



AL KITAB
The Renaissance Project

Finale

Faith



Mohamed Al Qadhi

Faith

By demonstrating that criticism pertaining to the scientific accuracy of the Quran is unfounded, I bring Volume One of Al Kitab to a close. As I write the final sentences of this book, I cannot help but wonder: has Al Kitab achieved its stated aim? What is going through the reader's mind as she reads the final pages of this book? Is she astounded and surprised by its content? Does it grow her sense of appreciation of the magnificence of the Quran? Or is she skeptical of the evidence? Is she in disagreement over the ideas and conclusions promoted?

The more I think about these questions, the more I am convinced that the answer does not depend solely on the content of this book or how well some of its ideas have been articulated, but rather, the answer depends largely on the reader's attitude and prior beliefs towards the subject of faith and religion. The story of Moses provides an excellent example of this:

Moses had declared himself a prophet, preached the worship of the one true God, and asked the Pharaoh to release the sons of Israel from servitude and allow them to leave Egypt in peace. In a bid to convince the Pharaoh of his honesty and prophethood, Moses provided several visible miracles as proof, one of which saw Moses turn his staff into a giant snake.

But even after seeing this miracle, the Pharaoh was not convinced. From his point of view, there was a more rational explanation that could describe this event; he claimed that Moses was a master of the art of illusion and was attempting to use his skills to convince people of his prophethood to gain power, money and fame. He called Moses a liar and challenged him to compete against some of the Pharaohs best magicians. He hoped that the magicians would "outdo" Moses and expose the "sham".

When the day of the competition arrived, several of Egypt's best magicians lined up against Moses. In an attempt to show the spectators that Moses's miracle was nothing more than a trick, they used their illusions skills to make their sticks appear as if they were snakes. Just as it seemed that Moses was exposed as an illusionist after all, he threw his staff on the ground and turned it into a great snake once again. What shocked the magicians was that Moses's snake went on to eat and swallow all the magician's "fake" snakes. The magicians were astounded and recognized that the latest act could not have been a trick or an illusion; they recognized that the snake was real!

Consequently, the magicians conceded defeat and declared that they believed in Moses's prophethood. Despite this spectacle, The Pharaoh, once again was not convinced and thought of a more "rational" explanation. He accused Moses and the magicians of collaboration with the aim of attaining Moses's goals of achieving power and fame. The magicians were crucified because of their alleged collusion.

What is so fascinating about the story of Moses is that it would continue along the same lines for many years to come; Moses would provide evidence of his prophethood through various miracles while the Pharaoh refused to attribute such events to divine intervention. No matter what he saw or experienced, the Pharaoh refused to consider God as an explanation to the most unlikely events. Instead, collusion, illusion, nature and chance were used as alternative explanations.

But can you blame the Pharaoh? After all, his interpretation of events can be justified; the snake could have been an illusion and the magicians could have collaborated with Moses prior to the event. I say this because it is easy to see how a set of events can be interpreted in very different ways by different individuals based on their prior beliefs, values and openness to new ideas. Moses could have been seen as a prophet or as a power hungry conman, depending on the individual's prior mindset.

Faith

The story of Moses is just an example of an everyday phenomenon; one experienced by all prophets but also by every human being when discussing religious or non-religious matters. From academia to politics, stories, events, and information can often be interpreted in different ways, depending on the individual's values and personal bias.

Even if the truth seems to tilt strongly towards a particular interpretation, a person's unwillingness to entertain an idea that has strong evidence will always lead that person to an alternate interpretation, no matter how unlikely or poorly supported that interpretation is. In the case of the Pharaoh, he would be exposed to rivers of blood, locust, other miracles, and finally, the splitting of the sea! But his preconceived idea about divine intervention and about the evil and trickery nature of human beings would not convince him that the most likely explanation for these events was in fact divine intervention.

Similarly, as I think of the answers to the questions I posed of Al Kitab's first volume, I cannot help but realize that the scientific examples cited in each chapter are no different than Moses's snake; they can be interpreted as evidence of the Quran's divinity, or they can be viewed in a more skeptical manner. While in my mind, the evidence of the text's divinity is unquestionable, supported by, among other things, evidence of advanced scientific knowledge, others will view the verses in question as nothing more than a coincidence or perhaps, biased interpretations affected by the author's belief,

No matter how I choose to communicate the information of this book, no matter how true the information presented here really is, I have come to the realization that the "truth" I see can only be seen by a person who believes or by someone who would allow herself to believe; a person who chooses to set her current inclinations aside and read the chapters again, with an open mind and an open heart, seeking to find the truth behind this narrative. On that note, I leave you with the following verses:

”وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكَّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ مُسْحُورُونَ“ (15, 15-14)

And if we opened the gates of the heavens so that they (disbelievers) could continue to ascend through it they would simply say “our eyes have been intoxicated, or rather we are people who have been bewitched”

”فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِن تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ“ (22, 46)

“It is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts within the breast”