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In Collaboration With
Jigawa State College Of Education,
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CHALLENGES: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS**

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Editorial

The Editorial Committee is pleased to present to the readers the Book of Proceedings of the first International Conference on **Qur'anic Learning and Contemporary Challenges: Issues and Prospects** jointly organized by the An-Nahdah International University, Niger Republic and the Jigawa State College of Education, Gumel, Nigeria. The two institutions and their respective leaderships deserve commendation for their steadfastness in accepting to hold such a historic collaborative intellectual venture. This, indeed, goes a long way to show the commitment shown by both in pushing the frontiers of knowledge. Moreover, it strengthens the historical ties between the people of the two countries who have always considered themselves brothers and sisters regardless of the artificial boundaries erected between them.

Special thanks must be extended to the members of Central Organizing Committee, as well as members of other sub-committees for working tirelessly to ensure the success of the Conference. The confidence reposed in them has never been misplaced.

It is worth noting that the Conference has been well received by scholars and researchers both domestically and externally, whereby it attracted participants from universities, colleges, and other institutions of learning from the Sudan, Egypt, the UAE, Malaysia, Mali, Niger Republic as well as from within Nigeria. During the two day event, papers of high academic quality have been deliberated upon and ideas exchanged in Arabic, English, French and Hausa, which make the Conference truly international.

Against all odds, the Book of Proceedings has been made available before the end of the Conference, as promised, which is unusual in conferences organized in this country due to numerous logistical challenges that require strenuous efforts and sacrifice. We take pride in informing the reader that all these challenges have been conquered by special grace of Allah, and participants are given their own copies at the point of registration. More importantly, all papers have undergone academically sanctioned vetting.

Therefore, the Editorial Committee wishes the reader a happy read of this compendium of knowledge written by our esteemed contributors in their sincere attempt at finding the solutions facing the Qur'anic learning in the contemporary world. Likewise, all constructive criticisms and suggestions aimed at improving the quality of this work are most welcome.

Dr. Muhammad Sani Mukhtar (Goni)

Secretary, Editorial Committee

THE GLORIOUS QUR'AN: QUINTESSENCE OF VERY TOUCHING AND THRILLING MIRACLES

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims at showing the uniqueness of the glorious Qur'an as the divine book of guidance which is full of thrilling miracles that are always being noticed. Allah the Most Exalted supported His last Messenger, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with many miracles which prove that he is a true Prophet and Messenger sent by Allah. Allah also supported His last revealed book, the glorious Qur'an, with numerous miracles which prove that this Qur'an is the literal word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad through angel Jibril, and that the Qur'an was not authored by anyone but Allah. This paper spells out some of the miracles in the glorious Qur'an. It shows through deduction from the Qur'an, some scientific facts only recently discovered by the "modern scientists" which had been clearly stated in the Qur'an over one thousand and four hundred years ago. Library research method is applied in this presentation. The paper then offers some recommendations that Muslims should not consider scientific facts as alien to Islam. They should try to engage in voracious reading and research in different disciplines of the Qur'an including its scientific aspects.

Introduction

The Qur'an is the literal word of Allah revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through angel Jibril. It was memorized by the Prophet, who then dictated it to his companions. They, in turn, memorized it, wrote it down, and reviewed it with the Prophet. Moreover, the Prophet ﷺ reviewed the Qur'an with the angel Jibril once each year,

and twice in the last year of his life. From the time the Qur'an was revealed, to this day, there has always been a huge number of Muslims who have memorized all of the Qur'an, letter by letter. Not one letter of the Qur'an has ever been changed over the centuries, and it is being recited in prayer.¹

As such, the Qur'an is the driving force upon which Islam was established. As the word of Allah, the Qur'an is the reservoir of divine guidance to humanity up to the last hour. This is why it contains numerous teachings, wisdoms and very touching and thrilling miracles which make man to easily succumb to Allah's laws and legislations.

In view of the foregoing, this paper spells out very few of such miraculous nature of the Qur'an.

The Miraculous Nature of the Qur'an:

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ by Allah the Most Exalted. Allah had promised to defend the Qur'an where He says:

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ

“It is We who revealed the Remembrance (the Qur'an) and it is We who shall preserve It”.²

Ever since the Qur'an was revealed over fourteen centuries ago, no one has been able to produce a single chapter like that of the Qur'an in its contents, meaning, beauty, eloquence, wise legislations, true information, true prophecy and other perfect attributes. For instance, the smallest chapter in the Qur'an, i.e., Surah Al-Kauthar is only ten words, yet, no one has ever been able to meet this challenge. Some of the disbelieving Arabs tried to meet this challenge to prove that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was not a true Prophet, and they refused to believe that the Qur'an was from Allah, but they all failed to do so. This failure was despite the fact that the Qur'an was revealed

¹ Al-Amin, Muhammad Subkiy, Al-Tabsirah fi Ulum al-Qur'an, Madinah (1420 AH), p.4.

² The Qur'an, Surah Al-Hijr:9.

in their own mother tongue and dialect, and that the Arabs at that time of the Prophet ﷺ were very eloquent people who composed beautiful and extraordinary poems.³

On this great challenge to the Arabs and to all humanity at large, i.e, to produce one chapter like the chapters of the Glorious Qur'an, Allah says:

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّن دُونِ
اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ۗ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ.

And if you are in doubt about what we have revealed (the Qur'an) to Our servant (Muhammad SAW), then produce a chapter (Surah) like it, and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) beside Allah if you are truthful. And if you do not do it, and you can never do it, then fear the fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.⁴

Allah went on further to challenge not only Arabs and human beings, but all of creation to create a book of the stature of the Qur'an:

قُلْ لِّئِنِ اجْتَمَعَتِ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ
بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ ظَهِيرًا

Say: If all mankind and the jinn would come together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce its like, even though they exerted all their strength in aiding one another.⁵

It is very important to note that Allah favored His messengers not only with revelation, but also with miracles clearly proving to their people the divine origin and truthfulness of their messages. The inability of the people to imitate the miracles of the prophets made them willingly to bear witnesses to Allah's unity and to obey the commandments of the prophets. For example, Prophet Musa (May Allah's Peace be on him) was raised up among the Egyptians, who were well noted for their mastery of the occult arts, sorcery and magic. Thus, Allah gave him the miracle of being able to place his hand in

³ Al-Zurqani, Muhammad Ahmad, Manahil al-Irfan Vol.1, Cairo Dar al-Ma'arif (1942), pp. 62-63.

⁴ The Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah: 23-24.

⁵ The Qur'an, Surah al-Israa': 88.

his cloak and extract a brilliantly shining hand. Therefore, when magicians were gathered to challenge Prophet Moses and the staffs which they had cast appeared to the audience as snakes, Allah turned Prophet Musa's staff into a huge snake that devoured the "snakes" of his opponents. That defeat was sufficient proof for the magicians who knew that no one could change the nature of a stick as Prophet Musa apparently had done. They, then believed in the God of Prophet Musa, in spite of the threats on their lives uttered by the Pharaoh.⁶

Another example is that of Prophet Isa (May Allah's Peace be on him) who was chosen by Allah from among the Jews. The Jews were especially noted for their exceptional abilities in the field of medicine. Jewish doctors were highly respected for their magical ability to mend bones and cure sick. Thus, Allah favored Prophet Isa with the miraculous ability to make the blind see, the lame walk and to bring the dead back to life. These abilities were clearly beyond those of the Jewish doctors of those days and they knew that no regular man could do that. Hence, they also surrendered.⁷

One of the greatest miracles and distinctive features of the Qur'an is that it affirms and completes the total process of revelation which has come from Allah for the divine guidance of the human race. This is because the Qur'an consummated the messages of the earlier scriptures. That is why in all the earlier scriptures references are to be found to the advent of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as stated by Abdulmajid Al-Zindāni:

Allah has given the Prophet an everlasting miracle (the Qur'an) as a supporting proof. If we ask a Jew or a Christian to show us the miracles of Prophet Moses or Jesus, they will both submit that it is not within human power to re-demonstrate any of those miracles now. Moses' stick cannot be re-created and Jesus cannot be involved to raise people from the dead. For us, these miracles are nothing more than historical reports. But if a Muslim is asked about the greatest miracle of Prophet

⁶ Bilal, Abu Amina Philips, *Usool al-Tafsir: The Methodology of Qur'anic Explanation*. Lagos, Nigeria, Waseelat Publishers, (1987), p.91.

⁷ Bilal, *Usool al-Tafsir...*, pp.91-92.

Muhammad, he can easily show the Qur'an as the everlasting miracle.⁸

Ahmad Shauqī also said about the miraculous nature of the Qur'an:

جاء النَّبِيُّونَ بِالآيَاتِ فَأَنْصَرَمَتْ وَجِئْتَنَا بِكِتَابٍ وَعَجَّتْنَا بِرَيْنُهُنَّ
آيَاتُهُ كُلَّمَا طَالَ الْمَدَى جُدُّ مُنْصَرِمٍ وَالْقِدَمِ الْعَتِيقِ جَمَالُ

Various Prophets came with āyāt (parables) and perished.

And you brought to us the imperishable Book.

Its verses are always fresh.

Its beauty and dynamism are always increasing.⁹

According to two distinguished Professors of State University of New York, Sachico Murata and William C. Chittick:

... Muslim and most Western scholars of Islam believe that the Arabic Qur'an that exists today contains the same Arabic that was transmitted by Muhammad. This often surprises scholars of the Bible, Judaism and Christianity ... In other words, while scholars of the Bible in the West have largely succeeded in convincing the community of scholars that the Bible we have today was not the very same "word of God" that was revealed through the prophets and which was spoken by Jesus, scholars of Islam have generally not come to similar conclusions about the Qur'an.¹⁰

At this point, let one sees what Allah says on deep seas and internal waves.

Thus, a scientific miracle of the Qur'an:

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرِ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ۗ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ
لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُّورٍ

⁸ www.islam.com The Qur'an and Qur'anic Interpretation. Retrieved in 2004.

⁹ Al-Sabuni, Muhammad Aliyu, Al-Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an, Makkah, (1997), P.7.

¹⁰ www.islam.com The Qur'an and Qur'anic Interpretation. Retrieved in 2004.

Or (the unbelievers' state) is like the darkness in a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are clouds. Darkness, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand, he cannot see it.¹¹

The above verse mentions the darkness found in deep seas and ocean, where if a man stretches out his hand, he cannot see it. The darkness in deep seas and oceans is found around a depth of 200 meters and below. At this depth, there is almost no light.¹²

Human beings are not able to dive more than forty meters without the aid of special equipment. Human beings cannot survive unaided in the deep dark part of the oceans, such as at a depth of 200 meters. Scientists have recently discovered this darkness by means of special equipment that have enabled them to dive into the depths of the oceans.¹³

By Allah's saying in the above verse

"...In a deep sea. It is covered by waves, above which are waves, above which are clouds", one understands that the deep waters of seas and oceans are covered by waves, and above these waves are other waves. The second set of waves are the surface waves that we see; this is because the verse mentions that above the second waves there are clouds.¹⁴

Dr. William W. Hay, a Professor of Geological Sciences at the University of Colorado, USA after a discussion with Prof. Hay about the Qur'an's mention of recently discovered facts on seas, said:

"I find it very interesting that this sort of information is in the ancient scriptures of the holy Qur'an, and I have no way of knowing where they would come from, but I think it is extremely interesting that they are there, and that this work is going on to

¹¹ Surah al-Nur: 40

¹² Ibrahim I.A, A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam, Second Edition, Texas USA, Darussalam Publishers and Distributors (1997), p.20.

¹³ Ibrahim, A Brief..., p.21

¹⁴ Ibrahim, A Brief..., p.21

discover it, the meaning of some of the passages. And when he was asking about the source of the Qur'an, he replied: "Well, I would think it must be the divine being".¹⁵

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper discussed some miraculous nature of the Qur'an. Mankind and *Jinn* were seriously challenged to bring something even similar to the shortest chapter of the Qur'an, i.e, Surah al-Kauthar. In fact, they all failed to do so. Ever since that time, the superiority of the Qur'anic miracles have been emerging constantly; even some Non-Muslim scholars from the West, for example, Prof. Sachico Murata and Prof. William Chittick from State University of New York, USA have asserted the genuinely of the Qur'anic revelation, hence, its miraculous nature.

The paper also discussed some scientific miracles of the glorious Qur'an with particular reference to verse 40 of Surah al-Nur which discussed among other things "deep seas and internal waves", and scientifically, the Qur'anic presentation on these issues, have been proved precise and correct by a non-Muslim scholar, Dr. William W. Hay as quoted earlier in the paper.

The paper, therefore, recommends that:

- i. Muslims should always read, understand, memorise, interpret, reflect and apply the teachings of the Qur'an in their daily life situations.
- ii. It also recommends that more Centres for Qur'anic Research and Studies be established in Nigerian Universities
- iii. The already established Centres for the Qur'anic Studies should be well funded by philanthropists, organizations in order to achieve the goals and objectives for which they were established.

¹⁵ Ibrahim, A Brief..., p.30

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