

SYNTAX OF

Modern Arabic Prose

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

ASIAN STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE
DENIS SINOR, DIRECTOR
ORIENTAL SERIES NO. 4

SYNTAX OF

Modern Arabic Prose

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

[VOLUME ONE]

by Vicente Cantarino

for the International Affairs Center

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

BLOOMINGTON / LONDON

Copyright ©1974 by Indiana University Press

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The Association of American University Presses Resolution on Permissions constitutes the only exception to this prohibition.

Published in Canada by Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, Don Mills, Ontario

Library of Congress catalog card number: 69-16996 / ISBN: 253-39504-6

Manufactured in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page viii
Abbreviations	xiii
1 – The Simple Sentence	2

I THE NOMINAL SENTENCE

2 – The Nominal Sentence with a Single Member	5
3 – The Nominal Sentence with Two Members	9
4 – Categories of Meaning of the Nominal Sentence	10
5 – Temporal Aspects of the Nominal Sentence	13
6 – The Subject in a Nominal Sentence	15
7 – The Predicate in a Nominal Sentence	18
8 – Agreement in a Nominal Sentence	22
9 – Word Order in a Nominal Sentence	27
10 – The Elliptical Nominal Sentence	32
11 – The Nominal Sentence with Three Members	34

II THE VERBAL SENTENCE

12 – Structure of the Verbal Sentence	41
13 – The Subject of the Verbal Sentence	45
14 – The Impersonal Subject	48
15 – The Indefinite Subject	50
16 – The Passive Voice	52
17 – The Verbal Tenses	58
18 – The Perfect Tense	59

19 – The Imperfect Tense	63
20 – Modal and Temporal Categories of the Verb	67
21 – The Particle قَدْ	67
22 – The Verb كَانَ	71
23 – The Particles سَوْفَ and سَ	75
24 – The Moods	77
25 – The Subjunctive	78
26 – The Jussive	80
27 – The Energetic	82
28 – Agreement in a Verbal Sentence	83
29 – Agreement of the Verb with a Multiple Subject	96

III NEGATIVE PARTICLES

30 – General Remarks on the Negative Particles	101
31 – مَا	108
32 – لَا	111
33 – لَيْسَ	119
34 – لَنْ	126
35 – لَمْ	127
36 – إِنَّ	128
37 – لَمَّا	129
38 – Particles of Emphasis in Negative Constructions	131

IV INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

39 – Interrogative Sentences	135
40 – Questions about the Validity of the Statement	136
41 – أ	137
42 – هَلْ	139
43 – Interrogatives Concerning a Fact	142
44 – مَنْ, "who," and مَا, "what"	142
45 – أَيُّ (أَيَّةُ), "which"	150
46 – كَمْ, "how?" "how many?" "how much"	156
47 – Adverbial Interrogative Sentences	160
48 – Answers to a Question	163

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I had the opportunity to teach a seminar on Arabic Syntax in the Five Universities Summer Program at Princeton University. In preparation for this seminar I embarked on an intensive reading program in order to gather from modern literary texts enough illustrative material to supplement systematically the materials in medieval Arabic that had already been compiled by the great scholars and pioneers in the Western study of Arabic Syntax. I wanted to provide my students with a single comprehensive treatment of the present-day literary language (which was in fact their main field of interest and at the same time the primary subject matter of the seminar); but the only available reference books were those on medieval Arabic, and even they had been written decades before.

During recent years most students of Arabic and most Arabists in this country have shown an ever-increasing interest in contemporary aspects of Arabic history and culture. There has been a deeply felt need for a presentation that would cover the language in its current form, without reference to its dependence upon the older language, and —as well— for adequate reference materials and illustrative examples. This latter need has been much highlighted in the last few years by the appearance of a number of readers and anthologies for intermediate and advanced students of modern Arabic. In their explanatory notes, the authors quite obviously labor under the handicap imposed upon them by having recourse only to books written on medieval Arabic.

Numerous grammars have also been written in recent years for teaching the language at an elementary level. They, too, are mainly concerned with contemporary Arabic; but because of the inevitable limitations imposed by the level of teaching for which they are designed, these texts fall short of providing the literary material so badly needed. The sample material and exercises that they offer are of necessity made up of simple expressions usually adapted to, and limited by, the pedagogical aims of the authors. The language as it is used in more literary prose has been, by and large, ignored.

In the present as in the past, the written language transcends political and geographical boundaries and forms the linguistic unity which is basic to

the awareness among Arabs of a common cultural heritage. In their presentation of the language. Western scholars have traditionally emphasized the fact that, unlike the colloquial dialects, the literary language has essentially remained unchanged throughout the centuries. Their efforts have been oriented toward the study of medieval Arabic as it has come down to us in the Koran and other early writings. In consequence, there has been a pronounced tendency to disregard the personality of modern literary Arabic as a living linguistic phenomenon. All too frequently, the contemporary use of the language is considered to be nothing more than an artificial preservation or corruption of the classical forms. As a result of such an approach, Arabic has been taught as a medieval language and even treated —*horribile dictu*— as a dead language.

Modern Arab grammarians have shown a similar reaction toward their modern literary language. They base their grammatical theory on, and select sample materials from, the works of the early grammarians, without taking into consideration the development of the present-day literary language, except in order to contrast it with the forms of classical Arabic.

I have long been aware of the problems that are encountered in any study of Arabic literary prose. One difficulty is inherent in the methods used by medieval Arab grammarians. These scholars, whose work has much influenced present-day Arab linguistics and grammatical theory, based their studies on Koranic texts and quotations taken from early poetry and only supplemented the latter with made-up ("ad hoc") prose examples that are often of very doubtful literary value. As a matter of principle, literary prose writings as such were nearly always ignored by the medieval grammarians as being stylistically inferior to poetry and were considered to be not worth studying.

Western scholars, on the other hand, have usually incorporated the material offered by Arab grammarians, while diligently implementing it with prose quotations. These quotations, however, are taken indiscriminately from literary sources that are frequently separated by several centuries. One result of investigating and presenting the language in this way has been the creation of an *ageless* Arabic linguistic image that is obviously inaccurate but nonetheless still commonly accepted. For this reason we must recognize that, among the existing reference materials, none can be considered truly representative of genuine Arabic literary prose, nor of the literary prose of any given period.

It is well known that written Arabic has displayed in the past and still does in our time the conservatism that is inherent in all Semitic languages. Nevertheless, written Arabic has always been the only medium of written and formal communication for the greater part of the Arab world, and since the number of people using the written language daily in both reading and writing has greatly increased during the last century, there is great pressure for changes in traditional forms and linguistic habits. The language is necessarily becoming more and more adapted to modern times.

Another factor contributing to change and to the new personality of the literary language of today is that Arabic *litterateurs* have been more than ever before exposed to trends and ideas in world literature and to new ways of life at home and abroad. This exposure has forced them to find new modes of expression which vary greatly from the old. These changes affect not only vocabulary but also syntactical constructions far beyond the limits of mere style. In short, the literary language of today is a living language which itself deserves attention from scholars in the field.

Only long after my seminar ended and I had started to follow my own interest in the results of my research and in the possibilities of the study did it occur to me that the material I had already collected could in itself, if properly arranged, represent an approach to a much needed, comprehensive presentation of modern literary Arabic.

My intention has consistently been to analyze the structure of literary Arabic as it is used today, independently of the syntactical forms employed in older times. That is to say, I do not aim at a comparative study and, although I may occasionally point out differences from older forms for the sake of a better understanding of their modern equivalents, I have intentionally omitted stylistic and syntactical comparisons and traditional or absolute judgments of "right" and "wrong". I do, however, mention what I consider to be the obvious influence of dialectical constructions wherever this is evident, and I note any instances of literary prose in which the author's intention is clearly that of reviving "learned" expressions no longer used by the majority of modern authors. In general I have approached the study of the language with the assumption that any expression which contemporary Arabic authors feel to be "right" in usage is worthy of analysis.

I have mentioned my purpose, but perhaps I should define it more closely: my goal is to present a humanistic study of the Arabic language which will enable its prospective users to become aware of the intricate syntactical patterns of the linguistic system and, even more, of its logical and semantic content and of the language's potential for literary expression. Thus, I decided to avoid experimental application of any particular theory that might obscure the special attention I wished to focus on the semantic and literary aspects of the language. An exclusive concentration on the language structure might have increased the interest of this presentation in certain linguistic circles, but at the same time it would certainly have excluded many prospective users with an interest in Arabic other than purely linguistic.

Therefore, I have in general used a meaning-based theory of grammar as a basis for my syntactical analysis. This gives the content of the study a greater internal unity than would have been possible had I tried to combine descriptive and logical notions of grammar. I have also used traditional terminology as have all my predecessors in analogous studies. (This practice represents an

acceptance in principle of grammatical terms used by Arab grammarians.) Nevertheless, when in my opinion traditional terminology should not be accepted without a more critical definition of terms, or whenever my terminology does not exactly follow traditional definitions or concepts, I have defined the term in question—even at the risk of lengthening the presentation unduly—in order to explain its use in denoting the particular syntactical and linguistic phenomenon or observation to which the term is applied. In all other cases, where my use of terms and concepts agrees with the traditional acceptance, they are not further explained; and when there is any possibility that the meaning of the terminology may be unclear to the reader, I refer him to any standard English grammar.

In order to cover as many aspects of modern literary Arabic as possible, I have selected illustrative materials from the works of authors in a variety of fields and genres: literary prose, fiction, drama, travelogues, and political, social, and historical writings. Newspapers have generally been disregarded, since Arabic journalism-like most news writing around the world—does not necessarily offer the best or most representative standards of literary language. The examples (some 13,000) finally selected during my years of extensive reading have been gathered from the authors mentioned in the table of Abbreviations.

It was only after I had completed the systematic arrangement of my sample material that I realized that there was too much of it to be presented in one volume. At that stage of my work it would have been easy to reduce the material to a bare minimum by using only one quotation to illustrate each observation. This would perhaps have fulfilled the requirements of a study of structural syntax; but my ambition to cover semantic and literary aspects as well made it not only advisable but necessary to attempt publication of the complete work. For the sake of internal completeness and also for the benefit of students, many observations have been included that will not be new to scholars; I have tried, however, to avoid any repetition that is not connected with the presentation of new information.

The complete work has been divided into three volumes which will complement each other, but which are conceived as structurally autonomous.

Volume I deals with the simplest units in sentence structure: nominal and verbal sentences considered in their affirmative, negative, and interrogative forms.

Volume II, which is divided into two sections, deals with the simple sentence expanded into more elaborate syntactical structures. In the first section, the components of the expanded sentence are studied: modifications of nouns and verbs; in the second section, the use of specific parts: numerals, relatives, infinitives, participles, etc., as well as special constructions or literary devices (anacoluthon, paronomasia, word union, ellipsis, etc.).

Volume III deals with the grouping of sentences into compounds; here the coordination and subordination of sentences are studied. This volume includes the index for the whole work.

The study is so arranged that the grammatical observations are presented with commentary and explanation based upon the quotations that follow them. These quotations do not necessarily illustrate given rules, nor should they be regarded as standards of "correct" usage. They are intended rather to illustrate the grammatical observations, the commentary, and the explanation that they follow.

Each quotation is given with the name of its author and its location in the author's work. In this way, the author is identified as is the literary genre in which the given expression or construction was used; also, the reader can, if he so desires, examine the quotation in its context-although the lack of standard editions presents the usual difficulty for such checking. For editions consulted, I refer the reader to the bibliography in the table of Abbreviations.

In selecting quotations for use in this study, I have relied primarily on two collections of readings (both available to the student) in modern Arabic that are now being used in the teaching of advanced Arabic in the United States. These are: *Advanced Arabic Readers*, I and II, by W. M. Brinner and II A. Khouri, of the University of California, Berkeley, and *A Reader in Modern Literary Arabic*, by Farhat J. Ziadeh of Princeton University.

The Arabic quotations have been fully translated and vocalized in order to facilitate the understanding of the points in question¹. The English translation, however, is usually given with the context taken into consideration and should be used ONLY to CLARIFY THE ARABIC TEXT, NOT TO PROVE THE SYNTACTICAL POINT AS GIVEN IN THE EXPLANATION. Here again the Arabic quotations should speak for themselves.

When the quotations do not consist of a complete sentence, different methods had to be applied to the various examples: for a single word or group of words the nominative case has been preferred, unless it changed the written picture of the word, in which event the original forms were left unchanged. In those cases where a complete expression or a certain part of the sentence had to be quoted, the proper endings have been used, preceded in parentheses by the special particle requiring the given ending.

When lengthy quotations have been shortened to include only those actions that illustrate the point in question, I have used the standard signs

¹ Proper names, however, **have been left unvocalized in the final consonant** when we have reason to believe that they are indeclinable (see Vol. II).

In addition, consonantic assimilations that occur between dental consonants and the suffix of the second and first person singular of the verb in the perfect tense have been mostly disregarded in the vocalization since there is not consensus of opinion as to the permissibility of such an assimilation (see Wright, I, p. 16 B). They have been taken into consideration only when they appear in the printed text.

(long dash in the Arabic, ellipses in the translation) to indicate omissions.

Vocalization of the Arabic text for the most part follows the general rules of Arabic morphology and syntax as traditionally given in native and Western studies. In supplying vowels for the vocalization I have carefully considered those given in the Arabic editions; in every case, if the same vowels are used in various texts by various authors, I have accepted these. I have also noted those expressions in which there is any uncertainty about the use of vowels or the possibility of varying interpretation. (It might be added here that vocalization of the Arabic text often follows the sentence analysis.)

Regardless of the construction demanded by the English language in the translation of the quotation, the corresponding Arabic has been analyzed according to the syntactical functions of the different parts of speech in Arabic; these parts of speech are considered first in their relationship to each other and second in their functional interrelationship as syntactical units. A part of a construction may be referred to in several different places because of its various syntactical uses, but the part is fully treated in only one place or in a special chapter with cross references as needed for practical and pedagogical reasons.

Although word order is rather a question of stylistic appreciation and goes beyond the limits of the present study, it has nevertheless been taken into consideration whenever it has syntactical relevance. A special chapter has also been added to present the most frequent patterns of stylistic word order.

Many people have helped me in many different ways in bringing this book into being. To them I owe a word of grateful recognition. Thus, I would like to express my thanks to my students in the seminar on Arabic syntax given during the summer of 1961 at Princeton. They used the first draft of my work, and with their interest and sympathy encouraged me to carry out this task.

I also would like to thank my students of Arabic at the University of North Carolina who, in the first drafts of this work, patiently studied the syntactical problems which arose during our readings and who assisted me in finding a more pedagogical formulation of the problems.

I must especially mention Mr. Daniel R. Rutledge and Mrs. Sally Jane McCrary, who were of great help in supplying the English expressions needed, as well as my colleague Dr. William DeSua for reading parts of the manuscript. I also owe great appreciation to my colleague Dr. Strugnell, professor of Semitics at Duke University, who spent many hours with my manuscript and who contributed valuable comments.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Research Council of the University of North Carolina and to the International Affairs Center of Indiana University for financial assistance during the preparation of this work, and to Professor Denis Sinor of Indiana University for his indefatigable support.

Vicente Cantarino

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are omitted. Refer to the original pdf

Abbreviations are omitted. Refer to the original pdf

*Abbreviations are omitted. Refer to the original pdf
omitted²*

Abbreviations are omitted. Refer to the original pdf

SYNTAX OF

Modern Arabic Prose

THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

§ 1 THE SIMPLE SENTENCE

A sentence is usually defined as a **self-contained unit of speech consisting of a meaningful word or word arrangement**.

Arabic has never required the use of a verb as a necessary constituent of the sentence. Hence, the most elementary division in the structure of the Arabic sentence is:

(a) **Nominal sentences** which are those sentences in which only nominal elements are used as constituents; for example, substantives, adjectives, pronouns, etc.

(b) **Verbal sentences** which, as the name indicates, include a verb as a constituent³.

³ Note that although this distinction between nominal and verbal sentences is also made by Arab grammarians, their definitions are, not the same.

For Arab grammarians a nominal sentence is one that begins with a noun; a verbal sentence, one that begins with a verb. (See Farhat *Bah* p. 340; see also Ya'ish VII, p. 88 and Wright II, p. 250 f.)

Western scholars generally do not accept these definitions. (See Reck. *Verh.* p. 2f.; Blachere p. 387; compare, however, Bravman *Studies*, p. 37 ff.)

I THE NOMINAL SENTENCE

§ 2 THE NOMINAL SENTENCE WITH A SINGLE MEMBER

In Arabic, a noun in the nominative case can by itself state the existence of the idea expressed by the noun and also its presence in a definite place. **This noun**, having a complete meaning in itself, **represents the simplest form of a nominal sentence**.

This usage, which Brockelmann⁴ rightly considers a remnant of the most primitive stage of expression in the language, can still be seen in certain independent positions.

(a) with a **substantive**:

حَادِثَةٌ؟ Is there a case?

(b) a **prepositional phrase** with مِنْ:

هَلْ مِنْ حَاجَةٍ الشَّرْحِ؟ Is there any need for an explanation?

هَلْ مِنْ لِقَاءٍ؟ Will we ever meet again?

In some expressions, this type of nominal sentence introduces an idea that is correlative to a preceding statement:

وَالْعَكْسُ and vice versa [and also the opposite].

The **correlative** use of the nominal sentence with a single member is very commonly followed

either by an **adverbial clause**:

هَذَا وَالشَّعْبُ فِي نِقْمَتِهِ That occurs while the people are suffering.

⁴ Sec Brock. *Grund.* II, p. 35.

by an **adjectival clause**⁵:

شَيْءٌ آخَرُ أَحَبُّ أَنْ أَقْصَهُ عَلَيْكَ There is another thing I want to tell you.

مَسْأَلَةٌ أُخْرَى يَخْتَلِفُ فِيهَا الْإِسْلَامُ
وَالنَّصْرَانِيَّةُ There is another question about which
Islam and Christianity disagree.

شَيْءٌ لَا يُصَدِّقُ أَتَعْلَمُ أَنْ _ ؟ There is something you won't believe.
Do you know that...?

مُؤَلِّفٌ آخَرُ يَجِبُ أَنْ نَعْرِفَ جَمِيعَ
مُؤَلَّفَاتِهِ There is another author, all of whose
works we should know.

مُؤَلِّفٌ آخَرُ حَبِيبٌ إِلَيَّ قَلْبِي هُوَ
أَنَا طُولُ فَرَانْسِ There is another author I dearly love; he
is Anatole France.

or by **another sentence** in the function of explicative apposition:

وَسَبَبٌ آخَرُ وَهُوَ أَنْ _ and there is another reason, namely....

وَسَبَبٌ آخَرُ لِاسْتِدْعَاءِ الْمُعْتَصِمِ لِلتُّرْكِ
وَهُوَ أَنَّ _ and there is another reason for al-
Mu'tasim's summoning the Turks, and
that is....

When this single component is "كُلُّ", "all," its meaning is restricted by a
following genitive:

كُلُّ ذَلِكَ وَعَبْدُ الْمُطَّلِبِ سَاكِتٌ سَاكِتٌ All this happened, and 'Abdul-Muttalib
was calm and silent.

كُلُّ ذَلِكَ وَ _ While all this happened....

كُلُّ هَذَا وَ _ All this happened....

⁵ Compare with:

ثَمَّةَ شَيْءٍ آخَرُ There is something else.

The **negative counterpart** of the nominal sentence with one member is found only after the conditional conjunction "لَوْ لَا" (see vol. III):

لَوْ لَا الْقُرْآنُ الْكَرِيمُ لَكَانَتْ لُغَةُ الْعَالَمِ
الْعَرَبِيِّ لُغَاتٍ مُتَفَرِّقَةً

If it had not been for the Precious Koran, the language of the Arabs would have become separate tongues.

بَيِّتُ الصَّدْفَةِ الْبَحْرُ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ لَوْ لَا
يَدُ الْإِنْسَانِ

The home of the shell would always be the sea, if it were not for human hands.

(For the use of a single term after "إِذَا", see vol. III. For the accusative case after "لَا", see page 114.)

Usually, Arabic expresses a **statement of simple existence** by using:

(a) a **nominal sentence** consisting of **two members** either with a demonstrative adverb⁶. "there":

أَنَّ ثَمَّ وَطَنًا عَرَبِيًّا؟

that there is an Arabic fatherland?

غَيْرَ أَنَّ هُنَا مَسْأَلَةً هَامَّةً لَا بُدَّ مِنَ
الْإِشَارَةِ إِلَيْهَا

But there is an important question we must point out.

هَلْ ثَمَّ أُمَّةٌ عَرَبِيَّةٌ؟

Is there an Arabic nation?

إِذْنِ فَهُنَاكَ مُحَامٍ آخَرُ يَحْمِلُ نَفْسَ
الْإِسْمِ

Then there is another lawyer who has the same name.

هُنَاكَ سَبَبَانِ يَحِلَّانِ الْمَرْأَةَ لِلرَّجُلِ

There are two reasons that make it permissible for a man to take a woman.

⁶ These cases should be differentiated from those in which the adverb has a demonstrative function, e.g.:

وَكَانَ هُنَاكَ كَيْشٌ مَمْلُوءٌ بِالْفَحْمِ and there — in that place — was a bag full of coal.
أَمَّا عَنْ يَمِينِهِ فَقَدْ كَانَ هُنَاكَ الْعَدَوِيُّونَ - وَأَمَّا عَنْ شِمَالِهِ فَقَدْ كَانَتْ هُنَاكَ خِيَامٌ
To his right there were the 'Adis - to his left there were tents in which....

أَنَّ ثَمَّةَ سَبَبًا غَيْرَ الْجَهْلِ that there is another reason besides ignorance.

or with the passive participle of the verb "وَجَدَ", "to find":

أَلَيْكَ مَوْجُودٌ؟ Is the Bey in?

أَنَّ الْقِصَّةَ وَالْأَقْصُوصَةَ مَوْجُودَتَانِ
الآنَ عَلَى نِطاقٍ وَاسِعٍ that the novel and the short story now exist on a large scale.

(b) or a verbal sentence

with "كَانَ", "to be" (see page 71):

حَتَّى كَانَ الْإِسْلَامُ until Islam appeared.

إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْبَحْرُ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرُ اللُّؤْلُؤَ وَإِنْ
لَمْ يَكُنِ النَّجْمُ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرُ الشُّعَاعَ
وَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ شَجَرَةُ الْوَرْدِ فَلَا تَنْتَظِرُ
الْوَرْدَ⁷ If the sea were not there, you could not expect the pearl to exist; if the star were not there, you could not expect its light to exist; if the rose bush were not there, you could not expect the rose to exist.

or with the passive voice of the verb "وَجَدَ", "to find" usually in the imperfect tense with the meaning of an indefinite present (see page 54):

هَلْ تُوْجَدُ قُوَّةٌ تَتَغَلَّبُ عَلَى الْمَوْتِ؟ Is there a force that can overcome death?

لَا يُوجَدُ غَيْرُنَا نَحْتُ There is no one besides us.

Note the use of both verb and demonstrative adverb in the following:

أَنَّهُ لَا يُوجَدُ ثَمَّةَ فَرْقٍ بَيْنَ امْرَأَةٍ
وَامْرَأَةٍ that there was no difference between one woman and another.

(For a discussion on the use of "لَيْسَ", "not to be" -the denial of existence- see page 119.)

⁷ For the use of the imperfect indicative in the apodosis of a conditional construction, see vol. III.

Note, however, the following:

أَلَيْسَ يُوجَدُ مَنْ هُوَ أَيْسَرُ شَرْطًا؟ Isn't there anyone who imposes easier conditions?

§ 3 THE NOMINAL SENTENCE WITH TWO MEMBERS

A nominal sentence usually consists of two parts: one is the **subject**-a noun or its equivalent about which a statement is made; the other is the **predicate**- also a noun or its equivalent— which specifies or modifies the idea of the existence of the subject. This specification or modification is achieved through a **simple juxtaposition of the nominal predicate and the subject**. Since this contiguity does not imply any relationship other than mere equivalence, the members do not influence each other mutually with respect to case, which is **usually nominative** for both:

السَّمَاءُ جَمِيلَةٌ The sky is beautiful.

هِيَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ She is everything.

هُوَ بِنَاءٌ كَبِيرٌ It was a large building.

إِبْنُ سَعُودٍ رَجُلٌ كَبِيرٌ Ibn Sa'ud is a great man.

الرَّبِيعُ جَمِيلٌ Spring is beautiful.

The **predicate** of the nominal sentence remains in the nominative case even if the subject is governed by particles that require the accusative (see vol. II)⁸:

إِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ (sic) Indeed, the mercy of God is at hand!

لَعَلَّكَ مَشْغُولٌ حَتَّى عَنِ الْجُوعِ!! Are you so busy that you forget your hunger!

⁸ Arab grammarians, in their definition of the "مُبْتَدَأٌ" and the "خَبَرٌ", usually require them to be in the nominative case. (See Zajjaji p. 48; Mufasssal p. 12; Ya'ish I, p. 83; Ashmawi p. 30.)

However, they also admit the possibility of a different case, *e.g.*, for the "مُبْتَدَأٌ" with the so-called "الضَّمَّةُ الْمُقَدَّرَةُ" "the virtual damma". (See Ashmawi p. 30.)

وَلَكِنِّي عَلَى الدَّوَامِ وَاضِحٌ But I'd always like to be clear.

or when the subject is governed by a preposition (see vol. II):

وَإِذَا بِذَلِكَ الشَّيْءِ حَجَلٌ كَبِيرٌ جَمِيلٌ And lo, it was a big and beautiful partridge.

On the other hand, in the nominal sentence the predicate may be in the accusative case in a certain environment; however, in such instances, the subject will still be in the nominative case as, for example, in some circumstantial constructions (see vol. III):

لِيَعْبُدُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ طَاهِرَةً
نَفْسَهُمْ in order to worship Him faithfully and
sincerely, with an upright spirit.

Note also the following example in which the nominal predicate is in the accusative case governed by "أَنَّ":

مَنْ أَدْرَاكَ أَنَّ مَا تَطْلُبُ مَوْجُودًا؟ Who told you that what you are seeking exists?

§ 4 CATEGORIES OF MEANING OF THE NOMINAL SENTENCE

Arabic uses the nominal sentence to express a field of relationships wider than those presented in English by the verb "to be". In order to translate them into English it is necessary to use more complex expressions.

The **main categories** of the relationship between subject and predicate are:

(a) the subject and its **identity**:

أَنْتِ هِيَ! You are she!

هَذَا أَنَا It is I.

أَنَا هُوَ I am he.

هُوَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ- He is Abu 'Abdallah....

(b) the subject and its **comparison**:

الْإِنْسَانِيَّةُ امْرَأَةٌ يَلْدُ لَهَا الْبُكَاءُ Humanity is like a woman who enjoys weeping.

الْإِنْسَانِيَّةُ طِفْلَةٌ تَقِفُ مُتَأَوِّهَةً بِجَانِبِ
الطَّائِرِ الذَّبِيحِ Humanity is like a little girl who stands moaning by a wounded bird.

(c) the subject and its **number**:

النَّاسُ فِي شِعْرِي ثَلَاثَةٌ I think there are three kinds of people.

أَعْمُرُهَا عِشْرُونَ عَامًا؟ Is she twenty years old?

الْحَيَاةُ نِصْفَانِ Life consists of two halves.

النِّسَاءُ اثْنَتَانِ Women are of two sorts.

(d) The subject and its **measure**:

الضَّحْكُ مَلْءٌ أَفْوَاهَهُمْ They laughed heartily.

هُوَ مَسِيرٌ سِتُّ سَاعَاتٍ It is six hours away.

(e) the subject and its **content**:

هِيَ تَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ بِعَيْنٍ مَلُوءَا الْحُبِّ She was looking at him with eyes full of love.

(f) the subject and its **material**:

رَأْسُهُ ذَهَبٌ إِبْرِيْزُ Its head is of pure gold.

(g) the subject and its **abstract** and **concrete qualities** and aspects:

هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ One is permitted but the other is forbidden.

أَنْتِ طَلَاقُ ! You are divorced!

هُوَ بِهِنَّ الْبِرُّ وَالشَّفَقَةُ He showed kindness and sympathy toward them.

ذَلِكَ فَوْقَ الْإِحْتِمَالِ	That is more than a man can bear.
سَفَكُ الدِّمَاءِ مُحَرَّمٌ	Shedding of blood is forbidden.
ذَلِكَ طَبِيعِيٌّ	That is natural.
هُوَ لَكَ	It belongs to you.
لَكَ إِذَنْ ثَلَاثٌ وَعِشْرُونَ عَصَا	Then you must get twenty-three blows.

(h) the subject and its **temporary circumstances** and **conditions**:

أَنَا كَذَلِكَ وَ-	I was in such a situation, as....
كَأَنَّ عَلَىكَ الْبَيْضَةَ	as if you had to lay an egg.
وَكَذَلِكَ الْحَالُ فِي الْأَدِيبِ	and the situation of the writer is similar.
السَّيَاحَاتُ كُلُّهَا مَشَقَّاتٌ وَأَخْطَارٌ	[the journeys] all of them are full of hardship and danger.

(i) the subject and its origin, e.g., with the preposition “مِنْ”:

هَذَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ دِينٍ	That came from a clergyman.
إِنِّي مِنْ جُبَيْلٍ	I come from Jubail.

(j) the subject and its **explanation**:

ذَلِكَ أَنِّي فَرَضْتُ جَدًّا أَنِّي مَالِطِي	[It was that] I assumed, for the sake of argument, that I was Maltese.
---	--

(k) the subject and its **cause**:

ذَلِكَ لِلْخَوْفِ مِنَ الْمُسْتَقْبَلِ	That happens because of fear of the future.
ذَلِكَ لِأَنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ لَيْسُوا وَحْدَةً تَحْصُرُهَا حُدُودٌ أَقْلِيمِيَّةٌ مُعَيَّنَةٌ	That happens because the Muslims do not form a unity delimited by fixed territorial borders.

§ 5 TEMPORAL ASPECTS OF THE NOMINAL SENTENCE

The nominal sentence in itself has no necessary relationship to any specific time. Thus, for instance, while "مَلَكَ الْمَنْصُورُ" means *al-Mansur came to power or reigned*, "الْمَنْصُورُ مَلِكٌ" might mean *al-Mansur was, is, or will be king*, timeless attribution and the present being the most frequent meanings.

A **temporal determination**, however, may be given by the **subject matter**, by the **context**, or by **some temporal particles** within the sentence which either emphasize the timeless validity of the sentence or restrict it to a definite time.

(a) indefinite or timeless present:

إِنَّ فَصْلَ الرَّبِيعِ فَصْلُ الْحُبِّ	Spring is the season of love.
ذَلِكَ شَأْنُ الشُّعْرَاءِ دَائِمًا	This is always the case with poets.
إِنَّ الْبُكَاءَ قَبِيحٌ بِمِثْلِي	Tears are not proper for a man like me.
الرَّبِيعُ جَمِيلٌ فِي كُلِّ مَكَانٍ	Spring is beautiful everywhere.
الْمَرْأَةُ شَرِيكُ الرَّجُلِ فِي حَيَاتِهِ	Woman is man's companion during his life.

(b) actual present:

أَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ حَبِيبِي	Today you are my betrothed.
إِنِّي الْآنَ سَعِيدَةٌ	I am happy now.
أَنَّ وَالِدَكَ فَقِيرٌ	that your father is poor.
أَنْتَ صَيْفِي اللَّيْلَةَ	You are my guest tonight.
فَهُوَ الْآنَ مَشْغُولٌ	for he is busy now.

(c) past:

مَمَاتُ زَيْدَانَ عَظِيمٌ كَحَيَاتِهِ	Zaidan's death has been as magnificent as his life.
---------------------------------------	---

نَحْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي مَدِينَةِ دَمْنَاهُورِ We were in Darnanhur at this time.

أَلَمْ يَرْنِي أَحَدٌ وَأَنَا آتِيَةٌ هُنَا؟ Didn't anyone see me while I was coming here?

مَاتَ وَالِدُهَا وَهِيَ فِي الْمَهْدِ Her father died while she was still an infant.

وَجَدْتُ أَنَّ أَمْرِي مُوَكَّلٌ بِرِجَالِ الشُّرْطَةِ I found that my case had been placed in the hands of the local police.

(d) future:

A future meaning is especially common when the nominal predicate is a participle (see vol. II):

أَنَّهُ مُسَافِرٌ بَعْدَ أَيَّامٍ that he will go within a few days.

وَهَا أَنَا ذَا قَادِمٌ إِلَيْكَ بَعْدَ قَلِيلٍ I will come to you shortly.

لَكِنِّي ذَاهِبَةٌ قَرِيبًا إِلَيْهِ But I shall go to him presently.

نَحْنُ ذَاكِرُونَ فِيمَا يَلِيـ We shall mention in the following

مَاذَا هُوَ صَانِعٌ؟ What is he to do?

(e) hypothetical:

بَيْتُ الصَّدْفَةَ الْبَحْرُ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ لَوْ لَا
يَدُ الْإِنْسَانِ The home of the shell would always be the sea, if it were not for human hands.

لَوْ أَنَّ مَا تَقُولُ صَحِيحٌ If only what you say were true!

(For the use of "كَانَ", "to be," as a temporal counterpart of a nominal sentence, see page 36.)

§ 6 THE SUBJECT IN A NOMINAL SENTENCE

The frequent occurrence of the nominal sentence in modern Arabic leads to a broad concept of noun-equivalents that may be used as a subject in the sentence. For example, the **subject** can be:

(a) any **substantive**:

السَّمَاءُ جَمِيلَةٌ	The sky is beautiful.
أَنَّ وَالَكَ فَقِيرٌ	that your father is poor.
إِنَّ سَاقِيَّ جَمِيلَتَانِ!	My legs are good-looking!

and thus and infinitive:

سَفَكُ الدِّمَاءِ مُحَرَّمٌ	Shedding of blood is forbidden.
لِمَازَا الْبُكَاءُ؟	Why this crying?
إِنَّ عَلَيْهِ الرُّجُوعَ كُلَّ مَسَاءٍ بِخَمْسِينَ قِرْشًا	He had to bring back fifty piasters every evening.
فَأَمَّا الْأَدَبُ الْقَدِيمُ فَقَرَأَتْهُ عَسِيرَةً وَفَهَمَهُ أَعْسَرُ وَتَذَوَّقَهُ أَشَدَّ عُسْرًا	As for ancient literature, reading it is difficult, and understanding it is very difficult, and savoring it is most difficult.

(b) a **personal pronoun**:

أَنْتَ هُنَا؟	Are you here?
أَنْتَ شَاعِرٌ	You are a poet.
هُوَ حَيٌّ	He is alive.

(c) a **demonstrative pronoun**, which can refer to a concrete substantive or to a preceding idea or situation:

هَذَا أَنَا	It is I.
هَذَا كَثِيرٌ	It is too much.
هَذَا فَوْقَ الْإِحْتِمَالِ	That's more than a man can bear.

(d) a **relative** or **interrogative pronoun**:

وَمَنْ فِيهِ and whoever is in it.

عِنْدَ مَا تَرَكَ الْعَالَمَ وَمَا فِيهِ when he left the world and everything that is in it.

كُلُّ مَنْ بِالْأَرِ whoever is in the house.

الْوَزِيرُ؟ قَمَرٌ؟ مَاذَا بِهِ؟ "The wezir? Qamar? What has happened to him?"

مَا بِكَ؟ مَا لَكَ تَرْتَجِفُ؟ "What is the matter with you? Why are you trembling?"

مَا الَّذِي يُضْحِكُكَ؟ "What [is it that] makes you laugh?"

(For more on the relative pronoun, see vol. III)

(e) an **adjective** or a **participle**, when used as a substantive (see vol. II):

مَنِ الْمُقْبِلُ؟ Who is this approaching?

غَيْرَ أَنَّ الْجَمِيلَ فِي هَذَا أَنَّ ظُهُورَكُمْ فِي عَصْرِنَا نَحْنُ But the wonderful thing about this is that you appeared precisely in our time.

(f) an **adverbial expression**, but only with "الْيَوْمَ", "today":

أَمَا تَعْلَمِينَ أَنَّ الْيَوْمَ يَوْمُ الْأَحَدِ Don't you know that today is Sunday?

الْيَوْمَ الْخَمِيسُ Today is Thursday.

(g) a **prepositional phrase**:

هَلْ إِلَى ذَلِكَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ؟ Is there any way to achieve this?

أَلَا فِي أَنْ تَمْلَأَ دَارَكَ ذَهَبًا؟ Do you want to fill your house with gold?

فِي الْبَحْرَيْنِ نَحْوَ جُمُسَةٍ وَعِشْرِينَ There are about twenty-five famous wells in Bahrain.
نَبْعًا مَشْهُورًا

(h) a **complete sentence**:

either a pronominal relative clause (see vol. III):

مَنْ صَوَّرَ صُورَةً جَمِيلَةً عَظِيمًا The man who is able to mold a beautiful figure is great.

أَصْحِيحُ مَا يَرْوُونَهُ عَنْ _ ؟ is it true what they say about . . . ?

مَا وَصَلَ إِلَيْنَا مِنَ الشَّعْرِ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ قَلِيلٌ The amount of poetry prior to that [time] which has come down to us is very scant.

or a noun clause (see vol. III):

عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تَتَخَيَّ عَنْهُ You have to go away from it!

خَيْرٌ لِي أَنْ أَكْتُبَ لَهَا كِتَابًا It is better for me to write her a letter.

خَيْرٌ لَكَ أَلَّا تَعْرِفِيهِ It is better for you not to know it.

هَلْ لَكَ أَنْ تَهْدِينِي؟ Do you want to lead me?

عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَنْطَلِقَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي الْفَجْرُ I have to leave before dawn comes.

(i) a **correlative compound**:

لَكَ أَنْ تَصَدَّقَ أَوْ لَا تُصَدِّقَ It is up to you to believe it or not.

عِنْدِي أَنَّهُمْ أَصَابُوا فِيَمَا يَقُولُونَ وَأَنْتَ مُخْطِئٌ فِيَمَا فَعَلْتَ I believe that they are right in what they say and that you are wrong in what you have done.

سَوَاءٌ أَكَانَ الْإِيمَانُ كَمَا تَقُولُ أَمْ غَيْرَهُ It does not make any difference whether faith consists in what you say or not.

§ 7 THE PREDICATE IN A NOMINAL SENTENCE

The predicate in a nominal sentence can assume as many grammatical forms as the subject. Since the nature of the nominal sentence is formal equivalence between both members represented by simple juxtaposition, it can and frequently does happen that there is no clear distinction between the two members⁹. For Western grammarians, the subject will be the member about which the statement is logically made; for Arab philologists, however, the subject will be the first member, if this is a substantive¹⁰. Thus, the **predicate** in a nominal sentence can be:

(a) a **substantive**:

ذَلِكَ أَمْرٌ سَتَفْهَمُهُ فِيمَا بَعْدُ That is something you will understand

أَنَا رَجُلٌ لَا مَالَ لِي I am a poor man.

أَنَا إِنْسَانٌ عَاقِلٌ I am a sensible person.

a proper name:

هَذَا أَبُو بَكْرٍ This is Abu Bakr.

إِسْمِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ My name is 'Abdallah.

an infinite:

السَّبَبُ الثَّانِي _ انْتِقَالُ عَاصِمَةِ
الْخِلَافَةِ The second reason ... is the transfer of
the capital of the Caliphate.

زَوَاجُهُ تَزْوِيرٌ حَيَاتُهُ تَزْوِيرٌ His marriage was a fake and so was his
life.

وَهُمْ وَقُوفٌ بِجَانِبِ قَائِدِهِمْ [while] they were standing next to their
leader.

(b) an **adjective**:

هُوَ حَيٌّ He is alive.

ذَلِكَ طَبِيعِيٌّ That is natural.

⁹ See Reck. *Synt.* § 1, 2 and § 141, 2.

¹⁰ On inversion of the word order in a nominal sentence, see page 28 below.

أَنَّ عَيْرَ قُرَيْشٍ مِنْهُ قَرِيبٌ that the caravan of the Koreish was near him.

السَّمَاءُ جَمِيلَةٌ The sky is beautiful.

(c) a **participle**:

إِنَّكَ كَذِبٌ You are a liar.

أَنَّكَ مُخْطِئٌ فِيْمَا فَعَلْتَ that you are wrong in what you have done.

(d) a **numeral**:

أَعْمُرُهَا عِشْرُونَ عَامًا؟ Is she twenty years old?

بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ الْمَدِينَةِ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ [The distance] between there and Medina is twenty-three miles.
مِيَلًا

الْأَبْوَابُ الْهِنْدِيَّةُ ١٢ - وَالْفَارِسِيَّةُ The Indian chapters are twelve ...
ثَلَاثَةٌ and the Persian, three.

إِنَّ وَظِيفَتِي فِي الشَّهْرِ مِائَتَا فَرَنْكٍ My montlily pay is 200 francs.

(e) a **personal pronoun**:

هَذَا أَنَا It is I.

هُوَ أَنْتَ إِذَا ! Then it is you!

(f) a **demonstrative pronoun**:

هَذَا ذَاكَ That is it.

(g) an **interrogative pronoun**:

مَا ذَاكَ ؟ What is that?

مَنْ هَذَا ؟ Who is this?

مَا اسْمُكَ ؟ What is your name?

مَنْ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ ؟ Who is this man?

(h) an **adverb**:

أَنَا هُنَا يَا أَبِي Father, I am here.

نَحْنُ كَذَلِكَ We were like that.

أَيْنَ أَنْتَ؟ Where are you?

كَيْفَ هُمْ؟ How are they?

الْجَوَابُ لَا The answer is "no".

Note the following example with an adverbial accusative as the predicate:

أَحَقًّا مَا تَقُولُ؟ Is what you say true?

(i) a **prepositional phrase**:

وَأَنْتَ دُونَ الثَّلَاثِينَ وَأَنَا فَوْقَ
الْخَمْسِينَ؟ since you are younger than thirty and I,
more than fifty years old?

وَالْمَدْعُودُونَ بَيْنَ جُلُوسٍ وَوُقُوفٍ While some of the guests were sitting,
others were standing. [while the guests
were between sitting and standing.]

أَنْتَ فِي الثَّاسِعَةِ مِنْ عُمرِكَ You are seven years old [in the seventh
year of your life].

وَالِدَتِي بِخَيْرٍ My mother is in good health.

From the preceding cases, one should distinguish:

(1) those in which the predicate is introduced by the preposition "بِ", as in some negative constructions (see page 115).

مَا أَنَا بِضَيْعَةٍ أَحَدٍ I am not anyone's protégé.

لَسْتُ بِشَارِبٍ وَلَا بِمَجْنُونٍ I am neither drunk nor mad.

(2) those introduced by the emphatic particle "لَ" following "إِنَّ" (sec vol. II):

إِنَّكَ يَا ابْنَتِي لَسَاذِجَةٌ You, my daughter, are certainly good-natured.

إِنَّهُ لَسَاحِرٌ خَسِيسٌ He is undoubtedly an evil sorcerer.

(j) an **elative** with or without a determinative complement:

هَذَا أَحْسَنُ مَا سَمِعْتُ مِنْكَ That is the most beautiful tiling I ever heard you say.

أَنْتَ أَجْمَلُ النَّاسِ You are the most handsome [person].

قَلْبُهُ أَذْنَى إِلَى السَّذَاجَةِ He is very simple at heart. [His heart is very close to simplicity.]

وَلَكِنَّهَا فِي مَجْمُوعِهَا أَطْوَلُ But, on the whole, they are longer.

(k) a **complete sentence**:

a pronoun relative clause (see vol. III):

أَنْتَ الَّذِي حَلَّصْتَنِي مِنْ هَذَا الْقُمْقُمِ؟ Are you the one who freed me from this bottle?

هِيَ مَا سَتَتَكَلَّمُ فِيهِ الْآنَ That is what we shall talk about now.

a noun clause (see vol. III):

الْوَاقِعُ أَنَّ الْقِصَّةَ وَالْأَفْصُوصَةَ مَوْجُودَتَانِ الْآنَ عَلَى نِطاقٍ وَاسِعٍ The fact is that the novel and the short story now exist on a large scale.

ذَلِكَ لِأَنَّهُمْ شَبَابٌ That was because they were young.

الرَّأْيُ أَنْ – The best thing [to do] is

an interrogative sentence:

الْمَسْأَلَةُ هِيَ هَلْ هُمَا مُؤَلِّفَانِ أَوْ مُتَرْجِمَانِ؟ (The question) is whether they are two works or two translations?

§ 8 AGREEMENT IN A NOMINAL SENTENCE

The question of agreement between subject and predicate becomes relevant in a nominal sentence only when one of the two members can be inflected in gender and/or number under the grammatical influence of the other member of the sentence. This occurs with adjectives, participles, and demonstratives used as adjectives (see vol. II).

In general, modern Arabic has become more consistent in gender agreement than it was in former times. As for agreement in number, however there are still a great many different usages which cannot always be reduced to simple and concrete rules. The position of the subject in relation to its normal predicate does not influence their agreement as we shall see in the examples quoted below.

In the following paragraphs we shall try to present the most frequent patterns of agreement between subject and predicate.

A Agreement in Gender

When **the subject is in the singular**, the predicate always agrees in **gender**:

الْأَمْرُ بَسِيطٌ It's a simple matter.

وَلَكِنَّ ذَاكِرَةَ الْأَطْفَالِ غَرِيبَةٌ But, children's memories are strange.

هَذَا كَثِيرٌ That is too much.

السَّمَاءُ جَمِيلَةٌ The sky is beautiful.

When the subject is the **personal pronoun of the first person**, which is the same for both genders, the predicate agrees logically with the person speaking:

أَنَا (طَهَ حُسَيْن) سَعِيدٌ I (Taha Husain) am happy.

أَنَا (مَاجْدُولِين) سَعِيدَةٌ I (Magdelene) am happy.

أَنَا رَاحِلَةٌ يَا حَبِيبِي إِلَى مَسَارِحِ الْأَرْوَاحِ I am departing, my beloved, to the spirits' pastures.

The **personal pronoun of the third person** and the demonstrative pronoun as subject of a nominal sentence will both usually agree in gender with their predicates if they are substantives:

هَذِهِ هِيَ حِكَايَتِي That is my story.

كَمَا هِيَ الْعَادَةُ as it is customary.

هَذِهِ هِيَ الْحَقِيقَةُ That is the truth.

إِنَّهَا هِيَ نُكْتَةٌ ظَرِيفَةٌ That is a good joke.

مَا هَذَا يَا إدْوَار؟ أَوَلَيْمَةٌ هِيَ؟ What is that, Edward? Is it a banquet?

But, they can also be in agreement with a preceding noun or situation to which they refer:

هَذَا الَّذِي نَرَى دُنْيَا أُخْرَى What we see is a different world.

الْمَالُ هُوَ السَّيَادَةُ وَهُوَ الْقُوَّةُ هُوَ
كُلُّ شَيْءٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا Wealth is power and strength and everything in the world.

هُوَ عَادَةٌ اجْتِمَاعِيَّةٌ That is a social custom.

(إِسْمٌ) هُوَ الْحَيَاةُ It (the name) is Life.

(صَدَاقَتُكَ) وَهِيَ شَيْءٌ أَعْظَمُ مِمَّا
أَسْتَحِقُّ And that (your friendship) is more than I deserve.

B Agreement in Number

(a) When the **subject** in the nominal sentence is **a noun in the plural**—either sound or broken—**referring to persons**, there is **agreement in number**. Therefore, the predicate will also be in the plural—either sound or broken:

حُرَّاسُ الْمَلِكِ أَحْرَارٌ The King's guards are free.

غَيْرَ أَنَّ الْأَمْوَاتَ كَثِيرُونَ but the dead are numerous.

صَبْيَانُ الشَّوَارِعِ الْمُهْمَلُونَ فِي
بَيْرُوتَ كَثِيرُونَ The street loafers in Beirut are numerous.

حِينَ كَانَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ قَلِيلِينَ at a time when there were few Muslims.

إِنَّهُمْ كَثِيرَاتٌ They are numerous.

نَسِيتُ أَنَّكُمْ تَقَالُ السَّمْعُ I forgot that you are a little deaf.

أَنْتُمْ كَثَارٌ You are numerous.

وَهُمْ أَيْقَاطٌ when they are awake.

نَحْنُ جَمِيعًا ضِعَافُ الْبَصَرِ We are all shortsighted.

Note that "كَثِيرٌ" can still be used without any gender and number agreement, as in the earlier days of the language

¹¹.

إِنَّ النِّسَاءَ لَكَثِيرٌ The women are numerous.

النِّسَاءُ غَيْرُهَا كَثِيرٌ Women different from her are numerous.

Note also the following:

إِنَّ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ Indeed, the mercy of God is at hand!

(b) When the subject is a plural that **refers to animals or inanimate objects**, the predicate is usually in the **feminine singular**:

سَاعَاتُ عَمَلِكَ طَوِيلَةٌ You have long working hours.

الْحُكُومَاتُ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةُ عَاجِزَةٌ فِي هَذَا The Muslim governments are powerless in this.

شَوَارِعُ الْمَدِينَةِ مُتَدَاخِلَةٌ The streets of the city are labyrinthine.

أَعْضَاؤُكَ سَلِيمَةٌ Your limbs are sound.

الْأَمْثَلَةُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ كَثِيرَةٌ There are numerous examples of this.

(c) When the subject is a **dual**, the predicate will always be in the **dual**:

الْمَرْأَتَانِ جَالِسَتَانِ the two women were sitting.

¹¹ On the use of this agreement in a nominal sentence with inverted word order, see page 27, for its use with an attribute function, see vol. II. And for its agreement in medieval Arabic, see Reck. *Synt.* 16,7; Brock. *Grund.* II § 48, b and § 127, d.

أَنَّ الْقِصَّةَ وَالْأَقْصُوصَةَ مَوْجُودَتَانِ
الآنَ عَلَى نِطَاقٍ وَاسِعٍ

that the novel and the short story now
exist on a large scale.

(d) When the personal **pronoun** of the **first person plural**, as subject of the nominal sentence, refers to two persons, **the predicate is in the dual**:

وَنَحْنُ صَغِيرَانِ when we were children.

وَنَحْنُ خَارِجَانِ when we were going out.

نَحْنُ هَائِمَانِ فِي فِضَاءٍ We are both dazed in infinite space.

(e) When the subject is a **substantive** naming a "**collection**" or "aggregate" of individuals and refers to persons, the **predicate** can be **in the singular**:

كَانَ جُمْهُورُ الْمُشَاهِدِينَ فِي تِلْكَ
الَّيْلَةِ - خَلِيطًا مِنَ الْعَمَالِ وَ-

That night the audience was a mixture of
workers and

كُلُّنَا مَسْحُورٌ وَسَاحِرٌ All of us are enchanted and are
enchanters.

However, it is most **usually** found **in the plural**-either sound or broken:

أَهْلُ هَذِهِ الْبَلَدِ شُرَفَاءُ طَيِّبُونَ إِلَى حَدِّ
السَّدَاجَةِ

The people of this country are honest
and kind to the point of naïveté.

كَانَ أَهْلُ هَذِهِ الْفَتَاةِ أَغْنِيَاءَ This girl's family is wealthy.

وَإِنْ هَبْتُ مَكَانًا فَالْكُلُّ هَارِبُونَ If I settle anywhere, everyone will run
away.

فَإِذَا الْقَوْمُ جَاثُونَ مِنْ حَوْلِهَا There were people kneeling around her.

However, if the **collective** noun **refers to animals or inanimate objects**, the predicate will be **in the singular**:

أَنَّ قَصَبَ هَذَا السِّيَاحِ كَانَ أَطْوَلَ مِنْ قَامَتِهِ that the canes of this hedge were taller than he.

فَإِذَا الْكُلُّ بَاطِلٌ Thus everything is vanity.

(f) When a collective noun as the subject is more closely defined by a **governed genitive**, the predicate can be brought into agreement **with the gender and number of the governed genitive** rather than with the gender and number of the governing noun, although the latter is the grammatical subject of the sentence:

جَمِيعُهُنَّ نَاطِرَاتٌ إِلَى عَشْتَرُوتَ All of them were looking at Astarte.

كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ فِي مِصْرَ مَحْزُونَةٌ حِينَ تُرِيدُ Women in Egypt are sad when they want to be.

بَعْضُ الْفَتَيَاتِ مَحْظُوظَاتٌ Some girls are fortunate.

However, this "logical agreement" is **not necessary**:

أَسْبَابٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بَعْضُهَا دَاخِلِيٌّ وَبَعْضُهَا خَارِجِيٌّ many reasons, some of which are internal, some external.

بَعْضُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْمُسْتَشْرِقِينَ مُخْلِصٌ فِي بَحْثِهِ Some of these Orientalists are sincere in their research.

(For additional information on agreement with elatives, see vol. II.)

Note that **in the case of inverted word order**, that is to say, when the predicate precedes the subject, it usually agrees with the subject **as stated above**:

in gender:

بَاطِلَةٌ هِيَ الْإِعْتِقَادَاتُ وَالتَّعَالِيمُ- Worthless are the teachings and the beliefs

أَمْرِيضَةٌ أَنْتِ؟ Are you ill?

أَسْعِيدُهُ أَنَا بِ - ؟ Am I happy with . . .?

and, when referring to persons, also in number:

كَثِيرُونَ هُمْ الَّذِينَ - Many are those who ...

كَثَارَ هُمْ الَّذِينَ - Many are those who ...

أَنَاءُئُونَ هُمْ الْآنَ ؟ Are they sleeping now?

Note that "كَثِيرٌ" may be used without agreement in number, (see also page 24):

كَثَارَ هُمْ الَّذِينَ - Many are those who ...

§ 9 WORD ORDER IN A NOMINAL SENTENCE

Arab grammarians traditionally emphasize the normal word order of the nominal sentence as being subject-predicate, as opposed to the verbal sentence in which the word order is stated as (verbal) predicate-subject (see page 41).

They believe this order to be so strongly characteristic of the nominal sentence that when the normal order is apparently inverted in the verbal sentence to subject-(verbal) predicate, they see instead a nominal construction with a verbal sentence as predicate. Thus, *e.g.*, زَيْدٌ جَاءَ, "Zaid came," is explained as follows: "Zaid" is the subject of a nominal sentence; "(he) came" is a verbal sentence which primarily functions as Zaid's nominal predicate.

Similarly, when a nominal sentence is apparently inverted, the grammarians try to explain it as a verbal sentence. Therefore, حَسَنٌ زَيْدٌ, "Zaid is handsome," is explained as equivalent to حَسَنَ زَيْدٌ. Actually, this is possible only when the predicate preceding its subject is a verbal (participial) form. In any other case, with adverbs or prepositional phrases as predicates in examples such as "فِي الدَّارِ رَجُلٌ", "a man is in the house," and

هَئَاكَ كَلِمَاتٍ, "there are some words," there is no explanation other than to admit the inversion of word order¹².

While accepting this division between nominal and verbal sentences, Western scholars do not usually consider the word order mentioned above essential to both types of sentences but only as a predominant characteristic of them: **subject-(nominal) predicate** for the nominal sentence and **verb (or verbal predicate)-subject** for the verbal sentence (see page 42).

However, this discrepancy is more apparent than real, especially in the nominal sentence, since the Arabic word for the subject in a nominal sentence **أَلْمُبْتَدَأُ بِهِ** ("that with which a beginning is made") should be understood in a rather local meaning¹³; while the term **subject** as used by Western scholars has a logical implication: **the person or thing about which a statement is asserted or predicated**.

It should be noted that both the normal and the inverted word orders are still traditionally referred to with respect to the position of the subject in relation to the nominal predicate or to the verb. Unless otherwise noted, we shall generally follow the same designations, although in fact there is no reason for not including the cases of inversion of any part of the sentence frequently found in modern Arabic (see page 42).

Modern literary Arabic is rather consistent with regard to its word order in the nominal sentence; the cases of so-called inversion occur only under definite circumstances which can, however, be of either syntactical or simply stylistic nature.

In general, we may state that the defined part will precede the undefined one, or the one to which more emphasis is given in the sentence, or the one that connects the sentence with a preceding statement (since the logic of the statement requires the transition from the better known to the less known).

A- Inverted word order:

Thus, for example, there will be **inverted word order**:

¹² For the definition of a nominal sentence as given by the native grammarians, see page 2 above.

In cases of inversion of the normal word order, Arab grammarians call the subject **مُبْتَدَأٌ مُؤَخَّرٌ** "subject placed behind" and the predicate **خَبَرٌ مُقَدَّمٌ** "predicate placed in front".

¹³ Arab grammarians seem also, at times, to give a certain logical value to the notion of subject, e.g., in cases of inversion of the word order, the subject-*mubtada* is then called **مُبْتَدَأٌ فِي الْمَعْنَى** "*mubtada* in meaning".

(a) when the **subject is undefined** and the **predicate is an adverb** or a **prepositional phrase**:

لِلتَّعَالِبِ أَوْجِرَةٌ وَلِلطُّيُورِ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ كَارٌ The foxes have caves and the birds of the air, nests.

لِي ثَلَاثَةُ أَوْلَادٍ I have three sons.

إِنَّ عَلَى بَابِ غُرْفَتِي صَاحِبًا In front of the door to my room there is an officer.

فَوْقَ رَأْسَيْهِمَا سِرَاجٌ ضَعِيفٌ Above their heads was a feeble lamp.

وَلَهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الْاجْتِمَاعِيَّةِ دَوْرٌ حَاطِرٌ She has an important role in social life.

مَا فِي ذَلِكَ رَيْبٌ There is no doubt about it.

(b) when the **predicate contains a pronoun suffix** or a **demonstrative pronoun** which relates the nominal sentence to a preceding statement (the inversion will occur even if the subject is defined, since in this case the predicate has a connecting value):

وَمِنْهُمْ هَذَا الشَّيْخُ This sheikh was one of them.

عَلَى بَضْعٍ خِلَالٍ فِي رَأْسِهَا الْأَمَانَةُ on a few qualities, the foremost of which is reliability.

وَقَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا شَوْقِي Shauqi is very much like this.

لَكَ الْحُرِّيَّةُ أَنْ تَتَكَلَّمَ مَعِيَ بِكُلِّ حُرِّيَّةٍ You can talk to me with complete freedom. [You can have the freedom to....]

مَغْفُورٌ لَهَا الْخَطَأُ Her error [has been] forgiven.

أَسْبَقُ الْأُمَمِ الْغَرْبِيَّةِ إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْيُونَانُ In that respect, the first Western nation to [achieve] this was Greece.

(g) to give the predicate an emphatic effect:

مُسْكِينٌ هَذَا الْإِنْسَانُ How poor this man is!

الطُّفْلُ أَنْتَ! You are the childish one!

مُسْكِينٌ أَنْتَ أَيُّهَا الشَّيْخُ You, old man, are certainly a miserable sight.

(h) frequently when the subject is unusually long, *e.g.*, defined by an adjectival relative sentence:

مَلْعُونَةٌ هِيَ الْأَيْدِي الَّتِي تَمُدُّ إِلَى هَذَيْنِ الْجَسَدَيْنِ Cursed be the hands that stretch out to these corpses

مُسْكِينٌ الْمُتَمَدِّنُ الَّذِي لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ - Poor is the civilized man who cannot—

بَاطِلَةٌ هِيَ الْإِعْتِقَادَاتُ وَالْتَّعَالِيمُ الَّتِي - Worthless are the beliefs and teachings that

جَمِيلٌ هَذَا الدَّرْسُ الَّذِي تُلْقِيهِ عَلَيَّ You have taught me a very good lesson. [Good is this lesson which....]

B Normal Word Order

On the other hand, **normal word order**, *i.e.*, subject-predicate, is found **even when the subject is grammatically undefined**:

(a) when it is a word representing an **abstract or general idea**:

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ حَسَنٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ Everything in life is beautiful.

جَمَالٌ هُوَ الطَّبِيعَةُ بِأَسْرِهَا Beauty is nature itself [altogether].

سَلَامٌ عَلَى الْوَاجِبِ وَالْوَطَنِيَّةِ Peace takes precedence over duty and patriotism.

(b) when it has an adjectival or relative determination:

أَدِيبٌ آخَرُ هُوَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَبْدُ الْقَادِرِ الْمَازِنِيِّ Another litterateur is Ibrahim 'Abd al-Qadir al-Mazini.

(c) after the negative adverb لَا as particle of general denial (see vol. II):

لَا قَلْبَ وَلَا دِينَ لَهُ He has no heart or religion.

إِنِّي رَجُلٌ ضَعِيفٌ لَا نَاصِرَ لِي I am a weak man without a helper.

(d) to achieve an emphatic effect, as in a greeting:

سَلَامٌ عَلَى سُورِيَا Greetings to Syria.

or in exclamatory expressions:

وَيْلٌ لِمَنْ يَفْضِي وَوَيْلٌ لِمَنْ يُدِينُ Woe [is] to those who judge!
Woe [is] to those who condemn!

(For a discussion of word order after وَ introducing a circumstantial clause, see vol. III; and after فَ following a conditional clause or conditional relative clause, see also vol. III).

§ 10 THE ELLIPTICAL NOMINAL SENTENCE

Nominal sentences containing **ellipsis of members** are different from those with only one member (see page 5).

While the latter are concerned with a statement of the mere existence of the noun expressed, the former indicate the same determination of this existence that a sentence with a nominal predicate intends. Those members already mentioned in the sentence or easily understood from the context are omitted.

Compare the almost exclamatory character of:

حَسْبُنَا That is enough for us.

with:

حَسْبُكَ هَذَا That is enough for you.

حَسْبِي أَنْ أَقُولَ - It will suffice for me to say

(a) This elliptical construction is **especially common in answers** to questions in order to achieve a more lively dialogue:

مَاذَا تَعْرِفُ عَنِ السَّحْرِ؟ سُؤَالٌ غَرِيبٌ "What do you know about magic?"
"That is a strange question."

سَأَلَنِي أَحَدُهُمْ فِي لُبْنَانَ أَصَحِيحٌ مَا
يَزُودُونَهُ عَنْ رُقِيٍّ أَبْنَاءِ الشَّامِ؟ قُلْتُ
صَحِيحٌ! Someone [one of them] asked me in
Lebanon, "Is it true what they say about
the progress of people in the North?" I
answered, "It is true."

أَشْرَهَةٌ أَنْتِ أَيَّتُهَا الْفَتَاةُ؟ قَالَتْ نَعَمْ يَا
سَيِّدِي إِلَى الْمَوْتِ "Are you greedy, my girl?" She
answered, "Yes, sir, until I die."

إِنَّهَا نُكْتَةٌ ظَرِيفَةٌ - فَأَجَابَ الْفَرَنْسِيُّ بَلْ
حَقِيقَةً تَجْهَلُهَا أَوْرُبَّا لِلْأَسَفِ "That is a good joke." The Frenchman
answered, "It is, rather, a truth which
Europe unfortunately ignores."

أَيْنَ أُمِّكَ يَا فُوَادُ؟ قَالَ مَرِيضَةٌ فِي
الْبَيْتِ "Where is your mother, Fu'ad?" He
answered, "Ill at home."

The question may include a preceding statement:

أَيْنَ؟ Where?

إِلَى أَيْنَ؟ Whither?

وَلِمَاذَا؟ and why?

وَلِمَا لَا وَهُوَ لَمْ يَكُنْ يَرَى عَرْضَ هَذِهِ
الْقَنَاةِ And why not, since he could not see the
width of this canal?

(b) The ellipsis is quite often used after لَا (see page 113):

وَكَيْفَ لَا وَقَدْ سَأَلْتَهُ لِحَبِيبٍ قَرِيبٍ Wow could I do otherwise, since you
asked it on behalf of a dear relative?

كَيْفَ لَا وَ - ؟ Why not, since . . . ?

Compare with:

وَكَيْفَ لَا يَكُونُ ذَلِكَ وَ - How could it be otherwise, since...?

(c) The **elliptical construction** is **also allowed** when the situation or a preceding statement makes any closer determination unnecessary:

شَاعِرٌ جَاءَ لِي - He was a poet who had come to....

قَالَ رَفِيقِي شَيْءٌ مَأْلُوفٌ My companion said, "That is a common thing."

أَلِذَاكَ وَحْدَهُ أَنْكَرَكَ سَلِيمٌ؟ أَمْرٌ أَكَادُ
أُصَدِّقُ Is it only for this that Selim disowned you? That is something I can hardly believe.

زَوْجَةٌ تُحِبُّ زَوْجَهَا Here is a wife who loves her husband.

حِسَابٌ مَضْبُوطٌ That is precise reckoning.

(For elliptical nominal sentences in correlative constructions and their use in conditional constructions, see vol. II; and in exceptive clauses, see vol. III.)

§ 11 THE NOMINAL SENTENCE WITH THREE MEMBERS

In Arabic, the structural simplicity of the nominal sentence-simple juxtaposition to a subject of a nominal predicate-becomes less strict through the addition of a **copula**.

A Personal Pronouns of the Third Person

The pronoun of the third person which, in this function, has been called **صَمِيرُ الْفَضْلِ**, "the pronoun of separation," by Arab grammarians, introduces a division between the subject and the predicate when both members are defined:

هَذِهِ الْمَرْأَةُ هِيَ أَرْمَلَةٌ سَمْعَانَ الرَّامِي This woman was the widow of Sem'an al-Rami.

It is **generally** used when **the subject is a demonstrative pronoun** and **the predicate is a substantive defined by the definite article**:

تِلْكَ هِيَ الْمُسْكَةُ That is the difficulty.

هَذَا هُوَ النَّامُوشُ That is the law.

هَؤُلَاءِ هُمْ الْعَاصَةُ These are the divers.

هَؤُلَاءِ هُمُ الْعُلَمَاءُ These were the *ulemas*.

The pronoun of the third person **may also be used even after a personal pronoun of the first and second person** given as subject. In such cases, the "pronoun of separation" can be considered as being a mere "copula" between both members of the nominal sentence:

أَنَا هُوَ الْقَلْبُ الْبَشَرِيُّ I am the human heart.

However, **this element of separation is not always used**, and since its function seems to be principally one of emphasis or clarification, it is difficult to see why such a personal pronoun in this position should be considered as structural rather than merely as a stylistic device:

أَنَا الْقَلْبُ الْبَشَرِيُّ I am the human heart.

هَذِهِ الْكَلِمَةُ الْوَحِيدَةُ الْمَعْقُولَةُ الَّتِي - That is the only reasonable word which...

On the other hand, the personal pronoun is used in cases where a "separation" would not be necessary:

هَذَا هُوَ مَكْتَبُكَ This is your desk.

since "this desk of yours" would not be مَكْتَبُكَ هَذَا but هَذَا مَكْتَبُكَ. (For the position of the demonstratives, see vol. II):

هَذِهِ هِيَ حِكَايَتِي This is my story.

هَذَا هُوَ طَلْبِي That is my request.

(For further discussion of the "pronoun of separation," see vol. II.)

When the subject and predicate differ in gender or number, the personal pronoun agrees with the subject in gender and number as if in apposition to it:

هَذِهِ الزَّلَّةُ الْأُولَى هِيَ بَدْءُ الْإِنْهِيَارِ فِي - This first slip was the beginning of the downfall for....
جَمَالٌ هُوَ الطَّبِيعَةُ بِأَسْرِهَا Beauty is nature itself [altogether].

But **when the subject is a demonstrative pronoun** and the predicate a substantive, then **both the subject and the personal pronoun are in agreement with the predicate**:

هَذِهِ هِيَ حِكَايَتِي This is my story.

B The Verb كَانَ, "to be"

كَانَ, "to be", which as a verb has no place within a nominal sentence, has become to a great extent the temporal counterpart of the "timeless" nominal sentence. The nominal predicate in this case, if it is a substantive or an adjective will be in the accusative as an adverbial determination of the verb:

شَيْخٌ ثَالِثٌ كَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ A third sheikh was in the town.
أَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ حَبِيبِي وَغَدًا تَكُونُ زَوْجِي Today you are my sweetheart and tomorrow you will be my husband.
سَأَكُونُ سَعِيدًا I shall be happy.
خَاطِبٌ كَانَ مِنْ كِبَارِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ Khatib was one of the Muslim leaders.

(For additional information on كَانَ, see page 71.)

C The Verb لَيْسَ, "not to be":

In the same way, the verb لَيْسَ, "not to be," seems at times to **have become a mere negative particle of the nominal sentence**. The nominal predicate, if it is a substantive or an adjective, will also be in the accusative case:

أَجَابَتْ بِأَنْ لَيْسَ عِنْدَهَا شَيْءٌ She answered that she had nothing.

لَيْسَ عِنْدَنَا وَظَائِفُ We have no openings.

فَهُمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ عَادَةٌ بِهَزِيمَةٍ for they were not used to being defeated.

الْمُؤَرِّخُ لَيْسَ نَاقِلًا The historian is not a translator.

(For further discussion of لَيْسَ, see page 119.)

II THE VERBAL SENTENCE

§ 12 STRUCTURE OF THE VERBAL SENTENCE

The **verbal sentence represents the subject as acting** (with transitive verbs) or as **being in a temporary state or condition** (with intransitive verbs).

The verbal sentence, as its name **جُمْلَةٌ فِعْلِيَّةٌ** indicates, contains a verb¹⁴. Hence, **its essential elements are**: the **verb**, which expresses the temporal action or condition; and the **subject**—the person or thing to which the verbal action is attributed. The subject is called **فَاعِلٌ** by Arab grammarians.

Since it has different grammatical forms that correspond to the different grammatical persons, a verb can by itself constitute a complete verbal sentence, the subject then being indicated only by the personal form of the verb:

مَاتَ زَيْدٌ Zaid died.

مَاتَ He died.

The subject, when expressed, usually follows the verb and, in this position, is always in the nominative case.

The word order of verb-subject represents the normal order in the verbal sentence.

Arab grammarians, and frequently Western scholars, consider the normal word order as being so essential to the verbal sentence that when it is inverted, as in

زَيْدٌ مَاتَ, "Zaid died," they view it as a nominal sentence whose predicate,

¹⁴ On the definition of the verbal sentence as given by the native grammarians, see page 2 above.

(b) to emphasize a change of subject, especially in correlative constructions:

يَدُ بَشَرِيَّةٍ دَفَعَتْني إِلَى الْهَوْنِ وَيَدُ
بَشَرِيَّةٍ خَلَّصَتْني Human hands forced me into
degradation, and human hands have
delivered me.

لَوْلَا أَنَّكَ شَاعِرٌ وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَفْهَمُونَ مِنْ
مَعْنَى السَّعَادَةِ غَيْرَمَا يَفْهَمُهُ النَّاسُ
جَمِيعًا- if you were not a poet, for poets
understand happiness differently from
all the rest....

رَجُلٌ فَتَكَ بِرَجُلٍ آخَرَ فَقَالَ النَّاسُ -
وَرَجُلٌ حَاوَلَ أَنْ يَسْلُبَ الدَّيْرَ فَقَالَ
النَّاسُ - وَامْرَأَةٌ خَانَتْ بَعْلَهَا فَقَالَ
النَّاسُ - A man destroys another human being
and people say.... A man tries to rob the
monastery and people say.... A woman is
unfaithful to her lord and people say....

(c) when the subject is modified by an adjectival relative clause:

وَالْمَرْأَةُ الَّتِي تُلْزَمُ بِسِتْرِ أَطْرَافِهَا
وَالْأَعْضَاءِ الظَّاهِرَةِ مِنْ بَدْنِهَا بِحَيْثُ لَا
تَتَمَكَّنُ مِنَ الْمَشْيِ وَلَا مِنَ الرُّكُوبِ بَلْ
لَا تَتَنَفَّسُ وَلَا تَنْظُرُ وَلَا تَتَكَلَّمُ إِلَّا
بِمَشَقَّةٍ تُعَدُّ رَقِيقَةً And the woman who is forced to cover
her limbs so that she cannot walk or
mount, nor even breathe, see or speak
without difficulty, can be considered a
slave.

فَالرَّجُلُ الَّذِي - لَا يَحْتَرِمُ حُرِّيَّتَهَا For the man who ..., does not respect her
freedom.

أَوَّلُ شُعُورٍ اخْتَرَقَنِي كَتِّيَارِ الْكَهْرَبَاءِ The first feeling that swept over me, like
an electric shock, was one of great
consternation and fear.
كَانَ شُعُورٌ ذُعْرٌ وَخَوْفٌ شَدِيدَيْنِ

(d) when a **negative particle modifies the subject** rather than the complete verbal sentence:

فَلَا الْبَحْرُ يَفْتَحُ لِي قَلْبُهُ وَلَا الْجَبَلُ
يَبْشُرُ لِي كَسَابِقِ عَهْدِي بِهِمَا

No longer would the sea open her heart to me, nor the mountain smile on me as before.

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ فِي هَذَا الْمَنْزِلِ يَسْتَطِيعُ-

Absolutely no one in this house can....

More often, however, the subject will precede both verb and negative particle:

أَنَا لَا أَفَكِّرُ أَنْ-

I do not think that....

الرَّسَالَةُ لَا تَمُوتُ

The mission will not end.

أَنْتَ لَا تَدْرِي شَيْئًا

You know nothing.

الكَاتِبُ الْحَقُّ لَا يَكْتُبُ لِيَكْتُبَ

The true author does not write just to write.

(e) when the **subject is a relative or an interrogative pronoun**:

أَيُّ بَشَرٍ رَأَى قَلْبَ مُحَمَّدٍ؟

What human being ever saw the heart of Muhammad?

مَنْ يَدْرِي؟

Who knows?

قَرَأْتُ فِيهِ مَا يَأْتِي

I read in it what follows.

مَا الَّذِي حَيَّرَكُمْ؟

What is it that disturbs you?

or when **the particles** **أَنَّ**, **إِنَّ**, and **لَكِنَّ** **are used to introduce** the subject (see vol. II):

إِنِّي أَقُولُ لَكَ

I am telling you.

إِنِّي أَعْرِفُ عَنْهُ شَيْئًا قَلِيلًا

I know little about it

- كَأَنَّهَا قَدْ سَمِعْتَنِي مُفَكِّرًا as though she had heard me thinking.
 وَلَكِنَّ الشَّهْرَ مَضَى but the month went by.
 لَكِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا ظَلَّ فِيمَا هُوَ فِيهِ but Mohammed remained as he had been before.

Note that when inversion of the word order takes place with the so-called compound lenses which use an auxiliary verb (see vol. III), **the subject precedes the main verb, usually following the auxiliary verb:**

- كَانَتْ أُمُّهُ تَقْطَعُ عَلَيْهَا اللَّحْمَ His mother used to cut the meat on it.
 فَقَدْ كَانَ الصَّبِيَّانِ يَنْتَقِلُونَ إِلَى الْفَقِيهِ
 وَالْعَرِيفِ كُلِّ مَا يَسْمَعُونَ مِنْ صَاحِبِهِمْ For the boys had been reporting to the teacher and the monitor whatever they heard from their friend.
 كَانَ فُولْتِيَرُ يَقُولُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ- Voltaire used to say about himself....

For a discussion of word order after the particles **فَ**, **حَتَّى**, **إِذَا**, and after **وَ** in circumstantial clauses, see vol. III.)

§ 13 THE SUBJECT OF THE VERBAL SENTENCE

In addition to the personal pronoun implied in the verbal form, the **subject** in a verbal sentence may consist of:

(a) a **personal pronoun**:

- وَانْتَهَرَ هُوَ فِي بَطْنِهِ but he remained in its [the valley's] bottom.
 بِالطَّرِيقِ الَّتِي أُرِيدُهَا أَنَا in the way I wish.

(b) a **substantive**:

- دَخَلَ النَّبِيُّ إِلَى بَيْتِهِ The Prophet went into the house.
 صَعَدَ الْخَطِيبُ الْمُنْبَرَ The preacher ascended the pulpit.

- مَاتَ أَبِي وَأُمِّي قَبْلَ أَنْ - My parents died before....
- أَقَامَ مُحَمَّدٌ فِي الصَّحْرَاءِ سَنَتَيْنِ - Mohammed stayed in the desert two years.
- أَخَذَتْ عَيْنِي كُتَيْبًا صَغِيرًا - A small book caught my eye.

thus, also an infinitive:

- كَأَنَّ انْكَارَ الْوَاقِعِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَمْحُوهُ - as if to deny the fact could erase it.
- قَدْ كَانَ اسْتِخْدَامُ الْمَوَالِي فِي الْعَهْدِ الْأُمَوِيِّ نَادِرًا - During the Umayyad period, the appointment of *mawalis* was not common.

(c) an **interrogative** or a **relative pronoun**:

- مَنْ حَلَّلَهُ لِلْأَمِيرِ؟ - Who made it lawful for the Emir?
- أَنْ مَنْ رَأَاكَ وَلَوْ مَرَّةً لَا يَنْسَاكَ؟ - that whoever sees you, even if only once, will never forget you?
- مَا خَرَجَ مِنْ يَدِي - Whatever leaves my hand....

(d) a **demonstrative pronoun**:

- كَانَ ذَلِكَ وَأَنَا فَتَى يَافِعٌ - This happened when I was still a boy.
- لِيَكُنْ هَذَا - So be it.
- مَنْ كَانَ هَذَا هَمَّهُ مِنْ حَيَاتِهِ - Whoever has such an aim in life

(e) an **adjective used as a substantive**:

- وَالْقَلِيلُ الَّذِي نَعْرِفُهُ يَتَغَيَّرُ بِتَغْيِيرِ الظُّرُوفِ - The little we know varies with the circumstances.

وَلَمْ يَمُضْ قَلِيلٌ حَتَّى - Hardly any time had passed when....
[A little had not passed when....]

a verbal adjective (participle) also used in a substantival function (see vol. II):

لِذَلِكَ هَذَا الْمُؤْمِنُ وَاضْطَرَبَ الْمُكْفِرُ For this reason, the believer is at peace
while the unbeliever is disturbed.

أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْمُتَظَاهِرُونَ أَفْنِيَّتَهُ that the demonstrators could enter its
courtyards.

For the paronomastic use of the active participle of the verb in cases like (see vol. II):

رَقَصَ الرَّاقِصُونَ Some people danced.

(f) of the various **prepositional phrases**, only those with مِنْ in a partitive meaning (see vol. II):

لَيْسَ مِنْ شَكٍّ فِي أَنْ - There is no doubt whatever that....

قَدْ قُرِئَ لِصَاحِبِنَا مِنْ هَذَا كُلِّهِ Part of all this was read to our friend.

Note that the impersonal construction of the verb كَفَى, "to be sufficient," "to be enough," used with the preposition بِ and with an adverbial accusative can hardly be considered as still productive¹⁶. It is an expression taken from the Koran:

كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا Allah is a sufficient witness.

which is sometimes repeated in phrases of analogous structure:

كَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا God is the best protector.

كَفَى بِالْوَاقِعِ الْمَشْهُودِ دَلِيلًا وَحُجَّةً The witnessed fact is sufficient proof and argument.

¹⁶ On the use of this construction, see Brock. *Grund*. II, p. 124.

Note also the exclamatory use of this verb:

كَفَى سَخَفًا Stop! Enough of this nonsense!

(g) a **pronominal relative sentence**:

لَا يَنْسَاهُ مَنْ رَأَاهُ Whoever saw it will not forget it.

أَنْ مَنْ ذَهَبَ سَوْفَ يَعُودُ؟ that whoever died will rise again?

مَا خَرَجَ مِنْ يَدِي دَخَلَ فِي حُوزَةِ الشَّيْطَانِ Whatever leaves my hand goes into the devil's possession.

(h) a **noun clause** introduced by أَنْ or أَنَّ (see vol. III):

خَطَرَلِي أَنَّ الْقَادِمَ قَدْ يَكُونُ لِصًّا It occurred to me that the man approaching could be a thief.

كَانَ طَبِيعِيًّا أَنْ - It was natural that....

يُظْهِرُ أَنْ - It is obvious that....

§ 14 THE IMPERSONAL SUBJECT

Arabic has never developed an impersonal approach to verbal action that could be considered equivalent to the European "it was," "it became": *es war, es gab; habia*, etc.

All Arabic constructions of this character actually have a subject expressed as understood.

A Thus **statements about weather and the like**, which in English are impersonal, **always take a personal construction** in Arabic. **The subject is the phenomenon itself or the part of nature affected** by the phenomenon: sky, earth, night, day, etc.

أَنَّ السَّمَاءَ سَتُمْطِرُنَا فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ that it will rain quite heavily tonight.
غَزِيرًا [that the skies will rain upon us....]

كَانَ اللَّيْلُ قَدْ أَظْلَمَ The night had grown dark.

إِنْتَصَفَ اللَّيْلُ It was midnight. [The night reached the middle.]

(حِينَ) أَوْ يَنْتَصِفُ النَّهَارُ or (when) it is noon. [The day reaches the middle.]

B In **temporal constructions** with the verb كَانَ, "to be," **the subject is the temporal idea itself** that is involved in the expression, such as the day, month, season, etc.

كَانَ الْيَوْمُ يَوْمَ جُمُعَةٍ It was Friday. [The day was Friday.]

كَانَ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ يَوْمَ الْأَضْحَى It was the Day of Immolation.

كَانَ الْفَصْلُ رَبِيعًا It was springtime. [The season was spring.]

كَانَ الْوَقْتُ عَصْرًا It was afternoon. [The time was afternoon.]

لَمَّا كَانَ غَدٌ جَاءَ النَّاسُ أَرْسَالًا إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ The next day the people came to the mosque in groups. [When it was the next day....]

C Verbs like أَصْبَحَ, "to enter upon the morning," and أَمْسَى, "to enter into the evening," **take the persons involved in the action as the subject**; cf. the personal use in Spanish of *amanecer*, "to dawn."

فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحْتُ يَوْمَ ٩ مِنْ مَارِسَ ذَهَبْتُ- On the ninth of March, I went.... [When I entered upon the ninth of March, I went....]

وَإِنَّمَا هُوَ عِنْدَ أَحَدِهِمْ إِذَا أَصْبَحُوا for it took place in one of their rooms during the mornings and in a different one in the evenings.
وَعِنْدَ ثَانٍ مِنْهُمْ إِذَا أَمْسَوْا

(For **paronomastic** constructions such as the following, see vol. II):

لَمَّا أَصْبَحَ الصُّبْحُ When it was morning....

D **When the subject is omitted**, the complete situation becomes the subject of the expression; in this case, the construction comes very close to an impersonal one:

كَانَ يَوْمَ الْأَرْبَعَاءِ It was Wednesday.
لَمَّا كَانَ قُبَيْلَ الْفَجْرِ - A little before dawn....

Note that in the expression:

كَانَ ذَلِكَ لَيْلَةَ الْثَامِنِ مِنَ - It happened during the night of the eighth of....

the second member of the sentence, "the night of," is an adverbial accusative of time. Thus, the first part, "it happened," should be considered as a nominal sentence with one single member plus the verb كَانَ as a temporal determination (see page 36).

§ 15 THE INDEFINITE SUBJECT

Those cases in which the verb has an indefinite subject are different from the above-mentioned examples of impersonal constructions. The subject here is only expressed in a general, that is to say in an indefinite, manner equivalent to: *It is said, people said; man sagte; se decia; etc.*

In these cases, **the subject can be expressed** by:

(a) the **third person masculine singular** of the **passive** voice (see page 48). Here the noun clause following the verb is the grammatical subject.

وَيُقَالُ إِنَّ فِي عُنُقِهِ دَمَ ثَلَاثَةِ قَتْلَى People said that he had three murders on his conscience.

قِيلَ إِنَّهَا ثَوْرَةٌ شُيُوعِيَّةٌ People said that it was a communist revolution.

(b) the **third person plural** of the **active** voice:

يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ الْحُبَّ أَعْمَى People say that love is blind.

وَلَيْسَ كَانَ صَحِيحًا مَا يَقُولُونَ - and if what people say is true....

حِينَ تَرْجِعُ إِلَى لُبْنَانَ سَيَسْأَلُونَكَ كَمْ
جَمَعْتَ مِنْ مَالٍ

When you return to Lebanon people will ask you how much money you have earned.

(c) the **second person singular** of the **active** voice:

أَثْمَنُ الْهِئَاتِ هِبَةٌ تَجْهَلُ وَاهِبَهَا

The most Precious gift is the one whose donor remains unknown [whose donor you don't know].

عَنْ شَمَالٍ إِذَا صَعَدْتَ السُّلَّمِ

on the left when one goes up the stairs [when you go up the stairs].

زَيْرُ مَاءٍ لَا تَعْرِفُ لَوْنَهُ

A water jar of indeterminate color [whose color you could not determine].

(d) the **active participle**, singular or plural, **of the same verb**. The participle is frequently undefined:

هَتَفَ بِهِ هَاتِفٌ

A voice called out to him. [A caller called him.]

وَلَوْ سَأَلَهُ سَائِلٌ -

If someone should ask him.... [If a questioner asked him....]

بَيْنَمَا هُوَ نَائِمٌ ذَاتَ نَوْمٍ أَوْ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ
أَتَاهُ آتٍ

One day while he was sleeping, or [perhaps] one night, someone came to him.

الْفَتَاةُ الْغَنِيَّةُ لَا يَعْوقُهَا عَنِ الزَّوْاجِ
عَائِقٌ

No one can prevent a rich girl from marrying.

but it can take the article:

بَكَى الْبَاكُونَ وَأَعْوَلَ الْمُعْوِلُونَ

Some cried and some wailed.

قَدْ كَانَ فَوْقَ مَا يَحْتَمِلُ الْمُحْتَمِلُ

for it was beyond anyone's endurance.

رَقَصَ الرَّاقِصُونَ

Some people danced.

وَقَدْ يَسْمَعُ السَّامِعُ فِيهَا - and there, one could hear....

أَنْنِي سَأَضْرِبُكَ ضَرْبَةً غَرِيبَةً لَمْ يَرَ
الرَّأَوْنَ مِثْلَهَا that I shall strike you in a way never seen
before.

The participle may have a suffixed pronoun; in this case, the indefinite meaning is in some way restricted by the suffix:

قَدْ كَالَ قَائِلُهُمْ - One of them [their speaker] said....

Compare with:

قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ - One [speaker] of them said....

In neither case, however, is mention of a specific person intended. (For additional information on this *figura etymologica* [paronomasia] see vol. II.)

§ 16 THE PASSIVE VOICE

As in the other Semitic languages, the passive voice was originally used in Arabic only when the agent exercising the verbal action could not be expressed because it was not known or ought not to be mentioned. According to native grammarians, this is also true when the grammatical subject is not to be named for the sake of respect, as in numerous expressions where God is involved in the action.

A **Modern Arabic** makes **extensive use of the passive voice** following the above-mentioned patterns. The purpose usually is to place a **greater emphasis** upon the action and its object:

قُتِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ God's messenger was killed.

الَّذِي وُجِدَ قَتِيلًا فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ مِنْذُ خَمْسَةِ
أَعْوَامٍ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ قَاتِلَهُ بَعْدُ who had been found murdered in the
wilderness five years before; no one
knew his killer yet.

دَخَلْتُ كُلَّ مَطْعَمٍ فَلَمْ أُعْطَ خُبْرًا I went into every restaurant, but no one
gave me bread.

أَنَّهُمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ طِينِ الْأَرْضِ	that they have been created from clay.
مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَى مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ	what has been revealed to Mohammed(pbuh).
فُتِحَ بَابُ السَّجْنِ	The prison door was opened.

If the agent has to be mentioned, Arabic repeats the same sentence in the active voice:

قَدْ مُدَّتِ الْمَائِدَةُ مُدَّتَهَا كُبْرَى أَخَوَاتِ الصَّبِيِّ	The table had been set by the boy's oldest sister.
---	--

B However, considering the **logical subject** (the agent) as **an instrument for the actual realization of the action**, Arabic has found a way to express the agent in passive constructions; and that is by using a **prepositional phrase** with instrumental meaning.

The preposition most frequently used is مِنْ, but بِ and لِ are also found:

أَنَّ مَا يُوحَى إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ إِنَّمَا يُوحَى إِلَيْهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَاتِهِ	that what had been revealed to his friend was revealed to him by God, Himself.
قَدْ أُصِيبَ بِعِلَّةٍ فِي نَفْسِهِ شَبِيهَةٍ بِالْجُنُونِ	He had been afflicted by an infirmity of the spirit like a madness.
جَعَلَ الصَّبِيُّ يُرَاعُ لِهَذَيْنِ الصَّوْتَيْنِ	The boy began to be frightened by these two voices.
فِي هَذِهِ السَّنِ الَّتِي يُعْجَبُ فِيهَا الْأَطْفَالُ بِآبَائِهِمْ وَأُمَّهَاتِهِمْ	at the age when children admire their parents.
كَانَا النَّهَارُ كَأَنَّهُ يُضِيءُ بِالْقَمَرِ لَا بِالشَّمْسِ	The day looked as if it were illuminated by the moon, not by the sun.

In fact, it is frequently difficult to state to what extent the prepositions introduce a real agent and not simply an instrumental idea. Compare the above with such expressions as:

جَاءَتْ تَتَعَثَّرُ بِالْحُزْنِ وَالْحَجَلِ

She came, stumbling with grief and shame.

لَقَدْ تَغَيَّرَتْ أَوْرُبَّا بِأَفْكَارِ هَذَا الْأَدِيبِ

Europe changed under the influence of this writer's ideas.

C The frequency of the passive voice in some constructions results in a series of **intransitive uses** of verbs which are actually transitive:

تُوَفِّي نَحْوَ سَنَةٍ 450 م

He died about 540 A.D.

(for: تَوَفَّاهُ اللَّهُ

God has taken him unto Him)

السَّعِيدُ مَنْ سَعِدَ حَيْثُ كَانَ

The happy one is he who finds happiness wherever he is.

مَا قُبِضَ نَبِيٌّ إِلَّا دُفِنَ حَيْثُ يُقْبَضُ

No prophet has ever died who was not buried where he died.

أَنْتَ جُنُنْتَ

You are crazy.

خُيِّلَ إِلَيَّ أَنْ -

It seemed to me....

The **passive voice of the verb** وَجَدَ, "to find," is of special interest. It frequently changes from its passive meaning as in:

الَّذِي وُجِدَ قَتِيلًا

who had been found murdered.

into an intransitive meaning of "to be [in a place]," "to exist":

هَلْ تَوْجَدُ قُوَّةٌ تَتَغَلَّبُ عَلَى الْمَوْتِ؟

Is there a force that can overcome death?

كُلُّ مَا يُوْجَدُ مِنَ الْفَرْقِ بَيْنَ السَّاحِرِ وَالصُّوفِيِّ هُوَ أَنْ -

The only difference between a sorcerer and a *sufi* is that....

لَا تَوْجَدُ وَظَائِفَ خَالِيَةٍ عِنْدَنَا الْآنَ

We do not have an opening now.

Note that the intransitive meaning of the verb وَجَدَ, "to be found." Is

common only in the imperfect tense. To give the construction preterital meaning, the verb كَانَ is used before it:

كَانَ يُوجَدُ بِالْوَزَارَةِ وَظِيفَتَانِ خَالِيَتَانِ There were two positions vacant in the ministry.

D Arabic can use the passive voice not only with those verbs which in the active voice take their direct object in the accusative case, but also with those verbs having a prepositional phrase as object (see vol. II).

When used in the passive voice the latter verbs always remain masculine singular regardless of the gender and number of the person or thing to which they might logically refer. Thus, they give origin to a series of constructions that could easily be understood as being impersonal.

Native grammarians of Arabic say that the prepositional phrase then becomes the subject of the verb (see vol. II). The fact that the prepositional phrase seems to be required in these constructions lends support to this opinion

¹⁷.

Therefore, while سِيرَ إِلَى مِصْرَ (from سَارَ, "to travel") is permissible, سِيرَ without the prepositional phrase seems to have been unacceptable since classical times.

Since there are no equivalent expressions in English, **these uses of the passive can be rendered either by a personal or an indefinite construction:**

أَغْمِيَ عَلَيَّ I fainted.

لَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لَهُمْ بِالْخُرُوجِ They were not allowed to go out.

لَمْ يُؤْذَنْ لِي بِالسَّفَرِ إِلَى الْبَحْرَيْنِ I was not allowed to travel to Bahrain.

قَدْ كَانَتْ زَيْنَبُ ابْنَتُهُ إِذْ ذَاكَ مَرِيضَةً
مَرَضًا خُشِيَ مِنْهُ عَلَيْهَا His daughter, Zainab, was so ill at that time that people feared for her life.

فَلَمَّا جِيَءَ بِهِمْ - when they were brought....

This use of the passive voice is especially common with participles (see vol. II). (For the omission of the prepositional phrase in expressions with a passive participle, see vol. II.)

¹⁷ See Zajjaji p. 88; Farhat *Bah.* p. 180.

E Verbs **which take a direct object in the accusative case when in the active voice are also frequently found in the passive voice with an indefinite meaning.** The logical object of the verb is in the nominative case as the grammatical subject, but this construction emphasizes the psychological indefiniteness of the agent: "people said," "they said," etc.

لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ أَبٌ يَعْلَمُ I fainted.

الَّذِي وُجِدَ قَتِيلًا فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ مُنْذُ خَمْسَةِ
أَعْوَامٍ وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ قَاتِلَهُ بَعْدُ who had been found murdered in the
wilderness five years before; no one
knew his killer yet.

A **special idiomatic use** of the passive voice has been derived from this indefinite meaning: from "something that people do" to "something that is possible to be done." It is frequently found in negative constructions:

وَلَكِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي كُلِّ الْأَحْوَالِ قُوَّةً لَا
يُسْتَهَانُ بِهَا But they were, in any case, a power one
could not scorn.

أَلْبِلَادُ الْمَفْتُوحَةِ وَالْأُمَمُ الْمَغْلُوبَةُ لَا
تَكَادُ تُعَدُّ The subjugated countries and nations
were almost innumerable.

لَيْسَ لَكَ رُوحٌ تُفْبِضُ! You do not have a spirit that can be
taken away.

إِنَّهُ شَيْءٌ لَا يُصَدَّقُ This is something unbelievable.

إِنَّهُ دَاهِيَةٌ لَا يَشُقُّ لَهُ غُبَارٌ that he was a fellow smart beyond
compare.

and also, "something that is worthwhile doing":

لَمْ تَكْ تَصِلْهُمْ بِالْكَنِيسَةِ صَلَةً تُذَكِّرُ Their connection with the Church is not
worth mentioning.

لَمْ يَكُنْ لَدَيْنَا مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ يُذَكِّرُ We did not have any that are worth
mentioning.

or "something that should be done":

أَمَّا أَنْ هَذِهِ الطَّرِيقَةُ حَدِيثَةٌ فَهَذَا مَا يُعْتَذَرُ عَنْهُ [to say] that this method is new is inexcusable.

زَارَنِي نَوْمٌ كُنْتُ وَالْحَقُّ يُقَالُ فِي حَاجَةٍ شَدِيدَةٍ إِلَى زِيَارَةِ مِثْلِهِ He called on me when—and the truth should be told—I was in great need of a visit such as his.

In these cases, the verb has a qualitative-modal idea and is frequently placed at the end of a sentence.

This meaning leads to the use of the **passive participle as a qualitative adjective**:

ثُمَّ هَذَا الْيَوْمُ الْمَشْهُورُ يَوْمٌ مَوْلِدِ النَّبِيِّ - then this memorable day, the birthday of the Prophet....

كَيْفَ تَصْنَعُ بِهَا شَيْئًا مَذْكُورًا؟ how to make a memorable thing of it?

هَذَا الْكَلِمَةُ الْوَحِيدَةُ الْمَعْقُولَةُ الَّتِي سَمِعْتُهَا اللَّيْلَةَ فِي هَذَا الْمَكَانِ that this is the only reasonable word I have heard here tonight.

أَنْتَ - مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ - You are...responsible for....

لَا تُسْفِرُ عَنْ نَتَائِجِ مَذْكُورَةٍ It does not offer results worth mentioning.

أَنَّهَا بَلَغَتْ فِي بَعْضِ الْعَصْرِ مَكَانًا مَحْمُودًا that it achieved a praiseworthy development during a certain period.

Note in the following examples the temporal meaning of the participle:

كَالْخُرُوفِ الْمَذْبُوحِ like a lamb that is to be slaughtered.

كَخَوَارِ تَوْرٍ مَذْبُوحٍ like the bellowing of an ox being slaughtered.

§ 18 THE PERFECT TENSE

The Arabic **perfect** is used:

(a) to express **actions completed in the past**. As a result it has become the natural tense for narration with a tendency to be used preferably with **single actions**:

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
رُفِعَ كَمَا رُفِعَ عِيسَى

The Messenger of God has been taken up [to heaven] as Jesus was.

هَكَذَا قَالَ يَسُوعُ النَّاصِرِيُّ

So spoke Jesus, the Nazarene.

وَقَفْتُ مَرَّةً بِبَابِ مَكْتَبَةٍ -

I stopped once at a bookstore....

خَرَجَ الْعَرِيسُ وَالْعَرُوسُ مِنَ الْهَيْكَلِ

The bride and the bridegroom came out of the church.

The perfect does **not necessarily** imply that the action was accomplished **all at once in the past**:

رَقَصَ الرَّاقِصُونَ

Some people danced.

كَانَ الشَّيْخُ عَبَّاسُ بَيْنَ سُكَّانِ تِلْكَ
الْقَرْيَةِ - كَالْأَمِيرِ بَيْنَ الرِّعَايَةِ

Among the inhabitants of that village
Sheikh Abbas was like a prince among his subjects.

تَرَبَّعَ الْأَمِيرُ عَلَى مَنْصَةِ الْقَضَاءِ
فَجَلَسَ عُقْلَاءُ بِلَادِهِ عَنْ يَمِينِهِ وَشِمَالِهِ

The Emir sat cross-legged upon the
judgment seat and on each side of him
sat the wise men of the country.

Only seldom does a perfect imply a **repeated performance** of an action in the past:

كُلُّهُمْ جَاءُوا فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ
وَبِأَيْدِيهِمْ أَوَانٍ مِنَ الْخَشَبِ -
يَنْتَظِرُونَ -

They used to come at this hour, with
wooden utensils, waiting for....

(b) to express **actions started in the past** and, as such, completed but understood as **still lasting** in their results or consequences-thus, equivalent to the imperfect. It is the so-called "**resultative perfect**":

إِخْتَلَفَ الْمُؤَرِّخُونَ كَذَلِكَ فِي الشَّهْرِ The historians likewise disagree about the month.

أَهَذَا إِلَٰهَ الَّذِي صِرْتُ كَاهِنَهُ؟ Is that the deity whose priest I have become?

يَا إِلَٰهِي! نَامَتْ وَيَدُهَا مُسْتَبْقِظَةٌ O my God! She is asleep but her hand is awake!

(c) to express the present:

(1) with verbs that manifest **activities of the mind or will**:

فِي أَيِّ وَقْتٍ شَاءَ whenever he wishes.

الآنَ عَرَفْتُ أَنَّ - Now I know that....

عَرَفْتُ أَنَّ - I know that....

أَرَأَيْتَ الآنَ كَيْفَ -؟ Do you see now how...?

لَأَنِّي اسْتَطَعْتُ فِي هَذَا السُّكُونِ Because in this prevailing silence... I can
السَّائِدِ - أَنْ أَكُونَ أَنَا نَفْسِي be myself.

(2) or with **general statements**, when presented as "always so" or as a fact known from human experience:

لِذَلِكَ هَذَا الْمُؤْمِنُ وَاضْطَرَبَ الْمُلْحِدُ For this reason, the believer is at peace,
but the unbeliever is troubled.

Accordingly, after an indefinite relative pronoun the perfect tense will frequently occur equivalent to a present (sec vol. III):

مَنْ فَقَدَهَا فَقَدْ غُنْصَرًا هَامًّا مِنْ Whoever loses it, loses one of his
عَنْصَرِهِ important elements.

مَنْ صَوَّرَ صُورَةً جَمِيلَةً عَظِيمًا

The man who is able to mold a beautiful figure is great.

(3) when the statement implies **emphasis**²⁰:

كَذَبْتَ ! You lie!

أَصَبْتَ You are right.

Note:

خَبِثْتَ ! Beat it!

(4) in **questions**:

أَصَدَّقْتَنِي الْآنَ؟ Do you believe me now?

هَلَّا نَهَضْتَ وَمَشَيْتَ مَعَهُمْ؟ Why don't you stand up and walk with them?

هَلَّا رَضِيتَ؟ Aren't you satisfied?

(5) in an **oath** and its contents:

لَا بَارَكَ اللَّهُ فِيكَ يَا وَدَادُ! Shame on you, Widad! [May God never bless you!]

قَبَحَكَ اللَّهُ وَقَبَّحَ صَوْتَكَ! Shame on you, for saying that! [May God render ugly you and your voice!]

أَخْزَاكَ اللَّهُ! May God put you to shame!

(6) in a **wish** and its contents:

أَبِي رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ My father, may God have mercy on him....

²⁰ Here also belongs the interjectional phrase حَبْدًا, "how nice, how lovely is...!"

حَبْدًا عَاصِفَةً وَتُلُوجٌ تَقَرَّبْنَا مِنْ ذِكْرِ تِلْكَ
النُّفُوسِ الْخَالِدَةِ How wonderful are the storm and snow that
make us remember those immortal souls.

For a discussion of this phrase, see Brock. *Grund.* II, § 78, b; Wright I p. 98 B and also *Mufassal* p. 124; Ya'ish VII, p. 138.

أَكْرَمَكَ اللَّهُ May God honor you!

تَبَارَكَتْ جُبَيْلٌ وَتَبَارَكَتْ ثَمَرَةُ بَطْنِهَا Blessed be Jubail and blessed the fruit of its womb!

أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ مَسَاءً! Good evening!

وَيَا لَيْتَ حُدُودُهَا مَا كَانَتْ غَيْرَ حُدُودِ
الْمَأْلُوفِ If only its boundaries ended with the usual and reasonable.

(d) to express a **present** or **future action** in **temporal and conditional clauses** (see vol. III):

لَوْ شِئْتُ أَنْ أَقُولَ لَكَ لَقُلْتُ If you want me to tell you, I will say....

وَلَوْ اسْتَطَعْتُ لَكُنْتُ تَالِثَكُمْ If I could, I would go with you.

حَتَّى إِذَا فَرَغْنَا مِنْ هَذَا الدَّرْسِ ذَهَبْتُ
بِكَ إِلَى الْأَزْهَرِ When we have finished this lesson, I shall take you to al-Azhar.

إِذَا فَقَدَ الْمَرْءُ صَدِيقًا عَزِيزًا وَالتَفَتَ
حَوْلَهُ يَجِدُ الْأَصْدِقَاءَ الْكَثِيرِينَ When a man loses a good friend and looks around, he will find many others.

(e) After the **adverbial relative** مَا, the perfect very frequently has the meaning of a **present** or a **future** (see vol. III):

أَقِمْ عَلَيْهَا مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ Persevere in it [prayer] as long as you can.

رُبَّمَا عُدْتُ إِلَيْكَ بَعْدَ قَلِيلٍ Perhaps I shall return to you soon.

لَأَنَّهُ أَقْوَى مِنْكَ وَرُبَّمَا قَتَلَكَ for he is stronger than you are and he might kill you.

سَأَشْكُرُ لَكَ فَضْلَكَ مَا حَيَّيْتُ I shall be thankful to you for your kindness as long as I live.

(f) When in contrast with another action, either present or past, the perfect can have the idea of the pluperfect:

(جَاءَتِ الْأَنْبَاءُ بِ) وَأَنَّ الْإِنْتِقَالَ مِنَ
الْعَاصِمَةِ وَإِلَيْهَا أَصْبَحَ مُسْتَحِيلًا (News arrived) that communication
between the capital and that place was
no longer possible.

وَعَلِمَ الْحَارِثُ حِينَ بَلَغَ الْمَدِينَةَ أَنَّ
عَبْدَ اللَّهِ مَاتَ وَدُفِنَ بِهَا بَعْدَ شَهْرٍ مِنْ
مَسِيرَةِ الْقَافِلَةِ إِلَى مَكَّةَ And al-Harith learned when he reached
Medina that a month after the caravan's
departure for Mecca, Abdallah had died
and had been buried.

هُوَ يَذْكُرُ هَذَا السِّيَاحَ كَأَنَّهُ رَأَاهُ أَمْسٍ He remembers this fence as if he had
seen it yesterday.

§ 19 THE IMPERFECT TENSE

The **Arabic imperfect**, as we have mentioned above, can refer to the three temporal spheres—**present**, **past**, or **future**.

A Present

The imperfect can express something that is actually happening as a single independent action, that is, it functions as **a definite present**. The imperfect is used with this meaning in the overwhelming majority of cases.

Thus in independent statements:

أُرِيدُ أَنْ - I want to....

أَنَا أُحِبُّكَ وَلَا أُحِبُّ سِوَاكَ I love you and I love no one besides you.

إِنِّي أَقُولُ لَكَ الْحَقِيقَةَ I am telling you the truth.

مَاذَا تَقُولُ الْآنَ فِي هَذَا؟ What do you say now about it?

نَسْتَطِيعُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ نَقُولَ - Hence, we may say....

and in dependent positions:

قَرَأْتُ فِيهِ مَا يَأْتِي I read in it what follows.

مَا أَظُنُّهَا تَعْرِفُ مَا هُوَ الْحُبُّ I do not believe that she knows what love is.

مَا أَفْظَعَ مَا تَقُولِينَ! How repulsive is what you are saying!

إِنِّي أَكَادُ أَرَى الْوُضُولَ إِلَيْهَا مُسْتَحِيلًا I almost believe that it is inaccessible.

أَمْرٌ لَا أَكَادُ أَصَدِّقُهُ That is something I can hardly believe.

The imperfect is also frequently used:

to express **an indefinite present**— that is, actions that do not happen in any definite time but which have permanent validity, such as those found in general statements:

الطَّبِيعَةُ تَكْرَهُ الْفَرَاغَ Nature loathes a vacuum.

الرَّحْمَةُ وَالْقَسَاوَةُ تَتَصَارَعَانِ فِي الْقَلْبِ الْبَشَرِيِّ Mercy and cruelty are always at war in the hearts of men.

الشَّاعِرُ يَرَى الْجَمَالَ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ The poet sees beauty in everything.

الْبَشَرُ يُحِبُّونَ الشَّرْثَرَةَ People love to chat.

النِّسَاءُ فِي قُرَى مِصْرَ لَا يُحِبُّنَ الصَّمْتَ وَلَا يَمِلْنَ إِلَيْهِ The Egyptian peasant woman doesn't like silence nor does she feel inclined toward it.

and to express **something that occurs habitually**:

إِلَى هَذِهِ الدَّارِ يَأْتِي الْمَلِكُ سِرًّا The king comes to this house in secrecy.

B Past

The imperfect is frequently used to express the **duration** or the **repetition of an action occurring in the past**, especially in coordinate or subordinate statements **following a perfect**:

كَانَ اسْمُهُ خَلِيلٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَحَدًا مِنَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَعْرِفُهُ بِهَذَا الْإِسْمِ هُمْ
يُنَادُونَهُ ((أَعْرَج))²¹

His name was Khalil, but nobody knew him by that name. They called him "Cripple."

كَانَ ذَلِكَ وَأَنَا فَتًى يَافِعٌ لَا أَفَكِّرُ فِي
غَيْرِ السَّاعَةِ الَّتِي أَكُونُ فِيهَا

That happened when I was an adolescent who thought only of the present.

كَانَ هَذَا الْكُتَّابُ بَيْتًا مِنْ بُيُوتِ الْوَقْفِ
يَتَكَوَّنُ مِنْ طَابَقَيْنِ

This school was a house maintained by a religious endowment. It was a two-story building.

جَعَلُوا يُرِيدُونَهَا عَلَى كَشْفِ وَجْهِهَا
وَهِيَ تَأْبَى

They tried to uncover her face, but she was unwilling.

دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا وَعِنْدَهَا أَبَوَاهَا وَامْرَأَةٌ مِنْ
الْأَنْصَارِ وَهِيَ تَبْكِي وَالْمَرْأَةُ تَبْكِي مَعَهَا

He went in to see her; with her were her parents and a woman from the Ansar, and she and the woman were crying.

In general, the imperfect subordinated to a perfect will express a **durative or repeated action** that happens **at the same time as the action set forth by the perfect**:

ثُمَّ جَلَسَتْ تَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ بِحُنُوٍّ وَشَفَقَةٍ

Then she sat down, looking at him with tenderness and compassion.

رَأَيْتُ فَتَاتَهَا إِلَى جَانِبِهَا تَبْكِي بُكَاءًا
مُرًّا

I saw her child near her, crying bitterly.

²¹ On the declension of proper names, see vol. II.

It can, however, also express an **action** that actually occurred in the past, but **later than the action described by the perfect** (see vol. II):

الثَّالِثُ رَاحَ يَحْلِقُ The third one went to shave.

جَلَسْتُ إِلَيْهِ أَتَحَدَّثُ مَعَهُ وَأَشْرَبُ الْقَهْوَةَ عِنْدَهُ I sat down to chat and have some coffee with him.

(For the imperfect subordinated to كَانَ and to auxiliary verbs, see vol. II.)

C Future

The imperfect can express a **future action** when it is contrasted with a present or past situation, or when it refers to a future time:

أَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ حَبِيبِي وَغَدًا تَكُونُ زَوْجِي Today you are my sweetheart, and tomorrow you will be my husband.

الَّيْلَةَ يُطَاخُ رَأْسٌ Tonight a head will be chopped off.

إِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ تَجْهَلِينَ وَغَدًا تَعْلَمِينَ Today you do not know, but you will tomorrow.

This is frequently the case in **questions**:

إِلَى أَيِّ مَكَانٍ تَذْهَبُ عِنْدَمَا تَذُوبُ هَذِهِ الشَّلُوجُ؟ Where will you go when this snow has melted?

مَتَى أَعُودُ؟ When shall I return?

أَيُّكُمْ أَصَدِّقُ إِذَنْ؟ Which of you shall I believe?

مَاذَا أَفْعَلُ يَا مَرْيَمُ؟ Mary, what shall I do?

and **after an imperative** in coordinating constructions, placing the reason for the command in a future action or event (see vol. III):

أَخْرُجْ وَطَفْ بِهِذِهِ الْمَدِينَةَ وَأَنْتَ تَفْهَمُ Go out and walk through this town and you will understand.

تَعَالَ فَأُرِيكَ - Come, I shall show you....

The **simple statement** of an action in its future occurrence, or projected into the future, may have a meaning in direct or indirect speech, which comes close to that of an **imperative**:

تَأْتِي كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُنَا وَتَتَمَرَّنُ قَلِيلًا You will come here every day and practice a little.
قُلْ لَهُ يَنْتَظِرُنِي حَتَّى أَعُودَ Tell him to wait for me till I come back.
[Tell him he will wait...].

§ 20 MODAL AND TEMPORAL CATEGORIES OF THE VERB

Since the forms of the Arabic verb have no necessary time reference in the sense found in some European languages, Arabic has always used certain words to give it various more definite modal and temporal meanings. These words differ from one another in their syntactical nature; hence, each modifies the verb in its own particular way. They include: **the particle قَدْ**, **the verb كَانَ**, and **the particles سَوْفَ and سَيَّ**.

Of these, **سَوْفَ** and **سَيَّ** have, a very definite usage: **before the imperfect indicative**, they emphasize its futurity (see page 75).

قَدْ follows a **strict rule of positioning** in relation to the verb, which it must immediately precede. According to the tense used, it can influence the verb either **temporally** or **modally** (see page 68).

كَانَ is used **with greater freedom** of position in modifying a subsequent verb in its modal or temporal aspects; it **precedes the verb it modifies**, but may be separated from it by one or more parts of the sentence (see vol. III).

§ 21 THE PARTICLE قَدْ

The particle **قَدْ**, which always **immediately precedes the verb**²², is used to

²² Note that an interjectional expression can be used between the particle **قَدْ** and the verb, e.g..

وَقَدْ وَاللَّهِ عَلِمْتُ - By God, I know....

and also that the negative adverb **لَا** can separate the particle and the verb in the imperfect, see page 71 below.

stress certain aspects of the temporal meaning of the tenses in the completion or certainty of completion of the verbal action.

A Before the Perfect

قَدْ emphasizes the verbal action in its past value, as having been completed at the moment of speaking or just prior to the introduction of a new situation; it is thus **equivalent to a pluperfect**:

وَجَدُوا أَنَّ الثَّوْرَةَ قَدْ قَامَتْ They found that the revolution had already started.

رَفَعَ الشَّابُّ رَأْسَهُ وَقَدْ نَدِمَ عَلَى
إِظْهَارِهِ الْحَقِيقَةَ لِلْمَرْأَتَيْنِ The youth raised his head, already
repenting of having told the truth to the
two women.

سَأَلَهُ هَلْ قَدْ رَأَى أَحَدًا؟ He asked him whether he had seen
anyone.

وَقَدْ سَكَنَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ وَشَمِلَ هُدُوءُ
الَّيْلِ كُلِّ سَيِّءٍ وَجَعَلَ هَذَا الصَّوْتُ
الْإِنْسَانِيَّ - When everything had calmed down and
the stillness of night had descended, this
voice would then begin to....

سَكَتَتِ السَّيِّدَةُ وَرَدَةً دَقِيقَةً وَقَدْ
أَغْمَضَتْ عَيْنَيْهَا الْكَبِيرَتَيْنِ كَأَنَّ - Warde grew silent for a while. She had
closed her big eyes as though....

قَدْ can also be used to emphasize the action in the certainty of its having taken place, in which case it is to be translated as **a simple perfect** with any of the perfect's meanings (see page 59):

فَقَدْ عَلِمْتُ أَنَّهُمَا مَاتَا for I do know that they have died.

فَقَدْ كَانَتْ حَاجَتُهُ إِلَيْهِ شَدِيدًا because his need for it was certainly very
great.

هَلْ سَمِعْتَ؟ لَا، لَمْ أَسْمَعْ) أَنَا قَدْ ("Did you hear?" "No, I heard nothing.")
سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا "I did, indeed, hear a voice."

قَدْ سَمِعْتُمْ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ
الْأَوَّلِ - You have certainly heard how the Lord
said to the first man....

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَدْ رُفِعَ كَمَا رُفِعَ عِيسَى The Messenger of God has been taken up to Heaven, as Jesus was!

The particle لَ is frequently prefixed to قَدْ to achieve a greater emphasis:

لَقَدْ فَهِمْتُ الْآنَ! Now I understand!

مَاذَا كُنْتُ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ؟ آه لَقَدْ تَذَكَّرْتُ What was I telling you? Ah! I remember.

نَعَمْ يَا ابْنَتِي لَقَدْ عَرَفْتُ أَبَاكَ فِي هَذَا
الطَّوْرِ مِنْ حَيَاتِهِ Yes, my daughter, I have known your father in this aspect of his life.

لَقَدْ كَانَ الْمَطْنُونُ أَنْ - It was the opinion that....

لَقَدْ تَغَيَّرَ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ! Everything has changed!

When **two correlative perfects** are modified by the particle قَدْ in any of its senses, the particle does not have to be repeated²³:

فَقَدْ حَطَّمَ النَّبِيُّ الْأَصْنَامَ وَأَمَرَ
أَصْحَابَهُ بِتَحْطِيمِهَا For the Prophet had broken the idols and ordered his Companions to do so.

يُظْهِرُ مَشْلِينِيَا وَقَدْ حَلَقَ لِحْيَتَهُ
وَشَارِبَهُ وَارْتَدَى ثِيَابًا كَثِيَابَ الْعَصْرِ Mashliniya appears, having shaved his beard and his mustache and wearing contemporary costume.

وَكَانَ الْهَلَعُ قَدْ مَلَأَ النُّفُوسَ وَاسْتَأْتَرَ
بِالْقُلُوبِ Anxiety had filled [their] spirits and preoccupied [their] hearts.

²³ Two coordinated perfects following the particle قَدْ do not necessarily have to be governed by the particle, e.g.:

كَانَ الْكُونَتِ ذِي جِيْشٍ قَدْ نَزَلَ مِنْ
مَقْصُورَتِهَا وَمَشَى فِي الْقَاعَةِ Comte de Guiche had descended from her lodge and walked through the hall. (Not had walked).

أَكْبَرُ ظَنِّهِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ قَدْ أَتَمَّ الْقُرْآنَ بَدْءًا
وَأَحَدَ يُعِيدُهُ

His strongest belief is that he had already finished the Koran [by that time] and had begun to repeat it.

B Before the Imperfect

قَدْ can emphasize the fact that the action of the verb is **in fact happening**:

وَلَيْسَ مِنْ شَكٍّ فِي أَنَّ رَحْمَةَ الْحَيَاةِ
قَدْ لَا تُفْهِمُهُمْ حَتَّى يُفْعِلُوا النَّظَرَ فِي
أُصُولِ الْفَنِّ الدَّقِيقَةِ

and there is no doubt about the fact that the crush of life certainly does not give them time to examine the finer principles of the art.

It can also emphasize the fact that the action of the verb is **known by experience** and, thus, something that has happened previously and could happen again:

إِذْ قَدْ يَكُونُ الرَّجُلُ شَاعِرًا وَلَا يُحْسِنُ
النَّظْمَ

since sometimes a man might be a poet but not versify well.

يُقَالُ إِنَّ رَجُلًا بِقَلْبِهِ قَدْ يَصِلُ إِلَى مَا
يَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ آخَرُ بِعَقْلِهِ

People say that sometimes a man can reach with his heart what another can reach with his intelligence.

Before the imperfect, قَدْ is frequently used to emphasize the verbal action as being incomplete and consequently, uncertain. This, in turn, leads to its use as a **definite expression of uncertainty**:

حَظَرَ لِي أَنَّ الْقَادِمَ قَدْ يَكُونُ لِصًّا

It occurred to me that the man approaching could be a thief.

مَنْ يَدْرِي قَدْ يَكُونُ فِي كَلَامِكَ شَيْءٌ
مِنَ الصَّوَابِ

Who knows, there might be some truth in your words.

وَقَدْ يَغَارُ مِنْهُ بَعْضُهُمْ

and perhaps some of them will be jealous of him.

مَا كَانَ غَيْرَ طَبِيعِيٍّ عِنْدَكَ قَدْ يَكُونُ
طَبِيعِيًّا عِنْدَ غَيْرِكَ

What is unnatural for you might be natural for others.

وَأَخِيرًا قَدْ يَسْأَلُنِي الْقَارِئُ - Finally, perhaps, the reader will ask me....

خَافَ مَا قَدْ يَكُونُ بِالْغَارِ - He was afraid of what might be in the cave.

It can also be used in a **negative statement of uncertainty**. In such instances the negative adverb is placed between particle and verb:

قَدْ لَا أَفْتَحُهُمَا بَعْدَ الْآنَ - I might not open them again.

§ 22 THE VERB كَانَ

When governing another verb كَانَ has been transformed to a great extent into a simple verbal component whose function is mainly to express more precisely the time-sphere of the accompanying verb.

It cannot, however, be considered as forming part of a compound tense since it has always preserved a certain degree of independence in position and agreement²⁴ (see vol. III):

وَكَاثَتْ أُمُّ الصَّبِيِّ وَأَبُوهُ يَجِدَانِ لَذَّةً
فِي أَنْ - The boy's parents found pleasure in....

خَشِيَ الرَّجُلُ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْعَلَامُ أَصَابَتْهُ
الْجِنُّ - The man feared that a spirit had taken possession of the boy.

لِذَلِكَ كَانَتْ إِذَا دَخَلَتْ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ قَامَ
إِلَيْهَا وَقَبَّلَهَا وَأَجْلَسَهَا فِي مَجْلِسِهِ - For this reason, whenever she entered he used to stand up, kiss her, and let her sit down in his place.

A When the **perfect of كَانَ** or (in some negative sentences) its jussive after لَمْ (see page 127) **precede another perfect**, they imply for the latter the sense of a **pluperfect**:

كُنْتُ نَجَوْتُ بِجِلْدِي - وَلَمَّا كُنْتُ
خَسِرْتُ مَكَانِي عِنْدَ الْمَلِكِ - I had escaped with my skin.... and I had not lost my position with the king.

²⁴ On the agreement of كَانَ preceding a temporal clause introduced by إِذَا, see vol. III; on its use preceding an imperfect in adverbial circumstantial clauses, see also vol. III.

لَوْلَا تِلْكَ الْحِكْمَةُ كُنْتُ فَشَلْتُ فِي
أَوَّلَى الْمَرَّاحِلِ

If it hadn't been for this maxim, I would
would have lost my courage on the first
journey.

Usually, however, **the idea of the pluperfect** is emphasized by using the **particle قَدْ**
following the verb كَانَ:

كَانَ قَدْ جَاوَزَ السِّتِينَ

He was [had passed] over sixty.

كَانَتْ أُمُّهُ قَدْ سَمِعَتْ صَوْتَ سَيِّدِنَا

His mother had already heard the school
teacher's voice.

كَانَتْ قَدْ سَمِعَتْ لَفْظَ اسْمِي فِي مَنْزِلِ
رَشِيدٍ

She had heard my name mentioned in
Rashid's house.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ عَمُّهُ أَبُو طَالِبٍ قَدْ دَخَلَ فِي
دِينِ اللَّهِ

His uncle, Abu Talib, had not yet
accepted God's religion.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ قَدْ كَتَبَ إِلَيْهَا مُنْذُ عَهْدٍ بَعِيدٍ

He had not written to her for a long time.

When the emphatic particle **لَ** is prefixed to **قَدْ**, the resulting compound will precede **كَانَ**,
but the resulting meaning is not necessarily that of the pluperfect:

لَقَدْ كَانَ زَيْدٌ إِذَا اخْتَلَفَ مَعَ زُمَلَائِهِ
الْقُرَيْشِيِّينَ رَجَحَ صَوْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ

Whenever Zaid disagreed with his
associates from the Koreish, their
opinion was given priority.

لَقَدْ كَانَ الْحِرْضُ عَلَى الدَّقَّةِ قَائِمًا
بِشُعُورِ النَّاسِ جَمِيعًا

Everyone wanted to be accurate.

B In dependent clauses introduced by **أَنَّ** or **أَنْ** the imperfect or the subjunctive of **كَانَ** may introduce a perfect which is usually preceded by **قَدْ**. The construction is then translated by a **perfect subjunctive**:

وَلَا أَرَالُ أَلْمُسَ صَدْرِي بِيَدِي لِأَعْلَمَ أَيْنَ
مَكَانُ قَلْبِي مِنْ أَضَالِعِي مَخَافَةَ أَنْ
يَكُونَ قَدْ طَارَ سُرُورًا بِتِلْكَ السَّعَادَةِ
I cannot stop touching my breast with
my hand to find where my heart is, for
fear that it may have flown away for joy.
(Sp. *por miedo de que se haya escapado*;
Ger. *es sei weggeflogenen*)

تَرَكْتُ جُوتِنْجَ - خَوْفًا أَنْ تَكُونَ الْحَيَاةُ
الْجَدِيدَةُ الَّتِي - قَدْ نَالَتْ مِنْ نَفْسِكَ
مَنَالَهَا
I left Goettingen-fearing that the new life
which... may have left a deep impression
in your spirit.

وَلَا بُدَّ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدْ أَحَسَّ الْخَطَرَ عَلَى
حَيَاتِهِ مِنْهُمْ
He must have felt that they threatened
his life.

شَقَّ عَلَيْهَا أَنْ تَكُونَ قَدْ ارْتَبَطَتْ
بِسِوَاهُ
It grieved her that she should have
bound herself to someone other than
him.

أَتَظُنُّ - أَنَّكَ تَكُونُ قَدْ انْتَقَمْتَ لِنَفْسِكَ
مِنْهُ إِذَا -
So you think... that you will have taken
revenge on him if...?

C When the **perfect of كَانَ** (or in some negative sentences its jussive after **لَمْ**) **modifies an imperfect**, it imparts to the latter the idea of duration or continuity in the past. It thus becomes equivalent to the imperfect in the Romance languages, *e.g.*, L. *legebat*, Sp. *el leia*, Fr. *il lisait*, Ital. *lui leggeva*.

كَانَ يَجْلِسُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْأُسْتَاذُ - Doctor N. used to sit at it before you did.

كَانَتْ أُمُّهُ تَقْطَعُ عَلَيْهَا اللَّحْمَ His mother used to cut the meat on it.

الَّذِي لَمْ يَكُنْ يَفْرَأُ وَلَا يَكْتُبُ who could neither read nor write.

Frequently, **كَانَ** has no other function than **to express the time in which the action takes place**; in such cases, the imperfect which follows will have its usual

descriptive meaning, but will refer to the time expressed by the perfect tense of **كَانَ**:

كُنْتُ أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَقُولَ لَكَ كَلِمَةً أُخْرَى I wanted to tell you something else.

لَمْ أَكُنْ أَرْجُو عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَجْرًا I was not expecting any reward for this.

كُنْتُ أَرْجُو أَنْ أَعِيشَ بِجَانِبِكَ I hoped to spend my life by your side.

كُنْتُ أَحْسِبُكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ I thought you better than that.

هُوَ يَذْكُرُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ - He remembers that he was able to....

كَانَ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ It was necessary to....

كَانَ الْعَرَبُ مَا تَفَتُّ تَذْكُرُ زَمْزَمَ - The Arabs had not forgotten Zemzem....

تَتَمَنَّى لَوْ أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ لَا تَزَالُ بَاقِيَةً They wished that it would still be there.

The temporal meaning introduced by **كَانَ** can be emphasized by a preceding **قَدْ**:

قَدْ كُنْتُ أَحْسِبُ أَنَّكَ حَفِظْتَ الْقُرْآنَ I thought you had memorized the Koran.

فَقَدْ كَانَ يَعْرِفُ الْأُسْرَةَ مِنْذُ عَشْرِينَ سَنَةً for he had known the family for twenty years.

وَلَكِنَّ الشَّعْبَ كَانَتْ لَا تَزَالُ فِي الشُّرَابِ but the people continued to be backward.

(For the emphatic particle **لَ** prefixed to **قَدْ**, see page 69.)

The imperfect after كَانَ can be modified by the particle سَ:

مَعَ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا سَيَقْتُلُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
مَنْ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ قَتْلَهُ

but they would continue killing as many Muslims as they could.

D كَانَ does not have to be repeated when it modifies two or more correlative verbs:

كَانَ الْفَرَاغَةُ يَطْلُبُونَ الْعِلْمَ
وَيَتَفَاخَرُونَ بِهِ

The Pharaohs sought knowledge and were proud of it.

كَانَتِ الْعَرَبُ مَا تَفْتَأُ تَذْكُرُ زَمْزَمَ -
وَتَتَمَنَّى لَوْ

The Arabs had not forgotten Zemzem... and wished that....

§ 23 THE PARTICLES سَوْفَ and سَ

The **future meaning** of the Arabic imperfect can be strongly emphasized with حُرُوفُ الْإِسْتِقْبَالِ, "the particles of the future."

A سَ is **prefixed to the imperfect indicative** and is used **only in affirmative** statements:

سَأَجَرِّبُ فَضْلَ الْكِتَابِ فِي نُزْهَةٍ أُخْرَى

I shall test the merit of the book at another time.

فَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَاذَا سَيَكُونُ شَأْنِي بَعْدَ غَدٍ

for I do not know what will become of me after tomorrow.

كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا وَكَذَلِكَ سَيَكُونُونَ

They have always been that way and always will be.

وَالَّذِي أَحِبُّ الآنَ سَأَحِبُّهُ إِلَى نِهَآيَةِ الْحَيَاةِ

and the one I love now I shall love till the end of my life.

(قَرِيبٌ) مِنْ هَذَا الْعَالَمِ الْمَجْهُولِ الَّذِي (near) to this unknown world that we
جِئْنَا مِنْهُ وَسَنَعُودُ إِلَيْهِ come from and to which we shall return.

B سَوْفَ immediately precedes the imperfect indicative and is used mainly for affirmative statements:

وَلَكِنْ سَوْفَ تَتَغَلَّبُ الرَّحْمَةُ عَلَى الْقَسَاوَةِ but mercy shall vanquish cruelty.

سَوْفَ أَعُودُ إِلَى هَذَا الْعَالَمِ I shall return to this world.

سَوْفَ أَتَّبِعُ الطَّرِيقَ إِلَى حَيْثُ لَا أَعْلَمُ I shall follow the road to I know not where.

Some authors, however, also use سَوْفَ for negative statements; in such cases, the negative adverb لَا is placed between particle and imperfect:

أَنْ سَوْفَ لَا أَتَحَرَّكَ مِنْ بَغْدَادَ حَتَّى يَجِئَنِي الْإِذْنُ بِالسَّفَرِ إِلَى نَجْدٍ that I would not move from Bagdad until permission arrived to travel to Nejed.

أَنَّ السُّورِيِّينَ - سَوْفَ لَا يَرْضَوْنَ بِأَنْ - that the Syrians... will not be satisfied with....

سَوْفَ لَا تَكُونُ فِي مُسْتَقْبَلِ حَيَاتِكَ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ شُرْطِيٍّ You never will be anything more than a policeman.

وَسَوْفَ لَا يَسْتَعْرِبُ أَيْضًا أَنْ - Nor will he be surprised....

سَوْفَ can be preceded by the emphatic particle لَ²⁵:

وَلَسَوْفَ يُحَارِبُ هِتْلَرُ عِشْرِينَ عَامًا and Hitler will certainly fight for twenty years.

²⁵ This emphatic particle according to Arab grammarians, loses its vowel when preceded by وَ or فَ. (See, e.g., Munjid under لَ.) However, compare with the vocalization of similar examples in Wright II, p. 18 B.

فَلَسَوْفَ نُقَدِّمُ لَهَا وَلِيْمَةً لَا تَنْسَاهَا We shall give her a banquet that she will never forget.

C When two or more imperfects follow *سَوْفَ* or *سَيَ* in a correlative construction, **the particle does not have to be repeated**:

سَأَبْحَثُ عَنِ الْأَمْرِ وَأُرْسِلُ نُسْخَةً إِلَيْكَ I shall look into the matter and send a copy to you.

سَوْفَ تَمُرُّ نَسِيمَاتٌ لَطِيفَةٌ وَتَحْمِلُ
بُذُورَكُمْ إِلَى الشَّمْسِ Gentle breezes will blow and carry your seeds toward the sun.

§ 24 THE MOODS

Arabic has never developed a full system of verbal moods. The ones existing: **indicative, subjunctive, jussive** (or *apocopatus*), and **energetic** are restricted to the imperfect and are, in fact, **modal variations of that tense's basic form represented by the indicative**.

The fact that Arabic has never possessed a distinction of moods for the perfect shows that their diversity in the imperfect was not originally based on a need for different ways to express a verbal action.

Each of the various moods of the imperfect (with exception of the jussive in some conditional constructions) can be used only if a special word governing the particular mood in question precedes the verb.

In general, we may say that the different moods of the imperfect indicate **the speaker's psychological approach to the description of the verbal action**, either (a) the speaker perceives or states the fact as being true, real, or certain (using the **indicative**); or (b) he states the fact, action, or situation as subordinated to another action, fact or situation (using the **subjunctive**); or (c) he states the fact as being conditional to the realization of another main action (using the **jussive**).

The jussive is sometimes called *apocopatus* due to its lacking the endings characteristic of the indicative. It also has an emphatic function, hence its name (L. *jubere, jussum*: to command).

Another mood of the imperfect is the **energetic**, which functions only as an indirect command.

In considering the indicative, subjunctive, and jussive it must be noted, however, that **there are many instances in which the use of a mood depends on the preceding word, with all the above-mentioned psychological implications**

neutralized, e.g., the indicative after **سَوْفَ** (see page 75), the subjunctive after **لَنْ** (see page 126), and the jussive after **لَمْ** (see page 127).

§ 25 THE SUBJUNCTIVE

The **subjunctive** occurs only in some subordinate clauses immediately following certain **subordinating particles**. The action in such cases is usually presented as something intended, wanted, or striven after. Thus the verbal action, as presented by the subjunctive, is future in relation to the action of the main verb.

The **subjunctive** is used after:

(a) **أَنَّ**, "that"; **أَلَّا**, "that not" (see vol. III):

مَاذَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ أَصْنَعَ؟ What do you want me to do?

مَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ يُتَابِعُوا مُحَمَّدًا؟ What prevented them from following Mohammed?

خَيْرٌ أَلَّا نُحَاوِلَ الْإِجَابَةَ It is better not to try to answer.

(b) **لِي**, "that," "so that," "in order to", **لِيَلَّا**, "in order not to," "lest" (see vol. III):

فَارَقَهُمْ لِيُعِدُّوا الدُّرُوسَ He left them so that they might prepare the lessons.

مَدَّتْ يَدَهَا لِتُصَافِحَنِي She stretched out her hand to greet me.

إِنَّ الْمَلِكَ إِذَا أَرَقَّ طَلَبَهَا لِيَقْرَأَ لَهُ When the king cannot sleep, he calls her in to read to him.

لَا تُدِينُوا لِيَلَّا تُدَانُوا Judge not lest ye be judged

(c) **حَتَّى**, "till," "until," "so that" (see vol. III):

كَذَلِكَ كَانَ يُطْعَمُ الْحَاجَّ جَمِيعًا حَتَّى
يَصْذُرُوا عَنْ مَكَّةَ Thus he used to feed the pilgrims until they left Mecca.

حَتَّى أَسْتَطِيعَ أَنْ - so that I can....

(d) لِكَيْ, "so that," "in order that"; كَيْلَا, "that not," "lest" (see vol. III):

أَوْصِدِي النَّافِذَةَ كَيْلَا تُطْفِئَ الرِّيحُ
السَّرَاجَ Close the window lest the wind put out
the lamp.

نَعَمْ كَيْ تُخْبِرَهَا أَنْ - Yes, so that she would let her know....

إِبْعَثْهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لِكَيْ يَأْخُذُوا مَكَانَكَ فِي
الْحَقْلِ Sent them to us to take your place in
the field.

(e) فَ, "and (then)," only when a subordination is intended, *i.e.*, "so that" (see vol. III):

وَلَيْتَ جَمِيعَ آلامِهِمْ تَنْتَقِلُ مِنْ أَمْعَائِهِمْ
إِلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَيَسْتَرِيحُوا! If only their pains would move from their
stomachs to their hearts so that they
could find some rest!

لَعَلَّ سَمَكَةً مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَسْمَاكِ يَزْدَرِدُهُ
فَيَفْظَرُ فِي بَطْنِهَا بِهَذَا الْخَاتَمِ so that one of those fish might swallow
him so that he might seize the ring in its
stomach.

(f) the negative particle, لَنْ (see page 126):

أَنْتِي لَنْ أَجِدَ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا that I would not be able to meet him
again.

لَنْ أُحَدِّثَكَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ هَذَا I will not tell you anything about that.

(g) أَوْ when it means "if not," "otherwise":

وَدَعَا أَهْلَهَا إِلَى الدُّخُولِ فِي الْيَهُودِيَّةِ
أَوْ يُقْتَلُوا and asked its people to adopt Judaism,
otherwise they would be killed.

With correlative subordinate clauses, **the subordinating particle does not have to be repeated** (see vol. III):

لِيَتَّخِلُوا دِيَانَاتِهِمُ السَّابِقَةَ وَيَدْخُلُوا فِيهِ so that they might abandon their old religions and adopt this one.

أَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ آكُلَ فِيهِ وَأَعُودَ I could eat there and come back.

but **it can be**, as in the following (see vol. III):

وَلَكَ أَنْ تُصَدِّقَ أَوْ أَنْ لَا تُصَدِّقَ It is up to you whether to believe it or not.

§ 26 THE JUSSIVE

The Arabic jussive has two different functions:

A **Emphasis** (jussive *sensu stricto*)

(a) as a **positive command** or expression of a wish, usually introduced by the particle **لِ**:

لِنَذْهَبْ مِنْ هُنَا Let us leave here.

لِيُبَارِكُكُمَا اللَّهُ May God bless you both!

لِنَمْشِ إِلَى الشَّرْقِ الْأَوْسَطِ Let us go to the Middle East.

لِيَكُنْ هَذَا يَا رَبِّ! So be it, Lord!

Frequently, **فَ** or **وَ** is prefixed to **لِ**, in which case the particle loses its vowel²⁶:

فَلِنَذْهَبْ إِلَى الْجَحِيمِ! Go to Hell!

وَلِيَعُدْ إِلَيْكَ عَقْلُكَ Come to your senses!

فَلْيَكُنْ مَا تُرِيدُ Let it be as you wish!

فَلَا تَقْيِدْ بِجُمَلِهِ وَعِبَارَتِهِ Let me be guided by its sentences and phrases.

²⁶ See Munjid under **لِ**.

- فَلْنُسَلِّمْ لِلَّهِ! Let us accept the will of God!
- وَلْيَكُنْ مِنْ يَشَاءُ Let him be what he will.
- أَوَّلًا فَلْيَأْتُوا بِالْقِطَّيْنِ First let them bring the two cats

(b) in **negative commands**—prohibitions—with the negative particle **لَا** (see page 116):

- لَا تَنْسَ أَنَّهُمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ طِينِ الْأَرْضِ Do not forget that they have been created from the clay of the earth.
- لَا تَكُنْ مُتَسَرِّعًا Don't be hasty!

B As a Dependent (non-emphatic) Form

(a) after the negative particle **لَمْ** as a negative form of a statement about the past (see page 127):

- لَمْ أَكُنْ قَاسِيًا مَعَهَا I was not hard on her.
- كُنْتُ أَنْتَظِرُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَنِي كِتَابٌ بِالْأَمْسِ I was expecting a letter to come yesterday, but it didn't.
- فَلَمْ يَأْتِيَنِي

(b) after the negative particle **لَمَّا** with the meaning of "not yet" (see vol. III):

- وَلَمَّا يَكُنِ الدِّينُ قَدْ كَمَلَ وَلَمَّا يَكُنْ قَدْ نَزَلَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا الْقَلِيلُ The religion was not yet perfect, and only a little of the Koran had been revealed.
- إِنَّهُمْ قَدْ شَبَّهُوهُ بِمُوسَى وَلَمَّا يَهْيَلُوا عَلَيْهِ الثَّرَابُ They are comparing him with Moses, and they have not buried him yet.

(c) in **both main and subordinate clauses** in certain **conditional constructions** (see vol. III):

- وَإِنْ سَأَلَ أَحَدَ سُكَّانِهَا عَنْ تَأْرِخِ الشَّيْخِ عَبَّاسٍ يُجِبُهُ - and should he ask a villager about the story of Sheikh Abbas, he would answer....

(d) in **relative constructions** to emphasize generalizations (see vol. III):

مَنْ يَرِ عِهْرَهَا يَكْرَهُ جَمَالَهَا	Whoever sees its prostitution will loathe its beauty.
مَنْ يَبْقَ مِنْهُمْ هَاهُنَا يَكُنْ مَحْرُومًا وَمَرْزُومًا	Whoever remains here shall be rejected and cast out.

(e) when **coordinated to an imperative** (see vol. III):

سَلِّهِ يُنْبِئُكَ	Ask him; he will tell you
أَنْطِقْ بِهَذِهِ الْعِبَارَةِ مَرَّةً ثَانِيَةً تَرِ نَفْسَكَ	Say that word again and you will see yourself....

§ 27 THE ENERGETIC

A The energetic form²⁷ preceded by the particle **لَ** is used:

(a) for special **emphasis**:

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ رُفِعَ كَمَا رُفِعَ عِيسَى وَلَيَرْجِعَنَّ	The Messenger of God was taken up [to heaven] as Jesus was, but He will most certainly return!
وَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ بِجُنُودٍ لَا قِبَلَ لَكُمْ بِهَا	We shall oppose you with such a large army you'll never be able to defeat it.
فَلَأَفْعَلَنَّ بِهِ مَا فَعَلْتُ بِصَاحِبِهِ	I will indeed do to him what I did to his friend.

(b) in the **main clause after a conditional clause** (see vol. III):

لَئِنْ ظَهَرَ أَنَّهُ لَا يَحْفَظُ الْقُرْآنَ لِأَحْلِقَنَّ لِخَيْتِي هَذِهِ	and if it should become evident that he does not know the Koran by heart, I shall shave off this beard of mine.
--	---

²⁷ In the majority of cases, it is not possible to ascertain which of the two forms of the energetic (يَفْعَلَنَّ or يَفْعَلُنَّ) is meant. Taha Husain gives the form يَفْعَلَنَّ in the first volume of his edition of al-Ayyam.

(c) in certain **subordinated constructions** for an indirect emphatic statement (see vol. III):

فَرَضَ الصَّبِيُّ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ لِيُصَلِّيَنَّ
الْحَمْسَ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ مَرَّتَيْنِ لِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَرَّةً لِأَخِيهِ وَلِيُصُومَنَّ مِنَ السَّنَةِ
شَهْرَيْنِ - وَلِيَكْتُمَنَّ ذَلِكَ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ
جَمِيعًا

The boy imposed upon himself the task of praying the five [*salawat*] twice every day, once for himself and once for his brother, of fasting two months a year . . . and hiding this from his whole family.

أَخَذَ عَلَيْهِ عَهْدًا مِثْلَهُ لِيَسْمَعََنَّ لِلصَّبِيِّ
فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ سِتَّةَ أَجْزَاءٍ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ

He had him make the same promise, that he would listen to the boy recite six parts of the Koran daily.

B The energetic is used **without** لَ with **direct** or **indirect commands**, or with prohibitions introduced by the negative particle لَا:

لَا أَسْمَعَنَّ أَحَدًا يَقُولُ - Don't let me hear anyone say that...!

لِنَفْعَلَنَّ إِرَادَةَ خَلِيلٍ Let us do Khalil's will.

لَا تَعْجَبَنَّ مِنْ حَالِكِ كَيْفَ تُوَي - Do not be surprised that the damned died....

ثُمَّ لَا يَخْطُرَنَّ لَكَ بَبَالٍ أَنْ تَعُودَ إِلَى هَذِهِ الْمَعَارَةِ then don't think about coming back to this cave.

Note that the energetic may also be used with the imperative:

إِعْجَبَنَّ مِنْ سَالِمٍ كَيْفَ نَجَا be surprised that the healthy survived.

§ 28 AGREEMENT IN A VERBAL SENTENCE

A Sentence with Normal Word Order

1 Agreement in number

In a verbal sentence with **normal word order**, viz., verbal predicate-subject, or

when the subject has not been mentioned, the verb is always singular; that is to say, **there is no agreement in number**²⁸:

كَمَا يَقُولُ الْفُقَهَاءُ as the legists say.

قَالَ النَّاسُ people said.

قَدْ اِخْتَلَفَ الْمُؤَرِّخُونَ فِي الْعَامِ الَّذِي
وُلِدَ مُحَمَّدٌ فِيهِ Historians disagree about the year in
which Mohammed was born.

مَضَى أَسْبُوعَانِ عَلَى تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ Two weeks had passed since that night.

Note that the verb can be used in the plural when the subject is an indefinite plural (e.g., "they," "people") not expressed by a noun (see page 50):

يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ الْحُبَّ أَعْمَى People say that love is blind

فِي عَصْرِ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُ عَصْرَ النُّورِ
وَالْعِلْمِ in an age which people allege [to be] one
of enlightenment and knowledge.

2 Agreement in gender

(a) The **verb may take the gender of the following subject** regardless of the subject's position within the sentence:

كَانَتْ تَنْتَظِرُنِي فِي ذَلِكَ مُفَاجَأَةً أُخْرَى There another surprise was waiting for
me.

اِنْطَلَقَتِ السَّيَّارَتَانِ The two cars drove off.

فَلَمْ تَشَأِ الْمَرْأَتَانِ مُتَابَعَةَ الْحَدِيثِ The two women were loath to continue
their conversation.

مَرَّتْ عَلَى تِلْكَ الْحَادِثَةِ أَعْوَامٌ طَوَالٌ Long years had passed since that event.

²⁸ Agreement in number with a following subject, which Noeldeke says is becoming "more and more frequent" (*Zur Grammatik*, p. 78), seems to have completely disappeared. (See also Mainz, *Zur Grammatik*, p. 23.)

The **broken plurals** are usually considered **masculine** when they refer to persons of **masculine gender**;

مَا يُكَابِدُهُ الْأَسَاتِذَةُ مِنَ الْعَنَاءِ the efforts that teachers endure.

كَانَ لَهُ أَبْنَاءٌ كَثِيرُونَ He had numerous sons.

and **feminine** when they refer to persons of **feminine gender** or to inanimate things:

مَرَّتْ عَلَى تِلْكَ الْحَادِثَةِ أَعْوَامٌ طَوَالٌ Long years had passed since that event.

حَلَّتِ الْحُقُولُ وَالْأُودِيَةُ The fields and valleys were empty.

نَاحَتْ نِسَاءُ قُرَيْشٍ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى قَتْلَاهَا شَهْرًا كَامِلًا After that, the women of the Koreish mourned its dead a full month.

جَعَلَتْ نِسَاءُ قُرَيْشٍ يَمْشِينَ خِلَالَ صُفُوفِهَا The women of the Koreish started to walk through its ranks.

(For agreement with نَاسٌ, "men," "people," see page 92.)

(b) But there are **frequent cases** in which **the verb will be masculine regardless of the gender of the subject** and of its position within the sentence, as long as it is mentioned after the verb:

وَكَانَ لِلْيَهُودِ فِي بِلَادِ الْعَرَبِ جَالِيَاتٌ كَثِيرَةٌ The Jews in the Arabic countries had many emigrant settlements.

قَدْ كَانَ يَسْكُنُ الْعِرَاقَ أُمَمٌ مُخْتَلِفَةٌ Different peoples had settled in Iraq.

قُتِلَ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ فِي تِلْكَ الْحُرُوبِ جَمَاعَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ A large number of the Companions were killed in these wars.

لَوْلَاهُ لَضَاعَ أَسْمَاءُ كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْكُتُبِ
النَّفِيسَةِ

If it had not been for him, the titles of many precious books would have been lost.

يَكْفِيهِ مِنَ النَّوْمِ سَاعَتَانِ

Two hours of sleep are enough for him.

كَانَ لِي امْرَأَةً

I had a wife.

جَاءَ فِي صُحْبَتِهَا نِسْوَةٌ أَرْبَعُ

Four women arrived accompanying her.

نَشَرَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْجَوَارِي نَوْعًا مِنَ الثَّقَافَةِ-

These slave girls spread a type of culture which....

Note that this use of the masculine is especially frequent with the word نِسَاءُ, "women":

كَانَ النِّسَاءُ يَتَحَدَّثْنَ إِلَيْهِمْ

The women used to talk to them.

لَا مِنَ الْأَدَبِ أَنْ يَجْلِسَ النِّسَاءُ مَعَ
الرِّجَالِ

It is not polite for women to sit down with men.

حَتَّى يَتَعَلَّمُ نِسَاؤُهَا

until its women learn.

كَانَ النِّسَاءُ يَتَلَقَّيْنَ هَذِهِ الْحُجُبَ
مُطْمَئِنِّاتًا إِلَيْهَا

The women used to take these amulets, placing great confidence in them.

وَلَقَدْ مَشَى نِسَاءٌ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمًا إِلَيْهَا
فَقُلْنَ -

Some of the women came to her one day and said....

(c) Sometimes a **broken plural** will be considered **feminine** even if it refers to **persons of the masculine gender**:

قَالَتِ الْحُكَمَاءُ -

The wise men have said....

كَانَتِ الشُّعْرَاءُ تَلْبَسُ -

The poets used to wear....

(d) However, **the actual meaning usually takes precedence over the grammatical form** for the gender:

اجْتَمَعَتْ بَنُو هَاشِمٍ وَزُهْرَةَ وَتَيْمٍ فِي
دَارِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ جُدْعَانَ فَصَنَعَ لَهُمْ
طَعَامًا [The tribes, *fem.*] The Banu Hashim,
Banu Zuhra and Banu Taim met in the
house of 'Abdallah ibn Jud'an, and he
prepared them some food.

تَجَاوَبُ أَصْدِقَاؤُهَا - Her [women] friends replied....

(For agreement with a genitive construction, see page 94), and with مِنْ in a partitive and determinative meaning, see page 95.)

B Sentence with Inverted Word Order

1 Agreement in gender

In a verbal sentence with **inverted word order**-subject-verbal predicate-or when the subject has already been mentioned, the verb **will always agree in gender** with its subject (see examples in the following paragraphs).

2 Agreement in number

Agreement **in number**, however, can be conditioned either by the grammatical form or by the identity of the subject—whether persons or things; therefore:

(a) With a subject which is **a masculine sound plural**, the verb is **always masculine plural**:

هُمَا الْأَكَادِيُّونَ وَالشُّومَرِيُّونَ جَاءُوا
وَادِي الْفُرَاتِ - They are the Accadians and Sumerians;
they had come to the Euphrates valley....

أَنَّ الْأُمَوِيِّينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَمَّا انْتَقَلُوا إِلَى
الْأَنْدَلُسِ - that the Umayyads themselves, when
they migrated to al-Andalus....

(الْمُتَظَاهِرُونَ) ثُمَّ انْدَفَعُوا إِلَى - Then they (the demonstrators) rushed
off toward....

(b) With a subject which is **feminine sound plural**, the verb is **feminine plural** only when the subject refers to **persons**:

(الْفَلَّاحَاتُ) وَقَدْ حَمَلْنَ عَلَى رُؤُوسِهِنَّ
مَا جَمَعْنَهُ مِنْ فَوَاكِهَ (The peasant women) carrying on their
heads the fruits they had gathered.

أَصْبَحَتْ بَنَاتُ هَؤُلَاءِ الْعُلَمَاءِ يَمَلَأْنَ
الْأَسْمَاعَ حُطْبًا وَشِعْرًا فِي الرَّادِيُو

On the radio the daughters of these
ulemas fill the people's ears with
speeches and poetry.

However, if the feminine sound plural subject **refers to animals** or **inanimate things**, the verb will be **feminine singular**:

لِأَنَّ الْمُرَاصِلَاتِ التِّلِفُونِيَّةَ بَيْنَ مِصْرَ
وَالْمَنْصُورَةِ قَدْ قُطِعَتْ كَذَلِكَ

for telephone communications between
Cairo and Al-Mansur had also been cut.

أَنَّ الْمُعْجَزَاتِ حَمَلَتْ أَحَدًا مِنْهُمْ عَلَى
أَنْ يُؤْمِنَ

that miracles made any of them believe.

ضَحَكَاتُ تَمَلَأُ الْغُرْفَةَ

Laughter filled the room.

أَنَّ الْعَادَاتِ الْفَرَسِيَّةَ تَغْلَعَتْ فِي
النَّاسِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْعَصْرِ

that Persian customs spread widely
among the people during that period.

آيَاتُ تَدُلُّ عَلَى الْجَبْرِ وَآيَاتُ تَدُلُّ عَلَى
الْإِخْتِيَارِ

Some [Koranic] verses prove
determinism and others, free will.

(c) If the subject is expressed by a pronoun—personal, demonstrative, or relative—there will **always be agreement in number**:

هُمْ قَدْ أَقْرَأُونِي ذَلِكَ فِي كُتُبِهِمْ

They let me read that in their books.

وَمِنْهَا الْمَسْحُورُونَ الَّذِينَ يَعِيشُونَ
تَحْتَ الْمَاءِ

To them belong the enchanted creatures
who live under water.

هَؤُلَاءِ الْبَشَرُ الَّذِينَ يَجِيئُونَ مِنْ
الْأَبَدِيَّةِ وَيَعُودُونَ إِلَيْهَا قَبْلَ أَنْ يَذُوقُوا
طَعْمَ الْحَيَاةِ الْحَقِيقَةِ -

Those who come forth out of the infinite
and return thereto before they have
tasted true life....

هَؤُلَاءِ وَأُولَئِكَ يَتَنَازَعُونَ أَسْبَابَ الْحَيَاةِ Both [these and those] struggle over the causes of life.

الْيَوْمَ أَصْبَحْتُ بَيْنَ اللَّوَاتِي يَمْشِينَ مَمْدُودَاتِ الْأَعْنَاقِ Today I am among those who walk with pride.

وَصَلَ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَى الْمَقْبَرَةِ وَأَوْدَعُوا الثَّابُوتَ حَفْرَةً Those reached the cemetery and deposited the casket in a grave.

(d) **With singular collective nouns** which refer to **persons** and also with those of a more general meaning, e.g., "all," "group," and the like, there **may be agreement of number** when they are applied to human beings; the verb, therefore, may be either masculine or feminine singular, according to the gender of the noun:

لَأَنَّ الشَّعْبَ - لَمْ يَكُنْ مَوْجُودًا for the people... did not exist.

لَأَنَّ الشَّعْبَ الَّذِي يَقْرَأُهُ يَجِدُ - because the people who read it find....

تَفَرَّقَ فِي جَوَانِبِهَا الرِّفَاقُ جَمَاعَاتٍ شُغِلَتْ كُلُّ مِنْهَا بِشَأْنِهَا The friends went to the corners in groups, each group occupied with its own problems.

نَهَضَتِ الْجَمَاعَةُ كُلُّهَا مِنَ الْفِرَاشِ وَأَنِيَابَتْ فِي الْبَيْتِ صَائِحَةً لَاعِبَةً They all got up from their beds and ran around the house, shouting and playing.

كُلُّهُمْ يُشِيرُ إِلَى الْمَاءِ بِأَصْبَعِهِ all pointing toward the water with their fingers.

جُمْهُورٌ آجَرٌ لَا يَقِلُّ عَنِ الْمِئَةِ - Another crowd of no less than a hundred....

(e) If they refer to **ethnic groups**, they are frequently **feminine** singular:

كَانَتِ الْعَرَبُ إِذَا قَصَدَتِ الْحَجَّ أَقَامَتْ بِهَذِهِ السُّوقِ - When the Arabs went on a pilgrimage, they stayed in this marketplace....

الْعَرَبُ لَا تَعْرِفُ الرَّذَقَةَ كَثِيرًا There was not much atheism among the Arabs.

خَافَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَذَلَّتْ The Jews were afraid and surrendered.

فَالرُّومَانُ تَفَخَّرُوا بِعِظَمِ سُلْطَانِهَا - for the Romans pride themselves on the greatness of their might.... the Indians
وَالْهِنْدُ تَفَخَّرُوا - وَالصِّينُ تُزْهِيْ - on.... and the Chinese on....

(f) **Usually**, however, **the verb agrees logically with the idea expressed** by the collective noun and is therefore in the plural. Its gender depends on that of the members of the group:

الْعَرَبُ كَانُوا أَهْلَ فَصَاحَةٍ لِّسَانِيَّةٍ The Arabs were eloquent people.

الْبَشَرُ يُحِبُّونَ الشَّرْزَةَ People like to chat.

(الْعَرَبُ) كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ذَلِكَ قَبْلَ الْإِسْلَامِ They (the Arabs) used to do this before Islam.

أَنَّ نَفَرًا مِنْ نَصَارَى الْحَبَشَةِ رَأَوْهُ مَعَهَا that some of the Ethiopian Christians saw him with her.

أَنَّ الْبَعْضَ يَقُولُونَ - that some people say....

جَعَلَ الْبَعْضُ يُرْقِصُونَ Some started dancing.

أَنَّ الْإِنْكِلِيزَ يَفْعَلُونَ لَا هَذَا وَلَا ذَاكَ that the British would not do either one.

الْأَلَمَانُ يَمْتَارُونَ بِأَبْحَاثِهِمُ الْفَلَسْفِيَّةَ الْعَوِيصَةَ The Germans are characterized by their abstruse philosophical studies.

رَأَيْتُ جَمَاعَةً يُحِيطُونَ بِصَاحِبِي الشَّيْخِ I saw a group surrounding my friend, the sheikh.

كَانَ الْجَمِيعُ - يَنْتَظِرُونَ - They were all waiting....

صَمَتَ الْقَوْمُ جَمِيعًا وَقَدْ شَعَرُوا - They all fell silent; they felt that....

Note the agreement in the following examples:

كَانَتِ الْعَرَبُ إِذَا قَصَدَتِ الْحَجَّ أَقَامَتْ
بِهَذِهِ السُّوقِ - يَبِيعُونَ وَيَشْتَرُونَ - When the Arabs went on a pilgrimage,
they stayed in this marketplace....

شَدَّتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ فَقَتَلُوهُ - The Jews attacked the Muslim and killed him.

ذَلِكَ أَنَّ الْمُعْتَزِلَةَ رَأَوْا - That is because the Mu'tazila saw....

ثُمَّ اخْتَلَفَتِ الْمُعْتَزِلَةُ فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ - The theologians of the Mu'tazila disagreed with each other....

(g) When the **collective** noun refers to **animals** or **inanimate objects**, the verb will always be **singular**:

رَأَيْتُ دَمْعَهُ يَنْحَدِرُ عَلَى خَدَّيْهِ - I saw tears flowing down his cheeks.

لِي غَنَمٌ تَرْعَى الْكَلَاءَ - I have sheep that are grazing.

الَسَّمَكَ يُشْتَرَى مَقْلَبًا مِنَ الدُّكَانِ - fish brought fried from the store.

أَنَّ قَصَبَ هَذَا السِّيَاحِ كَانَ أَطْوَلَ مِنْ قَامَتِهِ - that the canes of this hedge were taller than he.

(h) When the subject of the verb is a **broken plural** which refers to persons, the verb is usually **plural**:

أَنَّ الْأُدَبَاءَ الْقَدَمَاءَ كَانُوا يَكْتُبُونَ
لِلْأُدَبَاءِ مِثْلِهِمْ

The ancient writers wrote for others like themselves.

ظَلَّ الْجَمَاهِيرُ يَصِيحُونَ -

The crowds kept on shouting....

أَنَّ عُمُومَ الْأَبَاءِ فِي جَمِيعِ طَبَقَاتٍ
يُزَوِّجُونَ -

that the majority of fathers in all social classes give.... in marriage....

حَلَفْنَا الزُّنُوجَ يَحْمِلُونَ حَقَائِبَ الْمَتَاعِ

followed by Negroes carrying the luggage.

كَانَ الْبَرَامِكَةُ عَلَى الْخُصُوصِ يُحِبُّونَ
الْعِلْمَ وَالْعُلَمَاءَ

The Barmecides, especially, science and scientists.

although the feminine singular is permitted:

سَكَتَتِ الْجَمَاهِيرُ تَنْتَظِرُ رَفْعَ السَّارِ

The crowds became silent waiting for curtain to rise.

كَانَتِ الشُّعْرَاءُ تَلْبُسُ -

The poets used to wear....

Note that this feminine agreement is especially frequent with نَاسٌ, "men":

قَدْ أَحَاطَتْ بِي نَاسٌ فِي ثِيَابٍ غَرِيبَةٍ

People in strange clothes surrounded me.

النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِي لَا تَفْهَمُ مَا أُرِيدُ

The people around me do not understand what I want.

لَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ النَّاسَ بِأُذُنِي تَقُولُ ذَلِكَ

With my own ears I heard people saying that.

إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَبْلَ وُرُودِ الشَّرَائِعِ كَانَتْ
تَتَحَاكَمُ إِلَى الْعَقْلِ وَتَتَجَادَلُ بِالْعَقْلِ

Before the appearance of laws, mankind judged and disputed according to common sense.

(i) When the **broken plural** refers to **animals** or **inanimate things**, a subsequent verb is **feminine singular**:

مَبَادِي زَالَتْ وَلَمْ تُعَوَّضْ

Principles disappeared and were not replaced.

وَالْأَشْجَارُ تَتَقَفَّضُ عَنْ أَوْرَاقِهَا اللَّامِعَةِ
الْخَضْرَاءِ

and trees lose their bright green leaves.

لَعَلَّ الْأَجُورَ اِرْتَفَعَتْ فِي هَذَا الْبَلَدِ بَعْدَ
صُذُورِ الْكِتَابِ

Perhaps prices have gone up in this country since the publication of the book.

وَأَنَّ الْعَوَاطِفَ تَضْطَرُّ فِيهِ اضْطِرَامًا

and that feelings became restless then.

Some **broken plurals** (e.g., that of "angels") which, strictly speaking, **do not belong to the category** either of persons or animals, may be **personified** or **not**:

أَمَلَايَكَةُ نَزَلُوا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ؟

Are they angels who have come down from heaven?

لَأَنَّ الْمَلَايِكَةَ لَا تَبْكِي

for angels do not cry.

رَأَيْتُ مَلَايِكَةَ السَّعَادَةِ تُحَارِبُ أَبَالِسَةَ
الشَّقَاءِ

I saw the angels of happiness fighting the devils of misery.

(j) Other words referring to **animals** or **inanimate objects** may be used as **personifications** in the same way:

تَعْمُرُ كَائِنَاتٌ غَرِيبَةً - مِنْهَا التَّمَّاسِيخُ
الَّتِي تَزْدَرِي النَّاسَ اِرْذَرَادًا وَمِنْهَا
الْمَسْحُورُونَ الَّذِينَ يَعِيشُونَ تَحْتَ
الْمَاءِ -

Some strange beings live there....: among them are crocodiles which can easily swallow people, and the enchanted creatures who live under water....

أَنَّ الْقُرُودَ قَدْ تَوَلَّوْا زِمَامَ الْحُكْمِ فِي
مِصْرَ - وَأَنَّ الْقُرُودَ فِي حَدِيقَةِ
الْحَيَوَانَاتِ قَدْ حَطَّمُوا الْأَقْفَاصَ
وَخَرَجُوا لِيَنْقُذُوا إِخْوَانَهُمْ --

that the apes had seized power in Egypt... and that the apes in the zoo had wrecked their cages and broken out to deliver their brothers....

(k) With **duals**, the subsequent verb **always agrees** in **gender** and **number**:

جَعَلَ هَذَانِ الصَّوْتَانِ يُوقِظَانِ الصَّبِيَّ
كُلَّ يَوْمٍ These two voices started to awaken the
boy every day.

كَأَنَّ عَيْنَيَّ تَرَانِ مَا كَانَتَا عَنْهُ غَافِلَتَيْنِ as if my eyes saw what they had
neglected before.

يَدَايِ حَقًّا لَا تَسْتَطِيعَانِ - My two hands are in fact unable to....

مَا يَنْبَغِي لِهَاتَيْنِ الْعَيْنَيْنِ أَنْ تَبْكِيَا These two eyes must not cry.

C Agreement of the Verb with Phrases as Subjects

In some cases when a **genitive construction** functions as subject, the verb may be brought into agreement with the genitive rather than with the noun in the nominative case²⁹ (see vol. II):

رَأَتْ غَيْرُ قُرَيْشٍ مِنَ الْقَبَائِلِ -- and other tribes beside the Koreish
saw....

(الْقَبَائِلُ) بَعْضُهَا تَقُولُ - وَبَعْضُهُمْ يَقُولُ - Some of them (the tribes) said... and
others said....

This is usually true also with **elatives** (see vol. II):

أَنَّ أَهَمَّ عُنْصُرٍ فِي الْجُنْدِ كَانُوا إِلَى that the most important of the elements
عَهْدِ الْمُعْتَصِمِ هُمْ الْخُرَاسَانِيُّونَ were from Khurasan.

²⁹ Note that the verbs in the same passage may agree with either part, e.g.:

وَعَلَى الْأَرْضِ انْطَلَقَتْ جَمَاعَاتُ الطَّلَبَةِ كَانُوا Down below, groups of students hurried; they
يُغَادِرُونَ الْفَتَاءَ الْجَامِعِيِّ - had left the university courtyard....

أَكْثَرُ أُمَمِ النَّصْرَانِيَّةِ يَقْرَأُونَهَا فِي
اللُّغَاتِ -- The majority of the peoples within
Christendom read them in the
languages....

Note the logical agreement in the following:

إِنَّ أَكْبَرَ مِنْكَ يَتَزَوَّجْنَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ Women older than you get married
every day.

and also with **numerals**:

مِائَةُ رَجُلٍ كَانُوا ضِدَّكَ؟ Were there one hundred men against
you?

خَمْسَةُ أَطْفَالٍ يَتَضَوَّرُونَ جُوعًا five children wincing with hunger.

(For a discussion of nominal and verbal agreement with numerals, see vol. II.)

Note the agreement in number in certain temporal expressions (see vol. II):

لِثَمَانٍ حَلَوْنَ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ The eighth day of Ramadan [at the eight-
days-passed of the month of Ramadan].

Similarly, when a noun general in meaning is **followed by a determinative or partitive مِنْ**, the subsequent verb may agree in number with the substantive introduced by the preposition (see vol. II):

جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنْهُمْ وَوَقَفُوا أَمَامَهُ Three of them came in and stood before
him.

مِائَاتُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مِنْهُمْ يَعِيشُونَ بَعِيدًا عَنْنا Hundreds of millions of them live far
away from us.

ثُمَّ لَاحَتْ بَيْنَهُمْ جَمَاعَةٌ مِنَ الطَّالِبَاتِ Then a group of no more than five girl
students appeared among them.

Note also the verbal agreement in the following:

كَمْ سَالَتْ تَحْتَ نَضْلِهِ مِنْ دِمَاءٍ! How much blood has flowed under its
blade!

§ 29 AGREEMENT OF THE VERB WITH A MULTIPLE SUBJECT

When the **verb precedes** a subject which is a **series of two or more nouns**, the verb usually agrees in **gender with the noun which immediately follows it**:

مَاتَ أَبِي وَأُمِّي قَبْلَ أَنْ أْبْلُغَ السَّابِعَةَ
مِنْ عُمْرِي

My father and mother died before I was for seven years old.

كَانَتْ أُمُّ الصَّبِيِّ وَأَبُوهُ يَجِدَانِ لَذَّةً
فِي -

The boy's mother and father took pleasure in....

فَكَانَتْ الْحَيْرَةُ وَالْقَلَقُ وَالْإِضْطِرَابُ

and there was confusion, anxiety, and disorder.

تَنَارَعَنِي الضَّحْكُ وَالْعَصَبُ وَالْخَوْفُ

Laughter, anger, and fear fought within me.

فِي تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ بَيْنَمَا كَانَتْ رَاحِيلُ
وَابْنَتُهَا مَرْيَمُ وَخَلِيلُ جَالِسِينَ حَوْلَ
مَائِدَةٍ --

at that moment, as Rachel, her daughter Maryam, and Khalil were seated around a table....

تَبِعْتُهُ تَحِيَّةً وَفَاضِلُ

Tahya and Fadil followed him.

كَانَتْ لَيْزَا وَصَدِيقَتُهَا جَالِسَيْنِ عَلَى
انْفِرَادٍ فِي أَحَدِ أَرْكَانِ الْقَاعَةِ

Lisa and her friend sat alone in one corner of the room.

When the series of subjects precedes the verb or has already been mentioned, the series will be considered as equivalent to a **plural of persons** if one or more nouns referring to persons are included; it will be masculine if they have different genders³⁰.

وَمِنْ حَوْلِهِ إِخْوَتُهُ وَأَخَوَاتُهُ يَغِطُّونَ

while around him his brothers and sisters snored.

³⁰ The following example should be considered as having a simple subject with an explanation in parentheses:

كُلُّ هَذَا وَأَمْثَالُهُ يَدُلُّنَا عَلَى أَنَّ -- All this-and similar things-show us that....

أَنَّ إِخْوَتَهُ وَأَخَوَاتِهِ يَسْتَطِيعُونَ مَا لَا
يَسْتَطِيعُ that his brothers and sisters could do
what he could not.

When the series contains only two singular nouns the verb is always in the dual:

الرَّحْمَةُ وَالْقَسَاوَةُ تَتَصَارَعَانِ فِي
الْقَلْبِ الْبَشَرِيِّ Mercy and cruelty wage war in the
hearts of men.

أَنَّ الْحُزْنَ وَالْفَقْرَ يُطَهِّرَانِ الْقَلْبَ
الْبَشَرِيَّ that sadness and poverty purify the
human heart.

(For agreement with a series in which various grammatical persons are involved, see vol. II.)

III NEGATIVE PARTICLES

§ 30 GENERAL REMARKS ON THE NEGATIVE PARTICLES³¹

Arabic has developed into a language notably rich in negative constructions. Any attempt to study their functional or semantic differences will lead to an analysis of the origin of the negative particles and of their development into new syntactical entities.

It is generally accepted by philologists that only the old Semitic **لَا** is to be considered as being originally a negative particle. All others either are compounds of the negative **لَا**, such as **لَمَّا**, **لَمْ**, **لَيْسَ**, and **لَنْ**, or have become negative particles only after their original meaning had become obscure completely or in certain positions as, *e.g.*, with the interrogative particles **إِنْ** and **مَا**.

This diversity in the origins of the negative particles explains their very distinctive uses within different constructions.

In spite of their clear disparity in function, it is very difficult to give specific differences in their meaning That would allow for a more exact translation. And in addition to this difficulty in the appreciation of the exact semantic value of the negative particles, of which scholars have been well aware, we must today take account of stylistic and even conventional preferences.

The negative particles in Arabic, as in European languages, can be used to negate a complete statement or any specific part of it. However, the position of the negative particles within the different types of sentences can sometimes vary considerably from their position in other languages.

³¹ Although it does not deal primarily with negation as used in modern Arabic, H. Wehr's article, "Zur Funktion der arabischer Negation," *ZDMG*, 103, (1953), pp. 27-39, has excellent information on the subject.

A The Nominal Sentence

In a **nominal sentence**, the negative particle usually modifies the whole statement; thus **it is placed at the beginning of the sentence**:

مَا أَنَا بِحَالِمٍ I am not dreaming.

لَا هُوَ بِالْعَلِيزِ وَلَا هُوَ بِالنَّحِيفِ [a voice] it was neither harsh nor tender.

فَلَا هُوَ شِعْرٌ وَلَا هُوَ نَشْرٌ وَلَا هُوَ سَجْعٌ for it is neither poetry nor prose nor rhymed prose.

The nominal sentence may have **inverted word order** if the negative particle refers specifically to the predicate rather than to the subject (see page 29):

مَا فِي ذَلِكَ رَيْبٌ وَلَا شَكٌّ There is absolutely no doubt about it.

فَمَا دُونَ مَزَارِكَ بَابٌ مُوصَدٌ for the door is never closed to you.

مَا فِيهِ غَيْرِي وَغَيْرُهُ There was no one there except him and me.

B The Verbal Sentence

In a **verbal sentence**, the negative particle is **considered to modify primarily the verb**; thus it will **precede the verb directly**:

مَا أَشْكُ فِي ذَلِكَ I have no doubt about it.

مَا كُنْتُ تُحِبُّ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ You loved only yourself.

صَوْتُ مَا عَرَفْتُهُ أُذُنِي a voice unfamiliar to my ear.

لِمَ لَا يَفْهَمُ أَحَدُنَا الْآخَرَ؟ Why don't we understand each other?

وَلَا تَسْتَطِيعُ هَذِهِ الثِّيَابُ الَّتِي -- These clothes which... cannot....

When the normal word order of the verbal sentence is disturbed, the negative particle **will not be at the beginning**, but **will still precede the verb directly**:

وَلَكِنَّ أَحَدًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْرِفُهُ بِهَذَا
الْإِسْمِ but nobody knew him by this name.

إِنَّ الْبَطَلَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ الْحُضُورَ إِلَيْكُمْ The hero cannot appear before you.

أَنَا لَا أَفَكِّرُ أَنَّ -- I do not think that....

هَذَا لَنْ يَكُونَ This will not be.

أَنَا لَا أَسْتَطِيعُ -- I cannot....

When the negative particle precedes the subject directly, it negates the subject specifically:

لَا الْبَحْرُ يَفْتَحُ لِي قَلْبَهُ وَلَا الْجَبَلُ يَبْسُ
لِي كَسَابِقِ عَهْدِي بِهِمَا No longer would the sea open her heart
to me, nor the mountain smile on me as
before.

When the negative particle precedes a verb it denies that the verb's action took place; thus,
when two or more members, depending upon the verbal action, **have to be negated**, the
particle does not have to be repeated:

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ الشَّبَابَ لَا يَخَافُونَ حَتَّى
بَرِيطَانِيَا وَأَمْرِيكَ These young people are not even afraid
of England or America.

وَلَمْ يُشْفِقُوا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيَّ وَعَلَى صِغَارِنَا
الْعَرَاةِ الْجَائِعِينَ but they had no compassion for him, nor
for me, nor for our naked, hungry
children.

كَانَ الْفُرْسُ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِعَرَبِيَّةٍ
وَفُزْرِيَّسَةٍ The Persians did not believe in Arabism
or in Persianism.

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِي تِلْكَ النَّاحِيَةِ مِنَ الْجَبَلِ
طَرِيقٌ حَتَّى لِلْعَرَبَاتِ In that part of the mountains there were
no roads, not even for carts.

The negative particle can negate a whole **correlative series** in a clause subordinated to the verb which it modifies:

لَسْنَا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَبْحَثَ فِي ابْنِ الْمُقَفَّعِ
بَحْثًا تَحْلِيلِيًّا فِي مَوْلِدِهِ وَأَسْرَتِهِ
وَمَنَاصِبِهِ الَّتِي تَوَلَّاهَا وَعَلَاقَتِهِ بِالْوِلَاةِ
وَالْأُمَرَاءِ

We do not intend to study Ibn al-Muqaffa's birth analytically, nor his family, nor the offices he held, nor his relations with governors and emirs.

C Correlatives

When the sentence, nominal or verbal, has **two correlative parts, both of which have to be negated**, the first part usually is included in a negative construction of the sentence, the second merely being introduced by the **correlative compound** وَلَا (see also page 103 above):

مَا فِي ذَلِكَ رَيْبٌ وَلَا شَكٌّ

There is no doubt about it.

وَلَمْ يُصِبِ الْأَرْضَ دَمَارٌ قَلِيلٌ وَلَا كَثِيرٌ

There was neither extensive nor limited destruction to the Earth.

Note that وَلَا can introduce a correlative part also after غَيْرُ used in its negative meaning (see vol. II):

عَسْتُمْ لِلدُّنْيَا وَحْدَهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ نَظَرٍ إِلَى
تَوَابٍ وَلَا عِقَابٍ

You live for this world only without taking any notice of either reward or punishment.

كَشَجَرَةٍ بَغَيْرِ أَزْهَارٍ وَلَا أَثْمَارٍ

as a tree without flowers or fruits.

فِي غَيْرِ ثِقَةٍ وَلَا إِيمَانٍ

without any confidence at all.

The sentence may also be understood **as an affirmative one**, only the **correlative parts introduced by the negative particle** being negated:

إِذَا فَهُوَ يَذْهَبُ إِلَى الْكِتَابِ لَا لِيَقْرَأَ وَلَا
لِيَحْفَظَ

then he goes to school neither to read nor to learn.

- إِنَّمَا الْأَلْفِيَّةُ لِلْأَزْهَرِيِّينَ لَا لِأَبْنَاءِ
الْمَدَارِسِ The *Alfiyya* is for the students of Al-
Azhar, not for those of the schools.
- تِلْكَ فِي اعْتِقَادِنَا نَتِيجَةٌ لَا سَبَبٌ لِهَذَا
التَّعَصُّبِ That, in our opinion, is a result, not a
cause, of this fanaticism.
- يَشْعُرُ كَأَنَّهُ لَا بِشَ ثِيَابًا مِنْ الظِّلِّ لَا مِنْ
الْقَمَاشِ He felt as if he were wearing a garment
shadows, not of cloth.
- شَارَكَهُمْ فِي اللَّعْبِ بِعَقْلِهِ لَا بِيَدِهِ He took part in [their] games with his
mind, but not physically.

There are also common instances of **double negation** in which both the complete sentence and its parts are modified by negative particles. In such instances the correlative parts are negated by the negative adverb (لَا - وَلَا):

- لَيْسَ هُنَاكَ لَا حَيْلٌ وَلَا حَيَالَةٌ There were neither horses nor cavalry
[i.e. nothing at all].
- حَاوَلْتُ أَنْ أُوقِظَ الْوَاحِدَ ثُمَّ الْآخَرَ
بِيَدِي فَمَا اسْتَيْقِظَ لَا هَذَا وَلَا ذَاكَ I tried to awaken one, then the other,
with my hand but to no avail. [But
neither this nor that woke up.]
- فَإِنِّي لَمْ أَتَزَوَّجْ لَا ابْنَةَ مُدِيرِ بَنْكٍ وَلَا
ابْنَةَ وَكِيلٍ وَزَرَءَ For I have not married the daughter of a
bank director nor the daughter of an
undersecretary of state.
- مَا كَانَ بِجَوَارِ النَّهْرِ لَا حَيْلٌ وَلَا بِغَالٍ There were neither horses nor mules
near the river.
- أَنَّ الْإِنْكِلِيزَ لَا يَعْمَلُونَ لَا هَذَا وَلَا ذَاكَ that the British would do neither [neither
this nor that].

من D

A negative particle preceding the partitive **من** has a stronger effect than the simple negation of a noun; it becomes a **negation of the whole species in any of its parts**: "not at all," "absolutely none," "not a single one." This construction

is used even before nouns which do not admit any partitive meaning; the preposition **مِنْ** then has a determinative meaning (vol. II), still with the same emphatic effect:

- لَيْسَ مِنْ فَتَى فِي الْجَيْشِ -- There is not a single boy in the army....
- مَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا مَوْضِعُهَا جَمِيلٌ وَمَا مِنْ مَوْضِعٍ جَمِيلٍ إِلَّا فِيهِ قَرْيَةٌ There is absolutely no village without a beautiful location, nor a beautiful place without a village in it.
- أَنْ لَيْسَ هُنَاكَ مِنْ حَبِيبٍ يُقْبِلُ عَلَيْهَا؟ that there is absolutely no one in love who would approach her?
- أَنَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَيْسَ مِنَ السُّهُولَةِ I know that this is not at all easy.
- مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ فِي هَذَا الْمَنْزِلِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُخَالِفَ أَمْرِي Absolutely no one in this house can contradict my order.
- لَيْسَ مِنَ الْأَدَبِ - وَلَا مِنَ الْأَدَبِ-- for it is not polite..., nor is it polite....
- مَا مِنْ شَكٍّ فِي - There is no doubt about....

E Coordinate Negatives

With two coordinate negative sentences, **the particle used in the first sentence may be repeated in the second:**

- وَلَكِنَّهُ لَمْ يَقُلْ لَهَا شَيْئًا وَلَمْ تَسْأَلْهُ هِيَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ But he did not tell her a thing, nor did she ask him anything.
- سَمِعَ الصَّبِيُّ هَذَا الْكَلَامَ فَلَمْ يُصَدِّقْ وَلَمْ يُكَذِّبْ The boy listened neither believing nor disbelieving.
- لَمْ يَأْبَهُ لَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَلْتَفِتْ إِلَيْهِمْ He did not pay attention to them nor turn around to them.

لَمْ أَجْلِسْ إِلَيْهِ وَلَمْ أَسْمَعْ حَدِيثَهُ I never sat down with him nor even heard him talking.

The **negative particle may be omitted in the second sentence**, if the negation is also evident in the second part, *e.g.*, by the use of the jussive as in the following examples:

أَوَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ وَنَرَأْنِ -- ؟ Haven't we heard and seen that...?

وَقَلَّ مِنَ الشُّعْرَاءِ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْكَبْ أَوْ يَغْزُ and only a few of the poets neither rode nor participated in the raids.

Compare with the following, where the perfect **ظَلَّ** cannot be negated by the particle **لَمْ**:

أَمَّا خَلِيلٌ فَلَمْ يَفْهَمْ وَظَلَّ مَشْدُوهاً But Khalil did not understand and was confused.

Usually, however, the second sentence will be **introduced by the correlative negative compound وَلَا**:

وَمِنْهُمْ هَذَا الشَّيْخُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَكُنْ يَقْرَأُ وَلَا يَكْتُبُ وَلَا يُحْسِنُ قِرَاءَةَ الْفَاتِحَةِ Among them was this sheikh who did not know how to read or write or recite the *Fatiha* properly.

غَيْرَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْثَرْتُ لِدَلِكْ وَلَا فَكَّرْتُ فِيهِ But I did not pay attention to it, nor did I think about it.

قَضَيْتُ فِي صُحْبَتِهِ عَهْدًا طَوِيلًا مَا أَنْكَرَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ وَلَا يُنْكَرُ مِنْ أَمْرِي We spent a long time together without my finding fault with him, nor he with me.

مَا أَبْغَضْتُ مَا جَدُولِينَ إِسْتَيْفَنَ وَلَا أَحَبَّتْ إِدْوَارَ Magdalene did not detest Stephen, nor did she love Edward.

لَا هُوَ بِالْغَلِيظِ وَلَا هُوَ بِالنَّحِيفِ It was neither harsh nor tender.

لَيْسَ مِنَ الْعَدْلِ وَلَا مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ أَنْ -- It is neither just nor merciful to....

Where a clause is subordinated to a main clause, **the negative particle may stand in the main clause** even if logically it refers only to the subordinate clause (see vol. III):

لَا يَجِبُ أَنْ يَرَانِي وَلَا يَجِبُ أَنْ أَرَاهُ He must not see me, nor I him.

فِي صَوْتٍ بَاكِ لَا يَكَادُ يَسْمَعُ with a weeping voice that could hardly be heard.

وَلَمْ يَدْخُلْ الدَّارَ حَتَّى -- He had hardly entered the house when....

لَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ نَسُدَّ الْكَهْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ We must not close the exit to the cave on them.

The negative particle may also immediately precede the verb it modifies:

نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ - نَكَادُ لَا نَعْرِفُ شَيْئًا مِنْ مَعِيشَةِ سُكَّانِ الْقَرْيِ We who.... know almost nothing about the villagers' way of life.

مَا 31 §

In written Arabic, the negative particle مَا is used much less frequently today than previously.

The reason may be a stylistic consciousness, because مَا is very common in colloquial Arabic, and because writers want to avoid forms and constructions which could be labeled colloquial. On the other hand, it does appear in more elaborate literary prose, where its use might be explained as an intended archaism.

A مَا is rarely used to negate a **nominal sentence**:

فَمَا دُونَ مَرَارِكَ بَابٍ مُوصَدٍّ for the door is never closed to you.

مَا فِيهِ غَيْرِي وَغَيْرُهُ There was no one there except the two of us.

It is more frequently used in sentences with the nominal predicate, adjective, or substantive, introduced by the preposition بِ (see vol. II):

مَا أَنَا بِصَنِيعَةِ أَحَدٍ I am nobody's protege.

مَا أَنَا بِحَالِمٍ I am not dreaming.

وَمَا أَنَا بِكَاذِبٍ الْآنَ and I am not lying now.

مَا أَنْتُمْ بِبَالِغِينَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بَعْضُ مَا تُرِيدَانِ You two will not accomplish even a part of what you intend.

B As a negative particle for the **verbal sentence**, مَا is preferably used in direct discourse and, thus, with the first and second persons; it is usually placed at the beginning of the sentence immediately followed by the verb, which is the part denied.

مَا is used **before the imperfect** as a negation of the present:

مَا أَشْكُ فِي ذَلِكَ يَا بُنَيَّ! I have no doubt about it, my son!

أَمَا تَعْلَمِينَ أَنَّ الْيَوْمَ يَوْمَ الْأَحَدِ؟ Don't you know that today is Monday?

مَا أَدْرِي I do not know.

مَا أَظُنُّ شَيْئًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ I do not believe anything of the sort.

and **before the perfect** as the negation of its various meanings:

مَا رَأَيْتَنِي قَطُّ كَمَا أَرَانِي الْآنَ I never saw myself as I do now.

مَا كُنْتُ تُحِبُّ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ You loved only yourself.

مَا زِلْنَا كَذَلِكَ We remained like this.

أُفْسِمُ بِاللَّهِ ثَلَاثًا مَا نَسِيَهُ I swear three times by God, he had not forgotten it.

أَلَا يَقْدِرُ أَنْ بَهَاءَ اللَّيْلِ مَا عَرَفَتْ الْحُبَّ
بَعْدُ عَرَفَتْهُ لَيْلَةً خَطْبَتِهَا؟ Couldn't it be that Baha, who did not
know what love was, learned it the night
of her betrothal?

صَوْتُ مَا عَرَفْتُ أُذُنِي a voice my ear did not know.

مَا نَسِيتُهُ وَلَنْ أَنْسَاهُ الْبَتَّةَ I have not forgotten him, and I certainly
will not forget.

C مَا is also frequently used as the **first part of the exceptive compound** إِلَّا – مَا, "not... if not,"
"only" (see vol. III):

مَا أَنَا إِلَّا مَاءٌ I am nothing but water.

مَا أَنْتَ إِلَّا قَلْبٌ كَبِيرٌ! You are all heart!

مَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا مَوْضِعُهَا جَمِيلٌ وَمَا
مِنْ مَوْضِعٍ جَمِيلٍ إِلَّا فِيهِ قَرْيَةٌ There is absolutely no village without a
beautiful location, nor a beautiful place
without a village in it.

مَا هُوَ إِلَّا أَنْ عَلِمَتْ بِمَا حَدَثَ فِي
غِيَابِهَا-- No sooner had she learned what had
happened in her absence....

and as first part **of the temporal compound** حَتَّى – مَا, "not... until," "as soon as," etc. (see vol.
III)

مَا تَوَسَّطْتُهِ حَتَّى سَمِعْتُ-- I had hardly reached the middle of it
when I heard...

مَا دَخَلْتُ الْمَعَارَةَ حَتَّى وَجَدْتُني فِي
بَهْوٍ فَسِيحٍ I had hardly stepped into the cave when I
found myself in a spacious room.

D مَا is used to negate the preposition مِنْ with a partitive or determinative meaning with
an emphatic effect (see page 105):

مَا مِنْ شَكٍّ فِي-- There is not any doubt about ...

مَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ-- There isn't any village ...

This construction may cause the use of مَا to negate a verbal sentence with inverted word order otherwise not frequently found:

مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ فِي هَذَا الْمَنْزِلِ يَسْتَطِيعُ -- Absolutely no one in this house can....

أَنَّهُ مَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ يَعْلَمُ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ -- that none of them knew about him....

E As we have seen in the examples given above, مَا usually immediately precedes the denied part, but can also be separated from it by a prepositional phrase; this, however, occurs only when the negated noun and the prepositional phrase express a syntactical unity:

مَا فِي ذَلِكَ شَكٌّ There is no doubt about it.

أَنَّهَا الْمُبَارَزَةُ مَا مِنْ ذَلِكَ بُدٌّ that it was an unavoidable duel.

أَنَّهُ هَالِكٌ مَا مِنْ ذَلِكَ بُدٌّ that inevitably, he was going to perish.
[from that there is no escape.]

مَا can be separated from the verb by a particle of emphasis:

مَا قَطُّ رَأَيْتُ الْأُمُورَ فِي بِلَادِنَا جَارِيَةً I haven't ever seen things going normally
عَلَى مَجَارِيهَا in our country.

(For the use of مَا in cases of anacoluthon, see vol. II.)

لَا 32 §

A لَا is one of the oldest negative particles in Arabic, as we can see from its part in the development of the compound negative particles لَمْ, لَنْ, لَيْسَ.³² Even today it is most widely used of all the negative

³² On the origin and development of the negative particles, see Brock. *Grund.*, I, p. 500; II, p. 111.

particles. It has, however, preserved its original syntactical freedom only as a correlative. Arabic still uses **وَلَا**, "and not," "nor," **in any position whatsoever**, rather than repeat the previously used negative particle (see page 115):

مَا أَدْرِي وَلَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَدْرِي I do not know and I do not wish to know.

الْإِسْلَامُ لَيْسَ دِينٌ وَهْمٍ وَخَيَالٍ وَلَا هُوَ
دِينٌ يَقِفُ عِنْدَ دَعْوَةِ الْفَرْدِ وَحْدَهُ إِلَى
الْكَمَالِ Islam is not a religion of imagination and
fantasy, nor is it a religion that stops at
calling only the individual to perfection.

غَيْرَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْثَرْتُ لِدَلِيلِكَ وَلَا فَكَّرْتُ
فِيهِ but I was not concerned with this, nor
did I think about it.

لِدَلِيلِكَ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْمُشْرِكُونَ وَلَا كَانَ
الْيَهُودُ أَقْلًا إِقْبَالًا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ For this reason, the pagans and the Jews
were no less responsive than the
Muslims.

لَا is also used:

(a) as an **independent adverb** for a negative answer:

قَالَ لَا لَا تَذْهَبْ He said, "No! Don't go!"

أَتَفْهَمُ هَذِهِ الْأَبْيَاتَ؟ قَالَ الصَّبِيُّ لَا "Do you understand these verses?" The
boy answered, "No!"

هَلْ سَمِعْتَ يَا أُمًّا؟ ثُمَّ أَجَابَتْ لَا لَمْ
أَسْمَعُ سِوَى عَوِيلِ الْأَرْيَاحِ ("Did you hear, Mother?") Then she
replied, "No, I heard nothing but the
howling of the wind."

(b) in a subordinated position, as **an indirect negative answer**:

أَشَرْتُ لَهُ أَنْ لَا I shook my finger, "No!"

(c) with the preposition **بِ**; when so used, it becomes a compound preposition **بِلَا**,

"without":³⁶

³⁶ **بِلَا** seems to be used only when governing an undefined noun.

قَضَى اللَّهُ أَنْ أَعِيشَ فِي هَذَا الْعَالَمِ
بِلَا أَمَلٍ وَلَا رَجَاءٍ

God decreed that I should live in this world without hope or expectation.

رَأَتْ الشَّابَّ الْمُقَى بِلَا حَرَكََةٍ عَلَى
الثلجِ

She saw the young man lying motionless in the snow.

يُعَلِّمُ الْأَجَانِبَ اللُّغَةَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ بِلَا مُعَلِّمٍ

teaching Arabic to foreigners without a teacher.

هَذَا بِلَا رَيْبٍ صَوْتُ نَائِمٍ--

That is undoubtedly the voice of somebody sleeping.

(d) in elliptical constructions, as in the negation of a preceding statement or situation:

كَيْفَ لَا وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَأْمُرُ

How not, since he is the one who commands?

أَمَّا هَذَا فَلَا

As for this, no.

لَكِنِّي فِي حَاجَةٍ إِلَى أَنْ أَرَى لَا إِلَى أَنْ
أَسْمَعَ

But what I need is to see; it is not to hear.

لَا شَأْنٌ لِي وَلَا لَكَ مَعَهُ

I haven't anything to do with him, nor have you.

لَا يَفْعَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ الْحَرَكََةَ إِلَّا فِي نَفْسِهِ
فَأَمَّا فِي غَيْرِهِ فَلَا

Man can produce action only in himself but not others.

Compare the above ellipses with the following:

كَيْفَ لَا يَكُونُ كَذَلِكَ وَهُوَ--

Why can't it be that way, when....

B Within a nominal or verbal sentence, لَا can deny a part of a correlative sequence:

شَارَكَهُمْ فِي اللَّعْبِ بِعَقْلِهِ لَا بِيَدِهِ

He joined them in [their] play with his mind, but not physically.

فَتِلْكَ فِي اغْتِقَادِنَا نَتِيجَةُ لَا سَبَبٍ
لِهَذَا التَّعَصُّبِ

for in our opinion that is a result, not a cause, of this fanaticism.

كَانَ تَأْوِيلُنَا قَوْلُنَا لَا قَوْلَ اللَّهِ

Our interpretation would be our words not God's.

الَّذِي كَانَتْ تَعْتَبِرُهُ الشُّعُوبُ الْقَدِيمَةُ
عَرَضًا لَا جَوْهَرًا

which ancient peoples considered an accidental, not an essential, matter.

or it can be a **negative apposition**:

وَهُوَ لَا يَحْمِلُ شَيْئًا فِي جَيْبِهِ لَا سَاعَةً
وَلَا قَلَمًا وَلَا ذَهَبًا وَلَا فِصَّةً

and he does not carry a thing in his pocket—not a watch nor a pen nor money.

C لَا can also be used **before a clause** (see vol. III):

كَانَ قَلِيلَ الْأَكْلِ لَا لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ قَلِيلَ الْمِيلِ
إِلَى الطَّعَامِ بَلْ لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ--

He used to eat little, not because he did not feel like eating, but because....

سُرْعَانَ مَا امْتَدَّتْ يَدُ الْغُلَامِ إِلَى أَبِيهِ
لَا لِيَذُودَ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ بَلْ لـ --

How quickly the boy extended his hand to his father, not to protect himself, but to....

الَّذِي كَانَتْ تَعْتَبِرُهُ الشُّعُوبُ الْقَدِيمَةُ -
دَلَالَةً سَطَحِيَّةً عَلَى كَنْزٍ دَفِينٍ لَا أَنَّهُ
هُوَ فِي ذَاتِهِ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ

which ancient peoples considered... a superficial sign for a buried treasure, not that it was everything in itself.

D Preceding a **single noun**, لَا is used as a particle of general denial, and the noun will be in the accusative case without an article or nunnation (for the accusative of general denial, see vol. II):

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no god but God.

مَاذَا تَقُولِينَ؟ - لَا شَيْءَ "What are you saying?" "Nothing."

E In **the second part of a correlative construction** after مَا or لَيْسَ, the negative adverb لَا may negate a nominal sentence with the subject in the nominative and a **nominal predicate with the preposition بِ** (see page 120):

مَا أَنَا بِحَالِمٍ وَلَا الْكِتَابُ بِكَاذِبٍ I am not dreaming, nor is the letter lying.

By analogy, لَا with the same construction **may also be used to negate the former part of the correlative**:

لَا هُوَ بِالطَّالِبِ وَلَا هُوَ بِالْفَلَّاحِ He was neither a student nor a peasant.

لَا هِيَ بِالْحَلَوَّةِ وَلَا هِيَ بِالْمَرَّةِ [The days] were neither sweet nor bitter.

In **negative correlative sentences**, لَا is frequently used to deny a **nominal sentence** which has **both subject and predicate in the nominative**:

فَلَا هُوَ شِعْرٌ وَلَا هُوَ نَثْرٌ وَلَا هُوَ سَجْعٌ for it is not poetry nor prose nor rhymed prose.

لَا هُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ وَلَا هُوَ كَافِرٌ He is neither a believer nor an unbeliever.

فَلَا عَرَبِيٌّ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَعْجَمِيٍّ لِأَنَّهُ عَرَبِيٌّ وَلَا أَعْجَمِيٌّ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ عَرَبِيٍّ لِأَنَّهُ أَعْجَمِيٌّ For an Arab is not better than a Persian in being an Arab, nor is the Persian better than an Arab in being a Persian.

لَا هُوَ مُسْتَطِيعٌ - وَلَا هُوَ قَادِرٌ أَنْ -- He cannot..., nor is he able to....

F لَا is used **preceding a verb**:

لَا أَنْسَى أَبَدًا تِلْكَ السَّاعَةَ I will never forget this moment.

سُبْحَانَ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ Glory be to the Living One who never dies.

إِنَّا لَا نَرَى شَيْئًا We do not see anything.

إِنَّكَ لَا تَعْرِفُ النَّاسَ مِثْلَمَا أَعْرِفُهُمْ You do not know men as I do.

لَا أُعْطِيهَا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا إِذَا رَأَيْتُ فِي وَجْهِهَا بَارِقَةَ أَمَلٍ I will not give the letter to her unless I see a glimpse of hope in her face.

or when it functions as an indefinite present:

أَنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ لَا تَرَى فِي زَوْجِهَا عَيْبًا وَاحِدًا - مَهْمَا كَثُرَتْ عُيُوبُهُ that a woman never sees a single fault in her husband... however numerous they might be.

الْكَاتِبُ الْحَقُّ لَا يَكْتُبُ لِيَكْتُبَ The true author does not write just to write.

(b) with **the subjunctive**, but only after subordinating conjunctions such as **أَنَّ** (with which it often combines to form **أَلَّا**), etc. (see vol. III):

أَنَا أَرْجُو أَلَّا يَفْعَلَ -- I hope that he will not do....

أَوْحَى إِلَيْهِمَا أَلَّا يَسْمَعَا إِلَى نَزْعِ الشَّيْطَانِ He warned them not to listen to the temptation of the devil.

أَنْ لَا تَخْرُجَ مِنْ بَيْتِهَا فِي جَمِيعِ الْأَحْوَالِ that she should not go out of her house under any circumstances.

لَكِنِّي بَقِيتُ صَامِتًا كَيْلَا أُوقِفَهَا عَنِ الْكَلَامِ But I remained silent lest I stop her from speaking.

(c) with **the jussive** as a negative command (see page 81):

لَا تَذْهَبِي Do not leave!

لَا تَنْسَ أَنَّهُمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ طِينِ الْأَرْضِ Do not forget that they were made from clay.

لَا تَعُودِي إِلَّا بَعْدَ أَنْ تَشْعَبِي Do not come back until you have had enough.

لَا تَسْأَلْنِي الْآنَ شَيْئًا Do not ask me anything now.

(d) before **the energetic** (see page 83):

لَا أَسْمَعَنَّ أَحَدًا يَقُولُ إِنَّ مُحَمَّدًا قَدْ مَاتَ Don't let me hear anyone say that Mohammed has died.

لَا تَعْجَبَنَّ مِنْ -- Don't be surprised that....

(e) before **the perfect**, with wishes or curses:³⁴

لَا بَارَكَ اللَّهُ فِيكَ يَا وَدَادًا! Shame on you, Widad!

لَا سَمَحَ اللَّهُ God forbid!

or to express an emphatic negation:

لَا أَفْلَحْتُ You have failed. [You have indeed not succeeded.]

and in statements about the past, as the second part of a correlative expression, the first being negated by **لَمْ** with the jussive:

غَيْرَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْثِرْتُ لِدَلِكْ وَلَا فَكَّرْتُ فِيهِ But I did not pay attention to it, nor did I think about it.

G Since, as we have seen in some of the preceding examples, the negative particle **لَا** exerts its influence upon the verb, it usually immediately precedes the verb.

In a **verbal sentence with inverted word order**, the subject will usually precede both negative particle and verb:

أَنَا لَا أَفَكِّرُ أَنْ -- I do not think that....

³⁴ Such expressions, as, *e.g.*:

لَا زَالَ يَفْعَلُهُ He still does it.

in which the negative particle **لَا** is permitted before the perfect instead of **مَا**, are no doubt understood as present.

لَمْ يَزَلْ لَدَيَّ الْوَقْتُ الَّذِي يَكْفِي لِقَتْلِكَ I still have time to kill you.

أَنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ لَا تَرَى -- that a woman never sees....

الْكَاتِبُ الْحَقُّ لَا يَكْتُبُ لِيَكْتُبَ The true author does not write just to write.

إِنَّكَ لَا تَعْرِفُ النَّاسَ مِثْلَمَا أَعْرِفُهُمْ You do not know men as I do.

الرِّسَالَةُ لَا تَمُوتُ! The mission will not end.

In a correlative construction, **however, the subject may be placed between the verb and the negative particle:**

لَا الْبَحْرُ يَفْتَحُ لِي قَلْبَهُ وَلَا الْجَبَلُ يَبْسُ لِي كَسَابِقِ عَهْدِي بِهِمَا No longer would the sea open her heart to me, nor the mountains smile one me as before.

In cases of inversion when the subject is an indefinite noun, the noun is found in the accusative without nunnation. Arab writers understand the construction as a لَا of general denial followed by an asyndetical relative clause³⁵ (see vol. II).

لَا أَحَدَ يَعْرِفُ مَنْ أَبُوهُ Nobody knew who his father was. [There was no one who knew....]

لَا أَحَدَ يَدْرِي Nobody knows.

وَالنَّاسُ يُمْرُونَ مُشَاهَةً - وَلَا أَحَدَ يَلْتَفِتُ إِلَيْهِ The and the people went walking by..., but no one paid attention to him.

(For a discussion of the negative compound **أَلَّا**, see page 138, and for the negative-interrogative compound **هَلَّا**, see page 141. For the exceptive compound **إِلَّا**, see vol. III.)

³⁵ This vocalization is frequently given in Arabic editions, e.g.:

لَا أَحَدَ يَعْلَمُ... Nobody knows....

لَيْسَ 33 §

لَيْسَ is included among the so-called أَخَوَاتُ كَانَ, "sisters of kana" by Arab grammarians. It can be considered as the negative counterpart of كَانَ in its basic meaning of "to be," but لَيْسَ always has per se the meaning of a present tense. (However, for لَيْسَ subordinated to a perfect, see page 124 below.)

لَيْسَ primarily expresses the negation of general existence, "it does not exist," "there is not":

أَنْ لَيْسَ تَحْتَ الشَّمْسِ شَيْءٌ بَاطِلٌ that there is not a vain thing under the sun.

لَيْسَ لِي فِي الْوُجُودِ بِنْتُ بِهَذَا الْإِسْمِ I have no daughter with this name.
[There is not in existence....]

الطَّبِيعَةُ كُلُّهَا لَيْسَ فِيهَا لَذَّةٌ تُغْرِيكَ Is there no pleasure in the whole world
بِالْبَقَاءِ؟ which could entice you to stay?

Frequently it **negates an attribution**. Then, because of its verbal character, it **takes the predicate in the accusative case**:

مَا لَيْسَ وَاضِحًا لَيْسَ فَرَنْسِيًّا Whatever is not clear is not French.

لَسْتُ جَاهِلًا إِلَى حَدٍّ أَنْ -- I am not so ignorant that....

الْإِسْلَامُ لَيْسَ دِينٌ وَهْمٍ وَخَيَالٍ Islam is not a religion of imagination and fantasy.

أَلَيْسَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ أَنْ تَعُودُوا --? Isn't it better for them to return...?

الْمُؤَرِّخُ لَيْسَ نَاقِلًا The historian is not a translator.

even when a personal pronoun is predicate:

لَسْتُ إِيَّاهَا I am not she.

³⁶ إِنَّكَ لَسْتَ إِيَّاهَا You are not she.

Hence, it is used as simple negation of the nominal sentence (see page 36):

الْأَدَبُ لِلشَّعْبِ كُلِّهِ وَلَيْسَ لِطَبَقَةٍ مِنْهُ Culture is meant for all people; [it is] not for only one class.

لَيْسَ عِنْدَنَا وَطَائِفُ We have no openings.

فَهُمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ عَادَةٌ بِهَزِيمَةٍ for they were not used to being defeated.

لَيْسَ لِي بِكُفَا شَأْنُ I have nothing to do with you.

لَسْتُ خَيْرًا مِنَ النَّبِيِّ I am not better than the Prophet.

Frequently the **predicate** of لَيْسَ is **introduced by the preposition بِ**; thus it is in the genitive case:

إِنَّ الْفَتَى لَيْسَ بِجَمِيلٍ The young man is not handsome.

لَسْتُ بِشَارِبٍ وَلَا بِمَجْنُونٍ I am neither drunk nor mad.

لَيْسَ دَيْنُ أَبِيكَ لِهَذَا الْمَلِكِ بِأَقْلَ مِنْ دَيْنِكَ Your father's debt to this angel is not less than yours.

لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ بِمُسْتَحِيلٍ Nothing is impossible.

هَذَا لَيْسَ بِأَدَمِيٍّ! That is not a living human being!

³⁶ In the 1940 edition of the *Ahl al-Kahf*, T. al-Hakim writes alternately

لَسْتَ هِيَ
إِنَّكَ لَسْتَ هِيَ

In these instances, the verb لَيْسَ merely has an adverbial-negative function. In later editions this use of the verb is rejected.

The predicate introduced by the preposition بِ may be **defined by the definite article**:

لَسْتُ بِالْحَالِمِ الْآنَ I am not dreaming now.
أَنَّ لِيُونَارْدُو لَيْسَ بِالسَّاحِرِ that Leonardo was not a sorcerer.

When the **subject or the predicate of** لَيْسَ is introduced by the **preposition مِنْ** with a determinative or a partitive meaning, **the negation has an emphatic effect** (see page 105):

أَنَا أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَيْسَ مِنَ السَّهُولَةِ I know that this thing is not at all easy.

لَيْسَ مِنْ فَتَى فِي الْجَيْشِ -- There is not a single boy in the army who....

لَيْسَ مِنَ الْأَدَبِ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْعَائِلَاتِ In many families it is not good manners to....
-- أَنْ

When لَيْسَ negates the general existence of a noun, the noun may have an appositive element which will agree with it in case:

لَيْسَ فِي الدُّنْيَا رَأْسٌ آمِنٌ وَلَا أَسْلَمٌ Nowhere in the world is there a head safer or more secure than that of the
مِنْ رَأْسِ الْوَزِيرِ الْقَمَرِ vezir al-Qamar.

or it may be followed by a relative clause:

لَيْسَ شَيْءٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا هُوَ أَمْعَنُ فِي There is nothing in this world which is as
الْإِنْفَرَادِيَّةِ مِثْلَ -- eager for individuality as....

On the other hand, the noun denied by لَيْسَ as negation of the nominal sentence (see page 36) may be emphasized by a resumptive pronoun in agreement with it:

وَإِنَّ لَيْسَتِ الْمُسْكَلَةُ هِيَ مُسْكَلَةٌ Hence, the question is not one of
الصُّعُوبَةِ أَوِ السَّهُولَةِ difficulty or easiness.

لَيْسَ الرَّقِيقُ هُوَ الْإِنْسَانُ الَّذِي - فَقَطْ A slave is not only the man who....

Such a pronoun may also be used after the subject when the predicate of لَيْسَ is a relative clause:

لَيْسَتْ تِلْكَ الْقِصَصُ هِيَ الَّتِي تَجْعَلُنِي
انْطَلِقُ These tales are not what makes me rush
off.

Frequently the meaning of لَيْسَ, "there is not," loses its strength and is then used with an adverb to express the negation of general existence.³⁷ (see page 36):

لَيْسَ ثَمَّةَ رَيْبٍ فِي -- There is no doubt about....

لَيْسَ ثَمَّةَ مَا يَسْتَحِقُّ الْمَعْرِفَةَ There is nothing that is worth knowing.

صَحِيحٌ أَنَّهُ لَيْسَ هُنَاكَ أَدِيبٌ يَسْتَطِيعُ
أَنْ -- It is true that there is no writer who
could....

بِالطَّبَعِ لَيْسَ هُنَاكَ فَاصِلٌ يَفْصِلُ فَضْلًا
تَأَمَّا بَيْنَ الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ Of course, there is no distinct division
between the two groups.

لَيْسَ used as a simple negative particle may introduce a negative qualitative apposition.

Structurally, however, such cases are relative sentences asyndetically construed after an indefinite noun (see vol. III):

³⁷ Note the following emphatic redundant expressions:

أَلَيْسَ يُوجَدُ مَنْ هُوَ أَيْسَرُ شَرْطًا؟ Is there no one who requests easier conditions?

مَا يَنْقُلُهُ عَنِ الْيَتِيمَةِ لَيْسَ مَوْجُودًا فِي الَّذِي- What he quotes from al-Yatima is not found in what....

قَدْ وَطَّنُوا النَّفْسَ عَلَى الْبَقَاءِ زَمَنًا
لَيْسَ بِالْقَصِيرِ فِي جَزِيرَةِ مَالِطَه

They had become accustomed to the idea of staying on the island of Malta no short while [after a time which is not short].

بَعْدَ زَمَنٍ لَيْسَ بِالْقَصِيرِ after a long while.

لَيْسَ may also negate **any part of a sentence even an adverb**. These cases cannot be explained as independent asyndetical constructions, as above:

كُنْتُ أَرَى كُلَّ يَوْمٍ قَبْلَ غُرُوبِ الشَّمْسِ
لَيْسَ فِي سَاحَةِ الْقَصْرِ بَلْ وَرَاءَهُ عِنْدَ
بَابِ الْمَطْبَخِ جَمِيعًا آخَرٌ --

Every day before sunset I used to see another crowd... not in the palace yard but behind it, at the kitchen door.

لَيْسَ الْآنَ لَيْسَ قَبْلَ شَهْرٍ وَنِصْفٍ

Not now, not before a month and a half go by.

In **coordinated members** one of which is negated the coordinating conjunction **وَ** may introduce لَيْسَ. The expression then has an adverbial value and لَيْسَ **does not require any agreement**:

أَنَّ الْأَدِيبَ الْعَرَبِيَّ الْقَدِيمَ كَانَ يُنْشِدُ
الْحِكْمَةَ خَلْفَهُ وَلَيْسَ أَمَامَهُ

that the ancient Arabic writer sought wisdom in the past and not in the future.

الَّتِي تَعْتَمِدُ عَلَى حَقَائِقِ الْعِلْمِ وَلَيْسَ
عَلَى الثَّقَالِيدِ وَالْعَادَاتِ

which is based on scientific truths, and not on traditions and customs.

أَنْ نُنْشِدَ الْمَسَاوَاةَ وَلَيْسَ التَّفَوُّقَ

that we strive for equality, and not for superiority.

Note the following use of **لَيْسَ**:

غَايَةُ الْأَدَبِ الْإِنْسَانِيَّةُ وَلَيْسَ الْجَمَالُ³⁸ The aim of literature is humanity not beauty.

In a context subordinate to a perfect, **لَيْسَ** can be used to mean the past:

كَانَ هَذَا السُّلَّمُ مُتَوَسِّطًا لَيْسَ بِشَدِيدِ
السَّعَةِ وَلَا شَدِيدِ الضِّيقِ This staircase was average, not very wide
nor very narrow.

فَمَا كَانَ أَحَدٌ لِيُصَدِّقَ أَنَّ لِيُونَارْدُو
لَيْسَ بِالسَّاحِرِ But no one would believe that Leonardo
was not a sorcerer.

وَكَانَ يَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّ لَيْسَ لَهُ حِصْنٌ مِنْ -- and he believed that he had no
protection from....

كَانُوا قَدْ بَرَحُوا مِصْرَ وَلَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ مِنْ
التَّقْدِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ They had left Egypt having only a little
money with them.

ذَكَرْتُ أَنَّ لَيْسَ أَحَدٌ سِوَى جَدَّتِي -
وَأَنَّ الْمِفْتَاحَ لَيْسَ مَعِي I remembered that there was no one
there with my grandmother... and that I
did not have a key with me.

In a verbal sentence, that is to say, when **لَيْسَ** denies the verbal action attributed to a subject, it [the subject] also becomes the grammatical subject of **لَيْسَ**, which then functions as an auxiliary verb (see vol. II).

It can be used **before the imperfect** as a strong negation of the **present**:

لَسْتُ أَرَى أَمَلًا I do not see any hope.

لَسْتُ أُحِبُّهُمْ I do not love them.

³⁸ In this example, the vocalization required after **لَيْسَ** cannot be ascertained. The verb **لَيْسَ** can be considered as having an adverbial function and therefore not changing the case of the noun following it. (See footnote to examples on page 122.)

لَيْسَ

كَيْفَ أَفْهَمُكَ يَا صَاحِبِي مَا لَسْتُ أَفْهَمُ؟ How shall I make you understand, my friend, what I myself do not understand?

لَسْنَا نَرْضَى لِمُحَمَّدٍ دُونَ أَرْبَعَةِ بَكَارٍ For Mohammed, we are not satisfied with less than four young camels.

لَيْسَ يَغْنِينِي الْعَدُوُّ The future does not concern me.

or of the **future**:

لَسْتُ أَنْسَى مَا حَيَّيْتُ أَسْنَانَهُ I won't forget his teeth as long as I live.

Sometimes **لَيْسَ** precedes a perfect with a resultative meaning; in such cases, the negation can be understood as being in the present:

أَلَيْسَ قَدْ قَالَ الْمَسِيحُ --؟ Didn't Christ say ...? [Is it not a fact that Christ said ...?]

The denied verb does **not necessarily follow immediately after** **لَيْسَ**:

لَسْتُ هُنَاكَ أَقْدَحُ -- Here I do not blame....

لَسْتُ فِي هَذَا الْقَوْلِ أَعَاضُ بِأَنْ -- With these words, I do not contradict....

أَلَيْسَ النَّبِيُّ قَدْ مَاتَ؟ Didn't the Prophet die?

Sometimes, **لَيْسَ** may be used to introduce an imperfect functioning **as a negative particle**, *i.e.*, without any agreement with the subject:

أَمَّا أَهْلُ الشَّامِ فَلَيْسَ يَعْرِفُونَ إِلَّا -- The Syrians recognize only....

لَنْ 34 §

لَنْ originated as a compound particle derived from لَا أَنْ. It takes the subjunctive, and has the meaning of a very strong negation of the future; it is the negative counterpart of the imperfect after سَوْفَ and سَ.

The action stated as "**never going to happen**" may be the negation of a simple future: "**it will never happen**":

سَأَنْتَظِرُ وَلَنْ أَمَلَّ الْإِنْتِظَارَ حَتَّى يَعُودَ I'll wait, and I will not get tired of waiting until he comes back.

لَنْ يَرَاهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الْآتِيَةِ He will not see it in the hereafter.

قَدْ خَرَجْتُ مِنْ هَذَا الْمَنْزِلِ وَلَنْ أَعُودَ إِلَيْهِ I have left this house, and I shall not return to it.

لَنْ يَسْأَلَنِي He will never ask me.

or of a **simple future dependent on a verb in the past**:

حَتَّى عَلِمَا أَنَّهُ لَنْ يَعُودَ until they knew that he would not come back.

فَلَنْ تَلْبَثَ قُرَيْشٌ أَنْ تُدْرِكَهُمْ But it would not take long before the Koreish would catch up with them.

لَنْ may also be used for a **hypothetical future**: for the future as something that one expects never to happen; لَنْ, in such cases, **emphasizes one's belief or expectation**:

كَانَ قَدْ خُيِّلَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ قَدْ انْبَثَّ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْكُتَّابِ وَمَنْ فِيهِ فَلَنْ يَعُودَ إِلَيْهِ وَلَنْ يَرَى الْفَقِيهَ وَلَا الْعَرِيفَ He thought that his relationship with the school and with everybody in it had been ended and he would never return to it, nor again see the teacher or the monitor.

(أَيَقَنْتُ) أَنِّي لَنْ أَجِدَ بَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا (I was convinced) that I would never find a way to reach him after that day.

لَمْ 35 §

لَمْ is used only with the jussive. This construction expresses the **negation of the perfect in all its different meanings** (except the optative for which لَا is the exclusive negation; see page 83).

It is especially common as the **negative counterpart of the certainty expressed by قَدْ**.

In modern literary Arabic, in general, there is a definite preference for this particular negative construction, which may be attributed to a desire to avoid certain forms that are common in both the colloquial and literary languages:

لَمْ أَسْتَطِعْ أَنْ أَكْتُبَ إِلَيْكَ مُنْذُ شَهْرَيْنِ I haven't been able to write to you for two months.

سَأَلَهُ هَلْ قَدْ رَأَى أَحَدًا؟ وَأَجَابَ
مَجْدِي بِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَدِرْ إِلَّا رَاكِبَيْنِ He asked him if he had seen anyone, but Majdi answered that he had seen only two riders.

الَّتِي لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَعْرِفُونَهَا مِنْ قَبْلُ which they had not known before.

أَلَمْ تَسْأَلْ أَحَدًا؟ Haven't you asked anybody?

وَلَمْ يَمُضْ بِضْعُ دَقَائِقَ حَتَّى قَامَتِ
الْعَرُوسُ وَاتَّبَعَتْهُ After a few minutes had passed, the bride rose and followed him.

وَلَمْ يَزَلْ هَذَا شَأْنُهُمْ حَتَّى دَقَّتِ
السَّاعَةُ الْعَاشِرَةُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ This did not stop until the clock struck ten in the evening.

هَلْ سَمِعْتَ؟ - لَا لَمْ أَسْمَعْ "Have you heard?"... "No, I haven't heard."

كَتَبْتُ إِلَيْكَ كَثِيرًا فَلَمْ تَكْتُبْ إِلَيَّ
كَثِيرًا وَلَا قَلِيلًا I have written to you many times, but you did not write to me once.

مَضَى اللَّيْلُ إِلَّا أَقَلُّهُ وَلَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا-- The night had almost passed, and there wasn't anything left but....

لَمْ يَكُنْ زَوْجِي لَصًّا بَلْ كَانَ زَارِعًا يَفْلَحُ
أَرْضَ الدَّيْرِ

My husband was not a thief; he was a peasant who farmed the monastery's land.

لَمَّا كَبُرَ قُصِيٌّ وَضَعَفَ بَدَنُهُ وَلَمْ يَبْقَ
قَادِرًا عَلَى تَوَلَّى أُمُورِ مَكَّةَ --

When Qusi grew older and his body weak and he was no longer able to hold his office at Mecca....

لَسْنَا نَدْرِي أَسَبَقْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَمْ لَمْ نَسْبُقْ

We do not know whether we are the first ones or not.

In **correlative constructions**, when two verbs are to be negated by **لَمْ**, the negative particle **does not have to be repeated** (see page 107); both verbs are in the jussive, however:

أَوَلَمْ نَسْمَعْ وَنَرَّ أَنْ --

Haven't we heard and seen that....

وَقَلَّ مِنَ الشُّعْرَاءِ مَنْ لَمْ يَزْكُبْ أَوْ يَغْزُ

and only a few of the poets neither rode nor participated in the raids.

The second member of the correlative construction may be negated by **لَا** before a perfect (see also page 112):

وَلَكِنِّي لَمْ أَفْقِدِ الْأَمَلَ وَلَا يَيْئُسْتُ

but I did not lose or give up hope.

غَيْرَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْثَرْتُ لِدَلِّكَ وَلَا فَكَّرْتُ فِيهِ

but I was not concerned with this, nor did I think about it.

إِنْ 36 §

As a separate negative this archaic particle was already obsolescent in classical Arabic; in modern Arabic, the usage seems to have completely disappeared. It is, however, still found **introducing the first part of an exceptive compound** **إِنْ -- إِلَّا**, "not... if not," with an almost restrictive meaning of "only" (see vol III):

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا بِضْعَةُ قُرُوشٍ

It was only a few piasters. [It was not but a few piasters.]

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا لَحْظَةٌ Just a moment later....

إِنْ is furthermore used rather frequently as an **emphatic particle after مَا** as the first part of the **temporal compound**, مَا إِنْ — حَتَّى, "not ... until"; it actually has an adverbial meaning of "hardly," "no sooner," etc. (see vol. III):

مَا إِنْ بَلَّغْنَا الْبَابَ حَتَّى أَبْصَرْنَا بِهَاءَ
جَالِسَةً فِي فِرَاشِهَا We had hardly reached the door when
we saw Baha sitting on her bed. [We had
not reached the door when....]

مَا إِنْ دَخَلَ ابْنُهُ حُسَيْنٌ الْمَخْرَنَ وَأَلْقَى
يَدَهُ عَلَى الصُّنْدُوقِ حَتَّى وَثَبَ وَإِدُهُ
مِنْ مَرْبِضِهِ عَلَى الْعَتَبَةِ No sooner did his son, Husain, enter the
warehouse and lay his hand on the crate
than his father jumped up from where
he was sitting near the threshold.

مَا إِنْ هَمَّ بِالنُّزُولِ حَتَّى لَمَحَهُ
الْبُسْتَانِيُّ He had hardly started to climb down
when the gardener saw him.

مَا إِنْ فَرَعْتُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ - حَتَّى سَمِعْتُ -
I had hardly finished that... when I
heard....

مَا إِنْ سَقَطَ الْأَسْوَدُ حَتَّى خَرَجَ عُتْبَةُ
بُنْ رُبَيْعَةَ Al-Aswad had hardly fallen when 'Utba
ibn Rabi'a went out.

لَمَّا 37 §

لَمَّا is used only at the beginning of the sentence and is immediately followed by the **verb in the jussive**. It is the **negation of the resultative perfect** (see page 60), or **of the perfect preceded by قَدْ** with the meaning of "he had already" (see page 81).

لَمَّا is generally used **for the past**, "had not yet":

لَمَّا يَكُنِ الدِّينُ قَدْ كَمَلَ وَلَمَّا يَكُنْ قَدْ
نَزَلَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ إِلَّا الْقَلِيلُ The religion was not yet perfect and only
a little of the Koran had been revealed.

فَقَدْ أَتَمَّ حِفْظَهُ وَلَمَّا يُتَمَّ التَّاسِعَةُ مِنْ
عُمْرِهِ for he had fully memorized it before he
had [when he had not yet] completed his
ninth year.

لَمَّا يَفْضُ يَوْمَانِ عَلَى -- Two days had not yet passed....

and also with the meaning of a **present perfect**: "has not yet":

إِنَّهُمْ قَدْ شَبَّهُوهُ بِمُوسَى وَلَمَّا يُهَيَّلُوا
عَلَيْهِ التُّرَابَ They have compared him with Moses,
though they have not yet buried him.

إِنَّهُمْ قَدْ شَبَّهُوهُ كَذَلِكَ بِعِيسَى وَلَمَّا
يَذْرُجُوهُ فِي الْأَثْوَابِ! They have likewise compared him with
Jesus, even though they have not yet
wrapped him in a shroud.

وَهَا هِيَ الْآنَ تَعُودُ وَلَمَّا تَنْتَهِ الْعُطْلَةُ
and there she is, returning, and her
vacation has not yet come to an end.

It can also refer to a **future action**, "before," **equivalent to a future-perfect**:

أَلَسْنَا نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ سَيَفْقِدُ أُمَّهُ وَلَمَّا يَنْجَاوِزَ
السَّادِسَةَ مِنْ عُمْرِهِ؟ Don't we know that he will lose his
mother before he is six [at a time when
he will not yet have passed his sixth
year]?

In modern Arabic لَمَّا is frequently replaced by other particles with identical meaning, "not... yet."

لَمْ -- بَعْدُ (a)

أَمَّا الشَّعْبُ - لَمْ يَكُونُوا قَدْ ارْتَفَعُوا بَعْدُ As for the people... had not risen yet.

أَدَّى صَلَاتَهُ وَلَمْ يَطْعَمْ بَعْدُ شَيْئًا He performed his prayer before he had
eaten.

وَلَكِنَّ أَوَانَ الْحَدِيثِ عَنْ هَذَا الْإِعْتَزَالِ
لَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدُ But the time to speak about this
seclusion has not yet come.

(b) مَا -- بَعْدُ

الْأَدَبُ فِي دُنْيَا الْعَرَبِ مَا بَلَغَ بَعْدُ أَشَدَّهُ Literature in the Arab world has not yet reached its full maturity.

(c) لَيْسَ -- بَعْدُ

إِنِّي لَسْتُ أَدْرِي بَعْدُ هَلْ لِي رَأْسٌ فَوْقَ كَتَفَيَّ؟! I still don't know whether my head is on my shoulders!

§ 38 PARTICLES OF EMPHASIS IN NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

Beside the double-negative particle مَا إِنَّ, that we have been discussing (see page 129), Arabic uses some adverbs to give the negative construction an emphatic character.

أَبَدًا, "ever," is used only for the **emphatic negation of a future action**:

لَا أَنْسَى أَبَدًا تِلْكَ السَّاعَةَ I will never forget this moment.

الَّتِي لَا يَمُوتُ الصَّيْفُ فِيهَا أَبَدًا where summer never ends.

However, أَبَدًا can be used **in past and present**, as well as **future**, affirmative sentences:

هَذَا الْجَسَدُ يَبْقَى أَبَدًا قَتِيلَ الشَّوْقِ وَالْتَفْرِيقِ This body will always be a victim of longing and separation.

كَانَتْ بِاسِمَةً أَبَدًا كَأَوَّلِ مَا يَتَلَأَّلُ الْفَجْرُ She always smiled like the first radiance of dawn.

وَلَكِنَّا نَأْمَلُ أَبَدًا فِي أَنْ - but we shall always hope....

قَطُّ, "never," is generally used **with a negated perfect**, or a jussive after لَمْ, as an emphatic **negation of the past**:

وَلَمْ يَخْطُرْ لَهُ قَطُّ أَنْ - It never occurred to him that....

بَلْ مَا أَحَبَّنِي قَطُّ فِي يَوْمٍ مِنْ أَيَّامِ حَيَاتِهَا
Furthermore, she never loved me at any time during her life.

إِنِّي مَا ضَعُفْتُ قَطُّ أَمَامَهُ
I never was weak in his presence.

إِنَّ الْأَدَبَ الْقَدِيمَ كَانَ عَلَى الدَّوَامِ
أُسْلُوبِيًّا وَلَمْ يَكُ قَطُّ ابْتِكَارِيًّا
مُسْتَقْبَلِيًّا
that the old literature was always traditional and conventional, never original and *avant garde*.

Sometimes, قَطُّ seems to have **lost some of its temporal character** and become a particle of emphasis, "not at all," "not in the least":

فَإِذَا هِيَ سَبْعَةٌ وَعِشْرُونَ قِرْشًا لَمْ تَزِدْ شَيْئًا قَطُّ!
but there were twenty-seven piasters, not a single one more.

Note that it may at times—although rarely—be used with an imperfect:

أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ لَا يَسُوءُنِي قَطُّ بَقَاؤُكَ
You know that your presence never bothers me.

بَتَّةَ (ال) "absolutely (not)," "definitely (not)," is used **especially with negative** sentences as an adverb of emphasis. It can be used **for both future and past** actions:

مَا نَسِيتُ وَلَنْ أَنْسَاهُ الْبَتَّةَ
I have not forgotten, and I shall certainly never forget.

وَرُبَّمَا لَا يَكُونُ فِي ثِيَابِهِ جُيُوبٌ الْبَتَّةَ
and perhaps there was not a single pocket in his clothing.

IV INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

§ 39 INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

Arabic does not require any special word order or particle in order to express a question; rather, the emphasis or the intonation by itself can change a statement into a question.

Usually, however, a question will be introduced by a special element which will indicate the interrogative character of the expression. The grammatically appropriate interrogative element will be used according to the purpose of the question.

(a) A question can be asked **about a statement and its intrinsic validity**, ie, whether it is true. The question will then be answered positively or negatively (sometimes simply with "yes" or "no").

(b) A second group of questions inquires **about an essential element** (subject, object) of the interrogative statement. The intrinsic validity of the statement is accepted in such cases. The interrogation deals only with the identity of the agent or the main effects of an action. This type of question is always presented by such interrogative pronouns as: "who," "what," etc.

(c) A third group of questions inquires **about circumstances or adverbial aspects** of the interrogative statement. These questions are always introduced by adverbs: "where," "when/" etc.

In addition to these groups, there are frequent cases of interrogative sentences where the intent is not to ask actual information about the statement, but rather **to express one's bewilderment or admiration when confronted with a strange or surprising statement or fact, or to emphasize one's own opinion by using the rhetorical device of an interrogative construction for it.**

We shall give some attention to these rhetorical devices since they cause some structural changes within the interrogatives. For the sake of clarity we shall deal with this category when discussing the equivalent interrogative constructions.

§ 40 QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VALIDITY OF THE STATEMENT

This category **expresses the idea as uncertain, and asks about its truth**, thus seeking an affirmative or negative answer.

No special word order or special particle is required to show the interrogative character of sentences in this category³⁹. It is expressed only by the intonation and, in modern printing, by the question mark:

وَهِيَ فِي الدَّارِ؟	Is she in the house?
حَيَاتِي فِي خَطَرٍ؟	Is my life in danger?
ابْنَتِي نَجِيهَ عَادَتْ؟	Has my daughter, Najiya, come back?
وَتَعْلَمُ ذَلِكَ؟	and do you know that?
لَا أَحَدٌ يَدْرِي؟	Nobody knows?
أَكَلْتَ دَبْسًا؟	Did you eat honey?
وَلَا بُدَّ مِنْ هَذَا؟ قَالَ لَا بُدَّ	"Is there no way out of this?" He answered, "No."

³⁹ تَرَى, "do you think...?" used in interrogative constructions is derived from the verb رَأَى, "to see," hence, "to think." تَرَى has also always been used in the passive voice (تُرَى).

تَرَى and تُرَى have completely become particles which emphasize the doubt raised by the question. They no longer belong to the structure of the interrogative sentence having, rather, an interjectional character; they can be used preceding, following, or even in the middle of the sentence. تَرَى is frequently preceded by the particle يَا:

تَرَى أَلْبِثْنَا أَسْبُوعًا وَنَحْنُ لَا نَشْعُرُ؟	Could we have stayed a week without knowing it?
تَرَى مَعَ مَنْ هَذَا الْعَهْدُ الْمُقَدَّسُ؟	With whom could this holy vow have been made?
فَأَيُّ شَيْءٍ يَا تَرَى جَعَلَ هَذَا الْمُسْكِينِ يُخَاطِرُ بِحَيَاتِهِ؟	What then has made this poor youth place his life in danger?
وَمَنْ هُوَ الْمُجْرِمُ وَمَنْ هُوَ الْبَرِيُّ يَا تَرَى؟	Who is the guilty one and who the innocent?
فَمَا تُرَى يَكُونُ شَأْنُهَا-؟	How could she be...?
تَرَى أَهِيَ فِي الدَّارِ أَوْ فِي الْخَارِجِ؟	Is she in or out?
تَرَى مَاذَا حَدَثَ لَهَا؟	What has happened to her?

أ 41 §

A أ is the simplest interrogative particle. **It is always used at the beginning of the sentence**, nominal or verbal:

أَأَنْتِ وَحْدَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الدَّارِ؟ Are you alone in this house?

أَتَعْرِفِيْنَهُ؟ Do you know him?

أَتَبْكِيْنَ؟ Are you crying?

أَمَّا وَصَفَ لَكَ الْمَكَانَ الَّذِي هُوَ فِيْهِ؟ Didn't he describe to you where it is?

أَلَا تُعَاوِنِيْ قَلِيْلًا؟ Won't you help me a little?

(For cases of anacoluthon, see vol. II.)

Even وَ, فَ, and ثُمَّ, in coordinated constructions (see vol. III), **will follow** the interrogative particle:

أَوَمَا سَمِعْتَ؟ And haven't you heard?

أَفَتَظُنُّ أَنَّ مَا تَدْفَعُ إِلَيَّ فِي كُلِّ شَهْرٍ
أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنْ امْرَأَتِيْ؟ And do you think that what you pay me
every month is dearer to me than my
wife?

أَوَلَا تَعْرِفِيْنَ هَذَا أَيْضًا؟ And don't you know that also?

أَفَلَا يُرْضِيْهِ مِنِّيْ هَذَا كُلُّهُ؟ أَفَلَا يَقْنَعُهُ
مِنِّيْ أَنْ - ...? And won't he be satisfied with all this
from me? And won't he be content that I

Note that أ may also introduce a subordinate clause:

أَلَا تَهَا حَيَاةٌ هَنِيئَةٌ؟ Is it because it is a happy life?

When referring to a specific part rather Than to the complete sentence, **the word order is inverted** to bring this part closer to the interrogative particle:

أَشْرَهَةٌ أَنْتِ أَيْتُهَا الْفَتَاةُ؟ Are you greedy, my girl?

أَنَاءُمُونَ هُمُ الْآنَ؟ Are they asleep now?

أَمْتَرَوُجُ أَنْتَ؟ Are you married?

وَلَكِنْ أَبِالْخُبْزِ وَحْدَهُ يَحْيَا الْإِنْسَانُ؟ Does man live by bread alone?

أَمَيِّتًا كَانَ هُوَ؟ Was he dead?

أَحَقِيقَةً أَنْتَ تُحِبُّهَا؟ Do you truly love her?

أَحَقًّا تَقُولُ؟ Are you telling the truth?

أَهِيَ تَسْتَطِيعُ هَذَا؟ Could she [do] this?

Frequently, أ, when introducing a negative statement, **does not question its validity** but, **rather, emphasizes it** and is thus to be translated as equivalent to the English "that is so ? isn't it?":

أَلَمْ تَسْمَعُوا أَلْقَاظَهُ! أَلَمْ تَفْهَمُوا
مَعَانِيَهُ! You have heard his words; you have
understood what he means, haven't
you?

أَلَسْتُ مَنْدُوبَ الْجَرِيدَةِ! Am I not a newspaper reporter?

B Similar to this and of special interest, is the **rhetorical negative compound** أَلَا (from the negative particle لَا and the interrogative أ), which has become a particle of emphasis in desiderative and exclamatory constructions:

أَلَا مَا أَشَبَّهَ الْإِنْسَانَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
بِالسَّفِينَةِ فِي أَمْوَاجِ هَذَا الْبَحْرِ! How similar a man in life is to a ship on
the waves of this sea!

أَلَا كَمْ مِنْ آلَافِ السِّنِينَ وَآلَافِهَا قَدْ
مَضَتْ مُنْذُ أُخْرِجَ آدَمُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ! How many thousands of years have
passed since Adam was cast out of
Paradise!

أَلَا لَيْتَ الْمَنَابِرَ الْإِسْلَامِيَّةَ لَا يَخْطُبُ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا - If only [men]... would preach on Muslim pulpits

فَ introduces an exclamatory imperative which, in turn, is preceded by the conjunction أَلَا

أَلَا فَاسْأَلْ نَفْسَكَ Oh, do ask your soul!

أَلَا فَانْظُرْهَا مُتَّكِئَةً عَلَى سَاعِدِهِ Oh, look at her, leaning on his arm!

At time, أَلَا appears in a vocalized form as أَلَّا with the same meaning⁴⁰:

قُلْنَ أَلَّا تَبْكِينَ عَلَى أَبِيكَ وَأَخِيكَ وَأَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ They said, "Why! Do cry for your father, brother, and relatives!"

هَلْ 42 §

A هَلْ is very much like أَلَا, except that it seems to have a **stronger emphatic effect** on the statement about which the question is asked.

It can be used to introduce a **nominal sentence**, however, without any effect on the word order:

هَلْ هُنَّ فِي قَيْدِ الرِّقِّ؟ Are they bound in slavery?

هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مَرِيضٌ؟ Is somebody ill in the family?

هَلْ هُمَا حَيَّانِ؟ Are they still living?

وَهَلْ بِإِمْكَانِ الْبَشَرِ أَنْ يَعْرِفُوا الْحَقِيقَةَ؟ And is it in the power of men to know the truth?

هَلْ لَهُ الْحَقُّ أَنْ -? Has he the right to...?

⁴⁰ This, however, is the only vocalization given in *Munjid* for this particle. See under أَلَّا.

هَلْ can also introduce a **verbal sentence**, usually with normal word order, the perfect having its various meanings, **the imperfect, that of the present or future**.

هَلْ سَمِعْتَ يَا أُمَّاهُ! Have you heard, Mother?

هَلْ عَادَتِ الْبِنْتُ مِنَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ؟ Has the girl come back from school?

هَلْ ذَهَبْتَ إِلَى الْمَحْكَمَةِ؟ Did you go to the courthouse?

هَلْ أَسْتَطِيعُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ أَتَصَوَّرَ أَنَّكَ رَجُلٌ شَرِيفٌ؟ Can I still believe that you are a noble man?

هَلْ يَنْسَى التَّارِيخُ هَذَا؟ Will history forget that?

هَلْ تَقْضِيَانِ شَهْرَ الْعَسَلِ فِي الْقَاهِرَةِ؟ Are you spending your honeymoon in Cairo?

هَلْ تَعْرِفِينَ اسْمَهُ؟ Do you know his name?

هَلْ تَبْقَى سُورِيَا مَطْرُوحًا؟ Will Syria remain prostrate...?

It can also be used with an **inverted verbal sentence**:

هَلْ هُوَ يَزِيدُ إِحْسَاسَنَا الْإِنْسَانِيَّ؟ Will that increase our human feelings...?

Contrary to هَلْ, هَلْ comes after the coordinates وَ, فَ, and ثُمَّ, not before them:

وَهَلْ صَوْتُ كَمَنْجَتِي غَيْرُ صَوْتِي؟ And is the voice of my violin different from my own voice?

فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ سَامِعُونَ صَرَاحِنَا؟ And do you hear our crying?

وَهَلْ نَسِيتَهَا حَقًّا؟ And have you really forgotten it?

فَهَلْ دَعَا تَوْفِيقُ الْحَكِيمِ فِي هَذِهِ
الْمُسْرَحِيَّةِ إِلَى الْحَيَاةِ؟

And in this play, does Taufiq al-Hakim
urge [the people] to a [new] life?

It can be used in the **exceptive construction** هَلْ - إِلَّا (see vol. III):

وَهَلِ الْعَيْشُ يَا صَاحِبِي إِلَّا مُغَامَرَةٌ
دَائِمَةٌ؟

What is life, my friend, but a continuous
risk?

هَلْ أَنَا إِلَّا جَسَدٌ جَمِيلٌ!

What am I but a beautiful body!

(For هَلْ in alternate correlative questions, and for هَلْ in indirect questions, see vol. II.)

B هَلْ introducing a rhetorical question, has the value of a particle of emphasis:

وَهَلْ يَرْضَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَرُدَّ صَبِيًّا مَكْفُوفًا
حِينَ -!

and how could God reject a blind boy
when...! [and will God...!]

هَلْ preceding the negative particle لَا in the compound هَلَّا, has an emphatic effect with a
connotation of urgency when referring to the future or a **character of censure** when referring
to the past. (Compare with أَلَا page 139 above):

فَهَلَّا التَّصَحَّتْ وَ-؟

Why don't you follow my advice and...?

وَهَلَّا سَافَرْتَ إِلَى الرُّبْعِ الْخَالِي؟

Why don't you go to the Rub' al-Khali?

هَلَّا نَهَضْتَ وَمَشَيْتَ مَعَهُمْ؟

Why don't you stand up and walk with
them?

وَلَكِنْ هَلَّا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ أَنْ تَرْفَعُوا
نُفُوسَكُمْ إِلَى مَا فَوْقَ نُفُوسِكُمْ؟

But why can't you raise your spirits
toward what is above them?

هَلَّا تَشَبَّهْتُ أَنَا بِوَالِدِي -؟

Why didn't I try to be like my father...?

§ 43 INTERROGATIVES CONCERNING A FACT

A question about an element of the sentence sometimes does not require a special interrogative particle. Such cases, however, are restricted to nominal sentences and should be considered as elliptical constructions (see vol. II):

وَرَأَيْكَ؟ and your opinion?

(for وَمَا رَأَيْكَ؟ and what is your opinion?)

Usually these questions have an interrogative pronoun which introduces and indicates the element of the sentence about which the question is asked.

These interrogates pronouns are: مَنْ, مَا, and أَيُّ.

§ 44 مَنْ, "who?", and مَا, "what?"

A مَنْ and مَا ask about the **person** or the **thing** respectively⁴¹:

مَنْ هَذَا؟ Who is this?

مَا هَذَا؟ What is that?

As pronouns they perform a noun's function within the sentence; thus they may be **in any of the three grammatical cases**, although they are not inflected for case:

مَنْ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ؟ Who is this man?

مَنْ أَخْبَرَكَ أَنِّي هُنَا؟ Who told you that I was here?

مَا رَأْيُكَ فِي -؟ What is your opinion about...?

إِبْنُ مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ Whose son are you?

لِمَنْ هَذِهِ الدَّارُ؟ To whom does this house belong?

⁴¹ Note that مَنْ may also refer to persons and things simultaneously, e.g.:

يَذْكُرُونَ مَكَّةَ وَمَنْ تَرَكُوا فِيهَا مِنْ أَهْلِ وَوَلَدٍ وَمَالٍ thinking of Mecca, the family, the sons, and the wealth they had left there.

مَا تَقُولُ فِي ذَلِكَ؟ What do you say about that?

(For the use of in the adverbial accusative, see page 148 below.)

Because of their indefinite character, the interrogative pronouns مَنْ and مَا **cannot take a dependent genitive, nor be in apposition to a substantive, nor can they**, in general, **have a substantive in apposition to them**. Thus, in such cases as:

مَنْ رَجُلٌ يَخْرُجُ بِنَا؟ Who [is a man who] will come with us?

إِذَنْ مَا السِّرُّ فِي أَمْرِهِ هَذَا؟ Then what is the secret in this matter?

the substantives رَجُلٌ and السِّرُّ should be considered as nominal predicates followed by a relative sentence or a prepositional determination, not as nouns in apposition to the interrogative pronoun. Accordingly we translate the above examples: "what is the secret?" and not "what secret is there?"; "who is a man?" and not "which man?".

The personal pronoun that frequently follows the interrogative pronoun should be considered as a resumptive repetition of the interrogative pronoun, which at the same time gives it the possibility of number and gender distinction (see page 149 below).

مَا هُوَ أَعْظَمُ مَا -؟ What is the greatest thing that...?

مَا هِيَ عَلاَقَتُهُ بِمُجْتَمَعِهِ؟ What was his relationship to his society?

وَإِذَنْ مَنْ هُوَ هَذَا الْكَاتِبُ؟ Then who is this writer?

However, غَيْرُ, "other than," (see vol. II) is often used **in apposition** to an interrogative pronoun; this can be explained by the indefinite meaning of the construction:

مَعَ مَنْ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ تُرِيدِينَ؟ With whom else do you mean but God?

وَمَنْ غَيْرِ السَّاحِرِ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ -؟ Who else but a sorcerer could...?

لِمَنْ غَيْرِهِ إِذَنْ؟ For whom other than him, then?

مَنْ غَيْرِي صَاحِبُ الشَّأْنِ فِي ذَلِكَ؟ Whose business is it besides mine?

A **genitive construction** which is not allowed with the interrogative pronouns, **can be paraphrased by a prepositional construction with مِنْ** (see vol. II):

مَا عِنْدَنَا مِنَ الْحَرَكََةِ الرُّومَانِيَّةِ فِي مِصْرَ؟ Do we have a romantic movement in Egypt?

مَا and مَنْ may be followed by the demonstrative particle ذَا, which emphasizes their interrogative character⁴²:

مَاذَا أَصْنَعُ بِهِمَا؟ What shall I do with them?

فَمَاذَا تَفْعَلُ إِذَا ذَاكَ؟ And what will you do then?

فَمَنْ ذَا أَدْعُو؟ وَمَنْ ذَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لِي؟ Whom shall I summon? And who will listen to me?

فَمَنْ ذَا يَصْبِرُ عَلَى إِهَانَةٍ كَهَذِهِ الْإِهَانَةِ؟ Who could patiently accept such an insult?

The question is frequently **expanded into a relative construction**; in such cases the demonstrative particle ذَا may still be used:

مَا الَّذِي حَيَّرَكُمُ؟ What confuses you? [What is it that confuses you?]

مَنْ الَّذِي يَعُودُ؟ Who will return? [Who is it who will return?]

مَا الَّذِي يُخِيفُكَ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ النَّاسِ؟ What is it about these people that frightens you?

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَسْتَطِيعُ - ؟ Who could...?

⁴² مَنْ ذَا may also be written مَنْذَا: see Nu'. (Br. II) 115, 26.

وَمَاذَا الَّذِي يَمْنَعُهُ مِنْ هَذَا التَّجَرِبَةِ؟ and what would keep him from trying it?

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَكُونَ أَوَّلَ نَاطِقٍ؟ Who wants to be the first to speak?

The **interrogative pronouns** usually introduce the **interrogative sentence**, but they may be preceded by a preposition or a substantive in the construct state when they function as a genitive:

إِبْنُ مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ Whose son are you?

لِمَنْ هَذِهِ الدَّارُ؟ To whom does this house belong?

لِمَاذَا تَغَيَّبْتَ الْيَوْمَ عَنِ الْكَلْبِيَّةِ؟ Why were you absent from school today?

Although **they frequently appear at the end of the sentence**, this usage seems usually to be restricted to instances in which the first part of the question has a connective function and is merely a repetition of the elements of the preceding statement. The question in such cases can be considered as being an elliptical construction consisting of the interrogative pronoun and therefore structurally not different from other cases above:

الَّيْلَةَ يُطَاخُ رَأْسٌ - رَأْسُ مَنْ؟ "Tonight a head will be chopped off."
"Whose head?"

وَأَنْتَ تَفْهَمُ - أَفْهَمُ مَاذَا؟ "and you shall understand." "I shall understand what?"

أَنْ أُنَاجِيَكَ مِنْ طَرِيقِي لَا مِنْ طَرِيقٍ ... فَقَالَتْ لَهُ طَرِيقُ مَنْ؟ "to whisper to you myself, not through..." She said, "Through whom?"

الصَّفَاءُ قِنَاعُهَا - قِنَاعُ مَنْ؟ "Serenity is her weapon." "Whose weapon?"

سَتَمَكُثُ مَعَهَا إِذَنْ فِي قَصْرِ وَاحِدٍ - مَعَ مَنْ؟ "You will then stay with her in the same palace." "With whom?"

وَقَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُولِي لِي .. - "and before you tell me..."
أَقُولُ لَكَ مَاذَا؟ "I tell you what?"

أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَعْلَمَ - تُحِبُّ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ مَاذَا؟ "I want to learn." "You want to learn what?"

أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَعْرِفَ - تَعْرِفُ مَاذَا؟ "I want to know." "[You want] to know what?"

It is sufficient that the first part has a logical connecting effect for the construction to be used:

مَاذَا تَقُولِينَ؟ - تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَعْرِفَ مِنِّي مَاذَا؟ "What do you say?" "What do you want to know from me?"

أَتَدْرِي أَيْنَ أَذْهَبُ الْآنَ؟ أَوْ تَدْرِي مَعَ مَنْ؟ "Do you know where I am going now? And do you know with whom?"

Frequently in order to achieve a more lively dialogue, the interrogative sentence is omitted, leaving the **pronoun as the only exponent of the question**:

إِنَّ أَنْفَكَ أَثْيَاهَا الرَّجُلُ قَبِيحٌ جِدًّا - ثُمَّ مَاذَا؟ "Man! You certainly have a most ugly nose." "What else?"

لَا يُمَكِّنُ أَنْ يَكُونَ كَذَلِكَ! قَالَ لِمَاذَا؟ "That is not possible!" He said, "Why not?"

أَسَمِعْتَ؟ - مَاذَا؟ "Have you heard?" "What?"

تُرِيدُ أَنْ تُعْطَلَ نِصْفَ الْمُجْتَمَعِ ... لِحِسَابِ مَنْ؟ "wants a half of human society to be left idle..." "To whose advantage?"

As for the meaning, مَنْ usually asks for an **identification**, and thus for a **definite answer**:

لِمَنْ غَيْرِهِ إِذَنْ؟ - لِنَفْسِي "For whom, then, if not for him?"
"For myself."

مَنْ هُوَ؟ - الْعَبْدُ "Have you heard?" "What?"

مَا, "what?", and مَنْ, "who?"

مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ - أَنَا شَهْرَزَادَ "Who are you?" "I am Shahrazad."

مَنْ هُمْ أَهْلُكَ وَذَوُوكَ؟ - الْفُقَرَاءُ
وَالْمَسَاكِينُ الْمَظْلُومُونَ هُمْ أَهْلِي
وَعَشِيرَتِي "Who are your people and your kin?"
"The poor and downtrodden are my
people and my tribe."

أَيْنَ هِيَ فِي هَذِهِ اللَّحْظَةِ؟ مَنْ؟ -
الْأَمِيرَةُ "Where is she now?" "Who?" "The
Princess."

although it can receive a **generic indefinite answer**:

مَنْ هَذَا؟ - إِنْسَانٌ يَرَاكَ وَيَرَى بَرِيقَ
عَيْنَيْكَ "Who is this?" "A man who sees you and
sees the glitter of your eyes."

مَنْ أَنَا؟ - أَنْتَ إِنْسَانٌ - "Who am I?" "You are a man..."

مَا, as the counterpart of مَنْ, asks **for identification of things in a specific or generic way**:

مَا هِيَ أَشْهُرُ الثَّقَافَاتِ فِي ذَلِكَ
الْعَصْرِ؟ What was the most famous culture of
that period?

مَا هُوَ الشَّرْطُ؟ What is the condition?

مَا الَّذِي حَيَّرَكُمْ؟ What is the condition?

and also for a **definition**, in which case مَا, can refer to persons as well as to things:

مَا مَعْنَى هَذَا الْكَلَامِ؟ What does this word mean?

مَا هُوَ الْأَدَبُ الْعَرَبِيُّ الْقَدِيمُ؟ What is ancient Arabic literature?
هُوَ أَدَبٌ كَانَ - It is a literature which was....

مَا هِيَ فَلَسَفَتُكَ الْأَدَبِيَّةُ وَالْإِجْتِمَاعِيَّةُ؟ What is your cultural and social
philosophy?

إِذَا مَا هُوَ الرَّجُلُ الْإِنْفِرَادِيُّ؟ Then what is an individualist?

إِذَا مَا هُوَ النَّابِغَةُ؟ Then what is a famous man?

It is a characteristic of مَا that it can be used for questions about **any kind of qualifications or circumstances** involved in the statement regarding persons as well as things:

مَا لَكَ؟ What is the matter with you?

مَا اسْمُكَ؟ What is your name?

مَا بِأَلْكَ وَجَمْتَ؟ Why are you so silent?

It may also take on the **function of an adverbial accusative** (see page 142):

مَا دَخَلَ الشَّرْفُ فِي الْأَدَبِ What has honor to do with culture?
[How is honor included in culture?]

مَاذَا يُهَمُّنَا أَيْنَ تَعِيشُ الْأَكْثَرِيَّةُ؟ Why should we be interested in where
the majority lives?

مَا, with a prefixed preposition, originates a series of interrogative prepositional phrases, the meaning of each phrase being semantically related to the preposition used. In such compounds, the vowel of مَا is frequently shortened. This abbreviation, however, does not seem to have any functional relevance⁴³:

لِمَاذَا عَاهَدْتُ عَلَى السُّكُوتِ؟ Why had I promised silence?

لِمَ تُرِيدُ أَنْ أَبْتَسِمَ؟ Why do you want me to smile?

بِمَ تُرِيدُ أَنْ أَبْتَهِجَ؟ What do you want me to be happy
about?

فَيَوْمَ تَفَكَّرُ؟ What are you thinking about?

⁴³ They can hardly be considered new adverbs, since they remain equivalent in function and meaning to the full forms مَا and مَاذَا.

حَتَّى مَ أَتَّبِعُكَ عَلَى هَذِهِ الطَّرِيقِ
الْوَعْرَةِ؟ How long shall I follow you upon this
thorny road?

مِمَّ يَضْحَكُ؟ What are you laughing at?

مِمَّ تَخْشَى؟ What are you afraid of?

Note the interjectional use of لِمَ (see also page 148):

وَلِمَهُ؟! And why?!

With prepositions ending in a long vowel such as عَلَى, إِلَى, and at times, حَتَّى the long vowel of the preposition remains, though written with ا:

حَتَّى أَلَا أَنْتَظَرُ؟ How long shall I have to wait?

عَلَامَ تَأْسَفُ؟ what do you feel sad about?

عَلَامَ تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَحْمِلَ نَفْسَكَ؟ What do you intend to do?

إِلَامَ يَفْنَعُ بِالْأَحْلَامِ؟ How long would he be satisfied [only]
with dreams?

Both the interrogative pronouns مَنْ and مَا are grammatically masculine singular, and any adjective and verb in agreement with them can always be in the masculine singular. (See paragraphs above; compare also with مَنْ and مَا functioning as relative pronouns, vol. III.)

In order to give **the interrogative pronoun a gender and number determination, the personal pronoun of the third person may follow the interrogative pronoun.** After مَنْ, **the personal pronoun may be singular or plural**; after مَا, however, **only the masculine or feminine singular** is used⁴⁴ (see page 143):

⁴⁴ The personal pronoun always takes the gender of the following substantive, which is the subject of the sentence (see page 35). In some cases it is in agreement with the genitive governed by the subject (see vol. II):

فَمَا هِيَ أَشْهُرُ الثَّقَافَاتِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْعَصْرِ؟ What was the most famous culture of that
period?

وَإِذَنْ مَنْ هُوَ هَذَا الْكَاتِبُ؟ Then, who is the writer?

مَنْ هُمْ أَهْلُكَ وَذَوُوكَ؟ Who are your people and your kin?

مَنْ هُمْ الَّذِينَ؟- Who are they who...?

مَا هُوَ أَعْظَمُ مَا؟- What is the greatest thing that...?

مَا هِيَ الثَّقَافَةُ الَّتِي؟- What was the education that...?

مَا هِيَ الْأَحْزَابُ السِّيَاسِيَّةُ الَّتِي؟- Which are the political parties that...?

B مَنْ and, more frequently, مَا are used in **rhetorical questions**, always following the same patterns as those used for interrogative constructions:

مَا هَذَا الَّذِي أَرَى! What do I see!

مَاذَا لَقِيَ الْأَزْهَرِيُّ مِنْ إِكْرَامٍ وَحَفَاوَةٍ
وَمِنْ تَجَلَّةٍ وَإِكْبَارٍ! And how much honor, welcome,
reverence, and respect will the Azhari
find!

Hence the use of مَا as an **exclamatory particle** (see vol. II):

مَا أَكْثَرَ مَا كَانَ يَسْمَعُ! وَمَا أَغْرَبَ مَا
كَانَ يَسْمَعُ! How frequently he heard [conversations]
and how strange was what he heard!

مَا أَجْمَلَ الْحَيَاةَ هَهُنَا! How beautiful Life is here!

مَا أَجْمَلَكَ! How beautiful you are!

آهَ مَا أَجْهَلَ الْإِنْسَانَ! Ah! How ignorant is mankind!

§ 45 أَيُّ (أَيَّةٌ), "which"

A أَيُّ is generally used with a **following genitive** in the singular or plural and **can be in any of the three grammatical cases**. The genitive may be **singular and**

grammatically indefinite. أَيُّ then has an explicative meaning of "which," "what"⁴⁵:

فِي أَيِّ مَوْضِعٍ؟ In which place?

أَيِّ بَابٍ حَفِظْتَ الْيَوْمَ؟ Which chapter have you learned today?

أَيُّ شَيْءٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ هَذَا؟ What on earth is greater than this?

وَلَكِنْ لِأَيِّ سَبَبٍ آخَرَ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لِهَذَا؟ But for what other reason if not for this?

أَيِّ بَابٍ قَرَأْتَ؟ What chapter have you read?

The genitive may also be **plural**, in which case:

(a) If it is **indefinite** أَيُّ will have a qualitative meaning:

أَوْ تُزْمِعُ حَقِيقَةً إِنْزَالَ هَاتِهِ
الْمَخْلُوقَاتِ الْقَصْرَ؟ - أَيُّ مَخْلُوقَاتٍ؟
"Have you really decided that these creatures stay in the palace?" "What kind of creatures [are you talking about]?"

(b) If it is **definite**, it has a partitive meaning, e.g., "which one from; ...of; ...among":

فَأَيُّ هَؤُلَاءِ عَلَى الْحَقِّ وَأَيُّهُمْ عَلَى
الْبَاطِلِ؟ For which of these is on the side of the truth and which is not?

قُلْ لِي فِي أَيِّ الْمَدِينَتَيْنِ أَنَا؟ Tell me which of the two cities am I in?

أَيُّ أُمَّمِ الشَّرْقِ أَسْبَقُ إِلَى الْعِلْمِ؟ Which of the oriental countries was the first in developing science?

⁴⁵ Note أَيُّ governing a proper name containing the definite article:

أَيِّ قَاهِرَةٍ أَعْنَى؟ Which Cairo do I mean?

Likewise when أَيُّ is followed by a **dual** or **plural personal pronoun**, it always has a partitive meaning:

أَيُّنَا شَدِيدُ الْأَثَرِ؟ Which one of us has more influence?

أَيُّكُمْ أَصَدُّقُ إِذْنٌ؟ Which one of you shall I believe, then?

أَيُّهُمَا تَفْضِلِينَ؟ Which one do you prefer?

أَيُّ usually agrees in gender with the noun to which it refers:

أَيَّةَ فِتْرَةٍ تَعْنِي؟ What stage do you mean?

عَلَى أَيَّةِ طَرِيقٍ تُرِيدِينَ أَنْ نَسِيرَ؟ Which road do you want us to follow?

أَيَّةُ قِصَّةٍ فِي الْأَدَبِ أَعْجَبُ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقِصَّةِ؟ What story in literature is more fascinating than this one?

أَيَّةُ مَأْسَاةٍ؟ What tragedy?

However **this agreement is not necessary**:

أَيُّ زَهْرَةٍ لَمْ يَسْكُبِ الصَّبَاحُ قَطْرَةً مِنْ
النَّدَى بَيْنَ أَوْرَاقِهَا؟ On which flower petals will morning not deposit a drop of dew?

أَيُّ مَخْلُوقَاتٍ؟ What creatures?

أَيُّ فَايِدَةٍ لِي مِنْ ذِكْرِهَا وَهِيَ لَا
تُحِبُّنِي؟ What advantage could I have in mentioning her since she does not love me?

أَيُّ نِسَاءِ قُرَيْشٍ تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ -؟ Which woman of the Koreish could...?

Besides the partitive and explicative meaning, as we have seen in the preceding examples, أَيُّ can also have a **qualitative meaning**, e.g., "what," "what kind of." **The noun** (singular, dual, or plural) **will**, of course, **be indefinite**:

أَيُّ إِنْسَانٍ أَنْتَ؟! What kind of a man are you?!

(أَيَّةُ) أَيُّ, "which"

أَيَّةُ لُغَةٍ هَذِهِ؟ What kind of a language is that?

وَلَكِنْ أَيَّةُ جُسُورٍ هَذِهِ؟ But what kind of bridges are they?

وَأَيُّ بَأْسٍ فِي ذَلِكَ؟ And what is wrong with this? [What kind of wrongness is there in this?]

أَيُّ sometimes **governs an adjective**; the adjective is substantivised and, being indefinite, أَيُّ has an explicative meaning, as explained above (see page 00):

What is strange about this? [What strange thing is there about this?]

أَيُّ عَجِيبٍ فِي ذَلِكَ؟ (Cf. the French Quoi de drôle y a-t-il à ce sujet?)

أَيُّ is frequently used in **indirect questions** (see vol. III):

أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَرَى إِلَى أَيِّ حَدٍّ تَغَيَّرَ شَهْرِيَارُ I want to see to what extent Shehriyar has changed.

أَفَلَا أَفْهَمْتَنِي بِأَنَّةِ قُدْرَةٍ تَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ؟ Won't you explain to me by what power you do that?

أَمَا تَعْرِفُ فِي أَيَّةِ عَزْلَةٍ أَعِيشُ؟ Don't you know in what isolation I live?

B Of singular interest is the use of أَيُّ as an **indefinite pronoun**. When it is so used, its meaning, instead of being restrictive, becomes general. Thus, for example, فِي أَيِّ وَقْتٍ شَاءَ, which as an interrogative sentence would mean: "when does he wish?", as an indefinite clause means:

(أَنْ يُطَلِّقَهَا) فِي أَيِّ وَقْتٍ شَاءَ (to divorce her) any time he wishes.

In these expressions the agreement in gender of أَيُّ with the following noun in the sentence remains as stated for the interrogative; the genitive, however, is

usually indefinite. **A complete sentence is no longer necessary after أَيُّ** used in this meaning:

أَنَّ الْعَرَبَ لَيْسُوا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ مِنَ الْأُمَمِ وَلَا أَيُّهُ أُمَّةٌ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَيَّةِ أُمَّةٍ

that the Arabs are no better than any other people and no people are better than any other.

عَلَى أَيَّةِ حَالٍ أَرَى أَنْ - At any rate, I think that....

أَنْ أَمُدَّ يَدِي لِتُتَاوَلَ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ مِنْ أَيِّ إِنْسَانٍ

that I reach out my hand to accept anything from anyone.

لِلْمُقَارَنَةِ مَعَ أَيِّ آدَبٍ عَالَمِيٍّ

to be compared with any world literature.

فَقُوْبَةُ الصَّرْعِ لَا تَذَرُ عِنْدَ مَنْ تُصِيبُهُ أَيُّ ذِكْرٍ لَمَّا مَرَّ بِهِ أَثْنَاءَهَا

for a fit of epilepsy does not leave its victim with any memory of what happened to him during it.

فَلَا نَجِدُ أَيَّةَ عِنَايَةٍ بِالصَّانِعِ أَوْ التَّاجِرِ - and we don't find that any attention [is paid] to the craftman or the merchant....

أَمَّا الشَّعْبُ فَلَا يُحِشُّونَ أَيُّ وَجْدَانٍ لَهُ

as for the people, they [the writers] were not aware of their emotional life.

لَا أَذْرِي بِأَيِّ كَلَامٍ كَانَ يُحَرِّكُ شَفَتَيْهِ

I didn't know what words he was saying. [I did not know with what words he let his lips move.]

لِأَنَّهِنَّ لَمْ يُعِيرَاهَا أَيُّ اهْتِمَامٍ

for they did not pay any attention to her.

أَيُّ may, however, govern a plural personal suffix:

لِأَنِّي لَسْتُ أَفَكِّرُ فِي أَيِّكُمْ الْآنَ

for now I am not thinking about any of you.

When the noun which follows أَيُّ is definite, the genitive construction may be

paraphrased by a **prepositional phrase with مِنْ** (see vol. II). In such cases, أَيُّهُ remains masculine:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُ أَثْمَرَ أَيًّا مِنْ هَذَيْنِ الثَّمَرَيْنِ أَوْ كِلَيْهِمَا - and if he succeeds in achieving either of the two aims, or both of them....

كَيْمَا تَتَحَقَّقَ الْمَسَاوَاةَ بَيْنَ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَنُونَ أَيًّا مِنَ الطَّبَقَتَيْنِ in order to make no distinction among those who have either of the two editions.

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ فِي مَقْدُورِ أَيٍّ مِنَّا أَنْ - None of us could [for it was not in the power of any of us to]....

لِأَيِّ وَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَوْهَامِ الَّتِي ابْتَدَعَتْهَا الْإِنْسَانِيَّةُ because of any of the fancies which humanity has invented.

أَيُّهُ as an indefinite pronoun without a **following genitive** or prepositional specification may be used with the verb كَانَ. يي in such instances does not change in gender.

وَأَيًّا كَانَ السَّبَبُ - whatever the reason might be....

رَغِبَ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ شَيْئًا أَيًّا كَانَ He longed to do something, whatever it might be.

عِبَادَةُ حَجَرٍ أَيًّا كَانَتْ صُورَتُهُ! with the worship of a stone, whatever its appearance might be.

وَاقْرَأْ وَتَعَلَّمْ أَيُّهَا الْقَارِيءُ الْعَرَبِيُّ أَيًّا كُنْتَ Read and learn [this], O Arab reader, whoever you are!

C أَيُّهُ together with مَا as an indefinite particle (see vol. II) in the compound أَيُّهُمَا, has an **emphatic effect**.⁴⁶

إِضْطَرَبَ أَيُّهُمَا اضْطِرَابٌ He was most upset. [He was upset. What an upset!]

⁴⁶ Note that the particle مَا does not make void the governing function of أَيُّهُ, and therefore the noun following the particle is in the genitive case. (See Wehr under أَيُّهُ; Wright II, p. 316 D.)

سُرَّ لِدَلِكْ أَيَّمَا سُرُورٍ He was extremely glad because of this.

أَيُّ frequently expresses its qualitative meaning with an exclamatory effect:

أَيُّ أَثَرٍ تَرَكْتَ هَاتَانِ الْفَاجِعَتَانِ What a mark these two painful tragedies
الْأَلِيمَتَانِ فِي نَفْسِ مُحَمَّدٍ left on Mohammed's spirit!

أَيُّ ظُلْمٍ أَشَدُّ مِنْ أَنْ! What injustice could be greater than...!

وَأَيُّ فَضْلٍ! What kindness!

As an exclamatory particle أَيُّ may introduce, in the genitive case, a substantive already mentioned in the sentence, for which it serves as an exclamatory apposition. أَيُّ is in the same case as the noun which it modifies:

فَقَدْ أَصْبَحْتُ عَلَى يَقِينٍ مِنْ أَنَّهُ خَبِيثٌ for I became sure that he was malicious
وَأَيُّ خَبِيثٍ and how malicious!

وَلَكِنَّهُ صَعَبٌ أَيُّ صَعَبٍ حِينَ يَبْدَأُ But it is very difficult at the beginning.

فَقَدْ كَانَ لِأَهْلِهَا غَرَامٌ بِالْبَيْذِ أَيُّ غَرَامٍ for its people had a passion for wine and
وَكَانُوا يَجِدُونَ فِي النَّشْوَةِ بِهِ نَعِيمًا used to find the greatest pleasure in
أَيُّ نَعِيمٍ intoxication.

أَمَّا هُوَ فَقَدْ أَحْدَثَ ظُهُورَهَا الْمَفَاجِئُ Her sudden appearance had a
فِي نَفْسِهِ أَثَرًا أَيُّ أَثَرٍ remarkable effect upon him.

§ 46 كَمْ, "how?" "how many?" "how much?"

كَمْ is originally a contraction of the prepositional phrase كَمَا, "as what."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ On the origin and development of this particle, see Reck., *Verh.*, p. 76; Fleischer, *Beitr.*, VIII, p. 126.

More than any other particle, it has developed the double character of an interrogative and an exclamative. It has, however, preserved the character and syntactical functions of a pronoun, and thus can be used within the sentence to fill the same function as مَا with the specific meaning of this construction.

A **As an interrogative particle** it is always found at the beginning of the sentence-the usual word order for the question-and because of its indefinite character it may be more closely determined by an **accusative singular** functioning as an "accusative of specification" (see vol. II):

كَمْ قَيْرَاطًا تُحِبُّ أَنْ يَكُونَ اِرْتِفَاعُ قُبَّةِ
الْفَالُودَجِ الْيَوْمَ؟ How many inches high do you want the
faludaj to be today?

كَمْ حِزْبًا عِنْدَكُمْ؟ How many troops do you have?

The "accusative of specification" is frequently paraphrased by its **prepositional equivalent with مِنْ**. The prepositional phrase has a determinative function, and the noun in **the genitive is singular** (see vol. II):

كَمْ حَفِظْتَ مِنْ بَيْتٍ؟ How many verses have you memorized?

كَمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ جُزْءٍ؟ How many parts does the Koran have?

كَمْ تَشْتَغِلُ فِي الْكُتَّابِ مِنْ يَوْمٍ؟ How many days are we busy at school?

In a **nominal sentence** كَمْ can be used with the **following noun in the nominative**; in such cases the particle asks for a quantitative determination and functions as a predicate to the noun in the nominative case:

كَمْ السَّاعَةُ الْآنَ؟ What time is it now?

كَمْ الدِّيَّةُ فِيكُمْ؟ How much does the blood money
amount to among you?

كَمْ إِيجَارُ الشَّقَّةِ؟ How much is the rent for the apartment?

Similarly, within an indirect question (see vol. II):

أَلَا تَعْرِفُ كَمْ عُمُرُهُ؟ Don't you know how old he is?

كَمْ may also be followed by a **verbal sentence**. If the meaning remains clear, كَمْ need not be specified by an accusative or prepositional phrase; in such instances كَمْ alone fills the function of a substantive in any of the grammatical cases:

كَمْ كَانَ عَدَدُ أَعْدَائِكَ؟ How many were your adversaries?

كَمْ حَفِظْتَ؟ How much did you learn?

كَمْ تَظُنُّهُمْ عَلَى وَجْهِ التَّقْرِيبِ؟ Approximately how many do you think they were?

B As an exclamatory particle, كَمْ has the same quantitative and qualitative value as an interrogative particle; however, its construction as an exclamatory differs from its construction as an interrogative.

It can be used with an **indefinite noun, in the genitive case**:

كَمْ مَرَّةٍ فَكَّرْتُ مُنْذُ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةِ إِلَى هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ - How many times since that night [up to this moment] have I thought of...!

كَمْ قِصَّةٍ أَرَدْنَا - وَكَمْ دَمْعَةٍ ذَرَفْنَاهَا لِأَنَّ فَتَاةً أَمِيْنَةً خَانَهَا فَتَاهَا How many a story we wanted to.... How many a tear we shed because a faithful girl was betrayed by her beloved!

More frequently a **prepositional phrase with مِنْ** governing an indefinite noun is used as equivalent to the genitive case; the phrase may follow immediately after the particle, but it can also be placed at the end of the sentence:

وَكَمْ لِسَيِّدِنَا عَلَى الْأُسْرَةِ مِنْ حُقُوقٍ! and how many privileges the school-teacher had in the family!

وَكَمْ مِنْ رَجُلٍ عَازِبٍ رَاغِبٍ عَنِ الزَّوْاجِ - How many a single man, detesting marriage....

كَمْ مَرَقَتْ بِهِ مِنْ أَجْسَادٍ! وَكَمْ سَالَتْ
تَحْتَ نَضْلِهِ مِنْ دِمَاءٍ! How many bodies you have torn to
pieces with it! And how much blood has
flowed under its blade!

When the noun following the preposition مِنْ is plural and definite, the preposition has a **partitive meaning** (see vol. II):

كَمْ مِنَ الْمُصَابِينَ مِثْلَهُ مَنْ سَلَكَ سَبِيلَهُ
وَكََمْ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ سَقَطَ فَرِيْسَةً الْجُنُونِ How many of the people stricken as he
was had followed his path, and had
become a prey to madness.

كَمْ can introduce a **complete nominal sentence**; in such cases it has the syntactical function of an exclamatory adverb, "how!":

كَمْ أَنَا مُشْتَاقٌ إِلَى لِقَاءِ أَبِيكَ
بِشَخِصِكَ! How I longed to meet your father again
in you!

كَمْ أَنْتَ رَحْبُ الصَّدْرِ الْيَوْمَ! How carefree you are today!

كَمْ أَحَمَدُ اللَّهِ عَلَى هَذِهِ الْمُعْجَزَةِ
الْحَقَّةِ How praiseworthy God is for this true
miracle!

It has the same adverbial function when introducing a **verbal sentence**:

كَمْ تُحِبُّ أَهْلَكَ! How much you love your family!

وَكََمْ كَانَ الْقَاضِي يُحْسِنُ الْقِرَاءَةَ and how well the judge recited the
Koran!

With this meaning, كَمْ is frequently used **to emphasize the desiderative meaning of لَوْ** (see vol. II):

وَكََمْ أَحِبُّ لَوْ تَعْرِفِيَنَّهُ! How I wish you could know him!

كَمْ كَانَ يَتَمَنَّى طِفْلاً لَوْ - How much he wished as a child to....

كَمْ as an **exclamatory adverb** can also emphasize the **repetition** of an action: "how often!", "how many times!":

وَكَمْ دَفَعَ إِلَى الْعَرِيفِ مَا كَانَ يَمْلَأُ جَيْبَهُ مِنْ خُبْزٍ and how often he gave the monitor the bread he had in his pocket!

كَمْ صَعَدَ الْمَنَارَةَ مَعَ الْمُؤَذِّنِ وَكَمْ أَذَّنَ مَكَانَهُ وَكَمْ شَارَكَهُ فِي هَذَا الدُّعَاءِ الَّذِي - How many times he went up to the minaret with the muezzin, and how often called to prayer instead of him; and how many times he joined him in the prayer which....

For greater emphasis, the exclamatory particle لَ may precede كَمْ:

لَكَمْ أَلَمَنِي أَنْ أَبْصُرَ - How much it hurts me to see....

لَكَمْ نَهَيْتُهُ وَلَكَمْ حَاوَلْتُ مَعَهُ بِاللِّينِ حِينَئِذٍ وَبِالشَّدَّةِ كَثِيرًا How often I forbade him, and how often I tried, sometimes with kindness, mostly with severity, but....

كَمْ will be placed before the main clause when referring to a following subordinate noun clause:

كَمْ يَجِبُ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَوِيًّا هَذَا الْهِنْدِيُّ! How strong this Indian must be! [How it is necessary that this Indian be strong!]

§ 47 ADVERBIAL INTERROGATIVE SENTENCES

In this category we should include **questions about any circumstances or adverbial aspects modifying the statement**. They are always introduced by a local, temporal, or modal adverb.

When the adverb introduces a single substantive in the nominative case, it functions as a nominal predicate on the substantive, the question being a **complete nominal sentence** (see page 20):

أَيْنَ وَالِدُكَ؟ Where is your father?

أَيْنَ أَبُوكَ وَأُمُّكَ؟ Where are your your parents?

كَيْفَ هُمْ؟ How are they?

أَيْنَ هَذَا الْقَارِئُ الَّذِي -؟ and where is that reader who...?

أَنَّى لَهُ ذَلِكَ How could he attain that?

Note also its use with a prepositional phrase:

كَيْفَ لَنَا بِالتَّوْمِ؟ How could we sleep...?

(For a discussion of حَسْتُ, see vol. II.)

It may introduce a **verbal sentence**:

مَتَى أَعُودُ؟ When shall I return?

مَتَى أَصِيرُ هَكَذَا؟ When shall I be like this?

أَيْنَ ذَهَبَ؟ Where did he go?

كَيْفَ يَبْدَأُ؟ How could he begin?

وَكَيْفَ عَرَفْتُهُ؟ and how did you know him?

الْأَطِبَّاءُ! وَمَتَى اتَّفَقُوا عَلَى رَأْيٍ؟ The doctors! When did they agree on any opinion?

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ هَذَا التَّيِّ لِهَذِهِ الْعُجُوزِ؟ How can such an old woman have a bust like that?

The adverb is frequently modified by a preposition which specifies its meaning:

إِلَى أَيْنَ تَذْهَبُ؟ Where are you going?

إِلَى مَتَى هَذِهِ الدَّائِرَةُ الَّتِي لَا مَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا؟ How long will this vicious circle last?

مُنْذُ مَتَى؟ Since when?

مِنْ أَيْنَ أَتَى؟ Where did he come from?

The adverb مَتَى is used by some authors following the particle أَيُّ, 'ay [or 'ayyu (?)], with no apparent change of meaning:

- أَيُّ مَتَى وُلِدْتَ؟ When were you born?
 أَيُّ مَتَى يَحِينُ ذَلِكَ الْوَقْتُ؟ When will that time come?

In **elliptical constructions**, the adverb may refer to a sentence which has already been mentioned:

- تَعَالَ مَعِيَ يَا مَشْلِينِيَا! - إِلَى أَيْنَ؟ "Come with me, Mashliniya." "Where?"
 سَعَادَةُ الْبَكِّ يُرِيدُكَ عَلَى أَنْ يُقَابِلَهُ
 الْآنَ - أَيْنَ؟ "His Grace, the Bey, asks you to meet him now." "Where?"
 إِنِّي أَكَلِّمُكَ لِأَطْمَئِنَّكَ كَيْفَ "I am talking to you to calm you." "How"
 أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ أَتَيْهَا الْمَلِكُ . . . - مَتَى ...
 مَتَى؟ "I'll bring it to you, O King." "When?... When?"
 مُؤَدِّبُ الْأَمِيرَةِ؟ مُنْذُ مَتَى؟ "Preceptor of the princess? Since when?"

If, however, a part of the sentence is repeated, **the interrogative adverb may appear at the end of the sentence** rather than in the normal position at the beginning (see page 145):

- لَا تَلْمُسْهَا وَصَاحِبَهَا غَائِبٌ غَائِبٌ أَيْنَ؟ "Don't you touch it while its owner is absent." "Absent, where?"
 قَدْ اسْتَحَالَ الْآنَ إِلَى إِنْسَانٍ يُرِيدُ
 الْهَرَبَ ... يُرِيدُ الْهَرَبَ إِلَى أَيْنَ؟ "He has become a man who wants to flee...." "Wants to flee where?"

In subordinated clauses the adverbs frequently introduce either an **indirect question** (see vol. II), or a **subordinate adverbial clause** (see also vol. II):

- إِنَّا نَعْرِفُ أَيْنَ بَيْتُكَ We do know where your house is.

يُعَلِّمُهُمْ كَيْفَ يَسْرِقُونَ السَّاعَاتِ teaching them how to steal watches.

أَرَأَيْتَ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ السَّحَرُ؟ Have you seen how magic is practiced?

Of all the adverbs **only** كَيْفَ, which is used in both independent and dependent constructions, has developed an **exclamatory meaning**:

أَنْتَ لَا تَدْرِي يَا أَبِي كَيْفَ سَيَكُونُ
اجْتِهَادِي! You don't know, Father, how industrious
I shall be!

(For a discussion of the compounds كَيْفَمَا, أَيْنَمَا, etc., see vol. III.)

ϕ 48 ANSWERS TO A QUESTION

A question about the intrinsic validity of the statement is generally followed by an answer which either confirms or rejects the statement presented in the question.

A **For an affirmative answer** Arabic uses:

(a) نَعَمْ, which is the particle of **confirmation** for a preceding statement:

"yes!", "yes indeed!", "certainly!"; thus it is generally used only after questions expressed affirmatively:

أَأَنَا... فِي حَضْرَةِ الْمَلِكِ سُلَيْمَانَ؟ نَعَمْ
... مَا حَاجَتُكَ؟ "Am I... in the presence of King
Solomon?" "Yes! What do you want?"

أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَجْلِسَ عَلَى عَرْسِهَا - عَرْسُهَا؟
نَعَمْ - "I want her to sit down on her throne."
"On her throne?" "Yes!"

أَتُرِيدُ حَقًّا أَنْ تَتْرَكَ هَذَا الْبَيْتَ؟ - نَعَمْ
"Do you really want to leave this house?"
"Yes!"

هَلْ تُجِيدُ الْفَرَنْسِيَّةَ وَالْإِنْجِلِيزِيَّةَ - نَعَمْ
أَجِيدُهُمَا "Do you know French and English well?"
"Yes! I do."

أَنْتِ سَعِيدَةٌ؟ - نَعَمْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ "Are you happy?" "Yes, indeed, thank God!"

It is also used after questions where the speaker, although formally expressing himself in the negative, nevertheless **expects a positive answer** (cf. the Latin *nonne* in, e.g., "*Quid? Canis nonne similis est lupo?*"; "Is a dog not similar to a wolf?"):

أَلَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ؟ - نَعَمْ يَا سَيِّدَتِي "Isn't that so?" "Yes! My Lady!"

أَلَمْ يَقُلِ السَّاعَةَ إِنَّهُ ذَاهِبٌ إِلَى الْحَدِيقَةِ يَسْتَنْشِقُ الْهَوَاءَ؟ - نَعَمْ...
الْهَوَاءَ الطَّلَقِ النَّقِيِّ "Didn't he say just now that he was going to the garden to get some air?" "Yes! Fresh air."

أَوَلَمْ تُخْبِرْهَا بِمَا قُلْتُ لَكَ؟ -
نَعَمْ... نَعَمْ... "Haven't you told her what I told you?" "Yes! Yes!"

نَعَمْ is frequently used as an **emphatic confirmation** of a **preceding** affirmative statement:

هَاهُودَا... - نَعَمْ... هَاهُنَا... "There he is." "Yes! Here I am."

إِنَّكَ وَجَدْتَهَا - نَعَمْ وَجَدْتُهَا "You found her." "Yes! I found her."

فَيَقُولُ لَكَ (نَعَمْ سَأَفْعَلُ هَذَا) He will answer you, "Yes, I'll do that."

and also to confirm a **following statement**, which is very frequently introduced by the emphatic particle إِنَّ⁴⁸:

نَعَمْ إِنَّ مُعَامَلَةَ الرَّجُلِ لِلْمَرْأَةِ Truly, the behavior of men toward women....

⁴⁸ H. Wehr in his Dictionary, under نَعَمْ says that it may introduce a "verbal clause." It is not clear whether he means a different construction from the one presented here.

نَعَمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فِي الْعَهْدِ
الْأُمَوِيِّ

Indeed, they represent everything during the Umayyad period.

نَعَمْ إِنَّ الْمُتَوَكِّلَ دَبَّرَ لَهُ مَكِيدَةً فَقَتَلَهُ

Indeed, al-Mutawakkil devised a stratagem against him and killed him.

نَعَمْ مَا أَحْسَنَ مَلَابِسَ النَّاسِ الْآنَ

How pretty today's clothes are!

نَعَمْ هُوَ يَجْهَلُ ذَلِكَ

Yes, indeed, he ignores that.

نَعَمْ يَا مُسْتَرَّ بَلَاكَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْفَلَّاحُونَ
لَهُمْ ذَوْقٌ وَذَوْقٌ جَمِيلٌ

Yes, indeed, Mr. Black, these peasants have taste and delicate taste, at that.

نَعَمْ may be preceded by the particle أَيَّ with increased emphatic effect:

أَيَّ نَعَمْ

Yes, indeed!

(b) بَلَى, "yes," "certainly," is in some ways the counterpart of نَعَمْ. بَلَى contradicts the statement as expressed by the speaker. It is used **after those negative questions which expect an affirmative answer** (cf. the German *doch* in, e.g., "*Hast du ihn wirklich nicht gesehen?*" "*Doch* "; "Didn't you really see him?" "Yes, I did."):

أَلَا تَرَى لِي جَسَدًا جَمِيلًا؟ - بَلَى

"Don't you think I have a beautiful body?" "Yes, I do."

أَلَيْسَ هُوَ بِخَيْرٍ؟.. بَلَى... شُكْرًا

"Isn't he well?" "Yes, [he is well] Thank you!"

أَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ عَنْهُ؟! - بَلَى...

"Haven't you heard of him?" "Yes, I have."

إِنَّهُ الْوَزِيرُ أَلَا تَفْهَمُ؟ - بَلَى

"He is the minister! Don't you understand?" "Yes, I do."

Note:

وَهَذِهِ الْبَنَائَاتُ؟ بَلَى هَذِهِ (وَسْتَ هُول) "and these buildings?" "Yes, this is West Hall."

بَلَى is also used **after a negative statement to contradict the negation**, thus affirming its content:

مَا أَحْسَبُ لَكَ عَمَلًا تُسَارِعُ إِلَيْهِ - بَلَى "I do not believe that you have something urgent to do." "Yes, I have."

لَمْ أَنْسَ شَيْئًا - بَلَى! "I never forgot anything." "Yes, you did."

It is also used **after a negative command**:

لَا تَقُلْ هَذَا! - بَلَى يَا شَهْرَزَادَ سَأَمُوتُ "Don't say that!" "Yes, Shahrazad, [I will say it:] I shall die."

(c) أَجَلٌ, "yes," "certainly," confirms a preceding statement:

وَلَكِنَّكَ تَتَأَلَّمِينَ... - أَجَلٌ - كَثِيرًا "But you are suffering." "Yes, very much."

or **one that follows**:

أَجَلٌ كَانَ يَخَافُ ذَلِكَ الشُّعُورَ Of course he feared that feeling....

It is also used **after an affirmative question** to confirm the statement as intended by the speaker:

أَقَالَ لَكَ هَذَا؟ أَجَلٌ "Did he tell you this?" "Certainly."

أَهَذَا رَأْيُكَ؟! - أَجَلٌ "Is this your opinion?" "Yes."

أَحَقًّا كُنْتُ أُحَادِثُ نَفْسِي؟ أَجَلٌ "Was I really talking to myself?" "Yes!"

أَهَذَا كُلُّ مَا فِي وَسْعِهِمَا؟ - أَجَلٌ... هَذَا كُلُّ مَا فِي وَسْعِهِمَا "Is that all they can do?" "Yes, that is all they can do."

B For a negative answer لَا, "no," and كَلَّا, "not at all," are used:

لَا is a negation of a general nature; كَلَّا is an emphatic rejection of the preceding statement:

أَلَا تَذْهَبُ لِلِقَائِهِ؟ - ثُمَّ قَالَ بِحَزْمٍ كَلَّا "Won't you go to meet him?" Then he said firmly, "Certainly not!"

أَلَيْسُوا مِنَ الرُّومِ؟ - كَلَّا "Aren't they Byzantines?" "Certainly not!"

هَلْ سَمِعْتَ يَا أُمَّاهُ؟ هَلْ سَمِعْتَ صَوْتَ - صَارِحٍ مُسْتَغِيثٍ؟ - لَا لَمْ أَسْمَعْ سِوَى - "Mother, did you hear? Did you hear a voice crying for help?" "No, I only heard...."

قَالَ الشَّيْطَانُ وَاللَّهِ مَا ذَهَبَ بِهِ إِلَّا لِيَذْبَحَهُ قَالَتِ الْأُمُّ كَلَّا! هُوَ أَشْفَقُ بِهِ وَأَشَدُّ حُبًّا لَهُ Satan said: "By God, he only took him along to sacrifice him." The mother answered: "Certainly not! He is very tender to him and loves him very much."

(For a discussion of لَا شَيْءَ see page 169, and for لَا of general denial, see page 114.)

C A question about a fact or about the circumstances surrounding a fact, can frequently be answered in a complete statement; however, the answer may be given in the form of an elliptical sentence. In this instance, if nouns are involved, they will take the appropriate case:

كَمْ حَفِظْتَ مِنْ بَيُوتٍ؟ أَجَابَ عِشْرِينَ "How many verses did you learn?" He answered, "Twenty."

وَكَمْ نَشْتَغِلُ فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ يَوْمٍ؟ قَالَ الصَّبِيُّ خَمْسَةَ أَيَّامٍ "and how many days are we busy in school?" The boy answered, "Five days."

كَمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ جُزْءٍ؟ قَالَ ثَلَاثُونَ "How many parts does the Koran have?" He said, "Thirty."

However, when there is in the answer a **pronoun** that one would expect to be in the accusative case, the **nominative** is used instead:

وَأَقُولُ أَيُّضًا إِنَّهَا تُحِبُّكَ أَنْتَ وَلَا تُحِبُّ
فِي الدُّنْيَا أَحَدًا سِوَاكَ - قَالَ أَنَا؟ "Moreover, I tell you that she loves you
and that she does not love anyone on
earth but you." He said, "Me?"

Note that لَا شَيْءَ as an indefinite negative answer, "nothing," always seems to be considered as an accusative of general denial, and therefore the noun is in the accusative without the definite article or nunation (see page 114):

مَاذَا تَقُولِينَ؟ - لَا شَيْءَ "What do you say?" "Nothing."

وَمَاذَا صَنَعْتَ بَعْدَئِذَا؟ - لَا شَيْءَ "And what did you do then?" "Nothing."

مَاذَا تَرَى؟ - لَا شَيْءَ "What do you see?" "Nothing."

وَبِمَاذَا أَجَابَتْ؟ - لَا شَيْءَ "And what did she answer?" "Nothing."