Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

HOW ARE HEAVENLY BODIES MENTIONED IN ISLAM?

INTRODUCTION

All praise is for Allah sand may He bestow blessings and peace upon Sayyidina Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions, Amin.

Allah sthe Creator and Sustainer of all has placed the Sun, Moon, planets, stars and other heavenly bodies in the sky. We are encouraged to reflect on Allah's dazzling creation as a means of drawing near to Him. As explained by Imam `Abdallah ibn `Alawi al-Haddad in The Book of Assistance¹, reflecting on the wonders of God's dazzling creation, the inward and outward signs of His ability, and the signs He has scattered abroad in the Realm of the earth and heavens, increases one's knowledge of the Essence, Attributes and Names of God. He (Allah s) has encouraged it by saying, "Say: Look at what is in the heavens and in the earth!" (Qur'an 10:10)

Heavenly bodies are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the traditions (hadiths) of Prophet Muhammad , and the works of Muslim religious scholars, and this encourages us to look up and witness these great signs of Allah. And vice versa, when we witness these heavenly bodies, we are reminded of how they are mentioned in our sacred Islamic Tradition.

Let us look at some of the ways that heavenly bodies are mentioned in Islam. Their mentionings are vast in number so for the sake of brevity, only three or four examples have been given for each section below. All examples below are originally in the Arabic language unless otherwise stated.

1. HEAVENLY BODIES ARE SIGNS OF ALLAH MAND ARE UNDER HIS COMMAND

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an,

"Hast thou not seen that unto Allah payeth adoration whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the **sun**, and the **moon**, and the **stars**, and the hills, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind, while there are many unto whom the doom is justly due. He whom Allah scorneth, there is none to give him honour. Lo! Allah doeth what He will." (22:18)²*Note: this is an ayah of prostration.

It is not for the **sun** to overtake the **moon**, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an **orbit**. (36:40) ³

Lo! We have adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the **planets**; With security from every froward devil. They cannot listen to the Highest Chiefs for they are pelted from every side, Outcast, and theirs is a perpetual torment; Save him who snatcheth a fragment, and there pursueth him a piercing flame. (37:6-10) ⁴

2. FAVOURS FROM ALLAH 🗯

Allah 😹 says in the Holy Qur'an,

"It is He Who made the **sun** a shining thing and the **moon** as a light and measured out its (their) stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create this but in truth. He explains the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) in detail for people who have knowledge." (10:5) ⁵

"He is the Cleaver of the Daybreak, and He hath appointed the night for stillness, and the **sun** and the **moon** for reckoning. That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise. And He it is Who hath set for you the **stars** that ye may guide your course by them amid the darkness of the land and the sea. We have detailed Our revelations for a people who have knowledge." (6:96-97) ⁶

"They ask you (O Muhammad **a)** about the **new moons**. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the Pilgrimage . . . " (2:189) ⁷

3. ALLAH SALONE IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, "And that it is He (Allah) Who gives much or a little (or gives wealth and contentment), And that He (Allah) is the Lord of **Sirius**" (53:48-49) 8

It was narrated that Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani said: "It rained during the time of the Prophet and he said: 'Have you not heard what your Lord said this night? He said: I have never sent down any blessing upon My slaves but some of them become disbelievers thereby, saying: 'We have been given rain by such and such a **star**.' As for the one who believes in Me and praises Me for giving rain, that is the one who believes in Me and disbelieves in the **stars**. But the one who says: 'We have been given rain by such and such a **star**' he has disbelieved in Me and believed in the **stars**." (an-Nasai) ⁹

Narrated Mughirah bin Shu'bah : That there was a **solar eclipse** in the time of Allah's Messenger on the day his son Ibrahim died. The people said, "The **eclipse** of the **sun** has happened due to the death of Ibrahim." Allah's Messenger said: "The **sun** and the **moon** are two of Allah's signs; they are not **eclipsed** due to the death or the life of anyone. So when

you see them (the eclipse of the moon or sun) supplicate to Allah and offer prayers until the **eclipse** is over." (Agreed upon) ¹⁰

4. CHAPTER TITLES IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

Surah 53	Surah al Najm	The Star
Surah 54	Surah al Qamar	The Moon
Surah 91	Surah al Shams	The Sun

5. OATHS IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"And by the **sun** and its brightness
And by the **moon** as it follows it" (91:1-2) 11

"So verily, I swear by the **planets** that recede" (81:15) 12

6. ACTS OF WORSHIP

It was narrated that 'Amr bin Huraith said: "I performed prayer with the Prophet when he was reciting in the Fajr, and it is as if I can hear him reciting (from the Holy Qur'an 81:15-16): 'So verily, I swear by the **planets** that recede. And by the **planets** that move swiftly and hide themselves.'" (Ibn Majah) ¹⁴

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger as saying: Whenever you sight the **new moon** (of the month of Ramadan) observe fast. and when you sight it (the new moon of Shawwal) break it, and if the sky is cloudy for you, then observe fast for thirty days. (Muslim) 15

From Talha ibn `Ubaydullah who reported that when the Messenger of Allah saw the **new moon** he said: "O Allah, make it rise over us with good fortune, faith, peace, and submission. My Lord and your Lord is Allah." (ad-Darimi and at-Tirmidhi) 16

7. DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

Abu `Ubaida b. Muhammad b. `Ammar b. Yasir told that he asked ar-Rubaiyi`, daughter of Mu'awwidh b. `Afra' to describe God's Messenger to him, and she replied, "My son, if you had seen him, you would have seen the **sun** rising." (Darimi) 17

[&]quot;Nay, I swear by the places of the stars" (56:75) 13

Jabir ibn Samura said: "I saw Allah's Messenger on a cloudless night, and he was wearing a red suit of clothes, so I started looking at him as well as at the **moon**, for he is indeed more beautiful, in my opinion, than the **moon**!" (at-Tirmidhi, al-Baihaqi and ash-Shu`ab) 18

In a relatively lengthy narration, Hadrat Ka'b bin Malik is reported to have said, "And it was common with Messenger of Allah that when ever he was happy, his face would glow as if it were a **part of the moon** and it was from this that we recognized it (his delight) ..." (al-Bukhari and Muslim) ¹⁹

8. IN MUSLIM RELIGIOUS POETRY

Hadrat Hassan bin Thabit @composed the following lines about Prophet Muhammad ::

When I looked at his lights which rose
I placed my palm over my eyes in fear
Fearing for my sight, for the beauty of his form
So I did not look at him except in accordance to my strength
I have drowned in the lights from his light
For his face is like the rising sun and moon
A spirit from a light in a body from the moon
Like a garment woven from the brightest star²⁰

The below lines are from the *qasida* that the children of Madina recited with *daf* in greeting Prophet Muhammad and his noble Companions when they entered that blessed city, as narrated by Imam al-Ghazali in his Ihya 'Ulum al-Deen'.

The **full moon** rises on us From Thaniyyatil Wadaa' And it is obligatory on us to express thanks Whenever called upon by a summoner for the sake of Allah ²¹

He is the bounteous **sun** and they her **orbiting planets** - She reveals their lights for humanity in the darkness of night. ²²

In his mathnawi in the Persian (Farsi) language, when speaking about the true nature of man and the world, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi due mentions some of the miracles relating to some of the Prophets and saying,

The mountains too make a song like that of David , and the substance of iron is (as) wax in the hand.

The wind becomes a bearer for Solomon , the sea becomes capable of understanding words in regard to Moses .

The **moon** becomes able to see the sign in obedience to Ahmad (Mohammed) \$\mathscr{#}\$, the fire becomes wild-roses for Abraham \$\omega\$. \$^{23}\$

9. IN DURUD AND SALAWAT `ALAR-RASUL

Originally composed by Shaykh Abu Bakr bin Salim al-'Alawi and then expanded, Assalat u't tajiyyah begins with, "O Allah! Bestow blessings on our patron Sayyidina Muhammad, the wearer of the holy crown". As it continues, we see Sayyidina Muhammad referred to as the **sun** of the glorious morning (shamsid-duha) and the **full moon** on a dark night (badrid-duja). 24

Imam Sharafuddin Muhammad al-Busiri السلة begins his qasida al-Mudariyya with,

"O my Lord, pour Your blessings upon the Chosen One of Mudar (i.e. Sayyidina Muhammad And the Prophets and all of the Messengers whenever they are mentioned."

As it continues, we see that he invokes Allah sto multiply the said number of blessings by the number of stars in the sky:

"In quantity as great as the pebbles, the moist earth, the grains of sand, Followed by the **stars** in the heavens, plants on the earth and mounds of clay" ²⁵

In the following salat `alan-Nabi ﷺ, al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad السلامة refers to Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ as the bright moon:

O Allah! Bestow blessings and peace on **the bright moon**, the bringer of glad tidings, the warner, the soul of all existence and the merciful gift for all that exists and on his family and companions and followers till the Promised Day. ²⁶

10. IN BOOKS OF MAWLID UN NABI 38

In his mawlid book, <u>The Jeweled Necklace of the Resplendent Prophet's Birth</u>, when mentioning the Ahlul Bayt (the Family of the Prophet), Imam as-Sayyid Ja'far ibn Hasan ibn 'Abdal Karim al-Barzanji www writes,

"... his Family, the [guiding] **stars** of security for all mankind and the ship of well-being and deliverance." ²⁷

In his mawlid book <u>Necklace of Pearls</u>, Al Habib `Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi writes about Prophet Muhammad #,

"His virtues were perfected, were he to bestow his brilliance upon the **full moon**, it would not **eclipse**." ²⁸

In his mawlid book <u>The Shimmering Light</u>, Habib `Umar bin Muhammad bin Salim bin Hafiz writes about the blessed birth of Prophet Muhammad **35**,

"And shortly before dawn, the **Sun** of Guidance was made manifest, The Beloved appeared, honoured and protected." ²⁹

11. IN SALAM `ALAR-RASUL

The below lines are quite famous. As explained on iqra.net, it cannot be established who composed them as the Qiyam they are from is normally printed with the Mawlid by Imam Barzanji, the Mawlid by al-'Allamah Shaykh Ahmad bin Qasim, as well as the mawlid composed by al-Hafiz Shaykh Abdirrahman ibn Ali ad-Dayba'ee

A **full moon** rises over us The other moon disappears We never saw the like of your beauty O face of gladness

You are the **sun**, you are the **moon**You are light upon lights
You are gold and even more priceless
You are the light of hearts

O my beloved, O Muhammad O **star** of east and west O supporter, O praised one O leader of both Qiblas 30

In his salam at the Rawdah, Imam `Abdallah bin Alawi al Haddad السلة says:

"Allah's blessings be on you O master who travelled by night To Allah until he passed the seven heavens and all the veils

And your position of (a distance of two bow lengths) or even less Is enough exaltation and a gallery so high as to vie with the **stars**" ³¹

In his salam in the Urdu language, A`la Hadrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan was refers to Prophet Muhammad as the Moon when he says:

"The beautiful moment when Tayba's **moon** shone bright Millions of salutations on that joy-filling moment of his birth." ³²

In his salam in the Turkish language, Allamah Sulaiman Chelebi Effendi dur refers to the Prophet as the sun and the moon:

Hail to thee! Unsetting Sun! All hail to thee! Hail to thee! Unwaning moon! All hail to thee!

and

Hail to thee! O Moon! O Sun most fair! Hail to thee! who from the Lord are parted ne'er! 33

12. RELATING TO THE RIGHTEOUS

Allah $\frac{1}{36}$ says in the Holy Qur'an: "When Yusuf (Jospeh) said unto his father: O my father! Lo! I saw in a dream eleven **planets** and the **sun** and the **moon**, I saw them prostrating themselves unto me." (12:4) 34

Narrated Abu Hurairah : "Some people among the Companions of the Messenger of Allah said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Who are these people whom Allah mentioned, that if we turn away they would replace us, then they would not be like us?'" He said: "And Salman was beside the Messenger of Allah , so the Messenger of Allah patted Salman's thigh and said: 'This one and his companions, and by the One in Whose Hand is my soul! If faith were suspended from the *Pleiades*, then it would be reached by men from Persia." (at-Tirmidhi)³⁵

(Narrated Qais bin Kathir) A man came to Abu al-Darda' (**) while he was in Damascus. Abu al-Darda' asked him, "What has brought you here, my brother?" He replied, "A hadith which you relate from the Prophet **." Abu al-Darda' asked, "Have you come for business?" He replied, "No." "You have come only to seek this hadith?" He said, "Yes." Abu al-Darda' then said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah ** say: 'Whoever travels a path seeking sacred knowledge, Allah will place him on a path leading to Paradise. The angels lower their wings for the student of sacred knowledge, pleased with what he is doing. The creatures in the heavens and earth seek forgiveness for the student of sacred knowledge, even the fish in the water. The superiority of the religious scholar over the devout worshipper is like the superiority of the **full moon** over the **other heavenly bodies**. The religious scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets leave no money as a bequest, rather they leave knowledge. Whoever seizes it has taken a bountiful share." (Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah) 36

MUSLIM NAMES

Heavenly bodies are mentioned in some Muslim names/titles for example:

An-Najmu'th-thāqib (the Piercing **Star**) is said to be one of the names (asma) of the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad ** ³⁷

Shams al-Din (**Sun** of the Faith/Religion), such as Shams al-Din Muhammad (Shamsi Tabriz) b.1185 CE who is the shaykh of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi

Najm al-Din (**Star** of the Faith/Religion), such as Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad Abu al-Makarim Najm al-Din al-Ghazzi (Najm al-Ghazzi) & b.1570 CE who was a scholar and historian from Damascus.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE HEREAFTER

Narrated Jarir :: Allah's Messenger : came out to us on the night of the **full moon** and said, "You will see your Lord on the Day of Resurrection as you see this (full moon) and you will have no difficulty in seeing Him." (al-Bukhari) 38

Abu Dharr said: Allah's Messenger, what about the vessels of that Cistern (Pond)? He said: By Him in Whose Hand is the life of Muhammad, the vessels would outnumber the **stars** in the sky and its **planets** shining on a dark cloudless night. These would be the vessels of Paradise. He who drinks out of it (the Cistern) would never feel thirsty. There would flow in it two spouts from Paradise and he who would drink out of it would not feel thirsty; and the distance between its (two corners) is that between 'Amman and Aila, and its water is whiter than milk and sweeter than honey. (Muslim) ³⁹

(Hadrat) Sahl bin Sa'd said: The Messenger of Allah said, "The dwellers of Jannah (Paradise) will see the upper abodes of Jannah as you see the **stars** in the sky." (al-Bukhari and Muslim) 40

13. THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"When the **sun** is overthrown, And when the **stars** fall." (81:1-2) 41

"The Hour has drawn near, and the **moon** has been cleft asunder." (54:1) 42

It was narrated that Hudhaifah bin Asid (Abu Sarihah) , said: "The Messenger of Allah looked out from a room, when we were talking about the Hour. He said: 'The Hour will not begin until ten signs appear: The rising of the **sun** from the west; Dajjal; the smoke; the beast; Gog and Magog; the appearance of 'Isa bin Maryam, the earth collapsing three times once in the east, one in the west and one in the Arabian Peninsula; and fire that will emerge from the plain of Aden Abyan and will drive the people to the place of Gathering, stopping with them when they stop at night and when they stop to rest at midday." 43

Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet said: Woe to the rulers! Woe to the authorities! Woe to the trustees! Some people will wish their forelocks were hanging from the star of **the Pleiades** on the Day of Resurrection, rather than had done anything they did. (Ahmad) 44

14. IN (OTHER) WORKS OF THE `ULAMA (MUSLIM RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS)

Regarding the verse from the Holy Qur'an, "They ask you (O Muhammad ﷺ) about the **new moons**. Say: These are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the Pilgrimage . . . " (2:189), Justice Pir Muhammad Karam Shah Al-Azhari ﷺ says in his Tafsir <u>Dhiya'-ul-Qur'an:</u>

"On the one hand the phenomena of nature have been made so beautiful that man's heart is inexorably attracted to them, and on the other they are invested with such mystery as is unfathomable by human intellect. Then to complicate the matter, man has been given insatiable desire to search for causes and the reality behind the visible. Why so? The reason is simple: If the reality of the universe were not concealed in successive veils of mystery, it would not have challenged man to exercise his faculties and realise the many-dimensional potential built in the very core of his being. There was a time when man --- unable to penetrate even the lesser mysteries of the mysterious universe, bewildered by its fascinating beauty and terrified by its terrible majesty --- began to worship the phenomena of nature. The light of reason and insight, of intellect and intuition failed to dispel the darkness of apathy

and ignorance; and the hand that was given the power to control and restructure the universe withered to the point of paralysis. Then Allah, the Creator and Lord of the universe, sent His Last Prophet so guide mankind on to the straight path. Prophet Muhammad removed the blindfold of ignorance man had tied over his eyes, and gave him the courage to see the reality of the physical phenomena and reflect on his own position in the scheme of the universe. He declared that the **sun** and the **moon**, the earth and the sky, the valleys and the mountains, the rivers and the deserts were not his masters but his slaves, created for his benefit and made subservient to him." ⁴⁵

In this compilation, a hadith has already been quoted in which the Prophet mentioned, "The superiority of the religious scholar over the devout worshipper is like the superiority of the **full moon** over the **other heavenly bodies."** In his commentary on this hadith, Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali writes,

"This metaphor contains a comparison between the scholar and the **full moon**. The **full moon** represents the scholar, owing to the exquisite luminance of its light, while the **planets** represent devout worshippers. The difference in the radiance of the **full moon** and that of the **planets** represents the difference in virtue between the scholar and the devout worshipper. The underlying reason for this - and Allah knows best - is as follows: a **planet**'s light does not extend beyond itself, whereas the light of the **full moon** shines upon the earth's inhabitants; They are illuminated by it and guided in their travels.

The Prophet mentioned the **planets**, not the **stars**, because the **planets** are not used for guidance [as much as the stars]. Hence, they have the status of the devout worshipper whose benefit is limited to himself. As for the **stars**, they are heavenly bodies that are used for guidance...

... It has been said that the **moon** derives its light from the **sun**, just as the scholar is a reflection of the light of the divine message. For this reason he has been compared to the **moon** and not the **sun**. The Prophet was a lamp and a luminous **moon** which shone upon the earth. The scholars, as his heirs and successors, are compared to the bright and luminous **full moon**." 46

In <u>Key to the Garden</u> in the chapter entitled "Existent Beings are Evidence of the Divine Ability", al-Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad wire,

"Sound science and conclusive proofs have established that everything in the universe, whether it be high or low, articulate or dumb, is interconnected. The universe is constructed of harmoniously interrelated and interacting forces. If a single atom should deviate a hair's breadth from its designated course, for which it was created, the order of the world would be upset, its precise interconnectedness disrupted, and the heavens would collapse upon the earth. The worlds have so far been, and shall remain, joined and bound in mutual attraction,

performing the functions they were created for, in the most perfect, organized, and accurate way, until the appointed time.

Who then is the creator of all this? Who has originated these tremendous forces? Who moves the **planets** in their **orbits** in the heavens, maintains their courses and their regularity, and has governed them since the beginning of the world? Who holds the heavens back from falling upon the earth? Who moves ships in the seas, clouds in the air, and arranges the affairs of all beings upon the earth? Who sustains all that is in the heavens and earth, whether **planets**, shining **stars**, nations of different races, languages, and traits, and all other excellently fashioned and precisely disposed things, which have performed their functions down the ages with such exactitude? Is it not God, Lord of the Worlds, the Omniscient, the Able, the Manager, the Wise, to Whom belongs all Sovereignty, Who has neither partner nor helper?" ⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

Al-Hamdu Lillah, we see that heavenly bodies are mentioned in the many spheres of Islamic study. It's beneficial for us to know how Allah , His Messenger , his Companions , and Muslim religious scholars have mentioned heavenly bodies so that we can have a perspective on them that brings us closer to Allah. Allah has encouraged us to look at the heavens and ponder His signs for our benefit, and Al-Hamdu Lillah that He has adorned the sky so that pondering it resonates with our fitra (nature).

O Allah! May we witness the beauty, magnitude, mystery, and phenomena of the sky and what it contains, and be reminded of Your Oneness, Generosity, Mercy, Power, and Promises. Glory be to You O Allah! And when we see the Sun and Moon, may we continue to be reminded of the beauty, guidance, and majestic nature of the Messenger of Allah, Sayyidina Muhammad, Sallallahu `alayhi wa Alihi wa Sahbihi wa sallam. O Allah! Increase our knowledge of our rich Islamic heritage of astronomy, to which Muslims have made great scientific contributions. O Allah! Grant us Your forgiveness and nearness to You. We ask you for a good ending and to admit us into the Gardens of Paradise. Amin!

Al-Fatiha! Compiled by Irshaad Rashid Rajab 1446 AH / January 2025 www.madrasariyada.net

End Notes

- 1. **The Book of Assistance** by Imam Abdallah al-Haddad, translated by Mostafa al-Badawi, Quilliam Press 1989, p. 31.
- 2. Translation: Pickthall
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- 8. Translation: Muhsin Khan
- 9. Translation from: Sunnah.com
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- 28. **Necklace of Pearls** by Habib `Ali bin Muhammad al-Habashi, translated by Rizwana Sayed, Sakina, 2019, p.111.
- 29. The Shimmering Light by Habib `Umar bin Hafiz, p. 49
- 30. www.iqra.net/Salaams/salaams4.html

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- 38. Translation from: Sunnah.com
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- 46. **The Heirs of the Prophets** by Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, translated by Imam Zaid Shakir, Starlatch, 2001, p.32-33.
- 47. **Key to the Garden** by Habib Ahmad Mashhur al-Haddad, translated by Dr. Mostapha al-Badawi, p.13.