

The Miracles of Muhammad

Apart from the greatest miracle given to him, the Quran, Prophet Muhammad performed many physical miracles witnessed by his contemporaries numbering in hundreds, and in some cases thousands.^[1] The miracle reports have reached us by a reliable and strong method of transmission unmatched in world history. It is as if the miracles were performed in front of our eyes. The meticulous method of transmission is what convinces us that Muhammad indeed performed these great miracles with divine aid and, thus, we can believe him when he said, '*I am God's Messenger.*'

Muhammad's great miracles were witnessed by thousands of believers and skeptics, following which verses of the Quran were revealed mentioning the supernatural events. The Quran made some miracles eternal by etching them in the conscious of the believers. The ancient detractors would simply remain silent when these verses were recited. Had these miracles not taken place, they would have seized the moment to scandalize it and belie Muhammad. But rather, the opposite took place. The believers grew more certain of the truth of Muhammad and the Quran. The fact that the faithful grew stronger in their faith and the silence of the unbelievers and not denying their occurrence is acknowledgment from both that the miracles took place exactly as the Quran describes.

In this section we will discuss some of the physical miracles performed by Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

Miracles are from Divine Power

A miracle is one of the factors which further strengthens the claim of a prophet of God. (full stop needed) Miracles should not be the soul essence of belief, as supernatural events can also take place by the use of magic and devils. The truth of prophethood is clear and evident in the actual message brought, as God has instilled a capability, although limited, in humans to recognize the truth as it is, specifically in the matter of monotheism. But in order to further strengthen the argument of Prophethood, God performed miracles at the hands of His Prophets from Moses, Jesus to Muhammad. For this reason, God did not produce miracles upon the demand of the Meccans, but the Wise God gave Muhammad the miracles He desired at the time He choose:

“And they say, ‘We will not believe you until you break open for us from the ground a spring, or [until] you have a garden of date-palms and grapes and make rivers gush forth within them in force [and abundance] or you make the heaven fall upon us in fragments as you have claimed or you bring God

and the angels before [us] or you have a house of ornament [gold] or you ascend into the sky. And [even then], we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book we may read.’ ‘Say, Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a human messenger?’” (Quran 17:90-93)

The answer was:

“And nothing has prevented Us from sending [this message, like the earlier ones,] with miraculous signs [in its wake], save [Our knowledge] that the people of olden times [only too often] gave the lie to them: thus, We provided for [the tribe of] Thamud the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And never did We send those signs for any other purpose than to convey a warning.” (Quran 17:59)

When demanded ostensibly, God in His wisdom knew they would not believe, so He refused to show them miracles:

“Now they swear by God with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle were shown to them, they would indeed believe in this [divine writ]. Say: ‘Miracles are in the power of God alone.’ ‘And for all you know, even if one should be shown to them, they would not believe so long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned [away from the truth], even as they did not believe in it in the first instance: and [so] We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro.’” (Quran 6:109-110)

We gather here some of the major physical miracles performed by Prophet Muhammad.

Footnotes:

[1] The miracles add up to over a thousand. See ‘*Muqaddima Sharh’ Saheeh Muslim*’ by *al-Nawawi* and ‘*al-Madkhal*’ by *al-Baihaqi*.

Splitting of the Moon

One of the times when God performed miracles at the hand of the Prophet was when the Meccans demanded to see a miracle from Muhammad to show his

truthfulness. God split the moon in two separate halves and then re-joined them. The Quran recorded the event:

**“The Last Hour draws near, and the moon is split asunder!”
(Quran 54:1)**

Prophet Muhammad would recite these verses of the Quran in large congregations of the weekly Friday prayer and the bi-annual Eed prayers.^[1] Had the event never occurred, Muslims themselves would have doubted their religion and many would have left it! The Meccans would have said, ‘Hey, your prophet is a liar, the moon never split, and we never saw it split!’ Instead, the believers grew stronger in their faith and the only explanation the Meccans could come up with was, ‘passing magic!’

“The Last Hour draws near, and the moon is split asunder! And if they see a sign (miracle), they turn away and say, ‘Passing magic!’- for they are bent on giving it the lie, being always wont to follow their own desires.” (Quran 54:1-3)

The splitting of the moon is confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through an unbroken chain of reliable scholars so many that it is impossible that it could be false (*hadith mutawatir*).^[2]

A skeptic might ask, do we have any independent historical evidence to suggest the moon was ever split? After all, people around the world should have seen this marvelous event and recorded it.

The answer to this question is twofold.

First, people around the world could not have seen it as it would have been daytime, late night, or early morning in many parts of the world. The following table will give the reader some idea of corresponding world times to 9:00 pm Mecca time:

Country	Time
Mecca	9:00 pm
India	11:30 pm
Perth	2:00 am
Reykjavik	6:00 pm
Washington D.C.	2:00 pm
Rio de Janeiro	3:00 pm

Tokyo	3:00 am
Beijing	2:00 am

Also, it is not likely that a large number of people in lands close by would be observing the moon at the exact same time. They had no reason to. Even if some one did, it does not necessarily mean people believed him and kept a written record of it, especially when many civilizations at that time did not preserve their own history in writing.

Second, we actually have an independent, and quite amazing, historical corroboration of the event from an Indian king of that time.

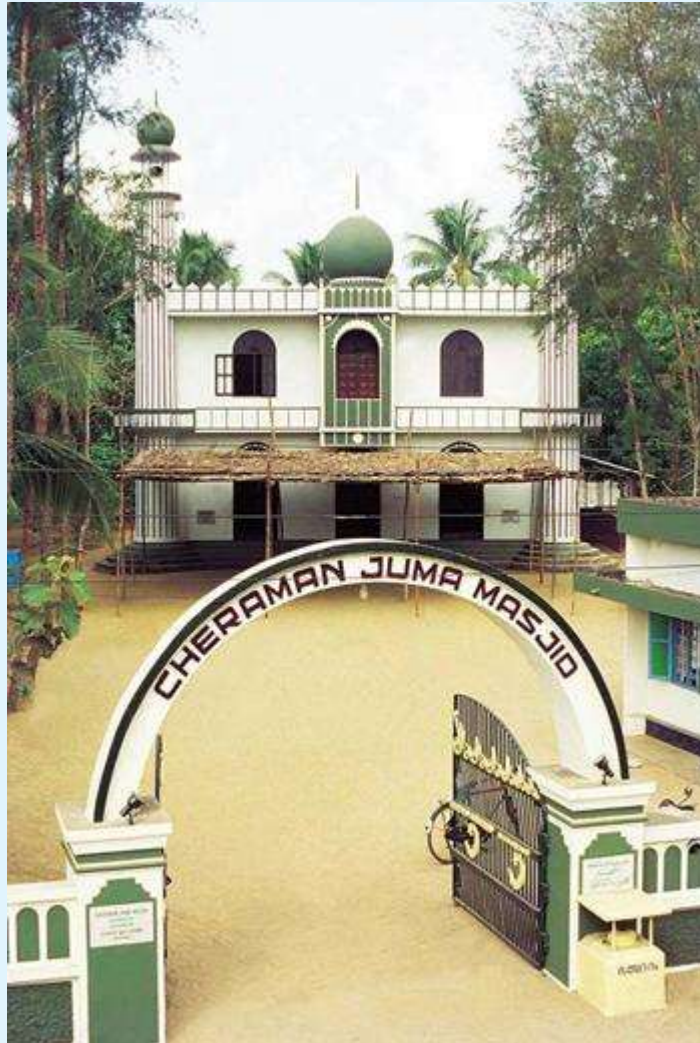
Kerala is a state of India. The state stretches for 360 miles (580 kilometers) along the Malabar Coast on the southwestern side of the Indian peninsula.^[3] King Chakrawati Farmas of Malabar was a Chera king, Cheraman perumal of Kodungallure. He is recorded to have seen the moon split. The incident is documented in a manuscript kept at the India Office Library, London, reference number: Arabic, 2807, 152-173.^[4] A group of Muslim merchant's passing by Malabar on their way to China spoke to the king about how God had supported the Arabian prophet with the miracle of splitting of the moon. The shocked king said he had seen it with his own eyes as well, deputized his son, and left for Arabia to meet the Prophet in person. The Malabari king met the Prophet, bore the two testimonies of faith, learned the basics of faith, but passed away on his way back and was buried in the port city of Zafar, Yemen.^[5]

It is said that the contingent was led by a Muslim, Malik ibn Dinar, and continued to Kodungallure, the Chera capital, and built the first, and India's oldest, mosque in the area in 629 CE which exists today.



A pre-renovation picture of the Cheraman Juma Masjid, India's oldest mosque dating back to 629 CE. Image courtesy of www.islamicvoice.com.

The news of his accepting Islam reached Kerala where people accepted Islam. The people of Lakshadweep and the Moplas (Mapillais) from the Calicut province of Kerala are converts from those days.



Cheraman Juma Masjid, named after India's first Muslim convert, Cheraman perumal Chakrawati Farmas, after renovation. Image courtesy of www.indianholiday.com.

The Indian sighting and the meeting of the Indian king with Prophet Muhammad is also reported by Muslim sources. The famous Muslim historian, Ibn Kathir, mentions the splitting of the moon was reported in parts of India.^[6] Also, the books of hadith have documented the arrival of the Indian king

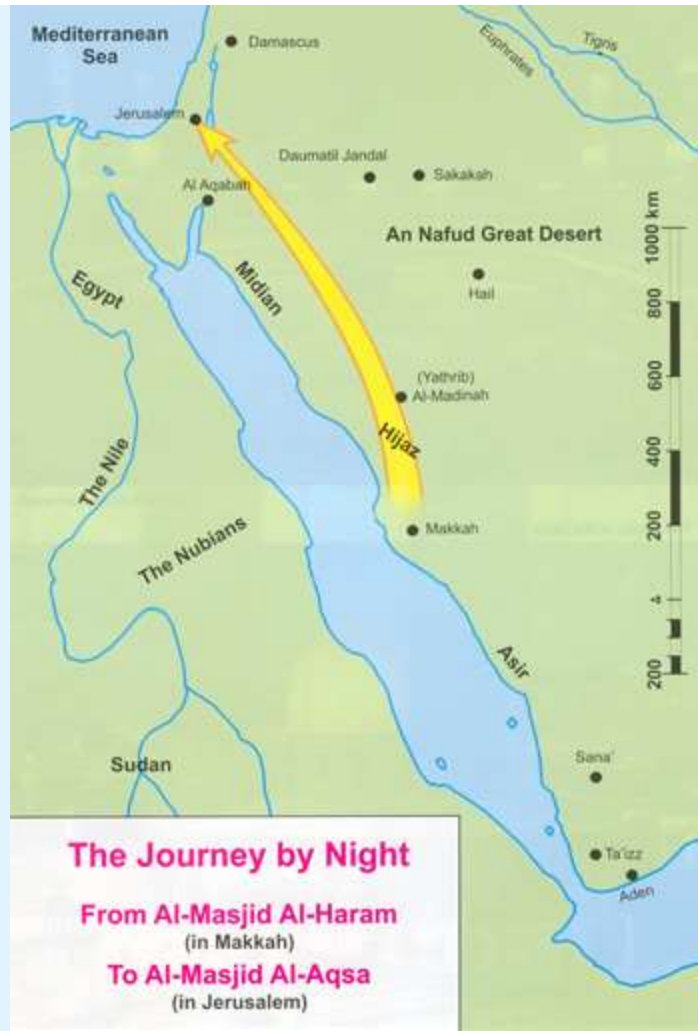
and his meeting the Prophet. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, a companion of Prophet Muhammad, states:

“The Indian king gifted the Prophet with a jar of ginger. The companions ate it piece by piece. I took a bite as well.”^[7]

The king was thus considered a ‘companion’ – a term used for a person who met the Prophet and died as a Muslim – his name registered in the mega-compendiums chronicling the Prophet’s companions.^[8]

Night Journey and Ascent to Heaven

A few months before the migration from Mecca to Medina, God took Muhammad in one night from the Grand Mosque in Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, a month’s journey of 1230 Km for a caravan. From Jerusalem, he ascended to the heavens, passing the boundaries of the physical universe to be in divine presence, meet God, and witness the Great Signs (*al-Ayat ul-Kubra*). His truth became apparent in two ways. First, ‘the Prophet described the caravans he had overtaken on the way home and said where they were and about when they might be expected to arrive in Mecca; and each arrived as predicted, and the details were as he had described.’^[9] Second, he was never known to have been to Jerusalem, yet he described al-Aqsa Mosque to skeptics like an eye-witness.



The mystical journey is mentioned in the Quran:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant [Prophet Muhammad] by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.” (Quran 17:1)

“So will you dispute with him over what he saw? And he certainly saw him in another descent at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary – near it is the Garden of Refuge (Paradise) – when there covered the Lote Tree that which covered (it). The sight (of the Prophet) did not swerve, nor did it transgress (its limit). He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.” (Quran 53:12-18)

The event is also confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through the ages with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).^[10]



Entrance of Al-Aqsa Mosque from where Muhammad ascended the heavens. Picture courtesy of Thekra A. Sabri.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim*.

[2] See '*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,' by al-Kattani p. 215.

[3] "Kerala." Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9111226>)

[4] It is quoted in the book "Muhammad Rasulullah," by Muhammad Hamidullah: "There is a very old tradition in Malabar, South-West Coast of India, that Chakrawati Farmas, one of their kings, had observed the splitting of the moon, the celebrated miracle of the Holy Prophet at Mecca, and learning on inquiry that there was a prediction of the coming of a Messenger of God from Arabia, he appointed his son as regent and set out to meet him. He embraced Islam at the hand of the Prophet, and when returning home, at the direction of the Prophet, died at the port of Zafar, Yemen, where the tomb of the "Indian king" was piously visited for many centuries."

[5] 'Zafar: biblical Sephar, classical Sapphar, or Sapphar ancient Arabian site located southwest of Yarim in southern Yemen. It was the capital of the Himyarites, a tribe that ruled much of

southern Arabia from about 115 BC to about AD 525. Up until the Persian conquest (c. AD 575), Zafar was one of the most important and celebrated towns in southern Arabia—a fact attested to not only by Arab geographers and historians but also by Greek and Roman authors. After the extinction of the Himyar kingdom and the rise of Islam, Zafar gradually fell into decay.’ “Zafar.” Encyclopædia Britannica from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9078191>)

[6] ‘*Al-Bidaya wal-Nihaya*,’ by Ibn Kathir, vol 3, p. 130.

[7] Reported by Hakim in ‘*Mustadrik*’ vol 4, p. 150. *Hakim* comments, ‘I have not memorized any other report stating the Prophet ate ginger.’

[8] ‘*Al-Isaba*’ by Ibn Hajr, vol 3. p. 279 and ‘*Lisan ul-Mizan*’ by Imam al-Dhahabi, vol. 3 p. 10 under the name ‘Sarbanak,’ the name with which the Arabs knew him.

[9] ‘Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources’ by Martin Lings, p. 103.

[10] Forty five companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on his Night Journey and the Heavenly Ascent. See the works of hadith masters: ‘*Azhar al-Mutanathira fi al-Ahadith al-Mutawatira*’ by al-Suyuti p. 263 and ‘*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,’ by al-Kattani p. 207.

There are many other miracles which the Prophet performed related in the Sunnah, or conglomeration of the sayings, deeds, approvals, and descriptions of the Prophet.

The Tree Trunk

In Medina Muhammad used to deliver sermons leaning on a tree stump. When the number of worshippers increased, someone suggested a pulpit be built so he can use it to deliver the sermon. When the pulpit was built, he abandoned the tree trunk. Abdullah ibn Umar, one of the companions, gave an eye-witness testimony of what happened. The trunk was heard weeping, the Prophet of mercy went towards it and comforted it with his hand.[1]

The event is also confirmed through eye-witness testimony transmitted through the ages with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).[2]

The Flowing of Water

On more than one occasion when people were in dire need of water, the blessing of the Muhammad saved them. In the sixth year after the he migrated from Mecca to Medina, Muhammad went to Mecca for pilgrimage. In the long journey through the desert, people ran out of all water, only the Prophet was left with a vessel with which he performed ablution for prayers. He put his hand in the vessel, water began flowing from between his fingers. Jabir ibn Abdullah, who witnessed the miracle, says of the fifteen hundred men, ‘We drank it and made ablution.’[3] This miracle has been transmitted with an unbroken chain of reliable scholars (*hadith mutawatir*).[4]

The sprouting of water from human fingers is similar to the Moses' miracle of producing water from a rock.

Blessing of Food

On more than one occasion, the Prophet blessed food by either praying or touching it so all present could get their fill. This happened at times when food and water shortage afflicted Muslims.^[5] These miracles took place in the presence of a large number of people and is, thus, not possible to deny.

Healing the Sick

Abdullah ibn Ateek broke his leg and Muhammad healed it by wiping his hand over it. Abdullah said it was as if nothing had happened to it! The person who witnessed the miracle was another companion, Bara' ibn Azib (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

During the expedition of Khyber, Muhammad healed the painful eyes of Ali ibn Abi Talib in front of a whole army. Ali, many years later, became the fourth caliph of Muslims.^[6]

Exorcising Devils

Muhammad exorcised the devil out of a boy brought by his mother for healing to him by saying, '*Come out! I am Muhammad, the Messenger of God!*' The woman said, 'By the One who sent you with the truth, we have never seen anything wrong with him since.'^[7]

Prayers Answered

(1) The mother of Abu Hurayra, a close companion of Muhammad, used to speak ill of Islam and its prophet. One day, Abu Hurayra came weeping to Muhammad and asked him to pray for his mother to be saved. Muhammad prayed and when Abu Hurayra returned home he found his mother ready to accept Islam. She bore the testimony of faith in front of her son and entered Islam.^[8]

(2) Jarir ibn Abdullah was commissioned by the Prophet to rid the land of an idol worshipped besides God, but he complained he was could not ride a horse well! The Prophet prayed for him, 'O God, make him a strong horseman and make him one who guides and is guided .' Jarir testifies he never fell off his horse after the Prophet prayed for him.^[9]

(3) The people were struck with famine during the time of Muhammad. A man stood up when Muhammad was delivering the weekly sermon on Friday, and said, 'O Messenger of God, our wealth has been destroyed and our children are starving. Pray to God for us.' Muhammad raised his hands in prayer.

Those in attendance testify that that the moment he lowered his hands after praying, clouds began to build like mountains!

By the time he stepped down off his pulpit, rain was dripping from his beard!

It rained the whole week till next Friday!

The same man stood up again, complained this time, ‘O Messenger of God, our buildings are destroyed, and our property is drowned, pray to God for us!’

Muhammad raised his hands and prayed, ‘O God, (let it rain) around us, but not on us.’

Those in attendance testify that the clouds withdrew in the direction he pointed, the city of Medina was surrounded by clouds, but there were no clouds over it!^[10]

(4) Here is the beautiful story of Jabir. He testifies that one time, the camel he was riding was exhausted because it was used for carrying water. The camel could hardly walk. Muhammad asked him, ‘What’s the matter with your camel?’ On finding out how tired the poor camel was, Muhammad prayed for the poor animal and from that time, Jabir tells us, the camel was always ahead of others! Muhammad asked Jabir, ‘How do you find your camel?’ Jabir responded, ‘It is well, your blessing has reached it!’ Muhammad bought the camel from Jabir on the spot for a piece of gold, with the condition that Jabir ride it back to the city! On reaching Medina, Jabir says he brought the camel to Muhammad the next morning. Muhammad gave him the piece of gold and told him to keep his camel!^[11]

It is no wonder why those around him who witnessed these great miracles performed in front of crowds were certain of his truthfulness.

Footnotes:

^[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

^[2] More than ten companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on their hearing the weeping of the tree trunk. See the works of hadith masters: ‘Azhar al-Mutanathira fi al-Ahadith al-Mutawatira’ by al-Suyuti p. 267, ‘Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir,’ by al-Kattani p. 209 and ‘Shamail’ of Ibn Kathir p. 239.

^[3] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*.

^[4] More than ten companions of the Prophet transmitted the reports on their hearing the weeping of the tree trunk. See ‘*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,’ by al-Kattani p. 212, ‘*al-Shifa*’ by Qadhi Iyyad, vol 1, p. 405, and ‘*al-'Ilaam*’ by al-Qurtubi, p. 352.

[5] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*. See ‘*Nadhm al-Mutanathira min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir*,’ by al-Kattani p. 213 and ‘*al-Shifa*’ by Qadhi Iyyad, vol 1, p. 419.

[6] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

[7] *Musnad of Imam Ahmad, and Sharh’ al-Sunnah*

[8] *Saheeh Muslim*

[9] *Saheeh Muslim*

[10] *Saheeh Al-Bukhar, Saheeh Muslim*

[11] *Saheeh Al-Bukhar, Saheeh Muslim*