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تَيْسِيرُ تَعَلُّمِ اللُّغَةِ الْعَرَبِيَّةِ لِلدِّرَاسَةِ التَّعْبُدِيَّةِ

Facilitating the Learning of Arabic for Devotional Studies

Taysir Ta'allum al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah li al-Dirāsah al-Ta'abbudiyyah

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Lesson 6

Intro to Morphology: Verbal Forms (الأوزان)

Morphology is a key area of study in Arabic grammar. One of the challenges to learning Arabic and being proficient in it is undoubtedly grasping the field of morphology, known as **ṣarf** or **taṣrif**. In essence, it is the study of how verbs and nouns change from their roots into different inflections and the meanings those inflections. Let's have a look at the **Ten Basic Verbal Forms**:

فَعَلَ (I) فَعَّلَ (II) فَاعَلَ (III) أَفْعَلَ (IV) تَفَعَّلَ (V) تَفَاعَلَ (VI)
اِنْفَعَلَ (VII) اِفْتَعَلَ (VIII) اِفْعَلَّ (IX) اِسْتَفْعَلَ (X)

عَبَدَ عَلِمَ كَبُرَ

The Roman numerals represent the **Ten Basic** or essential verbal forms, called **awzān** (أوزان) (**wazn** [وزن] is the singular). Let's see below how to relate to one another and inflect new meanings. ā ī ū

Verb Forms (الأوزان)

Form I فَعَلَ

This form conveys the standard or basic meaning of the **root verb**. It is roughly similar to the English **infinitive**.

An example would be from Sūrah 'Abasa:

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى

***“He frowned and turned away”** - Qur'an 80: 1*

In this example, the verb عَبَسَ is in its most basic form: **it consists of only the three root letters**.

Form II فَعَّلَ

Form II is **causative** or **intensive** (makes stronger or more intense) of Form I. It is formulated by placing a **shaddah** over the **second root letter**. “To know” عَلِمَ in Form I becomes “to teach” عَلَّمَ in Form II. “To smash” كَسَرَ in Form II is the more intense version of the root verb “to break” كَسَرَ. While **Form I** can have variations in the vowelization of the second root letter

كَبَّرَ - "to become large"

عَمِلَ - "to do, act, or operate"

عَبَدَ - "to worship"

Form II verbs always have a **fathah** for its three vowels:

كَبَّرَ - "to magnify or aggrandize"

عَمَّلَ - "to appoint a successor or viceregent"

عَبَّدَ - "to enslave"

An example would be from Sūrah al-Fajr:

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ

“As for man, when his Lord tests him by **honoring** him and favouring him, he says, ‘My Lord has honored me!’” - **Qur’an 89: 15**

Form III فاعَلَ

Form III is **transitive** or relates to another. For example the root verb “to be safe” سلم in Form III becomes “to make peace with someone” بسالم. “To become known” علن in Form I becomes “to disclose something to someone” عالن in Form III. And, as in the seventh verse of **Surah al-inshiqāq**, “To reckon, count, or consider” حسب in Form I becomes “to settle an affair, to give/make an assessment” حاسب in Form III.

Form IV أفعَلَ

Form IV is **causative** or **transitive** (requires an object) of Form I.

“To dictate” أكتب in Form IV instead of just “to write” كتب in Form I.

“To be good” صلح in Form I versus “to put in the order” أصلح in Form IV. This form can also be related to different parts of the day.

Form V تَفَعَّلَ

Form V is **reflexive** (i.e. the subject and the direct object are the same) or **passive** of Form I or Form II. “To observe” رقب in Form I becomes “to anticipate” ترقب in Form V. “To be destroyed” تنقض in Form V versus “to destroy” نقض in Form I.

Form VI تَفَاعَلَ

Form VI is **reflexive** or **passive** of Form III. The verb “to be fast” تسارع in Form I becomes “to rush or to hurry” تسارع in Form VI. “To work” عمل in Form I becomes “to do business with” تعامل in Form VI.

Form VII اِنْفَعَلَ

Form VII is the **passive** of Form I. “To tie” عقد in Form I becomes “to be knit together” انعقد in Form VII. “To break” فجر becomes “to explode or detonate” انفجر in Form VII.

Form VIII اِفْتَعَلَ

Form VIII is **reflexive** for nuances and can convey doing something with detail or intentionally. For example “to hear” سمع in Form I

becomes “to listen” استمع in Form VIII. “To acknowledge” اعترف in Form VIII instead of just “to know” عرف in Form I.

* ”Ma’rifah” can better be understood not simply as “knowing God” but “acknowledging God” (i.e., more active and purposeful).

Form IX اِفْعَلَّ

This verb form is actually quite rare, but is used with a meaning of “acquiring a color or a defect” (as in the case of physical defects).

Examples include احمر which means “to turn red” and اعوج which means “to be twisted”.

Form X اِسْتَفْعَلَ

Form X conveys a meaning of “seeking an action or quality” of Form I. It can also mean “to consider something to be such”. “To increase” زاد in Form I becomes “to try to achieve more” استزاد in Form X. “To be safe” سلم in Form X becomes “to surrender” استسلم in Form X.

Verb Forms Found In Juz' 'Amma

I

"To know"; (علم).

Q 78: 4.

"To make; to bring about; to make happen"; (جعل).

Q 78: 6.

"To flatten; to spread out"; (مهد).

Q 78: 6.

"To create"; (خلق)

Q 78: 8

"To build"; (بنى)

Q 78: 12

"To be"; (كان)

Q 78: 17, 19, 21, 27, 40; 79: 11

"To open"; (فتح)

Q 78: 19

"To taste"; (ذوق)

Q 78: 24, 30

“To hope/to have hope”; (رجا)

Q 78: 27

“To increase”; (زاد)

Q 78: 30

“To hear”; (سمع)

Q 78: 35

“To own”; (ملك)

Q 78: 37

“To stand (up)”; (قام)

Q 78: 38

“To hear/authorize”; (أذن)

Q 78: 38

“To speak/say”; (قال)

Q 78: 38, 40, 79: 10, 12

“To will/desire”; (شاء)

Q 78: 39

“To see/consider”; (نظر)

Q 78: 40

“To move or be in motion”; (سَيَّرَ)

Q 78: 20

“To slander/to flatout call s.th or s.o. a liar”; (كَذَّبَ)

Q 78: 28

“To precede/send forth/to come before s.th.”; (قَدَّمَ)

Q 78: 40

“To order/arrange affairs”; (دَبَّرَ)

Q 79: 5

III

“To settle an affair, to give/make an assessment”; (حَاسِبَ)

Q 84: 7

“To convene or call a meeting”; (نَادَى)

Q 79: 16

IV

“To send down”; (أَنْزَلَ)

Q 78: 14

“To bring forth”; (أَخْرَجَ)

Q 78: 15

“To blow (through s.th.)”; (أَنْفَخَ)

Q 78: 18

“To count or enumerate or record”; (أَحْصَى)

Q 78: 29

“To warn”; (أَنْذَرَ)

Q 78: 40

V

“To speak with another”; (تَكَلَّمَ)

Q 78: 38

VI

“To question s.o.; to question o.s”; (تَسَاءَلَ).

Q 78: 1.

VII

VIII

“To differ; to vary”; (اِخْتَلَفَ).

Q 78: 3.

“To take (a hold of)”; (اتَّخَذَ)

Q 78: 39

IX

X