

# *How we remember the night of al-Isrā wa'l Mi'rāj in every salāh*

One of the most important nights in the Islamic calendar is the night of *al-Isrā wa'l Mi'rāj*. One year before the *Hijra* (and just after the Year of Sorrow), Prophet Muhammad ﷺ went from Makka to Jerusalem with body and soul in a wakeful state, and then upwards to the heavens and beyond.

This miraculous night is remembered by Muslims *every* single day in their lives. During *salāh*, Muslims sit after two units to recite *tashahhud*. This *tashahhud* reportedly came about from the night of *al-Isrā wa'l Mi'rāj*, from the conversation of the Prophet ﷺ with his Lord. Imam al-Qurtubi states in his *tafsīr*<sup>1</sup> that when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ crossed the heavens and reached *sidra al-muntahā*, Jibril expressed his inability to journey any further with him, and so instructed him ﷺ to proceed alone thereafter. Jibril also advised him to offer his greetings to Allāh first. So after the point of *sidra al-muntahā*, he ﷺ reached a place no creation had ever reached, and basked in the vision of Allāh. There he ﷺ conversed with his Lord and began with these exalted words of greetings:

التحيات لله والصلوات والطيبات

*All compliments, prayers and pure words are for Allāh*

*Tahiyya* means greetings, the type given to kings and dignitaries. Then he ﷺ said all *salawāt* are for Allāh, namely the five daily prayers. Other opinions state that *salawāt* here means all types of *salāh*, be it compulsory or optional (*nafl*). *Salāh* can also mean *du'ā*. So the opening words can also mean all supplications are made to Allāh alone.

The word *tayyibāt* means pure things. Mulla Alī Qārī writes it means words that indicate towards good. It can also mean words of praise and supplication.

Another interpretation is that the three words (*tahiyyāt*, *salawāt*, *tayyibāt*) refer to the three types of worship; verbal worships, physical worships and financial worships.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> III: 273 (verse 2: 285). *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī (al-Jāmi li Ahkām al-Qur'ān)*. Allāma Abū Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurtubī (d. 668 AH), Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, Lebanon, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> II: 171, *Tuhfa al-Ahwazī bi sharh jāmi al-tirimdhī, (Bab mā jā fī al-tashahhud)*. Allāma al-Hāfiz M Abd al-Rahmān ibn Abd al-Rahīm al-Mubārākpūrī. Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, Lebanon.

السلام عليك أيها النبي  
*Salutations upon you O Prophet!*

In reply, Allāh saluted him with these words. The Prophet ﷺ accepted this as a personal greeting. As someone who was selfless, he ﷺ thought that he had been greeted, but his *ummah* had been deprived. Hence the words:

السلام علينا و علي عباد الله الصالحين  
*Peace be upon us, and the righteous servants of Allāh*

The *shahāda* (I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger) was added later and hence the name *tashahhud*:

أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله و أشهد أن محمدا عبده و رسوله  
*I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger*

Please note that in *salāh*, one cannot talk or address anyone. If one does, the *salāh* is broken. But in every *salāh*, we address the Prophet ﷺ directly. This does not break our *salāh*, but in fact completes it.

It is not just the *tashahhud* in *salāh* that reminds us of the miracle of *al-Isrā wa'l Mi'rāj*. In fact, *salāh* has a very close link with the Ascension:

- \* It is on this blessed night that *salāh* became obligatory upon the Muslim *ummah*.
- \* When the Prophet ﷺ went on the Ascension, he spoke to Allāh. When we perform *salāh*, it is our conversation with Allāh.
- \* When the Prophet ﷺ went on the Ascension, he saw Allāh. When we perform *salāh*, we should do so as if we are observing Allāh.
- \* Whereas other Islamic rulings were brought down to the Prophet ﷺ, so important was *salāh* that he ﷺ ascended to the heavens to receive it on this blessed night.
- \* Symbolically speaking, this is why *salāh* is seen as an ascending force, and why the Prophet ﷺ described *salāh* as the '*mi'rāj* of the believer.'

May Allāh grant us spiritual ascendancy through the means of *salāh*, *āmin*.

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