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## The Misrepresented Claims Of David Samuel Margoliouth On Prophet Muhammad’s Miracles: A Critical Evaluation

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to evaluate the misrepresented claims of the Western orientalist, David Samuel Margoliouth on the miracles of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). Like most Christian scholars, Margoliouth claimed that only Biblical prophets wrought a number of miracles to validate their truth, and Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) possessed no miracle including the Qur’an. To justify his claim, Margoliouth asserted that even the Qur’an clearly points out that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was never given any miracle, and hence, Muslims’ claims that he performed many physical miracles were just inaccurate and groundless. In attempt to evaluate the misrepresented claims of Margoliouth, this paper examines his main evidences and observations. At the same time, it deliberates a critical investigation of historical Islamic data about the miracles of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) in order to point out the validity of those miracles. Based on the historical facts, it can be justifiably claimed that Margoliouth’s rejection of Prophet’s miracles was part of his misrepresentation of Islam.

**Keywords:** *David Samuel Margoliouth, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), Miracles, Prophethood*

### Introduction: Critical Evaluation on the Orientalist Views of Margoliouth

There are two trends of writings on Islam and Muslim societies. The first one is the orientalist trend and the other is non-orientalist. Orientalist trend is dominated by Western discourse on Islam with pre-conceived biases and an ideological distortion whereas non-orientalist scholarship is grounded firmly in sound methods of research, non-biased and contributes to promote academic honesty. This paper focuses on the approach of the orientalist

approach done by David Samuel Margoliouth. Margoliouth’s expertise in and contributions to the field of Islam studies cannot be overemphasized. Despite the fact that he was expert in other fields, he appeared to be more interested in Islamic studies and Arabic in which his contributions were immense. He wrote a considerable number of books in the field. His writings led some scholars to assert that he was more knowledgeable in Islamic

studies than most of the Muslim scholars . However, his works entitled *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam* (1905), *Mohammedanism* (1911), and *Early Development of Mohammedanism* (1914) had made him appeared as a controversial interpreter of Islam. By observing his writings, it may be argued that Margoliouth is one of the bitter enemies of Islam. Although he possessed considerable knowledge on Islam from its original sources, he preferred to view it from negative viewpoint. Humayn Ansari pointed out that ‘while Margoliouth had many things to say about Muhammad and Islam, he considered Muhammad and his followers to be ultimately deeply flawed in several respects’ (K. Humyan Ansari, 2013) .

It can be observed that Margoliouth in his discussion on Islam was influenced by the methods and ideas of many other orientalist. In most cases, he quoted Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), Theodor Noldeke (1836-1930), Julius Wellhause (1844-1918), Sir William Muir (1819-1905), Aloys Sprenger (1813-1893), and many others. That might be the reason for the appearance of their relics in his various writings. For example, he shared the same idea with William Muir in portraying Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) as epileptic. He also subscribed to Ignaz Goldziher’s methodology in rejecting the traditions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h)

There various methodologies applied by orientalist and Margoliouth also used them in his various treatises on Islam, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and the revelation of the Qur’an. First, he used the theory of Judeo-Christian origin of the Qur’an. Margoliouth applied this theory and contended that a large number of the Quranic verses are from the Christian and Jewish traditions. He also asserted that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) composed his Qur’an from those traditions but he often declined to mention the sources. Second, Margoliouth applied the epileptic theory. Like some other orientalist, he also maintained that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) suffered from epilepsy. This assertion appears in several places in his treatises. He used this theory to argue that since the Prophet (p.b.u.h) suffered from epilepsy, his claim of the revelation cannot be accepted because he was not free from hallucinations and imaginations which are

usually accompanied by epileptic fits. The third method used by orientalist and also Margoliouth is historical critical method which is also known as historical criticism. Next, the orientalist applied the skepticism method. This method is used in order to take Muslims away from the original sources of the Islamic doctrine, or at least cast a serious doubt in their authenticity, and in turn cast doubt in their beliefs and practices as well as the sirah of the Prophet. Through this method, most of them argue that the Qur’an contains many errors and mistakes, and that it was altered during its compilation.

The traditions of the Prophet were also said to be fabricated by later Muslim scholars because the Prophet could not have said them all. Skepticism about and questioning the authenticity of the Islamic sources can be figured out in Margoliouth’s various treatises on Islam. In several places, he offered skeptical notions as regard to the Muslim sources. This caused him to reject several Prophet’s traditions as his role model Goldziher did. He argued that instead of painstaking and meticulous works conducted by Muslim scholars in compiling the Prophet’s traditions, we are still skeptical whether those traditions attributed to the Prophet were actually his. The last method applied by orientalist which is also used by Margoliouth is subjective approach. Although Margoliouth was academically considered by some of the western scholars to be well-versed in Arabic and Islamic studies and even more than most of the Muslim scholars, his methodology appeared to be subjective, not academic in nature. His writings reflect his Christian prejudices, for instance, his evaluation of the Prophet as an imposter and the Qur’an as plagiarized copy of Judeo-Christian traditions. As an acclaimed professor of Arabic and able interpreter of Islam, Margoliouth could neither clear himself nor could he be cleared by anyone from the charge of partiality and injustice which he had done against Islam and the Prophet.

It was obvious that Margoliouth was greatly influenced by many eminent orientalist such as Goldziher, Noldeke, Muir, Sprenger, and others. In his various writing, Margoliouth had used cruel and brutal words against the Prophet and showed hostility to Islam. Therefore, it

may be concluded that his general approach to Islam was negative.

### Background of the Study

According to the Christian scholars, performing miracle is one of the important criteria of prophethood. Most of them took the issue of miracle seriously and considered it a vital role in testifying the claims of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). Performing miracle, they argued, constitutes a symbol of divine authority. Hence, they asserted that it is necessary for every prophet who claimed his prophethood to produce miracles, otherwise his claim would be proven false (Buaben, 1996). Pailin pointed out that 'divine revelations are backed by miracles. The Bible shows this; Mahomet (Muhammad) produced no trustworthy miracles, therefore his claim must be false' (Pailin, 1984). Meanwhile, Alfonso argued that there are three criteria which must be fulfilled by a prophet to be considered as a true prophet, namely, producing miracles, probity of life, and constant truth in all what he says (Pailin, 1984).

Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was said to have failed regarding those criteria. The Christian scholars falsified and rejected every miracle of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). To justify their rejection of the Prophet's miracles, they held the opinion that there are criteria for the authenticity of miracles and only miracles which verify their beliefs can meet those criteria (Pailin, 1984). On this basis, they condemned the prophethood of Muhammad (p.b.u.h) and claimed that he fabricated false miracles to win Arabs and destroy churches. The Qur'an which was regarded as the miracle of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was rejected and considered unconvincing (Pailin, 1984). In addition, the Prophet's miracle of *Isra'* and *Mi'raj* were also rejected. In a nutshell, the Christian scholars rejected all kinds of physical miracles of Muhammad (p.b.u.h).

### The Misrepresented Claims of Margoliouth on the Prophet's Miracles

David Samuel Margoliouth is one of the Christian scholars who intensely rejected the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). He argued that claims made and maintained by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his followers must be supported by something greater than excellence of character or scholarship. It was not enough to claim prophethood on the basis of good character and scholarship only but must be also supported with evidences of miracles. He argued that although Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) claimed to follow the examples of the previous prophets, he did not deserve a prophethood on the basis that he had no miracles like them (Margoliouth, 1905). Margoliouth elaborated that Prophet Musa was provided with various miracles, and Prophet Isa was also provided with the miracles of making live sparrows out of clay and the miracles of healing. Meanwhile, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), he argued, declined to produce any miracle when he was challenged by his people to produce it (Margoliouth, 1905). Margoliouth claimed that even the Qur'an credited Prophet Musa and Prophet Isa with the miracles but no claims of miracles to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) (Margoliouth, 1914). In the Qur'an

itself, he argued, the Prophet (p.b.u.h) is made to disown miracles on many grounds (Margoliouth, 1914).

Since Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) wrought no miracle, Margoliouth considered Judaism and Christianity to be superior to Islam. He asserted that it was an embarrassment for Muslims to argue with Christians or Jews over the issue of the performance of miracles (Margoliouth, 1914). Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) himself, according to Margoliouth, admitted that he had no miracles. He stated that whenever the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was asked to produce a miracle, he would reply that if he possessed no miraculous power, then he possessed miraculous knowledge (Margoliouth, 1905). At the same time, Margoliouth denied the miracle of the Qur'an. In his writing, he argued that,

"In whatever sense the miracle of the Koran be interpreted, command of either language or archaeology is a different thing from command over the forces of nature" (Margoliouth, 1905).

Based on the above statement, Margoliouth argued that the Qur'an is inadequate and

unconvincing to be considered as a miracle. At the same time, he assumed that the Qur'an is having no power as compared to physical miracles. On that basis, people did not admire to believe in it. Margoliouth claimed that the challenge made by the Qur'an to the Arabs to produce a book similar to it, or ten chapters or even one chapter if they doubted the accuracy of the Qur'an cannot be made as a challenge in the era of high standard scholarship. He argued that even in the lifetime of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), criticisms made against this challenge of the Qur'an were numerous and powerful. Al-Nadr ibn Harith for example, attempted to answer the challenge and vowed to produce something as good as the Qur'an. The consequence of his criticism must have been very damaging since the Prophet (p.b.u.h) executed him at once when he was captured in the Battle of Badr while others were freed on ransom (Margoliouth, 1905).

Moreover, Margoliouth claimed that the life of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was full of struggle to perform miracles in order to meet or fulfil the requirements of the prophethood. He belittled the contribution of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in the battle of Badr and criticized the Prophet's claim of miracle when three hundred Muslims defeated the unbelievers who outnumbered them in the battle (Margoliouth, 1905).

When he turned to the prophecies foretold by the Prophet (p.b.u.h), Margoliouth considered them as inventions which could naturally lead to some difficulties. He argued that the miracle with which the Prophet could be credited harmlessly on the ground that history could rarely falsify was his prophecy. He brought some examples of the Prophet's prophecies which came into reality after his death viz., when and how Ali would die, Prophet's warning to Zubayr that he would fight against Ali and would be in the wrong side, his

warning to Aishah that the dogs of Haw'ab will bark at one of his wives and his prophecy about who would kill Ammar ibn Yasir. He also brought another story in which the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was said to have prophesied about the main sects of Islam. Margoliouth, eventually, rejected all these prophecies on the ground that they led to some difficulties and therefore required some exercise of imagination before they could be solved. He then questioned,

If A'ishah had really been warned about the dogs of Haw'ab, how came she to continue her expedition? If Ali knew who was to be his assassin, why did he not anticipate the blow? If Zubair had been told beforehand that he would be in the wrong in his dispute with Ali, why did he persist therein? Even in the case of Fatimah, who was told by the dying Prophet that she was to follow him speedily, it was clear that the prophecy had no influence either on her conduct or that of anyone else. (Margoliouth, 1914).

Margoliouth's foregoing argument led him to the conclusion that only the Biblical prophets performed miracles (Margoliouth, 1905). They were the only ones who could bring miracles to validate their truth, and some of them could even raise the dead. He contended that the Prophet's having wrought no miracle might be the reason why he preferred to be called (*rasul*) or Apostle, confining his assignment to the deliverance of divine message. Hence, the second position of the Islamic creed, he argued, was '*Muhammad Rasul Allah*' meaning Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, and not '*Muhammad Nabiyy Allah*' meaning Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. He added that although working miracles is less associated with the name Apostle, some of the Biblical apostles worked miracles, and St. Paul was even said to have raised a dead man (Margoliouth, 1905).

### **Evaluation of Margoliouth's Views on Prophet's Miracles**

In an attempt to evaluate Margoliouth's claims, his main evidence and observation will be examined. In addition, in order to refute his misrepresented claims, critical investigation of historical Islamic data about the miracles which

were performed by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) will be carried out in order to point out whether those miracles, including the miracle of the Qur'an were factual and realistic or imaginary and illusory.

### **Margoliouth's Evidence and Observation**

Although Margoliouth attempted to reject miracles with regards to the Prophet (p.b.u.h), he failed to provide valid evidences. The main reason of his rejection is the assertion that in the Qur'an itself the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was made to disown miracles. Margoliouth was, probably, referring to the following verse: "Glorified is my Lord. I am a human being and nothing more. I have been sent from God to you in order to convey His commands" (17: 88-93).

### **Refutation**

The above verse was revealed in response to the Quraysh who asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h) to cause a spring gush, or to have a garden of date trees, or to cause the sky to fall in pieces against them, or to bring Allah and the angels before them face to face, or to have house decorated with gold, or to mount a ladder right into sky and bring a book which will testify his claim before they would recognize him as a Prophet. So, in response to these demands Allah ordered his Prophet to say, "glorified is my Lord. I am a human being and nothing more. I have been sent from God to you in order to convey His commands" (Qur'an 17: 93). This verse does not prove that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) did not or could not work miracles. Their demands were not the performance of miracle; rather were just out of ignorance, pride, obstinacy and being in a state of firmness and stubborn determination. It may be observed that their demand that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) should cause the spring gush forth from the earth for them was just based on selfish interest, and it therefore contradicted the God's wisdom behind His creation of man. Their demand that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) should have the garden of date palms or to have a house of gold was not virtuous nor even righteous with regard to the prophets, and even

Margoliouth's assumption is that since the prophethood had to be supported by miracles which caused the claimer to have power over the forces of nature, and Prophet Muhammad was never granted that power, and he neither brought nor performed any miracle, and even the Qur'an asked him to disown it, his prophethood can be rejected on that basis.

if these had happened, they could not be considered as miracles because it is possible for other than the prophets to possess such things. Their demand that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) should cause the heaven to fall on them in pieces contradicted the will of God, because causing the heaven to fall in pieces may lead to the destruction of the whole world and God did not create the world to destroy it. Their demand that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) should bring God and the angels before them face-to-face is impossible, and therefore demanding it is illicit or even foolishness (Al- Qasimi, 1418 A.H). If all that they asked for were not miracles, then performing them will never be miracle. Therefore, using this verse as evidence that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) did not perform miracles is not just misrepresentation but also deviation from academic sincerity. Further, nowhere Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was ordered by God to deny the performance of miracles. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) employed miracles only in necessary circumstances to prove his prophethood, and he did not perform them unnecessarily like for entertaining people. The above Qur'anic verse and others were just misinterpreted by non-Muslim as well as some misled Muslim scholars.

### **Evidences on the Miracles of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)**

First of all, it has to be made clear that the main aim of sending messengers was not to perform miracles, otherwise, those who were not granted miracles their assignments would have been fruitless and futile. The miracles were strictly meant to convince people to whom a

given prophet was sent or to at least refute unbelievers who denied the accuracy of such a prophet (Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, n.d). The Qur'an and the Bible recorded the stories of many prophets to whom no miracles were granted. For example, Adam was not granted

miracle. The story of Hud tells us no miracle performed by him. In the story of Shu'ayb no miracle was also recorded. Even some of those to whom miracles were granted, their people were not convinced and subsequently denied them. Salih for example, was given a she-camel with which he would confirm his prophethood but his people were not convinced and eventually slaughtered it as a result of which they were destroyed (Quran 91: 11-15).

However, it is true that miracles played a vital role in confirming the truthfulness of a prophet, but at the same time, having not performed it cannot disqualify the authenticity and truthfulness of any prophet to whom it was not granted. If however the miracle is considered to be "supernatural intervention of the life of human beings" (Encyclopedia of the Qur'an, n.d) or "an extraordinary and astonishing happening that is attributed to the presence and action of a supernatural or divine power" (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d) it would be rather irrational as well as illogical to deny Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) the performance of miracles. Denying him may expose the unfortunate ignorance of the denier. Moreover, there is an important point to which attention must be drawn. The assertion which is made by even some Muslim scholars that Abraham was given such and such miracle, Jesus was given such and such miracle, Moses was also given such and such miracle and that "the miracle of Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was the Qur'an itself" (Al-Sha'rawi, 2012) needs to be corrected because it is misleading. For sure, the Qur'an was a miracle given to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h), but other miracles were also granted to him. Hence, the Qur'an is a miracle among the miracles or even the greatest one given to the Prophet (p.b.u.h).

The Prophet (p.b.u.h) is reported to have produced and worked wonders which were intervened by supernatural or divine power. A great Muslim scholar, al-Bukhari, recorded from Anas ibn Malik who said, "The people were afflicted with a (drought) year during the life time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). While the Prophet was delivering the sermon one Friday, a Bedouin got to his feet and said, "O Apostle of Allah! Our possessions are dying out and the families are hungry; please invoke Allah to bless us with rain". He (Anas) said, "So, the Apostle of Allah raised his hands (towards the

sky) and at that time there was not a trace of cloud in the sky. Then the clouds started gathering like mountains. (Anas said) "Before he got down from his pulpit I saw rain trickling down his beard. It rained that day, the next day, the third day, the fourth day and till the next Friday. The same Bedouin or another man got up on his feet and said, "O Apostle of Allah! The houses have collapsed and our possessions have been drowned; please invoke Allah for us (to intervene)". So the Apostle of Allah raised both his hands and said, "O Allah! Around us not on us" So, in whatever side he directed, the clouds dispersed from there till a hole (in the clouds) was formed over Medina. The valley of *Qanah* remained flooded for one month, none came from outside but talked about the abundant rain..." (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 1033).

Another miracle of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) could be seen in his fixing up of Qatadah's eye. Al-Bayhaqi recorded in his *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* from Qatadah ibn al-Nu'man that "His eye was wounded at Badr until its pupil came down on his cheekbone. They were about to cut it off, but they asked the Prophet (p.b.u.h) who said they should not do that. Then he (the Prophet) recovered it, and it became better to the extent that he (Qatadah) could not differentiate between it and the other one" (Al-Bayhaqi, hadith no 1112).

In addition, another incident which happened to Rifa'ah ibn Rafi' ibn Malik at Badr also informs us of the prophet's performance of the miracles. Rifa'ah informed us that his eye was gouged out. When the Prophet (p.b.u.h) spat into it and prayed for him, nothing happened to him with regards to it (Al-Bayhaqi, hadith no 969). The other miracle performed by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) could be seen in his increasing the quantity of water. From Anas ibn Malik, he said, "I saw the Apostle of Allah (p.b.u.h) when it was time for 'Asr prayer, and people searched for water but they could not find it. Then a pot (of water) was brought before the Prophet (p.b.u.h). He put his hand in it and ordered people to perform ablution with it. I saw water flowing from underneath his fingers, and the people started performing the ablution until all of them performed it" (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 3573). Another narration explains that the number of the companions who performed ablution with that water was

three hundred or nearly three hundred (Al-Bukhari, hadith no. 3572).

Al-Bara' also narrated that "We were one thousand and four hundred persons on the day of Hodaybiyah. Al-Hodaybiyah was a well. We drew its whole water without leaving a single drop. Then the Prophet (p.b.u.h) sat at the edge of it, asked for some water with which he rinsed his mouth and then spat it out into the well. We stayed for a while and then drew (the water and drank it) until we quenched our thirst. Even our riding animals had drunk the water to their satisfaction (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 3577).

Moreover, Abd Allah narrated that "We used to consider miracles as Allah's blessings, but people consider them to be a warning. We were with the Apostle of Allah (one day) on a journey in which we became short of water. Then he said, "Bring some remaining water". They brought a jar containing a small quantity of water. He put his hand in it and said, "Come to the clean and blessed water, and blessing is from Allah". I surely saw water flowing from among the fingers of the Apostle of Allah, and we certainly heard the meal (which was being eaten by the Prophet) glorifying Allah (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 3579).

A *hadith* narrated by Anas ibn Malik in which the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was said to have increased the quantity of the food prepared by Umm Sulaym, the wife of Abu Talhah, is also a clear indication that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) performed miracles. In the *hadith*, it was mentioned that some bread was prepared for the Prophet (p.b.u.h) by Umm Sulaym. But he came with many people. When he arrived at her house he demanded "O Umm Sulaym! Bring whatever you have". She brought the bread. The Apostle of Allah ordered it to be sliced into pieces. Umm Sulaym poured some butter on it. Then the Apostle of Allah recited what Allah wished him to recite and said, "Let ten people come (and partake of it). They came in and ate of it to their satisfaction and went out. He said again, "Let ten people come (and partake of it)". They came in and ate of it to their satisfaction and went out. He said again, "Let ten people come (and partake of it)". They came in and ate of it to their satisfaction and went out. He said again, "Let ten people come (and partake of it)". All of those people (who

came together with him) ate of it to their satisfaction. They were seventy or eighty people" (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 3578).

In *Sahih Muslim*, another tradition confirms that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) performed miracles. Abu Hurayrah narrated that (when) the Apostle of Allah was on the Mountain of Hira' it convulsed (shook). Then the Apostle of Allah said (to it), "Calm down! Those on you are a Prophet, a *siddiq* (righteous, honest or veracious) and a *shahid* (martyr)..." (Muslim, hadith no 50).

Another tradition recorded by Al-Tabarani shows that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) performed miracle. Asma' bint 'Umays was reported to have said, "(a message) was being revealed to the Prophet while his head was on Ali's lap, and (as a result of this) Ali did not pray Asr prayer until the sun set. Then the Prophet (p.b.u.h) prayed, "O Allah! Ali, indeed, was kept by the obedience to You and to Your Apostle, so bring the sun back for him. Asma' said, "I therefore, saw it (the sun) when it set, and also saw it rose after it set" (Al-Tabarani, hadith no 390).

The splitting of the moon was another miracle granted to the Prophet (p.b.u.h) by Allah. In the narration of Anas he said, "The people of Mecca asked (the Prophet) to show them a miracle. So, he showed them (the miracle of) splitting of the moon" (Al-Tabarani, hadith no 4867), Ibn Asakir, hadith no 292, Al-Humaydi, hadith no 86, Ahmad, hadith no 3583), 3924, 13918, 13919, 13958, 16750, Ibn Hibban, hadith no 6465, 6496, 6497, Al-Bazzar, hadith no 1971, 3430, 3436, 7159, Abu Dawud, no. 278, 293, 2003, 2072, Al-Tirmithi, hadith no. 3287, Muslim, hadith no. 2800, 2801, 2802, 2803, Abu Ya'la, Musnad, hadith no. 2929, 2930, 3141, 4967). Al-Bukhari recorded from Ibn Mas'ud who said, "The moon was split into two parts during the lifetime of the Apostle of Allah; one part remained over the mountain, and the other went beyond the mountain. The Apostle of Allah then said, "Witness (this miracle)" (Al-Bukhari, hadith no 4864).

With regards to the splitting of the moon and other miracles in general, there are many authentic traditions. But despite their considerable number and their accuracy, the Christian scholars especially the orientalist persist on denying the Prophet (p.b.u.h) any

performance of miracle. Al-'Uthaymin argued that, "It is quite amusing that some contemporary people concurred with the polytheist (Quraysh) in denying the split of the moon, and they said that it is not true and is not even possible for the moon to split..." (Al-Uthaymin, 1426 A.H). Someone may wonder why despite the existence of quite a number of Islamic data which confirm that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) performed miracles Margoliouth persisted on his blind denial.

After the above investigation, it is now clear that Margoliouth's claim that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) declined to produce any miracle when he was challenged by his people is invalid. His claim that only biblical prophets were granted miracle is just a baseless assertion. His denial, as may be concluded, was, if not based on bias, then at least based on inherited medieval Christian polemics. His acclaimed reputation in Islamic studies should have exposed him to these Islamic data which are found even in the most authentic Muslim sources after the *Qur'an*, *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was not given only the miracle of knowledge but also the

miracle of domination over the natural happenings of this material world.

Further, his baseless rejection of or scepticism about the prophecies made by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) which finally, as Islamic data show, became true was one of the gloomiest part of his misrepresentation of Islam. The involvement of Aishah in the war despite being warned by the Prophet (p.b.u.h), Zubayr's persistence on the fight against Ali despite that he was told by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) that he would be on the wrong side and other stories quoted and doubted by Margoliouth could not be the basis for rejecting the prophecies of Prophet (p.b.u.h). Of course, those foretold prophecies should have remained in their minds and also impacted their future conducts, but at the same time, Margoliouth should not forget the fact that the will of Allah supersedes and surpasses the will of man and whatever He decides must come into reality. Therefore, the taking place of those events should have been, instead, the basis for developing a faithful and positive appreciation of the Prophet's prophecies, not scepticism.

### The Qur'an as a Miracle

The Qur'an which was sent to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) is the greatest miracle ever surfaced in the human history. Amongst the other prophets, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) was the only one who was granted both miracles of knowledge as well as physical miracles. Prophets Abraham, David, Moses, Jesus and others were given only the physical miracles, but they were not favored with the miracle of knowledge. In that way, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) whom the Christian scholars denied the performance of miracles blindly and aggressively appeared to be more ideal in nature.

The Qur'an conforms the meaning of miracle itself, that is, 'a divine act which defies and transcends universal norms and laws, which Allah grants to His messengers and apostles in order to convince people of the truth of their message'. Unlike all other revealed books, the Qur'an was the only book which Allah promised to protect against corruption and adulteration. Allah has challenged the whole world to produce something similar to it or

even ten chapters, and elsewhere the challenge was reduced to just one chapter but they failed to produce it. It is, indeed, the miracle which thwarted the efforts of the most eloquent of Arabs.

It is asserted that the past prophets were given miracles in line with the interest or expertise of their people. Prophet Musa for example was confronted by the magicians but Allah gave him a stick with which he won over their magic. For Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) even though he was challenged to produce a physical miracle, and indeed he produced it, the expertise or the concentrated interest of his people was a literary art. They were such a people who were intoxicated with poetry and fascinating, charming and magnetic sermons. They were trained how to recite and produce poetry. Therefore, the Prophet (p.b.u.h) was given an astonishing and extraordinary book, the Qur'an which cannot be challenged by those eloquent of Arabs and the whole mankind to produce something similar to it.



If, however, miracles are meant to challenge the unbelievers, and upon their failure to prove them wrong and confirm the superiority and supremacy of Allah, then their failure and incompetence to produce something similar to the Qur'an must confirm its literary miracle. The truthfulness and effectiveness of its miracle do not necessarily depend on people's admiration but their inability to produce something similar to it. When Prophet Salih, for example, was given a she-camel as a miracle, his people was not even moved to admiration. Also when Prophet Isa wrought his miracles, his opponents showed no admiration and they even attempted to assassinate him. But their denials and hostilities did not make those miracles to be untrue. Hence, lack of admiration of the Qur'an's miracle from the unbelievers' side is not enough reason or

justification for disclaiming its miracle. And Margoliouth's assertion that "the miracle of the Qur'an...was not sufficient for ages in which a high standard of correctness and even of eloquence was demanded of all writers" must be viewed as pseudo, pathetic and ineffectual, because until now the world has not witnessed a single versification similar to the Qur'an which is free from errors and fallacies.

Moreover, the authenticity of the prophecies foretold by the Qur'an, its scientific and historical accuracies and its mistake-free nature are enough reasons to confirm that it is a unique miracle from God. Therefore, the Qur'an was and will still continue to be a challenging miracle which will forever thwart the efforts of both man and jinn to produce something similar to or discover any mistake in it.

### Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has pointed out that Margoliouth entirely rejected any claim that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) performed miracles. However, evaluation of his argument has revealed that the verse 93 of surah al-Isra' which Margoliouth and many other Christian scholars take to be the basis for denying the miracles of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) does not imply such a notion. None of the demands in that verse was a miracle. Therefore, using

such a verse as evidence that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) did not perform miracles is not just misrepresentation but also deviation from academic sincerity. Moreover, instances of the Prophet's performances of miracles have been explored to some extent. Based on the historical facts it may be highly impossible to deny Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h) the performance of miracle.

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