

Sarf - Variations of the Past Tense

Until now we have seen how to conjugate verbs using the simple past tense e.g. *he ate, he helped, he did* etc. Now we will see how we can couple some words to the past tense verb and make it either *present perfect* e.g. *he has helped* or *past perfect* e.g. *he had helped*.

Sticking the word **قد** in front of a past tense verb makes it *present perfect*. Thus, **قد** denotes actions

which have just been completed e.g. *he has helped, he has done, he has read* etc. Note that **قد** is a **حرف**

(i.e. a *particle*) so it does *not* change its form with the changing form of the verb. As an example, **نَصَرَ**

means *he helped* and **قد نَصَرَ** means *he has helped*. The significance of this will become clear when we

deal with the next section about making past perfect tense. One more thing to note is that you cannot

attach a **ما** in front of **قد** to negate it: this construction is *not* allowed in Arabic.

If we add **كان** in front of a past tense verb the verb becomes *past perfect*. Thus, **كان** denotes actions

which have been completed in distant past. However, **كان** is a verb, just like **فَعَلَ**, so it will also change

its form when coupled with the past tense verb. The following table shows how this is done:

كَانَ نَصَرَ	He had helped
كَانَا نَصَرَا	They (2 males) had helped
كَانُوا نَصَرُوا	They (many males) had helped
كَانَتْ نَصَرَتْ	She had helped
كَانَتَا نَصَرَتَا	They (2 females) had helped
كُنَّ نَصَرْنَ	They (many females) had helped
كُنْتَ نَصَرْتَ	You (1 male) had helped

كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (2 males) had helped
كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (many males) had helped
كُنْتَ نَصَرْتَ	You (1 female) had helped
كُنْتُمْ نَصَرْتُمْ	You (2 females) had helped
كُنْتُنَّ نَصَرْتُنَّ	You (many females) had helped
كُنْتُ نَصَرْتُ	I had helped
كُنَّا نَصَرْنَا	We had helped

The negation of this conjugation is constructed simply by adding a **ما** in front of it. Also, the passive voice for this conjugation is constructed the same way as before: *dhamma* on the first letter, *kasra* on the second last letter.