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The Thunder

Allah's House was tainted with the lingering effects of the Satanic Verses so Muhammad needed a new Qiblah - a new direction to go and a new object to exploit. He needed to replace the Ka'aba with a more credible shrine. So the wannabe prophet conjured up one of the most preposterous lies ever uttered in the name of religion. He said that he was flown on a winged steed to the Temple in Jerusalem. There, he was welcomed triumphantly by all the former scriptural big shots. They were waiting for him, assembled in a solemn conclave of prophet solidarity.

His imagination running wild, Muhammad leapt from the Temple Mount skywards, ascending from one heaven to another, finding himself in the presence of Allah, who promptly dismissed him, demanding that Muslims moon him fifty times a day. Hallucination over, Muhammad awoke the following morning in the house of his late uncle Talib. The vision still dancing vividly before his eyes, he cried out to his niece, **"Omm Hani, during the night I prayed in the Temple of Jerusalem."** She begged him not to expose such frivolity to the Quraysh, but he persisted.

Ishaq:184 **"Umm, Abu Talib's daughter, said: "The Apostle went on no journey except while he was in my house. He slept in my home that night after he prayed the final night prayer. A little before dawn he woke us, saying, 'O Umm, I went to Jerusalem.' He got up to go out and I grabbed hold of his robe and laid bare his belly. I pleaded, 'O Muhammad, don't tell the people about this for they will know you are lying and will mock you.' He said, 'By Allah, I will tell them.' I told a negress slave of mine, 'Follow him and listen.'"**

As the story spread, Muhammad's fledgling cadre of followers abandoned him. The disillusionment was confirmed by Katib al Wackidi, **"Upon hearing this many became renegades who had prayed and joined Islam."** The Sira says: *Ishaq:183* **"Many Muslims gave up their faith. Some went to Abu Bakr and said, 'What do you think of your friend now? He alleges that he went to Jerusalem last night and prayed there and came back to Mecca.' Bakr said that they were lying about the Apostle. But they told him that he was in the mosque at this very moment telling the Quraysh about it. Bakr said, 'If he says so then it must be true. I believe him. And that is more extraordinary than his story at which you boggle.' Then Allah sent down a Qur'an surah concerning those who left Islam for this reason: 'We made the vision which we showed you only, a test for men. We put them in fear, but it only adds to their heinous error.'" [Qur'an 13:33]** Once again, Muhammad flips out and it's everyone's fault but his own. And while it's not surprising anymore, the 13th surah was handed down in Medina, not Mecca.

What's surprising is that the "Thunder" surah actually rebukes Muhammad's claim of a miraculous journey. After saying, *Qur'an 76:4* **"Those who deny will wear collars and chains, yokes (of servitude) tying their hands to their necks; they will be the inmates of Hell.... They will witness Our (many) exemplary punishments! Verily, your Lord is severe in retribution,"** we are told that Muhammad was unable to perform a miracle. *Qur'an 13:7* **"The unbelievers say, 'Why was no sign**

or miracle sent down to him by his Lord.' But you are only the bearer of bad news - of warnings." The admission is repeated: *Qur'an 13:27* **"The unbelievers say, 'How is it that no sign miracle was sent down to him by his Lord.' Say, 'God leads whosoever He wills astray.'"** There were deceptions but no miracles.

The Islamic god was not only powerless, he was schizophrenic. *Qur'an 13:30* **"They do not believe in Ar-Rahman. Tell them, 'He is my Lord. There is no other ilah but He. In Him I have placed my trust.'"** The dark lord says to those who are mocking his prophet: *Qur'an 13:32* **"Many an Apostle have they mocked before you; but I seized them. How awful was My punishment then! ...The unbelievers plot, but for them is torment in this life and a far more severe torture in Hell."** Then the spirit of the Qur'an brags, **"He sends thunderbolts and smites whom He pleases."** Imagine worshipping a god this nasty.

Suggesting that he wasn't always impotent, Ar-Rahman boasts: *Qur'an 13:38* **"It was not for any Apostle to come up with a miracle or sign unless it was granted by Our permission."** But he was capricious and forgetful. **"For every age there is a Book revealed. Ar-Rahman abrogates, blots out, or confirms (whatever He wants)."** And we better watch out: *Qur'an 13:41* **"Do they not see Us advancing from all sides into the land (of the disbelievers), reducing its borders (by giving it to believers in war victories)? (When) Allah dooms there is none who can postpone His doom. Sure, they devised their plots, but We are the best schemers."** But his con didn't fool very many: *Qur'an 13:43* **"Yet the disbelievers say: 'You are not a Messenger.' Tell them: 'This Scripture is sufficient witness between me and you.'"**

Now that we know there were no miracles, and that these troubled words are the lone witness to the validity of Muhammad's claims, let's try to make sense of his fictitious journey. As always, it will be difficult to tell where the prophet's imagination subsided and that of the Muslim sages began. For example, when questioned by the Quraysh, we are told that the angel-less and miracle-less messenger convinced his spirit friend to erect a model of Jerusalem in their midst. As further evidence of the Night Journey, Muhammad said that while whizzing over a caravan the noise of his flying steed frightened a camel to death. Upon returning to Mecca, someone is said to have confirmed that a camel had indeed been anxious. It served as proof.