

The Vision of ALLAH, The Exalted in the world and the hereafter

Ibn ` Abd al-Barr in al-Intiqā' and others relate that Imam Malik adduced as proof of the believers' vision of Allah Almighty in the hereafter the verses: {That day will faces be resplendent, Looking toward their Lord} (75:22-23) and {Nay! Verily, from their Lord, that day, shall they [the transgressors] be veiled} (83:15). [1]

Imam Ibn Khafif stated in his al-`Aqida al-Sahihah:

30. The believers shall see Allah on the Day of Resurrection just as they see the full moon on the nights when it rises. They will not be unfairly deprived of seeing Him.

31. They will see Him without encompassment (ihata) nor delimitation (tahdid) within any given limit (hadd), whether from the front, the back, above, below, right, or left. ...

97. Sight in the world is impossible.

The Mu` tazila and some other groups held that Allah Almighty could not be seen at all, even on the Day of Resurrection. They rejected the sound hadiths to the contrary, claiming that such vision necessitated corporeality and direction, which were precluded for Him. Ahl al-Sunna adduced the verse {That day will faces be resplendent, Looking toward their Lord} (75:22-23) and the mass-narrated hadiths to the effect that such vision will be real. In contrast to the Mu` tazila, the totality of the scholars of Ahl al-Sunna both excluded modalities of encompassment, delimitation, direction, and other corporeal qualities and, at the same time, held that Allah will be seen by the believers in the Hereafter without specifying how. However, they differed whether such unqualified sight was possible in the world as well.

Al-Qari and al-Haytami reported that the agreement of Ahl al-Sunna is that sight of Allah Almighty in the world is possible but that it does not take place (except for the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him --), while two contrary opinions on the topic are narrated from al-Ash` ari in al-Qushayri's Risala. [2] The proof that His sight is possible in the world was adduced from Musa's -- upon him peace -- request to Allah: {My Lord! Show me Your Self, that I may gaze upon You} (7:143) as Prophets do not ask for the impossible. [3] Imam al-Qushayri stated in the Risala that sight of Allah in the world does not take place for anyone except the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- while al-Dhahabi, conceding that sight of Allah in the world is possible, held that it does not take place even for the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him --. [4] The best statement on the issue is that of Shaykh Muhyi al-Din ibn ` Arabi: "He can be seen with the hearts and the eyes, if He so wills." [5] Most or all of these views are based on the Prophet's -- Allah bless and greet him -- hadith: "Verily, you shall not see Allah until you die." [6] Ibn Hajar adduced the hadith: "Worship Allah as if you see Him" as further proof that there is no sight of Allah with the eyes of the head in this world but added: "The Prophet's -- Allah bless and greet him -- sight of Allah is supported by other evidence." [7]

The Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw Allah Almighty before death as is the doctrine of the majority of Ahl al-Sunna thus related from al-Nawawi by al-Qari. [8] The evidence for this is the hadith of Ibn ` Abbas whereby the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- said: "I saw my Lord" (ra'aytu rabbi). [9] Ibn Kathir cited it in his commentary on Sura al-Najm and declared its chain sound, but considered it part of the hadith of the dream cited below. Ibn al-Qayyim [see excerpt below] relates that Imam Ahmad considered such sight to be in the Prophet's sleep -- Allah bless and greet him -- but remains a true sight - as the dreams of Prophets are true - and that some of the Imam's companions mistakenly attributed to him the position that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord "with the eyes of his head." [10]

Al-Bayhaqi also narrated the hadith "I saw my Lord" in al-Asma' wa al-Sifat with a sound chain but with the addition: "in the form of a curly-haired, beardless young man wearing a green robe," a condemned, disauthenticated addition and concatenation with another hadith that refers to Gibril -- upon him peace --. [11] Hence al-Suyuti interpreted it either as a dream or, quoting his shaykh Ibn al-Humam, as "the veil of form" (hijab al-sura). [12]

Islamic Article: The Vision of ALLAH, The Exalted in the world and the hereafter

The latter explanation is echoed in al-Qari's several commentaries of the similar hadith whereby the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- said: "My Lord came to me in the best form - the narrator said: I think he said: 'in my sleep' - and asked me over what did the Higher Assembly (al-mala' al-a`la) [13] vie, and I said I did not know, so He put His hand between my shoulders, and I felt its coolness in my innermost, and knowledge of all things between the East and the West came to me." [14]

Al-Mubarakfuri relates from Ibn Kathir and al-Haytami the position that the above vision took place in the Prophet's sleep -- Allah bless and greet him. This is also the position of Ibn al-Jawzi based on what he termed the best chains of this hadith. [15] Al-Haytami points out that the words "I woke up and saw my Lord" in Ahmad's narration from Mu`adh are actually changed from "I dozed off and saw my Lord" due to a copyist's corruption of "I dozed off" (istathqaltu) - in al-Tirmidhi's narration from Mu`adh - into "I woke up" (istayqaztu). [16] On the whole, the scholars' interpretations of the Prophet's vision -- Allah bless and greet him -- show that whether it took place in his dream or in a wakeful state, "with the eyes of the heart" or "with the eyes of the head," does not change the fact that he saw Him in the real sense, as the Prophet's dream-vision or heart-vision -- Allah bless and greet him -- is by far sharper, more accurate, and more real than the visions of ordinary people.

Ahl al-Sunna scholars gave many interpretations of the above hadith. For example, al-Razi and, before him, al-Bayhaqi, interpreted the placing of Allah's Hand as His extreme consideration and attention to the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him --, or as His immense favor to him, while its specific placing between his shoulders refers to the pouring of divine kindness and mercy into his heart, and the coolness refers to the completion and perfection of his knowledge as shown by his words "I knew all things between the East and the West." [17] Al-Qari wrote the following in the chapter on the Prophet's -- Allah bless and greet him -- turban in his book Jam` al-Wasa'il fi Sharh al-Shama'il, a commentary on al-Tirmidhi's Shama'il or "Characteristics of the Prophet":

Whether the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord in his sleep or whether Allah the Glorious and Exalted manifested Himself to him with a form (bi al-tajalli al-suri), this type of manifestation is known among the masters of spiritual states and stations (arbab al-hal wa al-maqam), and it consists in being reminded of His disposition (hay'atihi) and reflecting upon His vision (ru'yatihi), which is the outcome of the perfection of one's self-detachment (takhliyatih) and self-adornment (tahliyatih). And Allah knows best about the states of His Prophets and Intimate Friends whom He has raised with His most excellent upbringing, and the mirrors of whose hearts He has polished with His most excellent polish, until they witnessed the Station of Divine Presence and Abiding (maqam al-hudur wa al-baqa'), and they rid themselves of the rust of screens and extinction (sada' al-huzur wa al-fana'). May Allah bestow on us their yearnings, may He make us taste their states and manners, and may He make us die in the condition of loving them and raise us in their group. [18]

Al-Qari goes on to quote Ibn al-Qayyim's relation from Ibn Taymiyya that when the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw that his Lord put His hand between his shoulders, he honored that place with the extremity of the turban. [19] Elsewhere he states:

Ibn Sadaqa said that Abu Zur`a said: 'The hadith of Ibn `Abbas [about the Prophet seeing His Lord] is sound (sahih), and none denies it except a Mu`tazili'... Ibn al-Humam said: 'This is but the veil of form (hijab al-sura).' It seems that he meant by this that the entire goal can be visualized if it is interpreted as a figural manifestation (tajalli suri), as it is of necessity absurd to interpret it as a real or literal manifestation (tajalli haqiqi). Allah Almighty has many forms of manifestations (anwa` min al-tajalliyat) according to His Entity and Attributes. Likewise, He possesses all power and encompassing ability, well beyond the angels and other than them, to fashion forms and appearances. Yet He is transcendent above possessing a body (jism), a form (sura), and directions (jihah) with regard to His Entity. These considerations help solve many of the purported difficulties in the ambiguous verses and the narrations of the Attributes. Allah knows best the reality of spiritual stations and the minutiae of objectives.... If the hadith is shown to have something in its chain that indicates forgery, then fine; otherwise: the door of figurative interpretation is wide and imposes itself (bab al-ta'wil wasi`un muhattam). [20]

Elsewhere al-Qari states:

If this vision took place in dream, then there is no difficulty.... However, if it took place in a wakeful state (fi al-yaqaza), as conveyed by the letter of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's narration [but see al-Haytami's comment quoted above], then the Salaf declared belief in the letter of such narrations - provided they were sound - without explaining them as

one would explain the attributes of creatures. Rather, they negated modality (al-kayfiyya) and entrusted knowledge of their hidden meaning to Allah. For He shows to His Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- whatever He wishes from behind the curtains of the Unseen, including what our minds have no way of comprehending. However, to leave aside figurative interpretation (al-ta'wil) in our time fosters confusion (fitna) in the beliefs of people, due to the dissemination of the doctrines of misguidance (i`tiqadat al-dalal). Therefore, it is appropriate to interpret it in conformity with the Law as a possible interpretation, not a definitive one. Accordingly, the words 'in the best form' could signify 'I saw my Lord as I was in the best form in the sense of His utmost favor and kindness to me'; or 'in the Lord's best form' in the sense that the form of something is whatever distinguishes it from something else, whether it pertains to the thing itself or to whatever part of it is being characterized. This can be applied to meanings just as it is applied to material bodies. One speaks about 'picturing a matter or a situation thus.' Allah's 'form' - and Allah knows best - would then be His specific Entity (dhatuhu al-makhsusa) separate from any other representation of the farthest levels of perfection, or the Attribute that is specific to Him, meaning 'My Lord was more gracious and kinder than at any other time.' Thus did al-Tibi and al-Tawrabashti relate it. [21]

The above is reminiscent of Ibn al-Jawzi's similar interpretation in the second hadith of his Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih:

If we say that he -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw Him while awake, then the form, if we say that it refers to Allah Almighty, would mean: "I saw Him in the best of His Attributes in turning to me and being pleased with me." If we say that it refers to the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- himself, then it would mean: "I saw Him as I was in the best form." [22]

Others considered Ibn `Abbas' narration to refer to a vision with the eyes of the heart, as elucidated by Ibn `Abbas' other narrations in Sahih Muslim and al-Tirmidhi (hasan): "He saw him with his heart." Another narration from Ibn `Abbas in Muslim states: "He saw him with his heart twice," in commentary of the verses: {The heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw} (53:11), {And verily he saw him, yet another time} (53:13).

Another explanation is that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw light. This is stated explicitly in the Prophet's -- Allah bless and greet him -- reply, when asked by Abu Dharr if he had actually seen his Lord: "I saw light." [23]

Many sound reports show that the Companions differed sharply whether the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw Allah or not. Ibn `Abbas related that he did, while Ibn Mas`ud, `A'isha, Abu Hurayra, and Abu Dharr related reports to the contrary, stating that the verses of Sura al-Najm and other Suras referred to Gibril -- upon him peace --, [24] and that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- said that he saw light.

Al-Bukhari narrated from Masruq that the latter said:

I said to `A'isha: "O my mother! Did Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- see his Lord?" She replied: "My hair stands on end because of what you said. Have you no idea of three things - whoever tells them to you is lying? [First,] whoever tells you that Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord, is lying." She then recited: {Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware.} (6:103) {And it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil} (42:51). "[Second,] whoever tells you that he knows what shall happen tomorrow, is lying." She then recited: {No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow} (31:34). "And [third,] whoever tells you that he concealed something, is lying." She then recited: {O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message. Allah will protect you from mankind. Lo! Allah guides not the disbelieving folk.} (5:67) "However, he did see Gibril -- upon him peace -- in his actual form twice."

This hadith is also narrated from Masruq by Muslim thus:

I was sitting back in `A'isha's house when she said: "O Abu `A'isha [i.e. Masruq], there are three things, whoever says any of which, he is lying about Allah in the most hateful manner." I asked: "Which things?" She said: "[First,] whoever tells you that Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord, he is lying about Allah in the most hateful manner." I was sitting back, so I sat up and said: "O Mother of the Believers! Give me a moment and do not rush me. Did not Allah Almighty say: {Surely he beheld him on the clear horizon} (81:23), {And verily he saw him, yet

another time} (53:13)?" She replied: "I am the first in this entire Community to have asked Allah's Messenger -- Allah bless and greet him -- about this, and he said: `It is but Gibril, I did not see him in the actual form in which he was created other than these two times. I saw him alighting from the heaven, covering it all. The magnitude of his frame spans what lies between the heaven and the earth.'" Then she said: "Did you not hear Allah say: {Vision comprehends Him not, but He comprehends (all) vision. He is the Subtle, the Aware} (6:103)? Did you not hear Allah say: {And it was not (vouchsafed) to any mortal that Allah should speak to him unless (it be) by revelation or from behind a veil, or (that) He sends a messenger to reveal what He will by His leave. Lo! He is Exalted, Wise} (42:51)?" She continued: "[Second,] whoever claims that Allah's Messenger -- Allah bless and greet him -- concealed any part of Allah's Book, he is lying about Allah in the most hateful manner when Allah is saying: {O Messenger! Make known that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, for if you do it not, you will not have conveyed His message} (5:67)." She continued: "[Third,] whoever claims that he can tell what shall happen tomorrow, he is lying about Allah in the most hateful manner, since Allah is saying: {Say: None in the heavens and the earth knoweth the Unseen save Allah [and they know not when they will be raised again]} (27:65)." [25]

Muslim mentions another wording which adds the phrase:

She said: "If Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- had concealed anything of what was revealed to him, he would have concealed this verse: {And when you said unto him on whom Allah has conferred favor and you have conferred favor: Keep your wife to yourself, and fear Allah. And you did hide in your mind that which Allah was to bring to light, and you did fear mankind whereas Allah had a better right that you should fear Him} (33:37)."

A narration by al-Tirmidhi from al-Sha`bi cites the two positions in context:

Ibn `Abbas met Ka`b [al-Ahbar] in `Arafa and asked him about something, whereupon Ka`b began to shout Allahu Akbar! until the mountains answered him. Ibn `Abbas said: "We are the Banu Hashim!" [26] Ka`b said: "Allah Subhan wa Ta`ala has apportioned His vision and His speech between Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- and Musa -- upon him peace. Musa -- upon him peace -- spoke with Him twice and Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw him twice." Masruq said: "Later [27] I went to visit `A'isha and asked: `Did Muhammad see his Lord?' She replied: `You have said something that makes my hair stand on end.' I said: `Do not rush!' and recited [the verses which conclude with] [28] the verse {Verily he saw one of the greater revelations of his Lord} (53:18). She said: `Where is this taking you? It was but Gibril. Whoever tells you that Muhammad -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord, or concealed something which he was commanded [to reveal], or knew the five things which Allah mentioned {Lo! Allah! With Him is knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain [and knows that which is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware]} (31:34) - he has told an enormous lie. Rather, he saw Gibril, whom he did not see in his actual form except twice: once at the Lote-Tree of the Farthest Boundary (sidra al-muntaha), and once in Jiyad [in Mecca], with his six hundred wings, he had filled the firmament."

Ibn al-Qayyim in Zad al-Ma`ad said:

The Companions differed whether the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- actually saw his Lord that night [of Isra' and mi`raj] or not. It is authentically narrated from Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- saw his Lord, and also authentically related that Ibn `Abbas said: "He saw Him with his heart." It is also authentically related from `A'isha and Ibn Mas`ud that they denied such vision, saying that Allah's words {And verily he saw him, yet another time, at the Lote Tree of the Farthest Boundary} (53:13) refer to Gibril -- upon him peace --. [29] It is also authentically related from Abu Dharr that the latter asked the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him: "Did you see your Lord?" and he replied: "[I saw] a huge light, how could I see Him?" (nurun anna arah?). That is: light came in between myself and His sight, as stated in the wording: "I saw light" (ra'aytu nuran). [30] `Uthman ibn Sa`id al-Darimi [incorrectly] said that the Companions all agreed that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- did not see Him. [31] Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya - may Allah sanctify his soul! - said:

Ibn `Abbas's statement that "He saw Him" does not contradict that claim, nor his statement that "He saw Him with his heart." For it is also authentically related that the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- said: "I saw my Lord - glorified and exalted is He!" [32] However, the latter was not during the Isra' but in Madina, when the Prophet -- Allah bless and greet him -- was occupied and could not be with the Companions at the time of the dawn prayer, after

which he told them about his vision of Allah during his sleep that night. It is on that evidence that Imam Ahmad based himself when he said: "Yes, he saw him in reality (na`am ra'ahu haqqan), for the dream-visions of Prophets are real." This is absolutely true, but Ahmad did not say that he saw Him with the eyes of his head while awake. Whoever said that he did, is mistaken. Ahmad said one time: "He saw Him" and another time: "He saw Him with his heart." These are the two statements narrated from him on the issue. The third statement whereby "He saw Him with the eyes of his head" comes from the free paraphrase of some of his companions. Ahmad's texts are present with us, and nowhere are such words found in them. [33]

Ibn Hajar analyzed this issue at length in his works [34] and compiled a monograph on the topic titled al-Ghunya fi al-Ru'ya. [35] Al-Qari also gave an authoritative discussion of the topic in al-Mirqat. [36]

NOTES

[1] Both Pickthall's and Yusuf `Ali's translations parenthetically annul the meaning of Allah's vision, respectively: {Nay, but surely on that day they will be covered from (the mercy of) their Lord} and {Verily, from (the Light of) their Lord, that Day, will they be veiled}.

[2] Al-Qari, al-Mirqat (1892 ed. 5:303); al-Haytami, Fatawa Hadithiyya (p. 147-150). The latter said (p. 150): "If it is authenticated that al-Ash`ari held that the vision does take place in the world, then that position is ignored as he either did not know of the Consensus to the contrary, or took an anomalous (shadhdh) stance which cannot be taken into consideration."

[3] As stated by Imam al-Haramayn in al-Irshad (p. 169).

[4] In the Siyar (8:430-431).

[5] In al-Futuh al-Makkiyya (1:164 §142).

[6] Narrated from Abu Umama ibn al-Samit al-Bahili as part of a longer hadith by Ahmad with a sound chain, as stated by al-Zayn, in the Musnad (16:415 #22663), Ibn Majah, al-Nasa'i in al-Sunan al-Kubra (4:419 #7764), al-Hakim (4:456) who stated that it is sahih and al-Dhahabi concurred, Ibn Abi `Asim in al-Ahad wa al-Mathani (2:446 #1249) and al-Sunna (p. 186-187 #429) with a sound chain as stated by al-Albani, al-Ajurri in al-Shari`a, and Ibn Khuzayma in al-Tawhid. It is also narrated without mention of the Companion's name by Muslim in his Sahih, al-Tirmidhi who declared it hasan sahih, Ahmad with a sound chain (17:72 #23562), and Ibn Abi `Asim in al-Sunna (p. 187 #430) with a sound chain.

[7] In Fath al-Bari (1959 ed. 1:125 #50).

[8] In al-Mirqat (1892 ed. 5:308).

[9] Narrated by Ahmad with two chains of which one is sound, and al-Ajurri with a sound chain as stated by the editors of the former's Musnad (3:165 #2580, 3:184 #2634) and the latter's al-Shari`a (p. 495 #1047) as well as al-Haythami in Majma` al-Zawa'id (1:78-79). Also narrated by Ibn Abi `Asim in al-Sunna (p. 188 #433) with the same chain as the second of Imam Ahmad's two narrations. Ahmad and Abu Zur`a considered this hadith authentic, as stated in Tabaqat al-Hanabila (1:312, 1:242), al-Suyuti's al-La'ali' (1:29-30), and al-Diya' al-Maqdisi's al-Mukhtara (1:79 #66).

[10] Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma`ad (3:34). On the difference between the dreams of Prophets and others, see al-`Iraqi, Tarh al-Tathrib (4:180-184, 8:204-220).

[11] Al-Asma' wa al-Sifat (Kawthari ed. p. 444-445, Hashidi ed. 2:363-364 #938). A "condemned" (munkar) narration according to Imam Ahmad as stated in al-Dhahabi's Tartib al-Mawdu`at (p. 22 #22), and according to al-Ahdab in Zawa'id Tarikh Baghdad (8:37-40 #1662). Ibn al-Jawzi in Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih (1998 Kawthari repr. p. 34) states that the hadith is narrated through Hammad ibn Salama (see n. 411) and that his foster-son the zindiq Ibn Abi al-

`Awja' used to interpolate this kind of baseless narrations into his books. Al-Dhahabi also states that it is munkar in the Siyar (8:430-431), however, he seems to apply this condemnation to the entirety of the narrations in this chapter.

[12] In al-La'ali' (1:29-30).

[13] I.e. "the angels brought near" according to Ibn al-Athir in al-Nihaya and others.

[14] Narrated by al-Tirmidhi with three chains, all sahih according to al-Albani: two from Ibn `Abbas - in the first of which he said "the knowledge of all things in the heaven and the earth" while he graded the second hasan gharib - and one chain from Mu`adh (hasan sahih) which explicitly mentions that this took place in the Prophet's (sleep. Al-Bukhari declared the latter chain sahih as stated by al-Tirmidhi in his Sunan and in his `Ilal, and it towers over all other chains, according to Ibn Hajar in al-Isaba (2:397), in the facts that there is no discrepancy over it among the hadith scholars and its text is undisputed (cf. ASH 2:78). Also narrated by Ahmad with four sound chains according to Shakir and al-Zayn: one from Ibn `Abbas with the words "I think he said: `in my sleep" (3:458 #3484); one from Mu`adh which Ahmad explicitly declared sahih as narrated by Ibn `Adi in al-Kamil (6:2244), with the words: "I woke up and lo! I was with my Lord" (16:200 #22008); and two from unnamed Companions in which no mention is made of the Prophet's (sleep or wakefulness (13:93-94 #16574, 16:556 #23103). Al-Haythami declared the latter sound as well as other chains cited by al-Tabarani in al-Kabir (20:109 #216, 20:141 #290) and al-Bazzar in his Musnad, and he declared fair the chain narrated from Abu Umama by al-Tabarani in al-Kabir (8:290 #8117). See Majma` al-Zawa'id (7:176-179). Shaykhs `Abd al-Qadir and Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut both declared sahih the seven narrations of al-Tirmidhi and Ahmad in their edition of Ibn al-Qayyim's Zad al-Ma`ad (3:33-34 n. 4). Also narrated from Jabir ibn Samura by Ibn Abi `Asim in al-Sunna (p. 203 #465) with a fair chain according to al-Albani. Also narrated from `Abd al-Rahman ibn `A'ish by al-Darimi in his Musnad (2:170 #2149) and al-Tabarani through two chains in al-Ahad wa al-Mathani (5:48-50 #2585-2586) and another in Musnad al-Shamiyyin (1:339 #597), and from Umm al-Tufayl by al-Tabarani in al-Ahad (6:158 #3385). The latter chain actually states: "I saw my Lord in the best form of a beardless young man" and was rejected by al-Dhahabi in Tahdhib al-Mawdu`at (p. 22 #22). Also narrated from the Companion Abu Rafi` [al-Isaba 7:134 #9875] by al-Tabarani in al-Kabir (1:317 #938). Also narrated from Ibn `Abbas by Abu Ya`la in his Musnad (4:475 #2608). Some fair narrations of this hadith - such as al-Tabarani's from `Abd al-Rahman ibn `Iyash and al-Khatib's from Abu `Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah in Tarikh Baghdad (8:151) - have the words: "I saw my Lord" instead of "My Lord came to me," hence Ibn Kathir's conclusion previously cited. Al-Ahdab in Zawa'id Tarikh Baghdad (6:251-253) and al-Haytami also cited Abu `Ubayda ibn al-Jarrah, Ibn `Umar, Abu Hurayra, Anas, Thawban, and Abu Umama which brings to at least eleven (without Umm al-Tufayl) the number of Companions who narrated this hadith. The various chains and narrations of this hadith were collated and discussed by Ibn Rajab in his monograph Ikhtiyar al-Awla fi Sharh Hadith Ikhtisam al-Mala' al-A`la, ed. Jasim al-Dawsari (Kuwait: Dar al-Aqsa, 1406). See also: Ibn Athir, Jami` al-Usul (9:548-550). Among those that considered this hadith as falling below the grade of sahih are al-Bayhaqi in al-Asma' wa al-Sifat (Kawthari ed. p. 300 = Hashidi ed. 2:72-79), Ibn al-Jawzi in al-`Ilal al-Mutanahiya (1:34), Ibn Khuzayma in al-Tawhid (p. 214-221) and al-Daraqutni in his `Ilal (6:56). Some went too far and suggested that it was forged: see al-Saqqaf, Aqwal al-Huffaz al-Manthura li Bayan Wad` Hadith Ra'aytu Rabbi fi Ahsani Sura, appended to his edition of Ibn al-Jawzi's Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih.

[15] In Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih (Kawthari ed. p. 32).

[16] In Al-Mubarakfuri Tuhfa al-Ahwadhi (9:74).

[17] Al-Razi, Asas al-Taqdis, as quoted by al-Kawthari in Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih (p. 32-33 n.). Cf. al-Bayhaqi, al-Asma' wa al-Sifat (Kawthari ed. p. 300-301).

[18] Al-Qari, Jam` al-Wasa'il (p. 209).

[19] Ibn `Umar said: "The Prophet - Allah bless and greet him - used to wind the turban around his head and tuck it in behind him, letting its extremity hand down between his shoulders." Narrated by al-Bayhaqi in Shu`ab al-Iman (5:174) and al-Tabarani in al-Awsat with a sound chain as indicated by al-Haythami in Majma` al-Zawa'id (5:120). Cf. al-Tabarani, al-Kabir (12:379 #13405) and al-Awsat (1:227 #344).

[20] Al-Qari, al-Asrar al-Marfu`a (2nd ed. p. 209-210 #209; 1st ed. p. 126 #478).

Islamic Article: The Vision of ALLAH, The Exalted in the world and the hereafter

[21] Al-Qari, al-Mirqat (1892 ed. 5:303). Al-Mubarakfuri in Tuhfa al-Ahwadhi (9:73-74) rejects al-Qari's words "to leave aside figurative interpretation in our time fosters confusion due to the dissemination of the doctrines of misguidance" on the grounds that they contravene - in his view - the method of the Salaf, a proof of al-Mubarakfuri's leaning towards unenlightened literalism. Al-Shatibi said in al-Muwafaqat (2:332): "The Congregation of [Sunni] Muslims follow Imam Malik's position [in the detestation of kalam], except if one is obliged to speak. One must not remain silent if his purpose is to refute falsehood and guide people away from it, or if one fears the spread of misguidance or some similar danger."

[22] Ibn al-Jawzi, Daf` Shubah al-Tashbih (Kawthari ed. p. 32).

[23] Narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhi (hasan), and Ahmad through four chains.

[24] As stated by Ibn al-Qayyim in Zad al-Ma`ad (3:34).

[25] Also narrated from Masruq by al-Tirmidhi (hasan sahih).

[26] Al-Tibi said: "[Ibn `Abbas said] this in order to urge him to be quiet, stop his irritation, and reflect upon the answer, meaning: `We are people of science and knowledge, we do not ask about things which should be considered so far-fetched.' Because of this, he reflected and gave him his answer." In al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfa al-Ahwadhi (9:118 #3496).

[27] Al-Tibi said: "It appears from this wording that Masruq was present at the time of the exchange that took place between Ka`b and Ibn `Abbas." In al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfa al-Ahwadhi (9: 119).

[28] This gloss is by al-Tibi, who said: "It is confirmed by al-Tirmidhi's other narration stating: `O Mother of the Believers! Give me a moment and do not rush me. Did not Allah Almighty say: {And verily he saw him, yet another time} (53:13), {Surely he beheld him on the clear horizon} (81:23)?" Al-Mubarakfuri confirmed al-Tibi's reading. In Tuhfa al-Ahwadhi (9: 119).

[29] `A'isha's stance is narrated by al-Bukhari in four places, Muslim, and al-Tirmidhi; Ibn Mas`ud's, by Bukhari and Muslim.

[30] Narrated by Muslim.

[31] This is flatly contradicted by the reports of Ibn `Abbas, but Ibn al-Qayyim does not reject it out of deference for Ibn Taymiyya, who defends al-Darimi's claim.

[32] See above, n. 9.

[33] In Ibn al-Qayyim, Zad al-Ma`ad (3:33-34).

[34] Cf. Fath al-Bari (1959 ed. 1:125-135 #50, 8:608-610, 11:463-469 #6204) and al-Isaba (2:405-406).

[35] This work is briefly described in `Abd al-Mun`im's Ibn Hajar (1:267-268).

[36] Al-Mirqat (1892 ed. 5:306f.).

Glory to You, O Allah! We have not encompassed Your praises. Truly You are as You have glorified Yourself.

Blessings and peace on the Prophet, his Family, and his Companions.

Copyright (c) 1997 - 2005 by
NooreMadinah Network
<http://www.NooreMadinah.net>