

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A

Pre-Islamic Poetic Couplet



This couplet is by the famous pre-Islamic poet

طَرْفَةُ بْنُ الْعَبْدِ

Speaking about his tribe's generosity, he says:

نَحْنُ فِي الْمَشْتَاةِ نَدْعُو الْجَفَلَى
لَا تَرَى الْآدِبَ فِينَا يَنْتَقِرُ

The desert Arabs have two types of inviting people to attend a banquet. They are:

1.

الْجَفَلَى

This is inviting *all* the members of the tribe or the community to participate in the public dinner.

2.

النَّقْرَى

This is inviting selected members of the tribe or the community.



Lexical and Grammatical Notes

The verb is: اُنْتَقَرَا اُنْتَقَارًا (viii), to invite selected members of the tribe or community to the banquet.

سَتَا يَشْتُو سَتُوا, to spend the winter.

And مَشْتَاةٌ is winter camp.

اَدَبَا اَدْبًا (a-i), to arrange for a banquet.

And the one who makes such an arrangement is: اَدْبٌ.

The banquet is مَادِبَةٌ and مَادِبَةٌ (with the *dāl* having *dammah* or *fathah*).

جَفَلَى in نَدْعُو الْجَفَلَى is مَفْعُولٌ مُطْلَقٌ.

The *taqdīr* is:

نَدْعُو دَعْوَةَ الْجَفَلَى.

يَنْتَقِرُ is for يَنْتَقِرُ.

The final vowel has been dropped for prosodic reason.

Translation of the Couplet

نَحْنُ فِي الْمَشْتَاءِ نَدْعُو الْجَفَلَى

Even in the winter camp,

We invite all the members of the tribe

To participate in the banquet.

لَا تَرَى الْآدِبَ فِيْنَا يَنْتَقِرُ

You will not find any inviter amongst us

Inviting selected members of the tribe.

He mentions winter camp because winter season is marked by scarcity of food stuffs.

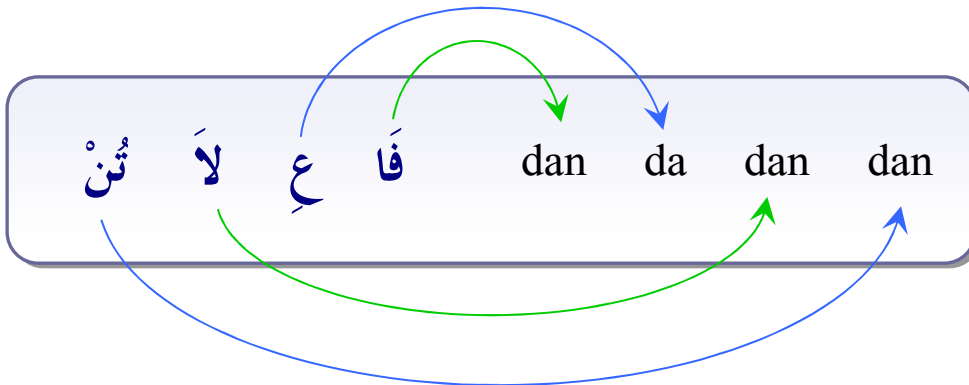
The *Bahr* of the Couplet

The *bahr* of this couplet is *bahr al-ramal* (بَحْرُ الرَّمْلِ).

It contains three feet which are:

فَاعِلَاتُنْ ١ فَاعِلَاتُنْ ٢ فَاعِلَاتُنْ ٣

١ فَاعِلَاتُنْ is phonetically: dan da dan dan:

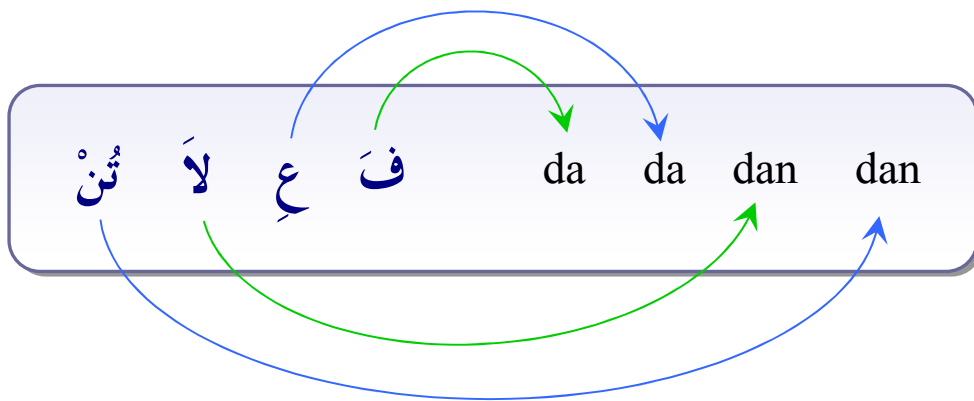


These syllables can be represented by the English sentence:

Come to London.

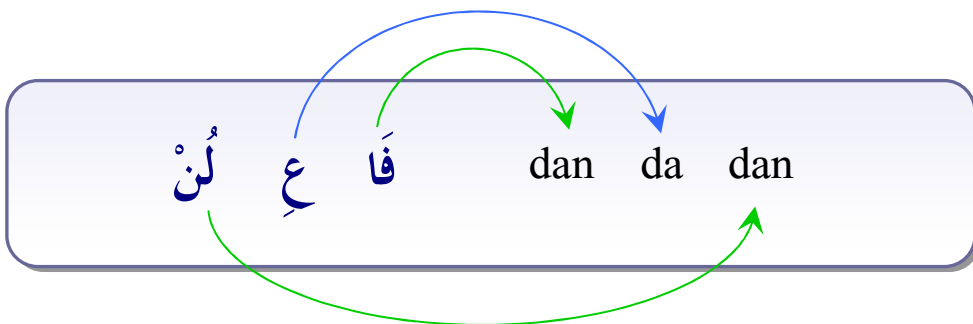
٢ فَاعِلَاتُنْ can be shortened to:

فَاعِلَاتُنْ, i.e.: da da dan dan:



These syllables can be represented by the English words:
any person.

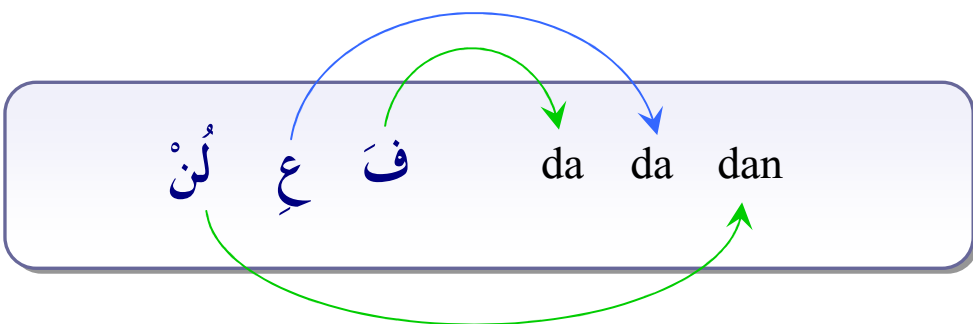
٣ فَاعِلُنْ is phonetically: dan da dan:



These syllables can be represented by the English sentence:
Come to me.

فَاعِلُنْ can be shortened to:

فَاعِلُنْ which is phonetically: da da dan:



These syllables can be represented by the English words:
any one.

Here is an anatomy of the couplet:

نَحْنُ فِي الْمَشْتَاةِ نَدْعُو الْجَفَلَى

نَحْ نُ فِلْ مَشْ : dan da dan dan = Come to London.

تَا ةِ نَدْ عُلْ : dan da dan dan = Come to London.

جَ فَ لَآ : da da dan = any one.

لَا تَرَى الْآدِبَ فِينَا يَنْتَقِرُ

لَا تَ رَلْ آ : dan da dan dan = Come to London.

دِ بَ فِي نَا : da da dan dan = any person.

يَنْ تَ قِرْ : dan da dan = come to me.