



The first letter of the alphabet [according to the order in which the letters are now commonly disposed; and also according to the original order, which see in art. اجد]: called أَلِف. [This name, like most of the other names of Arabic letters, is traceable to the Phœnician language, in which it signifies "an ox;" the ancient Phœnician form of the letter thus called being a rude representation of an ox's head.] It is, of all the letters, that which is most frequent in speech: and some say that, in آلَم, in the Kūr [ch. ii. &c.], it is a name of God. (TA.) Its name is properly fem., as is also that of every other letter; [and hence its pl. is أَلِفَاتُ;] but it may be made masc.: so says Ks: Sb says that all the letters of the alphabet are masc. and fem., like as اللسان is masc. and fem. (M.) As a letter of the alphabet, it is abbreviated, [or short, and is written l, as it also is generally when occurring in a word, except at the end, when, in certain cases, it is written ي,] and is pronounced with a pause after it: and it is also prolonged: (S, K, TA.) [in the latter case, it is written آ; and] this is the case when it is made a subst.: and when it is not called a letter, [i.e. when one does not prefix to it the word حَرْفٌ] it is [properly] fem. (S.) Its dim. is أَلِيفَةٌ, meaning an l written small, or obscure, (S, IB,) according to those who make it fem. and who say, زَيْبَتْ زَايَاً and ذَيْبَتْ ذَالًا; but زَوَيْبَتْ زَايَاً according to those who say, زَوَيْبَتْ زَايَاً. (IB.)=أَلِفٌ [properly so called] is one of the letters of prolongation and of softness and of augmentation; the letters of augmentation being ten, which are comprised in the saying, أَلِيفَةٌ تَنْسَاهُ ["to-day thou wilt forget it"]. (S.) There are two species of الف; namely, لَيْفَةٌ [or soft], and مَحْرُكَةٌ [or movent]; the former of which is [properly] called أَلِفٌ; and the latter, هَمْزَةٌ; (S, TA;) which is a faucial letter, pronounced in the furthest part of the fauces [by a sudden emission of the voice after a total suppression, so that it resembles in sound a feebly-uttered ع, whence the form of the character (ء) whereby it is represented]: but this latter is sometimes tropically called الف; and both [as shown above] are of the letters of augmentation. (S in art. او, and TA.) There are also two other species of الف; namely, أَلِفٌ وَصَلٌ [the alif of conjunction or connexion, or the conjunctive or connexive alif]; and أَلِفٌ قَطْعٌ [the alif of disjunction, or the disjunctive alif]; every one that is permanent in the connexion of words being of the latter species; and that which is not permanent, [i. e. which is not pronounced, unless it is an alif of prolongation,] of the former species; and this is without exception augmentative; [but it is sometimes a substitute for a suppressed radical letter, as in اَبْنٌ, originally بَنَى or بَنُو;] whereas the alif of

disjunction is sometimes augmentative, as in the case of the interrogative alif [to be mentioned below, and in other cases]; and sometimes radical, as in أَخَذَ and أَمَرَ: (S, TA:) or, according to Aḥmad Ibn-Yahyà and Mohammad Ibn-Yezced, (T, TA,) the primary أَلِفَاتُ are three; the rest being subordinate to these: namely, أَلِفٌ أَصْلِيَّةٌ [radical alif], (T, K, TA,) as in أَلِفٌ and أَكَلَ (T) and أَخَذَ; (K;) and أَلِفٌ قَطْعِيَّةٌ [disjunctive alif], as in أَحْمَدُ (T, K) and أَحْمَرُ (T) and أَحْسَنُ; (T, K;) and أَلِفٌ وَصْلِيَّةٌ [conjunctive or connexive alif], (T, K,) as in اسْتَخْرَجَ (T) and اسْتَخْرَجَ. (T, K.)—The أَلِفٌ which is one of the letters of prolongation and of softness is called الأَلِفُ السَّاكِنَةُ [the quiescent alif, and الأَلِفُ الْهَادِئَةُ, which signifies the same]: (MF, TA:) it is an aerial letter, (Mughnee, MF, TA,) merely a sound of prolongation after a fet-hah; (T, TA;) and cannot have a vowel, (IB, Mughnee, MF,) wherefore it cannot commence a word: (Mughnee:) when they desire to make it movent, if it is converted from و or ي, they restore it to its original, as in عَصَوَانٌ and رَحِيَانٌ; and if it is not converted from و or ي, they substitute for it hemzehl, as in رَسَائِلٌ, in which the hemzehl is a substitute for the l in [the sing.] رِسَالَةٌ. (IB.) IJ holds that the name of this letter is لَآ, [pronounced lá or lé, without, or with, imáleh, like the similar names of other letters, as بَآ and تَآ and &c.] and that it is the letter which is mentioned [next] before ي in reckoning the letters; the ل being prefixed to it because it cannot be pronounced at the beginning of its name, as other letters can, as, for instance, ص and ج; and he adds that the teachers [in schools] err in pronouncing its name أَلِفٌ. (Mughnee.)—The grammarians have other particular appellations for alifs, which will be here mentioned. (T, TA.)—الأَلِفُ الْمَجْهُولَةُ [The unknown alif] is such as that in فَاعِلٌ [or فَاعِلٌ] and فَاعُولٌ; i. e., every l, (T, K,) of those having no original [from which they are converted, not being originally أ nor و nor ي, but being merely a formative letter, and hence, app., termed "unknown"], (T,) inserted for the purpose of giving fulness of sound to the fet-hah in a verb and in a noun; (T, K;) and this, when it becomes movent, becomes و, as in the case of خَوَاتِمٌ and خَاتِمٌ, becoming و in this case because it is movent, and followed by a quiescent l, which l is the l of the pl., and is also مجهولة. (T.)—الأَلِفَاتُ الْمَدَاتُ [The alifs of prolongations] are such as those [which are inserted for the same purpose of giving fulness of sound to the fet-hah] in دَانَاتٌ, for كَنْكَلٌ, and خَاتِمٌ, for خَاتِمٌ, and دَانَاتٌ, for دَانَاتٌ. (T, K.) In like manner, و is inserted after a dammeh, as in أَنْظُرُ; and ي after a kesreh,

as in شِيمَالٌ. (TA.) An alif of this species is also called أَلِفُ الْإِشْبَاعِ [The alif added to give fulness of sound to a fet-hah preceding it]: and so is the alif in مَنَا used in imitation [of a noun in the accus. case; as when one says, رَأَيْتُ رَجُلًا (pronounced رَجُلًا) "I saw a man," and the person to whom these words are addressed says, مَنَا Whom?]. (Mughnee.)—أَلِفُ الصَّلَةِ [The alif of annexation, or the annexed alif,] is that which is an annex to the fet-hah of a rhyme, (T, K,) and to that of the fem. pronoun هَا: in the former case as in بَانَتْ سَعَادٌ وَأَمْسَى حَبْلُهَا أَنْقَطَا in which l is made an annex to the fet-hah of the ع [of the rhyme]; and in the saying in the Kūr [xxxiii. 10], وَتَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا, in which the l after the last ن is an annex to the fet-hah of that ن; and in other instances in the final words of verses of the Kūr-án, as قَوَارِيرَا and سَلْسَبِيلَا [in lxxvi. 15 and 18]: in the other case as in ضَرَبْتَهَا and مَمَرْتُ بِهَا. (T.) The difference between it and أَلِفُ الْوَصْلِ is, that the latter is in the beginnings of nouns and verbs, and the former is in the endings of nouns [and verbs]. (T, K.) It is also called أَلِفُ الْإِطْلَاقِ [The alif of unbinding, because the vowel ending a rhyme prevents its being مقيد, i. e. "bound" by the preceding consonant]: (Mughnee;) and أَلِفُ الْفَاصِلَةِ [the alif of the final word of a verse of poetry or of a verse of the Kūr-án or of a clause of rhyming prose]. (TA.) [This last appellation must not be confounded with that which here next follows.]—الأَلِفُ الْفَاصِلَةُ [The separating alif] is the l which is written after the و of the pl. to make a separation between that و and what follows it, as in شَكُرُوا (T, K) and كَفَرُوا, and in the like of يَغْزُوا and يَدْعُوا [and يَرْضُوا]; but when a pronoun is affixed to the verb, this l, being needless, does not remain: (T:) also the l which makes a separation between the ن which is a sign of the fem. gender and the heavy [or doubled] ن [in the corroborated form of the aor. and imperative], (T, K,) because a triple combination of ن is disliked, (T,) as in يَفْعَلْنَ and لَا تَفْعَلْنَ and أَفْعَلْنَ (T, K) and لَا تَفْعَلْنَ (T.)—أَلِفُ التَّنُونِ الْخَفِيفَةِ [The alif of the light, or single, noon in the contracted corroborated form of the aor. and imperative], as in the phrase in the Kūr [xcvi. 15], تَنْسَعَا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ, [explained in art. سفع], (T, K,) and the phrase [in xii. 32], وَأَلِيكُونَا مِنَ الصَّاعِرِينَ [And he shall assuredly be of those in a state of vileness, or ignominy], in both of which instances the pause is made with l [only, without tenween, so that one says تَنْسَعَا and أَلِيكُونَا, and this seems to be indicated in Expositions of the Kūr-án as the proper pronunciation of these two words in the phrases here cited, the former of which, and the first word of the latter,