



THE PROPHET'S 
NIGHT JOURNEY & HEAVENLY ASCENT

SAYYID MUHAMMAD IBN ALAWI AL-MALIKI

Translation and notes by
Gibril Fouad Haddad



*We appointed not the vision which We showed you
but as a test for mankind*

(17:60)

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SHAYKH MUḤAMMAD IBN ʿALAWĪ IBN ʿABBĀS ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī al-Makkī, Shaykh al-Islām fil-Balad al-Ḥarām, the educator of *Ahl al-Sunna* and light of the House of the Prophet ﷺ in our time, a major contemporary Scholar of ḥadīth, commentary of Qurʾān, Law, doctrine, *taṣawwuf*, and Prophetic biography (*sīra*), the most highly respected authority of *Ahl al-Sunna* in the Mother of Cities, passed away in 1425/2004. Both his father (d. 1971 CE) and grandfather were the Imāms and head preachers of the Sacred Mosque in Makka, as was al-Sayyid Muḥammad himself beginning in 1971 and until 1983. Allāh have mercy on them and continue to benefit us with them.

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INTRODUCTION

Glory be to Allāh Who chose His praiseworthy servant Muḥammad ﷺ for the Message, distinguished him with the night journey on the lightning-mount Burāq, and caused him to ascend the ladders of perfection to the high heavens to show him of the greatest signs of his Lord. He raised him until he reached the Lote-tree of the Farthest Boundary where ends the science of every Messenger-Prophet and every Angel Brought Near, where lies the Garden of Retreat, to the point that he heard the sound of the pens that write what has befallen and what is to befall.

There He manifested Himself to him through vision and addressed him intimately in the station of encounter, accompanying him so that he was no longer alone. There (in those lofty worlds) He stilled his fear and communicated to him what He wished, revealed to him what He wished, taught him what He wished, and explained to him what He wished. He showed him some of the signs of sovereignty and the signs of creation and the unseen that point to the uniqueness and perfection of His immense majesty, the marvels of His lordly power, and the sublimity of His wisdom without beginning. Glory to Him, the God that knows the heart's secret and its confidence, and knows what is more subtle and more

hidden! He hears the patter of the black ant's feet on a massive rock in the dark night.

I bear witness that there is no God but Allāh, Who is sanctified in His essence from all figurative representation and shades, and elevated above having a partner in His attributes and acts. I bear witness that our master Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger ﷺ, whose rank He has raised so that none of the seven skies can reach it, nor any of the Prophets. For how could they reach his stature when they were shown to him in the Sanctified House in Jerusalem, where Gibrīl ؑ gave him precedence over them so that he led them in prayer, then apprised him of their places and stations in the heavens, thereby showing that he is their paramount chief and foremost leader since the beginning?

Allāh bore witness that the Prophet ﷺ was the Guide through his knowledge and the Just Instructor in his actions. He elevated his speaking manner above vanity and disgrace; He freed his innermost being from belying what his eyes saw; and He warded his eyes from falsehood and transgression. Then he saw his Lord, in the station of Proximity and Servanthood. Nor did he fall short of uncovering the reality of the event, but he received all that was communicated to him of both partial and total knowledge.

May Allāh's blessing and peace be upon him and upon his Family, the People of Guidance and Firmness, and upon his excellent and pure Companions, carriers of the trusts of Prophetic Inheritance, defenders of the precious Religion with every burnished sword, who have triumphed and won the highest dwellings in the Abode of Eternity.

To begin, the indigent in need of the mercy of his generous Lord, Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī ibn 'Abbās al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī says – may Allāh treat him with His radiant kindness: Allāh has granted me the favor of writing a vast treatise covering the substantial research which has been done on the subject of *al-isrā' wal-mi'rāj*. Then He expanded my breast so that I could gather its account into a single text as a separate monograph so as to allow its access to the people

at large. In this way they can familiarize themselves with that text and recite it in the public meetings and great celebrations in which Muslims gather to commemorate *al-isrā' wal-mi'rāj*, as is the custom in many countries, especially in the two Holy Sanctuaries.

I have collated my own work with that of the ḥadīth Master al-Shāmī¹ and Najmal-Dīn al-Ghayṭī² to make a single comprehensive text with the mention of additions in their appropriate places. This text includes most of the different narrations on this subject. I have provided a concise commentary and brief notes explaining the meaning of rare or difficult words. I have named this treatise: *al-Anwār al-Bahiyya min Isrā' wa-Mi'rāj Khayr al-Bariyya*, “The Resplendent Lights of the Night-Journey and Ascension of the Best of Creation,” asking Allāh to grant much benefit through it and accept it purely for His sake. Allāh’s blessings and peace be upon our master Muḥammad and his Family and Companions!

CHAPTER ONE



The Striving of the Scholars to Organize the Account of *Isrā'* & *Mi^crāj* into a Single Version

The scholars have striven to organize this account and gather its narrations into a single narrative, at the same time making mention of a few variant additions, in order to facilitate its perusal and benefit. In this way they gathered the narrations in one place for the people at large. This is permitted according to the rules of the experts in the field of ḥadīth as stated by them. Many of them have used this method in many instances in which they would join up together the several narrations of different narrators of a single event, as was done with the Farewell Pilgrimage and some of the military raids and campaigns. The ḥadīth Master al-Shāmī did this with the account of the Prophet's Night-Journey and Ascension (as did the ḥadīth Master al-Ghayṭī and a number of other scholars). Of use here is what al-Shāmī said on this question in his great book *al-Mi^crāj*:

Know – may Allāh have mercy on me and you! – that each of the ḥadīths of the Companions [on this subject] contains something the other does not.³ Therefore I consulted Allāh Almighty and concatenated them, rearranging the account into a single narrative so that it would be sweeter to attentive ears, and in order for its benefit to suit all occasions.

If someone says: “Each hadīth of the *mi'raj* differs from the next and the ascensions may number according to the number of their accounts: why then did you make all of them into a single account?”

I say: The author of *Zād al-Ma'ād* [Ibn al-Qayyim] said:

This is the path of the feeble-minded among the literalists of the *Zāhirī* school who are authorities in transmitted texts. If they see in the account a wording that differs from the version of one of the narrators they multiply the occurrence of the event accordingly. The correct view is what the Imāms of text transmission have said: namely, that the *mi'raj* took place once, in Makka, after the beginning of Prophethood. It is a wonder how these have claimed that it took place repeatedly. How can they countenance the conclusion that, every time fifty prayers are prescribed upon him, then he goes back and forth between Mūsā and his Lord until they become five, and his Lord says: “I have decreed what is due to Me and have reduced the burden of My slaves,” only for him to come a second time with fifty prayers which he decreases again, ten by ten?⁴

The ḥadīth Master 'Imād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr said in his history, after noting that Mālik ibn Ṣaṣa'a's version did not make mention of al-Quds:

Some of the narrators would omit part of the report due to its being known, or due to forgetfulness, or because he would mention only what he considered important, or because one time he would feel eager to relate it completely, while another time he would tell his public what is of most use to them.

He who relates every differing narration to a separate occurrence thereby affirming several ascensions has strayed widely and has said something indefensible, failing to fulfill his pursuit. The reason is that all of the versions contain his meeting

with the Prophets and the prescription of the prayers upon him: how then could one defend multiplying these occurrences? This understanding is extremely far-fetched nor was it related from any of the *Salaf*, whereas if this had indeed taken place several times the Prophet ﷺ would have reported it to his Community and the people would have transmitted it often.⁵

CHAPTER TWO



The Collated Ḥadīth of *Isrā'* & *Mi'rāj*

As the Prophet ﷺ was in al-Hijr at the House,⁶ lying down at rest between two men,⁷ Gibrīl and Mīkā'il came to him. With them was a third angel.⁸ They carried him until they had brought him to the spring of Zamzam, where they asked him to lie on his back and Gibrīl took him over from the other two. (Another version says:) “The roof of my house was opened and Gibrīl descended.”

He split the Prophet's ﷺ chest from his throat to the bottom of his belly. Then Gibrīl said to Mīkā'il: “Bring me a *tast*⁹ of water from Zamzam so that I may purify his heart and expand his breast.” He took out his heart and washed it three times, removing from it all trace of harm^a (*mā kāna bihi min adhā*). Mīkā'il went back and forth to him with the vessel of water from Zamzam three times.

Then he brought him a golden vessel filled with wisdom and belief which he emptied into his chest. He filled his chest with *ḥilm*,¹⁰ knowledge, certainty, and submission; then he closed it up. He sealed it between his shoulders with the seal of Prophethood.

a Imām al-Taqī al-Subkī said the “black clot” represents the potentiality of shaytanic influence over every human heart, not its necessity, least of all in the Prophet's ﷺ, while Imām Aḥmad Riḍā Khān said the “black clot” represents the part of the Prophet's ﷺ mercy (*rahma*) that would have benefited Shayṭān on *Qiyāma*.

Then he brought the Burāq, handsome-faced and bridled, a tall, white beast, bigger than the donkey but smaller than the mule. He could place his hooves at the farthest boundary of his gaze. He had long ears. Whenever he faced a mountain his hind legs would extend, and whenever he went downhill his front legs would extend. He had two wings on his thighs which lent strength to his legs.

He bucked when the Prophet ﷺ came to mount him. Gibrīl put his hand on his mane and said: "Are you not ashamed, O Burāq? By Allāh, none has mounted you in all creation dearer to Allāh than he." Hearing this he was so ashamed that he sweated until he became soaked, and he stood still so that the Prophet ﷺ mounted him.

The other Prophets used to mount the Burāq before. Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib said: "It is the beast of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام which he used to mount whenever he travelled to the Sacred House."

Al-Isrā' & Jerusalem

Gibrīl departed with him. He placed himself on his right while Mikā'il was on his left. (In Ibn Sa'd's version:) The one holding his stirrup was Gibrīl and the one holding the reins of the Burāq was Mikā'il. They travelled until they reached a land filled with datepalms. Gibrīl said to the Prophet ﷺ: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Gibrīl said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Gibrīl said: "You prayed in a *ṭayba* or land of pastures, and the Migration will take place there.

The Burāq continued his lightning flight, placing his hooves wherever his gaze could reach. Gibrīl then said again: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Gibrīl said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Gibrīl said: "You prayed in Madyan¹¹ at the tree of Mūsā."¹²

The Burāq continued his lightning flight, then Gibrīl said again: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Gibrīl said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Gibrīl said: "You prayed at the mountain of Sīnā' where Allāh addressed Mūsā."¹³

Then he reached a land where the palaces of al-Shām became visible to him. Gibrīl said to him: “Alight and pray.” He did so and remounted, then the Burāq continued his lightning flight and Gibrīl said: “Do you know where you prayed?” He said no. Gibrīl said: “You prayed in Bayt Laḥm, where ʿĪsā ibn Maryam was born.”¹⁴

As the Prophet ﷺ was travelling mounted on the Burāq he saw a devil from the jinn who was trying to get near him holding a firebrand. Everywhere the Prophet ﷺ turned he would see him. Gibrīl said to him: “Shall I teach you words which, if you say them, his firebrand will go out and he will fall dead?” The Prophet ﷺ said yes. Gibrīl said:

Say: *aʿūdhu bi-wajhillāhi al-karīm*
wa-bi-kalimātillāhi al-tāmmāt
al-lātī lā yujāwizuhunna bārrun wa-lā fājir
min sharri mā yanzilu min al-samāʾ
wa-min sharri mā yaʿruju fihā
wa-min sharri mā dharaʾa fil-arḍ
wa-min sharri mā yakhruju minhā
wa-min fitani al-layli wal-nahār
wa-min ṭawāriq al-layli wal-nahār
illā ṭāriqin yaṭruqu bi-khayrin yā raḥmān

I seek refuge in Allāh’s Blessed Face
and in Allāh’s perfect words
which neither the righteous nor the disobedient overstep
from evil that descends from the heaven
and evil that ascends to it
and evil that is created in the earth
and the trials of night and day
and the visitors of night and day
save the visitor that visits goodness upon us,
O Beneficent One!

At this the devil fell dead on his face and his firebrand went out.

They travelled until they reached a people who sowed in a day and reaped in a day. Every time they reaped, their harvest would be replenished as before. The Prophet ﷺ said: "O Gibrīl! What is this?" He replied: "These are *al-mujāhidūn*, those who strive in the path of Allāh the Exalted. Every good deed of theirs is multiplied for them seven hundred times, and whatever they spend returns multiplied."

The Prophet ﷺ then noticed a fragrant wind and said: "O Gibrīl, what is this sweet scent?" He replied:

This is the scent of the lady who combed the hair of Fir'awn's¹⁵ daughter and that of her children. As she combed the hair of Fir'awn's daughter the comb fell and she said: "*Bismillāh ta'isa Fir'awn* – In the name of Allāh, perish Fir'awn!" whereupon Fir'awn's daughter said: "Do you have a Lord other than my father?" She said yes. Fir'awn's daughter said: "Shall I tell my father?" She said yes. She told him and he summoned her and said: "Do you have a Lord other than me?" She replied: "Yes, my Lord and your Lord is Allāh."

This woman had two sons and a husband. Fir'awn summoned them and he began to entice the woman and her husband to give up their religion, but they refused. He said: "Then I shall have you killed." She said: "Please bury us all together in a single grave if you kill us." He replied: "Granted, and it is your right to ask us." He then ordered that a huge cow made of copper be filled with boiling liquid¹⁶ and that she and her children be thrown into it. The children were taken and thrown in one after the other. The second and youngest was still an infant at the breast. When they took him he said: "Mother! fall and do not tarry for verily you are on the right." Then she was thrown in with her children.

Ibn 'Abbās ؓ said: "Four spoke from the cradle as they were still infants: this child, Yūsuf's witness,¹⁷ Jurayj's companion¹⁸, and 'Īsā ibn Maryam."

Then the Prophet ﷺ saw some people whose heads were being shattered, then every time they would return to their original state and be shattered again without delay. He said: “O Gibrīl, who are these people?” He replied: “These are the people whose heads were too heavy [on their pillows] to get up and fulfill the obligatory prayers.”

Then he saw a people who wore loincloths on their fronts and on their backs. They were roaming the way camels and sheep roam about. They were eating thistles and *zaqqūm* – the fruit of a tree that grows in hell and whose fruit resembles the heads of devils¹⁹ – as well as white-hot coals and stones of Hell-Fire. He said: “Who are these, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “These are the ones who did not meet the obligation of paying alms from what they possessed, while Allāh never withheld anything from them.”

Then he saw a people who had in front of them excellent meats disposed in pots and also putrid meat, and they would eat from the foul meat and not touch the good meat. He said: “What is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “These are the men from your Community who had an excellent, lawful wife at home and who would go and see an infamous woman and spend the night with her; and the women who would leave her excellent, lawful husband to go and see a infamous man and spend the night with him.”

Then he came to a plank in the middle of the road which not even a piece of cloth nor less than that could cross except it would be pierced. He said: “What is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “This is what happens to those of your Community who sit in the middle of the road and harm passers-by” and he recited: {*Lurk not on every road to threaten wayfarers and to turn away from the path of Allāh him who believes in Him, and to seek to make it crooked*} (7:86).²⁰

The Prophet ﷺ saw a man swimming in a river of blood and he was being struck in his mouth with rocks which he then swallowed. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “What is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “This is what happens to those who eat usury.”

Then he saw a man who had gathered a stack of wood which he could not carry, yet he was adding more wood to it. He said: "What is this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This is a man from your Community who gets people's trusts when he cannot fulfill them, yet he insists on carrying them."

He then saw people whose tongues and lips were being sliced with metal knives. Every time they were sliced they would return to their original state to be sliced again without respite. He said: "Who are these, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "These are the public speakers of division in your Community: they say what they do not do."

Then he passed by people who had copper nails with which they scratched their own faces and chests. He asked: "Who are these, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "These are the ones who ate the flesh of people and tarnished their reputations."

Then he saw a small hole with a huge bull coming out of it. The bull began to try entering the hole again and was unable. The Prophet ﷺ said: "What is this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This is the one in your Community who tells an enormity, then he feels remorse to have spoken it but is unable to take it back."

(Al-Shāmī added:) He then came to a valley in which he breathed a sweet, cool breeze fragrant with musk and he heard a voice. He said: "What is this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This is the voice of Paradise saying:

*O my Lord, bring me what You have promised me!
Too abundant are my rooms, my gold-laced garments,
My silk, my brocades, my carpets, my pearls, my corals,
My silver, my gold, my goblets, my bowls, my pitchers,
My couches, my honey, my water, my milk, my wine!*

And the Lord says:

*You shall have every single Muslim man and woman,
Every believing man and woman,
Everyone who has believed in Me and My Messengers
And did excellent deeds*

*Without associating a partner with Me
Nor taking helpers without Me!
Anyone who fears Me shall be safe,
And whoever asks of Me, I shall give him,
And whoever loans Me something, I shall repay him,
And whoever relies upon Me, I shall suffice him!
I am Allāh beside Whom there is no God.
I never fail in My promise.
{Successful indeed are the believers.} (23:1)
{So blessed be Allāh, the best of Creators!} (23:14)*

“And Paradise answers: I accept.”

Then the Prophet ﷺ came to a valley in which he heard a detestable sound and smelled a foul wind. He said: “What is this, O Gibril?” He replied: “This is the sound of Hell-Fire saying:

*O Lord, give me what You promised me!
Abundant are my chains, my yokes, my punishments,
My fires, my thistles, my pus, my tortures!
My depth is abysmal, my heat unbearable!
Therefore give me what You promised me!*

And the Lord replies:

*You shall have every idolater and idolatress,
Every disbelieving man and woman, every foul one,
And every tyrant who does not believe
in the Day of Reckoning! ”*

The Prophet ﷺ saw the Anti-Christ (*al-Dajjāl*) in his actual likeness. He saw him with his own eyes, not in a dream. It was said to him: “O Messenger of Allāh, how was he when you saw him?” He replied: “Mammoth-sized (*faɣlamāniyyan*), extremely pale and white (*aqmaru hijān*), and one of his eyes is protuberant as if it were

a twinkling star. His hair is like the branches of a tree. He resembles 'Abd al-'Uzzā ibn Qaṭan."²¹

The Prophet ﷺ saw a pearl-like white column which the angels were carrying. He said: "What is this you are carrying?" They replied: "The Column of Islām. We have been ordered to place it in *al-Shām*." (End of al-Shāmi's addition.)²²

As the Prophet ﷺ was travelling he heard someone calling him from his right: "Muḥammad! Look at me, I want to ask you something!" But the Prophet ﷺ did not respond. Then he said: "Who was this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This is the herald of the Jews. If you had answered him your Community would have followed Judaism."

The Prophet ﷺ continued travelling and he heard someone calling him from his left: "Muḥammad! Look at me, I want to ask you something!" But the Prophet ﷺ did not respond. Then he said: "Who was this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This is the herald of the Christians. If you had answered him, your Community would have followed Christianity."

The Prophet ﷺ continued travelling and passed by a woman with bare arms, decked with every female ornament Allāh had created. She said: "Muḥammad! Look at me, I need to ask you something." But he did not look at her. Then he said: "Who was this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This was the world (*al-dunyā*). If you had answered her, your Community would have preferred the world to the hereafter."

As the Prophet ﷺ travelled on, he passed by an old man who was some distance away from his path saying: "Come hither, O Muḥammad!" But Gibrīl said: "Nay! Go on, O Muḥammad!" The Prophet ﷺ went on and then said: "Who was this, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "This was Allāh's enemy, Iblīs. He wanted you to incline towards him."

He went on and passed by an old woman on the roadside who said: "O Muḥammad! Look at me, I need to ask you something!"

But he did not look at her. Then he said: “Who was this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “The world has as much left to live as the remaining lifetime of this old woman.”

(Al-Shāmī added:) As he went on he was met by some of Allāh’s creatures who said: “Peace be upon you, O First One! (*Yā Awwal*). Peace upon you, O Last One! (*Yā Ākhir*). Peace be upon you, O Gatherer! (*Yā Ḥāshir*).” Gibrīl said to him: “Return their greeting,” and he did. Then he saw them another time and they said the same thing. Then he saw them a third time and again they greeted him. He said: “Who are they, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā.”

The Prophet ﷺ then passed by Mūsā ؑ as he was praying in his grave at a place of red sandhills. He was tall, with long hair and brown complexion, similar to one of the Shanū’a – the [Yemeni] men of pure lineage and manly virtue. He was saying with a loud voice: “You have honored him and preferred him!” Then the Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting. Mūsā ؑ said: “Who is this with you, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “This is Aḥmad ؑ.” He said: “Welcome to the Arabian Prophet who acted perfectly with his Community!” and he made an invocation for blessing on his behalf. Then he said: “Ask ease for you Community.”

They continued travelling and the Prophet ﷺ said: “O Gibrīl! Who was this?” He replied: “This was Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān.” The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Who was he reprimanding?” He said: “He was reprimanding his Lord.” The Prophet ﷺ said: “He reprimands (his Lord) and raises his voice against his Lord??” Gibrīl said: “Allāh the Exalted well knows Mūsā’s bluntness.”

He passed by a large tree whose fruit seemed like a thornless berry (of the kind that gives shade to men and cattle). Under it an old man was resting with his dependents. There were lamps and a great light could be seen. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Who is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “Your father Ibrāhīm.” The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and Ibrāhīm ؑ returned his greeting and said: “Who is this with you, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “This is your son Aḥmad.” Ibrāhīm ؑ said:

Welcome to the unlettered Arabian Prophet who has conveyed the message of his Lord and acted with perfect sincerity with his Community!

O my son, you are going to meet your Lord tonight, and your Community is the last and weakest of all Communities – therefore, if you are able to have your need fulfilled concerning your Community, or most of it, be sure to do it!

Then he invoked for goodness on his behalf.

They continued travelling until they reached the valley that is in the city – that is: the Hallowed House [Jerusalem] – when lo and behold! Hell-Fire was shown to them like a carpet unfolded. They [the Companions] said: “O Messenger of Allāh! What did it look like?” He replied: “Like cinders.”

He continued travelling until he reached the city of the Hallowed House and he entered it by its southern gate. He dismounted the Burāq and tied it at the gate of the mosque, using the ring by which the Prophets tied it before him. One narration states that Gibrīl came to the Rock and placed his fingers in it, piercing it, then he tied the Burāq using the spot he had hollowed out.

The Prophet ﷺ entered the mosque from a gate through which the sun and the moon could be seen when they set. He prayed two cycles of prayer and did not tarry long before a large throng of people had gathered. The Prophet ﷺ recognized all the Prophets, some standing in prayer, some bowing, some prostrating. Then a caller called out to the prayer and the final call to prayer was made. They rose and stood in lines, waiting for the one who would lead them. Gibrīl took the hand of the Prophet ﷺ and brought him forward. He led them in two cycles of prayer.²³

The following is related from Ka'b: Gibrīl ﷺ raised the call to prayer. The angels descended from the heaven. Allāh gathered all the Messengers and Prophets. Then the Prophet ﷺ prayed as the leader of the angels and Messengers. When he left, Gibrīl asked him:

“O Muḥammad, do you know who prayed behind you?” He said no Gibrīl said: “Every single Prophet whom Allāh has ever sent.” (Al-Shāmī adds:) Abū Hurayra’s narration related by al-Ḥākim who declared it sound, and by al-Bayhaqī, states that the Prophet ﷺ met the spirits of the Prophets.

They glorified their Lord, then Ibrāhīm ؑ said:

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ Who has taken me as His intimate friend, Who has given me an immense kingdom, Who has made me a prayerful Community and one by whom prayer is led, Who has rescued me from the fire and made it cool and safe for me!

Then Mūsā ؑ glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ Who has spoken to me directly, Who has brought to pass the destruction of Fir‘awn and the salvation of the Children of Israel at my hands, and Who has made from among my Community a people who guide others through truth and establish justice upon it!

Then Dāwūd ؑ glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ Who has brought me an immense kingdom, Who has softened iron for my hands and subjected to me the mountains and the birds which laud Him, and has given me wisdom and unmistakable judgment in my speech!

Then Sulaymān ؑ glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ Who has subjected the winds to my command as well as the devils, so that they did as I wished and constructed for me elevated sanctuaries, images, large bowls the size of ponds, and vessels fixed in their spot [due to their size]! Who has taught me the language of birds and has brought me a portion of every

good thing! Who has subjected to me the armies of the devils and the birds and has preferred me over many of His believing servants! Who has brought me an immense kingdom which no one after me may possess! And Who has made my kingdom a goodly one wherein there is no reckoning nor punishment!

Then ʿĪsā ibn Maryam ﷺ glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allāh ﷻ Who has made me His Word! Who has fashioned me after Ādam's likeness whom He created out of earth then said to him: Be! and he was. Who has taught me the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Evangel! Who has caused me to heal the blind and the leper and to raise the dead by Allāh's permission! Who has raised me and cleansed me and granted me and my mother protection against the cursed devil, so that the devil had no path by which to harm us! (End of al-Shāmī's addition).

Every Prophet then glorified his Lord in the best language and the Prophet ﷺ said:

All of you have glorified their Lord and I am going to glorify Him also:

*Al-ḥamdu lillāh al-ladhī arsalanī rahmatan lil-ʿālamīn
wa-kāffatan lil-nāsi bashīran wa-nadhīrā
wa-anzala ʿalayya al-qurʿāna fīhi tibyānun li-kulli shayʿ
wa-jaʿala ummatī khayra ummatin ukhrijat lil-nās
wa-jaʿala ummatī wasatā
wa-jaʿala ummatī hum al-awwalūna wal-ākhirūn
wa-sbaraḥa lī ṣadrī wa-waḍaʿa ʿannī wazrī
wa-rafaʿa lī dhikrī
wa-jaʿalanī fātīḥan khātīmā!*

Praise to Allāh Who has sent me
As a mercy to the worlds sent to all without exception,
A bearer of glad tidings and a warner!
Who has caused to descend upon me the Qur'ān
In which there is a perfect exposition of all things!
Who has made my Community the best Community
Ever brought out for the benefit of mankind!
Who has made my Community a median and a middle!
Who has made my Community, in truth,
The first [in Paradise] and the last [in creation]
of all Communities!
Who has expanded my breast
And relieved me of my burden!
Who has exalted my name,
And made me the Opener and the Sealer!
(Upon hearing this Ibrāhīm ؑ said: "In this has Muḥammad ﷺ
bested you!")

Then they evoked the matter of the Hour and referred it to Ibrāhīm ؑ, but he said: "I have no knowledge of it." They turned to Mūsā ؑ but he said: "I have no knowledge of it." They turned to ʿĪsā ؑ and he said:

As for the time when it shall befall, no one knows it except Allāh ﷻ. But this is what my Lord has assured me [concerning what precedes it]. The *Dajjāl* or Anti-Christ shall come forth and I will face him with two rods. At my sight he shall melt like lead. Allāh ﷻ shall cause his destruction as soon as he sees me. It will be so that the very stones will say: "O Muslim, behind me hides a disbeliever, therefore come and kill him!" And Allāh shall cause them all to die.

People shall then return to their countries and nations. At that time Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj [Gog and Magog] shall come out. They shall come from every direction. They shall trample all nations underfoot. Whatever they come upon, they shall destroy.

They shall drink up every body of water. At long last the people shall come to me bewailing about them. At that time I will invoke Allāh ﷻ against them so that He will destroy them and cause their death until the whole earth will reek of their stench. Allāh ﷻ will then send down rain which shall carry their bodies away and hurl them into the sea.

I have been assured by my Lord that once all this takes place then the Hour will be as the pregnant mother at the last stages of her pregnancy. Her family does not know when she shall suddenly give birth – by night or by day. (End of al-Shāmī's addition)

The Seven Heavens

The Prophet ﷺ then felt the greatest thirst that he had ever felt, whereupon Gibrīl ﷺ brought him a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. He chose the latter. Gibrīl said: "You have chosen *fiṭra* – natural disposition. Had you chosen to drink the wine, your Community would have strayed from the right way and none but a few of them would have followed you."²⁴

Another narration states: There were three vessels and the third contained water. Gibrīl said: "If you had drunk the water your Community would have perished by drowning."

Another narration states that one of the vessels presented to him contained honey instead of water, and that he then saw the wide-eyed maidens of Paradise at the left of the Rock. He greeted them and they returned his greeting. Then he asked them something and they replied with an answer that cools the eyes.

Then the Prophet ﷺ was brought the ladder by which the spirits of the children of Ādam ﷺ ascend. Creation never saw a more beautiful object. It had alternate stairs of silver and gold and came down from the Highest and Amplest Garden of Paradise, Jannat al-Firdaws. It was incrustated with pearls and surrounded with angels on its right and left.

The Prophet ﷺ began his ascent with Gibrīl ﷺ until they reached one of the gates of the nearest heaven called *Bāb al-Ḥafaẓa*.

There an angel stood guard, named Ismā'īl ؑ, who is the custodian of the nearest heaven. He inhabits the wind. He never ascended to the heaven nor descended to earth except on the day that the Prophet ﷺ died, blessings and peace upon him. In front of him stood seventy thousand angels, each angel commanding an army of seventy thousand more.

Gibrīl ؑ asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- "Who is this?"
- "Gibrīl."
- "Who is with you?"
- "Muḥammad."
- "Has he been sent for?"
- "Yes."
- "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life! A brother and deputy, and what an excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Ādam ؑ the father of humanity, just as he was on the very day Allāh ﷻ created him in his complete form.²⁵ The spirits of the Prophets and of his faithful offspring were being shown to him, whereupon he would say: "A goodly spirit and a goodly soul, put it in the Highest (*'illiyīn*)!" Then the spirits of his disbelieving offspring were shown to him and he would say: "A foul spirit and a foul soul, put it in the lowest layer of Hell (*sijjīn*)!"

The Prophet ﷺ saw on Ādam's right great dark masses and a gate exuding a fragrant smell, and on his left great dark masses and a gate exuding a foul, putrid smell. Whenever Ādam ؑ looked to his right he would smile and be happy, and whenever he looked to his left he would be sad and weep. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and Ādam returned his greeting and said: "Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet!"

The Prophet ﷺ said: "What is this, O Gibrīl?" He replied:

“This is your father Ādam ﷺ and the dark throngs are the souls of his children. Those on the right are the people of Paradise and those on the left are the people of the Fire. Whenever he looks to his right he smiles and is glad, and whenever he looks to his left he is sad and weeps. The door to his right is the gate of Paradise. Whenever he sees those of his offspring enter it he smiles happily. The door to his left is the gate of Hell-Fire. Whenever he sees those of his offspring enter it he weeps sadly.”

(Al-Shāmī added:) Then the Prophet ﷺ continued for a little while. He saw a tablespread in which there were pieces of good meat which no one approached, and another tablespread in which were pieces of rotten meat which stank, surrounded by people who were eating it. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “O Gibrīl, who are these?” He replied: “These are those of your Community who abandon what is lawful and proceed to what is unlawful.”

(Another version says:) The Prophet ﷺ saw a great deal of people gathered around a tablespread in which was set grilled meat of the best kind one had ever seen. Near the table there was some carrion decaying. The people were coming to the carrion to eat from it, and they were leaving the grilled meat untouched. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Who are they, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “The adulterers (*al-zunāt*): they make lawful what Allāh ﷻ has made unlawful, and they abandon what Allāh ﷻ has made lawful for them.”

Then the Prophet ﷺ went on for a little while. He saw groups of people who had bellies as large as houses, and there were snakes in them which could be seen through their skins. Every time one of those people stood up he would fall again and he would say: “O Allāh, don't make the Hour of Judgment rise yet!” Then they meet the people of Fir'awn on the road and the latter trample them underfoot. The Prophet ﷺ said: “I heard them clamoring to Allāh.” He asked: “O Gibrīl, who are these?” He replied: “They are those of your Community who eat up usury (*al-ribā*). They cannot stand up except in the manner of those whom Shayṭān touches with possession.”

Then the Prophet ﷺ went on for a little while. He saw groups of people whose lips resembled the lips of camels. Their mouths were being pried open and they would be stoned. One version says: A rock from Hell-Fire was placed in their mouths and then it would come out again from their posteriors. The Prophet ﷺ said: "I heard them clamoring to Allāh." He asked: "O Gibrīl, who are these?" He replied: "They are those of your Community who eat up the property of orphans and commit injustice. They are eating nothing but a fire for their bellies, and they shall be roasted in it."

Then the Prophet ﷺ went on for a little while. He saw women suspended by their breasts and others hanging upside down. The Prophet ﷺ said: "I heard them clamoring to Allāh." He asked: "Who are these, O Gibrīl?" He replied: "These are the women who commit fornication and then kill their children."

Then the Prophet ﷺ went on for a little while. He saw groups of people whose sides were being cut off for meat and they were being devoured. They were being told: "Eat, just as you used to eat the flesh of your brother." The Prophet said: "O Gibrīl, who are these?" He replied: "They are the slanderers of your Community who bring shame to others." (End of al-Shāmi's addition.)

Then the Prophet ﷺ continued for a little while, and he found the consumers of usury and of the property of orphans, the fornicators and adulterers, and others, in various horrible states like those that have been described or worse.

Then they ascended to the second heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- "Who is this?"
- "Gibrīl."
- "Who is with you?"
- "Muḥammad."
- "Has he been sent for?"
- "Yes."
- "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him

long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw the sons of the two sisters: ʿĪsā ibn Maryam ﷺ and Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyyā ﷺ. They resembled each other in clothing and hair. Each had with him a large company of his people. ʿĪsā was curly-haired, of medium build, leaning towards fair complexion, with hair let down as if he were coming out of the bath. He resembles ʿUrwā ibn Masʿūd al-Thaqafī.²⁶

The Prophet ﷺ greeted them and they returned his greeting. Then they said: “Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet!” Then they invoked for goodness on his behalf.

After this the Prophet ﷺ and Gibrīl ﷺ ascended to the third heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- “Who is this?”
- “Gibrīl.”
- “Who is with you?”
- “Muḥammad.”
- “Has he been sent for?”
- “Yes.”
- “Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Yūsuf ﷺ, and with him stood a large company of his people. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: “Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet!” Then he invoked for goodness on his behalf.

Yūsuf ﷺ had been granted the gift of beauty. One narration states: He was the most handsome creation that Allāh ﷻ had ever created and he surpassed people in beauty the way the full moon

surpasses all other stars. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Who is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “Your brother Yūsuf.”

Then they ascended to the fourth heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- “Who is this?”
- “Gibrīl.”
- “Who is with you?”
- “Muḥammad.”
- “Has he been sent for?”
- “Yes.”
- “Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Idrīs ؑ. Allāh ﷻ exalted him to a lofty place. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: “Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet!” Then he invoked for goodness on his behalf.

Then they ascended to the fifth heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- “Who is this?”
- “Gibrīl.”
- “Who is with you?”
- “Muḥammad.”
- “Has he been sent for?”
- “Yes.”
- “Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Hārūn ؑ. Half of his beard was white and the other half black. It almost reached his navel due to its length. Surrounding him were a company of the children of Israel listening to him as he was telling them a story. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: “Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet!” Then he invoked for goodness on his behalf. The Prophet ﷺ asked: “Who is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “This is the man beloved among his people, Hārūn ibn ‘Imrān.”

Then they ascended to the sixth heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- “Who is this?”
- “Gibrīl.”
- “Who is with you?”
- “Muḥammad.”
- “Has he been sent for?”
- “Yes.”
- “Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. The Prophet ﷺ passed by Prophets who had with them less than ten followers in all, while others had a large company, and others had not even one follower.

Then he saw a huge dark mass (*sawād ‘aẓīm*) that was covering the firmament. He said: “What is this throng?” He was told: “This is Mūsā and his people. Now raise your head and look.” He raised his head and saw another huge dark mass that was covering the firmament from every direction he looked. He was told: “These are your Community, and besides these there are seventy thousand of them that will enter Paradise without giving account.”

As they went in the Prophet ﷺ saw Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān ؑ, a tall man with brown complexion, similar to one of the Shanū’a – the

[Yemeni] men of pure lineage and manly virtue – with abundant hair. If he had two shirts on him, still his hair would exceed them. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: “Welcome to the righteous brother and the righteous Prophet!” Then he invoked for goodness on his behalf and said: “The people claim that among the sons of Ādam I am more honored by Allāh than this one, but it is he who is more honored by Allāh than me!”

When the Prophet ﷺ reached him Mūsā ؑ wept. He was asked: “What is it that makes you weep?” He replied: “I weep because a child that was sent after me will cause more people to enter Paradise from his Community than will enter from mine. The children of Israel claim that among the children of Ādam I am the one most honored by Allāh, but here is one man among the children of Ādam who has come after me in the world while I am in the next world, and is more honored. If he were only by himself I would not mind, but he has his Community with him!”

Then they ascended to the seventh heaven. Gibrīl asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

- “Who is this?”
- “Gibrīl.”
- “Who is with you?”
- “Muḥammad.”
- “Has he been sent for?”
- “Yes.”
- “Welcome to him, from his family! May Allāh grant him long life, a brother and deputy, and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit this is!”

The gate was opened. The Prophet ﷺ saw Ibrāhīm ؑ the Friend sitting at the gate of Paradise on a throne of gold the back of which was leaning against the Inhabited House (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr*).²⁷ With him were a company of his people. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: “Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet!”

Then Ibrāhīm ؑ said: “Order your Community to increase their seedlings of Paradise for its soil is excellent and its land is plentiful.” The Prophet ﷺ said: “What are the seedlings of Paradise?” He replied: “*Lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā billāh al-‘Alī al-‘Azīm* – There is no change nor might except with Allāh the Exalted, the Almighty!”

(Another version says:) “Convey my greetings to your Community and tell them that Paradise has excellent soil and sweet water, and that its seedlings are:

subḥān allāh: Glory to Allāh!

wal-ḥamdu lillāh: and Praise to Allāh!

wa-lā ilāha illallāh: and there is no God but Allāh!

wallāhu akbar: and Allāh is greatest!

With Ibrāhīm ؑ were sitting a company of people with pristine faces similar to the whiteness of a blank page, and next to them were people with something in their faces. The latter stood and entered a river in which they bathed. Then they came out having purified some of their hue. Then they entered another river and bathed and came out having purified some more. Then they entered a third river and bathed and purified themselves and their hue became like that of their companions. They came back and sat next to them.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “O Gibrīl, who are those with white faces and those who had something in their hues, and what are these rivers in which they entered and bathed?” He replied: “The ones with white faces are a people who never tarnished their belief with injustice or disobedience; those with something in their faces are a people who would mix good deeds with bad ones, then they repented and Allāh relented towards them. As for these rivers, the first is Allāh’s mercy (*raḥmatullāh*), the second his favor (*ni‘matullāh*), the third {and their Lord gave them a pure beverage to drink} (*wa-saqāhum rabbuhum sharāban ṭahūrā*) (76:21).”

Then the Prophet ﷺ was told: “This is your place and the place of your Community.” He saw that his Community were divided

into two halves: one half were wearing clothes that seemed as white as a blank page, the other were wearing clothes that seemed the color of ashes or dust. He entered the Inhabited House and those who were wearing the white clothes entered with him. Those that wore ash-colored clothes were no longer able to see him, and yet they were in the best of states. The Prophet ﷺ prayed in the Inhabited House together with those of the believers that were with him.

Every day seventy thousand angels enter the Inhabited House, who shall never return to it until the Day of Resurrection. The angels who have entered it never see it again. This House is exactly superposed to the Ka'ba. If one stone fell from it, it would fall on top of the Ka'ba.

One version states that the presentation of the three vessels, the Prophet's ﷺ choice of the vessel of milk, and Gibrīl's approval took place at this point. (Al-Shāmī adds:) al-Ṭabarānī cites this ḥadīth with a sound chain: "The night I was taken on a Night-Journey I passed by the heavenly host, and lo and behold! Gibrīl was like the worn-out saddle-cloth on the camel's back from fear of his Lord." One of al-Bazzār's narrations states: "like a saddle-blanket that clings to the ground."²⁸

The Lote-Tree & Paradise

Then the Prophet ﷺ was raised up to the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit [of creatural knowledge]. There ends whatever ascends from the earth before it is seized, and whatever descends from above before it is seized.²⁹

It is a tree from the base of which issue rivers whose water is never brackish,³⁰ and rivers of milk whose taste does not change after it is drunk, and rivers of wine which brings only pleasure to those who drink it, and rivers of purified honey. Someone on his mount could travel under its shade for seventy years and still not come out of it. The lotus fruit that grows on it resembles the jars of Hajar [near Madīna]. Its leaves are shaped like the ears of the

she-elephant, and each leaf could wrap up this Community entirely. One version says that one of its leaves could wrap up all creatures.

On top of each leaf there was an angel who covered it with colors which cannot be described. Whenever he covered it by Allāh's order it would change. One version says: It would turn into sapphire and chrysolite, the beauty of which is impossible for anyone to praise according to its merit. On it alighted moths of gold.

From the base of the tree issued four [more] rivers: two hidden rivers and two visible ones. The Prophet ﷺ asked: "What are these, O Gibrīl? He replied: "As for the hidden ones, they are two rivers of Paradise. The visible ones are the Nile and the Euphrates."³¹

(Al-Shāmī added that one version says): At the base of the tree ran a source called Salsabil. From it issued two rivers: one is the Kawthar. (The Prophet ﷺ said:) "I saw it flowing impetuously, roaring, at the speed of arrows. Near it were pavilions of pearl (*lu'lu'*), sapphire (*yāqūt*), and chrysolite (*zabarjad*) on top of which nested green birds more delicate than any you have ever seen. On its banks were vessels of gold and silver. It ran over pebbles made of sapphire and emerald (*zumurrud*). Its water was whiter than milk."

The Prophet ﷺ took one of the vessels and scooped some water and drank. It was sweeter than honey and more fragrant than musk. Gibrīl said to him: "This is the river which Allāh ﷻ has given you as a special gift, and the other river is the River of Mercy." The Prophet ﷺ bathed in it and his past and future sins were forgiven. (End of al-Shāmī's addition.)

(One version says:) At the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit the Prophet ﷺ saw Gibrīl (in his angelic form). He had six hundred wings. Every single wing could cover the entire firmament. From his wings embellishments were strewn in all directions, such as rare pearls and sapphires of a kind Allāh alone knows. Then the Prophet ﷺ was taken to the Kawthar and entered Paradise. Lo and behold! It contains what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor human mind ever imagined. On its gate he saw written:

al-ṣadaqatu bi-ʿashrin amthāliha
wal-qarḍu bi-thamāniyati ʿashara

Charity is repaid tenfold, and loan eighteenfold.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “O Gibrīl, how can the loan be more meritorious than charity?” He replied: “Because one asking for charity may still have some need left, while the borrower does not borrow except his need is fulfilled.”

The Prophet ﷺ continued to travel until he reached rivers of milk whose taste does not change, and rivers of wine which bring only pleasure to those who drink it, and rivers of honey purified. Overhanging those rivers were domes of hollowed pearl whose circumference is as wide as the Aquarius star.

(Another narration says:) Above the rivers were pommels resembling the hides of humped camels. Its birds were like the Bactrian camel. Upon hearing this, Abū Bakr ؓ said: “O Messenger of Allāh, they are certainly delicate!” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “And daintier to eat yet, and I hope that you shall eat from them.”³²

The Prophet ﷺ then saw the Kawthar and on its banks were domes of hollowed pearl. The soil of its banks was extremely fragrant musk. Then the Fire was shown to him. In it he saw Allāh’s wrath and His punishment and sanction. Were rocks and iron to be thrown into it, the Fire would consume them completely. In it were a people who were eating carrion. The Prophet ﷺ said: “Who are these, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “Those who ate the flesh of people.” Then the Prophet ﷺ saw Mālik ؑ, the custodian of the Fire. He was a grim figure whose face expressed anger. The Prophet ﷺ greeted him first. Then the gates of the Fire were closed as he stood outside, and he was raised up beyond the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit, and a cloud concealed him from everything else, and Gibrīl stayed back.³³

The Divine Meeting

The Prophet ﷺ was taken up to a point where he heard the scratching of the Pens [writing the divine Decree]. He saw a man who had disappeared into the light of the Throne. He said: "Who is this? Is this an angel?" It was said to him, no. He said: "Is it a Prophet?" Again the answer was no. He said: "Who is it then?" The answer was: "This is a man whose tongue was moist with Allāh's remembrance in the world, and his heart was attached to the mosques, and he never incurred the curse of his father and mother."

Then the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord, the Most Glorious, the Exalted, and he fell prostrate.³⁴ At that time his Lord spoke to him and said: "O Muḥammad!" He replied: "Twice at Your service, O Lord!" Allāh ﷻ said: "Ask (*sal*)!" The Prophet ﷺ said:

You have taken to Yourself Ibrāhīm as an intimate friend (*khalīl*), and You have given him an immense kingdom. You have spoken to Mūsā directly, and have given Dāwūd an immense kingdom and softened iron and subjected the mountains to him. You have given Sulaymān an immense kingdom, and subjected the jinn and men and devils to him, as well as the winds, and You have given him a kingdom the like of which no one may have after him. You have taught ʿĪsā the Torah and the Evangel, and made him heal those born blind and the lepers, and raise up the dead with Your permission, and You have protected him and his mother from the cursed devil so that the devil had no path by which to harm them!

Allāh ﷻ said: "And I have taken you to Myself as My beloved and intimate friend (*ḥabīban wa-khalīlā*).” The narrator said: It is written in the Torah: *Ḥabībullah* "Allāh's Beloved."³⁵ Allāh continued:

I have sent you for all people without exception, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner.

I have expanded your breast for you and relieved you of your burden and exalted your name, as I am not mentioned except you are mentioned with Me.

I have made your Community the best Community ever brought out for the benefit of mankind.

I have made your Community a mean and a middle.

I have made your Community in truth the first and the last of all Communities.

I have made public address (*al-khutba*) impermissible for your Community unless they first witness that you are My servant and Messenger.

I have placed certain people in your Community with Evangels for hearts.³⁶

I have made you the first Prophet created and the last one sent and the first one heard in My court.

I have given you Seven of the Oft-Repeated which I gave to no other Prophet before you.³⁷

I have given you the last verses of Sūrat al-Baqara which constitute a treasure from under My Throne which I gave to no other Prophet before you.

I have given you al-Kawthar.

I have given you eight lots: Islam, Emigration (*al-hijra*), Jihad, Charity (*al-ṣadaqa*), Fasting Ramadan, Ordering Good, and Forbidding Evil; and the day I created the heavens and the earth I made obligatory upon you and upon your Community fifty prayers: therefore establish them, you and your Community.

(Al-Shāmī added:) Abū Hurayra said that Allāh's Messenger said ﷺ:

My Lord has preferred me over everyone else (*faḍḍalanī rabbī*). He has sent me as a mercy to the worlds and to all people without exception, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner.

He has thrown terror into the hearts of my enemies at a distance of a month's travel.

He has made spoils of war lawful for me while they were not lawful for anyone before me.

The entire earth was made a ritually pure place of prostration for me.

I was given the words that open, those that close, and those that are comprehensive in meaning.³⁸

My Community was shown to me and there is none of the followers and the followed but he is known to me.

I saw that they would come to a people that wear hair-covered sandals.³⁹

I saw that they would come to a people of large faces and small eyes as if they had been pierced with a needle.

Nothing of what they would face in the future was kept hidden from me.

And I have been ordered to perform fifty prayers daily.

And he has been given three particular merits: He is the Master of Messengers (*sayyid al-mursalin*), the Leader of the Godwary (*imām al-muttaqīn*), and the Chief of Those with Signs of Light on Their Faces and Limbs (*qā'id al-ghurr al-muḥajjalīn*). (End of al-Shāmī's addition.)

One narration says: The Prophet ﷺ was given the five daily prayers and the last verses of Sūrat al-Baqara. For his sake, whoever of his Community does not associate anything with Allāh ﷻ is forgiven even the mortal sins.

Then the cloud that cloaked him was dispelled and Gibrīl ﷺ took him by the hand and sped away with him until he reached Ibrāhīm ﷺ, who did not say anything. Then the Prophet ﷺ reached Mūsā ﷺ who asked: "What did you do, O Muḥammad? What obligations did your Lord impose on you and your Community?" He replied: "He imposed fifty prayers every day and night on me and my Community." Mūsā ﷺ said: "Return to your Lord and ask Him to lighten your burden and that of your Community, for,

in truth, your Community will not be able to carry it. Verily, I myself have experienced people's dispositions before you. I tested the Children of Israel and took the greatest pains to hold them to something easier than this, but they were too weak to carry it and they abandoned it. Those of your Community are even weaker in their bodies and constitutions, and in their hearts, their sight, and their hearing."

The Prophet ﷺ turned to Gibrīl ؑ to consult him. The latter indicated to him that yes, if he wished, then he could return. The Prophet sped back until he reached the Tree and the cloud cloaked him and he fell prostrate. Then he said: "My Lord, make lighter the burden of my Community for verily they are the weakest of all Communities." He replied: "I have removed five prayers from their obligation."

Then the cloud was dispelled and the Prophet ﷺ returned to Mūsā ؑ and told him: "He has removed five prayers from my obligation." He replied: "Go back to your Lord and ask him to make it less, for in truth your Community will not be able to carry that." The Prophet ﷺ did not cease to go back and forth between Mūsā and his Lord, while Allāh ﷻ each time reduced it by five prayers, until Allāh ﷻ said: "O Muḥammad!" The Prophet said: "Twice at Your service, O Lord!" He said:

Let them be five prayers every day and night, and let every prayer count as ten. That makes fifty prayers. This word of Mine shall not be changed nor shall My Book be abrogated. Let whoever is about to perform a good deed, even if he does not ultimately do it, receive the reward of doing it, while if he does it, he shall receive it tenfold. Let whoever is about to commit a bad deed, and he does not ultimately do it, let not anything be written against him, while if he does it, let one misdeed be written against him.

Then the cloud was dispelled and the Prophet ﷺ returned to Mūsā ؑ and told him: "He has removed five prayers from my

obligation.” He replied: “Go back to your Lord and ask him to make it less, for, in truth, your Community will not be able to carry that.” The Prophet ﷺ said: “I have gone back again to my Lord until I feel too shy before Him. Rather, I accept and submit.” At this a herald called out: “I have decreed My obligation and have reduced the burden of My servants.” Mūsā ؑ then said to the Prophet ﷺ: “Return back down in the Name of Allāh.”

The Descent

The Prophet ﷺ did not pass a throng of angels except they said to him: “You must practice cupping (*alayka bil-hijāma*),” and in another version: “Order your Community to apply cupping.”⁴⁰

As the Prophet ﷺ was descending he asked Gibrīl ؑ: “Why did I not see any of the people of heaven except they welcomed me and smiled at me except one: I greeted him and he greeted me back and welcomed me, but he did not smile at me?” He replied: “That was Mālik ؑ the custodian of the Fire. He never smiled once since the day he was created. If he had ever smiled for anyone, it would have been you.”

When the Prophet ﷺ reached the nearest heaven he looked below and he saw a dense cloud of smoke filled with clamor. He asked: “What is this, O Gibrīl?” He replied: “These are the devils that swarm over the eyes of human beings so that they will not think about the dominions of the heavens and the earth, or else they would have seen wonders.”

Then he mounted the Burāq again (which he had tied in Jerusalem) and departed. He passed by a caravan of the Quraysh in such-and-such a place (the narrator forgot the name) and saw a camel upon which were tied two containers, a black one and a white one. When he came face to face with the caravan there was a stampede in which the caravan turned around and that camel was thrown down to the ground and its freight broke.

Then the Prophet ﷺ passed by another caravan that had lost

one of its camels which the tribe of So-and-so had rounded up. The Prophet ﷺ greeted them and one of them said: "This is the voice of Muḥammad!" after which the Prophet ﷺ returned to his Companions in Makka shortly before morning.

When morning came he remained alone and, knowing that people would belie him, sat despondently. Allāh's enemy, Abū Jahl, was passing by and he approached and sat down next to him, saying by way of mockery: "Has anything happened?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "Yes." Abū Jahl said: "And what is that?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "I was taken on a Night-Journey last night." Abū Jahl said: "Where to?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "To the Hallowed House." Abū Jahl said: "Then you woke up here among us?" He replied: "Yes."

Abū Jahl decided not to belie the Prophet ﷺ, fearing that the latter would deny having said this to him if he went and told the people of Makka, so he said: "What do you think if I called your people here? Will you tell them what you just told me?" The Prophet ﷺ said yes. Abū Jahl cried out: "O tribe of the Children of Ka'b ibn Lu'ay, come hither!" People left their gatherings and came until they all sat next around the two of them. Abū Jahl said: "Tell your people what you just told me." Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "I was taken on a Night-Journey last night." They said: "To where?" The Prophet ﷺ replied: "To the Hallowed House." They said: "Then you woke up here among us?" He replied: "Yes." There was no one left except he clapped his hands, or held his head in amazement, or clamored and considered it an enormity.

Al-Muṭ'īm ibn 'Adī⁴¹ said:

"All of your affair before today was bearable, until what you said today. I bear witness that you are lying (*anā asbbadu annaka kādhibun*). We strike the flanks of the she-camels for one month to reach the Hallowed House, then for another month to come back, and you claim that you went there in one night! By al-Lāt, by al-'Uzzā! I do not believe you."

Abū Bakr ؓ said:

“O Muṭ‘im! It is an evil thing you said to your brother’s son when you faced him thus and declared him a liar! As for me, I bear witness that he spoke the truth (*anā ashhadu annahu Ṣādiqun!*)”

The people said: “Muḥammad, describe the Hallowed House for us. How is it built, what does it look like, how near is it to the mountain?” There were some among them who had travelled there. He began to describe it for them: “Its structure is like this, its appearance like this, its proximity to the mountain is such-and-such,” and he did not stop describing it to them until he began to experience doubts about the description. He was seized with an anxiety he had not felt before, whereupon he was brought to the mosque itself [in Jerusalem] on the spot and saw it in front of him. He was placed outside the gate of ‘Aqīl (or ‘Iqāl). The people said: “How many gates does the mosque have?” He had not counted them before. He looked at the gates and began to count them one by one, informing them. All the while Abū Bakr was saying: “You have spoken the truth. You have spoken the truth. I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣadaqta ṣadaqta ashhadu annaka rasūlullāh*).”

The people said: “As for the description, then, by Allāh, he is correct.” They turned to Abū Bakr and said: “But do you believe what he said, that he went last night to the Hallowed House and came back before morning?” He replied: “Yes, and I do believe him regarding what is farther than that. I believe the news of heaven he brings, whether in the space of a morning or in that of an evening journey (*na‘am innī la-uṣaddiquhu fīmā huwa ab‘adu min dhālika: uṣaddiqu bi-khabari al-samā’i fī ghudwatim aw rawḥa*).” Because of this, Abū Bakr was named al-Ṣiddīq: the Trusting and Truthful.

Then they said: “O Muḥammad, tell us about our caravans!” He replied: “I saw the caravan of the tribe of So-and-so as I was

coming back. They had lost one of their camels and were searching for it everywhere. I reached their mounts and there was no one with them. I found a water bottle and I drank from it.”⁴²

“Then I reached the caravan of the tribe of So-and-so in such-and-such a place. I saw a red camel carrying one black container and one white one. When I came face to face with the caravan there was a stampede and that camel fell and its freight broke. Then I reached the caravan of the tribe of So-and-so in al-Tan‘īm. It was headed by a grayish camel on which was a black hair-cloth and two blackish containers and here are the [three] caravans about to reach you from the mountain pass.” They said: “When will they arrive?” He replied: “On the fourth day of the week.” On that day the Quraysh came out, expecting the caravans. The day passed and they did not arrive. The Prophet ﷺ made an invocation and the day was extended one more hour during which the sun stood still, and the caravans came.

They went to meet the riders and asked them: “Did you lose a camel?” They said yes. They asked the second caravan: “Did one red camel of yours shatter her freight?” They said yes. They asked [the first caravan]: “Did anyone lose a water bottle?” One man said: “I did, by Allāh, I had prepared it but none of us drank it nor was it spilled on the ground!” At this they accused the Prophet ﷺ of sorcery and said: “Al-Walīd spoke the truth!”⁴³

Then Allāh revealed the verse:

*{We appointed not the vision which We showed you
but as a test for mankind}.*

(17:60)

The account is finished with praise to Allāh and by His grace.
May Allāh send blessings and utmost, abundant greetings
upon our Master Muḥammad and his Family and
Companions, and praise belongs
to Allāh the Lord of
the worlds!

NOTES

1. *Al-Ayāt al-‘Azīmat al-Bāhira fī Mi‘rāj Sayyid Ahl al-Dunyā wal-Ākhira* ﷺ in 17 chapters by the ḥadīth Master Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn ‘Alī al-Shāmī al-Dimashqī al-Ṣāliḥī al-Shāfi‘ī Nazīl al-Qāhira (d. 942), al-Suyūṭī’s student, author of a ten-volume biography of the Prophet ﷺ titled *Subul al-Hudā wal-Rashād fī Sīrati Khayr al-‘Ibād* which he compiled from over three hundred sources and which his student Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Fīshī al-Māliki edited and published. He also authored ‘*Uqūd al-Jumān fī Manāqib Abī Ḥanīfata al-Nu‘mān, al-Fawā’id al-Majmū‘a fī Bayān al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū‘a* [a title also used by al-Shawkānī], *al-Ithāf bi-Tamyīz Mā Tabī‘a fīhi al-Bayḍāwi Sāḥib al-Kashshāf*, and others. See al-Kattānī, *al-Risāla al-Mustaṭrafa* (p. 151, 199-200).

2. *Al-Ibtihāj fīl-Kalām ‘alāl-Isrā’ wal-Mi‘rāj* by the ḥadīth scholar Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Mawāhib Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Bakr al-Ghayṭī al-Sakandarī al-Miṣrī al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 981). See al-Kattānī, *Risāla Mustaṭrafa* (p. 200). Al-Ghayṭī’s work was published under the title *Mawsū‘at al-Isrā’ wal-Mi‘rāj al-Mūsammāt Taṭrīz*

al-Dībāj bi-Ḥaqqā'iq al-Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1994).

3. Al-Kattānī in *Naẓm al-Mutanāthir fil-Ḥadīth al-Mutawātir* (p. 207-209) listed as forty-five the number of the Companions who related something pertaining to the Prophet's ﷺ night-journey. Accordingly, the scholars have graded the event of *isrā'* as mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*), together with the facts that it took place on top of the Burāq and that the Prophet Idrīs (عليه السلام) is in the Fourth Heaven.

4. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād* (3:38).

5. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wal-Nihāya* (al-Ma'ārif ed. 3:117).

6. Al-Hijr is the semi-circular space under the waterspout which is open on both sides on the Northwest side of the Ka'ba.

7. His uncle Ḥamza (عليه السلام) and his cousin Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib (عليه السلام).

8. Isrāfil.

9. A vessel, usually made of copper.

10. *Ḥilm* denotes intelligence, forbearance, gentleness, and good character.

11. A city on the shore of the Red Sea bordering Tabūk near the valley of Shu'ayb.

12. The tree under which Mūsā (عليه السلام) rested from fatigue and hunger during his flight from Fir'awn.

13. Mount Sinai.

14. Bethlehem.

15. Pharaoh.

16. Oil and water.

17. Qur'ān (12:26).

18. Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Ibn Ḥajar mentions that the account of the lady who combed the hair of Pharaoh's daughter is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās by Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Bazzār. Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Book of *al-zuhd wal-raqā'iq* (3005) mentions the part of the infant speaking to his mother before they are both thrown into the fire. The mention of Yūsuf's witness in the verse {*And a witness, one of her own folk, testified*} (12:26) as being an infant is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās by Ibn Abī Ḥātim with a weak chain, but is retained by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Sa'īd ibn Jubayr. It is also the explanation retained by al-Suyūṭī and others in their commentaries of the Qur'ān. This brings the number of speaking infants alluded to in the ḥadīth "Those who spoke from the cradle are three" (narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad) up to five, and there are reports that increase it to seven or more. Allāh knows best. *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (1989 ed. 6:593-594).

19. {*Is this better as a welcome, or the tree of Zaqqūm? Lo! We have appointed it a torment for wrong doers. Lo! it is a tree that springs in the heart of hell. Its crop is as it were the heads of devils. And lo! they verily must eat thereof, and fill (their) bellies therewith*} (37:62-66).

20. See note 43.

21. Ibn Qaṭan died in the Time of Ignorance.

22. See our *Forty Ḥadīths on the Excellence of Syro-Palestine and Its People*.

23. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī said that this took place before his ascension according to the highest probability, quoting Najm al-Dīn al-Ghayṭī who said: "The narrations agree to the fact that the Prophet ﷺ prayed among the other Prophets in Jerusalem before his ascension." This is one of the two possibilities mentioned by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ. Ibn Ḥajarsaid: "This is apparently the case. The second possibility is that he prayed among them after he came down from the heaven, and they came down also." Ibn Kathīr also declared the former scenario the sound one. Some said that there is no objection to the possibility that the Prophet ﷺ prayed among them twice, since some of the ḥadīths mention that he led them in prayer after his ascent.

24. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Every child is born with natural disposition (*kullu mawlūdīn yūladu 'alā al-fiṭra*). Then his parents convert him to Judaism, or Christianity, or Zoroastrianism. It is the same with the animal which delivers a fully formed (*jam'ā*) calf. Do you find that it is missing part of its facial features (*jad'ā*)?" Narrated from Abū Hurayra by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and Mālik. Al-Tirmidhī also narrates it (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*) but omits the mention of the animal and narrates the addition: "O Messenger of Allāh, what if the child dies before that?" He replied: "Allāh knows best what they would have done."

The ḥadīth master Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī said in his commentary on al-Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā'* entitled *Ithāf al-Sādat al-Muttaqīn bi-Sharḥ Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* ("The Gift of the Godwary Masters: Commentary on al-Ghazzālī's 'Giving Life to the Sciences of the Religion'"): "The definite case in *al-fiṭra* indicates that it is universally known and consists in Allāh's disposition with which He endows all people. That is, the innate character with which He creates them and which predisposes them to accept Religion and to differentiate between wrong and right." Al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf* (7:233).

25. *I.e.* without passing him through the stages of embryonic formation. The scholars have explained in this sense the ḥadīth “Allāh created Ādam in his form,” narrated from Abū Hurayra by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, *i.e.* in his finished form.

26. The martyred Companion ‘Urwā ibn Mas‘ūd al-Thaqafī ؓ was one of the dignitaries of the town of Ṭā‘if. Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Iṣāba* (4:492-493) and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Istī‘āb* (8:1066-1067) relate that he alone responded to the Prophet’s ﷺ invitation to that city by following him and declaring his acceptance of Islām. Then he asked for permission to return to his people and speak to them. The Prophet ﷺ said: “I fear lest they harm you.” He said: “They would not even wake me up if they saw me sleeping.” Then he returned. When he began to invite them to Islam, they rejected him. One morning as he stood outside his house raising *adhān*, a man shot him with an arrow. As he lay dying he was asked: “What do you think about your death now?” He replied: “It is a gift granted me out of Allāh’s generosity.” When news of this reached the Prophet ﷺ he said: “He is like the man of Yā Sīn when he came to his people,” a reference to the verses {*And there came from the uttermost part of the city a man running. He cried: O my people! Follow those who have been sent! Follow those who ask of you no fee, and who are rightly guided. For what cause should I not serve Him Who has created me, and unto Whom you will be brought back? Shall I take (other) gods in place of Him when, if the Beneficent should wish me any harm, their intercession will avail me naught, nor can they save? Then truly I should be in error manifest. Lo! I have believed in your Lord, so hear me. It was said (unto him): Enter Paradise. He said: Would that my people knew with what (munificence) my Lord has pardoned me and made me of the honored ones*} (36:20-27). Ibn Ḥajar also mentions that it is from ‘Urwā that Abū Nu‘aym narrated – with a weak chain – that the Prophet ﷺ took the women’s pledge of allegiance at Ḥudaybiyya by touching the water of a pail in which they dipped their hands.

27. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī said: “*Ma'mūr* means inhabited with the remembrance of Allāh and the great number of angels.”

28. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī said: “Of the same meaning is the ḥadīth *kun ḥilsan min aḥlāsi baytik*, ‘Be one of the saddle-blankets of your house,’ that is: keep to it in times of dissension.” Narrated from Ibn Mas'ūd by Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan*. The translator heard Mawlānā Shaykh Nāzim al-Haqqānī say that the comparison of Gibrīl ﷺ to the *ḥils* is a reflection of the manifestation of the Divine Names al-Muqtadir and 'Allām al-Ghuyūb: the All-Encompassing All Powerful and the All-Knower of all invisibles.

29. Al-Dardīr said: “This is the eighth ascension, meaning that it is the ascension to what is higher than the Lote-tree by means of the eighth step, so that the Prophet reached the top height of its branches in the eighth firmament which is called *al-Kursī* – the Chair or Footstool – which is made of white pearl. This is found in al-Qalyūbī, and it is the literal sense of the account. However, it is contradicted by what is mentioned later: ‘Then he came to al-Kawthar,’ because al-Kawthar, like the remainder of the rivers, flows from the base of the Tree, not from its top. The account goes on to say after this: ‘Then he was raised up to the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit.’ It follows that the raising up to the Lote-tree took place more than once, but this is definitely dubious upon anyone’s reflection. I saw in al-Ajhurī’s account at this point: ‘Then he came to the Lote-tree of the farthest boundary, there ends etc.’ and this is correct as it does not signify being raised up. This makes it clear that he ﷺ came to the Tree and saw at its base the rivers – which are soon to be mentioned – and travelled towards al-Kawthar. What the narrator said later: ‘Then he was raised to the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit etc’. indicates that the eighth ascension took place at that later point and that the present stage is only an exposition of his coming to the base of the Tree which is in the seventh heaven. Another narration states that it is in the sixth heaven. What harmonizes the two is that its base is in the sixth heaven while its branches and trunk are in the seventh.”

30. It does not change in taste, or color, or smell, and the sweat of those who drink it in Paradise has the fragrance of musk.

31. Ibn Kathīr said: “What is meant by this – and Allāh knows best – is that these two rivers (the Nile and the Euphrates) resemble the rivers of Paradise in their purity, sweetness, fluidity, and such of their qualities. As the Prophet ﷺ said in the ḥadīth narrated by Abū Hurayra: *al-‘ujwatu min al-janna*, The Date [of Madīna] is from paradise.’ That is: it resembles the fruit of Paradise, not that it itself originates in Paradise. If the latter were the actual meaning then the senses would testify to the contrary. Therefore, the meaning which imposes itself is other than that. Similarly, the source of origin of these rivers is on earth.”

32. This is an indication of the rank of Abū Bakr in Paradise, as the Prophet’s ﷺ hope, like his petition, is granted. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alawī also said: “From all this it can be known that Paradise and the Fire exist already, and that the Lote-tree of the Farthest Boundary is outside Paradise.”

33. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alawī said: “The Prophet’s ﷺ greeting of Mālīk ؓ before Mālīk greeted him first agrees with the subsequent wording of more than one narrator whereby the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I greeted him and he returned my greeting and welcomed me, but he did not smile at me,’ etc. This is found in some of the narrations. However, the correct narration, as the compiler and others have said, is that it is Mālīk who greeted the Prophet ﷺ first in order to soften the harshness of his sight since his face showed severity and anger. It is possible to harmonize the two versions with the fact that the Prophet ﷺ saw Mālīk more than once, so that Mālīk was first to greet the Prophet ﷺ the first time, as we said, while the Prophet ﷺ was first to greet Mālīk the second time, in order to dispel estrangement and instil familiarity. Know also that the Prophet’s ﷺ sight of Mālīk was not in the same form those who are being punished see him.”

34. See Appendix “The Vision of Allāh ﷻ in the World and the Hereafter.”

35. This wording is in the narration from Abū Hurayra by al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr* (15:10). Another wording states: “And I have taken you to Myself as My intimate friend (*khalīlī*). It is written in the Torah: *Muḥammadun Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān*, Muḥammad, the Beloved of the Merciful.” Narrated from Abū Hurayra by al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* with a chain of trustworthy narrators except for a possible unnamed link as indicated by al-Haythamī in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* (1:71-72). Ibn Kathīr cites the latter in his *Tafsīr* (3:21). Al-Suyūṭī in *al-Durr al-Manthūr* said that it is also narrated by Abū Ya‘lā, Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī in *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn ‘Adī, Ibn Mardūyah, and al-Bayhaqī, in commentary of the verse {*Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place of Worship the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! Lo! He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer*} (17:1). Both wordings refute those who claim that it is preferable to call the Prophet ﷺ *Khalīlullāh* rather than *Ḥabībullāh*, as the latter clearly applies only to him in the Umma, whereas the former applies both to Ibrāhīm ؑ and to him ﷺ as stated in the ḥadīth narrated from Ibn Mas‘ūd by al-Tirmidhī (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*): “Verily, your Companion – i.e. himself – is Allāh’s intimate friend.” This holds true regardless of the weak chain of the narration from Ibn ‘Abbās narrated by Tirmidhī (*gharīb*) and Dārimī whereby the Prophet ﷺ said: “Lo! I am Allāh’s Beloved, and I say this without pride.” Further, some of the reports of the splitting of the noble breast quote the angels as saying to the Prophet ﷺ: “O Beloved you shall never fear! (*Yā Ḥabīb lan tura‘*)” In addition, the Prophet ﷺ is the foremost archetype and paradigm of the famous ḥadīth, “When Allāh loves someone, he says it to Gibrīl ؑ, etc.” All these and additional proofs are mentioned in ‘Iyāḍ’s *Shifā*.

36. *I.e.* repositories of Allāh’s Book.

37. *I.e.* Sūrat al-Fātiḥa.

38. *I.e.* I was given the apex of eloquence.

39. *I.e.* untanned sandals.

40. Cupping is the process of drawing blood from the body by scarification (scratches or superficial incisions in the skin) and the application of a cupping glass (in which a partial vacuum is created, as by heat) for relieving internal congestion.

41. He died a disbeliever.

42. Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ‘Alawī said: “Doubt has been raised about this report on the basis of the question how could he allow himself to drink the water without permission from its owner? The answer is that he acted according to the custom of the Arabs whereby they never refuse milk to whomever passes by and takes it, a *fortiori* water, and they used to instruct the herdsmen not to prevent wayfarers from taking milk from the herd (*i.e.* without asking the owner), and this applies even more to water. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ comes before the Believers’ own selves and properties, and this applies even more to the unbelievers.”

43. Ibn Hishām narrates in his *Sīra* that when the Meccan fair was due, a number of the Quraysh came to al-Walīd ibn al-Mughīra, who was a man of some standing, and he addressed them in those words: “The time of the fair has come round again and representatives of the Arabs will come to you and they will have heard about this fellow of yours, so agree upon one opinion without dispute so that none will give the lie to the other.” They replied: “You give us your opinion about him.” He said: “No, you speak and I will listen.” They said: “He is a *kāhin* (seer or giver of oracles).” He said: “By Allāh, he is not that, for he has not the unintelligent murmuring and rhymed speech of the *kāhin*.” “Then he is possessed,” they said. “No, he is

not that," he said, "we have seen possessed ones, and here is no choking, spasmodic movements and whispering." "Then he is a poet," they said. "No, he is no poet, for we know poetry in all its forms and meters." "Then he is a sorcerer." "No, we have seen sorcerers and their sorcery, and here is no blowing and no knots." "Then what are we to say, O Abū 'Abd al-Shams?" they asked. He replied: "By Allāh, his speech is sweet, his root is a palm-tree whose branches are fruitful, and everything you have said would be known to be false. The nearest thing to the truth is your saying that he is a sorcerer, who has brought a message by which he separates a man from his father, or from his brother, or from his wife, or from his family."

At this point they left him, and began to sit on the paths which men take when they come to the fair. They warned everyone who passed them about the Prophet's ﷺ doings. Allāh revealed concerning al-Walid:

*{Leave Me to deal with him whom I created lonely,
and then bestowed upon him ample means,
and sons abiding in his presence
and made life smooth for him.
Yet he desires that I should give more.
Nay, for lo! He has been stubborn to Our revelations.
On him I shall impose a fearful doom.
For lo! He did consider; then he planned –
Self-destroyed is he, how he planned!
Again, self-destroyed is he, how he planned! –
Then looked he,
Then frowned he and showed displeasure.
Then turned he away in pride
and said: This is naught else than magic from of old;
This is naught else than speech of mortal man.
Him shall I fling unto the burning.}* (74:11-26)

APPENDIX

THE VISION OF ALLĀH IN THE WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER

{That day will faces be resplendent, looking toward their Lord}
(75:22-23). *{Nay! Verily, from their Lord, that day, shall they [the
transgressors] be veiled}* (83:15).

Allāh ﷻ made our Prophet ﷺ hear His Speech without intermediary on the Night of Ascension, and of Mūsā ﷺ also He took the Covenant without intermediary, but our Prophet ﷺ enjoyed an additional state: in addition to hearing the words addressed to him, an unveiling of vision.

– Al-Qushayrī.¹

An example of the ambiguous verses are the individual letters that open certain suras. Another example is the affirmation of the vision of Allāh ﷻ with the sight of the eyes in reality in the hereafter, according to the explicit text of the Qur’ān: *{On that day will faces be resplendent, looking towards their Lord}* (75:22-23). For He exists with the Attribute of perfection, and the fact that He can be seen both by Himself and others, is among the characteristics of perfection; moreover, the believer is apt to receive such bestowal of the gift of Allāh. However, the affirmation of

direction is precluded. It follows that the description of the vision is among the ambiguities, and so it is obligatory to resign to it while believing in its reality.

– Al-Pazdawī.²

Imām Abū Ḥanīfa said in his *Waṣīyya*, “The meeting of Allāh Most High with the dwellers of Paradise is by visual sight without modality, nor simile, nor direction” (*liqā' Allāh ta'ālā li-ahl al-janna bil-ru'yati al-baṣariyya bilā kayf wa-lā tashbīh wa-lā jiha*).³ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in *al-Intiqā'* and others relate that Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī adduced as proof of the believers' vision of Allāh ﷻ in the hereafter the verses: {*That day will faces be resplendent, Looking toward their Lord*} (75:22–23) and {*Nay! Verily, from their Lord, that day, shall they [the transgressors] be veiled*} (83:15).⁴ Ibn Nāfi' and Ashhab each said to Imām Mālik: “Abū 'Abd Allāh! {*That day will faces be resplendent, looking toward their Lord*} (75:22–23), are they looking at Allāh?” He replied: “Yes, with these two eyes of theirs.”⁵

Imām Ibn Khafīf stated in his *al-'Aqīda al-Ṣaḥīḥa*:

30. The believers shall see Allāh on the Day of Resurrection just as they see the full moon on the nights when it rises. They will not be unfairly deprived of seeing Him.

31. They will see Him without encompassment (*iḥāṭa*) nor delimitation (*taḥdīd*) within any given limit (*ḥadd*), whether from the front, the back, above, below, right, or left. ...

97. Sight in the world is impossible.

The *Mu'tazila* and some other groups such as the Shī'a held that Allāh could not be seen at all, even on the Day of Resurrection. They rejected the sound ḥadīths to the contrary, claiming that such vision

necessitated corporeality and direction, which are precluded for Him. In contrast, *Ahl al-Sunna* held that Allāh will most certainly be seen by the believers without our specifying how, adducing the verse {*That day will faces be resplendent, Looking at their Lord*} (75:22-23) and the mass-narrated ḥadīths to the effect that such vision will be real. Al-Ash‘arī authored several refutations of the Mu‘tazilī and Shī‘ī view,⁶ while early Ḥanbalīs considered that the belief that Allāh ﷻ will not be seen on the Day of Resurrection is *kufr*.⁷ The totality of the scholars of *Ahl al-Sunna* excluded modalities of encompassment, delimitation, direction, and other corporeal qualities and, at the same time, held that Allāh will be seen by the believers in the Hereafter without specifying how. Al-Qushayrī said in *al-Risāla* (p. 36-37): I heard the Shaykh Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī say: I heard Manṣūr ibn ‘Abd Allāh say: I heard Abū al-Ḥasan al-‘Anbārī say: I heard Sahl ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī⁸ say: “The believers shall look at Him with their eyesights (*bil-abṣār*) without encompassment (*iḥāṭa*) nor attainment (*idrāk*).”

However, they differed whether such unqualified sight was possible in the world as well. Al-Qārī and al-Haytamī reported that the agreement of *Ahl al-Sunna* is that sight of Allāh in the world is possible but that it does not take place (except for the Prophet ﷺ), while two contrary opinions on the topic are narrated from al-Ash‘arī in al-Qushayrī’s *Risāla*.⁹ The proof that His sight is possible in the world was inferred from Mūsā’s ﷺ request to Allāh: {*My Lord! Show me Your Self, that I may gaze upon You*} (7:143) as Prophets do not ask for the impossible.¹⁰ Imām al-Qushayrī stated in the *Risāla* that sight of Allāh in the world does not take place for anyone except the Prophet ﷺ alone, while al-Dhahabī, conceding that sight of Allāh in the world is possible, held that it does not take place, even for the Prophet ﷺ.¹¹ The best statement on the issue is that of Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ‘Arabī: “He can be seen with the hearts and the eyes, if He so wills.”¹² Most or all of these views are based on the Prophet’s ﷺ ḥadīth: “Verily, you shall not see Allāh until you die.”¹³ Ibn Ḥajar adduced the ḥadīth: “Worship Allāh as if

you see Him” as further proof that there is no sight of Allāh with the eyes of the head in this world but added: “The Prophet’s ﷺ sight of Allāh is supported by other evidence.”¹⁴

The Prophet ﷺ saw Allāh before death as is the doctrine of the majority of *Ahl al-Sunna* according to al-Nawawī and al-Qārī.¹⁵ The evidence for this is the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās whereby the Prophet ﷺ said: “I saw my Lord” (*ra’aytu rabbī*).¹⁶ Ibn Kathīr cited it in his commentary on *Sūrat al-Najm* and declared its chain sound, but considered it part of the ḥadīth of the dream cited below. Ibn al-Qayyim [see excerpt below] relates that Imām Aḥmad considered such sight to be in the Prophet’s ﷺ sleep but remains a true sight – as the dreams of Prophets are true – and that some of the Imām’s companions mistakenly attributed to him the position that the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord “with the eyes of his head.”¹⁷

Al-Bayhaqī also narrated the ḥadīth “I saw my Lord” in *al-Asmā’ wal-Ṣifāt* with a sound chain but with the addition: “in the form of a curly-haired, beardless young man wearing a green robe and gilded sandals,”¹⁸ a condemned, disauthenticated addition and concatenation with another ḥadīth that refers to Gibrīl ﷺ.¹⁹ Hence, al-Suyūṭī interpreted it either as a dream or, quoting his Shaykh Ibn al-Humām, as “the veil of form” (*ḥijāb al-ṣūra*).²⁰

The latter explanation is echoed in al-Qārī’s several commentaries of the similar ḥadīth where the Prophet ﷺ said: “My Lord came to me in the best form” – the narrator said: “I think he said: ‘in my sleep’” – “and asked me over what did the Highest Assembly (*al-mala’u al-a’lā*)²¹ vie; I said I did not know, so He put His hand between my shoulders, and I felt its coolness in my innermost, and knowledge of all things between the East and the West came to me.”²²

Al-Mubārakfūrī relates from Ibn Kathīr and al-Haytamī the position that the above vision took place in the Prophet’s ﷺ sleep. This is also the position of Ibn al-Jawzī based on what he termed the best chains of this ḥadīth.²³ Al-Haytamī points out that the words “I woke up and saw my Lord” in Aḥmad’s narration from Mu‘adh are actually changed from “I dozed off and saw my Lord” due to a

copyist's corruption of "I dozed off" (*istathqaltu*) – in al-Tirmidhī's narration from Mu'adh – into "I woke up" (*istayqaḏtu*).²⁴ On the whole, the scholars' interpretations of the Prophet's ﷺ vision show that whether it took place in his dream or in a wakeful state, "with the eyes of the heart" or "with the eyes of the head," does not change the fact that he saw Him in the real sense, as the Prophet's ﷺ dream-vision or heart-vision is categorically true and real.

Ahl al-Sunna scholars gave many interpretations of the above ḥadīth. For example, al-Rāzī and, before him, al-Bayhaqī, interpreted the placing of the Hand of Allāh ﷻ as His extreme consideration and attention to the Prophet ﷺ, or as His immense favor to him, while its specific placing between his shoulders refers to the pouring of Divine kindness and mercy into his heart, and the coolness refers to the completion and perfection of his knowledge as shown by his words "I knew all things between the East and the West."²⁵ Al-Qārī wrote the following in the chapter on the Prophet's ﷺ turban in his book *Jam' al-Wasā'il fī Sharḥ al-Shamā'il*, a commentary on al-Tirmidhī's *Shamā'il* or "Characteristics of the Prophet ﷺ":

Whether the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord in his sleep or whether Allāh the Glorious and Exalted manifested Himself to him with a form (*bil-tajallī al-ṣūri*), this type of manifestation is known among the masters of spiritual states and stations (*arbāb al-ḥāl wal-maqām*), and it consists in being reminded of His disposition (*hay'atihi*) and reflecting upon His vision (*ru'yatihi*), which is the outcome of the perfection of one's self-detachment (*takhliyatihī*) and self-adornment (*taḥliyatihī*). And Allāh knows best about the states of His Prophets and Intimate Friends whom He has raised with His most excellent upbringing, and the mirrors of whose hearts He has polished with His most excellent polish, until they witnessed the Station of Divine Presence and abiding (*maqām al-ḥuḏūr wal-baqā'*), and they rid themselves of the rust of screens and extinction (*ṣada' al-ḥuzūr wal-fanā'*). May Allāh bestow on us their yearnings, may He make us taste their states and manners,

and may He make us die in the state of loving them and raise us in their group.²⁶

Al-Qārī goes on to quote Ibn al-Qayyim's reported that Ibn Taymiyya said that when the Prophet ﷺ saw that his Lord put His hand between his shoulders, he honored that place with the extremity ('*azaba*) of the turban.²⁷ Elsewhere he states:

Ibn Ṣadaqa said that Abū Zur'a said: "The ḥadīth of Ibn 'Abbās [about the Prophet ﷺ seeing His Lord] is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*), and none denies it except a *Mu'tazilī*... Ibn al-Humām said: "This is but the veil of form (*ḥijāb al-ṣūra*).” It seems that he meant by this that the entire goal can be visualized if it is interpreted as a figural manifestation (*tajallī ṣūrī*), as it is of necessity absurd to interpret it as a real or literal manifestation (*tajallī ḥaqīqī*). Allāh ﷻ has many forms of manifestations (*anwā' min al-tajalliyāt*) according to His Essence and Attributes. Likewise, He possesses all power and encompassing ability, well beyond the angels and other than them, to fashion forms and appearances. Yet He is Transcendent beyond possessing a body (*jism*), a form (*ṣūra*), and directions (*jihāt*) as to His Essence. These considerations help solve many of the purported difficulties in the ambiguous verses and the narrations of the Attributes. Allāh knows best the reality of spiritual stations and the minutiae of objectives.... If the ḥadīth is shown to have something in its chain that indicates forgery, then fine; otherwise: the door of figurative interpretation is wide and imposes itself (*bāb al-ta'wīl wāsi'un muḥattam*).²⁸

Elsewhere yet al-Qārī states:

If this vision took place in a dream, then there is no difficulty.... However, if it took place in a wakeful state (*fil-yaqāza*), as conveyed by the letter of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's narration [but see al-Haytamī's comment quoted above], then the *Salaf* declared

belief in the letter of such narrations – provided they were sound – without explaining them as one would explain the attributes of creatures. Rather, they negated modality (*al-kayfiyya*) and entrusted knowledge of its hidden meaning to Allāh. For He shows to His Prophet ﷺ whatever He wishes from behind the curtains of the Unseen, including what our minds have no way of comprehending. However, to leave out figurative interpretation (*al-ta'wīl*) in our time fosters confusion (*fitna*) in the beliefs of people, due to the dissemination of the doctrines of misguidance (*i'tiqādāt al-ḍalāl*). Therefore, it is appropriate to interpret it in conformity with the Law as a possible interpretation, not a definitive one.²⁹ Accordingly, the words “in the best form” could signify “I saw my Lord as I was in the best form in the sense of His utmost favor and kindness to me”; or “in the Lord’s best form” in the sense that the form of something is whatever distinguishes it from something else, whether it pertains to the thing itself or to whatever part of it is being characterized. This can apply to meanings just as it applies to material bodies. One speaks about “picturing a matter or a situation thus.” The “form” (*ṣūra*) of Allāh ﷻ – and Allāh knows best – would then be a particularity of His Essence (*dhātuhu al-makhṣūṣa*) as distinguished from any other representation of the farthest levels of perfection, or the Attribute that is specific to Him, meaning “My Lord was more gracious and kinder than at any other time.” Thus did al-Ṭībī and al-Tūribishtī relate it.³⁰

The above is reminiscent of al-Nawawī’s and Ibn al-Jawzī’s similar interpretation, respectively in *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and in the second ḥadīth of *Daf’ Shubah al-Tashbīh*:

What is meant by “the form” (*al-ṣūra*) here is the attribute, in the sense that Allāh ﷻ manifests Himself (*yatajallā*) to them in the attribute that they know and by which they recognize Him. For they only know Him through His Attribute even if they never saw Him before – Exalted is He! – as they shall see that He does not

resemble any of His creatures – and they know that He does not resemble any of His creatures – so they will realize that this is their Lord and say: “You are our Lord!” So the word “attribute” (*ṣifa*) was expressed by means of the word “form” (*ṣūra*) because of resemblance (*mushābaha*) and lexical reiteration (*muḡānasat al-kalām*) since there had already been mention of the form.³¹

If we say that he ﷺ saw Him while awake, then the form, if we say that it refers to Allāh Almighty, would mean: “I saw Him in the best of His Attributes in turning to me and being pleased with me.” If we say that it refers to the Prophet ﷺ himself, then it would mean: “I saw Him as I was in the best form.”³²

Others considered Ibn ‘Abbās’ narration to refer to a vision with the eyes of the heart, as elucidated by Ibn ‘Abbās’ other narrations in *Ṣaḡīḡ Muslim* and al-Tirmidhī (*ḡasan*): “He saw him with his heart.” Another narration from Ibn ‘Abbās in Muslim states: “He saw him with his heart twice,” in commentary of the verses: {*The heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw*} (53:11), {*And verily he saw him, yet another time*} (53:13).

Another explanation is that the Prophet ﷺ saw light. This is stated explicitly in the Prophet’s ﷺ reply, when asked by Abū Dharr if he had actually seen his Lord: “I saw light.”³³

Many sound reports show that the Companions differed sharply whether the Prophet ﷺ saw Allāh or not. Ibn ‘Abbās related that he did, while Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Ā’isha, Abū Hurayra, and Abū Dharr related reports to the contrary, stating that the verses of Sūrat al-Najm and other Suras referred to Gibrīl ﷺ,³⁴ and that the Prophet ﷺ said that he saw light.

Al-Bukhārī narrated from Masrūq that the latter said:

I said to ‘Ā’isha: “O my mother! Did Muḡammad ﷺ see his Lord?” She replied: “My hair stands on end because of what you said. Have you no idea of three things – whoever tells them to

you is lying? [First,] whoever tells you that Muḥammad ﷺ saw his Lord, is lying.” She then recited: {*Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware.*} (6:103) {*And it was not vouchsafed to any mortal that Allāh should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil*} (42:51). “[Second,] whoever tells you that he knows what shall happen tomorrow, is lying.” She then recited: {*No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow*} (31:34). “And [third,] whoever tells you that he concealed something, is lying.” She then recited: {*O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message. Allāh will protect you from mankind. Lo! Allāh guides not the disbelieving folk.*} (5:67) “However, he did see Gibrīl ﷺ in his actual form twice.”

This ḥadīth is also narrated from Masrūq by Muslim thus:

I was sitting back in ‘Ā’isha’s house when she said: “Abū ‘Ā’isha [*i.e.* Masrūq], there are three things, whoever says any of which, he is lying about Allāh in the most hateful manner.” I asked: “What things?” She said: “[First,] whoever tells you that Muḥammad ﷺ saw his Lord, he is lying about Allāh in the most hateful manner.” I was sitting back, so I sat up and said: “O Mother of the Believers! Give me a moment and do not rush me. Did not Allāh Almighty say: {*Surely he beheld him on the clear horizon*} (81:23), {*And verily he saw him, yet another time*} (53:13)?” She replied: “I am the first in this entire Community to have asked the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ about this, and he said: ‘It is but Gibrīl, I did not see him in the actual form in which he was created other than these two times. I saw him alighting from the heaven, covering it all. The magnitude of his frame spans what lies between the heaven and the earth.’” Then she said: “Did you not hear Allāh say: {*Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware*} (6:103)? Did you not hear Allāh say: {*And*

it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allāh should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a messenger to reveal what He will by His leave. Lo! He is Exalted, Wise (42:51)?” She continued: “[Second,] whoever claims that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ concealed any part of the Book of Allāh, he is lying about Allāh in the most hateful manner when Allāh is saying: {O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message} (5:67).” She continued: “[Third,] whoever claims that he can tell what shall happen tomorrow, he is lying about Allāh in the most hateful manner, since Allāh is saying: {Say: None in the heavens and the earth knows the Unseen save Allāh [and they know not when they will be raised again]} (27:65).”³⁵

Muslim mentions another wording which adds the phrase:

She said: “If Muḥammad ﷺ had concealed anything of what was revealed to him, he would have concealed this verse: {And when you said unto him on whom Allāh has conferred favor and you have conferred favor: Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allāh. And you did hide in your mind that which Allāh was to bring to light, and you did fear mankind whereas Allāh had a better right that you should fear Him} (33:37).”

A narration by al-Tirmidhī from al-Sha‘bī cites the two positions in context:

Ibn ‘Abbās met Ka‘b [al-Aḥbār] in ‘Arafa and asked him about something, whereupon Ka‘b began to shout *Allāhu Akbar!* until the mountains answered him. Ibn ‘Abbās said: “We are the Banū Hāshim!”³⁶ Ka‘b said: “Allāh ﷻ has apportioned His vision and His speech between Muḥammad ﷺ and Mūsā ﷺ. Mūsā ﷺ spoke with Him twice and Muḥammad ﷺ saw him twice.” Masrūq said:

“Later³⁷ I went to visit ‘Ā’isha and asked: ‘Did Muḥammad see his Lord?’ She replied: ‘You have said something that makes my hair stand on end.’ I said: ‘Do not rush!’ and recited [the verses which conclude with]³⁸ the verse {*Verily he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord*} (53:18). She said: ‘Where is this taking you? It was only Gibrīl. Whoever tells you that Muḥammad ﷺ saw his Lord, or concealed something which he was commanded [to reveal], or knew the five things which Allāh mentioned {*Lo! Allāh! With Him is knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain [and knows that which is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Lo! Allāh is Knower, Aware*]} (31:34) – he has told an enormous lie. Rather, he saw Gibrīl, whom he did not see in his actual form except twice: once at the Lote-Tree of the Farthest Boundary (*sidrat al-muntahā*), and once in Jiyād [in Makka], with his six hundred wings, he had filled the firmament.”

Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zād al-Ma‘ād* said:

The Companions differed whether the Prophet ﷺ actually saw his Lord that night [of *isrā’* and *mi‘rāj*] or not. It is authentically narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ saw his Lord, and also authentically related that Ibn ‘Abbās said: “He saw Him with his heart.” It is also authentically related from ‘Ā’isha and Ibn Mas‘ūd that they denied such vision, saying that the words of Allāh ﷻ {*And verily he saw him, yet another time, at the Lote Tree of the Farthest Boundary*} (53:13) refer to Gibrīl ﷺ.³⁹ It is also authentically related from Abū Dharr that the latter asked the Prophet ﷺ: “Did you see your Lord?” and he replied: “[There was] a great light, how could I see Him?” (*nūrun annā arāh?*). That is: light came in between myself and His sight, as stated with the wording: “I saw light” (*ra’aytu nūran*).⁴⁰ ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-Dārimī claimed that the Companions all agreed that the Prophet ﷺ did not see Him.⁴¹ Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyya – may Allāh

sanctify his soul! – said:

Ibn 'Abbās's statement that "He saw Him" does not contradict that claim, nor his statement that "He saw Him with his heart." For it is also authentically related that the Prophet ﷺ said: "I saw my Lord – glorified and exalted is He!"⁴² However, the latter was not during the *isrā'* but in Madīna, when the Prophet ﷺ was occupied and could not be with the Companions at the time of the dawn prayer, after which he told them about his vision of Allāh during his sleep that night. It is on that evidence that Imām Aḥmad based himself when he said: "Yes, he really saw him (*na'am ra'āhu ḥaqqan*)," for the dream-visions of Prophets are real. This is absolutely true, but Aḥmad did not say that he saw Him with the eyes of his head while awake. Whoever said that he did, is mistaken. Aḥmad said one time: "He saw Him" and another time: "He saw Him with his heart." These are the two statements narrated from him on the issue. The third statement whereby "He saw Him with the eyes of his head" comes from the free paraphrase of some of his companions. Aḥmad's texts are present with us, and nowhere are such words found in them.⁴³

In fact, it is established that Aḥmad stressed "He saw his Lord" then added "We must believe this, and the fact that the people of paradise see their Lord with their own eyes." This is narrated from Imām Aḥmad by two of his direct students: Muḥammad ibn 'Awf al-Ṭā'ī and 'Abdūs ibn Mālik al-'Aṭṭār.^{43a}

Ibn 'Abd al-Salām said in his *Fatāwā*:

Concerning the vision of Allāh Most High in the hereafter, He shall be seen with the light which He created in the eyes in addition to the light of knowledge. For vision unveils what knowledge does not unveil, and if the exalted Lord wanted to create in the heart

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a light such as the one He created in the eyes so that it could look at Him by means of it, it would not be difficult for Him at all. Nay – if He wanted to create the light of the heart and that of the eyes in the hands and the feet and the nails it would not be difficult for Him at all!⁴⁴

Imām al-Qushayrī also addresses the Vision in his monograph on *Mi'rāj*.⁴⁵ Ibn Ḥajar analyzes this issue at length in his works⁴⁶ and actually compiled a monograph on the topic titled *al-Ghunya fīl-Ru'ya*.⁴⁷ Al-Qārī also gave an authoritative discussion of the topic in *al-Mirqāt*⁴⁸ as well as al-Ṣāliḥī in *Subul al-Hudā* (3:82-93) and Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alawī al-Mālikī in his book *Wa-Huwa bil-Ufuqi al-A'lā*.

May Allāh send blessings and utmost, abundant greetings
upon our Master Muḥammad and his Family and
Companions, and praise belongs
to Allāh the Lord of
the worlds!

NOTES

1. In *Laṭā'if al-Ishārāt* (5:152).
2. Al-Pazdawī in 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Bukhārī's commentary on al-Pazdawī's *Uṣūl* entitled *Kashf al-Asrār* (1:55-60).
3. As cited by al-Qārī in *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar* (p. 176-177). See also Imām al-Kawtharī's edition of the *Waṣiyya* of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa.
4. Cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *al-Intiqā'* (p. 73, 145-136). Both Pickthall and Yūsuf 'Alī's translations parenthetically annul the meaning of the vision, respectively: {*Nay, but surely on that day they will be covered from (the mercy of) their Lord*} and {*Verily, from (the Light of) their Lord, that Day, will they be veiled*}! And this is Shī'ism and Mu'tazilism.
5. Cited by al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ in *Tartīb al-Madārik* (2:42).
6. Among al-Ash'arī's books up to the year 320 as listed by himself in *al-'Umad* ("The Supports") is a refutation of al-Jubbā'ī's objections

to al-Ash'arī on the vision of Allāh in the hereafter as reported by Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Saymarī; a refutation of al-Khālidī's book on the denial of the vision of Allāh in the hereafter; *al-Ru'ya* ("The Vision"), which affirms the vision of Allāh by the believers in the hereafter, contrary to the Mu'tazilī doctrine which denies the possibility of such a vision; and *al-'Umad* ("The Supports") on the vision of Allāh in the hereafter.

7. See *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (1:59, 1:161, 1:312).

8. A major Šūfī master who died in 283. See on him our chapter on Imām Aḥmad in *The Four Imāms and Their Schools*.

9. Al-Qārī, *al-Mirqāt* (1892 ed. 5:303); al-Haytamī, *Fatāwā Ḥadīthiyya* (p. 147-150). The latter said (p. 150): "If it is authenticated that al-Ash'arī held that the vision does take place in the world, then that position is ignored as he either did not know of the Consensus to the contrary, or took an anomalous (*shādhdh*) stance which cannot be taken into consideration." In his *Kitāb al-Ru'ya al-Kabīr*, al-Ash'arī did not hold that vision **does** take place in the world, but he held with the *jumbūr* that it **can**.

10. As stated by Imām al-Ḥaramayn in *al-Irshād* (p. 169) and al-Qārī in his *Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar*.

11. In the *Siyar* (8:430-431).

12. In *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (1:164 §142).

13. Narrated from Abū Umāma ibn al-Šāmit al-Bāhilī as part of a longer ḥadīth by Aḥmad with a sound chain, as stated by al-Zayn in the *Musnad* (16:415 §22663), Ibn Mājah, al-Nasā'ī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (4:419 §7764), al-Ḥākim (4:456) who stated that it is *ṣaḥīḥ* and al-Dhahabī concurred, Ibn Abī 'Āṣim in *al-Āḥād wal-Mathānī* (2:446 §1249) and *al-Sunna* (p. 186-187 §429) with a sound chain as

stated by al-Ājurri in *al-Sharī'a*, and Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawhīd*. It is also narrated without mention of the Companion's name by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, al-Tirmidhī who declared it *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*, Aḥmad with a sound chain (17:72 §23562), and Ibn Abī 'Āsim in *al-Sunna* (p. 187 §430) with a sound chain.

14. In *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (1959 ed. 1:125 §50).

15. In *al-Mirqāt* (1892 ed. 5:308). See further down for a full translation of al-Qārī's discussion.

16. Narrated by Aḥmad with two chains of which one is sound, and al-Ājurri with a sound chain as stated by the editors of the former's *Musnad* (3:165 §2580, 3:184 §2634) and the latter's *al-Sharī'a* (p. 495 §1047) as well as al-Haythamī (1:78-79). Also narrated by Ibn Abī 'Āsim in *al-Sunna* (p. 188 §433) with the same chain as the second of Imām Aḥmad's two narrations. Aḥmad and Abū Zur'a considered this ḥadīth authentic, as stated in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (1:312, 1:242), al-Suyūṭī's *al-La'ālī'* (1:29-30), and al-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī's *al-Mukhtāra* (1:79 §66).

17. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād* (3:34). On the difference between the dreams of Prophets and others, see al-'Irāqī, *Ṭarḥ al-Tathrīb* (4:180-184, 8:204-220).

18. Narrated from Umm al-Ṭufayl the wife of Ubay ibn Ka'b through Nu'aym ibn Ḥammād by al-Dāraqutnī at the very end of al-Ru'ya (p. 190-191 § 316-317) with a chain of unknowns of al-Dhahabī, *Mizān* (7:42) and *Siyar* (Risāla ed. 10:602 *munkar jiddan*). A "rejected" (*munkar*) narration according to Imām Aḥmad as stated in al-Dhahabī's *Tartīb al-Mawḍū'āt* (p. 22 §22), and according to al-Aḥḍab in *Zawā'id Tārīkh Baghdād* (8:37-40 §1662). Ibn al-Jawzī in *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbīh* (1998 al-Kawtharī repr. p. 34) states that the ḥadīth is also narrated through Ḥammād ibn Salama and

that his foster-son the *zindīq* Ibn Abī al-'Awjā' used to interpolate this kind of baseless narrations into his books. Al-Dhahabī said of him in *al-Mughnī fīl-Ḍu'afā'* (1:279 §1711): "Ḥammād ibn Salama: a trustworthy Imām who is responsible for some blunders and strange things which he alone narrates. Others are more firmly established than he." He also states that it is *munkar* in the *Siyar* (8:430-431), however, he seems to apply this condemnation to the entirety of the narrations in this chapter. Al-Nawawī in *Bustān al-Ārifīn* (1985 ed. p. 31), al-Dhahabī in *Tadhkirāt al-Ḥuffaẓ*, al-Mizzī in *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, and Ibn Ḥajar in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* mention that Ḥammad ibn Salama was considered to be one of the *Abdāl* or "Substitute-Saints."

19. *Al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt* (Kawtharī ed. p. 444-445, Ḥāshidī ed. 2:363-364 §938).

20. In *al-La'ālī'* (1:29-30).

21. *I.e.* "the angels brought near" according to Ibn al-Athīr in *al-Nihāya* and others.

22. Narrated by al-Tirmidhī with three chains: two from Ibn 'Abbās – in the first of which he said "the knowledge of all things in the heaven and the earth" while he graded the second *ḥasan gharīb* – and one chain from Mu'ādh (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*) which explicitly mentions that this took place in the Prophet's ﷺ sleep. Al-Bukhārī declared the latter chain *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* as reported by al-Tirmidhī in both his *Sunan* and *ʿIlal*, and it towers over all other chains, according to Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Iṣāba* (2:397), in the facts that there is no discrepancy over it among the ḥadīth scholars and its text is undisputed (cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Asmā'* Ḥāshidī ed. 2:78). Also narrated by Aḥmad with four sound chains according to the typically lax grading of Shākir and al-Zayn: one from Ibn 'Abbās with the words "I think he said: 'in my sleep'" (Shākir ed. 3:458 §3484=al-Arnaūṭ ed. 5:437-442 §3483 *isnāduhu*

ḍaʿīf); one from Muʿādh which Aḥmad explicitly declared *ṣaḥīḥ* as narrated by Ibn ʿAdī in *al-Kāmil* (6:2244), with the words: “I woke up and lo! I was with my Lord” (al-Zayn ed. 16:200 §22008); and two from unnamed Companions in which no mention is made of the Prophet’s ﷺ sleep or wakefulness (al-Zayn ed. 13:93-94 §16574=al-Arnaʿūt ed. 27:171-174 §16621 *isnāduhu ḍaʿīf muḍṭarib*; al-Zayn ed. 16:556 §23103). Al-Haythamī declared the latter sound as well as other chains cited by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (20:109 §216, 20:141 §290) and al-Bazzār in his *Musnad*, and he declared fair the chain narrated from Abū Umāma by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (8:290 §8117). See *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid* (7:176-179). Shaykhs ʿAbd al-Qādir and Shuʿayb al-Arnaʿūt both declared *ṣaḥīḥ* the seven narrations of al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad in their edition of Ibn al-Qayyim’s *Zād al-Maʿād* (3:33-34 n. 4). Also narrated from Jābir ibn Samura by Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim in *al-Sunna* (p. 203 §465 *isnād ḥasan*). Also narrated from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿĀʾish by al-Dārimī in his *Musnad* (2:170 §2149), Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim through two chains in *al-Āḥād wal-Mathānī* (5:48-50 §2585-2586) and al-Ṭabarānī in *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn* (1:339 §597), and from Umm al-Ṭufayl by Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim in *al-Āḥād* (6:158 §3385). The latter chain actually states: “I saw my Lord in the best form of a beardless young man” and was rejected by al-Dhahabī in *Tahdhīb al-Mawḍūʿāt* (p. 22 §22). Also narrated from the Companion Abū Rāfiʿ [*al-Iṣāba* 7:134 §9875] by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (1:317 §938). Also narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās by Abū Yaʿlā in his *Musnad* (4:475 §2608). Some fair narrations of this ḥadīth – such as al-Ṭabarānī’s from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAyyāsh and al-Khaṭīb’s from Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ in *Tāriḫ Baghdad* (8:151) – have the words: “I saw my Lord” instead of “My Lord came to me,” hence Ibn Kathīr’s conclusion previously cited. Al-Aḥḍab in *Zawāʿid Tāriḫ Baghdad* (6:251-253) and al-Haytamī also cited Abū ʿUbayda ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Ibn ʿUmar, Abū Hurayra, Anas, Thawbān, and Abū Umāma which brings to at least eleven (without Umm al-Ṭufayl) the number of Companions who narrated this ḥadīth. The various chains and narrations of this ḥadīth were collated and discussed by

Ibn Rajab in his monograph *Ikhtiyār al-Awlā*. See also Ibn Athīr, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl* (9:548-550). Among those that considered this ḥadīth as falling below the grade of *ṣaḥīḥ* are al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt* (Kawtharī ed. p. 300, Hāshidī ed. 2:72-79), Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-'Ilal al-Mutanāhiya* (1:34), Ibn Khuzayma in *al-Tawḥīd* (p. 214-221) and al-Dāraquṭnī in his *'Ilal* (6:56). Al-Saqqāf in his misnamed *Aqwāl al-Huffāz al-Manthūra li-Bayān Waḍ'ī Ḥadīth Ra'aytu Rabbī fī Aḥsani Ṣūra*, appended to his edition of Ibn al-Jawzī's *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbīh*, claims that it is forged!

23. In *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbīh* (Kawtharī ed. p. 32).

24. In al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī* (9:74).

25. Al-Rāzī, *Asās al-Taqdīs*, as quoted by al-Kawtharī in *Daf' Shubah al-Tashbīh* (p. 32-33 n.). Cf. al-Bayhaqī, *al-Asmā' wal-Ṣifāt* (p. 300-301).

26. Al-Qārī, *Jam' al-Wasā'il* (p. 209).

27. Ibn 'Umar said: "The Prophet ﷺ used to wind the turban around his head and tuck it in behind him, letting its extremity hang down between his shoulders." Narrated by al-Tirmidhī (*ḥasan gharīb*), al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab al-Īmān* (5:174), and al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ* with a sound chain as indicated by al-Haythamī (5:120). Cf. al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* (12:379 §13405) and *al-Awsaṭ* (1:227 §344).

28. Al-Qārī, *al-Asrār al-Marfū'a* (2nd ed. p. 209-210 §209; 1st ed. p. 126 §478).

29. Al-Mubārakfūrī in *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī* (9:73-74) rejects al-Qārī's words "to leave aside figurative interpretation in our time fosters confusion due to the dissemination of the doctrines of misguidance" on the grounds that they contravene – in his view – the method of the *Salaf*, a proof of al-Mubārakfūrī's leaning towards unenlightened lit-

eralism. Al-Shāṭibī said in *al-Muwāfaqāt* (2:332): “The Congregation of [Sunni] Muslims follow Imām Mālik’s position [in the detestation of *kalām*], except if one is obliged to speak. One must not remain silent if his purpose is to refute falsehood and guide people away from it, or if one fears the spread of misguidance or some similar danger.” Cf. al-Qushayrī, Ibn ‘Asākir, Ibn al-Subkī and Abū Zahra as cited in the chapter on Imām Aḥmad in our *Four Imāms and Their Schools*.

30. Al-Qārī, *al-Mirqāt* (1892 ed. 5:303).

31. Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (3:20).

32. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf’ Shubah al-Tashbīḥ* (Kawtharī ed. p. 32).

33. Narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī (*ḥasan*), and Aḥmad through four chains.

34. As stated by Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zād al-Ma’ād* (3:34).

35. Also narrated from Masrūq by al-Tirmidhī (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*).

36. Al-Ṭibī said: “[Ibn ‘Abbās said] this in order to urge him to be quiet, stop his irritation, and reflect upon the answer, meaning: ‘We are people of science and knowledge, we do not ask about things which should be considered so far-fetched.’ Because of this, he reflected and gave him his answer.” In al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī* (9:118 §3496).

37. Al-Ṭibī said: “It appears from this wording that Masrūq was present at the time of the exchange that took place between Ka’b and Ibn ‘Abbās.” In al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī* (9: 119).

38. This gloss is by al-Ṭibī, who said: “It is confirmed by al-Tirmidhī’s other narration stating: ‘Mother of the Believers! Give me a moment and do not rush me. Did not Allāh Almighty

say: {*And verily he saw him, yet another time*} (53:13), {*Surely he beheld him on the clear horizon*} (81:23)?" Al-Mubārakfūrī confirmed al-Ṭībī's reading in *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī* (9: 119).

39. 'Ā'isha's stance is narrated by al-Bukhārī in four places, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhī; Ibn Mas'ūd's, by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

40. Narrated by Muslim.

41. This is flatly contradicted by the reports of Ibn 'Abbās, but Ibn al-Qayyim does not reject it out of deference for his teacher Ibn Taymiyya, who defends 'Uthmān al-Dārimī's claim.

42. See above, note 16 and 22.

43. In Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād* (3:33-34) and as cited from the latter by ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bārī* (8:609).

43a. Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-Hanābila* (1:242, 1:312)

44. Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, *al-Fatāwā al-Mawṣiliyya* (p. 106).

45. Al-Qushayrī, *al-Mi'rāj* (p. 94-99).

46. Cf. *Fath al-Bārī* (1959 ed. 1:125-135 §50, 8:608-610, 11:463-469 §6204) and *al-Iṣāba* (2:405-406).

47. This work is briefly described in 'Abd al-Mun'im's doctrinal thesis *Ibn Ḥajar* (1:267-268).

48. *Al-Mirqāt* (1892 ed. 5:306f.).

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