

Validation of the Chain of Transmission (*Sanad*) and Content (*Matn*) of the *Mi'rāj* Traditions in the Exegesis *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*

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Introduction

Although the principle of the Prophet's Ascension (*Mi'rāj*), affirmed by explicit Quranic verses and *Mutawātir* traditions, is unanimously accepted by all al-Muslim scholars and cannot be rejected or rationalized away, the diversity of discussions regarding its nature and details (the "how and what") has led to various viewpoints, exegeses, and interpretations, thus making it a controversial subject that is sometimes shrouded in ambiguity. One of the exegetical works that mentions a significant volume of traditions on this topic—some of which are contradictory—is the *Nūr al-Thaqalayn* exegesis. The differences within these traditions have led to the creation of various perspectives and, consequently, diverse questions and ambiguities about the *Mi'rāj*. Examples include the number of times the Ascension occurred, the number of obligatory daily prayers imposed during the *Mi'rāj*, and the manner of seeing God. Therefore, the present research, while extracting the *Mi'rāj* traditions cited under the relevant verses in this exegesis, undertakes a complete evaluation and subsequent validation of their authority.

Materials and Methods

Given that the Prophet(pbuh)'s *Mi'rāj* is a crucial topic addressed in religious sources, especially tradition exegeses; this study utilizes a library-based, analytical, and critical method to evaluate the aforementioned traditions in the tradition exegesis *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*. The process began by extracting the traditions cited under the relevant verses in the exegesis and categorizing them thematically. Subsequently, the primary source of each tradition in earlier works was investigated, followed by a chain of transmission (*sanad*) and content (*matn*) analysis, relying on credible *Rijāl* (biographical) sources and other relevant texts.

Results and Findings

The analysis indicates that *Huwāyzī*, regarding the vision of God, the quality of the *Mi'rāj*, and the obligation of daily prayers, selected traditions that are generally consistent and authoritative in terms of chain of transmission (*sanad*) and content

(*matn*). However, regarding the number of times the *Mi'rāj* occurred, he cited two sets of traditions. Based on specific criteria, the traditions indicating the *Mi'rāj* occurred twice are preferred. Conversely, the traditions he cited concerning the number of daily prayers are disputable and subject to criticism regarding their chain and content. Another category of traditions he included within the *Mi'rāj* discussions relates to the designation of Imam Ali (as) as the Prophet's successor. Although these traditions do not have a fully reliable chain, their content is deemed authentic.

Conclusion

The *Mi'rāj* traditions mentioned in *Nūr al-Thaqalayn* include those that explain the number of times the Ascension occurred, the quality of the event, and the incidents that took place during it. Among these incidents are the vision of God, the obligation and determination of the number of daily prayers, and the designation of Imam Ali (as) as the Prophet's successor. *Huwayzī*'s approach in citing these themes is inconsistent: for issues like the vision of God, the quality of the occurrence, and the obligation of prayer during the *Mi'rāj*, he cited traditions that are reliable in terms of *sanad* and *matn*. However, concerning themes such as the total number of daily prayers, unreliable traditions are observed, which are weak in terms of *sanad* and *matn* and are questionable. Nevertheless, he cited both sets of traditions regarding the number of times the *Mi'rāj* occurred. This divergence in his approach to citing traditions, in a way, demonstrates his *Ijtihād* (independent judgment) in selecting traditions. Furthermore, this research highlights which topics related to the *Mi'rāj* are areas of difference and contention within Shi'a thought and which are matters of consensus. Simultaneously, this contention is not of a nature that necessitates dismissing all traditions; rather, by applying criteria for preference—especially the preference based on *sanad* and *matn* validity—some traditions are prioritized over others.

Keywords: Tradition Validation, *Nūr al-Thaqalayn*, *Mi'rāj*, Designation of the Prophet's Successor, *Mi'rāj* and the Determination of the Number of Prayer Units (*Rak'ahs*), Obligation of Prayer.