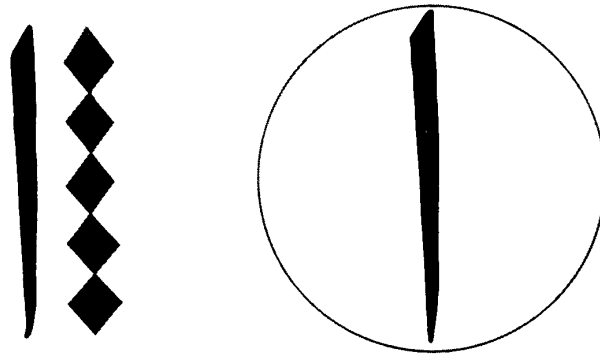


## LESSON 22

### REVIEW

The legibility of the Qur'anic text and the mystery of its beauty lie in the proportions of Arabic characters based on three coordinates, 'alif, dot and circle. The dot or the point, as we learnt in Lesson 6, is the universal unit of measurement in Arabic calligraphy. 'Alif is taken as the *module* which determines the diameter of an imaginary circle within which all Arabic letters can be written. In the *Naskh* script 'alif is five points high. See below the standard 'alif scaled to five diamond-shaped dots placed vertex to vertex and the standard circle.



All other letters in this script are proportioned to this 'alif and circle. The

## LESSON 22

letter **ب** is normally five to seven points. When a letter is partly curved it must be based on the arc of the circle. The outline of certain letters may determine one or two areas. This is the case, for example, with the letters **ص** , **ض** , **ق** , **ل** etc. The area is established by **س** which has a circle of three points. Each letter has a head, a body and a tail. The head is necessary for the recognition of the letter, providing the information by which it is determined. The secondary part of the letter serves as a liaison, but it is the ligature which gives style to a writing. Observe the following forms of **ع** and the style of their ligatures and circles:



At the end of this lesson you will find a chart of the Arabic alphabet together with the measurement of each letter. This chart will give you an idea of the harmony and beauty of the script. Have a look at a page of the Qur'an and admire the interplay of curves and upright strokes articulating the words, vowels and points. In this chart you will notice three characters which we have not done so far, the variant forms of **م** and **ك** and the combination of *lām* and *'alif*.

The following variant of **م** *mim* is commonly used as a final letter.



## INTRODUCTION TO QUR'ANIC SCRIPT

Together with 'alif' and lām it provides upright strokes to break the monotony of teeth and curves.

Observe the following phrases:

يَوْمَ قُلُوبِهِمْ    يَوْمَ قُلُوبِهِمْ    يَوْمَ قُلُوبِهِمْ    يَوْمَ قُلُوبِهِمْ    يَوْمَ قُلُوبِهِمْ  
 اِبْرَاهِيمَ    اِبْرَاهِيمَ    اِبْرَاهِيمَ    اِبْرَاهِيمَ    اِبْرَاهِيمَ  
 رَحِيمٌ    رَحِيمٌ    رَحِيمٌ    رَحِيمٌ    رَحِيمٌ

The following variant of ك *kāf* is very frequently used as an initial letter.



Observe the following phrases:

كَانَ كَبِيرًا    كَانَ كَبِيرًا    كَانَ كَبِيرًا    كَانَ كَبِيرًا    كَانَ كَبِيرًا  
 لَكُمْ اِرْكَعُوا    لَكُمْ اِرْكَعُوا    لَكُمْ اِرْكَعُوا    لَكُمْ اِرْكَعُوا    لَكُمْ اِرْكَعُوا  
 كَادُوا    كَادُوا    كَادُوا    كَادُوا    كَادُوا  
 كَلَّمَا    كَلَّمَا    كَلَّمَا    كَلَّمَا    كَلَّمَا

The negative particle and the imperative لا *lā* is normally written in the following forms:



*Naskh*

*Andalusian Maghribi*

*Dīwānī*



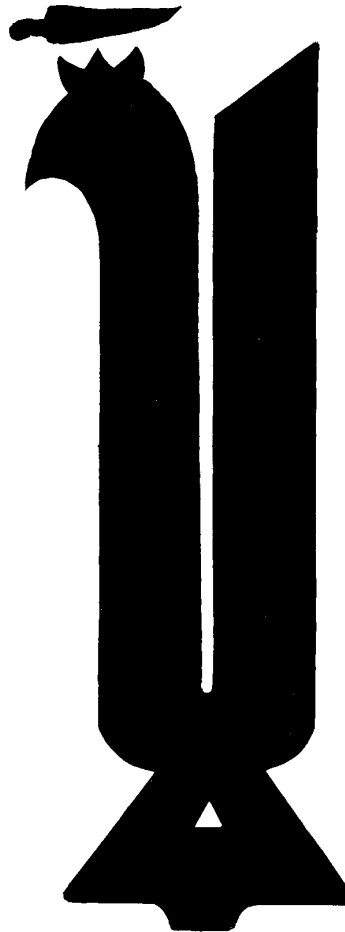
It is the word لا *lā* which introduces the essential element of the faith,

“There is no God but Allāh, and Muḥammad is his Prophet”.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

In mystical Islam the combined letters *lām* and *'alif* are used as a metaphor of poetry reminding one of a close embrace between two lovers.

I saw you in my dream embracing me  
Like as the *lām* of the scribe embraces the *'alif*.



Ornamental Kūfic



