

The Arabic Alphabet and Vowel Signs

The Arabic letters of the alphabet are twenty nine (29) in number, all of which, with exception of Alif, are consonants.

Consonants means it has speech sound.

There are three vowel signs in Arabic.

FATAH (—) denoting “a” e.g. دَ = da رَ = ra

KASRAH (—) denoting “i” e.g. دِ = di رِ = ri

DUMMA (—) denoting “u” e.g. دُ = du رُ = ru

SUKUN (—) it is the sign denoting absence of a vowel.

A consonant that does not carry any vowel is marked by a Sukun.

In Arabic there are three (3) parts of speech.

اسْمٌ (Noun) فِعْلٌ (Verb) حَرْفٌ (Particle)

Arabic اسْمٌ includes English nouns, pronouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Arabic فِعْلٌ is co-extensive with English verbs.

All words besides اسْمٌ and فِعْلٌ are حَرْفٌ - Particles.

اسْمٌ (noun) may be indefinite (نَكْرَةٌ) or definite (مَعْرِفَةٌ).

There are no definite or indefinite articles in Arabic language equivalent to English **a, an, the**.

Indefiniteness of اسْمٌ is indicated by تَنْوِينٌ (**nunation** at the end of the noun) which means the vowel sign is doubled at the end of the word.

Definiteness is indicated by اَلْ prefixed to the noun.

كِتَابٌ a book

قَلَمٌ a pen

الْكِتَابُ the book

الْقَلَمُ the pen

Since اسْمٌ cannot at the same time be definite and indefinite, تَنْوِينٌ and اَلْ **do not coexist**.

الْكِتَابُ and الْقَلَمُ will be incorrect.

Tanween is also used with proper nouns i.e. مُحَمَّدٌ، خَالِدٌ، زَيْدٌ. Even though there is a

tanween at the end of the noun, **these proper nouns are definite**.