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**Interpretations of the Celestial Places Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and Bayt al-‘Izzah
mentioned in the Islamic Texts;
An Analytical Study**

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Abstract

The Islamic Texts encompass numerous terminologies having multiple interpretative explorations, needed to be coincided for explicit conceptualization. Sometimes, there is a probability of establishing correlation between multiplicity found in narrations, whereas in other cases, the rule of preference is applied. In this research paper, various interpretations of two celestial terms which exhibit the heavenly places in Islamic texts, will be discussed in detail. One of them is the Quranic term “*Bayt al-Ma‘mūr*” and the other is a narrative term “*Bayt al-‘Izzah*” used in the narrations of the Quranic Descent. Here, meanings of both the terms (lexical and terminological), variant explanatory accounts attributed to them with conclusive statements will be presented.

Keywords: Bayt al-Ma‘mūr, Bayt al-‘Izzah, Quran, Exegesis, Prophetic Traditions, Narrations

Introduction

There is no possibility of contradiction in the Revelatory accounts which have absolute evidence. If there is a contradiction between absolute evidentiary text and presumptive evidentiary text, the attempt is made to establish co-relation to the level best, but if it is not possible to coincide them or coinciding

them rescinds already accepted reality, absolute evidentiary text will be given preference, otherwise both accounts will be accepted.

Bayt al-Ma'mūr and Bayt al-'Izzah are two significant concepts mentioned in the Revelatory Islamic texts having variant interpretations. The term Bayt al-Ma'mūr has been used in both the Quran and Hadith literature but the term Bayt al-'Izzah has been used in the Hadiths narrated for the process of the Quranic Descent.

Research Question

- Are both the celestial terms mentioned in the Islamic Texts used for a same place?

Research Objectives

- To determine the equivalents of both the celestial terms used in Islamic Texts: Bayt al-Ma'mūr and Bayt al-'Izzah in the light of narrative accounts.

Lexical Meanings

The following are the meanings of the subject terms found in lexicons:

1- Bayt

The word “بيت” (bayt): It means a person’s shelter during the night, because it is said: “بَاتَ” (bāta), meaning to stay during the night. It also refers to a dwelling without specific consideration of night. Its plural form is “بُيُوتَ” (buyūt).¹

2- Ma'mūr

The word “معمور” (ma'mūr) is a passive participle derived from the verb “عَمَرَ”. In general usage, it can refer to a populated or inhabited place. “المعمورة” can be referred to the Earth, also known as “the inhabited world” or “the globe”.²

3- 'Izzah

¹ Rāghib Aṣfahānī, Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Quran, 1/ 151

² Aḥmad Mukhtār Umar, Al-Mu'jam al-Lughat al-'Arabiyyāh al-Mu'āṣirah, 2/ 1553

The term “عِزَّةٌ” is derived from the verb “عَزَّ”, and it can be clarified in two ways:

- a) “عِزَّةُ النَّفْسِ”: This refers to a person’s dignity, self-respect, or pride. It encompasses the concept of upholding one’s honor and not compromising it.
- b) “لَهُ الْعِزَّةُ”: This means having strength, might, or superiority. It is associated with dominance and power. In the context of the Quran, it is mentioned to emphasize the idea that honor, strength, and dignity belong to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers.

”وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ“^{3,4}

Terminological Meanings

Here, the terminological meanings of both the terms “Bayt al-Ma‘mūr” and “Bayt al-‘Izzah” will be explained through Islamic accounts found in the exegeses, books of hadith and books of the Quranic Sciences.

BAYT AL-MA‘MŪR

The word Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is mentioned in the Quran in Surah al-Ṭūr in which Allah , the Almighty has taken an oath upon it. The following verses are the incepting verses of Surah al-Ṭūr:

وَالطُّورِ ١ وَكِتَابٍ مَّسْطُورٍ ٢ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنشُورٍ ٣ وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ ٤

“By Mount Ṭūr, And by the Book written, on open pages for all to read, And by the Sacred House frequently visited”⁵

a) General Description of Bayt al-Ma‘mūr

The narrations which provide general description of Bayt al-Ma‘mūr are as follows:

Imam Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H.) reported that a man asked Imam Ali (r.a.), “What is Bayt al- Ma‘mūr?” He replied, “It is a house in the sky like a mausoleum, situated directly above the Ka‘ba. Its sanctity in the

³ Abdul Ghanī, Abul ‘Azīm, Mu‘jam al-Ghanī, 2011, Root Word (ع ز ن)

⁴ Al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 8

⁵ Al-Ṭūr, 52: 4

heavens is similar to the sanctity of the Ka‘ba on Earth. Every day, seventy thousand angels pray in it, and they never return to it again.”⁶

Imam Qurṭubī (d. 671 A.H.) stated that Ali (r.a.), Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.), and others have mentioned that Bayt al- Ma‘mūr refers to a house in the sky above the Ka‘ba. Every day, seventy thousand angels enter this House, and once they leave, they do not return to it.⁷

Allama Ṭabāṭabā‘ī (d. 1402 A.H.) stated that as for the narration “أما كون الكعبة بحذاء البيت المعمور” that the Ka‘ba corresponds to the bottom of Bayt Al-Ma‘mūr, it appears to be a symbolic or metaphorical alignment rather than a literal, physical one. Based on the evidences from the Quran and Hadith, it is understood that the Throne and the Chair (Kursī) encompass the heavens and the Earth. The concept of literal and physical alignment with Ka‘ba doesn’t make sense.⁸

b) Location of Bayt al-Ma‘mūr

There are multiple narrative accounts attributed to the location of Bayt al-Ma‘mūr. They have been mentioned as under:

1- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Ka‘ba on the Earth

The accounts which support this verdict are as follows:

Imam Tha‘labī (d. 427 A.H.) reported from Hassan Baṣrī that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Ka‘ba, the Sacred House that is frequently visited by people. It is a place of continuous worship and is built by Allah every year. It was the first mosque established on Earth for worship.⁹

Imam Qurṭubī narrated from Hassan Baṣrī said that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Ka‘ba on Earth which is circumambulated by six hundred thousand people every year, if this number is short, Allah completes it by sending Angels. This is the first home which was built for worship.¹⁰

⁶ Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Tā’wīl Āy al-Quran, 22/ 455

⁷ Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, 17/60

⁸ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, Tafsīr al-Mīzān, 8/ 171 (<http://shiaonlinelibrary.com/>)

⁹ Tha‘labī, Al-Kashaf wal-Bayān ‘an Tafsīr al-Quran, 9/ 124

¹⁰ Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, 17/60

Imam Bayḍāwī (d. 685 A.H.) also opined that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Ka‘ba on the Earth which remains surrounded by pilgrims and attendants.¹¹

2- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is a metaphor used for the Earth

This statement is a distinctive argument by *Allama Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī* (d. 1997), who stated that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Earth on which there is a shelter of the Sky. He presented evidence against his statement that the metaphor of “Bayt” is very suitable for the Earth:

- a) Firstly, there are various instances in the Quran where the Earth has been denoted by “مهّاد” and “قرار”. Hence, the Earth as a floor and the Sky as its roof has been beautifully used as a metaphor of Bayt.
- b) Secondly, the next verse after “وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ” is “وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ” which means “*And the roof exalted*”. It is clear evidence that Bayt must be considered as the Earth because there are various places in the Quran where Allah indicated His Mighty paradigms and mentioned the Sky after the Earth.
- c) Thirdly, at various places in the Quran, it has been clarified that humans will be questionable for the resources provided by Allah to them in the Earth. The word “مَعْمُورٌ” is indicating those resources and the answerability to Allah in the result of utilizing them.
- d) Fourthly, in the previous Surah, Al-Dhāriyāt, Allah says: “*And in the earth are portents for those whose faith is sure*”¹² and “*And in the heaven is your providence and that which ye are promised*”.¹³ In this Surah also, the witness of the Earth and the Sky has been presented about resources and punishment in the same way but pattern is different.

For all the above-mentioned reasons, the term Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Earth and its attribution to word Ma‘mūr is indicating towards Omnipotence, Prudence and Superiority of Allah by which, at various places in the Quran, His Justice and system of reward or punishment has been inferred.¹⁴

3- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the heart of a Believer

¹¹ Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Isrār al-Tā’wīl*, 5/152

¹² Al-Dhāriyāt, 51: 20

¹³ Al-Dhāriyāt, 51: 22

¹⁴ Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur e Quran*, P. 19

Imam Bayḍāwī mentioned about Bayt al-Ma‘mūr: “قلب المؤمن وعمارته بالمعرفة والإخلاص” that it is the heart of a believer, structured with knowledge and sincerity.¹⁵

4- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located in the First Heaven

Imam Qushayrī (d. 465 A.H.) narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) that he mentioned Bayt al-Ma‘mūr to be in the lowest heaven (the sky above the Earth).¹⁶

Allama Ṭabṛasī (d. 548 A.H.), a leading Shia scholar reported: narrated from Abū Ḥurayrah (r.a.) that the Prophet ﷺ said: The Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located on the heaven of the earth, and in the Fourth heaven, there is a canal called “al-Ḥayawān”, a place where Gabriel (a.s.) enters every day when the sun rises and dive into it, and when he leaves, seventy thousand drops fall out from his feathers. Allah creates an angel for each of these drops, and they are tasked with visiting Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and performing acts of worship therein. After their worship, they do not return to it ever again.¹⁷

As far as authenticity of this narration is concerned, traditionist questioned its source and did not accept it. *Imam Ibn Kathīr* (d. 774 A.H.), after quoting the same narration, wrote: “هَذَا حَدِيثٌ غَرِيبٌ جَدًّا” and is uniquely attributed to Rawḥ b. Janāh, a Qurayshī Umayyad affiliated with Abu Sa‘d al-Damishqī. Many hadith scholars, including Al-Jawzajānī, Al-‘Uqaylī, and Hākim Nīshāpurī, among others, have criticized and rejected this hadith. Hākim Nīshāpurī stated that he could not trace the authenticity of this hadith back to Abū Huraira, Sa‘īd, or Zuhri.¹⁸

Imam Ibn Jawzī (d. 597 A.H.) narrated: Rabī‘ b. Anas said: Bayt al-Ma‘mūr was originally located where the Ka‘ba is in the time of Adam (a.s.). When the time of Noah (a.s.) came, people were commanded to perform pilgrimage to it, but they disobeyed. When the waters of the flood prevailed, it was lifted and placed in the first heaven with the Ka‘ba in the sky.¹⁹

5- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located in the Fourth Heaven

¹⁵ Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Isrār al-Tā’wīl*, 5/152

¹⁶ Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 17/60

¹⁷ Ṭabṛasī, *Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Quran*, P. 209

¹⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Quran al-‘Aẓīm*, 7/398

¹⁹ Ibn Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī ‘Ilm al-Tafsīr*, 4/176

Imam Qurṭubī narrated from Anas b. Malik reported from Mālik b. Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "I was taken up to the fourth heaven, and there, Bayt al-Ma‘mūr was raised for us. It was situated over the Ka‘ba. If it falls, it would fall directly on the Ka‘ba. Every day, seventy thousand angels enter it, and when they leave, they never return." ²⁰

Imam Bayḍāwī stated that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is *al-Ḍurrāh* on Fourth Heaven which is surrounded by angels. ²¹

Allama Ṭabrasī narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) and Mujāhid: Bayt al- Ma‘mūr is located in the fourth heaven exactly above the Ka‘ba, the angels circumambulate around it for worship. ²²

Allama Ṭabāṭabā‘ī mentioned a narration, “So He placed a house in the fourth heaven, aligning with the Throne.” ²³

6- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located in the Sixth Heaven

Imam Ṭabarī narrated from Khalid b. ‘Ur‘urah narrated from Ali (r.a) that a man asked him: What is Bayt al-Ma‘mūr? He said: It is a house in the sixth heaven known as *al-Ḍurrāh*. Seventy thousand angels enter it every day, and they never return to it. ²⁴

Imam Qurṭubī reported from Ali (r.a.) said that it is a house in the sixth heaven. ²⁵

7- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located in the Seventh Heaven

Imam Bukhārī (d. 256 A.H.) reported from Mālik b. Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah, the relevant portion of the hadith has been quoted here for reference: “Then we ascended to the seventh heaven and again the same questions and answers were exchanged as in the previous heavens. There I met and greeted Abraham who said, you are welcomed O Son and a Prophet. Then I was shown Bayt al-Ma‘mūr. I asked Gabriel about it and

²⁰ Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān, 17/60

²¹ Bayḍāwī, Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Isrār al-Tā’wīl, 5/152

²² Ṭabrasī, Majma‘ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Quran, P. 209

²³ Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, Tafsīr al-Mīzān, 8/ 171 (<http://shiaonlinelibrary.com/>)

²⁴ Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Tā’wīl Āy al-Quran, 22/ 455

²⁵ Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān, 17/60

he said, this is Bayt al- Ma‘mūr where 70,000 angels perform prayers daily and when they leave they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily).”²⁶

Imam Muslim (d. 261 A.H.) narrated on the authority of Anas b. Mālik that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Then I was taken up to the seventh heaven. Gabriel asked the (gate) to be opened. It was said: Who is he? He said: Gabriel It was said. Who is with thee? He replied: Muhammad ﷺ It was said: Has he been sent for? He replied: He has indeed been sent for. (The gate) was opened for us and there I found Ibrahim (peace be upon him) reclining against the Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and there enter into it seventy thousand angels every day, never to visit (this place) again.”²⁷

He quoted another narration: “Then we travelled on till we reached the seventh heaven and I came to Ibrahim. Then the Bayt al-Ma‘mūr was raised up to me. I said: O Gabriel! what is this? He replied: It is the Bayt al-Ma‘mūr. Seventy thousand angels enter into it daily and, after they come out, they never return again.”²⁸

Imam Nasā’ī (d. 303 A.H.) reported: “Then we came to the seventh heaven and a similar exchange took place. I came to Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and greeted him, and he said: Welcome to you! What an excellent son and Prophet. Then I was taken up to the Oft-Frequented House (Bayt al-Ma‘mūr) and I asked Gabriel about it, and he said: This is Bayt al-Ma‘mūr in which seventy thousand angels pray every day, and when they leave it they never come back.”²⁹

Imam Ṭabarī stated that the Prophet ﷺ said: When the angel took me on the Night Journey to the seventh heaven, I came across a building and asked the angel, what is this? The angel replied, this is a building that Allah has constructed for the angels. Seventy thousand angels enter it every day to glorify and sanctify Allah. They do not return to it again.³⁰

²⁶ Bukhārī, *Al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Book: Beginning of Creation, Chapter: In reference to Angels, No. 3207

²⁷ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book of Faith, Chapter: The night journey on which the messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was taken up into the heavens and the prayers were enjoined, No. 162 (a)

²⁸ Muslim, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Book of Faith, Chapter: The night journey on which the messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was taken up into the heavens and the prayers were enjoined, No. 164 (a)

²⁹ Nasā’ī, *Al-Sunan*, Book of Prayers, Chapter: Enjoining Ṣalāh and mentioning the differences reported by the narrators in the chain of the Hadith of Anas b. Mālik (May Allah be pleased with him), and the different wordings in it, No. 448

³⁰ Ibid.

Imam Tha‘labī quoted that Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is called so because of the frequent visitors and inhabitants. It is a house in the seventh heaven, located directly above the Ka‘ba on Earth. It is called *al-Ḍurrāh*. Its sanctity in the heavens is like the sanctity of the Ka‘ba on Earth. Every day, seventy thousand angels enter it, circumambulate, and pray in it, after which they do not return to it ever again. Its guardian is an angel referred to as al-Jinn.³¹

Imam Qurṭubī quoted a narration from Thābit, who narrated from Anas b. Malik, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I was brought the Burrāq (a heavenly steed). Then I was ascended to the seventh heaven. Gabriel opened the gate, and it was asked, who is this? Gabriel replied, this is Muhammad ﷺ. It was asked, who is with him? Gabriel said, Ibrahim (a.s.). Muhammad ﷺ continued, Ibrahim (a.s.) was leaning with his back against the Frequented House. He entered it every day, and seventy thousand angels accompany him, but they never returned to it.³²

Imam Ibn Kathīr stated that the angels worship Allah in Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and perform Circumambulation around it just as the people on Earth perform Ṭawāf around the Ka‘ba. Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is the Ka‘ba of those who reside in the seventh heaven. During the Night Journey, the Prophet ﷺ saw Ibrahim (a.s.) who was reclining with his back against Bayt al-Ma‘mūr. Ibrahim (a.s.) built the Ka‘ba on the Earth, and surely, the reward is compatible with the action.³³

8- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located beneath Allah’s Throne

Imam Ṭabarī narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) who said, it is the house beneath the Throne (of Allah), which is inhabited by the angels. Seventy thousand angels pray in it daily, and they do not return to it”.

³⁴

Imam Qurṭubī quoted from Abū Bakr Anbārī that Ibn Kawwā’ asked Ali (r.a.), what is Bayt al-Ma‘mūr? Ali (r.a.) replied, it is a house above the seven heavens, beneath the Throne, and it is like a room.³⁵

³¹ Tha‘labī, Al-Kashaf wal-Bayān ‘an Tafṣīr al-Quran, 9/ 124

³² Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, 17/60

³³ Ibn Kathīr, Tafṣīr al-Quran al-‘Azīm, 7/398

³⁴ Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Tā’wīl Āy al-Quran, 22/ 456

³⁵ Qurṭubī, Al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, 17/60

BAYT AL-‘IZZAH

The term Bayt al-‘Izzah is not found in the Quran but in the narrations pertaining to the process of descent of the Quran. From the Quranic verses, Prophetic Traditions and various narrations, it has been authenticated that the Quran was revealed in two stages. In first stage, from the Guarded Tablet to the House of Honour and from there to the heart of the Prophet ﷺ in a period of more than twenty-two years. The following verses pertain to Descent of the Quran: ³⁶ {شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ} “The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran”; ³⁷ {إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبْرَكَةٍ} “We have sent it (this Qur’ān) down on a blessed night” and ³⁸ {إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ} “Verily, We have sent it (this Qur’ān) down in the Night of Decree”. In interpretation of the aforementioned verses of the Quran which evidence the descent in two stages, exegetes have reported various narrations. Moreover, Descent of the Quran is one of the topics of the Quranic Sciences related to the History of the Quran, therefore the Quranic Sciences’ experts have also penned down those narrations. Here, multiple opinions of scholars regarding Bayt al-‘Izzah will be presented.

1- The Quran was revealed from the Preserved Tablet to Bayt al-‘Izzah in the First Heaven

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277 A.H.) narrated:

”عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ: أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ فَجُعِلَ فِي بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ“³⁹

He further narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) who, while explaining the verse "*Indeed, We sent the Quran down during the Night of Decree,*" The Quran was revealed in its entirety from the preserved tablet near the Lord of Honor until it was placed in the House of Honor in the lowest heaven (وَضَعَ فِي بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ فِي) (السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا). Then, Gabriel (a.s.) began to descend upon Muhammad ﷺ at Hira, responding to the speech and deeds of the people.⁴⁰

Ibn Ḍurais (d. 294 A.H.) mentioned various narrations in the chapter of how the Quran was revealed.

He quoted from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.):

³⁶ Al-Baqarah, 2: 185

³⁷ Al-Dukhān, 44: 3

³⁸ Al-Qadr, 97: 1

³⁹ Abū Ḥātim, Tafsīr al-Quran al-‘Azīm, 8/2690

⁴⁰ Ibid., 10/3452

”نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً إِلَى سَمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، ثُمَّ كَانَ جِبْرِيْلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَنْزِلُ بِهِ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْأَوَّلِ فَالْأَوَّلُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ“⁴¹

”نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ كُلُّهُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِي رَمَضَانَ إِلَى سَمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، فَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يُحْدِثَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

سَبَبًا أَنْزَلَ مِنْهُ حَتَّى جَمَعَهُ“⁴²

”أَنْزَلَ الْقُرْآنَ جُمْلَةً فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ إِلَى سَمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، وَكَانَ بِمَوْقِعِ النُّجُومِ، وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُنْزِلُهُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَعْضُهُ

فِي إِثْرِ بَعْضٍ“⁴³

”أَنْزَلَ الْقُرْآنَ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حَتَّى رُفِعَ فِي بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ“⁴⁴

From Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 95 A.H.), one of the leading jurist from Tābi‘īn:

”نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَجَعَلَ فِي بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ، ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي

عَشْرِينَ سَنَةً جَوَابَ كَلَامِ النَّاسِ“⁴⁵

”نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ فَجَعَلَ فِي بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ“⁴⁶

Imam Nasā’ī (d. 303 A.H.) quoted from Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.):

”فصل القرآن من الذكر فوضع في بيت العزرة في السماء الدنيا فجعل جبريل عليه السلام ينزل على النبي يرتله ترتيلا“⁴⁷

The Quran was separated from the Preserved Tablet and was placed in Bayt al-‘Izzah in the lower heaven, and then Gabriel (a.s.) would descend upon the Prophet ﷺ and recite it to him. **Imam Hākim Nīshāpurī** (d. 405 A.H) also narrated the same narration and commented on its status as: “هذا حديث صحيح”⁴⁸ **Allama Suyūfī** (d. 911), after quoting it, commented that the chain of narrators is Ṣaḥīḥ.⁴⁹

Imam Ṭabarī reported by Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.), who said: "The Quran was revealed in its entirety on the Night of the twenty-fourth day of Ramadan and was placed in Bayt al-‘Izzah."⁵⁰

⁴¹ Ibn Ḍurais, Muhammad b. Ayyūb, Faḍā’il al-Quran, P. 71

⁴² Ibid., P. 72

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., P. 73

⁴⁵ Ibid., P.72

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Nasā’ī, Faḍā’il al-Quran, P. 71

⁴⁸ Hākim Nīshāpurī, Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥīḥīn, والمرسلين والأنبياء من المتقدمين من الأئمة والمرسلين، No. 4216

⁴⁹ Suyūfī, Al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Quran, 1/ 147

⁵⁰ Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Tā’wīl Āy al-Quran, 3/ 187-8

Imam Ṭabarānī (d. 360 A.H.) narrated: Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) said: The Quran was separated from the Preserved Tablet and was placed in Bayt al-‘Izzah in the first heaven. Gabriel would then descend with it to the Prophet ﷺ, and he would recite it to him with distinct and clear enunciation.”⁵¹

Imam Baghawī (d. 516 A.H.) stated that the Quran was initially revealed in its entirety from the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lawḥ Al-Maḥfūz) to the lowest heaven in the material world, specifically to the Bayt al-‘Izzah. Then, Gabriel (a.s.) descended with it upon the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ over a period of twenty years, in stages or gradual revelation.⁵²

Imam Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) quoted the following narration:

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ وَغَيْرُهُ: أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ الْقُرْآنَ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً مِنَ اللَّوْحِ الْمُحْفُوظِ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، ثُمَّ نَزَلَ مُفَصَّلًا

بِحَسَبِ الْوَقَائِعِ فِي ثَلَاثٍ وَعِشْرِينَ سَنَةً عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ⁵³

Ibn ‘Abbās (r.a.) and others said: Allah revealed the Quran all at once from the Preserved Tablet to the House of Honor in the first heaven. Then, it was revealed in detail over twenty-three years to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, according to the circumstances.

Allama Zarkashī (d. 794 A.H.) quoted the same narration from Imam Nasā’ī “فصل القرآن من الذكر فوضع في “بَيْتِ الْعِزَّةِ فِي السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا فَجَعَلَ جِبْرِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَنْزِلُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ بِرَتْلِهِ تَرْتِيلًا” and added a statement to the authenticity of that narration: “And its chain is authentic and good. He is Ibn Abī Al-Ashras, and he was considered trustworthy by Al-Nasā’ī and others”⁵⁴

Dr. Fahd b. Abdul Raḥmān al-Rūmī opined:

”نزول القرآن جملة واحدة من اللوح المحفوظ في السماء السابعة إلى بيت العزة في السماء الدنيا“⁵⁵

The Quran was revealed all at once from the Preserved Tablet in the seventh heaven to the House of Honor in the lower heaven.

The term “السَّمَاءُ الدُّنْيَا”

⁵¹ Ṭabarānī, Mu‘jam al-Kabīr, No. 12381

⁵² Baghawī, Ma‘ālim al-Tanzīl, 5/283

⁵³ Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr al-Quran al-‘Azīm, 8/425

⁵⁴ Zarkashī, Al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Quran, P. 229

⁵⁵ Fahd Rūmī, Dirāsāt fī ‘Ulūm al-Quran, P. 192

Almost all the above mentioned narrations indicate the location of Bayt al-‘Izzah on “السماء الدنيا”. This term has been used in the Quran in the following verses:

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَأَعَدَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ⁵⁶

“And verily We have beautified the world’s heaven with lamps, and We have made them missiles for the devils, and for them We have prepared the doom of flame”.

إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوَاكِبِ⁵⁷

“Indeed! We have adorned the lowest heaven with an ornament, the planets”

Hence, “السماء الدنيا” (literal tr. The Sky of the Earth) is the sky that contains the sun, the moon, the meteors, the planets etc. Everything that surrounds our Earth and the sky which a human eye can behold is the *Al-Samā’ al-Dunyā* or the first heaven.

2- Bayt al-‘Izzah is in the Seventh Heaven

Imam Fakharuddīn Rāzī (d. 606 A.H.) opined that the Quran used to be revealed to the Prophet ﷺ during the Night of Decree every year, from the Bayt al-‘Izzah in the seventh heaven to the worldly heaven. Allah revealed the Quran over twenty months in twenty years.⁵⁸

3- The Quran was revealed from the Preserved Tablet to Bayt al-Ma‘mūr

Imam Ṭabarī narrated by Musa, who said: Narrated by ‘Amr, who said: Narrated by Asbāt, from Suddī regarding the verse: "*The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran*". As for when the Quran was revealed, Ibn ‘Abbas (r.a.) said: The month of Ramadan, and the blessed night is the Night of Decree. The Night of Decree is that blessed night, and it is within Ramadan. The Quran was revealed all at once from the Preserved Tablet to Bayt- al-Ma‘mūr, which is the location of the stars in the first heaven, where the Quran descended (وَهُوَ مَوَاقِعُ النُّجُومِ، فِي) نَزَلَ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً مِنَ الرُّبْرِ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ، (السماء الدنيا حيثُ وَقَعَ الْقُرْآنُ). Then, Muhammad ﷺ received it gradually in matters of command, prohibition, and in times of war step by step."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Al-Mulk, 67: 5

⁵⁷ Ṣāffāt, 37: 6

⁵⁸ Rāzī, Fakharuddīn, Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, 32/230

⁵⁹ Ṭabarī, Jāmi‘ al-Bayān ‘an Tā’wīl Āy al-Quran, 3/ 190

Shaykh Kulaynī (d. 329 A.H.), a prominent Persian Shiite Traditionist wrote: The belief is that the Quran was revealed all at once in the month of Ramadan to Bayt al-Ma‘mur, and then it descended gradually over a period of twenty years. He quoted a narration: The Prophet ﷺ said that the Scrolls of Ibrahim (a.s.) were revealed on the first night of Ramadan, the Torah was revealed over the first six nights of Ramadan, the Gospel over the first thirteen nights, the Psalms over the first eighteen nights, and the Quran over the first twenty-three nights of Ramadan.⁶⁰

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381 A.H.), a Persian Shiite Traditionist and Jurist stated:

”اعتقادنا في ذلك أن القرآن نزل في شهر رمضان في ليلة القدر جملة واحدة إلى البيت المعمور ثم نزل من البيت المعمور

في مدة عشرين سنة وأن الله عز وجل أعطى نبيه ﷺ العلم جملة “⁶¹

Our belief is that the Quran was revealed in the month of Ramadan on the Night of Decree all at once to Bayt al-Ma‘mūr. It then descended from Bayt al-Ma‘mūr over a period of twenty years. We believe that Allah granted His Prophet ﷺ and his family, knowledge of the entire Quran all at once.

4- The Quran was not revealed on any Celestial Place

Allama Muhammad Rashīd Rezā (d. 1935) stated that the term Quran is applied to both the entire book and to some of its parts. Those who have engaged in exegesis after the era of narration have thought that the verses indicating the Quranic Descent have confusions and they tried to eliminate those confusions by stating that the Quran was revealed from the Preserved Tablet, above the seven heavens, to the lowest heaven in the Night of Decree in the month of Ramadan, then gradually to the Prophet ﷺ. He commented that this interpretation is opposing the apparent meaning of the verse. It does not demonstrate favor upon us, nor does it serve any wisdom in having the Quran in the worldly heavens like it exists in the other heavens or the Preserved Tablet, as if it was not a guidance for us. There is no evident benefit in this kind of revelation or reporting of it. Furthermore, the exegetes added to this by narrating that all the heavenly books were revealed during Ramadan, such as their claim that all previous nations were obligated to fast during Ramadan. He stated:⁶² ”قَالَ الْأُسْتَاذُ الْإِمَامُ: وَلَمْ يَصِحَّ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَقْوَالِ“. Allah did not say that the Quran was revealed in its entirety during Ramadan, nor that it was revealed from the

⁶⁰ Kulaynī, Muhammad b. Ya‘qūb, Kitāb al Kāfī, Book: Virtues of the Quran, Chapter of Rare or Extraordinary Events, 2/629 (shiaonlinelibrary.com)

⁶¹ Ibn Bābawayh, Al-I‘taqādāt fī dīn al-Imāmiyyah, P. 83 (shiaonlinelibrary.com)

⁶² Muhammad ‘Abduh (d. 1905) was his teacher.

Preserved Tablet to the worldly heaven. Instead, He said afterward: "*But it is a noble Quran in a Preserved Slate*" (Quran 85:21-22), which means that it is preserved in a slate after its revelation. As for the Preserved Tablet they claim to be above the seven heavens, with specific dimensions and containing all of Allah's knowledge, there is no mention of it in the Quran. It is considered part of the unseen, and belief in it as part of the unseen should be in accordance with established and unaltered texts, without additions, omissions, or elaborations. In this context, we have no definitive text that requires belief in it.

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Dr. **Şubhī Şālih** (b. 1953) also disproved the Quranic Descent in two stages because he considers that it has not been proved through the Quran; he claims that the subject matter is related to the revelation of the Quran, so it is a divine secret which needs an absolute proof to be believed in. He states: "I am not convinced to accept three stages of the Quranic Descent: The first on the Preserved Tablet, the second on Bayt al-‘Izzah in the Heavens and the third on the Prophet (ﷺ) spasmodically according to the need. Although this stance has been backed up by narrations with authentic chains, yet foregoing three stages pertain to divine unseen secrets, therefore it is essential to be proven by recurrent testimony from the Quran or Sunnah. Mere authenticity of chain of narrators cannot be sufficient to establish belief in it, especially when it contradicts the Quranic statement."⁶⁴

ANALYSIS

Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and Bayt al-‘Izzah are the two celestial terms used in the Quranic texts with multiple as well as variant interpretations. Indeed, these are the matters of unseen and the authenticity of one's faith is not conditioned with believing in the accurate score. After analyzing the Islamic Scholarships pertaining to both the terms, following are the derivatives:

- Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is a Quranic term which has been interpreted through multiple and variant narrations. When the authenticity of certain narrations is proved, they should be given preference for acceptance, as multiplicity of interpretations causes confusions in the minds of readers. Moreover, if accepting them does not cause any impairment, there remains no room for ignoring them. Based on the narrations transmitted in the most authentic books of Hadiths, Şaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Şaḥīḥ Muslim and Sunan Nasā'ī (mentioned earlier under the title: "Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is located in

⁶³ Muhammad Rashīd Rezā, Tafsīr al-Manār, 2/ 130

⁶⁴ Şubhī Şālih, Mabāḥith fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, P. 51

the Seventh Heaven”), the most widely accepted opinion about the location of Bayt al-Ma‘mūr is its presence in the Seventh Heaven.

- The Descent of the Quran in two stages cannot be denied in either way, as there are multiple authentic narrative accounts that prove this stance. The first descent is from the Preserved Tablet to Bayt al-‘Izzah in the Worldly Heaven and the second descent is on the heart of the Prophet ﷺ. There is a historical sequence of narrations in various Exegeses, Books of Hadiths and Quranic Sciences while discussing the topics of Quranic Decent and Compilation of the Quran.
- Some scholars who negate the Quranic Descent on Bayt al-‘Izzah, despite accepting the chain of narrators authentic, demand an absolute evidence to proof the statement. It is to clarify that these narrations are considered to be Marfū‘ with authentic chain of narrators, which is a sufficient proof for the two stages of the Quranic Descent. *Allama Ibn Hajar* (d. 852 A.H.) stated: “**Marfū‘ Qawlī Hukmī** is that statement of a Ṣaḥābī, who did not learn from the Israelites, which neither pertains to Ijtihād nor to elaboration of any Obscure word; like the reports of the past e.g. Origin of Life, Accounts of the Prophets; or Prognostics, like warfare, afflictions, reports of Doomsday; and similarly narrating a particular reward or punishment for performing some task. It is legally called Marfū‘ because reporting them implies an informant, and there is no room for independent judgment. There was no one else other than the Prophet ﷺ to inform such reports to the Ṣaḥābah (May Allah be pleased with them); or only a few other than him ﷺ who used to narrate from the previous divine scriptures. Since the second option belongs to the Israelites, therefore must not be considered and it becomes implicit to consider the first option; whether the Ṣaḥābah listened directly from the Prophet ﷺ or through some channel”⁶⁵
- It has been verified through careful research that both the celestial terms Bayt al-Ma‘mūr and Bayt al-‘Izzah are two different places and it has been accepted by the Majority. The Islamic Scholars have not attempted to prove them a same place, except Shiite scholars who consider both the terms for a same place.

CONCLUSION

⁶⁵ Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalānī, *Nuzhat al-Nazar fi Tawḍīḥi Nukhbatul Fikr fi Muṣṭalaḥi Ahl al-Athar*, P. 106

- 1- Bayt al-Ma'mūr is a celestial place in the Seventh Heaven, viewed by the Prophet ﷺ, when he ascended to the Night Journey. It is a place exactly above the Ka'ba where 70,000 angels circumambulate daily and their turn is never repeated.
- 2- Bayt al-'Izzah is a celestial place in the First Heaven where the Quran was revealed all at once from the Preserved Tablet.
- 3- Bayt al-Ma'mūr and Bayt al-'Izzah are entirely two different places.

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