsis of the predicate is acceptable in the case of a question and an answer. However, the speaker’s preference is for a full statement: ‘Siyāwaš is my father’. The speaker, by this choice, probably assumes that the addressee is not very clever, or he wants to make him look like a fool. A redundant repetition, thus, can cast some doubts on the cleverness of the addressee.

Sections on definite and indefinite predicate (*ta’rīf-i musnad* and *tankīr-i musnad*) only discuss nominal predicates. In fact, only the nominal part of the predicate can be definite or indefinite. A definite predicate generally identifies (*ta’yīn*) a specific entity. An indefinite predicate, on the other hand, occurs where the conditions for its definition are lacking. Indefinite reference may also express respect (*tafḥīm*) or contempt (*taḥqīr*) as a secondary meaning as we have already mentioned with regard to the predicand (see § 4.4).

Word order is discussed in relation to the predicate too. The predicate may come after the predicand (*ta’ḥīr-i musnad*), which is the expected standard word order in Persian, or before the predicand (*taqdīm-i musnad*). And since these are, from the reverse side, the same as ‘preposing the predicand’ (*taqdīm-i musnad ilayh*) and ‘postposing the predicand’ (*ta’ḥīr-i musnad ilayh*), the reader can refer to what was discussed earlier in § 4.10. However, preposing the predicate is sometimes considered a separate topic. Under this heading, some manuals introduce Persian syntactic structures in which the nominal predicate is placed before the nominal predicand by inversion. Examples of this kind are common in forms such as:

dānā-st kas-ī ki rūy az īn ġādū
*dar parda-yi dīn-i ḥaq bipūšānad*⁴

Wise is he who shelters himself from this sorcery
 Covering his face with the veil of God's religion.

*ḥuğastarūz kas-ī k-az dar-aš tu bāz ā'ī*⁵

Fortunate is he whose door you enter.

*bīčāra ān kas-ī ki giriftār-i 'aql šud*⁶

Hopeless is he who became a prisoner of reason.

Such use violates the norm of putting the thing about which the judgement is made first. Iranian scholars have different ideas on how to interpret the expressions above. Kazzāzī (1991, 171-2) considers it a form of preposing the predicate to the predicand with a value of delimitation (*ḥaṣr*) of the judgement expressed. The aim would therefore be to specify for whom the state expressed by the predicates *dānā* 'wise', *ḥuğastarūz* 'fortunate', and *bīčāra* 'hopeless, remediless' is valid and for whom it is not. Thus, the function of such a construction approximates that of a restriction marker ('Wise is *only* who...'). On the contrary, Šamīsā's idea is that these utterances add emphasis (*ta'kīd*) in expressing good news (*bašārat*) or repulse (*inziğār*) (1994, 94). Alternative translations could then be 'indeed wise is he who...' and 'indeed fortunate is he who...'. Remarkably enough, a typically Persian syntactic feature finds specialists at odds when it is time to integrate it into the science of meanings framework.

5.3 Predicate Constraints (*taqyīd-i musnad*)

Among the *aḥwāl* 'states' specific to the predicate, one is called *taqyīd* 'constraining, adding a constraint'. It consists of adding adjuncts, subordinates, and similar elements to narrow the scope of the predicate. In other words, the constraints (*qayd*, plural *quyūd*) are the limits within which the predicate of the main clause operates. More specifically, constraints encompass varied optional elements whose function is to limit the *when*, *where*, *why*, *with whom*, *how* and *under*

⁴ Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 172. Nāṣir-i Ḥusraw 1928, 126, v. 2.

⁵ Quoted in Šamīsā 1994, 94. Sa'dī 1939, 48, *ğazal* 84ṭ, [v. 5].

⁶ Quoted in Šamīsā 1994, 94. Adīb al-Mamālik 1933, 123, *qiṭ'a*.

what condition of the predicate.⁷ Thus, the term *qayd* in the science of meanings assumes a broader meaning than the narrower sense of ‘adverb’ that the term generally assumes in a Persian grammar textbook (see, for example, Ḥānlārī 1964, 69).

The greater the number of constraints expressed, the more the scope of the predicate shrinks. Therefore, as Raḡā’ī (1961, 107) and Zāhidī (1967, 109) observe, the speaker leaves constraints out (*tark-i taqyīd*) under certain conditions. Examples include situations where the speaker ignores the existence of a constraint, does not need to express it to reach his communicative goal, or wishes to conceal such details from others. Finally, a *qayd* may be dropped for fear of missing an opportunity by dwelling on details.

The protasis of the conditional statement (*ṣarṭ*) is the most important, and sometimes the only, *qayd* to be discussed in the manuals. Here some problems arise in adapting the Arabic model to Persian. In their analysis of the protasis, Arabic scholars considered how to distinguish between real and unreal conditionals. They saw the difference as a matter of the choice of the if-word from among *in*, *iḡā* and *law*. Each of the three specialises in a different context: *iḡā* introduces a condition that is very likely to be fulfilled (*kaṭīr al-wuqū’*); *in* marks a condition that can only happen under certain circumstances (*muḥtamal al-wuqū’*); and *law* refers to an impossible condition in the past (*mumtani’ al-wuqū’*). It was primarily the conjunction introducing the protasis that expressed the degree of plausibility of the hypothesis in Arabic.⁸ In Persian, there is only one if-word (*agar* ‘if’, also given in the contracted forms *gar* or *ar*) which introduces conditionals of various kinds. As a result, Persian scholars could not fully benefit from the Arabic model in this case.

In the Persian science of meanings, a different approach, logical rather than lexical, guides the distinctions among real, possible, and impossible conditions. The question to be assessed is: what degree of possibility does the speaker see for the fulfilment of the condition expressed by the protasis? One speaks of *kaṭīr al-wuqū’* when the condition will undoubtedly occur, of *muḥtamal al-wuqū’* when there is a fifty per cent chance, and of *mumtani’ al-wuqū’* when there is no possibility of realisation. The Persian science of meanings evaluates conditional statements by whether the speaker and the addressee believe the condition to be true or not. Below are three Persian examples that differ in the degree of plausibility. The first line illustrates a real condition, the second a condition possible to fulfil and the third an unreal condition:

⁷ On constraints in the Arabic science of meanings and earlier Arabic linguistic tradition, see Simon 1993, 155-7.

⁸ On conditionals in the Arabic science of meanings, see al-Taftāzānī 1911, 152-73.

*dar īn bāzār agar sūd-ī-st bā darwīš-i ḥursand ast
ḥudāy-ā mun'im-am gardān ba darwīšīyy u ḥursandī⁹*

If in this market place there is any profit, it is to the contented dervish.

O God make me the beneficiary of dervishism and blessed contentment!

*gar bibīnam ḥam-i abrūy-i ču miḥrāb-aš bāz
saḡda-yi šukr kunam w-az pay-i šukrāna rawam¹⁰*

If again I see the curve of his prayer-niche-like eyebrow,
I will kneel in gratitude and proceed in acknowledgement of favour.

*gar musalmānī az īn ast ki Ḥāfiẓ dārad
wāy agar az pas-i imrūz buwad fardā-yī¹¹*

If this is to be a Muslim, that Hāfiẓ professes,
Alas if on the heel of today there is any tomorrow!

It should be noted that manuals make no attempt to correlate the logical criterion to morphological features such as verbal mode or tense in connection to the various types of Persian conditionals. Morphology proper is outside the scope of the science of meanings and the same morphological pattern may be evaluated differently in different contexts. In addition to the primary conditional value, also secondary meanings are sometimes discussed. An if-clause could then appear to express blame or to feign ignorance. It may also place different persons or things on the same level as equivalents, as in:

*agar pādšāh ast wa-gar pīnadūz
čū ḥuftand gardad šab-i har du rūz¹²*

Whether (*agar* 'if') one is a king or another a cobbler,
When they have fallen asleep, the night of both becomes day.

The conditional section shows how Arabic and Persian manuals differ in selected topics. In Arabic, the section distinguishes between the uses of different conditional conjunctions and mainly clarifies the contexts in which they occur. Also, it extensively deals with cases

9 Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 157. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 878, *ḡazal* 431, v. 7. Avery 2007, 520.

10 Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 157. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 720, *ḡazal* 352, v. 6. Avery 2007, 432.

11 Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 157. Ḥāfiẓ 1983, 978-9, *ḡazal* 481, v. 10. Avery 2007, 583.

12 Quoted in Kazzāzī 1991, 161. Sa'dī 1937a, 173.

where one of the three if-words appears out of the proper context. Indeed, one sometimes occurs in a context where the other would generally be more appropriate.¹³ Such reflections could not find parallels in Persian. Perhaps because of this seeming impossibility of finding Persian records like the Arabic, some manuals (Humāyī 1991; Šamīsā 1994; Āq-Iwlī n.d.) avoid entirely dealing with the protasis in Persian.

13 See al-Taftāzānī 1911, 152-73; Jenssen 1998, 94-5.