

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

We are now officially beginning week 1.

Intro

This is our first recording. Prior to this in the introductory recording we talked about how the course is structured. We mentioned that in the two years foundations program there are milestones and goals. We constantly draw the attention of our students to those goals, so they have a clear map of where they are going. Then we walk them every step of the way to those goals.

Goals

Our immediate goal right now is to begin the Stories of the Prophets (The Qasas book), the little green 68 page book. We want to begin that as soon as possible.

After testing and experience over the course of the last 8 years, we have come to the conclusion that it takes at least 3 weeks of theory before students are prepared to analyse the structures that occur in the book.

Our introductory preliminaries, i.e. our calculated amount of theory will focus on:

- introducing the two sciences of grammar and morphology
- talking about words, sentences and phrases
- major types of verbs

Purpose of Learning

In the earlier recording we talked a little about the purpose behind learning the language.

The ultimate goal, behind us studying the Arabic language is to:

- understand the words of the Creator
- to be able to appreciate the miracles of the Qur'an
- to gain access to the heritage of the Scholars

Understanding the Qur'an and Its Miracles

Allah ﷻ has communicated to us through the Qur'an His message. Not only does the Qur'an contain the message, but also the miracle given to the Prophet, ﷺ is embedded in that message. This is because

Allah ﷻ controls all events, since the beginning of time. Every event that has occurred, has occurred by the direct will, knowledge, and power of Allah ﷻ.

For instance, when fire burns, Allah ﷻ creates the fire, the heat, the burning, and the substance the fire comes in contact with, e.g. cotton. The attachment of the cotton with the fire, then the burning of the cotton, etc., each event is created separately.

So these are all patterns we observe, which we call 'Cause and Effect' or 'correlations'. In other words, all the created events occur through observed correlation. Generally this is the case most of the time. Only if Allah ﷻ wishes to communicate with humans, He would cause a break in that chain of cause and effect. This is done through miracles.

So every prophet and messenger is given a miracle which he is able to present to the community in order to establish his truth of Prophethood from Allah ﷻ.

➤ Imam al-Ghazali gives an example

If in the presence of a King a person stands up and to the rest of the audience he claims to be a messenger of the King - the proof of that person's being a messenger of the king, will be that the king will stand up from the throne and he would sit in a manner, which he is not known to sit in.

So he stands up, turns around and he sits down, and his sitting manner is contrary to the normal way of his sitting.

There would be no doubt in the minds of anyone sitting in that audience that this person who claims to be the messenger of the king, is telling the truth. This is a certitude which would be achieved, and everyone in the audience would be fully convinced that the person is telling the truth.

So when a break occurs at the hand of one claiming to be Prophet by his presenting something extraordinary that other people are not able to do, that would be the equivalent of God Almighty saying that my servant has spoken the truth.

This is the case with all messengers. When Musa (alaihis salaam) hits the staff on the water and it creates paths, or when he throws the staff and it becomes a snake - he does this in order to establish for the people that he is a messenger and he has been appointed by Allah ﷻ.

All miracles given to the previous prophets and messengers ﷺ were of an observable kind. Those that witnessed the miracle first hand, would then believe in the messenger and their faith would be strong. After that time, the occurrence of the miracle would be transmitted to the children, and the children would believe as they find their parents to be trustworthy. Then several generations later, it would all pass through a chain of transmission, but it wouldn't be the same thing anymore. So you cannot compare the faith and belief of those that witnessed it first hand, to those that received it generations later.

Completely contrary to this, Allah ﷻ through His wisdom and knowledge, granted our Prophet ﷺ a special miracle. That is, it is not transmitted, rather observable and witnessable by anyone until the end of time. This is a miracle that does not perish and endures forever and ever.

What is this miracle?

It is embedded within the Qur'an itself.

It is a linguistic miracle, i.e. the special use of the language within the Qur'an which makes it miraculous.

How is that so?

In order to appreciate that, one would need to study the Arabic language, be acquainted with the essentials of the language, and know how the language works and know its dynamics.

This is one of the primary objectives of learning the Arabic language, so that the veils are removed and we are able to witness the miracle and strengthen our faith thereby.

Accessing the Heritage of the Scholars

On the Qur'an alone, volumes of commentaries have been written. These commentaries highlight the wondrous aspects of the Qur'anic eloquence. So when you are able to access these great books, then you are able to appreciate a lot of what the verses are saying. The translations cannot do justice - not at all. You need to delve into it and know a particular word choice, or an arrangement of the words, or a delaying of the subject, or the use of a pronoun when a noun is expected. All of these things have profound objectives and benefits that the scholars highlight.

All of these commentaries are written in Arabic. 'Al Alusi' has 30 volumes. 'Al Fakh al Raazi' has 17 volumes. 'Ibn 'Ashur' has 18 volumes. Al 'Baidawi' has 2 volumes, but people have written super commentaries for it in 30 volumes. If you want to access any of that, you will need to learn the Arabic language using the proper method.

Learning Arabic opens up the doors of further learning, such as the books of ahadeeth, their commentaries, e.g. 'FatHul Bari', Umdadul Qari, Imam Nawawi. You can learn what all these Scholars have to say so it advances you in further studies.

Method of learning

Whenever one attempts to learn a language, they always have a purpose, such as to converse with relatives, friends, for travel purposes, or for historical or cultural reasons. But when we study the Arabic language, it is for religious reasons beyond anything else. So our purpose will dictate our method. We will focus on those aspects of the language which will bring us closer to our goal. Therefore we will be studying the manuals in grammar, morphology and rhetoric left behind by the scholars.

This is the method that has been established from the time of the Sahaba. From the time these sciences first began developing, and scholars started writing and documenting these rules - from that very time till now, [the method has remained consistent]. The medieval grammarians wrote volumes and volumes of works. We also have the manuals (*mutoon*), which are the smaller versions in grammar, morphology and

rhetoric. So we will study these manuals, cover to cover in their entirety. This will build within the students all that they would need in order to be impacted by the Qur'an as the pre-Islamic Arab would be impacted.

At the same time, there will be some Arabic medium in the second year; some of our sessions are taught in Arabic by the instructor; and there will also be some composition exercises which we are not able to focus on except by recommendations. We recommend that certain composition exercises are undertaken by the students. So this is how we will go about, *inshaAllaah*, covering our materials.

Vowels and Consonants

Consonants

As you know from studying the Arabic alphabet and Arabic script, there are 29 letters, all of which are *consonants*. This is unusual, as in English the vowels are part of the alphabet, whereas in Arabic they are not, rather they are represented by marks. These markings are on top of or below the consonants.

There are 28 or 29 letters depending on whether you consider ء and ٰ the same letter or not. In any case, the actual number is not that significant. Let's pretend that it's 28. The point to understand here is that all 28 letters in the alphabet are consonants. So, ب which is the second letter corresponds to a 'b' in

English. ت which corresponds to "t". ج corresponds to 'j'. س corresponds to "s", same thing with ل, م, etc.

Vowels

Now the vowels are not part of the alphabet, but vowels are still needed. You will not be able to pronounce anything unless you use vowels.

Why?

Because when people speak, they do not speak in just consonants. You cannot string up 3 consonants and expect to pronounce. You won't be able to.

➤ Example: "ktb"

It is not pronounceable. You will have to add at least 3 vowels to form syllables. When people speak, they speak in syllables.

What is a syllable?

A *syllable* is a sound that is produced by combining both consonants and vowels. Vowels on their own won't do it, and consonants on their own would not do it either.

You take a "ba", and you add an "a" to it, it becomes "baa".

You add an "o" to it, it becomes "bo".

You add an "e" to it, it becomes "be".

The "ba" on its own is not pronounceable but when the vowel is added, it becomes a syllable.

Short Vowels

We have 3 vowels:

- One corresponds to an “a”.
- One corresponds to an “o”
- One corresponds to an “e”.

For all of our purposes 3 are enough.

Long Vowels

There are some long vowels, just like in English. From the 28 letters in the alphabet there are two letters which can be used both as vowels and consonants.

➤ Example: in English ‘y’.
‘y’ has a dual capacity.

- If it is in the beginning of a word, it is considered a consonant, e.g. **y**ellow
- If it is at the end of a word, it will be considered a long vowel – an extension of an ‘e’, e.g. pretty, funny

So both the letters waw and yaa, when they come at the end of already begun syllables, they will extend the vowel sounds from the short vowels immediately preceding them, and thus will NOT be consonants when used as such. Instead, they will be long vowels. As for the short vowels, they are not part of the alphabet at all, but rather represented through markings.

How are words constructed?

Words are constructed by grouping the consonants.

From 28 letters, 3 will be selected. Let’s pretend we have a ن, a ص and a ر .

These are 3 letters of the alphabet in that particular order. When they appear, they will have an associated meaning of ‘help’.

This combination of 3 consonants can occur in many words. All words will have one thing in common, that would be the meaning of ‘help’.

The consonants (ن - ص - ر) on their own are not pronounceable.

You can visualize and conceptualize it, but you will not be able to speak it, because of the human limitation. The tongue can’t move, No sounds can come out unless the vowels are added.

So how do we add the vowels?

Given the vowels are 3, and each letter needs a vowel, we can have:

- 3 a’s.
- 3 o’s.
- 3 e’s.
- Or a combination.

There would be total 27 combinations possible.

So what happens is that the vowels are introduced to the letters, and now it becomes pronounceable. So the limitation of pronunciation is removed.

On the other hand, beyond that something unique happens, depending on the particular configuration of the vowels, you will have more meanings. It is not just 'help' anymore; it becomes:

- “helped” as a verb in the past,
- or “helping” as a verb in the now or in the future
- or “helper” as a noun
- or “the one who helps more”
- or “helpful”
- Etc

By the particular configuration of vowels we get these **added connotations** and **more meaning**. To simplify it, we get tense and voice. So we know that the “help”:

- when it happened
- we also know whether the meaning is being conveyed as active or passive. That is to say, whether the word 'helping' is attributed to the doer, or is the helping attributed to the object “he was helped”.

So this comes from the vowels.

Some of these things in the initial 3 weeks will be abstract. That is something we will need to deal with because our goal is to begin the reading text as soon as possible. And the only way we can do that is if we move at a somewhat swift pace. We will introduce the material but we cannot dwell on too many examples because the minute we start dwelling on examples, week 3 becomes week 9 and the book still hasn't started.

So you will need to trust us. At various stages we are going to make promises. Our promise right now at this stage is to wait until week 3. At the end of the week 3 all of the theory will come to life. And we will ask you whether we delivered on our promise or not. Then we will make you a new promise for week 7.

This is what we mean when we constantly draw attention to the goals and the milestones. Our immediate goal right now is to begin the book.

So now we have all these 27 vowel combinations – so what's the difference between one configuration as compared to another? We are going to highlight that using the example. But first, before doing that, we will tell you the names of the 3 vowels. Their Arabic terms, and what terms they correspond to in terms of English equivalent.

The 3 vowels – كسرة, فتحة, ضمة

- Our first short vowel is ضمة/ُ

It looks like a little number 9 which comes at the top of a consonant which corresponds to an 'o' or 'u' in English.

Pretend we have a 'ba' and if we add a ُ, it becomes 'boo'. [ب becomes بُ]

Don't stretch it too much.

- Our next short vowel is a **فَتْحَة** / **وَ**

It's like a stroke that comes on top of the consonant and corresponds to a short 'a'. [ب becomes **بَ**]

- Our third one comes underneath, known as **كَسْرَة** / **ِ**. It is exactly the same as the second one, but that one was on top, and this one is underneath. It corresponds to an 'e' or 'i' in English.

I have brushed over this very quickly because this is a prerequisite. The student must know these vowels and the Arabic alphabet.

We are just refreshing and spending a couple of minutes, and not dwelling on them. So you should continue with the lesson *inshaAllaah*, when we get to the slide and give you examples.

So we have our **كَسْرَة**, **فَتْحَة** and **ضَمَّة**

[Illustration with pen]

Bo, ba, be [بُ , بَ , بِ]

Here we have a **ب**.

If you put the **ضَمَّة** on it, it becomes **بُ** [bo]

If you do it with the **فَتْحَة**, it would be **بَ** [ba]

If you do it with the **كَسْرَة**, it would be **بِ** [be]

It's pretty simple, nothing complicated about it. Moving forward.

Absence of vowel = سكون

The absence of the vowel is called **سُكُون**.

There is more on the next slide to illustrate the **ضَمَّة**, **فَتْحَة** and **كَسْرَة**.

The absence of vowels is **سكون**. In English, where you have a 3 lettered word - a consonant at the very front, a consonant at the very end and a vowel in the middle, the first consonant is the one that has the **وَ** / **ِ** / **ُ** on it or beneath it. And the one that ends the syllable which is not **followed** by any vowel, is the one which is said to have **سكون**.

- Example: if we write the word 'fun' in Arabic, it would be:

ف and **ن** connected together, a **وَ** above the **ف**, and a **ُ** on the **ن**. So that's **فُنْ** / fun.

So what is that sound?

That is an absence of vowel which we mean by سكون.

2 of the same syllable

One more thing, in English if you have a word that has two syllables, where the first syllable ends in the same consonant that the next syllable begins in, they write the letter twice.

- Example: the word “funny”. If you dissect it, it would be fun+ny. So they literally write the letter twice.

In Arabic we wouldn't do that. In Arabic we would have a special symbol for that – a fifth symbol. It looks like a small little ‘w’ [و]. It comes on top of the single consonant. You do not write the consonant twice – only the once. The symbol represents a سكون + a vowel. So it's like you are pronouncing the letter twice – the first time with the سكون and the second time with a vowel. Which is exactly what is happening with funny. (The first “n” would have a سكون and the second “n” would have a كسرة)

Pronouncing the letter twice is called تَشْدِيد or شِدَّة. So look here, right in the word شِدَّة, a ّ is used - ش + د + د + ة [shaddah].

Moving forward

اِسْتَنْصَرُوا

Now we have our example. This gets very interesting.

First of all, what we have here is what looks like a single word that is written in Arabic. It is written in Arabic itself, so we can practice what we have learned in the previous slides.

We have a كسرة [ِ] at the very front, on the س, a سكون [ْ]; on the ت, a فتحة [َ], and on the ن we have a سكون [ْ] → اِسْتَنْ

We take the first two and it forms a syllable “is” and we take the next two and it forms a second syllable “tan”. So we have اِسْتَنْ.

Then the ص is by itself. And ر with a ضمة [ُ]. But after the ضمة we have a و which is one of our long vowels, so that is not just [ro] رُ, but رُو [roo]

So it's اِسْتَنْصَرُوا

What does this thing mean?

First of all, is it one word, or two words, or three words, or more than that? How many are we dealing with?

Let me give you the translation for this first.

إِسْتَنْصَرُوا means 'they sought help'. A very large meaning. That is actually a full sentence.

When I say **'they'**, I am talking about a *group of males*, not women. If it were women, we would do it differently.

So the question is how many meanings is that?

We won't tell you the exact number now, but dissect it already.

One of the meanings within this compound structure is obviously the 'help'.

(1) Meaning of 'help'

From إِسْتَنْصَرُوا, where are we getting the 'help' meaning from?

The letters ن - ص - ر are giving us meaning number (1) which is "**help**".

So why am I saying that the meaning of help is coming from these 3 consonants?

The reason is because if I substitute with 3 other letters, the "they" part and "sought" part would remain the same, and the "help" part would change to something else.

- Example: if I change it to طَعَام [ط - ع - م], it would be إِسْتَطَعَمُوا. Notice it rhymes.

إِسْتَنْصَرُوا is now إِسْتَطَعَمُوا. The meaning would now change and it would become "They sought food".

I think that's enough proof to establish the claim that the meaning of 'help' is coming from the particular 3 consonants used in the middle.

So we have one meaning so far.

Other than that, what do we have here?

There is the notion of *seeking*. Because it didn't have to be 'they sought help', it could have been 'they helped'.

(2) Notion of seeking

Where is the seeking coming from?

You can ponder on that and think about that and give a few guesses – pause the file, and try to think about that and write down a few possible responses and then resume. .

So let me tell you that 'seeking' – a lot of people might think:

- It's coming from the 'و'. That is not true.
- Some people might think it might be coming from 'س' of إِسْتَنْصَرُوا.
- Or maybe all three of those "إِسْت" together conveying the notion of seeking.

But let me tell you what it is.

- It is the س and the ت only.

By the way I am not teaching you these things, I am only highlighting how meanings are achieved. The details of what we are doing right now will all come at a future time when the discussions are introduced in the proper sequence.

So right now focus on the example, and try not to memorize the details. But try to comprehend what we are giving you as we are giving it to you. So the (1) first meaning was the 'help', which came from the particularness of the ن - ص - ر, and (2) the second meaning is the notion of seeking, which comes only from the two letters of س and ت.

What is the / doing there?

It's written in the form of an ألف, but it's actually a همزة.

It's not conveying any meaning – the همزة at the front, it's just there for a particular purpose and that is because the immediately following letter has a سكون on it. Notice that the س has a سكون on it, and initiating the pronunciation of س with سكون, is not something that happens in Arabic, it does not happen in Urdu, nor does it happen in a lot of eastern languages. I.e. They do not have any process of initiating pronunciation with سكون.

- Example: the word 'school'. A person from one of those countries would say, "iskool", or "sakool", they cannot say 'school'. In our example it is 'stun'. I don't have a problem saying it, as I grew up here, and I am accustomed to speaking English, but a lot of people wouldn't be able to do it. So now you know the secret, why they would do that.

So the همزة there in اِسْتَنْصَرُوا is called the "enabling" همزة. It's there for pronunciation purposes. Otherwise the pronunciation of سكون in the beginning of a word is difficult. Not impossible, but difficult. So we are going to put an "x" underneath that to indicate that there is no meaning being conveyed by that همزة or الف.

(3) Past Tense

What's next?

(3) Next meaning here would be the *past tense*. It could have been "they are seeking help", or "they seek help", or "they will seek help". But it's none of those. It's specifically, "They sought help".

So where is this past tense coming from?

To answer that question, one would need to know, how future, present, and past tense verbs would look. So you can compare with them, and use a process of elimination and come to the correct answer. Since you do not know that and since we haven't covered that, I wouldn't expect anyone to give an accurate

reply to that – not yet. But I will tell you just for the purpose of illustrating that the present tense verb which we call the *imperfect* verb, or the one which we have in front of us, is the *perfect* verb, (perfect, that which is done, and imperfect is one that is ongoing, or will happen in the future – details of this will come later as we move forward in our introduction). For now, just understand that every imperfect verb in the language, without exception, must have a particular prefix.

And what is that?

That is one of the 4 letters, that has to be at the very front either

- a “ya” - ي
- a “ta” – ت
- an “a” أ
- or a “na” ن

So it's going to be

- يَسْتَدُّ
- تَسْتَدُّ
- أَسْتَدُّ
- نَسْتَدُّ

So if you see, if the word is initiated with one of these four letters, then you know it is *imperfect*. If it is missing those letters, it cannot be imperfect.

In our اِسْتَنْصِرُوا example, there are none of those 4 letters in the front.

There is همزة, but it's a different type of همزة; it's the enabling همزة which we already talked about.

From that we rule out the imperfect verb. The verb in front of us cannot be imperfect, as it's missing what is required for the imperfect verb – in other words the prefix at the front.

Now the other type of verb is the command one – the imperative.

- Example: seek help!

That is a type of verb in the Arabic language. We will have to rule that out. You will need to know how that looks.

Let me tell you: that one has a كسرة on the ص. So instead of اِسْتَنْصِرُوا, it would be اِسْتَنْصِرُوا.

Since the vowel here is a فتحة, that is how we know we are not dealing with a command verb.

So we have ruled out:

- the imperfect and
- the command

And since the verbs are only 3, now we know that we are dealing with “they sought help” in the **past**.

How would we represent that on our chart – on our screen right now?

We will put an “x” at the top. This “x” means the absence of the prefix. We will circle the فتحة because it is significant.

اِسْتَنْصَرُوا^x

Both the **absence of the prefix** and this فتحة together contributed and they gave us (3) meaning number 3, which was the **past tense**.

You see how interesting this is getting.

(4) Active vs. Passive

Moving forward - “they sought help”. Ponder over the meaning.

What are we doing in this sentence?

What we are doing is we’re taking a particular action and attributing to a group of males i.e. the group of males did it.

Now was there another way of conveying? What's the alternative?

The alternative is to take the action and attribute it to the *object*. In other words, ‘help was sought from *them*’. The seekers are not talked about – ‘they’ are not the subject anymore, ‘them’ becomes the subject. We call this ‘active’ vs. ‘passive’.

Again, you do not have to be masters of English grammar. I myself have not studied English grammar formally at all. These are simple things. They are not too complicated. The terminology you are hearing for the first time, but I will repeat them again. And I will not use heavy Arabic terms. I will use English terms. I will sort of interchange them a little when we move forward. So it will become like vocabulary, as though you are learning new words, no big deal. Also you can pause the recording, and go back and re-listen to things. If you need multiple viewing, you are free to do that.

The verb we have in front of us is definitely active, as the translation says “they sought help”, and not that “help was sought from them”.

How do we determine that? How do we determine that the verb in front of us is active as opposed to passive?

Let me tell you the answer to that – it is pure vowels. It's not about prefixes, it's not about extra letters, it's not about anything else. The و at the end we haven't even come to that yet, so it's pure vowels. *How would I explain that?*

Very briefly again, because we are not teaching the topic, we are just trying to illustrate as a method to introduce the science. Once I am done all of that, I am going to say , “oh, there is a particular science that talks about all of this, it's called صَرْف [sarf]. I have sort of ruined it a bit there, because I should have built the momentum and said that at the very end. In any case, I think that is fine.

We have the pure vowels here – what we mean - I mean this كسرة right here (under the همزة). It's contributing. This فتحة on the ت is also contributing. And this فتحة (on the ص) here is playing a secondary role. Number 1 it's distinguishing from the command verb, as we circled it and labeled it number 3. but again it's contributing.

So all 3 of these, so I am going to draw a line that extends all 3 of these. I am going to call that meaning number 4.

When I say meaning number 4, I mean **(4) active vs. passive**, that the verb in front of us happens to be *active*.

If the verb was *passive*, it would have been أُسْتَنْصِرُوا. this vowel here [on the همزة] would have changed to a ضمة. This vowel here [on the ت] would have changed to a ضمة. The point is that what we have is very specific, and each of the components is giving something very specific in its meaning.

So we have the 4th meaning, the active voice, which is coming from the particular configuration of 3 vowels.

Other than that we have four meanings already.

(5) 3rd Person

So we are going to now focus on the 'they'.

In English we have plurality, and third person. Because we are talking *about* a *group*, and we are not talking *to them*. Instead of 'you sought help' or 'we sought help, it is 'they sought help. So it's third person. There is our fifth meaning – which is **(5) 3rd person**.

(6) Plural (7) Masculine

So we are talking about **(6+7) a group of males**. So it's a *group*, as opposed to singular.

Also it's *males*, specifically males. If it were a group of females, there would have been a different way of conveying that.

These meanings, 5, 6, and 7 are coming from where?

They are coming from that single و.

What's the ألف doing there?

This is digressing a little. The ِ (after the و) is there for *script purposes*. It's not conveying any meaning. It is there to distinguish between another و we have in the language.

- One و is a *conjunction*. It means 'and'.
 - Example: زَيْدٌ وَ عَمْرٌو - 'Zaid and Amr'.

- دَخَلَ وَ خَرَجَ – ‘He entered and he existed’.
- أُعْطِيَ وَ مَنَعَ – ‘He gave and he prevented/withheld’.

The و joins between *nouns*, *verbs* and *adjectives*. It is a *conjunction*; a whole word.

و → pronoun

The و we are dealing with right now is not a conjunction, it is a *pronoun*.

It is an actual word also. It is written with the verb, to the point where it looks like it's part of the verb; it's really a word on its own and it's a pronoun. It accounts for meanings 5, 6, and 7. So we have the other wow in the language which is a conjunction.

Just pretend that all the Arabic vowels were removed. Because in classical Arabic script there are no vowels written in the book. So we need vowels – we have been establishing for the last half an hour, that without vowels you cannot even do anything – all you can do is *imagine* and *conceptualize*. I am not saying that vowels are discarded, but that they are not *written* in the script. Instead, the reader would need to infer them. This is the reason we study grammar, so that we can infer them and pronounce them as they are not written. So in the text, if we have اِسْتَنْصَرُوا written, and the vowels were removed, then it would become a little problematic in the sense that the reader might confuse it for اِسْتَنْصَرَ وَ, as opposed to اِسْتَنْصَرُوا which is what we have. So it would be a major confusion. And simply the space in between can be confused, because when you are writing, you might write them too close together, or you might cause a gap too much and the person might confuse the intended one for something else. That is why they make adding of the ا at the end mandatory. Basically this alif is there to distinguish the و pronoun from the other و which means 'and'. Hopefully that was clear.

There is no meaning conveyed by that ا, so we are going to draw an 'x' there also.

This was an exercise so we took you through it, and I think you learned a lot from that because you saw what looked like a single word, and in actually wasn't a single word. It was a bare minimum of three words. 'They sought help'. But in terms of the Arabic, we can consider it two words. This is because اِسْتَنْصَرَ part is a verb, and the و part is a pronoun. But if you want to dissect it further, the total number of meanings is seven. So what looked like a single word, actually conveyed 7 meanings. And that is pretty phenomenal if you ask me.

The 7 meanings of اِسْتَنْصَرُوا

No other language can do that. What are the meanings?

1. Notion of help: It came from the particularness of the consonants.
2. Notion of seeking: It came from the س and the ت in the front.

3. Past tense: It came from the absence of the prefix and the َ on the ص. These two together combined, contributed, and gave us the past tense.
4. Active voice: pure vowels; it was the configuration of 3 of the vowels together. Had they been different, it would have been passive.
5. Masculine gender in the subject: it's coming from the و
6. The plurality of the subject is also coming from the و.
7. The third person aspect of the subject is also coming from the و.

That is a lot of meaning being conveyed by what looked like a single word.

The superiority of Arabic

What makes Arabic superior is the comprehensive nature. You don't have to use too much, because it's not just the letters that convey the meaning, but we have vowels, and patterns, and even absences convey meaning. If you have a passage or paragraph that needs to be rendered into English, you will need twice the amount of words – that's the rule. As a rule, you would need at least twice the amount of words, possibly more. It could even be more than double. In certain cases, it can become triple. Like, right now, we just saw 1 word – translated 3 words. So this is the comprehensiveness.

The Prophet ﷺ said, *أُعْطِيتُ جَوَامِعَ الْكَلِمِ وَأَخْتَصِرُ لِي الْكَلَامَ إِخْتِصَارًا*, "I was given words of great comprehensive meaning, and speech was made concise for me."

He was talking about his own eloquence as a native Arabic speaker. Allaah ﷻ gave him a particular ability to communicate, a very impacting and penetrating way to communicate with his community.

Other than that, he is also talking about the language itself, because the language has these things built into it. And this is one of the things that makes the Arabic language superior above all other languages.

What is صرف?

صرف is the science which talks about these additional meanings because from all of those 7 meanings, it's only 1 that you will get from the dictionary. The rest you will not get from the dictionary – you will get from a particular science called صرف. In English it's called *morphology* or *etymology*.

What does صرف do?

It focuses on *patterns* and *endings*.

By patterns, we mean all of those earlier meanings – not 1, but 2, 3 and 4. These 3 meanings are the subject matter of sarf, and this is what we mean when we say *patterns*.

The **و** is one of numerous designated letters that could have been added to the verb. And that particular one (of **و**) gave us 3 things. It gave us:

1. gender
2. plurality
3. 3rd person

Had it been different, it could have been a group of females or it could have been “I”, or “You”, or “We”.

So one of those designated endings that are added to the end of the verb to give us the gender, the plurality, and the person of the one doing the verb – this is all taught in the science of **صرف**.

Let me summarize that.

صرف is a science of classical Arabic, that gives us patterns of vowelisation that convey the tense and the voice and the added connotation (such as notion of seeking).

When we say patterns, we do not mean just the vowels, but also the extra letters. Like ‘seeking’ in our example. It could be something else, such as a hyperbole. It could be receiving effect. It could be when a verb becomes transitive, like going becomes taking. Or, becoming angry changes to making someone angry – provoking.

- Example: **عَضِبَ** = ‘became angry’. **أَعَضَبَ** = ‘making someone angry’.

The extra **همزة** at the front added the connotation. It made it *transitive*. Transitive means it requires an object.

- **ذَهَبَ** = ‘went’. **أَذْهَبَ** = took (i.e. take someone with you).

It has an addition of extra **همزة** at the front.

So “patterns” is vowels, and also extra letters.

“Endings” is what we saw with the ‘wow’ at the end. This is the science of the sarf that talks about these things.

Verb Conjugation

Next topic is what we call *Verb Conjugation*, keeping the 3 base letters and adding pronouns or designated letters in the end that results in *tables*.

We have aspects of the subject that need to be reflected:

1. The gender
2. The plurality
3. The person

This cannot escape.

Gender

Any subject of a verb will have a *gender*.

In Arabic we have two genders. There is the *masculine* and *feminine*. There is no neutral.

All nouns and pronouns will have gender, either masculine or feminine.

The verb will look different depending on the gender of the subject – that's the point.

Plurality

The subject will be *singular*, *dual*, or *plural*.

In Arabic we have dual, which is different than in English because in English there is no dual.

In English 1 is called singular, 2 or more is called plural.

Person

Other than that we have *person* – because we want to know whether we are talking about the subject, or to the subject, or are we ourselves the subject.

The first one is called 3rd *person*, then 2nd *person*, and then 1st *person*.

Gender + Plurality + Person = Numerous conjugations

So when you combine these aspects together, you get numerous combinations because every subject will have a gender (masculine or feminine), plurality (singular/dual/plural), and person (3rd/2nd/1st). Those aspects are then combined together and multiplied, so we have a whole series of various conjugations.

Difference in Arabic and English

Let me talk a bit more about that before proceeding.

In English the verb is not affected, no matter what the subject is.

- Example: if a man slept, you would say '*He*' slept. If more than one, you would say '*They*' slept. If it was a female then '*She*' slept. Similarly, '*You*' slept, '*I*' slept, '*We*' slept.

First of all, there is not too many of them because 'they' does not distinguish between whether it's a group of males or a group of females. It doesn't matter; it's just 'they'.

"You" does not distinguish at all – you could be talking to a male or female or a group. Regardless of how many there are, the verb does not change. In English 'slept' remains 'slept'.

There is no impact on the verb.

In Arabic it's different. We just saw in our example, that the *و* was attached to the verb, and it actually has an impact on the verb – it changes how the verb looks. We have numerous more than they do in English because there is less overlap. If we are talking about a male in the 3rd person and we are talking about two males or a group of males, or a female, two females or a group of females, we would use six different verb combinations. It would be a different letter each time.

The same goes for the 2nd person. We could be talking to one male, or two males, or a group of males, or one female, two females, or group of females, and this will result in six separate verbs. They will all look different, as opposed to the 'slept' example, as the 'slept' verb did not change.

Conjugation Layout

Now we have a conjugation layout.

What they do is, they group it up 6+6+6 = 18.

Why? Because we are going to take 3rd person – look on the far left side – see 3rd person. There is going to be some of them that are male and some female, along with singular dual and plural. The resulting English equivalents are, He, They, They, She, They, They... this is very clear.

I think this representation we are giving you in the table is crystal clear. You should understand what we are talking about right now. So these are 6 – top 6.

Now, we are saying that the Arabic verb that we will give you, there will be 6 different verbs to represent all 6 of these. If you want to say 'He helped', you can use a particular verb for that. 'They (two males) helped'. That would be a different conjugation also. 'They (group of males) helped'. That would be different again, and that would be the *و* one, نَصَرُوا. So you start off with نَصَرَ, and eventually it becomes نَصَرُوا.

For the females, how is that?

For the two females, or group of females.

So this is what you need to understand, that the conjugation layout is divided into:

- 3rd person
- 2nd person
- and finally 1st person

Each one has 6.

Why 6?

Because there is *masculine* gender, *feminine* gender, and each one has *singular*, *dual* and *plural*. So 3x2 =6. This is how we get 6.

Same thing again for the 2nd person. 'You, you, you, you, you, you'. 6 'you's.

What does that mean?

It means, that whether you are speaking to one male, or two males, or a group of males, or one female, or two females, or a group of females, it's 'You' (in English equivalent).

Finally, we have 'I, We, We, I, We, We'. Notice that it's shaded out.

What is that indicating?

It is indicating that in Arabic, just like in English there is an overlap and we will not distinguish if the speaker is a male, we will use number 13, if the speaker is a females, we will also use number 13 to convey that meaning. There is no number 16. So there is an overlap. The same conjugation is used twice. So it's condensed.

Instead of 6,6,6, we have 6,6,2.

And in number 14, dual becomes irrelevant, and it's just like فَعَلْنَا – 'we helped'. So 'we' could mean two men, two women, a group of males, or a group of females – it doesn't really matter.

The top ones are all different, but when we hit the first person, it becomes the same, we have a little condensing that occurs. In English there is a lot condensing, because 'You' does not distinguish. So just like in English there is condensing, in Arabic there is condensing also. The difference is that in English it's more, in Arabic it's less. Since our number after all of the condensing is 14 which is a big number compared to the 6 of English. Personal pronouns in English are 6 (he, she, they, you, I, we). Personal pronouns in Arabic are 14.

More importantly, they are separate, the verb is separate, the pronoun is separate, and they are not attached. In Arabic they are actually attached. It looks like the verb is being repeated 14 times, slightly different.

When the numbers get big, when it looks like the same thing is being repeated 14 times, what you need now is a table. So it is entirely logical and understandable and it makes perfect sense, that in the study of the Arabic language, there should be a heavy emphasis on verb conjugation tables. I think I have explained it quite sufficiently why that is the case.

So in next few weeks, we will assign some tables. We haven't given you any tables yet – all we have given you is the table layout. Because mastering the layout is the first step. So now we start filling the slots and we start giving you the actual words to place therein – 1,2,3 etc.

Now you know what they mean. When we say number 10, it means 'You' speaking to a female. When we say 9, it means 'You', speaking to a group of males. When we say number 3, that means 'They', group of males. Number 6 is 'They', group of females.

This is the table layout we need to properly understand before moving forward.

Look at the slides a few times and just try to grab an image of this in your mind that you know and you can associate. He, they, they, she, they, they, 6 'you's, I, and we.

And then we are going to have tables of 14 basically.

So from the next session onwards, we are going to introduce the verbs inshaAllaah. We are still in our introductory theory, or you can call it our preliminaries. All of this is to begin the book in week 3. We will introduce the past tense verbs inshaAllaah in your third recording. And also we will tell you a bit about active and passive.

And this concludes the session.

Assalaamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuh.