was broken by a powerful chief who was able to abrogate the will of the assembly and install himself as a tyrant. In such cases, power would be concentrated in this chief, and it was he who would designate the members of the assembly, collect taxes, declare war, etc. A powerful amghar could subordinate other chiefs and extend his rule over an increasingly expansive area. In such circumstances, he would abandon the title of amghar and instead take the more prestigious title of caïd (qāxid). The best examples are provided by the “lords” of the High Western Atlas in Morocco, whose emergence is described in detail by Robert Montagne. Currently, the amghar of the Berber-speaking tribes of Morocco designates a local representative to the Ministry of the Interior. The historical prestige accorded to the status of amghar has ended.

Bibliography

HASSAN RACHIK

Āmina

Āmina, the mother of the prophet Muhammad, was the daughter of Wahb b. ‘Abd Manāf of the clan of Zuhra of the Quraysh and Barra bt. ‘Abd al-UZZĀ of the clan of ‘Abd al-Dār (Ibn Sa’d, 1:59). Her husband was ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, to whom she was married while she was staying with her uncle Wuhayb b. ‘Abd Manāf, who was her guardian (Ibn Sa’d, 1:94–9). Muslim tradition regards the marriage as part of a divine scheme: An old Yemeni scholar, well versed in the holy scriptures, reportedly recognised prophethood and kingdom in ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib’s nostrils and stated that one of them—prophethood—would be found in the clan of Zuhra. Accordingly, ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib married a woman of that clan (Hāla bt. Wuhayb), and took another one, namely Āmina, for his son ‘Abdallāh (Ibn Sa’id, 1:86. For more versions see Rubin, 86).

The traditions about Āmina’s pregnancy with Muhammad revolve around the motif of the light of Muḥammad (nūr Muḥammad) that was seen blazing on ‘Abdallāh’s forehead, signaling the essence of Muḥammad hidden in his loins. It is related that ‘Abdallāh’s divine blaze attracted several women who knew what it meant and hoped to gain it, thus becoming the Prophet’s mother. However, ‘Abdallāh eventually entrusted it to Āmina, who conceived Muḥammad, and thereupon the light disappeared from ‘Abdallāh’s forehead. The transmission of the light to Āmina is described as a cosmic event that had extraordinary effects all over the world. During her pregnancy Āmina reportedly saw a vision in which she was informed of the identity of her child and was ordered to name him Muḥammad or Aḥmad. She also saw light coming out of her that lit up the palaces of Ḫūrā (Bostra), in Syria. When she gave birth to Muḥammad she saw the same light coming out of her (Rubin, 83–9). Some reports maintain that the birth took place in the ravine (shīb) of Abū Ṭālib (al-Kulaynī, 1:439; Ibn Sayyid al-Nāṣ, 1:26).

Āmina is said to have died when Muḥammad was six, on her way back to Mecca from a visit with her son to his
kinsmen in Yathrib (= Medina). Her death occurred at al-Abwā’ and she was buried there. Muhammad reportedly visited her grave during his journey to Mecca in the year of al-Hudaybiyya (6/628) (Ibn Sa’d, 1:116–7). Other reports maintain that her grave was in Shīb Abī Dubb (al-Azraqī, 432), Mecca’s old burial ground. Still other reports say that she was buried in al-Rū’d (al-Wuṣūq, 14–5); or that she had lived as adherents of the bā’laq, i.e., persons who died during an interval between two prophets (in their case, Jesus and Muhammad). Because of this circumstance, they would have had no direct source of guidance and therefore would be given the chance to be tested in the next world; if they were to profess belief then, they would be saved from Hell. Other arguments were offered: that God brought Muḥammad’s parents back to life and they expressed their belief in him (al-Suhaylī, 1:194–5; al-Qurṭūbī, 14–5); or that they had lived as adherents of the hanīfiyya, i.e., the monotheistic religion of Abraham. (For the various arguments see al-Suyūṭī, 225–43; Rubin, 75, n. 43.)

The story of Muḥammad’s visit to his mother’s grave is usually associated with Q. 9:113: “It is not for the Prophet and the believers to ask pardon for the idolaters, even though they be near kinsmen, after that it has become clear to them that they have professed belief then, they would be saved and hence would be given the chance to be tested in the next world; if they were to profess belief then, they would be saved from Hell. Other arguments were offered: that God brought Muḥammad’s parents back to life and they expressed their belief in him (al-Suhaylī, 1:194–5; al-Qurṭūbī, 14–5); or that they had lived as adherents of the hanīfiyya, i.e., the monotheistic religion of Abraham. (For the various arguments see al-Suyūṭī, 225–43; Rubin, 75, n. 43.)

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al-ʿĀmm wa-l-Khāṣṣ

ʿĀmm and khāṣṣ, often translated as “general” and “specific,” respectively, are a key pair of technical terms in the Islamic and Arabic sciences. They are most intensively discussed in writings on Islamic legal hermeneutics (usūl al-fiqh), at the intersection of law (fiqh), theology (kalām), grammar (nahu), and Qur’ānic exegesis (tafsīr). Jurists used these terms to denote the breadth of application of legal rules (ahkām) by deem phing expressions, particularly in the Qur’ān and hadīth, as either ʿāmm or khāṣṣ, in which case such expressions exhibit the qualities of generalness of reference (ʿumm) or specificity of reference (khūṣūṣ). These terms and cognates also occur frequently in non-specialised domains of writing (including in other Islamicate languages) to mean “general” and “specific,” “masses” and “elites,” and so on.

It is unclear in which field ʿāmm and khāṣṣ first emerged as technical terms. Both terms appear in early works of tafsīr in a loose technical sense and also as labels for Qur’ānic text types (Vérsteegh, 74–5,