

***Shab-e-meraj* and your Doubts**

By: Khurshid Imam

Index:

1. Introduction
2. Was this a physical journey or a spiritual journey?
3. Do laws of physics allow such a journey?
4. Whom did Prophet see on *meraj*?
5. Conclusion

A. Introduction

Shab-e-meraj or the night of Journey is an important event in the life of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). ‘*Shab*’ in Persian means night and Arabic word ‘*mera’j*’ means ‘ascension’ / ‘to gain height’ / ‘to rise high’. It refers to the journey which Prophet Muhammad ((Peace be upon him) undertook on a night and went to distant places in the universe.

This event is described in Quran (Word of GOD) as well as *Hadith* collection (books that contain words or actions of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)).

The event in short is that Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) was taken to *Jerusalem, Bayt al-Muqaddas*. Later he was taken up in the universe. At the highest horizon he saw someone whose identity remains a subject of curiosity. Then he came back.

B. Was this a physical journey or a spiritual journey?

Some people say that this journey was merely a spiritual journey.

Some say that the whole event is allegorical and in actual sense nothing happened as understood.

Some scholars are of the view that whole event was a dream.

As per our best understanding the journey was **neither purely physical nor purely spiritual**.

This event was not allegorical as is claimed by the *Qadiyanis*.

Many ayah related to this event make it clear that it was not a dream, rather it was a reality.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ

... And We did not make the **sight [vision]** which We showed you except as a trial for the people .. Quran 17:60.

Arabic word ‘*Ru’ya*’ is used in Quran most of the time for ‘seeing’. A few times it is used for ‘vision’. To translate ‘*Ru’ya*’ as ‘dream’ in above ayah [17:60] will be incorrect because Quran 53:11-13 proves clearly that it was not a dream.

مَا كَذَّبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ

The (Prophet's) (mind and) **heart in no way falsified that which he saw.** Quran 53:11

أَفْتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا بَرَىٰ

Will you then dispute with him concerning what he saw? Quran 53:12

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ

For indeed **he [prophet] saw him at a second descent.** Quran 53:13

Had the prophet seen all these events in a dream then it would make no sense:

1. To say that his heart did not lie. It indicates that his seeing was in sync with the reality. His mind, his senses confirmed what he was seeing through his eyes.
2. To emphasize so much that he saw something important.
3. To make very clear that he saw something at his second descent.

We know from *ahadith* that before and after the event of *meraj* there were some changes done to his body. Why? So that he could undertake the journey across the universe. Normal human body could not have borne the heat and other other waves; hence some changes were required in his body.

Arch angel *Jibriel* along with two other angels visited the holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) one night, while he was asleep in the *Hateem* part of *Ka'abah*. The angel then operated upon his heart and body and made some changes; probably because the material body could not withstand the space travel with the required velocity without certain protection. The related part of the hadith (narration) reads:

“... *Jibriel* among them took upon himself to make a cut from the throat down to a part below the heart of the Prophet till he emptied the chest and the stomach. Then with his hands he washed it with Zamzam water till the stomach was cleaned. Then was brought a golden tray in which was a golden light filled with faith and wisdom. Pouring it inside, the chest and the veins of throat were filled up. Then the opened part was closed...”. *Sahih Bukhari*

By incorporating the changes in the body system, his body was probably converted from material into *Noorani* (luminous) body to withstand the journey of space. It may be remembered that the material bodies of people destined for heavens would also be changed to luminous (made of light) bodies after the *Maidaan-e-Hash'r* (the place of the great gathering) before taking them to heavens”.

Also, after completion of this journey his bodily changes were reversed back to their original condition. So, journey of the Prophet was neither purely physical nor purely spiritual.

Neither Asleep Nor Awake:

“The Qur’an in *Surah Israa*, in which the advent is mentioned, indicates the state in which the Prophet was carried to his journey. It says; “... *And we made not the vision which we showed you, but a trial for mankind..*”. Quran 17:60

It was neither a dream nor the state of wakefulness in the material sense. The *Qur’anic* word for the vision is **‘Ru’ya’ which is different from a dream**. We find in one of the *ahadith* describing *Me’raj* thus:

“... *They (the angels) came in such a state that the heart (of the Prophet) was seeing them. The eyes were asleep but the heart was awake. Likewise, the eyes of (all) the Prophets sleep but their hearts do not sleep..*” (Bukhari; *Kitab-ut-Tauhid*; *Narration of Abu Hurairah*)

The above narration of *Me’raj* in *Bukhari*, which is a very lengthy one, ends with the following words; “...*And when he (Prophet Muhammad) woke up, he was in Masjid-al-Haram (Ka’abah).*”

So, the material body of the Prophet was in a state of sleep after the *Me’raj*, while during the vision his transcendental body actually visited the places and witnessed the signs of Allah. In sleep he was taken and to sleep he was returned before and after the journey. During the journey, he was not asleep. He saw and witnessed everything with a transcendental body and with eyes, which were not material. Such is the vision of Prophets.”

C. Do laws of physics allow such a journey?

A normal physical entity even if it travelled at the speed of light could not have reached the first heaven even after 1400 years while the Prophet travelled across all heavens and reached beyond that within a very short period of time [some minutes or hour probably]. How is that possible?

Scientific discoveries have proved it to be theoretically possible. Answer lies in ‘wormhole’. What is a worm hole? A worm hole is a conduit for connecting two extremely far locations in the universe. Though it is a theoretical possibility, as of now, the concept of **worm holes allow for intra universe journey .i.e. journey across two universe or heavens**.

“A wormhole is a theoretical passage through space-time that could create shortcuts for long journeys across the universe. Wormholes are predicted by the theory of general relativity.

In 1935, physicists Albert Einstein and Nathan Rosen used the theory of general relativity to propose the existence of "bridges" through space-time. These paths, called Einstein-Rosen bridges or wormholes, connect two different points in space-time, **theoretically creating a shortcut that could reduce travel time and distance**.

Wormholes may not only connect two separate regions within the universe, they could also connect two different universes.

Scientists continue to explore the concept as a method of space travel with the hope that technology **will eventually be able to utilize them.**”

Source: <http://www.space.com/20881-wormholes.html>

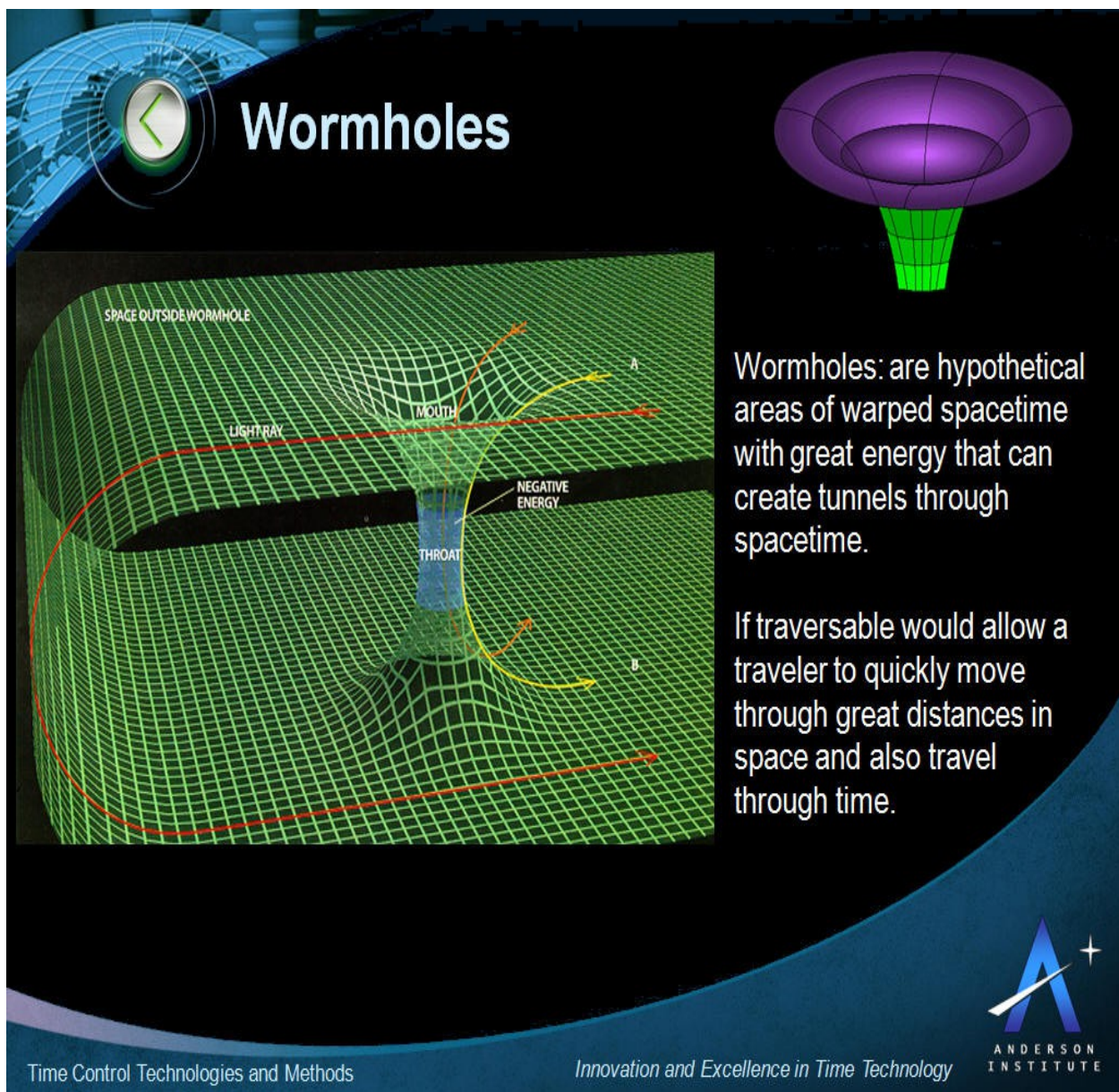
For more information on the subject, go through:

1. <http://www.daviddarling.info/encyclopedia/W/wormhole.html>

2. http://www.speed-light.info/miracles_of_quran/wormholes.htm
3. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WHRtdyW9ong>
4. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=4qbMbPLYReo&feature=endscreen>
5. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&v=SLUzJeto0Wo&NR=1>

Based on wormhole, in 2014 a science movie named '**Interstellar**' was made in which a crew of astronauts travels through a wormhole.

Scientists are looking into the possibility where an entity passes through wormhole and exits into a different universe. However, that is not practical as yet because of many factors. In future – it may be reality. Also, in such journey time will pass extremely slowly. Can this be said that journey of Prophet could have been through a worm hole?




Wormholes

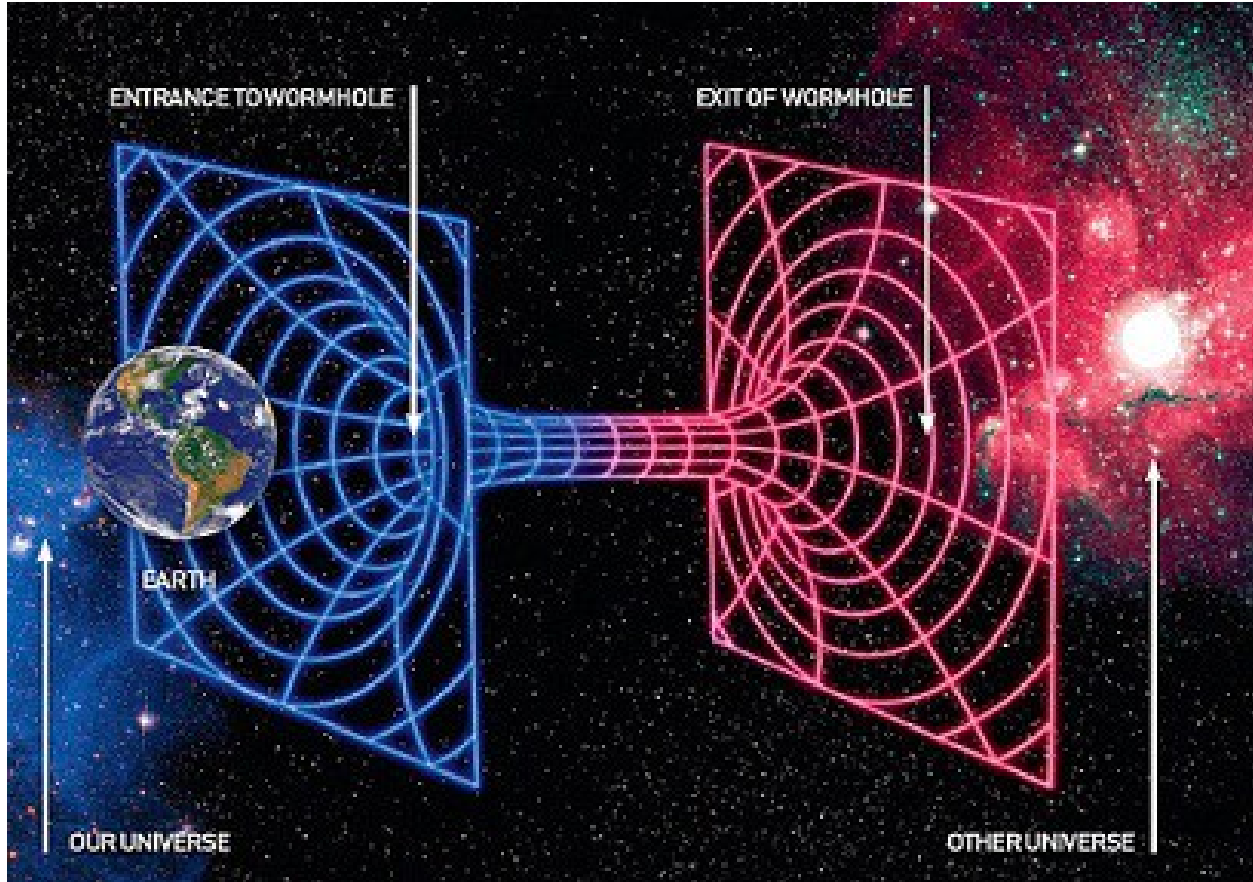
Wormholes: are hypothetical areas of warped spacetime with great energy that can create tunnels through spacetime.

If traversable would allow a traveler to quickly move through great distances in space and also travel through time.

Time Control Technologies and Methods

Innovation and Excellence in Time Technology


 ANDERSON
 INSTITUTE



There are many ayah of Quran that indicate about existence of wormholes or such ‘doors’ in the universe.

Quran and wormholes

Quran 15:14-17

وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ

Even if **we opened out to them a gate from heaven, and they were to continue ascending** therein.

لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ مَسْحُورُونَ

They would only say: "Our eyes have been intoxicated: Nay, we have been bewitched by sorcery."

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ

And we have placed within the heaven great stars and have beautified it for the **observers (those who can see)**.

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ

And (moreover) we have guarded them from every cursed devil.

Quran gives clear indications of worm hole as ‘door in the heaven’ and says that one will continue to pass through it and rise. The traveller – one who passes through this worm hole or door of heaven – will be shocked to see the universe and how beautifully Allah has decorated it. The traveller will find it hard to believe as to where he has come in such short time and what he is seeing; he will feel as if he is intoxicated or bewitched.

وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا

And the **heavens shall be opened as if there were doors**. Quran 78:19

Regarding the *burraq* or the means by which prophet was taken into space; it is not difficult to understand that the description of *burraq* given in *hadith* is to make people of that time understand the means of travel in simple language. Of course, people of that time would have not understood the exact mechanism of this journey, hence some aspects were told in simple terminologies that are captured in books of *hadith*.

Burraq word is derived from the Arabic word, ‘*barq*’ which means ‘light’.

Some terms used in *ahadith* are meant for making contemporary people understand in the way they would have understood better. For example, the use of the word “ant” in place of DNA in context with ADAM and his progenies. This topic is beyond the scope of this article.

With the passage of time, with more pondering over signs of God human beings keep discovering new things. Allah will continue to show his signs everywhere.

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

“We will show them our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth”. Quran 41:53

D. Whom did Prophet see on *meraj* - Allah or Angel *Jibriel* or someone else?

Some people say that the Prophet saw angel *Jibriel* on *meraj*. The Prophet had seen angel *Jibriel* on numerous occasions, so there was nothing extra-ordinary in seeing him on *meraj*. Some people say that the Prophet saw *Jibriel* in his ‘original form’ but this is without any proof, without any evidence. Traditions say that angel *jibrael* could not go beyond a certain point and when prophet ‘saw’ someone special then *Jibriel* was not with him.

It is an anticlimax of a very extraordinary miracle described with much importance by Qur’an and *Hadith*. Seeing *Hazrat Jibriel*, a frequent visitor to the Prophet (even in his original form) would not have been such a big event.

Some people mistakenly think that Prophet actually “saw” Allah. Both groups have their set of narrations for their support. Quran – the *furqaan* – clarifies when there are contradictory narrations. Nowhere Quran says that the Prophet saw Allah on *meraj*.

The ayah related to *meraj* event itself categorically rejects this idea.

لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى For truly did **he see, of the Signs of his Lord**, the Greatest! Quran 53:18

Allah is beyond comprehension. Prophet did not see Allah on *meraj*.

Quran 17:1 also says that Allah showed his 'signs' to the Prophet.

لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا ... in order that We might **show him of our signs**.. Quran 17

Note: Allah communicated with the Prophet when he went for *meraj*. That does not imply that God lives above 7th heaven or at a particular place. God communicated with prophets when they were in different parts of the world.

Allah asked Prophet Moses to come to Mount *Tur* and communicated with him then that does not mean that Allah was present physically over mount *tur*. Allah communicates to his creatures but that does not mean God is present physically in any time and space. **Almighty God is beyond time and space and He can't be confined to it.**

“We (Almighty God) are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein”. Quran 50:16
Do we mean that God is 'physically' present near our jugular vein? The answer is 'No'.

Let us analyze the ayah that talks about the Prophet seeing **someone** very important. Let's name him as 'mysterious personality' for some time:

A. Whom did prophet see? Quran 53:1-14,18

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ By the star when it goes down (or vanishes).

مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ Your companion neither (has) gone astray nor has erred.

وَمَا يَتَّبِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ Nor does **he** speak of (his own) desire.

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ It is only a Revelation revealed.

عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ **He** (Prophet) has been taught (this Qur'an) **by one mighty in power**
[mysterious personality]

ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ **One of soundness. And he** [mysterious personality] **rose**

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ While **he** [mysterious personality] was in the highest part of the horizon

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ Then **he** [mysterious personality] approached and came closer

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ And was at a distance of two bows' length or (even) nearer

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ So (Allah) revealed to His **slave** whatever He revealed

مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ The (Prophet's) heart lied not in what **he** (Muhammad) saw

أَفْتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ Will you then dispute with **him** (Muhammad) about what **he** saw

وَلَقَدْ رَأَهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ And indeed **he** (Muhammad) saw **him** [mysterious personality] at a second descent

عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ Near *Sidrat-ul-Muntaha*

Then Ayah Number 18 clearly says that Prophet saw 'signs' of Allah and **NOT Allah itself**.
لَقَدْ رَأَى مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَى Indeed **he** (Muhammad) did see of the **Greatest Signs, of his Lord (Allah)**.

B. Whom did prophet see? Quran 81:19-23

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ Verily, this is the Word (Qur'an brought by) **a most honorable messenger** [mysterious personality]

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ **Owner of power** [mysterious personality], (and high rank) **with** (Allah), the Lord of the Throne

مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ **Obedied** and **trustworthy** [mysterious personality]

وَمَا صَاحِبُكُمْ بِمَجْنُونٍ And your **companion** (Muhammad) is not a madman

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأَفْقِ الْمُبِينِ And indeed **he** (Muhammad) saw **him** [mysterious personality] in the clear horizon

Yellow color text: Refers to Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

Green color text: Refers to the one whom prophet saw. Who is this 'mysterious personality'?

Attributes of that 'mysterious personality' as per above ayaah are:

- ✓ Mighty in power [*shaded ul qawa*]
- ✓ Most honorable messenger [*rasul in Kareem*]
- ✓ Owner of the power [*zee quwwatin*]
- ✓ Near to / with / closer to Allah
- ✓ Trustworthy [*Ameen*]

Let us find from the Quran who is mentioned having the above mentioned qualities.

There is a personality in Quran called '*Ruh ul quddus*' or '*Ruh ul amin*' or the Holy Spirit. A big misconception is that people think that Holy Spirit and angel *Jibriel* are one and the same personality. There is no proof for this understanding. Quran has maintained separate personality of *Jibriel* and Holy Spirit. Proof for this subject is beyond the scope of this article. Holy Spirit and angel *Jibriel* both act as messengers for bringing the revelation of God. However, Holy Spirit is higher in rank and closer to Allah. Let us see the following ayaah for proof.

نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ *Ruh ul Amin* [**The HOLY Spirit**] has brought it [revelation of God] down. Quran 26:193

قُلْ نَزَّلَهُ رُوحُ الْقُدُسِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ

Say! **Ruh ul Qudus** [**HOLY Spirit**] has brought it (the Qur'an) down from your Lord with truth. Quran 16:102

وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْتَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

.. And We gave 'Īsa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear signs and supported him with **Ruh ul Qudus** [**HOLY Spirit**]. Quran 2:87

وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ

To Jesus- the son of Mary- we gave clear (Signs), and strengthened him with **Ruh ul Qudus** [**Holy Spirit**]. Quran 2:253

رَفِيعِ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ

".. One who is owner of throne [Almighty God] raises in status does ILQA [to place to put, to reveal] to **Al-Rooh** [**Holy Spirit**]. Quran 40:15

From these ayaah we find that the description of *Ruh ul Qudus* or the Holy Spirit or *Al Ruh* or *Ruh ul Amin* matches exactly with the personality whom prophet saw on *meraj*. Prophet did not see Allah or *Jibriel* but *Ruh ul Qudus* or the Holy Spirit. ‘What is the significance of the Holy Spirit and what his relation with Prophet Muhammad is’ – this topic is beyond the scope of the present article.

E. Conclusion

1. *Shab-e-meraj* or night of journey holds an important event in the house of Islam.
2. Prophet did go to the highest heavens and communicated with Allah.
3. The journey of *meraj* is within the gamut of possibilities for mankind.
4. The journey was neither a dream nor purely a physical one; rather some changes were done to the body to make it possible.
5. The Prophet did not see Allah on *meraj* rather he saw one of the greatest signs of Allah – *Ruh ul Ameen* or the Holy Spirit.
6. With more discoveries and scientific advancement, exact mechanism of this journey will be understood better.

Author can be contacted: imam.khurshid@yahoo.com WhatsApp: +91-8884542768
