

Man Reaching the Moon in the light of the Shari'ah

Q: Imaan-49: Did the Americans really reach the moon and bring sand and rocks back to earth? Is this possible in the light of the Shari'ah and why? Please reply in detail.

Answer: Man can reach the moon. This does not conflict with the teachings of Islaam. Therefore, in terms of the Shari'ah, there is no harm in accepting the claim of the Americans that they have reached the moon. The moon is also a creation of Allaah and, after all, it is Allaah who granted man the intellect and ability to accomplish this. In fact, Allaah had given the accursed Shaytaan even greater powers than this. He also has the power to reach the skies.

Allaah will also grant Dajjaal amazing powers, who will be able to cut a person in two and bring him back to life. He will also bring back to life people who have been dead for centuries. They will rise from their graves and actually speak to people. He will also make the rain fall, make crops grow and travel great distances in a few moments. He will have his own forms of Jannah and Jahannam with him and make his followers enter the Jannah and opponents enter the Jahannam.

Hadhrat Sulaymaan ALY. travelled by air and was informed of matters in far off lands by the bird called Hood Hood. It was this very same Hood Hood who gave Hadhrat Sulaymaan ALY. news of the kingdom of Saba that was ruled by the queen Bilqis, who possessed a most spectacular throne. It was then one of the ministers of Hadhrat Sulaymaan ALY. who brought the throne to him in the blink of an eye because he knew the Ismul A'zam. All this is discussed in the Qur'aan in Surah Naml.

If the American spacecraft managed to land on the moon and bring rock and sand back, there remain no wonder because even Hood Hood could have achieved this. It is Allaah Who grants people the aspirations they strive for. Allaah states in the Qur'aan, "Whoever desires the harvest (rewards) of the Aakhirah, We shall increase its harvest for him. (On the contrary,) We shall grant (only) a part of this world's harvest (luxuries) to the one who desires it (without him receiving all he desires); and he will have no share (of good) in the Aakhirah (because he has no Imaan)"

Most people claim that reaching the moon is impossible only because the moon is in the heavens and the heavens are protected by the angels. They prove this by the following verses of the Qur'aan:

(1) "Blessed is the Being Who created gigantic stars in the sky and (among the more prominent sources of light He created in the sky, He has) placed the sun and the luminous moon in it.

(2) "Have you not seen how Allaah has created the seven skies in layers and has made the moon a celestial light in them (in the skies) and the sun a (bright) lamp?"

While the above two verses indeed prove that the moon is in the skies, we say in reply that the meaning of the word 'skies' is vast. In Arabic terminology, the word Samaa (sky) is used for anything that is above and the upper part of anything is also referred to as Samaa.

The Qur'aan uses the term Samaa in a very general sense, even for that part of the atmosphere where the clouds are found. Allaah says, "And We have sent water from the Samaa." Allaah also says, "And We have sent pure water from the Samaa". This is stated in the Qur'aan even though rain comes from the clouds to the ground, as Allaah says, "And We send torrential rains from laden clouds". Tafseer Haqqaani therefore makes it clear that the Arabic word Samaa may sometimes refer to the clouds (as in the above verses), sometimes to the sky itself and sometimes to the horizon as well.

Recent scientific research seems to support the view of Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas RADI. who maintains that the moon and stars are beneath the sky and not above when he states, "The stars are lanterns suspended between the heavens and the earth." After quoting this statement from Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas RADI. the author of Ruhul Ma'aani Allaama Aalusi RAH. remarks, "It seems obvious that the stars are not in fixed positions as the earlier philosophers thought." This theory is supported by modern science as well.

Hadhrat Moulana Nanotwi RAH. stated that it would do no harm to the beliefs of the people of Islaam to accept that all the stars are on this side of the sky and that the sun is at the centre with the earth and all others revolving around it.

Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. has also stated that the stars and moon are not in fixed positions, but are suspended in space and travel on their orbits.

While Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas RADI. was of the opinion that the Falak is really the sky, the majority of scholars state that the Falak is the space beneath the sky where the sun, moon and stars are located.

There are some verses of the Qur'aan that make it apparent that the moon and other celestial bodies are beneath the sky. An example of this is the verse in which Allaah states, "We have decorated the nearer sky with the beauty of the stars". A similar verse appears in Surah HaaMeem Sajdah as well. These verses use the term 'nearer sky', which refers either to the bottom part of the sky or the lower reaches of the atmosphere. Allaah has decorated this portion of the sky with the stars just as ceilings are decorated with lanterns.

Muslims need never be overawed by the progress of science because their advancements serve only to support the Islaamic viewpoints. The invention of aircraft, telephones, television and other innovations lends strength to the beliefs of Muslims in events such as Hadhrat Sulaymaan ALY. air travels. Hadhrat Umar RADI. warning from the Masjidun Nabawi to Hadhrat Saariya RADI. who was commanding an army in Iraq and the testimony that the limbs of the body will deliver on the Day of Qiyaamah. When people question how Rasulullaah SAW. was able to breathe when he traversed through space during the journey of Mi'raaj, we ask how do the astronauts on spacecraft breathe?

Discussing the conversations between the people of Jannah and Jahannam, Allaah says in the Qur'aan, "The people of Jannah will call to the people of the Fire (Jahannam) saying, 'We have found the promise (of rewards of Our Rabb to be true. Have you found the promise (of punishment) of your Rabb to be true?' They (the people of Jahannam) will reply, 'Yes! Another verse states, "They will be in Jannaat asking the sinners (in Jahannam)," "What has landed you in Jahannam?' They will reply, 'We were not among those who performed salaah and we did not feed the

poor. We used to be absorbed (in finding ways to oppose Islaam) with those who were absorbed and we used to deny the Day of Reckoning until death came to us (only then we realised the error of our ways, but it was too late)". When people question how this will happen when Jannah and Jahannam are so far apart, we ask how was it possible for the Americans to see and speak to Neil Armstrong when he landed on the moon?

The moon is by no means at the end of the universe, but just the beginning. Beyond it lies the seven heavens with each heaven located at a distance of 500 years from the other. Above these heavens lies Jannah, which itself contains 100 levels, also with each level located at a distance of 500 years from the other. It is therefore a combined distance of 50000 years before Allaah's Arsh. Glorified is Allaah, the Most Grand!

Hadhrat Qataadah RAH. states that Allaah has created the stars for three reasons:

- 1.To decorate the skies
- 2.To chase off eavesdropping Shayaateen
- 3.To guide travellers by night

He says that people will be wasting their time by seeking to derive any other benefit from the stars, such as using them to learn of the future.

We will now present some material from Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Muhammad Mia Sahib, which he discusses in his book Aasmaan awr Chand Taare.

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