The Formation of Rain

From the Perspective of the Qur'an and Modern Science



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
AK (Kelantan)
quranscience.my

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE FORMATION OF RAIN

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فَتَرَى ٱلْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَٰلِهِۦ

"...and you see the rain emerge from within it."

SURAH AN-NUR 24:43

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord who drives the clouds, brings them together and makes them into a mass, then sends down rain from within them in due measure. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who received the first raindrops on his body because they had just come from their Lord.

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 send down upon us abundant and beneficial rain — ṣayyiban nāfiʿan — upon our land and upon our hearts, and make this knowledge ʿilmun yuntafaʿu bih, knowledge that benefits.

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ABOUT THIS EBOOK'S COVER

This eBook's cover depicts a towering cumulonimbus cloud rising like a mountain range in the evening sky, lit by the golden light of the setting sun. Deep within the cloud, lightning flickers faintly — an image of Surah An-Nur 24:43: "and sends down from the sky, mountains (of clouds) within which is hail ... The flash of its lightning almost takes away the eyesight."

From the base of the cloud, curtains of rain fall in grey streaks onto a wide expanse of green paddy fields, while a winding river reflects the light of the sky — water "made to flow as springs in the earth" (Az-Zumar 39:21), producing crops of varying colours.

At one side, the sky begins to clear and a thin mist rises from the wet earth — a sign of the land that "stirs and swells" after it has been watered by rain (Fussilat 41:39). The cover deliberately shows no people or animals: let the clouds, the rain and the earth themselves "speak" of their Creator.

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CONTENTS

THE FORMATION OF RAIN — *Al-Anbiya' 21:30; Sahih al-Bukhari 846*

1. THE SKY THAT RETURNS THE RAIN: THE WATER CYCLE — *At-Tariq 86:11, Az-Zumar 39:21, Al-Mu'minun 23:18*

2. THE WINDS THAT BRING GOOD TIDINGS — *Al-A'raf 7:57, Al-Hijr 15:22, Ar-Rum 30:46; Sahih Muslim 899; Sahih al-Bukhari 3343*

3. DRIVING, JOINING, STACKING: THE ANATOMY OF A RAIN CLOUD — *An-Nur 24:43, Ar-Rum 30:48*

4. MOUNTAINS IN THE SKY AND GRAINS OF ICE — *An-Nur 24:43; Sahih al-Bukhari 1033*

5. LIGHTNING AND THE THUNDER THAT GLORIFIES — *Ar-Ra'd 13:12–13, Al-Baqarah 2:19–20, An-Nur 24:43; athar of 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr*

6. SENT DOWN IN DUE MEASURE — *Az-Zukhruf 43:11, Al-Hijr 15:21; athar of Ibn Mas'ud*

7. FRESH WATER THAT PURIFIES — *Al-Waqi'ah 56:68–70, Al-Furqan 25:48–49, Al-Anfal 8:11; Sahih Muslim 898*

8. REVIVING THE DEAD EARTH — *Fussilat 41:39, Fatir 35:9, Qaf 50:9–11; Sahih al-Bukhari 4935*

9. RAIN, SUPPLICATION AND THE SERVANT'S DEPENDENCE — *Nuh 71:10–12, Ash-Shura 42:28, Al-Mulk 67:30; Sahih al-Bukhari 1032*

10. VIEWS OF SCHOLARS OF SCIENTIFIC I'JAZ — *Prof. Dr. Zaghloul El-Naggar, Dr. Maurice Bucaille*

POINTS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN REVELATION AND SCIENCE — *Summary table and Conclusion*

REFERENCES

SUPPORT & CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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THE FORMATION OF RAIN

Every time rain falls on our village, a long journey has just come to an end. The drop that strikes the roof may have begun as vapour over the South China Sea a few days earlier; it rose into the air, was carried by the wind, gathered into a cloud, and was then released back to the earth in a measure neither too much nor too little. For most of us, rain is simply weather. For the Qur'an, rain is a **sign** (*āyah*) — something to be read, reflected upon and given thanks for.

The Qur'an mentions water, clouds, winds, lightning and thunder in dozens of verses. It was not revealed as a book of meteorology; it is a book of guidance. Yet when it describes nature, that description has never needed to be "corrected" by later knowledge. Some of it, such as the sequence of cloud formation in Surah An-Nur 24:43, is so precise that many modern researchers have paused to reflect on it.

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

This verse places water as the basis of life — *"We made from water every living thing"*. Imam Ibn Kathir explains that water is the origin of every living thing (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/21/30). Rain, in turn, is the main way Allah distributes fresh water across all the land. So to understand rain is to understand one of the most basic blessings of life.

RAIN BY THE GRACE OF ALLAH, NOT BECAUSE OF THE STARS

Before looking at the physics of rain, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ first corrected **belief** about rain. The Arabs of the Jahiliyyah attributed rainfall to the stars (*anwā'*). After a night of rain at al-Hudaybiyah, he conveyed the following words of Allah:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 846

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حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ، عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ كَيْسَانَ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ بْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ خَالِدٍ الْجُهَنِيِّ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ صَلَّى لَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم صَلاَةَ الصُّبْحِ بِالْحُدَيْبِيَةِ عَلَى إِثْرِ سَمَاءٍ كَانَتْ مِنَ اللَّيْلَةِ، فَلَمَّا انْصَرَفَ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَقَالَ «هَلْ تَدْرُونَ مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ». قَالُوا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ «أَصْبَحَ مِنْ عِبَادِي مُؤْمِنٌ بِي وَكَافِرٌ، فَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ مُطِرْنَا بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَتِهِ فَذَلِكَ مُؤْمِنٌ بِي وَكَافِرٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ، وَأَمَّا مَنْ قَالَ بِنَوْءِ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَذَلِكَ كَافِرٌ بِي وَمُؤْمِنٌ بِالْكَوْكَبِ».

TRANSLATION:

Zayd ibn Khalid al-Juhani رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ led us in the Fajr prayer at al-Hudaybiyah after rain had fallen during the night. When he finished, he faced the people and said: "Do you know what your Lord has said?" They said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: **"(Allah said:) This morning some of My servants have become believers in Me and some disbelievers. Whoever says, 'We have been given rain by the bounty and mercy of Allah,' believes in Me and disbelieves in the stars. Whoever says, '(We have been given rain) by such-and-such a star,' disbelieves in Me and believes in the stars."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Maslamah, from Imam Malik, from Salih ibn Kaysan, from 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Utbah ibn Mas'ud, from Zayd ibn Khalid al-Juhani رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Call to Prayer (Kitab al-Adhan), Hadith No. 846; also narrated by Muslim (No. 71).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:846

This Hadith is central to this eBook. It does not forbid us from studying the causes of rain — wind, clouds, temperature and air pressure — because all of these are *sunnatullah*, the patterns Allah has set in creation. What is forbidden is attributing rain to a created thing as though that thing had the power to send it down. A believer may read a weather map and a radar image, and still say: **"We have been given rain by the grace and mercy of Allah."** Science explains *how*; faith answers *who*.

THE APPROACH OF THIS EBOOK: AGREEMENT, NOT IMPOSITION

This eBook has been developed from the author's short article on the formation of rain. In this expanded edition, each chapter follows the same order: **verses of the Qur'an** (green boxes), **the explanations of respected scholars of tafsir** such as Ibn Kathir, al-

Qurtubi and as-Sa'di, **authentic Hadith** with their chains of narration (gold boxes), and then **scientific findings** from sources that can be checked (blue boxes).

One principle is held firmly: the interpretations of the early scholars come first, and science is presented as **agreement**, not as "proof" that forces the meaning of a verse. When a link is strong, we say it is strong; when it is only a possibility, we say it is a possibility. Weak narrations are clearly marked in **Narration Note** boxes (brown boxes).

Note: The scientific figures in this eBook are average estimates from scientific agencies and journals. They may be revised as new data appears; the verses of the Qur'an remain unchanged.

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THE SKY THAT RETURNS THE RAIN: THE WATER CYCLE

Rain is not an isolated event. It is part of one great cycle that has never been broken since the earth was inhabited. The Qur'an touches on this cycle from several angles — the sky that "returns", the water that is "stored" in the earth, and the springs that are "made to flow".

SURAH AT-TARIQ 86:11

وَٱلسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ ٱلرَّجۡعِ ١١

By the sky which returns [rain].

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/86:11

Allah swears by *as-samā' dhāt ar-raj'* — the sky that has "returning". Imam Ibn Kathir reports from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that *ar-raj'* is rain; in another narration, the clouds that contain rain; and in yet another, that the sky *"rains, and then rains again"*. Qatadah said: the sky returns the provision of the servants every year; were it not so, they and their livestock would perish (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/86/11). Shaykh as-Sa'di says: the sky returns with rain every year (tafsir.app/saadi/86/11).

SURAH AZ-ZUMAR 39:21

أَلَمۡ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءٗ فَسَلَكَهُۥ يَنَٰبِيعَ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ ثُمَّ يُخۡرِجُ بِهِۦ زَرۡعٗا مُّخۡتَلِفًا أَلۡوَٰنُهُۥ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَىٰهُ مُصۡفَرّٗا ثُمَّ يَجۡعَلُهُۥ حُطَٰمًاۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكۡرَىٰ لِأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَلۡبَٰبِ ٢١

Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky and makes it flow as springs [and rivers] in the earth; then He produces thereby crops of varying colors; then they dry and you see them turned yellow; then He makes them [scattered] debris. Indeed in that is a reminder for those of understanding.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/39:21

SURAH AL-MU'MINUN 23:18

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وَأَنزَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءَۢ بِقَدَرٖ فَأَسۡكَنَّٰهُ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۖ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ذَهَابِۭ بِهِۦ لَقَٰدِرُونَ ١٨

And We have sent down rain from the sky in a measured amount and settled it in the earth. And indeed, We are Able to take it away.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/23:18

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

On Surah Al-Mu'minun 23:18, **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains the meaning of *bi-qadar* (in measure): rain is sent down *"according to need — not so much that it ruins the land and buildings, and not so little that it does not suffice the crops and fruits"*. The phrase *fa-askannāhu fil-arḍ* (and We lodged it in the earth) means the water is made to stay within the ground, and the ground is given the capacity to absorb it (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/23/18).

Shaykh as-Sa'di adds a very subtle meaning: Allah stores that water as a "treasury" within the earth, not so deep that it cannot be reached. The end of the verse, *"and indeed, We are able to take it away"*, is a reminder for people to be grateful for this blessing and to imagine its loss, as in His words in Surah Al-Mulk 67:30 (tafsir.app/saadi/23/18).

Surah Az-Zumar 39:21 completes the picture: rainwater is *"made to flow as springs in the earth"* (*fa-salakahu yanābīʿa fil-arḍ*), then by it crops of varying colours grow, then turn yellow and crumble. One verse encompasses rain, groundwater, plants and the life-and-death cycle of vegetation.

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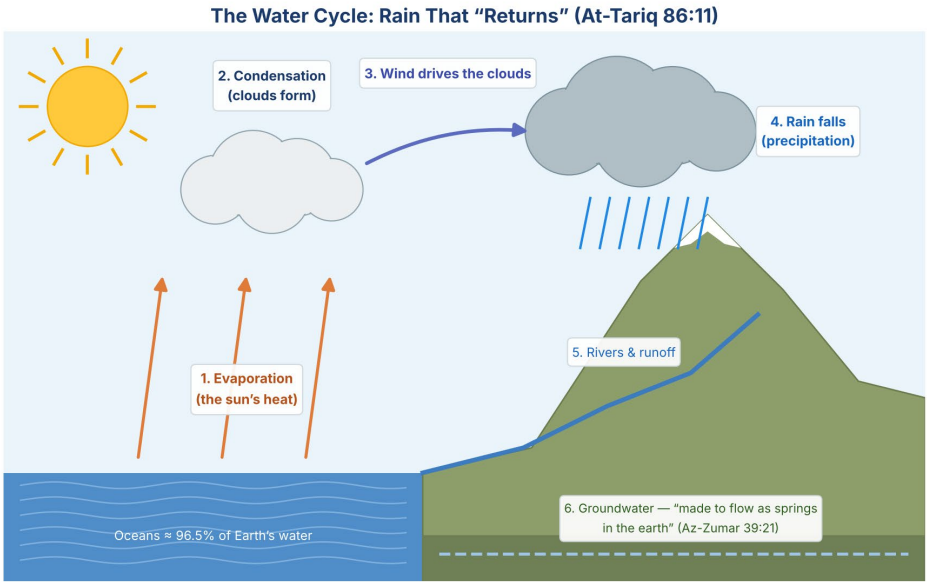


Figure 1: The water cycle — evaporation, condensation, wind, rain, rivers and groundwater. Figures from NASA Earth Observatory and NOAA.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE WATER CYCLE THAT NEVER STOPS

According to NASA Earth Observatory, the oceans, seas, lakes and rivers supply **nearly 90%** of the moisture in the atmosphere; the rest is released by plants through transpiration. At any one time, the atmosphere holds only about **12,900 km^3** of water vapour — a very small fraction of the earth's water. Yet every year about **495,000 km^3** of water cycles through it; in other words, the water in the air is **replaced nearly 40 times a year**.

NOAA estimates that once a water molecule reaches the atmosphere, it stays there for **about nine days** on average before falling back to the earth. Rain truly is something that "returns" again and again — *dhāt ar-raj'*.

Globally, total evaporation is **approximately equal** to total precipitation. Over the oceans, evaporation exceeds precipitation; over the continents, precipitation exceeds evaporation. This surplus is what flows in rivers and seeps down to become groundwater — *"and made it flow as springs in the earth"*.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA Earth Observatory. The Water Cycle. https://science.nasa.gov/earth/earth-observatory/the-water-cycle/

NOAA JetStream. What a Cycle! (The Hydrologic Cycle). https://www.noaa.gov/jetstream/max-what-cycle

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A HISTORICAL TRAIL: WHERE DOES SPRING WATER COME FROM?

Today we regard the water cycle as primary-school knowledge. But for centuries, many philosophers could not explain where springs and rivers came from. **Dr. Maurice Bucaille**, in his book *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* (1976), discusses a chapter on "The Water Cycle and the Seas" and notes that some ancient thinkers believed sea water returned to the land through great underground channels, while the idea of the water cycle as understood today only became firmly established in European science around the 16th and 17th centuries CE.

Bucaille then compares verses such as Az-Zumar 39:21 and Al-Mu'minun 23:18, and finds that the Qur'an links springs with **rain from the sky**, not with underground sea channels — a picture free of the misconceptions of its time.

Note on honesty: The Arabs themselves saw wells and valleys fill after rain, so the link between rain and springs was no hidden secret. The distinction of the Qur'an lies in the precision and completeness of its description, and the absence of the mythical elements common in ancient explanations.

LESSONS FOR US

First, water is a trust. If every drop we use today has travelled thousands of kilometres through the air and the ground, then wasting water is no small matter. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed ablution with a mudd of water and bathed with a sa' — an example of economy that is highly relevant in an age of water crisis.

Second, the treasury of water is not ours. The end of Surah Al-Hijr 15:22, *"and you are not its retainers"*, reminds us that dams, tanks and pipes are only tools. The groundwater that feeds our wells is refilled by the rain Allah sends down, not by us.

Third, a cycle is a sign of careful management. The same water has circulated between sea, air and land since the earth was created, yet it has never run out, nor overflowed to drown all the land. This is no coincidence; it is the decree of the All-Knowing.

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THE WINDS THAT BRING GOOD TIDINGS

Before the clouds come the winds. The Qur'an repeatedly describes the winds as "bearers of good tidings" that go before His mercy — and, in other circumstances, as a punishment. This chapter traces the role of the winds in giving birth to rain clouds.

SURAH AL-A'RAF 7:57

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُرۡسِلُ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ بُشۡرَۢا بَيۡنَ يَدَىۡ رَحۡمَتِهِۦٓۖ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَآ أَقَلَّتۡ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقۡنَٰهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنزَلۡنَا بِهِ ٱلۡمَآءَ فَأَخۡرَجۡنَا بِهِۦ مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُخۡرِجُ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَذَكَّرُونَ ٥٧

And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy until, when they have carried heavy rainclouds, We drive them to a dead land and We send down rain therein and bring forth thereby [some] of all the fruits. Thus will We bring forth the dead; perhaps you may be reminded.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/7:57

SURAH AL-HIJR 15:22

وَأَرۡسَلۡنَا ٱلرِّيَٰحَ لَوَٰقِحَ فَأَنزَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَسۡقَيۡنَٰكُمُوهُ وَمَآ أَنتُمۡ لَهُۥ بِخَٰزِنِينَ ٢٢

And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/15:22

SURAH AR-RUM 30:46

وَمِنۡ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَن يُرۡسِلَ ٱلرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرَٰتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُم مِّن رَّحۡمَتِهِۦ وَلِتَجۡرِىَ ٱلۡفُلۡكُ بِأَمۡرِهِۦ وَلِتَبۡتَغُواْ مِن فَضۡلِهِۦ وَلَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُونَ ٤٦

And of His signs is that He sends the winds as bringers of good tidings and to let you taste His mercy and so the ships may sail at His command and so you may seek of His bounty, and perhaps you will be grateful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/30:46

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COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS: FOUR KINDS OF WIND

When explaining Surah An-Nur 24:43, **Imam Ibn Kathir** cites the words of a tabi'i, **'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr al-Laythi**, narrated by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir: *"Allah sends al-Muthīrah, and it sweeps the earth; then Allah sends an-Nāshi'ah, and it begins the clouds; then Allah sends al-Mu'allifah, and it gathers them; then Allah sends al-Lawāqiḥ, and it 'pollinates' the clouds."* (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/43)

NAME OF THE WIND	LITERAL MEANING	ROLE ACCORDING TO THE NARRATION
al-Muthīrah (المثيرة)	the one that stirs up	Sweeps the surface of the earth
an-Nāshi'ah (الناشئة)	the one that originates	Begins the formation of clouds
al-Mu'allifah (المؤلفة)	the one that gathers	Gathers the scattered pieces of cloud
al-Lawāqiḥ (اللواقح)	the ones that fertilise	"Pollinate" the clouds until they are laden with water

In his tafsir of Surah Al-Hijr 15:22, Ibn Kathir cites an almost identical version from 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr, as well as the view of Ibn 'Abbas, Ibrahim an-Nakha'i and Qatadah that *lawāqiḥ* are winds that carry water and then "milk" the clouds until they drip water as a she-camel gives milk. Ad-Dahhak said: Allah sends them to the clouds and they "fertilise" them until the clouds are full of water (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/15/22).

Shaykh as-Sa'di explains: the winds of mercy *"fertilise the clouds as the male fertilises the female"*, and water is produced by Allah's permission. The end of the verse, *"and you are not its retainers"*, means people have no power to store such vast amounts of water; it is Allah who stores it for them and makes it flow as springs (tafsir.app/saadi/15/22). In his tafsir of Surah Al-A'raf 7:57, he adds that the heavy clouds are *"raised by some winds, gathered by other winds, and fertilised by yet other winds"* (tafsir.app/saadi/7/57).

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE SEEDS OF CLOUDS: CONDENSATION NUCLEI

Water vapour does not easily turn into droplets on its own. It needs "seeds" — tiny particles such as **dust, sea salt and smoke** — on which to condense. NASA GPM explains that cloud droplets form when moisture condenses around dust and smoke particles suspended in the clouds, and the droplets then grow by colliding and merging.

Meteorologists call these particles **cloud condensation nuclei** (CCN). The wind plays an important role: it lifts sea spray from the ocean surface and dust from the land into the air, and carries moist air to places where clouds can form.

The meaning of *lawāqiḥ* explained by the scholars — winds that "fertilise" the clouds until they are laden with water — is **in agreement** with this picture, even though the early scholars of course did not speak in terms of particles and nuclei.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA GPM. Anatomy of a Raindrop. https://gpm.nasa.gov/science/anatomy-of-a-raindrop
NASA Scientific Visualization Studio. Aerosols Impact Cloud Formation. https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/10387

NARRATION NOTE: THE NARRATION "THE SOUTH WIND IS FROM PARADISE"

In his tafsir of Surah Al-Hijr 15:22, Ibn Kathir mentions a narration of Ibn Jarir, attributed to the Prophet ﷺ, that *"the south wind is from Paradise, and it is the lawāqiḥ wind that Allah mentions in His Book"*. Ibn Kathir himself judges: **"This is a weak chain of narration"** (*hādhā isnādun ḍa'īf*).

Therefore this narration is not used as evidence in this eBook. The meaning of *lawāqiḥ* is sufficiently understood from the verse and the explanations of the Companions and tabi'in above.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Al-Hijr 15:22. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/15/22

WIND: MERCY OR PUNISHMENT

The same wind can bring mercy or punishment. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was highly attentive to changes in the weather, and his face would change when he saw clouds or strong winds:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 899B

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وَحَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الطَّاهِرِ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ ابْنَ جُرَيْجٍ، يُحَدِّثُنَا عَنْ عَطَاءِ، بْنِ أَبِي رَبَاحٍ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، زَوْجِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم إِذَا عَصَفَتِ الرِّيحُ قَالَ « اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا فِيهَا وَخَيْرَ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّهَا وَشَرِّ مَا فِيهَا وَشَرِّ مَا أُرْسِلَتْ بِهِ ». قَالَتْ وَإِذَا تَخَيَّلَتِ السَّمَاءُ تَغَيَّرَ لَوْنُهُ وَخَرَجَ وَدَخَلَ وَأَقْبَلَ وَأَدْبَرَ فَإِذَا مَطَرَتْ سُرِّيَ عَنْهُ فَعَرَفْتُ ذَلِكَ فِي وَجْهِهِ. قَالَتْ عَائِشَةُ فَسَأَلْتُهُ فَقَالَ « لَعَلَّهُ يَا عَائِشَةُ كَمَا قَالَ قَوْمُ عَادٍ { فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا مُسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَتِهِمْ قَالُوا هَذَا عَارِضٌ مُمْطِرُنَا} ».

TRANSLATION:

‘Aishah رضى الله عنها, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, said: When the wind blew strongly, the Prophet ﷺ would say: **“O Allah, I ask You for its good, the good of what is in it and the good of what it has been sent with; and I seek refuge in You from its evil, the evil of what is in it and the evil of what it has been sent with.”** She said: When the sky became overcast (as if it would rain), his colour would change; he would go out and come in, go forward and back. When it rained, his concern would leave him, and I recognised that in his face. ‘Aishah said: So I asked him, and he said: **“Perhaps, O ‘Aishah, it is as the people of ‘Ad said: {And when they saw it as a cloud approaching their valleys, they said: This is a cloud bringing us rain} (46:24).”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu at-Tahir Ahmad ibn ‘Amr, from ‘Abdullah ibn Wahb, from Ibn Juraij, from ‘Ata’ ibn Abi Rabah, from ‘Aishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Prayer for Rain, chapter on seeking refuge when seeing wind and clouds, Hadith No. 899b.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:899b

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3343

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَرْعَرَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنِ الْحَكَمِ، عَنْ مُجَاهِدٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « نُصِرْتُ بِالصَّبَا، وَأُهْلِكَتْ عَادٌ بِالدَّبُورِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **“I was given victory by the *saba* (the east wind), and the people of ‘Ad were destroyed by the *dabur* (the west wind).”**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn ‘Ar‘arah, from Shu‘bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaibah, from Mujahid ibn Jabr, from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Prophets, chapter on the words of Allah {And to ‘Ad [We sent] their brother Hud}, Hadith No. 3343. Also narrated by al-Bukhari (1035) and Muslim (900).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3343

These two Hadith teach balance. We are glad to see clouds because we hope for rain, yet we do not forget that winds and clouds are also soldiers of Allah. The people of ‘Ad saw a cloud approaching their valleys and said, *“This is a cloud bringing us rain”*, while it carried punishment (Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:24). So the sunnah is to ask for the good of the wind and to seek refuge from its evil.

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DRIVING, JOINING, STACKING: THE ANATOMY OF A RAIN CLOUD

This is the verse at the heart of this eBook. In a single verse, Surah An-Nur 24:43 sets out the formation of a rain cloud step by step — with the connective *thumma* (then) indicating sequence.

SURAH AN-NUR 24:43

أَلَمۡ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُزۡجِي سَحَابٗا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيۡنَهُۥ ثُمَّ يَجۡعَلُهُۥ رُكَامٗا فَتَرَى ٱلۡوَدۡقَ يَخۡرُجُ مِنۡ خِلَٰلِهِۦ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مِن جِبَالٖ فِيهَا مِنۢ بَرَدٖ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَصۡرِفُهُۥ عَن مَّن يَشَآءُۖ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرۡقِهِۦ يَذۡهَبُ بِٱلۡأَبۡصَٰرِ ٤٣

Do you not see that Allah drives clouds? Then He brings them together, then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it. And He sends down from the sky, mountains [of clouds] within which is hail, and He strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills. The flash of its lightening almost takes away the eyesight.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/24:43

SURAH AR-RUM 30:48

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِي يُرۡسِلُ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابٗا فَيَبۡسُطُهُۥ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ كَيۡفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجۡعَلُهُۥ كِسَفٗا فَتَرَى ٱلۡوَدۡقَ يَخۡرُجُ مِنۡ خِلَٰلِهِۦۖ فَإِذَآ أَصَابَ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦٓ إِذَا هُمۡ يَسۡتَبۡشِرُونَ ٤٨

It is Allah who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds and spread them in the sky however He wills, and He makes them fragments so you see the rain emerge from within them. And when He causes it to fall upon whom He wills of His servants, immediately they rejoice.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/30:48

WORD BY WORD

① ***Yuzjī saḥāban* — "drives clouds".** Imam Ibn Kathir explains: Allah drives the clouds by His power *"at the beginning of their formation, while they are still weak; that is al-izjā'"* (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/43). The verb *azjā* is used by the Arabs for driving something along slowly and gently. Shaykh as-Sa'di describes the clouds at first as *"scattered pieces"* (tafsir.app/saadi/24/43).

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② ***Thumma yu'allifu baynahu*** **— "then brings them together".** Ibn Kathir: *"He gathers them after they were scattered."* As-Sa'di: Allah unites those pieces.

③ ***Thumma yaj'aluhu rukāmā*** **— "then makes them into a mass".** Ibn Kathir: *"mutarākiman"*, that is, *"one part mounting upon another"*. As-Sa'di: *"clouds heaped up like mountains."* The word *rukām* in Arabic means a heap stacked layer upon layer.

④ ***Fa-tarā al-wadqa yakhruju min khilālih*** **— "and you see the rain emerge from within it".** *Al-wadq* is rain. As-Sa'di explains: rain comes out from the gaps in the clouds *"in separate drops, so that its benefit is obtained without harm"*.

Surah Ar-Rum 30:48 completes this picture from another angle: the winds *"stir up clouds"* (*fa-tuthīru saḥābā*), then Allah *"spreads them in the sky"*, then *"makes them fragments"* (*kisafā*). Mujahid, Abu 'Amr ibn al-'Ala', Matar al-Warraq and Qatadah said *kisaf* means pieces; others said it means stacked layers (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/30/48). Ibn Kathir adds a beautiful image: Allah begins a cloud that looks *"like a shield"* to the eye, then spreads it until it fills the horizon.

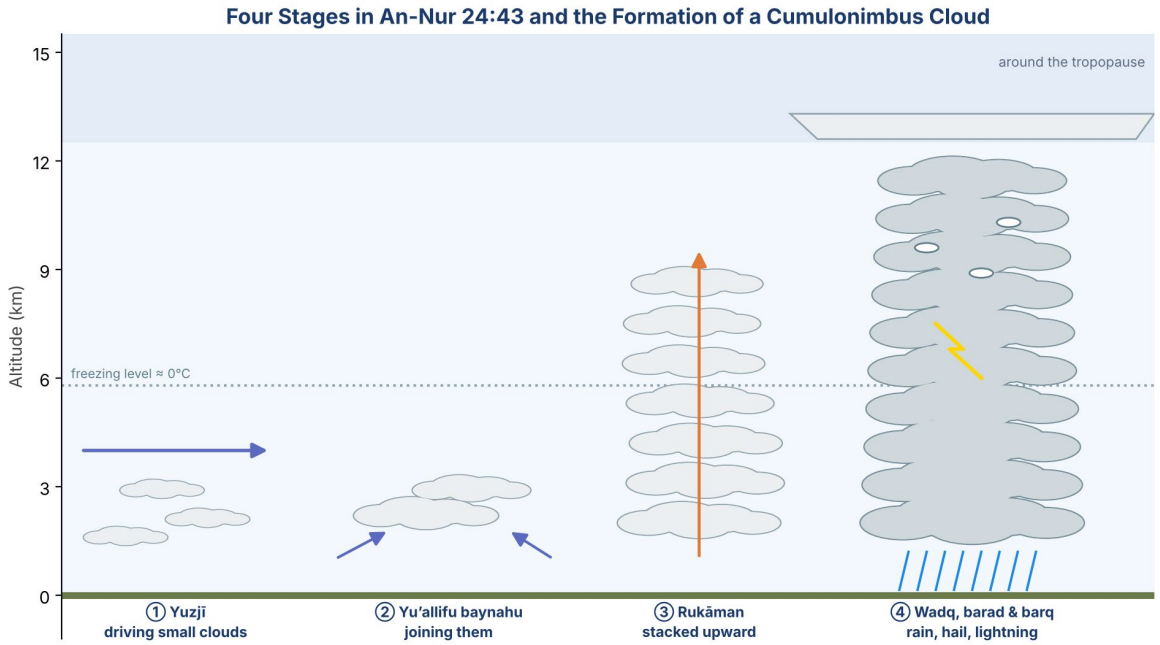


Figure 2: The four stages in Surah An-Nur 24:43 compared with the formation of a cumulonimbus cloud. Altitudes are approximate.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: HOW A CUMULONIMBUS CLOUD FORMS

Meteorologists explain that large rain clouds usually begin as **small cumulus clouds** that form when warm, moist air rises and cools. The wind carries and moves these cloud cells. In zones of **converging winds**, the cells gather and merge.

When the **updraft** is strong enough, the cloud grows vertically into stacked towers — known as *towering cumulus* — and finally becomes a **cumulonimbus**. The *International Cloud Atlas* of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) defines cumulonimbus as a *"heavy and dense cloud, with a considerable vertical extent, in the form of a mountain or huge towers"*, whose upper part often spreads out like an anvil.

Inside the cloud, tiny droplets collide and merge until they are heavy enough to fall. A 2024 study in *Scientific Reports* by Gumber and colleagues found that micro-vortices in turbulent clouds "fling" droplets of 6–18 micrometres and speed up their settling; in simulations, this effect caused **rain to begin earlier and more intensely**.

STUDY REFERENCES:

WMO International Cloud Atlas. Cumulonimbus (Cb). https://cloudatlas.wmo.int/en/cumulonimbus-cb.html

Gumber S, Bera S, Ghosh S & Prabhakaran TV (2024). Turbulence-induced droplet grouping and augmented rain formation in cumulus clouds. Scientific Reports 14:10298. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-61036-z

NASA GPM. Anatomy of a Raindrop. https://gpm.nasa.gov/science/anatomy-of-a-raindrop

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: "HEAVY" CLOUDS

The Qur'an describes rain clouds as *as-saḥāb ath-thiqāl* — heavy clouds (Al-A'raf 7:57; Ar-Ra'd 13:12). Ibn Kathir explains: they are heavy *"because of the abundance of water in them, and they are close to the earth"*.

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) estimates that **an average cumulus cloud of 1 km × 1 km** weighs about **1.1 million pounds** (roughly 500 tonnes) — yet it floats because its droplets are extremely small and spread through a vast volume of air. A far larger cumulonimbus carries many times more water.

STUDY REFERENCES:

USGS. How much does a cloud weigh? https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/how-much-does-a-cloud-weigh

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:12. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/13/12

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SUMMARY OF WORDS AND SCIENCE

QUR'ANIC WORDING	SCHOLARLY EXPLANATION	SCIENTIFIC PICTURE
yuzjī saḥāban (يُزْجِي سَحَابًا)	drives clouds while still weak (Ibn Kathir)	small cumulus cells carried by the wind
yu'allifu baynahu (يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ)	gathers them after scattering (Ibn Kathir)	cloud cells merge in zones of converging winds
rukāmā (رُكَامًا)	stacked, one part mounting another (Ibn Kathir)	vertical growth — cumulonimbus towers
al-wadq min khilālih (الْوَدْقَ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ)	rain in separate drops (as-Sa'di)	droplets merge and fall as rain
kisafā (كِسَفًا)	pieces / stacked (Mujahid, Qatadah)	thick layers and cells of cloud
as-saḥāb ath-thiqāl (السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ)	heavy with much water (Ibn Kathir)	±500 tonnes for a 1 km^3 cumulus (USGS)

Note on honesty: A careful observer in the desert can watch clouds gather and grow taller before rain. So we do not claim that every detail of this verse was impossible for people to know. What is remarkable is the precision of its sequence and its choice of words — brief, dense, and never contradicted by what was later measured by radar and satellite.

LESSONS FOR US

Surah An-Nur 24:43 opens with the question *a-lam tara* — *"Do you not see?"* It is not merely a question, but an invitation to observe. Clouds drifting over the paddy fields, thickening in the afternoon, then falling as rain — all of this can be seen with one's own eyes, without sophisticated instruments.

The Qur'an trains Muslims to be **attentive observers of nature**. It is no wonder that the Muslim scholars of the past wrote works on winds, clouds and seasons, for they understood that reflecting on creation is part of worship. Today, when we open a weather app or look at a satellite image of clouds, we are continuing that tradition of *a-lam tara* with better tools.

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MOUNTAINS IN THE SKY AND GRAINS OF ICE

The second half of Surah An-Nur 24:43 moves from rain to something more formidable: *"and sends down from the sky, mountains (of clouds) within which is hail."* What are these "mountains"?

TWO SCHOLARLY VIEWS ON "JIBĀL"

Imam Ibn Kathir mentions two views (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/24/43). **First**, that in the sky there are real "mountains" of *barad* (hail) from which Allah sends down hailstones; on this view, each *min* in the verse means, respectively, origin, part, and clarification of kind. **Second**, that the "mountains" are **an expression for the clouds** themselves — clouds as large as mountains. He closes with *wallāhu a'lam*.

Shaykh as-Sa'di adopts the second meaning in his explanation: the gathered clouds become *"heaped up like mountains"*, and *"sometimes Allah sends down from those clouds hail that destroys whatever it strikes"* (tafsir.app/saadi/24/43).

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1033

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُقَاتِلٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْمُبَارَكِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا الأَوْزَاعِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي طَلْحَةَ الأَنْصَارِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي أَنَسُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ أَصَابَتِ النَّاسَ سَنَةٌ عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَبَيْنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَخْطُبُ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ قَامَ أَعْرَابِيٌّ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَلَكَ الْمَالُ وَجَاعَ الْعِيَالُ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ لَنَا أَنْ يَسْقِيَنَا. قَالَ فَرَفَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَدَيْهِ، وَمَا فِي السَّمَاءِ قَزَعَةٌ، قَالَ فَثَارَ سَحَابٌ أَمْثَالُ الْجِبَالِ، ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ عَنْ مِنْبَرِهِ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ الْمَطَرَ يَتَحَادَرُ عَلَى لِحْيَتِهِ، قَالَ فَمُطِرْنَا يَوْمَنَا ذَلِكَ، وَفِي الْغَدِ وَمِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَدِ وَالَّذِي يَلِيهِ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ الأُخْرَى، فَقَامَ ذَلِكَ الأَعْرَابِيُّ أَوْ رَجُلٌ غَيْرُهُ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، تَهَدَّمَ الْبِنَاءُ وَغَرِقَ الْمَالُ، فَادْعُ اللَّهَ لَنَا. فَرَفَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَدَيْهِ وَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ حَوَالَيْنَا وَلاَ عَلَيْنَا. قَالَ فَمَا جَعَلَ يُشِيرُ بِيَدِهِ إِلَى نَاحِيَةٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلاَّ تَفَرَّجَتْ حَتَّى صَارَتِ الْمَدِينَةُ فِي مِثْلِ الْجَوْبَةِ، حَتَّى سَالَ الْوَادِي ـ وَادِي قَنَاةَ ـ شَهْرًا. قَالَ فَلَمْ يَجِئْ أَحَدٌ مِنْ نَاحِيَةٍ إِلاَّ حَدَّثَ بِالْجَوْدِ.

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه said: The people were struck by drought in the time of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. While the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was delivering the sermon on the pulpit on a Friday, a Bedouin stood up and said: “O Messenger of Allah, the livestock have perished and the families are hungry; pray to Allah for us that He give us rain.” So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ raised both his hands, and there was not a single wisp of cloud in the sky. **Then clouds rose up like mountains**, and he had not yet come down from his pulpit before I saw rainwater dripping from his beard. We had rain that day, the next day, the day after, and the following days until the next Friday. Then that Bedouin — or another man — stood up and said: “O Messenger of Allah, the buildings have collapsed and the property is drowned; pray to Allah for us.” So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ raised both his hands and said:

“O Allah, around us, and not upon us.” He did not point with his hand to any part of the sky but that the clouds there parted, until Madinah was like an open hollow (in the clouds), and the valley of Qanah flowed for a month. No one came from any direction without speaking of the abundant rain.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Muqatil, from ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, from al-Awza‘i, from Ishaq ibn ‘Abdillah ibn Abi Talhah al-Ansari, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Invoking Allah for Rain (al-Istisqa’), Chapter: Whoever Stood in the Rain until It Dripped from His Beard, Hadith No. 1033; the same incident is also narrated in No. 1013 and by Muslim (No. 897).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1033

Notice the language of Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه: *“Then clouds rose up like mountains”* (*amthāl al-jibāl*). The Companions themselves described storm clouds with the word “mountains”. This shows that the second interpretation — *jibāl* as great clouds — is very close to the living Arabic of the Prophet’s ﷺ time. This Hadith also shows how quickly cumulonimbus clouds can form: a sky that had not a single wisp of cloud was suddenly filled with mountain-like clouds before he came down from the pulpit.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: MOUNTAIN CLOUDS AND ICE FACTORIES

The WMO's official definition of cumulonimbus — *"in the form of a mountain or huge towers"* — uses the same image as the Qur'an. In tropical regions such as Malaysia, the tops of these clouds can rise above 12 km, far beyond the freezing level (around 5 km). Their upper parts are filled with ice crystals, while their lower parts contain water droplets.

The U.S. National Severe Storms Laboratory (NOAA NSSL) explains that **hail forms when raindrops are carried upward by updrafts into extremely cold air, where they freeze**. The hailstones then grow as liquid droplets collide and freeze onto their surface. Layers form as they pass through zones of different temperature and water content; they fall once they are too heavy for the updraft to support.

The largest recorded hailstone in the United States (Vivian, South Dakota, 2010) measured **8 inches (20 cm)** across and weighed almost **0.9 kg**. It was born inside a "mountain" of cloud — *min jibālin fīhā min barad*.

STUDY REFERENCES:

WMO International Cloud Atlas. Cumulonimbus (Cb). https://cloudatlas.wmo.int/en/cumulonimbus-cb.html

NOAA NSSL. Severe Weather 101: Hail Basics. https://nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/hail

"STRIKES WITH IT WHOM HE WILLS"

The verse continues: *"and strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills."* Ibn Kathir mentions two possibilities: either what strikes is rain and hail as a mercy, or hail as a calamity that destroys fruits and crops.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: HAIL THAT CHOOSES ITS PATH

NOAA NSSL records that a **hail swath** can be as small as a few acres, or as large as 10 miles (16 km) wide and 100 miles (160 km) long. Two neighbouring farms can meet different fates: one destroyed, the other spared.

This precision reminds us that every grain of ice falls by decree: *"strikes with it whom He wills and averts it from whom He wills."*

STUDY REFERENCES:

NOAA NSSL. Severe Weather 101: Hail Basics. https://nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/hail

Note on honesty: We do not claim that this verse describes the physics of freezing. The Qur'an links barad *with "mountains" in the sky, and hail is indeed born inside mountain-shaped clouds — an agreement that needs no forcing.*

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LIGHTNING AND THE THUNDER THAT GLORIFIES

Surah An-Nur 24:43 closes with a stirring image: *"The flash of its lightning almost takes away the eyesight."* Lightning and thunder are mentioned in several other verses, not merely as physical phenomena, but as creatures that glorify Allah.

SURAH AR-RA'D 13:12–13

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُرِيكُمُ ٱلْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنشِئُ ٱلسَّحَابَ ٱلثِّقَالَ ﴿١٢﴾

It is He who shows you lightening, [causing] fear and aspiration, and generates the heavy clouds.

وَيُسَبِّحُ ٱلرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِۦ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِۦ وَيُرْسِلُ ٱلصَّوَٰعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَن يَشَآءُ وَهُمْ يُجَٰدِلُونَ فِى ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْمِحَالِ ﴿١٣﴾

And the thunder exalts [Allah] with praise of Him - and the angels [as well] from fear of Him - and He sends thunderbolts and strikes therewith whom He wills while they dispute about Allah; and He is severe in assault.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/13:12-13

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:19–20

أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَٰتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِم مِّنَ ٱلصَّوَٰعِقِ حَذَرَ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ مُحِيطٌۢ بِٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

Or [it is] like a rainstorm from the sky within which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death. But Allah is encompassing of the disbelievers.

يَكَادُ ٱلْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَٰرَهُمْ ۖ كُلَّمَآ أَضَآءَ لَهُم مَّشَوْا۟ فِيهِ وَإِذَآ أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا۟ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَٰرِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

The lightning almost snatches away their sight. Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still]. And if Allah had willed,

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He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:19-20

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Imam Ibn Kathir explains that lightning is *"the gleaming light that flashes out from the gaps in the clouds"*. On *khawfan wa ṭama'an* (fear and hope), Qatadah said: fear for the traveller who dreads its harm, and hope for the resident who hopes for the blessing and benefit of rain (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/13/12). **Shaykh as-Sa'di** adds: it is feared for its thunderbolts and the damage to fruits, and hoped for because of the goodness of abundant rain (tafsir.app/saadi/13/12).

On *"and the thunder exalts with praise of Him"*, Ibn Kathir links it to the words of Allah in Surah Al-Isra' 17:44: *"and there is not a thing except that it exalts with His praise."* The thunder itself glorifies Allah in a way known only to Him.

ATHAR OF 'ABDULLAH IBN AZ-ZUBAYR رضى الله عنهما: When he heard thunder, he would stop speaking and say: ***"Subḥāna alladhī yusabbiḥu ar-ra'du bi-ḥamdihi wal-malā'ikatu min khīfatih"*** — "Glory be to the One whom the thunder glorifies with His praise, and the angels out of fear of Him." Then he would say: "Indeed, this is a severe warning to the people of the earth." — Narrated by Imam Malik in *al-Muwatta'* and al-Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*; cited by Ibn Kathir in the tafsir of Ar-Ra'd 13:13. This is a saying of a Companion (mawquf), not a statement of the Prophet ﷺ.

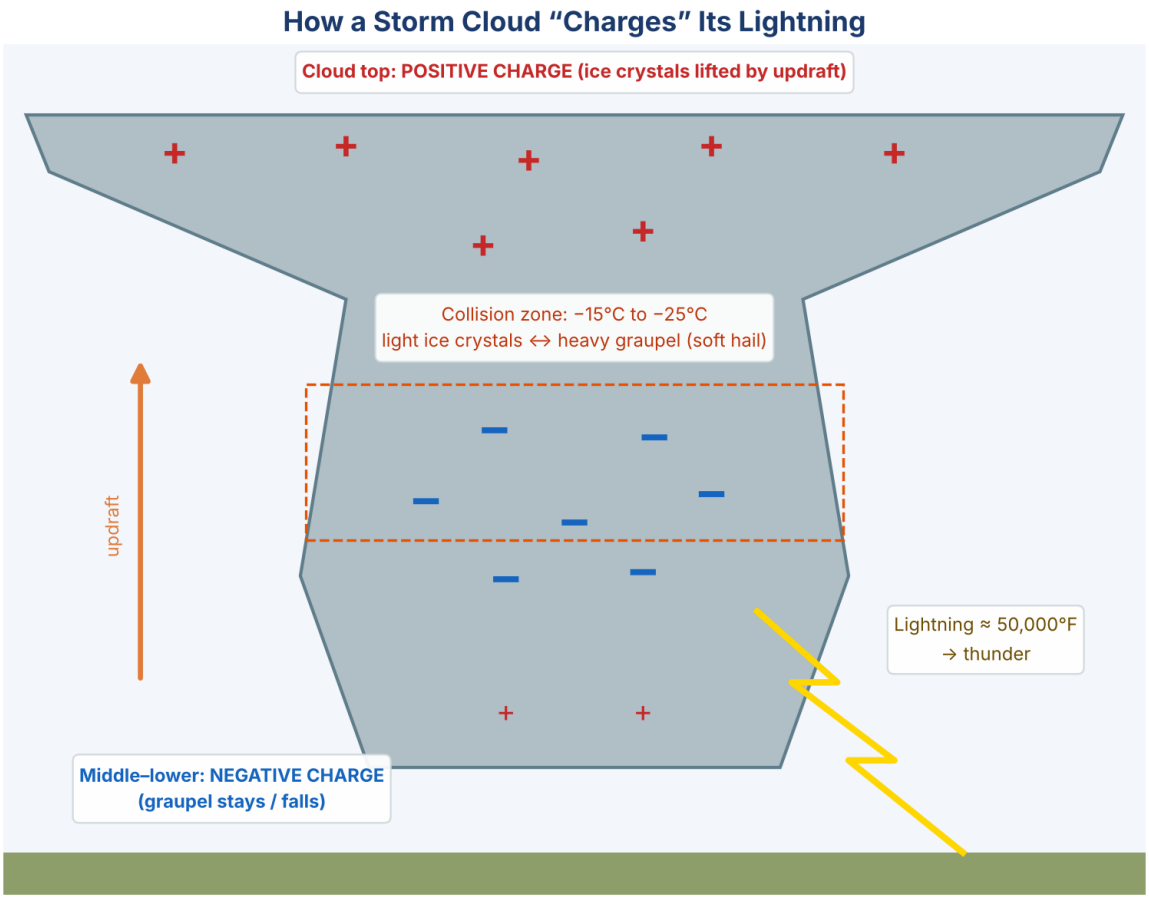
NARRATION NOTE: OTHER NARRATIONS ABOUT THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

In the same tafsir, Ibn Kathir cites several other narrations, among them the supplication *"Allāhumma lā taqtulnā bi-ghaḍabik..."* (O Allah, do not kill us with Your anger) narrated by Ahmad and at-Tirmidhi through **al-Hajjaj ibn Artah** from **Abu Matar** — a chain that **many Hadith scholars have criticised** because of the weakness of its narrators.

He also cites words that "reached us" (*balaghanā*) that lightning is an angel with four faces. Reports like this **have no authentic chain** to the Prophet ﷺ and are not relied upon in this eBook. What is certain and authentic is this: the thunder glorifies Allah, the angels fear Him, and it is recommended for us to remember Allah when we hear it, as the Companions did.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:12–13. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/13/12

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Source: NOAA National Weather Service — Understanding Lightning: Thunderstorm Electrification; The Science of Thunder.

Figure 3: Separation of electric charge inside a storm cloud according to the NOAA National Weather Service.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: HOW A CLOUD "CHARGES" ITS LIGHTNING

The U.S. National Weather Service (NOAA NWS) explains that a thunderstorm becomes electrified mainly in its central region, where air rises rapidly and temperatures range from **−15°C to −25°C**. There we find supercooled droplets, small ice crystals and **graupel** (soft hail).

When **light ice crystals** carried upward by the updraft **collide with heavier graupel**, the ice crystals become **positively** charged while the graupel becomes **negatively** charged. The updraft carries the ice crystals to the top of the cloud; the graupel stays in the middle or falls to the lower part. Over time, the difference in charge becomes so great that it is released as **lightning**.

In other words, lightning is born from the collision of **ice** particles inside the "mountain" of cloud — the same cloud that sends down *barad*. No wonder Surah An-Nur 24:43 mentions hail and lightning in a single breath.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NOAA NWS. Understanding Lightning: Thunderstorm Electrification.
https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-science-electrification

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: A LIGHT THAT ALMOST TAKES AWAY THE SIGHT

According to NOAA NWS, the air in a lightning channel can reach about **50,000°F (around 27,700°C)** — roughly five times hotter than the surface of the sun. This sudden heating makes the air expand extremely rapidly, producing the sound wave we hear as **thunder**. Thunder can be heard up to about **10 miles (16 km)** from the lightning strike.

The light from a channel that hot is indeed blinding — *yakādu sanā barqihi yadh-habu bil-abṣār*. Al-Baqarah 2:20 likewise describes lightning that *"almost snatches away their sight"* — a parable for the hypocrites dazzled by the light of truth.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NOAA NWS. The Science of Thunder. https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-science-thunder

ETIQUETTE DURING STORMS AND THUNDER

From the verses, Hadith and athar above, several points of etiquette for a Muslim facing storms, lightning and thunder can be summarised:

1. Remember Allah when hearing thunder, as 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr رضى الله عنهما did:

"Subḥāna alladhī yusabbiḥu ar-ra'du bi-ḥamdih..."

2. Ask for the good of the wind and seek refuge from its evil, as in the supplication of the Prophet ﷺ in Sahih Muslim No. 899 in chapter two.

3. Take safety measures. Islam does not ask us to resign ourselves without effort. NOAA advises that if you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance and should move to shelter in a building at once. Effort like this is part of true reliance on Allah.

4. Do not curse the wind, the rain or the weather, for all of them are creatures submitting to Allah's command. What we should do is ask for their good.

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SENT DOWN IN DUE MEASURE

The Qur'an repeatedly affirms that rain is sent down *bi-qadar* — in measure and by decree. This measure can be seen at three scales: the total rainfall of the whole world, its distribution from place to place, and the size of each drop.

SURAH AZ-ZUKHRUF 43:11

وَٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنشَرْنَا بِهِۦ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١١﴾

And who sends down rain from the sky in measured amounts, and We revive thereby a dead land - thus will you be brought forth.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/43:11

SURAH AL-HIJR 15:21

وَإِن مِّن شَىْءٍ إِلَّا عِندَنَا خَزَآئِنُهُۥ وَمَا نُنَزِّلُهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَّعْلُومٍ ﴿٢١﴾

And there is not a thing but that with Us are its depositories, and We do not send it down except according to a known measure.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/15:21

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

On Surah Al-Hijr 15:21, **Imam Ibn Kathir** explains that Allah owns the treasuries of all things, and *"does not send it down except in a known measure, as He wills ... because of His perfect wisdom and His mercy to His servants"* (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/15/21).

Shaykh as-Sa'di, explaining Surah Ar-Rum 30:48, mentions a very interesting wisdom: rain emerges from the gaps in the cloud *"in small, separate drops, not falling all at once so as to ruin whatever it strikes"* (tafsir.app/saadi/30/48). On Al-Mu'minun 23:18, he says Allah sends it down when it is needed and holds it back when continuous rain begins to cause harm.

NARRATION NOTE: THE ATHAR "NO YEAR HAS MORE RAIN THAN ANOTHER"

In the tafsir of Al-Hijr 15:21, Ibn Kathir cites a narration of Ibn Jarir from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه: *"No year has more rain than another year, but Allah distributes it wherever He*

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wills — one year here, one year there." Almost the same words are narrated from al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah.

The chain of the Ibn Mas'ud narration passes through **Yazid ibn Abi Ziyad**, a narrator **considered weak** by many Hadith scholars. It is therefore presented as an interesting saying of the early generations, **not as conclusive evidence**. Coincidentally, modern data show that total global rainfall is indeed fairly stable from year to year, while its distribution shifts from region to region — but we build no claim on this narration.

Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Surah Al-Hijr 15:21. https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/15/21

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: A GLOBAL BALANCE: EVAPORATION ≈ PRECIPITATION

NASA Earth Observatory states that on a global basis, **evaporation approximately equals precipitation**. If more water evaporated than fell, the atmosphere would keep getting wetter and the land drier; if the reverse, the oceans would shrink. This balance holds even though **±495,000 km^3** of water moves every year.

This measure is remarkably "fine": the atmosphere holds only about **0.001%** of all the earth's water (NOAA), yet that tiny amount waters every continent.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA Earth Observatory. The Water Cycle. https://science.nasa.gov/earth/earth-observatory/the-water-cycle/

NOAA JetStream. What a Cycle! https://www.noaa.gov/jetstream/max-what-cycle

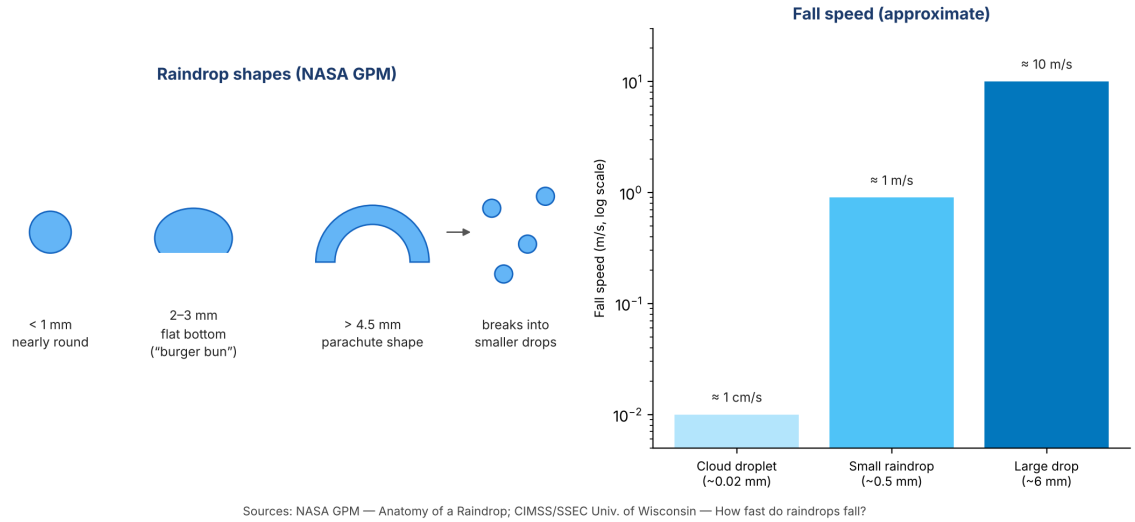


Figure 4: Raindrop shapes by size, and their approximate fall speeds.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: DROPS SIZED FOR MERCY

NASA GPM explains that raindrops are **not tear-shaped**. Drops under 1 mm are nearly round; drops of 2–3 mm flatten at the bottom like the top of a hamburger bun; and drops **larger than 4.5 mm** take on a parachute shape and then **break apart into smaller drops**.

Meteorologists at the University of Wisconsin (CIMSS) estimate that cloud droplets fall at only about **1 cm per second**, small raindrops at about 2 miles per hour, while large drops (about ¼ inch) fall at around **10 metres per second**. Drops larger than that cannot survive; they break apart in the air.

These laws of physics — surface tension and air resistance — set a "size limit" for every drop. Imagine if a cloud weighing hundreds of tonnes released its water all at once. Instead, it falls as billions of small drops — *"in separate drops, so that its benefit is obtained without harm"*, as as-Sa'di said.

STUDY REFERENCES:

NASA GPM. Anatomy of a Raindrop. https://gpm.nasa.gov/science/anatomy-of-a-raindrop

CIMSS / SSEC, University of Wisconsin. How fast do raindrops fall? https://wxguys.ssec.wisc.edu/?p=581

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FRESH WATER THAT PURIFIES

The oceans hold more than 96% of the earth's water, but it is salty. Rain, however, falls as fresh water that can be drunk. The Qur'an invites us to pause for a moment before a glass of water.

SURAH AL-WAQI'AH 56:68–70

أَفَرَءَيْتُمُ ٱلْمَآءَ ٱلَّذِى تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

And have you seen the water that you drink.

ءَأَنتُمْ أَنزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ ٱلْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ ٱلْمُنزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?

لَوْ نَشَآءُ جَعَلْنَٰهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/56:68-70

SURAH AL-FURQAN 25:48–49

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرْسَلَ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ بُشْرًۢا بَيْنَ يَدَىْ رَحْمَتِهِۦ ۚ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً طَهُورًا ﴿٤٨﴾

And it is He who sends the winds as good tidings before His mercy, and We send down from the sky pure water.

لِّنُحْىِۦَ بِهِۦ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُۥ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَآ أَنْعَٰمًا وَأَنَاسِىَّ كَثِيرًا ﴿٤٩﴾

That We may bring to life thereby a dead land and give it as drink to those We created of numerous livestock and men.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/25:48-49

SURAH AL-ANFAL 8:11

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ ٱلنُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِۦ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنكُمْ رِجْزَ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ ٱلْأَقْدَامَ ﴿١١﴾

[Remember] when He overwhelmed you with drowsiness [giving] security from Him and sent down upon you from the sky, rain by which to purify you and remove from you the evil [suggestions] of Satan and to make steadfast your hearts and plant firmly thereby your feet.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/8:11

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Shaykh as-Sa'di explains that *al-muzn* is the clouds and the rain that Allah sends down, from which come the rivers on the surface of the earth and within it; and among His blessings is that He made that water *"sweet and fresh, easy for souls to swallow"* (tafsir.app/saadi/56/68). On *mā'an ṭahūrā* (pure, purifying water) in Al-Furqan 25:48, he says: it purifies from ritual impurity and filth, and cleanses from dirt (tafsir.app/saadi/25/48).

Imam Ibn Kathir, in his tafsir of Al-Hijr 15:22, links *"and given you drink from it"* with Surah Al-Waqi'ah: Allah sends it down fresh so that it can be drunk, *"and had We willed, We could have made it bitter (ujāj)"* (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/15/22).

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 898

وَحَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا جَعْفَرُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ ثَابِتٍ الْبُنَانِيِّ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، قَالَ قَالَ أَنَسٌ أَصَابَنَا وَنَحْنُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَطَرٌ قَالَ فَحَسَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ثَوْبَهُ حَتَّى أَصَابَهُ مِنَ الْمَطَرِ فَقُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لِمَ صَنَعْتَ هَذَا قَالَ لِأَنَّهُ حَدِيثُ عَهْدٍ بِرَبِّهِ تَعَالَى

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه said: Rain fell upon us while we were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ uncovered part of his garment until the rain fell upon him. We said: "O Messenger of Allah, why did you do this?" He said: **"Because it has just come from its Lord, the Exalted."**

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya ibn Yahya, from Ja'far ibn Sulayman, from Thabit al-Bunani, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of the Prayer for Rain, Chapter: Supplication in the Prayer for Rain, Hadith No. 898.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:898

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ uncovered part of his garment to receive the raindrops because they had *"just come from their Lord"*. The scholars take this Hadith as evidence that it is sunnah to receive the first rain on one's body — as a sign of love for Allah's newly created mercy. The water that touched his skin had just completed a long journey from the sea, to the air, to the clouds, and then to the earth.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE GREATEST DISTILLERY ON EARTH

When sea water evaporates, **salts and dissolved substances are left behind** in the ocean; only water molecules rise into the air as vapour. This is why rain, snow and the water formed from them are **fresh water**. The earth is in fact running the largest solar "distillery" of all, every day, without stopping.

Yet rain is not perfectly distilled water. It dissolves a little carbon dioxide from the air, forming weak carbonic acid; natural rain is therefore **slightly acidic, with a pH of about 5.6**. This weak acidity helps dissolve minerals from rocks and soil — part of the way rain "brings life" to the land.

Imagine if salt evaporated along with the water: every raindrop would be salty, and no river would be drinkable. *"If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?"*

STUDY REFERENCES:

EarthDate (Bureau of Economic Geology, Univ. of Texas at Austin). How Earth Makes Fresh Water. https://www.earthdate.org/episodes/how-earth-makes-fresh-water

Energy Education (Univ. of Calgary). Acid rain. https://energyeducation.ca/encyclopedia/Acid_rain

Note: Rain in urban and industrial areas can be polluted by smoke and gases; this is "acid rain", which differs from natural rain. In fiqh, rainwater remains pure and purifying as long as its qualities are not changed by impurity.

REVIVING THE DEAD EARTH

The ultimate purpose of rain is not merely to wet the earth, but to bring it to life. The Qur'an often uses this event as **evidence for the resurrection** — just as dead land comes back to life after rain, so will people be raised from their graves.

SURAH FUSSILAT 41:39

وَمِنْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَنَّكَ تَرَى ٱلْأَرْضَ خَٰشِعَةً فَإِذَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا ٱلْمَآءَ ٱهْتَزَّتْ
وَرَبَتْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾

And of His signs is that you see the earth stilled, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and grows. Indeed, He who has given it life is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/41:39

SURAH FATIR 35:9

وَٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرْسَلَ ٱلرِّيَٰحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسُقْنَٰهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ
ٱلْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ ٱلنُّشُورُ ﴿٩﴾

And it is Allah who sends the winds, and they stir the clouds, and We drive them to a dead land and give life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness. Thus is the resurrection.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/35:9

SURAH QAF 50:9–11

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً مُّبَٰرَكًا فَأَنۢبَتْنَا بِهِۦ جَنَّٰتٍ وَحَبَّ ٱلْحَصِيدِ ﴿٩﴾

And We have sent down blessed rain from the sky and made grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest.

وَٱلنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَٰتٍ لَّهَا طَلْعٌ نَّضِيدٌ ﴿١٠﴾

And lofty palm trees having fruit arranged in layers.

رِّزْقًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ۖ وَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِۦ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ ٱلْخُرُوجُ ﴿١١﴾

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As provision for the servants, and We have given life thereby to a dead land. Thus is the resurrection.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/50:9-11

COMMENTARY OF RESPECTED SCHOLARS

Shaykh as-Sa'di explains *khāshi'ah* as land without vegetation; when rain falls, it *"stirs with plants"* (*ihtazzat*) and *"swells"* (*rabat*), then grows every beautiful kind. He concludes: *"Just as His power was not incapable of reviving the earth after its death, it is not incapable of reviving the dead"* (tafsir.app/saadi/41/39).

In his tafsir of Al-A'raf 7:57, as-Sa'di stresses that this argument is very clear: there is no difference between the two matters, and whoever denies the resurrection while seeing its likeness every rainy season is in fact denying what can be seen with the eyes (tafsir.app/saadi/7/57). Ibn Kathir, in his tafsir of At-Tariq 86:12, cites Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما that *"the earth which cracks open"* is the earth that splits to bring forth plants (tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/86/11).

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4935

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدٌ، أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو مُعَاوِيَةَ، عَنِ الأَعْمَشِ، عَنْ أَبِي صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رضى الله عنه - قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « مَا بَيْنَ النَّفْخَتَيْنِ أَرْبَعُونَ ». قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ يَوْمًا قَالَ أَبَيْتُ. قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ شَهْرًا قَالَ أَبَيْتُ. قَالَ أَرْبَعُونَ سَنَةً قَالَ أَبَيْتُ. قَالَ « ثُمَّ يُنْزِلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً. فَيَنْبُتُونَ كَمَا يَنْبُتُ الْبَقْلُ لَيْسَ مِنَ الإِنْسَانِ شَىْءٌ إِلاَّ يَبْلَى إِلاَّ عَظْمًا وَاحِدًا وَهْوَ عَجْبُ الذَّنَبِ، وَمِنْهُ يُرَكَّبُ الْخَلْقُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Between the two blowings (of the Trumpet) there will be forty."** Someone asked: Forty days? Abu Hurairah said: I decline (to specify). He asked: Forty months? He said: I decline. He asked: Forty years? He said: I decline. (The Prophet ﷺ said): **"Then Allah will send down water from the sky, and they will sprout as vegetables sprout. There is nothing of the human being that does not decay except one bone, the tailbone ('ajb adh-dhanab), and from it the creation will be reassembled on the Day of Resurrection."**

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Salam, from Abu Mu'awiyah Muhammad ibn Khazim, from Sulaiman al-A'mash, from Abu Salih as-Samman, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah an-Naba', Hadith No. 4935. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 2955).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4935

This Hadith completes the analogy perfectly. Between the two blowings of the Trumpet, Allah will send down **water from the sky**, and people will *"grow as vegetables grow"*. The rain we see every year is a small "rehearsal" for that great event.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: WHEN THE FIRST DROP TOUCHES THE SOIL

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Youngsoo Joung and Cullen Buie, filmed about **600 experiments** of raindrops striking 28 kinds of surface, including 16 soil samples, with high-speed cameras. They found that a drop hitting porous ground traps tiny air bubbles, which rise and burst, **releasing aerosols** into the air. Light and moderate rain produced the most aerosols.

These aerosols may carry aromatic compounds and micro-organisms from the soil. The researchers proposed this mechanism as a **possible explanation** for the refreshing earthy smell after light rain (*petrichor*) — a sign that the earth is beginning to "breathe" again.

At the same time, dormant seeds in the soil absorb water (a process called *imbibition*), swell and split their coats — the beginning of germination. The soil "stirs" and "swells" with new life — *ihtazzat wa rabat*.

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RAIN, SUPPLICATION AND THE SERVANT'S DEPENDENCE

After understanding how intricate the process of rain is, a question arises: can people "create" rain? The Qur'an's answer is clear — and the answer of modern science is humble as well.

SURAH NUH 71:10–12

فَقُلْتُ ٱسْتَغْفِرُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ﴿١٠﴾

And said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord. Indeed, He is ever a Perpetual Forgiver.

يُرْسِلِ ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُم مِّدْرَارًا ﴿١١﴾

He will send [rain from] the sky upon you in [continuing] showers.

وَيُمْدِدْكُم بِأَمْوَٰلٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ أَنْهَٰرًا ﴿١٢﴾

And give you increase in wealth and children and provide for you gardens and provide for you rivers.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/71:10-12

Prophet Nuh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ called his people to seek forgiveness, and promised them three worldly rewards: abundant rain, wealth and children, and gardens and rivers. The scholars take this verse as evidence that **seeking forgiveness is among the causes of rain**, which is why the prayer for rain (*istisqā'*) is filled with seeking forgiveness.

SURAH ASH-SHURA 42:28

وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُنَزِّلُ ٱلْغَيْثَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا۟ وَيَنشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُۥ ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْوَلِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾

And it is He who sends down the rain after they had despaired and spreads His mercy. And He is the Protector, the Praiseworthy.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/42:28

SURAH AL-MULK 67:30

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قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَن يَأْتِيكُم بِمَآءٍ مَّعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?"

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/67:30

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1032

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدٌ ـ هُوَ ابْنُ مُقَاتِلٍ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ الْمَرْوَزِيُّ ـ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ، عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَانَ إِذَا رَأَى الْمَطَرَ قَالَ صَيِّبًا نَافِعًا. تَابَعَهُ الْقَاسِمُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ. وَرَوَاهُ الأَوْزَاعِيُّ وَعُقَيْلٌ عَنْ نَافِعٍ.

TRANSLATION:

‘Aishah رضى الله عنها narrated that whenever the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw rain, he would say:

“*Ṣayyiban nāfi‘an*” — “(O Allah, make it) an abundant, beneficial rain.”

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Muqatil Abu al-Hasan al-Marwazi, from ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, from ‘Ubaydullah ibn ‘Umar, from Nafi‘, from al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, from ‘Aishah رضى الله عنها, from the Prophet ﷺ. It is supported by al-Qasim ibn Yahya from ‘Ubaydullah, and also narrated by al-Awza‘i and ‘Uqayl from Nafi‘.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Invoking Allah for Rain (al-Istisqa’), Chapter: What to Say When It Rains, Hadith No. 1032.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1032

This short supplication — *ṣayyiban nāfi‘an* — contains two requests: rain that is **abundant** (*ṣayyib*) and **beneficial** (*nāfi‘*). Heavy rain that brings floods is not beneficial; scant rain is not enough. This supplication asks for the right measure — *bi-qadar* — as discussed in chapter six. And when rain becomes excessive, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught the supplication *“Allāhumma ḥawālaynā wa lā ‘alaynā”* (O Allah, around us and not upon us), as in the Hadith of Anas رضى الله عنه in chapter four.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: CLOUD SEEDING: THE LIMITS OF HUMAN ABILITY

Cloud seeding technology sprays particles such as silver iodide into clouds to encourage the formation of droplets or ice crystals. Yet the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) official Statement on Weather Modification stresses that seeding **cannot** make weather systems rain on demand, and that **"it is impossible to create cloud systems that rain"**.

According to the WMO, the strongest evidence exists only for specific methods (wintertime seeding of clouds over mountains); results of other methods vary by cloud type, and claims of dramatic effects *"should be treated with suspicion"*. In other words, people can only "nudge" clouds that **already exist** — the cloud itself is still driven, gathered and stacked by Allah.

"Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?" (Al-Waqi'ah 56:69). After a century of research, science's own answer is: not us.

STUDY REFERENCES:

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VIEWS OF SCHOLARS OF SCIENTIFIC I'JAZ

The verses about rain, especially Surah An-Nur 24:43, have long attracted the attention of researchers of *i'jaz 'ilmi* (the scientific wonders of the Qur'an). Two names are often mentioned: a Muslim geologist from Egypt and a surgeon from France.

PROF. DR. ZAGHLOUL EL-NAGGAR (1933–2025)

Prof. Dr. Zaghloul El-Naggar was born in Gharbia, Egypt, on 17 November 1933 and passed away in Amman, Jordan, on 9 November 2025. He was a geologist who once chaired geology at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran, and was elected a Fellow of the Islamic Academy of Sciences (1988). He also chaired the **Committee of Scientific Notions in the Qur'an** at the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, Cairo, and wrote some 45 books in Arabic, English and French.

In his writings on the cosmic verses, El-Naggar often highlighted the **sequence** of the process in Surah An-Nur 24:43 — driving, joining, stacking, then rain, hail and lightning — as one of the finest examples of the precision of the Qur'an's language in describing nature. His approach gained wide following, although some scholars and scientists caution that scientific interpretations must not be forced beyond the linguistic meaning of a verse.

DR. MAURICE BUCAILLE (1920–1998)

Dr. Maurice Bucaille was a French surgeon known for his book *La Bible, le Coran et la Science* (1976), translated into many languages as *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*. In his chapter on the water cycle, he compared the Qur'anic verses on rain, winds and springs with the views of ancient thinkers, and concluded that the Qur'an's description agrees with modern knowledge and is free of the errors common in the era of its revelation.

Note: Quotations attributed to these two scholars often circulate on the internet in various translations that are hard to verify. This eBook therefore summarises their views in its own words, and readers are encouraged to consult their original works.

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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 FINDING	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT
The sky *dhāt ar-raj'* (86:11); water made to flow as springs (39:21)	Water cycle: ±495,000 km^3 a year; vapour stays ±9 days in the air	Clear agreement
Water lodged in the earth; Allah able to take it away (23:18)	Groundwater holds ±30% of fresh water	Agrees in its general picture
Lawāqiḥ winds "fertilise" the clouds (15:22)	Condensation nuclei (salt, dust) carried by the wind	Agrees with the scholars' interpretation; not a technical term
Yuzjī – yu'allifu – rukāmā (24:43)	Cumulus cells → merging → vertical cumulonimbus	Clear agreement in sequence
Mountains in the sky (24:43)	WMO: cumulonimbus "in the form of a mountain or huge towers"	Agrees; one of two scholarly interpretations
Barad from "mountains" of cloud (24:43)	Hail forms inside cumulonimbus	Clear agreement
Lightning in the same cloud (24:43; 13:12)	Charge separated by collisions of ice and graupel	Agrees in its general picture
Sent down *bi-qadar* (23:18; 43:11)	Evaporation–precipitation balance; drop size limit	Agrees in principle
Fresh water, not *ujāj* (56:68–70)	Salt left behind during evaporation	Clear agreement
The earth *ihtazzat wa rabat* (41:39)	Soil aerosols, imbibition and germination of seeds	Agrees in picture; the verse is evidence for resurrection
"Is it you who brought it down?" (56:69)	WMO: impossible to create cloud systems that rain	Clear agreement

CONCLUSION

Every raindrop carries a long story: driven by the wind, gathered, stacked into mountains of cloud, measured in size, distilled from a salty ocean, and then delivered to dead land to bring it to life. The Qur'an describes this journey in brief verses, while people need radar, satellites and research aircraft to measure it.

Yet the aim of the Qur'an is not to teach meteorology. It wants us to **look** — *a-lam tara?* (do you not see?) — and then to be **grateful**, to **supplicate**, and to be **certain** of the

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resurrection. Science does not diminish the wonder of rain; it only **enlarges the scale of our awe**.

May our tongues, whenever rain falls, be moist with the supplication of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, ***"Allāhumma ṣayyiban nāfi'an"***, and may our hearts say, like the believing servants: **"We have been given rain by the grace and mercy of Allah."**

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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

JAZAKUMULLAHU KHAIRAN KATHIRA

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