

## Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension

Muhammad (pbuh) was sound asleep when a voice called him so insistently that he woke up. There before him stood the angel Jibril in full splendour. Jibril beckoned for him to follow, and when they reached the doorway Muhammad saw a most marvellous beast. This was Burraq – a dazzling white mare with a human face, wings like an eagle, hooves which reached as far as the eye could see, and the ability to travel faster than light. Jibril told Muhammad to mount the creature, and together they flew off into the night sky. All along the journey they saw many strange and terrible sights. Some were designed to tempt the Prophet and lead him from the true path, others were examples of the terrible punishments which people bring upon themselves as a result of the things they do on earth. At last they landed at the gates of the temple in Jerusalem. As they entered, they saw Jesus and Moses and many other prophets. After spending some time in prayer, they came out. Reaching all the way up into the heavens was a Ladder of Light. Jibril told Muhammad to mount the ladder, and he did so, as quickly and easily as if it had been made of air. Moses then led Muhammad through each of seven heavens. They met many prophets from the past, including Adam, Noah, Aaron, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus. They also saw many great and powerful angels who existed to offer praise and worship to God, to punish those who disobeyed him and to encourage and reward those who were faithful. Finally, Muhammad was taken into the Heavenly Abode, into the presence of God. There was a sweet fragrance all around, and Muhammad felt the touch of an invisible hand on his shoulder and chest which produced a feeling of unspeakable happiness. Here he was given the laws that govern Islam. On his descent from the Heavenly Abode, the Prophet met again with Moses. 'How many prayers a day are prescribed for your religion?' asked Moses. 'Fifty prayers a day,' responded the Prophet. Moses was troubled. 'Muhammad, how do you imagine that your people will pray fifty times a day? Believe me; people are quite incapable of carrying out such an instruction. Go back – and ask for a smaller number.' So

Muhammad returned and asked for fewer prayers. On his way back down, he met with Moses again, who asked him, 'How many prayers are prescribed to you now?' 'Forty,' replied Muhammad. 'Forty!!! Impossible! Go back and ask for fewer.'

And so the situation continued. Even when Muhammad reported that just five prayers a day were required, Moses said, 'That is still too much. Imagine an ordinary man praying five times a day! Return again!'

'No,' answered Muhammad. 'I have returned too many times and I am ashamed.'

He then said goodbye to Moses and began his descent. Down they went, by the Ladder of Light, back to the temple in Jerusalem. They found Burraq and flew back to the house where Jibril had found Muhammad sleeping.

Today the events of this remarkable night are celebrated at the festival of Lailat al Miraj on the 27th day of the month of Rajab.

### Key Challenge:

*Re-tell the story from the point of view of one of the following:*

- a) *someone who doesn't believe Muhammad is telling the truth*
- b) *Prophet Muhammad*
- c) *Angel Jibril.*

*You could do this as a comic, a blog entry, a story or even a series of texts or tweets.*

*Choose the correct pronouns and get creative!*