

THE CONCEPT OF MIRACLE IN ISLAM

By E-Da`wah Committee



لجنة الدعوة الإلكترونية

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The Concept of Miracle in Islam
with Special Focus on the Qur'an

By

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What is a Miracle?

The Prophets and Messengers of Allah (peace be upon them all) are distinguished from common individuals by many qualities and characteristics. Almighty Allah educated them in a way that prepares them for their



mission and enables them invite people to Allah. The prophets and messengers (peace be upon them) were supported with supernatural favors by Allah, namely *Mu`jiah* (i.e. miracle) that means an action or deed which is beyond the ability and power of human beings, and differs from the law of nature in this universe. In the Islamic terminology, *Mu`ajizah* (miracle) means an act which people are unable to do, but Allah performs it at the hands of a prophet to prove his prophethood.

In all such conditions, the action which proves the truthfulness of the claim of prophethood is called *Mu`ajizah*. The prophets (peace be upon them) were given the miracles as proofs of their prophethood before their peoples. Miracles are such performances that cannot be done without supernatural help from Allah. By the Support of Allah, the miracle occurs to the Prophet without any practice or machinery. Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) would cure the blind and leprous without any medicine, and that was his miracle.¹

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had innumerable miracles, but his greatest living miracle is the Glorious Qur'an. His miracles include the splitting of the moon, food multiplication, water multiplication, the crying of the stem of the date-palm tree, glorification of Allah by the Prophet's food, the night journey of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Jerusalem, ascension to the seven Heavens, information about the future and

¹ Encyclopedia of Islamic Concepts, definition of *Al-Mu`ajizah*, an article prepared by Dr. Prof. `Abdul-Mu`ti Bayyumi, The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt, 2009.

running of water from between his fingers like a fountain. In addition, the trees obeyed his orders, mountains and rocks said "peace be upon you! Oh! Messenger of Allah," not to mention curing the ill people, healing the sick and injured people, testimony of the animals for his prophethood, testimony of Jinn for his messengerhood and protection of Allah. Furthermore, many extraordinary incidents happened during his birth and throughout his childhood.²

Since the purpose of miracle is to convince people that such things could not happen without the authority of Almighty Allah, it was essential that miracle should surpass every branch of knowledge or expertise which was the most advanced at the time of the Prophet. Otherwise, people could not be convinced that the miracle was really of such high standard which was beyond human capacity.

During the days of Prophet Musa (peace be upon him), magic was the most advanced art of that time. Therefore,

² For more details, see, *Ar-Rasul* by Sa`eed Hawwa, chapter 2, Miracles.

Allah (glory be to Him) gave him the walking stick which turned into a python and swallowed sticks and ropes of the magicians of Pharaoh.

When our noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) appeared, the Arabs were very proud of their eloquent language and poetry. Even their girls could compose poetry of very high standard without any previous preparation. Poets were held in high esteem in the Arabian Peninsula. The seven Mu`allaqat (well-known long poems) were put on the walls of *Ka`abah* and poets were challenged to compose and bring similar poetry.³

At that time, Allah gave the noble Prophet (peace be upon him) the miracle of the Glorious Qur'an which was quite separate from the styles and genres of their literature. It is neither poetry nor an ordinary prose.

While Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was crowned with the glory of being *Ummi* (did not write or read), he was bestowed with knowledge from Allah and

³ Sayyid Sabiq, *Al-`Aqa'id al-Islamiyyah*, Al-Fath Lil-I`alam Al-`Arabi, Cairo, 2002, p.187.

was saved from the infidelity and polytheism of the people of Quraish. Allah Himself describes the Prophet (peace be upon him) as 'unlettered' (*Ummi*), a description well understood and clear in the Arabic language. In fact, this unique characteristic is a clear proof of his prophethood that attests the true divine nature of his message. The very fact that the beloved Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), the best ever of all creation, did not read or write unequivocally demonstrates the tremendous favor of Allah for him, and shows how tremendous a human he was. He was human, but not like humans, a man of knowledge, but not like our knowledge; his knowledge was pure and beyond comprehension, because it was not tainted with any worldly means of acquisition.

The Glorious Qur'an and its Miraculous Nature

The Glorious Qur'an is the living miracle of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) bestowed by Allah. It is the revered divine book revealed to



Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through Angel Jibril (Gabriel). More than 1400 years have passed and nobody from Arabs or non-Arabs has been able to produce such sort of unique literature. No book can approach the Glorious Qur'an in the beauty of diction, style or in the grandeur of its contents. The Glorious Qur'an is miraculous in many ways and aspects, including its eloquence, the information about the past, present and future, and the stories of the Prophets and their nations that could not be sought through common human sources. The Glorious Qur'an contains many predictions that came true in the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Glorious Qur'an introduces principles of faith, law, ethical values and rules on transactions. Not only this, but it also includes many clear scientific facts that were discovered only very recently whilst the Glorious Qur'an has talked about them before more than 1400 years in a specific and patent manner.

The Arabs of the 6th and 7th centuries CE were masters of the Arabic language. Eloquence and rhetoric were inherent in their instinct and nature. Composition of the best standard poems was the virtue of which they boasted; all found expression through poetry and literature. It was in this atmosphere that there appeared on the scene our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who presented before them an inimitable oration and declared it to be the Word of Allah, challenging the eloquent and expressive poets of his time and all times. He challenged them to compose something similar to the Glorious Qur'an, as Allah says in this regard:

Say, "If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants." (Al-Israa' 17:88)

Such challenge was an amazing thing for Arabs, especially when it came from a person who had never learned reading or writing, never recited even a single piece of poetry on any occasion, and was totally far from composing any poetry. He did not even remember the verses of other poets. This challenge has been repeated several times in the Glorious Qur'an, which was the greatest challenge to their literary expertise. But no one stepped forward to accept the challenge of producing the like of the Glorious Qur'an. That's why it is a great proof that asserts the divine nature of the Glorious Qur'an.⁴

⁴ *Majallat al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah*, 30th edition, 1411 A.H.

Difference between Mu`ajizah and Karamah

The prophets and messengers (peace be upon them all) were supported by Allah, the Almighty, who performed some extraordinary and abnormal deeds at their



hands. This was to inform people that the one at whose hand the miracle was performed has been sent by Allah. Such a deed is called *Mu`ajizah*. *Karamah* is also a sort of extraordinary action that is performed at the hands of a pious person, who is neither a messenger nor a prophet but Allah makes such unusual things occur at their hands as a kind of favor from Him. These are called *Karamah*. Only devout and pious people are honored with *Karamah* by the permission of Allah. Therefore, if an extraordinary thing is performed by a messenger or prophet, it is called a *Mu`ajizah*, but if a pious and

devoted person has some supernatural action, it is called *Karamah*. Moreover, *Karamah* is neither accompanied by a challenge or a claim of prophethood, contrary to the miracle of a prophet that was always followed by the challenge and claim of prophethood. In fact, *Karamah* is a result of true love and imitation of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).⁵

In addition, sometimes, some supernatural actions are performed by some Hindu monks and priests who practice very hard spiritual exercises, throwing themselves in severe difficulties, in order to get some miracles while they are non-believers. Such people are fooled by the devil who misleads them and their followers with some false and momentary miracles, but this will never benefit them on the Day of Judgment. Almighty Allah says:

⁵ Encyclopedia of Islamic Concepts, definition of *Al-Karamah*, an article prepared by Dr. Prof, `Abdus-Salam Muhammad `Abduh , The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt, 2009.

[Some] faces, that Day, will be humbled, Working [hard] and exhausted. They will [enter to] burn in an intensely hot Fire. (Al-Ghashiyah 88:2-4)

Qur'an as the Miracle of Prophet Muhammad

Definition of Revelation

The Arabic word for revelation is *wahy* that literally denotes an action that is done in secret and quickly, or to inform someone about something swiftly and secretly.



In the Islamic terminology, *wahy* means information sent down by Almighty Allah to His Prophet or Messenger; whether it is related to an Islamic ruling or anything else, whether it is through a mediator or directly.⁶

⁶ Dr. `Abdul Fattah Ahmad Al-Fawi, *An-Nubuwwah Bayn Al-Falsafah Wat-Tasawwuf*, Maktabat Az-Zahra', Cairo, 1st ed. 1981, p. 24.

In other words, *wahy* is divine knowledge conveyed to a prophet or messenger, directly or by the mediation of an angel, in order to inform people. It is noteworthy that the Knowledge of Allah remains as it is in the Preserved Tablet, only it comes down according to what is written in it.⁷

Revelation is a substantial and essential matter in prophecies and religions. It is like the miracles in importance. Both are necessary; without them there would not be any prophethood or messengerhood.

The word *wahy* and its derivatives are repeated in the Glorious Qur'an 78 times, which attest the importance of the revelation for divine religions.⁸

According to Islam, faith in revelation is compulsory for every person; male and female, because it is a part of the faith to believe in the divine Scriptures sent down to

⁷ Dr. Muhammad Al-Bahi, *Al-Farabi Al-Muwaffiq Wash-Sharih*, Maktabah Wahbah, Cairo 1981, p. 24.

⁸ Muhammad Fu'ad `Abdul-Baqi, *Al-Mu`jam Al-Mufahris li-alfazh al-Qur'an al-Karim*, under the word *Wahy*, Dar al-Kutub Al-Misriyyah, 1364 A.H.

the prophets and messengers including the Glorious Qur'an.

Almighty Allah says:

And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of the `A'lamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists), which the trustworthy Ruh [Jibril (Gabriel)] has brought down, upon your heart (O Muhammad!) that you may be (one) of the warners, in the plain Arabic language. (Ash-Shu`ara' 26:192-194)

Revelation, in the form of books and divine scriptures, is a basic requirement for human life, so that the guidance of the prophets and messengers would be everlasting for humans, generations after generations until the Day of Judgment. That's why Allah (glory be to Him) has revealed the Glorious Qur'an which is the greatest blessings of Almighty Allah to His slaves.⁹

⁹ Abu Bakr al-Jaza'iri, *Minhaj Al-Muslim*, Dar Ash-Shuruq, Jaddah, 1987, p.7.

Allah (glory be to Him) says:

Verily, We have sent the revelation to you (O Muhammad) as We sent the revelation to Nuh (Noah) and the Prophets after him; We (also) sent the revelation to Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma`il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya`qub (Jacob), and the offspring of the twelve sons of Ya`qub (Jacob)], `Isa (Jesus), Ayyub (Job), Yunus (Jonah), Harun (Aaron), and Sulayman (Solomon); and to Dawud (David) We gave the Zabur (Psalms). (An-Nisa' 4:163)

The verse clearly elucidates that revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never was a strange happening in human history but it remained a source of guidance from Almighty Allah to His prophets and messengers for the guidance of mankind across the human history.

Angel Gabriel and Revelation

The angel of revelation is Gabriel (peace be upon him), his name was mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an as Almighty Allah said:



**Say (O Muhammad):
"Whoever is an enemy to**

Jibril (Gabriel) (let him die in his fury), for indeed he has brought it (this Qur'an) down to your heart by Allah's Permission, confirming what came before it [i.e. the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] and guidance and glad tidings for the believers. (Al-Baqarah 2:97)

It is understood from this verse that we must love the angel of revelation, Gabriel (peace be upon him) as he was an infallible and pure angel who brought the

Message of Allah and His guidance to the prophets and messengers and conveyed the divine message to the slaves of Almighty Allah honestly.

Furthermore, in the Glorious Qur'an, he is given the title of "Ar-Ruh Al-Amin" (the Trustworthy Spirit) as Allah (glory be to Him) said:

And truly, this (the Qur'an) is a revelation from the Lord of the 'Âlamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists), which the trustworthy *Ruh* [Jibril (Gabriel)] has brought down. (Ash-Shu`ara' 26:192-193)

Also, he is called the "Sacred Spirit" in the Glorious Qur'an, as Almighty Allah says:

Say (O Muhammad) Ruh-ul-Qudus [Jibril (Gabriel)] has brought it (the Qur'an) down from your Lord with truth. (An-Nahl 16:102)

Moreover, Gabriel is called "An-Namus" (Angel of revelation) as was stated by Warqah ibn Nawfal to the

Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) after his first meeting with angel Gabriel when Warqah commented saying: “You have met the same spirit or “An-Namus” that was sent down by Allah to Moses.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sayyid Sabiq, *Al-`Aqa'id Al-Islamiyyah*, Dar Al-Kitab Al-`Arabi, Beirut, 1985, p. 118.

Types of Revelations

Revelations are of three types;

1- Almighty Allah talks to His Prophet from behind a screen.

2- Allah sends down an angel with revelation to the Prophet.

3- Allah inspires, or throws in the mind and heart of the Prophet.

Almighty Allah says:

It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by Revelation, or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a messenger to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise. (As-Shura 42: 51)



The abovementioned verse indicates that the revelations are of three types:

The First: Almighty Allah reveals or inspires the meaning in the heart. In other words, sometimes Almighty Allah inspires the meaning in the heart of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and he was sure that it was from Almighty Allah, as was recorded in Sahih of Ibn Hibban on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Jibril breathed into my heart that no soul will die until its allotted provision and time have expired, so have fear of Allah and keep seeking in a good way."

The Second: Almighty Allah talks from behind a screen, as He (glory be to Him) spoke to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) when Moses sought to see Him with his naked eyes. Yet, he was denied this wish and was diverted to hear a talk from behind the tree, as Almighty Allah says:

He was called from the right side of the valley, in the blessed place, from the tree: "O Musa (Moses)! Verily I am Allah, the Lord of the `Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!" (Al-Qasas 28:30)

The Third: The revelation that was brought by the angel of revelation, Gabriel, to the Prophet (peace be upon him). It was reported by Al-Bukhari that `A'ishah, the mother of the believers, (may Allah be pleased with her) said that Al-Harith ibn Hisham asked the Messenger of Allah, "O Messenger of Allah! How does the revelation come to you?" The Messenger of Allah said: "Sometimes it comes to me like the ringing of a bell and this is the hardest for me which then leaves me after I have fully understood and retained what was said. Sometimes, the angel comes to me in the form of a man and speaks to me and I retain what he says." `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "I saw him when the revelation was descending unto him in a very cold day and when it left him his forehead was dripping with sweat."

It is worth mentioning that the revelation that would come like the ringing of a bell was the hardest one for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) as it required him to come out from the circle of human necessities for a while, being connected to the spiritual world in order to retain and preserve the divine revelation. The second type of the revelation was easier for the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him); as it did not require him to bear such hardship, rather, the angel of the revelation would take the shape of a human being which was an easy procedure for him.

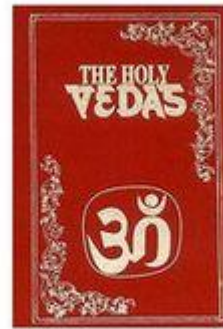
Thus, the whole Glorious Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) by the angel of revelation, Gabriel, during a period of 23 years.

It was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Every prophet was given a miracle, the type of which brings mankind to faith. What I was given is a revelation that Allah sent down to me.

Yet, I hope that I will be the most followed on the Day of Resurrection.)”

Revelation in Hinduism

This is a brief introduction to revelation in Islam which constitutes an indispensable part of faith, as was explained by the Glorious Qur'an and authentic hadiths. Undoubtedly, it has no obscurity or darkness in any aspect. On the contrary, the concept of Hindu faith about revelation consists of all types of misunderstanding and dimness in all aspects of this subject. In Hinduism, whenever Ishvar intends to express something or reveal His Will to His Prophets or Messengers, He Himself assumes a human shape or takes any form of His creation and comes down to this physical world. In Hinduism, God himself is born according to the nature of this universe. He grows like a baby and lives like a human being and eats, drinks, marries and has wives and children. Also, he falls sick,



and dies. In fact, an ordinary man becomes perplexed and confused whether that 'human god' should behave like a human being or would be worshipped like a god.

The comparison between both faiths drives us to conclude that the faith of Islam when it comes to revelation, as well as its whole system, is the safest belief and purest creed which deserves to be believed in by every person who loves his Lord and likes to be loved by his Lord.