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# Preface

The Prophet of Islam (S) began his historical night journey, along with the trusted protector of the revelation, the *Angel Jibra'il* from the house of Umm al Hani, the daughter of his uncle and sister of Amir al-Mo'minin 'Ali (a.s.) in the blessed city of Makkah. With the aide of his steed *al-Buraq,* he traveled to *Bayt al-Muqaddas,* which (at that time) was located in the country of Jordan and is also known as Masjid al-Aqsa (the Furthest Masjid). He disembarked at this place and in a very short period of time, visited various places inside the Masjid - including *Bayt al-Laham,* the birthplace of `Isa al-Masih (a.s.), in addition to the houses and other important places of the various Prophets. In some of these places, he even recited a two Rak`at Salat.

In the next stage (of his journey) he traveled from this spot to the heavens, where he was witness to the celestial bodies and the entire universe. He spoke with the spirits of the (previous) Prophets and the Angels; he saw from very close both Paradise and Hell; and the various stages and levels of the people of Paradise and those in Hell. It was these unknowns of the creation, the secrets of the origin of the Universe, the expanse of the world of creation, and the unlimited power of Allah the Highest, that he was given complete knowledge of.

Subsequently, he continued on with his journey until he reached to the region known as *Sidratul ' Muntaha,* a place that was covered in grandeur and magnificence. It was from this same path that he traversed that he returned, and upon coming back, once again visited to *Bayt al-Muqaddas,* proceeded on to *Makkah* and then to his home. On the return trip, he came across a trade caravan from the tribe of the Quraish who during their journey had lost one of their camels which they were searching for. The Prophet (S) drank from the water that the people of the caravan had with them and by the rising of the morning sun, reached back to the house of Umm al-Hani.

Upon his return, the Prophet (S) told Umm al-Hani of the secrets (that he saw) and that evening, in a gathering of the people of the Quraish, lifted all the curtains of the secrets of the Mi'raj and his journey and opened their minds to this event. The word of his travels spread from mouth to mouth amongst all

the groups, and now more than ever, the Quraish were upset (with him).

The Quraish, as was their old-time habit, belied the Prophet (S) and in the gathering, a man stood up and asked if there was anyone in Makkah who has seen Bayt al-Muqaddas so that he could ask the Prophet (S) in regards to the physical building. Not only did the Prophet (S) describe the physical particularities of Bayt al Muqaddas, rather, he even informed them of the event that took place between Makkah and Bayt al-Muqaddas - and it was not long after that the travelers (of that caravan) reported the exact events (as had occurred).

## Qur'anic Roots of the Mi'raj

The Heavenly Journey of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been straight-forwardly explained in two Surahs of the Qur'an. In other Surahs as well, we see allusions to this journey.

In the Surah al-Isra (Sarah 17 - also known as Bani Isra`il), it is mentioned:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

*"Glorified be He who carried His servant at night from Masjid al Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa, the precincts of which We have blessed so that We may show him of Our Signs. Verily He is the All Hearing, the All-Seeing.* " 1

From this verse, we come to the conclusion that the Prophet of Islam (S) traveled with his physical body through the worlds of Ascension. Further, by the greatness of the Hidden Power, he was able to complete this journey in a very short span of time.

Allah (SWT) starts His speech with the phrase (سبحان) which denotes the fact that Allah (SWT) is free from all deficiencies - but He does not stop here. Rather, He makes the ascension the reason for His greatness by saying `made to travel' (أسرى) so that others do not imagine that the means of this journey was through causes of the natural world and with normal, ordinary means of transportation. This would have made his journey something that could have been denied. Rather, this journey was accomplished by relying upon the power of Allah (SWT) and His specific and special blessings.

Although this verse states that the start of the journey was from *Masjid al-Haram* and ended at *Masjid al*

*Aqsa,* this does not contradict the fact that the Prophet (S) in addition to this trip, also had other trips towards the higher world, since another part of the journey of Ascension of the Prophet (S) is explained in verses of Sarah al–Najm.

Another important part of this verse is that the journey of the Prophet (S) was both bodily and spiritually, not just a spiritual pilgrimage, and this is confirmed by the word (بعبده) meaning His servant which is used to mean both the body and the spirit. Had it not been so, He would have said (بروحه) meaning his (Muhammad's) soul only. In Surah al–Najm, the event of the Mi'raj is explained in more detail.

From the time the Prophet Muhammad (S) told the Quraish, `I saw the angel of revelation (when he received the first revelation) in his original and pure state', all the Quraish rose up to mock him.

The Qur'an, in response to the thoughts of the ignorant people replies:

أَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ {12} وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ {13} عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ {14} عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ {15} إِذْ يَغْشَى
السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ {16} مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ {17} لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ {18}

*"Will you then argue with him about what he saw? He certainly saw him* (*Jibra'il*) *during his other asc2ent to the Lote–tree* (*in the seven heavens*) *near which is Paradise. When the tree was covered with a covering,* (*Muhammad's*) *eyes did not deceive him, nor did they lead him to falsehood. He certainly saw the greatest* (*signs*) of *the existence of his Lord.* " 2

## The History behind the Heavenly Journey

The date of the Mi'raj of the Prophet of Islam (S) has been recorded by two major Muslim historians, *Ibn Ishaq* and *Ibn Hisham,* as being in the 10th year of *Bi`thah* (appointment to Prophethood). The great Muslim historian, *Baihaqi* has recorded this event as occurring in the 12th year of Bi'thah. Others have mentioned it as occurring in the beginning of the Bi'thah, and some mentioned it as being between these two dates.

Sometimes, to rationalize between these different views, it is has been said that the Prophet of Islam (S) went on the Mi'raj more than once. However, it should be mentioned that that Mi'raj in which the daily Salat was made incumbent, without doubt, occurred before the death of Abu Talib, who passed away in the 10th year of Bi'thah. Unmistakably, from the ahadith and books of history, it is mentioned that on the night of Mi'raj, Allah (SWT) gave the order of the five daily Salat as being mandatory upon the Islamic Nation.

# The Physical Ascension

It has been an on-going discussion and debate for hundreds of years concerning the method of travel of the Holy Prophet (S) during the Mi'raj. Many things have been said regarding this journey and its being physical or only spiritual even though from the Qur'an and the ahadith there is no doubt that it was a physical ascension.

However, one problem from the point of view of science prevented some people in believing the reality and thus, the Mi'raj of the Prophet of Islam (S) was recorded as being simply spiritual. Another group went a step further and believed that this complete event was simply a dream and that the Prophet (S) experienced the Mi'raj during his sleep!

However, the response of the Quraish, after hearing about the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S) clearly shows that the journey through the different worlds was not something that was seen in a dream because then it would have had no meaning and if the Quraish could have just called the dream of the Prophet (S) a lie and they would not have created all the commotion (that they did).

Others have said that the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S) was nothing more than spiritual in meaning and it was because his deep contemplation and thought for the creations of Allah (SWT), the witnessing of the greatness and beauty of His creations, and his being entirely submerged in the thought and remembrance of the Truth, and thus, the physical restrictions and spiritual closeness (that the Prophet (S) encountered) are beyond explanation.

However, this type of spiritual ascension and closeness is something that anyone with a clear conscience and pure heart can attain. Nevertheless, the Qur'an relates that this distinct ascension of the Prophet (S) is one of the peculiarities of the Noble Prophet (S) and this trip which he was taken through was something extraordinary, since many a nights did the Prophet of Islam (S) experience a state of spiritual ascension and closeness (to his Creator), whereas this physical Ascension was one that took place on a particular night.

It must be mentioned that the Greek hypothesis which was put forth by Bartholomew, who for close to two thousand years was well recognized in the scientific circles of the east and west, also fell into error. He was of the belief that all physical entities that exist in this world are of two divisions: elemental and celestial. By elemental he meant the four known elements which are: *water, ground, wind and fire.* The first sphere that comes to our attention is the sphere of the ground, which is the center of the universe. After that, it is the sphere of water, followed by that of the wind, and the fourth, is that of the fire. Each of

these four spheres are related to the other. It is from here that the spheres come to an end and the celestial bodies start.

The meaning of the celestial bodies are the nine celestial planes, which just like the various skins of an onion, are related to one another but do not have the ability of tearing nor becoming united (as one). There is not a single creature which by its own leave is able to traverse within these boundaries, since this would call for the separation of the levels of the celestial bodies.

Since the physical Mi'raj involved travelling upwards from this world, and passing through the four levels of the elemental world and then piercing through the celestial boundaries – one after the other until all four had been split, and since this act was not correct according to the scientific beliefs of the Greeks, thus the physical Mi'raj too was not possible (according to the theory of Bartholomew).

In reality, this theory held weight for that time period in which the hypothesis of Bartholomew had strength and a following. Fortunately, his ideas which were completely baseless, have been made apparent today and have lost all of their value.

The same goes for the scientists who study Natural Science and try to find a tangible reason for everything that happens and for every event that occurs and who look for a natural or scientific consequence – their ideas too have lost their value. Similarly, those people who accepted the hypothesis of Bartholomew were at the forefront of denying the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S) and thought that the heavenly journey went against the scientific and natural laws of today – natural laws such as: the law of gravity of the earth; its speed of travel of 25,000 miles per hour; the weightlessness of an object that is outside of the airspace of earth; the fact that it is not possible to breathe *the air* that is outside our atmosphere; the various cosmic rays; meteorites and air pressure; and the speed of light that goes at the speed of approximately 300,000 kilometers a second; and other such examples.

Fortunately however, it must be known that through scientific research and investigation, the space scientists of the East and the West, by launching the very first rocket in the year 1957, named Sputnik, were able to demonstrate to mankind with ease, that they could overcome such problems as the gravitational pull, cosmic rays, problems with breathing in space, and others, through various technologically designed and built equipment and instruments.

Even today, the space science research is ever increasing and the scientists and researchers are confident that in a matter of time, they will be able to place life on one of the planets in our solar–system; just as today, they have opened up the exploration to the moon and the planet Mars.

These scientific progresses and advancements in technology and industry are a clear proof that such a celestial travel (that of the Prophet of Islam (S) on the night of Mi'raj) is possible and can not be

classified as something that was impossible.

That which is certain and in which there can be no doubt is the fact that everything mankind can do today through various human created ways and means, the Prophets were able to perform by the grace of Allah (SWT) and without the apparent and external means.

Therefore, we see that the Prophet of Islam (S) by the will of Allah (SWT) was taken on the Mi'raj, and all that exists in it belongs to Him and He is the designer and fashioner of this amazing and perfectly arranged system. It is He who has given the earth its' gravitational pull, has given the sun its cosmic rays, and it is He who has given the air its various levels; and anytime He wants to, He is able to take all of these back and put a halt to them all. Also, it must be known that in reference to miracles, natural events and the power of mankind, all of these are independent issues and never can the infinite power of Allah (SWT) be compared to the limited power and ability of mankind.

Bringing alive those who are dead, converting a staff into a snake, splitting the moon, keeping alive the Prophet Yunus in the belly of a whale in the depths of the ocean, and many other miracles such as these which have been mentioned in other heavenly books, confirm the fact that no uncertainty can be placed on the Mi'raj of the Prophet (S).

Thus, all of the natural occurrences and all the external obstacles were demolished and conquered by the intention of the Maintainer of the Universe. His will and intention are not only limited to issues that are impossible – rather, any time that He wishes to perform any action, He is able to – whether mankind has the ability to perform it or not.

Further, that person, who in recognizing Allah (SWT) has reached to that level of true cognizance of his Creator and the attributes and characteristics which are exclusive to Him, and who recognizes Allah (SWT) as the One who is Eternal, Ever–Lasting and the All–Powerful Creator whose power and intention is above all things, will much more quickly accept (these facts and occurences). Other people (who have not reached to that level of cognizance of their Creator), through a little bit of study and research and with a deep and precise understanding along with the correct outlook on the world too will accept and acknowledge the truth.

The treatise of the Mi'raj according to the narration of Faidh al–Kashani, which is in your hands is a collection of traditions taken from the speech of Imam Ja'far as–Sadiq (peace be upon him) as compiled by the late Muhaddith and great Philosopher and Thinker Faidh al–Kashani as taken from his well known book, *"Nawadir al–Akhbar"* [3] which is a collection of ahadith on the topic of Usul adDin.

It goes without saying that the complete collection of ahadith in regards to the Mi'raj can be read in *Bihar al–Anwar* from `Allamah Majlisi, *volume 18, page 282; volume 26, page 86; volume 36, page 162 and*

*245; volume 39, page 158; volume 70, page 6; volume 76, page 146 and 184, and volume 93, page 93.*

*Hawza `Ilmiyyah of Qum*

*Mahdi Ansari Qummi*

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1. Surah al-Isra' (17), Verse 1
2. 2 Surah al-Najm, Verses 12 to 18
3. The full title of this book is Nawadir al-Akhbar fima Yatal `aqu biusul ad-Dini, written by Faidh al-Kashani, research by Mahdi Ansari, printed by the Research Department of the Faculty of Humanities, Tehran, 1376

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