

Al Thaahir: The Evidence, the Outer, the Manifest: Material Evidence for God's Presence

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The testimonial text Al Thaahir links verses from the Qur'an to observable natural events to argue that human existence is worthy of awe and respect.

Sahar Maurice's bilingual testimonial *Al Thaahir* draws on the Qur'an to provide material evidence for God's presence in, and influence over, every aspect of the world and every human experience.

Maurice begins by detailing her personal experiences with Islam, including dramatic changes in her life, as proof of the miracle of faith. Following this, simplified versions of scientific principles are applied to common life events like pregnancy; the presence of God is noted in each such event. Across six brief chapters, the notion that all of the secrets of the universe, and all of its questions and unknown values, are the work of God is mused upon. Sciences, including natural science, physical science, and microbiology, are approached in terms of their divine origins; the hand of God is argued to be obvious in each of these fields. Human curiosity itself is attributed to the same source, and the book encourages wonderment and awe: "Though humans have reached the moon and may even reach Mars, they will never create a fly."

But alongside marveling over the atomic bonds that create water molecules as being created by God, the book also argues the sacred origins of artificial environments and processed objects like carved furniture. It supports its musings with quotes from the Qur'an; its bibliography nods only to the Qur'an, and its glossary includes some of the ninety-nine names of God. Its arguments are superficial and its logic is circular; it is absent interrogations of its spiritual truisms. Prophecies from the Qur'an are pointed to as fulfilled or proven by science, sometimes many centuries later, but treatments of such phenomena are interpreted at a surface level that underemphasizes their significance.

The book works to simplify the principles of faith, but in the process of doing so, it comes to read like a pamphlet. It skims over its most interesting suggestions and revisits its dominant themes—maintaining faith through discomfort; discovering God in all conditions—often. Still, its tone is confident and friendly, and its habit of linking observable events to quotes from the Qur'an makes the religious text seem accessible and relatable.

In English and German versions that are printed back to back, *Al Thaahir* links verses from the Qur'an to observable natural events to argue that human existence is a miracle and worthy of awe and respect.

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