

Why the ends of words move

Bāb al-l'rāb. Lessons 1 and 2 taught you to say what a word *is*. This one says what happens to its *end*, and why — and it turns out two of the four endings are themselves proof of what the word is.

THE TEXT

الإِعْرَابُ: هُوَ تَغْيِيرُ أَوَاخِرِ الْكَلِمِ
لِاخْتِلَافِ الْعَوَامِلِ الدَّاخِلَةِ عَلَيْهَا لَفْظًا أَوْ تَقْدِيرًا.
وَأَقْسَامُهُ أَرْبَعَةٌ: رَفْعٌ، وَنَصْبٌ، وَخَفْضٌ، وَجَزْمٌ.
فَلِلْأَسْمَاءِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ: الرِّفْعُ، وَالنَّصْبُ، وَالْخَفْضُ،
وَلَا جَزْمَ فِيهَا.
وَلِلْأَفْعَالِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ: الرِّفْعُ، وَالنَّصْبُ، وَالْجَزْمُ،
وَلَا خَفْضَ فِيهَا.

Al-i'rābu huwa taghyīru awākhiri l-kalimi li-khtilāfi l-'awāmili d-dākhilati 'alayhā lafẓan aw taqdīran.

Wa-aqsāmuḥu arba'atun: raf'un, wa-naṣbun, wa-khafḍun, wa-jazmun. Fa-li-l-asmā'i min dhālika: ar-raf'u, wa-n-naṣbu, wa-l-khafḍu, wa-lā jazma fihā. Wa-li-l-af'āli min dhālika: ar-raf'u, wa-n-naṣbu, wa-l-jazmu, wa-lā khafḍa fihā.

I'rāb is the changing of the ends of words because of the different governing agents that come upon them — whether in *pronunciation* or in *estimation*.

Its divisions are four: **raf'**, **naṣb**, **khaḍ** and **jazm**.

Of these, nouns take raf', naṣb and khaḍ, and there is no jazm in them.

And verbs take raf', naṣb and jazm, and there is no khaḍ in them.

THE FOUR, AND WHO IS ALLOWED THEM

		Nouns	Verbs
رَفْع	rafʿ	yes	yes
نَصْب	naṣb	yes	yes
خَفَض	khafḍ	yes	never
جَزَم	jazm	never	yes

The two 'never' boxes are the useful part. Khafḍ proves a noun. Jazm proves a verb. Rafʿ and naṣb prove nothing on their own, because both kinds take them.

And the particle is absent from this table entirely — it has no iʿrāb, because its ending never moves.

PRONOUNCED, OR ESTIMATED

The word	Its case	Can you hear it?
الأَعْمَالُ	rafʿ	Yes — the ḍamma is right there on the lām. <i>Lafẓan</i> .
مُوسَى	rafʿ, naṣb or khafḍ	No. The alif cannot carry a vowel, so the case is estimated on it. <i>Taqdīran</i> .
الْفَتَى	any of the three	No, and for the same reason. It is not caseless; it is silently cased.

A word with no visible ending is not a word with no case. Forgetting this is the commonest way a beginner mis-parses a line and concludes the grammar is broken.

WORKED EXAMPLE — HADITH 1, FIRST FOUR WORDS

Word	What it is	What its ending is doing
إِنَّمَا	ḥarf	Nothing. Particles are <i>mabnī</i> — fixed. This chapter does not apply to it at all.
الأَعْمَالُ	ism	Rafʿ , and you can hear it: the ḍamma on the end. Nothing has come along to push it elsewhere.
بِ	ḥarf	Nothing to itself — but it is the <i>ʿāmil</i> . It is the thing that acts on the next word.
النِّيَّاتِ	ism	Khafḍ — the kasra, put there by the <i>bāʾ</i> . And khafḍ is one of the two that only a noun can take, so the ending alone proves the word-class.

Read that last row again: you identified the word-class from the ending, without knowing the meaning. That is what this chapter buys you.

NOW YOU — THE SECOND HALF OF HADITH 1

For each word write whether its ending shows **rafʿ**, **naṣb**, **khafḍ**, **jazm**, or **no iʿrāb at all** — and say what put it there. One of these is a particle and has no answer; one has its case estimated rather than pronounced.

وَإِنَّمَا لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مَا نَوَى

Word	Its ending	What acted on it
لِ		
كُلِّ		
أَمْرٍ		
نَوَى		

Hint for the last one: it ends in an alif maqṣūra. Look again at the second table before you write anything.

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