

Prophet Idris (as)

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Idris is an ancient prophet mentioned in the Qur'an, he was the third prophet after Seth. Islamic tradition has identified Idris with the biblical Enoch, although many Muslim scholars of the classical and medieval periods claim that Idris and Hermes Trismegistus are the same person.

Idris is described in the Qur'an as trustworthy and patient, and the Qur'an says that he was exalted to a high station. Because of this and other parallels, Islamic tradition places Idris in the early Generations of Adam, and considers him one of the oldest prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, placing him between Adam and Noah. Idris's unique status inspired many future traditions.

According to Ahadith, narrated by Malik ibn Anas and found in Sahih Muslim, it is said that on Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey, he encountered Idris in the fourth heaven. The traditions that have developed around the figure of Idris have given him the scope of a prophet as well as a philosopher and mystic, and many later Muslim mystic, or Sufis including Ruzbihan Baqli and Ibn Arabi, also mentioned having encountered Idris in their spiritual visions.

Muslim sources of the eighth century hold the view that Idris has two names, "Idris" and "Enoch," and other sources even stated that "Idris' true name is Enoch, and that he is called Idris in Arabic, because of his devotion to the study of sacred books of his ancestors Adam and Seth.

Idris was born in Babylon, a city in present-day Iraq. Before he received the Revelation, he followed the rules revealed to Prophet Seth, son of Adam. When Idris grew older, God bestowed Prophethood on him. Idris left his hometown of Babylon, because a most of his people committed many sins even after he told them not to do so. Some of his people left with Idris.

They asked Prophet Idris: "If we leave Babylon, where will we find a place like it?" Prophet Idris said: "If we immigrate for the sake of Allah, He will provide for us." They reached the land of Egypt. They saw the Nile River. Idris stood at its bank and mentioned Allah, the Exalted, by saying: "Subhan-Allah."

Idris was made prophet at around 40, which parallels the age when Muhammad began to prophesy, and lived during a time when people had begun to worship fire. Exegesis embellishes on the lifetime of Idris, and states that he divided his time into two parts, for three days, he would preach to his people and four days he would devote solely to the worship of God. Many early commentators, such as Tabari, credited Idris with possessing great wisdom and knowledge.

Exegesis narrates that Idris was among "the first men to use the pen as well as being one of the first men to observe the movement of the stars and set out scientific weights and measures." These attributes remain consistent with the identification of Enoch, as these attributes make it clear that Idris would have most probably lived during the Generations of Adam, the same era during which Enoch lived. Ibn Arabi described Idris as the "prophet of the philosophers" and a number of works were attributed to him. Some scholars wrote commentaries on these supposed works.

Ibn Ishaq narrated that he was the first man to write with a pen and that he was born when Adam still had 308 years of life left. In his commentary on the Quranic verses 19: 56-57, Ibn Kathir narrated "During the Night Journey, Prophet Muhammad (saw) passed by him in the fourth heaven. In a hadith, Ibn Abbas asked Ka'b what was meant by the part of the verse, which says, "And We raised him (Idris) to a high station." Ka'b explained: Allah revealed to Idris: 'I would raise for you every day the same amount of the deeds of all Adam's children.' Idris wanted to increase his deeds and devotion to his Lord. A friend of his from the angels (Gabriel) visited and Idris said to him: 'Allah has revealed to me such and such, could you please speak to the angel of death to delay my death, so I could increase my deeds.' The angel carried him on his wings and went up into the heavens. When they reached

the fourth heaven, they met the angel of death who was about to descend to earth. Angel Gabriel conversed with the angel of death about what Idris had said to him. The angel of death said: 'Where is Idris?' Gabriel replied, 'He is on my back.' The angel of death said: 'How astonishing! I was told to seize his soul in the fourth heave, which made me think how could I seize it in the fourth heaven when he resides on planet earth?' Then, the angel of death removed the soul of Idris from his body. That is what is meant by the verse: 'And We raised him to a high station.'

Early accounts of Idris's life attributed "thirty portions of revealed scripture" to him. Therefore, Idris was understood by many early commentators to be both a prophet as well as a messenger. Several modern commentators have linked this sentiment with Biblical apocrypha such as the Book of Enoch and the Second Book of Enoch.