

NURSI AND IQBAL ON *MI'RĀJ*: THE METAPHYSICAL DIMENSION OF THE PROPHET'S ASCENSION

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Abstract: Said Nursi (1877-1960) and Muḥammad Iqbal (1877-1938) constructed their prophetologies in light of *'aql* (reason), but they also considered the mystical and metaphysical sides of prophethood and Prophet Muḥammad as a major component of their prophetologies. Nursi's and Iqbal's approaches depict a thought-provoking modus towards *nubuwwa* (prophethood) in a highly rationalised climate. This paper critically examines Nursi's and Iqbal's discussions of the metaphysical dimension of Prophet Muḥammad's ascension, known as the *mi'rāj*. Nursi and Iqbal respond to the rationalists using *'aql* and *kashf* (spiritual unveiling) without compromising spirituality. Their choice of genre, methods and arguments in defending the spiritual dimensions of *mi'rāj*, as a second aspect, of *nubuwwa* will be examined. This paper highlights the creative use and interplay of rational and metaphysics in Nursi's and Iqbal's works (particularly *Ayat al-Kubra* and *Javidnama*) as a way to respond to a rationalised climate, but also to retain the spiritual aspects of their faith and *mi'rāj* in their writings. Both saw the limitations of *'aql* and therefore relied on the *kashf* of the literature and poetry to communicate their thoughts. Nursi's and Iqbal's discussions on the *mi'rāj* not only depict their contribution to the metaphysical aspects of prophethood, but also illustrate the variance of Muslim scholars' responses to rationalism and prophethood in the 20th century. The effect of Nursi's and Iqbal's contributions to the continuation of a belief and tradition of Islamic faith is staggering proof of their intellectual and spiritual capacity to defend an aspect of faith with *'aql* and *kashf*, and appeal to the heart and spirit.

Keywords: *Miraj, Javidnama, Risale-i nur, Said Nursi, Muhammad Iqbal, mirajnama, prophethood, Prophet Muhammad*

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