

# The Night Journey and the Ascent through the Heavens – Sharh Usool ath-Thalaathah by Shaikh Saalih al-Fawzaan

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**Sharh-ul-Usool-ith-Thalaathah by Shaikh Saalih al-Fawzaan**  
**Translated by Dawud Burbank rahimahullaah**

Below in the Transcription of the Audio Explanation of Dawud Burbank

## The Night Journey and the Ascent through the Heavens (Israa wa Miraaaj)

وبعد العشر عرج به إلى السماء ، وفرضت عليه الصلوات الخمس ، وصلى في مكة ثلاث سنين

After the ten years, he was taken up through the heavens and the five daily prayers were made obligatory upon him and he prayed in Makkah for three years.<sup>[61]</sup>

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[61] «After the ten years, he was taken up through the heavens» He *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* remained for ten years upon this – forbidding *shirk* and calling to *tawheed*, laying down this foundation. Then, in the eleventh year, he was taken by night from *Masjid al-Haraam* (the Sacred Mosque) to *Masjid al-Aqsaa* (the farthest mosque, i.e. the mosque in Jerusalem).

He, the Most High, said:

**«Perfect and Exalted is He who took His slave on a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest mosque.» [17:1]**

Whilst he *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* was sleeping in the house of Umm Haani., Jibreel *`alaihissalaatuwassalaam* came to him and had with him an animal called *al-Buraaq*, which was smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey. Its steps were as far apart as the distance which it could see. So, he *`alaihissalaatuwassalaam* was caused to ride upon it and he was taken to Jerusalem at night.

(أسرى) is from (السرى) which means: ‘to travel by night.’ This was something special to him *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* and from the miracles given to him *`alaihissalaatuwassalaam*. So there, he met the prophets in Jerusalem, then he *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* was taken up through the Heavens. Meaning: he was raised up from Jerusalem to the heavens in the company of Jibreel – and the meaning of (العروج) is ‘to ascend.’

So, he was taken on a night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and he was taken up from Jerusalem to the heavens – meaning: Jibreel *`alaihissalaam* took him up and he passed by the inhabitants of the heavens. At each level, Jibreel requested that it should be opened for him until he came to the seventh heaven.

Then, he ascended over the heavens to the farthest lote tree and there Allaah spoke to him with whatever He wished from His revelation and He made obligatory upon him the five daily prayers. So, He obligated for each day and night fifty prayers. However, Moosaa *`alaihissalaam* advised our Prophet Muhammad *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* to ask his Lord for a reduction, for his nation would not be able to bear fifty

prayers in each day and night. So, Allaah's Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* kept going back to his Lord asking for a reduction until they came to be five.

Then, Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, said, as occurs in the *hadeeth* of the *Israa*. and the *Mi`raaj*:

«أمضيت فريضتي ، وخففت عن عبادي ، وأجزيتي الحسنة عشرة»

**«I have established My obligatory duty and I have made it easy upon My servants, and I will reward a good deed ten times over.»**[1]

In the narration of Anas from Aboo Dharr, He said:

**«They are five and they are fifty .»**[2]

Meaning: They are five with regards to the action and fifty in the balance (of good deeds).

Five prayers in each day and night are equal to fifty prayers upon the balance, because a good deed is rewarded with ten times its like. So a single prayer takes the place of ten prayers.

The Night Journey is mentioned at the beginning of *Soorah Subhaan* (the 17<sup>th</sup> *soorah*) [also known as] *Soorah Bane Israa.eel*; and the *Mi`raaj* is mentioned at the beginning of *Sooratu-Najm*:

**«And he saw Jibreel on another occasion. By the farthest lote tree. Near it is the Garden of Refuge. When the lote tree was covered by that which covered it! His (*sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*) sight did not deviate to the right or left nor did it go beyond that with which he was commanded. He certainly saw tremendous signs of his Lord.»** [54:13-18]

This was with regard to the *Mi`raaj*.

He descended from the heaven to Jerusalem, then he returned to Makkah in the same night. So, in the morning he informed the people about that. The believers increased in *eemaan*, but as for the disbelievers, then their evil increased and they became happy at this and went about broadcasting it: "How can your companion claim that he went to Jerusalem and came back in a single night when we have to exert ourselves upon camels to reach it, taking a whole month to go there and a month to come back?!"

So, they made analogy between the ability of the Creator and the ability of the creation, for the *Israa*. and the *Mi`raaj* were a test from Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, for the people. The people of *shirk* increased in mockery and their evil and their belittlement of the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* whereas the believers increased in *eemaan*.

Therefore when the people of *shirk* said to Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq *radiyallaahu`anhu*: "Look at your companion – what he is saying!" He said: "What is he saying?" They said: "He is claiming that he went to Jerusalem (and that he was taken up through the heavens) and that he came back in a single night!" Aboo Bakr as-Siddeeq said: "If he said it, then it is just as he said. He has spoken the truth." They said: "How can that be?" He said: "I attest to the truth of what he says with regard to something greater than that. I attest to the truth with regard to the news coming down from the heavens upon him. So, how should I not attest to the truth of what he says with regard to his being taken at night to Jerusalem?"[3]

This [night journey and ascension] came about through the ability of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, not through the ability of the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam*. It was only through the ability of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic. This was one of the miracles given to the Messenger *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* and is a case of Allaah showing his honorable status with his Lord, the Mighty and Majestic.

It must be held as a person's creed and belief that he *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* was taken on the Night

Journey and taken up through the Heavens with his soul and his body together whilst awake and not as a dream; because some people say: "He was taken on the Night Journey with his soul, and as for his body, then it did not go outside Makkah. And he was only taken on the Night Journey and taken up through the heavens with his soul." This is false and futile speech. Rather he was taken on the Night Journey with his soul and his body *`alaihissalaatuwassalaam* and he was carried upon *al-Buraaq*. And this was in a state of being awake, not asleep, since if it had happened with his soul only or if it had been a dream, then what would have been the difference between it and (other) dreams.

Whereas Allaah, the Majestic and Most High, says:

**«Perfect and Exalted is He who took His `abd on a journey by night.» [17:1]**

The *`abd* is used to apply to the soul and the body together. It is not used for just the soul alone that it be described as *`abd*, nor is it applied to the body alone that is an *`abd*. It is not used except to apply to the soul and the body combined, for He did not say: "Perfect and Exalted is He who took the soul of His *`abd*." Rather He said: «...took His *`abd* on a journey by night.»

The *`abd* is the combination of the soul and the body. And Allaah, the Majestic and Most High, is not rendered incapable by anything and He is the One who has full power over everything.

He (*rahimahullaah*) said: «**And the five daily prayers were made obligatory upon him and he prayed in Makkah for three years**» He used to pray them as two *rak`ahs*. When the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* migrated, the four *rak`ah* prayers were completed and became four *rak`ahs* – except for *Fajr* prayer, for in that he lengthened the recitation so it remained as two *rak`ahs* just as it was, and except for the *maghrib* prayer, for indeed it is three from the first period when it was made obligatory, because it is the *witr* (prayer with the odd number of *rak`ahs*) of the daytime. As for the *Dhuhr*, *Asr* and the *Ishaa* prayers, then in Makkah they were two *rak`ahs* each but when the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* made *Hijrah*, they were made complete as four *rak`ahs*.

As occurs in the *hadeeth*:

**«The prayer was first made obligatory as two rak`ahs, then when the Prophet sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam made Hijrah, the prayer for the resident was completed and the prayer of the traveler remained as it was.»[4]**

This is by consensus of the people of knowledge, that the prayer was obligatory in Makkah and that the Prophet *sallallaahu`alaihiwasallam* prayed it in Makkah. However, they differ about whether it was made obligatory three years before the *Hijrah*?

This is what is more correct, just as the *Shaykh* mentioned here. Or it is otherwise said that it was made obligatory five years before the *Hijrah*, or it is said one year before the *Hijrah*, or it is said a year and a half. However the most correct saying is what the *Shaykh* mentioned is that it was three years before the *Hijrah*.

And was anything else from the pillars of Islaam made obligatory along with the prayer? This is an area of disagreement amongst the scholars; some of them held that the *Zakaat* was also made obligatory in Makkah, and that only its applicable limits, its amounts and those eligible to receive it were made clear in al-Madeenah. But as for the origin of its being made obligatory, then that was in Makkah.

And the proof is His saying, He the Most High:

**«And give the right due from the crops on the day when it is harvested .» [6:141]**

The meaning of the «**due**» here is the *Zakaat*. And the whole *soorah* came down in Makkah.

And likewise in His statement:

**«And those whose wealth has a known portion for the beggar who asks and for the deprived .»  
[70:24-25]**

This *soorah* also came down in Makkah. And what is meant by the «**known portion**» is the *Zakaat*. So, it was in origin made obligatory in Makkah, however, its details were made clear in al-Madeenah. This is one saying.

The second saying: what is apparent from the speech of the *Shaykh* here, is that the *Zakaat* was only made obligatory in al-Madeenah and nothing was made obligatory in Makkah, except for the first pillar which is *tawheed* and the second pillar which is the prayer. This is what is apparent from the speech of the *Shaykh*.

#### **Footnotes :**

[1] Reported by al-Bukhaaree no. 3208 and no. 3887 as a *hadeeth* of Maalik ibn Sa`sa`ah and it is a long *hadeeth* containing the story of the *Mi`raaj* (the Ascent through the Heavens).

[2] Reported by al-Bukhaaree no. 349 as a *hadeeth* of Anas from Aboo Dharr, *radiyallaahu `anhumaa*.

[3] [Reported by al-Haakim in *al-Mustadrak* 3/65 no. 4407 as a *hadeeth* of `Aa.ishah *radiyallaahu `anhaa*.  
[Declared *saheeh* by *Shaykh* al-Albaanee in *as-Saheehah* no. 306].

[4] Reported by al-Bukhaaree no. 350 and Muslim no. 685 as a *hadeeth* of `Aa.ishah *radiyallaahu `anhaa*.

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