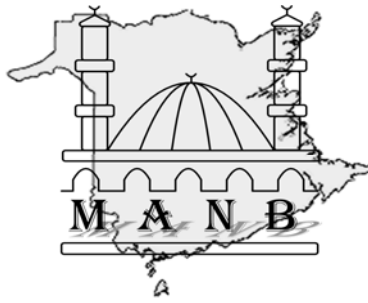


M A N B

is a nonprofit organization
found to present, serve
and educate the Muslim
community in Saint John



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Muslim Association of New Brunswick N E W S L E T T E R

INSIGHTS

Lessons from the Ascension of the Prophet

By Ahmed El Azhary (www.islamonline.net)

The books of seerah (biography of Prophet Muhammad) report that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) saw examples of people of Hellfire and different ways of their punishment when he was ascending through the heavens with Angel Jibreel (Gabriel). One can recognize from the scenes narrated in the story that the punishments he witnessed are all punishments for sins of immorality. These are sins that lead to the destruction of the public well-being. Nowadays, they are widespread in many Muslim communities. As we remember the story of Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj (Arabic for the Night Journey and the Ascension of Prophet Muhammad), we would like to remind ourselves and others of the dangers of these sins. We should forbid ourselves and others from falling into such sins. In this series, we will take a close look at the scenes that the Prophet saw and elaborate on each sin and its punishment. In the first scene, the Prophet saw the backbiters being punished. He told us about what he saw: "When I was taken up into the heavens, I passed by some people who had nails of copper with which they were scratching their faces and chests. I said, 'Who are these people, O Jibreel?' He said, 'These are the ones who used to eat the flesh of people and slander their honor.'" Such people shall receive a punishment that is similar to the nature of their sin. As they used to eat people's flesh during life, they shall torment their own flesh in the hereafter. In explaining the nature of backbiting and shedding light on its danger, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, said, "Islam prohibits backbiting. Almighty Allah says, [And spy not, neither backbite one another.] (Al-Hujurat 49:12) The Prophet wanted to transfer the meaning of backbiting to his Companions through questions and answers. He asked them, "Do you know what backbiting is?" They replied, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said, "It is saying something about your brother that he would dislike." Someone asked, "What if I say something about my brother that is true?" The Prophet replied, "If what you say about him [or her] is true, it is backbiting, and if it is not true, then you have slandered him [or her]" (Muslim). A person who dislikes another is likely to look for defects in the appearance, behavior, lineage, or anything else pertaining to the person that he or she dislikes. So, backbiting is nothing but a desire to belittle people, slander their honor, and deride their accomplishments in their absence. As this is considered stabbing in the back, it is a manifestation of narrow-mindedness and cowardice. Backbiting is a negative attribute; those who indulge in backbiting are not achievers. Backbiting is a tool of destruction, for those who are addicted to it spare none. They throw darts at everyone and wound everybody. It is no wonder then that those who are addicted to this vile habit are described by a repulsive picture in the Qur'an. This repulsive picture aims at making people tremble in horror when they imagine the enormity of this sin. Almighty Allah says, [And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you love to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor that (so abhor the other)!] (Al-Hujurat 49:12) Anyone would feel sick at the thought of eating human flesh, so what would be more repellent than to think of eating the flesh of one's dead brother? Whenever there was an opportunity, the Prophet stressed this Qur'anic imagery so as to imprint it on people's hearts and minds. Ibn Mas'ud narrated, "We were sitting with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Then a man got up and left, whereupon another person spoke ill of him. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told him, 'Pick your teeth.' The man replied, 'Why? I haven't eaten any meat.' The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied, 'You have eaten your brother's flesh'" (Al-Tabarani). Jabir narrated, "While we were with the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), the wind brought a foul odor in our direction, whereupon the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, 'Do you know what this odor is? It is the odor of those who backbite the believers'" (Ahmad). This being mentioned, one can extract the wisdom of the strong warning against falling into backbiting. We are strongly warned against it because it is not just a common social evil — it is also an abhorrent sin that impairs the well-being of the community and gives rise to other major sins. Spread of backbiting in a community means that slandering, insulting, defaming, and vilifying will be a daily routine for the individuals living in that community.

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Al-Isra and Al-Miraj A Miraculous Journey

By Magda Azzam (www.readingislam.com)

(Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship to the Far Distant Place of Worship the neighborhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him of Our tokens! Lo! He, only He, is the Nearer, the Seer.) (Al-Israa' 17:1)

On 27 Rajab, Muslims remember Israa' and Mi'raj, the miraculous Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him). The exact date of the event is uncertain, but the majority of scholars place it at 12 to 16 months before the Hijrah, the Prophet's migration to Madinah. One night Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was sleeping near the Ka'bah in Makkah, when the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) came to him, woke him up and, taking him by the arm, led him to Al-Buraq, a beast resembling a horse with two huge wings springing from its back. From Makkah, Al-Buraq took off toward Jerusalem. There, the Prophet was met by all the other prophets. He (peace and blessings be upon him) dismounted, tethered Al-Buraq to a ring in the gate of Jerusalem, and led them in Prayers. Two vessels were then brought to him, one containing milk, the other wine. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) drank the milk. Jibreel said, "O Muhammad, you enjoy what is pure. Surely you will guide your people to the right path." This journey demonstrates God's might and ability to make possible the impossible. The concepts of time and space as we understand them do not apply, and what applies cannot be perceived by our limited faculties. Led by the Angel Jibreel, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) began his ascent through the seven heavens, where he saw the other prophets till he reached Sadrat Al-Muntaha, the remotest lote tree, symbolizing the end of worldly knowledge. He was then taken before the Divine Presence. Allah enjoined the Muslims to perform salah (ritual Prayers) 50 times a day. After his audience with Allah and on his way down, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) met Musa (Moses—peace and blessings be upon him), who asked him how many Prayers were laid upon his followers. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) replied 50, Musa (peace and blessings be upon him) told him that the congregational Prayer is heavy and your people are weak. He advised him to go back and ask Allah to reduce them. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) made several trips back and forth, and each time God reduced the number, till finally He reduced it to 5 Prayers a day and if they are performed properly the worshipper will be given credit for 50. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) continued his descent till he arrived back in Makkah. When he told the people what had happened to him, Muslims who were weak in faith doubted the Prophet's report. Yet when his friend and long supporter Abu Bakr was asked to take a stand on the issue, he replied, "If Muhammad said it happened, then it must have happened. I believed him when he first talked about his divine revelation, why should I doubt him now?" Thus on this occasion he earned the title of As-Siddiq (the Veracious).

(...and We appointed the vision which We showed thee as an ordeal for mankind..) (Israa' 17:60)

This miracle was the first serious trial for the Companions' faith when they were confronted with an issue that cannot be measured empirically. For the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), after seeing Allah's signs, his faith was established on certainty. The trip from Makkah to Jerusalem was not chosen haphazardly. This area is known as the cradle of all religions and Muhammad's message encompasses all the preceding ones. This miraculous journey establishes several facts. First, the status of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), as he was chosen to lead all the prophets in prayer, and to go where no one else, not even Jibreel, was allowed. The journey also establishes the sanctity of Jerusalem, because it is the point where the earth and sky meet and from there the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ascended to heaven. Therefore, the whole of Jerusalem and not only the mosque is considered in the eyes of Muslims a sacred place to behold and cherish after Makkah and Madinah.

Sometimes It Causes Me to Tremble

By AElfwine Mischler, *Muslim teacher and translator in California*
(www.readingislam.com)

OK, folks, try this one at two o'clock in the morning or, if you can't manage that, after the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer when the world around you is quiet. Spend some time reflecting on the Prophet's Night Journey and Ascension—Israa' and Mi'raj—which are remembered on 27 Rajab. Imagine yourself accompanying him on that miraculous journey. Here's a guy (peace and blessings be upon him) who's been struggling for 12 long years to get people to worship only the One God, Allah. They call him "Al-Ameen", The Trustworthy, and even the staunchest pagans continue to entrust their property to him when they travel because of his honesty. Yet they won't accept his words concerning Allah. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) sees his followers persecuted and tortured and is powerless to help them. He himself is persecuted and reviled by most. He has recently traveled to a distant city, Ta'if, to try to win the people there to Islam, but he was ignominiously driven out. His mission as a prophet has not brought him wealth or power. There has not yet been any vision of a Muslim state such as was later to be established in Madinah. So here he is asleep, an ordinary human with an extraordinary mission. Imagine if you can, the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel) coming to wake him up and setting him on the marvelous steed, Al-Buraq. Imagine the flight to Jerusalem and the salah (ritual Prayer) of all the past prophets with Muhammad as their imam (peace and blessings on them all). In this miraculous gathering of these holy men, they didn't go around shaking hands and slapping each other on the back. "Hey, Moses! I always wanted to meet you! I've heard so much about you!" "Jesus! What really happened when they tried to arrest you?" If it had been me, that's what I would have done. But Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) didn't do that, he didn't try to gain moral strength and encouragement from his fellow prophets, and they didn't offer any. Instead, they all turned their attention to their Lord and worshipped Him in the way He had instructed. Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) sought moral and spiritual strength not from other humans—even if they were great ones who miraculously appeared to him then—but from his Lord and Creator. And then their flight to the heavens. It's hard to picture it because, of course, it's totally out of our comprehension. How can a human being—with all his physical limits, his composition of matter—how can he possibly travel in the Unseen? (Well, then it wouldn't have been a miracle, would it, if it hadn't happened so?) That's the whole wonder and glory of it. That a human could be lifted to another realm of existence and return unharmed. Dwell upon that for a few minutes while the world around you sleeps. Let your spirit be lifted up towards your Creator and Lord. I imagine Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) at the highest point of his ascension, when he has reached the vicinity of the Throne of Allah. But even for Muhammad, who has already passed through so much on that night, the vision is limited. Allah is veiled by light and Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is unable to see Him. I contemplate that. I imagine that I'm standing behind Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and also gazing at the veil of light. And I long to have the veil lifted. I long to gaze in adoration at my Lord. But not yet. I'm still limited by my humanity, my corporeal being. When life gets stressful, I will close my eyes and imagine myself again standing behind Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in the vicinity of the Throne of the One Being Whom I long to see.

How to Celebrate Al-Isra and Al-Miraj?

By Dr. Sano Koutoub Moustapha, *Professor of Fiqh and its Principles, International Islamic University, Malaysia* (www.islamonline.net)

It is very unfortunate that this marvelous occasion is coming at the time when Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa is under this unjust occupation. Our beloved brothers and sisters in Palestine are living under oppression and are continually subjected to all kinds of humiliation and atrocities. As Muslims, we shall take this opportunity to pray for our fellow Muslims around the globe who are suffering from atrocities. All Muslims should remember that the liberation of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa isn't an obligation upon Palestinians alone but upon every single able-bodied Muslim. Each of us must do his or her best, at least through our prayers and supplications. I hope to see Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj celebrated with the return of Al-Aqsa to the Muslims. It is my utmost wish to pray one day in Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. Let us celebrate Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj of this year by contributing to the causes of oppressed Muslims in the world, especially in Palestine. May Allah strengthen our faith and brotherhood so we will feel the pains and difficult times of our fellow Muslims. Surely Al-Israa' and Al-Mi'raj is a great and memorable occasion for all Muslims around the globe. It is also an occasion to remind ourselves about our duty and obligation towards our beloved brothers and sisters in Palestine. We should increase all levels of assistance to the Palestinians who have been living for decades under unjust oppression and occupation. I am sorry to say that the Muslims would be considered sinful by continuing to simply watch the atrocities and humiliation poured upon the Palestinians without doing anything. Certainly, there is a dire need to try all possible means and methods that will put a quick end to the barbaric and inhumane treatment to the Palestinians in their homeland by the Zionists. At the very least, this blessed occasion should be celebrated by renewing calls to all Muslims to fear Allah concerning the Palestinians. The suffering is increasing and there seems to be no end in sight to the ways they are humiliated on a daily basis. This occasion should remind all Muslims about their obligation towards liberating Al-Aqsa mosque. Let us pray for the best and let us hope to be allowed to pray in this mosque which is the third sacred mosque in Islam. I do believe that celebrating historical events and occasions such as the Mawlid (Prophet's birthday) and Al-Israa' should not be considered as a totally forbidden innovation. It is true that these celebrations are innovations but not all innovations are considered prohibited or forbidden. Thus, there are so many innovations which took place after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) such as compilation of the Qur'an, and the second call for Prayer on Friday. Furthermore, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) is reported to have said: "Whoever innovates something good he will be rewarded for it and the rewards of whoever follows him in that innovation. The same thing goes to whoever innovates something bad, he will be sinful of it and the sin of whoever follows him in that matter." Accordingly, one shouldn't take the general statement in other hadith which says all innovations are acts of straying but we should restrict that general statement to the specific statement in this hadith—meaning that innovations are considered prohibited when they are sinful, not when they are good. In light of this aspect of understanding the divine texts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, I shall conclude that the legal ruling of celebrating any auspicious Islamic occasion such as the Mawlid and Al-Israa' has been done in the context of its relevance to the maslahah or interest of Islam.

continue No sound relationships will be built and no friendships will endure. As human beings, we are in a dire need to have a social life. It is said that humans are sociable in nature. Backbiting is a sin that wipes away this human natural instinct. It is said that humans are sociable in nature. Backbiting is a sin that wipes away this human natural instinct. It leads people's social life to destruction at the expense of mutual understanding and respect. Those who backbite others hurt their feelings and harm their emotions, and Islam is definitely against hurting others by stabbing them in the back through backbiting. It is easy to imagine the feeling of resentment that the victims of backbiting experience. It is also easy to imagine the amount of hatred and hostility that might result in reaction to backbiting. Unfortunately, not everyone pays attention to this.



DATE		FAJR		SUNRISE		DHUHR		ASR		MAGRIB		ISHA	
JUL 10	JUL 17	3:57	4:05	5:47	5:53	1:35	1:35	5:38	5:37	9:15	9:10	10:30	10:23
JUL 11	JUL 18	3:58	4:06	5:48	5:54	1:35	1:35	5:38	5:36	9:15	9:09	10:29	10:22
JUL 12	JUL 19	3:59	4:07	5:48	5:55	1:35	1:36	5:37	5:36	9:14	9:09	10:28	10:21
JUL 13	JUL 20	4:00	4:08	5:49	5:56	1:35	1:36	5:37	5:36	9:13	9:08	10:28	10:20
JUL 14	JUL 21	4:01	4:10	5:50	5:57	1:35	1:36	5:37	5:36	9:13	9:07	10:27	10:19
JUL 15	JUL 22	4:02	4:11	5:51	5:58	1:35	1:36	5:37	5:35	9:12	9:06	10:26	10:18
JUL 16	JUL 23	4:04	4:12	5:52	5:59	1:35	1:36	5:37	5:35	9:11	9:05	10:25	10:16

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KIDS' CORNER

Dear Children, assalamu alaikum. This is your corner to take part of our contest. Please answer the question, write your name, cut the sheet and place it inside the designated box before next Friday prayer. On Sunday after Dhuhr prayer we will announce the winner who will receive a decent prize!

IS THERE ANY CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT THE NIGHT OF AL-ISRA AND AL-MIRAJ IS ON THE 27TH OF RAJAB? (*Parents help may be needed!*)

NAME:

AGE: