Glorification Along the Orbits

The Earth and Planets in the Embrace of the Sun



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

GLORIFICATION ALONG THE ORBITS

The Earth and Planets in the Embrace of the Sun

كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ

"All [heavenly bodies] in an orbit are swimming."

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:33

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord who made the sun and the moon run by precise calculation, and whom the seven heavens, the earth and all within them glorify. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who rose in the last third of the night, looked up at the sky and reflected on His signs.

This eBook is dedicated especially to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my children-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

May Allah make us all servants who constantly glorify Him, just as the heavens and the earth never cease to glorify Him — and make this knowledge *'ilmun yuntafa'u bih*, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THIS EBOOK'S COVER

This eBook's cover depicts a deep night sky, with the Milky Way arching in the background. At its centre shines **a golden sun**, surrounded by fine golden orbital lines. Along these lines small planets "swim", while the blue **earth** is highlighted with a thin trail of light along its orbit — an image of Surah Al-Anbiya' 21:33 and Ya-Sin 36:40: *"all [heavenly bodies] in an orbit are swimming."*

Above and below the cluster of orbits, the words كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ are written in softly glowing calligraphy, as if the orbits themselves were engaged in remembrance. This is the meaning of the title *Glorification Along the Orbits*: the words *yasbaḥūn* (swimming) and *tasbīḥ* (glorifying Allah) come from the same root.

At the bottom is the silhouette of a small hill and a servant of Allah sitting and gazing at the sky in the last third of the night — recalling the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in Sahih al-Bukhari No. 4569, who rose at night, looked up at the sky, and recited *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth..."* (Al 'Imran 3:190). On the eastern horizon a streak of dawn begins to break: a sign that the earth keeps turning, and the night is always "wrapped" by the day.

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Colour guide: green box = Qur'anic verse; gold box = Hadith; blue box = scientific discovery; grey box = athar / words of scholars. Narrator names underlined in blue can be clicked to go to the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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GLORIFICATION ALONG THE ORBITS

Every time we wake up in the morning, we have just completed a full turn with the earth. In a day and a night, the earth has spun on its axis, and at the same time it has travelled about 2.5 million kilometres along its orbit around the sun. The sun, in turn, carries its whole family — eight planets, moons, asteroids and comets — around the centre of the Milky Way galaxy. Not one of them is still. All of them move, all of them obey, and all of them **glorify** Allah in a way that only He knows.

The Qur'an was not revealed as a book of astronomy. It is a book of guidance. Yet it contains dozens of *cosmic verses (ayat kauniyah)* — verses about the heavens, the sun, the moon, day and night — that invite people to look up at the sky and submit to its Creator. This eBook traces those verses together with the related authentic Hadith, the explanations of respected scholars, and modern scientific discoveries about the movements of the earth, the sun and the planets.

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:44

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ ٱلسَّبۡعُ وَٱلۡأَرۡضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّۚ وَإِن مِّن شَيۡءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمۡدِهِۦ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَفۡقَهُونَ تَسۡبِيحَهُمۡۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورٗا ٤٤

The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them exalt Him. And there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] by His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] exalting. Indeed, He is ever Forbearing and Forgiving.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:44

SURAH AN-NUR 24:41

أَلَمۡ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَٱلطَّيۡرُ صَٰٓفَّٰتٖۖ كُلّٞ قَدۡ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُۥ وَتَسۡبِيحَهُۥۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمُۢ بِمَا يَفۡعَلُونَ ٤١

Do you not see that Allah is exalted by whomever is within the heavens and the earth and [by] the birds with wings spread [in flight]? Each [of them] has known his [means of] prayer and exalting [Him], and Allah is Knowing of what they do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/24:41

EXPLANATIONS AND COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

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Imam Ibn Kathir explains that the seven heavens, the earth and all within them declare Allah free of every imperfection, and that there is not a thing except that it glorifies Him with praise, but people do not understand their glorification because it is not in human language (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/17/44). **Imam al-Qurtubi** records the scholars' differing views: some held that this glorification is *lisan al-hal* — the state of creation bearing witness to the greatness of its Creator — while others, the view he favours, held that it is real glorification, in keeping with His words "but you do not understand their glorification" (tafsir.app/qurtubi/17/44).

Surah An-Nur 24:41 adds a beautiful truth: **"each has known his [means of] prayer and exalting [Him]." Shaykh as-Sa'di** explains that every creature has been inspired with its own way of worship (tafsir.app/saadi/24/41). For the sun, the moon and the planets, that "way" is shown in courses from which they never stray. The orbit is their prayer mat; each revolution is their remembrance.

THE APPROACH OF THIS EBOOK: AGREEMENT, NOT IMPOSITION

Before going further, one principle must be made clear honestly. **The Qur'an does not state explicitly that the earth circles the sun.** The verses state that every heavenly body moves in its own course, that the sun itself moves, that day and night wrap over each other, and that all run by precise calculation. The fact that the earth circles the sun comes from science — the work of astronomers over centuries.

Therefore this eBook explains the relationship between revelation and science as **agreement**, not as "proof" that a scientific theory is written in the Qur'an. Three guidelines are held throughout the discussion:

First, the Qur'an is a book of guidance; cosmic verses are mentioned to awaken faith and gratitude, not to teach physics formulas. **Second**, verses must not be forced to fit theories, since scientific theories can change while revelation is fixed. **Third**, when authentic texts are correctly understood and scientific facts are truly established, the two will never contradict each other, because both come from Allah: one is the *sign that is read*, the other the *sign that is seen*. This principle is explained at length by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah in *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql*: sound reason never contradicts sound revelation.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself showed how a believer engages with the sky:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4569

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حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي مَرْيَمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي شَرِيكُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي نَمِرٍ، عَنْ كُرَيْبٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ بِتُّ عِنْدَ خَالَتِي مَيْمُونَةَ، فَتَحَدَّثَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَعَ أَهْلِهِ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ رَقَدَ، فَلَمَّا كَانَ ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الآخِرُ قَعَدَ فَنَظَرَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَقَالَ {إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلاَفِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لأُولِي الأَلْبَابِ}، ثُمَّ قَامَ فَتَوَضَّأَ وَاسْتَنَّ، فَصَلَّى إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً، ثُمَّ أَذَّنَ بِلاَلٌ فَصَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ فَصَلَّى الصُّبْحَ.

TRANSLATION:

From Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما, who said: “I spent the night at the house of my maternal aunt, Maymunah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ talked with his wife for a while, then slept. When the last third of the night came, he sat up, **looked up at the sky** and recited: ‘Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding’ (Al ‘Imran 3:190). Then he got up, made wudu’, used the tooth-stick, and prayed eleven rak‘ahs. Then Bilal called the adhan, so he prayed two rak‘ahs, then went out and led the Fajr prayer.”

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa‘id ibn Abi Maryam, from Muhammad ibn Ja‘far, from Sharik ibn ‘Abdillah ibn Abi Namir, from Kuraib, from Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Chapter on His words “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth…”, Hadith No. 4569.

ريوايت إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب التفسير، حديث نومبور ٤٥٦٩

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4569

This is a sunnah often forgotten: the Messenger of Allah ﷺ rose in the last third of the night, **looked up at the sky**, and recited the verse on the creation of the heavens and the earth. Observing the sky is not a secular activity separate from worship; it was part of his night prayer. Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani notes in *Fath al-Bari* that this Hadith shows the encouragement to recite the closing verses of Surah Al ‘Imran on waking at night while reflecting on the sky.

Note: Scientific discoveries are presented as evidence of agreement, not to “prove” the truth of the Qur'an. The truth of revelation stands by itself; science is provisional and always being revised.

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IT BEGAN WITH SMOKE: THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Before there can be orbits, there must be bodies that orbit. Before the earth could circle the sun, the earth and the sun themselves had first to be created. The Qur'an opens this story with a few short verses that are rich in meaning.

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:30

أَوَلَمْ يَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَٰهُمَاۖ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ حَىٍّۖ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Have those who disbelieved not considered that the heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them and made from water every living thing? Then will they not believe?

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:30

SURAH FUSSILAT 41:11

ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰٓ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَهِىَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ٱئْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَآ أَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِينَ ﴿١١﴾

Then He directed Himself to the heaven while it was smoke and said to it and to the earth, "Come [into being], willingly or by compulsion." They said, "We have come willingly."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/41:11

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir records several interpretations of *ratqan fa-fataqnahuma* ("joined, then We separated them"). Among them is the view of Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that the heavens and the earth were originally joined and Allah separated them; and another narration from him that the sky once gave no rain and the earth grew no plants, and then Allah "opened" the sky with rain and the earth with vegetation (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/21/30). Both interpretations are linguistically sound, and we do not reject either.

On Surah Fussilat 41:11, Ibn Kathir explains that the *dukhan* (smoke) was vapour that rose from the water when the earth was created (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/41/11). What is clear from this verse is that the heaven in its early stage was not in the form we see today,

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but in a state like smoke or gas. Notice too the reply of the heavens and the earth: **“We have come willingly.”** From the very first moment, the universe chose obedience.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3191

حَدَّثَنَا عُمَرُ بْنُ حَفْصِ بْنِ غِيَاثٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبِي، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، حَدَّثَنَا جَامِعُ بْنُ شَدَّادٍ، عَنْ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ مُحْرِزٍ، أَنَّهُ حَدَّثَهُ عَنْ عِمْرَانَ بْنِ حُصَيْنٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ دَخَلْتُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَعَقَلْتُ نَاقَتِي بِالْبَابِ، فَأَتَاهُ نَاسٌ مِنْ بَنِي تَمِيمٍ فَقَالَ " اقْبَلُوا الْبُشْرَى يَا بَنِي تَمِيمٍ ". قَالُوا قَدْ بَشَّرْتَنَا فَأَعْطِنَا. مَرَّتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ نَاسٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ فَقَالَ " اقْبَلُوا الْبُشْرَى يَا أَهْلَ الْيَمَنِ، إِذْ لَمْ يَقْبَلْهَا بَنُو تَمِيمٍ ". قَالُوا قَدْ قَبِلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، قَالُوا جِئْنَاكَ نَسْأَلُكَ عَنْ هَذَا الأَمْرِ قَالَ " كَانَ اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَىْءٌ غَيْرُهُ، وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ، وَكَتَبَ فِي الذِّكْرِ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ، وَخَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ ". فَنَادَى مُنَادٍ ذَهَبَتْ نَاقَتُكَ يَا ابْنَ الْحُصَيْنِ. فَانْطَلَقْتُ فَإِذَا هِيَ يَقْطَعُ دُونَهَا السَّرَابُ، فَوَاللَّهِ لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ تَرَكْتُهَا.

TRANSLATION:

From ‘Imran ibn Husain رضى الله عنهما, who said: “I went in to see the Prophet ﷺ and tied my camel at the door. A group from Banu Tamim came to him and he said: ‘Accept the glad tidings, O Banu Tamim.’ They said: ‘You have given us glad tidings, so give us (wealth).’ (They said it) twice. Then a group of the people of Yemen came in, and he said: ‘Accept the glad tidings, O people of Yemen, since Banu Tamim did not accept them.’ They said: ‘We have accepted them, O Messenger of Allah. We have come to ask you about the beginning of this matter.’ He said: **‘Allah existed and there was nothing besides Him; His ‘Arsh was upon the water; He wrote everything in the Dhikr (the Preserved Tablet); and He created the heavens and the earth.’** Then someone called out: ‘Your camel has gone, O Ibn al-Husain!’ So I went after it, and found that the mirage had blocked my view of it. By Allah, I truly wish I had let the camel go (and not left that gathering).”

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from ‘Umar ibn Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from his father Hafs ibn Ghiyath, from al-A‘mash, from Jami‘ ibn Shaddad, from Safwan ibn Muhriz, from ‘Imran ibn Husain رضى الله عنهما, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation (Bad’ al-Khalq), Chapter on Allah’s words “And it is He who begins creation…”, Hadith No. 3191.

ريوايت إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب بدء الخلق، حديث نومبور ٣١٩١

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3191

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This Hadith lays the most important foundation of belief before we speak of orbits and galaxies: **the universe has a beginning**, and before that beginning only Allah existed. Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani explains that the words "Allah existed and there was nothing besides Him" are a clear text that nothing is eternal alongside Allah. For centuries, some philosophers — including Aristotle — held that the universe is eternal without beginning. This view only truly collapsed in science in the 20th century.

SURAH ADH-DHARIYAT 51:47

وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بَنَيۡنَٰهَا بِأَيۡيْدٖ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ۝٤٧

And the heaven We constructed with strength, and indeed, We are [its] expander.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/51:47

The word *la-musi'un* was interpreted by earlier scholars as "We are truly vast in power" or "We expand the provision of creation" (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/51/47). Some contemporary scholars see in it an indication of an expanding universe. Linguistically, *awsa'a* can indeed mean "to expand". We present this as **an interesting agreement**, without denying the interpretation of the early scholars.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE UNIVERSE HAS A BEGINNING AND IS EXPANDING

In 1929, Edwin Hubble found that distant galaxies are moving away from us, and the farther a galaxy is, the faster it recedes. This indicates that the universe is expanding. In 1965, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson accidentally discovered the cosmic microwave background radiation — the heat "echo" of the hot, dense early universe. Data from the Planck satellite (2018) estimate the age of the universe at about **13.8 billion years**. In 1998, two research teams found that this expansion is actually speeding up.

This model is known as the *Big Bang* theory. It does not explain "who" began the universe, but it ends the claim that the universe is eternal without a beginning.

STUDY REFERENCES:

Hubble E (1929). A relation between distance and radial velocity among extra-galactic nebulae. PNAS 15(3):168–173. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.15.3.168

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SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE SOLAR SYSTEM WAS BORN FROM A CLOUD OF GAS AND DUST

Scientists have found that the sun and the planets formed from a spinning, contracting cloud of gas and dust (the solar nebula). The centre of the cloud became the sun, while the remaining material spinning around it formed a disc that later became the planets. Dating of the oldest solid grains in meteorites shows that the solar system began to form about **4,567 million years** ago. In 2014, the ALMA telescope captured an image of a planet-forming disc around the young star HL Tauri — like seeing a "baby picture" of a solar system.

Its agreement with the Qur'an: the heaven was once in a state of *dukhan* (like smoke or gas), and the heavenly bodies that move today were born from that state by Allah's command, **inheriting their spin** from the beginning of creation.

STUDY REFERENCES:

Connelly JN et al. (2012). The absolute chronology and thermal processing of solids in the solar protoplanetary disk. Science 338:651–655. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1226919

ESO (2014). ALMA reveals planetary genesis around HL Tauri. https://www.eso.org/public/news/eso1436/

Note on honesty: We do not say that the Qur'an "mentions the Big Bang theory". What we say is: the Qur'an and Hadith state that the universe has a beginning, that the heaven was once like smoke, and that Allah is able to expand it — and the discoveries of modern science agree with this general picture.

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KULLUN FĪ FALAKIN YASBAḤŪN: EACH IN ITS ORBIT

This is the verse at the heart of this eBook. It appears twice in the Qur'an, and both times it describes the heavenly bodies as things that **swim** in a *falak*.

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:33

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلَّيۡلَ وَٱلنَّهَارَ وَٱلشَّمۡسَ وَٱلۡقَمَرَۖ كُلٌّ فِى فَلَكٍ يَسۡبَحُونَ ٣٣

And it is He who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all [heavenly bodies] in an orbit are swimming.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:33

SURAH YA-SIN 36:40

لَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ يَنۢبَغِى لَهَآ أَن تُدۡرِكَ ٱلۡقَمَرَ وَلَا ٱلَّيۡلُ سَابِقُ ٱلنَّهَارِۚ وَكُلٌّ فِى فَلَكٍ يَسۡبَحُونَ ٤٠

It is not allowable for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/36:40

THE MEANING OF "FALAK" AND "YASBAHUN"

In Arabic, *falak* refers to something round that turns. Imam Ibn Kathir records the words of Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that the heavenly bodies "turn as the spindle (*mighzal*) turns in its *falkah*" — the small whorl that spins on a spinning tool (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/21/33). An image very close to the concepts of orbit and rotation.

The verb *yasbaḥūn* means "they swim" or "they move smoothly". It comes in the plural form used for rational beings, as if the heavenly bodies obey consciously. More interesting still, *yasbaḥūn* (swimming) and *tasbīḥ* (glorifying Allah) share the same root: **sīn–bā'–ḥā' (سبح)**. This is where the title of this eBook comes from: every heavenly body "swims" in its orbit, and at the same time it is **glorifying** Allah.

Who is meant by "*kullun*" (each one)? In Surah Al-Anbiya' 21:33, the context is the night, the day, the sun and the moon. The exegetes mention the sun and the moon specifically,

and some also include the stars. The verse does not limit the number, so its meaning is open to every heavenly body that moves.

SURAH AR-RAHMAN 55:5

ٱلشَّمۡسُ وَٱلۡقَمَرُ بِحُسۡبَانٖ ۝٥

The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/55:5

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that the sun and the moon move by precise calculation, without discrepancy or disorder (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/55/5). The word *ḥusbān* itself comes from the root "hisab" — calculation. This is what astronomers have found: planetary orbits can be calculated with precise mathematical formulas.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE LAWS OF ORBITS: KEPLER AND NEWTON

In the early 17th century, Johannes Kepler formulated three laws of planetary motion: (1) every planet orbits the sun in an **ellipse**, with the sun at one focus; (2) the line joining a planet and the sun sweeps out equal areas in equal times — a planet moves faster when close to the sun; (3) the square of the orbital period is proportional to the cube of the planet's average distance from the sun. In 1687, Isaac Newton showed that all three laws arise from one force: **gravity**.

Today these figures are measured very precisely. The earth completes one orbit in **365.256 days** at an average speed of **29.78 km per second** (about 107,000 km per hour). The moon circles the earth every 27.3 days. Truly, *"the sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation."*

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA Scientific Visualization Studio. Kepler's Laws of Planetary Motion. https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4642

NASA Earth Observatory. Planetary Motion: The History of an Idea — Orbital Mechanics. https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/OrbitsHistory/page2.php

NASA NSSDCA. Earth Fact Sheet. https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet/earthfact.html

Note: Earlier scholars understood these verses within the astronomical framework of their time. What is amazing is that the wording of the Qur'an — "each swims in its orbit" — remains accurate whether read in the 7th century or the 21st.

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THE SUN RUNS TO ITS APPOINTED PLACE

Many assume the sun is a “motionless centre”. The Qur'an never describes it that way. Instead, it describes the sun as something that **runs** (*tajrī*).

SURAH YA-SIN 36:38

وَٱلشَّمۡسُ تَجۡرِي لِمُسۡتَقَرّٖ لَّهَاۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقۡدِيرُ ٱلۡعَزِيزِ ٱلۡعَلِيمِ ٣٨

And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/36:38

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3199

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم لأَبِي ذَرٍّ حِينَ غَرَبَتِ الشَّمْسُ " تَدْرِي أَيْنَ تَذْهَبُ ". قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ " فَإِنَّهَا تَذْهَبُ حَتَّى تَسْجُدَ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ، فَتَسْتَأْذِنَ فَيُؤْذَنَ لَهَا، وَيُوشِكُ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ فَلاَ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهَا، وَتَسْتَأْذِنَ فَلاَ يُؤْذَنَ لَهَا، يُقَالُ لَهَا ارْجِعِي مِنْ حَيْثُ جِئْتِ. فَتَطْلُعُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا، فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى {وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ}".

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه, who said: The Prophet ﷺ asked Abu Dharr at sunset: “Do you know where it goes?” I said: “Allah and His Messenger know best.” He said: **“It goes until it prostrates beneath the ‘Arsh, then it asks permission (to rise again) and is given permission.** And soon it will prostrate but its prostration will not be accepted, and it will ask permission but will not be given permission; it will be told: ‘Return from where you came’, and it will rise from its place of setting. That is the meaning of the words of Allah the Exalted: ‘And the sun runs to its stopping point; that is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing’ (Ya-Sin 36:38).”

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Firyabi, from Sufyan ath-Thawri, from al-A‘mash, from Ibrahim at-Taymi, from his father Yazid ibn Sharik at-Taymi, from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation, Chapter on the Description of the Sun and the Moon, Hadith No. 3199.

ريوايت إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب بدء الخلق، حديث نومبور ٣١٩٩

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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari; also narrated by Imam Muslim in the Book of Faith.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3199

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4803

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا وَكِيعٌ، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ التَّيْمِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، قَالَ سَأَلْتُ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم عَنْ قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى {وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا} قَالَ " مُسْتَقَرُّهَا تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ ".

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه, who said: I asked the Prophet ﷺ about the words of Allah the Exalted: “And the sun runs to its stopping point.” He said: **“Its stopping point is beneath the ‘Arsh.”**

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Waki‘ ibn al-Jarrah, from al-A‘mash, from Ibrahim at-Taymi, from his father Yazid ibn Sharik at-Taymi, from Abu Dharr al-Ghifari رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Chapter on His words “And the sun runs to its stopping point…”, Hadith No. 4803.

رواية إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب التفسير، حديث نومبور ٤٨٠٣

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4803

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir mentions two views on the sun’s *mustaqarr* (stopping point) (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/36/38). **First**, it is a place (*mustaqarr makani*), namely beneath the ‘Arsh, as in the Hadith of Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه. **Second**, it is a time (*mustaqarr zamani*), namely the end of its journey on the Day of Resurrection. Qatadah described it as “its appointed time and term, which it will not exceed”. He also records the reading of Ibn Mas‘ud and Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهم: *“wash-shamsu tajrī lā mustaqarra lahā”* — “the sun runs without resting” — a reading that is not mutawatir, but lends supporting meaning that the sun is always moving.

On the sun’s prostration beneath the ‘Arsh, Hadith commentators such as al-Khattabi and Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani stress that it is a matter of the unseen whose manner we do not know. Every creature’s prostration is according to its nature, as Allah says in Surah

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Al-Hajj 22:18 that the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains and the trees all prostrate to Him. This Hadith does **not** mean that the sun stops moving or leaves the sky; the ‘Arsh encompasses all creation, so the sun is beneath it at every moment. We believe in this Hadith as it has come, without likening it to human prostration.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE SUN ALSO HAS AN ORBIT

The sun is not a static body. It carries the whole solar system around the centre of the Milky Way galaxy at about **230 km per second** (more than 800,000 km per hour). One complete circuit takes about **230 million years** — known as a “galactic year”. Since it formed, the sun is estimated to have completed about 20 circuits.

The sun also has a “term”. It is now about 4.6 billion years old, and in about 5 billion more years the hydrogen fuel in its core will run low, and it will swell into a red giant. This agrees with the second meaning of *mustaqarr* mentioned by Ibn Kathir and Qatadah — **the sun runs towards an appointed end**.

STUDY REFERENCES:

Live Science. How many times has the sun traveled around the Milky Way? https://livescience.com/space/cosmology/how-many-times-has-the-sun-traveled-around-the-milky-way

NASA. Sun: Facts. https://science.nasa.gov/sun/facts/

NASA Astrobiology. Living in a Dying Solar System, Part 2. https://astrobiology.nasa.gov/news/living-in-a-dying-solar-system-part-2/

Note on honesty: The Hadith of Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه does not describe a galactic orbit, and we do not claim that it does. The agreement we see is in the wording of the Qur'an, “the sun runs” — an image that never needed to be “corrected”, even as science moved from an earth-centred model to a sun-centred one, and then to a sun that moves within the galaxy.

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NIGHT WRAPPED OVER DAY: A ROUND AND SPINNING EARTH

The alternation of day and night is the sign closest to our lives. The Qur'an describes it in very subtle language.

SURAH AZ-ZUMAR 39:5

خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَ بِٱلۡحَقِّۖ يُكَوِّرُ ٱلَّيۡلَ عَلَى ٱلنَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ ٱلنَّهَارَ عَلَى ٱلَّيۡلِۖ وَسَخَّرَ ٱلشَّمۡسَ وَٱلۡقَمَرَۖ كُلٌّ يَجۡرِي لِأَجَلٖ مُّسَمًّىۗ أَلَا هُوَ ٱلۡعَزِيزُ ٱلۡغَفَّٰرُ ٥

He created the heavens and earth in truth. He wraps the night over the day and wraps the day over the night and has subjected the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. Unquestionably, He is the Exalted in Might, the Perpetual Forgiver.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/39:5

SURAH YA-SIN 36:37

وَءَايَةٞ لَّهُمُ ٱلَّيۡلُ نَسۡلَخُ مِنۡهُ ٱلنَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُم مُّظۡلِمُونَ ٣٧

And a sign for them is the night. We remove from it [the light of] day, so they are [left] in darkness.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/36:37

THE MEANING OF "YUKAWWIR" — WRAPPING LIKE A TURBAN

The verb *yukawwiru* comes from *kawwara al-'imamah* — winding a turban around the head, layer upon layer. Night is wound over day and day is wound over night continuously. **Imam Ibn Hazm** in *al-Fisal* and **Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah** in *Majmu' al-Fatawa* took this verse as one of the proofs that the earth and the heavens are round; Ibn Taymiyyah also records the scholars' consensus, via Abu al-Husain Ibn al-Munadi, that the heavens (falak) are round. Winding can only happen around something round.

Surah Ya-Sin 36:37 uses the word *naslakhu* — "We strip away" — like stripping the skin from a slaughtered animal. Daylight is only a thin layer that is "stripped away", revealing the original darkness. This image fits remarkably well with what astronauts see: the earth is wrapped in a layer of light on the half facing the sun, while the other half lies in the darkness of space.

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SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:54

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ فِى سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى
ٱلْعَرْشِ ۖ يُغْشِى ٱلَّيْلَ ٱلنَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُۥ حَثِيثًا وَٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ وَٱلنُّجُومَ
مُسَخَّرَٰتٍۭ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ ٱلْخَلْقُ وَٱلْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:54

The phrase *yaṭlubuhu ḥathīthā* — "chasing it rapidly" — describes night and day pursuing each other without pause. Imam as-Sa'di explains that when one leaves, the other comes at once to replace it, without any gap (tafsir.app/saadi/7/54).

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE EARTH'S ROTATION ON ITS AXIS

The earth rotates on its axis once every **23 hours 56 minutes 4 seconds** relative to the distant stars (a sidereal day). At the equator, the earth's surface moves at about **1,670 km per hour**. In Malaysia, close to the equator, we are "riding" the earth at nearly 1,650 km per hour as we read this verse.

A famous laboratory proof is Foucault's pendulum. In 1851 at the Panthéon in Paris, Léon Foucault hung a long pendulum; its plane of swing appeared to turn slowly throughout the day — not because the pendulum turned, but because the earth beneath it was rotating. Because the earth is round and spinning, at every moment half of it is in day and half in night; the boundary line moves without stopping — *"He wraps the night over the day and wraps the day over the night."*

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA NSSDCA. Earth Fact Sheet (sidereal rotation period 23.9345 hours). https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet/earthfact.html

Smithsonian Magazine. How does Foucault's pendulum prove the Earth rotates? https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-does-foucaults-pendulum-prove-earth-rotates-180968024/

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MOUNTAINS PASSING LIKE CLOUDS: AN EARTH THAT MOVES WITHOUT OUR NOTICING

A verse in Surah An-Naml is often linked to the movement of the earth. To be honest, this verse must be read together with the verse before it.

SURAH AN-NAML 27:87–88

وَيَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَفَزِعَ مَن فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَن فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ وَكُلٌّ أَتَوْهُ دَٰخِرِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

And [warn of] the Day the Horn will be blown, and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth will be terrified except whom Allah wills. And all will come to Him humbled.

وَتَرَى ٱلْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ ٱلسَّحَابِ ۚ صُنْعَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ خَبِيرٌۢ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

And you see the mountains, thinking them rigid, while they will pass as the passing of clouds. [It is] the work of Allah, who perfected all things. Indeed, He is Acquainted with that which you do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/27:87-88

TWO SCHOLARLY VIEWS

The view of the majority of exegetes. Imam Ibn Kathir, Imam al-Qurtubi and Shaykh as-Sa'di interpret verse 88 as an event of the Day of Resurrection: after the Horn is blown (verse 87), the mountains that were thought fixed will move and fly like clouds (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/27/88; tafsir.app/qurtubi/27/88). This interpretation is supported by other verses such as Surah At-Takwir 81:3, "And when the mountains are removed."

The view of some contemporary scholars. They see two indications in this verse: (1) the phrase *"thinking them rigid"* — on the Day of Resurrection, people would no longer think the mountains fixed, since they would see them crumble; and (2) the end of the verse *"[It is] the work of Allah, who perfected all things"* — praise of the perfection of creation, which fits an ordered universe better than one being destroyed. For them, the verse hints at mountains moving with the earth without our noticing.

The position of this eBook: the view of the majority of exegetes is the stronger interpretation in terms of context. The second view is a reflective ijtihad that may be

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presented as *a possible agreement*, but cannot be taken as a definitive interpretation or a scientific "proof".

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: WE MOVE AT HIGH SPEED WITHOUT FEELING IT

At this very moment, we are moving at three speeds at once: about **1,670 km per hour** because of the earth's rotation (at the equator), about **107,000 km per hour** because of the earth's orbit around the sun, and more than **800,000 km per hour** because the sun circles the centre of the galaxy. Yet the mountains around us appear still, and the water in a cup does not shake.

The reason is that uniform motion cannot be felt by someone moving along with it — a principle explained by Galileo in the 17th century. We feel only changes in speed, not speed itself. So indeed, our eyes "think them rigid", while in reality everything is moving.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA NSSDCA. Earth Fact Sheet (mean orbital velocity 29.78 km/s).
https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet/earthfact.html

Live Science. How many times has the sun traveled around the Milky Way?
https://livescience.com/space/cosmology/how-many-times-has-the-sun-traveled-around-the-milky-way

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THE EARTH CIRCLES THE SUN: PRECISE CALCULATION

This is the original question that inspired this eBook. The Qur'an does not state directly that the earth circles the sun. What the Qur'an affirms is that the movements of the heavens are **signs**, that they are **ordered by calculation**, and that they were created so that people could **count the years and reckon time**.

SURAH YUNUS 10:5

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ ٱلشَّمْسَ ضِيَآءً وَٱلْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُۥ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا۟ عَدَدَ ٱلسِّنِينَ وَٱلْحِسَابَ ۚ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ إِلَّا بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ يُفَصِّلُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝٥

It is He who made the sun a shining light and the moon a derived light and determined for it phases - that you may know the number of years and account [of time]. Allah has not created this except in truth. He details the signs for a people who know.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/10:5

Shaykh as-Sa'di explains that Allah made the sun shine and the moon give light, then set the stages of their courses, so that by them people know the number of years and the reckoning of time that underlies worship and worldly affairs (tafsir.app/saadi/10/5). The lunar Hijri calendar and the solar Gregorian calendar are both possible only because of these fixed courses. The solar year itself — just over 365 days — is nothing other than the time of **one circuit of the earth around the sun**.

HISTORICAL TRAIL: FROM MARAGHA AND DAMASCUS TO FROMBORK

For more than a thousand years, the world held to Ptolemy's model, which placed the earth at the centre of the universe. Muslim astronomers did not accept it wholesale. Ibn al-Haytham (d. 1040 CE) wrote *al-Shukuk 'ala Batlamyus* (Doubts Concerning Ptolemy). Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. 1048 CE) discussed the possibility that the earth rotates on its axis and stated that it would not spoil astronomical calculations. Nasir al-Din al-Tusi at the Maragha observatory devised a geometric technique now known as the *Tusi couple* (*Tusi couple*).

Later, Ibn al-Shatir (d. 1375 CE), the *muwaqqit* (prayer-time keeper) of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, built models of the moon and planets that are mathematically almost identical to those used by Nicolaus Copernicus in Frombork, Poland, about 150 years later. Many historians of science believe Copernicus knew of this work through

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certain channels. Copernicus published *De revolutionibus* in 1543, placing the sun at the centre; Kepler perfected it with elliptical orbits (1609); Galileo saw the phases of Venus (1610); and Newton explained the cause through gravity (1687). Interestingly, a mosque's prayer-time keeper stands in this chain of history — because Muslim worship has always depended on calculating the sun's course.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: EVIDENCE THAT THE EARTH CIRCLES THE SUN

The aberration of starlight (1729). James Bradley found that the positions of stars appear to shift slightly in a yearly cycle. He explained that this happens because an observer on earth moves at about 30 km per second around the sun, so the direction of starlight "tilts" slightly — like rain that appears slanted when we run.

Stellar parallax (1838). Friedrich Bessel succeeded in measuring the tiny shift in the position of the star 61 Cygni when seen from two ends of the earth's orbit, six months apart. This shift is only possible if the earth really changes position as it circles the sun.

The seasons. The earth's axis is tilted about **23.44°**. As the earth circles the sun, the northern and southern hemispheres take turns tilting more towards the sun, producing summer and winter.

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HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1043

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا هَاشِمُ بْنُ الْقَاسِمِ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنْ زِيَادِ بْنِ عِلاَقَةَ، عَنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ بْنِ شُعْبَةَ، قَالَ كَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَوْمَ مَاتَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ، فَقَالَ النَّاسُ كَسَفَتِ الشَّمْسُ لِمَوْتِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " إِنَّ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لاَ يَنْكَسِفَانِ لِمَوْتِ أَحَدٍ وَلاَ لِحَيَاتِهِ، فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَصَلُّوا وَادْعُوا اللَّهَ ".

TRANSLATION:

From al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah رضى الله عنه, who said: There was a solar eclipse in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, on the day Ibrahim (his son) died. The people said: "The sun has eclipsed because of the death of Ibrahim." So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The sun and the moon are not eclipsed because of anyone's death, nor because of anyone's birth.** So when you see (an eclipse), pray and supplicate to Allah."

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Muhammad al-Ju'fi, from Hashim ibn al-Qasim, from Shayban Abu Mu'awiyah, from Ziyad ibn 'Ilaqah, from al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Eclipses (al-Kusuf), Chapter on Prayer During a Solar Eclipse, Hadith No. 1043.

ريوايت إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب الكسوف، حديث نومبور ١٠٤٣

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1043

This Hadith is very important in our discussion. When Arab society linked eclipses to the deaths of great figures, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ — on the day of his own son's death — rejected that superstition. An eclipse is a **sign of Allah's power** that runs according to sunnatullah, not an omen of human fate. Today, because the orbits of the earth and moon run with precise *ḥusbān*, astronomers can predict eclipses thousands of years forwards and backwards to the minute. Yet the sunnah remains: when an eclipse occurs, we **pray and supplicate**, because knowing the scientific cause does not remove the duty to glorify the Creator of that cause.

NOTE: Precise eclipse predictions can be seen in NASA's eclipse catalogue: eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov. The accuracy of these predictions is a "modern witness" to the words of Allah, *"The sun and the moon [move] by precise calculation."*

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THE PLANETS IN THE EMBRACE OF THE SUN

The earth is not the only body that circles the sun. The Qur'an mentions the *kawākib* (shining heavenly bodies) as an adornment of the nearest heaven.

SURAH AS-SAFFAT 37:6

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا ٱلسَّمَآءَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةٍ ٱلْكَوَاكِبِ ۝٦

Indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment of stars.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/37:6

SURAH AT-TAKWIR 81:15–16

فَلَآ أُقْسِمُ بِٱلْخُنَّسِ ۝١٥

So I swear by the retreating stars.

ٱلْجَوَارِ ٱلْكُنَّسِ ۝١٦

Those that run [their courses] and disappear.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/81:15-16

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

On *al-khunnas al-jawari al-kunnas*, Imam al-Qurtubi mentions a view, narrated from ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضى الله عنه, that what is meant is five stars: **Zuhal (Saturn), Mushtari (Jupiter), Mirrikh (Mars), Zuhrah (Venus) and ‘Utarid (Mercury)** — because these stars appear to “retreat” (*khanasa*) in their course, then “run” (*jara*), then “hide” (*kanasa*) (tafsir.app/qurtubi/81/15). There are other views that it refers to stars in general or to wild animals. But this narration from ‘Ali is interesting: these five bodies are exactly the planets visible to the naked eye, and “backward” (*retrograde*) motion is indeed a feature of planets when seen from an earth that is itself moving around the sun.

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SURAH AR-RA'D 13:2

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى رَفَعَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ۖ ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ۖ وَسَخَّرَ
ٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ ۖ كُلٌّ يَجْرِى لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ يُدَبِّرُ ٱلْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُم بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ۝٢

It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then He established Himself above the Throne and made subject the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. He arranges [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/13:2

The phrase *bi-ghayri 'amadin tarawnahā* has two interpretations recorded by Ibn Kathir (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/13/2): (1) the heavens are raised with no pillars at all; and (2) according to Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما and Mujahid, the heavens do have pillars, but **pillars you cannot see**. The second view agrees with the way science describes gravity: an invisible force that holds every planet in its course.

SURAH FATIR 35:41

۞ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُمْسِكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ أَن تَزُولَا ۚ وَلَئِن زَالَتَآ إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا
مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنۢ بَعْدِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ۝٤١

Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease. And if they should cease, no one could hold them [in place] after Him. Indeed, He is Forbearing and Forgiving.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/35:41

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: GRAVITY: THE INVISIBLE PILLAR

The sun holds about **99.8%** of the total mass of the solar system. Its gravitational pull holds the eight planets, dwarf planets, asteroids and comets in their orbits. The planets do not fall into the sun because they move sideways at just the right speed; nor do they escape into space, because the sun's pull holds them back. This fine balance between speed and pull is what keeps orbits stable for billions of years — *"Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease."*

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In September 2025, NASA's Exoplanet Archive confirmed more than **6,000 planets** orbiting other stars. Our solar system is just one of billions of "orbital families" in the universe — each one *swimming* in its course.

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THE SUN'S FAMILY: PLANETARY ORBIT DATA

PLANET	AVERAGE DISTANCE FROM THE SUN	TIME FOR ONE ORBIT	TIME FOR ONE ROTATION
'Utarid (Mercury)	57.9 million km	88 days	58.6 days
Zuhrah (Venus)	108.2 million km	224.7 days	243 days (retrograde)
Earth	**149.6 million km**	**365.256 days**	**23 hours 56 minutes**
Mirrikh (Mars)	228.0 million km	687 days	24 hours 37 minutes
Mushtari (Jupiter)	778.5 million km	11.9 years	9 hours 56 minutes
Zuhal (Saturn)	1,432 million km	29.4 years	10 hours 33 minutes
Uranus	2,867 million km	84 years	17 hours 14 minutes (retrograde)
Neptune	4,515 million km	164.8 years	16 hours 6 minutes

Data source: NASA NSSDCA Planetary Fact Sheets — nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet. Notice: the farther a planet is from the sun, the longer its orbital period — exactly as Kepler's Third Law states.

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UNTIL AN APPOINTED TERM

Every orbit has a beginning, and every orbit has an end. The phrase *li-ajalin musamma* ("for a specified term") recurs several times in the Qur'an when mentioning the sun and the moon — including in Surah Az-Zumar 39:5 and Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:2, which we have read.

SURAH AT-TAKWIR 81:1–2

إِذَا ٱلشَّمۡسُ كُوِّرَتۡ ١

When the sun is wrapped up [in darkness]

وَإِذَا ٱلنُّجُومُ ٱنكَدَرَتۡ ٢

And when the stars fall, dispersing

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/81:1-2

SURAH AL-QIYAMAH 75:8–9

وَخَسَفَ ٱلۡقَمَرُ ٨

And the moon darkens

وَجُمِعَ ٱلشَّمۡسُ وَٱلۡقَمَرُ ٩

And the sun and the moon are joined

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/75:8-9

SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:104

يَوۡمَ نَطۡوِي ٱلسَّمَآءَ كَطَيِّ ٱلسِّجِلِّ لِلۡكُتُبِۚ كَمَا بَدَأۡنَآ أَوَّلَ خَلۡقٖ نُّعِيدُهُۥۚ وَعۡدًا عَلَيۡنَآۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ ١٠٤

The Day when We will fold the heaven like the folding of a [written] sheet for the records. As We began the first creation, We will repeat it. [That is] a promise binding upon Us. Indeed, We will do it.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/21:104

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COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir reports from Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما that *kuwwirat* means the sun becomes dark, and from other scholars that it is rolled up and loses its light (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/81/1). Surah Al-Anbiya’ 21:104 describes the heaven being folded like the pages of a book — an image of the end of the whole universe, whose manner only Allah knows.

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4635

حَدَّثَنَا مُوسَى بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَاحِدِ، حَدَّثَنَا عُمَارَةُ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو زُرْعَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ، رضى الله عنه قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " لاَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ مِنْ مَغْرِبِهَا، فَإِذَا رَآهَا النَّاسُ آمَنَ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا، فَذَاكَ حِينَ لاَ يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا، لَمْ تَكُنْ آمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ ".

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **“The Hour will not be established until the sun rises from where it sets.** When the people see it, all who are on the earth will believe. That is when a soul’s faith will not benefit it if it had not believed before” (see Surah Al-An‘am 6:158).

SANAD: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Musa ibn Isma‘il, from ‘Abd al-Wahid ibn Ziyad, from ‘Umarah ibn al-Qa‘qa‘, from Abu Zur‘ah, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, from the Prophet ﷺ.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Chapter on His words “Bring forward your witnesses…” (Al-An‘am 6:150), Hadith No. 4635.

ريوايت إمام البخاري دالم صحيح البخاري، كتاب التفسير، حديث نومبور ٤٦٣٥

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4635

This Hadith mentions a great unseen event: the sun will rise from the west as one of the major signs of the Hour. It is directly linked to the Hadith of Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه in chapter three — the sun that has always sought permission to rise from the east will, one day, no longer be permitted. This event is a **matter of the unseen** that must be believed on the basis of authentic texts. Science does not predict it, and we need not look for a “scientific explanation” for it; it is enough to be certain that the Lord who set the laws of orbit has power to change them whenever He wills.

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SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY: THE UNIVERSE HAS AN END

The moon is drifting away. Reflectors left by the Apollo missions allow scientists to measure the earth–moon distance with lasers. The result: the moon is moving away from the earth by about **3.8 cm a year**.

The earth's rotation is slowing. Records of ancient eclipses spanning 2,700 years show that the length of the day increases by an average of about 1.8 milliseconds per century.

The sun will run out of fuel. In about 5 billion years, the sun will swell into a red giant. The solar system as we know it today will not last forever.

All this points to one reality: the clock of the heavens is ticking, and it ticks towards an *ajal musamma* (appointed term). Yet these scientific figures can**not** be used to predict the date of the Hour. The Hour may come at any time by the will of Allah, far earlier than any of these natural processes.

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SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:187

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلسَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَىٰهَا ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِندَ رَبِّى ۖ لَا يُجَلِّيهَا
لِوَقْتِهَآ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ ثَقُلَتْ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً ۗ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ
كَأَنَّكَ حَفِىٌّ عَنْهَا ۖ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِندَ ٱللَّهِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

They ask you, [O Muhammad], about the Hour: when is its arrival? Say, "Its knowledge is only with my Lord. None will reveal its time except Him. It lays heavily upon the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except unexpectedly." They ask you as if you are familiar with it. Say, "Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most of the people do not know."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:187

POINTS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN REVELATION AND SCIENCE

The table below summarises the discussion of this eBook. The last column states honestly how far the agreement can be claimed.

REVELATION	SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT
Allah existed before everything (Bukhari 3191); the heavens and earth were once joined (21:30)	The universe had a beginning about 13.8 billion years ago	Agrees in principle: the universe had a beginning
The heaven was once *dukhan* / smoke (41:11)	The solar system was born from a cloud of gas and dust	Agrees in its general picture
"We are its expander" (51:47)	The universe is expanding	A possible indication; the salaf interpreted it differently
Each swims in a *falak* (21:33; 36:40)	Every heavenly body has an orbit and rotation	Clear agreement
The sun runs to its *mustaqarr* (36:38)	The sun orbits the galactic centre and has a lifespan	Agrees in wording; the Hadith of prostration is a matter of the unseen
Night wrapped over day (39:5)	The earth is round and rotates on its axis	Agrees; supported by Ibn Hazm and Ibn Taymiyyah
Mountains passing like clouds (27:88)	The earth moves without being felt	Majority of exegetes: an event of the Hour
The sun and moon by *ḥusbān* (55:5; 10:5)	Laws of Kepler and Newton; precise eclipse prediction	Clear agreement
Pillars you cannot see (13:2)	Gravity holds the planets in orbit	Agrees with one interpretation of Ibn 'Abbas
The earth circles the sun	Proven by aberration, parallax and the seasons	Not stated directly; no contradiction
The sun rolled up; rising from the west (81:1; Bukhari 4635)	The sun and orbits have an end	Agrees in principle; the event is unseen

CONCLUSION

The earth has never asked for leave from its orbit. The sun has never been a second late on its schedule. The planets have never fought over their paths. All of them are *yasbaḥūn* — swimming calmly along the orbits that Allah has set — and all of them, according to the Qur'an, are glorifying Him.

Modern astronomy has opened our eyes to speeds, distances and timescales that earlier generations could not imagine. Yet it has not changed the original message of the Qur'an; it has only **enlarged the scale of our wonder**. And among all the creatures in motion,

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only humankind has been given the choice to obey or to refuse. The heavens and the earth answered on the very first day, *"We have come willingly."* (41:11) The question now rests with us.

May Allah make us like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the last third of the night: gazing at the sky, reciting His verses, then rising to prostrate — joining the glorification of the whole universe along the orbit of our own servitude.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who said: “Charity does not decrease wealth. Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises his rank.”

SANAD: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa‘id and ‘Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma‘il ibn Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining of the Ties of Kinship, Chapter on the Encouragement to Forgive and Be Humble, Hadith No. 2588.

ريوايت إمام مسلم دالم صحيح مسلم، كتاب البر والصلة، حديث نومبور ٢٥٨٨

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

From Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him.”

SANAD: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Ayyub, Qutaybah ibn Sa‘id and ‘Ali ibn Hujr, from Isma‘il ibn Ja‘far, from al-‘Ala’ ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman, from his father ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Ya‘qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills, Chapter on the Reward That Reaches a Person After His Death, Hadith No. 1631.

ريوايت إمام مسلم دالم صحيح مسلم، كتاب الوصية، حديث نومبور ١٦٣١

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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