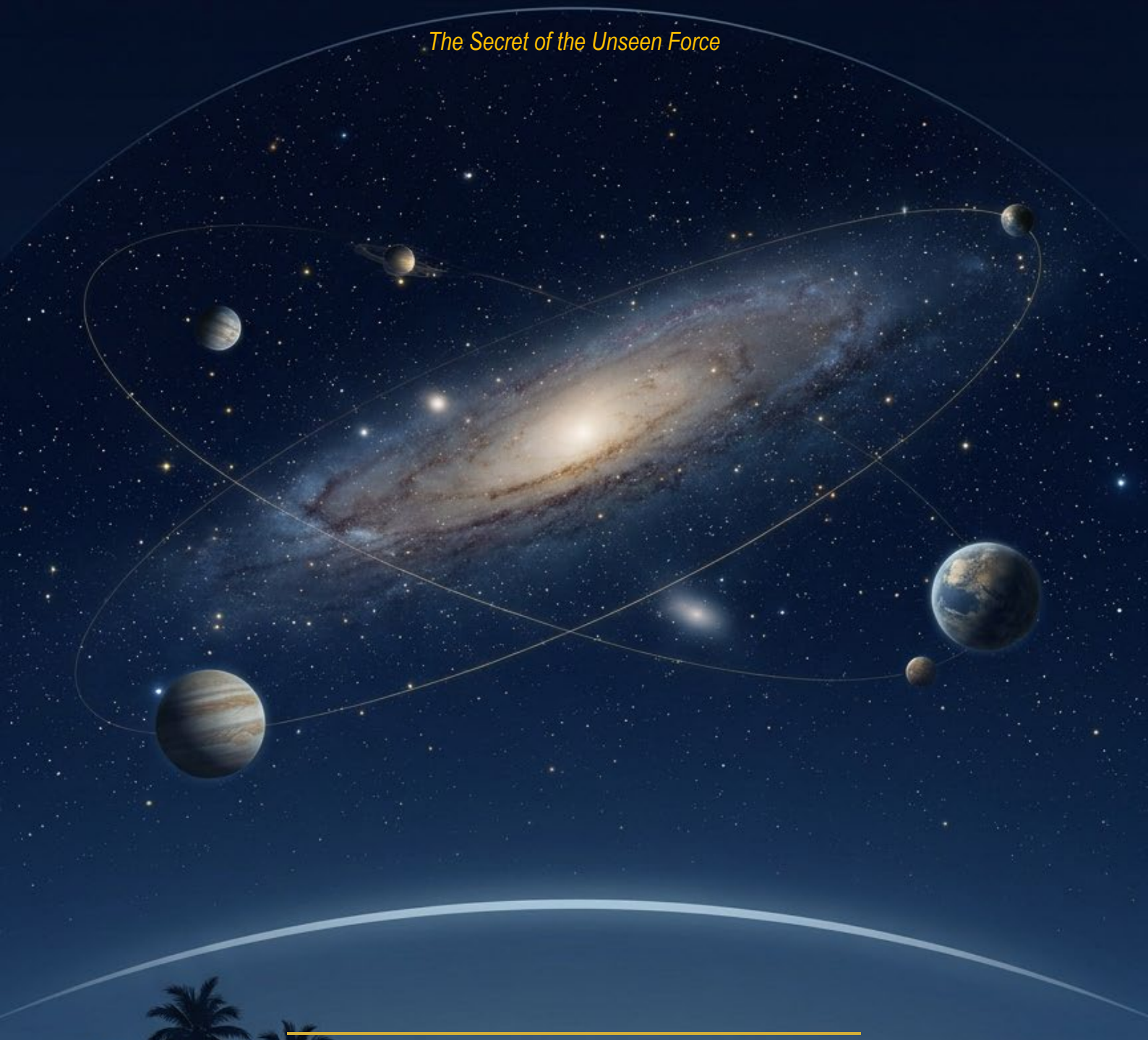
EXPLORING AL-QUR'AN & SCIENCE

THE SKY RAISED WITHOUT PILLARS

The Secret of the Unseen Force



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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THE SKY RAISED WITHOUT PILLARS

The Secret of the Unseen Force

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى رَفَعَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا

"It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see…"

SURAH AR-RA'D 13:2

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise belongs to Allah, who raised the heavens without pillars that we can see, who restrains the sky from falling upon the earth except by His permission, and who holds the heavens and the earth lest they cease. 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 recited the verses about its creation, and upon his family and Companions.

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 sons- and daughters-in-law,

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

Whenever we look up at the night sky, may we remember the prayer of those of understanding: ***"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly"*** (3:191) — and may this eBook become *'ilmun yuntafa'u bih*, knowledge that is benefited from.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook shows ***a vast, deep-blue night sky*** with a glowing ***spiral galaxy*** at its centre. Around it, several ***planets*** float in space — the blue Earth, a banded ringed planet and small moons.

Fine golden lines curve between the galaxy and the planets, like an unseen web. They symbolise Allah's words: ***"It is Allah who erected the heavens without pillars that you [can] see"*** (13:2). Not a single pillar is visible — yet the heavens remain by His command (30:25).

At the bottom, ***a silver curve of the horizon*** and the silhouettes of ***coconut palms*** on the dark earth remind us that small human beings are invited to look up and reflect. **Note:** This image is ***a symbolic illustration*** only, not an actual astronomical image. ***Two gold lines*** at the bottom frame the author's name.

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Colour guide: green box = verse of Al-Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; blue box = scientific finding; blue table = comparison. Narrator names underlined in blue can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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THE SKY RAISED WITHOUT PILLARS

Have we ever lain in the yard of our house at night and looked up at the sky? The stars are scattered across it, the moon moves calmly on its course, and beyond all of it stretches a space of unimaginable size. Yet not a single pillar holds it up. Al-Qur'an invites us to reflect on this reality in a beautiful phrase: ***bi ghairi 'amadin taraunahā*** — "without pillars that you [can] see".

This phrase appears twice in Al-Qur'an, in Surah ***Ar-Ra'd 13:2*** and Surah ***Luqman 31:10***. Elsewhere, Allah says that He ***restrains the sky from falling upon the earth*** (22:65), ***holds the heavens and the earth lest they cease*** (35:41), and that the heaven and earth ***remain by His command*** (30:25). The sky is described as a ***construction*** and a ***ceiling***, raised with a ***balance*** and harmony, without any flaw.

Modern science, for its part, has discovered that stars, planets and galaxies are bound together by ***unseen forces*** — gravity as described by Newton and Einstein, ***dark matter*** that emits no light yet holds galaxies together, and ***dark energy*** that stretches space itself. Are these the "pillars you cannot see" mentioned in the verse? This eBook explores that question through ***verses of Al-Qur'an***, ***authentic Hadith***, ***the explanations of respected scholars*** and ***scientific findings*** — honestly, distinguishing between solid harmony and forced interpretation.

THE SKY IN NUMBERS

Before exploring the verses of Al-Qur'an, here are some brief facts that will be explained in this eBook, with their sources:

FACT	FIGURE AND SOURCE
Age of the universe	About ***13.8 billion years*** (Planck Collaboration, 2020).
Share of the universe made of ordinary matter (stars, planets, us)	Only about ***5%***; the rest is dark matter (~27%) and dark energy (~68%) (Planck Collaboration, 2020).
Bending of starlight by the Sun's gravity	About ***1.75 arcseconds*** — confirmed during the 1919 eclipse (Dyson, Eddington & Davidson, 1920).
The Moon moving away from the Earth	About ***3.8 cm per year*** (Dickey et al., 1994).
Chance that Mercury's orbit becomes unstable within 5 billion years	About ***1%*** (Laskar & Gastineau, 2009).
World population that can no longer see the Milky Way	More than ***one third*** (Falchi et al., 2016).

Note: The translation of Al-Qur'an verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of each Hadith is stated in its Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com. Every scientific finding includes a link to its original source.

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THE HEAVENS RAISED WITHOUT PILLARS

This chapter discusses the two verses at the heart of this eBook. Both use the same phrase: ***bi ghairi 'amadin taraunahā***.

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 — 13:2

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 13:2

The word ***'amad*** is the plural of *'imād* or *'amūd*, meaning ***pillars*** that support a building. The verse mentions the heavens being ***raised*** (*rafa'a*) without pillars, then mentions Allah ***established above the Throne*** — in a manner befitting His majesty — and ***making the sun and the moon subject***, each running its course for a specified term.

The scholars of tafsir differ on the meaning of ***"that you [can] see"*** (*taraunahā*). Ibn Kathir reports two opinions:

First opinion: The heavens ***do have pillars, but you do not see them***. This opinion is narrated from ***Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, al-Hasan al-Basri, Qatadah*** and others. According to this reading, the word *taraunahā* describes the "pillars" — that is, there are no pillars ***that you can see***.

Second opinion: The heavens ***have no pillars at all***, and you yourselves see them standing without pillars. ***Iyas ibn Mu'awiyah*** said: "The sky above the earth is like a dome," meaning without pillars. This opinion is also narrated from Qatadah. Ibn Kathir states that this second opinion is ***the one more fitting to the context of the verse***, based on Allah's words: ***"And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission"*** (22:65). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 13:2

Al-Qurtubi also presents both opinions and concludes that, whatever the meaning, the verse shows ***the power of Allah*** who upholds so magnificent a structure without any support that human beings can see. Tafsir al-Qurtubi 13:2

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REFLECTION — THE UNSEEN STRENGTH

Every house we build needs pillars. The taller the building, the stronger its pillars must be. Yet the sky — far vaster than any human structure — stands without a single visible pillar. Both scholarly opinions lead to the same conclusion: ***what upholds the heavens is the command of Allah***, whether through "pillars" we cannot see or without pillars at all.

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SURAH LUQMAN 31:10

خَلَقَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ بِغَيۡرِ عَمَدٖ تَرَوۡنَهَاۖ وَأَلۡقَىٰ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ رَوَٰسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمۡ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَآبَّةٖۚ وَأَنزَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءٗ فَأَنۢبَتۡنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوۡجٖ كَرِيمٍ ١٠

He created the heavens without pillars that you see and has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with you, and dispersed therein from every creature. And We sent down rain from the sky and made grow therein [plants] of every noble kind.

Translation: Sahih International — 31:10

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 31:10

This verse repeats the phrase ***"without pillars that you see"***, then mentions the ***firmly set mountains*** that stabilise the earth, the ***creatures*** dispersed upon it, and the ***rain*** that makes plants grow. The heavens above and the earth below are mentioned together as one complete system — both depending on Allah's decree.

In the next verse, Allah challenges: ***"This is the creation of Allah. So show Me what those other than Him have created"*** (31:11). The purpose of the verse is clear: to awaken people to the truth that ***only Allah deserves to be worshipped***, for only He creates and sustains. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 31:10

A LANGUAGE LESSON — WHY "RAISED" AND "CREATED"?

In 13:2 Allah uses the word ***rafa'a*** (raised), while in 31:10 He uses ***khalaqa*** (created). Together they show that the heavens were not only ***created*** but also ***raised and kept*** in their place. Creation is not a one-time event that is then left alone; it requires ***continuous preservation*** — a meaning made clearer in the next chapter.

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THE SKY THAT IS RESTRAINED AND PRESERVED

If the first chapter speaks of the heavens ***without pillars***, this chapter explains ***who holds them***. The following three verses use different verbs — *yumsiku* (restrains), *yumsiku… an tazūlā* (holds lest they cease) and *taqūma* (remain standing) — but all point to one reality.

SURAH AL-HAJJ 22:65

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلْفُلْكَ تَجْرِى فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِۦ
وَيُمْسِكُ ٱلسَّمَآءَ أَن تَقَعَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is on the earth and the ships which run through the sea by His command? And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission. Indeed Allah, to the people, is Kind and Merciful.

Translation: Sahih International — 22:65

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 22:65

Allah mentions three blessings in one verse: ***whatever is on the earth*** is made subject to people, ***ships*** run through the sea by His command, and ***the sky is restrained from falling*** upon the earth except by His permission. Ibn Kathir explains that if Allah willed, He could permit the sky to fall upon the earth and destroy its inhabitants — but out of ***His kindness and mercy***, He holds it back. The verse ends: ***"Indeed Allah, to the people, is Kind and Merciful."*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 22:65

Notice that the preservation of the sky is linked to ***mercy***, not merely to power. The stability of the universe that we enjoy every day is a sign of Allah's compassion.

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 — 35:41

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 35:41

The phrase ***an tazūlā*** means "lest they ***shift*** or ***cease***". Ibn Kathir explains that Allah holds the heavens and the earth so that they do not move from their places, and that ***no one other than Allah*** could hold them if they were to cease. The verse closes with two of Allah's names: ***al-Halīm*** (the Forbearing) and ***al-Ghafūr*** (the Forgiving) — indicating that even though people commit sins and associate partners with Him, Allah continues to hold the heavens and the earth out of His forbearance and forgiveness. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 35:41

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SURAH AR-RUM 30:25

وَمِنْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦٓ أَن تَقُومَ ٱلسَّمَآءُ وَٱلْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِۦ ۚ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ إِذَآ أَنتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

And of His signs is that the heaven and earth remain by His command. Then when He calls you with a [single] call from the earth, immediately you will come forth.

Translation: Sahih International — 30:25

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 30:25

This verse states that among the signs of Allah's greatness is that ***the heaven and earth remain by His command*** (*an taqūma as-samā'u wal-ardhu bi amrihi*). Ibn Kathir explains that the heavens and the earth stand firm and well ordered by Allah's command, and that at the end of time Allah will ***call people with a single call***, and they will come forth from their graves. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 30:25

REFLECTION — FROM CREATION TO PRESERVATION

These three verses teach an important concept of belief: Allah is ***al-Khāliq*** (the Creator) and also ***al-Qayyūm*** (the Self-Sustaining, who sustains all creation). Ayat al-Kursi states: ***"and their preservation tires Him not"*** (2:255). The universe does not run by itself like a clock left alone; at every moment it depends on Allah's preservation.

When science explains that the planets move according to the law of gravity, a Muslim sees that law as ***sunnatullah*** — the way Allah holds and manages the universe. The laws of nature do not replace Allah; they are ***Allah's command operating in an orderly way***.

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CONSTRUCTION, BALANCE AND HARMONY

Al-Qur'an describes the sky with several images: a ***construction*** (*binā'*), a ***ceiling***, a sky that is ***raised and then proportioned***, a sky ***constructed with strength***, and a sky with ***no inconsistency***. This chapter gathers those verses.

SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:22

ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ فِرَٰشًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

[He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].

Translation: Sahih International — 2:22

SURAH GHAFIR 40:64

ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ فَتَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ رَبُّ ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

It is Allah who made for you the earth a place of settlement and the sky a ceiling and formed you and perfected your forms and provided you with good things. That is Allah, your Lord; then blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds.

Translation: Sahih International — 40:64

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 2:22 AND 40:64

In both verses, the earth is described as a ***bed*** and a ***place of settlement***, while the sky is a ***ceiling*** (*binā'*, literally "a construction"). Ibn Kathir explains that *binā'* means a ***roof*** over the earth, and that verse 2:22 is the first call in the mushaf to pure monotheism: the Lord who built the sky and sends down rain — so ***do not attribute equals to Him***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:22

SURAH AN-NAZI'AT 79:27–28

ءَأَنتُمۡ أَشَدُّ خَلۡقًا أَمِ ٱلسَّمَآءُۚ بَنَىٰهَا ﴿٢٧﴾

Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven? Allah constructed it.

رَفَعَ سَمۡكَهَا فَسَوَّىٰهَا ﴿٢٨﴾

He raised its ceiling and proportioned it.

Translation: Sahih International — 79:27-28

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 79:27–28

Allah asks those who deny the resurrection: ***"Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven?"*** Then He answers: Allah ***constructed it***, ***raised its ceiling*** (*rafa'a samkahā*) and ***proportioned it*** (*fa sawwāhā*). The word *samk* means the height or roof of a structure. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah made the sky high, vast and balanced, adorned with stars. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 79:28

The logic is clear: bringing human beings back to life is far easier for Allah than creating so magnificent a sky. The science chapter will show how vast this "construction" is — with billions of galaxies, each containing billions of stars.

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 — 51:47

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 51:47

This verse says the heaven was constructed ***bi aydin*** — with ***strength*** (not "hands" in a physical sense). Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and al-Thawri explained it as ***"with strength"***. Then Allah says: ***wa innā la mūsi'ūn***. Ibn Kathir explains its meaning: ***"We have expanded the heaven and raised it without pillars until it stands as it is."*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 51:47

Sahih International translates it as ***"and indeed, We are [its] expander"***. Other classical scholars understood *mūsi'ūn* as ***"possessors of vast power"*** or ***"those who expand provision"*** — the Malay translation by Abdullah Muhammad Basmeih, for example, renders it as "We possess limitless vast power". Some modern translators render it as ***"We are steadily expanding it"***. These differences will be discussed carefully in Chapter 7.

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SURAH AR-RAHMAN 55:7–9

وَٱلسَّمَآءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ ٱلۡمِيزَانَ ۝٧

And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance.

أَلَّا تَطۡغَوۡاْ فِي ٱلۡمِيزَانِ ۝٨

That you not transgress within the balance.

وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلۡوَزۡنَ بِٱلۡقِسۡطِ وَلَا تُخۡسِرُواْ ٱلۡمِيزَانَ ۝٩

And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance.

Translation: Sahih International — 55:7-9

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 55:7–9

Allah ***raised the heaven*** and placed ***al-mīzān*** (the balance), then immediately commanded people: ***do not transgress within the balance***, and ***establish weight in justice***. Ibn Kathir explains that *al-mīzān* here means ***justice***. A sky arranged in balance is a lesson for people to establish balance in the affairs of their own lives. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 55:7

SURAH AL-MULK 67:3–4

ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبۡعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٖ طِبَاقٗاۖ مَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلۡقِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ مِن تَفَٰوُتٖۖ فَٱرۡجِعِ ٱلۡبَصَرَ هَلۡ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٖ ۝٣

[And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?

ثُمَّ ٱرۡجِعِ ٱلۡبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيۡنِ يَنقَلِبۡ إِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡبَصَرُ خَاسِئٗا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٞ ۝٤

Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued.

Translation: Sahih International — 67:3-4

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 67:3–4

Allah created ***seven heavens in layers*** (*tibāqā*) and challenges people: ***"You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency"*** (*tafāwut*). Return your vision — ***do you see any breaks*** (*futūr*)? Return it again, and your vision will come back humbled and fatigued. Ibn Kathir explains that *tafāwut* means contradiction or imbalance, and *futūr* means cracks or gaps. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 67:3

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REFLECTION — THE BALANCE OF THE SKY, THE BALANCE OF LIFE

It is striking that the verse about the raised heaven (55:7) is ***immediately followed*** by the command to be just in weighing (55:8–9). The verses of Al-Mulk challenge us to find a flaw in the sky — and we never will. Instead, ***flaws are abundant in human affairs***: cheating in weights, oppression and injustice. The balanced sky is a mirror that admonishes us.

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FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE FOLDING

Al-Qur'an speaks not only of the heavens standing today, but also of their ***beginning*** and their ***end***. The sky that is restrained and preserved will not last forever; it will be ***folded up*** on the Day of Resurrection.

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 — 21:30

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 21:30

The word ***ratq*** means joined or closed, while ***fatq*** means separated or opened. Ibn Kathir reports several opinions: the heavens and the earth ***were originally one and were then separated***; or the sky ***was closed and sent down no rain*** and the earth ***was closed and grew no plants***, and then Allah opened the sky with rain and the earth with vegetation — an opinion that fits the continuation of the verse: ***"and [We] made from water every living thing."*** Tafsir Ibn Kathir 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 — 41:11

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 41:11

This verse states that the heaven was originally ***smoke*** (*dukhān*). Allah commanded the heaven and the earth to ***come willingly or by compulsion***, and both replied: ***"We have come willingly."*** Ibn Kathir explains that *dukhān* was vapour rising from water when the earth was created. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 41:11

This verse holds a profound lesson: the heavens and the earth ***obey willingly*** the command of Allah. The orderly laws of nature — studied by physicists — are a picture of creation's obedience to its Creator. Human beings, who have been given a choice, are even more obliged to obey willingly.

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SURAH AL-ANBIYA' 21:104

يَوْمَ نَطْوِى ٱلسَّمَآءَ كَطَىِّ ٱلسِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۚ كَمَا بَدَأْنَآ أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيدُهُۥ ۚ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَآ ۚ 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 — 21:104

SURAH AZ-ZUMAR 39:67

وَمَا قَدَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِۦ وَٱلْأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُۥ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ مَطْوِيَّٰتٌۢ بِيَمِينِهِۦ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥ وَتَعَٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

They have not appraised Allah with true appraisal, while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand. Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.

Translation: Sahih International — 39:67

EXPLANATION OF VERSES 21:104 AND 39:67

The sky that is restrained today will be ***folded like the folding of a written sheet*** (*katayyis-sijilli lil-kutub*). On the Day of Resurrection, ***the earth entirely will be within His grip*** and ***the heavens will be folded in His right hand***. Ibn Kathir brings authentic Hadith explaining verse 39:67 — two of them are presented in Chapter 5 (Bukhari 4811 and 4812). Tafsir Ibn Kathir 39:67

Ahl al-Sunnah affirm the attributes of Allah as mentioned in Al-Qur'an and authentic Hadith, ***without likening Him to creation*** and ***without denying them***: ***"There is nothing like unto Him"*** (42:11).

REFLECTION — STANDING TODAY, FOLDED TOMORROW

The sky we see is so magnificent and firm — yet for Allah it is like a sheet of paper that is rolled up. This awareness puts all the grandeur of the universe in its proper place: ***the universe is created, not a god***. Our wonder at galaxies and stars should lead us to ***wonder at their Creator***, not stop at the creation.

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EVIDENCE FROM THE HADITH

This chapter presents ***nine Hadith*** related to the creation of the heavens, their preservation, their stars and their end. Each Hadith is presented in full with the Arabic text, the chain of narration linked to the narrators' pages on sunnah.com, a translation and its grade.

HADITH	THEME
Sahih al-Bukhari 3191	"Allah existed and there was nothing besides Him… and He created the heavens and the earth."
Sahih al-Bukhari 3192	The Messenger of Allah ﷺ tells of the beginning of creation up to Paradise and Hell.
Sahih al-Bukhari 4569	The Messenger of Allah ﷺ looks at the sky at the end of the night and recites Ali 'Imran 3:190.
Sahih Muslim 2531	"The stars are a source of security for the sky."
Jami' al-Tirmidhi 2312	"The heaven groans, and it has the right to groan" — angels in prostration.
Sahih al-Bukhari 3199	The sun travels and prostrates beneath the Throne — Ya-Sin 36:38.
Sahih al-Bukhari 1145	Allah descends to the lowest heaven in the last third of the night.
Sahih al-Bukhari 4811	The heavens on one finger — Az-Zumar 39:67.
Sahih al-Bukhari 4812	Allah folds the heavens in His right hand.

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FIRST HADITH — "ALLAH EXISTED AND THERE WAS NOTHING BESIDES HIM"

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:

'Imran ibn Husain رضى الله عنهما said: I entered upon the Prophet ﷺ and tied my she-camel at the door. Then some people from Banu Tamim came to him, and he said: "Accept the good tidings, O Banu Tamim." They said: "You have given us good tidings, so give us (something)." (They said it) twice. Then some people from Yemen came in, and he said: "Accept the good tidings, O people of Yemen, since Banu Tamim did not accept them." They said: "We accept, O Messenger of Allah. We have come to ask you about this matter (the beginning of creation)."

He said: ***"Allah existed and there was nothing besides Him. His Throne was over the water. He wrote everything in al-Dhikr (the Preserved Tablet), and He created the heavens and the earth."***

Then someone called out: "Your she-camel has run away, O Ibn Husain!" So I went off, and the mirage hid it from me. By Allah, I wish I had left it (and stayed in that gathering).

CHAIN 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.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation (Bad' al-Khalq), Chapter: Allah's Words "And it is He who begins creation, then repeats it", Hadith No. 3191.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

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

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: This Hadith affirms that ***only Allah is without beginning***. The heavens and the earth are ***originated creations*** — they have a beginning. This is in harmony with the scientific finding that the universe has a finite age (about 13.8 billion years), although the Hadith mentions no figure.

Second: 'Imran ibn Husain رضى الله عنهما regretted leaving a gathering of knowledge to chase his camel.

Knowledge of ***the origin of creation*** is more precious than wealth — a lesson for every seeker of knowledge.

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SECOND HADITH — A SERMON ON THE BEGINNING OF CREATION

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3192

وَرَوَى عِيسَى، عَنْ رَقَبَةَ، عَنْ قَيْسِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ، عَنْ طَارِقِ بْنِ شِهَابٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عُمَرَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ يَقُولُ قَامَ فِينَا النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم مَقَامًا، فَأَخْبَرَنَا عَنْ بَدْءِ الْخَلْقِ حَتَّى دَخَلَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ مَنَازِلَهُمْ، وَأَهْلُ النَّارِ مَنَازِلَهُمْ، حَفِظَ ذَلِكَ مَنْ حَفِظَهُ، وَنَسِيَهُ مَنْ نَسِيَهُ.

TRANSLATION:

Tariq ibn Shihab said: I heard 'Umar رضى الله عنه say: ***"The Prophet ﷺ once stood among us in a gathering and told us about the beginning of creation, until the people of Paradise entered their places and the people of Hell entered their places.*** Some remembered it and some forgot it."

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Isa, from Raqabah, from Qais ibn Muslim, from Tariq ibn Shihab, from 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Beginning of Creation, Hadith No. 3192 — stated by al-Bukhari in mu'allaq form (without naming his own teacher) with definite wording ("and 'Isa narrated…").

GRADE: SAHIH — a mu'allaq narration that al-Bukhari states with definite wording (jazm); by the principles of the Hadith scholars, such a narration is judged authentic up to the narrator named.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3192

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ taught the Companions about ***the beginning and the end of creation*** in one gathering — from the heavens and the earth to Paradise and Hell. Knowledge of the universe was not separated from knowledge of the Hereafter.

Second: "Some remembered it and some forgot it." Knowledge needs to be ***recorded and revised***. An eBook like this is a small effort to gather and preserve that knowledge.

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THIRD HADITH — LOOKING AT THE SKY AT THE END OF THE NIGHT

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4569

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:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said: I spent the night at the house of my maternal aunt, Maimunah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ talked with his wife for a while, then slept. ***When it was the last third of the night, he sat up, looked 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."*** Then he got up, performed ablution and used the tooth-stick, and prayed eleven rak'ahs. Then Bilal called the adhan, so he prayed two rak'ahs, then went out and prayed Fajr.

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa'id ibn Abi Maryam, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far, from Sharik ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abi Namir, from Kuraib, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah Ali 'Imran, Chapter: "Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth…", Hadith No. 4569.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

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

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***looked at the sky*** as part of his night worship. Reflecting on the creation of the heavens is not a side activity; it is a ***sunnah*** that opened his night prayer.

Second: The verse he recited is 3:190, continued by 3:191: those of understanding ***remember Allah*** in every state and ***give thought*** to the creation of the heavens and the earth, saying: ***"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly."*** This combination of ***remembrance and reflection*** is the essence of this eBook.

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FOURTH HADITH — THE STARS ARE GUARDIANS OF THE SKY

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2531

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، وَإِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ بْنِ أَبَانَ، كُلُّهُمْ عَنْ حُسَيْنٍ، - قَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ حَدَّثَنَا حسين بْنُ عَلِيٍّ الْجُعْفِيُّ، - عَنْ مُجَمِّعِ بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي بُرْدَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ صَلَّيْنَا الْمَغْرِبَ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لَوْ جَلَسْنَا حَتَّى نُصَلِّيَ مَعَهُ الْعِشَاءَ - قَالَ - فَجَلَسْنَا فَخَرَجَ عَلَيْنَا فَقَالَ «مَا زِلْتُمْ هَا هُنَا». قُلْنَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّيْنَا مَعَكَ الْمَغْرِبَ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا نَجْلِسُ حَتَّى نُصَلِّيَ مَعَكَ الْعِشَاءَ قَالَ «أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَوْ أَصَبْتُمْ». قَالَ فَرَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَكَانَ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا يَرْفَعُ رَأْسَهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَقَالَ «النُّجُومُ أَمَنَةٌ لِلسَّمَاءِ فَإِذَا ذَهَبَتِ النُّجُومُ أَتَى السَّمَاءَ مَا تُوعَدُ وَأَنَا أَمَنَةٌ لأَصْحَابِي فَإِذَا ذَهَبْتُ أَتَى أَصْحَابِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ وَأَصْحَابِي أَمَنَةٌ لأُمَّتِي فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ أَصْحَابِي أَتَى أُمَّتِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Burdah narrated from his father (Abu Musa al-Ash'ari) رضى الله عنه: We prayed Maghrib with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then we said: "How good it would be if we sat until we pray 'Isha' with him." So we sat. Then he came out to us and said: "Are you still here?" We said: "O Messenger of Allah, we prayed Maghrib with you, then we said: let us sit until we pray 'Isha' with you." He said: "You have done well," or "You have done right."

The narrator said: ***Then he raised his head towards the sky — and he often raised his head towards the sky — and said: "The stars are a source of security for the sky. When the stars depart, there will come to the sky what it has been promised.*** And I am a source of security for my Companions; when I depart, there will come to my Companions what they have been promised. And my Companions are a source of security for my Ummah; when my Companions depart, there will come to my Ummah what they have been promised."

CHAIN Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaibah and Ishaq ibn Ibrahim and 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ibn Aban, from Husain ibn 'Ali al-Ju'fi, from Mujammi' ibn Yahya, from Sa'id ibn Abi Burdah, from Abu Burdah, from his father, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of the Merits of the Companions, Chapter: The Prophet ﷺ Being a Source of Security for His Companions, Hadith No. 2531.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2531

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***often raised his head towards the sky***. Imam al-Nawawi explains that "what the sky has been promised" is ***its splitting and destruction on the Day of Resurrection***, when the stars are scattered (82:1–2). As long as the stars remain in their places, the sky is in a state of safety.

Second: He used ***the order of the sky*** as a parable for ***the order of the Ummah***: the stars guard the sky, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ guarded the Companions, and the Companions guard the Ummah. The balance of the sky becomes a lesson about the role of leadership and knowledge in society.

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FIFTH HADITH — "THE HEAVEN GROANS, AND IT HAS THE RIGHT TO GROAN"

HADITH — JAMI' AL-TIRMIDHI, NO. 2312

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مَنِيعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أَحْمَدَ الزُّبَيْرِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا إِسْرَائِيلُ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِ الْمُهَاجِرِ، عَنْ مُجَاهِدٍ، عَنْ مُوَرِّقٍ، عَنْ أَبِي ذَرٍّ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم «إِنِّي أَرَى مَا لاَ تَرَوْنَ وَأَسْمَعُ مَا لاَ تَسْمَعُونَ أَطَّتِ السَّمَاءُ وَحُقَّ لَهَا أَنْ تَئِطَّ مَا فِيهَا مَوْضِعُ أَرْبَعِ أَصَابِعَ إِلاَّ وَمَلَكٌ وَاضِعٌ جَبْهَتَهُ سَاجِدًا لِلَّهِ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ مَا أَعْلَمُ لَضَحِكْتُمْ قَلِيلاً وَلَبَكَيْتُمْ كَثِيرًا وَمَا تَلَذَّذْتُمْ بِالنِّسَاءِ عَلَى الْفُرُشِ وَلَخَرَجْتُمْ إِلَى الصُّعُدَاتِ تَجْأَرُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ». لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ شَجَرَةً تُعْضَدُ. قَالَ أَبُو عِيسَى وَفِي الْبَابِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ وَعَائِشَةَ وَابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ وَأَنَسٍ. قَالَ هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ. وَيُرْوَى مِنْ غَيْرِ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ أَنَّ أَبَا ذَرٍّ قَالَ لَوَدِدْتُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ شَجَرَةً تُعْضَدُ.

TRANSLATION:

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Indeed, I see what you do not see and I hear what you do not hear. The heaven groans, and it has the right to groan. There is not a space in it the width of four fingers except that an angel is placing his forehead there, prostrating to Allah.*** By Allah, if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much, you would not enjoy your wives in your beds, and you would go out to the open roads beseeching Allah." (Abu Dharr said:) "I wish I were a tree that is cut down."

Abu 'Isa (al-Tirmidhi) said: On this topic there are narrations from Abu Hurairah, 'A'ishah, Ibn 'Abbas and Anas. This Hadith is ***hasan gharib***. It is also narrated through other routes that the words "I wish I were a tree that is cut down" are the words of Abu Dharr himself.

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi: from Ahmad ibn Mani', from Abu Ahmad al-Zubairi, from Isra'il, from Ibrahim ibn al-Muhajir, from Mujahid, from Muwarriq, from Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Tirmidhi in Jami' al-Tirmidhi, Chapters on Zuhd, Hadith No. 2312.

GRADE: HASAN — graded hasan gharib by Imam al-Tirmidhi; graded hasan by al-Albani.

Source: https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2312

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: The sky is not a silent empty space. It is ***filled with worship*** — there is no space the width of four fingers without an angel in prostration. This is a matter of the ***unseen*** (ghaib) known only through revelation; it ***must not be linked*** to dark matter or any scientific discovery.

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Second: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used this image to ***soften hearts***: if even the magnificent heaven "groans" under the weight of the angels' worship, how much more should human beings weep and turn to Allah.

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SIXTH HADITH — THE SUN TRAVELS UNTIL IT PROSTRATES BENEATH THE THRONE

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:

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه said: The Prophet ﷺ asked Abu Dharr when the sun set: ***"Do you know where it goes?"*** I said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: ***"It goes until it prostrates beneath the Throne, then it asks permission and is granted permission.*** And soon it will prostrate but it will not be accepted from it, and it will ask permission but will not be granted permission; it will be told: 'Go back to where you came from,' so it will rise from its place of setting. That is the meaning of the words of Allah the Exalted: ***'And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing'*** (36:38)."

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Yusuf, from Sufyan al-Thawri, from al-A'mash, from Ibrahim al-Taimi, from his father, Yazid ibn Sharik, from Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه.

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

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

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

LESSONS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THIS HADITH

First: Some people assume this Hadith contradicts astronomy, since the sun does not "go" anywhere when it sets — it merely disappears from view for part of the Earth. The scholars explain that ***the Throne encompasses the whole universe***; so the sun is ***always beneath the Throne*** wherever it is. ***Its prostration*** is a prostration of submission suited to its nature — just as Allah says that the sun, the moon and the stars ***prostrate to Him*** (22:18) — and we do not know its true reality.

Second: This Hadith links the course of the sun to ***Allah's permission*** in every cycle. This is the meaning of "restrained and preserved" (35:41): the order of the universe is not because the universe has power of its own, but because ***at every moment it runs by His permission***. At the end of time that permission will be withdrawn, and the sun will rise from the west — one of the major signs of the Hour.

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SEVENTH HADITH — ALLAH DESCENDS TO THE LOWEST HEAVEN

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1145

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مَسْلَمَةَ، عَنْ مَالِكٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، وَأَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الأَغَرِّ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ «يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الآخِرُ يَقُولُ مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Our Lord, Blessed and Exalted is He, descends every night to the lowest heaven when the last third of the night remains, and says: 'Who will call upon Me, that I may answer him? Who will ask of Me, that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?'"***

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Maslamah, from Malik ibn Anas, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah and Abu 'Abdillah al-Agharr, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tahajjud, Chapter: Supplication and Prayer at the End of the Night, Hadith No. 1145.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1145

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

First: ***The lowest heaven*** (*as-samā' ad-dunyā*) — the heaven nearest to us — becomes the place to which Allah's mercy descends in the last third of the night. Ahl al-Sunnah affirm this attribute of "descending" as befits Allah, ***without likening Him to creation*** and without asking "how".

Second: This is also the time when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***looked at the sky*** and recited 3:190 (the Third Hadith). The night sky is not merely an object of study; it is ***a door of supplication***.

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EIGHTH HADITH — THE HEAVENS ON ONE FINGER

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4811

حَدَّثَنَا آدَمُ، حَدَّثَنَا شَيْبَانُ، عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ، عَنْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ عَبِيدَةَ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ قَالَ جَاءَ حَبْرٌ مِنَ الأَحْبَارِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ، إِنَّا نَجِدُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ السَّمَوَاتِ عَلَى إِصْبَعٍ وَالأَرَضِينَ عَلَى إِصْبَعٍ، وَالشَّجَرَ عَلَى إِصْبَعٍ، وَالْمَاءَ وَالثَّرَى عَلَى إِصْبَعٍ، وَسَائِرَ الْخَلاَئِقِ عَلَى إِصْبَعٍ، فَيَقُولُ أَنَا الْمَلِكُ. فَضَحِكَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَتَّى بَدَتْ نَوَاجِذُهُ تَصْدِيقًا لِقَوْلِ الْحَبْرِ ثُمَّ قَرَأَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم {وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالأَرْضُ جَمِيعًا قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ}

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud) رضى الله عنه said: A rabbi came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said: "O Muhammad, we find (in our scripture) that Allah will place ***the heavens on one finger, the earths on one finger***, the trees on one finger, the water and the soil on one finger, and all other creatures on one finger, then He will say: 'I am the King.'" ***The Prophet ﷺ laughed until his molar teeth became visible, confirming what the rabbi said.*** Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ recited: ***"They have not appraised Allah with true appraisal, while the earth entirely will be [within] His grip on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His right hand. Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him"*** (39:67).

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Adam ibn Abi Iyas, from Shaiban, from Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir, from Ibrahim al-Nakha'i, from 'Abidah al-Salmani, from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-Zumar, Chapter: "They have not appraised Allah with true appraisal", Hadith No. 4811.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4811

NINTH HADITH — ALLAH FOLDS THE HEAVENS IN HIS RIGHT HAND

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4812

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ عُفَيْرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي اللَّيْثُ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ خَالِدِ بْنِ مُسَافِرٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ، أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم

يَقُولُ «يَقْبِضُ اللَّهُ الأَرْضَ، وَيَطْوِي السَّمَوَاتِ بِيَمِينِهِ، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا المَلِكُ، أَيْنَ مُلُوكُ الأَرْضِ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه said: I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: ***"Allah will grasp the earth and fold the heavens in His right hand, then He will say: 'I am the King! Where are the kings of the earth?'"***

CHAIN Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Sa'id ibn 'Ufair, from al-Laith ibn Sa'd, from 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn Musafir, from Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri, from Abu Salamah, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Tafsir, Surah al-Zumar, Chapter: "And the earth entirely will be within His grip on the Day of Resurrection", Hadith No. 4812.

GRADE: SAHIH — narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4812

LESSONS FROM THE EIGHTH AND NINTH HADITH

First: The sky we admire — with its billions of galaxies — is ***small before the greatness of Allah***. Verse 39:67 and these two Hadith place the entire universe within the "grip" and the "folding" of His power.

Second: The question ***"Where are the kings of the earth?"*** humbles all human arrogance. If even the heavens will be folded, what is the worth of worldly power and kingdoms? Ahl al-Sunnah affirm the attributes of "finger" and "right hand" as befits Allah, ***without tashbih*** (likening) and ***without ta'til*** (denial).

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WHAT MODERN SCIENCE SAYS

This chapter presents scientific findings on ***the forces that uphold and arrange the heavens*** — from the gravity that holds the moon and planets, to the dark matter that holds galaxies together and the dark energy that expands the universe. Each finding is supported by peer-reviewed research, with links to the original sources.

A SIMPLE EXPLANATION — WHY DOESN'T THE MOON FALL?

Imagine swinging a stone tied to a string. As long as the string holds it, the stone keeps circling. If the string is released, the stone flies off in a straight line. ***Gravity*** is the "invisible string" that holds the moon in its orbit around the Earth, and the Earth around the Sun.

In fact, the moon is ***always "falling"*** towards the Earth — but at the same time it moves sideways so fast that it keeps "missing" the Earth. This delicate balance between ***speed*** and ***gravitational pull*** is what forms an orbit. If the moon moved more slowly, it would fall; if faster, it would escape into space. Everything runs with ***precise measure***.

Reflect: no pillar holds the moon, no visible string, yet it has not fallen for billions of years. ***"And He restrains the sky from falling upon the earth, unless by His permission"*** (22:65).

FROM NEWTON TO EINSTEIN: UNDERSTANDING GRAVITY

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: NEWTON'S LAW OF UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION

In 1687, Isaac Newton published *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. He showed that ***the force that makes an apple fall*** is the same force that ***holds the moon in its orbit***. Every mass attracts every other mass with a force that increases with mass and decreases with the square of the distance.

For the first time, the heavens and the earth were explained by ***one and the same law***. Yet Newton himself admitted that he did not know ***what gravity actually is*** — he only described how it works.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Newton, I. (1687/1846). The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy (trans. Andrew Motte). Wikisource. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Mathematical_Principles_of_Natural_Philosophy_(1846)

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: EINSTEIN: GRAVITY AS THE CURVATURE OF SPACE AND TIME

In 1915, Albert Einstein introduced ***the general theory of relativity***. According to this theory, gravity is not merely a "pull" but ***the curvature of space and time*** caused by mass. The Sun curves the space around it, and the planets move along that curvature.

The theory was tested during ***the solar eclipse of 29 May 1919***. Dyson, Eddington and Davidson measured the positions of stars near the Sun and found that starlight was ***bent by about 1.75 arcseconds*** — as Einstein had predicted. Since then, the theory has passed ever more precise tests (Will, 2014).

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Dyson, F.W., Eddington, A.S. & Davidson, C. (1920). A determination of the deflection of light by the Sun's gravitational field. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A, 220, 291–333. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.1920.0009

Will, C.M. (2014). The confrontation between general relativity and experiment. Living Reviews in Relativity, 17, 4. https://doi.org/10.12942/lrr-2014-4

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: GRAVITATIONAL WAVES: "RIPPLES" IN SPACE

On 14 September 2015, the ***LIGO*** detectors in the United States recorded a signal named ***GW150914*** — gravitational waves from ***two black holes*** (about 36 and 29 times the mass of the Sun) merging about ***1.3 billion light-years*** from Earth. This confirmed another of Einstein's predictions: space and time can ***ripple*** like the surface of water.

The discovery led to the ***2017 Nobel Prize in Physics***. Space that appears empty and silent is in fact a living "fabric" — it can be curved, stretched and set vibrating.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Abbott, B.P. et al. (LIGO Scientific Collaboration and Virgo Collaboration) (2016). Observation of gravitational waves from a binary black hole merger. Physical Review Letters, 116(6), 061102. https://doi.org/10.1103/PhysRevLett.116.061102

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE FIRST IMAGE OF A BLACK HOLE'S SHADOW

In 2019, the ***Event Horizon Telescope*** collaboration — a network of radio telescopes around the world — produced ***the first image of the shadow of a black hole*** at the centre of the galaxy M87, about 55 million light-years from Earth. Its mass is about ***6.5 billion times the mass of the Sun***.

A black hole is a place where gravity is so strong that ***not even light can escape***. It shows how tremendous this unseen force is — the same force, at far smaller strength, that holds us to the surface of the Earth.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration (2019). First M87 Event Horizon Telescope results. I. The shadow of the supermassive black hole. The Astrophysical Journal Letters, 875(1), L1. https://doi.org/10.3847/2041-8213/ab0ec7

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ORBITS HELD WITH MEASURE

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: IS THE SOLAR SYSTEM STABLE FOREVER?

Laskar and Gastineau (2009) ran ***2,501 computer simulations*** of the motion of the planets over the next 5 billion years. In about ***99% of the simulations***, the planetary orbits remained stable. But in about ***1%***, Mercury's orbit became so elongated that it could lead to a collision with Venus or the Sun — and in a small number of cases, with the Earth.

This shows that the stability of the Solar System ***is not absolutely "guaranteed"*** by the laws of physics; it is highly stable, but depends on delicate conditions. A Muslim reads this together with Allah's words: ***"Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease"*** (35:41).

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Laskar, J. & Gastineau, M. (2009). Existence of collisional trajectories of Mercury, Mars and Venus with the Earth. Nature, 459(7248), 817–819. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature08096

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE MOON SLOWLY MOVING AWAY

Apollo astronauts left ***light reflectors*** on the surface of the Moon. By firing lasers from Earth and measuring the time of their return, scientists found that the Moon is ***moving away from the Earth by about 3.8 cm per year*** — the result of tidal interaction between the Earth and the Moon (Dickey et al., 1994).

This change is too small to notice within a human lifetime, but it reminds us that the heavenly system is ***always in motion***, and every motion happens with precise measure. ***"And the moon — We have determined for it phases"*** (36:39).

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Dickey, J.O. et al. (1994). Lunar laser ranging: a continuing legacy of the Apollo program. Science, 265(5171), 482–490. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.265.5171.482

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DARK MATTER: THE UNSEEN MASS

If gravity is the "string", then mass is the "hand" that holds it. Astronomers have found that ***visible mass*** — stars, gas and dust — ***is not enough*** to hold galaxies and clusters of galaxies together. There must be another mass that ***emits no light***. This is what is called ***dark matter***.

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: ZWICKY AND THE COMA CLUSTER (1933)

In 1933, the astronomer Fritz Zwicky measured the speeds of galaxies in ***the Coma cluster***. He found that the galaxies were moving ***too fast*** — they should have flown apart if only the visible mass held them. Zwicky proposed the existence of ***"dunkle Materie"*** (dark matter), far more abundant than the luminous matter.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Zwicky, F. (1933). Die Rotverschiebung von extragalaktischen Nebeln. Helvetica Physica Acta, 6, 110–127. https://ui.adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/1933AcHPh...6..110Z

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: RUBIN: STARS THAT ORBIT TOO FAST

In 1980, ***Vera Rubin***, Kent Ford and Norbert Thonnard measured the rotation speeds of stars and gas in ***21 spiral galaxies***. If only the visible mass existed, stars at the edges of galaxies should orbit ***more slowly*** — just as the outer planets orbit more slowly than Mercury.

Instead, they found that the rotation speeds ***stay flat*** all the way to the edges of the galaxies (Figure 1a). This means every galaxy is wrapped in ***a "halo" of unseen mass*** — far larger than its luminous part.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Rubin, V.C., Ford, W.K. Jr. & Thonnard, N. (1980). Rotational properties of 21 Sc galaxies with a large range of luminosities and radii. The Astrophysical Journal, 238, 471–487. https://doi.org/10.1086/158003

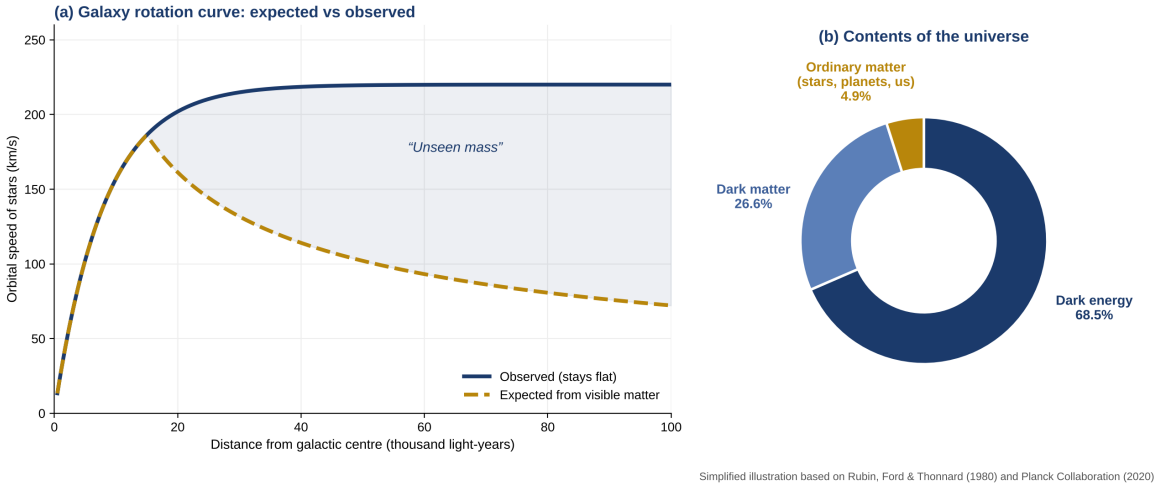


Figure 1: (a) Galaxy rotation curve — the observed speed of stars stays flat, while the visible mass predicts falling speeds; this gap shows the presence of unseen mass (simplified illustration based on Rubin and colleagues, 1980). (b) The contents of the universe according to the Planck satellite (2020): ordinary matter is only about 5%.

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE BULLET CLUSTER: DIRECT EVIDENCE OF DARK MATTER

Clowe and colleagues (2006) studied ***the Bullet Cluster*** (1E 0657-558) — two clusters of galaxies that collided. The hot gas (the most abundant ordinary matter) lagged behind in the middle because of the collision, but ***the centre of mass*** — measured through the bending of light from galaxies behind it — ***moved straight on*** with the galaxies.

This separation between gas and mass is regarded as ***direct empirical proof*** that most of the mass in the cluster is unseen matter. Even so, ***the true nature of dark matter particles is still unknown*** — it remains one of the greatest mysteries in physics.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

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THE EXPANDING UNIVERSE

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: HUBBLE AND THE RECEDING GALAXIES

In 1929, ***Edwin Hubble*** published the relationship between a galaxy's distance and the speed at which it moves away from us: ***the farther a galaxy, the faster it recedes*** (Figure 2). Georges Lemaître had proposed a similar idea in 1927. This discovery showed that ***space itself is expanding*** — galaxies are not "flying" through space; the space between them is stretching.

If the universe is expanding, then in the past it was smaller and denser. This is the basis of ***the Big Bang theory*** — discussed in the eBook "The Big Bang in the Qur'an".

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Hubble, E. (1929). A relation between distance and radial velocity among extra-galactic nebulae. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 15(3), 168–173. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.15.3.168

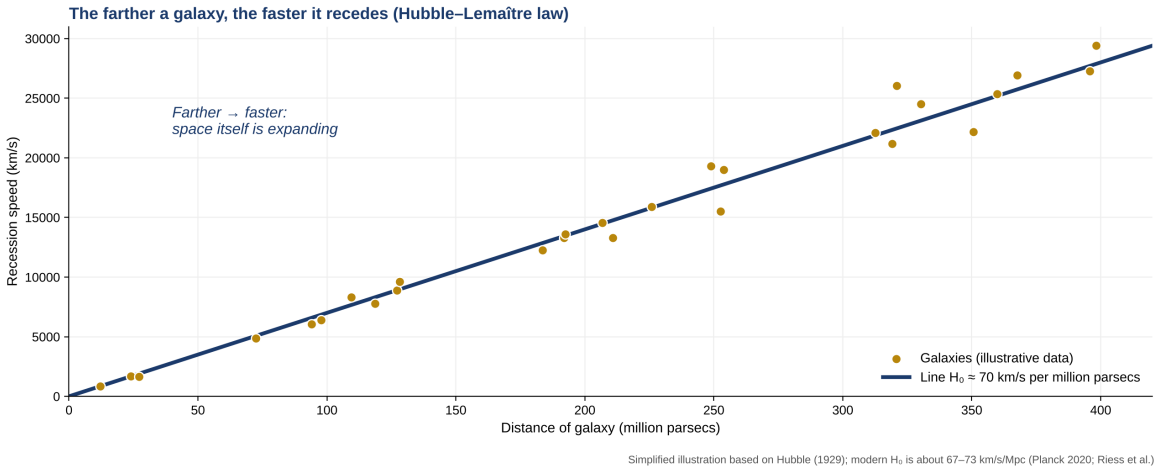


Figure 2: The Hubble–Lemaître law — the farther a galaxy, the faster it moves away from us, a sign that space is expanding (illustrative data; simplified illustration based on Hubble, 1929).

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: AN EVER-FASTER EXPANSION: DARK ENERGY

In 1998 and 1999, two research teams — led by ***Adam Riess*** and ***Saul Perlmutter*** — studied distant type Ia supernovae. They expected the expansion of the universe to be ***slowing down*** because of gravity's pull. Instead, they found that the expansion is ***speeding up***.

The cause of this acceleration is called ***dark energy*** — making up about ***68%*** of the contents of the universe. The discovery led to the ***2011 Nobel Prize in Physics***. The nature of dark energy is also ***not yet understood***.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Riess, A.G. et al. (1998). Observational evidence from supernovae for an accelerating universe and a cosmological constant. The Astronomical Journal, 116(3), 1009–1038. https://doi.org/10.1086/300499

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: A BABY PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSE: THE PLANCK SATELLITE

The European Space Agency's ***Planck*** satellite mapped ***the cosmic microwave background*** — the oldest light in the universe. Its final analysis (Planck Collaboration, 2020) estimates the age of the universe at ***13.8 billion years***, with contents of: ***ordinary matter about 4.9%***, ***dark matter about 26.6%*** and ***dark energy about 68.5%*** (Figure 1b).

This means ***more than 95% of the contents of the universe is unseen*** and its nature not yet understood. All the stars, planets, oceans and human beings are only a small part of the "construction" of the heavens.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

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SCIENTIFIC FINDING: NEW HINTS: IS DARK ENERGY CHANGING?

In 2025, the ***DESI*** collaboration (Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument) published a three-dimensional map of millions of galaxies. When combined with other data, there are ***early hints*** that dark energy may ***not be constant*** but may ***change over time*** — perhaps weakening.

The researchers stress that this is ***not yet conclusive***. It shows that human knowledge of these "unseen forces" is still developing — and we must be careful not to tie verses of Al-Qur'an to theories that are still changing.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

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THE COSMIC WEB: AN ORDERED CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEAVENS

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: THE MILLENNIUM SIMULATION AND THE UNIVERSE'S "SPIDER WEB"

Springel and colleagues (2005) ran ***the Millennium Simulation*** using more than ***10 billion particles*** to reproduce the formation of structure in the universe. The result: galaxies are not scattered randomly, but arranged in ***a cosmic web*** — long filaments joined at knots, surrounding vast empty voids.

This web is shaped mainly by ***the gravity of dark matter***. Real observations by large-scale galaxy surveys show the same pattern. The sky is not chaos; it is ***an ordered construction***.

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Springel, V. et al. (2005). Simulations of the formation, evolution and clustering of galaxies and quasars. Nature, 435(7042), 629–636. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature03597

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: LANIAKEA: "IMMEASURABLE HEAVEN"

Tully and colleagues (2014) mapped the motions of thousands of galaxies and defined a ***supercluster*** that is home to our Milky Way. They named it ***Laniakea*** — a Hawaiian word meaning ***"immeasurable heaven"***. Laniakea contains about ***100,000 galaxies*** and spans about ***520 million light-years***.

The Milky Way is just a small dot within Laniakea, and Laniakea is just a small part of the cosmic web. ***"Are you a more difficult creation or is the heaven? Allah constructed it"*** (79:27).

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Tully, R.B., Courtois, H., Hoffman, Y. & Pomarède, D. (2014). The Laniakea supercluster of galaxies. Nature, 513(7516), 71–73. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13674

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THE SKY DISAPPEARING FROM VIEW

SCIENTIFIC FINDING: A THIRD OF HUMANITY NO LONGER SEES THE MILKY WAY

Falchi and colleagues (2016) published ***a world atlas of light pollution***. They found that ***more than one third of humanity*** can no longer see the Milky Way galaxy from where they live — including about ***60% of Europeans*** and nearly ***80% of North Americans***.

Our generation may be the first in human history that ***rarely looks up at the night sky***. Yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ***often raised his head towards the sky*** (Muslim 2531) and recited the verses of creation at the end of the night (Bukhari 4569).

RESEARCH REFERENCE:

Falchi, F. et al. (2016). The new world atlas of artificial night sky brightness. Science Advances, 2(6), e1600377. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.1600377

THE STORY OF A STAR AND AN INVISIBLE STRING

Imagine a star at the edge of the Milky Way galaxy. It orbits the galactic centre at about ***220 kilometres per second*** — one full orbit takes more than ***200 million years***. At that speed, it should have escaped into outer space. But it has not.

Something holds it. Not a pillar, not a string, not anything a telescope can see. Scientists call it ***dark matter*** — and admit they do not yet know what it really is. They only know that ***it is there***, because its effects can be seen.

A Muslim reads this story and remembers Allah's words: ***"without pillars that you [can] see"***. Whether we follow the opinion that the heavens have ***no pillars*** or ***pillars that are unseen***, both lead us to one conclusion: what holds the heavens is ***Allah***, through causes He has created — some of which we understand, and most of which ***remain hidden***.

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BETWEEN HARMONY AND CAUTION

The table below summarises an assessment of each commonly heard claim about the sky, Al-Qur'an and science.

POPULAR CLAIMS AND THEIR ASSESSMENT

COMMONLY HEARD CLAIM	ASSESSMENT
"The 'pillars you cannot see' in 13:2 are gravity."	***Caution needed.*** This fits only ***one*** of the two scholarly opinions (Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid). Ibn Kathir himself preferred the opinion that the heavens are ***without pillars***. Gravity, dark matter and dark energy are ***a beautiful harmony for reflection***, not a definitive interpretation of the verse.
"Verse 51:47 (*lamūsi'ūn*) proves that the universe is expanding."	***An interesting harmony, not proof.*** Classical scholars understood it as "We possess vast power" or "We expanded the heaven". Linguistically the word allows the meaning "expanding", but the verse does not mention the rate or mechanism of expansion.
"Verse 21:30 (*ratq* and *fatq*) describes the Big Bang."	***A general harmony.*** Classical scholars gave several interpretations, including the heavens and the earth being joined and then separated. The scientific details of the Big Bang are not mentioned in the verse.
"The *dukhān* in 41:11 is a primordial gas nebula."	***A reflection only.*** Ibn Kathir explained it as vapour from water. The resemblance to cosmic gas is interesting, but cannot be confirmed.
"The seven heavens are the seven layers of the atmosphere."	***Not accurate.*** The atmosphere is usually divided into five main layers, and the number depends on the classification used. The seven heavens in the Hadith of the Isra' and Mi'raj have gates and inhabitants — they are matters of the ***unseen***.
"Dark matter is angels or jinn."	***Baseless.*** Angels and jinn are unseen beings known through revelation; dark matter is a physics concept detected through gravity. Mixing the two harms both religion and science.
"The Hadith of the sun prostrating beneath the Throne contradicts astronomy."	***No contradiction.*** The Throne encompasses the whole universe; the sun is always beneath it. Its prostration is a submission whose reality Allah knows (22:18). The Hadith concerns the unseen, not an astronomical description.
"Science has proven how the heavens will end."	***Not yet.*** The final fate of the universe depends on the nature of dark energy, which is not yet understood (DESI, 2025). The Hour and the folding of the heavens (21:104) are certain matters of the unseen, known through revelation.

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COMMONLY HEARD CLAIM	ASSESSMENT
"The sky as a 'protected ceiling' (21:32) is the atmosphere."	***Discussed in the next eBook***, "The Carefully Guarded Roof", with the same caution.

THREE QUESTIONS BEFORE ACCEPTING A SCIENTIFIC MIRACLE CLAIM

First: What do the scholars of tafsir say? If the claimed meaning contradicts all the interpretations of respected scholars, be careful.

Second: Is the scientific fact well established? Theories that are still changing — such as the nature of dark energy — are not suitable as "proof" of a miracle.

Third: Is the link clear or forced? Honest harmony enriches reflection; forced links lower the standing of Al-Qur'an when scientific theories change.

REFLECTION — WHY THIS CAUTION MATTERS

Al-Qur'an is a book of guidance, not a cosmology textbook. The purpose of the verses on the heavens without pillars is ***to lead people to the Oneness of Allah***: only Allah creates, restrains and preserves. When science discovers unseen forces, it adds to our wonder — but our faith does not depend on theories that may change tomorrow. The heavens remain standing, with or without our understanding of how.

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LOOKING AT THE SKY: PRACTICES AND ETIQUETTE

Knowledge about the sky is not just information; it should ***change the way we live***. Here are some practices based on the sunnah and on the reflections in this eBook.

PRACTICE	EVIDENCE AND REFLECTION
Looking up at the sky at night	The Messenger of Allah ﷺ often raised his head towards the sky (Muslim 2531) and looked at the sky at the end of the night (Bukhari 4569).
Reciting Ali 'Imran 3:190–191 on waking at night	The sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ before the night prayer (Bukhari 4569) — combining remembrance and reflection.
Supplicating in the last third of the night	The time when Allah descends to the lowest heaven and answers supplications (Bukhari 1145).
Taking the family to see the stars	Take children to a dark place; show them the moon, the planets and the Milky Way. Many children today have never seen it (Falchi et al., 2016).
Reducing unnecessary lighting at night	Light pollution prevents people from seeing the signs of Allah in the sky.
Avoiding belief in astrology	The stars are submissive creations, not determiners of fate. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ rebuked those who attributed rain to the stars (Bukhari 846).
Establishing justice in daily affairs	The heaven was raised with a balance, so do not transgress within the balance (55:7–9).

A SUPPLICATION WHEN REFLECTING ON THE SKY

Among the supplications that Al-Qur'an teaches to those of understanding after reflecting on the creation of the heavens and the earth is: ***"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire"*** (3:191). This supplication is short, easy to memorise, and can be taught to children when they first begin asking about the stars.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

First: Never ***look directly at the Sun***, whether with the naked eye, binoculars or an ordinary telescope, as it can permanently damage the eyes. Use a proper solar filter when watching an eclipse.

Second: When sharing "facts" about the sky and Al-Qur'an on social media, ***check the source***. Many viral claims have no basis in either tafsir or science.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: Only Allah restrains the heavens. Whether without pillars or with unseen pillars, the heavens stand by Allah's command (13:2; 22:65; 30:25).

Second: Creation requires preservation. Allah is al-Qayyūm; the universe depends on Him at every moment (35:41; 2:255).

Third: The sky teaches balance. The heaven was raised with a balance, so people must establish justice (55:7–9).

Fourth: Remembrance and reflection go hand in hand. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ looked at the sky and recited 3:190 before the night prayer (Bukhari 4569).

Fifth: Human knowledge is limited. More than 95% of the contents of the universe is not yet understood (Planck, 2020). Humility is the attitude of the true scholar.

Sixth: The universe is created, not a god. The heavens will be folded like a sheet (21:104; Bukhari 4812).

Seventh: Be honest in I'jaz Ilmi. Distinguish solid harmony from forced interpretation.

SUMMARY: VERSES, MESSAGES AND SCIENTIFIC REFLECTIONS

THE VERSE AND ITS MESSAGE	REFLECTION FROM MODERN SCIENCE
13:2; 31:10 — The heavens raised without pillars that you see.	Gravity, dark matter and dark energy — forces that are unseen yet whose effects are clear.
22:65 — The sky restrained from falling upon the earth.	The moon and planets "fall" while moving sideways — forming stable orbits.
35:41 — The heavens and earth held lest they cease.	The Solar System is highly stable but depends on delicate conditions (Laskar & Gastineau, 2009).
51:47 — The heaven constructed with strength; "We are [its] expander".	The universe is expanding (Hubble, 1929) and its expansion is accelerating (Riess, 1998).
67:3–4 — No inconsistency in the creation of the heavens.	Galaxies are arranged in an ordered cosmic web (Springel, 2005).
79:27–28 — The heaven constructed, raised and proportioned.	The Laniakea supercluster: 100,000 galaxies across 520 million light-years (Tully, 2014).
21:104; 39:67 — The heavens will be folded.	Science does not yet know the final fate of the universe; the Hour is a matter of the unseen.

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

- ***Tonight:*** Step outside for a moment, look up at the sky and recite Ali 'Imran 3:190–191.

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- ***This week:*** Memorise the supplication "Rabbanā mā khalaqta hādhā bātilā…" with your family.
- ***This month:*** Take your children to a dark place to see the stars and the Milky Way.
- ***Every day:*** Establish justice in weighing and in your dealings, as the heaven was raised with a balance.
- ***Every time you share:*** Check the source before spreading claims about Al-Qur'an and science.

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CONCLUSION

Al-Qur'an invites us to look up at the sky and ask: ***who holds it up without pillars?*** The scholars understood the verse in two ways — the heavens without pillars, or with pillars that are unseen — and both point to the power of Allah, who restrains the sky by His mercy. Modern science, for its part, has discovered that the heavens are bound by unseen forces: gravity that curves space, dark matter that holds galaxies, and dark energy that expands the universe. Yet the more we discover, the clearer it becomes ***how little we know***.

So whenever we see the moon that does not fall and the stars that do not scatter, let us remember His words: ***"Indeed, Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease"*** (35:41) — and let us pray like those of understanding: ***"Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly."***

In sha' Allah, the series Exploring Al-Qur'an & Science will continue with the title ***"The Carefully Guarded Roof"*** — on the sky as a protected ceiling (21:32) — using the same method: Al-Qur'an, Hadith and science, with honesty and caution.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	BRIEF MEANING
'Amad	Pillars that support a structure; mentioned in 13:2 and 31:10.
Al-Mīzān	The balance or scale; in 55:7 it means justice.
Ṭibāq	In layers or tiers; a description of the seven heavens (67:3).
Gravity	The force of attraction between masses; according to Einstein, the curvature of space and time.
Orbit	The path of a body circling another body because of gravity.
Gravitational waves	Ripples in space and time caused by great events such as merging black holes.
Black hole	A region where gravity is so strong that not even light can escape.
Dark matter	Mass that emits no light but is detected through its gravitational effects.
Dark energy	The not-yet-understood cause of the accelerating expansion of the universe.
Hubble–Lemaître law	The relationship that more distant galaxies recede from us faster.
Cosmic microwave background	The oldest light in the universe, from about 380,000 years after the Big Bang.
Cosmic web	The arrangement of galaxies in filaments and knots, surrounding vast empty voids.
Light pollution	Excessive artificial light that blocks the view of the night sky.
Mu'allaq	A Hadith cited by an author without mentioning part or all of the chain at its beginning.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

• The scholars differ on whether the heavens are "without pillars" or "with unseen pillars". Why do both opinions lead to the same conclusion in belief?

• Why is the verse about the raised heaven (55:7) immediately followed by the command to be just in weighing (55:8–9)? What is the lesson for our work and business?

• More than 95% of the contents of the universe is not yet understood by science. How should this fact shape a Muslim's attitude towards knowledge?

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• How do we distinguish between harmony of a verse with science and a forced interpretation? Give one example from this eBook.

• When did you last look up at the night sky and reflect? What prevents us from doing so more often?

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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 him in rank."

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CHAIN: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship, Chapter: The Encouragement of Forgiveness and Humility, 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: a continuing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

CHAIN: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurairah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills, Chapter: 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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