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AL-ISRA' AND AL-MI'RAJ were not miracles to prove the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ; rather they represent an incredible journey of tremendous importance undertaken by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ through the power of Allah ﷻ. It was the highest accolade afforded to the Prophet ﷺ. He undertook a journey no other human has been able to make, on a mode of transport that was only accessible to the greatest of the previous Prophets. Those who have faith in Allah ﷻ have no hesitation in accepting the Night Journey, as Allah ﷻ is Supreme with power above all things.

The timing of al-Isra' is also significant in relation to both the Prophet's ﷺ mission and status amongst his contemporaries. As mentioned earlier this was the time when he was least secure, most prone to attacks and gravely concerned about the future of his mission. However, through the Night Journey Allah ﷻ empowered him and indicated the futility of those rebels on earth who were presenting obstacles to the mission. The solace and comfort the Prophet ﷺ gained from this journey almost mid-way in his ﷺ prophethood was absolute.

The Islamic creed is set apart from the other monotheistic faiths for a number of reasons, most pertinently due to the fact that the Ummah, through the will of Allah ﷻ, has preserved in great detail the actual and specific words spoken by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the final Messenger to humanity, with full chains of narrators whose authenticity has been verified painstakingly. It is only Muslims who can claim this, since no words attributed to 'Isa ﷺ or Musa ﷺ

(outside of the Qur'an) claimed by the Christians or Jews can be verified or proven to have actually been uttered by the respective Prophets. Again, it is only Muslims who can testify to have received the words from Ibrahim ؑ, Musa ؑ and 'Isa ؑ without any doubt. The ahadith about the Night Journey are quoted directly from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ regarding his conversations and, on occasion, the advice he ﷺ received from the aforementioned Prophets. Hence, al-Isra' and al-Mi'raj provided Muslims with a magnanimous bounty, and that was the opportunity to receive unadulterated messages from those great Prophets.

The Prophet's ﷺ faith was immovable but became secured even further by the Might of Allah ﷻ and this journey nurtured him and enabled him to face every conceivable challenge. The greatness of the physical journey itself pales into insignificance when contrasted to the depth and breadth of experiences he encountered and the meetings he had during al-Mi'raj. To see and meet previous Prophets and the angels is not insignificant, and to have been greeted by them and showered with respect is without doubt one of the most honourable experiences of the Prophet ﷺ. This helped to banish the anguish created by the taunts and obstinacy of the tribe of Quraish.

The appointment of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the imam of all the Prophets when he led the prayers within al-Aqsa cannot be underestimated. It was an honour of majestic proportions, especially when one considers that the Prophet ﷺ was leading all the Prophets including the first man on earth, our and his ﷺ father Adam ؑ and the other great Prophets like Ibrahim ؑ, Musa ؑ, Dawud ؑ and 'Isa ؑ. This appointment of authority should be seen in its correct perspective, as a mighty responsibility and an indication of the finality of Prophethood and the transfer of Allah's message to the final Prophet, Muhammad ﷺ. His ﷺ subsequent meetings with the principle Prophets during various stages of the journey was a source of comfort and reassurance from his Prophetic "brothers and father". He ﷺ was able to draw strength from their experiences and witness the true life of the Hereafter which awakened him ﷺ to the

responsibility of his ﷺ own mission which was yet to be completed.

Witnessing the reality of the hereafter with both heaven and hell being unfolded in front of his ﷺ eyes must have strengthened him immeasurably in his ﷺ mission, driving him ﷺ to leave no stone unturned when warning humanity about the perils of going astray.

The greatest bounty of all was his ﷺ being taken to the presence of Allah Almighty, the Lord ﷻ of the Worlds. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was allowed to ascend where no other had or has been allowed to, not even angel Jibra'il. This audience was not restricted to one visit, but following the advice of Musa ؑ, he ﷺ asked again and again for Allah ﷻ to reduce the number of obligatory prayers. In this way, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was able to meet Allah ﷻ, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the Lord of All the Worlds, the Limitless, the Magnificent, ten times.

If one considers the life of this world and all of its frailties, trials, tribulations and hardships and one remembers that these are tests set by Allah ﷻ Most High, in order to separate the righteous from those who go astray, what greater bounty could He ﷻ bestow on His servants than to grant them an audience? Only Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has been worthy of this glory. The exclusive audience with Allah ﷻ washed away all of his ﷺ sorrows and concerns, instilling in him a renewed determination to dedicate himself with ardent vigour towards his central purpose of delivering the Message and reforming humanity across the world.

After considering the greatness and significance of al-Isra' and al-Mi'raj it is not surprising to understand how it impacted on the course of history. Prior to the Night Journey, the Prophet ﷺ was fighting for his ﷺ own survival. After this incredible journey, he ﷺ returned to his mission with unbending faith and renewed vigour. A few months after this event, the Prophet ﷺ undertook the Hijrah (Emigration) to Madinah, and thereafter victory followed victory. The Prophet ﷺ established an Islamic state, something that appeared inconceivable just a few months earlier. His ﷺ Companions also benefitted by being imbued with resolute conviction in both their faith and their mission. The once sworn enemies and doubters of

this very journey in time embraced faith sincerely and the numbers of the faithful began to grow exponentially.

Allah ﷻ the Most High, the best of planners, raised the Prophet ﷺ to Him ﷻ and showed him ﷺ the reality of this transitory world during the incredible Night Journey. In this are lessons for us all, and a reminder. The life of this world is nothing but a gilded cage, and if we are distracted by what is apparent here on earth, we will surely lose out on the promises of an everlasting paradise. Besides al-Isra' and al-Mi'raj having enriched the Prophet ﷺ they provided the ummah with an eyewitness account from the most reliable source of the future which all of creation will have to encounter. Remembrance of this great journey strengthens the *Iman* of the believer in the hereafter and thereby plays a pivotal role in ensuring good conduct during his lifetime on earth. The event became a means through which the course of history changed for the Prophet ﷺ and for Islam. For the believers who ponder over this journey, its impact should be no less, insha'Allah.