



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



RAHAT-UL-QULOOB

Bi-Annual, Trilingual (Arabic, English, Urdu) ISSN: (P) 2025-5021. (E) 2521-2869
Project of RAHATULQULOOB RESEARCH ACADEMY,
Jamiat road, Khiljiabad, near Pak-Turk School, link Spini road, Quetta, Pakistan.

Website: www.rahatulquloob.com

Approved by Higher Education Commission Pakistan

Indexing: » Australian Islamic Library, IRI (AIOU), Tahqeeqat, Asian Research Index, Crossref, Euro pub, MIAR, ISI, SIS.

TOPIC:

Sectarian Marriages: A critical analysis of religion and marital bond in a Pakistani Novel

AUTHOR:

1. Bushra Subhan, Lecturer and PHD scholar, in Qaid e Azam university, Islamabad, Pakistan.
2. Prof. Dr. Nosheen Zaheer, Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Quetta, Pakistan
Email: nosheenirma@gmail.com

How to Cite: Bushra Subhan, & Prof. Dr Nosheen Zaheer. (2022). ENGLISH: A Descriptive Study of Khamsa of Nizami: The Ascent of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to Heaven. *Rahat-Ul-Quloob*, 6(2), 10-18. <https://doi.org/10.51411/rahat.6.2.2022/413>

URL: <http://rahatulquloob.com/index.php/rahat/article/view/413>
Vol. 6, No.2 || July–December 2022 ||English - Page. 10-18
Published online: 06-08-2022

QR. Code



A Descriptive Study of *Khamsa of Nizami: The Ascent of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH to Heaven*

¹ Bushra Subhan ² Nosheen Zaheer

Abstract:

The miraculous journey of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is called Isra nd Miraj. The detail of this journey can be known from the Quran and Hadith. In history this miraculous event was captured by Muslim painters in their Mirajnamas. The one under consideration is khamsa Nizami;s Mirajnam which is a miniature that depicts this night voyage in calligraphic and as well as pictographic form. The calligraphic part includes one Persian peon consisting on nine couplets. While the pictography is influenced by Timurid and Chinese art. This mirajnama is symbolic representation of Islamic cosmology as well as the symbolic representation of every event of Isra and Miraj.

Key words: Mirajnama, Isra, Miraj, Islamic Cosmology.

“A particular calligrapher might have seemed the right one for the book at hand, while a certain artist’s special talents demanded that he and only he be chosen.”¹

The vital role of iconography can be traced in human history from time immemorial. This form of art can be comprehended without accompanied textual interpretation. A magnum opus of such art is Mirajnama that delivers the complete illustration of Prophet Muhammad’s ascension. The recognition of the *Mirajnama* can be traced from the time 1465 to 1850 AD, in Timurid and Safavid dynasties. Initially, *Mirajnama* comprised of one page but later on the Ottoman exemplified the profiles. The most distinguished illustrated manuscripts of *Mirajnama* were Nizami’s Khamsa (Quintet), Amir Khusraw Dihlavi’s Khamsa (Quintet), and Jami’s Haft Awrang (Seven Thrones).²

History of “*Mi’raj*” Images

The history of the Prophet’s ascension image can be traced in *Jami-al-Tawarikh* of Ill Khanid vizier Rashid al- Din made in Tabriz in 1306-7.³ Similarly, the diversity in the illustration of *The Remaining Signs of the Past Centuries* written by Al-Biruni can be seen by twenty-five illustrative versions.⁴ The first record of the painted *Mirajnama* can be traced in the period of the last Ill Khanid ruler Abu Saeed Khudabanda. The second Timurid *Mirajnama* in 1436-37 (840 AH) was painted in the period of Timurid ruler Shahrukh in Herat Khorasan.⁵

The Turkish dialect text on the Mirajnama was composed by Mir Hader and it was calligraphed by Malik Bakhshi. It was in “Uighur” script. If we peep into the mists of history, we shall realize that there have been a variety of representations in this regard; the most renowned illustrations in context are Nizami’s Khamsa (Quintet), Amir Khusraw Dihlavi’s Khamsa (quintet) and Jami’s haft Awrang (seven Thrones).⁶ These manuscripts integrated the images of the *Miraj*, as well folk stories and poems. The miniature discussed in this paper is taken from Khamsa Nizami.

Mirajnama of Khamsa of Nizami

Khamsa’s Mirajnama was painted in 1539-1543 under the patron of Safavid ruler Shah

Tahmas and it is attributed to Sultan Muhammad. While calligrapher of this miniature was done by shah Mahmud Nishapuri. It is due to brilliance of his script that he was known as *Zareen qalam* (Golden pen).⁷

It resembles the Persian style miniature which is usually a small painting on paper having figurative scenes and ornamental decoration. These decorations are painted in borders and panels that cover the starting point to the end. The style of illustration displays a double heritage one of them is Chinese while the other is Timurid. Both great dynasties were ruled on Persia before Safavid. The whole painting displays the utilization of bright colors with decorative sprinkled gold on borders and other places. The face images in the painting resemble with young Chinese features with cheerful expressions.⁸ This miniature mainly revolves around the objective description of Prophet Muhammad PBUH's journey from this materialistic world to the highest station of ascension. This spiritual celestial journey of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is described by Quran as *Isra* and *Miraj*. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH traveled this journey with his physical body with spiritual experiences. The *Isra*, first part of Prophet Muhammad's journey symbolizes his nocturnal voyage which starts from Mecca *masjid-al-haram* to an end to *masjid al-Aqsa*. The *Miraj* that comprises the second portion of this sacred journey includes all the events that take place from the *masjid al Aqsa* to the heavens.⁹



The Quran describes this celestial journey in *Surah Isra* as,
 “Glory be to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Place of Worship (*al-masjid al-haram*) to the Far Distant Place of Worship (*al-masjid al-Aqsa*). Whose precincts We have blessed, that We might show him Our signs. Lo! He alone is the Hearer, the Seer.”¹⁰

The detail of which can be read from the Hadith of Sahih Bukhari that:

“The Prophet PBUH said, "While I was in the house and was in the state between sleep and wakefulness, (an angel recognized me) as the man lying between two men. A golden tray full of wisdom and belief was brought to me and my body was cut open from the throat to the lower part of the abdomen and then my abdomen was washed with *Zam-Zam* water and (my heart was) filled with wisdom and belief. *Al-Buraq*, a white animal, smaller than a mule and bigger than a donkey was brought to me and I st out with Gabriel...”¹¹

The present study aims to cover both aspects of the *Mirajnama*, the pictographically explanations and also the calligraphic part. The calligraphic part of *Mirajnama* is primarily a Persian poem consisting on nine couplets. Each couplet describes particularly a different theme of *Miraj*. This Persian poetry of *Mirajnama* is translated by Dr. Sohail* in Urdu and which is very poetical in nature. The first couplet of the poem describes the revelation received by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by angel Gabriel (A.S) for this celestial journey. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was sleeping in the house of Umm e Hani when angel Gabriel (A.S) appeared with the message of Almighty Allah for this night voyage.¹²

چون محمد ز جبرئیل بھرا ز گو شکر دینیا گوشنواز
 جب محمد ﷺ نے جبرائیل سے رازدارانہ یہ پیام سامعہ نواز سنا

When Muhammad heard this melodious message from Gabriel confidentially

The second couplet describes the spiritual experience of complete submission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) after receiving the secret melodious message from Almighty Allah. This was the state when prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not question the possibility of this miraculous journey intellectually rather this secret discourse between Gabriel (A.S) and him encompasses the sense of his hearing.

دو اینسبر اما تنگینجور گوشتر احلقہ غلامیاد
 وہ سخن جس نے عقل ہوش کو مکمل کیا شنوائی کو غلامی کے حلقے میں لے لیا

The discourse that grasped the intellectual reasoning and encompassed the sense of hearing entirely.

* He is director of “Iqbal Academy”, Director of “Institute of Islamic culture”, chief editor of “ Al-Maarif “, founder editor of “ Riwayat”, editor of “ Iqbal Review” , Director of “ Centre of English Language and Professor of Social Sciences at University of Punjab Lahore.

The third couplet describes that Allah Almighty chooses two trustees for this treasury, one Gabriel (A.S) who is an angel and the second one is Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These two trustees are in the divine protection from the devil (jinn) and the demons (human).

زان سخن هوش رانمائی داد اینزدیو آزدیو مرد دور

اس خزینه امانت کے دو امین وہ (جبرائیل) شیطان (جنوں) سے اور یہ (محمد) شیاطین (الانس) سے بچ کر دور

The two trustees of this treasury, trust, he (Gabriel) away from the devil (jinn) and he (Muhammad) escaped from the demons (humans)

The fourth couplet further describes the duties of the two trustees of this message. The Gabriel (A.S) who is an angel of Allah, trusted with the responsibility of bringing revelation to all Prophet including Muhammad PBUH. While Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the last chosen Prophet of Allah for preaching, His last message to Human beings. These two honest messengers of Allah deliver the message of Allah without addition or subtraction.

آن امینخدا ایدر تزیلویا اینا میخرد بھقولود لیل

وہ نزول وحی میں خدا کا امین یہ قول و دلیل سے امین خرد

The (Gabriel (A.S)) who is the trustworthy of God's revelation and the receiver (Muhammad (S.A.W)) who is the genius trustee

The fifth couplet describes that how Gabriel (A.S) precisely delivers the message of Allah to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that tonight he will be taken to *masjid i Aqsa* by a miraculous animal *Buraq*. And in *Masjid i Aqsa* he will be the one under whose *imamnt* all the prophets will perform their prayers. And after this he will be taken to heaven for his meeting with his beloved God, Allah almighty.

آن رساند آنچه بود شرط پیامو، مشنید آنچه بود سر کلام

اس (جبرائیل) نے پیغام خداوندی ٹھیک ٹھیک پہنچا دیا اور اس نے جو راز سخن تھا وہ ہی سنا

He (Gabriel (A.S)) conveyed the message of God precisely and he (Muhammad (S.A.W)) grasped the actual secrecy of the discourse.

The sixth couplet describes that Almighty Allah bestows on Prophet Muhammad the blessing of the material and spiritual treasures. These blessing can be summed up in the special closeness of Prophet Muhammad PBUH to Allah almighty that Quran describes as *قَاب قَوْسینِوَادِئِ* *فَكَانَ* which gives Prophet Muhammad the status of seal of final desire of Allah.

در شب تیرہا آسرا جنمیر شد ز مہر مراد نقش پذیر

اندھیری رات میں وہ چمکتا چراغ مہر مراد سے نقش پذیر ہوا

In the dark night, the illuminating lamp (Prophet Muhammad) appeared, who is the seal of the final desire (of God).

The seventh couplet describes the superb submission of Prophet Muhammad PBUH to his lord as before this miraculous journey Prophet Muhammad PBUH started the preaching of the last revealed religion to the people of *Makkah* where he faced great opposition in the form of boycott. But instead of so much hardship he did not give up rather he visited the valley of *taif* to invite people to the right path but he was tortured and ridiculed by the mob. Here in this situation Prophet Muhammad PBUH supplicated Allah Almighty to accept his best slavery destined by Allah for him. The translation of this *dua* is as:

“O Allah! To you I complain of my weakness, of my helplessness and my insignificance before men. O most Merciful of Merciful. You are the Lord of helpless and you are my Lord! Into whose hands would you entrust me? Into the hands of a remote person who would scowl at me, or to an enemy who You have given control over my affairs? If you are not angry with me, I donot care; but your clemency is wider for me. I seek refuge with light of Your Countenance, whereby all darkness is illuminated, and of which all affairs are ordered in this world as well as in the Hereafter, from (any possibility) that you should send down your anger or that I should incur your wrath. It is for me to return to You until You are well satisfied! There is no means nor might save with You.”¹³

گردن از طوق آن کمند نتافت طوق زر جز چمنینشاید یافت

اس کمند (وجی) کے [چمندے میں سے گردن نہ موڑی کہ ایسا سہری طوق قسمت سے ملتا ہے

He (Muhammad) did not refuse this superb submission as it is the blessed slavery that rarely destined (by God).

The eighth couplet describes the *Buraq*, the animal Prophet Muhammad PBUH rode from *Masjid al Haram* to *Masjid al Aqsa*. In Sahih Muslim “it is narrated on the authority of Anas b. Malik that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: I was brought *al-Buraq* Who is an animal white and long, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, who would place his hoof a distance equal to the range of version. I mounted it and came to the Temple (*Bait Maqdis* in Jerusalem).”¹⁴

برق کردار بربراق نشست تازیش زیر و تاز یانہ بہ دست

وہ بجلی سے کردار والا براق پر بیٹھا عربی گھوڑا پاؤں تلے اور چابک ہاتھ میں

He (Muhammad) the power-driven is sitting on the lightning-mount, an Arabian horse under his feet and a whip in his hand

The ninth couplet describes the ascension of Prophet Muhammad PBUH symbolically with the flight of *keklik*, for the eternal love of Prophet Muhammad PBUH and his lord.

چون در آورد در عقاب پای کبک علوی خرام جست ز جای

جب عقابیت (شاپینی) میں قدم دھرا او نچاڑنے والے (آسمان پرواز) چکور نے اپنی جگہ سے جست لگائی

When they ready to fly as the eagle, the *keklik chukor* jumped from his place (the journey of eternal love starts)

The detailed account of the calligraphic part of the *Mirajnama* demands the illustration of the pictographically part of it. The miniature systematically reveals the Islamic cosmological ideology in sufi perspective as: “*nasut* (physical universe), *malakut* (dominion of angels including Bait al-Mamur), *jabarut* (dominion of Lauh Mahfuz (the Tablet), *Sidrahal-Muntaha* (Lote tree), *Throne* (Arsy), *Footstool* (Kursy), *Lahut* (angels that carry the throne and Muqorrabun – the near ones) and *Hahut*.”¹⁵ The miniature reflects the *nasut* (physical world) and *malakut*. The *nasut* is symbolically represented by expressing every element of the physical world like air, water, earth, moon, clouds, night and sky. The earth appears circular with contented sky- blue color which demonstrates its significant place in the universe from where Holy Prophet PBUH went for *Miraj* and then arrived backed with spiritual treasure for his followers. This sacred night has been shown through the bright yellow moon. Moreover, the moon is within the circle of the earth that shows the actual location of the moon above the earth. The position of earth and moon in the miniature is signifying Prophet Muhammad PBHU’s *Miraj* by leaving the physical entities behind. The sky is also covers with dragon shaped clouds that also reveals the influence of Chinese art on this miniature.

The *alam e mualqt* is shown in the miniature by sketching different type of angels with different posture and gestures with variety of objects carrying by them. Some angels are holding lights while other are carrying different trays having different ornamental gifts for Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Allama Ismail Haqqi in his tafseer *Rooh-ul-Bean* writes about these gifts as:

“Some said that angels have never visited *sidra-tul-muntaha* without having accolades prizes. They spread such presents on *sidra-tul-muntaha* with full of “*israr-o-Ramuz*”. Thus, they also carried different types of accolades for presenting to the Allah’s beloved prophet Muhammad (PBUH) at the event of *Miraj* in obeying to God Almighty’s will to assign the highest level of the station of proximity to God (*Muqam-ul -qurba*) with his messenger.”¹⁶

The Islamic cosmology describes the distinct shape of angles. In the Quran the God articulates: “[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, [Who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.”¹⁷

The miniature discloses the Islamic cosmological concept of angles that angels are made up of light (*noor*).

In Hadith “A’isha reported that Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: The Angels were born out of light and the *Jinns* were born out of the spark of fire and Adam was born as he has been defined (in the Qur’an) for you (i. e. he is fashioned out of clay).”¹⁸ Thus the physically distinct *noore* angels with wings are depicted in the miniature is representing the Islamic concept of angels.

The connecting point that links the *nasut* (physical world) to *Mulakut* the metaphysical world is Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Thus, Prophet Muhammad PBUH is the pivotal

crux and the focal point in the whole painting which symbolizes the spiritual life as a principal model for Islamic cosmological connecting point of physical and metaphysical world. The miniaturist doesn't depict the face features of Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the visual depiction of Prophet Muhammad PBUH is a controversial issue in different Muslim school of thoughts (*Hanafī, Maliki, Shafai, Hanabal* and *Shia*).¹⁹ This seems to be the reason that miniaturist symbolizes *nor e Muhammadi* in the form of flame of light. The green dress of Prophet Muhammad PBUH symbolizes the spiritual inculcation of man in the physical world with the help of *lataif*, the inner faculties or light points in human body. These *lataif* can be activated by mediation and *tazkiya nafs*. These *lataif* are named as *qalb* (heart), *Ruh* (spirit), *Nafs* (soul), *Sirr* (conscience), *Khafī* (mystery) and *Akhfā* (Arcanum). In *Naqshbandi* order the green color is associated with *Akhfa* which is situated at the center of the chest. It is effective against the spiritual diseases of prudence and arrogance. This *sufi* order further elaborate that "the lights and beneficence of these *lataif* came from our Illustrious master the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. These are descended in green color from the fifth Heaven."²⁰ The miniaturist symbolizes the twelve folds on the headgear (*Qizilbash*) of Prophet Muhammad PBUH to the twelve imams of the *Shiaism*. As the *Qizilbash* were the influential *Shias* living in the Ottoman state. (r.1524-1576).²¹

In the *Mirajnama*, Prophet Muhammad PBUH is mounted on *Buraq* in the center of the canvas. The depiction of *Buraq* in *Mirajnam* shares the similar account of hadith except his human face and long ears. *Buraq* is the symbolic explanation of the Prophet PBUH nocturnal voyage from *masjid al haram* to *Masjid al Aqsa*. It covers all the events which Holy Prophet PBUH experienced but is not mentioned in *Mirajnama*. These events include the account of *Ahadith* from *masjid e haram* to *Masjid e Aqsa*. During his voyage Prophet Muhammad PBUH performed prayers at different places and on each place Gabriel A.S. asked Prphet that he knew where he was performing prayers? On negation Gabriel told Prophet that first place where he performed prayer was *tayba*, the place where he will migrate from *Makkah*. The Second place was *Madyan*, the three of Musa A.S. Thirdly the name of place was mountain of *Sina*, where Allah addressed Musa (A.S)."²² During his journey the Prophet PBUH noticed a fragrant wind and enquired Gabriel (A.S) about it. The Gabriel told Prophet PBUH the story of the servant of Firwan's daughter who believed in one lord. She was punished by the Firwan for her monotheistic belief and he threw her with her children in boiling liquid.²³ In the miniature the *Buraq's* front foot steps are forwarding towards up which is the indication of that the *Miraj*, the second part of the journey is on ward. While its back steps are among the skies and ready for leaving the place of clouds indicates the end of *Isra*, the first part of the Voyage. It is worth mentioning here that in *Mirajnama* the pictorial representation of the other prophets is totally lacking.

In the end it could be concluded in the words of Welch as: "If this awesome painting is valid evidence, Sultan Muhammad had experienced such a vision. It is spiritual, ascending forms, dragon like wisp of cloud, flapping angel wings, and electrifying bursts

of flame catch us up in the Prophet's flight. Nevertheless, it maintains contact with Shah Tahmasp's court—for the Prophet himself wears the Safavid turban, and the angels and *Buraq* are dressed for court."²⁴

References

- ¹Stuart Cary Welch. Persian paintings. New York: George Braziller, 1976.
- ²Christiane Gruber, the timurid "book of ascension" (micrajnama): a study of text and image in a pan-asian context. patrimonio, 2008, p.255.
- ³David Talbot Rice. The illustrations to the world history of rashid al-din. ed. Basil Gray. Edinburgh University Press, 1976, p. 110
- ⁴Christiane Gruber. "the ilkhanid book of ascension." (2010): 27-28., c.f. Christian Gruber. , Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God, 2014, p. 2014.
- ⁵C.J.Gruber, the timurid "book of ascension" (micrajnama): a study of text and image in a pan-asian context. patrimonio, 2008, p.255.
- ⁶Thompson, J. (2003-2004). Hunt for paradise, court art of Safavid Iran. (S. Ed.) New York: Asia Society Museum, pp.117-118.
- ⁷A. Welch, Art in Iran. Encyclopedia Iranica, 11, 1986, pp. 620-627.
- ⁸J. Rawson, Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon. British Museum Publications, 1984.
- ⁹Christiane Gruber, the timurid "book of ascension" (micrajnama): a study of text and image in a pan-asian context. patrimonio, 2008,
- ¹⁰Al Quran, 17:1.
- ¹¹Imam Bukhari, M. Muhsin Khan (translator), Sahih Bukhari, (Vol. 4). Chapter 54, H: 429, 1st Edition, edited by Mika'il al-Almany, 2009.
- ¹²Hazrat Qazi Sanullah Pani Pati (writer), Maulana Abdud Daim al Jalali (translator), Tafseer Mazhari, Volume 4, Maktaba Ludhyani, Karachi, n.d., p.326
- ¹³Ibn e Hasham (writer), Abdus Salam M. Harun (translator), Seerta ibn e Hasham, Cairo, Al-Falah Foundation for Translation, Publication and Distribution, 2000, p.80.
- ¹⁴Imam Muslim, Abdul Hamid Siddiqui (Translator), Mokhtaser Sahi Muslim, Chapter 75, Book 001, H: 0309, Edited by Mika'il al-Almany, 1st Edition, 2009. p.139
- ¹⁵Shahidan Radiman, On Islamic Cosmological Principles, East Asia & South East Asia Conference on Philosophy of Science, ILIM, 5-6 Nov. 2014, p.3.
- ¹⁶Ismail Haqqi, Rooh ul Bean. Karachi, Maktabah Ghosia, 2007, p. 179.
- ¹⁷Al Quran 35: 1.
- ¹⁸Imam Muslim, Abdul Hamid Siddiqui (Translator), Mokhtaser Sahi Muslim, Bab Zuhd, Chapter 12, H: 7134. Edited by Mika'il al-Almany, 1st Edition, 2009, p. 1778.
- ¹⁹P. C. Michellin, The Story of a Picture Shiite Depictions of Muhammad. Popular Piety, 2006, p.17.
- ²⁰A. M. Awan, Treasures of the Heart. (N. Malik, Trans.) Chakwal: Dar ul Irfan, 2013, p.23.
- ²¹Yasin Arslantas, Depicting the Other: Qizilbash Image in the 16th Century Ottoman Historiography, Masters Thesis, Department of History, İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University Ankara, July 2013, p.51
- ²²Sayyid Muhammad ibn Alawi Al Malki (writer), Gibril Fouad Haddad (translator), The Prophet's Night Journey and Heavenly Ascent, 4th Edition, Turkey, Aqsa Publication, 2006, p.6
- ²³Ibid, p. 8.
- ²⁴S. C. Welch, Persian Paintings. New York: George Braziller, 1976, p.95