Unit 2

الفصل 2

VERBS

Al- Fi'l الفعل

A verb is a word indicating any action by one or more persons in the past, present or future tense.

In Arabic, the verbs are mainly divided into **Past tense** ماضي (*Maadi*) and **Present / Future tense** مضارع (*Mudaari*).

Arabic verbs are mostly tri-lettered, that is they are based on the roots of three consonants, e.g.:

فَعَلَ شَكَرَ كَفَرَ . These verbs are called الفعل السالم (Al-Fi'l al Salim).

PAST TENSE الفعل الماضي

To indicate patterns of the verbs, grammarians use the letters of the verb فعل (*fa'ala*). The ف (*fa*) represents the first consonant, the ع ('*ain*) represents the second consonant, and the ل (*lam*) represents the third consonant.

In a simple tri-lettered verb, the ـَ is placed on the first and last letters, but ـِ or ـُ is placed on the middle letter.

Constant ـَ	←	فَعَلَ	→	Constant ـَ
		Variable ↓		
		ـَ ـِ ـُ		

e.g.:

Middle Letter	Verb		
ـَ	نَصَرَ	فَتَحَ	كَتَبَ
ـِ	سَمِعَ	عَلِمَ	فَرِحَ
ـُ	عَظُمَ	كَرُمَ	شَرُفَ

The format for three letter past tense verbs is as follows:

Plural جمع	Dual مثنى	Singular مفرد	
فَعَلُوْا They (all) did	فَعَلَا They (two) did	فَعَلَ He, it did	الغائب المذكر *Third person Masculine*
فَعَلْنَ They (all) did	فَعَلَتَا They (two) did	فَعَلَتْ She, it did	الغائب المؤنث *Third person Feminine*
فَعَلْتُمْ You (all) did	فَعَلْتُمَا You (two) did	فَعَلْتَ You did	الحاضر المذكر *Second person Masculine*
فَعَلْتُنَّ You (all) did	فَعَلْتُمَا You (two) did	فَعَلْتِ You did	الحاضر المؤنث *Second person Feminine*
فَعَلْنَا We (all) did	فَعَلْنَا We (two) did	فَعَلْتُ I did	المتكلم المذكر/المؤنث *First person (masculine & feminine)*

There are some important points about the above chart:

1. Starting with third person, masculine, dual, suffixes are added to the three letter verbs (there are no prefixes).

2. Starting with the third person, feminine, plural فَعَلْنَ، a — is placed over the third letter of all verbs.

3. Starting with third person, feminine, singular, ___ – _ are placed over the last letter (ت) of singular, third, second and first person verbs, respectively.

4. Second person, masculine and feminine verbs end with تَ، تُمَا، تُمْ، تِ، تُمَا، تُنَّ, same as in the detached pronouns أَنْتَ، أَنْتُمَا، أَنْتُمْ، أَنْتِ، أَنْتُمَا، أَنْتُنَّ

5. First person, plural ends with نَا. In the attached pronouns table, first person, plural is also نَا.

6. Make a note of the slight difference between feminine, third person, plural فَعَلْنَ (short vowel, *fatha*) and first person, plural فَعَلْنَا (long vowel, *alif*).

7. It is important to know that there is no verb without a pronoun hidden within it.

8. If the subject is a noun mentioned after the verb, the verb will always be in the singular form, but it will match the gender of the noun; e.g.:

فَعَلَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ	فَعَلَ الْمُسْلِمَانِ	فَعَلَ الْمُسْلِمُ

Note: The subject is masculine, in the form of singular, dual and plural, but the verb is masculine singular for every one of them.

فَعَلَتِ الْمُسْلِمَاتُ	فَعَلَتِ الْمُسْلِمَتَانِ	فَعَلَتِ الْمُسْلِمَةُ

Note: The subject is feminine, in the form of singular, dual and plural, but the verb is feminine singular for every one of them and the sukun is replaced by a temporary Kisra.

Exercise

Recite the Qur'an and try to find more examples.

Memorize the following vocabulary and make the past tense tables with all the words with translations.

He went out	خَرَجَ	He wrote	كَتَبَ
He cursed	لَعَنَ	He killed	قَتَلَ
He heard	سَمِعَ	He reached	بَلَغَ
He knew	عَلِمَ	He earned	كَسَبَ
He left	تَرَكَ	He boarded (the ship)	رَكِبَ

89

He entered	دَخَلَ	He wronged	ظَلَمَ

For a complete vocabulary of verbs see Appendix B.

1. *The following are examples of Past Tense verbs:*

كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ

How your Lord **did** *(105:1)*

وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ

And David **killed** Goliath *(2:251)*

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا

But when they (two) **reached** the junction *(18:61)*

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَكِبَا فِى السَّفِينَةِ

Until when they (two) **were** in the boat *(18:71)*

خَرَجُوا مِن دِيَـٰرِهِمْ

They (all) **came** out of their land *(2:243)*

قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

Those who **rejected** (the faith) said *(19:73)*

كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا

Every time a new people **enters** (the hell) it curses its (sister) people *(7:38)*

فَلَمَّا سَمِعَتْ بِمَكْرِهِنَّ

When she **heard** of their malicious talk *(12:31)*

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ

When they (women) **have completed** their term *(2:234)*

فَلَكُمُ الرُّبُعُ مِمَّا تَرَكْنَ

For you is a fourth from what they (wives) **leave** *(4:12)*

ءَأَنتَ فَعَلْتَ هَـٰذَا بِـَٔالِهَتِنَا

Did you **do** this to our gods? *(21:62)*

خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

You **created** me from fire and you **created** him from clay *(7:12)*

هَلْ عَلِمْتُم مَّا فَعَلْتُم بِيُوسُفَ

Did you **know** how you **dealt** with Yusuf? *(12:89)*

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا

And when you **killed** a man *(2:72)*

رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي

O my Lord! Indeed I **have wronged** my soul *(28:16)*

مَا مَنَعَكَ أَن تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ

What prevents you from bowing to the one whom I **have created**? *(38:75)*

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا

They (both) said, "Our Lord we **have wronged** our souls." *(7:23)*

كَيْفَ فَعَلْنَا بِهِمْ

How we **did** with them *(14:45)*

مَا عَلِمْنَا عَلَيْهِ مِن سُوءٍ

We **knew** of no evil on his part. *(12:51)*

2. *In the following examples, an extra* و *(which has no effect on the meaning) is*

attached to the pronoun ـتُم, since it is followed by another pronoun.

أَدَعَوْتُمُوهُمْ أَمْ أَنتُمْ صَٰمِتُونَ

Whether you call them or you hold your peace. *(7:193)*

وَإِذِ ٱعْتَزَلْتُمُوهُمْ

When you turn away from them. *(18:16)*

إِذَآ ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ

When you make the payment of the dower to them. *(60:10)*

3. The words قَدْ (*qad*) and لَقَدْ (*laqad*), meaning 'indeed' or 'certainly', often precede a past

   tense verb to emphasize the meaning of the verb.

Examples:

قَدْ جَآءَكُم بَصَآئِرُ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ

Indeed there came to you clear proofs from your Lord. *(6:104)*

قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا تَنقُصُ ٱلْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ

Indeed we knew what the earth diminished them to. *(50:4)*

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَ

Certainly we took a covenant. *(5:70)*

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ فِىٓ أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ

Certainly we made man in the best form. *(95:4)*

لَقَدْ ءَاثَرَكَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا

Certainly Allah has preferred you above us. *(12:91)*

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ

Certainly we sent Noah to his people. *(29:14)*

4. The word مَا (*ma*) meaning 'not' or 'have not' precedes the past tense to give the negative meaning.

Examples:

مَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ لِتَشْقَىٰ

We have **not** revealed upon you the Qur'an that you may be in hardship. *(20:2)*

مَّا جَعَلَ ٱللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّن قَلْبَيْنِ فِى جَوْفِهِ

Allah has **not** made for anyone two hearts within him. *(33:4)*

وَمَا قَدَرُوا ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ

They have **not** estimated Allah with His due estimation. *(6:91)*