

Was the Miraj (Ascension) bodily or spiritual? The legal ruling on the denier of the Miraj being bodily.

Darulifta Ahlesunnat

(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and muftis of the mighty Shari‘ah say concerning the following matters: 1) Was the Mi‘rāj of the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ bodily or spiritual? 2) What is the legal ruling on someone who denies the Mi‘rāj being bodily?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

The beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ was granted a bodily Mi‘rāj, in a wakeful state. The Qur‘anic verses and Sahih Aḥādīth indicate upon this. This is the opinion of the majority of the honourable Companions, Tābi‘īn (successors), tbā‘ Tabi‘īn (successors to the successors), fuqahā (jurists), muḥaddithīn (hadith masters) and mutakallimīn (scholastic theologians) and this is the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah.

Allah mentions in the noble Quran:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنَ الْإِنْتَابِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١٠١﴾

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: Glory be to Him Who took His bondsman by the night from the Sacred Mosque (the Ka'bah) to Al-Aqsa Mosque around which We have placed blessing, in order that We may show him Our great signs. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.

It is mentioned in the commentary of this verse in Tafsīr al-Khāzin, Tafsīr Jalālayn and Ḥāshiyah al-Ṣāwi:

والحق الذي عليه اكثر الناس ومعظم السلف وعامة الخلف من المتأخرين من الفقهاء والحدثين والبتكلميين انه اسرى بروحه وجسده صلى الله عليه وسلم، ويدل عليه قوله سبحانه وتعالى: ﴿سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا﴾، ولفظ العبد عبارة عن مجبوع الروح والجسد،

والحديث الصحيحة التي تقدمت تدل على صحة هذا القول

“The truth which which is affirmed by most of the people, the majority of the salaf (pious predecessors), the generality of the jurists, hadith masters and scholastic theologians from Mutakhhireen (the later scholars), is that the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ went on the night journey with his body and soul. The following statement of Allah Almighty indicates upon this:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: Glory be to Him Who took His bondsman by the night

The word عبد is an expression of the combination of body and soul. The preceding Sahih hadith also indicates upon the correctness of this opinion.”

It is stated in Nasīm al-Riyād:

﴿انه اسراء بالجسد والروح في القصة كلها﴾ اى في قصة الاسراء الى المسجد الاقصى والسجوات، ﴿وعليه تدل الآية﴾ الدالة على شطرها صريحاً
﴿وصحيح الاخبار﴾ المشهور المستفيضة الدالة على عروجه صلى الله عليه وسلم الى السماء، والاحاديث الاحاد الدالة على دخوله الجنة
ووصوله الى العرش او طرف العالم كما سيأتي كل ذلك بجسده لا يقظة

(The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ undertook the journey to Masjid al-Aqṣā and the heavens with both body and soul. The verse mentioned clearly indicates upon one part of this journey, whilst a Mashhoor Mustafeed hadith proves the journey towards the heavens. Whereas, a khabar-e-wahid indicates upon his entry into Paradise and his arrival at the ‘Arsh or the edge of the created realm, all of which shall be discussed further on. All of this occurred with his body in a wakeful state.”

It is stated in Maktūbāt Imam al-Rabbāni and Fatāwā Rizawīyah:

The noble Mi‘rāj, absolutely, definitely, occurred with the blessed body and not only spiritually, which also occurs for his devotees through his granting. Allah Almighty stated:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: Glory be to Him Who took His bondsman by the night He did not state ‘Who took His bondsman’s soul’.

It is stated in Maqālāt al-Kāzīmī:

“The view of majority of the scholars, the honourable Companions, Tābi‘īn, atbā‘ al-Tabi‘īn, as well as muḥaddithīn, fuqahā and mutakallimīn after them, is that the Isrā and Mi‘rāj both occurred physically, in a wakeful state. And, this is the truth.”

2. Absolute denial of the noble Mi‘rāj is disbelief. This is because the Mi‘rāj from Masjid al-Ḥarām to Masjid al-Aqṣā is definitive and established from the noble Quran. However, if a person accepts the Mi‘rāj but believes it to be only spiritual, he is upon error. In this age, only the deviated deny this.

Outright denial of the Mi‘rāj, is an act of disbelief. It is mentioned in Sharḥ al-‘Aqāid al-Nasafiyyah and Nibrās:

والمعراج لرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في اليقظة بشخصه الى السماء، ثم الى ما شاء الله تعالى من العلى حق اى ثابت بالخبر المشهور حتى ان منكره يكون مبتدعاً، – فالاسراء هو من المسجد الحرام الى البيت المقدس قطعى اى يقينى ثبت بالكتاب اى القرآن ويكفر منكره –

الخ

The Mi‘rāj, in a physical and wakeful state for the beloved Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ to the sky and then to wherever Allah willed is proven by Mashhoor narrations, such that its denier is an innovator. The Isrā from Masjid al-Ḥarām to Bayt al-Muqaddas is definitive, i.e. established by the Book, meaning the noble Quran. Its denier is declared a disbeliever.”

It is stated in Nasīm al-Riyād:

﴿ذهب معظم السلف والمسلمين﴾ عطف للعام على الخاص، وفيه إشارة إلى ان خلافه لا ينبغي لمسلم اعتقاده ﴿إلى انه اسراء بالجسد﴾ مع

الروح وفي اليقظة

The majority of the pious predecessors and the Muslims took the opinion (this is a conjunction of the general upon the specific, and the words “majority of the pious predecessors and the Muslims” indicate that it does not befit a Muslim to believe contrary to this) that the Isrā was with the body and soul, and in a wakeful state. ¹

It is mentioned in Fatāwā Rizawiyah:

These profound happenings have also made the fact that the Mi'rāj was bodily, more apparent than the Sun. If it was a mere spiritual journey or in a dream, why would amazement be expressed upon this? Zayd and 'Amr travel to Makkah and Madinah in their dreams and are found in their beds in the morning. Taking the word رؤيا as evidence and not looking at *و فتنه و* *إِلَّا فِتْنَةٌ لِلنَّاسِ* is a manifest error. رؤيا comes in the meaning of beholding and *آزمائش* occurs in a wakeful state, rather than in a dream. For this reason, Allah stated:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ اَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهٖ لَيْلًا

Translation from Kanz al-Īmān: Glory be to Him Who took His bondsman by the night^{2, 3}

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ

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Date: 3rd Jumādā al-Ūlā 1439 AH/21st January 2018



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¹ Nasīm al-Riyāḍ sharh al-shīfa, vol. 2, p. 267

² al-Quran, 17:1

³ Al-Fatāwā al-Razawiyah, vol. 29, p. 635