

The Quran and its Message

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Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

MIRACLES OF THE PROPHET ^(pbuh)

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It is widely accepted in Muslim thought that Prophet Muhammad ^(pbuh) performed many miracles during his ministry. These miracles ranged from food [1] and water [2] multiplication, invoking the clouds to gather for rain abundantly and to disperse it around Medina [3], producing miracle lamps of light to guide companions in the dark [4], the speech of a wolf [5], to stop a trunk of a date-palm from crying when it was used to make a pulpit [6] and the expulsion of a Christian liar's corpse repeatedly from its burial location [7].

One of the most famous alleged miracles of the Prophet and which is linked to a Quranic verse is the splitting of the moon by the prophet's command. This will be discussed later in the article.

All support for the miracles of the Prophet (except the splitting of the moon) are garnered from [Islamic secondary sources](#).

PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S ^(pbuh) MIRACLES

The Quran does indeed talk about miracles (or signs / portents - Arabic ayat-i) but does so in the context of the previous prophets performing them.

For example, Prophet Jesus ^(pbuh) was known to heal the blind, the lepers, raise the dead, to create birds from clay and breathe life into them (5:110). Similarly, Prophet Moses ^(pbuh) was able to turn a staff into a serpent (7:107) or to part the sea (26:63) with God's command.

However, despite Prophet Muhammad's ^(pbuh) contemporaries insistently demanding such miracles from the Prophet, he **was not** granted any such miracles to perform by the Quran's own testimony.

006.109

"They swear their strongest oaths by God, that if a (special) sign / miracle came to them, by it they would believe. Say: "Certainly (all) signs / miracles are in the power of God: but what will make you realise that (even) if signs / miracles came, they will not believe?""

Please note the Arabic word 'ayat' in the following verses which in this context refers to signs, portents or miracles.

017:059

"**And We refrain from sending signs / miracles (Arabic: bil-ayati), only because the former generations treated them as false:** We sent the she-camel to the Thamud to open their eyes, but they treated her wrongfully: We only send the signs by way of a warning"

013.007

"And the Unbelievers say: "Why is not a miracle (**Arabic: ayatun**) sent down to him from his Lord?" But you are truly a warner, and to every people a guide"

003.183

"(The same are) those who say: Lo! God has charged us that we believe not in any messenger until he bring us an offering which fire (from heaven) shall devour. Say (to them, O Muhammad): Messengers came to you before me with miracles (**Arabic: bil-bayinati**), and with that (very miracle) which you describe. Why did you then slay them? (Answer that) if ye are truthful!"

030.058

"Verily We have coined for mankind in the Quran all kinds of similitudes; and indeed if you come to them with a miracle (**Arabic: bi-ayati**), those who disbelieve would verily exclaim: Ye are but tricksters!"

020.133

"They say: "Why does he not bring us a sign / miracle (**Arabic: bi-ayati**) from his Lord?" Has not evidence come to them of all that was in the former Books of revelation?"

029.050-1

"And they say: Why are not signs / miracles (**Arabic: ayatun**) sent down upon him from his Lord? Say: The signs / miracles are only with God, and I am only a plain warner. And is it not enough for them that we have sent down to you the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is Mercy and a Reminder to those who believe"

006.007

"Had we sent down to you (Muhammad) (actual) writing upon parchment, so that they could feel it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said: This is nothing else than mere magic"

006:124

"When there comes to them a sign, They say: "We shall not believe until we receive one (exactly) like those received by Allah's messengers." God knows best where (and how) to carry out His mission. Soon will the wicked be overtaken by humiliation before God, and a severe punishment, for all their plots"

THE ONLY SIGN OR MIRACLE THE PROPHET WAS GIVEN WAS THE QURAN

020.133

"They say: "Why does he not bring us a sign / miracle (**Arabic: bi-ayati**) from his Lord?" Has not **evidence** come to them of all that was in the former Books of revelation?"

THE PROPHET STRONGLY ADVISED

The following verse strongly captures the theme of the article and the Quranic position that the prophet **was not** given any miracles to perform. The narrative is transmitted in the form of a challenge and a rebuke.

006:035

"And if their aversion is grievous to you, then, if you can, seek a way down into the earth or a ladder to the sky that you may bring to them a sign / miracle! **(Arabic: biayatin)** - If God willed, He could have brought them all together to the guidance - So don't be among the ignorant ones **(Arabic: Jahileen))**"

THE CASE OF THE MOON SPLITTING

054.001

"The Hour is nigh and the moon is split asunder."

[Islamic secondary sources](#) furnish many details with regards what **allegedly** occurred with respect to the few verses that are narrated at the start of Surah 54 (Al-Qamar).

They attempt to explain that this was a miracle performed by Prophet Muhammad^(pbuh) to convince the Quraish after they had asked for a sign from him. (Please note the contradiction of this assertion with verse 17:59). The moon was thus split and remained visible on either side of Mount Hira.

The Quran makes no such claims, or indeed of the Prophet's involvement. If the verses are read in context of the whole Surah (chapter), it is clear that this is a reference to a future event relating to an apocalypse and has nothing to do with the Quraish or Prophet Muhammad.^(pbuh)

The Quran makes references to future events as if they have already occurred. Verse 36:26 is a possible example where a righteous man was told "...Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known". Given the context of the narrative, it is quite possible that to emphasise certainty, a future dialogue on the Day of Resurrection has been captured as if it has already taken place.

With regards the moon split, we further read:

054.002

And if they see a sign, they turn away, and say, "transient magic." And they denied **(Arabic: wa-kadhabu)** and follow their desires but every matter has its appointed time"

It is significant to note that the word 'kadhab' in Arabic means to give a lie to, to falsely invent something or say something which is not factual, implying that they denied what was being alleged.

Therefore, if the **traditional position** from [Islamic secondary sources](#) is to be accepted, then the denial would amount to a rejection of the sign that was shown to them (i.e. the **alleged** splitting of the moon). On the contrary, this could be a reference to a **general denial** of the truth when it reaches them.

If one is to assume the **traditional position**, i.e. that the denial was of the sign shown to them (splitting of the moon), then we have an immediate problem as this would infer that Noah's people also denied the same sign.

054:009

"The people of Noah **denied before them (Arabic: kadhabat qablahum) and they denied Our slave and said: A madman; and he was repelled"**

Please note that there are two denials in this verse.

- (1) A similar denial to the one made by Muhammad's ^(pbuh) community (kadhabat qablahum), and
- (2) A denial of God's slave (fakadhabu abdha - they denied our servant).

The first denial cannot be a reference to the **alleged moon splitting event** as Prophet Noah's community were not privy to the specific event that traditions hold to be experienced by Prophet Muhammad's ^(pbuh) community **alone**. Therefore, this denial most likely refers to a **general denial** of the truth once it reached them.

We further note, the people of Aad also denied in a similar manner to both Noah's ^(pbuh) and Muhammad's ^(pbuh) community.

054.018

"The 'Ad (people) also denied **(Arabic: kadhabat)**: then how terrible was My penalty and My warning"

Similarly, this cannot be a denial of the sign of splitting the moon but a **general denial** of the truth and the warnings when it reached them. This is further confirmed in the example of Thamud a few verses later.

054:023

"Thamud denied **(Arabic: kadhabat)** the warnings"

Furthermore, we read that the people of Lot denied the warnings (54:33) and Pharaoh's people also denied the warnings (54:41-2). None of these 'denials' refer to the alleged splitting of the moon.

If all the verses of the Surah (chapter) are analysed as a **theme and holistically**, it is clear that the sign that the people of Prophet Muhammad's ^(pbuh) community rejected was **not** the splitting of the moon but a **general denial** of the truth when it reached them. This no different from the communities of the other messengers mentioned by the Surah.

Therefore, the splitting of the moon is a reference in the perfect tense to emphasise certainty of a future event which will precede the Day of Judgment and most likely unconnected to Prophet Muhammad's ^(pbuh) community.

054:046

"Nay, the hour is their promised time, and the hour shall be most grievous and bitter"

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Quran does not support the belief that the Prophet performed any miracles. Rather, the only sign given to the Prophet Muhammad ^(pbuh) was the Quran.

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