THE PROPHET'S SIRAH

SERIES 6

THE NIGHT JOURNEY

The Journey to Jerusalem and the Seven Heavens, the Gift of Prayer, and the Pledges of al-'Aqabah According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡأَقۡصَا
ٱلَّذِي بَٰرَكۡنَا حَوۡلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنۡ ءَايَٰتِنَآۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ

"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing."

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:1

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Exalted is Allah, who took His servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa. Blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and his Companions.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This sixth book of The Prophet's Sirah follows the greatest journey in human history — al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj — and the gift of the five daily prayers brought back from it, followed by the meetings with the people of Yathrib and the Pledges of al-'Aqabah that opened the way to the hijrah. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being. It shows **the old city of Jerusalem at night**: glowing stone walls and domes beneath **a star-filled sky**, with **a beam of light** rising from the city through the clouds into the high heavens. In front of it, **a winding stony path** through the hills and **a garden** lead towards the city.

The stony path and garden recall the hard journey to Ta'if (Book 5); that path now leads to the light. The city is al-Masjid al-Aqsa, destination of the Isra', while the light rising to the sky symbolises the Mi'raj — his journey through the seven heavens to Sidrat al-Muntaha.

The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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CONTENTS

THE NIGHT JOURNEY — *Introduction*
1. AFTER TA'IF: SEEKING HELPERS — *Sirah note*
2. WHEN DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE? — *Table of views*
3. "EXALTED IS HE…" — *Al-Isra' 17:1*
4. A CHEST OPENED AND FILLED WITH FAITH — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3887*
5. AL-BURAQ — *Assessing depictions*
6. IN JERUSALEM: LEADING THE PROPHETS — *Sahih Muslim 162, 172*
7. AL-MASJID AL-AQSA — *Map; facts*
8. THE MI'RAJ: THE HADITH OF MALIK IBN SA'SA'AH — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3887*
9. THE PROPHETS IN THE SEVEN HEAVENS — *Figure of seven heavens*
10. SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA — *An-Najm 53:13–18*
11. THE GIFT OF THE FIVE PRAYERS — *Figure of the reduction*
12. DID HE SEE ALLAH? — *Assessing the views*
13. MORNING IN MAKKAH: QURAYSH DENY — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3886*
14. ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ — *Sirah note*
15. A TRIAL FOR PEOPLE — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3888*
16. LESSONS OF THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ — *Table of lessons*
17. YATHRIB: A CITY MADE READY — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3777*
18. SIX MEN OF KHAZRAJ — *Sirah note*
19. THE FIRST PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH — *Sahih al-Bukhari 18*
20. MUS'AB IBN 'UMAYR: ISLAM'S FIRST ENVOY — *Sahih al-Bukhari 3925*
21. THE SECOND PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH — *Figure; sirah note*
22. BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES — *Assessing the reports*
23. IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES — *From al-Hijr to Jerusalem and Mina*
24. JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF THE ISRA' — *Between Rome and Persia*
25. TRACES OF HISTORY: THE AL-MASJID AL-AQSA COMPOUND — *The Dome of the Rock and the al-Buraq Wall*
26. PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES — *The prophets and the Companions*
27. TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD — *Table of events 614–692 CE*
28. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS — *Twelve questions*
29. LESSONS AND CONCLUSION
REFERENCES
SUPPORT & DONATIONS

Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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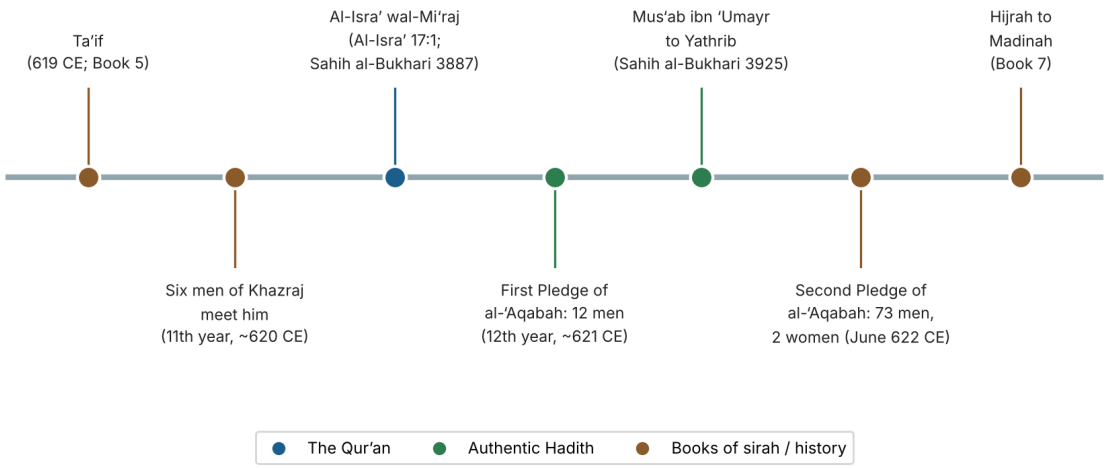
THE NIGHT JOURNEY

The fifth book of The Prophet's Sirah ended with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ re-entering Makkah under the protection of a polytheist, after the boycott, the loss of Abu Talib and Khadijah, and the stoning at Ta'if. When the earth felt narrow, Allah opened ***the heavens***. This sixth eBook tells of ***the Isra'*** — the night journey from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa — and ***the Mi'raj*** — his ascent through the seven heavens to Sidrat al-Muntaha, where ***the five daily prayers*** were enjoined.

The second part of this eBook tells of the ease on earth that followed: the meeting with a few men from ***Yathrib***, the two ***Pledges of al-'Aqabah***, and the sending of ***Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr*** as Islam's first envoy — opening the way to the hijrah.

The story of the Isra' and Mi'raj is long and has many reports, some authentic and some weak or fabricated. This eBook ***holds to the Qur'an and authentic Hadith***, especially the hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah in Sahih al-Bukhari, and clearly marks unauthentic stories.

Timeline: From Ta'if to the Pledges of al-'Aqabah (619–622 CE)



The date of al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj is disputed; the well-known view places it about a year before the hijrah.

Figure 1: Timeline from Ta'if to the Pledges of al-'Aqabah.

Note: The Qur'anic translation in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in its box. Information from the books of sirah is placed in brown "Sirah Note" boxes, and historical facts come with source links.

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AFTER TA'IF: SEEKING HELPERS

After Ta'if, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not give up. In every pilgrimage season, when the Arab tribes came to Makkah and to markets such as 'Ukaz, Majannah and Dhu al-Majaz, he went from tent to tent, offering Islam and asking for protection to convey the message.

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما narrated that he presented himself to people at the halting places and said: ***"Is there a man who will take me to his people? For Quraysh have prevented me from conveying the words of my Lord"*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 4734, authentic).

> **SIRAH NOTE: THE TRIBES THAT REFUSED**
>
> The books of sirah say he approached tribes such as ***Kindah, Kalb, Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah and Banu Hanifah***. Most refused; some politely, some harshly. Banu 'Amir is said to have agreed on condition that leadership pass to them after him, but he replied that the matter belongs to Allah, who places it where He wills.
>
> Abu Lahab is said to have followed him, telling people not to believe him.

The lesson: da'wah does not turn into ***bargaining for power***. He refused conditional support, though he badly needed it.

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WHEN DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE?

The Qur'an and authentic Hadith ***do not give a date*** for the Isra' and Mi'raj. For this reason, the sirah scholars differ widely:

VIEW	DETAILS
27 Rajab	The popular view, celebrated in many countries; not based on an authentic report.
About a year before the hijrah	The view of many sirah scholars; Wikipedia equates it with about 621 CE.
Rabi' al-Awwal or Ramadan	Mentioned by Ibn Sa'd and others.
Before Khadijah's death	Some scholars, since prayer was obligatory while Khadijah was alive.

Source: Wikipedia, "Isra' and Mi'raj".

More important than the date is ***its lessons***. Scholars remind us that there is no authentic special worship for the night of 27 Rajab. Remembering this event by studying the sirah and guarding the prayer is the best way to honour it.

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"EXALTED IS HE…"

The Qur'an records the Isra' in the first verse of the surah named after it:

SURAH AL-ISRA' 17:1

سُبۡحَٰنَ ٱلَّذِيٓ أَسۡرَىٰ بِعَبۡدِهِۦ لَيۡلٗا مِّنَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡأَقۡصَا
ٱلَّذِي بَٰرَكۡنَا حَوۡلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنۡ ءَايَٰتِنَآۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلۡبَصِيرُ ١

Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/17:1

EXPLANATION OF VERSE 17:1

The verse begins with ***"Exalted is He who took His Servant by night"***. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah begins with ***tasbih*** — declaring His own perfection — because this event ***surpasses human ability***; only Allah could do it. The word ***"His servant"*** indicates the journey involved ***body and soul***, since "servant" refers to both. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 17:1.

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PHRASE IN THE VERSE	LESSON
"Exalted is He"	This event is a miracle; do not measure it by reason alone.
"His servant"	The noblest title of the Messenger ﷺ is 'servant of Allah'.
"by night"	It happened within part of a single night.
"from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa"	Linking two sacred mosques; Islam is heir to the message of the prophets.
"whose surroundings We have blessed"	The land of Sham and Palestine is blessed.
"to show him of Our signs"	The purpose: to strengthen the Messenger's certainty.

The lesson: true honour is ***being a servant of Allah***. On the most honoured night of his life, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is called by the title "servant".

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A CHEST OPENED AND FILLED WITH FAITH

The hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنه begins with an astonishing event. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was lying in ***al-Hatim*** (al-Hijr), beside the Ka'bah, when the angel came and ***opened his chest***, took out his heart, washed it in a golden basin full of faith, and returned it (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

The same event had happened when he was a child among Banu Sa'd (Book 1; Sahih Muslim 162). Scholars explain that this second opening was ***preparation*** for the great journey: to witness the heavens and receive the command of prayer directly.

THE HEART AS THE SEAT OF FAITH

His heart was washed and filled with ***faith and wisdom***. This reminds us that the most important preparation for any great task is ***purifying the heart***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that in the body there is a lump of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound — it is the heart (Sahih al-Bukhari 52).

This event is a matter of ***the unseen*** to be believed as reported, without forcing reason to explain it by the measures of ordinary medicine.

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AL-BURAQ

Authentic hadith describes al-Buraq as ***a white mount***, ***smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey***, that placed each step ***as far as its sight reached*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). Scholars link the name "Buraq" to ***barq*** (lightning), for its speed.

DEPICTION	STATUS
White, between a mule and a donkey	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
Its stride as far as its sight	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
Tied to a ring in Jerusalem	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 162)
A winged horse with a woman's face	No basis in authentic hadith; a later artistic depiction

The widespread pictures of al-Buraq as a winged horse with a human head ***have no basis in authentic hadith***. They are later artistic creations. It is enough for us to believe in the description given by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself.

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IN JERUSALEM: LEADING THE PROPHETS

The hadith of Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه in Sahih Muslim adds details of the Isra': he rode al-Buraq until he reached ***Bayt al-Maqdis***, then ***tied it to the ring*** the prophets used to tie their mounts to. Then he entered the mosque and ***prayed two rak'ahs*** (Sahih Muslim 162).

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that he said: ***"I found myself among a group of prophets… Then the time of prayer came, and I led them in prayer"*** (Sahih Muslim 172).

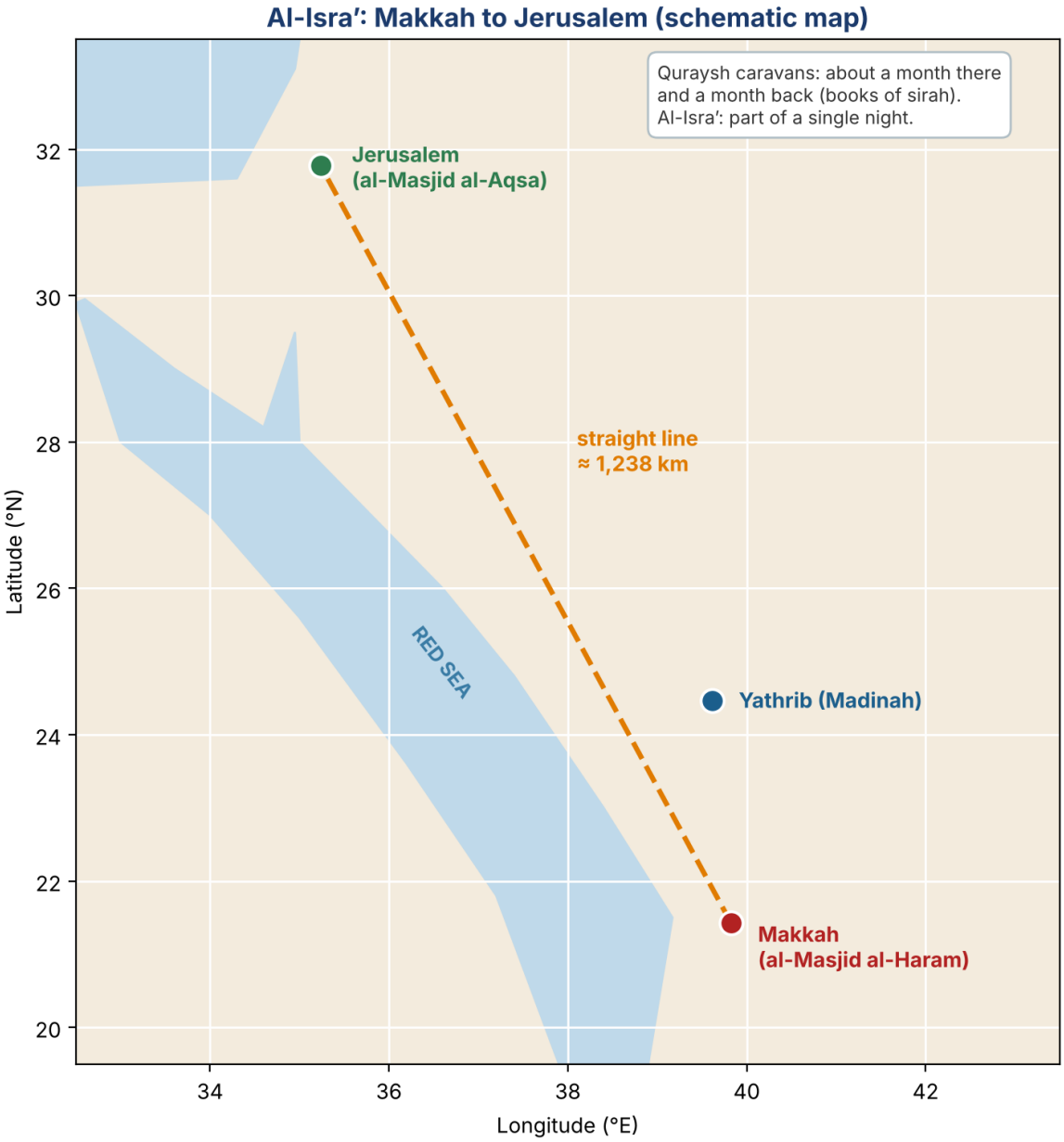
THE MEANING OF LEADING THE PROPHETS

Scholars explain that his leading the prophets shows ***the leadership of his message*** over all earlier messages. The religion of the prophets is one — ***tawhid*** — and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is their ***seal*** (Al-Ahzab 33:40).

The lesson: Muslims are ***heirs*** of all the prophets — Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isa and others عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. So love for Jerusalem and the prophets of the Children of Israel is part of a Muslim's faith.

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AL-MASJID AL-AQSA



Approximate coordinates and coastline. Distance calculated from coordinates. Source: Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque".

Figure 2: The Isra' from Makkah to Jerusalem (schematic map).

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FACTS ABOUT AL-MASJID AL-AQSA

MATTER	DETAILS
Area	"Al-Masjid al-Aqsa" refers to the whole walled compound (al-Haram ash-Sharif), about 14.4 hectares.
The al-Qibli Mosque	The mosque building on the south side; holds about 5,000 worshippers.
The Dome of the Rock	Built in the Umayyad era ('Abd al-Malik), decades after the Prophet's death ﷺ.
Standing	The third holiest place in Islam after Makkah and Madinah.
The first qiblah	Muslims prayed towards it for about 16 or 17 months after the hijrah (Sahih al-Bukhari 40).

Source: Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque"; Sahih al-Bukhari 40.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also named al-Masjid al-Aqsa as one of ***three mosques*** to which travel for worship is encouraged, together with al-Masjid al-Haram and the Prophet's Mosque (Sahih al-Bukhari 1189).

The lesson: the Isra' bound the hearts of Muslims to ***Jerusalem*** forever. Defending al-Aqsa and praying for its wellbeing is part of the legacy of this event.

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THE MI'RAJ: THE HADITH OF MALIK IBN SA'SA'AH

The most complete hadith on the Mi'raj in Sahih al-Bukhari is the report of ***Anas ibn Malik*** from ***Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah*** رضى الله عنهما. It tells of the journey from the Ka'bah to the seventh heaven, Sidrat al-Muntaha and the enjoining of prayer:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3887

حَدَّثَنَا هُدْبَةُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا هَمَّامُ بْنُ يَحْيَى، حَدَّثَنَا قَتَادَةُ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ صَعْصَعَةَ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم حَدَّثَهُمْ عَنْ لَيْلَةِ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ «بَيْنَمَا أَنَا فِي الْحَطِيمِ ـ وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ فِي الْحِجْرِ ـ مُضْطَجِعًا، إِذْ أَتَانِي آتٍ فَقَدَّ ـ قَالَ وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ فَشَقَّ ـ مَا بَيْنَ هَذِهِ إِلَى هَذِهِ ـ فَقُلْتُ لِلْجَارُودِ وَهْوَ إِلَى جَنْبِي مَا يَعْنِي بِهِ قَالَ مِنْ ثُغْرَةِ نَحْرِهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ، وَسَمِعْتُهُ يَقُولُ مِنْ قَصِّهِ إِلَى شِعْرَتِهِ ـ فَاسْتَخْرَجَ قَلْبِي، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِطَسْتٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مَمْلُوءَةٍ إِيمَانًا، فَغُسِلَ قَلْبِي ثُمَّ حُشِيَ، ثُمَّ أُوتِيتُ بِدَابَّةٍ دُونَ الْبَغْلِ وَفَوْقَ الْحِمَارِ أَبْيَضَ». ـ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْجَارُودُ هُوَ الْبُرَاقُ يَا أَبَا حَمْزَةَ قَالَ أَنَسٌ نَعَمْ، يَضَعُ خَطْوَهُ عِنْدَ أَقْصَى طَرْفِهِ ـ «فَحُمِلْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَانْطَلَقَ بِي جِبْرِيلُ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، فَقِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا فِيهَا آدَمُ، فَقَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ آدَمُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الثَّانِيَةَ فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفَتَحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، إِذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى، وَهُمَا ابْنَا الْخَالَةِ قَالَ هَذَا يَحْيَى وَعِيسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِمَا. فَسَلَّمْتُ فَرَدَّا، ثُمَّ قَالاَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّالِثَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِذَا يُوسُفُ. قَالَ هَذَا يُوسُفُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ، ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ، ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الرَّابِعَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ

أَوَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَفُتِحَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ إِلَى إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ هَذَا إِدْرِيسُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ الْخَامِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ صلى الله عليه وسلم. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قِيلَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ. فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ فَإِذَا هَارُونُ قَالَ هَذَا هَارُونُ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي حَتَّى أَتَى السَّمَاءَ السَّادِسَةَ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ مَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ، فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا مُوسَى قَالَ هَذَا مُوسَى فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ، فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ ثُمَّ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالأَخِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. فَلَمَّا تَجَاوَزْتُ بَكَى، قِيلَ لَهُ مَا يُبْكِيكَ قَالَ أَبْكِي لأَنَّ غُلاَمًا بُعِثَ بَعْدِي، يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِهِ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا مِنْ أُمَّتِي. ثُمَّ صَعِدَ بِي إِلَى السَّمَاءِ السَّابِعَةِ، فَاسْتَفْتَحَ جِبْرِيلُ، قِيلَ مَنْ هَذَا قَالَ جِبْرِيلُ. قِيلَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ قَالَ مُحَمَّدٌ. قِيلَ وَقَدْ بُعِثَ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ نَعَمْ. قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِهِ، فَنِعْمَ الْمَجِيءُ جَاءَ فَلَمَّا خَلَصْتُ، فَإِذَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ قَالَ هَذَا أَبُوكَ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَيْهِ. قَالَ فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَرَدَّ السَّلاَمَ قَالَ مَرْحَبًا بِالاِبْنِ الصَّالِحِ وَالنَّبِيِّ الصَّالِحِ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَتْ لِي سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، فَإِذَا نَبِقُهَا مِثْلُ قِلاَلِ هَجَرَ، وَإِذَا وَرَقُهَا مِثْلُ آذَانِ الْفِيَلَةِ قَالَ هَذِهِ سِدْرَةُ الْمُنْتَهَى، وَإِذَا أَرْبَعَةُ أَنْهَارٍ نَهْرَانِ بَاطِنَانِ، وَنَهْرَانِ ظَاهِرَانِ. فَقُلْتُ مَا هَذَانِ يَا جِبْرِيلُ قَالَ أَمَّا الْبَاطِنَانِ، فَنَهَرَانِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، وَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَانِ فَالنِّيلُ وَالْفُرَاتُ. ثُمَّ رُفِعَ لِي الْبَيْتُ الْمَعْمُورُ، ثُمَّ أُتِيتُ بِإِنَاءٍ مِنْ خَمْرٍ، وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ لَبَنٍ وَإِنَاءٍ مِنْ عَسَلٍ، فَأَخَذْتُ اللَّبَنَ، فَقَالَ هِيَ الْفِطْرَةُ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهَا وَأُمَّتُكَ. ثُمَّ فُرِضَتْ عَلَيَّ الصَّلَوَاتُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. فَرَجَعْتُ فَمَرَرْتُ عَلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قَالَ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسِينَ صَلاَةً كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي وَاللَّهِ قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. فَرَجَعْتُ، فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَوَضَعَ عَنِّي عَشْرًا، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِعَشْرِ

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صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَقَالَ مِثْلَهُ، فَرَجَعْتُ فَأُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، فَرَجَعْتُ إِلَى مُوسَى، فَقَالَ بِمَا أُمِرْتَ قُلْتُ أُمِرْتُ بِخَمْسِ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ. قَالَ إِنَّ أُمَّتَكَ لاَ تَسْتَطِيعُ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ، وَإِنِّي قَدْ جَرَّبْتُ النَّاسَ قَبْلَكَ، وَعَالَجْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَشَدَّ الْمُعَالَجَةِ، فَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّكَ فَاسْأَلْهُ التَّخْفِيفَ لأُمَّتِكَ. قَالَ سَأَلْتُ رَبِّي حَتَّى اسْتَحْيَيْتُ، وَلَكِنْ أَرْضَى وَأُسَلِّمُ ـ قَالَ ـ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزْتُ نَادَى مُنَادٍ أَمْضَيْتُ فَرِيضَتِي وَخَفَّفْتُ عَنْ عِبَادِي».

TRANSLATION:

Anas ibn Malik narrated from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ told them about the night he was taken on the journey: **"While I was lying in al-Hatim — or he said, in al-Hijr — someone came to me and split (my chest) from the base of the throat to below the belly. He took out my heart; then a golden basin full of faith was brought to me, and my heart was washed and filled, then returned. Then a white mount was brought to me, smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey"** — al-Buraq, whose stride reached as far as its sight. **"I was mounted on it, and Jibril set out with me until we reached the lowest heaven. He asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked: 'Who is this?' He said: 'Jibril.' It was asked: 'Who is with you?' He said: 'Muhammad.' It was asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes.' It was said: 'Welcome to him; how excellent his coming is!' The gate was opened, and there was Adam. Jibril said: 'This is your father Adam; greet him.' I greeted him; he returned the greeting and said: 'Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet.'"** In the same way he ascended to the second heaven and met ***Yahya and 'Isa*** (two cousins), the third and met ***Yusuf***, the fourth and met ***Idris***, the fifth and met ***Harun***, and the sixth and met ***Musa***; each said: "Welcome, righteous brother and righteous prophet." **"When I passed him, Musa wept. He was asked: 'What makes you weep?' He said: 'I weep because a young man was sent after me, and more of his nation will enter Paradise than of mine.'"** In the seventh heaven he met ***Ibrahim***, who said: "Welcome, righteous son and righteous prophet." **"Then Sidrat al-Muntaha was raised up before me. Its fruits were like the jars of Hajar and its leaves like elephants' ears. There were four rivers: two hidden and two visible. I asked: 'What are these, Jibril?' He said: 'The two hidden are rivers in Paradise, and the two visible are the Nile and the Euphrates.' Then al-Bayt al-Ma'mur was raised up before me. Then a vessel of wine, a vessel of milk and a vessel of honey were brought to me. I took the milk. He said: 'That is the fitrah, on which you and your nation stand.' Then fifty prayers a day were made obligatory upon me."** On the way down, Musa advised him: **"Your nation cannot bear fifty prayers a day. By Allah, I tested people before you and struggled hard with the Children of Israel. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to lighten it for your nation."** He went back again and again, and it was reduced ten by ten, then to ten, then to ***five prayers a day***. Musa advised him again, but he said: **"I have asked my Lord until I feel shy; but I am content and I submit." "When I moved on, a caller called out: 'I have enacted My obligation and lightened (the burden) for My servants.'"**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Hudbah ibn Khalid, from Hammam ibn Yahya, from Qatadah, from Anas ibn Malik, from Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3887. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 164). The translation of the second to sixth heavens is summarised as the wording repeats.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3887

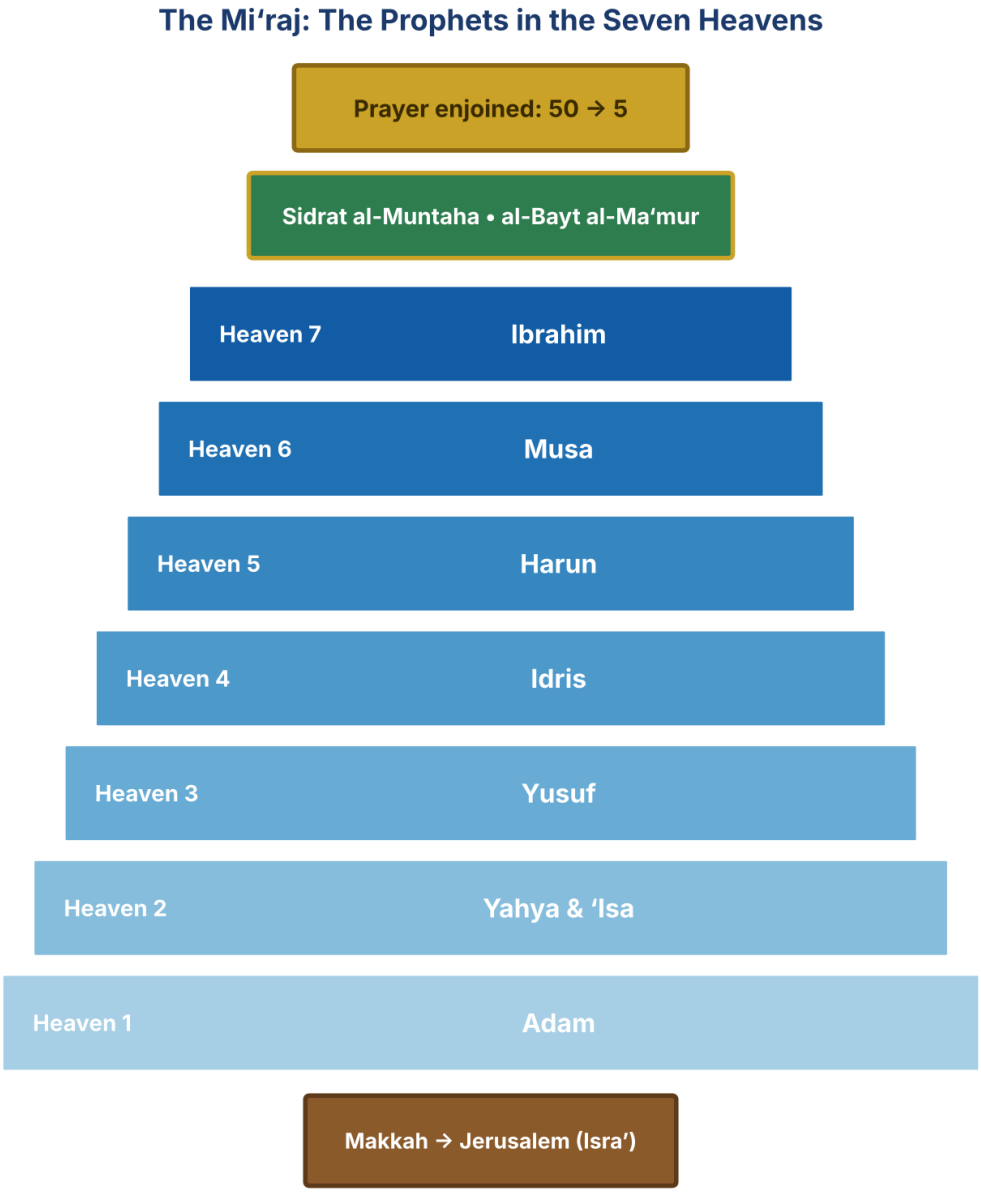
LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Notice ***the etiquette at the gates of heaven***: Jibril asked permission, was asked who he was and who was with him, and the gate opened only after confirmation. Even on the noblest journey, etiquette and permission were observed.

Notice too ***the welcome*** of the prophets: Adam and Ibrahim greeted him as ***"righteous son"***, since he was their descendant; the others greeted him as ***"righteous brother"***. The prophets are one family.

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THE PROPHETS IN THE SEVEN HEAVENS



According to Sahih al-Bukhari 3887 (narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah). This figure is schematic, not a depiction of the unseen.

Figure 3: The prophets met in the seven heavens (schematic).

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Sirah scholars have reflected on the wisdom of meeting each prophet. Some of the explanations below are ***scholarly reflections***, not texts, but they help us understand the continuity of the message:

HEAVEN AND PROPHET	REFLECTION
1 — Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Father of mankind; sent out of Paradise, then forgiven — like the Prophet driven from his home.
2 — Yahya and 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Opposed and persecuted by their own people.
3 — Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Wronged by his brothers, then forgave them.
4 — Idris عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Raised to "a high station" (Maryam 19:57).
5 — Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Beloved by his people; supported his brother in da'wah.
6 — Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	The messenger who struggled most with his people's ways.
7 — Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Father of the prophets; reclining against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur (Sahih Muslim 162).

The lesson: every trial the Messenger of Allah ﷺ faced had been faced by prophets before him. These meetings were ***a consolation*** after the Year of Sorrow.

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THE WEEPING OF PROPHET MUSA

A very moving moment in the Mi'raj hadith is ***the weeping of Prophet Musa*** عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed him: "I weep because a young man was sent after me, and more of his nation will enter Paradise than of mine" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

Scholars explain that this weeping was ***not envy***, for prophets are free of it. It was weeping of ***love and sorrow*** for his own people, many of whom rejected him, and a longing for more of his nation to be saved.

MUSA: AN ADVISER TO THE NATION OF MUHAMMAD

Even more remarkable, the same Prophet Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who wept then ***advised*** the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to go back and ask for the prayers to be lightened — until fifty became five. His experience with the Children of Israel became a mercy for the nation of Muhammad ﷺ.

The lesson: ***the experience of those before us*** is a treasure. Value the advice of those who have walked the road we walk, and do not begrudge others the good they receive.

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SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA

At the summit of the journey, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ reached ***Sidrat al-Muntaha*** — the lote tree of the utmost boundary, a limit no creature passes. Allah describes it in Surah An-Najm:

SURAH AN-NAJM 53:13–18

وَلَقَدْ رَءَاهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾

And he certainly saw him in another descent.

عِندَ سِدْرَةِ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾

At the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary.

عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ ٱلْمَأْوَىٰٓ ﴿١٥﴾

Near it is the Garden of Refuge.

إِذْ يَغْشَى ٱلسِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾

When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it]?

مَا زَاغَ ٱلْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾

The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit].

لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ ءَايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰٓ ﴿١٨﴾

He certainly saw of the greatest signs of his Lord.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/53:13-18

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EXPLANATION OF VERSES 53:13–18

Allah praises the steadiness of his sight: ***"The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress"***. Ibn Kathir explains that his gaze ***did not turn right or left*** nor go beyond what he was commanded — a picture of perfect ***courtesy and obedience*** before the majesty of Allah. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 53:17.

MATTER	DETAILS
Whom he saw (53:13)	According to 'A'ishah and Ibn Mas'ud, he saw Jibril in his true form a second time (Sahih Muslim 177; Sahih al-Bukhari 4856).
The tree	Its fruits like the jars of Hajar, its leaves like elephants' ears (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Covered (53:16)	Covered by colours and things beyond description (Sahih Muslim 162).
The Garden of Refuge (53:15)	The Garden of abode lies near it.
The greatest signs (53:18)	He saw some of the greatest signs of his Lord.

The lesson: ***courtesy*** is a mark of perfection. At the most majestic moment, the gaze of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was controlled — just as a believer must guard his gaze in every situation.

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AL-BAYT AL-MA'MUR AND THE FOUR RIVERS

After Sidrat al-Muntaha, ***al-Bayt al-Ma'mur*** was raised up before him. In another version of the same hadith, Jibril explained: ***"This is al-Bayt al-Ma'mur; every day seventy thousand angels pray in it, and when they leave they never return"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3207).

Ibn Kathir mentions that al-Bayt al-Ma'mur lies ***directly above the Ka'bah*** on earth, and Allah swears by it in Surah At-Tur (52:4). The Ka'bah on earth is the qiblah of mankind; al-Bayt al-Ma'mur in heaven is the place of worship of the angels.

FOUR RIVERS

He also saw ***four rivers*** by Sidrat al-Muntaha: two hidden — rivers of Paradise — and two visible, ***the Nile and the Euphrates***. Scholars explain that this shows ***the blessing*** of these two rivers, and that the origin of their good is from Allah, without denying their known geographical sources on earth.

The lesson: the unseen world is ***vast and full of worship***. If seventy thousand angels worship every day in al-Bayt al-Ma'mur never to return, how small is our worship, and how much we must guard our few prayers.

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MILK, WINE AND THE FITRAH

During the journey, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was offered vessels of drink — ***wine, milk and honey*** — and he chose ***milk***. Jibril said: ***"That is the fitrah, on which you and your nation stand"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).

In Abu Hurayrah's رضى الله عنه report, Jibril added: ***"Praise be to Allah who guided you to the fitrah. Had you taken the wine, your nation would have gone astray"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 3394). The same hadith also describes the appearance of Prophets Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as he saw them.

WHAT IS THE FITRAH?

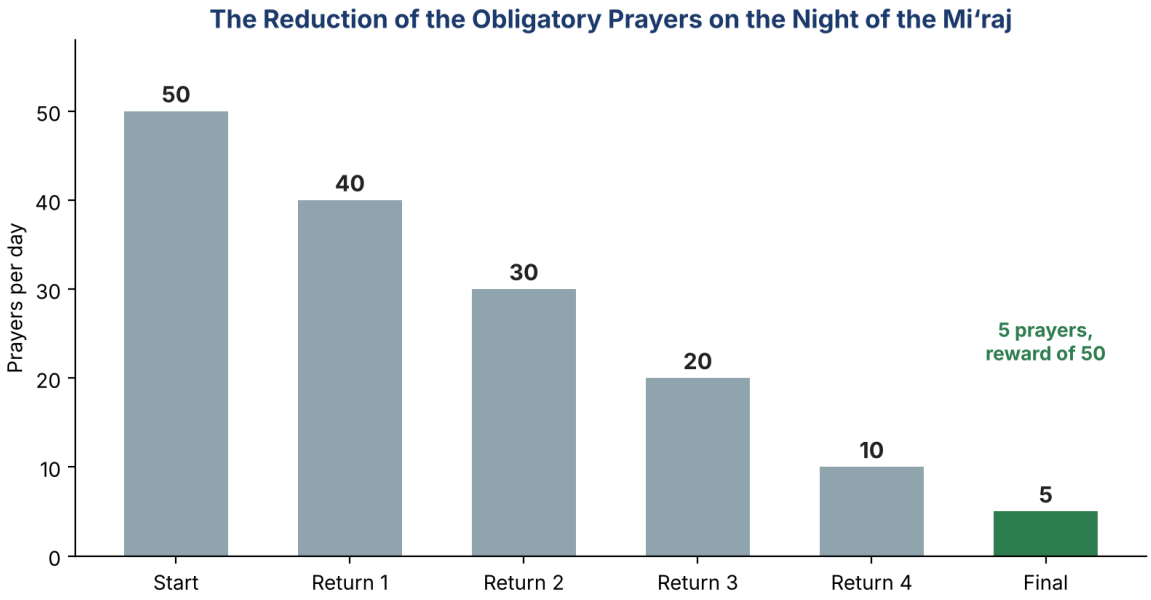
Fitrah is the original pure state on which Allah created mankind (Ar-Rum 30:30). Milk is a drink that is ***pure, nourishing and natural***, a baby's first food; while wine ***ruins the mind***, the source of many evils.

This choice became a symbol of ***the religion of Islam***: a religion in harmony with the fitrah, protecting mind, body and soul. Wine was later prohibited in stages in Madinah.

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THE GIFT OF THE FIVE PRAYERS

The greatest gift of the Mi'raj is ***prayer***. It is the only act of worship enjoined ***directly in the heavens***, without Jibril descending to earth. At first fifty prayers a day, then reduced to five (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).



Per Sahih al-Bukhari 3887 (reduced 10 at a time). Another report (Sahih al-Bukhari 349) mentions reductions by portions.

Figure 4: The reduction of the obligatory prayers on the night of the Mi'raj.

In Abu Dharr's رضى الله عنه report, Allah said: ***"They are five, and they are fifty; the word with Me does not change"*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). Scholars explain: five in deed, but ***fifty in reward***.

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THREE GIFTS AT SIDRAT AL-MUNTAHA

'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was given ***three things*** that night: ***the five prayers***, ***the closing verses of Surah Al-Baqarah***, and ***forgiveness of major sins*** for those of his nation who associate nothing with Allah (Sahih Muslim 173).

THE STANDING OF PRAYER	EVIDENCE
Enjoined in heaven, without intermediary	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Pillar of the religion; first deed reckoned	Sunan at-Tirmidhi 413 (authentic)
The line between faith and disbelief	Sahih Muslim 82
The coolness of the Prophet's eyes ﷺ	Sunan an-Nasa'i 3939 (authentic)

The lesson: prayer is ***the believer's "mi'raj"*** — the moment he speaks intimately with his Lord. A gift brought back from the seventh heaven should not be neglected on earth.

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DID HE SEE ALLAH?

This question has been discussed since the time of the Companions. Their views are based on authentic reports:

VIEW	EVIDENCE
He did not see Allah with his eyes	'A'ishah: "Whoever says Muhammad saw his Lord has lied" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855).
"Light — how could I see Him?"	His answer to Abu Dharr (Sahih Muslim 178).
He saw with his heart	Ibn 'Abbas: "He saw Him with his heart twice" (Sahih Muslim 176).
Whom he saw at the Lote Tree was Jibril	'A'ishah and Ibn Mas'ud on An-Najm 53:13 (Sahih Muslim 177).

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RECONCILING THE VIEWS

Many scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Hajar, reconcile these reports: he ***did not see Allah with his physical eyes*** in this world, as 'A'ishah said; and what Ibn 'Abbas meant was ***seeing with the heart***. Seeing Allah with the eyes is the greatest blessing for the believers in ***the Hereafter*** (Al-Qiyamah 75:22–23).

The lesson: in matters of the unseen, we ***stop where the texts stop***, respect the differences of the Companions, and add no descriptions that revelation does not give.

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OTHER SIGHTS THAT NIGHT

Several authentic hadith mention other sights shown to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that night, as ***lessons and warnings*** for his nation:

SIGHT	SOURCE
People scratching their faces and chests with copper nails — those who backbite and attack people's honour	Sunan Abi Dawud 4878 (authentic)
Prophet Musa praying in his grave by the red sand dune	Sahih Muslim 2375
Malik, keeper of Hell, greeting him	Sahih Muslim 172
The appearance of Musa, 'Isa and Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Sahih al-Bukhari 3394

The hadith of the copper nails is very relevant today. Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه narrated that he asked who they were, and Jibril replied: ***"These are those who eat people's flesh (backbite) and attack their honour"*** (Sunan Abi Dawud 4878).

> **SIRAH NOTE: LONG STORIES THAT ARE WEAK**
>
> There are long, popular stories about various groups punished in particular ways on the night of the Mi'raj — adulterers, those who consume usury, those who abandon prayer and others — with very detailed descriptions. Most of these long reports are ***weak or fabricated*** according to the Hadith scholars, and cannot be attributed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
>
> What is authentic about the punishment of adulterers, usurers and others is found in ***a separate dream of the Prophet*** (Sahih al-Bukhari 1386), which is not part of the Mi'raj.

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MORNING IN MAKKAH: QURAYSH DENY

That morning, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told people of his journey. For Quraysh, the story became something to mock: a journey to Syria that took ***a month there and a month back*** by caravan, claimed to have happened in ***part of a single night***.

They challenged him to describe Jerusalem, which some of them had seen on trade journeys. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself told what happened:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3886

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ، عَنْ عُقَيْلٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، سَمِعْتُ جَابِرَ بْنَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَقُولُ «لَمَّا كَذَّبَنِي قُرَيْشٌ قُمْتُ فِي الْحِجْرِ، فَجَلَا اللَّهُ لِي بَيْتَ الْمَقْدِسِ، فَطَفِقْتُ أُخْبِرُهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ وَأَنَا أَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ».

TRANSLATION:

Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: **"When Quraysh disbelieved me, I stood in al-Hijr, and Allah displayed Bayt al-Maqdis before me, and I began telling them of its features while I was looking at it."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Yahya ibn Bukayr, from al-Layth, from 'Uqayl, from Ibn Shihab, from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the Night Journey, Hadith No. 3886. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 170).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3886

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This hadith shows ***a miracle within a miracle***: Allah displayed Jerusalem before him so he could answer their questions one by one. In Muslim's report, he said he was asked about things he had not noticed, and Allah showed them to him (Sahih Muslim 172).

The lesson: the truth need not fear ***questions***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not hide the event though he knew it would be mocked; he conveyed it honestly and Allah defended him.

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ABU BAKR AS-SIDDIQ

SIRAH NOTE: "IF HE SAID SO, THEN HE HAS SPOKEN THE TRUTH"

The books of sirah relate that the polytheists rushed to ***Abu Bakr*** and said: "Your friend claims he went to Jerusalem last night and came back before dawn!" Abu Bakr asked: "Did he say that?" They said: "Yes." He said: ***"If he said so, then he has spoken the truth. I believe him in what is farther than that — news from heaven morning and evening."***

This report is recorded by al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak and graded ***authentic*** by some Hadith scholars. From then on Abu Bakr was known by the title ***as-Siddiq*** (the great affirmer of truth).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Abu Bakr". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr

THE LOGIC OF ABU BAKR'S FAITH

Abu Bakr's answer was very wise. He did not judge the event by ordinary measures, but by ***trust in its messenger***. If he already believed that Muhammad ﷺ received revelation from heaven every day, then a journey to Jerusalem in one night was no harder to believe.

Abu Bakr's standing as ***as-Siddiq*** was also mentioned by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself in an authentic hadith, when Mount Uhud shook: "Be still, Uhud, for upon you are a prophet, a siddiq and two martyrs" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3675).

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A TRIAL FOR PEOPLE

The Qur'an itself states that this event was ***a trial***: some grew stronger in faith, some turned back, and some mocked all the more. Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما explained the relevant verse:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3888

حَدَّثَنَا الْحُمَيْدِيُّ، حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا عَمْرٌو، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ فِي قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى {وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلاَّ فِتْنَةً لِلنَّاسِ} قَالَ هِيَ رُؤْيَا عَيْنٍ، أُرِيَهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَيْلَةَ أُسْرِيَ بِهِ إِلَى بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ. قَالَ وَالشَّجَرَةَ الْمَلْعُونَةَ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَالَ هِيَ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّومِ.

TRANSLATION:

Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said about the words of Allah the Exalted {And We did not make the sight which We showed you except as a trial for the people}: **"It was a sight of the eye (not a dream) shown to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night he was taken to Bayt al-Maqdis."** He said: "And the cursed tree in the Qur'an is the tree of Zaqqum."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from al-Humaydi, from Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, from 'Amr ibn Dinar, from 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on al-Mi'raj, Hadith No. 3888.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3888

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

Ibn 'Abbas's explanation that it was ***"a sight of the eye"*** (ru'ya 'ayn) is among the strongest proofs that the Isra' happened ***while awake***, not in a dream. Had it been merely a dream, it would not have been a trial for people, since no one disputes such dreams.

The lesson: ***belief in the unseen*** is the first quality of the God-conscious (Al-Baqarah 2:3). This event sifted those who truly believed from those who followed reason alone.

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WITH BODY AND SOUL?

Scholars have discussed whether the Isra' and Mi'raj took place with ***body and soul***, with the soul alone, or in a dream:

VIEW	DETAILS
Body and soul, while awake	The view of the majority; evidence: the word "His servant" (17:1), the trial for people (17:60) and Ibn 'Abbas's explanation (Sahih al-Bukhari 3888).
The soul alone	Reported from a few of the early Muslims; rejected by the majority.
In a dream	Rejected, since Quraysh would not have denied a dream and it would be no trial.

Source: Ibn Kathir, tafsir of 17:1; Wikipedia, "Isra' and Mi'raj" ("most Islamic scholars hold that the journey was both physical and spiritual").

The lesson: miracles are not measured by ***the ordinary laws of nature***. Allah who created those laws has power to go beyond them for His Messenger.

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LESSONS OF THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ

The Isra' and Mi'raj left a great many lessons. Among them:

LESSON	EXPLANATION
Consolation after grief	Allah opened the heavens after the earth felt narrow in the Year of Sorrow.
The standing of prayer	The only worship enjoined in heaven.
The unity of the prophets' message	He led the prophets and was welcomed as a brother.
The sanctity of Jerusalem	Destination of the Isra'; first qiblah; one of three great mosques.
Islam, the religion of fitrah	Choosing milk over wine.
Mercy and ease	Fifty became five, with the reward of fifty.
A test of faith	Some affirmed (Abu Bakr), some denied.
Courtesy before Allah	His gaze did not swerve (53:17).

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THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ IN OUR LIVES

The best way to remember the Isra' and Mi'raj is not with unfounded practices on a particular night, but by ***guarding the five daily prayers*** — the gift brought back from heaven — on time, with humility and in congregation.

Every time a believer says the takbir, he is receiving the gift of the Mi'raj. Every time he prostrates, he is ***closest to his Lord*** (Sahih Muslim 482).

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YATHRIB: A CITY MADE READY

As Makkah grew ever more closed, Allah was preparing another city about 340 km to the north: ***Yathrib***, later known as ***Madinah***. Its Arab population consisted of two related tribes, ***Aws*** and ***Khazraj***, alongside several Jewish tribes.

Aws and Khazraj had long fought each other. The last great battle was ***the Battle of Bu'ath***, a few years before the hijrah. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها saw great wisdom behind that tragedy:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3777

حَدَّثَنِي عُبَيْدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ، عَنْ هِشَامٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ عَائِشَةَ ـ رضى الله عنها ـ قَالَتْ كَانَ يَوْمُ بُعَاثَ يَوْمًا قَدَّمَهُ اللَّهُ لِرَسُولِهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَقَدِ افْتَرَقَ مَلَؤُهُمْ، وَقُتِلَتْ سَرَوَاتُهُمْ، وَجُرِّحُوا، فَقَدَّمَهُ اللَّهُ لِرَسُولِهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فِي دُخُولِهِمْ فِي الإِسْلاَمِ.

TRANSLATION:

'A'ishah رضى الله عنها said: **"The Day of Bu'ath was a day Allah brought about in advance for His Messenger ﷺ. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arrived (in Madinah), their leaders were divided, and their chiefs had been killed or wounded. Allah brought it about in advance for His Messenger ﷺ, to ease their entry into Islam."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Ubayd ibn Isma'il, from Abu Usamah, from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, from his father, 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the merits of the Ansar, Hadith No. 3777.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3777

LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

The Battle of Bu'ath ***weakened the old leaders*** who might have opposed Islam, and left the people of Yathrib ***weary of enmity*** and looking for a leader who could unite them. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came, their hearts were ready.

SIRAH NOTE: THE JEWS AND THE AWAITED PROPHET

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The books of sirah say that the Jews of Yathrib often told Aws and Khazraj that ***a prophet would be sent***, and they would follow him to defeat the Arabs. Ibn Kathir mentions this in his tafsir of Al-Baqarah 2:89. When the men of Khazraj met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, they said to one another: "This is the prophet the Jews promised; do not let them get to him before us."

REFERENCES:

Tafsir Ibn Kathir 2:89 https://tafsir.app/ibn-katheer/2/89

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SIX MEN OF KHAZRAJ

SIRAH NOTE: A MEETING IN THE PILGRIMAGE SEASON

According to ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, in the pilgrimage season of ***the eleventh year of prophethood*** (around 620 CE), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ met ***six men from Yathrib*** — all of Khazraj — at 'Aqabah, Mina. He recited the Qur'an and invited them to Islam, and they all believed.

Among them was ***As'ad ibn Zurarah***, who would later host Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr. They returned to Yathrib and spread news of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, until ***no house*** in Yathrib did not speak of him.

REFERENCES:

Al-Mubarakfuri, al-Rahiq al-Makhtum — "The First 'Aqabah Pledge". https://islam101.com/index.php/with-the-prophet/biographies/44-ar-raheeq-al-makhtum/499-the-first-aqabah-pledge

SIX MEN, ONE BEGINNING

After ten years of da'wah in Makkah with limited results, ***six men*** from another city became a turning point in history. Allah often begins great things with ***small and unexpected*** beginnings.

The lesson: never underestimate ***one meeting*** or ***one conversation*** of da'wah. That brief meeting at Mina became the beginning of an Islamic state.

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THE FIRST PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH

In the next pilgrimage season — ***the twelfth year of prophethood*** — five of those six returned with seven others, making ***twelve men***, including two from Aws. At 'Aqabah, they pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. One of them, 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه, narrated the content of the pledge:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 18

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْيَمَانِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعَيْبٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي أَبُو إِدْرِيسَ، عَائِذُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ أَنَّ عُبَادَةَ بْنَ الصَّامِتِ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ وَكَانَ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا، وَهُوَ أَحَدُ النُّقَبَاءِ لَيْلَةَ الْعَقَبَةِ ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ وَحَوْلَهُ عِصَابَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ «بَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لاَ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا، وَلاَ تَسْرِقُوا، وَلاَ تَزْنُوا، وَلاَ تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلاَدَكُمْ، وَلاَ تَأْتُوا بِبُهْتَانٍ تَفْتَرُونَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ، وَلاَ تَعْصُوا فِي مَعْرُوفٍ، فَمَنْ وَفَى مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا فَعُوقِبَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ، وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ، فَهُوَ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ، وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَاقَبَهُ». فَبَايَعْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

TRANSLATION:

'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه — who fought at Badr and was one of the leaders (naqib) on the night of al-'Aqabah — narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, with a group of his Companions around him:

"Pledge to me that you will not associate anything with Allah, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor kill your children, nor bring forth a slander you have invented, nor disobey in what is right. Whoever of you fulfils it, his reward is with Allah. Whoever commits any of these and is punished in this world, that is an expiation for him. And whoever commits any of these and Allah conceals it, his matter is with Allah: if He wills He pardons him, and if He wills He punishes him." So we pledged to him on that.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Abu al-Yaman, from Shu'ayb, from az-Zuhri, from Abu Idris 'A'idhullah ibn 'Abdullah, from 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, Hadith No. 18. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 1709).

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:18

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

This pledge is known as ***the Pledge of the Women*** because its terms are almost the same as the women's pledge mentioned in the Qur'an (Al-Mumtahanah 60:12). It contained no agreement to fight; it was a pledge of ***belief and character***.

TERM OF THE PLEDGE	EFFECT ON SOCIETY
Not associating anything with Allah	The foundation of tawhid for all of life.
Not stealing	Protecting property and trust.
Not committing adultery	Protecting lineage and family honour.
Not killing children	Ending the Jahiliyyah practice of killing infants.
Not slandering	Protecting honour and public trust.
Obeying in what is right	Obedience to leaders is limited to what is good.

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MUS'AB IBN 'UMAYR: ISLAM'S FIRST ENVOY

After the first Pledge of al-'Aqabah, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ***Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr*** رضى الله عنه to Yathrib to teach the Qur'an and the religion. Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما, then a young man of the Ansar, remembered his arrival:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3925

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا غُنْدَرٌ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ الْبَرَاءَ بْنَ عَازِبٍ ـ رضى الله عنهما ـ قَالَ أَوَّلُ مَنْ قَدِمَ عَلَيْنَا مُصْعَبُ بْنُ عُمَيْرٍ وَابْنُ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ، وَكَانَا يُقْرِئَانِ النَّاسَ، فَقَدِمَ بِلاَلٌ وَسَعْدٌ وَعَمَّارُ بْنُ يَاسِرٍ، ثُمَّ قَدِمَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ فِي عِشْرِينَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم ثُمَّ قَدِمَ النَّبِيُّ صلى الله عليه وسلم، فَمَا رَأَيْتُ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ فَرِحُوا بِشَيْءٍ فَرَحَهُمْ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم، حَتَّى جَعَلَ الإِمَاءُ يَقُلْنَ قَدِمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَمَا قَدِمَ حَتَّى قَرَأْتُ {سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الأَعْلَى} فِي سُوَرٍ مِنَ الْمُفَصَّلِ.

TRANSLATION:

Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما said: **"The first to come to us (in Madinah) were Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktum; both of them taught people to recite the Qur'an."** Then came Bilal, Sa'd and 'Ammar ibn Yasir, then 'Umar ibn al-Khattab with twenty of the Prophet's Companions, then the Prophet ﷺ himself arrived. **"I never saw the people of Madinah rejoice at anything as they rejoiced at the Messenger of Allah ﷺ,"** so much so that the slave girls were saying: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has come!" Before he arrived, I had read {Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High} along with other surahs of al-Mufassal.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Ghundar, from Shu'bah, from Abu Ishaq as-Sabi'i, from al-Bara' ibn 'Azib رضى الله عنهما.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Merits of the Ansar, chapter on the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions in Madinah, Hadith No. 3925.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3925

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LESSONS FROM THIS HADITH

SIRAH NOTE: A WEALTHY YOUTH WHO CHOSE ISLAM

The books of sirah say that before Islam, Mus'ab was ***the most pampered youth*** in Makkah, with the finest clothes and perfumes. After embracing Islam, he left that luxury behind. In Yathrib, he stayed at the house of ***As'ad ibn Zurarah***.

Through his gentle and wise da'wah, two great leaders of Aws — ***Sa'd ibn Mu'adh*** and ***Usayd ibn Hudayr*** — embraced Islam, and with them the whole of Banu 'Abd al-Ashhal. Mus'ab was later martyred at Uhud; his shroud was not enough to cover his whole body (Sahih al-Bukhari 1276).

REFERENCES:

Wikipedia, "Mus'ab ibn Umayr". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%27ab_ibn_Umayr

The lesson: da'wah needs ***teachers with knowledge and character***. One sincere and wise young man was able to change a city within a year.

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THE SECOND PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH

SIRAH NOTE: A PLEDGE ON A NIGHT OF THE DAYS OF TASHRIQ

According to ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, in the pilgrimage season of ***the thirteenth year of prophethood*** (***June 622 CE***), ***73 men and 2 women*** from Yathrib met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ secretly at 'Aqabah by night, on one of the days of Tashriq. The two women were ***Nusaybah bint Ka'b*** (Umm 'Umarah) and ***Asma' bint 'Amr***.

He came with his uncle ***al-'Abbas***, who had not yet embraced Islam. Al-'Abbas warned them to take him only if they were prepared to defend him; otherwise they had better leave him.

REFERENCES:

Al-Mubarakfuri, al-Rahiq al-Makhtum — "The Second 'Aqabah Pledge".
https://seerah.gtaf.org/books/1/chapters/13/the-second-aqabah-pledge/

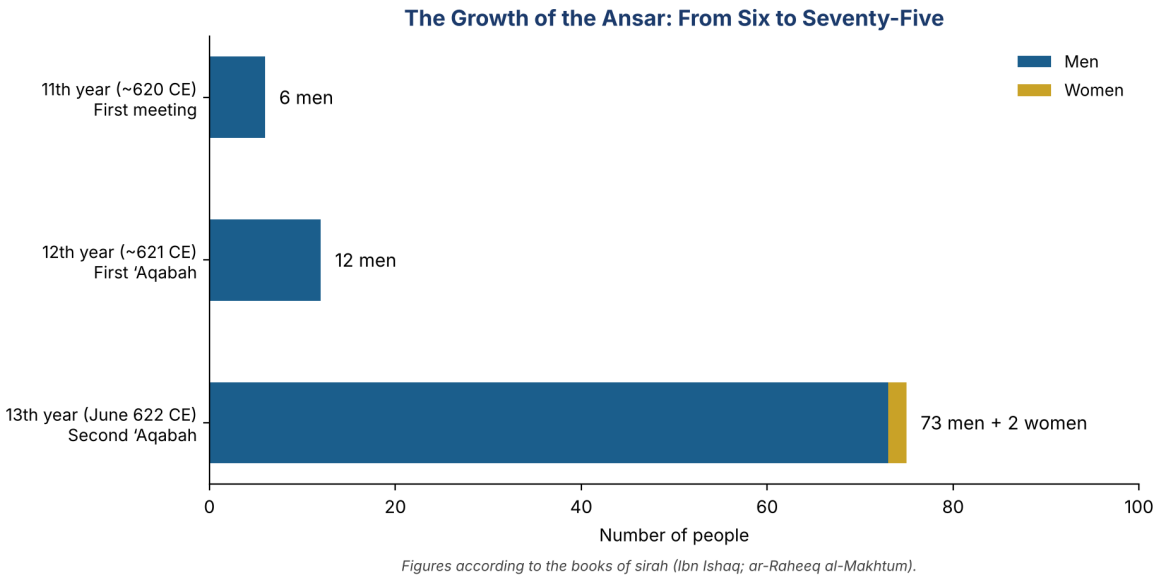


Figure 5: The growth of the Ansar from six to seventy-five.

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THE TERMS OF THE SECOND PLEDGE

According to the report of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah رضى الله عنهما in Musnad Ahmad, cited in ar-Raheeq al-Makhtum, the second pledge contained the following terms:

TERM	MEANING
To listen and obey in all circumstances	The discipline of a new society.
To spend in ease and hardship	Readiness to sacrifice wealth.
To enjoin good and forbid evil	Every Muslim's social responsibility.
To fear no blame in Allah's cause	Moral courage.
To protect him as they protect their own families	A defence pact — the basis of the hijrah.
The reward: Paradise	No promise of worldly wealth or power.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then asked them to choose ***twelve naqibs*** (leaders) — ***nine from Khazraj and three from Aws*** — to be responsible for their people. 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit, narrator of the first pledge hadith, was one of them.

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THE PLEDGE THAT OPENED THE WAY TO HIJRAH

The second Pledge of al-'Aqabah was ***the turning point*** of the sirah. For the first time, the Muslims had ***a refuge*** and a community pledged to defend the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Soon after, he permitted the Companions to emigrate to Yathrib in stages.

Today, a small mosque known as ***Masjid al-Bay'ah*** stands at Mina near Jamrat al-'Aqabah, marking the place believed to be the site of that pledge.

The lesson: the only reward promised to the Ansar was ***Paradise***, yet they answered with full conviction. The greatest sacrifices are born of ***faith in the Hereafter***.

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BETWEEN AUTHENTIC REPORTS AND POPULAR STORIES

The story of the Isra' and Mi'raj is among the most embellished of stories. The table below distinguishes the authentic, those from the books of sirah, and the weak or baseless.

STORIES AND THEIR STATUS

POPULAR STORY	STATUS
His chest was opened and washed before the Mi'raj.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Al-Buraq as a winged horse with a woman's head.	Baseless; authentic hadith mentions only a white mount.
He led the prophets in prayer in Jerusalem.	Authentic (Sahih Muslim 172).
The prophets in the seven heavens and Musa's weeping.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887).
Fifty prayers reduced to five.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887, 349).
The Isra' was on 27 Rajab.	Disputed; no authentic report on its date.
Special worship on the night of 27 Rajab.	No authentic evidence.
He saw Allah with his physical eyes.	Denied by 'A'ishah (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855); Ibn 'Abbas: with the heart.
People scratching their faces with copper nails.	Authentic (Sunan Abi Dawud 4878).
Long stories of various punishments that night.	Mostly weak or fabricated.
Abu Bakr: "If he said so, he has spoken the truth."	Al-Hakim; graded authentic by some scholars.
The first Pledge of al-'Aqabah and its terms.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 18).
Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr teaching the Qur'an in Yathrib.	Authentic (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925).

REFLECTION

The authentic reports of the Isra' and Mi'raj are already astonishing. We need no weak additions to ***magnify*** this event.

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IMPORTANT PLACES IN THIS SERIES

The events in this eBook begin beside the Ka'bah, leap thousands of kilometres to Jerusalem in part of a night, return to Makkah — and end in a narrow hill pass at Mina where the Ansar gave their pledge. This chapter gathers those places together so that readers can picture their distances and setting.

TABLE OF PLACES

The distances in the table are ***approximate***: straight-line distances are worked out from modern coordinates. A caravan in his time took about a month to reach Syria — which is why Quraysh mocked him when he described a journey made in part of a single night.

PLACE	CONNECTION TO THIS SERIES	LOCATION / CONDITION TODAY
Al-Hatim (al-Hijr / Hijr Isma'il)	Where he was lying when the angel came and opened his chest before the Mi'raj (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887); where he stood when Quraysh denied him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886).	The semi-circular area on the north side of the Ka'bah, inside Masjid al-Haram.
His house in Makkah	In one narration, the roof of his house opened and Jibril descended (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). The books of sirah say he spent the night in the house of Umm Hani' — a report of the books of sirah.	Exact location unknown; most of old Makkah now lies within Masjid al-Haram.
Jerusalem (al-Masjid al-Aqsa)	Destination of the Isra'; he tethered al-Buraq and prayed two rak'ahs (Sahih Muslim 162).	About 1,240 km in a straight line north-west of Makkah.
The area of al-Sakhrah	The great rock at the centre of the al-Aqsa compound; the Dome of the Rock was built over it some 70 years after this event.	At the centre of the al-Aqsa compound's plaza.
The al-Buraq Wall	According to Muslim tradition, al-Buraq was tethered here. The exact location is tradition, not a text.	The western wall of the al-Aqsa compound; the al-Buraq Mosque is a small prayer room within it.
The pass of al-'Aqabah, Mina	Site of the two Pledges of al-'Aqabah (books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 18).	Masjid al-Bay'ah, about 500 m north-east of Jamrat al-'Aqabah; about 5 km from the Ka'bah.
Yathrib (Madinah)	City of the Ansar who gave the pledge; destination of the Hijrah after this series.	About 340 km in a straight line north of Makkah.

Sources: Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque"; Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque"; Saudipedia, "Al-Bay'ah Mosque"; Sahih Muslim 162.

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TWO MOSQUES, FORTY YEARS

Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ which mosque was built first on earth. He replied: al-Masjid al-Haram. Then which? He replied: al-Masjid al-Aqsa. How long was there between them? He replied: forty years (Sahih al-Bukhari 3366).

The Isra' linked the two oldest mosques on earth in a single night. Scholars explain that "mosque" in this Hadith means a place appointed for prostration to Allah, not necessarily the buildings we know today.

MASJID AL-BAY'AH AT MINA

According to Saudipedia, Masjid al-Bay'ah was built by the Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far al-Mansur in 761 CE (about 144 AH) at the place believed to be the site of the pledge, about 500 metres north-east of Jamrat al-'Aqabah. It has been restored several times, including under the Caliph al-Mustansir in 1227 CE. The building is small, fitting the hushed setting of that secret night meeting.

Source: Saudipedia, "Al-Bay'ah Mosque".

LESSON

A month's journey was covered in part of a night, and a small pass at Mina became the birthplace of a state. Human measures of far and near, great and small, are not the measures of Allah.

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JERUSALEM AT THE TIME OF THE ISRA'

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was taken by night to Jerusalem, the city was neither in Arab hands nor in Roman hands. Understanding Jerusalem's situation at that time helps us appreciate why Quraysh were so confident they could "test" him with questions about the city.

CAPTURED BY PERSIA

According to Wikipedia, in ***614 CE*** the Sasanian Persian army under the general ***Shahrbaraz***, in the reign of Khusrau II, took Jerusalem after a siege. The relic revered by Christians as the "True Cross" was seized and carried off to the Persian capital, Ctesiphon. For the Roman Christian world it was an enormous blow.

This happened in the early years of the da'wah in Makkah. The Qur'an itself records that Roman defeat, and promises that they would be victorious again within a few years (Ar-Rum 30:2–4). The idolaters of Makkah rejoiced at the victory of the fire-worshipping Persians, while the Muslims sympathised with the Romans as People of the Book.

THE CITY VISITED IN A SINGLE NIGHT

If the Isra' took place about a year before the Hijrah, as many scholars of sirah hold, then Jerusalem was still under Persian rule at the time. The city was known to the Quraysh merchants who travelled back and forth to Syria. That is why they challenged him to describe it — and Allah displayed Jerusalem before him so that he could answer every question (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886; Sahih Muslim 172).

BACK TO ROME

The Qur'an's promise was fulfilled. Heraclius launched his counter-offensive from 622 CE — the year of the Hijrah — and Persia was finally brought low. According to Wikipedia, the peace of ***628 CE*** returned Palestine and the Cross to Rome; Persian troops were still in Jerusalem until at least late summer or early autumn of 629 CE. On ***21 March 630 CE***, Heraclius himself entered Jerusalem in procession bearing the Cross.

Only a few years later, Jerusalem was opened by the Muslims in the time of the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضى الله عنه, around ***638 CE*** (about 16–17 AH).

Sources: Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Sasanian conquest of Jerusalem"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

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HISTORICAL NOTE: DIFFERING DATES

Historical sources differ on the exact month Jerusalem fell in 614 CE (April or May), and on the year the Muslims opened Jerusalem (637 or 638 CE). This eBook uses the dates held by most references and marks them as approximate.

The date of the Isra' and Mi'raj itself is also disputed among scholars, as discussed in the chapter «When Did the Isra' and Mi'raj Take Place?».

LESSON

While Jerusalem passed between two great empires, Allah took one of His oppressed servants in Makkah to that city by night and made him the imam of the prophets. Worldly power changes hands; true honour belongs to the one whom Allah chooses.

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TRACES OF HISTORY: THE AL-MASJID AL-AQSA COMPOUND

Many people assume that the famous golden dome is "al-Masjid al-Aqsa". In fact, al-Aqsa is the whole walled plaza of about 14.4 hectares (see the chapter «Al-Masjid al-Aqsa»), and within it stand several buildings constructed long after the Isra'. This chapter introduces the main buildings on the basis of solid historical records.

THE MAIN BUILDINGS AND THEIR AGE

BUILDING	WHEN BUILT	DESCRIPTION
Al-Qibli Mosque	Umayyad period, later restored many times	The main prayer hall in the southern part of the compound; what is usually called "al-Aqsa Mosque".
The Dome of the Rock	Completed around 691–692 CE (72 AH), on the order of the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan	A domed building over the great rock (al-Sakhrah); classed as a shrine, not a congregational mosque.
The al-Buraq Mosque	Around the 10th century CE (perhaps earlier)	A small underground prayer room beside the al-Buraq Wall, near the south-west corner of the compound.

Sources: Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock"; Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque"; Wikipedia, "Al-Aqsa Mosque".

THE INSCRIPTION OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK (72 AH)

The Dome of the Rock holds some of the most important Islamic inscriptions from the first century of the Hijrah. Its mosaic inscription is dated ***72 AH*** (691–692 CE) and contains many passages of the Qur'an. Among them is the verse calling the People of the Book not to go to extremes in religion and affirming that 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is the messenger of Allah and His word (corresponding to An-Nisa' 4:171), as well as Surah al-Ikhlas (Al-Ikhlas 112) on the outer arcade.

This inscription matters because it shows the text of the Qur'an being displayed officially in a public place some six decades after the death of the Messenger ﷺ.

Sources: Islamic Awareness, "The Arabic Islamic Inscriptions On The Dome Of The Rock, 72 AH / 692 CE"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

THE AL-BURAQ WALL AND THE RING OF THE PROPHETS

An authentic Hadith says he tethered al-Buraq to ***the ring used by the prophets to tether their mounts***, then entered the mosque and prayed two rak'ahs (Sahih Muslim 162).

Muslims have long associated that place with the western wall of the al-Aqsa compound, naming it the ***al-Buraq Wall***. According to Wikipedia, the historian Ibn al-Faqih mentions a place called "Marbat al-Buraq"

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(the tethering place of al-Buraq) in 903 CE. The al-Buraq Mosque today is a small prayer room within a vaulted passage beside that wall.

> **NOTE: BETWEEN TEXT AND TRADITION**
>
> The authentic Hadith only mentions "the ring used by the prophets" without fixing its location. Identifying that location with the al-Buraq Wall is a ***tradition*** held by Muslims for centuries, not an authentic text. Indeed some earlier scholars, such as al-Meknasi (1785 CE), noted that the ring of their own day was only a marker, since the original place had been buried.
>
> The balanced position is to respect this tradition as the heritage of the Ummah, without claiming it as certain fact.

Source: Wikipedia, "Al-Buraq Mosque".

LESSON

The beautiful buildings of al-Aqsa were raised by generations after the Messenger ﷺ as a sign of their love for the place of the Isra'. We inherit that love — but we should distinguish between what is authentic from the texts and what is tradition, so that our love stands on knowledge.

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PEOPLE IN THIS SERIES

This series brings the Messenger of Allah ﷺ together with two groups: the prophets he met on the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj, and the people on earth who accepted or rejected the news, along with the Ansar who gave their pledge. The tables below summarise them with their sources.

THE PROPHETS HE MET

The order of the heavens follows the Hadith of Malik ibn Sa'sa'ah (Sahih al-Bukhari 3887). The details of each meeting are given in the chapter «The Prophets in the Seven Heavens».

PROPHET	WHERE HE WAS MET	SOURCE
The prophets (together)	Jerusalem — he led them in prayer	Sahih Muslim 172
Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	First heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Yahya and 'Isa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Second heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Yusuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Third heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Idris عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Fourth heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Harun عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Fifth heaven	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Sixth heaven; also seen praying in his grave	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih Muslim 2375
Ibrahim عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Seventh heaven, leaning against al-Bayt al-Ma'mur	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887; Sahih Muslim 162

PEOPLE ON EARTH

PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
Jibril عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ	Opened his chest and accompanied him throughout the Isra' and Mi'raj.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3887
Abu Bakr as-Siddiq رضى الله عنه	Affirmed the news of the Isra' without doubt; called al-Siddiq.	Books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 3675
Umm Hani' bint Abi Talib رضى الله عنها	According to the books of sirah, he spent the night of the Isra' in her house.	Books of sirah (Ibn Ishaq)
As'ad ibn Zurarah رضى الله عنه	One of the six men of Khazraj who believed earliest; host of Mus'ab in Yathrib.	Books of sirah

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PERSON	ROLE IN THIS SERIES	SOURCE
‘Ubadah ibn al-Samit رضى الله عنه	Present at the first Pledge of al-‘Aqabah and narrated its content.	Sahih al-Bukhari 18
Mus‘ab ibn ‘Umayr رضى الله عنه	Islam's first envoy, teaching the Qur'an in Yathrib.	Sahih al-Bukhari 3925
Ka‘b ibn Malik رضى الله عنه	Present at the second Pledge of al-‘Aqabah and narrated it.	Books of sirah; Sahih al-Bukhari 4418
Al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib	Accompanied him on the night of the second Pledge though not yet a Muslim (according to the books of sirah).	Books of sirah

LESSON

In the heavens the Messenger ﷺ was welcomed by the prophets; on earth he was denied by his people but believed by one Companion and defended by the Ansar. Every Muslim can choose to be like Abu Bakr and the Ansar: to affirm the truth and to stand up for it.

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TIMELINE: SIRAH AND THE WORLD

This table places the events of this series alongside the major events in Jerusalem and the surrounding empires. The CE years for the events of the sirah are ***approximate***, since scholars differ about the date of the Isra' and Mi'raj.

YEAR (APPROX.)	SIRAH OF THE PROPHET	THE WORLD AND JERUSALEM
614 CE	Open da'wah in Makkah; persecution begins.	Persia captures Jerusalem (Shahrbaraz); the Cross is taken to Ctesiphon.
619–620 CE	The Year of Sorrow; the journey to Ta'if (Part 5).	Jerusalem still under Persia.
~620 CE (11th year of prophethood)	Six men of Khazraj believe at al-'Aqabah.	—
~621 CE (view of many)	The Isra' and Mi'raj; the five daily prayers made obligatory.	—
~621 CE (12th year)	First Pledge of al-'Aqabah; Mus'ab sent to Yathrib.	—
June 622 CE (13th year)	Second Pledge of al-'Aqabah: 73 men and 2 women.	Heraclius begins his counter-offensive against Persia.
Sept 622 CE (Rabi' al-Awwal 1 AH)	The Hijrah of the Messenger ﷺ to Madinah.	—
628–629 CE	—	Peace treaty: Palestine and the Cross returned to Rome.
21 March 630 CE	—	Heraclius enters Jerusalem in procession.
~638 CE (16–17 AH)	—	Jerusalem opened by the Muslims in the time of 'Umar رضى الله عنه.
691–692 CE (72 AH)	—	The Dome of the Rock completed by 'Abd al-Malik.

Sources: books of sirah (al-Rahiq al-Makhtum); Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Sasanian conquest of Jerusalem"; Wikiwand/Wikipedia, "Dome of the Rock".

LESSON

In less than twenty-five years, Jerusalem passed from Persian hands to Roman, and then to the Ummah whose Prophet had been imam there on the night of the Isra'. This timeline teaches us to read history with the eye of faith: Allah's promise is certain to be fulfilled, even when people see it as impossible.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here are questions often asked about the Isra', the Mi'raj and the Pledges of al-'Aqabah, with brief answers based on the sources discussed in this eBook. For a hadith-by-hadith discussion, see also the ***Special Edition: Stories of the Night Journey***.

1. WHEN EXACTLY DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE?

Scholars differ. The view of many scholars of sirah is about a year before the Hijrah. The date of 27 Rajab is very well known, but it does not rest on an authentic narration. See the table of views in the chapter «When Did the Isra' and Mi'raj Take Place?».

2. DID THE ISRA' AND MI'RAJ TAKE PLACE WITH BODY AND SOUL, OR IN A DREAM?

The view of the majority of scholars is that it happened with body and soul while awake. Their arguments include the word "His servant" in Al-Isra' 17:1, and the reaction of Quraysh in denying him — they would not have mocked him if he had merely related a dream. There are reports from a few of the salaf holding that it happened with the soul, and this view is discussed by the scholars of tafsir. See the chapter «A Trial for People».

3. DID HE SEE ALLAH ON THE NIGHT OF THE MI'RAJ?

The Companions themselves differed. 'A'ishah رضى الله عنها denied it (Sahih al-Bukhari 4855); Ibn 'Abbas رضى الله عنهما said he saw with his heart (Sahih Muslim 176); and when Abu Dharr رضى الله عنه asked, he replied: "Light — how could I see Him?" (Sahih Muslim 178). This is a matter of the unseen that calls for caution. See the chapter «Did He See Allah?».

4. IS THERE A SPECIAL ACT OF WORSHIP ON THE NIGHT OF 27 RAJAB?

There is no authentic narration prescribing a special act of worship, such as a particular prayer or fast, for the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj. Remembering this event by studying the sirah, guarding the prayer and doing good deeds in general is good; what should be avoided is fixing special practices that have no basis.

5. DID THE BUILDINGS OF AL-MASJID AL-AQSA ALREADY EXIST ON THE NIGHT OF THE ISRA'?

The buildings we see today were built afterwards (see the chapter «Traces of History: The al-Masjid al-Aqsa Compound»). Yet the Qur'an and authentic Hadith speak of "al-Masjid al-Aqsa" as a place of prostration established long before — forty years after al-Masjid al-Haram (Sahih al-Bukhari 3366). In Arabic, masjid means a place of prostration, not necessarily a building.

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6. WHERE WAS AL-BURAQ TETHERED?

An authentic Hadith says he tethered it to the ring used by the prophets (Sahih Muslim 162). Identifying that place with the al-Buraq Wall is a Muslim tradition, not a text that fixes the exact location.

7. IS THE DOME OF THE ROCK AL-MASJID AL-AQSA?

Not exactly. The Dome of the Rock is a domed building over the great rock at the centre of the al-Aqsa compound, completed around 72 AH. The main prayer hall is the al-Qibli Mosque in the southern part. Both stand within the area of al-Masjid al-Aqsa, which covers about 14.4 hectares.

8. WHY WAS THE PRAYER MADE OBLIGATORY IN THE HEAVENS AND NOT ON EARTH?

Scholars explain that this shows the very high rank of the prayer: other obligations were revealed to him on earth, but the prayer was made obligatory directly on the night of the Mi'raj. Scholars also describe the prayer as the believer's "mi'raj" — the moment he is closest to his Lord.

9. IS THE REWARD OF THE FIVE PRAYERS REALLY EQUAL TO FIFTY?

Yes. In the Hadith of the Mi'raj, Allah said: "They are five, and they are (in reward) fifty; My word is not changed" (Sahih al-Bukhari 349). This is a very great mercy for the Ummah of Muhammad ﷺ.

10. WHO WAS THE FIRST TO AFFIRM THE NEWS OF THE ISRA'?

The books of sirah report that Abu Bakr رضى الله عنه affirmed it immediately when told, and so was called al-Siddiq. His rank as siddiq is confirmed by an authentic Hadith (Sahih al-Bukhari 3675).

11. WHERE DID THE PLEDGE OF AL-'AQABAH TAKE PLACE, AND MAY THE SITE BE VISITED?

In the hill pass of al-'Aqabah at Mina. Masjid al-Bay'ah, built in the Abbasid period, now marks the place believed to be its location, about 500 metres from Jamrat al-'Aqabah. Visiting it to remember the history is fine, but no special practice is prescribed there.

12. HOW DID QURAYSH KNOW JERUSALEM WELL ENOUGH TO TEST HIM?

Quraysh trade caravans travelled to and from Syria every year (Part 2), and many of their merchants had seen Jerusalem. That is why they were sure they could prove he had never been there — but Allah displayed Jerusalem before him (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886).

LESSON

The Isra' and Mi'raj is a tremendous event of the unseen. The safe course is to believe fully in what is authentic, to be open-hearted towards the differences of scholars, and to stay away from baseless additions — so that this event remains a source of faith, not of argument.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

LESSONS FROM THIS EBOOK

First: After hardship, Allah opens the heavens. The Isra' and Mi'raj came after the Year of Sorrow.

Second: The highest honour is being Allah's servant. "Exalted is He who took His servant" (17:1).

Third: Prayer is a gift from heaven. Five in deed, fifty in reward (Sahih al-Bukhari 349, 3887).

Fourth: The prophets are one family. He led them and was welcomed as a brother (Sahih Muslim 172).

Fifth: Jerusalem in the heart of the Ummah. Destination of the Isra' and first qiblah (17:1; Sahih al-Bukhari 40).

Sixth: Islam is the religion of fitrah. Milk was chosen, not wine (Sahih al-Bukhari 3394).

Seventh: Faith in the unseen. Abu Bakr affirmed; Ibn 'Abbas: it was a sight of the eye (Sahih al-Bukhari 3888).

Eighth: Small beginnings, great results. Six men of Khazraj became the beginning of Madinah.

Ninth: Belief and character before power. The first pledge was about tawhid and conduct (Sahih al-Bukhari 18).

Tenth: A sincere teacher changes a city. Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr taught the Qur'an in Yathrib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925).

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TIMELINE SUMMARY

TIME (APPROX.)	EVENT AND SOURCE
After Ta'if (619–620 CE)	He presents himself to the tribes (Sunan Abi Dawud 4734)
11th year (~620 CE)	Six men of Khazraj believe at 'Aqabah (sirah)
About a year before the hijrah	Al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj (17:1; Sahih al-Bukhari 3887)
The next morning	Quraysh deny; Jerusalem displayed (Sahih al-Bukhari 3886)
12th year (~621 CE)	First Pledge of al-'Aqabah, 12 men (Sahih al-Bukhari 18)
After the first pledge	Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr to Yathrib (Sahih al-Bukhari 3925)
13th year (June 622 CE)	Second Pledge of al-'Aqabah, 73 men and 2 women (sirah)

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CONCLUSION

From al-Hatim beside the Ka'bah, to Jerusalem, through the seven heavens to Sidrat al-Muntaha, and back to earth bearing the gift of prayer — then to 'Aqabah at Mina, where the people of Yathrib pledged to defend him. After the hardship of the Year of Sorrow, Allah opened ***the gates of heaven and the gates of earth***. In sha Allah, the series **The Prophet's Sirah** will continue with ***the hijrah to Madinah*** — the journey that changed world history. And Allah knows best.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

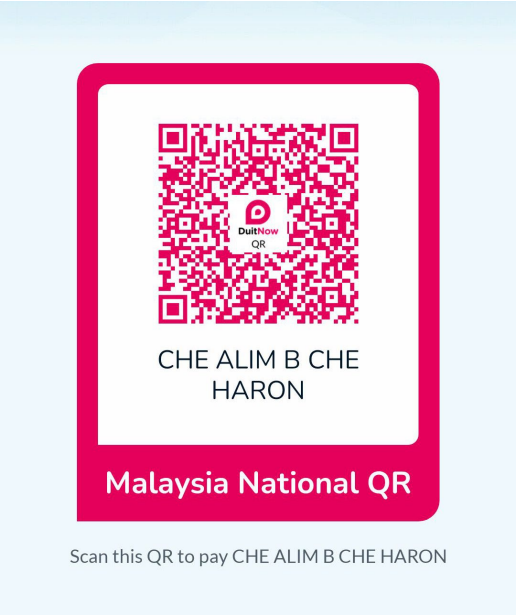
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GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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