Nahw - The Anatomy of a Sentence - Part 1

In this post I will give a few examples from القصص النبیّین (Qasas-un-Nabiyyeen - Stories of the Prophets) which is the text which we are reading at the Toronto Shariah Program. The purpose here is to see how some of the grammatical terms which we have learned so far fit into an Arabic sentence. This will help in identifying the correct terms and how they can be properly used while constructing longer Arabic sentences. We will also learn a few new grammatical states and will fit each of them in the table which we built in the previous Nahw post.

(In a town there was a very famous man) Note the order of Noun, Adjective, and Adverb here. In English we put Adverb + Adjective + Noun (very + famous + man); in Arabic this order is reversed (man + famous + very). ﻣﺸﻬﻮﺭ جدًا is the adverb here, called the normal adverb or ﻣﻔﻌﻮل ﻣﻄﻠﻖ and it goes into ﺑﺼﺐ therefore you see the two fathas at the end. In addition to this ﻗﺮﻳﺔ is in جر since it is preceded by a preposition, ﻓ. Also notice ﻣﺸﻬﻮﺭ: they have a صفة, ﻣﻮﺻﻮف relationship and thus the following rules apply to them, as explained in this post:

1. Definiteness: no ﻋ ﺍ in front of either

2. Plurality: both are singular
3. Gender: both are masculine
4. Grammatical state: both are in ﺱ (double dhamma at the end). Why they are in ﺱ is because ﻣﺸﻬﻮﺭ has to agree with it in grammatical state because of the صفة, ﻣﻮﺻﻮف relationship. One important thing to note here is that there is no rule which says that the
The name of this man was Aazar) Let’s take آز-ﺭ first: it is in ن-ص-ب as can be seen by the fatha at the end. This is because آز-ﺭ is the خبر of كان so therefore it goes into ن-ص-ب. Also, note the one dhamma on اسم which means that it is in the state of رفع. This is because it is اسم of كان so it goes in the state of رفع. Also, الـجَلِل is the مضاف إليه of اسم therefore it goes into جر as our Grammatical State Table shows. (Note: the final kasra may not show properly on the web page)

And in this house there were idols): كان اسم الـجَلِل so it is in the state of رفع, thus the double dhamma at the end. The whole phrase فی هـذَا الـبَيْت is termed to be in place of ن-ص-ب. This is necessary since this whole phrase, rather than just a single word, is the خبر of كان. However, الـبَيْت itself is in جر because of فی, a preposition. This concept of being in a grammatical state is important since most of the time it is a whole phrase which will need to take up a specific grammatical state rather than a single word. Because we cannot put dhamma, fatha, or kasra on the entire phrase therefore we consider the whole phrase into that specific grammatical state. This will become more clear, Insha Allah, when I give more examples involving complex sentences.
And Aazar would worship these idols: The combination of كان and يعبد the verb (in this case) gives the meaning of would. In other terms, this combination depicts the past continuous tense and is used whenever the idea of a general habit or an action occurring over and over again is to be conveyed. Notice the fatha at the end of الاصنام: it is the مفعول به of يعبد thus it goes into نصب.

I hope that these simple examples would be an easy primer to the application of the concept of Grammatical States in Arabic Language. Insha Allah, I will soon post more example with more complex sentences.