

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. *ابجد*]: 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 *المر*, in the *Qur* [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 *أَلِفَات*]; but it may be made masc.: so says Ks: Sb says that all the letters of the alphabet are masc. and fem., like as *اللِسَان* is masc. and fem. (M.) As a letter of the alphabet, it is abbreviated, [or short, and is written *ا*, as it also is generally when occurring in a word, except at the end, when, in certain cases, it is written *ى*,] 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 *حَرْف*], it is [properly] fem. (S.) Its dim. is *أَلِفَةٌ*, meaning *an written small*, or *obscure*, (S, IB,) according to those who make it fem. and who say, *زَيْتٌ زَايَا* and *ذَيْلٌ ذَالَا*; but *زَوَيْتٌ زَايَا* according to those who say, *زَوَيْتٌ زَايَا*. (IB.)—*أَلِف* [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, *الْيَوْمَ تَنْسَاهُ* ["to-day thou wilt forget it"]. (S.) There are two species of *الف*; namely, *لَيْتَةٌ* [or *soft*], and *مُتَحَرِّكَةٌ* [or *movent*]; the former of which is [properly] called *أَلِف*; 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 (*ا*) 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 وَضَلٌ* [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 *أَبْنٌ*, originally *بَنَى*]; 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 *أَمَرَ* and *أَخَذَ*: (S, TA:) or, according to Aḥmad Ibn-Yaḥyà and Moḥammad Ibn-Yezed, (T, TA,) the primary *أَلِفَات* are three; the rest being subordinate to these: namely, *أَلِفٌ أَصْلِيَّةٌ* [radical *alif*], (T, K, TA,) as in *أَكَلَ* and *أَلَفَ* (T) and *أَخَذَ* (K); and *أَلِفٌ قَطْعِيَّةٌ* [disjunctive *alif*], as in *أَخَذَ* (T, K) and *أَحْمَدُ* (T) and *أَحْسَنُ* (T, K); and *أَلِفٌ وَضَلِيَّةٌ* [conjunctive or connexive *alif*], (T, K,) as in *أَسْتَخْرَجُ* (T) and *أَسْتَفْرَجُ* (T, K).—The *أَلِف* 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 *ى*, they restore it to its original, as in *عَصَوَانٌ* and *رَحِيَانٌ*; and if it is not converted from *و* or *ى*, they substitute for it *hem-zeh*, as in *رَسَائِلٌ*, in which the *hem-zeh* is a substitute for the *ا* in [the sing.] *رِسَالَةٌ*. (IB.) IJ holds that the name of this letter is *لَا*, [pronounced *lá* or *lé*, without, or with, *imáleh*, like the similar names of other letters, as *بَا* and *تَا* and *ثَا* &c.] and that it is the letter which is mentioned [next] before *ى* 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 *أَلِف*. (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 *ا*, (T, K,) of those having no original [from which they are converted, not being originally *أ* nor *و* nor *ى*, 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 *خَاتَمٌ* and *خَوَاتِمٌ*, becoming *و* in this case because it is movent, and followed by a quiescent *ا*, which *ا* is the *ا* of the pl., and is also *مَجْهُولَةٌ*. (T.)—*أَلِفَاتُ الْمَدَاتِ* [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 *دَانَاقٌ*, for *خَاتَمٌ*, and *كَلِكَلٌ*, for *خَاتَمٌ*, and *دَانَاقٌ*, for *دَانَاقٌ*. (T, K.) In like manner, *و* is inserted after a *dammeh*, as in *أَنْظُورٌ*; and *ى* 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 الْاِتِّصَالِ* [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 *ا* is made an annex to the *fet-hah* of the *ع* [of the rhyme]; and in the saying in the *Qur* [xxxiii. 10], *وَتَلَطُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظَّنُونَا*, in which the *ا* 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 *Qur-án*, as *قَوَارِيرَا* and *سَلْسَبِيلَا* [in lxxvi. 15 and 18]: in the other case as in *ضُرِبَتْهَا* and *مَرَّزَتْ 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 *مُقَيَّدٌ*, 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 Qur-án or of a clause of rhyming prose*]. (TA.) [This last appellation must not be confounded with that which here next follows.]—*أَلِفُ الْفَاصِلَةِ* [The *separating alif*] is the *ا* which is written after the *و* of the pl. to make a separation between that *و* and what follows it, as in *شَكَرُوا* (T, K) and *يَدْعُوا* and *يَغْزُوا* and *كَفَرُوا* [and *يُرْضُوا*]; but when a pronoun is affixed to the verb, this *ا*, being needless, does not remain: (T:) also the *ا* 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 *يَفْعَلْنَانِ* and *لَا تَفْعَلْنَانِ* and *أَفْعَلْنَانِ* (T, K) and *تَفْعَلْنَانِ* and *أَفْعَلْنَانِ* (T.)—*أَلِفُ التَّوْنِ 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 *Qur* [xcvi. 15], *لَنْسَفَعَا بِالتَّاصِيَةِ* [explained in art. *سفع*], (T, K,) and the phrase [in xii. 32], *وَلْيَكُونَا 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 *ا* [only, without tenween, so that one says *لَنْسَفَعَا* and *لْيَكُونَا*, and this seems to be indicated in Expositions of the *Qur-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,