Whoever has seen me in a dream will see me when he is awake – or it is as if he has seen me while he is awake; the devil does not take my shape

Abu Hurayrah reported that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever has seen me in a dream will see me when he is awake – or it is as if he has seen me while he is awake; the devil does not take my shape."

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Muslim - Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

Scholars held different opinions regarding the interpretation of this Hadīth; some of which are as follows: First: The Hadīth addresses the people contemporaneous with the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). It means that whoever saw him in a dream and had not yet made Hijrah, Allah would guide him to make Hijrah and see the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) with his own eyes in wakefulness. Second: That this dream will come true in the Hereafter, because all Muslims will see him in the Hereafter, both those who saw him in the life and those who did not. Third: That he will see him in the Hereafter in a special manner in terms of closeness to him and receiving his intercession and so on. His statement: “or it is as if he has seen me while awake” is part of the narration of Imām Muslim, and he was doubtful about it as to whether the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) said “then he will see me while he is awake,” or “it is as if he has seen me while he is awake.” Meaning: Whoever sees the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in a dream in his true image, it is as if he has seen him while awake. It is similar to his statement: “Whoever sees me in a dream has indeed seen me.” And his statement: “Whoever sees me in a dream then what he has seen is true.” His statement: “the devil does not take my shape,” and in another wording; “Whoever has seen me in a dream has indeed seen me for the devil is not permitted to take my shape.” Meaning: the devil cannot assume the appearance of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in his true shape. Nevertheless, the devil may come (and trick people) saying that he is the Messenger of Allah while assume an appearance that is not the true appearance of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). This would not be the Messenger of Allah. Therefore if a person sees someone (in a dream) and his soul tells him that this is really the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) then he should verify whether the description of the person he saw matches the Prophet's. If they did indeed match then he has seen the Prophet. If they do not match then it definitely was not the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but rather illusions that the devil put into the heart of the sleeping person insinuating to him that it was the Messenger, while in fact it was not him. Yazīd al-Fārisi said: “I saw the Messenger of Allah in a dream so I said to Ibn ‘Abbās: ‘I have seen the Messenger of Allah in a dream.’ Ibn ‘Abbās said: ‘The Messenger of Allah used to say: 'The devil cannot take my shape, so whoever has seen me in a dream has without doubt seen me.' Can you describe to me the man that you saw?’ I said: ‘Yes.'"

After Yazīd had described him, Ibn ‘Abbās said: "If you had seen him while awake, you wouldn’t have described him better.” Meaning: If you had seen the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) while you were awake, you wouldn’t have given a more accurate description of him. This is the meaning of the statement that he has truly seen the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him).

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