69741 - Discussion of numerical miracles in the Qur’aan and use of the solar calendar

the question

I read some 'miracles' of the qur'an recently. These included many things such as the 3 stages of embryos, the orbits of planets, etc etc. However, one of them claimed that the word yawm (day) is mentioned 365 times in the qur'an, and the word qamar is mentioned 12 times in the quraan. I forget how many times the word ayyaam is mentioned. However, a friend pointed out that the islamic calender does not have 365 days in it. What does this mean about the islamic calender? That it is wrong? Or that God knew that most of the world would use the Gregorian calender and that this is a sign that it is the correct one?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Many people are infatuated by the different types of miracles in the Qur’aan, including the “numerical miracles”. In newspapers and magazines and on the internet they publish lists of words that are repeated a number of times that corresponds to their structure, and words that are repeated the same number of times as their opposites. They also claim that the word yawm (day) is repeated 365 times and the word shahr (month) is repeated 12 times, and they do this with other words too, such as al-malaa’ikah (angels) and al-shayaateen (devils), and al-dunya (this world) and al-aakhirah (the Hereafter), etc.

Many people think that these numbers are true and that this is one of the miracles of the Qur’aan, but they do not distinguish between subtleties and miracles. Writing a book which contains a specific number of certain words is something that anyone can do; what is so miraculous about that? The miracle that appears in the Book of Allaah is not like these subtleties, rather it is far

deeper and greater than that. It is the fact that the most eloquent and well-spoken of the Arabs could not produce anything like the Qur'aan, or ten soorahs of it, or even one soorah. It is not like these subtleties that any writer could produce in any book that he writes, or more.

It should be noted that some people have taken this beyond mere statistics. Some of them have used these numbers to foretell when the state of Israel will fall, and others have used them to say when the Day of Judgement will be. One of the latest fabrications against the Book of Allaah is that which they have published saying that the Qur'aan foretold the explosions in the towers in New York! Based on the number of the verse in al-Tawbah, and the number of the soorah and juz'. All of that is toying with the Book of Allaah which is caused by ignorance of the true nature of the miracle of the Book of Allaah.

Secondly:

By examining the statistics presented by those who have published these numbers, we find that they did not get the numbers of some phrases right, and some of them have been selective in the way they counted the words, and that is so that they might reach the conclusion they want and that they think is in the Book of Allaah.

Shaykh Dr. Khaalid al-Sabt said:

Dr. Ashraf 'Abd al-Razzaaq Qatanah presented a "study of the numerical miracles in the Holy Qur'aan" which he published in a book entitled: "The Qur'aan and the Numerical Miracles, a critical study of the numerical miracles of the Holy Qur'aan." In the conclusion to this book he reviews three other books: (1) I'jaaz al-Raqm 19 (The miracle of the number 19) by Baasim Jaraar; (2) al-I'jaaz al-'Adadi fi'l-Qur'aan (the numerical miracle in the Qur'aan) by 'Abd al-Razzaaq Nawfal; and (3) al-Mu'jizah (the miracle) by 'Adnaan al-Rifaa'i. The author reached a conclusion which he describes as follows:

As the result of my study I reached the idea that the "numerical miracle" as presented in these books is not real at all, and these books are based on conditions that are sometimes selective , in order to prove the validity of this view in a way that will make the reader accept these

preconceived results referred to above. These selective conditions sometimes lead the author to go against that which is proven according to the consensus of the ummah, such as going against the spelling of the ‘Uthmaani Mus-haf, which is not permissible at all; or adopting the spelling of some words which appears in some Mus-hafs and without paying attention to the spellings in other Mus-hafs. It also goes against basic principles of the Arabic language with regard to synonyms and antonyms.

p. 197, Damascus, Manaar li’l-Nashr wa’l-Tawzee’, first edition, 1420 AH/1999 CE.

Dr. Fahd al-Roomi said something similar about the selective way in which Dr ‘Abd al-Razzaaq Nawfal chose words in order to reach this numerical balance, such as when he said: The word yawm (day) is mentioned 365 times in the Qur’aan, the number of days in a year. In order to prove this he counted the words “al-yawm” and “yawman” but he ignored words such as “yawmukum” (your day) and “yawmuhum” (their day) and yawma’idhin (on that day), because if he had done that, he would have got a different number. The same applies to the word al-isti’aadhah which refers to seeking refuge from the shaytaan. He says that it is repeated 11 times, but he includes in that the words “a’oodhu” (I seek refuge) and “fasta’idh” (seek refuge) but not “ ‘udhtu” (I sought refuge) or “ya’oodhoona” (they seek refuge) or “u’eedhuha” (I seek refuge for her) or “ma’aadh Allaah” (Allaah forbid).

See: Ittijaahaat al-Tafseer fi’l-Qarn al-Raabi’ ‘Ashara (2/699, 700), Beirut, Mu’sasat al-Risaalah, second edition, 1414 AH.

From this well-founded discussion, the answer to the issue of the word “yawm” and the number of times it appears in the Qur’aan, which is mentioned in the question, is clear.

Thirdly:

With regard to the count (of time) (al-hisaab, mentioned in Yoonus 10:5) that Allaah has mentioned in His holy Book, it is the precise count (of time) that does not differ as the years pass, which is the lunar count (of time).

With regard to the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

“And they stayed in their Cave three hundred years, adding nine”

[al-Kahf 18:25],

some of the scholars have stated that the number 300 refers to solar years, and that the number 309 refers to lunar years. This view was refuted by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen, who explained in his refutation that the count (of time) with Allaah is lunar, not solar.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“adding nine” means that they added nine years to three hundred, so they stayed there for three hundred and nine years. It may be said: Why doesn’t it just say three hundred and nine?

The answer is that this is what is meant, but the Qur’aan is the most eloquent of books, and in order for the ends of the verses to match (in Arabic) it says: “And they stayed in their Cave three hundred (solar) years, adding nine (for lunar years)”. It is not as some people think, that the three hundred refers to solar years and the nine was added for lunar years, because we cannot testify that Allaah meant that. Who can testify that this is what Allaah meant? Even if it so happens that three hundred solar years are equal to three hundred and nine lunar years, we cannot testify about Allaah in this way, because the count (of time) with Allaah is one.

What are the signs by which the count (of time) is reckoned with Allaah?

The answer is that they are the new moons; hence we say that the view that “three hundred years” refers to solar years and “adding nine” refers to lunar years, is a weak view.

Firstly: because we cannot testify that Allaah meant this.

Secondly: because the number of months and years with Allaah is based on the new moons. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and

measured out stages for it; that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time)”

[Yoonus 10:5]

“They ask you (O Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about the new moons. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage”

[al-Baqarah 2:189]

Tafseer Soorat al-Kahf.

Reckoning time by the moon and the new moons was well known to the Prophets and their peoples, and reckoning time by the sun was only known to the ignorant followers of false religions, but unfortunately many Muslims follow them nowadays.

Dr Khaalid al-Sabt says, in his refutation of those who say that the verse “The building which they built” [al-Tawbah 9:11] in al-Tawbah refers to the explosions in America:

5 (the fifth point) – These connections are based on the solar calendar, which is a calendar that was inherited from idolatrous nations, and which was of no significance to the Prophets (blessing and peace be upon them). Rather the calendar that counts in sharee’ah is the calendar that is based on the moon and new moons, which is more precise. This indicates that what was known to the Prophets was the lunar calendar. In the hadeeth of Waathilah ibn al-Asqa’ (may Allaah be pleased with him) it says that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The Suhuf of Ibraaheem were revealed to him on the first night of Ramadaan, and the Tawrat (Torah) was revealed on the sixth of Ramadaan, and the Injeel (Gospel) on the thirteenth of Ramadaan, and the Furqaan (Qur’aan) was revealed on the twenty-fourth of Ramadaan.” Narrated by Ahmad (4/107) and by al-Bayhaqi in al-Sunan (9/188). Its isnaad is hasan. It was also mentioned by al-Albaani in al-Saheehah (1575). This could not be known unless the calendar was based on the moon and new moons. This is also indicated by the hadeeth which was narrated in al-Saheehayn from Ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Madeenah, he found the Jews fasting on the day of

‘Ashoora’. He said: “What is this?” They said: This is a good day, this is the day on which Allaah saved the Children of Israel from their enemies. So Moosa fasted on that day … Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2004) and Muslim (1130). And al-Haafiz (may Allaah have mercy on him) stated clearly that they did not base their count (of time) on the sun. See: al-Fath (4/291 and 7/323).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, commenting on the verses “It is He Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light and measured out for it stages” [Yoonus 10:5] and “And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk” [Yaa Seen 36:38, 39]: Hence the lunar calendar was better known among the nations and was less likely to involve errors, and it is more precise than the solar calendar, and all people can follow it easily. Hence Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “and measured out for it stages that you might know the number of years and the reckoning” [Yoonus 10:5]. But He did not say that about the sun, hence the months of Hajj, fasting, Eid and other Islamic occasions are based on the lunar calendar. This is by the wisdom of Allaah and His mercy, and so as to protect His religion, as the people may all be able to figure out this count of time easily and avoid mistakes, and so that no differences or confusion would happen to the religion as happened to the people of the Book.

End quote from Miftaah Daar al-Sa’aadah, p. 538, 539.

It may be understood from the last comment of Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) that the people of the Book used to follow a solar calendar, and this was stated clearly by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) in his response after he attributed this view to Ibn al-Qayyim. See al-Fath (7/323).

But in fact it played no role in their religion, rather it was introduced after that by the ignorant among them. End quote.

Concerning the things we learn from the verse “They ask you (O Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about the new moons…”, Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

… and we learn that the fixed periods of time for all nations are the fixed periods of time that were established by Allaah for them – which are the new moons – so these are global fixed periods of time, because Allaah says “fixed periods of time for mankind”. As for what has happened recently, namely the adoption of the European calendar, there it has no tangible basis and it makes no sense and is not prescribed in sharee’ah. Hence you find that one month has twenty-eight days and some have thirty days and some have thirty one, without any known reason for this discrepancy. Moreover these months have no physical sign that the people can refer to in order to work out time, unlike the lunar months which have a physical sign that is known to everyone. End quote.

Tafseer al-Baqarah (2/371).

Al-Qurtubi said, commenting on the verse “Verily, the number of months with Allaah is twelve months (in a year), so was it ordained by Allaah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth” [al-Tawbah 9:36]: This verse indicates that rulings on acts of worship and other matters must be connected to the months and years that were known to the Arabs, and not those that were used by the Persians, Byzantines or Copts, and they should not be more than twelve months, because they vary in the number of days; some of them being thirty days and some of them being more or less. But the months of the Arabs never exceed thirty days, although some of them may be less; the ones that are less are not any specific months, rather that varies according to variations in the moon’s movement through the sky. End quote. Tafseer al-Qurtubi (8/133).

And Allaah knows best.