

Unit 30

Words from verbs

Verbal nouns and nouns of place or time generally follow patterns. A knowledge of these patterns can help in increasing your vocabulary and in correct reading.

Apart from active and passive participles (see previous Unit), other words are derived from verbs in Arabic. In this Unit, we shall deal with verbal nouns, nouns of place and time, and nouns of instrument.

Verbal Nouns

In previous Units and in the Word List, we have suggested that a verb should be learnt in its past and present tense. It is customary also to learn its verbal noun as well. This is a good way of increasing your vocabulary. A good Arabic dictionary will list verbal nouns.

Meaning	Verbal Noun	Verb - Present	Verb - Past
going out, exit	خُرُوجٌ	يُخْرِجُ	خَرَجَ
remembrance	ذِكْرٌ	يَذْكُرُ	ذَكَرَ
patience	صَبْرٌ	يَصْبِرُ	صَبَرَ

We can see that the above verbal nouns are on the pattern of **فَعْلٌ**, **فِعْلٌ** and **فَعْلٌ**.

Verbal nouns of other Form I verbs may be on the pattern of **فَعْلٌ** e.g. **بَصْرٌ**.

Translation of the verbal noun into English

(i) The verbal noun in Arabic is sometimes translated into English as an **infinitive**, for example:

So (if) they asked you permission **فَاسْتَأْذَنُواكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ**
to leave (lit. for the leaving) 9: 83

(ii) The Arabic verbal noun may also be translated as a clause, for example:

And you have indeed disbelieved after you **قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ**
had professed faith (lit. after your faith) 9: 66

(iii) The verbal noun in the accusative may be qualified by an adjective. This is translated into English as an adverb, for example:

And speak to him gently (lit. and **فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَيِّنًا**
speak to him a gentle speaking).

Nouns of place and time

From Form I verbs, these occur in three patterns each beginning with the letter **mim**:

مَفْعَلَةٌ

مَفْعَلٌ

مَفْعَلٌ

The plural of these nouns is on the pattern of **مَفَاعِلٌ** which does not take **tanwīn**.

Meaning of Singular	Plural	Noun of place	Verb - Past	
place or time of prostration	مَسَاجِدٌ	مَسْجِدٌ	سَجَدَ	to prostrate
habitation, dwelling	مَسَاكِنٌ	مَسْكَنٌ / مَسْكَنَةٌ	سَكَنَ	to dwell
grave	مَقَابِرٌ	مَقْبَرَةٌ	قَبَرَ	to bury

Nouns of instrument

From Form I verbs, these are formed according to the pattern of **مَفْعَالٌ**. The plural is on the pattern of **مَفَاعِلٌ**.

Meaning of Singular	Plural	Noun of instrument	Verb - Past	
key	مَفَاتِحٌ	مِفْتَاحٌ	فَتَحَ	to open
ladder, step	مَعَارِجٌ	مِعْرَاجٌ	عَرَجَ	to ascend

Children of Adam

Human beings are called 'Children of Adam' in the Qur'an. The human race is one species. It is perhaps significant that human beings as a whole, and not just Muslims, are asked to go to a masjid, which literally means both a place and time of prostration.

And then (if) they were to ask you permission to go forth, say: Never shall you go forth with me. 9: 83	1	فَاسْتَسْأَلُونَكَ لِلخُرُوجِ فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا
You have indeed disbelieved after (you had professed) your faith. 9: 96	2	قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
Whoever associates (anything) with God, he has indeed gone far astray. 4:116	3 ■	وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا
O you who have believed! Remember God much. 33: 41	4 ■	يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا
So (O believers) endure (adversity) with beautiful endurance. 70: 5	5 ■	فَأَصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا
(Be conscious of God) and speak truthfully and directly. 33: 70	6 ■	وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا
And (so that) God might help you (O Muhammad) with powerful help. 48: 3	7 ■	وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللّٰهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيمًا
So whoever expects to meet his Sustainer, then let him act righteously. 18: 110	8 ■	فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا
O Children of Adam! Take (to) your adornment at every time and place of worship. 7: 31	9 ■	يَا بَنِي ءَادَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ
And who is more wicked than the one who bars the places of worship of God ...	10	وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللّٰهِ
that His name should be mentioned in them. 2:114	11	أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ
Indeed, in their habitation, (the people of) Saba had evidence (of God's grace). 34: 15	12 ■	لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَإٍ فِي مَسْكِنِهِمْ ءَايَةٌ
And those habitations of theirs have not been dwelt in after them... 28: 58	13	وَتِلْكَ مَسَاجِدُهُمْ لَمْ تَسْكُنْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
Competing for ever more (wealth) distracts you until you visit (reach) the graves. 102: 1-2	14 ■	الْهَٰكِمِ التَّكَاثُرِ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ
And with Him are the keys of the Unseen. None knows them but He. 6: 59	15	وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

Notes for text above

- **Lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8:** The verbal nouns in the accusative are called 'absolute accusatives' - maf'ul mutlaq.
- **Line 9:** The word مَسْجِدٍ signifies both a place and time of prostration, and not only a mosque.

■ **Line 12:** Notice how كَانَ with the preposition لِ is used to show possession in the past tense.

■ **Line 14:** لَهَا is a Form IV verb from لَهَى meaning 'to have a good time, to play, to fritter away, to distract oneself'. The noun from لَهَا is لَهْوٌ meaning 'amusement, diversion, distraction'.