240242 - Is Jeremiah one of the Prophets of Allah in whom we are obliged to believe?

the question

Do we believe in prophet Jeremiah or is he just held by the Jews and Christians? If so that we believe in him what is his story and is the first four verses of surah Isra?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Belief in the Prophets and Messengers of Allah (peace be upon them) is one of the fundamentals of faith, and a person’s faith is not complete unless he believes in all the Messengers of Allah.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“The Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers. They say, ‘We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers’”

[al-Baqarah 2:285]

“And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you”

[an-Nisa’ 4:164].

So we believe in all of them, in general terms with regard to those that are mentioned in general terms, and in detail with regard to those that are mentioned in detail.

Shaykh Haafiz al-Hakami (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Belief in the Messengers of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is obligatory. Whoever disbelieves in one of them has disbelieved in Allah, may He be exalted, and in all of the Messengers (peace be upon them).

Allah has told us some of their stories, in which there is sufficient teaching and exhortation, both in general terms and in detail, then He said: “And Messengers We have mentioned to you before, and Messengers We have not mentioned to you, - and to Moosa (Moses) Allah spoke directly”[an-Nisa’ 4:164].

So we believe in all of them, in detail where they have been mentioned in detail, and in general terms where they have been mentioned in general terms.

End quote from Ma‘aarij al-Qubool (2/676-678).

There is no mention in the Holy Qur’an or in the Prophet’s Sunnah of the name Jeremiah, and there is no affirmation that he was one of the Prophets; rather this is something that was mentioned by the historians.

In this case we are not required to believe in him, because of the possibility that this may be one of the lies of the People of the Book, and it is not permissible for us to disbelieve in him, because of the possibility that he may indeed have been a Prophet. Rather we refrain from such a decision in his case.

Al-Bukhaari (4485) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The People of the Book used to recite the Torah in Hebrew and explain it in Arabic to the Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not believe the People of the Book and do not disbelieve them; rather say: ‘We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya‘qoob (Jacob), and to Al-Asbaat (the twelve sons of Ya‘qoob (Jacob)), and that which has been given to Moosa (Moses) and ‘Eesa (Jesus), and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him we have submitted (in Islam)’ [al-Baqarah 2:136].”

It was also narrated by Ibn Abi Haatim in his Tafseer (17364), but at the end of the hadith he quoted another verse: “and say (to them): ‘We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you; our Ilaah (God) and your Ilaah (God) is One (i.e. Allah), and to Him we have submitted (as Muslims)’” [al-‘Ankaboot 29:46].

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said in Fath al-Baari:

“Do not believe the People of the Book and do not disbelieve them” means: if what they tell you may be true or false, lest it is true and you disbelieve it, or it is a lie and you believe it, and thus you will fall into error.

There is no prohibition on disbelieving them in matters concerning which Islam says something different, or on believing them in matters concerning which Islam is in accordance with it. This was pointed out by ash-Shaafa‘i (may Allah have mercy on him).

From this hadith we learn that we should refrain from indulging in discussion of ambiguous matters or being definite about matters which come under the heading of speculation. This is how we should interpret the reports that have come down from the early generations concerning that. End quote.

‘Ali al-Qaari said in Mirqaat al-Mafaateeh (1/240):

“do not believe” means: with regard to that which it is not clear to you is true, because of the possibility that it may be a lie, because they are proven to fabricate lies.

“the People of the Book” namely the Jews and Christians, because they distorted their Book

“and do not disbelieve them” that is, with regard to what they quote from the Torah and Gospel, when it is not clear to you that it is false, because of the possibility that it may be true, even if that happens rarely, because the one who tells lies may say something true.

This indicates that we should refrain from judging ambiguous matters and information, so it is not to be deemed acceptable or false. And this was the way of the early generations. They used to

say: I do not know. This was with regard to issues of that nature that they were asked about. Whoever failed to say “I do not know” could possibly say something that would lead to his doom.

“Say (O Muslims), We believe in Allah” [al-Baqarah 2:136] that is, we believe in and acknowledge Him, or we believe in Him with certainty

“and that which has been sent down to us” of the Qur’an.

“and that which has been sent down to Ibrahim (Abraham), Ismail (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Ya‘qoob (Jacob), and to Al-Asbaat (the twelve sons of Ya‘qoob (Jacob)), and that which has been given to Moosa (Moses) and ‘Eesa (Jesus)” that is, of the Torah and Gospel. This is the point of our discussion, and what is meant is to put an end to the dispute, i.e., that we believe in general terms in what was sent down to them (of the Torah and Gospel).

“and that which has been given to the Prophets from their Lord” this is a general statement after mentioning specific Prophets.

“We make no distinction between any of them” that is, in terms of believing in them and in their books

“and to Him” that is, to Allah, or to what has been sent down

“we have submitted (in Islam)” that is, we are obedient, or we comply with it.

End quote.

Thirdly:

More than one of the historians have stated that Jeremiah (peace be upon him) was one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel. It was said that he was ‘Uzayr, or al-Khadir, but the correct view is that he was neither of them.

Al-Haafiz ibn ‘Asaakir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Jeremiah son of Hilkiah (Irmiya ibn Halqiya), of the tribe of Levi son of Jacob (Laawi ibn Ya‘qoob) was one of the Prophets of the Children of Israel. End quote.

Tareekh Dimashq (8/27).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He was Jeremiah son of Hilkiah (Irmiya ibn Halqiya), of the tribe of Levi son of Jacob (Laawi ibn Ya‘qoob). It was said that he was al-Khadir, as was narrated by ad-Dahhaak from Ibn ‘Abbaas, but this is ghareeb and is not saheeh. End quote.

Al-Bidaayah wa’n-Nihaayah (2/360).

The historians said:

Allah, may He be exalted, sent revelation to Jeremiah (peace be upon him) when sins became prevalent among the Children of Israel, and they committed major sins, and they killed the Prophets, telling him: Go to them and admonish them, remind them of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon them, tell them about their sins and warn them of the punishment of the Lord, in a lengthy and eloquent admonition.

And they said:

When Jeremiah conveyed to them the message of their Lord, and they heard what it contained of warnings and punishment, they disobeyed him, disbelieved him and made accusations against him. They said: You are lying and fabricating a grave lie against Allah, claiming that there will come a time when Allah’s land and His places of worship will be devoid of His books and devoid of anyone to worship Him and affirm His Oneness. So who would worship Him when there is no worshipper, place of worship or book in the land? You have fabricated a grave lie against Allah and you must be possessed! Then they took him, tied him up and imprisoned him.

At that point, Allah sent Nebuchadnezzar against them, who came marching with his troops and he besieged them, and it was as Allah, may He be exalted, said: “and they wrought havoc throughout

the land” [al-Isra’ 17:5].

When the siege had gone on for a long time, they agreed to accept his terms, so they opened the gates and (Nebuchadnezzar’s troops) rampaged throughout the city. He subjected them to the rule of ignorance and punished them like a tyrant. He killed one third of them and took one third captive, leaving the chronically ill and old men and women, then he trampled them with horses. He destroyed the Temple, captured the young boys and carried them off, paraded the women bareheaded in the marketplace, killed the men of fighting age, destroyed the fortresses, destroyed their places of worship, and burned the Torah.

After he did what he did, it was said to him: They have a man who warned them of what has befallen them; he described you to them and told them what you would do to them, that you would kill the men of fighting age, take their children captive, destroy their places of worship and burn their synagogues. But they disbelieved him and made accusations against him; they beat him, tied him up and imprisoned him.

So Nebuchadnezzar issued orders that Jeremiah be brought out of prison, and he said to him: Did you warn these people about what has befallen them?

He said: Yes.

He said: I knew that.

He said: Allah sent me to them, but they disbelieved me.

He said: Did they disbelieve you, beat you and imprison you?

He said: Yes.

He said: What a bad people they are who disbelieve their Prophet and reject the message of their Lord. Will you join me, and I will honour you and take care of you, and if you want to stay in your own land, I will grant you protection?

Jeremiah said: I have been under the protection of Allah all my life, and have never been without it

for a moment. If the Children of Israel had not chosen to disregard Allah’s protection, they would never have feared you or anyone else, and you would never have gained any power over them.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard these words from him, he left him alone, and Jeremiah stayed where he was in the land of Aelia (Jerusalem).

See: Tareekh at-Tabari (1/538-589); Tareekh Dimashq (8/29-41) and al-Bidaayah wa’n-Nihaayah (2/361-372)

Ibn Katheer said:

This is a wondrous story in which there is wisdom, exhortation and many beneficial things.

And Allah knows best.