

## APPENDIX

### THE PERSIAN AND URDU SCRIPT

The Arabic script, like the Latin script, provides a system of writing for several languages of the world. It is used in Afghanistan, East Africa, India, Malaya and Pakistan. The two most widely spoken languages, Persian and Urdu, are written in the Arabic script. But they employ the *Nasta'liq* style of writing, which was developed in the late fifteenth century by the Persians. While the *Naskh* is an easy-to-write cursive style with geometric form, without any structural complexities, the perfectly rounded curves of the *Nasta'liq* display marked contrast to the *Naskh* in their line-width, which changes from the maximum to the thinnest possible line that can be drawn by the same pen. The clarity of the style combined with delicately formed curves give *Nasta'liq* a deceptively casual look which belies its highly sophisticated and strictly applied rules.

Persian is now printed by movable type which is based on *Naskh*, but it has not gained popularity among the Urdu-speaking people and most Urdu books, newspapers, and magazines are first handwritten by professional scribes in *Nasta'liq* and then lithographed.

#### PERSIAN VOWELS

Although Persian employs the same vowel signs as Arabic, the Persian vowel values are not the same as in Arabic. You might have noticed that the English vowel sounds represented by *o* and *e* are not used in transcribing Arabic vowels. Persian has approximate variations of both these English vowel sounds.

ف س ج ا

The image shows four calligraphic letters in the Nastaliq script: 'ف' (F), 'س' (S), 'ج' (J), and 'ا' (A). Each letter is accompanied by numbered arrows (1-6) and dashed lines indicating the correct stroke order and direction for writing.

ک م ن و ه ل گ ق

The image shows eight calligraphic letters in the Nastaliq script: 'ک' (K), 'م' (M), 'ن' (N), 'و' (W), 'ه' (H), 'ل' (L), 'گ' (G), and 'ق' (Q). Each letter is accompanied by numbered arrows (1-6) and dashed lines indicating the correct stroke order and direction for writing.

The alphabet written in *Nastaliq*

## INTRODUCTION TO QUR'ANIC SCRIPT

*Fathah*. It approximates to a sound which is intermediate between the vowels in English words 'bed' and 'bad', e.g.,  $\text{بَد}$  *bad*, bad.

*Dammah*. It is more rounded than the u-sound in the English word 'book', e.g.,  $\text{بُردَن}$  *bordan*, to carry.

*Kasrah*. It approximates to the vowel in the English word 'bed', e.g.,  $\text{بِه}$  *beh*, better.

### PERSIAN CONSONANTS

The following four characters have been introduced to Arabic script to represent Persian sounds:

$\text{پ}$  (pe). It is pronounced like English p. It is written like Arabic  $\text{ب}$ , but it has three dots below it while  $\text{ب}$  has only one dot.

$\text{چ}$  (*chim* in Persian and *che* in Urdu). It is pronounced like English ch in 'church'. It is written like Arabic  $\text{ج}$ , but it has three dots while  $\text{ج}$  has only one dot.

$\text{ژ}$  (*zhe*). It is pronounced like English s in 'measure' or j in the French word 'jour'. It is written like Arabic  $\text{ز}$ , but it has three dots above it while  $\text{ز}$  has no dot.

$\text{گ}$  (gāf). It is pronounced like English g in 'good'. It is written like Arabic  $\text{ك}$ , but it has an extra stroke. It is never written as  $\text{س}$ ; both the strokes should be together.

### URDU VOWELS

The number and quality of Urdu vowels is different from Arabic and Persian, but the same signs are employed with different results. The general scheme of these vowels is given below:

1.  $\text{ا}$  *Fathah*. A lower mid-central unrounded vowel, similar to English u in *but* or a in *above*.
2.  $\text{آ}$ . It is a 'pure vowel' similar to Spanish e in *me*, German ee in *see* or French e in *été* (longer than the French vowel). It is not a diphthong though it is expressed

by the combination of  $\text{ع}$  and *fathah*. It is similar to *a* in the English word *fate* or the English word *say*, but without the y-like diphthongal offglide of the English word. As a final vowel the shape of  $\text{ع}$  is changed, it is then written as  $\text{اے}$ , e.g.,  $\text{چاے}$  *chā-ay*, tea.

3.  $\text{و}$ . A mid-back rounded vowel. It is also a 'pure vowel' and not a diphthong. It is similar to English *o* in the word *go* but without the "w-like" diphthongal offglide. It is similar to Spanish *o* in *loco*.

4.  $\text{دین}$  *Kasrah*. A lower high-front unrounded vowel like *i* in *pin*, *sit*, e.g.,  $\text{دین}$  *din*, day.

5.  $\text{تو}$  *Dammaḥ*. A lower high-back rounded vowel similar to *u* in *put* or *oo* on *book*, e.g.,  $\text{تو}$  *tum*, you.

The long vowels of Arabic, ā  $\text{آ}$ , ū  $\text{و}$  and ī  $\text{ی}$  are common to both Persian and Urdu.

#### URDU CONSONANTS

Urdu script is a further modification of Persian script. It has added thirteen more characters to express sounds peculiar to it. There are three retroflex and ten aspirated sounds in Urdu. For the retroflex sounds Urdu has adapted the Arabic script by putting a small  $\text{ط}$  *t* over an Arabic character and the aspirated sounds are expressed by adding a  $\text{ه}$  *h* to an Arabic character.

#### Retroflex Sounds

1.  $\text{ٹ}$  (*Tay*). It is written like Arabic  $\text{ب}$  but it has a small  $\text{ط}$  above it instead of a dot below. It is similar to English *t* but is unaspirated. It is produced by the edge of the tongue behind the teeth ridge.

2.  $\text{ڈ}$  (*Dal*). It is written like Arabic  $\text{د}$  but it has a small  $\text{ط}$  above it. It is similar to English *d* in *doctor*, but it is unaspirated. It is produced by the tip of the tongue touching the upper teeth.

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جو علی راعی  
میدان جانان دامن آستان چمن  
وان چمن غار چمن گون چمن  
وان چمن گل چمن چمن  
وان چمن چمن چمن چمن  
فقیہ شمس الدین محمد

A Persian quatrain written in *Nasta'liq* by the Indian calligrapher Muḥammad Shamsuddin in 1312/1894. Note the short verticals and deep rounded letters. While parts of some letters appear to have been written with a much finer pen than others, the calligrapher uses the finer portion of the same nib, which involves expert manipulation. (Author's collection)

أَحَدُهُمَا فَتُذَكَّرُ أَحَدُهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا  
 وَلَا تَنْهَوْنَهُنَّ أَنْ تَكْتُبْنَ لَهُنَّ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
 وَأَقْوَمُ لِشَهَادَةٍ وَأَذَنُ الْأَنْتِ تَأْتُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا  
 بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَ  
 كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ لَكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ  
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَوَهْنٌ  
 مَقْبُوضَةٌ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيُسْقِ  
 اللَّهُ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ أُمٌّ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّ وَمَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
 أَوْ تُخْفَوْنَ يُحَاسِبُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ  
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ  
 وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا تَفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ  
 مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٦٠﴾ لَا  
 يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا  
 لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا أَوْرَاقَنَا كَمَا

Qur'an leaf calligraphed by Mirza Noor Ahmad (d. 1384/1964). Note the influence of *Nasta'liq* on the perfectly rounded curves and the fine lines. Mirza Noor Ahmad was an expert in the *Nasta'liq* style and practised the *Naskh* to produce a copy of the Qur'an which should combine the qualities of both the styles. (Noor Ahmad Edition, Karachi)

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3.  (Ray). It is written like Arabic ر with a small *b* over it. No Semitic or Indo-European sound is similar to this sound. It is produced by the edge of the tongue far behind the teeth ridge.

### *Aspirated Sounds*

In Urdu there are five aspirated voiceless stops, *ph*, *th*, *Th*, *chh*, *kh*, and five aspirated voiced stops, *bh*, *dh*, *Dh*, *jh*, and *gh*. It is absolutely necessary to differentiate between aspirated and unaspirated sounds, since they are in contrast.

The aspirated sound is expressed by adding *h* to the unaspirated consonant.

#### *Aspirated Voiceless Stops*

1.  (pha)


2.  (tha)


3.  (Tha)


4.  (chha)

5.  (kha)

#### *Aspirated Voiced Stops*



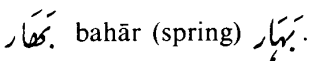

1.  (bha)

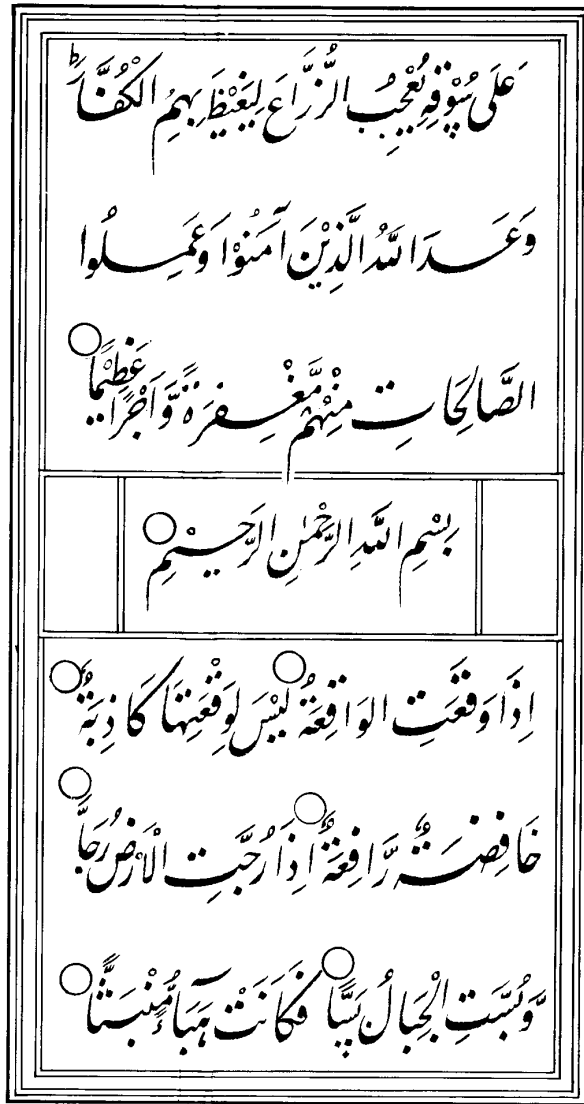
2.  (dha)

3.  (Dha)

4.  (jha)

5.  (gha)

In the Urdu script alone *h* is added to express an aspirated consonant. When it is used as a consonant by itself it is written as . This distinction between the two shapes of *hā*, *h* and  is made only in Urdu. Observe the following two words : bhār (load) and  bahār (spring) .



The last verse of the 48th chapter (Victory) and the first six verses of the 56th chapter (The Event) of the Qur'an in *Nasta'liq* perfectly dispersed on the page, from a collection of five *surahs* of the Qur'an copied in India (probably 17th century). The border is in gold and the verses are divided by gold roses, which do not appear in the above reproduction. (Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, 1151, H.L. 67)

الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم مالك يوم الدين

إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين اهتدنا الصراط المستقيم

صراط الذي نأمنك عليه من غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

The opening chapter of the Qur'an, *Al-Fāṭiha*, calligraphed by Madrasī.  
(Author's collection).