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# **Discourse Nineteen: Miracles**

**Discourse Nineteen: Miracles 1** 

The Holy Qur'an claims to be a miracle in many of its verses. This claim in fact is comprised of two claims.

That, essentially, miracles exist in the world;

That the Qur'an is one of these miracles.

Obviously, if the second claim (that the Qur'an is a miracle) is proven, the first (that miracles exist in the world) will also be proven.

An important point in this discussion is that, basically, how can a miracle occur in the external world whereas they are contradictory to the laws of nature. A prevailing and constant law of nature is that every effect has a cause.

This is a certain natural law that can never be violated. How can a miracle occur in the external world while simultaneously not harming the generality of this law, causing an exception in causality? Therefore, the Qur'an must reveal two things:

First, what is the essential truth of miracles and how it is possible for something to happen in the natural world against the laws of nature?

Second, miracles exist and the Qur'an is one of them.

## Miracles according to the Qur'an

There is no doubt in the fact that the Qur'an testifies to the occurrence of miracles in the natural world. The miracles spoken of in the Qur'an do not necessitate the impossible which would negate an incontrovertible intellectual axiom.2

Some people who consider themselves scientists interpret the verses regarding miracles such that they conform to modern science. However, these endeavors are in vain and the belief is rejected. I will explain the Qur'an's definition of miracles in two parts:

#### Part one: the Qur'an validates the general law of causality

Just as reason, scientific discussion, and logical judgments prove the existence of causes for natural events, the Qur'an also confirms the general law of causality and considers all natural phenomena to have causes.

In explanation, humans innately believe that every physical event has a cause which brought about the event. Natural and other sciences also demonstrate events and their related phenomena as fitting causes distinct from them.3

What does cause mean? What I mean by cause is that wherever an event takes place there must be one or several things preceding it such that whenever those things transpire, another thing will surely come into being. This phenomenon that has come into existence is called an effect. This is understood though experience.

By way of example, experience shows us that whenever combustion occurs, there must be a cause anterior to it, such as a spark or friction, resulting in a flame. Through careful deliberation of the meaning of 'cause' it is clearly understood that two irrefutable qualities of 'causality' are 'generality' and 'inviolability'.4

In all the cases where the Qur'an speaks of life, death, livelihood, and generally, all events, both heavenly and mundane, it is totally clear that the Qur'an endorses this law. It should not be forgotten, however, that the Qur'an ultimately attributes all causes to God since they all eventually must end in a single central cause.

In short, the Qur'an asserts that the law of causality is authentic. This means that whenever a cause exists with the characteristics necessary for creating an effect, if there are no obstacles the effect will surely occur—by God's leave of course. On the other side of the coin, whenever an effect is found, perforce the existence of a cause is recognized.

### Part two: the Qur'an verifies miracles

The Qur'an informs of some events that are contradictory to the normal course of the natural world, which is based upon the system of causality. These events are the signs and miracles that the Qur'an ascribes to some great prophets, such as the miracles of Noah, Hed, Selih, Abraham, Lot, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus ('a), and Muhammad (S).

These miracles are things that go against the prevailing routine of the natural world. However, it must be

noted and carefully considered that even though these phenomena seem unfamiliar and highly unlikely5 in relation to the normal way of the world, they are not essentially impossible and in no way warrant that two antitheses may co-occur or that one is not half of two.

These are things that the intellect deems as impossible and if a miracle were like this, no mind could accept it whereas we see that the minds of the people of many nations and religions have accepted these miracles without protest.

In addition, if one contemplates the matter, the essence of miracles is not completely unknown in the natural order of things. Every moment, the corporeal system of the world takes the life of the living and gives life to the dead; it changes one event into another and that into yet another; it alters one form into a different one and again into another; it transforms frailty into resilience and so on. The world system performs these transformations and alterations upon matter.

The difference between the manifest routines and miracles is that the normal causes we see everyday can only be effectuated under specific relations and temporal and spatial conditions. These relations and conditions necessitate that this effectuation be gradual.6

For instance, a cane may turn into a serpent or a decomposed and lifeless body may transform into a living human being. However, observation and experience shows that this alteration normally happens under specific temporal and spatial circumstances and causes.

As a result of these causes and conditions, matter transforms from one state into another until eventually it gains the form that we intend—such as a cane becoming a serpent or a dead corpse reconstructing and coming to life. Therefore, the normal material system is based upon graduation through specific conditions and relations.

However, the miracles the Qur'an speaks of did not occur in specific relations and temporal and spatial circumstances, rather they occurred under prevailing conditions or even without any causes and conditions at all or at the will of a certain individual!7

Bear in mind that neither can simple sense and experience confirm these miracles nor can natural scientific theories corroborate them since natural sciences are on the same level as the manifest system of natural cause and effect; the same level that modern scientific experience and theories that explain material events are based on. Neither can normal and simple experience confirm miracles nor can the theoretical natural sciences. Even so, science cannot deny these phenomena either.

Science cannot conceal all those strange and miraculous performances of ascetics. Everyday people observe such events and newspapers, magazines, and journals record them. Such occurrences are so numerous that no sane person can doubt them. It is these wonders that have forced modern scientists—those who research spiritual effects—to consider them effects of an obscure type of electrical wave or magnetic field.

In short, the theory of electrical waves is that through strict self-discipline, humans gain the ability to exploit a mysterious type of waves. These waves are such that the will and intellect of the individual can take possession of them or accompany them. As a result of this appropriation and exploitation of these unknown waves, an ascetic can perform wondrous and extraordinary acts by expanding and compressing matter.

If this theory is comprehensive and free of exception, it entails another all-inclusive theory. This theory bases all the events that previous theories justified on a general and constant principle, i.e. force and movement, and relates all material events to a specific natural cause.8

This is what modern scientists say and in essence they are correct because it is meaningless to assume that a natural effect exists that does not have a natural cause. Bearing in mind that (in the natural world) the relationship between cause and effect must be natural, a natural effect must have a natural relationship with its natural cause.

To state matters differently, the coincidence of natural existents (i.e. natural causes) in specific proportions and relations brings about the existence of a new natural existent that is subsequent to its causes. This new being is related to its causes such that if the system governing them was terminated then it would surely never have come into being.

In short, every natural effect requires a natural cause. However, we cannot insist that the natural causes are those that we think they should be. The ultimate natural cause may be something else—as shown in the wave theory posited by natural scientists.9

- 1. This is a translation of a Farsi translation of an original Arabic text by 'All®mah Tab®tab®'s. The Farsi translation and original glosses were done by Mr. Hujjat® Kirm®n®.
- 2. Something that reason demonstrates as impossible will never come to pass. Doubtless two times two is equal to four and it is impossible for the solution to be five. A miracle is not to perform an impossible thing in the world. However, sometimes humans consider things that have never happened as impossible. For example, a thousand-headed person is not impossible; however, because it has never occurred we mistake it as an impossibility. A miracle is a phenomenon that defies normality but is not intellectually impossible in the strictest sense.
- <u>3.</u> Because there must be affiliation between causes and effects, every effect is dependent upon a fitting cause and every cause entails a corresponding effect.
- 4. The meaning of cause is that whenever it occurs, it must entail an effect. Thus, if the law of causality were violable, it would mean that we have found a case in which a cause exists without an effect whereas a cause that does not entail an effect is not a cause and naming it such is an error.
- <u>5.</u> In the previous footnote, a simple example was given for better understanding of the matter. Bear in mind that things that have not occurred and are without precedence must not be considered impossible.
- 6. Under the influence of specific relations and conditions, a seed that is planted in the earth grows a stalk and fruit. These conditions gradually produce their effect as opposed to a seed instantly becoming a grown plant with fruit.
- 7. As you can see a cane can become a serpent and the dead may gain life in the natural world although in specific temporal and spatial conditions which may occur concurrently only after thousands of years.
- 8. The theory of mysterious waves regarding the miraculous deeds of ascetics can be summarized into these two words: force and movement. These two factors refer to a specific truth; movement is caused by force. In general, all material events are explained through this.

9. Extracted from the journal, "Majm®'ah-ye Hikmat", issue 4.

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