

<https://journal.unisza.edu.my/mjis>

## FALSEHOOD DISTORTED TRUTH

MIAH MUHAMMAD ADEL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Chemistry and Physics, School of Arts and Sciences  
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff  
1200 N. University Drive, Mail Slot 4818  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601, United State of America.

Email: [adelm@uapb.edu](mailto:adelm@uapb.edu)

Corresponding Author email: [adelm@uapb.edu](mailto:adelm@uapb.edu)

Received Date: 23 February 2026 • Accepted Date: 31 March 2026 • Published Date: 30 April 2026

### Abstract

It is observed that people from all walks of life spread the hearsay that Hajar was moving between Safa and Marwa in search of water instead of quoting from the actual hadith. These include muftees (professional jurist who interprets Muslim law), *allamas* (profound Islamic scholars), imams (prayer leaders), writers, and poets. No one can look for water from the mountain tops or from the valley because only illusion can deceive the water seeker in the desert. Preaching hadith this way harm Islam because of inconsistency with science. Non-Muslims can challenge the validity of the statement and deepen their distrusts in Islam. Further added distortion to the hadith is that the Zam-zam well was created by the baby Ishmael's striking the ground with the leg. Today's social media lectures have opened more windows for spreading distorted hadith to many audiences. Preachers should refer to the source of the hadith without indulging in the hearsay. The article has been prepared to safeguard the hadith and to arouse hadith consciousness among readers, writers, poets, speakers and preachers alike. It is hoped that muftees, *allamas*, and imams will take the leading roles of referring to hadith with the appropriate source since their little mistake can have a very far-reaching effect.

**Key Words:** Hajar, Safa, Marwa, Jurhum, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Zam-zam, Abraham, Ishmael, Mecca, Ka'aba



This is an open-access article under the CC-BY 4.0 license

**Cite as:** Miah Muhammad Adel. 2026. Falsehood Distorted Truth. *Malaysian Journal for Islamic Studies* 10(1): 1-14.

## INTRODUCTION

Islam is a very scientific religion without any conflicts with science. Today, the volume of preaching media has increased. It is done by writing in news media and in books (Muftee Ahmed (1), Allama Kasemi (2), Hafez Billah (3), Mowlana Ali (4), Natun Barta (5), and anonymous poet (6). It is done by giving lectures in gatherings and in Friday sermons. (Islam (7)) Also, it is done in YouTube audio and video lectures. Mistakes made by speakers and writers are spread widely among many who take them as authentic. This article refers to a Hadith (8) from Sahih Al-Bukhari. Baby Ishmael's mother went on As-Safa and Al-Marwa mountains and into the valley in between them to look for someone who could help her. Preachers say that she was looking for water which is contrary to science. This has become a legendary hearsay. The hadith is verbatim mentioned in the article. When Abraham married Hajar and she conceived Ishmael, Sarah, Abraham's first wife, became jealous of her and swore that she would cut three parts from her body. So Hajar tied a girdle around her waist and ran away, dragging her robe behind her to wipe out her tracks lest Sarah, should pursue her. Allah knows better.

### Methodology

Textbook poems have been read, news media have been followed, Friday sermons have been attended, and heresays have been heard to find any distortions of the Hadith no. 583 in vol. 4 of Sahih Al-Bukhari.ve been heard when Hajj and on other occasions, and a textbook poem has been studied.

### The Hadith

Narrated by Ibn Abbas: The first lady to use a girdle was the mother of Ishmael. She used a girdle so that she might hide her tracks from Sarah. Abraham brought her and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place near the Ka'ba under a tree on the spot of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody in Mecca, nor was there any water. So, he made them sit over there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael's mother followed him saying, "O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes." She said, "Then He will not neglect us," and returned while Abraham proceeded onwards, and on reaching the Thaniya (a hill at latitude 23°18'0" N, longitude 49°4'60" E, and elevation 190 meters in Saudi Arabia, with the region font code of Africa/Middle East where they could not see him, he faced the Ka'ba, and raising both hands, invoked Allah saying the following prayers:

'O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Your Sacred House (Kaba at Mecca) in order, O our Lord, that they may offer prayer perfectly. So, fill some hearts among men with love

towards them, and (O Allah) provide them with fruits, so that they may give thanks Ishmael's mother went on suckling Ishmael and drinking from the water (10).

When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child also became thirsty. She started looking at him (i.e. Ishmael) tossing in agony; She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain of Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she could not see anybody. Then she descended from Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like a person in distress and trouble, till she crossed the valley and reached the Marwa mountain where she stood and started looking, expecting to see somebody, but she could not see anybody. She repeated that (running between Safa and Marwa (Figs. 1 and 2) seven times."

The Prophet said, "This is the source of the tradition of the walking (Fig. 3) of people between them (i.e. Safa and Marwa). When she reached the Marwa (for the last time) she heard a voice, and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said, 'O, (whoever you may be)! You have made me hear your voice; have you got something to help me?' And behold! She saw an angel at the place of Zam-zam (Fig. 4), digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place. She started to make something like a basin round it, using her hand in this way, and started filling her water-skin with water with her hands, and the water was flowing out after she had scooped some of it."

The Prophet added, "May Allah bestow Mercy on Ishmael's mother! Had she let the Zam-zam (flow without trying to control it) (or had she not scooped from that water) (to fill her water-skin), Zam-zam would have been a stream flowing on the surface of the earth." The Prophet further added, "Then she drank (water) and suckled her child. The angel said to her, 'Don't be afraid of being neglected, for this is the House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people.' The House (i.e. Kaba) (Fig. 5 and 6) at that time was on a high place resembling a hillock, and when torrents came, they flowed to its right and left. She lived in that way till some people from the tribe of Jurhum or a family from Jurhum passed (by her and her child, as they (i.e. the Jurhum people) were coming through the way of Kadā (A locality in Al Bahah Region, Saudi Arabia. Kadā is situated nearby to the locality Āl Muftā, as well as near Āl Shaghīb al Ḥadbā'. Al-Bahah Province (Al-Bahah) is a small mountainous region known for its cool climate and green landscapes, it's a popular summer retreat.) (Fig. 7). They landed in the lower part of Mecca where they saw a bird that had the habit of flying around water and not leaving it. They said, 'This bird must be flying around water, though we know that there is no water in this valley.' They sent one or two messengers who discovered the source of water and returned to inform them of the water. So, they all came (towards the water)." The Prophet added, "Ishmael's mother was sitting near the water.

They asked her, 'Do you allow us to stay with you?' She replied, 'Yes, but you will have no right to possess the water.' They agreed to that." The Prophet further said, "Ishmael's mother was pleased with the whole situation as she used to love to enjoy the company of the people. So, they settled there, and later they sent for their families who came and settled with them so that some families became permanent residents there. The child (i.e. Ishmael) grew up

and learnt Arabic from them and (his virtues) caused them to love and admire him as he grew up, and when he reached the age of puberty they made him marry a woman from amongst them.

After Ishmael's mother had died, Abraham came after Ishmael's marriage to see his family that he had left before, but he did not find Ishmael there. When he asked Ishmael's wife about him, she replied, 'He has gone in search of our livelihood.' Then he asked her about their way of living and their condition, and she replied, 'We are living in misery; we are living in hardship and destitution,' complaining to him. He said, 'When your husband returns, convey my salutation to him and tell him to change the threshold of the gate (of his house).' When Ishmael came, he seemed to have felt something unusual, so he asked his wife, 'Has anyone visited you?' She replied, 'Yes, an old man of so-and-so description came and asked me about you and I informed him, and he asked about our state of living, and I told him that we were living in a hardship and poverty.' On that Ishmael said, 'Did he advise you anything?' She replied, 'Yes, he told me to convey his salutation to you and to tell you to change the threshold of your gate.' Ishmael said, 'It was my father, and he has ordered me to divorce you. Go back to your family.' So, Ishmael divorced her and married another woman from amongst them (i.e. Jurhum).

Then Abraham stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them again but did not find Ishmael. So, he came to Ishmael's wife and asked her about Ishmael. She said, 'He has gone in search of our livelihood.' Abraham asked her, 'How are you getting on?' asking her about their sustenance and living. She replied, 'We are prosperous and well-off (i.e. we have everything in abundance).' Then she thanked Allah' Abraham said, 'What kind of food do you eat?' She spoke. 'Meat.' He said, 'What do you drink?' She said, 'Water.' He said, "O Allah! Bless their meat and water." The Prophet added, "At that time they did not have grain, and if they had grain, he would have also invoked Allah to bless it." The Prophet added, "If somebody has only these two things as his sustenance, his health and disposition will be badly affected, unless he lives in Mecca." The Prophet added, "Then Abraham said Ishmael's wife, "When your husband comes, give my regards to him and tell him that he should keep firm the threshold of his gate.' When Ishmael came back, he asked his wife, 'Did anyone call on you?' She replied, 'Yes, a good-looking old man came to me,' so she praised him and added. 'He asked about you, and I informed him, and he asked about our livelihood, and I told him that we were in good condition.' Ishmael asked her, 'Did he give you any piece of advice?' She said, 'Yes, he told me to give his regards to you and ordered that you should keep firm the threshold of your gate.' On that Ishmael said, 'It was my father, and you are the threshold (of the gate). He has ordered me to keep you with me.'

Then Abraham stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them afterwards. He saw Ishmael under a tree near Zamzam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Abraham, he rose up to welcome him (and they greeted each other as a father does with his son or a son does with his father). Abraham said, 'O Ishmael! Allah has given me an order.' Ishmael said, 'Do what your Lord has ordered you to do.' Abraham asked, 'Will you help me?' Ishmael said, 'I will help you.' Abraham said, 'Allah has ordered me to build a house here,' pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it." The Prophet added, "Then they raised the foundations of the House (i.e. the Ka'ba). Ishmael brought the stones and Abraham was building, and when the walls became high, Ishmael brought this stone and put it for Abraham who stood over it and carried on building, while Ishmael was handling him the stones, and both

were saying, ‘O our Lord! Accept (this service) from us, Verily, you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.’ The Prophet added, “Then both went on building and going round the Ka’ba saying: O our Lord ! Accept (this service) from us, Verily, you are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.” (13)



Fig. 1. Mount Safa in Masjed al Haram (14)



Fig. 2. Mount Al-Marwah exists inside the Grand Mosque in Mecca, it ending AL-Sa'yee (15)



Fig. 3. Safa and Marwa walking (16)

**Safa and Marwa** are two small hills located on the eastern side of the Grand Mosque. Hajj and Umrah pilgrims walk back and forth between them seven times (Figs. 1, 2, and 3). This act of walking, known as *Sae'e*, is one of the integral rites of both Hajj and Umrah, which are both considered incomplete without Sae'e. Safa marks the starting point of the Sae'e, while Marwa marks its conclusion in the seventh cycle.



Fig. 4. (left)Thirty-meter deep Zam-zam well Just 20 meters away from the Holy Ka'aba (17)

Allaah honored this act in the Qur'an:

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ

“Indeed, Safa and Marwa are among the signs of Allah. So, whoever makes Hajj to the House or performs Umrah, there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever volunteers good – indeed, Allah is Appreciative and Knowing.” (18)

This verse shows these two hills are not just stones. They are signs of faith, hope, and trust in Allah’s plan.



Fig. 5. Kada’ located in the region of Al Bahah (19)

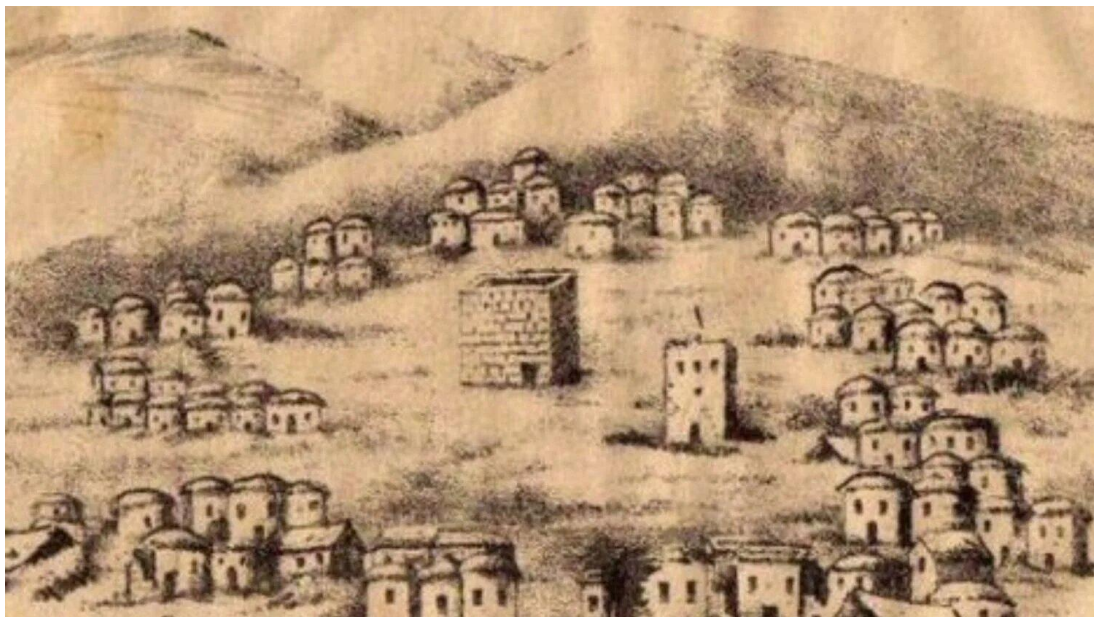


Fig. 6. A sixteenth century image of Ka’aba and the surroundings. ”

Located in the Hejaz region of what is today Saudi Arabia (Fig. 5), Mecca's importance as a religious and cultural center for the people of Arabia precedes Islam. Before the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in the sixth century CE, Mecca and the ancient cube structure, known as the Kaaba, were a site of pilgrimage for Bedouin tribes. Before Islam, the Kaaba housed idols representing several deities that were part of a polytheistic pagan tradition. The Prophet Muhammad believed these were in violation of the original monotheistic faith that was established by the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), who in Islamic tradition rebuilt the Kaaba after its original construction by the first man, Adam. According to Samir Mahmoud, from Cambridge Muslim College, after Adam was expelled from heaven, what he missed most was witnessing the angels circumambulate "Bait al Mamur", an exact replica of the Kaaba that is believed to exist in heaven. God then asked Adam to build the Kaaba at the exact point on the earth that lies underneath the heavenly version. The image above was produced in 1575 and is featured in the 2005 collection titled *Atlas of Maps of Mecca*, and the top image is a late 19th-century painting by an unknown artist. (Above images: Public domain, top image: (20),



Fig. 7. Political map of Makka Province (21)

**Mirage.** The important point is that Hajar was looking for anybody, not water contrary to which Islamic speakers speak or write that Hajar was looking for water. That was not the way to look for water in the desert. Looking for water in the desert is tantamount to pursuing a mirage which is an optical illusion. The more advancement is made toward the mirage the further ahead it moves. We observe this while driving on highways on summer days (Fig. 8). The highway ahead seems to be wet, but as we go ahead the illusion moves farther out.



Fig. 8. Highway mirage effect (22).

Mirage arises out of light refraction in the layers of air just above the ground. If the air temperature is uniform, air density, too, will be uniform, and no mirage effect will be seen. Light is not refracted in passing through the air layer that has uniform temperature. It passes straight the unlayered airmass. In summer days, the air layer in contact with the highway is warmer than the layer above it (Fig. 9). Each layer of different temperature acts like a different medium for light refraction.

The air layer adjacent to the concrete is warmer than the layer above it, which in turn is warmer than the layer above it, and so on (23). The figure shows upper warmer and lower cooler layers by drawing four horizontal lines. A light ray's propagation directions are shown in different layers. In a layer, the angle between the path of the light and the vertical bar at the emergence point is shorter than such an angle in the lower part.

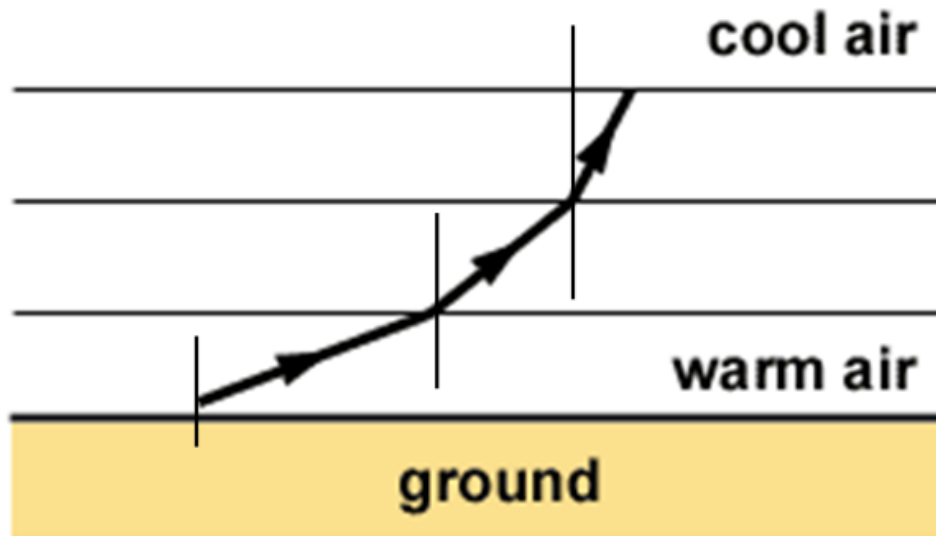


Fig. 9 shows varying temperature caused stratified air columns. In an upper layer, the angle between the path of the light and the vertical bar at the emergence point is shorter than such an angle in the lower part. Light ray bends toward the vertical bar. (24)

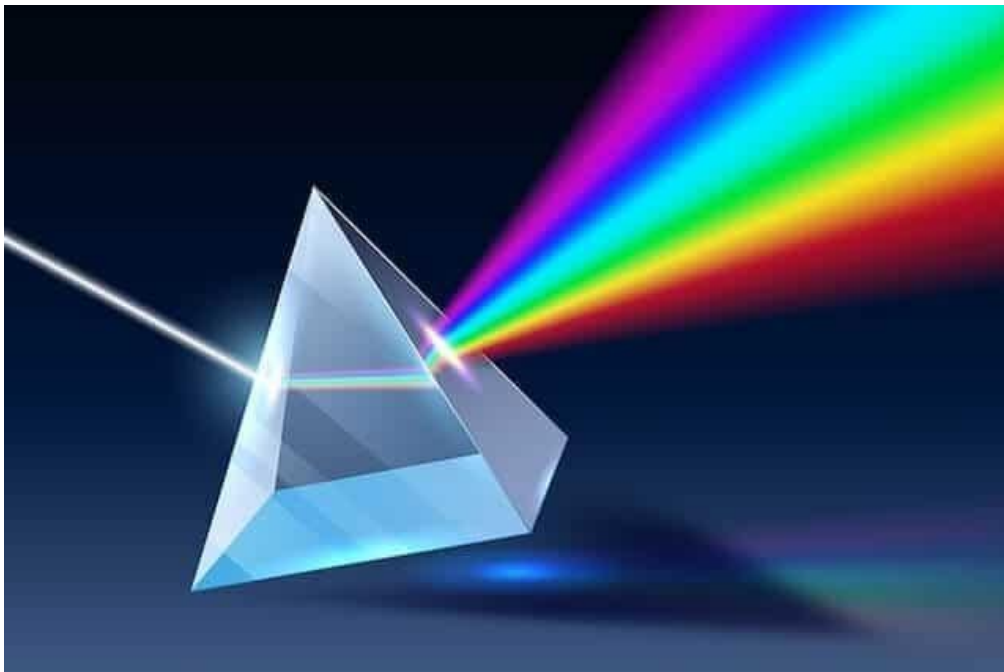


Fig. 10. In refraction, light rays bend in passing from one medium to another. In refraction, light rays bend in passing from one medium to another. Fig. 10 shows refraction of light ray through a glass prism (25)

Fig. 11 illustrates critical angle associated with light refraction. Water medium is denser than air medium. Light rays from a source in the water medium are incident at the interface of the water and air medium at four different angles. The leftmost ray is incident vertically with zero angle of incidence and zero angle of refraction. Counting from the left, the second ray makes the angle of incidence  $\theta_1$  with the red normal line in the water medium, and the angle of

refraction  $\theta_2$  in the air medium. Some part of the ray is reflected in the water medium at the same angle  $\theta_1$ . The third ray makes the angle of incidence  $\theta_c$  in the water medium, and angle of refraction  $90^\circ$  in the air medium. The reflected ray in the water medium makes the same angle  $\theta_c$ . This angle of incidence for which the refracted ray grazes the interface i. e. neither in the air medium nor in the water medium, is called the critical angle. The corresponding angle of refraction is  $90^\circ$ . The 4<sup>th</sup> ray does not go to the air medium. It is totally reflected in the water medium. Its angle of incidence is greater than  $90^\circ$ . This is called total internal reflection. It only occurs if light ray is incident at incidence angles greater than the critical angle.

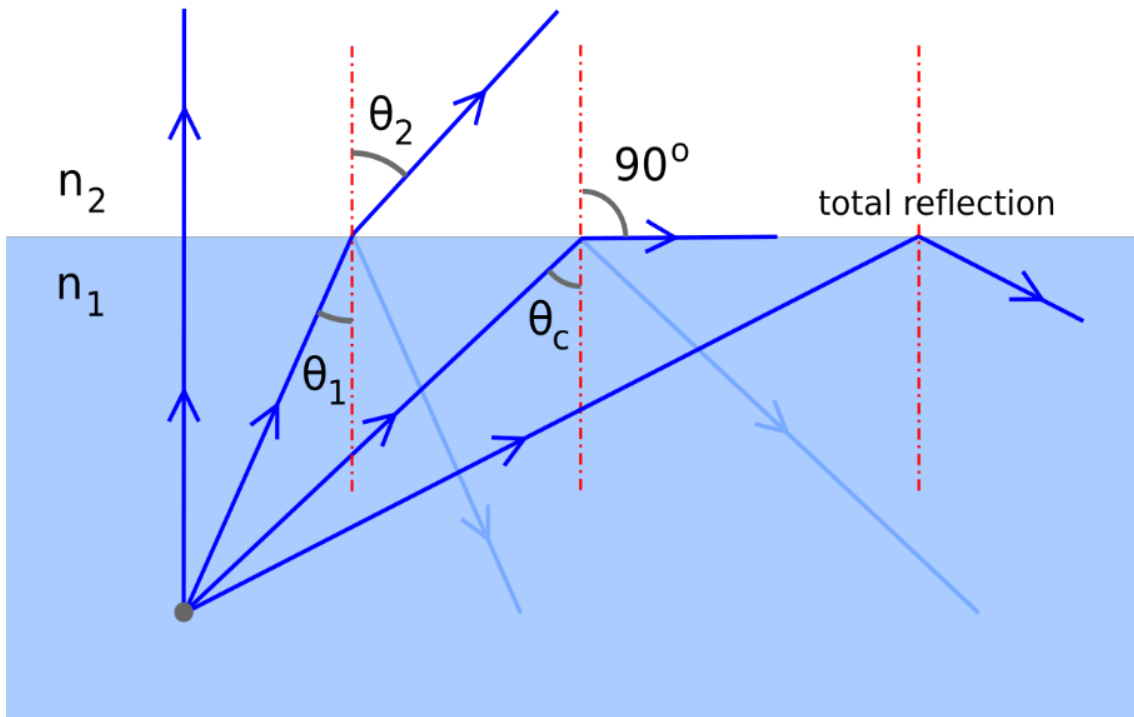


Fig. 11. Illustration of critical angle (26)

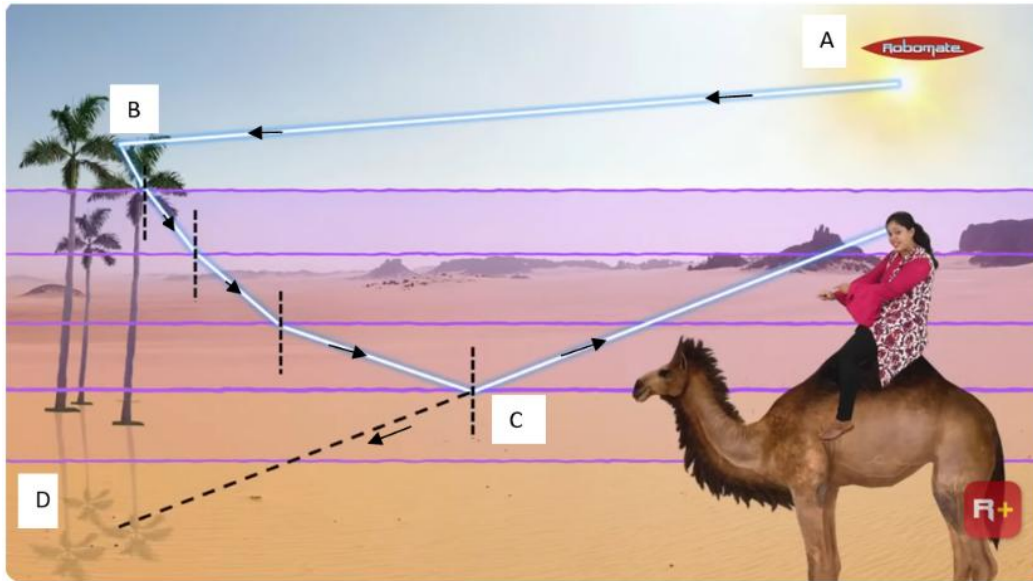


Fig. 12. Light enters from cooler (denser) air layer to warmer (lighter) air layer. Light rays bend away from the vertical bar making the angle of refraction greater than the angle of incidence. (27)

In Fig. 12, light ray falls from the Sun (point A) on the treetop (point B). The tree reflects it down. The angle of incidence becomes gradually greater, and at point D, the angle of incidence is greater than the critical angle between the layers of air. Consequently, the reflected ray passes into the incident layer. This incident ray falls on the observer's eye who follows the ray straight down. When this incident ray is traced backward, it appears to come from the tree image on the ground. This sort of image is formed in water medium for trees standing on the bank of the water body. This illusion is the mirage effect. The desert traveler may follow the image unknowingly.

Desert mirage images are called inferior mirages because they form below the horizon. Figs. 13 and 14 show desert mirage effects. This is also the reason for the appearance of water-like images on the ground.



Fig. 13. A piece of cloud in the sky creates the mirage (28)



Fig. 14. The blue sky above creates the mirage effect (29)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The hadith reveals that Hajar was the first woman to set up the populated Mecca. Abraham and Ishmael rebuilt the Ka'aba, the first builder being Adam, the first human on Earth. Hajar asked the unknown voicer if he had something to help her and not if he had got water for her. The hadith nowhere points at Hajar's searching for water. Stating in these words undermines the science of mirage formation and paves the way for criticism by non-Muslims. Attaching this falsehood to the hadith damages Islam, the most scientific religion on Earth. Speakers, writers, and composers should pay attention to this. Hajar was a brave lady. She had a tremendous Taqwa. Allah does not forsake her/him who is determined to depend on Him.

## References

- Allama Khurshid Alam Kasemi, Director Markajul Fikreel Qurani and Imam Allama Karim Jam-e-Masjid, Muhammadpur, Dhaka
- Hafez Mowlana Kazi Maruf Billah, Mystery of the Zam-zam Well Creation, the Daily Ittefaque, 19 July 2019, 08:46 Hr
- [http://www.phy.cuhk.edu.hk/phyworld/iq/mirage/mirage\\_1\\_e.gif](http://www.phy.cuhk.edu.hk/phyworld/iq/mirage/mirage_1_e.gif) (slightly changed).
- <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=77502540>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safa\\_and\\_Marwa#/media/File:Al-Marwah\\_2.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safa_and_Marwa#/media/File:Al-Marwah_2.JPG)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safa\\_and\\_Marwa#/media/File:Mount\\_Safa\\_Mecca.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safa_and_Marwa#/media/File:Mount_Safa_Mecca.jpg)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total\\_internal\\_reflection#/media/File:ReflexionTotal\\_en.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Total_internal_reflection#/media/File:ReflexionTotal_en.svg)
- <https://epod.usra.edu/blog/2010/03/highway-mirage.html>
- <https://saudipedia.com/en/article/403/religion/the-grand-mosque/safa-and-marwa>
- <https://tuitionphysics.com/sep-2020/shedding-light-on-the-reflection-and-refraction-of-light/>
- [https://www.getamap.net/maps/saudi\\_arabia/saudi\\_arabia\\_\(general\)/\\_thaniya/](https://www.getamap.net/maps/saudi_arabia/saudi_arabia_(general)/_thaniya/)..The figure
- <https://www.khaborerkagoj.com/religion/794761>`
- <https://www.mapsofworld.com/saudi-arabia/regions/makkah-map.html>
- <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/saudi-arabia-map.htm>).

<https://www.natun-barta.com/62096/149/index.php>, Naytun Barta, Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Published : Thursday, 22 July, 2021 at 2:09 AM  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMMJo2q5ADM>)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMMJo2q5ADM>)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMMJo2q5ADM>)  
Islam, Pine Bluff Islamic Center, Arkansas, USA  
Jfmeleiro (adapted by Gavin R Putland). - File:ReflexionTotal.svg — subsequently translated  
and retouched., CC BY-SA 3.0,  
Jurhum, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jurhum>  
Mowlana Ashraf Ali, World's Wonder Zam-zam Well, <https://www.bd-pratidin.com/editorial/2025/11/17/1180586>  
Muftee Sabbir Ahmed, So Many Wonders of the Heavenly Fountain Zam-zam, in a Dhaka,  
Bangladesh, daily, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021  
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, Book 55, Hadith No 583  
Thaniya, ([https://www.getamap.net/maps/saudi\\_arabia/saudi\\_arabia\\_\(general\)/\\_thaniya/](https://www.getamap.net/maps/saudi_arabia/saudi_arabia_(general)/_thaniya/)).  
The Khalili Collections” (<https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/mecca-kaaba-grand-mosque-depictions-history>)