

## The shape and orbit of the earth (Part 2)

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Question #10: “What do you say about the orbiting of the earth?”

Shaykh al-Albānī answers:

“We in fact don’t doubt that the matter of the orbiting of the earth is an indisputable scientific fact. At the same time, we believe that it is not the purpose of the Islamic legislation in general and the Qur’ān specifically to talk about astronomy and its details. Rather, this is included in the generality of (the Prophet’s) saying (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which Muslim brought out in his Sahīh from the narration of Anas bin Mālik (radi Allāhu ‘anhu) about the story of pollinating the date palm trees,[1] when he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to them: ‘It was only an opinion of mine, so if I order you to do something concerning your religious affair, then do it as much as you are able, and whatever I order you to do concerning your worldly affairs, then you are more knowledgeable about them.’[2] So these issues were not obligatory for the Messenger (of Allāh) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to talk about, and if he did talk (about them) in his hadīth or if our Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, did so in His Book, then it is only for (showing) a sign or miracle or the like. Thus, we can say that there isn’t anything in the Book nor in the Sunnah that would contradict this scientific fact that is well-known today, which states that the earth is round and that it runs in an orbit by the Power of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, in this vast space. Rather, it is possible for the Muslim to find that which suggests, if not clearly states, that the earth is like the sun and the moon because they are all in this space, as He, the Mighty and Majestic, says: {they all float, each in an orbit}; and (this is

so) especially if we remember that before this divine statement with the word ‘all,’ (this word) means the three celestial bodies due to the fact that He began with the earth. So He said: {And a sign for them is the dead earth. We give it life, and We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof},[3] then He said: {And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing / And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk / It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit}.[4] The word ‘all’ includes the first āyah: the earth, then the sun, then the moon. Then He, the Most High, says: {They all float, each in an orbit}. This is what is apparent from the context of these āyāt, which are no doubt amazing āyāt about the dominion of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic. All of this is while knowing that the scholars of tafsīr[5] attributed the term ‘all’ to the closest thing mentioned, which is the sun and the moon. However, there isn’t anything that would ever prevent us from extending the meaning of ‘all’ to include the earth which was mentioned before the sun and the moon.”

[1] Sahīh Muslim #2363; the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw people pollinating date palm trees and expressed that it may be good if they did not do so, but after they left doing it, there was a negative impact on date production

[2] the Shaykh also mentioned some extra wordings; refer to Sahīh Muslim #2361, #2362 and Sahīh ibn Mājah #2

[3] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36:33

[4] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36:38-40

[5] explanation of the Qur’ān