

On Israa and Miraj

First Sermon

All praise is due to Allah. Exalted is He Who took His Servant from Al Masjid Al Haram to Al Masjid Al Aqsa and showed him some of His greatest signs. I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah, having no associates. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. He revealed to him the Quran and supported him with miracles. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, his pure grateful family and companions, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

As to what follows,

I urge you, **O servants of Allah**, and myself to be aware that you are asked to obey Him, the Most Exalted, in line with His orders: “**so believe in Allah and His messengers. And if you believe and fear Him, then for you is a great reward.**” (Al-Baqara: 281).

O servants of Allah,

It was with a message of goodness and mercy that Allah, the Almighty, has sent His Messenger Muhammad pbuh. Carrying such a message and armed with clear understanding, the Prophet pbuh called people for Islam and had to endure so many ordeals in that way that he complained to Allah, the Most High, about his weakness and helplessness. The Exalted is He saw his state and heard his complaints for “**indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing**” (Al Israa: 1). Thus, He honoured him through the miracle of Israa and Miraj.

Through this miracle, Allah compensated the Prophet pbuh for the ill-treatment he tolerated from the disbelievers by being welcomed and celebrated by the people of Heaven. This helped him overcome his grief, strengthened his determination and he was put in a high rank as evidenced in this Aya, “**and was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer.**” (An-Najm: 9).

Thanks to him for being steadfast in worshiping Allah, the Almighty, and following His ordain, he pbuh earned such a noble standing. The Almighty says, “**Exalted is He who took His Servant by night.**” (Al-Israa: 1). In an interpretation of this Aya, Muslim scholars said that the use of “**His servant**” to refer to the Prophet pbuh was very special in such a magnificent setting of honour and that it was the highest rank any man could ever reach.

Truly, by worshiping Allah, the Most Glorious, one will attain honour in this life and the best of success in the next. Piety puts the believer in a dignified status and places love and respect for him in the people’s hearts. Some scholars said, “indeed, the righteous good deed brings light to the heart, brightness to the face, abundance of provisions and love in people’s hearts.”

Dear Muslims,

The journey of Israa began from Al Masjid al Haram and ended in Al Masjid Al Aqsa whose surroundings Allah has blessed, in an indication of the high status Allah, the Almighty, attributes to mosques, being the dearest places to Him. The Prophet pbuh emphasised this when he said: “the parts of the land dearest to Allah are its mosques.”

During his ascension to the Heaven, the Prophet pbuh met some of the earlier Prophets pbuh. Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, “the Prophet pbuh met Adam, Idris, Musa (Moses), Isa (Jesus) and Ibrahim (Abraham) over the heavens. Each of them welcomed him by saying: welcome! O pious Prophet and pious brother.” In fact, the special welcoming that the Prophet pbuh received shows that the structure that all the Prophets established and the religion they called for are in harmony, with our Master Muhammad perfecting all the messages and sealing all the prophecies.

While there are some variations in the rulings of these religions, yet their essence is just the same: they all called people to worship Allah and associate none with Him. Glory be to Him says, “**and We sent not before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that,**

"there is no deity except Me, so worship Me." (Al-Anbiyaa: 25). He also says, **"He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion."** (As-Shoora: 13). That is: to worship Allah with no associates, obey His orders and believe in His Prophets, Books and the Day of Judgment. Yet, the rulings of each religion may differ based upon the interests and the circumstances pertaining to each nation.

The final part of the Miraj journey took the Prophet pbuh to Sidrat al Muntaha, the highest point in the heavens, about which Allah says, **"near it is the Garden of Refuge. When there covered the Lote Tree that which covered [it]. The sight [of the Prophet] did not swerve, nor did it transgress [its limit]."** (An-Najm: 15-17). Therein, he was graced with being closer to Allah, the Almighty, and supplicating to Him.

O Servants of Allah,

One of the many lessons that we can draw from this sacred journey is the great status of prayers and the importance of observing them. Indeed, the essence of religion is to connect with the Creator and be kind with His creation. From this view, prayer is not just about performing the acts related to it, but rather about drawing closer to Allah. The Almighty, says, **"but prostrate and draw near [to Allah]."** (Al-Alaq: 19).

Furthermore, prayer is amongst the greatest acts of worship that brings abundant rewards. Saeed ibn Al Musayyab, may Allah rest his soul in peace, said in this regards, "whoever observes the five daily prayers in congregation will be as if he has filled the earth and the sea with worship." So, glad tidings to those who observe the daily prayers perform bowing and prostration perfectly and nurture the love of prayer in their children's hearts.

Please also know that amongst the greatest things given to the Prophet pbuh during this blessed journey was the closing Ayas of Surat Al-Baqara and the promise that the major sins of every one of his nation, who does not associate partners with Allah, will be forgiven. Abdullah ibn Masood, may Allah be pleased with him, said in this regard, "when the Messenger of Allah pbuh was taken to the Heavens, he reached to Sidrat al Muntaha... He was given three (things): the five prayers, the concluding verses of Surat Al-Baqara and remission of serious Sins for those amongst his Ummah who associate not anything with Allah."

Truly, it is such a gracious giving. This is because of the so many great virtues attributed to the last verses of Surat Al-Baqara. For example, they keep the evil away and protect against any mishaps. The Prophet pbuh said, "if one recites the last two Verses of Surat Al-Baqara at night, it is sufficient for him (for that night)."

Thus, the night of Ascension was a night of kindness and generosity. There in the seventh heaven, the Prophet Ibrahim pbuh greeted our Master Muhammad pbuh and gave him one advice, about which he pbuh said, "I met Ibrahim pbuh on the Night of Ascension (Israa), and he said to me: 'O Muhammad, salute your Ummah on my behalf and tell them that Paradise has a vast plain of pure soil and sweet water. It is a plain levelled land and its plants are (these words): Glorified be Allah; praise is due to Allah; there is no deity save Allah; and Allah is the Greatest.'"

This Hadith reflects the great status and virtues of the remembrance of Allah. Invocations are the plants that are immune against all natural calamities; they will stand firm in face of the strongest wind as well as any other disasters. Let us, then, ponder and decide if we have planted in Paradise for ourselves any trees that we can reap their fruits at the Day of Judgment.

With this in mind, let us seek Allah's grace to grant us success in speaking the best of words and doing the best of deeds.

O Allah, may You guide us all to obey You and obey Your Messenger Muhammad pbuh and obey those You have commanded us to obey in line with Your orders: **“O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you”** (An-Nisaa: 59).

May Allah direct us all to the blessings of the Glorious Quran and the Sunna of His Messenger pbuh.

I say this and ask Allah for forgiveness for me and you, so invoke Him for forgiveness, for He is the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

Second Sermon

All praise is due to Allah, the Lords of the Worlds. I bear witness that there is no deity save Allah, having no associates. I also bear witness that our Master Muhammad is the servant of Allah and His Messenger. May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Master Muhammad, his pure family, companions, and all those who follow them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment.

As to What follows,

Please be aware, **dear worshipers**, that the first thing we should advise each other about is obeying Allah, seeking his sublime pleasure and know that what the Prophet pbuh saw during his Israa and Miraj journey was amongst the greatest signs of His Creator.

Amongst the scenes he pbuh witnessed were some of the despicable behaviours that destroy relations amongst members of the community like backbiting. Allah, the Almighty showed him the punishment of committing slander because it is one of the worst plagues and most serious sins that trigger disputes and bigotry amongst people. The Almighty says, **“and do not spy or backbite each other. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother when dead? You would detest it. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Accepting of repentance and Merciful.”** (Al-Hujurat: 12).

Another scene the Prophet pbuh saw was Paradise and the Hell-Fire. In Paradise, he saw the rewards that Allah, the All Beneficent, has prepared for His righteous servants. He described them by saying, “Allah said, ‘I have prepared for My Pious servants things which have never been seen by an eye, or heard by an ear, or imagined by a human being. If you wish, you can recite this Verse from the Holy Quran: **‘no soul knows what is kept hidden for them, of joy as a reward.’** (As-Sajda: 17).”

The aim is to motivate people to long for Paradise and be determined to win its perpetual dwelling. This implies being steadfast in obeying Allah's commands and treating people in kindness so as to win Allah's satisfaction and be admitted to His Paradise. So, let us pray to Allah to help us with what gets us closer to Paradise, both in words and deeds.

That is said, please bear in mind that you are instructed to invoke peace and blessings on the Prophet pbuh. The Messenger of Allah pbuh said, “for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allah.”

O Allah, please confer Your blessings and grant peace upon our Prophet Muhammad pbuh, his family and all of the companions.

O Allah, we seek your grace to make us amongst those who follow the guidance of Your Messenger pbuh and take example of his life. O Lord of the Worlds, please make us amongst the dwellers of Your Paradise.

May Allah have mercy on the honourable martyrs of our country and those of the coalition and gather them with the righteous. May Allah make their dwelling with the ones upon whom

Allah has bestowed favour of the prophets and the steadfast affirmers of truth, O the Most Gracious the Most Forgiving.

O Allah, please grant the best reward for the families of the martyrs and offer them patience and solace. May Allah grant victory to the soldiers of the Arab Coalition who gathered to restore the rights to their owners. O Lord, please be by their side and guide the Yemeni people to everything that is good. O Allah, make them rally for the word of truth and legitimacy, and bless them with welfare and stability, O the Most Generous.

May Allah be pleased with the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, and all of the Companions.

O Allah, may we ask You for all that is good, in this world and in the Hereafter. O Allah, we seek Your grace to admit us, our parents, whoever has done a favour to us and all Muslims to Your Paradise.

May Allah grant success and continued health and care to the UAE President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. May Allah also ensure success to his Vice-President, trustworthy Crown Prince and his brothers, Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Emirates.

O Allah, please forgive all of the Muslims, men and women, living and dead. May Allah have mercy on Sheikh Zayed, Sheikh Maktoum and the Late UAE Sheikhs. O Lord, forgive and show mercy on our parents, relatives and whoever has done a favour to us.

O Allah, we pray to You to grant Your forgiveness and reward to who built this mosque and to his or her parents as well as to anyone who gave to this mosque. O Allah, we also supplicate to You to forgive whoever built a mosque where Your name is remembered.

O Allah, make this gathering one of compassion, and our dispersion after it one that is infallible. O Allah, do not let anyone amongst us be deprived or desperate.

We pray to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, to protect the UAE against any of temptations, both apparent and hidden, and continue blessing the UAE with safety and security.

O Allah, we implore you to send upon us wealthy rain and make us not amongst those who are desperate. O Allah, relieve us! O Allah, relieve us! O Allah, relieve us! O Lord, provide us from the blessings of the sky a beneficial rain and make our crops grow.

Our Lord, give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire.

O Servants of Allah “indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.” (An-Nahl: 90).

Remember Allah and He will remember you. Be grateful of His benevolence and He will increase His blessings to you. Allah says, **“and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.” (Al-Ankaboot: 45).**

Translation:

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Note: The English translation of the Quran and Hadith is an interpretation of their meanings and does not have the status of their original Arabic text.