

The Night of *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*

An account of the miraculous night journey of the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).

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Introduction.

The Isrā & Mi'rāj

The *Isrā & Mi'rāj* refers to the night when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was taken on a miraculous journey by Allāh Almighty. Most scholars agree that this night fell on the twenty-seventh of Rajab¹, one year before the migration of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) from Makka to Madīna.²

The word *Isrā* means to travel by night. This indicates the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) journey from Makka to Masjid Aqsā in Jerusalem. *Mi'rāj* means 'the means of ascending.' This word is used to describe the upward journey from Jerusalem to the heavens and beyond.

Scholars have said that for the *Ummah* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), the Night of *Qadr* (*Layla al-Qadr*) constitutes the most important night of the Islamic calendar. This is because worship on this night 'is better than a thousand months.'³ As for the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) personally, the Night of *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj* was the greatest night.

The true importance and significance of this night for our Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is perhaps beyond our limited comprehension. Despite the huge literature available on this night, the countless *ahādīth* and the sayings of our pious predecessors, we can merely outline what happened on this auspicious occasion. The true nature and reality of this night is in essence a beautiful secret between Allāh Almighty and His Beloved Messenger.

¹ p. 480. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (vol. II; 4th ed.) See also p. 209, *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol I; Part II.

² p. 481. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (vol. II; 4th ed.).

³ Sūrah al-Qadr; verse 3.

The Background to the *Isrā* and *Mi'rāj*.

Perhaps one can only truly appreciate the importance of the miraculous journey when the historical perspective is analysed. Most historians agree that the *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj* took place in the tenth year after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) first received the revelation (*wahy*). Clearly he was facing anxiety and hardship at the time. Firstly, his endless effort to invite people to Islam in Makka was sometimes met with disappointment. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) geared all his energies into this task, but the infidels were often staunch, insulting and disinterested. Secondly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had to endure the personal tragedy of the death of his wife Sayyida Khadīja (may Allāh be pleased with her). Thirdly, the episode of Tā'if hurt the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) immensely. He travelled there to invite people to Islam, but the inhabitants blasphemously mistreated the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).

All these factors made the *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj* a very special gift from Allāh Almighty to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). As Pīr Muhammad Karam Shāh al-Azharī notes, the historical circumstances at the time meant there was no better time for the Night Journey to occur.⁴ Despite the obvious hardship and strain, Allāh reiterated His closeness and love for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) by inviting him to the heavens.

The *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj*; a detailed account.

The *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj* from the Holy Qur'ān.

There are two Sūrah's in the Holy Qur'ān that refer to the *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj*; Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl (also called Sūrah al-Isrā) and Sūrah al-Najm. The verse from Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl refers to the journey from Makka to Jerusalem, whereas Sūrah al-Najm refers to the ascension to the heavens.

Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl

Glorified be He Who carried His blessed servant in the span of a night from the Sacred Mosque to the Aqsā Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed- so that We may show Our servant signs of Our glory. Verily, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.⁵

⁴ p. 623, vol. II. *Ziā al-Qur'ān*. Pīr Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari.

⁵ Sūrah al-Isrā, verse 1. The translation has been taken from *Jamāl al-Qur'ān*, (Professor Anis Ahmed Sheikh).

Sūrah al-Najm

By the bright shining star, when it came down (on the night of Ascension). Your (life-long) Companion neither strayed from the right path nor was misled. And he speaks not of his own desire. This is not but a revelation that is revealed to him. By One Mighty in Power who has taught him. The Lord of great wisdom. Then he made for the heights. And he was on the highest point of the horizon. Then the Splendid Vision drew near, and came nearer still. Till there was a distance of two-bow lengths or even less. So Allāh revealed to His beloved servant what He revealed. The heart lied not in what the Prophet's eye saw. Do you then dispute with him about what he saw? And indeed he saw that splendid vision for the second time. Near the Lote-Tree at the farthest end. Near to it is the Garden of Eternity. When that was covering the Lote-Tree, which was covering it. The Prophet's eye did not wander, nor it trespassed the limit of respect. Certainly he saw the great signs of his Lord.⁶

All the scholars agree that these verses from Sūrah al-Najm relate to the *Mi'rāj* of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). However, there is a small difference of opinion regarding who exactly is being referred to in these verses. Some believe that the meeting of Jibrīl (peace be upon him) and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is being described. This was the first time the Prophet saw Jibrīl in his original, created form. The majority and correct opinion is that these verses are in fact referring to the Prophet's encounter with Allāh Almighty.⁷

The *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj* from *ahādīth*.

There are countless authentic narrations to be found in all books of hadīth that relate the events of the *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj*. These *ahādīth* vary in detail and length. What follows is a narration as recorded by Imām Muslim ibn Hajjāj in his *Sahīh*,⁸ which has been mentioned in its entirety. This particular narration has been chosen because it is considerably detailed. Additional commentary and analysis is offered in the footnotes.

'While I was at the House [i.e. the Ka'ba] in a state midway between sleep and wakefulness⁹, (an angel recognised me) as the man lying between two men.¹⁰ A golden

⁶ Sūrah al-Najm; verses 1-18.

⁷ p. 521-527. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁸ *Sahīh Muslim*; Book of Imān, Chapter; the Night Journey of the Prophet (hadith no. 234). From the narration of Hasan ibn Musa, from Hammād ibn Salama, from Thābit al-Banani, from Anas ibn Mālik. The first paragraph is taken from Imām al-Bukhārī's narration (Book of the Beginning of Creation; Chapter the Mentioning of Angels).

⁹ Other narrations mention that the Prophet was resting next to the *hatim* at the time, which is the semi-circular, external part of the Ka'bah. (p. 624, vol.II. *Ziā al-Qur'ān*, Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari).

tray full of wisdom and belief was brought to me and my body was cut open from the throat to the lower part of the abdomen and then my abdomen was washed with Zamzam water and (my heart was) filled with wisdom and belief.¹¹

The Burāq¹² was brought to me. This is a white animal larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule. It can place its hoofs to the [furthest] point it can see. So I mounted it. So I was taken on a journey¹³ until I reached Bayt al-Muqaddas [in Jerusalem]. So I tied the animal to the ring where the prophets tie theirs. Then I entered [the mosque] and I prayed two *rak'ats* in there. I recognised the prophets there; some were standing and some were in *rukū* and some were in prostration. A caller made the call for Prayer (*adhān*) and prayer was performed. We stood and made the rows and waited for someone to lead the prayer. Thus, Jibrīl took my hand and placed me forward. So, I performed *salāh* with them.¹⁴ Then I came out and Jibrīl (peace be upon him) came to me with a vessel of wine and milk. Thus I chose the milk, upon which Jibrīl said: 'you have chosen the natural (*al-fitra*).'¹⁵

Then I was taken on ascension to the worldly skies. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'Who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent for?' Jibrīl replied: 'Yes.' It was then said: 'He is welcomed. What a wonderful visit his is!'¹⁶

So it was opened for us, and there was Ādam. He welcomed us and prayed for my wellbeing.

Then I was taken on ascension to the second sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent for?' Jibrīl replied: 'Yes.' It was then said: 'He is welcomed. What a wonderful visit his is!'

¹⁰ The two men were Hamza and Ja'far ibn Abu Tālib (may Allāh be pleased with them). (p. 358. *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*. Abd Allāh al-Harawi).

¹¹ This has been referred to as the *Shaqq Sadar*, or 'splitting of the chest.' This also happened to the Prophet when he was a young child.

¹² The word probably derives from *baraq* which means 'lightening' and is so called because of its speed. (p. 210. *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol I; Part II).

¹³ The word used in Arabic is *Saa'ra*. The usage of the word suggests that the journey from Makka to al-Aqsā was not necessarily a direct one; rather the Prophet was taken to other places on the way. There are in fact some narrations that suggest on the way to al-Aqsā, the Prophet was taken to Madīna Sharif and Mount Moses in Sinai. (p. 358. *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*. Abd Allāh al-Harawi).

¹⁴ The description of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) performing *Salāh* with the prophets is from the narration of Ibn Mas'ud. (Cited from p. 47, *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud).

¹⁵ Imām al-Nawawī writes that the milk symbolised 'Islam and *Istiqāma*, or remaining steadfast.' (p. 212 *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol I; Part II). In an addition mentioned by Imām al-Bukhārī (hadith no. 3182; Book of Prophets), the Prophet chose the milk, upon which Jibrīl remarked, '...if you had chosen the wine, your *Ummah* would have become astray.'

¹⁶ These last comments (*He is welcomed. And what a wonderful visit his is!*) can be found in the narration of Imām al-Bukhārī in his *Sahīh*. (Chapter 'the Beginning of Creation, Chapter, the Mentioning of Angels).

So it was opened for us, and there were Yahyā and Īsā, cousins of each other.¹⁷ They both welcomed me and prayed for my wellbeing.

Then I was taken on ascension to the third sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent?' Jibrīl replied: 'yes.'

So it was opened for us, and there was Yūsuf (peace be upon him). And he had been given a portion of beauty. He welcomed me and prayed for my wellbeing.

Then I was taken on ascension to the fourth sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent?' Jibrīl replied: 'he has been sent to the skies.'

So it was opened for us, and I was there with Idrīs. He welcomed me and prayed for my wellbeing. Allāh says: 'And We have raised him to a lofty place.'¹⁸

Then I was taken on ascension to the fifth sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent?' Jibrīl replied: 'he has been sent to the skies.'

So it was opened for us, and there I was with Hārūn. He welcomed me and prayed for my wellbeing.

Then I was taken on ascension to the sixth sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent?' Jibrīl replied: 'he has been sent to the skies.'

So it was opened for us, and there I was with Mūsā.¹⁹ He welcomed me and prayed for my wellbeing.²⁰

¹⁷ In a narration of al-Bukhārī (Chapter 'the Beginning of Creation, Chapter, the Mentioning of Angels), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) described both Isa and Musa (peace be upon them) in detail. He said, 'On the night of my Ascent to the heaven, I saw Musa who was a tall brown curly-haired man as he was one of the men of Shan'awa tribe, and I saw Isa, a man of medium height and moderate complexion inclined to the red and white colours of lank hair.'

¹⁸ Sūrah Maryam, verse 57.

¹⁹ Imām Muslim narrates in his *Sahīh*, from Anas, that the Prophet said: 'On the night I was taken on the ascension, I passed by Musa, who was standing performing *salāh* in his grave.' (Cited in *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (pp. 49-50).

²⁰ In the narration of al-Bukhārī, the following addition can be found: 'When I proceeded on, he [Musa] started weeping and on being asked why he was weeping, he said: 'O Lord! Followers of this youth who was sent after me will enter Paradise in greater number than my followers.' (Book; the Beginning of Creation; Chapter, the Mentioning of Angels).

Then I was taken on ascension to the seventh sky. So Jibrīl opened [the skies] and he was asked: 'who are you?' He replied: 'Jibrīl.' He was then asked: 'and who is with you?' He replied: 'Muhammad.' He was asked: 'and he has been sent?' Jibrīl replied: 'he has been sent to the skies.'

So it was opened for us, and there I was with Ibrāhīm.²¹ And he was resting against the *al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr*. This is where seventy thousand angels enter every day, and never return there again.²²

Then I went to the *Sidra al-Muntahā*.²³ Its leaves were like the ears of elephants. And its fruits resembled the clay jugs. No one from the creations of Allāh is able to describe its beauty. Then Allāh inspired me [with *wahy*] whatever He inspired me with. And fifty prayers were made obligatory upon me every day and night. I then descended until I reached Mūsā. He asked: 'what has your Lord made obligatory upon your *Ummah*?' I said: 'fifty prayers each day and night.' Mūsā said: 'return to your Lord. Ask for concession for your *Ummah*. For verily your people cannot fulfil that. I tested Banī Isrā'īl [with the same].'

So I returned to my Lord and I said: 'O Lord! Please reduce it for my *Ummah*.' So five were reduced for my people.

I then descended until I reached Mūsā and he asked: 'what did you do?' I said: 'five were reduced from my *Ummah*.' He said: 'return to your Lord. Ask for concession for your *Ummah*. For verily your people cannot fulfil that.'

I continued to return between my Lord and Mūsā, and five were continuously reduced, until Allāh said:

O Muhammad! These are five prayers for every day and night. Each prayer performed will be worth ten. And that is fifty prayers. So whoever intends a righteous action but does not perform it, one unit of reward will be written for him. If he does perform it, then ten units of reward will be written for him. And

²¹ In a narration recorded by Imām al-Tirmidhi, the details of the conversation between the Prophet and Ibrahim (peace be upon them) is mentioned. Ibrahim said: 'O Muhammad! Convey my salutations to your *Ummah*. And inform them that Paradise is a beautiful land, with cold water...And that its cultivation is to say *Subhān Allāh wa al-Hamdu Lillāh wa Lā Ilāha Illallāhu wa Allāhu Akbar, wa Lā Hawla wa Lā Quwwata Illā billāhil al-Aliyyi al-Azim*.' (Cited in *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (p. 52).

²² In other words, once an angel visits the *al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr*, he is never given an opportunity to visit it again. Every day, a new batch of angels visit it.

²³ This is a tree in the seventh heaven. In the narration of al-Bukhārī, (Book; the Beginning of Creation; Chapter, the Mentioning of Angels), the following additions can be found; 'Then I was shown *Sidra al-Muntahā* and I saw its Nabk fruits which resembled the clay jugs of Hajr (a town in Arabia) and its leaves were like the ears of elephants. Four rivers originated from its roots, two of them were apparent and two of them were hidden. I asked Jibrīl about the two rivers and he said, 'the two hidden rivers are in Paradise, and the apparent ones are the Nile and the Euphrates.'

Imām al-Nawawi writes that the knowledge of angels stops at the *Sidra al-Muntahā*, and only the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was permitted to cross this point. (p. 214; *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawi*. Vol I; Part II).

whoever intends a sin but does not perform it, then no sin will be written against him. If he does perform it, [only] one sin will be written against him.

So I descended until I reached Mūsā and I told him. He said: 'return to your Lord. Ask for concession for your Ummah. For verily your people cannot fulfil that.'

[The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said]: 'I have returned to my Lord [so many times] that I am ashamed.'²⁴

The Next Day.

Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrates in his *Musnad*²⁵ that the next day, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) felt that some people would not believe his miraculous journey. Abū Jahl passed by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) until he sat down next to him. He asked: 'is there something?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied: 'yes'. He then told him that he had been taken on a night journey. Abū Jahl asked: 'to where?' The Prophet said: 'to Bayt al-Muqaddas.' Abū Jahl asked: 'then you returned here in the morning in front of us?' The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) replied: 'yes.'

Abū Jahl then insisted that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) inform the people of Quraysh exactly what he had just informed him. So, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) told them too that he had been taken on a miraculous journey the night before. Most reacted in an astonished way. They then asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to describe the Bayt al-Muqaddas to them. Some Makkans had recently returned from there, and so they knew what the mosque looked like. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself said that when people of Quraysh asked this question, Allāh placed an exact vision of the mosque in front of his eyes, and thus he was able to describe the mosque to the Makkans to the tiniest of details.²⁶ When the people heard the description, they said: 'As for the description, by Allāh! He is correct.'

The infidels taunted Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) about the event. They said that 'your companion thinks he went to Bayt al-Muqaddas last night, performed Salāh there, and then returned here to Makka in the morning.' Abū Bakr did not hesitate. Instead, he said to the Makkans:

By Allāh! He informs me that revelation comes to him from the sky to the earth during the day and night, and I believe this with conviction. This is more far-fetched than believing in the story you find astonishing [i.e. the Night Journey].

²⁴ Clearly, this highlights the importance of *salāh*. The other fundamental pillars of Islam such as Hajj were ordained to the Prophet when he was on earth. However, such was the significance of *salāh* that Allāh deemed it imperative that the Prophet ascend to the heavens to receive this order.

²⁵ Hadith no. 2680, The narrations of Ibn Abbās.

²⁶ *Sahīh Muslim*. Book of Faith; Chapter 'the mentioning of Isa and the Dajjal.'

After this display of confidence, wholehearted belief and strength in religion, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) gave Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) the title of *al-Siddīq*, the verifier of the truth.²⁷

Appendix I.

Was the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* a bodily or spiritual journey?

The scholars of Islam – classic and modern – have long disputed the exact nature of the Prophet's journey to Jerusalem and the Heavens. Specifically, detailed discussions can be found highlighting whether the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* took place with soul only, or with body and soul.

Qādī Iyād analysed the debate in great detail in his book *al-Shifā bi Ta'rīf Huqūq al-Mustafā*.²⁸ From his work, it is clear there are three camps on this specific issue;

Camp One.

'The *Isrā* was with soul only, and that the entire journey was a dream.'

However, the advocates of this camp accept that the dreams of prophets are truthful and are part of revelation (*wahy*).

Their evidence.

- Mu'āwiya (may Allāh be pleased with him) was asked about the night of *Isrā & Mi'rāj*, and he replied that it was a 'beautiful dream (*al-ru'yā al-sāliha*).'²⁹
- Muhammad ibn Ishāq too accepts this position. As evidence, he cites the verse from the Holy Qur'ān: 'And We did not make the vision that we showed you except as a test for the people' (*Isrā*; 60). The word in the verse used is *ru'yā*, which means 'dream' in Arabic. Therefore, it seems the Qur'ān asserts that the journey in its entirety was a dream.
- Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her) reports: 'I did not miss (*mā faqad'tu*) the body of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).'³⁰ This suggests the Prophet in body remained in Makka throughout the night.

²⁷ pp. 58-59. *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud.

²⁸ pp. 106-124. *al-Shifā bi Ta'rīf Huqūq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

²⁹ p. 144. *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani.

³⁰ p. 144. Ibid.

• Moreover, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself said: 'whilst I was sleeping...' When Anas (may Allāh be pleased with him) related the story of the Night Journey, he began with the words '...whilst he was sleeping in the Sacred Mosque...' These two reports implicitly suggest that all the occurrences of that night took place whilst he was asleep.³¹ Also, a narration from Anas (may Allāh be pleased with me) concludes with the words: 'then I woke up in the Sacred Mosque [in Makka]'. Again, this implicitly implies the entire journey was a dream.

Camp Two

'The *Isrā* (the Night Journey from Makka to Jerusalem) was performed with body and soul, whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was awake. Thereafter, the journey to the skies (*Mi'rāj*) was performed with soul only.'

Their evidence.

Their proof is the verse from the Qur'ān in which Allāh Almighty proclaims:

Most pure is the One who took His blessed servant on the Night Journey from the Sacred Mosque to the Furthest Mosque (al-*Isrā*; 1).

This verse indicates that the astonishing and miraculous part of the journey was up to Furthest Mosque (Masjid Aqsā) only; there is no mention in the verse of the upward journey to the heavens.³²

Camp Three (The Correct and Majority Opinion).

'The *Isrā* & *Mi'rāj* occurred with body and soul, whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was awake.'

This – Qādī Iyād affirms – is the truthful position and the opinion of the majority of the classical scholars.³³ Allāma Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī adds that 'the one who denies its occurrence is an innovator (*mubtadi*).³⁴

³¹ p. 112. *al-Shifa bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafa*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

³² p. 113. *Ibid*.

³³ p. 113. *Ibid*. See also, p. 356. *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirat al-Mustaqīm* and p. 209. *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol I; Part II.

³⁴ p. 144. *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani.

Our evidence.

a. Most Companions, Successors (*Tabi'ūn*) and respected scholars express no doubt whatsoever in the fact that the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* occurred with body and soul. Their opinion itself is sufficient to dispel any doubts.

Proponents of this truthful position include Ibn Abbās, Jābir, Huzayfa, Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū Hurayra, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Malik ibn Sa'sata, Abū Habba al-Badarī, Dhahak, Qatāda, Ibn al-Musayyab, Ibn Shihāb, Ibn Zayd, al-Hasan, Ibrāhīm, Masrūq, Mujāhid, Ikrama, Ibn Jurayj, al-Tabarī, Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (may Allāh be pleased with them all), as well as the majority of the *fuqahā* (Jurists), hadīth scholars, *kalām* scholars and Qur'ān commentators.

b. Qādī Iyād writes that we can only interpret the event differently when the possibility of the event is questionable. He continues to affirm that 'there is no impossible element in the *Isrā* whilst awake and with body.'³⁵ This is because the Being behind the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* was Allāh Almighty Himself; nothing is beyond His ability. In all of the hadīth reports on the journey, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said 'when I was taken on the night journey'; nowhere do we find a report in which he said 'when I went on the night journey.' In other words, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) ascribed the occurrences to Allāh Almighty. It was He who made the journey possible. If people doubt the events on the basis of its physical impossibility, then they are in essence questioning what Allāh can and cannot do.

c. Qādī Iyād adds that if the journey had occurred whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was asleep, then:

- (i) The verse in the Qur'ān³⁶ would certainly have mentioned that it occurred with just his soul.
- (ii) The journey would not have been categorised as a sign (*āyah*) or a miracle (*mu'jiza*).
- (iii) The infidels would not have considered the journey as far-fetched and would not have mocked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him).
- (iv) Some weak-Muslims would not have become apostates (non-believers) upon hearing the story the next day.³⁷
- (v) Abū Bakr (may Allāh be pleased with him) was given the title of *al-Siddīq* (most truthful/a verifier of the truth) by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) just after the *Isrā & Mi'rāj*. This was because he believed the occurrences without hesitation. This too indicates that the journey must have been miraculous.

³⁵ p. 113. *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

³⁶ Sūrah al-Isrā; verse 1.

³⁷ p. 113. Ibid. See also *al-Isrā wa al-Miraj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud. and p. 144-145, *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani.

d. Professor Abd al-Halīm Mahmūd, who was the former Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar University, Cairo, writes that people often have the most far-fetched and astonishing dreams, travelling to far-off places and meeting people that they have never met before. Seldom do people consider such dreams miraculous, or deny the possibility of such visions occurring. The reaction of the infidels of Makka, as well as the Muslims, clearly suggest that the events of *Isrā & Mi'rāj* could not have been a dream. Otherwise, the reaction would have certainly been less controversial.³⁸

e. The verse from Sūrah al-Isrā mentions the verb *asrā*. In Arabic, this verb (meaning to travel by night) is not used to mean a journey performed whilst asleep. Rather, it is used to denote an actual, physical journey.³⁹

f. The word *abd* (servant) that features in the verse (Sūrah al-Isrā; 1) is only used to describe a person with body and soul. It cannot be used in the Arabic language to denote a person with soul only.

g. Those who deny that *Isrā & Mi'rāj* took place with body and soul on the sole basis that it is scientifically impossible have simply misunderstood what a *mu'jiza* (miracle) is. As Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khān rightly points out, a miracle is not considered as such until it breaks the law of nature.⁴⁰ The parting of the sea by Mūsā (peace be upon him) – with the permission of Allāh – was miraculous *precisely* because it contravened the laws of nature. In short, if a Muslim believes that Allāh Almighty is 'capable of all things', then denying the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* on the basis of its physical impossibility should be completely avoided.

The answers to the evidence put forward by the first camp.

-In response to the verse 'And We did not make the vision that we showed you except as a test for the people.'

a. Pīr Muhammad Karam Shāh al-Azharī writes that many Qur'ān commentators do not believe that this particular verse actually refers to the night of *Isrā & Mi'rāj*.⁴¹ It could in fact be referring to the dream the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) had prior to the Conquest of Makka.

Even if we do assume that this verse *is* referring to the Night Journey, then there is still ample evidence to clearly indicate that it was not a dream, but a real occurrence;

b. Imām al-Bukhārī records a hadīth from Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) who said in the commentary of the verse: 'And We did not make the vision that we

³⁸ pp. 41-42. *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud.

³⁹ p. 115. *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

⁴⁰ p. 631, vol. II. *Ziā al-Qur'ān*. Pīr Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari.

⁴¹ p. 626, vol. II. *Ibid*.

showed you except as a test for the people' that 'this was a vision of sight [i.e. not a dream] that was shown to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) on the night of the Ascension.'⁴²

• The verse 'except as a test for the people' (*illa fitna li al-Nās*) too supports the view that the journey occurred whilst the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was awake. Qādī Iyād writes a dream (whilst asleep) is not 'a test for the people', since no one denies the occurrences of a dream.⁴³

In response to the opinion of Ā'isha and Mu'āwiya (may Allāh be pleased with them)

a. As for the opinion of Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her), she was not married to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) at the time. In fact, she may not have been born at the time of the Night Journey, (as there are minor disputes as to which year the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* took place). Hence, she did not witness this night and must have heard the event from someone else. For this reason, preference is given to the other Companions, of which most assert the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* took place with body and soul. Also, Ā'isha never slept with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) until Madīna, and the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* happened when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was in Makka.⁴⁴

There is further evidence offered by Allāma Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī. He writes that Ā'isha's said the body of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not part from her on the night of Ascension. This could possible mean that the body of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not part from his soul on this night. In other words, she meant that the body and soul remained together throughout the journey, thus supporting the view that the journey was not a dream.⁴⁵

b. As for the opinion of Mu'āwiya (may Allāh be pleased with him), he was not a Muslim at the time.⁴⁶

In response to the narrations of Anas (may Allāh be pleased with him).

a. In response to the Hadith recorded by Anas in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was reported to have said (at the end of the journey): 'then I woke up in the Sacred Mosque', which seemingly suggests that the events of the night was a dream, the scholars write that this does still not explicitly suggest that the entire journey was a dream. Rather, it indicates that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was asleep or almost asleep when the angel approached him in the Sacred Mosque

⁴² *Sahīh al-Bukhārī*, Book of Merits, Chapter; the *Mi'rāj*, hadith no. 3599.

⁴³ p. 115. *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

⁴⁴ p.117. Ibid.

⁴⁵ p. 144, *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani.

⁴⁶ p. 627, vol. II. *Ziā al-Qur'ān*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari.

in Makka. It cannot be deduced from this that the entire events of the night was a dream.
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To conclude, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* was merely a spiritual journey. The Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) were clearly in the best position to know the exact nature of the journey, and the majority express no doubt in the fact it was a bodily occurrence.

Even without the evidence from the Qur'ān and *ahādīth*, the reaction from the people of Makka after the *Isrā & Mi'rāj* is sufficient to support the fact that the journey was with body and soul. If it was merely a spiritual journey, why did some Muslims become apostates? If it was just a dream, why did the infidels challenge the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) to describe Jerusalem?

Once we wholly acknowledge Allāh Almighty as the force behind the *Isrā & Mi'rāj*, then a true Muslim does not question the event at all. Nothing is beyond His capabilities.

Appendix II.

Did the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) see his Lord on the night of *Isrā & Mi'rāj*?

Closely related to the *Isrā* journey is the issue as to whether the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh Almighty on this special night. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

So Allāh revealed to His beloved servant what He revealed. The heart lied not in what the Prophet's eye saw. Do you then dispute with him about what he saw?

This issue has been disputed since the time of the Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them). Ā'isha, for example, was of the opinion that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not see his Lord. Ibn Abbās, on the other hand, was adamant that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was bestowed with this honour on the night of *Isrā & Mi'rāj*.

⁴⁷ p. 210. *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol II; Part I.

In this section, the two sides of the argument will be explored and analysed:

Opinion One;

'The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not see his Lord.'

- In the commentary of the verses '*Till there was a distance of two-bow lengths or even less*', '*The heart lied not in what the Prophet's eye saw*' and '*Certainly he saw the great signs of his Lord*' Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) said that all refer to when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Jibrīl (peace be upon him) in his original, created form with six-hundred wings. In other words, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did not see Allāh on this night, but Jibrīl in his original form for the first time.⁴⁸

- Imām Muslim narrates from Masrūq, who said:

Once I was in the presence of Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her) when I asked her if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh. She replied: 'there are three comments which – if are spoken – constitute a great lie against Allāh.' I asked: 'what are they?' She replied: 'whoever assumes that Muhammad saw his Lord, then he has invented a lie against Allāh.'

I was lying down, and sat up [due to astonishment] and said to her: 'O Mother of the Faithful! Look at me and do not be haste! Did not Allāh say in the Qur'ān '*And verily he saw him at the clear horizon*' and '*And indeed he saw that splendid vision for the second time*'? She replied: 'I was the first from this *Ummah* to ask the Prophet about this. He said: 'It is merely [referring to] Jibrīl (peace be upon him). I did not see him in his original form except twice...' Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her) then said to Masruq: 'did not Allāh say in the Qur'ān, '*No vision can grasp Him; But His grasp is over all vision; And He is Subtle, Well-Aware*' ...'⁴⁹

Opinion Two;

'The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did see his Lord.'

- Imām Ahmad narrates from Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said; 'I saw my Lord, most Powerful and Grand.'⁵⁰

This hadīth is in essence sufficient on the issue; the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself clearly stated here that he did see his Lord.

- Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) is considered the most authoritative Companion on the commentary of the Qur'ān. Regarding the verse *The Prophet's eye did*

⁴⁸ pp. 527-8. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁴⁹ p. 8. *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. (Book of Iman; Chapter, the proving of the vision of Allāh). Vol II; Part I. See also p. 531, *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁵⁰ Cited in *al-Isrā wa al-Miraj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (p. 49).

not wander, nor it trespassed the limit of respect. Certainly he saw the great signs of his Lord from Sūrah al-Najm, Ibn Abbās said: 'The Prophet saw Allāh with his heart twice.'⁵¹

Al-Tabarānī writes in *al-Awsat* with an authentic chain from Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) that 'verily Muhammad saw his Lord twice; once with his eyes and once with his heart.'⁵²

- Imām al-Nasā'ī records a hadīth with a sound chain from Ikrama that Ibn Abbās said:

Are you surprised that friendship was granted to Ibrahim, direct dialogue to Mūsā and vision to the Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him)?⁵³

- Imām Abd al-Razzāq narrated from Ma'mar that al-Hasan al-Basrī would take an oath upon insisting that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw his Lord.⁵⁴

- Atā believes that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw him with his heart.⁵⁵

- Ibn Khuzayma narrates with a strong chain 'that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw his Lord.'⁵⁶

- In response to the saying of Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her), the scholars have offered numerous answers:

-Firstly, al-Marūzī once asked Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal: 'the people say that Ā'isha said that whoever assumes Muhammad saw his Lord has invented a lie against Allāh. How do you respond to this?' He replied: 'I respond with the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) that 'I saw my Lord'. And the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is stronger than her opinion.'⁵⁷

On another occasion, Imām Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw his Lord. He said: 'he saw him, he saw him' until he became breathless.⁵⁸

The verse '*No vision can grasp Him; But His grasp is over all vision; And He is Subtle, Well-Aware*'... seemingly suggests that no one can see Allāh. However, Qādī Iyād

⁵¹ Cited in *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (p. 532) (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁵² Cited in *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. 'Abd al-Halīm Mahmud. (p. 48). See also, p. 362, *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*. Abd Allāh al-Harawi.

⁵³ Cited in *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (p. 533) (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁵⁴ p. 534. Ibid.

⁵⁵ p. 118. *Al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

⁵⁶ Cited in *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*. (p. 362) Abd Allāh al-Harawi.

⁵⁷ p. 534-5. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (p. 532) (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁵⁸ p. 537. Ibid.

writes that in theory, it must be possible to see Allāh. This is because Mūsā asked Allāh to honour him with His vision.⁵⁹ And prophets do not ask Allāh for matters that are impossible.⁶⁰

-Secondly, Ibn Hajar answers the claim that Ā'isha (may Allāh be pleased with her) asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) about the meaning of the verse, upon which he asserted that he saw Jibrīl. He writes that Ā'isha asked about the verse '*And surely he saw him on the bright horizon*'. This verse is undoubtedly referring to the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) vision of Jibrīl. This is because this actual verse is from Sūrah al-Takwīr, which does refer to Jibrīl. Allāh says in the Qur'ān:

This [Qur'ān] is the word (brought) by an honoured Messenger – who is powerful and dignified with the Lord of the Mighty Throne – There he is the obeyed one (of the angels) and trustworthy. And this companion of yours is not mad. And surely he saw the messenger on the bright horizon.⁶¹

This refers to when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Jibrīl in his original form, with six-hundred wings on the *bright horizon*. But the verse in Sūrah al-Najm refers to the *highest horizon*, which is beyond the *Sidra al-Muntahā*. Ā'isha asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) about Sūrah al-Takwīr, but that does not refer to the *Isrā*. It is Sūrah al-Najm that refers to the *Isrā*.

- Imām al-Nawawī writes after a detailed discussion on the topic:

To conclude, the preferred opinion according to the majority of the scholars is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did see his Lord on the night of *Isrā*...it is not desirable to doubt this.⁶²

Once it has been established that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) did see his Lord on the night of *Isrā*, there is a small difference of opinion as to whether he saw Him with his physical eyes, or the eyes of the heart.

- Allāma Sa'd al-Dīn al-Taftazānī writes that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw his Lord with his heart rather than with his eyes.⁶³

⁵⁹ Sūrah al-Araf; verse 143.

⁶⁰ p. 119. *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.). See also, p. 4. *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol II; Part I.

⁶¹ Sūrah al-Takwīr; verses 19-23.

⁶² p. 536. *Ziā al-Nabī*. Pir Muhammad Karam Shah al-Azhari. (p. 532) (vol. II; 4th ed.).

⁶³ p. 145. *Sharh al-Aqā'id al-Nasfiyya*. Allāma Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani.

- Al-Samarkandī narrates from Muhammad ibn Ka'b and Rabī ibn Anas that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was asked 'did you see your Lord?' He replied, 'I saw Him with my heart, and I did not see him with my eyes.'⁶⁴
- Imām al-Nawawī writes that Anas, Ikrama, al-Hasan and al-Rabī were all of the opinion that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh with his physical eyes.⁶⁵
- Shaykh al-Harawī summarises the debate on the topic when he writes:

[On the night of *Isrā*], Allāh removed the veil from the heart of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), after which he could see his Lord with the eyes of his heart. In other words, Allāh granted him the strength of vision to see Him with his heart. So, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Him with his heart and not with his eyes, because Allāh cannot be seen in this world with the [physical] eye. If anyone could, then it certainly would have been the Beloved Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him). This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: 'Verily you will not see your Lord until you die' (*Sahīh Muslim*), and why Allāh said: 'You can never see Me' to Mūsā (peace be upon him).⁶⁶ It has been reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) was asked whether he saw Allāh on the night on *Isrā*, to which he responded, '*Subhān Allāh! Subhān Allāh!* I saw Him with my heart, and I did not seem Him with my eyes.' But this hadīth is weak and has not been proven authentic. Imām Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) said: 'The Immortal cannot be seen by the eyes of a mortal. The Immortal can only be seen in the hereafter with eyes of immortality.' [In other words, Muslims – when they become immortal in Paradise, will only then see the Ever-Living Allāh]. As for the opinion of some [scholars of the] *Ahl al-Sunna* that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh with his physical eyes on the Night of *Isrā*, this is a weak opinion. [However] whoever believes in this opinion is not a heretic (*bid'atī*) nor a *fāsiq* because this has also been the opinion of some of the pious predecessors...the preferred opinion is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh with his heart and not with his physical eyes.⁶⁷

To conclude, opinions are divided as to exactly how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh. But this should not distract anyone from the majority opinion that he did see his Lord. In fact, if it is assumed that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw him with the vision of his heart, this proves to be more miraculous and unique. This is because anyone can see with their physical eyes, but Allāh granted His beloved Messenger the ability to see with his heart.

⁶⁴ p. 118, *al-Shifā bi Ta'rif Huquq al-Mustafā*. Allāma Qādī Abu al-Fadl Iyād ibn Musa (d. 544 A.H. /1149 C.E.).

⁶⁵ p. 6, *Sahīh Muslim bi Sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī*. Vol II; Part I.

⁶⁶ Sūrah al-Araf: 143.

⁶⁷ p. 363. *al-Sharh al-Qawīm fī Hill Alfāz al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*. Abd Allāh al-Harawī.

Appendix III.

The sustained life of Prophets after death.

- Imām Muslim narrates from Anas ibn Malik (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

‘I passed by Mūsā on the night I was taken on the night journey...and he was standing in his grave performing *salāh*.’⁶⁸

This is just one hadīth from the countless *ahādīth* on the topic that clearly indicate that the bodies of prophets are not consumed by the earth after death. Rather, Allāh grants his prophets life in the grave. This is a fact which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) himself asserted.

- Imām al-Nasā’ī narrates from Aws ibn Aws (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

The best of your days is the day of Friday. On this day Ādam was created and on this day he died...so send *salāh* upon me as much as possible on this day. For verily your *salāh* is presented to me.’ The companions asked: ‘And how will our salutations be presented to you when you pass away?’ The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said: ‘Verily Allāh has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the prophets.’⁶⁹

- Imām Bayhaqī narrates from Abū Amāma who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

Send *salāh* upon me excessively upon the day of Friday. The *salāhs* of my *Ummah* are presented to me every Friday. So whoever sends *salāh* upon me most will be closest to me in rank.⁷⁰

- Moreover, there is no difference whether the person sending the *salāh* is next to the resting place of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him), or far away. Imām al-Bukhārī writes in his *Tarīkh* from the narration of Ammār, who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

Verily Allāh has an angel who can hear the voices of the creation, and he stands at my grave. Thus, there is no one who sends *salāh* upon me except it reaches me.⁷¹

- In a similar narration, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

⁶⁸ Cited in *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (pp. 49-50).

⁶⁹ Sunan al-Nasā’ī. Hadīth no. 1357. Book of Juma; Chapter; Sending *salāh* upon the Prophet Excessively.

⁷⁰ Cited in *al-Isrā wa'l-Mi'rāj*, Dr. Abd al-Halim Mahmud. (p. 87).

⁷¹ p. 87, Ibid.

‘Indeed Allāh has angels who roam the earth, [whose task is to] convey the salutations of my *Ummah* to me.’⁷²

Imām al-Qushayrī adds that ‘there is only purpose behind conveying *salām* if the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) is alive.’⁷³

- Imām al-Qurtubī summarises the belief that prophets are alive when he writes,

‘Death (*al-mawt*) does not mean mere nothingness. Rather, it means the transferral from one state to another. This is proven by the fact that the martyrs after their death are alive, are given sustenance, are happy and give glad tidings to others [as mentioned in the Qur’ān]. This [type of life] is of resemblance to people who are alive in this world. When it is established that martyrs are alive after death, then prophets are most certainly alive. And indeed it is proven conclusively that the earth does not consume the bodies of prophets, and that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) met the [previous] prophets on the Night of *Isrā* in Bayt al-Muqaddas and in the skies, and that he saw Mūsā (peace be upon him) performing *salāh* in his grave and offered his salutations to the *Ummah*, to mention just a few sources of evidence. The ‘death of prophets’ is correct only in the sense they are hidden from our sights. Otherwise, they are undoubtedly alive. Rather like the angels; for indeed they are present though no one from us can see them, except those who have been privileged by Allāh from his *awliyā*.’⁷⁴

⁷² p. 88, Ibid.

⁷³ p. 88, Ibid.

⁷⁴ p. 91, Ibid.

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