

On the Path of the Beloved ﷺ

Al-Israa and Al-Mi'raj

Today's lecture is about the outcome of the Prophet's journey to At-Ta'if. It is now the 10th year following the revelation. We talked yesterday about the hardships Prophet Muhammad ﷺ went through in At-Ta'if. A few weeks later after he returned to Makkah, he made the greatest journey ever in the history of humanity; *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj*¹. Notice how this journey takes place after his persistence and endurance when badly hurt and injured. Do you remember when Allah ﷻ ordered the woodworm to eat the document inside *al-ka'ba*²? That followed a long three-year siege. Likewise, *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* is a supernatural miracle that took place after 10 whole years of persistent *da'wa* (missionary activity).

It is said that *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* took place on Ragab 27th, of the 10th year after revelation. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ made *dua'a* (supplication) to Allah about the grief and humiliation he went through following the death of both Khadijah (RA) and his uncle Abu-Taleb, and At-Ta'if hardships. Therefore, *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* came to honor him, to answer his prayers, and to show him his rank in heaven.

Three different stories explain where Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was that night. He was either in his house, in the house of Om-Hani' (Ali Ibn-Abu-Taleb's sister visiting them), or sleeping beside Al-Ka'ba.

Al-Israa and *Al-Mi'raj* was a journey that involved both the body and soul unlike what some people claim that it involved only the latter. The main proof is that Abu-Bakr got his title "*As-Seddiq*" (the most sincere) based on this incident. Moreover, there were several cases of people embracing Islam following this event. Furthermore, the disbelievers of Quraysh were in a state of chaos after this journey. Had this journey only involved the soul, none of this would have happened as Jibril (AS³) "Gabriel" used to come regularly to the Prophet ﷺ without any similar consequences.

Jibril came to Muhammad ﷺ on that night and told him to circumambulate Al-Ka'ba seven times. From Al-Ka'ba, he told him that he was going to the *Aqsa* mosque and from there; they shall be ascending to the seventh heaven to meet Allah. We should all thus prepare ourselves for that day when we shall meet Him. Will you be happy on such a day, or will you be ashamed of what you have committed your life?

Allah says, "**All Extolment be (to Him), Who made His bondman to set forth by night from the Inviolable Mosque to the Further (Literally: Remotest) Mosque, around which We have blessed, that We might show him (some) of Our signs. Surely He, Ever He, is The Ever-Hearing, The Ever-Beholding" (17:1).**

The choice of timing to be at night is due to the fact that it has different implications to different people. For the corrupt, it represents a time of adultery, drinking, and doing

¹ *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* = The night journey of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Jerusalem and his ascension to the seventh Heaven

² Al-ka'ba = The sanctified house of Allah.

³ AS = '*Alayhi-s-Salam* [Peace be upon him].

everything that is forbidden. For believers, it is the time when they feel nearest to Allah . It is the time when the soul is pure. Therefore, take advantage of this Ramadan and pray at night as much as you can and worship Him .

Notice as well the choice of the word "bondman" in the *ayah* (verse). Whenever Allah honours a human being, he either reminds him that he is a human being, or bestows upon him the blessing of remembering that he is His slave.

Along the history of all Prophets, there comes a moment when they embark upon a glorious victory, yet remain humble and in gratitude to Allah . When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ finally conquered Makkah, he entered it on his she-camel with his head bowed in humility. Prophet Yusuf (AS) "Joseph" also kept to the same humbleness and modesty when his parents and brothers kneeled before him after a long life of hardships.

He appeals to Allah as Allah says , **"Lord! You have already brought me (my share) of kingship and You have taught me (my share) of the interpretation of discourses. O Originator (Literally: Renderer; i.e., Creator) of the heavens and the earth, You are my Ever-Patronizing Patron in the present (life) (Literally: the lowly (life), the life of this world) and the Hereafter, Take me up to You as a Muslim (One who submits to you) and join me with the righteous." (12:101).**

Likewise, Solaiman ﷺ with all his gifts for communicating with all creatures, appeals in humility to Allah in *Surat*¹ *An-Naml* (Ants). **"Lord! Dispense me to thank (You) for Your favor wherewith You have favored me and (both) my parents, and to do righteousness that satisfies You, and cause me to enter by Your mercy, among Your righteous bondmen." (27:19).**

Therefore, no matter how successful, famous, wealthy, or religious you get, always maintain your humility before Allah ﷻ and He shall elevate you and raise your status even more.

The journey of *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* is of a highly symbolic nature. After Prophet Muhammad ﷺ circumambulated *Al-Ka'ba*, he found *al-Buraq*². It was going to be his means of transportation at first from the Holy mosque to the *Aqsa* mosque. Anas Ibn-Malik provides a description of *Al-Buraq*, 'Prophet Muhammad said, "I was brought *al-Buraq* Who is an animal white and long, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, who would place his hoof a distance equal to the range of his vision."³. From this *Hadith* we learn the degree of faith of the Prophet's companions who believed in such an incident that is beyond human comprehension in a time when even modern means of transport like trains and planes had not yet been invented. Moreover, Allah ﷻ used *al-Buraq* to challenge and remind us that His capability and power shall always surpass our knowledge no matter how far we reach in science and technology until the Day of Judgment. So never ever, boast about before The Ever-Powerful .

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ described how Jibril accompanied him closely along his journey saying, "I got on the back of *Al-Buraq* and he got on it with me. Neither did I let go of him nor did he let

¹ Surat = Chapter of the Qur'an.

² *Al-Buraq* is the creature which Prophet Muhammad used to ascend to the seventh heaven.

³ Authentic *Hadith*, Narrated by Anas Ibn-Malik, , Sahih Muslim, Book 001, Number 0309.

go of me" thus referring to the importance of company and to how it should be chosen to aid you in the trip of your life. *Al-Buraq* in Arabic is derived from the word "*Barq*" meaning lightning. It corresponds to the fast pace with which *al-Buraq* travels from one place to another. Likewise, only a good companion can push you forward with such speed. A few weeks earlier, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was not able to move freely in Makkah and life was so suppressing on earth. However, now he was able to penetrate the whole universe.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and Jibril ﷺ reached the *Aqsa* mosque. They landed next to the wall of the mosque and Muhammad ﷺ did a strange thing. He tethered the creature to a ring. Why do you think he instinctively did so though the creature had come just for this purpose and was not expected to run away? This is to teach us an extremely important lesson. Entrusting one's soul to Allah ﷻ does not mean that you dispense with the causes or the means. We must do our best to achieve our goals. We must all tie our own *Buraq*.

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ entered the mosque. Being in the middle of the night and expected to be deserted, the mosque was amazingly full of the Prophets of Allah ﷻ from the time of Adam ﷺ until Isa ﷺ. There was no place to set a foot. They all came especially to welcome Muhammad ﷺ. Such a gathering of all the Prophets at the same time and place was an unprecedented event. It had an important significance; the unity of humanity regardless of the difference in time. How can unity be achieved in light of the current wars, feelings of hatred and the shedding of blood all over the world? Islam calls for unity, for the coexistence of civilizations and not for the clash of civilizations.

There is another significance in the descent of the Prophets to the mosque, when Muhammad was going to see them later during his journey in the seven heavens. All the Prophets stood aligned to pray. They were waiting for what Jibril had to say. Jibril told Muhammad ﷺ to lead the prayer and they all prayed two *Raka'a(s)*¹. As much as this incident came to honor Muhammad ﷺ, it was also a commandment. The Prophets came to handover to him the leadership banner of mankind. Accordingly, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was now responsible for the earth and so are we now. Do you feel that you are responsible? We represent 20% of the world population, yet we still get all our theories, sciences, and studies from the other 80%. We stopped giving and adding to humanity 200 years ago. 'Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "The upper hand is better than the lower hand (i.e. he who gives in charity is better than him who takes it)"². Therefore, there is no other way for us now but that of revival. We are the ones responsible for this earth now.

Al-Mi'raj honored Muhammad ﷺ, yet *Al-Israa* was similarly important. The *Aqsa* mosque is where the Prophets gathered, where the ascension to the seven heavens started, and where the descent ended before returning to Makkah. Leading the Prophets in prayer has an important significance. It is known in Islam that a man is not to be led in prayer in his own home, so what does that say about Prophet Muhammad's responsibility towards the *Aqsa* mosque?

Anas Ibn-Malik continues, 'Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "I prayed two *Raka'a(s)* in it, and then came out and Jibril brought me a vessel of wine³ and a vessel of milk. I chose the milk, and

¹ Raka'a = One unit of prayer.

² Authentic *Hadith*, Narrated by Hakim Ibn-Hizam, Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 2, Book 24, Number 508.

³ At that time, drinking wine had not yet been forbidden.

Jibril said: You have chosen the natural thing."¹. The milk here represents Allah 's creation that is intact. The wine, on the other hand, stands for the interference of man in the creation of Allah ﷻ that sometimes leads to its ruin; in this case, wine is originally made from grapes. Accordingly, the natural instinct and not the fake one is the foundation for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and for his nation, and we must search for this pure instinct within ourselves.

Allah ﷻ says , **"All Extolment be (to Him), Who made His bondman to set forth by night from the Inviolable Mosque to the Further (Literally: Remotest) Mosque, around which We have blessed, that We might show him (some) of Our signs. Surely He, Ever He, is The Ever-Hearing, The Ever-Beholding. And We brought Mûsa (Moses) the Book and We made it a guidance to the Seeds (Or: Sons) of Israel (saying), "Do not take to yourselves any trustee apart from Me." Offspring of whomever We carried with Nûh, (Noah) surely he was a constantly thankful bondman." (17:1-3).**

The three *ayahs* talk about three consecutive generations: Muhammad , preceded by Musa (AS) "Moses", who in turn is preceded by Nuh ﷺ. All three of them have a common bond; their love towards Allah ﷻ, sharing the same message, and having the same target. Notice as well that Muhammad ﷺ passed through *Al-Israa* journey by Musa's mount *At-Tur*, Isa's Bethlehem, and the road, which Ibrahim ﷺ and Isma'il ﷺ took, between Palestine and Makkah to build al-Ka'ba. Hence is the connection among them.

Muhammad ﷺ started his ascension journey of *Al-Mi'raj* from *Al-Mi'raj* rock. They reached the seven heavens within seconds taking into consideration that nowadays, a spaceship traveling 7000 km/h takes three whole years to cover a distance from earth to the nearest planet in the sky.

In an authentic Al-Bukhari Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ says, **"Then he took my hand and ascended with me to the nearest heaven, when I reached the nearest heaven, Gabriel said to the gatekeeper of the heaven, 'Open (the gate).' The gatekeeper asked, 'Who is it?' Gabriel answered: 'Gabriel.' He asked, 'Is there anyone with you?' Gabriel replied, 'Yes, Muhammad I is with me.' He asked, 'Has he been called?' Gabriel said, 'Yes.' So the gate was opened and we went over the nearest heaven and there we saw a man sitting with some people on his right and some on his left. When he looked towards his right, he laughed and when he looked toward his left he wept. Then he said, 'Welcome! O pious Prophet and pious son.' I asked Gabriel, 'Who is he?' He replied, 'He is Adam and the people on his right and left are the souls of his offspring. Those on his right are the people of *Jannah* (Paradise) and those on his left are the people of Hell and when he looks towards his right he laughs and when he looks towards his left he weeps".**

Adam ﷺ is the father of the whole of humanity, which confirms the unity of humanity. Can you see how this theme keeps recurring in the journey?

The only one who knows the dwellers of *Jannah* and the dwellers of Hell is Allah ﷻ. We do not know with which group our names are written. It is said that one of the followers once prayed to Allah in his *Qiyam* prayers saying, "Allah, you are the only one who knows the dwellers of *Jannah* and the dwellers of Hell. With whom have you written my name" If Allah wills, you

¹ Authentic *Hadith*, Narrated by Anas Ibn-Malik, , Sahih Muslim, Book 001, Number 0309.

become one of the dwellers of *Jannah*. Now why did Adam ﷺ laugh and cry? He is happy with those who learned from his experience, and at the same time, sad that there are those who have not learned. You see, his experience with *Iblis* (Satan) was like an example of an answered question, as in mathematics; it is something you have to learn from in order to resolve your own problems. The other questions come in different shapes, but the idea is the same.

In the previous Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ goes on narrating that journey saying, **“Then we ascended to the second heaven. Jibril ﷺ (asked the door of heaven to be opened), and he was asked who he was. He answered: Jibril; and was again asked, “Who is with you?” He replied, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” The gate was opened. When I entered 'Isa b. Maryam and Yahya b. Zakariya (AS), cousins from the maternal side, welcomed me and prayed for my good Then I was taken to the third heaven and Jibril asked for the opening (of the door). He was asked, “Who are you?” He replied, “Jibril” He was (again) asked, “ Who is with you?” He replied, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” (The gate) was opened for us and I saw Yusuf (AS) who had been given half of (world) beauty. He welcomed me prayed for my well-being. Then he ascended with us to the fourth heaven. Jibril (AS) asked for the (gate) to be opened, and it was said, “Who is he?” He replied, “Jibril” It was (again) said, “Who is with you?” He said, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” The (gate) was opened for us, and lo! Idris was there. He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being,... Then he ascended with us to the fifth heaven and Jibril asked for the (gate) to be opened. It was said, “Who is he?” He replied, “Jibril” It was (again) said, “Who is with thee?” He replied, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” (The gate) was opened for us and then I was with Harun (Aaron-AS). He welcomed me prayed for my well-being. Then I was taken to the sixth heaven. Jibril (AS) asked for the door to be opened. It was said, “Who is he?” He replied, “Jibril” It was said, “Who is with thee?” He replied, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” (The gate) was opened for us and there I was with Musa (AS) He welcomed me and prayed for my well-being. Then I was taken up to the seventh heaven. Jibril asked the (gate) to be opened. It was said, “Who is he?” He said, “Jibril” It was said, “Who is with thee?” He replied, “Muhammad” It was said, “Has he been sent for?” He replied, “He has indeed been sent for” (The gate) was opened for us and there I found Ibrahim (AS) reclining against *Al-Baitul-Ma'mur* and there enter into it seventy thousand angels every day, never to visit (this place) again”.**

Now, where are the rest? Why does not he meet Nuh ﷺ? The presence of these particular Prophets is symbolic. Some of the Prophets made constructing societies their main concern, which was what Prophet Mohammad ﷺ was going to do when he goes to Madinah. Some were Prophets who migrated from their homelands and returned to them, like Yusuf and Musa (AS), which is a foreshadowing for the Prophet ﷺ as he was going to do that in two years. Others were Prophets who had been persecuted and whose people murdered or attempted to murder them. It is as if Allah ﷻ chose for him a “sample” of the Prophets in whose lives he would see his own in the future. These are Allah’s arrangements for his Prophet ﷺ.

Al-Bayt al-Ma'mur (The much-frequented Fane), is a place exactly above the Holy Ka'ba and identical to it in the seventh heaven. We perform *tawaf* on earth, and right above us, the angels perform *tawaf* around *Al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*, and above them both is Allah’s throne. You

have to feel it when you go to Makkah; it is the holiest place on earth. A point directly connected to the holiest of places. Now, let me ask you this question. Why is it that Ibrahim (AS) was reclining against its wall? It is because he built al-K'aba and the rule is, you sow what you reap. He is leaning against it because he strived enough in his life to rest later.

We should strive in the present life so that Allah ﷻ allows us to rest on the Day of Judgement. Life is like that! We want to rest, but there is no rest in it. Imam Ahmad Bin-Hanbal was once asked, "When does a man get to relax?" and he replied, "It is the moment he sets his foot in *Jannah*; there is no relief before that". Do not let comfort be your purpose in life; you live in the present life, which was made so you could farm, learn, rise, reform, make life, worship and pray, help people, and take initiatives. Allah ﷻ says, **"Indeed We already created man in suffering" (90:04)** Thus, work, toil, and fulfill your destiny.

The Prophet said, "Seventy thousand angels enter into it [al-Bayt al- Ma'mur] daily and, after they come out, they never return again". Can you imagine the number of angels? You cannot even compare the number of human beings to the number of angels. Listen to this evocative Hadith; the Prophet ﷺ says, in an authentic Hadith reported by Al-Albani, "the skies voiced in yearn, worthy it is to sound in yearn and in pride, as no place in it is but an angel prostrating in adoration and worship to Allah " Therefore, Allah does not need our worship. We are the ones who need to worship Him in order to save ourselves from Hellfire. We need to kneel and prostrate. The angels are many. The Prophet ﷺ saw crowds and crowds of them as he ascended. They were true worshippers performing all the parts of prayer—prostrating, kneeling, and standing. Can you see Allah's Kingdom? Do you now understand what the Sovereign, The Ever-Magnificent, The Eternal Owner of Sovereignty, and The Owner of Majesty and Bounty mean? It is a message to the Prophet not to be depressed due to what happened in At-Ta'ef or to Quraysh's persecution since Allah is the Ever-Great and his Kingdom is boundless.

Ibrahim ؑ gave him a message for us. Yes, he did. He said, **"Oh, Muhammad convey to your nation (followers) on my behalf, peace. Further inform your nation that the *Jannah* is of pleasant scented earth (said to be scented of musk and saffron); its waters are fresh and pleasant. It (*Jannah*) is of plane earth, free of trees. Its trees are Subhan Allah (Glorify Ye Allah), alhamdu lillah (Praise Ye Allah), la ilaha illa Allah (Allah is but the One and Single God), and Allahu akbar (Allah is the Great and the Exalted)**

We only need to say those words: "Subhan Allah, wa Alhamdule-Allah, wa la 'elaaha ella Allah wa Allahu Akbar." Congratulations, you have just planted a tree in your *Jannah* house. Let us all now, and the people watching, say it together, let us plant palm trees now in *Jannah*. We will say it together, and if Allah wills, he will remind us of this on the Day of Judgement. "Subhan Allah, wa Alhamdule-Allah, wa la 'elaaha ella Allah wa Allahu Akbar." The more you say it, the better your decoration will be. That was Ibrahim's message, may Allah reward him for it.

Humanity's beauty is in its unity. Conflict between civilizations is not the rule. Those who hear the story of *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* will never conclude that Muslims favor conflict. On the contrary, harmony among humanity is the basis. We are one nation and one world.

After this encounter, the Prophet ﷺ saw wonderful things. He had an encounter with a woman called “the Hair-dresser of Pharaoh’s Daughter.” As he ﷺ ascended, he could smell an exquisite fragrance filling the air. He then he asked Jibril ﷺ what the smell filling the air was, and Jibril said that it was the smell of “the Hair-dresser of Pharaoh’s Daughter”, and her four sons. She was secretly one of the followers of Musa ﷺ and she believed that Pharaoh was not a God, but she never revealed it in order to protect herself. One day, she was combing the girl’s hair and the comb accidentally fell on the floor. The first word she said was *basmallah* (invocation of the name of Allah). The girl said, “You mean father?” The Faithful woman, unable to hide her faith anymore, said, “My Lord and your father’s and yours.” The girl then exclaimed, “Do you have an other God than my father?!” The hair dresser repeated, “Yes, my Lord and your father’s and yours,” The girl told Pharaoh, so he summoned her and asked, “Do you have another God than me?” and she insisted, “My Lord and yours is Allah”. Can you see the persistence of women? Pharaoh thought he knew how to make her break down. He asked if she had children and when he was told she had four, he ordered his guards to bring them all. He also ordered them to make a brass oven in the shape of a cow. Imagine how she felt as he pulled her sons one by one towards it. He asks, “Do you have another God than me?” she kept answering confidently, “My Lord and yours is Allah,” and he threw one of her sons in the oven. People heard him cry for a while, then silence reigned, and his other brothers followed. When the only one left of her children was the baby in her arms, she held him tight while they tried to pull him away, so the baby miraculously said, “Mother, persist for you are the one who is right” Thus, she and her baby were taken and thrown with the rest of the children. It is a mercy from Allah that she was burnt with her children, so she could be saved from a life without them. The story ends here, but to us it does not. The Prophet ﷺ could smell their pleasant fragrance filling the air as he ascended. Allah ﷻ gave them this fragrance, as a compensation for the day they were burnt to death when the last smell was that of their flesh burning. As you sow, you shall reap seems to be the rule. Allah ﷻ never forgets to reward his worshippers their rightful rewards.

The Prophet ﷺ saw more scenes as he ascended. He saw men and women in front of whom there was an edible and attractive dish of meat, but they abandoned it and ate foul meat instead and they went on devouring it. The Prophet ﷺ asked Jibril ﷺ who they were and he replied, “These are the adulterers; they leave the *halal* (permissible) good meat and eat foul *haram* (sinful) meat instead.” Bear in mind that this is not their punishment in Hell; but rather their punishment after their death only.

The Prophet ﷺ also saw as he went on people in whose mouth balls of fire were crammed. He asked Jibril (AS) who they were and he answered, “These are the ones who embezzle the property of orphans unlawfully”. This is clear in the ayah where Allah ﷻ says , **“Surely the ones who eat the riches of the orphans unjustly, they surely only eat (up) Fire in their bellies and will roast in a Blaze”? (4:10).**

The Prophet ﷺ also heard the *Jannah’s* sweet voice as it addresses Allah saying, “Oh Lord, where are my dwellers? I have prepared myself, and my silk, trees, water, and plants are in abundance. Where are my dwellers?”

The Prophet ﷺ also saw people with brass nails with which they scratched their faces and chests. He asked Jibril (AS) who they were and he answered, “These are the ones who gossip about people in their absence and whose speech stigmatizes a woman’s honor.”

The Prophet ﷺ and Jibril (AS) kept ascending, until they reached a point where Jibril stopped. That was the farthest place Jibril was allowed to reach; it was the Lote-Tree (The Tree of the End) which means the top or the point that creatures do not go beyond. No creature, be it an angel, a jinn, or a human, can walk beyond this tree, but the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. By this, he was given a great rank and we all should love him and revere him for that. Do you indeed love him for that? Jibril said, "If you walk further, you will penetrate, but if I walk further, I will incinerate." The Prophet ﷺ said that Jibril at that moment looked more like a threadbare carpet from fear of Allah. Imagine Jibril so humble and modest out of Allah's fear. Allah ﷻ says, **"And indeed he did already see him (during) another descent, At the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary. At it is the Garden of the Abode. As that which envelops did envelop the Lote-Tree. In no way did (his) beholding (i.e., the eyesight) swerve, and in no way was it inordinate. Indeed he has already seen of the signs of his Lord, the greatest" (53: 13-18).**

He saw what no man ever saw. There is no Hadith that describes what happened there clearly because language simply cannot describe Allah's Greatness.

The Prophet ﷺ said that he reached a place where he could hear the scraping of pens as they wrote the destinies of mankind. There is a great controversy among scholars whether Prophet Muhammad ﷺ saw Allah ﷻ or not. The Prophet ﷺ himself does not mention any details on this subject. We are all going to see Allah ﷻ on the Day of Judgement. We will all-if Allah wills-see him in Jannah. Can you imagine that? I personally find myself speechless. We should grasp the level to which Prophet Muhammad ﷺ got in order to feel what it is going to be like when we are in *Jannah*. Look at us, how the story of *Mir'raj* detached us from the present life and took us to other realms of Allah's Kingdom. Do you realize that what we are talking about is our destination? Imagine the day you look at Allah ﷻ. Allah ﷻ says, **"Faces upon that Day will be blooming, Looking towards their Lord" (75:22-3).**

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ says, Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: **"Allah will say to the people of Paradise, 'O the people of Paradise!' They will say, 'Labbaik, O our Lord, and Sa'daik, and all the good is in Your Hands!' Allah will say, 'Are you satisfied?' They will say, 'Why shouldn't we be satisfied, O our Lord as You have given us what You have not given to any of Your created beings?' He will say, 'Shall I not give you something better than that?' They will say, 'O our Lord! What else could be better than that?' He will say, 'I bestow My Pleasure on you and will never be angry with you after that.' "(Authentic Hadith, Al-Bukhari)**

The Prophet ﷺ got there and Allah ﷻ said to him, "Muhammad! I have enjoined on your Ummah fifty prayers daily."

Prayer is the only obligation that was decreed in the Heavens and we should pray bearing in mind this fact. You should feel that the moment you say *"Allahu Akbar"* (Allah is Great), you start a meeting with Allah ﷻ, that Allah gives you attention, that Allah looks at you, and that if you look or drift away, He says, "[Are you looking] At who is better than me?" Have you turned away because you found someone who is better than me? You should feel what you mean by saying *"Allahu Akbar"*. Nothing should be more important when you start your meeting with Allah ﷻ. Allah is greater. That is why *"Allahu Akbar"* works like the joints between the parts of

the prayer. That is because nothing is greater than meeting Him and at His own time. Fifty prayers a day were decreed in the Heavens. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had to go all the way to the Lote Tree, so we could appreciate prayer and realize how essential it is. You who do not pray, or do not pray on a regular basis, or if you always pray late, or miss prayers, how could you see the importance of prayer and yet simply laze about. We were ordered to perform prayers in *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj*. Prayer in itself is a kind of spiritual *Mi'raj* to Allah.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Then the prayers were enjoined on me: They were fifty prayers a day. When I returned, I passed by Musa (AS) who asked (me), **"What have you been ordered to do?" I replied, "I have been ordered to offer fifty prayers a day" Musa (AS) said, "Your followers cannot bear fifty prayers a day, and by Allah, I have tested people before you, and I have tried my level best with Bani-Israel (in vain). Go back to your Lord and ask for reduction to lessen your followers' burden" So I went back, and Allah reduced ten prayers for me. Then again I came to Musa, but he repeated the same as he had said before. Then again I went back to Allah and He reduced ten more prayers. When I came back to Musa he said the same, I went back to Allah and He ordered me to observe ten prayers a day. When I came back to Musa, he repeated the same advice, so I went back to Allah and was ordered to observe five prayers a day. When I came back to Musa, he said, "What have you been ordered?" I replied, "I have been ordered to observe five prayers a day" He said, "Your followers cannot bear five prayers a day. No doubt, I have got an experience of the people before you. I have tried my level best with Bani-Israel. So go back to your Lord, and ask for reduction to lessen your follower's burden" I said, "I have requested so much of my Lord that I feel ashamed, but I am satisfied now and surrender to Allah's Order" When I left, I heard a voice saying, 'I have passed My Order and have lessened the burden of My Worshipers" (Authentic Hadith, Al-Bukhari)**

The question now is, when Allah ﷻ already knew that the prayers were going to be five eventually, why did He start with fifty? Musa ﷺ cannot have altered the order of Allah, can he? It is because we have to appreciate Allah's mercy. It is also because we have to know that the basis of this religion is simplicity and clearness. How can we neglect prayers now? How can we when we know that on the Day of Judgement, the first thing man is judged for is prayer.

The Prophet ﷺ also said that he saw *Jannah*, and that he entered *Jannah*. Once, the Prophet teased his companions by asking if any of them had ever been to *Jannah*. No one answered, except Abdullah Ibn-Omar, who raised his hand saying that he has. The Prophet ﷺ asked if any of them had ever drunk of the rivers of *Jannah*, so Abdullah said that he did. Omar Ibn-Al-Khattab (his father) put his hands over his head. The Prophet ﷺ asked if any of them had ever eaten of the fruit of *Jannah*, so Abdullah Ibn-Omar said that he had. People got confused. So the Prophet ordered Abdullah to tell them how he had done those things. So he said that he entered *Jannah* the day Prophet Muhammad ﷺ entered it, and that he drank of its rivers when the Prophet did, and that he ate of its fruit the day the Prophet did. This is how much the companions believed in him (SWAS) and in what he said. We too ate of its fruit! The Prophet's visit to *Jannah* is a symbol that inspires us all.

The Prophet ﷺ says that he saw in *Jannah* what no eyes have seen, and what no ears have heard, and what never crossed the minds of humankind. Thus, the Prophet ﷺ widens the scope as he goes; first, what no eyes ever saw. You certainly have seen many things in your

life. Moreover, your ears must have heard about what you have not seen. Finally, what your senses stand short of grasping may be envisioned in your imagination. Nevertheless, the Prophet's descriptions go beyond that all to include what have never flitted into a man's heart!

He also saw the *Kawthar River* that Allah promised him. He asked Jibril what it was and he said that it was the river *kawthar*, whose banks are made of gold, as Allah promised in , **“Surely We have given you the Abundance; So pray to your Lord and slaughter (the sacrifice). Surely your antagonist is he who is without offspring” (108:1-3).**

He also saw our houses in *Jannah*. He says that the houses are made of blocks of gold and silver, the cement that sticks them together is made of pure musk, the pebbles are pearls, and its ceiling is Allah's throne. Imagine that wherever you look up from your house, you will see Allah's throne. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was once asked who the lowest classes of the *Jannah* dwellers will be. He said that they are those who could walk in their properties for a thousand years without reaching their boundaries. Then, he was asked who the upper classes were, so he said that they are the ones who see Allah's face day and night.

After he the Prophet ﷺ saw *Jannah*, he descends to the Buraq wall and then he was brought home.

He then said that his pillow was as warm as it was when he left it, as if the trip was short. The next morning, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ woke up depressed and confused; he did not know whether to tell Quraysh about his journey or not, as the Surah explaining it was not revealed yet. Abu-Jahl walked near him and asked him what was wrong. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ started telling him what happened. Abu-Jahl then decided to seize the opportunity to ridicule the Prophet ﷺ and his message and asked Prophet Muhammad whether he would repeat the same story if he crowds the dwellers of al Ka'ba to which the Prophet agreed. For the very first time, Abu-Jahl started to gather people to listen the Prophet ﷺ who narrated what happened with confidence. However, the people kept clapping their hands as a sign of disbelief mockery. When Abu-Bakr heard about this, he said his popular quotation “If he had said that, then it is true. I believe what is far more than that”

The people of Quraysh tried to challenge the Prophet , asking him to describe the *Aqsa* mosque to them. At that moment, the Prophet ﷺ somehow could not recall exactly what it looked like. Therefore, Allah ﷻ showed it to His Prophet in a revelation and he started describing it to them as he saw it. In defiance, the people of Quraysh asked for another sign, to which the Prophet ﷺ said that he saw a convoy on the way from the *Aqsa* mosque to Makkah, and that it was going to be late because some of their goods were stolen. Soon after that, what the Prophet foresaw actually took place, but the people of Quraysh falsified his testimony and claimed that it was only magic.

In conclusion, the goal of this journey was to provide us with significant symbols and precious knowledge. It tells us that we are responsible for the *Aqsa* mosque. It also shows Allah's ﷻ support Prophet Muhammad .

Lecture Notes Provided By: Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin

Seerah: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Hisam, Ibn Kathir and Diya al-Nabi were used in the compilation of these lecture notes as well as various books of Hadith.

The selective topics and format is from Amr Khaled's Arabic lecture on Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ with renditions from the "dar al tarjma" convoy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oDLD8B-has>

I have included modifications for the sake of readability and clarity.