



Book Review



Dr. Sayyid Reza Mo'addab, *I'jāz-i Qurān* [Inimitable, Miraculous Aspects of the Holy Quran], 2nd ed., Qom: Al-Mustafa International University, 1390 Sh/ 2011. 240 pp. [In Persian]

Since the earliest instances of the descent of the Divine revelation of the Holy Quran unto the Prophet Muḥammad, everybody, particularly erudite and poetically talented Arabs, have got astonished at sensing and tasting the exceptional charm, beauty, sweetness, strength, force, attention-grabbing traits, and the unique rhetoric and language of the Holy Quran. Granted that the Holy Quran is in Classical Arabic, the Arabic variety of the Holy Quran is sublimer and much superior by far than all other Arabic discourses, even more attractive than the discourses, hadiths, and sermons of the Prophet Muḥammad. Generally termed as 'inimitability' and/or 'miraculousness' (Arabic and Persian *i'jāz*) of the Holy Quran, this uniquely Quranic phenomenon, with its multiple instances, has attracted the attention of many a disciple of the Holy Quran. As such, the Holy Quran has been an evident miracle of the Prophet Muḥammad. This Divine miraculousness has made many people bow down to it in esteem.

The book under review has five chapters. The first chapter invites the reader to certain general aspects of the nature of the Quranic inimitability or miraculousness. It sheds light on inimitability as an instance of being a miracle. Starting from the Holy Quran itself, it draws citations from various Quranic verses in that Allah refers to it as an instance of the Divine miracle. It indicates that this Divine emphasis took place in the two main phases of the life of the Prophet, i.e., both in Mecca and in Medina.

The book has adopted an instructive lesson plan. Chapter two is devoted to multiple assertions made by the fourteen Holy Infallible dignitaries. According to Shii thought, the Infallibles are the most knowledgeable dignitaries on any enquiry whatsoever that may pertain to the Holy Quran. In the light of this worldview, inimitability-cum-miraculousness of the Quran is explained in the words of the Prophet Muḥammad through to the 12th Infallible Imam al-Mahdi.

The third chapter of the book deals with the views of outstanding Shii scholars throughout Islamic history. Here the list begins with Sheikh Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Baghdadi "Sheikh al-Mufid" down to our contemporary, leading Shii clerics, e.g., Allama Sayyid Muhammad-Husayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Khu'i and Imam Khomeini. In doing this, various miraculous aspects of the Quranic verses, rhetorical, social, scientific, historical, and ethical, are brought to the fore.

Chapter Four of the book sheds light on the views of Sunni ulema regarding miraculous aspects of the Holy Quran. The list begins with Ḥamd b. Muḥammad al-Khaṭṭābī and then turns to al-Rāghib al-Isfāhānī and pursues the line down to the contemporary Sunni Arab scholar Muṣṭafā Ṣādiq al-Rāfī'ī.

The last chapter of the book, indeed the most detailed, all-inclusive one, deals with various aspects of the miraculous, hence inimitable, nature of the Holy Quran. It takes the reader to the nature and significance of the Divine miracles depicted and expressed in the Holy Quran. Apart from various linguistic and rhetorical facets of Quranic miracles, it shows to the reader other aspects that were, later on, confirmed by scientific advancements, e.g., the stages of the growth of human embryo when there



was no device whatsoever to detect it. Numerical and mathematical miracles observable in the Holy Quran have also received adequate treatment.

The book makes references to the views of a number of leading Western scholars who expressed their amazement vis-à-vis the Holy Quran and dealt with it in full esteem. References are to translations. The final part of this chapter lists a number of stubborn Arab poets who attempted to fabricate something by way of opposing the Holy Quran. All of them failed and were ashamed to have found all their toil and trouble result in vain.

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