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ISRAK AND MIKRAJ

'PROPHET'S LEADERSHIP LED TO THE FALL OF RACIAL WALLS, DISUNITY'

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Lessons from divine journey need to be remembered, says Najib

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LESSONS from the Israk and Mikraj chapter in Prophet Muhammad's life can be adopted to forge stronger ties among Muslims and the people as it depicts the importance of moral values in life.

In his message for this year's Israk and Mikraj celebration, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak described Muhammad as a "model in nurturing noble and honourable moral values", who was successful in his mission to spread Islam and unity among the people.

"Previously, ethnic communities in the Arabian peninsula tend to live in '*kekabilahan*' (divisions). But, the arrival of Islam and the leadership of Prophet Muhammad led to the fall of racial walls and disunity."

Israk and Mikraj, celebrated on the 27th of Rejab in the seventh month of the Islamic calendar, commemorates the Prophet's di-

vine journey from Mecca to Jerusalem in one night, before ascending to heaven on a winged creature called a *buraq*.

According to Islamic parable, Prophet Muhammad met several of his predecessors there who had died. He was then brought to the highest point in heaven and experienced the divine presence of Allah.

Before returning to Earth, Allah had tasked Prophet Muhammad with a number of decrees to be conveyed to Muslims, including the obligatory five daily prayers.

The hardship, or test which Prophet Muhammad later experienced, was scepticism among some of his followers, who doubted the divine journey had taken place.

Najib said Malaysia had adopted an approach to celebrate diversity, which formed the foundation of the nation's strength.

"What needs to be developed and empowered is the adoption of diversity as the foundation of the ummah's unity and nationhood building. Everyone needs to be respected, just as we need to be respected by others."

Against the backdrop of several restive situations around the world, Najib said Malaysia was

viewed by the global audience as a "peaceful, harmonious and competitive" country with astounding achievements in various aspects, including political stability, efficacy in economic management, as a foreign direct investment destination and human capital development.

"That is the illustration of efforts pooled in to carry out monumental endeavours by the country's leaders, with support from the people who are loyal (to the country's noble cause).

"Those who are sceptical will experience embarrassment, for they do not know that the bird in hand is worth two in the bush."

Najib said although the events of Israk and Mikraj took place more than 1,400 years ago, they were a guide to signify the omnipotence of Allah, which no man could comprehend.

"It is something that is incumbent upon us to learn from and remember, based on context of human intellectuality.

"Just as mentioned in Surah An-Nahl, verse 8: 'And He (Allah) creates that which you do not know', and Surah Al-Isra verse 85: '...mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little'."

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