

Unit 21

The verb: the present tense

The past form of the verb is sometimes referred to in English as the **Perfect**.

The present form of the verb is sometimes referred to as the **Imperfect**.

The **indicative** is used to make a statement about an action in the present or the future, e.g. he writes, he is writing, he shall write.

In the last Unit, we mentioned that the middle root letter in the Present Tense verb may take a dammah, fat-hah or a kasrah. Below we give an example of each with the full conjugation of the verb in the present tense.

You will notice throughout that:

- i. the prefix يَ represents the 3rd person.
- ii. the prefix تَ represents the 2nd person (with the exception of the 3rd person fem. singular and dual).
- iii. the prefix أَ represents I.
- iv. the prefix نَ represents We.
- v. the first root letter in a regular verb takes a sukun throughout.

Plural	Dual	Singular	
يَكْتُبُونَ	يَكْتُبَانِ	يَكْتُبُ	3.m.
يَكْتُبْنَ	تَكْتُبَانِ	تَكْتُبُ	3.f.
تَكْتُبُونَ	تَكْتُبَانِ	تَكْتُبُ	2.m.
تَكْتُبْنَ	تَكْتُبَانِ	تَكْتُبِينَ	2.f.
نَكْتُبُ	نَكْتُبُ	أَكْتُبُ	1.m.& f.

The verb يَعْلَمُ in the present takes a fat-hah on the middle root letter.

يَعْلَمُونَ	يَعْلَمَانِ	يَعْلَمُ	3.m.
يَعْلَمْنَ	تَعْلَمَانِ	تَعْلَمُ	3.f.
تَعْلَمُونَ	تَعْلَمَانِ	تَعْلَمُ	2.m.
تَعْلَمْنَ	تَعْلَمَانِ	تَعْلَمِينَ	2.f.
نَعْلَمُ	نَعْلَمُ	أَعْلَمُ	1.m.& f.

The verb يَرْجِعُ in the present takes a kasrah with the middle root letter.

يَرْجِعُونَ	يَرْجِعَانِ	يَرْجِعُ	3.m.
يَرْجِعْنَ	تَرْجِعَانِ	تَرْجِعُ	3.f.
تَرْجِعُونَ	تَرْجِعَانِ	تَرْجِعُ	2.m.
تَرْجِعْنَ	تَرْجِعَانِ	تَرْجِعِينَ	2.f.
نَرْجِعُ	نَرْجِعُ	أَرْجِعُ	1.m.& f.

Let us give thanks
God has divided people into two streams, the people of gratitude (*shukr*) and the people of ingratitude (*kufr*). 'Indeed, We have shown him (the human being) the way - whether he is grateful or ungrateful (is up to him).' 76: 3
Ingratitude, conceit, arrogance, rejection of the truth and ultimate humiliation are all part of the same stream. God has explained in the Qur'an that the only people who truly worship Him are those who give thanks. Those who are not among the people of gratitude therefore are not among the people of 'ibadah or worship. 'And be grateful to God, if indeed it is Him you worship (2: 172).'

Indicative Mood

The present tense conjugation of the verb above is in the **indicative mood** (مرفوع).

You will notice that in this mood: (i) the last letter of all the singular forms (except 2nd person feminine) and the 1st person plural has a dammah.

(ii) the dual forms end with سَانِ .

(iii) the masculine plural forms (2nd and 3rd persons) end with سُونَ .

(iv) the feminine plural forms end with نِ preceded by a letter with a sukun:

It is important to remember points (i), (ii) and (iii) above, especially when we come to deal with the verb in its other moods - the subjunctive (منصوب), the jussive (مجزوم) and the imperative (أمر).

Do you command people with righteousness and you forget yourselves...	1	أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
while you read the Book (of God)? Would you not use your reason? 2: 44	2 ■	وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ
You are the best community produced for (the benefit of) mankind - you command ...	3	كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ
the good and forbid the evil and you believe in God. 3: 110	4	بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
Indeed God is the Possessor of bounty for all people ...	5	إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ
but most people do not give thanks 2: 243	6	وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ
God has promised the believing men and the believing women gardens...	7	وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ
through which rivers flow. 9: 72	8 ■	تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
In these two (gardens), two springs will flow. 55: 50	9 ■	فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ
And the shoots and the trees both prostrate. 55: 6	10 ■	وَالنَّجْمِ وَالشَّجَرِ يَسْجُدَانِ
And the cattle - He created them. For you in them is warmth...	11	وَالْأَنْعَامِ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ
and (other) uses and of them you eat. 16: 5	12	وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ
and they carry your loads to (many) a land. 16: 7	13	وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَى بَلَدٍ
So she (Maryam) came with him (to) her people carrying him...	14 ■	فَأَتَتْ بِهِ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُ
They said: O Maryam, you have come (with) a strange thing. 19: 27	15	قَالُوا يَا مَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْئًا فَرِيًّا

Notes for text above

- **Line 2:** The letter **و** is translated here as 'while'. This **waw** is known as the **waw al-hal** and points to an action taking place at the same time as another.
- **Line 8:** The verb **تَجْرِي** is feminine singular of **جَرَى** to run. Its subject is **أَنْهَارٌ** which is the broken plural of **نَهْرٌ**; it is thus considered feminine singular. **تَحْتِهَا** literally means 'underneath them' (i.e. gardens)

but is translated above as 'through them'.

- **Line 9:** The word **تَجْرِيَانِ** has a future sense.
- **Line 10:** **نَجْمٌ** is normally translated as 'stars'. It may also mean 'shoots' from the ground.
- **Line 14:** **أَتَتْ**, she came - is the feminine of **أَتَى** which takes a direct object. **She** refers to Maryam, may God be pleased with her. The **بِهِ** in **بِهِ** refers to the baby 'Isa (Jesus).