

TAWAFUQ: A MIRACLE OF THE QUR'AN VISIBLE TO THE EYE

1. Introduction

The greatest miracle of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him - PBUH), is the All-Wise Qur'an. In the Twenty Fifth Word, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi has pointed out forty aspects of its miraculousness. Moreover, he said: "we intended to show the aspect, one of the forty aspects of Qur'an's miraculousness, which can be seen with the eyes, and only one sort of the ten sorts of that kind of miraculousness, on the patterns of the Qur'an" [1]. This sort of miraculousness pertaining to the patterns of the Qur'an is named as "tawafuq" which can be defined as *"the coinciding of occurrences among seemingly disconnected and random events, that reveal evident patterns of a higher pre-determined arrangement by the Creator displaying His deliberate will and intent in the arrangement and correspondence."* Bediuzzaman was the first to discover and demonstrate the miracle of tawafuq in the patterns of the Qur'an. In this article, after a concise history of the All-Wise Qur'an, the miracle of tawafuq discovered by Bediuzzaman will be explained briefly.

2. Revelation and Arrangement of the All-Wise Qur'an

The revelation of the Qur'an started with the first verses brought by Jibreel (Gabriel) (PBUH) in 610 and continued for 23 years until the passing of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 632. As the verses of the Qur'an were sent down, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) memorized them himself, communicated them to other people, and called some of the companions and made them write down the revelation. Those companions who wrote the revelation were called revelation scribes and were assigned by Prophet Muhammad. They wrote the revealed verses on various materials such as leather, bone, parchment, etc. Moreover, the society during that period was predominantly oral, and the revealed verses were widely memorized by the companions [2].

The Holy Quran was revealed gradually. The first revealed verses are the first five verses of 96th Surah (Chapter). As the different verses from different suras were revealed, Jibreel (PBUH) would inform which surah they belonged to and their sequence in the surah [3]. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) memorized and trained his companions in this way. Every year in the month of Ramadan, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Jibreel (PBUH) recited mutually all the verses revealed thus far. Especially the last mutual recitation in the Ramadan of the year in which Prophet Muhammad passed away took place twice, and the Holy Qur'an took its final form [4].

Qur'an, whose layout was determined in the last recitation, was scribed and memorized by many companions, named as "hafez – keeper and memorizer of Qur'an". During the period of Caliph Abu Bakr some of hafez were martyred in the battle of Yamama and in some other wars, which gave the need to gather the verses of the Quran and compile them between two covers. Caliph Abu Bakr charged this important task to Zayd ibn Thabit. Zayd ibn Thabit and the members of the delegation gathered all the written verses of the Qur'an, and taking also the final recitation into account, they wrote down all the verses. Thus, the Qur'an was

gathered completely with the help of written materials and memorization, and this compilation between the two covers was called "Mushaf" [5].

The increase in the number of Muslims during the period of Caliph Uthman and their spread across a wide geography resulted in the need for the first Mushaf to be reproduced and sent to certain centers. The duty of reproduction was completed by a delegation of approximately twelve people, again chaired by Zayd ibn Thabit, between the years 646 and 651. Seven copies of the Mushaf, which were reproduced at the end of this study, were sent to Mecca, Kufa, Basra, Damascus, Yemen and Bahrain, and one copy was left in Medina [6].

The copies in the hands of the Muslims today were taken from Mushafs of Caliph Uthman or those copied from them. In the following periods, with the revival of science and art, the activities of reproduction of Qur'an began to increase rapidly. Number of scribes who wrote Mushaf multiplied and the art of writing gained an Islamic identity by rapid development and transformation. Mushafs were written in different styles with different page layouts. An example Mushaf with 11 lines per page is presented in Figure 1, and another example with 13 lines per page is shown in Figure 2.

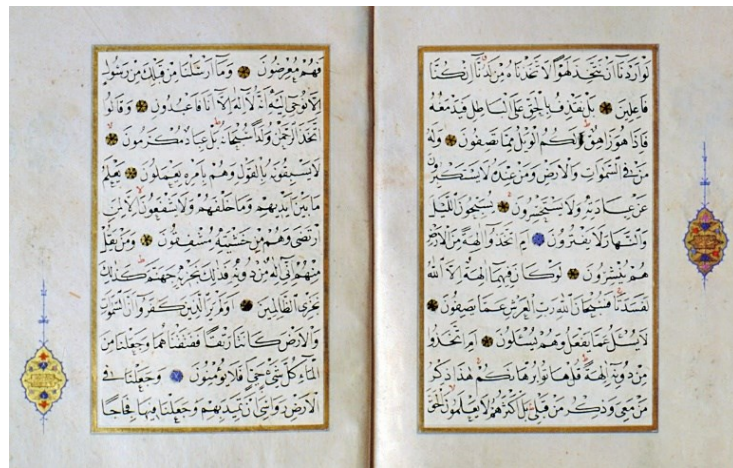


Figure 1 – Two pages of Mushaf written by Sheikh Hamdullah (d.1520) (Istanbul University Library)



Figure 2 - Two pages of Mushaf written by Şekerzade Seyyid Mehmed (d.1753) (Sulaimania Library)

3. The Measure Based on Revelation: Ayetberkenar

Hafez Osman Nuri Kayışzade (d.1895) wrote the Mushaf in the “ayetberkenar” organization for the first time. The meaning of ayetberkenar feature is this: Beginning of each page coincides with the beginning of a verse and end of each page coincides with the end of a verse, i.e. last verse of a page never remains uncompleted. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi referred to Hafez Osman and his measure as follows:

“At the bottom of every page of the Qur’an, the verses are complete, and they end rhyming in a fine way. The reason is this: When the longest verse called Mudayana (2:282) provides the standard for the pages, and the Suras Ikhlas and Kawthar, the standard for the lines, this fine quality of the All-Wise Qur’an and sign of its miraculousness become apparent.” [7]

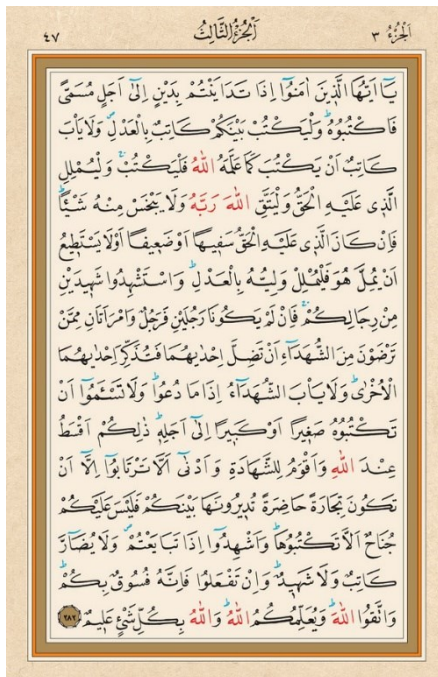


Figure 3.a- Verse Mudayana (2:282), reference for page length, whole page consists of one verse

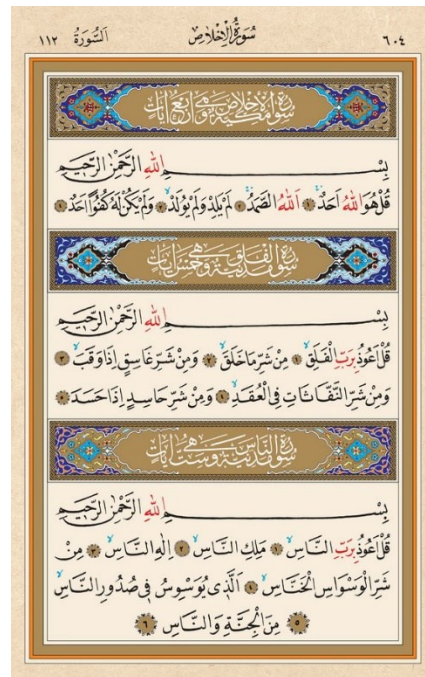



Figure 3.b- Shortest Sura Ikhlas, reference for page width, the whole sura consists of one line

NOTE: The mark  represents end of a verse, like punctuation mark “.”, and verse number is written the middle.

In the Mushaf where Hafez Osman defined the length of the page based on longest verse of Mudayana and the width of a page based on the two shortest surahs, Surah Al Ikhlas and Surah Al Kawthar, the “ayetberkenar” feature emerged.



Figure 4.a- 62nd and 63th pages, the last verses never remain uncompleted.



Figure 4.b- 64th and 65th pages, the last verses never remain uncompleted.

The “ayetberkenar” feature, seen in Figure-4, appears in all 604 pages of Qur’an. In the earlier Mushafs, as it can be seen in Figure-1 and Figure-2, the verses could be split at the end of the page and goes on the next page. The emergence of this feature by writing the same text from the first Mushaf to the present based on the measures depending on the Qur’an itself clearly shows that this is a divine miracle. This miraculous feature emerged when the verses with various lengths, revealed for different reasons in different times and in different orders, are scribed according to the measures based on revelation 12 centuries after the

first written Mushaf. This layout has received great popularity in the Islamic world, and the vast majority of the Mushafs have been written based on this measure.

4. Miracle of Tawafuq

About 40 years after Hafez Osman's death (towards the mid-1930s), Bediuzzaman realized that the words of Allah were partially aligned in his own Qur'an, which was written in the style of Hafez Osman. Thereupon, he examined all the pages and the words of Allah mentioned in those pages. Bediuzzaman stated that the significant portion of the words "Allah" were aligned miraculously and in some of them, there were some shifts despite a clear tawafuq being present (as shown in Figure 5). He says: "After examining the same Qur'an that was scribed by the hatt of Hafez Osman, we observed that, foremost in the 'lafzullah' (the word 'Allah'), there was a significant tawafuq relating to the ghayb¹. After marking each one of these tawafuqs in my personal copy of the Qur'an, we found that the erratic gaps between the sentences and ayat had partly spoiled the display of these tawafuqs. Together with this, we came to the belief that the tawafuq was an intended outcome, since it is an embellishment and beautification which removes the apparent blemish of repeated wordings. We realised that without making any changes to the pages and sentences, this intended tawafuq could, to a degree, be displayed without difficulty. And in doing so, it would awaken a pleasure and enthusiasm towards the hatt (scribing) of the Qur'an and would expound one of the ten visible indications pointing to its miraculousness. With this purpose in mind, I present this matter to the attention of my friends in the service of the Qur'an and invite their consultation and support." [1]

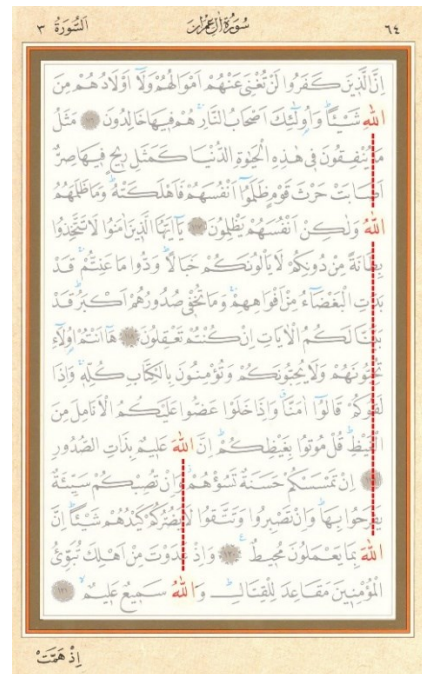
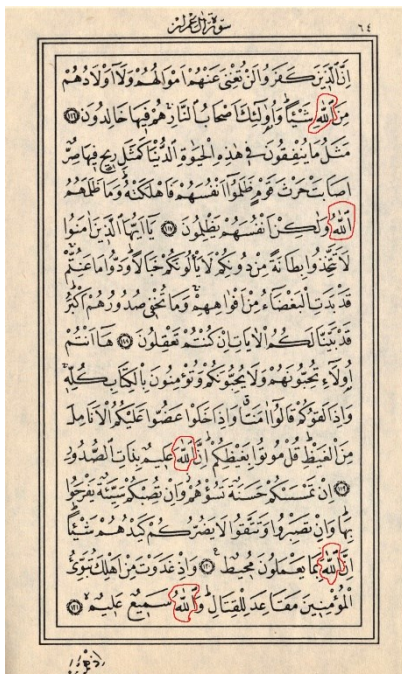


Figure 5.a- 64th page from Mushaf of Hasan Rıza by Hafez Osman style. Bedüzzaman put remarks on lafzullah's over his own mushaf.

Figure 5.b- 64th page from Mushaf of Hamid Aytac, with style as Bedüzzaman figured out.

¹ Ghayb is defined as: the realm of the unseen that is hidden to us human beings, but that exists and is known by Allah's timeless knowledge. "None knows the ghayb except Allah" (i.e. the past, the future, the spiritual and otherworldly realms).

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, who stated the purpose of his life as “declaring the miraculousness of the Qur’an” [8], expressed that “there is a sign of the Qur’an’s miraculousness which may be seen with the eyes”, even for “the seeing class, that is to say, the face of the uneducated common people, or of materialists whose minds see no further than their eyes”. He classified the tawafuq of its wording into three kinds [1]:

“The Qur’an of Miraculous Exposition has many kinds of tawafuq (NOTE). Other than the tawafuqs in the embroidery of its wording, it has other spiritual tawafuqs (relating to their meanings). They are very profound and plentiful. As for the tawafuq of its wording, they are of three kinds:

1. The first are those tawafuqs which appear in a single page.
2. The second, those appearing in pages that face each other.
3. The third, are those across various pages.

NOTE: As for tawafuq, it indicates concordance. Concordance is a sign of union. Union is a mark of unicity. Unicity shows tawhid. As for tawhid, it is the greatest of the four fundamental principles of the Quran.”

“The Word ‘Allah’ is mentioned 2806 times. Including in the Bismillah’s (In the Name of Allah), the Word Rahman (Merciful) 159; Rahim (Compassionate) 220; Ghafur (Forgiving), 61; Rabb (Sustainer) 846; Hakim (Wise) 86; Alim (Knowing) 126; Qadir (Powerful) 31; Hu (the He) in ‘La ilahe illa Hû – There is no god but He,’ 26 times.” The majority of these words (that are more than 4000 in total) are aligned one under the other. Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8 show a few examples of these three kinds of tawafuqs.



Figure 6.a- A tawafuq which appears on a single page (pages 62-63 are shown). Words of Allah are at the same alignment beneath each other on the same page.

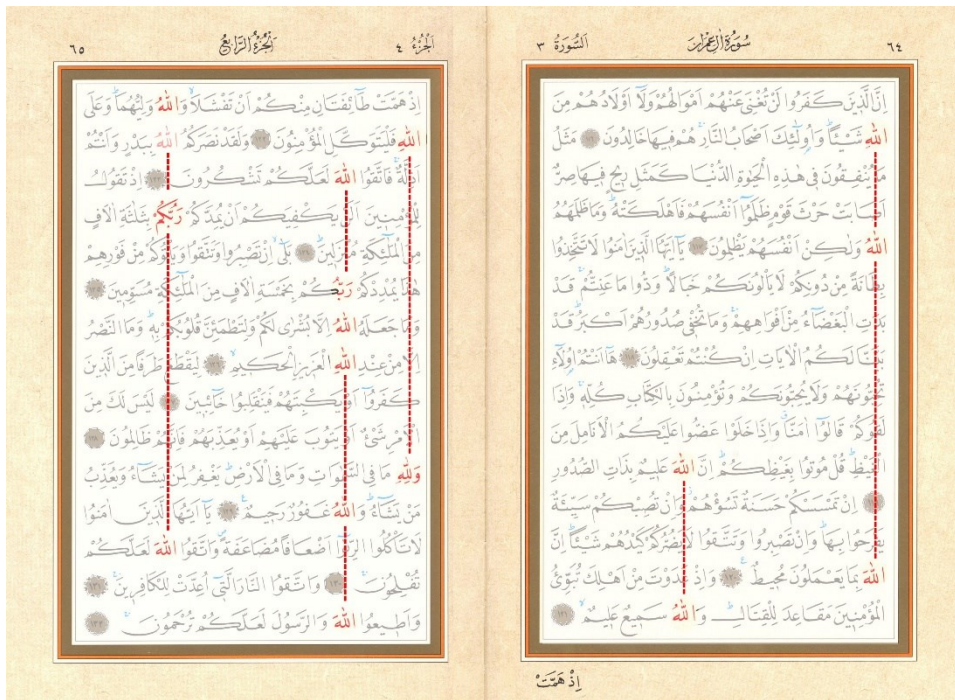


Figure 6.b- A tawafuq which appears on a single page (pages 64-65 are shown). Words of Allah are at the same alignment beneath each other on the same page.



Figure 7- Tawafuq appearing in pages that face each other. In pages 540 and 541, all six words of Allah are aligned symmetrically, i.e. they face each other in opposite pages.

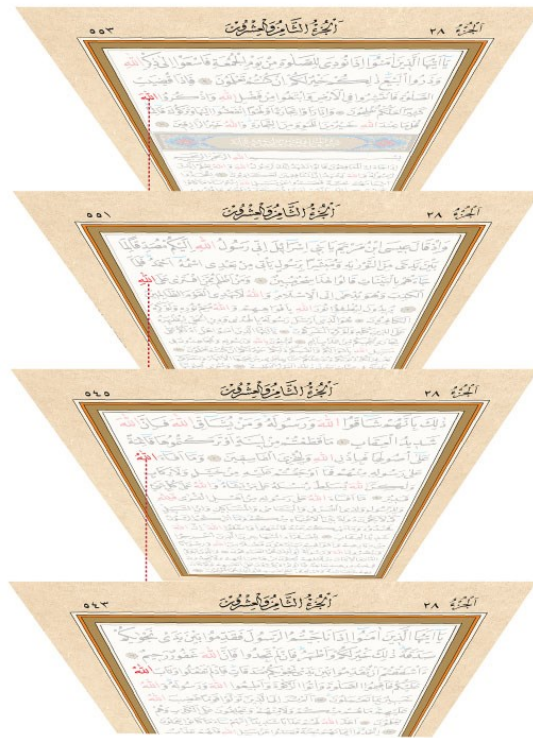


Figure 8- Tawafuq across various pages. In pages 543, 545, 551 and 553, words of Allah at the end of third lines overlap each other.



Figure 9- Page 422, one of the pages in the Qur'an that includes highest amount of words of Allah.

In addition, there exists different and very rich forms of tawafuq. Leaving further details to another article, here we give just a single example. In page 422, one of the pages in the Qur'an that includes the highest number of words of Allah, there are **sixteen words of Allah**. The 41st verse that

includes the last occurrence of the word of Allah is as follows: “*O you who have believed! Remember Allah with much remembrance!*”. Therefore, when somebody reads this page from the beginning, as he reads the 41st verse, he has said and remembered “Allah” sixteen times, and has thus obeyed the command of the final verse.

5. Conclusion

In this article, we briefly described the “*ayetberkenar*” feature discovered by Hafez Osman in the 19th century, and the *tawafuq* feature, a miracle of the Holy Qur’an visible to the eye, discovered by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi in the 20th century; both of which were found many centuries after the revelation of the Qur’an. In his *Risale-i Nur* Collection, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi has proved many of the Qur’an’s miraculous truths with scientific, logical and philosophical arguments. Moreover, in one part of his work titled as “*Rumuzat-i Semaniyye*”, he has explained many other types of *tawafuq*, of which we have tried to summarize only one type in this article.

REFERENCES

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- [2] Suyûtî, Celaleddin. "el-İtkân fî Ulûmi'l-Kur'an." *Tahkîk, Mustafa Reyb el Buğa, Beyrut: Dârubnû Kesîr* (1996). pp. 185-186.
- [3] Buhârî, El Câmi' u's-Sahih, Bed'ül-vahy, 1-5.
- [4] Buhârî, El Câmi' u's-Sahih, Bed'ül-halk, 6-7.
- [5] Buhârî, El Câmi' u's-Sahih, Fezâ'ilü'l-Kur'an, 3-4.
- [6] Dâni, Ebû Amr Uthman b. Said. el-Muḳnî` fî resmi meşâḫifi'l-emşâr. Thk. Muhammed es-Sadık Kamhâvî. Kahire: Mektebetü'l-küllîyyati'l-Ezheriyye, 1978 (pages 17-19).
- [7] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters*, 19th Letter, 18th Sign.
- [8] Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, *The Letters*, 28th Letter, 7th Matter.