



A Critical Analysis of Uri Rubin's Claims about Prophet Muhammad's Miracle of the Splitting of the Moon

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Abstract

Research Article

The splitting of the moon (*shaqq al-qamar*) is one of the miracles of Prophet Muhammad (s) and a significant fact during the era of Qur'anic revelation, which is mentioned in the Qur'an. The present research addresses and discusses Uri Rubin's denial of the Prophet's splitting of the moon. This paper aims to defend the sanctity of the Qur'an's divine revelation using a descriptive-analytical method and relying on scholarly sources. It seeks to answer the fundamental question of how Uri Rubin's denial of the miracle of the splitting of the moon is formulated and what criticisms can be made of it. The results of this study indicate that the miracle of the splitting of the moon is strongly supported by Qur'anic and hadith sources. Rubin's views on the matter are not based on sound and logical evidence, and his denial stems from superficial reasoning, lack of accurate knowledge of exegetical and theological sources, or from non-scholarly, antagonistic motivations.

Keywords: the splitting of the moon, the miracle of splitting the moon, Uri Rubin, scholarly critique.

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Introduction

The miracle of the splitting of the moon (*shaqq al-qamar*), as one of the most astonishing events in human history and one of the most significant miracles of Prophet Muhammad (s), has always been a subject of discussion and examination by scholars and intellectuals. The Qur'ān refers to this remarkable event in *Sūrat al-Qamar*, presenting it as a clear sign of God's infinite power and the divine mission of Prophet Muhammad. Throughout history, this miracle has consistently been affirmed by Muslims and has been cited as one of the strongest proofs of the truth of Islam. However, in the present age, with the rise of positivist thinking, some Western scholars, such as Uri Rubin, have cast doubts on the historical and theological authenticity of this miracle. Rubin, relying on certain scientific and historical assumptions, regards this event as a post-Qur'ānic historical miracle and restricts the interpretation of the related verses to signs of the Day of Judgment. Utilizing credible Islamic sources and employing a critical and analytical approach, this study thoroughly examines and critically evaluates Uri Rubin's claims regarding the miracle of the splitting of the moon.

Research Background and Necessity

The views of Orientalists regarding the miracle of the splitting of the moon relate to a long-standing discussion in the Qur'ānic exegetical sources of Muslim scholars, including al-Ṭabarī, al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, al-Baghawī, al-Ṭabarsī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī, al-Ālūsī, Ibn 'Āshūr, 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī. These discussions, primarily centered on the interpretation of *Sūrat al-Qamar*, have been examined from various perspectives. Many authors have explored this topic in books and articles, among which the following can be mentioned:

On the one hand, there are monographs dedicated to the issue of the splitting of the moon, such as Ayatullah Makārim Shīrāzī's (1992) *Ascension, the splitting of the moon, and prayer in the North and South Poles* (in Persian) and Muhammad Barra' Yāsīn's (2024) *Reflection on the claims of those who deny the splitting of the moon* (in Arabic).



On the other hand, there are research articles addressing the issue, including “Revisiting miracles in Shiite sources of theology and its application to the event of the splitting of the moon” by the Center for Islamic Facts (Markaz al-Ḥaḡā’iq al-Islāmiyyah), “The splitting of the moon” by Sayyid ‘Alī Āqā’ī (2019), “The splitting of the moon on scale” by Muḡammad Bahrāmī (2014), and “An examination of Qur’ānic verses pertaining to the Prophet not presenting miracles” by Muṣṭafā Adharakhshī (2021).

These works and similar studies, while containing valuable information about the splitting of the moon and related Qur’ānic verses and hadiths, do not primarily focus on analyzing the views of Orientalists or addressing contemporary skepticisms, particularly the views of Uri Rubin. His perspective critically examines various aspects of the prophetic miracle of the splitting of the moon with a meticulous approach, challenging its authenticity.

Thus, while previous studies have provided insights into the splitting of the moon, they have primarily focused on analyzing the perspectives—both supportive and opposing—within the Islamic world regarding this miracle. However, they have not thoroughly examined or critically assessed the views of Orientalists like Uri Rubin, who have questioned various aspects of the miracle and introduced new claims. In contrast, the present study specifically focuses on Rubin’s denial of the Prophet’s splitting of the moon, critically analyzing his assertions. By addressing these claims with scholarly and logical responses, this research aims to fill the gap in previous studies and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and awareness in the field of Islamic studies.

At this point, it is essential to first examine the term *shaqq al-qamar* from both a literal and terminological perspective before proceeding to analyze and critique the various viewpoints.

1. The Concept

Literal and Terminological Uses of “Shaqq al-Qamar”

Literally speaking, *shaqq al-qamar* means “the splitting of the moon.” This phrase consists of two words: *shaqq*, meaning “splitting” or “cleaving” (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 1:459), and *qamar*, meaning “moon” (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 1:684). In the Qur’ān, *qamar* specifically refers to Earth’s moon rather than the moons of other planets. The term was chosen due to the moon’s bright white illumination, particularly when it moves beyond its crescent phase and becomes full (Ṭurayhī 1996, 3:463). It can also signify a moon that outshines and dominates the stars (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī 1991, 1:684). Therefore, in its lexical sense, *shaqq al-qamar* denotes the splitting or cleaving of the moon.

Terminologically, *shaqq al-qamar* refers to a miraculous event mentioned in the Qur’ān, hadith, and historical sources. According to these accounts, the moon was split into two halves at the gesture of Prophet Muhammad (s) and then rejoined. This miracle is explicitly referenced in verses 1 and 2 of *Sūrat al-Qamar*: “*The Hour has drawn near and the moon is split. If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, ‘An incessant magic!’*”² (Qur’ān 54:1-2). It is recognized as a sign affirming the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Views of Islamic Scholars Regarding the Prophet’s Miracle of Splitting of the Moon

An analysis of exegetical and hadith sources reveals that many scholars, with diverse exegetical approaches, agree on the historical occurrence of Prophet Muḥammad’s splitting of the moon. Only Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Muslim al-Khurāsānī, and Abū al-Qāsim al-Balkhī al-Mu‘tazilī have opposed this view (Ṭabarsī 1993, 9:281). This perspective is clearly evident in the works of prominent scholars from both Shiite and Sunni traditions, such as Tustarī (2002, 158), al-Nisā’ī (1990, 2:365), al-Ṭabarī (1992, 27:51), Ṭabarsī (1993, 9:281), al-Ṭabarānī (2008, 6:152), al-Māturīdī (2005, 9:441), al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1999, 29:228), al-Tha‘labī

². «إِفْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانْشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ، وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرَضُوا وَ يَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ» (القمر/ ١-٢)



(2001, 9:162), al-Jaṣṣāṣ (1985, 5:298), al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (n.d.), al-Mujāshī'ī (2007, 474), al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1970, 19:60), and many other scholars.

2. Urin Rubin's Biography

Uri Rubin, a retired full professor with 41 years of experience in Arabic and Islamic studies, has authored works primarily focused on the Qur'ān, its translation and exegesis, as well as the Prophet's life and hadith. He has written numerous articles and works that challenge the Qur'ān and the Final Messenger. Additionally, Rubin is a member of the advisory board of the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān* (Brill), contributing entries such as "Muhammad," "Children of Israel," "Ḥafṣa," "Quraysh," and "Repentance" (Rubin 2024).

The volume and nature of his writings, along with his rigid religious perspectives, highlight the necessity of responding to and critically engaging with his views in defense of the divine nature of the Qur'ān and the lofty teachings of the Prophet of Islam. This article undertakes an examination and critique of one of his works, focusing on the miracle of the splitting of the moon, titled "Muhammad's Message in Mecca: Warnings, Signs, and Miracles," published in *The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'an* in 2010.

3. His Views: A Formulation

In his article "Muhammad's Message in Mecca: Warnings, Signs, and Miracles," Uri Rubin critically examines Islamic narratives regarding the splitting of the moon, attempting to analyze this event from historical and scientific perspectives. Among the key points he addresses are the following:

1. The Difference Between Qur'ānic and Extra-Qur'ānic Narratives About the Prophet:

when we read the Quranic Meccan passages alone, without the benefit of post-Quranic interpretation, Muḥammad emerges as a mortal

prophet who still has no miracle other than the Qur'ān, the book he received from God over the last twenty-two years of his life, first in Mecca (610–622 CE) and then in Medina (622–632). Muḥammad appears in these passages as a man who both warns of the oncoming Judgment Day and brings God's message of mercy. But in the post-Quranic sources, a different Muḥammad emerges; these sources move away from the mortal Qur'ānic warner toward an ideal hero whom later generations of devoted believers have shaped and read back into the Qur'ān by means of its exegesis... The splitting of the moon, once detached from the context of the Hour and perceived as a historical event demonstrating Muḥammad's supernatural abilities, could be grafted onto the specific accounts of Muḥammad's pre-hijra period that were eventually retold as part of a glorious history of continuous success. This literary progression took place at a secondary stage, as proved by a comparative reading of the earliest descriptions of Muḥammad's confrontation with his Meccan opponents and their later reshaped versions. (Rubin 2010, 39)

2. Muhammad and Earlier Prophets:

Post-Quranic Muslims needed a hero who could be venerated not only for the Quran that had been revealed to him but also for his extraordinary personality and unusual abilities. The Quran could not remain Muhammad's only substitute for miracles performed by previous prophets (see earlier herein the tradition of Abū Hurayra), and similar miraculous signs had to be attributed to him as well. The splitting of the moon was only one of those miracles, and soon numerous others became the subject of traditions that were circulated and recorded in the various sources of tafsir, sira, and hadith and later on collected in the compilations of *dala'il al-nubuwwa* ("proofs of prophethood"). What makes the splitting of the moon unique, though, is its position as one of the very few miracles that could be read into an explicit Quranic statement... (Rubin 2010, 56-57)

3. Transforming an Eschatological Sign into a Historical Miracle:

Rubin notes that different interpretations exist regarding the verse on the



splitting of the moon. However, he emphasizes that in post-Qur'ānic Islamic sources, the event is presented as a significant historical occurrence in the life of Muhammad. He argues that exegetes, by incorporating geographical details, different recitations, and connections with other historical reports, sought to transform this account from an eschatological event into a historical miracle attributed to the Prophet by his followers (Rubin 2010, 40).

4. Muslims' Attempts to Offer Scientific Proofs for the Event of the Splitting of the Moon: Rubin states that various Islamic websites present scientific "proofs" of the moon's splitting, citing telescopic images of the lunar surface, though debates over the credibility of these claims continue. He sees this as evidence of the ongoing effort by generations of devout Muslims to affirm Muhammad's superiority over other prophets (Rubin 2010, 59).

5. Political and Ideological Uses of the Narrative: Rubin argues that witnessing the splitting of the moon became a source of pride and political advantage. Muslims who were recorded as having been present at the event could take pride in their early conversion to Islam. One related narrative ties the event to the Sunni-Shiite dispute over the Prophet's succession. Attributed to Mujāhid, this report states that when the moon split, Muhammad said to Abū Bakr, "Abū Bakr, look!" Thus, the miraculous event serves as a sign for Abū Bakr, portraying him as the first Muslim and a companion of superior rank, which in turn reinforces his legitimacy as the most deserving candidate for the caliphate after the Prophet. Conversely, figures revered in Shiite tradition also attain an esteemed status in narratives concerning the event. One such figure is Ḥamza ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's paternal uncle, who is honored among Shiites as the "Master of Martyrs." His name appears in a report cited by al-Māwardī, in which the moon splits only because Ḥamza asks the Prophet for a sign to strengthen his faith. Additionally, some Shiite traditions place key Shiite figures, such as 'Alī, at the scene of the moon's splitting. These accounts serve to emphasize the special status of these

individuals within the Muslim community and their close relationship with the Prophet (Rubin 2010, pp. 54–55).

Response to the Doubts

After reviewing Uri Rubin's perspectives on the miracle of the splitting of the moon, let us now examine and critique his claims. By raising doubts and offering his own particular interpretations, Rubin attempts to present a different and challenging viewpoint. This section critically evaluates the scholarly validity of his assertions.

First Objection: The Prophet Had No Miracles Other Than the Qur'ān

Response: Rubin's claim that the Prophet of Islam had no miracles apart from the Qur'ān (Rubin 2010, 39) is unfounded and can be refuted from a Qur'ānic perspective. The Prophet, in addition to the Qur'ān as a verbal miracle, demonstrated numerous sensory, scientific, and rational miracles, as attested in both the Qur'ān and hadiths. Among these miracles are: the Splitting of the Moon (Qur'ān 54:1–2 and 70:6–7), the Ascension (*Mi'rāj*) (Quran 17:1 and 53:13–18), prophecies, such as the Byzantine victory (Quran 30:1–4), and the Event of *Mubāhala* (Quran 3:61).

Another noteworthy point is that although the Prophet's miracle in the context of argumentation and *mubāhala* (mutual cursing) did not materialize due to the withdrawal of the Christians of Najrān, this event demonstrates that he was fully prepared to perform any miracle necessary to prove his truthfulness. His readiness for such an extraordinary act, along with the occurrence of the *mubāhala* itself, serves as a clear response to those who claim that the Prophet of Islam never asserted miraculous abilities or refrained from performing miracles.

Furthermore, the Qur'ānic verse “*When a sign comes to them, they say, 'We will not believe until we are given the like of what was given to Allah's messengers'*”³ (Quran 6:124) clearly illustrates that the Prophet's

³. «وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَى مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ» (الانعام / ١٢٤)



opponents were constantly seeking excuses to deny his truthfulness. Even after witnessing miracles or signs, they persisted in their rejection out of envy toward the Prophet. They continued to demand additional miracles, insisting that they did not want the signs presented to them but rather miracles similar to those of previous prophets—rejecting the Qur’ān as a divine miracle (Ṭūsī 2020, 4:262; Tha’labī 2001, 4:187; Ṭabarsī 1993, 4:559; Subḥānī 2000, 6:131). In fact, their opposition stemmed from jealousy and hostility, making them unwilling to accept any proof, instead using each miracle as an excuse for further denial.

To elaborate, the term “sign” (*āya*) in the verse “*When a sign comes to them, they say, ‘We will not believe until we are given the like of what was given to Allah’s messengers’*” (Quran 6:124) refers to tangible and sensory miracles of the prophets, such as Moses’ staff and his shining hand, rather than the Qur’ān itself. The reasoning behind this interpretation lies in the use of the indefinite noun “*āya*,” which suggests a general reference to various miracles. Additionally, the absence of the explicit mention of the word “Qur’ān” and the lack of the verb “*nuzūl*” (sending down), which is typically used to describe the revelation of divine scripture, further support this understanding (Subḥānī 1995, 7:218).

Several other Qur’ānic verses also highlight the reactions of the polytheists and idolaters toward the miracles of the Prophet (see Berenjkar 2012, pp. 3-5). Whenever they witnessed a miracle, rather than accepting it, they dismissed it as sorcery. For instance, *Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt* (37:14-15) states: “*and when they see a sign they make it an object of ridicule, (14) and say, ‘This is nothing but plain magic!’*” Similarly, *Sūrat al-Qamar* (54:2) declares: “*If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, ‘An incessant magic!’*” In both verses, the verbs *ra’aw* (have seen) and *yaraw* (see) clearly indicate the physical witnessing of a tangible miracle rather than merely hearing the verses of the Qur’ān. Thus, it can be concluded that the term *āya* in these verses refers to a visible and sensory miracle distinct from divine revelation (Subḥānī 1996, 219; Subḥānī 2000, 4:105). Accordingly, many exegetes interpret *āya* in these verses as referring to

the miracle of the splitting of the moon (Muqātil b. Sulaymān 2002, 4:147; Ṭabarī 1991, 23:29; Ṭabarānī 2008, 25:299; Māturīdī 2005, 8:548; Thaʿlabī 2001, 8:141; Baghawī 1999, 4:28; Khāzin 1995, 4:17; Ibn al-Jawzī 3:538; Shawkānī 1993, 5:145; Khaṭīb al-Sharbīnī, 2004, 3:454; Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān 1999, 6:475). This serves as evidence that the Prophet performed miracles beyond the Qurʾān itself.

Regarding the Ascension (*Miʿrāj*), it must be noted that the event is explicitly and unequivocally mentioned in the Qurʾān. Moreover, the number of hadiths concerning the Ascension is so vast that it has undoubtedly reached the level of *tawātur* (mass transmission), making it impossible to dismiss them as fabrications. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī records approximately thirty-one individuals who narrated reports confirming the occurrence of the Ascension in his work *al-Khaṣāʾiṣ al-Kubrā* (see Suyūṭī 2021, 1:252ff). Furthermore, in addition to these transmitters of hadiths, the Prophet himself publicly declared this event in Masjid al-Ḥarām, where both his followers and the polytheists heard his account. Numerous historical and exegetical sources have referenced this event in various ways (see Bayhaqī 1985, 2:357; Maqrīzī 1999, 8:253; Dhahabī 1992, 1:243; Ibn Bābawayh 1997, 449; Ibn Kathīr 1998, 3:114; Astarābādī 1995, 109; Ṭabāṭabāʾī 1970, 13:17; Abū Zuhra 2004, 1:415).

Therefore, given the collective evidence from the Qurʾānic verses, it is evident that the Prophet, in addition to the Qurʾān, performed other miracles explicitly mentioned in the Qurʾān itself. There is no dispute regarding the authenticity and occurrence of these miracles. However, any differences in the details, extent, or manner of these miracles do not serve as a basis for their denial.

Second Objection: The Difference in the Portrayal of the Prophet in the Qurʾān and Post-Qurʾānic Sources

In response to the claim that the Prophet is portrayed in the Qurʾān as merely a warner, whereas post-Qurʾānic sources depict him as a role model and hero (Rubin 2010, 39), it should be noted that this difference arises from variations in perspective, purpose, audience, and the distinction between conciseness and elaboration. The Qurʾān, as divine revelation,



emphasizes the Prophet's divine mission and responsibility, while people's perceptions, influenced by emotions, experiences, and beliefs, focus on his human qualities and exemplary character.

From the divine perspective, the Prophet's status in the Qur'an is that of a servant, a warner, a messenger, and a prophet, entrusted by God with the mission of guiding people toward Him without the slightest error. God emphasizes the Prophet's immense responsibility and the consequences of any potential mistakes, highlighting his prophetic and divine role. However, the people and his followers perceive the Prophet from a human perspective in terms of his interactions and conduct. This viewpoint focuses on his moral, human, and exemplary qualities, portraying him as a hero, a role model, and the most elevated being to have set foot on Earth—one beyond comparison with any other historical figure, for he is the representative of the Almighty Creator on Earth. This is the people's perception of the Prophet, which is not merely an abstract idealization but is also shaped by his ethical conduct and social interactions.

Another reason for this difference lies in the purpose and audience of the Qur'an. The primary audience of the Qur'an is the general public, and its main objective is to guide humanity toward truth and righteousness. Therefore, it emphasizes the Prophet's aspects of servitude, prophecy, warning, and his role as a caller to Islam, clarifying his mission in this regard. Other aspects, such as the Prophet's role as a warrior, are left less emphasized, as the focus of all his virtues is centered on his prophethood and mission.

Another reason for this difference in portrayal lies in the distinction between conciseness and elaboration. The Qur'an addresses matters in a general manner, while the hadiths and historical accounts provide more detailed reports. The fact that two cases differ in terms of generality and detail does not mean they are contradictory. In fact, such cases are complements to each other. For instance, regarding the miracles of the Prophet, such as the splitting of the moon, the Qur'an mentions it briefly, while the details are found in the hadiths. Similarly, concerning the

Prophet's orphanhood, the Qur'ān refers to it in a general sense, but historical sources elaborate on it in greater detail. These hadiths in no way contradict the Qur'ān.

Therefore, it cannot be said that the Prophet is only portrayed as a warner in the Qur'ān and as a role model and hero in post-Qur'ānic sources. Both perspectives are complementary, and the difference lies in the viewpoint, language, position of the speaker, and the relationship between the Qur'ān and Islamic sources, all of which should be considered in our analyses.

The Third Objection: The Splitting of the Moon as Part of Qur'ānic Eschatology

Rubin claims that the verses of *Sūrat al-Qamar* are about the Day of Judgment, and later, this eschatological sign was transformed by the followers of the Prophet into a historical miracle (Rubin 2010, 40).

This claim by Uri Rubin contradicts numerous Qur'anic and hadith-based pieces of evidence. A thorough analysis of the verses related to the splitting of the moon shows that this miracle occurred during the time of the Prophet and was presented as a clear sign to invite people to Islam. The assertion that the first verse of *Sūrat al-Qamar*, due to its placement after the phrase "The Hour has drawn near," refers to the Day of Judgment and that the moon will split on that day is incorrect. The apparent meaning of the verse does not conflict with this understanding.

In response to Uri Rubin's critique of the splitting of the moon, we can point to several key aspects that clearly demonstrate the power and authenticity of this miracle in the Qur'ān and Islamic hadiths.

1. Citing the past tense in the Qur'ān: The first verse of *Sūrat al-Qamar* clearly uses the past tense verb "the moon was split (*inshaqq*).” This use of the past tense indicates that this event occurred in the past and cannot be interpreted as a sign of the Day of Judgment (Tustarī 2002: 158; Ṭabarī 1991, 27:50; Ṭabarsī 1993, 9:282).

2. It is acceptable to change the meaning of a word from its original and commonly understood sense to another meaning only when there is a valid reason. As Abū al-Muzaffar al-Sam'ānī stated, interpreting the verse "the



moon was split” as “the moon will be split” is incorrect, and such a change from the apparent meaning of the verse is not permissible without a decisive reason (Sam‘ānī 1997, 5:307). This point is a key reason for rejecting Rubin's claim.

3. The incident of the splitting of the moon occurred during the time of Prophet Muhammad in Mecca, at the request of the city’s polytheists. They had asked the Prophet to present a tangible sign of his prophethood. The Prophet, accepting this request, asked Allah to display a clear miracle. Following this request, on the fourteenth night of the lunar month (full moon), the moon was split into two halves, with each half positioned in a separate location. This astonishing event was visible to all the polytheists. However, instead of leading them to faith, this clear miracle only increased their disbelief and defiance. They rejected the reality of the event and, making excuses, attributed this divine miracle to magic and sorcery (Tustarī 2002, 158; Ṭabarī 1991, 27:50; Ṭabarsī 1993, 9:282).

4. Interpreting the event of the splitting of the moon as a sign of the Day of Resurrection contradicts both Qur’ānic and hadith-based evidence. This is because the content of the verse “*If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, ‘An incessant magic!’*” (54:2), which immediately follows the verse about the splitting of the moon, clearly shows that this miracle took place during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and in response to a request made by the polytheists. The polytheists’ reaction of attributing the event to magic indicates that they witnessed the miracle firsthand and directly encountered it. Given this, if the splitting of the moon referred only to events on the Day of Resurrection, the polytheists’ reaction would be unjustifiable. On the Day of Resurrection, the truths will be revealed, and denial will be impossible. However, during the lifetime of the Prophet, due to their disbelief and obstinacy, the polytheists were able to deny the truth and even attribute a clear miracle to magic (Zamakhsharī 1987, 4:431; Qurṭubī 1985, 7:217; Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1970, 19:56; Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2014, 134). Therefore, based on Qur’ānic and hadith-based evidence, it can be concluded that the incident of the splitting of the moon took place during

the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and is considered one of his miracles (see Mohamadi 2023, pp. 196-198).

5. If the splitting of the moon were only a sign of the Day of Resurrection, it could not have been met with the reaction of the disbelievers of Mecca, who called it “a constant magic.” This is because the verse, “*If they see a sign, they turn away, and say, ‘An incessant magic!’*” (*Quran 54:2*), indicates that this event was a tangible miracle that took place during the time of the Prophet. Moreover, this interpretation is incompatible with the view that the splitting of the moon refers to the Day of Resurrection. It is clear that on that day, the truth will be fully revealed, and no one will be able to deny it. Thus, it does not make sense to say, after witnessing the splitting of the moon, “This is constant magic,” on that day. It is evident that this verse pertains to the present world (Zamakhsharī 1987, 4:431; Qurṭubī 1985, 7:217; Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1970, 19:56; Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2014, 134).

6. Moreover, the term “sign” (*āya*) refers to a miracle in general, which includes the splitting of the moon. There is no doubt that the subjects of the verbs, “see,” “turn away,” and “say” are the polytheists of Mecca during the time of Prophet Muhammad. Nusrat Begum Amin also emphasizes the word “constant” in the verse, pointing out that the polytheists attributed all of the Prophet’s miracles to magic. This pattern of behavior reflects the repeated and ongoing reactions of the disbelievers to various miracles (Nusrat Begum Amin 1982, 12:420). Furthermore, the documentation of this event in various historical sources and by numerous eyewitnesses adds to its historical credibility. Al-Sam‘ānī, for example, recorded this event from various sources (Sam‘ānī 1997, 5:137). Therefore, this event is confirmed by all of them.

The Fourth Objection: Muslims’ Reliance on Modern Technologies to Prove Muhammad’s Superiority

The claim that Muslims today attempt to prove Muhammad’s superiority by seeking scientific evidence for the splitting of the moon through telescopic images of its surface (Rubin 2010, 59) is incorrect because:



1. The use of telescopic tools and modern technologies to examine religious miracles reflects scientific progress and an effort to gain a deeper understanding of these events.
2. A miracle is an extraordinary event beyond human capability, serving as proof of the prophethood and divine mission of God's messengers (Āmidī 2002, 4:17; Ḥillī 1987,171; Taftāzānī 1987, 5:11). These efforts are not about proving the superiority of the Prophet of Islam but rather about seeking the truth and gaining a better understanding of miracles.
3. Rubin's perspective may stem from religious presuppositions and personal biases. For a fair and scholarly critique, one must avoid prejudices influenced by religious viewpoints and biases and instead focus on the available evidence and reasoning.
4. However, if Rubin's argument is that there is no valid scientific evidence to support the occurrence of this miracle and that Muslims seek scientific validation, the response would be as follows: When reasoning about events related to the metaphysical realm, one must rely on appropriate arguments and evidence specific to that domain. The occurrence of the splitting of the moon is entirely within the will and decree of God, the Creator of the universe, and is by no means impossible. In this context, the focus should be on the implications of scriptural evidence and historical reports rather than on prejudgments shaped by materialistic and non-theistic perspectives. Although there is no direct scientific evidence confirming the splitting of the moon, this does not mean the event did not occur. Many religious miracles transcend the scientific understanding of their time and cannot be measured by conventional scientific standards. Reflecting on extraordinary phenomena and recognizing that empirical sciences have yet to provide a clear explanation for such events should caution against outright denial merely because an event appears improbable, extraordinary, or does not conform to empirical methodologies.

Rejecting an event solely due to its incompatibility with empirical observation disregards the limitations of experimental sciences, which are confined to the material realm and constrained by human intellectual boundaries. This perspective has been acknowledged by philosophers of religion, including even atheists such as John Spurzheim (see Aḥmadī 2010, 242–243; Qadrūdān Qarāmaliḳī 2002, 170).

5. From a scientific perspective, there is no reason to deny the possibility of the moon splitting. Events such as meteorite impacts on celestial bodies, which create fissures and fractures, demonstrate the feasibility of such phenomena (see Makārim Shīrāzī 1992, 103).

Therefore, the Qur'ān and hadiths affirm that the miracle of the moon splitting occurred during the time of the Prophet, and the objections raised by Orientalists in this regard are unfounded.

The Fifth Objection: Political and Ideological Uses of the Narrative

Uri Rubin claims that exegetical distortions have been made in favor of a historical reading of the first and second verses of *Sūrat al-Qamar*—where followers allegedly fabricated hadiths to strengthen the status of the Prophet, the Imams, or the first caliph, and to affirm the legitimacy of Islam, using the account as a symbol of God's power and the greatness of Islam (Rubin 2010, pp. 54-55).

In response, it should be noted that rejecting a historical narration can only be justified by factors such as weak transmission chains or textual inconsistencies. The hadith regarding the splitting of the moon are well-established, widely recognized in historical sources, and have attained the status of *mutawātir* (mass-transmitted reports), making them difficult to dismiss outright (see Ibn Kathīr 1999, 4:427; Ibn Kathīr 1950, 2:114; Zarqānī 1996, 6:172). While it is possible that some alterations were made within these hadiths to serve the interests of different factions—such as the supporters of the caliphate potentially inserting the presence of the first caliph to bolster his standing—such interpolations do not undermine the



authenticity of the core narrative. Even if minor modifications have been introduced, they do not invalidate the consensus among Muslims regarding the event, nor do they negate the historical credibility of the account. This argument underscores the necessity of distinguishing between authentic historical reports and potential later embellishments. Evaluating these narrations requires referring to reliable sources and avoiding superficial judgments. Thus, the miracle of the splitting of the moon remains a historically credible event and cannot be dismissed merely due to the possibility of minor and secondary modifications.

Findings and Conclusions

The present research was conducted with the aim of critically analyzing the views and objections raised regarding the miracle of the splitting of the moon, particularly Uri Rubin's claims. The findings of this research are as follows:

- Historical validation of the miracle of the splitting of the moon: Numerous Qur'ānic and hadith-based pieces of evidence, along with the consensus of Muslims on its occurrence, affirm its historical authenticity.
- Refutation of Rubin's claim regarding the absence of non-Qur'ānic miracles: The Qur'ān and hadiths explicitly mention multiple miracles of the Prophet, countering this assertion.
- Differences in the portrayal of the Prophet in the Qur'ān and post-Qur'ānic sources: These differences stem from variations in perspective, purpose, and audience, without entailing any contradiction.
- Rejection of Rubin's eschatological interpretation of the verse on the splitting of the moon: A careful analysis of the relevant verses demonstrates that this miracle took place during the Prophet's lifetime.



- Political and ideological uses of the narrative: While some distortions may have occurred in the transmission of the event, they do not undermine the authenticity of the core narrative.
- Muslims' use of modern technology: The application of scientific tools to examine miracles reflects an effort to gain a better understanding of these events rather than an attempt to elevate the Prophet's status.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the splitting of the moon is a historically credible event, and the objections raised against it can be effectively refuted.

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