Navigating Arabic text

AN INTRODUCTION TO ARABIC SYNTAX

Part 1

MT KARAAN



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DĀR AL-ʿULŪM AL-ʿARABIYYAH AL-ISLĀMIYYAH

Strand • Western Cape • South Africa

www.duai.org.za • admin@duai.org.za

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الحمد لله رب العالمين، وصلى الله على سيدنا مُحَمَّد وآله وصحبه أجمعين، وبعد:

Recent years have seen a marked slant away from formal grammar in the teaching of the Arabic language. A continuing track record of unsatisfactory results combines with advances in linguistic theory to condemn as inept traditional methods of teaching Arabic to non-speakers of the language. So does a grammatical approach to teaching Arabic have a future?

The study of Arabic cannot conceivably be reduced to one single universal purpose. Every student of the language would be motivated by reasons of his own. As such, it would not make good sense to adopt a one-size-fits-all method for teaching the language. Methods of instruction should ideally be structured around, and orientated towards the purpose of study.

The prospective student of Islamic studies tends to be motivated by a dual purpose. He wishes to become proficient at speaking and writing the language; but of equal—if not greater—significance to him is the need to access the *Turāth*: the sacred texts and the written scholarly record. As many doors as might be opened to him by mastery of spoken Arabic, the door of the *Turāth* will not readily yield except to the possessor of at least a modicum of Arabic grammar.

The present offering aims at providing that modicum. Towards that aim it willingly makes a number of sacrifices:

- technical terminology, especially in definitions, is omitted in favour of simple language, unless necessary;
- higher intricacies of grammar are dispensed with;
- a few grammatical inaccuracies are willingly committed, though acknowledged.

In doing so the purpose was to impart a living, animate appreciation of grammar, and not one so stilted in archaic jargon as to render it unwieldy in application.

A study of this text (in two parts) will certainly not achieve mastery over all aspects of the language. Selections from Arabic literature will still have to be studied; a stock of vocabulary will still have to be built; expressing oneself with both tongue and pen will still have to be exercised. All that this text aims to provide is the grammatical framework within which all of that should fit.

A word of caution: Due care should be taken not to overload the creative aspects of learning the language (reading, writing and speaking) with so much of grammar that it all devolves down to simply another lesson in grammar. Grammar is not the entirety of the language; it is but the *correct use* of language. For that reason it makes good sense not to correct the beginner's every mistake in the earlier stages of learning the language. It is part of the natural order that infants who learn language at the knees of their parents commit grammatical errors. Those errors are happily tolerated, for the joy of seeing them experiment with language at this stage outweighs any concern for correct usage. There will be ample time for correcting their usage later.

Instructors should optimally aim to introduce grammar into the student's mind, not as a lumpy set of abstract terms, rules and definitions, but as an intuitively perceptible internal logic that suffuses the living fabric of language. Achieving this requires a three-pronged approach:

1. the generous use of examples;
2. exposure to grammatical constructs in other texts;
3. challenging the student to produce examples on his own.

Every lesson should therefore be followed by exercises that seek to create within the student the ability, firstly, to recognise the construct of grammar under study, and secondly, to use it correctly in his own speech or writing.

May Allah accept this effort.

MT KARAAN
Strand, Cape Town
South Africa

SECTION ONE:

Basic concepts

LESSON 1

Why *naḥw*?

الكلام المصطلح عليه عند النحاة عبارة عن اللفظ المفيد فائدة يحسن السكوت عليها. فاللفظ جنس يشمل الكلام والكلمة والكلم، ويشمل المهمل كـ«ديز»، والمستعمل كـ«عمرو». و«مفيد» أخرج المهمل؛ و«فائدة يحسن السكوت عليها» أخرج الكلمة وبعض الكلم، وهو ما تركب من ثلاث كلمات فأكثر ولم يحسن السكوت عليه، نحو «إن قام زيد».

The passage above comes from the beginning of Ibn ʿAqīl's commentary on Ibn Mālik's famous thousand line poem, the *Alfiyyah*. What you immediately notice about it is that not a single letter carries any sort of vowel sign. In fact, the letters of the Arabic alphabet are almost exclusively *consonants*. Consonants are letters formed through bringing certain parts of the mouth, tongue and teeth together. In the word *tap*, for example, the *t* and the *p* are consonants. The *a* between them is a *vowel*, a letter which represents the sound we give to a consonant.

So in English we vocalise consonants through vowels. How do we do that in Arabic? For that purpose we use the *ḥarakāt*, the signs above or below the letter which indicate which sound the letter must be given. There are three types of *ḥarakāt*, or vowel signs: the *ḍammah* (ـُ), *fatḥah* (ـَ)and *kasrah*(ـِ) ; and when a letter is not supposed to be vocalised we place a *sukūn* above it.

نُ نَ نِ كُــنْ

Now, Arabic is typically written *without* vowel signs, as you can see in Ibn ʿAqīl's text above. So how does one know which *ḥarakah* to give to which letter? This is where the rules of grammar come to our rescue. The two twin disciplines of

Arabic grammar, namely *naḥw* (syntax) and *ṣarf* (morphology) guide the process of assigning *ḥarakāt* to a text lacking vowel signs, also called *diacritics*. By mastering these two disciplines one gains the ability to correctly vowelize an unmarked text.

Comparing *naḥw* to *ṣarf*

So why are there two separate disciplines? To understand that we need to take a step back and make a quick survey of the words that form the Arabic language. It is by no means possible to give a precise number for the words that exist in Arabic, but it is possible to classify them into three groups. This classification considers what the word indicates. Consider these groups of words:

from	مِنْ
to	إِلَى
on	عَلَىٰ

mosque	مَسْجِد
book	كِتاب
pen	قَلَم

(he) went	ذَهَبَ
(he) writes	يَكْتُبُ
(he) broke	كَسَرَ

You will notice that all the words in the group to the extreme right have something in common. They all seem to indicate *acts* or *deeds*. Furthermore, they also appear to indicate the *time* when the deed was or is done. It is either in the past or in the present. Words of this kind, that indicate *deeds* together with *time* or *tense*, are called verbs in English. In Arabic a verb is called a *fiʿl* and its plural is *afʿāl*.

The group of words in the middle simply indicate things: a mosque, a book or a pen. Words that indicate things are called nouns in English. In Arabic we call such a word an *ism*. Its plural is *asmāʾ*.

The words on the left do not indicate any particular thing or act, but they assist to tell how things relate to one another, or how acts relate to things. They connect the other words in a sentence together by telling us that the book, for example, is

on the table, or that the pen is *under* the book. Such words are called particles. In Arabic we speak of a *ḥarf* in the singular, and *ḥurūf* in the plural.

Thus we get three types of words in Arabic: *ism*, *fiʿl* and *ḥarf*.



Now consider the following sentence:

ذَهَبَ مـُحَمَّدٌ إِلَى الْـمَسْجِدِ

Muḥammad went to the masjid.

It contains four words:

- ذَهَبَ , a *fiʿl*
- مُـحَمَّد , an *ism*
- إِلَى , a *ḥarf*
- الـمَسْجِد , an *ism* again.

Some *ḥarakāt* in this sentence are determined by the rules of *ṣarf*; some by the rules of *naḥw*; and some by no particular set of rules. The following table shows this in detail:

ـدٌ	ـمَّـ	ـحَـ	مُـ	مُـحَمَّدٌ
No rules				إِلَى

ـدِ	ـجِـ	ـسْـ	ـمَـ(الـ)	اَلْـمَسْجِدِ

The shaded blocks indicate the letters affected by the rules of *naḥw*. You will notice that each one is the *last letter* in an *ism*. We may deduct from here that ***naḥw* pertains to the last letter of an *ism*.**

As for the remaining letters of the *ism*, they are often—but not always—governed by the rules of *ṣarf*. *Ṣarf* furthermore governs *all* the letters of the *fiʿl*. We may thus say that ***ṣarf* is the discipline that governs all the letters of the *fiʿl*, and often all the letters of the *ism* except the last one.**

As for the *ḥarf*, the *ḥarakāt* of its letters are governed by neither *naḥw* nor *ṣarf*. We simply take them as they appear in the dictionary or in the spoken word.

Deeper role of *naḥw*

So is that all that *naḥw* does: help us determine the *ḥarakah* of the last letter of the *ism*? If that was the extent of its function it would appear to be a somewhat insignificant discipline. In reality it is everything but insignificant.

A sentence is a set of words that work together to convey information. At the simplest level a sentence in Arabic will say one of two things:

➢ either	A	is, was or will be	B
➢ or	C	did, does or will do act X	to D

These simplest of sentence structures provide us with four distinct roleplayers in the information that the sentence conveys.

In the first case we have—

- A, about whom we wish to convey the information, eg. *Aḥmad…*
- and B, the information which we wish to convey, eg. Aḥmad *is intelligent*.

In the second case we have—

- C, who is carrying out the action, eg. *The boy…*
- and D, upon whom the action is being done, eg. The boy eats *the bread*

What the discipline of *naḥw* does is to indicate the precise role a particular word plays in the sentence. As you have seen above, there are four possible basic roles a word might play: A, B, C and D. So when we encounter a word, we might ask:

- Is this word the A about whom we wish to say something?
- Or is it the information itself which we wish to convey as B?
- Is it C, the person carrying out the action described in the sentence?
- Or D, the one who finds himself on the receiving end of that action?

The manner in which *naḥw* indicates the respective roles of the role players in the sentence is through assigning a specific *ḥarakah* to the last letter of the *ism*. *Naḥw* is therefore not simply a set of rules to determine what *ḥarakah* the last letter takes, but at a deeper level it represents the very logic of language, the manner in which sentences come to make sense. Without the structure which *naḥw* imparts to a sentence it might as well be a meaningless jumble of words.

Let's illustrate this with a comparison. When a whole lot of labourers stand around on a construction site without anyone knowing exactly what each one is supposed to do, the intended building will probably never get done. But when each one is given his instructions and set to work, some mixing cement, others laying bricks, and yet others doing the woodwork, etc. we may soon expect to see a completed building. That set of instructions is exactly what *naḥw* is. It helps us to identify the role players of the sentence and assign to them their respective roles.

We may therefore say that ***naḥw*, or Arabic syntax, is the study of the rules according to which the elements within a sentence combine in order to produce meaningful information.**

LESSON 2

Characteristics of the *ism*

The previous lesson introduced us to the three types of words we get in Arabic:

- the *ism*, or noun, that indicates a thing;
- the *fiʿl*, or verb, that indicates an act and its tense;
- and the *ḥarf*, or particle that serves to join words together.

In *naḥw* it is with the *ism* that our primary concern lies. This does not mean that we are totally going to ignore the *fiʿl* and the *ḥarf* in our study of *naḥw*, but rather that when we do get to discuss them our focus will more often than not be the manner in which the *fiʿl* or *ḥarf* affects the *ism*. The *ism* is therefore our central point of reference.

Precisely what about the *ism* is it that we are about to learn? Grammar touches upon a range of aspects, but only four of those are of immediate interest for us. They are:

1. the fact that the *ism* may be either singular, dual or plural;
2. the fact that the *ism* may be either definite or indefinite;
3. the fact that the *ism* may be either masculine or feminine;
4. the fact that the last letter of the *ism* is either open to change (we call it *inflected*), or not (*uninflected*).

In each of the next four lessons we study one of these characteristics of the *ism*.

LESSON 3

Number

All languages make adaptations to words in order to make them indicate a higher number of things. In English, for example, we add an *s* to the word *book* to indicate more than one book. In the case of *child* we add the suffix *-ren*; and sometimes we simply change the spelling a bit, as in *woman* and *women*.

Arabic, like most Semitic languages, employs not only singular and plural forms, but also a dual form to indicate two of a thing. In terms of number we therefore have three forms for the *ism*:

- singular, which we call *mufrad* (also *wāḥid*)
- dual, or *muthannā* (also *tathniyah*)
- and plural, or *jamʿ*.

The *mufrad*

There is no single standard pattern for the singular case. The basic default form in which a word appears is its singular form. Thus words such as رَجُلٌ كِتَابٌ قَلَمٌ مَسْجِدٌ طَالِبٌ are all in the *mufrad* form.

Forming the *muthannā*

Adapting the *ism* to form the *muthannā* is relatively easy. All that needs to be done is to add the suffix *-āni* or *-ayni* to the end of the word, as shown in this table:

مُفْرَد	مُثَنَّى	
رَجُلٌ	رَجُلاَنِ	رَجُلَيْنِ

كِتَابٌ	كِتَابَـــانِ	كِتَابَـــيْنِ
قَلَـمٌ	قَـلَمَـــانِ	قَـلَمَـــيْنِ
مَسْجِدٌ	مَسْجِدَانِ	مَسْجِدَيْنِ
طَالِبٌ	طَالِـبَـــانِ	طَالِـبَـــيْنِ

Forming the *jamʿ*

The formation of the *jamʿ* is a bit more complicated. The complexity is due to the fact that we have two distinct ways of forming the plural. One of these, similar to the *muthannā*, entails only the addition of a **suffix** to the original *mufrad* form while the other involves **disruption** of the original *mufrad* form. When we leave the *mufrad* form unchanged and simply hitch a suffix to it, we get the *unbroken* or *sound plural*; and when we disrupt the *mufrad* form we get the broken plural.

***Jamʿ sālim*, or the sound plural**

In Lesson 5 we are going to come across the fact that an *ism* can be either masculine or feminine. Here we are going to jump the gun a bit by saying that the specific suffix that is added to the *mufrad* form to render it plural depends on gender. The suffix for a masculine word differs from that of a feminine word. In this way we get two types of *jamʿ sālim*: *mudhakkar*¸ and *muʾannath*.

Jamʿ mudhakkar sālim

In order to get the sound masculine plural, or *jamʿ mudhakkar sālim*, simply add the suffix *-ūna* or *-īna* to the end of the word.

مُفْـرَد	جَـمْعُ الْمُذَكَّرِ السَّالِـم	
مُسْلِمٌ	مُسْلِمُوْنَ	مُسْلِمِيْنَ

مُؤْمِنٌ	مُؤْمِنُوْنَ	مُؤْمِنِيْنَ
طَالِبٌ	طَالِبُوْنَ	طَالِبِيْنَ

Jamʿ muʾannath sālim

In order to get the sound feminine plural, or *jamʿ muʾannath sālim*, simply add the suffix *-ātun* or *-ātin* to the end of the word.

مُفْرَد	جَمْعُ الْمُؤَنَّثِ السَّالِم	
مُسْلِمَةٌ	مُسْلِمَاتٌ	مُسْلِمَاتٍ
مُؤْمِنَةٌ	مُؤْمِنَاتٌ	مُؤْمِنَاتٍ
طَالِبَةٌ	طَالِبَاتٌ	طَالِبَاتٍ

***Jamʿ mukassar*, the broken plural**

As its name shows, the *jamʿ mukassar* involves breaking or disrupting the basic form of the *mufrad*. There is, however, no single standard pattern of breaking up the *mufrad*. Instead, we have a number of patterns, some of which will be demonstrated here. The list, however, is not exhaustive.

But although the list is not exhaustive, it is still quite long. Therefore we will break it up into two separate tables, each containing six forms of the broken plural. Hopefully this will make it easier to commit these forms and their given examples to memory.

In these tables we will use the *fāʾ*, *ʿayn* and *lām* as place holders in the names we give to the standard forms. Accordingly, the plural of قَلَم will come on the standard form of أَفْعَال , yielding the word أَقْلَام , while the standard form for the plural of مَسْجِد will be مَفَاعِل , giving us the plural as مَسَاجِد .

مُفْرَد	جَـمْـع مُـكَـسَّـر (١)					
	أَفْعَالٌ	فُعُلٌ	فِعَالٌ	فُعُوْلٌ	فُعَلٌ	فَعَلَةٌ
قَلَمٌ	أَقْلَامٌ					
كِتَابٌ		كُتُبُ				
جَبَلٌ			جِبَالٌ			
بَيْتٌ				بُيُوْتٌ		
سُوْرَةٌ					سُوَرٌ	
طالِبٌ						طَلَبَةٌ

مُفْرَد	جَـمْـع مُـكَـسَّـر (٢)					
	فُعَلَاءُ	أَفْعُلٌ	أَفْعِلَةٌ	مَفَاعِلُ	مَفَاعِيْلُ	فَعَالِلَةٌ
عَالِمٌ	عُلَمَاءُ					
شَهْرٌ		أَشْهُرٌ				
سُؤَالٌ			أَسْئِلَةٌ			
مَسْجِدٌ				مَسَاجِدُ		
مِفْتَاحٌ					مَفَاتِيْحُ	
أُسْتَاذٌ						أَسَاتِذَةُ

LESSON 4

Definiteness

In English, when I wish to speak of a specific book, I will refer to it as *the book*, whereas it will simply be *a book* when no specific book is intended. *The book* would then be *definite*, while *a book* is *indefinite*.

In Arabic it is the definite article *al-* at the beginning of an *ism* that chiefly determines whether a word will be definite or indefinite. However, the prefix *al-* works in tandem with the use of *tanwīn* at the end of the *ism*. The cardinal rule is that when *al-* appears at the beginning of an *ism* it will not get *tanwīn* at the end, and vice versa, if it has *tanwīn* at the end it will not get *al-* at the beginning.

A word prefixed with *al-* will be definite, or *maʿrifah*. However, it does not follow automatically that it will be indefinite, or *nakirah*, simply because it has *tanwīn* at the end and lacks *al-* at the beginning. The fact is that a word may sometimes have no *al-* at the beginning, have a *tanwīn* at the end and still be *maʿrifah*. This is true of personal names or proper nouns (*ʿalam* in Arabic). In the sentence,

مـحمدٌ رسولُ اللهِ

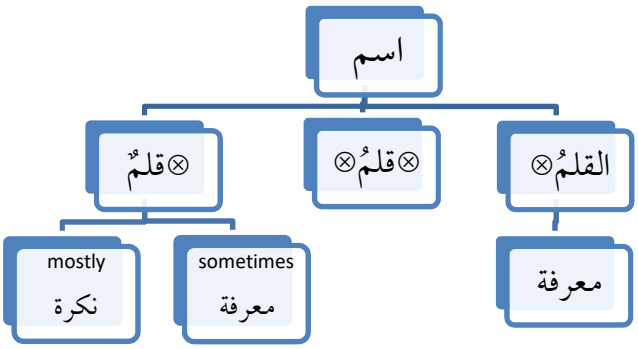
the word *Muḥammad* can clearly be seen to carry a *tanwīn*, and yet it is *maʿrifah*. This is because it is a personal name.

What we learn from here is that an *ism* either carries *al-* at the beginning, or *tanwīn* at the end.

- When it carries *al-* it is *maʿrifah*.
- When it carries *tanwīn* it is
    - sometimes still *maʿrifah*, as in the case of personal names;
    - but mostly *nakirah*.

Now, we know that an *ism* can never have both *al-* and *tanwīn*. But does it ever happen that it becomes bereft of both *al-* and *tanwīn*, ending up with neither *al-* at the beginning nor *tanwīn* at the end? Yes, it does, and there are specific reasons for that happening. However, going into those reasons, and answering the question as to whether those cases would be considered *maʿrifah* or *nakirah* goes beyond our immediate scope for now.

In a nutshell we may represent the findings of this lesson in the following diagram where the sign ⊗ will represent the absence of either *al-* at the beginning, or *tanwīn* at the end:



LESSON 5

Gender

Arabic, unlike, English, does not really possess a neuter gender. Every word has to be either masculine or feminine. In English one could, of course, adapt *master* to *mistress*, or *uncle* to *aunt*, but the same ease is notably absent when it comes to the masculine form for *nurse* or the feminine form for *president*.

In determining whether a word is *mudhakkar* (masculine) or *muʾannath* (feminine) there is an easy rule: begin with the assumption that the word is *mudhakkar*. Then, to determine whether the word is *muʾannath*, consider the following two questions:

- **Does it denote a female?** In other words, is the person indicated by the word a female?
- **Does it contain a sign of femininity?** The main sign of femininity is of course the *tā marbūṭah* (rounded *tā*, ة).

If the answer is *no* to both, the word remains *mudhakkar*, eg.

رَجُلٌ ، إِبْرَاهِيمُ ، كِتَابٌ ، سَعِيدٌ ، مَسْجِدٌ

If the answer is *yes* to both, the word is definitely *muʾannath*, eg.

اِمْرَأَةٌ ، مَنَارَةٌ ، مُسْلِمَةٌ ، مَكْتَبَةٌ ، فَاطِمَةُ

If it answers *yes* to one and *no* to the other, the rule is that **denotation trumps the sign** it contains. Thus, if it contains a sign of femininity but the person it denotes is a male, it will be *mudhakkar*, eg.

طَلْحَةُ ، حَمْزَةُ ، اَلْعَلَّامَةُ ، الدَّاعِيَةُ

But if it denotes a female despite the lack of any sign of femininity, it will be considered *muʾannath*, eg.

زَيْنَبُ ، مَرْيَمُ ، سُعَادُ ، حَامِلٌ ، حَائِضٌ

This table will help setting all of this into perspective:

GENDER	FEMININE SIGN	FEMININE DENOTATION	WORD
مذكر	×	×	رَجُل
مؤنث	✓	✓[1]	مَكْتَبَة
مؤنث	✓	✓	فَاطِمَة
مذكر	×	×	مَسْجِد
مذكر	✓	×	طَلْحَة
مؤنث	×	✓	مَرْيَم
مؤنث	×	✓	حَائِض
مذكر	×	×	إِبْرَاهِيْم

Muʾannath samāʿī, the received feminine

There are some words in Arabic that display no ostensible trace of being feminine, yet they are feminine. We call these *muʾannath samāʿī* which means that the Arabs have been heard to treat them as feminine. Technically we will refer to these as the *received feminine*. Words such as شَمْس (sun) and نَار (fire) are received feminine words.

[1] With inanimate things such as a library (which is what *maktabah* means) there is of course no way to determine whether they are biologically male or female. In such cases the mere appearance of the *tā marbūṭah* is taken as sufficient to indicate femininity.

LESSON 6

Inflection

The idea of inflection is foreign to English. Thus, whether Jack hits John, or John hits Jack, in a sentence describing the fact that one of them hit the other, both words will remain unchanged as they are. We will not get a case of *Jack*^{un} *hit John*^{an}.

The Arabic noun is not as impervious to change. The *ism* changes the *ḥarakah* of its last letter (we will call it the *end-case*) to denote the role it plays in the sentence. Accordingly, in respect of what he happens to be doing in the sentence, Zayd could be *Zayd*^{un}, *Zayd*^{an}, or Zayd^{in} (but never just *Zayd*^{0}).[2] This change in end-case is what is referred to as *inflection* in English, and *iʿrāb* in Arabic.

To say that *iʿrāb* is the very soul of *naḥw* is an understatement. However, it remains true that not all Arabic nouns lend themselves to inflection. Some of them are every bit as impervious to change as their English counterparts. Those that lend themselves to *iʿrāb* are called *muʿrab* (inflected) while those that refuse inflection are called *mabnī* (uninflected).

Differentiating *muʿrab* from *mabnī*

To the student of the language, however, the important question is how to tell *muʿrab* from *mabnī*. So is there an easy way to determine whether an *ism* you encounter in a text is *muʿrab* or *mabnī*?

The easiest way is admittedly not the technically precise way, but at this stage the beginner has a greater need for something that gives him traction (in other words, gets him going) than something that affords grammatical precision. This easy way amounts to simply identifying the major categories of uninflected *mabnī*

[2] I have used superscript here to denote *tanwīn*, The superscribed zero denotes a *sukūn*.

nouns and assuming the rest to be *muʿrab*. What makes this approach useful is the fact that it produces a correct result 95 percent of the time.

We will presently deal with four categories of *mabnī*. Should the word you encounter fall within any of these four categories, it will be *mabnī*; if not, you may safely assume it to be *muʿrab*. [3]

Four categories of *mabnī*

Our four categories of *mabnī* are:

1. the *ḍamāʾir*, or pronouns
2. the *asmāʾ al-ishārah*, or demonstrative pronouns
3. *al-asmāʾ al-mawṣūlah*, or relative pronouns
4. the numbers 11 (eleven) to 19 (nineteen).

1. The *ḍamāʾir*

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. When speaking about someone it becomes tedious to constantly refer to him by his name, eg. *I saw Farīd and asked Farīd if Farīd had a few minutes for me*. Instead we'd say, *I saw Farīd and asked him if he had a few minutes for me*. The underlined words *him* and *he* in this sentence are pronouns.

In Arabic there are altogether 14 pronouns, or *ḍamāʾir* (singular: *ḍamīr*). The differentiation comes about due to three factors:[4]

- person (first, second, third)
- gender (masculine, feminine)
- number (singular, dual, plural)

[3] There are, of course, *mabnī* nouns other than the ones listed here, but listing them all will defeat the present pedagogical purpose. Instructors are encouraged at this point to simply indicate the existence of other types of *mabnī* nouns, and then to identify them as they occur to the student in the course of his studies.

[4] Read more about these concepts in Lessons 7 and 8 of *Forming the Arabic word* Part 1.

The table below sets out the 14 *ḍamāʾir*.

غَائِب 3rd person	مذكَّر	مفرد	هُوَ
		مثنىٰ	هُـمَا
		جمع	هُـمْ
	مؤنَّث	مفرد	هِيَ
		مثنىٰ	هُـمَا
		جمع	هُنَّ
مُخَاطَب 2nd person	مذكَّر	مفرد	أَنْتَ
		مثنىٰ	أَنْـتُمَا
		جمع	أَنْـتُمْ
	مؤنَّث	مفرد	أَنْتِ
		مثنىٰ	أَنْـتُمَا
		جمع	أَنْـتُـنَّ
مُتَكَلِّم 1st person	مفرد		أَنَـا
	جمع		نَحْنُ

2. The *asmāʾ al-ishārah*

The *asmāʾ al-ishārah* are basically the words that correspond to *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* in English. There are twelve of them in all, since they accommodate changes in gender and number and have separate forms for what is near (*qarīb*) and what is far (*baʿīd*).

The table for the *asmāʾ al-ishārah* looks like this:

	قريب		بعيد	
	مذكر	مؤنث	مذكر	مؤنث
مفرد	هٰذَا	هٰذِهِ	ذٰلِكَ	تِلْكَ
مثنىٰ	هٰذَانِ/ هٰذَيْنِ	هَاتَانِ/ هَاتَيْنِ	ذَانِكَ/ ذَيْنِكَ	تَانِكَ/ تَيْنِكَ
جمع	هٰؤُلَاءِ		أُولٰئِكَ	

3. *al-Asmāʾ al-mawṣūlah*

Relative pronouns serve the purpose of connecting a noun to a phrase. For example, if I saw a man yesterday and I now wish to describe him by the fact that I saw him yesterday, I will say, *The man who I saw yesterday is your uncle*. The underlined word *who* serves the purpose of connecting the noun *man* to the phrase *I saw yesterday*. In Arabic we call them *al-asmāʾ al-mawṣūlah*.

There are 8 of them: 3 masculine, 3 feminine, and 2 additional ones. Of the two additional ones, one is used for humans (*man* = the person who), and the other for non-humans (*mā* = the thing which).

	مذكر	مؤنث	
مفرد	الَّذِيْ	الَّتِيْ	مَنْ
مثنىٰ	اللَّذَانِ/ اللَّذَيْنِ	اللَّتَانِ/ اللَّتَيْنِ	
جمع	الَّذِيْنَ	اللَّاتِيْ اللَّوَاتِيْ	مَـا

	اللَّائِيْ		

4. The numbers 11 to 19

The words used to denote the eight numbers from 11 to 19 consist of two parts. The first one indicates the additional number and the other denotes the ten. The end casings of both these words will always carry a *fatḥah*, no matter what the grammatical situation might be. Since it is *mabnī* it is impervious to change.

The numbers from 11 to 19 are set out in the table below.

١١	أَحَدَ عَشَرَ
١٢	اِثْنَا عَشَرَ
١٣	ثَلاَثَـةَ عَشَرَ
١٤	أَرْبَعَةَ عَشَرَ
١٥	خَمْسَةَ عَشَرَ

١٦	سِتَّةَ عَشَرَ
١٧	سَبْعَةَ عَشَرَ
١٨	ثَـمَانِيَةَ عَشَرَ
١٩	تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ

The 30 words in these four categories are the most commonly occurring examples of the *mabnī* noun. They are the ones that refuse to adapt their end-cases for inflection. They maintain the same end-case under all circumstances.

You might have noticed that the dual forms for both the *asmāʾ al-ishārah* and *al-asmāʾ al-mawṣūlah* reveal a certain amount of adaptability. If we had to subtract them from the list of 30 we are left with only 24.

The purpose for knowing them is to help us decide whether a word we encounter is *muʿrab* or *mabnī*. If it happens to be any of these two dozen words it will of course be *mabnī*, and you would not have to worry with giving any *iʿrāb*. If it is not one of these 24, you have a very good chance that it will be *muʿrab*.

With that decision behind you, you will then be able to go on and apply the rules of *iʿrāb* which follow in Sections Two and Three.

SECTION TWO:

Sentence structure

LESSON 7

The *jumlah ismiyyah* (nominal sentence)

When words stand in isolation and do not interact with one another they are not susceptible to *iʿrāb*. It is only in the context of a sentence, or *jumlah*, where the various components start exerting an influence upon one another, that the phenomenon of *iʿrāb* arises. Sentence structure is therefore of crucial importance to *naḥw*.

The most basic thing to consider when analysing sentence structure is the word with which the sentence begins. Sentences basically begin with either an *ism* or a *fiʿl*.[5] Already we have two categories of sentences:

- The sentence that begins with an *ism* is called a *jumlah ismiyyah* (nominal sentence)
- and the one which begins with a *fiʿl* is called a *jumlah fiʿliyyah* (verbal sentence).

Having now identified the two types of sentences, we proceed with the *jumlah ismiyyah*.

1. Structure of the *jumlah ismiyyah*

At the most fundamental level the *jumlah ismiyyah* is a sentence which makes the statement,

A	is was will be	B

[5] When a sentence happens to begin with a *ḥarf*, you simply disregard the *ḥarf* and the word/s directly connected to it, and consider the *ism* or *fiʿl* that then follows as an essential of the sentence.

Its basic components are therefore two:

A	the SUBJECT about whom information is conveyed
B	the PREDICATE, which is the conveyed information about A

The subject, A, is called the *mubtadaʾ*, and the predicate, B, is called the *khabar*.

We may thus analyse examples of the *jumlah ismiyyah* as follows:

جملة اسمية	
مبتدأ	خبر
الكِتَابُ	مُفِيْدٌ
أَحْـمَدُ	مُدَرِّسٌ
القُرْآنُ	كلامُ اللهِ
الطَّالِبُ	ذَكِـيٌّ
الـمُدَرِّسُ	جَالِسٌ

Now look closely: Do you notice anything about the *ḥarakah* of the last letter of every word, in both columns (with the exception of the word الله in the middle of the second column)? What do they all have in common? The vowel sign *ḍammah*, or its doubled form, the *ḍammatayn*.

You might remember the discussion in Lesson 6 about the change in the *ḥarakah* of the last letter of a noun, which we called the end-case or *iʿrāb*. You might also recall that words receive *iʿrāb* on account of the respective roles they play in the

sentence. So what would happen if you brought that knowledge to bear upon the *jumlah ismiyyah* and its parts, the *mubtadaʿ* and the *khabar*?

Would you able to conclude that simply being the *mubtadaʿ* or the *khabar* of a sentence is reason enough to give the *ism* a *ḍammah* or *ḍammatayn*? And in the next few lessons you will soon notice other patterns of the end-case emerging. So what is the link between these various parts of the sentence and the *ḥarakah* of the end-case?

For the answer to these tentative questions, let's wait till we get to Section Three.

LESSON 8

Modifying the *jumlah ismiyyah* through *kāna*

The *jumlah ismiyyah* makes a simple statement. The simplicity of the statement lies in two things:

- firstly, it is located in the present tense, eg.

الْبَابُ مَفْتُوحٌ

The door is open.

- and secondly, it carries no emphasis, eg.

اللهُ غَفُورٌ

Allah is Oft-forgiving.

But how does one go about if you wanted to place the statement in the past tense, or if you wanted to add emphasis? To bring about this type of modification, the Arabic language provides us with two devices. One of them takes the sentence into the past tense, while the other adds emphasis.

The subject of our present lesson is the device *kāna.* This word, which means *was*, takes the statement from the present tense to the past tense. So, when we add *kāna* to our example above, we get the following:

كَانَ الْبَابُ مَفْتُوحًا

The door was open.

But while the addition of *kāna* changed the meaning of the sentence, you might also have noticed that it modified the *iʿrāb* of the *khabar*. In the original sentence, the *khabar* carried a *ḍammah*. Now, after *kāna* was added, it carries a *fatḥah*.

There is another change which you will not quite see in the sentence. While each part of the *jumlah ismiyyah* has a particular *iʿrāb*, which you can see, each part also has its own specific name. The first part is, of course, the *mubtadaʾ* and the second part the *khabar*. This is the other area where the addition of *kāna* has an effect. It gives new names to both parts. The *mubtadaʾ* now becomes the *ism* of *kāna*, while the *khabar* becomes the *khabar* of *kāna*.

This table demonstrates the modifications brought about by *kāna*.

TENSE	The tense changes from the PRESENT to the PAST tense.
NAMES	The *MUBTADAʾ* now becomes the *ISM* OF *KĀNA*. The *KHABAR* now becomes the *KHABAR* OF *KĀNA*.
IʿRĀB	The *IʿRĀB* of the *KHABAR* OF *KĀNA* changes from a *ḌAMMAH* to a *FATḤAH*.

After modification through *kāna*, the previous examples will now look like this:

كان	اسم كان	خبر كان
كَانَ	الكِتَابُ	مُفِيْدًا
كَانَ	أَحْـمَدُ	مُدَرِّسًا
كَانَ	القُرْآنُ	كَلَامَ اللهِ
كَانَ	الطَّالِبُ	ذَكِـيًّا
كَانَ	الـمُدَرِّسُ	جَالِسًا

The sisters of *kāna*

You have seen the effects that *kāna* has on the *jumlah ismiyyah*. Like *kāna* there are a group of other words—just about a dozen of them—that have a similar effect on the sentence structure, though not with exactly the same meaning. Since they resemble *kāna* in effect, they are called *the sisters of kāna*.

Presently we will look at just a few of these. They are the seven listed in the table below.

is not	لَيْسَ
became	صَارَ
became (by morning)	أَصْبَحَ
became (by evening)	أَمْسَىٰ
remained	ظَلَّ
spent the night	بَاتَ
as long as	مَا دَامَ

The following examples demonstrate the use of the sisters of *kāna* in context.

The man is not energetic.	لَيْسَ الرَّجُلُ نَشِيطًا.
Muḥammad became a doctor.	صَارَ مُحَمَّدٌ طَبِيبًا.
The boy became ill (by morning).	أَصْبَحَ الْوَلَدُ مَرِيضًا.
The worker became tired (by evening).	أَمْسَىٰ الْعَامِلُ مُتْعَبًا.

The wall remained upright.	ظَلَّ الْـجِدَارُ قَائِمـًا
The student spent the night studying.	بَاتَ التِّلْمِيذُ مُطَالِعًا.
The time of Maghrib remains as long as the afterglow is apparent.	وَقْتُ الْـمَغْرِبِ مَا دَامَ الشَّفَقُ ظَاهِرًا.

The complete *kānā*

You have learnt that *kāna* means *was*. This is the most common meaning of the word. It can also have another shade of meaning. Sometimes it means, not simply *was*, but *there was*.

What is the difference between *was* and *there was*? We use *was* when we want to describe, in the past tense, something *about* someone. For example, *Zayd was tall*, *ʿUmar was strong*, *ʿAbdullah was kind*. In these sentences you will notice that there are words on both sides of *kāna*. To the left of *kāna* stands the someone (*Zayd, ʿUmar, ʿAbdullāh*) about whom we are speaking, and to the right there is the information (*tall, strong*, *kind*) that we are imparting about each of them.

What would happen if we removed the information? Then the sentences would look like this: *Zayd was… , ʿUmar was… , `Abdullāh was…* Very obviously, there is something missing here. Because the sentence lacks completeness, this particular *kāna* is called *kāna nāqiṣah*, or the incomplete *kāna*. Together with its sisters, it constitutes a certain class of *fiʿl* called the *fiʿl nāqiṣ*, or incomplete verb. They are incomplete because they need a *khabar* to complete the sentence.

But in the Arabic language we do encounter the verb *kāna* standing on its own, and needing no *khabar* to complete it. For example,

كَانَ فِي الْبَيْتِ رَجُلٌ

So what type of *kāna* is this? This particular *kāna* is called the *kāna tāmmah*, or complete *kāna*. What makes it complete is the fact that it does not need a *khabar* to complete the sentence. It is not intended to convey any information about a person or thing, but rather just the fact that it simply *existed*. This is why we translate it, not simply as *was*, but rather, *there was*.

The sentence above therefore translates into, *There was a man in the house*.

Therefore, take care when you come across *kāna* in text. It may be the normal incomplete *kāna* in which case you may go ahead and look for its *ism* and *khabar*. But it may also be the complete *kāna* which, like any other *fiʿl*, will simply have a *fāʿil*.[6]

[6] You will learn more about the *fāʿil* in Lesson 10.

LESSON 9

Modifying the *jumlah ismiyyah* through *inna*

The previous lesson introduced you to the idea of modifying the *jumlah ismiyyah*. There we looked in detail at modifying the sentence to place it in the past tense. In this lesson we deal with modifying the *jumlah ismiyyah* to add emphasis.

The device we use to add emphasis is the particle *inna*—a word that we will translate, for the sake of convenience and lack of an adequate equivalent, as *verily*. In terms of nomenclature, the addition of this word has an effect upon the sentence similar to that of *kāna*: it turns the *mubtadaʾ* into the *ism* of *inna*, and the *khabar* into the *khabar* of *inna*. When it comes to *iʿrāb*, however, its effect is the inverse of *kāna*'s effect. It changes the *iʿrāb* of the *mubtadaʾ*/*ism of inna* from *ḍammah* to *fatḥah*, while the *iʿrāb* of the *khabar* is left unchanged.

This table sets out the effects that the addition of *inna* has upon the *jumlah ismiyyah:*

MEANING	Emphasis is added to the sentence.
NAMES	The *MUBTADAʾ* now becomes the *ISM* OF *INNA*. The *KHABAR* now becomes the *KHABAR* OF *INNA*.
IʿRĀB	The *IʿRĀB* of the *ISM* OF *INNA* changes from a *ḌAMMAH* to a *FATḤAH*.

After modification with *inna* the *jumlah ismiyyah* would now look like this:

إنَّ	اسم إنَّ	خبر إنَّ
إنَّ	الكِتَابَ	مُفِيْدٌ
إنَّ	أَحْـمَدَ	مُدَرِّسٌ
إنَّ	القُرْآنَ	كَلَامُ اللهِ
إنَّ	الطَّالِبَ	ذَكِـيٌّ
إنَّ	الـمُدَرِّسَ	جَالِسٌ

The sisters of *inna*

Like *kāna*, *inna* also has sisters. They are a group of words that have the same effect upon the sentence as *inna*. They also have an *ism* whose *iʿrāb* they change to a *fatḥah*, and a *khabar* whose *iʿrāb* remains a *ḍammah*.

These are the sisters of *inna*:

that	أَنَّ
because	لِأَنَّ
as if	كَأَنَّ
but	لٰكِنَّ
perhaps	لَعَلَّ
if only	لَيْتَ

A few examples will demonstrate the use and effect of these sisters of *inna*.

﴿ اِعْلَمُوْا أَنَّ اللهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ﴾	Know that Allah is severe in punishment, and that Allah is oft-forgiving, most merciful.
مَا حَضَرَ الطَّالِبُ لِأَنَّ أُمَّهُ مَرِيْضَةٌ.	The student did not come because his mother is ill.
لَا يَتْرُكُ التَّاجِرُ دُكَّانَهُ، كَأَنَّ الدُّكَّانَ بَيْتُهُ.	The trader does not leave his shop, as if the shop is his house.
أَحْمَدُ حَاضِرٌ، لٰكِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا غَائِبٌ.	Aḥmad is present, but Muḥammad is absent.
لَعَلَّ الطَّالِبَ نَاجِحٌ.	Perhaps the student is successful.
لَيْتَ السُّؤَالَ سَهْلٌ!	If only the question was easy!

LESSON 10

The *jumlah fiʿliyyah* (verbal sentence)

The *jumlah fiʿliyyah*, as stated before, is a sentence that begins with a *fiʿl*. The *fiʿl*, as we have learnt, indicates an act that is carried out. Now, that act has to be carried out by someone, and often—though not always—the sentence might even mention the party who is on the receiving end of that act.

Structure of the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*

Accordingly, we may expect at least two, but sometimes even three parts to the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*:

the verb denoting the act:	the *FIʿL*
the person carrying out the act:	the *FĀʿIL* (agent)
the party upon whom the act is carried out:	the *MAFʿŪL BIHĪ* (patient)

In tabular form, this is what the analysis of the *jumlah fiʿliyyah* would look like:

فعل	فاعل	مفعول به
جَاءَ	سَعِيْدٌ	
ضَرَبَ	زَيْدٌ	عَمْرًا
قَامَ	الْخَطِيْبُ	

فعل	فاعل	مفعول به
أَكَلَ	الْوَلَدُ	خُبْزًا
قَتَلَ	الرَّجُلُ	الْكَلْبَ
يَفْتَحُ	التِّلْمِيْذُ	الكِتَابَ

If you take careful note of the *iʿrāb* of both the *fāʿil* and the *mafʿūl bihī* you will begin to notice the emergence of a certain consistent pattern. You will notice that the *fāʿil* displays a constant *ḍammah* or *ḍammatayn* in its end-case, while the *mafʿūl bihī* shows an equally constant *fatḥah* or *fatḥatayn*.

What does this tell you? Refresh your memory of what you learnt in Lesson 6: words receive their *iʿrāb* (i.e. the *ḥarakah* of the last letter) on account of the role that they play in the sentence. Do you see a rule or two taking shape here? The word that acts out the deed constantly receives the *ḍammah* sign while the one on the receiving end of the deed receives a *fatḥah*.

For the moment it is enough to simply anticipate and adumbrate this rule without going into its actual details. The details will follow soon enough in Section Three.

LESSON 11

Modifying the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*

In a sentence that possesses both a *fāʿil* and a *mafʿūl bihī* it is possible to bring about a certain modification. This modification entails changing the voice of the *fiʿl* from active to passive.[7] In other words,

- أَكَلَ (he ate) is changed to أُكِلَ (it was eaten)
- ضَرَبَ (he hit) is changed to ضُرِبَ (he was hit)
- قَتَلَ (he killed) is changed to قُتِلَ (he was killed)

After this modification the table now looks like this:

فعل مجهول	فاعل	مفعول به
ضُرِبَ		عَمْرًا
أُكِلَ		خُبْزًا
قُتِلَ		الْكَلْبَ
يُفْتَحُ		الكِتَابَ

But we are not yet done. You would have noticed that changing the *fiʿl* to the passive voice (*majhūl*) causes the space for the *fāʿil* to become vacated. Two things will now happen:

- One, the *mafʿūl bihī* will move into the space of the *fāʿil*.
- Two, when it does so, it will leave its old *iʿrāb* behind and adopt the *iʿrāb* particular to the new position it now occupies, which is the *iʿrāb* of the *fāʿil*.

[7] Read more about this in Lesson 9 of *Forming the Arabic word* Part 1.

- However, since it is not really the *fāʿil*, but rather just substitutes for the *fāʿil* by filling its space, we call it the *nāʾib al-fāʿil* (surrogate agent).

Our table now changes to the following:

فعل مجهول	نائب الفاعل
ضُرِبَ	عَمْرٌو
أُكِلَ	خُبْزٌ
قُتِلَ	الْكَلْبُ
يُفْتَحُ	الكِتَابُ

SECTION THREE:

Causes of *iʿrāb*

(inflection)

LESSON 12

Causes of *rafʿ* (the nominative case)

Types of *iʿrāb*

As many as the causes of *iʿrāb* may be—and we will be discussing 19 of them— the last letter of the *ism muʿrab* could only conceivably carry one of three *ḥarakāt*: either a *ḍammah*, a *fatḥah*, or a *kasrah*. The 19 causes soon to come under discussion are distributed between these three cases.

For the sake of ease each case is referred to by a particular term:

- The *ḍammah* case is referred to as ***rafʿ***, and when a word happens to be in the *rafʿ* case it is called ***marfūʿ***. In English we call this case *the nominative case*.
- The *fatḥah* case is referred to as ***naṣb***, and a word in the *naṣb* case is termed ***manṣūb***. The corresponding English term is *the accusative case*.
- The *kasrah* case is referred to as ***jarr***, and when a word is in the *jarr* case it is ***majrūr***, or in English, *the genitive case*.

Having now properly identified and named the three cases of *iʿrab*, we may proceed to the causes of each case.

—❖—❖—❖—

Causes of *rafʿ* (the nominative case)

1. From the *jumlah ismiyyah*

The previous lesson would already have alerted you to the causes of *rafʿ* which we are about to discuss. The gist of that lesson was

- that the *jumlah ismiyyah* has two basic components, the *mubtadaʾ* and the *khabar*;

- and the *jumlah ismiyyah* may be modified through the addition of either *kāna* or *inna*
- in which case the *mubtadaʾ* will become the *ism* of *kāna*/*inna*, while the *khabar* becomes the *khabar* of *kāna*/*inna*.

That much about what names to give to the parts. Now, what about the *iʿrāb* of those parts? You would have been alert enough to notice that—

- the *mubtadaʾ* was constantly *marfūʿ*
- the *khabar* was constantly *marfūʿ*
- the *ism* of *kāna* remained *marfūʿ* after modification
- as did the *khabar* of *inna*
- and that it was only the *khabar* of *kāna* and the *ism* of *inna* that underwent a change in *iʿrāb* due to modification.

What we learn from here is that the *jumlah ismiyyah* in its simple and modified forms provides us with 4 causes of *rafʿ*. Since there are only 6 in all, this is a major step forward.

We may set this information in the following table where the shaded areas indicate the causes of *rafʿ* arising out of the *jumlah ismiyyah*.

	جملة اسمية	
	مبتدأ	خبر
كان	اسم كان	خبر كان
إن	اسم إن	خبر إن

2. From the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*

The structure of the simple *jumlah fiʿliyyah* provided us with the following parts:

- a *fiʿl*
- its *fāʿil*
- and often even a *mafʿūl bihī*

The *fāʿil*, as you would have noticed from the examples, constantly remains *marfūʿ* while the *mafʿūl bihī* becomes *manṣūb.*

However, when we change the *fiʿl* from the active voice to the passive voice—

- the *fāʿil* disappears
- the *mafʿūl bihī* steps into the position earlier occupied by the *fāʿil*
- and then sheds its own *iʿrab* of *naṣb* and adopts the *iʿrāb* of *rafʿ* originally possessed by the *fāʿil*,
- thus becoming known as the *nāʾib al-fāʿil.*

Remember what we said earlier about there being 6 causes of *rafʿ* all in all, of which we had only learnt 4? Well, we have just discovered the remaining two in the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*. They are the *fāʿil* and the *nāʾib al-fāʿil.*

The causes of *rafʿ* emerging out of the *jumlah fiʿliyyah* are the ones shaded in this table:

جملة فعلية		
فعل معروف	فاعل	مفعول به
فعل مجهول	←	نائب الفاعل

We have now completed the causes of *rafʿ*. In terms of what we have learnt, an *ism* could be *marfuʿ* for any of the following reasons:

- it is the *mubtadaʾ* in a *jumlah ismiyyah*
- it is the *khabar* in a *jumlah ismiyyah*
- it is the *ism* of *kāna* in a modified *jumlah ismiyyah*
- it is the *khabar* of *inna* in a modified *jumlah ismiyyah*
- it is the *fāʿil* in a *jumlah fiʿliyyah*
- or it is the *nāʾib al-fāʿil* in a modified *jumlah fiʿliyyah*

It might be a good idea to begin keeping a progress chart for the causes of *iʿrāb* as we proceed with learning them. We might jump the gun a bit and say that—

- for *rafʿ* there are 6 causes (and we have learnt them all)
- for *naṣb* we will be dealing with 9 cases (3 of which we have already come across)
- and *jarr* has only 2 causes.

This allows us to draw our progress chart (in which will take the slight liberty of foreshadowing the three causes of *naṣb* that we have already come across, but which actually form part of the next lesson):

IʿRĀB PROGRESS CHART

أسباب الإعراب		
أسباب الرفع	أسباب النصب	سببا الـجر
مبتدأ	خبر كان	
خبر	اسم إنَّ	
اسم كان	مفعول به	
خبر إنَّ		
فاعل		
نائب الفاعل		

LESSON 13

Causes of *naṣb* (the accusative case) I

The previous lesson has already exposed us to 3 of the 9 cases of *naṣb* with which we will be dealing. Two of them arose from the modified *jumlah ismiyyah* and one from the simple *jumlah fiʿliyyah*.

From the modified *jumlah ismiyyah* we had—

- the *khabar* of *kāna*
- and *ism* of *inna*;

while the simple *jumlah fiʿliyyah* gave us—

- the *mafʿūl bihī.*

With this information we were able to fill three spots of the nine positions under the causes of *naṣb* on our *iʿrāb* progress chart.

Before continuing on the remaining six, let us look at a few examples that display these cases of *naṣb*.

And Allah was well-aware of what you do.	﴿ وَكَانَ اللهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرًا ﴾
Indeed, Allah has power over all things.	﴿ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴾
And Dāwūd killed Jālūt.	﴿ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوْتَ ﴾
Indeed, the book is useful.	إِنَّ الْكِتَابَ مُفِيْدٌ.
We are studying the subject of syntax.	نَدْرُسُ مَادَّةَ النَّحْوِ.

كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ وَلَدًا ذَكِيًّا.	Ibrāhīm was an intelligent boy.

IʿRĀB PROGRESS CHART

أسباب الإعراب		
أسباب الرفع	أسباب النصب	سببا الـجر
مبتدأ	خبر كان	
خبر	اسم إنَّ	
اسم كان	مفعول به	
خبر إنَّ		
فاعل		
نائب الفاعل		

Now, on to the remaining six causes of *naṣb*.

LESSON 14

Causes of *naṣb* (the accusative case) II

Non-essential components of a sentence

At the simplest level, a sentence can either be a *jumlah ismiyyah* consisting of nothing but a bare *mubtadaʾ* and *khabar*, or a *jumlah fiʿliyyah* comprising of only a *fiʿl*, *fāʿil* and occasionally a *mafʿūl bihī*. However, anyone who has seen what Arabic text looks like would know for a fact that sentences are rarely as simple as that.

While the *mubtadaʾ—khabar* combination, or the *fiʿl—fāʿil—mafʿūl bihī* structure, form the core essentials of a sentence, there are additional, non-essential elements that may be included into the sentence for a range of purposes. Quite a number of these happen to be in the *manṣūb* case. In this lesson we begin our acquaintance with three of them, leaving the remaining three for the lesson that follows.

The other *mafʿūls*

In the simple *jumlah fiʿliyyah* we came across the *mafʿūl bihī*, the patient upon whom action is carried out. There are, however, three other types of *mafʿūl* with which we will become acquainted in the present lesson. They are:

- the ***mafʿūl muṭlaq***
- the ***mafʿūl lahū*** (or ***mafʿūl li-ajlihī***)
- and the ***mafʿūl fīhi*** (or ***ẓarf***)

1. The *mafʿūl muṭlaq* (absolute object)

The *mafʿūl muṭlaq* is a usage somewhat unique to the Arabic language. It is sometimes translated as the *absolute object*. To get an idea of what this usage entails, consider what a typical *jumlah fiʿliyyah* does: it relates the doing of a *deed*.

On occasion, however, a speaker might want to do one of two things:

- he might want to add a description of the deed mentioned;
- or he might just want to add emphasis to his narration of the deed.

He faces a bit of a problem here: descriptions are usually added to nouns, and not to verbs. Thus, the *sky* (a noun) can be *blue* (an adjective), but in the sentence, *The bird flew in the blue sky*, how do I describe the bird's flight (i.e. the verb *flew*) in the sentence?

This is where a particular device of the Arabic language called the *maṣdar*, or verbal noun, becomes of use.[8] The very name of this device affords a glimpse into its role. As a verbal noun, it is the bridge between the world of verbs and the world of nouns. Therefore, when the need arises to add an adjective to a verb, the *maṣdar* bridge is adjoined to the verb, and then the adjective is simply added to the *maṣdar*. You can see this in the examples below.

We have granted you a conquest, a clear conquest.	﴿ إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا ﴾
And that *Allah* may give you aid, mighty aid.	﴿ وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيزًا ﴾
We have understood syntax, a correct understanding.	لَقَدْ فَهِمْنَا النَّحْوَ فَهْمًا صَحِيحًا.
I beat him, a severe beating.	ضَرَبْتُهُ ضَرْبًا شَدِيدًا.

You would of course have noticed that the translation above does not reflect the way we would typically express ourselves in English. Instead of repeating the word *conquest* we would simply say, *We have granted you a clear conquest*. And we

[8] See more about the *maṣdar* in Lesson 15 of *Forming the Arabic word* Part 1.

would say, *We have understood syntax correctly* instead of repeating *a correct understanding*. The awkward translation above was employed only to convey a sense of the structure of the sentence in the original Arabic.

What we have learnt here is that the *mafʿūl muṭlaq* is added to the verb to add a description of the verb. Sometimes, however, it is added simply to add emphasis to the sentence, without any further description. And providing an adequate direct translation for this type of emphasis then becomes even more elusive. Have a look at these examples.

﴿وكَلَّمَ اللهُ مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا﴾.	And Allah spoke to Mūsā [indeed].
﴿ وَمَا بَدَّلُوْا تَبْدِيْلًا ﴾.	And they did not change [at all].
ضَرَبْتُهُ ضَرْبًا.	I gave him a *beating*. [emphasis on the last word]

The *mafʿūl muṭlaq* may therefore be said to be **a non-essential component of the sentence in which the *maṣdar* is repeated after the *fiʿl*, either for the sake of emphasis, or description.** And in terms of *iʿrāb*, it will always be *manṣūb*.

2. The *mafʿūl lahū* (causative object)

If a typical *jumlah fiʿliyyah* describes the doing of a deed, then the next type of *mafʿūl* is one that advances *a reason or cause* for why that deed was done. This is why it is called the *mafʿūl lahū* or *mafʿūl li-ajlihī*, which translates literally into "done for that reason". More properly it is referred to as the *causative object*.

The examples which follow demonstrate the use of the *mafʿūl lahū*.

ضَرَبْتُ الْوَلَدَ تَأْدِيبًا.	I hit the boy in order to teach (him) manners.

The trader travelled to seek sustenance.	سَافَرَ التَّاجِرُ طَلَبًا لِلرِّزْقِ.
The soldier fought in defence of his country.	قَاتَلَ الْجُنْدِيُّ دِفَاعًا عَنْ بَلَدِهِ.
We prevented him from travelling for fear of criminals.	مَنَعْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّفَرِ خَوْفًا مِنَ الْـمُجْرِمِيْنَ.
I gave charity to the beggar out of desire for reward.	تَصَدَّقْتُ عَلَى السَّائِلِ رَغْبَةً فِي الثَّوَابِ.

You would have noticed that all the underlined words (in order to, to seek, in defence of, for fear, out of desire) advance reasons for the deeds described in their respective sentences. The *mafʿūl lahū* may therefore be defined as **a non-essential component of the sentence that answers to the question, *Why?*.** And in terms of *iʿrāb*, it will always be *manṣūb*.

3. The *mafʿūl fīhi* or *ẓarf* (adverb)

Another non-essential part of the sentence is the *mafʿūl fīhi*. This term literally means "that in which [the deed] is done". It is also called the *ẓarf*, meaning "container". The corresponding grammatical term for it is the *adverb*. It describes either the time or the place in which the deed takes place. As such we may speak of two types of *ẓarf*:

- a *ẓarf makān*, or locative adverb (i.e. adverb of place);
- and a *ẓarf zamān*, or temporal adverb (i.e. adverb of time).

In the simplest of terms, a *ẓārf* is an addition to a sentence that answers to the questions of *Where?* or *When?*

The table below presents a few examples of the *ẓarf makān*.

The foundation is under the house.	الأَسَاسُ تَحْتَ الْبَيْتِ.
The roof is above the house.	السَّقْفُ فَوْقَ الْبَيْتِ.
The pilgrims prayed at the Kaʿbah.	صَلَّى الْحُجَّاجُ عِنْدَ الْكَعْبَةِ.
Do not pray before a grave.	لاَ تُصَلِّ أَمَامَ قَبْرٍ.
The student hides behind the wall.	يَخْتَفِي الطَّالِبُ وَرَاءَ الْجِدارِ.

Now we look at examples of the *ẓarf zamān*.

The traveller returned after a year.	رَجَعَ الْمُسَافِرُ بَعْدَ عَامٍ.
Pray Fajr before sunrise.	صَلِّ الْفَجْرَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ.
They came to their father in the evening.	﴿ وَجَاءُوْا أَبَاهُمْ عِشَاءً ﴾.
We will visit you on Friday.	سَنَزُوْرُكُمْ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ.
ʿAbdullah fasted for a full month.	صَامَ عَبْدُ اللهِ شَهْرًا كَامِلاً.

To sum up, we may define the *mafʿūl fīhi* or *ẓarf* as **a non-essential component of the sentence that describes either the place or time of the action described in the sentence.** In terms of *iʿrāb* it will never be anything but *manṣūb*.

—❖—❖—❖—

We are now able to record some progress on our *iʿrāb* progress chart.

You will notice that a distinction has been maintained between the essential and non-essentials of the sentence. The non-essentials appear in italics.

***IʿRĀB* PROGRESS CHART**

أسباب الإعراب		
أسباب الرفع	أسباب النصب	سببا الـجر
مبتدأ	خبر كان	
خبر	اسم إنَّ	
اسم كان	مفعول به	
خبر إنَّ	*مفعول مطلق*	
فاعل	*مفعول له/ لأجله*	
نائب الفاعل	*مفعول فيه/ ظرف*	

LESSON 15

Causes of *naṣb* (the accusative case) III

Further non-essentials of the sentence

Among the *manṣūbāt*, we have thus far dealt with three cases of essentials, and three cases of non-essentials. There are no further essentials to be discussed, neither *marfūʿ* nor *manṣūb*. In this lesson we deal with the few remaining non-essential *manṣūbāt*. They are—

- the *ḥāl*
- the *tamyīz*
- and the *ism* of *lā li-nafyi l-jins*.

—❖—❖—❖—

1. The *ḥāl* (circumstantial adjective)

A sentence typically makes a statement in which information is conveyed about one of the characters in the sentence. Let us take an example: Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ returned to his people after forty days. If we wanted to convey the fact that Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ returned, it would suffice to say,

رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ

This much is regular. But now, there is something else we want to say about Mūsā عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ. Over and above the basic fact that he returned, we want to say something about the *state* or *condition* in which he returned. He was angry and he was aggrieved. How does one add this information to the sentence without in any way detracting from its basic purpose which is to state that Mūsā returned?

For this purpose the Arabic language has a device called the *ḥāl*. This word, which literally means *condition*, describes the state, or the condition, or the

circumstances of one of the characters in the sentence. We therefore refer to it as the *circumstantial adjective*.

With the device of the *ḥāl* in place we may now expand our sentence to include a description of the condition that Mūsā was in when he returned:

رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا[9]

In terms of the basic sentence structure, the word *Mūsā* is the *fāʿil*.[10] But in terms of being described by the *ḥāl* it carries another appellation: it is called the *dhu l-ḥāl*.[11]

We may thus define the *ḥāl* as **a word that describes the condition of another word in a sentence**. It will always be *manṣūb*.

Let's look at some examples of the *ḥāl*.

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾	Indeed, We sent you as a witness, a giver of glad tidings, and a warner.
﴿ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَرْضِيَّةً ﴾	Return to your Lord as one who is pleased and with whom (Allah) is pleased.
إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا.	I have been sent but as a teacher.
جَاءَنَا فَقِيرًا، وَذَهَبَ عَنَّا غَنِيًّا.	He came to us as a poor man, and he went away from us as a rich man.

[9] You might wonder why one of these two words *(ghaḍbān)* carries no *tanwīn* while the other *(asif)* carries *tanwīn*. This will all be discussed in Part 2 of this book.

[10] You might be tempted to ask why, as the *fāʿil*, the word *Mūsā* does not display the *ḍammah* which is the sign of it being *marfūʿ*. The answer will come in Part 2 of this book.

[11] Note, though, that being the *dhu l-ḥāl* has absolutely no bearing upon *iʿrāb*. It simply conveys the fact that its state is being described by another word elsewhere in the sentence. In this case it gets its own *iʿrāb* from being the *fāʿil* of the *jumlah fiʿliyyah*.

The youth went forth from his city as a seeker of knowledge.	خَرَجَ الشَّابُّ مِنْ بَلَدِهِ طَالِبًا لِلْعِلْمِ.

—❖—❖—❖—

2. The *tamyīz* (specificative adverb)

The *jumlah ismiyyah* typically makes an association between two things, eg. *Zayd* and *student*:

زَيْدٌ طَالِبٌ

Sometimes this association, instead of being simple and straightforward, becomes qualitative and comparative. Zayd is no longer just a student; he is the best of the students:

زَيْدٌ أَحْسَنُ الطَّلَبَةِ

Thus far we have learnt two things about Zayd:

- he is a student;
- and of all the students he is the best one.

What is it that we don't know? We know that he is a student, and that he is better than the others, but what we do not know yet is the specific aspect in which he surpasses his fellow students.

This is where the Arabic language provides us with a device called the *tamyīz*. It is a word that is added to the sentence to specify the aspect to which a comparative assertion in the sentence applies.

Now, that is a bit of a mouthful. Let's simplify it by returning to Zayd. Our first sentence made the assertion that Zayd is a student. To this the second sentence

adds a qualitative and comparative aspect. It tells us that when you compare Zayd to the rest of the students, he is found to be a student of a better quality. All that is now left for the *tamyīz*, or specificative adverb, to do is to specify for us the precise area in which Zayd supersedes the rest. Let's assume that it is the aspect of character. We may now expand our sentence to include this specification:

زَيْدٌ أَحْسَنُ الطَّلَبَةِ خُلُقًا

If it was his voice that made him superior to his colleagues, we would have said,

زَيْدٌ أَحْسَنُ الطَّلَبَةِ صَوْتًا

or if his superiority was on account of his excellent handwriting, the sentence would have read,

زَيْدٌ أَحْسَنُ الطَّلَبَةِ خَطًّا

In a nutshell, **when a sentence makes a qualitative or quantitative assertion, the *tamyīz* is an addition to that sentence that answers to the question, *In terms of what?*** Its *iʿrāb* will always be *manṣūb*.

Now let's have a look at some examples of *tamyīz*.

﴿ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللهِ ﴾	And who is better in terms of speech than he who calls to Allah?
أَعْظَمُ النِّكَاحِ بَرَكَةً أَيْسَرُهَا مُؤْنَةً.	The marriage that is greatest in terms of blessing, is the one which is least in terms of expense.
صَحِيحُ الْبُخَارِيِّ أَفْضَلُ كُتُبِ الْحَدِيثِ صِحَّةً.	*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is the best of the ḥadīth books in terms of authenticity.

Abu l-Ṭufayl is the last of the Companions in terms of death.	أَبُو الطُّفَيْلِ آخِرُ الصَّحَابَةِ مَوْتًا.
The Ḥanafī school is the first of the Four Schools in terms of existence.	الْـمَذْهَبُ الْحَنَفِيُّ أَوَّلُ الْـمَذَاهِبِ الْأَرْبَعَةِ وُجُودًا.

—❖—❖—❖—

3. The *ism* of *lā li-nafyi l-jins* (*lā* of absolute denial)

Before going any further, there is an admission that has to be made here.

You would remember, from Lesson 6, that *asmāʾ* (nouns) may be either *muʿrab* (inflected, that is, open to change in end-case) or *mabnī* (uninflected). At that point we identified a few common categories of nouns that are *mabnī*, while the existence of other cases of *mabnī* nouns was merely hinted at.

Had grammatical precision been our overriding concern, the present case—the noun that follows the *lā* of absolute denial—should not have appeared under the causes of *iʿrāb*. That is because it is not even *muʿrab* in the first place. It is *mabnī*.

But although the typologies of the grammarians are undeniably important, it is with practicality that our immediate concern lies. Since this particular *ism* invariably carries a *fatḥah*,[12] it is easier and makes for greater practicality to treat it along with all the other cases where the *ism* gets a *fatḥah*.

Having acknowledged the liberty taken, we may now proceed.

—❖—❖—❖—

The particle *lā* can be used in a number of ways. It may be—

[12] Be careful to note, though: only a single *fatḥah*, and not *fatḥatayn* in *tanwīn*.

- **negative**, where it does nothing more than negate something;
- or **prohibitive**, where it forbids an act.

The *lā* which appears in the following sentence is the negative *lā*, or *lā nāfiyah*.

Zayd is not eating. زَيْدٌ لَا يَأْكُلُ

From the translation you will notice that it is rendered into English as *not*.

The prohibitive *lā*, or *lā nāhiyah*, is translated differently. In English it would correspond to *do not*.

Do not eat the unlawful. لَا تَأْكُلِ الْحَرَامَ

Neither of these two *lās* is the focus of our present discussion. The *lā* which you are about to be introduced to is one that every Muslim is well aware of since it appears in the most fundamental credo of Islam:

There is no god but Allah. لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ

This *lā* is called *lā li-nafyi l-jins*, the *lā* of absolute denial. By merely observing this example you will learn all you need to know about the noun that follows the *lā li-nafyi l-jins*. These are three points:

- It is *nakirah* (indefinite) and not *maʿrifah* (definite).
- It is translated as *there is no.*
- It carries a single *fatḥah* and not *fatḥatayn*.

Finally, some further examples of the *lā li-nafyi l-jins*.

There is no good in much of their private conversation.	﴿ لاَ خَيْرَ فِيْ كَثِيْرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ ﴾.
There is no god but Allah alone; there is no partner unto Him.	لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ.
There is no faith in one within whom there is no honesty.	لَا إِيْمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ.
I am the Seal of the Prophets; there is no prophet after me.	أَنَا خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّيْنَ لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِيْ.
There is no salāh except with the Opening of the Book.	لاَ صَلَاةَ إِلَّا بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ.

And herewith we come to the end of the *manṣūbāt*.

We may thus proceed to complete the second column—causes of *naṣb*—of our progress chart. You will, of course, notice the differentiation between the essentials and non-essentials of the sentence, just as you will notice that the *lā li nafyi l-jins* has been marked with an asterisk to indicate the liberty taken of listing it along with the causes of *naṣb*.

Among the direct causes of *iʿrāb*, it is now only the two causes of *jarr* that remain, and after them we get to deal with the three indirect causes of *iʿrāb*. Those two lessons will bring us to the end of Part 1 of this book, *in shā Allāh*.

IʿRĀB PROGRESS CHART

أسباب الإعراب		
أسباب الرفع	**أسباب النصب**	**سببا الجر**
مبتدأ	خبر كان	
خبر	اسم إنَّ	
اسم كان	مفعول به	
خبر إنَّ	*مفعول مطلق*	
فاعل	*مفعول له/لأجله*	
نائب الفاعل	*مفعول فيه/ظرف*	
	حال	
	تمييز	
	**اسم لا لنفي الجنس*	

LESSON 16

Causes of *jarr* (the genitive case)

There are only two direct reasons why an *ism* would fall into the *majrūr* or genitive case. They are:

1. the fact that it stands after a *ḥarf al-jarr*
2. and that it happens to be the *muḍāf ilayh* (possessor) in an *iḍāfah* (possessive construction).

—❖—❖—❖—

1. Standing after a *ḥarf al-jarr* (prepositional particle)

The very first lesson in this book made the point that the words of the Arabic language may be either—

- *asmāʾ* (nouns),
- *afʿāl* (verbs),
- or *ḥurūf* (particles).

Up to this point our preoccupation was with the *ism*, and for good reason. Most of the rules of syntax with which we had to deal concerned the *ism*. In the present lesson we will get better acquainted with one specific class of *ḥarf*, but only in relation to the effect that this *ḥarf* has on the *ism*. Our true focus remains the *ism*.

This particular class of *ḥarf* is called the *ḥarf al-jarr*. Literally this term means "the particle of the genitive case", but its proper grammatical descriptor is the *prepositional particle*. The effect that it has, of imparting *jarr* to the *ism* that stands after it, is probably one of the most common occurrences in Arabic text.

There are, all in all, 17 *ḥurūf* of *jarr*. They are all given in the table that follows, grouped according to their specific areas of use.

You might notice that the table lists 18, and not 17, *ḥurūf*. This is because the particle *bi-* is repeated. Its repetition is on account of its use in two areas: as a common preposition, as well as a particle of oath.

PREPOSITIONAL PARTICLES حُـرُوف الْـجَـرّ						
PARTICLES OF DURATION	since	مُـنْـذُ		COMMON PREPOSITIONS	in	فِيْ
		مُـذْ			from	مِنْ
	until	حَـتَّىٰ			on	عَلَىٰ
					to	إِلَىٰ
PARTICLES OF EXCEPTION	except	عَدَا			for	لِـ
		خَلَا			by/with	بِـ
		حَاشَا			like	كَـ
					from/about	عَنْ
PARTICLE OF UNDISCLOSED NUMBER	many a/an	رُبَّ				
				PARTICLES OF OATH	by	وَ
						تَـ
						بِـ

Before going on to look at the use of these *ḥurūf* in examples, there are a few important points to keep in mind about the use and effect of the *ḥurūf al-jarr*.

- **Firstly,** and most importantly, the *ḥarf al-jarr* makes the *ism* following it *majrūr*.
- **Secondly,** the *ism* following the *ḥarf al-jarr* will be known as the *majrūr* as well.

- **Thirdly,** the *ḥarf al-jarr* together with the *majrūr* will form a sub-clause of the sentence to which we will apply the name, *mutaʿalliq* (associated sub-clause).

- **Fourthly,** the *mutaʿalliq* will be one of the non-essential components of the sentence that attach themselves to the essentials.

Indeed, the righteous shall be in gardens and rivers.	﴿إِنَّ الْـمُتَّـقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنَّاتٍ وَنَـهَرٍ﴾
…Striking them with stones of hard clay.	﴿تَرْمِيْهِمْ بِـحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيْلٍ﴾
We rely on Allah.	نَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَى اللهِ.
I sent the book to Saʿīd.	بَعَثْتُ الْكِتَابَ إِلَى سَعِيْدٍ.
Have you seen anyone like Zayd?	هَلْ رَأَيْتَ أَحَدًا كَـزَيْدٍ؟
Religion is goodwill: for Allah, for His Messenger, for His Book, for the leaders of the Muslims, and all of them.	الدِّيْنُ النَّصِيْحَةُ، للهِ، وَلِرَسُوْلِهِ، وَلِكِتَابِهِ، وَلِأَئِمَّةِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ، وَعَامَّتِهِمْ.
They ask you about the new moons.	﴿يَسْأَلُوْنَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ﴾
By the dawn. And by the Ten Nights. And by the Even and the Odd. And by the night when it passes.	﴿وَالْفَجْرِ، وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ، وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ، وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ﴾

Peace it is until the emergence of dawn.	﴿سَلَـٰمٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطۡلَعِ ٱلۡفَجۡرِ﴾
I memorized the Qurʾān except one juz.	أَحۡفَظُ ٱلۡقُرۡآنَ خَلَا جُزۡءٍ
There is many a person who recites the Qurʾān while the Qurʾān curses him.	رُبَّ قَارِئٍ لِلۡقُرۡآنِ وَالۡقُرۡآنُ يَلۡعَنُهُ

There is one last important remark to make about the *ḥurūf al-jarr*. There are a number of words that, on account of their meaning as well as the effect they have on the *ism* following them, give every impression of being *ḥurūf al-jarr*—yet they are not. These are:

with	مَعَ
above	فَوۡقَ
under	تَحۡتَ
at	عِنۡدَ
besides/ beneath	دُوۡنَ

The grammatical fact is that these words are not *ḥurūf*, but *asmāʾ*. Yes, there is a strong resemblance to the *ḥarf al-jarr*—but that is because they are *asmāʾ* that indicate place. In fact, they commonly come in the *manṣūb* case precisely because of the fact that they indicate place. As you would remember from Lesson 14, the *ism* that indicates place is called the *mafʿūl fīhi* or the *ẓarf*, which is one of the causes of *naṣb*.

The other strong point of similarity between these words and the *ḥurūf al-jarr* lies in the effect they both have on the *ism* following: they both make that *ism majrūr*. In the case of the *harf al-jarr* the reason is understood: all *ḥurūf al-jarr* make the *ism*

following them *majrūr*, for no other reason than the fact that they are by nature *jarr*-giving particles. So why do words such as *maʿa* and *ʿinda* impart *jarr* to the *ism* following them?

At the beginning of this lesson you learnt that there can only be two direct reasons for *jarr*: standing after the *ḥarf al-jarr*, and being the *muḍāf ilayh* in a possessive construction. So if it is not a case of *ḥarf al-jarr*, then it must surely be...?

—❖—❖—❖—

2. The *muḍāf ilayh* (possessor)

What is a possessive construction? Or, before that, what is a construction?

Words as we know them tend to be used on their own, individually. We speak of a *construction* when two words are joined together into some sort of unit. Possession, on the other hand, is a situation that comes about when one thing is owned by another. So, if Zayd owns a pen, *Zayd* is the possessor, and the *pen* is the possessed. If we want to speak of not just any pen, but specifically the pen that Zayd owned, we will create a unit consisting of two words: *Zayd's pen*. The English language provides us with two devices that allow us to express possession:

- the apostrophe S ('s), as in *Zayd's pen*;
- and the preposition *of*, as in *the Messenger of Allah*.

In Arabic, possession is indicated in a simple manner. We already know that in a case of possession there are going to be two words, one being the possessor, and the other the possessed. To form the possessive construction, which we call *iḍāfah*, do the following:

- Place the possessed first. We refer to the possessed as the *muḍāf*.
- Make sure the ***muḍāf* never gets *alif-lām* at the beginning, *or tanwīn* at the end**. This allows it to attach to the possessor and thereby form the unit.

- Place the possessor second. The possessor is called the *muḍāf ilayh*.
- Make sure the ***muḍāf ilayh* becomes *majrūr***. This is the crucial sign that it is the possessor.

And those four simple steps give you your *iḍāfah* construction.

However, they apply when you are forming sentences of your own, either in writing or in speech. If you happen to be reading an already existing text, it may be assumed that certain of these requirements will already be in place. For example—

- the *muḍāf* will already be first, and the *muḍāf ilayh* second,
- and the *muḍāf* will already be free from *alif-lām* at the beginning.

All that then remains for you to do is—

- to make sure you do not give the *muḍāf* a *tanwīn*,
- and, critically, to give *jarr* to the *muḍāf ilayh*.

The *iḍāfah* construction is a very common phenomenon in the Arabic language. In reading text, therefore, you need to be on the lookout for it constantly. Wherever you see two or more nouns clustering together at one spot in a text, you have a good chance of encountering an *iḍāfah* construction.

When you do encounter one, be sure to remember that it is only the *muḍāf ilayh* that takes the standard *iʿrāb* of *jarr*. Being the *muḍāf ilayh* is in itself a cause of *iʿrāb*, but being the *muḍāf* is not. The only thing standard about the *muḍāf* is that it gets neither *alif-lām* nor *tanwīn*. As for its *iʿrāb*, it will be determined not by the fact that it is the *muḍāf*, but by other factors within the sentence structure. It might, for example, be—

- *marfūʿ* on account of being the *fāʿil*, or the *mubtadaʾ*, or the *khabar*;
- *manṣūb* due to being the *khabar* of *kāna*, or the *mafʿūl bihī*, or a *ẓarf*;

- or *majrūr* because it stands after a *ḥarf al-jarr*, or even since it is itself the *muḍāf ilayh* to an *ism* standing before it.

In fact, it can take its *iʿrāb* from any of the causes which we have been through. Take care not to make a mistake here.

What remains now is to look at some examples of the *iḍāfah* construction.

Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah.	﴿ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُوْلُ اللهِ ﴾.
Praise to Allah who inspired the messenger of the Messenger of Allah.	الْحَمْدُ للهِ الَّذِيْ وَفَّقَ رَسُوْلَ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ.
Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is for you a good example.	﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ ﴾.
Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.	﴿ مٰلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ﴾.
There is not ṣalāh except with the Opening of the Book.	لاَ صَلاَةَ إِلَّا بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ.

In terms of the direct causes of *iʿrāb*, our progress chart is now complete.

There is only one single chapter left to complete Part 1 of this book, and it deals with three indirect causes of *iʿrāb*. We will begin our preparations for that last chapter by expanding the chart to create the necessary space for the indirect causes of *iʿrāb*.

IʿRĀB PROGRESS CHART

CAUSES OF *IʿRĀB* أسباب الإعراب				
أسباب غير مُبَاشِرَة Indirect causes التوابع	Direct causes أسباب مُبَاشِرَة			
	سببا الجر	أسباب النصب	أسباب الرفع	
	مجرور (بعد حرف الجر)	خبر كان	مبتدأ	
	مضاف إليه	اسم إنَّ	خبر	
		مفعول به	اسم كان	
		مفعول مطلق	خبر إنَّ	
		مفعول له/لأجله	فاعل	
		مفعول فيه/ظرف	نائب الفاعل	
		حال		
		تمييز		
		* اسم لا لنفي الجنس		

LESSON 17

Indirect causes of *iʿrāb* I

There is something that you might have noticed about each of the seventeen causes of *iʿrāb* that were discussed in the preceding lessons. In every case, the cause applies to the word *directly*. In other words—

- a word will be *marfūʿ* because it itself is the *fāʿil*, the *nāʾib al-fāʿil*, the *mubtadaʾ*, or the *khabar* of *inna*, as the case may be;
- or a word will be *manṣūb* due to it itself being the *mafʿūl bihī*, the *mafʿūl muṭlaq*, the *ḥāl*, or the *tamyīz*;
- or a word, on account of it itself standing after a *harf al-jarr*, or being a *muḍāf ilayh*, will be *majrūr*.

But in the Arabic language we also come across the phenomenon wherein a word gets a certain *iʿrāb*, not on account of itself, but simply because it happens to follow another word in the sentence. Thus, if that other word happens to be *marfūʿ*, its follower will similarly become *marfūʿ*; if it happens to be *manṣūb*, the follower will become *manṣūb* as well; and if that other word comes as *majrūr*, the follower will also receive *jarr*.

Nouns that act in this fashion are called the *Tawābiʿ*, or Followers, and it is to three cases of *Tawābiʿ* that we turn our attention in this final lesson of Part 1 of this book.

The *Tawābiʿ* which we discuss in this lesson are:

- the *maʿṭūf* (conjunct)
- the *ṣifah* (adjective)
- the *badal* (substitute)

—❖—❖—❖—

The *maʿṭūf* (conjunct)

Conjoining is a common occurrence in just about every language. It happens when we take one of the existing role players of the sentence and add others to it, usually through a connecting particle called the *conjunction*.

To demonstrate, let us use a simple sentence such as *Khālid came*. *Khālid* is our main role player here:

جَاءَ خَالِدٌ

Now we will add to it the fact that Maḥmūd came along with Khālid. To do that we will need to use the conjunction *wa* (and):

جَاءَ خَالِدٌ وَمَحْمُودٌ

What you see here are two words conjoined through the use of the conjunction وَ. This conjunction وَ itself is called the *ḥarf al-ʿaṭf*. As for the words which it connects, *Khālid* and *Maḥmūd*, the English language simply calls them *a pair of conjuncts* without any further differentiation. Arabic differentiates between them in name. To *Khālid* in this case it gives the name *maʿṭūf ʿalayh*, which we will render as *lead conjunct*, while *Maḥmūd* will become the *māʿṭūf*, or *follower conjunct*.

It is with good reason that we differentiate in name between the pair of conjuncts. From what you have already learnt you would know that *Khālid* gets its *iʿrāb* from the fact that it stands as the *fāʿil* of the verb جَاءَ. It is therefore *marfūʿ*. So from where does *Maḥmūd* get its *iʿrāb*? From nowhere besides the fact that it stands connected through a *ḥarf al-ʿaṭf* to *Khālid*. And since *Khālid* already has its own *iʿrāb*, *Maḥmūd* will simply *follow* the *iʿrāb* of *Khālid*.

So if it were to be asked: "From where does *Khālid* as the *maʿṭūf ʿalayh* or lead conjunct get its *iʿrāb*? we would have to say: "From the role it plays in the sentence." In our example the cause of its *iʿrāb* just happens to be the fact that it is

the *fāʿil* of the sentence. Outside of this example the cause of *iʿrāb* may literally be any of the direct causes of *iʿrāb* with which we have become acquainted in the preceding lessons.

But the *iʿrāb* of the *maʿṭūf*, the follower conjunct (*Maḥmūd* in our example) is another matter. None of those direct causes of *iʿrāb* applies to it. It simply gets what the *maʿṭūf ʿalayh* already has. If the *māʿṭūf ʿalayh* is *marfūʿ*, the *maʿṭūf* will also become *marfūʿ*; if the *maʿṭūf ʿalayh* is *manṣūb*, the *maʿṭūf* will similarly become *manṣūb*; and if the *maʿṭūf ʿalayh* gets *jarr*, then so will the the *maʿṭūf*. The *maʿṭūf* is a very loyal and adaptable follower.

The particle وَ (and) is of course the most prominent *ḥarf al-ʿaṭf*, but it is by no means the only one. The list below will introduce you to the other important particles of *ʿaṭf*, after which some examples of the use of *ʿaṭf* are provided.

and	وَ
or	أَوْ
then	فَـ
then	ثُمَّ

These examples demonstrate the use of these four conjunctions.

﴿ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَاهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

Indeed, We sent you as a witness, a giver of glad tidings, and a warner.

﴿...يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ، أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ﴾

An orphan of near relationship, or a needy person in misery.

أَكَلَ مُحَمَّدٌ تُفَّاحًا فَمَوْزًا

Muḥammad ate the apple, then the banana.

Zayd entered the classroom, then Muḥammad.	دَخَلَ الْفَصْلَ زَيْدٌ ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدٌ.

—❖—❖—❖—

LESSON 18

Indirect causes of *iʿrāb* II

The *ṣifah* (adjective)

Our second case of follower is that of the *ṣifah*, or adjective. An adjective is a word that describes a noun. You may thus well expect that, as in the previous instance, you will have here a lead word, which will be the noun described by the adjective, and then the adjective itself which will follow the noun in its *iʿrāb*.

The noun described by the adjective will be called the *mawṣūf*.[13] The *ṣifah*, on the other hand, is the name given to the describing adjective. Like the *maʿṭūf ʿalayh* and the *maʿṭūf*—

- if the *mawṣūf* is *marfūʿ*, the *ṣifah* will be *marfūʿ* as well;
- if the *mawṣūf* is *manṣūb*, the *ṣifah* will be *manṣūb* as well;
- and if the *mawṣūf* is *majrūr*, the *ṣifah* will also be *majrūr*.

In addition to conforming to the *mawṣūf* in terms of its *iʿrāb*, the *ṣifah* will agree to the *mawṣūf* in three other respects:

- number,
- gender,
- and being definite or indefinite.

Accordingly, a *mawṣūf* that is—

- *mufrad* (singular) will have a singular *ṣifah*;
- *muthannā* (dual) will have a dual *ṣifah*;
- and *jamʿ* (plural) will get a plural *ṣifah*.[14]

Similarly, if the *mawṣūf* is—

[13] It is also called the *manʿūt*, in which case the *ṣifah* will be known as the *naʿt*.

[14] Note that the *ṣifah* for the *jamʿ mukassar* (broken plural) will come in the singular feminine form.

- *mudhakkar* (masculine) it will get a masculine *ṣifah*;
- *muʾannath* (feminine) it will get a feminine *ṣifah*.

And if the *mawṣūf* happens to be—

- *maʿrifah* (definite), its *ṣifah* will also be definite;
- *nakirah* (indefinite), its *ṣifah* will also be indefinite.

Let us take a look at the operation of this rule in the context of some examples.

Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurʾān.	﴿إِنَّا أَنزَلْنَـٰهُ قُرْءَٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا﴾
Guide us to the straight path.	﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْـمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾
They were under two of Our righteous servants.	﴿كَانَتَا تَحْتَ عَبْدَيْنِ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا صَالِحَيْنِ﴾
And We have certainly revealed to you manifest verses.	﴿وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ءَايَـٰتٍ بَيِّنَـٰتٍ﴾
In which for you are abundant fruits and from which you eat.	﴿لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ﴾

—❖—❖—❖—

LESSON 19

Indirect causes of *iʿrāb* III

The *badal* (apposition)

There is something you should observe about the *mawṣūf* and the *ṣifah*. It is about removing the *mawṣūf* from the sentence. What happens to the sentence when you remove the *mawṣūf* from it?

Between the *mawṣūf* and the *ṣifah*, the *mawṣūf* is your lead word. The *ṣifah* is merely a follower. Remove the follower, and you will still have a meaningful sentence. But what happens when the lead word is removed? Let's see.

قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَ الْمُفِيْدَ — قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَ ~~الْمُفِيْدَ~~ — قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَ

I read the useful book. — I read the book.

Now let's see what happens when the lead word, the *mawṣūf* is removed from the sentence:

قَرَأْتُ الْكِتَابَ الْمُفِيْدَ — قَرَأْتُ ~~الْكِتَابَ~~ الْمُفِيْدَ — قَرَأْتُ الْمُفِيْدَ

I read the useful book. — I read the useful...

As you can see, the removal of the *mawṣūf* leaves you with an incomplete sentence hanging somewhere in mid-air.

The type of follower we are about to discuss is different in this regard specifically. This follower is called the *badal*, which literally means *substitute*, but whose correct grammatical name is the *apposition*.

With the *badal* we have a situation somewhat similar to the *mawṣūf* and the *ṣifah*: a lead word, followed by a word which tells us something more about the lead word.

However, in the case of the *badal*, we may remove the lead word without producing a hanging, incomplete sentence. This is because the follower in this case has enough independence to complete the sentence on its own, without its lead word.

The best way to comprehend this is through an example:

جَاءَ عَلِـيٌّ الْـمُـدَرِّسُ	جَاءَ عَلِـيٌّ الْـمُـدَرِّسُ	جَاءَ الْـمُـدَرِّسُ
ʿAlī, the teacher, came.		The teacher came.

We have in this sentence two words: عَلِيٌّ, the lead word, and الْمُدَرِّسُ, the follower who gives us further descriptive information on عَلِيٌّ. When we remove the lead word, عَلِيٌّ, the remaining sentence does not at all appear unfinished. The follower, الْمُدَرِّسُ, is sufficiently independent to produce a complete sentence.

In this sentence, the follower word is called the *badal*, or substitute, while the lead word is known as the *mubdal minhu*, or substituted.

We may therefore conclude the following:

- Like the *mawṣūf—ṣifah*, the case of the *badal—mubdal minhu* consists of a follower word adding description to a preceding lead word.
- Unlike the *mawṣūf—ṣifah*, the removal of the *mubdal minhu* does not lead to an unfinished sentence; the *badal* is independent enough to complete the sentence on its own.
- Like the *mawṣūf—ṣifah*, the *badal* follows the *mubdal minhu* in *iʿrāb*.

Types of *badal*

After this introduction to the concept of the *badal*, we move on to the types of *badal*. For the sake of simplification, let us pre-empt the categories of the *badal* by using a simple example.

We have a person. Let's call him Zayd. He has a brother, Ṣāliḥ. He also has quite a large head. And then he happens to have very good manners. Remember that we are about to use a *badal* for Zayd. Now, look at the three sentences that follow:

Zayd, Ṣāliḥ's brother, came.	جَاءَ زَيْدٌ أَخُوْ صَالِحٍ.
I saw Zayd, his head.	رَأَيْتُ زَيْدًا رَأْسَهُ.
I like Zayd—his manners.	أُحِبُّ زَيْدًا أَدَبَهُ.

1. *Badal al-kull* (full apposition)

In the first sentence, the words *Ṣāliḥ's brother* denote the very same person that the word *Zayd* does. It also denotes the entire person and not just a part of him. We might say that the *badal* (*Ṣāliḥ's brother*) and the *mubdal minhu* (*Zayd*) are 100% the same. When this type of relationship exists between the *badal* and its *mubdal minhu*, we refer to it as a case of *badal al-kull*, or full apposition.

2. *Badal al-baʿḍ* (partial apposition)

In the second sentence, I looked for Zayd, but his body was obscured from view—all of it, that is, except for his head. So I say initially that I saw Zayd, but then I specify the part of him that I saw. You can see that the relationship between the *mubdal minhu* (*Zayd*) and the *badal* (*his head*) is partial: his head is just a part of

him. When such a partial relationship exists between the *mubdal minhu* and the *badal*, we refer to it as *badal al-baʿḍ*, or partial apposition.

3. *Badal al-ishtimāl* (associated apposition)

Now look at the third sentence. Here the *mubdal minhu* is again Zayd, but the *badal* is his good manners. His manners, of course, do not constitute all of him, so it cannot be a case of *badal al-kull*. But neither do his manners form a tangible, physical part of him, so it is not *badal al-baʿḍ* either. Be that as it may, what cannot be denied is that those manners are associated with him in some way or the other.

When the relationship between the *mubdal minhu* and the *badal* is not physical, neither in full nor in part, but still denotes a certain type of intangible association, we refer to it as *badal al-ishtimāl*, or the associated apposition.[15]

Muḥammad, your friend, came.	جَاءَ مُحَمَّدٌ صَدِيقُكَ.
The imām, Abū ʿAbdillāh, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, al-Bukhārī said…	قَالَ الْإِمَامُ أَبُوْ عَبْدِ اللهِ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ الْبُخَارِيُّ …
[All] praise is [due] to Allāh, Lord of the worlds, The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful, Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.	﴿الْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ، مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

In each of these examples, the *badal* and *mubdal minhu* refer to the same person or being in his entirety and not just in part. In other words, they are fully congruent.

- *Muḥammad* and *your friend* refer to one and the same person with full congruency.

[15] Although the term *badal al-ishtimāl* translates more directly into *inclusive apposition*, preference went to the word *associated* because it conveys a more accurate description of the relationship.

- Each of the terms *the imām*, *Abū ʿAbdillāh, Muḥammad, ibn Ismāʿīl* and *al-Bukhārī* refers to the same person as does *the shaykh*, with full congruency.
- Each of the terms *Rabb*, *al-Raḥmān*, *al-Raḥīm* and *Mālik* refer to Allāh with full congruency.

Below follow some examples of *badal al-baʿḍ*.

The book—it's cover—impressed me.	أَعْجَبَنِيْ الْكِتَابُ غِلَافُهُ.
Arise [to pray] the night, except for a little—half of it.	﴿قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا نِصْفَهُ. ﴾
Islām is based on five [principles]: testifying that there is no God except Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh; establishing ṣalāh; paying zakāh; [performing] the pilgrimage; fasting the month of Ramaḍān.	بُنِيَ الْإِسْلَامُ عَلَىٰ خَمْسٍ: شَهَادَةِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللهِ، وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ، وَالْحَجِّ، وَصَوْمِ رَمَضَانَ.

- In the first example, it is not all of the book that impresses the speaker, but only part of it: its cover.
- In the second example, it is not all of the night that should be spent in prayer, but only part of it: a half or less.
- In the third example, the word *shahādah* represents only one of five pillars

Finally, some examples of the *badal al-ishtimāl*.

The food—its heat—will harm you.	يَضُرُّكَ الطَّعَامُ حَرَارَتُهُ.

﴿يَسۡـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهۡرِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ قِتَالٖ فِيهِ﴾	They ask you about the Sacred Month—fighting in it.
أَكْرَهُ خَالِدً سُوْءَ خُلُقِهِ.	I dislike Khālid—his bad character.