



256196 - Was the Night Journey Merely a Journey Through Time?

the question

I heard on one of the TV channels someone saying, "When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was taken on the Night Journey, it was not just from one place to another, but he also traveled from one time to another." He said this when he wanted to respond to those who say that Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa did not exist and that it was built during the reign of `Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan. I want a response or clarification to the statement that says the Prophet traveled from one time to another, considering this a great miracle, as physicists have not yet found a way to travel through time.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

First: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was taken by night from Al-Masjid Al-Haram to Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning): {Exalted is He Who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing} [Al-Isra' 1:1].

From there, he ascended to the highest heavens. Subsequently, he returned to Bayt Al-Maqdis where he led the prophets in the dawn prayer. After that, he returned to Makkah. The claim that he was not physically transported from one place to another is a clear error that both the Quran and the authentic Hadiths refute. The claim that Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa did not exist is an error. This represents a doubt in Al-Isra' (the Night Journey) as a whole. Moreover, it casts doubt on the Quran and contradicts its explicit wording. Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa existed and was well-established. It had been built in ancient times. Sulayman (peace be upon him) renovated its building. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described it to the polytheists of Quraysh when they criticized his journey to it.



Jabir ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with them both) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying: "When the Quraysh disbelieved me, I stood in Al-Hijr, and Allah displayed Bayt Al-Maqdis before me, so I started informing them about its signs while looking at it." (Reprted by Al-Bukhari, 3886 and Muslim, 170)

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I saw myself in Al-Hijr while Quraysh were questioning me about my Night Journey. They asked me about details of Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) which I had not committed to memory. I became distressed, more distressed than I had ever been. Then Allah raised it before my eyes, and I began answering everything they asked me about it." (Related by Muslim, 172)

Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I asked, "O Messenger of Allah, which Masjid was established first on earth?" He said: "Al-Masjid Al-Haram." I asked: "Then which?" He said: "Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa." I asked: "How long was the period between them?" He said: "Forty years. Then wherever the prayer becomes due after that, perform it there, for there is virtue in it." (Reported by Al-Bukhari, 3366 and Muslim, 520)

`Abdullah ibn `Amr narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When Sulayman ibn Dawud (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) built Bayt Al-Maqdis, he asked Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, for three things: He asked for judgment that would match Allah's judgment, and it was granted to him; he asked for a kingdom that no one after him would ever have, and it was granted to him; and when he finished building the mosque, he asked that whoever comes to it solely for prayer would be cleansed of their sins as if they were newborn." (Narrated by An-Nasa'i, 693). This hadith was classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih An-Nasa'i.

Sulayman (peace be upon him) merely renovated the existing structure, just as Ibrahim (peace be upon him) renovated the Ka`bah.

Ibn Al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "The reference here is to the first construction



and foundation of the two mosques. Ibrahim was not the first to build the Ka`bah, nor was Sulayman the first to build Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem). There were many prophets, righteous people, and builders before them, and Allah knows best who initiated the construction."

"It has been reported that Adam was the first to build the Ka`bah. After his children spread across the earth, it is possible that some of them built Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem)" (End quote from Kashf Al-Mushkil, 1/360).

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) expressed a similar view, and Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) preferred it in Fat-h Al-Bari (6/409).

As for `Abd Al-Malik ibn Marwan, he only built the Dome of the Rock (Qubbat As-Sakhrah) in 72 AH (691 CE), and he did not build Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa. Please see the answer to question number [20903](#).

The existence of Al-Aqsa Mosque during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is undisputed. It was the first Qiblah (direction of prayer) for Muslims. It is therefore strange how some people ignore this established fact and turn instead to mere speculations and illusions.

Second: Time is merely a mathematical function between two variables. It cannot be separated or abstracted in a way that allows traveling through or penetrating it. The only exception would be if time travel refers to space travel and time reduction, which reason does not reject. This is different from traveling through time itself. What happened with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) on the night of Al-Isra' and Al-Mi`raj was that he covered vast distances in a brief time, which was miraculous. Though humans may invent means to exceed the speed of light, they cannot reach this miraculous level. Such inventions would not enable their user to ascend to the heavens, whose gates only open with permission, as mentioned in the Hadiths. The concept of time travel in Einstein's theory of relativity is based on approaching or exceeding the speed of light. However, it is impossible for humans to travel back to the past. What must be believed in is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was taken up from Bayt Al-Maqdis to the heavens. He passed through each heaven one after another until he reached the seventh



heaven, and then to whatever Allah willed beyond that. At each heaven, Jibril would seek permission for entry, and it would be opened for him, and he would be welcomed. This is widely narrated in the Hadiths, and we will cite here one such Hadith as an example.

Anas ibn Malik narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "I was brought Al-Buraq, which is a white, long mount, larger than a donkey but smaller than a mule, who would place its hoof at the farthest point within its sight. I mounted it until I reached Bayt Al-Maqdis. I tethered it to the ring where the prophets tether their mounts. Then I entered the mosque and prayed two rak'ahs in it. When I came out, Jibril brought me a vessel of wine and a vessel of milk. I chose the milk, and Jibril said: 'You have chosen the Fitrah (natural disposition).' Then we were taken up to heaven. Jibril asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked: 'Who is it?' He said: 'Jibril.' It was asked: 'Who is with you?' He said: 'Muhammad.' It was asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes, he has been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and there I saw Adam. He welcomed me and prayed for good for me. Then we were taken up to the second heaven. Jibril asked for the gate to be opened. It was asked: 'Who is it?' He said: 'Jibril.' It was asked: 'Who is with you?' He said: 'Muhammad.' It was asked: 'Has he been sent for?' He said: 'Yes, he has been sent for.' The gate was opened for us, and there I saw the two maternal cousins, `Isa ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) and Yahya ibn Zakariyya (John son of Zechariah), peace be upon them. They welcomed me and prayed for good for me. [Translation continues in similar pattern through all seven heavens...] Until I reached Ibrahim (peace be upon him) who was reclining against Al-Bayt Al-Ma`mur. Every day seventy thousand angels enter it, never to return to it. Then I was taken to Sidrat Al-Muntaha (the Lote Tree of the Utmost Boundary). Its leaves were like elephant ears and its fruits like large vessels. When it was covered by the Command of Allah, it changed, and none among Allah's creation could describe its beauty. Then Allah revealed to me what He revealed and made obligatory fifty prayers every day and night. I went down to Musa (peace be upon him) who asked: 'What has your Lord made obligatory upon your Ummah?' I said: 'Fifty prayers.' He said: 'Return to your Lord and ask Him for reduction, for your Ummah cannot bear this. I have tested the Children of Israel and have experience with them.' [The dialogue continues between the Prophet and Musa about reducing the prayers...] Until it was said: 'O Muhammad, they are five prayers every day and night, each being counted as ten, so that makes fifty prayers. Whoever intends to



do a good deed and does not do it will have a good deed recorded for him, and if he does it, it will be recorded for him as ten. Whoever intends to do an evil deed and does not do it, it will not be recorded, and if he does it, only one evil deed will be recorded.' I went down until I reached Musa (peace be upon him) and informed him. He said: 'Go back to your Lord and ask Him for reduction.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'I said: I have gone back to my Lord until I feel shy before Him.'" (Reported by Muslim, 162)

Anas ibn Malik narrated from Malik ibn Sa`sa`ah (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) told them about the night he was taken on the night journey: "While I was in the Hatim - or he said: in the Hija - lying down, someone came to me..." [rest of Hadith]. (Reported by Al-Bukhari, 3887)

Therefore, beware greatly of those who question the Sunnah or speak about the religion without knowledge.

And Allah knows best.