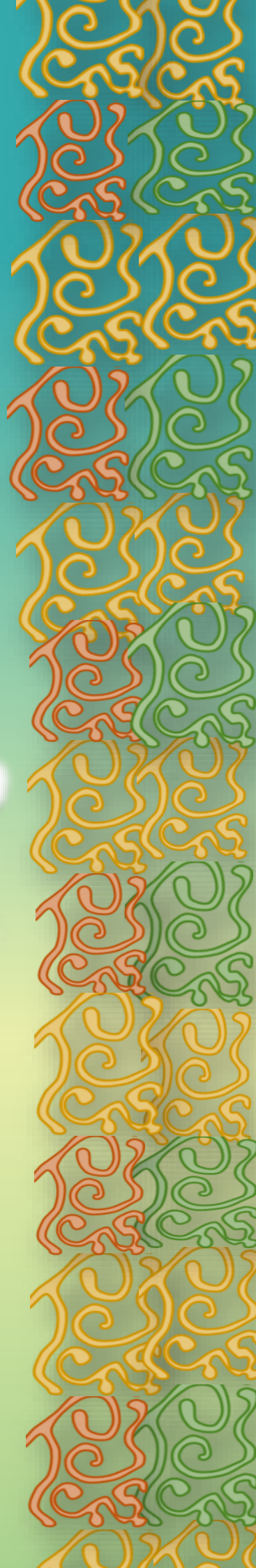


Letters of the Alphabet  
& Particles

حروف المبني والمعنى

Transcription of  
Part of the lecture



# حروف المبني وحروف المعنى

## Letters (of the Alphabet) and Particles

(The following is a transcription of part of the above lecture by the Shaykh)

In Arabic, letters of the alphabet are 28 letters.

The first letter of the alphabet – *Alif* ا – in ancient times was

written like this: ا which is actually *hamzah*. همزة

*Hamzah* is a glottal stop 

*Hamzah* as a term, is a later creation. Formerly it was called *Alif*.

*Alif* means *hamzah*.

Then when Arabs began to write – and we had words like:

لَا، مَا، نَامَ

لَ short *fathah*

مَ short *fathah*

نَ short *fathah*

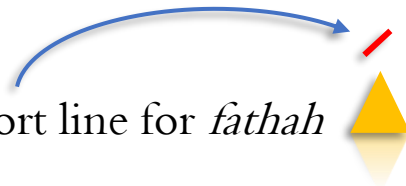
- and words like:

لَا *laa* = long *fathah*

مَا *maa* = long *fathah*

نَا *naa* = long *fathah*

- the grammarians invented the short line for *fathah*



But they had a problem: How to write a long *fathah* (*aa*)?

لَا،

مَا

*laa, maa*

So what they did, is they took the first letter of the alphabet –

*hamzah* ٓ – and used it as a sign of a long *fathah*:

لَا = ا + ل

مَا = ا + م

نَا = ا + ن

لَا، مَا، نَا

These words نَا، مَا، لَا could have been read as *hamzah* first of all:

لَا → لا  
laa → la'

مَا → ما  
maa → ma'

So how could they differentiate between the original function of *alif* – which is *hamzah*, a glottal stop – and the secondary function of *alif* – a long *fathah*?

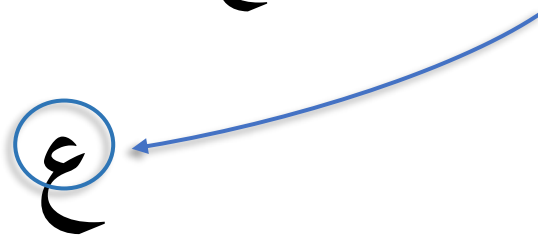
Original function of *alif*:



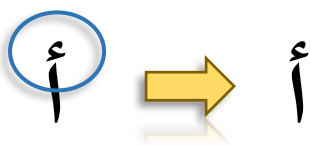
Secondary function of *alif*:



To differentiate, they took the 'ain ع and cut off its head.



And they used this head on the *alif* to indicate the *hamzah* – a glottal stop.



They [also] used this head on the *waaw* and *yaa* to indicate the *hamzah* – a glottal stop.



So since one letter was used to do two functions, the Arabs had to invent this sign (ء) to differentiate between the original function of *alif* which is the glottal stop.

In ancient texts they don't have ا.

When they meant مَا they wrote مَا and put *sukuun* on it.

So مَا in ancient texts is مَا

And this is مَا long *fathah* ( ا + م ).

That is why in India, Pakistan, on *waaw* and *yaa* we put a *sukuun*:



قَوْلُوا

But in Arab countries, they write without a *sukuun*:

قولوا

But in both the Arab and Pakistan systems, they both write a long *fathah* without *sukuun*:

مَا

- otherwise it will become a *hamzah* (a glottal stop) مَا .

So when *alif* represents a long *fathah*, you have to leave writing a *sukuun* on it.

*(The lecture continues...)*