

BELIEF IN THE PROPHETS

Rating: 4.0


Description: The purpose and role of the Prophets, the nature of the message that they brought to humanity, and the emphasis that they were mere humans with no divine attributes.

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Published on: 16 Jan 2006

Last modified on: 25 Jun 2019

Belief in certain prophets who God chose to relay His message to humans is a required article of Islamic faith. 

"The Prophet (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in God, His Angels, His Books, and His prophets. (They say,) 'We make no distinction between one another of His prophets...'" (Quran 2:285)

God conveys His message and relates His will through human prophets. They form a link between the earthly beings and the heavens, in the sense that God has picked them to deliver His message to human beings. There are no other channels to receive divine communications. It is the system of communication between the Creator and the created. God does not send angels to every single individual, nor does He open the skies so people can climb up to receive the message. His way of communication is through human prophets who receive the message through angels.

To have faith in the prophets (or messengers) is to firmly believe that God chose morally upright men to bear His message and pass it to humanity. Blessed were those who followed them, and wretched were those who refused to obey. They faithfully delivered the message, without hiding, altering, or corrupting it. Rejecting a prophet is rejecting the One who sent him, and disobeying a prophet is disobeying the One who commanded to obey him.

God sent to every nation a prophet, mostly from amongst them, to call them to worship God alone and to shun false gods.

"And ask (O Muhammad) those of Our prophets whom We sent before you: 'Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides the Most Merciful (God)?'" (Quran 43:45)

Muslims believe in those prophets mentioned by name in Islamic sources, such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, and

Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, to name a few. A general belief is held in those not mentioned by name, as God says:

"And, indeed We have sent prophets before you (O Muhammad), of some of them We have related to you their story, and of some We have not related to you their story..."
(Quran 40:78)

Muslims firmly believe the final prophet was the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, and there will be no prophet or messenger after him.

To appreciate this fact, one must understand that the teachings of the last prophet are preserved in original language in their primary sources. There is no need for another prophet. In the case of earlier prophets, their scriptures were lost or their message was corrupted to the point that truth was hardly distinguishable from falsehood. The message of the Prophet Muhammad is clear and preserved and will remain so till the end of time.

The Purpose for Sending Prophets

We can identify the following main reasons for sending prophets:

- (1) Guiding humanity from the worship of created beings to the worship of their Creator, from being in a state of servitude to the creation to the freedom of worshipping their Lord.
- (2) Clarifying to humanity the purpose of creation: worshipping God and obeying His commands, as well as clarifying that this life is a test for each individual, a test of which its results will decide the type of life one will lead after death; a life of eternal misery or eternal bliss. There is no other definite way to find the true purpose of creation.
- (3) Showing humanity the right path that will lead them to Paradise and to salvation from Hellfire.
- (4) Establishing proof against humanity by sending prophets, so people will not have an excuse when they will be questioned on the Day of Judgment. They will not be able to claim ignorance to the purpose of their creation and life after death.
- (5) Uncovering the unseen 'world' which exists beyond the normal senses and the physical universe, such as the knowledge of God, existence of angels, and the reality of the Day of Judgment.
- (6) Providing human beings practical examples to lead moral, righteous, purpose-driven lives free of doubts and confusion. Innately, human beings admire fellow human beings, so the best examples of righteousness for humans to imitate are those of God's prophets.

(7) Purifying the soul from materialism, sin, and heedlessness.

(8) Conveying to humanity the teachings of God, which is for their own benefit in this life and in the Hereafter.

Their Message

The single most important message of all prophets to their people was to worship God alone and none else and to follow His teachings. All of them, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammad and others, in addition to those we do not know - invited people to worship God and shun false gods.

Moses declared: "Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4).

This was repeated 1500 years later by Jesus, when he said: "The first of all the commandments is, 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.'" (Mark 12:29).

Finally, the call of Muhammad some 600 years later reverberated across the hills of Mecca:

"And your God is One God: there is no god but He..." (Quran 2:163)

The Holy Quran states this fact clearly:

"And We did not send any Messenger before you (O Muhammad) but We revealed to him (saying): 'none has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me.'" (Quran 21:25)

The Message Bearers

God chose the best among humanity to deliver His message. Prophethood is not earned or acquired like higher education. God chooses whom He pleases for this purpose.

They were the best in morals and they were mentally and physically fit, protected by God from falling into cardinal, major sins. They did not err or commit mistakes in delivering the message. They were over one hundred thousand prophets sent to all mankind, to all nations and races, in all corners of the world. Some prophets were superior to others. The best among them were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him.

People went to extremes with the prophets. They were rejected and accused of being sorcerers, madmen, and liars. Others turned them into gods by giving them divine powers, or declared them to be His children, like what happened to Jesus.

In truth, they were fully human with no divine attributes or power. They were God's worshipping slaves. They ate, drank, slept, and lived normal human lives. They did not have the power to make anyone accept their message or to forgive sins. Their knowledge of future was limited to what God revealed to them. They had no part in running the affairs of the universe.

Out of the Infinite Mercy and Love of God, He sent to humanity prophets, guiding them to that which is the best. He sent them as an example for humanity to follow, and if one does follow their example, they would live a life in accordance to the Will of God, earning His Love and Pleasure

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