

A CONCISE CHILDREN'S ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF ISLAM



Al-Arabee Ben Razzouq



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ISLAM

The present reference work is a humble attempt to place before the English-speaking Muslim children a number of basic Islam teachings and concepts.

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Introduction

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

All praise is due to Almighty Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our own selves and from our sinful deeds. Whomever Allah guides, there is none to misguide him; and whomever He leads astray, none can guide him. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger. May Allah bestow His peace and blessings upon Prophet Muhammad, upon his good and pure family, as well as upon all the noble companions and those who follow them in righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

The present reference work is a humble attempt to place before the English-speaking Muslim children a number of basic Islamic teachings and concepts.

It is primarily aimed at children of age ten years and over and presents topics in an easy-to-use alphabetical format. It also covers a wide range of topics and features cross-references which draw attention to related subjects.

Given the fact that some of these Islamic teachings and concepts have been forgotten by many Muslims, and given the fact that some of them have been given wrong definitions or interpretations by some non-Muslims, either deliberately or out of ignorance, an effort has been made here to present these teachings and concepts in their true light and clear picture.

The definitions not only cover a wide range of concepts such as tawheed, tawbah, shirk, Eemaan and Ihsaan, but also include some of the well-known Prophets and Messengers of Allah, may Allah's peace be upon them all, the significance of certain important occasions such as Ashuraa and Eid, the benefits of the observance of certain practices and a short biography of the four rightly-guided caliphs who helped shape the destiny of the new faith.

Even though the present reference guide is designed specifically for Muslim children, readers and students of all ages and different faiths who wish to learn more about the world's fastest-growing religion will certainly find it enlightening and highly informative.

The explanations this reference too l provides are for the most part based on the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet, sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam. When the reference is to the surah of the Qur'an, the name of the surah is mentioned, followed by its number and then by the number of the verse. Thus, (Surat Maryam, 19:11) means the eleventh verse of the nineteenth surah of the Qur'an, which is Surat Maryam. When the reference is to the hadeeth, this is in many cases followed by the narrators who reported it, sometimes followed by the category of the hadeeth if not reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim.

In the compilation of the present work, a number of books and web sites have been consulted. Part of it was also the product of translation of a number of texts provided by Brother Abdul Malik Mujahid, Director of Darussalam. A list of the books consulted appears at the end of the encyclopedia.

Special thanks go to a number of people who helped produce the book in its present format, particularly graphics designer Brother Zulfiqar who conscientiously provided all the illustrations and Brother Muhammad Nazeer for patiently revising the text with the utmost patience.

We pray to Allah the Almighty to make this humble effort successful. We also pray to Him to accept it as an effort done for His sake alone and to make it of real benefit to all those who read it, for it is ultimately Allah's acceptance alone that really counts, and success is only by His Will.

"I only intend reform as much as I am able; and my success [in the task] can only come from Allah. In Him I trust, and unto Him I return." (Surat Hud, 11:88)

"Our Lord! In You only do we trust; unto You do we turn in repentance; and to You is our final return." (Surat Al-Mumtahinah, 60:4)

AL-Arabee Ben Razzouq

Jumaadaa ath-Thaaniyah, 1428 AH

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Useful Definitions

The following are transliterations of some Arabic expressions that appear throughout the encyclopedia, followed by their meanings in English.

Subhaanahu wa ta'aalaa:

Glorified and Exalted is He. This expression is generally said after mentioning the name of Allah the Almighty. Another common expression is 'Azza wa Jalla.

Sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam:

May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him. This expression is commonly said whenever the Prophet Muhammad's name is mentioned.

Alaih-issalaam:

Peace be upon him. This formula is usually said after the name of a prophet or an angel, such as Musa (Moses) or Jibreel, respectively. It is also said after the names of certain pious men mentioned in the Qur'an, such as Al-Khidhr, whose story appears in Surat Al-Kahf, 18:65-82.

Alaih-assalaam:

Peace be upon her. This is said after the names of certain pious women mentioned in the Qur'an, such as Maryam, the mother of Prophet Isaa, alaih-issalaam.

Radhiy-Allaahu 'anhu:

May Allah be pleased with him. This is generally used for a male companion of the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) such as Abu Hurairah and Ibn Abbaas.

Radhiy-Allaahu 'anhaa:

May Allah be pleased with her. This is usually used for a female companion of the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) such as his wives Khadeejah and A'ishah.

Shaikh-ul-Islam:

This title of honour precedes the name of certain learned scholars of Islam particularly those who had attained by their fatwas certain fame or the approval of a large number of Muslim jurists. Ibn Taymiyyah is an example of such learned scholars.

Ibn:

son of. This is a title of respect, an example of which is Omar ibn Al-Khattab, which means Omar, son of Al-Khattab.

Bint:

Daughter of. This is a title of respect, an example of which is Hafsa bint Omar, which means Hafsa, daughter of Omar.

Abu:

Father of. This is a title of respect, an example of which is the Prophet 's companion Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him).

Umm:

Mother of. This is a title of respect, an example of which is the Prophet's wife Umm Salamah (May Allah be pleased with her).

'Aam Al-feel

'Aam Al-feel (The Year of the Elephant) is the year in which Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was born.

Before Islam, the Arabs had no calendar of their own, and so they would name a year after an important incident that occurred during that year, before it or after it. The year in which the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was born is known as the 'Year of the Elephant' because it was the year in which Abrahah Al-Ashram, the Christian ruler of the Abyssinian Kingdom of Yemen, marched upon Makkah with a large army consisting of a huge elephant, with the intention of destroying the Ka'bah so that the Arabs would do pilgrimage to a temple he had built in Yemen instead. The guardians of the Ka'bah offered no defence whatsoever, as the army was too strong for them.

However, Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) saved His Sacred House and caused Abrahah's evil plan to end in vain. He sent down on him and his army birds carrying stones of baked clay in their beaks and claws with which they pelted them until they were all destroyed.

The Qur'an tells the story of the 'Companions of the Elephant' in Surat Al-Feel, thus: "Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray? And He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of baked clay; and He made them like eaten straw. "(Surat Al-Feel, 105)

Abrahah's army was suddenly overtaken by flocks of birds, striking them with small stones slightly bigger than lentil seeds. When these stones fell on the soldiers, it would dissolve their flesh and burst it into pieces. They all perished in this way. Abrahah fled while his flesh was bursting into pieces but he died on the way back to Yemen.

Abu Bakr As-Siddeeq (May Allah be pleased with him)

Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) was one of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. He was two years younger than the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and was one of the wealthiest merchants of Makkah who came from a noble family. He was renowned for his good and upright nature. His honesty and truthfulness won him the friendship of young Muhammad (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and this companionship, which started in early boyhood, proved life long.

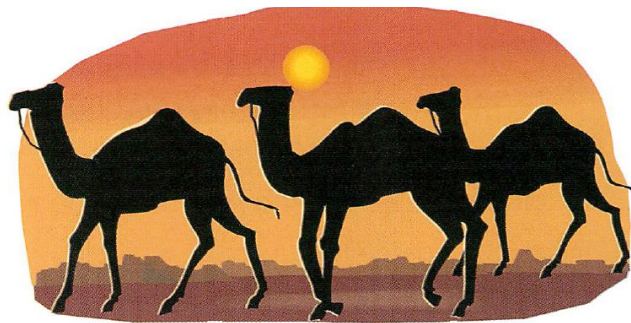
Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) was the first adult male to accept Islam, and this he did without hesitation. Once the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said, "I called people to Islam, and everybody thought over it, at least for a while. But this was not the case with Abu Bakr; the moment I put Islam before him, he accepted it without any hesitation."

Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) was very kind-hearted; when he saw someone in difficulty, he would do whatever he possibly could to help him. No sacrifice was too great in his eyes for the sake of the new faith. When the heartless Quraish masters tortured their slaves to give up Islam, they would make them lie naked, on burning sand, like they did with Bilal ibn Rabaah (May Allah be pleased with him). Then they would put big rocks on their chests. Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) used his wealth to buy many such helpless Muslim slaves from their ruthless masters and set them free for the sake of Allah.

When the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) asked people to help the expedition of Tabuk with whatever they could, Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) beat all past charitable records by taking all his money and household articles and heaping them at the Prophet's feet.

The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) called him

As-Siddeeq (the truthful) because when he undertook the night journey to the highest heaven with Angel Jibreel (Peace be upon him) and his enemies jeered at him, Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) simply replied when asked about the credibility of this incident, "I would believe anything that the Messenger of Allah (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) says."



It was Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) who made all the arrangements for the historic journey to Madeenah in which he accompanied the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Of all the companions, Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) had the honour of being with the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) during the most critical days of his life. He also took part in all the battles that the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) fought. All his life, he fought boldly under his banner, and under his supervision the collection of the Qur'anic revelations was recorded in the Qur'an.



When the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) could no longer lead prayers during his last illness, he appointed him for the task.

After the Prophet's death, Muslims elected him the first khaleefah (caliph). His unshakable faith helped Islam keep its foundation intact. He had to fight against those who left Islam and started fighting against Muslims, such as the powerful tribe of Banu Bakr. He also declared war on those who refused to pay the obligatory poor-rate, Zakaat, made an all-out attack on the impostors, such as the notorious Musailimah the Liar who claimed he was a prophet. Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) inflicted a crushing defeat on all of them.

Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) was as sincere as he was firm in faith. He lived and worked for Islam to the last breath. When he passed away at the age of 63, he was buried by the side of the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him), once said about him,

"If I were to choose from my Ummah anyone as a khaleel, I would have chosen Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him), but he is my friend and my companion." (Reported by Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

A khaleel is someone whose love is mixed with one's soul. He is in fact superior to a friend or a beloved person. The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had only one khaleel, i.e. Allah the Almighty, but he had many friends.

(See As-Sahaabah, Al-Khulalaa' Ar-Raashidoon, Al-Israa and Al-Mi'raaj and Zakaat)

Adam (Peace be upon him)

Adam (Peace be upon him) was not only the first human Allah created but also a prophet. The Qur'an mentions that Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) created Adam of clay and then told him "Be!" and he was. When Allah said to the angels that he would create Adam, they asked why He would create a being that would do evil. But when He "taught Adam the names", they saw that he knew more than them.

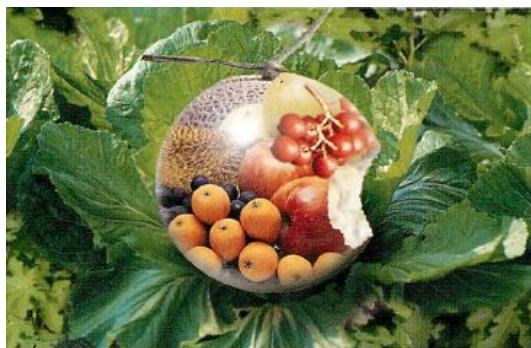
When Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) ordered the angels to prostrate to Adam, they all prostrated except Iblees who was one of the jinn; he arrogantly said,

"I am better than him. You created me from fire, and You created him from clay." (Surat Saad, 38:76)

Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He) created a wife for him, Hawwaa (Eve). The creation of Hawwaa is not described in the Qur'an as in the case of Adam; though it is stated that a "mate" was created with Adam, from the same nature and soul. The Qur'an says:

"It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her." (Surat Al-A'raaf, 7: 189)

Adam and Hawwaa were allowed to live as they pleased in Paradise but not to eat from a certain tree or taste its fruit. However, they both eventually gave in to the temptation of Satan who said to them,



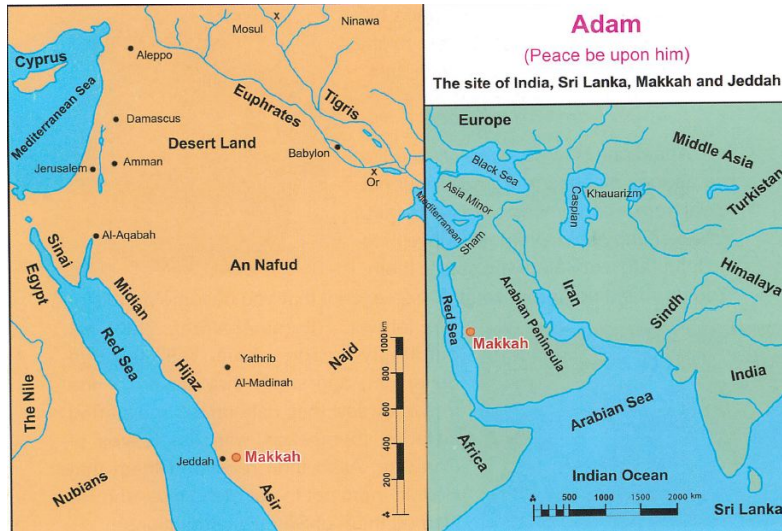
"Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or live forever." (Surat Al-A'raaf, 7:20)

He cunningly made them fall through deception, and when they tasted of the tree, they saw their nakedness and started covering themselves with the leaves of Paradise. Allah then reminded them that He told them not to eat of the tree, and He warned them of Satan's temptations.

Contrary to the teachings of the Bible, the Qur'an places the same blame on Adam and Hawwaa for their mistake. It does not say that Hawwaa tempted Adam to eat from the tree or even that she had eaten before him. Hawwaa in the Qur'an is not a 'deceiver'. They both committed a sin and then asked Allah for forgiveness and He forgave them both:

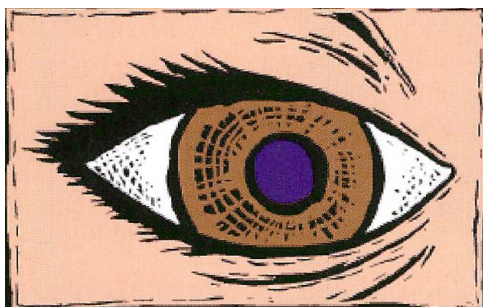
"Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall surely be among the losers." (Surat Al-A 'raaf, 7:23)

Therefore, there is no question of a hereditary sin called 'the Original Sin' in Islam. People have the free will and are therefore responsible for their choice of action and the consequent responsibility before Allah (Glorified and Exalted is He). (See Iblees and Shaitaan)



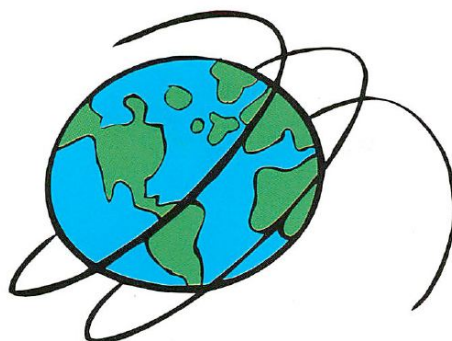
Ad-Dajjaal

The appearance of Ad-Dajjaal (the Liar, Antichrist) will be one of the major signs of the nearness of the Day of Judgment. He will have the power to perform unusual feats in order to deceive people and will claim divine attributes. Between his eyes will be the three letters kaa, laa and raa, meaning kaafir, or disbeliever.



The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) described him as having

"a huge body, red complexion, curly hair and blind in the right eye; and his eye will look like a protruding grape." (Reported by Al-Bukhaaree)



He will travel all over the world but will not be able to enter Makkah and Madeenah because these sacred cities will be guarded by the angels who will prevent him from entering them. Some of his extraordinary acts will be that he will command the clouds which will then pour down with rain and will cure those born blind and the lepers; he will also cut a youth into two halves with a sword, and the youth will come to life with a smile when he commands him so.



The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said,

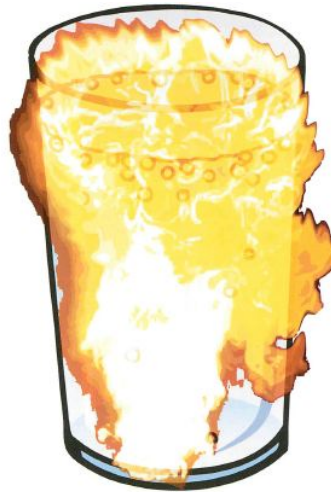
"No prophet was sent but that he warned his followers against the one-eyed liar (Al-Maseeh ad-Dajjaal). Beware! He is blind in one eye, but your Lord is not so; and there will be written between his (i.e. Al-Maseeh ad-Dajjaal's) eyes [the word] kaafir (disbeliever)." (Reported by Al-Bukhaaree)

He will also have what would seem to actually water and fire with him; what would seem to be fire would actually be nice cool water, and what would seem to be water would in fact be fire. Eventually, Prophet 'Isaa [Jesus] will come again and defeat the Dajjaal and kill him.

The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said,

"Whoever memorizes the first ten verses of Surat Al-Kahf will be protected from the Dajjaal." (Reported by Muslim)

(See Makkah, Al-Madeenah, 'Isaa (Peace be upon him) and Alaamaat-us-Saa 'ah Al-Kubraa)



Adhaan

Adhaan is the call to the obligatory prayers. In the beginning, Muslims would attend to the prayers in the mosque without adhaan. Then the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) consulted his companions. Some suggested using the Jewish trumpet, and others suggested the Christian bell, but neither was welcome to him. When the matter was still under discussion, 'Abdullaah ibn Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him) came along to say that he had been taught the manner of adhaan in a dream. The Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) then asked him to teach it to Bilal ibn Rabaah, the first muezzin in Islam. When Omar ibn Al-Khattaab (May Allah be pleased with him) heard Bilal (May Allah be pleased with him) calling to prayer, he went to the Prophet (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and informed him that he had the same dream that Abdullah ibn Zaid (May Allah be pleased with him) had.

The words of the adhaan are:

Allaahu Akbar

"Allah is the Greatest" (four times)

ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah

"I declare that there is no god but Allah " (twice)

ash-hadu anna Muhammadan rasoolullaah

"I declare that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah " (twice)

hayya 'alas-Salaah

"Come to the prayer" (twice)

hayya 'al Al-falaah

"Come to success" (twice)

Allaahu Akbar

"Allah is the Greatest" (twice)

laa ilaaha ill-Allaah

"There is no god but Allah" (once)

When used for calling to the first prayers of the day at dawn (Fajr), the statement as-salaatu khairun minan-nawm "Prayer is better than sleep" is said twice in the adhaan after hayya 'al Al-falaah "Come to success".

When the adhaan is announced, Shaitaan runs away to avoid hearing it.

When a Muslim hears the adhaan, he should respond to each call and repeat after the muezzin. When the latter says hayya 'alas-Salaah 'Come to the prayer', and Hayya 'al Al-Falaah 'Come to success', one should,

however, say, Laa hawla wa laa quwwata iliaa bilaah 'There is no power or might except with Allah' after each of these statements.

Any person, jinn or thing that hears the adhaan will testify for the muezzin on the Day of Judgment.

The person (usually a man) who calls the adhaan is called mu'adhdhin (English muezzin).

After the Adhaan, I say,

Allaahumma Rabba haadhihid-da ' watittaammati, was-Salaatil-qaa ' imati, aati Muhammadanil-waseelata wal-fadeelata, wab 'ath-hu maqaaman-mahmoodan-illadhee wa'adtahu,

Oh Allah, the Lord of this perfect call and the established prayer, give Muhammad Al-Waseelah (a high position in Paradise) and Al-Fadeelah (a rank above the rest of creation), and raise him on the honoured station which You have promised him.

(See Iqaamah and Shaitaan)