

The Noble Quran, the Permanent Miracle of Allah (swt) of Inimitability (إِعْجَاز) and Challenge (تَّحْدِي)

(Translation from Arabic)

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The Noble Quran represents the basis for the confirmation (ithbaat) of the validity of the Message of Islam. Invalidating its evidence of miraculous Inimitability ('ijaaz) would mean the collapse of the entire Islamic edifice, which has been causing sleeplessness to the East and West since its blessed emergence. Apart from the details of the miraculous aspects of the Quran, elaborated by experts in 'Uloom ul-Quran (Quranic Knowledge), I will confine discourse only to the miraculous aspect which is the most simple, most powerful and most easy for the common man to understand, as well as being compatible with the clear and direct Quranic address in this regard. Before addressing the heart of the subject, it is necessary to review the basis of perceptions upon which the subject is based.

Since the tangible, natural components of creation lack the faculty of reasoning, characterized by limitations in their form, existence and organization, such that they are in need of a greater power, if they are ever to come together like glittering pearls arranged in an intricate necklace. That greater power must have the ability of creation from nothing (khulq min a'dam), the ability to precisely control things and to supremely organize the ordered existence of the created. This cannot occur from nature itself, as it does not have the faculty of reasoning to do so. The system that directs the universe is according to wisdom and observable laws that cannot be violated. It is not correct to deny the need of the creation for a Creator, the Wise Organizer.

Man cannot be excluded from the above principle upon the premise that he enjoys of intellectual capacity and free will. This is because he confirms his limitation and incapability before the compelling laws of the universe, which he strives to understand and must conform to even during innovation, discovery and invention. If this is the case with man, who colonizes the earth and explores space, then it is the case with the rest of the creatures, which man senses are more incapable than them. Therefore, He (swt) is the Creator Who determines the laws of nature, controlling them beyond the limited paradigm of creation. Accordingly, the philosophers and thinkers have agreed to define the One Who has this limitless ability of creation and organization of the universe, man and life, as indispensable for existence (waajibul wujood) i.e. the Creator who is Eternal (azali) upon Whom all the creations depend on for their existence.

Driven by several tendencies to understand his role in life, man looks around him, searching for answers to his many questions about the nature of his worldly life. Man was neither consulted about his arrival to the world, nor was he given choice over many of its details, asides from the fact that he does not possess the ability for immortality in this world. Man is forced to adopt a philosophy that answers his questions, though he neither feels relief nor does his heart receive tranquility, remaining in a permanent confusion, anxiousness and bewilderment, no matter how concise the adopted philosophy were, unless this philosophy provides him an enlightened view that addresses the causes for his existence and forced departure, in a complete and comprehensive manner, convincing his mind and complying with his human nature (fitrah).

Allah (swt), the indispensable for existence (waajib ul-wujood), reveals the Message (risaalah) to whomsoever He (swt) chooses from amongst humankind. He (saw) chooses a Messenger to guide man towards the purpose of his creation, determining for him the nature of his role in life, providing for him the method to advance upon, in order to elevate himself by it to the level that Allah (swt) has created humankind for, with respect to honor and favor over

the rest of all creations. There arises the need of verification (tawtheeq) of the source of this Message, as it is mandatory for the Messenger to be provided with evidence (daleel) that verifies what he carries, such that it is not merely pretense; otherwise, there would be claims to Prophethood by anyone who desires, leaving the people lost in a dilemma.

The evidence (daleel), the miracle (mu'jizah), comes at a level befitting with the Message that seeks to connect the people of the Earth with the Creator (swt), such that this evidence overwhelms humankind by breaching the prevailing laws of nature that are controlled by the Creator (swt) alone. The evidence (daleel) thus poses a challenge that people, with all their capabilities, collectively and individually, fail to bring the like of it. Thus, it affirms the validity of the Prophethood (nabuwwah) of the one who carries the Message (risaalah). The evidence becomes a clear evidence (burhaan), distinguishing disbelief from Imaan.

So, the law of burning was removed from fire, such that it did not harm Ibrahim (as), Khaleelullah (Confidante of Allah). The staff of Musa (as), Kaleemullah (Converser with Allah), was transformed into a snake. Thus, Isa ibn Maryam (as) revived the dead with the permission of Allah (swt). The divine will intervenes in the laws of nature, effecting them such that these testimonial evidences are miracles for those associated with them, verifying the validity of their prophethoods to everyone who witnessed and was informed of them. However, these miracles have ceased to be conclusive evidences beyond their specific eras and peoples. As for our Iman about the truthfulness of their occurrence, we believe in them because they are narrated in the Book of Allah (swt), the permanent miracle, whose conclusive evidence neither ceases over time, nor is confined to any one people within all peoples.

The Noble Quran was revealed to the Noble Prophet, Muhammad (saw). He (saw) never claimed that he was the author of the Quran. However, even if we assume that was the case, for the sake of argument, no one during his time or after was able to bring the like of it, let alone that which is better, by virtue of the inviolable constraints of human nature and laws governing existence. This never happened. Also, no one else claimed to be the author of the Quran. Even if someone did claim so, the same ruling would apply to them. That is, as long as someone was able to compose the Quran, others would soon bring the like of it, or better than it. This also has never happened. We will now elaborate the impossibility of such an occurrence to establish with certainty that the Quran is from Allah (swt).

The Quran is composed in pure Arabic language morphologically, with its principles and definitions that are subjected upon Arabic letters from 'Alif' to 'Yaa.' The Quran is embodied with thirty parts (Juz'), divided into one hundred and fourteen chapters (surah), composed of six thousand two hundred thirty-six verses. Most of its verses (ayahs) are larger than its shortest surahs.

The Noble Prophet Muhammad (saw) confronted his opponents who had mastered the Arabic language, excelling in its poetry and prose prominently by which the Arabs reached its heights, in manner similar to how the conjurers of Firaun mastered the art of conjuring, or how the people of Isa (as) mastered medicine. The Prophet (saw) challenged the Arabs to bring the like of Noble Quran. Allah (swt) said, **﴿قُلْ لَئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنْسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا﴾** **Say: 'Surely, if mankind and jinn were to get together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they will never be able to produce the like of it, howsoever they might help one another.'** [Surah Isra 17: 88]. He (swt) asked them to bring the like of some of the Surahs at least, persisting in the challenge, showing its strength. He then asked, **﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَاذْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾** **"Or do they say, 'He invented it'? Say, 'Then bring ten surahs like it that have been invented and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you should be truthful.'**" [Surah Hud: 13]. He (swt) then asked them to bring the least of the challenge i.e. to bring one Surah, **﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِسُوْرَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَاذْعُوا مَنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾** **"Or do they say [about the Prophet], 'He invented it'? Say, 'Then bring forth a surah like it and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allah, if you**

should be truthful.” [Surah Yunus: 38]. He emphasized this challenge and repeated it again by saying, ﴿وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ﴾ **“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down upon Our Servant [Muhammad], then produce a Surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses other than Allah, if you should be truthful.”** [Surah al-Baqara 2:23].

The Quraysh could not ignore the challenge in any way, because the Noble Qur’an is the main pillar of establishing the validity of the Prophethood of Muhammad (saw) and the truthfulness of the Message of Islam. It included doctrines and laws representing the new way of life that clashed with the Jahiliyah society in its fundamentals, sharply striking at its core in a manner that turned matters upside down ideologically, politically, economically and socially. The leaders of Makkah rose to challenge, trying in vain and failing miserably. This led to the abandoning of verbal argument, transitioning to the fierce and aggressive resistance of the Islamic call.

They tried to crush the call of Islam. They practiced killing, torture, exile and siege to eliminate the call that was only restricted to words and the challenge of the Quran, in thirteen years of discord, when there was neither weapon nor revolution nor violence. This was how the revered words of the Noble Quran overwhelmed them, although the words of the Quran were formed from the very alphabetic letters and the language which they were so familiar with. They glorified and marveled at the status of the Quran, whilst being awestruck of the intricacies of the Quran, such that they adorned the Kaaba itself with its unmatched compositions. The Islamic call became stronger and gained new supporters until it was struck by the hands of the tyrants of Makkah, who increased their aggression. They conspired against the Noble Prophet (saw) and devised a plan to kill him. They increased their persecutions against his (saw) followers, even though they were sufficient to make an attempt to bring one surah. Had they done so, they could have stopped the mission of Islam forever. However it was far away from them as ﴿تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ﴾ **“The revelation of this Book is from Allah—the Almighty, All-Wise.”** [Surah Al-Ahqaf: 2].

Simply, it was sufficient to bring one surah as was written in the Noble Quran in order to invalidate the call to Islam. It is worth mentioning that there is no need for anyone who takes up the challenge to bring a surah like Surah Al-Baqarah, that has 6144 words. Instead, it is enough to bring a surah like Surah Al-Kawthar, that has only three verses, composed of no more than ten words only. Yes, one sentence, less than one line, which was, and is still is, sufficient for the Arabic writers of prose and poetry amongst the opponents of this Deen to permanently close the chapter of Islam.

However, it never happened and will not happen for an essential reason, the Noble Quran is the Word of Allah (swt) and it is not from any of humankind. Its pearls are composed in a unique and wonderful manner that made Walid bin Mughirah, the chief enemy of the Noble Prophet (saw), exclaim: “By Allah, I have heard once the words of Muhammad which are not from amongst the words of humans, nor amongst the words of Jinn. It has beautiful and eloquent words, (like a tree) with rich fruits and solid roots.”

One may argue here that if we assumed that the miracle of Quran is true, its appreciation would be limited to Arabs alone, as only they can sense the language and are aware of its intricacies. So it may be argued that only the Arabs can comprehend the miraculous aspect of the Quran, so it is not applicable to non-Arabs. It may then be argued that how can the Quran be considered as conclusive argument (Hujjah) before all men, obliging them to adopt Islam?!

The one who argues such has overlooked that believing in the Qur’an and embracing Islam does not require expert proficiency in the Arabic language, let alone acquaintance. This requirement is not achieved by many Muslims, as most of them do not understand Arabic. Also acquaintance of the language in order to appreciate the Quran, plunging its depths and basking in its radiance, has even become difficult for most Arabs these days. As for what must be comprehended by those who adopt Islam, it is that the Quranic miracle is

based and focused on challenging anyone amongst humankind the like of a single surah of the Quran. In short, the Quran challenges all of humankind to bring something similar to the surah of the Quran, consisting of ten words that do not exceed a sentence, not more than that in order to invalidate the Message of Islam. This is something that no one has ever been able to do, although the Arabic language is still in use with its grammar, spoken by hundreds of millions of people, which confirms that the Quran is from the Creator (swt) of humankind.

What must be understood, which Muslims are aware of, both Arabs and Non Arabs, is that all the nations, collectively or individually, have failed to bring the like of one single surah of the Noble Quran. The knowledge of Muslims about this inability to bring such a small surah of Quran over all of time, despite their knowledge of the mastery of many non-Muslims in the Arabic Language and the existence of the means to accept the challenge, is what made Muslims, not their linguistic skills, accept the fact that the Noble Quran is from Allah (swt).

Some of those who argue repeat the same question in another form, by asking, non-Arabs, who are not Muslims, will not be able to judge the Quranic texts and comprehend its miracle, as long as they do not know Arabic, so, how could they be asked to comprehend the conclusive argument (Hujja) of the Quran and its miracle?!

We reaffirm that what is required is to comprehend that the miracle lies in the failure of human beings to bring a surah like that in the Holy Quran, even if it is of the size of one sentence of ten words. This has never happened. Thus, this conclusive argument of the Quran is binding upon all those who relate this miraculous aspect to its claim.

In order to remove confusion, we add that it is true that the surah is composed only in the Arabic language, so accordingly it is necessary to master the Arabic language in order to make an attempt at the challenge. However, what requires appreciation is that those who possessed such superior skills have failed, even though they were the original people of the language and its masters. Also, there are still those who possess such skills, bent upon destroying Islam altogether, yet they also failed. Therefore, this is what obliges belief in the validity of the miracle of the Noble Qur'an.

Moreover, the door for the challenge is still left wide open. There is no doubt that Islam is advancing all over the world. Amongst other nations, major powers are interested in the thwarting Islam. Understanding and learning Arabic language is possible for every person who is bent upon this purpose. How is it not possible, whilst learning other languages that have been in practice since ancient times?! Moreover, many remarkable people possess superior skills in many of the languages, simultaneously. In fact, such people, who are fluent in more than one language, strengthen the reality of the Quranic miracle. More than others, polyglots are aware of the meaning of the impossibility of bringing one single sentence, which does not exceed one single line in the language, despite the availability of all the composing elements of the language.

In our subject, the matter is related to mastery in the language. It would be enough to establish the error in the claim of the miracle of the Quran for the depraved enemies of Islam, yet they resorted instead to successive campaigns to eliminate Islam, in crusade wars that continued for centuries, in the contemporary bloody civilizational conflict and in various campaigns to eliminate the roots of "terrorism"! This is not new. Islam has represented the most important factor for conflict for many centuries that is ongoing today and will continue. Islam has always been the focus of attention for major powers and empires, because of the challenge and threat that it embodies, which cannot be ignored in any way. Islam has caused sleeplessness to the leaders of the West and East, ever since it graced the world with its presence.

The opponents of Islam have made strenuous efforts to eliminate the factor of Deen in their conflict with the Islamic Ummah, particularly what we have witnessed of the West in recent centuries. Trying to undermine Islam in various ways and arousing suspicion, the activities of the neo-Orientalists intensify misgivings and misconceptions about its rulings. It

is not acceptable for anyone to think that they have would have somehow missed or overlooked the Quranic challenge of bringing the like of one surah from the Qur'an, consisting of one sentence with ten words to invalidate Islam from its very foundation.

Moreover, the West has scholars and skilled experts in the centers specialized in the study of Islam and Arabic, such that they have access to the minutia of our subject. It is a well-known matter that they have a long history of study, embodied in a plethora of voluminous studies. One who visits specialized institutions in London, Moscow, Washington and Paris will find non-Muslim experts who are uniquely proficient in Arabic, such that one would think these people to be contemporaries of Shafi'i, Maalik and Abu Aswad Ad-Dauli. As long as the experts and specialists have failed to present that which invalidates the miracle of the Qur'an, despite the presence of compelling motives to do so and the absence of obstacles that prevent them from doing so, all must acknowledge the great status of the Noble Quran, admitting its miracle and the validity of the Message of Islam.

What increases the strength of the Quranic miracle, in its overwhelming and confounding, in addition to the low requirement to meet the challenge, the availability of linguistic elements to undertake the challenge and the enormous capabilities of its fervent opponents, is that the door of challenge will remain wide open, until the Day of Judgment. There is no other limiting deadline to end this challenge. Thus the Quranic challenge remains ever present before all of humanity to completely invalidate Islam. However, it is impossible as it is the miraculous Word of Allah (swt), protected until the Day of Judgment. Thus, the Quran is the permanent miracle that obliges believing in the Message of Islam, and consequently the Noble Messenger Muhammad (saw), the one who carried and conveyed it from Allah (swt).