

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPHET'S NIGHT JOURNEY



مجمع خبراء الدعوة الإلكترونية
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When and How

Allah says in the Qur'an what means:

{Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go on a night from the Sacred Mosque to the remote mosque of which We have blessed the precincts, so that We may show to him some of Our signs; surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.} (Al-Israa`a' 17:1)

There is no doubt that Al-Israa` (the night journey) followed by Al-Mi`raj (the heavenly ascension) was one of the miracles in the life of our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). According to the most accepted view, it happened on the 27th of Rajab, the seventh month of the Hijri calendar, in the tenth year of Muhammad's prophethood.

It is reported in Hadith literature, that the Messenger of Allah was carried from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the "Farthest Mosque" (Al-Masjid al-Aqsa) in Jerusalem on a creature called Al-Buraq in the company of the archangel Gabriel (peace be upon him). There he led a congregational prayer of the prophets of God.

Then Gabriel took him to the heavens where he met the prophets Adam, John, Jesus, Idris, Aaron and Moses (peace be on them all). In the seventh heaven, he met Abraham (peace be on him).

He was then brought to the Divine Presence. The details of this encounter are beautifully detailed in the beginning of Surat An-Najm (۵۲).

Prayer: God-given Gift

During this time, Allah ordered for his nation fifty daily Prayers. But on the Prophet's return, he was told by Prophet Moses (peace be on him) that his followers could not perform fifty Prayers. Thus, he went back and eventually it was reduced to five daily Prayers. After this, the Prophet returned to Makkah on the same night itself.

Therefore, Muslims should be thankful to Allah for this gift. They should take care of it and never neglect it. It is the thing that allows the Muslim to communicate with the creator five times as day.

Time and Space Are Not Bound for Allah

One major lesson of that miraculous event, was that space and time which are bound by laws of nature for humans, are not so bound for Allah. On that night prophet Muhammad bridged time and space and this world, traveling to the heavens by Allah's will.

The implications of the night journey cannot be overstated. The miraculous nature of the Prophet's journey established his divine-stated legitimacy as the seal of all prophets. Allah brought the Prophet to Him to show us his true worth in the sight of Allah.

All religious traditions share the concept of miracles, that is, something that defies logic, nature, or the established constitution and course of things.

We will limit our discussion to legitimate miracles from Allah, which are by definition the only true miracles. When the forces of disbelief are strong, typically the prophetic miracles that oppose them are stronger.

Prophet Moses was given several miracles, which included his staff that turned into a massive snake and culminated in his parting of the Red Sea, as a divine response to the extreme infidelity of Pharaoh.

Similarly, Prophet Jesus was given even the power to raise the dead, in order to establish his legitimacy before the Jews who would ultimately condemn him to death for blasphemy. Nevertheless, his miracles were undeniable by their nature, and it was only the obstinacy and arrogance of the people to whom he was sent that enabled them to deny him.

Muhammad's night journey was obviously not easy for the pagan Makkans to believe. Nevertheless, the Prophet proved it logically by describing the approaching caravans that he overtook on his miraculous return.

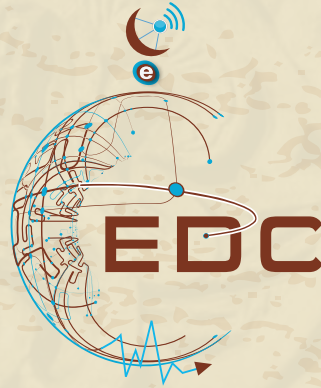
Thus, this particular prophetic miracle not only established the Prophet's eminence for Muslims as discussed above, but it also helped to prove his prophethood to the non-believers of his time.

Celebrating the Event

As far as the Muslims are concerned, there is no particular celebration, fast or prayer to commemorate Al-Israa` and Al-Mi`raj. But in some places, the Muslims themselves have started to have commemorative functions, where the story of the night journey is told in poetry or lectures.

While the Prophet himself did not establish these practices, there are scholars who maintain that gatherings meant to remind the Muslims of the importance of Al-Mi`raj in the history of Islam, or to remind us of the importance of love for the Prophet and the significance of the city of Jerusalem, are permissible.





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