

years later during the compilation of the Qurʾān (*q.v.*). Having sold the horse to the Prophet, the Bedouin sought to renege on the deal by asking, “who is your witness that I sold it to you?” Khuzayma b. Thābit (d. 37/657), Allāh be well-pleased with him, testified in the Prophet’s favor, who asked him: “On what basis do you testify (*bi-mā tashhad*)?” (for he had not witnessed their contract). He replied: “With your attestation (*bi-taṣḍīqik*).” The Prophet declared that henceforth Khuzayma’s witness would count doublefold (Aḥmad, ḥadīth Khuzayma b. Thābit, 36:205 §21883; Ḥākim 2:21 §2187, declared sound by him and al-Dhahabī; Bayhaqī, *Sunan* 10:246 §20515).

This Prophetic investiture (granting his witness the status of two) was significant during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān when a second codex of the Qurʾān was being prepared. Abū Bakr had instructed that each verse of the codex be supported by two Companions who had witnessed it from the Prophet; at this compilation Khuzayma’s single witness was able to suffice for Q 33:23 (Bukhārī, Jihād wal-siyar, qawl Allāh ta‘ālā, min al-mu‘minīn rijāl ṣadaqū; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, qawluhu bāb jam‘ al-Qurʾān; Mubārakfūrī, *Tuhfa* 8:408; Ibn Sayyid, *Uyūn al-athar* 2:389-391).

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See also: ABŪ BAKR; BUYING AND SELLING; COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET; COMPILATION OF THE QURʾĀN; FAMILY OF THE PROPHET; FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE;

HIJRA; WITNESS OF FAITH, WITNESSING, AND WITNESSES.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

ANONYMOUS MENTIONS

MUBHAMĀT

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions; ii. Exegetical Function; iii. Stylistic Function; iv. Importance of the Genre; v. Boundaries; vi. History of the Genre; vii. *Mubhamāt* as a Category of Qurʾānic Sciences; viii. Strengths and Weaknesses; ix. A Divergent Gloss of Q 80:1-10; x. Table of Selected Glosses; xi. Bibliography.

Definitions

Mubhamāt al-Qurʾān is a branch of exegesis (*tafsīr*) devoted to the exposition of “anonymous mentions” (*mubhamāt*), specifically the identity or identifying features and details related to living beings, events, times and dates, places, and things referred to in the Qurʾān. *Mubham* is a passive adjective derived from the root *b-h-m* in the causative fourth form *abhama*—“to be or make vague or confused” (Farāhīdī 4:62), infinitive noun *ibhām*—the contrary of *bayyana*, “to make clear,” infinitive noun *bayān*, as in relation to speech. Derived from this are (i) the substantive *bahīma* for “dumb beasts; specifically excluding, in customary usage, feral animals and birds” according to al-Rāghib (d. 502/ca.1108) in the *Mufradāt* as in Q 5:1, 22:28, 22:34; and (ii) the *af‘al*-form descriptive *abham*, used in the accusative plural in the ḥadīth, “People shall be resurrected *buhman*” (Aḥmad, *Musnad al-Makkiyīn*, ḥadīth Abd Allāh b. Anīs §16042), that is, without any distinguishing mark and, by extension, naked.

Exegetical Function

Al-Zarkashī (745-794/ca.1344-1392) in *al-Burhān fī ‘ulūm al-Qurʾān* (Type 6, 1:155-163) lists seven reasons for the existence of anonymous mentions in the Qurʾān.

- I. Economy: when the anonymous mention is elucidated elsewhere. For example, *those You have favored* (Q 1:7) are the Prophets and the most truthful and the martyrs and the righteous (Q 4:69) and *those who are true* (*al-ṣādiqīn*) (Q 9:119) are the Quraysh Emigrants (see MUḤĀJIRŪN) (Q 59:8).
- II. Fame: since Ḥawwā’ (Eve) is known by all to have been Ādam’s only wife, her name is left

unmentioned and she is referred to simply as *your wife* (Q 2:35). Similarly Qābil and Hābil are *the two sons of Ādam* (Q 5:27), and Nimrūd is *him who disputed with Ibrāhīm concerning his Lord* (Q 2:258).

- III. Protection of identity as a conciliatory stance (*isti'tāf*), as practiced by the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—when he criticized particular individuals without naming them. Thus, Mālik b. al-Ṣayyif may be the party meant in *Is it ever so that when they make a covenant a party of them set it aside?* (Q 2:100), while *Or do you desire to question your Messenger as Mūsā was questioned in former time?* (Q 2:108) targeted Rāfi' b. Ḥuraymila and Wahib b. Zayd, and *among mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this world pleases you* (Q 2:204) the murderous hypocrite al-Akhnas b. Sharīq (see HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES).
- IV. Irrelevance: the message is complete without need to elaborate on the denomination, for example, of the precise places meant in verses such as *Or the like of him who, passing by a township* (Q 2:259), *Ask them of the township that was by the sea* (Q 7:163), *If only there had been a township* (Q 10:98): respectively Jerusalem, Eilat, and Nineveh.
- V. Universals over particulars: the general import of the verse matters more than its incidental circumstances. Thus, the message is more important for all people at all times than for the one person meant at one time in such verses as *and whoso forsakes his home, a fugitive unto Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is incumbent on Allah* (Q 4:100) or *Those who spend their wealth by night and day, secretly and openly* (Q 2:274).
- VI. Emphatic praise: a full, laudatory description is further emphasized by concealing the identity of the person meant, such as Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—Allah be well-pleased with him—in the verse *And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and needy* (Q 24:22).
- VII. Dismissive blame: here, understatement is used for the opposite purpose, namely as a curt, disparaging reference according little importance to the person alluded to, in such verses as *It is your insult-er who is without posterity* (Q 108:3) and *If an evildoer brings you tidings* (Q 49:6), where al-Āṣī b. Wa'il and al-Walīd b. 'Uqba respectively were meant.

Stylistic Function

The last two of al-Zarkashī's reasons refer to stylistic devices used in the Qur'an reflecting the purity of

Arabic style and beauty of expression—both conveyed by the term *faṣāḥa*—as well as eloquence (*balāgha*) and, most especially, concision (*ijāz*) of the type known as “curt” or “elliptical” (*ijāz ḥadhf*). This aspect of style, held in the highest esteem by Arab rhetoricians from pre-Islamic times, is the trope most literally connected to the anonymous mentions (*mubhamāt*) since, like the latter, it suppresses more or less indispensable elements of speech to achieve a fuller outcome in both style and substance. Such ellipsis might even include obligatory syntactical elements, as in the verse *And those who kept their duty to their Lord were driven unto the Garden in troops until, when they reached it, and the gates thereof were opened, and the warders thereof said unto them: Peace be unto you, pure ones! So enter, to dwell therein* (Q 39:73). Here the entire conditional-clause apodosis (*jawāb al-shart*) that would normally follow “until” is deliberately omitted, the inferred meaning being that they shall behold something sublime beyond description (Zamakhsharī, *sub* Q 39:73; Ḥabammaka, *al-Balāgha*, p. 41) (see RHETORIC AND ELOQUENCE).

Importance of the Genre

The masters of exegesis showed great keenness in investigating the minutiae of anonymous mentions. Ibn 'Abbās (3BH-68/619-688) said he waited no less than a year to ask 'Umar (d. 23/644), who overawed him—Allah be well-pleased with them—if he knew who were the two women that connived against the Prophet—upon him blessings and peace—as mentioned in Q 66:3 (Bukhārī, *Tafsīr*, bāb tabtaghī marḍāta azwājik and in three other places; Muslim, Ṭalāq, bāb fī-l-ilā' wa-i'tizāl al-nisā'), to which 'Umar answered that they were Ḥafṣa (d. 41/661) and 'Ā'isha (7BH-57/623-677). Either Ibn 'Abbās or his client 'Ikrima (d. 104/722) travelled for 14 years to discover exactly who had been meant in the words *and whoso forsakes his home* (Q 4:100): it was Ḍamura b. Abī al-'Aṣṣ as narrated by Ibn Mandah (310-395/922-1005) in his *Ma'rifa al-Ṣaḥāba*.

Thus, early scholars left no stone unturned to complete their exegetical documentation, the identification of anonymous mentions ranging:

- from the extremely momentous—such as Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq's historic extraction, upon the demise of the Prophet, of the leadership status of the Emigrants (see MUHĀJIRŪN) over the Helpers (see ANṢĀR) from the verse *For the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and their belongings, who seek bounty from Allah and help Allah*