# **Unit 15**

The verb: past tense, number & gender



The word 'Allah' is grammatically masculine singular but it has no gender connotations. Also, the word Allah does not have any plural form - unlike the word 'god' in English or 'ilah' in Arabic.

### Number (continued)

Feminine plural past tense verbs end with ; which is a short vowel. For example:

However, first person plural verbs end with  $\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \$  which is a long vowel:

Be careful when reading to keep short vowels short and lengthen the long vowels. Meanings change when you lengthen vowels. You can see that the endings of words are very important in Arabic.

#### Gender

Verbs, like pronouns, in Arabic may be either masculine (m.) or feminine (f.). There is no neuter gender. Study the following:

is الْـحَقُّ A masculine singular noun takes a verb in the masculine. The noun masculine and the verb جاء is also masculine.

A feminine singular noun takes a verb in the feminine. The noun المستسارة is is also feminine because it ends with ta' marbutah . Its verb جاءت - it ends with ت.

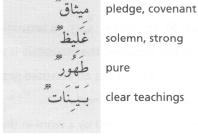
#### More on the agreement of subjects and verbs

- i. When a verb comes first in a sentence and its subject is 3rd person, it is always singular - even if the subject is singular, dual or plural. (See lines 12 - 15.)
- ii. When a verb comes first in a sentence, it can be masculine even if the subject is feminine plural المُــوّ مناتُ is feminine plural but its verb حاء is masculine singular.
- iii. The verb occurring first in a sentence is singular even if the subject is plural. But a following verb with the same plural subject will be plural. In line 15, the is plural. The subject of دُخَلُوا is singular but the second verb both verbs is إخوة , the brothers.

## Hint on translating into English:

First identify the subject of the Arabic sentence. If the subject is a noun, it must be in the nominative case. For example, in line 13 opposite, the

which is رُسُلُنَا subject must be nominative. In line 14, the subject of the verb آخُو منات أن which is



solemn, strong pure clear teachings

The verse in line 4 opposite, expresses a profound truth: that water is necessary for the emergence and development of life. Life depends on water. Read this verse with the previous amazing verse

of the Qur'an, 21: 29.

الماء

They (f.) took from you a solemn pledge. 4: 21

So when they (f.) saw him... 12: 31

We created the heavens and the earth. 50: 16

And We made from water every living thing.

We sent down from the sky pure water. 25: 48

We have heard and we have obeyed. 2: 285

Indeed We did send our messengers with clear teachings. 57: 25

And indeed We did send  $M\underline{u}s\underline{a}$  with our signs. 11: 96

A man came. 28: 20

The Truth has come. 17: 81

A caravan came. 12: 19

Messengers before me have come to you. 3: 183

And indeed Our messengers came (to) Ibrahim with the good news. 11: 69  $\,$ 

O Prophet! When the believing women come (to) you... 60: 12

And the brothers of Yusuf came and entered unto him and he recognized them. 12: 58

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عَ فَلَمَّا رَأَيْنَهُ

## Notes for text above

- Lines 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8: The words 'We' and 'Our' refer to Allah. In the Qur'an, Allah frequently refers to Himself as 'We' but this does not in any way affect the fact that Allah is One.
- Lines 7, 8 and 13: لَقَدُ is a combination of the J of emphasis and قَدُ . To emphasize that an action is complete, the particle قَدُ is placed before the past tense verb. قَدُ with the past tense of the verb

sometimes conveys the sense of the Past Perfect in English - as in عَدُ كَتَبُ - he had written.

is one of the many particles which control verbs in Arabic and help to convey precise tenses. The actual tense of a verb, however, has to be determined by the context in which it is used.

Lines 15: The word يُوسفُ is genitive. See Note for line 2, Unit 16.