

# Unit 39

## More on broken plurals

### Broken plurals

When you learn a new word, find out its plural or singular and learn the two together. Some words may have more than one broken plural.

In Unit 6, we referred briefly to broken plurals of nouns and noted that many such plurals are formed according to patterns. Some of these plurals take *tanwīn*. Some do not take *tanwīn*. Here we give some examples of these patterns using the root letters *فعل* :

### Broken plurals with *tanwīn*:

Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular
(i) On the pattern of <i>أَفْعَالٌ</i> :		(ii) On the pattern of <i>فُعُولٌ</i> :	
أَوْلَادٌ	وَلَدٌ	نَفُوسٌ	نَفْسٌ
أَسْوَاقٌ	سُوقٌ	قُلُوبٌ	قَلْبٌ
(iii) On the pattern of <i>فُعُلٌ</i> :		(iv) On the pattern of <i>فِعَالٌ</i> :	
كُتُبٌ	كِتَابٌ	جِبَالٌ	جَبَلٌ
سَبِيلٌ	سَبِيلٌ	رِجَالٌ	رَجُلٌ
(v) On the pattern of <i>أَفْعُلٌ</i> :		(vi) On the pattern of <i>فِعَالَانٌ</i> :	
أَنْفُسٌ	نَفْسٌ	وَلَدَانٌ	وَلَدٌ
أَعْيُنٌ	عَيْنٌ	صَبِيَّانٌ	صَبِيٌّ

### Broken plurals without *tanwīn*:

Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular
(i) On the pattern of <i>فُعَلَاءٌ</i> :		(ii) On the pattern of <i>أَفْعَلَاءٌ</i> :	
عَلَمَاءٌ	عَالِمٌ	أَنْبِيَاءٌ	نَبِيٌّ
فُقَرَاءٌ	فَقِيرٌ	أَغْنِيَاءٌ	غَنِيٌّ
(iii) On the pattern of <i>فِعَالِلٌ</i> :		(iv) On the pattern of <i>فِعَالِيلٌ</i> :	
مَسَاجِدٌ	مَسْجِدٌ	تَمَائِلٌ	تَمَثَّلٌ
مَسَاكِينٌ	مَسْكِنٌ	مَحَارِبٌ	مَحْرَابٌ

### Great and small

Many people deviate from what they know to be right because they stand in awe and do the bidding of leaders and men considered great on account of wealth, power or influence.

The result of this servility and sycophancy is a loss of dignity, and humiliation in this world and the next.

On the day of Judgement, the excuse that we were misled by the great and powerful (refer to the verse in line 9 opposite) will not reduce this humiliation.

That a worse fate may be in store for such as were great and powerful in this world may be but little comfort.

In the indefinite, broken plurals without *tanwīn* end with a single fat-hah for both the accusative and genitive. In line 13 opposite, the words *mahariba* and *tamathila* both end with a fat-hah but they are genitive. You will remember that certain proper names also have the same ending for both the accusative and genitive, for example: *Maryama*, *Fir'awna*.

**Remember that:** Broken plurals of nouns referring to non-rational beings or things are considered to be grammatically **feminine singular**. This means that:

- the adjective of such a broken plural noun will be feminine singular. In line 5 opposite, for example, the adjectives *mutahharatan* and *qayyimatum* are singular whereas the nouns they qualify are plural.
- the pronouns used to refer to a broken plural noun will be feminine singular: see the attached pronoun *haa* in lines 3, 5, 8, 12, and 15 opposite.
- if the broken plural is the subject of a verb, the verb will be feminine singular. For example, see the verbs *tatma'innu* in line 1, and *zuwwijat* in line 6.

Surely, in the remembrance of God hearts do find rest. 13: 28

1 أَلَا بَدِكْرَ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

She said: Indeed kings - when they enter a town, they corrupt it. 27: 34

2 قَالَتْ إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا

And (He created) horses and mules and donkeys that you might ride them and as an adornment 16: 8

3 وَالْخَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً

Men - neither bargaining nor selling diverts them from the remembrance of God. 24: 37

4 رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

A messenger from God reciting pages purified in which are sound prescriptions. 98: 2-3

5 رَسُولٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ يَتْلُو صُحُفًا مُّطَهَّرَةً فِيهَا كُتِبَ قِيمَةٌ

And when (all) human beings are coupled (with their deeds)... 81: 7

6 وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ

And We did not wrong them but they have been wronging themselves. 16: 118

7 لَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَٰ

And they have hearts with which they do not grasp the truth and they have eyes with which they do not see. 7: 179

8 لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا

And they will say: Our Sustainer! Indeed We obeyed our leaders and our great ones and they led us astray from the right path. 33: 67

9 وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكِبْرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَ

Only the ones with knowledge among His servants fear God. 35: 28

10 إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

God has indeed heard the saying of those who said, God is poor and we are rich. 3: 181

11 لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ

And mosques - in them the name of God is remembered much. 22: 40

12 وَمَسَاجِدٍ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا

They (were) making for him whatever he wished of sanctuaries, and images, and basins...

13 يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحَارِبٍ وَتَمَاثِيلٍ وَجِفَانٍ

as (large as) watering-troughs and cauldrons firmly anchored. 34: 13

14 كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَاسِيَاتٍ

What are these images to which you are devoted? 21: 52

15 مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ

### Notes for text above

■ **Line 5:** The word **صُحُفٌ** literally means 'pages' and here refers to 'revelations'. It is the plural of **صَحِيفَةٌ**. The word **كُتِبَ** is normally translated as books or scriptures. Here it may be translated as prescriptions or ordinances. The singular is **كِتَابٌ**. The root word has the basic meaning of to write or to prescribe.

■ **Line 6 & 7:** Notice that the word **نَفْسٌ** has two broken plurals: **نُفُوسٌ** here meaning human beings or souls and **أَنفُسٌ** meaning selves.

■ **Line 13:** The words **مَحَارِبٍ** and **تَمَاثِيلٍ** are both genitive because they are controlled by a preposition. Notice however that they both end with a fat-hah.