

The Isra and Mi'raj

(The Night Journey and Ascension)

Part 9



The Quran linguistic miracle series

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Then Allah (swt) continues:

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ

while He was In the highest part of the horizon

This to one of the two times where the Prophet ﷺ saw Jibreel (a.s) in his real form. The Prophet ﷺ saw Jibreel descend from heaven to earth and he was so huge that he filled the entire horizon between the earth and sky.

The و is a to indicate a haal of اسْتَوَىٰ

الْأُفُقُ means the horizon and is an adverb of place. الْأَعْلَىٰ mean (the highest) and is an adjective. The word العَالِي was not used but instead الْأَعْلَىٰ was used to indicate the highest position possible.

Contrast Surat Al Najm with Surat Al Takweer when referring to the same event.

Surat Al takweer was predominately defending the Prophet ﷺ hallucinating and being possessed by the jinn. So notice the ayah:

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ بِالْأُفُقِ الْمُبِينِ

And without doubt he saw him in the clear horizon.

You will notice Allah (Swt) swearing an oath and the لَقَدْ is a response to this oath. This is to indicate that he most certainly saw him and was not deluded or hallucinating etc. Also the word الْمُبِينِ / clear, was used to indicate the clarity of the Prophet's vision which matches the context perfectly.

In Surat Al Najm the word **الأَعْلَى** / the highest was used to indicate height and elevation. The context of the surah is that of the ascension to heaven which involves the highest position that any creation has reached.

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى

then He approached and came closer

يُسَبِّحُ indicates some time before Jibreel (a.s) descended to the Prophet ﷺ which indicates the preparation and anticipation of this meeting. The Prophet (s) is therefore honored in this verse to indicate his great rank.

The verb **دَنَا** (دَنَا يَدْنُو) was then used which means he approached and came near/ close. And

then following this act the verb **تَدَلَّى** was used which is a form V verb from the triliteral form

يَدُلُو - دَلَا which means to send down, to lower.

تَدَلَّى (form V) means he descended; he became lowly, submissive and humbled.

Form V has the meaning of to do s.th gradually or in stages so this indicates his descent was a gradual process. This verse explains the great rank of the Prophet (saw).

فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى

and was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (Even) nearer

قَاب means he came near. From the same root we get the word **قَابٌ** which refers to the portion of a bow that is between the part that is grasped by the hand and the curved extremity

i.e the distance between them. قَابٌ also is used to mean the distance between two stars which matches the context of the Surah.

قَوْسَيْنِ means a bow. قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ used to mean two bows length.

فَكَانَ قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ is originally the following:

فَكَانَ قُرْبُ جَبْرِيلَ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ مِثْلَ قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ

فَكَانَ قُرْبُ جَبْرِيلَ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ مِثْلَ قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ

Note on Comparisons

Tashbeeh is used to show that a thing (or things) shares with something else in one or more attributes through the use of an instrument which is usually the كاف or some other instrument.

When the device of Tashbeeh is removed from the comparison this emphasizes this comparison

e.g هِيَ الْبَدْرُ , She is the moon (here the comparison is stronger) هِيَ مِثْلُ الْبَدْرِ / هِيَ كَالْبَدْرِ

The Ism of Kana قُرْبُ is also removed (what is compared) and only the Mudaf ilay is left. This also further emphasizes the statement قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ i.e. that it is no ordinary relationship.

This statement is based on an old Arab custom of 2 persons vowing to a firm and strong friendship. This would be done by turning the wooden part of their bows to themselves and the chord will be towards each other. This closeness was a sign of proximity, love and affection. This simile was something understood by the Arabs but Allah (swt) wanted make it known that it was not any ordinary friendship.

قَابِ قَوْسَيْنِ was known to the Arabs and Allah (swt) clarified that it was a relationship that was much closer than one could in fact imagine. / أَوْ أَذْنَى

There were many ways to explain the closeness of Jibreel and the Prophet ﷺ so why was this simile used

The Bow is an instrument used to propel arrows with force. This beautifully matches the context. of Jibreel (a.s) coming close to the Prophet ﷺ to propel with force the weighty words of the Quran.

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا

Soon shall We thrust to you a weighty Message