161451 - Can Allah be described as having protective jealousy (gheerah)? Can it be said that Allah has protective jealousy for His Prophets and close friends?

the question

There is a qaseedah (ode) written by a poet in defence of the Mother of the Believers ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in which it says “My Lord has protective jealousy with regard to the wife of Ahmad [that is, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and I have protective jealousy the honour of my Prophet.” Is it permissible to say such words concerning Allah, may He be glorified and exalted? There are also some qaseedahs praising the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which I feel are not appropriate, such as that which says “Your image never leaves my mind.” Recordings of these qaseedahs are widely available in the marketplace. Are such things permissible?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The way of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah in understanding the attributes of Allah, may He be exalted, is based on certain principles, the most important of which include the following:

1. They are tawqeefi issues [i.e., they can only be known through divine Revelation and sound texts of hadeeth, with no room for ijtihad] and it is not permissible for anyone to affirm any attribute unless there is evidence for it in the Qur’an and Sunnah. So Allah, may He be exalted, cannot be described as possessing any attribute except those which He ascribed to Himself or His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) ascribed to Him.

2. The divine attributes are to be understood in a manner that is befitting to the majesty and greatness of Allah, may He be exalted. Therefore we may learn the meanings of these attributes, but as for the nature thereof, it cannot be known.

3. One should believe in these attributes without distorting the meaning, likening them to those of any of His creation, discussing their nature, or denying any of them.

See the answers to questions no 72318 and 39803.

Secondly:

The divine attribute of gheerah (protective jealousy) is affirmed in the saheeh Sunnah. The reports that speak of that include the following:

1. It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: “Allah has protective jealousy, and the protective jealousy of Allah is provoked when the believer does something that Allah has forbidden.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (4925) and Muslim (2761).

2. It was narrated that al-Mugheerah said: Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubaadah said: If I saw a man with my wife, I would strike him with my sword, and not with the flat side of it. News of that reached the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he said: “Are you surprised at the protective jealousy of Sa‘d? By Allah, I am more jealous than him, and Allah is more jealous than me. It is because of His protective jealousy that Allah forbade immoral deeds, both open and secret.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (6980) and Muslim (1499); Muslim narrated an extra phrase: “There is no one who is more jealous than Allah.”

3. It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah that she said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “O ummah of Muhammad, there is no one who has greater protective jealousy than Allah if His male or female slave commits zina. O ummah of Muhammad, if you knew

what I know, you would laugh little and weep much.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1044) and Muslim (901).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The protective jealousy (gheerah) of Allah is provoked when a person does that which He has prohibited, and His protective jealousy is provoked when His male or female slave commits zina…

The protective jealousy that Allah attributes to Himself is provoked either when a believer commits that which is forbidden to him, or when immoral deeds are committed, either openly or secretly.

End quote from al-Istiqaamah (2/9-11).

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Protective jealousy implies hatred and resentment (of bad deeds), so Allah told us that no one has protective jealousy greater than His, and because of His protective jealousy He prohibited immorality and obscenity. According to those who deny the divine attributes, protective jealousy is regarded as a matter of feelings and emotions, like shyness, joy, anger, wrath, resentment and hate. So in their view, it cannot be attributed to Allah. But it is well-known that these divine attributes are attributes of perfection that are entirely praiseworthy according to reason, religious texts, customs and traditions, and sound human nature; and their opposites are blameworthy according to reason, religious texts, customs and traditions, and sound human nature. If someone has no sense of protective jealousy, then it is all the same to him whether one commits immoral deeds or refrains therefrom; such a person is utterly blameworthy and deserves to be rebuked harshly.

End quote from as-Sawaa‘iq al-Mursalah (4/1497).

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

What is not right or appropriate is to describe Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, as having protective jealousy similar to that of people. As for describing Him as having protective jealousy in a manner that is befitting to His majesty, may He be glorified and exalted, it is not wrong or

incorrect to ascribe that to Him, as is indicated by this hadith and other similar reports. Allah, may He be glorified, is described by Ahl as-Sunnah as having protective jealousy in a manner that cannot be likened to that of people, and no one knows the essence and nature thereof except Him, may He be glorified. This is similar to what is said about His rising over the Throne [istiwaa'] and descending, and His pleasure and wrath, and other divine attributes. And Allah knows best.

End quote from the comment of Shaykh Ibn Baaz on Fath al-Baari by Ibn Hajar (2/531).

Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Ghunaymaan (may Allah preserve him) said, commenting on the hadith, "the protective jealousy of Allah is provoked when the believer does something that Allah has forbidden":

The protective jealousy of Allah, may He be exalted, is one of His attributes that are His alone, and it is not like the protective jealousy of people; rather it is an attribute that is befitting to His greatness, like the attributes of wrath, pleasure and other unique attributes that no created being shares with Him. It is already established that there is none like unto Him, may He be exalted, in His Essence or in His attributes or deeds.

End quote from Sharh Kitaab at-Tawheed min Saheeh al-Bukhaari (1/287).

Thirdly:

Once the meaning of this great attribute is established, which is one of the attributes of our Lord, may He be exalted – namely protective jealousy (gheerah) – it will become clear that speaking of it in the manner asked about is sound and correct, as in the hadith of Sa'd ibn 'Ubaadah (may Allah be pleased with him), for protective jealousy, when provoked, implies anger at the transgression of the sacred limits. Allah, may He be glorified, hates what He has forbidden and is angered when His sacred limits are transgressed, as it says in Ta'leeqaat ash-Shaykh 'Abd ar-Rahmaan al-Barraak 'ala al-Mukhaalafaat al-'Aqdiyyah fi Fath al-Baari, no. 55.

There can be no doubt that impugning the honour of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by slandering his wife as-Siddeeqah 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) is one of

the gravest sins by which the protective jealousy (gheerah) of Allah, may He be exalted, will be provoked, for Allah, may He be exalted, has protective jealousy for His noble Messengers (peace be upon them). Therefore, no one speaks ill of them but he will be disgraced and destroyed. And Allah has protective jealousy for His close friends and chosen ones, therefore He, may He be exalted, said [in a hadith qudsi]: “whoever takes as an enemy a close friend of Mine, I shall declare war on him.” Allah has protective jealousy for His laws and sacred limits, lest they be transgressed. Therefore He, may He be exalted, warned sinners and transgressors of punishment, and He hastens the punishment for some of them in this world, so that they may be a lesson for others. All of that is appropriate and befitting to the Majesty of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

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

When the people of the slander (al-ifk) spoke ill of ‘Aa’ishah and fabricated lies against her, Allah’s protective jealousy for her was provoked, so He revealed ten verses of Qur’an establishing her innocence, which will be recited until the end of time.

End quote from al-Bidaayah wa’n-Nihaayah (8/99; see also 3/334).

With regard to the phrase “Your image never leaves my mind”, when it said of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), we do not see anything wrong with it, even though something else may be better and avoiding that is more appropriate, lest the matter be confused with the words of lovers and their ilk (of immoral people), for these words are more akin to that.

For more information on types of praise of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), please see the answer to question no. 112152.

And Allah knows best.