

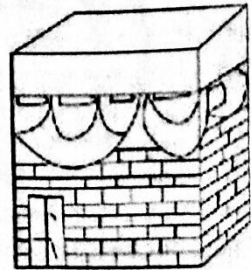
HAZRAT ABU DHAR GHIFARI (R.A)

The Ghifar tribe lived in the Waddan valley which connects Makkah with the outside world. The Ghifar existed on the meager offerings of the trade caravans of the Quraysh which plied between Syria and Makkah. It is likely that they also lived by raiding these caravans when they were not given enough to satisfy their needs.

Hazrat Abu Dhar Ghifari (R.A) was known for his courage, his calmness and his far-sightedness and also for the dislike he felt against the idols which his people worshipped. He rejected the silly religious beliefs and had appeared in Makkah. He really hoped that his appearance would help to change the hearts and minds of people and lead them away from the darkness of superstition. Without wasting much time, he sent his brother, Anis to Makkah to get information about the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

Anis went to Makkah and met the Prophet (S.A.W). He listened to what he had to say and returned to the Waddan desert. Abu Dhar (R.A) met him and anxiously asked for news of the Prophet. **"I have seen a man,"** reported Anis, **"who calls people to noble qualities and there is no mere poetry in what he says."**

Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) was not satisfied and decided to go to Makkah himself. On his arrival at Makkah, he immediately felt very apprehensive and decided to exercise great caution. The Quraysh were noticeably angry over the denunciation of their gods. Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) heard of the terrible violence they were meting out to the followers of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He therefore refrained from asking anyone about the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) not knowing whether that person might be a follower or an enemy.



At nightfall, he lay down in the Sacred Mosque. Hazrat Ali (R.A) passed by him and, realising that he was a stranger, asked him to come to his house. Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) spent the night with him and in the morning returned to the Mosque. He had asked no questions and no questions were asked of him. He spent the following day without getting to know anything. In the evening he went to the Mosque to sleep and Hazrat Ali (R.A) again passed by him and again asked him to come to his house. Again no one asked the other about anything. On the third night, however, Hazrat Ali (R.A) asked him, **"Aren't you going to tell me why you came to Makkah?"** **"Only if you will give me an undertaking that you will guide me to what I seek."** Hazrat Ali (R.A) agreed and Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) said: **"I came to Makkah from a distant place seeking a meeting with the new Prophet and to listen to some of what he has to say."**

Hazrat Ali's (R.A) testified the prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) and went on telling Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) more about his teaching. Finally, he said: **"When we get up in the morning, follow me wherever I go."**

In the morning, Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) followed closely in Hazrat Ali's (R.A) footsteps until they were in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Before long, Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) pronounced the Shahadah, thus entering the new religion. He was among the first persons to accept Islam. Then he went to the Sacred Mosque. The Quraysh were sitting and talking. He went in their midst and called out, **"O people of Quraysh, I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."** His words had an immediate effect on them. They jumped up and began to beat him mercilessly. They clearly meant to kill him. But Hazrat Abbas (R.A), the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), recognised him. He bent over and protected him from them. He told them: **"Woe to you! Would you kill a man from the Ghifar tribe when your caravans must pass through their territory?"**

After this, according to the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), he left and went back to his people. He spread the message of Islam in his tribe and soon a large number of people became Muslims including his own brother and mother.

Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) moved to Madinah after the battle of Trench. After the demise of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), he could not bear to stay in Madinah and left for Syria. He was a devoted and God-fearing person. Whatever would come in his hand, he would spend it in the way of Allah. He is regarded as one of the most respectable and close companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He led a simple and careful life to the end. In the year 32 AH, he passed away.

HAZRAT ABU AYYUB ANSARI (R.A)

Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) was a great and close companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He enjoyed a privilege which many of the Ansar in Madinah hoped they would have. When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) reached Madinah after his migration from Makkah, he was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Ansar of Madinah. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) entered Madinah on his camel. The chieftains of the city stood along his path, each one wishing to have the honour of the Prophet's (S.A.W) stay at his house. One after the other stood in the camel's way entreating, "***Stay with us, O Rasulallah.***" "***Leave the camel,***" the Prophet (S.A.W) would say, "***It is under Allah's command.***" The camel stopped in front of the house of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) stayed in his house until his mosque was completed. He moved to the rooms which were built around the mosque for himself and his family. He thus became a neighbour of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A).

Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) had a distinguished military career. He took part in all the battles during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He also participated in the conquest of Egypt. Later, he was appointed as the governor of Madinah by Hazrat Ali (R.A). The last campaign he took part in was against Constantinople. He was a very old man, almost eighty years old, at that time. But that did not prevent him from joining the army and crossing the seas in the path of Allah. After only a short time engaged in the battle, Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) fell ill and died. He was buried in Constantinople.

ISLAM AND SCIENCE

THE SOLAR SYSTEM IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QURAN

An extract from the book "The Quran and Modern Science: Compatible or incompatible?" By: Dr. Zakir Naik)

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE: 'THE BIG BANG'

The creation of the universe is explained by astrophysicists in a widely accepted phenomenon, popularly known as the 'Big Bang'. It is supported by observational and experimental data gathered by astronomers and astrophysicists for decades. According to the 'Big Bang', the whole universe was initially one big mass (Primary Nebula). Then there was a 'Big Bang' (Secondary Separation) which resulted in the formation of galaxies. These then divided to form stars, planets, the sun, the moon, etc. The origin of the universe was unique and the probability of it occurring by 'chance' is zero. The Quran contains the following verse, regarding the origin of the universe: **"Do not the unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before We clove them asunder?"** [Al-Quran 21:30]. The striking similarity between the Quranic verse and the 'Big Bang' is inescapable! How could a book, which first appeared in the deserts of Arabia 1400 years ago, contain this profound scientific truth?

THERE WAS AN INITIAL GASEOUS MASS BEFORE THE CREATION OF GALAXIES

Scientists say that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter. In short, huge gaseous matter or clouds were present before the formation of the galaxies. To describe initial celestial matter, the word 'smoke' is more appropriate than gas. The following Quranic verse refers to this state of the universe by the word *dhukhan* which means smoke: **"Moreover, He directed Himself to the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: Come you together, willingly or unwillingly. They said: 'We do come (together), in willing obedience.'" [Al-Quran 41:11].** Again, this fact is a consequence to the 'Big Bang' and was not known to the Arabs during the time of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).

THE SPHERICAL SHAPE OF THE EARTH

In early times, people believed that the earth is flat. For centuries, men were afraid to venture out too far, lest they should fall off the edge. Sir Francis Drake was the first person who proved that the earth is spherical when he sailed around it in 1597. Consider the following Quranic verse regarding the alternation of day and night: **"Do you not see that Allah merges night into day and He merges day into night?"** [Al-Quran 31:29]

Merging here means that the night slowly and gradually changes to day and vice versa. This phenomenon can only take place if the earth is spherical. If the earth was flat, there would have been a sudden change from night into day and from day into night. The following verse also alludes to the spherical shape of the earth: **"He created the heavens and the earth in true (proportions): He makes the night overlap the day, and the day overlap the night."** [Al-Quran 39:5]. The Arabic word used here is *Kawwara* meaning 'to overlap' or 'to coil'—the way a turban is wound around the head. The overlapping or coiling of the day and night can only take place if the earth is spherical.

The earth is not exactly round like a ball, but geo-spherical i.e. it is flattened at the poles. The following verse contains a description of the earth's shape: **"And the earth, moreover, hath He made egg shaped."** [Al-Quran 79:30]. [The Arabic word *dahaha* has been translated by A. Yusuf Ali as "vast expanse", which also is correct. The word *dahaha* also means an ostrich-egg.] The Arabic word for egg here is *dahaha*, which means an ostrich-egg. The shape of an ostrich-egg resembles the geo-spherical shape of the earth.

Thus the Quran correctly describes the shape of the earth, though the prevalent notion when the Quran was revealed was that the earth is flat.

THE LIGHT OF THE MOON IS REFLECTED LIGHT

It was believed by earlier civilizations that the moon emanates its own light. Science now tells us that the light of the moon is reflected light. However this fact was mentioned in the Quran 1,400 years ago in the following verse: "Blessed is He who made Constellations in the skies, and placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light." [Al-Quran 25:61]. The Arabic word for the sun in the Quran is *shams*. It is referred to as *siraaj*, which means a 'torch', or as *wahhaaj* which means 'a blazing lamp'. Both of these descriptions are appropriate to the sun, since it generates intense heat and light by its internal combustion. The Arabic word for the moon is *qamar* and it is described in the Quran as *muneer*, which is a body that gives *nur* i.e. light. Again, the Quranic description matches perfectly with the true nature of the moon, which does not give off light itself and is an inert body that reflects the light of the sun. Not once in the Quran, is the moon mentioned as *siraaj* or *wahhaaj* or the sun as *nur* or *muneer*. This implies that the Quran recognizes the difference between the nature of sunlight and moonlight. Consider the following verses related to the nature of light from the sun and the moon: "It is He who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light." [Al-Quran 10:5]. "See ye not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another, and made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a Lamp?" [Al-Quran 71:15-16]

THE SUN ROTATES

For a long time European philosophers and scientists believed that the earth stood still in the center of the universe and every other body including the sun moved around it. In the West, this geocentric concept of the universe was prevalent right from the time of Ptolemy in the second century B.C. In 1512, Nicholas Copernicus put forward his Heliocentric Theory of Planetary Motion, which asserted that the sun is motionless at the centre of the solar system with the planets revolving around it. In 1609, the German scientist Yohannus Keppler published the 'Astronomia Nova'. In this he concluded that not only do the planets move in elliptical orbits around the sun, they also rotate upon their axes at irregular speeds. With this knowledge it became possible for European scientists to explain correctly many of the mechanisms of the solar system including the sequence of night and day. After these discoveries, it was thought that the Sun was stationary and did not rotate about its axis like the Earth.

Consider the following Quranic verse: "It is He who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon: All (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course." [Al-Quran 21:33]. The Arabic word used in the above verse is *yasbahûn*. This word is derived from the word *sabaha*. It carries with it the idea of motion that comes from any moving body. If you use the word for a man on the ground, it would not mean that he is rolling but would mean he is walking or running. If you use the word for a man in water it would not mean that he is floating but would mean that he is swimming. Similarly, if you use the word *yasbah* for a celestial body such as the sun it would not mean that it is only flying through space but would mean that it is also rotating as it goes through space. In fact, the sun travels through space at roughly 150 miles per second, and takes about 200 million years to complete one revolution around the center of our Milky Way Galaxy. "It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: Each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to law)." [Al-Quran 36:40]. This verse mentions an essential fact discovered by modern astronomy, i.e. the existence of the individual orbits of the Sun and the Moon, and their journey through space with their own motion. The 'fixed place', towards which the sun travels, carrying with it the solar system, has been located exactly by modern astronomy. It has been given a name, the Solar Apex. The solar system is indeed moving in space towards a point situated in the constellation of Hercules (alpha Layer) whose exact location is firmly established. The moon rotates around its axis in the same duration that it takes to revolve around the earth. It takes approximately 29½ days to complete one rotation. One cannot help but be amazed at the scientific

accuracy of the Quranic verses. Should we not ponder over the question: "What was the source of knowledge contained in the Quran?"

THE SUN WILL EXTINGUISH AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD

The light of the sun is due to a chemical process on its surface that has been taking place continuously for the past five billion years. It will come to an end at some point of time in the future when the sun will be totally extinguished leading to extinction of all life on earth. Regarding the impermanence of the sun's existence the Quran says: "**And the Sun runs its course for a period determined for it; that is the decree of (Him) the exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.**" [Al-Quran 36:38] [A similar message is conveyed in the Qur'an in 13:2, 35:13, 39:5 and 39:21]. The Arabic word used here is *mustaqarr*, which means a place or time that is determined. Thus the Quran says that the sun runs towards a determined place, and will do so only up to a pre-determined period of time – meaning that it will end or extinguish.