

The concept of melodic progression (*Seyir*) in Persian classical music

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Abstract

Melodic progression is one of the most essential elements of the “Mode” definition in Iranian and Arabic-Turkish music. There is a distinctive manifestation of this concept in Persian classical music due to the distinctive features of *Dastgâh*. This article aims to trace some continuities in the concept of melodic progression, reaching from the earliest medieval treatises, through the Safavid period, and into the modern era, when the *Dastgâh* became dominant. In this musical system the concept of melodic progression has recently been termed *Seyir-e Naghmegi*, where *Seyir* is used as an acronym for that concept. The purpose of this study is to explore the role and position of *Seyir* within the *Dastgâhi* system. So this study’s problems are: Due to the multi-layered structure of the *Dastgâh*, how many levels is the concept of *Seyir* defined? How are the different levels of the *Seyir* concept related to each other? The recent reports on *Seyir* in the literature on the subject, from the micro to macro levels, have been discussed separately. Thus, the purpose of the study was to come to a conclusion by describing different repertoire narrations and deductive reasoning in order to draw a conclusion. Using a descriptive-analytic approach, the article collected written information as library studies and discussed it. Manuscripts and treatises are also studied using the historical method. According to this study, the *Seyir* concept appears at three levels, each of which is independent, coherent, and contiguous. According to the article, the following three levels have been identified: Micro level: *Gūsheh*, Middle level: *Âvâz*, Macro level: *Dastgâh*. This study demonstrates that *Seyir*, as an abstract concept in a modal structure, does not define “melody” in any exact sense, thus forcing the melody to conform to the exact expression of the mode. The concept of *Seyir* in a *Dastgâhi* system, as a framework that is closed in the dimensions of seven *Dastgâh-hâ* and five or with a grace of six *Âvâz-hâ*, offers the possibility of endogenizing new modes on previously used platforms within the system. While the use of different permutations of the tetrachords and pentachords gives “98 Circles” the concept of *Seyir* can create infinite modes. In short, the *Seyir* in its general and common sense in the Iranian and Arabic-Turkish field refers to a set of modal aesthetic criteria that provides the basis for transforming mode into a definite and tangible form. As *Seyir* progresses from abstraction (sound scale) to determination (melody), it incorporates concepts such as melodic figures. In this regard, *Seyir*’s ability to organize new modes on a mutual scale with existing modes is expanded.

Keywords

dastgâh, mode, Persian classical music, radif, seyir

Introduction

In the Arabic-Turkish musicology literature, *Seyir* has been described by Cantemir since the beginning of the eighteenth century; however, Cantemir refers to this concept as “*Hareket*” (Feldman, 1996, 257). In the third chapter of *Kitâb-i Ilmül Mûsikî ala Vech’l-Hurûfât* [The Book of the Science of Music According to the Alphabetic Notation], he describes each *Makâm* and the *Hükm* related to them (Cantemir, n.d. b, 45-65).

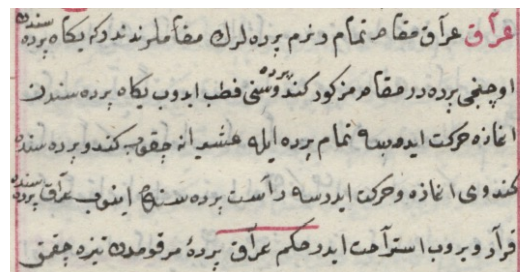


Figure 1. Cantemir’s use of the term *Hükm* in of *Kitâb-i Ilmül Mûsikî ala Vech’l-Hurûfât*. (Cantemir, n.d. a, 78v)

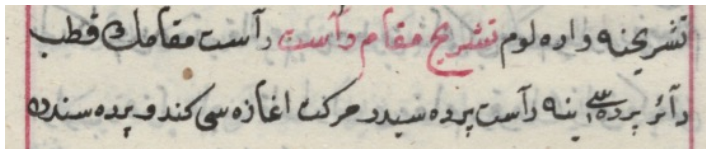


Figure 2. Cantemir's use of the term *Hareket* in of *Kitâb-i Ilmül Mûsîkî ala Vech'l-Hurûfâ*. (Cantemir, n.d. a, 79r)

The information he provided regarding this concept, however, was less specific than that found in mid-eighteenth century sources. Actually, he established new parameters of *Hükm* and amplified the meaning of this technical term that had been previously used by Turkish authors (Popescu-judetz, 2002, 109-110). Eventually, the designation *Hükm* was abandoned in favor of the modern expression *Seyir* (ibid, 110). Tanburi Küçük Artin describes the melodic configuration of modes in the first chapter of his treatise in a manner that is similar to the concept of *Hükm* (ibid, 28-57). Therefore, this concept is well known to musicologists and musicians of the Ottoman musical tradition (*Makâm*).

Considering the similar roots of the musical system in this field, the term *Seyir* or *Sayr*, which was commonly used by Ottoman Turkish musicians, was also used by Persian music theorists, although apparently to describe both melodic progression and elaboration (Pourjavady, 2019, 137). It should be noted, however, that based on the sources, it appears that until the late 18th century, melodic progressions were expressed by metric musical forms such as *Pishrow* and the *Kâr-o amal*, which were performed using *Osûls* (see ibid, 184-215). Upon the disappearance of these elements from Persian music by the late 18th century, the concept of melodic progression gradually came to be associated with the non-metrical core of *Dastgâh* performances (see Feldman, 1996, 285-288).

Feldman (1993, 3) notes that there seem to have been a few genres of unmetered, at least partially improvised music in the Islamic music world before the sixteenth century but that *Taksim* as a genre seems to have emerged in the early seventeenth-century Ottoman court, possibly derived from the aforementioned genres and/or from the

Tajweed form of Qur'anic recitation (Ederer, 2011, 41, see also Feldman, 1993, 17-23 and 30, and Feldman 1996, 276-277 and 495-496, and Signell 2008, 121-124).

This article aims to trace some continuities in the concept of melodic progression, reaching from the earliest medieval treatises, through the Safavid period, and into the modern era, when the *Dastgâh* became dominant. However, the main emphasis will be on analyzing this concept within the logic of the *Dastgâh*.

The term *Seyir* is used by Al-Marâghi (1966, 108), in *Maqâsed al-Alhân*, but it appears that he does not mean melodic progression and uses it only as a general term in the sense of melodization:

It should be known that the *Tarji'* (ترجیع) in the term of the 'ūd players and other string instruments that they *Seyir* on a single string ...¹

The melodic commands, such as those mentioned in the treatise *Taqsim al-Naghamât*, related to the Safavid period in "Expressing the *Parde-hâ-ye Isfahan* and Presenting Them,"² implicitly refer to a concept similar to that expressed by Cantemir:

Initially, they should proceed from the *Pardeh-ye Panjgâh* to *Pardeh-ye Nim-maqlûb* and return to the *Pardeh-ye Hosseini*. Thereafter, they will proceed to the *Pardeh-ye Panjgâh* and from there to the *Nim-Pardeh-ye Chahârgâh*, then to the center of the *Pardeh-ye Chahârgâh*, and finally to the *Pardeh-ye Segâh*. Afterward, they will return to the *Pardeh-ye Chahârgâh* and go to the

¹ بیاید دانست که ترجیع در اصطلاح نوازندگان عود و دیگر آلات نوات الاوتار آن است که بر وتری سیر نغمات کنند.
² بیان پردههای اصفهان و نمودن آن.

Pardeh-ye Segâh. Finally, they return to the *Pardeh-ye Chahârgâh* and from there to the *Pardeh-ye Segâh*. This is how to express *Isfahân*, so it is composed of four *Motlaq Pardeh-hâ* (s. *Pardeh*), two *Moqayyad Pardeh-hâ*, and eight tones; this is its perfection³ (Wright, 2019, 362).

The word *Seyir* is used elsewhere in the treatise directly:

[...] Following this *Jam'ol-Jam'* mentioned in these two pages, they should perform in the order in which it took place as if they start from *Mobarqa'* and then it *Sayirs*⁴ to the *Râst* from there, and from there to *Panjgâh*, and after that to *Neyriz*, and from there to *Isfahân*, and from there to *Neshâbûrk*, and because of this analogy, at the end when they perform as this, nothing will disturb⁵ (Wright, 2019, 421).

Also, in Al-Shirâzi's treatise named *Dorrat al-Tâj* (Al-Shirâzi, 2009, 145-147), the term *Heyat-e Enteqâl*⁶ (transmission form), which is also used for the term *Sho'beh* (شعبه) (ibid, 141 & 145), a similar concept of *Seyir* is understood:

In actuality, the *Sho'beh* is also a transmission form (*Heyat-e Enteqâl*) on the tones of *Pardeh* based on the principle of induction⁷ (145).

It should be noted that elsewhere, he considers the *Pardeh* to be synonymous with the *Jam'* (Al-Shirâzi, 2009, 142). By referring

³ می باید که ابتدا از پرده پنجگاه کنند و از آنجا به پرده نیممقلوب روند و از آنجا برگردند به پرده حسینی و از آنجا به پرده پنجگاه روند و از آنجا به نیمپرده چهارگاه روند و از آنجا به مرکز پرده چهارگاه روند و از آنجا به پرده سهگاه روند و از آنجا باز برگردند به پرده چهارگاه و از آنجا به پرده سهگاه روند و آنجا بگذارند. اینچنین است طریق نمودن اصفهان پس او مرکب است از چهار پرده مطلق و دو پرده مقید و هشت نغمه کمالش این است.

⁴ Read it as a verb and also refer to the Persian text in the next endnote.

⁵ [...] و بعد ازین جمع‌الجمعیت که درین دو صفحه نموده می‌آید می‌باید به ترتیبی که واقع شده است ادا کنند چنانکه اول از مبرقع بنیاد کنند و از آنجا به راست سیر کنند و از آنجا به پنجگاه و بعد از آن به نیریز روند و از آنجا به اصفهان سیر کنند و از آنجا به نشابورک و علی هذا القیاس الی آخر وقعی که چنین ادا کنند از علم نغمه چیزی پریشان و متصور نماند والله اعلم.

⁶ هیئت انتقال.
⁷ و حقیقت شعبه هم به حسب استقرار هیئت انتقال بود بر نغمات پرده بر وجهی مخصوص.

to the concept of the *Naghme-ye Mafrūzeh*⁸ and the movement of the *Laḥn* around it in different ways, he explains how to achieve different modal entities through the change in the *Heyat-e Enteqâl* (145 & 146). On the 11th topic of the final season (*Khâtemeh*), he discusses six types of melodic directions in general (149-151):

- *Hâbet* (Descending);
- *Sâ'ed* (Ascending);
- *Mostaqim* (Direct);
- *Râje'* (Returning);
- *Mottasel* (Connected);
- *Tâfer* (Separated).

In addition, he mentions that if a tone is repeated consecutively, it is called "*Eqâmeḥ*". The fourth type, "*Râje'*", consists of different types.

It is also mentioned by Nasimi in *Nasim-e Tarab*. Essentially, he introduces three directions: ascending, descending, and ascending-descending. As follows, he describes the direction of melodies in *Âvâzât* and *Sho'ab*:

- The direction of melody in the *Âvâzât* (s. *Âvâz*) is descending;
- The direction of melody in the three *Maqâms* as *Būsalik*, *Zangūleh*, and *Isfahân*, is ascending-descending, and in the rest of the *Maqâms*, is ascending;
- The direction of melody in the nine *Sho'ab* (s. *Sho'beh*) as *Nahoft*, *Bayâti*, *Sepehri*, *Negâr*, *Ashirân*, *Neyriz*, *Ikiât*, *Neshâburk*, and *Zâboli*, it is ascending-descending. In the rest of the *Sho'ab*, it is ascending⁹ (Pourjavady, 2006, 83).

⁸ نغمه مفروضه.
⁹ جهت ظهور نغمات در همه آوازات نزولی است؛ ۲. جهت ظهور نغمات در سه مقام بوسلیک، زنگوله و اصفهان صعودی - نزولی و در بقیه مقامات صعودی است؛ ۳. جهت ظهور نغمات در نه شعبه نهفت، بیاتی، سپهری، نگار، عشیران، نیریز، ایکیات، نشابورک و زابلی صعودی - نزولی و در بقیه شعب صعودی است.

Mahdiqoli Hedâyat, in the third part of *Majma' al-Advâr and the description of Dastgâh-hâ*, uses the term *Seyir* as follows: "the first section includes three-parts of *Naghme*, five-parts of *Zirkesh-e Salmak*, three-parts of *Salmak*, *Golriz* with two *Moqaddameh* (introduction), *Safâ*, *Chahârmezrab*, *Forûd*, *Abûatâ*, *Bozorg* with two introductions, *Khârâ*, *Qajar*, *Hazin*, *Molânâzi*. The *Seyir* of this section is on the fourth and seventh *Tabaqât* (s. *Tabaqeh*)"¹⁰ (Hedâyat, 1939, 92).

The conscious and clear presentation of the concept of *Seyir* in Persian music along with the attempt to formulate theoretical foundations date back to the recent era of *Dastgâhi* music (see Châlesh & As'adi, 2017 and Sanayei, 2022a), however, it was hidden in the method of chest-to-chest training and the years of musical development of the *Dastgâh*. This method relies on the use of memorable melodies that convey all the necessary information for understanding the concept of mode.

Seyir may be considered the most complex and abstract objective element in the concept of mode in the musical systems based on *Dastgâh*. This is due to the fact that the definition of mode is dependent upon this abstract element. As'adi defines the concept of mode as a formula consisting of three components: "sound scale + function of degrees or role of tones + melodic models or formulas" (As'adi, 2003, 47). According to Harold Powers (2003, 121-144), mode is a structure of the tune-scale spectrum. It is important to note that the meaning of the sound scale is not necessarily one that is within the range of the octave. It is similar to the *Jam'* concept used by Systematist school (*Maktab-e Montazamiyeh*), which in summary refers to more than two notes, while in Persian classical music, it is typically a tetrachord, a pentachord, or a combination of these.

¹⁰ «... قسمت اولی شامل آواز، سه نغمه، پنج قسم زیرکش سلمک، سه قسم سلمک، گلریز با دو مقدمه، صفا، چهارمضرب، فرود، ابوعطا، بزرگ با دو مقدمه، خارا، قجر، حزین، فصل ملانازی. این قسمت در طبقات دایره چهار سیر دارد و گاه وارد دایره هفت می‌شود.»

According to Mohsen Hadjâriân (2006), "Mode is the arrangement of the musical tones with a specific hierarchy" (5). Continuing the formula he presents for mode, As'adi examines the role of melodic models or melodic figures and melodic formulas in shaping the identity of the modal space (As'adi, 2003, 47). According to Powers, the appearance of a stereotypical motif at the beginning or at the end of a modal space is essential and effective for identifying the mode (Powers, 2003, 129 & 133). Even though the concepts of melody, melody-model, melodic figures, motif, and melodic path differ, all demonstrate the importance of melody or at least an element of its kind in the identification of a modal entity.

As a result of structural differences between Persian music and Arabic-Turkish musical traditions, it seems that the concept of *Seyir* in the musical system based on the logic of *Dastgâh* has a different manifestation, and of course, as well as *Dastgâh*, has several layers. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate the characteristics, role, and position of the concept of *Seyir* at different levels of the *Dastgâh* musical system.

Literature Review: The Concept of *Seyir*

It appears that Cantemir was the first to develop a language for describing melodic progressions within the scale of a *Makâm*. His basic approach was to divide the description into two sections: 1. *Teşrih*: In this section, the opening and closing points of the mode are presented, as well as the notes that are used within the specific sequence of its melodic progression; 2. *Hüküm*: The scale and progression of the mode after it has left its basic range can be found in this section (Feldman, 1996, 263). According to Feldman (ibid, 257), no Turkish source prior to Cantemir used either *Hareket* or *Seyir*, nor any other comparable word. Quoting Jean During, he also believes that the characteristics of *Seyir* were never

mentioned by Safi al-Din Urmawi, or by other Systematists (ibid). The most important point to keep in mind is that as discussed in the introduction, Qutb al-Din al-Shirzi, one of the pioneers of the Systematist school, offers explanations that are similar to the concept of *Seyir*.

Karl Signell (2004), who was influenced by Raouf Yekta's theories, introduces five elements for identifying a *Makâm*: 1. Scale, 2. Melodic expansion, 3. Modulation, 4. Motifs, and 5. The range of melody and the following describe the coordinates of *Seyir* (92):

In Turkish music theory, *Seyir* is a melody that attempts to capture the essentials of a *Makâm* for students. Besides the scale and melodic direction, a *Seyir* might reveal typical melodic patterns, ranges to be exploited, and notes to be emphasized. The repertoire of all compositions in a *Makâm* shows the full range of possibilities, but the *Seyir* should give the essential features in brief (Signell 2002, 52).

Elsewhere, he describes *Seyir* as a more abstract "direction of melody" (Signell, 1986, 50-61). In his view, the movement of the melody between *Makâm*'s two primary tonal centers, the beginning, and the final, occurs in ascending, descending, and ascending-descending forms. This explanation, which summarizes the essential degrees of a *Makâm* to its beginning and final, appears to be imperfect. When considering the functions of the degrees in the structure of a *Makâm*, the main question is which element defines the importance of some degrees before the melodic representation of mode?

Murat Aydemir summarizes the characteristics of each *Makâm* in "sound scale," "functions of the degrees," "melody direction," "*Seyir*," and "modulation" and believes that there are many *Makâm*'s that despite the similarity of sound scales and functions of the degrees can be distinguished based on

their unique *Seyir* (Aydemir, 2010, 9). Despite Signell, Aydemir introduces the *Seyir* separately along with the element of "direction of melody" in order to distinguish between the two. This distinction can be used to express the greater generality of the first element compared to *Seyir*.

Considering *Seyir*'s origin, as mentioned in the introduction, it is considered to be a key element of Turkish classical music. In this music, the term *Seyir* refers to the progression, which means a condensed melodic outline defining the main structural elements and therefore the most prominent notes, the general direction of the melody, and the typical medial and final cadences (Wright, 1990, 242). Hence, the explanation provided here complements the views presented by Signell and Aydemir. This indicates that the "general direction of the melody" is influenced by the concept of *Seyir*.

According to Feldman (1993), *Seyir* is also a "codified melody progression" (4). In this regard, he distinguishes between this concept and other conceptions of it:

Seyir differs from other concepts of melodic progression in that it specifies not only a hierarchy of tonal centers within a scale but a specific melodic path which will involve not only direction but returning to specific tones, prolonging these or other tones and deviating from the basic scale in pre-determined ways (4).

He makes an important point precisely, referring implicitly to the feasibility of extracting different modes from a mutual sound scale only by varying the element of *Seyir*. This is almost consistent with the definitions of the terms *Sho'beh* and *Gûsheh* in the musical system prior to *Dastgâh*, and even the current meaning of *Âvâz* in the contemporary repertoire of Persian classical music called *Radif*.

Ârash Mohâfez (2011) considers two aspects in order to identify the *Seyir*:

- The general melodic direction, which is the ascending or descending direction of the melody;
- Codified melodic path (110).

In which “the codified melodic path maps the way and the main lines of the melodic behaviors of each *Makâm* in the various stages of formation, expansion, and returning in relation to the function of important degrees of scale” (Mohâfez, 2011, 113). In addition, it is also possible to ask the previous question here; how are the significant degrees of the sound scale determined, with which the melody is associated at different stages and levels of development?

Amnon Shiloah (1981) summarizes the main features of the Arabic concept of mode:

Feature 1. The modal scale is conceived as a combination of several small groups of notes, whether of the same intervallic structure or not, called “genera” (*Ajnâs*, s. *jîns* or *jens*);

Feature 2. In many cases, one genus is sufficient to give the feeling of a given mode;

Feature 3. A genus, as well as the entire scale in which that genus is predominant, is frequently designated by the same name;

Feature 4. As a result of characteristic (1), many combinations can be created theoretically, but only a limited number have been admitted or commonly accepted;

Feature 5. Among the latter, a particular hierarchy exists; first, we find *râst*, followed by the other principal *Maqâmât*, then the six *Âvâzât*, then the *sho'ab*, or *murakkabât*, which, practically speaking, ordinated patterns;

Feature 6. Part of the modal scale is linked to a definite pitch level that is determined by relation to the general

scale; it also evolves within a given segment of the general scale;

Feature 7. A group of notes transposed is considered to be a different entity and consequently may receive a new name;

Feature 8. Intervallically, identical groups are considered different when they do not have the same point of departure, although they may repose on the same *finalis*;

Feature 9. Two intervallically identical groups may be considered different even when they have the same departure and *finalis* if one ascending and the other descending, or if they emphasize different scale degrees;

Feature 10. Beyond these common points, a significant part of the system has always been subject to local and, to a certain extent, personal interpretation. We can also assume that the widely accepted theoretical principles were adapted to various local styles from the beginning. (38-39).

From items 7 to 9, we gain an understanding of the concept of *Seyir*. As discussed in the seventh case, the pitch plays a vital role in the genus' identity, demonstrating the importance of a hierarchical relationship between modal entities, which can assist in distinguishing similar modal entities. Both items 8 and 9 explicitly refer to the concept of *Seyir*, as mentioned earlier. Based on these examples, it is evident that, in modal structures with the same intervals and functions of degrees, it is the way the melody moves between its degrees that determines their identity.

In Eastern Europe and adjacent to Turkey and Bulgaria, *Seyir* is also referred to as a “codified melodic progression.” However, the concept is not exactly the same in *Makâm*'s music tradition. Gueorgui Harizanov (2014) considers *Seyir* as one of the modal elements in Bulgarian music, which includes,

in short, the direction of the melody, sound scale, and the function of the degrees such as *initialis* and *finalis* (52-57). In some cases, he believes that “stereotypical melodic formulas” represent the elements that

define the mode at important structural points, such as cadences (Ibid, 57). As an example of melodic formulas, he compares the Dorian mode with the status of *Oshâq* or *Hosseini* (ibid, 57 & 58).

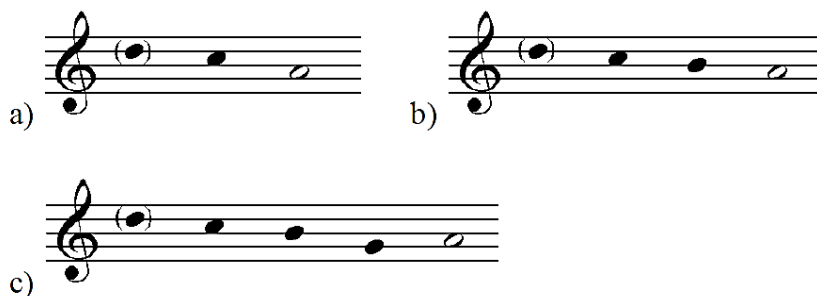


Figure 3. Melodic formulas of Dorian mode. (Harizanov, 2014, 57)

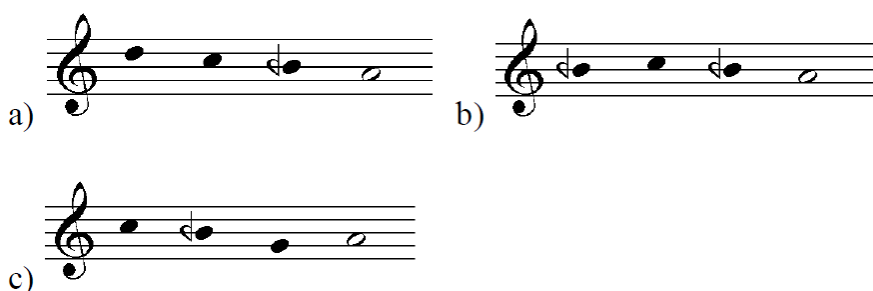


Figure 4. Melodic formulas of *Oshâq* or *Hosseini* (Harizanov, 2014, 58)

Oriental Arabic music also uses the concept of *Seyir*, although it may have a different pronunciation. Rob Simms (2004), an Iraqi scholar, considers the distinction of *Makâms* in the contour of their background or middle ground melodic progression and places definitive “motifs” and “themes” under the concept of *Seyir*, which sometimes appear in the form of *cadential formulas* varying from a few notes to phrases lasting thirty seconds or more (particularly in Iran) (12).

Ayari and Mc Adams (2003) define *Maqâm* as something beyond a sound scale, “a process of melodic movement, and an operational protocol of improvisation according to the models and forms of melodic and rhythmic organization” (164). This definition contains a concept similar to the one discussed previously.

According to Farraj and Abu Shumays (2019),

the concept of *Seyir* is defined as the expected melodic behavior in a *Makâm* or genus (*Jens*), which musicians and composers use as the main body of tradition, aesthetics, and musical conventions (314).

Since the Iranian and Arabic-Turkish musical tradition is an oral tradition, the role of *Seyir* is particularly prominent. For in passing time and the perfect transfer of modes and *Makâms*, musicians, consciously or unconsciously, follow a set of rules in using the mode as musical material, which are manifested under the concept of *Seyir*. Thus, the concept of *Seyir* goes beyond a mere “tonal progression” between or around important degrees, since understanding and accepting some degrees as “important degrees” results in a mental interaction with the melody and its perception by the brain. So, somewhere between melody and sound scale, there must be an abstract concept. It

becomes more evident when different modal entities are extracted from a single sound scale.

The concept of *Seyir* has not been extensively researched in Persian classical music. One of the earliest materials that directly and separately refers to this concept is that which is devoted to the year 2017 by Châlesh and As'adi (2017). *Seyir* is an acronym for *Seyir-e Naghmeji*¹¹ (سیر نغمگی), a term used in the cited article and the oral literature of its contemporary musicians. Prior to that, Saeed Kordmâfi (2012) briefly discussed the position of the *Seyir* in an article regarding the *Jomū'-e Nâqeseh* (جموع ناقصه) and considers it as a more general concept than melody and more specific than functions of tones. Châlesh and As'adi claim that the *Seyir*, the most fundamental layer in any melody, is a path that, without tying the

melody to specific patterns, draws special coordinates for the melody's movement (Châlesh and As'adi, 2017, 90).

Conceptualization and Development of Hypotheses

Taking a closer look at the structure of the Radif in Persian classical music, we discover that this structure comprises multiple components interconnected at different levels that form a "whole." According to As'adi (2003), "*Dastgâh* is a multi-modal cycle, a set of melodies that are organized based on a modal infrastructure in a cyclic design [and in this cycle] *Âvâz* can also be considered as derivation which is almost similar to the *Dastgâh* in terms of modal characteristics, except that they usually have a more straightforward modal structure (46). Thus, the *Radif* of Persian classical music can be briefly described:

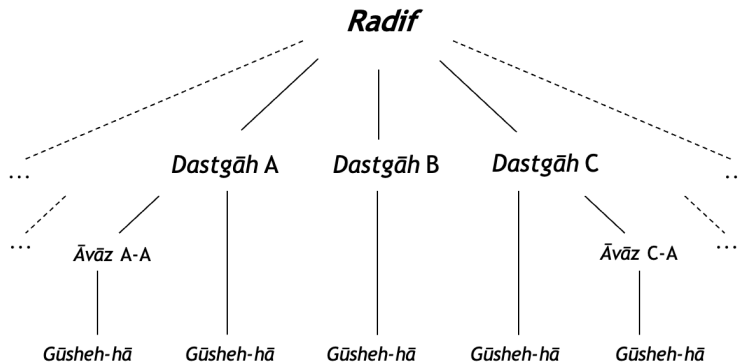


Figure 5. The structure of the *Radif* of Persian classical music

In As'adi's (2003) definition, *Gûsheh-hâ* (s. *Gûsheh*) are representatives of "base mode," "primary mode," "transitional mode," and "secondary mode," and sometimes they can be in the form of "mobile *Gûsheh*" without a separate modal content (47-48). The coexistence of these *Gûsheh-hâ* with a varied modal structure results in a modal diversity within the *Dastgâh*.

¹¹ In Persian language, "*Seyir*" is an infinitive noun with an Arabic root from the verb "*Sâra*" which means "to move." "*Naghmeji*" also means melodic, which, along with "*Seyir*", forms the leading composition of the melodic progression as "*Seyir-e Naghmeji*".

Hormoz Farhat (1990, 22) introduces *Gûsheh* "as a generic term for individual pieces, other than the *Darâmad* which make up the repertoire of a *Dastgâh*." It should be noted that the *Gûsheh* is actually a container that carries a modal content. In fact, the *Darâmad* is also a *Gûsheh* that introduces the main mode of the *Dastgâh*. In this regard, Dâriush Talâi (1993, 18) believes that "the term *Gûsheh* is an unimportant word that can be replaced by "piece", or something of that nature."

Traditionally, in order to “deliver” one mode to another, a tone or tones must be shared between the structure of the two modes. This sharing of tones makes the *Gūsheh*’s melody conform to a specific behavior, ensuring that the “*Tahvilât*¹²” (delivers) are pleasant. Because of this tonal commitment, in the *Dastgâh*, the *Gūsheh-hâ* find a hierarchy relative to each other, which forms the orderly character of the modal arrangement of the *Dastgâh*. Forsat al-Dawlah Shirâzi (1997) has also explicitly mentioned this issue:

In the old days, the *Dastgâh* was played in the order the tradition desired; they did not reduce or increase its order. As an example, they were concerned that an *Âvâz* would not be able to move from one *Dastgâh* to another. Even so, in this new way, many *Âvâz-hâ* of one *Dastgâh* pass to another, but this, too, has a rule and a secret; Therefore, the melodies should be gentle with each other, and the background of the later melodies should be unified with those of the previous melodies. They should not be at odds with each other, and these depend on the taste and knowledge of the singer (27).

In the discussion of the musical system based on the logic of *Makâm*, “the modes are not hierarchical to each other, while [in the logic of *Dastgâh*] the *Gūsheh-hâ* are hierarchical to each other; [Therefore] the development of the melodic representation of the mode differs from the *Gūsheh*” (Hadjâriân, 2006). Regarding the seventh of Shiloah’s (1981) characteristics of a mode, a modal entity within the arrangement of *Dastgâh* will differ from its independent behavior outside this order. As an example we can mention the similarities and differences between *Delkash* in *Mâhūr* and *Shahnâz* in *Shūr* or *Mokhâlef-e Segâh* and *Bayât-e Isfahân-e Qadim* (see Sanāyei, 2022b); Consequently, if the position of a modal entity in a modal arrangement distinguishes it from its independent characteristics, then because

of the structural differences between the *Dastgâh*-based system and the *Makâm* system in the Arabic-Turkish field, the concept of *Seyir* in a *Dastgâh*-based musical system will differ from what was mentioned earlier. As a consequence, we encounter at least two types of hierarchies within a great tradition based on *Dastgâh*:

- Hierarchy of degrees relative to each other in a *Jam’* or genus.
- Hierarchy of *Gūsheh-hâ* relative to each other within each *Dastgâh*.

Therefore, the concept of *Seyir* in Persian classical music will need to be studied at various levels.

Problem of Study

As mentioned in the previous sections, with the emergence of the system of *Dastgâh* as a *Nobat-e Morattab*¹³, the execution of each mode is affected by their logical arrangement within *Dastgâh* and companionship with other modal entities. As a result of this problem, the *Seyir* of each mode is affected by the modal arrangement of the *Dastgâh*. Therefore, it is necessary to consider this issue in redefining the concept of *Seyir* in Persian classical music. So this study’s problems are:

- Given the multi-layered structure of the *Dastgâh*, how many levels is the concept of *Seyir* defined?
- How are the different levels of the *Seyir* concept related to each other?

This study takes the above questions as the purpose of the study and explores the role and position of *Seyir* within the *Dastgâhi* musical system.

Method

As mentioned earlier, given the multi-layered structure of the *Dastgâh*, it was first necessary to study the existing definitions of the concepts of *Seyir*, “Mode,” and *Dastgâh*

¹² تحویلات.

¹³ نوبت مرتب.

in relation to each other. In treatises and musical manuscripts, these concepts were explored and adapted to the current repertoire of Persian classical music, the *Radif*, and its performative facts. From the micro level to the macro level of the logic of the *Dastgâh*, the reports of *Seyir* in the literature on the subject have been examined separately and in relation to each other. By describing different repertoire definitions and using deductive reasoning, the study has attempted to conclude. Throughout this article, written information was collected as library studies and analyzed in a descriptive-analytical manner. Manuscripts and treatises are also studied using the historical method.

Results and Discussion

Seyir at the Macro Level: *Dastgâh*

By studying *Seyir* within oral traditions on a larger scale, it is possible to obtain a more accurate picture of it. In this image, *Seyir* seems to be a concept beyond a simple sequence of *Ajnâs* and as a set of unwritten modulation rules. It is these rules that make some modulations in the *Dastgâh* literature “conventional” and others “unconventional” or “forbidden” altogether (see Farraj and Abu Shumays, 2019, 325). Analyzing different narrations of Persian music shows that a set of modal sequences within the structure of each *Dastgâh* is shared between other narrations. For example, a *Dastgâh* is called *Shūr* with (at least) the modal arrangement of *Darâmad* (*Shūr*), *Shahnâz*, *Qaracheh*, *Razavi*, and *Hosseini*. However, these modalities do not strictly follow a particular order and are, to some extent, dependent on the taste of their narrator, with slight differences (see As’adi, 2006, 223-227).

In the study of musical treatises, the oldest concept related to the *Dastgâh* system can be considered the concept of *Shadd* (شد) in Safavid treatises. In these treatises, *Shadd* is defined as a definite chain of modal entities, with a particular mode of focus and sometimes with signs of melodic determination” (Kordmâfi, 2021, 58). Among these sources, *Taqsim al-Naghamât*, in the

fifth chapter, entitled “Relating each two *Sho’beh* to their *Maqâm*,” describes the modulations between each *Maqâm* and the two *Sho’beh* related to it (see Wright, 2019, 84-113). The important point in all the modal commands presented is the final statements: “... it is preferable that they conclude in the same way that they began” (Wright, 2019, 403-414); This phrase illustrates the cyclical nature of the command. As mentioned in the introduction, al-Shirâzi (2009), in a chapter entitled “In the confusion of the *Pardeh-hâ* with each other and the rest of the speech in famous *Maqâmât*”¹⁴, explicitly speaks of mechanisms such as modulation:

It should be known that these *Jomû’* (s. *Jam’*) and *Sho’ab* (s. *Sho’beh*) are related. It is the desire to transfer from each to the occasion that causes excellent prosperity and freshness of melody. The occasion was sometimes when one was in the center (*Mafrûzeh*), both are on the same *Tabaqeh* (level) and sometimes in two, between the destination tone of both [...] and we point to some of these relations for example. The rest is delegated thanks to the mind and purity of those in charge of the practical technique, and God knows best¹⁵ (148).

Al-Shirâzi’s final sentence illustrates the flexibility of modal arrangements which can be altered and expanded according to the narrator’s taste and talent. “This determination of modal cycles is only one necessary structural feature of *Dastgâh*, but it is not enough; Even today, it is not possible to pour every melodic object into the *Dastgâh* and still be sure that the result will be considered and accepted as Persian classical music based on the logic of *Dastgâh*” (Kordmâfi, 2021, 64). In this regard, in *Taqsim al-Naghamât*, we read:

¹⁴ در خلط پرده‌ها با یکدیگر و در بقیت سخن در مقامات مشهور.
¹⁵ ببايد دانست کي اين جموع و شعب را با یکدیگر مناسبات افتد و در تلحين انتقال از هر يکي به مناسبت آن سبب زيادت رونق و طراوت لحن گردد و مناسبت گاه باشند کي يک در مرکز بود (مفروضه) هر دو در يک طبقه باشند و گاه باشند که در دو يعنى ميان نغمه مقصد هر دو [...] و ما از جهت مثال به بعضى از اين مناسبات اشارت کنيم و باقى به لطف ذهن و صفای قريحه متصديان فن عملی مفوض است و الله اعلم.

A principle was that it was done from the *Maqâmat* and *Sho'ab* and *Âvâz-hâ*, but there are many sub-*Âvâz-hâ* because it was known as the principle of these. However, some do not believe that what is determined in these scenes cannot be achieved elsewhere. It is also got from the *Sho'ab* of these *Pardeh-hâ*, but the same *Pardeh-hâ*, if arranged in another way, could be used to obtain a *Maqâm* or a *Sho'beh* or an *Âvâzeh*. As for the method that is the principle and the master's drive, it was described in this treatise¹⁶ (Wright, 2019, 424).

Whether the concept of *Dastgâh* is a definite order of "frozen and rigid," "formalized" or "standardized," or a potential possibility and container for the arrangement of different modes or "*Âvâz-hâ*," it will not make a difference. The formation of the *Dastgâh*, no matter how unpredictable and improvised, is ultimately predestined to some degree of determination. It is because what is ultimately heard from this *Nobat-e Morattab* will be a continuous and pleasant arrangement of modal entities.

Therefore, based on our current understanding of Persian classical music, if there is a significant sequence of modes in most narrations, then this should be considered part of the nature and main characteristics of that *Dastgâh*. In other words *The Seyir is, therefore, on a large scale, a set of definite paths that bring to end a Dastgâh from a "base" or "focal" mode to "primary/secondary/transitional" or "peripheral" modes.* Since the tools of these paths are the *Gûsheh-hâ*, as a result of the changes that occur in successive modal structures, a level of melody determination will occur within each *Gûsheh* in the service of the *Dastgâh*'s order. The concept of *Forûd*

(descent) holds that positioning of a modal entity relative to *Darâmad*, as a "focal" mode, is of paramount importance within the *Dastgâh*. Furthermore, according to Shiloh's ten cases, the pitch level of a mode relative to *Darâmad*, as the zero point and initiator of *Dastgâh*'s modal order, inevitably changes and distinguishes its personality from its independent state - outside the order of the *Dastgâh*.

Seyir at the Micro Level: Gûsheh

In a musical system based on the logic of *Dastgâh*, the *Seyir* at the micro level is closer to the definition of *Makâm* or *Maqâm* in the Arabic-Turkish music - as discussed in the introduction - because some *Gûsheh-hâ* in the *Dastgâh* cycle have a modal identity and others appear only as "*mobile Gûsheh*."

When studying the modal structures in the *Radifs* of Persian music, there are various genera (*Ajnâs*) that are generally represented as trichord, tetrachord, and pentachord. The coexistence of these *Ajnâs* forms larger units of the *Jens*. Musicians of the Systematist school refer to cells composed of more than two tones as *Jam'* (see al-Urmawi, 2006 and al-Shirâzi, 2009). Therefore, *Jam'* can be considered a more general unit than *Jens*, which includes a variety of types in terms of scope. Currently, the most obvious place for the emergence of a *Jam'* with any kind of *Ajnâs* is the *Gûsheh* in the system of *Dastgâh*.

According to Powers, the musicality of a *Jam'* is determined by an element related to the melody. As previously mentioned, in the multilayered structure of the melody, the *Seyir* is the most basic layer, which provides specific coordinates for the movement of the more specific layers of the melody. According to the current repertoire of Persian classical music, the *Gûsheh* is an area where melody appears. Although the definition of melody in *Maqâm*-based music, prior to *Dastgâh*, differs from what is known in Western music culture as "melody," it is largely due to the fact that the foundation is different. As we refer to the old Persian treatises of music,

¹⁶ آنچه اصل بود این است که نموده شد از مقامات و شعب و آوازها، اما آوازها را فروع بسیارست چون مراد آن بود که اصل اینها دانسته شود اختصار برین شد. اما بعضی را گمان آن نشود که آنچه درین پردهها تعیین یافته از جای دیگر حاصل نمی‌شود. از فروع این پردهها نیز حاصل می‌شود بلکه همین پردهها را اگر طوری دیگر ترتیب کنند می‌تواند بود که از آنجا مقامی یا شعبه‌ای یا آوازه‌ای حاصل شود. اما آن طریق که اصل است و استادان برانند این است که درین رساله نموده شد.

we find a term that is more closely related to what we know today as a melody, known as *Laḥn* (لحن).

Al-Fârâbi (2014) in *Al-Mūsīqiyya Al-Kabir* defines *Laḥn*: “*Laḥn* sometimes refers to a group of tones arranged in a certain order, and sometimes refers to a group of tones that are combined with accompanying the letters and words of a poetic phrase to express a specific meaning and purpose according to the current rules of the language...¹⁷” (47). Bukhârî (2013) also describes the term *Laḥn* in the description of al-Urmawi’s *al-Advâr* as “an arrangement of tones followed with care and precision” (20). Al-marâghi (1966), in *Maqâsed al-Alhân*, considers the *Laḥn* as “a group of different tones with different pitches arranged in a particular order” (8). He writes: “The *Jam’* is a group of different tones, and if it is gentle, they say the *Laḥn* in the conditions mentioned above; so each *Laḥn* is a *Jam’* not the opposite¹⁸” (Ibid, 11). Al-Shirâzi (2009), as same as Al-Marâghi, considers the *Laḥn* as a particular state in the *Jam’* and describes it as the appropriate transition from one tone to another of the *Jam’* (56); Therefore, the *Laḥn* is always derived from the *Jam’*, that is, the *Jam’* tones must be formed first, before establishing a specific and suitable transition between them to form the *Laḥn*. In short, “the *Laḥn* is composed of tones arranged in a limited order to a specific transition¹⁹” (Ibid, 168). With these interpretations, *Laḥn* may be viewed as a more determined form of *Seyir*, revealing the identity of the mode. It passes through the path that *Seyir* has provided without imposing specific details on certain tones and, of course, in a particular order (Farraj and Abu Shumays, 2019, 284-320).

Sometimes, in Persian classical music, the particular coordinates defined by the *Seyir* are reflected in melodic formulas, which often serve as opening and concluding elements (see Powers, 1958, 449). With the emphasis on the role of *Seyir* and *Laḥn*, two genera with similar intervals can be distinguished with the aim of these precise coordinates; Therefore, since the character of a hierarchical sound scale is determined by the *Seyir* of the *Laḥn*, the *Seyir* can be considered as the most fundamental element of the mode’s identity in any *Jam’*.

In examining the concept of *Seyir* at the macro level, it was mentioned that the *Seyir* of each *Gûsheh* (as a component) in the structure of the *Dastgâh* (as a whole) would also be affected by the sequences of the modes inside the *Dastgâh*. However, it is difficult to determine precisely which influence precedes the other. What we know today about the *Dastgâh* and its ancestor, *Shadd*, is a definite chain of modal entities focusing particularly on a specific mode (Meisami, 2010, 222); During the passage of structures on a larger scale, components must behave particularly within this chain. But in performances called *Bedâhe-Navâzi* (improvisation) or sometimes *Morakkab-Khânî*²⁰ or *Morakkab-Navâzi*²¹, the situation will be a little bit different because an immediate decision by the musician to perform the *Laḥn* of a *Jam’* can lead the whole performance to unpredictable modal entities. Therefore, the macro level will be affected by the micro level. Returning to the main topic of the article, we examine the *Seyir* within the *Dastgâh*. Inside the structure of the *Dastgâh* - as a definite modal arrangement - once a mode has been introduced, several *Gûsheh-hâ* will stabilize the introduced modal space. Following this, several *Gûsheh-hâ* will create the conditions for the modal transition. Therefore, the *Gûsheh-hâ* present in this transition are somehow served by the *Seyir* of modal arrangement of the *Dastgâh*.

¹⁷ لحن گاهی به جماعتی از نغمه‌ها دلالت دارد که با ترتیبی معین قرار گرفته‌اند و گاهی به گروهی از نغمه‌ها اطلاق می‌شود که به‌منظور همراهی با حروف و کلمات یک عبارت منظوم برای بیان یک معنی و مقصود معین بنا بر قواعد جاری زبان ترکیب شده‌اند.
¹⁸ جمع عبارت است از جماعت نغمات مختلفه و آن اگر ملائم باشد لحن گویند بشرط مذکورہ کما مر؛ پس هر لحنی جمع باشد من غیر عکس.
¹⁹ لحن مرکب از نغماتی است مرتب به ترتیبی محدود به انتقالی خاص.

²⁰ مرکب‌خوانی.
²¹ مرکب‌نوازی.

In addition, the essential feature in the logic of the *Dastgâh*, which is the founder of the concept of its cycle, is *Forūd*. This element plays a fundamental role in the relationship between *Seyir* on the macro and micro levels. With the concept of *Forūd*, within the logic of the *Dastgâh*, along with the concept of mode, the *Seyir* is employed to some extent at the micro level to serve the macro level. Regardless of any order, the various modal entities within the *Dastgâh* are forced to return to what is introduced in the *Darâmad*, the “base” or “focal” mode, to form the cyclic logic. As a result, a portion of the *Seyir* of the *Jam’* will be affected by this process. Taking the same concept of *Forūd* and applying it to the seventh case of the Shilohah strengthens the relationship between macro and micro levels of *Seyir*.

Another important role of the *Seyir* in Persian classical music is the *Âvâz-hâ* derived from the *Shūr*, which are independently recognizable despite having the same scale. Despite the genera’s similarity, the role of *Seyir* in shaping the *Lahn* has become more prominent. This role of *Seyir* in the music based on *Dastgâh* extends beyond the micro level and may be considered to be on the middle level as, in this system, *Âvâz* can be placed somewhere between *Gūsheh* and *Dastgâh*. Because they are not small enough to remain inside the productive *Dastgâh* as a *Gūsheh*, nor large enough to be named an independent *Dastgâh*.

Seyir at the Middle Level: Âvâz

Persian classical music uses the term *Âvâz* to refer to various concepts that have contributed to its confusion to this day, and a detailed examination of this term requires a separate and detailed analysis²². What is recognized today in the Persian music repertoire as the concept of the *Âvâz* is a title that refers to the modes derived from the *Dastgâh-e Shūr* and *Âvâz-e Bayât-e*

Isfahân from the *Dastgâh-e Homâyûn*²³; Thus, these “*Âvâz-hâ*” (s. *Âvâz*) all use a scale that has already appeared in the text of the productive *Dastgâh* (*Shūr* and *Homâyûn*).

For example, Mahdiqoli Hedâyat (1939), in explaining the derivations of *Shūr*, introduces *Dashti*, *Dastân-e ‘Arab*, *Hejâz* or *Hejâz-e Baghdâdi*, *Afshâr*, *Tork*, and *Kord* all in the 7th circle that is named *Navâ*, some of which are also in 4th circle (94). In each of these 6 cases of *Âvâz*, the sound scales are all derived from the *Dastgâh* to which they are attributed and are distinguished by something other than the sound scale. But it seems that this distinction was not so substantial as to make them a prominent entity to be used as the main mode in an independent *Dastgâh*, nor was it insufficient to enclose them as a *Gūsheh* inside a *Dastgâh*. As a result, this issue has placed the *Âvâz* somewhere between the concepts of *Gūsheh* and *Dastgâh*.

A key difference between “*Seyir* at the Middle Level” and “*Seyir* at the Micro Level” is the extent to which it plays a role in modal space. On this level, the *Seyir* creates a new entity by creating a different path for the *Lahn*. The difference is that the *Seyir* at the micro level, while trying to differentiate between the modes within a *Dastgâh*, serves the macro level, the modal order of the *Dastgâh*.

In other words, this modal arrangement and the process of *Forūd*, to which the effects of tuning (*kūk*) of the *Dastgâh* based on the “focal” mode are sometimes added, makes the coordinates of a modal entity as a *Gūsheh* different from the coordinates of the same entity as an *Âvâz*. Again, as a brief reference for independent research, the differences between *Isfahân-e Qadim* and *Mokhâlef-e Segâh* can be sought in the same issue (see As’adi, 2008 and Sanāyei, 2022b).

Middle-level *Seyir*’s ability to differentiate in a space relatively similar to other *Âvâz-hâ* can sometimes be explained by melodic

²² For further reading, see Mohammadi, 2017.

²³ Some experts consider *Âvâz-e Bayât-e Isfahân* to belong to the *Dastgâh-e Shūr*, but addressing this issue is not the main subject of the present study.

patterns. The role of melodic patterns in shaping the modal space in Persian classical music has also been prominent in the past. Hedâyat (1939) introduces particular melodic coordinates in presenting *Shūr*'s derivations:

[...] *Kord* is also in circle 7, including an *Âvâz* with two descents (*Forūd*), one called *Azarbaijâni*, *Râh-e Rûh*, *Owj*, special *Forūd* (do not mention other *Forūds* here)²⁴ (94).

Hedâyat, in his explanation of the *Kord* [-*Bayât*], refers to a *Forūd* that is specific to it and emphasizes that other *Forūds* should not be used in this *Âvâz*; Therefore, a particular conclusive melodic pattern in the *Forūd* of this *Âvâz* is considered as one of the main characteristics of it. According to Powers' explanation of the concept of mode, initial and descending stereotypes play an important role in forming modal entities. The role of *Seyir* can therefore be highlighted as one that determines specific melodic patterns, particularly at the beginning and at the end of a mode's presentation. As Feldman has stated, in the method of deriving from a basic scale (as mentioned previously), as well as the parameters of Shiloah, in the current Persian classical music system, this appears to be more in the sense of *Âvâz*. In other words, *Seyir in the middle level comes from its micro level, that is, the Gûsheh; Because its role becomes more definite and independent within a platform that was previously used for another mode, it is capable of identifying and organizing new modes or taking them out of the modal arrangement of the Dastgâh.*

Conclusion

Seyir as the most basic defining layer and one of the essential elements shaping the modal structure in a system based on the logic of the *Dastgâh* emerges at three levels:

- Micro Level: *Gûsheh*
- Middle Level: *Âvâz*
- Macro Level: *Dastgâh*

Although these levels are independent, they influence one another within the system of the *Dastgâh* as a whole. It is important to note that the manifestation of the same concept of *Seyir* in the literature within a musical system that is based on the logic of *Dastgâh* occurs at three different levels.

In its simplest form, *Seyir* is an abstract concept within a modal structure that does not define a melody. It requires that the melody conforms to a context in order to accurately express the mode. The concept progresses toward determination by incorporating melodic models and melodic figures, which are the most important places for their emergence and manifestation in each mode's opening and concluding paths. In this regard, *Seyir*'s capabilities expand to include the ability to organize a new mode on a platform that was previously used for another mode. In the current logic of Persian classical music, this issue is reflected in the concept of *Âvâz*, which is referred to as the "Middle Level" in this article.

The position of the concept of *Seyir* in the Power's tune-scale spectrum for mode's definition can be modified and illustrated as shown in Figure 6:



Figure 6. The sound scale-melody spectrum

If we take sound scale as more than just a raw and potential sound material, but also consider it as a bed for a particular mode in this spectrum, then the concepts of sound scale and *Seyir* almost overlap, since their existence is dependent on each other. So far, the concept of *Seyir* has given it a melodic expression, as it has not been merely a pure abstraction consisting of a sequence of intervals. Accordingly, the *Seyir* reveals the function of the various degrees on the sound scale. In the same way, the *Laḥn* is limited in its freedom within the framework that the *Seyir* lays down for it, and it serves mode in some way.

The macro level of *Seyir* is formed within the logic of the *Dastgâh* as a *Nobat-e Morattab*. within this logic, the position of the modal entities in the definite order of the *Dastgâh* is of great importance. In accordance with existing definitions of mode, the location of a mode within a modal order impacts its identity; Thus, *Seyir* occurs at the macro level in coordination with the micro level. Because according to the concept of *Forūd* and the effect of modal arrangements from the tuning of the *Dastgâh* based on *Darâmad*, as a “focal” or “base” mode, each of the modal entities present in the *Dastgâh* besides maintaining its character will serve modal transitions.

The concept of *Seyir* in a *Dastgâh*-based system, as a framework that is closed in the dimensions of seven *Dastgâh-hâ* and five or with a grace of six *Âvâz-hâ*, offers the possibility of endogenizing new modes on previously used platforms within the system. While the use of different permutations of the tetrachords and pentachords gives “98 Circles” (see Tahmâsbi 2020), the concept of *Seyir* can create infinite modes. In short, the *Seyir* in its general and common sense in the Iranian and Arabic-Turkish *field refers to a set of modal aesthetic criteria that provides the basis for transforming mode into a definite and tangible form.*

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