

## The Splitting of the Chest

By Mufti Adam Koya, *Director & Teacher, JQU*

The splitting of the chest is one of the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ, and this incident occurred four times in his life.

The first time occurred during the Prophet ﷺ's childhood when he was four years old. Once, the Prophet ﷺ was in the wild when two angels, Jibreel and Mikaeel عليهما السلام, came to him in human form, wearing white clothes and bringing with them a gold container filled with Zamzam water. They split his chest and took out his blessed heart. They then split his heart and took out one or two pieces of dried blood from it, saying that this was the portion of Shaytan. The angels placed the heart in the gold container, washed it with Zamzam, then put it back in the chest and placed a seal between his shoulders. This incident is established through several different narrations, such as in *Fath al-Baari* (6: 629), in the *Chapter of the Seal of Prophets* as well as *Mustadrak Hakim* (2: 616). There are six other narrations that establish this incident, which are found in *Musnad Ahmad*, *al-Zurqani*, *Tabaqat ibn Sa'd* and others, all of which are narrated through different chains that support the sound narration.

The second time was when the Prophet ﷺ was 10 years old. This narration is found in *Fath al-Baari* (17: 524). Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported this narration, and it is mentioned by *al-Zurqani* (1: 183). It is also found in *Sahih Muslim*, narrated by Anas رضي الله عنه, as cited in *Fath al-Baari* (1: 582).

The third report is when the Prophet ﷺ received prophethood. This is narrated by Aishah رضي الله عنها in the *Musnad* of Abu Dawud al-Tayaalisi (215), *Dalaail Abi Naeem* (1: 69), and Hafiz relates it in *Fath al-Baari* (8:625; 17: 524).

The fourth time occurred during the journey of ascension, or *Mi'raj*, which is related in *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan an-Nasai*, and others on the authority of Abu Dhar رضي الله عنه. This narration is mass-transmitted and well-known. All four occurrences of the chest splitting are established through sound, authentic, and accepted narrations. Some narrations mention that when the Prophet ﷺ's age was 20, his chest was split as well, but this narration is not sound.

The splitting of the chest, the blessed heart being taken out, washed, and all things related to it are all supernatural and must be accepted by necessity. Viewing it all to be literal is also integral. Understanding it as metaphorical for the heart being convinced, as some contemporary historians opine, is incorrect. Understanding it in its literal sense is the correct view, as Hafiz ibn Hajr, Allamah Tibi, Allamah Suyuti and others say. If the meaning were the heart being convinced, then this would not be something specific to the Prophet ﷺ, instead, the Companions, scholars, and righteous all also had this

quality. The splitting of the heart is a miracle only for the Prophet ﷺ, and the Companions have relayed that they themselves have seen the stitches on the Prophet's chest.

The scholars mention many hidden wisdoms behind the splitting of the chest in detail. In the splitting of the chest, which occurred during the Prophet's childhood, the black portion of the heart that causes humans to sin was removed. The Prophet's heart was purified so that no traces of disobedience remained. By the heart being washed by ice, the heat of sin was removed, the impact of anger was removed, the thought of being higher than others (that occurs during anger) was removed, and humility and humbleness were instilled along with many other changes that the scholars mention. The seal placed after the splitting of the heart is akin to something of value being sealed to protect it. The Prophet ﷺ, whose heart was filled with knowledge and wisdom, had a seal placed between his shoulder blades so that nothing was lost. This seal of Prophethood was from birth, although some scholars are of the opinion that it was placed after the splitting of the chest. However, the first opinion is more sound. The way to reconcile the narrations and opinions is that the seal of Prophethood was present since birth but was renewed after the splitting of the chest. From the above, we can understand that the splitting of the chest did in fact happen and was one of the great miracles of our beloved Prophet ﷺ.