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**See also:** ABŪ BAKR, ALLAH BE PLEASED WITH HIM; ‘ARAFĀT; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; BELIEF; BLESSINGS, BOOTY; BOUNTIES AND FAVORS OF ALLAH; BROTHER AND BROTHERHOOD; CALIPH; CANONICAL READINGS; COMMANDING GOOD AND FORBIDDING WRONG; COMMUNITY; CONVEYING THE MESSAGE; DAY OF RECKONING; DEATH AND THE DEAD; DISCIPLES OF ‘ĪSĀ; DISBELIEVER(S); DISOBEDIENCE; DIVINE DECREE; FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE; FEAR; HAJJ; ḤANIF AND ḤUNAFĀ; HAPPINESS AND SADNESS; HEALTH AND SICKNESS; HEREAFTER; HIJRA; IBRĀHĪM, PEACE BE UPON HIM; ‘ĪSĀ, PEACE BE UPON HIM; JĀHILIYYA; JIHAD; LAW; LOVE, DESIRE, AND LUST; KĀ‘BA; MADINA; MAKKA AL-MUKARRAMA; MŪSĀ, PEACE BE UPON HIM; OCCASIONS OF REVELATION; PARADISE; PLEDGE; POVERTY; PRAYER; PRESERVED TABLET; PROPHETHOOD; QIBLA; QURĀNIC RULINGS; RABB AND RUBŪBIYYA; READINGS OF THE QURĀN; RESURRECTION; REWARD AND PUNISHMENT; SULAYMĀN, PEACE BE UPON HIM; SUSTENANCE; TABLE SPREAD; TRIALS AND STRIFE; TRUST IN ALLAH; WELL-PRESERVED TABLET; WORLD; ZAKĀT.

MUZAFFAR IQBAL

## CONVEYING THE MESSAGE

### TABLĪGH AL-RISĀLA

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions and Usage; ii. Conveyers of the Message were Chosen in Pre-eternity; iii. Parameters of Conveying the Message; vi. Conveying the Message Means Conveying all of it; v. Prophets do not demand Reward (*ajr*) for Conveying the Message; vi. Messengers will be asked about Conveying; vii. Have I conveyed the Message? The Testimony of the Prophet’s Companions; viii. Bibliography.

### Definitions and Usage

Conveying the Message in this article refers to the Divinely ordained duty of the Prophets and Messenger (see: PROPHETHOOD AND MESSENGERSHIP) to convey what they were commanded to convey to the people to whom they were sent by Allah Most High. The Qur’ān uses two verbal derivatives of the trilateral root *b-l-gh*, used 77 times in eight derived forms, to refer to this sacred duty: Form II verb *ballagha–yubalighu–tablighan* is used six times (Q 5:67 (2x); 7:62, 68; 33:39; 46:23) and Form IV verb *ablagha* appears in five verses (Q 7:79, 93; 9:6; 11:57; 72:28). The noun *balāgh*, conveying, is used fifteen times (Q 3:20; 5:92, 99; 13:40; 14:52; 16:35, 82; 21:106; 24:54; 29:18; 36:17; 42:48; 46:35; 64:12; 72:23), including seven instances of its use with the adjective *mubīn* (al-balāgh al-mubīn, the clear conveying in Q 5:92; 16:35, 82; 24:54; 29:18; 36:17; 64:12). “The clear conveying is that which elucidates the Truth” (Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 16:35); “it explains to humankind all that [the Prophets] are commanded to convey” (Samarqandī, *sub* Q 16:35), and it “distinguishes guidance (*al-hudā*) from deviation (*al-ḍalāla*)” (Samarqandī, *sub* Q 16:82).

The root *b-l-gh* primarily signifies “attaining the utmost limit of what is intended, may that be a place, time, or an affair, although sometimes it is may also be used for reaching within the proximity of the intended goal” (Rāghib). “You say, *balagh al-makān/al-manzil*’ to mean “he arrived at the place/abode” (Ibn Fāris; Ibn Sīda). In Q 2:232, *fa-balagna ajalhumna* is used in reference to the women who receive divorce: *when they have fulfilled their waiting period, do not prevent them from remarrying*. In Q 3:35, *wa qad balagni-al-kibru* means *when old age has come to me, or overtaken me*.

### Conveyers of the Message were Chosen in Pre-eternity

A primordial covenant (*q.v.*) was established with all

children of Ādam: [Recall] *when your Lord brought forth their progeny from the loins of the children of Ādam, and made them testify about themselves, [asking] “Am I not your Lord?” They said, “Indeed, You are. We testify.” [We did so] lest you should say on the Day of Judgment, “We were unaware of this”* (Q 7:172). Allah Most High brought forth spirits (*al-arwāh*) before the creation of their bodies (*khalq al-ajsād*); He then bestowed upon these spirits knowledge by which His Address could be understood (Ṭabarī, *sub* Q 7:172).

In addition to this first covenant, *al-mīthāq al-awwal*, which is incumbent on all human beings (*mīthāq al-kull*) (Qushayrī, *sub* Q 33:7), a second covenant was established with those children of Ādam who had been chosen to be sent to earth as Messengers and Prophets of Allah: *And when We took from the Prophets their Covenant (mīthāqahum) and from you [O Muḥammad], and from Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm, and Mūsā and ‘Īsā, the son of Maryam; and We took from them a solemn and strong covenant (mīthāqan ghalīẓan). So that the truthful may be questioned concerning their truthfulness. And for the disbelievers He has prepared a painful punishment”* (Q 33:7-8). The covenant with the Prophets is also mentioned in Q 3:81, where it is understood by most commentators to refer to the Prophets’ affirmation of the Prophet Muḥammad (Ṭabarī; Māwardī; Makkī; Bayḍāwī; Rāzī).

According to Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. al-Sirrī al-Zajjāj (241-311/855-923), the covenant with the Prophets was made “when they were brought forth from the loins of Ādam as his progeny, and they were like atoms (*kal-dharr*).” Similar opinions are found in a number of other exegeses (Muqātil; Ṭabarī; Māwardī; Makkī; Bayḍāwī; Rāzī; Ibn al-Jawzī). The purpose of this covenant was to task them with the conveying the Message (Makkī, *sub* Q 33:7). Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Makhḥūf al-Tha‘ālibī (d. 875/1470) adds: “They were commissioned to convey the Message and matters related to [the duties of] Prophethood” (*Jawāhir*; also see, Ibn ‘Aṭīyya and Zajjāj, *sub* Q 33:7).

“This solemn covenant was established for the conveying of the Message (*fī tabligh al-risāla*),” as per Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Māturīdī (d. 333/ca.945), and “to fulfill that which they were commissioned to do” (Shawkānī).

Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq b. Ghālib Ibn ‘Aṭīyya (d. 481-541/1088-1147) explains that the verse begins with the mention of Prophets as a group, “then He, the Exalted, specifies some of them by name; this is to honor them (*tashrīfān lahum*) and to single out

those Prophets and Messengers who were given Books and Laws (*al-sharā’i’*), who fought decisive battles for the sake of Oneness of Allah Most High, and they were of great resolve (*ūlū-l-‘azm*, *sub* Q 33:7).

The Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, himself said, “I was the first of the Prophets (*awwal al-anbiyā’ fī-l-khalq*) to be created and the last of them to be appointed (*wa ākhirahum fī-l-ba‘th*)” (Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*, Qatāda ‘an al-Ḥasan ‘an Abī Hurayra raḍiya-Llāhu ‘anhu; Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim; Baghawī; Qurṭubī; Tha‘labī, *sub* Q 33:7).

### Parameters of Conveying the Message

All Messengers were commanded to convey the Message as received—*‘alayka-l-balāgh*, upon you, the only [duty is of] conveying the Message, while guidance comes from Allah Most High (Q 3:20; 5:99; 7:79, 93; 11:57; 13:40; 24:54; 29:18; 36:17; 42:48; 64:12; see GUIDANCE AND MISGUIDANCE; CALLING TO ALLAH). The response of the recipients of the Message will be judged by Allah (Samarqandī, *sub* Q 3:20). The Messengers were commissioned to convey what they were commanded to convey (*bimā umira bihi min al-tabligh*) (Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 5:99). *Are the Messengers charged with anything but to convey clearly the Message?* (Q 16:35). The verse explains that the exclusive duty of all Messengers sent by Allah was to convey the Message (*laysa ‘alayhim illā al-tabligh*) (Qurṭubī; Ibn al-Jawzī) and all Prophets and Messengers did this while guidance (*al-hidāya*) belongs to Allah Most High (Qurṭubī; Wāḥidī, *Wajīz*; Ibn al-Jawzī).

The integrity of the Divine Message is vouchsafed by Allah Most High Himself: *Indeed, We have, without doubt, sent down the Reminder and We are its guardian* (Q 15:9). No one, not even the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, is allowed to change anything in the Message, *for had he ascribed any statements to Us, We would have taken him by the right hand. Then We would have severed his life vein. And none among you could have shielded him from it. Truly it is a Reminder for the reverent. And truly We know that among you are those who deny. It is a source of regret indeed for the disbelievers. It is indeed the truth of certainty. So glorify the Name of thy Lord, the Magnificent.* (Q 69: 44-52).

### Conveying the Message Means Conveying all of it

Prophets and Messengers, upon them peace, are not discouraged or intimidated during the process of conveying the Message; *for those who convey the Messages of Allah (risālāti-Llāhi) and fear Him do not fear anyone*