

25 PROPHETS OF ISLAM

Irfan Alli
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25 PROPHETS OF ISLAM: Ever wondered who is a prophet, and if there is a connection between the work of one prophet and another? This booklet explains the role of a prophet and the relationship between the work of one prophet and another while sharing with you the names and life of some of the prophets of Islam.

They include: Adam, Idris (Enoch), Nuh (Noah), Hud (Heber), Salih (Methusaleh), Lut (Lot), Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Yaqub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Shu'aib (Jethro), Ayyub (Job), Dhulkifl (Ezekiel), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilias (Elias), Alyasa (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariya (Zachariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus) and Muhammad. Peace be upon them all.

IRFAN ALLI: Irfan Alli is the production manager for the Canadian division of an international engineering company, a position he has held for the last 25 years. During that time he has served as a director, educator and chairperson in Islamic organizations as well as a lay Muslim Chaplain in Canadian hospitals and prisons.

He is the author of three books "The ABCs of Parenting - A Practical Guide for Muslim Parents", "How to get the most out of School - A Practical Guide for Students and Parents" and "Muslim Child - Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems" which is co-authored with his wife Rukhsana Khan.

Irfan is often asked to speak to Muslims and non-Muslims to help them better understand Islam. His presentations to students, parents, youths, community groups, pastors, educators, and at interfaith forums have been well received. His research and lecture notes are transcribed into booklets, and can be downloaded from IslamicBooklets.com free of charge.

His volunteer and professional work has taken him all across Canada, to the U.S., Brazil, Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, Guyana, Pakistan, India, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. What he has learned from his travels is reflected in his writing. Irfan lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife and four children.

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INTRODUCTION

Questions like: What is the purpose of life? How should life be lived? Who is God? What should one look for in a spouse? How should one raise one's children? What happens after death? What are angels? Who are prophets and what are their roles? - are all addressed in the Quran and Hadith (the sayings and practices of prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), the two sources of Islam's teachings.

Muslims believe the same angel Gabriel that came to prophets Abraham, Moses and Jesus also came to Muhammad (peace be upon them all). Muslims also believe God, through the angel Gabriel, revealed the Quran to Muhammad (peace be upon him). This was done over a period of twenty-three years. Muslims consider the Quran to be God's last revelation to mankind. Since one in every five persons on earth is a Muslim, the Quran enlightens and guides over one billion people around the world.

The Hadith are sayings and practices of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muhammad (peace be upon him) lived during the sixth and seventh centuries. Muslims accept him as God's last prophet and messenger to mankind. He invited people to the same God that Abraham, Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them) invited people to. The sayings of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) number in the thousands, and cover a variety of topics.

In this booklet we will look at what these two sources say regarding prophets, and list the 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran.

AN ARTICLE OF FAITH

The faith of a Muslim (a follower of Islam) consists of several beliefs. It includes the belief in:

1. God
2. His Books
3. His Prophets
4. His Angels
5. The Last Day

This booklet focuses on the belief in prophets. Some of the topics will include who they are, their responsibilities, how they relate to our lives, and the connections between the teachings of various prophets.

The Quran teaches:

“O you who believe! Believe in God and His Messenger, and the scripture which He has sent to His Messenger and the scripture which He sent to those before (him). Any who denies God, His angels, His Books, **His Messengers**, and the Day of Judgement, has gone far, far astray.”
(Quran 4:136)

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness - to believe in God and the Last Day. And the angels, and the Book, **and the Messengers**; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer. For those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakah, to fulfil the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing.”
(Quran 2:177)

As you can see from the above verse it is part of righteousness for a Muslim to believe in all of God’s messengers.

THE ROLE OF PROPHETS

Islam teaches that God created man with a purpose. To help man understand his purpose God raises up prophets from society to teach us. Prophets were sent at different times in history and were all human beings supported by God.

Belief in all the prophets of God is essential in Islam because all of the prophets were sent by the same God. To accept some and reject others could imply a racial bias or ignorance about the role of prophets and the fact that they all invited people to the same God. They conveyed whatever guidance they were asked to share with mankind at that stage in mankind’s spiritual evolution.

Muslims believe that Adam (peace be upon him) was the first prophet and Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the last prophet, and in between the two of them there were numerous prophets sent. God instructs us:

“Say: ‘We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in (the Books) given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets, from their Lord: we make no distinction between one and another among them, and to God do we bow our will (in Islam).’ ” (Quran 3:84)

All prophets were collectively inspired by the same God. Their role was to help us understand the purpose of life and how best to live it, so that God is pleased with us. God says:

“We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Issac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms.” Quran 4:163)

REVELATIONS FROM GOD

To some of the prophets God sent revelations through the angel Gabriel. As human society evolved, the content of the revelation evolved with it. The Quran tells us:

a) The Scrolls were given to Abraham (peace be upon him):

“And this is in the Books of the earliest (Revelations), The Books of Abraham and Moses.” (Quran 87:18-19)

b) The Psalms were given to David (peace be upon him):

“And it is your Lord that knows best all beings that are in the heavens and on earth: and We made some of the Prophets to excel others and We gave to David the Psalms.” (Quran 17:55)

“We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Issac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms.” (Quran 4:163)

c) The Old Testament was given to Moses (peace be upon him):

“No just estimate of God do they make when they say: ‘Nothing does God send down to man (by way of revelation)’: Say: ‘Who then sent down the Book which Moses brought?- a light and guidance to man: but you make it into (separate) sheets for show, while you conceal much (of its contents): therein were you taught that which you knew not -neither you nor your fathers.’ Say: ‘God (sent it down)’: then leave them to plunge in vain discourse and trifling.” (Quran 6:91)

d) The New Testament was given to Jesus (peace be upon him):

“And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear God.” (Quran 5:46)

e) The Quran was given to Muhammad (peace be upon him):

“It is He who sent down to you (step by step), in truth, the Quran, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus). Before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the Criterion (of judgement between right and wrong). Then those who reject faith in the Signs of God will suffer the severest chastisement and God is Exalted in might, Lord of retribution.” (Quran 3:3-4)

As we mentioned earlier belief in the revelations of God is one of the articles of faith for Muslims. However, since we are missing the original texts of the earlier revelations, Muslims only follow those parts of the earlier revelation that is in harmony with the Quran. As for keeping the Quran from being tampered with, it has always been with the people in both a written and memorized format, preventing any kinds of tampering or changes. Further, God says:

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Quran; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).” (Quran 15:9)

HOW MANY PROPHETS WERE SENT?

By now, you may be wondering how many prophets God sent to mankind. Nobody knows for sure. What we know is what God has told us in the Quran.

God says he sent a prophet to every nation. He says:

“For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messenger, (with the command): ‘Serve God, and eschew Evil;’ of the people were some whom God guided, and some on whom Error became inevitably (established). So travel through the earth, and see what was the end of those who denied (the Truth)” (Quran 16:36)

This is because one of the principles by which God operates is that He will never take a people to task unless He has made clear to them what His expectations are.

The Quran mentions the names of 25 prophets and indicates there were others. It says:

“Of some messengers We have already told you the story; of others We have not; - and to Moses God spoke direct.” (Quran 4:164)

Later in this booklet we will sample portions of the Quran that speaks about the lives of some prophets. Let us first find out the names of the twenty-five mentioned in the Quran..

25 PROPHETS MENTIONED IN THE QURAN

The names of the twenty-five prophets mentioned are as follows:

Adam
Idris (Enoch)
Nuh (Noah)
Hud (Heber)
Salih (Methusaleh)
Lut (Lot)
Ibrahim (Abraham)
Ismail (Ishmael)
Ishaq (Isaac)
Yaqub (Jacob)
Yusuf (Joseph)
Shu'aib (Jethro)
Ayyub (Job)
Dhulkifl (Ezekiel)
Musa (Moses)
Harun (Aaron)
Dawud (David)
Sulayman (Solomon)
Ilias (Elias)
Alyasa (Elisha)
Yunus (Jonah)
Zakariya (Zachariah)
Yahya (John the Baptist)
Isa (Jesus)
Muhammad

Peace be upon them all.

THE PROPHETS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS WERE MUSLIMS

Because all prophets invited to the same one God. Muslims see them as all inviting to the same religion as well, the religion of Islam. **Islam** is an attributive title. It literally means peace, submission, and obedience. In the religious sense, Islam means: The way to peace and salvation through submission to the will of God and by obedience to His laws.

A person who chooses this path is called a **Muslim**. The Quran therefore describes the prophets and their followers as Muslims.

In the Quran Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (peace be upon them) are mentioned as praying to God to make them **Muslims**, or instructing their people to be **Muslims**. That is, one who submits to God.

Here is what God reveals in the Quran on:

ABRAHAM (peace be upon him)

Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed:

“Our Lord! Make of us **Muslims**, bowing to Your (Will), and of our progeny a people **Muslim**, bowing to Your (Will); and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn to us (in mercy); for you are the Oft-Relenting, Most Merciful.” (Quran 2:128)

MOSES (peace be upon him)

“Moses said: ‘O my People! If you do (really) believe in God, then in Him put your trust if you are **Muslims**.’” (Quran 10:84)

JESUS (peace be upon him)

“And behold! I inspired the Disciples to have faith in Me and My Messenger; they said: ‘We have faith, and do bear witness that we bow to God as **Muslims**.’” (Quran 5:11)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

“Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all people to Jesus, the son of Mary. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one.” (Abu Huraira in Bukhari, Volume 4, pg. 434, # 652)

Islam therefore is not a new religion, but the way of life taught by all the prophets of God. Amongst them - Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them).

On accepting and living Islam one therefore accepts all the prophets of the past, recognising that God's religion is one and historically connected. All prophets got their guidance from the same God, and each invited to the same way of life - **Islam**.

Here are some selected verses from the Quran on prophets Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon them). Should you be further interested, you can then read the rest of the Quran on your own.

ABRAHAM / IBRAHIM

(peace be upon him)

Abraham was chosen by God to be the father of a great religious movement with a universal call. From his offspring came great prophets and an invitation to God.

It is known that Abraham had two sons Isaac and Ismail. Prophets Moses and Jesus are descendants of Prophet Isaac, and Prophet Muhammad descended from Prophet Ismail (peace be upon them all).

The Quran is filled with all kinds of interesting stories around Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). For example:

ABRAHAM'S SEARCH FOR GOD

“Lo! Abraham said to his father Azar: ‘Do you take idols for gods? For I see you and your people in manifest error.’ So also did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, that he might have certitude. When the night covered him over, he saw a star, he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when it set, he said, ‘I love not those that set.’ When he saw the moon rising in splendour, he said: ‘This is my Lord.’ But when the moon set, he said: ‘Unless my Lord guide me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.’ When he saw the sun rising (in splendour) he said: ‘This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).’ But when the sun set, he said: ‘O my people! I am indeed free from your (guilt) of giving partners to God. For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God.’” (Quran 6:74-79)

ASKED GOD TO SHOW HIM HOW HE GAVE LIFE TO THE DEAD

Behold! Abraham said: ‘My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead,’ He said: ‘Do you not then believe?’ He said: ‘Yea! But to satisfy my own heart.’ He said: ‘Take four birds, tie them (cut them into pieces), then put a portion of them: on every hill, and call to them: they will come to you (flying) with speed. Then know that God is Exalted in power, Wise.’ ” (Quran 2: 258-260)

CHALLENGES THE PRACTICES OF HIS PEOPLE

“We bestowed aforetime on Abraham his rectitude of conduct, and well were We acquainted with him. Behold! He said to his father and his people, ‘What are these images, to which you are (so assiduously) devoted?’ They said, ‘We found our fathers worshipping them.’ He said, ‘Indeed you have been in manifest error- you and your fathers.’ They said, ‘Have you brought us the Truth, or are you one of those who jest?’ He said, ‘Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who created them (from nothing): and I am a witness to this (truth). And by

God I will certainly plan against your idols, after you go away and turn your backs’... So he broke them to pieces, (all) but the biggest of them, that they might turn (and address themselves) to it. They said, ‘Who has done this to our gods? He must indeed be one of the unjust ones. They said, ‘We heard a youth talk of them: He is called Abraham.’ They said, ‘Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness.’ They said, ‘Are you the one that did this with our gods, O Abraham?’ He said: ‘Nay, this was done by this the biggest one! Ask them, if they can talk.’ So they turned to themselves and said, ‘Surely you are the ones in the wrong!’ Then were they confounded with shame; (they said), ‘you know full well that these (idols) do not speak!’ (Abraham) said, ‘Do you then worship, besides God, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? Fie upon you, and upon the things that you worship besides God! Have you no sense?’...” (Quran 21:51-67)

HIS PEOPLE TRIED TO BURN HIM, BUT GOD COOLED THE FIRE

“They said, ‘Burn him and protect your gods, if you do (anything at all)!’ We said, ‘O Fire! Be cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!’ ” (Quran 21:68-69)

ARGUED WITH GREAT WISDOM

“Have you not turned your thought to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because God had granted him power? Abraham said: ‘My Lord is He Who gives life and death.’ He said: ‘I give life and death.’ Said Abraham: ‘But it is God that causes the sun to rise from the east: cause it then to rise from the west.’ Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected faith. Nor does God give guidance to a people unjust.” (Quran 2:258)

MOSES / MUSA

(peace be upon him)

It may surprise you to know that much of Moses’s (peace be upon him) life is also reported in the Quran. Muslims accept him as one of the mighty messengers of God. Below are some excerpts from the Quran.

GOD SPOKE TO MOSES

“Of some messengers We have already told you the story; of others We have not; - and to Moses God spoke direct.” (Quran 4:164)

HIS CALL TO PROPHETHOOD

“Now when Moses had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he perceived a fire in the direction of Mount Tur. He said to his family: ‘Remain here; I perceive a fire; I hope to bring you from there some information, or a burning firebrand, that you may warm yourselves.’ But he came to the (Fire), he was called from the right bank of the valley, from a tree in hallowed ground: ‘O Moses! Verily I am God, the Lord of the Worlds... Now throw your rod!’ But when he saw it moving (of its own accord) as if it had been a snake, he turned back in retreat, and retraced not his steps: ‘O Moses!’ (It was said), ‘Draw near, and fear not: for you are of those who are secure. Thrust your hand into your bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or

harm), and draw your hand close to your side (to guard) against fear. Those are the two credentials from your Lord to Pharoah and his Chiefs: for truly they are a people rebellious and wicked.’ He said: ‘O my Lord! I have slain a man among them, and I fear lest they slay me.’ ” (Quran 28:29-33)

SENT TO PHAROAH

“Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and slacken not, either of you, in keeping Me in remembrance. Go both of you, to Pharoah, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds; But speak to him mildly; perchance he may take warning or fear (God). ” (Quran 20:42-44)

“ ‘So go you both to him, and say, ‘Verily we are Messengers sent by your Lord: send forth, therefore, the children of Israel with us, and afflict them not: with a Sign, indeed, have we come from your Lord! And Peace to all who follow guidance!’ ” (Quran 20:47)

GOD STRENGTHENS MOSES WITH AARON

“He said: ‘We will certainly strengthen your arm through your brother, and invest you both with authority, so they shall not be able to touch you: with Our Signs shall you triumph, you two as well as those who follow you.’ ” (Quran 28:35)

PHAROAH AND HIS ARMY DROWNS

“We sent an inspiration to Moses: ‘Travel by night with My servants and strike a dry path for them through the sea, without fear of being overtaken (by Pharoah) and without (any other) fear.’ Then Pharoah pursued them with his forces, but the waters completely overwhelmed them and covered them. Pharoah led his people astray instead of leading them aright.” (Quran 20:77-79)

JESUS / ISA

(peace be upon him)

It may be surprising to know that Muslims are required to believe in Jesus (peace be upon him). Muslims believe he is a prophet of God. Muslims also believe in the virgin birth of Jesus (peace be upon him). The entire incident is narrated in a chapter of the Quran titled Maryam (Mary). Below are portions of the chapter describing the virgin birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) as well as other aspects of his life.

VIRGIN BIRTH

“Relate in the Book (the story of) Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East. She placed a screen (to screen herself) from them: then We sent to her Our angel, and he appeared before her as a man in all respects. She said: ‘I seek refuge from you to (God) Most Gracious: (come not near) if you do fear God.’ He said: ‘Nay, I am only a messenger from your Lord (to announce) to you the gift of a pure son.’ She said: ‘How shall I have a son, seeing that

no man has touched me, and I am not unchaste?’ He said: ‘So (it will be): Your Lord said: ‘That is easy for Me: and (We wish) to appoint him as a Sign unto men and a mercy from Us’: it is a matter (so) decreed.’ ” (Quran 19:16-21)

JESUS WAS NOT THE SON OF GOD

“Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger; many were the Messengers that passed away before him. His mother was a women of truth. They has both to eat their (daily) food. See how God does make His Signs clear to them; yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!” (Quran 5:75)

“The similitude of Jesus before Allah is as that of Adam, he created him from dust, then said to him: ‘Be’: and he was.” (Quran 3:59)

PERFORMED MIRACLES

“Behold! The Disciples said: ‘O Jesus the son of Mary! Can your Lord send down to us a Table set (with viands) from heaven?’ Said Jesus: ‘Fear God, if you have faith’ They said: ‘We only wish to eat thereof and satisfy our hearts, and to know that you have indeed told us the truth; and that we ourselves may be witnesses to the miracle.’ Said Jesus the son of Mary: ‘O God our Lord! Send us from heaven a table set (with viands), that there may be for us -for the first and the last of us - a solemn festival and a Sign from You; and provide for our sustenance, for You are the best Sustainer (of our needs).’ God said: ‘I will send it down unto you: but if any of you after that resists faith, I will punish him with chastisement such as I have not inflicted on any one among all the peoples.’ ” (Quran 5:112-115)

FORETOLD THE COMING OF MUHAMMAD

“And remember, Jesus, the son of Mary, said: ‘O children of Israel! I am the Messenger of God (sent) to you, confirming the Torah (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be **Ahmad**. But when he came to them with Clear Signs, they said: ‘This is evident sorcery!’ ” (Quran 61:6)

WAS NOT KILLED

“That they said (in boast): ‘We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of God’ but they killed him not, nor crucified him. Only a likeness of that was shown to them. And those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge. But only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay, God raised him up unto Himself; and God is Exalted in Power, Wise.” (Quran 4:157-158)

MUHAMMAD

(peace be upon him)

Muslims consider Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be God's last prophet and Messenger to mankind.

He was born in Arabia in the year 570 of the Christian era. He was called to prophethood at the age of 40 and died at the age of 63. The Quran, which we have referred to throughout this book, was revealed to him in small amounts over 23 years.

In this short span of 23 years he was able to change the whole of the Arabian Peninsula from idol-worship and paganism to the worship of God; from moral decay to moral excellence; from tribal wars to solidarity and purpose; from the exploitation of women and killing of female babies to respect for females.

The Encyclopedia Britannica calls him "the most successful of all religious personalities of the world." Others had this to say:

"My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels." (From: *The 100 - A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* by Michael H. Hart.)

"People like Pasteur and Salk are leaders in the first sense. People like Ghandi and Confucius, on one hand, and Alexander, Caesar and Hitler on the other, are leaders in the second and perhaps the third sense. Jesus and Buddha belong in the third category alone. Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Mohammed, who combined all three functions. To a lesser degree Moses did the same." (Professor Jules Masserman)

"Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Warrior, Conqueror of ideas, Restorer of rational beliefs, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty-terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?" (From: *Historie de la Turquie* by Alphonse de LaMartine).

Today he is followed by over one billion Muslims worldwide. Below are some verses from the Quran relating to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

WAS A HUMAN BEING

"Say: 'I am but a man like yourselves, (but) the inspiration has come to me, that your God is one God: whoever expects to meet his Lord, let him work righteousness, and, in the worship of his Lord, admit no one as partner.' " (Quran 18:110)

ANGEL GABRIEL BROUGHT REVELATION TO HIM

“Verily this is a Revelation from the Lord of the Worlds: With it came down the truthful spirit to your heart that you may admonish. In the perspicuous Arabic tongue.” (Quran 26:192-195)

MESSENGER TO ALL MANKIND

“We have not sent you but as a (Messenger) to all mankind, giving them glad tidings, and warning them (against sin), but most men know not.” (Quran 34:28)

SEAL TO PROPHETHOOD

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of God, and the Seal of the Prophets, and God has full knowledge of all things.” (Quran 33:40)

SUMMARY

When Muslims teach their children the stories of the lives of the prophets, they not only teach about the life of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him, who Muslims believe was the last prophet from God), but also about:

- (a) The miraculous birth of Jesus (peace be upon him), as well as the fact he was able to perform miracles by God's permission.
- (b) The story of Moses (peace be upon him), his upbringing and his eventual confrontation with Pharaoh's oppression.
- (c) Abraham's (peace be upon him) search for God. His destruction of the idols of his people and God's cooling of the fire when his people tried to burn him for his act of rebellion.
- (d) The lives of Noah, Joseph, Solomon, Jonah, and other prophets (peace be upon them).

All these and other prophets' stories are in the Quran, God's final revelation to mankind.

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