245475 - Miraculous aspects of the Holy Qur’an

the question

What is meant by the qurans challenge to produce a chapter like it. Because it seems anyone can either paraphrase 3 lines of quran and put them together or put together 3 lines that the law teaches in an eloquent way (not to steal, murder or rape). Also Shakespeares literature also seemed like it could of matched the linguistic ability of quran.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

By His wisdom, Allah, may He be exalted, never sent any Messenger except He gave him signs to prove his truthfulness and the soundness of his message. Each of the previous Prophets was sent only to his own people, and his call was not for all of mankind and was not to abide until the Day of Resurrection. Therefore Allah gave them tangible signs, and whoever saw them would believe in them, then whoever heard of these signs among the generations who came soon afterwards, would also believe in them. Then when the reports of them faded away, Allah sent another Prophet with other signs, and so on, such as the signs of Moosa and ‘Eesa (peace be upon them).

But the case of our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is different from that of all the other Prophets, for He is the Seal of the Prophets, and there is no prophet after him; his call is for all of the jinn and mankind, and is to abide until the Day of Resurrection. So it was appropriate that his greatest sign, that proves his sincerity and truthfulness, should abide until the Day of Resurrection, preserved by Allah and protected from change and alteration, to establish proof against the stubborn and be believed in by those of sound hearts. So the greatest sign of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is the Holy Qur’an, along with what Allah also gave him of visible signs, such as the splitting of the moon and so on.

Concerning that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no Prophet but he was given signs because of which people believed in him. That which I have been given is revelation that Allah has revealed to me, and I hope that I will have the greatest number of followers on the Day of Resurrection.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7274).

What this means is that the Holy Qur’an is the greatest of the signs given to the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). It is a miracle in the utmost sense of the word; in other words, it is beyond people, and is in fact beyond the jinn and mankind, to produce anything like it. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say: ‘If mankind and the jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur’an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they helped one another”

[al-Isra’ 17:88].

Allah, may He be exalted, challenged them to produce the like thereof, or to produce just ten soorahs like its soorahs, or to produce a single soorah only, like its soorahs, even if it was like the shortest soorah that does not take up more than a single line, such as Soorat al-Kawthar or Soorat al-Ikhlaas, and the like.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Or they say, ‘He (Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) forged it (the Qur'an).’ Say: ‘Bring you then ten forged Soorahs (chapters) like unto it, and call whomsoever you can, other than Allah (to your help), if you speak the truth!’”

[Hood 11:13]

“And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur’an) to Our slave (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)), then produce a Soorah (chapter) of the like thereof and call your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah, if you are truthful”

[al-Baqarah 2:23].

Allah, may He be exalted, has truthfully told us that they will never be able to do any such thing, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“But if you do it not, and you can never do it, then fear the Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers”

[al-Baqarah 2:24].

For more than fourteen hundred years, the enemies of the Qur’an have been trying to meet this challenge, which is still valid and still stands, and the Qur’an keeps telling them that their religions are false and that they are regarded as foolish, and it warns them of the Fire. This means that they have had a motive to produce something like it – namely the motive to prove the Qur’an to be false and their desire to show it to be false before people.

There is nothing to stop them from doing that, and there is nothing to prevent them from speaking or writing or responding to this challenge.

Yet despite all that, we have never heard of anyone among them – and they number in the billions, and include eloquent and well-spoken people, literati, writers, scholars and the like…

But we have never heard of anyone among them who accepted this challenge and was able to produce even a single line like the shortest soorah of the Holy Qur’an… Apart from a few miserable attempts made by some of the eloquent Arabs, which caused them to become a laughing stock among their own people before they became a laughing stock among the Muslims!

This challenge still stands until today, and they keep hearing it and will continue to hear it until the onset of the Hour.

The jinn and mankind are incapable of producing anything like it.

After all that, how can it be right to say that it is possible for any person to produce three lines written in an elegant style that matches the eloquence of the Qur’an?!

This possibility is merely hypothetical, as it has no existence in reality, because if that were possible for them, why have they not done it?

So the challenge still stands:

“Let them then produce a recital like unto it (the Qur'ân) if they are truthful”

[at-Toor 52:34]

“then produce a Soorah (chapter) of the like thereof”

[al-Baqarah 2:23].

But the aspects of the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur’an are not limited to that which has to do with the Arabic language in terms of style, composition and eloquence; rather the aspects of its miraculous nature are many, of which the earlier scholars mentioned ten, and later scholars added others. It is not far-fetched to say that there may be other aspects of which we are unaware, which Allah will make manifest to future generations and which will be appropriate to their knowledge and reasoning.

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The miraculous aspects of the Qur’an are ten:

· Its amazing composition that is unlike any kind of composition that is known in Arabic or other languages…

· Its style that is unlike any other style in Arabic.

· Its cohesiveness, which is such that it could not have been produced by any created being at all…

· The manner of its expression in Arabic, which is such that no Arab could have come up with it, to the extent that all the Arabs are agreed that every single word is put in exactly the right place.

· The fact that an unlettered man, who never read any book before and never wrote anything with his right hand, told about things that happened at the beginning of this world and until the time of its revelation; he told the stories of what happened with the Prophets and their nations, and past generations; he answered the questions that the People of the Book asked him and what they challenged him with of the story of the People of the Cave, the story of Moosa, and the story of Dhu'l-Qarnayn. Although he was an unlettered man from an unlettered nation, that had no knowledge of such matters on the basis of previously revealed books, he came to them with something the soundness of which they were aware.

· Fulfilment of promises that was tangible and could be seen with the eyes. Everything that Allah, may He be glorified, promises may be divided into two categories, according to whether they are general promises, such as His promise to cause His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to prevail and to expel those who had expelled him from his homeland, or promises that are subject to a condition, such as when He said (interpretation of the meaning): "And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him" [at-Talaaq 65:3], "and whosoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart" [at-Taghaabun 64:11], "And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty)" [at-Talaaq 65:2], "If there are twenty steadfast persons amongst you, they will overcome two hundred" [al-Anfaal 8:65] and the like.

· It tells of future events that come under the heading of matters of the unseen, that could not be known except through divine Revelation. That includes the promise that Allah made to His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that He would cause His religion to prevail over all other religions, as He, may He be exalted, said (interpretation of the meaning): "It is He Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) with guidance and the religion of truth (Islam), to make it superior over all religions even though the Mushrikoon (polytheists, pagans, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) hate (it)" [at-Tawbah 9:33]. And He indeed did that.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will

certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them”

[an-Noor 24:55]

“Indeed Allah shall fulfil the true vision which He showed to His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) [i.e. the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw a dream that he has entered Makkah along with his companions, having their (head) hair shaved and cut short] in very truth. Certainly, you shall enter Al-Masjid al-Haraam; if Allah wills, secure”

[al-Fath 48:27]

“And (remember) when Allah promised you (Muslims) one of the two parties (of the enemy i.e. either the army or the caravan) that it should be yours”

[al-Anfaal 8:7]

“Alif-Laam-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings].

The Romans have been defeated.

In the nearer land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious”

[ar-Room 30:1].

All of these verses referred to future events that no one could have known except the Lord of the Worlds or one whom the Lord of the Worlds informed about that. This indicates that Allah, may He be exalted, told His Messenger about them so that this might be proof of his truthfulness.

· What the Qur’an contains of knowledge which is essential for the well-being of mankind with regard to what is lawful and prohibited, and all other rulings.

· Ultimate wisdom which cannot be found in such abundance and greatness in any book written by a human being.

· Harmony among all that is mentioned in the Qur’an, both explicitly and implicitly, without any contradiction. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein many contradictions”

[an-Nisa’ 4:82].

These ten aspects were mentioned by our scholars, may Allah have mercy on them.

Ibn ‘Atiyyah said:

The point of the challenge in the Qur’an has to do with its composition, the soundness of the ideas explained in it, and the consistent eloquence of its words and phrases. The reason for its miraculous nature is that Allah, may He be exalted, encompasses all things by His knowledge, and He encompasses all words by His knowledge. By His all-encompassing knowledge, He knows which word is fit to follow another, and how to expand upon the meaning. This is so from the beginning of the Qur’an until the end. End quote.

Ustaadh Muhammad Qutub (may Allah have mercy on him) said in the introduction to his book Laa Ya’toona bi Mithlihi (p. 8, 9):

During their period of ignorance (jaahiliyyah) the Arabs were a people of rare eloquence, and they were proud of their eloquence, to the point that they would call those who did not speak their language al-‘ajam (lit. dumb). This clearly indicates that they regarded others as inferior for no reason except that they could not speak the language of eloquence – meaning their own language – by which they were distinguished!

Every divinely-revealed religion challenged the deniers with a miracle that was beyond the realm of human capability, so that they would become certain that it was from Allah, even if they denied it openly out of disbelief and stubbornness, as Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, tells us of

the attitude of the people of Pharaoh towards the miracles of Moosa (peace be upon him):

“And they belied them (those Ayaat (signs)) wrongfully and arrogantly, though their ownselves were convinced thereof”

[an-Naml 27:14].

As this was the way with every divinely-revealed message, we see that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, challenged every people with regard to that in which they excelled and which they regarded as a source of their pride. So we see that Allah challenged the people of Pharaoh with signs that surpassed the magic in which they excelled and which they used to divert people away from their Lord, and to assert the divinity of Pharaoh instead of Allah. And He challenged the people of ‘Eesa (pace be upon him) with signs that surpassed their excellence in medicine, which they practised and felt proud of their skill therein. So He gave ‘Eesa the ability to breathe life into clay, to revive the dead, and to heal those born blind and lepers, so that they would be certain that the message was from Allah:

“a Messenger to the Children of Israel (saying): ‘I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, that I design for you out of clay, a figure like that of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah’s Leave; and I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I bring the dead to life by Allah’s Leave. And I inform you of what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely, therein is a sign for you, if you believe’”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:49].

When Allah sent the final Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to the Arabs, it was appropriate that the sign with which he challenged the deniers should be eloquence of a type and level that they were unable to match, so that they might become certain, in their own hearts, even if they rejected it outwardly, as did the people of Pharaoh. Thus the greatest miracle of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was this Qur’an, which challenged them to produce the like thereof, but they were unable to do so. So it challenged them to produce ten soorahs like it, but they were unable to do so, apart from the worthless attempt of the liar

Musaylimah, and another attempt by the false prophetess Sajjaah. Neither of them was able to convince the Arabs that anyone could produce something like the Qur’an.

This is in addition to the fact that Allah willed that the miracle of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) should abide until the end of time, and should not disappear with the people who had witnessed it, because Allah willed that Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) should be the Seal of the Prophets, and that his message should be the eternal message that would abide until the end of time. If we understand this, then we will realise the reason for the interest of Arab writers in the past in the linguistic miracle of the Qur’an, as this was the focus of the challenge, and the fact that the Arabs – who were so proud of their eloquence – were unable to produce the like thereof offered certain proof that this Qur’an was the word of Allah and was not the word of any human being and that this was proof of the truthfulness of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his message.

But the Qur’an is not only miraculous from a linguistic point of view, although its miraculous linguistic nature is sufficient – on its own – to prove that it is from Allah, and it is sufficient – on its own – to pose this challenge to mankind and the jinn until the onset of the Hour.

The Qur’an is miraculous in all the fields that it discusses, and in all areas. End quote.

Then he stated that he could not discuss every aspect of the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur’an, because this would require a huge effort to be undertaken by a number of researchers. Therefore it is sufficient to mention a few aspects of the miraculous nature of the Qur’an, of which he selected the following:

The miraculous nature of its linguistic style.

The miraculous nature of its approach in calling people to Allah.

The miraculous nature of its educational approach.

The miraculous nature of its legislative approach.

The miraculous nature of its scientific approach.

He discussed all of these fields, and he did well – may Allah have mercy on him.

And Allah knows best.