

Some important Muslim scholars claim that the Qur'an does not aim to teach science

Abul A'ala Maududi (1903-1979) was one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of the 20th century. He said: "As the aim of the Quran is to guide Man and not to teach Nature Study or History or Philosophy or any other science or art, it does not concern itself with these latter subjects."¹

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) was one of the most important Muslim scholars of his time. He wrote: "The problems of physics are of no interest to us in our religious affairs or in our livelihoods. Therefore we must leave them alone. Physics must not bother us because it cannot be applied to the two domains that are truly important to us: this life and the life to come."²

Maulana Nawabzada Nabiullah Khan (1999): "Doubt is sown in the minds of the people on the validity of the Quran as the word of God. More and more we work hard to prove the Quran's scientific correctness, more and more people will get apprehensive of the truth of the Quran. This is an abomination."³

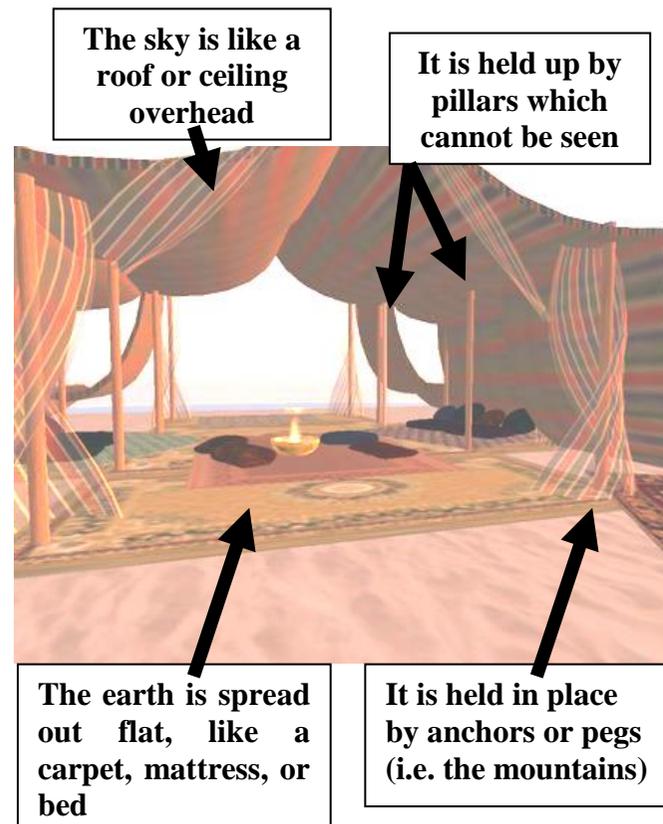
¹ Abul A'ala Maududi "The Meaning of the Quran" in Abdullah Yusuf Ali *The Holy Quran: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1975), xxvi

² Remi Brague *The Legend of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009) p.75

³ <http://www.islam-watch.org/JihadiUmmah/What-Islam-Wants-Nabiullah-Khan.htm> accessed on 26th Aug, 2008

The Qur'an describes a geocentric universe revolving around a flat earth

So that the Arabs of Muhammad's time would understand it, the universe is likened to a Bedouin tent. The Qur'an describes the earth as a carpet that is spread out flat. The mountains are huge rocks or anchors that stop the earth from moving. The sky is a canopy or tent raised over the top like a tent, and it is held up by invisible pillars. The sun, moon and stars run across the sky, and the sun sets in a muddy pool at night.



(a) The earth is flat, like a carpet, mattress, bed or geometric or geological plane

Many verses speak about this:

"We (i.e. Allah) 'stretched out' *madadna* the earth" (Yusuf Ali adds: 'like a carpet') (13:3; 15:19; 50:7).

"We (i.e. Allah) spread out' *farashna* (51:48) the earth." The verb *farasha* means "to pave or cover the ground". A *farsha* is a mattress, which is typically stored rolled up, and spread out flat to sleep on.

He made the earth 'a couch' *firaash*^{an} (2:22)

"We made it *ja'alna* "like a bed (spread out)" *mahd*^{an} (Hilali and Khan in 20:53; 43:10). A *mahd* is a bed or a cradle, or *mihaadan* (78:6)

Allah made it 'a wide expanse' *bisat*^{an} (71:19). The word *bisat* means a 'carpet' or a 'rug'.

"After that He (Allah) spread out *daha* (the earth)" (79:30) *daha(ha)* means "spread out, flatten, level, unroll ('it' f.s. i.e. the earth)".

Its cognate word *midh*^{an} مِدْحِي is a roller, or steamroller.

The earth is 'spread out' *sutihat* (88:19), like the roof of a building, or deck of a ship: *sath* is the geometrical term for a 'plane' or flat surface.

One day, we are told, the mountains will be removed, and the earth will be seen "as a levelled plain" *bāriza* (18:47)

Muslim support for the Flat Earth theory

Support for the Qur'an's flat earth theory has been found in other places.

"In 1993, the Muslim world was stunned by the alleged edict by then supreme religious authority of the Islamic University of Medina, in Saudi Arabia. On page 23 of his infamous book, "Evidence that the Earth is Standing Still", Shaykh 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn 'Abdullaah ibn Baaz declared, "**The earth is flat, and anyone who disputes this claim is an atheist who deserves to be punished.**" Thereafter, Sheikh 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baaz had received pressure from his contemporaries and eventually was persuaded by his close colleagues to edit his book. The first edition of "Evidence that the Earth is Standing Still" has been discarded and the subsequent editions revised."⁴

Pakistani civil engineer, Maulana Nawabzada Nabiullah Khan, stated that "There are many Hadiths, which say that the earth is flat. But any science will tell you the earth is a sphere. But you can use the same science like the relativity theory to prove that the earth is flat. It is the same case with evolution."⁵

The mountains are described as pegs, holding the flat (carpet) earth in place

The normal word for 'mountain' is *jebel* (pl. *jibaal*) e.g. 11:42; 15:82; 17:37; 18:47; 19:90, etc

However in the context of the earth 'spread out', the mountains are like pegs in the ground, which prevent the earth from moving (16:15; 31:10). They are called 'anchors' *rawaasi* (Q.13:2; 15:18; 21:31; 31:10; 50:7 – singular for *rasiya*), translated as 'firm mountains' by Hilali and Khan. In another verse, the mountains are described as 'pegs' *awtaadan* (78:7)

Suras 16:15; 21:31; **31:10**; 78:6-7; 88:19 tell us that Allah placed (threw down) mountains on the earth like tent pegs to keep the earth from shaking.

(c) **The skies are described as a 'roof' or 'ceiling'** *saqf^{fm}* overhead (Q.21:32), raised up (55:7) and held up without pillars that you can see (13:2; 31:10).

(d) **The sun and moon** are in every orbit 'swimming' *yasbahūn* (21:33). Hilali and Khan call them 'floating' because the sky was thought to be full of water – that is where rain comes from.

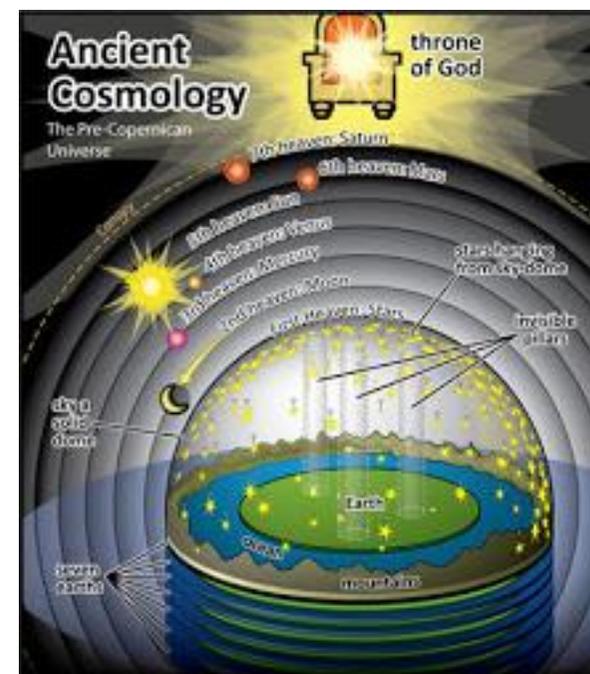
(e) **It is a geocentric universe** - The sun "runs" *yajri* around the earth (13:2; 36:38)

(f) **The setting of the sun** – "When he (Alexander the Great) reached the setting place of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring." (Q.18:86). Yusuf Ali admits that this verse has "puzzled Commentators." Yusuf Ali *Holy Qur'an* p.754, n.2430

Cosmology in the Qur'an

cos-mol-o-gy *n.* (kōz-mōl'ə-jē)

The study of the physical universe considered as a totality of phenomena in time and space.



⁴ Source: <http://khalas.wordpress.com/2007/03/01/a-flat-earth-the-islamic-perspective/> accessed on 3rd Nov, 2008

⁵ <http://www.islam-watch.org/JihadiUmmah/What-Islam-Wants-Nabiullah-Khan.htm> accessed on 26th Aug, 2008