

MIRAJ

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MIRAJ An ascent. Muhammad's journey to Heaven; called also *Isra* "the nocturnal journey." It [took] place in the twelfth year of the Prophet's mission, in the month of Rabi l'Awwal.

According to 'Abdu 'l-Haqq, there are some divines who have regarded this miraculous event as a mere vision, but, he adds, the majority hold it to be a literal journey.

The only mention of the vision in the Qur'an is contained in Surah 17:1 – "Praise be to Him who carried His servant by night from the Masjidu 'l-Haram (i.e. the Makkan [mosque]) to the Masjidu 'l-Aqsa (i.e. the [mosque] of Jerusalem)."

The following is the description of the journey given in the *Mishkatu 'l-Masabih*. Muhammad is related to have said :

"Whilst I was sleeping upon my side, he (Gabriel) came to me, and cut me open from my breast to below my navel, and took out my heart, and washed the cavity with Zam-zam water, and then filled my heart with Faith and Science [wisdom and faith]. After this, a white animal was brought for me to ride upon. Its size was between that of a mule and an ass and it stretched as far as the eye could see. [The animal's step was so wide that it reached the farthest point within the reach of Buraq's sight] The name of the animal was Buraq. Then I mounted the animal, and ascended until we arrived at the lowest heaven, and Gabriel demanded that the door should be opened. And it was asked, 'Who is it ?' and he said, 'I am Gabriel.' And they then said, 'Who is with you?' and he answered, 'It is Muhammad.' They said, 'Has Muhammad been called to the office of a Prophet?' He said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' Then the door was opened; and when I arrived in the first heaven, behold, I saw Adam. And Gabriel said to me, 'This is your father Adam, salute him.' Then I saluted Adam, and he answered it, and said, 'You are welcome, O good son, and good Prophet!'

After that Gabriel took me above, and we reached the second heaven; and he asked the door to be opened, and it was said, 'Who is it?' He said, 'I am Gabriel.' It was

said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Was he called?' He said, 'Yes.' It was said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' Then the door was opened; and when I arrived in the second region, behold, I saw John and Jesus. And Gabriel said, 'This is John and this is Jesus; salute both of them.' Then I saluted them, and they returned it. After that they said, 'Welcome good brother and Prophet.'

After that we went up to the third heaven and asked the door to be opened; and it was said, 'Who is it?' Gabriel said, 'I am Gabriel.' They said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' They said, 'Was he called?' Gabriel said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' Then the door was opened; and when I entered the third heaven, behold, I saw Joseph. And Gabriel said, 'This is Joseph, salute him.' Then I did so, and he answered it, and said, 'Welcome, good brother and good Prophet.'

After that Gabriel took me to the fourth heaven, and asked the door to be opened; it was said, 'Who is that?' He said, 'I am Gabriel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Was he called?' He said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' And the door was opened; and when I entered the fourth heaven, behold, I saw Enoch. And Gabriel said, 'This is Enoch, salute him.' And I did so, and he answered it, and said, 'Welcome, good brother and Prophet.'

After that Gabriel took me to the fifth heaven, and asked the door to be opened; and it was said, 'Who is there?' He said, 'I am Gabriel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' They said, 'Was he called?' He said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' Then the door was opened; and when I arrived in the fifth region, behold, I saw Aaron. And Gabriel said, 'This is Aaron, salute him.' And I did so, and he returned it, and said, 'Welcome good brother and Prophet.'

After that Gabriel took me to the sixth heaven, and asked the door to be opened; and they said, 'Who is there?' He said, 'I am Gabriel.' They said, 'And who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' They said, 'Was he called?' He said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is

well.' Then the door was opened; and when I entered the sixth heaven, behold, I saw Moses. And Gabriel said, 'This is Moses, salute him.' And I did so; and he returned it, and said, 'Welcome, good brother and Prophet.' And when I passed him, he wept. And I said to him, 'What makes you weep?' He said, 'Because one is sent after me, of whose people more will enter Paradise than of mine.'

After that Gabriel took me up to the seventh heaven, and asked the door to be opened; and it was said, 'Who is it?' He said, 'I am Gabriel.' And it was said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' They said, 'Was he called?' He said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Welcome Muhammad; his coming is well.' Then I entered the seventh heaven, and behold, I saw Abraham. And Gabriel said, 'This is Abraham, your father, salute him'; which I did, and he returned it, and said, 'Welcome good son and good Prophet.'

After that I was taken up to the tree called *Sidratu 'l-Muntaha*; and behold its fruits were like water-pots, and its leaves like elephant's ears. And Gabriel said, 'This is *Sidratu 'l-Muntaha*' And I saw four rivers there; two of them hidden, and two manifest. I said to Gabriel, 'What are these?' He said, 'These two concealed rivers are in Paradise; and the two manifest are the Nile and the Euphrates.' After that, I was shown the *Baitu 'l-M'amur*. After that, a vessel full of wine, another full of milk, and another of honey, were brought to me; and I took the milk and drank it. And Gabriel said, 'Milk is religion; you and your people will be of it,'

After that the divine orders for prayers were fifty every day. Then I returned, and passed by Moses; and he said, 'What have you been ordered?' I said, 'Fifty prayers every day.' Then Moses said, 'Verily, your people will not be able to perform fifty prayers every day; and verily, I swear by God, I tried men before you; I applied a remedy to the sons of Israel, but it had not the desired effect. Then return to your Lord, and ask your people to be released from that. And I returned; and ten prayers were taken off. Then I went to Moses, and he said as before; and I returned to God's court, and ten more prayers were curtailed. Then I returned to Moses, and he said as before; then I returned to God's court, and ten more were taken off. And I went to Moses, and he said as before; then I returned to God, and ten more were lessened. Then I went to Moses, and he said as before; then I went to God's court, and was ordered five prayers every day. Then I went to Moses, and he said, 'How many

have you been ordered?' I said, 'Five prayers every day.' He said, 'Verily, your people will not be able to perform five prayers every day; for, verily, I tried men before you, and applied the severest remedy to the sons of Israel. Then return to your Lord, and ask them to be lightened.' I said 'I have asked Him till I am quite ashamed. I cannot return to Him again. But I am satisfied, and resign the work of my people to God,' Then, when I passed from that place a crier called out, 'I have established divine commandments, and have made them easy to My servants.'

[*This hadith can be found in Sahih Bukhari Volume 1, Book 8, Number 345; Volume 4, Book 54, Number 429; Volume 5, Book 58, Number 227; Volume 9, Book 93, Number 608 Sahih Muslim Book 001, Number 0309; Book 001, Number 0313*]

Suratu 'l-Mi'raj is a title of the 17th chapter of the Qur'an, in the first verse of which there is a reference to the night journey of Muhammad. It is called also the Surat Bani Isra'il, or the Chapter of the Children of Israel.