

The claim is that in 12:20 the quran makes a historical error. It uses the term “Dirham” saying that Prophet Yusuf (AS) was purchased with “a countable number of Dirhams” ie

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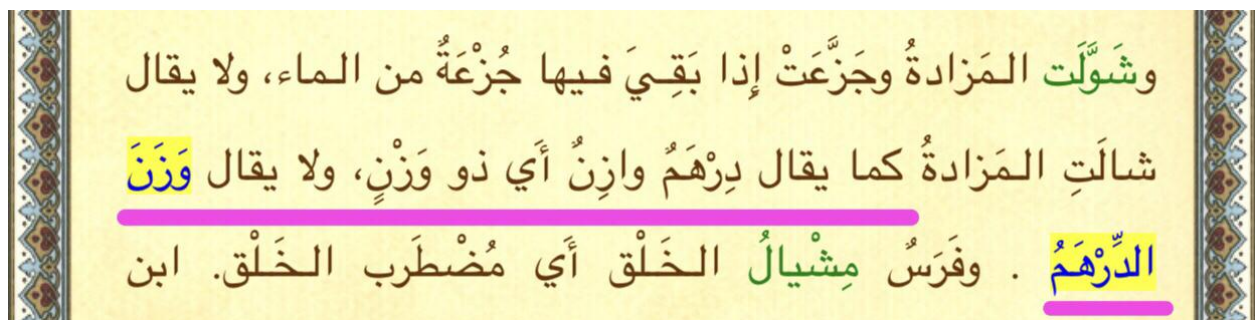
And this supposedly is a substantial lapse in the historical accuracy of the quran. After all, the “Dirham” **currency** or even coins for that matter were not utilized in any transactions at the time of our Prophet Yusuf (AS).

First, let us dissect what the word “Dirham” actually means, as opposed to what it modernically represents.

The root of the word

در-هم

This word linguistically means “**weight** (of something valuable)”:



“That is - we say Dirham of weight, and **NOT** weight of a Dirham” - Lisan al Arab

دِرْهَمٌ *dirhim*, pl. *darāhim*, and—  
دِرْهَمٌ *dirham*, *dirhim*, pl. *darāhim*,  
silver drachm (20=a *dinār*);  
silver coin, money; a weight

↑ from Steingass

دِرْهَمٌ Plur. دَرَاهِمٌ (2nd declension) from the Pers.  
دِرَم, Money; a silver coin, the value of which  
has varied considerably at different times and  
in different places; the weight of the legal  
dirhem is fixed at 50 $\frac{1}{2}$  barleycorns.

↑ from Penrice

دِرْهَمٌ *dirham* pl. دَرَاهِمٌ *darāhim*<sup>2</sup> dirhem,  
drachma (*Ir.* = coin of 50 فلس); a weight  
(*Eg.* =  $\frac{1}{12}$  اوقية = ca. 3.12 g); دَرَاهِمٌ  
money, cash

↑ from Hans Wehr

A Dirham is used to refer to any item weighted and used for commerce, whether it be chunks of metal, silver coins, or even metal sheets.

The most interesting explication of the original root for Dirham comes from Lane's Lexicon:

دَرَهْمٌ, (Ṣ, Mgh, Mṣb, K,) of the measure فَعْلَلُ, (Mṣb, MF,) of which it has been said that there are only three other instances, but there are many more; (MF;) an arabicized word, (Ṣ, Mṣb,) from the Pers. [دَرَم]; (Ṣ;) also pronounced دَرَهْمٌ, (Ṣ, Mṣb, K,) but this is of rare occurrence; (TA;) and دَرَهْمٌ, (Ṣ, K,) which is more rare; (TA;) *A certain silver coin*; (Mgh, Mṣb;) like as دِينَارٌ signifies a certain gold coin: (Mgh:) [and the weight thereof; i. e. a drachm, or dram:] its weight is six دَوَانِيقُ [or dāniqs]; (Mṣb, and K in art. مَك;) i. e., the weight of the دَرَهْمِ اِسْلَامِيّ: but in the Time of Ignorance, some dirhems were light, being four دَوَانِيقُ; and these were called طَبْرِيَّة: and some were heavy, being eight دَوَانِيقُ; and these were called عَبْدِيَّة, or بَغْلِيَّة: and of these two they made two that were equal; so that each دَرَهْمِ was six دَوَانِيقُ: this is said to have been done by 'Omar: or, accord. to another account, some dirhems were of the weight of twenty carats, and were called the weight of ten [i. e. of ten dāniqs]; and some were of the weight of ten [carats], and were called the weight of five; and some were of the weight of twelve [carats], and were called the weight of six; and they put the three weights together, and called the third part thereof the weight of seven: and one of the weights of the دَرَهْمِ before El-Islām was twelve carats, which is six دَوَانِيقُ: but the دَرَهْمِ اِسْلَامِيّ is sixteen carats; the دَانِقِ of this being a carat and two thirds: (Mṣb:) or dirhems should be fourteen carats [i. e. seven dāniqs]; ten being of the weight of seven مَثَاقِيلُ [or mithkūls]: in the Time of Ignorance, some were heavy, [equal to] مَثَاقِيلُ; and some were light, [called] طَبْرِيَّة; and when they were coined in the age of El-Islām, they made of the heavy and the light two dirhems, so that ten became equal to seven مَثَاقِيلُ: A 'Obeyd says that this was done in the time [of the dynasty] of the sons of Umeiyeh: (El-Karkhec, cited in the Mgh:) [see also De Sacy's "Chrest. Arabe," sec. ed., vol. ii. p. 110 of the Arabic text, and p. 282 of the transl.; where it is further stated, on the authority of Ibn-Khaldoon, that the دَرَهْمِ مَغْرِبِيّ was three دَوَانِيقُ; and the دَرَهْمِ اِسْلَامِيّ, one دَانِقُ; and, as is said in the Mṣb, that 'Omar adopted the mean between the بَغْلِيّ and the طَبْرِيّ, making the دَرَهْمِ to be six:] the pl. (of دَرَهْمِ, Ṣ) is دَرَاهِمٌ and (of دَرَهْمِ, Ṣ) دَرَاهِمٌ. (Ṣ, K.) [The former of these pls. is often used as signifying Money, each or six in an abso-]

**As we can see, the figure of a Dirham's value changed over time, and that the weight of a Dirhamic quantity varied, so it was not standardized to a particular and specific form of monetary currency / value.**

**This is clear decoration of the notion that the word Dirham is in reference to the arbitrary weight of valuable objection and NOT intrinsically relative to a specific currency.**

Dirham is linguistically a **measure of weight**, and not literally a measure of currency.

To truly illustrate this notion, let us consider a more relative example

Consider the coin currency of Britain: the Pound. Was the weight named after the currency or was the currency named after the weight?

"Its name derives from the Latin word "poundus" meaning "weight". The £ symbol comes from an ornate L in Libra. Anglo-Saxon era. The pound was a unit of currency as early as 775AD in Anglo-Saxon England, equivalent to 1 pound weight of silver. This was a vast fortune in the 8th century."

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/a-short-history-of-the-british-pound/>

So we establish that the word "pound" is

1. NOT exclusively a reference to the currency meaning
2. NOT the original linguistic meaning which actually comes from "weight"
3. Pound has BOTH meanings "weight" and "currency"

If I were to say

"The king gave the beggar a few pounds of money"

There is no way to say whether the king gave the beggar a few Pounds £ of money or a few Pounds lbs weight of money.

Similarly, when the word Dirham is used, how are we going to say that it DEFINITELY means the currency? That isn't even the original meaning of the word. In fact, the currency was NAMED after the original meaning - that being the **\*\*weight\*\*** of something.

"The dirham was a **unit of weight** used across North Africa, the Middle East, Persia and Ifat; later known as Adal, **with varying values.**"

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirham>

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And to further demonstrate this, consider the Ayaat in which Allah DOES mention words whose roots are 'coin' or 'currency'

In 3:75 Allah says:

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَّهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ  
 إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنُهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ  
 إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ  
 عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
 الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

ENGLISH TRANSLATION



(75) And among the People of the Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount [of wealth], he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a [single] coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him [demanding it]. That is because they say, "There is no blame upon us concerning the unlearned."<sup>[133]</sup> And they speak untruth about Allāh while they

Allah mentions the word 'dinar' here

"The word "dinar" derives from the Latin "dēnārius," a silver coin of ancient Rome, which was first minted about c. 211 BCE."

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dinar>

denarius (n.)

ancient Roman silver coin, 1570s, from Latin denarius, noun use of adjective meaning "containing ten," and short for denarius nummus "the coin containing ten (aces)"

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Similarly in another verse 18:19:

وَكَذَلِكَ بَعَثْنَاهُمْ لِيَتَسَاءَلُوا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ  
 كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالُوا  
 رَبُّكُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثْتُمْ فَابْعَثُوا أَحَدَكُمْ  
 بِوَرِقِكُمْ هَذِهِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَيُّهَا أَزْكَى  
 طَعَامًا فَلْيَأْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا  
 يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ أَحَدًا ﴿١٩﴾

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION



(19) And similarly,<sup>[782]</sup> We awakened them that they might question one another. Said a speaker from among them, "How long have you remained [here]?" They said, "We have remained a day or part of a day." They said, "Your Lord is most knowing of how long you remained. So send one of you with this silver coin of yours to the city



The term used here is 'wariq'. This word is derived from "leaf" or "thin metal plate" or "sheet of value".. and thus it has original linguistic roots for "coin".

So why did Allah not use any of these words in 12:20? Why did he choose to use the word Dirham, which doesn't even mean coin or currency, just like the word pound ALSO doesn't originally mean coin or currency - but rather originally and linguistically it means "weight"?

It's almost as if Allah WASN'T making a mistake in the Quran? Who would've thought!

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The claimants against Islam continue to attack this verse using the word "معدودة"

These claims are no doubt copium.

Since "معدودة" means countable number, apparently this alludes to Dirham being a currency because it's supposedly saying you can sum up the amount of money discreetly?

This is a fallacious statement. The word Dirham is the weight of something valuable, let's say, a weight of a small chunk of gold for example.

Why is it so preposterous that we can have a small countable number of chunks of gold (in our example) that Yusuf (AS) was purchased with?

The people buying Yusuf (AS) weren't using entire treasure chests or hoards of money so big that we can't even count it in any way to buy him were they? They used a small number of these pieces of this 'valuable' weight (Dirhams) and this indicates how little and unvalued Yusuf (AS) was worth to them - In fact, they purchased him so quickly and informally that they didn't even bother weighing out particular / specific amounts of metal.. but rather.. they just handed over a few pieces / arbitrary weights (literally some Dirhams which means weight) of whatever valuable metal it was and bought him just like that. THIS is what 'ma3doodah' is also indicative of - but Allah juxtaposes this by praising Yusuf (AS) to a high rank by saying we granted him 'Ilm and Hikmah, and that is how the Muhsineen are granted.

So this claim that 'معدودة' indicates a sum of currency is

1. Erroneous
  2. Actually is in regards to the small number of the valuable weights they purchased him with, because of course, these weights were distinct and separate to each other..
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So what *did* people at the time of Yusuf (AS) use as currency? Let's look to the article attacking this verse for some.. clues..

Such a thing did not exist in ancient Egypt. Rather, there were stone weights, particularly the denben, for measuring amounts of precious metals and to price other goods that could be barter traded, but not itself

Stone weights being used to measure out weights of precious metals, and it's the weight of metal that is being used in transactions, and not the stones themselves?? Hmm...

Seems quite authentic to "Dirham" in any objective scenario.

May Allah guide those struck by myopia who mislead people away from Islam with these fallacious arguments.