

Belief in the Messengers

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Belief in messengers is a required article of Islaamic faith.

[“The Messenger (Muhammad) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allaah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. (They say,) ‘We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers’”]¹

Allaah conveys His message to humanity through messengers. They form a link between the humans and the heavens, in the sense that Allaah has chosen them to deliver His message to humanity. Divine messages were not conveyed to mankind except through the Messengers. It is the system of communication between the Creator and the created. Allaah does not send the 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 messengers who receive the message through the angels. Allaah only sent men as Prophets and Messengers. No angels were sent with a message to mankind. He, the Exalted, says:

[‘And they say, “Why was there not sent down to him an angel? But if We had sent down an angel, the matter would have been decided; then they would not be reprieved. And if We had made him [i.e. the Messenger] an angel, We would have made him [appear as] a man, and We would have covered them with that in which they cover themselves.’”]²

What does the belief in the Messengers entail?

Faith in messengers is to firmly believe Allaah chose morally upright men to bear His message and pass it on to humanity. Blessed were those who followed them, wretched were those who refused to obey. They faithfully delivered the message, without hiding, altering, or corrupting it. Rejecting a messenger is rejecting the One who sent him. Disobeying a messenger is disobeying the One who commanded to obey him.

¹ Qur’aan [2:285]

² Qur’aan [6:8-9]

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Disbelieving in one Messenger is like disbelieving in all the Messengers. In the following verse, Allaah, the Exalted, says that the people of Noah disbelieved in all the messengers, even though they were commanded only to follow Noah:

['The people of Noah disbelieved in the Messengers.']³

More specifically, belief in messengers means:

(1) Allaah sent to every nation a prophet from amongst them, to call them to worship Allaah alone and to shun false gods.

["And ask (O Muhammad) those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: 'Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides the Most Merciful (that is Allaah)?'"]⁴

They did not add or omit anything from the Divine Message.

["Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?"]⁵

(2) Belief in those have been specifically mentioned, such as Muhammad, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Noah, may Allaah praise them all. We hold a general belief in those not mentioned by name as Allaah says:

["And indeed, We have sent Messengers 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"]⁶

We believe the final messenger was our Prophet Muhammad and there is no prophet or messenger after him as Allaah has said in the Qur'aan:

["Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allaah and the last of the Prophets. And Allaah is Ever All-Aware of everything."]⁷

The Prophet stated categorically:

"There will be no prophet after me."⁸

Previous Prophets were sent with laws and commandments specific to that people in that time. Prophet Muhammad, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), however was sent with a message applicable for all time, people and places; thus, there is no need for more Prophets to come. Another important reason is that some nations were sent more than one prophet due to the changes they introduced into the religion. Since God has promised that the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah*

³ Qur'aan [26:105]

⁴ Qur'aan [43:45]

⁵ Qur'aan [16:3]

⁶ Qur'aan [40:78]

⁷ Qur'aan [33:40]

⁸ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

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the Most High be upon him) will never undergo change and will always be preserved in the original language in their primary sources – the Qur’aan and Sunnah, there is no need for another prophet. In the cases of earlier prophets, scriptures were lost or their message became corrupted to the point that truth was hardly distinguishable from falsehood. The message of Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) is clear and preserved till the end of times.

(3) Belief in the sound reports that have been narrated from the messengers. For instance, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) – the Sunnah - are preserved in the books of hadeeth.

(4) Following the laws of the messenger who has been sent to us, the final prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*), who was sent to all of humanity. Allaah says:

["But no, by your Lord, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission"]⁹

The Purpose

What’s the purpose of sending messengers?

(1) Taking people from worship of other created beings to the worship of the Creator, from servitude of creation to the freedom of worshipping their Lord.

(2) Clarifying to people the purpose of their creation: worshipping and serving Allaah, their Creator. There is no other definite way to find the true purpose of creation.

(3) Establishing proof against humanity by sending messengers, so people will not have an excuse when they will be questioned on the Day of Judgment. They won’t be able to say they did not know what they were to do in life.

(4) Uncovering the some of the ‘unseen world’ beyond the normal senses and the physical universe, like knowledge of Allaah, the existence of angels, the reality of the Day of Judgment.

(5) Providing human beings practical examples to lead moral, righteous, purpose-driven lives free of doubts and confusion.

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

The Message

The single most important message of all prophets and messengers to their people was to worship Allaah alone and none else, to submit to Allaah’s will. All of them - Noah, Abraham,

⁹ Qur’aan [4:65]

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Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammad, and those we do not even know - invited people to worship Allaah and shun false gods.

Moses declared:

“Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord.”¹⁰

It 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.’”¹¹

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."]¹²

The Qur'aan 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.’”]¹³

The laws they brought differed, each suitable for its own time and people:

["To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way"]¹⁴

But the central, basic message was Allaah's oneness, Tawheed, and worship. It was Islaam; Islaam in its broad, general sense of submission to Allaah.

["Surely, religion in the sight of Allaah is Islaam."]¹⁵

The Message Bearers

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

They were best in morals and fit mentally and physically, protected by Allaah from falling into major sins. They did not err or commit mistakes in delivering the message. There were many prophets and messengers sent to all mankind, to all nations and races, to all corners of the world. Some prophets were superior to others, some messengers excelled over the rest. The best among them were Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.

Some went to extremes in regards to the prophets. Some were rejected, and accused of being sorcerers, madmen and liars. Others were turned into gods by their followers by

¹⁰ Deuteronomy 6:4

¹¹ Mark 12:29

¹² Qur'aan [2:163]

¹³ Qur'aan [21:25]

¹⁴ Qur'aan [5:48]

¹⁵ Qur'aan [3:19]

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attributing to them powers only befitting for Allaah or they were regarded as God's son like what happened to Jesus.

In truth, they were fully human with no divine attributes or power. They were Allaah'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 Allaah revealed to them. They had no part in running the affairs of the universe.