



TAKING LESSON FROM THE MI'RAJ - ADVICE FOR THE LEADERS OF THE UMMAH

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In the Seerah of Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam), we read about the beautiful experience and miraculous journey of the Mi'raj. The journey from Makkah Shareef to Baitul Muqqaddas (Jerusalem) is known as Isra, and the miraculous journey to the seven heavens and beyond is known as the Mi'raj.

Whilst every aspect of the Isra and Mi'raj offers great lessons, there is a lesson that comes to mind, considering these times that we live in and the responsibilities and the trust that devolves upon those who have the knowledge of Deen, and who are in a position where they are able to influence the people.

Our respected Muhadditheen have quoted Ahadith wherein Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) related that during this journey, he (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) was offered wine and milk to drink. Some say that this was at Masjid-al-Aqsa, and others say it was in the heavens, near Sidratul Muntaha. When Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) accepted the milk, Jibreel (alaihis salaam) said:

“You have adopted that which is Al-Fitrah . Had you taken the wine, your Ummah would have certainly gone astray.”

Allah Ta'ala blessed Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) with a disposition that was pure and unadulterated, and thus he (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) inclined to what is good and pure. Milk is pure and nourishing. Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (rahmatullahi 'alayh) explained that like how milk provides nourishment and serves as a food and drink, similarly, the Deen of Islam offers complete spiritual nourishment.

Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) is Sayyidul Ambiyaa , Khaatamun Nabiyyeen and Imamul Muttaqeen . If he (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) had chosen the wine, then Jibreel (alaihis salaam) had said, it would have had such an influence – such a great effect – on the entire Ummah, that the Ummah would have gone astray.

There is a great lesson in this incident for those who are known as scholars, for those who preach, for those who sit on the Mimbars, and for people like myself who give Bayaans, Wa'az and Nasihah. A lot depends on such people. In whichever direction they go, the Ummah will follow. There will be a large following in whichever direction such people go.

If a scholar goes in the right direction, there will be a following in that direction, and if he goes in the wrong direction, then too, there will be a following in the wrong direction. Mufti Muhammad Aashiq-e-Ilaahi Bulandshahri (rahmatullahi 'alayh) had said: "This statement of Jibreel (alaihis Salaam) makes evident that the character and deeds of a leader have a direct impact on his followers."

It is not that everyone in the Ummah will just naturally and instinctively follow the Haq (truth). If that were the case, we would not find so many people in the Ummah of Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) following nafs and Shaytaan. Are we not following nafs and Shaytaan in our lives? How often do we place our own desires before the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala? So many engage in sins recklessly – as if sins are the aim and objective of this worldly life (na'uzu billah).

Whether Haq or Baatil, there will be followers. Look at Shaytaan! He too has a following!

The Scholars are supposed to be the leaders of the Ummah of Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam). They are assigned with the great trust and immense responsibility of conveying this message of Deen and Haq. They are to show us the direction towards Jannah and lead us in that direction – by practically implementing the commandments of Allah Ta'ala and keeping clear of all the prohibitions of Allah Ta'ala. Now, if the scholars are going to go in the direction of Jahannum, then there will be many people who will follow them and who will say to Allah Ta'ala on the Day of Judgment: "Maulana Saheb, Qari Saheb, Mufti Saheb, Haji Saheb, Tablighi Saheb, Khanqah Saheb – and all these people of Deen, were showing us the direction to Jahannum. They were our leaders and we followed them" –but this will not be an excuse.

We, who are categorised as scholars, should keep in mind the Hadith wherein

Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) said:

“Whoever initiates a good practice in Islam and is emulated by others in doing so, will get the reward of it and the reward of all those who act upon it, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And whosoever initiates an evil practice in Islam and is emulated by others, will bear the sin of it, and the sin of all those who act on it without their burden being diminished in the least.”

One of the outstanding qualities of one who has knowledge is his fear of Allah Ta'ala:

“...It is only those who have knowledge among his slaves that fear Allah...”

If a person has much knowledge, but there is no obedience to Allah Ta'ala, and there is an absence of the fear of Allah Ta'ala, he will not be categorised amongst the 'Ulama or Ahle-Ilm.

If the Scholars give leeway with respect to any of the Muharramaat (prohibitions), there is no doubt that the Ummah will very freely move in the direction of sins. And this is what we find happening today. Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Saheb Ludhyaanwi (rahmatullahi Alaih) explained that when the people of learning set a wrong precedent, the consequences are very severe:

- 1) Accountability before Allah Ta'ala will be harsher.
- 2) The wrongdoing by the scholars emboldens the masses to engage in sin.
- 3) The masses will consider sin as permissible.

Our Akaabir always considered that their actions must not affect the Deen in any way. They were very particular about their actions. They looked at the bigger picture and did not compromise on Deen. As scholars, there has to be a concern for the safety of the Ummah and humanity at large. We should think of Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam)'s deep concern for the Ummah, his tears for the Ummah, and his repeated Dua for: "Ummati, Ummati".

The incident of Isra and Mi'raj is very clear: Had Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam) adopted that one single action, the Ummah would have gone astray. Those who hold some influence should realise that their actions can ultimately “make” this Ummah or “break” this Ummah.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the concern and grant us Taqwa and Istiqaamah on Siraatul Mustaqeem. May Allah Ta'ala make us true flagbearers of this beautiful Deen, and

true representatives of Rasulullah (sallallaahu 'alayhi wasallam).

A natural, pure state

Sahih Muslim

Sayyidul Ambiyaa: Master of the Messengers (of Allah Ta'ala)

Khaatamun Nabiyyeen: Seal of the Messengers (of Allah Ta'ala)

Imamul Muttaqeen: The leader of the pious

Sahih Muslim