

The Shaykh of Mecca -- may Allah grant him long life and health -- Sayyid Muhammad `Alawi al-Maliki al-Hasani composed an excellent booklet entitled al-Anwar al-bahiyya min isra' wa mi`raj khayr al-bariyya (The resplendent lights of the rapture and ascension of the Best of creation) in which he says:

COMMEMORATING THE PROPHET'S RAPTURE AND ASCENSION TO HIS LORD

I. Introduction

Praise be to Allah Who has chosen His praiseworthy servant Muhammad for the Message, distinguished him with the sudden rapture on the Buraq, and caused him to ascend on the ladders of perfection to the high heavens to show him of the greatest signs of his Lord. He raised him until he reached to 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 where he heard the sound of the pens that write what befell 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 He stilled his fear in those lofty worlds and He communicated to him what He wished, and revealed to him what He wished, and taught him what He wished, and explained to him what He wished. He showed him of the signs of sovereignty and the signs of creation and of the unseen that point to the uniqueness and perfection of His immense majesty, and 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 Allah, Who is sanctified in His essence from all imaginal representation and shades, and elevated above having a partner in His attributes and acts. I bear witness that our master Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, 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 Jibril 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?

Allah bore witness that the Prophet 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 kept 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 Allah'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 burdens of the Prophetic Inheritance, defenders of the precious Religion with every burnished sword, who have triumphed

and won the highest dwellings of the Abode of Eternity.

To begin, the indigent in need of the mercy of his generous Lord, Muhammad ibn `Alawi ibn `Abbas al-Maliki al-Hasani says -- may Allah treat him with His radiant kindness: Allah has granted me the favor of writing a vast treatise covering the substantial research which has been done on the subject of al-isra' wa al-mi`raj. 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-isra' wa al-mi`raj, as is the custom in many countries, especially in the two Holy Sanctuaries.

I have collated my own work with that of the hafiz al-Shami and Najm al-Din al-Ghayti 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 light commentary and brief notes explaining the meaning of rare or difficult words. I have named this treatise: al-Anwar al-bahiyya min isra' wa mi`raj khayr al-bariyya, "The resplendent lights of the rapture and ascension of the Best of creation," asking Allah to grant benefit with it and accept it as purely for His sake. Allah's blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad and his Family and Companions.

II. The striving of the scholars in organizing the account of isra' and mi`raj into a single version

The scholars have striven to organize this account and gather its narrations into a single version, at the same making mention of some separate additions, in order to facilitate its perusal and its 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 hadith 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 hadith master al-Shami did this with the account of the Prophet's Rapture and Ascension as well as the hadith master al-Ghayti and a number of other scholars. This is what al-Shami said on this question in his great book al-Mi`raj for it is useful:

Know -- may Allah have mercy on me and you -- that each of the hadiths of the Companions [on this subject] contains what the other does not. Therefore I consulted Allah Almighty and concatenated them, thus rearranging the account into a single text so that it would be sweeter to attentive ears, and in order for its benefit to suit all occasions.

If someone says: "Each hadith 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 Zad al-ma`ad [Ibn al-Qayyim] said:

This is the path of the feeble-minded among the literalists of the Zahiri 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 Imams of text transmission have said: namely, that the mi`raj took place once, in Mecca, 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 Musa and his Lord until they become five, and his Lord says: "I have decreed what is due 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?

The hadith master `Imad al-Din Ibn Kathir said in his history [al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya], after noting that Malik ibn Sa`sa`a's version did not make mention of Jerusalem:

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 said something indefensible and has not fulfilled his pursuit. The reason is that all 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 would have reported it to his Community and the people would have transmitted it often.

COMMEMORATING THE PROPHET'S RAPTURE AND ASCENSION TO HIS LORD

III. The Collated Hadith of Isra' and Mi`raj

In the name of Allah Most Merciful Most Beneficent Blessings and Peace upon the Messenger of Allah and his Family and Companions,

As the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, was in al-Hijr at the House (the semi-circular space under the waterspout which is open on both sides on the Northwest side of the Ka`ba), lying down at rest between two men (his uncle Hamza and his cousin Ja`far ibn Abi Talib), Jibril and Mika'il came to him. With them was a third angel (Israfil). They carried him until they brought him to the spring of Zamzam, where they asked him to lie on his back and Jibril took him over from the other two. **(Another version says:)** "The roof of my house was opened and Jibril descended."

He split the Prophet's chest from his throat to the bottom of his belly. Then Jibril said to Mika'il: "Bring me a *tast* (a vessel, usually made of copper) of water from Zamzam so that I will purify his heart and expand his breast." He took out his heart and washed it three times, removing from it what was wrong. Mika'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 *hilm* (intelligence, patience, good character), knowledge, certainty, and submission, then he closed it up. He sealed it between his shoulders with the seal of Prophethood.

Then he brought the Buraq (lightning-mount), 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 came to mount him. Jibril put his hand on his mane and said: "Are you not ashamed, O Buraq? By Allah, no-one has ridden you in all creation more dear to Allah than he is." Hearing this he was so ashamed that he sweated until he became soaked, and he stood still so that the Prophet mounted him.

The other Prophets used to mount the Buraq before. Sa`id ibn al-Musayyib said: "It is the beast of Ibrahim which he used to mount whenever he travelled to the Sacred House."

Jibril departed with him. He placed himself on his right while Mika'il was on his left. (In Ibn Sa`d's version:) The one holding his stirrup was Jibril and the one holding the reins of the Buraq was Mika'il.

They travelled until they reached a land filled with datepalms. Jibril said to the Prophet: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Jibril said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Jibril said: "You prayed in a *tayba* (land of pastures) and the Migration will take place there.

The Buraq continued his lightning flight, placing his hooves wherever his gaze could reach. Jibril then said again: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Jibril said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Jibril said: "You prayed in Madyan (a city on the shore of the Red Sea bordering Tabuk near the valley of Shu`ayb) at the tree of Musa" (where Musa rested from fatigue and hunger during his flight from Fir`awn).

The Buraq continued his lightning flight, then Jibril said again: "Alight and pray here." He did so and remounted, then Jibril said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Jibril said: "You prayed at the mountain of Sina' (Mount Sinai) where Allah addressed Musa."

Then he reached a land where the palaces of Syria became visible to him. Jibril said to him: "Alight and pray." He did so and remounted, then the Buraq continued his lightning flight and Jibril said: "Do you know where you prayed?" He said no. Jibril said: "You prayed in Bayt Lahm (Bethlehem), where `Isa ibn Maryam was born."

As the Prophet was travelling mounted on the Buraq he saw a devil from the jinn who was trying to get near him holding a firebrand. Everywhere the Prophet turned he would see him. Jibril 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 said yes. Jibril said:

Say: *a`udhu bi wajhillahi al-karim
wa bi kalimatillahi al-tammat*

*al-lati la yujawizuhunna barrun wa la fajir
min sharri ma yanzilu min al-sama'
wa min sharri ma ya`ruju fiha
wa min sharri ma dhara'a fi al-ard
wa min sharri ma yakhruju minha
wa min fitani al-layli wa al-nahar
wa min tawariq al-layli wa al-nahar
illa tariqin yatruqu bi khayrin ya rahman*

I seek refuge in the Face of Allah the Munificent
and in Allah's perfect words
which neither the righteous nor the disobedient overstep
from the evil of what descends from the heaven
and the evil of what ascends to it
and the evil of what is created in the earth
and the trials of the night and the day
and the visitors of the night and the day
except the visitor that comes with goodness,
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 said: "O Jibril, what is this?" He replied: "These are *al-mujahidun* -- those who strive -- in the path of Allah the Exalted. Every good deed of theirs is multiplied for them seven hundred times, and whatever they spend returns multiplied."

The Prophet then noticed a fragrant wind and said: "O Jibril, what is this sweet scent?" He replied: "This is the scent of the lady who combed the hair of Fir`awn's daughter and that of her children. As she combed the hair of Fir`awn's daughter the comb fell and she said: *bismillah ta`isa fir`awn* -- In the name of Allah, may Fir`awn perish! 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 Allah. This woman had two sons and a husband. Fir`awn summoned them and he began to entice the woman and her husband to renege on their religion, but they refused. He said: Then I shall kill you. She said: Be so good as to 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 liquid (oil and water) 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."

He (Ibn `Abbas) said: "Four spoke from the cradle as they were still infants: this child, Yusuf's witness (cf. 12:26), Jurayj's companion, and `Isa ibn Maryam."²²

Then the Prophet saw 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 Jibril, who are

these people?" He replied: "These are the people whose heads were too heavy (on their pillows) to get up and fulfill the prescribed prayers."

Then he saw a people who wore loincloths on the fronts and on their backs. They were roaming the way camels and sheep roam about. They were eating thistles and *zaqqum* -- the fruit of a tree that grows in hell and whose fruit resembles the head of devils (37:62-63) -- and white-hot coals and stones of Gehenna. He said: "Who are these, O Jibril?" He replied: "These are the ones who did not meet the obligation of paying *sadaqa* from what they possessed, whereas Allah never kept anything from them."

Then he saw a people who had in front of them excellent meats disposed in pots and also putrid, foul meat, and they would eat from the foul meat and not touch the good meat. He said: "What is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "These are the men from your Community who had an excellent, lawful wife at home and who would go and see a foul woman and spend the night with her; and the women who would leave her excellent, lawful husband to go and see a foul 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 Jibril?" He replied: "This is what happens to those of your Community who sit in the middle of the road and cut it" and he recited:

wa la taq`adu bi kulli siratin tu`iduna wa tasudduna `an sabilillah man amana bihi wa tabtaghunaha `iwajan

Lurk not on every road to threaten wayfarers and to turn away from Allah's path him who believes in Him, and to seek to make it crooked (7:86).

The Prophet 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 asked: "What is this, O Jibril?" 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 Jibril?" 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 Jibril?" He replied: "These are the public speakers of division in your Community: they say what they don't 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 Jibril?" 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 said: "What is this, O Jibril?" 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-Shami 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 Jibril?" He replied: "This is the voice of Paradise saying: O my Lord, bring me what You have promised me for too abundant are my rooms, my gold-laced garments, my silk, my brocades, my carpets, my pearls, my coral, my silver, my gold, my goblets, my bowls, my pitchers, my couches, my honey, my water, my milk, my wine! And He says: You will have every single Muslim and Muslima, every Mu'min and Mu'mina, and everyone who has believed in Me and My Messengers and did excellent deeds without associating a partner to Me nor taking helpers without Me. Anyone who fears Me will be safe, and whoever asks Me I shall give him, and whoever lends Me something I shall repay him, and whoever relies on Me I shall suffice him. I am Allah besides Whom there is no god. I never fail in My promise. Successful indeed are the believers! Blessed is Allah, therefore, the best of Creators! And Paradise answered: I accept."

Then he came to a valley in which he heard a detestable sound and smelled a stench-carrying wind. He said: "What is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "This is the sound of Gehenna saying: O Lord, give me what You promised me, for abundant are my chains, my yokes, my punishments, my fires, my thistles, my pus, my tortures! My depth is abysmal, my heat is extreme, therefore give me what You promised me! And He replied: You will have every idolater and idolatress, every male and female disbeliever and foul one, and every tyrant who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."

The Prophet saw the Dajjal in his actual likeness. He saw him with his own eyes not in a dream. It was said to him: "O Messenger of Allah, how was he when you saw him?" He replied: "Mammoth-sized (*faylamaniyyan*), extremely pale and white (*aqmaru hijan*), 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-`Uzza ibn Qatan (who died in Jahiliyya)."

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

[The Prophet called Syria the purest of Allah's lands, the place where Religion, belief and safety are found in the time of dissension, and the home of the saints for whose sake Allah sends sustenance to the people and victory to Muslims over their enemies:

1. Ibn `Asakir in *Tahdhib tarikh Dimashq al-kabir* relates from Ibn Mas`ud that the Prophet compared the world to a little rain water on a mountain plateau of which the *safw* had already been drunk and from which only the *kadar* or dregs remained. al-Huwjiri and al-Qushayri mention it in their chapters on tasawwuf, respectively in *Kashf al-mahjub* and *al-Risala al-qushayriyya*. Ibn al-Athir defines *safw* and *safwa* in his dictionary *al-Nihaya* as "the best of any matter, its quintessence, and purest part." The quintessence spoken of by the Prophet is Syria, because he called Syria "the quintessence of Allah's lands" (*safwat Allah min biladih*). Tabarani related it from `Irbad ibn Sariya and Haythami authenticated the chain of transmission in his book *Majma` al-zawa'id*, chapter entitled *Bab fada'il al-sham*.

2. Abu al-Darda' narrated that the Prophet said:

As I was sleeping I saw the Column of the Book being carried away from under my head. I feared lest it would be taken away, so I followed it with my eyes and saw that it was being planted in Syria. Verily, belief in the time of dissensions will be in Syria.

al-Haythami said that Ahmad narrated it with a chain whose narrators are all the men of the *sahih* -- sound narrations -- and that al-Bazzar narrated it with a chain whose narrators are the men of sound hadith except for Muhammad ibn `Amir al-Antaki, and he is *thiqa* -- trustworthy.

In the version Tabarani narrated from Ibn `Amr in *al-Mu`jam al kabir* and *al-Mu`jam al-awsat* the Prophet repeats three times: "When the dissensions take place, belief will be in Syria." One manuscript bears: "Safety will be in Syria." al-Haythami said the men in its chain are those of sound hadith except for Ibn Lahi`a, and he is fair (*hasan*).

3. al-Tabarani relates from `Abd Allah ibn Hawala that the Prophet said:

"I saw on the night that I was enraptured a white column resembling a pearl, which the angels were carrying. I said to them: What are you carrying? They replied: The Column of the Book. We have been ordered to place it in Syria. Later, in my sleep, I saw that the Column of the Book was snatched away from under my headrest (*wisadati*). I began to fear lest Allah the Almighty had abandoned the people of the earth. My eyes followed where it went. It was a brilliant light in front of me. Then I saw it was placed in Syria." `Abd Allah ibn Hawala said: "O Messenger of Allah, choose for me (where I should go)." The Prophet said: *alayka bi al-sham* -- "You must go to Syria."

al-Hafiz al-Haythami said in *Majma` al-zawa'id*: "The narrators in its chain of transmission are all those of sound hadith, except Salih ibn Rustum, and he is *thiqa* -- trustworthy."

4. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal relates in his *Musnad* (1:112):

The people of Syria were mentioned in front of `Ali ibn Abi Talib while he was in Iraq, and they said to him: Curse them, O Commander of the Believers. He replied: No, I heard the Messenger of Allah say: "The Substitutes (*al-abdal*) are in Syria and they are forty men, every time one of them dies, Allah substitutes another in his place. By means of them Allah brings down the rain, gives (Muslims) victory over their enemies, and averts punishment from the people of Syria."

al-Haythami said in *Majma` al-zawa'id*: "The men in its chains are all those of sound hadith except for Sharih ibn `Ubayd, and he is trustworthy (*thiqa*)." There are more hadiths on the *abdal* which we cite elsewhere in the present work.]

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

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

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

As the Prophet travelled on, he passed by an old man who was a distance away from his path saying: "Come hither, O Muhammad!" But Jibril said: "Nay, go on, O Muhammad!" The Prophet went on and then said: "Who was this, O Jibril?" He replied: "This was Allah's enemy, Iblis. He wanted you to incline towards him."

He went on and passed by an old woman on the roadside who said: "O Muhammad, look at me, I need to ask you something." But he did not look at her. Then he said: "Who was this, O Jibril?" He replied: "The world has as much left to live as the remaining lifetime of this old woman."

(al-Shami added:) As he went on he was met by some of Allah's creatures who said: "Peace be upon you, O First One! Peace upon you, O Last One! Peace be upon you, O Gatherer!" Jibril 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 Jibril?" He replied: "Ibrahim, Musa, and `Isa."

The Prophet then passed by Musa 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 *shanu'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 greeted him and he returned his greeting. Musa said: "Who is this with you, O Jibril?" He replied: "This is Ahmad." 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 said: "O Jibril, who was this?" He replied: "This is Musa ibn `Imran." The Prophet asked: "Who was he reprimanding?" He said: "He is reprimanding his Lord." The Prophet said: "He reprimands his Lord and raises his voice against his Lord?!" Jibril said: "Allah the Exalted knows Musa'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 said: "Who is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "Your father Ibrahim." The Prophet greeted him and Ibrahim returned his greeting and said: "Who is this with you, O Jibril?" He replied: "This is your son Ahmad." He 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 the 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! the Gehenna was shown to them like a carpet unfolded. They (the Companions) said: "O Messenger of Allah, how was it?" 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 Buraq and tied it at the gate of the mosque, using the ring by which the Prophets tied it before him. One narration states that Jibril came to the Rock and placed his fingers in it, piercing it, then he tied the Buraq using the spot he had hollowed out.

The Prophet 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 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. Jibril took the hand of the Prophet and brought him forward. He led them in two cycles of prayer.

[Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi said:

This took place before his ascension according to the highest probability. Najm al-Din al-Ghiti said: "The narrations agree to the fact that the Prophet prayed among the other Prophets in Jerusalem before his ascension." This is one of the two possibilities mentioned by Qadi `Iyad. Hafiz Ibn Hajar said: "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 Kathir also declared the former scenario as the sound one. Some said: "What is the objection to the possibility that the Prophet prayed among them twice, since some of the hadiths mention that he led them in prayer after his ascent?"]

The following is related from Ka`b: Jibril raised the call to prayer. The angels descended from the heaven. Allah gathered all the Messengers and Prophets. Then the Prophet prayed as the leader of the angels and Messengers. When he left Jibril asked him: "O Muhammad, do you know who prayed behind you?" He said no. Jibril said: "Every single Prophet whom Allah has ever sent."

(Al-Shami adds:) Abu Hurayra's narration related by al-Hakim who declared it sound, and by al-Bayhaqi, states: Then the Prophet met the spirits of the Prophets. They glorified their Lord, after which Ibrahim said:

Praise to Allah Who has made 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 Musa glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allah 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 Dawud glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allah 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 Sulayman glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allah 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 part 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 `Isa ibn Maryam glorified his Lord and said:

Praise be to Allah Who has made me His word, Who has fashioned me after Adam'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 Allah'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-Shami's addition).

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

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

al-hamdu lillah al-ladhi arsalani rahmatan li al-`alamin

wa kaffatan li al-nasi bashiran wa nadhira

wa anzala `alayya al-qur'ana fihitibyanun li kullishay'

wa ja`ala ummati khayra ummatin ukhrijat li al-nas

wa ja`ala ummati wasatan

wa ja`ala ummati hum al-awwaluna wa al-akhirun

wa sharaha li sadri wa wada`a anni wazri

wa rafa`a li dhikri

wa ja`alani fatihan khatiman!

Praise belongs to Allah Who has sent me, 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'an 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 mean and a middle,

Who has made my Community in truth the first and the last of all Communities,

Who has expanded my breast and has relieved me of my burden,

Who has exalted my name,

And has made me the Opener and the Sealer!

Upon hearing this Ibrahim said: "In this has Muhammad bested you!"

Then they brought up the matter of the Hour and referred it to Ibrahim, but he said: "I have no knowledge of it." They turned to Musa but he said: "I have no knowledge of it." They turned to `Isa and he said:

As for the time when it shall befall, no one knows it except Allah. As for what my Lord has assured me (concerning what precedes it), then: the Dajjal or Antichrist will come forth and I will face him with two rods. At my sight he shall melt like lead: Allah 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 Allah shall cause them all to die.

People will then return to their countries and nations. At that time Ya'juj and Ma'juj (Gog and Magog) shall come out. They will come from every direction. They will trample all nations underfoot. Whatever they come upon they will destroy. They will drink up every body of water.

At last the people will come to me complaining about them. At that time I will invoke Allah against them so that He will destroy them and cause their death until the whole earth will reek of their stench. Allah will 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-Shami's addition)

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

[The Prophet said, "Every child is born with a natural disposition (*kullu mawludin yuladu `ala al-fitra*); then his parents convert him to Judaism, or Christianity, or Zoroastrianism. It is

the same with the animal which delivers a perfect baby animal. Do you find it missing anything?" Bukhari narrates it. Muslim omits the mention of the animal. Tirmidhi's narration (*hasan sahih*) also omits it, but adds: "O Messenger of Allah, what if the child dies before that?" He replied: "Allah knows best what they would have done."

The hadith master al-Zabidi said in his commentary on Ghazali's *Ihya'* entitled *Ithaf al-sadat al-muttaqin bi sharh ihya' `ulum al-din* (The gift of the godwary masters: commentary on Ghazali's "Giving life to the sciences of the Religion"): "*Born with a natural disposition*: the definite case indicates that it is commonly known, and it consists in Allah'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 the wrong and the right."²³]

Another narration states: There were three vessels and the third contained water. Jibril 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 to 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 was brought the ladder by which the spirits of the children of Adam 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 began his ascent with Jibril until they reached one of the gates of the nearest heaven called *Bab al-hafazha*. There an angel stood guard, named Isma`il, who was the custodian of the nearest heaven. He inhabits the wind. He never ascends to the heaven nor descends to earth except on the day that the Prophet died, blessings and peace upon him. In front of him stood seventy thousand angels, each angel commanding an army of seventy thousand more.

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Adam, peace be upon him, the father of humanity, as he was on the day Allah created him in his complete form. The spirits of the Prophets and of his believing offspring were being shown to him, whereupon he would say: "A goodly spirit and a goodly soul, put her in the Highest! (*illiyin*)." Then the spirits of his unbelieving offspring would be shown to him and he would say: "A foul spirit and a foul soul, put her in the lowest layer of Hell! (*sijin*)."

The Prophet saw to Adam's right great dark masses and a gate exuding a fragrant smell, and to his left great dark masses and a gate exuding a foul, malodorant smell. Whenever Adam 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 greeted him and Adam returned his greeting and said: "Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet!"

The Prophet said: "What is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "This is your father Adam 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 Gehenna. Whenever he sees those of his offspring enter it he weeps sadly.

(al-Shami added:) Then the Prophet continued for a little while. He saw a tablespread on which there were pieces of (good) meat which no one approached, and another tablespread on which were pieces of rotten meat which stank, surrounded by people who were eating it. The Prophet asked: "O Jibril, who are these?" He replied: "These are those of your Community who abandon what is lawful and go to what is unlawful."

(One version says:) The Prophet saw a great deal of people gathered around a tablespread on 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 asked: "Who are they, O Jibril?" He replied: "The adulterers (*al-zunat*): they make lawful what Allah has made unlawful, and they abandon what Allah has made lawful for them."

Then the Prophet 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 Allah, 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 said:) "I heard them clamoring to Allah." He asked: "O Jibril, who are these?" He replied: "They are those of your Community who eat up usury. They cannot stand up except in the manner of those whom the Shaytan touches with possession."

Then the Prophet 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 Gehenna was placed in their mouths and then it would come out again from their posteriors. (The Prophet said:) "I heard them clamoring to Allah." He asked: "O Jibril, 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 went on for a little while. He saw women suspended by their breasts and others hanging upside down, (and the Prophet said:) "I heard them clamoring to Allah." He asked: "Who are these, O Jibril?" He replied: "These are the women who commit fornication and then kill their children."

Then the Prophet 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 Jibril, who are these?" He replied: "They are the slanderers of your Community who would bring shame to others." (End of al-Shami's addition.)

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

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw the sons of the two sisters: `Isa ibn Maryam and Yahya ibn Zakariyya. They resembled each other in clothing and hair. Each had with him a large company of their people. `Isa 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 `Urwa ibn Mas`ud al-Thaqafi.

[One of the dignitaries of the town of Ta'if. Ibn Hajar in his *Isaba* relates that he alone responded to the Prophet's invitation to that city by following him and declaring his acceptance of Islam. Then he asked for permission to return to his people and speak to them. The Prophet 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 making adhan, 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 given me out of Allah's generosity." When news of this reached the Prophet he said: "He is like the man of *Ya Sin* when he came to his people," a reference to 36:20-27.

Ibn Hajar also mentions that it is from `Urwa that Abu Nu`aym narrated (with a weak chain) that the Prophet took the women's pledge of allegiance at Hudaibiyya by touching the water of a pail in which they had dipped their hands.]

The Prophet 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 and Jibril ascended to the third heaven. Jibril asked for the gate to be opened. Someone said:

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Yusuf, and with him stood a large company of his people. The Prophet 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.

Yusuf had been granted the gift of beauty. One narration says: He was the most handsome creation that Allah had ever created and he surpassed people in beauty the way the full moon surpasses all other stars. The Prophet asked: "Who is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "Your brother Yusuf."

Fourth Heaven

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Idris. Allah exalted him to a lofty place. The Prophet 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.

Fifth Heaven

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. When they came in they saw Harun. Half of his beard was white and the other half was 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 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 asked: "Who is this, O Jibril?" He replied: "This is the man who is beloved among his people, Harun ibn `Imran."

Sixth Heaven

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. The Prophet 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 (*sawad`azhim*) that was covering the firmament. He said: "What is this throng?" He was told: "This is Musa 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 saw Musa ibn `Imran (again), a tall man with brown complexion, similar to one of the *shanu'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 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 Adam I am more honored by Allah than this one, but it is he who is more honored by Allah than me!"

When the Prophet reached him Musa wept. He was asked: "What is it that makes you weep?" He replied: "I weep because a child that was sent after me will enter more people in Paradise from his Community than will enter from mine. The children of Israel claim that among the children of Adam I am the one most honored by Allah, but here is one man among the children of Adam 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!"

[This is the proof of the famous saying of the master Abu Yazid al-Bistami: "We have crossed an ocean on the shore of which the Prophets stood befuddled." That is: We -- the Last Community -- have been granted, in the person of the Seal of Prophets, levels of knowledge, election, and divine favor which previous Prophets have longed to receive. This does not contradict the tenet of *Ahl al-Sunna* expressed by Imam al-Tahawi in his *`Aqida* whereby "A single Prophet is higher in rank than all *awliya'* put together."]

Seventh Heaven

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

– "Who is this?"

– "Jibril."

– "Who is with you?"

– "Muhammad."

– "Has he been sent for?"

– "Yes."

– "Welcome to him, from his family! May Allah grant him long life, a brother (of ours) and a deputy (of Allah), and what excellent brother and deputy! What an excellent visit is this!"

The gate was opened. The Prophet saw Ibrahim 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`mur*). With him were a company of his people. The Prophet greeted him and he returned his greeting and said: "Welcome to the righteous son and the righteous Prophet!"

[Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi said: "*ma`mur* means inhabited with the remembrance of Allah and the great number of angels."]

Then Ibrahim said: "Order your Community to increase their seedlings of Paradise for its soil is excellent and its land is plentiful." The Prophet said: "What are the seedlings of Paradise?" He replied: *la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah al-`ali al-`azhim* "There is no change nor might except with Allah the High, 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:

subhan allah: Glory to Allah

wa al-hamdu lillah: and Praise to Allah

wa la ilaha illallah: and there is no god but Allah

wallahu akbar: and Allah is greatest.

With Ibrahim 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 said: "O Jibril, 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 hues are a people who would mix good deeds with bad ones, then they repented and Allah relented towards them. As for these rivers, then the first is Allah's mercy (*rahmatullah*), the second his favor (*ni`matullah*), and the third **and their Lord gave them a pure beverage to drink** (*wa saqahum rabbuhum sharaban tahuran*) (76:21)."

Then the Prophet 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 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. This House is exactly superposed to the Ka`ba. If one stone fell from it it would fall on top of the Ka`ba. The angels who have entered it never see it again.

One version states that the presentation of the three vessels, the Prophet's choice of the vessel of milk, and Jibril's approval took place at this point.

(al-Shami adds:) al-Tabarani cites this hadith with a sound chain: "The night I was enraptured I passed by the heavenly host, and lo and behold! Jibril was like the worn-out saddle-cloth on the camel's back from fear of his Lord." One of al-Bazzar's narrations states: "like a saddle-blanket that clings to the ground."

[Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi said: "Of the same meaning is the hadith: *kun hilsan min ahlas baytik* **Be one of the saddle blankets of your house**, that is: keep to it in times of dissension.]

The Lote-Tree of the Farthest Limit

Then the Prophet was raised up to the Lote-Tree of the Farthest Limit. There ends whatever ascends from the earth before it is seized, and whatever descends from above before it is seized.

[al-Dardir 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-Kursi* -- the Chair, or Footstool -- which is made of a white pearl. This is found in al-Qalyubi, and it is the apparent sense of the account. However, it is contradicted by what is mentioned later: "Then he came to the Kawthar," because the Kawthar, like the remainder of the rivers, flows from the base of the Tree, not from its top, and 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 undoubtedly this is dubious for whoever ponders it. I saw in al-Ajhuri's account here: "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 came to the Tree and saw at its base the rivers -- which are soon to be mentioned -- and he travelled towards the 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."]

It is a tree from the base of which issue rivers whose water is never brackish (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); 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 Hijar (near Madina). Its leaves are

shaped like the ears of the she-elephant, and each leaf could wrap up this Community entirely. One version says: 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 Allah's order it would change. One version says: It would turn into sapphire and chrysolite the beauty of which it is impossible for anyone to praise according to what its merit. On it were moths of gold.

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

[Ibn Kathir said: What is meant by this, and Allah knows best, is that these two rivers (the Nile and the Euphrates) resemble the rivers of Paradise in their purity and sweetness and fluidity and such of their qualities, as the Prophet said in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayra: *al-`ajwa min al-janna* "Date pastry is from paradise," that is: it resembles the fruit of Paradise, not that it itself originates in Paradise. For if that were the 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.]

(al-Shami added:) 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 said:) "I saw it flowing impetuously, roaring, at the speed of arrows. Near it were pavilions of pearl (*lu'lu'*), sapphire (*yaqut*), 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 took one of the vessels and scooped some water and drank. It was sweeter than honey and more fragrant than musk. Jibril said to him: "This is the river which Allah has given you as a special gift, and the other river is the River of Mercy." The Prophet bathed in it and his past and future sins were forgiven. (End of al-Shami's addition.)

One version says: At the Lote-tree of the Farthest Limit the Prophet saw Jibril (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 Allah alone knows. Then the Prophet 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-sadaqatu bi `ashrin amthaliha
wa al-qardu bi thamaniyati `ashara

Charity is repaid tenfold,
and the loan eighteenfold.

The Prophet said: "O Jibril, 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 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, and overhanging those rivers were domes of hollowed pearl whose circumference is like the Aquarius star.

Another narration says:

Above the rivers were pommels resembling the hides of the humped camels. Its birds were like the Bactrian camel. Upon hearing this Abu Bakr said: "O Messenger of Allah, they are certainly delicate!" The Prophet replied: "And daintier to eat yet, and certainly I hope that you shall eat from them."

[This is an indication of the rank of Abu Bakr in Paradise, as the Prophet's hope, like his petition, is granted. Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi said: "From all this it can be known that Paradise and the Fire exist already, that the Lote-tree of the Farthest Boundary is outside Paradise,]

The Prophet then saw the Kawthar and on its banks were domes of hollowed pearl. The soil of its banks was overfragrant musk. Then the Fire was shown to him. In it he saw Allah'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 said: "Who are these, O Jibril?" He replied: "Those who ate the flesh of people." Then the Prophet saw Malik, the custodian of the Fire. He was a grim figure whose face expressed anger. The Prophet 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 Jibril stayed back.

[Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi said: The Prophet's greeting of Malik before Malik greeted him first agrees with the subsequent wording of more than one narrator whereby the Prophet said: "I greeted him and he returned my greeting and welcomed me, but he did not smile at me" etc. and this is found in some of the narrations. However, the correct narration, as the compiler and others have said, is that it is Malik who greeted the Prophet first in order to dispel 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 saw Malik more than once, so that Malik was first to greet the Prophet the first time, as we said, while the Prophet was first to greet Malik second time, in order to dispel estrangement and to inspire familiarity. Know also that the Prophet's sight of Malik was not in the same form that those who are being punished see him.]

The Prophet was taken up to a point where he heard the screeching 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 Allah'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 saw his Lord, the Glorious, the Exalted, and he fell prostrate, and at that time his Lord spoke to him and said: "**O Muhammad!**" He replied: "At your service, O Lord!" Allah said: "**Ask! (sal).**" The Prophet said:

You have taken to Yourself Ibrahim as a friend, and You have given him an immense kingdom. You have spoken to Musa directly, and have given Dawud an immense kingdom and softened iron and subjected the mountains to him. You have given Sulayman 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 no one may have after him. You have taught `Isa 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!

Allah said: "**And I have taken you to Myself as My beloved.**" The narrator said: It is written in the Torah: *habibullah* "Allah's Beloved." Allah continued:

**And I have sent you for all people without exception,
a bearer of glad tidings and a warner;
and I have expanded your breast for you
and relieved you of your burden
and exalted your name;
and I am not mentioned except you are mentioned with Me;
and I have made your Community the best Community ever brought out for the benefit
of mankind;
and I have made your Community a mean and a middle;
and I have made your Community in truth the first
and the last of all Communities;
and I have made public address (*al-khutba*) impermissible for your Community unless
they first witness that you are My servant and Messenger;
and I have placed certain people in your Community with Evangels for hearts (i.e.
repositories of Allah's Book);
and I have made you the first Prophet created and the last one sent and the first one
heard in My court;
and I have given you Seven of the Oft-Repeated which I gave to no other Prophet before
you (i.e. Surat al-Fatiha);
and I have given you the last verses of Surat al-Baqara which constitute a treasure from
under My Throne which I gave to no other Prophet before you;
and I have given you the Kawthar; and I have given you eight arrows (i.e. shares in
good fortune): Islam, Emigration (*hijra*), Jihad, Charity (*sadaqa*), 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-Shami added:) Abu Hurayra said: Allah's Messenger said:

**My Lord has preferred me over everyone else (*faddalani rabbi*):
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 has been 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 (i.e. I was given the apex of eloquence);**

**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;
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 has been 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 Godway (*imam al-muttaqin*), and the Chief of those with signs of light on their faces and limbs (*qa'id al-ghurr al-muhajjalin*). (End of al-Shami's addition.)

One narration says:

The Prophet was given the five daily prayers and the last verses of Surat al-Baqara, and (for his sake) whoever of his Community does not associate anything with Allah is forgiven even the sins that destroy.

Then the cloud that cloaked him was dispelled and Jibril took him by the hand and hurried away with him until he reached Ibrahim, who did not say anything. Then the Prophet reached Musa who asked: "What did you do, O Muhammad? 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." Musa 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 natures 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. Your Community are even weaker in their bodies and constitutions, in their hearts, in their sight, and in their hearing."

The Prophet turned to Jibril to consult him. The latter indicated to him that yes, if you wish, then return. The Prophet hurried back until he reached the Tree and the cloud cloaked him and he fell prostrate. Then he said: "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 returned to Musa 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 did not cease to go back and forth between Musa and his Lord, while Allah each time reduced it by five prayers, until Allah said: "O Muhammad!" The Prophet said: "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 returned to Musa 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 said: "I

have gone back again to my Lord until I feel shy from 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." Musa then said to the Prophet: "Go down in the name of Allah."

The Prophet did not pass a throng of angels except they said to him: "You must practice cupping (*alayka bi al-hijama*)," and in another version: "Order cupping to your Community."

[Cupping: 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) without scarification, as for relieving internal congestion. *Webster's.*]

As the Prophet was descending he asked Jibril: "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 Malik 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 reached the nearest heaven he looked below it and he saw a dense cloud of smoke filled with *din*. He asked: "What is this, O Jibril?" 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 Buraq 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 passed by another caravan who had lost one of their camels which the tribe of So-and-so had rounded up. The Prophet greeted them and one of them said: "This is the voice of Muhammad!" after which the Prophet returned to his Companions in Mecca shortly before morning.

When morning came he remained alone and, knowing that people would belie him, sat despondently. The enemy of Allah Abu Jahl was passing by and he approached and sat down next to him, saying in the way of mockery: "Has anything happened?" The Prophet replied: "Yes." Abu Jahl said: "And what is that?" The Prophet replied: "I was enraptured last night." Abu Jahl said: "To where?" The Prophet replied: "To the Hallowed House." Abu Jahl said: "Then you woke up here among us?" He replied: "Yes."

Abu Jahl decided not to belie the Prophet for fear the Prophet would deny having said this to him if he went and told the people of Mecca, so he said: "What do you think if I called your people here? Will you tell them what you just told me?" The Prophet said yes. Abu Jahl cried out: "O assembly 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. Abu Jahl said: "Tell your people what you just told me." Allah's Messenger said: "I was enraptured last night." They said: "To where?" The Prophet 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-Mut`im ibn `Adi (he died a disbeliever) said: "All of your affair before today was bearable, until what you said today. I bear witness that you are a liar (*ana ashhadu annaka kadhibun*). 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-Lat, by al-`Uzza! I do not believe you."

Abu Bakr said: "O Mut`im, what an evil thing you said to the son of your brother when you faced him thus and declared him a liar! As for me I bear witness that he spoke the truth (*ana ashhadu annahu sadiqun*)."

The people said: "O Muhammad, 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 have doubt about the description. He was seized with an anxiety he had not felt before, whereupon he was immediately brought to the mosque itself (in Jerusalem) and saw it in front of him. He was placed outside the gate of `Aqil or `Iqal. 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 and to inform them. All the while Abu Bakr was saying: "You have spoken the truth. You have spoken the truth. I bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah (*sadaqta sadaqta ashhadu annaka rasulullah*)."

The people said: "As for the description, then, by Allah, he is correct." They turned to Abu 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 inni la usaddiquhu fima huwa ab`adu min dhalika usaddiqu bi khabari al-sama'i fi ghudwatin aw rawhatin*)."

Because of this Abu Bakr was named al-Siddiq: the Most Truthful, the One Who Never Lies.

Then they said: "O Muhammad, 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."

[Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi 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 comes before the Believers' own selves and properties, and this applies even more to the unbelievers.]

(The Prophet continued:) "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 (not previously mentioned) of the tribe of So-and-so in al-Tan`im.

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 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 Allah, I had prepared it but none of us drank it nor was it spilled on the ground!" At this they accused the Prophet of sorcery and they said: "al-Walid spoke the truth." And Allah revealed the verse:

wa ma ja`alna al-ru'ya al-lati araynaka illa fitnatan li al-nas

We appointed not the vision which we showed you but as a test for mankind. (17:60)

[Ibn Hisham narrates: When the fair was due, a number of the Quraysh came to al-Walid ibn al-Mughira, 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 *kahin* (seer or giver of oracles)." He said: "By Allah, he is not that, for he has not the unintelligent murmuring and rhymed speech of the *kahin*." "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 Abu `Abd al-Shams?" they asked. He replied: "By Allah, 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 doings. Allah 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)]

The account is finished with praise to Allah and by His grace.

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

1 al-Jaza'iri, al-Fiqh `ala al-madhahib al-arba`a (Beirut: Dar al-fikr) 1:557.

2 Muslim and Abu Dawud relate it in Kitab al-sawm, respectively in the chapter on fasting at times other than Ramadan, and in the chapter of fasting during Rajab, also Ahmad in his Musnad.

3 Qastallani in al-Mawahib al-laduniyya (Beirut, 1996) 3:301.

4 Kitab al-siyam, Chapter: "Fasting During the Sacred Months." Also in Ibn Majah and Ahmad, hadith of the man who repeats: "I can bear more," and to whom the Prophet finally says: "Fast during the sacred months."

5 Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim, Kitab 13 Bab 34 #179.

6 Musannaf `Abd al-Razzaq 4:293, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba 1:125.

7 Muslim relates it in the first chapter of Kitab al-libas, and Ibn Majah in the book of Fasting.

8 Ayyam al-tashriq are the Days of drying the meat after the sacrifice of `Id al-Adha = 11, 12, and 13 of Dhu al-hijja.

9 Ibn Qudama, al-Mughni (Beirut, 1414/1994 ed.) 3:119.

10 al-Haytami, al-Khayrat al-hisan fi manaqib Abi Hanifa al-Nu`man (Cairo: al-Halabi, 1326) p. 40.

11 Sharh sahih Muslim Kitab 37 Bab 2 #10.

12 Bayhaqi, Shu`ab al-iman 3:368 #3802; Abu Nu`aym, al-Targhib #1821.

13 Ibn Qudama, al-Mughni 3:118-119.

14 Sayyid Sabiq, Fiqh as-sunnah, Alms tax and Fasting, trans. Muhammad Sa`eed Dabas and Jamal al-Din M. Zarabozo (ATP, 1989) p. 127-128.

15 Abu Dawud, Siyam Chapter 54; Bayhaqi, al-Sunan al-kubra 4:291; Suyuti, al-Durr al-manthur 3:235.

16 Ahmad, Musnad 5:201.

17 There is also a Shi'i scholar by the name of Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Babawayh al-Qummi (d. 380) who wrote Fada'i'l al-ashhur al-thalatha: 1. Shahr Rajab, 2. Shahr Sha`ban, 3. Sharh Ramadan (Najaf: Matba`at al-adab, 1396/1976). Neither this volume nor hafiz al-Kattani's book on the merits of Rajab were available to us.

18 Sayyid Muhammad `Alawi al-Maliki al-Hasani, al-Anwar al-bahiyya min isra' wa mi`raj khayr al-bariyya (Mecca: s.n., 1414/1993).

19 Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghayti (d. 984), Mawsu`at al-isra' wa al-mi`raj al-musamma Tatriz al-dibaj bi haqa'iq al-isra' wa al-mi`raj (Beirut: Dar wa-maktaba al-Hilal, 1994).

20 Bukhari and Muslim.

21 al-`Ajluni in Kashf al-khafa (2:244) and al-Qari in al-Asrar al-marfu`a (p. 199) said that the hadith master al-Damyati said that al-Khatib narrated it with a chain that meets the criteria of soundness.

22 Ibn Hajar mentions that the account of the lady who combed the hair of Pharaoh's daughter is narrated from Ibn `Abbas by Ahmad, al-Hakim, Ibn Hibban, and al-Bazzar, while Muslim in Kitab al-zuhd wa al-raqa'iq (#3005) mentions the part of the infant speaking to his mother before they are both thrown into the fire, and the mention of Yusuf's witness in verse 12:26 as being an infant is narrated from Ibn `Abbas by Ibn Abi Hatim with a weak chain, and it is held by al-Hasan al-Basri and Sa`id ibn Jubayr. [It is also the explanation retained by Suyuti in Tafsir al-jalalayn.] This brings the number of speaking infants alluded to in the hadith "Those who spoke from the cradle are three" (Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad) up to five, and there are reports that increase it to seven or more. Allah knows best. Fath al-Bari (1989 ed.) 6:593-594.

23 al-Zabidi, Ithaf al-Sadat al-muttaqin 7:233.