



TALWEEH
ACADEMY

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الحمد لله رب العالمين ، والصلاة والسلام على أشرف الأنبياء والمرسلين ،

وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين



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Lesson 5: The Definitions of the Ism, Fi'l, and Harf

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Lesson 5

Overview:

In this video we discuss the three types of kalimah: ism, fi'l, and ḥarf, highlighting their definitions, functions, and origins.

1. الاسم

- Defined as a word that indicates a meaning in itself but is not attached to one of the three tenses (past, present, future) by default.
Like the word بيت.
- The ism can function as a musnad or a musnad ilayh, giving it the highest grammatical status.

2. الفعل

- Defined as a word that indicates a meaning in itself and is attached to a tense. Example: ضَرَبَ (he hit).
- Named fi'l because it primarily conveys the occurrence of an action (ḥadath), and tense. Derived from the maṣḍar (verbal noun).



الحرف 3.

- Defined as a word that does not convey a meaning in itself but affects the meaning of another word. Example: min in من البيت indicates “from” but the meaning of beginning (ابتداء) is in the noun.
- Named ḥarf because it cannot be a musnad or musnad ilayh—it is always “on the edge” or auxiliary to other words.

Summary:

Types of Kalām

وهي اسمٌ، وفعلٌ، وحرفٌ جاء لمعنى

It (kalimah) is an ism, a fi'l, and a ḥarf that comes for a meaning. The reason he says ḥarf that comes for a meaning is that ḥarf also refers to ḥurūf al-tahajjī, the alphabetical letters like alif or bā. Someone can say that it's already understood through the context what ḥarf this is referring to, so it's unnecessary to add this



clause. And many grammarians don't mention it. The author didn't define the ism, fi'l and ḥarf. He mentions their signs.

Definition of the Ism

ما دلّ على معنى في نفسه غير مقترن بزمن من الأزمنة الثلاثة وضعاً ، مثل زيد وكتاب

The difference between asmā and af'āl is that asmā do not indicate one of the three tenses of time, whereas af'āl do. We're saying the ism is not attached to one of the three tenses because of words like **الْيَوْمَ** today and **أَمْسَ** yesterday. They indicate a time, but they're not af'āl. Rather, they're names for time itself. The word **غَبَقَ** means to drink at night. **صَبَحَ** means to drink in the morning. They are attached to time. But they are not from the three tenses. The past, the present, and the future. Morning and night are general times. There is an ism that indicates a time and is attached to the present tense—the ism al-fa'il. If you say a person who hits, the hitting will occur in a tense because that's the only way for it to come into existence. The ism al-fā'il primarily indicates the entity that performs the action and the action. The action needs to happen within a time. But the ism al-fā'il was only coined to indicate the entire action. The tense is a secondary meaning. The same applies to the ism al-maf'ul.



We added on **وضعا**, which means by coinage. We added that clause because certain af'āl, like **عسى**, which indicates hope, **ليس**, which indicates negation, **نعم**, which indicates goodness, don't indicate a time. But they're still verbs because of the clause **وضعا**. At the time they were coined, these words were attached to a tense. But their meanings were overruled and replaced. For example, the tense of time in **نعم** was overruled by the meaning of praise. When you praise someone, you want to do it unconditionally. All these meanings are such that we don't want to attach them to a tense. Their meanings are inshāī, initiative. So by adding the clause **وضعا**, we've excluded these. We're explaining it like this because they have all or most of the signs of a fi'l, so we know that in reality they're af'āl.

Origin of the Word Ism

According to the Baṣriyyūn, the word ism originates from **سُمُو**, which means **عُلُو**. To be very lofty. And the Kūfiyyūn say that it originates from **سمة** or **وسم**, which is a stamp or a label. The majority have taken the Baṣrī opinion, in which case we would say the word was really **سُمُو** on the pattern of **فَعْل**. The lām position was dropped, and then to make up for it, a hamzah was added in the beginning. And it became **اسم** on the pattern **اِفْع**. In the Kūfī opinion, the word was originally **وسم** on the pattern of **فَعْل**. And then the wāw was dropped from the beginning and substituted with a hamzah. And it became **اسم** on the pattern of **اِعْل**.



The Kūfiyyūn say the ism is a label, so it's from sumuw. The Baṣriyyūn say that the ism is stronger than the fi'l and ḥarf because it can be the musnad ilayh and the musnad. So, the ism has the highest status. So, it's from wasm. This opinion is stronger if we look from a linguistic perspective. Ibn Ya'īsh writes that we say **أَسْمِيَّتُهُ**. It was actually **أَسْمَوْتُ**, and then it changed to **أَسْمِيَّتُ** because the **ي** came in the fourth position. If the word were from **وسم**, we would say **أَوْسَمْتُهُ**. The taṣḡīr and jam' al-taksīr are where the true letters come out. They say Ibn Ya'īsh said the taṣḡīr of **اسم** is **سَمِي**, which was actually **سَمِيو**. When a yā and a wāw meet and the first of them is sākin, one of them will become the other, and idḡām occurs. If this were from **وسم**, it would have been **وَسِيم**. And the jam' al-taksīr is **أَسْمَاء**, which was originally **أَسْمَاو** on the pattern of **أَفْعَال**. If it were from **وسم**, it would have been **أَوْسَام**.

Definition of the fi'l

مَا دَلَّ عَلَى مَعْنَى فِي نَفْسِهِ مُقْتَرِنٍ بِزَمَنِ مِنَ الْأَزْبَانِ الثَّلَاثَةِ

It indicates a meaning in and of itself, whilst being attached to a tense from the three tenses by coinage like **ضَرَبَ**, which means he hit. It primarily indicates the ḥadath (the occurrence) and the tense. **ضرب** indicated the meaning of hitting and the past tense.



Why was it named the fi'l?

It indicates the occurrence of an action and a tense. فعل means action, so the most rightful thing to that name is the maṣḍar because it's the action itself. But it was already named ism. The fi'l was extracted from the maṣḍar. So it was the next most rightful and took the name fi'l. It also indicates zamān. But we didn't name it zamān because, although it indicates occurrence and time, it's derived from the maṣḍar, which indicates occurrence, so it's closer to occurrence and not time. This is mentioned in Hidāyah al-Naḥw.

Definition of a ḥarf

الحرف لا يدل على معنى في نفسه أصلاً، بل يدل على معنى في غيره

It indicates a meaning in something else. The meaning of ibtidā is in min. من البيت. That ibtidā is occurring in the house, not the min. You can give information about the word ابتداء, which indicates the essence of ibtidā, but min indicates the meaning of ibtidā in other than it. That's why a ḥarf can't be a musnad or musnad ilayh. Raḍī explains this in his commentary on the Kāfiyah. And he says, based on this, that if a ḥarf was found alone, it can't convey a meaning. It needs an entity to



indicate its meaning through, like the tanwīn in رَجُلٌ (which is a ḥarf, it's actually a nūn sākin). It indicates tankīr in رَجُل, not itself.

Why was it named the ḥarf?

It was named حرف because it can't be a musnad or musnad ilayh. It's just a side thing. And the word حرف literally means the edge of something. It comes for three benefits:

1. لِإِفَادَةِ مَعْنَى فِي مَا يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ. It indicates a meaning in the word that it enters upon
 - 1.1. أَنْ يَدْخُلَ عَلَى الْاسْمِ. It enters upon an ism. Like الرجل. The alif lām gave the meaning of ta'rīf in الرجل.
 - 1.2. It enters upon a fi'l like sīn and sawfa. سَيُضْرَبُ. The sīn indicates the meaning of near future in يَضْرَبُ.
 - 1.3. It enters upon structures like the hamzah al-istifhām and the mā of nafy. For example أَزِيدُ عِنْدَكَ. The hamzah is giving the meaning of questioning in Zaid being with you. مَا قَامَ خَالِدٌ. The mā is giving the meaning of negation in Khalid's standing.
2. لِتَعْلِيقِ لَفْظٍ بِلَفْظٍ آخَرَ وَرَبْطِهِ بِهِ. It comes to join one word to another word. For example, you want to join the words مُحَمَّدٌ and زَيْدٌ. You add a wāw and say مُحَمَّدٌ وَزَيْدٌ.
 - 2.1. Between two isms like جاء زَيْدٌ وَعَمْرُو.



- 2.2. Between a fi'l and another fi'l like قام زيد وقعد
- 2.3. Between an ism and a fi'l like نظرت إلى زيد.
- 2.4. Between a jumlah and another jumlah like إن تُعطيني أشكرُك. These sentences were not combined before we added the ḥarf.
3. وَلِزِيَادَةٍ ضَرْبٍ مِنَ التَّأْكِيدِ. To emphasize another word. It's called extra. Some grammarians like Ibn Hishām note that when they come in the Qurān, it's better not to call them extra because the meaning is still changing. It's just that no new meaning is being added; rather, the old one is being emphasized. Al-Kāfiyah Jī says in his commentary on the Qawā'id Al-'Irāb that we should call these ṣilah. For example, فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ. It is due to the mercy of Allah that you were kind and lenient with your companions. Even though there's a mā, the bā is still causing jarr. So this mā is extra. That doesn't mean it's irrelevant.