

# THE IJĀZ ĀL-QURĀN

## A STUDY OF THE CLASSICAL SCHOLARS

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**Abstract:** Undoubtedly, the holy Quran is the greatest gift of Allah almighty to all human being from the days of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the walls of doomsday. Since no prophet would be send after Muhammad (PBUH) so the Quran was preserved for all times to come, contrary to old revelations, which were meant only for some specific period for specific place. The Holy Quran can be applauded on two levels; it is the word of Allah, and it is preserved by Allah himself. These two attributes imply its wisdom, undiluted and uncontaminated text, rhythmical and phonetical excellence, perfect meanings, an outstanding master piece of literature, having solace and soothing elements, perfect in its grammatical structure and above all perfect of the perfection. We observe, no one, in its history, could make any challenge to all its attributes and if someone made, challenge lose its worth since the times of Muhammad (PBUH). In this paper, an attempt has been made to dig out the works of the classical scholars of the Holy Quran regarding Ijaz-ul-Quran

The Quran is the greatest gift of Allah to humanity and its wisdom is of a unique kind. Briefly stated, the purpose of the Book is to guard the previous revelations and restore the eternal truth of God, to guide humanity to the straight Path and quicken the soul of man, to awaken the human conscience and enlighten the human mind. The Quran is the word of God to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the Holy Spirit, Gibriel, and it is beyond human imagination to produce anything like it. The Prophet's contemporaries were, by acclamation, the greatest masters of the Arabic language with most compelling motives to produce a rival text. But they could not produce any thing like the Quran in content or style. The Prophet had no formal schooling and he made no secret of it. It is his greatest credit that he was an illiterate man rising from among illiterate people to teach the whole of mankind, literate and illiterate alike, the true message of God.

This unique Book is unquestionably authentic in its contents and order, a quality which no other book of any kind has ever enjoyed or is likely to enjoy. The authenticity of the Quran leaves no doubt as to the purity, originality and totality of its text. Serious scholars, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have concluded, beyond doubt, that the Quran we use today is the very same Book which Muhammad (SAW) received, taught by, and bequeathed to humanity almost fourteen centuries ago.

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The Arabs, who owned the pure, undiluted and undeviating instincts and were distinguished by their extremely refined literary taste, enjoyed and appreciated the good pieces of literature. The Quran, by acclamation, was to their taste the most outstanding masterpiece of literature. They were moved by its touching tone and attracted to its extraordinary beauty. They found in it the greatest satisfaction and the deepest joy, and they embarked on a course of recitation and memorization of the Book. It was, and still is, admired, quoted and cherished by all Muslims and many non Muslims.

When one looks at the rhythmical and phonetical excellences of the Quran which include miraculous selection of words, their rhythmical combinations producing perfect meaning and not resembling any prose or poetry extraordinarily easy to recite with beautiful phonetical balance and turning, so much so that its reciter never feels bored. The reciter of the Quran feels solace and soothing of his interior and exterior not only because of its spiritual excellences only, but also because of its beautiful wordings, their setting and punctuation which is quite peculiar to the Arabic language.

Then the grammatical perfection in the Quran is in itself a great miracle of it. Great grammarians of Arabic have written voluminous books on this subject. It was never possible for an unschooled Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to write something like the Quran with absolute grammatical perfection. This miraculous eloquence of the Quran is known in Islamic history as *al- Ijāz al -bayāni*, and constitutes the most distinguished and remarkable feature of multi-dimensional *iijāz*, as Nuaim al-Himsi elaborates in his treatise titled *Tarikh Fikrah iijāz al-Quran*. Al-Himsi has thoroughly evaluated the different shades, dimensions, and varieties of the Quranic miracles theorized and fully developed by the classical scholars, scholastics, commentators as well as the literary men of Islamic history. To him, the theory of *iijāz* advocating the Quranic eloquence and rhetoric forms the strongest and the most impressive of all other thoughts discussed by the classical scholars.<sup>1</sup>

Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni, the renowned scholar of the Quranic phonetics and eloquence, while elaborating the grammatical beauty of the Quran in his magnum opus *Dalāil al-Ijāz* has selected the following verse for his narratives:

Then the word went forth: “O earth! swallow up your water, and O sky! withhold (your rain)!” and the water abated, and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: Away with those who do wrong!” (11:44)

A wonderful passage. The whole picture is painted in just a few words. The chain of material facts are linked together, not only in their relation to each other, but also in their relation to the spiritual forces that control them, and the spiritual consequences of sin and wrong-doing. The drowning in the material sense was the least part of the penalty. A whole new world came into existence after the Deluge-as always happens after any great catastrophe, like the World war of 1914-18, evaluates Abdullah Yusuf Ali.<sup>2</sup>

Profound knowledge of Arabic is needed to appreciate the excellent grammatical perfection as well as the marvellous word selection and how the first word is followed by a balanced second word not only producing rhythmical balance but also presenting a miraculous eloquence, says Al-Jurjāni. First the earth is being addressed then the earth is quoted as one which has been ordered and see how the earth is addressed by the interjection, *ya*, instead of *ya ayyatuha*. Secondly the past tense in passive voice, *ghīda* was used to declare clearly that the flood was not abated automatically. Thirdly the adjoining sentence, *qudiyā amr* (that reads, the matter was finally decided and ended absolutely), again in the passive voice, pronounced the phrase *wastawat* (that reads the Ark rested on) contained the literary style of *idmār qabl al-dhikr* that implied to use a pronoun before describing the noun in the sentence in order to glorify any thing. Finally the word *qila* (that reads, the word went forth) is complementarily used to create a rhythmical balance in response to the same word used in the beginning of the same verse. This phraseology is chosen so by the holy Quran that it became evident that it did not happen itself but by the order of God.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that Abdullah bin al-Muqaffa (d. 759), the famous writer who translated *Kalilah wa Dimnah* into Arabic from Pahlawi language, decided to write an answer to the Quranic challenge. Soon after that he heard some child reciting the verse quoted above,<sup>4</sup> he involuntarily cried, "By God, I stand witness to the fact that confrontation to the Quran was impossible and that it was never a word of man."

### **Ibn Rabban al-Tabaris**

Ibn Rabban al-Tabari (b. 807) is recorded in the history, the first scholar who claimed the miraculous eloquence of the Quran and its unparallel style as the important feature of *ijaz al-Quran* in his famous book *al-Din wa al-Dawlah*, published first from Egypt in 1923. He was a physician of Syriac origin. He settled down in Tabristan, came later on to Samurra, the city next to Baghdad under Abbasids and was rather declared as the capital by al-Mutasim in 836 AD, and became intimate to the

Abbasid caliph, al-Mutawakkil (846-861 AD). His another composition on the medicine titled *Firdaus al-Hikmah* was printed from Berlin in 1925.

Before Ibn Rabban al-Tabari has touched the issue, Abu Uthman al-Jahiz (775-868 AD approximately) had declared the Quranic miracles in terms of its coherence and literary style in his book titled *Nazm al-Quran*, slightly different in *al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin* published in 1932 from Egypt, and also in his *Kitab al-Hayawan*, into seven volumes printed from the same in 1938. Al-Jahiz is also quoted as an advocate of the *sarfah* theory being justified by the Mutazilite scholars. In *Kitab al-Hayawan*, Vol. 4, pp. 31-32, he argued in favour of Mutazilites that the Arabs could not resist the Quranic challenge of producing any book or verses similar to the holy Quran because God had deprived them forcefully of such qualities and had averted their qualifications from any such response.

Al-Jahiz, simultaneously, in the same book vol. 1, p. 05 elaborates that he had written a book on the order and coherence of the Quran in order to refute some Mutazilites who do not believe in the Quranic eloquence as the miracle. In the *Al-Hayawan* (vol. 4, p. 32) itself he once says: "There remains no argument for the one who does not believe in *tawhid* except that he may ask about the source that leads to the belief in *tawhid* and in testifying the apostles sent by God. The source is our Book revealed by God. This leads us to the authenticity and trustworthiness due to its unique coherence and unmatched style inaccessible to the human beings accompanied with other arguments the Book carried".

Al-Jahiz, however, could not elaborate the theory of order maintained in the Book. Nor did he illustrate it with the examples from the Quranic verses and the pre-Islamic Arabic literature as his predecessors did. The precedence, however, goes to his credit. He provided the base of the theory of literary *ijaz* on which others laid their arguments.

Ibn Rabban al-Tabari clearly admitted the literary styles of the Quran as the miracle inaccessible. He narrates:

"Being a Christian I used to claim-and my uncle, as an eloquent student, always supported me – that the style of the Quran was not inaccessibly miracle and that it did not constitute any sign and proof of the prophethood because this was attainable to the human beings. When I tried to follow the Quranic style in order to respond its challenge and I found out the meanings of its words I realized the followers of the Quran were right absolutely in their claims. I could not access any book that orders the good, forbids the wrong, offers the law of God and the belief in the prophethood; that reveals the urge for paradise and the distance from the hell like the Holy Quran qualifies all this. When a person, who was unschooled and did not

formally join the skill of writing and reading and was unaware of the science of eloquence, carried to us a book being equipped with the same qualities mentioned above, revealing to our mind so elegance and grace as well as so terror and horror simultaneously, and claiming forcefully so bright future, such book would be proof of his prophethood undoubtedly.”<sup>5</sup>

The miracle, thus, to Ibn Rabban al-Tabari lies in the reformative campaign of the Quran and its graceful and eloquent style in spite of the prophetic illiterate and unschooled position.

### **Ibn Jarir al-Tabari**

The pioneer of tafsir *mathur* (tafsir as quoted by the holy prophet (SAW), his companions and their succeeding followers), Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310/923), the man of encyclopaedic knowledge, the authentic historian, the expert of hadith, born in Āmul, Tabristan, travelled frequently Iran, Iraq, Syria and Egypt, finally settled down in Baghdad wherein he died. His school of law as propounded by himself did not find any following after him. Apart from the tafsir, he covered a variety of subjects for writing and analysis. His *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk*, *Tahzib al-Āthār*, *Ikhtilāf al-Fuqaha*, and *Adāb al-Qudāt* are very important in the fields of history, hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. His magnum opus, *Jāmi' al-Bayān'an Tawīl Aāi al-Quran* interpretes the holy Quran following the most authentic method of Quranic exegesis e.g. tafsir *mathur*. While explaining the Quranic verses, he goes through the issue of *ijaz al-Quran* and emphasizes repeatedly on the literary beauties, unique coherence, and inaccessible styles of expression the Quran implied. For example while interpreting the verses of the chapter al-Baqarah that deal with the Quranic challenge, he discusses in detail the unequal literary style of the Quran. These verses read the following:

“And if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a *sura* like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. But if you can not-and of surety you can not- then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject Faith.”<sup>6</sup>

The holy Quran offered a challenge to the Makkian pagans to produce any chapter like the Quranic *sura*. If there is anyone besides God, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence. Or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory, against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle, and stands on its own merits. Whatever al-Tabari has written in

his explanatory notes on these verses may be summarized in the following:

- a) The holy Quran is a miracle, eternal, everlasting; no human being or jinn can produce anything like it in the eloquence and grammatical perfection.
- b) The Quran is inimitable in its power and capability to express miraculously what a speaker intends.
- c) The Quran challenged the Arabs to produce any book like it which was sent down in their own language, and whose connotations and meanings were in consonance with the connotations and meanings of their words frequently used by them.
- d) The Arabs could not resist the Quranic challenge. Those who attempted, could produce the absurd, the silly things only like the pieces forged by Musaylimah, the Liar and some others.
- e) Al-Tabari mentioned the shades and the dimensions in which a speech varies in composition as well as in the rhetoric. These dimensions do not exceed usually the grammatical principles of *taqdim* (preceding), *takhir* (postponement), *istiārah* (metaphor), *iijaz* (abridgment), *itnāb* (verbosity) and so on.

Al-Tabari touched the issues of order and coherence incorporated in the Quran, known in early Islamic history as the *nazm*, and said: Amongst the distinctions achieved our Book over all the books previously revealed, is its unique order, its novel expression, and its marvellous composition that incapacitated the most eloquent orators to compile any piece even like the shortest chapter of the Quran; paralyzed the masters of Arabic language to offer any literary structure like that of Quran, and debilitated the poets to anything like thereunto.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Al-Rummāni**

Abul Hasan Ali bin Isa al-Rummāni (296-384 AH), a Mutazilite scholar of the Quranic sciences especially of the Quranic philology and miraculous eloquence, born and died in Baghdad, left a number of books of his in Arabic grammar as well as in interpretation of the Mutazilite doctrines, wrote on the subject of the Quranic miracles which is titled *al-Nukat fi Iijaz al-Quran*. This treatise deals with the Quranic miracles in the following dimensions:

1. None resisted the Quranic challenge inspite of the strong motives and factors in abundance, the emergent necessity of the Arabs and despite the open challenge of the Quran, because they were deprived by God of any capability to respond accordingly.

2. All the opponents were provoked to produce any book, any chapter or few verses like that of the Quran. They, however, bowed their knees to the Quran because of their disability and impotence.
3. All the predictions of the Quran were proved true and accurate both in the letters as well as in the spirit in spite of all the unsuited circumstances and inconsistent situations. The Quran, for instance, promised, just before Badr, in the chapter *al-Anfāl* verse No.7 one of the two (enemy) parties that it should be their's. Muslims wished that the one unarmed should be their's but God willed to justify the Truth according to His words, and to cut off the roots of the unbelievers. The Quranic promise was accurately fulfilled in the battle of Badr. Muslims having no more than 300 men ill-armed opposed the well-armed and well-equipped Quraysh army of thousand men from Makkah and by God's help they won a splendid victory, and the standard of Truth was established, never to be lowered again.<sup>8</sup>
4. He has taken into account the *sarfah* factor also. God had paralyzed the capabilities of the Arabs miraculously. It was a clear proof in support of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW).
5. The Quranic language and literature was unique and novel. It was neither to be placed under poetry, and rhymed prose, nor under sermons and treatises. This was above all the prevailing kinds of Arabic literature. The Quran defeated all varieties of prose and poetry.
6. The Quran may be resembled to each and every kind of miracle. It contained all the perceptible and sensuous miracles too like striking the sea with the rod by the Prophet Moses and its being divided as each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain; Moses and his followers were delivered and Pharaoh and his great host were drowned.<sup>9</sup> The Quran also narrated the miracle of throwing the rod by Moses, and when, behold, it straightway swallowed up all the magics demonstrated by the sorcerers,<sup>10</sup> and other miracles.<sup>11</sup>

Al-Rummani has categorized the grade of expression in to three: i) *mutanāfir*, the mutually averted one ii) *mutalaim*, the suitable one in the second grade and iii) the suitable in the first grade of expression and it is evident to every one who reflects in the grammatical perfection of the Quran. The miraculous eloquence of the Quran is thus, established on the basis of *talāum al-alfāz*, the suitability of the words.<sup>12</sup> He also holds the opinion that realizing the fact that the literary style of the Quran is inaccessible to human being, depends entirely on the taste of a person. Those who have acquired the correct and sound taste of Arabic literary style are the only people capable to grasp this reality; the ordinary men

and the non-Arabs are unable to realize that. They depend on the opinions of the men of knowledge.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Al-Khattābi**

Hamd bin Muhammad al-Khattabi (319-388), the jurist, the expert of hadith, composed a number of books on various subjects like *māālim al-Sunan*, *Gharib al-Hadith*, *Tafsir Asāmi al-Rabb*, *Sharh al-Bukhari*, *Kitab Āalām al-Hadith*, etc. His book *al-Bayān fi Ijaz al-Quran* on the Quranic miracles is a valuable contribution.

To al-Khattabi, the Quranic miracle lies in its unique order, eloquent words and excellent meanings. The Quran educated the oneness of God; framed the rules of lawful and unlawful, legal and illegal things; clarified the principles of beautiful preaching and formalized the institution of ordering good and forbidding wrong, all this was incorporated in an orderly coherence so much as all the precious pearls would be scattered in case the thread breaks.<sup>14</sup>

He further says; “Most of the scholars of coherence hold the view that the miracle implies in the eloquence of the Quran. The details of eloquence, however, could not be disclosed by them. They were rather governed by their literary taste.” To Al-Khattabi, the Quranic narratives combined both the purity of style as well as its flowing to make it a proof for the authenticity of the Prophet. The Arabs could not resist the Quranic challenge because they were unable to cover exhaustively the words in Arabic and to render the meanings into different dimensions of the expression. The Quran combined the beauty of the words to the excellence of the order and exaltedness of the meaning in a single expression and that was the expression of All-knowing, Most Powerful. How this could be combined in any human expression!

Al-Khattabi, then, enumerates in detail the varying meanings and connotations the Quran that carried especially its predictions and informations of unseen. The best opinion in this regard he expressed, was the following paragraph taken from his book:

“I have opted in the field of the Quranic miracles a dimension, overlooked by others, that the *ijāz* assertively implied in its effectiveness on the hearts and its penetration right into the souls. You will find no pieces of prose or poetry besides the Quran that if strike the hearts it produce the sweetness and delight in the hearts immediately or the terror and horror in the soul at other occasions so much as it is exclusively occupied and becomes liberated. Allah says in the Quran describing its unique feature:



“Had We sent down this Quran on a mountain, verily you would have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God.” (59:21)<sup>15</sup>

Allah also declares:

“God has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message in the form of a Book, consistent with itself, (yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of God’s praise.”(39:23)

The word *Mutāshābih* is translated generally as “allegorical” when it is used as opposed to *Muhkam*. Here it is contrasted or compared to *Mathāni*. The root meaning is: “having something similar; working by analogy or allegory, or parable; having its parts consistent with each other.’ The Quran was revealed in parts at different time. And yet its parts all conform to each other. There is no contradiction or inconsistency anywhere. The skin is the outer integument of the body. It receives the first shock from the impact of anything unusual, and it trembles and its hair stands on end under excitement. So in spiritual matters the first stimulation from God’s message is external. Those who receive faith do it as it were with tremor and not with apathy. But the next stage is that it penetrates their outer nature and goes right into their hearts. Their whole nature is ‘softened’ to receive the beneficent Message and it transforms them through and through.

Al-Khattābi, thus, do not treat the different stands taken by the scholars of *ijaz*, as contradictory and opposed to each other. He, rather, collects and combines all these dimensions of *ijaz* in to a deep knowledge of the beauty of the expression and the actual eloquence defining it in the same terms that we today acknowledge as the salient features a remarkable literature e.g. the elevated meanings alongwith a sound beautiful style and strong emotions that penerate directly the hearts.

### **Al-Bāqillāni**

Muhammad bin Tayyib bin Jafar al-Bāqillāni (338-403), a sound scholar of *ilm al-Tawhid*, a prominent Asharite theologian who was amongst the students of Abbas bin Mujahid al-Tāi, a Maliki jurist-Ibn Khathir, however, described him as hanbalite and shafiite too in another place \_ and most notably the author of Ijāz al-Quran. He defended the mainstream sunni arguments in the Islamic scholasticism and established the rationale for the attestation of the foundations of *tawhid*.

His book *Ijāz al-Quran* is considered by the scholars as the best one written to his period. Al-Bāqillāni dealt with the theories of *ijaz* propounded so far, and evaluated them. He, then portrayed the situation of

his contemporaries and their attitude about the religion, the miracles of the Quran and its eloquence. He warned the Muslims of their lenient behaviour of the religion, and of their fading belief in the theory of *iijaz*. Since the book left tremendous effect on the coming scholars of the Quran, and almost all the theorists and ideologues of *iijaz al-Quran* were more or less influenced later on by al-Bāqillāni, it seems advisable to summarise his thoughts in the following lines:

1. The Quran itself constitutes a proof and a miracle. Neglecting it is deemed as neglecting the unavoidable, and doubting the observations. Al-Bāqillāni then quotes from the Quran to prove his thesis.
2. He mentions the allegations of the heretics about the composition of the Quran and their's equating it with the Arabic poetry as well as the shortcoming of the Quranic scholars to respond organisedly.
3. He describes al-Jāhiz criticizing him. Al-Jāhiz in his *Nazm al-Quran* could not add any thing to his ancestors. Nor was he able to disclose the confusion of this issue.
4. The prevailing trend in this period was that the Quran was a miracle only to the contemporaries of he Prophet (SAW) and not to the coming generations. Al-Bāqillāni refuted the trend. To prove the everlasting nature of *iijaz* it sufficies to compare the Quran with any literature of any period in the history (pp. 3-5).
5. He elaborates the deep impact of the Quran on the human minds and hearts and quotes the relevant verses of the Quran, and says that in case of disappearance of miraculous eloquence no proof and evidence does stand. The Quran challenged the Arabs because it was revealed in their Arabic language and not in any non-Arabic one(p.6).
6. It is only the Quran which is miracle in its eloquence and rhetoric while the other revealed books were not miracles in their order and eloquence; these were miracles in their forecastings only. The revelation sent to the last Prophet (SAW) may be thus, testified by the argumentation uniquely.
7. When it was proved that the Quran was a miracle and that the human beings were not capable to resist it, it was also proved logically that the personality that brought the Quran to the humanity was extraordinary and authentic in his sayings and deeds (p. 9-10).
8. The evidence for the historical fact that Arabs could not resist the Quranic challenge, is the reporting made successively in the history. Al-Bāqillāni refutes academically those who claim that the Arabs were unaware of the challenge and that the Prophet (SAW) concealed the challenging verses from them.

9. The author quotes the verses describing the sayings of the polytheists about the Quran and their disputation of the Truth without any authority (p.11).
10. He argues if the Arabs were capable to respond the Quranic challenge accordingly they would have attempted by their poetry or prose and compared it to the Quran. They, historically, did not do that.
11. The miraculous eloquence of the Quran may be realised only by those who have the excessive knowledge of the varying dimensions of Arabic oration and the methods of rhetoric. The author narrates in this regard the stories of 'Utbah bin Rabiah and Abu Sufyān who were highly impressed by the firsthand hearing of the few verses and they spontaneously reacted in appreciation (p. 14).
12. He nullifies those who believe in *sarfah* theory. If we consider this factor as *ijaz*, he says, the Quran will remain no more miracle but the prohibition by would be treated as miracle (p. 15).
13. He describes few sayings of those who are doubtful of the miracles of the Quran and claims that there is no difference in this regard between the human expression and the divine expression (p. 17).
14. He says that the reason of the miraculous eloquence of the Quran lies in the great difference in the order available in the Arabic and not in other languages. The Arabic is enriched with a varieties of dimensions in the expression, in the connotation of the words, and in the synonymity which other languages lack.
15. Al-Bāqillāni narrates some one has written that the resistance to the Quran was attempted by Ibn al-Muqaffa'. The author says, Ibn al-Muqaffa' has no merit in his book *al-Durrah al-Yatīmah*. The sagacity, the book implies, goes to the credit of his ancestors. Al-Bāqillāni says that Ibn al-Muqaffa' was ashamed later on of it and made it into pieces.
16. He deals with issue of *ijaz* following the methods of scholastics. He asks whether the *ijaz* occurred because it was literal quotation of the Eternal word, or because it interpreted that Eternity or because it was the Eternal itself. The author does not consider the letters as Eternal nor does he treat the *ijaz* as a literal quotation of the Eternal words; he rather thinks it an interpretation of the Eternal Words.
17. A group claimed the Quran as the poetry while some heretics thought it consisted some parts and elements of poetry. Some sects declared the Quran as the rhymed prose, other classified it under rhythmically balanced words, because they were aware of these kinds of literature only. The Quran was above all these considerations.

18. Among those who deny the miraculous position of the Quran, were Al-Nazzam, Abbad bin Sulayman, and Hisam al-Qurazi (p. 16).
19. *Badī'* (the science of metaphors) was no more factor for the miracle. It was available in abundance in the poetry of Abu Tammam (788-845). The man may be well-versed with *badī'*.
20. Non-Arabs may know the *ijaz* of the Quran by the information that the Arabs were historically defeated to resist the Quranic challenge.
21. Al-Bāqillāni deals with the minimum quantity incorporated by the Quran for challenging the Makkian pagans (p. 117) and describes approvingly in this regard Abul Hasan al-Ashari (260-324 AH) who holds the view that the minimum quantity is the shortest *sura* of the Quran. The author also mentions the Quranic description of letting the Makkians produce a recital (*hadith*) like unto the Quran (52:34) and says that the requirement of *hadith* may not be fulfilled but with the minimum words and sentences of a shortest chapter, and also the word *hadith* might implied the expression of the Quranic *sura*.
22. To al-Bāqillāni, the dimensions of *ijaz*, as apposed to the *sarfah* theory, cover the three arguments:
  - a) the Quranic predictions and forecastings, inaccessible to the human beings,
  - b) the Prophet (SAW) was unanimously unschooled and had no informations of the ancient books, previous stories and biographies, and inspite of that he described all the historical events ranging from Adam to his period, and
  - c) the Quran exceeds the human ability in the order and coherence as well as in the style and the rhetoric.

The first two arguments were provided in detail by the ancestors. The elaboration of the third argument is, however, credited to al-Bāqillāni who has discussed independently it in the following points and these constitute his original contribution to the field of *ijaz*:

1. The literary style of the Quran alongwith varying forms is beyond the prevailing literary styles in Arabic literature.
2. Arabs had no literary legacy that might be equated with the Quran in its rhetoric so much as it might have preserved the beauty of style as well as the length in the measurement as that of the Quran.
3. The Quran interacted a variety of subjects ranging from the orders and the prohibitions, the promises and the warnings, to the stories and the historical events; all this was brought in the style uncompetible by the best selection of the prose and poetry. The poets and the orators might do excellence in any one or few subjects. The Quran, in contrast, performed excellently in all the subjects simultaneously.

4. We find the kinds of expression varying in the writings of dignatoreis and celebrities even though they interact a single subject especially when they move from one idea to the other. The holy Quran, in contrast, combines all the varying dimensions and brings them out in a method that demonstrates them as a harmonious unit.
5. The literary style of the Quran is not only higher than the style of the human being but it also supersedes the style of the jinn cited by the then Arabs.
6. Different styles of expression available in Arabic literature like *bast*, the elaboration; *iijaz*, the conciseness; *Jamá*, the holding together; *tafriq*, the separation; *istiārah*, the metaphor; and *tasrīh*, the clarification. These styles are, however, higher and more impressive as well as more communicative than others if compared with.
7. Composing the words and sentences in a novel idea is difficult than composing them in a familiar one. The Quran interpretes the newer thoughts in a method inaccessible to the human being.
8. The excellence of the order and exaltedness of the rhetoric incorporated in the Quran exhibits when any word of the Quran is borrowed to be accommodated in any prose or poetry and attracts the attention of the reader or listener forcefully.
9. The alphabets in Arabic are 28 in number, and the *maqta'* (the crossing points) in the Quran to which these letters begin are also 28 in number. The number of letters used in these beginnings is 14 e.g. the half of the *maqta's* in number. The scholars later on further divided the letters in to pharyngeal and non-pharyngeal, whispered and non-whispered, sounding and non-sounding, intensifiedly pronounced and unintensifiedly pronounced. The number of the letters used in these beginnings in each of these kinds is just the half of the number of the kind. This classification in each of these kinds is a proof of the knowledge of the future affairs which is unattainable except to Allah.
10. The language of the Quran is convenient and its meanings may be easily understood and no obstruse word or construction disturbs them. But there is no scope for the human style to be in conformity with the Quranic one.

### **Al-Jurjāni**

Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni (d. 471 AH 1078 AD) was amongst the leading philologists, the student of Abul Hasan al-Farasi, the scholar who quoted frequently in his writings Sibwayh, al-Jahiz, Ibn Qutaybah, Qudamah, al-Āmudi, Abu Hilal Askari, Mutanabbi, Buhturi, Abu Tammān and others. A shafi'ite jurist, an Asharite theologian but gained his name

and fame in Arabic rhetoric and especially in the discipline of *iijaz al-Quran*. A number of books he composed in a variety of subjects. His two prominent works namely *Asār al-Balāghah*, and *Dalāil al- Iijaz* are of our interest.

Al-Jurjāni commanded the theory of order in the ideology of the Quranic miracles (*iijaz al-Quran*). He elaborated the theory in the full length and moved with it as an scholastic literary scholar from the domain of the words to that of the meanings. Most of the people mistakenly consider him as the first writer of the science of rhetoric. Al-Jurjāni was, instead, the first scholar who arranged and put in order the thoughts available in this discipline, and exhibited them in an academic fashion. His magnum opus, *Dalāil al- Iijaz* is a clear proof that the science of rhetoric emerged from the theory of *iijaz al-Quran*. He wrote this book to fulfill a religious purpose. While deliberating the issues of rhetoric and grammer al-Jurjāni claims that no one may be aware of the Quranic literary miracles unless he is capable to differentiate masterly between various kinds of order and arrangement and does understand them well. In his another book *Asrār al-Balāghah* the author complements what he had initiated in *Dalāil al- Iijaz*. In the second book, however, al-Jurjāni takes special interests in elaborating the secret and value of Arabic rhetoric in the psychological perspective as how the words do effect the soul directly and what will be the best methods to attract the minds and hearts of the people to communicate the meanings and concepts. The thoughts of al-Jurjāni in respect of *iijaz* may be summarized pointwise as under:

1. The Quranic miracle does not establish on the literary objects intended in the construction of the phraseology for the sake of general meanings. For example a generous man is illustrated in literature as that of an ocean or as that of any general portrait. The phraseology should be, instead, constructed by the beautiful form that should transfer the meaning from generality to embellishment in the interpretation, to excellence in the communication and to beautification of the concept by the subsidiary secondary meanings complementing that; and that should enrich the meaning by enhancing its attractiveness and captivity. In this situation the portrait of the meaning would be charming and fascinating by the use of rhetorical styles like *taqdim*, the preceding; *takhir*, the postponement; *isti'ārah*, the metaphors and whatever is described in the sciences of rhetoric and illustration. The miracle does not establish in the words since it is the wisdom and not the *iijaz*. The miracle does not stand in the consistency of the singular or compound words<sup>16</sup>; the miracle rather stands only in the beauty and excellence of the coherence which is

based on the consideration of conformity to the meanings of singular words in such a way that helps communicate the intended general meaning with the force and smartness. The coherence in these meanings is complemented conveniently by the masterly use of *ilm al-nahw* which is comprised of both the grammar as well as the rhetoric (Ibid, p. 35).

2. Al-Jurjāni narrates the Prophet (SAW) practically challenged the Arabs who knew the objective of it but could not resist it.
3. The miracle does not establish by the meanings of simple and uncompound words; it is established only when these simple words are orderly constructed to communicate a compact and conclusive meaning. The miracle also does not stand by maintaining a balance between the words.
4. The miracle is not an outcome of maintaining the *qawāti'* (the partitions) and the *fawāsil* (the ends resulting in to the rhyme) since it is no more difficult than the consideration of the poetic measures and rhymes. The Arabs were fully capable to do that. It was perhaps Abul 'Ala al-Ma'arri (973-1057) who composed his poetic work bearing the sections and chapters. (Ibid, pp. 296-297).
5. Al-Jurjāni mentions al-Jāhiz saying that Arabs realized by intuition and from the depth of their soul the *ijaz* of the Quran and failed to resist that. The Arabs did not mean by the Quranic miracle *fawāsil*, the separations; *harakāt*, the movements and the vowels; and *sakanāt* the motionless letters. He offered an argument in his favour and said that when Arabs compared the Quranic verse No. 179 of *al-Baqarah* that reads: "in the law of equality there is (saving of) life to you, O ye men of understanding" with the Arabic popular sentence that is translated as "Due killing of anyone means the survival of the humanity," they did not follow the grammatical details but they paid their attention to the far-reaching eloquent connotation.
6. Al-Jurjāni condemns the advocates of *sarfah* theory and nullifying their arguments does raise the question that in case their stand was correct why did the Quran dazzle their eyes? Did their amazement not occur because of a thing they found in it a novelty and that beyond their access?
7. The Quranic miracle was not implied in the metaphors and the rhetoric since these were not found necessarily in every verse, a stand *al-Baqillani* has opposed.
8. Al-Jurjani criticizes those who declare the *ijaz* in the Quranic usage of rare words, as he also goes against those who apply the miracle on

- the use of easy and convenient words free from hard of speaking (p. 304).
8. The miracle of the Prophet (SAW) was the eloquence of the Quran, because the miracle of every prophet was designated in the dimension in which his people were reputed (p. 365).
  9. Al-Jurjani negates the *ijjaz* of the Quran being confined within its revelatory position, a stand taken by Ibn Hazm (994-1063), and Bundar al-Farasi, the scholastic scholar (p. 398).
  10. He, in one place of his book (p. 401), does not reject the role of letters while speaking in the merit of words and sentences. What he rejects is to declare them the solely responsible to the *ijjāz*.
  11. He believes the rhetoric and eloquence to be traced in the order and the arrangement, and the miracle in it may be found out by the literary taste, the spiritual feelings and the awareness of the Arabs' literature in abundance (p. 418).

The scholars have pointed out, Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni presented in his books namely *Asrār al-Balāghah*, and *Dalail al-Ijāz* the model for all the succeeding scholars on the Arabic rhetoric and miraculous eloquence of the Quran, and that he was a flexible thinker who provided rationale for *ijjāz al-Quran* in his philosophy of *nazm* but in an entirely invisible way. For this theorization there is no mathematical argument based on a categorical approval and negation. To this theory the miracle stands with the meanings and is traced by the taste. Al-Jurjani coined a flexible theory that strengthened the belief of faithfuls and cemented their faith in the divine revelation.

### **Al-Zamakhshari**

Abul Qasim Mahmood bin Umar al-Zamakshari (467-538AH), originally Iranian scholar in Tafsir, Islamic jurisprudence, scholasticism, linguistics, Arabic grammar and rhetoric, logic and philosophy as well as in hadith, who defended the Mutazilite doctrines and propagated especially the miraculous literary beauties of the Quran by his Quranic commentary, *al-Kashshāf*.

Born in Khwarizm, nowadays situated in Uzbekistan (an independent republic in Central Asia) and after roaming in the Muslim world he permanently settled down in Makkah and was titled the neighbour of God (Jar Allah). Amongst his prominent teachers were Abu Ali al-Hasan bin al-Muzzaffar, Abu Mudar Mahmud bin Jarir, Abdullah bin Talha, Abu Mansur Nasr al-Harithi, Alauddin Sadid, Ruknuddin and Abu Mansur al-Jawaliqi. He died in Jurjaniyah, the capital of Khwarizmshahids.



The theory of *ijaz* as propounded by al-Zamakhshari in his *tafsir al-Kashshaf* is based on the features of the words as well as on the order and arrangement maintained in the interpretation. He conforms to the opinion of al-Jurjani to whom the miracle was established on the rhetoric: the *tarif*, a rendering definite; the *tanker*, a rendering indefinite; the *taqdim*, performing a precedence; the *takhir*, making one postponed and other kinds of rhetoric. That was the reason why Dr. Muhammad Khalil al-khatib, in his preface to Bisayuni's book entitled as *Husn al-Sanee'*, has declared that al-Zamakhshari should be placed after Abdul Qāhir al-Jurjani on the top of those scholars who set down the science of rhetoric. It is advisable to quote here Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) who says in his *al-Muqaddamah* that, "The outcome of the science of rhetoric is the understanding of the miracle of the Quran. The commentators of the Quran are in immense need to this science. Most of the commentaries written by the earlier scholars neglected this until Jar Allah al-Zamakhshari emerged and arranged his book on the tafsir. He pursued the holy verses in order to apply the verdicts of this science and thus exposed and approved the Quranic challenges as unimitable and unaccessible. The *al-Kashshāf*, thus, preceded all other commentaries of the Quran".<sup>17</sup>

Al-Zamakhshari was the first commentator of the Quran who fully attended the issues of rhetoric and applied them accordingly in his exegesis. He, for instance, explained the following verse:

"Say, if the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Quran, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support".(17:88)

The proof and miracle of the Quran is in its own beauty and nature, and the circumstances in which it was promulgated. The world is challenged to produce a Book like it and has not produced one. It is the only revealed Book whose text stands pure and uncorrupted to-day.

Being a Mutazilite scholar, al-Zamakhshari explaining the verse of *al-Isra* quoted above, advocates unconvincingly the theory of the Quran being created entity, as well as *hadith* the unprecedented in order to prove its miraculous position, and justify the Quranic challenge. In case the Quran was *qadim*, the pre-existent eternally it was not inevitable to the human being and challenging to the pagans by the Prophet (SAW) could not be justified. Al-Zamakhshari says: "Very surprisingly the generation-he meant *Ahl al-Sunnah* – claimed the Quran as Pre-existent in spite of their recognizing the Quran as miraculous. The inimitability is established where the capability exists. It will be said, for example, Allah is capable to create the human bodies while the human beings are incapable. In case

of a non-inevitable there is no scope for capability and power and no intervention of ability in that. Take the example of next to Pre-existent. In this case it would not be logically correct to say that the actor was incapable to create such entity and that would not be treated as miraculous. And if it would be considered otherwise correct, the incapability of God would be justified by logic. Allah is not to be described as capable of non-inevitability. Those who are arrogant and contentious would only claim that God was capable of non-inevitable; their capital is the haughtiness and the reversal of the truths only.”<sup>18</sup>

Al-Zamakhshari was refuted well by Shaykh Nāsiruddin Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Iskandari al-Maliki (d 683) in his valuable comments published on the margin of *al-Kashshāf*. He says: “The ideology of *Ahl al-Sunnah* is based on the argument that the connotations of the divine texts are eternally pre-existent along with the divine Entity, on which the word Quran is applied as it is also applied on the words before us leading to the revealed meanings, and the challenging and miraculous element is the *dalil*, the words leading to the meanings, and not the *madlul*, the meanings. The scholars are very much cautious to apply this due to two reasons

- a. The ancestors avoided it and were literally followed by the predecessors who also did not use this phrase.
- b. The phrase could confuse the weak-spirited people that the connotations of the Quran were not eternal.”

Al-Zamakhshari, in the preface of his tafsir *al-Kashshaf*, necessitates the knowledge of the science of rhetoric and illustration to acknowledge the miracle of the Messenger of God and to know the subtleties and secrets of his proof. He emphasizes on the availability of the literary taste, the intelligence and the complete awareness of the styles of prose and poetry in order to realize the *ijaz* as well.

While explaining the following verse:

“Or they may say, “He forged it”. Say, “Bring you then ten *Suras* forged, like unto it, and call (to your aid) whomsoever you can, other than God! If you speak the truth!” (11:13).

The author of *al-Kashshaf* says:” It was demanded to produce ten chapters like unto the Quran, and was clarified in case they failed to resist the challenge, be sure that the Quran is the book of God and the divine writings were arranged in the light of the divine knowledge inaccessible to the human beings. The order and coherence maintained in Quran was unattainable to a man, and the predictions provided therein were inimitable”.

## The Ijāz Al-Quran: A study of the classical scholars

In the chapter *Yunus*, the Quran challenges the pagans to produce a *Sura* like unto it, and call to their aid any one they can, besides God, if it be they speak the truth (10:38). After that it pronounces:

“Nay, they charge with falsehood that whose knowledge they can not compass, even before the elucidation thereof has reached them: thus did those before them make charges of falsehood: but see what was the end of those who did wrong!” (10:39)

*Tāwīl*, referred to, means elucidation, explanation and final fulfillment. The Message of God not only gives us rules for our every day conduct, but speaks of high matters of spiritual significance which require elucidation in three ways: (1) by instruction from teachers of great spiritual experience (2) by experience from the actual facts of life, and (3) by the final fulfillment of the hopes and warnings which we now take on trust through our Faith. The unbelievers reject God’s message simply because they can not understand it and without giving it even a chance of elucidation in any of these ways.

While explaining the verse cited above, al-Zamakhshari talks of the Quranic inimitable challenge that implied basically two elements: (1) the order and coherence maintained in the Quranic verses, and (2) its forecastings and predictions inaccessible to the human beings. The Makkan polytheists considered neither the Quranic order nor took into account seriously the Quranic informations and reporting of unseen (*ghayb*) and declared them as forged and fabricated.

In the *Sura al-Nisa*, al-Zamakhshari deals with the verse No. 166 that reads:

“But God bears witness that what He has sent unto you He has sent from His own Knowledge, and the angels bear witness: but enough is God for a witness”.

The inspiration, though clothed in human language, and shaped to the personality of the inspired one, proceeds from the *‘ilmihī*, knowledge of God, and therefore often contains more meaning than the inspired one himself realizes. Al-Zamakhshari here clarifies the Quran was revealed being accompanied with the knowledge of God, of which no one is aware. This divine knowledge required that revelation was so coherently and orderly made that it became inimitable even to the selective experts of rhetoric and the most eloquent Arabs.

To al-Zamakhshari, the Quranic forecastings and predictions also constitute the *ijāz* of the Quran, but they also not provide the foundation; these are supportive to the foundation which is the Quranic order, arrangement and coherence. He, therefore, necessitates the expertised knowledge of rhetoric and illustration for a commentator of the Quran.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Al-Zarkashi***

Badruddin al-Zarkashi (745-794), a shafiite jurist, contributed to various disciplines as that of hadith, tafsir, Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic grammar and composition, principles of jurisprudence, biography, as well as *fatawa*. Muhammad Abul Fazl Ibrahim, who has edited *al-Burhān*, the magnum opus of al-Zarkashi, has enumerated his writings as 33 in number. Among his prominent teachers are Shaykh Jamaluddin al-Isnawi, Sirajuddin al-Balqini, al-Hafiz Mughaltai, Shihabuddin al-Adhrai and Hafiz Ibn Kathir. He was born and died in Cairo.

*Al-Burhān fi 'Uloom al-Quran* was divided into forty seven sections, each dealing with a subject of the sciences of the Quran and the relevant deliberations. Each section of the book discusses a specific topic, provides the historical development of that covering exhaustively the books composed so far in the discipline as well as the scholars who engaged themselves in teaching and writing on the topic concerned. The 38<sup>th</sup> section of the book exclusively deals with the *ijaz al-Quran*. In the discipline he has referred to al-Baqillani, al-Khattabi, al-Rummani and Abul Maāli al-Azizi (d. 494).

Al-Zarkashi had described the *ijaz al-Quran* a discipline of Islamic studies, the exalted and the magnificent, since the everlasting miracle of the Prophet is the Quran and this obligates the acquisition of the knowledge of *ijaz*. He cites the two verses of the Quran e.g. verse No.1, Chapter *Ibrahim*, and verse No. 6, Chapter *Tawbah*, and argues the Prophet's leading into the light out of the depths of darkness, and the pagans' hearing the word of God, referred to in the verses, are only to establish the proof and the argument against the enemies, and being a proof is being a miracle. The holy Quran declares:

“Yet they say:” Why are not Signs sent down to him from his Lord?

Say: “The Signs are indeed with God: and I am indeed a clear warner”. And is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book which is rehearsed to them? Verily, in it is Mercy and Reminder to those who believe”. (29: 50-51).

These verses reveal the Book is the biggest sign of the Prophet (SAW), and that it does suffice to guide the humanity and substitutes the sensuous miracles of other prophets before him, explains al-Zarkashi.<sup>20</sup>

Al-Zarkashi has enumerated various stands of the scholars about the dimensions of *ijaz* in detail:

1. God had turned the Arabs forcefully from the resistance against the Quranic challenge and had snatched their intelligence. They were potentially capable to respond accordingly but were checked by an external obstacle and thus it became the miracle, a stand advocated by

- the Mutazilites, but was academically refuted by the author (Ibid., p. 93).
2. The miracle lied in the specific composition, and not in the general composition, as the un-compound words of the Quran moderated the structure as well as the measurement, and its compounds heightened the meaning in such a way as every object of rhetoric turned into being placed on the highest rank both in the word as well as in the meaning, the view opted by Kamaluddin Muhammad bin Ali al-Zamlakāni in his *al-Burhān fi ijāz al-Quran* (Ibid., p. 95)
  3. The Quranic reporting of the future events and of the unseen did constitute the *ijjaz*. This stand was criticized by the author because the *Suras* free from such reports also formed the miracle (pp. 95-96).
  4. The Quranic narration of the past stories and the ancient nations as by one who had observed them with his own eyes. This was rejected by the author because it would have confined the *ijjaz* in such narrations.
  5. The Quranic exposure of what was implied in the human hearts and was not exhibited by any saying or doing, as contained in the verses like *Aal Imrān*: 122; *al-Mujadalah*: 8; and *al-Anfāl*: 7.
  6. The miracle was established because of the arrangement of the Quran, the authenticity of its meanings and the eloquence of its words. The reason of *ijjaz* lies in reality that God has covered all the varieties of knowledge as well as all the kinds of expression and illustration and these are inimitable to the human beings, a stand justified by Ibn Atiyah and the majority of the scholars (p. 97).
  7. The eloquence, the novelty of the style, and its being safe from all the shortcomings and faults accompanying with the challenge, the stand supported by Fakhrudin al-Rāzi (d. 606/1210).
  8. The Quranic order and arrangement, its composition and surfacing being beyond the familiar dimensions of the order prevailing the Arabic literature; different from the styles of Arab expressions and addresses, as al-Baqillani has propounded.
  9. The *ijjāz* can not be interpreted, a stand taken by Abu Yaqub Yusuf bin Abu Bakr Muhammad bin Ali al-Sakkaki (1160-1228) in his *Miftah al-'Uloom*. The similar view was expressed by Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi in his *al-Basāir* (p. 100).
  10. The Quranic eloquence and expressive style dominates the whole book in the entire verses without any break alongwith all its dimensions. The most selective and celebrative dignitaries of Arabic language, in the contrast, lacked this recurrent eloquence due to human nature, an opinion held by Abul Hasan Hazim bin Muhammad al-Qartajani in his *Minhāj al-Bulagha*.

11. The dimension of *ijaz* is implied in the Quranic rhetoric, a stand held by Hamd bin Muhammad al-Khattabi in his *al-Bayān fi Iijāz al-Quran*. The author comments on al-Khattabi and says that he relied in this regard on the verdict of the taste and acceptance to the soul because providing its detail was inconvenient to him (p. 101).
12. The miracle covers all the dimensions of *ijaz* propounded so far. The *ijāz* may not be confined in any single dimension. It may consist some new dimensions also not discovered so far.

Apart from these dimensions of the miracle of the Quran discussed by the ancestors, al-Zarkashi points out some new areas of *ijaz* as under:

- i. the thrill and the excitement the hearers of the Quran feel, whether believers or un-believers.
- ii. The rhymes created out of the recitation of the Quranic verses make it eternally tender, soft and luxuriating.
- iii. the reciter of the Quran finds in it God addressing his Apostle directly in some verses, and addressing the human being in the other extempore and abruptly. Thus he is not bored inspite of the connotations being oft-repeated.
- iv. The two seemingly contrasted attributes of literature e.g. the plentifulness and the sweetness are combined in the Quranic style unlike the human literature. The plentifulness requires in general the force and the roughness to some extent while the sweetness demands the fluency and the convenience. Combining both the qualities by the Quran proved a great contribution and made it inimitable.
- v. The final revelation is dispensed with the previously revealed books while the later are in need of the Quran for their clarification and perfection sometimes, (p. 107) as the Quran says:  
“Verily this Quran does explain to the Children of Israel most of the matters in which they disagree.” (27:76).

### *Al-Suyuti*

Jalaluddin al-Suyuti (d.911/1505), the shafiite scholar, was born and died in Cairo. He benefited formally as a student from 51 ulama and teachers and travelled for the sake of knowledge almost all the Arab countries including India. After he reached 40 of his age he devoted his life to writing. His works exceeded five hundred in the disciplines of tafsir, hadith, Islamic jurisprudence, and Arabic grammar and rhetoric. His commentary on the Quran titled *al-Durr al-Manthur fi al Tafsir al-Mathur* represents a bet selection of the exegetic sayings cited by the ancestors who followed the classical method to explain the Book of Guidance.

*Al-Itqān fi Uloom al-Quran*, the magnum opus of al-Suyuti in two volumes, offers a detailed description of the theory of *ijaz al-Quran* taking the various dimensions and shades of the discipline from their sources without a proper evaluation of most of them accordingly. He, for instance, quotes the theory of *sarfah* as well as the Arabic rhetoric and the Quranic reporting of the unseen as the basic elements of the composition of *ijaz*. It is very difficult for a reader to assess what al-Suyuti intends to opt and what he chooses to criticize, as the learned author does not necessitate to estimate any of these theories.

Al-Suyuti, however, defines *mujizah* and *ijaz* elaborately in the comprehensive terms. To him, the *mujizah* implied an extraordinary and supernatural thing being accompanied with the divine challenge (*tahaddi*), free from any resistance, evacuated of all the imitations and human followings. The *mujizah* are of two kinds: sensuous and rational. According to the learned author, most of the miracles concerning the Bani Israel (Israelites: the Jews) were sensuous because of their lower intelligence and short-sightedness, while the majority of the miracles bestowed to this Ummah constitutes rational because of its perfect understanding and abundant intelligence. Also because this Shairah was eternal and everlasting it was specified and characterized by the lasting rational miracle so that the men of intellect and deep understanding might have realized it. Al-Suyuti has cited a hadith from al-Bukhari's *al-Sahih* in this regard to prove argument. The Prophet(SAW) is reported to have said:

“There is no apostle who was not granted by Allah a thing (miraculous) like unto him in which his peoples had faith accordingly. What is bestowed on me is (*Wahy*) the revelation Allah has made to me. I hope I would be followed more than these apostles”.

The hadith was varyingly interpreted by the traditionists, says al-Suyuti. Some meant the previously awarded miracles were exterminated with the passing history and were observed only by those who physically attended them. The Quran, in contrast, constitutes the miracle, lasting for the day of judgement. Its inimitability implies its eloquence, rhetoric, style and its reporting of unseen. With the passage of time its forecasting would be disclosed and its claim for authenticity would be testified more.

Some others interpreted the hadith cited by al-Bukhari in terms of a difference between being sensuous and rational. The previously sent down miracles were based on the senses like the she-camel of the Prophet Sālih, the rod of the Prophet Moses etc. The miracle of the Quran, conversely, may be realised by the intellect and the insight, and consequently the following of the later would be more in number and quantity. The miracle to be observed; and the one observed by the eyes would naturally

disappear with the disappearance of the observes; by he reason and the intelligence would be lasting to be observed continuously by the coming generations.

A third interpretation was provided by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d 852/1449) in his *Fath al-Bari bi Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* that reads a combination of both the stands quoted above. The result of both the arguments is not contradictory.<sup>21</sup>

Al-Suyuti has discussed all the different sayings of the ancestors about the dimensions of the Quranic miracle providing arguments from the Quran, the hadith, and the classical scholars, amid his elaboration of the learning and sciences derived from the Quran. He believes in the Quran as the source of all the religious and temporal learning widening the scope extensively, a stand taken already by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d 505/1111) in his *Ihya Uloom al-Din* (Chapter VI, pp. 259-264), and was, conversely, refuted by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 790/1388) in his magnum opus *al-Muafaqat*. Al-Suyuti has quoted in this context the two oft\_cited verses of the Quran as well as a number of prophetic traditions in his favour. The Quran declares:

“Nothing have We omitted from the Book” (6:38)

“And We have sent down to you the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims”. (16:89) •

While elaborating the classical scholars and their varying stands about the *ijaz al-Quran*, al-Suyuti has mainly emphasized on the ulama like Abu Bakr al-Baqillani, Fakhruddin al-Razi, Ibn al-Zamlakani, Ibn Atiyah, Hazim al-Qartajani, al-Murrakushi, al-Isbahani (d. 749) al-Sakkaki, Bundar al-Farasi, Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi, al-Khattabi, Ibn Suraqua (d. 410), al-Zarkashi, al-Rummani, and al-Qadi Iyād (d. 544).

This brief account, provided here, demonstrates clearly how the learned scholars from different schools enriched the legacy of *ijāz* and tried their utmost to contribute a remarkable literature on the everlasting miraculous eloquence of the holy Quran.



## Notes and References

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2. A. Yusuf Ali, *The Glorious Quran – Translation and Commentary*, p. 525, footnote No. 1538.
3. Al- Jurjāni, Abdul Qāhir, *Dalāil al- Ijāz*. Matba‘ah al-Manār, 1331 A.H., Cairo, pp. 36-37.
4. *The Quran*, 11:44.
5. Ibn Rabban Al-Tabari, *Al-Din wa al-Dawlah*, p. 40
6. *The Quran*, 2: 23-24.
7. Al-Tabari, Ibn Jarir, *Jam‘i al-Bayān ‘an Tawil Āai al-Quran*, edited by Mahmud Shakir, Beirut, *Dar Ihya al-Turāth al-Arabi*, 1421/2001, Vol. I. pp. 190-191.
8. Al-Rummani has quoted to prove his thesis some other Quranic predictions as well. The forecasting of the Roman overcoming over Iranian empire in the chapter *al-Rum* verses 1-3 was realized within few months after the Quranic pronouncement. The prediction of the dominance of Islam in the chapter *al-Saff* verse No 9 was also actualized. Other predictions made in the chapter *al-Baqarah*: 94-95; chapter Qamar: 45; al-Fath: 27, 20,21 were also fulfilled in due course of time. Al-Rummani, Abul Hasan Ali, *Thalath Rasāil fi Ijāz al-Quran*, ed. Muhammad Khalfullah & Muhammad Zaghlul Salam, Egypt, Dar al-M‘aarif, pp. 69-70.
9. *The Quran*, 26: 64-67.
10. *The Quran*, 26: 43-46.
11. Al-Rummani, op.cit. pp. 69-101.
12. *Ibid*, p. 69.
13. Quoted in Dr. Abdul Aleem, *The Islamic Culture* Vol. 33, Nos 1-2.
14. Al-Khattabi, Hamd bin Muhammad, *Al-Bayān fi Ijāz al-Quran*, ed. Dr. Abdul Aleem, Aligarh, A.M.U., 1953, p. 9.
15. There are two ideas associated in men’s minds with a mountain: one is its height, and the other that it is rocky, stony, hard. Now comes the metaphor of the Quran. The Revelation of God is so sublime that even the highest mountains humble themselves before it. The Revelation is so powerful and convincing that even the hard rock splits asunder under it. Will man then be so arrogant as to consider himself superior to it, or so hard-hearted as not to be affected by its powerful message? The answer is “No” for unspoilt man, “Yes” for man when degraded by sin to be the vilest of creatures. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *Op.cit.*, p. 1527, footnote No. 5398.
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19. *Ibid.*, Preface to the Vol. I, pp. 42-43.
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21. Al-Suyuti, Jalaluddin, *Al-Itqān fi ‘Uloom al-Quran*, Matb’ah Hijaziyah Misriyah, Cairo, 1368 AH, Vol. 2, pp. 116-117.

