Proposal to encode the 'Hamsa' symbol in Unicode

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1   Introduction

This is a proposal to encode the following symbol in the 'Miscellaneous Symbols and Pictographs' block (U+1F300) in Unicode:
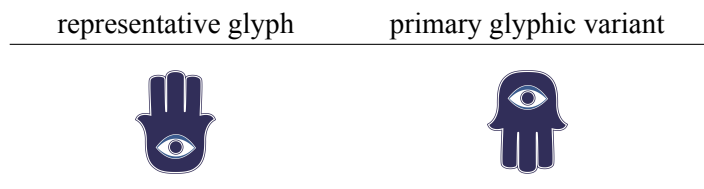
glyph	character name
	HAMSA

The representative glyph is derived from an image found at `http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File: WPVA-khamsa.svg`, which is in the public domain.
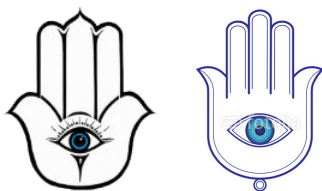
2   Description

The ☝ HAMSA is used by various cultures throughout the Middle East as an emblem of protection. It is painted upon structures and worn as an amulet. The Anglicized name 'Hamsa' is derived from the Arabic word خمسة *hamsa* "five" (fem.), with a specific reference to the five digits of the hand. It is known in Hebrew as חָמֵשׁ *hamesh* "five" (fem.). The symbol is commonly referenced to as the 'Hand of Fatima', 'Hand of Miriam', and 'Hand of Mary'.

The basic structure of the HAMSA consists of an open human hand with palm oriented towards the observer. The second, third, and fourth digits are joined laterally and extended straight. The third digit is generally longer. The thumb and fifth digit are truncated and curved outward. An eye motif consisting of the contours of the eyelids, iris, and pupil appears on the palm. There are numerous graphical renditions of the HAMSA, but they are all based upon the structure described above. A simple representative glyph has been chosen for the symbol, which emphasizes the digits and eye motif in order to assist with its identification and legibility on the displays of hand-held digital devices.

The primary glyphic variant of the HAMSA consists of the palm pointing downwards:

representative glyph	primary glyphic variant

Shown below are porrayals of the symbol in outline form:

The symbol is often accentuated with color and varying degrees of ornamentation:

Representations of the symbol with inscriptions in Arabic and Hebrew are common:

Additional artistic interpretations include the incorporation of religious symbols in place of the eye motif:

3   Character Data

Character Properties   Properties in the format of `UnicodeData.txt`:

```
1F9xx;HAMSA;So;0;ON;;;;;N;;;;;
```

Linebreaking   Linebreaking properties in the format of `LineBreak.txt`:

```
1F9xx;ID     # So      HAMSA
```

Names List   Names list information in the format of `NamesList.txt`:

```
1F9xx     HAMSA
          = Arabic hamsa, Hebrew hamesh
          * hand of Fatima
          * hand of Miriam
          * hand of Mary
```