CHAPTER THREE

Etymological Shape Of The Letters In Arabic And Hebrew
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In this chapter, the etymological shape of letters in Arabic and Hebrew linked with the meaning of each letter, with comparison to other Semitic languages are given.

3.1 The Historical Development of the Letter (א in Arabic) (א in Hebrew) (א and ה)

The sound of this letter is: [a and ‘] voiceless glottal stop. In Arabic ālif, (Hebrew: א) and its name is: Aleph in modern Hebrew, al in old Hebrew, in Syriac olaf the shape is like: ላ, in Greek and Latin (a). In south Arabian languages the shape is like: ꡫ, in Phoenician it is like: כ, in Ethiopic the shape is like: ኢ. In modern Hebrew א, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E.) it is like: כ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E.) it is like: כ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E.) it is like: ל. For many scholars the oldest shape of letter represents the head of an ox or cow כ, but by the study it represents the head of human to give the power of human mind, or Divine power. The numerical value is one.

This letter was seen in Sinaitic inscriptions (1500-1600 B.C.E.) with shape of head of an ox or cow כ. In south Semitic group of languages we see the similar shape of head of an ox, similar to horns of an ox. The shape later became symbol of lines, may be the reason for that is using the cuneiform which is difficult to draw pictures or cycloid lines.

Meaning: In ancient Hebrew it’s responding to head of an ox, and the old meaning in Hebrew was strong, leader, and power. In Arabic, there is no entry a direct meaning related to shape of the letter in books or dictionaries,
but by referring to the largest dictionary in Arabic (Lisan Al-ʕrab” (The tongue of Arabs))\(^68\), there is a similar meaning to the nature or behavior of cow or an oxen to the word أَلفَ (aleph) with meaning: friendly, sociable, close friend, domestic, and tame. And these can been seen in behavior of cows. The question is: why did people select the ox head as a shape to represent the letter (a)? May be the reason for that is nature of their life, in the history of mankind, cow and ox had an important position in many societies, for example in India cow is blessed by Lord Krishna, and respected by people, it is also considered as the first animal to be used by man in the agricultural activities. People used to worship ox which was earlier considered as idol in Judaism. So, ox in ancient days had represented in the Middle East as Divine power. In “Tariyḥ Al-luġat Al-Samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages) by Wlfenson, it has the meaning as “Cow”\(^69\). In Arabic philosophy it also means the complete mind. Moreover, according to Aḥmad Zarqah\(^70\) the letter carries the meaning of domestic, domesticated. So the original name is aleph means ox, head, divine power, leader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7- Development of the Letter (pronounced as “ai” in Arabic)) (X in Hebrew) (א and ‘)(^71)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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\(^69\) Wlfenson, A. “Tariyḥ Al-luğaṭ al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92

\(^70\) Zarqah, Aḥmad. “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters) p.124

\(^71\) Notice: most of the tables in this chapter based on “Al-niżam Al-siymya’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-ʕarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) by Yiṯya Ṣababni, with some modifications.
3.2 The Historical Development of Letter in (Arabic ﹩
(Hebrew Ꙅ) (b)

The sound of this letter is: [ b ] ﹩ voiced bilabial stop. The form of letter in Arabic ﹩, and its name in Arabic is bā’. In Hebrew its name is beth Ꙅ (b). In Syriac it is bêt 72, the shape is: ܒ, the derivatives in Greek and Latin is B beta. In modern Hebrew Ꙅ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ב, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ב, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ב. In Phoenician it is: ב, in south Arabian languages it is /Internal. In Ethiopic it is: . The oldest shape of the letter ﹩ (b) represents the shape of the house, room or tent. It can be seen in the oldest pictorial shape in Sinaitic inscriptions (1500-1600 B.C.E) as square room or house with door or footpath ﹩, and that shape changed in next period like square with open one side. Until the shape change in south of Arabian like a square without one side. The shape in the later period changed into bow, the open side to up, and one dot under it as ﹩ in Arabic 73, in Hebrew Ꙅ the open side become in the left. In Syriac it changed as cave with side open. The reason for those changes are to make the writing easier and faster, and they may add the dot in Arabic to distinguish between it and other letters.

**Meaning:** As in next picture, the meaning was tent footpath, so in ancient Hebrew it means house 74. In Arabic there is no direct meaning for the shape of letter, but we have near meaning in the word baa which means the one who get married or the women when she gets a house after her marriage 75, and home 76, it has also the meaning of going back to home (bā’a). In other Semitic languages just like Syriac, Akkadian, Aramaic, and in Ugarit the meaning is: house or room. In “Tariyḥ al-luğat al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages) by Wlfenson, it has the meaning of a house 77. According to the study the original name for this letter is bêt, and meaning is house.

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73 ʕababni, Yihya. “Al-niZam Al-siyyma’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-Ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p 29.
74 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language p62.
75 ʕababni, Yihya. “Al-niZam Al-siyyma’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-Ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p 29.
3.3 The Historical Development of the letter (Arabic ـ) (Hebrew ג) (g Egyptian Arabic or j)

The sound of this letter in Standard Arabic is: [j] ـ voiced lamino-alveolar palatal affricate. In Egyptian and many Semitic languages it pronounced as g. The shape of the letter in Arabic is ـ (j/g), in Hebrew ג its name is gimel, in Arabic ـ its name is j/giym, in Syriac gomâl, and the shape is like:  or ـ. In modern Hebrew it is ג, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is like this ג, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ג, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ג. The shape of the letter represents in old Hebrew “neck of camel”78, or sound of camel in Arabic79. In Phoenician ג, and Ethiopic ꝱ alphabet bears the resemblance to the nick of camel80, also the same meaning by Wlfenson, 81. The shape in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) has the form of a nail or a stick ג, also in Ugarit language (1400-1300 B.C.E) it has the shape of a stick. May be the reason for that both of them had used the cuneiform writing which was difficult to have a curved, bent, or circle shape. So some linguists like Albright and Driver considered the shape represents the stick82. But in Sinaitic inscriptions ג according to the reading of Grimme the shape was as

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78 Klein, Ernest. *A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language*, p.88
80 Gesenius Lexicon, p 1338
81 Wlfenson, A. “Tariyy al-luğat al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92
82 ʕababni, Yihya. “Al-niZam Al-siyyma’yy Li’l-Ḥat Al-Ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p37
the letter (L) in English in old Hebrew\textsuperscript{83}. In south Arabian (300 B.C.E- 700 C.E) the shape changed into turned over of letter (L). In Aramaic (900 B.C.E- 272 C.E) the shape became like the head of camel, and from Aramaic the Syriac also had the Shape of camel's head, and later in Arabic the shape became like the neck and head of camel. And nowadays, in Arabic they put dot under the head like this: ݟ. In conclusion, it can be said that the main meaning of this letter is \textit{camel}, the shape represented by the camel's head or neck of camel. Probably the original name was \textit{g/jamal}.

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Development of the letter (Arabic ݟ) (Hebrew ג) (g Egyptian Arabic or j)}
\end{table}

### 3.4 The Historical Development of the Letter (ݟ in Arabic) (ת in Hebrew) (d)

The sound of this letter is [d] voiced apico-dental stop. The fourth letter of alphabet; and they used as numeral four. The shape or grapheme of the letter in Arabic is ݟ and its name is \textit{daāl}, and in Hebrew ת its name is \textit{daleth}\textsuperscript{84}. In Syriac its name is \textit{dolad} \textsuperscript{85} with the shape of: ܡ. In western Syrian it is: ܇, in east Syrian it is ݏ. In modern Hebrew it is ת, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: Ʌ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: Ʌ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: Ʌ. In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) the shape is: ݎ or ݀, it was

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{83}Sababni, Yīhya. “Al-niZam Al-siymya’y y Li’l-hat Al-Sarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p38.
\textsuperscript{84} Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language p. XII.
\textsuperscript{85} Khoury. Asmer G. A student’s companion to Syria in Syriac & Arabic and English, p 7.
\end{flushright}
similar to the shape of fish. In south Arabian alphabet the shape was like triangle attached with vertical line in north Semitic languages the shape is like triangle. In Ethiopic the shape is like this: . From all these shapes for this letter, it can be said that shape has developed from door to take symbol of half door as in Hebrew or in Arabic.

**Meaning:** In Hebrew Dictionary the name signifies a door, which appears to have been the most ancient form of this letter. Form of this letter represents a house. In Arabic there is no special meaning with scientific method. The old grammarian in Arabic Al- considered the meaning of the letter as fat woman. But no scientific way to prove his idea, the shape of letter is not also similar to the meaning of a fat woman! It is also in Arabic the name of letter carries the meaning of indicative. And for Wlfenson, A. it carries the meaning of door. In conclusion, the original meaning is nearer to the shape of the door.

![Image of letter development](image)

Table 10- Development of the Letter ( in Arabic) ( in Hebrew) (d)

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87 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.112.
88 See his opinion in “Al-nizam Al-siymya’yy Li’il-ḥat Al-‘arabiy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) by Yilḥya ʿababni, p 42.
3.5 The Historical Development of the Letter (ה in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) ($h$)

The sound of this letter is [$h$] a voiceless laryngeal fricative. The fifth letter, when it stands as a numeral value is five. In Arabic, the name of letter in Arabic $حاّد$ ($h$ in Hebrew) in western Hebrew $ה$ in Syriac $ح$ with the shape of letter in western Syriac as $ح$, and in eastern Syriac as: $ح$. The shape of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is: $ح$ and $י$ in Phoenician it is: $י$, in south Arabian languages it is: $י$, in Ethiopic the shape is: $י$. In modern Hebrew ב, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: $י$, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: $י$. In modern Hebrew ב, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: $י$, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: $י$. In north Semitic languages the shape got a lot of change to be more similar to net or window. In Arabic there is no special meaning was found in Arabic dictionaries, but as in Hebrew they use the word $ה$ means or particle for calling. In modern studies the letter represents the words which have the meaning of shouting (sad or happy), sorrow ...etc. In conclusion, the most similar meaning for this letter is a man calling.

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92 Gesenius Lexicon. P.211.
94 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I
95 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.189
96 Wlfenson, A. “Tariyḥ al-lugat al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92
97 Gesenius Lexicon. P.211
3.6 The Historical Development of Letter (ٔ in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (w)

The sound of this letter is: [w] ʼvoiced bilabial (round) velar glide. The sixth letter, when it stands as a numeral value is six. In Arabic, the name of the letter is waʻaw. In Hebrew, the name in western Hebrew and Modern Hebrew is vav, and Waaw in old Hebrew. In Syriac the name is waaw, with the shape of letter in western Syriac as  defaultCenter, and in eastern Syriac the shape is:  defaultCenter. The shape of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is:  defaultCenter. In Phoenician it is:  defaultCenter. In south Arabian languages it is:  defaultCenter. In Ethiopic the shape is:  defaultCenter. In Modern Hebrew, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is like this  defaultCenter, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is:  defaultCenter. In Hebrew, the meaning of this letter is “hook, peg”, so called in allusion to the ancient Hebrew form of this letter. At the beginning of west Semitic, words (i.e. Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic) י (w) waw almost became י (y) yood. Similar meaning by Wlfenson, A. for him it means “coign, fasten, picket, wedge, peg, pin, stake, peg, cotter”, Just like tent-peg. Also in Hebrew dictionaries it means a nail, or hook, to this even the modern form of the

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99 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
100 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.189.
102 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.189.
letter bears a resemblance\textsuperscript{104}. The ancient form, as found in the Phoenician remains as similar, only the hook is larger at the top. In Arabic the shape has changed from straight to bent like this ꠸, and that shape is similar to peg. In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is like this ꠸ so it seems like straight peg. That shape in Syriac and south Arabian languages seems a peg without leg, but in Phoenician it seems like open peg that also becomes in Hebrew without the circle of peg. In conclusion, the original name was \textit{Waaw}, and the most similar meaning to the shape of this letter is \textit{peg}.

![Image of letter development](image.png)

Table 12- Development of the Letter (٨ in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (w)

3.7 The Historical Development of the Letter (\textit{ז} in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (z)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is: [z] ꠸ voiced apico-alveolar fricative. the seventh letter in Hebrew, when it stands as a numeral value is seven\textsuperscript{105}. ꠸ in Arabic, the name of letter in Arabic is \textit{zaā’} or \textit{zaay}, in Arabic slang \textit{Zayn}. י In Hebrew, the name is \textit{zayin}\textsuperscript{106}. In Syriac the name is \textit{zayin}, with the shape of letter in western Syriac as ꠸, and in eastern Syriac as: ꠸\textsuperscript{107}. The shape of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is: ꠸, in Phoenician it is: ꠸, in south Arabian languages it is: ꠸, in Ethiopic the shape is: ꠸. In modern Hebrew י, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ꠸, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ꠸, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ꠸.

\textsuperscript{104} Gesenius Lexicon. p.233.
\textsuperscript{105} Klein, Ernest. \textit{A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language}, p.193.
\textsuperscript{106} Klein, Ernest. \textit{A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language}, p.XII.
\textsuperscript{107} Benjamin, Davidson. \textit{The Elements of Syriac Grammar}, p. I.
This letter corresponds Arabic ١ dh or ژ. The meaning of this letter by Wlfenson, A. is *arm, weapon*\(^{108}\). In Syria the word Zayna means *an arm*, and in old Egyptian the word Zin means also *an arm*. In Arabic dictionaries there is no entry related to an arm but the word zyin has many meanings one of them means *embellishment*\(^{109}\), and in Arab culture the most important things for men embellishment is an arm. The shape of this letter has taken the shape of sword but until now there is no evidence for that, so it is still a theory. In Hebrew the shape of the letter seems to be that it has the shape of sword from the oldest Hebrew until now it is still has the shape of sword, but I did find the meaning of the sword in Hebrew dictionaries related with the shape of this letter. The later development of the letter in Arabic, the writer put one dot above of the letter ژ in order to distinguish between this letter and letter ڦ. In conclusion, the original meaning for this letter is *an arm*, and the original name is zayin.

![Table 13- Development of the Letter (ژ in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (ז)](image)

3.8 The Historical Development of the Letter in (Arabic ح) (נ in Hebrew) (ه)

The sound of this letters is [ ҳ ] ح it is voiceless radico-pharyngeal fricative. The eighth letter of the alphabet, when it stands as a numeral value

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is eight 110. In Arabic ﺟ, its name is ﻫﺎئ. In Hebrew ﻳ, its name is cheth 111. In Syriac its name is ﻫئ with the shape ﻤ, in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) the shape is: ﻓ 112, in South Arabian Alphabet it is: ﻲ, in Phoenician it is: ﻲ, in Canaanite it is: ﻧ, in Ethiopic it is: ﻳ. In modern Hebrew ﻳ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ﻳ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ﻳ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ﻳ. As we see from those shapes, the main meaning as appear as fence.

In Hebrew dictionaries as in Gesenius Lexicon 113, the shape of this letter in the Phoenician monuments, and the Hebrew coins is ﻓ ﻡ whence in Greek is ﻫ, and its name probably signifies a hedge, or fence, from the root حط ﻫﺎئ which means to surround, to gird. In Arabic the word ﻫﺎئ means wall or fence. In Arabic Dictionaries also as in Ibn Manزار’s dictionary, it has the meaning of check, discouragement, preventing, and deterring 114, and by that meaning is accepted the old shape of the letter. For Wlfenson, A. it carries the meaning of wall 115. In conclusion, the original meaning for this letter is wall or fence. Probably the original name is ﻫﺎئ.

Table 14- Development of the Letter in (Arabic ﺟ) (ﳔ in Hebrew) (ﲦ)

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110 Gesenius Lexicon. p 255.
113 Gesenius Lexicon p. 255-256.
3.9 The Historical Development of the Letter (ط in Arabic) (ו in Hebrew) (ן)

The sound of this letter is [ṭ] a voiceless apico-dental emphatic stop. The letter in Arabic is ٦, its name is تاء. In Syriac the name is جة, in western Syriac and in east Syriac ヴ, ヴ in Hebrew and its name (גה) גת 116. It’s the ninth letter of the alphabet, as a numeral it is nine 117.

There is no shape for this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E), in south Arabian the shape is: _span>, and in Phoenician it is: ґ. In Modern Hebrew it is: ヴ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ג, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ヴ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ג.

The meaning of this shape did not denote single meaning. The name of this letter is uncertain, it is commonly explained to mean: a serpent, to which is has a resemblance in figure in several Phoenician alphabet 118. By the study it found the same meaning by Wlfenson, A. in his book “تاريخ التراث السامي” (The History of Semitic languages) 119, and as it seen in Syriac the shape is similar to the meaning of serpent. In modern Arabic books about letters, the letter has the meaning of hole in wall 120, and that meaning can be compatible with the shape of letter as in Phoenician and south Arabian languages. Another meaning is: window, as in south Arabian the shape is like: ں, and in Phoenician as: ґ 121. But in old Arabic books it has far meaning and not related to shape of letter as “old man who likes to have sex” 122. In conclusion, there is no certain meaning for this letter, and scholars give us different meanings, but probably the original meaning is serpent.

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116 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
117 Gesenius Lexicon. P.316.
118 See this meaning in Gesenius Lexicon. P.316.
119 Wlfenson, A. “تاريخ التراث السامي” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92.
121 ʕababni, Yihya. “Al-niZam Al-sīmya’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-ʕarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p.64.
122 See this meaning in “Al-niZam Al-sīmya’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-ʕarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) by Yihya ʕababni, p 62.
3.10 The Historical Development of the Letter (ٔ in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (y)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is: [y] ٔ voiced palatal (unrounded) glide. The tenth letter in alphabet, when it stands as a numeral value is ten. ٔ in Arabic, the name of letter yaā’. י In Hebrew, the name of the letter is yōdh. In Syriac the name is yud, with the shape of letter in western Syriac like this، and in eastern Syriac the shape is: ܐ. In Sinaic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: י or י, in Phoenician it is: י, in south Arabian languages it is: י, in Ethiopic the shape is: י. In modern Hebrew י, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: י, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: י, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: י.

The meaning in of this letter in Hebrew relates to the י (hand), so called in allusion to the ancient Hebrew form of this letter. The same meaning (hand) is also accepted by Wlfenson, A. In Arabic the word yad means hand, and that meaning agreed with the name in Hebrew and Syriac, but in Arabic dictionaries there is no reference for the word (yad) to the name of letter. In heliographic the shape of hand is so clear as you see in the next.

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123 Gesenius Lexicon. P.325.
124 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII
125 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I
126 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.251
127 Wlfenson, A. “Tariyḥ al-luğat al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92
table, but it means the letter (ד) not yad, but anyway the letter (ד) is the last letter in word Yād in all Semitic languages. And the shape of letter has developed from pictorial shape to symbolic shape. Form all of previous reasons the shape of letter is so related with the shape of hand, and in Arabic it developed and take only the upper shape of the hand, and in the latest development the writers add two dots under the letter to distinguish between this letter from letter י . In Egypt many writers until now write this letter without dots. In Hebrew the shape has developed to take a part of a hand י . In conclusion, the original meaning for this letter is hand, and the original name was yād. י in Hebrew.

Table 16- Development of the Letter (ש in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (י)

3.11 The Historical Development of the Letter (מ in Arabic) (ך, ק in Hebrew) (ו)

The sound of this letter is: [k] מ voiceless velar stop. The eleventh letter, when it stands as a numeral value is twenty. מ in Arabic, the name of letter is kaāf. ק is in Hebrew, ק is at the end of a word, the name of the letter is kaph. In Syriac kof, with the shape of letter in western Syriac as: כ, and in eastern Syriac as: כ. In Sinaïtic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: ו, in Phoenician it is: ק, in south Arabian languages it is: כ, in Ethiopic the shape is: מ. In modern Hebrew כ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: כ, in Dead sea

128 Šababni, Yiḥya. “Al-niZam Al-siymya’yy Li’il-hat Al-ʕarábiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p 108.
129 Gesenius Lexicon. P.597.
130 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
131 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p.I.
scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: י, in the end of a word it is: י, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: י.

The meaning of this letter as in the name in Hebrew (כ) signifies a wing “hollow of the hand, palm”, to which the figure of the letter in Chaldee alphabet on new use refers. So called in allusion to the ancient Hebrew, also the same meaning “palm of the hand” is accepted by Wlfenson, A. This letter כ is alternated with כ. The shape of this letter in old Egyptian writing as in hieroglyphic takes a clear shape of palm of hand (see the picture down).

The meaning in Arabic for this letter with the word kaaf agreed with meaning of palm of hand. And that meaning is accepted in modern studies as in “Al-ni Zam Al-siyma’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), also in “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters). In conclusion, the original meaning for this letter is palm of hand, and the original name is kaph.

Table 17 - Development of the Letter (כ in Arabic) (כ, כ in Hebrew) (k)

132 Chaldee is the language of the ancient Chaldeans (in Iraq) the Aramaic vernacular that was the original language of some parts of the Bible. Gesenius Lexicon, P.377.
134 This is opinion by Al-Ḥaliyel Ṣababni, Yihya. “Al-ni Zam Al-siyma’yy Li’l-ḥat Al-ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p.80.
3.12 The Historical Development of the Letter (л in Arabic) (ל in Hebrew) (L)

The sound of this letter is: [l] л voiced apico-alveolar lateral, the twelfth letter in alphabet, its numeral value is thirty. л in Arabic, the name of the letter is laām. ל in Modern Hebrew, the name of the letter in Hebrew is lamed\(^{136}\). In Syriac the name is lomad with the shape is like this in western Syriac ﯾ, and in east Syriac it is: ﯶ\(^{137}\). In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: ﯾ and ﯲ ﯾ, in Phoenician it is: ﯾ, in south Arabian languages it is: ﯾ, in Ethiopic it is: ﯿ. In Modern Hebrew it is ﯾ, in Old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ﯿ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ﯿ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ﯿ.

The meaning of this letter as seen from previous shapes is similar to stick or the rod (of the teacher). And this is also the opinion of Wlfenson, A.\(^{138}\), it means ox-good “to Prick, sting, incite, goad” in Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of The Hebrew language\(^{139}\). In Arabic, in the modern book like “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters)\(^{140}\) the meaning of this letter is collector, or association. In Arabic dictionaries there is no entry of any special meaning for this letter. However, in Arabic the grammarian Al-ḥaliyel\(^{141}\) considered the meaning of the letter as tree when it becomes green, but this meaning as seen is far away from the meaning of the shape of letter. In conclusion, the main meaning of the shape of the letter is stick or the rod.

\(^{136}\) Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.291.
\(^{137}\) Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
\(^{139}\) Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.291.
\(^{141}\) See his opinion found in Šababni, Yilḥya. “Al-nizAm Al-siymya’yy Li’il-ḥat Al-ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p 84.
3.13 The Historical Development of the Letter (ר in Arabic) (נ in Hebrew) (m)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is: [m] َ voiced bilabial nasal. The thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, when it stands as a numeral value is forty\(^{142}\). ១ in Arabic, the name of letter is miym. ٤ in Hebrew, ៤ at the end of a word, the name of the letter is mem\(^{143}\). In Syriac the name is mim, with the shape in western Syriac is: ꝓ, and in eastern Syriac the shape is: ꝕ\(^{144}\). In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: ꜧ 嫚, in Phoenician it is: ꜧ, in south Arabian languages it is: ꜧ, in Ethiopic the shape is: ꜧ. In Modern Hebrew is ꜧ, and in the end of the word is ꜧ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ꜧ in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ꜧ, and in the end of a word as ꜧ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ꜧ\(^{145}\).

The meaning of this letter in Hebrew dictionaries is probably signifies water, and its most ancient forms bear a resemblance to Waves\(^{146}\). So it is called in allusion to ancient form of this letter resembling waves of water\(^{147}\). The meaning of this letter by Wlfenson, A. is water\(^{148}\).

\(^{142}\) Klein, Ernest. *A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language*, p.308.
\(^{143}\) Klein, Ernest. *A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language*, p.XII.
\(^{144}\) Benjamin, Davidson. *The Elements of Syriac Grammar*, p. I.
\(^{145}\) Gesenius Lexicon, p.443.
\(^{146}\) Gesenius Lexicon, p.443.
\(^{147}\) Klein, Ernest. *A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language*, p.308.
\(^{148}\) Wlfenson, A. “*Tariyẖ al-luğat al-samiyya*” (*The History of Semitic languages*), p.92
The meaning of this letters in one of modern Arabic studies as in Aḥmad Zarqah, “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters)\textsuperscript{149} also means water. In slang Arabic the word may means water. In classic Arabic the word maā’ means water, and the original root for this word is mwh which means water also\textsuperscript{150}.

As it seen from the previous shapes of this letter, in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) as \textsuperscript{ヴィ} which is similar to the shape of water waves, also some similarity in Phoenician “]+)/, and in south Arabian languages ȝ, and in Ethiopic א. On the other hand, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac have similar shape in general, and those shapes are little bit so far of other languages and the shape of waves of water was not clear for them. The word mayya in Syriac means water, and in Hebrew the word mayim means water also. In conclusion, the shape of this letter has developed in Hebrew and Arabic to take the symbolic shape rather than pictorial shape. And probably the original meaning for the name of the letter is water.

\textsuperscript{149} Zarqah, Aḥmad. “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters) p.130.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibn Maḥṣur, “Lisan Al-ʕrab” (The tongue of Arabs) p.4302.
3.14 The Historical Development of the Letter (ن in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (n)

The sound of this letter is: [n] ن voiced apico-alveolar nasal. The fourteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, when it stands as a numeral value is fifty. ن in Arabic, the name of letter is nuwn. י at the end of a word, the name of the letter is nun. In Syriac its name is nun, with the shape of letter in western Syriac it is: Ꞩ, in eastern Syriac the shape is: ꞧ at the end of a word Ꞧ.

The shapes of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) are: Ꞩ ꞟ, in Phoenician it is: Ꞧ, in south Arabian languages it is: Ꞩ, in Ethiopic it is: Ꞩ. In modern Hebrew it is Ꞩ , and at the end of a word Ꞩ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: Ꞩ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: Ꞩ, and at the end of a word Ꞩ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: Ꞩ .

In Hebrew dictionaries: The meaning of this letter denotes a fish, the form appears to have been intended by its original figure. The meaning of this letter by Wolfenson, A. is whale. In Arabic dictionary as Ibn Manẓur “Lisan Al-ʕrab” (The tongue of Arabs) the word nuwn means whale, also it has the meaning of sword. The meaning of this letter in one of modern Arabic studies as by Aḥmad Zarqah, “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters), it also has the meaning of whale, and the meaning of essential, substantial, material, intrinsic, fundamental... this letter excites the emotion of human senses. On the other hand, Dr. Yiḥya ʕababni, in his book “Al-niẓam Al-siymya’yyy Li’l-ḥat Al-ʕarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), according to him the shape represents the snake shape, and this meaning (snake) is found in Ethiopic, also from previous shapes in most of the languages the shape is more related to snake.

The latter development In Arabic language is that writers put one dot above of the letter as ن , in order to distinguish between this letter and letter ب.

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151 Gesenius Lexicon. P.523.
152 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
153 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
154 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.400.
155 Gesenius Lexicon P.523.
159 ʕababni, Yiḥya. “Al-niẓam Al-siymya’yyy Li’l-ḥat Al-ʕarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) p.94.
3.15 The Historical Development of the Letters (س, ش in Arabic) (ሱ, ṣ in Hebrew) (ṣ, š)

First: The sound of these letters is: [s] س، ش voiceless apico-alveolar fricative. There are two shapes in most Semitic languages for this sound, but in some languages they are three shapes as in South Arabian languages, as an example in Hebrew the sound can be in this shape ṣ (samech) which means “fish” or this υ (sin) which means “tooth”. In Arabic the shape of sound υ s (samech) is not found, but the sound itself is used in the shape of س sīyn. The other shape of the same sound in Hebrew is υ corresponds to the sound ش š in Arabic in many words and with the opposite occurs. The shape υ s (samech) do not have an equal in Arabic.

In Arabic, the name of letter is sīyn. In Hebrew, the name is samech. As sound, I suppose that it was anciently pronounced as a lighter sibilant than υ s which as latter used where diacritic points were not distinguished in writing from υ s, hence it is that most roots are constantly written in one manner, either with the letter υ s or with the letter υ s. In Syriac the name is samkat, with the shape of the letter in western Syriac as س, and in eastern Syriac the

160 Gesenius Lexicon. P.575.
161 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language p.XII.
162 Gesenius Lexicon. P.575.
shape is: ﻠ١٦٣. There is no shape for this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E). In Phoenician it is: ﻮ which may come from heliographic. In south Arabian languages it is: ﻨ for samech, ﻩ for sin, in Ethiopic the shape is: ﻣ. In modern Hebrew ﻯ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ﻲ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ﻟ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ﻰ.

The meaning of this letter by Wlfenson. A. is an instrument or device that is used as stick١٦٤. The main meaning of this letter in modern studies is the tooth, and the shape of letter came from the shape of lips when we pronounce this letter١٦٥. But according to Dr. Yiḥya ʿababni, the shape of the letter س in Arabic and ﻯ (sin) in Hebrew came from the shape of the skeleton (bones) of fish١٦٦.

Second: ﺲ voiceless lamino-palatal fricative. It is ش in Arabic, and the name of letter is َيyn. The twenty first letter in Hebrew, its numeral value is three hundred١٦٧. It is ﻳ In Hebrew, the name of the letter is shin١٦٨, the other Hebrew letter similar to this one is ﻯ with the sound sin. In Syriac the name is ﻥ, as the shape of letter in western Syriac as ﻢ, and in eastern Syriac the shape is: ﺲ١٦٩. The shape of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C) is: ﻘ or ﺀ, in Phoenician it is: ﻪ, in south Arabian languages it is: ﻨ and sometimes it is: ﻣ, in Ethiopic the shape is: ﻪ. In modern Hebrew it is ﻯ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C) it is: ﻯ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C) it is: ﻯ, in Nabatean (50 B.C) it is: ﻲ.

The meaning of this letter in Hebrew is derived from ﻯ (=tooth), and called in allusion to the ancient form of this letter. The letter ﻯ in Hebrew has two different sounds: ﻯ sin and ﻯ shin. Hebrew ﻯ corresponds to Aramaic ﻯ and ﻯ, Syriac ﻯ, Ugaritic sh, Arabic sh. Ethiopic sh. Akkadian sh.١٧٠ There is exception to the rule according to which Arabic sh corresponds to Hebrew ﻯ and vice versa. These exceptions are due to assimilation, partly also to the circumstance that Hebrew ﻯ sometimes stands for original ﻯ.

١٦٣ Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
١٦٦ ʿababni, Yiḥya. “Al-nizam Al-siymya’y Li’l-ḥat Al-ʿarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p 52.
١٦٨ Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
١٦٩ Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
The meaning of this letter by Wlfenson, A. is tooth. The meaning of the word shin in Arabic dictionary is defective, faulty, shameful and ugly. In modern studies the meaning of this letter came from the shape of sunshine.

In conclusion, the shape of those letters came from sunshine concerning the letter ב in Hebrew and ش in Arabic. And from the shape of fish or its skeleton (bones) concerning the letter כ in Hebrew and س in Arabic.

Table 21 - Development of the Letters (ש, ש in Arabic) (ס, כ in Hebrew) (ס, כ)

3.16 The Historical Development of the Letter (ع in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (י)

The sound of this letter is: [ʕ] ع voiced radico-pharyngeal fricative. The sixteenth letter, its numeral value is seventy. In Arabic, the name of letter is ڠ. In Hebrew, the name of the letter is ב. In Syriac ʄ, with the shape of letter in western Syriac as ʄ, and in eastern Syriac the shape is: ʄ. In Sinaite inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: ʘʘ, in Phoenician it is: O. In south Arabian languages it is: ʘ, in Ethopic the shape is: ʘ. In modern Hebrew י, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ʘ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ʘ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ʘ.

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175 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
176 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
The meaning of this letter is eye. As seen in previous shapes, the shape of the eye is clear in Phoenician, south Arabian languages, Sinaitic inscriptions, and Ethiopic. And maybe that shape came from Hieroglyphic in Egypt, because in Hieroglyphic the shape of the letter is very clear, that it represents the human eye. In Arabic ع the shape takes half of an eye with long half-moon attached with it from down. In Hebrew the shape is like half eye from other side with long line. As it seen, the languages transfer from pictorial shape to symbol, in order to make writing easier and faster. While Hebrew was a living language, it would seem that this letter is peculiar to the Phoenician language. For Hebrew people it is very difficult to pronounce due to their organs, a double pronunciation this is the case in Arabic, and they distinguish it by a diacritic point ع and غ. Hence it is that several Hebrew roots comprehend, properly speaking, two roots of different significations, one of which is written in Arabic with letter ع, the other with غ. In Arabic this letter is far more frequent than the letter غ, and for this reason ي is very often interchanged with ك. Or to speak more accurately, ي is often softened into the latter ك. Coming back to meaning of the shape, in Arabic dictionaries the meaning in all of them is: eye. This meaning is also supported by Wlfenson, A. The same meaning is also accepted by modern scholars.

Table 22- Development of the Letter (ع in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (ʕ)

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177 Gesenius Lexicon. P.597.
3.17 The Historical Development of the Letter (ف in Arabic) (פ in Hebrew)(f and p)

The sound of this letter is: [f in Arabic- ph or p in Hebrew] ـ voiceless labio-dental fricative. The seventeenth letter, its numeral value is eighty ١٨١. ﻓ in Arabic, the name of letter in Arabic ﻓاء. ﻓ In Hebrew, and ﻓ at the end of a word, the name of the letter is pe ١٨٢. In Syriac its name ﻕ, with the shape of letter in western Syriac as ﻕ, and in eastern Syriac the shape is: ﻕ ١٨٣. In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is: ﻕ, in Phoenician it is: ﻕ, in South Arabian languages it is: ﻕ, in Ethiopic the shape is: ﻕ. In Modern Hebrew ﻫ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is: ﻫ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is: ﻫ and in the end of a word it is ﻫ, in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is: ﻫ.

The meaning of this letter as seen in previous shapes is similar to the shape of mouth, the name of the letter pe is derived from ﻓَ ﻟَاَ{k} mouth, and so called in allusion to the ancient form of this letter. In Hebrew this letter is alternates with ﻖ and ﻖ ١٨٤. In Arabic this letter alternated to ﻓ. The same meaning is also agreed with the opinion of Wlfenson, A. ١٨٥. In modern Arabic studies the meaning of letter is fountain, and they also accept the meaning of mouth ١٨٦ and cuttlebone ١٨٧. In Arabic the word pe is equal to what in Hebrew with the same meaning: mouth.

The proto-sound of this letter according to western scholars is p not f as Arab scholars do who consider the proto-sound of this letter is f. In South Arabian languages and Ethiopic they use the sound f and p, in Hebrew and Semitic languages they use the sound p. So maybe the real proto-sound is (f or ph).

The shape of this letter Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is ﻕ and that shape is similar to corner, but the other shapes in Sinaitic inscriptions for this letter have the meaning of mouth as seen in the first line in the following table (no.23). In South Arabian Languages the shape of mouth ﻕ is so clear. In Phoenician and Hebrew the shape takes the form of half mouth ﻕ, and the shape in Syriac, Nabatean, and Arabic is so similar with some development.

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181 Gesenius Lexicon. P.597.
182 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
183 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
184 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.492.
187 This is this opinion by Al-ḥalilīy in “Al-niżam Al-siymya’yį Li’l-ḥat Al-ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking) by Yilţiya ʕababni. p.71
half mouth, the later development of this letter in Arabic is having a dot above the letter in order to distinguish between this letter ﻓ and the letter ﻗ. In conclusion, the original meaning for this letter is *mouth*.

3.18 The Historical Development of the Letter (ص in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (ת)

The sound of this letter is [ת] ص voiceless apico-alveolar emphatic fricative. The eighteenth letter, the numeral value is ninety. ص in Arabic, the name of letter in Arabic saād. It is י in Hebrew, and י at the end of a word, the name of the letter is tsade. In Syriac the name of letter is šode, with the shape of י in western Syriac, and ﻳ in eastern Syriac. In Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) it is ﻳ ﻳ, in Phoenician it is ﻳ, in south Arabian languages it is ﻳ, in Ethiopic it is ﻳ, in modern Hebrew ﻳ, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is ﻳ, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is ﻳ, and in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is ﻳ.

In Arabic alphabet there are two letters which denote to the Hebrew ﻳ ص saād or ﻳ, a sibilant letter. The meaning of this letter in Hebrew dictionary is a *fishing hook*, which is similar to Wlfenson, A. who supposed that it means a *fish net*. In the Arabic dictionary “Lisan Al-ʕrab” (The

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188 Gesenius Lexicon, P.597.
189 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.XII.
190 Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar, p. I.
191 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.539.
192 Wlfenson, A. “Tariyḥ al-луğat al-samiyya” (The History of Semitic languages), p.92
tongue of Arabs)\textsuperscript{193} the meaning of the verb ʂ\textit{aada} is \textit{hook}, and the noun ʂ\textit{ayyād} means \textit{a fish-man or a hunter}, and that meaning is accepted in Hebrew language. Some modern scholars as, Aḥmad Zarqah said in his book “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters)\textsuperscript{194} that it means \textit{an open box}, maybe this meaning accepted in the modern shape of the letter in Arabic, but not with the old shape in old Arabic or other Semitic languages, as we seen in the previous shapes. Another meaning of this letter by old grammarian in Arabic \textit{Al-ḥaliyel}\textsuperscript{195}, for him it means \textit{a rooster wallowing himself in soil}. According to some modern studies it has different meaning that is \textit{cockroach} because it has a similar sound to the sound of this letter\textsuperscript{196}. As in the Sinaitic inscriptions writing the shape is similar to \textit{a plant}, and also to \textit{a hook}, there is no similar meaning to a plant in other Semitic languages, in south Arabian languages the shape is similar to \textit{a hunter or a fisher man}.

In conclusion, the nearest meaning for the shape of this letter is \textit{a hook} and \textit{a hunter or a fisher man}, because in most Semitic languages the words which are similar to the name of the letter with the same meaning \textit{hook} and \textit{a hunter or a fisher man}.

![Table 24- Development of the Letter (ṣ in Arabic) (x in Hebrew) (§)](image)

\textsuperscript{193} Ibn Manẓur. “\textit{Lisan Al-ṯrab}” (The tongue of Arabs), p.2533.
\textsuperscript{195} See his opinion in Ṣababni, Yihya. “\textit{Al-nizam Al-siymya’yy Li’l-hat Al-ṣarabiyy}” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p 56.
3.19 The Historical Development of the Letter (ق in Arabic) (י in Hebrew) (q)

The sound of this letter is [q] ق voiceless dorso-uvular stop. The nineteenth letter, its numeral value is one hundred١٩٧. ق in Arabic, the name of letter in Arabic is: qa.af. י in Hebrew, the name of the letter is koph or kuph١٩٨. In Syriac the name is qoof, with the shape of ق in western Syriac, and in eastern Syriac it is ق١٩٩. In the Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) the shape is: ق . In Phoenician it is: פ , in south Arabian languages it is ش , in Ethiopic it is ג . In modern Hebrew is ג , in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is ג , in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is ג , and in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is ג .

The meaning of this letter in Hebrew dictionaries denotes the hole of an axe, and this accepted well with the form in Phoenician and Hebrew alphabets٢٠٠. It also means an eye of a needle٢٠١, this meaning is also supported by Wlfenson, A.٢٠٢. In Hebrew the word kuph also means monkey٢٠٣. In Arabic dictionaries, there is no meaning related to the shape of the letter. However, the grammarian Al-Ḥaliyel٢٠٤ considered that this letter means an independent man, but the meaning is so far and not agreed with the shape of the letter.

In modern Arabic studies, as in “Asrar al-ḥuruwf” (the Secrets of Letters)٢٠٥ the shape may come from the figure of moon, or cutting, or crock, jar. For Dr. Yiḥya Ṣababni, the shape of the letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is أ which is similar to or represent a basket٢٠٦.

In conclusion, the shape of this letter has changed and taken different shapes in Semitic languages, and the main meaning is represented by the shape of an eye of a needle. In Hebrew they have the old shape until now with a little change, but in Arabic the shape has been changed a lot, and in the last

١٩٧ Gesenius Lexicon. P.720.
١٩٨ Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language. p.XII.
١٩٩ Benjamin, Davidson. The Elements of Syriac Grammar. p. I.
٢٠٠ Gesenius Lexicon. P.720.
٢٠٤ See his opinion found in Ṣababni, Yiḥya. “Al-niẓam Al-siymya’yy Li’il-ḥat Al-Ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p 75.
٢٠٦ See his opinion found in Ṣababni, Yiḥya. “Al-niẓam Al-siymya’yy Li’il-ḥat Al-Ṣarabiyy” (signing system of Arabic stroking), p 76.
period of development, two dots were put above the letter to distinguish it from the letter (فاا‘) faa‘.

Table 25- Development of the Letter (ق in Arabic) (ת in Hebrew) (q)

3.20 The Historical Development of the Letter (ق in Arabic) (ר in Hebrew) (r)

The sound of this letter is [ r ] ะ voiced apical trill roll. In Arabic ق, its name is ra‘ā’. In Hebrew ר, its name is reesh207. In Syriac the name is riish, in western Syriac is װ, and it is ױ in east Syriac. The twentieth Hebrew letter, as its numeral value is 200208.

The shape of this letter denotes the head, and refers to the form of this letter ق ทร in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E), in the Phoenician alphabet it is 𐤚 with the head turned back, in Ethiopic the shape is כ, and in South Arabian languages the shape is כ209. In Modern Hebrew is ר, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is ג, in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is ח, and in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is ש. In Aramaic it is resh and it means a head, so called in allusion to the ancient form of this letter210.

As it seen from the previous shapes, it can say that the main meaning is head. The shape of this letter has been developed from the picture of a

207 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p. xii.
208 Gesenius Lexicon. P.748.
210 Klein, Ernest. A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language, p.600.
human head to symbols in order to make the writing easier. The name of the letter in Hebrew has the same meaning, but in Arabic the letter has no meaning. By comparison, it can say that the word *resh* in Hebrew is equal to word *raās* in Arabic with the same meaning *head*, and the word *raā*’ in Arabic has a different meaning as a *weak man*.

In conclusion, it can say in most Semitic languages the shapes were similar to the *head of a human being*, and in later development the shape has changed from pictorial to symbol in order to make the writing easier. For Wlfenson, A. it also means *head*. So the original meaning is *head*, and probably the original name of the letter was *raās*.

Table 26- Development of the Letter (٦ in Arabic) (ן in Hebrew) (ר)

### 3.21 The Historical Development of the Letter (٦ in Arabic) (ן in Hebrew) (ט)

The sound of this letter is [t] .wp=voiceless apico-dental stop. The twenty second letter of Hebrew alphabet, its numerical value is four hundred. In Arabic ٦, its name is *taā*. In Hebrew is י, its name *taw* or *tav* (modern). In Syriac it is *taw*, the shape of this letter in western Syriac is ת, and in east Syriac is א and ʉ. The shape of this letter in Sinaitic inscriptions (1600-1500 B.C.E) is icense mark, in Phoenician it is כ, in south Arabian languages it is כ, in Ethiopic it is ℹ. In modern Hebrew י, in old Hebrew (400 B.C.E) it is י in Dead sea scrolls (100 B.C.E) it is י, and in Nabatean (50 B.C.E) it is י.

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214 Klein, Ernest. *A comprehensive etymological dictionary of The Hebrew language*, p. xII.
The name of this letter in Hebrew means a *sign, mark*, so called in allusion to the ancient form of this letter. For Wifenson, A. it means a *sign, mark*. The meaning of this letter in one of the modern Arabic studies is *soft soil, and cow (golden goose)*, it also means a *shape of cross*. In Arabic dictionaries the popular meaning for this letter is *to sign to others*. In a later development in Arabic, the writers put two dots above the letter to distinguish it from the two letters and .

### 3.22 The Historical Development of the Letter (א in Arabic) (א in old Hebrew) (א)

The sound of this letter is a voiceless inter-dental fricative. The third letter in Arabic, the name of letter . In south Arabian languages it is ، in Ugaritic it is . In old Hebrew they used to pronounce this letter, but rarely nowadays in modern Hebrew is .

The sound of this letter has been changed a lot, because it needs to push the tongue out of teeth while pronouncing. This sound requires strong people and life, and language is the reflection of life. For that reason the sound has been lost in many Semitic languages, especially north Semitic languages which their life is easier, while it remains in south Semitic languages. It remained in Arabic, Ugaritic, and Epigraphic South Arabian. It changed to š, in Canaanite, Hebrew, Akkadian, Assyrian, and Phoenician. And changed to t, in Syriac and Aramaic. In Ethiopic it becomes S or š. In Arabic the shape is similar to the letter , but the old writers put three dots above the letter to distinguish it from the letter , in modern Arabic or slang Arabic many people in Syria nowadays pronounce this letter as . The meaning for this letter in Arabic dictionaries was not found, but in some Arabic studies the meaning of the shape of this letter is the stones of oven.

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218 Same above.
3.23 The historical development of the letter (خ in Arabic) ( כ in modern Hebrew) (ה)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is [ḥ] خ voiceless dorso-uvular fricative. The shape of this letter is خ, in Ugaritic the shape is written in cuneiform as 𐤀. The shape in south Arabian languages is ﻖ.

The proto sound of this letter *ḥ remained in Arabic, Ugaritic, Akkadian, Assyrian, Ethiopic and Epigraphic South Arabian. In other languages it changed to ḥ. *ḥ>ḥ in Syriac Hebrew, Phoenician and Aramaic. In old Hebrew the sound has been changed to ḥ, *ḥ>ḥ. In modern Hebrew the sound became ḫ from כ k. ḫ>k. In later development, Arab writers add one dot above it in order to distinguish it from the letters ج and ح. In Arabic dictionaries there is no meaning related to the shape of this letter, but in modern studies one meaning is found, that is the bubble of camel 222, and the meaning of camel is suitable to the letter ج.

3.24 The Historical Development of the Letter (ذ in Arabic) ( ט in modern Hebrew) (ד)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is [ḍ ] ذ voiced inter-dental fricative. The name of this letter in Arabic is ǧaabāl. In modern and eastern Hebrew they use this letter as ט 223. The shape of this letter in Ugaritic is 𐤉 or 𐤋 𐤆 𐤄 and is written in cuneiform writing. In south Arabian the shape is ﻖ or ﻖ. In Sinaitic inscriptions writing it as ﻖ  nhuận.

This letter has been lost in many Semitic languages, but still used in Arabic, Ugaritic (occasionally), Akkadian (rare), Eblaite and Epigraphic south Arabian. The sound has been changed from *gd to d and z . *gd>z in Akkadian (most), Hebrew, Phoenician, Assyrian, Canaanite and Ethiopic. It changed to d, *gd>d in Syriac, Ugaritic and Aramaic.

In modern Arabic or slang Arabic the sound changed to z in Egypt, and to d in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. In a later development, the Arabic writers put a dot above the letter ذ in order to distinguish it from the letter ﻖ.

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There is no meaning for this letter in Arabic dictionaries, but according to one of the Arabic studies, the shape of this letter came from the shape of tail 224, but this is agree with Sinaitic inscriptions and South Arabian Languages which is similar to letter H in English, so it is difficult to find the real meaning of this shape.

3.25 The Historical Development of the Letter (ض in Arabic) (ḏ)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is (ḏ) voiced apico-dental emphatic fricative, name of this letter is ḏaḏd. In south Arabian languages the shape is ﺚ.

Many scholars considered this as a rare letter in languages, because it is only found in Arabic, and many scholars called the Arabic as language of ḏaḏd. But in fact not only Arabic used this letter, it also used in Ethiopic, Geʕez, and Epigraphic South Arabian. Most of the Semitic languages had lost this letter because it is not easy to pronounce it. It is changed to ش, *ḏ>ض in Aramaic and Syriac. It changed to ص, *ḏ>ض in other Semitic languages.

The Arabic writers developed the shape and they put a dot above the letter ض in order to distinguish it from the letter ص.

In Arabic dictionaries the popular meaning for this letter is opposition 225, but there is no link between this meaning and the shape of the letter.

3.26 The Historical Development of the Letter (ز in Arabic) (Ẓ)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is voiced inter-dental emphatic fricative, its name is Za‘. Its shape in South Arabian languages was ﺔ, in Ugaritic cuneiform it was ﻟ.

The sound of this letter has been lost in many Semitic Languages, *Ẓ>ض it has been changed to ﺚ in Assyrian, Akkadian, Hebrew, Geʕez and Ethiopic. The sound changed to ﺚ, *Ẓ>ض in Syriac, Aramaic, Amharic, and East Ethiopic. The proto sound *Ẓ remained in Arabic, Eblaite, Ugaritic, and Epigraphic South

Arabian. In modern slang languages as in Arabic it changed to Z. *Ẓ > Z as in Syria.

The Arabic writers developed its shape and they put a dot above ف in order to distinguish it from the letter ع. In the Arabic dictionary "Lisan Al-ʕrab" (The tongue of Arabs) the sound of the letter changed from طحط > ظ in Nabatean language (50 B.C.E).

3.27 The Historical Development of the Letter (ך in Arabic) (ג)

The sound of this letter in Arabic is voiced dorso-uvular fricative; the name of this letter is ǧayn. In old Hebrew it is pronounced instead of the letter  with stress. The shape of this letter in South Arabian languages is or . In Ugaritic cuneiform it is . In Sinaitic inscriptions writing it is .

In Arabic dictionary the word ǧayn means clouds, also green tree with heavy leaves, and its meaning agrees with the shape of tree with heavy leaves as it seen in Sinaitic inscriptions writing (1600-1500 B.C.E). This meaning is similar to the shape in South Arabian languages or .

The sound of this letter has been lost in most of the Semitic languages, the sound has changed to (a), that means * ǧ > a in Akkadian and Mandiac Aramaic. Also it is * ǧ > h in Eblaite (some words), and Akkadian. The letter has been changed to ܈, * ǧ > FullScreen.pdf in Hebrew, Aramaic, Gez, Ethiopic, Syriac, Ugaritic (some words), Phoenician, and Epigraphic South Arabian. The proto-sound * ǧ remained in Arabic, Eblaite and Ugaritic (see for the words which start with this letter in chapter four).

The Arabic writers developed the shape and put a dot above the letter ך in order to distinguish it from the letter ך.

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Table 27- The Ancient Alphabets