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Particles of Meaning and Their Impact on Religious and Legal Texts

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Letters are one of the parts of Arabic speech, which linguists have divided into: the verb, which is the event associated with time; the noun, which is what indicates a meaning in itself without being associated with time; and the particle, which does not indicate a meaning except with something else. That is, if it is independent, it does not convey any meaning. However, if it is used in speech composed of verbs and nouns, then it performs its function, which is to link sentences in speech and texts together to convey a significant meaning and have an effect, especially if these texts are legal or religious

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INTRODUCTION

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his pure family, and his righteous companions. It is well-known that language consists of sounds that form words, which are then arranged into sentences to convey various meanings. Each people uses language to express what is in their minds, enabling them to communicate and achieve their goals. These various meanings constitute the semantic system, meaning that each sentence, or part of it, has a specific meaning. Language is also a mirror and instrument of thought, the fruit and product of the intellect. Furthermore, it is a showcase of human culture and civilization, and a means of human communication through which people express their thoughts and feelings. In addition, the organization of all human life is achieved through language. The Arabic language is distinguished from others by being the language of the Holy Quran, which has granted it a sacred status and preserved it from extinction. This is further enhanced by its exceptional richness in vocabulary, synonyms, and antonyms, and its remarkable ability to derive and coin new terms. It is also characterized by its precise inflection, eloquent diction, and coherent grammatical structure, making it a language... Flexible and able to keep pace with the times.

What concerns us in this modest research is the particles of meaning, which are one of the parts of Arabic speech. Linguists have divided speech into: the verb, which is an action associated with time; the noun, which indicates a meaning in itself without being associated with time; and the particle, which does not indicate a meaning except in conjunction with something else. That is, if it is independent, it does not convey any meaning. However, when used in speech composed of verbs and nouns, it fulfills its function of connecting sentences and texts, especially if these texts are legal or religious. Therefore, particles of meaning are essential tools in interpreting texts, as they determine the connotations of words, connect sentences, and change contextual meaning, which directly affects the derivation of legal rulings. Hence, commentators, jurists, hadith scholars, and legal theorists have differed in many rulings due to their differences in grammatical and semantic interpretation and understanding of meaning. In this research, we will discuss some particles of meaning according to scholars of legal theory, in terms of their meaning and types, while mentioning the applications of some of these particles in jurisprudence and law. The research is divided into two sections. The first is dedicated to understanding the nature of particles The first part deals with legal and legitimate applied models of some of the meanings that are frequently used in legal texts, and our final supplication is that praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

The first section: The nature of particles of meaning. This section is divided into two parts: the first defines particles, and the second discusses their types in the Arabic language, as follows:

First part: Definition of particles of meaning: Linguistically, the word "particle refers to the edge or edge of something. God Almighty says, "And among the people is he who worships God on the edge" (2:110). The

commentators explained this to mean that they worship Him only in times of ease, not in times of hardship (1).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ibn Manzur said: "A letter is one of the letters of the alphabet, and a letter is a tool called a link because it connects nouns to nouns and verbs to verbs, such as 'an' and 'ala' and the like. Al-Azhari said: Every word constructed as a bare tool in speech to differentiate meanings is called a letter, even if its construction is with a letter or more, such as 'hatta' and 'hal'." (2) Technically: These are letters that lack the characteristics of nouns and verbs, and their meaning appears in relation to others. That is, they do not indicate a meaning in themselves (3), but rather their meaning appears and becomes clear when they are used in sentences. An example is the two prepositions 'min' and 'ila'. If they come alone, they do not indicate any meaning, but when they are included in speech, they convey a meaning that has an important significance and purpose, as in our saying, 'I traveled from Baghdad to Basra.'" The second point: Types of letters in the Arabic language: Linguists have divided them into two categories:

The first: Building letters: These are the letters that make up the Arabic language, and they are, in the following order: (28 letters (The letters are the letters used in the Arabic language and are also called the letters of the alphabet. Words (verbs, nouns, particles) are formed from them, and they have no effect on the meaning of texts.

Second: Particles of Construction: This term was coined by grammarians in the Arabic language, who divided speech into verbs, which are actions associated with time; nouns, which denote meaning in themselves without being associated with time; and particles, which here refer to particles of meaning. These particles reveal their meaning when they are used in a sentence because they connect the meanings of verbs and nouns and indicate specific meanings and connotations. This topic falls under the category of grammar, but it is also needed in the Islamic sciences, including jurisprudence (fiqh), its principles (usul al-fiqh), exegesis (tafsir), and even history, in addition to linguistics. Scholars of the principles of jurisprudence paid attention to it and dedicated chapters and sections in their books to it because of the significant impact these particles have on interpreting texts and understanding the intended meaning of speech. Speech is not arbitrary but has meaning and purpose. Al-Zarkashi said: However, because jurists frequently needed them, the scholars of the principles of jurisprudence mentioned them. He said, "The scholars of the principles of jurisprudence needed them because they are part of the Arabic language, and legal rulings differ due to the difference in their meanings." (4) Through them, texts and speech are interpreted, whether religious or legal. Exegetes, jurists, and hadith scholars may differ among themselves in interpreting texts accordingly. Their differing interpretations of the semantic meaning of the letters within the context of speech are one of the reasons for the differences among jurists in legal rulings. There are eighty-two letters, which grammarians and linguists have divided into several categories based on various considerations, including the number of letters they comprise. These categories are: single, double, triple,

quadruple, and quintuple. Some of them, according to their specialization, are specific to verbs, some to nouns, and some are common to both nouns and verbs. These are letters that enter both nominal and verbal sentences without specialization. The most prominent of these are the conjunctions (wa, fa, thumma, hatta, aw, am, bal, la, lakin), the negation letters (ma, la, in), and the interrogative letters (hamza, hal) (5). There is another division according to their shared function, as each group of them shares a meaning or function to which it is attributed. Thus, it is said: the letters of response (la, na'am, bala, i, ajal, jalal, jayri, inna), the letters of negation (lam, lamma, lan, ma, la, lat), and the letters of condition (in, idhma, law, lawla, lawma, amma), and so on. Our study was limited to some of these letters, choosing from them those that were frequently used in legal texts.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using library research to examine the meanings and functions of Arabic particles in religious and legal texts. The data were collected through documentation of selected Qur'anic verses, religious texts, Iraqi legal provisions, and relevant literature on Arabic linguistics, grammar, Islamic jurisprudence, and legal theory. The data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis by identifying and classifying Arabic particles, examining their grammatical and semantic functions within textual contexts, and interpreting their implications for understanding religious teachings and legal provisions. The analysis focuses on selected particles, including bi, waw, lam, aw, in, min, ila, ala, and hatta, to demonstrate how differences in their meanings influence textual interpretation and the derivation of religious and legal implications.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Section Two: Some Applied Examples of Particles of Meaning

It is known that the number of particles of meaning exceeds eighty, but we will address some of these particles that are frequently used in positive law. This section is divided into two parts. The first part deals with examples of particles of meaning in religious texts, while the second part is dedicated to applied examples of these particles in positive law, as follows:

First Part: Religious Examples

First: The letter, which has several meanings, including:

Attachment, as in the Almighty's saying: "Divorce is twice. Then either retain [her] in kindness or release [her] with good treatment" (6). The words bi-ma'ruf and bi-ihsan each relate to what follows them from the verbal noun, and is for attachment (7). It also comes for causation, as in the Almighty's saying: "And when Moses said to his people, 'O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to God.'" (8) Your Creator, meaning you have harmed yourselves by taking the calf as an idol. He says, "Turn away from the worship of the calf and return to the worship of your Creator and repent to Him." (9)

Every person who commits an act that warrants punishment from God Almighty is unjust to himself. The act they committed, by which they wronged

themselves, was what God informed us about their apostasy when they took the calf as a god after Moses left them. (10) The preposition "bi " can also indicate assistance, as in "I wrote with the pen" and "I struck with the sword," meaning I used the pen and the sword for these actions. In the Wise Reminder (the Quran), God Almighty says, "And there is no creature on earth nor bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you." (11) Here, the "bi "indicates assistance in flying. It can also indicate equivalence and compensation, as in God Almighty's saying, "The free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female." (12) Here, equality in retaliation between the killer and the killed is considered in terms of freedom, slavery, and gender. The understanding from the context is that a free person is not killed for a slave, and a man is not killed for a woman. That is, if a free person kills a slave, he is not killed for it, and if a man kills a woman, he is not killed for it. The verse only mentions three scenarios: a free person killing a free person, a slave killing a slave, and a woman killing a woman. It does not address the issue of a woman killing a man. Regarding the remaining scenarios—a free man killing a slave, a slave killing a free man, a man killing a woman, and a woman killing a man—there is disagreement among jurists. The verse explicitly states that retaliation is prescribed in the first three scenarios, and this is agreed upon by all jurists, as there is no disagreement on the explicit meaning of the Quran. However, the verse neither explicitly nor implicitly negates or affirms retaliation in the other scenarios. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to other evidence from the Sunnah or scholarly consensus. The jurists differed on this matter. Malik, Shafi'i, and Ibn Hanbal said that a free man is not killed for killing a slave. Abu Hanifa said that a free man is killed for killing another man's slave, but not for killing his own. All four agreed that a man is killed for killing a woman, and vice versa. The Imamiyyah said: If a free man kills a slave, he is not killed in retaliation, but rather severely beaten and made to pay the blood money for the slave. If a woman intentionally kills a man, the victim's guardian has the choice between accepting the blood money from her, if she agrees, or executing her. If he chooses execution, her family is not liable for anything. If a man kills a woman, her guardian has the choice between accepting the blood money, if the killer agrees, or executing the killer himself, provided that he pays the killer's heirs half the blood money for the man (13).

And for the circumstantial qualifier, as in the Almighty's saying, "And Allah had already given you victory at Badr when you were weak" (14), meaning Allah aided you on the day of (15) Badr. It also comes for oaths, as in "I swear by Allah".

Secondly: The letter Waw has several meanings, including: It indicates conjunction, as in our saying, "Omar and Zaid attended," and it indicates resumption, as in the Almighty's saying, "Then He decreed a term and a specified term" (16). Likewise, it comes for oaths, as in the Almighty's saying, "By the sky and the night-comer" (17), and for accompaniment, as in our saying, "I walked with the roads," meaning, "I walked with the road".

Third: The letter Lām

It conveys several meanings (18), including ownership. This is the Lām that comes between two nouns, where ownership belongs to the second noun, as

in the Almighty's saying, "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth" (19). It also conveys location, as in the Almighty's saying, "And We will place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection" (20). Furthermore, it conveys becoming, consequence, and outcome, as in the Almighty's saying, "So the family of Pharaoh picked him up so that he would become for them an enemy and a source of grief" (21). This Lām is the Lām of consequence, and it has also been said that it is the Lām of becoming, for they did not pick him up to make him an enemy and a source of grief for them, but rather their affair led to this later on (22).

It also indicates explanation, as in the Almighty's saying, "And We have sent down to you the Reminder so that you may explain to the people what was sent down to them" (23). It indicates specification when it occurs between two nouns, as in the Almighty's saying, "O Aziz, indeed he has a father, an old man" (24). It indicates an oath, as in the Almighty's saying, "Let the wealthy man spend according to his means" (25). It indicates a beginning, as in the Almighty's saying, "Joseph and his brother are more beloved to our father than we are" (26).

Fourth: The letter or. It indicates choice, as in the Almighty's saying, "Freeing a slave (13) or feeding on a day of severe hunger (14) an orphan of near relation (15) or a needy person who is poor (16)(27) And freeing a slave means specifying the price and spending it on the unjust relative. If one cannot do that, then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. If one cannot do that, then refrain from your speech and do not speak except good.(28) It comes to indicate doubt, as in the Almighty's saying, "They said, 'We stayed a day or part of a day.'"(29) It comes to indicate ambiguity, meaning it is not intended to specify, as in the Almighty's saying, "Our command came to her by night or by day."(30) It comes to mean "rather," as in the Almighty's saying, "And We sent him to a hundred thousand or more." It comes to indicate division, as in our saying, "A word is a noun, a verb, or a particle".

Fifth: The particle "in" has more than ten meanings, including indicating location, as in our saying, "Zayd is in the house," and "The family gathers in the evening." It may also mean "on," as in the Almighty's saying, "And I will crucify you." (in the trunks of palm trees) (31), and it indicates cause and reason, as in the saying of the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, "A woman entered Hell because of a cat." It also indicates purpose, as in "I went on an errand," and it indicates the meaning of "to," as in "They put their hands to their mouths".

Sixth: The preposition "min" (from). Among its meanings are: to indicate beginning, as in the Almighty's saying, "Glory be to Him Who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque." It also indicates partiality, as in "Among them are those to whom God spoke." It is used for interrogation, as in "Is there any creator other than God?" It indicates cause, as in "Because of their sins they were drowned." It also indicates substitution, as in the Almighty's saying, "Are you content in this worldly life rather than the Hereafter?" These are also among its meanings. It comes with the meaning of

"from," as in the verse, "What have they created of the earth?" (32), meaning, "Whatever they have created on earth".

Seventh: The preposition "to "indicates the end of a journey, whether spatial, as in the verse, "Glory be to Him Who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque" (33), or temporal, as in the verse, "Then complete the fast until nightfall" (34). It also comes with the meaning of "with," as in the verse, "And do not consume their wealth along with your own" (35).

Eighth: The preposition "on "indicates elevation, as in the verse, "And upon them and upon the ships you are carried" (36). It also comes with the meaning of "in," as in the verse, "And he entered the city at a time of inattention" (35), meaning, "at a time of inattention." It also indicates accompaniment, as in the verse, "And indeed, your Lord He is Forgiving to people for their wrongdoing (36), meaning even with their wrongdoing. Ibn Abbas said: He is Forgiving to the polytheists if they believe, and He is severe in punishment for those who persist in polytheism. Muqatil said: He is Forgiving of their polytheism by delaying the punishment, and He is severe in punishment when He punishes (37). It also indicates cause, as in His saying, may He be exalted, "And that you may magnify God for having guided you" (38). Why magnify Him? Because God has guided us. It also indicates time, as in our saying, "This was during the time of so-and-so," meaning in his time and era. It comes with the meaning of the preposition "min," as in His saying, may He be exalted, "Those who, when they take a measure from people, demand full measure." It also indicates overlooking, as in our saying, "I overlooked so-and-so," meaning I pardoned him and overlooked his mistakes.

Ninth: The letter "hatta" (until). It may come with the meaning of "ila" (until) and indicates the limit, as in His saying, may He be exalted, "Peace it is until the emergence of dawn," and His saying, may He be exalted, "Until the white thread becomes distinct from the black thread." Dawn (39) is the first appearance of the transverse dawn on the horizon, like a stretched thread (from the black thread). It is what extends from the darkness of night, resembling two threads, one white and one black, due to their extension (from the dawn). This indicates that the white thread is from the dawn and not from anything else, and it suffices to mention it without mentioning the black thread because mentioning one implies mentioning the other (40).

Second Requirement: Applied Models in Positive Law

Legal texts are affected in terms of meaning and connotation according to the difference in the letters of meaning and the difference in their connotations, as follows:

Among the meanings of the letter:

1. It indicates choice and eligibility, as in Article (101) of the Iraqi Civil Code: (The court may authorize a minor of discernment if the guardian refuses to authorize him, and the guardian may not place him under guardianship thereafter, and the court may, after authorization, reinstate guardianship over the minor). That is, the court has the right to authorize someone who

has completed fifteen years of age, and it has the right to reinstate guardianship over him according to his best interests.

2. It indicates ownership, as in Article (410) of the law. The Iraqi Civil Code states that if a depositary has a debt owed by the depositary, and the debt and the deposit are of the same kind, or if a usurper has a debt owed by the owner of the usurped property of the same kind, the deposit or the usurped property shall not be subject to set-off for the debt unless the two parties agree to set it off by mutual consent. This establishes ownership for both the depositary and the usurper.
3. It establishes causation, as in Article (138/3) of the Iraqi Civil Code: "However, a person lacking legal capacity is not obligated, if the contract is annulled due to lack of capacity, to return anything other than the benefit he received as a result of the contract's execution." That is, if the contract is annulled or rescinded due to lack of capacity.

Meanings of the preposition

1. Obligation and duty, as in Article (283/2) of the Iraqi Civil Code: "The one who holds something must preserve it and provide an account of its yield." This refers to the one holding something as collateral. Similarly, in Article (25/3) of the Iraqi Personal Status Law: "The court must delay issuing a ruling of disobedience against the wife until it ascertains the reasons for her refusal to obey her husband".
2. Justification, as in Article (31) of the Iraqi Penal Code: "Attempting felonies and misdemeanors is punishable." This refers to the reason for the punishment.

Third: One of the meanings of the letter "hatta" is the end or limit of something, as in Article (160/A) of the Iraqi Code of Criminal Procedure: "If the resolution of a criminal case depends on the outcome of another criminal case, the proceedings in the first case must be suspended until the second is resolved".

CONCLUSION

After completing this humble research with God's help and guidance, we will now summarize what has been presented. We have learned that Arabic speech consists of verbs, nouns, and particles. These particles do not convey meaning on their own; rather, their meaning emerges when they are incorporated into speech. Herein lies their importance, as they are tools with significance. Indeed, a single particle may have more than one meaning. This is what makes these particles, which number more than eighty, of great importance in interpreting texts, whether religious or legal. They are considered one of the reasons for the differences of opinion among jurists in matters of Islamic jurisprudence when deriving rulings from the Holy Quran or the Prophetic Sunnah. Even in legal texts, if they are not open to interpretation, we observe that jurists have differed on the issue of wiping (a specific ritual act). Is the head wiped part of it or all of it? And is the wiping done with the whole hand or just a part of it, since it is the instrument of wiping? And our final supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

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