

# Islamic Cosmology

## Lesson 5



# The Belief in Angels

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ  
بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

*“The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in God and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], “We make no distinction between any of His messengers.” And they say, “We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.” Quran 2:285*

# The Belief in Angels

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ  
مِن قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

*“O you who believe, believe in God and His Messenger and the Book that He sent down upon His Messenger and the Scripture which He sent down before. And whoever disbelieves in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, and the Last Day has certainly gone far astray.”* Quran

4:136

# The Infallibility of Angels

وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِمَّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

*“And to God prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth of creatures, and the angels [as well], and they are not arrogant. They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.” Quran 16:49-50*

# The Ranks of Angels

وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا لَهُ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُومٌ

*“[The angels say], “There is not among us any except that he has a known station.” Quran 37:164*

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ مُطَاعٍ ثَمَّ أَمِينٍ

*“This Quran is the speech of a noble messenger, who has power and eminence in the presence of the Lord of the Throne, and who is obeyed there [in God’s presence] and trusted.” Quran 81:19-21*

# The Ranks of Angels

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَى وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ  
يَزِيدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

*“Praise is for God who created the skies and the earth, who installed the angels as messengers with wings in twos, threes, and fours. He increases His creation as He wills...” Quran 35:1*

# The Function of Angels

- **1. Bearers of messages:**

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولِي أَجْنَحَةٍ مِّثْنَى وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ  
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- “the angels” in the plural implies “all angels”.
- “messengers” are not limited to the bearers of revelation; the Quran refers to angels with other functions as “messengers” also.

# The Function of Angels

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ

*“...when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail [in their duties].” Quran 6:61*

إِنَّ رُسُلَنَا يَكْتُبُونَ مَا تَمْكُرُونَ

*“Indeed, our messengers record their trickery.” Quran 10:21*



# The Function of Angels

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ

*“And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good tidings, they said, “Indeed, we will destroy the people of that Lot's city. Indeed, its people have been wrongdoers.” Quran 29:31*

# The Function of Angels

- **2. Bearers of the Divine Throne**

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

*"Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord..."* Quran 40:7

وَتَرَى الْمَلَائِكَةَ حَافِينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ

*"And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne, exalting [Allah] with praise of their Lord..."* Quran 39:75

# The Function of Angels

- **3. Governing affairs of creation:**

فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا

*“and by the manager of affairs.”* Quran 79:5

- In supplication 3 of Sahifa al-Sajjadiyah, Imam al-Sajjad describes the functions of some of these angels.

# The Function of Angels

وَخِزَّانِ الْمَطَرِ وَزَوَاجِرِ السَّحَابِ، وَالَّذِي بِصَوْتِ زَجْرِهِ يُسْمَعُ زَجَلُ الرَّعْدِ، وَإِذَا سَبَحَتْ بِهِ  
حَفِيفَةُ السَّحَابِ التَّمَعَّتْ صَوَاعِقُ الْبُرُوقِ. وَمُشَيِّعِي التَّلْجِ وَالْبَرْدِ. وَالْهَابِطِينَ مَعَ قَطْرِ الْمَطَرِ إِذَا  
نَزَلْ،

“... the keepers of the rain, the drivers of the clouds, him at whose driving's sound is heard the rolling of thunder, and when the reverberating clouds swim before his driving, bolts of lightning flash; the escorts of snow and hail, the descenders with the drops of rain when they fall,...

# The Function of Angels

وَالْقُورَامِ عَلَى خَزَائِنِ الرِّيَّاحِ، وَ الْمُؤَكَّلِينَ بِالجِبَالِ فَلَا تَزُولُ. وَالَّذِينَ عَرَّفْتَهُمْ مَثَاقِيلَ الْمِيَاهِ، وَكَيْلَ  
مَا تَحْوِيهِ لَوَاعِجِ الْأَمْطَارِ وَعَوَالِجُهَا،

“the watchers over the treasuries of the winds, those charged with the mountains lest they disappear, those whom Thou hast taught the weights of the waters and the measures contained by torrents and masses of rain;

# The Function of Angels

وَرُسُلِكَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ بِمَكْرُوهٍ مِمَّا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ الْبَلَاءِ، وَمَحْبُوبِ الرَّخَاءِ، وَالسَّفَرَةِ  
الْكِرَامِ الْبَرَّةِ، وَالْحَفَظَةِ الْكِرَامِ الْكَاتِبِينَ، وَمَلَكِ الْمَوْتِ وَأَعْوَانِهِ،

“the angels who are Your messengers to the people of the earth with the disliked affliction that comes down and the beloved ease; the devoted, noble scribes, the watchers, noble writers, the angel of death and his helpers,...

# The Function of Angels

وَمُنْكَرٍ وَنَكِيرٍ، وَرُومَانَ فَتَّانِ الْقُبُورِ، وَالطَّائِفِينَ بِالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ، وَمَالِكِ، وَالْخَزَنَةَ، وَرُضْوَانَ،  
وَسَدَنَةَ الْجَنَانِ

“Munkar and Nakir, Rumaan, the tester in the graves, the circlers of the Inhabited House, Malik and the guardians, Ridwan and the gatekeepers of the gardens,...”

# The Function of Angels

- **4. Seeking forgiveness for the believers:**

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

*“Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed, [saying], “Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire.” Quran 40:7*



# The Function of Angels

- **5. Glorifying God**

يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ

*“They glorify [Him] night and day and do not tire.”* Quran 21:20

# The Function of Angels

- **6. Intercession:**

وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَىٰ

*“...and they do not intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves.” Quran 21:28*

# The Function of Angels

- **7. Invoking God's damnation:**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

*“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the damnation of God and of the angels and the people, all together.” Quran 2:161*

# The Function of Angels

- **8. Comforting believers on their deathbeds:**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا  
بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

*“Indeed, those who have said, "Our Lord is God " and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], "Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.” Quran 41:30*

# The Function of Angels

- **9. Recording deeds:**

وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ كِرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ

*“And indeed, [appointed] over you are recorders, who are noble scribes.” Quran 82:10-11*

# The Function of Angels

- **10. Salutations upon the Prophet (s):**

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

*“God and his angels send their prayers to the Prophet. O you who believe! Pray for him and salute him.”* Quran 33:56

# The Function of Angels

- **11. Receiving the souls at death:**

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ

*“...when death comes to one of you, Our messengers take him, and they do not fail [in their duties].” Quran 6:61*

# The Function of Angels

- **12. Guarding against misfortune and death**

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً

*“And He is the Supreme, above His servants, and He sends keepers over you...”* Quran 6:61



# The Function of Angels

- **13. Supporting the believers in war:**

إِذْ تَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُمِدُّكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرَدِّفِينَ

*“Recall when you were seeking your Lord’s help, and he answered your prayer saying, “I shall aid you with a thousand angels in ranks.” Quran*

8:9