

The Thirty-First Word

On the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him)

[NOTE: The Ascension is a question that results from the essentials and pillars of belief, and follows on after them, a light that draws strength from the lights of the pillars of belief. For sure, the Ascension cannot be proved independently to irreligious atheists who do not accept the pillars of belief, because it cannot be discussed 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 the case, we shall address the discussion to a believer who, since he considers it unlikely, has misgivings about the Ascension and we shall explain it to him. However, from time to time we shall take into account the atheist who is the position of listener and shall set forth the matter to him. Some flashes of the truth of the Ascension have been mentioned in others of the other Words. At the insistence of my brothers we seek the grace from Almighty God to unite all those different flashes with the essence of the truth, and with all of them to form a mirror to the beauty of the perfections of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him).]

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

Limitless in His glory is He Who transported His servant by night from the Inviolable House of Worship to the Remote House of Worship, the environs of which We had blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs: for, indeed, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.¹

*It is no less than inspiration sent down to him; * He was taught by one mighty in power, * Endued with wisdom: for he appeared in [stately form] * While he was in the horizon's loftiest part. * Then he*

¹ Qur'an, 17:1.

*approached and came closer, * And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or [even] nearer; * And thus did [God] reveal unto His servant whatever He revealed. * The [servant's] heart in no way falsified what it saw. * Will you, then, dispute with him as to what he saw? * For, indeed, he saw him at a second descent, * Near the Lote-tree of the farthest limit, * Near it is to the Garden of Abode. * Behold, the Lote-tree was shrouded in mystery unspeakable. * [His] eye did not waver, nor yet did it stray. * Truly did he see some of the most profound of his Sustainer's signs.*²

Since it is related to our question here, I shall expound two allusions –based on principles of the science of rhetoric– contained in the pronominal phrase *for indeed He*, which is part of the vast treasury of the first sublime verse mentioned above. It was also explained in the treatise about the Qur'an's miraculousness.

After mentioning the journey of God's Most Noble Beloved (Upon whom be the best of blessings and most perfect peace) from the mosque at Mecca to the mosque in Jerusalem, which was the beginning of his Ascension, the All-Wise Qur'an says: *He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing*. This phrase, together with the pronoun in the phrase, for indeed He, which alludes to the furthest point of the Ascension indicated to by the verses from Sura an-Najm, refers either to Almighty God or to the Prophet (PBUH).

If it refers to the Prophet (PBUH), the rule of rhetoric and the relationship in the sequence of the words states the following: there is, within this particular journey a general one and a universal ascent during which the Prophet (PBUH) heard and saw the dominical signs and wonders of Divine art which his eyes and ears happened upon within the universal degrees of the Divine Names as far as *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit* and *the distance of two bow-lengths*. It indicates that his insignificant and particular journey was like the key to a journey that is both universal and an exhibition of marvels.

If the pronoun refers to Almighty God, it is thus: in order to invite one of His servants on a journey to His presence and to entrust him with a duty, after sending him from the Mosque in Mecca to that in Jerusalem, which is where the prophets gather, and causing him to meet with them and demonstrating that he was the sole heir of the principles of the religions of all the prophets, He took him on a journey through both the external face of the world of existence and the face that looks to its Creator as far as *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit* and *the distance of two bow-lengths*.

Certainly, he was a servant and the journey was a particular Ascension,

² Qur'an, 53:4-18.

but he had been accorded a Trust that was connected to the whole universe and had been given a light that would change the colour of the universe. Moreover, since he had with him the key to open the door leading to eternal happiness, God Almighty bestowed on him the attribute of “seeing and hearing all things” so that he might demonstrate the world-embracing comprehensive wisdom of the Trust, light, and key – wisdom and purposes which encompassed the whole universe and embraced all creatures.

This profound truth contains four Principles.

The First: Why was the Ascension necessary?

The Second: What was the reality of the Ascension?

The Third: What was the wisdom and purpose of the Ascension?

The Fourth: What are the fruits and benefits of the Ascension?

First Principle

The reason for the Ascension’s necessity

It is said, for example, that Almighty God is *closer to him than his jugular vein*.³ He is closer to everything than anything else. He is free of and beyond corporeality and space. However, all the saints are able to converse with Him in their hearts, so why was the Saint, Muhammad (PBUH), successful in holding an inward conversation with God that any saint may do in his heart, only after and as a result of a long journey like the Ascension?

The Answer: We shall make this profound mystery easier to understand by means of two comparisons. Consider these two comparisons from the Twelfth Word, which are about the mystery of the Qur’an’s miraculousness and the mystery of the Ascension.

First Comparison: A king has two sorts of interviewing, conversation, and discussion at his disposal, and two modes of address and favour. The first is to converse with a common subject about a particular matter and special need by means of a private telephone. The second, under the title of august sovereignty, in the name of supreme kingship, with the dignity of universal rule, and with the aim of publishing and promulgating his commands, is to converse and speak through an envoy connected to those matters or by means of a high official related to those commands. It is also to speak through an illustrious edict that proclaims his majesty.

Thus, *And God’s is the highest similitude*,⁴ like this comparison, the

³ Qur’an, 50:16.

⁴ Qur’an, 16:60.

Creator of the universe, the Lord of all things with their apparent and inner faces, the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, has two modes of conversing, speaking, and favouring. The first is particular and private, the other universal and general. The Ascension, therefore, was a manifestation of the sainthood of Muhammad (PBUH) in the form of a universality and exaltedness superior to all other sainthood. It was being honoured by God Almighty's conversation and address through His Name of Sustainer of All the Universe and title of Creator of All Beings.

Second Comparison: A man holds up the mirror he is holding to the sun. According to its capacity, the mirror receives light, which contains the seven colours, from the sun, and a reflection. The man becomes connected with the sun and converses with it in relation to these. If he directs the luminous mirror towards his dark house or his tiny, private garden, which is covered by a roof, he cannot benefit in relation to the sun's value, but only in accordance with the capacity of the mirror.

A second man, however, puts down the mirror, faces the sun directly, and sees its majesty and understands its grandeur. Then he climbs a very high mountain, sees the brilliance of the sun's broad dominion and converses with it in person and without veil. Then he returns and makes large windows in his house and in the roof over his garden, and opens up ways to the sun in the sky, and speaks and converses with the constant light of the actual sun. And he is able to speak to it gratefully as follows:

"O amiable sun, who is the beauty of the world and pet of the skies, who gilds the face of the earth with its light and makes it and the faces of all flowers smile! You have heated and illuminated my little house and garden in the same way that you have illuminated the whole world and warmed the face of the earth." The first man with the mirror, however, cannot say that, for the sun's reflection and traces are limited and restricted by the mirror, and are in accordance with the restriction.

Thus, the manifestation of the Single and Eternally Besought One, the Pre-Eternal Sun and Post-Eternal Sovereign, appears in the human essence in two forms, which comprise innumerable degrees.

The First is a manifestation through a dominical relationship which is extended to the mirror of the heart. Through it, everyone may receive the particular and universal manifestation of the Pre-Eternal Sun's light, discourse, and conversation in relation to his capacity, and in the relation to the manifestation of the Divine Names and attributes in his traversing the degrees in his spiritual journeying. The degrees of sainthood, which proceed under the shadow of most of the Names and attributes, arise from this sort.

The Second: Since man possesses comprehensiveness and is the most enlightened fruit of the tree of the universe, and since he is able to display at

once in the mirror of his spirit all the Divine Names manifested in the universe, Almighty God displayed, through the manifestation of His Essence and at the greatest level of the Most Beautiful Names, in the member of the human race who reflected them most comprehensively the greatest manifestation of those Names. This display and manifestation is the inner meaning of the Ascension of Muhammad (PBUH), by which his sainthood became the source of his messengership.

Sainthood proceeds through shadow and resembles the first man in the Second Comparison. While in messengership there is no shadow, it looks directly to the oneness of the All-Glorious One and resembles the second man in the Second Comparison. As for the Ascension, since it was the greatest wonder of Muhammad's sainthood and also its highest degree, it was transformed into the degree of messengership. The inner face of the Ascension was sainthood, it went from creation to Creator. While its apparent face was messengership, it came from Creator to creation. Sainthood is spiritual journeying in the levels close to God; it needs a certain amount of time and many degrees must be traversed. While messengership, whose light is greatest, looks to the mystery of uncovering Divine immediacy, for which the passing instant is sufficient. It was for this reason that it is said in the Hadith: "He went and returned in an instant."⁵

Now we say to the atheist who is in the position of listener: "Since the universe resembles a most orderly country, magnificent city, and adorned palace, it surely must have a ruler, owner, and builder. And since there is such a magnificent, All-Glorious Owner, All-Perfect Ruler, and All-Beauteous Maker; and since there was a human being whose view was universal and who demonstrated a relationship with the entire world, country, city, and palace and was connected to all of them through his senses and faculties of perception; certainly, the Magnificent Maker would have an elevated relationship to the fullest degree with that human being, whose view was universal and consciousness comprehensive, and would favour him with an exalted and sacred address.

Among those who manifested this relationship from the time of Adam (Peace be upon him) up to now, Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him) demonstrated it at the very fullest degree according to the testimony of his achievements, that is, his having taken half the globe and a fifth of mankind under this direction and control and having transformed and illuminated the spiritual shape of the universe. This being so, the Ascension, which comprised the very fullest degree of that relationship, is most worthy and suitable for him.

⁵ Suyuti, *al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, i, 439, 444; Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa'*, 190, 192.

Second Principle

What was the reality of the Ascension?

The Answer: It consisted of the journeying of the person of Muhammad (PBUH) through the degrees of perfection. That is, through the various Names and titles He makes manifest in the disposition of creatures, and by showing that special servant of His all the works of His dominicality which He displays in the spheres, creation, and regulation within the sovereignty of His dominicality, and in the levels of the heavens within those spheres –each of which is the means to a seat of dominicality and centre for the disposal of power– God Almighty made that servant both embrace all human perfections, and display all the Divine manifestations, and view all the levels of the universe, and the herald of the sovereignty of dominicality and the proclaimer of those things pleasing to God, and the solver of the talisman of the universe. And so that he could do this, He mounted him on Buraq, caused him to flash through the heavens like lightning traversing all its levels, observe Divine dominicality from mansion to mansion like the moon, and from sphere to sphere, and showing him each of the prophets, his brothers, whose abodes are in the heavens of those spheres, He raised him to the station of a distance of two bow-lengths and displayed to him His oneness and His Word and the vision of Himself.

This exalted truth may be examined through the telescope of two comparisons.

First Comparison: As is explained in the Twenty-Fourth Word, a king has different titles in the different spheres and offices of his government, different qualities and attributes in the classes of his subjects, and different names and marks in the degrees of his sovereignty. For example, he is Wise Judge in the judiciary, Sovereign in the civil service, Commander-in-Chief in the army, Caliph in the learned establishment, and so on; it is the same with the rest of his names and titles. In each sphere he has a seat or chair which has the meaning of a throne. The single king may be able to have a thousand names and titles in those spheres of sovereignty and levels of government; he may have a thousand thrones of sovereignty one within the other. It is as if the ruler is present and knowing in every sphere through his corporate personality and through his telephone; and sees and is seen in every class through his law, regulation, and representatives; and administers and observes from behind the veil in every level through his command, knowledge, and power; and has a different centre and headquarters in every sphere. His decrees are all different from one another, and his levels are all different from one another.

Thus, a king such as this may allow a person of his choosing to visit all his different spheres and offices and may show him the imperial dominion and sovereign commands special to each. He may cause him to travel from sphere to sphere and from level to level until he brings him to his presence. There he will entrust him with certain universal and general commands concerning all those spheres and will send him back.

Similarly to this comparison, the Sustainer of All the Worlds, Who is the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, has functions and attributes in the levels of His dominicality which are all different but that look to one another; and Names and signatures in the spheres of His Divinity which are all different but which appear one within the other; and manifestations and revelations in the performance of His splendid deeds which are all different but which resemble each other; and titles in the disposal of His power which are all different, but which hint of one another; and sacred appearances in the manifestation of His attributes which are all different but which all point to each other; and acts of disposal in the manifestation of His actions which are all different but complete one another; and He has a majestic dominicality in His multicoloured art and creatures whose aspects are all different but which gaze on one another.

As a consequence of this vast mystery, He ordered the universe and arranged it in an amazing and wonderful fashion with different formations one over the other from particles, which are the tiniest level of creatures, to the heavens, and from the first level of the heavens to the Sublime Throne. Each heaven is like the roof of a different world, a throne for dominicality, a centre for Divine disposal.

For sure, with regard to Divine oneness, all the Divine Names may be found in those spheres and levels; they are manifested together with the titles. But just as in the Ministry of Justice the title of Wise Judge was fundamental and dominant and there the rest of the king's titles looked to its command and were dependent on it, so in each level of creatures, in each heaven, one Name, one Divine title, is dominant, and the other titles look to it.

For example, in whichever sphere of the heavens the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) met with Jesus (Peace be upon him), who manifested the Name of All-Powerful, in that sphere God Almighty Himself was manifested with title of All-Powerful. And, for example, the most predominant in the sphere of the heavens which is Moses' (Peace be upon him) seat is the title of Speaker, which he manifested. And so on.

Thus, since the person of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) manifested the Greatest Name, and all the Divine Names, and since his prophethood was universal, he was surely connected with all the spheres of

dominicality. And to meet with the prophets whose seats are in those spheres and to pass through all those levels, surely necessitates the fact of the Ascension.

Second Comparison: The title of Commander-in-Chief, which is one of the titles of a king, is manifested and makes an appearance in every rank of the army from that of the commander-in-chief, which is a broad and universal rank, to that of a corporal, which is special and particular. For example, a private sees in the person of his corporal a sample of the imposing title of Commander-in-Chief, he looks to it and takes his orders from it. On becoming a corporal, the manifestation of the title in the sergeant's rank will command his attention and it will be to that that he will look. Then, if he is promoted to the rank of sergeant, he will see a sample of the title of Commander-in-Chief and a manifestation of it in the lieutenant's rank. It will be present together with a seat peculiar to it at that rank. And so on. He will see the title in each of its ranks of captain, major, general, and field marshal in relation to its smallness or largeness.

Now, if the Commander-in-Chief wishes to entrust the private with a duty which concerns all the ranks of the army, if he wishes to promote him to a rank where he can observe each sphere like an inspector and himself be observed; he will cause him to make a tour of inspection of the ranks, from that of the corporal to the highest, and will also allow him to be seen. Then he will receive him into his presence and honouring him with conversation and conferring on him a decoration and a decree, will send him back whence he came in an instant.

The following point must be noted in this comparison: if the king is not in any way powerless and if he has spiritual power in the same way that he has material power, he will not appoint persons like the general, field marshal and lieutenant as his representatives but will himself be present everywhere in person. He will give his orders directly, merely from behind certain veils and individuals, themselves of rank. In fact, there are narrations relating that certain kings who were saints of the highest level executed their affairs in many spheres in the form of different individuals.

As far as the truth we looked at in this comparison is concerned, since the Commander-in-Chief was in no way impotent, the order and command came directly from him in every sphere. Affairs were executed through his command, will, and power.

Like this comparison, the commands and authoritative functions of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, Who is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth, Owner of the command of "*Be!*" and *it is*,⁶ and the Absolute Commander, are in force in all the levels of creatures and are conformed to

⁶ See, Qur'an, 36:82, etc.

with perfect obedience and order. Each appears as a sphere of dominicality, a level of rulership in the levels of creatures and classes of beings, which stretch from particles to the planets and from flies to the heavens, and which, great and small, particular and universal, are all different but are such that they look one to the other.

Now, the way to understand the exalted aims and mighty results of the entire universe and to see all the different duties of worship of all its levels; and, through observing the sovereignty of dominicality of the One of Grandeur and the splendour of His rule, to understand what is pleasing to Him; and to be the herald of His sovereignty, is to make a journey through all those levels and spheres until the Sublime Throne, which is the title of the greatest sphere, is reached; until *The distance of two bow-lengths*. It is to meet there with the All-Glorious and Beauteous One. And this journey is the reality of the Ascension.

Like ordinary human beings travel in the mind with the speed of imagination, and saints journey in the heart with the speed of lightning, like angels, which are luminous bodies, circulate with the speed of spirit from the Throne to the earth and from the earth to the Throne; and like the people of Paradise will rise to Paradise from the resurrection with the speed of Buraq through a distance greater than five hundred years;⁷ of a certainty the body of Muhammad (PBUH) went together with his elevated spirit as far as the Divine Throne. For the body of Muhammad (PBUH) was the treasury of the faculties of the spirit of Muhammad (PBUH), and the means for the performance of its duties, which is light and has the characteristics of light, is subtler than the hearts of the saints, more insubstantial than the spirits of the dead and the bodies of the angels, and more ethereal than the astral bodies and subtle bodies.

Now we consider the atheist who is listening. It comes to mind that he would think of saying: "I do not recognize God and I do not know the Prophet (PBUH), how should I believe in the Ascension?" To which we would reply as follows.

Since the universe and beings exist, and within them are acts and creation; and since an orderly act cannot occur without an author, a meaningful book cannot be without a scribe, and a skilful embroidery be without an embroiderer; the purposeful acts which fill the universe surely have an author, and the meaningful letters and amazing embroideries which cover the face of the earth and are renewed from season to season have a scribe and an embroiderer.

And since two governors directing the same matter spoils the order in that matter being spoilt; and since from a fly's wing to the lamps in the heavens

⁷ Bukhari, viii, 147; Ibn Mubarak, *al-Zuhd*, ii, 122.

there is perfect order, there must be only one governor, one ruler. For the art and wisdom in everything is so wonderful it necessitates that the Maker of one thing is powerful over all things, to the extent that He knows every matter. Since this is so, if He was not One, there would have to be gods to the number of beings. These would be both opposed to and similar to one another, and it would therefore be a hundred thousand times impossible for this wonderful order not to be broken.

Furthermore, since as is self-evidently apparent, at a command the classes of beings are in motion in a fashion a thousand times more well-ordered than an army – each group, from the stars, sun and moon and their motions to the flowers of the almond, displaying the decorations and uniforms the Pre-Eternal All-Powerful One has conferred on it, and the motion He has determined, a thousand times more regularly and perfectly than an army – since this is so, the universe has an Absolute Ruler behind the veil of the Unseen to Whose command its beings look and conform.

And since according to the testimony of all the wise matters He carries out and splendid works He displays, the Ruler is an All-Glorious Sovereign; and since according to the bounties He demonstrates He is a most Compassionate Sustainer, and according to the beautiful examples of His art which He exhibits, He is a Maker Who loves His art; and since He is an All-Wise Creator Who wishes to attract to His works of art the admiring gazes of conscious beings through the adornments and skills He demonstrates; and since it may be understood that He wishes to make known to conscious beings the meaning of the adornments, which astound the mind, that He displays in the creation of the world and to inform them through the wisdom of His dominicality about where creatures come from and where they are going; most certainly, this All-Wise Ruler and All-Knowing Maker wishes to demonstrate His dominicality.

And since he wishes to make Himself known and loved by conscious creatures through the great many works of benevolence and mercy and wonders of art He displays, He will surely make known to them by means of a herald what He desires of them and what those things are that please Him, and concern them.

Since this is so, He will appoint one of the conscious beings and will proclaim His dominicality through him. He will honour a herald with the proximity of His presence and make him the means of exhibiting the art which He loves. He will appoint one of them as a teacher in order to inform other conscious beings of those exalted aims and to display His perfections. He will certainly appoint a guide so that the talisman contained in the universe and the riddle of dominicality He has concealed within beings will not remain meaningless. And He will appoint a guide who will teach the purposes contained in the beauties of art He displays and publishes as a

spectacle for all to gaze on so that they do not remain useless and vain. Moreover, in order to announce the things that please Him to conscious beings, He will raise one of them to a rank above the others, and will inform him of those things and send him to them.

Since reality and wisdom require it to be thus and the one most worthy to perform this duty was the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), for he actually performed those duties most perfectly, to which fact the world of Islam which he founded and the light of Islam which he showed are truthful and just witnesses; this necessitates that he should have risen above all the rest of the universe, surpassed all beings, and attained to a rank at which he held a universal, elevated, and all-embracing conversation with the Creator of all beings. Thus, the Ascension expresses this truth as well.

In Short: Since He has formed, arranged, and adorned the vast universe in this way for mighty purposes and sublime aims such as those mentioned above; and since among beings mankind exists to see this universal dominicality together with all its subtleties and this supreme Divine sovereignty together with all its truths; most certainly that Absolute Ruler will speak with man, He will inform him of His purposes.

Since everyone cannot free themselves from particular, insignificant, and lowly matters and rise to the highest and universal position, and therefore cannot themselves receive the Ruler's universal address, certain special individuals from among human beings will be appointed to that duty so that it may be related to in two respects. First, in order to teach human beings, they must be human beings themselves. And in order to be able to receive the address directly, they must be extremely exalted spiritually.

Thus, since among those human beings the one who made known the purposes of the universe's Maker most perfectly, disclosed the talisman of the universe and solved the riddle of creation, and who heralded the sublimity of the sovereignty of dominicality in the best way was Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), certainly, of all human beings he would make a spiritual journey in the form of an Ascension touring the corporeal world; he would traverse all the levels to beyond the intermediate world of the Divine Names, the manifestation of the Divine attributes and acts, and the levels of beings, all of which are known as the seventy thousand veils. And the Ascension was this.

Again the following comes to mind: O listener! You are thinking of asking: "How should I believe it? What does it mean to traverse a distance of thousands of years to a Sustainer Who is closer than anything else and to meet with Him after passing through seventy thousand veils?" To which we reply as follows:

God Almighty is closer to everything than anything else, but everything is infinitely distant from Him. For example, if the sun possessed consciousness and the power of speech, it would be able to converse with you by means of a mirror held in your hand. It would have power of disposal over you as it wished. Indeed, although it would be closer to you than the pupil of your eye, which is like a mirror, you would be approximately four thousand years' distance from it and could in no way draw closer to it. If you progressed and rose to the position of the moon and came to the point of being face to face with it, you would still only be able to be a sort of mirror to it.

Similarly, although the All-Glorious One, Who is the Sun of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, is closer to everything than anything else, everything is infinitely distant from Him. Only one who traverses all beings, rises above particularity and gradually passes through the thousands of veils in the degrees of universality till he approaches a Divine Name which encompasses all beings, and then traverses the many degrees beyond it, may be honoured by a sort of Divine proximity.

For example, a private is far inferior in rank to the commander-in-chief. He looks to his commander through the small sample of his commander's rank he sees in his corporal, at a great distance and beyond many veils, as it were. To gain true proximity to his rank through his corporate personality, the private has to pass through many universal degrees or ranks, like that of lieutenant, captain, and major. Whereas the commander-in-chief can be present with the private and seeing, in person as well as in meaning, through his commands, regulations, view, decree, and knowledge. Since this truth has been proved decisively in the Sixteenth Word, we deem that sufficient and cut short the discussion here.

Again it comes to mind that you are thinking of asking: "I deny the existence of the heavens and I do not believe in the angels, so how can I believe in someone travelling in the heavens and meeting with the angels?"

Yes, of course, it is difficult to demonstrate something and convince someone like you over whose eyes a veil has been drawn and who sees only what is immediately apparent to them. But the truth is so brilliant that even the blind can see it, so we also say what is unanimously agreed, that the depths of space are full of matter called 'ether'. Subtle energies like light, electricity, and heat point to the existence of some subtle matter which fills space. For just as fruits clearly demonstrate the existence of the tree that bore them, flowers their flower-bed, shoots their seed-bed, and fishes the sea, the stars also thrust before the mind's eye the necessary existence of their source, seed-bed, sea, and flower-bed.

Since there are different formations in the world above us and different rules are seen to be in force under different conditions, the heavens, which

are the source of those rules, also differ. And since just as in man there are immaterial faculties apart from his body, like the mind, heart, spirit, imagination, and memory, certainly in the world, which is the macroanthropos, and in the universe, which is the tree of which man is the fruit, there are other worlds apart from the corporeal world. Moreover, there are heavens to each world, from the world of the earth to the world of Paradise.

As far as the angels are concerned, we say this: on the globe of the earth, which is medium-sized among the planets and insignificant and dense among the stars, animate and conscious beings, the most valuable and luminous among beings, are found in countless numbers. So surely the stars, which are like embellished castles and fine palaces compared to the earth, which is like a dark house, and the skies, which are like the seas of the stars, will be the dwelling-places of angels and spirit beings, which are conscious, animate, extremely numerous, and of various sorts.

In my commentary on the Holy Qur'an called *Isharat al-I'jaz* (Signs of Miraculousness), both the existence and plurality of the heavens have been proved conclusively in the section on the verse,

*Then He applied His design to the heavens and fashioned them into seven heavens,*⁸

and in the Twenty-Ninth Word we have proved the existence of angels with the finality of two plus two equals four, so considering those to be sufficient we cut short the discussion here.

In Short: It is required by wisdom and by reason that the heavens are formed of ether, that they are the source of subtle energies like electricity, light, heat, and gravity, and that, in accordance with the Hadith, "The heavens are waves held back,"⁹ they are favourable for the motion of stars and planets. It is further required that from *majarrat al-sama'*¹⁰ (the Milky Way) to the closest planet they should consist of seven levels in different states and formations, and that each level, each world, from the world of the earth to the Intermediate Realm and World of Similitudes, to the World of the Hereafter, should have a heaven, like a roof.

And the following comes to mind: O atheist! You say: "Man is only able to ascend to a height of one or two kilometres with a thousand difficulties by means of the aeroplane."¹¹ How then could someone come and go bodily within a few minutes covering a distance that would normally take thousands of years?"

⁸ Qur'an, 2:29.

⁹ Tirmidhi, Tafsir Sura al-Hadid, 1; Musnad, ii, 370.

¹⁰ Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, xx, 123; Ibn Hajar, *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, viii, 135.

¹¹ This treatise was written in 1928 or '29. [Tr.]

To which we reply: According to your science, in its annual rotation a heavy body like the earth cuts a distance of approximately one hundred and eighty-eight hours in one minute. In one year it covers a distance of approximately twenty-five thousand years. Should an All-Powerful and Glorious One, then, Who causes its regular motion and revolves it like a stone in a sling be unable to convey a human being to His Throne? Should a wisdom that causes the body of the earth, which is extremely heavy, to travel around the sun through a dominical law known the sun's gravity like a Mevlevi dervish be unable to raise a human body to the Throne of the All-Merciful One like lightning through the gravity of that All-Merciful One's mercy and the attraction of the Pre-Eternal Sun's love?

Again it comes to mind that you would say: "All right, so he could ascend there, but why did he and why should he? Would it not have been enough if he had gone just in heart and spirit like the saints?"

To which we would reply: Since the All-Glorious Maker wished to display His wondrous signs which lie in both the outer aspects of things and in their aspects that look directly to Himself, and to make the workshops and sources of the universe spectacles to be gazed upon, and to point out the results of man's actions in the hereafter, it was necessary to take together with his heart and spirit as far as His Throne Muhammad's (PBUH) eyes, which were like the key to the world of visible objects, and his ears, which perceived the signs in the world of sound. Furthermore, it is required by wisdom and reason that the All-Glorious Maker should have taken as far as His Throne his blessed body, which was like the machine of his spirit comprising different members and components, by means of which be performed his duties.

Just as in Paradise Divine wisdom makes the body accompany the spirit, because it is the body that is the means by which the duties of worship are performed and the means of innumerable pleasures and pains, so did his blessed body accompany his spirit. Since the body goes to Paradise together with the spirit, it is pure wisdom that He should have made the blessed body of Muhammad (PBUH) accompany his self, which ascended to the Lote-tree of the farthest limit, which is the trunk of the home of Paradise.

Again it comes to mind that you would say: "According to rational criteria is it not impossible to traverse a distance of thousands of years in several minutes?"

To which we would reply: The motion in the different works of the All-Glorious Maker's art varies to the utmost degree. For example, it is well-known how different are the speeds of light, electricity, spirit, and imagination, and that of sound. And, as has been established by science, the speeds of the motion of different planets are so different that it astounds the mind.

How then should the motion at the speed of spirit of his subtle body, which followed his exalted spirit during the Ascension, seem contrary to reason?

Furthermore, it sometimes happens that on sleeping for ten minutes you are subject to a year's-worth of different states. And even, if the words spoken and heard during a dream lasting one minute were collected together, for them to be spoken and heard in the waking world, a day or even longer, would be necessary. That means a single period of time is relative; it may seem like one day to one person and like a year to another.

Consider the meaning of this by means of a comparison. Let us imagine a clock which measures the speed of the movement displayed by man, cannon-balls, sound, light, electricity, spirit, and imagination. The clock has ten hands. One shows the hours while another counts the minutes in a sphere sixty times greater. Another hand counts the seconds in a sphere sixty times greater than the previous one, and yet others each count regularly decreasing fractions to a tenth of a second in vast spheres that regularly increase sixty times.

Let us suppose the circles described by the hand counting hours was the size of our clock, so that of the hand counting tenths of a second would have to be the size of the annual orbit of the earth, or even larger. Now, let us suppose there are two people. One of them is as though mounted on the hour-hand and observes according to its motion while the other is on the hand counting tenths of a second. There will be an enormous difference, as great as the relation between our clock and the annual orbit of the earth, as regards the things observed by these two individuals in the same period of time.

Thus, since time is like a hue, shade, or ribbon of motion, a rule that is in force in motion is also in force in time. And so, although the things we observe in the period of one hour would be equalled in amount by the conscious individual mounted on the hour-hand of the clock, like the one mounted on the hand counting tenths of a second, God's Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him) mounted Buraq of Divine Assistance and in the same space of time, in that specified hour, like lightning traversed the entire sphere of contingency, saw the wonders of the outer aspects of things and the aspects which look to their Creator, ascended to the point of the sphere of necessity, was honoured with Divine conversation and favoured with the vision of Divine beauty, received his decree, and returned to his duty. It was possible for this to happen, and it did happen.

And again it comes to mind that you would say: "Yes, so it could happen, it is possible. But everything possible does not occur, does it? Is there anything else similar to this so that it can be accepted? How can the occurrence of something to which there are no similar cases be posited through only probability?"

To which we would reply: There are so many similar cases to it that they cannot be enumerated. For example, anyone who possesses sight can ascend with his eyes from the ground to the planet Neptune in a second. Anyone who has knowledge can mount the laws of astronomy with his intellect and travel beyond the stars in a minute. Anyone who has belief can, by mounting his thought on the action and pillars of the obligatory prayers, through a sort of Ascension, leave the universe behind and go as far as the Divine presence. Anyone who sees with his heart and any saint of perfection can, through his spiritual journeying, traverse in forty days the Divine Throne and the sphere of the Divine Names and attributes. And certain persons, even, like Shaykh Geylani and Imam-i Rabbani, truthfully recorded their spiritual ascensions as far as the Throne, which lasted a minute.

Furthermore, there is the coming and going of the angels, which are luminous bodies, from the Divine Throne to the earth and from the earth to the Throne in a short period of time. And the people of Paradise ascend to the gardens of Paradise from the plain of resurrection in a short space of time. Of course, this many examples demonstrate that it is pure wisdom, completely rational, and an occurrence about which there can be no doubt that the person of Muhammad (PBUH), who is the Lord of all the saints, the leader of all the believers, the head of the people of Paradise, and is accepted by all the angels, should have had an ascension which was the means of spiritual journeying, and that it should have been in a form appropriate to his rank.

Third Principle

What was the wisdom and purpose of the Ascension?

The Answer: The wisdom of the Ascension is so exalted that human thought cannot comprehend it. It is so profound that human thought cannot reach it, and so subtle and fine that the intellect cannot see it by itself. But even if the reality of the instances of wisdom in the Ascension cannot be comprehended, their existence may be made known through certain indications. For example, as follows:

In order to demonstrate the light of His unity and the manifestation of His oneness in these levels of multiplicity, the Creator of the universe chose an eminent individual to represent all creatures, and took him by means of an Ascension that was like a link from the furthest levels of multiplicity to the source of unity. There, addressing him as representing all conscious beings, He explained to him the Divine purposes and made them known through him, and observed through his gaze the beauty of His art and perfection of His dominicality in the mirrors of His creatures, and caused him to observe them.

Moreover, according to the testimony of His works, the Maker of the world possesses infinite beauty and perfection. The two of them, both beauty and perfection, are loved for themselves. Since this is so, the Possessor of that beauty and perfection has an infinite love for them, and His infinite love is manifested in many different ways in His works of art. He loves His works of art because He sees His beauty and perfection within them.

The most lovable and elevated among the works of art are animate beings. The most lovable and elevated among animate beings are conscious beings. And by reason of their comprehensiveness, the most lovable among conscious beings are to be found among human beings. The most lovable individual among human beings is the one who has most fully developed his potentiality and displayed the samples within it of the perfections manifested in all creatures and spread among them.

Thus, in order to see at one point and in one mirror all the varieties of His love spread through all creatures and to display, through the mystery of His oneness, all the varieties of His beauty, the Maker of beings will take a person who is at the degree of being a luminous fruit of the tree of creation and whose heart is like a seed containing the essential truths of that tree, and will demonstrate the belovedness of that individual, who represents the universe, through an Ascension that is like a thread linking the seed, which is the origin, with the fruit, which is the end. He will draw him to His presence and honour him with the beauty of the vision of Himself. And, in order to cause him to spread that sacred state to others, He will favour him with His Word and entrust him with His Decree.

In order to look at this exalted wisdom, we shall observe it through the telescope of two comparisons.

First Comparison: As is explained in detail in the story-comparison in the Eleventh Word, there was an illustrious king who had vast treasures and in those treasures many varieties of jewels were to be found. He had much skill in strange crafts, comprehensive knowledge of innumerable curious arts, and erudition and learning in numberless wondrous sciences. In accordance with the mystery that every possessor of beauty and perfection wants both to see and display his beauty and perfection, of course that skilful king wished to open an exhibition and to set up displays within it in order to reveal to the people the splendour of his sovereignty so they might gaze on it, and to manifest both the glitter of his wealth and the wonders of his art and the marvels of his knowledge. In this way he might observe his own transcendent beauty and perfection in two respects. The first was so that he himself might see with his own eyes, which were cognizant of reality, while the other was so that he might look through the gaze of others.

As a consequence of this wisdom, he began to build a huge and splendid

palace. It was magnificently divided into apartments and mansions. He adorned it with every sort of bejewelled treasure from his coffers, and decorated it with the finest and most gorgeous arts of his own handiwork. He ordered it with the greatest refinements of his knowledge and science, and decked it out and completed it with the miraculous works of his learning. Next, he spread tables with varieties of bounties and the most delicious of foods worthy for each group and prepared a general banquet. Then, in order to display his perfections to his subjects, he invited them to the banquet and to behold the perfections.

Then he appointed one of them as the highest ranking general, invited him up from the lower levels and mansions to tour sphere after sphere in the levels rising one after the other. Showing him the successive machinery and workshops of his wonderful art and the storehouses for the produce coming from below, he brought him to his own particular sphere and private apartment. There, he honoured him through showing him the blessed person who was the source of all those perfections and taking him into his presence. He informed him of the true nature of the palace and of his own perfections. He appointed him as guide to the other spectators and sent him back. He was to describe to the people the palace's maker by means of its contents, inscriptions, and wonders, and inform those who entered the palace of the allusive meanings of the inscriptions within it, what the works of art signified, and what the harmonious and well-proportioned inscriptions and works of art in its interior were, and how they pointed to the perfections and skills of the palace's owner. He was also to teach them the correct behaviour and formalities in viewing the exhibition and describe the protocol and ceremonies which were in accordance with the pleasure and desires of the learned and skilful king, who did not appear.

In exactly the same way, *And God's is the highest similitude*, the All-Glorious Maker, Who is the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, desired to behold and display His infinite perfections and boundless beauty. So He made this world in such a fashion that every being utters His perfections with numerous tongues and points to His beauty with many signs. The universe shows through all its beings the many hidden immaterial treasures in all of His Most Beautiful Names and the many veiled subtleties in all of His sacred titles. And it shows this in such a way that, although since the time of Adam, all sciences together with all of their laws have studied this book of the universe, only a tiny proportion of the book's meanings and signs, which state and point to the Divine Names and perfections, have been read.

Thus, the wisdom of the All-Glorious One of Beauty, the All-Beauteous One of Glory, the Maker possessing Perfection, Who opens the palace of the world as though it was an exhibition in order to see and display His own transcendent beauty and perfections, requires that He should inform

someone of the meaning of the palace's signs so that they do not remain vain and without benefit for conscious beings on the earth. His wisdom requires that He should cause one of them to travel in the higher worlds, which are the sources of the wonders in the palace and are the treasures of their results; that He should elevate him above all others, honour him with His close presence and cause him to tour the worlds of the hereafter, and entrust him with numerous duties, such as teacher to all His servants, herald of the sovereignty of His dominicality, announcer of those things pleasing to Himself, and expounder of the signs of creation in the palace of the world; that He should mark out his pre-eminence by conferring on him the decorations of miracles, and should make known through a decree like the Qur'an that that person is the truthful personal interpreter of the All-Glorious One.

Thus, by way of example, we have demonstrated through the telescope of this comparison one or two of the many instances of wisdom in the Ascension. Others may be thought of in the same way.

Second Comparison: If a knowledgeable and skilful person were to compose and write a miraculous book, and on all the book's pages were as many truths as would fill a hundred books, and in all its lines as many subtle meanings as would fill a hundred pages, and in all its words as many truths as would fill a hundred lines, and in all its letters as many meanings as would fill a hundred words, and if all the meanings and truths of the book were to look to and point to the transcendent perfections of its miracle-displaying writer, he most certainly would not leave such an inexhaustible treasury closed and thus worthless. He would surely teach it to others so that such a valuable book would not remain meaningless and vain, and his own hidden perfections would become apparent and find their perfection, and his transcendent beauty be seen; and so that he too should be pleased, and that he should make himself loved. Moreover, he would cause someone to go through that wonderful book from the first page to the last and teach him all its meanings and truths so that the person would then teach them to others.

In exactly the same way, in order to display His perfections, His beauty, and the truths of His Names, the Pre-Eternal Inscriber has written the universe in such a way that all beings set forth and state His infinite perfections, Names, and attributes together with their innumerable facets and aspects. Of course, if a book's meaning remains unknown, its value is reduced to nothing. However, a book like the universe, every word of which contains thousands of meanings, cannot lose its value or be made to do so.

Since this is so, the book's Writer will certainly make it known and explain a part of it to each group according to their capacity. He will instruct in all the contents of the book the individual who has the most extensive and

comprehensive view, the most universal consciousness, and the greatest ability. Wisdom requires that He should take the individual on a lofty journey in order to teach him all the contents of such a book and its universal truths. That is, He should cause him to travel from the furthest extreme of the levels of multiplicity, which is the first page, to the sphere of Divine oneness, which is the final page. Thus, through this comparison, you can look to an extent at the exalted instances of wisdom in the Ascension.

Now, we shall consider the atheist who is listening, and, listening to his heart, we shall learn what state it is in. And so it comes to mind that his heart would say: “I have begun to believe in it now, but I still do not have a clear understanding of it. I have three more important difficulties.

“*The First:* Why was this mighty Ascension special to Muhammad the Arabian (Peace and blessings be upon him)?

“*The Second:* How is he the seed of the universe? And you say that the universe was created from his Light, and also that he was its farthest and most illumined fruit. What does that mean?

“*The Third:* In your explanations above you say that he made his Ascension in order to rise to the celestial realm and to see the machinery and workshops of the works of art found in the realm of the earth, and the treasuries of their results. What does this mean?”

The Answer

Your First Difficulty: It has been analysed in detail in the first thirty Words, so here we shall set out a concise list briefly indicating the perfections of Muhammad (PBUH), the signs of his prophethood, and the fact that he was the most worthy to make the Ascension. It is as follows.

Firstly: Despite numerous corruptions in the texts of Holy Scriptures like the Torah, Gospels, and Psalms, in recent times even, an exacting scholar like Husayn Jisri extracted one hundred and fourteen good tidings of Muhammad’s prophethood (PBUH), which he set forth in his *Risale-i Hamidiye*.¹²

Secondly: It has been proved historically that there were many predictions accurately forecasting the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), like those of the two soothsayers Shiqq and Satih, which, a while previously to his prophethood, gave news of it and the fact that he was to be the final prophet.¹³

Thirdly: There were hundreds of extraordinary happenings, famous in history, called *irhasat*, that is, signs forewarning men of a coming prophet, like, for example, on the night of Muhammad’s (PBUH) birth, the idols in the

¹² Husayn al-Jisri, *Risale-i Hamidiye* 4 vols. Turk.tr. Manastırlı İsmail Hakkı (Istanbul: 1308); Suyuti, *al-Khasa’is al-Kubra*, i, 26, 73.

¹³ Ibn Sayyid al-Nas, ‘*Uyun al-Athar*, I, 29; Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa’*, i, 364-6.

Ka'ba fell from their places and the famous palace of Khosroes the Persian was rent asunder.¹⁴

Fourthly: History and the Prophet's biographies show that he satisfied the thirst of an army with water flowing from his fingers, that in the presence of a large congregation in the mosque, the dry wooden support against which Muhammad (PBUH) was leaning moaned like a camel and wept on being separated from him when he ascended the pulpit, and that he was distinguished by close on a thousand miracles attested to by the verses of the Qur'an, such as,

*And the moon split,*¹⁵

referring to the splitting of the moon, and verified by those who investigated them.

Fifthly: Anyone who considers the facts and is fair and just cannot hesitate to agree that, as is unanimously agreed by friend and foe alike, good moral qualities were to be found at the highest degree in his personality, and that, in accordance with the testimony of all his dealings and actions, attributes and character of the greatest excellence were apparent in the way he performed his duties and proclaimed Islam, and, in accordance with the fine qualities and conduct enjoined by the religion of Islam, laudable virtues of the highest order were to be found in the law he brought.

Sixthly: As is alluded to in the Second Indication of the Tenth Word, it is a requirement of wisdom that Divinity be manifested. And this desire of Divinity to be manifested is met at the highest level and most brilliantly by the comprehensive worship performed by Muhammad (PBUH) in the practice of his religion. Also, wisdom and truth require that the Creator of the world displays His beauty in its utter perfection through some means. And the one who met that wish, and displayed and described His beauty most perfectly was self-evidently the person of Muhammad (PBUH).

It was also clearly Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to the desire of the world's Maker to exhibit and attract attentive gazes towards His perfect art within infinite beauty, heralded that art with the loudest voice.

Again it was necessarily Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to the desire of the Sustainer of All the Worlds to proclaim His unity in the levels of multiplicity, announced all the degrees of unity, each at the greatest level of unity.

And, as is indicated by the utter beauty in beings and as is required by truth and wisdom, the world's Owner desires to see and display in mirrors, His infinite essential beauty and the subtleties and qualities of His exquisite

¹⁴ Qadi Iyad, *al-Shifa'*, i, 366-8; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, i, 126.

¹⁵ Qur'an, 54:1.

ness. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to that desire, acted as a mirror and displayed His beauty in the most radiant fashion, and loved it and made others love it.

Also, in response to the desire of the Maker of the palace of this world to exhibit His hidden treasures, which are filled with the most wonderful miracles and priceless jewels, and through them to describe and make known His perfections, it was again self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who exhibited, described, and displayed them in the most comprehensive fashion.

Also, since the Maker of the universe has made it in such a way that He adorns it with different varieties of wonders and embellishments and has included conscious creatures in it so that they might make tours and excursions and ponder over it and take lessons, wisdom requires that He should desire to make known the meanings and value of the works of art to those who observe and ponder over them. And it was again self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire of the universe's Maker, by means of the All-Wise Qur'an, acted as guide in the most comprehensive fashion to jinn and man, indeed, to spirit beings and angels.

Also, the All-Wise Ruler of the universe wishes, by means of an envoy, to cause all conscious beings to unravel the obscure talisman containing the aims and purposes of the change and transformations in the universe and to solve the riddle of the three perplexing questions: "Where do beings come from?", "What is their destination?", and, "What are they?" And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this wish of the All-Wise Ruler, by means of the truths of the Qur'an, unravelled the talisman and solved the riddle in the clearest and most comprehensive fashion.

Also, the All-Glorious Maker of the universe desires to make Himself known to conscious beings by means of all His fine artefacts and to make them love Him through all His precious bounties, and, most certainly, to make known to them by means of an envoy His wishes and what will please Him in return for those bounties. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire of the All-Glorious Maker, by means of the Qur'an, expounded those wishes and things that please Him in the most exalted and perfect fashion.

Also, since the Sustainer of All the Worlds has given to man, who is the fruit of the universe, a comprehensive disposition which encompasses the universe and has prepared him for universal worship, and since, because of his faculties and senses, multiplicity and the world afflict man, the Sustainer desires to turn man's face from multiplicity to unity, from transience to permanence. And again it was self-evidently Muhammad (PBUH) who, in response to this desire, by means of the Qur'an, acted as guide in the most comprehensive and complete fashion, and in the best way, and carried out the duty of prophethood in the most perfect manner.

Among beings the most superior are animate beings, and among animate beings the most superior are conscious beings, and among conscious beings the most superior are true human beings. So the one among true human beings who carried out the above-mentioned duties at the most comprehensive level and in the most perfect manner would rise through an all-embracing Ascension to *the distance of two bow-lengths*, knock at the door of eternal happiness, open the treasury of Mercy, and see the hidden truths of belief. Again it would be him.

Seventhly: As is plain to see, beings are made beautiful with the utmost degree of fine embellishment and adornment. Such an embellishment and adornment clearly demonstrate that their Maker possesses an extremely strong will to make beautiful and intention to adorn. The will to make beautiful and adorn demonstrates that the Maker necessarily possesses a strong desire for and holy love towards His art. And among beings the one who displayed altogether in himself the most comprehensive and subtle wonders of art, and knew them and made them known and himself loved, and who appreciated the beauties to be found in other beings, declaring: "What wonders God has willed!", and was most beloved in the sight of his Maker, Who nurtures and loves His art, would most certainly be him.

Thus, the one who, declaring: "Glory be to God! What wonders God has willed! God is most Great!" in the face of the exquisiteness that gilds beings and the subtle perfections that illuminate them, causes the heavens to ring out, and who, through the strains of the Qur'an, causes the universe to reverberate, and through his admiration and appreciation, his contemplation and display, and his mentioning of the Divine Names and affirmation of Divine unity, brings land and sea to ecstasy, is again self-evidently that one (PBUH).

And so, according to the meaning of 'the cause is like the doer,' it is pure truth and sheer wisdom that the one in whose scales shall be found the equivalent of all the good deeds performed by his community, and whose spiritual perfections draw strength from the benedictions of all his community, and who, as a result of the duties he discharged in his messengership, received immaterial recompense and boundless emanations of Divine mercy and love, should advance by the stairway of the Ascension as far as Paradise, *the Lote-tree of the farthest limit*, the Divine Throne, and *the distance of two bow-lengths*.

Your Second Difficulty: O you who is listening! This second truth that you make difficult is so profound and exalted that the mind can neither rise to it nor draw close to it. It may be seen only with the light of belief. However, the fact that this truth exists may be brought close to the understanding by means of allegory and comparison. In which case, we shall attempt to do that to some small degree.

Thus, when the universe is considered from the point of view of wisdom,

it is seen to bear the meaning of a mighty tree. For just as a tree has branches, leaves, blossom and fruit, so in this lower world, which is one part of the tree of creation, there are elements, which are like its branches; plants and trees, which are like its leaves; animals, which are like its flowers; and man, which is like the fruit.

Furthermore, the Divine Name of All-Wise requires that a law of that All-Glorious Maker which is in force in trees generally will also be in force in the mighty tree of creation. Since this is so, wisdom requires that the tree of creation also be formed from a seed, and such a seed that contains the essentials and principles of other worlds besides the corporeal world. For the fundamental and original seed of the universe, which comprises thousands of different worlds, cannot be a scrap of desiccated matter.

Since before the tree of the universe there was no tree of the same kind, it is also a requirement of the Name of All-Wise that meaning and light, which are like a source and seed to it, should be clothed with the garment of a fruit on the tree of the universe. For a seed cannot remain permanently unclothed. And since at the beginning of creation it was not clothed in the garment of a fruit, it would surely be clothed in it at the end. And since that fruit is mankind; and since, as was proved above, the most famous fruit and sublime result from among mankind, who attracted the attention of all and confined to himself the gaze of a fifth of mankind, and with his moral and spiritual qualities caused the world to consider him with either feelings of love or of wonder, is the Person of Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), most certainly, light, which was the seed from which the universe was formed, would become clothed in corporeality in his person and would appear in the form of an ultimate fruit.

O listener! Do not consider it improbable that this strange and mighty universe is created from the particular essence of a human being! Why should the All-Powerful One of Glory, Who creates a huge pine-tree –a sort of world– from a seed the size of a grain of wheat, not create the universe from ‘the Light of Muhammad’ (Peace and blessings be upon him)?¹⁶ Why should He not be able to do so?

Since, like the Tree of Tuba, the tree of the universe has its roots and trunk above and branches below, there is a luminous connecting line from the level of the fruit below to that of the original seed. Thus, the Ascension is the sheath and form of that connecting line, the way of which Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) opened up. He went through his sainthood, returned through his messengership, and left the door open. The saints of his community following after him, travel that luminous highway with the heart and spirit in the shadow of the Prophet’s Ascension, and according to their abilities, rise to elevated ranks.

¹⁶ Suyuti, *al-Hawi li'l-Fatawa*, ii, Qastalani, *al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyya*, i, 25-83.

Also, as was proved above, the universe's Maker made it and decked it out in the form of a palace for the aims demonstrated in the answer to the First Difficulty. Since Muhammad (PBUH) was the means of all those aims being realized, he must have been regarded with favour by the universe's Maker before the universe was created, he must have been the first recipient of His manifestation. For the result and fruit of a thing is considered first. That is to say, material existence comes last and meaning comes first. However, since Muhammad (PBUH) was both the most perfect fruit, and the means of all other fruits acquiring value, and the means of all the aims becoming manifest, his Light must have received the first manifestation of creativity.

Your Third Difficulty: This is so extensive that those like us with straitened minds cannot contain and comprehend it. However, we can look at it from afar.

Yes, the immaterial workshops and universal laws of the lower world are in the higher worlds. And the fruits of the actions of jinn and men and the results of the actions of all the innumerable creatures on the earth, which is an exhibition of works of art, are also represented in the higher worlds. Moreover, a great many signs and the testimony of many narrations show that good deeds will take on the form of the fruits of Paradise and bad deeds the form of the bitter food of Hell. The wisdom in creation and the Divine Name of All-Wise necessitate this and the All-Wise Qur'an indicates it.

For sure, the multiplicity on the face of the earth is so widespread and the creation so ramified that its species of creatures and classes of beings are far more numerous than all the beings dispersed throughout the universe. In a state of constant change, they ever fill the earth and are emptied from it. Thus, the sources and mines of this multiplicity and these particulars are universal laws and universal manifestations of the Divine Names.

Those universal laws and universal, all-encompassing manifestations of the Names are to some extent sheer and undifferentiated and each forms a heaven which is like the Throne and ceiling of a world and its centre of direction. One of those worlds is Paradise, the Garden of the Abode at the Lote-tree of the farthest limit. It is established by accounts given by the Bringer of Sure News (PBUH) that the praise and glorification on the earth takes on the form of the fruits of that Paradise.¹⁷ Thus, these three points demonstrate that the treasures of the results and fruits produced on the earth are there, in the heavens, and that the crops and produce of those results and fruits also return there.

Do not say: "How can it be that my words 'All praise be to God!', which are formed only of air, should become a corporeal fruit of Paradise?"

¹⁷ *Kanz al-'Ummal*, i, 459-60; Manzari, *al-Tarhib wa'l-Tarhib*, ii, 422-3.

because, sometimes while dreaming you eat in the form of a delicious apple a good word you uttered during the day while awake. And sometimes you eat at night in the form of something bitter, an ugly word you uttered during the day. If you slander and backbite, you are made to eat it in the form of putrid flesh. In which case, the good words and ugly words you say in the sleep of this world, you will eat in the form of fruits in the world of the hereafter, which is the world of consciousness. You should not consider it unlikely that you will eat them.

Fourth Principle

What are the fruits and benefits of the Ascension?

The Answer: We shall mention only five, by way of example, of the more than five hundred fruits of the Ascension, which has the meaning of the Tree of Tuba.

FIRST FRUIT

This fruit has brought to the universe and mankind a treasury, a gift of pre-eternal and post-eternal Light, which is to see with the eyes the truths of the pillars of belief and to behold the angels, Paradise, the hereafter, and even the All-Glorious One. It raises the universe from an imaginary state of wretchedness, transitoriness, and disorder and, through that Light and fruit, shows its reality, which is its consisting of sacred missives of the Eternally Besought One and being a beautiful mirror to the beauty of Divine oneness. It has made happy and pleased the universe and all conscious beings.

Furthermore, through this Light and sacred fruit, it shows that man is not merely bewildered, wretched, impotent, impoverished, with endless needs and innumerable enemies, ephemeral and impermanent, which is like the state of misguidance; it shows man in his true form of being a miracle of the Eternally Besought One's power on 'the most excellent of patterns,' a comprehensive copy of the Eternally Besought One's missives, an addressee of the Pre-Eternal and Post-Eternal Monarch, the special bondsman, the admirer and friend of His perfections, the lover bewildered at His beauty, and a beloved guest appointed to eternal Paradise. It has filled all human beings who are true human beings with infinite joy and infinite longing.

SECOND FRUIT

This fruit has brought to jinn and man as a gift the fundamentals of Islam, and first and foremost the prescribed prayers,¹⁸ which constitute those things pleasing to the Sustainer, the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, Who is

¹⁸ Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, iii, 406; *al-Sunna al-Kubra*, iv, 362.

the Maker of beings, Owner of the universe, and Sustainer of all the worlds. To discover the things that please Him brings such happiness it cannot be described. For how eager is everyone to find out, from a distance, the desires of a powerful benefactor or generous king, and if they find out, how delighted they are. They say longingly: "If only there was some means by which I could communicate with that personage directly. If only I could learn what he wants of me. If only I knew what would please him that I could do."

Man, then, should understand just how necessary it is to be desirous and eager to discover the wishes and pleasure of the Ruler of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity. For all beings are in the grasp of His power, and the beauty and perfections to be found in all beings are but pale shadows in relation to His beauty and perfection, and being needy for Him in innumerable ways, man constantly receives countless numbers of His bounties.

Thus, as a direct fruit of the Ascension, Muhammad (PBUH) heard with utter certainty what it is that pleases the Monarch of Pre-Eternity and Post-Eternity, behind seventy thousand veils, and returning, brought it as a gift to mankind.

Indeed, how curious is man to learn the conditions on the moon. If someone was to go there and return bringing news of it, both what self-sacrifice he would display, and, if he was to understand the conditions there, how he would be overcome by wonder and curiosity. But the moon is merely touring in the domain of a Lord of such dominion that it encircles the globe of the earth like a fly, and the globe flies round the sun like a moth, while the sun is one lamp among thousands and is just a candle in a guest-house of that Glorious Lord of All Dominion.

Thus, Muhammad (PBUH) saw the works and wonders of art and treasures of mercy in the everlasting realm of this All-Glorious One, and he returned and informed mankind. And so, if mankind does not listen to him with complete wonder, curiosity, and love, you can understand how contrary to reason and wisdom is their attitude.

THIRD FRUIT

Muhammad (PBUH) saw the treasury of eternal happiness, obtained the key, and brought it as a gift to jinn and men. Yes, through the Ascension, he saw Paradise with his own eyes and witnessed the eternal manifestations of the All-Glorious and Merciful One's mercy; he understood eternal happiness with absolute and utter certainty and brought as a gift to jinn and men the good news of its existence.

If wretched jinn and men imagine themselves and all beings to be in the soul-searing situation of an unstable world amid the upheavals of decease and separation, being poured with the flood of time and motion of particles

into the oceans of non-existence and eternal separation, it cannot be described how precious and enheartening such good news is in the ears of ephemeral jinn and men, who thus supposed themselves to be condemned to eternal annihilation. If, at the moment he is to be executed and sent to non-existence, a man is pardoned and given a palace in proximity to the king, what great joy this would cause him. So, gather up all such joy and happiness to the number of jinn and men and then evaluate this good news.

FOURTH FRUIT

Just as he himself sampled the fruit of the vision of Divine beauty, so did he bring to jinn and men the gift of this fruit being attainable by all believers. You may understand from the following how delightful, pleasing, and exquisite a fruit this is.

Everyone of fine perception loves one who possesses beauty and perfection and is benevolent, and his love increases proportionately to their degrees; it reaches the degree of worship and a pitch whereat he would sacrifice his very life. On seeing that person only once, his love becomes such he would sacrifice the world. However, in relation to the beauty, perfection, and benevolence of God Almighty, the beauty, perfection and benevolence of all beings are not the equivalent of even a few tiny sparks in relation to the sun. That is to say, if you are a true human being, you may understand how delightful and fine a fruit it is and what happiness and joy it brings to receive in eternal happiness the vision of the All-Glorious One of Perfection, Who is worthy of boundless love, infinite longing, and being gazed upon eternally.

FIFTH FRUIT

Man's being the precious fruit of the universe and the petted beloved of the Maker of the universe was understood through the Ascension, and he brought this fruit to jinn and men. This fruit raises man, an insignificant creature, a weak animal, an impotent conscious being, to an elevated rank of pride above all the beings in the universe. It gives man indescribable pleasure and joyful happiness. For if it is said to an ordinary private: "You have been promoted to the rank of field marshal," how delighted he will be. But wretched man is an ephemeral, impotent 'rational animal' who constantly suffers the blows of decease and separation. If then he is told that not only will he make excursions and tours with the speed of imagination and breadth of the spirit in an eternal never-ending Paradise within the mercy of an All-Compassionate and Generous Merciful One, and journey in the mind in accordance with all the desires of his heart in both the outer dimensions of things and those dimensions that look directly to their Creator, but that he will also behold the vision of Divine beauty in eternal happiness, you can imagine what a profound joy and true happiness a human being who has not fallen from the level of humanity would feel in his heart.

Now we say to our listener: Tear off the shirt of atheism and throw it away! Listen with believing ears! Look with Muslim eyes! We shall show you through two short comparisons the great value in one or two further fruits.

For example, you and I are together in a certain country. We see that everything is hostile to us and to each other, and is strange to us. Everywhere is full of ghastly corpses. The sounds to be heard are the weeping of orphans and the lamentations of the oppressed. So if someone appears when we are in that situation bringing good news from the king of the country by which those of his subjects who were strange to us assume the form of friends and the enemies turn into brothers, and the ghastly corpses are seen to be worshipping and praising and glorifying in deep humility and submission; and if the piteous weeping becomes praise and exaltation and cries of "Long live the king!", and the deaths and plunder and pillage are transformed into demobilizations and release from duty; and if we join the general joy to our own joy, you will certainly understand how joyful and happy that news is.

Thus, when the beings in the universe are considered with the eye of misguidance, as they were before the light of belief, which is one fruit of the Ascension of Muhammad (PBUH), they are seen to be strange, menacing, troublesome, dreadful, terrifying corpses the size of mountains, while the appointed hour is severing people's heads and casting them into the pit of eternal, never-ending nothingness. Although misguidance interprets all the voices as being lamentations occasioned by separation and decease, the truths of the pillars of belief, which are fruits of the Ascension, show you that just as beings are brothers and friends to you and praisers and glorifiers of the All-Glorious One, so are death and decease a demobilization and discharge from duties; in reality those voices are all glorifications of God. If you wish to study this truth in its entirety, you may refer to the Second and Eighth Words.

The Second Comparison: You and I are in a place resembling a vast desert. There is a sand-storm in the sea of sand and the night is so black we cannot see even our hands. If suddenly, without without friend or protector, hungry and thirsty, we were despairing and giving up hope, a person was to pass through the curtain of blackness and approach us bringing a car as a gift; and if he was to seat us in it, and then instantly install us in a place like Paradise where our future was secure, food and drink ready prepared, and where we had a most kindly and sympathetic protector, you can understand how pleased we would be.

Thus, that great desert is the face of this world. The sea of sand consists of beings and wretched man, who are tossed around by the force of the flood

of time and the motion of particles within events. All human beings see the future with the eye of misguidance, enveloped in terrifying darkness, and their hearts are harrowed with anxiety. They know no one they can make hear their cries for help. They are infinitely hungry, infinitely thirsty.

However, when this world is seen in terms of things pleasing to God, which is a fruit of the Ascension; that is, it is seen to be the guest-house of Someone exceedingly generous, and human beings are seen to His guests and officials, and the future to be as delightful as Paradise, as sweet as mercy, as shining as eternal happiness, you will understand what a delightful, exquisitely sweet fruit it is.

At this point, the one who is listening says: "Never-ending praise and thanks be to Almighty God, for I have been saved from atheism and now affirm Divine unity. I have attained a complete belief, I have gained perfect belief."

And we say: "Brother! We congratulate you. May Almighty God allow us the intercession of His Most Noble Messenger (Peace and blessings be upon him). AMEN."

O God! Grant blessings to him at whose sign the moon split, and from whose fingers water flowed forth like the spring of Kawthar, the one who made the Ascension and whose eye did not waver, our master Muhammad, and to all his Family and Companions, from the beginning of the world to the end of the Great Gathering.

*All glory be unto to You! We have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise!*¹⁹

*O our Sustainer! Accept this from us; for, indeed, You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing!*²⁰ * *O our Sustainer! Do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong!*²¹ * *O our Sustainer! Let not our hearts swerve from the truth after You have guided us!*²² * *O our Sustainer! Perfect our light for us and grant us forgiveness; for, indeed, You are Powerful over all things!*²³ * *And their call will close with, 'All praise is due to God, the Sustainer of all the worlds.'*²⁴

¹⁹ Qur'an, 2:32.

²⁰ Qur'an, 2:127.

²¹ Qur'an, 2:286.

²² Qur'an, 3:8.

²³ Qur'an, 66:8.

²⁴ Qur'an, 10:10.

Addendum to the Nineteenth Letter and Thirty-First Word

About the Miracle of the Splitting of the Moon

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

*The Hour is nigh, and the moon is split. * But if they see a sign, they turn away, and say: "This is evident magic."¹*

Philosophers and their unreasoning imitators, who want to eclipse with their vicious delusions the Splitting of the Moon, which is a miracle of Muhammad (PBUH) that shines like the moon, say: "If the Splitting of the Moon had occurred, it would have been known to the whole world and would have been related throughout the subsequent history of man."

The Answer: Since the Splitting of the Moon was demonstrated as an evidence of prophethood, and happened instantaneously, at night when people were asleep, and before a gathering who, although they witnessed such an evidence, denied it; and since there were obstacles hindering the sighting of it such as mist, clouds, and time-differences between different parts of the world; and since at that time science and civilization were not widespread, and observation of the skies was very limited, and the event itself was exceptional, there was, therefore, nothing to necessitate that it should have been seen all over the world and passed into the general histories. For now, listen to Five Points out of many that will scatter those clouds of delusion concerning the Splitting of the Moon.

¹ Qur'an, 54:1-2.

FIRST POINT

The extreme stubbornness of the unbelievers there at that time is well-known and is recorded in history. And yet, when the All-Wise Qur'an announced this event to the whole world through saying:

And the moon is split,

not one of those unbelievers, who denied the Qur'an, spoke up to give the lie to this verse; that is, not one of them denied the event it was announcing. If the event had not been considered as a definite fact by the unbelievers at that time, they would have taken the verse as a pretext, denied it in a most fearsome manner, and tried to attack and overthrow Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood. However, the biographies of the Prophet and histories mentioning the event relate nothing to suggest that the unbelievers denied it. The only thing that history relates is, as the verse:

And [they] say, "This is evident magic,"

points out, the unbelievers who saw the event declared it to be magic, and said that if the caravans in other places had seen it, it was true, otherwise he had bewitched them. The caravans arriving the following morning from the Yemen and other places announced that they had seen such a happening. So the unbelievers then said of the Pride of All the Worlds (PBUH) that, God forbid, the magic of Abu Talib's orphan had affected the heavens.²

SECOND POINT

The majority of the most illustrious scholars, like Sa'd al-Din Taftazani, declared that like the Prophet had satisfied the thirst of a whole army with water flowing from his fingers, and the whole congregation had heard a dry wooden post against which Muhammad (PBUH) had leant while delivering the sermon weep on being separated from him, the Splitting of the Moon, too, was *mutawatir*,³ that is, had been transmitted by numerous authorities. That is to say, these events had been passed down from group to group forming such a vast congregation that a conspiracy to lie would have been impossible. Like the appearance of the famous Haley's Comet a thousand years ago had been unanimously reported, and the existence of the island of Ceylon was certain due to unanimous reports, although we had not seen it.

And so, it is unreasonable to foster baseless doubts in such certain,

² Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bari*, vii, 145; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il al-Nubuwwa*, ii, 266, 268.

³ Bukhari, ii, 251; v, 62; vi, 178; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, ii, 472; Suyuti, *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi'l-Hadith al-Mutawatir*, 135; Bayhaqi, *Dala'il*, i, 279-81.

witnessed matters. It is enough that they are not impossible. And as for the Splitting of the Moon, it is quite as possible as a mountain's splitting with a volcanic eruption.

THIRD POINT

Miracles are for proving claims to prophethood and for convincing those who deny those claims, they are not for compelling people to believe. Therefore, miracles have to be manifested to those who hear claims to prophethood at a degree that will persuade them. Just as it would be contrary to the All-Wise and Glorious One's wisdom to display them all over the world or in so self-evident a manner that all would be compelled to believe, so would it also be contrary to the mystery of man's accountability. For this accountability requires "opening the door to the reason and not removing the power of choice." If the All-Wise Creator had left the moon split for one or two hours in order to show it to the whole world as the philosophers wished, and it had been recorded in all the general histories of man, then it would have been like all other occurrences in the heavens and would not have been an evidence to Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood nor been special to his messengership. Or else it would have been such a self-evident miracle that it would have negated the power of choice, a part of man's reason, compelling it to accept it; willy-nilly, it would have had to assent to his prophethood. Someone with a coal-like spirit like Abu Jahl would have remained at the same level as someone with a diamond-like spirit like Abu Bakr the Veracious; the mystery of man's accountability would have been lost. It was due to this mystery that, being both instantaneous, and at nighttime, and at a time of sleep, and time differences, mist, and cloud and other obstacles concealing it, it was not shown to the whole world and did not pass into the histories.

FOURTH POINT

Since this event occurred instantaneously at night while everyone was sleeping, of course it was not seen all over the world. Even if some people had seen it, they would not have believed their eyes. And even if it had made them believe, such a significant event would not have become a permanent source for future histories through isolated individual reports.

In some books it is written that after the moon split into two halves, it fell to earth, but veracious scholars have rejected such additions, saying that they were perhaps added by dissemblers with the intention of reducing to nothing the value of this evident miracle.

And, for example, just as the same time in England and Spain, which were then enveloped in mists of ignorance, would have been just after sunset, in America daytime, and in China and Japan morning, so too in other places there would have been other obstacles preventing it being seen. Now consider these unreasoning objectors who say that the histories of peoples like the English, Chinese, Japanese, and Americans do not mention it, and that therefore it did not occur. A thousand curses be on the heads of those who toady to Europe and repeat such things.

FIFTH POINT

The Splitting of the Moon happened neither of its own accord in consequence of certain causes, nor as a result of chance, nor was it a natural event that occurred through the ordinary laws of nature. Rather, the All-Wise Creator of the Sun and the Moon caused it to happen as something out of the ordinary in order to confirm His Messenger's messengership and to illuminate his claim.

As the mystery of guidance, the mystery of human accountability, and the wisdom of messengership required, it was demonstrated as a convincing proof to certain people specified by dominical wisdom. The mystery of wisdom required that it was not shown to people in every region of the world, who had not yet heard of Muhammad's (PBUH) claim to prophethood. Numerous obstacles prevented them, therefore, such as mist, cloud, and time-differences, and the fact that in some countries the moon had not risen, and in others the sun had risen, while in others it was morning, and in yet others the sun had just set.

If it had been shown to all and sundry, it would have been shown as a result of the Sign of Muhammad (PBUH), and a miracle of prophethood, in which case his messengership would have been so manifest that everyone would have been compelled to affirm it. No choice would have remained for the reason. And belief is attained through man's power of choice and his reason. The mystery of human accountability would have gone for nothing. And if it had been shown merely as an occurrence in the heavens, its connection with Muhammad's (PBUH) messengership would have been severed, and it would have retained no peculiarity to him.

To Conclude: There is no longer any doubt concerning the possibility that the Splitting of the Moon occurred; it has been proved decisively. And now we shall mention six⁴ of the many evidences pointing to its occurrence.

⁴ That is to say, there are six proofs concerning the event in the form of a sixfold consensus. Unfortunately, the explanation of them is brief, although they deserve more.

The concurrence of the Companions of the Prophet, who were all men of justice, on its occurrence.

Their agreement in expounding the verse, And the moon is split of all exacting commentators on the Qur'an.

The fact that, relying on numerous different chains of authorities and lines of transmission, all the scholars of the Prophetic Hadiths and transmitters of the sound narrations narrated the event.⁵

The testimony of all the saints and the veracious, those who receive inspiration, and uncover the mysteries of the creation.

The confirmation of learned scholars and theologians, whose ways differ greatly from one another.

The fact that the Community of Muhammad (PBUH) accepted its occurrence, which, on an established principle, never agrees upon error.⁶

These six evidences prove the Splitting of the Moon as clearly as the sun.

CONCLUSION

Up to here this Addendum has been in the name of establishing the truth, and for the sake of silencing those enemies who deny it. Its concluding sentences will now be in the name of the truth and for the sake of belief. Indeed, establishing the truth spoke as above, now the truth speaks.

The Seal of the Office of Prophethood, who was the luminous moon of its heaven, proved his sainthood through his Ascension. This was the greatest wonder and supreme miracle of sainthood, achieved through his worship, which was so elevated as to make him God's beloved. That is to say, by travelling with his earthly body through the heavens, his superiority and his being God's beloved were demonstrated to the dwellers of the heavens and inhabitants of the lofty worlds. So too, through the moon, which is bound to the earth and suspended in the heavens, being split into two halves at the sign of an inhabitant of the earth, a miracle indicating to that earth-dweller's messengership was displayed to the other inhabitants of the earth. Thus, the person of Muhammad (PBUH) flew to the very summit of perfections on the two luminous wings of messengership and sainthood – like the two luminous unfolded wings of the moon; he ascended to the distance of two bow-lengths; he became the cause of pride of both the inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth....

⁵ *Musnad*, i, 377, 413, 447, 456; iii, 207, 220, 275, 278; iv, 81; *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, vi, 469.

⁶ *Suyuti*, *Nazm al-Mutanathir fi l-Hadth al-Mutawatir*, 180; *Tabarani*, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabir*, xii, 13623-4; xvii, 666-7; *Ibn 'Adi*, *al-Kamil fi'l-Du'afa*, iii, 1307.

Upon him and upon his Family be blessings and peace such as will fill the earth and the heavens.

Glory be unto You! we have no knowledge save that which You have taught us; indeed, You are All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁷

O God! For the sake of the one at whose sign the moon split make my heart and the hearts of all true students of the Risale-i Nur like the moon in the face of the Sun of the Qur'an. AMEN. AMEN.

⁷ Qur'an, 2:32.