

Prophet Ilyas (as)

Prophet Ilyas (Elijah as)

Elijah, meaning "My God is Yahweh (Allah in Arabic), was, according to the Books of Kings in the Hebrew Bible, a prophet and a miracle worker who lived in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Ahab (9th century BCE). In 1 Kings 18, Elijah defended the worship of God over that of the Canaanite deity Baal. God also performed many miracles through Elijah, including resurrection, bringing fire down from the sky, and entering heaven alive by fire." He is also portrayed as leading a school of prophets known as "the sons of the prophets". Following his ascension, Elisha, his disciple and most devoted assistant, took over his role as leader of this school. The Book of Malachi prophesies Elijah's return "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord", making him a harbinger (a person that announces or signals the approach of another) of the Messiah. References to Elijah appear in Sirach, the New Testament, the Mishnah and Talmud, the Qur'an, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and Baha'i writings.

In Judaism, Elijah's name is invoked at the weekly Havdalah rite that marks the end of Shabbat, and Elijah is invoked in other Jewish customs, among them the Passover Seder and the brit milah (ritual circumcision). He appears in numerous stories and references in the Haggadah and rabbinic literature, including the Babylonian Talmud. According to the Hebrew Bible, Elijah will return during the last age (maybe Imam Mahdi).

The Christian New Testament notes that some people thought that Jesus was, in some sense, Elijah, but it also makes clear that John the Baptist is "the Elijah" who was promised to come in Malachi 3:1; 4:5. According to accounts

in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Elijah appeared with Moses during the Transfiguration of Jesus.

In Islam, Elijah or Ilyas appears in the Qur'an as a prophet and messenger of God, where his biblical narrative of preaching against the worshipers of Baal is recounted in a concise form. Due to his importance to Muslims, Christians, Elijah has been venerated as the patron saint of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1752.

Elijah is mentioned as a prophet in the Qur'an ([Surah 6:85](#)). Elijah's narrative in the Qur'an and later Muslim tradition resembles closely that in the Hebrew Bible and Muslim literature records Elijah's primary prophesying as taking place during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel as well as Ahaziah. He is seen by Muslims to be the prophetic predecessor to Elisha. While neither the Bible, nor the Qur'an mentions the genealogy of Elijah, some scholars of Islam believe he may have come from the priestly family of prophet Aaron ([Musa's brother](#)).

Qur'an

The Qur'an narrates that Elijah told his people to come to the worship of God and to leave the worship of Ba'l, the primary idol of the area. The Qur'an states, "Verily Elijah was one of the apostles. When he said to his people: "Will you not fear God? "Will you call on Ba'l and leave the Best of Creators, God, your Lord and cherisher and the Lord and cherisher of your forefathers? ([Qur'an: 123 - 126](#))

The Qur'an makes it clear that the majority of Elijah's people denied the prophet and continued to follow idolatry. However, it mentions that a small number of devoted servants of God amongst them followed Elijah and believed in and worshiped God. The Qur'an states, "They denied him (Elijah), and will surely be brought to punishment, Except the sincere and devoted Servants of God among them. And We left his memory for posterity."

In the Qur'an, God praises Elijah in two places:

Peace be upon Elijah! This is how We reward those who do good. He is truly among our believing servants.

Qur'an, chapter 37 (*As-Saaffat*), verse 129–132

Zachariah and John and Jesus and Elijah, they were all from among the righteous.

Qur'an, chapter 6 (*Al-An'am*), verse 85

Numerous commentators, including Abdullah Yusuf Ali, have offered commentary on this verse saying, that Elijah, Zechariah, John, the Baptist, and Jesus were all spiritually connected Abdullah Yusuf Ali says, "The third group consists not of men of action, rather preachers of the truth, who led solitary lives."

Literature and tradition

Elijah preached to the Kingdom of Israel, which was ruled over by Ahab and later his son Ahaziah. He is believed to have been a prophet of the desert like John the Baptist. Elijah is believed to have preached with zeal to Ahab and his wife Jezebel, who according to Muslim tradition was partly responsible for the worship of false idols in this area. Muslims believe that it was because the majority of people refused to listen to Elijah that Elisha had to continue preaching the message of God to Israel after him.

Elijah has been the subject of legends and folktales in Muslim culture, usually involving his meeting with Khidr, and in one legend, with Muhammad himself. In Islamic mysticism, Elijah is associated closely with Khidr. One hadith reports that Elijah and Khidr met together every year in Jerusalem to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Elijah appears also in the Hamzanama (or the book of Hamza, a book based on a history passed down orally over many centuries. Having been composed in the 9th century) numerous times, where he is spoken of as being the brother of Khidr as well as one who drank from the fountain of youth.

Further, It is narrated in Kitab al-Kafi that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq was reciting the prostration of Ilyas (Elijah) in the Syrian language and began to weep. He then translated the supplication in Arabic to a group of visiting scholars:

"O Lord, will I find that you punish me although you know of my thirst in the heat of midday? Will I find that you punish me although you know that I

rub my face on the earth to worship you? Will I find that you punish me although you know that I gave up sins for you? Will I find that you punish me although you know that I stay awake all night just for you?" To which Allah then inspired Ilyas, "Raise your head from the earth, for I will not punish you."

Although most Muslim scholars believed that Elijah preached in Israel, some early commentators on the Qur'an stated that Elijah was sent to Baalbek, in Lebanon. Modern scholars have rejected this claim, stating that the connection of the city with Elijah would have been made because of the first half of the city's name, that of Baal, which was the deity that Elijah exhorted his people to stop worshipping. Scholars who reject identification of Elijah's town with Baalbek further argue that the town of Baalbek is not mentioned with the narrative of Elijah in either the Qur'an or the Hebrew Bible.

Ilyas' full name is Ilyas ibn Yasin, since in the Qur'an (*As-Saffat* 37: 130), Ilyas is called Yasin. Some stories of Ilyas are also mentioned in Islamic Hadiths; such as the curse of the Israelites with drought by Ilyas, healing Alyasa, and fighting with Ahab.

Prophethood

Ilyas is first mentioned as a prophet in the Qur'an (*Al-An'am* 6: 85). He invited his people who lived in Baalbek to monotheism, obeying God and abandoning sin's. His main task was to prevent idol-worshipping. After he faced persistence of his people for many years, he cursed them with drought

and the people were inflicted with starvation. Ilyas' narrative in the Qur'an and later Muslim tradition resembles closely that in the Hebrew Bible and Muslim literature records Elijah's primary prophesying as taking place during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel as well as Ahaziah. Ilyas' figure has been identified with a number of other prophets and saints, including Idris, which is believed by some scholars to have been another name for Ilyas, and Khidr. Islamic legend later developed the figure of Ilyas, greatly embellishing upon his attributes.

Ilyas is mentioned in the Qur'an, where his preaching is recounted in a concise manner. The Qur'an narrates that Ilyas told his people to come to the worship of God and to leave the worship of Baal, the primary idol of the area. The Quran states:

"Verily Ilyas was one of the apostles. When he said to his people: "Will you not fear God? "Why do you invoke Baal (idol, which is to this day being worshipped at the Vatican in Rome) and leave the Best of Creators, God, your Lord and Cherisher, and the Lord and Cherisher of your forefathers?"

Death

By the passage of time, drought spread, and many died. When they saw themselves inflicted, regretted their past deeds, turned to Elias, and began to accept his invitation. Then, due to the prayer of Elias, heavy rain came down; however, after a while, people forgot their covenant with God and returned to idol worshipping. When Ilyas saw this, he asked God for his death, but God

sent him a chariot of fire and he ascended to the skies and chose Alyasa who was his pupil as his vicegerent. Ilyas is rarely associated with Islamic eschatology.

Legacy

Elias is the same as Elijah, whose story will be found in the Old Testament in 1 Kings 17-19 and 2 Kings 1-2. Elijah lived in the reign of Ahab (896-874 BCE) and Ahaziah (874-872 BCE), kings of the northern kingdom of Israel or Samaria. He was a prophet of the desert, like John the Baptist, unlike our holy Prophet, who took part in, controlled, and guided all the affairs of his people. Both Ahab and Azariah were prone to lapse into the worship of Baal, the sun-god worshipped in Syria. That worship also included the worship of nature-powers and pro-creative powers, as in the Hindu worship of the Lingam, and led to many abuses. King Ahab had married a princess of Sidon, Jezebel, a wicked woman who led her husband to forsake Allah and adopt Baal-worship.

Elijah denounced all Ahab's sins as well as the sins of Ahaziah and had to flee for his life. Eventually, according to the Old Testament, he was taken up in a whirlwind to heaven in a chariot of fire, after he had left his mantle with prophet Elisha.

The story of calling Elisha is among the most amazing call stories in the Holy Bible, yet with all its minute details, it is not far from the story of God's call to each one of us. When Elijah, the Prophet passed by Elisha, he threw his

responsibility upon him" (1 Kings 19:19). Elijah is symbolic of God, while Elisha is symbolic of humanity.