SAMPLE

The Earth: Mountains, Oceans, and Rivers in the Quran

The Terrestrial Signs of Allah

Aira Aurora

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This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

Introduction: The Earth as a Sign

Beneath your feet is a sign. The Quran does not say this once or twice — it says it dozens of times, in different ways, through different images. The earth is a firash, a carpet spread out. The mountains are awtad, pegs driven into the ground. The rivers are paths carved through the land. The oceans are bodies of water held back by an unseen barrier. The soil is the source of every plant, every tree, every grain of food. The earth is not a dead rock spinning in space; it is a living sign, a speaking testimony, a book as readable as the Quran itself.

The Quran speaks of the earth more than four hundred and fifty times. It describes its creation, its shaping, its flattening, its stretching, its fixing with mountains, its bringing forth of vegetation, its producing of fruits, its holding of springs, its swallowing of bodies, and its final shaking on the Day of Judgment. The earth is presented as a deliberate, designed, purposeful creation — not the product of accidental geological processes, but the work of a Creator who measured its expanse, set its boundaries, and filled it with provisions for the beings He would place upon it.

This book explores the Quranic vision of the earth. It examines the mountains, the oceans, the rivers, the soil, the springs, the earthquakes, and the earth itself as a sign of resurrection. It asks: what does the Quran say about each of these terrestrial features? How does it describe their function, their origin, and their relationship to human life? What spiritual and moral lessons does it draw from the ground beneath our feet?

The first chapter begins with the mountains — the most frequently mentioned terrestrial feature in the Quran, the objects Allah describes as pegs, weights, and stabilizers of the earth.

Chapter 1: The Mountains — Pegs and Pillars

And the mountains as pegs? (78:7)

The Quran describes the mountains as awtad — pegs, stakes, tent pegs. A tent peg is driven into the ground to hold a tent in place against the wind. The Quran uses this image for mountains: they are driven into the earth to hold it in place. The earth, in this image, is a tent — a shelter, a dwelling, a temporary structure — and the mountains are the pegs that keep it stable.

The comparison is both visual and functional. Visually, a mountain resembles a tent peg: the visible part is small compared to the buried part. The mountain you see above ground is only a fraction of its total mass; the roots extend deep into the earth, anchoring it. Functionally, the peg stabilizes the tent; the mountain stabilizes the earth. Without the pegs, the tent would be blown away.

Without the mountains, the earth would shake uncontrollably. The Quran expressed this relationship centuries before geology described the isostatic function of mountain roots.

And We placed within the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with them. (21:31)

The Quran states the function of the mountains explicitly: an tamida bikum — lest it should shift with you, lest it should shake beneath you, lest it should move from its place. The mountains are placed as stabilizers — rawasi — firm, unshakeable, deeply rooted. The word rawasi comes from the root r-s-y, which means to fix firmly, to anchor, to establish securely. The mountains are not merely large rocks; they are anchors, designed and placed to keep the earth from moving.

The theological point is about divine care. The same Allah who created the earth also created the means to keep it stable. He did not create a world and leave it to its own devices. He created a world and equipped it with the mechanisms to sustain it. The mountains are evidence of a mind that anticipated the problem of instability and provided the solution before the problem could arise.

And He cast within the earth firm mountains rising above it, that it may not shake with you. (16:15)

The Quran says the mountains were ilqaiha — cast, thrown, placed into the earth. The word suggests a deliberate act: the mountains were not formed by accident; they were placed by a will. The mountains rise above the earth (tamida — towering, projecting upward), and their function is to prevent the

earth from shaking. The image is of a heavy weight placed on a surface to keep it from moving — a paperweight on a document, a stone on a tent, a mountain on the earth.

And He made for you roads that you may be guided. (16:15)

The Quran connects the mountains to human navigation. Mountains serve as landmarks — visible from great distances, they guide travelers across deserts, mark the entrances to valleys, and define the boundaries between regions. Before maps and GPS, the mountain was the map. Its shape, its position, its relationship to other mountains — all of these were navigation data for the traveler.

The Quran presents this as another divine provision. The mountains are not obstacles; they are guides. They do not block the way; they mark it. The same mountains that stabilize the earth also guide the human being across it. One mountain serves two functions simultaneously — structural and navigational — and both were intended by the One who placed it.

And they said, "Can you bring us a greater sign?" Say, "I am to you a clear warner." (43:46-47)

The people of Aad, to whom Prophet Hud was sent, lived in a land of mountains. The Quran describes them as building monuments on every elevated place — ashab al-ahqaf, the people of the sand dunes, but also a people who carved their civilization into the mountains. Their architecture was monumental, their buildings were grand, and their confidence in their own permanence was absolute.

The mountains that witnessed their civilization also witnessed its destruction. When Allah sent a wind to destroy them, the mountains could not protect them. The civilization that was carved into the rock was erased by a force that the rock could not withstand. The mountains, which the people of Aad trusted as symbols of permanence, became the monuments of their destruction.

And the mountains will be like carded wool. (101:5)

The Quran describes the mountains as being utterly destroyed on the Day of Judgment. The mountain — the most solid, most permanent, most unshakeable thing the human being can see — will become like carded wool, like scattered dust, like a mirage. The image is devastating: the thing you trust most for its solidity will lose all solidity. The peg will be pulled from the ground. The anchor will be lifted from the sea. The weight will be removed from the earth.

This description serves the Quran's argument for resurrection. The same Allah

who placed the mountains and kept them stable for the entire duration of the world will, on the Day of Judgment, dissolve them. The power that holds the mountain in place is the same power that can remove it. The mountains are not eternal; they are maintained. And the same will that maintains them can also unmaintain them. The mountain that has been a sign of stability throughout your life will be a sign of instability on the last day — and the same Allah is the author of both the stability and the instability.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

The NurOne master series is her primary project -- a multi-sub-series exploration of the Quran covering prophets, people, places, events, lessons, commands, signs, the unseen, the hereafter, and everyday life. Each book is a close reading of the Quranic verses on a specific topic, presented in clear, accessible language.

Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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