


BELIEF IN PROPHETS

Rating: 4.8 

Description: Allah conveys His message to humanity through prophets and messengers. What was the nature of these messengers and the message they brought? Were they humans with divine attributes? This lesson sheds light on the answers.

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Prerequisites

- An Introduction to Pillars of Islam and Articles of Faith (2 parts).

Objectives

- To learn and understand the need and purpose for messengers to be sent to mankind.
- To learn what belief in the messengers entails.
- To become familiar with the nature of the messengers and the message they brought.

Arabic Terms

- Tawheed* – The Oneness and Uniqueness of Allah with respect to His Lordship, His Names and Attributes and in His right to be worshipped.
- Sunnah* - The word *Sunnah* has several meanings depending on the area of study however the meaning is generally accepted to be, whatever was reported that the Prophet said, did, or approved.

Belief in messengers is a required article of Islamic 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 Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His messengers. (They say,) ‘We make no distinction between one another of His messengers’” (Quran 2:285)

Allah conveys His message to humanity through messengers. They form a link between the humans and the heavens, in the sense that Allah 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. Allah 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. Allah 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.'* (6:8-9)**

What Does the Belief in the Messengers Entail?

Faith in messengers is to firmly believe Allah 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.

Disbelieving in one messenger is like disbelieving in all the messengers. In the following verse, Allah, 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.' (Quran 26:105)

More specifically, belief in messengers means:

(1) Allah sent to every nation a prophet from amongst them, to call them to worship Allah 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 Allah)?"* (Quran 43:45)**

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

***"Are the messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?"* (Quran 16:35)**

(2) Belief in those have been specifically mentioned, such as Muhammad, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Noah, peace be upon them all. We hold a general belief in those not mentioned by name as Allah 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” (Quran 40:78)

We believe the final messenger was our Prophet Muhammad and there is no prophet or messenger after him as Allah has said in the Quran:

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the prophets. And Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything.” (Quran 33:40)

The Prophet stated categorically:

“There will be no prophet after me.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

Previous prophets were sent with laws and commandments specific to that people in that time. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of Allah 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 will never undergo change and will always be preserved in the original language in their primary sources – the Quran 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 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 – 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, who was sent to all of humanity. Allah 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” (Quran 4:65)

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 Allah, 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 Allah, 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 Allah alone and none else, to submit to Allah's will. All of them - Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Jesus, Muhammad, and those we do not even know - invited people to worship Allah and shun false gods.

Moses declared:

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

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.'" (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." (2:163)

The 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.'" (21:25)

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”(Quran 5:48)

But the central, basic message was Allah’s oneness, *tawheed*, and worship. It was Islam; Islam in its broad, general sense of submission to Allah.

“Surely, religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.” (Quran 3:19)

The Message Bearers

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

They were best in morals and fit mentally and physically, protected by Allah from falling into major sins. They did not err or commit mistakes in delivering the message. They 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 attributing to them powers only befitting for Allah 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 Allah’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 Allah revealed to them. They had no part in running the affairs of the universe.

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