83417 - Evidence for the superiority of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) over other Prophets

the question

Is there a verse in the Holy Quran which states that the Messenger is superior to other Prophets?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We would point out to the brother who asked this question and to all our readers that it is not essential for every ruling to be mentioned in the Quran. The evidence for sharee’ah is the Quran and Sunnah, not only the Quran. The rulings of Allah may be mentioned in the Sunnah and not in the Quran, or they may be mentioned in the Quran and not in the Sunnah, or the ruling may be mentioned in general terms in the Qur'aan and explained in detail in the Sunnah.

There is no single verse in the Book of Allah which says that we should follow what it says in the Quran and not that which is in the Sunnah. The one who claims to follow the Quran only and not the Sunnah should quote as evidence a verse which will support his method and understanding, but he will not be able to do that. Rather, in the Book of Allah there is the command to follow that which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has brought, and to abstain from what he forbids. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it)” [al-Hashr 59:7]

“And obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad), and beware (of even coming near to drinking or gambling or Al-Ansaab, or Al-Azlaam) and fear Allah. Then if you turn away, you should know that

it is Our Messenger’s duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest way” [al-Maa’idah 5:92]

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and His Messenger, and turn not away from him (i.e. Messenger Muhammad) while you are hearing” [al-Anfaal 8:20]

The Sunnah is the wisdom (al-hikmah) that is mentioned in the Book of Allah in many verses, such as the following (interpretation of the meaning):

“Similarly (to complete My Blessings on you), We have sent among you a Messenger (Muhammad) of your own, reciting to you Our Verses (the Quran) and purifying you, and teaching you the Book (the Quran) and the Hikmah (i.e. Sunnah, Islamic laws and Fiqh — jurisprudence), and teaching you that which you used not to know” [al-Baqarah 2:151]

“And treat not the Verses (Laws) of Allah as a jest, but remember Allah’s Favours on you (i.e. Islam), and that which He has sent down to you of the Book (i.e. the Quran) and Al-Hikmah (the Prophet’s Sunnah — legal ways — Islamic jurisprudence) whereby He instructs you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is All-Aware of everything” [al-Baqarah 2:231]

The Quran and Sunnah both come from the same source, both are Revelation (wahy) from Allah. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Nor does he speak of (his own) desire.

4. It is only a Revelation revealed.

5. He has been taught (this Quran) by one mighty in power [Jibreel (Gabriel)]” [al-Najm 53:3-5]

Secondly:

The Prophets (peace be upon them) vary in status over one another. This is something that has been stated by Allah in His Book and by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in His Sunnah.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honour); and to ‘Eesa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), We gave clear proofs and evidences, and supported him with Rooh-ul-Qudus [Jibreel (Gabriel)]” [al-Baqarah 2:253]

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen al-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to the words “others He raised to degrees (of honour)”, in other places it is indicated that among them is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), such as the verses in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaam Mahmoud (a station of praise and glory, i.e., the honour of intercession on the Day of Resurrection” [al-Isra’ 17:79]

“And We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind, but most of men know not” [Saba’ 34:28]

“Verily, I am sent to you all as the Messenger of Allah” [al-A’raaf 7:158]

“Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Quran) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the ‘Aalameen (mankind and jinn)” [al-Furqaan 25:1]

Elsewhere Allah indicates that Ibraaheem (peace be upon him) is also one of them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And Allah did take Ibraaheem (Abraham) as a Khaleel (an intimate friend)”

[al-Nisa’ 4:125]

“ ‘Verily, I am going to make you an Imam (a leader) for mankind (to follow you)’” [al-Baqarah 2:124]

Elsewhere Allah indicates that Dawood is one of them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And indeed, We have preferred some of the Prophets above others, and to Dawood (David) We

gave the Zaboor (Psalms)” [al-Isra’ 17:55]

Elsewhere Allah indicates that Idrees is one of them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We raised him to a high station” [Maryam 19:87]

And here Allah indicates that ‘Eesa is one of them, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And We gave ‘Eesa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear signs and supported him with Rooh-ul-Qudus [Jibreel (Gabriel)” [al-Baqarah 2:87]

Adwa’ al-Bayaan (1/184, 185)

With regard to what is narrated in the Sunnah about it being forbidden to show preference to some of the Prophets over others, or to show preference to our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) – such as the hadeeths in al-Saheehayn, “Do not differentiate between the Prophets” and “Do not favour me over Moosa” – the scholars have resolved this confusion, but the scholars differed concerning that.

Al-Khattaabi said: What this means is that we should not differentiate between them in the sense of belittling some of them, because that may lead to false beliefs concerning them and failing in the duty to give them their due rights. But it does not mean that we believe they are equal in status, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others…” End quote.

In ‘Awn al-Ma’bood it says: This means: Do not prefer some of them over others based on your personal opinions.

Al-Qurtubi mentioned other opinions which were along the same lines, then he said:

The best of that is the view of those who say that refraining from differentiating between them means with regard to prophethood which is the same for all of them, with no difference. Rather the differentiation has to do with circumstances, characteristics, miracles, and words. As for prophethood itself, there is no differentiation; rather the differentiation has to do with other

matters that are separate to that. Hence some of them were Messengers of firm resolve (ulu'l-'azm), some were taken as close friends (khaleel), some of them were spoken to directly by Allah, and some were raised in status. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And indeed, We have preferred some of the Prophets above others, and to Dawood (David) We gave the Zaboor (Psalms)" [al-Isra' 17:55]

Then he said: This is a good view, as it reconciles between the verses and the ahaadeeth without abrogating anything."(Tafseer al-Qurtubi 3/249)

Thirdly:

There is no difference of opinion among the scholars concerning the fact that our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is superior to all of his fellow-Prophets (peace be upon them). That is clear from the evidence of the Quran and Sunnah, such as the following:

1 – He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will attain the station of praise and glory (maqaam Mahmoud) on the Day of Resurrection. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And in some parts of the night (also) offer the Salaah (prayer) with it (i.e. recite the Quran in the prayer) as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer ____ Nawaafil) for you (O Muhammad). It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaam Mahmoud (a station of praise and glory, i.e., the honour of intercession on the Day of Resurrection)" [al-Isra' 17:79]

This refers to his intercession on the Day of Resurrection asking that judgement be passed among all of creation. That will happen after they have been gathered and stood for so long, and there befalls the people that which will befall them. The people will go to the Prophets and each one will excuse himself from interceding for them, until they come to our Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He will go to his Lord and fall prostrate before Him, and he will ask to intercede for the people and it will be granted to him. It is called al-maqaam al-mahmoud (a station of praise and glory) because all of creation will praise Muhammad (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) for that status, because his intercession will be a cause of their suffering in the lengthy standing coming to an end.

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “On the Day of Resurrection the people will come on their knees, each nation following its Prophet, saying, ‘O So and so, intercede! O So and so, intercede!’ until intercession comes to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). On that day Allah will raise him to the station of praise and glory.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (4441).

2 – He was given conciseness of speech, was supported with fear cast into the hearts of his enemies, war booty was permitted to him, the earth was made a place of prostration and a means of purification for him, the line of Prophets ended with him and he will be granted intercession.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last (end) of the Prophets. And Allah is Ever All-Aware of everything” [al-Ahzaab 33:40]

“Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Quran) to His slave (Muhammad) that he may be a warner to the ‘Aalameen (mankind and jinn)” [al-Furqaan 25:1]

It was narrated that Jaabir ibn ‘Abd-Allah said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I have been given five things that were not given to any of the Prophets before me: I have been supported with fear (cast into the hearts of my enemies) for a distance of one month’s travel; the earth has been made a place of prostration and a means of purification for me, so when the time of prayer comes for any man among my ummah, let him pray; war booty has been permitted for me; a Prophet would be sent only to his own people, but I have been sent to all of mankind; and I have been given the power of intercession.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (427) and Muslim (421).

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I have been favoured over the other Prophets in six ways: I have been given the

gift of concise speech; I have been supported with fear; booty has been made permissible for me; the earth has been made a means of purification and a place of prostration for me; I have been sent to all of mankind; and the (line of) Prophets ends with me.” Narrated by Muslim (523).

3 – He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) will be the first one among the Messengers who will be permitted to cross the Siraat.

Al-Bukhaari (773) narrated a lengthy hadeeth from Abu Hurayrah, in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I will be the first one among the Messengers who will cross with his ummah.”

4 – He will be the first one for whom the grave will be opened, the first to intercede and the first whose intercession will be accepted.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I will be the leader of the sons of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, the first one for whom the grave is opened, the first one to intercede and the first one whose intercession will be accepted.” Narrated by Muslim (2278).

5 – Allah, may He be exalted, forgave him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) all his sins, past and future.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have given you (O Muhammad) a manifest victory.

2. That Allah may forgive you your sins of the past and the future, and complete His Favour on you, and guide you on the Straight Path” [al-Fath 48:1-2]

6 – He was called as a Prophet and Messenger

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“O Prophet (Muhammad)! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a

warner” [al-Ahzaab 33:45]

“O Messenger (Muhammad)! Proclaim (the Message) which has been sent down to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His Message. Allah will protect you from mankind. Verily, Allah guides not the people who disbelieve”

[al-Maa’idah 5:67]

His fellow Prophets were called by their names only.

7 – Allah commanded His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to follow the guidance of the Prophets, peace be upon them.

Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“They are those whom Allah had guided. So follow their guidance” [al-An’aam 6:90]

Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sa’di (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This means: Walk, O noble Messenger, behind these good Prophets, and follow their way. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) obeyed the command and followed the guidance of the Messengers who came before him, thus acquiring all the qualities of perfection that they had which made him superior to all of creation. Thus he is the leader of the Messengers and the imam of the pious. May the blessing and peace of Allah be upon them all.

From this evidence the Sahaabah understood that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was the best of all the Messengers. Tafseer al-Sa’di (p. 263).

See also the answers to questions no. 2036, 7459 and 10669.

And Allah knows best.