Sarf - The Command Verb: constructing the امر

The command verb, or the امر , is different from other verb conjugations previously covered in the

sense that a command is usually directed *towards* a second person e.g *eat!* or *stop!*; thus, the

construction of 2nd person command verb in Arabic is different from that of other conjugations of the

same. Also, at first, it seems rather odd that we can even have a command verb in 1stor 3rdperson

conjugations. However, examples like *He must eat!* and *They must abstain!* do give us good examples

of command verbs in persons other than second.

Based on the above information we see that the 2nd person active command verb requires special
attention. In fact, it's construction rules are a bit different than those of 1st & 3rd person active
command verb. Below I give the general rules which govern the construction of active voice command
verbs in Arabic:

1. 2nd Person Active Command verb - constructed using active verb of the مضارع and applying 3

   specific steps

2. 1st& 3rd person active & passive and 2ndperson passive - constructed using the endings of the لم

   table and attaching لام of امر in front of each conjugation

Insha Allah we will see now how these rules are applied in practice.
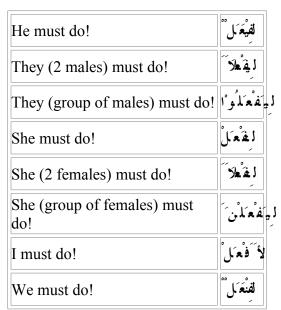
As a first step we divide the لم table into two sections - 2nd person (left side) and 3rd & 1st persons (right

side):

You (male) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ	He did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْ
You (2 males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا	They (2 males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلَا
You (group of males) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلُوْا	They (group of males) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلُوْا
You (female) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلِي	She did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْ
You (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا	She (2 females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلَا
You (group of females) did not do	لَمْ تَفْعَلْنَ	She (group of females) did not do	لَمْ يَفْعَلْنَ
		I did not do	لَمْ أَفْعَلْ
		We did not do	لَمْ نَفْعَلْ

Constructing the 1st Person / 3rd Person Active command verb:

1. Attach a لام with a *kasra* in front of each conjugation and keep the endings exactly as those in

   the لَمْ table. This rule also applies to the passive construction. Here I will only give examples of

   the active voice:

He must do!	لِيَفْعَلْ
They (2 males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلَا
They (group of males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلُوْا
She must do!	لِتَفْعَلْ
She (2 females) must do!	لِتَفْعَلَا
She (group of females) must do!	لِيَفْعَلْنَ
I must do!	لِأَفْعَلْ
We must do!	لِنَفْعَلْ

Constructing the 2nd Person Active command verb:

These conjugations are constructed from the مضارع verb as outlined below:

1. Remove the sign of مضارع i.e. ت from the verb

2. After removing the sign of مضارع if the next letter (i.e. the ف position) has a vowel on it then simply make the last letter of the remaining word *sakin* and use the endings from the لم table .

An example of this kind would be تَتَقَبَّلSince the second letter already has a *fathah* on it therefore the command verb would be تَقَبَّل

3. After removing the sign of مضارع if the next letter is *sakin* then it cannot be pronounced since words need to start with a vowel (*dhamma, fatha, kasra*). In this case, we add a *hamza* (ءا) in front of the word to aid pronunciation, and then look at the ع position of the word: if this letter has a *dhamma* then we put a *dhamma* on the *hamza* which is at the front of the word. However, if this letter has either a *fathah* or a *kasra* we put a *kasrah* on the *hamza*. Examples of this construction are:

- تَنصُرُ which changes to أُنصُرُ

4. تَضرِب which changes to إِضرِب

5. تَسمَع which changes to إِسمَع

A complete listing of the 2nd Person Active command verb is given below. Note that the endings remain that of the لم table:

You (male) do!	إِفْعْل
You (2 males) do!	إِفْعَلاَ

You (group of males) do!	إِفْعَلُوْا		
You (female) do!	إِفْعَلِيْ		
You (2 females) do!	إِفْعَلاَ		
You (group of females) do!	إِفْعَلْنَ		

The Emphatic Command :

In addition to saying *He must do!* we can also give an emphatic command: V*erily, he must do!*, which is the addition of emphasis to the command verb. Since we know that emphasis in Arabic can be achieved either by using ن ثقيلة or ن خفيفة , therefore we can have command verb conjugations in the emphatic form. The table below lists these conjugations for the active voice. Notice that the endings are exactly those of the emphatic table and that the لام of امر (with a *kasra*) replaces the لام with a *fatha* at the start in the 3rd and 1st person conjugations (and also in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person passive conjugations). Plus, the 2 nd person active conjugations still start with ا ف

ن ثقيلة conjugations for the command verb:

Verily [You (male)] do!	فَعَلَنَّ	Verily he must do!	لِيَفْعَلَنَّ
Verily [you (2 males)] do!	فَعَلانِّ	Verily they (2 males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلاَنِّ
Verily [you (group of males)] do!	فَعَلُنَّ	Verily they (group of males) must do!	لِيَفْعَلُنَّ
Verily [you (female)] do!	فَعَلِنَّ	Verily she must do!	لِتَفعَلَنَّ
Verily [you (2 females)] do!	فَعَلانِّ	Verily they (2 females) must do!	لِتَفعَلانِّ
Verily [you (group of females)] do!	افْعَلنانِّ	Verily they (group of females) must do!	لِيَفْعَلْنَانِّ
		Verily I must do!	لِاَفعَلَنَّ
		Verily we must do!	لِنَفعَلَنَّ

Verily [You (male)] do!	فِعَلَن	Verily he must do!	لِـيَـفْـعَـلَـنْ
Verily [you (2 males)] do!		Verily they (2 males) must do!	
Verily [you (group of males)] do!	فِعَلُن	Verily they (group of males) must do!	لِـيَـفْـعَـلُـنْ
Verily [you (female)] do!	فِعَلِن	Verily she must do!	لِفَعَلَن
Verily [you (2 females)] do!		Verily they (2 females) must do!	
Verily [you (group of females)] do!		Verily they (group of females) must do!	
		Verily I must do!	لا فِعَلَن
		Verily we must do!	لِفَعَلَن