

ANGELS (PART 1 OF 3): CREATED TO WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD

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Muslims believe in the existence of angels. 

In Islam there are six pillars of faith; belief in God, the One and Only, the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, belief in His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day and divine predestination.

Angels are part of the unseen world, but Muslims believe in their existence with certainty because God and His messenger, Muhammad, have provided us with information about them. The angels were created by God in order to worship and obey Him..

“They, (angels) disobey not, the Commands they receive from God, but do that which they are commanded.” (Quran 66:6)

God created angels from light. Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, said, **“The angels are created from light,”**^[1] We have no knowledge of when the angels were created, however, we do know that it was before the creation of humankind. Quran explains that God told the angels of His intention to create a vicegerent on earth. **(2:30)**

Muslims know that angels are beautiful creations. In Quran 53:6 God describes the angels as *dhoo mirrah*, this is an Arabic term that renowned Islamic scholars^[2] define as, tall and beautiful in appearance. Quran **(12:31)** also describes Prophet Joseph as beautiful, like a noble angel.

Angels have wings, and can be very large. There is nothing in either the Quran, or the traditions of Prophet Muhammad that indicate that angels are winged babies or have any form of gender.^[3] We do know however, that angels are winged and some are extremely large. From the traditions of Prophet Muhammad we know that the angel Gabriel’s great size filled **“the space between heaven and earth”**^[4] and that he had six hundred wings^[5].

“...Who made the angels, messengers with wings - two, or three, or four (pairs)...”
(Quran 35:1)

There are also differences in the status of angels. Those angels who were present at the first battle, the Battle of **Badr**, are known to be the “best” of the angels.

“Angel Gabriel came to the Prophet and asked, ‘How do you rate the people among you who were present at Badr?’ Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, answered, ‘They are the best of the Muslims,’ or something similar. Gabriel then said: ‘So it is with the angels who were present at Badr.’”[\[6\]](#)

Muslims believe that angels have no need to eat or drink. Their sustenance is glorifying God and repeating the words, there is no god but God. **(Quran 21:20)**.

“. . . For in the presence of your Lord are those who celebrate His praises by night and by day. And they never flag (nor feel themselves above it).” **(Quran 41:38)**

The story of Prophet Abraham in Quran also indicates that the angels have no need of food. When angels, in the form of men, visited Prophet Abraham to give him the good tidings of the birth of a son, he offered to them a calf in their honour. They refused to eat and he became fearful, it was then that they revealed themselves as angels. **(Quran 51:26-28)**

There are many angels, but only God knows the exact number. During his ascension to heaven, the Prophet Muhammad visited a House of Worship known as ‘the much-frequented house’, or, in Arabic *al Bayt al-Mamoor*, the heavenly equivalent of the Kaaba.[\[7\]](#)

Then I was taken up to ‘the Much-Frequented House’: every day seventy thousand angels visit it and leave, never returning to it again, another (group) coming after them.”[\[8\]](#)

Prophet Muhammad has also informed us that on the Day of Judgement, hell will be brought forth and shown to the people. He said, **“Hell will be brought forth that day by means of seventy thousand ropes, each of which will be pulled by seventy thousand angels.”**[\[9\]](#)

The angels have great powers. They have the ability to take on different forms. They appeared before both Prophet Abraham and Prophet Lot as men. The angel Gabriel appeared before Mary the mother of Jesus as a man, **(Quran 19:17)** and he appeared before Prophet Muhammad as a man, whose clothes were exceedingly white, and whose hair was exceedingly black.[\[10\]](#)

The angels are strong. Four angels carry the throne of God, and on the Day of Judgement their number will be increased to eight. Among the traditions of Prophet Muhammad is a narration that describes one of the angels carrying God’s throne. **“The distance between his ear-lobes and his shoulders is equivalent to a seven-hundred-year journey.”**[\[11\]](#)

Angels carry out various duties and responsibilities. Some are responsible for matters of the universe. Some are responsible for the seas, or the mountains or the wind.

Once, after visiting the city of Ta'if, a town near Mecca, Prophet Muhammad was pelted with stones. The angel Gabriel and the angel of the mountains paid him a visit.

The angel of the mountains offered to destroy the intractable people by burying them under the rubble of two nearby mountains. Prophet Muhammad declined the offer for he believed that if they had a chance to settle down and look at Islam, they would accept it and love God.^[12]

Angels carry out God's commands without flinching or hesitating. Each angel has a duty or function. Some angels guard and accompany human beings, others are messengers. In part two we will examine these duties and learn the names of some of the angels who perform them.

Footnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Muslim.*

[2] Ibn Abbas & Qutadah.

[3] The use of the term *he* is for grammatical ease and in no way indicates that the angels are male.

[4] *Saheeh Muslim*

[5] The Musnad of Imam Ahmad.

[6] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[7] The cube shaped building, in the centre of the Holy Masjid, in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

[8] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*

[9] *Saheeh Muslim*

[10] Ibid

[11]

Sunan Abu Dawood

[12]

Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim

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