

Prophet Muḥammad and his Miracles: Critiquing ‘Alī Dashtī’s View

Saeid Sobhani
The Islamic College

A short biography of ‘Alī Dashtī

‘Alī Dashtī, a famous Iranian journalist and a political activist during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran, was born to a highly religious Iranian family in Karbala, Iraq, in 1898. He was trained in Arabic grammar, logic, and Islamic theology. Sometime around 1919, he travelled to Iran and engaged himself in politics in a turbulent situation by starting to write political articles in local newspapers in Shiraz and Isfahan. Traveling to the capital, Tehran, he joined *The Star of Iran*, a newspaper, as editor. In February 1922, according to J. E. Knörzer, in *Ali Dashti’s Prison Days: Life Under Reza Shah*, he founded the *Shafaq-i Surkh* (Red Dawn) newspaper and published his own reflections, as well as those of other celebrated intellectuals of the time, on the current social and political situation.¹

He was arrested, prosecuted, and jailed several times for his political criticism. He was among scores of political activists and intellectuals who were arrested and jailed for three months following the *coup d’etat* of Sayyid Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn and Riḍā Khān in February 1921. His prison notes were later published in the *Shafaq-i Surkh* and subsequently as a book entitled *Ayyām-i Maḥbas*² (Prison Days), which seems to be the first Iranian work on the life of political prisoners. In it, among other things, Dashtī criticises human civilisations as the sources of the wretchedness

of many people and the prosperity and happiness of some others.³ On the other hand, rejecting the ‘nature-negating aspects of Christianity and mysticism,’ he states that the best way to make man happy, or to create a relative happiness, is found in the teaching codes such as Islam in which natural and ethical duties of mankind are reminded and explained.⁴

With the reign of Reza Shah, Dashtī started supporting him, notoriously saying to him, ‘My pen, tongue, and mind are all at the service of Your Majesty for the advancement of your nationalistic aims’.⁵ While Reza Shah, who was hailed by many famous intellectuals of the period as ‘the strong man Iran needed,’ was eagerly trying to westernise Iran through such measures as restricting the influence of the clergy, curbing and even inhibiting certain religious practices, inhibiting women from wearing the Islamic cover (*hijāb*), and abolishing certain Islamic honorific titles, Dashtī, who was still under house-arrest at the time, commented that he was essentially in favour of the anti-hijab measure but criticised Reza Shah for his ‘abrupt, dictatorial way of implementing it’.⁶ On Reza Shah’s departure from Iran, Dashtī severely denounced the king’s financial corruption and wealth accumulation.⁷ Dashtī served for a long time as a parliament member and some time as the Iranian ambassador to Egypt and Lebanon.⁸

In addition to his political writings, he wrote and published a number of translations of European thinkers and writers such as Anatole France and Marcel Proust, short story collections such as *Fitnib* (1943), *Jādū* (1952), and *Hindū* (1955), some reflections on famous Persian poets produced in such books as *Naqshī az Ḥāfiẓ* (Hafiz: A Sketch), 1957, and *Sayrī dar Dīvān-i Shams* (An Excursion into the Divān of Shams), 1958, and finally, several books on religious themes including such works as *Pardeb-e Pendar* (The Veil of Thought), 1974 and, more importantly, *Bīst o sih sāl*, translated as *Twenty-Three Years: A Life of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad* by F. R. C. Bagley in 1994.⁹

Dashtī claims that his reason for writing this life of Muḥammad is to give a clear and reasonable picture of Muḥammad’s life which is not distorted by prejudices, preconceptions, and fantasy.¹⁰ Like

Thomas Carlyle, who considers and treats Muḥammad as a hero in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History*,¹¹ Dashtī, too, takes him as ‘one of the most outstanding men of genius who have appeared in human history’ and the greatest of his own time.¹² He starts the book giving a pleasant and positive view of the life and personality of the Prophet, revealing his deep belief in the prophethood of the man and censuring some Europeans for denying Muḥammad’s prophethood, while admitting the prophethood of Jesus and Moses without rationally acceptable evidence.¹³ As the biography goes on, however, it is revealed that Dashtī makes no distinction between Muḥammad and other social or religious reformers or heroes as he makes no reference to revelation as a distinguishing feature of the Prophet.¹⁴ The pleasant picture, little by little, gives way to a negative and dark one, and finally, Islam is denounced as changing from ‘a purely spiritual mission into a militant and punitive organisation whose progress depended on booty from raids and revenue from the Zakat tax’ after the capture of Mecca.¹⁵

It seems that Dashtī’s main goal is to provide a picture of Islam that follows reason standards (‘aql). For him, reason appears to be the basis for perceiving and interpreting Qur’anic revelations and traditions (hadith). He emerges in his study of Muḥammad and Islam not only as a historian but also as a neo-Mu‘tazilite theologian to whom the role of reason should be highlighted and emphasised. However, as a result of too much dependence on his own reason while allegedly trying to get rid of superstitions and false legends, he has distorted the picture of Islam and the Prophet in another way which does not correspond to much of the widely agreed interpretation of the Qur’an.

1. Introduction

The Islamic tradition holds that God has selected certain people to guide mankind, entrusting them with His messages for all peoples. These are the prophets, through whose meditations the current of mercy and guidance comes down to earth from God.¹⁶

On the other hand, during the history of human life, a number of people have misused the people’s trust and belief in the origin and the end of humanity and have presented themselves as a messenger of God.¹⁷ From another angle, human nature compels man not to accept any claims without conclusive evidence. Avicenna (d. 1036) says that whoever accepts someone who makes claims without such necessary evidence has lost his sound human nature.¹⁸

Therefore, theologians have laid down a set of rules by which true prophets can be distinguished from false ones. One of these rules is the performance of miracles in such a way that the asserter of prophecy is able to perform extraordinary acts that other people and even geniuses cannot perform.¹⁹

From the Qur’anic perspective, it can be clearly seen that demanding miracles from prophets or those who claim prophethood is part of human nature. For example, when Prophet Ṣāliḥ claimed he was a Messenger of God, the Qur’an says that the people told him, ‘You are just a human being like us, so bring us a sign [a miracle], should you be truthful’.²⁰ Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad was expected to perform miracles to prove that he was a real messenger of God, a prophet. Otherwise, he would not have been believed and followed by his people.

In the eyes of Muslims, the Qur’an is the eternal miracle of the Prophet.²¹ But a question may be raised as to whether the Prophet’s miracle was limited to the Qur’an or whether he produced other miracles as well. Fakhr al-Islām (d. 1911), an Islamic theologian in *Anīs al-‘Ālām*, argues that the issue that the Qur’an is the Prophet’s only miracle was originally raised by some Christian scholars. He quotes from Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865), a German priest, who claimed, in *Minār al-Ḥaqq*, that the Prophet of Islam had no miracle apart from the Qur’an.²² Fakhr al-Islām also quotes George Droy, who has written a book about the life of the Prophet, similarly contending that whenever the Prophet was asked to bring a miracle apart from the Qur’an, he would say: ‘I have no authority to perform any miracle and this blessing has not been given to me’.²³ The first part of this sentence, ‘I have no authority to perform any miracle,’ is right because unless there is

permission by God a prophet is unable to perform a miracle. The Qur'an says: 'an apostle may not bring a sign except by Allah's leave'.²⁴ But the second part, 'this blessing has not been given to me,' does not accord with the argument found in the Qur'an. According to various circumstances, for the sake of convincing certain persons, the Prophet performed many miracles by the permission of God and through His power.

'Alī Dashtī, in *Twenty-Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammmad*, also maintains the Prophet did not perform any miracle apart from the Qur'an. He states that Muslims would find 'no report of a miracle [by the Prophet]' in the Qur'an if they were to read it; rather, 'they would learn from twenty or more Qur'anic passages that whenever the prophet Muḥammad was asked by doubters to perform a miracle, he either stayed silent or said that he would not do so because he was a human being like any other'.²⁵

The burden of the present essay will be an argument against such claims. I shall argue that both the Qur'an and genuine narrations (*al-ḥadīth al-ṣaḥīḥ*) reveal a different picture in which the Prophet performed many miracles. This work consists of three sections. First it will explain the verses that refer to the fact that the Prophet performed many miracles. Second, it will endeavour to reveal through traditions that the Prophet had other miracles than the Qur'an. Third, it shall discuss those verses which Dashtī believes reject any miracle-doing apart from the Qur'an on the part of the Prophet. In the eyes of Dashtī, it seems that these verses generally problematise the concept of miracles. It would appear that the Neo-Mu'tazilite learnings of 'Alī Dashtī, in particular, his commitment to a rational, non-miraculous prophet, caused him to neglect those verses of the Qur'an that affirm the prophet's miracles.

The Qur'an and the Prophet's miracles

The Qur'an clearly confirms that the Prophet performed miracles. The Qur'anic verses can be classified into two categories: (a) the

verses that refers to the fact of the Prophet’s miracle-doing in general; (b) Those verses which give actual examples of the Prophet’s miracles. Now we deal with the first category.

The first category

The first category of verses includes general references to the fact that the Prophet was given the power of performing and did perform miracles as proof of his mission. In this category, we encounter two subdivisions: (1) the verses which include the word *āyah* (sign); (2) the verses which refer to the noun *bayyīnah* (manifested proof). It is evident from the Qur’anic verses that miracle is one meaning of these two words. We now turn our attention to the first subdivision. i.e., the verses which include the word *āyah*.

Throughout the Qur’an, the word *āyah* or *āyāt* (plural) appears frequently. Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, in *The Vision of Islam*, classify the meanings of the word *āyah* into three senses: Qur’anic verses and other scripture;²⁶ general signs of God’s existence and power;²⁷ and prophetic miracles.²⁸ Moreover, ‘Alī Akbar Qurashī in his *Qāmūs-i Qur’ān* maintains that the word *āyah* refers to four meanings: (a) miracle,²⁹ (b) Sign (and proof),³⁰ (c) Lesson (‘ibrat),³¹ and (d) the Qur’an.³²

Furthermore, a considerable number of Qur’anic verses³³ confirm that the word *āyah* or *āyāt* points to a miracle. Here is an example: “They say, “Why has not some sign been sent down to him from his Lord?” say, “The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a manifest Warner.” Does it not suffice them that We have sent down to *you* the Book which is recited to them?”³⁴ In response to the pagans’ criticism of the Prophet, that he did not have any signs of his prophethood except the Qur’an, God stresses that the Qur’an itself is a miracle which has been ignored, and therefore there would be no point in sending other signs to people who have stubbornly decided to reject clear signs. Here people are talking about the signs of the Prophet’s divine mission and God refers to the Qur’an as a sign. Clearly the sign which the people demanded was something other than scriptures – the

Qur'an – they wanted a miracle to convince them.³⁵

The miracles of Jesus also are considered as āyah in the Qur'an. It says:

and [he will be] an apostle to the Children of Israel, [and he will declare,] 'I have certainly brought you a sign as [āyah] from your Lord: I will create for you the form of a bird out of clay, then I will breathe into it, and it will become a bird by Allah's leave. I heal the blind and the leper and I revive the dead by Allah's leave. I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful.'³⁶

As you see, the miracles of Jesus such as healing the blind, reviving the dead and etc., are called *āyah*. Moreover, the attribution of the meaning 'miracle' to the word āyah is also affirmed by Dashtī when he discusses such verses as 10:20; 13:7; 29:50 and 6: 37 and 109, all containing the word āyah or āyāt.³⁷

In light of what was discussed above, it can be concluded that one of the meanings of the word 'sign' in the Qur'an signifies a miracle. Now, we return to our discussion, i.e. the first group of Qur'anic verses which talk about the Prophet's miracles referring to them as *āyah* or *āyāt*. We allude to three examples.

1. A case in point is where the Qur'an reports that the disbelievers sometimes dismissed the Prophet's miracles as 'plain magic'. The Qur'an states:

وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ وَقَالُوا إِن هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

when they see a sign they make it an object of ridicule, and say, 'this is nothing but plain magic'.³⁸

The phrase 'they see' (*ra'aw*) suggests that the 'sign' here is an object or an action which can be seen. If the word referred to Qur'an the word 'recite' (*tutlā* or other forms of the same verb) would have been used to modify it, as in the verse

ذٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ

These that We recite to you are from the signs and the Wise Reminder.³⁹

Furthermore, the content of the verse does not suggest the sense of ‘God’s general signs’ either. The only remaining possibility then is a miracle. Also, *āyatan* in the above verse is indefinite (*nakarah*), indicating that *āyatan* has a general meaning. In other words, it does not refer to a specific miracle, rather it means that they considered every miracle as ‘plain magic’. It implies that the Prophet performed different miracles.

In sum, the verse ‘when they see a sign they make it an object of ridicule, and say, “this is nothing but plain magic”⁴⁰ indirectly indicates that the Prophet performed many miracles (apart from the Qur’an) and they could not convince the disbelievers when they saw (*ra’aw*) them. In light of these reasons Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1209), in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, too, posits that this verse refers to miracles other than the Qur’an.⁴¹

2. A similar argument is found in the following verses. The Qur’an states:

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ وَإِن يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split. If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, ‘An incessant magic!’⁴²

In the above verses the statement ‘they see’ shows that *āyah* is a reference not to scriptures but to the splitting of the moon as a miracle. The word *mustamir* (incessant) refers to the fact that they had seen many miracles from the Prophet; the splitting of the moon was one of the series of his miracles. They considered the splitting of the moon as magic as they regarded the preceding miracles as magic.⁴³

3. Sometimes when the Prophet performed a miracle, people would demand that they, too, would be given prophetic abilities

or positions. The Qur'an says:

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ

When a sign comes to them, they say 'we will not believe until we are given the like of what was given to Allah's apostles'.⁴⁴

Some commentators like Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabarsī (d.1152), in *Majma' al-Bayān*, have mentioned that this verse was revealed when Walīd ibn Mughīrah, who was among the heads of the idolaters and a chief of a big clan and also a mastermind of the pagans, once said to the Prophet, 'If prophethood is something true and real, then I deserve more than anybody else to be elected to such a position because I am older than you and have more wealth than most of the people'.⁴⁵

Again as reasoned above, the meaning of āyah is not the Qur'anic verses since it is not modified by the word 'recite' but 'comes.' Moreover, āyah is indefinite (*nakarrah*) indicating that it has a general meaning. Thus, it does not refer to a specific miracle; as a result, it is implied that the Prophet performed different miracles.

As mentioned earlier, the first category of verses includes general references to the fact that the Prophet was given the power of performing and did perform miracles as proof of his mission. In this category, we encounter two subdivisions: (1) The verses which include the word āyah (sign). (2) The verse which refers to the noun *bayyinah* (manifested proof). The second subdivision is now the subject of our attention.

Throughout the Qur'an, the word *bayyinah* or *bayyināt* (plural) appears frequently meaning 'proof/s' or 'manifested proof/s', which introduces the idea of a miracle.⁴⁶ The following are clear examples:

We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, manifested proofs
[*bayyināt*];⁴⁷

Certainly Joseph brought you manifested proofs [*bayyināt*] earlier⁴⁸

Then after him We sent [other] apostles to their people. They brought them manifested proofs [*bayyināt*].⁴⁹

As we can see, there is no report of ‘reciting’ the *bayyināt* (manifested proofs) here, but rather God speaks of ‘giving’ and ‘bringing,’ whereas, if *bayyināt* referred to the Qur’an or other scripture, as also explicated above, it would have been modified by a form of the word ‘recite’ (*tullā*). Therefore, we may argue that the verses do not point to scriptures or the Qur’an, in specific, as ‘manifested proofs,’ but to miracles.

There is yet another group of verses which attest to the meaning ‘miracle’. Here are some examples:

If they impugn you, those before them have impugned [likewise]: their apostles brought them manifest proofs [*bayyināt*], writs, and illuminating scriptures;⁵⁰

Certainly we sent Our apostles with the manifested proofs [*bayyināt*], and we sent down with them the Book.⁵¹

In both of these verses, the phrase ‘manifested proofs’ (*bayyināt*) is followed and compared with ‘scriptures’ or ‘Book.’ In this way, *bayyināt* is distinguished from them, although all of them are considered as ‘proofs’ of God and the messengers’ prophethood. As these verses and the three previous ones altogether reveal, the noun *bayyināt* means not ‘scriptures’ but other signs which a prophet is supposed and expected to produce as proof of his prophethood or close relationship to God, signs which are usually referred to as miracles. Dashtī, too, gives a similar commentary when dealing with the verse ‘Then they took up the Calf [for worship], after all the manifested proofs that had come to them’.⁵² He decides that ‘*bayyināt*’ (‘the manifested proofs’) refers to miracles.⁵³

Now that this meaning of the word ‘*bayyināt*’ is substantiated for, I will try to demonstrate how the verse ‘How shall Allah guide a people who have disbelieved after their faith and [after] bearing witness that the Apostle is true, and after manifest

proofs [*bayyināt*] had come to them⁵⁴ can reveal that Prophet Muḥammad had miracles other than the Qur'an itself.⁵⁵ The verse was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad when Hārith ibn Suwayd killed an innocent person and, fearful of Islamic punishment, renounced his Islamic belief and fled to Mecca. Later he regretted the act and sent a person to ask Prophet Muḥammad if he could rejoin Islam. In this situation, the verse was revealed to help the Prophet make the right decision, which was a conditioned positive answer to the man. As Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd Zamakhsharī (d. 1143), in *al-Kashshāf*⁵⁶, and Fakhr al-Din Rāzī⁵⁷ argue, the word *bayyināt* in the verse concerns the Prophet's miracles as the signs of his mission, which led to the man's believing in Islam earlier. This verse, therefore, is a general indication of the fact that the Prophet had to and did perform miracles to make people like Ibn Suwayd believe in God.

As mentioned earlier, the Qur'anic verses can be classified into two categories: (a) the verses that refer to the fact of the Prophet's miracle-doing in general; (b) the verses that provide actual examples of the Prophet's miracles. We now move on to the second category.

Second category

The second category of the Qur'anic verses indicates that the Prophet performed miracles other than the Qur'an. The four miracles will be discussed below.

Ascent to Heaven

Muslim scholars consider the ascent (*mi'rāj*) of Prophet Muḥammad to Heaven as one of his miracles. The idea of *mi'rāj* is a general concept which is applied to three prophets: Solomon, Jesus, and Muḥammad. It explains a miraculous situation in which the prophets physically as well as spiritually ascended to Heaven. The Qur'an reports, 'And for Solomon [We subjected] the wind: its morning course was a month journey and its evening

course’.⁵⁸ Likewise, Prophet Jesus is reported by the Qur’an to have gone through a similar situation: ‘they did not kill him [Jesus] nor did they crucify him [. . .] rather Allah raised him up toward Himself’.⁵⁹

There are several verses in the Qur’an which are interpreted as referring to the event of *mi‘rāj*. Among them is the following one which is clearly talking about *mi‘rāj*: ‘immaculate is He who carried His servant on a journey by night from the sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque whose environs We have blessed, that we might show him our signs’.⁶⁰ Two points need to be discussed here. First, in order to prevent any doubt, Allah stresses that He is Immaculate and free from any defects and needs. He made the journey possible for Muḥammad so that people might not think that the journey was performed according to natural laws and, with usual means, consequently, deny its possibility. It has, therefore, been clarified that it was undertaken through Divine Will and special favor of the Almighty. Second, the verse suggests that the Prophet performed the journey in his body and soul together and not in his soul only. The words ‘His servant’ apply to the Prophet as a whole, not his soul only. If the *mi‘rāj* had been only spiritual proper words to be used would have been ‘His servant’s soul’.

Another verse which clearly mentions the event of *mi‘rāj* and emphasises its physical aspect is the verse which was revealed when the Prophet told the Quraysh people that he had physically seen the Archangel Gabriel. When he recited the first revelation, they disputed with him. The Qur’an replies thus to their objection:

will you dispute with him about what he saw? Certainly he saw it yet another time, by the Lote tree of the Ultimate Boundary, near which is the Garden of the Abode, when there covered the Lote Tree what covered it. The gaze did not swerve, nor did it overstep the bounds. Certainly he saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.⁶¹

The quality of the *mi‘rāj* has been a subject of discussion for a long time and much has been said about its being physical or

spiritual. Although the Qur'an, the traditions and the consensus of Shi'a scholars clearly show that it was physical,⁶² Dashtī considers the *mi'rāj* of the Prophet to be purely spiritual and claims that only his spirit travelled through the world and then returned to his body. However, he rejects the bodily *mi'rāj* of the Prophet by citing an invalid tradition. In *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, as Dashtī quotes, there is a *hadith* describing the Prophet's report of his *mi'rāj* experience in this way:

That night Gabriel came, bringing a quadruped bigger than a donkey and smaller than a mule, with outward-facing hoofs on its feet. I mounted it and rode to the House of the Sanctuary. I tied Boraq's (the animal's) bridle on the ring on which prophets usually tied it. [. . .] Gabriel brought two vessels to me, one filled with milk and one filled with wine. I chose the one filled with milk and Gabriel approved my choice. [. . .] Then a revelation came ordering me to pray fifty times every day and night. On my way back, the Prophet Moses said to me, 'Fifty prayers are too many. Ask the Lord to reduce them!' So I went back to God and ask for reduction. The Lord granted a reduction to forty prayers. This time Moses said, 'I have tested the matter in my own community. The people can't pray forty times every day and night.' I went back to God again [In short, the Prophet went on haggling until God reduced the number of the daily prayers to five].⁶³

Dashtī argues that the authors of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* do not mention any sources for the hadith, which shows its unreliability. Thus, he concludes that the *mi'rāj* was not a physical experience, as claimed by the hadith, but spiritual only.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, two points need to be explained regarding Dashtī's claims. First, the writers of the book do mention the references of the tradition, which are *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*.⁶⁵ The optimist explanation would be that Dashtī had access to a version which did not include the sources or that he did not really notice them. Second, there is no doubt that there are some dubious traditions regarding the issue of *mi'rāj*. Therefore,

to distinguish between genuine traditions and invalid ones, the Islamic scholars established the disciplines of *rijāl* and *dirāyah*. There are methods in these disciplines for distinguishing genuine traditions from unreliable ones.⁶⁶ As a result, many Muslim scholars rejected the hadith’s validity more than one thousand years ago. For example, Sayyid Murtaḍā (d. 1044) in *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah*, shows that this hadith includes illogical conceptions and can’t be true. For instance, it says that Allah abrogated a decree before delivering it to the people by reducing the number of prayers before ordering people to pray a certain number of times per day and night.⁶⁷ Moreover, al-Ṭūsī (d. 1067), in *‘Uddat al-Uṣūl*, also points out the weakness of this hadith, asking how the Prophet could ask Allah to decrease the religious obligations while it is not within his power and authority to do so.⁶⁸ Ṭabarsī has divided *mi‘rāj* narratives into four groups and includes the above hadith in the fourth group, which is comprised of exaggerated reports forged and circulated by liars. For example, such false traditions have it that, at times, the Prophet sat that night with the Almighty or that he heard the sound of His pen.⁶⁹

It would not be very justifiable to ignore some other Qur’anic pieces of evidence as well as genuine traditions, confirmed by such famous scholars as al-Ṭūsī in *al-Tibyān*,⁷⁰ Ṭabarsī, in *Majma‘ al-Bayān*,⁷¹ and Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī in *Mafātīh al-Ghayb*,⁷² and stick to a clearly fabricated hadith to prove that the *mi‘rāj* was not physical and thus no miracle. This astonishing journey taking place in the course of a very short time is one of the Prophet’s miracles.⁷³

Cleaving of the moon

Another prophetic miracle mentioned in the Qur’an concerns the cleaving of the moon. Al-Ṭabarsī reports that when the idolaters made their faith contingent upon the cleaving in two of the moon by the Prophet, he did exactly that with the permission of Allah and through His power.⁷⁴ The Qur’an puts in this way:

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ وَإِن يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُّسْتَمِرٌّ

The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split. If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, 'An incessant magic!'⁷⁵

It may be claimed that the moon is to be cleaved at the approach of resurrection; consequently, this verse does not refer to the Prophet's miracle. However, it appears that based on some pieces of evidence the cleaving of the moon took place in the time of the Prophet. Firstly the tense of the verb (*inshaqqa*) is in the past, rendering an action that has already happened. Secondly, this verse is immediately followed by another criticising the pagans for the rejection of miracles by calling them 'an incessant magic.' It would be very far-fetched to argue that there is no relation between the two verses. We could then argue that 'āyatan' (a sign) in the second verse refers to the cleaving of the moon, which is ignored, rejected, and called 'an incessant magic' by the pagan spectators. Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī supports this idea by referring to genuine traditions.⁷⁶ Also Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505), in *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīr al-Ma'thūr*, reports that, after the cleaving of the moon, some stubborn people such as Abū Jahl commented that the Prophet had 'played a magic trick' on them.⁷⁷

The awareness from the unseen world

The Qur'an views Jesus' awareness of the unseen world ('ilm al-ghayb) one of his miracles as states, 'I have certainly brought you a sign from your Lord: I will create for you the form of a bird out of clay, [...] I will tell you what you have eaten and what you have stored in your houses. There is indeed a sign in that for you, should you be faithful'.⁷⁸ The Muslim theologians also believe that Prophet Muḥammad was also informed through revelation about a series of events that happened later. Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn, known as Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Rāzī (d.1175), believes that one of the Prophet's miracles is his informing the people about the unseen world to prove his prophecy.⁷⁹

For instance, the Prophet predicted the victory of the Romans

over the Iranians,⁸⁰ the conquest of Mecca,⁸¹ the death of Walīd ibn Mughīrah,⁸² Abū Lahab and his wife in disbelief (*kufr*),⁸³ and the Quraysh’s defeat at the battle of Badr.⁸⁴ These events occurred as he predicted.⁸⁵

In light of what was mentioned so far, it can be concluded that the miracles of the Prophet cannot be limited to the Qur’an; rather, in various circumstances, he performed other miracles to convince certain individuals.

Furthermore, based on the following simple inquiry, we can firmly establish in our minds that the Prophet performed many miracles apart from the Qur’an. The Qur’an mentions nine miracles for Moses,⁸⁶ and five for Jesus.⁸⁷ Can it be acceptable that the Prophet, who considers himself superior to the previous prophets and their final one, had only one miracle after narrating so many different miracles for the previous prophets? And didn’t the people, considering the issuance of all those miracles from the earlier prophets, wish for various miracles from the Prophet and were content with seeing one miracle from him?⁸⁸

As mentioned earlier this work consists of three sections. First, it explains the verses that refer to the fact that the Prophet performed many miracles. Second, it attempts to demonstrate through traditions that the Prophet had other miracles in addition to those contained within the Qur’an. Third, it discusses those verses which Dashtī believes reject any miracle-doing on the part of the Prophet. Having addressed the first one, the following part will deal with the second section.

2. Traditions and the Prophet’s miracles

It is evident from the narrations that the Prophet performed many miracles in addition to the Qur’an. Muslim scholars, despite their minor differences about the Prophet’s miracles, compiled many books in this regard. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d.1692), the famed narrator, collected more than twenty thousand hadiths regarding the miracles of the Prophet and his successors in his *Ithbāt*

al-Hidāyah bil-Nuṣūṣ wa al-Mu'jizāt, from 142 Shi'i sources and 24 Sunni sources.⁸⁹ Moreover, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1699) dedicated a part of his book *Ḥayāt al-Qulūb* to the miracles of the Prophet.⁹⁰

Among such narrations, there is an abundance of narrations which relate the Prophet's predictions about people and events as a kind of miraculous activity. It is interesting that such predictions or foretelling statements by Jesus are also regarded by the Qur'an as his miracles.⁹¹ In other words, the Prophet prophesied many events, giving precise information about them. It is worth noting that they unfolded exactly as predicted. A case in point is the story of Imam 'Alī and his martyrdom. According to Majlisī, in *Biḥār al-Anwār*, once the Prophet, talking with tears in his eyes to 'Alī, informed him that he would be killed while praying in the month of Ramaḍān by a cruel man with a sword. This is exactly what happened more than thirty years later. In this act of foretelling, the prophet precisely predicted not only the time (in the month of Ramaḍān), but also the means (sword) and the occasion (praying) of the event.⁹²

'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (1325) mentioned many miracles by the Prophet.⁹³ It is worth noting two points here. First, no one has claimed that all these hadiths are definitely issued by infallible individuals. Nevertheless, when we look at all the collections of narrations, it leads us to a generally widely transmitted (*tawātur-i ijmālī*) in which the Prophet performed many miracles other than the Qur'an. Second, when we take into account the verses talking about the Prophet's miracles in general and the verses which give instances of his miracles, as well as the traditions which relate his miraculous acts, we may conclude that the prophet performed various miracles, other than the Qur'an, which Dashtī ignores.

This article consists of three sections, as previously mentioned. First, it explains the verses that refer to the fact that the Prophet performed many miracles. Second, it demonstrates through traditions that the Prophet had other miracles in addition to those contained within the Qur'an. Third, it discusses those verses in which Dashtī believes the Prophet did not perform any miracle

apart from the Qur’an. Having addressed the first and the second ones, the following part will deal with the third section.

3. Dashtī and the rejection of the Prophet’s miracles

Dashtī claims that some verses indicate that the Prophet had no miracles apart from the Qur’an. In this part of this article, I would like to analyse some of them and answer the claim. Dashtī contends that more than twenty-five passages in the Meccan *sūrah*s reveal that the Prophet was requested to perform a miracle, but his ‘response was either silence or assertion of his humanity’.⁹⁴ In order to illustrate his claim, he cites some verses as evidence which we refer to as the two most important ones.

First piece of evidence

It seems that the most critical piece of evidence, in the eyes of Dashtī, indicates that the Prophet had no miracle apart from the Qur’an is the following set of verses:

They say, ‘We will not believe you until you make a spring gush forth for us from the ground. Or until you have a garden of date palms and vines and you make streams gush through it. Or until you cause the sky to fall in fragment upon us, just as you would aver. Or until you bring Allah and the angels [right] in front of us. Or you have a house of gold, or you ascend into the sky. And we will not believe your ascension until you bring down for us a book that we may read’, say, immaculate is my Lord! Am I anything but a human and apostle.⁹⁵

According to the above verses, the pagans of Mecca had six requests from the Prophet:

- 1) to make a spring which gushes water forth from it.
- 2) to build a garden of date-palms and grapes with streams gushing through it
- 3) let stones fall on us from the sky
- 4) to show Allah and the angels

- 5) to have a house of gold,
- 6) to ascend into the sky or to bring a book from the sky for them.

For a better understanding of this verse, let me quote the occasion of the revelation from *Majma' al-Bayān*. It says that one day, after sunset, the chiefs of Quraysh, such as Abū Sufyān and Abū Jahl, assembled by the side of the Ka'bah and decided to discuss with the Prophet about his prophetic claims. During the discussion, they demanded the Prophet perform certain miracles as proof of his truthfulness regarding his religion. These demands are all mentioned in the above verse. According to the response of the Prophet – ‘immaculate is my Lord! Am I anything but a human and apostle’⁹⁶ – Dashtī concludes that the Prophet had no miracles other than the Qur’an. As we discussed previously, the Prophet did perform miracles, which are attested to by the Qur’an and abundant traditions. Yet, there are justifiable arguments why such miracles, as demanded by those pagans, were rejected on that occasion by the Prophet.

In reply, it should be noted that performing miracles depend on certain conditions such as (a) the logical possibility of miracles, (b) its providential possibility, (c) a sensible relationship between them and the verification of prophethood, and (d) a good encouraging effect on the faith of miracle-demanders.⁹⁷ Taking these four conditions into consideration, we evaluate Dashtī’s claim.

The first condition of the performance of the miracle is that the impossible affairs cannot fit in the realm of miracle.⁹⁸ The prophets always reject logically impossible requests. This means that whenever prophets are asked to perform such acts, they ignore them. As a result, ignoring such demands cannot be a sign of the incapability of the prophets to perform miracles. It is clear that the fourth request of the pagans, i.e., to bring and show Allah and His angels to them, is logically impossible. For visibility, some conditions of visual sense-perception must be fulfilled: (a) the object must be in a particular place; (b) it must be illuminated by some light source (that is, it must not be in complete darkness);

(c) it must be separate, in essence, ‘from the perceiving subject’. Clearly, such conditions apply to material substances only, not Allah.⁹⁹ It would be against the very definition of God to behave like a material substance. As a result, the Prophet’s refusal to fulfil the fourth request of the pagans was not due to his incapacity, but rather to the absence of the fourth condition of the miracle.

The second condition of the performance of a miracle is that it should not be against His will. It means that the Prophet does not perform any act which is against His will. In the third demand of the pagans, the Prophet was asked to cause the sky to fall in fragments upon them. It is clear that such an act is not essentially impossible, but it is against God’s will since He wills to keep man and lead them to reach perfection through His mercy. Allah is absolutely wise and perfect and never does anything against His purpose and Providence. Yes, it is the will of God for the sky, in a sense, to fall and collapse on Doomsday.¹⁰⁰ The Qur’an says: ‘The day We shall roll up the sky, like the rolling of the scrolls for writings. We will bring it back as We began the first creation – a promise [binding] on Us [that] indeed We will do’.¹⁰¹ Thus, the Prophet’s refusal to fulfil the fourth demand of the pagans was not due to his incapacity but rather to the absence of the second condition of the miracle.

The third condition of the performance of a miracle concerns its purpose. The miracle’s purpose is to confirm the integrity of the claim to prophethood and the relationship between a prophet and Allah. Thus, if people requested a miracle whose performance is devoid of this purpose, there would be no reason for its performance. It is clear that the performance of the miracle would not be a sign of the prophet’s connection with Allah and so, would not benefit his mission in any way. Such miracles as having ‘a garden of date palms and vines,’ if these could be miracles at all, could not make people believe that a certain person was a prophet of God since some ordinary people have these things without being prophets.¹⁰²

It might be argued that fulfilling such expectations as having ‘a garden of date palms and vines’ or having ‘a house of gold’ would

not prove the veracity of the claim to prophethood if it were done by ordinary means. Nevertheless, if the Prophet performed them extraordinarily, undoubtedly, it would have been evidence of the truth of his prophetic claims. In reply, this seems to be a reasonable objection; however, having a gold house or a palm and grape garden through miraculous means was not what the pagans actually required. Rather, they believed that the Prophet should be wealthy. The Qur'an quotes pagans asking, 'Why was not this Qur'an sent down to some great man from the two cities?'¹⁰³ If the pagans intended a supernatural performance, they would not say, 'We will not believe you until you have a garden of date palms and vines' or 'until you have a house of gold'.¹⁰⁴ Rather, the problem lay somewhere else: they could not understand why an ordinary non-wealthy man should be selected as a prophet in the first place.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the lack of third condition was the reason for the Prophet's refusal of the performance of miracles, not his incapability.¹⁰⁶

The fourth condition of the miracle concerns the belief of the people. It means that the Prophet performs miracles in order to improve people's faith or prove their prophetic mission. Now when the requesters were obstinate and unreasonable people, performing miracles would have been pointless. The verse itself indicates that the pagans were stubborn to such an extent that even they were not satisfied with the Prophet's ascension to the sky.¹⁰⁷ They would say, 'We will not believe your ascension until you bring down for us a book that we may read'.¹⁰⁸ In fact, as the Qur'an says, they would not even be satisfied if all of their requests were accomplished. The Qur'an states, 'Had we sent down to you a Book on paper so they could touch it with their [own] hand [still] the faithless would have said this is nothing but plain magic'.¹⁰⁹

Dashtī, referring to the verse 'Am I anything but a human and apostle?',¹¹⁰ postulates that the verse conveys the inability of the Prophet to perform miracles. This does not, however, seem to be the right understanding of the verse. It rather suggests that the Prophet is just a messenger and obedient to Allah's will. Stressing his humanity and his being an 'apostle' only, he answers that

performing miracles is out of his human power and that such performance would be solely made through Divine power. In terms of his prophethood, however, it implies that the Prophet is only allowed and supposed to carry out Allah’s orders and do whatever He wishes.¹¹¹ The Qur’an confirms this understanding of the verse when God says, ‘An apostle may not bring any sign except by Allah’s permission’.¹¹²

More importantly, prophets were not obliged to fulfil all the people had requested. The aim of prophets was to connect people to Allah through miracles but they were not supposed to convince every single person of their society through miracles. Therefore, the Prophet’s failure to perform some miracles was due to the absence of the fourth condition rather than his incapacity.

Furthermore, the claim of Dashtī that more than 25 passages of the Meccan chapters reveal that the Prophet was requested to perform a miracle, but his ‘response was either silence or assertion of his humanity’¹¹³ does not appear to be true. Since, Jalal al-Din al-Suyūṭī, in *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafṣīr al-Ma’thūr*, quotes,¹¹⁴ some traditions showing that the Prophet actually did not remain silent on the occasion of the above verse; rather, he discussed the matters with the pagans’ interlocutors.¹¹⁵ So while the Prophet reasserted his humanity in such cases, he also talked to the pagans and tried to convince them in other ways when God did not permit him to do miracles. Moreover, the Prophet said that as long as necessary, he had performed miracles recorded in hadith compilations.¹¹⁶

In light of what was discussed above, it can be concluded that the Prophet’s refusal to perform the miracles mentioned in verses 17:91-3 is not proof of his inability to perform them; rather, it shows that the miracles had no required conditions. Because the miracles they wanted were either impossible or had no benefit in their performance. History proves that the Prophet performed many miracles with God’s permission whenever it was expedient and beneficial.

As mentioned earlier, Dashtī claims that some verses indicate that the Prophet had no miracles apart from the Qur’an. In order

to illustrate his claim, he cites some verses. Having discussed the first evidence, namely 17:91-3, we now turn to the second one.

Second piece of evidence

The second evidence for Dashtī is polytheists' claim that if the Prophet performs a miracle, they will believe in him. Taking recourse to the verse, 'they swear by Allah with solemn oaths that were a sign to come to them they would surely believe in it. Say, "The signs are only with Allah" and what will bring home to you that they will not believe even if they come?'"¹¹⁷ Dashtī explains that 'the polytheists had sworn that if any of the miracles which they were demanding of the Prophet should occur, they would then believe. Dashtī adds that God had commanded the Prophet to reply that miracles were not in his power but only in God's'. Dashtī concludes that 'this clear affirmation of the inability of any human being, even a prophet, to take supernatural action means that the laws of nature are immutable and the actions or phenomena contrary to those laws are impossible. Fire, for example, can never lose its capacity to burn'.¹¹⁸

Although Dashtī is right in arguing that all human beings are incapable of taking supernatural action, the idea that 'the laws of nature are immutable' implies that he rejects the possibility of the performance of the miracle.¹¹⁹ While the Qur'an admits and emphasises the law of causality in the world, it also relates many events which were against the normal and natural system of cause and effect. It ascribes many supernatural miracles to various prophets, including Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad, and other prophets. It should be remembered that such events, although un-normal and unnatural, were not inherently impossible. They are possible events but the form of occurrence is not normal and natural. The lepers, for example, could be cured by a particular medicine and operation according to the laws of nature, but Prophet Jesus, by his hand¹²⁰ and bypassing this usual way, healed them.

Nevertheless, according to Dashtī, it would not be possible

for natural laws to be suspended in any way. Fire, he claims, can never lose its burning effect. However, it is against what the Qur’an narrates that the fire was commanded, ‘Be cool and safe for Abraham’.¹²¹ It is obvious that it is due to God’s suspension of such natural laws that Abraham going through fire and coming out safe becomes possible.

Dashtī, then, raises another argument about the above-mentioned verse, i.e., 6:109, and states that:

The prophet asked himself how he was to know that, in the event of a future miracle, the polytheists would not believe? This question prompts a counter-question: can it be taken for certain that if a miracle had already occurred, polytheists would have believed? In the view of the human tendency to marvel at an abnormal deed and to admire its doer, they would of course have been likely to submit.¹²²

Dashtī wonders why the Prophet did not perform a miracle in response to their request. The polytheists would believe if a miracle were performed, he says. In short, Dashtī argues that performing miracles generally leads to believing in God.

As a response, this argument seems weak. In fact, all prophets’ invitation to believe in God was accompanied by miracles, while people’s tendency toward faith was low. For instance, the Prophet Moses, in spite of his nine clear miracles, was accused of being a magician.¹²³ He did his best to guide Pharaoh and his folk to the way of justice and truth, but it ended up with little influence. They persecuted the believers and Moses himself, and eventually, Moses and his followers fled Egypt in the dark of night.¹²⁴ The manifested proofs of the Prophet Jesus, too, were considered as plain magic.¹²⁵ The Prophet Ṣāliḥ, with his remarkable miracle not only could not draw the attention of Thamūd, but they also hamstrung her camel.¹²⁶ In some verses, the Qur’an declares that the polytheists contradicted all Allah’s signs and miracles as it states, ‘there did not come to them any sign from among the signs of their Lord but they used to disregard it.’¹²⁷ In light of such verses, it can be argued that the Qur’an indicates that miracles cannot always lead

people towards faith.¹²⁸

Furthermore, Dashtī is surprised at the Qur'an and God for saying, 'We transform their hearts and their visions as they did not believe in it the first time, and We leave them bewildered in their rebellion'.¹²⁹ He argues that 'this statement prompts the question whether Almighty God really causes mischief by depriving people of the ability to see the truth. If He does, what can be expected of mankind, and what use is there in sending prophets to mankind?'¹³⁰

In response, it should be added that in the interpretation of any verse, all the verses related to that subject should be considered as a totality, as Imam 'Alī says some verses of the Qur'an can interpret other verses.¹³¹ It is right that the Qur'an says, 'We transform their hearts and their visions,' but according to other numerous verses, turning the heart and sight is the result of their sins. In other words, the actions of men, apart from deserving an appropriate reward or punishment in the hereafter, have consequences in this world, too. In fact, some events in the world are direct results of human actions; this is a reality which the divine revelation frequently points to: 'if the people of the town had been faithful and God wary, We would have opened to them blessing from the heaven and the earth. But they denied; so We seized them'.¹³² As being faithful results in Allah's blessing, the breaking of promises leads to the hardness of the heart: 'then because of their breaking their covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hard'.¹³³

The Qur'an introduces itself as the book of guidance for pious people,¹³⁴ whereas it is ineffective for disbelievers.¹³⁵ They may lose the power of discerning and comprehending the truth due to their sins. They have minds, eyes, and ears but, when it comes to realities, they cannot understand, see, or hear the truth as their disgraceful actions, stubbornness, and hostility, like curtains, have covered these means of cognition.¹³⁶

It should be noted that Allah does not take away people's sense of perception from the very beginning. According to some verses

and traditions, sinful wrongdoing and denial of obvious truth make for such a situation. If losing the power of distinction and comprehension in several verses is put in terms of setting a seal upon the hearts, ears and eyes, it is because these are the basic means of understanding. The Qur’an asks, ‘Have you seen him who has taken his desire to be his god and whom Allah has led astray knowingly, and set a seal upon his hearing and his heart, and drawn a blind on his sight?’¹³⁷ Somewhere else, it says, ‘those who dispute the signs of Allah without any authority that may have come to them [that is] greatly outrageous to Allah and to those have faith. That is how Allah seals the heart of every arrogant [one]’¹³⁸ and ‘Allah has set a seal on them for their unfaith’.¹³⁹ So these verses clearly inform us that losing the sense of cognition is a result of heresy and disputing the signs of Allah and, in other words, is a reaction proportionate to the sinners’ actions, not mischief on the part of Allah.¹⁴⁰

Dashtī propounds the question of why He sent the prophets to them if Allah had known that these people never believed in Him.¹⁴¹ In reply, it could be said, firstly, as the Qur’an says, Allah had a purpose in creating man, and this purpose was to be fulfilled by means of a perfect plan for all human affairs; and this plan had to be designed by Allah for all people in such a way that there could be no further possibility of arguing with Him, or giving excuses for their lack of faith saying, for instance, ‘I did not know the right way to conduct my life’.¹⁴² Secondly, it is not necessary that the achievement of prophets should be one hundred per cent. A gardener waters gardens which include numerous weeds in order to grow some useful plants and trees, but no one would claim that ‘the watering of this garden is vain.’ Likewise, the prophets have been sent not for disbelievers only, so it would not be reasonable to maintain that prophets are there for nothing and that there is no point in sending them; they are there for all mankind.¹⁴³ Naturally, their mission proves fruitful with some people who are led to the right way while others reject and dismiss them as liars, magicians, and the like.

Conclusion

As generally agreed, it is essential for a prophet to verify his prophetic mission by performance of miracles. According to some Qur'anic verses and genuine narrations, the Prophet Muḥammad performed many miracles other than the Qur'an. The Qur'anic verses fall into two categories: (a) the verses that refer to the fact of the Prophet's miracle-doing in general; (b) verses that provide examples of the Prophet's miracles. The cleaving of the moon and his *mi'rāj* are just two clear cases mentioned in the Qur'an and supported by various genuine traditions.

Dashtī contends that several passages in the Meccan suras demonstrate that the Prophet was asked to perform a miracle, but either responded by silence or by asserting his humanity. It, in the eyes of Dashtī, implies the incapability of the Prophet for the performance of the miracles.

To reply, it should be noted that performing miracles depends on a number of factors, including (a) the logical possibility of miracles, (b) the providential possibility of miracles, (c) a sensible connection between them and the verification of prophethood, and (d) an encouraging effect on miracle seekers' faith. So, it seems that performing any suggested miracles was unnecessary when these conditions were lacking. In short, a clear analysis of the Qur'an and true traditions can reveal that Prophet Muḥammad performed miracles like all other prophets; he had his own miracles as signs of his relation to God and his mission as a divinely appointed apostle of true faith.

In sum, according to some Qur'anic verses and genuine narrations, the Prophet Muḥammad performed many miracles apart from the Qur'an.

Endnotes

- 1 J.E Knörzer, *Ali Dashti's Prison Days: Life under Reza Shah* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda in association with Bibliotheca Persica, 1994), 11-12.
- 2 Ibid., 12.
- 3 Ibid., 89.
- 4 Ibid., 83.
- 5 H. Khājīh Nūrī, *Bāzī Garān-i 'Aṣr-i Ṭalā'ī* (Tehran: Kitabhā-yi Jībī, 1962), 268. See also 'Alī Dashtī, *Panjāh o Panj* [Fifty-Five Years] (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1975), 29.
- 6 Knörzer, 37-50.
- 7 Ibid., 41-2.
- 8 Ibid., 13-4.
- 9 Ibid., 16-21.
- 10 'Alī Dashtī, *Twenty-Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad*, trans. F.R.C Bagley (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda, 1994), 1.
- 11 Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 37-66.
- 12 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 7-8.
- 13 Ibid., 17.
- 14 Ibid., 20.
- 15 Ibid., 97.
- 16 According to a traditional Muslim view, God has sent one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets. Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *al-I'tiqādāt* (Qum: al-Mu'tamar al-'Ālami lil-Shaykh al-Mufid, n.d), 92-3. See also Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 111 vols., vol. 11 (Beirut Dār al-Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1982), 30, 58, 32 and 28. These prophets, in turn, can be divided into two types: major prophets (*ulū al-'aẓm*) and minor prophets (non-*ulū al-'aẓm*). Major prophets are those to whom God gave a divine Book. 'Abdullāh Javādī, *Tafsīr-i Maẓdū'ī-yi Qur'ān-i Karīm: Sīrīh-yi Piyambarān dar Qur'ān*, 19 vols. (Qum: Markaz-i Nashr-i Isrā', 2010), vol. 6, 251; Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq,

- ‘Ilal al-Sharā‘i’, 2 vols. (Qum: Dāvārī, 1996), vol. 1, 122-3. Each Book, according to the Islamic viewpoint, reveals a collection of the fundamental principles of religious beliefs, rulings, and ethics. ‘Abdullāh Javādī, *Tasnīm: Tafṣīr-i Qur’ān-i Karīm*, vol. 2 (Qum: Markaz-i Nashr-i Isrā’, 2010), 135-6; *Tafṣīr-i Mawḍū‘ī-yi Qur’ān-i Karīm: Sīrib-yi Piyāmbarān dār Qur’ān*, 6. 364. See also *Adab-i Fanā-yi Muqarrabān*, 7 vols., vol. 2 (Qum: Markaz-i Nashr-i Isrā’, 2009), 185. According to the Qur’an (42:13) and hadiths such Books have been given to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, all major prophets. *Tasnīm*, vol. 2, 135-6. See also al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 11, pp. 32, 56; al-Ṣadūq, *‘Ilal al-Sharā‘i’*, vol. 1, 149. Minor prophets, on the other hand, are those to whom God did not give such a book and who were merely guardians and preachers of previous major prophets’ teachings. Javādī, *Tasnīm*, vol. 2, 136. Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Jonah, Job, Aaron, Solomon and David are major prophets. *Ibid.*, vol. 10, 472-3; vol. 14, 232. See also *The Qur’an*, trans. Aliquili Qara’i, 2nd ed. (London: ICAS, 2005), 3:163.
- 17 It has been reported that Musaylamah, al-Aswad al-‘Ansī, and Ṭalḥah ibn Khuwaylid claimed to be prophets. See Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī Ibn Shahrāshūb, *Manāqib ‘Alī Abī Talīb*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Qum: Allamah, 1959), 117-8; Taqī al-Din Māqriẓī, *Imtā’ al-asmā’ bi-mā lil-Nabī ṣallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-sallam min al-aḥwāl wa-al-amwāl wa-al-ḥafadah wa-al-matā’*, 15 vols., vol. 14 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1999), 229; ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā Irbīlī, *Kashf al-Ghummah fi Ma‘rifah al-‘Immah*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Tabriz: Banī Hāshimī, 1961), 27; Yūsuf ibn ‘Abdullāh ‘Abd al-Birr, *al-Isti‘āb fi Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*, 4 vols., vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1991), 773.
- 18 Abū ‘Alī Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Nijat* (Beirut: Dar al-Ufuq, 1984), 304.
- 19 Ja‘far Sobḥānī, *al-Ilāhiyyāt ilā Hudā al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah wa al-‘Aql*, ed. al-Dār al-Islāmiyyah, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Islāmiyyah, 1990), 61. See also, *Doctrine of Shi‘i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices*, trans. Reza Shah-Kazami (London and New York: I.B.Tauris, 2001), 65. The other ones are (a) the confirmation of the previous prophet, and (b) portents and signs.
- 20 *The Qur’an*, 26:154.
- 21 For eternity of the Qur’an, see *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, vol. 2, 215-226.

Endnotes

- 22 Muḥammad Ṣādiq Fakhr al-Islām, *Anīs al-A'lam*, 5 vols., vol. 5 (Tehran: Murtaḍavī, 1975), 347-9.
- 23 Ibid., 349-50.
- 24 The Qur'an, *The Qur'an*, trans. Aliquli Qara'i (London: ICAS, 2005), 13:38.
- 25 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 38. For this article, I took inspiration from the books of *Anīs al-A'lam* and *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Resālat*. See citations of them in the notes.
- 26 Like the verse, 'The faithful are only those whose hearts tremble [with awe] when Allah is mentioned, and when His signs [*āyāt*] are recited to them, they increase their faith'. *The Qur'an*, 8:2.
- 27 Like the verse, 'Among His signs [*āyāt*] is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. There are indeed signs in that for those who know'. Ibid., 30:22.
- 28 William C. Chittick and Sachiko Murata, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994), 52-3.
- 29 *The Qur'an*. 2:211. It says 'Ask the Children of Israel how many a manifest sign We had given them'.
- 30 Ibid., 2:248. It says: 'Their prophet said to them, 'Indeed the sign [proof] of his kingship shall be that the Ark will come to you, bearing tranquillity from your Lord and the relics left behind by the House of Moses and the House of Aaron, borne by the angels'.
- 31 Ibid., 10:92. It says 'So today We shall deliver your body so that you may be a sign [lesson] for those who come after you.'
- 32 Ibid., 3:7. It says 'It is He who has sent down to you the Book. Parts of it are definitive verses [*āyāt*], which are the mother of the Book, while others are metaphorical'. 'Alī Akbar Qurashī, *Qāmūs-i Qur'an*, 7 vols. (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1992), vol. 1, 145-6.
- 33 See, *The Qur'an*. 3:49; 7:132.
- 34 Ibid., 29:50-1.
- 35 Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i, *al-Mīzān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'an*, 20 vols. (Qum: Daftar-i Intishārāt-i Islāmī, 1996), vol. 16, 139-40.
- 36 *The Qur'an*, 3:49.

- 37 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 40-6.
- 38 *The Qur'an*. 37:14-5.
- 39 Ibid., 3:58. See also 2:151; 2:252; 3:17; 3:108; 3:164; 4:140; 8:2; 8:31; 10:15, etc.
- 40 Ibid., 37:14-5.
- 41 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, 32 vols., vol. 26 (Beirut Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmiyyah, 1999), 325. See also Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mizān*, vol. 17, 194; Fakhr al-Islām, *Anīs al-A'lām*, vol. 5, 358-9 and Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 10 vols. (Tehran: Nasir Khusru, 1993), vol. 8, 687.
- 42 *The Qur'an*, 54:1-4.
- 43 Nāṣir Makārim, *Tafsīr-i Nimūnih*, 27 vols. (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1995), vol. 23, 10.
- 44 *The Qur'an*, 6:124
- 45 Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, 10 vols. (Tehran: Nasir Khusraw, 1993), vol. 4, 559.
- 46 Fakhr al-Islām, *Anīs al-A'lām*, vol. 5, p. 361.
- 47 *The Qur'an*, 2:87.
- 48 Ibid., 40:34.
- 49 Ibid., 10:74. See also, 10:13; 2:92, 3:153; 5:101; 16:44; 20:72; 55:25; 64:16 and 7:101.
- 50 Ibid., 35:25.
- 51 Ibid., 57:25.
- 52 Ibid., 4:153.
- 53 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 45.
- 54 *The Qur'an*. 3:86.
- 55 Ja'far Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat* (Tehran: Kitābkhānih Masjid-i Jāmi'-i Tehran, 2006), 410.
- 56 Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashāf 'an Haqā'iq Ghavamiz Al-Tanzil*, 4 vols., vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Arabi, 1986), 381.
- 57 Fakhr al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 8, 283.
- 58 *The Qur'an*, 34:11.

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- 59 Ibid., 4:157-8.
- 60 Ibid., 17:1.
- 61 Ibid., 53:12-18.
- 62 Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, 609.
- 63 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 6-7; Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 383.
- 64 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 5-6.
- 65 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (Beirut: al-Nūr, 1995), 285.
- 66 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 384. In these two disciplines, in order to distinguish genuine hadiths, the practitioners apply a number of rules and make a number of considerations. For instance, they check to see who has narrated a certain hadith and if he/she was a truthful person, if he/she had a good reliable memory, if the ones he/she relates the hadith from could have been his/her contemporary, and if these other people by whom the tradition has been narrated had the same qualifications as he/she does.
- 67 al-Sayyid Murtaḍā, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*, 2 vols (Tehran: University of Tehran, 1997), vol. 1, 441; Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 385.
- 68 Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *al-'Uddah fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, 2 vols. (Qum: Sitārih, 1996), vol. 2, 524-5; Ḥasan Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī, *Ma'ālim al-Dīn wa Malādh al-Mujtabidīn* (Qum: Jami'at al-Mudarrisīn, n.d), 218-9.
- 69 al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, 609; Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 385-6.
- 70 Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 10 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī), vol. 6, 446-7.
- 71 al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, 609.
- 72 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 20, 292-7.
- 73 Some commentators hold that the verse 43:46 indicates the meeting of the Prophet with other prophets at night of *mi'rāj*. It states, 'Ask those of Our apostles We have sent before you: Did We set up any gods to be worshipped besides the All-beneficent?' For more information see,

- Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *al-Mīzān*, vol. 18, 105, 107.
- 74 al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 9, 282.
- 75 *The Qur'an*, 54:1.
- 76 Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 29, 288.
- 77 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafsīr al-Ma'thūr*, 6 vols., vol. 6 (Qum: Mar'ashī-yi Najafī, 1983), 133.
- 78 *The Qur'an*, 3:44.
- 79 Ḥusayn Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Rāzī, *Rawḍ al-Janān wa Rawḥ al-Janān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 20 vols. (Mashhad: Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍavī, 1987), vol. 5, 181-2.
- 80 *The Qur'an*, 30:32.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 48:27.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 74:26-7.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 111:1-5.
- 84 *Ibid.*, 54:45.
- 85 For a through information about the awareness of the Prophet from the Unseen World and his prediction see Ja'far Sobhānī, *Mafāhīm al-Qur'ān*, 10 vols. (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 1992), vol. 3, 359-398.
- 86 *The Qur'an*, 17:101.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 3:49.
- 88 Subhani, *Doctrine of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices*, 85.
- 89 Sobhānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 414.
- 90 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlsī, *Ḥayāt al-Qulūb*, 5 vols. (Qum: Surūr, 2007), vol. 3, 429-669.
- 91 *The Qur'an*. 3:49.
- 92 al-Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 42, 190; Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī* (Tehran: Kitābchī, 1997), 95; 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, 2 vols. (Tehran: Jahān, 1958), vol. 1, 295-7.
- 93 al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-Murād* (Qum: Mu'assisah al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, 2015), 167-172.
- 94 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 40.

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- 95 *The Qur'an*, 17:90-3.
- 96 al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, 519.
- 97 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 472-5.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 472.
- 99 Subhani, *Doctrine of Shi'i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices*, 42.
- 100 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 473.
- 101 *The Qur'an*, 21:104.
- 102 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 473.
- 103 *The Qur'an*, 43:31.
- 104 *Ibid.*, 17:91.
- 105 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 474-5.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 474.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 475.
- 108 *The Qur'an*, 17:93.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 6:7.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 17:93.
- 111 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 476.
- 112 *The Qur'an*, 40:78.
- 113 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 40.
- 114 See also al-Ṭabarsī, *Majma' al-Bayān*, vol. 6, 678-9.
- 115 Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī Tafṣīr al-Ma'thūr* (Qum: Mar'ashī Najafī, 1983), vol. 4, 203.
- 116 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlsī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 18, 199-200.
- 117 *The Qur'an*, 6:109.
- 118 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 41.
- 119 Sobḥānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 439.
- 120 See *The Qur'an*. 3:49.
- 121 *Ibid.*, 21:69.
- 122 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 41.
- 123 *The Qur'an*. 17:101.

- 124 Ibid., 44:23.
- 125 Ibid., 5:110.
- 126 Ibid., 11:65.
- 127 Ibid., 36:46.
- 128 Sobhānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 440-1.
- 129 *The Qur'an*. 6:110.
- 130 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 42
- 131 Imām 'Alī, *Nahj al-Balāghah* (Beirut: Maktabah al-Madrasah, 1982), 192 (sermon 133).
- 132 *The Qur'an*, 7:96.
- 133 Ibid., 5:13.
- 134 Ibid., 2:2.
- 135 Ibid., 2:6.
- 136 Ibid., 2:7.
- 137 Ibid., 45:23.
- 138 Ibid., 40:35.
- 139 4:155.
- 140 See Sobhānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 448.
- 141 Dashti, *Twenty-Three Years*, 42.
- 142 *The Qur'an*, 4:165; 62:2; 57:25 and 2:213.
- 143 Sobhānī, *Rāz-i Buzurg-i Risālat*, 450.