

Unit 20

The verb: the present tense

The Arabic word for the past tense is **الْمَاضِي**

The Arabic word for the present tense is **الْمُضَارِع**

So far, we have been dealing with the Past Tense of the simple verb in Arabic. In this Unit, we will introduce the Present Tense which in fact is used to represent all present tenses and the future.

The Present Tense is formed by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root word. The **prefix** in this case is a letter with its vowel which is **added before** the first root letter.

The **suffix** may be (i) a vowel or (ii) letters and vowels **added after** the root letters.

In the following example, see how the Present Tense (3.m.) is formed from the root word. **Read from right to left.**

Present Tense 3.m.p.	Present Tense 3.m.s.	Root Word 3.m.s.
يَكْتُبُونَ	يَكْتُبُ	كَتَبَ
they write, they are writing	he writes, he is writing	he wrote

You will notice that for the above example in the present tense:

- (i) the prefix **يَ** is added to both the singular and plural masculine 3rd person.
- (ii) the first root letter **ك** has a sukun.
- (iii) the second root letter **ت** has a dammah. In some verbs, the second root letter may have a fat-hah or a kasrah, for example:

يَجْعَلُ / يَجْعَلُونَ he made/he makes. **يَجْعَلُ** has a fat-hah on the second root letter.
يَرْجِعُ / يَرْجِعُونَ he returned/he returns. **يَرْجِعُ** has a kasrah.

For each verb, you need to learn the present form with the root word to ensure that you use the correct vowel on the second root letter.

- (iv) the singular form ends with a dammah.
- (v) the plural form ends with **سُون**.

Study some of the singular and plural parts of the present tense conjugation of the verb **سَجَدَ** below. Read from right to left.

Plural		Singular		
they prostrate	يَسْجُدُونَ	يَسْجُدُ	he prostrates	3.m.
they are prostrating			he is prostrating	
you prostrate	تَسْجُدُونَ	تَسْجُدُ	you prostrate	2.m.
you are prostrating			you are prostrating	
we prostrate	نَسْجُدُ	أَسْجُدُ	I prostrate	1.m.&f.
we are prostrating			I am prostrating	

You will notice that:

- The prefix **تَ** refers here to the second person - **you**.
- The prefix **أَ** refers to **I**; the prefix **نَ** refers to **we**.
- The first root letter **س** has a sukun throughout.
- The 3.m.p. and 2.m.p. forms both end with **سُون**.

Note that the present tense conjugation of the verbs above is in the **indicative mood**. This will be explained in the next Unit.

Appropriate use
 An'am (line 12 opposite) refers to all livestock - cattle, goats, sheep, camels. In them are many benefits (*manafi'*) for people, providing food, drink, clothing, transport. They are to be cared for as creatures of God for they are communities ('umam') like you. They are not to be ill-treated and abused. At the same time, animals should not be accorded any supernatural status or qualities.
 Surah 6 of the Qur'an is called Al-An'am. In verses 136ff, the practice of regarding cattle as sacred is condemned as are all tendencies to attribute Divine qualities to created beings or imaginary powers.

He creates what you do not know. 16: 18	يَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ 1
He knows whatever enters in the earth and whatever comes out of it,	يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا 2 ■
and what descends from the sky and what ascends to it,	وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرَجُ فِيهَا 3 ■
and He is with you wherever you may be (lit. you have been) 57: 4	وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ 4
And God is All-Seeing of whatever you do. 57: 4	وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ 5
Indeed God does not wrong (even) the weight of an atom. 4: 40	إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ 6
They do not know the Truth. 21: 24	لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْحَقَّ 7
They shall have their reward with their Sustainer ...	لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ 8 ■
and no fear shall be on them and they shall not grieve. 2: 262	وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ 9 ■
He said: Indeed, I know what you do not know. 2: 30	قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ 10
Have you seen the water that you drink? 56: 68	أَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ 11
And the cattle - He created them. For you, in them, is warmth...	وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ 12 ■
and (other) uses, and of them you eat. 16: 5	وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ 13
I do not worship what you worship. 109: 2	لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ 14
You alone we worship. 1: 5	إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ 15 ■

Notes for text above

- **Line 2:** The verb **يَلِجُ** is the present tense of **وَلَجَ** to enter, penetrate and is known as a 'weak verb'.
- **Line 3:** **يَعْرَجُ** is present tense of **عَرَجَ** to ascend. From this comes the word **مِعْرَاجٌ** a ladder.
- **Line 8 & 9:** **لَهُمْ** for them, also means 'they have'. Here it refers to the future and so is translated as 'they shall have'. **يَحْزَنُونَ** 'they shall not grieve' is

an example of the Arabic present form which refers to the future.

■ **Line 12:** **أَنْعَامٌ** is grammatically feminine singular and so the pronoun **هَا** is used for it.

■ **Line 15:** For **إِيَّاكَ** see note on line 5, Unit 7.

Pronouns attached to **إِيَّا** are normally placed before the verb.