

# ISLAMICA

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## THE PROPHET'S NIGHT JOURNEY

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## THE ASCENSION

The Ascension is one of the greatest miracles of the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings. The Prophet realized a spiritual perfection and full refinement through belief and worship and, as a reward, God took him to His holy Presence. Escaping from the imprisonment of 'natural' laws and material causes and rising beyond the limits of bodily existence, the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, crossed distances swiftly and transcended all dimensions of the material world until he reached the holy Presence of God.

### Multi-dimensional existence

Atomic physics has changed many notions in physics and established that the material world is a dimension or an appearance of existence. Besides this world, there are many other worlds or dimensions of existence, each of which has its own particularities. Einstein put forward the notion that time is only one of the dimensions of existence. Science has not yet drawn the final conclusions about existence and new findings and developments continually change our view of it. Therefore, especially in our day, it is completely illogical to question the event of Ascension. People have difficulty in understanding how one can penetrate all time at the same moment as a single point. In order to understand this subtle matter, consider the following analogy.

Imagine that you are standing with a mirror in your hand, with everything reflected on the right representing the past, while everything reflected on the left represents the future. The mirror can reflect one direction only since it cannot show both sides at the same time as you are holding it. If you wish to reflect both directions at the same time, you will have to rise high above your original position so that left and right directions are united into one and nothing remains to be called first or last, beginning or end.

In the Ascension, the Prophet Muhammad, upon him be peace and blessings, must have moved with the speed of the spirit and he traveled through all time and space and all dimensions of existence in a very short period. During that heavenly journey, he met with the previous Prophets, saw angels and beheld the beauties of Paradise and the terrors of Hell. He also observed the essential realities of all the Qur'anic issues and the meanings and wisdom of all the acts of worship. He went as far as the realms where even the greatest of angels, Gabriel, cannot reach and was honored with vision of God's 'Countenance' free from any qualitative and quantitative dimensions and restrictions. Then, in order to bring humanity out of the darkness of material existence into the illumined realm of belief and worship, through which they could realize a 'spiritual' ascension each according to his capacity, he returned to the world where he was made subject to all kinds of persecution.

(NOTE: Belief in the Prophet's Ascension is the result of belief in the pillars of faith and draws its light and strength from those pillars. For sure, the Ascension cannot be proved independently to irreligious atheists who do not accept the pillars of faith, because it is impossible to discuss the Ascension with those who neither know God, nor recognize the Prophet, nor accept the angels, and who deny the existence of the heavens. Firstly, those pillars must be proved. Since this is so, in the following we shall address the believer who, since he deems it unlikely, has doubts about the Accession. However, from time to time we shall turn to the atheist who is the third party in our discussion and is in the position of listening, and speak to him.

The Qur'an declares:

Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque (Masjid al-Haram) to Masjid al-Aqsa, the neighborhood of which We have blessed, that We might show him of Our signs. Surely He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (al-Isra', 17.1)

Then he drew nigh and came down, till he was two bows' length or even nearer, and He revealed unto His servant what He revealed. The heart (of His servant) lied not (in seeing) what he saw. (al-Najm, 53.8-11)

In the Name of God, the merciful, the Compassionate.

*Glory be to Him Who transported His servant by night from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa', the environs of which We had blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs. Surely He is the One Who is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. (al-Isra', 17.1)*

*It is naught but a revelation revealed. One with mighty power taught it, one exalted in wisdom and strength: he rose, while he was in the highest horizon. Then he approached and came nearer. He was at a distance of two bows' length or even nearer. And He revealed unto His servant what He revealed. The heart did not falsify what he saw. Will you then dispute with him concerning what he saw? Surely he saw him (another time when) he (Gabriel) descended, near the Lote-tree of the farthest limit, beside it is the Garden of Abode. It was when what enveloped the Lote-tree enveloped it. The eye did not waver, nor did it stray. Truly did he see some of the greatest signs of his Lord. (al-Najm, 53.4-18)*

Out of the vast treasury of the first mighty verse above, we shall only describe two points which the pronoun He in Surely He is refers to as a principle of eloquence, since they are included in our present concern here.

After mentioning the journey of the noble Beloved of God, upon him be the best of blessings and most perfect peace, from Masjid al-Haram in Makka to Masjid al-Aqsa' in Jerusalem, which was the beginning of his Ascension, the Wise Qur'an concludes: Surely He is the One Who is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing. Together with this phrase itself, the pronoun in the Surely He is, which alludes to the furthest point of the Ascension indicated by the verses from sura al-Najm (sura 53), refers either to Almighty God or to the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings.

If it refers to the Prophet, according to the rules of rhetoric and the relationship between the pronoun and its antecedent, the meaning is this: this journey, which is apparently particular, is in reality so comprehensive and signifies such universal ascent that the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, heard and saw during it all the signs of the Lord and the wonders of Divine art which caught his sight and encountered his ears as the results of the manifestations of Divine Names in universal degrees as far as the Lote-tree of the farthest limit and the distance of two bows' length. Thus, through its conclusive phrase, the verse describes that particular journey as the key to understand a (higher) journey that is universal and full of extraordinary events.

If the pronoun in Surely He is, refers to God Almighty, the meaning is this: in order to call a servant of His on a journey to His presence and entrust him with a duty, after sending him from Masjid al-Haram to Masjid al-Aqsa', which is where the Prophets gather, and causing him to meet with them and showing that he is the absolute, indisputable heir of the principles of the religions of all the Prophets, He took him through both the external and inner dimensions of His dominion as far as the Lote-tree of the farthest limit and the distance of two bows' length.

For sure, he was a servant and that journey was a particular ascension. However, since he was given a Trust which is connected to the whole of the universe, was accorded a light which would change the colour of the universe, and also had with him a key with which to open the door to eternal happiness, Almighty God describes Himself as the One Who hears and sees all things so that His world-embracing, comprehensive and all-encompassing wisdom in the Trust, the light, and the key, might be observed and understood.

## A GATHERING IN HEAVENS

Anas ibn Malik's narration of the story of ascension continues. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

*"I prayed two rak`ahs in it [i.e. Al-Aqsa Mosque] and then went out, and Jibreel brought me a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. I chose the milk, and Jibreel said, 'You have chosen the natural thing.'" (Muslim)*

Milk represents Allah's creation that is intact. On the other hand, wine is an example of human interference in the creation of Allah. It is produced by fermenting the juice of grapes and thus requires human interference. In many cases, such interference can spoil what Allah has created.

The Prophet's choice emphasizes that *fitrah* or pure nature of what Allah has created is one foundation for the Muslim Ummah. One must search for this pure nature within oneself.

Almighty Allah says,

*[Glory be to Him Who took His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless, in order that We might show him some of Our signs; surely, He, only He, is the Hearer, the Seer [of all things]. We gave Musa (Moses) the Book and made it a guidance to the Children of Israel, commanding, "Take no guardian beside Me." [They were] the offspring of those whom We bore with Nuh (Noah); surely he was a grateful servant.] (Al-Israa' 17:1-3)*

These verses talk about three generations in a descending chronological order: the generation of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), that of Prophet Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him), and that of Prophet Nuh (Noah) (peace be upon him). All three generations have a common bond: love for Almighty Allah, belief in the same message, and endeavor to achieve the same goal.

Also, it is worth mentioning that Prophet Muhammad passed by three important sites during his Night Journey: Mount At-Tur in Sinai, which witnessed a number of events mentioned in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) and the Children of Israel; the city of Bethlehem where Prophet Jesus was born; and the road between modern-day Palestine and Makkah, which was trod by Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isma`il (Ishmael) in their way to the place where they built the Ka`bah.

Prophet Muhammad started his journey of ascension from Al-Mi`raj Rock. In company with Angel Jibreel, he reached the seventh heaven within seconds. Today, a spacecraft traveling at a speed of 7,000 KPH takes three years to reach the nearest planet.

In a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, Prophet Muhammad said,

*"Then he [Jibreel] took my hand and ascended with me to the nearest heaven. When I reached the nearest heaven, Jibreel said to the gatekeeper of the heaven, 'Open [the gate].' The gatekeeper asked, 'Who is it?' Jibreel answered, 'Jibreel.' He asked, 'Is there anyone with you?' Jibreel replied, 'Yes, Muhammad is with me.' He asked, 'Has he been sent for?' Jibreel said, 'Yes.' So, the gate was opened and we went over to the nearest heaven, and there we saw a man sitting with some people on his right and some on his left. When he looked toward his right, he laughed, and when he looked toward his left, he wept. Then he said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious son.' I asked Jibreel, 'Who is he?' He replied, 'He is Adam, and the people on his right and left are the souls of his offspring. Those on his right are the people of Paradise, and those on his left are the people of Hellfire; when he looks toward his right, he laughs, and when he looks toward his left, he weeps.'" (Al-Bukhari)*

*Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) is the father of humanity. This confirms the idea of unity of humans everywhere. Anyone can easily notice the recurrent emphasis on this notion throughout the journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi`raj.*

*Now, why is Prophet Adam laughing and crying? He is happy with those who learned from his experience and, at the same time, sad for those who did not. As we already know, his experience with Satan resembles a mathematical problem that has a model answer; it is something that one has to learn to resolve similar problems. Although other problems may appear different, the idea is the same: Keep away from the whispers of Satan.*

*Prophet Muhammad continued the narration. He said,*

*"Then, we ascended to the second heaven. Jibreel (peace be upon him) demanded that the gate of heaven be opened, and he was asked who he was. He answered, 'Jibreel.' Again, he was asked, 'Who is with you?' He replied, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened."*

*"When I entered, Jesus, son of Mary, and John, son of Zachariah (peace be upon them) — cousins from the maternal side, each is the son of the other's aunt — welcomed me and prayed for my well-being."*

*"Then, I was taken to the third heaven and Jibreel asked for the opening [of the gate]. He was asked, 'Who are you?' He replied, 'Jibreel.' He was asked, 'Who is with you?' He replied, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and I saw*

*Yusuf (Joseph) (peace be upon him), who had been given half of [world's] beauty. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being. Then, he ascended with us to the fourth heaven."*

*"Jibreel (peace be upon him) asked for the gate to be opened, and it was said, 'Who is it?' He replied, 'Jibreel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He said, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and lo Enoch was there. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being. Then, he ascended with us to the fifth heaven."*

*"Jibreel demanded that the gate be opened. It was said, 'Who is it?' He replied, 'Jibreel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He replied, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and then I was with Aaron. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being."*

*"Then, I was taken to the sixth heaven. Jibreel (peace be upon him) asked for the door to be opened. It was said, 'Who is it?' He replied, 'Jibreel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He replied, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and there I was with Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him). He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being."*

*"Then, I was taken up to the seventh heaven. Jibreel demanded that the gate be opened. It was said, 'Who is it?' He said, 'Jibreel.' It was said, 'Who is with you?' He replied, 'Muhammad.' It was said, 'Has he been sent for?' He replied, 'He has indeed been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and there I found Abraham (peace be upon him) reclining on Al-Bayt-ul-Ma`mur [Arabic for the much-frequented fane], and there enter it 70,000 angels everyday; they never visit [this place] again." (Al-Bukhari)*

But, where are the rest of the Prophets? Why didn't Prophet Muhammad meet Prophet Nuh (Noah)? The fact is that the presence of those particular Prophets in the seven heavens is symbolic.

Some prophets were ordered by Allah to construct new societies and this was what Prophet Mohammad was going to do when he immigrated to Madinah. Other prophets migrated from their homelands and returned, like Prophets Yusuf (Joseph) and Musa (Moses). In fact, this was a prediction of what Prophet Muhammad was going to do two years after immigration to Madinah.

Some other prophets were subjected to persecution, while others were even subjected to murder or attempts of murder by their people. It was as if Almighty Allah had selected a number of Prophets whose lives foreshadowed future events in the life of Prophet Muhammad.

Al-Bayt-ul-Ma`mur is a place in the seventh heaven. It is located exactly above the Ka`bah and is identical to it. We perform Tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka`bah) on earth, and right above us, the angels perform Tawaf around Al-Bayt-ul-Ma`mur. Above both of these is Allah's throne. Those who visit Makkah for Hajj or `Umrah feel this. The Ka`bah is the holiest place on earth and a point directly connected to the holiest of places ever.

But, why is Prophet Abraham reclining on the wall of Al-Bayt-ul-Ma`mur? This is because he and his son, Isma`il (Ishmael), built the Ka`bah. The rule is that one reaps the fruits of his or her labors. He is leaning on it because he labored enough in his life, and now he can rest in the hereafter.

We should labor in this life so that Almighty Allah would allow us to rest on the Day of Judgment. That is life: We want to rest, but there is no comfort in it. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was once asked, "When does a person get to relax?" He replied, "It is the moment when he [or she] sets his [or her] foot in Paradise." There is no repose before that.

We should not let comfort be our purpose in life. We live this life to farm, learn, reform our societies, reproduce, worship Allah, help people, and take initiatives. Almighty Allah says,

*[Verily, We have created man into toil and struggle.] (Al-Balad 90:4)*

Thus, work, toil, and accept your destiny.

Prophet Muhammad said, "Seventy thousand angels enter into it [Al-Bayt-ul-Ma`mur] daily and, after they come out, they never return again." Can anyone imagine the number of angels? One cannot even compare the number of human beings to the number of angels. Look at this evocative hadith: Prophet Muhammad said,

*"The heavens resound yearningly — worthy it is to sound yearningly and proudly — as no place in them is without an angel prostrate in adoration and worship before Almighty Allah."*

*(Authenticated by Al-Albani)*

However, Allah does not need our worship. We are the ones who need to worship Him to save ourselves from Hellfire. We need to kneel and prostrate ourselves before Him. The angels are many. Prophet Muhammad saw scores of them as he ascended through heavens. They are true worshippers who perform Prayer thoroughly. Now, can you see the kingdom of Allah? Do you understand what the Omnipotent, Almighty, Owner of the Kingdom, and Possessor of Majesty and Bounty mean?

The journey of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi`raj was a bounty and honor bestowed on Prophet Muhammad by Almighty Allah. It relieved his grief over the incident of At-Ta'if and the persecution of Quraish. Truly, Allah is Most Great and his kingdom is boundless.

## **ABU BAKR; MAN AMONG MEN**

Abu Bakr was the dearest friend of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to speak about Abu Bakr, remarking on how he was the only person who never hesitated to accept Islam once he heard about it. Other people who embraced Islam in the early days would think for some time and consider, but Abu Bakr declared his faith immediately (Al-Mubarakpuri, 77).

Before he declared his Islam, Abu Bakr was known as a pious man; he had an essentially good character, and only good was expected from him. He and the Prophet were good friends before the Prophet's mission (Nadawi, 33).

Abu Bakr was a wealthy man and was in the habit of using his wealth to benefit others. One of the evil pre-Islamic traditions was the practice of burying baby girls alive. This practice was stopped when the Prophet Muhammad came with the message of Islam. This pre-Islamic time is commonly known as the era of ignorance because the people lived without the knowledge of the values and principles of Islam. For this reason, the birth of a baby girl was something for a man to be ashamed of. Men thought that sons would bring more honor on them, their families, and their tribes while girls could potentially bring them and their tribes dishonor; therefore, many men buried their daughters alive. Whenever Abu Bakr heard that a baby girl was to be buried alive, he would go and negotiate with the father and he started something that could be called a boarding house in today's terms, a place where he put these little girls in the care of women who would look after them while he paid for their maintenance. (Witness – Pioneer.org; nzmuslim.net).

Muslims believe that, every human being is born with an innate nature; an ability to tell the difference between good and evil and the knowledge that there is a Creator and a desire to know Him. This nature remains strong in some people and weakens over time with others. Abu Bakr remained firm in his human nature, so that even before the advent of Islam and the sure knowledge and system that came with it, he knew that such things as burying baby girls alive were essentially evil. He knew this in a society that largely accepted this practice.

Goodness is attracted to goodness and comprehends it, so it is not surprising that Abu Bakr befriended the Prophet Muhammad as he perceived his innate piety and, thereafter, never even hesitated to follow the Prophet until his last breath.

The final days of the Muslims before they emigrated to Madinah, witnessed two kinds of extremes: the Muslims' gradual sense of success and the continual torment and persecution at the hands of the non-Muslims of Quraish. The Prophet and the believers were hopeful that better days would soon come and that the migration to Madinah would soon occur. About one year before the migration, God (Allah) blessed the Prophet (peace be upon him) with something miraculous. This was the event of the Prophet's Night Journey to Jerusalem and then his Ascension to the heavens.

The Qur'an tells us about this event:

[By the star when it goes down, Your companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has erred. Nor does he speak of his own desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired. He has been taught this Qur'an by the one mighty in power (Jibreel). (Free from any defect in body and mind), then he (Jibreel) rose and became stable. While he was in the highest part of the horizon, then he approached and came closer and was at a distance of two bows length or even nearer (Jibreel). So did Allah convey the inspiration to His slave (Muhammad) through (Jibreel). The Prophet's heart lied not in seeing what he saw. Will you then dispute with him about what he saw? And indeed he (Muhammad) saw him (Jibreel) at a second descent. Near the lote tree of the utmost boundary (beyond which none can pass). Near it is the Paradise of Abode. When that covered the lote tree which did cover it! The sight of Muhammad turned not aside nor it transgressed beyond the limit ordained for it. Indeed, Muhammad did see, of the Greatest Signs, of his Lord.] (An-Najm 53:1-18)

The following day, after this miraculous event, the Prophet (peace be upon him) spoke about it. This was a test for the Muslims because, from the earthly point of view, such an event cannot be explained by human reason and so those who were weak in their faith doubted. The true and strong Muslims found nothing unusual in Allah granting His prophet a miracle as they believed that He is All Powerful and created all there is by an act of His will. Needless to say, the non-Muslims ridiculed and questioned the truth of this event. They went to Abu Bakr to see his response to this event. When Abu Bakr was asked about it, he asked if the Prophet Muhammad had said this happened. When they answered in the affirmative, Abu Bakr simply declared that he did indeed verify it. It was due to his response on this most important day that Abu Bakr earned the title of As-Siddiq which means the verifier of truth (Al-Mubarakpuri, 150-51).

Abu Bakr knew that prophets received Allah's signs to establish their faith. He knew that they were eligible for this in consequence of divine privilege because of the heavy burdens they had to bear, as messengers of Allah. Abu Bakr did all he could to help his friend the Prophet (peace be upon him) carry out his mission in the service of Allah.

The Night Journey, together with other revelations around that time, showed the Muslims the greatness of the civilization which they were in the process of constructing. A coherent society was soon to be established and the call of Islam was soon to be heard throughout the world. Abu Bakr was a significant part of the call and spread of Islam.

Not long after the Night Journey, the Muslims prepared to migrate to Madinah. The people of Madinah welcomed the Prophet Muhammad and his followers and eagerly awaited his blessed arrival. One by one, the Muslims left the distress and persecution of Makkah and settled in Madinah (Lings, 113-15). Abu Bakr, still in Makkah, wished that he would be the one to travel with the Prophet (peace be upon him), but the Prophet did not answer Abu Bakr until he received guidance from Allah to do so.

## THE HISTORICAL MIRACLES OF QURNA: THE CITY OF IRAM

At the beginning of 1990, press-releases in the well-known newspapers of the world declared "Fabled Lost Arabian city found," "Arabian city of Legend found" and "The Atlantis of the Sands, Ubar." What rendered this archaeological find particularly intriguing was the fact that this city is mentioned in the Qur'an. Many people had previously suggested 'Ad was a legend or that the location in question could never be found. Such people could not conceal their astonishment at this phenomenal discovery

It was Nicholas Clapp, a noted documentary filmmaker and a lecturer on archaeology, who found this legendary city mentioned in the Qur'an.[1] Being an Arabophile and a winning documentary film maker, Clapp had come across a very interesting book during his research on Arabian history. This book was Arabia Felix, written by the English researcher Bertram Thomas in 1932. Arabia Felix was the Roman designation for the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula which today includes Yemen and much of Oman. The Greeks called this area "Eudaimon Arabia" and medieval Arab scholars called it "Al-Yaman as-Saeed." [2] All of these names mean "Happy Yemen," because the people living in that region used to serve as middlemen in the lucrative spice trade between India and places north of the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the people living in this region produced and distributed "frankincense," an aromatic resin from rare trees

The English researcher Thomas described these tribes at length and claimed that he found the traces of an ancient city founded by one of these tribes.[3] This was the city known as "Ubar" by the Bedouins. In one of the trips he made to the region, the Bedouins living in the desert had shown him well-worn tracks and stated that these tracks led toward the ancient city of Ubar. Thomas, who showed great interest in the subject, died before being able to complete his research

*Whole societies have passed away before your time, so travel about the earth and see the final fate of the deniers  
(Qur'an, 3:137)*

Clapp, who examined what the English researcher Thomas wrote, was convinced of the existence of the lost city described in the book. He quickly started his research, attempting to carry on from where Thomas had left the project. Clapp took two different approaches in his mission to prove the existence of Ubar. First, he found the tracks which the Bedouins said existed and in order to aid his work, he applied to NASA to provide the satellite images of the area. After a long struggle, he succeeded in persuading the authorities to take the pictures of the region he so craved.[4]

Clapp went on to study the ancient manuscripts and maps in the Huntington library in California. Here, he quickly found a map covering the region he was studying so intensely. He found a map drawn by the Greek-Egyptian geographer Ptolemy in 200, which showed the location of an old city found in the region and the paths which actually led up to this city

Meanwhile, his research received a further boost when he received the news that satellite photographs had been taken by members of NASA. In the pictures, caravan trails, which were virtually invisible to the naked eye, caught Clapp's attention. They could only be seen as a whole from the sky. Comparing these pictures with the old map he had in hand, Clapp immediately realised that the trails in the old map corresponded with the trails in the pictures taken from the satellite. The final destination of these trails was a broad site understood to have once been a city

Finally, thanks to the work of Clapp and Thomas before him-along with a helping hand from NASA researchers-the location of this legendary city, which had been subject of the stories told orally by the Bedouins, was discovered. After a short while, excavations began and remains of an old city were brought to light. This lost city was dubbed "Ubar, the Atlantis of the Sands

But let us ask: What was it that proved this to be the city of the people of 'Ad mentioned in the Qur'an?

From the very beginning of the study of the site, it was understood that this ruined city belonged to 'Ad. Researchers discovered Iram's pillars, which were specifically mentioned in the Qur'an, in the form of towers in the land of the people of 'Ad. Dr. Juris Zarins, a member of the research team leading the excavation, said that since the towers were alleged to be the distinctive feature of Ubar and since Iram was mentioned as having towers or pillars, this then was the strongest proof so far that the site they had unearthed was Iram, the city of 'Ad :described in the Qur'an

*Do you not see what your Lord did with 'Ad-Iram of the Columns whose like was not created in any land? (Qur'an, 89:6-8)*

As seen, that the information provided by the Qur'an about the events of the past is in total agreement with historical information is another evidence of the fact that the Qur'an is the .Word of Allah

[1] *Thomas H. Maugh II, "Ubar, Fabled Lost City, Found by LA Team," The Los Angeles Times, 5 February 1992.*

[2] *Kamal Salibi, A History of Arabia (Caravan Books: 1980).*

[3] *Bertram Thomas, Arabia Felix: Across the "Empty Quarter" of Arabia, (New York: Schrieber's Sons: 1932), 161.*

[4] *Charlene Crabb, "Frankincense", Discover, January 1993.*

## 10 Ways of Protection from Shaytan

Imam Ibn ul Qayyim al Jawziyyah

1. Seeking refuge with Allah from Shaytan. Allah the Most High said, “**And if there comes to you from Satan an evil suggestion, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.**” [41:36]
2. Recitation of the two soorahs al-Falaq and an-Nas, as they have wondrous effect in seeking refuge with Allah from his evil, weakening Shaytan and protection from him. This is why the Messenger, sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam, said: “No person seeks refuge with anything like the Mu`awwidhatayn (soorahs al-Falaq and an-Nas)”. [an-Nasaa’i, 5337]
3. Recitation of Ayat al-Kursi (2:255).
4. Recitation of soorah al-Baqarah. The Messenger, sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam, said, “The house in which al-Baqarah is recited is not approached by Shaytan.” [Muslim]
5. The final part of al-Baqarah. The Messenger, sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam, said, “Whoever recites the two last verses of al-Baqarah at night they will suffice him.” [Muslim]
6. Recitation of the beginning of soorah Mu`min (Ghafir), until His saying, “wa ilayhi-l-maseer” (to Him is the destination). (i.e. “**Ha. Meem. The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Knowing, the forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of abundance. There is no deity except Him; to Him is the destination.**” [40:1-2])
7. Saying “la ilaha ill Allah wahdahu la sharika lah, lahul mulku wa lahul hamdu wa huwa `ala kulli shay’in qadir” (there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah, He has no partner, His is the Dominion and Praise, and He is able to do all things) a hundred times.
8. The most beneficial form of protection from Shaytan: abundance of remembrance of Allah, the Exalted.
9. Ablution and prayer, and they are from among the greatest means of protection, especially at the time of emergence of anger and desire.
10. Abstinence from excess speech, food and mixing with people.

## **The Gates of Paradise**

Dr. `Abdullah al-Shimemeri

"Gardens of perpetual bliss - they shall enter them, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring. And angels shall enter upon them every gate." [ar-Ra`d, 13:23]

"This is a reminder. Verily, for the righteous is a beautiful place of [final] return - gardens of eternity, whose doors will [always] be open to them." [Saad, 38:49-50]

"And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in crowds, until behold, they arrive there. Its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say, 'Peace be upon you!' Well have you done, do enter it, abiding [in it] eternally." [Az-Zumar, 39:73]

Sahl bin Sa`d reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Paradise has eight gates, and one of them is called ar-Rayyaan, through which none will enter but those who observe fasting." [al-Bukhaari]

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

"Whoever spends two things in the way of Allah will be called from the gates of Paradise and will be addressed, 'Oh slave of Allah, here is prosperity!' So whoever was among the people who used to offer their prayers will be called from the gate of the prayer; and whoever was among the people who used to participate in jihaad will be called from the gate of jihaad; and whoever was among those who used to observe fasts will be called from the gate of ar-Rayyaan; and whoever was among those who used to give charity will be called from the gate of charity." Abu Bakr said, "Let my parents be sacrificed for you, oh Allah's Apostle! No distress or need will befall him who will be called from those gates. Will there be anyone who will be called from all these gates?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, "Yes, and I hope you will be one of them." [al-Bukhaari]

`Uqba ibn `Aamir said:

"We were entrusted with the task of tending the camels. On my turn, when I came back in the evening after grazing them in the pastures, I found Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) stand and address the people. I heard these words of his, 'If any Muslim performs ablution well, then stands and prays two rak`ahs, setting about them with his heart as well as his face, Paradise will be guaranteed to him.' I said, 'What a fine thing this is!' A narrator who was before me said, 'The first was even better than this.' When I cast a glance, I saw that it was `Umar who said, 'I see that you have just come and observed. If anyone among you performs the ablution, completes the ablution well and says, "I testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger," then the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him and he may enter by whichever of them he wishes.'" [Muslim]

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (peace be upon him) said:

"The gates of Paradise will be opened on Monday and on Thursdays, and every servant [of Allah] who associates nothing with Allah will be forgiven, except for the man who has a grudge against his brother. [About them] it will be said, 'Delay these two until they are reconciled. Delay these two until they are reconciled. Delay these two until they are reconciled.'" [Muslim, Maalik, Abu Dawood]

Source and references:  
*www.thewaytotruth.org*  
*www.rasoulallah.net*  
*www.miraclesofthequran.com*  
*www.islaam.com*

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