

THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND THE ASCENSION (PART 4 OF 6): THE SEVENTH HEAVEN

Rating: 4.5

Description: Prophet Muhammad meets Prophet Abraham, and witnesses the realm wherein the angels are most densely arrayed in worship

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By: Aisha Stacey (© 2008 IslamReligion.com)

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The Angel Gabriel and Prophet Muhammad continued their miraculous ascension through the heavens. This journey was far beyond the wildest imagining of any human being. It began in the deserts of Arabia and spanned the reaches of the known universe and beyond. At the gate of the seventh heaven, they exchanged the same questions and answers as in the previous heavens, and the angels declared their pleasure at meeting Prophet Muhammad. Permission to enter was given and the Prophet of God, accompanied by Gabriel, the angel trusted with the revelations of God, moved into the final heaven.

The seventh heaven is an expression used by Christians to denote extreme happiness or bliss, as in "I am in the seventh heaven". In Islam, the seventh heaven is where Prophet Mohammad met Prophet Abraham; and indeed, he (Muhammad) must have been extremely happy and in a state of bliss, having been honoured with this journey of wonders. Both Prophets exchanged greetings by saying *Assalamu alaikum* (may peace be upon you) and, as every other prophet had done, Prophet Abraham expressed his belief and faith in Prophet Muhammad's mission.

Through his son, Ishmael, Abraham is the father of the Arabs and the ancestor of Prophet Muhammad; he is an ancestor of the people who became the Children of Israel (followers of Prophet Moses) through his son Isaac. In Jewish traditions, Abraham is called the father of the Jews. However, Islam rejects this idea, for the Quran clearly states that he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a believer in pure monotheism (belief in One God).

"Why do you dispute about Abraham, while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Have you then no sense? Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a true Muslim Hanifa."[\[1\]](#) (Quran 3:65 & 67)

Muslims are required to believe in all of the Prophets of God; Abraham, however, holds a special place as one of the important messengers of God and has the unique honour

of being called, in both Islamic and Christian^[2] traditions, the beloved servant of God. Together, Abraham and his son Ishmael built the Kaaba (the black cubical building in the middle of the Holy Masjid in Mecca).

“And remember when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, saying, Our Lord! Accept this from us. Verily! You are the All-Hearer, the All-Knower.” (Quran 2:127)

Muslims turn their faces towards the Kaba many times every day whilst performing their prayers, and in every prayer, they ask God to bless Abraham and his family.

The World of Angels

While in the seventh heaven, Prophet Muhammad was shown the building known as the much-frequented house, or *al Bayt al-Mamoor* in Arabic. It is fitting that Prophet Abraham was here with this house, as it is the heavenly equivalent of the Kaaba in Mecca. Each year at the time of pilgrimage (Hajj), more than 2 million Muslims from all over the world flock to Mecca to follow in the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and perform certain rites including circling the Kaaba. Every day 70,000 angels visit this much-frequented house in the seventh heaven to worship God. Prophet Muhammad informed us that, once the angels have visited *Bayt al-Mamoor*, they never return. God swears by this house in the Quran.

“And by the Bayt al-Mamoor.” (Quran 52:4)

Seventy thousand angels every day! What are the implications of this? Think about it and wonder for how many thousands or even millions of years has this been happening? How many of these beings, created by God from light, are there? This was another wonder that Prophet Muhammad was privileged to see and made able to describe to us. In his traditions, he also informs us that the heavens above us are moaning, every space as big as the width of four fingers is occupied by an angel worshipping God.

The Uppermost Boundary

Prophet Muhammad then moved through the seventh heaven to the uppermost boundary, to *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, a lote tree.

“Near Sidrat al-Muntaha (lote-tree of the utmost boundary. Near it is the Paradise of Abode.” (Quran 53:14-15)

He described its fruits like jugs and its leaves as big as elephant ears. Four rivers originated from the lote tree's roots. When he asked about them, Prophet Muhammad was told that two of the rivers originated in Paradise. Nothing has reached us about the names or significance of these two rivers from the narrative of the ascension. However,

he was told that the other two rivers were replicas of the Nile and the Euphrates, two rivers that are especially blessed in this world of mankind.

Sidrat al-Muntaha is called the uttermost boundary because everything that comes up from the earth or the heavens stops there, and everything that comes down stops there, [3] and because the knowledge of the angels stops at that point. No one has gone beyond it except Prophet Muhammad.[4] Beyond this point, we leave the heavens and move into the realm of the hereafter, the realm that contains Paradise and the Throne of God. As Prophet Muhammad continues his miraculous journey, he moves into this realm and stands in the presence of God Almighty.

Footnotes:

[1] The word *Muslim* denotes a man who submits to God alone, whilst *Hanifa* connotes purity, truth and sincerity. The Arabic dictionary assigns the word *orthodox* as one of the denotations of *Hanifa*, but it is more than orthodoxy. It is n untaught orthodoxy; a sense of the true nature of things that is instinctual and natural.

[2] Isaiah 41:8 & 2.

[3] Saheeh Muslim

[4] Imam Al-Nawawi

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