

Sūrat al-Hud Verse 44

وَقِيلَ يَا أَرْضُ ابْلَعِي مَاءَكِ وَيَا سَمَاءُ أَقْلِعِي وَغِيضَ الْمَاءِ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَاسْتَوَتْ عَلَى الْجُودِيِّ ۖ وَقِيلَ
بُعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

11:44 - Then it was said, ‘O earth, swallow your water! O sky, withhold!’ The waters receded; the edict was carried out, and it settled on [Mount] Judi. Then it was said, ‘Away with the unjust people!’

Questions for Reflection

1) Do creations like the earth and sky also receive commands and obey?

Commentary

The flood continued for a long time, sweeping away all that came on its path. Many of the rejecters of faith had taken refuge in mountains or higher elevations, but they were all swept away. Commentators of the Quran say the flood lasted for six months in which water flowed from the earth and fell from the sky consistently. Others believe that the flood lasted for 40 days.

Then one day, Allah commanded the storm to end. He commanded the earth to swallow water and the sky to stop raining. The winds calmed down and the clouds cleared. The ark came to rest safely on the side of a mountain as the flood was finally over. The ark rested upon Mt. Judi. Prophet Nuh stepped out of the ark, followed by the believers. When their feet touched the ground, the believers fell to the ground in prostration and thanked Allah for saving them from the flood. The Prophet set the animals, birds, and insects free to roam the earth.

The above verse outlines the end of the storm in six steps;

- 1) The earth is told to swallow its water.
- 2) The sky is told to stop raining.
- 3) The water receded.
- 4) The matter (episode, journey . . .) came to an end.
- 5) The ark rested on Mt Judi.
- 6) The disbelievers were drowned.

This verse shows that the earth and sky (as well as other creation) have some form of awareness and they obey the commands of Allah. The Quran talks of other creation whom Allah inspires and commands. It also says that all of creation glorifies Allah, but we do not understand their glorification. One form of their glorification is following the path of action laid out for them by Allah.

According to Arabic linguists this verse is one of the most eloquent in the Quran as it says in very short and clearly expressed words exactly what happened. It is said to be one of the most beautiful

and expressive passages in the Arabic language and literature. It has a wonderful moving force and fluency through which a lot that happened in one scene is explained in few words.

History tells us that the Quraysh who were opposed to the Prophet (s) gathered a few poets and asked them to compose poetry that would rival the Quran in words and content. They prepared delicious meals for them and asked to work at it. The group went through verses of the Quran. When they came to this verse they were wonderstruck and exclaimed that no human being could say it so well. The right words were used to strongly describe what happened, in a unique manner.

Mount Judi is believed to be in South east Turkey, close to the Syrian and Iraqi borders. Others say it could be a mountain in Iraq, or in Syria.

Lessons

- 1) All created beings obey and glorify Allah.
- 2) Sajdah of Shukr is done by believers to thank Allah for a blessing.
- 3) The poetic brilliance of the Quran is matchless.

Cross reference verses

- 1) Creation being commanded to obey Allah – 41:11, 16:68
- 2) Challenge to compose poetry like the Quran – 2:23, 10:38

Connecting topics

- 1) Importance of the Sajdah of Shukr

<http://www.shiadas.com/SpecialPurposeDuas/sdcc/5008218836391135923/PROSTRATIONOFTHANKSGIVINGSAJDAALSHUKR/>
<https://al-rida.net/knowledge-base/sajdat-al-shukr/>

- 2) Beauty of the poetry of Quran

- a) An interesting discussion can be found at:

<https://www.shiachat.com/forum/topic/235027786-are-muslims-lying-about-the-qurans-inimitability/>

- b) See notes below, extracted from <https://www.quora.com/What-makes-the-Quran-so-unique-in-Arabic-linguistics>.

Arabic language rules and grammar are owed to the Qur'an, final book of our Lord. The necessity for supporting Arabic language by guiding rules, came from an urgent need to protect the original speech from mistakes in grammar by new non-Arab comers into Islam. Non-Arabs couldn't tell the difference for unwritten but spoken letters with or without dots and diacritics.

Grammar rules were derived out of and/or particularly devised to have proper spread of Qur'anic recitation and understanding plus knowledge of Arabic language.

Along came sciences such as:

- Grammar نحو NaHu
- Conjugation صرف Sarf.
- Eloquent and Rhetoric speech البلاغة والبديع والبيان
- Sciences of phonetics and phonemes. والترتيل التجويد
- Different Quranic recitations قراءات
- Original ancient Arabic tribal dialects.
- Dictionaries and word etymologies, etc...
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Before Qur'anic revelation, Arabic language was only vocal, and was spoken by a limited number of scattered tribes within the Arabian peninsula. Contrary to other Semitic languages (old Sabiac-Musnad, Aramaic, Nabatean, Hebrew) Arabic was not on record and was not documented in any written form.

Arabs prior to Islam were well known and versed in eloquent poetry, it was subject of pride and competition between various tribes and regions and was the dominant media for memorising and spreading events and glorifying individuals and tribes.

Annual competitions would be held in a special market (Okaz) at the mountainous city of Taif, 200 km south of Makkah, to pick top poets. The winning poetry gets the reward of being hanged on the walls of Ka'bah, the sacred house of Makkah, and given the name of **المعلقات** 'The hanged ones' ten of those were famous at the time of Prophet Mohammad.

Early Islamic era witnessed many of these great poets. Two of those, Labeed bin Rabea [معلقة لبيد بن ربيعة](#) and [Al-Khansa](#), quit composing poetry after experiencing the unique eloquence of the Quran. Labeed was on top of the top ten known poets whom their poetry was hanged on the Ka'bah, and Al khansa' was named as the top most lady poet of all times!

Following are some examples of Qur'anic eloquence:

- Rhythme is unique and flawless in the recitation of each and every verse **السجع والترتيل**
- Flow of different subjects without feeling of breakage **الانتقال من موضوع لآخر**
- Last three sections of Qur'an (out of 30) are short and easy to memorize. **سور قصار سهلة الحفظ**
- Medium sized chapters each has its own separate style. **لكل سورة متوسطة أسلوب خاص بها**
- Long chapters are mostly unrhymed as they tell stories of past nations and detail certain laws. **السور الطويلة غير مسجعة وفيها أحكام وقصص الاولين وعبر**
- Unique words used in various verses of different chapters, not used in others, which at many instances it is enough to know one word to search the verse and reference the chapter.

كلمات متفردة في كل سورة وفي كثير من الايات مما يسهل مهمة البحث ومعرفة الاية والسورة

- The entire book of Qur'an (604 pages A6 size, or 250 pages A4) is memorized by hundreds of thousands. And multiple sections by millions.