

I'jaaz al-Qur'aan -The Miraculous Nature of the Qur'aan

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Abstract:

This article discusses the miraculous nature of the Qur'an. The Qur'an is regarded in Islam as the supreme and eternal miracle bestowed upon the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This article explores the miraculous characteristics of the Qur'an by analyzing its linguistic inimitability (i'jāz al-Qur'an), structural harmony, and profound meanings, which posed a challenge to the most articulate Arabs of its era and continue to resist imitation. It also emphasizes the Qur'an's flawless preservation, internal consistency, and all-encompassing guidance for moral, spiritual, and social aspects of life. Additionally, the study examines the Qur'an's enduring significance and its function as a source of divine guidance (hidāyah) for humanity. Through these aspects, the paper asserts that the Qur'an is not a product of human authorship but a divine revelation, serving as a lasting miracle for all generations.

Key words:

Qur'an, I'jāz al-Qur'an (Linguistic Inimitability), Divine Revelation, Miracle of the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, Structural Harmony, Preservation of the Qur'an, Hidāyah (Divine Guidance), Moral and Spiritual Guidance, Islamic Theology, Inimitability, Eternal Miracle.

Introduction:

The term I'jaaz is derived from the root word 'a-j-z (عجز), which translates to "to be incapable or to be weak." I'jāaz is the miraculous nature of the Qur'an that makes it impossible for humans to produce anything similar to it in language, meaning, or guidance. Consequently, the wonders carried out by the prophets are referred to as معجزة (mu'jizah,) as humanity is unable to replicate such acts.

Key Aspects of I'jaāz:

Scholars have identified several dimensions of the Qur'an's I'jaāz, including:

Linguistic and Literary

- Unmatched eloquence, style, rhythm, and structure
- Arabs, masters of language, were challenged but failed to imitate it
- Qur'anic challenge: even one chapter (Surah) like it cannot be produced
- Meaning and Content
- Profound guidance on belief, ethics, law, and spirituality
- Consistency without contradiction over 23 years
- Legislative
- Comprehensive and balanced system of laws
- Suitable for all times and societies
- Scientific
- Accurate references to natural phenomena unknown at the time of revelation
- Prophetic and Historical

- True accounts of past nations
- Predictions that later came true

Purpose of I'jāz

- To prove the divine origin of the Qur'an
- To affirm the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ
- To challenge humanity and jinn to reflect and believe
- It is likely that Imaam Ahmad Ibn Hambal (d. 204 A.H.) was the first to employ this term.ⁱ

MU'JIZAH

Mu'jizah denotes actions performed by the prophets that possess wonderful characteristics, which cannot be replicated by humans; the term I'jaaz represents the idea, whereas mu'jizah specifies the individual act. A prominent illustration of a mu'jizah is the transformation of Moosa's staff into a serpent. In the Qur'aan, this notion is referred to as 'aayah or bayyinah.

There are several criteria established by scholars for an act to qualify as a mu'jizah.

1. It must take place under the command of Allah.
2. It should be an extraordinary event that deviates from the natural order.
3. It cannot be replicated by any individual or entity.
4. It must take place through the actions of someone who asserts prophethood.
5. The action must correspond with the Prophet's claim. For instance, if the Prophet asserts that He will transform a staff into a snake, but it

instead becomes a different creature, it would not be considered as a mu'jizah.

6. The action must not contradict the assertion made by the Prophet. For instance, if a Prophet asserts that a particular stone will speak, and the stone indeed speaks, declaring that the individual is lying about their claim to prophethood, this situation will also not be considered a mu'jizah.

The Evidence for I'jaaz

Allah granted miracles (Mu'jizāt) to His Prophets as clear signs of their truthfulness and to support their mission of conveying divine guidance. These miracles were beyond human ability and occurred by the will of Allah, often suited to the needs and context of the people to whom each prophet was sent. The miracles linked to Moosaa, 'Eesaa, and the other prophets are well recognized by all Muslims. Allah states.

وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَآتَيْنَاكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ (سورة آل عمران : ٤٩)

Indeed, there are numerous miracles that were bestowed upon specific nations, that Allah said,

سَلِّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِّن آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ (سورة البقرة : ٢١١)

Despite all these wonders, however, most individuals dismissed their prophets.

The Qur'aan as the Prophet's Miracle

The Qur'aan is the miracle of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was bestowed with this miracle as the definitive evidence of his prophethood.

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَذِكْرَى لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (سورة العنكبوت: ٥٠-٥١)

When the disbelievers asked for wonders from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, Allah revealed that the Qur'an itself serves as a sufficient miracle.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also referred to the significance of the miracle of the Qur'an when he stated, "There has not been a single prophet except that Allah gave him miracles because of which people believed in him. I have been given (as my miracle) the Inspiration (i.e.. the Qur'aan) which Allah revealed to me. I hope, therefore, that I will have the largest number of followers on the Day of Judgement"ⁱⁱ.

The declaration made by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), which conveys his aspiration to have the greatest number of followers on the Day of Judgement, signifies that his miracle, the Qur'an, exceeds any miracle granted to earlier prophets. The grandeur of this miracle is best comprehended through the notion of I'jaaz.

"The Qur'aan is not the sole miracle bestowed upon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Among his other miracles are the division of the moon into two halves, the transformation of a small quantity of food into a substantial amount, the ability of stones, animals, and trees to communicate with him, and the emergence of water from his (صلى الله عليه وسلم) hands when his Companions were in need of it."ⁱⁱⁱ

The famous Muslim historian and sociologist, Ibn Khaldoon (d. 808 A.H.), states in his Muqaddhimah:

“Know that the greatest of all miracles, and the most sacred and blessed, and the clearest in proof is the Qur'aan that was revealed to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This is because all other miracles, in general, were brought forth separate from the actual inspiration (that the prophet received), as a means of proving the truthfulness of the inspiration. As for the Qur'aan, it is the inspiration and the miracle in one, and is therefore not in need of any external miracles (to prove itself), unlike all the previous inspirations, it is. Therefore, the clearest and most powerful miracle, since it combines the boast and the proof in one (i.e.. it combines the boast that it is the truth from Allah, and the proof for the boast). This is the meaning of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) statement. "...I hope, therefore, that I will have the largest number of followers on the Day of Judgement." This shows that a miracle as clear and powerful as this one -for it is the inspiration in its essence - must have the greatest number of believers and followers..."^{iv}

And Shaykh al-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 A. H.) wrote, "The greatest (of all miracles) is the Qur'aan that the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) came with, for it is the religion of Allah and His speech, and it is the proof of the prophethood of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) Its very revelation is one of the most supernatural and extraordinary of acts, for it is the call (to the worship of Allah), and the proof (of the prophethood of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)). And the miracle (all in one)"^v

The types of I'jaaz

Numerous scholars of 'Uloom al-Qur'aan have provided various responses: the Arabic language of the Qur'aan; the laws and sharee'ah that the Qur'aan introduced; the prophecies it contains; the meticulousness with which it has been preserved, among others. Ultimately, the prevailing view is that all these elements, and more, constitute an essential part of the i'jaaz of the Qur'aan. In essence, the Qur'aan's beauty lies in the fact that it is miraculous not merely in one aspect, but in every dimension and perspective from which it can be examined.

The scholar Muhammad Ibn Juzay al-Kalbee (d. 741 A.H.) categorized the I'jaaz of the Qur'aan into ten distinct categories:

1. The eloquence of the Qur'aan surpasses that of any human speech.
2. The unique structure and organization of its verses and chapters, along with the arrangement of the words.
3. The inability of the disbelievers during the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and those who followed to produce anything akin to it.
4. The narratives and accounts of ancient nations and prophets, as the Prophet had no access to such information.
5. The prophecies contained within the Qur'aan that later came to fulfilment.
6. The Names and Attributes of Allah, Glory be to Him, along with the affirmation of all that is befitting to Him, the denial of all that is not befitting, and the Creator's call to the created to worship Him (in essence, the perfect 'aqeedah). Such a composition is beyond human capability unless divinely inspired by Allah.

7. The laws and sharee'ah that the Qur'aan introduced, along with the morals and conduct it advocates. All of this contributes to the enhancement of life in this world and the Hereafter. The existence of a flawless set of laws applicable to any society at any time and place is unattainable by humans, and the sharee'ah stands as the sole example of such a legal framework.
8. The fact that it has been safeguarded and has remained unchanged over an extensive period, unlike all other religious texts that have been altered.
9. The simplicity with which it can be memorized, a fact supported by experience and observation. This contrasts with all other religious texts, as none can be memorized as easily as the Qur'aan.
10. The profound meanings embedded within it, and the reality that a reader never grows weary of reading the Qur'aan, regardless of how many times it has been heard or read. This stands in stark contrast to any other book, as individuals cannot read them more than a few times without finding them tedious and mundane.^{vi}

The Language and Style of the Qur'aan

During the era of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the Arabs had attained the peak of eloquence, which was their most cherished art! Poetry was held in the highest regard, and each tribe competed with others to determine which could produce the most talented and eloquent poet. At the annual fair of 'Ukaadh, poets from across Arabia would compete for the distinction of having their poem

receive the utmost acclaim: that of being displayed on the door of the Ka'bah until the next fair.

The pride that was widespread among the Arabs led to the nature of the miracle bestowed upon the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) being of a comparable kind; Allah revealed the Qur'aan in a form of Arabic that was profoundly emotive and eloquent, allowing the Arabs to unmistakably recognize it as a miracle from their Creator. Furthermore, Allah challenged them to produce anything akin to the Qur'aan, asserting that any such endeavours would be in vain.

Several elements of the literary I'jaaz of the Qur'aan are outlined as follows^{vii}:

1. The placement of specific words in their ideal context, as opposed to their synonyms. The implications conveyed by the selected word surpass those that would be expressed by its alternatives.
2. The distinctive sentence structures and syntax, which do not adhere to a single pattern but instead vary throughout the Qur'aan. Each style is unique, with a rhythm that is both clear and resonant.
3. The use of various tenses (such as past vs. present; plural vs. singular, etc.) to impart deeper meanings to a passage.
4. The pronunciation of words aligns with their context. In other words, when addressing topics that are uplifting and convey good news, it utilizes words that are easy to articulate and pleasant to hear, and conversely for other topics.

5. The ideal blend of conciseness and detail. When a subject necessitates thorough explanation, the Qur'aan elaborates on the topic, whereas it remains concise when a brief phrase suffices to convey the message.
6. The conciseness of expression achieves a remarkable clarity, enabling even the least educated Arabic-speaking individual to comprehend the Qur'aan effortlessly. Concurrently, the Qur'aan possesses a depth, adaptability, inspiration, and brilliance that serves the foundations of Islamic sciences and arts, particularly in theology and legal schools. Therefore, it is nearly unfeasible to convey the concepts of the text through a single interpretation, whether in Arabic or any other language, even with the utmost diligence.
7. There exists an ideal harmony between the two opposing forces of reason and emotion, intellect and sentiment. In the narratives, arguments, doctrines, laws, and ethical principles, the language possesses both persuasive instruction and emotional impact. Throughout the whole Qur'aan, the speech maintains its surprising solemnity, power and majesty which nothing can disturb.

The literary dimension of I'jaaz, while being the most prominent and evident feature of I'jaaz, presents the greatest challenge when addressed in a non-Arabic context. The Qur'aan is in Clear Arabic" (26:195), and to grasp this notion of I'jaaz, a comprehensive understanding of the Arabic language is crucial.

The Predictions of the Qur'aan

The Qur'an contains several clear predictions that testify to its divine origin and miraculous nature. These prophecies were revealed at times when their fulfillment seemed impossible, yet they came true exactly as foretold. Among the

most well-known is the prediction of the victory of the Romans over the Persians after a crushing defeat, which occurred within the specified period mentioned in the Qur'an. The Qur'an also foretold the spread and preservation of Islam, the protection of the Qur'an from corruption, and the defeat of the enemies of Islam despite their strength. Additionally, it predicted certain social and moral conditions that would appear in later times. The accurate fulfillment of these predictions strengthens faith in the Qur'an as the word of Allah and stands as a lasting miracle given to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Undoubtedly, the most significant forecast of the Qur'aan pertains to its own I'jaaz. In other terms, the Qur'an has foretold that it will endure unmatched and inimitable for all eternity.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ. فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْتُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْجِبَارُ أَعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ (سورة البقرة: ٢٣- ٢٤)

This represents a test for all of perpetuity, and this, within itself, constitutes another miracle, as Allah has foretold, in unequivocal and assured terms, without any doubt or apprehension, that nothing will ever be able to rival this Qur'aan, for all of infinity. And this is precisely what has transpired! None have successfully contested it to this day, nor can they do so, for how could they, when the Qur'aan is the speech of Allah?^{viii}

The Stories in the Qur'aan

The Qur'aan recounts the narratives of numerous prophets and ancient nations. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had no access to such knowledge. He had resided among the Quraysh for forty years, and throughout this period, he had

never been educated by any priest or monk, nor had he perused any historical texts. Nevertheless, despite his lack of formal education, he suddenly began to enlighten his people about the histories of former nations — from the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, to the construction of the Ka'bah by Ibraaheem, from the creation of Adam to the deluge of Nooh, from the parting of the Nile by Moosa to the miraculous birth of 'Eesaa, from the she-camel of Saalih to the great fish that swallowed Yunus... from where did he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) acquire all of this knowledge?

قُلْ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا تَلَوْتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَدْرَاكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ لَبِثْتُ فِيكُمْ عُمُرًا مِّن قَبْلِهِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (سورة يونس: ١٦)

In other words, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) spent forty years of his life among the people of Makkah, during which he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was not recognized for any literary endeavours. This fact served as a significant indication that his revelations were not self-originated, but rather divinely inspired by Allah.

The Purpose of the Stories

The purpose of the stories of the Qur'an is to guide and teach, not just to tell history. The Qur'an uses stories as a powerful way to shape belief, character, and behaviour. The aim of these narratives is to instill faith in the Prophets (as this is a fundamental aspect of belief); to emphasize the perseverance of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers (by narrating the treatment of past Prophets by their communities); to elucidate the method of inviting others to the path of Allah (all Prophets commenced their missions by promoting the true ibadah of Allah, tawheed); and to guide Muslims towards better morals, as each story in the Qur'an is filled with wisdom and guidance to be extracted from.

Their main purposes are:

- Guidance and lessons – to teach moral and spiritual lessons and show the right path.
- Strengthening faith – to reassure believers that truth and patience lead to success.
- Warnings – to show the consequences of disbelief, injustice, and arrogance.
- Comfort and encouragement – especially for the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and believers during hardship.
- Examples to follow or avoid – righteous people are models to follow; wrongdoers are warnings.
- Reflection, not entertainment – details are secondary; the lesson is the focus.
- Confirmation of divine truth – showing the continuity of Allah's message through all prophets.

Thus, the stories of the Qur'an are signs (āyāt) meant to guide hearts, correct behavior, inspire faith, and warn against wrongdoing—so people may reflect and live righteously.

The Beliefs and Laws of the Qur'aan

The Qur'aan was revealed as a source of guidance for all of humanity. Its main objective is to clearly express the genuine set of beliefs ('aqeedah) regarding the Creator and to embed these beliefs within a legal framework (sharee'ah) that benefits creation in both this life and the afterlife. The veracity of the Qur'aan is demonstrated by the flawless nature of its 'aqeedah and sharee'ah. In terms of

'aqeedah, the most significant subject is that of the Creator: His Existence (Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah), His Names and Attributes (Tawheed al-Asmaa' wa as-Sifaat), and His sole Right to be Worshipped (Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah).

No other faith comes close to this standard of absolute Monotheism. Jews and even Hindus all profess their monotheistic convictions;; however, the Christian concept of the Trinity and the paganism and idolatry associated with Hinduism clearly demonstrate that such claims are unfounded. Although Jews may be somewhat closer to monotheism than many other faiths, they ascribe forgetfulness, weariness, and ignorance to their deity, among other attributes, and lack a solid foundation of spiritual beliefs.

The sharee'ah serves as another testament to the wonderful nature of the Qur'aan. The sharee'ah represents the law of Allah, remaining constant in its fundamental principles. In its ultimate form, it was revealed to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) over fourteen centuries ago, in a particular time and location, and among a distinct group of people. Nevertheless, when these laws are applied in totality, they demonstrate their capacity to enhance both the society and individual, regardless of the era or community. Regardless of which aspect of the sharee'ah is examined, it is consistently found to be flawless in every respect. The regulations pertaining to personal care and cleanliness, family life, social responsibilities, monetary affairs, and political interactions - select any area you prefer - the I'jaaz is evident.

Conclusion

The Qur'an stands as the most significant miracle bestowed upon Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, serving as clear proof of his prophethood and the divine foundation of Islam. Its unmatched eloquence, flawless preservation, and comprehensive guidance reflect the words of Allah rather than human creation. As a guiding source (hidāyah) for all of humanity, the Qur'an continues to be a living miracle, directing believers towards faith, righteousness, and success in both this life and the Hereafter.

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