

Unit 11

Root words, root letters

The root letters of an Arabic word are sometimes called radicals.

The root word is sometimes referred to simply as the root.

Precision

بَدَأَ - بَرَأَ - خَلَقَ

فَطَّرَ - جَعَلَ

There are a few words in the Qur'an meaning 'to make' or 'to create'. Each has a precise meaning which is often not conveyed in English translations.

bada'a - means to begin or originate;

bara'a - means to bring into existence from nothing;

khalafa - has the sense of to bring into existence for the first time and define the nature and disposition of what is created.

fatara - means to originate. It has the basic meaning of to break or to split.

ja'ala - has the sense of to make and has a wide variety of meanings including to appoint or to change something.

The following words

بَرَأَ - خَلَقَ - فَطَّرَ

are used only for Allah.

Most Arabic words have three main letters. These are called root letters. The simplest word from these three root letters has the meaning of he + the past tense.

The word خَلَقَ means 'He created'.

The root letters in خَلَقَ are خ ل ق . خَلَقَ is a root word. It only has root letters.

New words grow like a tree from the root words. Letters are added to the root and vowels and signs are added or changed to form new words.

Letters may be added:

i. before the first root letter, as in:

يَخْلُقُ

ii. between the root letters

خَالِقٌ

iii. after the last root letter

خَلَقُوا

iv. by doubling letters (using a shaddah)

خَلَّقَ

v. by a combination of the above.

إِخْتَلَقَ

Letters used for adding to the root word are:

أ ت ة س ل م ن ه و ي

These letters, apart from the ta' marbutah ة, are contained in the word

سَأَلْتُمُونِيهَا which means 'You asked me about them'. Soon we hope you will understand how one word in Arabic can mean so much.

Words are formed from the root word according to a variety of word patterns.

You can often tell the meaning of a word from the word pattern. We will see

how this happens as we go along. But let us go back to خَلَقَ .

خَلَقَ means 'He created'.

The pronoun 'He' is built into the form of the verb خَلَقَ . So usually there is no need for a separate word for 'He'.

Arabic is a language of patterns and if you can match one pattern to another, you can get some idea of the meaning of a word. Other verbs with different root letters but which have the same pattern as خَلَقَ may also mean 'He + the past tense'. Therefore:

جَعَلَ He made.

دَخَلَ He entered.

خَرَجَ He went out.

The middle root letter in خَلَقَ has a fat-hah.

In some root words, the middle root letter has a kasrah, for example:

عَمِلَ He worked.

عَلِمَ He knew.

سَمِعَ He heard.

In a few cases, the middle root letter has a dammah, for example:

كَبُرَ It was great

كَثُرَ It was plentiful.

Read the following from right to left, starting from the root words in Arabic.
In the column 'Words from Root Words', note the letters which are added to the root words.

Added Letters	Words formed from Roots Words	Root Words
م و	eaten مَأْكُول	أَكَلَ he ate
ت و ن	you (pl.) command تَأْمُرُونَ	أَمَرَ he commanded
ة	congregation جُمُعَة	جَمَعَ he gathered
و	leaving, exit خُرُوج	خَرَجَ he went out
ا	Creator خَالِق	خَلَقَ He created
ي و ن	they (pl.) enter يَدْخُلُونَ	دَخَلَ he entered
م	place of prostration مَسْجِد	سَجَدَ he prostrated
ل doubled	he taught عَلَّمَ	عَلِمَ he knew
ي س ت و ن	They ask forgiveness of Him يَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ	غَفَرَ he forgave
م س ت + ي	straight مُسْتَقِيمٌ	قَامَ he stood
ا	book, scripture كِتَاب	كَتَبَ he wrote
ف ا	disbelievers كُفَّار	كَفَرَ he disbelieved
م	place مَكَان	كَانَ he was
و turned to ا	death مَوْت	مَاتَ he died
ا ا	helpers أَنْصَار	نَصَرَ he helped

Note: The alif in مَاتَ is turned into a و in مَوْت
The alif in قَامَ is turned into a ي in مُسْتَقِيمٌ

Unit 12

Sentences

beginning with a root word

A verb is the doing or the action word in a sentence.

The tense of a verb refers to the time of an action.

Each sentence on the opposite page begins with a verb in the past tense. (Tense refers to the time of an action.) Each verb has only the three root letters and therefore means 'He + the past tense'.

Notice again that all the verbs come first in these sentences and that the word 'He' is built into each verb.

Sentences

A sentence is a word or group of words which makes complete sense.

In Section One, we read sentences in Arabic without verbs which made complete sense.

We learnt that sentences beginning with a noun are called 'nominal sentences'.

Verbal Sentences

It is common in Arabic for sentences to begin with a verb. Sentences which begin with a verb are called 'verbal sentences'. An example of such a sentence is:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ God created the earth.

In the above sentence, the verb is خَلَقَ .

The **subject** of a sentence is the part which says who or what you are talking about. You can know the subject of a sentence by asking the question 'who?' or 'what?' before the verb. If you ask, 'who created?' the answer - 'God' - is the subject of the sentence.

The subject of a sentence in Arabic is in the **nominative** case. The word اللَّهُ in the above sentence is therefore nominative. It is also singular and so ends with a dammah.

A **'direct object'** of a sentence is the person or thing which is directly affected by the verb. In the above sentence the object is 'the earth'. You know the direct object by asking the question 'what?' or 'whom?' after the verb. If you ask, 'created what?' the answer - 'the earth' - is the object of the sentence.

In Arabic, the object of a sentence is in the **accusative**. الْأَرْضُ is therefore accusative and ends with a fat-hah.

Word order

In Arabic, when the subject of the verb is specified, like اللَّهُ in the sentence above, the verb normally comes first, followed by the subject and then the rest of the sentence.

We can see this in sentence 8 opposite. The subject of the sentence 'Musa' follows the verb.

Be prepared for quite a different word order in Arabic phrases and sentences from what you are used to in English.

In the English translation opposite, words between brackets are added to complete the meaning of a sentence. There is no corresponding Arabic for the words in brackets.

Note on line 10 opposite: الطَّاغُوتِ

There is no single word for Taghut in English. Taghut may refer to idols or any false objects of worship, or any evil practices which take a person away from the straight path of obedience to God. It may also refer to tyrannical rulers or systems.

رَبِّ

There is no single word in English for Rabb. Rabb means 'one who owns something and looks after it well'. We may translate it as 'Cherisher and Sustainer' when it refers to God. Often only the word 'Lord' or the word 'Sustainer' is used for Rabb, but we should always bear in mind its wider meaning.

He gathered wealth. 104: 2	1	جَمَعَ مَالًا	مالٌ	wealth
He created the earth. 20: 4	2	خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ	مدينةٌ	city
He entered the city. 28:15	3	دَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ	طَاغُوتٌ	false gods
He went out from it (the city). 28: 21	4	خَرَجَ مِنْهَا	رَجَعَ	to return
He called (upon) his Sustainer. 39: 8	5 ■	دَعَا رَبَّهُ		
So he called (upon) his Sustainer. 44: 22	6 ■	فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ		
And he remembered God much. 33: 21	7	وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا		
So Musa returned to his people. 7: 150	8 ■	فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ		
He did righteous work. 18: 88	9	عَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا		
He has worshipped false gods. 5: 60	10	عَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ		
So He forgave him. 28:16	11	فَغَفَّرَ لَهُ		
Who has done this with our gods? 21:59	12 ■	مَنْ فَعَلَ هَذَا بِآلِهَتِنَا		
He said: I (am) better than he. 38: 76	13 ■	قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ		
He found beside her sustenance. 3: 37	14	وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا		
This (is) what the Beneficent has promised. 36: 52	15 ■	هَذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَنُ		

Notes for text above

- **Line 5:** The verb دَعَا is known as a weak verb. The alif in دَعَا stands for the letter و. The root letters of دَعَا are د ع و.
- **Lines 6 & 8:** The letter فَ and, and so, is always attached to the following word. The word موسى does not change. It has the same form for all cases.
- **Line 12:** The word بِ + آلهة + نَا = بِآلهَتِنَا

- 'with our gods'.

- **Line 13:** The verb قَالَ 'he said' is known as a hollow verb. It is like the verb كَانَ, 'he was'. The root letters of قَالَ are ق و ل. The root letters of كَانَ are ك و ن.
- **Line 15:** The particle مَا means 'what'. Note that مَا can also mean 'not', negating the verb in the past tense.

Unit 13

The verb:
past tense,
singular

Tense refers to the time of an action. The term Past Tense is used to refer to the Arabic *Māḍī*. In many grammar books, *Māḍī* is also referred to as the Perfect Tense since it refers to actions which are 'perfect' or complete. It is important to remember that the *Māḍī* in Arabic does not always refer to actions in the past. It may be used for making a wish or in 'conditional sentences' (see Unit 40). The actual tense of a verb must be determined by its context.

A car - سَيَّارَةٌ

In modern Arabic, *sayyarah* is a car. In *Surah Yusuf*, *sayyarah* refers to the caravan or the company of travellers that found *Yusuf* in a well after he had been taken away and abandoned there by his jealous brothers. They went back to their father and said that a wolf had eaten *Yusuf*, a story which the father, Prophet *Ya'qub* - peace be on him, did not believe. The caravan travelled on to Egypt and sold *Yusuf* to the ruler of Egypt in whose household he grew up. The amazing story of *Yusuf* is told at some length in the *Qur'an*.

The word *sayyarah* comes from the verb *sara* which means to go, to move or to travel.

The verb **كَتَبَ** is a root word. It is a verb in the past tense. It means 'He wrote'. The word 'He' is built into the word **كَتَبَ**. If you add the letter **ت** with a sukun to the root word, you form the new word **كَتَبَتْ**. The suffix **ت** with a sukun tells you that **كَتَبَتْ** means 'She wrote'. A letter or letters added after a word is called a suffix.

Verbs having the suffix **ت** will mean 'she + the past tense'. Thus:

سَمِعَ	he heard	عَلِمَ	he knew
سَمِعَتْ	she heard	عَلِمَتْ	she knew

From **كَتَبَ** we also get other words by adding different suffixes:

كَتَبْتَ you (m.s.) wrote, كَتَبْتِ you (f.s.) wrote, كَتَبْتُ I wrote.

(Abbreviations: m.s. = masculine singular; f.s. = feminine singular)

In the three words above, notice that a sukun is placed on the last root letter. The suffix or added ending in all the above words is the letter **ت**. But each **ت** has a different vowel.

In the word **كَتَبْتَ**, the last **ت** with the fat-hah stands for 'you' masculine singular (m.s.).

In the word **كَتَبْتِ**, the last **ت** with the kasrah stands for 'you' feminine singular (f.s.).

In the word **كَتَبْتُ**, the last **ت** with the dammah stands for 'I'.

Other singular verbs in the past tense will have the same endings. Thus:

you (m.s.) went out	خَرَجْتَ	دَخَلْتَ	you (m.s.) entered
you (f.s.) went out	خَرَجْتِ	دَخَلْتِ	You (f.s.) entered
I went out	خَرَجْتُ	دَخَلْتُ	I entered

Below is a chart with the singular forms of two verbs in the past tense. Read from the right and then down.

Singular		Singular		
he did	فَعَلَ	كَتَبَ	he wrote	3.m.
she did	فَعَلَتْ	كَتَبَتْ	she wrote	3.f.
you did	فَعَلْتَ	كَتَبْتِ	you wrote	2.m.
you did	فَعَلْتِ	كَتَبْتِ	you wrote	2.f.
I did	فَعَلْتُ	كَتَبْتُ	I wrote	1.m. & f.

God has heard. 58: 1	1 سَمِعَ اللَّهُ
So when she heard about their gossip. 12: 31	2 فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ
She bore a burden. 7: 189	3 حَمَلَتْ حَمَلًا
So she watched over him from afar. 28: 11	4 فَبَصَّرَتْ بِهِ عَنْ جَنْبٍ
And a caravan came. 12: 19	5 وَجَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةً
And indeed Our messengers came (to) Ibrahim with the good news. 11: 69	6 ■ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى
You created me from fire... 7: 12	7 خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ
and You created him from clay. 7: 12	8 وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ
Have you seen the one who has rejected/disbelieved in Our signs? 19: 77	9 ■ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا
And you killed someone. 20: 40	10 وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا
They said: O Maryam! Indeed you have come (with) an amazing thing. 19: 27	11 ■ قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا
He said: My Lord! Indeed I have killed someone from among them. 28: 33	12 ■ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا
And I made for him wealth extensive. 74: 12	13 وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا
I saw eleven planets and the sun and the moon... 12: 4	14 رَأَيْتَ أَحَدَ عَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
I have not created jinn and mankind except that they may worship Me. 51: 56	15 ■ مَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Notes for text above

■ **Line 6:** The word رُسُلٌ messengers, is a broken plural of رَسُولٌ and is here considered to be feminine singular. The verb جَاءَتْ is therefore feminine singular. • The word الْبُشْرَى means 'the good news'.

■ **Line 9:** The particle أَرَأَيْتَ introduces a question.

• يَا أَيَاتِنَا = يَا + أَيَاتِنَا + نَا - in Our signs

■ **Line 11:** يَا مَرْيَمُ = يَا + مَرْيَمُ - O Maryam!

■ **Line 12:** The preposition مِنْ is translated as 'from among'.

■ **Line 15:** لِيَعْبُدُونِ = لِ + يَعْبُدُونَ - so that + they may worship + Me. The نِ is short for نِي.

فَرِيًّا	amazing	مَكْرٌ	plot, gossip
أَحَدَ عَشَرَ	eleven	طِينٍ	clay
كَوْكَبٍ	planet	الَّذِي	the one who

Unit 14

The verb: past tense, singular, dual & plural

To conjugate a verb is to show its various forms for the singular, dual and plural - masculine and feminine, in a particular tense.

Below is a chart with the complete conjugation of the verb **كَتَبَ** in the past tense. To conjugate a verb is to show its various forms.

In the past tense, all changes to the verb are made by adding suffixes to the root word.

The suffixes tell who did the action. For example, the suffix **تُ** indicates 'I' and the suffix **نَا** indicates 'We'.

You may use the chart below as a reference. You are not expected at this stage to remember all the endings of the verb in the past tense before going on. However, the sooner you know them the better.

	Plural	Dual	Singular			
they wrote	كَتَبُوا	they wrote	كَتَبَا	he wrote	كَتَبَ	3.m.
they wrote	كَتَبْنَ	they wrote	كَتَبَتَا	she wrote	كَتَبَتْ	3.f.
you wrote	كَتَبْتُمْ	you wrote	كَتَبْتُمَا	you wrote	كَتَبْتَ	2.m.
you wrote	كَتَبْتُنَّ	you wrote	كَتَبْتُمَا	you wrote	كَتَبْتِ	2.f.
we wrote	كَتَبْنَا	we wrote	كَتَبْنَا	I wrote	كَتَبْتُ	1.m & f.

From the above chart, you will see that verbs are classified according to:

- Number - singular, dual or plural
- Gender - masculine or feminine
- Person - 3rd, 2nd or 1st person.

(They are also classified according to **tense** (e.g. past or present), **voice** (active or passive) and **mood** - but we will explain what these mean later.)

Number

We already know from Section One, that words in Arabic can be singular, dual or plural. Singular refers to one, dual refers to two, and plural refers to more than two. This applies to verbs as well.

In the last Unit, we dealt with the singular forms of the verb in the past tense. The dual forms do not occur very frequently. The verbs in lines 2 and 5 opposite are dual.

In the plural of the past tense, notice that there is an alif written, but not pronounced, at the end of the masculine, 3rd person form: **كَتَبُوا** they wrote. In the Madjnah Mus-haf, a small circle is placed above this alif to show that it is not pronounced.

Notice the difference in pronunciation and meaning between **كَتَبْنَ** they (f.) wrote, and **كَتَبْنَا** we wrote.

Hint: The verbs in the second person past tense all have the same endings as their respective separate pronouns.. Repeating each verb with its pronoun may help in memorizing, e.g. **أَنْتِ كَتَبْتِ أَنْتِ كَتَبْتِ أَنْتُمْ كَتَبْتُمْ**

Faith and good works

Faith and good works are frequently mentioned together in the Qur'an. It is not sufficient to believe in God. Belief has to be supported and confirmed by righteous action. Noone lives in a vacuum. Either one does good deeds, or remains idle and lazy, or does wrong and evil deeds.

The words

ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

- those who 'have believed and done good works' (lines 11 & 12 opposite) occur more than fifty times together in the Qur'an.

He made darkness and light. 6: 1	جَعَلَ الظُّلْمَتِ وَالنُّورِ 1
They both made partners unto Him. 7: 190	جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ 2
And they made partners unto God. 13: 33	وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ 3
And He found you wandering and guided (you). 93: 7	وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى 4
And they (both) found one of Our servants (lit. a servant from Our servants). 88: 65	وَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا 5
They found their merchandise. 12: 65	وَجَدُوا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ 6
The messenger has believed. 2: 285	ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ 7 ■
Surely, I believed in your Lord. 36: 25	إِنِّي ءَامَنْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ 8
Our Sustainer! We have believed... 5: 83	رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا 9 ■
What have they created of the earth? 35: 40	مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ 10 ■
And those who have believed...	وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا 11 ■
...and have done good works...	وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ 12
...those are the companions of Paradise. 2: 82	أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ 13
And those who have disbelieved and denied Our signs...	وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا 14 ■
...those are the companions of the Fire. 2: 39	أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ 15

Notes for text above

■ **Line 7:** The verb **ءَامَنَ** in line 7 is a Form IV verb; other past tense forms of this verb occur in lines 8, 9 and 11.

■ **Line 9:** The word **رَبَّ** is accusative. In addressing someone, the accusative is used:

(i) when the word has an attached pronoun as in **رَبَّنَا**, *Our Sustainer!*

(ii) when it is followed by a word in the genitive, e.g.

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ - *O company of jinn and mankind!*

Otherwise, the nominative is used: a single dammah for words in the singular e.g.

يَا مُحَمَّدُ, *O Muhammad!*

■ **Line 10:** The preposition **مِنْ** is translated as 'of'.

■ **Lines 11 & 14:** **الَّذِينَ** *those who*, is the masculine plural of **الَّذِي**, *the one who*.

Unit 15

The verb:
past tense,
number &
gender

اللَّهِ

The word 'Allah' is grammatically masculine singular but it has no gender connotations. Also, the word Allah does not have any plural form - unlike the word 'god' in English or 'ilah' in Arabic.

Number (continued)

Feminine plural past tense verbs end with **نَ** which is a short vowel. For example:

دَخَلْنَ they (f.) entered كَتَبْنَ they (f.) wrote.

However, first person plural verbs end with **نَا** which is a long vowel:

دَخَلْنَا we entered كَتَبْنَا we wrote.

Be careful when reading to keep short vowels short and lengthen the long vowels. Meanings change when you lengthen vowels. You can see that the endings of words are very important in Arabic.

Gender

Verbs, like pronouns, in Arabic may be either masculine (m.) or feminine (f.). There is no neuter gender. Study the following:

جَاءَ He has come	جَاءَ It has come.
جَاءَ رَجُلٌ A man came	جَاءَ الْحَقُّ The Truth has come.
جَاءَتْ She came	جَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ A caravan came.

A masculine singular noun takes a verb in the masculine. The noun **الْحَقُّ** is masculine and the verb **جَاءَ** is also masculine.

A feminine singular noun takes a verb in the feminine. The noun **سَيَّارَةٌ** is feminine because it ends with **تَ** marbutah. Its verb **جَاءَتْ** is also feminine - it ends with **تَ**.

More on the agreement of subjects and verbs

- When a verb comes first in a sentence and its subject is 3rd person, it is always singular - even if the subject is singular, dual or plural. (See lines 12 - 15.)
- When a verb comes first in a sentence, it can be masculine even if the subject is grammatically feminine. In line 14, the subject **الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ** is feminine plural but its verb **جَاءَ** is masculine singular.
- The verb occurring first in a sentence is singular even if the subject is plural. But a following verb with the same plural subject will be plural. In line 15, the first verb **جَاءَ** is singular but the second verb **دَخَلُوا** is plural. The subject of both verbs is **إِخْوَةٌ**, the brothers.

Hint on translating into English:

First identify the subject of the Arabic sentence. If the subject is a noun, it must be in the nominative case. For example, in line 13 opposite, the subject must be **رُسُلَنَا** which is nominative. In line 14, the subject of the verb **جَاءَ** is **الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ** which is nominative.

مِيثَاقٌ	pledge, covenant
غَلِيظٌ	solemn, strong
طَهُورٌ	pure
بَيِّنَاتٌ	clear teachings

الْمَاءِ

The verse in line 4 opposite, expresses a profound truth: that water is necessary for the emergence and development of life. Life depends on water. Read this verse with the previous amazing verse of the Qur'an, 21: 29.

They (f.) took from you a solemn pledge. 4: 21	أَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا 1
So when they (f.) saw him... 12: 31	فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ 2
We created the heavens and the earth. 50: 16	خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ 3 ■
And We made from water every living thing. 21: 30	وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ 4 ■
We sent down from the sky pure water. 25: 48	أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا 5 ■
We have heard and we have obeyed. 2: 285	سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا 6
Indeed We did send our messengers with clear teachings. 57: 25	لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ 7 ■
And indeed We did send <u>Muṣā</u> with our signs. 11: 96	وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا 8 ■
A man came. 28: 20	جَاءَ رَجُلٌ 9
The Truth has come. 17: 81	جَاءَ الْحَقُّ 10
A caravan came. 12: 19	جَاءَتْ سَيَّارَةٌ 11
Messengers before me have come to you. 3: 183	قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّن قَبْلِي 12
And indeed Our messengers came (to) <u>Ibrāhīm</u> with the good news. 11: 69	وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا <u>إِبْرَاهِيمَ</u> بِالْبَشْرَىٰ 13 ■
O Prophet! When the believing women come (to) you... 60: 12	يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ 14
And the brothers of <u>Yūsuf</u> came and entered unto him and he recognized them. 12: 58	وَجَاءَ إِخْوَةُ <u>يُوسُفَ</u> فَدَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ 15 ■

Notes for text above

■ **Lines 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8:** The words 'We' and 'Our' refer to Allāh. In the Qur'ān, Allāh frequently refers to Himself as 'We' but this does not in any way affect the fact that Allāh is One.

■ **Lines 7, 8 and 13:** لَقَدْ is a combination of the ل of emphasis and قَدْ. To emphasize that an action is complete, the particle قَدْ or لَقَدْ is placed before the past tense verb. قَدْ with the past tense of the verb

sometimes conveys the sense of the Past Perfect in English - as in قَدْ كَتَبَ - he had written.

قَدْ is one of the many particles which control verbs in Arabic and help to convey precise tenses. The actual tense of a verb, however, has to be determined by the context in which it is used.

■ **Lines 15:** The word يُوسُفَ is genitive. See Note for line 2, Unit 16.

Unit 16

The verb:
past tense,
person

Abbreviations:

- f.s. = feminine singular
- f.d. = feminine dual
- f.p. = feminine plural
- m.s. = masculine singular
- m.d. = masculine dual
- m.p. = masculine plural

Person

As with pronouns, we also use the expressions 1st person, 2nd person or 3rd person when we describe any form of the verb in Arabic.

3rd person

The 3rd person is the person *spoken about*: *he, she, it, or they* in English.

In Arabic, the 3rd person may be: *he, she, they two (m.), they two (f.), they (m.p.) or they (f.p.)*.

Notice in Arabic that there are four forms of the verb meaning 'they + verb':

كَتَبُوا	They (m.p.) wrote.	كَتَبَا	They (m.d.) wrote.
كَتَبْنَ	They (f.p.) wrote.	كَتَبَتَا	They (f.d.) wrote.

The masculine plural form is used for males and also for mixed groups of males and females.

2nd person

The 2nd person is the person being *spoken to*: *you*. In English, the word 'you' may refer to a male or female, to one person or a group of people. In Arabic, we have already learnt that there are five pronouns meaning 'you' and there are also five forms of the verb which refer to 'you', depending on whether the word 'you' is masculine or feminine, singular, dual or plural:

كُتِبْتُمْ	You (m. p.) wrote.	كُتِبْتَ	You (m. s.) wrote.
كُتِبْتُنَّ	You (f. p.) wrote.	كُتِبْتِ	You (f. s.) wrote.

The masculine and feminine dual is كُتِبْتُمَا , You (m. & f. d.) wrote.

Hint: The verbs in the second person past tense all have the same endings as their respective separate pronouns. Repeating each verb with its pronoun may help in memorizing:

أَنْتُمْ كُتِبْتُمْ	أَنْتَ كُتِبْتَ
أَنْتُنَّ كُتِبْتُنَّ	أَنْتِ كُتِبْتِ

For the m.& f. dual, the pronoun with the verb is أَنْتُمَا كُتِبْتُمَا .

1st person

The first person is the person *speaking*: *I, We*.

Here, as in English, there is no distinguishing between masculine and feminine.

There is also no distinction between the dual and the plural.

كُتِبْتُ - I (m. & f.) wrote;	كُتِبْنَا - We (m. & f. dual and plural) wrote.
-------------------------------	---

Reflecting on water

In the words of lines 4 and 5 opposite, Allah asks us to reflect on or think about the water we drink. Several verses of the Qur'an deal with the water cycle and the uses of water. Water is a crucial part of Allah's sustenance (rizq) to His creation. When we think of and use water, we are thankful to God and acknowledge His creative power and grace.

As if you see Him

The word إِحْسَانٌ is

often translated simply as 'good' or 'goodness'. It also means excellence and implies the doing of something to the best of one's ability. According to a hadjth (saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him), ihsan is 'that you should worship God as if you see Him, for while you do not see Him, He surely sees you'.

He said: Did you know what you did...	1 ■	قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ	
...with Yusuf and his brother? 12: 89	2 ■	بِيُوسُفَ وَأَخِيهِ	
You have disbelieved after your (attaining) faith. 9: 66	3	قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ	
So have you seen the water...	4 ■	أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ	
which you drink? 56: 67	5 ■	الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ	to drink شَرِبَ / يَشْرَبُ
Have you seen the one who has disbelieved in Our signs? 19: 77	6 ■	أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِآيَاتِنَا	to cut قَطَعَ / يَقْطَعُ
Is the recompense of good (anything) but good? 55: 60	7	هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ	God save us! حَاشَ لِلَّهِ
So have you found what ...	8 ■	فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا	a human being, human beings بَشَرٌ
your Lord promised (to be) true? 7: 44	9	وَعَدَرَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا	an angel مَلَكٌ
And she said (to Yusuf): 'Come out before them.'	10 ■	وَقَالَتْ أَخْرِجْ عَلَيْنَهُ	
And when they saw him, they marvelled greatly at him...	11 ■	فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ أَكْبَرْنَهُ	
and cut their hands...	12	وَقَطَّعْنَ أَيْدِيَهُنَّ	
and said, 'May God save us!'	13	وَقُلْنَ حَاشَ لِلَّهِ	
This is not a human being...	14	مَا هَذَا بَشَرًا	
This is nothing but a noble angel. 12: 31	15 ■	إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ	

Notes for text above

- **Lines 1, 4 & 6:** To introduce a question, **أَ** or **هَلْ** is used. They are referred to as interrogative particles. In the Qur'an **أَ** is used more frequently than **هَلْ**.
- **Line 2:** The word **بِ** **يُوسُفَ** is genitive because it is controlled by the preposition **بِ**. Some words, including many proper names, have only one form for the accusative and genitive.

Examples: **إِبْرَاهِيمَ**، **إِسْرَائِيلَ**، **مَرْيَمَ**.

- **Line 5:** **تَشْرَبُونَ** - you (2.m.p.) drink - is present tense. See Unit 21. **Line 8:** In **وَجَدْتُمْ**, the sukun which should be on the **dal** is omitted and a shaddah is placed on the **ta'** for ease in pronunciation.
- **Line 10:** **أَخْرِجْ** is imperative, (m.s.). See Unit 25.
- **Line 11:** The word **أَكْبَرْنَهُ** is translated 'they marvelled greatly at him' - lit. they (f.p.) considered him great. **Line 15:** **إِنَّ** - a negative particle followed by **إِلَّا** = 'nothing ...but'.

Unit 17

The verb: past tense - active & passive

A verb is **active** when its subject is the doer of the action.

A verb is **passive** when its subject is acted upon.

Unwanted

الْمَوَّودَةُ refers, in line

7 opposite, to the 'unwanted' girl child who is murdered by parents or others and who in the hereafter will point its accusing finger at its murderer. The Qur'an condemns this practice of infanticide. Those who are responsible for this heinous crime will be brought to account on the day of judgment. The appalling practice is not just of the past. In fact, as a result of genetic screening and social engineering, and the rampant spread of abortions worldwide through the 'pro-choice' lobby, this practice is now on a far vaster scale than it has even been in the past.

Verbs are either active or passive.

So far we have been dealing with Arabic verbs in the past tense which are active. A verb is active when its subject is the doer of the action.

A verb is passive when its subject is acted upon.

In the following sentence,

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ - God created the earth

the verb خَلَقَ is active. The subject, اللَّهُ, is the doer of the action.

In the following sentence,

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ - The human being was created.

the verb خُلِقَ meaning 'was created' is passive. The subject, الْإِنْسَانُ, is acted upon.

The verb in English is easily recognized as passive because it is a combination of 'was' + 'created'. The verbs in sentences like 'I am created', 'We are created', 'They were created' are all passive.

The passive of the past tense simple verb in Arabic is on the pattern of خُلِقَ. The first root letter takes a dammah and the second takes a kasrah.

Active قَتَلَتْ she killed

ذَكَرَ he mentioned

Passive قُتِلَتْ she was killed

ذُكِرَ he was mentioned

The suffixes or endings of passive verbs are the same as those of past tense active verbs given in the previous Units.

Note: The word إِيْل in line 10 opposite is normally taken to mean 'she-camels'.

Muhammad Asad (*The Meaning of the Qur'an*, p. 949) has pointed out that the word has a rarer meaning of 'clouds bearing rain-water'. This better fits the context which refers to the skies, mountains and the earth.

weak	ضَعِيفٌ
female child	الْمَوَّودَةُ
to ask	سَأَلَ
to tremble	وَجَلَ
fasting	صِيَامٌ
Stand firm!	اسْتَقِم

He created the human being. 55: 3

1 خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ

The human being was created weak. 4: 28

2 خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا

He gathered wealth. 104: 2

3 جَمَعَ مَالًا

So the sorcerers were gathered. 26: 38

4 ■ فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ

And Dawūd killed Jalūt. 2: 251

5 وَقَتَلَ دَاوُودُ جَالُوتَ

And whoever has been killed unjustly... 17: 33

6 وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا

And when the female babe is asked: for what sin was she killed? 81: 9

7 وَإِذَا الْمَوْءُودَةُ سُئِلَتْ بِأَيِّ ذَنْبٍ قُتِلَتْ

Perish the human being! How ungrateful is he!
80: 17

8 ■ قَتَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا أَكْفَرَهُ

Permission (to fight) has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged. 22: 39

9 أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا

Do they not look at the clouds - how they were created? 88: 13

10 أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبْلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ

When Allāh is mentioned, their hearts tremble.
22: 35

11 ■ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ

Fasting has been prescribed for you (lit. on you).
2: 183

12 كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ

And if you were killed in the path of God or were to die...

13 ■ وَلَئِن قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مِتُّمْ

...then forgiveness from God and His grace is better than whatever (wealth) they amass. 3: 157

14 لَمَغْفِرَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةً خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

And stand firm as you were commanded. 32: 15

15 وَأَسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أَمَرْتَ

Notes for text above

■ **Line 4:** The verb, whether active or passive, is singular when it is the first word in a sentence. This is so whether the subject of the sentence is singular, dual or plural. For example, the subject *السَّحَرَةُ* the sorcerers, is plural but the verb *جُمِعَ* is singular.

■ **Line 8:** The verb *قُتِلَ* is used to express a wish. The past tense of the verb in Arabic, whether active or passive, is sometimes used to express a wish. An

example of this - not from the Qur'an - is *رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ* - may God have mercy on him.

The construction *مَا أَكْفَرَهُ* is used to express the exclamation: *How ungrateful is he!* It is made up of *مَا* + comparative adjective + the pronoun *هُ* (For comparative adjectives, see Unit 18.)

■ **Line 11.** This is a conditional sentence (see Unit 40) introduced by the particle *إِذَا*, meaning 'if' or 'when'.

■ **Line 13.** *لَئِن* = *إِن* + *لَ*

Unit 18

The past tense of قَالَ

In English, adjectives like big, bigger and biggest are called positive, comparative and superlative respectively.

In Arabic, there is only one form for the comparative and the superlative.

Two verbs which occur very frequently in the Qur'an are قَالَ and كَانَ in their various forms.

They are called hollow verbs. The alif in قَالَ and كَانَ stands for the letter و. So: the root letters of قَالَ are ق و ل; the root letters of كَانَ are ك و ن.

This means that if you are looking up قَالَ in a dictionary, you will need to look under ق و ل and not ق ا ل. The second root letter 'waw' is also important when we come to deal with the present tense of قَالَ.

Below is given the full conjugation of قَالَ in the past tense. You will see that the alif is dropped in all the 1st and 2nd person forms, and in the feminine plural 3rd person. Whenever the alif is dropped, the ق takes a dammah.

Plural	Dual	Singular	
قَالُوا	قَالَا	قَالَ	3.m.
قَالْنَ	قَالَتَا	قَالَتْ	3.f.
قُلْتُمْ	قُلْتُمَا	قُلْتَ	2.m.
قُلْتُنَّ	قُلْتُمَا	قُلْتِ	2.f.
قُلْنَا	قُلْنَا	قُلْتُ	1. m & f.

The passive of قَالَ is قِيلَ, it has been said, it is said.

Adjectives: comparative & superlative

In line 1 opposite, the word أَكْبَرُ meaning 'bigger' or 'greater', is the comparative form of the adjective كَبِيرٌ meaning 'big' or 'great'. Many adjectives follow the same pattern. In English, we use the terms positive, comparative and superlative for adjectives used for comparing. For example, big, bigger and biggest are positive, comparative and superlative respectively. In Arabic, to form the comparative of a masculine adjective, an alif is added before the first root letter. A sukun is then placed on the first root letter. The second root letter takes a fat-hah. Read from right to left.

Comparative		Positive	
bigger	أَكْبَرُ	big	كَبِيرٌ
smaller	أَصْغَرُ	small	صَغِيرٌ
nearer	أَقْرَبُ	near	قَرِيبٌ
more	أَكْثَرُ	many	كَثِيرٌ
greater	أَعْظَمُ	great	عَظِيمٌ

We hear and we obey

The response of a believer to Divine guidance contained in the Qur'an is to accept and follow it. But this is not robotic behaviour. It is based on the clear consciousness of the absolute knowledge, wisdom and justice of God Who knows what is best for His creatures. Each person has a duty to use his or her God-given reason to ponder and reflect.

Arabic uses the comparative form for the superlative as well. So the word أَكْبَرُ can mean both 'bigger' and 'biggest'. You can tell from the context whether an adjective is comparative or superlative.

The feminine of كَبِيرٌ is كَبِيرَةٌ, the comparative form of which is كُبْرَى which means 'greater' or 'greatest' as in الآية الكُبْرَى - the greatest sign.

He said: This (is) my Lord. This (is) greater. 6: 78	1	قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ	
He said: I am better than he. 7: 12	2	قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ	
She said: It is from God. 3: 37	3	قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ	
She said: My Sustainer! Indeed I have wronged myself. 27: 44	4	قَالَتْ رَبِّي إِنَّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي	
They both said: Our Sustainer! We have wronged ourselves. 7: 23	5	قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا	
They (f.) both said: Our father (is) an old man. 28: 23	6	قَالَتَا أَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ	an old man
They said: We heard and disobeyed. 2: 93	7	قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا	to disobey
They said: We heard and obeyed. 2: 285	8	وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا	to obey
Did you say to people...? 5: 116	9	أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ ...	food
I did not say to them...	10 ■	مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ ...	
except what You commanded me. 5:117	11 ■	إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ	
And behold! We said to the angels... 2: 34	12	وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ	
And behold, you said: O Musa,	13	وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى	
we shall not bear one (type of) food. 2: 61	14 ■	لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ	
And when it is said to them: Believe, as people have believed... 2: 13	15 ■	وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ	

شَيْخٌ
عَصَى
أَطَاعَ
طَعَامٌ

Notes for text above

- **Line 10:** The first مَا negates the verb: قُلْتُ - I said; مَا قُلْتُ - I did not say.
- **Line 11:** The مَا means 'what'. بِهِ, meaning 'with it' must be included in the Arabic but is not translated in the English.
- **Line 14:** The word لَنْ means 'shall not'. It is followed by a verb in the subjunctive. See Unit 23.

- **Line 15:** The word ءَامِنُوا is imperative plural. Notice the kasrah with the mjim. See Unit 33.

Finding out: Use a translation of the Qur'an to find out the following: Who is the speaker in line 1, line 2, line 3, line 4 and line 10? Who are the speakers in line 5, line 6 and lines 13-14? Describe the context of each of these lines.

Unit 19

The past tense of كَان

The noun of كَان is in the nominative.

The predicate of كَان is in the accusative.

Below is a chart with the full conjugation of the verb كَان in the past tense. It follows the same pattern as that of قَالَ .

Plural	Dual	Singular	
كَانُوا	كَانَا	كَانَ	3.m.
كُنُّوا	كَانَتَا	كَانَتْ	3.f.
كُنْتُمْ	كُنْتُمَا	كُنْتَ	2.m.
كُنْتُنَّ	كُنْتُمَا	كُنْتِ	2.f.
كُنَّا	كُنَّا	كُنْتُ	1.m.f.

The 3rd person feminine plural كُنُّوا is a contraction of كُنْتُنَّ .

The 1st person plural كُنَّا is a contraction of كُنْنَا .

The 'noun' of kana and the 'predicate' of kana

Study the following sentence:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً - Mankind was one nation.

In this sentence, the word النَّاسُ is called in Arabic 'the noun of كَان'. The word النَّاسُ is nominative, ending with a dammah. The noun of كَان is in the nominative case .

The word أُمَّةً is the predicate or خَبَر of كَان . It is accusative, ending with fat-hah. The predicate of كَان is in the accusative case.

(The word وَاحِدَةً is an adjective of أُمَّةً and agrees with it in gender and case.)

Below are more examples with kana. Notice that all the nouns of kana are nominative and all the predicates are accusative. Read from right to left.

Predicate of kana	Noun of kana	kana	
أُمَّةً	النَّاسُ	كَانَ	Mankind was one nation.
غَفُورًا	اللَّهِ	كَانَ	God has been Forgiving.
مُؤْمِنِينَ		كَانُوا	They were believers.
يَهُودِيًّا	إِبْرَاهِيمَ	مَا كَانَ	Ibrahim was not a Jew.
صَادِقِينَ		إِنْ كُنْتُمْ	If you were truthful.

The one who conceals
The word 'kafir' is the active participle of the verb kafara which has the basic meaning of 'to conceal' or 'to cover up'. A kafir may be described as one who 'covers up' his natural state of goodness and virtue and denies or rejects the natural belief in one God. A kafir is also one who is ungrateful for all the favours which God has bestowed on the human being.
The word kafir has two plurals: kafirun and kuffar. In one instance in the Qur'an (sura al-Hajj, 57: 20), the word kuffar is used to mean 'tillers' of the soil, people who 'cover up' seed with soil.

Notes for text on opposite page:

Line 7: The word مُسْلِمِينَ is accusative because it is the predicate of كَانُوا .

Line 9: The word خَيْرٍ is accusative because it is the predicate of كُنْتُمْ .

Line 10: The word ظَالِمِينَ is accusative because it is the predicate of كُنَّا .

Line 14: The word تَرَابًا is accusative because it is the predicate of كُنْتُ .

Line 15: The word اللَّهُ is nominative because it is the noun of كَان .

Mankind was one nation. 2: 213

1 ■ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

And he was from among the disbelievers. 2: 34

2 وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And indeed she was from a disbelieving folk. 28: 47

3 إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ

And she was one of the devout. 66: 12

4 وَكَانَتْ مِنَ الْقَانِتِينَ

(There is) no god but You. Glory be to You...

5 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ

Indeed, I have been one of the wrongdoers. 21: 87

6 إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

They were Muslims (submitting to God). 43: 69

7 كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

They were before that doers of good. 51: 16

8 كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ

You are the best community produced for mankind... 3: 110

9 كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

They said: Glory be to our Sustainer! Indeed we, we were wrong-doers. 68: 29

10 قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

So He expelled them both from where they were. 2: 36

11 فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ

And if (it were) not for God's favour on you and His mercy,

12 ■ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ

you would certainly have been among the losers. 2: 64

13 لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

And the unbeliever would say, 'Oh! Would that I were dust.' 78: 40

14 ■ وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُ يَلِيَّتِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا

And God has been Forgiving, Merciful. 4: 96

15 ■ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Notes for text above

■ **Line 1:** The word 'ummah' (plural: umam) means community or nation. It is used in the Qur'an to refer to the community of believers or the universal Muslim community which is described as a middle community. Other species in creation (such as birds) are also referred to in the Qur'an as 'umam' or 'communities'.

■ **Line 12:** لَوْ meaning 'if' introduces a conditional sentence. This is why the following لَكُنْتُمْ is translated as 'you would certainly have been'. The

initial ل is the lam of emphasis.

■ **Line 14:** يَلِيَّتِي is a combination of يَتَّى + نِي meaning 'Oh, would that I ...'.

■ **Line 15:** Note that the verb كَانَ refers not only to the past but to the present as well. It has the sense of 'was' and 'continues to be'. The past form of the verb in Arabic is often used in a past and present continuous sense. It is important to look at the context in which a verb is used to determine its tense.