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توليسن ملايو

A HANDBOOK OF
MALAY SCRIPT

M. B. LEWIS



How to write and spell in Jawi Script,
with passages for reading
in print and manuscript

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A HANDBOOK OF MALAY SCRIPT

*With passages for reading and a list
of commonly-used Arabic words*

1204

by

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MACMILLAN AND CO. LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1958

MACMILLAN AND COMPANY LIMITED
London Bombay Calcutta Madras Melbourne

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA LIMITED
Toronto

ST MARTIN'S PRESS INC
New York

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*First edition 1954
Reprinted (with alterations) 1958*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
LOWE AND BRYDONE (PRINTERS) LIMITED, LONDON, N.W.10

PREFACE

'THOSE follow but a vain shadow who seek to prescribe exact modes of spelling words regarding which even native authorities are not agreed.' So wrote Sir William Maxwell in 1881, and his words are substantially true to-day. The compiler¹ of the latest authoritative list, *Daftar Ejaan Melayu* (A List of Malay Spellings)² does not claim to do more than record 'common usage'.

This list of spellings has been adopted by the Education Departments in Malaya and it is likely, therefore, that future texts will conform to it. But since the students for whom this handbook is primarily intended will, for some time to come, be reading texts which were printed before the publication of *Daftar Ejaan*, I have followed the plan of first stating the principles underlying the spelling which they will find in those texts and then indicating the points on which *Daftar Ejaan* diverges from those principles.

I am aware that in my efforts to clear a straight path through the thicket, so that students may acquire what is, after all, a mere mechanical proficiency in as short a time as possible, I have laid myself open to the charge of undue attention to detail and of occasional repetition. My answer is that I have followed the method which I have been using for several years, having discovered through experience that in this particular task the longest way round is the shortest way home. Even so, there are certain to be some questions that I have left unanswered.

It is my hope that Asian students, as well as English, may find this book useful since a knowledge of the *Jawi* script will considerably widen the field of their Malay reading.

M. B. LEWIS

LONDON

October, 1953

¹ Zainal-'afidin bin Ahmad (Za'ba).

² First published, for the Department of Education, Malaya, in 1940 revised and reprinted in 1949 (Macmillan & Co. Ltd.).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank all those who have helped me in the production of this book, whether by granting permission for the use of material or by discussion and elucidation of points of difficulty.

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My personal thanks are due to a number of people :

To Professor A. S. Tritton for patient answering of elementary questions concerning Arabic, over a prolonged period.

To Dr. C. Hooykaas for permission to use the letter given on pages 138-9, for the loan of books, and for many a helpful discussion.

To Enche' Mohd. Yunus Maris and other Malay friends for permission to use excerpts from private correspondence.

Above all, to Dr. P. Voorhoeve, Librarian of Leiden University, not only for arranging the photographing of two manuscript pages in that library. (Nos. 32 and 33) and for directing me to most of the Dutch references which I have quoted, but also for so generously putting the resources of his scholarship at the disposal of one who could offer him no *quid pro quo*. My debt to him is evident from the footnotes in which I have acknowledged his help.

Finally, I am grateful to Messrs. Macmillan for having consented to publish a book which has involved many problems of production and much patient wrestling with difficulties.

BOOKS CONSULTED

In addition to the relevant volumes of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Straits Branch* and *Malayan Branch*, and the *Bijdragen tot de Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, I have made use of the introductory chapters of: Wright's *Arabic Grammar* (3rd Edition), and Phillott's *Higher Persian Grammar*.

M. B. L.

October, 1953

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SECTION I

THE ALPHABET

Malay script is an adaptation of Arabic script. It is written from right to left, with most of the letters joined. There are no capital letters, and there is not much difference between print and manuscript. Until recent times no punctuation marks were used.

Every letter (with a few exceptions) has a full form which is used only in isolation or as a final, and a much shortened form which is used as an initial or medial letter.

There are thirty-five letters in the alphabet given on p. 3, but of these one (*lam-alif* No. 32) is merely a combination of two letters, and another (*hamzah* No. 33) is an indication of pronunciation rather than a letter. These letters are set out on pp. 4 and 5, but you would do well to learn to say the alphabet by heart before you begin to study the forms of the letters.

Out of the thirty-five letters there are some which are found only in words of Arabic origin.¹ You will not be using them while you are in the practising stage. The information given below is intended merely to tide you over the initial difficulty of pronouncing the names of these letters while you are learning them by heart. If it is possible, get a Malay to go over the alphabet with you a few times before you begin committing it to memory.

Letters ² found only in Arabic words :

No. 4. <i>tha</i>	ث	: as in <i>Thalatha</i> , but usually pronounced <i>s</i> .
No. 7. <i>ha</i>	ح	: as in <i>hakim</i> ; a strong <i>h</i> with the back of the tongue pressed well down. Malays call this letter <i>ha bësar</i> , to distinguish it from <i>ha këchil</i> , No. 31.

¹ A list of Arabic loan words commonly used in Malay is given on pp. 60-71.

² For the pronunciation of these letters in Arabic see *Teach Yourself Arabic* by A. S. Tritton (E.U.P.). In the first chapter you will find the alphabet set out with the appropriate phonetic symbols attached. For an introduction to Arabic calligraphy see *Writing Arabic* by T. F. Mitchell (O.U.P.). Malay pronunciation does not always conform to Arabic pronunciation nor does Malay writing exactly correspond to Arabic writing.

- No. 8. *kha* خ : as in *khābar* ; a scraped throaty sound like the *ch* in *loch*, but popularly pronounced *k*.
- No. 10. *dzal* ذ : as in *dzikir* ; pronounced *dth*, but popularly changed to *j* as e.g. *dzarah* or *jarah*.
- No. 12. *zai* or *za* ز : as in *zaman* ; popularly changed to *j* as e.g. *Zainab* becomes *Jenab*.
- No. 15. *ṣad* ص : as in *sabar* ; an *s* pronounced with the tip of the tongue behind the lower teeth. In the names of this and the next three letters the *a* is sounded almost like a short *o* pronounced gutturally.
- No. 16. *ḍad* or *dlad* ض : as in *kadzi* ; a *d* pronounced with the tip of the tongue behind the lower teeth. In Malay it sometimes has a suspicion of an *l* sound after it.
- No. 17. *ṭa* ط : as in *tabib* ; a *t* pronounced with the tip of the tongue behind the lower teeth.
- No. 18. *ẓa* or *ṭla* ظ : as in *dzalim* ; pronounced *dth* (*th* as in *this*) or *dz* or *tl*, and sometimes popularly *l* as e.g. *dzahir* or *lahir*.
- No. 19. *‘ain* ع : as in *‘adat*, *‘ilmu*, *‘umor* ; an indeterminate sound with the back of the tongue well down. In the middle of a word (e.g. the name *Sa‘ad*) it is like the ‘broken’ sound of ‘a’ in a lamb’s ‘baa’. It is the voiced partner of strong *h* (No. 5). The name of the letter is pronounced rather like German *ein* pushed well back into the throat.
- No. 20. *ghain* غ : as in *ghaib* ; it is the voiced partner of *kha* (No. 8), both being pronounced with the back of the tongue. One Persian dictionary describes it as ‘the noise made in

gargling'. Popularly pronounced as a back *r* as e.g. *ghaib* or *raip*. The name of the letter is pronounced in the same way as 'ain (No. 19) with the *gh* sound in front of it.

- No. 22. *fa* ف : as in *faham* ; popularly pronounced *p* as e.g. *fikir* or *pikir*.
- No. 24. *kaf* ق : as in *kaum* ; a deep *k* produced by pressing the root of the tongue against the throat, but in common words frequently pronounced as an ordinary *k* (*kaf* No. 25) as e.g. in *kuat*. (See also p. 45.) In the pronunciation of the name of the letter the throat consonant gives the *a* a guttural *o* sound, as in Nos: 15 to 18. Malays call this letter *kaf bĕsar* to distinguish it from *kaf kĕchil* (ك No. 25).

Below are given the names of letters of the Malay alphabet. They are grouped to correspond to the page divisions on p. 9 to p. 17. The result is a sort of jingle which may help you to memorize them more quickly.

The letters of the Malay alphabet :

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <i>alif</i> | 2. <i>ba</i> | 3. <i>ta</i> | | |
| 4. <i>tha</i> | 5. <i>jim</i> | 6. <i>cha</i> | | |
| 7. <i>ha</i> ¹ | 8. <i>kha</i> | 9. <i>dal</i> | 10. <i>dzal</i> | 11. <i>ra</i> |
| 12. <i>zai</i> (<i>za</i>) | 13. <i>sin</i> | 14. <i>shin</i> | | |
| 15. <i>ṣad</i> | 16. <i>dad</i> (<i>dlad</i>) | 17. <i>ṭa</i> | 18. <i>ṣa</i> (<i>-tla</i>) | |
| 19. 'ain | 20. <i>ghain</i> | 21. <i>ngā</i> | 22. <i>fa</i> | 23. <i>pa</i> |
| 24. <i>kaf</i> (or <i>qaf</i>) | 25. <i>kaf</i> | 26. <i>ga</i> | | |
| 27. <i>lam</i> | 28. <i>mim</i> | 29. <i>nun</i> | 30. <i>wau</i> | 31. <i>ha</i> |
| 32. <i>lam-alif</i> | 33. <i>hamzah</i> | 34. <i>ya</i> | 35. <i>nya</i> . | |

The letters are given in their isolated form on pages 4 and 5.

¹ The dot below the letters numbered 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 24 is used in the early pages only, to help you to distinguish between these Arabic sounds and the more commonly used letters numbered respectively 31, 13, 9, 3, 12, and 25.

THE ALPHABET

Read from right to left

3 ت <i>ta</i>	2 ب <i>ba</i>	1 ا <i>alif</i>
6 چ <i>cha</i>	5 ج <i>jim</i>	4 ث <i>tha</i>
9 د <i>dal</i>	8 خ <i>kha</i>	7 ح <i>ḥa</i>
12 ز <i>zai (or za)</i>	11 ر <i>ra</i>	10 ذ <i>dzal</i>
15 ص <i>ṣad</i>	14 ش <i>shin</i>	13 س <i>sin</i>
18 ظ <i>ẓa (or ıla)</i>	17 ط <i>ṭa</i>	16 ض <i>ḍad (or ḍlad)</i>

THE ALPHABET (*continued*)

21


 nga

20


 ghain

19


 'ain

24


 kaf

23


 pa

22


 fa

27


 lam

26


 ga

25


 kaf

30


 wau

29


 nun

28


 mim

33


 hamzah

32


 lam-alif

31


 ha

35


 nyā

34


 ya

Pages 9 to 17 show the formation of the letters in the three positions, initial, medial, and final.

But before you turn to those pages learn to reel off the alphabet. It will pay you to do so before you begin wrestling with difficulties of writing and spelling.

If you look up the Arabic alphabet you will not find in it the letters numbered 6, 21, 23, 26, and 35, i.e. *cha*, *nga*, *pa*, *ga*, and *nya*.

Islam came to the Malays largely through the agency of Indian merchants, and it was Persian merchants who, in the main, had brought it to India. In adapting the script of the *Kor'an* to fit their own language the Persians had added four letters to represent the sounds *ch*, *g*, *p*, and *zh* (as in 'vision'). When this script in its turn was adapted for Malay it was necessary to add two further sounds, *ng* (No. 21) and *ny*¹ (No. 35) and to discard the *zh* sound. You will notice when you come to examine the shapes of the letters that all the new ones were created by the device of adding dots to already existing forms.

The method of formation of the letters in each position is shown by numbered arrows. Do not spend much time on these pages at the first reading. Come back to them for reference when you begin practising the writing of the complete words in the next section.

These are the chief points to be noted :

1. The letters are written from right to left.
2. Each of them must be joined to a letter which precedes it, unless that letter is *alif*, *dal*, *dzal*, *ra*, *zai* or *wau*.
3. All except six of them must be joined to a succeeding letter, i.e. a letter on the left. The six letters which are not joined to following letters are : *alif* ا (No. 1) ; *dal* د (No. 9) ; *dzal* ذ (No. 10) ; *ra* ر (No. 11) ; *zai* ز (No. 12) ; and *wau* و (No. 30). Since *dzal* and *zai* are the same in formation as *dal* and *ra* respectively, they need not be memorized. Remember the other four as *RODA* (*wheel*). As soon as you begin to practise writing you

¹ The letter which is used for the *ny* (medial) sound had already been adopted in Persian for the *p* sound. For this sound Malay took the Arabic *f* (usually pronounced *p* by Malays) and added two dots.

will realize why none of these letters is joined to the letter which follows it. *Alif*, as a medial, ends high above the line and would need a reverse stroke as long as itself to bring it back to the line¹ ready for the next letter, and as an initial it would become *lam* (No. 27) if it were joined to the next letter. The same applies to *ra* and *wau* because they end below the line; and *dal*, if joined, would hardly be distinguishable from *lam*.

4. A letter which is abbreviated in an initial or medial position must still carry its dots.

Letters are cut short in the following ways :

(a) The letters which rest flat on the line as though they were saucers (i.e. *ba* ب, *ta* ت, *tha* ث, *fa* ف, *pa* پ), or bowls (i.e. *kaf* ق, *nun* ن, *ya* ي, *nya* ث), are cut off as soon as they begin to curve on to the line. A succession of these letters, therefore, has the appearance of a succession of notches, with a dot or dots above or below each notch.

(b) The letters which have flat tops (i.e. *jim* ج, *cha* چ; *ha* ح; *kha* خ) are cut off at the neck, i.e. just when they are about to cross the line.

(c) The letters which have round heads (i.e. *'ain* ع; *ghain* غ; *nga* غ; and also *mim* م), as well as the letters which recline (i.e. *sin* س; *shin* ش; *ṣad* ص; *ḍad* ض) are all cut short in the same way when they are about to cross the line.

(d) The only letters which cut the line, in initial and medial positions, are the unjoined letters *ra* ر, *za* ز, and *wau* و.

¹ Malay script is frequently called *Tulisan Jawi*, and the romanized script *Tulisan Rumi*. For the sake of brevity these two terms will usually be used in this book. *Jawi* script is not written 'on the line' as is romanized script, but if you look at the passage of *Jawi* printing on p. 78 you will see that the letters, nevertheless, have a definite position relative to one another. All the notches are in alignment, and the heads of curtailed letters rest on a level with them. The (imaginary) line referred to in the text runs along immediately under the notches. In handwriting there is considerable licence for variation of this alignment of notches, but it is an ordered licence.

- (e) All the letters not included in (a), (b), and (c) above are written on the line, in full (except that *lam* J is curtailed in the same way as are the saucer-letters).
5. With some exceptions final letters revert to their full form.

THE ALPHABET

Isolated

Initial Medial Final

1.  *alif*  

Note that when *alif* is isolated or initial it is a downward stroke, when it follows another letter it is an upward stroke.

Alif is *never joined* to the letter which follows it.

2.  *ba*  

Note that when a 'saucer' letter is cut short the dot moves over to the right.

In the medial position the first arrow-stroke shows the preceding letter making a junction with *ba*. The dot is usually placed immediately under the notch so created.

3.  *ta*  

In continuous writing the two dots would appear over the notch, in the initial and medial forms.

Isolated

Initial Medial Final

4.

 *tha*


Note that (for initial and medial positions) one notch with three dots above it is *tha*, two notches with three dots above is *shin* (No. 14)—both of them uncommon—and one notch with three dots below is *nya* (No. 35).

5.

 *jim*


Notice the method of joining a flat-topped letter. In the medial and final positions the first arrow indicates a joining line¹ coming in from the preceding letter. This line may be made to carry dots, and so count as a letter itself. This joining-line, when not used to carry a dot or dots belonging to the preceding letter, is the *only* meaningless stroke in *Jawi* script. All other strokes or curves must be accounted for as parts of letters.

6.

 *cha*


In rapid writing this three-dotted arrow is easy to confuse with initial and medial *nya* (No. 35). Look for the joining line.

¹ In print the joining-line comes up from below, thus ح.