

Unit 8

Prepositions

We have already come across a few prepositions: **عَلَى** on; **فِي** in; **عَنْ** about. We have noted that a word controlled by a preposition is genitive.

This Unit lists more prepositions used in the Qur'an. Some prepositions may be translated in different ways. We need to look at the context in which a preposition is used to determine its exact meaning.

A preposition is placed before a noun or pronoun. It tells you the position or place of something in either space or time. Some prepositions in Arabic are used to show possession.

Attached prepositions

There are two prepositions which are single letters attached to the words they control:

لِ - to, belonging to, for; **بِ** - by, with, in.

The letter **كَ** as, like - is not a preposition but acts like one.

for whoever	لِ + مَنْ = لِمَنْ	with a heart	بِ + قَلْبٍ = بِقَلْبٍ
to people	لِ + النَّاسِ = لِلنَّاسِ	with the pen	بِ + القَلَمِ = بِالقَلَمِ
for God	لِ + اللَّهِ = لِلَّهِ	in the name	بِ + اسْمٍ = بِاسْمٍ

Note: the alif of the definite article **الْ** is omitted when it is preceded by **لِ**,

for example: **لِ** + **النَّاسِ** = **لِلنَّاسِ** and **لِ** + **الرَّسُولِ** = **لِلرَّسُولِ**.

If a word begins with a **لِ**, the whole of the definite article **الْ** is omitted,

for example: **لِ** + **الليل** = **لِليل**

When used with an attached pronoun **لِ** becomes **لِ**,

for example: **لِ** **لَكَ**, **لِ** **لَهَا**, **لِ** **لَهُ**; exception **لِي**

Separate prepositions

إِلَى / إِلَيْ	to	خَلْفَ	behind	فِي	in, among
بَعْدَ	after	عَنْ	about, concerning	قَبْلَ	before
بَيْنَ	between	عَلَى / عَلَيَّ	on, against	مَعَ	with
تَحْتَ	under	عِنْدَ	at, with	مِنْ	from
حَتَّى	until, even	فَوْقَ	above		

سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

'Peace be on you! Well have you done. Enter, then, this Paradise, herein to abide.' This will be the greeting of the keepers of Paradise to those who were conscious of their Creator, who were true to their nature and fulfilled their purpose on earth. Their response to the greeting of the keepers of Paradise will be: 'All praise is due to God, Who has made His promise to us come true...'

The prepositions **لِ**, **مَعَ** and **عِنْدَ** are used to indicate possession as well:

لَهُ, **عِنْدَهُ** and **مَعَهُ** can all mean 'he has'.

Some verbs in Arabic are followed by a particular preposition for which no translation in English is needed:

غَفَرَ لَهُ He forgave him (lit: he forgave to him).

اسْتَعِذْ	Seek protection!
ءَامَنَّا	We believed
عِزَّةٌ	honour
حَرَامٌ	sacred, inviolable
الْأَقْصَى	the further

So, seek protection with God from the rejected Satan. 16: 98

1 ■ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful. 1: 1

2 ■ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

And among people are those who say, 'We have believed in God and the Last Day...'

3 وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

and they are not believers. 2: 8

4 ■ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

And (all) honour belongs to God and to His messenger and to the believers. 63: 8

5 وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

From the Sacred Mosque to the Farther Mosque. 17: 1

6 مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى

With vessels (made) from silver. 76: 15

7 بِعَانِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ

From before the Prayer of dawn. 24: 58

8 مِنْ قَبْلِ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ

and from after the Prayer of 'Isha'. 24: 58

9 وَمِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ

Your possessions and your children are only a test. 64: 15

10 إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ

And God - with Him - is a great reward. 64: 15

11 وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

At the Sacred Mosque (in Makkah). 2: 191

12 عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ

Indeed the religion with God is Islam. 3: 19

13 إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

Indeed, God is with the steadfast ones. 2: 153

14 إِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الصّٰبِرِينَ

Peace (be) on you! 39: 73

15 سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Notes for text above

■ **Line 1:** The preposition **مِنَ** has a fat-hah on the نَ instead of a sukun for linking it to the following word.

The word **اللَّهِ** is genitive because it is controlled by the preposition **بِ**.

■ **Line 2:** The word **اللَّهِ** is genitive because it indicates possession.

■ **Line 4:** The sentence is a negative sentence

beginning with **مَا**. Now notice the **بِ** attached to **مُؤْمِنِينَ**. In negative sentences beginning with **مَا** (not) or **لَيْسَ** (he is not), **لَسْتُ** (I am not), **لَسْتُمْ** (you are not), the following noun is often prefixed by the preposition **بِ** which is not translated: e.g.

مَا هُوَ بِشَاعِرٍ He is not a poet.

أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ Am I not your Lord?