145405 - When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) met his fellow prophets in Bayt al-Maqdis, he met their souls, without their bodies

the question

When the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was taken on the night journey to Bayt al-Maqdis, he led the prophets in prayer. Were they brought back to life from their graves for that prayer?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

it is proven in the authentic Sunnah that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) led his fellow prophets in prayer during his journey to Bayt al-Maqdis.

1. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "...And I remember when I was among a group of the Prophets, and I saw Musa standing and praying. He was a slim man with curly hair, as if he was one of the men of Shanu'ah. And I saw `Isa ibn Maryam standing and praying, and the closest in resemblance to him is 'Urwah ibn Mas`ud ath-Thaqafi. And I saw Ibrahim standing and praying, and the closest in resemblance to him is your companion – meaning himself –. The time for prayer came and I led them in prayer."

Narrated by Muslim, 172.

2. It was narrated that Ibn `Abbas said: When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) entered al-Masjid al-Aqsa, he stood and prayed, then he turned, and turned again,

and saw the prophets all praying with him.

Narrated by Ahmad, 4/167. There are some reservations about its isnad, but the report quoted above corroborates it.

II.

The scholars differed as to whether this prayer occurred before the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was taken up to heaven or after he came back down. What is more likely to be correct is the former.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

`Iyad said: It may be that he led all the prophets in prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis, then those of them regarding whom it is mentioned that he saw them in the heavens were taken up, or it may be that he led them in prayer after he came back down from heaven and they came down also...

What is more likely to be the case is that he led them in prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis before he was taken up.

Fat-h al-Bari, 7/209.

III.

The Muslim is required to believe that the life in al-barzakh [the period between death and the Day of Resurrection] is not subject to the same laws as life in this world. If the martyrs are alive during this time [al-barzakh] with their Lord in a perfect sense, then the prophets are alive in a more perfect sense. Hence the Muslim must believe in this life, without discussing how it is or what its true nature is, except on the basis of the revealed texts.

Allah, may He be Exalted, says regarding the life of the martyrs:

{And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision

Rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve

They receive good tidings of favor from Allah and bounty and [of the fact] that Allah does not allow the reward of believers to be lost } [Al `Imran 3:169-171].

It was narrated that Anas ibn Malik said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The prophets are alive in their graves, and they pray.”

Narrated by Abu Ya`la in his *Musnad*, 3425; classed as authentic by the commentators thereon.

Shaykh al-Albani also classed it as authentic in *Silsilat al-Ahadith as-Sahihah*, 621.

In *`Awn al-Ma`bud*, 3/261, it says:

Ibn Hajar al-Makki said: What the report affirms, that the prophets have a kind of life by means of which they worship and pray in their graves, in addition to their having no need of food and drink, like the angels, is something concerning which there is no doubt. Al-Bayhaqi wrote a book about that...

The text from the Book of Allah about the martyrs states that they are alive and given provision, and life in their case is connected to their bodies, so how about the prophets and messengers? End quote.

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Moreover, you should understand that the life that is affirmed for the prophets (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them) in this hadith is the life of al-barzakh, which is not the same as life in this world at all, hence we must believe in it without comparing it to the life of this world, or trying to discuss how it is, or likening it to what we know of the life of this world.

This is the attitude that the believer must adopt regarding this matter: believing in what is mentioned in the hadith, without adding anything by way of comparison or personal opinion, as

the innovators do, some of whom went so far as to claim that the life of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in his grave is life in a real sense, saying that he eats and drinks and has marital relations with his wives! Rather it is the life of al-barzakh, the nature of which no one knows except Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

As-Silsilat as-Sahihah, 2/120.

See also the answer to question no. 26117.

IV.

When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) met his fellow prophets, did he meet them body and soul, or their souls only, and not their bodies? There are two scholarly views.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Some people wondered about how he saw the prophets in the heavens, even though their bodies are in their graves on earth. The response is that their souls appeared in the form of their bodies, or their bodies were brought on that night so that they could meet the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), as an honour to him.

Fat-h al-Bari, 7/210.

What is most likely to be the case is that he met their souls which appeared in the form of their bodies, with the exception of `Isa (peace be upon him), as he was taken up body and soul. And there is a difference of opinion regarding Idris (peace be upon him), but the more correct view is that he is like his fellow prophets, and not like `Isa (peace be upon him).

So the bodies of the prophets (peace be upon them) are in their graves, and their souls are in heaven, and what Allah, may He be Exalted, decreed for them of meeting the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was only for their souls which appeared in the form of their real bodies. This is what Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, al-Hafiz ibn Hajar and others thought was most likely to be the case.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to [the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)] seeing Musa (peace be upon him) and other prophets on the night of the Mi`raj in heaven, as he saw Adam in the lowest heaven, and he saw Yahya and `Isa in the second heaven, Yusuf in the third heaven, Idris in the fourth heaven, Harun in the fifth heaven, Musa in the sixth heaven and Ibrahim in the seventh heaven – or vice versa – he saw only their souls, which appeared in the form of their bodies.

One of the scholars said: perhaps he saw the same bodies that are buried in their graves, but this is not a credible view.

Majmu` al-Fatawa, 4/328.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What he saw in heaven of the prophets (peace be upon them) was only their souls, except `Isa, for he was taken up to heaven physically.

Fat-h al-Bari, 2/113.

This is the favoured view of Abul-Wafa' ibn `Aqil, as al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar narrated from him. But what appears to be the case is that it is the view of al-Hafiz himself. He refuted the view of some of his shaykhs who favoured the other view, as he (may Allah have mercy on him) said.

There was a difference of opinion regarding the state of the prophets when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) met them: were their bodies taken up to meet the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) on that night? Or were the souls residing in the places where the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw them, and their souls appeared in the form of their bodies, as Abul-Wafa' ibn `Aqil stated? Some of our shaykhs favoured the first view, and quoted as evidence the report that was soundly narrated by Muslim from Anas, according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "I saw Musa on the night on which I was taken on the Night Journey (Isra'), standing and praying in his grave." This indicates that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was travelling on his

night journey when he passed by him.

I say: that is not necessarily the case; rather it may be that his soul is connected to his body on earth, and that is why he is able to pray when his soul is residing in heaven.

Fat-h al-Bari, 7/212.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) explained that it is not possible for the body of Musa (peace be upon him) or anyone else to move from one place to another (when they are in their graves); rather this applies to the soul. Hence when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) saw Musa (peace be upon him) praying in his grave, then he saw him in Bayt al-Maqdis, then in the sixth heaven, it was only his soul that moved, not his body.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is well known that the bodies of the prophets are in their graves, except for `Isa and Idris. If Musa was standing and praying in his grave, then he saw him in the sixth heaven within a short time, this is something that cannot happen to the body.

Majmu` al-Fatawa, 5/526, 527.

Shaykh Salih Al ash-Shaykh (may Allah preserve him) said:

The more correct of the two views, in my opinion, is that this refers to the souls, not the bodies, except in the case of `Isa (peace be upon him). That is because when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) met the other prophets and they prayed with him (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), either they prayed with him physically, meaning that their bodies had been collected from their graves to meet him, then they were returned to the graves and their souls remained in heaven,

or it was their souls only, because he met them in heaven.

It is well known that the only one who was taken up alive to heaven is `Isa (peace be upon him), and the idea that they were taken up body and soul to heaven on a permanent basis, and their

bodies are not in their graves, is an idea for which there is no evidence; rather there is a great deal of evidence to the contrary, namely that the prophets are in their graves and will remain there until the onset of the Hour.

The fact that they died and were buried means that their bodies are on earth, and this is what is usually the case.

As for those who say otherwise, and say that this is something unique to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), that the other prophets were resurrected for him so that he could lead them in prayer and then meet them in heaven,

there must be clear evidence for this unique case, and as I mentioned, after examining the issue, the conclusion is that the evidence contradicts that view.

Whatever the case, these are two scholarly views among both the earlier and later scholars.

Sharh al-`Aqidat at-Tahawiyyah, tape no. 14.

And Allah knows best.