

The Miracles of the Qur'ān.

What is a miracle (mu'jiza)?

Allāma Taftazānī defines *mu'jiza*:

‘It is something that appears contrary to the customary way of things (*al-Ādat*) at the hands of one who claims the office of prophet, [and it happens] in such a way that those who deny are unable to do the same thing that he does when they compete with him.’¹

Importantly, a miracle must defy and transcend the laws of nature. If the act can be explained by universal norms and laws, then it is no longer considered a *mu'jiza*. The parting of the sea by Mūsā (peace be upon him) was miraculous precisely because science and gravity cannot explain it.

What is the purpose behind a miracle?

When Allāh sent prophets and messengers to people, He did so with an undeniable and easily-understandable message. Unfortunately, in each and every generation, some people refused to accept Islām. Sometimes this was because they preferred their own distorted belief system and sometimes they preferred to seek the short-term, worldly gain instead.

Moreover, each and every prophet was tested by their people. They were subject to denial, insult and mockery. In order to convince people that they were indeed the representatives of Allāh, the prophets and messengers were granted miracles that contravened the laws of nature. The purpose behind this *mu'jizas* was to produce an extraordinary event that could only happen through the involvement of Allāh.

¹p. 134. *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī. In *Reliance of the Traveller*, Sheikh Nuh Keller defines a *mu'jiza* as an ‘event contravening natural laws that appears at the hands of someone who claims to be a prophet and is challenged by those who deny this, such that the deniers are unable to perform the like of it. (p. 919).

The Prophet's (peace be upon him) miracles.

Whereas other prophets were given one or just a handful of miracles from Allāh, the Final Messenger (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was given thousands of miracles. With the permission of Allāh:

-He split the moon on half.

-He made a tree uproot itself from the ground, come to him and then return.

-He made water gush from his blessed fingers. ²

But with each of these miracles (and indeed those given to previous prophets), it was only a miracle for those who observed it first hand. The people who witnessed these wonderful spectacles were fortunate. But those who missed it missed it.

Because Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent for all people until the day of Judgement, his special miracle in the form of the Qur'ān was special. It would be miraculous for those who lived 1400 years ago, and those living now too. So the difference between the miracle of the Qur'ān and previous miracles given to other prophets and messengers is that the Qur'ān is the everlasting miracle of Allāh given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). Those who lived in the time of the Prophet can appreciate this miracle, in the same way those living a thousand years later can too.

The nature of a miracle.

A miracle would be useless if it did not achieve its desired effect on its witnesses. **So for it to have full impact, it must relate to an area of knowledge in which its intended audience are well-versed.** This has been the pattern with previous prophets and their miracles:

- The people in the time of Mūsā (peace be upon him) were well-versed in magic and sorcery. So Allāh granted Mūsā the miracle whereas a simple staff turned into a vicious snake.

- The people in the time of Īsā (peace be upon him) were well-versed in medicine and biology. So Allāh granted Īsā the miracle whereas he could bring the dead back to life, could cure the leper merely by his touch and restore sight to the blind.

² *Mu'jizat al-Rasul*, p. 27.

This methodology explains why the very first people to accept faith in Mūsā were the magicians themselves. Being in a better position than others to judge that the miracle was the supernatural work of a divine power and not the result of a magical skill, they were overwhelmed by what they witnessed:

And the magicians fell down prostrating, crying: We believe in the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn. (7:120-2)

● The same idea applies with the Holy Qur'ān. This too had to be miraculous in a field of knowledge that the witnesses were familiar with. But whereas other miracles were for particular people and times, the Qur'ān was to be the miracle for all people for all times. So that means it had to be truly miraculous not just in one field of knowledge and expertise, but several according to the changing times:

-In the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), the Arabs were known for their mastery in language and linguistic skills. The Qur'ān proved miraculous in this regard.

-Later, people became experts in wisdom and philosophy. The Qur'ān proved miraculous in this regard.

-Later still, people became brilliant at mathematics and algebra. The Qur'ān proved miraculous in this regard.

-Today, science and technology is at the forefront. The Qur'ān proved miraculous in this regard.

-Tomorrow, we ourselves have **no idea** which discipline, expertise or field of knowledge. But we know this much; that the Qur'ān will prove miraculous in that sphere too.

The different aspects of the miraculous Qur'ān.

a. Unmatched in beauty and perfection of speech.

Despite taking great pride in their unparalleled lingual skills and mastery in Arabic, the people of Makka could not match the Qur'ān at all. Allāh laid a challenge to:

-Bring a Qur'ān like it (al-Isrā: 88)

-Bring ten Sūrahs like it (Hūd: 13)

-Bring just one Sūrah like it (al-Baqara: 23, Yūnus: 38).

To this day, no one has been able to answer this challenge and the Qur'ān will remain un-matched until the Day of Judgement.³

Moreover, Allāh says:

And the disbelievers said: Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and make noise in the midst of its (recitation) so that you may overcome (Fussilat: 26)

This verse indicates that the Qur'ān's recitation **was** certainly having an effect on the disbelievers. If it wasn't, then they wouldn't tell others to close their ears.

The infidels took every opportunity to insult the Prophet and object to Islam. But it is interesting to note that none raised any objections and concerns about the *hūruf al-muqatta'āt*, the individual letters to be found at the beginning of some Sūrahs (for example, طه, المر, كهيعص, الم). Imam al-Sha'rawi writes that the reason for this was because these letters were having an effect on the infidel Arabs. Though they could not make sense of it – reading individual letters was unheard of – they couldn't ridicule and defame them because they were totally mesmerised by them.

b. Informing of future events.

The Qur'ān is miraculous in the sense there are several verses which referred to future events, namely these events had not yet materialised at the time of revelation. For example:

a. Certainly, you shall enter al-Masjid al-Harām, if Allāh wills, securely...(al-Fath: 27).

This verse was revealed when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in Madina Sharif. Like the Qur'ān predicted, the Prophet did return on the occasion of Fath Makka.

b. Alif Lām Mīm. The Romans have been defeated. In the lowest land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious.' In a few years (three to nine years) (al-Rūm: 1-4).

When the verse was revealed, the Byzantine Empire (eastern part of the later Roman empire) had just been severely defeated by the Persians. The Qur'ān predicted that after a few years, they would be victorious once again and this is exactly what happened.

³ *Al-Shifa*, p. 161.

c. The foolish will say ‘What has turned the Muslims away from their Qibla...(al-Baqara: 142).

This verse was revealed regarding the Qibla change from Jerusalem to Makka, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in Madina. The Qur’ān predicted that the non-Muslims would object to the Qibla change, **not** that they had. In order to defeat the truthfulness of the Qur’ān, all the non-Muslims had to do when this verse was revealed was to remain quiet, and not to question the Qibla change. They then could have said that as they had remained quiet, the Qur’ān was false in its claim.

But they did make objections, just like the Qur’ān said they would. Once the Qur’ān said it would happen, it had to happen.

c. Its divine protection.

One of the greatest miracles of the Qur’ān is that it remains unchanged and unaltered from the time it was first revealed to the Messenger (peace be upon him). Allāh states:

‘Indeed It is We Who sent down the Remembrance (the Qur’ān), and surely We will guard it.’ (al-Hijr: 9)

d. Mathematical miracles of the Qur’ān.

There is amazing symmetry when many opposing terms have been used in the Qur’ān.

For example:

<i>Shayātin</i> (devils)	88	<i>Malā’ika</i> (angels)
<i>Dunya</i> (world)	115	<i>Aakhirah</i> (hereafter)
<i>Hayāt</i> (life)	145	<i>Mawt</i> (death)
<i>Sālihāt</i> (goodness)	167	<i>Sayyiāt</i> (167)
<i>Nafa</i> (benefit)	50	<i>Fasād</i> (corruption)
Paradise	77	Hell

Sometimes, two terms, one leading and resulting in the other, have been repeated the same number of times:

<i>Salāh</i> (prayer)	68	<i>Najāh</i> (salvation)
<i>Zakāh</i>	32	<i>Barakāt</i> (blessing)
<i>Siyām</i> (fasting)	14	<i>Sabr</i> (patience)
<i>Infāq</i> (spending)	73	<i>Ridā</i> (pleasure)

The word "land" appears 13 times in the Qur'ān and the word "sea" 32 times, giving a total of 45 references. If we divide that number by that of the number of references to the land we arrive at the figure 28.88%. The number of total references to land and sea, 45, divided by the number of references to the sea in the Qur'ān, 32, is 71.11%. Extraordinarily, these figures represent the exact proportions of land and sea on the Earth today.

Even the word month (*shahr*) appears 12 times in the Qur'ān.

e. Scientific miracles of the Qur'ān

1. Chest contraction at higher altitude.

When we breathe we take in the oxygen in the air. As a person moves up in altitude, the amount of oxygen entering the blood stream declines and it becomes harder and harder to breathe. When a certain height is reached, it becomes impossible to breathe without the aid of breathing equipments.

Allāh states:

And whomsoever Allāh wishes to guide, He opens up his chest for Islām. And whomsoever He wills to misguide, He makes his chest tight and constricted, as if he were climbing up into the sky (6: 125).

2. Active ears during sleep.

According to recent scientific discoveries, the ear is the only sensory organ that remains active during sleep. This is why an alarm clock is required to wake us up.

The Qur'ān touched upon this fact 1400 years ago. The Companions of the Cave were put to sleep by Allāh in order to escape persecution from their people. They were put

to sleep for 309 years. So that they could sleep for this long without disturbance, the Qur'ān states:

So We covered their ears in the cave for a number of years (18:11)

3. The order of human development.

In countless verses, Allāh describes the creation of humans:

و هو الذي أنشأ لكم السمع و الابصر و الافئدة

It is He who created for you hearing, eyes and hearts (23:78)

و جعل لكم السمع و الابصر و الافئدة

And He gave you hearing, sight and hearts (16:78)

قل ارءيتم ان أخذ الله سمعكم و ابصركم و ختم علي قلوبكم من اله غير الله يأتكم به

Say (O Messenger)! If Allāh took away your hearing and sight, and sealed up your hearts, who is there other than Allāh who could restore them to you?'

The style differs but all of these verses mentions the creation of hearing first, followed by the sight and heart.

In a paper published in the *Journal of the Islamic Medical Association*, Dr. Keith Moore write that during the development of the foetus, the eye begins to form after the inner ear has assumed its first form. He says the brain, the centre of feeling and understanding, begins its development after the ear and eye. The foetus' ears begin to develop as early as the twenty-second day of pregnancy and become fully functional in the fourth month. After that, the foetus can hear sounds in its mother's womb. For that reason, the sense of hearing forms before the other vital functions for a new-born baby.

4. Water as the origin of life.

It is only through recent discoveries that we know that all living life originated from water. In the clearest possible terms, the Qur'ān informed us of this very fact centuries ago:

And We have made from water every living thing (21: 30)

5. Pairs in creation.

Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

Glory is to Him, Who has created all the pairs of that which the earth produces, as well as of their own (human) kind (male and female), and of that which you know not (36: 36).

We know that almost all living things consist of pairs, in the human, plant and physical kingdom.

Science in the Qur'ān: A word of precaution.

Science can be wrong but the Qur'ān cannot be wrong. Some over zealous Muslims try to ascribe every new scientific discovery to the Qur'ān, and say that the Qur'ān informed us of it 1400 years ago. These Muslims forget that first and foremost, the Qur'ān is a book of guidance, not a scientific text book.

An example is that of the big-bang theory, explaining how life started. Some Muslims believe that the Qur'ān proves the big-bang theory in the verse:

Do the disbelievers not see that the heavens and earth were joined together as one united piece, then we parted them? (21:30)

This may be true. But if in a few years time the big bang theory is proved wrong, what will these Muslims say in response? Will they accept now that the Qur'ān is wrong too? The big bang theory is but a theory. Like with so many areas of science, it is subject to change and revision. The Qur'ān is the truthful, unchanging word of Allāh.