

Speech & Its Components

In the first line of the Ajrumiyya, Ibn Ajurrum defines speech:

الكلامُ هو اللَّفْظُ المُرَكَّبُ المُفِيدُ بِالوَضْعِ

A *lafz* is an utterance. Hence, the written word or the gesture is not referred to as speech.

Murakkab implies that it is connected. Hence, a single word by itself is not speech. A single word is known as a *kalima*, pl *kalimaat*. (The word *kalima* is also used to refer to a full speech or a sentence with a deep meaning, such as *kalimat al-tawhid*, which is the *shahada*.)

Mufid implies that the listener is not left waiting for more words. Hence, half a sentence like *Samih ate the* would not be speech, since we remain waiting to hear what Samih ate. Phrases like these are known as *ghayr mufid*, not beneficial. (Benefit here, does not refer to value, but rather to grammatical completeness.)

Bil wad' refers to *al-wad' al-'arabi*. Hence, speech in any other language is not considered *kalam*.

The Components of Kalam

Next, he lists the three types of words of which speech is comprised:

وأقسامه ثلاثة: إسمٌ وفعلٌ وحرفٌ جاءَ لمعنى.

- 1 *ism* (noun), pl *asma'*
- 2 *fi'l* (verb), pl *af'al*
- 3 *harf* (particle), pl *huruf*

The *ism* is anything that has meaning in itself. الاسمُ كُلُّ ما لَهُ مَعْنَى فِي نَفْسِهِ.

The *fi'l* is anything that has meaning in itself and is connected to time (past, present, future, or command).

الفِعْلُ كُلُّ ما لَهُ مَعْنَى فِي نَفْسِهِ مُتَّصِلٌ بِزَمَنٍ.

The *harf* is that which has no meaning in itself, but lends meaning to another.

الحَرْفُ ما دَلَّ عَلَى مَعْنَى فِي غَيْرِهِ لا فِي نَفْسِهِ.

Indicators

فالاسمُ يُعْرَفُ: بالخَفْضِ والتَّنْوِينِ ودُخُولِ الأَلِفِ واللامِ وحُرُوفِ الخَفْضِ وهي:

من وإلى وعن وعلى وفي وربِّ والباءِ والكافِ واللامِ وحروفُ القَسَمِ وهي الواوُ والباءُ والتاءُ.

The sign of an *ism* is that it can receive the grammatical case of *khafd* (marked with a *kasra* at the end of the word). Or that it can receive *tanwin*, or *al-* at its beginning, or be preceded by the *huruf al-khafd*, also known

as prepositions: from, to, upon/about, on, in, perhaps, with, like, for, and the letters of swearing or giving oath, which are *waw*, *baa*, and *taa*. If a word has any of these signs, then it is an *ism*.

وَالْفِعْلُ يُعْرَفُ بِقَدْ وَالسِّينِ وَسَوْفَ وَتَاءِ التَّانِيثِ السَّاكِنَةِ.

The sign of a verb is that it can receive the word *qad*, which indicates certainty when preceding a past tense verse (as in *qad qamat al-salat*), or speculation when preceding a present tense verb. Or that they are preceded by *seen* and *sawfa*, which shift a word from present tense to future tense. An example from the Quran is His saying, *kalla sawfa ta'tamun* or *sayasla naran dhata lahab*. Lastly, if the morphology of a word allows it to receive the feminine *taa* with a *sukun*, then it is a verb and not anything else. An example is again *qad qamat al-salat*.

وَالْحَرْفُ مَا لَا يَصْلُحُ مَعَهُ دَلِيلُ الْأِسْمِ وَلَا دَلِيلُ الْفِعْلِ.

The *harf* is that which has neither of the above indicators.

A string of *kalimaat* that are *mufid* give us a *jumla*, which is a sentence. More on that will come in future chapters.