Quranic Grammar - Verb Forms

The Arabic letters fā ʿayn lām (ف ع ل) are typically used as placeholders in verb patterns to denote three different radical letters, since فَعَلَ is a prototypical verb that means "to do" or "to act". Roots in Arabic convey a basic meaning which then allow for more complex semantic concepts to be derived, whether these are verbs or nouns. Based on this system nouns and verbs can have up to fourteen to fifteen forms, although though ten is the norm for most roots.

VN Verbal Noun	PP Passive Particle	AP Active Particle	Perfect	Imperfect	Verb Form	فعلPattern
فِعَلٌ	مَفْعُلٌ	فَعِلٌ	يَفْعَلُ	فَعَلَ	I	Base of فعل
تَفْعِيلٌ	مُفَعَّلٌ	مُفَعِّلٌ	يُفَعِّلُ	فَعَّلَ	II	Shadda is placed across radical عَّ .
مُفاعَلَة / فِعالٌ	مُفاعَلٌ	مُفاعِلٌ	يُفَاعِلُ	فَاعَلَ	III	Radical فَ carries ا which makes فَا
اِفْعَلٌ	مُفْعَلٌ	مُفْعِلٌ	يُفْعِلُ	اَفْعَلَ	IV	Radical ف carries sukoon فْ
تَفَعُّلٌ	مُتَفَعَّلٌ	مُتَفَعِّلٌ	يَتَفَعَّلُ	تَفَعَّلَ	V	تَ is added before radicals ف and ع . shaddah عَّ .تَفَعَّ
تَفَاعُلٌ	مُتَفَاعَلٌ	مُتَفَاعِلٌ	تَفَاعَلُ	تَفَاعَلَ	VI	تَ is added before radicals ف and ف carries ا which makes تَفَا

اِنْفِعالٌ	مُنْفَعَلٌ	مُنْفَعِلٌ	يَنْفَعِلُ	اِنْفَعَلَ	VII	ن is added with sukoon. Radical ف accepts fatah نْفَ
إِفْتِعَلٌ	مُفْتَعَلٌ	مُفْتَعِلٌ	يَفْتَعِلُ	إِفْتَعَلَ	VIII	Radical ف carries sukoon. تَ is added. فْتَ
إِفْعِلالٌ		مُفْعَلٌّ	يَفْعَلُّ	إِفْعَلَّ	IX	Radical ف accepts sukoon. ع carries fatah. While ل takes shaddah. فْعَلَّ
اِسْتِفْعالٌ	مُسْتَفْعَلٌ	مُسْتَفْعِلٌ	يَسْتَفْعِلُ	إِسْتَفْعَلَ	X	سْ addied with sukoon. Then تَ is added, with ف having sukoon. سْتَفْ

Form	Derived Verb	Meaning	Examples
			Example:
Form I F-a-3-a-L-a	K-a-T-a-B-a ("to write")	The simplest form, "he wrote". Verbs of this form are generally transitive so that they require an object, as in "he wrote a book" or "he ate an apple". However it is possible to have intransitive verbs that require no object verbs in this class as well.	(2:187:28) kataba has ordained كَتَبَ V
			Causative:
Form II F-a-33-a-L-a	3-a-LL-a-M-a ("to teach")	A verb that is already transitive becomes doubly so, as it takes a meaning of "make do" or "make become", so the meaning could be "to make one learn" i.e. "to teach". This form reflects meaning in three ways: 1. Intensity of the verb (repetition or the energy in which the action is performed). 2. He made himself do (to make himself). 3. Causative (to make another do). In the intensity example on the right, the form of the verb shows the intensity and the repetition of the action, i.e. she closed all the doors and bolted them.	(96:4:2) ʿallama taught عَلَّمَ V Intensity: (12:23:8) waghallaqati And she closed وَ غَلَّقَتِ V CONJ
Form III F-aa-3-a-L-a	Q-aa-T-a-L-a ("to fight")	This form implies that there is someone or something else present and that the action is performed upon him/her/it. This forms reflects meaning in two ways: 1. Causative ("to be") as an active participle. 2. Mutual action (he made him do the same).	Causative: (12:26:7) shāhidun a witness Intensity: (2:244:1)

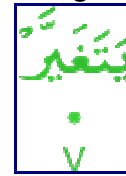|			
		In the causative example on the right, the active participle is derived from form I SH-a-H-i-D-a "to witness" or "to be present", which also occurs in the same verse. So here it is almost as if to say "he caused himself to witness". In the second example, the verb "fight" requires someone to be fought with, and so the action is mutual.	waqātilū And fight
Form IV a-F-3-a-L-a	a-H-L-a-K-a ("to destory")		Example 1: (2:205:8) wayuh'lika and destroys
		This pattern is similar to form II in that it makes intransitive verbs transitive, and transitive verbs doubly so. This form has the meaning of: 1. He made himself do or perform an action. 2. A reflexive causative, i.e. he made himself do something transformative to a place or a state. In the first example on the right, he made himself "destroy the crops". In the second example, the verb is causative, so that he made himself "want to harm". In the third example, he was not of the losers before this action of killing, but now was transformed into that state.	Example 2: (12:25:15) arāda intended Example 3: (5:30:7) fa-asbaha and became فَأَصْبَحَ V CONJ
Form V t-a-F-33-a-L-a	t-a-DH-KK-a-RR-a ("to receive admonition")	Form 5 is linked to form 2. Whatever action is done through a F-a-33-a-L-a form 2 verb, the t-a-F-33-a-L-a form 5 verb is from the point of view of the object of the verb. This usually reflects the reflexive or effective meaning, e.g. "he made himself" or "he made something undergo an action". In the first example on the right, DH-a-KK-a-R-a "to remind" is form II, and now in form V it is from the point of view of the object, i.e. "he received the reminder".	Example 1: (2:269:13) yadhakkaru remembers يَذَّكَّرُ V Example 2:

In the second example, the verb here is t-a-GH-a-YY-a-R-a "to undergo change", so these rivers in paradise do not undergo any change of state or taste even if ones tries to do that (in relation to form II: GH-a-YY-a-R-a "to cause to change").

(47:15:16)
yataghayyar
changes

يَتَغَيَّر

V

Form VI
t-a-F-aa-3-a-L-a

t-a-DH-aa-H-a-R-a ("to support one another")

Form 6 is the reflection of how the object underwent the action of form 3 (F-aa-3-a-L-a). Notice that as in form 5, this is obtained by adding ta- before the verb. Since form 3 implies an action done on someone, form 6 implies reciprocity as in the English sentence "they looked at each other".

The subject cannot be singular in this function of the form. For example, t-a-K-aa-T-a-B-a itself would mean "they corresponded with each other" (they wrote to each other). Here they support one another in this particular action. This usually reflects the meaning of:

1. Pure mutuality, e.g. t-a-B-aa-D-a-L-a "he exchanged" takes one object, or t-a-3-aa-W-a-N-a "he became assisting". More than one party needs to be involved in this action
2. Conative - he made himself be the doer.
3. Pretension – he made himself do something, e.g. "He made himself appear to forget".

Mutuality:

(2:85:11)
tazāharūna
you support one another

تَظَاهَرُونَ

PRON   V

Conative:

(46:16:8)
wanatajāwazu
and We will overlook

وَنَتَجَاوَزُ

V   CONJ

Form VII
i-n-F-a-3-a-L-a

i-n-Q-a-L-a-B-a ("to turn away")

This form expresses submission to an action or effect. In the case of an animate being, this is an involuntary submission. The form reflects meaning on two levels:

1. Reflexive (to let oneself be put through).
2. Angentless passive (non-reciprocal of form I).

In the second example, the verb is i-n-F-a-T-a-R-a "to be taken apart". In the Quranic sense, the agent of the action is God, as the skies do not split without a cause. But here it serves the heaven's submission to be broken apart.

Reflexive:

(3:144:18)
yanqalib
turns back

يَنقَلِبْ

V

Agentless passive:

(73:18:2)
munfatirun

(will) break apart

مُنفَطِرٌ

N

Form			
Form VIII i-F-t-a-3-a-L-a	i-3-t-a-R-a-DH-a ("to excuse oneself")	This form is generally the reflexive of the simple form K-a-T-a-B-a "he wrote", where the object of form 1 becomes its own object. This form reflects two meanings: 1. Either conative or causative (to make oneself do). 2. Reciprocal. In the conative example on the right, the verb is i-3-t-a-R-a-DH-a "to excuse oneself". Here in the second person, the meaning becomes "do not excuse yourselves". In the causative example, they made themselves take a conscious effortful action.	Conative: (9:94:8) taʿtadhirū make excuse, تَعْتَذِرُوا PRON V Causative : (2:51:7) ittakhadhtumu you took
Form IX i-F-3-a-LL-a	i-S-W-a-DD-a ("to turn black in color")	This form usually reflects the meaning of stativity, and typically refers to bodily defects and colors. For example, i-3-W-a-JJ-a "to be crocked or lame".	Color: (3:106:4) wataswaddu and would become black وَتَسْوَدُّ V CONJ
Form X i-s-t-a-F-3-a-L-a	i-s-t-a-H-Z-a-A-a ("to make oneself mock at")	The tenth form usually reflects the meaning of someone seeking something. Typically the form reflects the meaning of: 1. Causative - i-s-t-KH-R-a-J-a "to effortfully make come out" (i.e. he extracted) . 2. Reflexive causative - i-s-t-a-H-Z-a-A-a "he made himself deride". Reflexive transformative - "he made be himself be something", e.g. i-s-t-a-3-R-a-B-a "he made himself an Arab" 3. Causative - "to do to the self", e.g. "he made the object do himself" (as the	Reflexive causative: (13:32:2) us'tuh'zi-a were mocked Causative: (4:106:1) wa-is'taghfiri And seek forgiveness

subject), or "He sought to be done by the object". i-s-t-GH-F-a-R-a "he sought to be forgiven by someone else".

وَ ٱسْتَغْفِرْ

V REM

Fig 3. Triliteral verb forms (I to X).