

## AL-ŪDWĪ'S THEORY OF I'JĀZ AL-QUR'ĀN

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### **Abstract**

Maulānā Muḥammad Ismā'īl al-Ūdwī al-Shikārpurī (1897-1970) was one of the very prominent scholarly personalities of Pakistan. His life and works are studied and analyzed in detail elsewhere. (See. IRJAH, Faculty of Arts, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Vol. 42, 2014 and Ma'arif Research Journal, Islamic Research Academy, Karachi, issue. 13, 2017). This paper mainly deals with al-Ūdwī's theory of i'jāz al-Qur'ān. With regard to the theory of i'jāz al-Qur'ān, classical scholars including al-Rummani, al-Khaṭṭābī, al-Baqillani, al-Rāzī significantly emphasize the linguistic nature of i'jāz as an argument to support the doctrine of i'jāz al-Qur'ān. Al-Ūdwī on the other hand, after accepting the linguistic i'jāz of the Qur'ān, proceeds to go further than his predecessors in supporting the doctrine of i'jāz al-Qur'ān by emphasizing and situating i'jāz in the content of the Qur'ān. Therefore, his book *Nūr al-Īqān bi i'jāz al-Qur'ān* seems to be considerably different in its arguments from his predecessors' theory. There is no exaggeration to say that al-Ūdwī has distinctly added several new arguments in his book, which, according to him, provide the certainty in the doctrine of i'jāz, as he names his book as *Nūr al-Īqān bi I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, 'Light of the faith through the inimitability of the Qur'ān.

**Keywords:** I'jāz al-Qur'ān, al-āyāt al-kauniyyah, al-āyāt al-'ilmiyyah, scientific exegesis

### **Introduction**

#### **Al-Ūdwī's Classification of Miracles**

Al-Ūdwī articulates that God granted miracles to the prophets according to the time and space to prove their veracity. He classifies the miracles into two categories: first, nature-related miracles, which he terms as al-āyāt al-kauniyyah, and second, knowledge-related miracles, which he names as al-āyāt al-'ilmiyyah.<sup>i</sup> He argues that knowledge-related miracles fulfil their purpose far greater and they are more convincing and everlasting than that of nature-related miracles for some reasons as follows<sup>ii</sup>:

Firstly, nature-related miracles occur in a particular point of time, hence, only those people, who were present at that time and who have observed them, believe in them. As far as those people are concerned who came later are not able to observe them, except the transmitted knowledge of them, which could not substitute to the observation.

Secondly, nature-related miracles are subject to rejection on the ground that people may say that they are jugglery and magic. This kind of interpretation may mislead them as is mentioned in the Qur'ān:

And even if We had sent down unto you a message written on paper so that they could touch it with their hands, the disbelievers would have said: This is nothing but obvious magic.<sup>iii</sup>

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As regards the objection of unbelievers that the Qur'ān is magic, as mentioned in S. al-Muddathir (Q. 74: 24), al-Ūdwī asserts that it is void and meaningless because the Qur'ān is speech. According to al-Ūdwī, this was the reason that Walīd b. 'Utbah saw himself in a difficult position to call the Qur'ān a majic, as demanded from him by the Quraysh. Thus, he began to think again and again on the this issue.<sup>iv</sup>

Thirdly, the unbelievers may ask for a miracle, which seems impossible or contrary to divine wisdom and designs such as, descent of angels, seeing of God with naked eye, and raising of the dead in this world, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

And those who expect not a meeting with us, said: Why are not the angles sent down to us or why do we not see our Lord? Indeed they think too highly of themselves and are scornful with great pride.<sup>v</sup>

Explaining the divine wisdom behind Prophet's knowledge-related miracle, al-Ūdwī believes that if his message had been based on nature-related miracles, the demand of unbelievers for such miracles would have necessitated the performance of those miracles, which seems impossible or contrary to divine wisdom and designs.<sup>vi</sup>

As regards knowledge-related miracles, they do not have such flaws and weaknesses, thus this prove that they are superior and greater than that of nature-related miracles. This is the reason that Prophet Muḥammad (PBḤ), unlike previous prophets, was granted knowledge-related miracle, i.e. the Qur'ān, which was suitable to his office, since he was the final messenger whose message has to last until the last person.<sup>vii</sup>

Al-Ūdwī believes that Prophet Muḥammad (PBḤ) was not only supported by nature-related miracles for his claim as a prophet, but also was granted knowledge-related miracle, i.e. the Qur'ān. Thus, al-Ūdwī presents the Qur'ān as a proof of his prophecy, since it surpasses all human capabilities.<sup>viii</sup> According to al-Ūdwī, the Qur'ān is essential and chief miracle given to Prophet Muḥammad (PBḤ) to support his claim of prophecy. For this reason, Prophet Muḥammad (PBḤ) challenged those who denied his claim of prophecy to produce the like of the Qur'ān. They, he believes, failed to accept that challenge by producing the like of it, although, being masters of the language it was easier for them to compose something similar to it as compared to combating in the battlefield. This is clear evidence that they realized that the eloquence of the Qur'ān surpasses human power and capability.<sup>ix</sup>

According to al-Ūdwī, this challenge and the failure of rivals to produce something similar to it is known through taḥaddī (challenge) verses in the Qur'ān as well as through history.<sup>x</sup> Furthermore, he argues that no successful attempts of competitive imitation (mu'āraḍah) are transmitted down to us. The reason, according to al-Ūdwī, behind that fact was that they recognized the excellent style and eloquence of the Qur'ān, which was beyond their potentials and mental capabilities. This is a fact, which is admitted by many contemporaries of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBḤ) like Walīd b. al-Mughīrah, who is reported to have said:

I have heard numerous speeches, poetry and jargon of sorcerers, but all of them are nothing compared to this [Qur'ān].<sup>xi</sup>

Furthermore, the endorsement of this fact by the experts and masters of Arabic language of every age also proves this fact.<sup>xii</sup>

Although al-Ūdwī did not clearly refute the notion of *ṣarfah* advanced by al-Nazzām, however, he explains the reason why al-Nazzām advanced this notion. According to al-Ūdwī, al-Nazzām by the notion of *ṣarfah* tried to relax him from tough and hard task of finding out the aspects of *ī'jāz*.<sup>xiii</sup> In view of al-Ūdwī's explanation, one might be right in assuming that he does not approve the notion of *ṣarfah*.

Al-Ūdwī asserts that *ī'jāz* of the Qur'ān has many aspects, every one of which is sufficient to prove its *ī'jāz*, of which some were discovered in the past, some are discovered in present time as we have included in our treatise, and some of them will be discovered in future. Therefore, it seems very difficult to include and count all of them.<sup>xiv</sup>

Before discussing al-Ūdwī's arguments for *ī'jāz*, it seems necessary to mention that he bases his theory on the concept that Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was *ummī* which, as long been recognized, means that he did not acquire his knowledge from anyone else. Rather he acquired his knowledge and information from God through Archangel Gabriel.<sup>xv</sup> Refuting the concept of borrowing from a Christian monk Buḥeira, he asserts that it is not possible that he collected all this material at his very early age in merely two short mercantile journeys.<sup>xvi</sup> Based on the concept of *ummī*, which is widely held by the majority of Muslim scholars, he advances his arguments of which some of them may hardly be considered as arguments for *ī'jāz*, as will be pointed out later. However, considering his concept of *ummī*, all the aspects that he has advanced may be discerned. In fact, he has advanced five new arguments, which were never discussed before him by the Muslim scholars of the sub continent, in support of the doctrine of *ī'jāz*, as will be discussed later. This clearly shows his contribution in the field.

### **His Theory**

As opposed to that of his predecessors who attempted to prove the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān through form and style of the Qur'ān, al-Ūdwī changed his line of argumentation and attempted to prove the same through the content of the Qur'ān. Thus, in contrast to his predecessors he employed rationalistic and scientific approach to prove the supernatural quality of the Qur'ān.

This new line of argumentation emerged largely in answer to new questions, which arose from the political, social and cultural changes brought about in Muslim societies by the impact of Western civilization. Of particular significance among these were two problems: the compatibility of the Qur'ānic worldview with the findings of modern science; and question of appropriate political and social order based on Qur'ānic principles, which would enable Muslims to throw off the yoke of western dominance.<sup>xvii</sup>

The waves of Western thought struck this subcontinent of Indo-Pak (then India), while it was under the British Rule and Muslims were trying to get rid of the shackles of slavery. Under the influence of Western thought new attempts were made for the harmonization of Islamic teachings with the new ideas. Otherwise, Islamic faith might be rejected as being obsolete and meaningless. For the prevention of this acute danger, Sir Sayyid set himself to the study of the Qur'ān in the firm conviction that the truth it contained would be demonstrable in the spirit of any age. A six-volume Qur'ān commentary on the first seventeen suras was the result.

Parallel sincere attempts to arrive at a new evaluation of Islamic principles were made by Muḥammad 'Abduh in his work called *risalah al-Tauḥid* and some specimens of his Qur'ān commentary which was further continued by his pupil Muḥammad Rashid Rida, in his commentary

called al-Manār. 'Abduh's interpretations, which often enriches with lengthy excursions, show a general tendency towards stressing the rationality of Islam and its positive attitude towards science. For 'Abduh, too, in the case of doubt, science is the decisive criterion for the meaning of Qur'ān ic wording.<sup>xviii</sup>

A similar moderate method of interpretation was followed by another Egyptian author Muḥammad Abu Zayd, who published a commentary in 1930. Abu Zayd can also be ranked among the exponents of a rationalistic interpretation inspired by a popular appropriation of the European Enlightenment. His book *al-Hidāyah wa al-'Irfān fi Tafsir al-Qur'ān bi al-Qur'ān*, created a considerable stir and was finally confiscated by the authorities at the investigation of al-Azhar University, which condemned it in an official report.<sup>xix</sup>

The scientific i'jāz approach was started by Muhammad al-Iskandarani, a physician who around 1880 CE wrote two books that purported to uncover the luminous Qur'ānic secrets about heavenly and terrestrial bodies, the animals, the plants, and the metallic substances. He was followed by others, with bolder agendas, particularly that of Tantawi Jawhari<sup>xx</sup>, who in 1923 produced nothing less than a full Qur'ānic encyclopedia of scientific subjects, complete with pictures and tables, proving point by point that the Qur'ān contained "jewels" (jawahir in his title) of knowledge that preceded all modern discoveries.

According to al-Ūdwī<sup>xxi</sup>, without mentioning the authors and their works, none of these objections is serious for following reasons:

Firstly, these disregard the idea that the Qur'ān must not be culturally bound to seventh-century Arabia. Al-Ūdwī believes that it must be relevant to all people, provided they make an intellectual effort to make it so.

Secondly, they ignore the main idea that the Qur'ān carries a multiplicity of meanings and can, therefore, be illuminated by any reader, scientifically or literally inclined, rationally or spiritually minded.

In order to prove his contention that the i'jāz of the Qur'an consists both in its language and its meanings, al-Ūdwī elaborates the following argument. The Prophet was sent to all mankind and not only to the Arabs. The Messenger of God is reported to have said that he was sent to all mankind, red, black, and white. The Qur'an states: 'And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bearer of good tidings and warner unto all mankind' (Q. 34: 28); and 'Say (O Muhammad): O mankind! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah to you all.' (Q. 7: 158). The Qur'ānic message, therefore, is universal, and it is addressed both to the Arabs and non-Arabs alike, although it was revealed in Arabic. The reason as to why it was revealed in Arabic is stated in the Qur'ān itself where it says: 'And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make [the message] clear for them.' (Q. 14: 4).<sup>xxii</sup> According to al-Ūdwī, the argument of stylistic beauty applies only to those whose language is Arabic, but it does not apply to non-Arabs. When it does not apply to them it cannot prevail over them. But, al-Ūdwī states, this is not possible, since the Qur'ān is the Prophet's most dazzling miracle and an overwhelming proof of his prophet-hood, and it prevails over all, Arabs as well as non-Arabs. Thus, it is necessary that the Qur'ān should contain something besides its formal aesthetic qualities which would apply to non-Arabs. The answer to the latter, he adds, is the Qur'ān's internal splendour of wisdom, the meanings embodied in its words.<sup>xxiii</sup>

Those, according to al-Ūdwī, who advocate that only the style of the Qur'ān is supernatural, are

therefore doing a great injustice to the Book by robbing it of its most brilliant ornament, that is, its meaning. Those who ponder over the meaning of the Qur'ānic words and its contents will realize that its miracle from this point of view is even greater than from its diction. It is a repository of the highest truth.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Attempting to defend it in a reasonable way, he justifies his guarded support on the following basis: 'From a linguistic standpoint, it is quite possible for a word, phrase, or statement to have more than one layer of meaning, such that one layer would make sense to one audience in one age and another layer of meaning would, without negating the first, be meaningful to another audience in a subsequent age'.<sup>xxv</sup> He offers the following example:

'The word *yasbahun* (swim or float) in the verse 'And He is the One Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon – each 'swimming' in an orbit' (Q: 21: 33) made good sense to seventh-century Arabs observing natural phenomena with the naked eye; it is equally meaningful to us in light of today's scientific findings [i.e. celestial mechanics]'.<sup>xxvi</sup>

In this regard, al-Ūdwī lists the following rules for the validity of any concordance to be found between scientific results and Qur'ānic statements:

1) Guarantee that a particular scientific discovery has been established as a 'permanent and durable' fact by the specialists.

2) Exactness of the meaning of the text concerning the given (scientific) fact, without any overdue effort of interpretation of the text, while still showing that knowledge of that fact was impossible during the Prophet's times.

From the forgoing analysis it is obvious that al-Ūdwī's central and original argument in defence of the *i'jāz* is Qur'ān's scientific and rationalistic *i'jāz*, which is never discussed from early centuries of Islam until very recent times.

After advancing theoretical framework for rational and scientific miraculous nature of the Qur'ān, al-Ūdwī proposes the theory involving thirteen aspects to demonstrate *i'jāz* of the Qur'ān. These Fourteen aspects are as follows:

#### **(i) Rationality of the Qur'ānic Teachings and Commandments:**

Al-Ūdwī maintains that the teachings of the Qur'ān are based on reason; hence, it emphatically exhorts man to use reason to arrive at the truth of the Qur'ānic message. Al-Ūdwī, while quoting Qur'ānic verses in which the Jews, Christians and pagan Arabs are repudiated for their irrational thinking<sup>xxvii</sup>, asserts that all the teachings of the Qur'ān seem to be based on reason and supported by arguments. He divided Qur'ānic arguments into two kinds:

First, the arguments which every sane person can understand easily.

Second, the arguments which intelligent people can understand.

To support his thesis, he gives three examples from the second kind of arguments as follows:

Firstly, Quoting fourth, fifth and seventh verse of S. al-Tīn, he points out that the idea of recompense at the day of judgement is based on the freedom of choice and rational faculty that human being is blessed with unlike animals. Thus, the scheme of retribution is clear rational argument, as he asserts: this is convincing argument as it is based on that (rational faculty) which a man is blessed with.

Secondly, according to him, making *zakāt* obligatory and making usury prohibited seems logical and

according to the reason. Although, in outlook zakāt seems to be decrease in money whereas, usury seems increase in money.

Thirdly, the lawfulness of eating meat is based on reason and according to the very nature of human being as follows:

Firstly, the predatory animals have sharp pointer teeth for cutting the meat off which herbivores do not have, rather they have flatten molar teeth to grind uneasily digestible food.

Secondly, the predatory animals move their jaws up down and vice versa only while chewing, whereas the herbivores move them right left to grind the food.

Thirdly, the inner side of stomach of first one is sleek, as far as the second type is concerned, [its] inner side of stomach is vast, hairy-surfaced and wrinkled which is specified to digest both little and big quantity of food, while the extra is waste.

Fourthly, the guts of the first type are short which, with regard to their stature, are three times shorter, whereas the guts of the second type are excessively long exceeding their stature by twenty seven times.

As regards the human, they have pointer teeth together with molar teeth. They move their jaws to aforementioned four dimensions, and their stomach is neither sleek nor hairy-surfaced like animals rather it is in between and their intestines are six fold of their bodies. Therefore, it becomes clear that humans do not belong to those two types, i.e. carnivores and herbivores, thus herbivorous and carnivorous foods are the natural food for humans.

It is important to note that al-Ūdwī does not explain as to how this may be considered as an aspect of i'jāz. However, he has asserted elsewhere that there is strong reason to believe that such rational teachings came from God through Angel Gabriel, since the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was ummī.<sup>xxviii</sup> It is also note worthy that al-Ūdwī's predecessors -mentioned above- did not discuss this aspect, thus it becomes his original argument in the support of i'jaz al-Qur'ān.

#### **(i) Reports Pertaining to Unseen (Mughayyabāt):**

In agreement with al-Rummānī and al-Bāqillānī, al-Ūdwī considers the content of the reports pertaining to unseen as an aspect of i'jāz. In this regard, al-Ūdwī believes that no one can declare such reports without fear of being false, except the person who is sent by God.<sup>xxix</sup> Unlike his predecessors<sup>xxx</sup>, al-Ūdwī has classified these reports (akhbār) in two categories as follows<sup>xxxi</sup>:

A. With regard to the time of those reports, which he sub-divides in two types as follows:

(i) The reports that occurred in future after they were reported:

In this regard, he has cited twenty-one reports from various places of the Qur'ān including report about the victory at the battle of Badr (Q. 3:111); report about the security of the Prophet (Q. 5:67); report about the defeat of enemy at Badr (Q. 8:7); report that God will punish His enemies through Muslims (Q. 9:14); report that the Prophet will dominate in Arab peninsula (Q. 9:33); report that the Qur'ān will be preserved (Q. 15:9); report that God will suffice the Prophet against the scoffers (Q. 15:95); report that no one will produce a thing similar to the Qur'ān (Q. 17:88); report about the reign of four rightly-guided caliphs (Q. 24:55); report about the failure of the enemies of the Prophet (Q. 26:6); report about the victory of the Romans over the Persians (Q. 30: 2-6); report about the triumph of the Qur'ān (Q. 38: 87-88); report that some people from the people of the Book will accept Islam (Q. 46:10); report that some people from people of the Book will testify the truth of

Islam (Q. 13:43); report that the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet is foretold in previous scriptures (Q. 26:196-97); report that soon Muslims will fight against mighty nation of Rom (Q. 48: 16); report that Muslims will get booties of Khayber (Q. 48:20); report that Muslims will perform 'umra (Q.48: 27); report that the enemies will be defeated at Badr (Q. 54: 44-45); report that the Makkah will be conquered (Q.110:1-3); report that Abū Lahab will die in the state of disbelief (Q. 111: 1-5).

(ii) The reports about the past including the stories of previous prophets and past nations:

Concerning this, he has mentioned twenty-seven reports including report about Adam and Eve (Q. 2:36); report about God's blessings upon Mary and her guardianship (Q. 3:37); story of prophet John (Q. 19: 12-15); story of prophet Shu'ayb (Q. 7:85-86); story of prophet Jonah (Q. 21:87-88); story of Jesus Christ and his mighty miracles (Q. 3:45-60); story of Israelites and their deliverance from torment of the Pharaoh (Q.2:49-71); story of two sons of Adam and their sacrifice (Q. 5:27-32); story of prophet Noah (Q. 11:25-48); story of prophet Hūd (Q. 11:50-68); story of prophet Abraham and his preaching to his father (Q.19:41-48); story of the people of the cave (Q. 18:9-19); story of prophet Joseph (Q. 12:23-29); story of prophet Solomon and his mighty kingdom (Q. 27:20-44); story of Prophet David (Q. 34:10-11); story of Alexander (18:83-98).

B. With regard to the time of the occurrence of those reports exactly as reported:

He sub-divides this in two types as follows:

(i) The occurrence took place during the time of the Prophet, and his companions. He has cited twenty-one reports as mentioned earlier.

(ii) The truthful occurrence took place in recent times, which are curious and unique of its kind. In this regard, he has given four examples from the Qur'ān, which are:

First example: Quoting Q. 5: 77, which says that some people believed in Trinity before Christians believed in it, al-Ūdwī argues that the Arabs, at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān, did not know that it was an ancient belief before Christianity. Referring to al-Beirutī's book, al-Ūdwī argues that archaeological evidences, conducted by European scholars reveal that trinity was the religion of pagans of the East and the West.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Second example: Quoting Q. 10: 92, which concerns with the deliverance of Pharaoh's body from loss and decomposition, al-Ūdwī argues that the truth of this report occurred in present time. Nobody did know about it at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Third example: Quoting Q. 16: 5-8, which speaks about the old means of transportation at the time of revelation as well as modern means of transportation, al-Ūdwī argues that Qur'ān has predicted about modern means of transportation such as, planes, trains, buses, which were not known at the time of revelation.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Fourth example: Quoting Q. 26: 18, which differentiate between the Pharaoh to whom Prophet Moses was sent and the Pharaoh who was punished by drowning are two different, al-Ūdwī argues that it was not known at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān. Without mentioning the source, al-Ūdwī points out that archaeological findings and Papyrus record preserved at the Museum of Egypt provide sufficient evidence on this. According to al-Ūdwī, it is a clear miracle.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### (i) Compatibility of the Qur'ānic Teachings with Nature

In order to show compatibility of Qur'ānic teachings with nature, al-Ūdwī presents five examples

from the Qur'ān.

First, al-Ūdwī considers monasticism adopted by the Christians having overemphasized on spiritual dimension, is one of the violations of this religion compatible to the nature. This, according to him, seems to be in clear contradiction with human nature created by God (al-fiṭrah al-ilāhiyyah). On the contrary, the Qur'ānic religion does not prohibit enjoying worldly pleasures; rather it balances both spiritual and material aspects of human life, as mentioned in the following verse:

say: who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah which He has produced for His slaves and lawful things? Say: they are in the life of this world for those who believe (and) exclusively for them on the day of resurrection. Thus, We explain the āyāt in detail for people who have knowledge.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Second and third, al-Ūdwī considers pre-Islamic practice of the divorce by calling wife as mother, and making adopted son as a real son, to be in contrast to the nature (fiṭrah) created by God in man. Therefore, these are two contradictory practices which are mere words having no reality on ground. According to al-Ūdwī, the Qur'ān rejected these two practices on the ground that they contradict the basic human nature created by God.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Fourth, referring to Q. 49: 13, he points out that Qur'ān establishes equality among all human being, as they have been created from one male and female, i.e. Adam and Eve. He explains that all ethnic identities are nothing but just for identity (ta'aruf). Having given examples of Hindu caste system and apartheid policy of South Africa, al-Ūdwī argues that the distinction among people based on origin, colour, citizenship, homeland or state, and the restriction of the ranks and offices based on this is prejudice and injustice with mankind and in contradiction with the nature created by God.

Regarding the Qur'ānic stand on this issue, al-Ūdwī writes:

Indeed, restricting honour to the merit and qualification is the feature, which is peculiar to the religion of the Qur'ān.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Fifth, criticising Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī and others who consider eating meat of the animals as cruelty and hard-heartedness, al-Ūdwī argues that their practice is against the nature created by God as is evident from their digestive system.<sup>xxxix</sup>

By looking at the works of al-Ūdwī's predecessors on i'jāz al-Qur'ān mentioned above, it is clear that this argument is his original argument in the support of i'jāz of the Qur'ān. One can conclude from al-Ūdwī's arguments that he is certainly insisting on the fact that this feature of the Qur'ān, i.e. harmony between Qur'ānic religion and human nature, shows that it is the revelation of God.

## (ii) Wisdom and Lessons in Qur'ānic Stories

Unlike al-Bāqillānī<sup>xl</sup> who includes the content of stories in the reports of unseen, al-Ūdwī, having done the same as well, attempts to extract another aspect of i'jāz from the same content and that is that the stories of the Qur'ān contain amazing wisdom.

In order to show this amazing feature, which makes the Qur'ānic stories miraculous, al-Ūdwī divides the Qur'ānic stories into four categories as follows:

A. The stories pertaining to the preaching and conveying of God's message to the people, such as the stories of Noah, Abraham, Hud, Saleh, Lot, Shu'ayb, Moses.



- B. Al-Ūdwī subdivides this into two types:
- (i) The stories of the prophets showing lofty morals, such as the story of Joseph and Abraham
  - (ii) The stories of deviant and disobedient people, such as Qārūn and Pharaoh
- C. The stories that make fundamental beliefs stronger such as the story of the people of cave (aṣḥāb al-kahf)
- D. The stories pertaining to the secrets and deep knowledge, which is beyond common people's understanding, such as the story of Adam, Moses with one of the slaves of God (Khidr) and Jesus Christ.

Extracting lessons and wisdoms from these stories, al-Ūdwī argues that these stories of previous prophets and bygone people indicate that God has revealed them to the Prophet<sup>xli</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

In their history, verily, there is a lesson for men of understanding. It is no invented story but a confirmation of the existing (scripture) and a detailed explanation of everything, and guidance and a mercy for those who believe.<sup>xlii</sup>

By the study of al-Ūdwī's predecessors' works mentioned above, it is evident that this aspect is al-Ūdwī's original argument, although he has not very clearly explained how it makes the Qur'ān miraculous. It may safely be concluded that al-Ūdwī has not convincingly presented this argument to support his theory of i'jāz al-Qur'ān.

### (iii) Unveiling the Secrets Pertaining to Natural Sciences

In agreement with modernist scholars including al-Afghani, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muḥammad Abduh, who attempted to rediscover in the Qur'ān the results of modern researches<sup>xliii</sup>, al-Ūdwī attempts to interpret some verses of the Qur'ān in the light of modern science. Admitting the fact that the verses pertaining to natural science have been, and can be, interpreted in various ways, al-Ūdwī believes that their meanings have become more evident after modern scientific discoveries. In order to support his thesis, al-Ūdwī cites twenty-one verses from the Qur'ān that, according to him, pertain to the facts of natural sciences discovered in modern times.<sup>xliv</sup> This, according to him, shows the double miracle (i'jāz muḍā'af) of the Qur'ān. He cites these verses as follows:

- (i) Q. 11: 7, which states that God's throne was on the water, i.e. before the creation of the heavens and the earth. He explains that this phenomena indicates to the fact discovered in modern times that before the creation of the heavens and the earth the substance of the earth was melted by the heat before it freezes and takes shape of the earth, which is indicated by the Qur'ān as 'water'.<sup>xlv</sup>
- (ii) Q. 13: 2, which indicates that Allah has created the heavens without any pillars that can be seen. Quoting this and one other verse Q. 31: 10 similar to it, al-Ūdwī argues that the Qur'ān has specified the creation of heavens with invisible pillars in two places, which must have some meaning. Al-Ūdwī interprets this specification with the law of gravitation (al-nāmūs al-jāzbiyyah) which was not known at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- (iii) Q. 13: 3 and 36: 36, which indicate that there is a pair of male and female in every plant. Referring to the examples of pumpkin and palm-tree, which have stamen and pistil, al-Ūdwī argues that this fact is discovered recently, while it is mentioned in the Qur'ān at the time when it

was not known. This is, according to him, one of the miracles of the Qur'ān, which confirms that it is revealed from God.<sup>xlvi</sup>

(iv) Q. 13: 17, which states that the useful and profitable will survive in the earth and useless and unprofitable will wither away and disappear from the earth. Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī claims that the Qur'ān speaks of a universal law of survival of the fittest (la yabqā illa al-aṣḥaḥ) which is discovered in modern times by the scientists.<sup>xlviii</sup>

(v) Q. 15: 19, which reads as follows:

and the earth We have spread out and have placed therein firm mountains and caused to grow therein all kinds of things in due proportion.

According to al-Ūdwī, the Qur'ān in this verse unveils the fact discovered by modern science that every plant sucks up, through their stems, specified and weighed amount and specified proportion of various elements according to their desires and needs. Some plants suck up double, half or one third.<sup>xliv</sup>

(vi) Q. 15: 22, which reads as follows:

and We send the fertilizing winds then caused the water to descend from the sky and We gave it to you and it is not you who are the owners of its stores.

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī argues that the Qur'ān thirteen hundred years ago speaks of the fact discovered recently by the botanists that the blowing winds carry fertilizers from the male plants for their female plants to fertilize them.<sup>i</sup>

(vii) Q. 18: 25-26, which reads as follows:

And they stayed in their cave three hundred (solar) years and adding nine (for lunar years). Say: Allah knows best how long they stayed. With Him is (the knowledge of) the unseen of the heavens and the earth.

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī claims that the Arabs did not know mathematics and astronomy, thus, they did not know the difference between solar and lunar calendars even one of the great Muslim scholar al-Rāzī seemed to be confused in this matter. Three hundred lunar years equal to three hundred and nine years lunar calendar, which is one of the miracles of the Qur'ān.<sup>ii</sup>

(viii) Q. 18: 109, which reads as follows:

Say: if the sea were ink for (writing) the words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord would be finished, even if we brought (another sea) like it for its aid.

Quoting Nicolas Camille Flammarion, al-Ūdwī claims that the Qur'ān, in this verse, speaks about the idea of ever expanding universe thirteen hundred years ago, and this is now confirmed by the modern science.<sup>iii</sup>

(ix) Q. 21: 31, which reads as follows:

Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī points out that the Qur'ān indicates to one of the modern important scientific discoveries, i.e. Big Bang, according to which the heavens and the earth were jointed together with one block, which were latter parted. This, according to him, is one of the clear miracles of the Qur'ān.<sup>liii</sup>

(x) Q. 16: 15, which reads as follows:

And He has affixed into the earth, mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you.

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī argues that modern science confirms that core of the earth is blazing fire surrounded by the crust of which the mountains are apparent part. Had these mountains been removed and the earth not been protected by the shell of fire, it would have caused massive destruction of the world.<sup>liv</sup>

(xi) Q. 21: 32-33, which reads as follows:

And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded, yet they turn away from its signs. And He it is who has created the night and the day and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating.

Al-Ūdwī argues that the ancient scientists held all the stars including the sun and the moon are stagnant in their orbits. It is the modern science, which has discovered that all the stars are floating in their orbits, whereas the Qur'ān told about this when it was not known.<sup>lv</sup>

(xii) Q. 27: 88, which reads as follows:

And you will see the mountains and think them solid but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds, the work of Allah, Who perfected all things. Verily, He is Well-Acquainted with what you do.

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī argues that the Qur'ān unveils the fact that the mountains are moving, although they look stagnant. This is discovered in recent times. This, according to him, is one of great curious works of God.<sup>lvi</sup>

(xiii) Q. 36: 38, which reads as follows:

And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term. That is the decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

After quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī asserts that the Ptolemaic astronomy believed in geocentric theory while Pythagorean astronomy held heliocentric theory.<sup>lvii</sup> In addition, ancient scientists believed that the earth stand still until Herschel in the last century, i.e. 19<sup>th</sup> century, who observed that it runs on its axis and rotates around its orbit.<sup>lviii</sup> The Qur'ān declared this fact before centuries ago.<sup>lix</sup>

(xiv) Q. 41: 10, which reads as follows:

Say: do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days and you set up rivals with Him? That is the Lord of the worlds. He placed therein firm mountains from above it and He blessed it and measured therein its sustenance in four days equal for all those who ask.

Al-Ūdwī interprets the idea of 'day' mentioned in above verse as an expression of 'prolonged time span' (āmād ṭawīlah). He supports his claim by the following two verses of the Qur'ān:

And verily, a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you reckon.<sup>lx</sup>

and

He manages and regulates (every) affair from the heavens to the earth, then it will go up to Him, in one day, the space whereof is a thousand years of your reckoning.<sup>lxi</sup>

After interpreting the above-mentioned verse, al-Ūdwī explains the concept of six days as geological six periods (time scale) known as primitive (al-aṣlī), transitory (al-intiqālī), secondary (al-thānawī), tertiary (al-thālithī), flood (al-ṭufānī) and the present age (al-ḥālī). He further explains that in the first era, according to geology, protecting shell was created, in the second some of the smaller animals and grass, in the third plants and the spirit, in the fourth high mountains, birds, and wild animals, in the fifth global flood took place, and the sixth is the present age.<sup>lxii</sup>

(xv) Q. 41: 11-12, which reads as follows:

Then He rose over towards the heaven when it was smoke and said to it and to the earth: Come both of you willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly. Then He completed and finished from their creation (as) seven heavens in two days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps (stars) to be an adornment as well as to guard. Such is the decree of Him, the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

After quoting the above-mentioned verse, al-Ūdwī asserts that there is no word in Arabic language which is more suitable than the smoke (dukhān) to express the phenomena of the beginning of the creation. According to this verse, the process of the creation started by the smoke, which is interpreted as 'smoky haze' (māda sadīmiyyah) in present-day modern science.<sup>lxiii</sup>

(xvi) Q. 52: 68, which reads as follows:

And by the sea kept filled (or it will be fire kindled on the day of resurrection). Verily, the torment of your Lord will surely come to pass. There is none that can avert it.

Referring to the tradition narrated by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Alī, Mujāhid and Ibn Zubayr (RA), who are reported to have said that masjūr means mawqūd, which means flaming, al-Ūdwī argues that this flaming is the core of the earth, which is discovered in the present age. This, according to him, is one of the clearest miracles of the Qur'ān, because it was not known at the time of revelation of the Qur'ān.<sup>lxiv</sup>

(xvii) Q. 55: 33, which reads as follows:

assembly of jinn and men! If you have power to pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth then pass beyond (them)! But, you will never be able to pass them except with authority.

Quoting the above-mentioned verse, al-Ūdwī interprets sulṭān used in this verse as scientific technology (al-burhān al-'ilmī). To support his thesis, he quotes verses from the Qur'ān, such as Q. 18: 15, 40: 23 and 40: 56, in which the word sulṭān is used in the sense of clear evidence and argument. He argues that this is what scientists have discovered that human structure does not have the power to pass beyond the zones (jawānīb) of heavens and the earth, except with the power of scientific technology.<sup>lxv</sup>

(xviii) Q. 67: 3, which reads as follows:

Who has created the seven heavens one above another; you can see no fault in the creation of the

Most Gracious.

Quoting the above-mentioned verse, al-Ūdwī argues that the scientists have discovered, through infrared spectrum of celestial bodies (khuṭūṭ ṭif dāu' al-ajrām al-samāwiyyah), in recent times that the sun, the earth and the other stars of the universe are not different from each other in their chemical composition of elements (tarkībihā al-'anāshir). They discovered that the sun, for instance, is made up of the same elements of which the earth is made up. According to al-Ūdwī, this is also one of the clear miracles of the Qur'ān that it stated this phenomenon at the time when it was not known to the world.<sup>lxvi</sup>

(xix) Q. 71: 15-16, which reads as follows:  
See you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another and has made the moon a light therein and made the sun a lamp?

Quoting the above-mentioned verse, al-Ūdwī argues that the usage of the word sirāj for the sun, meaning a thing which itself is a light, and nūr for the moon, meaning a thing which is enlightened, is proved by the scientists that the light of the moon is borrowed and reflected light of the sun (mustafād min in'ikās nūr al-shams 'alayhi). This, according to al-Ūdwī, indicates that the Qur'ān is revealed from God.<sup>lxvii</sup>

(xx) Q. 70: 4, which reads as follows:  
The angels and Gabriel ascend to Him in a day the measure whereof is fifty thousand years.

Quoting this verse, al-Ūdwī argues that the scientists have discovered the celestial bodies (al-ajrām) in the universe, which have hundreds of thousands of miles of diameter. For instance, he goes on to say, they observed that the distance of Andromeda constellation (sadīm al-mar'a al-musalsalah) is six hundred light years and the length of its diameter (quṭr) is twenty thousand light years. This is what the Qur'ān expressed by the word yaum centuries ago.<sup>lxviii</sup>

This aspect of scientific i'jāz of the Qur'ān (al-i'jāz al-'ilmī), although controversial among scholars<sup>lxix</sup>, has never been discussed by the predecessors of al-Ūdwī mentioned above in their works on i'jāz al-Qur'ān. Nevertheless, it is evident that al-Ūdwī is certainly influenced by Ṭanṭāwī al-Jauharī<sup>lxx</sup> (d. 1359/1940), modernist Egyptian theologian, who attempted to interpret such verses in the light of Western modern scientific discoveries.<sup>lxxi</sup> This influence can clearly be discerned even though al-Ūdwī does not acknowledge him.<sup>lxxii</sup> However, the remarkable feature of this aspect might be his effort and ability to collect and synthesize between the ideas of previous writers which make this work uniquely his own.

#### (iv) Clear (Muḥkamāt) and Allegorical Verses (Mutashābihāt)

Like most of the Muslim scholars<sup>lxxiii</sup>, al-Ūdwī divides the verses of the Qur'ān into two categories: (i) Muḥkamāt (ii) Mutashābihāt.

According to al-Ūdwī, the Muḥkamāt, (umm al-Kitāb), constitute the fundamental teachings of the Qur'ān, which are: (i) the belief in one God, His books, His messengers, His angels, (ii) the righteous deeds, and (iii) the belief in resurrection and recompense. These, according to al-Ūdwī, are foundations and pillars of the Qur'ān defined and explained away clearly that all the people can

understand them easily. Whereas, the *mutashābihāt*, according to him, is God's great bliss and mercy as He has revealed numerous secrets and plenty of knowledge in them for those who have deep and sound knowledge. Al-Ūdwī considers *mutashābihāt* as surplus to the foundations, which are not fundamental for the success of this world as well as of the next; rather they contain jewels of deep knowledge and wisdom for profound scholars.<sup>lxxiv</sup>

As people, according to al-Ūdwī, are not equal in their understanding of the Qur'ān and they have different skills and capabilities, God revealed both type of verses.<sup>lxxv</sup> It is quite surprising that al-Ūdwī, unlike his predecessors, has included *muḥkamāt* and *mutashābihāt* as an aspect of *i'jāz*. However, if we consider al-Ūdwī's concept that the Qur'ān perfectly fulfils the needs of the people of different capabilities simultaneously, which ultimately makes it beyond human potential, then it may possibly and justifiably be included as an aspect of *i'jāz*, as he states:

What we have held, gives the answer to the question as to why it was not revealed completely *muḥkam* in order that everyone equally could have understood it. In fact, such should be the case of the book revealed as guidance to mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and criterion. This is because all the people are not equal in potentials. Of them, is dull ignorant, who seems to be content with *muḥkamāt*, or (of them is) wise intelligent who deserves to be granted deep knowledge, and of them is cruel disobedient, who is guided by *muḥkamāt* or one who is righteous obedient, whose status becomes higher by the grant of magnificent knowledge.<sup>lxxvi</sup>

Thus, the conclusion which can be drawn from this statement is that al-Ūdwī believes that such a quality only can be found in divine work, which cannot be found in human work in such a perfect manner.

#### **(v) Classification of Qur'ānic Commandments into Obligatory (Farḍ/Wājib), Optional (Mandūb), Prohibited (Ḥarām) and Disliked (Makrūh):**

Unlike his predecessors, al-Ūdwī includes Qur'ān's classification of the commandments into these categories as one of the aspects of *i'jāz* of the Qur'ān.

With regard to the first category of obligatory commandments, such as five daily prayers mentioned in Q. 30: 17-18, al-Ūdwī maintains that these commandments purify individual as well as society and adorn with lofty morals; and they play very important role in the spiritual development of individual as well as community.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

With regard to the second category of optional commandments, such as *tahajjud* prayer mentioned in Q. 73: 20, al-Ūdwī holds that they perfect and complete the process of spiritual purification and they add glory to the first category of the commandments.<sup>lxxviii</sup>

With regard to the third and fourth category of prohibited and disliked commandments, al-Ūdwī asserts that they are not of the same nature. In view of the harmfulness of these commandments to an individual or to the society, they are classified into two categories as prohibited and disliked. He further points out the fifth category as *mubāḥ* (permitted) which, according to him, has nothing to do with spiritual purification and adornment of individual as well as society.<sup>lxxix</sup>

To the question of inclusion of this aspect as an aspect of i'jāz, al-Ūdwī firmly asserts that this kind of division of the commandments based on perfect wisdom shows that they came directly from God, since Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) was ummī and brought up among unlettered nation<sup>lxxx</sup>, as God said:

And truly this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds which the trustworthy Gabriel has brought down upon your heart that you may be one of the warners, in the plain Arabic language.<sup>lxxxi</sup>

#### (vi) Easiness of the Qur'ānic Commandments

In order to prove the easiness of Qur'ānic commandments, al-Ūdwī lists three aspects as follows:

Firstly, that its commandments are easy to practice, thus they are compatible with human nature. This, as al-Ūdwī sees, is the reason that God condemned those who invented new practices not mandated by God; and forced them upon themselves, as mentioned in the Qur'ān as follows: But the monasticism which they invented for them, We did not prescribe for them.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Secondly, the prohibitions are lifted in the state of necessity, thus God discards the sin for those who commit those prohibitions in the state of compulsion. For instance, in order to survive one is allowed to eat pork or drink liquor<sup>lxxxiii</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

He has forbidden you only the dead animals, and blood, and the flesh of swine and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah. But, if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits, then there is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>lxxxiv</sup>

Al-Ūdwī further points out that the obligations are either completely lifted if their practice causes trouble, such as the performance of pilgrimage (ḥajj) is lifted for the blind and handicapped, or partially lifted as in case of the prayer in fear by whatever possible gestures<sup>lxxxv</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

Guard strictly five obligatory prayers especially the middle prayer. And stand before Allah with obedience and if you fear perform prayer on foot or riding and when are you in safety, offer the prayer in the manner He has taught us which you knew not (before).<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

Thirdly, its commandments are classified into 'azīmah (determined) and rukḥṣah (permitted), such as the fasting is determined ('azīmah) for the traveller, while breaking is permitted (rukḥṣah) for him<sup>lxxxvii</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

And whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (must be observed) from other days. Allah intends for you ease and He does not want to make things difficult for you.<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

Similarly, the utterance of the word of disbelief is permitted in the state of coercion<sup>lxxxix</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

Whoever disbelieved in Allah after his belief, except him who is forced thereto and whose heart is at rest with faith, but such as open their breasts to disbelief, on them is wrath from Allah and theirs will be a great torment.<sup>xc</sup>

Not quite surprisingly, al-Ūdwī has not explained as to how and why this could be included as an aspect of i'jāz of the Qur'ān. In view al-Ūdwī's idea of ummī, it, however, may be quite reasonable to say that such perfect teachings came from God.

**(vii) Material and Spiritual Aspects of the Qur'ānic Teachings**

Another aspect of i'jāz, according to al-Ūdwī, is that the Qur'ān contains teachings pertaining to material and spiritual aspects of human life.<sup>xcī</sup> He asserts that human life has two dimensions: the material and the spiritual. In order to fulfil the spiritual needs, the Qur'ān commanded of right beliefs, good deeds and lofty morals, which help develop the spiritual side of human life. Besides these positive commandments, it prohibits making partners to God (shirk), disbelief and bad deeds. Similarly, in order to fulfil the needs of material side of human life, the Qur'ān commands of the actions that support and preserve the specie of human being on the face of earth. Consequently, it prohibits all those actions that corrupt and devastate human body. This is why it commanded of clothing, eating, drinking and wedding even it allowed eating of prohibited things, such as pork, to preserve material side<sup>xcīi</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

O children of Adam! Take your adornment while praying and going round the Ka'ba and eat and drink but waste not by extravagance. Certainly, He likes not those who waste by extravagance. Say: who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves and all kinds of ḥalāl food? <sup>xcīii</sup>

According to al-Ūdwī, as there is contrast between material and spiritual side, the Qur'ān forbids from exceeding and violating the limits with regard to any of the two sides so that there may not be wrong with any of two sides. This is why, the Qur'ān, while considering the spiritual side, prohibited extravagance regarding physical pleasures. In order to consider the material aspect, the Qur'ān commanded of finishing fasts up to night, i.e. without continuing them as done in ṣaum al-wiṣāl (continuous fasts without break). Similarly, it prohibited monasticism in order to fulfil material needs.<sup>xcīv</sup>

Again, al-Ūdwī has mentioned all this without giving any reason for his inclusion of this as an aspect of i'jāz. However, in view of al- Ūdwī's thought that this perfectness in the teachings comes only from God, it may justifiably be considered as an aspect of i'jāz.

**(viii) Qur'ān's Preservation From Loss, Alteration and Interpolation:**

Unlike his predecessors, al-Ūdwī includes this feature as an aspect of i'jāz, because God, who revealed the Qur'ān, guaranteed its preservation and safety from corruption<sup>xcv</sup>, as mentioned in the Qur'ān: Verily, It is We who have sent down the Qur'ān, and surely We will guard it.<sup>xcvi</sup>

This, according to al-Ūdwī, clearly indicates that preservation is one of the arguments of its revelation from God as mentioned in above verse.

**(ix) It is Secure From Contradiction and Inconsistency:**

Basing his argument on the thesis that all the teachings of the Qur'ān are consistent and directed to one point in the best manner, al-Ūdwī maintains that the Qur'ān is revealed by God, who is the All-



Knowing and the All-Wise.<sup>xcvii</sup> In order to explain it, al-Ūdwī gives three examples as follows:

Firstly, the Qur'ān has not only prohibited the adultery but it mentioned all the factors and motivations that may cause it. This is why it commanded, men and women, of lowering the gaze, talking to marriageable people (ghayr maḥram) from behind the curtain, drawing the cloak.<sup>xcviii</sup>

Secondly, the Qur'ān established a principle with regard to financial issue that the wealth may not become a commodity of the rich. Therefore, all the teachings with regard to the wealth are directed toward that principle. For this reason, it made zakāt obligatory; it made expiations an obligatory in certain cases<sup>xcix</sup>; it stimulated helping the poor; and it prohibited the usury.<sup>c</sup>

Thirdly, the Qur'ān commanded of maintaining good relations with kith and kin, and severely condemned to cut them off, thus it prohibited all the actions that lead towards worsening the relations, such as marrying two sisters at the same time.<sup>ci</sup>

This, according to al-Ūdwī, reveals the fact that coherence in the teachings of the Qur'ān is proof that it is revealed from God.

#### **(x) Its Surpassing Eloquence and Rhetoric:**

According to al-Ūdwī, faṣāḥah (linguistic purity) belongs to the words and balāghah (eloquence) belongs to the meaning.

In order to explain the eloquence and rhetoric of the Qur'ān, al-Ūdwī, lists seven characteristics of the eloquent speech, which are: easy to pronounce, fluent, not dreary, succinct, well formed, not disgusting and blunt and not poseur and amalgamate. As such, no speech, according to al-Ūdwī, can match the Qur'ān in terms of its conciseness, clarity, purity, refinement, glamour, freshness, and elegance.

Not surprisingly, without going into details of these characteristics, al-Ūdwī asserts that the Qur'ān contains all of these characteristics, which surpasses human capability. This is, according to him, acknowledged by all the experts and masters of the Arabic language. This is why God, who knew that no one will be able to match it, foretold in the Qur'ān in the following words:  
and you can never do it.<sup>cii</sup>

He also said:

If the mankind and the jinn were together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof even if they helped one another.<sup>ciii</sup>

In agreement with al-Bāqillānī, al-Ūdwī says that surpassing feature of the Qur'ānic style can only be tested by those who possess deep knowledge of the Arabic language and who have read through most of the Arabic composition, prose and poetry.<sup>civ</sup>

#### **Qur'ān's powerful influence upon human hearts and minds**

Like most of the scholars, including al-Rummānī, al-Khaṭṭābī, al-Bāqillānī, al-Ūdwī states that the Qur'ān has great effect on minds and powerful influence on hearts.<sup>cv</sup> This is why the opponents used to advise one another to make noise during the recitation of the Qur'ān in order to stop people from listening to it. In this regard, he cites verses from the Qur'ān (Q. 41: 26; 6: 26) as well as he narrates the famous story of Walīd b. Muḥīrah mentioned in ḥadīth literature.<sup>cvi</sup>

In addition, al-Ūdwī says that it was due to this influence that people embraced Islam and performed

extremely brave actions and sacrifices that mind can hardly imagine. In this regard, he mentions sacrifices of the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) during the battle of Badr and so on. Expansion of Islam, according to him, is another proof of this supernatural and magical influence of its beautiful wording.<sup>cvi</sup>

#### (xi) The evidence upon the truth of the Qur'ān is from within itself

Al-Ūdwī believes that God, throughout history, has granted miracles, which are termed as *āyāt*, *sultān*, *bayyināt*, to His messengers to support their claim for their prophecy. To support his argument, al-Ūdwī cites some verses from the Qur'ān 7: 133, 44: 19 and 30: 47, which speaks about the issue of miracle. He divides miracles into two kinds: nature-related miracles and knowledge-related miracles. He believes that the Qur'ān itself is a miracle. Whenever people questioned its authority, it presented itself as a proof of its authority.

It seems that al-Ūdwī considers this aspect as a singularity and distinctive feature of the Qur'ān as mentioned in the heading, rather than an aspect of *I'jāz*.

#### Conclusion

From the forgoing analysis it is obvious that al-Ūdwī's central and original argument in defense of the *i'jāz* is Qur'ān's scientific and rationalistic *i'jāz*, which is never discussed from early centuries of Islam until very recent times.

Although al-Ūdwī has adopted a new line of argumentation and distinctly approached the doctrine of *i'jāz* al-Qur'ān, however, his work did not influence the latter writers, since his work has not yet been published. However, one should not approach al-Ūdwī's *Nūr al-Īqān bi I'jāz al-Qur'ān* in the hope of finding a striking originality of thought or a new intellectual framework for the doctrine of *i'jāz* al-Qur'ān.

#### References

<sup>i</sup> For different classification of *mu'jizah*. See. al-Bāqillānī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Tayyib, *Al-Bayān 'an al-Farq Bayna al-Mu'jizāt wa al-Karāmāt wa al-Ḥiyal wa al-Kahāna wa al-Siḥr wa al-Narānjāt*, Ed., R. J. McCarthy, Beirut: Maktaba al-Sharqiyya, 1958, pp. 24-25; 'Abd al-Jabbar b. Aḥmad, al-Qādī, *Al-Mughnī fī Abwāb al-Tawḥīd wa al-'Adl*, Ed., Maḥmūd al-Khuḍayrī and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Qāsim, part. XV, Cairo: Maṭba' Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, 1965, p. 164; See also Peters, J. R. T. M., *God's Created Speech: A Study in the Speculative Theology of the Mu'tazilite Qādī l-Quḍāt Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abd al-Jabbār bn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976, p. 99.

<sup>ii</sup> See Al-Ūdwī, Muḥammad Ismā'īl b. Nabī Bakhsh, *Nūr al-Īqān bi I'jāz al-Qur'ān*, MS, C.N. 9903, Hālā: Library Shāh Walī Allah Oriental College, 1955, pp. 102-7.

<sup>iii</sup> Qur'ān, 6: 7. For similar verses see. 15: 15, 7: 133, 61: 6

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid. 74:24; See also his *Nūr*, p. 103.

<sup>v</sup> Qur'ān. 25: 21; 6: 8-9.

<sup>vi</sup> Al-Ūdwī, *Nūr*, p. 104.

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid. pp. 104-5.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid. pp. 3, 5, 92, 93.

<sup>ix</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-93, 104-5.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-93.

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid. p. 93.

<sup>xii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ibid. p. 93.

<sup>xiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xv</sup> By contrast Richard Bell argues that Prophet Muḥammad was able to write and read. *Ummī*, in his opinion, means that he had never read any previously-revealed holy scriptures. He cites as evidence the fact that the Prophet was said to have written a secret letter and corrected some words in the constitution of Medina. See. Bell, R., *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,

1953, pp. 17-20.

<sup>xvi</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>xvii</sup> See. Wielandt, Rotraud, Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Early Modern and Contemporary, in Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān, General Editor: Jane Dammen, p. 131.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid. p. 133.

<sup>xix</sup> See. Janssen, J.J.G, The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974, p. 88; See also Wielandt, p. 132.

<sup>xx</sup> See. Tantawi, Jawhari. 1931. Al-Jawahir fi Tafsir al- Qur'ān al-Karim al-Mushtamil 'ala 'Ajaib (The Pearls in the Exegesis of Qur'ān with Its Marvels). 26 vols. Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi.

<sup>xxi</sup> See. Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, p. 106.

<sup>xxii</sup> See. Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, p. 107.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>xxvii</sup> See. Qur'ān, 2: 11; 21: 24; 23: 117.

<sup>xxviii</sup> See. al-Ūdwī, Nūr, p. 5,6.

<sup>xxix</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>xxx</sup> Al-Rummānī has mentioned the reports pertaining to future. (See. al-Rummānī, 'Alī b. 'Īsā, "Al-Nukat fi I'jāz al-Qur'ān", in Thalāth Rasā'il, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Ed. Muḥammad Khalafallah et al. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d. p. 69); al-Bāqillānī has divided these reports into past and future. (See. al-Bāqillānī, I'jāz al-Qur'ān, Ed., Aḥmad Ṣāqir, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954 48-54); whereas al-Rāzī has rejected this aspect of i'jāz al-Qur'ān. (See. al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar, Kitāb al-Arba'īn fi Uṣūl al-Dīn, Hyderabad Daccan, 1353 AH, Nihāya al-Ījāz fi Dirāya al-I'jāz, Ed. Dr. Aḥmad al-Saqā, Cairo: al-Maktab al-Thaqāfī, 1989, p. 56).

<sup>xxxi</sup> Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, pp. 14-28.

<sup>xxxii</sup> See. al-Beirutī, Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-'Aqā'id al-Wathaniyya fi al-Diyāna al-Naṣrāniyyah, Ed. Abd Allah al-Sharqāwī, Beirut: Dār 'Imrān, 1993, pp. 54-68.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, pp. 25-26.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Ibid. pp. 26-27.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Ibid. pp. 27-28.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Qur'ān, 7: 32; al-Ūdwī also quotes verses Q. 4: 24-25; 24: 32; 2: 232.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Ibid. pp. 32-33.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>xxxix</sup> Ibid. pp. 34-35

<sup>xl</sup> See. al-Bāqillānī, I'jāz, pp. 48-54; See also al-Suyūfī, I'jāz al-Qur'ān, Ed., Aḥmad Ṣāqir, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954, vol. I, pp. 118-19.

<sup>xli</sup> Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, p. 35.

<sup>xlii</sup> Qur'ān, 12: 111.

<sup>xliiii</sup> See. Guessoum, N., The Qur'ān, Science, and The (Related) Contemporary Muslim Discourse, in Zygon, Journal of Religion and Science, vol. 43, no. 2 (2008), pp. 420-21.

<sup>xliv</sup> Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, pp. 47-62.

<sup>xlv</sup> Ibid. pp. 47-48.

<sup>xlvi</sup> Ibid. p. 48.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Ibid. pp. 48-49.

<sup>xlviii</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>xlix</sup> Ibid. pp. 49-50.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid. pp. 50.

<sup>li</sup> Ibid. pp. 50-51.

<sup>lii</sup> Ibid. pp. 51-53.

<sup>liiii</sup> Ibid. pp. 53-54.

<sup>liiv</sup> Ibid. pp. 54-55.

<sup>liv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lvi</sup> Ibid. pp. 55. 56.

<sup>lvii</sup> Cf. Lawson, M. R., Science in the Ancient World: An Encyclopaedia, California: ABC-CLIO, 2004, pp. 29-30.

<sup>lviii</sup> Cf. Holden, E. S., Sir William Herschel: His Life and Works, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1880, p. 49.

<sup>lix</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lx</sup> Qur'ān, 22: 47

<sup>lxi</sup> Ibid. 32: 5

<sup>lxii</sup> Al-Ūdwī, Nūr, pp. 57-58.

<sup>lxiii</sup> Ibid. pp. 58-59. Martin Rees, one of the leading cosmologists, uses the word fog to indicate the initial stage of the creation of the universe. See. Rees, Martin, Our Cosmic Habitat, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 56.

<sup>lxiv</sup> Ibid. 59-60.

<sup>lxv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxvi</sup> Ibid. pp. 60-61.

<sup>lxvii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxviii</sup> Ibid. p. 62

<sup>lxix</sup> For detailed study of different views on the interpretation of Qur'ān in the light of modern scientific discoveries, see. Jansen, J. J. G., *The Interpretation of the Koran in Modern Egypt*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, pp. 18-55; Jomier, J., *Aspects of the Qur'ān Today*, in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, Ed. A. F. L. Beeston et al., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 266-76; al-Khūlī, Amin, *Manāhij Tajdīd fī al-Naḥw wa al-Balāghah wa al-Tafsīr wa al-Adab*, Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1961, pp. 287-96; al-Dhahabī, M. H., *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1976, vol. III, pp. 140-60; Mīr, 'Scientific Exegesis of the Qur'ān: A Viable Project?' , in *IS*, vol. 2, Summer (2004), pp. 33-42; Boullata, I. J., "The Rhetorical Interpretation of the Quran: I'jaz and Related Topics" Ed. Rippin Andrew, *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Quran*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 143-53; al-'Aqqād, A. M., *al-Insān fī al-Qur'ān*, Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl, n.d., p. 171.

<sup>lxx</sup> For his life and works, see. Jong, F. De, 'Djawharī Ṭanṭāwī', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Ed. P. J. Bearman et al. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960-2005, vol. XII, p. 262; See also Zakhūrā, Ilyās, *Mir'āt al-'Aṣr fī Tārīkh wa Rusūm Akābir al-Rijāl bi Miṣr*, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-'Umūmiyyah, 1897, vol. II, pp. 225-28.

<sup>lxxi</sup> See. Guessoum, N., 'The Qur'ān, Science and The (Related) Contemporary Muslim Discourse', in *ZJRS*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2008), pp. 420-24.

<sup>lxxii</sup> For instance, See, Ṭanṭāwī, vol. VI, pp. 6-7, 22, 143-44; vol. VII, pp. 6-8; vol. IX, p. 73. However, at some places, al-Ūdwī's interpretation differs from that of al-Jauharī. See, for instance, vol. VI, p. 6-7; vol. VII, p. 7-8; vol. IX, p. 73.

<sup>lxxiii</sup> See. al-Suyūfī, vol. II, p. 147; al-Zarkashī, Muḥammad b. Bahādūr, *Al-Burhān fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1972, vol. II, p. 197; Zayd, Muṣṭafā, *Dirāsāt fī al-Tafsīr*, Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī li al-Nashr wa al-Tauzī', 1967, pp. 33-35; Wansbrough, J., *Qur'anic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 150-56; Watt, *Companion to the Qur'ān*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967, p. 47.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, pp. 62-64.

<sup>lxxv</sup> Ibid. p. 65.

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Ibid. p. 75

<sup>lxxviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>lxxix</sup> Ibid. p. 77.

<sup>lxxx</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-78.

<sup>lxxxi</sup> Qur'ān, 26: 192-95.

<sup>lxxxii</sup> Ibid. 57: 27.

<sup>lxxxiii</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 79.

<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 173

<sup>lxxxv</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 80.

<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 238

<sup>lxxxvii</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 80.

<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 185

<sup>lxxxix</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 80

<sup>xc</sup> Qur'ān, 16: 106

<sup>xcī</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 82.

<sup>xcii</sup> Ibid. p. 83.

<sup>xciii</sup> Qur'ān, 7: 32

<sup>xciv</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 83.

<sup>xcv</sup> Qur'ān, 83-84.

<sup>xcvi</sup> Ibid. 15: 9.

<sup>xcvii</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 89.

<sup>xcviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xcix</sup> For instance, the expiation for breaking the oath mentioned in Q. 5: 89, the expiation for *zihār* (calling wife as mother) mentioned in Q. 58: 4.

<sup>c</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 90.

<sup>ci</sup> Ibid. pp. 90-91.

<sup>cii</sup> Qur'ān, 2: 24

<sup>ciii</sup> Qur'ān, 17: 88

<sup>civ</sup> *Al-Ūdwī, Nūr*, p. 93.

<sup>cv</sup> Ibid. pp. 94-95.

<sup>cvi</sup> Ibid. p. 96.

<sup>cvi</sup> Ibid. pp. 97-101.