

Dear Brothers and Respected Sisters.
Salaamun Alaykum.

The Night of al-Isra' and the Day of al-Mabath: 27th Rajab al-Asabb

Isra' in Arabi denotes night journey, as narrated in the very first Ayah of Surah al-Isra'. Mer'aj in Arabi refers to the act of being elevated - in the case of Rasulullah, being elevated spiritually from Masjid-al-Haraam to Masjid al-Aqsa, and therefore to the "Sidrat al-Muntaha", the last spiritual station. All Anbiya' are bestowed with Asrar 'ilahiyyah but the realities of the unseen revealed to Rasulullah(S) on the night of Mer'aj were superior. The Qur'an describes the Qurba (proximity) of Rasulullah(S) to his Rabb:

"And was at a distance of two bow lengths or even nearer."

The Ismaili esoteric interpretations of this event in Qur'an and Islamic literature tend to emphasize the spiritual significance of Mer'aj. It is seen as a symbol of the journey of the soul, and the potential of 'ins'an to rise above the trappings of material life – through Ibadah, Taqwa and truthfulness in deeds. In the Qur'an, the direct mention and reference to the Mer'aj is found in the first Ayah of Surah al-Isra, which reads:

"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

Ranging from the physical and the miraculous, to the spiritual and personal, poetic expressions and philosophical explanations of the Mi'raj reflect some common themes, including spiritual ascension through righteous deeds, purification of the soul, and humility before the Divine.

Once a person asked the 14th Fatimi Ismaili Imam al-Muiz (as) the interpretation of "Kaabah" and the "al-Aqsa" (in the Ayah 17:1) to which the Imam replied:

"The Masjid al-Har'am refers to Nafs'e-Im'am and al-Aqsa refers to the last station of the areas where the Aql finds its asylum and satisfaction".

The great Ismaili intellectual Da'i, Sayyiduna Abu Hatim al-Razi (ra) elaborated:

"Glory to Him who carried His servant by night from the Masjid al-Har'am to the Masjid al-Aqsa' (Qur'an 17:1).

That is to say, he [Muhammad] was elevated from Nafs to the station of Aql and was bestowed with the title of 'Naatiq' which is the last Darajah of the Hudud of his Daw'ah.

In his interpretation of Rasulullah's Mer'aj, Sayyiduna Al-Muaiyyad fiddeen al-Shirazi (ra) informed: "Bur'aq is derived from the Arabi verb Baraqa (to shine), suggesting the celestial animal was an amalgamation of humans, birds and various animals, and symbolized an illuminating experience or 'ilm granted by al Hadd al-Aali - a spiritual rank of the higher world

known as *Khayal* or *Imagination*. This *Noor - Baraqa* - which emanates from the *Universal Soul*, shone upon *Rasulullah (S)* and elevated him to the higher spiritual rank of *Jadd* (fortunate), and finally to the *Nafs* and *Aql*.

Similarly, the Beloved *Muaiyyadi Student*, *Hujjah* of two *Jazair*, *Khurasan* and *Badakhshan*, *Sayyiduna Abu Muin Hamiduddin Nasir'e Khusraw (ra)* explained:

"The *Anbiya* attained the rank of *Natiq* and returned to the heaven of the *Nafs* by the *Mair'aj Ruhani* (ascent)" (*Wajh'e Din*, Discourse 15).

Quite literally, *Masjid* means "place of *Sajdah*"; esoterically, according to *Sayyiduna Al-Qadi al-Nauman (ra)*:

"it signifies the submission of the soul and its merge with the Higher Realities and Gradations". Therefore, esoterically, during his *Mer'aj*, *Rasulullah (S)* first attained demotion (*Fana*) in *Nafs* (*Masjid al-Haram*) and was then promoted to merge with the *Aql* (*Masjid al-Aqsa*).

According to *Ismaili Du'at*, such as *Sayyiduna Abu Yaqub al-Sijistani* or the *Ikhwan al-Safa*, the *Noor* mentioned in *Ayat al-Noor* (24:35) in the *Qur'an*, is the *Aql* and the *Noor of Nafs*. These are the two *Noor*, *Noor un-Ala Noor*, as *Ayah al-Noor* mentions.

In a special discourse 27 of his *Wajh'e Din*, *Sayyiduna Nasir'e Khusraw (ra)* explains:

"Allah has to be worshiped through *Nafs* and *Aql*, that are His *Asma al-Husna* (Beautiful names) in the true sense."

And then, in discourse 51, he associates the *Aql* and *Nafs* with the Divine Names *al-'Ali* ("The High") - above which there is no "Higher" rank (*Hadd*) - and *al-'Azim* ("The Great") respectively.

According to *Tafsir'e Kabir*, *Muhammad ibn Jarir* writes in his *Tafsir*:

"In the tradition of *Huzaiifah (ra)*, *Rasulullah's Mer'aj* occurred spiritually, and not bodily or physically, and truly he was elevated through the heavens where he met *Anbiya (as)* on every precincts of orbits of heaven".

In the tradition of *al-Muslim* and *Tirmidi*, *Ibn Abbas (ra)* relates:

"*Rasulullah (S)* has seen *Rabb* in his heart, not by eyes"

Malik bin Sahsia Ansari relates *Rasulullah(S)* says:

"I was lying in the *Kaabah* between the state of dream and consciousness"

On the day of *Mab'ath* where *Rasulullah (S)* received the first *Wahy* through *Jibrael* (*Gabriel*) to call people towards *Islam* which is the 27th *al-Asabday* of *Rajab*, *Rasulullah (S)* disclosed his sacred status of *Risalah* and *Nubuawah*. Under the divine instruction from *Rabb Taala Subhanahu*, He (*S*) invited his beloved wife *Sayyidah Khadijah (as)* to join His *Daw'ah* and she was the first one to respond. Then *Rasulullah (S)* invited *Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as)* to join the *Daw'ah*, who at very young age responded immediately in affirmative. According to *Sayyiduna Al Qadi al-Nauman's* narrative of the offerings around the *Kaabah*, *Rasulullah (S)* led *Salaat* with *Ali (as)* on his side and

Khudaijah (as) behind them. The Nabavi Daw'ah and his divine appointment in establishing Islam - which is very well explained in the Surah al-Qalam - is celebrated on the day of Mab'ath.

The night of Isra' and day of Mair'aj on the eve of the 27th of Rajab, occurred many years after the Daw'ah of Islam. It is one of the selected nights and day when Dua is answered, Hajaat are fulfilled, and Afaat are removed. Ascension only occurred once but the Me'raj or spiritual ascension of Rasulullah (S) occurred many a time in his life where he was shown the Haqaiq Aaliyyah (realities of heaven and hell).

Eiltimas al-Dua and Best Regards

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