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Lesson 9: The Science of the Miracles of the Qur'an

Definition of the miracle

Miracle is type of a speech or an action that man without the Leave of God is unable to perform. The Arabic term for miracle is 'Mo'jezah' which is driven from 'Ajz' meaning 'to be unable'. Thus, 'Ajooz' means a very old man and 'Ajooza' a very old woman.

In English, miracle is from Latin miráculum meaning to wonder. Any amazing or wonderful occurrence—although mostly unusual—is called miracle in English. Thus, the English term is more inclusive than its Islamic terminology. Mo'jizah in the Islamic theology is the violation of normal natural laws that a Messenger of God performs by the Leave of God to prove authenticity of his Prophetic claim. The common term used in the Qur'an as well as the bible for miracle is 'Ayah' (Sign) as it is a sign for truth of the Prophet as well as the sign of the Might of God.

The Holy Qur'an the best and the everlasting miracle of Muhammad (S)

Among the three thousand miracles recorded from the Prophet of Islam (S) the Holy Qur'an is his most vivid and living miracle. Thus, every sentence of the Qur'an is named 'Ayah' (Sign). As we learned earlier a miracle from the Islamic perspective is an occurrence than is impossible for any humans— or even the jinn— to perform without the Leave of God. To prove the miraculous aspect of the Qur'an the Almighty God has invited man and the jinn to the challenge of producing something similar to the Qur'an:

"Say: If the mankind and the jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another." (17:88)

"And if you are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'an) to Our slave

(Muhammad), then produce a Surah (Chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters) besides Allah, if you are truthful. But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers." (2:23,24)

Similar to this Ayah is also mentioned in Surah 10 Ayah 28

"Or the say, "He (Muhammad (S)) forged it (the Qur'an). Say: Bring you hen ten forged Surahs like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than Allah (to your help), if you speak the truth." (11: 13)

"If then they answer you not, know then that it (the Qur'an) is sent down with the Knowledge of Allah and that none has the right to be worshipped but He! Will you then be Muslims " (11: 14)

"Or do they say: He has forged it (the Qur'an)? Nay! They believe not! Let them produce a recital like unto it if they are truthful." (52:33-34)

Some useful points in the above Ayaat

- Among the above Ayaat the first the most comprehensive for it is inviting the mankind and the jinn to the ever unsuccessful challenge of producing something similar to the Qur'an.
- The term 'Qur'an' in the Ayah does not necessarily mean the entire Qur'an for surely at the time of the revelation of the above Ayah the whole Qur'an was not revealed yet.
- The second Ayah is inviting the deniers of the Qur'an to produce even a Surah like unto the Qur'an. The shortest Surah of the Qur'an is Surah al-Kauthar (ch.108) which consists of only three short Ayah. Yet none has ever been able to produce anything similar to this Surah.
- Most of the 'Ayaat of the Challenge' are revealed when the Prophet (S) was still in Makka. This means although the challenge has been always on, there has not been any further efforts from the disbelievers and hence no need for further invitation to challenge the Qur'an has been necessary.

Unsuccessful Challenges

Since the time of the above revelations several attempts have been made from the enemies of Islam to challenge the miraculous aspects of the Qur'an but to no avail.

The first person who dared attending the challenge was 'Mosaylama' a man from Yamama who claimed to be a prophet in the year 11 A.H. to his own assumption he produced a chapter similar to Surah al-Fil (ch.105): "The elephant, what is the elephant. And what made you understand what the elephant is. For it there is a disastrous tail and a long trunk!"

Every Arab would only laugh at this production and hence Mosaylama did not succeed in his attempt.

In the recent years some evangelical anti-Muslim groups have produced a forged book called 'the True Furqan'. They claimed that they have been able for the first time after 1400 years to challenge the Qur'an. This book has being published in numerous copies in the North America by two American companies (Omega 2001 and Wine Press) for free distribution among Muslims!

In addition to its feigned Arabic style, the Christian dogma of Trinity is mentioned in it more than the Bible! They have even named one of its chapters 'The Triune God'! All its chapters begin with the name of god the father, god the son and the Holy Spirit! Jihad is forbidden in it (for obvious reasons!) and divorce is prohibited!

Dimensions of the Miracles of the Qur'an

A. Rhetorical Miracle

Rhetoric is the art of using language effectively and persuasively. The first apparent miracle of the Qur'an is related to its rhetorical styles. Although the original version of the previous Scriptures were also miraculous for they contain revealed prophecies. Nonetheless, their literal styles were not miraculous. Thus, they had never called anyone to the challenge of producing something like them.

Amazingly, however, some of the early Sunni scholars either denied the rhetorical aspects of the miracle of the Qur'an or limited its miracle to rhetoric. Among the Sunni scholars the Ash'aris limited the miraculous aspects of the Qur'an to its rhetoric whilst the Mo'tazelis denied the rhetorical miracle of the Qur'an claiming that its prophecies are the only miracles of the Qur'an. Al-Baqellani died in 403 A.H. is the most known Ash'ari linguist who limited the miracle of the Qur'an to its rhetorical aspects. Although al-Baqellani is wrong in limiting the miracle of the Qur'an to its rhetoric, his book 'E'jazul-Qur'an' (the Miracle of the Qur'an) is one of the best sources on the rhetorical aspects of the Qur'an. Al-Nazzam; the Mo'tazeli Sunni scholar died in 231 A.H., on the other hand, denied the rhetorical miracle of the Qur'an limiting the miracle of the Book of Allah only to its prophecies.

As a matter of fact, the dimensions of the miracles of the Qur'an are numerous. Although the rhetoric of the Qur'an is undoubtedly miraculous, its miracle is not limited to its rhetoric.

The miraculous rhetoric of the Qur'an coupled with its profound meanings has been the strongest magnet in attracting mankind- and even the jinn- to Islam.

In the early years of the advent of Islam, the chiefs of Quraysh had banned listening to the Qur'an. The Qur'an in narration of that event states:

"And those who disbelieve say: Listen not to this Qur'an, and make noise in the midst of its (recitation) that you may overcome."(41:26)

Ironically, however, the magnet of the Qur'an was so pleasant that the chiefs of Quraysh themselves

could not but enjoy listening to it. Thus, they used to secretly listen to it. The story of Walid, Akhnas and Abu-Jahl is well known in the history. Similarly, the conversion of 'Umar Ibn Khattab six years after the advent of Islam by listening to some of the Ayaat of Surah TAHA (ch.20) is narrated by many historians.

The linguists have usually divided the human literatures into poetry and prose. The poetry and the prose have their own styles and literal frames. "The Qur'an –as accurately expressed by Taha Husain– is neither poetry nor a prose, it is rather the Qur'an. It is not poetry for it is not limited to the frames of poetry, as it is not a prose for it has its own unique styles of speech."

1. Examples of the rhetorical miracles of the Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an with reference to the law of equality in punishment (al-Qisas) states:

"And there is (a saving of) life for you in al-Qisas." (2:179)

Prior to the revelation of this Ayah the common Arabic proverb for the equality of punishment was 'killing is more banishing for (another) killing.'

Al-Soyouti; has listed twenty points whereby the Ayah of the Qur'an is more preferred than the Jahilliyah expression.

"The Day when a Maula cannot avail a Maula in aught, and no help can they receive. Except him on whom Allah has Mercy." (44:41-42)

The message of the above Ayah is to deny any type of help for anyone from anyone– be it from his direct family, relatives, friends, solicitors, etc. on the Day of Judgment. The only exception however is for those on whom Allah has Mercy. The Arabic term 'Maula' has 27 different meanings. This is the best and the only word in Arabic to include any type of helper. Thus, the above message could not be possibly expressed in any better way.

"And it was said: O earth! Swallow up your water, and O sky! Withhold (your rain. And the water was made to subside and the Decree (of Allah) was fulfilled. And it (the ship) rested on (Mount) Judi, and it was said: Away with the people who are wrong doers." (11:44)

Unfortunately, no matter how well the above Ayah is translated it can never be equal to its Arabic text. This is definitely the most eloquent Ayah in the Qur'an and in the Arabic literature. Arab linguists have discovered at least 30 different arts of eloquence that are utilized in the above Ayah. That means the arts used in the Ayah are far more than the number of the words used in the Ayah!

When the Qur'an invited the disbelievers to challenge the Qur'an some of the most eloquent idolaters request to have forty days to produce something similar to the Qur'an. During that time the above Ayah (11:44) was revealed. The rhetoric of the Ayah was so commanding that the idolaters were left with no

doubt that those words cannot be possibly challenged by any humans.

2. Sublime Teachings and Educational Miracles of the Qur'an

The miracles of the Qur'an are not limited to its rhetoric; otherwise the Almighty Allah would have not asked the mankind and the jinn to challenge it. For, obviously not all humans are acquainted with Arabic language.

The sublime educational aspects of the miracles of the Qur'an; be it in theology, ethics, sociology, psychology, politics, economic, etc. are so perfectly and miraculously described.

Monotheism, for instance, is the bedrock of all divine religions. Prior to the revelation of the Qur'an the most that mankind knew about this concept was not further than numerical unity of God (Tawheed 'Adadi). The Holy Qur'an is the first Book in the human history that educated man on the sublime concept of monotheism in uniqueness of God (Tawheed Ahadi).

Surah al-Ekhlās (ch.112) and the first six Ayaat of Surah al-Hadeed (ch.57) have the best expression on the uniqueness of God. Kolayni narrated in his Isnad from Imam Sajjad (a.s): "The Almighty God knew that there will be humans with profound understanding in the coming centuries, thus He revealed Surah al-Ekhlās and the beginning of Surah al-Hadeed to 'and He has full knowledge of whatsoever is in the breasts."

3. Unification and the Harmony of the Qur'an

Lack of discrepancies and a unique harmony of the Qur'an is another aspect of its miracle. The almighty Allah states: ***"Do they not then consider the Qur'an carefully? Had it been from other than Allah they would surely have found therein many a contradiction."*** (4:82)

The present Bible is fragmentary in its literature style. For, it is the remains of a larger literature and it is compiled by various writers over centuries. On the contrary, the Qur'an has a unique style from its beginning to the end. Al-Baqellani; a well versed Arab linguist in his testimony on the harmonious style of the Qur'an asserts:

"The amazing order and marvellous compilation of the Qur'an is never subject to any changes, in spite of the variety of the subjects that the Qur'an deals with. These subjects include stories, admonitions, arguments, orders, excuses, warnings, promises, glad tidings, alarming, teachings sublime morals codes, the biography of the ancient people and many other subjects. We have examined the literature of the most rhetorical scholars, outstanding poets and the most eloquent orators on different subjects... Every poet excels only in one particular style; Emra'ul-Qays in description of horse riding, al-Naabegha in horror and fear, al-Zohair in love stories. The same difference can be observed in the styles of writers and orators." In further explanation about the harmonious style of the Qur'an he added:

"A skilful poet makes a mistake when he describes asceticism. An eloquent orator cannot be so eloquent in description of the permissible and not permissible statutes. But the order of the Qur'an never changes. The order and its eloquence is always the same (although the subjects differ. Nay, the best and the most sublime status always belongs to the Qur'an."

4. The Unseen News of the Qur'an

The fourth dimension of the miracles of the Qur'an is with regards to its unseen news of the past as well as the future.

The Almighty Allah addressing the Prophet (S) states: ***"This is of the news of the Unseen which We reveal unto you; neither you nor your people knew it before this."*** (11:49, and similarly in 3:44 and 12: 103)

The stories of some of the previous nations and the Prophets are mentioned in the Qur'an. Although in general the narrations of the Qur'an are quite similar with the Bible, there are ample differences. The narration of the Qur'an is free from any distortions that occurred in the text of the Bible. The narrations of the Qur'an are the narration of all-Knowing All-Seeing Witness; i.e. the Almighty God. The Qur'an sometimes so clearly narrates an event that it seems to us as if we are observing the scene.

Apart from the histories of the previous Prophets some useful and amazing events that had taken place after Jesus Christ (S) but some centuries prior to the advent of Islam are uniquely described in the Qur'an. The story of the People of the Cave as mentioned in Surah al-Kahf (ch. 18) is the best example of this category.

One of the miracles of the Qur'an concerning the stories of the ancient nations is the different titles the Qur'an is using for different chiefs of the ancient Egyptian monarch.

In the Old Testament, the Egyptian ruler during the period of Prophet Ibrahim (a.s) and Prophet Yusuf (a.s) are named "Pharaoh." However, this title was actually employed after the eras in which these two Prophets lived.

While addressing the Egyptian ruler at the time of Prophet Yusuf (a.s), the word "Al-Malik" in Arabic is used in the Qur'an: It refers to a ruler, king or sultan: ***"The King said, 'Bring him to me straight away!'"*** (12:50)

The ruler of Egypt in the time of the Prophet Musa (as) is referred to as "Pharaoh." This distinction in the Qur'an is not made in the Old and New Testaments nor by Jewish historians. In the Bible, the word "Pharaoh" is used, in every reference to an Egyptian monarch. On the other hand, the Qur'an is far more concise and accurate in the terminology it employs.

The use of the word "Pharaoh" in Egyptian history belongs only to the late period. This particular title

began to be employed in the 14th century B.C., during the reign of Amenhotep IV. The Prophet Yusuf (a.s) lived at least 200 years before that time. 216

The Encyclopaedia Britannica says that the word "Pharaoh" was a title of respect used from the New Kingdom (beginning with the 18th dynasty; B.C. 1539–1292) until the 22nd dynasty (B.C. 945–730), after which this term of address became the title of the king. Further information on this subject comes from the Academic American Encyclopaedia, which states that the title of Pharaoh began to be used in the New Kingdom.

The Holy Qur'an also contains many prophecies for the future. Several events were foretold in the Qur'an prior to their occurrence.

An example of these prophecies is the foretelling of the victory of the Romans over the Persians after they were defeated from them. The prophecy is mentioned in the beginning of Surah al-Room (ch.30). The prophecy of the Qur'an took place about ten years after the revelation of the Ayah.

Promising the victories return of the Prophet (S) to Makka; his home town is another example of the prophecies of the Qur'an as stated in Ayah 85 of Surah al-Qasas (ch.28).

Amongst the prophecies of the Qur'an for the farther future is about the globalization of Islam and its superiority over all other religions. The Almighty Allah in three different Surahs of the Qur'an states that He has sent His Messenger (Muhammad) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the disbelievers hate it. (9:33, 48:28, 61:9)

Today even non-Islamic sources confirm that Islam is the fastest growing religion in our age in spite of all the propaganda against it.

5. The Scientific Miracles of the Qur'an

The Almighty God in nearly every page of the Qur'an invites man to reflect on the nature around and within him. The book of creation; is one of the frequently used books in the Qur'an to prove the existence of God in the Qur'an. From the view of the Qur'an the entire universe from the micro cells to the macro galaxies are all the signs of the Creators. The best and the most accurate description of the creation, therefore, can be cited by its Creator, i.e. Allah. The description of God about the nature is not based on man's limited and very often wrong knowledge, it's based on reality as it is. The precise deception of the Qur'an about the natural phenomena leaves us with no doubt that this Book is but a miraculous Words of God.

The 18th century Swedish biologist, Carolus Linnaeus discovered that the gender exists in the world of plants. He explained his new discovery in his book 'Spices Plantarum'. Many centuries before Carlous, the Almighty God referred to the plants as a pair of male and female. (13:3 and 31:10).

Sir Isaac Newton in 17th century discovered the universal gravity force. Gravity is a force that attracts all objects in the universe. In other words, it holds all the objects in their due place by unknown pillars called the force of gravity. This fact is also mentioned in the Qur'an (13:2 and 31:10).

Edwin Hubble in 1929 discovered that the universe is expanding. The concept of the expansion of the universe is vividly and without any ambiguity is mentioned in the Qur'an. The Almighty Allah in Surah Adha-Dhariyat states: ***"With power did We construct the heaven. Verily, We are extending the vastness of space thereof."***(51:47)

How could possibly an unlettered man more than fourteen hundred years ago flived in the barren desserts of the Arabian Peninsula know so precisely about the expansion of the universe? Glory be to Allah.

Many books and articles are compiled explaining the scientific miracles of the Qur'an. With the new discoveries in various scientific fields, more examples of the scientific miracles of the Qur'an will be discovered.

6. The Numerical Miracles of the Qur'an

Another aspect of the miracles of the Qur'an is a new numerical finding in the Qur'an. For instance, the term 'Duny'a (this world) is repeated 115 times in the Qur'an, and its opposite, i.e. 'Aakhirat' (the hereafter) is also repeated 115 times. 'Life' is used 145 times and 'death' is also used 115 times. 'Tongue' is used 25 times and so is 'sermon'. 'Man' is used 24 times and so is 'woman'.

One of the best works in this field is compiled by a Shi'a scholar Dr. Abu-Zahra al-Najdi 'Menal-E'jazel-Balaghi Wal-A'dadi Fil-Qur'anel-Karim' (From the Rhetorical and Numerical Miracles of the Noble Qur'an). Similarly, Dr. Abdul-Razzaq Noufel in his book 'al-E'jazul-Adadi Fil-Qur'an al-Karim' has cited many examples of this aspect of the miracle of the Qur'an.

It is worthy to note that some authors are so much indulged in their calculations that they even altered the Qur'an to match their calculations! Rashad Khalifa; the Egyptian biochemist who came up with the mysterious number '19' is a clear example of this type of abusing the Qur'an. He deleted the last Ayah of Surah al-Touba (ch.9) simply because it did not match his calculations! The man later claimed to have experienced a heavenly ascension and his followers in the U.S. regarded him a prophet!

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