

## Investigating Allameh Tabatabaee's Perspective on the Miracle of the Qur'an

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**Abstract:** *Qur'an is the Divine word revealed to the Prophet of Islam and during fourteen centuries, it has been under the focus of the scholars and thinkers. The question raised is whether Qur'an can be a miracle? What is the thinkers' perspective? Thus in the present research, through analytical and descriptive method, we have dealt with Allameh Tabatabaee's perspective as an interpreter and scholar of Qur'an, answering this question and we've achieved the following results. In Allameh Tabatabaee's view, the Quranic words and expressions are exactly revealed by the Almighty, in addition in terms of the content, they contain miracle, too. As Allameh assumes, the verses recalling others in the challenge to produce the kind of the Qur'an, the verses implying eloquent miracle, the miracle of Qur'an from the direction of the bearer, scientific miracle, the miracle of the invisible news, the miracle of Qur'an from being protected against difference and other verses, all indicate that Qur'an included words and expressions are exactly revealed by The Master. In Allameh's mind, the presence of the Qur'anic words and expressions has caused Qur'an to be a miracle from different dimensions. This paper can provide a novel horizon on the miracle of Qur'an for Qur'anic science researchers. The study results and findings are of significance for Qur'an scholars.*

**Keywords:** *Qur'an, Allameh Tabatabaee, miracle, challenge, The Prophet (p.b.u.h)*

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### I. Introduction

Qur'an is the word of God revealed by the divine angel letter by letter and word by word to the Prophet (p.b.u.h). Q17: 9

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْرَبُ

Verily, this holy Qur'an does guide man to the most Upright Religion". Q2: 138

"This [Holy Qur'an] is a statement for mankind [in general] and a guidance and admonition for the pious, [in particular]". Though, the Holy Qur'an has been revealed in Arabic language. "For two reasons", it has drawn Arab orators' and lecturers' attention:

1. The excellent style and the order governing the Quranic verses 2. Highly distinctive and illustrious meanings

The tremendous and impressive effect of Qur'an has been so that even Early Islam Arab scholars and orators dealt with adopting and guaranteeing Quranic verses in their writing and speech and adorned their speech with it. It is not unknown to the researchers that in case of studying the verse and prose texts belonging to early Islam and post-Islam, they can dive in the immeasurable ocean of Qur'an. They will perceive this Holy tradition more (Majlesi, 19-89) and Walid Ibn Maghreyeh when listening *علي كفضل القرآن* deeply as saying: to Q41: 13

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضْنَا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَ ثَمُودَ

Being recited by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) under dramatic emotions and said to his companions: the words that I heard from Muhammad (p.b.u.h) are inimical to human speech, and they are orphic and delightful, neither similar to poetry nor prose (Ghasempour, 2010, 12). The miracle of the Qur'an is precisely remarkable through this passage. Qur'an is an immortal, evident, universal and spiritual miracle independent from time and place and exceeding these two.

The miracle of the Qur'an during 14 centuries of age has constantly been under the scope of the scholars. The Quranic scholars have looked at the miracle from diverse dimensions, from the Qur'an eloquence, rhetoric and prophecies and information of the unseen to the order and integrity governing the divine verses and also the scientific miracle that in particular attracted the 14<sup>th</sup> century scholars that have to be added to this list of research and study. The subject termed Miracle has always been focused by the scholars throughout these 14 centuries. This issue generally denotes this central point that throughout human history, no book has been focused as much as Qur'an. The Shiite scholars from Sheikh Koleini and Sheikh Sadoogh to the 14<sup>th</sup> century great figure, i.e., Allameh Tabatabaee, each of whom with the goal to explain the luminous rules, have made valuable efforts so that today we are provided with Shiite school in trust. In the science of speech, commentary,

jurisprudence, principles and ..., they've supplied invaluable works and considering Qur'an and its greatness, they have stated important perspectives including the discussions as "the Miracle of Qur'an".

Discussing and surveying all Shiites scholars' views in this field are beyond the scope of this article, thus we solely investigate the honorable interpreter and the owner of Al-Mizan, Allameh Tabatabaee. It is critical to state the concept of miracle in advance.

## **II. The Literal And Technical Concept Of Miracle**

Miracle is derived from *Ajz* or powerlessness that means inability. Raghif Esfahani stated about *Ajz* in this manner: the origin of this word is to hesitate and delay something whose achievement and perception at the time of disability is taken as postponing or disabling (Raghif Esfahani, 2008, 322).

Miracle is a literal and verbal term for expressing the unique character of the Qur'an. This term has not been applied in the Qur'an but its present synonym is and its derivatives have been used 16 times in Qur'an.

Jalaleddin Siouti in a terminology based definition of miracle expressed:

"Miracle is an extraordinary affair, prone to challenge and immune against interference" (Al-Ataghan, 1418 AH, 4-4).

Khajeh Nasir al-Din Toosi defined miracle this way: the method to recognize the Prophet and the truth behind his speech is the miracle revealed by his hand" (Tajrid Al-Eteghad, 1399 AH, 327). In Muhammad Javad Belaghi's view, miracle is an extraordinary action and beyond human power and learning rules, prophecy claimer brings it thanks to the Divine will and desire as the sign of the truth of the Prophet's words and the proof to his claim Q55: 3. Allameh Tabatabaee (1981), the great Shiite interpreter of Qur'an and the noted philosopher, the owner of works such as Qur'an in Islam, Revelation or the Mysterious Perception of the Miracle of the Qur'an in Quranic Domains, addressed the discussion of Miracle in Qur'an and also the miracle of Qur'an itself in the honored commentary the Al-Mizan. Allameh stated: in the material world for the events of materialists, there are causes and means of materiality that the realization of every event depends on their being realized and no violation is involved, whether we want or not (Tabatabaee, 1983, p.14).

Every normal effect requires a normal cause, but we cannot guarantee that the normal cause is the very same thing we recognize as normal causes. Allameh Tabatabaee in Tafsir Al-Mizan reiterated that: like other extraordinary affairs, Miracle is done by normal and ordinary means; though, some of these means are unknown and latent (Tabatabaee, 1391, vol.1, p.82).

## **III. Verses Challenging**

Allameh Tabatabaee proposed the miracle of Qur'an in the verses 23 and 24 of Al-Baqarah surah and believes that the verses of challenge indicate the miracle of Qur'an and the challenge of Qur'an is generic and inclusive and involves all its dimensions such as challenging this Holy verse: Q17: 88

قُلْ لَنْ يَجْتَمِعَ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِمِثْلِ هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَأْتُونَ بِمِثْلِهِ

"Say, [O Messenger], if all mankind Jinns should get together to produce the kind of this Qur'an, they could not produce its like, though they receive assistance from one another".

Allameh said: if challenge were merely in its rhetoric and linguistic style, its addressing inclusion scope would not exceed certain Arabs while the mentioned verse addressed all mankind and Jinns and thus it is vivid that the miracle of Qur'an is not only in terms of linguistic style and also if a special quality except rhetoric were challenged by Qur'an, Qur'an would address a special group while the challenge is generic and for all.

The generality of challenge address denotes that the Master has invited all to produce the kind of this Qur'an, thus Qur'an is miracle for all and belongs to no particular group (Tabatabaee, 1391 Ah, 1-59).

### **About the Miracle of Qur'an**

Thus Qur'an is a miracle in eloquence and fluency for the most eloquent and fluent individuals and for the wise in its wisdoms and for the scholars in scientific issues and for the social scientist in social matters and for the law makers in rules and regulations and for the policy makers in policy and for the rulers in ruling and for all the mortals in those truths they have no way to discover such as the unseen principles and the cases man gets confused when trying to identify (ibid, 1-60)

He added: "Qur'an is all miracles, even the smallest surah like Al-Kouthar and Al-Asr.

In addition, the challenge does not only cover Qur'an eloquence and fluency, rather it encompasses all dimensions including exalted and immense learnings, decent moral, revealed principles, prophecies and information of the unseen and scientific miracles, all and all are challenged by Qur'an. (ibid, 60).

In Allameh's mind, all challenging verses are a sort of reasoning for Qur'an being a miracle and its revelation by the Lord, though it differs in general and in particular. Some of them have challenged all Qur'an, some 10 surahs and some others one surah. The Glorious Qur'an announces and establishes its being the utterance of God with the challenging verses<sup>1</sup> and introduces Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as the messenger and Prophet of Allah and this way, the Prophetic document of the Prophet is presented and based on this, many times in the Word of Allah, the Most

Generous Prophet is commanded to prove his prophecy by the testimony of Allah, that is, referring to his prophecy supported by the Holy Qur'an Q13: 43:

قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ

"Say: sufficient as witness between me and you is Allah and also witnessing of those who have knowledge of the Book" (Tabatabaee, 1373, 17).

Tabatabaee assumes that three principles make up the columns of miracle.

1-3: General causation law in the events of the world, whether usual or unusual events rule irrefutably.

2-3: In miracle, as one of the supernatural events the souls of the prophets, that is, their will is involved.

3-3: The will of the miracle bearer relies on the unconquerable will and desire of the Almighty and Glorious (Tabatabaee, 1387, p.262).

#### **IV. The Qur'an Rhetoric Miracle:**

At the time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), a renowned technique and the magnificent art was solely summarized in the rhetoric and fluent speech and the renowned poets exposed their poetry in the forums, circles and communities to Arab eloquent and fluent individuals' vision and hearing.

It is surprising that Quranic utterances do not arise from the same alphabets which were accessible to all and are at hand now, but neither in the past nor in future, nobody could produce a surah similar to the smallest one combining the same utterances and letters.

This aspect of the miracle of Qur'an is almost agreed by all prominent Qur'an scholars and most of them have stipulated this aspect of the miracle of Qur'an (Tabatabaee, 1391 Ah, 1-58).

Allameh Tabatabaee stated: One of the miracle's dimensions the Glorious Qur'an challenged human is by this saying that: "if you doubt this book being Heavenly, produce one of these kinds". The question is the eloquence of Qur'an. In this respect, Q11: 13-14:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِعَشْرِ سُوْرٍ مِثْلِهِ مُفْتَرِيَاتٍ وَإِذْعُوا مَن اسْتَضَعْتُمْ مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ  
فَلِمَ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا أُنزِلَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

Or they say: Mohammad has forged it." [Say, O, Messenger]: Bring you then ten forged Surahs like to it and call to your aid whomsoever you can other than Allah, if you speak truly. "And if they did not answer your call, then know that it has emerged from Allah's Divine Knowledge and that there is no God but Allah. [Say to the disbelievers]: "will you now submit to Allah's Will?" Besides, the verses 38-39 of Yunus surah have challenged for eloquence and order. Since the only benefit the Arab of that period enjoyed out of science and culture was the very issue known as rhetoric and eloquence (Tabatabaee, *ibid*, 1-68). Against Arab speakers and linguists, Qur'an has challenged and taken their very failure to produce the kind of this Qur'an the reason behind the Qur'an words and statements and meaning as Divine. Following the 13-14 verses of Hud surah literally responding those considering the Quranic words and statements, Allameh stated: the context of Qur'an could not be from the Prophet (p.b.u.h), since if were so, considering the Prophet (p.b.u.h) as the most eloquent and fluent human being, maybe others would make efforts for creating the speech similar to Qur'an and could produce some identical verses. Though they unable to produce the kind thoroughly similar to Qur'an. Thus the failure of the audience to answer Qur'an challenging and bringing one or more statements such as Qur'an small surahs confirms that nobody even the Prophet is not capable to utter such words without depending on the Divine Revelation (*ibid*, 10-171). 5-The Miracle of Qur'an in Terms of the

#### **Bearer:**

In interpreting the verses related to this issue, Allameh expressed this way:

Responding those demanding the Prophet to produce the kind of this Qur'an or change the Divine Utterance, the Glorious Q10: 15

قُلْ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أُبَدِّلَهُ مِن تِلْقَائِي نَفْسِي إِنْ أَرَادْتُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ

"Say [O, Messenger]: it is not allowed for me to change it of my own accord; I only follow what is revealed to me".

The meaning of this verse regarding its context is that the command for the revelation of the Qur'an is the Divine providence not my desire. I am only the Messenger of God. If Allah had not wanted to send another kind of the Qur'an and had not wanted this Qur'an, I would not have chanted it for you and God would not have made you aware of it. Ahead of the revelation of this Book, I had lived a long life with you but you did not see any sign of the Divine Revelation in my speech; if these utterances had been of my own and created by me, I would have tried before and its effects would have been revealed before. Therefore, I am merely the Divine providence (*ibid*, 29).

#### **6-Scientific Miracle**

Qur'an by means of the Holy verses Q16: 89

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيِيْحًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

"We revealed this Holy Book to you explaining everything" Q6: 59

وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ

"Nor anything wet or dry but [it is recorded] in the expositing Book of Truth".

Also other verses have challenged science and knowledge because everyone contemplating the great teachings of Islam, whether the generalities stated by Qur'an or the details expressed by the Prophet, referring to the Holy verse.

Q59: 7

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

"So, take what your Messenger gives you and whatever he forbids you abstains from it and fears from the disobedience of Allah's Commands; verily, Allah is the Severe Forbidding".

All philosophical and ethical material, religious, political and social laws and everything else human beings require at the stage of action not only the Qur'an refutes them but it also denies the smallest issues and it is strange that all its teachings have been based on the innate disposition and the origin of the Unity (Tabatabaee, 1391 Ah, 1-62).

Responding this question if somebody asks:

"Today, the social science scientists assume that social laws need to transform due to the society getting developed and transformed and it is out of place for such laws to remain fixed".

Allameh stated: The Heavenly laws of Qur'an fundamentally differ from those of human and that is the Divine laws have been built based on instinctive Unity and excellent ethics and are always fixed. While human law makers' say laws which are not based on spirituality and monotheism will naturally undergo transformation due to the society transforming (ibid, 63).

In many verses, Qur'an calls all to contemplate in the verses of heaven and stars and strange differences occurring in their conditions and the firm system governing them (Tabatabaee, 1373 Ah, p.20).

As an example, the verses mentioned by Allameh as being scientific follow:

6-1: The relationship between mountains and earthquakes (Luqman, 10) (Tabatabaee, 1391, vol.16, p.331)

6-2: The science of finger-tips (Al-Qiyamat, 4) (ibid, vol.29, p.308)

6-3: The Gravity of the earth (Al-Asraa, 95) (ibid, vol.13, p.348)

6-4: Weight influencing plant growth (An-Hijr, 19) (ibid, vol.12, p.211).

6-5: Genesis of rain (Al-Hijr, 19) (ibid, vol.12, p.211).

6-6: Inoculation by winds (Al-Hijr, 53) (ibid).

6-7: Coupling of plants (Ta-Ha, 53) (ibid, vol.14, p.360).

6-8: Movement of the sun (Ya-Sin, 38) (ibid, vol.7, p.139).

These are the samples of the verses Allameh Tabatabaee proposed as Qur'an scientific miracle in the interpretation Al-mizan, which were presented by Allah 1400 years ago and today human science has reached it through progress.

### **9-The Prophecies and Information of the Unseen Miracle:**

Allameh Tabatabaee considered the miracle of "the Unseen Prophecies and Information" another dimension of the miracle of Qur'an and stated:

In many verses, God has challenged for His Unseen Prophecies and Information and announced it to others that if they doubt this Book being Divine, produce the kind of the Qur'an including the Unseen Prophecies and Information, like the following Holy verse Q11: 49

تِلْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهَا إِلَيْكَ مَا كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهَا أَنْتَ وَلَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا

"[O, Messenger], this is of the news of the Unseen which is revealed to you neither you nor your people knew them before this, so be patient; surely, the Good End is for the pious".

And also other verses informing us about the previous prophets and their nations' stories and about future and illustrating the great events of the world of Islam after the descent of revelation (ibid, 64).

### **10-The Miracle of Qur'an, Protected against Difference**

Of the Quranic challenges is that despite its knowledge extent and scope and its contents, you cannot discover difference and contradiction.

Referring to this Holy verse, Allameh Tabatabaee stated Q4: 82

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْفُرْعَانَ وَ لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

"Do they not ponder about the Qur'an? Had it been from other than Allah, surely they would have found therein so many contradictions". Emphasizing that the life of the world, material life and the ruling law in it is the law of evolution and development, no creature belongs to the creatures of this world, unless undergoing evolution and transformation, such as human, his actions and works formed with the help of his thoughts and mentality and each of us finds ourselves more perfect than before.

On the one hand, Qur'an was gradually revealed: some verses were revealed in Mecca and some other in Medina but under various circumstances, despite this not even the smallest difference is observed in its content and the material's ordering, rather some verses interpret some other verses and if it originated from someone other than God, its words' order undergoes transformation in terms of goodness and discretion and its meaning would be variable in terms of validity and perfection (ibid, 66).

In addition to the miracle in expression, Qur'an is a miracle in terms of content we will focus on.

**11-Miracle in the Quranic Content Dimension:** Undoubtedly, what plays a more significant role in the immortality of the Qur'an accompanied with the miracle of Qur'an in expression is the miracle in the content domain whose recognition requires further thinking and reflection, let's look at some cases:

#### 11-1:Coordination with the Common Nature of Human Beings

Humans enjoying natural nature have united their homogeneous instincts in the motivation of diverse movements, and different mental and physical requirements. In this respect, the Glorious Qur'an stated Q30: 30

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

"Allah has originality created the nature of man's soul with full tendency and love and nothing can change".

Of the basic features of the Qur'an making it exclusive out of all is coordination with human divine nature and responding his needs and questions in all ages and places.

#### 11-2:Realism and Moderation:

The art of the Qur'an is in this fact that via a realistic attitude to human existence reality and his destiny, it organizes the preliminary regular, moderate, excellent and final classification so that all its intrinsic talents are nurtured and its origins are met in a moderate and coordinated manner (Saeedi Roshan, 122).

11-3:Perfection against Difference and Contradiction: Of the material world and nature necessities is transformation and evolution. All the creatures of this universe have gradual existence and in their essence, they always move from weakness to strength and from imperfection to perfection. Man is also constantly transforming and evolving in his thoughts and works. Though during 23 years under different conditions and states (travelling and residing at home, Mecca and Medina, war and peace and hardship and ease), Qur'an was revealed in order to express the Divine teaching and to teach the descent ethics and to state the revealed religious laws, there is not even the smallest difference and contradiction in its verses and elements (Tabatabaee, 1393, 1-66)

#### 11-4:Criterion for Recognizing the Right and Wrong

The Holy Qur'an states Q25: 1

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا

"The Absolute Source of blessings is the One who sent down Forqan upon His exclusive and devoted worshipper [Mohammad S.A]. So that he be a warning expositor by teaching it to all mankind throughout the world".

Manifest *mobin* and the Criterion *forghan* are two descriptions expressing the apex of the greatness of Qur'an to the world forever and manifested as a spark of the Divine blessing and mercy in the Great Qur'an and thanks to this Book, the reality and truth of the false face and wrong-like right is revealed at any time, especially the contemporary complex era (Tabatabaee, 1391, 15-174).

## V. Conclusion

In Allameh Tabatabaee's mind, whole Qur'an are the words and statements revealed by the Most High and includes miracle, the miracle in the eloquence and fluency, in being challenged, in terms of the bearer, the scientific issues, perfection against difference and other verses, indicates that the Holy Qur'an was revealed by Allah and is of the Divine miracles. Through its miracle, Qur'an has built the most stable literary rules' elements so that everybody familiar with rhetoric fails against its greatness and grandeur. Thus in order to recognize the meanings of Qur'an and the marvelous geometry of its high teachings, it is critical not to use the loose and subordinate rules not befitting for the decent literary column. In addition to Quranic miracle in expression, it is miracle in terms of content, too and accompanied with Quranic miracle in expression, Allameh assumes the content miracle of Qur'an, too.

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