

Class Notes for Session 01

Section II of IV: Classification of Words*

January 24, 2004

In Arabic, words are classified into three major categories: حرف [Letter], إسم [Noun], and فعل [Verb].

الكَلِمَةُ [(the) Word]

حَرْفٌ (١)	لَفْظٌ وَضِعَ لِغَنَى غَيْرِ مُسْتَقِلٍّ
إِسْمٌ (٢)	لَفْظٌ وَضِعَ لِغَنَى مُسْتَقِلٍّ بِدُونِ زَمَانٍ
فِعْلٌ (٣)	لَفْظٌ وَضِعَ لِغَنَى مُسْتَقِلٍّ مَعَ زَمَانٍ

Word-for-word, the table above could be understood as follows:

1. كَلِمَةٌ [word]; أَلْكَامَةُ [the word].
2. حَرْفٌ [letter]; لَفْظٌ [utterance]; وَضِعَ [(it) was put (in language)]; لِغَنَى [for + مَعْنَى meaning]; غَيْرِ [not, without]; مُسْتَقِلٍّ [independent].
3. إِسْمٌ [noun]; لِغَنَى وَضِعَ لَفْظٌ —the same phrase as before; مُسْتَقِلٍّ [independent]; بِدُونِ [with + دُونَ without]; زَمَانٍ [time].
4. فِعْلٌ [verb]; مُسْتَقِلٍّ وَضِعَ لِغَنَى لَفْظٌ —the same phrase as before; مَعَ [with]; زَمَانٍ [time].

*These lecture notes are from the *Learn Qur'anic Arabic* course being taught by Dr. Yusuf Kavakci at the Islamic Association of North Texas (IANT) in Richardson, Texas. Details and course materials are available online at <http://www.iant.com/lqamain.php>.

In essence, we state the following:

1. حَرْفٌ [Letter], is a كَلِمَةٌ [word] that has no independent meaning. For example, in Arabic, بِ [with, to] is classified as حَرْفٌ. It has a meaning, but not an independent meaning—it cannot be used independently.
2. اِسْمٌ [Noun], is a كَلِمَةٌ that has an independent meaning, but without any sense of time. For example, when we say, “Chair,” it has an independent meaning. Similarly, غُرْفَةٌ [room], مَسْجِدٌ —each has an independent meaning. Note the phrase: بِدُونِ زَمَانٍ [without (a sense of) time]; for example, when we say اِنْسَانٌ [human being] —it has an independent meaning, but there is no sense of time in it.
3. فِعْلٌ [Verb], is a كَلِمَةٌ that has an independent meaning, along with a sense of time. For example, قَتَلَ [killed] —an action done in the past—it has an independent meaning; also, there is a time element in it. Note the phrase: مَعَ زَمَانٍ [with time].

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