

Miracles

Meaning of Miracle

'Mujiza' (معجزة) in Arabic language means 'that which disables,' 'that which people are unable to do-' In Islamic terminology, 'Mujiza' (معجزة) means 'Such act which people are unable to do and Allah shows it on the hands of a prophet or Imam to prove the prophethood of that Nabi or Imamat of that Imam.

Such Mujiza may appear either before or after the birth of the Prophet or Imam concerned; either during his childhood or after his attaining majority; either before the declaration of his Nubuwwat or Imamat or after such declaration or just at the time of such claim, either in his life time or after his death; either on his body or in such things which have any connection with him like clothes, house or grave. It makes no difference whether that Mujiza appears to be his own action or the action of God.

In all such conditions, the action which proves the truth of the claim of prophethood or Imamat is called Mujiza.

The Prophets were given the miracles as their credentials. Miracles are such performances which are not impossible, but which cannot be done without apparatus, medicine or practice. But the Prophet performs them without any practice and without any machinery. Curing the blind persons or lepers is not impossible. But Jesus Christ cured them without any medicine, and that was his miracle. Mohammed (s-a.w.) had innumerable miracles, but his greatest living miracle is Qur'an.

Difference Between Mujiza and Magic, Etc.

It is known that many people like magicians, astrologers, sadhus, yogis and hypnotists do perform many extraordinary feats and acts which common people are quite unable to perform, and which baffle even intelligent persons. It may be asked whether Mujiza is like these extraordinary feats. Is there any test by which we can differentiate between Mujiza and magic, mesmerism, hypnotism, etc?

There are few conditions which easily show the difference between miracle and magic etc.

First of all the Mujiza appears to prove the truth of the claim of Nubuwwat or Imamat. Therefore, it is

necessary that the man who shows the Mujiza should claim either Nubuwwat or Imammat during his life time.

Secondly, the person who shows the Mujiza should declare that that Mujiza is the proof of the truth of his claim.

Thirdly, the Mujiza should never be surpassed by any other person's extraordinary feat. In other words, Mujiza should always remain beyond the reach of the people of the time and should always remain unchallenged and undefeated.

Fourthly, the *Shariah* and religion which that person claims to bring from God must be according to the views of the right thinking people of his time based on perfection and intelligence.

Fifthly, that claimant of Nubuwwat or Imammat must follow and adhere to the rules and regulations of that *Shariah* himself.

Sixthly, the ethical, moral and social life of the person who claims to show the Mujiza must be beyond reproach, most perfect and most noble in the eyes of the right thinking people of his time.

Seventhly, his behaviour in private should not differ from that in public; his private life should be as blameless as his public life.

Eighthly, the challenge given in connection with that Mujiza should not be limited to a time. It must be open during all the period when the Nubuwwat or Imammat of the claimant is supposed to continue.

What Types of Miracles Were Given?

As it was the purpose of the Mujiza to convince the people that such things could not occur without the authority of Almighty God, it was essential that Mujiza should supercede that every branch of knowledge or expertise which was the most advanced in the time of the prophet or Imam concerned. Otherwise, the people could not be convinced that the Mujiza was really of such high standard which was beyond human capacity.

For example, if in a primitive society in which people do not know how to make a wooden wheel, a man comes with a cycle and says, "It is my Mujiza that I ride on this cycle and go from one place to another," the people may easily be fooled. But if such a man comes in an industrialized society even with a space rocket, nobody will believe that it is beyond human power.

To make people appreciate the genuine highest standard of a Mujiza, Allah always gave such miracles to his prophets which concerned that very science or art which was the most advanced in his time. So that the experts of that art or science could easily test, judge and then believe that the claim of Mujiza was genuine and really it was not in the power of a man to conjure such things himself.

In the days of Prophet Musa (a.s.), magic was the most advanced art of the time. Therefore, Allah gave Prophet Musa the walking stick which turned into python and swallowed the sticks and ropes of the magicians.

In the days of Prophet Isa (a.s.), medicine was very much advanced. So Allah gave him the miracle of curing lepers without medicine, giving eyesight to those who were blind since birth.

At the time of the appearance of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.), the Arabs were very proud of their language. Their girls could compose poetry of very high standard without any previous preparation. They called non-Arabs as 'Ajam,' which means 'dumb.' They thought that non-Arabs were dumb in comparison to themselves. Poets were held in high esteem. Seven odes were put on the walls of Kaaba and were treated as deities.

At that time, Allah gave the Holy Prophet the miracle of the Qur'an. It was quite separate from all the styles of their literature. It is not poetry; nor is it an ordinary prose. And it so impressed the Arabs that when al-Kauthar (the shortest Sura of Qur'an) was put on the wall of Kaaba, the most renowned poet wrote under it: "It is not the talk of mortals." And the seven odes were promptly taken down.

Miracle of Qur'an

Miracles may be divided into various categories. Miracles can be either of words or deeds. Miracles of words which appeared from the Holy Prophet of Islam were of three types:-

- (a) Qur'an
- (b) Prophecies of future events
- (c) Correction of wrong beliefs of ancients.

You will learn about the Qur'an in the Unit 6. Here I will point out only three features of this miracle. Qur'an is a miracle, because:

1. Its literary beauty baffled the whole Arabia and, in spite of several challenges, they could not write reply even to a small sura.
2. It is the only miracle which has united together the claim and the proof of the prophethood. All other miracles of the Holy Prophet and the previous prophets, needed a separate declaration that the miracle shown was in support of the claim of the prophet-hood. Qur'an is not so. It contains in itself repeated claims of the prophethood of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, if one accepts the miracle of Qur'an, he automatically accepts the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.).
3. Qur'an is unique in one more respect. All other miracles appeared at a given time and then vanished; and now there is no way to prove that such a miracle ever appeared. But Qur'an is a permanent miracle which will Continue up to the last days of the world. (It was because the prophethood of the Holy

Prophet is to continue up to the end of the world).

Other aspects of the miracle of Qur'an will be explained later.

Miracles of Prophecies

Second kind of the miracle of words are the prophecies of future events.

So many prophecies have come down to us from the Holy Prophet that it is impossible to give a full list here. Still some of the famous prophecies should be mentioned here to make our meaning clear. I am giving neither the full wordings, nor the references, to save the space; but anybody who reads the Islamic books must have come across these prophecies time and again:

1. The prophecy that Uthman will banish Abu Dhar from Mecca and Madina, and will detain him at Rabdha.

Also the prophecy "O Abu Dhar! you accepted Islam alone, you will die alone and will be brought into Quiyamat alone."

2. The prophecy that Bibi Fatima (a.s.) would be the first member of Ahlul-Bait to die after the Holy Prophet.

3. The prophecy about the birth of Muhammad bin al-Hanafiyya, asking Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) to name him Muhammad and give him the Kunniyat 'Abul-Qasim.'

4. The prophecy that one of his wives would wage a war with Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.), she would ride on a camel having much hair on its face, and the dogs at the place called 'Haw-ab' would bark at her.

5. The prophecy that Ammar bin Yasir (R.A.) would be killed by a rebellious group who would be calling him to Hell while Ammar would be calling them to Paradise.

6. The prophecy that Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) would be killed in the month of Ramadhan and that his murderer would be the most cursed one of the human race.

7. The prophecy that Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.) would have to wage war with three groups: "Those who would break their allegiance to thee; those who would rise into rebellion against thee and those who would go out of the faith."

8. The prophecy to Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.): "Thou wilt wage war for the (correct) interpretation of the Qur'an as I had to wage war on its revelation."

9. The numerous prophecies about the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.).

10. The prophecy to Umme Salma (R.A.) that the dust of Kar-bala given to her would turn into blood on the day of the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.).

11. The prophecy about the martyrdom of Imam Ali bin Musa Ar-Ridha (a.s.) in Khorasan.
12. The prophecy that Hujr bin Adi (R.A.) and his companions would be killed by Moavia unjustly.
13. The prophecy that when the number of the children of Abul-Aas would reach thirty, they would ruin the religion of Allah, would enslave the people and would usurp the wealth of the Muslims.
14. The prophecy during the war of Khaiber, when Abu Bakr and Umar retreated several times from the battle; "Tomorrow I will give the standard of Islam to the man who repeatedly attacks the enemies and never flees; who loves Allah and His Rasul, and whom Allah and His Rasul love, and who will not return till Allah opens the fort on his hands."

These 14 prophecies (out of hundreds) are enough to convince any right-thinking man that such accurate news could not come except by the teaching of Allah.

Information of Past Events

The third category of the miracles of words is the information contained in the Qur'an of the past events. It may seem strange, but first you consider the fact that the Holy Prophet of Islam was never taught by any human being how to read or write; he had no access to any scripture. Then if you compare the events of the previous prophets mentioned in the Qur'an with the rendering of the same events in Bible, you will find that whenever there is any discrepancy between the two versions, Bible always ascribes to those prophets a character far beneath the dignity of a sensible man, let alone of a sinless prophet; and the Qur'an always differs with the Bible and maintains the dignity of the prophets. For example, let us see the description of the calf-worship of the Israelites in the absence of Nabi Musa (a.s.). Bible says that Nabi Haroon (a.s.) had instigated Israelites to mould a calf and worship it:

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

"And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

"And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

"And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

"And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord.

"And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the

people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." (Exodus, 32: 1-7).

Now remember that, according to Bible, Aaron, together with his sons, was chosen by God to be His priest:

"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty.

"And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

"And these are the garments which they shall make; a breast-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a brodered coat, a mitre, and a girdle; and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." (Exodus, 28: 1-4)

And whose functions and privileges were ordained in full detail by God from chapters 28 to chapter 31.

And then immediately Chapter 32 says that he instigated and helped Israelites in idol-worship! Does it seem possible?

Now read the same incident in the Qur'an:-

"Said (God): "Verily We have tried thy people in thine absence, and the Samiri had led them astray."

So returned Moses unto his people angered, sorrowfully said he! ' O my people! Did not your Lord promise you a goodly promise? Did then the promise seem long to you? or did ye wish, or desired ye that the wrath from your Lord should light upon you? that ye violated the tryst with me?"

Said they: "We violated not the tryst with thee of our own accord, but we were made to bear the burdens of the ornaments of the people, so we cast them away, and thus didst the Samiri suggest."

Then he brought forth (from the fire) for them (the image of) a calf, a (mere) body; which (also) gave out the lowing sound;

Then they said: "This is your god and the god of Moses, but he (Moses) hath forgotten." What! See they not that it could not return unto them a word (for an answer) and that it could neither hurt nor benefit them?"

***And indeed Aaron had said unto them before: "O my people! Verily, ye are tried by it (the image) and verily your Lord is the Beneficent (God), so follow me and obey ye my order."
Said they Never will we cease worshipping it until returneth unto us Moses."***

(Moses) said: "O Aaron! What hindered thee when thou didst see them going astray, that thou didst not follow me? Hast thou then disobeyed my order?"

Said (Aaron): "O son of my mother! Seize me not by my beard nor by my head; I was afraid lest sayest thou: "Thou hast caused a division among the children of Israel and didst not respect my word!"

(Moses) said: "What was thy object O Samiri?"

Said (Samiri): "I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful of (the dust) from the track of the Messenger (Angel), and flung it (into the image of the calf) for so did myself prompt me (to do)."

(Moses) said: "Begone then, verily for thee it shall be in this life to say: 'Touch me not;' and (besides this) thou hast a tryst (of punishment) never will that fail; and (now) look at thy god whose worship thou kept (so long); Certainly will we burn it, then certainly will we scatter (the ashes of) it in sea (with a wide) scattering!" (Qur'an, 20:85-97)

Now you may judge yourself which of the narratives conforms with the character of a man who was chosen by God to be "His priest?"

Also, there is the logical belief that the prophets could not have committed sins. It is clear that the Qur'an did not copy from the Bible: it was not an imitation; it was revealed to cancel the lies which had been interpolated in the Bible. It is the guardian of the old books in the sense that it preserved the truth and removed the poison of interpolations and additions.

Seen in this light, even the narrations of past events can easily be counted as miracles, because the facts were lost to the mankind and could not be re-established without divine guidance.

Miracles of Deeds

Miracles of deeds of the Holy Prophet of Islam were of various types and so numerous that many volumes have been written to record them. Allamah Fakhru'l-Islam has written that he has counted more than four thousand of such miracles from authentic books.

Though the Holy Prophet always said that he was a human being, having no extraordinary power independent of Allah, God allowed him to show these miracles whenever his claim was challenged by those adversaries who had no sense to recognise his truth by his sublime character and the most intelligent *Shariah*. Thus, for example:

1. Many blind people got their eyesight back by his blessings.
2. Many sick persons were cured of their ailments at once by his dua.
3. Many were the times when a dead man or dead animal became alive again as a result of his dua.
4. Amr bin Humque Khuzai lived up to 80 years without a single hair being gray, because of the dua of the Holy Prophet.
5. Many were the times when a dried up tree became green and brought out fruit for him and his entourage.
6. Many were the times when he put the date-stones into the earth and they developed at once into full grown trees.
7. Several times, he fed a great number of people with a very small quantity of food. Not only that all of them were satisfied, but also the food remained as before.
8. Many times he put his fingers in a cup and water flowed from them till the whole caravan filled their water-skins.
9. Several times animals like large lizard and camels testified in clear Arabic language for his truth and prophethood.
10. Many were times when pebbles and stones in his hand recited the praise of Allah in clear Arabic language.
11. And most important of all, Allah took him to the furthest limit of the heaven, and showed him the wonders of creation.

Why Such Miracles?

It has been mentioned that miracle is such a performance which is not impossible, but which cannot be done without apparatus, medicine or practice. But the prophet or Imam does it without any practice. Also, it has been explained that miracle must be from the same branch of learning which is the most advanced in the days of the prophet or Imam concerned.

Now, it is not the place to prove that the said miracles are not impossible. Still, one may ask as to why these miracles were given to the Holy Prophet of Islam? Surely, nobody in his days claimed that he could fly in the air. Therefore, what was the need of taking him to Miraaj? And magic was not the prevalent art or craft of his time. Then why the speaking animal and pebble? Why the flow of water from the fingers? Why feeding so many people with a little food?

Most of our scholars present these miracles to prove how great was the position of our Holy Prophet in the eyes of Allah, how dearly was he loved by Allah. According to their way of thinking, such miracles were given to him just to show his greatness in the presence of Allah. But such people do not see the whole truth.

It is true that these miracles show the greatness of the Holy Prophet, as all miracles must naturally show. But it does not answer the question as to why these particular miracles were selected by Allah to show his greatness when magic was not the norm of his time.

The fact is that the prophethood of the Holy Prophet of Islam was not for a limited time; it was to continue up to the last moment of this world. All previous prophets were sent for a particular tribe or are and for a limited time.

Therefore, they were given miracles which resembled the art of only that time. But Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) was to remain prophet up to the end of the world and for the whole humanity. As the period of his prophethood was to include the era of the highly sophisticated science and technology, Allah gave such miracles to him which will continue to defy the scientists up to the end of the world.

The modern science is highly advanced in almost all branches. But the culmination of scientific expertise is the space travel. Man has already imprinted his footmark on the moon. It was to defy this advancement that Allah gave Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) the supreme miracle of Miraaj.

By growth of world population, scientists are trying to find a formula to feed human beings on a concentrated food-pill or such other things. So, Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) fed 40 people with a small piece of bread.

Science has succeeded in recording the human voice on plastic discs and magnetic tape. Muhammad Mustafa (s.a.w.) defeated this attempt by making pebbles and animals talk on his command.

And he did all this without any apparatus, without previous arrangements.

Thus, it is clear that these miracles were not only to show his greatness but they were necessary to prove his truth to the scientific world.

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