

Allah SWT says in Surah Al Ra'ad (Thunder, الرعد) Ayah 41

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا وَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ لَا مُعَقِّبَ لِحُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

Have they not seen that We set upon the land, reducing it from its borders? And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision. And He is swift in account.

How does earth have borders (أطراف) when earth is spherical?

How is earth is reduced from its borders?

What is meant by this ayah?

Is there a scientific fact hidden in this Ayah? Please explain.

AssalamuAlaikum,

We are very pleased with the quality of responses to the questions. May reward everyone for their hard work!

Surah Al Ra'd is one of the Surah's the contain many scientific facts, This ayah was interpreted in several ways by the scholars. It carries a circumstantial meaning as well as a physical meaning. A similar ayah also came in Surah Al Anbiyya'

The word (يرى) means either physically see, or scientifically see. The ayah was interpreted in the past as follow. The reduction in earth borders was interpreted to mean the death of the Scholars, it was also interpreted to mean the increase in Muslim land and the reduction of land of Al Kufr at the time of the rise on Islam.

From a scientific stand point, and when investigating the physical shape of earth and its rotation around the sun, science shows that the vertical diameter of earth is bigger than the horizontal diameter around earth. Due to the rotation of earth around the sun at a certain well defined speed, a centrifugal force is created, with a force of attraction between earth and the sun. The centrifugal force puts the pressure on earth and causes it bulge, which explains the difference in the two diameters. The reduction in diameter around the equator, or the horizontal diameter may have been intended in this context. Another interpretation also is explained in the reduction of earth's dry surface due to the rise of the ocean surface, which is caused by ice meting resulting from global warming. Another scientific fact also explained here. The sun's mass is reduced overtime due to the evaporation of its substances due to the heat. In order to maintain the same distance between the sun and earth, earth also has to lose some of it's mass. Science has proven that both earth and the sun are losing small amounts of their masses over time, and this reduction is proportional to each other in order to maintain the required centrifugal force that keeps earth at the same distance from earth. And Allah knows best. The Quran is good for anytime and any place. Many years from now, future scholars may discover new things in this ayah. May Allah benefit us from what we learn Ameen.