

Question:

Assalaamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu,

I hope this message finds you well In sha' Allah. A few months ago, one of my high-school students had asked about shifting realities and Astral projection in Islam. I have been unable to answer her because I'm not aware of these concepts myself. I have reached out to other scholars, but they haven't been able to help either. Would you please advise on these matters? What is the Islamic perspective on shifting realities and Astral projection? Is it permissible? Looking forward to your response.

Jazakumullahu Khairan,

Answer:

Wa 'alaykum al-Salām wa rah̄mat Allāh wa Barakātuh.

In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

1). "Shifting realities" is a recent trend especially among youth. It has been characterized as resembling lucid dreaming in which the dreamer is aware of dreaming and can manipulate his vision. Non-Muslim youth practice shifting methods which may involve planning what one wants to see (sometimes called "scripting," which may or may not involve writing an actual script) and using certain techniques resembling self-hypnosis, such as counting down from 100 while imagining their desired reality and falling asleep. "Shifters" describe that through such techniques they have very vivid imaginations in which they experience things similar to the experience they planned to have. For example, non-Muslim youth attempt to use shifting to have vivid romantic fantasies involving famous celebrities they find attractive.

Scholars of Islamic metaphysics acknowledge the human being having faculties that can be - and sometimes should be - engaged. They speak of the *qalb*, the *ruh*, the *'aql* and the *nafs*. Likewise, these scholars have delved into and elaborated on the role of the subconscious mind and how it may behave in dreams and in other experiences. Intellectual discourse of this can be found in the works of Al-Ghazali; Ibn Arabi and Shah Waliyullah - amongst many others. However, they ALL agree that the only purpose to engage these faculties is to enable and enhance the worship of Allah. They do not allow Muslims to participate in engaging these faculties for "fun" or intellectual entertainment.

That being said, we can posit the following:

Shifting realities is theoretically possible and most probably experienced by many people. But being able to do this is not a sign of being close to Allah - as non-Muslims are also theoretically capable of doing this. If non-Muslims can do this, then invariably, both the method and the result may be insinuated by the devils in that realm. Muslims should aim for knowledge that is not tainted by the devil and his stooges. Manipulating reality stands short of interfering with Allah's Divine Plan. Prophets are the closest beings to Allah and their powers of manipulation are steeped in humbleness and asking Allah to help them directly. Our Prophet (upon him be peace) said: "My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep"¹ - meaning it is always awake. This is proof that they were in direct communication

¹ Al-Bukhārī: #2013

with the other world every time they slept. Also, they could have very easily manipulated the other world and could have converted all people via those manipulations. But they remained humble and in need of Allah's direct intervention on the ground rather - than float around in another world.

In terms of accessing the other world, Islam already has methods that allow “access” into the other world like the dua of *istikharah*. Since this is prescribed by our Prophet - and not by some internet guru - we would give much more weight to this method. Muslims must follow the methods of the Sunnah. The Dajjāl will come and manipulate matter in this world. We believe he is the worst human being ever. We make dua - as the Prophet did - and seek refuge from the trials of the Dajjāl. Venturing into shifting realities is futile and un-Islamic. Allah Ta'ālā reports in the Noble Qur'ān that Satan says, “I will surely lead them astray and I will surely make them have false fantasies (al-Nisā', 4: 119).” In the famous hadith, the Messenger of Allah said, “It is from the beauty of a person's Islam that he leaves what does not concern him.”²

If you wish to engage your faculties, seek a master of the spiritual path and he will lead you to a path that leads you to Jannah.

² Al-Tirmidhī: #2317

2). "Astral projection" is an out of body experience in which a person feels that they leave their body and travel elsewhere. This experience can be induced through self-hypnosis or drugs.

Astral Projection is also theoretically possible. Allah is Lord of ALL the worlds. There are probably thousands of micro worlds within the major macro worlds. Abdul Karīm Jīlī has mentioned some of these worlds in his treatise al-Insān al-Kāmil. The Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) reached the highest and most sublime world in his mi' rāj. He said the following when he experienced it:

"...His veil is *nūr*. If He lifts it, the grandeur of His Countenance (*wajh*) would burn all His creation."³ This travel is reserved for Prophets. Ibn al-'Arabī mentions that there are thousands of spiritual stations (for travel) in the other worlds for non-prophets...

In Islamic metaphysics, two types of outer body travel -in some of these worlds- are discussed. The first is that which any human being - Muslim or non-Muslim - may experience through volition and E.S.P. (extra sensory perception). This type is rejected as there are elements of selfish desires of the traveler and the insinuations of the devil that accompany such experiences. The results of these travels are inconclusive at best and cannot be a proof of spiritual elevation.

³ Muslim: #293

The second type is where The Divine Himself initiates the soul of the traveler and allows him to travel. This type of travel is a sign of spiritual growth and proximity to Allah. When Divine Grace accompanies the travel, all that is experienced is noble and worthy of acceptance. This type is involuntary and hence there is no ego or *nafs* attached to it. This is initiated by *dhikr* and maintaining piety in one's life.

Delving in Astral Projection is also futile and not worthy of a Muslim's time and energy. Islam has already given us a method by which our souls travel far beyond any potential realm that non-Muslims can access. That is the method of five times salat. Salat is the *mi'raj* of a believer as we understand from many hadith[s]. My advice would be for you to find someone who can refine your salat and help you experience this *mi'raj* without the shenanigans of Astral projection.

And Allah Knows Best.

Shaykh Amin Kholwadia

Darul Iftā', Darul Qasim