

Shab-e-Meraj

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In the name of Allah the compassionate, the Merciful

A brief description of the Meraj:

Just one year before his exodus from Mecca to Madina, on the 27th night of Rajab, Prophet Muhammad^{PBUH} had a unique experience in the history of all religions. The Prophet^{PBUH}, accompanied by Angel Gabriel was taken for Night Journey-(**ISRA**) from Mecca to Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. There he led a congregation of the souls of all the earlier Prophets^{PBUT}.

Then accompanied by Angel Gabriel he had the Ascension-(**MERAJ**) to Heavens. In the heavens he met again with the Prophets^{PBUT} individually. Then he was taken to see the Paradise and the Hell. He was shown what would be the fate of the humans after the Day of Judgment. How the Believers and the Righteous would be rewarded in the Paradise and also how the non-believers and the wicked would be chastised in the Hell. After seeing several important divine Signs (**Ayaat**) he was led by Gabriel to the Sid'rah (The Berry Tree). Gabriel stopped there. The Prophet^{PBUH} proceeded from there to the Divine Proximity. The Prophet^{PBUH} had the Vision of God, Lord of the Universe. Five obligatory prayers were ordained by the way of Thanksgiving. The Prophet^{PBUH} was brought back to the earth and to his own place before the Dawn prayers in the same night.

This Great event has been described above very briefly. The details can be read in the books about the Meraj of the Prophet^{PBUH}.

The most important things we believe about the Meraj are noted below:

1) The night journey (**ISRA**) and the Ascension (**MERAJ**) both did not take place "spiritually" nor they were merely in a "dream", as a few people argue. They took place with the "body and soul," and the Prophet^{PBUH} was fully awake.

Our'an says that: *"Glorified be He Who Carried His servant by night....."*

The word '**Abad**' (servant) applies to a 'person' with his body and soul. Therefore, to say that the ascension was only spiritual is wrong. In fact it was with the body and soul and in full awareness.

2) The Prophet^{PBUH} did not go for Meraj for seeing Angel Gabriel in his original form as some people try to explain. The Prophet^{PBUH} had the Vision of his Lord and that is the essence of the Meraj as believed by a majority of the Companions of the Prophet^{PBUH}. The Prophet^{PBUH} had seen Angel Gabriel in his original form at least twice on the earth earlier. Hence, there was no need to see him again by ascension to heavens.

3) What will happen in the Paradise and the Hell after the Day of Judgment was shown to the Prophet^{PBUH} as if it was happening before his eyes.

How To Spend- The night of Meraj (Ascension)

The night of Ascension of our Prophet (Allah Bless him and give him peace) is the night of great significance for us because it is a night of great rewards, blessings and bounties of God. It should not be wasted by sleeping or by watching movies etc. Believers should spend the whole night worshipping, begging for forgiveness, seeking divine mercy and aspiring for His true love and vision. A few tips about how to spend this night are given below:

1. Start Zikrullah ... Remembrance of God right from the sunset. Offer Magrib and Isha prayers with jam'at or in congregation and continue Zikr up to sunrise, as far as possible.
2. Try to be with Wuzu (ablution) during the whole night. Whenever it is lost take a fresh ablution. It should be followed with offering two rak'at of Wuzu Greeting or thanks giving prayer.
3. In the 1st rak'at, after Surah Fateha recite "Wallazeena Iza fa'alu fahishatan....." and in the 2nd rak'at after reciting Surah-Fatiha "Wa man ya-mal....." as taught by our Imam, the Promised Mehdi (May God Bless Him and give Him peace). And after the two salaams, go into Sajdah (prostration) and say the Munajat as taught by the Imam^{AS}. Thereafter, pray for a firm, strong and unshakable Iman (faith) for yourself and for all the loved ones. Pray for the well being of yourself and all the fellow human beings. Solicit His love and purity of heart from the lust and greed of the world and worldly attractions. Ask for Halal or permissible means of living. Pray for making our conduct to be in obedience to His Book and His Prophet^{SAS}. Pray for health and well being of the self and the loved ones. Pray for the ultimate bounty, which is His Vision within this lifetime.
4. Whenever you take ablution, offer this prayer during this night. Prayers five times a day was made obligatory for all the believers. We do not remember how many we missed in our life time. Therefore, offer Qaza or make-up prayers. We may offer all the five obligatory prayers with Witr-Wajib of one day as Qaza. These may cover the prayers of five or three or at least one day. We may seek forgiveness from the questioning in the grave for our failure in offering the prayers during our lifetime.
5. Fortunate believers, men and women who have been regularly offering Tahajjud or late night prayers may offer it now i.e. before dawn.
6. Eat Sahr food if you intend to observe fasting the next day, which is also very rewarding (of sawab) in the life hereafter.
7. After offering Fajr prayer in congregation stay performing Zikrullah or remembrance of God with love and devotion up to Sunrise.

May Allah make us His whole-hearted worshipers! Please remember that Worship of our Beloved, Merciful Lord is the very purpose of our coming into this world.