

মে'রাজের ঘটনা

আকাশ মালিক

শুদ্ধেয় পাঠকবৃন্দ,

বহুদিন যাবত লিখালিখি নেই। বাংলাদেশে বিগত পাঁচ বৎসরে বি এন পি ও সকল ইসলামী দলগুলো মিলে, ইসলামী রাষ্ট্রের যে প্রী-পুফ দেখালো, তার সাথে ১৪ শো বছর পূর্বের আরবের ইসলামী অবস্থার মিল খোঁজছিলাম। বোধকরি বাংলাদেশের খবর পড়ে পড়ে আমার মতো আপনারাও সিক অফ পলিটিসিয়ান বা সিক অফ পলিটিক্স হয়ে গেছেন। তাই আপনাদের মনে ভিন্ন সাধের কিছু একটা পড়ার ইচ্ছে জাগতে পারে ভেবে 'মে'রাজের ঘটনা'টি উপহার দিলাম। আমার বিশ্বাস আপনাদের ভাল লাগবে। মোহাম্মদের (দঃ) নিন্দুকেরা প্রথম দিন থেকেই ঘটনাটিকে ফ্যাক্ট নয় ফিক্শন বলে আসছে। আপনাদের মনে কখনো যদি কোন ব্যাপারে সন্দেহের উদ্বেক হয়, ইসলামের নিন্দুকের মুখে ছাই মেরে আল্লাহর কালাম 'কোরআন' ও হজরত বোখারীর 'হাদিস শরীফ' খোলে দেখতে ভুল করবেন না। কারণ সম্পূর্ণ ঘটনাটি কোরআন ও হাদীস সমর্থিত।

MIRAAJ

THE NIGHT JOURNEY OF MUHAMMAD (Peace Be Upon Him) TO HEAVEN

MUHAMMAD RASOOL ALLAH'S JOURNEY

17:1: "Praise be to Allah Who has taken His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque (Mecca) to the Farthest Mosque (Jerusalem)."

33:56: "Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Nabee (Prophet). You who believe; send blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation."

53: 1-18: "By the star when it sets, Your companion does not err, nor is he deceived:Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is nothing except an inspiration that is inspired, which one of mighty powers has taught him, one vigorous; and he grew clear to view when he was on the uppermost horizon. Then he drew near and came down till he was at a distance of two bow lengths or even nearer, And He revealed to His slave that which He revealed. The heart did not lie in seeing what it saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he sees? And truly he saw him yet another time by the furthest-tree of the furthest boundary, near which is the Garden of Abode. When that which shrouds did enshroud the furthest-tree, The eye did not turn aside nor yet was it overbold. Truly he saw one of the greater revelations of his Rabb (Lord).

Allah ordered Jibraeel to go down with seventy thousand angels to Muhammad (pbuh), and stand by his door. "Accompany him to My presence. And you, Mikaeel, take the hidden knowledge and go down with seventy thousand angels and stand by the door of his bedroom. You, Israfeel, and you Azraeel, do as Jibraeel and Mikaeel have been ordered." Then He said to Jibraeel: "Increase the light of the moon with the light of the sun, and increase the light of the stars with the light of the moon." Jibraeel asked: "Allah, has the Day of resurrection dawned?" Allah said: "No, but tonight We are calling to Our presence Muhammad (pbuh), the last Messenger who came after Isa (Jesus) to reveal to him a secret that pertains to Us." Jibraeel said: "Allah, what is that secret?" Allah said: "Jibraeel! The secret of kings cannot be given to the servants. Go with My order and don't ask."

And Jibraeel began his descent carrying with him the heavenly message. All the angels accompanied him as Allah had ordered, until they reached the door of Muhammad (pbuh). When they arrived, they said: "*Qum ya sayyidi*: Arise, my Master, and prepare yourself! Ride on the back of the *buraq*, the heavenly creature that will carry you on your journey to the Rabb (Lord) of power through the land of the angels!"

THE BURQA (HEAVENLY BEAST)

When Allah ordered Jibraeel to carry with him the *buraq* for Muhammad (pbuh) to ride, he went to the paradise of *buraqs* and there he found forty million *buraqs*. Every *buraq* had a crown on its forehead inscribed with the words: "There is no god only Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Under it was written: "Believe in Me, in My angels, in My books, and in My Rasools (prophets)." Jibraeel saw among them a *buraq* who secluded himself and who sat alone crying. Jibraeel came to him and asked him why he was in such a state. The *buraq* answered: "I heard the name of Muhammad (pbuh) forty thousand years ago, and my yearning for him has prevented me from eating and drinking." Jibraeel chose that *buraq* and he took him.

The *buraq* had the body of a horse but the face of a human being, with big black eyes and soft ears. His colour was that of a peacock whose plumage was set with red rubies and corals, on which sat a white head of musk on a neck of amber. His ears and shoulders were of pure white pearls attached with golden chains, each chain decorated with glittering jewels. His saddle was made of silk lined with silver and gold threads. His back was covered with green emerald and his halter was pure peridot.

The speed of the *buraq* is according to his sight. His legs reach wherever his eyes can see. Jibraeel said: "Rasool Allah, this night is your night, and your turn has come to shine in the sky of creation. You are the sun of ancient and recent knowledge, you are the moonlight of the beauties of the worlds, the happiness of creation and the adornment of the lands of human beings and angels. You are the cup of love from the river of milk and honey. The river of Kawser in paradise overflows in anticipation of seeing you. You, the joy of all

creation, the pride of paradise, the tables are ready and the palaces of heaven are waiting for your coming!"

"Jibrael," said Muhammad (pbuh), "did you come with a message of mercy or wrath?"

"I came with a message from your Rabb (Lord) to give you a secret."

"What does the Rabb (Lord) of Generosity want to do with me?"

"He wants to shower you with His mercy and all human beings that accept you."

"Give me a moment to prepare myself."

"I brought you water of paradise and a turban with a message inscribed:

'Muhammad the servant of Allah; Muhammad the prophet of Allah;

Muhammad the beloved of Allah; Muhammad the friend of Allah.'"

"Jibrael, tell me more about that turban."

"Allah created a turban from his light and he entrusted it to Ridhwan, the angel-custodian of paradise, and the praising of Ridhwan's host of angels belonged to the owner of that turban before heaven and earth were created. Tonight, when the order came for your visit, Ridhwan took the turban from paradise, and all forty thousand angels said with him: 'Our Rabb (Lord), you have ordered us from time immemorial to praise the owner of that turban. Honour us tonight with his sight and permit us to walk before him.' And Allah granted them what they asked. Then Allah ordered me, Jibrael, to hand Mikaeel the precious jar of the pure water of Salsabil, and Mikaeel to give to Azraeel, and Azraeel to give it to Israfeel, then Israfeel to Ridhwan, then Ridhwan sent that water another time to the highest paradise: Jannat al-Firdaws, where all the beautiful maiden-angels washed their faces with that water and shone even more brightly. Then they sent back that water to me, and I am giving it to you."

And Muhammad (pbuh) showered with the water from paradise. As soon as it touched his noble body he became covered with a garment of subtle angelic light, and Jibrael gave him the buraq to ride. But the buraq stopped and asked Jibrael: "Is that Muhammad (pbuh) who is invited to our Rabb (Lord)?" Jibrael said: "Yes." The buraq asked: "Is he the owner of the blessed pond in paradise?" Jibrael said: "Yes." The buraq said: "Is he the leader of the people of paradise?" Jibrael said: "Yes." The buraq said: "Is he the intercessor on Judgment-Day?" Jibrael said: "Yes." At that time the buraq began to melt like ice and snow melt in the light of the sun. He knelt down and said to Muhammad (pbuh): "Pride of creation, ride on me; but I have one request to ask of you: Do not forget me on the day of intercession."

THE JOURNEY TO THE FAR-DISTANT MOSQUE

When Muhammad (pbuh) began to ride he was crying. Jibrael asked him: "Rasool Allah, why are you crying?" He said: "I remembered human beings. Are they going to ride on Judgement Day as I am riding now on the buraq, and go to their heavenly palaces in paradise?" Jibrael said: "Yes, truly, we are going to resurrect the pious ones in delegations of riders: On the Day when We shall gather the righteous unto the Beneficent, a goodly company (19:85)."

At that Muhammad (pbuh) felt happy, and he rode forward on the buraq. Jibraeel took hold of the reins while Mikaeel held the saddle, and Israfeel the saddle-cloth. The buraq moved in space until in the blink of an eye they reached the place appointed for their first stop in the middle of the desert. Jibraeel said: "Muhammad, go down and pray to Allah in this place." Muhammad (pbuh) said: "What is this place?" Jibraeel said: "This is the place where you are going to emigrate, and it is going to be your second city." That was the town of Yathrib not far from Mecca, and its name was going to be Madina.

In the blink of an eye they again passed through space until they stopped a second time, and Jibraeel told Muhammad (pbuh) to come down and pray. "Which place is this, Jibraeel?" asked Muhammad (pbuh). "This is Sinai, where Musa (Moses) used to speak with Allah." Then the buraq moved in space another time until he reached a third place where Jibraeel ordered him to pray. "And now, where are we, Jibraeel?" "You are in Bethlehem, where Isa (Jesus) was born and from where he spread the message of the King of heavens and of the earth."

As Muhammad (pbuh) walked with delight on the soil where Isa (Jesus) was born, he felt someone moving near his right shoulder who said: "Muhammad! Wait, I want to ask you a question." But Muhammad (pbuh) did not respond. Then another call came from behind his left shoulder, but again he did not answer it. Finally, an unimaginably beautiful mountain covered with the wealth and beauty of this world appeared in front of him and spoke to him with a human voice, but for the third time Muhammad (pbuh) did not respond. Then he asked Jibraeel about the three voices. Jibraeel said: "If you had listened to the first voice all your nation would have been corrupted because it is the voice of evil; and had you listened to the second one, all your nation would have been tyrants because it is the voice of Satan. And if you had stopped to hear the decorated mountain all your nation would have preferred this world to the eternal world."

Muhammad (pbuh) continued on his way and saw two beautiful angelic beings, one masculine and one feminine. They wore a beautiful dress and the fragrance of heaven. They kissed him between his eyes and left. He asked Jibraeel who were these two. He said: "These are the believers of your nation. They are going to live in happiness and die in happiness and they are going to enter paradise."

Then another angel appeared to him and offered him three cups to drink: one of water, one of milk, and one of wine. He took the cup of milk and drank, and Jibraeel said: "You have chosen the cup of fitra: innocence." Then a maiden-angel appeared and offered Muhammad (pbuh) three suits of cloth, one green, one white, and one black. He took the first two. Jibraeel said: "White is the colour of believers and green is the colour of paradise. All of your followers are going to be believers in this world and all are going to enter paradise in the next."

Then, as Muhammad (pbuh) was walking on the place where Isa (Jesus) taught, he entered the Temple of Sulaiman (Solomon) in Jerusalem. He found the temple full of angels waiting for him. Every angel in the temple represented a group of angels in paradise. Then he saw all the Prophets (alaihi salaam) standing in rows. He asked Jibraeel who all these were. Jibraeel said: "These are your brothers from among the prophets, and these angels are the leaders of all the angels of paradise." Then Jibraeel made the call to prayer, after which he said: "Muhammad, most honorable of beings in the sight of Allah, proceed to prayer." And Muhammad (pbuh) came forward and led the prescribed prayer, and all the prophets (alaihi salaam) and the angels followed him.

Adam spoke saying: - "Praise be to Allah who created me with His hands and ordered the angels to prostrate for me and brought out all the prophets from among my descendants!"

Then Nuh (Noah) said: - "Praise be to Allah who accepted my prayer and saved me and my people from drowning with my ship with the help of the angels, and honoured me!"

Then Ibraheem (Abraham) said: - "Praise be to Allah who took me as His friend and gave me a huge kingdom, and gave me prophets for descendants, and saved me from the fire of Namrood, and made it cool and safe for me!"

And Musa (Moses) said: - "Praise be to Allah who spoke to me without an intermediary and chose me for His message, and made me victorious over Pharaoh with the help of his angels, and gave me the Torah which Jibraeel taught me how to write, and adorned me with His love."

And Dawood (David) said:- "Praise be to Allah who revealed the Psalms to me, and softened the iron between my hands and all other elements, and chose me for His Message!"

And Sulaiman (Solomon) said:- "Praise be to Allah who has made subject to me the winds, the jinn, and human beings; who taught me the language of birds; who gave me a kingdom which he never gave to anyone after me, and supported me with all his angels."

And Isa (Jesus) said:- "Praise be to Allah who sent me as a Word from Him to the world, taught me the Torah and the Gospel, made me cure the deaf, the dumb, and the leper, made me bring back to life the dead by His permission, and supported me with Jibraeel and all His angels."

And Muhammad (pbuh) said:- "All of you praised your Rabb (Lord) and I praise Him also, Who sent me as a MOercy for human beings and revealed the Quran to me, expanded my breast, took out my sins, raised me up, made my Nation and all human beings the best that could be, and called me 'Kind and Merciful'!"

And Jibraeel said:- "That is why, Muhammad you are the last of Prophets and a Mercy for human beings. Prophets and angels, creations large and small, Allah and His angels send blessings and salutations on His Prophet! You also send much blessings upon him and utmost greetings! Increase your praise. Praise is an angel with two eyes and two wings that flies to Allah directly to ask forgiveness for its reciter until Judgment Day."

Then Muhammad (pbuh) continued on his way, riding on the buraq together with all the angels that came to greet and accompany him. Whenever he passed through a different universe he found the angels of that universe gathered to greet and dress him with all kinds of gifts and adornments. They dressed him with the cloaks of perfection and made him the possessor of every beauty.

Then Muhammad (pbuh) heard a very powerful voice coming from Israfeel from behind the veils of Lordly Power and Angelic Perfection: - "Paradises and heavens! Angels! Mountains and trees and oceans and rivers! Moons and suns and stars and planets and constellations! Plunge in to the beauty and perfection of Muhammad (pbuh). Angels and houris of paradise, walk with pride! Creation, be happy tonight, for we are receiving in our presence the Master of human beings and the Seal of Prophets."

THE ASCENT - AL MIRAAJ

Another voice came from an angel called Ismaeel, saying: "Heavenly stairs, show yourselves and descend!" upon which the ladder of heaven descended all the way from Firdaws, the loftiest paradise, until it reached the Temple of Sulaiman (Solomon). The arms of the ladder shone with two heavenly lights, red amethyst and green jasper of the greatest perfection. Every believer is going to see that ladder and climb on it. It has one hundred steps and it goes from the temple to the first heaven.

Jibraeel called Muhammad (pbuh) and the buraq climbed the first step. There Muhammad (pbuh) saw all kinds of angels red in colour. On the second step, Muhammad (pbuh) saw angels in yellow cloth, on the third step the angels were green and all of them were greeting him and giving him heavenly gifts which he took and gave to Jibraeel to keep as a trust for the believers on earth. On the fourth step messenger-angels came and said: "Jibraeel, keep rising for the Rabb (Lord) is waiting!" And Muhammad (pbuh) saw their subtle bodies shining and their faces glittering like mirrors in the sun.

Then he climbed the fifth step of the ladder and saw a huge world of angels that had no beginning and no end. All of them were praising Allah and their only words were: "There is no god only Allah." He asked Jibraeel: "How many are these angels?" for he was awed by their numbers. Jibraeel said: "If the skies and the earth and the moon and the sun and the stars and galaxies were crushed into dust and were all piled up, their dust particles would not be one tenth of the angels of this step of the ladder of paradise." Then the buraq

climbed up to the sixth step and there a great surprise awaited Muhammad (pbuh), and a great event took place which passed all description. An immense, white-upon-white angel sat on a chair of burnished white gold, accompanied by a great host of angels with wide, awe-struck gazes looking at the divine majesty. The white angel stood up and said: "Muhammad, welcome! I beg you to bless my seat by sitting on it." **When Muhammad (pbuh) sat on the chair, it melted with love for him and became a cloud of multicolored light chanting the praise of Allah. Out of every drop of that cloud Allah created another throne and another great angel sitting upon that throne.**

Then the buraq climbed to the seventh heaven and Muhammad (pbuh) saw angels whose light replaced the light of his vision, as in the case when someone looks at the sun and his sight is stolen away. At that time, he became able to see whatever these angels were seeing. Then he climbed the eighth step of the ladder and saw nothing but angels in prostration. He quickly climbed to the ninth so as not to disturb them. On the ninth step of the ladder he saw angels which passed description and he stood in awe, unable to comprehend their creation. At that time their leader appeared and said: "Rasool Allah! we are dressing you with the secret of our creation and enabling you to understand all things by Allah's permission."

Then Muhammad (pbuh) went up to the tenth step of the ladder and saw the angels that praised Allah in all the languages that had been created since the beginning of creation. Muhammad (pbuh) wondered at the limitless creations of Allah. At the eleventh step, the angels numbered even more than the angels of the fifth step, and out of them an infinite number of colours glowed, different for each single one of them. At the twelfth step, Muhammad (pbuh) found angels with faces like moons and eyes like stars. The light of their faces were covering their words. On the thirteenth step, the most beautiful angels appeared and these were the angels of Allah, praising Allah with soft voices and revelling in other-worldly beauty. Their music did not resemble any other kind of music and if one tone of that music were heard on the earth everyone on it would faint.

On the fourteenth step Muhammad (pbuh) saw the angel Ismaeel with seventy thousand angels riding on horses. Behind everyone of them was a battalion of one hundred thousand angels created from the attribute of Beauty. It is the duty of each and everyone of these angels to appear on earth at least one time to bring it the touch of his beauty. The fifteenth to the twenty-fourth steps were under the command of the angel Ruqyaeel, great and small, thin and wide. The twenty-fifth step to the ninety-ninth were presided by the angel Qalaeel. His right hand was under the first heaven. Between each two of his fingers there are seven hundred thousand angels continuously praising Allah. For each of the praises that they utter strings of pearls come out of their mouth. The diameter of every pearl is eighty-one miles. For each pearl Allah creates an angel that guards it and keeps it as a trust for human beings until they enter paradise.

Then Muhammad (pbuh) saw a huge throne from a precious element other than gold standing on five posts. Each post has two wings and each wing

encompasses the constellation of our world five times. On each wing rest fifty thousand angels, each of whom ask forgiveness for human beings in a different dialect and yet in complete harmony and with an angelic sound that melts the rocks of the seven earths. Out of each one of their tears Allah creates fifty thousand angels more whose task is to ask forgiveness in the same way as these angels do and in many times more dialects than they. Then the throne spoke to Muhammad (pbuh) and said: "I and the angels who guard me were created to carry human beings to their stations in paradise." Then, the throne invited Muhammad (pbuh) to sit on it, and when he sat he felt a pleasure he had never experienced before.

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE FIRST PARADISE: THE ABODE OF PEACE

Muhammad (pbuh) arrived at the hundredth step where he heard the angels praising and glorifying their Rabb (Lord) in the first heaven. It is called Dar as Salaam, the Abode of Peace, and has one hundred and twenty-four thousand doors. Each door represents a prophet. Jibraeel knocked at the door reserved for Muhammad (pbuh). A voice said from inside: "Who is it?" Jibraeel replied: "It is Jibraeel and Muhammad (pbuh)." The voice said: "Has he been sent for?" Jibraeel said: "Yes, he has been called to the Divine Presence." The door was opened. The angel Ismaeel came on a horse of light, covered in a cloth of light, holding a staff of light. In his right hand, Ismaeel carried all the deeds of human beings performed during the day, and in the other, all that they had done during the night. One thousand processions of angels accompanied him.

Ismaeel said: "Jibraeel, who is with you?" He replied: "The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)." Ismaeel said: "Has he been sent for?" Jibraeel replied yes. Then the buraq was invited to land on the first paradise, the nearest paradise to the world. It is also called As Samaa ad-Dunya: the nearest heaven. This paradise can be compared to a rolling wave held in mid-air; Allah spoke to it and said: "Be a red emerald," and it was. The praising of its inhabitants is: Subhana zil Mulki wal Malakut: "Praise be to the Possessor of the earthly and the heavenly dominions."

Then Muhammad (pbuh) looked at the first heaven and found an angel formed like a man. All the actions that belong to human beings are displayed to him. If the spirit of a believer comes to him he sends it to paradise; if the spirit of an unbeliever comes to him he asks forgiveness for it. When forgiveness is granted he sends it to paradise. He has a tablet made of light which hangs from the throne to the first heaven. He writes on it the names of those who are sent to paradise. Then Muhammad (pbuh) saw a man with an angelic power towards whom he felt a great attraction. When he asked who that man was, Jibraeel said: "This is your father, Adam." Adam greeted him and said to Muhammad (pbuh): "Welcome to the good son and the righteous Prophet."

There are two doors to the right and the left of Adam. When he looks at the right side he is happy and when he looks at the left he weeps. Muhammad (pbuh) asked what these two doors were. Jibraeel said: "The door to the right is the door to paradise and rewards. When Adam sees his children entering it he smiles and is happy. The door to the left leads to punishment and the fire. When Adam sees his children entering it he weeps and is sad for them. Out of each of his tears Allah creates an angel who asks forgiveness until the day when forgiveness is granted and they are allowed to enter into paradise."

Then the angels began to recite:

"I yearn to see the one whom Allah created

To be unique in creation!

No beloved one is purer nor more elevated than that one,

Allah's beloved is His servant, the Praised One (Ahmad)

Whose name was cut out from the name

Of the Most Glorious One.

His are the attributes that no eloquence can express.

It is enough honour that for him the moon split in two.

What more do you ask than Allah's perfecting of his beauty?

And truly Allah endowed him with the best character.

And truly Allah created his light to be the greatest blessing,

And He called him "Beloved" before He created creation.

And because of his light the sun was clouded over,

Because of his overwhelming light filling the firmament.

The clouds showed a great miracle and moved

Like a wild herd,

And thunder clapped and rain poured

Upon his mere request.

What more do you want than the softening of the rock

When he walked upon it with his sandalled feet,

Although you did not see its marks

When he tread on the sand?

Allah has elevated him to His presence

And the angelic world.

Were it not for him, there would never be paradise,

Nor heavens, and no earth.

What an honour Allah bestowed upon him when He gave

Ten salutations to those who would

Send to him only one!"

They moved for five hundred thousand light-years within the radius of the first paradise. The buraq moved faster than the speed of light, for each of its steps could reach wherever his sight did. The entire distances they travelled were filled with angels whose number is known only to the Creator, praising Him and glorifying Him with all kinds of praises. There was not one handful of space but it was occupied by an angel in prostration. They were all sizes, big and small. A voice came saying: "My beloved Muhammad! all these angels are glorifying Me, and I am sending all this praise as waves upon waves of angelic blessings to support human beings through their daily life. These blessings will guide them towards everything that concerns them, and open

for them all kinds of physical and spiritual knowledge that will help them progress in their ways of life, materially and spiritually. I will raise them through this angelic power and enable them to enter My paradise when they come to My Divine Presence."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE SECOND PARADISE: THE ABODE OF CONSTANCY

Then Jibraeel ordered the buraq to take Muhammad (pbuh) to the second paradise, whose name is Dar al Qarar, the Abode of Constancy. He then knocked at one of the doors of the second paradise. It was made of a heavenly element that has no name in our language. The angel Jarjaeel came with one thousand processions of angels who made an even greater and happier music than the angels of the first paradise. A voice said: "Who is it?" "Jibraeel."

"Who is accompanying you?"

"Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy."

Then the door was opened. Muhammad (pbuh) saw angels whose faces were like the disk of the sun, riding horses and girded with spiritual swords and lances. Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Jibraeel! who are these?" Jibraeel answered: "These are angels whom Allah created to support humans against devils. Their praising is: Subhana zil `Izzati wal Jabarut: 'Glory to the Rabb (Lord) of Force and Might,' and they are wearing yellow turbans on their heads. When they praise Allah their turbans move and radiate a yellow light that supports the light of the sun. They radiate another light also, which makes the devils run away and chases out gossip from the heart of believers." Then Muhammad (pbuh) saw two very handsome men sitting on a throne made of red rubies. He asked: "Who are these?" Jibraeel said: "They are your relatives, Yahya (John) and Isa (Jesus)." Isa (Jesus) was of a reddish complexion as if he came out of the bath. Then angels came to Muhammad (pbuh) in battalions, greeting him one by one. Allah extended time in such a way that one second was enough to greet all of the angels and pray with them, for the time of prayer had come. Isa (Jesus) and Yahya (John) greeted Muhammad (pbuh) farewell, and Jibraeel ordered the buraq to go to the third paradise.

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE THIRD PARADISE: THE ABODE OF ETERNITY

Muhammad (pbuh) moved in space for another five hundred thousand light-years until they reached the third paradise. It is called Dar ul Khuld: the Abode of Eternity. As they approached their destination they heard great voices that thundered all around them. "That is the sound of angels praising their Rabb (Lord)," said Jibraeel. As they approached they heard the music of the angels

by which everything moves in the orbits of the heavenly worlds. Jibraeel stopped at a door made of a pure, burnished heavenly copper, and he knocked. "Who is there?" said a voice behind the door. "Jibraeel, bringing Muhammad." "Has he been sent for?" "Yes." And the door was opened.

Muhammad (pbuh) entered and he saw an angel who changed from one shape to another in every moment. As he changed, his colour changed also. He seemed as one moving in a flash and yet immobile like a moving series of pictures and yet each picture is fixed in its place. Behind the angel Muhammad (pbuh) saw seven hundred thousand angels, all of them moving like the first angel, from one colourful image into another, like countless kaleidoscopes. Their feet reached the seven earths. Their musical praise was: Subhan al Hayy ul Qayyum al lazi la yamut: "Glory to the Living One, the Self-Subsistent who never dies!" The melody of their praise moved the entire heavens to unutterable joy which showered mercy on the earth and its inhabitants. Muhammad (pbuh) asked Jibraeel to ask the angel whether human beings could hear that music and if it were possible for them. The angel said: "Anyone who opens his angelic power and connects himself to us will hear that melody and he will receive the reward that we receive for uttering this praise." Then the angel recited:

Secret Reality! Angelic heart of light,
Kingdom of power, shining in steadfast light,
Firm in foundation, in beauty all complete,
Its essence descended from Adam's heart enthroned,
Just as the All Merciful descended on His Throne.
Essence of angels' light in Adam manifest,
And yoked with it Allahs' trust fulfilled,
The grant He made to all mankind.
Here appeared knowledge of Allah's light
Known only to chosen saints who alone can see.
Where His knowledge glows imperfection flees
And all worldly cares dim and disappear.
Here ends and begins the place of drawing near
Where the pure ones settled, similar to light upon light.

As they moved forward they saw a handsome man before whose beauty everything paled. "This is Yusuf (Joseph), the Prophet," said Jibraeel. Muhammad (pbuh) approached him and greeted him, and Yusuf (Joseph) greeted him back with the best greeting of heaven. Jibraeel said: "Out of the beauty of Yusuf (Joseph) came the beauty of all human beings. His is the beauty of the full moon, the sun and the stars." Yearning for angelic beauty will melt the hearts of the stone hearted. The faint hearted cannot hope to approach its secret, for they will immediately fall under its power and extinguish themselves in it. That is the meaning of the sweetness of painful yearning in love: the approach of beauty in its absence is sweeter still than its embrace and possession. For possession of the beloved entails the satisfaction of the lower self, while to remain in pain because of the beloved is better than comfort and contentment.

Behind Yusuf, Muhammad (pbuh) saw a great human crowd, all of them wearing radiant angelic dresses. Muhammad (pbuh) asked, "Who are these people, Jibraeel?" He answered: "Behind Yusuf (Joseph), Allah created seven hundred thousand posts in paradise; on each post there are seven hundred thousand red jewels; each jewel contains seven hundred thousand palaces; in every palace there are seven hundred thousand rooms, and in every room there are seven hundred thousand windows. These rooms are inhabited by human beings who carry angelic powers and spend their lives in love of each other and nature. Their hearts are filled with love of Me and devoid of low desires. They pine for Me and I pine for them. Every day these human beings appear at their windows and look at the people of paradise. From their beauty a great light shines forth, in the same way that the sun appears in the windows of the sky and sheds its light over the people on earth. Then the people of paradise say: 'Let us run towards the Lovers of Allah.' As soon as they reach them these Lovers adorn them with all kinds of rainbows and showers of light. They give them a dress made of green silk which symbolizes the qualities of those made perfect and agreeable to Allah."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE FOURTH PARADISE: THE SHELTERING GARDEN

Then Jibraeel called for prayer and Muhammad (pbuh) led the prayer among all the inhabitants of paradise. Then the buraq moved for another five hundred thousand light-years during which they travelled towards the fourth heaven which is called Jannat al-Maawa: the Sheltering Garden. There they heard a voice mixing angels and spirits. The door was made of silver upon a floor of gold. Again, the voice behind the door asked: "Who is there?" and Jibraeel answered, "Muhammad." "Has he been sent for?" "Yes." And the door opened.

Muhammad (pbuh) saw angels standing and sitting, lying and bowing, praising and saying: "Subhan al Malik al Quddus Rabb al Malaikati war Ruh," : "Glory to the holiest King, Rabb (Lord) of the angels and the Spirit!" Muhammad (pbuh) asked Jibraeel, "Jibraeel, is that not the prayer of my grandfather Abraham?" and Jibraeel said, "Yes, this is how your grandfather Abraham used to pray, and Allah was so happy with that prayer that he created an entire host of angels and filled the fourth heaven with them. He ordered them to repeat the same prayer. If anyone recites that praising among human beings, Allah will give them rewards according to the number of these angels."

Then Muhammad (pbuh) saw two angels, one of transparent crystal like spring water, and one denser like salt water. Jibraeel said: "One is the angel of sweet waters. He carries all the oceans of this universe with his right thumb. The other is the angel of salty waters. He carries all the oceans of this universe in his left thumb. These are the angels responsible for supporting every creature in creation through water, sweet or salty. They meet without

mixing, as Allah has said: "He has loosened the two seas. They meet. There is a barrier between them. They encroach not one upon the other." (40:19-20)

Behind them Muhammad (pbuh) saw angels shaped like birds, standing on the bank of a great river of paradise. When a human being on earth says: "There is no god only Allah," one of these angel-birds opens his wings. If the person says: "Glory to Allah," the angel-bird enters the river to swim in it. When the person says: "Praise be to Allah," the angel-bird dives into the water. When the person says: "Allah is greatest," the angel-bird comes out of the river. When the person says: "There is no power nor might except in Allah," the angel-bird will shake off the water from him, and seventy thousand drops of water will come from him, out of each of which Allah creates an angel that asks forgiveness for that person until Judgment Day. In addition to this, Allah orders forty thousand rewards written in the book of that one and keeps them for him until his resurrection.

Then Muhammad (pbuh) saw a man who leaned against the books of human beings, in which were inscribed all their deeds. Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Who is this?" Jibraeel said: "This is the Prophet Idris, peace be upon him." Muhammad (pbuh) approached Idris and greeted him. Idris greeted him back and said: "Welcome to the pious brother and perfect prophet." Above him Muhammad (pbuh) saw a dome of light on which was written: "There is no god only Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." Muhammad (pbuh) looked inside it and saw a venerable old man with a white beard filled with light and crowned with a white turban. He asked: "Who is that, Jibraeel?" He answered: "That is an angel representing the Prophet Idris." Muhammad (pbuh) greeted him and said: "My brother! Allah has elevated you and honoured you, and you have entered paradise before me and saw its pleasures." Idris said: "Beloved one! At first I did not enter paradise nor see its pleasure. But when I left this world I entered a garden with a door on which I saw: 'Beyond this door none may enter before Muhammad (pbuh) and his nation.' And I asked Allah, 'For the sake of my grandson Muhammad (pbuh), let me in.' Allah let me in, so now because of you I am in this place."

Then Idris recited:

"This Station sought by all for shelter,
This lofty place where all people bow subdued
And stands the noble Messenger
With wisdom and might endued,
Station of guidance and angelic light
Where gloom of night and orphans' sadness
At once are effaced,
This is the Station of direct communication
And the firm foothold for those determined to reach.
The All-Merciful called him His beloved one
And he is the beloved one of the universe
And from his light came the light of all life."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE FIFTH PARADISE: THE GARDEN OF BEAUTY AND FELICITY

Muhammad (pbuh) travelled for five hundred thousand light-years, after which he arrived at the fifth paradise which is called Jannat al Naeem: "the Garden of Beauty and Felicity." Its door is made of mixed gold and silver from heaven. Jibraeel knocked at the door and a voice said: "Who is it?" "Jibraeel, bringing Muhammad (pbuh)." "Has he been sent for?" "Yes." "Welcome, Beloved one, to the fifth paradise!" **The door opened and Muhammad (pbuh) saw five beautiful ladies whose radiant light among their servants made them appear like diamonds surrounded by pearls. His heart was moved towards them. He asked Jibraeel: "Who are these ladies?" He answered: "This is Hawwa (Eve), the mother of human beings, this is the Virgin Maryam (Mary), the mother of Isa (Jesus), this is Musa's (Moses') mother Yukabid, and this is Assia, the wife of Pharaoh." The fifth lady looked like a sun among stars. Her light shone over the rest of the inhabitants of that paradise like a gentle breeze passing through the tree-leaves. Jibraeel said: "This is an angel representing your daughter Fatima"**

Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Jibraeel, what is the secret of this paradise?" Jibraeel said: "Allah created this paradise to reflect the beauty and perfection of women. The light of this paradise is the source of the angelic lights of all women on earth. Women have been created to carry the secret of creation in themselves. Allah has honoured them greatly by making their wombs the repository of His word which represents the Spirit. He looks at the most sacred place and there descends His mercy and blessings. He perfected that place and covered it with three protective layers to shelter it from any damage. The first is a layer of light, the second a layer of love, and the third a layer of beauty. There he fashions and creates human beings after His likeness, as Muhammad (pbuh) said: 'Allah created Adam after His likeness.' He orders the angels of the womb to perfect His creation by giving the baby life, beauty, health, intelligence, and all kinds of perfect attributes that will make each one distinguished among human beings."

"Women are not created weaker but more generous than men. They are created more beautiful and less fierce, as beauty hates to hurt and harm others. That is why they seem weak to people, but in reality they are not. Angels are the strongest of created beings, and women are closer to the angelic nature than men, as they are readier than men to carry angelic light. It is the good manners and ethics of spirituality which they carry which makes them less forceful than men. Even physically, however, they are extremely strong. They undergo great upheavals in their body without flinching for the sake of childbirth, and face the direst physical conditions more successfully than men because Allah has enabled them to insure the survival of generations."

"Allah gave women five angelic qualities which men rarely have. They are the source of peace, as Allah said that He created them "so that you might find rest in them" (30:21). This is the attribute of the first paradise which is named "the Abode of Peace." They are oasis of constancy in the midst of chaos and change. That is why they give birth as the mother nurtures and shelters the baby more reliably than the father. This is the attribute of the second paradise, which is named 'the Abode of Constancy.' They perpetuate generations. Through their offspring Allah creates angelic prophets and saints who establish His perpetual remembrance on earth as the angels establish it in heaven. This is the attribute of the third paradise which is named 'the Abode of Eternity.' They are generous and bountiful. They are described as 'a fertile land' in all Scriptures because they give without counting, including life. They sacrifice themselves for the sake of another creation, and this is the attribute of the fourth paradise which is named 'the Sheltering Garden.' Finally, they are the source of Beauty. Through their softness and subtlety, Allah has crowned the earth with the diadem of angelic grace. This is the attribute of the fifth paradise which is named "the Garden of Beauty."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE SIXTH PARADISE: THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Muhammad (pbuh) travelled again on the buraq for five hundred thousand years. On his way to the sixth paradise which is called Jannat al Aden: "the Garden of Eden," he saw nations and nations of saffron-coloured angels standing on pedestals of pink marble. They had one thousand wings and on each wing there were one thousand faces. Each face had one thousand mouths saying: "Praise be to the Rabb (Lord) of Majesty and Splendour!" Jibraeel knocked at the door of the sixth paradise which was made of aquamarine and gold. As usual, a voice asked from behind the door who was there and the answer was given: "Jibraeel, bringing Muhammad (pbuh)." "Has he been sent for?" said the voice. "Yes," replied Jibraeel. The door was opened. Muhammad (pbuh) entered and what he saw passed all imagination and all recorded books, all fabled accounts, all legends, all histories.

Silent gold sat on stars of pearl. Under every pearl fifty thousand angels whirled in a lake of galaxies producing a heavenly sound like a million birds humming on top of the buzzing of a million bees. Everything is moving at the speed of light but at the same time everything is silent and still. Each angel spoke words of greetings to Muhammad (pbuh) at the same time in a different language but distinctly and without any clash one with the other. Their words were phrased in diadems and garlands of light which he wore one after the other on his head and around his neck. A huge angel named Semlaeel appeared at the head of ten thousand processions of similar angels wearing a crown of multi-coloured garnets and reciting praise of Allah in an angelic language which made each angel swoon and rise up in turn. These were the karubiyyun: 'Those brought near.' No one on earth can see them and live because of the intensity of their light which they borrow from the One they behold.

Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Jibraeel! What is this untarnished heavenly sound?" "Rasool Allah!" Jibraeel answered, "This is the music of the angelic souls in the presence of their Rabb (Lord) trembling like a leaf, not daring to move or speak, awed and annihilated by perfection, yet vivified and moved by divine Light, rushing to the divine meeting and announcing your coming."

Muhammad (pbuh) saw a honey-coloured angel of astounding beauty and of yet even greater majesty so that his majesty overpowered his beauty. He had a long mane of hair and a long beard out of which light flashed like thunderbolts. He had a stern face and yet a child's eyes. His enormous chest seemed to heave like a dormant volcano under his shirt of heavenly brocade. When Muhammad (pbuh) enquired about him, Jibraeel said: "This is your brother Musa (Moses). He is the one who prayed six times on the Mount of Sinai in order to be a simple servant in your Nation. He is the vanquisher of tyrants and the secret of his father Yaqoob (Jacob). Allah wrote for him the character of a fiery servant. That is why he approached the burning bush and was not afraid when His Rabb (Lord) wanted to speak to him."

Musa (Moses) was crying and he said to Muhammad (pbuh): "Prophet of the Last Nation! Intercede for me and my people." Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Why are you crying, my brother Musa (Moses)?" He replied: "I cry for love of you and for the great honour where Allah has raised you and made your nation countless people and other nations very few, even mine. Muhammad! you are the seal of prophets and the light of creation. Allah is raising you today to His presence, to a station where no-one can reach. Remember me there as Allah made you the intercessor for all human beings including prophets, from Adam to Isa (Jesus). Then he recited:

"Prophet sprung from Hashim's line,
Lover of Him Who is lauded above,
Sealer of every book revealed to mankind.
Opener of treasured knowledge sublime
Who mounted the buraq to ascend to his Rabb (Lord),
Allah in Whose presence none before had remained,
Approach that place where only angels draw near
Messenger of Allah before whom winds and clouds move
And lay open clear myriad paths to celestial light.
For your intercession human souls plead and yearn,
Prophet at whose sight angels delight!
It is you for whom paradise was made and adorned,
For you the furthest-tree of farthest limit is made to stand
And bear the fruit of compassion in every land.
Beloved Muhammad, may Allah grant us to be
Always numbered in your noble band."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE SEVENTH PARADISE: JANNAT AL FIRDAWS

Muhammad (pbuh) arrived at the seventh paradise whose roof touches the Heavenly Throne and whose name is Jannat al Firdaws, after a travel of five hundred thousand light-years. He knocked at the door which was made of pure emerald, topaz, beryl, and gold. After he entered he saw another gate of light. From it came the praise of nations of hidden angels at whose sight one would die of awe because of their intense beauty. Their laud was simply: "Praise be to the Creator of Light!" Beyond this it is not permitted to speak about them. Muhammad (pbuh) greeted them with the greeting of peace and proceeded past the gate of gold to a dome of light which encompassed all the previous heavens, although the distance he had travelled between the sixth and the seventh heaven was the same as that between each two of the other layers of paradise.

Inside the dome Muhammad (pbuh) saw an angelic being which resembled him in every fashion and who was leaning against a wall of white silk which seemed to move like a waterfall and yet stand firm. Muhammad (pbuh) asked who that was and Jibraeel said: "This is your grandfather Ibraheem (Abraham), the leader of the pure of heart and a great one among prophets." Ibraheem (Abraham) said: "Welcome to the pious son and the perfected Prophet!" Around Ibraheem (Abraham) stood crowned angels. Each of their crowns contained four hundred diamonds, each worth more than what the entire earth contains. At their service stood throngs of angels crowned with the light of the previous angels and all were reading the Ayat ul Kursi. Jibraeel said: "This is the verse that keeps the universe firm in the balance. This is the secret of the order of Creation." And the angels recited:

Allah! There is no god save Him, the Living, the Eternal, Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes him. Unto him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in earth. Who is he that intercedes with him save by His leave? He knows that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, While they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He will. His Kursi includes the heavens and the earth, And He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous. (2:255)

Circumambulating the building against which Ibraheem (Abraham) leaned, the entire universes, the throngs of angels of the seven heavens, the angels of mercy and the angels of wrath, the angels of beauty, the angels brought near, the great and the small angels, the visible and the invisible angels, and all the human beings whose angelic souls had been purified and elevated to the divine presence, the prophets, the truthful saints, the martyrs, the righteous, all of creation whirled and turned in the same direction as every heavenly body, counterclockwise, around the Kaaba of the heavens. Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Jibraeel, How wondrous are the incredible marvels of my Rabb (Lord)!" And Jibraeel replied: "Muhammad! You have seen only a glimpse of the wonders of Allah."

Blessings and Peace on Muhammad, his Family, and his Companions.

THE FURTHEST-TREE OF THE FURTHEST BOUNDARY

Muhammad (pbuh) and Jibraeel travelled once more until they reached the absolute limit of the created intellect, named Sidrat al Muntaha: "The Furthest-Tree of the Furthest Boundary." There they saw nothing which the tongue could describe. The effect of the sight they beheld on Muhammad (pbuh) is a secret which took place in his heart. A sound came to them from above which dissipated some of Muhammad's (pbuh) astonishment. At that time he saw a large tree which does not resemble any of the trees of paradise, a tree without description, covering all the paradises, heavens, and universes. The trunk of the tree was a huge angel named Samrafeel. Muhammad (pbuh) could see nothing else besides it. It grew from an infinite, unimaginable, indescribable ocean of musk. **The tree had an infinite number of branches, created from a heavenly element that has no name in a created language. The distance between one branch and another was five hundred thousand light-years. On every branch there was an infinite number of leaves. If all the created universes were placed on a single one of these leaves they would disappear, like an atom disappears inside an ocean of water.** On every leaf sat a huge angel in a multi-coloured light. On his head was a crown of light and in his hand a staff of light. Written on their forehead was the inscription: "We are the inhabitants of the Furthest-Tree." Their praise was: "Praise be to Allah Who has no end." Their names are the Sarufiyyun, "The secret ones," because they are created from the absolute secret of their Rabb (Lord).

From the trunk of the tree four absolute springs issued. The first was a pure, transparent, crystal water; the second was a river of white milk; the third was a river of pleasurable, untarnished wine that elevates without abasing; the fourth was a river of pure honey mixed with gold. Inside the trunk was the prayer-niche of Jibraeel, and his constant words of praise are: Allahu Akbar: Allah is Great! to which the reply always comes from above: Ana Akbar: I am Greater! Ana Akbar: I am Greater!

Jibraeel entered his prayer-niche and he called for the prayer. All the Sarufiyyun stood in rows and Muhammad (pbuh) led them in prayer. The prayer finished and all the Sarufiyyun were ordered to give their greetings to Muhammad (pbuh) one after the other. After this, a great angel came out from behind Jibraeel's prayer-niche and asked Muhammad (pbuh) to approach.

Muhammad (pbuh) and Jibraeel entered the trunk of the tree and reached in a glance the entire sight of creation. On the top of the tree they saw Adam and Hawwa and Nuh, Ibraheem, Musa, Isa, and all the other prophets whom they had just visited. With them they saw all their respective nations, sitting with them in spirit together with those of Muhammad's nation who had already left

this world. All were sitting there together, happy, basking in the love and beauty of their Rabb's (Lord's) mercy and praising Him.

That Furthest-Tree carries the knowledge of all of Allah's creation from the beginning of its sequence in time. Whatever is created is part of it and contained in it. It was called the tree "of the furthestmost boundary" because everything ends in it and after it begins a new life. Allah decorated it with the light of His own essence. It has three characteristics: a continuous shade of light extending over every creation, a continuous pleasure reaching everyone from the fruit of its branches, and a continuous fragrance from its flowers scented with beauty the life of creation.

Then Muhammad (pbuh) and Jibraeel moved forward. A stern and severe angel appeared and covered the horizon before them. Jibraeel said: "Muhammad! This is the angel of death, Azraeel." The angel of death said: "Welcome, Muhammad! You who bear goodness, and welcome to all the prophets and their nations. This is the place from which I gaze at the destinies of every person and seize the spirits of those whom I am commanded to bring to eternal life."

Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Tell me how you take the souls of the dying." The angel of death revealed to Muhammad (pbuh): "When Allah orders me to take the spirit of a human being at the last hour of his life and the first hour of his afterlife, I send to him my deputies who carry with them the smell of paradise and a branch from the tree of paradise which they put between his eyes. When that sweet smell reaches him and he catches a glimpse of that heavenly branch, his spirit is attracted and his soul begins to ascend to paradise, until it reaches his throat. At that time, I descend from my place and I take his spirit with the greatest care, because Allah wants this moment to be easy on His servant. I then carry his soul to paradise. On the way, whenever I pass by angels, then angels will greet this soul and salute it until it reaches the presence of its Rabb (Lord). Allah the Exalted says to that soul at that time: "Welcome to the good spirit which I created and placed in a good body! My angels! Write the upper layer of paradise as a reward for that person." Then angels take him up to paradise, where he will see what Allah has prepared for him and he will be happy to stay there. However, Allah orders the spirit to go back to his body on earth, where he can see the people washing him, crying for him, and all those who love him standing around him until they take the body to the grave. There the soil says to him: "Welcome, my beloved one! I was always yearning for you when you were above me. Now you are in me and I will show you what I am going to give you." Immediately, his grave will be enlarged beyond sight, until the two angels of the grave come and ask him about his Rabb (Lord) and about his belief. He will give them the correct answers by Allah's permission. At that time they will open for him a door leading to paradise and his spirit will go back upward to the same place where Allah first called him to His presence."

"I remember when death had separated us.
I consoled myself with the thought of the Beloved Prophet.
I said: All of us go on this way one day.

Who does not die today, he will die tomorrow.
Be happy, my soul, because your Rabb (Lord) is waiting for you
And the beloved one is calling you."

Then Jibraeel moved forward another five hundred thousand light-years, mounted on the buraq, until they reached a place where Jibraeel began to slow down. Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Jibraeel! Why are you slowing down? Are you leaving me?" Jibraeel replied: "I cannot go further." Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Jibraeel, don't leave me alone." "Muhammad!" Jibraeel said, "You now have to step down from the buraq and move to a place which no-one has entered before you." At that moment the buraq stopped and was unable to move further. Muhammad (pbuh) stepped down and moved hesitantly. Jibraeel said: "Muhammad, move forward without fear. If I were to continue with you I would be annihilated for the greatness of the Light."

Muhammad (pbuh) moved, and moved, and moved. He saw Mikaeel standing ahead of him, afraid and trembling. The light of his face was changing quickly from one colour to another. Muhammad (pbuh) asked: "Mikaeel, is this your station?" "Yes," Mikaeel answered, "and if I were to trespass it I would be annihilated. But you go on and don't stop." Muhammad (pbuh) moved, and moved, and moved. Then he found Israfeel with his four huge wings, one of which covered his face to veil him from the light which came from the horizon of everything. Muhammad (pbuh) asked him: "Is this your station, Israfeel?" Israfeel said, "Yes. If I trespass it, that light would burn me. But you move on and do not fear." And Muhammad (pbuh) moved, and moved, and moved. He saw the Spirit to whom Allah gave the power of earth and the heavens. From the top of his head to the bottom of his feet and from every cell of his there were faces with traits of subtle light, the number of which no-one knows but Allah, and from the each of which Allah creates an angel-spirit which looks like the Spirit, whom He then takes to himself as the spirit-angels of the Divine Presence.

Every day the Spirit looks into hell three times, and because of the cool light of his angelic gaze the fire of hell melts until it becomes as a rainbow. The Spirit also looks into paradise three times every day and extends to it the divine light which Allah gives him. If Allah gathered the tears of the eyes of the Spirit it would flood all the created universes and make Nuh's (Noah's) flood seem like the drop gathered by a needle dipped into the ocean. This is the Spirit whom Allah mentioned in the Quran:

"The day when the Spirit and the angels rise, no-one shall speak except with permission from His Rabb (Lord)."

Muhammad (pbuh) said: "Spirit! Is this your station?" The spirit replied: "Yes, and if I trespass it I will be annihilated by the light which I am receiving. Muhammad! Move forward and do not be afraid. You are invited and you have permission." Muhammad (pbuh) moved forward. Allah inspired his heart with the following discourse: "I the Rabb (Lord), have veiled myself from the inhabitants of paradise, as I have veiled myself from the inhabitants of the

earth. As I veiled Myself from their minds, I veiled myself from their vision. I am never in anything, and I am never away from anything."

Muhammad (pbuh) then moved through one veil after another until he passed through one thousand veils. Finally he opened the Veil of Oneness. He found himself like a lamp suspended in the middle of a divine air. He saw a magnificent, great and unutterable matter. He asked his Rabb (Lord) to give him firmness and strength. He felt that a drop of that presence was put on his tongue and he found it cooler than ice and sweeter than honey. Nothing on earth and the seven paradises tasted like it. With this drop, Allah put into Muhammad's heart the knowledge of the First and the Last, the heavenly and the earthly. All this was revealed to him in one instant shorter than the fastest second. He was ordered to move forward. As he moved he found himself elevated on a throne that can never be described, now or later. Three additional drops were given to him: one on his shoulder consisting in majesty, one in his heart consisting in mercy, and an additional one on his tongue which consisted in eloquence. Then a voice came from that presence, which no created being had heard before: "Muhammad! I have made you the intercessor for everyone." At that moment Muhammad (pbuh) felt his mind enraptured and taken away to be replaced with an astonishing secret. He was placed in the fields of Allah's Eternity and Endlessness. In the first he found no beginning and in the second he found no end. Then Allah revealed to Him: "My end is in My beginning and My beginning is in My end." Then Muhammad (pbuh) knew that all doors were absolutely closed except those that led to Allah, that Allah cannot be described within the confine of a place in speech, and that Allah encompasses the everywhere of all places. This is a secret that no tongue can be stirred to express, no door opened to reveal, and no answer can define. He is the Guide to Himself and the Rabb (Lord) of His own description. He is the Beauty of all beauty and the speech by which to describe Himself belongs to Him alone.

Allah my Creator, in Your infinity do I stand amazed.
In Your ocean of unity do I drown submerged.
Allah, at times You are close to me in familiar intimacy.
At times You leave me without, veiled and strange,
Hidden in Your sovereign Majesty.
Give me to drink the wine of Your love,
For only drunk from it am I able to say:
My Rabb (Lord)! Let me see You.

Muhammad (pbuh) then looked on his right and saw nothing except His Rabb (Lord), then on his left and saw nothing except his Rabb (Lord), then to the front, to the back, and above him, and he saw nothing except his Rabb (Lord). He hated to leave that honoured and blessed place. But Allah said: "Muhammad, you are a Messenger to My servants as all Messengers, if you stay here you would never be able to communicate My Message. Therefore descend back to earth, and communicate My message to My servants. Whenever you want to be in the same state as you are now, make your prayers, and I shall open this state for you." This is why Muhammad

(pbuh) stated: "Prayer is the apple of my eyes," and he called it also: "Our rest."

Then Muhammad (pbuh) was ordered to go back to earth, but he left the self in heaven and his spirit at the Furthest-tree, and his heart in the unutterable divine presence while his secret was left suspended without place. His self wondered: "Where is the heart?" And the Heart wondered: "Where is the spirit?" And the spirit wondered: "Where is the secret?" And the secret wondered where it was. And Allah revealed: "Self of Muhammad (pbuh)! I granted you the blessing and the forgiveness, and spirit! I granted you the mercy and the honour, and heart! I granted you the love and the beauty, and secret, you have Me." Allah then revealed to Muhammad (pbuh) the order to recite: "He is the one who sends blessings on you, together with His angels, in order to bring you out from darkness into light" (33:43). "Muhammad! I have ordered the angels of all My heavens, those created and those yet uncreated, to send blessings on you and My creation unceasingly, with My own praise. I am your Rabb (Lord) Who said: My Mercy has taken over My anger. And all My angels I have created for you human beings." And Allah ordered Muhammad (pbuh) to descend with this angelic message back to earth.

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