

A Study of the Interpretation of the seven Earths from "Wa men al-arz e Mithlahun" ("وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلُهُنَّ") (65:12) and its Relation to Science

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Abstract:

This article re-examines Qur'an 65:12 — "God created seven heavens and of the earth their like" — which has traditionally been interpreted as referring to the creation of "seven earths." The study identifies a major tension between the verse's linguistic structure and the dominant exegetical view, which lacks direct textual evidence yet remains prevalent across classical and modern tafsīr. Through a Textual Analysis, Hadith Critique and Comparative Cosmology approach, the research analyses (1) the grammatical and syntactical possibilities of mithlahunna, (2) the isnād and matn of related ḥadīth reports in both Sunni and Shi'i sources, and (3) parallels with ancient cosmological models in Hindu, Greek, and Zoroastrian traditions. The findings demonstrate that the "seven earths" interpretation emerged not from Qur'anic semantics but from early exegetes' reliance on weak or mythologically influenced reports, reinforced by exegetical convention. By disentangling textual meaning from inherited cosmological assumptions, this study highlights how pre-Islamic conceptions of the cosmos shaped tafsīr and argues for a method that privileges Qur'anic coherence over narrative tradition.

Keywords: Qur'an 65:12; Seven Earths; Ancient or mythological Cosmologies; Exegetical convention; Exegetical tradition.

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