COLLOQUIAL
ARABIC
(LEVANTINE)
The Colloquial Series

Series adviser: Gary King

The following languages are available in the Colloquial series:

Albanian
Amharic
Arabic (Levantine)
Arabic of Egypt
Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia
Basque
Bulgarian
*Cambodian
*Cantonese
*Chinese
Croatian and Serbian
Czech
Danish
Dutch
Estonian
Finnish
French
German
Greek
Gujarati
Hindi
Hungarian
Indonesian
Italian
Japanese
Korean
Latvian
Lithuanian
Malay
Mongolian
Norwegian
Panjabi
Persian
Polish
Portuguese
Portuguese of Brazil
Romanian
*Russian
Slovak
Slovene
Somali
Spanish
Spanish of Latin America
Swedish
*Thai
Turkish
Ukrainian
*Vietnamese
Welsh

Accompanying cassette(s) (*and CDs) are available for all the above titles. They can be ordered through your bookseller, or send payment with order to Routledge Ltd, ITPS, Cheriton House, North Way, Andover, Hants SP10 5BE, or to Routledge Inc., 29 West 35th Street, New York NY 10001, USA.

COLLOQUIAL CD-ROMs
Multimedia Language Courses
Available in: Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish
Forthcoming: German
COLLOQUIAL ARABIC (LEVANTINE)

Leslie J. McLoughlin

Routledge
London and New York
CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS vii

INTRODUCTION 1

PART ONE THE LESSONS 13

1 Nouns and adjectives; basic sentences 13
2 Possession and pronouns 18
   Appendix: Numbers 21
3 Verbs, word order and demonstratives 24
4 Verbs, conjunctions and elatives 33
5 Participles 40
6 Hollow verbs and ‘to be able’ 44
7 Verbs, defective and doubled 50
8 Assimilated verbs, conjunctions and ‘for’ 58
9 Relative pronouns, verbal nouns and possession 63
10 More verbs, verbal phrases and whenever/whoever 69
11 Conditional sentences 73
12 Idioms 76
13 Terms of address and reference 86
14 Proverbs 92
15 Courtesy expressions for various occasions 97
16 A story 101
17 A miscellany 105
18 Concepts in society 112
19 Abuse 117
PART TWO APPENDICES

Key to exercises 121
Grammar, indexed by lesson 127
Vocabulary 129
Bibliography 145
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRP</td>
<td>British Received Pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Common (of gender)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Classical Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coll.A.</td>
<td>Colloquial Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>Feminine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lit.</td>
<td>Literally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.</td>
<td>Noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prep.</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pron.</td>
<td>Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sing.</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vb</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.n.</td>
<td>Verbal noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Arabic is the language of daily communication for between 150 and 200 million people, and the language of worship for many hundreds more millions of Muslims. It is the original language of the Koran, which in Muslim belief is incomparably excellent, since it is the direct word of God (kalaam allaah). Arabic is the language of prayer for all Muslims, and the language of the muezzin who summons the faithful to prayer the world over five times daily. It is now an official working language in the UN and many international agencies. Its script is used in many other languages—Persian, Ottoman Turkish and Urdu among them—and since the Koran is possibly the world’s best selling book the Arabic script may well be the second most used script after Latin. The Arabic written language is almost completely uniform throughout the Arab world. Moreover the language of radio and television is uniform to the same extent, since it is simply the written word of modern Arabic being read aloud.

There is a direct line of descent from classical Arabic, the language of the Koran, to modern Arabic; so that across 1,400 years (in the Islamic calendar) the script is recognizably the same, the grammar has changed remarkably little (by comparison with, for example, German or English) and even the vocabulary has shown an astonishing integrity and consistency. It is the Koran which has preserved the essence of written Arabic, and it is also the elevated status accorded to the original language of Islam which has prevented the Arabic dialects from becoming as far apart from each other as the dialects of Latin. Whereas Italian and French are not now mutually comprehensible, the speakers of dialects of Arabic over an enormous area can understand each other. Peasants from Muscat and Morocco
respectively would certainly have problems with each other’s dialects, but even peasants and certainly educated people throughout the Peninsula, the Levant, Iraq, Egypt, the Sudan and some parts of N. Africa can make themselves understood to each other without necessarily resorting to classical Arabic.

Within the Levant (historical Syria, Jordan and Lebanon) there is, if not linguistic homogeneity, at least clearly visible evidence of close similarity between the many dialects. The differences are what one would expect. A Sidon (Lebanon) fisherman will use different metaphors from those of a Syrian from the Jebel Druze; because of close community ties over long historical periods villages tend to preserve distinctive features of vocabulary and phonology. *

This introductory manual aims to present those features of the language which would be acceptable throughout the Levant area. The speech presented is not, on the one hand, the dialect of any particular village or area; nor is it, on the other, a debased classical form spoken by no one in particular. The aim is to present a natural form of speech, which is acceptable and at the same time idiomatic and correct.

An Arabic proverb says ‘A new language is a new man’ and, among other things, this means that a non-Arab approaching Arabic has to be ready to understand (if not necessarily to imitate) different attitudes and perspectives. Westerners are not in everyday speech given, as Arabs are, to quoting poetry, ancient proverbs and extracts from holy books. Nor are they wont to exchange fulsome greetings. This is to say nothing of the different attitudes to physical contact and proximity, as well as to relations between the sexes. It is, however, essential to understand not only the grammar and vocabulary of the Arabic of this area but also the underlying attitudes and assumptions.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the Levantine approach to language and that of westerners is that Levantines, like most Arabs, take pleasure in using language for its own sake.** The sahra (or evening entertainment) may well take the form of talk alone, but

*This is after all the area which gave the world the concept of a shibboleth, and this same feature (s/sh) still distinguishes Levant dialects from each other (sajana/shajara; tree).

**But in a way totally different from other Arabic speakers: five minutes on the streets of Cairo reveal attitudes to life and language totally different from those of Syria.
talk of a kind forgotten in the west except in isolated communities such as Irish villages or Swiss mountain communities—talk not merely comical, tragical, historical/pastoral, etc but talk ranging over poetry, story-telling, anecdotes, jokes, word-games, singing and acting. It is no accident that Arabic has a verb which means ‘to chat to someone in the evening’ and that a common name is Samir (f. Samira) meaning ‘one with whom one chats in the evening’. The moral for the non-Arab is that if one can adjust to these different attitudes to language, and understand what is going on, one can discover whole layers of Arab life which must remain unsuspected to those who know no Arabic or who, knowing some, remain attached to (for example) the belief that only classical Arabic is a fit object of study. The present writer takes the view that a real understanding and appreciation of colloquial Arabic can only expand a student’s knowledge of classical Arabic. A student who understood all the allusions to poetry, proverbs and religion to be heard on a day’s march in the Levant would be far beyond doctoral standards in terms of university study.*

This manual attempts to give some insight into aspects of colloquial Arabic other than syntax and vocabulary: in addition to twelve lessons on these subjects there are lessons on idioms, greetings, ritual language, terms of address and reference, proverbs, even on abuse. A multi-media approach would be necessary to do justice to a communicative approach to colloquial Arabic** (perhaps to any language) but the present volume, it is hoped, will, by presenting information in separate ‘packages’ on the printed pages, prepare the student’s approach to mastering this most fascinating language.

---

*Lebanese Arabic in particular is much maligned by some orientalists. In fact a study of its vocabulary reveals a very high percentage of classical vocables.

**This manual has, perforce, to omit an essential element in everyday Levantine communication, namely hand gestures. An illustrated dictionary of the meanings of some hundreds of gestures could be (indeed, once was) compiled. These differ from Mediterranean hand gestures (with which they show some features) in that they not only reinforce meaning but can also be used to hold meaningful conversations across a distance.
THE STRUCTURE OF ARABIC

The following are brief notes on how Arabic works, taking ten broad features common to both written and spoken Arabic.

1 Arabic is a Semitic language (unlike Turkish and Persian), hence the similarity to Arabic of Hebrew phrases from the Bible, e.g. Matt. 27:46: ‘Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lamma sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’

2 Semitic languages are distinguished by the triliteral root system. The consonants k-t-b imply something to do with writing. The addition of prefixes, infixes and suffixes generates words connected with writing.

3 The root and pattern system in Arabic is highly developed and, being on the whole consistent and predictable, can be used by a foreign student to guess meanings of new words and increase vocabulary. Thus, from k-t-b:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ma/—a- maktab</td>
<td>Office, study, bureau, desk</td>
<td>Pattern always means ‘place of…’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 -aa-i- kaatib</td>
<td>Clerk, writer, author</td>
<td>Pattern always means the active participle or doer of the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ma--oo- makoob</td>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>Pattern always means the passive participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 -aa-a- kaatab</td>
<td>To correspond with someone</td>
<td>Form III derived verb, usually means to do the action to someone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mu-aa-i- mukaatib</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
<td>Active participle of (4) above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Predictability Arabic has almost complete predictability in its patterns (cf. English: light/lit; fight/fought; sight/sighted). Past-tense verbs conjugate with suffixes, for example, which are invariable for all verbs.

5 Consistency in spelling
(a) Words can be spelled correctly once the sound is known correctly. Not for Arabic the complexities of English: seen/scene; bean/been etc.
(b) The name of the consonant gives the consonant’s pronunciation. *Haa’* is the name of the sound registered by *H* (cf. English: aitch=ḥ).

6 **Economy**

(a) Arabic has only two tenses, past and non-past.
(b) Arabic has basically only three short vowels (*a, i* and *u*), three long (*aa, ee* and *oo*) and two diphthongs (*ay* and *aw*).
(c) In classical Arabic the short vowels do heavy morphological duty for verb endings, case endings and pronoun distinction, in ways which are clearly related, for example a final */i/* or */ee/* means *you*, feminine singular, in both verbs and pronouns.
(d) In colloquial Arabic the same applies, but even more so: colloquial has almost no case endings, and verb suffixes are far fewer than in classical.

7 **Simplicity** Particularly in colloquial Arabic, sentence structure is very simple: for example, equational sentences have no *is/are*. Furthermore, Levantine Arabic like all Arabic dialects is much given to expressing a great deal in highly truncated sentences and phrases and even single words. (Cf. Egyptian multi-purpose use of the word for yes!)

8 **Stress patterns** The place of the stress—or prominence—in a word is almost completely determined by fixed rules. In broad terms the stress falls on the first syllable except when the word has a long syllable. Then the stress falls on the nearest long syllable to the end of the word.*

9 **Formality** Colloquial Arabic has many ritual or formal phrases in greeting, salutation etc. (Beware of thinking, however, that the language is cabalistic!)

10 **Intonation** Particular attention should be paid by students to native speakers’ intonation: a wrong intonation is one of the clearest markers of a foreign accent.

**TRANSCRIPTION AND PRONUNCIATION**

Systems of transliteration seem to vary only in degrees of repulsiveness. No one system is satisfactory to all, and the general reader is often

*A long syllable is one with a long vowel or diphthong or a short vowel followed by two consonants.*
deterred by an excessively scrupulous attempt to render phonetic differences.

The system employed in this book uses only the symbols found on an ordinary typewriter. In the writer’s experience most of the apparent difficulties of using transliteration disappear when use is made of a recording of the text (see How to use the book).

Introduction to Arabic pronunciation

1 Consonants and vowels The table below aims to guide the beginner with a mixture of technical terms and layman’s language. The recordings should also be used freely.

2 Stress Arabic stress rules are quite different from English, and failure to observe this is one of the principal features of a foreign accent.

   (a) short syllables have short vowels;
   (b) long syllables have either long vowels or a diphthong; or a short vowel followed by two consonants;
   (c) in words with long and short syllables the stress falls on the nearest long syllable to the end of the word;
   (d) otherwise the stress is on the first syllable.

Examples: mu’Hamw mad; bayróot; ána.

3 Intonation One of the principal features distinguishing Levantine dialects one from another, and all from English, is the intonation, the rise and fall of the voice. Students should note different intonation patterns most carefully. A wrong intonation pattern is another common feature of a foreign accent.

4 Junction and elision The student should note how words ‘run together’, in order to avoid sounding too foreign.

   A hyphen is intruded as a guide to pronunciation as follows: between /s/ and /h/ when these symbols represent separate consonants, for example, ’as-hal (easy). Therefore when /sh/ is written with no hyphen the sound is as in English ship. Similarly for k-h/kh, t-h/th, d-h/dh and g-h/gh.

   An asterisk (*) in the table below indicates that the pronunciation of Levantine Arabic (in one or other dialect) may differ markedly from that of classical Arabic.
Please note

For most occurrences in classical Arabic of the unvoiced uvular plosive (qaaf: /q/ in transliteration) the symbol /ʔ/ is used (i.e. the symbol for the glottal stop). Most Levantine dialects regularly make this ‘conversion’ from classical Arabic, but the student should note that:

1. Bedouin throughout the area use /g/ for /q/,
2. the Druzes systematically maintain /q/,
3. certain words always retain the classical /q/: al-qur’aan (Koran) and al-qahira (Cairo).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Arabic letter</th>
<th>Name of letter</th>
<th>Transliteration of name</th>
<th>Transliteration symbol</th>
<th>Phonetic remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>همزة</td>
<td>hamza</td>
<td></td>
<td>’</td>
<td>Glottal stop. In coll. A. often becomes lengthening of adjacent vowel: ra’s becomes raas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>باء</td>
<td>baa’</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Voiced bilabial plosive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>تاء</td>
<td>taa’</td>
<td>t</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dental, not alveolar as in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ثاء</td>
<td>thaa’</td>
<td>th</td>
<td></td>
<td>As in thin; in coll. A. often /t/ or /s/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>جيم</td>
<td>jeem</td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td>In Lebanon, often as in French je.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>حاء</td>
<td>Haa’</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td>Notably strong expulsion of breath; unvoiced pharyngeal fricative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>خاء</td>
<td>khaa’</td>
<td>kh</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rougher than in Scottish loch; unvoiced velar fricative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>دال</td>
<td>daal</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dental; not as in English /d/.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ذال</td>
<td>dhaal</td>
<td>dh</td>
<td></td>
<td>As in then; frequently pron. /d/ or /z/ in coll. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial</td>
<td>Arabic letter</td>
<td>Name of letter</td>
<td>Transliteration of name</td>
<td>Transliteration symbol</td>
<td>Phonetic remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ر راً</td>
<td>raa’</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>A much more trilled /r/ than in BRP.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>ز زاي</td>
<td>zay</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>More tense than in English z. In CA 14 often becomes /z/.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>س seen</td>
<td>seen</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>More tension and lip-spreading than in English sit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>ش sheen</td>
<td>sheen</td>
<td>sh</td>
<td>More tense than in English shop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>ص Saad</td>
<td>Saad</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>14–17 share the phonetic feature (velarization, pharyngealization) of Emphasis, and 17 has variant pronunciations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>ض Daad</td>
<td>Daad</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ط Taa’</td>
<td>Taa’</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cf. 3)</td>
<td>(cf. 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*17</td>
<td>ظ Zaa’</td>
<td>Zaa’</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>CA 17 frequently becomes coll. A. 15.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(cf. 11)</td>
<td>(cf. 11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ع 9ayn</td>
<td>9ayn</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Voiced pharyngeal fricative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>غ ghayn</td>
<td>ghayn</td>
<td>gh</td>
<td>Voiced uvular fricative, and similar to a Parisian r sound.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>ف faa’</td>
<td>faa’</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>As in off. not of. More tense than English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*21</td>
<td>ق qaaaf</td>
<td>qaaaf</td>
<td>q</td>
<td>Unvoiced uvular plosive; in many dialects changes to glottal stop, or hamza.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>ك kaaf</td>
<td>kaaf</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>As in kid.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ل laam</td>
<td>laam</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>‘Clear’ not ‘dark’ /l/, i.e. more dental.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>م meem</td>
<td>meem</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>ن noon</td>
<td>noon</td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>ه haa’</td>
<td>haa’</td>
<td>h</td>
<td>An 'English' /h/. Cf. 6 above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serial</td>
<td>Arabic letter</td>
<td>Name of letter</td>
<td>Transliteration of name</td>
<td>Transliteration symbol</td>
<td>Phonetic remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>داَوَ</td>
<td>waw</td>
<td>w</td>
<td>With tension and lip-rounding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>يَأَهَ</td>
<td>yaa’</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>With tension and lip-spreading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Arabic letter</th>
<th>Name of letter</th>
<th>Transliteration of name</th>
<th>Transliteration symbol</th>
<th>Phonetic remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>فَتْحَةٌ</td>
<td>fatHa</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Many allophones, but frequently as in BRP hat.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>كَسْرَةٌ</td>
<td>kesra</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>As in pin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>ضَمْعَةٌ</td>
<td>Damma</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>As in BRP put, never as in BRP putt.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Long vowels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Arabic letter</th>
<th>Name of letter</th>
<th>Transliteration of name</th>
<th>Transliteration symbol</th>
<th>Phonetic remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>أَلْفَةٌ طَوْيَلْةٍ</td>
<td>'alif Taweela</td>
<td>aa</td>
<td>As in BRP heart, but allophonic variations occur. See the following pronunciation exercises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>يَ</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cf. 28 above; as in BRP bee, but more tense and with more lip-spreading than in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>وَ</td>
<td>oo</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cf. 27 above; as in food, but with greater tension, and protrusion and rounding of the lips.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Diphthongs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Arabic letter</th>
<th>Name of letter</th>
<th>Transliteration of name</th>
<th>Transliteration symbol</th>
<th>Phonetic remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>ءَيَ</td>
<td>ay</td>
<td></td>
<td>As in hay, but as many allophones exist as in English hay.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>ؤَوَ</td>
<td>aw</td>
<td></td>
<td>As in mow, but with greater lip-rounding and protrusion: allophones occur, e.g. the o of German Lohn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation exercises

These are taken from proper names, i.e. names of persons and places of relevance to the modern Arabic and Islamic worlds, and to the Levant. The tape recordings should be used freely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Arabic letter</th>
<th>Name of letter</th>
<th>Transliteration of name</th>
<th>Transliteration symbol</th>
<th>Phonetic remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>As in German Lohn. (Found principally in final position as 3 m. sing. pronoun.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note The /l/ of ‘al, the definite article, is assimilated to the following consonant (i.e. there is gemination) when the noun following ‘al begins with any of these sounds: nos 3, 4, 8–17 inclusive, 23, 25 and frequently 5 in Lebanon. Thus al-salaam becomes as-salaam and so on. These are ‘sun-letters’. The rest are ‘moon-letters’.

Pronunciation exercises

These are taken from proper names, i.e. names of persons and places of relevance to the modern Arabic and Islamic worlds, and to the Levant. The tape recordings should be used freely.

saqaTra qubruS
dimashq SaaliH
Hasan Husayn
sa9eed su9ood
najeeb tawfeeq
saleem salim
meekhaa’eel faaDil
kareem baheej
’ibraheem fareed
wadee9 9abd un-naaSir
9abd us-salaam 9aarif 9abd ul-laTeef baghdaadee
’aHmad shuqayree ’aHmad 9abd ullah
muHammad 9abd us-salaam 9alee 9abd ul-laTeef
9abd ul-kareem qaasim 9abdul-Hakeem 9aamir
’ash-shaykh saalim ’aS-Sabaah 9aadul-Hameed noor ud-deen muSTafa kamaal
maHmood 9abd ul-waaHid 9abdul-Hakeem 9aamir
haadee SalaaH ud-deen ’al-ayyoobee
(Saladin) naSree shams ud-deen
muHammad salmaan muSTafa kamaal
9uthmaan Husayn fareed al-’aTrash
’iHsaan Saadiq maHmood ’alhaashimee
9aarif 9abd ul-laT eef  baghdaadee najaat’aS-Sagheera
HOW TO USE THE BOOK

**Without a teacher**

There are scores of possible ways of using a combination of the Arabic text, the translation or key and the sound recording of the Arabic, but among the possibilities are the following four step-by-step procedures for exercises and dialogues:

1. Read the English; say the Arabic; hear the Arabic recording; repeat the Arabic.
2. As 1 and then: play your own voice recording; play the Arabic; correct where necessary.
3. Hear the Arabic recording (at any point, i.e. in random fashion); write the translation; check and correct where necessary.
4. Use the recordings for memorizing vocabulary; test yourself by covering up the Arabic version and saying the Arabic; check from the recording.

All sections of text which are on the cassette are marked /H17039/H17039/H17039/H17039/H17039 in the margin.

**With a teacher**

The teacher will want to use his own methods based on experience, but the following suggestions may be useful.

1. Ten drills based on the sentences and dialogues: repetition; inflexion; replacement; restatement; completion; transposition; expansion; contraction; transformation; integration. (See the author’s *Course in Colloquial Arabic*, Beirut, 1974, pp. 12–14)

   Of these, **transformation** is particularly valuable for Arabic; a given sentence can be changed for tense, negativeness, positiveness, interrogative etc.

2. **Random comprehension practice** The teacher may use the Arabic of the dialogues or the exercises for rapid-fire testing of
comprehension (in random order, preferably) or for eliciting the correct response.

3 **Action and movement** The teacher may have the student(s) act out the dialogues with appropriate exits and entrances when necessary.

4 **Recapitulation** The student(s) may be asked to re-tell the story of the dialogues and the anecdote in Lesson sixteen.

5 **Vocabulary testing** This can be done Arabic–English or English–Arabic using the lists in each chapter or, at a later stage, the vocabularies at the end of the book.
FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS

Equational sentences (e.g. The teacher/he...is...)

You can communicate a great deal in perfectly correct Arabic (spoken and written) without using a single verb.

1 The present tenses of to be and to have are not in the form of conjugated verbs in Arabic (see Lesson two for to have). In fact there is no need normally to say is/are.

2 The negative is formed by using one word (mush) systematically for nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

3 The interrogative is formed by simply changing the intonation of the voice. Compare English: They are not here, Aren’t they here?

Examples

Salim is here—saleem hawn
Salim is not here—saleem mush hawn
Is Salim here?—saleem hawn?
Is Salim not here?—saleem mush hawn?
Karim is Lebanese—kareem lubnaanee
Karim is not Lebanese—kareem mush lubnaanee
Is Karim Lebanese?—kareem lubnaanee?
Is Karim not Lebanese?—kareem mush lubnaanee?
Note The ‘Karim’ sentences illustrate that all adjectives may be used as nouns. Indeed the classical grammarians say that the whole of Arabic grammar may be summed up in three parts: nouns, verbs and particles.

**SUBJECT PRONOUNS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>’ana</td>
<td>’iHna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m</td>
<td>’inta</td>
<td>’intoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>’intee</td>
<td>’intoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>huwa</td>
<td>hum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>hiya</td>
<td>hum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note** (1) You and I—’ana oo ’inta. (2) Many dialects use a different compound form of the subject pronouns (see below, in Lesson two, ‘Possession’): You and I—’ana oo iyyaak.

**Examples**

They are Jordanians—hum ‘urdunee-een
We are Syrians—’iHna sooree-een
They are the Lebanese girls—hum ’il-banaat il-lubnaanee-een

**AGREEMENT**

Adjectives and verbs agree in gender and number with their noun or pronoun subjects in Arabic. *On the other hand* . . .

1. There is no indefinite article, let alone a declined one as in many European languages.
2. The definite article does not change for gender or number.
3. Plural non-humans are regarded as feminine singular for the purposes of grammatical agreement.

**GENDE**

The feminine adjective is formed in most cases by simply adding /a/: shaikh, shaikha; sulTaan, sulTaana; lubnaanee, lubnaaneea; urdunee, urduneeea.
Adjectives formed from names, such as lubnaan/ lubnaanee, bayroot/ bayrootee, are called nisba adjectives (meaning relationship). When made feminine (by adding /a/) they double the /ee/ sound. The feminine nisba ending will henceforth be transcribed-iyya.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Feminine adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lubnaan</td>
<td>lubnaanee</td>
<td>lubnaaniyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bayroot</td>
<td>bayrootee</td>
<td>bayrootiyya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dimashq</td>
<td>dimashqee</td>
<td>dimashqiyya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples**

The boy is Syrian—’il-walad sooray
The girl is Syrian—’il-bint sooriyya
The boy is a Muslim—’il-walad muslim
The girl is a Muslim—’il-bint muslima

Conversely, most nouns ending in /a/ are feminine.

**NUMBER**

1  Arabic has a form for dual (two of anything) formed by adding -ayn (as in Bahrain, Alamain etc.):
   The two boys are here—’il-waiadayn hawn
   The two girls are here—’il-bintayn hawn

2  The most common plural formula (the ‘sound’ one) is that composed of the adjective/noun plus -een:
   a Syrian—sooray (NB no indefinite article in Arabic)
   the Syrians—’is-sooray-een

   (Plurals formed otherwise—see Vocabulary—are called broken plurals.)

3  In colloquial Arabic the feminine plural ending (-aat) is not extensively used:
   The girls are Syrian—’il-banaat sooray-een

4  The attributive adjective (e.g. ‘the Syrian girls’) must also be definite:
   the Jordanian girls—’il-banaat ’il-’urduney-een
5 Usually a dual noun (especially with humans) will, in colloquial Arabic, have a plural adjective:

the two Lebanese girls—‘il-bintayn ‘il-lubnaanee-een

**THE IDAFA OR CONSTRUCT**

This feature of Arabic has no equivalent in English, but the rules can be learned from simple, well-known examples.

The Arabic name Dar es Salaam means ‘the abode of peace’. Notice that the first definite article is not used.

**Rule 1** in the structure *the...of the...* the first definite article is not found:

the book of the boy—kitaab ‘il-walad

**Rule 2** the construct, if longer, removes all but the final definite article:

the book of the son of the teacher—kitaab ‘ibn il-mu9allim

**Rule 3** there is no ‘apostrophe s’ in Arabic. ‘The boy’s book’ must be rendered ‘the book of the boy’.

**VOCABULARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9arabee</td>
<td>Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9arab</td>
<td>(pl. 9arab)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘awlaad</td>
<td>boy, son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘abnaa</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banaat</td>
<td>girl, daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sufaraa’</td>
<td>ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘een</td>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kutub</td>
<td>book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lubnaanee</td>
<td>Lebanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ameen</td>
<td>Syrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘urdunee</td>
<td>Jordanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ileen</td>
<td>Palestinian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ileen</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ileen</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ileen</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ajaanib</td>
<td>foreigner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXERCISE

Translate:

1. ’il-walad ’ingleezee
2. ’il-bint faransiyya
3. ’il-kitaab kitaab 9arabee
4. kitaab il-bint hawn
5. bint ’il-mu9allim hawn
6. The boy’s teacher is a foreigner
7. The foreigner’s sons are here
8. The American boy is the son of the teacher
9. We are the sons of the English teacher
10. The Syrian girl is the daughter of the ambassador

Make the above negative and/or interrogative, where feasible.

DIALOGUE: East meets west

A marHaba!
B marHabtayn! kayf ’il-Haal?
A ’il-Hamdu lillaah! kayf ’il-Haal?
B il-Hamdu lillaah! ’inta ingleezee?
A na9am ’ana ingleezee oo huwa amreekaanee
B ’ahlan wa sahlan!
A ’ahlan wa sahlan feek!

Translation

A Hullo!
B Hullo! how are you?
A Praise be to God! How are you (How is the state)?
B Praise be to God! Are you English?
A Yes, I’m English and he is an American
B Welcome!
A (Ritual reply implying that the welcome is embodied in the person extending it!)

PROVERB

’il-walad walad wa law Hakam balad—Boys will be boys…(lit. ‘The boy is a boy even though he rules a country!’)
LESSON TWO
POSSESSION AND PRONOUNS

POSSESSION

1  The verb to have (present tense) is expressed in Arabic by saying that something is with/to in the possession of someone.

I have a book—9indee kitaab
They have a book—9indhum kitaab

9ind implies with/in the possession of/chez etc. The pronouns attached to it have multiple uses: as possessive pronouns, object pronouns and as additions to prepositions.

   The full table is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>-ee (-nee when object of</td>
<td>-nna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>verb and following prep, fee)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>-ak</td>
<td>-kum (or koo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>-ik</td>
<td>-kum (or koo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>-hum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>-ha</td>
<td>-hum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2  The negative is as follows:

I do not have a book—maa 9indee kitaab
Hasn’t she a book?—maa 9indhaa kitaab?

3  my book—kitaabee
their books—kutubhum (etc.)

Note My book=the book of me. The definite article disappears, as this is a kind of idafa or construct. Attributive adjectives added to my book etc. must be definite.

my new book—kitaabee il-jadeed
her Arabic book—kitaabhaa il-9arabee

Note also A refinement is introduced for nouns ending in /a/ (see Vocabulary note below).
OTHER PRONOUN USES

1  you and I—’ana oo ’inta

In many Levantine dialects, however, this becomes ’ana oo ’iyyaak; i.e. the possessive pronoun is added to ’iyyaa.

we and they—’iHna oo ’iyyaahum

(In such phrases, pronoun order is always 1, 2 3; for example: you and they—inta oo iyyaahum.)

2  Added to prepositions:

from—min
with—ma9a
in—fee
from/with/in them—minhum/ma9hum/feehum

Note from/with/in me—minnee/ma9ee/feenee

3  Idiomatic expressions (m. and f.):

How are you?—kayfak? kayfik?
How are you? (Syria)—shlawnak? shlawnik?
(lit. ‘What is your colour?’)
Where are you?—waynak? waynik?
(often means ‘How could you say/do such a thing?’)

4  Objects of verbs. The pronouns are suffixed to verbs as direct or indirect objects (see Lesson three).

5  With kull (all), and other words:

all of us—kullnaa
all of them—kullhum
all/the whole of it—kullo

■ VOCABULARY

new—jadeed (pl. judud) (often becomes ’ijdeed, pl. ’ijdaad) from—min
please—min faDlak (lit. ‘of your graciousness’)
with—ma9
in—fee
house—bayt (pl. buyoot)
school—madrasa (f.; pl. madaaris)
large, big—kabeer (pl. kibaar)
small, young—Sagheer (pl. Sighaar) (often becomes ‘iZgheer, pl. ‘iZghaar)
car—sayyaara (f.; pl. -aat)
man—rajul (pl. rijaal)
woman—mara (f.; pl. niswaan)
room—ghurfa (f.; pl. ghuraf)
yes—na9am
no—lāa

Note on possessive pronouns
When a possessive pronoun or a noun ‘in construct’ is added to a word ending in /a/ such as sayyaara (car), a /t/ is inserted before the pronoun:

my car—sayyaaratee
the car of the teacher—sayyaarat ‘il-mu9allim
(This is the taa’ marboo‘Tā of classical Arabic.)

EXERCISE
Translate:
1 huwa fee ghurfat ‘il-mu9allim
2 ‘il-bintayn ma9a mu9allimee
3 ‘ir-rajul ‘il-kabeer min 9ammaan
4 9indee bintayn oo walad
5 9indhaa kitaabha ‘il-jadeed
6 He has a new car
7 She is with him in the large room
8 They are all with us here
9 All of us are English
10 All of them are foreigners
Make the above negative and/or interrogative, where feasible.

DIALOGUE: Family news
A ’ahlan wa sahlan!
B ’ahlan wa sahlan feek! kayf Haalak?
LESSON TWO

A 'il-Hamdu lillaah! kayf inta?
B 'il-Hamdu lillaah! min faDlak, 9indak awlaad?
A na9am 9indee waladayn oo bint
B 'il-waladayn fil-madrasa?
A laa! hum Sighaar

Translation

A Welcome!
B And to you! (Approximately) ‘How are you?’
A Praise be to God! How are you?
B Praise be to God! Please (i.e. excuse me for asking), do you have children?
A Yes, I have two boys and a girl
B Are the (two) boys in school?
A No, they are (too) young

PROVERB

haadha min faDl rabbee—This is by the graciousness of my Lord…

This sign, in classical Arabic, is frequently found as an inscription at the entrance to a house or other building.

APPENDIX

NUMBERS

Connoisseurs have long savoured Tritton’s despairing remark in *Teach Yourself Arabic* (London, 1943), ‘The numerals are the nightmare of a bankrupt financier’ (p. 171). Things are not quite so bad in colloquial Arabic.

1 waaHid (f. waaHida) 5 khamsa
2 ‘itnayn (f. tintayn) 6 sitta
3 talaata 7 sab9a
4 ’arba9a 8 tamaanya
9 tis9a 15 khamst9ash(ar)
LESSON TWO

10 9ashara
11 ’iHd9ash(ar)
12 ’itn9ash(ar)
13 talatt9ash(ar)
14 ’arba9att9ash(ar)
16 sitt9ash(ar)
17 sab9at9ash(ar)
18 tamaant9ash(ar)
19 tis9at9ash(ar)
20 9ishreen

Note

1 The ‘intrusive’ /t/ in 13–19 inclusive.
2 3–10 inclusive take a plural noun.
3 11 upwards take a singular noun (but see below at Dates, times etc.).
4 11–19 take final /-ar/ when followed by a noun.

Examples

Three men—talaata rijaal
Five women—khams niswaan

The classical Arabic rule of masculine numeral with feminine noun (and vice versa) is not closely observed in colloquial Arabic:

Sixteen books—sitt9ashar kitaab
Nineteen girls—tis9at9ashar bint

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>talaatteen</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>’arba9een</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>khamseen</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>sitteen</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples

Thirty-five books (5+30)—khams oo talaatteen kitaab
Sixty-four dollars (4+60)—’arba9a oo sitteen doolar

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>miyyatayn</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>talaatmiyya</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>’arba9amiyya</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>khamsmiyya</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>sittmiyya</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>sab9amiyya</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>tamaanmiyya</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dates, times, etc.

1979 (books)—‘alf oo tis9amiyya oo tis9a oo sab9een (kitaab) (NB singular)
1910 (books)—‘alf oo tis9amiyya oo 9ashara (kutub) (NB plural)

the year 1945—sanat ‘alf oo tis9a miyya oo khams oo ’arba9een
4 o’clock—is-saa9a ‘arba9a
10.00—is-saa9a 9ashara
10.20—is-saa9a 9ashara oo tult (a third)
10.15—is-saa9a 9ashara oo rub9
10.30(35)—is-saa9a 9ashara oo nuSS (oo khamsa)
10.45—is-saa9a ‘iHd9ashar illaa rub9 (i.e. 11–1/4)
2.00—is-saa9a tintayn (in some dialects)

Telephone numbers are frequently divided as follows:

123456—(123/456) miyya oo talaata oo 9ishreen (pause) ’arba9
    miyya oo sitta oo khamseen

THERE IS/ARE

fee (indeclinable) renders both there is and there are. The negative is maa fee. In some dialects /-sh/ is suffixed. In some dialects this /-sh/ is a common suffix added to all verbs for negation. For example:

I have not—maa 9indeesh

VOCABULARY

everyone—kull waaHid
day—yawm (pl. ’ayyaam)
week—’usboo9 (pl. ’asaabee9) (from sab9a, seven)
month—shahr (pl. shuhoor)
year—sana (pl. sineen or sanawaat)
minute (n.)—da’ee’a (pl. da’aayi’)
hour—saa9a (pl. -aat)
either…or, or—yaa…yaa; ’aw
How much/many? (followed by sing.)—kam?’ addaysh?
age—9umr (pl. ’a9maar)
EXERCISE

Translate:

1. kam ’usboo9 fee fis-sana?
2. fee miyya oo 9ishreen da’ee’a fee saa9atayn
3. kam 9umro? 9umro sitta shuhoor
4. 9umr il-walad 9ashar sineen
5. In the Islamic calendar (hijree) month there are twenty-nine or thirty days
6. 9indo 9ishreen kitaab
7. 9indhum ’arba9a sayyaaraat
8. ma9ee talateen leera sooree
9. ma9haa khams oo ’arba9een deenaar ’urdunee
10. sanat ’alf oo tis9amiyya oo ’arba9t9ash
11. I have 3 new cars
12. She has 53 Lebanese lira (with her)
13. Have you got 33 Jordanian dinars (on you)?
14. (Telephone) 459/937
15. the year 1939

Give 6–9 above in the negative where feasible.

LESSON THREE
VERBS, WORD ORDER
AND DEMONSTRATIVES

VERBS: INTRODUCTION

Strong men have been known to blench at the thought of conjugating verbs; any verbs, let alone Arabic ones. Moreover the published memoirs of old-Arab-world hands are replete with heart-rending accounts of grappling in Aden or Lebanon (without benefit of air-conditioning and heating respectively) with the forty-four (or was it ninety-two?) forms of the verbal noun.

There are difficulties, but the reader may be assured that the Arabic verb system is much easier to grasp than that of Russian,
German or French, and is simplicity itself compared to the English. Not for Arabic speakers the deviousness of the (British) English ‘I should’ve thought…’, meaning ‘I think, and contradiction is inconceivable’. Arabic is by comparison the soul of economy and elegance, in form and function.

First the bad news

– Arabic verbs conjugate for number and gender (classical Arabic verbs have thirteen ‘persons’: singular, dual and plural).
– In addition to indulging in fancies such as hollow verbs, assimilated verbs, doubly defective verbs and quadriliteral verbs, Arabic is prolific in derived forms of the same, viz. Forms II to XV.
– For the ‘simple’ verb there are forty-four patterns possible for the verbal noun.

Now the good news

– Colloquial Arabic has no dual form in verb conjugation.
– The distinction between plural masculine and feminine is neutralized: i.e. there is only one form for each of we, you and they (dual masculine and feminine; plural masculine and feminine).
– Arabic has only two tenses: past and non-past.
– The past tense is formed by adding suffixes.
– The non-past is formed by adding prefixes (plus some of the ‘past’ suffixes to indicate number).
– Prefixes and suffixes are standard for all types of verb.

*There is almost no such thing as an irregular verb in Arabic.*
– The subject of the verb if a pronoun (I/we etc.) is included in the subject; pronouns are used only to give extra emphasis.
– The economy of prefixes/suffixes used is extreme: the foreigner often feels there is risk of ambiguity. For example:

I/you (m. sing.) wrote—katab/t/
you (m. sing.)/she writes—ta/ktub

– The prefixes and suffixes are nearly all clearly related to the subject/possessive pronouns (see Lessons one and two). For example:

you (f. sing.) wrote—katab/tee (cf. in/tee: you f. sing.)
you (pl.) wrote—katab/too (cf. ’in/too: you pl.)
– Negation of verbs is done in only one way in colloquial Arabic: the word *maa* is placed immediately before all forms of the verb (classical Arabic has one form for past (*maa*) and another for non-past (*laa*), a distinction more or less suppressed in colloquial Arabic).
– The interrogative form is nearly always achieved by simply changing the intonation of the affirmative form.
– Derived forms in colloquial Arabic are nine only, not II–XV as in classical Arabic.

**To sum up**

As with reports of Mark Twain’s death, reports of the difficulty of Arabic verbs have been greatly exaggerated.

**CONJUGATION OF PAST TENSE OF SIMPLE VERBS**

he wrote—*katab*

**Note** In Arabic grammar the starting point is always *he*, not the infinitive as in European languages (*to write* etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1c.</th>
<th>2m.</th>
<th>2f.</th>
<th>3m.</th>
<th>3f.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I—katabt</td>
<td>you—katabt</td>
<td>you—katabti</td>
<td>he—katab</td>
<td>she—katabat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we—kabdanaa</td>
<td>you—katabtoo</td>
<td>you—katabtoo</td>
<td>they—kataboo</td>
<td>they—kataboo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note** The above is the *active voice*. The passive (It was written) is little used in colloquial: either *They wrote it* or Form VII (see below, *Derived forms of verbs*) is used.

**Exercise**

Conjugate the following verbs:

OBJECT PRONOUNS

The object pronouns (see Lesson two) are suffixed to verbs:

He wrote it—katabo
She knew them—9arafat-hum

**Note** When *it/him* (o) is added to verbs ending in a long vowel, the pronoun is indicated simply by lengthening the final vowel (indicated below by (h)):

You (f. sing.) wrote it—katabtee(h)
They ate it—’akaloo(h)

WORD ORDER

Classical Arabic prefers the order: verb+subject+predicate. For example: wrote+The boys+letters. Furthermore, in such cases the verb is always singular.

Colloquial Arabic prefers the order: subject+verb+predicate.

The boys wrote letters—’il-’awlaad kataboo makaateeb

i.e. the verb agrees in gender and number with its subject.

NEGATION AND INTERROGATION

Negation

The rule is very simple: the verb takes *maa*, immediately preceding.

The boys did not write letters—’il-’awlaad maa kataboo makaateeb

Interrogative form

This is indicated by changing the intonation. Occasionally a classical Arabic form (*hal*) is used, particularly when a speaker wishes to upstage his interlocutor. (Arabic has many devices to be used as conversation-stoppers or to focus the attention of the speaker. See Lesson fourteen on *Proverbs*.)

Did they write letters?—hal kataboo makaateeb?
DERIVED FORMS OF VERBS

Introduction (Past tense)

This section concentrates on the aspects of conjugation, meaning-survey and usage. Like the man who discovered he had been speaking prose all his life, the student may be pleasantly surprised to find he has been using Arabic derived-form verbs without being a master of the contents of Wright’s *Arabic Grammar* (2 vols, 3rd edn, Cambridge, 1964).

Conjugation

All forms except IX (see Lesson seven below) are conjugated exactly like the verbs in the previous section of this chapter. For example:

*from* he knew—9araf  
*comes* they became acquainted (with)—ta9arrafoo (9ala)  
This is a Form V verb.

Below are some specimen verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Conjugations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| II   | send someone/thing back | rajja9  
(from come back) rajja9 |
| III  | correspond with someone | kaatab  
(from write) katab |
| IV   | send someone/thing down | ‘anzal  
(from go down) nazal |
| V    | become acquainted (with) | ta9arrafoo(9ala)  
(from know) 9araf |
| VI   | become acquainted with each other | ta9aaraf(9ala)  
(from know) 9araf |
| VII  | be written | ‘inkatab  
(from write) katab |
| VIII | be assembled | ‘ijtama9  
(from gather, add) jama9 |
| X    | use, employ | ‘ista9mal  
(from do, make) 9amil |
Survey of meaning and usage

The **forms** of verbs are completely consistent: Form VII verbs always put /'in/ before the Form I verb; Form V verbs always double the middle radical of Form I verbs and put /ta/ before the result (which, itself, is the form for Form II verbs); and so on.

**Exercise:** form the derived forms of fa9al.

**Meaning** is not quite so consistent: hence the many academic jokes about the meaning of Arabic derived-form verbs. However, in general the following guide is true, though not the whole truth.

Form II  often means to make someone do the action of Form I: hence raja9 means ‘to make someone/thing go back’, i.e. ‘to send back’.

Form III frequently means to do the action of Form I to someone: hence kaatab means ‘to write to someone’. (Lots of academic jokes here on the sexual proclivities of Form III verbs. And in fact the verb ‘to have sexual intercourse with (a woman)’ is a Form III verb.)

Form IV often has the same meaning as Form II. Both nazzal (II) and 'anzal (IV) mean ‘to make go down’ (e.g. to drop off passengers from a cab). ('anzal means also ‘to send down the revelation’, i.e. reveal the Koran.) **Note IV** frequently has a ‘denominative’ meaning. For example 'aslam means ‘to become a Muslim’.

Form V usually the passive of II. 9arraf(II) means ‘to make someone know someone’ (i.e. introduce someone to someone else), so ta9arraf (V) (9ala) means ‘to be introduced (to) someone’.

Form VI usually the reflexive of III: hence ta9aarfoo means ‘they got to know one another’.

Form VII in Levantine Arabic a heavily used form, by comparison with other dialects. It is most commonly used in place of the passive. Where other dialects use the passive or the form ‘They did so-and-so’, Levantine Arabic generates Form VII verbs. From the verbs in the previous section come: be opened, infataH; be edible, 'in 'akal; be drinkable, 'insharib; be known, 'in9araf; be done, 'in9amal.
Form VIII frequently the passive of Form I. jama\textsuperscript{9}=gather, add; 'ijtama\textsuperscript{9}=be gathered, assembled.

Form X has possibly the most diverse collection of areas of meaning attaching to it, some only vaguely related: hence yet more academic jokes. Frequently has a sense of ‘to make something perform the action of Form I’. Hence ista\textsuperscript{9}mal means ‘to make something work’, i.e. ‘employ’. (Form IX, by the way, is used only for colours and defects in classical Arabic, and in colloquial Arabic almost solely for colours: e.g. 'iHmarr means ‘to become red’, from 'ahmar, red. See Lesson seven below.)

DEMONSTRATIVES (this, that, these, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>this</td>
<td>m. haada</td>
<td>haadol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. haadi</td>
<td>haadol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>m. haadaak</td>
<td>haadolak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. haadeek</td>
<td>haadolik (or as above)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above are the pronoun forms.

This is a book—haada kitaab
These are foreigners—haadol ’ajaanib

Note This is the book—haadal-kitaab

(The intonation indicates that this is a sentence with a predicate in the definite form. The first syllable in the sentence is more stressed than usual.)

When used as adjectives all forms of this can be replaced by hal. For example:

These boys are Lebanese—hal-’awlaad lubnaanee-een

In Lebanon, especially, a double-demonstrative is frequently used.

this book—hal-kitaab haada (hayy)

VOCABULARY

newspaper—jareeda (pl. jaraayid)
door, gate—baab (pl. ’abwaab)
water—mayy (f.; pl. -aat)
map—khaarTa (pl. kharaayiT)
to (prep.)—‘ila
Who?—meen?
When?—’aymta?
on—9ala
chair—kursee (pl. karasee)

Verbs
write—katab
arrive—waSal
correspond with (someone)—kaatab
open; opened—fataH; maftooH
be opened—’infataH
eat—’akal
return, come back—raja9
send back—rajja9
drink—sharib
know—9araf
get to know, be introduced to…—ta9arrafa9ala…
get to know each other—ta9aara9

do, make—9amil
be done—’in9amal
employ, use—ista9mal
take—‘akhad
go up—Tala9
go down—nazal
send down, put down—nazzal (or ‘anzal)
ask—sa’al

EXERCISE
Translate:
1 ’akhadoo ma9hum miyya oo talaateen jareeda
2 meen fataH hal-baab?
3 ’aymta ta9arrafti 9ala hal-kitaab?
4 ’awlaad il-madrasa ista9maloo kharaayiT
5 ’il-‘ajaanib nazaloo min 9ammaan ila ’areeHa (Jericho)
6 This is the map of Damascus
7 He took all of them with him to Beirut
8 They sent every one of us back from Damascus to Amman
9 They took the chairs from our school
10 I wrote to him in 1958

Make the above negative and/or interrogative where possible. Substitute other subjects for the verbs above (they for he, etc.).

### DIALOGUE: A safe return

A  ’ahlan! marHaba! kayf Haalak?
B  marHabtayn! il-Hamdu lillaah! kayf il-Haal?
A  il-Hamdu lillaah ’aymta waSalt min 9ammaan?
B  ’abl saa9atayn
A  il-Hamdu lillaah ’is-salaama!
B  ’allaah yisallimak!

**Translation**

A  Hullo! Welcome! How are you?
B  Hullo! Praise be to God! How are you?
A  Praise be to God! When did you arrive from Amman?
B  Two hours ago.
A  Praise be to God for your safety!
B  God bless you!

**PROVERB**

’ibnak ’inta mitlak inta—Like father like son
LESSON FOUR
VERBS, CONJUNCTIONS
AND ELATIVES

VERBS: NON-PAST, SIMPLE AND DERIVED FORMS

From he wrote—katab

Formation

The radicals retain their position throughout (k-t-b), the vowelling is changed (more or less systematically) and the prefixes (and suffixes) added to indicate the subject are mostly related to pronouns already learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c. */a/ktub ('ana)</td>
<td>/na/ktub ('iHna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. /ta/ktub ('inta)</td>
<td>/ta/ktub/oo ('intoo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f. /ta/ktub/ee/('intee)</td>
<td>/ta/ktub/oo ('intoo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m. yaktub</td>
<td>/ya/ktub/oo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f. /ta/ktub</td>
<td>/ya/ktub/oo/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anyone knowing classical Arabic will recognize the similarity to colloquial Arabic forms. The above forms are used in colloquial Arabic, for example following auxiliary verbs (such as must, laazim; may, mumkin) but in the Levant two changes are made to the above.

1 Where u is the vowel before the third radical, u is most frequently used also before the first radical: i.e. there is regressive vowel harmony: yaktub becomes yuktub. (Bear this in mind for the imperative form below.)

2 Before the prefixes mentioned above, a bilabial (unreleased) is added, which is /b/ in all forms except 1 plural, where it is /m/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>(b)uktub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>(b)tuktub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>(b)tuktube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>(b)yuktub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>(b)tuktub</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meaning and extensions

1 The non-past form, above, means
He is writing, he writes—byuktub
Also, ‘he does write’ (but see present continuous, at 7 below)

2 He will write—raaH yuktub

(Note raaH does not change for number or gender. After most auxiliary verbs the non-past has no /b/ or /m/ prefix.)

3 We must write—laazim nuktub

(Note We must not write—mush laazim nuktub
(Again: laazim is invariable and the non-past verb has no /b/ or /m/ prefix.)

4 He wants to write—biddo yuktub (bidd+pronouns+verb without b/m)

5 They may write—mumkin yuktuboo (i.e. ‘possibly’)

6 We can write—feenaa nuktub

(The preposition fee (‘in’) takes the normal pronoun suffixes and comes to mean ‘it is in my power/ability’:
Note I can—feenee)

7 Present continuous

I am/We are (etc.) writing—9am buktub (especially in Lebanon and Syria)

Non-past conjugation (continued)

Take the verbs used in Lesson three and note their non-past form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>fataH</td>
<td>byiftaH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eat</td>
<td>‘akal</td>
<td>byaakul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>raja9</td>
<td>byirja9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise

Conjugate the above fully in the present continuous.

Some rules may be derived from the above as to the final vowels used, but from the learner’s point of view it is just as easy to learn each verb, in the past and non-past, as one item. Henceforth verbs will be given in this form, for example:

write—katab, byuktub

Derived forms non-past: conjugation

Here there is a completely systematic formation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>send back</td>
<td>rajja9</td>
<td>byirajji9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>correspond with</td>
<td>kaatab</td>
<td>byikaatib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>send down</td>
<td>’anzal</td>
<td>byinzil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>get to know</td>
<td>ta9arraf</td>
<td>byita9arraf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>get to know each other</td>
<td>ta9arraf</td>
<td>byita9arraf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>be opened</td>
<td>’infataH</td>
<td>byinfatiH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>be assembled</td>
<td>’ijtama9</td>
<td>byijtami9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>use</td>
<td>’ista9mal</td>
<td>byista9mil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules

1 All derived-form verbs behave this way,
2 In the non-past the final vowel before the third radical is always /i/, except in V and VI where it is always /a/. 
3 In the non-past the distinguishing feature of the past tense is preserved, i.e. the /aa/ of Form III, the second-radical doubting of V and VI, etc.

**THE IMPERATIVE (positive and negative)**

This is formed from the non-past:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>byuktub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>byiftaH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>byirja9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>byishrab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, make</td>
<td>byi9mal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go up</td>
<td>byiTla9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go down</td>
<td>byinzil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>yis'al</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formation**

1. Remove the /b/ and prefix (e.g. byu-).
2. Replace by the vowel /u/ when final vowel is /u/; otherwise replace by /i/.

**Masculine singular**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>write</th>
<th>'uktub!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>'iftaH!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>'irja9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>'ishrab!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, make</td>
<td>'i9mal!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go up</td>
<td>'iTla9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go down</td>
<td>'inzil!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>'is'al!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feminine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>write</th>
<th>'uktubee!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>'iftaH!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>'irja9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>'ishrab!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, make</td>
<td>'i9mal!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go up</td>
<td>'iTla9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go down</td>
<td>'inzil!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>'is'al!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plural (m. and f.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>write</th>
<th>'uktuboo!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open</td>
<td>'iftaH!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>return</td>
<td>'irja9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>'ishrab!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do, make</td>
<td>'i9mal!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go up</td>
<td>'iTla9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go down</td>
<td>'inzil!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
<td>'is'al!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note** Two important exceptions:

| eat      | kul!       | kulee!    | kuloo!   |
| take     | khud!      | khudee!   | khudoo!  |

**Negative imperative**

Do not write!—maa or laa tuktub (/ee/, /oo/)

**Rule**

Take the non-past 2 m. sing, (without the /b/ prefix) and place before it maa or laa (this applies to derived-form verbs also).
Exercise

Negate the eight imperatives listed above.

Derived-form imperative (positive: see above for negative)

Again these are completely systematic and predictable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>byirajji9</td>
<td>rajji9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byikaatibkaatib!</td>
<td>byikaatibkaatib!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byinzil</td>
<td>’anzil!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byita9arraf</td>
<td>ta9arraf!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byita9aaraf</td>
<td>ta9aaraf!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byinfatiH</td>
<td>’infatiH!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byijtami9’ijtami9!</td>
<td>byijtami9’ijtami9!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byista9mil</td>
<td>’ista9mil!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules

1. Remove the /byi/ prefix.
2. If the result begins with a single consonant that is the imperative.
3. Where the result begins with two consonants add a vowel: /a/ for Form IV, /i/ for Forms VII, VIII and X.

Exercise

Form the full imperative (masculine and feminine; singular and plural; positive and negative) of the following verbs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Form I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>teach</td>
<td>9allam</td>
<td>(9alam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>consult</td>
<td>raaja9</td>
<td>(raja9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>expel</td>
<td>’akhiraj</td>
<td>(kharaj)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>learn</td>
<td>ta9allam</td>
<td>(9alam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>wonder, ask oneself</td>
<td>tasaa’al</td>
<td>(sa’al)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>(extremely rare in imperative)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>open (ceremonially)</td>
<td>iftataH</td>
<td>(fataH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>regain</td>
<td>’istarja9</td>
<td>(raja9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONJUNCTIONS

The particle *maa* (meaning ‘the time when’) is used to make conjunctions from prepositions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preposition</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Conjunction</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9ind</td>
<td>at</td>
<td>9indmaa</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’abl</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>’ablmaa</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ba9d</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>ba9dmaa</td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e.g. After he arrived I introduced him to the teacher—ba9dmaa waSal 9arrafto 9ala-l mu9allim

ELATIVES (comparatives and superlatives)

Possibly the two most powerful words in all Arabic, and indeed in all Islamic history:

God is Most Great!—allaahu ’akbar!

The pattern ’a/k/ba/r is typical of all comparatives and superlatives (elative).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Elative form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kabeer</td>
<td>big</td>
<td>’akbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagheer</td>
<td>small</td>
<td>’aSghar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kateer</td>
<td>much</td>
<td>’aktar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rakheeS</td>
<td>cheap</td>
<td>’arkhaS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasan</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>’aHsan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The elative without ’al- is comparative.
The elative with ’al- is superlative. (Al-Azhar, in Cairo, means ‘the most resplendent’.)

Where radicals 2 and 3 are the same, note the formation:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jadeed</td>
<td>new</td>
<td>’ajadd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shadeed</td>
<td>intense</td>
<td>’ashadd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bigger than…</td>
<td></td>
<td>’akbar min…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is bigger than I</td>
<td></td>
<td>hiyya ’akbar minnee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary of the previous lessons, especially the verbs.
Note The tag-phrase equivalent to *n’est-ce pas* in French: *mush hayk* (‘Is it not so?’).

### EXERCISE

*Translate:*

1. rajja9naa l-kutub ’abl-maa waSaloo
2. iftaH baab il-madrasa!
3. ’uktub maktoob ’ila-1 mu9allim!
4. 9arrafna 9ala ’ibn is-safeer
5. hal-kitaab ’aHsan min haadaak, mush hayk?
6. They must introduce me to the boys at 4.30
7. Don’t (pl.) write more than four letters!
8. He wrote his letters after we arrived
9. They want to write letters to their children
10. You (f. sing.) will drink water with your food (*akl*)

*Make the above feminine, plural, negative, interrogative, where feasible.*

### DIALOGUE: Lost property

A  meen ’akhad il-karaasee min hal-ghurfa?
B  ’ibraaheem akhad-hum ’abl saa9atayn, mush hayk?
A  mush laazim yaakhud shee (*anything*) min hawn!
B  Tayyib,’urajji9hum ilal-ghurfä?
A  na9am! rajji9hum,’i9mal ma9roof!

*Translation*

A  Who has taken the chairs from this room?
B  Ibrahim took them two hours ago, didn’t he?
A  He should not take anything from here!
B  OK, shall I bring them back to the room?
A  Yes, please return them (‘do (me) a favour’)!

### PROVERB

’akbar minnak bi-yawm ’a9lam minnak bi-sana—He who is one day older than you is one year more knowledgeable (*sic?*)
LESSON FIVE
PARTICIPLES

PARTICIPLES, ACTIVE AND PASSIVE

Form

The formation is quite systematic.

Form I verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>write(katab)</td>
<td>kaatib (aa-i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open (fataH)</td>
<td>faatiH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drink (sharib)</td>
<td>shaarib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know (9alam)</td>
<td>9aalim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived-form verbs

II teach (9allam)     mu9allim (final /a/)
(final/i/) (teacher)

III write to (kaatab) mukaatib (correspondent)

IV expel (‘akhraj)   mukhrj
(producer)

V learn (ta9allam)    muta9allim (learned)

VI wonder (tasaa’al)
mutasaa’il (wondering)

VII be open (infataH)
munfatiH (open-minded)

VIII gather, be assembled
(‘ijtama9) mujtami9
(assembled)

X regain (‘istarja9)
mustarji9

40
Meaning and usage

Active participle

1 Normally this is the doer of the action. For example:
kaatib (writer); 'aalim (scholar); mu'allim (teacher); mukaatib (correspondent).

2 Sometimes, the active participle can mean that an action has been completed. For example:
Will you have something to drink?—btishrab shee?
No, thanks! I’ve had a drink—lāa, shukran! ’ana shaarib

3 A common Levantine usage is:
He has just arrived—ba9do waaSīl
We have just arrived—ba9dna waaSīleen
(i.e. the preposition ba9d+pronouns+active participle, which is inflected for gender and number. Compare Irish-English ‘He’s (just) after coming’).

4 fātiH can mean ‘opened’ (e.g. for shops).

Passive participle

1 In the strict sense of the passive participle—the action having been done:
It has been written—maktoob
(This expression is used to accept fate, in the sense that such-and-such an occurrence has been known to God forever.)

2 As a noun: maktoob (‘a letter’). Note many such nouns have broken plurals.

letter maktoob becomes makaateeb, but
drink mashroob becomes mashroobaat

3 Some plural passive participles have no singular:
information—ma9loomaat
food—ma’koolaat

4 The passive participles of derived-form verbs can be used to
mean *the place of* an action. Thus, society (place of gathering together) is *mujtama9*.

hospital (place of seeking a cure)—*mustashfa*

### VOCABULARY

#### Verbs

dwell, live—*sakan, byuskun*

hear—*sami9, byisma9*

be present—*HaDar, byuHDur*

prepare, make ready—*HaDDar (II)*

wear, put on (clothes)—*labis, byilbas*

study—*daras, byudrus*

close—*sakkar (II)*

enter—*dakhal, byudkhul*

#### Nouns

shop—*dukkaan (f. dakaakeen)*

office—*maktab (pl. makaatib)*

dwelling—*maskan (pl. masaakin)*

entrance—*madkhal (pl. madaakhil)*

exit—*makhraj (pl. makhaarij)*

street—*shaari9 (pl. shawaari9)*

clothes—*malaabis*

#### Adjectives

cold—*baarid*

present, ‘there’—*mawjood*

first—*’awwal*

second (also ‘other’)—*taanee*

third—*taalit*

fourth—*raabi9*

fifth—*khaamis*

sixth—*saadis*

seventh—*saabi9*
eighth—taamin
ninth—taasi9
 tenth—9aashir
(Note the pattern /aa-i/ imposed on the basic number ‘arba9: raabi9.)

Particles

What?—shoo?
Why?—laysh? lay?

EXERCISE

Translate:

1 intoo saakineen fish-shaari9 it-taanee, mush hayk?
2 HaDDir ‘il-’akl, min faDlak!
3 9am byudrus khaarTat il-makaatib il-jadeeda
4 ’udkhul oo sakkir il-baab!
5 laysh il-awlaad laabiseen malaabis 9arabiyya?
6 Take these letters to the office entrance at 2.30
7 He heard them before they entered
8 Are these shops open at 7.30?
9 We must drink something cold
10 They may possibly eat something before 4.45

Make the above negative, interrogative, feminine and plural where feasible,

DIALOGUE: A phone call

A allo?
B (Caller) ahlan! marHaba! kayf Haalak?
A il-Hamdu lillaah! kayfak inta?
B nushkur allaah! kayf il-’awlaad?
A mabsooTeen, byisallimoo 9alayk!
B allaah yisallimak! min faDlak, fu’aad mawjood?
A mush saami9. meen?
B fu’aad
A laa, fu’aad mush mawjood
Lesson Six

Hollow Verbs and ‘To Be Able’

Hollow Verbs

These verbs are so called because the middle radical is unstable: a verb with /aa/ medial in the past may become /aa/, /ee/ or /oo/ in the non-past, according to certain rules: kaan (he was) may be taken as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>kaan</td>
<td>byikoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pl.</td>
<td>kaanoo</td>
<td>byikoonoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the middle radical is followed by two consonants, however, the /aa/ is shortened as follows: for verbs with /oo/ in the non-past /aa/ becomes /u/, otherwise it becomes /i/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>ku/nt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. pl.</td>
<td>ku/nt/oo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other types of hollow verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>khaaf (fear)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>khift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>Saar (become)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>Sirt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past tense of kaan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>kunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>kunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>kunti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>kaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>kaanat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, /aa/ is maintained only in all the third persons.

Exercise

Conjugate (past tense) khaaf, byikhaaf (fear); naam byinaam (sleep); Saar byiSeer (become); Taar byiTeer (fly).

Hollow verbs, non-past tense

Rule The appropriate long vowel is maintained throughout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type 1</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Type 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>byikoon</td>
<td>byiTeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>bitkoon</td>
<td>bitTeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pl.</td>
<td>byikoonoo</td>
<td>byiTeeroo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LESSON SIX  45
Participles

Active: khaayif, naayim, Saayir, Tayyir
Passive: almost non-existent

Exercise

Conjugate the above verbs fully.

KAAN AND VERBS (pluperfect and past continuous)

He had studied—kaan daras
We had studied—kunna darasna

Rule

The pluperfect of any verb is formed by kaan+verb (past tense, both verbs conjugating):

He was studying or He used to study—kaan yudrus

To emphasize past continuity many Levantine dialects use the particle of the present continuous, 9am (see Lesson four).

He was studying—kaan 9am byudrus

HOLLOW VERBS, DERIVED FORMS

The second radical is maintained throughout in Forms II, III, V, and VI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II Sawwar</td>
<td>byiSawwir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III saayar</td>
<td>byisaayir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V taSawwar</td>
<td>byitaSawwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI tashaawar</td>
<td>byitashaawar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Forms IV, VII, VIII and X, the rule for shortening the vowel in the past is observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form IV</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>'adaar</td>
<td>'inqaad</td>
<td>'irtaa'H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(administer)</td>
<td>(be led)</td>
<td>(relax, rest)</td>
<td>(respond</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to) Form IV VII VIII X
2 m. sing. ’ada/irt 'inqa (d/t)t 'irtaHt 'istaja/ibt
(a/i and d/t imply free variation)

Non-past tense:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 m. sing.</th>
<th>byideer</th>
<th>byinqaad</th>
<th>byirtaaH</th>
<th>byistajeeb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>bitdeer</td>
<td>btinqaad</td>
<td>btirtaaH</td>
<td>btistajeeb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note No derived-form hollow verb has /oo/ in the non-past.)

Exercise

Conjugate the above verbs fully.

Note Very useful hollow verbs:

Bring!—haat! (/ee/, /oo/)
(This verb is found only in the imperative.)

Take away!—sheel! (/ee/, /oo/)

IMPERATIVES

These are formed from the non-past, and always have the long vowel of the non-past.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>raH</td>
<td>byirooH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sleep</td>
<td>naam</td>
<td>byinaam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring</td>
<td>jaab</td>
<td>byijeeb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>see</td>
<td>shaaf</td>
<td>byishoof</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Derived forms

Forms II, III,V and VI are quite regular:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II photograph</td>
<td>Sawwar</td>
<td>byiSawwar</td>
<td>Sawwir!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III consult</td>
<td>shaawar</td>
<td>byishaawir</td>
<td>shaawir!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V imagine</td>
<td>taSawwar</td>
<td>byitaSawwar</td>
<td>taSawwar!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI consult each other</td>
<td>tashaawar</td>
<td>byitashaawar</td>
<td>tashaawar!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forms IV VII, VIII, X

IV  administer  adaar  byideer’  adeer!
VII  be led  inqaad  byinqaad  ('inqaad!)
VIII  relax, rest  'irtaa  HbyirtaaH  'irtaaH!
X  respond to  istajaa  bbyistajeeb  'istajeeb!

Note The imperative always has a long vowel in the above four forms.

Participles

Active: muSawwir (II), mushaawir (III), mudeer (IV), mutaSawwir (V), mutashaawir (VI), munqaad (VII), murtaaH (VIII), mustajeeb (X).
Passive: muSawwar (II), mushaawar (III), mudaar (IV), mutaSawwar (V), (mutashaawar) (VI), (munqaad) (VII), (murtaaH) (VIII), (mustajaab) (X).

Note All active participles have /i/ or /ee/ finally. All passive participles have /a/ or /aa/ finally. Notice that in VII and VIII /aa/ distinguishes both forms, active and passive.

TO BE ABLE

Arabic has a distinction somewhat similar to that of French between savoir and pouvoir, though in Arabic there is more free variation. Two verbs are acceptable: 'adar, byi'dir; and 9araf, byi9raf. These are followed by another verb always in the non-past (with some exceptions in some dialects), with no b/m- prefix.

Can you write?—bta9rif tuktub? or bti'dir tuktub?
He could not write the letter—maa 'adar yuktub il-maktoob

VOCABULARY

Verbs

take away—shaal, byisheel
go—raaH, byirooH
see—shaaf, byishoof
say, tell—’aal, byi’ool
bring—jaab, byijeeb
speak—takallam (V)
rise, get up—‘aam, byi’oom

Nouns/adjectives
language—lugha (pl.-aat)
classical—faSeeH (f. fuSHa)
colloquial—daarij (or 9aammiyya)
table—Taawila (pl.-aat)
knife—sikkeen(a) (usually f.; pl. sakaakeen)
fork—shawka (pl. shuwak)
spoon—mal9a’a (pl. malaa9i’)
today—il-yawm
tonight—il-layla

Particles
How?—kayf?
between, among—bayn
above—faw’
below—taHt
only, but—bass
a little—shwayy, ’aleel

EXERCISE

Translate:

1 baynee oo baynak, maa ta’ool shee il-layla!
2 bta9rif tatakallam 9arabee daarij?
3 laa, bass ba9rif ’ektub 9arabee
4 rooH, shoof shughlak!
5 min faDlak, sheel is-sikkeena oo ish-shuwak’ oo ’il-malaa9i
6 He must bring all his books with him today
7 Do you (f. sing.) want to speak (the) classical Arabic (language)?
8 We cannot go with you (pl.) from Amman to Beirut
9 Bring (pl.) everything with you from the other house
10 Just imagine! He wants to take away all these books!
DIALOGUE: ‘The pause that refreshes’

A marHaba! mumkin taakhud hal-kutub, min faDlak?
B HaaDir! haat!
A shukran! laazim ’artaaH hawn shwayy
B ’ahlan wa sahlan!

Translation

A Hullo! Could you please take these books?
B At your service! Let me have them!
A Thanks! I must rest here for a moment
B You are welcome!

PROVERB

naam bakkeer, ’oom bakkeer, shoof iS-SiHHa, kayf bitSeer!—Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise!

LESSON SEVEN

VERBS, DEFECTIVE AND DOUBLED

Defective and doubled verbs are grouped together (although in classical Arabic their conjugations differ quite considerably) because in colloquial Arabic their variations from their own basic form are all similar in the past tense. In the non-past, however, they may be regarded as different conjugations.

PAST TENSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Defective</th>
<th>Doubled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>masha <em>(walk)</em></td>
<td>dall <em>(guide)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m. sing.</td>
<td>mash/ayt/</td>
<td>dall/ayt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pl.</td>
<td>mashoo</td>
<td>dalloo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Full conjugations, past tense, are:

**Defective verbs** (ending in /a/)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>'arayt (read)</td>
<td>'arayna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>'arayt</td>
<td>'araytoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>'arayti</td>
<td>'araytoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>'ara</td>
<td>'aroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>'arat</td>
<td>'aroo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Those who know classical Arabic will recognize 'ara as qara’a, i.e. a final hamzated verb. In colloquial Arabic the distinction between such and defective verbs disappears.)

**Doubled verbs** (radicals 2 and 3 the same)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Singular</strong></th>
<th><strong>Plural</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>Dallayt (remain)</td>
<td>Dallayna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>Dallayt</td>
<td>Dallaytoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>Dallayti</td>
<td>Dallaytoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>Dall</td>
<td>Dalloo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>Dallat</td>
<td>Dalloo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NON-PAST TENSE**

**Defective verbs**

As opposed to classical Arabic, these verbs in colloquial Arabic tend to have final /a/ or /ee/.

```plaintext
Past  Non-past  
masha (walk) byimshee  
'ara (read) byi’ra  
da9a (invite) byid9ee (/oo/ in classical Arabic)
```

**Conjugation rule**

Where /-a/ or /-ee/ comes before final /-oo/, /-oo/ dominates.  
3 pl.—byimshoo, byi’roo, byid9oo
Exercise
Conjugate these three verbs fully.

**Imperative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m. sing.</td>
<td>f. sing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by’ra</td>
<td>’ra!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byimshee</td>
<td>’imshee!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byid9ee</td>
<td>’id9ee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Doubled verbs**

Past-tense *Dall* becomes non-past *byiDall*. But three possibilities exist for the vowel before radical 2.

*Past* | *Non-past* |
---|---|
*Dall* (remain) | *byiDall* |
*madd* (extend) | *byimidd* |
*HaTT* (put) | *byiHuTT* |

Apart from the above, doubled verbs conjugate with the same prefixes and/or suffixes as *katab byuktub* etc.

**Exercise**

Conjugate the above three verbs fully.

**Imperative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Imperative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>m. sing.</td>
<td>f. sing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dall</em></td>
<td>byiDall</td>
<td><em>Dall!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>madd</em></td>
<td>byimidd</td>
<td><em>midd!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>HaTT</em></td>
<td>byiHuTT</td>
<td><em>HuTT</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participles**

On the pattern *HaTT; HaaTiT; maHTooT*. 
**DERIVED FORMS**

**Defective verbs**

*Past tense*

The suffixes change exactly as in defective verbs, Form I.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>mashsha</td>
<td>laa’a</td>
<td>’a9Ta</td>
<td>ta9ashsha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(make walk)</td>
<td>(meet)</td>
<td>(give)</td>
<td>(dine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>mashshayt</td>
<td>laa’ayt</td>
<td>’a9Tayt</td>
<td>ta9ashshayt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talaa’a</td>
<td>’inHaka</td>
<td>’ishtara</td>
<td>’istaHla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(meet)</td>
<td>(be said)</td>
<td>(buy)</td>
<td>(find sweet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(talaa’ayt)</td>
<td>(’inHakayt)</td>
<td>’ishtarayt</td>
<td>’istaHlayt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Non-past tense*

Two simple rules cover all forms:

1. V, VI and VII have final /-a/.
2. All other forms end in /ee/.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past</td>
<td>mashsha</td>
<td>laa’a</td>
<td>’a9Ta</td>
<td>ta9ashsha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-past</td>
<td>byimashshee</td>
<td>byilaa’ee</td>
<td>bya9Tee</td>
<td>byita9ashsha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>talaaa</td>
<td>’inHaka</td>
<td>’ishtara</td>
<td>’istaHla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>byitalaa’a</td>
<td>’byinHaka</td>
<td>byishtaree</td>
<td>byistaHlee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the above two rules are added the previous rules for the non-past of simple defective verbs (e.g. /-eeoo/ becomes /-oo/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>V</th>
<th>VIII</th>
<th>X</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 pl.</td>
<td>byita9ashshoo</td>
<td>byishtaroo</td>
<td>byistaHloo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note** Give (’a9Ta) takes two direct objects:

I gave her the book—’a9Tayt-ha il-kitaab
I gave her it—’a9Tayt-ha ’iyyaa (h)

**Exercise** Conjugate the above Forms II–X.
Derived forms, doubled verbs

Past tense

**Form II** Quite normal.  
*jaddad* (renew) takes the suffixes of *katab* (Form I)

**Form III** Quite normal.  
*aaSaS* (punish) takes the suffixes of *katab* (I)

**Form IV** Takes the suffixes of Form I *doubled verbs*.  
'asarr (insist) becomes 'asarrayt (I insisted)

**Form V** Quite normal.  
*ta'jaddad* (be renewed) takes the same suffixes as *jaddad* (II, renew)

**Form VI** Quite normal.  
*ta'aaSaS* (be punished) takes the same ending as *'aaSaS* (III, punish)

**Form VII** Takes the same endings as Form I, *doubled* third-person masculine singular.  
'in9add (be counted) becomes (1 pl.) in9addayna

**Form VIII** Takes the same endings as Form I, *doubled* third-person masculine singular.  
'ihtamm (be interested) becomes (1 pl.) ihtammayna

**Form IX** This is the only use of Form IX in colloquial Arabic.  
Doubled verbs Form IX indicate *colours* (and defects in classical Arabic) and conjugate like Form I, doubled.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>'iHmarr 'iswadd 'ikhDarr</td>
<td>(red) (black) (green)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>'iHmarrayt 'iswaddayt 'ikhDarrayt</td>
<td>(red) (black) (green)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Form X** Behaves like Form I, doubled third-person masculine singular.  
*ista9add (prepare) becomes (1 pl.) ista9addayn*a
Non-past

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{Past 3m. sing.} & \text{Non-past 3 m. sing.} \\
\text{II} & \text{jaddad} \\
\text{III} & \text{'aaSaS} \\
\text{IV} & \text{'aSarr} \\
\text{V} & \text{tajaddad} \\
\text{VI} & \text{ta’aaSaS} \\
\text{VII} & \text{'in9add} \\
\text{VIII} & \text{'ihtamm} \\
\text{IX} & \text{'iHmarr} \\
\text{X} & \text{ista9add}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
\text{byijaddid} & \text{(like 9allam)} \\
\text{byi’aaSiS} & \text{(like kaatab)} \\
\text{byiSirr} & \\
\text{byitajaddad} & \text{(like ta9allam)} \\
\text{byita’aaSaS} & \text{(like takaatab)} \\
\text{byin9add} & \\
\text{’byihtamm} & \\
\text{byiHmarr} & \\
\text{byista9idd}
\end{array}
\]

Note

1 As in hollow verbs, derived forms, Forms II, III, V and VI, behave like verbs such as \textit{katab}.
2 IV and X have the characteristic final vowel /i/, while VII and VIII have characteristic /a/.
3 When suffixes are added to the above, radicals 2 and 3 are never split. For example:

They are interested—byihtammoo

The imperative: come! ta9aal!

This comes from the classical Arabic Form VI defective verb:

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
m. sing. & f. sing. & pl. \\
\text{Come!} & \text{ta9aal!} & \text{ta9aalee!} & \text{ta9aaloo!}
\end{array}
\]

The prepositions \textit{'ila (to) and 9ala (on)+pronouns}

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{Singular} & \text{Plural} \\
\text{1 c.} & \text{'ilee} & \text{9alay} & \text{'ilaynaa} & \text{9alaynaa} \\
\text{2 m.} & \text{'ilak} & \text{9alayk} & \text{'ilaykum/koo} & \text{9alaykum/oo} \\
\text{2 f.} & \text{'ilik} & \text{9alayki} & \text{'ilaykum/koo} & \text{9alaykum/oo} \\
\text{3 m.} & \text{'ilo} & \text{9alay(h)} & \text{'ilhum} & \text{9alayhum} \\
\text{3 f.} & \text{'ilha} & \text{9alayha} & \text{'ilhum} & \text{9alayhum}
\end{array}
\]
LESSON SEVEN

VOCABULARY

Verbs
relate, tell (story), speak—Haka, byiHkee
throw—ram a, byirmee
let (Let’s go!), leave—khalla (II), byikhallee
meet each other—‘ilha’a (VIII), byilha’e; ta’aabal, talaa’a

Nouns/adjectives
city—madeena (pl. mudun)
place—maHall (pl. -aat), makaan (pl. amaakin)
in the morning—SabaaHan
in the evening—masaa’an
same, self—nafs (+ noun or pronoun)
tomorrow—bukra
necessary—Darooree
you don’t have to go—mush Darooree tarooH
(cf. you must not go—mush laazim tarooH)
life—Hayaa(t)

Particles
thus, so—hayk
(NB such things as that—hayk ’ashyaa)
therefore, and so—li-hayk
inside—juwwa; daakhil
outside—barra

EXERCISE

Translate:
1. shoo ’ult ’ilo? maa ’ult ’ilo shee!
2. wayn raayiH? mush raayiH maHall!
3. hayk il Hayaa(t)! yawm ’ilak, yawm 9alayk
4. biddee ’aHuTT hal-kutub fee nafs il-makaan
5. laa, HuTT-hum hawn, 9indee, min faDlak!
6. Let us meet tomorrow at 6.45 in the evening
7. You don’t have to go before you see him
8 When you go outside you get sunburned (be red!)
9 After you (f. sing.) see her go to her house
10 Everyone must be interested in his work

**DIALOGUE: Being taken for a ride**

A biddee aroo ila 9ammaan. btaakhud minnee kam?
B mitl-maa biddak!
A laa, ’ool lee! 9ashara, miyya, maa ba9rif
B Tayyib, ’ool khamseen!
A laa, haada ikteer! btaakhud 9ishreen?
B laa, mush mumkin, wallahee!
A Tayyib, ma9 is-salaama!
B yallaah! ’iTla9! baakhud minnak khams oo 9ishreen

**Translation**

A I want to go to Amman. How much (will you take from me)?
B Just as you wish!
A No, tell me! 10…100: I don’t know
B OK (Let’s) say fifty
A No, that’s too much! Will you take twenty?
B No, by God! Impossible!
A OK. Goodbye!
B Come on! Get in! I’ll take (from you) twenty-five

**PROVERB**

ba9d il-ghada tamadda, ba9d il-9asha tamashsha!—Take a rest after lunch, take a walk after dinner
LESSON EIGHT
ASSIMILATED VERBS, CONJUNCTIONS AND ‘FOR’

ASSIMILATED VERBS

initial /w/ mainly; very few initial /yaa/ verbs.

Past tense: initial /w/

Form I: conjugation exactly as for katab. Participles quite regular: waSal has waaSil and mawSool.

Exercise

Conjugate waSal (arrive); wa’af (stand)

Derived forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>stop someone/something wa”af</th>
<th>III</th>
<th>continue something waaSal</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>make someone lonely, sad ’awHash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>stop (intransitive) tawa”af</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>be continuous tawaaSal</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>be situated/found ‘inwajad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(not a classical Arabic verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>be united ittaHad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>establish a settlement, be a colonizer ’istawTan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Active and passive participles

Quite regular. For example, Form X: mustaw’Tin and mustaw’Tan.
Exercise

List active and passive participle, for the above derived forms,

**Past tense: initial /ya/**

Only two (of the very few available) are used in colloquial: one meaning *despair*, the other *wake up.* (It is uncertain if there is a moral there, somewhere.)
Form I despair: *ya’as.* Conjugation as for *katab,*
Form X awake: *istay’aZ* from *ya-’-Z*. Conjugation as for *katab.*
A Form V verb is possible: *tayassar,* to be available

**Non-past tense: initial /w/**

*Form I*

As opposed to classical Arabic, which drops the initial /w/, colloquial Arabic regards it as a full consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arrive</td>
<td>waaS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pain</td>
<td>waja9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stand</td>
<td>wa’af</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Derived forms* As for verbs of the *katab* type.

The initial /w/ is maintained in all Forms except VIII, where it becomes assimilated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>wa”af</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>waaS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>’awHash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>tawa”af</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>tawaaS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>inwajad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>ittaHad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>’istawTan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-past tense: initial /ya/

The rules for initial /w/ apply. In the few verbs with initial /ya/ the /ya/ behaves as a consonant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>despair</td>
<td>ya’as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be available</td>
<td>tayassar (V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awake</td>
<td>istay’aZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participles of initial /ya/ verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ya’as</td>
<td>yaa’is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tayassar</td>
<td>mutayassir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’istay’aZ</td>
<td>mustay’iZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE SISTERS OF ’ANNA

The above is the translation of the Arabic term for a group of conjunctions which behave in the same way as the word ’anna (the conjunction that).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alone</th>
<th>With pronouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>that</td>
<td>’in (CA ’anna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>li-’an (CA li-’anna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>(wa) laakin (CA walaakinna)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since, because, whereas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples

1. He went to Amman because his son was there—raaH ’ila 9amman li-’an ’ibno kaan hunaak
2. I know that you arrived here two days ago—ba9rif ’inkum wasalToo la-hawn ’abl yawmayn
3. I wanted to see him but he had gone—kaan biddee ’ashoofo laakinno kaan raaH
4. Because he is a good man I don’t want to take any money from him Hays-’inno rajul Tayyib maa biddee ’aakhud minno fuloos
THE PREPOSITION ‘FOR’ AND PRONOUNS (LA+)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>lee or ’ilee</td>
<td>lana or ilna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>lak or ’ilak</td>
<td>lakum or ’ilkum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>lik or ’ilik</td>
<td>lakum or ’ilkum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>lo or ’ilo</td>
<td>lahum or ’ilhum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>laha or ’ilha</td>
<td>lahum or ilhum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VOCABULARY

Verbs

call (out to)—naada (III), byinaadee
clean—naDDaaf (II), byinaDDif
offer (to)—9araD, byi9rad (9ala)
oppose—9aaraD (III), byi9aariD
allow, permit (to) (+verb in non-past)—samaH, byismaH (la)

Nouns

idea—fikra (pl. fikar, ’afkaar)
officer—Daabit (pl. DubbaaT)
friend, owner—SaaHib (pl. ’aSHaab)
official, employee—muwaZZaf (pl. –een)
opportunity, chance—furSa (pl. furaS)
past—maaDee
peace—salaam
people (in general)—naas
people (e.g. the French)—sha9b (pl. shu9oob)
hand—yad (f.; pl. aydee)

Note Parts of the body in pairs are feminine (ear, hand etc.).

Particles

certainly, of course—ma91oom
naturally, of course—Tab9an
true, correct—SaHeeH
(as a question: Is that so?—SaHeeH?)
EXERCISE

Translate:

1. shoo fee? yadee btooja9nee
2. 9araD 9alayya yinaDDif lee is-sayyaara
3. kull 9aSHaabee 9aaruDoonee 9indmaa 9araDT 9aalyhum halfikra
4. HaDart ’ilal-madrasa li-annhum jaaboo roa9hum ’aSHAabak
5. is-sayyaara tawa”afat fee nuSS il-madeena
6. Do you want to see his new car?
7. There is nothing to be found like it in the whole city
8. Of course not all our friends will arrive at the same time (hour)
9. Will you allow me to stop the car?
10. The officer gave me this book

Make the above singular, plural, feminine, negative, interrogative etc.

DIALOGUE: Car-wash facilities

A marHaba! bti’dir tnaDDif lee is-sayyaara?
B ma91oom! ’ayya saa9a biddak iyyaaha?
A ba9d shee saa9atayn. 9indee shughl fil-madeena
B Haadir! ta9aal ba9d nuSS saa9a btlaa’eeha naDeefa mit! sayyaara jadeeda!
A Tayyib! shukran!
B laa shukran 9ala waajib!

Translation

A Hullo! Can you clean this car for me?
B Of course! What time do you want it?
A In about two hours. I have some work in the city.
B At your service. Come back in half an hour and you’ll find it like a new car.
A Fine! Thanks!
B You’re welcome, (lit. ‘There is no thanks for a duty!’)

PROVERB

laa Hayaata li-man tunaadee (CA)—It’s like talking to a brick wall (lit. ‘there is no life in him to whom you call’)
LESSON NINE
RELATIVE PRONOUNS,
VERBAL NOUNS AND
POSSESSION

THE RELATIVE PRONOUN (who, which, etc.)

This construction in Arabic is simplicity itself, in comparison with English.

_The man whom I saw, the man I saw, the man that I saw_ are three perfectly acceptable spoken and written usages in English. Furthermore, dialects may say _The man who_ (‘oo) _I saw; the man what_ (wot) _I saw_ , not to mention _the man as I saw_ and _the man worr I saw_ , etc. All of these are rendered in practically every dialect through the Arabic-speaking world as follows:

*ir-rajul ‘iilee shufto*

The complexities of English are not to be found in Arabic. (‘This is a thing up with which I will not put’ ‘A preposition is something which you should not end a sentence with’)

Rules

1. _‘iilee_ is invariable for all genders and numbers: case does not arise because
2. _‘iilee_ is best regarded as a word linking two co-ordinate sentences (as its name in Arabic grammar implies)
3. When the antecedent is indefinite, _‘iilee_ is omitted.

Examples

He is the man who went to Beirut—huwa ir-rajul _‘iilee_ raaH ‘ila bayroot

He is the man whom I saw in Beirut—huwa ‘ir-rajul _‘iilee_ shufto fee bayroot.

They are the men in whose car I went to Beirut—hum ‘ir- rijaal _‘iilee_ ruHt ‘ila bayroot fee sayyaarat-hum

She is the woman in whose sister’s car I went to Beirut—hiyya ‘il-mara _illee_ ruHt ‘ila bayroot fee sayyaarat ‘ukht–ha
There’s a girl here who wants to speak to you—fee bint hawn bidd-ha tiHkee ma9ak

From these examples it can be seen that when translating from English one first makes two sentences which contain the same meaning. These sentences are translated and then linked with ‘illee (omitted when the antecedent is indefinite).

This is the explanation for the slightly odd-looking ‘the man (whom) I saw him’.

THE VERBAL NOUN

This is roughly the equivalent of the ‘infinitive’ (to write, to see etc.), but also equates with the so-called gerund (e.g. ‘seeing is believing’).

Arabic would use the verbal noun in the above cases,

Examples

Writing Arabic is easy—kitaabat ’il-lugha ’il-9arabiyya sahla
He likes reading and writing—byi Hibb ’il-’iraya oo il-kitaaba

(Note The verbal noun is usually definite.)

Uses of the verbal noun

Arabic uses the verbal noun where English frequently uses some other construction. An example is airport flight announcements. Where English says ‘Would passengers please proceed…’ etc. Arabic says ‘The proceeding of the passengers is requested.…’

Examples

1 Adverbially

He hit him hard—Darabo Darab (lit. he hit him a hitting’)

In this usage the verbal noun may take an adjective, for example:

He hit him repeatedly (a continuous hitting)—Darabo Darab mutawaa Sil
2 In place of clauses

After Muhammad arrived—ba9ad wuSool muHammad

3 As the infinitive

He likes to visit the Arabic countries—byiHibb zeeaarat il-bilaad ‘il-9arabiyya

4 As the gerund

He likes travelling—byiHibb is-safar

5 To render ‘as…as’ etc. Arabic does not have the equivalent small words of German, French and English (so…wie; aussi… que; as…as), but among ways of rendering such constructions is the use of the verbal noun.

He is as interested in English as he is in Arabic—byihtamm billugha il-inkleeziyya ihtimaamo bil-lugha il-9arabiyya

6 To render a variety of clauses

(a) because the students are not here—bisabab 9adam (lack) wujood iT -Tulaab (lit. ‘the lack of the presence of…’)
(b) because the students may attend—bisabab ‘imkaaniyyat HuDoor iT -Tullaab (‘because of the possibility of the students’ attendance’)

7 In formal Arabic: for example notices or announcements which may be broadcast and will therefore be part of the student’s contact with spoken Arabic.

no smoking—mamnoo9 (forbidden) it-tadkheen
no parking—mamnoo9 (forbidden) il-wu’oof
please (come forward)—‘ar-rajaa (both parts are v.ns) ‘al-HuDoor

8 In idioms

absolutely beautiful—fee muntaha al-jamaal

(Note 3 and 4 above are very common in colloquial Arabic; 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are used in a slightly elevated form of colloquial Arabic, or, indeed, in standard written Arabic.)
Forms of the verbal noun

Wright’s *Arabic Grammar* lists forty-four forms possible for the verbal noun (apart from the derived forms which have standard patterns for each form). It is not necessary to memorize these forms, but the student will need to memorize the form(s) occurring for each particular verb. (These are given in the vocabulary lists at the end of the book.) Some common forms are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Verbal noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>be glad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>sit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The forms for *derived-form verbal nouns* are as follows.

- II teach  
  - 9allam ta9leem
- III consult  
  - shaawar mushaawara
- IV throw out  
  - akhraj ‘ikhraaj
- V learn  
  - ta9allam ta9allum
- VI write to one another  
  - takaatab takaatub
- VII be written  
  - ’inkatab ’inkitaab
- VIII assemble  
  - ’ijtama9 ’ijtimaa9
- IX be red (become red)  
  - ’iHmarr ’iHmiraar
- X employ, use  
  - ’ista9mal isti9maal

**POSSESSION**

Levant Arabic has another formula for indicating possession, in addition to the *construct* (Lesson one) and *9ind* (Lesson two). This is the word *taba9* (cf. classical Arabic *taabi9*, meaning ‘subordinate to, belonging to’). *taba9* has a variety of uses

1. his book—’il-kitaab taba9o
2. the book of the boy—’il-kitaab taba9 il-walad
3. The book belongs to the boy—’il-kitaab taba9 il-walad

(There is a difference in intonation between the above: 3 is an example of an equational sentence; hence the lack of a verb.)

Whose is this book?—hal-kitaab taba9 meen? (*Also* la-meen hal-kitaab?)
In some Levantine dialects *taba9* has a feminine, *taba9a*, and a plural, *taba9een*. For example:

his boys—‘il-’awlaad taba9eeno

### VOCABULARY

#### Verbs

help—saa9ad  
work—’ishtaghal, byishtaghii  
laugh (at)—DaHak, byiDHak (9ala)  
wash—ghassal, byighassil  
try—jarrab, byijarrib  
think—’iftakar, byiftikir

#### Nouns/adjectives

early—bakkeer  
north—shimaal  
south—janoob  
est—shar’  
west—gharb  
education—tarbeea  
Egypt—maSir *(f.)*, miSr  
private—khuSooSee *(f.)*-iyya  
programme—barnaamaj *(pl.)* baraamij

#### Particles

during—’asnaa  
while—baynangaa  
pardon: I beg your pardon (reply to thanks)—il-9afoo or 9afwan  
now—halla  
not yet (gone)—maa (raaH) ba9d, lissa maa (raaH)  
some *other* book—ghayr kitaab  
some one *other* than they—ghayr hum  
some *other* time—ghayr marra
EXERCISE

Translate:

1. has-sayyaara taba9 meen?
2. il-maktoob 'illee Hattayto 9alaT-Taawila mush hawn halla
3. ’il-bint illee ta9arrafna 9alayha ’umrha 9ashar sanawaat
4. kullhum dakhaloo il-ghurfa ’illee kunna mujtami9een feeha
5. sami9na ’inno raayiH ’ila 9ammaan fis-sayyaara ’illee ishtaraaha fee bayroot
6. Do you know who is the man they were laughing at?
7. Whose are the books you brought with you?
8. Before you wash your hands (eedayk) leave your books here.
9. Don’t laugh at him, he’s trying
10. Who was that lady I saw you with?

Make the above sentences negative, plural, interrogative etc., where feasible.

DIALOGUE: Brief encounter

A ta9aal! biddee 9arrifak 9ala ’aSHaabee !
B shukran! meen iD-DaabiT ’illee waa’if ma9 ’aHmad?
A haada ’abdul waaHid, musaa9id is-safeer
B biftikir, shufto ’abl shahr ’asnaa ‘iz-zeeaara ’illee 9amilnaaha ’ila lundun
A SaHeeH! ’ana oo iyyaah kunna fee lundun fee nafs ‘il-wa’t

Translation

A Come (on)! I want to introduce you to my friends
B Thanks!… Who’s the officer standing with Ahmad?
A That’s Abdul-Wahid, the Ambassador’s assistant (aide)
B I think I saw him a month ago during the visit we made to London
A That’s right! He and I were in London at the same time

PROVERB

btiHkee(h) fish-shar’ byijaawibak fil-gharb—He is unpredictable (and probably not very bright) (lit. ‘You speak to him in the east, he replies in the west’)
LESSON TEN
MORE VERBS, VERBAL PHRASES
AND WHENEVER/WHOEVER

QUADRILITERAL VERBS

These verbs are unusual only in the sense that they are based on words not falling into the tri-consonantal pattern. Their conjugation, however, is quite consistent. A common type is the verb tarjam, meaning ‘translate’ (the origin of the old-fashioned word for an Oriental translator dragoman, from tarjumaan).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Participles</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarjam</td>
<td>byitarjim</td>
<td>mutarjim</td>
<td>mutarjam</td>
<td>tarjama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tafarnaj</td>
<td>byitafarnaj</td>
<td>mutafarnij</td>
<td>mutafaraaj</td>
<td>tafarnuj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(behave like a faranjee, i.e. ape foreigners)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Active participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 m. sing.</td>
<td>’aja</td>
<td>byeejee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Remember from Lesson seven the odd imperative come!—ta9aal.)

TO COME

The nearest thing to an irregular verb in colloquial Arabic. The suffixes are consistent but the rest is unstable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Non-past</th>
<th>Active participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>jeet</td>
<td>jeena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>jeet</td>
<td>jeetoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly the verb is unsure if it is a hollow one or not.

Non-past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 c.</td>
<td>bajee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 m.</td>
<td>bteejee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 f.</td>
<td>bteejee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 m.</td>
<td>byeejee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 f.</td>
<td>bteejee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HAAL CLAUSES

So called from the classical Arabic term for a class of adverbial clauses.

I learned the language when I was small—ta’allamt ’il-lugha oo ’ana ’iSgheer (or iZgheer)
I saw him as I was coming to school—shufto oo ’ana jaayee lil- madrasa

compare I saw him (as he was) coming—shufto jaayee

Note the extension of this:

I saw him writing—shufto 9am byuktub

WHenever/Whoever etc.

anything whatever—shoo maa kaan
anytime at all—aya wa’t (or classical Arabic waqtin) kaan whatever
he does—mahmaa bya9mal
no matter how tired he is—mahmaa byikoon ta9baan anytime
(whenever) you like—wa’t maa btreed
as much as you like—’add maa btreed
whoever you wish—meen maa btreed
as soon as—Haalmaa
THE VERB SAAR (‘become’)

Note the idiomatic uses of Saar:
1. They began to write—Saaroo yuktuboo (+non-past; both verbs conjugate, non-past with no b/m prefix)
2. (a) They have been here two months—Saar lahum shahrayn hawn
   (b) We have been waiting two hours—Saar il-na saa9atayn nantaZir hawn
   (i.e. Sar 3 m. sing, impersonal, unchanging: the pronouns following ’ila or la change. Any verb following is non-past. Cf. French ‘j’attends depuis 2 heures’)
3. (a) They have already gone—Saaroo raayiHeen
   (b) We had already gone—kunna Sirna raayiHeen

VOCABULARY

Verbs

spend a summer holiday—Sayyaf, byiSayyif
rain—shattat (id-dunya), bitshattee
prefer…to…—faDDal…9ala…byifaDDil
come near, move (intransitive, either to or from the speaker)—’arrab, byi’arrib

Nouns/adjectives

mistake—ghalaT (pl. ghalTaat)
wrong number—numra ghalaT
summer—Sayf
winter—shitaa
spring—rabee9
autumn—khareef
in a hurry, ‘express’—musta9jal
peasant—fallaaH (pl. -een)
difficult—Sa9b
free (i.e. no work)—faaDee (pl. -een)
Particles
without—bidoon, bilaa  doubtless—bi-laa shakk, bidoon shakk
Forget it! (lit. ‘Without it!’)—bi-laa-haa!

EXERCISE

Translate:

1  Haayaat il-fallaaHeen  `ikteer Sa9ba fish-shitaa
2  Wayn bitSayyif, fish-shaam aw fee 9ammaan?
3  bufaDDil  `annak teejee wa’t maa btkoon faaDee
4  `il  `ajaanib byiHibboo yeejoo  `ilal-bilaad fish-shitaa li-
 `ann bilaad-hum feeha bard
5  shufto jaayee bass ma kaan 9indee wa’t  `uwa”if is-
sayyaara
6  It was raining as I came from the city
7  Does it rain a great deal in Lebanon in the spring?
8  Please could you give me Mr Ahmad! Wrong number!
9  I will come to the office as soon as I see him
10  Do you want to come in the new car we have bought,
my friends and I?

DIALOGUE: Translator wanted

A  `ool lee bta9rif titarjim inkleezee 9arabee?
B  shway, bass, shoo, 9indak shee biddak titarjimo?
A  laa, bass baHibb  `ata9arraf 9ala waaHid bya9rif il-
lughatatyn kwyyis.
B  Tayyib, ba`ool lak shoo, 9indee Sadee`  `almaanee
bya9rif inkleezee kwyyis oo bya9rif 9arabee  `aHsan
minnee oo minnak!
A  `a9Teenee ismo, 9indak ra`m talfoono?
B  na9am, 9indee iyyaah hawn

Translation

A  Tell me, can you translate English/Arabic?
B  Only a little. What’s the matter? Have you
something you want to translate?
A No, but I’d like to get to know someone who knows both languages well.
B OK, I tell you what. I have a German friend who knows English well and knows Arabic better than you and I do,
A Give me his name. Do you have his phone number?
B Yes, I have it here.

PROVERB
’a9Tee khubzak lil-khabbaaz wa law ’akal nuSSo—Give your bread to the baker, even if he eats half of it (i.e. always consult an expert or professional)

LESSON ELEVEN
CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES (‘If…’)
1 The rules for classical Arabic ‘if’ sentences are very elaborate, but the colloquial rules are much simpler.
2 Real or ‘probable’ conditional sentences
Arabic uses ‘iza for ‘if’ in sentences such as:
If you see him tell him I’m here—iza btshoofo ’ool lo ’ana hawn
3 Unreal or ‘impossible’ conditional sentences
law is used:
if I had a million dollars—law kaan 9indee milyoon doolaar
4 The rules for sequence of tenses are much less elaborate than in classical Arabic.
If they had gone that way down to Beirut they would be there by now—law kaanoo nazaloo ila bayroot min hunaak kaanoo waSaloo (halla’).
5 A classical word for ‘if’ (‘in) is used in some formal expressions.
The most famous is:
If God wills—in shaa’ ’allaah (or ’inshalla(h))

**Note**  
(a) The classical *in* is used:  
(b) the classical sequence of tenses is used;  
(c) ’allaah is the only word in all Arabic with such a dark /l/ sound (velarization). Other Levantine formulae include  
(d) If God wills—in ’alla(h) raad (or ’araad)

6 NB unless I’m mistaken—’in lam akun ghalTaan

### VOCABULARY

**Verbs**

finish—khallaS, byikhalliS  
destroy—khairab, byikharrib  
specialize (in)—takhaSSaS (fee)  
believe—Sadda’, byiSaddi

**Nouns/adjectives**

broken down, worn out, out of order—kharbaan  
national, patriotic—waTanee  
hair—sha9r (*pl.* -aat)  
poetry—shi9r  
poet—shaa9ir  
journalism—SaHaafa  
hotel—fundu’ (*pl.* fanaadi’)

**Particles**

for, for the sake of (prep.)—min shaan  
in order to, that (conjunction)—Hatta  
approximately—ta’reeban  
about (subject)—9an  
that is to say (lit. ‘it means’)—ya9nee
EXERCISE

Translate:

1. Saddi’nee! haada ’aHsan kitaab bil’inkleezee 9an ish-shi9r il-9 arabee
2. ’ool lee, ’ayya saa9a bitkhalliS shughlak?
3. ’iza btrooH (’ila) 9ammaan bitlaa’ee fanaadi’ jadeeda ikteer
4. law kunna hawn ’abl sanatayn maa shufna wa-la9a mad rasa, abadames?
5. ’iza bitlaa’ee kitaab kwayyis bil-9arabee 9an ’ish-shi9r ’ilfaransaawee jeeb lee ’iyyaah
6. He is coming from Damascus so that he can study journalism in the university
7. Did you know that my friend is a specialist in education programmes?
8. Would you like anything else?
9. If you want to be introduced to the man you saw here, come to my house tomorrow at 9.00 a.m.
10. if I had worked with him I would have become a millionaire

Make the above sentences plural, feminine, interrogative, etc, where feasible.

DIALOGUE: Of Arabic poetry

A ’ool lee, shoo raayak? meen ’aHsan shaa9ir 9arabee?
B wallaah, haada su’aal Saa9b ikteer. shaa9ir lubnaanee, ya9nee?
A laa, mush biD-Daroora. ’aSdee, min ayya bilaad 9arabiyya
B Tayyib, fee miSr 9indak ’aHmad shaw’ee, maa fee ghayro byisammnoo(h) ’ameer ish-shu9araa
A ’aHmad shaw’ee, ba9do Tayyib?
B laa, maat sanat ’alf oo tisa9 miyya oo ’itnayn oo talaatee n

Translation

A Tell me, what do you think (what is your opinion)? Who is the best Arab poet?
B (By God) that’s a very difficult question. A Lebanese poet, do you mean (‘…it means?’).
A Not necessarily. I mean, a poet from any Arab country
B OK. In Egypt you have Ahmad Shawqi. There’s no other (to compare). They call him the Prince of Poets
A Is Ahmad Shawqi still alive?
B No, he died in 1932

PROVERB

khayrul-kalaami maa qalla wa dall *(classical Arabic, but used widely in colloquial)—The best speech is short and to the point (‘what is little and shows the way’)*

LESSON TWELVE

IDIOMS

The vernacular of the Levant is rich in idioms, as is the vernacular of any society where speech is prized as an art-form. (‘Wisdom alighted on three things, the brain of the Franks, the hand of the Chinese and the tongue of the Arabs.’) Poetry recitals, songs, Koran recitations, story-telling, poetry composition, word-games, speech-making, zajl competitions,* are all examples of Arabic language activity which are still highly prized.

The Levant is no exception among Arabic societies. Before the Lebanese civil war a *bon mot* at a public zajl competition would often be greeted by enthusiastic small-arms fire. But, apart from formal activities such as the above, Arabic everyday speech is vivid and idiomatic. Levantine Arabic is especially rich and varied, as its geographical area includes coastal plain and mountain, desert and plateau, villages, rural settlements and metropolitan areas, while the communities range from trilingual western-orientated city dwellers to monolingual Bedu; from Druze ‘initiates’ to Muslim peasants; and from Imams to Maronite patriarchs and cultivators, not to mention

*Extempore competitions in rhyming colloquial poetry on themes set as debating topics between rival teams.
Armenians, Greek Orthodox, Chaldean Catholics, Nestorians, Roman Catholics and even Aramaic-speaking communities. Given such variety it is not surprising that there is a wide range of idiom (mariners and mountaineers, peasants and traders, Christian and Muslim, etc.). The approximately 200 idioms which follow are a modest offering from a wealth of possible items.

The arrangement is alphabetical Arabic-English and English-Arabic, taking the initial letter of the main word in the idiom.

### 'alif

- **God forbid!** (lit. ‘I seek a refuge in God from the Devil!)  
  ‘a 9oozu billaah min ash-shayTaan ’ar-rajeem!
- **two-faced** (lit. ‘father of two tongues’)  
  ’aaboo lisaanayn

**NB**

1. **For sure!**  
   ’abadan!
2. **with neg.=not at all**  
   a nice chap  
   aadamee

### baa’

- **No question!**  
  maa feesh baHs!
- **not so hot, not too good**  
  mush wa-laa budd
- **Get out!**  
  barra!
- **That’s quite enough!**  
  bass!

### taa’

- **Fantastic!**  
  tuHfa! *(Leb.)*
- **Just a mo!**  
  takki iZ.gheera! *(Leb.)*
- **worn out**  
  ta9baan
- **They overdid it**  
  takhkhanoo-ha

### thaa’

- **Holy Trinity**  
  ath-thaalooth al-mu’addas
- **three-quarters**  
  talaat ’arbaa9
- **twenty minutes**  
  tult saa9a *(one-third of an hour)*

### jeem

- **I’m serious. No joking!**  
  9am baHkee jadd!
- **Much obliged!**  
  shukran jazeelan!
The whole thing is... (what it all amounts to is...)
He went crazy

next to Hadd
a crafty one
Shame on you!
He has the luck of the devil (His luck splits rocks!)

sells like hot cakes (bread)
 senile
 amiable
 Stay here!

Work it out for yourself
(Débrouillez-vous!)
please!

simple, nice chap, unpretentious
straight ahead (also, honest)

the same thing
‘gormless’, stupid
You are really too kind!
in X’s debt

straight on/ahead/away
You have to pay for good value
They made fun of us
Get a move on!

‘old chap’
a long time ago
Remove it to one side 
Add to that, that...

zeeHo!
zid 9ala haada, inno...

Praise be! (Muslims only!)
had already gone
indisposed, ill
It just happened that...

subHaan il-mughayyir!
saba’ oo raaH
saakhin shwayy
saa’abat inno…(Leb.)

(Said to avoid evil)
What else can we do?
What’s up? What’s wrong (with you)?
Why, of course!
I want nothing to do with this shaghla?
Er…what I mean is…
What’s new?
No! you can’t mean that!
No! you can’t mean that!
What a bore!
What an agreeable fellow!

min ghayr sharr
shoo biddna na9mal?
shoo bik?
shoo, la-kaan! (Leb.)
shoo biddee fee hash-affair (Leb.)
shoo biddee ‘a’ool lak?
shoo fee, maa fee? (Leb.)
shoo hal-fawDa!
shoo hal-Hakee!
shoo 9am btiHkee?
shoo mut9ib!
shoo laTeef !

Patience is beautiful/good
moody
fortunate coincidence
in the direction of...

iS–Sabr jameel/Tayyib
SaaHib ’aTwaar
Sudfa khayr min mee9aad
Sawb(Leb.)…

Chaos! (The bath-house bowl is missing)
Put the light on (for us)!
I have fixed things!
the Arabic language

iT-Taasa Dayy9a
Dawweel-naa!
ZabbaTt-haa!
lughat-iD-Daad
spitting image
first-rate
senseless (talk)
gossip Ta”

It seems that…
He’s just gone out
by heart
behind his back

That doesn’t prove a thing
a traffic jam
in plain language
Raise your voice! Speak up a little!

usually
something’s afoot
closed his eyes
it slipped my mind

Switch on (the radio) to the BBC
all at one go
from one piece (e.g. of wood)
each (e.g. L. 10 each)

common factor (often, ‘unifying principle’)

(at the) bottom of the village
nonsense

Taa’
Taba’ il-’aSl
min iT-Tiraaz il-awwal
bi-laa Ta9m
Hanak

Zaa’
iZ-Zaahir ’inno…
alla’ Zahar (Leb.)
9an Zahr ’alb
waraa Zahro

9ayn
mush 9ibra
9aj’at sayr (Leb)
bil-9arabee il-mushabraH
9allee Sawtak!

ghayn
gaaliban (maa)
fee shee 9am byighlee
gammaD 9aynay(h)
ghaab 9an baalee

faa’
iftaH 9a-lundun!
fard marra (Leb.)
fard sha’fa
fi’at

qof
qaasim mushtarak

kaaf
fee ka9b iD-Day9a (Leb.)
kalaam faarigh
same old story
Just a moment!

Not bad
No! it can’t be! (astonishment)

Just a drop!
(a) boring (person)

Give (me)!Bring (me)!
Let’s see (it)
Hullo!

Not at all! That’s the least we could do (for you)!
Lower your voice!
Please (do something for me)! or
I assure you/believe me!
Look out! Mind your back!

I wonder (if)…
Oh! Lord! (Said when beginning work)
Oh! God! (Expression of astonishment)

all day long
all right (ça va)
Anyone there?
as much as you like

laam
latt oo 9ajn
laHZa iZgheera!

meem
mush baTTaal
mush ma9’ool!

noon
nitfa ‘iZgheera! (Leb.)
naashif

haa’
haat!
haat tanshoof!
yaa hala!

waw
wa law! waajibna!
waTTee Sawtak!
wa-Hyaatak!
’oo9aa!

yaa’
yaa turaa…
yaa rabb
yaa salaam!

A
Tool in-nahaar
maashil-Haal
fee Hada hunaak?
’add maa btreeed
back to front
bad language
bear: I can’t bear him
beg: I beg pardon of God

changed his mind
Cheers! (e.g. with a drink)
circle: vicious circle
close friend

dark: it became dark
death: sick to death; fed up
deep end: go off the deep end
devil: Poor devil!

each other (e.g. on top of each other)
easy in mind
either…or…
equals (e.g. 2+2=4)

face: lose face
fall in love with…
fall out (quarrel)
feeling: Are you feeling all right?

give and take
go out of one’s mind
good-for-nothing
grounds: on the grounds that…
had: You had better go
hand-in-hand
head over heels
here is/are
(Here they are!)

‘aHsan tarooH
maasikeen eed ba9D
ra’san 9ala 9aqab
hayy (+pronouns)
hayy iyyaahum!)

ill: It’s an ill wind (etc.)
in: He’s not in
inside out
It’s…speaking (e.g. phone)

maSaa’ib qawm 9ind qawm
fawaa’id (Al-Mutanabbi)
mush mawjood
bil-ma’loob
’ana

job: It’s a good job it wasn’t worse
joking: I’m not joking
just: I’ve just come
Just so! Exactly!

m leeH innha maa kaanat
’a9Zam
mush 9am bamzaH
ba9dnee jaa’ee
biZ–ZabT!

Keep quiet!
kidding: No kidding!

Kindly (e.g close the door)!
know: as far as I know

uskut!
laa, SaHeeH! 9am baHkee
jadd!
luTfan…
9ala 9ilmee

labour: hard labour
land: by land
last: At last!
late: the late (e.g. king)

’a9maal shaa”a
bil-barr
oo ‘akheeran!
’il-marHoom…

makes no difference to me
means: By no means!
middle-aged
mind: set his mind on

maa btifri’ ma9ee
laa, abadan!
fee mutawassiiT il-9umr
HaaTiT bi-fikro
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Arabic Word(s)</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>neck: He got it in the neck&lt;br&gt;net weight&lt;br&gt;Never mind&lt;br&gt;now: from now on</td>
<td>Hara’oo lo bayto&lt;br&gt;il-wazn iS-Saafee&lt;br&gt;maa 9alaysh&lt;br&gt;min halla oo Taali9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>obliged: Much obliged&lt;br&gt;odd: on odd days&lt;br&gt;Once upon a time…&lt;br&gt;owe: I owe you a lira</td>
<td>mamnoonak&lt;br&gt;kull yawm taanee&lt;br&gt;fee yawm min al-ayyaam…&lt;br&gt;9alay lak leera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>pack of lies&lt;br&gt;pair of shoes&lt;br&gt;Pardon me!&lt;br&gt;particular (reason)</td>
<td>kizb fee kizb&lt;br&gt;jawz kandara&lt;br&gt;il-9afoo!&lt;br&gt;(sabab) mu9ayyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>queer (sex)&lt;br&gt;question: It’s a question of…&lt;br&gt;quick-witted saree9&lt;br&gt;Quite right! Quite so!</td>
<td>shaazz&lt;br&gt;il-mas’ala mas’alat…&lt;br&gt;il-khaaTir&lt;br&gt;tamaaman! biZ-Zabt!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>rather: or rather…&lt;br&gt;read aloud&lt;br&gt;reason: by reason of his work&lt;br&gt;return: in return for…</td>
<td>’aw bil-’aHraa…&lt;br&gt;’araa bi-Sawt 9aalee&lt;br&gt;bi-Hukm shughlo&lt;br&gt;mu ’aabil…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>saying: as the saying goes&lt;br&gt;Search me! (How do I know?)&lt;br&gt;still: He’s still here&lt;br&gt;Stop!</td>
<td>mitl maa byi’ ooloo&lt;br&gt;shoo ba9arrifnee?&lt;br&gt;ba9do hawn&lt;br&gt;wa’ ’if!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Take my word for it!&lt;br&gt;taste: not to my taste&lt;br&gt;that big/so big (demonstration)</td>
<td>’isma9 minnee!&lt;br&gt;mush 9ala zaw’ee&lt;br&gt;hal ’add</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
too big kabeer ikteer;'akbar min il-laazim

under: in under one hour fee 'a'all min saa9a
up to now li-ghaayat halla
use: It’s no use maa fee faa’ida
utmost: Do your utmost i9mal il-mustaHeel

very: the very same day fee nafs ilyawm
view: in view of the circumstances naZaran liZ-Zuroof
virtue: by virtue of… bi-faDl…
visits: They don’t exchange visits maa byizooroo oo maa byinzaaroo

Wait a minute! 'istanna shwayy!
wants: He wants for nothing maa byun’uSo shee
washed up the dishes ghassalat il 'aTbaa'
whatsit, er… you know what I mean ool ma9ee!

X: MrX 'il-'ustaaz fulaan
X-rays 'ash9iat-iks

Year: Happy New Year (or any annual feast) kull 9aam oo int bi-khayr
Yes, indeed! ‘ay, na9am!
yet: He’s not come yet maa ’ajaa ba9d
yet again kamaan marra 'il-mukhliS
Yours sincerely’il-mukhliS

zero hour saa9at iS-Sifr
LESSON THIRTEEN
TERMS OF ADDRESS AND REFERENCE

English is poverty-stricken by comparison with Arabic in terms of address and reference. In the Levant one can ring the changes in everyday communication on a great range of titles for people (coupled with a vocative ‘O…!’) depending on whether they are young, old, male or female, venerable, known or unknown, superior or inferior in station, single or in a group, and even according to religious denomination: a priest has a different title from a mufti, a Druze elder from a young Druze in modern dress. The terms which follow are a mere selection of those it is possible to hear in the Levant on a typical day between town and village, between home and souq, school and office.

Words on a page cannot describe fully the background to the terms given. Only experience can tell the foreigner how to use the terms freely. A start may be made on those expressions which are almost entirely unambiguous, being addressed to people whose status is known, and being, in most cases, meant literally, (yaa, the vocative, is invariable and has none of the quaint old fashioned sound of ‘O…’ in English. Exclamation marks and ‘O…’ are omitted in the translation into English.)

ADDRESS

Group A  Literal and/or unambiguous terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Used to*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yaa muHtaram</td>
<td>Respected one</td>
<td>A priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaa Hakeem</td>
<td>Wise one</td>
<td>A doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaa jaar</td>
<td>Neighbour</td>
<td>A neighbour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yaa shaaweesh</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>A sergeant (or lesser rank for purposes of ingratiation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Used to*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 yaa ‘ustaaz</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Someone of standing, usually a brain worker (teacher, well-dressed stranger etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 yaa mu9allim</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>A craftsman: carpenter, mechanic etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 yaa sitt(na)</td>
<td>Lady</td>
<td>A married woman, usually older than the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 yaa ’aanisa</td>
<td>Miss</td>
<td>A young lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 yaa mukhtar</td>
<td>Mukhtar</td>
<td>A mukhtar or village headman (lit. ‘chosen one’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 yaa walad</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>A young boy (possibly to a waiter, but caution is enjoined. Try 6 above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 yaa shaykh</td>
<td>Shaikh or elder</td>
<td>An elder, not necessarily a religious man (also a friendly term used to an equal or contemporary)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Group B  Terms used to a group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Used to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 yaa jamaa9a</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>A group (may be used to call them to order)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 yaa shabaab</td>
<td>Youths</td>
<td>A group of youngish men (always well-received)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below*
Now for a group of terms using words which have a specific kinship meaning, but which are used widely to address a stranger without offence.

**Group C   Kinship terms used to strangers**

18 yaa 9amm    Paternal uncle    An older man, usually
19 yaa khaaal  Maternal uncle    As 18
20 yaa 'ukhtee  My sister        A respectable lady of
   roughly the same age

Related to group C are a number of terms which, especially in Lebanese Arabic, are used to entirely the wrong person! A grandchild may be addressed as ‘Grandfather’!

**Group D   Kinship terms used ‘wrongly’**

21 yaa jiddo    His grandfather    Very affectionate: to a grandchild
22 yaa bayyee   My father         To a son!
23 yaa 9ammo    His uncle         To a nephew, but also to a stranger in friendly fashion
24 yaa khaalo   As 23            As 23

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below*
Group E is another group where the term is not necessarily to be understood literally.

**Group E  Flattery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Used to*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 yaa 9arees</td>
<td>Bridegroom</td>
<td>Good-looking (or not!) young stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 yaa shabb</td>
<td>Young man</td>
<td>As 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 yaa bay</td>
<td>Bey (Ottoman title)</td>
<td>Possibly ingratiating, but can be used jokingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 yaa baasha</td>
<td>Pasha (Ottoman title)</td>
<td>As 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 yaa mawlaanaa</td>
<td>Our Lord(!)</td>
<td>As 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 yaa seede</td>
<td>Sir</td>
<td>As 27 (very common in Damascus)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next group is possibly the most ambiguous, and is the one which calls for the most caution: a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. However, to plunge in, the main characteristic of this group is excessive flattery.

**Group F  Excessive flattery**

Nos 31–4 can be used to strangers, especially an official dealing with the public.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31 yaa rooHee</td>
<td>My spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 yaa 9aynee</td>
<td>My eye</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 yaa Habeebee</td>
<td>My dear/darling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 yaa ’albee</td>
<td>My heart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 yaa shaaTir</td>
<td>Clever one</td>
<td>To a young boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 yaa kwawayys</td>
<td>Excellent one</td>
<td>As 35, but many other uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 yaa Tayyib</td>
<td>Good one</td>
<td>As 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 yaa sitt il-kull</td>
<td>Mistress (i.e. ladyof all)</td>
<td>To (older?) women; slightly bantering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below*
### Group G  Grand titles, but of obligatory usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Used to*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39 yaa HaDrat…</td>
<td>Your Honour</td>
<td>Depends on addressee; e.g. no. 40:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 yaa HaDrat il-’un-Sul</td>
<td>Your Honour the Consul</td>
<td>(Many other combinations in the above forty styles of address)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 yaa dawlat arra’ees</td>
<td>Dawla (‘state’ in political science)</td>
<td>A Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 yaa ma9aaleekum</td>
<td>‘Votre Excellence’</td>
<td>A minister in government (or yaa sa9aadat is-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 yaa samaaHat il-muftee</td>
<td>Eminence</td>
<td>A mufti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 yaa fakhaamat ar-ra’ees</td>
<td>Excellency</td>
<td>A President of the Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 yaa ghibTat il-baTriark</td>
<td>Beatitude</td>
<td>A cardinal of the Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And finally a group of terms used which are addressing God, if translated literally, but which have other uses. All are taken from the ninety-nine ‘Most Beautiful Names of God’.

### Group H  Calling on the Almighty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>To express</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 yaa salaam!</td>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>astonishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 yaa laTeef!</td>
<td>Kindly One</td>
<td>As 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 yaa saatir!</td>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>To ward off trouble, especially after mention thereof</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below*
LESSON THIRTEEN

**Arabic** | **Meaning** | **Used to***
--- | --- | ---
50 yaa allaah! | Allah | Many uses; often, e.g. ‘how could anyone be so brazen as to do/ say a thing like that!’

The above categories are by no means exhaustive, and each category has many additional terms. Furthermore each term could be described at greater length: for example yaa 9azeezee, yaa Habeebee (‘my dear, my darling’) could be used in exasperation or remonstrance, And so on…. However, the above are an indispensable minimum which the student should recognize and begin to use.

**REFERENCE**

Very often such terms are the obverse of terms of reference For example, when referring to some distinguished person one would say HaDino, whereas one would address him as HaDirtak (His/Your Honour). A Muslim religious dignitary would be referred to as samaaHto.

Three terms should be noted which overlap address and reference. In asking, ‘What is your name?’, one may say:

1 shoo’ism il-’akh? What is the name of the brother?
2 shoo’ism il-kareem? What is the name of the noble one?
3 shoo’ism il-9azeez? What is the name of the dear one?

Such formulae could be used for many questions: for example Where are you from?’, ‘Is this yours?’ and so on.

**ADDRESS AND REFERENCE IN RELIGIOUS TERMS**

Scores of terms may be used to address a stranger in Islamic terms: yaa 9abdo! (‘O, His slave!’) is an example. Indeed, in some dialects any male stranger may be acceptably addressed as yaa muHammad!

*But not exclusively, in any particular example below*
PATRONYMICS etc.

A married couple with children may be addressed as the parents of the first-born male child. Such address implies closeness and respect on the part of the speaker. The parents of Ashraf would be described and addressed as 'aboo 'ashraf and 'umm 'ashraf. Couples without children and even unmarried men may be given honorific parenthood titles such as 'aboo Zayd (hence the widespread use of such terms for describing PLO figures).

Holders of certain names are traditionally called 'aboo so-and-so. A man called Muhammad may be styled Abul-Qasim (recalling the Prophet Muhammad’s son who died in infancy). For Christians a slightly bantering example would be that a Maroun would be styled 'aboo-T-Taa’ifa ('Father of the Sect’, i.e. of the Maronites).

LESSON FOURTEEN

PROVERBS

Proverbs are used with great effect in Levantine Arabic—as in all Arabic dialects—and are highly prized as the distillation of collective wisdom and experience. A native English speaker would be wary of using English proverbs, fearing to sound quaint or tendentious or both, but Arabic proverbs are used in all contexts.

The student should note carefully how proverbs are used, and with practice should be able to use them appropriately. But be careful! A foreigner using the proverb ‘Tie the donkey where its master tells you to’ (i.e. ‘Follow the boss’s instructions!’) once caused a major industrial stoppage, since he seemed to be calling an Arab subordinate a donkey!

The following fifty proverbs have been chosen for their popularity. Where necessary explanation is added. Very distinctive attitudes and particular beliefs or superstitions are shown in Nos 10, 14, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35 to 50.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'irshak il- 'abyaD liyawmak il-’aswad</td>
<td>Your white penny for your black day (i.e. Save for a rainy day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’ana fee waadee oo 'inta fee waadee</td>
<td>I am in a valley and you are in a valley (i.e. We are at cross-purposes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'il-jaar 'abl id-daar oo ir-rafe’ 'abl iT-Taree’</td>
<td>(Choose) the neighbour before the house and the companion before the way (i.e. Plan ahead—but especially in relation to neighbours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man 9aashar al-qawm ’arba9eena yawman Saara min-hum</td>
<td>Who lives with a tribe forty days becomes one of them (i.e. in praise of harmonizing with surroundings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bukra fil-mishmish</td>
<td>Tomorrow in the apricots (when they ripen) (i.e. scepticism about someone’s promises)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maa ilee wa laa naa’a wa laa jamal fee-ha</td>
<td>I have no she—or he—camel in it (i.e. Nothing to do with me)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’urbuT il-Himaar maHall maa bi’ool lak SaaHibo</td>
<td>Tie the donkey in the place where its owner says to (i.e. Follow the boss’s instructions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>min taHt id-dalaf li-taHt il-mizraab</td>
<td>From under the drip to under the water spout (i.e. From the frying pan into the fire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’imsik il-khashab!</td>
<td>Touch wood!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>il-manHoos manHoos walaw 9alla’oo 9alayah faanoos</td>
<td>A chronically unlucky (bewitched) person remains so even if they hang a lamp on him (NB the concept of <em>naHs</em> – being bewitched or jinxed – is common in Arabic society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9aash man shaafak</td>
<td>He who sees you lives (very acceptable flattery)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12 khayr ul-birri 9aajiluhu
(classical)
13 'il-maktoob byin’ara
min-9unwaano
14 illee byishlaH teeabo
byubrud

15 hayk-id-dunya!
16 Darbat il-mu9allim bi-’alf
Darba

17 mush kull-yawn tislam
il-jarra
18 9aSfoor bil-yad wa laa
9ashara bish-shajara
19 bya9mal min il-Habba ’ubba

20 byusru’ il-kuHl min il-9ayn
21 farkh il-biTT 9awwaam
22 danab il-kalb byiDall a9waj
23 maa Hada byita9allam ’illa
min keeso
24 il-9ilm fiS-Sighr mitl in-na’sh
fil-Hajr
25 il-9aalam ma9al-wa’if

Text
Translation
The best kindness is that done expeditiously
The letter can be read from its address (i.e. Some things need no explanation)
He who takes off his clothes gets cold (i.e. Do not cut yourself off from your (family) group)
That’s life!
The master’s touch is worth a thousand by someone else (i.e. an expression of admiration for good work)
The jar does not remain whole every time (i.e. Be careful)
A bird in the hand is better than ten in the tree
He makes a dome from a grain (i.e…. mountains out of molehills)
He (would) steal the Kohl from the eye (i.e. an incorrigible or skilled thief)
The duck’s offspring floats (i.e. Like father like son)
The dog’s tail remains bent (i.e. Some people are incorrigible, hopeless cases)
No one learns except from his bag/pocket (i.e. Experiences can come dearly)
A thing learned when young is like a thing carved in rock
The world is with the one who is standing (i.e. Might is right)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26  <code>illee eedo bil-mayy mush mitl </code>illee eedo bin-naar</td>
<td>He whose hand is in the water is not like the one whose hand is in the fire (i.e. It’s easy to criticize when you’re not facing the tough decisions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27  `illee faat maat</td>
<td>What has died has passed (i.e. Let bygones be bygones)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28  khaalif tu9raf</td>
<td>Disagree, you become well-known (i.e. disapproval of tendentious individuals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29  mitl il–Hammaam ma’T oo9a mayyaato</td>
<td>Like a bath house whose water has been cut off (i.e. Chaos!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30  baab in-naj jaar makhloo9</td>
<td>The carpenter’s door is hanging loose (i.e. ‘Physician, heal thyself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31  byiHkee mitl `aaDee ma9zool</td>
<td>He talks as much as a dismissed judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32  mitl il-‘aTrash fiz-zaffa</td>
<td>Like a deaf man at a wedding (i.e. doesn’t know what’s going on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33  man shabb 9ala shee shaab 9alay(h)</td>
<td>He who grows up with something grows old on it (i.e. Most things can become habitual)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34  9uzr ’a’baH min zanbo</td>
<td>An excuse worse than the offence (e.g. ‘Sorry, we didn’t come. We forgot’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35  fee kull bayt baaloo9</td>
<td>In every house there is a drain/cesspool (i.e. We all have our faults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36  ghalTat ish–shaaTir bi-’alf ghalTa</td>
<td>The clever man’s mistake is equal to a thousand mistakes (i.e. Gifted people should take special care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37  Darabnee oo baka, saba’nee `ishtaka</td>
<td>He hit me and wept, got in oo front of me and complained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 'akram min Haatim ('Tay')</td>
<td>More generous than Haatim (the symbol of Bedouin hospitality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 'ana 'ameer oo 'inta 'ameer, oo meen byisoo’ il-Hameer</td>
<td>I am a Prince, and so are you. Who, then, will drive the donkeys? (i.e. Someone has to do the dirty work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 9indal-buToon Daa9at il-9uqool</td>
<td>When it was time for the bellies (food) the minds went astray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 baTTeeekhtayn bi-eed waa-Hida maa byinHamaloo</td>
<td>Two water melons cannot be carried in one hand (i.e. Match the tools to the job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 'ib9ad 9an ish-sharr oo ghannee lo</td>
<td>Keep away from evil and sing to it (cynical advice for keeping in well with people and regimes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 ba9eed 9an il-9ayn ba9eed 9an il-’alb</td>
<td>Far from the eye, far from the heart (i.e. Out of sight out of mind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 it-tikraar byi9aallim il-Himaar</td>
<td>Repetition will teach even a donkey (beware in using this!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 ShaHHaad oo byishaariT</td>
<td>A beggar and (yet) he’s haggling (i.e. What impudence!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 kull shams il-haa maghrib</td>
<td>Every sun has its setting (i.e. Fame and fortune are fleeting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 ‘iS-Sawm bi-la Salaa mitl ir-raa9ee bi-la9 9aSa</td>
<td>Fast without prayer is like a shepherd with no crook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 ’al qaafila taseer wal-kilaab tanbaH</td>
<td>The caravan proceeds while the dogs bark (i.e. contempt of niggling critics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 laa yaDurr as-siHaab nabH il-kilaab</td>
<td>The clouds are not harmed by the barking of the dogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
And, finally, to sum up on the learning of Arabic:

A new language means a new man

---

LESSON FIFTEEN
COURTESY EXPRESSIONS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

British English must be unique among developed languages in having no agreed response to the phrase, ‘Thank you’. By comparison, Levantine Arabic is rich in polite formulae for every occasion. There is a danger, however, that the foreign student may fear that ‘courtesy’ Arabic is a cabalistic language which only the initiates may master after undergoing years of travail and nameless rites.

This chapter explains usage appropriate to salutations, congratulations, condolences etc. From the ten sections covered it will be seen that certain phrases are common to many occasions, in particular, invocation to the Deity. The name of allaah is used on most occasions and, indeed, ‘God bless you’ (allaah yisallimak) is possibly the most frequently used courtesy formula,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 kayf il-Haal?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Reply: <em>il-Hamdu lillaah!</em> ‘Praise be to God!’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kayf iS-SiHHa?</td>
<td>How is the health?</td>
<td>For <em>kayf</em> many speakers use <em>shlawn</em> (<em>shlawn SiHHatak</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 marHaba!</td>
<td>Hullo! (a misleading word with complex connotations)</td>
<td>Used by either party in a chance or formal encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The root (r-H-b) implies ‘Welcome’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: <em>marHabtayn</em>! or <em>maraaHib</em>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 SabaaH il-khayr!</td>
<td>Good morning!</td>
<td>Lit. ‘Morning of well-being’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: <em>SabaaH in-noor</em> (‘Morning of light’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 masaa il-khayr!</td>
<td>Good evening!</td>
<td>Meaning and changes as in 4.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 nahaarak sa9eed!</td>
<td>May your day be happy!</td>
<td>Used at any time of day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: <em>nahaarak 'as-9ad</em> (‘…happier!’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 as-salaam 9alaykum!</td>
<td>Peace be upon you!</td>
<td>Used by Muslims,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: <em>wa 9alaykum as salaam</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introductions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 baHibb 9arrifak 9ala…</td>
<td>I’d like to introduce you to…</td>
<td>NB ‘we’, not ‘I’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tasharrafna</td>
<td>We are honoured (after being introduced)</td>
<td>Reply: the same or <em>allaah yizeedak sharaf</em> (‘May God increase your honour’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 furSa sa9eeda!</td>
<td>A happy occasion!</td>
<td>Reply: <em>furSa 9aZeema!</em> (‘A great occasion!’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thanks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 shukran/ash-kurak/</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Reply: <em>il-9afoo</em>! (‘I beg pardon’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mutashakkir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 mamnoonak</td>
<td>I am obliged to you</td>
<td>Reply: as in 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 'ana 9aajiz 9an ish-shukr</td>
<td>I am quite unable to express my thanks</td>
<td>An acceptable exaggeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: as above or laa shukran 9ala waajib ('No thanks needed for a duty').</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Journeys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 'aymta sharraf?</td>
<td>When did you arrive?</td>
<td>Lit. ‘When did you honour us?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 'aymta btitsahhil?</td>
<td>When do you leave?</td>
<td>Lit. ‘When do you go on a journey which God, we hope, will make easy?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Hamdillaah 9as-salaama</td>
<td>Praise God for your safety</td>
<td>To someone back from a trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 inshallaah tawaffa’t bi-hal mishwaar</td>
<td>If God wills you were successful on this trip</td>
<td>Reply: as in 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 inshallaah toooH oo tirja9 bis salaama</td>
<td>If God wills you will go and come back in safety</td>
<td>Reply: as in 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ishta’naalak</td>
<td>We have missed you</td>
<td>To someone returning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reply: 'ihabil-'aktar ('We have missed you more').</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weddings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 mabrook!</td>
<td>Congratulations!</td>
<td>Lit. ‘May you be blessed!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Used to bride and groom, and even parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 inshallaah titahannoo</td>
<td>If God wills you will be made happy</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Funerals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 allaah yirHamo</td>
<td>May God have mercy on him</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 il-9awD bi-</td>
<td>The consolation is that you are well</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salaam-tak</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Departures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ma9 is-salaama</td>
<td>(Go) with safety</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tuSbaH 9ala khayr</td>
<td>May you arise in the morning in well-being</td>
<td>(Said at night by person leaving.) Reply: oo 'int min 'ahlo (‘And you are of its family!’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Visit to a sick person

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 salaamtak</td>
<td>(We wish for) your well-being</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 salaamat-ha</td>
<td>(We wish for) her well-being</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food and drink etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 bil-’afraaH!</td>
<td>Rejoicing and celebrations!</td>
<td>Used after being entertained. Reply: allaah yisallimak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 sufra dayima!</td>
<td>May your table last for ever!</td>
<td>Said to a host. Reply: allaah yideem Hayaatak! (‘May God lengthen your life!’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 na9eeman</td>
<td>May it be pleasant to you</td>
<td>To someone freshly shaved, bathed etc. Reply: allah yin9am 9alayk!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Festivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kull 9aam wa ‘int bi-khayr</td>
<td>Every year and may you be well</td>
<td>Used for any annual feast, civil or religious, birthdays etc. Reply: oo ‘int bi-khayr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9eed sa9eed!</td>
<td>A happy feast!</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9eed mubaarak!</td>
<td>A blessed feast!</td>
<td>Reply: allaah yisallimak!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

The above phrases are but a fraction of the possibilities, but will take the student a long way. With increasing familiarity he will pick up variants and additions. It should be noted that, of course, many of the above will need the addition of names or titles or patronymic (see Lesson thirteen on terms of address). Again, much variety is to be expected as between the many communities making up Levant society.

Much more detail on courtesy expressions of the Levant will be found in H.T.Farha’s manual (see Bibliography).

The student should be ready to be generous with expressions of courtesy, remembering the common Arabic phrase, ‘Anyone who greets you, return his greeting twice over.’

LESSON SIXTEEN
A STORY

‘COLLOQUIAL ARABIC’

fee yawm min il-‘ayyaam kaan fee ingleezee ‘aja lil-bilaad min shaan yata9allam 9arabee. sajjal ‘ismo fee madrasat ‘il-lughaat fee waSaT ‘il-9aaSima oo ballash yudrus il-lugha ‘il-9arabiyya il-fuSHa, oo kamaan ‘il-9aamiyya. ba9d ’usboo9 shaafuu ‘inno mush 9am byita’addam abadan. maa kaan ya9rif yuktub wa laa yi’raa. oo bin-nisba lil-Hakee ma ‘adar yulfuZ Hatta ’absaT il-kalimaat. li has-sabab shaaf mudeer il-madrasa
ㄧnThe lesson is about the importance of adjusting the curriculum according to the needs of the poorer students. It also mentions the need to keep track of all the activities and the importance of the principal's role in this. The teacher also emphasizes the need to adjust the curriculum to the new city, but without any benefit. If there is no homework, the teacher must be present. The principal is concerned that the students do not learn the English language and asks the teacher to attend the new city and learn more. The teacher agrees to attend the new city and to learn more. The principal also asks for the teacher to attend the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.

The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The teacher then asks the principal to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more. The principal agrees to send the teacher to the new city and to learn more.
LESSON SIXTEEN 103

‘allah yizeedak 9aafya, yaa ustaaz! ahlan wa sahlan! kayf Haal janaabak?’
‘allaah yiHfaZak! kayf SiHHatak?’
‘nushkur allaah kull saa9a! tfaDDal, ustaaz, ’u9ud shway!
‘afDalt, bass Habbayt ’ukammiT iT-Taree liD-Day9a oo ashoof ’ahlee oo Sadee ’ee. yimkin ta9rifo, il-ingleezee ’illee aja la-hawn ’abl sitt ’ush-hur ta’reeban.’
‘ma9loom, ba9rifo!’
‘wayno halla’?’
‘He’s just round the corner in the fish-and-chip shop!’

TRANSLATION

Once, there was an Englishman who came to the (this) country to learn Arabic. He registered (his name) at the School of Languages in the centre of the capital and began to study classical Arabic as well as colloquial. A week later they saw that he was not making any progress at all. He could not pronounce even the simplest words. For this reason the director of the school saw that it was necessary to amend the programme (syllabus) a little in order to help the unfortunate young man. (It was) a shame that he should come from London and pay the expense of an air ticket as well as the school fees in addition to daily expenses, that is, the cost of food, drink and accommodation (sleep), and (then) after all this not learn a thing! So the director agreed with his teacher on changing the syllabus, on the basis of abandoning classical (Arabic) and concentrating on colloquial.

They tried the new syllabus for a whole month but with no success (without benefit). The young man learned…(well…let’s) say he learned nothing. He could speak no more than 2 or 3 words. (And) really (it was) completely broken Arabic. The teacher went back to the director and said to him,

‘Director, allow me to tell you: this young Englishman who is with me in the class is completely useless. It’s better for him to go back to his country. It’s (absolutely) no use at all. If he were to stay twenty years more in the school it would be impossible for him to learn to speak Arabic, believe me!’

‘Well, I appreciate the position you’re in. But what can we do?’
‘I’ll tell you what. I have a suggestion. I hope it is to your liking.’
‘Please go ahead. I want to help him, poor chap.’
‘Why don’t we make an arrangement with (some) people for him to stay (sit) with them for six months or a year and speak nothing but Arabic with them? In that way (thus) he must learn, in spite of himself!’
‘An excellent idea. But where? Do you know anyone?’
‘Yes. I have relatives living in the country, maybe 400 miles from here. (They are) a large group, very nice (people), and there’s not a single one of them knows English.’
‘Wonderful. Can you arrange a way for him to stay with them? We will pay them what is necessary. Then…(Well), we’ll see.’
‘We will rely on God!’
Then they made an agreement with the teacher’s family, who received the young man in the village and arranged two rooms for him in the house of the teacher’s cousin.

This happened at the end of the year, and six months later, that is, in the summer, the director of the school sent the teacher to the village to enquire about the young man and see if he needed anything.

After an hour in the aircraft and two hours in the small bus which runs between the village and the centre for the province the teacher arrived, praising God and thanking Him, at the beginning of the village.

When he got off the bus he saw a peasant working at the side of the road. He greeted him and began to speak with him.
‘Hello! May God give you the fitness!’
‘May God increase you in strength sir! Welcome! How are you (Your Honour)?’
‘We thank God every hour! Won’t you sit down for a while, sir?’
‘Thank you but I wanted to finish my journey (complete the way) to the village and see my family and my friend. Maybe you know him, the Englishman who came here about six months ago?’
‘Of course I know him!’
‘Where is he now?’
‘He’s just round the corner in the fish-and-chip shop!’
Of learning languages there is no end. There are always deeper levels to fathom even in one’s own language, let alone in a foreign language, to say nothing of a language from a different family, in this case the Semitic family.

The student will always be learning Arabic. There is always more to learn, but this is no cause for despair: the same is true of every language. It is in this sense that all languages are equally difficult. In this chapter fifteen miscellaneous topics are taken which constantly crop up in everyday communication in Arabic, and with which the student should have some familiarity. Some relate to syntax and idiom, others are sociological, anthropological, religious, historical, etymological or morphological.

1 Simple as A, B, C

Arabic uses abjad, hawaz etc. for A, B, C…. The letters of the alphabet are taken and made into words which sound like genuine Arabic words. These are abjad, hawaz, HuTTee, kalman, sa9fas, qurshit, thakhadh, DaZagha.

Furthermore each letter in classical Arabic is assigned numerical value (1–1,000) as follows (read from right to left):

```
1,000 900 800 700 600 500 400 300 200
100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
```

‘From A to Z’ in Arabic is min al-’alif lil-yaa.
2 Times of prayer

The Muslim times of prayer are often used as approximate reference points in time. These are: \( \text{al fajr} \)—dawn; \( \text{aD-Duhr} \)—noon; \( \text{al-9aSr} \)—late afternoon; \( \text{al-maghreb} \)—sunset; \( \text{al 9isha} \)—evening prayer.

3 Basic religious terms

**Islamic**

(a) The Five Pillars of Islam

(i) \( \text{shahaada} \): to testify that ‘There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God’ (\( \text{laa 'illaaha 'illaahu wa muHammad rasoolu-llaah} \)).

(ii) \( \text{Salaat} \): prayer, five times daily as in 2 above,

(iii) \( \text{zakaat} \): alms-giving.

(iv) \( \text{Hajj} \): pilgrimage to Mecca in the pilgrimage month,

(v) \( \text{Sawm} \): fast of the month of Ramadan.

(b) Names for the Koran (a small selection)

(i) \( \text{'al-muSHaf} \) (the Book),

(ii) \( \text{'al-qur'aan al-kareem} \) (the noble Koran),

(iii) \( \text{aS-SiraaT al-mustaqeem} \) (the straight path),

(iv) \( \text{adh-dhikru-l-Hakeem} \) (the wise mention of God).

(c) Four law-codes in Sunni Islam

(i) Hanafi.

(ii) Hanbali.

(iii) Shafa’i.

(iv) Maliki.

(d) Phrases used following the names of celebrated figures in Islam.

(i) Muhammad: \( 9alay(h) \ aS-Salaat was-salaam \) (‘May prayers and peace be upon him’).

(ii) Each of the first four Caliphs: \( raDee allaah 9anhu \) (‘May God be pleased with him’).

(iii) Many other heroic and/or holy figures: \( karram allaah wajhahu \) (‘May God honour his face’).
Christian

(a) Church—kaneesa; priest—khooree; mass—’uddaas; bishop—’us’uf or mu’Taan; baptism ceremony—9imaada; sect—Taa’ifa.

(b) Sects. Roman Catholic—laateen; Greek Orthodox—room; Greek Catholic—room kaatooleek; Protestant—brootestant. And many others.

4 Calendar months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AD (Christian)</th>
<th>AH (Muslim)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Jan., Feb. etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 kaanoon taanee</td>
<td>muHarram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 shbaaT</td>
<td>Safar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ’aadaar</td>
<td>rabee9 il-awwal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 neesaan</td>
<td>rabee9 it-taanee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ’ayyaar</td>
<td>jumaada il-oola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Huzayraan</td>
<td>jumaada il-’aakhira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 tammooz</td>
<td>rajab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ’aab</td>
<td>shawwaal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 ’aylool</td>
<td>ramaDaan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 tishreen ’awwal</td>
<td>sha9baan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 tishreen taanee</td>
<td>dhool-qa9da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 kaanoon ’awwal</td>
<td>dhool-Hijja</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two calendars do not coincide, of course: the Islamic calendar is lunar and is of 354 days, the months having twenty-nine or thirty days, alternately. The Christian calendar corresponds to the Gregorian calendar.

5 Trades and professions

The pattern -a- (doubled) aa-indicates ‘one professionally engaged on some activity’. Hence:

baker—khabbaaz  
mason—Hajjaar

butcher—laHHaam  
tentmaker—khayyaam

carpenter—najjaar  
blacksmith—Haddaad

money changer—Sarraaf  
coppersmith—naHHaas
6 Colours

The principal colours are all of the pattern 'a—a- (f. -a—aa).
red—’aHmar (pl. Humr) black—’aswad (pl. sood)
white—’abyaD (pl. beeD) green—’akhDar (pl. khuDr)
blue—’azra’ (pl. zur’) yellow—’aSfar (pl. Sufr)
brown—’asmar (pl. sumr)

Feminines are of the pattern ’aHmar/Hamraa (hence the Alhambra in Spain).

Other colours
brown—bunnee (coffee-coloured) pink—wardee (rose-coloured)

7 Shapes, areas etc.

Triangle—muthallath circle—daa’ira
square—murabba9 cube—muka99ab

8 Numbers, powers etc.

odd number—9adad fardee even number—9adad zawjee
a pair of shoes—zawj (jawz) kundara a dozen—darzen
bilateral—thunaa’ee trilateral—thulaathee quadrilateral (quartet, quatrain)—rubaa9ee (e.g. of Omar Khayyam)
five-fold (quintet)—khumaasee six-fold (sextet)—sudaasee seven-fold (septet)—subaa9ee eight-fold (octet)—thumaanee nine-fold (nonet)—tusaa9ee ten-fold—’9ushaaree

Notice another pattern giving useful numerical ideas. From thalaatha comes muthallath (triangle). Hence:
muthanna—dual (grammar)
muthallath—triangle
murabba9—square
mukhammas—pentagon
musaddas—hexagon (but also ‘revolver’ i.e. ‘six-shooter’!)

9 What’s in a name?

Whereas English does not now use names such as Praise-the-Lord
Barebones, Arabic names always tell a story.

(a) Origins

Many family names are based on the place of origin: hence Hourani,
Shami, Trabulsi, Halabi, Nabulsi (to use American names of Levantine
origin).

(b) Qualities

Many personal names describe virtues.

kareem—generous  SaaliH—upright
saleem—sound  najeeb—of good stock
fareed—unique  naseeb—of noble descent

(There are many proverbs and stories illustrating discrepancy between
a name and its owner’s qualities!)

(c) Qualities to be avoided!

Names expressing defects may relate to the condition of an
eponymous ancestor, or may be given to ward off the affliction
referred to.

’aTrash—deaf’a9war—one-eyed

(d) Trades and professions

(See section 5 above.)

Haddaad—blacksmith najjaar—carpenter
(e) **Religious names**

(i) The largest category of names is that beginning with Abdul (9abdul-), This means ‘the slave of…’, but the name is incomplete without the addition of one of the ninety-nine *Most Beautiful Names* of God. Hence:

9abdul-9azeez, 9abdul-kareem, 9abdul-majeed, 9abdul-waaHid

Although this group of names is usually given to Muslim males, some Christians have names of this kind, either as personal or family names. Abdullah (9abdullaahi) is used by both Christians and Muslims.

(ii) Some names are clearly always Muslim: Muhammad, Ali, Hussayn etc.

(iii) The Shia tend to prefer certain names over others: Ali, Hassan, Hussayn.

10 **Religious festivals (selected)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christmas—9eed il-meelaad</td>
<td>Prophet’s Birthday—mawlid in-nabee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Friday—al-jum9a al-Hazeena</td>
<td>Muhammad’s miraculous journey—il-mi9raaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter—9eed il-fiSH</td>
<td>Hijra New Year—’awwal muHarram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whit Sunday—9eed il-9anSara fiTr</td>
<td>End of Ramadan—9eed il-fiTr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ascension—9eed iS-Su9ood</td>
<td>Hajj Feast—9eed il-’aDHa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 **The feminine ‘it’**

As in many other languages a vaguely defined ‘it’ is rendered in the feminine (cf. English, ‘You’ve had it!’; ‘It’s a mess!’). Below are examples in Levantine colloquial.

(i) bifrij-haa ’allaah!—God will sort it out!

(ii) Tuli9at’inno…—It turned out that...

(iii) mndabbir-haa—We’ll fix things.
(iv) maa Tuli9at bi-eedo—He failed (lit. ‘It did not come up into his hand’)
(v) saa’abat inno…—It just happened that…
(vi) khallee-haa 9alaynaa—This one’s on me (e.g. restaurant bill)
(vii) maa btifri’ ma9ee—It makes no difference to me
(viii) takhkhanoo-haa—They overdid it/went too far
(ix) halla’ Zaba’Tat—Now it’s turned out OK
(x) maa misheeat—Things did not go well (lit. ‘It did not walk’)
(xi) ’akaloo-haa—They had a terrible time (lit. ‘They ate it’)
(xii) wa’t-haa, saa9at-haa, yawmit-haa—at that time, then
(xiii) mleeH innha maa kaanat ’a9Zam—A good thing things were no worse
(xiv) bi-laa-haa—Never mind, forget it!
(xv) 9am bitshattee—It’s raining

12 The future negative

A common pattern is:
We shall not see him—mush Haa-nshoofo
Won’t you be coming?—mush Haa-teejee?

Haa is a truncated form of the colloquial future particle raaH.

13 Present tense negative

‘He is not…’ is frequently rendered in the Levant (especially Lebanon) by maano(h)sh. This is (a) the negative maa, plus (b) the particle inn, plus (c) the pronoun, plus (d) the negative suffix /sh/. Hence:

He is not here—maano(h)sh mawjood

The other pronouns may be substituted.

14 The double-possessive/object pronoun

A very common Lebanese formula is as follows:

Karim’s book—kitaabo la-kareem
Samira’s husband—jawz-haa la-sameera
He hit Samir—Darabo la-sameer
15 ‘Arabic has no word for “interesting”’*

To round off this miscellany, the above myth should be finally laid to rest.

What is true is that the English word ‘interesting’ does duty for many words, even ‘boring’ (e.g. ‘How interesting!’). ‘An interesting condition/person/book/evening/idea’ can all be rendered perfectly adequately in Arabic, but no one word covers all the above cases. Among translations for ‘interesting’ are mufeed, muhimm, lazeez, shayyi’, mushawwi’ and mutheer lil-ihtimaam.

The student can judge the quality of English–Arabic dictionaries by the number of Arabic words given for ‘interesting’.

LESSON EIGHTEEN
CONCEPTS IN SOCIETY

‘Let us pause to consider the…Levantines’—as Ogden Nash might have said.

The Levant Arabic-speaking population includes a wide variety of Christian sects (Uniate and Orthodox divisions of all the principal Eastern communities, together with Roman Catholics and Protestants of many persuasions) in addition to the predominantly Sunni Muslim population. Of other Muslim communities there are many varieties: Shia (‘Seveners’ and Twelvers’), Druze, Nusairis (Alawites) etc. Then there are small communities of Arabic-speaking Jews, not to mention members of the Bahai and other communities.

Since adherence to religious community is of fundamental importance in the Levant (e.g. conflicts in 1979 in Syria between Sunni and Alawite; the constitution of the Lebanese parliament, Christian and Muslim in the ratio of 6 to 5; the name of the kingdom of Jordan, ‘Hashemite’), it is not surprising that evidence of adherence to community is found in speech. Indeed it is this area which gave the word shibboleth to the English language: possibly the most famous

example in world history of betrayal of community origins and belief by a single word (see the Introduction).

The student should realize that knowledge of Arabic implies not only knowledge of syntax and pronunciation but an awareness of the dimension of concepts, i.e. the basic assumptions about society which underlie the native speaker’s use of his language. Religion is only one element, though a very obvious one: a Muslim may, in an everyday ‘oath’, invoke the Prophet Muhammad, while a Christian may invoke the Cross. The student will also come across ideas more or less unfamiliar to him (depending on his own origins) relating to family relationships, the constituent elements of society, neighbours, what makes life worth living, the hereafter, sex, time, the position of women, marriage, race, superstition, honour, politics, fate, birth, life and death.

This lesson explains some of the language used in relation to some of these concepts. A beginning may be made as follows.

**Oaths**

By comparison with British English, Levantine Arabic is extremely rich in oaths. Whereas in the author’s lifetime ‘By God!’ and ‘By Jove!’ have declined in British use, Levantine speech has maintained its traditional everyday oaths. A man may give extra emphasis to a statement by saying:

1  wallaahee (il-9aZeem)!—By Almighty God! (Largely Muslim)
2  wa-Hyaat ‘oolaadee!—By the life of my children!
3  wa–Hyaat in-nabee!—By the life of the Prophet! (Muslim)
4  wa–Hyaat il-maseeH!—By the life of Jesus the Messiah! (Christian)
5  wa–Hyaat 9uyoonee!—By the life of my eyes!
6  bi-sharafee!—By my honour!
7  wa–Hyaat il-’imaam 9alee—By the life of the Imam Ali! (Shia)
8  wa–Hyaat haadol…(ish-shawaarib/il-9uyoon)!—By the life of these…moustaches/eyes!
9  wa–Hyaat il-9adraa!—By the life of the Virgin! (Christian)
10 wa–Hyaat 9arDee!—By the life of my honour!
Honour

*sharaf* and *9arD* are used. The first tends to refer to generalized personal or family standing, while the second has complex implications, frequently to do with the honour of a family group as represented by its women-folk (cf. T.Y.Awwad’s novel *Death in Beirut*, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1976, translated by the present writer). In a famous incident, however, a Lebanese community leader was in modern times presented at his front door with the head of a follower’s sister with the words: *ghosalna ishsharaf* (‘We have washed clean the (family) honour’).

Fate

It was written—maktoob! It was a judgment of God and fate—qaDaa oo qadar!

Groups in society

Muslims (usage by non-Muslims)—il-‘islaam
my ancestors (grandfathers)—’ujdoodee
my uncles (paternal)—9umoomtee
( maternal)—’akhwaalee
our group (can mean family or even religious community)—jamaa9atnaa

What makes life worth living

Clearly an enormously broad field but any foreigner must be familiar with a key phrase: *keef oo basaT*, approximately ‘good spirits and cheer’.

Time

As is well known by rumour, the Arab’s approach to time is, at least, more flexible than that of non-Arabs. Two phrases may be examined to illustrate possible misunderstandings.

*bukra* is frequently taken by foreigners to mean ‘tomorrow’. To a Levantine it may, quite sincerely, mean only ‘at some time in the
future’. Indeed in Lebanon they say *bukra 9aa-bukra* for ‘tomorrow’.

*fee hal-yawmayn*—lit. ‘in these (next) two days’. Frequently the Levantine means by this (apparently exact) phrase only ‘quite soon’.

**Women**

Care must be taken to use the right term of reference or address. Among phrases to be heard are:

is-sitt—the lady (i.e. your wife)
sitt-haanum—madame (with a Turkish honorific)
madaamtaak—your wife (Lebanese, indeed Beiruti!)
martee—my wife (some groups would deplore this usage)
il-Hurma—my wife (used in very conservative circles, e.g. among Bedu)
il-maHroosa—your daughter (lit. ‘the guarded one’)
mart-9ammee—my mother-in-law (lit. ‘the wife of my uncle’).

NB A euphemism is felt to be needed!

**Marriage and divorce**

The subject is so fundamental and attitudes are so varied that refuge will be sought in brevity!

1 ‘Divorce’ is *Talaa*. A Muslim divorce (‘I divorce thee’ said three times) is *‘iT-Talaa’ bit-talaata*. A bantering oath used to persuade someone to do something is: ‘I will divorce my wife!’ *baTalli martee*. But note that *Talla’t-haa* can mean not only ‘I divorced her’ but ‘we parted company’, e.g. two unmarried people. (The root T-1-’ means ‘be free’.)

2 NB a very revealing word:

He married X’s daughter—‘akhad bint fulaan (lit. ‘He took X’s daughter’)

3 *Honeymoon*. The phrase is an exact rendering of *lune de miel* or ‘honeymoon’: *shahr il-9asl* (‘month of honey’). The phrase used for the wedding night is less ambiguous: *laylat id-dakhla*, lit. ‘the night of the entering’.
Race/community

Every community throughout the world likes to distinguish itself from others by developing its own terms for referring to others: hence ‘ethnic’ jokes and terms such as ‘paddies’, ‘jocks’, ‘limeys’ etc. Levant society has its ‘ethnic’ jokes, though they tend to be directed against the next village rather than against other countries. A certain village in Lebanon refers to the next two villages in rhyming prose as follows: ‘If it weren’t for—and—the world would be empty of morons’. Two phrases which should be cleared up are:

1  
_İl-9arab_—lit. ‘the Arabs’
Depending on who says it, this may mean ‘non-Lebanese’, ‘the Bedu’ or ‘member states of the Arab League’.

2  
_İl-9abeed_—lit. ‘the slaves’
This apparently offensive phrase is commonly used of blacks, even of US citizens. It is best regarded as being like English titles such as Tory, which were originally terms of abuse but have now more or less lost their pejorative connotations.

Superstition

Levantine society has inherited a wealth of ideas which seem to be irreconcilable with the degree of scientific education attained by their adherents. Belief in ‘the evil eye’ is very widespread, and the consultation of fortune tellers was attributed to 80 per cent of the population of Lebanon in a survey in the late 1960s. Two common phrases may illustrate this.

1  
_9a9eed 9annak_—far from you
This is used to wish that the interlocutor may not be affected by the unpleasant thing just mentioned: death, disease etc.

2  
_yikhza-l-9ayn_—‘may He disgrace the (evil) eye’
This phrase may be used to express admiration for a handsome child. NB In most Levantine societies it is not usual or welcome for such admiration to be explicitly formulated, so as not to attract the evil eye.
Family reputation

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of a family’s reputation. A term of admiration is ibn-naas: ‘a son of people’, i.e. of people of standing. To preserve a family’s standing periodic clan-gatherings are common: a well-known Baalbek (Lebanon) extended family claims 22,000 members.

Revenge

Not only the Bedu insist on revenge; vendettas are endemic throughout the Levant.

To take revenge—il-’akhd bit-taar (CA tha’r)

Influence

To end on a lighter note, all should be aware of the need for waaSTa, lit. ‘mediation’.

In a society accustomed to leader-client relationships, modern impersonal bureaucracy is intrusive. Dealings with government are regarded as so fraught with perils that reliance can be placed only on those known to the petitioner/citizen to have influence. Hence the frequency of appeals for intervention made to ‘Godfather’ figures for assistance in getting passports, telephones and permits of all kinds.

LESSON NINETEEN
ABUSE

A delicate subject!

1 It is inviting trouble to attempt to instruct a foreigner on how to be abusive.

2 Below are examples of expressions which may be heard. These are given for purposes of comprehension only. There is no recommendation to use any of these phrases, still less to reply to them!
The town of Zahle in the Lebanon is famous for the richness and inventiveness of the terms of abuse used by its inhabitants. Care should be taken in attempting to be equally innovative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Hayawaan!</td>
<td>Animal!</td>
<td>Often heard between cab-drivers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 'ibn kalb!</td>
<td>Son of a dog!</td>
<td>Lack of remarks in this column should be interpreted as a silently eloquent injunction to be careful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Himaar!</td>
<td>Donkey!</td>
<td>Often rounded out with 'ibn-Himaar!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 yil9an deenak!</td>
<td>May your religion be cursed!</td>
<td>His/your/their, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 yil9an 'abook!</td>
<td>May your father be cursed!</td>
<td>Extreme caution!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 yil9an deen 'aboo(h)!</td>
<td>May his father’s religion be cursed!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 yukhrab baytak!</td>
<td>May your house be destroyed!</td>
<td>yukhrab bayto! shoo Tayyib!(‘…What a good man!’) is a common paradox, used amicably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ibn-sharmooTa!</td>
<td>Son of a whore!</td>
<td>Other kinship terms possible!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 yu’Suf9umro!</td>
<td>May his life be blasted!</td>
<td>See 7 above for use as a term of praise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 yiHri’ deeno!</td>
<td>May his religion a be burned!</td>
<td>See 7 above for use as term of praise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 9akroot!</td>
<td>Pimp!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 9ars!</td>
<td>Pimp!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 ibn wuskha!</td>
<td>Son of an unclean woman!</td>
<td>See 8 above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 ghabee!</td>
<td>Idiot!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 baheem!</td>
<td>Bovine creature!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 bighl!</td>
<td>Mule!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 tees!</td>
<td>Moron!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 fallaaH!</td>
<td>Peasant!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 ibn Haraam!</td>
<td>Bastard!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 yaa ’aleel il-’adab</td>
<td>Uncivilized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above twenty expressions are, it is repeated, given for reference and comprehension purposes only. The student will find more detail in H.T.Farha (see Bibliography).
PART TWO
APPENDICES

KEY TO EXERCISES

LESSON ONE
1. The boy is English
2. The girl is French
3. The book is an Arabic book
4. The girl’s book is here
5. The teacher’s daughter is here
6. mu9allim il-walad ’ajnabee
7. abnaa il-’ajnabee hawn
8. ’il-walad il-amreekaanee ’ibn il-mu9allim
9. ’iHna abnaa il-mu9allim il-‘ingleezee
10. ’il-bint is-sooriyya bint is-safeer

LESSON TWO
1. He is in the teacher’s room
2. The two girls are with my teacher
3. The big man is from Amman
4. I have two girls and a boy
5. She has her new book
6. 9indo sayyaara jadeeda (or ’ijdeeda)
7. hiya ma9o fil-ghurfâ il-kabeera (or il-ikbeera)
8. hum kull-hum ma9na hawn
9. kull-na ingleez
10. kull-hum ’ajaanib
Appendix

1. How many weeks are there in a year?
2. There are 120 minutes in two hours
3. How old is he? He is six months
4. The boy is ten
5. fish-shahr il-hijree fee tis9a oo 9ishreen aw talaateen yawm
6. He has twenty books
7. They have four cars
8. I have thirty Syrian lira
9. She has forty-five Jordanian dinars
10. The year 1914
11. 9indee talaat sayyaaraat ijdeeda
12. ma9haa talaata oo khamseen leera lubnaanee
13. ma9ak talaata oo talaateen deenaar urduneec?
14. (tilifoon) 'arba9miyya oo tis9a oo khamseen; tis9amiyya oo sab9a oo talaateen
15. Sanat ’alf oo tis9amiyya oo tis9a oo talaateen

LESSON THREE

1. They took with them 130 newspapers
2. Who opened this door?
3. When did you (f. sing.) get to know this book?
4. The schoolboys used maps
5. The foreigners went down from Amman to Jericho
6. haadi khaarTat ish-shaam (dimashq)
7. 'akhad-hum kull-hum ma9o ‘ila bayroot
8. rajja9oona kull-na min ish-shaam ‘ila 9ammaan
9. 'akhadoo il-karaasee min madrasatna
10. kaatabto sanat alf oo tis9a miyya oo tamaanya oo khamseen

LESSON FOUR

1. We returned the books before they arrived
2. Open the school gate!
3. Write a letter to the teacher!
4. He introduced us to the ambassador’s son
5. This book is better than that, isn’t it?
6. laazim yi9arrifoonee 9ala-l-awlaad is-saa9a ’arba9a oo nuSS
LESSON FIVE

1. You are living in the other street, aren’t you?
2. Prepare the food, please!
3. He is studying the chart of the new offices
4. Come in and shut the door!
5. Why are the children wearing Arab dress?
6. khud hal-makateebee ila madkhal il-maktab is-sa9a ‘itnayn oo nuSS
7. samihhum abl maa dakhloo
8. had-dakaakeen faatiHa (maftooHa) is-sa9a sab9a oo nuSS?
9. laazim nishrab shee baarid
10. yimkin yaakuloo shee ‘abl is-sa9a khamsa illa rub9

LESSON SIX

1. (Just) between ourselves, don’t say a thing tonight!
2. Can you speak colloquial Arabic?
3. No, but I can write Arabic
4. Go and get on with your work! (Lit. ‘…see your work!’)
5. Please take away the knife, the forks and the spoons
6. laazim yijeeb kull kutubo ma9o il-yawm
7. biddik titakallamee il-lugha il-9arabiyya il-fuSHa?
8. maa ni’dir narooH ma9kum min 9ammaan ‘ila bayroot
9. jeeboo kull shee ma9kum min il-bayt il-taanee!
10. taSawwar! biddo yisheel kull hal kutub!

LESSON SEVEN

1. What did you say to him? I didn’t say a thing to him!
2. Where are you going? I’m not going anywhere!
3. That’s life! One day for you, another day against you!
4. I want to put these books in the same place
5. No, put them here, with me, please!
LESSON EIGHT

1. What's wrong? (lit. ‘What is there?’) My hand is hurting me
2. He offered to clean the car for me
3. All my friends opposed me when I suggested this idea to them
4. I came to the school because they brought your friends with them
5. The car came to a stop in the middle of the city
6. bid'dak tishoof sayyaarto il-'ijdeeda?
7. maa byinwajad shee mitlo fil-ma'deeena kull-haa
8. Tab9an mush kull 'aSHaabna raaH yooSalloo fee
   nafs is-saa9a
9. btismaH lee 'uwa ”if is-sayyaara?
10. 'iD DaabiT 'a9Taanee hal-kitaab

LESSON NINE

1. Whose is this car?
2. The letter which I put on the table is not here now
3. The girl to whom we were introduced is ten years old
4. They all came into the room where we were meeting (‘…in which…’)
5. We heard that he is going to Amman in the car which he bought in Beirut
6. bta9rif meen ir-rajul 'illee kaanoo yiDHakoo 9alay(h)?
7. la-meen (or taba9 meen) il-kutub 'illee jibt-haa ma9ak?
8. 'abl maa tighassal eedayk khalleed kutubak hawn
9. maa TiDHaK 9alayh, 9am byijarrib
10. meen is-sitt 'illee shuftak ma9haa?

LESSON TEN

1. The life of the peasants is very difficult in winter
2. Where do you spend the summer, in Damascus or in Amman?
1 I (would) prefer that you come any time you are free
2 Foreigners like to come to the country in winter because their country is cold (‘...in it is cold...’)
3 I saw him coming but I did not have time to stop the car
4 kaanat 9am bithattee (id-dinya) wa’t maa jeet min il-balad
5 fee lubnaan, bithattee (id-dunya) ikteer fir-rabee9?
6 min faDlak, ’a9Teenee il-ustaaz ’aHmad! ghalaT! (…Habeebee!)
7 baajee 'ilal-maktab Haalmaa ’ashoofo
8 btreed teejje fis-sayyara 'il-ijdeeda 'illee 'ishtaraynaa-haa, ’ana oo ’aSHaabee?

LESSON ELEVEN

1 Believe me, this is the best book in English on Arabic poetry.
2 Tell me, what time do you finish (your) work?
3 If you go to Amman you (will) find many new hotels
4 If we had been here two years ago we would not have seen a single school. Not one (lit. ‘at all/every’)
5 If you find a good book in Arabic on French poetry bring it to me
6 huwa jaaee min ish-shaam min shaan yudrus i5-SaHaafa filjaami9a
7 9arift (or btaarif) ’inno SaaHibee mutakhaSSiS fil-baraamij it-tarbawiyya?
8 btred shee ghayro?
9 iza biddak tata9arraf 9alar-rajul ’illee shufts ta9aal ’ila baytee bukra is-saa9a tis9a S-Subh
10 Law (kunt) ishtaghalt ma9o (kunt) Sirt milyyoonayr
GRAMMAR, INDEXED
BY LESSON

‘Able’, 6
Active participles, 5
Agreement (n./adj.), 1;
verbs, 3
‘aja (‘come’), 10
‘Already’, 11
‘Anna, sisters of’, 8
Assimilated verbs, 8
Auxiliary verbs, 4

biddo (‘want’), 4

‘Can’, 6
‘Come’, 10
Comparative adj., 4
Conditional sentences, 11
Conjunctions, 4, 11
Construct (Idafa), 1

Defective verbs, 7
Demonstrative adj./pronoun, 3
Doubled verbs, 7
Dual number, 1

Elative adj., 4

Future tense, 4

Gender, 1

Haal clauses, 10

Idafa (construct), 1
Imperative form, 4
Interrogative form, 3

kaan, 6

laazim (‘necessity’), 4

‘Maybe’, 4

Necessity, 4
Negation, 3
‘Non-past tense’, 3
Number (dual etc.), 1
Numbers (cardinal), 2,
Appendix

Object pronouns, 2

Particiles, 5
Passive participles, 5
Passive voice, 3
‘Past tense’, 3
Possession, 2, 8, 9
‘Possible/possibly’, 4
Prepositions, 2, 8, passim
Pronouns: subject, 1;
possessive/object, 2;
relative, 9;
uses of, 2
Relative pronouns, 9

Sisters of 'anna, 8
Subject pronouns, 1
Superlative adj., 4

Tenses: future, 4;
   past continuous, 6;
   past and non-past, 3;
   pluperfect, 6;
   present continuous, 4

Verbs: introduction, 3, 3–11;
   derived forms, introduction, 3;
   auxiliary verbs, 4;
   imperative, 4; negative
   imperative, 4; interrogative
   particle hal, 3; interrogative
   tag (= 'n'est-ce pas'), 4;
   verbal nouns, 9; hollow verbs,
   6; 'to be able', 6; doubled verbs,
   7; defective verbs, 7; assimilated
   verbs, 8; quadriliteral, 10;
   'come', 10; Saar, 10

   'Who', 'which' etc, (relative
   pronouns), 9
   'Whoever', 'whenever' etc., 10
   Word order, 3
VOCABULARY

A

about (e.g. a subject)—9an
above—faw’
acclimatized: become
acclimatized—ta’a’lam (II)
addition: in addition to—
bil-‘iDaafa ‘ila
address (n.)—9unwaan (pl. 
9anaaween)
administer—‘adaar (IV)
aeroplane—Taa’ira (pl. -aat),
Tayyaara (pl. -aat)
afraid: be afraid—khaaf, byikhaaf,
khawf
after (conj.)—ba9dmaa
after (prep.)—ba9d
afternoon—ba9d aD-Duhr
age—9umr (pl. ‘a9maar)
ago (e.g. a year ago)—‘abl sana
agree with—‘ittafa’ ma9
airport—maTaar (pl. -aat)
al—kull
allow, permit (to)—samaH,
byismaH, samaaH (la)
almsgiving—zakaat(t)
aloud—bi-Sawt 9aalee already (see
Lessons ten)
also—kamaan
ambassador—safeer
(pl. sufaraa’)
amend, adjust, alter—ghayyar
(II)
American—’amreekaanee (pl. 
’amreekaan)
among—bayn
ancestors—’ujdood
and—oo, wa
animal—Hayawaan (pl. -aat)
ape (e.g.) foreigners—tafarnaj
(II)
appreciate—’addar (II)
approach—’arrab (II)
approximately—ta’reeban
apricots—mishmish
Arab, Arabic—9arabee (pl. 
9arab)
arrange, fix—dabbar (II)
arrive—waSal, byooSal,
wuSool
as: as much as you like—’add maa
biddak/btreed
Ascension (feast)—9eed
aS-Su9ood
ask—sa’al, byis’al, su’aal
assemble (intransitive)—
‘ijtama9 (VIII)
assist—saa9ad (III)
assistant—musaa9id (pl. -een)
VOCABULARY

author—kaatib (pl. kuttaab)
autumn—khareef
available: be available—tayassar (V)

B

back to front—bil-ma’loob, bil-’ilb
bag, sack—kees (pl. ’akyaas)
baker—khabbaaz (pl. -een)
baptism—9imaada
bark (vb)—nabaH, byinbaH, nab(a)H
bastard (abuse)—9akroot (pl. 9akaareet)
bath, ‘loo’, bath-house—Hammaam (pl. -aat)
bear: I can’t bear him—taHammal (V)
because—li-’ann (see Lesson eight)
become—Saar, byiSeer, maSeer
beer—beera
before (prep.)—’abl
before (conjunction)—’ablmaa
beggar—shaHHaad (pl. -een)
begin—Saar, byiSeer; ballash (II); bada’, byibda’, bidaaya
believe—Sadda’ (II)
below—taHt
bent, crooked—’a9waj
best—’aHSan, khayr
better—’aHSan
between, among—bayn
big, large—kabeer (pl. kibaar)
bilateral—thunaa’ee

bird—Tayr (pl. Tuyoor)
bird (small)—9uSfoor (pl. 9aSafeer)
birthday—9eed meelaad birthday
of the Prophet
Muhammad—mawlid an-nabee
bishop—’us’uf (pl. ’asaa’ifa)
black—’aswad
blacksmith—Haddaad (pl. -een)
blast (vb)—’aSaf, byu’Suf’aSf
book—kitaab (pl. kutub)
boy, son—walad (pl. ’awlaad)
bride—9aroos (pl. 9urus)
bridegroom—9arees
bring—jaab, byijeeb
bring! (imperative)—haat!
broken—mukassar
broken down, worn out, out of
order—kharbaan
bureau—maktab (pl. makaatib)
burn (vb)—Hara’, byiHri’, Har’
but—walaakin, bass
butcher—laHHAam (pl. -een)
buy—’ishtara (VIII)

C

call (out to)—naada (III)
camel—jamal (pl. jimaal)
camel (female)—naa’a (pl. -aat)
can, be able—’adar, byi’dar,
’udra (and followed by the
imperative vb; see also Lesson four)
car—sayyaara (pl. -aat)
caravan—’aaﬁla (pl. ’aawaafil)
carpenter—najjaar (pl. -een)
VOCABULARY 131

carve—na‘ash, byun‘ush, na‘sh
cattle—baheem
centre—markaz (pl. maraakiz, waSat)
certainly, of course—ma9loom, Tab9an
chair—kursee (pl. karaasee)
changed (his mind)—ghayyar (II)
(fikro)
cheap—rakheeS
Cheers! (A toast)—SaHHtayn!
(Reply: 9ala 'albak!)
chick, offspring—farkh (pl.
firaakh)
Christ—(as-sayyid) al-maseeH
Christian—maseeHee (pl. -een)
Christmas—yawm 9eed
il-meelaad
church—kaneesa (pl. kanaayis)
circle, vicious circle—daa’ira (pl.
dawaa ‘ir), Hal’a faarigha
city—madeena (pl. mudun)
classical (Arabic)—(al-lugha al-
9arabiyya) al-fuSHa
classroom—Saff (pl. Sufoof)
clean (adj.)—naZeef (pl.
niZaaf)
clean (vb)—naDDaf (II)
clerk—kaatib(pl. kataba)
clever—shaaTir
clock—saa9a (pl. -aat)
close (vb)—sakkar (II)
clothes—malaabis
clouds—suHub, siHaab
cold—baarid
cold (of persons)—bardaan
colloquial—daarij, 9aammiyya
colour—lawn (pl. ‘alwaan)
come—‘aja byeejee

come back—raja9, byirja9,
rujoo9
come near, move—’arrab (II)
community (religious)—Taa’ifa
(pl. Tawa’a’if)
companion—rafee’
complain—’ishtaka (VIII)
concentrate on—rakkaz (II)
9ala
Congratulations!—mabrook!
consult (a book)—raaja9 (III)
correspond with (write to)—
kaatab (III)
correspondent—mukaatib (pl.
-een)
count (vb)—9add, byi9idd,
9add
country—bilaad (pl. buldaan)
cousin—ibn 9amm/khaal (etc.)
cube—muka99ab
curse (vb)—la9an, byil9an,
la9n
cut, cut off—’aTa9, byi’Ta9,
’aT9

dark: It became dark—9atamat id-
dunya
dawn—fajr
day—yawm (pl. ’ayyaam)
def—’aTrash
dear (expensive)—ghaalee
dear (endearment)—9aammiyya
desk—maktab (pl. maktab)
despair (vb)—ya’as, byay’as,
ya’s
destroy—kharrab (II)
devil; Poor devil!—shayTaan
(pl. shayaaTeen); miskeen
(pl. masakeen)
difference: It makes no
difference to me—maa
btifri’ ma9ee
different (various)—mukhtalif
difficult—Sa9b
dine—ta9ashsha (V)
director—mudeer (pl.
mudaraa)
dirty—wusikh (pl. -een)
dismiss, ‘fire’—9azal, byi9zal,
9azl
divorce—Talla’ (II)
do, make—9 amil, bya9mal, 9aml
dog—kalb (pl. kilaab)
dome—'ubba (pl. 'ubab)
done: be done—‘in9amal
donkey—Himar (pl. Hameer)
door, gate—baab (pl. 'abwaab)
doubt (vb)—shak, byishukk,
shak
doubtless—bi-laa shak,
bidoon shak
dozen—darzen
drain, cesspool—baaloo9
drink (n.)—mashroob (pl. -aat)
drink (vb)—sharib, byishrab,
shurb
dual (grammar)—muthanna
duck—biTT
during—'asnaa
dwell, live—sakan, byuskun,
sakan
dwelling—maskan (pl.
masaakin)

E
each one—kull wa9Hid
each other; on top of each
other—al-ba9D; faw’
ba9D
early—bakkeer
cast—shar’
Easter—9eed al-fiSH
eat—’akal, byaakul, ’akl
education—tarbeea
Egypt—miSr
either…or—yaa…yaa
employ, use—ista9mal (X)
employee—muwaZZaf
empty—faarigh
end—nihaaya
end of year—’aakhar is-sana
English—’ingleezee (pl.
’ingleez)
enter—dakhal, byudkhul,
dukhool
entrance—madkhal (pl.
madaakhil)
equals—byisaawee
even (e.g. ‘even you’)—Hatta
even if—Hatta wa law
evening—masaa
everyone—kull wa9Hid
evil (n.)—sharr
except (conjunction)—‘illaa
excuse (n.)—9udhr (pl.
‘a9dhaar)
exit—makhraj (pl. makhaarij)
expel—’akhraj (IV)
expenses—takaaleef,
maSaareef
express (adj.)—musta9jil
express (vb)—9abbar (II) 9an
extend, stretch—madd, byimidd, madd
eye—9ayn (pl. 9uyoon)

F

face; lose face—wajh (pl. wujooh); fa’ad mayy wajho
fall—wa’a9, byoo’a9, wu’oo9
fall in love with—wa’a9 fee Hubb (fulaan)
fall out with, quarrel with—takhaana’ (VI) ma9
far, distant—ba9eed (pl. bi9aad)
far from—ba9eed 9an
fast (adj.)—saree9
fast (n.)—Sawm
fast (vb)—Saam, byiSoom, Siyaam
fate; ‘That is fate’—qadr; qaDaa’ wa qadr
father—’ab (pl. ‘aabaa)
favour: do me a favour—ma9roof
fear (n.)—khawf
fear (vb)—kaaaf, byikhaaf, khawf
fed up—zah’aan
feel—sha9ar, byush9ur, shu9oor; Hass, byiHiss, Hiss
feelings; Are you feeling all right?—mashaa9ir; Haasis bi-shee?
fees—rusoom
fierce (heat)—shadeed
finish—khallaS (II)
fire (n.); open fire—naar (pl. neeraan); fataH an-neeraan
flies (insects)—dabbaan (sing. dabaana)
float—9aam byi9oom
fly (vb)—Taar, byiTeer, Tayaraan
for—min shaan, la-( + pronouns), min ‘ajl
foreigner—’ajnabee (pl. ajaanib)
Forget it! (slang)—bi-laa-haa!
fork—shawka (pl. shuwak)
free—Hurr (pl. ‘aHraar)
free (no charge)—bi-laash
free (no work)—faaDee (pl. -een)
French—faransaawee (pl. -een)
friend—Sadee’ (pl. ’aSdi’aa)
friend, owner—SaaHib (pl. ’aSHaab)
from—min

G
gate, door—baab (pl. ’abwaab)
generous, noble—kareem (pl. kiraam)
get acquainted with—ta9arraf (V) 9ala
girl, daughter—bint (pl. banaat)
give and take (n.)—’akhd oo radd
glad: be glad—fariH, byifraH, faraH
go—raaH, byirooH
go down—nazal, byinzal, nuzool
go in—dakhal, byudkhul, dukhool
VOCABULARY 134

go out—kharaj, byukhruj, khurooj

go out of one’s mind—Taar 9a’lo

go up—Tala9, byiTla9, Tuloo9

God—allaah (jalla jalaaluhu, 9azza wa jail, subHaan wa ta9aala, etc.; see Lesson seventeen)

good—Hasan, Tayyib, kuwayyis, 9aal

Good Friday—al-jum9a al-9aZeema

goodbye—bi-khaaTrak (by person leaving), ma9 as-salaama (by one remaining)
good-for-nothing—mush naafi9

grain (wheat)—Habba (pl. Habbaat)
grandfather—jidd (pl. ’ajdaad, ’ujdood)
great, big—kabeer (pl. Kibaar), 9aZeem
green—’akhDar
greet—sallam (II) 9ala
greeting—salaam, taHeea (pl. -aat, for both)
ground—’arD

grounds: on the grounds that…—9ala ’asaas ’inno…
group—jamaa9a (pl. -aat)
grow (cultivate)—zara9, byizr9a9, ziraa9a
grow old—shaab, byisheeb, shayb
guide (n.)—daleel
guide (vb)—dall, byidill, dallaala

H

had: You had better go—’aHsan tarooH

haggle—shaaraT (III)

hair—sha9r (pl. -aat)

hand—yad or eed (pl. aydee, or dayyaat in some dialects)

hand in hand—fee eed ba9D

hang, suspend—9alla’ (II)

happen; It happened that…

—Hadas, byuHdus, Hudoos; saa’abat inno…

happy—sa9eed (pl. su9adayaat), farHaan (pl. -een)

have—(see Lesson two ff.)

he—huwa

head—raas (pl. ru’oos)

head over heels—ra’san 9ala 9aqab

hear—sami9, byisma9, sam9

heart—’alb (pl. ’uloob)

help—saa9ad (III)

here—hawn

here is—hayy (+pronouns)

hexagon—musaddas

hit—Darab, byuDrub, Darb

honeymoon—shahr il-9asal

honour (n.)—sharaf, 9ard/9irD

(see Lesson eighteen)

honour (vb)—karrarn (II), sharraf(II)

hospital—mustashfa (pl. mustashfayaat)

hot—Haar, Haamee, sukhn

hotel—fundu’ (pl. fanaadi’)

hour—saa9a (pl. -aat)

house—bayt (pl. buyoot)

How?—kayf?
How much/many?—kam?
‘addaysh?
Hullo!—marHaba!
humour (vb)—saayar (III)
hurry: in a hurry, ‘express’—musta9jal

I

idea—fikra (pl. fikar, ‘afkaar)
idiot—ghabee (pl. ‘aghbeeaa)
if—(see Lesson eleven)
imagine—taSawwar (V)
impossible—mustaHeel
in—fee
in: He’s not in—mush mawjood
in order to/that—min shaan
incapable of—9aajiz 9an
influence—nufooz; wasTa (see Lesson eighteen)
information—ma91oomaat
inside—juwwa; daakhil
inside out—bil-ma’loob
insist on—’aSarr (IV) 9ala
intense—shadeed
interested: be interested in—ihtamm (VIII) fee
interesting—(see Lesson seventeen)
mufeed etc
introduce (someone) to; get to
know—9arraf (II) (someone)
9ala; ta9arraf 9ala
invite—9azam, byi9zam, 9azam;
da9a, byid9ee, da9wa

J

jar—jarra (pl. -aat)

joking: I’m not joking—mush 9am bamzaH

Jordan—’al-’urdun
Jordanian—’urdunee (pl. -een)
journalism—SaHafa
journalist—SuHufee (pl. -een)
joy, wedding celebration—faraH (pl. ‘afraaH)
judge—‘aaDee (pl. ‘uDaat)
just: He’s just come—ba9do jaee
Just so!—biZ-Zaft!

K

kidding: No kidding!—laa! SaHeeH!
kindly: Would you kindly…?—luTfan
knife—sikkeen(a) (usually f.; pl. sakaakeen)
know; as far as I know—9araf,
byi9raf, ma9rifa; 9ala 9ilmee
knowledge, science—9ilm (pl.
9uloom)
kohl—kuHl
Koran—al-qur’aan al-kareem etc.
(see Lesson seventeen)

L

labour, hard—‘a9maal shaa’a
lack (n.)—9adam
lack (vb): He lacks nothing—maa byun’uSo shee
lamp—faanoos (pl. fawaanees)
land: by land—barran
language—lugha (pl. -aat)
last: At last! the last one; last
year—(wa) akheeran! aakhir
waaHid; is-sana il-maaDya
late: the late Mr X—
il-marHoom

laugh (at)—DaHak, byiDHak, DaHk (9ala)

lead (vb)—’aad, byi’ood, ‘eeaada

learn—ta9allam (V)
learned: a learned man—9allaama, muta9allim

leave, abandon—takr, byutruk, tark

Lebanese—lubnaanee (pl. -een)

Lebanon—lubnaan

let (Let’s go!), leave—khalla (II)

letter—maktoob (pl. makaateeb)

lies: pack of lies—kizb fee kizb

life—Hayaa(t)

like (prep.)—mitl
like, love—Habb, byiHibb, Hubb

line, track, route—khaTT (pl. khuTooT)

little: a little—shwayy, ’aleel

live, dwell—sakan, byuskun, sakan

long for, miss—ʼishtaa’ (VIII)

lost: get lost—Daa9, byiDee9, Deeea9

lunch (n.); have lunch—ghada; taghadda (V)

M

make, do—9amil, bya9mal, 9aml

man—rajul (pl. rijaal)
morning: in the morning—SabaaHan
moron—tees (pl. tuyooos)
Moslem, Muslim—muslim (pl. muslimeen)
much—kateer, ’ikteer
must—laazim, Daroor (see Lesson four)
my dear—Habeebee

N

country—’umma (pl. umam)
country—waTanee
natural, patriotic—Tabee9ee
naturally, of course—Tab9an
nature—Tabee9a
necessary—Daroooree, laazim
neck: He got it in the neck—Hara’oo lo deeno/bayto
neighbour—jaar (pl. jeeraan)
never mind—maa 9alaysh
new—jadeed (pl. judud), ’ijddeed (pl. ’ijddaad)
newspaper—jareeda (pl. jaraayid)
New Year’s Day—9eed ra’s is-sana
next to—bi-jaanib, Hadd
nine-fold—tusaa9ee
no—laa
noon—Duhr/Zuhr
north—shimaal
not—mush, laa/maa
not yet—mush...ba9d, lissa (li-has-saa9a)
now; from now on—halla, issa;
min halla oo Taali9
number—numra
numbers—(see Lesson two,
Appendix; for adjectives see Lesson five)

O

obliged: much obliged—mamnoon (+pronouns)
ocet—tumaaneen
odd (number)—fardee
offer (to)—9araD, byi9raD,
9arD (9ala)
office—maktab (pl. makaatib)
officer—DaabiT (pl.
DubbaaT), ZaabiT (pl.
ZubbaaT)
official—rasmee
official, employee—muwaZZaf
(pl. -een)
OK, fine—Tayyib
on—9ala
one: Anyone there?—fee Had(a) hunaak?
one-eyed—’a9war
only, but—bass
open; opened—fatah; maftooH
opened; be opened—’infataH
open-minded—munfatiH
opinion—ra’ee (pl. ’aaraa’)
opportunity, chance—furSa (pl.
furaS)
oppose—9aaraD (III)
or—’aw
or: out of order; in order
to—mu9aTTal, kharbaan,
9aTlaan; Hatta
other—taanee, ’aakhar, ghayr
outside—barra
outstanding, excellent—mumtaaz
overdid: they overdid things—takhkhanoo-haa
owe: I owe you a lira—9alay-Iak leera
owner—SaaHib (pl. 'aSHaab)

P

pain (n.)—'alam (pl. 'alaam)
pain (vb)—waja9, byooja9, waj9
pair—zawj/jawz (pl. 'azwaaj)
Palestine—filisTeen
Palestinian—filisTeenee (pl. -een)
pardon: I beg your pardon; I beg pardon of God!—9afwan; 'astaghfir 'allaah!
park (vb)—wa’ af (II)
particular (e.g. reason)—mu9ayyan
pass, elapse—faat, byifoot, fawaat
past (n.)—maaDee
pay (vb)—dafa9, byidfa9, daf9
peace—salaam, silm, SulH
peaceful (e.g solution)—silmee
peasant—fallaaH (pl. -een)
people (in general)—naas
people (e.g. the French)—sha9b (pl. shu9oob)
photograph (vb)—Sawwar (II)
pilgrimage—Hajj
Pillars of Islam—’arkaan al-1s1aan
pimp (professional!)—gawwaad (pl. -een), 9ars, 9akroot

pity: What a pity!—yaa Haraam! yaa khasaara!
place—maHall (pl. -aat), makaan (pl. amaakin)
please: Yes please—min faDlak
pleased: be pleased with—raDee 9an
poet—shaa9ir (pl. shu9araa)
poetry—shi9r
praise (n.)—Hamd
prayer—Salaa(t) (pl. Salawaat)
precede, get ahead of—saba’, byusbu’, saba’
prefer…to…—faDDal (II)…9ala…
present (intransitive); be present—ista9add (X); HaDar, byuHDur, HuDoor
present, ‘there’—mawjood
priest—khooree (pl. khawaarina)
prince—‘ameer (pl. ’umaraa)
private—khaaS, khuSooSee
proceed, march—saar, byiseer, sayr
producer (e.g. film)—mukhrij (pl. -een)
professor—’ustaaz (pl. ‘asaatiza)
programme—barnaamaj (pl. baraamij)
progress (vb)—ta’addam (V)
prophet—rasool (pl. rusiul)
pronounce—lafaZ, byulfuZ, lafZ
prostitute—sharmooTa (pl. sharaameeT)
punish—’aaSaS(III)
put—HaTT, byiHuTT, HaTT
put on (clothes)—labis, byilbas, libaas

Q
quadrilateral, quatrain—
rubaa9ee
queer (sex)—shaaz
question; It’s a question
of…—su’aal (pl. ’as9ila),
mas’ala (pl. masaa’il);
il-mas’ala mas’alat…
quick-witted—saree9 il-khaaTir
quiet: keep quiet!—’uskut!
quintet—khumaasee

R
rain (n.)—shitaa
rain (vb)—shattat (II)
(id-dunya)
rather: or rather—’aw bil-aHra
read—’araa, byi’raa, ’iraaya
ready—Haadir, musta9idd,
jaahiz
really, truly—Ha’ee’a
reason; by reason of—sabab
(pl. ’asbaab); bi-Hukm
receive (guests)—ista’bal (X)
red: be red, become red—
’aHmar, iHmarr
regain—istarja9 (X)
relate, tell (story), speak—
Haka, byiHkee, Hikaaya
relation: in relation to (as for)—
bin-nisba ’ila
relations—’araayib
relax, rest—istaraaH (X)
religion—deen (pl. ’adyaan)
rely on—ittakal 9ala (VIII)
remain—Zall/Dall, byiDall,
Dall; ba’ee, byib’aa, ba’aa
renew—jaddad (II)
repetition—tikraar
residence—manzil (pl.
manaazil)
respect—iHtaram (VIII)
respond to—istajaab li (X)
return, come back; in return
for—raja9, byirja9, rujoo9;
mu’aabil
revenge—taar
revolver—musaddas (pl. -aat)
right (correct)—SaHeeH
right (and left)—yameen (oo
yasaar/shimaal)
rise, get up—’aam, byi’oom,
’eeaam
room—ghurfa (pl. ghuraf)
Rubbish!—kalaam faaDee!
rule (vb)—Hakam, byuHkum,
Hukm

S
same, self—nafs (e.g. nafs
is-saa9a)
say, tell—’aal, byi’ool, ’awl
saying: as the saying goes—
milt-maa byi’ooloo
scholar—9alim (pl. 9ulamaa)
school—madrasa (pl. madaaris)
Search me! (How do I
know!?)
—shoo baa9rifnee?
sect—Taa’ifa (pl. Tawaa’if)
see—shaaf, byishoof
VOCABULARY

send—’arsal (IV)
send back—rajja9 (II)
send down, put down—nazzal, ’anzal
sergeant—shaaweesh (pl. shawaaweesh)
settle (land)—istawTan (X)

she—hiya
shepherd—raa9ee (pl. ru9aa(t))
shop—dukkaan (f.; pl. dakaakeen)
sick to death of—zah’aan min
simple, easy—baseeT
simple (-minded), ‘nice’—darweesh
since, because—see Lesson eight

sincerely; yours sincerely—al-mukhliS
sing—ghanna (II)
Sir (Dear sir)—yaa seedee
sister—’ukht (pl. ’akhawaat)
sit—jalas, byijlis, juloos; ’u9ud, byu’9ud, ’u9ood
situated: be situated—byoojad
situation, position—maw’if (pl. mawaa’if), waDa9 (pl. ’awDa9)
slave—9abd (pl. 9abeed)
sleep—naam, byinaam, nawm
small, young—Sagheer (pl. Sighaar)
smoke (vb)—dakhkhan (II)

so big (demonstration)—hal’add
so-and-so—fulaan

society (e.g. news)—mujtama9 (pl. -aat)
son—’ibn (pl. ’abnaa)
sound, healthy—saleem, SaHeeeH
south—janoob
speak—takallam (V)
speaking: It’s…speaking—’ana…
specialize (in)—takhaSSaS (V) (fee)
spend a summer holiday—Sayyaf(II)
spirit—rooH (pl. ’arwaaH)
spite: in spite of—ghaSban 9an
spoon—mal9a’a (pl. malaa9i’)
spring—rabee9
square—murabba9
stand—wa’af, byoo’af, wu’oof
state (political)—dawla (pl. duwal)
steal—sara’, byusru’, sara’a
stick, crook—9aSa (pl. 9aSaaya)
still (e.g. He’s still here)—ba9do hawn
stock: of good stock—najeeb
stomach—baTn (pl. buToon)
stone—Hajar(pl. ’aHjaar)
stop (intransitive)—tawaqqaf (V)
stop (transitive)—wa”af
street—shaari9 (pl. shawaari9)
study (vb)—daras, byudrus, diraasa
success—najaaH
successful: be successful—tawaffa
suggestion—’i’tiraaH (pl. -aat)
summer—Sayf
sun—shams
sunset—maghrib
sweet; find sweet—Heloo;
‘istaHla (X)
Syria—soorya, ish-shaam
Syrian—sooree, shaamee (pl. -een)

table; dining table—Taawila (pl. -aat); sufra
tail—danab (pl. ‘adnaab)
take—’akhad, byakkhud, ‘akhd
take away—shaal, byisheel
take off (clothes)—shalaH, byishlaH
taste: good taste—zaw’ (NB often equivalent to English ‘common sense’)
teach—9allam (II)
teacher—mu9allim (pl. -een)
tear out, uproot—khala9, byikhla9, khal9
telephone—tilfon (pl. -aat), haatif (pl. hawaatif)
tentmaker—khayyaam (pl. -een)
testify—shahad, byish-had, shahaada
testimony, certificate—shahaada (pl. -aat)
than—min
thank—shakar, byushkur, shukr
Thanks!—shukran!
that (conjunction)—(see Lesson eight)
that (demonstrative)—had(h)aak
that is to say;...er...—ya9nee
then (i.e. ‘and then...’)—oo ba9dayn
there is/are—fee
therefore, and so—Li-hayk
they—hum
think—’iftakar(VIII)
this—haad(h)a
throw—rama, byirmee, ramee
throw out, expel—’akhraj (IV)
thus so—hayk
ticket—tazkira (pl. tazaakir)
to (prep.)—’ila
today—il-yawm	
tomorrow—bukra (often in Lebanon followed by 9aa
bakra)
tongue, language—lisaan (pl.
’alsina/’alsun)
tonight—il-layla
too (e.g. ‘too big’)—kabeer, ’ikbeer
translate—tar jam, byitarjim,
tarjama
travel—saafar (III)
tree—shajara (pl. shajar/’ashjaar)
triangle—muthallath
tribe—qawm, qabeela,
9asheera, jamaa9a
trilateral—thulaathee
trip, visit—mishwaar (pl.
mashaaweer)
true, correct—SaHeeH
try—jarrab (II)
VOCABULARY

**U**

ugly—’abeeH, ’ibaaH
uncle—9amm, khaal
under—taHt, ’a’all min (‘less than’)
understand—fahim, byifham, fahm
unfortunate—miskeen (pl. masaakeen)
unique—fareed
united: be united—ittaHad, yattaHid, ittiHaad
unlucky (jinxed)—manHoos
up to (now)—li-ghaayat…
upright, honest—SaaliH (pl. -een)
use (vb)—istakhdam (X)
use: It’s no use—maa fee(sh) faayida
utmost: do one’s utmost—9amil il-mustaHeel

**V**

valley—waadee (pl. widyaan)
very—’ikteer (following the adj.)
view: in view of the circumstances—naZaran li—…
village—qarya (pl. quraa), Day9a (pl. Dee9)
Virgin, the—9adraa
virtue: by virtue of—bi-faDl
visit—zaar, byizoor, zeeaara

**W**

wait—intaZar(VIII), istanna
(conjugates like Form I doubled vb)
wait up
(intransitive)—istay’aZ (X)
wait up (transitive)—wa99a (II)
wake up
water—mayy (pl. -aat)
watermelon—baTTeekh (pl. baTTaayikh)
waterspout—mizraab (pl. mazaareeb)
we—’iHna, naHn, niHna
wear (vb)—labis, byilbas, libaas
wedding—(Haflat) 9urs/zafaaf, faraH
week—’usboo9 (pl. ‘asaabee9)
weep, cry—baka, byibkee, bakaa
weight: net weight—wazn Saafee
welcome (vb)—raHHab(II) bi well, fit, happy—mabsooT
west—gharb
What?—shoo?
whatever (etc.)—(see Lesson ten)
Where?—’aymta?
When?—wayn? fayn?
Which?—‘ayy?
which (relative pronoun)—‘illee
while—baynāmaa
Whit Sunday—‘eed il-‘anSara
white—‘abyaD
Who?—meen?
whole, complete—kaamil
Why?—laysh? lay?
will (future tense)—raaH
  (indeclinable: followed by vb in non-past)
wine—nabeed
winter—shitaa
wise—Hakeem (also =
  ‘doctor’)
with—ma9
without—bidoon, bilaa
woman—mara (pl. niswaan)
wonder: I wonder…—yaa
turaa…
wood—khashab (pl. -aat)

word—kalima (pl. -aat)
work—‘ishtaghāl, byishtaghīl
world—‘aalam
write—katab, byuktub, kitaaba
write to one another—takataab
writer—kaatib (pl. kuttaab)
written: be written—‘inkatab

Y
year—sana (pl. sineen,
  sanawaat); Happy New
  Year!—kull sana/‘aam oo
  int bi-khayr!
yes—na9am, aywa, ‘‘ay na9am!
yet: not yet—lissa, mush…
  ba9d
you—inta
youths—shabaab

Z
zero—Sifr