

Orbiting of the Earth

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question no.10: “What do you say about the orbiting of the earth?”

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) ¹ answers:

“We in fact don’t doubt that the matter of the orbiting of the earth is an indisputable scientific fact. At the same time, we believe that it is not the purpose of the Islaamic legislation in general and the Qur’aan specifically to talk about astronomy and its details. Rather, this is included in the generality of (the Prophet’s) saying (عليه الصلاة والسلام) ² which Muslim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) brought out in his Saheeh from the narration of Anas bin Maalik (رضي الله عنه) ³ about the story of pollinating the date palm trees, ⁴ when he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) ⁵ said to them: ‘It was only an opinion of mine, so if I order you to do something concerning your religious affair, then do it as much as you are able, and whatever I order you to do concerning your worldly affairs, then you are more knowledgeable about them.’ ⁶

So these issues were not obligatory for the Messenger (of Allaah) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to talk about, and if he did talk (about them) in his hadeeth or if our Lord (عز وجل) ⁷ did so in His Book, then it is only for (showing) a sign or miracle or the like. Thus, we can say that **there isn’t anything in the Book nor in the Sunnah that would contradict this scientific fact that is well-known today, which states that the earth is round and that it runs in an orbit by the Power of Allaah (عز وجل) in this vast space.** Rather, it is possible for the Muslim to find that which suggests, if not clearly states, that the earth is like the sun and the moon because they are all in this space, as He (عز وجل) says: **[they all float, each in an orbit];** and (this is so) especially if we remember that before this divine statement with the word ‘all,’ (this word) means the three celestial bodies due to the fact that He began with the earth. So He said: **[And a sign for them is the dead earth. We give it life, and We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof],** ⁸ then He said: **[And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing / And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk / It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit].** ⁹ The word ‘all’ includes the first aayah: the earth, then the sun, then the moon. Then He (تعالى) ¹⁰ says: **[They all float, each in an orbit].** ⁶

This is what is apparent from the context of these aayaat, which are no doubt amazing aayaat about the dominion of Allaah (عز وجل). All of this is while knowing that the scholars of tafseer ¹¹ attributed the

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)(rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² (عليه الصلاة والسلام) (alayhi as-Salaat wa Salaam) Upon him prayer and peace

³ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

⁴ Saheeh Muslim no.2363; the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) saw people pollinating date palm trees and expressed that it may be good if they did not do so, but after they left doing it, there was a negative impact on date production.

⁵ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

⁶ the Shaykh also mentioned some extra wordings; refer to Saheeh Muslim no.2361, no.2362 and Saheeh ibn Maajah no.2

⁷ (عز وجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

⁸ Surah Yaa Seen, 36:33

⁹ Surah Yaa Seen, 36:38-40

¹⁰ (تعالى) Ta’aala (He, The Most High)

¹¹ Explanation of the Qur’aan

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term 'all' to the closest thing mentioned, which is the sun and the moon. However, there isn't anything that would ever prevent us from extending the meaning of 'all' to include the earth which was mentioned before the sun and the moon."