



RS.IB16 The Night Journey: Isra and Mi'raj and Their Significance for Muslims

AQA 8062 • Calculators not allowed • about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Multiple choice question on the setting of the Night Journey, Isra, in the Islamic narrative: choose the one correct option.

- ☐ A) Muhammad travelled by camel from Makkah to Madinah
- ☐ B) Muhammad was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem on Buraq
- ☐ C) Muhammad sailed from Makkah to Abyssinia
- ☐ D) Muhammad walked from Makkah to Taif

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Give two reasons why Muslims regard the Isra and Mi'raj as important events in Prophet Muhammad's life, in the context of belief in prophethood.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Explain two features of the Mi'raj part of the Night Journey, naming the guide and two things Muhammad encountered during the ascent through the heavens.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4** Explain two ways the Qur'an or Hadith is used as a source of authority when Muslims refer to the Night Journey. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer and name the verse or text where appropriate.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

- 5** Give three practical ways the story of Isra and Mi'raj influences Muslim belief or worship today, referring to daily life or communal practice in the Islamic context.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

- 6** Explain the importance of the Isra and Mi'raj story for the development of Salah, the five daily prayers, in Muslim worship today.
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(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

- 7** Explain two ways belief in the Night Journey supports Muslim belief in the unseen realm, angels and life after death in the context of Islamic doctrine.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** Explain two reasons why some Muslims hold the Isra and Mi'raj as a sign confirming Muhammad's prophethood, in the context of evidence used within Islam.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

- 9** State two differences between how the Isra and the Mi'raj are described, in the narrative context of the Night Journey story.

(Total for Question 9 is 3 marks)

- 10** Give three reasons why some Muslims commemorate Isra and Mi'raj today, in the context of communal memory and religious education.

(Total for Question 10 is 3 marks)

- 11** Explain two contrasting Muslim responses to questions about whether the Isra and Mi'raj happened literally or should be read mainly as spiritual teaching. Refer to Islamic approaches but keep the answer at GCSE level.

(Total for Question 11 is 5 marks)

- 12** Explain two ways the Isra and Mi'raj narrative might encourage moral behaviour among Muslims today, in the context of everyday ethical decisions.

(Total for Question 12 is 4 marks)

- 13** Evaluate the statement, 'The Isra and Mi'raj is the most convincing evidence that Muhammad was a true prophet.' In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, and reach a justified conclusion. Include accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar; up to 3 additional marks are available for SPaG.

Evaluate whether the Isra and Mi'raj is the most convincing evidence that Muhammad was a true prophet, using religious arguments and reaching a justified conclusion. Include SPaG for up to 3 marks.

(Total for Question 13 is 15 marks)

Mark scheme · RS.IB16 The Night Journey: Isra and Mi'raj and Their Significance for Muslims

Question 1

- **B1** choice B, Muhammad was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem on Buraq, cao
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** it confirms Muhammad's special status as a prophet who experiences miracles, oe
- **B1** it provides divine instruction for worship, especially the establishment of the five daily prayers, oe
- **Answer: E.g. confirms Muhammad's prophetic status through a miracle; leads to the instruction about the five daily prayers.**

Question 3

- **B1** point 1: Jibril is the angel who guides Muhammad during the Mi'raj, oe
- **B1** development 1: Jibril leads Muhammad through the seven heavens to meet earlier prophets, such as Ibrahim, Musa and Isa, oe
- **B1** point 2: Muhammad meets earlier prophets and sees signs of the unseen realm during the ascent, oe
- **B1** development 2: these meetings include greetings with Ibrahim and Musa, confirming continuity with earlier revelation, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Jibril guides Muhammad through seven heavens meeting prophets like Ibrahim, Musa and Isa; Muhammad sees realities of the unseen realm.**

Question 4

- **B1** point 1: Muslims cite Qur'an 17:1 (Surah Al-Isra) as a Quranic reference to the Night Journey, oe
- **B1** development 1: this verse states that God took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the far mosque, supporting belief in Isra, oe
- **B1** point 2: many Hadith collections provide fuller narrative detail about the Mi'raj, including meetings with prophets and the giving of prayer, oe
- **B1** development 2: Hadith such as those in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim are used to explain the sequence of events and the origin of the five daily prayers, oe
- **B1** for: accurate naming of a Qur'an verse or a named Hadith collection as the source, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Qur'an 17:1 supports Isra; Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim give details of Mi'raj and the command about prayer.**

Question 5

- **B1** observance of the five daily prayers as a central practice, oe
- **B1** celebration or remembrance of the Isra and Mi'raj on special dates by some Muslim communities, oe
- **B1** strengthened belief in the unseen, encouraging faith in angels and the afterlife, oe
- **Answer: E.g. five daily prayers; community remembrance of Isra and Mi'raj; stronger belief in the unseen, angels and life after death.**

Question 6

- **Level 3** (5-6): A detailed, well structured answer that explains several ways Isra and Mi'raj led to the obligation and practice of Salah, supported by reference to scripture or Hadith and clear links to contemporary worship.
- **Level 2** (3-4): An answer that explains some ways the Night Journey influenced Salah with some supporting detail, though links to contemporary practice may be limited.
- **Level 1** (1-2): One or two simple points are made about a connection between Isra/Mi'raj and prayer, with little development or supporting reference.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Tradition records that during the Mi'raj Muhammad was instructed about the prayers and initially given fifty daily prayers, later reduced to five after consultation with Musa, explaining both the obligation and mercy in their number.
 - Hadith literature records the negotiation and reduction in number, showing the origin of the five daily prayers as tied to the Mi'raj event.
 - The story therefore provides a direct link between Muhammad's experience and the practical structure of Muslim worship, giving religious authority to Salah.
 - Because Salah is timed and performed collectively in mosques, the Mi'raj narrative underpins communal as well as personal prayer practices.
 - For believers the miraculous context gives extra spiritual weight to the prayers, motivating regular observance and teaching about discipline and submission to God.

Question 7

- **B1** point 1: Mi'raj describes encounters with angels such as Jibril, supporting belief in angels as real beings, oe
- **B1** development 1: seeing the heavens and meeting prophets during the ascent provides believers with evidence of a spiritual realm beyond ordinary sight, oe
- **B1** point 2: the narrative includes references to afterlife realities, reinforcing belief in Akhirah, oe
- **B1** development 2: for many Muslims the experience of the Prophet acts as a reliable demonstration that life continues beyond death and that moral accountability exists, oe
- **Answer: E.g. encounters with angels and prophets show the reality of spiritual beings; seeing heavenly things and references to afterlife realities support belief in Akhirah.**

Question 8

- **B1** point 1: the miraculous nature of being taken from Makkah to Jerusalem and then ascended supports the claim that Muhammad received special revelations from God, oe
- **B1** development 1: miracles are a common form of prophetic confirmation in Islamic teaching, so Isra and Mi'raj function as such a sign, oe
- **B1** point 2: the receipt of an important practical command, the prayers, during the event demonstrates Muhammad's role as a lawgiver and messenger, oe
- **B1** development 2: receiving obligations from God through the Prophet is evidence to believers that he is the chosen recipient of divine guidance, oe
- **Answer: E.g. the miraculous journey acts as a prophetic sign; receiving the command about prayer shows Muhammad as God's messenger conveying revealed duties.**

Question 9

- **B1** difference 1: Isra is the night journey from Makkah to Jerusalem, a physical ride on Buraq, oe
- **B1** difference 2: Mi'raj is the ascension from Jerusalem through the seven heavens to stand before God, oe
- **B1** for: differences stated clearly and distinctly, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Isra is the night travel from Makkah to Jerusalem on Buraq; Mi'raj is the heavenly ascension from Jerusalem through the seven heavens to meet God.**

Question 10

- **B1** to teach and remind communities of the origin of the five daily prayers, oe
- **B1** to celebrate an important event in the Prophet's life and strengthen religious identity, oe
- **B1** to encourage reflection on belief in the unseen and trust in God's power, oe
- **Answer: E.g. to teach the origin of prayers; to celebrate the Prophet's life and strengthen identity; to encourage reflection on the unseen and divine power.**

Question 11

- **B1** response 1: some Muslims accept a literal, physical miracle and see the events as factual historical occurrences, oe
- **B1** development 1: this view emphasises the miraculous power of God and supports the event as direct evidence of prophecy, oe
- **B1** response 2: other Muslims focus on the spiritual meanings and moral lessons of the story, reading it as primarily teaching about faith and worship, oe
- **B1** development 2: this approach stresses the narrative's theological and devotional significance without engaging in historical debates, oe
- **B1** for: both contrasting responses explained with development, oe
- **Answer: E.g. literalist view sees Isra and Mi'raj as historical miracles proving prophecy; symbolic view emphasises spiritual teaching about worship and belief, without focusing on historicity.**

Question 12

- **B1** point 1: belief that the Prophet received commandments such as prayer encourages discipline and regular ethical reflection, oe
- **B1** development 1: regular prayer can shape character, promote honesty, patience and responsibility in daily life, oe
- **B1** point 2: seeing the Prophet rewarded with closeness to God can inspire imitation of his example, encouraging moral conduct, oe
- **B1** development 2: Muslims may follow prophetic teachings more closely, including care for others, charity and justice, oe
- **Answer: E.g. obligation to pray fosters discipline and moral reflection; the Prophet's exalted experience inspires imitation of his ethical example, promoting charity and justice.**

Question 13

- **Level 4** (10-12): A well argued, balanced evaluation that analyses reasons for and against the statement, uses religious arguments and evidence, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion. Arguments are organised and mostly precise.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A balanced response with some analysis and religious argument, leading to a supported conclusion, though treatment may lack detail in places.
- **Level 2** (4-6): A basic evaluation with some developed points for and against the statement, but limited use of religious argument or weak conclusion.
- **Level 1** (1-3): Simple, often one-sided points for or against the statement, with little or no developed reasoning or religious argument.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant material.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments supporting the statement: the miraculous nature of Isra and Mi'raj, including travel to Jerusalem and ascension through the heavens, is a unique supernatural sign that many believers find compelling evidence of divine favour and therefore prophethood.
 - Supporters may argue that the event directly led to an essential practice, Salah, linking Muhammad's experience to authoritative religious law and showing his role as recipient of revelation.
 - The presence of Quranic reference (Surah 17:1) and detailed Hadith narratives gives textual backing, strengthening the claim that the event is an authentic part of the prophetic corpus.
 - Arguments against the statement: other forms of evidence for prophethood exist, such as the Quran itself as a linguistic and moral miracle, the consistency of Muhammad's character and leadership, and the long term spread of Islam, which some may find more persuasive than a single narrative.
 - Some might prefer empirical or historical criteria and find miraculous accounts less convincing; others may point to the diversity of interpretations within Islam about the literal or symbolic nature of the event, weakening its force as conclusive proof for all.