

## Root Words

### What are root words?

Root letters are letters that form the main part of a word. Most of the Arabic words are constructed from root letters. These root letters provide the basic lexical meaning of the word. They are joined along with some other letters to form different words which have related meanings. Just as the root determines the type of plant, the genes determine the characteristics of a person; similarly roots determine the *meaning* of the word.

Example: the root - ر ح م joins together to form the original word رَحْمٌ (Rahim): womb. Mercy is derived from the womb. If we understand the mercy of a mother, then we can understand the concept of mercy that is related to this root. Thus, the root gives the characteristic of mercy.

### How many letters does a root consist of?

Most Arabic words have three letter roots and rarely four or five letter roots, and they *always* maintain their order / specific arrangement.

Example: ع ل م = knowledge and ل م ع = action ( changing the order gives a completely different meaning!)

### What comes out of a root?

From one set of root letters, come multiple stem words ( مصدر ) and from them many words emerge out, like from the roots of a plant; the stem and many branches emerge.

For example, the root ع ل م gives the stem words: عَلِمَ (ilm) and عَلِمٌ (alam). Furthermore, from the stem word عَلِمَ (ilm) comes the branching words يَعْلَمُ (ya'lamu), عَلِيمٌ (aleem), عَالِمٌ (aalim) etc; and from عَلِمٌ (alam) comes the branching words عَالَمِينَ (aalameen) etc.

### Does anything else affect the root meaning?

In a word, we have the root letters and other letters that share the basic root meaning. In English we have stem words, for example eat: eating, eats, ate, eaten, eatery, eatable. Other letters are sometimes before, between and also after the root letters.

Example: ر ح م are the root letters. If you add an extra ي: you get رَحِيمٌ (Raheem): Always all merciful

If you add a ن at the end: you get رَحْمَنٌ (Rahmaan) : Most merciful

### Why are root words important?

To know the translation of the word, and to analyze the word; knowing the root is essential. Also, to use the Arabic dictionary one must know the root of the word.

### Match the word with its root:

### Write the root for the following words:

Word	Root	Word	Root
الْحَمْدُ	ر ح م	الْعَالَمِينَ	
الرَّحْمَنَ	ح م د	الرَّحِيمِ	
نَعْبُدُ	ن ع م	مَالِكِ	
أَنْعَمْتَ	م ل ك	صِرَاطِ	
مَالِكِ	ع ب د	الْمَعْضُوبِ	