

REFLECTIONS ON ISLAM

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*A Commentary on the Letters and Counsel of our Shaykh*

By Allie Khalfe with Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks

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"Undoubtedly a corpus of profound principles and guidance to transform the heart, body and mind into an ideal Muslim. This work, 'Reflections on Islam', provides guidance to all Muslims aspiring to embody Quranic values and Prophetic wisdom to walk as 'Vicegerent on earth (Khalifa fil ard)'. 'Reflections on Islam' is truly inspirational and presents the reader with profound insight into a remarkable relationship between teacher, student and knowledge, a must-read for all."

*Dr. Dawood Terblanche, Doctor Of Philosophy (Religion), Imam, Nur El Houda Masjid, Bo-Kaap, Cape Town.*

"The English language is in dire need of authentic works that translate into native idioms and styles, universal truths and practices of Islam, and the scholars of the past upon whom our current interpretations are based. The success or failure of this task is the difference between producing the next Sibawayh-Ghazali-Razi versus the next snake oil salesman peddling a perverted, adulterated Islam that only furthers the already murky water of ignorance. This current work is one that we can rally behind and helps to transport the reader and student to the teachers of the Makkan line of scholars. As English-speaking Muslims, we continue to be in the debt of the saintly Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks and his dutiful student, my friend and colleague, Shaykh Allie Khalfe. May the Almighty give this work wings to fly and soar above the rest, and may it inspire the next revival in our faith community."

*Dr. Tarek Elgawhary, Founder, Making Sense of Islam*

*Reflections on Islam*

# Reflections on Islam

*A commentary on the Letters and Counsel of our Shaykh*



*By Allie Khalife with Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks*

THE **ISLAMICTEXT**  
I N S T I T U T E

*Reflections on Islam*

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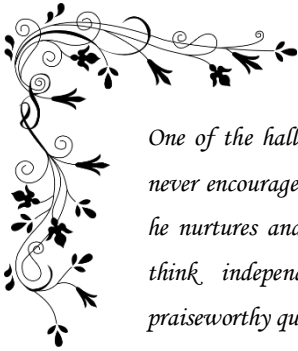
Dedicated to my parents,  
Ahmed & Zuleikha

*And to the late Shaykh Seraj Hendricks  
of the Zawia Mosque in Cape Town, and all his students.*

*Inspired by the book “Pearls of Wisdom”  
by the late Faiqah Jardine Daniels.*

Special thanks to the IslamicText team  
for assisting with various aspects of the book.





*One of the hallmarks of a good teacher is that he never encourages students to dislike others. Rather, he nurtures and expands their hearts so they may think independently, and guides them with praiseworthy qualities like love, mercy and tolerance.*

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## Preface



About thirteen years ago I consulted the late Shaykh Seraj Hendricks about compiling a book capturing some of the sayings and lessons of the teachers of the Zawia Mosque. My intention was to do what the great Imām, Abul Qāsim al-Qushayrī did when he recorded the words of his predecessors and masters. His work, *Al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī ‘ilm al-Tasawwuf – Al-Qushayrī’s Epistle on Sūfism*, would fast become the standard text on orthodox Tasawwuf.

A short while had passed and I received a call from a colleague and dear friend, Faiqah Jardine Daniels. She too wanted to capture the sayings of the Shaykhs and consulted me on a number of occasions regarding the contents of her research. Her dream was soon realised when she succinctly captured the essence of their sayings into a beautiful booklet titled, *“Pearls of Wisdom”*. This work, *“Reflections on Islam”*, is a little different as it is restricted to the lessons delivered by Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks, accompanied by my comments and citations from important books on Tasawwuf. It is an independent work in which I compiled I have tried my utmost to capture the essence of the lessons (*durūs*) of the Shaykh while remaining true to the style and manner in which Shaykh Ahmad delivered them.

It is my wish that the reader begins this book with a reading of Sūrah Fātiha and dedicates its blessings to all our teachers and those who served and still serve them today.

—Allie Khalfe

## Foreword



While this present work is an appreciation of the inspirational wisdom of Shaykh Ahmad, it is being launched in the sad aftermath of the recent passing on of his brother, *al-marhūm* Shaykh Seraj Hendricks.

As I read through the gem-filled pages of the transcript of Shaykh Allie's compilation and commentary, I cannot help but reflect on how these two extraordinary scholars have exemplified brotherly love and mutual reverence in their profound relationship with one another over the years. It struck me that we, as students, have benefitted uniquely from this very special bond between two brothers. Firstly, through living example they modelled the knowledge they disseminated, in the way they interacted with one another and secondly, through their complementary styles and approaches they were able to meet the needs of a broad and diverse body of learners.

Given this close relationship, the lessons shared in this work, while directly attributable to Shaykh Ahmad, are in reality an expression of the collective wisdom, camaraderie and shared legacy of the brothers Hendricks as well as their illustrious forebears – a legacy, in its 100 years of commemoration, which Shaykh Khalfe, through his commendable diligence, is helping to preserve.

—A lifelong student of the Zawia



## Endorsements



*“This work, ‘Reflections on Islam’, echoes the inner dimensions of Islam, espoused by an erudite scholar and captured in the understanding of a devoted student. God-centred and God-focused; the work ushers the reader into the temperament, the vision and the insight of the Sufi. It places into context the juxtaposition between the spiritual and the material, the here and the hereafter, the finiteness of the human and the infinity of the Divine. The amiable style of the work as a documentation of personal and public communications presents the reader with a crystalline form of faith; evoking understanding, arousing introspection and encouraging spiritual reflection. It fosters a degree of presence that is most empowering.”*

SHAYKH SA’DULLAH KHAN,  
CEO: ISLAMIA COLLEGE (CAPE TOWN)



*“Love for one’s spiritual guide is one of the most important elements for the student to not only obtain cerebral learning from a teacher, but also for the polishing of the heart and nourishment of the soul. Such affinity is palpable in ‘Reflections on Islam.’”*

DR. RASHIED OMAR, IMĀM, CLAREMONT MAIN ROAD MOSQUE  
RESEARCH SCHOLAR - NOTRE DAME’S KROC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE STUDIES

*“The English language is in dire need of authentic works that translate into native idioms and styles, universal truths and practices of Islam, and the scholars of the past upon whom our current interpretations are based. The success or failure of this task is the difference between producing the next Sībawayh-Ghazālī-Rāzī versus the next snake oil salesman peddling a perverted, adulterated Islam that only furthers the already murky water of ignorance. This current work is one that we can rally behind and helps to transport the reader and student to the teachers of the Makkan line of scholars. As English-speaking Muslims, we continue to be in the debt of the saintly Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks and his dutiful student, my friend and colleague, Shaykh Allie Khalfe. May the Almighty give this work wings to fly and soar above the rest, and may it inspire the next revival in our faith community.”*

DR. TAREK ELGAWHARY, FOUNDER: MAKING SENSE OF ISLAM



*“The dedicated activity of recording the master’s words is known in traditional Islamic sciences as The Spoken Words (Al-Malfūdhāt). Allie Khalfe once again, under the influence of his mentor and ustādh, revived an unpractised knowledge activity. He has recorded the oral presentations, counselling and lessons of his teacher. The value of this is two-fold: firstly, companionship with the teacher (suhba) and secondly, absorbing knowledge from his heart (qalb).”*

MOULANA AHMED MUKADAM, BA (UKZN), MA (UCT),  
FORMER RECOTR – ICOSA, COSULTANT, ISLAMIC STUDIES (SOUTH AFRICA)

*“The book ‘Reflections on Islam’ has left me exceedingly humbled. It offers a series of stirring and insightful discourses given by the ‘Ulamā of the Zāwiya. In his willingness to share, my brother Shaykh Allie Khalfe offers glimpses of profound wisdoms that would otherwise be accessible only to those who have mastered the Arabic language. Sh Allie offers a rare possibility to go beyond all limitations. This is an informative and exhilarating read, incisive and insightful. It is a brutally honest book about a remarkably charismatic ‘Ālim, written by an author who is intelligent and independent.”*

SHAYKH SHOUKET ALLIE, ADV. OF THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA;  
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC STUDIES, B.A LL.B (HONS) LL.B (SHARĪ‘A) LL.M



*“Undoubtedly a corpus of profound principles and guidance to transform the heart, body and mind into an ideal Muslim. This work, ‘Reflections on Islam’, provides guidance to all Muslims aspiring to embody Quranic values and Prophetic wisdom to walk as ‘Vicegerent on earth (Khalifa fil ard)’. ‘Reflections on Islam’ is truly inspirational and presents the reader with profound insight into a remarkable relationship between teacher, student and knowledge, a must-read for all.”*

DR. DAWOOD TERBLANCHE, DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (RELIGION),  
IMĀM, NUR EL HOUDA MASJID, BO-KAAP, CAPE TOWN

*“What is a true Muhammadan inheritor? A true Muhammadan inheritor has fully absorbed the essence of Islam from the teachers of that inheritance. At each and every moment that inheritor links you to Allah, whether they are teaching fiqh, ‘aqīda or, the king of the sciences - tasawwuf. Such an inheritor brings the entire, immense range of the Islamic tradition to bear on the present moment, a moment in which you reflect on your relationship to the Almighty. These inheritors are the gold bars of our community and our beloved Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks is indeed one such inheritor. We are extraordinarily blessed to have someone like him in our midst and are immensely grateful to his dedicated companion and student, Shaykh Allie Khalfe, for linking us, through this work, to the suhba of Shaykh Ahmad and the profound inheritance which he embodies.”*

PROF. AUWAIŠ RAFUDEEN,  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND ARABIC, UNISA



*“In these times when knowledge is easily available through the media but lacking in humility and wisdom, we are happy to see Shaykh Allie Khalfe produce an invaluable piece of work and commentary of his Suhba with his Shaykh. It is a true reflection of a time-honoured tradition of learning at the feet of a true shaykh and absorbing what his teacher imparted to his heart. It is a heartfelt piece of work to be absorbed by the seeker of truth.”*

IMĀM HASEN WALELE,  
IMĀM MASJIDUL JUMUAH, MILNERTON, CAPE TOWN

## *Biography, Shaykh Ahmad Hendricks*



SHAYKH AHMAD HENDRICKS spent ten years specialising in Islamic Law (*fiqh and usūl al-fiqh*) at the Umm ul-Qura University in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Prior to this, he spent several years studying at the feet of his late uncles, Shaykh Mahdi, Shaykh Ebrahim and Shaykh Mujahid Hendricks. Shaykh Ahmad is the current Shaykh at the Zawia in Cape Town.

Our Shaykh's biography will be incomplete without a brief background of his esteemed uncles.

SHAYKH MUJAHID HENDRICKS was fortunate to have been a student of the great gnostic, Sayyid Amīn Kutbi, who narrated directly from the Shaykh and Wali of the Awliyā, Shaykh Umar Hamdān, may Allah be pleased with him.

THE SHAYKHS, MAHDI AND EBRAHIM HENDRICKS, may Allah be pleased with them, narrated and received Ijāza from the likes of Sayyid 'Abbās al-Māliki, Shaykh Bakr al-Bār, Shaykh Bakr Bābsayl and Shaykh 'Umar Bā-Junaid. They received specific Ijāza in the thabat of Shaykh al-Amīr al-Kabīr from Sayyid 'Abbās al-Māliki.

Shaykh Mahdi was also an authority in transmitting the Shāfi'ī school and dearly loved the works of Imām Khatīb al-Shirbīni.

Shaykh Ahmad was therefore the recipient of a wealth of traditional knowledge, even before departing to Makkah.

The Shaykh's uncles, in turn, were brought up and trained by their father, Shaykh Muhammad Salih Hendricks, may Allah be pleased with him, who sat at the feet of Shaykhs 'Umar Bā-Junaid and Sayyid Husayn al-Hibshī, who in turn narrated directly from the Master, Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlān, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

Aside from his studies at Umm ul-Qura University, Shaykh Ahmad spent nearly a decade at the feet of the Scholar, Shaykh, Muhaddith, Wali and Master of the path, Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Alawi al-Māliki, from whom he obtained – along with his late brother Shaykh Seraj – a full ijāza in the religious sciences and a number of tariqas. The Shaykhs also obtained ijāzāt from both the late Sayyid Ahmad Mashhūr al-Haddād and Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir bin Ahmad al-Saqqāf, may Allah be pleased with them.

## *Biography, Allie Khalfe*



ALLIE KHALFE spent over 15 years learning traditional texts with the late Shaykh Seraj and Shaykh Aḥmad Hendricks. They, in turn, graduated from the Umm al-Qura University in Makkah specialising in uṣūl al-fiqh, and spent about ten years at the feet of the ocean of knowledge, al-Sayyid Muḥammad bin ‘Alawī al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī. Allie received from them license (*ijāza*) to transmit various branches of traditional Islamic texts from them.

He also spent two years at the grand al-Azhar mosque in Cairo, sitting at the feet of some of the foremost scholars alive today, including Shaykh Sa‘īd Mamdūh, Shaykh ‘Alī Jumu‘a, Shaykh Faṭḥī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥijāzī, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Shāfi‘ī al-Hanfī and Shaykh Hishām Kāmil, may Allah preserve and bless them all. He also read classical texts like the *Jawharah al-Tawhid* in private settings to Shaykh Yusri Jabr and Dr. Ustādha Nahla el-Harrāki in Cairo, and Habib Jibrīl Haddad in Madīnah, all of whom bestowed their blessings upon him to transmit from them.

Allie is the founder of The IslamicText Institute in Surrey Estate, Cape Town and is currently completing his Masters in Islamic Studies, with a focus on theology, at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

He previously lectured on theology and spirituality at the International Peace College of South Africa (IPSA) and the Madina Institute. He is the author of the following books:

- A commentary on the Jawharah al-Tawhid, vol. 1
- Sūrah Al-Fātiha: A Fellowship of Faith
- Islam: A Tradition of Mercy
- Mind, Body and Soul madrasa textbook series
- The Honour and Status of the Human Being
- The Legacy: A Spiritual Journey to God

Allie also developed The IslamicText Trivia game, which complements the way Islamic knowledge is disseminated. It compliments authentic tradition of learning with a tool enhancing the teacher's ability to educate, stimulate and empower learners, as well as showcasing Islam's rich legacy to communities of various faiths.



Two Thousand and Five, May  
ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE HEART  
(TANWĪR AL-QULŪB)



Our Shaykh reminded us about actions that revive the heart, heal us inwardly and bring us closer to Allah ﷻ. He quoted the Gnostic, Abū Layth Nasr Samarqandī, who mentioned in his treasured work, Admonition for the Neglectful (*Tanbīh al-Ghāfilīn*), seven actions that revive a neglectful heart. I will mention four of these points followed by a brief commentary on each.

1. **SINCERITY IN WORSHIP (IKHLĀS FIL ‘IBĀDA)**

Allah ﷻ says, “*And they have been commanded no more than this: to worship Allah, offering Him sincere devotion.*” *Quran 98:5*

This means that worship (*‘ibāda*) should be done solely for Allah ﷻ. Sincerity of intention (*ikhlās al-niyya*) is not something that comes to one automatically. Rather, it is something one needs to work towards. Imām Ghazālī reminds us to question our intention everytime we perform an act of obedience.

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25 NOVEMBER 2020

**Publications by Allie Khalfe,**  
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**A commentary on the Jawharah al-Tawhid, vol. 1 R200**

**FOREWORD BY SHAYKH ḤASAN AL-SHĀFI'Ī AL-AZHARĪ**

ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO ALLAH, and may the prayers and salutations of Allah be upon the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muḥammad, his Household, his Companions and all those who follow them. During mid *Jumāda al-Ūlā*, 1435 H. according to the Islamic calendar, in the blessed city of Cairo—may Allah preserve it—I received the



request to write an introduction to this work by my student and brother, Ustādh Allie Khalfe, a student of sacred knowledge at al-Azhar al-Sharīf. Before I begin my introduction to the translation of the *Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*, which was authored by Imam al-Laḳānī in the science *tawḥīd*, I would like to mention two points:

The first is regarding the virtues of traditional expeditions of knowledge, which distinguish the culture and history of Islam. This has brought about a unique connection and relationship between the Islamic lands of Africa, Asia and the entire Islamic world, which is increasing around the globe. These journeys also nourish the different schools of thought and cultures, and enrich the dispersing of ancient theological learning and the different systems and models of wisdom, which flourished in specific times and places and spread throughout the Islamic nation.

Al-Azhar al-Sharīf in Egypt is one such institution of knowledge and a beacon of Islamic culture, as it fully embraces the voyage of learning. Al-Azhar al-Sharīf must be applauded for producing the finest fruits, our scholars, who call towards beneficial knowledge and a sound understanding of Islam. Knowledge indeed gushes from al-Azhar al-Sharīf like fountains from the earth.

The second point I would like to make is to emphasise the diligence that this student of knowledge has shown. Shaykh Allie Khalfe has chosen to present a gift to his family and fellow countrymen in South Africa—in it are rare and splendid jewels from the *Jawhara al-Tawhīd*. This is a work of knowledge and intellectual research, focussing on the oneness of Allah, which is considered as the most noble of sciences and greatest of quests.

It is also a text that makes clear the truth and veritable nature of the Prophets and Messengers, the resurrection on the Day of Judgement, and so much more. As for his reward in translating this text, I mention what the noble Prophet Muḥammad said: “Good in this world will be rewarded with good in the next, and disobedience in this world will be returned with punishment in the next.”

The science of *tawhīd* is the underlying pillar of all other sciences, and is referred to as scholastic theology [*‘ilm al-kalām*] or the fundamentals of religion [*uṣūl al-dīn*]. The text of Imam al-Laḳānī is one that is studied and taught at many institutions around the world, and has indeed received tremendous accolades over the centuries. Imam al-Laḳānī was one of

the renowned scholars of al-Azhar al-Sharīf, in the eleventh century of Islam (approximately four hundred years ago) and, needless to say, research into his *Jawhara* and into the science of theology continues to this day at al-Azhar al-Sharīf. Numerous commentaries and footnotes have been written on the *Jawhara*, the first by Imam al-Laḳānī himself. The most important and most noble compilations have been produced by two scholars, both of whom held the position of Grand Shaykh



of al-Azhar al-Sharīf, a high and noble seat that cannot be attained except by the most senior scholars of sacred knowledge. These Shaykhs are none other than Shaykh al-Amīr al-Kabīr and Imam al-Bājūrī.

Shaykh Allie Khalfe selected the commentary of Imam al-Bājūrī as a reference for the English speaking audience for two reasons: first, because it is more concise and less extensive than the commentary of Shaykh al-Amīr. Secondly, the author presents detailed discussions of each chapter and brings forth such clarity that it has facilitated many students of knowledge to experience the easiest and most accessible way to understand the various Islamic sciences. Until today, his commentary has proved the best for beginners when compared to that of the esteemed Shaykh al-Amīr.

I have read the chapters that have been translated into English and found myself content with them. It is my hope that this translation will provide the English reader with a clear and concise example of Islamic theology.

It is said that a translator does not translate except that he leaves certain things out from the original text. Someone who undertakes the translation of the text of knowledge and philosophy is required to take heed of the minute details, for there might be some differences between the original text and the translation, as is the case with my introduction, which has been translated from Arabic to English.

Our son, Shaykh Allie Khalfe, is an intelligent student of knowledge. I pray that Allah accepts him, that He strengthens and aid him. He has reached a high station with a sound understanding of the original text and has expressed that within his translation.

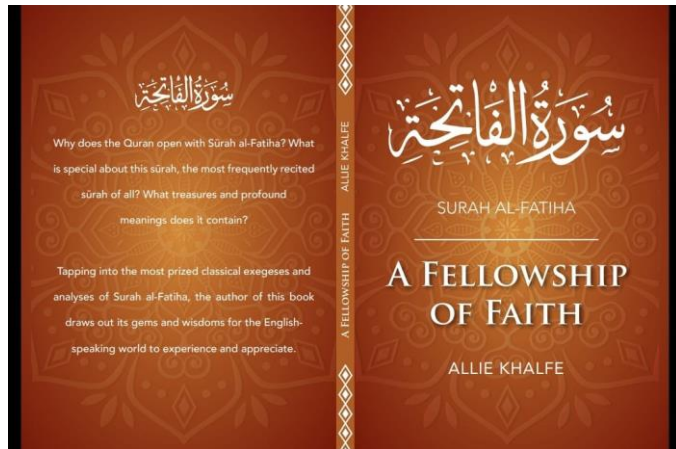
May Allah reward him and his family with the best of rewards, *āmīn*. I request from him to remain sincere in his knowledge and to make good use of it. His responsibility is to teach and spread the knowledge he has been blessed with. I request from him to pray for us, his teachers, and the entire Muslim *umma*.

*Āmīn* - Friday, 15th of *Jumāda al-Ūlā*, 1437 H. 6th of March, 2015 Cairo

## Sūrah Al-Fātiha: A Fellowship of Faith R150

**PREFACE: -DR. IBRAHIM NEGM, SENIOR ADVISOR TO THE MUFTI OF EGYPT**

The first chapter of the Quran, appropriately named "The Opening", is truly the opening of not just the book of God, but of Man's relationship with God Himself. It is the opening of humanity's ability to understand their purpose in this life, and what awaits them in the next, which is achieved first and foremost by knowing our Creator, and seeking aid and guidance from Him alone. From that humble beginning comes great honour and strength for those who live its message.



Although small in size, its words have kept scholars and saints alike busy throughout the ages seeking out its meanings, and it will continue to do so until the last hour. That journey of understanding is in no way limited to just the Arabic Language, but extends to all those who have heard its words and wish to relay some of their beauty and depth into the other languages of the world.

So it is with great joy that we introduce a new addition to that journey of understanding into the English language, at a time in which the English speaking world is in need of hearing the true message of Islam, encapsulated in this commentary of the opening chapter of The Quran by Shaykh Allie Khalfe entitled "A Fellowship of Faith".

We ask God, the Almighty, to accept this work and its author, and to make it a means of reaching the hearts of those who read it.

## A Tradition of Mercy R150

The work before you contains anecdotes from a few classical texts, particularly the Quranic commentary, *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, penned by the gnostic and pole of the saints, Imām Fakhrudīn al-Rāzī, may Allah’s mercy be upon him.

The reason for selecting Imām al-Rāzī’s text in particular is because of the amount of beneficial lessons it contains, which, in my opinion has for far too long been confined to those well-versed in the Arabic



language. While some have attempted to translate certain sections of his work, which comprises nearly 37 volumes, into various languages including English, I have not come across any graphical representation of the anecdotes found in it to date.

While this work, *Islam: A Tradition of Mercy*, focuses primarily on the opening chapter of the Quran, Sūrat Al-Fātiha, it is not limited to it but rather expands and sheds light on some of the infinite spiritual lessons found within the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Some of these include mercy (*al-rahma*), forgiveness (*maghfirah*), hope (*rajā'*), fear (*khawf*), and consciousness (*taqwā*).

I pray that this work is accepted by Almighty Allah and that it serves beneficial to the reader.

## IslamicText Trivia Game R200

IslamicText Trivia, the brainchild of Shaykh Allie Khalfe, complements the way Islamic knowledge is disseminated.

It compliments authentic tradition of learning, with a tool enhancing the teacher's ability to educate, stimulate and empower Muslims, as well as showcasing Islam's rich legacy to communities of various faiths.



The game consists

of 250 cards. Cards are divided into 8 categories, including Fiqh, Tawhīd, Arabic, History, General, Special, Egypt and Makkah.

Players compete to answer questions correctly, thereby engaging in the pursuit of traditional Islamic knowledge in the most enjoyable way possible. A correct answer yields 2 rewards [thawāb]. Once a player hits 20 thawāb, he or she unlocks the first gate of paradise [jannah]. As players accumulate thawāb, they quickly work their way through the various levels of paradise toward the highest, al-Firdaws.



The first player to reach 140 thawāb unlocks al-Firdaws, is the winner. Along the journey, a card may detour a player to Egypt, a separate deck of cards focusing on questions related to Egyptian history. Your sojourn here ends when a card releases you to either continue the journey to paradise or travel to Makkah, which is another set of cards focusing on Meccan history. If one reaches 80 rewards in either Egypt or Makkah, one dies a martyr [shahīd] and automatically enters al-Firdaws.

The question and turn based method cultivates patience, sociability and camaraderie. All traits which foster confidence, and coupled with sound knowledge, is a springboard to learn more. Along with character building, reading abilities are greatly enhanced for children at the preschool-primary level. Their inquisitiveness and the repetitive nature of reading the questions help to cement up to 2000 Islamic facts and more than 10000 English words which greatly improves memory.