

QUESTION: The second part of the Muslim's testimony of faith is the statement "Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah".

What significance does this have for Muslims?

ANSWER: Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is seen by Muslims as being the last of the Prophets sent by Allah,

All of the Prophets were entrusted with the task of calling the people to worshipping Allah alone.

It was to Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that the final revelation, the Quran, was revealed over the course of 23 years.

His actions and statements – known to Muslims as 'the sunnah' – constitute the second source in Islam along with the Quran. Muslims believe that his actions and statements were also divinely inspired.

'Your companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has he erred.

Nor does he speak of his own desire.

It is only a Revelation that (has been) revealed.'

Surah Najam (the 53rd chapter) verses 2 to 5

Both the Quran and the Sunnah have been preserved by the Muslim nation since they were revealed 1400 years ago, through careful research and memorisation.

Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was and continues to be rejected as a Prophet by all nations except the Muslims. The testimony that he is really a Prophet is therefore a key distinction between the Muslims and the non Muslims.

His language was Arabic, although he could not read or write. His illiteracy was therefore a source of confusion to the Arabs who heard the Quran but did not accept that it was a revelation from Allah.

They could not understand how an illiterate man had written such beautiful Arabic which surpassed their own considerable efforts in the field of Arabic poetry.

After he first starting receiving the revelation of the Quran at the age of 40, he spent 13 years in a town called Mecca, and 10 years in Medina.

Nearly all of the first 13 years was spent teaching the topic of tawheed and other aspects of aqeedah (Islamic creed).

Most of the aspects of Islam which are so closely associated with Muslims – such as

the fasting, pilgrimage, compulsory charity, etc – were only legislated in the latter 10 years.

Muslims believe that unlike the previous Prophets who were sent to their own nations only, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was sent to all of mankind. Everyone is therefore obligated to follow him, and not just the Arabs.

Testifying that he is the Messenger of Allah has requirements:

It means that Muslims obey him in those matters which he ordered with eg the prayer, or the compulsory charity.

It also means that Muslims affirm and testify to those matters which he informed about, such as the events that occur to a person after death or descriptions of Allah that he gave.

Muslims also avoid those matters which he prohibited and warned against, such as associating partners with Allah or other matters such as murder and theft.

And Muslims also worship Allah only in the way which he (peace and blessing be upon him) legislated, not in any old manner which happens to suit them.

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NEXT TIME:

Muslims say that the testimony that 'Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)' has pillars to it. What does this mean?