



The Event of Isrā' and Mi'rāj

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Regarding the date and year of this event, historians and biographers have differing opinions. One opinion is that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was taken on the *Mi'rāj* on the 27th of *Rajab* in the twelfth year of prophethood, at the age of 51 years and 5 months. This has been mentioned by 'Allāmah Qāḍī Muḥammad Sulaymān Maṣṣūpūrī (RA) in his book *Mahr al-Nubuwwah*.

The meaning of *Isrā'* is "to be taken by night." The journey from *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* (Makkah al-Mukarramah) to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* is referred to as *Isrā'*. This journey is mentioned in *Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى

"Glory be to Him who carried His servant by night from *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* to *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā*".
(17:1)

The journey from *al-Masjid al-Aqṣā* to the heavens is called *Mi'rāj*. The word *Mi'rāj* is derived from *'Urūj*, meaning "ascending." In the Ḥadīth, the phrase *'Urija bī* ("I was taken up") is used, which is why this journey was named *Mi'rāj*. This sacred event is referred to by both names, *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*, and both events occurred in a single night.

The event of *Mi'rāj* is mentioned in the following verses of *Sūrah al-Najm*:

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ

"Then he drew near and came closer, till he was at a distance of two bow-lengths or closer. So He revealed to His servant what He revealed". (53:8-10)

In verses 13-18 of *Sūrah al-Najm*, it is clarified that the Prophet ﷺ (on this occasion) witnessed great signs:

وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ

"And he certainly saw him at another descent, at the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary, near which is the Garden of Refuge. When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered it, the sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit]. He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord". (53:13-18)

In addition to the aforementioned verses of the Holy Qur'ān, the event of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* is also established through *Aḥādīth Mutawātirah* (mass-transmitted narrations). A large number of companions narrated *Aḥādīth* related to the event of *Mi'rāj*.

The Longest Journey in Human History

It is established from the Qur'ān and *Aḥādīth Mutawātirah* that the entire journey of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* was physical, meaning that the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ undertook this journey not as a dream but as a physical journey and a direct observation. This was a miracle whereby, through various stages, such an extensive journey was completed by the will of Allāh ﷻ in just a portion of the night.

Allāh ﷻ, the creator of the entire universe, finds nothing difficult, for He is the omnipotent. Whatever He wills comes into existence merely by His command. The event of *Mi'rāj* stands as one of the most magnificent, blessed, and unparalleled miracles in all of human history, one that defies comparison. The creator of the universe bestowed upon His beloved ﷺ the immense honor of inviting him and making him His guest—a distinction unmatched by any human or even the closest of angels.

The Purpose of the Event of *Mi'rāj*

Among the purposes of the journey of *Mi'rāj*, the most concise and profound one is mentioned in the Qur'ān (*Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl*):

لِنُرِّيَهُ مِنْ ءَايَاتِنَا

"So that We (Allāh ﷻ) may show him (Muḥammad ﷺ) some of Our signs". (17:1)

One of its significant purposes was to bestow upon the beloved Muḥammad ﷺ a status and rank so magnificent that no human being, nor even the closest of angels, has ever attained or will ever attain. Additionally, the *Mi'rāj* journey serves as a message to the Muslim *Ummah* about the importance of *Ṣalāh*. It highlights that this exalted act of worship was not ordained on earth but rather in the highest and most elevated place, above the seven heavens, on the night of *Mi'rāj*. Furthermore, the obligation of prayer was not conveyed to the Prophet ﷺ through Jibrīl (AS) but was personally gifted by Allāh ﷻ to His beloved ﷺ.

Ṣalāh is the greatest means of establishing a connection with Allāh ﷻ, seeking one's needs, and presenting one's supplications. In prayer, there is direct communication with Allāh ﷻ.

A Brief Account of the Event of *Mi'rāj*

A golden tray filled with wisdom and faith was brought to the Prophet ﷺ. His chest was opened, washed with the water of *Zamzam*, filled with wisdom and faith, and then sealed. A mount named *Burāq*, faster than lightning, was brought for him. It was a long, white, and swift creature, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, and it would place its steps as far as its sight reached. The Prophet ﷺ was mounted on it and taken to *Bayt al-Maqdis*, where all the Prophets prayed under his leadership.

After this, he was taken to the heavens. On the first heaven, he met Ādam (AS); on the second, 'Īsā and Yaḥyā (AS); on the third, Yūsuf (AS); on the fourth, Idrīs (AS); on the fifth, Hārūn (AS); on the sixth, Mūsā (AS); and on the seventh, Ibrāhīm (AS).

After this, *al-Bayt al-Ma'mūr* was presented before the Prophet ﷺ, where seventy thousand angels worship Allāh ﷻ daily, never returning to it again. He was then taken to *Sidrat al-Muntahā*. He saw its leaves, as large as elephant ears, and its fruits, resembling large jars. When *Sidrat al-Muntahā* was covered by what Allāh ﷻ commanded, it transformed into a state of beauty and majesty that no creature could describe.

At the base of *Sidrat al-Muntahā*, four rivers were seen: two hidden rivers and two visible ones. Upon inquiry, Jibrīl (AS) explained that the hidden rivers are rivers of Paradise, while the visible rivers are the Euphrates and the Nile (located in Iraq and Egypt, respectively).

The Obligation of *Ṣalāh* (Prayer)

At that time, Allāh ﷻ revealed what He intended to reveal, and fifty daily prayers were ordained. On the way back, the Prophet ﷺ met Mūsā (AS). At the suggestion of Mūsā (AS), the Prophet ﷺ returned to Allāh's presence several times to request a reduction in the number of prayers. Each time, five prayers were reduced until only five remained. Even then, Mūsā (AS) suggested asking for further reduction, but the Prophet ﷺ replied that he felt shy to ask for more and accepted Allāh's ﷻ command. At this point, a proclamation was made by Allāh ﷻ:

مَا يَبْدُلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ

"The word will not be changed with Me" (50:29)

This meant that while the obligation of prayer remained, Allāh ﷻ had granted ease to His servants. Furthermore, each prayer would carry the reward of ten prayers, making the reward equivalent to fifty prayers while performing only five. Thus, five prayers are obligatory to perform, but the reward is as if fifty have been offered.

During this significant event, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ received the gift of *Ṣalāh* as the primary means of connecting humanity with Allāh ﷻ. Due to the Prophet's concern for his *Ummah* and Allāh's ﷻ grace, the reward for performing five daily prayers was equated to that of fifty prayers.

Additionally, two other significant blessings were granted:

1. The final two verses of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* were revealed.
2. It was declared that apart from *Shirk* (associating partners with Allāh ﷻ), all sins of the followers of the Prophet ﷺ could be forgiven. Major sins would either be pardoned through sincere repentance or after enduring punishment, but disbelievers and polytheists would remain in Hell eternally.

The Vision of Allāh ﷻ in *Mi'rāj*

A long-standing debate exists about whether the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was blessed with the vision of Allāh ﷻ during *Mi'rāj*, and if so, whether it was a physical or spiritual vision. For us, it suffices to acknowledge that the event is authentic, occurred in a part of the night, took place in a state of wakefulness, and was among the greatest miracles of the Prophet ﷺ.

The Rejection by the Quraysh and Establishing the Truth

The journey involved traveling from Makkah to *Bayt al-Maqdis*, leading the Prophets in prayer, ascending to the heavens, meeting the Prophets, standing in the divine presence of Allāh ﷻ, witnessing Paradise and Hell, and returning to Makkah—all within a part of the night. On his return, the Prophet ﷺ met a caravan of the Quraysh returning from Syria.

The next morning, when the Prophet ﷺ narrated the incident, the Quraysh were astonished and rejected it. They approached Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (RA), who responded: "If he has said this, then it is true". When they asked how he could believe such a claim, Abū Bakr (RA) replied: "I believe in things more astonishing than this—that divine revelation descends upon him from the heavens". This earned him the title "*al-Ṣiddīq*."

When the Quraysh asked the Prophet ﷺ to describe *Bayt al-Maqdis*, Allāh ﷻ illuminated it for him. While seated in *Ḥaṭīm*, he answered their questions with precision, further confirming the truth of his journey.

Some Observations from the Journey

During this extraordinary journey, the Prophet ﷺ was shown Paradise, Hell, and the states of various sinners.

Those Scratching Their Faces and Chests

Anas (RA) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "During *Mi'rāj*, I saw people scratching their faces and chests with copper nails. I asked Jibrīl (AS): "Who are these people?" He replied: "These are those who ate the flesh of others (engaged in backbiting) and tarnished their honor". (Abū Dāwūd)

The Fate of Usurers

Abū Hurayrah (RA) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "I passed by people whose bellies were as large as houses, and snakes were visible inside them. I asked Jibrīl (AS): "Who are these people?" He replied: "These are those who consumed usury". (Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ)

Heads Being Crushed with Stones

The Prophet ﷺ saw people whose heads were being crushed with stones, and each time they were crushed, they returned to their original state, and the process continued endlessly. When he inquired, Jibrīl (AS) said: "These are those who were lazy in performing prayers". (Anwār al-Sirāj fī Dhikr al-Isrā' wa-l-Mi'rāj, Shaykh Muftī 'Āshiq Ilāhī)

The State of Those Neglecting *Zakāh*

The Prophet ﷺ also passed by people whose private parts were covered with rags and who grazed like animals, consuming thorny bushes and stones of Hellfire. Jibrīl (AS) explained: "These are those who failed to give *Zakāh* on their wealth". (Anwār al-Sirāj fī Dhikr al-Isrā' wa-l-Mi'rāj)

Eating Rotten Meat

The Prophet ﷺ saw people who had a pot of cooked meat and another of rotten meat in front of them, but they chose to eat the rotten meat. Jibrīl (AS) said: "These are people who had lawful, pure spouses but engaged in adultery with unlawful partners, leaving their lawful spouses". (Anwār al-Sirāj fī Dhikr al-Isrā' wa-l-Mi'rāj)

What Is *Sidrat al-Muntahā*?

The term *Sidrat al-Muntahā* (Lote tree of the utmost boundary) is used in the Qur'ān and appears in *Aḥādīth* as well. The name refers to a tree at the utmost limit, beyond which no one can pass. According to Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ explained that divine commands descend to this point before being sent down to the earth, and the deeds of people ascend to this point before being carried further upward.

Practical Lessons from the event of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*

No specific act of worship has been prescribed for Muslims annually to commemorate the event of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*. The primary purpose of narrating this event is to familiarise ourselves with its details and to avoid sins whose consequences the Prophet ﷺ witnessed during this journey and warned his *Ummah* about.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all steadfast faith and success in both worlds. *Āmīn!*

References: 1) The Miracle of *Mi'rāj*, Mufti Muhammad Aashiq Ilahi. 2) Issues and Rulings of Islamic Months, Mufti Abdul Wahab Hassan,

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