

Unit 40

Conditional Sentences

Note carefully

The use of the Past form of the verb in Arabic should not be taken automatically to refer to an event that has happened. You must look at the context in which a verb is used to determine its tense.

Parts of a conditional sentence

إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ If you help (the cause of) God, He will help you. 47:7

The above sentence is known as a conditional sentence. It is made up of two parts. The first part is: 'If you help the cause of God'. It begins with the word 'if'. This part is known as the condition and is called the **شَرَطٌ** in Arabic.

The second part of the sentence is 'He will help you'. This part is the fulfilment of the condition. In Arabic it is called the **جَوَابٌ** or reply to the condition.

In Arabic conditional sentences, the **شَرَطٌ condition**, almost always comes before the **جَوَابٌ reply**.

Introducing the condition

There are various short words or particles used in Arabic for 'if'. The most common of these are: **إِنْ**, **لَوْ**, and **إِذَا**.

لَوْ is often used for hypothetical conditions. See line 3 opposite.

إِذَا may be translated as 'when' or 'whenever'. **إِذَا** must be distinguished from **لَمَّا**.

لَمَّا does not introduce a conditional sentence but is clearly used to introduce a verb in the past tense. Compare the following two examples:

إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُنَافِقُونَ قَالُوا نَشْهَدُ... When the hypocrites come to you, they say, 'We testify...' 63: 1

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ When the Truth came to them, they said, 'This is plain magic.' 43:30

There are other particles used to introduce conditional sentences. The most common of these in the Qur'an is **مَنْ**:

مَنْ may have the meaning of 'whoever, he who, those who';

كَلَّمَا - whenever; **أَيْنَمَا** - wherever.

Submitting your face

Whoever submits his face to God and is a doer of good.. (line 10) opposite. Here 'his face' has the meaning of 'his whole self'. This is an example of metonymy - a figure of speech in which the part is used to express the whole. The face has the marvellous capacity to reflect the range of emotions and human states—happiness, fear, grief, anger, hurt, pain, calm reflection. It can, quite dangerously, also dissimulate and cover up and be a front for hypocrisy and deviousness.

In contrast, the use of the word face in 'face of God' cannot be taken to represent human emotions but is a pointer to God's existence and his vast and awesome creative power.

Verbs in conditional sentences

Arabic uses either the Past form of the verb or the Jussive for conditional sentences.

- the past form may be used in both the **shart** and the **jawab** - see lines 1, 2, 3, 7 and 13 opposite;
- the jussive may be used in both the **shart** and the **jawab** - see lines 5, 6 and 14;
- there may be a mixture of the past form and the jussive in the **jawab** and the **shart** - see line 12;
- the **jawab** may have an imperative - see line 8;
- the **shart** may not have a verb at all - see line 4;
- the **jawab** may not have a verb at all - see line 10.

Introducing the jawab

The **jawab** is often introduced by **la** or **fa** - both of which can remain untranslated.

If the condition is introduced by **lau**, the **jawab** is often introduced by **la** - see lines 1, 2, 3 and 4 opposite.

The **jawab** is introduced by **fa** if:

- the **jawab** begins with anything but a verb - see line 9;
- the **jawab** begins with a verb in the imperative - see line 8.

If We had sent down this Qur'an on a mountain..,

1 لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ

...you would have seen it humbling itself, breaking asunder out of the awe of God. 59: 21

2 لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدِّعًا مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ

If your Lord had wished, he would have made human beings one nation. 11: 118

3 وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَجَعَلَ النَّاسَ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

And if it were not for the grace of God on you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers. 2: 64

4 وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

If you help (the cause of) God, He will help you. 47:7

5 إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ

If you obey him (the messenger) , you will be guided. 24: 54

6 إِنْ تَطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا

And when the ignorant ones address them, they say, Peace. 25: 63

7 وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

And when the Salat is ended, then disperse in the land. 62: 10

8 فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَانْتَشِرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ

Whoever follows My guidance, there shall be no fear on them and they shall not grieve. 2: 38

9 مَنْ تَبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَخَوْفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Whoever submits his face to God and is a doer of good, he shall have his reward with his Lord. 2: 112

10 مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ

And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for the benefit of his own self. 31: 12

11 وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ

Whoever from among you witnesses the month (of Ramadan), let him fast it. 2: 185

12 فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ

Whenever I invited them for you to forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears. 71: 7

13 كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ

Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you forth, all (of you). 2: 148

14 أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا

So wherever you turn, there is the face of God. 2: 115

15 فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ

Notes for text above

- **Line 10:** *وَجْهَهُ* 'his face' has the meaning of 'his whole self'. This is an example of a figure of speech in which the part is used to express the whole.
- **Line 11:** The preposition *لِ* in *لِنَفْسِهِ* has the meaning of 'for the benefit of'.

- **Line 14:** *أَيْنَ مَا* 'wherever' is written here as two words but in line 15 it is written as one word.
- **Line 15:** This verse should not be taken to mean that God is part of His creation or that the creation is part of God. Instead the creation provides marvellous evidence of the creative power of God and His existence.