

# PROOFS OF PROPHETHOOD

*VRC Curriculum Essay Series*

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## Verification and Renewal Curriculum Essay Series

The VRC Curriculum Essay Series augments the texts of the classical curriculum that speaks directly to the 'big questions.' The purpose of this series is to capture what is essential to philosophical and theological topics like epistemology (establishing what we know), cosmic semiotics (interpreting the world as signs), and cosmology (understanding God's relation to the universe). The essays seek to form a new English language reference on the subject that can be deployed by scholars and institutions.

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Verification and Renewal Curriculum Essay Series, *Proofs of Prophethood*

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## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

Over fourteen-hundred years have passed since this world was illuminated with the blessing of Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ presence. He was aided with physical proofs for his claim of prophethood, with an overpoweringly eloquent revelation to guide humanity, knowledge of the unseen past and the future to convince the world of his truthfulness, and beautiful character and manners for billions of people to emulate. Before him, Allah (exalted) sent prophets on the same mission to guide humanity to true belief and righteous action. Like these blessed prophets before, Allah gifted him ﷺ with miraculous, norm-disrupting events that none of his deniers or skeptics could reproduce or counter. These events conclusively demonstrated that he ﷺ was truthful in his claim of prophethood. Muslims all believe in the prophethood of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and they are aware of the miracles (*mu'jizāt*) given to the Messenger ﷺ, especially the Quran. But oftentimes, we don't reflect on these miracles and consider what a miracle is and how it proves the truthfulness of a prophet. What are the proofs of prophets, and what are the specific proofs of our prophet, Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ?

This essay, which you should read and study slowly with a teacher and other peers, explains what a miracle is, how it proves the claim of someone claiming to be a prophet, what type of knowledge this miracle gives you, and finally what miracles were given to the Messenger ﷺ. Of these miracles, we'll explore three that were given to the Messenger ﷺ: the Quran, the splitting of the moon, and his character.

Pay close attention to two features of this essay: the syllogisms written out and the tables that show the disruption of the norm. Consider both of these and think about how each argument leads to the conclusion. At the end of this essay, you will also find resources for further reading.

### ▲ The Proof of Prophethood

Imam al-Rāzī (d. 606/1212) proves the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ in his *Ma'ālim uṣūl al-dīn* in a concise and powerful way:

Claim: Muḥammad ﷺ is the messenger of Allah.

Argument:

- P1. Muḥammad ﷺ claimed prophethood and a miracle was given to him.
- P2. Everyone who claims prophethood and is given a miracle is a true prophet.
- C. Therefore, Muḥammad ﷺ is a true prophet.

Al-Rāzī then tells us that we need to justify the first premise: the Prophet ﷺ claimed prophethood and was given a miracle. This premise has two parts: 1) claim of prophethood and 2) given a miracle. For the first part, al-Rāzī tells us that this is known through mass-transmission, which we'll revisit later in this essay. Nearly everyone in the world who has heard of Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ or has read the Quran knows with certainty that he claimed to be a prophet, a speaker on behalf of Allah. Allah (exalted) states in the Quran: *"Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets. And Allah has 'perfect' knowledge of all things"* (Q 33:40) and *"Muḥammad is no more than a messenger; other messengers have gone before him. If he were to die or to be killed, would you regress into disbelief? Those who do so will not harm Allah whatsoever. And Allah will reward those who are grateful"* (Q 3:144).<sup>1</sup> That part of the premise was easy to prove.

As for the second part of the premise, that he ﷺ was given a miracle, let's see what al-Rāzī says first, and then we'll justify it through the remainder of this essay. He tells us that the Messenger ﷺ received the Quran, which reaches a level of eloquence that surpasses human ability. In addition, it contains knowledge that the Messenger ﷺ couldn't have known from his own efforts. He lived for forty years before prophethood among the desert Arabs who had no scholars, sages, or philosophers and who had no tradition of scientific and philosophical writings and libraries. He ﷺ only traveled outside of Makkah for business twice, and he didn't remain outside of Makkah for longer than a few months, at most. Then, at forty years of age, he begins reciting these extraordinarily eloquent *āyāt* filled with wisdom and knowledge of ancient scriptures, historical and empirical facts, and knowledge of the unseen to his people. His people couldn't understand how this was possible, since they knew him, and they knew he had no access to this knowledge through pouring over books and researching and studying to gain knowledge of these things. How could someone without copious learning, reading, researching, and traveling have composed these *āyāt*? Allah (exalted) challenges the Arabs, and everyone after them: *"And if you are in doubt about what We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a sūrah like it and call your helpers other than Allah, if what you say is true"* (Q 2:23). The Arabs are challenged to produce a sura like one of the suras of the Quran. Then, al-Rāzī explains another possible meaning of *"like it,"* saying that they are challenged also to bring the like of a sura that is produced by an individual with the same description of the Messenger ﷺ of being without learning, reading, etc.<sup>2</sup> No one has been able to do this, and no one will be able to do this (Q 2:24), and thus the Quran is a miracle from this perspective, too.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translations of the Quran are generally selected from Mustafa Khattab's *The Clear Quran*, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem's *The Qur'an*, and Saheeh International's *The Qur'an*, each with some adjustment when needed.

<sup>2</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Sharḥ Ma'ālim uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Yaḥyā Zakariyyā ('Ammān and Beirut: Dār al-Rayāḥīn, 2022), 541.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 545.

Furthermore, the second part of the premise is proven through the mass-transmitted reports of the physical miracles given to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, such as the moon-splitting and his perfect character and virtues.

Although prophets only need a single miracle to prove their claim, they are often given many miracles so that different people at different times and places experience the proof for his claim. So, we'll discuss more than one miracle in this essay. Additionally, they are gifted with powerful rational arguments for the beliefs to which they call their people. Our essay, though, focuses on their miracles. Allah gave His prophets different types of miracles, and some of these miracles are of the same nature by which his people were known or in which they excelled. Mūsā (upon him peace) was given some miracles, like his staff could change into a snake, that seemed to onlookers like sorcery, since the Pharaoh and Egyptians deeply believed in sorcery, considered sorcerers to be noble and wise, and thought that sorcery was the greatest science and knowledge and sign of power. Mūsā's miracles disproved this, showing them that the miracles given to him demonstrate that Allah is the creator and their Lord and that he speaks truthfully on behalf of Allah. Some of 'Īsā's (upon him peace) miracles, such as healing the blind, challenged Banī Isrā'īl, who had excelled in the medicine of their time and believed that they could heal the sick through the knowledge they possessed. His miracles challenged their understanding and demonstrated that he was the Messiah and prophet sent to them. Let's take a thought experiment to further explain.

Imagine an individual walked into an automotive manufacturing plant for the first time and claimed that he was the chief engineer whom the founder just appointed. He came to convey that they will be shutting down their current projects and putting all their efforts into a new design. But the crew on the shop floor had never seen him before and hadn't heard about any new appointment, so some of them ignored him, some scoffed and began heading to lunch, and others mocked him, saying the claimed chief engineer was unknown. So, he pulls the shop floor alarm, they all turn to him, and he shows them the plans for a brand-new design, far more advanced than anything they had ever seen and using technology of which no one had heard before. He shows them the design plans and notes the founder's signature and stamp at the bottom, and then he leaves the shop and drives in a prototype for the new design that he built himself over a short period. Of course, only an extreme skeptic or biased against the founder would deny that this individual was the newly appointed chief engineer or that he was incompetent. Now imagine if the newly-appointed chief engineer had worked every day since he started on the shop floor with all the other employees as just another ordinary employee, and they knew him well and for many years, and they knew he never studied engineering.

If the above individual entered the shop and his "proof" was unrelated to manufacturing and engineering, like a medical document or designs for a new role-playing game, no one would have believed his claim. This is similar to how prophets prove that they were truly sent by Allah. Allah sends His prophets (upon them peace) with miracles that are suitable to the knowledge, culture, and circumstances of the prophet's people. In this way, the prophets are relevant to their people, and the people will more easily accept the message they bring. We'll see an example of this when we discuss the Quran, since the Messenger ﷺ was given the Quran as a miracle of eloquence, since his immediate

audience (the Quraysh and Arabs) were distinguished by their eloquent speech and mastery of rhetoric, oratory, and beautiful language.

To summarize, the Messenger ﷺ received many miracles, each of which proves his prophethood. The Quran's eloquence, the Quran recited by the like of the Messenger ﷺ, the inability of the Arabs to meet its challenge, the Messenger's ﷺ physical miracles (e.g., the moon-splitting), and the miracle of his exceptional character are all miracles. In this essay, we'll focus on each of these miracles and demonstrate how they are miracles and how they prove the truthfulness of the Messenger ﷺ.

## ▲ What is a Miracle (*Mu'jiza*)?

We've been mentioning miracles and how they prove the truthfulness of prophets, but we haven't defined exactly what a miracle is and how it proves a prophet's truthfulness. You will find theologians providing a precise definition of a miracle (*mu'jiza*), which has several parts, and each of which makes sure that a miracle is that which *proves the truthfulness of a prophet*. We'll combine all the parts that various theologians mention and then look at each part on its own to see what each means.

Theologians define a miracle as “a phenomenon that

- 1) disrupts the norm (*khāriq li-l-āda*), a) be that through preventing something from happening or b) making something happen,<sup>4</sup>
- 2) is given to a someone who claims to be a prophet,
- 3) is accompanied by a challenge (*al-taḥaddī*), a) either from those who deny his claim or b) from the prophet, to produce something similar or prevent the miracle, and
- 4) cannot be countered (*‘adam al-mu‘āraḍa*).

Taking each of these points into consideration, let's start with the first two. A miracle disrupts the norm. First, what is a 'norm'? Think of your everyday experience, like heavy things on earth falling downwards (i.e., gravity) and water at standard atmospheric pressure condensing at 32°F (i.e., becomes ice). We experience these connections between one thing and another so many times that it becomes a physical law and a given that we believe in and arrange our lives around. However, Allah (exalted) creates both the prior and the subsequent event. He creates the item, the falling, and the earth; He creates the water, the pressure, the temperature, and the ice. So, at any moment, He could will to suspend the connection between these events. This is the disruption. When the connection between two events is broken, this alerts us to Allah's (exalted) will and 'intervention', which informs us of something weighty. When Allah selects an individual to be His prophet, that individual then claims that he is a prophet sent by Allah, and Allah confirms his claim through such a disruption, which only He has the power to do. Thus, a miracle is given to someone who claims to be a prophet.

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<sup>4</sup> Some scholars add that the miracle is accompanied by calling towards good and salvation (*al-khayr wa-l-sa'āda*). They add this clause to distinguish a prophetic miracle from, what we can call, a 'demonic miracle' or similar, which is given to false prophets and misguided individuals, and especially those miracles that the Dajjāl will be given. All these events call towards misguidance and disbelief.

For example, Allah chose Ibrāhīm (upon him peace) to be His prophet, and then he claimed to be a prophet, to which his people responded by throwing him in a pit of fire. Allah (exalted) disrupted the norm such that the fire did not harm Ibrāhīm (Q 21:68-69). This disruption confirmed that he spoke truthfully and was a prophet.<sup>5</sup>

As for the ‘challenge’ (*al-taḥaddī*), it could initiate from either the prophet or the prophet’s people. When a prophet makes his claim of prophethood, his people may challenge his claim and demand proof, or he may challenge his people to falsify his claim by bringing a miracle similar to his own. Mūsā (upon him peace) approached Pharaoh’s court and said, “...Indeed, I have come to you with clear proof from your Lord, so let the children of Israel go with me” (Q 7:105). Pharaoh then demanded that Mūsā (upon him peace) display this sign (i.e., he challenged Mūsā), so Mūsā threw down his staff, which became a gigantic snake, and he placed his hand within his shirt and then brought it out, and it was shining brightly (Q 7:107-108). Pharaoh and his council could not reproduce the same from themselves, so they claimed this was sorcery and that Mūsā was a sorcerer (Q 7:109). But the miracles that Mūsā was given were not magic, such that even Pharaoh’s sorcerers recognized that Mūsā’s miracles were not magic. In this case, Mūsā made a claim, and said he had proof, and then Pharaoh demanded to see the proof, so both scenarios played out here. With Ṣāliḥ (upon him peace), he made a claim of prophethood and warned his people (Thamūd) to obey Allah (exalted) and leave off their evil and corrupt actions (Q 26:141-152). His people denied his claim and accused him of being bewitched (i.e., insane and deluded). They demanded a sign from him (Q 26:154). So, Allah (exalted) created a cow (i.e., female camel) that miraculously appeared out of a large rock. Allah (exalted) responded to their challenge and demand by disrupting of the norm and sending this sign as a confirmation of Ṣāliḥ’s truthfulness in his claim of prophethood.

Once a miracle answers a challenge, it cannot be countered. What is a ‘response’ or ‘counter’ (*al-mu’arāḍa*)? Once the claimant of prophethood has shown a sign or miracle to his people, his people are left with three options. They could either accept his claim, they could ignore the claim and miracle and thus ignore the prophet, or they could fight him. If they choose either of the latter two, the prophet could continue to call them towards good and righteousness. If they choose to attempt a response, they could either attempt to:

- 1) produce the same or a comparable miracle, or
- 2) prevent the miracle, which the prophet says will occur, from happening.

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<sup>5</sup> Some scholars add another part to the definition, “and does not undermine the individual’s claim.” It appears that most definitions leave out this part of the definition, because it is not always the case. An example, for illustration, would be Musaylama the Liar, a false prophet who lived during and after the life of the Messenger ﷺ, claimed he was prophet. He said that he could cure people, so someone who was blind in one eye came to him and Musaylama wiped the man’s blind eye, but not only did his eye remain blind, the other eye became blind. Thus, Allah (exalted) falsified Musaylama’s claim of prophethood by disrupting the norm (i.e., wiping the eye did not cure it of blindness), which in turn undermined his claim (i.e., the other eye also became blind). See Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, ed. ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Giza: Dār Hijr, 1997), 9:474.

Failing both of these, they are left powerless (*mu'jaz*). And since they would not bear with the prophet constantly calling them to good and disrupting their status-quo of false beliefs and immorality, they would ultimately fight him, harm him and the believers, or demand that Allah (exalted) bring destruction to them, as a last attempt to disprove the prophet's claim. While reading the Quran, you will find that no prophet's people were ever able to produce a response, so they oftentimes resorted to violence, attempting to kill the prophet (sadly, sometimes successfully) and harming and torturing the believers. But Allah (exalted) always comes to the aid of His prophets and the believers, so He destroys the disbelievers in a way suitable to their crimes.

Now that we have a clear understanding of what a miracle is and how a miracle demonstrates the truthfulness of a prophet, we'll move onto three of the Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ miracles, proving that they are actual miracles and thus giving you certainty and confidence in the prophethood of the final messenger and prophet, Muḥammad ﷺ.

*Chapter 2*

## THE QURAN AS A MIRACLE

### (I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN)

*“Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Had it been from anyone other than Allah, they would have certainly found in it many inconsistencies.” (Q 4:82)*

The Messenger ﷺ said, “Among the prophets, none were sent except with signs [i.e., miracles] the like of which [were suitable to the context of his people and] because of which people believed [in him]; and I have been given a revelation, which Allah revealed to me. So, I hope that my followers will be more than those of any other prophet on the Day of Resurrection.”<sup>6</sup>

The Messenger ﷺ in the hadith above tells us that he was given miracles just like prior prophets. In addition, prophets are given revelation, and some receive a scripture and law, like Mūsā (upon him peace), who received the *Tawrah*, and ʿĪsā (upon him peace), who received the *Injil*. Revelation itself is in fact a miracle, since it is communication from Allah, in which He (exalted) conveys some of His knowledge and will to His creation either directly or through the intermediary of an angel. His knowledge manifests to an individual as human speech. Allah (exalted) says, “*It is not ‘possible’ for a human being to have Allah communicate with them, except through inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger-angel to reveal whatever He wills by His permission. He is surely Most High, All-Wise*” (Q 42:51). This method of communication breaks the norms we experience since we human beings cannot normally communicate with Allah (exalted) in this way, and it is beyond human capacity to communicate with Allah and be made aware of His knowledge and will without His revealing these to an individual.

The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was also given a revelation: the Quran. What sets the Quran apart from prior revelations is two key aspects: its rhetorical force and its preservation through divine protection, both of which we will speak on in this section, along with other aspects of the Quran’s

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<sup>6</sup> Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, “Chapter on Holding Fast to the Qur’an and Sunnah,” Sunnah.com, #7274, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7274>.

miraculousness.<sup>7</sup> Of the miracles given to the Messenger ﷺ, the Quran holds the greatest position since, unlike physical miracles, it remains for all generations to experience. Those who read and ponder its *āyāt* gain certainty through it in the prophethood of the Messenger ﷺ and the truth of the message. Also, part of its miraculousness is its preservation.

The Quran disperses the dark layers of disbelief and the shadows of doubt. Its unrivaled and unsurmountable eloquence moves the minds and hearts to belief. Its arguments challenge the stubborn and self-deluded and fell their objections, which only appear fortified outwardly and yet shake in their core at the slightest counter. The vast knowledge and wisdom the Quran contains continues to enlighten souls with guidance and insight.

The Quran's first audience was the Arabs, those who were most adept in the Arabic language, and this audience extends to those who are less adept and knowledgeable of the language, just as the miracles given to prior prophets were directed first at those who were most knowledgeable of the type of knowledge or skill that the miracle challenged. Over the 23 years of its revelation, the most eloquent and skillful Arab poets admitted defeat, that they were unable to challenge the Quran and match its eloquence and rhetorical force. Imagine that 100 bodybuilders each tried to lift a large object, and each of them failed. Would you then, as a non-bodybuilder, feel the need to try to lift the object, too, to know that it is too heavy for you to lift?<sup>8</sup> Would you decide to train for such a time and with such effort to be like these other bodybuilders and then try to lift the same box? This is similar to the situation with the Quran. If the masters of the Arabic language said they could not match the Quran and that it is miraculous and unexplainable (unless admitting it is revelation), you should not need to then test the Quran for yourself by studying Arabic for your entire life, hoping you would reach a level even close to these previous Arabs. If those who had the knowledge and skill failed a miracle's challenge, the Quran's rhetorical force in this case, then everyone after should also admit to the inability to meet the challenge.

One may ask whether, as a non-Arabic speaker, a person should despair of experiencing the Quran's miraculous eloquence and instead simply believe in its eloquence reported by those who, despite their skill in Arabic, failed to produce its like, or if it is possible for them to experience some aspect of the Quran's miraculous nature. The miraculous nature of the Quran goes beyond its rhetorical beauty,

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<sup>7</sup> Provided at the end of this essay is a list of thorough, but accessible, resources for reading on the miraculous nature of the Quran. In addition, Safaruk Chowdhury provides an excellent analysis of the Quran's miraculous nature in Chapter 4 of *Introducing Arabic Rhetoric* (p. 47-84) and three detailed analyses of the rhetorical features of *Sūrat al-Najm*, *Sūrat al-Ṭāriq*, and section on some of the rhetorical features from the last ten suras (Appendix I, II, and III, respectively). See Safaruk Chowdhury, *Introducing Arabic Rhetoric* (London: Ad-Duha, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> This example is taken from the YouTube channel, Arabic 101: "How can the Qur'an be a Miracle for NON-ARABIC Speakers? | Arabic 101," posted August 18, 2023, by Arabic 101, YouTube, 7 min., 19 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fyF-35naDE>.

and in fact it contains other miraculous features. We'll look at some of these below, in addition to the Quran's rhetorical beauty and force, to prove that it is a miracle sent to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

So, we have two items to prove: 1) that the Quran is miraculous and 2) that the Quran, as a miracle, proves the truthfulness of the Messenger ﷺ.

We would say in syllogistic form:

Argument 1:

P1: A phenomenon that disrupts our normal experience, given to one who claims prophethood, is accompanied by a challenge to those who deny that claim, and cannot be reproduced or challenged is a miracle (*mu'jiza*).

P2: The Quran is such a phenomenon.

C1: The Quran is a miracle.

Argument 2:

P3: Every miracle proves the truthfulness of the one to whom it is given.

P4: The Quran is a miracle.

C2: The Quran proves the truthfulness of the one to whom it is given.

## ▲ What Makes the Quran a Miracle?

Recall that a miracle is a phenomenon that Allah grants to prophets to prove their prophethood and truthfulness. It incapacitates (*i'jāz*) creation from challenging it and replicating it because it disrupts the normal phenomena that we experience. For these events, like fire burning or the dead being brought back to life, only their creator has the ability to reverse, change, or suspend the order and expected effect. Just like how the splitting and repair of the moon or water flowing from the Messenger's ﷺ fingertips cannot be reproduced by humans or any other creation, the Quran likewise remains outside the ability of creation to produce or replicate and is thus a miracle that proves the prophethood of the one to whom it was given, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. How do we know the Quran is from Allah, and what makes the Quran a miracle and beyond human capacity to challenge and imitate?<sup>9</sup>

Now, the Quran meets all these conditions: the Quran is miraculous in that it is a phenomenon that is given to a prophet to prove his truthfulness. It disrupts the norm we experience. It challenges those who deny the truthfulness of the prophet to produce a speech like it. And it has not been and cannot be successfully challenged. How does it disrupt the norm?

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<sup>9</sup> Check out the excellent discussion with Dr. Ali Ataie, which touches on many of the points brought up in this essay: "Candid Conversations: Conquering Doubts & Defending Islam | Getting to Know Dr. Ali Ataie," posted January 31, 2025, by Muslim Community Center of the East Bay, YouTube, 1 hr., 40 min., 30 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoGBx23WqqA&t>.

Our everyday experience tells us the following. When an individual who knows little to nothing of a technical science produces something of this science that baffles experts, who cannot explain how this individual produced this novel product and cannot reproduce it, then this is a phenomenon that disrupts the normal order we experience. We would assume that this scenario is unexplainable or impossible (meaning, highly improbable). The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who grew up and lived among a community of Arabs known for their poetry and superb eloquence, presented the Quran to the Arabs. They would have said, “We have a long tradition of poetry and renowned poets. We can easily match the eloquence of at least a few of the *āyāt* Muḥammad recited.” But then, after all their efforts, they were unable to match it in the slightest, while knowing that the Prophet ﷺ was not known for poetry or for the knowledge that is in the *āyāt* he recited. This phenomenon, for them, was unexplainable, and it disrupted their everyday experience. So, instead of admitting that the Quran was from Allah (exalted), they ascribed it to other supernatural means: sorcery and communicating with jinn, which they knew was not true.

Here’s another concrete example. Suppose someone named Ahmad grew up in and lives in a small city known for its abundance of computer programmers, but Ahmad didn’t learn computer programming and instead devoted his studies to history. One day, Ahmad attends a programming convention because there would be a short discussion on the history of computer programming in his town, and suddenly he is given the microphone to speak about what it is like to be a historian. But instead of speaking on history, he presents a new programming language he developed on the spot, which is faster, more secure, more capable and future-proof than any of the languages the programmers knew—like introducing generative artificial intelligence (AI) to a society playing with binary—and additionally he demonstrates the use of the language in a program he produced within seconds, which would *normally* have taken years of research, debugging, and development by a team of programmers. Such a scenario seems contrary to what we would deem possible. This is similar to how the Quran disrupts what we consider possible. So, the only explanation in both scenarios would be that Allah (exalted) intervened and disrupted the everyday norm we experience.

In addition to being beyond human capacity to match because of its rhetorical force, the Quran contains information that human beings at the Prophet’s ﷺ time could not normally have known, including knowledge about events long past and future events that have already occurred or are predicted to occur after our own time; and its preservation. The Quran has yet to be challenged and replicated (which it never will be) with any the aspects that make it miraculous. It is a proof that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is truly a prophet.

The Quran’s miraculousness fulfills the conditions in our definition of a miracle. It challenged the Arabs, and everyone after, to bring a revelation like it in all its aspects of miraculousness. No one has met this challenge. Imam al-Rāzī mentions the syllogistic form of this argument in his *Ma‘ālim*.

Our claim is that the Quran is a miracle that the Messenger ﷺ challenged his people to reproduce.

Argument:

- 1) EITHER the Quran reaches a level at which it is miraculous,

- a. The Quran reaches a level at which it is miraculous.
  - b. THEREFORE, the Quran is a miracle.
- 2) OR it does not reach the level at which it is miraculous.
- a. IF the Quran does not reach a level at which it is miraculous, THEN countering it would be possible.
  - b. IF countering it is possible, the disbelievers would have successfully countered it, especially since they had so much animosity towards it.
  - c. HOWEVER, they could not successfully counter it, despite all the opportunities and motivations to do so.
    - i. IF they have not been able to counter it, THEN it disrupts the norm.
    - ii. IF it disrupts the norm, THEN it is a miracle.
      - 1. The Quran disrupts the norm.
      - 2. THEREFORE, the Quran is a miracle.

So, either arm of the argument leads one to the conclusion that the Quran is miraculous. But our work is not over. We still need to prove that the Quran reaches a level at which it is miraculous.

In this section, we'll consider three of the many aspects of the Quran's miraculousness (*i'jāz*):

- 1) its rhetorical force (vast range of information, precise wording and amazing linguistic structures, lack of contradiction, rhetorical beauty)
- 2) its containing knowledge of the unseen (prophecies, scientific and historical facts), and
- 3) its preservation (recitation and text).

Once we establish these three aspects of the Quran's miraculousness, you will have certainty that the Quran is from none other than Allah and that the Quran proves the truthfulness of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, as the greatest miracle he was given. We'll focus on the first aspect, while briefly discussing the other two and referring you to resources on them.

## ▲ The Quran's Rhetorical Force

Before moving on, the Quran's supernatural eloquence inspired scholars to study it in terms of its rhetorical power. It is in consideration of this aspect of the Quran's miraculousness that theologians and scholars of Arabic rhetoric (*balāgha*) developed a genre of writing called *i'jāz al-Qur'ān* ("the rhetorical inimitability of the Quran"). They wrote volumes exploring just the Quran's miraculous rhetoric. And make no mistake, this is the most important aspect of the Quran's miraculousness, thus the reason for it receiving so much attention. The Quran's inimitable rhetoric is part of what makes it contrary to the norm, unchallenged, and unchallengeable. We'll discuss this aspect of the Quran first and demonstrate its rhetorical force through a brief analysis of two suras.

The Quran's rhetorical force is the most important aspect of its miraculousness. The rhetorical force of the Quran was and remains unmatched, and it incapacitated the Arabs, and those after them, to produce something similar to it. In what follows, we discuss the Quran's rhetorical force without

getting into nuances of the Arabic language and show how we can experience some of the Quran's rhetorical beauty even while not having mastered the Arabic language. The crux of the argument is that with all these examples and aspects of the Quran put together collectively, it is impossible that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ produced the Quran of his own initiative and it is impossible for the Arabs and anyone after to produce its like. Thus, it is a miracle, a work of Allah, that confirms the truthfulness of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

By “rhetorical force,” we mean something broader than the Quran's rhetorical beauty, as noted above. In our discussion, “rhetorical force” includes along with its beauty its conveying information that the Messenger ﷺ couldn't have known on his own (nor anyone else of the Arabs), its precise wording, and its lack of error and contradiction.

Beginning with the first aspect, the Quran contains intricate knowledge of words and languages, including dialects of Arabic and ancient languages like Hebrew; other scriptures in those languages, such as the Tanakh and then lost gospel traditions, and oral narratives, such as the Midrash teachings; and it makes correctives to these ancient traditions and scriptures. The Messenger ﷺ did not know these languages, and he was not a scholar of these ancient stories and traditions. Despite engaging with this wide range of myriad texts, the Quran still employs incredibly precise word choice and word arrangement and maintains an internal consistency in and between suras, all of which could not be the work of an unstudied man. When the Messenger ﷺ received revelation, he would convey what was revealed to him to those around him. There was no opportunity to “correct” what he conveyed, neither before nor after. An aspect of the Quran's consistency can be found in mentioning a concept, incident, or story in one place and later referencing that same thing but from a different angle or with more detail, expecting the listener to pick up the insight and nuance. Some parts of the Quran explain other parts and add details to what is mentioned elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> When this occurs, the Quran remains consistent with itself and the detail given, never contradicting what it says in one place with what it says in another. The Quran's rhetorical eloquence and beauty overpowered the best of the Arab poets, such that no one could challenge it. Each of these aspects are part of the Quran's rhetorical force. We'll explain these characteristics of the Quranic revelation below, and it will become obvious that it is not of a human source.

In each of these we have a norm and a disruption of the norm. Let's place these in a table.

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<sup>10</sup> This is a well-known principle in Quran commentary.

Example	The Norm	The Disruption	Judgment
<p>The Quran contains deep insight into Arabic and other languages, other scriptures and oral narratives, ancient traditions and religions, and correctives of other scriptures.</p>	<p>One who presents this information would have to be a master of many languages, have access to many preserved and lost scriptures and oral narratives, have a vast library and connection to a community of other religious scholars, and have read all the scriptures he corrects.</p>	<p>The Messenger ﷺ did not have any of these qualities but still recited to his people the Quran, which contained all these insights.</p>	<p>It is impossible according to our norm for an individual to know all these details and have these qualities without the means mentioned and without study and then present them in a recitation. Thus, the Quran is a miracle (i.e., it disrupts our norm) given to Muḥammad ﷺ, which confirms that he is a prophet.</p>
<p>The Quran is internally coherent and lacks any contradiction.</p>	<p>Any speech, be it oral or textual, that is produced without need to correct in future revisions must have at least one unjustifiable factual, historical, grammatical, linguistic, or stylistic error according to the conventions and rules of the language it is in.</p>	<p>The Quran amazingly contains no factual, historical, grammatical, linguistic, or stylistic error that was contrary to the conventions and rules of the Arabic language, even according to the most hardened detractors of Islam, who were masters of the language.</p>	<p>It is impossible according to our norm for a speech to be completely free of error, contradiction, and flaw in this manner. Thus, the Quran is a miracle, and Muḥammad ﷺ is a prophet.</p>

<p>The Quran is supernaturally eloquent and beautiful.</p>	<p>Any speech, despite its superb eloquence, melodiousness, beauty, and core message, must have some challenger (especially a master of rhetoric) who rivals it with something similar or an impartial and sincere audience who discovers some flaw in its eloquence.</p>	<p>The Quran is such a speech whose eloquence is unmatched and unchallenged, whose message changed an entire community of people, and whose sheer eloquence and beauty moved millions upon millions to believe in its core message. No one was able to rival it or discover a flaw in its eloquence.</p>	<p>It is impossible according to our norm for a speech to be so eloquent and beautiful and for there to be no speech that rivals it. Thus, the Quran is a miracle, and Muḥammad ﷺ is a prophet.</p>
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Thus, keeping in mind that the Quran is not the Messenger’s ﷺ speech or word selection, but rather Allah’s, one who analyzes the Quran’s language finds amazing nuances, which can only be explained after acknowledging its divine source. Let’s take a look at some brief examples.

***Vast Range of Information***

The Quran contains deep insight into Arabic and other languages, other scriptures and oral narratives, ancient traditions and religions, and corrects other scriptures. It provides subtle overlaps of words and phrases with other traditions’ scriptures, makes detailed and nuanced references and correctives, and alludes to details buried in other scriptures, scriptural commentaries, and oral narratives. We cannot give more than a few examples of each; otherwise, we would have volumes to write. So, we’ll suffice with just a few examples and give you some references and material to read and listen to should you desire.” This section demonstrates that the Messenger ﷺ could not have had such deep knowledge of these languages, scriptures, narratives, and traditions, except through revelation. Otherwise, he would have to have all these qualities:

- 1) have to be a master of multiple languages (aside from Arabic),
- 2) have a massive library in these languages, containing manuscripts that existed at his time and that were thought to be lost, such that only he had access to them,

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” In fact, commentaries on the Quran, which are filled with such examples, oftentimes reach 20 or more volumes. Scholars of Quran commentary, while also explaining the grammar, meanings, history, and eloquence of the Quran, often explain and source the connections and allusions that the *āyāt* of the Quran make.

- 3) have studied philosophy (metaphysics, legal theory, and psychology), astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, history, and the social sciences,
- 4) have traveled to many lands and experienced many cultures,
- 5) have had access to ancient information that no one else at his time knew (like knowledge of ancient Egypt and ancient Arabia), and
- 6) ultimately be extraordinarily intelligent and wise, such that no human being has existed or will exist who rivals his intelligence and wisdom, and his people would have taken him as a king and sage to whom they would resort for all their matters.

Or he ﷺ was a prophet who received revelation and was guided by Allah (exalted) and thus had access to this information without the need to study and travel.

While it may be conceivable for an individual living in the Arabian desert to have possessed one of these qualities, it is impossible according to our norm for such an individual like the Messenger ﷺ to have possessed all of them. Also note that some of these points could fall under the last section on “Knowledge of the Unseen,” since knowledge about matters long since forgotten or highly improbable to know for an individual living in the valley of Makkah would be a type of “unseen knowledge.” You’ll see in that section that we can include philosophical and empirical knowledge along with knowledge of the distant past and the near and distant future (i.e., prophecies). So, for this section, we’ll only consider those facts that existed at the time of the Messenger ﷺ, but he couldn’t have known except through revelation.

Here’s an example of the Quran providing a nuanced reference to previous religious texts. Allah called Mūsā (upon him peace) to Mount Sinai to gift him revelation and speak to him directly. Mūsā (upon him peace) was away in this retreat initially for 30 days, but then Allah granted him an addition 10 days to be in His divine presence. Allah (exalted) references this area in Makkan suras of the Quran with both *tūr sīnīn* (Q 95:2) and *tūr saynā’* (Q 23:30), both of which refer to Mount Sinai, located in modern-day Egypt, and both word forms are used in the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 19:2 and 24:16, respectively, and elsewhere). The words *sīnīn* and *saynā’* are loanwords, and they were unfamiliar to the desert Arabs, who were living in the Arabian Peninsula, far from Egypt. The Messenger ﷺ could not read, in general, let alone read the Hebrew Bible in Hebrew, and he had no direct knowledge of the Jewish and Christian texts present at his time. So, how would he have known such nuanced usage in the Hebrew Bible and then use the same two word forms in the Quran? The point here is that the Quran is aware of the usage of these two words in the Torah, and it alludes to its knowledge of other scriptures in this example. Clearly, the Quran is Allah’s revelation, since only Allah could inform the Messenger of both words through revelation. This is just one example. Maybe this one is a coincidence or has some possible explanation, but there are a number of similar examples like this and in hadith, which show how the Messenger ﷺ was even aware of many of the Arabic dialects and words that even the most knowledgeable Companions and Qurayshī poets did not know.

The Quran gives another name for the sacred area that houses the Kaaba: Bakka (Q 3:96). Allah (exalted says): “Surely the first House ‘of worship’ established for humanity is the one at Bakkah—a blessed sanctuary and a guide for ‘all’ people.” Interestingly, the Hebrew Bible uses the same word in

Psalms 84:6, which states (NRSVUE): “As they go through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.”<sup>12</sup> Allah describes the area of Bakka as, “...the valley of Mecca...” (Q 48:24), with the “spring” being Zamzam. Somehow the Messenger ﷺ knew both the word and description found exclusively in the Hebrew Bible. This is equivalent to an unstudied Bedouin who has lived his life in the deserts of Jordan without encountering city people calling the Amman Philadelphia, the long forgotten Roman name for the city.

In *Sūrat al-Baqara*, the Quran describes an event that occurred during the life of Prophet Sulaymān (upon him peace) in Babylon, “...Never did Solomon disbelieve, rather the devils disbelieved. They taught magic to the people, along with what had been revealed to the two angels, Hârût and Mârût, in Babylon” (Q 2:102). There are three points here. The Quran regularly corrects false notions and tampered historical and theological details mentioned in previous scriptures, most especially lies made against His noble prophets (upon them peace). The Hebrew Bible and Jewish and Christian tradition ascribe demonic acts to Sulaymān (upon him peace), two of which are idolatry and the use of magic (see for example 1 Kings 11).<sup>13</sup> Allah rejects this lie and honors His prophet, Sulaymān, exonerating him of these false accusations. But to know this, the Messenger ﷺ would have had to have known of these biblical and extra-biblical stories, some of which at the time were only passed down orally. In addition, in the above *āya*, Allah (exalted) declares the innocence of His angels, as He does elsewhere in the Quran. Jewish, Christian, and other religious traditions, which affirm the existence of angels, claim that angels have the ability to sin and disobey Allah, such that they say some angels are “fallen” or that they have children among each other, or even with humans.<sup>14</sup> Yet, angels do not commit disbelief, and they do not disobey Allah (Q 66:6). The third point is that this story mentions details about Babylon and two angels, details of which are not mentioned or referenced in the biblical tradition but may be referenced or mentioned in other non-Jewish and non-Christian works.<sup>15</sup> Such a detailed engagement with previous scriptures and the intimate knowledge of them it requires cannot be mere chance.

The Quran recounts the story of Zakariyyā, his wife, and Yaḥyā (upon them all peace) in the beginning of *Sūrat Maryam* (Q 19:2-15). Zakariyyā calls out to Allah, asking Him for a child, since his wife had not been able to conceive. Allah (exalted) answers his prayer, sending angels to give him news that his wife will have a son and that Allah Himself has named him Yaḥyā (lit. “he lives”). In the canonical

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<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew actually says “spring,” so the NRSVUE translation is slightly inaccurate. It’s possible the translator deliberately mistranslated the Hebrew to misguide readers. NRSVUE stands for “New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition.” Consider the meaning of this acronym.

<sup>13</sup> Some extra-biblical texts compiled over many years attribute sorcery and other evils to Sulaymān (upon him peace), such as *The Testament of Solomon*, *The Key of Solomon*, and traditions within the Jewish Talmud and midrash (commentary and oral stories) literature. Could the Messenger ﷺ have known about all these works?

<sup>14</sup> Many of these details are mentioned in the three *Books of Enoch*, which are extra-biblical.

<sup>15</sup> It is also possible they were two kings, and not angels.

gospels of the New Testament, Yaḥyā's ("John the Baptist") name is Yohanna/Iōánnēs (Ἰωάννης in Greek and Yôḥānān or יוחנן in Hebrew).<sup>16</sup> The Quran alludes to this name in the following *āyas*, when describing Yaḥyā's character: "...as well as purity (*ḥanānan*)..." (Q 19:13). "*Ḥanānan*" is precisely, then, the perfect word. No other word could allude to the Hebrew pronunciation of Yaḥyā's name while so accurately describing him.

About Ibrāhīm's (upon him peace) people, the Quran mentions that they worshipped the sun, moon, and "a star" (6:76-78). Ibrāhīm's city has been identified as the city of Ur, which is in current-day Iraq. Only recently have archaeologists uncovered that the people of Ur worshipped three many deities (idols): the sun, the moon, and the star Venus.<sup>17</sup> The Messenger ﷺ recites this in the Quran, while this information has only recently been uncovered by archaeologists.

In fact, the Quran contains a number of details and corrections to the biblical narrative. Some of the most prominent relate to historical facts about Egypt, from the time of Yūsuf (upon him peace) until the time of Mūsā (upon him peace), particularly since the Old Testament places a lot of emphasis on the history of Banī Isrā'īl in Egypt. The Quran corrects the Egyptian ruler's title ("King" not "Pharaoh") in *Sūrat Yūsuf*, corrects the exaggerated number of Israelites who left Egypt, and accurately identifies Hāmān (Pharaoh's servant), among many other corrections.<sup>18</sup>

There are many such examples in the Quran, where details or events are mentioned from other traditions, scriptures, and oral narratives, all of which someone like the Messenger ﷺ couldn't have normally known without the six points mentioned above. Consider these examples, the details of which you can study with scholars: the infancy story about 'Īsā (upon him peace) (Q 19:30), the description of the believers (Q 48:29),<sup>19</sup> the description of Pharaoh as one who possesses *awtād* (Q 38:12), the Companions of the Cave (Q 18:9-27), the Queen of Sheba and Sulaymān (upon him peace)

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<sup>16</sup> See: "Luke "Luke 1:13 - Gabriel Foretells John's Birth," 2025, Bible Hub, 2025, <https://biblehub.com/luke/1-13.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> See Abu Zakariya, *The Eternal Challenge* (London: One Reason, 2017), 94–103.

<sup>18</sup> See Mohammad Elshinawy, *The Final Prophet: Proofs for the Prophethood of Muhammad* (Irving: Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, 2022), 178–182; *The Eternal Challenge*, 87–91; "The Qur'an and the Secrets of Egypt," posted December 27, 2020, by ManyProphetsOneMessage, YouTube, 30 min., 2 sec., [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2ovILc\\_sKY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2ovILc_sKY); "Historical Miracle of Quran – Nouman Ali Khan," posted January 13, 2017, by FreeQuranEducation, YouTube, 5 min., 12 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imSHELEn74>; "The Qur'an and the Secrets of Sodom," posted December 6, 2023, by ManyProphetsOneMessage, YouTube, 15 min., 19 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2AbrETkZLE>. These three videos have resources in their descriptions.

<sup>19</sup> Compare the description to that in the Gospels of Matthew (13:31-32), Mark (4:30-32), and Luke (13:18-19).

(Q 27:44), the wisdom and advice of Luqmān (Q 31:13-19), the story of Mūsā and Khadr (upon them peace) (Q 18:60-82), the meanings of the names of prophets,<sup>20</sup> and so on.<sup>21</sup>

Even if the most recalcitrant skeptic claimed that the Messenger ﷺ somehow copied all these details from these traditions, oral narratives, and books, this doesn't answer 1) how the Messenger ﷺ had access to all these sources and 2) how he understood them. In fact, some of the Quraysh claimed someone was teaching the Messenger ﷺ, "We know very well that they say, 'It is a man who teaches him,' but the language of the person they allude to is foreign, while this revelation is in clear Arabic" (Q 16:103). There are three problems with this claim, each of which the Quran itself addresses explicitly or implicitly. Firstly, assuming that there is an individual who was teaching all of this knowledge to the Messenger ﷺ, he would have to have been doing so in Arabic. But no one was known to be in Makkah with all these sources and details in Arabic. Secondly, this is simply shifting the question further down the line, since that individual would have to have access to all these sources, narratives, and details. So, even that would be miraculous and in need of explanation. Thirdly, assuming this person translated this information to the Messenger ﷺ, the Quran is still a miraculously eloquent text, contains all these details, and is free of contradiction (both discussed next). Fourth, the skeptic has no proof that the Messenger ﷺ was taught by someone else. Fifth, and finally, this claim doesn't explain the other information the Quran contains, such as its prophecies (to be discussed later).

## Precise Wording and Amazing Linguistic Structures

### I. The Difference a Single Word Makes

One can find an example of the Quran's precise word choice and arrangement in *Sūrat al-Zumar*, where Allah speaks about the fate of the disbelievers and believers after judgment. Allah tells us that the disbelievers will be gathered and brought before the gates of the hellfire in groups. Only after waiting at the gates will they be opened. The angels who guard the gates of the hellfire will rebuke them, and the disbelievers are commanded to enter the fire (Q 39:71-72).

Fate of the Disbelievers		
39:71	Those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in 'successive' groups. When they arrive there, its	وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا...الآية

<sup>20</sup> See *The Onomastic Miracle in the Koran* by Raouf Abou Seida, Dar al-Maiman Publishing, Riyadh, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> *Awtād*, the plural of *watād*, means stakes or poles, which may be a reference to how strong and stable the mighty structures Pharaoh built are; his military outposts throughout the land; to a form of punishment Pharaoh used; or to a distraction of his. See al-Nasafi's *Madārik al-Tanzīl*, <https://tafsir.app/alnasafi/38/12>, and Bayḍāwī's *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, <https://tafsir.app/albaydawee/38/12>.

	<b>gates will be opened</b> and its keepers will ask them...	
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As for the believers, they will be gathered and brought before the gates of paradise, but in contrast to the disbelievers' welcoming, the gates of paradise are already open when the believers arrive, welcoming them without waiting (Q 39:73).

Fate of the Believers		
39:73	And those who were mindful of their Lord will be led to Paradise in 'successive' groups. When they arrive at its ' <b>already</b> ' <b>open gates</b> , its keepers will say...	وَيَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا...الآية

Notice the subtle, but precise, difference between the two *āyas*. Have you spotted it? Focusing on the bolded sections, between the two (“Fate of the Disbelievers” and “Fate of the Believers”), there is only a difference of a single letter, a *wāw* (“while”), in the Arabic. This single letter produces for the listener and reader of the Quran an entire image, both of fear and of calm. In the “Fate of the Disbelievers,” you notice that the gates of hell are initially closed and are opened only after the disbelievers arrive. This means that they will be waiting for their fate in suspense, scared and reflecting on their actions and the punishment before them. Just think of the anxiety and quaking fear. Then, with the “Fate of the Believers,” just the *wāw* tells us that the gates of paradise are already open when the believers arrive, welcoming them to comfort and a life with the blessed. With just a single letter, the Quran’s precision gives such detail.

Another example is in the Quran’s quotation of Ibrāhīm’s (upon him peace) prayer for Makkah. When Allah first sends Ibrāhīm with his family (upon them peace) to Makkah, he asks Allah, “...*My Lord! Make this a secure city (baladan āminan)*...” (Q 2:126). After many years, Ibrāhīm (upon him peace) returns to build the Kaaba with his son (upon him peace) and to call people for hajj. He then says, “...*My Lord! Make this city secure (al-balada āminan)*...” (Q 14:35). Take a look at the quoted parts of the two *āyas* below.

First Visit		
From 2:126	...“My Lord! make this a secure city...”	...رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا...الآية
Second Visit		

From 14:35	...“My Lord! Make this city secure...”	رَبِّ أَجْعَلْ هَذَا الْبَلَدَ آمِنًا...الآية
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Do you notice the difference? In the Arabic, the addition of *alif-lām* in the second *āya* makes the word definite, meaning “the” in this case. The Quran is amazingly precise here. When Ibrāhīm (upon him peace) first arrives, the place he is standing in is not a city yet, so he says, “a city,” and after he returns years later there are people living there, so he says, “this city,” since it is a city at that time. The Quran could have used “this city” or “a city” in both cases, but then it wouldn’t have been precise and accurate, would it? These are just two of hundreds (if not thousands) of Quranic examples that could be noted. Keep in mind that the Messenger ﷺ did not “revise” the Quranic language, and he would recite the Quran on the spot without any hesitation or pausing.

## II. Circular Patterns

The Quran contains a number of circular patterns. Take for example the palindrome, where a word reads the same forwards and backwards (think “racecar” and “Never odd or even”).<sup>22</sup> The Quran uses palindromes to speak of important issues, like that in *Sūrat al-Muddaththir* (Q 74:3): *wa-rabbaka fa-kabbir*.

Palindrome		
74:3	Revere your Lord ‘alone’.	وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ

The *āya*, after the *wāw* that indicates a new sentence (like a capital letter), revolves around the *fā’* letter. We have *r-b-k-f-k-b-r*. Maybe this is just a coincidence.

Palindrome		
21:33	...each travelling in an orbit.	كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

What about this example? Now, we have in the beginning, *k-l-f-y-f-l-k*, where the palindrome revolves around the *yā’* letter, which suits the meaning of the *āya*, since it is speaking about the sun and moon traveling in an “orbit,” which is empirically true, as well.

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<sup>22</sup> See Sarah Almaden, “37 English Palindromes: A List of Words that Read the Same Forwards & Backwards,” Beelinguapp, January 30, 2023, <https://beelinguapp.com/blog/37-english-palindromes-read-the-same-forward-backwards>.

Another circular pattern is the ring composition. A ring pattern, also called a chiasmus, revolves around a central word, phrase, or theme, which acts like the ring-stone; and the rest of the speech begins and ends at that word, phrase, or theme. You will find ring patterns in *āyas*, in a sura, and between suras. Examples include *Āyat al-Kursī*, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, *Sūrat al-Baqara*, *Sūrat Yūsuf*, *Sūrat al-Burūj*, and *Sūrats al-Raḥmān* and *al-Wāqī'a* together. Now, remember that the Messenger ﷺ delivered the Quran orally, without an editorial process, and he delivered the Quran part-by-part, meaning that *āyas* were being revealed for one sura while *āyas* were being revealed for another sura. He would indicate to his Companions in which sura each newly-revealed *āya* would go in, and sometimes it would be between other previously-revealed *āyas*. How could he have developed these ring structures while *āyāt* were being revealed like this? Maybe it would be possible if he were writing the Quran, moving words and phrases from here and there, and then presenting the structure. But that's not what happened.

Here's *Āyat al-Kursī*:

Level 1: Allah! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining.

Level 2: Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him.

Level 3: To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.

Level 4: Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission?

Level 5: He 'fully' knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them

Level 6: but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills 'to reveal'.

Level 7: His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth

Level 8: and the preservation of both does not tire Him

Level 9: For He is the Most High, the Greatest.

Notice that the levels of the *āya* from Level 1 to 9, excluding Level 5, mirror each other, such that Level 1 mirrors Level 9, Level 2 mirrors Level 8, and so on, while all the levels revolve around the middle level (Level 5): "*He fully knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them,*" which fits with the structure, since this level is in the middle position, having levels before and after it.

Analyzing further, we find that Level 1 and 9 mirror each other in addressing Allah's transcendence with His Names, those being the Ever-Living and All-Sustaining in Level 1 and the Most High and the Greatest in Level 9. Levels 2 and 8 highlight that Allah never becomes tired or falters in His actions. Levels 3 and 7 speak about His power and dominion, both mentioning the heavens and earth, in that everything belongs to Him. Levels 4 and 6 address His knowledge state that nothing takes places except through His permission and will. Level 5, the center, unites the two halves of the ring, stating that Allah knows what is ahead (i.e., everything mentioned after) and what is to behind (i.e., everything mentioned before).

And here's *Sūrat Yūsuf*:

Level 1: Yūsuf's Dream

Level 2: Brothers plot against him

Level 3: 'Azīz's wife tries to seduce him

Level 4: Ladies try to convince him

Level 5: Yūsuf sent to prison

Level 6: King's dream

Level 7: King's dream interpreted

Level 8: Yūsuf leaves prison

Level 9: Ladies confess to plot

Level 10: 'Azīz's wife confesses

Level 11: Brothers ask forgiveness

Level 12: Yūsuf's dream realized

Notice how each level has a “mirror” in that each level forms a ring with another level that resolves an event.<sup>23</sup> For example, in Level 1, Yūsuf (upon him peace) receives a dream. That dream is resolved in Level 12. In Level 2, his brothers plot against him. In Level 11, they ask forgiveness for plotting against him, and so on.

Maybe one instance of this ring structure could be a coincidence, but when you find it in multiple places in the Quran, you immediately realize that this would not be possible given the circumstances of the Messenger ﷺ.

### *III. Additional Phenomena*

The Quran presents several more overarching types of phenomena, a few of which we'll note below. Present in the Quran are parallel structures, where one phrase or theme lines up with another. Think of A-B-C-C-B-A or A-B-C-A-B-C. In fact, every sura has at least one parallel structure. Next time you read *Sūrat al-ʿAṣr* or *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*, see if you can find the parallel. Consider why Allah mentions the specific things of His creation in *Sūrat al-Naba'* and look for the parallel structures. An example of a parallel structure is found in the beginning and ending of *Sūrat al-Jumu'a*:

In *Sūrat al-Jumu'a*, the Quran begins with:

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<sup>23</sup> For an excellent analysis of an example, see Jawad Qureshi's “Ring Composition in *Sūrat Yūsuf* (Q 12)” in *Journal of International Qur'anic Studies Association* 2(2017): 149-168. In the article, Qureshi expounds on multiple ring structures in the sura, of which is the one above, in addition to parallelism within the sura, such as “dream/dream realized,” “separation/reunion,” “temptation/exoneration,” and so on (p. 156). It is no wonder why the sura begins declaring that Allah has revealed in this sura the most wonderful method of recounting a story (*aḥsan al-qaṣaṣ*).

<i>Sūrat al-Jumu‘a</i>		
62:1	Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth 'constantly' glorifies Allah—the King, the Most Holy, the Almighty, the All-Wise.	يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ
62:2	He is the One Who raised for the illiterate 'people' a messenger from among themselves—reciting to them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, for indeed they had previously been clearly astray—	هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيٰتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ

In the first *āya*, Allah declares that He is 1) King, 2) the Most Holy, 3) the Almighty, and 4) the All-Wise. In the second *āya*, Allah states that He sent the Messenger ﷺ with four responsibilities, each of which matches with the four names and attributes Allah just mentioned about Himself. The Messenger ﷺ is to 1) recite His *āyāt*, as the messenger of a King, 2) purify them, as one sent from the Most Holy, 3) teach them the Quran, as one sent from the Almighty, which is the one who commands and prohibits, and 4) teach them wisdom, as one sent from the All-Wise. This is an A-B-C-D-A-B-C-D parallel structure.

In *Sūrat al-Baqara*, consisting of 286 *āyāt*, the Quran states in the middle *āya* (143): “*And thus have We made you a middle nation (ummatan wasatan)...*” (Q 2:143). So, in the middle of the sura, the Quran uses the word “middle.” The Quran was being revealed in parts, some parts from this sura and some from another, and it was not being worked out on paper or rearranged. So, how could the Messenger ﷺ have planned for this *āya* to be in the middle of such a long sura and mention the word “middle”? Additionally, this *āya* is the “ring stone” in the ring structure of *al-Baqara*, mentioned above. It includes the “turning point” for the believers, in that Allah commands them to face a new direction of prayer, showing the Muslims and those against them that 1) they are reclaiming the heritage and way of Ibrāhīm and 2) the Muslims are distinct from other religious traditions and groups. This changing of direction showed, also, that Allah requires humanity to follow this one way, the way of Islam.

Another inexplicable harmony is the number of times Ādam and ‘Īsā are mentioned. The Quran mentions the names “Ādam” and “‘Īsā” 25 times in the Quran, amazingly consistent with the Quran’s statement, “*Indeed, the example of Jesus in the sight of Allah is like that of Adam...*” (Q 3:59). Perhaps one instance of such phenomena could be dismissed as a coincidence. But all of them? Reason deems this absurd.

The Quran mentions that prophets are sent to their people, and when they call their people to good, oftentimes they use the phrase, “My people!” except for ‘Īsā (upon him peace). Whenever he calls the people to whom he was sent, he says, “Banī Isrā’īl!” The Quran maintains this consistency throughout.

Why? Prophetic lineage has always been established through the father.<sup>24</sup> And we know that ʿĪsā (upon him peace), having been born miraculously from Maryam (upon her peace) without a father, cannot claim to be of the lineage of Banī Isrāʾīl and so cannot call them “his people.” The Israelites trace their lineage to Yaʿqūb (upon him peace), to whom Allah gave the name “Isrāʾīl.”

The Quran uses two words for “wife”: *zawj* (literally, “couple”) and *imraʿa* (literally, “woman”), which you could translate as “spouse (m./f.)” and “wife” in context, respectively. However, the Quran’s usage of each is subtle and precise, and the usage reflects something deeper to ponder. When the Quran uses *zawj* to refer to a man’s wife, its usage means that the spouses (husband and wife) complement each other and are a “perfect match,” just like what the literal meaning of *zawj* means (i.e., one part of a couple). What we notice, though, is that *imraʿa* (“wife”) is used only when something is missing between the husband and wife. For example, the Quran uses the term *imraʿa* for the wife (*imraʿa*) of Nūḥ, of Lūṭ, of Abū Lahab, of Pharaoh, and of Zakariyyā. The wife (*imraʿa*) of the first three were bad people, in that they either rejected the message of the prophet (who was their husband) or were idolaters and calling to evil. But the wife of Pharaoh was a believer, who believed in Mūsā (upon him peace) and disbelieved in Pharaoh’s claims of being a god. So, she was *incompatible* with Pharaoh. The wife of Zakariyyā was a believer, too, but she couldn’t have children. Now, notice the precise usage here. Zakariyyā calls out to Allah in *Sūrat Maryam*, saying, “...my wife (*imraʿati*) is barren...” (Q 19:5), meaning that she couldn’t have children. But when Allah answers his prayer, Allah says, “...and cured his wife (*zawjahu*) of barrenness...” (Q 21:90), the word used is *zawj*. Now, Zakariyyā’s wife is a perfect complement, since they can now have a child and a complete family. This subtle usage shows us the difference between the two words *imraʿa* and *zawj*, and it causes one to be amazed at the Quran’s precision. The Messenger ﷺ recited the Quran, which contains such precise usage, without delay and without revision.

The final example for this section is about the Quran’s statement, “Allah does not place two hearts in a man’s abdomen...” (Q 33:4). You only need to know two Arabic words to appreciate this nuanced point. The first word is *ṣadr* (chest) and the second is *jawf* (abdomen, body). *Jawf* literally means a cavity or an empty space; in the case of a human, it refers to the abdomen or stomach area. In this *āya*, the Quran mentions that men only have one heart in their abdomen. In other places, the Quran uses the word “chest” (*ṣudūr*, the plural of *ṣadr*) when speaking of the location of hearts (Q 22:46, Q 57:6, Q 11:5, etc.) and not “abdomen,” but in this one place, it changes the phrasing. It accurately states that Allah has not placed two hearts in the “abdomen” of a man. Why the change in phrasing? Because a woman, when pregnant, actually has two hearts, not in her chest, but in her abdomen.

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<sup>24</sup> While some societies and groups are matrilineal, meaning that they consider lineage to be passed down based on one’s mother, like the Jewish traditions hold, Allah (exalted) has always considered spiritual lineage through the father, evidenced by how the prophets have always been male and how ʿĪsā calls the people to whom he was sent. One should not think that this belittles mothers and women of society. Far from it! Allah honors noble and pious women throughout the Quran, and the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters are held in high esteem. Allah loves whoever follows His guidance and seeks His reward.

Remember that the Messenger ﷺ would recite these *āyāt* in various situations and without any reflection or revision. If this Quran were not revelation from Allah, then how could one explain these precise details issuing from the Messenger ﷺ?

In the following sections on coherency and lack of contradiction, we'll have more examples, some of which are similar to those above. One finds such examples on every page of the *muṣḥaf* of the Quran, and maybe in every *āya*, and for some of these jewels, you don't need to know much Arabic or any at all.

### ***Lack of Contradiction***

Before we discuss the Quran's internal consistency and coherency (i.e., its lack of contradiction), we need to discuss what a contradiction is and why internal consistency matters. Remember from our exploration of epistemology that a contradiction looks like "X is A; X is not A." When a statement is contradictory, it means that what one said in one statement is the exact opposite of what one said in another statement, with everything else being *intended* exactly the same, meaning both statements refer to the same subject, time, place, order, and so on. A contradiction implies the two things cannot both be true simultaneously and cannot be false simultaneously. So, when Allah recounts in the Quran an event or the statement of an individual, one should keep in mind that the event or statement may have occurred multiple times, that the Quran gives detail in one place that it did not give in another, or that the Quran paraphrases the statement or summarizes the event.

For example, when the angels visit Ibrāhīm and Sāra (upon them peace) and inform them that Sāra will bear a son, Allah states in *Sūrat Hūd*, "His wife was standing [nearby] and laughed. We gave her good news of Isaac and, after him, of Jacob. She said, 'Alas for me! How am I to bear a child when I am an old woman, and my husband here is an old man? That would be a strange thing!'" (Q 11:71) and in *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt*, "His wife then entered with a loud cry, struck her face, and said, 'A barren old woman?'" (Q 51:29). As you read the above and the remainder of the passages, the Quran recounts details in one place that are absent in the other, while the event is one and the one saying the statement (i.e., Sāra) is the same. In *Sūrat Hūd*, Sāra was nearby and laughed when she heard the news, and in *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt*, she strikes her face. But this is not a contradiction since the two *āyas* do not state the opposite of what the other does. Sāra simply both struck her face and laughed. This is not a contradiction. Sāra did both, obviously not at the same time. One *āya* gives additional information not present in the other for rhetorical and contextual reasons, and to encourage us to reflect on the Quran's message.

In *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt*, Allah recounts the incident with less detail since the context within this section of the sura speaks of the role of angels. The angels come to Ibrāhīm and Sāra (upon them peace) to deliver news and immediately after to save Lūṭ (upon him peace) and his followers and destroy his rebellious disbelieving people. The brief language conveys the seriousness of the angels' objectives and the swiftness of them carrying out Allah's commands, in contrast to the context in *Sūrat Hūd*. In *Sūrat Hūd*, Allah speaks about prophets and their peoples and how He guides, blesses, and saves His prophets and the believers, how prophets call their people and the rejection the prophets face, and how Allah punishes those who reject the message.

The Quran only states the details of an event or quotes the wording of an individual to the degree it is significant to the broader passage. Therefore, an omission of some details in one place cannot be considered a contradiction. Any contradiction that is claimed to be in the Quran can easily be resolved with a bit of reflection and consideration of the context, along with a fair and sincere reading, and most of the time one does not need a deep understanding of the Arabic to see the lack of contradiction. Sadly, those who unfairly read the Quran bring their own prejudice to their reading and read with a preconceived idea that the Quran is a narrative, a novel, and like the Bible. However, the Quran is none of these. The Quran does not chronologically recount an event in detail in one place (except for *Sūrat Yūsuf*) but rather in multiple places; it does not narrate events and dialogue exactly as they happened; and it does not resemble the Bible, which is a human narrative written down over centuries and filled with superfluous detail. The Quran is not a book of history or science, though it comprises historical and empirical facts. Rather, it is a revelation whose purpose is to guide humanity to sound belief and righteousness.

### *Coherency and Principles*

But why is coherency and the lack of contradiction part of the miracle of the Quran? Allah revealed the Quran to the Messenger ﷺ over 23 years. During its revelation, the Messenger ﷺ publicly and immediately recited to his people, both his Companions and the disbelievers, what was revealed to him to be conveyed to his people. One cannot claim that the Messenger ﷺ had the opportunity to consider all the *āyāt* previously revealed to ensure there was consistency in what he recited or to “revise” the Quran, whether by writing it down or thinking about previous *āyāt*. And if there were any “revision” taking place, the disbelievers would be quick to attack this, despite it being well-known that their own poets revised their poetry from time to time. So, the fact that the Quran was revealed and recited over 23 years and that there is complete coherency and lack of contradiction in the Quran is itself miraculous. Think of any author, be that a poet or novelist or writer, and ask yourself if any of them could have composed or written their work without the “backspace” button, without an eraser, without a few spare sheets of paper, and with no drafts, and then produce a final copy without errors or contradictions, while being wonderfully eloquent and consistent. Could you do this, even after knowing your own language and thinking through the details of a speech, paper, or work of fiction, while even being able to write it down? Then consider how much more difficult impromptu speaking is than impromptu writing.

When we speak of coherence, we mean that the Quran lacks contradiction and that the details it gives throughout its *āyāt* are also coherent, meaning that they support and complement each other and that there is a harmony between the *āyāt*, which were revealed to the Messenger ﷺ over 23 years. The Quran’s coherence covers every aspect of the Quran, such that one will not find anything missing for humanity’s guidance nor any part of the Quran at odds with another part. This harmony becomes apparent when the Quran is read and contemplated over as a whole, which means to consider the context of the *āyāt*, both the *āyāt* before, after, and elsewhere in a sura.

“We have explained things in various ways in this Quran, so that such people might take notice, but it has only turned them further away.” (Q 17:41)

An appreciation of the Quran’s miraculousness in its coherency, force, and style requires that one keep in mind a few principles, which will also prevent any potential doubts or objections to the Quran’s method of guiding humanity through commands and prohibitions and narrating events. Scholars of Quranic commentary (*tafsīr*) took these principles from the Quran, the teachings of the Messenger ﷺ, and the methodology of the Companions when they taught the Quran. For our section on the miraculousness of the Quran, we’ll look at four principles, the last of which we briefly mentioned above: 1) be aware of the context and all the previous and following *āyāt*, 2) consider the style of Arabic and figurative usage, 3) ask if there’s abrogation, and 4) look for the Quran’s own clarification. What you’ll soon realize is that all these principles (even just the four mentioned above) work together.

### *I. Consider the Entire Quran*

When considering the Quran’s coherence and lack of contradiction, you must look at the *āyāt* that come before and after the *āya* you are reading and contemplating, which means all the *āyāt* relevant to the portion you are reading, along with the overall context and topic of the section. For example, Allah tells us that He made heaven into seven heavens in two “days” (Q 41:12), He created the earth in two “days” (Q 41:9), made the mountains in four days (Q 41:10), and elsewhere He states that He created the heavens and earth in six “days” (Q 10:3).<sup>25</sup> A skeptic comes and argues, “The number of days adds up to both eight and six. So, which is it? These *āyāt* contradict each other.” Were one to survey the relevant *āyāt* of the Quran, one would find that Allah states He created the heavens and earth and everything between them in six days (Q 50:38). During the days in which Allah created the mountains, the two days in which He created the earth are included. So, the heavens, earth, and everything between them were being created within this six-day period. So, there is no contradiction here. One must consider all the relevant *āyāt* to obtain a complete “picture” of the meaning.

The same skeptic may argue that in *Sūrat Fuṣṣilat* (Q 41) Allah first mentions that He created the earth (Q 41:9), then heaven (Q 41:12), which He made into seven, mistakenly thinking that Allah describes the order in which He created the universe. Were the skeptic to consider the message and context of these passage, it would become clear that the purpose is not to explain the order of creation in time but its amazing construction and complexity and Allah’s power.

### *II. Stylistic Features and Figurative Usage*

In *Sūrat al-Kahf*, Allah recounts some incidents from Dhū al-Qarnayn’s travels, a wise and righteous leader whom Allah blessed and guided. Dhū al-Qarnayn was traveling and came to an area where he saw the sun setting and he “found it setting in a spring of *murky* water” (Q 18:86). A number of Orientalists and non-Muslims from the past (and until today) object that this *āya* is nonsensical since

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<sup>25</sup> The term “day” here does not refer to our 24-hour earth day, since the earth was not yet created or in the process of being created at this time.

the sun does not set in murky water.<sup>26</sup> However, this is unfortunately a simple case of not understanding Arabic and not understanding figurative language, which ironically is present in all languages, even the language of the objector. Considering the Arabic, Allah says that Dhū al-Qarnayn “found it setting,” which uses the Arabic verb *wajada*, one of whose meanings is ‘to find something appearing to be’. In fact, this is one way we use ‘to find’ in English, like “I found him (to be) reliable.” Moreover, there’s even figurative usage in this *āya*, and it’s apparent even in translation. Does the sun really “set”? We say in Arabic and English that that sun “sets,” and we speak about the “sunset,” but in reality the sun is stationary and the earth is rotating. What appears to be the sun setting is actually the earth rotating on its axis, which makes the sun appear to set.

The point being drawn out here is that Allah speaks to human beings in revelation as phenomena appear to us. It was already mentioned above that the Quran is not a book of science in which Allah explains phenomena with rigorous empirical explanations, but rather that the Quran is a book of guidance. Allah mentions phenomena to call humanity to reflect on His creation and witness His knowledge, power, will, and wisdom. Consider how Allah speaks of the mountains, “*He has made mountains stand firm on the earth, to prevent it shaking under you, and rivers and paths so that you may find your way*” (Q 16:15), wherein He says He “placed” the mountains in/on the earth and that they resemble pegs (Q 78:7). Empirically, we know that mountains rise out of the earth as they are formed and through layering, but that’s not the point of the *āya*. Of course, the *āya* is not empirically incorrect, since the mountains do function and resemble pegs as noted in the *āya*. But the *āya* draws our attention to Allah’s power and care for His creation. You will find the same when Allah (exalted) explains the stages through which He creates the human being in the womb by using descriptions of what the human being *looks like* at each stage (Q 23:14). The purpose of these *āyāt* is to overwhelm the human being with awe and gratitude with a recognition of Allah’s power and care for the human individual as He forms him or her.

### *III. Wisdom of Abrogation*

Allah (exalted) states in the Quran, “Any revelation We cause to be superseded or forgotten, We replace with something better or similar. Do you [Prophet] not know that God has power over everything?” (Q 2:106). Many a detractor of Islam has objected to the occurrence of abrogation (*naskh*) in the Quran, claiming that Muslims appeal to abrogation to resolve contradictions in the Quran and to sidestep the criticism that rulings changed or that the Messenger ﷺ, according to them, made a mistake or forgot and thus was not consistent. Each of these is false.

Allah clearly states that He abrogates *āyāt* and rulings as He wills, though there are only a few instances of technical abrogation in the Quran. Technically, where Allah (exalted) mentions abrogation in the Quran, it refers to “removing a ruling from what was previously revealed” or “clarifying the termination of a particular legal ruling” or “to restrict or clarify a ruling.” We should

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<sup>26</sup> If such highly educated writers could only come up with such obviously ridiculous claims, then it shows there is no strong objection to the coherence of the Quran to be found.

note that abrogation only occurs for rulings on actions, be they necessary, prohibited, disliked, or permissible. You will not find abrogation of statements of fact or obligations and prohibitions related to beliefs, as these do not and cannot change since they are objective statements. For example, a Muslim is required to believe that Allah is one. This requirement will never change, and all prophets (upon them peace) taught the same foundations of belief. That Allah sent Nūḥ (upon him peace) and instructed him to build an ark is a fact that is not subject to abrogation since it is a statement of fact. But with the legal rulings given to each prophet, Allah (exalted) at times modifies them to suit the needs and situation of each community in its time and place. At times, a ruling is completely replaced by another ruling and at other times a ruling is slightly modified through the addition or removal of conditions and qualifications. When one's parent says on Monday, "Take out the trash," and then on the following Monday says, "Don't take out the trash." There is no contradiction here. Maybe that following Monday was a holiday, and thus there was no reason to take out the trash. There was a reason and wisdom behind the change in the ruling. Although we can't give a complete treatment of a discussion on abrogation here, we'll just look at one example and the wisdom behind it.

The purpose of abrogation is actually mentioned in the above and other *āyāt*. Allah (exalted) abrogates rulings for the sake of His creation, to make ease for them and grant them a ruling that, according to their situation, is better for their guidance in this life and the hereafter. Scholars wrote many volumes on those rulings that are abrogated and the wisdom behind their abrogation. Allah commanded the early Muslim community in Madinah to pray toward Bayt al-Maqdis in Jerusalem (al-Bukhārī, #399) but later changed the direction of prayer to the Kaaba in Makkah (Q 2:144).<sup>27</sup> Scholars have noted a number of wisdoms for the changing of the direction of prayer. Two of these wisdoms are the reconnection of the Muslim community to the common tradition of Ibrāhīm (upon him peace), since he and his son built the Kaaba and prayed towards it, and the distinguishing of the Muslim community as the umma of Allah's final prophet, distinguishing them from the other groups who claimed to be following the truth. For more examples and discussion, you can take a look at Mufti Taqī Usmani's *An Approach to Quranic Sciences*, Sh. Faraz Khan's answer "Jihad, Abrogation in the Quran & the 'Verse of the Sword'" on IslamQA, and Yaqeen Institute's "Abrogated Rulings in the Qur'an: Discerning their Divine Wisdom."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> See al-Bukhārī, "Chapter: [During the obligatory Salat (prayers)] one should face the Qiblah (Kabah at Makkah) wherever one may be," #399, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:399>.

<sup>28</sup> Mohammad Taqī Usmani, *An Approach to the Qurānic Sciences*, trans. Mohammad Swaleh Siddiqui, ed. Rafiq Abdur Rehman (Karachi: Darul Isha'at, 2000), 167-180; Faraz A. Khan, "Jihad, Abrogation in the Quran & the 'Verse of the Sword'," *IslamQA*, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://islamqa.org/hanafi/seekersguidance-hanafi/32401/jihad-abrogation-in-the-quran-the-verse-of-the-sword/>; Anonymous, "Abrogated Rulings in the Qur'an: Discerning their Divine Wisdom," *Yaqeen Institute for Research*, July 30, 2024, <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/abrogated-rulings-in-the-quran-discerning-their-divine-wisdom>.

In summary, abrogation is not to avoid a contradiction. Allah (exalted) abrogates rulings out of concern and consideration of His creation, granting them ease and guidance and gifting another avenue to reflect on His wisdom.

#### *IV. When the Quran Clarifies Itself*

Let's look at two examples of the Quran's internal consistency and when it explains itself. Allah (exalted) tells us that He bestowed upon Dāwūd (upon him peace) gifts and miracles, such as “*We made Sulaymān understand the case [better], though We gave sound judgement and knowledge to both of them. We made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises with Dāwūd—We did all these things*” (Q 21:79). What does it mean to “celebrate the praises” of Allah? In *Sūrat Saba'*, Allah explains, “*We graced David with Our favor. We said, ‘You mountains, echo God’s praises together with him, and you birds, too.’ We softened iron for him*” (Q 34:10). The Quran clarified itself that to “celebrate the praise” of Allah means for mountains and birds to echo the praises of Allah that Dāwūd (upon him peace) would say.

Familiar to every Muslim, the *āya* in *Sūrat al-Fāṭiha* that states “*Guide us along the straight path, the path of those whom You blessed*” (1:5-6) does not explicitly tell us who are those whom Allah has blessed. However, later in *Sūrat al-Nisā'* (4:69), Allah states, “*Whoever obeys God and the Messenger will be among those He has blessed: the messengers, the truthful, those who bear witness to the truth, and the righteous- what excellent companions these are!*” In *Sūrat al-Nisā'*, the Quran clarifies who these blessed people are.

“In this Quran, We have put forward all kinds of illustration for people, so that they may take heed—an Arabic Quran, free from any distortion- so that people may be mindful.” (Q 39:27-28)

#### *Analysis of Two Suras*

Thus far we have looked at the Quran's vast range of knowledge, its precise wording and extraordinary literary structures, and four principles that one must keep in mind when reflecting on the Quran's message, especially when considering its miraculous coherency and lack of contradiction. Let's bring all that we've discussed together into an analysis of two short suras of the Quran. Recall that Allah (exalted) challenged the Arabs to produce a single sura like the Quran, like it in terms of its rhetorical force, its knowledge of the unseen (past and future events, description of empirical phenomena), its ability to transform an entire people, its preservation, and so on. We'll see some of these aspects of its challenge in *Sūrat al-Kawthar* and *Sūrat al-ʿAṣr*.

Across centuries, and starting from the pagan Arabs' own ceding to the Quran's challenge, no one has been able to produce something like the Quran in the aspects mentioned above. Even one of the shortest suras of the Quran demonstrates this.

In *Sūra* 108, Allah (exalted) says:

<i>Sūrat al-Kawthar</i>		
1	We have truly given abundance to you [Prophet]—	إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ
2	so pray to your Lord and make your sacrifice to Him alone—	فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحِرْ
3	it is the one who hates you who has been cut off.	إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْتَرُ

One of the first things to notice is how much Allah conveys in just three *āyāt* with such brevity. After the *basmala* (“*In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Beneficent*”), Allah begins the sura with declaring emphatically that He, and only He, has granted the Messenger ﷺ “al-Kawthar.” As a brief explanation of the sura, Allah (exalted) states that He has granted and prepared for the Messenger ﷺ “al-Kawthar.” The word “al-Kawthar” bears a number of meanings, each of which are intended. First, it refers to an abundance of blessing and gifts, the greatest of which is prophethood itself. Allah (exalted) granted the Messenger ﷺ prophethood, and through him He guided the Companions and the believers, from then till the day of reckoning. In addition, the word refers to the name of the pond that Allah promised to the Messenger ﷺ from which the believers will drink on the Day of Reckoning and afterwards never thirst again. Other opinions state that it refers to a river flowing in paradise that Allah gifted to the Messenger ﷺ. And other opinions mention other blessings, all of which fall under the first reference.<sup>29</sup> All of these meanings are contained just in this one *āya*.

Thereafter, Allah commands the Messenger ﷺ, along with the believers, to pray to his Lord and sacrifice for His sake. This is the general meaning. The specific meaning refers to the prayer of Eid al-Adha and the animal sacrifice of that day.

Finally, Allah (exalted) consoles the Messenger ﷺ, who was mocked and ridiculed by the pagan Quraysh (some of whom were his close relatives), specifically an individual named al-‘Āṣ b. Wā’il, for not having any surviving male children (i.e., being *abtar*, lit. ‘bereft’). The Quraysh held an ignorant belief that only male children bring virtue and nobility to a family. So, when the last male child of the Messenger ﷺ, Ibrāhīm (may Allah be pleased with him), passed away, the Messenger’s ﷺ detractors ruthlessly and inhumanely took the death of his son as an opportunity to attack him ﷺ. Allah (exalted) informs the Messenger ﷺ that the one who is actually *abtar* is the one who curses and hates him, not the Messenger ﷺ. Those who hated him used the term *abtar* to mean that the Messenger ﷺ is ‘cut off’ of any good and virtue in the eyes of people, especially since he has no male offspring to pass on his name and legacy. The Messenger ﷺ is told that his enemies will be the ones who are cut off from good and virtue, and whose own children accepted Islam and became close to the Messenger

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<sup>29</sup> See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr*, <https://tafsir.app/zad-almaseer/108/1>.

ﷺ and became vessels of knowledge and wisdom, like al-‘Āṣ’s own son, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, and his son, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (may Allah be pleased with them).

Part of the rhetorical force in this *āya* is the reversal of the meaning of *abtar* to mean ‘to have no good or virtue’, which is the redirection of *abtar* to the Messenger’s ﷺ enemies. They may have had male offspring, but they themselves would have no virtue or honor among people. His enemies fell from honor, and their names are recorded under the category of ignoble and wretched people—they were cut off from good, virtue, and nobility, and the Prophet ﷺ was given abundant good (*Kawthar*). Also implicit in this *āya* is that the Messenger ﷺ will have a lineage, but his lineage will not be of his male offspring, but of his female offspring through Lady Fāṭima (may Allah be pleased with her) and his Companions and the believers. In fact, one of the meanings of *āl*, which we say in the prayers for the Messenger ﷺ (i.e., “Allah! Send peace and blessings on Muḥammad and his *āl*) is his Companions and followers.

Below, we’ll list just a few points from the sura, each of which you should consider and reflect on.

1. A prophecy is made and fulfilled about the Messenger’s ﷺ legacy and the end of his enemies.
2. Each *āya* ends with an ‘r’ sound.
3. In the middle of each *āya* is a *kāf*, meaning “you” and referring to the Messenger ﷺ. This sura focuses on the Messenger ﷺ.
4. Each *āya* bears a general and specific meaning.
5. In few words, the entire sura abundant so much meaning.

Now for a second sura, the 103<sup>rd</sup> sura, *al-‘Aṣr*. Since the second shortest sura (*al-Kawthar*) was too challenging for the Arabs, let us examine the shortest.

<i>Sūrat al-‘Aṣr</i>		
1	By the ‘passage of’ time!	وَالْعَصْرِ
2	Surely humanity is in ‘grave’ loss,	إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ
3	except those who have faith, do good, and urge each other to the truth, and urge each other to perseverance.	إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

The sura opens with an oath on *al-‘aṣr*, which refers to the shortness and squeezing of time. The word *‘aṣr* brings to mind something being squeezed, like how ‘juice’ is called *‘aṣīr* in Arabic. Allah swears by this shortness of time, which calls the individual to reflect on the shortness of his or her life. An individual is on earth no more than 80 years or so for most, after which one enters into a new life, just like the end of the day quickly enters the beginning of the night: from *‘aṣr* to *maghrib*. In the Quran,

Allah only takes an oath on momentous things: the sun, moon, stars, etc. Likewise, this oath, just two words, tells us of the importance of considering time and what one does in it.

Then, the second *āya* makes a categorical statement, “Every individual is in loss.” What a profound and wise statement! Think about how you can never get back the time and opportunities that you lost yesterday. Time only moves in one direction, and once you missed that opportunity to do a good deed yesterday, your only option is to do it now. Sometimes, though, your only *time* to do it was yesterday. Likewise, when we die and are resurrected and stand before our Lord, our time to do good deeds, to ask forgiveness, to right our wrongs is over. Everyone on that day is in loss. This statement makes a number of emphatic stresses, which you can hear in the Arabic: the *inna*, the *la on fi*, the lack of *alif-lām on khusr*. Even without knowing Arabic, you can *hear* the loss. But all hope isn’t *lost*.

The final *āya* makes an exception from the categorical. Yes, all individuals are in loss in a general sense. So, one may think, “Then, what’s the point of trying to do good or correcting my habits when I’ve already lost time?” This *āya* tells us that there are some who are not in loss, and they are the ones who: 1) believe in their Lord, in the Messenger ﷺ, in Islam; 2) do good deeds, starting *now*; 3) encourage others to believe in the Truth; and 4) continue on in both their belief and good deeds, for surely Allah is aware of our actions, intentions, and striving. Notice that there is a parallelism here in this last *āya*. “Those who believe” is paired with “those who encourage others towards the Truth,” the latter of which relates to belief. “Those who do good deeds” is paired with “those who encourage others to persevere,” the latter of which relates to deeds.

Finally, the sura tells us of another important matter: individuals are accountable for their individual actions, but they are also accountable for their impact on others.

These three short *āyas*, housing so much wisdom and meaning, could not be challenged by the Arabs, and it remains so till today. Imam al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820) is reported to have said, “Were humanity to reflect on just this sura, it would suffice them.”<sup>30</sup>

So, to summarize, consider the following points.<sup>31</sup>

1. Just three short statements contain all this meaning and wisdom.
2. Each *āya* ends with an ‘r’ sound.
3. This is the shortest sura of the Quran, and yet the Arabs could not challenge it.
4. The impact of hearing this sura recited with all the emphatic stress.

One could argue that these examples and the sura that was analyzed are coincidences or cherrypicked to suit our end of proving the Quran’s miraculous rhetoric. Maybe this objection would stand if it were

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<sup>30</sup> See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, <https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/103/1>.

<sup>31</sup> You can listen to its recitation here: <https://quranicaudio.com/quran/43>.

not for the overwhelming number of examples an unbiased researcher finds throughout the Quran, dare I say, in every *āya* of the Quran.

## ▲ Knowledge of the Unseen

Part of the Quran’s miraculousness and its challenge to the Arabs and those after them is its informing of events both of the past and future and facts then unknown to the Arabs and others, none of which the Messenger ﷺ could have known without revelation from Allah (exalted). The Messenger could not have been aware of the events and intricate details of previous communities and events, make corrections to previous scriptures, describe those natural phenomena mentioned in the Quran, and inform of future events without revelation. The Messenger ﷺ did not read ancient tomes and he was not in contact with scholars of the Jews, Christians, and other religions, such that he could read their scriptures (especially in non-Arabic languages) or ask them about their scriptures. While he did have contact with Waraqa b. Nawfal, the cousin of Khadija, he passed away shortly after he received prophethood. He was not a scientist, astronomer, poet, or philosopher of the ancients. On a few occasions, when he was younger, the Messenger ﷺ left Makkah along with a caravan to the Levant for trade, but he did not reside there nor did the company with whom he traveled. So, how could the Messenger ﷺ have described, for example, the formation of the human being in the womb or related events about the Prophet Sulaymān (upon him peace)? From where did he obtain this knowledge?<sup>32</sup>

In this section we’ll just mention a few of the prophecies the Quran contains, some of which have occurred, and a few of the empirical facts it mentions. However, a caveat needs to be made before moving forward.

The Quran, as mentioned before, is primarily a source of guidance for humanity to find salvation from the hellfire in the hereafter and to gain Allah’s (exalted) acceptance and forgiveness. Despite this, the Quran does contain empirical facts.<sup>33</sup> Some of these facts are readily and literally understood from the Arabic, such as, “*And We created pairs of all things so perhaps you would be mindful*” (Q 51:49), which tells us that Allah has created everything in pairs. These *āyāt* give us a conclusive understanding of its meaning. In contrast, the apparent meaning of some other *āyāt* may indicate a meaning or we may derive a meaning from the Arabic that may (or may not) agree with our current empirical understanding. For example, Allah uses the feminine gender when speaking about bees (to be

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<sup>32</sup> For more examples of prophecies the Messenger ﷺ mentioned, see Abdullāh Amin, “Latest Twitter Threads by @Abduallah\_Amin on Thread Reader App,” Thread Reader App, accessed April 3, 2025, [https://threadreaderapp.com/user/abduallah\\_amin](https://threadreaderapp.com/user/abduallah_amin) and Mohammad Baqer, “Proving Islam: Shocking prophecies and historical accuracies found only in Islam,” Proving Islam, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.provingislam.com/>.

<sup>33</sup> This discussion falls under a broader genre of Quran literature called “scientific miracles of the Quran.” One should be cautious when making absolutely certain statements, except for when the Quranic wording conclusively and unambiguously states a fact.

discussed below) in Q 16:68-69. Although there may be a reason from Arabic grammar for the use of the feminine gender, one could perhaps also understand from these two *āyas* that the feminine gender is used to indicate to an empirical fact: pollenating and worker bees are all female.<sup>34</sup> In this and similar cases, the point that we can draw out is not conclusively the intended meaning, but still quite an astounding harmony.<sup>35</sup>

Were you to see someone do a backflip one time, you might think, “He got lucky.” But if he does a backflip a few more times, then you would obviously say, “He’s skilled.” Likewise, once we take into consideration both types of *āyas*, the conclusive and non-conclusive, we realize that these are not coincidental statements, but rather that they indicate facts that the Messenger ﷺ could not have known except through revelation. So, it becomes absolutely certain that the Quran is not of a human source.

Using a table again, let’s see how the Quran’s informing of this unseen knowledge disrupts the norm.

Example	The Norm	The Disruption	Judgment
The Quran presents information about future events and empirical facts unknown at the time, especially to an individual living in the desert.	It is not normally possible for a human being to have unambiguous knowledge of multiple future events or empirical facts that scientists end up discovering many years later without some supernatural explanation.	The Messenger ﷺ recited <i>āyāt</i> of the Quran that accurately and unambiguously mention future events, which occurred as stated, and empirical facts that he could not have known.	This is impossible according to our norm. Thus, the Quran is revelation from Allah (exalted) and a miracle, and it confirms that Muḥammad ﷺ is a prophet.

Remember how we said the Quran is not a book of history or science, but it contains both historical and scientific facts? The Quran describes, for example, the dwellings of Thamūd in modern-day Hejaz,

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<sup>34</sup> Check out Manchester & District Beekeepers’ Association, “Bee Information,” MDBKA, accessed April 4, 2025, <https://www.mdbka.com/bee-information/>.

<sup>35</sup> The Arabic used for “bees” is a generic noun, which is singular in Arabic, but can be treated as a plural, in which case it would be a feminine noun. So, one could argue that the *āya* does not directly indicate an empirical fact (i.e., that all pollenating and worker bees are female), but coincidentally appears to do so. Regardless, that “coincidence” along with all the other coincidental/non-conclusive examples given prove beyond doubt that the Quran is from Allah.

Saudi Arabia, to whom Prophet Ṣāliḥ (upon him peace) was sent. Ṣāliḥ called his people to believe in Allah and worship only Him, but they eventually rejected him and the miracles given to him. Allah states that He destroyed them with an earthquake and lightning storms (Q 7:78, 69:5). The Messenger ﷺ could not have known this without revelation. Additionally, Allah informs us of details about the City of Iram whose people were destroyed due to the dam water drowning them (Q 34:15-16), details of which the Messenger ﷺ could not have known. One finds other examples in the details of Yūsuf's (upon him peace) life, Pharaoh's fate, and the People of the Cave (mentioned in Q 18). In addition, the Quran predicts its own miraculous preservation: *"It is certainly We Who have revealed the Reminder, and it is certainly We Who will preserve it"* (Q 15:19), along with making other predictions. In addition, the Messenger ﷺ mentioned other prophecies, some of which have already occurred. See *101 Fulfilled Islamic Prophecies: Using the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith* by Mohammad Baqer and *Forbidden Prophecies* by Abu Zakariya.<sup>36</sup>

The Quran states that the Romans (the Byzantines at the time) were defeated, referencing the Persian conqueror of Jerusalem in 614 (Q 30:2), and prophesizes that the Romans will make a comeback and defeat the Persians, which they did in 622.<sup>37</sup> The point to notice here is that the Quran says, *"The Romans have been defeated in the lowest part of the earth"* (Q 30:2-3). In fact, the Dead Sea, close to Jerusalem, is the lowest area on the land-based surface of the earth. It's amazing how the Messenger ﷺ knew this.

The Quran states in *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt* two facts, "We built the universe with 'great' might, and We are certainly expanding 'it'" (Q 51:47) and "And We created pairs of all things so perhaps you would be mindful" (Q 51:49), stating that the universe is currently expanding, which is empirically true, and that everything is created in pairs. As for everything in pairs, this is beyond just procreation, but also everything we know metaphysically. Numbers are even or odd, things are either above or below, everything is either alive or dead, etc.

In *Sūrat al-Naml*, the Quran mentions that ants have a system of communication, "And when they came across a valley of ants, an ant warned, 'O ants! Go quickly into your homes so Solomon and his armies do not crush you, unknowingly'" (Q 27:18). Ants have a complex system of communicate through pheromones, a fact we have only recently discovered.

The Quran describes the communication and work of bees, "And your Lord inspired the bees: 'Make 'your' homes in the mountains, the trees, and in what people construct, and feed from 'the flower of' any fruit 'you please' and follow the ways your Lord has made easy for you.' From their bellies comes

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<sup>36</sup> See also "Proofs of Prophethood (continued) || NBF 418 || Dr Shadee Elmasry," posted January 22, 2025, by Safina Society, YouTube, 1 hr., 32 min., 27 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKwfD022uNo>; and "Scientific Facts Mentioned in the Quran | Ustadh Omar Naisan," posted February 14, 2025, by MCC East Bay (Muslim Community Center), YouTube, 8 min., 10 sec., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuTvGFDEmbc>.

<sup>37</sup> See Elshinawy, *The Final Prophet*, 108–109.

forth liquid of varying colours, in which there is healing for people. Surely in this is a sign for those who reflect” (Q 16:68-69), while using the feminine gender to describe the bees. We know that a queen bee is at the center of a beehive and the one for whom the other bees, which are also female, are working. Male bees only work inside the beehive and make honey. Additionally, we now know that bees have different stomachs for honey production.

Regarding iron, the Quran says, “...And We sent down iron with its great might...” (Q 57:25). Geologists and astronomers state that the vast majority of the iron on the earth, most of which is in its core, is from asteroids that collided with the earth millions of years ago.

The Quran accurately describes the lack of light in the far depths of the oceans. It wasn't until recently when oceanographers had the technology to build small submarines that could withstand the intense, bone-crushing pressure of the depths of the sea that they empirically discovered this. At these levels, all sunlight is prevented from reaching these depths. “Or ‘their deeds are’ like the darkness in a deep sea, covered by waves upon waves, topped by ‘dark’ clouds. Darkness upon darkness! If one stretches out their hand, they can hardly see it. And whoever Allah does not bless with light will have no light!” (Q 24:40).

Many more examples can be given, but this will suffice for our purposes.<sup>38</sup>

## ■ Quranic Preservation

Before closing out our section on the Quran as a proof of the prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, we'll discuss one more aspect of the Quran's miraculousness: its preservation. Allah (exalted) stated in the Quran that He will preserve the Quran (Q 15:19), which means both its words and its meanings. You know that millions of Muslims have memorized the entire Quran since the last time the Messenger ﷺ recited it to the Companions until now. These individuals memorized the words of the Quran, the sounds of its words, its method of recitation (*tajwīd*), and its meanings. There is no other scripture or book like the Quran, and it is a miracle that it has been preserved exactly as it was revealed. Even the skeletal text, which Abū Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered be collected during his caliphate and which ‘Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered be reproduced with multiple copies and sent out to the major cities of Muslims, has not changed since its compilation. We have recently found manuscripts dated to the time of the Companions and many manuscripts throughout the centuries all testifying to the same skeletal structure of the Quranic text.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Such as descriptions of the winds (*lawāqih*) being the source of pollination (Q 15:22), the function of winds in rain production (Q 35:9), the source of milk from mammals (Q 16:66), and the homogenizing region between saline bodies of water and estuaries which have a pycnocline zone (Q 55:20 and 25:53), etc.

<sup>39</sup> See Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-‘Azamī's *The History of the Qur'ānic Text: From Revelation to Compilation* (London: Turath Publishing, 2010) and al-‘Azamī's *Ageless Qur'an: Timeless Text* (London: Turath Publishing, 2017). In

With another table, let's see how the Quran's preservation disrupts the norm.

Example	The Norm	The Disruption	Judgment
The Quran is preserved like no other text. Its method of pronunciation, recitation, and skeletal text (written form) have been preserved and memorized with astonishing accuracy.	Every text, whether oral or written, must have some error, gap, or loss in its transmission.	The Quran has been preserved with such accuracy down to the minutest detail that it disrupts the norm of what humans were capable of, especially before technological advancements and computers.	This is impossible according to our norm. Thus, the Quran is miraculously preserved and revelation that confirms that Muḥammad ﷺ is a prophet.

## ■ Conclusion

We've seen in this section how the Quran disrupts our everyday experience in multiple ways, making it a miracle from the Creator. A miracle breaks what we would normally understand to be possible, and the only explanation for this disruption is a divine act from the Creator. The Quran challenges humanity to bring a text like it, containing currently unknown historical knowledge, knowledge about the future, empirical facts yet unknown, and so incredibly eloquent that it moves humanity to embrace its message and change their morals and focus in life. Even leaving off the challenge for a human who has no access to such information or literacy, all of humanity has not been able to meet this challenge despite centuries of advancement in knowledge and technology. The norm is disrupted. The Quran is a miracle. The miracle proves the Messenger ﷺ true. Now, let us look at a physical miracle.

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addition, see "What is the Birmingham Qur'an?", *The University of Birmingham*, accessed April 3, 2025, <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/facilities/cadbury/birmingham-quran-mingana-collection/birmingham-quran/what-is>.

## Chapter 3

# SPLITTING OF THE MOON

“And even if We opened for them a gate to heaven, through which they continued to ascend, still they would say, ‘Our eyes have truly been dazzled! In fact, we must have been bewitched.’” (Q 15:14-15)

“The Hour has drawn near and the moon was split ‘in two’. Yet, whenever they see a sign, they turn away, saying, “Same old magic!” (Q 54:1)”

“We have certainly set forth every ‘kind of’ lesson for people in this Quran. And no matter what sign you bring to them ‘O Prophet’, the disbelievers will definitely say ‘to the believers’, ‘You are only a people of falsehood.’” (Q 30:58)

Sometime into the Messenger’s ﷺ delivering the message, while still in Makkah, a group of the nobles of Quraysh approached him with a demand. The Quraysh were the tribe to whom the Messenger ﷺ belonged and the first people to whom he delivered the message of Islam and to whom he was reciting the Quran. They stubbornly rejected him being a prophet, mocked him and the believers, and fabricated absurd stories to explain the Quran’s unparalleled eloquence and unexplainable accuracy of the past and future facts of which it informs. The Messenger ﷺ produced numerous signs and miracles to prove that he was a prophet sent by Allah, but every time the Messenger ﷺ produced a miracle for them, through Allah’s permission they would reject the miracle out of arrogance and tribalism. They had demanded many strange miracles from the Messenger ﷺ, like producing an overflowing spring from the earth and causing the sky to fall upon them (Q 17:90, 92), and they tested his knowledge of previous events, such as demanding information about the life and prophethood of Prophet Yūsuf (upon him peace). Once while still in Makkah when the nobles were gathered around the Messenger ﷺ and some of his Companions, they demanded another sign from him, that Allah split the moon into two parts. The moon was suspended in the dark night sky above, full and glowing, and those present saw one half of the moon falling towards the mountain of Abū Qubays on their right and the other half falling towards the mountain of Qu‘ayqi‘ān on their left. The nobles were astounded, bewildered, and in disbelief. They had seen another unexplainable event before them in response to their disbelief and demands. It was a miracle that they could not deny. The Messenger ﷺ said, “Witness!” But out of their animosity to the truth, they rejected again and played off the event as “sorcery” and an illusion.

They needed some way to justify their accusation of sorcery. So, one of the chiefs exclaimed, “Muhammad may have bewitched us, but he cannot have bewitched all people. So, let’s ask anyone who passes by if they saw what we saw.” Each passerby was asked, and each said they also saw the

moon split in two. The Quraysh were left with no option but to double down on their baseless claim of sorcery and trickery.

The event of the splitting of the moon, like other miracles, proves with certainty that the Messenger ﷺ is truthful in his claim of being a prophet. The moon's splitting was an event that ruptured the norm, which was that this event is beyond the normal capacity of a human being. So, when the Messenger ﷺ claimed to be a prophet and an event occurred that those around him could not reproduce or challenge, the event (i.e., splitting of the moon) proves that Allah (exalted) confirms his claim. We have before us a mass-transmitted event narrated from the generation of the Companions, who all believed in the event, which becomes a point of creed for us in which we can have epistemic certainty that it occurred as described and demonstrates the prophethood of the Messenger ﷺ.

Placing our arguments into a syllogism, we have:

Argument 1:

P1: An event that disrupts our normal experience, given to one who claims prophethood, is accompanied by a challenge to those who deny the claim, and cannot be reproduced or challenged is a miracle.

P2: The moon-splitting is such an event.

C1: The moon-splitting is a miracle.

Argument 2:

P3: Every miracle confirms the truthfulness of the one to whom it is given.

P4: The moon-splitting is a miracle.

C2: The moon-splitting confirms the truthfulness of the one to whom it is given.

## ► Our Knowledge of the Event

How do we know this event took place? How can we have certainty the moon split in two and was mended, an occurrence that we still cannot explain despite advancements in science and technology? We know with certainty that Allah gave the prophets and messengers (upon them blessings and peace) miracles, which confirm their truthfulness and prophethood since they are mentioned in the Quran. Some of these miracles were Ibrāhīm (upon him peace) not being burned by the fire in which his people threw him (Q 21:69), Mūsā's (upon him peace) staff becoming a snake (Q 7:107), and Sulaymān's (upon him peace) control of the winds (Q 34:12). And we also know with certainty that the Messenger ﷺ received miracles in addition to the Quran, which is the greatest and the most persistent of the miracles given to him. These miracles include his impeccable character, his telling of past and future events (neither of which he could have known without revelation), water flowing from his fingers, his healing others through supplication to Allah, and so on. What is our proof of these other miracles? We received information about these miracles through mass-transmission. We know with certainty that the Messenger ﷺ received other miracles because the Companions conveyed to us what they witnessed, and their statements and testimonies were conveyed to their students, and so on until they have reached us. What we know from all this is that the Messenger ﷺ received and

performed miracles of various kinds by the permission of Allah. So, none but an extreme skeptic would claim that the Messenger ﷺ received no miracles, even though he or she may have doubt about some particular miracles. It is a point of creed in which all Muslims must believe that the Messenger ﷺ received miracles since it is mass-transmitted from the Companions. We can have epistemic certainty in the Messenger's ﷺ miracles.

In this section, let's discuss the miracle of the moon-splitting and demonstrate how we can have epistemic certainty, through mass-transmission, that the event occurred. For us to hear of something by mass-transmission is as though we are seeing the event before us.

## ■ Mass-Transmission of the Event

Recall our discussion above (and in our epistemology essays) on mass-transmission (sometimes called 'ubiquitous reporting'). When each individual of a large group of individuals witnesses with their eyes or hears with their ears an event and then each conveys their experience to you, from the aggregate of the information told to you by so many people you gain certainty that what they are saying is true. This report has been mass-transmitted to you, and it gives you conclusive knowledge of the information contained within it. It is impossible, you realize, that every individual has lied or erred in what they saw or heard. The same occurs when many people all report from another individual that they saw or heard something from him or her and then they convey this to you. You have certainty that all these individuals could not have lied or erred in what they saw or heard from another individual. Similarly, when these same individuals tell a bunch of others, and then you and they all inform another group, and so on, the report itself becomes mass-transmitted such that it is impossible for the information to be a lie or error. By "impossible," we mean that it is for all intents and purposes impossible for them to be lying or erring given our normal everyday experience. Consider how we know about the existence of Mūsā (upon him peace) or the Zhou dynasty of China—this is mass-reported due to the number of individuals and documents mentioning their existence.

A report that has been conveyed through mass-transmission gives us certainty that at least the event occurred. Some of the individuals may add their own explanation (e.g., "The moon split because of a volcanic fissure beneath the moon's surface"), their own subjective experience (e.g., "The moon's splitting shocked me"), or details that they witnessed from their standpoint (e.g., "From where I was standing, one part of the moon began falling towards a different mountain"), but each conveys the least common denominator, which is that the event occurred (e.g., the splitting of the moon) or what they experienced occurred (e.g., that so-and-so did or said something).

This is exactly what occurred in our example of the splitting of the moon. The Companions who were present to witness the event or heard from other Companions about the event conveyed this to others, until it has reached us today. For example, Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with him) states that he witnessed this event, other Companions narrate this from him, and then eventually their narrations all reach us. The event is mass-transmitted to us from those Companions who narrate the event from Ibn Mas'ūd (though he wasn't the only one present). Some of the Quraysh saw this occur, and despite their opposition and attempt to explain it away as their eyes being bewitched, they

affirmed that they saw the splitting, as did those who passed by them, who affirmed they saw this. Even in this example, you have three groups of individuals: the Companions, who already believed in the Messenger ﷺ; the Quraysh, who denied the Messenger's ﷺ claims; and those who passed by, who had nothing to gain by affirming or denying.

So, a large group of individuals witnessed this event or heard about it from different perspectives and individuals, such that it would be nearly impossible for the individuals of the Companions, Quraysh, and the “innocent bystanders” to come together, resolve their differences or convince each other to lie about this event or for each individual to have erred in what they saw. So, when another companion who was not present would have been informed of this event, he or she would have believed with certainty in this event from the sheer number of individuals saying the same thing, and then hearing on top of this both the Quraysh (though mockingly) and other visitors passing into Makkah for trade speaking about it. Now, when that same report reaches you, dear reader, from many Companions who all convey from those who witnessed the event, would you not believe it, too? It would be absurd to not believe it.<sup>40</sup> At this point, I think you are convinced that were you to receive so many reports about the miracle of the moon-splitting, you would believe in it. But have you received this many reports? Has the incident of the moon's splitting been conveyed to us through mass-transmission? Let's take a look at the narrations we have and analyze them.

Scholars of hadith (i.e., narrations that convey the statements and actions of the Messenger ﷺ) and theologians agree that the splitting of the moon, like other miracles of the Messenger ﷺ, has been conveyed to us through mass-transmission, and thus these reports give us conclusive knowledge that the event occurred. We should demonstrate this so that we have conclusive proof of the event, and so that we repel any possible doubt or objection.

## ► Companions Who Narrated

How many Companions reported about the moon-splitting? Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373) records in his Quranic commentary, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm*, the names of the following Companions who reported on the incident: Anas b. Mālik, Jubayr b. Muṭ'īm, 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar, 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd, and Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān, while others, like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) include 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with them all).<sup>41</sup> That's seven Companions, each who report that the moon split in two. And imams al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Ṭaḥāwī, Aḥmad, al-Ṭabarī, Abū Zur'a, 'Abd b. Ḥumayd, Ibn al-Mundhir, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mardawayh, al-Bayhaqī, al-Ḥākim, Abū Nu'aym, Ibn Abī Shayba, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, and al-Ṭabarānī, among others, all report their own chains in their hadith

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<sup>40</sup> In fact, the great commentator of the Quran and genius scholar, al-Ālūsī, says just this in his Quranic commentary, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī* (Maḥmūd b. 'Abdallāh, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa-l-sab' al-mathānī*, eds. Māhir Ḥabbūsh et al., Mu'assasat al-Risāla: Beirut, 2010, 26:181).

<sup>41</sup> See Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, <https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/54/1>, and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr*, <https://tafsir.app/aldur-almanthoor/54/1>.

compilations from these Companions about this incident.<sup>42</sup> Later, we'll take a look at some of these chains of narration to visualize the mass-transmission of the incident from these Companions.

Ibn Mas'ūd, one of the most senior and closest of the Messenger's ﷺ Companions, narrates this incident, stating that he saw this with his own eyes, and he was one of the Companions who narrated often and had many students. He witnessed this event, conveyed information about it, and told those who were not present and younger Companions about this incident. But he was not necessarily the only companion to have witnessed the event. Even though some of these Companions were not present at the incident, they would have heard about it from the senior Companions and those who were present when the moon-splitting occurred.

Ibn Mas'ūd had many students and was a source of knowledge for other Companions. So, he would have narrated the incident to them. Ibn Mas'ūd could not have been mistaken about what he saw, nor anyone else who witnessed the event. This is for two reasons. First, if Ibn Mas'ūd were mistaken about what he saw, then 1) the Messenger ﷺ would have corrected him and not have allowed him to continue to have this mistaken notion and spread his incorrect understanding about it and 2) the other Companions would have corrected him and not narrated this incident from him, be they senior or younger Companions. Were other Companions to have disagreed about the splitting of the moon, the Messenger ﷺ would have clarified the matter for them. Second, were Ibn Mas'ūd's eyes to have been bewitched or were the incident to have been a mere illusion, then this would falsify Allah's (exalted is He) statements in which He rebukes disbelievers and skeptics for thinking that the miracles they see are magic or an illusion: "*Yet, whenever they see a sign, they turn away, saying, 'Same old magic!'*" (Q 54:1) and "*still they would say, 'Our eyes have truly been dazzled! In fact, we must have been bewitched'*" (Q 15:14-15).<sup>43</sup> Additionally, while it is possible for one person to perhaps have faulty sight, it is not possible for everyone to and so the others would have corrected him.

The event has been transmitted from at least seven Companions. Then, those Companions narrated it to their students, and so on. Below are charts showing some of the chains up to the third generation (students of the successors), after which the chains reach the compilers of the hadith works either directly or with a few additional individuals between them and the third generation in the chain. Just seeing the chains of narrations, ranging from some of the most authentic of chains to those which are weak, gives us confidence and certainty in the accuracy of the report and conclusive knowledge that the splitting of the moon occurred. The chains shown below are not for a specific hadith text (*matn*),

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<sup>42</sup> See 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Zarqānī, *Sharḥ al-Zarqānī 'alā al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya bi-l-minaḥ al-muḥammadīyya*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Khālīdī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1996), 6:469–484; Tāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Subkī, *Raf' al-ḥājib 'an Mukhtaṣar Ibn Ḥājib*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad Mu'awwiḍ and 'Ādil 'Abd al-Mawjūd (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1999), 2:316–329.

<sup>43</sup> See al-Ālūsī, 26:182.

but in general for narrations related to the splitting of the moon. You will see the students and students of students who narrated about this incident from the Companions.

## ► Chains from the Companions

We know that Ibn Mas‘ūd witnessed this event and narrated about it. Some of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s closest students from the Successors, aside from other Companions, narrate from him about the incident: al-Aswad, Zirr, Abū Ma‘mar, ‘Alqama, and Masrūq, among others. Al-Aswad narrates to Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī; Zirr narrates to ‘Āṣim; Abū Ma‘mar narrates to Ibrāhīm and to Mujāhid; Ibrāhīm and Ibn Sīrīn both narrate from an unknown individual, and then to al-A‘mash and Ayyūb, respectively; ‘Alqama narrates to Ibrāhīm; and Masrūq narrates to Abū al-Ḍuḥā. These are some of the chains.

Anas b. Mālīk narrates the incident to Qatāda, who then narrates to Shaybān, Sa‘īd b. Abī ‘Arūba, Shu‘ba, and Ma‘mar.

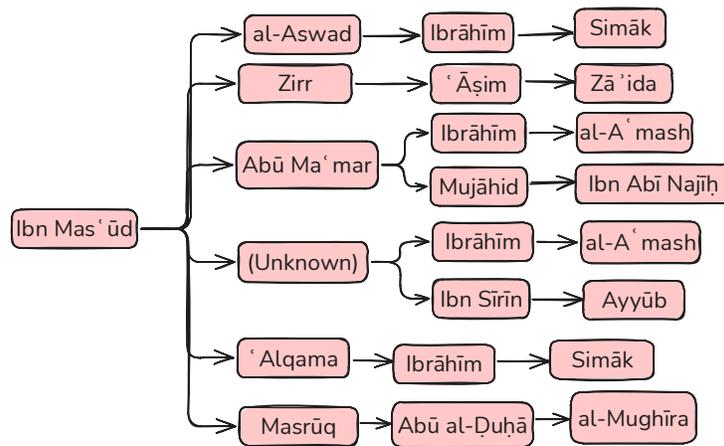
Ibn ‘Abbās narrates to ‘Aṭā’, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, ‘Ikrima, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa, and ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abdallāh.

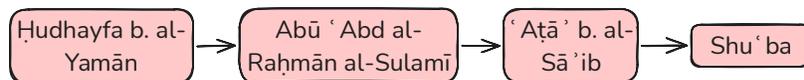
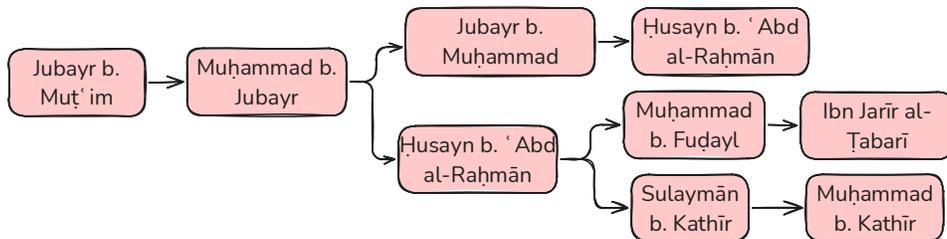
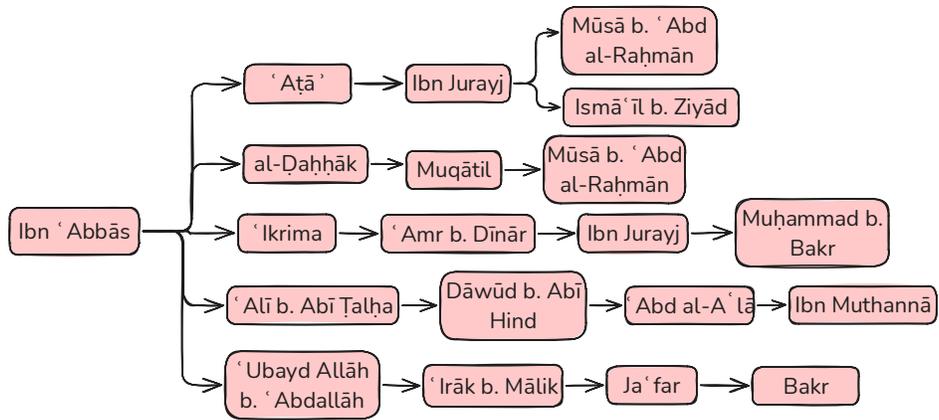
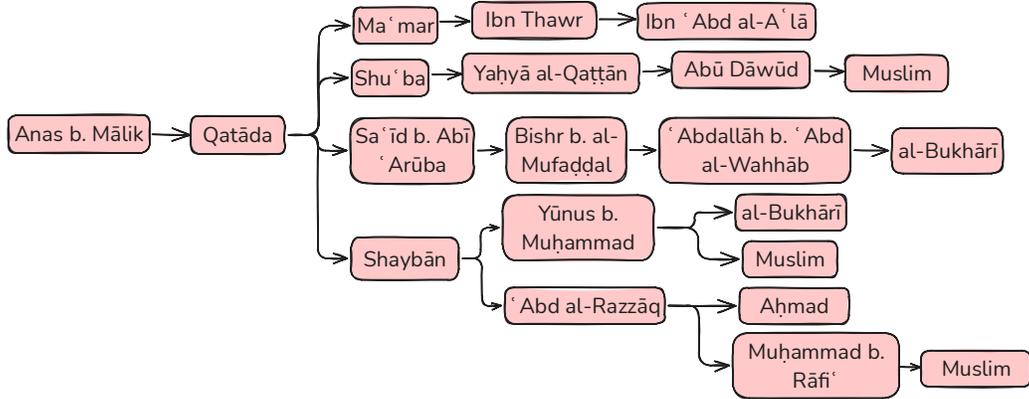
Ibn ‘Umar narrates to Mujāhid, who narrates to al-A‘mash.

Jubayr b. Mu‘īm narrates to his son, Muḥammad b. Jubayr.

Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān narrates to Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, who narrates to ‘Aṭā’ b. al-Sā‘ib.

With all these chains and individuals (all of whom are hadith scholars, while also being scholars of other fields), you should find an overwhelming confidence and certainty that the splitting of the moon occurred. That’s the force behind mass-transmission. While other objections have been brought against the incident, like whether “scientifically” possible or historically corroborated by other civilizations, they are futile when we have conclusive knowledge of the incident through mass-transmission. You will find resolutions to these objections in works such as *The Final Prophet* by Mohammad Elshinawy.





## ▲ Three Objections and Their Responses

One objection that has been raised against the splitting of the moon awkwardly argues that the splitting of the moon could not have occurred because it would overshadow the miraculous nature of the Quran. This objection affirms that the Quran is the greatest miracle given to the Messenger ﷺ, a fact on which all Muslims agree, and affirms that other prophets and messengers were given physical miracles, which demonstrated their prophethood and truthfulness beyond any doubt. But since this objection supposes that the Messenger ﷺ could not have received any miracle other than the Quran, the proponent of this objection would have to deny the Night Journey (*isrā'*) and Ascension (*mi'rāj*), the mass-transmitted reports about the Messenger ﷺ healing the sick, water flowing from his hands, informing about past and future events (other than those stated in the Quran), and more. The central flaws with the proponent's argument are 1) a flawed definition of *i'jāz* (miraculousness), a miracle (*mu'jiza*), and what makes the Quran miraculous; 2) a misunderstanding of what makes the Quran the greatest miracle given to the Messenger ﷺ; 3) a mistaken understanding of what "establishing a proof" (*iqāmat al-hujja*) means; 4) the absurd presumption that the Prophet ﷺ cannot have multiple miracles lest it lessen the Quran; and 5) that the great eloquence of the Quran is less than the splitting of the moon—this is purely subjective. Similarly, the greatest miracles given to the likes Mūsā (upon him peace) and 'Īsā (upon him peace) were the revelations given to them, in addition to the physical miracles they received.

The proponent may also argue, citing the Quran, that Allah recounts the idolaters' demand that the Messenger ﷺ produce for them great physical miracles, after which they say that they still would not believe in him because he was a human messenger (Q 17:90-94). He may claim that this *āya* of the Quran shows that physical miracles would not convince the disbelievers of the truthfulness of the Messenger's ﷺ claim of prophethood, and so Allah revealed the Quran as the only miracle since it suffices to prove his prophethood. However, this argument fails because the disbelievers persisted in their disbelief despite the Quran and because the main objection the disbelievers had, in the clear context of this *āya*, is that the Messenger ﷺ was a human being as opposed to an angel or some other creation. They would have continued to disbelieve whether or not Allah produced the physical miracles they demanded or revealed the Quran. The wisdom in giving the Messenger ﷺ a physical miracle was to prove the truthfulness of the Quranic claim.

Finally, the proponent may argue, again citing the Quran, that whenever Allah produced a miracle for a prophet, were the people to reject the prophet after the miracle, Allah would immediately destroy them (Q 6:8). However, there are a number of problems with this objection, since the proponent does not take into consideration those *āyāt* of the Quran that do not suit the objection. For example, with some peoples, Allah (exalted) gave multiple opportunities to them to accept the message and their prophet, and only after did He destroy or punish them, even after they witnessed miracles. This is what occurred with the people of Nūḥ (upon him peace) whom Nūḥ called for over 900 years; Banī Isrā'īl with Mūsā (upon him peace) who argued and fought with Mūsā and continuously fell into idolatry and misguidance; and Banī Isrā'īl with 'Īsā (upon him peace) who rejected 'Īsā and attempted to murder him. In these examples, Allah did not immediately destroy the people even after the

prophets produced miracles, and some He continued to forgive and to them send prophets. Second, the umma of the Messenger ﷺ is different, since he ﷺ is the final messenger and his umma is all of humanity until the day of judgment. Additionally, Allah did destroy the polytheism of the polytheists in a relatively short time span (literally, the idols were smashed). “Allah punished them with your hands.” (9:14).

## ▲ Conclusion

The moon-splitting is a physical miracle that Allah (exalted) produced to prove the truthfulness of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ. The moon-splitting cannot be produced, reproduced, nor challenged given the physical ability Allah (exalted) placed in human beings. The mass-transmission of the miraculous splitting of the moon confirms with certainty in us that the Messenger ﷺ was a truthful prophet sent by Allah. It is inconceivable that the individuals who narrated this event could have colluded to lie or all erred in what they narrated. Subsequent generations conveyed to us the Companions’ direct experience and information such that it has reached us as a mass-transmitted report. Now, we will examine the Messenger’s ﷺ miraculous character.

## Chapter 4

# PROPHETIC CHARACTER

*“And you are truly ‘a man’ of outstanding character.” (Q 68:4)*

*“There certainly has come to you a messenger from among yourselves. He is concerned by your suffering, anxious for your well-being, and gracious and merciful to the believers.” (Q 9:128)*

Before receiving revelation, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was known among his people as *al-ṣādiq al-amīn* (the truthful and trustworthy). His people knew him as a righteous man, one who never lied or cheated anyone, did not speak foul language, had a balanced temperament, and helped the poor and orphans. His people, even his enemies, had nothing bad to say about him. Even after prophethood, when his people attacked him and his message, they never said anything against his character. Even at this time, the Quraysh and later the non-Muslims of Madinah would leave their items with the Messenger ﷺ to be watched over when they traveled or needed safe keeping of their property.<sup>44</sup> Non-Muslims would come to the Messenger ﷺ in Madinah to resolve issues between themselves, even though they had their own scriptures and customs. They trusted the Messenger ﷺ, and they knew him to be wise, just, and fair.

His Companions described his character in such beautiful detail that one cannot help but love and admire him ﷺ. Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) consoled the Messenger ﷺ after he first received revelation: “...You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones...”<sup>45</sup> Hind b. Abī Hālah, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and Umm Ma‘bad (may Allah be pleased with them) each give a detailed account of the Messenger’s ﷺ outward appearance and beauty along with his character and

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<sup>44</sup> The Quraysh prided themselves on being honorable, trustworthy, and brave, despite their idolatry and negative character traits. In fact, Abū Sufyān (may Allah be pleased with him), before he converted to Islam, said that he would have lied about the Messenger ﷺ were it not for his fear of being called a liar by his people. Instead, he spoke truthfully and praised the Messenger ﷺ, even though he had the opportunity to lie about him. See al-Bukhārī, #7, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:7>.

<sup>45</sup> See al-Bukhārī, #3, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3>.

manners.<sup>46</sup> Scholars compiled these descriptions in a genre of works entitled *shamā'il* and *khaṣā'is*, both of which detail the beautiful qualities and character of the Messenger ﷺ.<sup>47</sup>

Even later Orientalists speak about the Messenger ﷺ as a noble, wise, loveable, and astounding individual.<sup>48</sup>

The remainder of this essay could be filled with pages of praise and illustration of the Messenger's ﷺ character and that would not exhaust what we could say about our beloved Messenger ﷺ.

Nevertheless, we must return back to the objective of our essay, which is to prove that Muḥammad ﷺ is a prophet. So, how does the Messenger's ﷺ impeccable character prove that he is a prophet? Let's once again use a convenient table to show this, after which we'll address the argument in more detail.

Example	The Norm	The Disruption	Judgment
The Messenger ﷺ possessed and exhibited noble character traits and virtues, and he acted with immense kindness and wisdom. His character was flawless. No other individual before or after him has possessed all these qualities, for his entire life, and never once changed from	Every individual has some flaw in their character, whether that flaw is known publicly or privately, and even if no flaw is found, every individual's character and personality changes over time.	The Messenger ﷺ possessed pristine and noble character traits and virtues, and his character never changed in whatever state he was in.	This is impossible according to our norm. This shows that he was divinely guided and protected, disrupting our norm, and thus his impeccable character is a miracle that proves his ﷺ prophethood.

<sup>46</sup> See "Appendix B: Descriptions of the Prophet ﷺ" in *An Introduction to Islamic Theology: Imam Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's Al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, trans. Faraz Khan (Berkeley: Zaytuna College, 2020), 423–433.

<sup>47</sup> See Yusuf Nabahani, *Muhammad: His Character and Beauty*, trans. Abdul Aziz Suraqah (Duluth: Al-Madina Institute, 2015); Abū 'Isā al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Shamā'il al-Muhammadiyya: 415 Hadiths on the Beauty & Perfection of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ*, trans. Abdul Aziz Suraqah and Mohammed Aslam (Kuala Lumpur: Imam Ghazali Institute, 2019); and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ghazali: The Book of Prophetic Ethics and the Courtesies of Living*, trans. Adi Setia (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2019).

<sup>48</sup> See the entire Chapter 2 "The Prophet's Character" in *The Final Prophet*, 17–45.

these traits, neither publicly nor privately.			
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After mentioning some of the Messenger's ﷺ noble virtues, Imam al-Ṣābūnī states the following argument in his *al-Bidāya fi uṣūl al-dīn*,

He continued to exhibit these traits for his entire life, not changing whatsoever in private or public, neither when angry nor when pleased, to the extent that his enemies, despite their extreme animosity and zeal to slander his character, found no fault in him at all. This, then, is the strongest proof of the truthfulness of his message, for it is impossible that the all-wise—may His majesty be exalted—gather all of these virtues for one whom He knows will invent lies against Him, and then give him respite for twenty-three years, give victory to his religion over all other faiths and grant him victory against his enemies, and finally give life to the traces [of his person, deeds, and teachings] after his death until the Day of Resurrection.<sup>49</sup>

Al-Ṣābūnī makes an additional point in the above argument about the Messenger's ﷺ noble character. We begin with the premise that Allah (exalted) is All-Knowing and Most Wise. Anyone who affirms the existence of the Creator must necessarily affirm both names of the Lord. We also know that the Messenger ﷺ called to pure monotheism and worship and obedience to Allah, the hallmark of all the Abrahamic faiths and the core of what it means to be Muslim. Given that Allah is Most Wise, would He place all these noble traits in someone and grant him perfect character and wisdom and then allow him to call towards monotheism (i.e., the Truth) and aid him and his followers such that Islam has spread all over the world? That would be unwise and deceptive, indeed, if it were the case that this individual was a liar. So, we can only conclude, given our initial premises, that the Messenger ﷺ is a true prophet, divinely selected and aided as the prophets before him, and one of the proofs of this selection is his perfect character.

Then, what we realize after reading about the Messenger's ﷺ life and character from his friends and Companions and enemies-turned-Companions, transmitted to us through mass-transmission, is that his perfect character remained constant for his entire life. He never once was spiteful, foul, vicious, cowardly, foolish, abusive, or stingy. He wanted nothing for himself, and he gave everything he had (time, wealth, energy) to propagate the message delivered to him. How is it possible that someone never had a lapse in their character? You can think of dozens of times when you were, embarrassingly, mean, cowardly, and selfish. That's part of being an average human being. But the Messenger ﷺ was clearly not an average human being. His perfect character and his consistency disrupt the norm we expect for any individual.

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<sup>49</sup> See al-Ṣābūnī, *An Introduction to Islamic Theology*, 172.

Moreover, his followers strive to emulate him in all his traits and habits out of love for him and out of love for Allah (exalted), since Allah was pleased with His own messenger and loved him. The Quran tells us, *“Say, ‘O Prophet, ‘If you ‘sincerely’ love Allah, then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive your sins. For Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”* (Q 3:31). You will find Muslims striving to follow the Messenger ﷺ in his minutest habits and traits, even though we all individually fall short of emulating the Messenger ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ came with the same message and many of the same traits and habits as the noble prophets and messengers (upon them peace and blessings) before him. Muslims seek to follow them all through following the Messenger ﷺ. The fact that he has so many followers trying to emulate his character further strengthens that his character is miraculous.

So, the argument to prove the truthfulness of the Messenger ﷺ and his prophethood through his impeccable character as follows.

P1: The Messenger ﷺ had flawless character and he not once fell from this lofty level of character.

P1.1: The Messenger ﷺ had flawless character, and this is proven through mass-transmission.

P1.2: Anything proven through mass-transmission leads to absolutely certain knowledge.

C1: Therefore, it is absolutely certain that the Messenger ﷺ had flawless character.

P2: Anyone who has such flawless character must be a true prophet of Allah.

P2.1: Someone with such flawless character is a phenomenon that disrupts the norms we experience.

P2.2.: Any phenomenon that disrupts the norms we experience is a miracle.

C2: Therefore, someone with such flawless character is a miracle.

C: The Messenger ﷺ was a true prophet of Allah.

To conclude this section, we’ll list some of the traits of the Messenger ﷺ for you, reader, to reflect on and ask whether anyone else independently has these traits, meaning they are not following or emulating some other individual with those traits, like Muslims.<sup>50</sup>

## ▲ The Messenger’s ﷺ Love for His Umma

The Messenger ﷺ loved his umma, who are all those individuals from his lifetime till the day of judgment and especially the Muslims, so much that he would stand crying in prayer for long periods, asking Allah (exalted) that He help the Muslims, forgive them, and guide them, including guiding the

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<sup>50</sup> For example, suppose there is some individual who miraculously has all these traits, but he is following the Messenger ﷺ in these traits. In that case, he doesn’t “independently” have these traits.

non-Muslims to Islam.<sup>51</sup> He loved and defended his Companions, both the men and women of them; he supported them and encouraged them; he lived with them in times of difficulty and times of ease; he celebrated with them and consoled them. His entire life was a sacrifice for their guidance, for they would carry on the final message after him. He said he longed to meet the Muslims after the Companions, for they believe in him despite having never met him.<sup>52</sup> Out of love, he was concerned for the Muslims after him, for their faith and their difficulties.

### ▲ The Messenger's ﷺ Generosity

The Messenger ﷺ was filled with generosity, kindness, and clemency. He gave away any wealth he had; he distributed but never took charity; he cared for the orphans, widows, and poor; and he always sought ways to ease the struggle and suffering of others. He was even kind to animals and warned of mistreating them. Allah (exalted) describes the Messenger ﷺ in the Quran as "...only as a mercy for the whole world" (Q 21:107). He encouraged Muslims to smile at one another, to be kind and compassionate to children, the weak, and neighbors.<sup>53</sup>

### ▲ The Messenger's ﷺ Bravery and Courage

He displayed bravery and courage regardless of the situation and the odds. When the Muslims were forced to fight to defend themselves, their families, and their homes, the Messenger ﷺ was the first among them. He fought against tyranny and injustice. Many of the Companions would stay close to the Messenger ﷺ during battles for protection, knowing that he was the best of them and the fiercest warrior. The Messenger ﷺ feared no one except Allah, and he placed all of his trust and reliance in Allah alone. His bravery and courage are an example, and he showed us how to be concerned only with Allah's opinion of us. The Messenger ﷺ stood up for Islam and its message no matter how dangerous the situation. He traveled to the eastern town of Ṭā'if in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of prophethood (three years before hijra) to call its inhabitants to Islam. He stayed for ten days. In this year, he lost his

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<sup>51</sup> See "The Prophet's Love for Us," Life With Allah, accessed April 4, 2025, <https://lifewithallah.com/articles/loving-the-prophet/the-prophets-love-for-us/>, and "How Did Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Show His Love for His Ummah," Al-Falah SG, October 15, 2024, <https://alfalah.sg/how-did-the-prophet-show-love-to-his-ummah/>.

<sup>52</sup> See Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Chapter: The Jewelry of Wudu'," Sunnah.com, #150, <https://sunnah.com/nasai:150>.

<sup>53</sup> You can read more about the Messenger's ﷺ overwhelming generosity and kindness here: Ali Zohery, "The Kindness of Prophet Muhammad (s)," IslamiCity, November 8, 2024, <https://www.islamicity.org/6428/the-kindness-of-prophet-muhammad-s/>; Theresa Corbin, "Learning Prophet Muhammad's Kindness and Compassion," AboutIslam, May 20, 2024, <https://aboutislam.net/reading-islam/about-muhammad/learning-the-prophets-kindness-and-compassion/>; and "The Prophet's Generosity," IslamOnline, accessed April 4, 2025, <https://islamonline.net/en/the-prophets-generosity/>.

beloved wife Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) and his uncle Abū Ṭālīb, his strongest supporter, but who did not accept Islam. Despite this, the Messenger ﷺ continued to fulfill his obligation of calling others to Islam. In Ṭāʾif, he asked the Thaḳīf tribe to accept Islam and support the Muslims.<sup>54</sup> They rejected him, mocked him, and drove him out of the city, pelting him with rocks. True bravery and courage demand that one trust Allah's plan, and that's what the Messenger ﷺ displayed to the highest degree. He supplicated,

O Allah! To You alone I make complaint of my helplessness, the paucity of my resources and my insignificance before mankind. You are the most Merciful of the merciful. You are the Lord of the helpless and the weak, O Lord of mine! Into whose hands would You abandon me: into the hands of an unsympathetic distant relative who would sullenly frown at me, or to the enemy who has been given control over my affairs? But if Your wrath does not fall on me, there is nothing for me to worry about.

I seek protection in the light of Your Countenance, which illuminates the heavens and dispels darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Your wrath, or that You should be wrathful to me. And there is no power nor resource, but Yours alone.<sup>55</sup>

## ► The Messenger's ﷺ Wisdom and Fairness

In addition to his ﷺ love, generosity, bravery and courage, the Messenger ﷺ was the wisest of his people and the fairest in resolving issues they had between themselves and with the Muslims. Being the wisest of their people is one of the special character traits of prophets. In fact, wisdom is the hallmark and key virtue that distinguishes prophets from non-prophets. Prophets are not philosophers (who claim they are wise). Rather, they are individuals whom Allah (exalted) selects out of His love and compassion, and He places in them wisdom. Wisdom is the virtue that encompasses knowledge, experience, foresight, justice, patience, and forbearance, and it manifests in one's speech, action, and outlook. The prophets displayed such wisdom in all their states.

A few examples of the Messenger's ﷺ wisdom and fairness include his treatment of the Quraysh at the Conquest of Makkah. Instead of retaliating against the Quraysh for all the violence and evil they did to the Muslims over 20 years, he instead gave those who surrendered safety in Abū Sufyān's (may Allah

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<sup>54</sup> See Ali al-Halawani, "Glimpses of the Prophet's Courage," AboutIslam, February 28, 2025, <https://aboutislam.net/shariah/prophet-muhammad/manners/glimpses-prophets-courage/>.

<sup>55</sup> See Safiur-Rahman Mubarak Puri, *The Sealed Nectar: Biography of the Noble Prophet ﷺ* (Riyadh: Maktaba Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2011), 189.

be pleased with him) house, and he said, “I speak to you in the same words as Yusuf (Joseph) spoke to his brothers: *No reproach on you this day,*’ [12:92] go your way, for you are freed ones.”<sup>56</sup>

The Messenger ﷺ took counsel from his Companions, and he recognized the aptitudes and skills of his Companions. A truly wise individual is a natural leader and values others and their skills. The Messenger ﷺ for example recognized Abū Bakr’s and ‘Umar’s wisdom and courage for defending the truth, ‘Uthmān’s generosity, ‘Alī’s bravery, Usāma b. Zayd’s leadership, Bilāl’s loyalty, Fāṭima’s kindness, ‘Ā’isha’s intelligence, Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh’s generosity.<sup>57</sup>

Recalling the incident at Ṭā’if, the Messenger ﷺ stayed outside of Ṭā’if after being rejected and physically attacked by its residents. An angel was sent to him who informed the Messenger ﷺ that he could crush the city between two mountains if the Messenger ﷺ wanted. The Messenger ﷺ declined, stating that he hoped there would be Muslims from the city in the future. Not only was the Messenger ﷺ thinking beyond the present moment, but he was also forbearing and recognized the reality of the situation. These individuals were not ready yet for the message, but the seed was planted.<sup>58</sup>

You will find wisdom in every statement the Messenger ﷺ made and in every action of his. Look for the wisdom when you are reading about the Messenger ﷺ, his sunna, and his life (*sira*).

## ■ Conclusion

In this section, we considered the Messenger’s ﷺ immaculate character and how it is beyond what a normal human is capable. His honesty, trustworthiness, wisdom, and fairness, all of which even his enemies recognized disrupt the norm of what we deem possible for the average individual. He remained so throughout his entire life such that not one of his Companions or enemies criticized his character, even after testing him. This disruption of the norm proves to us that the Messenger’s ﷺ character was miraculous and thus a proof of his prophethood.

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<sup>56</sup> See Safiur-Rahman Mubarak Puri, 530.

<sup>57</sup> Many collections of hadith have a chapter called, “Virtues of the Companions.” Also see Mohsen Hareedy, “The Wise Leader (peace be upon him): The Prophet’s Wisdom in Leading His Companions,” IslamOnline, accessed April 4, 2025, <https://islamonline.net/en/prophets-wisdom-in-leading-his-companions/>; Thomas Cleary, *The Wisdom of the Prophet: The Sayings of Muhammad* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> See Theresa Corben, “Lessons from Prophet Muhammad’s Wisdom, Patience & Foresight,” AboutIslam, May 5, 2024, <https://aboutislam.net/reading-islam/about-muhammad/lessons-prophets-wisdom/>.

## *Conclusion*

# THE FINAL MESSENGER

Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, was given miracles that amazed those who experienced and witnessed them. The final and lasting miracle of the Quran remains with us today for us to experience and in which to find guidance and wisdom. Miracles such as the splitting of the moon, the Quran, and the Messenger's ﷺ character prove his truthfulness and his prophethood, and they prove the truth of Islam. We examined in this essay what a miracle is and how it proves the truthfulness of a prophet. We explored a number of the miracles given to the Messenger ﷺ, including physical, scriptural, and internal miracles. By this point, you should have gained absolutely certain knowledge and belief in the prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, and there should be no doubt in your mind and heart about his prophethood. Now, it is up to you to continue to learn about the Messenger ﷺ, his life, and his miracles and to continue to study the Quran, the final miracle given to the final messenger.

At the end of this essay, you will find a list of resources for further reading and research, in addition to the sources referenced in the footnotes.

May Allah guide you and fill your heart with the Quran's light and guidance and firmly rest in your innermost self a love for the final messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ.

# RESOURCES

Here are some resources to read in order of which to start with first.

- Elshinawy, Mohammad. *The Final Prophet: Proof of the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ*. Irving: Yaqeen Institute, 2022.
- Elshinawy, Mohammad. "The Unique Storytelling Style of the Qur'an." *Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research*. Last modified July 22, 2024. <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/the-unique-storytelling-style-of-the-quran>.
- Hani, Suleiman. "Introduction to I'jaz al-Qur'an: The Role of Muhammad ﷺ." *Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research*. Last modified July 22, 2024. <https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/introduction-to-ijaz-al-quran-the-role-of-muhammad>.
- Abu Zakariya. *The Forbidden Prophecies*. London: OneReason, 2019.
- Baqer, Mohammad. *101 Fulfilled Islamic Prophecies Using the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith*. Self-published, Amazon, 2024.
- Abu Zakariya. *The Eternal Challenge: A Journey Through the Miraculous Qur'an*. London: OneReason, 2017.
- Rashid, Adnan, Abu Zakariya, and Zakir Hussain. *Abraham Fulfilled: A Biblical Study of God's Plan for Ishmael and Arabia*. London: Sapience Publishing, 2024.
- Saeh, Bassam. *The Miraculous Language of the Qur'an: Evidence of Divine Origin*. London: IIIT, 2015.
- Ahmad, Yusuf al-Hajj. *The Unchallengeable Miracles of the Qur'an: The Facts That Can't Be Denied by Science*. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Edited by Huda Khattab. Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 2010.
- Draz, Muhammad. *The Qur'an: An Eternal Challenge*. Translated and edited by Adil Salahi. Riyadh: Osoul Global Center, 2019.