



NEWSLETTER

Volume 20 | Issue 2

February 2026 | Sha'ban - Ramadan 1447

"Had We sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would surely see it humbled and split apart from awe of Allah. Such are the parables We present to people, so that they may reflect." [al-Hashr, 59:21]

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QUR'AN CONFERENCE

Sunday, February 15

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RAMADAN TENTATIVE DATE

IONA follows moonsighting.com and ...

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AL-ISRA' WAL-MIR'AJ

Synopsis of Friday Sermon

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First Friday sermon starts at 12:10 PM and the second sermon starts at 1:20 PM



19th Annual Qur'an Conf....

Join us for an uplifting evening dedicated to the Book of Allah – its guidance, mercy, and ...



Hafsa: The Prophet's Wife (RAA)

She was known for her strong personality, deep piety, intellectual seriousness, and close connection ...



A Journey of Faith, & Leadership

Muslims around the world commemorate the miraculous occasion of *al-Isra' wal-Mi'raj*, the Night Journey and ...

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Announcements

Ramadan 2026 (1447 AH)

IONA typically follows moonsighting.com and Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) in determining the dates for Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. We don't have updates from the FCNA, however, moonsighting has published the following: "The Astronomical New Moon is on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 12:00 Universal Time. On that day, nowhere in North America the elongation is more than 8 degrees and moon is more than 5 degrees above the sun. Therefore, first day of Ramadan 1447 is on Thursday, February 19, 2026, insha'Allah. Tarawih prayer will start on Wednesday night." Therefore until it is confirmed by the FCNA, first day of fasting will TENTATIVELY be on Thursday, February 19. The exact date will be published in the special issue, Ramadan Newsletter.

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Al-Isra' wa'l-Miraj: A Journey of Faith, Leadership, and Justice

Muslims around the world commemorate the miraculous occasion of *al-Isra' wa'l-Mi'raj*, the Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), as a profound event in the life of the final Messenger. This extraordinary journey is mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Glory be to Him who took His slave on a journey by night from the Masjid al-Haram to the Masjid al-Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, in order to show him some of Our Signs. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing" (al-Isra', 17:1)

The term *al-Aqsa*, meaning "the farthest," refers to the mosque in Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis) from the sacred mosque in Makkah (*al-Masjid al-Haram*). This ayah recounts the miraculous journey that carried the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Jerusalem and onward through the heavens, culminating at *Sidrat ul-Muntaha* – the Lote Tree of the utmost boundary, a place beyond the reach of any creation, where Muhammad (ﷺ) experienced the divine presence of Allah.

The Sacred Mosques and Their Interconnection

The first house of worship established on earth was the sacred mosque in Makkah. Allah says:

"The first House established for mankind was that at Bakka, a place of blessing and guidance for all beings" (Aal 'Imran, 3:96)

Ibrāhīm (AS), along with his son Ismā'il (AS), built the Ka'bah and, forty years later, established al-Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. Both mosques are considered holy, blessed, and interlinked, making it incumbent upon the Muslim ummah to safeguard their sanctity from destruction, occupation, or interference – a sacred trust (*amanah*) that has been entrusted to Muslims across generations.

The Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized the significance of these three mosques:

"You should not undertake a special journey to visit any place of worship other than the three mosques: Makkah, my mosque in Madinah, and al-Aqsa in Jerusalem."

He further highlighted the spiritual rewards of worship in these places:

"The prayer in al-Masjid al-Haram is equivalent to one hundred thousand prayers, in my mosque one thousand prayers, and in Jerusalem five hundred prayers."

These teachings underline the spiritual and historical importance of these sites and the responsibility of the Muslim community to honor and protect them.

The Context of the Night Journey

The journey of *al-Isra' wa'l-Mi'raj* occurred during a critical period in the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission. For ten years in Makkah, he, his companions, and the nascent Muslim community endured humiliation, boycott, and persecution. After the deaths of his beloved wife Khadijah (RA) and his supportive uncle Abū Tālib, plots were hatched to end the Prophet's life.

Seeking relief and support, the Prophet (ﷺ) traveled to al-Ta'if, a nearby town, accompanied by Zayd ibn Haritha.

There, he faced rejection and abuse, as the townspeople drove him out, pelting him with stones. With his feet bleeding and heart heavy, the Prophet (ﷺ) turned to Allah in heartfelt supplication, expressing his weakness, sorrow, and hope for divine guidance.

Allah's response was extraordinary. He called the Prophet (ﷺ) to His divine presence, initiating the Night Journey and Ascension – a demonstration of divine mercy, affirmation, and spiritual elevation amidst trials.

The Journey to Al-Masjid al-Aqsa and the Heavens

Under the protection of the polytheist Mut' am ibn 'Adī, the Prophet (ﷺ) returned to Makkah and prepared for the migration to Madinah. One night, the angel Jibril (ﷺ) guided him onto *Buraq*, a white, winged creature, which transported him to al-Masjid al-Aqsa. There, the Prophet (ﷺ) led all previous prophets in prayer, affirming his role as the seal of the messengers.

From Jerusalem, the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended through the seven heavens. At each level, he met key prophets:

- **First Heaven:** Adam (AS), reminding us of our responsibility to guide humanity and pray for their salvation.
- **Second Heaven:** Yahyā and 'Isā, (AS), exemplifying the need for unity and vigilance against oppression.
- **Third Heaven:** Yūsuf (AS), representing purity and resilience in the face of temptation and trials.
- **Fourth Heaven:** Idrīs (AS), symbolizing truthfulness, sincerity, and the importance of associating with the righteous.
- **Fifth Heaven:** Hārūn (AS), illustrating eloquence and clarity in delivering God's message.
- **Sixth Heaven:** Mūsā (AS), who spoke directly with Allah, teaching perseverance and courage against oppression and falsehood.
- **Seventh Heaven:** Ibrāhīm (AS), demonstrating complete devotion, sacrifice, and total submission to God.

At *Sidrat ul-Muntaha*, the Prophet (ﷺ) witnessed *Bayt al-Mā'mur*, a celestial replica of the Ka'bah on earth, surrounded daily by seventy thousand angels glorifying Allah. Here, he was given the command of fifty daily prayers, which, after consultation with Mūsā (AS) were reduced to five while retaining the reward of fifty – underscoring the mercy and wisdom of Allah.

Significance of Leadership and Responsibility

The journey of *al-Isra' wa'l-Mi'raj* not only marks the spiritual elevation of the Prophet (ﷺ) but also signifies the transition of leadership from Bani Israel to the Muslim ummah. Due to the repeated breaches of covenant and transgressions by Bani Israel, the mantle of guidance and stewardship was entrusted to the followers of Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah reminds humanity of the consequences of disobedience:

"They are stricken with disgrace wherever they are found...because they have persistently disbelieved in God's revelation and killed prophets without any right, all because of their disobedience and boundless transgression" (Aal 'Imran, 3:112)

| Continued on page 6

Sisters Corner

Hafṣah Bint “Umar (RAA), One of the Noble Wives of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Introduction:

Hafṣah bint ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (may Allah be pleased with her, RAA) was one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and among the distinguished *Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn* (Mothers of the Believers). She was known for her strong personality, deep piety, intellectual seriousness, and close connection to the Qur'an. As the daughter of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RAA), the second Rightly Guided Caliph, Hafṣah inherited a temperament marked by firmness, integrity, and devotion to truth. Her life reflects a balance of strength and spirituality, discipline and compassion.

Early Life and Upbringing:

Hafṣah (RAA) was born in Mecca approximately five years before the beginning of the Prophet's mission. She grew up in a household shaped by honor, literacy, and leadership. Her father, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, was known even before Islam for his sharp intellect and commanding presence. After embracing Islam, ‘Umar became one of its staunchest defenders, and this environment deeply influenced Hafṣah's character. Unlike many women of her time, she was literate, a skill that would later play a vital role in the preservation of the Qur'an.

First Marriage and Widowhood:

Hafṣah (RAA) was married to Khunays ibn Hudhāfah al-Sahmī, a noble Companion of the Prophet (SAW). Together they migrated to Madinah, sharing in the early sacrifices of the Muslim community. Khunays later participated in the Battle of Badr and was wounded at the Battle of Uhud. He eventually succumbed to his injuries, leaving Hafṣah a young widow. Her widowhood was a period of grief and testing, but it also prepared her spiritually for a greater role in the service of Islam.

Marriage to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

Concerned for his daughter's future, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb sought a righteous husband for Hafṣah and approached both Abū Bakr and ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (RAA). When neither proposal materialized, the Prophet (SAW) himself proposed to Hafṣah, marrying her in the third year after Hijrah. This marriage honored Hafṣah, strengthened the bond between the Prophet and ‘Umar, and provided companionship and security for a devoted young widow.

Character and Spiritual Discipline:

Hafṣah was known for her seriousness in matters of faith.

She was devoted to prayer, fasting, and worship, often engaging in voluntary acts of devotion beyond what was required. Her strong personality sometimes manifested in firmness and emotional intensity, traits shared by her father. While this occasionally led to moments of tension within the Prophet's household, it also reflected her sincerity and deep concern for religious matters. The Qur'an itself addressed certain domestic events involving Hafṣah and ‘Ā'ishah, reminding the believers that even the noblest households are subject to moral instruction and divine guidance [al-Tahrim, 66:1-5].

Guardian of the Qur'an:

Hafṣah's most enduring contribution to Islamic history was her role as the guardian of the written Qur'an. During the caliphate of Abū Bakr, the Qur'an was compiled into a single manuscript under the supervision of Zayd ibn Thābit due to the deaths of many Qur'an memorizers. This precious manuscript was entrusted to Hafṣah for safekeeping, a testament to her reliability, integrity, and literacy. During the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, this manuscript served as the primary reference for producing standardized copies of the Qur'an that were distributed throughout the Muslim world. Through this role, Hafṣah became a silent yet central guardian of the Book of Allah.

Knowledge and Transmission:

Hafṣah narrated a number of hadiths from the Prophet, particularly related to worship, fasting, and family life. Her narrations contributed to the legal and devotional understanding of Islam. She was also known to correct misunderstandings when she felt religious accuracy was at stake, reflecting her intellectual confidence and commitment to preserving authentic knowledge.

Life After the Prophet's Passing:

After the Prophet's death, Hafṣah lived a life of dignity, learning, and worship in Madinah. She remained deeply respected among the Companions and was consulted on matters of religious importance. Though she lived during times of political upheaval, she largely withdrew from public conflict, dedicating herself to the Qur'an and acts of devotion.

Death and Legacy:

Hafṣah bint ‘Umar passed away in 45 AH (approximately 665 CE) during the caliphate of Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān. She was buried in al-Baqī' cemetery in Madinah.



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alongside many members of the Prophet's family. Her legacy endures through her guardianship of the Qur'an, her devotion to worship, and her embodiment of principled strength.

Conclusion:

Hafṣah bint 'Umar's life reflects the harmony of intellect, discipline, and faith. As a Mother of the Believers and the custodian of the Qur'an's earliest compilation, she occupies a unique and honored place in Islamic history. Her story reminds Muslims that devotion to Allah requires both strength of character and humility before divine guidance. Through her life, the Ummah continues to learn the value of integrity, responsibility, and unwavering commitment to the truth.



Kids Corner

Umar ibn al-Khattab and The Servant

Justice and Fairness

Allah (SWT) said "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do." (Surah Al-Ma'idah:8)



Abdullah ibn Umar reported that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "Indeed, the just will be with Allah upon pulpits of light near the right hand of the Merciful, the Exalted, and both His sides are right (being equal in honor); those who practice justice in their rulings and with their families and in all that they do." (Sahih Muslim)

Here is the story of Umar ibn al-Khattab and The Servant to teach us about justice and fairness:

One day, there was a race between the son of Amr ibn al-As, may God be pleased with him, and a servant who worked during that period. When the race began, the servant won. Out of anger, the son of Amr ibn al-As punished the servant and hit him, saying, "Do you dare to outrun the son of the noble ones?"

When Umar ibn al-Khattab, may God be pleased with him, heard about this, he summoned the son of Amr ibn al-As and the servant. He organized another race and,

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Al-Isra' wa'l-Miraj: A Journey of Faith, Leadership, and Justice ... Cont'd

In contrast, the Muslim ummah is praised for its potential: "You are the best nation ever to be produced before mankind. You enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, and have faith in Allah" (Aal 'Imran, 3:110).

This highlights the ethical responsibility entrusted to Muslims: to uphold truth, justice, and righteousness in society, and to protect sacred spaces such as al-Masjid al-Aqsa.

Moral and Practical Lessons

Several practical lessons emerge from this miraculous journey:

1. **Guard Salah:** Maintaining regular prayers keeps us mindful of Allah and spiritually connected.
2. **Persist in Da'wah:** We must continue the mission of the Prophet ﷺ, ensuring that the way of truth prevails over falsehood.
3. **Protect Sacred Sites:** Al-Masjid al-Aqsa must be preserved as a functioning, spiritual, and historical beacon.
4. **Collaborate Across Faiths:** Muslims, Christians, Jews, and people of conscience should work together to uphold justice and human rights, particularly in places affected by occupation and oppression.

These lessons remind us that faith is inseparable from responsibility, courage, and moral action.

Justice, Solidarity, and the Triumph of Truth

Movements such as international solidarity campaigns and boycotts demonstrate the potential for global action in the pursuit of justice. Academics, artists, politicians, and ordinary citizens have joined hands to confront injustice, particularly in Palestine.

Falsehood, no matter how entrenched, is temporary. As Allah declares: "No! We hurl the truth against falsehood, and truth obliterates it – see how falsehood vanishes away" (al-Anbiyā', 21:18).

The struggle against injustice requires patience, sacrifice, and determined effort. Each individual has a role to play, and Allah, in His wisdom, will ensure that righteousness ultimately prevails.

Conclusion

The journey of al-Isra' wa'l-Mi'raj is both spiritual and deeply instructive. From the trials of the Prophet ﷺ in Makkah to his ascension through the heavens, it illustrates faith, perseverance, and moral responsibility.

The encounters with the prophets highlight lessons in guidance, courage, purity, truthfulness, eloquence, perseverance, and total devotion. These are not mere historical events; they are enduring lessons for humanity.

As Muslims, we are reminded to protect sacred spaces, maintain our spiritual practices, work for justice, and engage with people of conscience across faiths. The Night Journey and Ascension is a timeless testament to the power of truth, the importance of moral courage, and the ultimate triumph of righteousness over oppression.

May Allah help us internalize these lessons, strengthen our faith, and empower us to act with wisdom, courage, and compassion in our lives. Ameen.

Abdullah bin Omar and The Honest Shepherd ... Cont'd

once again, the servant won.

Umar ibn al-Khattab then instructed the servant to whip the son of Amr ibn al-As as he had done to him. At that moment, Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) declared, "Since when do you enslave people when their mothers gave birth to them as free?"

The Lesson of the Story

This story is a powerful lesson in justice and fairness. Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) demonstrated that justice must be served regardless of social status. He taught that every person, regardless of their position, deserves fair treatment and respect.

By making the son of Amr ibn al-As face the consequences of his actions, Umar (RA) showed that no one is above the law and that true justice means treating everyone equally.



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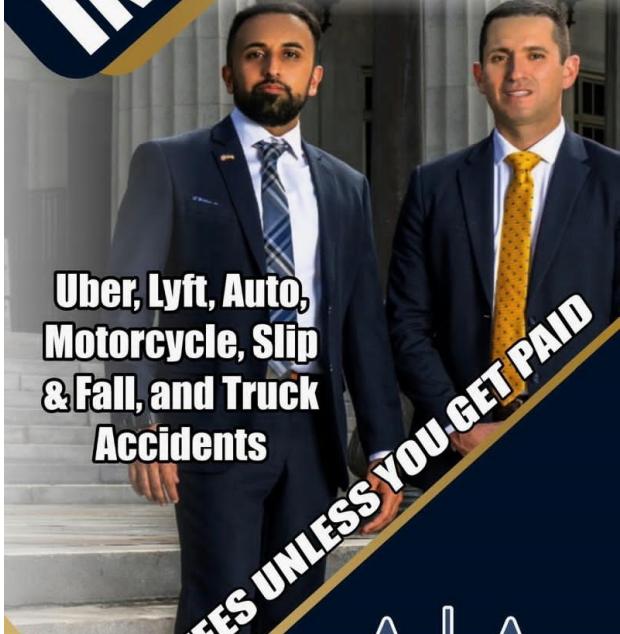


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FEBRUARY 2026

IONA Masjid - Prayer and Iqamah Timings

Date	Fajr	Iqamah	Sunrise	Zuhr	Iqamah	Asr (S)*	Asr (H)*	Iqamah	Maghrib	Iqamah	Isha	Iqamah
Sun 1	6:12	6:45	7:46	12:51	2:00	3:24	4:04	4:15	5:49	5:54	7:13	7:30
Mon 2	6:11	6:45	7:45	12:51	1:00	3:25	4:05	4:15	5:51	5:56	7:14	7:30
Tue 3	6:10	6:45	7:44	12:51	1:00	3:26	4:06	4:15	5:52	5:57	7:15	7:30
Wed 4	6:09	6:45	7:43	12:51	1:00	3:27	4:08	4:15	5:53	5:58	7:16	7:45
Thu 5	6:08	6:45	7:42	12:51	1:00	3:28	4:09	4:15	5:54	5:59	7:17	7:45
Fri 6	6:07	6:45	7:40	12:51	1:00	3:29	4:10	4:15	5:56	6:01	7:18	7:45
Sat 7	6:06	6:45	7:39	12:51	1:00	3:30	4:11	4:30	5:57	6:02	7:19	7:45
Sun 8	6:05	6:45	7:38	12:51	2:00	3:31	4:13	4:30	5:58	6:03	7:20	7:45
Mon 9	6:04	6:45	7:37	12:51	1:00	3:32	4:14	4:30	6:00	6:05	7:21	7:45
Tue 10	6:02	6:45	7:36	12:51	1:00	3:33	4:15	4:30	6:01	6:06	7:23	7:45
Wed 11	6:01	6:45	7:34	12:51	1:00	3:34	4:16	4:30	6:02	6:07	7:24	7:45
Thu 12	6:00	6:45	7:33	12:51	1:00	3:35	4:18	4:30	6:04	6:09	7:25	7:45
Fri 13	5:59	6:45	7:32	12:51	1:00	3:36	4:19	4:30	6:05	6:10	7:26	7:45
Sat 14	5:57	6:45	7:30	12:51	1:00	3:37	4:20	4:45	6:06	6:11	7:27	7:45
Sun 15	5:56	6:45	7:29	12:51	2:00	3:38	4:21	4:45	6:08	6:13	7:28	7:45
Mon 16	5:55	6:45	7:27	12:51	1:00	3:39	4:22	4:45	6:09	6:14	7:29	7:45
Tue 17	5:53	6:45	7:26	12:51	1:00	3:40	4:24	4:45	6:10	6:15	7:30	7:45
Wed 18	5:52	6:45	7:26	12:51	1:00	3:41	4:25	4:45	6:11	6:16	7:31	8:00
Thu 19	RAMADAN - First Day of Fasting (Tentative)											

Please Refer to Ramadan Prayer Schedule



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* S = Shafii, H = Hanafi | **Athan is 10 minutes** before Iqamah except for Maghrib
First Friday sermon starts at 12:10 PM and second sermon is at 1:20 PM

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