

# Muhammad is the messenger of God

Last week, we explored the Shahada, the fundamental testimony of faith in Islam. The declaration “La Ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad Rasulul Lah,” which translates to “There is no God except Allah, and Muhammad is His messenger,” is what makes a person a Muslim. We delved into the profound meaning of the first part, “There is no God but Allah,” and discussed how it fundamentally means *freedom*.

This declaration signifies liberation from worldly attachments that can distract or control one’s life. It is a powerful statement that goes beyond a mere religious proclamation. Remarkably, while serving as the gateway to a new faith and new life, the Shahada offers guidance that can positively influence an individual’s existence both in this world and the hereafter. The simplicity of these words belies their deep significance. By affirming that no entity deserves worship except Allah, the believer commits to a journey of detachment from material distractions and a focus on more meaningful pursuits. One is sure it is all in the Hand of the Creator, the Sustainer, the All-Powerful, and the All-Knowing.

Before we discuss this further, I find it relevant to define the word religion. Religion is fundamentally a comprehensive framework of rules (guidelines) that provide structure for its followers. A truly meaningful religion addresses both the present

life and the afterlife (if the religion states its existence). It offers a holistic approach to human existence, providing guidance on how to live meaningfully and purposefully.

A robust religious framework should do more than simply restrict or prohibit. It must offer balanced alternatives and pathways for human fulfillment. This includes addressing fundamental human needs and desires. For instance, a religion should recognize that enjoyment and the satisfaction of desires are essential aspects of human experience, not peripheral considerations. If religion prohibits something, it should, then, also provide an alternative of the same nature.

The underlying principle for any religion should be balance. When a religion establishes prohibitions, it must simultaneously provide constructive alternatives.

For example, Islam prohibits adultery and warns against it, telling that there is a punishment for those who commit such a sin and do not repent from it. Yet, Islam provided the alternative, which is marriage. Marriage comes with a whole package of benefits for the wife. I sometimes ask myself, which is better, a relationship that guarantees nothing, in which the man uses the woman, or a marriage relationship that guarantees a wife a tremendous amount of rights?

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Column

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*religion creates a balanced ecosystem for personal development. It acknowledges human complexity, recognizing that spiritual growth is not about suppressing human experiences and desires into constructive and meaningful directions.*

The connection between the two parts of the Shahada reveals a profound understanding of the relationship between the Divine and humanity. When one declares, “There is no God but Allah,” one attests to the supreme attributes of the Almighty: the Creator, the Sustainer, the All-Powerful, the Compeller, and the Subduer. These attributes invoke a sense of reverence and, indeed, a natural human response of fear. Oh my God, I am standing before the Almighty who knows everything!

This is where the second part of the Shahada, “Muhammad is His messenger,” becomes crucial. It means “*Mercy*”. It shows how merciful the divine is. The second part of the Shahada is the balance we just talked about.

The fact that Allah allows His messenger’s name to be mentioned alongside His own is a sign of compassion. The

Almighty Himself allowed one of his creatures, a simple human being, to be chosen to deliver the Almighty’s message to his servants. It suggests a pathway of understanding, a method of approach. If God asks us to follow his framework (religion) then the teacher is his messenger, Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. The divine words themselves acknowledge the weight of this responsibility, as revealed in the verse: “**Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (i.e. obligations, legal laws, etc.).**” [Qur’an 73: 5]

The messenger provides humanity with a practical, comprehensible way to live our lives and achieve our goals based on the rules in the Qur’an that were sent to us through the messenger. The Prophet, pbuh, was an example to follow on how to do what God ordered us to do and how to avoid what bring upon us God’s anger and then His punishment. Prophet Muhammad was a living example to us on how to follow the guidelines and how not to think of them as difficult or impractical.

The messenger, pbuh, is the interpreter of divine guidance, showing how the abstract principles of faith translate into daily life. Through Prophet Muhammad’s teachings, the seemingly unreachable becomes accessible, and the incomprehensible becomes understandable. God the Almighty says, “**And obey Allah and the Messenger, so you may receive mercy.**” [Qur’an 3: 132] and “**Who-**

**ever obeys the Messenger is obeying Allah. And whoever turns away—We did not send you as their keeper.**” [Qur’an 4: 80]. The Qur’an (the literal words of God, as believed by all Muslims) also says, “**With the clarifications and the Divine Books. And We revealed the Reminder (the Qur’an) to you, so that you may explain to people what was revealed to them, and so that they may think.**” [Qur’an 16: 44]. It states clearly that Prophet Muhammad is the messenger chosen by the Almighty to receive the revelations and to convey the message to us (we, the people) and to explain it to us. It is imperative to say that Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, has always explained Qur’anic verses via his actions and not via explaining the meanings of the words. The Qur’an was revealed in Arabic, and Arabs of the time were the most eloquent, especially the Prophet Muhammad’s own people. Prophet Muhammad was known by his people as one of those who are eloquent when they speak, but he was never a poet. This means that the Arabs did not need an explanation, but they needed something more important. They needed to see the Prophet himself pray, fast, pay the alms, and do all the other commandments before they started doing them. This is what he, pbuh, did. He showed us how to perform and how to practice.

The Qur’an says clearly, “**And pray regularly, and give charity regularly,**

**and obey the Messenger, so that you may receive mercy.**” [Qur’an 24: 56]. And “**We did not send you except as a mercy for humankind.**” [Qur’an 21: 107]. Another is, “**Just as We sent to you a messenger from among you: reading Our revelations to you, and purifying you, and teaching you the Scripture and wisdom, and teaching you what you did not know.**” [Qur’an 2: 151].

All these verses and more tell us how merciful God (Allah) is. How compassionate He is. To accept the name of his servant and messenger to be next to His holy name is a clear signature that He is a merciful God.

From among the teachings of The messenger, his hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) “**Were this world worth a wing of mosquito, He would not have given a drink of water to an infidel**” and “**No one of you shall become a true believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.**” and “**Whoever has been given his portion of compassion has been given his portion of good. Whoever is denied his portion of compassion has been denied his portion of good. Good character will be the weightiest thing in the believer’s balance (scale) on the Day of Rising (Resurrection). Allah hates a coarse, foul-mouthed person.**”

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