

= Splitting of the moon =

The splitting of the moon ( Arabic : ?????? ????? ) was a miracle attributed to the Islamic prophet Muhammad , derived from the Quranic verses 54 : 1 @-@ 2 , and mentioned by Muslim traditions such as the Asbab al @-@ nuzul ( context of revelation ) . Most Muslim commentators interpret the event as a literal split in the moon , while some others identify it as an event that will happen at judgement day or an optical illusion .

Early traditions supporting a literal interpretation are transmitted on the authority of companions of Muhammad such as Ibn Abbas , Anas bin Malik , Abdullah bin Masud and others . According to the Indian Muslim scholar Abdullah Yusuf Ali , the moon will split again when the day of judgment approaches . He says that the verses may also have an allegorical meaning , i.e. the matter has become clear as the moon . The Qur 'anic verses 54 : 1 @-@ 2 was part of the debate between medieval Muslim theologians and Muslim philosophers over the issue of the inviolability of heavenly bodies . In 2010 a NASA Lunar Science Institute ( NLSI ) staff scientist , named Brad Bailey , said " No current scientific evidence reports that the Moon was split into two ( or more ) parts and then reassembled at any point in the past . "

The narrative was used by some later Muslims to convince others of the prophethood of Muhammad . It has also inspired many Muslim poets , especially in India .

= = The Qur 'an and Islamic tradition = =

Verses 54 : 1 @-@ 2 of the Quran reads :

The Hour ( of Judgment ) is nigh , and the moon is cleft asunder . But if they see a Sign , they turn away , and say , " This is ( but ) transient magic .

Early traditions and stories explain this verse as a miracle performed by Muhammad , following requests of some members of the Quraysh . Most Muslim commentators accept the authenticity of those traditions . The following verse 54 : 2 , " But if they see a Sign , they turn away , and say , ' This is ( but ) transient magic ' " is taken in the support of this view . The classical commentator Ibn Kathir provides a list of the early traditions mentioning the incident : A tradition transmitted on the authority of Anas bin Malik states that Muhammad split the moon after the pagan Meccans asked for a miracle . Another tradition from Malik transmitted through other chains of narrations , mentions that the mount Nur was visible between the two parts of the moon ( Mount Nur is located in Hijaz . Muslims believe that Muhammad received his first revelations from God in a cave on this mountain , Cave Hira ' ) . A tradition narrated on the authority of Jubayr ibn Mut 'im with a single chain of transmission says that the two parts of the moon stood on two mountains . This tradition further states that the Meccan responded by saying " Muhammad has taken us by his magic ... If he was able to take us by magic , he will not be able to do so with all people . " Traditions transmitted on the authority of Ibn Abbas briefly mention the incident and do not provide much details . Traditions transmitted on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud describe the incident as follows :

We were along with God 's Messenger at Mina , that moon was split up into two . One of its parts was behind the mountain and the other one was on this side of the mountain . God 's Messenger said to us : Bear witness to this 039 : 6725

The narrative was used by some later Muslims to convince others of the prophethood of Muhammad . Annemarie Schimmel for example quotes the following from Muslim scholar Qadi Iyad who worked in the 12th century :

It has not been said of any people on the earth that the moon was observed that night such that it could be stated that it was not split . Even if this had been reported from many different places , so that one would have to exclude the possibility that all agreed upon a lie , yet , we would not accept this as proof to the contrary , for the moon is not seen in the same way by different people ... An eclipse is visible in one country but not in the other one ; in one place it is total , in the other one only partial .

= = Other perspectives = =

Al @-@ Zamakhshari , a famous commentator of the Qur 'an , acknowledged the splitting of the moon as one of Muhammad 's miracles . But he also suggested that the splitting might take place only on the day of judgment . The Muslim scholar Yusuf Ali provides three different interpretations of the verse . He holds that perhaps all three are applicable to the verse : Moon once appeared cleft asunder at the time of Muhammad in order to convince the unbelievers . It will split again when the day of judgment approaches ( here the prophetic past tense is taken to indicate the future ) . Yusuf Ali connects this incident with the disruption of the solar system mentioned in 75 : 8 @-@ 9 . Lastly , he says that the verses can be metaphorical , meaning that the matter has become clear as the moon .

Some dissenting commentators who do not accept the miracle narration believe that the verse only refers to the splitting of the moon at the day of judgment . Likewise , M. A. S. Abdel Haleem writes :

The Arabic uses the past tense , as if that Day were already here , to help the reader / listener imagine how it will be . Some traditional commentators hold the view that this describes an actual event at the time of the Prophet , but it clearly refers to the end of the world .

Some Muslim scholars postulate and believe that a ( now known ) Astronomical event must have happened at that time , which made it appear to the observers as if the moon had been split in two , because the phenomenon was seen at least in India as well . One of the possible lunar events could be a large asteroid hitting the moon , and the plume and debris from the strike blocking enough lunar view to make it appear as if the Moon had split in two . A second possibility could be a celestial body passing between Earth and the Moon and blocking some part of lunar surface for short time . Moreover , in the light of the verse that was revealed at that time , the word " Saa 'at " also means spiritual revolution , so the event also symbolized the end of the Pagan Arab culture and religions which used Moon as their symbol or worshipped moon gods .

Western historians such as A.J. Wensinck and Denis Gril , reject the historicity of the miracle arguing that the Qur 'an itself denies miracles , in their traditional sense , in connection with Muhammad .

= = Debate over the inviolability of heavenly bodies = =

Quran 54 : 1 @-@ 2 was part of the debate between medieval Muslim theologians and Muslims philosophers over the issue of the inviolability of heavenly bodies . The philosophers held that nature was composed of four fundamental elements : earth , air , fire , and water . These philosophers however held that the composition of heavenly bodies were different . This belief was based on the observation that the motion of heavenly bodies , unlike that of terrestrial bodies , was circular and without any beginnings or ends . This appearance of eternity in the heavenly bodies , led the philosophers to conclude that the heavens were inviolable . Theologians on the other hand proposed their own conception of the terrestrial matter : the nature was composed of uniform atoms that were re @-@ created at every instant by God ( the latter idea was added to defend God 's omnipotence against the encroachment of the independent secondary causes ) . According to this conception , the heavenly bodies were essentially the same as the terrestrial bodies , and thus could be pierced .

In order to deal with implication of the traditional understanding of the Quranic verse 54 : 1 @-@ 2 , some philosophers argued that the verse should be interpreted metaphorically ( e.g. the verse could have referred to a partial lunar eclipse in which then earth obscured part of the moon ) .

= = Literature = =

This tradition has inspired many Muslim poets , especially in India . In poetical language Muhammad is sometimes equated with the sun or the morning light . As such , part of a poem from Sana 'i , a renowned early twelfth century Persian Sufi poet , reads : " the sun should split the moon in two " . Jalal ad @-@ Din Rumi , a renowned Persian @-@ writing poet and mystic , in one of his poems conveys the idea that to be split by the Muhammad 's finger is the greatest bliss the lowly

moon can hope for and a devoted believer splits the moon with Muhammad 's finger . Elaborating on this idea , Abd ar @-@ Rahman Jami , one of the classical poets and mystics of Persia , plays with the shapes and numerical values of Arabic letters in a complicated way : The full moon , Jami says , resembles the Arabic letter for a circular m with the numerical value 40 . When Muhammad split the moon , it became like two crescent @-@ shaped n 's ( the Arabic letter for " n " ) whose numerical value is 50 each . This would mean that , thanks for the miracle , the value of moon had increased .

In another place Rumi , according to Schimmel , alludes to two miracles attributed to Muhammad in tradition , i.e. the splitting of the moon ( which shows the futility of man 's scientific approach to nature ) , and the other that Muhammad was illiterate .

= = NASA photograph = =

Apollo mission photographs of the Rima Ariadaeus revealed a 300 km @-@ long rift line on the surface of the moon . On being asked in 2010 about Internet suggestions that this was proof of the Quranic story , NASA scientist Brad Bailey said , " My recommendation is to not believe everything you read on the internet . Peer @-@ reviewed papers are the only scientifically valid sources of information out there . No current scientific evidence reports that the Moon was split into two ( or more ) parts and then reassembled at any point in the past . "