

**A request to all imams:  
Please dedicate a khutba to talking about Masjid al-Aqsa and Palestine, with a focus  
on the incredible night journey, 'Al isra wa al mi'raj' so that your congregations  
can be reminded of the struggle in Palestine.**



**In the name of Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful**

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى  
الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ  
السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾

Alhamdulillah. May prayers and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah. Ashadu anna la ilaha illa Allah, wa ashadu ana Mohammad rasul Allah.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ  
إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ  
مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾

### **Surah al-Isra**

Glory be to He Who did take His Servant for a Journey by night, from the Sacred Mosque (in Makkah) to the Farthest Mosque (Masjid al-Aqsa), Whose precincts We did Bless, in order that We Might show him some Of Our Signs: for He Is the One Who heareth And seeth (all things).

The blessed Masjid al-Aqsa has been referred to in the Quran and hadith, as a land which Allah (swt) placed special blessings upon. In our search for knowledge and our desire to follow in the footsteps of the righteous and rightly guided, the land of Palestine and the sanctuary of the al-Aqsa cannot be stressed enough.

- Abu Dharr reports that the Messenger said, “One night I was asleep, in the Makkan Sacred Precinct (al-Haram) near the Ka‘bah when I was woken by Jibra‘il. He informed me of the divine will and took me to the well of Zamzam, where upon he opened my chest and poured wisdom and faith into it. Then he sealed it. I was then presented with the beautiful Buraq. This is an animal larger than a mule but smaller than a horse. I mounted it...”
- Anas Ibn Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah said: “He (the Buraq) puts its hoof wherever its eyesight ends.” He said, “I rode it (and started the journey) until I arrived at Bayt al-Maqdis.” He continued, “Then I tied it to a ring that the Prophets used to tie their animals on.” He said, “Then I entered the Masjid, and I prayed two units of prayer, then I went out, so Jibra‘il brought me a cup of wine and a cup of milk. I chose the milk, so Jibra‘il said, ‘You chose the *fitrah* (natural goodness, good instinct),’ then we were raised to heaven...”
- The Night Journey (al-Isra‘) of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Jerusalem and the subsequent Heavenly Ascent (al-Mi‘raj) was one of the most incredible and fantastic events in the history of humanity. This journey represented both a turning point in the prophethood and challenged conventional science.
- Allah swt, with His Might and Majesty folded time and space into one plane and took the Prophet through it while the time on Earth stood still. The Prophet then journeyed the earth whilst mounted on the Buraq, a horse-like creature capable of travelling cosmic distances in short periods of time. The Prophet journeyed through space, and again time stood still. He witnessed heaven and hell, and saw the future and past, experiencing phenomena beyond anything of this world. While such events are undoubtedly beyond scientific comprehension, for Allah swt, the Creator of the universe and of time itself, this was His will and He made it happen through His power.
- Ibn Kathir states, “As for the report of al-Isra‘, all Muslims unanimously concur upon it and only heretics and atheists have denied it.”
- By acknowledging the journey the believer (mu‘min) testifies to the will and limitless power of the Almighty, making firm their faith in Him. As for recognising the experience of the Prophet in al-Mi‘raj, one testifies to the life of the hereafter and the Day of Judgement.
- Al-Isra‘ and al-Mi‘raj, therefore, holds fast the faith of a person and consolidates the very central tenet of Islamic teaching - that we are here for a temporary period; created by the Lord, whose powers are limitless; and after death we will be resurrected and judged according to our deeds.
- The greatness of al-Isra‘ thus goes beyond the narrow confines of breaking physical barriers and transcends into believing that the Creator is “He, Allah the one and only; He is the Eternal and Absolute, He begets none, nor is He begotten, and there is nothing that could be compared to Him.”; and thus facilitates one’s submission to the greatness of the Lord.

### **The significance of Masjid al-Aqsa in the Night Journey**

- All-Knowing, the Creator, mentions both Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem, by name in the first verse of Surah al-Isra‘. In this way, Allah swt honours them, and calls them both His ‘Masjid’.

- These “Masajid” were not physical buildings but rather it is the land on which they stand which Allah has blessed. Thus, with or without any buildings, they can be regarded as a Masjid. When al-Isra’ and al-Mi’raj took place, there were no complete buildings within the Noble Sanctuary of al-Aqsa; the only building present was the surrounding wall and perhaps a few ruins.
- Muslims consider al-Aqsa to have been built first by Prophet Adam (as).
- Abu Dharr reported that he asked the Prophet (saw), “O Prophet of Allah, which Masjid was built first on earth?” The Prophet replied, “The Sacred Masjid of Makkah.” Abu Dharr again asked, “Which was next?” The Prophet said, “The Masjid al-Aqsa.” “How long was the period between them?” Abu Dharr asked. The Prophet said, “Forty years. Apart from these, offer your prayers anywhere when it is time to pray, although excellence is in praying in these Masajid.”
- Imam al-Qurtubi (Allah have mercy on him) says, “There are different opinions regarding the construction of Masjid al-Aqsa. Some assert that Adam (as) established Masjid al-Haram in Makkah and then proceeded to build Masjid al-Aqsa forty years later. Others assert the angels laid the foundation of Masjid al-Haram and after forty years established Masjid al-Aqsa. There are a lot of possibilities and Allah knows best.”
- Allah swt has designated Masjid al-Aqsa and its surrounding area as “blessed”. The “blessed land” under the Islamic ethos means land associated with *barakah* — the land over which Allah swt has endowed spiritual and physical blessings from which all of humanity and Allah’s creation can derive benefit. This *barakah* also extends to the people residing within this land, on the condition that they abide by the commands of Allah swt and more specifically, that they practise Islam.

### The Night Journey

- Anas ibn Malik narrates, “The Prophet (saw) was offered a drink of water, milk, or wine... Then Adam and all the other Prophets were resurrected and the Messenger of Allah led them (in prayer) that night.”
- Ibn Kathir (Allah have mercy on him) narrates a hadith, “Then I left and it was not more than a little while when a lot of people gathered, and someone called for the prayer and the prayer was established.” he (the Prophet ) continued, “So we stood in lines waiting for someone to come and lead us, then Jibra’il took my hand and asked me to lead the prayer, and I did. After the end of the prayer Jibra’il asked me, ‘o Muhammad, do you know who prayed behind you?’ I said, ‘No’. he said, ‘every Prophet sent by Allah swt prayed behind you.’ Then Jibra’il took my hand and we ascended to heaven.”
- The Prophet’s praying in al-Aqsa consolidates this bond between the first two places of worship built on earth. It also provides al-Aqsa with special significance as this is the only place known to us on earth where all the Prophets of Allah prayed together at one given time led by the final Prophet Muhammad (saw). The fact that all the Prophets were assembled together in al-Aqsa on this special night indicates the inclusive nature of Islam attested to by the Qur’an ; “Say (o Muslims!), ‘We believe in Allah and in that which has been revealed to us; in that which was revealed to Ibrahim, Isma’il, Ishaq, Ya’qub, and their descendents; in that which was given to Musa and ‘Isa; and in that which was given to the Prophets from their Lord’; We do not make any distinction between any of them...” (2:36)

- The fact that Prophet Muhammad (saw) led all of the other Prophets in prayer is a clear indication of his being a leader of all the Prophets and therefore a salient call to all humanity and the People of the Book to now come under the guidance of the final Prophet, Muhammad (saw).
- For Muslims, the prayer by Prophet Muhammad (saw) in al-Aqsa declares the connection, firstly, between the Ka'bah and al-Aqsa, and secondly, between the Prophet (and thereby all Muslims) and al-Aqsa. Leading the Prophets in prayer in al-Aqsa further signifies inheriting the legacy of the other Prophets, and the leadership of humankind.

### **Praying in Al-Aqsa**

- Abu Darda' relates that the Prophet said, "A prayer in Makkah is worth 100,000 times; a prayer in my Masjid (in Madinah) is worth 1,000 times; and a prayer in al-Aqsa is worth 500 times more than anywhere else."  
[Al-Tabarani, al-Bayhaqi and al-Suyuti]
- Anas ibn Malik relates that the Prophet said, "The prayer of a person in his house is a single prayer; his prayer in the Masjid of his tribe has the reward of twenty-five prayers; his prayer in the Masjid wherein the Friday prayer is observed has the reward of five hundred prayers; his prayer in Masjid al-Aqsa has a reward of five thousand prayers; his prayer in my Masjid (the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah) has a reward of fifty thousand prayers; and the prayer in the Sacred Masjid at Makkah has a reward of one hundred thousand prayers."  
[Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah]