260581 - Is it possible for anyone in Paradise to be in a rank higher than the prophets?

the question

In the hadeeth of al israa wal miraaj, when the Prophet (saw) goes to jannah and in each level he meets a prophet, is that their level in Jannah with regards to their reward? I know when we make dua to Allah (swt) we always should ask Him for the highest level in Jannah which is al firdaus. And we should always have high hope in Allah swt, but how can we except to be in the highest level of Jannah if the prophets are in the other levels.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

First: The people of Paradise differ in their ranks. The prophets hold the highest ranks among them, followed by those who are most virtuous in descending order. Please see the answer to question number 126349.

What is mentioned in the Hadiths of Al-Isra' and Al-Mi'raj about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) meeting his father Adam (peace be upon him) in the first heaven, Yahya and `Isa (Jesus) in the second heaven, Yusuf in the third, Idris in the fourth, Harun in the fifth, Musa in the sixth, and Ibrahim in the seventh, is not according to their ranks and virtues. If it were so, `Isa (peace be upon him) would be in a lower position than Idris and Yusuf. This is because `Isa (peace be upon him) is in the second heaven while he is one of the Messengers of strong will (Ulu Al-`Azm), whereas Yusuf and Idris are in the third and fourth. It is known that the Messengers of strong will are the best of prophets.

Some scholars mentioned a "subtle point" and "wisdom" regarding why these prophets were assigned to these heavens, as related by Ibn Hajar from Ibn Abu Jamrah, in *Fat-h Al-Bari* (7/211):

"The wisdom behind Adam being in the lowest heaven is because he is the first of prophets and the first of fathers, and he is the origin; so he was first, in the first, and to create familiarity between prophethood and fatherhood. And `Isa is in the second because he is the closest prophet in time to Muhammad, followed by Yusuf because Muhammad's nation will enter Paradise in his form, and Idris is in the fourth as Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning): {And We raised him to a high station} [Maryam 19:57], and the fourth of seven is a moderate middle, and Harun for his closeness to his brother Musa, who is higher than him due to the virtue of Allah's direct speech, and Ibrahim because he is the last father, so it was fitting that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would find renewed comfort in meeting him before proceeding to another realm..." (*Fat-h Al-Bari*, 7/211).

Whatever the case may be in this matter, the Hadith did not come in the context of explaining their ranks and superiority over one another.

Second: It is authentically reported from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that Paradise has varying degrees, and its highest is Al-Firdaws, and its ceiling is the Throne of Ar-Rahman (the Most Merciful), Glorified and Exalted is He. Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Indeed in Paradise there are one hundred degrees which Allah has prepared for those who strive in His cause (Mujahidin). The distance between each two degrees is like the distance between the heaven and earth. When you ask Allah, ask Him for Al-Firdaws, for it is the middle of Paradise and its highest part. Above it is the Throne of Ar-Rahman, and from it spring the rivers of Paradise." (Related by Al-Bukhari, 2790)

Al-Firdaws Paradise also has levels, and its highest level is Al-Wasilah, which is the station of our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

At-Tirmidhi (3612) related from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Ask Allah to grant me Al-Wasilah". They said: "O Messenger of Allah, what is Al-Wasilah?" He said: "The highest level in Paradise; no one will attain it except one man, and I hope that I am him." (classed as authentic by

Al-Albani in Sahih At-Tirmidhi).

Ahmad (11783) related from Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Al-Wasilah is a level with Allah above which there is no level, so ask Allah to grant me Al-Wasilah".

The prophets (peace be upon them) hold the highest rank among the people of Paradise. No human will ever surpass them. Non-prophets will enter the Paradise of Al-Firdaus alongside the prophets, as Allah Says (interpretation of the meaning): {And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous} [An-Nisa' 4:69].

This companionship does not mean they will achieve the same or higher degree than the prophets. Rather, being "with them" means sharing the same abode despite having different ranks. It also means they will not miss the opportunity to see and sit with the prophets. Similarly, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is with his brothers, the prophets, in Al-Firdaus, though he occupies a higher rank than them.

Ibn `Atiyyah said: "The meaning of 'they are with them' is that they share one abode and one place of enjoyment..." We have learned from the Shari`ah that the people of Paradise will have different ranks. These ranks depend on their deeds and Allah's favor upon whom He wills." (*Al-Muharrar Al-Wajiz*, 2/76).

He said in the interpretation of the next verse {That is the bounty from Allah, and sufficient is Allah as Knower} [An-Nisa' 4:70]: "Allah's saying: 'That is the bounty from Allah' addresses someone who might ask: What makes the obedient ones equal to the prophets in the Hereafter, when there is a clear difference between them in this world? Allah clarified that this is through His bounty, not as an obligation upon Him. The word 'That' refers to the obedient ones being with those whom Allah has favored. Moreover, we do not claim they are equal. While they share the same abode, their stations remain different." (End quote)

Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Regarding Allah's saying: {And whoever obeys

Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets}. This verse was revealed concerning Thawban, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). He had intense love for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and could barely bear being away from him. One day, he came with his complexion changed and sadness visible on his face. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked him: "What has changed your color?" He replied: "O Messenger of Allah, I have no illness or pain. However, when I don't see you, I feel intense loneliness until I meet you. Then I remembered the Hereafter and feared that I won't see you because you will be raised with the prophets. If I enter Paradise, I will be in a station lower than yours, and if I don't enter Paradise, I will never see you again." So this verse was revealed.

Qatadah said: Some Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) asked: "How will it be in Paradise when you are in the highest degrees and we are below you? How will we see you?" So Allah revealed this verse: {And whoever obeys Allah} in performing the obligations, {and the Messenger} in following the Sunnah, {those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favor of the prophets}. This means they will not miss seeing the prophets and sitting with them; not that they will be raised to the degree of the prophets." (*Tafsir Al-Baghawi*, 2/247)

What truly matters is that the servant of Allah strives with utmost seriousness and Ijtihad (the exertion of one's best efforts). They must prepare themselves in obedience to Allah and seek His pleasure. Their striving and work should be focused on attaining these lofty stations. Their share should not be limited to mere talk and wishful thinking! Please see the answer to question number 135085.

And Allah knows best.