

LESSON 13

☞ HAMZAH

In reciting the Arabic alphabet in its conventional order, one says 'alif, bā', tā', etc., but actually *hamzah* is the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and 'alif is the chair on top of which *hamzah* sits, thus أ . *Hamzah* written like the initial part of ع represents a glottal stop similar to the sound frequently made in English at the beginning of a word with an initial vowel, e.g., 'absolutely', 'essential'. In English transliteration it is expressed like an apostrophe, thus 'د'.

In the initial position, *hamzah* is always written with 'alif, whatever the following vowel. If the *fathah* or *dammah* follows *hamzah*, it is written above *hamzah* and *hamzah* sits on 'alif thus, أَ أُ . If the *kasrah* follows *hamzah*, both *hamzah* and the *kasrah* appear below 'alif أِ .

ILLUSTRATIVE TEXT

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|-------------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| 1. Question marker (is it? whether) | ('a) | أَ |
| 2. the | ('al) | أَلْ |
| 3. if | ('in) | أِنْ |
| 4. verily | ('inna) | أِنَّ |

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5. that (conjunction)	('anna)	أَنَّ
6. father	('abun)	أَبٌ
7. mother	('ummun)	أُمُّ
8. son	('ibnun)	ابْنٌ
9. brother	('akhun)	أَخٌ
10. name	('ismun)	إِسْمٌ
11. camel	('ibilun)	إِبِلٌ

أَنَّ , the first word which we have learnt today, is the definite article

and it is important to know its correct usage, both for the recitation and the understanding of the Qur'an. A noun is either indefinite or definite. We have already learnt in Lesson 11 that a noun with *tanwīn* at the end is indefinite. One way of making a noun definite is to give it the article **أَنَّ** e.g., **الْكِتَابُ** , *the book*. But Arabic uses the definite article where English does not. So whenever you come across a noun, make a note of its usage.

In the middle of a verse *hamzah* is merged with the final vowel of the preceding word, e.g., **خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ** *khalaqal insāna*, He created man. Note that the **قَ** of **خَلَقَ** has joined the **لَ** of **الْإِنْسَانَ** and while the *hamzah* sign has disappeared from the text, 'alif is retained but it is not pronounced.

PRACTICE TEXT 11

1. Man says

قَالَ الْإِنْسَانُ

2. Does man think?

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ

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3. He said: How long hast thou tarried? قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ
4. That which a wild animal has eaten مَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ
5. The truth is out حَصَحَصَ الْحَقُّ
6. He speaks the truth يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ
7. He taught man عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ
8. We created man from dry clay خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ
9. He created man from a clot of blood خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ

Indo-Pakistani calligraphers normally omit the *hamzah* sign on an *'alif* if there is already a vowel sign over or under it.

نَسْتَعِينُ

NASTA'ĪNU