

LESSON 1

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In this lesson we learn the following:

- a) The Declension of Nouns, and
- b) The Moods of Verbs.

(A) Declension of Nouns □ □

We have already seen in Parts One and Two that most Arabic nouns are declinable, i.e., they indicate their function in the sentence by their endings.

These endings are three. They are:



- 1) The *dammah* to indicate the nominative case (الرَّفْعُ). A noun with this ending is called مَرْفُوعٌ.
- 2) The *fathah* to indicate the accusative case (النَّصْبُ). A noun with this ending is called مَنْصُوبٌ.
- 3) The *kasrah* to indicate the genitive case (الجُّرْحُ). A noun with this ending is called مَجْرُورٌ.

Here is an example:

دَخَلَ المَدْرِسُ. ‘The teacher entered.’

Here al-mudarris-u is مَرْفُوعٌ because it is the *fā'il* (الفاعل).

سَأَلَتُ المَدْرِسَ. ‘I asked the teacher.’

Here al-mudarris-a is مَنْصُوبٌ because it is the object (المفعول به).

هَذِه سَيَّارَةُ المَدْرِسِ. ‘This is the teacher’s car.’

Here al-mudarris-i is مَجْرُورٌ because it is *muḍāfi layhi* (مضاف إليه).

Now these endings (*dammah*, *fathah* and *kasrah*) are called the Primary Endings

علاماتُ الْإِعْرَابِ الْأَصْلِيَّةُ.

There are other endings also which are called the Secondary Endings

علاماتُ الْإِعْرَابِ الْفَرْعَيَّةُ.

The following groups of nouns have these endings:

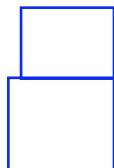
a) The Sound Feminine Plural (جَمْعُ الْمَؤْنَثِ السَّالِمُ):

Only the *naṣb*-ending is different in this group. It takes *kasrah* instead of *fathah*, e.g.:

سَأَلَتِ الْمُدِيرَةُ الْمَدْرِسَاتِ. ‘The headmistress asked the female teachers.’

Here al-mudarrisāt-i takes *kasrah* instead of *fathah* because it is sound feminine plural.

Note that in this group the *naṣb*-ending is the same as the *jarr*-ending, e.g.:



رأيَتُ السَّيَاراتِ ‘I saw the cars.’

Here al-sayyārāt-i^١ is مَنْصُوبٌ because it is the object.

خَرَجَ النَّاسُ مِنَ السَّيَاراتِ. ‘The people came out of the cars.’

Here al-sayyārāt-i is مَجْرُورٌ because it is preceded by a preposition.

b) The Diptote (المُمْتُونُعُ مِنَ الْصَّرْفِ): □ □

In this group the *jarr*-ending is *fathah* instead of *kasrah*, e.g.:

هَذَا كِتَابُ زَيْنَبٍ. ‘This is Zainab’s book.’

Here Zainab-a has *fathah* instead of *kasrah* because it is a diptote.

Note that in this group the *jarr*-ending is the same as *naṣb*-ending, e.g.:

سَأَلْتُ زَيْنَبَ. ‘I asked Zainab.’

Here Zainab-a is مَفْعُولٌ بِهِ مَنْصُوبٌ because it is preceded by a preposition.

هَذَهْبَتُ إِلَى زَيْنَبٍ. ‘I went to Zainab.’

Here Zainab-a is مَجْرُورٌ because it is preceded by a preposition.

c) The Five Nouns (الْأَسْمَاءُ الْخَمْسَةُ): □

أَبٌ، أَخٌ، حَمٌّ، فَمٌ، ذُو ^٢أَبٍ These nouns take the secondary endings only when they are

مُضَافٌ إِلَيْهِ, and the مُضَافٌ is not the pronoun of the first person singular. In this group the *raf‘*-ending is *wāw*, the *naṣb*-ending is *alif* and the *jarr*-ending is *yā’*, e.g.:

مَاذَا قَالَ أَبُو بَلَالٍ؟ ‘What did Bilāl’s father say?’

□ Note it is أَبُو (abū) with a *wāw*, not أَبٌ (abu).

أَعْرِفُ أَبَا بَلَالٍ. ‘I know Bilāl’s father.’

Note it is أَبَا (abā) with an *alif*, not أَبٌ (aba).

ذَهَبَتُ إِلَى أَبِي بَلَالٍ. ‘I went to Bilāl’s father.’

Note it is أَبِي (abi) with a *yā’*, not أَبٌ (abi).

^١ - This should be pronounced as-sayyārāt-i. For the sake of uniformity, I write the definite article *al-* even with the solar letters.

^٢ - الحَمُّ means the male relative of the husband such as his brother and his kasher.

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The مضاف إِلَيْهِ can be a pronoun, e.g.:

أين ذَهَبَ أخُوكَ؟ ‘Where did your brother go?’ (akhū-ka)

ما رأيْتُ أخَاكَ. ‘I did not see your brother.’ (akhā-ka)

ما أَسْمُ أخِيكَ؟ ‘What is your brother’s name?’ (akhī-ka)

If the مضاف إِلَيْهِ is the pronoun of the first person singular, the noun remains unchanged, e.g.:

يدرسُ أخِي بِالجَامِعَةِ. ‘My brother is studying at the university.’

أَتَعْرِفُ أخِي؟ ‘Do you know my brother?’

خُذِ الْعُنَوَانَ مِنْ أخِي؟ ‘Take the address from my brother.’

The word فم (mouth) can be used in two ways: with the *mīm* and without it. When used with the *mīm*, it is declined with the primary endings, e.g.:

فَمُكَ نَظِيفٌ. ‘Your mouth is clean.’

إِفْتَحْ فَمَكَ. ‘Open your mouth.’

مَاذَا فِي فَمِكَ؟ ‘What is in your mouth?’

If the *mīm* is dropped, it is declined like the Five Nouns (الْأَسْمَاءُ الْخَمْسَةُ), e.g.:

فُوكٌ صَغِيرٌ. ‘Your mouth is small.’ (fū-ka)

إِفْتَحْ فَاكَ. ‘Open your mouth.’ (fā-ka)

مَاذَا فِي فِيكَ؟ ‘What is in your mouth?’ (fī-ka)

The Five Nouns are declined with the special secondary endings only if they are مضاف as we have seen. Otherwise they are declined with the primary endings.

هُوَ أَخٌ. ‘He is a brother.’

أَيْنَ الْأَخُ؟ ‘Where is the brother?’

رَأَيْتُ أخًا. ‘I saw a brother.’

سَأَلْتُ الْأَخَ. ‘I asked the brother.’

هَذَا مِنْ أَخٍ. ‘This is from a brother.’

هذه سيارة الأخ . ‘This is the brother’s car.’

d) The Sound Masculine Plural (جَمْعُ الْمَذْكُورِ السَّالِمُ). This group has -ū(na) as the *raf‘* ending, and -ā(na) as the *naṣb/jarr*-ending, e.g.:

دَخَلَ المَدْرِسَوْنَ . ‘The teachers entered.’

Here al-mudarris-ūna is مرفوعٌ.

ما سَأَلْتُ الْمَدْرِسِينَ . ‘I did not ask the teachers.’

Here al-mudarris-āna is منصوبٌ.

أَيْنَ غُرْفَةُ الْمَدْرِسِينَ ? ‘Where is the teachers’ room?’

Here al-mudarris-āna is مجرورٌ.

Note that the *naṣb*-ending is the same as the *jarr*-ending in this group.

The ن of -ū(na) and -ā(na) is omitted if the noun happens to be مُضَافٌ, e.g.:

أَيْنَ مُدْرِسُو الْقُرْآنِ ? ‘Where are the Qur’ān teachers?’ (mudarris-ū)

أَرَأَيْتَ مُدْرِسِي الْقُرْآنِ ؟ ‘Did you see the Qur’ān teachers?’ (mudarris-ā)

You will learn more about the omission of the *nūn* in Lesson 9.

e) The Dual (المُشَتَّى):

The dual takes -ā(ni) as the *raf‘*-ending, and -ai(ni) as the *naṣb/jarr*-endings, e.g.:

أَجَاءَ الْمَدْرِسَانِ الْجَدِيدَانِ ؟ ‘Have the two new teachers come?’ (al-mudarris-āni)

أَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَدْرِسَيْنِ ؟ ‘Did you see the two teachers?’ (al-mudarris-ayni)

أَسْأَلُ عَنِ الْمَدْرِسَيْنِ . ‘I am asking about the two teachers.’ (al-mudarris-ayni)

The ن of -ā(ni) and -ai(ni) is omitted if the noun happens to be مُضَافٌ, e.g.:

أَيْنَ تَدْرِسُ أُخْتَا بَلَالِ ؟ ‘Where are Bilāl’s two sisters studying?’ (ukht-ā)

أَتَعْرِفِينَ أُخْتَيِ بَلَالِ ؟ ‘Do you know Bilāl’s two sisters?’ (ukht-ai)

أَكْتَبْتَ إِلَى أُخْتَيِ بَلَالِ ؟ ‘Did you write to Bilāl’s two sisters?’ (ukht-ai)

You will learn more about the omission of the *nūn* in Lesson 9.

Latent Endings

(الإعراب التقديرية)

There are three groups of nouns in which the endings do not appear for phonetic reasons. These are:

a) The *maqṣūr* (المقصورة): It is a noun ending in a long ā like الفَتَى, العَصَم, الْمُسْتَشْفَى.

All the three endings are latent in the *maqṣūr*, e.g.:

‘**قتل الفتى الأفعى بالعصما**.’ The young man killed the viper with a stick.’

Here **الفَتَى** (al-fatā') is the فاعلُ (al-fa'u), but has no u-ending;

الأفعى (al-af'ā') is the مفعولٌ به (maf'ūl bi), but has no a-ending;

العصما (al-'aṣā') is preceded by a preposition, and so it is مَحْرُورٌ,

but has no i-ending.

Compare this sentence to the following sentence with the same meaning:

‘**قتل الولد الحية بالعود**’ (qatala l-walad-u l-hayyat-a bi l-'ūd-i)

In this sentence the endings of all nouns appear.

b) The *Muḍāf* of the Pronoun of the First Person Singular (المضاف إلى ياء المتكلّم) like زَمِيلٍ. In this group also all the three endings are latent, e.g.:

‘**دعا جدّي أستاذِي مع زُملائِي.**’ My grandfather invited my teacher with my classmates.’

Here جَدّي (jadd-i) is فاعلُ (fa'u),

أَسْتَاذِي (ustādh-i) is مفعولٌ به (maf'ūl bi),

زُملائِي (zumalā'-i) is مُضَافٌ إِلَيْهِ (muḍāf ilayhi).

But none of the three has the ending.

Compare this to:

‘**دعا جدّك أستاذَك مع زُملائِك.**’

‘Your grandfather invited your teacher with your classmates.’

Here jadd-u-ka has the u-ending, ustādh-a-ka has the a-ending and zumalā'-i-ka has the i-ending.

c) The *Manqūs* (الممنقوص):

It is a noun ending in an original *yā'*, e.g.:

‘**الجاني**, ‘**المُحَاامي**, ‘**القاضي**, ‘**the judge**, ‘**the advocate**, ‘**the culprit**’.

In this group the u- and the i-endings are latent, but the a-ending appears, e.g.:

‘**سأَلَ القاضي المُحَاامي عن الجاني.**’ The judge asked the advocate about the culprit.’

Here القاضي (al-qādiy) which is مرفوعٌ (marfu'u) has no ending,

الجاني (al-jāniy) which is مَجْرُورٌ also has no ending,

but المحامي (al-muḥāmiy-a) which is مَنْصُوبٌ has a-ending.

If the *manqūs* takes the *tawwīn* it loses the terminal *yā'*, e.g.:

قاضٍ which originally was قاضٍ.

After the loss of the u-ending and the *yā'* it became qādi-n (qādiy-u-n → qādi-n).

The *yā'*, however, returns in the accusative case (مَنْصُوبٌ), e.g.:

هذا قاضٍ. ‘This is a judge.’

سأّلتُ قاضياً. ‘I asked a judge.’

هذا بيتُ قاضٍ. ‘This is the house of a judge.’

Note that the *yā'* of the *manqūs* is retained only in the following three cases:

1) If it has the definite article *al-*, e.g.:

القاضي، الوادي، المحامي

2) If it is مُضافٌ, e.g.:

قاضٍي مكةً. ‘qādiy of Makkah’

محامي الدفاع. ‘defence advocate’

وادي العقيق. ‘the Valley of Aqīq’ (in Madīnah Munawwarah).

3) If it is مَنْصُوبٌ, e.g.:

عبرتُ وادياً. ‘I crossed a valley.’

سأّلتُ قاضياً. ‘I asked a judge.’

أريد ثانياً. ‘I want a second.’

The Indeclinable Nouns

(المَبْنِيُّ مِنَ الْأَسْمَاءِ).

We have seen that most Arabic nouns are declinable. Some are indeclinable, i.e. they do not indicate their functions by changing their endings. The following groups are indeclinable (*mabnī*).

1) The pronouns (الضمائر) like: أنا (anā), أنت (ant), هو (hu), أتيت (rā'itah). Likewise *raf'* and *hū* in رأيته (I saw him) are pronouns.

You might have noticed that there are two sets of pronouns. One set is used as *raf'* pronouns, and another set as *nasib* and *jarr* pronouns, e.g.:

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نَحْنُ طُلّابٌ . ‘We are students.’

أَرَأَيْتَنَا ؟ ‘Did you see us?’

هذا بَيْتُنَا . ‘This is our house.’

But the changes that the pronouns undergo have no pattern. So each form of the pronoun is regarded as a separate entity. That is why the pronouns are classed as indeclinable though they undergo changes to indicate their functions in the sentence.

2) Demonstrative pronouns (أَسْمَاءُ الِإِشَارَةِ) like: هَذَا, هَذِهِ, ذَلِكَ, هُؤُلَاءِ, أُولَئِكَ and هَذَانِ but هَذَا, هَذِهِ, ذَلِكَ, هُؤُلَاءِ, أُولَئِكَ (أَسْمَاءُ الِإِشَارَةِ)

□ هَاتَانِ مُعْرَبٌ (مُعْرَبٌ) are declinable.

3) Relative pronouns (الْأَسْمَاءُ الْمُوْصُولَةُ) like: اللَّذانِ and اللَّذانِ but اللَّذِي, الَّتِي, الَّذِينَ, الَّتِيَّ like: (الْأَسْمَاءُ الْمُوْصُولَةُ) □ are declinable.

4) Some interrogative words like: مَنْ, أَيْنَ, مَا, مَتَى, كَيْفَ.

5) Some adverbs (الظُّرُوفُ) like: إِذَا, حَيْثُ, أَمْسِ, الْآنَ.

6) The verb-nouns (أَسْمَاءُ الْفِعْلِ): A verb-noun is a noun with the meaning of a verb, like:

أَفْ ‘I am annoyed.’ آهِ ‘I feel pain.’ آمِينَ ‘Accept.’

7) Compound numbers. These are تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ up to أَحَدَ عَشَرَ along with their feminine forms.

Only the first part of إِثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ and إِثْنَا عَشَرَ is declinable (as explained in Key to Part Two).

With regard to a *mu'rab* noun we say it is *marfū'*, *mansūb* or *majrūr*, but with regard to a *mabnī* noun, we say: it is في محل رفع, في محل نصب, في محل جرّ i.e., it is in the place of *raf'*, *naṣb* or *jarr*, because a *mabnī* noun cannot be *marfū'*, *mansūb* or *majrūr*, but it occupies a place that belongs to a *marfū'*, *mansūb* or *majrūr* noun; and if a *mabnī* noun were to be replaced by a *mu'rab* one it will be *marfū'*, *mansūb* or *majrūr*, e.g.:

رأَيْتُ بِلَاً the noun بِلَاً is *mansūb* because it is المفعول به, but

رأَيْتُ هَذَا the noun هَذَا is ‘in the place of *naṣb*’ because it occupies the same

place as the *mansūb* بِلَاً.