

An Elucidation on Veneration of Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him: Lesson for Muslims

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 13-01-2025 Revised: 01-03-2025 Accepted: 01-03-2025 Published: 03-03-2025 Keywords: Veneration; Prophet Muhammad (SAW); Lesson; Muslims.	This paper explores the exalted position of Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} in the sight of Allah. The paper adopts a literature review method in gathering relevant data and analyzing them appropriately. To authenticate the position of the paper, it solemnly relies on the Glorious Qur'an and prophetic traditions in addition to few other sources. The discussion highlights Prophet's glorification above all creation, the levitation of his fame by Allah, the swift respond to his demands by Allah and the unwavering support for his dignity. The paper also looks into the magnitude of Allah's love for the Prophet, his sanctified being, and unique corporeal formation as evidences solidifying his esteemed position. The paper enunciates some derivable lessons for Muslim from veneration of the Prophet. The findings of the research show that, in the sight of Allah, the Noble Prophet occupies a great position of honour that no one besides him was endowed with. In addition, various Qur'anic evidences and prophetic traditions require Muslims to accord him great honour respect, and regard.
Info Artikel	Abstrak
Kata Kunci: Pemuliaan; Nabi Muhammad Saw; Pelajaran; Umat Islam.	Artikel ini mengkaji kedudukan mulia Nabi Muhammad Saw di sisi Allah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka dalam mengumpulkan data yang relevan serta menganalisisnya secara tepat. Untuk menguatkan argumen dalam kajian ini, penelitian ini secara utama merujuk pada Al-Qur'an dan hadis Nabi, serta beberapa sumber lainnya. Pembahasan dalam makalah ini menyoroti pemuliaan Nabi di atas seluruh makhluk, pengangkatan namanya oleh Allah, respons cepat terhadap permohonannya, serta dukungan Allah yang tak tergoyahkan terhadap kehormatannya. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga mengulas besarnya cinta Allah kepada Nabi, kesucian pribadinya, serta keunikan bentuk jasmaninya sebagai bukti yang memperkuat kedudukannya yang agung. Makalah ini juga mengemukakan berbagai pelajaran yang dapat diambil oleh umat Islam dari penghormatan terhadap Nabi. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam pandangan Allah, Nabi Muhammad Saw menempati posisi kehormatan yang tiada bandingannya. Selain itu, berbagai dalil Al-Qur'an dan hadis menegaskan kewajiban umat Islam untuk memberikan penghormatan, rasa hormat, dan pengagungan terhadap beliau.



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INTRODUCTION

Recognising that synonyms allow for multiple interpretations, this paper describes the term veneration as profound, regards, great honour, or high esteem. This definition of veneration could be further appreciated and acknowledged in the study of the Noble Prophet's chronicles, especially in relation to hadith, as a means of venerating him Caterina (2023). It therefore implies that, a cursory look at the history of the Noble Prophet, either from Qur'anic text, Prophetic traditions, or historical evidences, would lead one to affirming how the creator raised his fame. Consequently, this paper undertakes an examination of the life of the Noble Prophet, affirming his preeminence above all creations.

A thorough examination of human history and religion reveals three central and imperative aspects. Firstly, from the beginning of creation to the last generation, Prophets were raised and messengers were sent as bearers of glad tidings and to warn people about the laws of God on them. The first of all the one hundred and twenty-four thousand (124,000) Prophets was Prophet Adam while the seal of them was Muhammad {peace be upon him}.

Secondly, right from the first Prophet to the last of all; no one is as venerated as the Noble Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}. This veneration is a divine favour, evident in his divinely given name "Muhammad" meaning the praise worthy. This assertion is undeniable when considering the vast record of his honour in this world and the immeasurable favour reserved for him in the hereafter.

However, some people fail to appreciate the greatness of the Prophet's personality and consider the enunciation of his veneration as excessive glorification. The Glorious Qur'an attests to the two pertinent issues earlier mentioned:

Verily, We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of glad tidings, and as a warner. In order that you (O mankind) may believe in Allah and His Messenger, that ye may honor him and have high regard for him... (Fath :8-9)

By implication, Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} is sent as a bearer of glad tidings and warner, and mankind is mandated to greatly honour and regard him. Although the Qur'an commands having high veneration for him, this veneration cannot be said to be excessive as no one knows the extent of his greatness in the sight of Allah. It is still acceptable so long as his veneration is not like the way and manner by which the followers of Prophet Isa venerated him. Prophet says:

Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam (Mary), for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His Messenger (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 4 no 3445, p410,).

The teachings of the above prophetic traditions did not oppose this admirable position accorded the Prophet but cautions against the kind of transgression exhibited by the people of Prophet Isa in the course of venerating him. This was where they tagged him son of God, one of the three gods (Trinity) and in some instances regard him God (Maida :17 & 171). In spite of the high sense of veneration which the companions had for the Noble Prophet, they never elevated him to the status of God. They clearly acknowledged the unity of God and attested to the status of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as a messenger of Allah. This understanding has remained consistent throughout Islamic history, affirming the Prophet's role as a messenger, while maintaining the fundamental principle of Tawhid (Wan Mohd, 2018).

Furthermore, in stanza forty-three of his eulogy about the Noble Prophet, al-Busiri (2019), acknowledged that, one is free to exalt and extol the Noble Prophet with all forms of praise but with a crucial limitation. The limitation is by avoiding the kind of proclamations made by the People of the Book about their prophets. By implication, when venerating the Noble Prophet, one is mandated to abstain from labelling him as God.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature-based research approach, specifically content analysis, drawing on relevant literature from libraries, textbooks, and other sources (Sugiyono, 2019). According to Sari & (Asmendri, 2018), library research involves examining text books, magazines, and various materials available in libraries and other repositories. In this research, the primary materials consulted were the Glorious Qur'an and Prophetic traditions. Through sequential arrangement and analogical reasoning, the issues were substantiated with pertinent Qur'anic verses and authentic Prophetic traditions, rendering the argument robust and persuasive.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

His glorification above all the Prophets in particular and the creation in general

This section discusses the research findings related to the glorification of Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} above all Prophets and creation. To buttress the preeminence of Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} among all the messengers of

Allah and the creation of man which is considered as the best creation, the Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} says:

I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Judgment, and I am not boasting. The Banner of Praise will be in my hand, and I am not boasting. There will not be a Prophet on that day, not Adam nor anyone other than him, except that he will be under my banner. And I am the first one for whom the earth will be opened for, and I am not bragging (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 6 no 3615, p 315)

In the same vein, the message of verses eighty-one to eighty-two of chapter three of the Glorious Qur'an, (Al-Imran: 81-82) clearly explains the admirable position of the Prophet among the entire Prophets of Allah. Ibn Kathir relates that Ali bn. Abi Talib and Abdullah bn. Abbas maintained that the verses revealed that no Prophet was sent except with some preconditions laid before him as oath to be taken before Allah. The covenant between all the past Prophets and Allah was if Muhammad {peace be upon him} was sent in his lifetime, he would believe and support him. All the Prophets agreed to this assertion and the agreement was sealed by Allah but affirming that betraying the oath is considered as an act of rebellion. Ibn Kathir further explained that during the night of his ascent to God, he led all the Prophets in prayer in Bayt Al-Maqdis as an affirmation of his most admirable position among them (Ibn Kathir, 2003: vol. 2, pp 199-200).

In Bukhari, it was mentioned that all generations of mankind shall be gathered on one plain on the day of resurrection with the sun brought close to the people fearing what would be their faith. Due to the intensity of the distress and trouble, they will rush to Adam requesting him to intercede for them in the sight of the creator. Adam will, turn down the request on account of the fear of the state of anger of the creator on this day and for fear of the judgment of the Lord on him for eating the forbidden fruit. When same request is put before Prophet Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa and Isa, they will all reject one after the other on account of what would be their own faith for one thing which they had exhibited in life. Prophet Muhammad {Peace be upon him} would be the only one who will bail out mankind from this state of apprehension. This further validates the highest status occupied by the Prophet in the sight of the creator and his admirable position in the midst of all mankind (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 6 no 4712, pp 188-190)

From the first Prophet (Adam) to the second to the last Prophet (Isa), notification of his coming was made to the people and description of his feature and or name was mentioned. In the book of Taurah given to Prophet Musa (AS), he was described as Muhammad {Peace be upon him} (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 6 no 3617, p317) while the name Ahmad is his description in Injil of Prophet Isa Qur'an (Saff:6). The Bible in (Song of

Solomon 5:6) mentioned him as Muhammadim in the Hebrew language but translated to lovely or praised one in English. In Torah, Deuteronomy 18:15, Matthew 21:42-43), he is called Muhammad {peace be upon him}. This name keeps on resonating from generation to generation until it was finally unveiled in the 6th century. There are several Prophetic traditions emphasizing that the most glorified of all being is Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}. Besides, in (Anbiya:107), the Noble Prophet is being referred to as a mercy to mankind. The following Prophetic traditions explicate further:

I will be the Prophet with the greatest number of followers on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first one to knock at the gate of Paradise (Muslim, 2007: vol. 1 no. 484 pp 329-330)

'I will come to the gate of Paradise on the Day of Resurrection and will ask for it to be opened. The keeper will say: 'Who are you?' I will say: 'Muhammad.' He will say: 'I was commanded not to open it for anyone before you'' (Muslim, 2007: vol. 1 no 486 pp 329-330)

In spite of the numerous evidences affirming that the Noble Prophet was endowed with the knowledge of the unseen, some people still believe that attributing this favour to the Prophet is a form of excessive veneration. The topmost of all the unseen is our Creator (Allah). In the history of man, no one had ever ascended to the Lord not to talk of having the opportunity to see and have a communion with Him. This favour is granted to no one except the Noble Prophet. The following Prophetic tradition narrated by Ibn Abbas says:

The (Prophet's) heart lied not in what he saw", "And indeed he saw him at a second descent." He said: "He saw Him with his heart, twice (Muslim, 2007: vol. 1. no 437, p281).

Among the issue of unseen is that of the knowledge of time and place of death of each and every living being. During his fatal illness, Prophet secretly informed Fatimah his daughter that he will soon answer the call of Allah as a result of the ailment. In addition, he notified her that she would be the first of his family to follow him (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 5 no 4433, p 440). Both predictions eventually came to pass. As if they knew the Prophet had the knowledge, before his death, his wives asked him, who amongst them will be the first to follow him. In his response, he said "the one with the longest hand". At the beginning, they misinterpreted the prediction but with the death of Zainab bint Jahsh as the first to die, they realised that it means the one who practiced charity more (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 2 no 1420, pp290-291).

Added to the above, in another hadith, he foretold the martyrdom of Umar and Uthman who were later martyred at their respective time (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 5 no 3675, p27). During the battle of Badr, the Prophet specified the spot where two people will die

by saying: "This is the place where so and-so will fall," placing his hand on the ground here and there. This prediction also came to pass as both of them died at the exact spot identified for each of them (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 5 no. 4621, pp79-80). Attributing possession of the knowledge of the unseen to the Noble Prophet is therefore not an exaggeration nor excessive veneration as it concurs with the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an (Jinn: 26-28). The copious authentic evidences from Prophetic narrations also affirm that the Noble Prophet is endowed by His Lord with the knowledge of the unseen (Al-Qadi Iyad, 1988: vol.1, pp335-336).

In Bukhari, Prophet identified five special favour of Allah which no one else was ever given. The items are victory over enemies by frightening them for a distance of one month's journey, the whole earth was allowed as a place for offering purification (*Tayammum*) for his followers, war booty was made lawful to him as against its prohibition for the past generation, reservation of the right of intercession for him (on the Day of Resurrection) and as a messenger to the entire mankind while each of the past messengers were restricted to a specific nation (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 1 no.335, p 226).

During his communion with his Lord, Prophet Musa realized a lot of special great favour of Allah reserved for the generation of a Prophet. When he asked for these favour for his own generation one after the other, he was told that they were meant for the generation of the Noble Prophet. In spite of the favour bestowed on Prophet Musa (being a Prophet and Messenger of Allah), he yearned for those great favour as he requested for inclusion among the generation of the Noble Prophet. In return, God Almighty told him to hold onto what has been given to him and be grateful for that. All these favour were reserved for the generation of the Noble Prophet on account of his blessing and esteem position in the sight of Allah. This explanation is contained in the exegesis of (Al Aaraf: 144) as mentioned by (Al-Kawlaky, 2011: vol 2, p 319).

A cross examination of the manner by which God Almighty addressed all the Prophets leaves a great lesson for man to realize and comprehend the esteem position of the Noble Prophet. Various Qur'anic verses express how all other Prophets were called directly with their names without any appellation. For example, Allah says: "We said: "O Adam" (Baqorah:35), "O Moses! Verily, I am Allah" (Naml:9), "O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might (Maryam:12), "O Ibrahim" (Hud:76), "O Isa" (Al-Imran: 55), "O Dawud", (Sod:26), "O Nuh" (Hud:46), and "O Zakariyah" (Maryam:7).

In the case of the Noble Prophet, he enjoined a distinct treatment as he was not addressed directly in all the four places his name appeared in the Glorious Qur'an. For example, Allah says: "Muhammad is no more than a messenger" (Al-Imran:144), "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah" (Ahzab:40), "But those who believe and exhibit deeds of righteousness, and believe in the [Revelation] sent down to Muhammad - for it is the Truth from their Lord" (Muhammad:2), and "Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" (Fath:29). In three places of the four, his name was not merely mentioned but along side with the accolade "Messenger of Allah" while the encomium that accompanied his name in the fourth place depicts "the one given revelation from his Lord". This prestigious approach received by the Noble Prophet from Allah further accentuates how highly venerated he is by the creator. The study reveals that Prophet's position is unparalleled in Islamic theology and his preeminence is evident in various aspects of Islamic teachings.

Levitation of his fame by Allah

In the sight of Allah, the Prophet is undoubtedly positioned as the most glorified being. In Qur'an chapter ninety-verse four, Allah took it upon himself to raise the fame of the Prophet. To this effect, He intertwined His name with that of the Prophet, ensuring that the two are remembered together simultaneously. This is special favour is granted to no one except him. In the exegesis of the verse (Inshirah:4), the hadith of Bukhari related that Mujahid said Allah said "I Allah am not remembered except that you are remembered with Me" (Ibn Kathir,2003: vol. 10 pp 525-526). A notable example of this is in the testimony of faith "Kalimaus-Sha'adah" which reads I "Bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad {Peace be upon him} is the Messenger of Allah." Acknowledging the great position of the Prophet as a condition for acceptance into the fold of Islam implies a levitation of his fame. This follows that Allah is not interested in a testimony of faith that has no regard for the position of the Prophet.

In the second pillar of Islam, great credence is given to the Noble Prophet as his name must be mentioned in the call for prayer (*Adhan*), at the beginning of the prayers (*Iqamah*), while salutation is also made to him towards the tail end of the prayer (*At-Tahiyah*). Ritual prayer no doubt is considered a communion between a servant and his Lord. While offering prayers, a Muslim is mandated by Allah to answer the call of the Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} if called upon by him. In the exegesis of the

Glorious Qur'an, the hadith of Bukhari was quoted as follows: "(Answer), obey, (that which will give you life) that which will make your affairs good." Al-Bukhari went on to narrate that Abu Sa'id bin Al-Mu'alla said, "I was praying when the Prophet passed by and called me, but I did not answer him until I finished the prayer. He said, (What prevented you from answering me Has not Allah said: (O you who believe! Answer Allah and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life)' (Ibn Kathir, 2003: vol 4 p286). All these emphasise his esteem position in the sight of Allah.

In all the bits and seconds of the day, salutations are repeatedly offered to him by the Creator and His Angels. To benefit from recognising his preeminence in the sight of Allah and attain the blessings of Allah, man is enjoined to equally offer salutations on him. This ensures continuous exaltation of his fame. In the grave, no one dies without being questioned about the Noble Prophet by the Angels of questioning (Munkar and Nakir) their question is usually "What did you used to say about this man (Muhammad)" {Peace be upon him} (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 2, no 1071, pp443-444).

Swift response to his demand and unwavering support for his dignity

The utmost concern God Almighty Has for the Noble Prophet also translates to instantaneous response to his heartfelt desires. In addition, Allah does not delay in ensuring the protection of his dignity among people in the society. Entering the house of the Messenger of Allah without his permission was among the pre- Islamic traditions and practices at the beginning of Islam. After entering, they would stay waiting for food to be ready, and after taking the food, some would wait behind chatting. Despite the fact that all these practices did not go well with him, his bashfulness and regard for them prevented him from reprimanding them. Having realised this, a revelation from the Most High came cautioning the companions against this.

O ye who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses, - until leave is given you, - for a meal, [and then] not [so early as] to wait for its preparation: but when ye are invited, enter; and when ye have taken your meal, disperse, without seeking familiar talk. Such [behaviour] annoys the Prophet: he is ashamed to dismiss you, but Allah is not ashamed [to tell you] the truth. (Ahzab:53)

When the wives of the Prophet made house peaceful for him, Allah described them as no equal to the women of the world Qur'an (Ahzab:32). The table was turned around when they ensued in dispute thereby making the Prophet to desert them for a while. Allah warned them promising to replace them with women better than them Qur'an (Tahrim:5).

This instantaneous response by Allah to anything that affects the Prophet's interest depicts his esteem position in Allah's sight.

Among the things which Allah (SWT) often react swiftly to is that which affects the dignity of Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}. At a point in the history of the Prophet, Abubakar and Umar, who were described to be the most righteous companions of the Prophet, nearly earn Allah's wrath and destruction of all their efforts in Islam. This was as a result of rising their voices in the presence of the Prophet. This brought about the warning from Allah the Most High against this act in an attempt to protect the dignified position of the Prophet in His sight. The verse says:

O ye who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk, as ye may speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds become vain and ye perceive not. Qur'an (Hujurat :2)

In verse three of the same chapter, lowering one's voice before the messenger of Allah is considered a sign of God consciousness, while those who shout behind the door calling him are described as being lunatic. In Qur'an chapter twenty-four verse sixty-three (Nur:63), Allah the Most-High categorically warned that calling upon the messenger must not be equated with way and manner human being call themselves. Furthermore, the units of the five daily prayers given to the Prophet were initially fifty (50) but with the advice of Prophet Musa to the Noble Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}, the prayer was reduced to five. On each occasion, his request for reduction was never turned down by Allah. Similarly, the changing of the Kiblah to Ka'bah was meant to appease the mind of the Prophet who had wished so (Baqorah: 144). While corroborating on how Allah the Most High do quickly respond to the heartfelt desire of the Prophet, Nana Aisha's in the following hadith says:

"I used to feel jealous of those (women) who offered themselves (in marriage) to the Prophet and I said: 'Would a free woman offer, herself?' Then, the Mighty and Sublime, revealed: 'You can postpone whom you will of them and you may receive whom you will.' I said: 'By Allah, I see that your Lord is quick to respond to your wishes (Nasai, 2007: vol.4 no 3201, p 83)

Moreover, in the Glorious Qur'an, the Noble Prophet was given a reassurance from his Lord about gladdening his heart on his desires beyond his expectation: "And soon will thy Guardian-Lord give thee [that wherewith] thou shalt be well-pleased" (Duha:5)

The magnitude of his love in the sight of Allah depicts his glorified position

The magnitude of his love in the sight of the Creator cannot be quantified as the Lord nicknamed him “the Beloved one”. In addition, the Creator conditioned that for man to be a true believer, he must love him more than every other thing. In Bukhari, Umar thought making the Prophet dearer to himself than everything except his own self was an act of righteousness. However, the Prophet refuted this assumption saying there must be no exemption including one self (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 8 no 6632, p333). In another tradition, for one to have faith, the love of the Prophet must supersede the love one has for his father, children and all mankind" (Bukhari, 1997: vol.1 no 15 p61). A man was given assurance of paradise for having sincere love for the Prophet in his heart, (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 5 no 3688, pp33-34). To sum it up, the love of the Prophet is expected to supersede the love one has for his fathers, children, friends, and all treasures of this world as mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an (Taubah: 4).

By virtue of the magnitude of Allah's love for him, He promised a return of ten manifold blessing or salutation on who ever sends one blessing or salutation to him (Nasai, 2007: vol. 2 no 1296, p257). Closeness to the Prophet on the Day of Judgment is determined by the extent of the salutation one sent onto him (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol.1 no.484, p487). Similarly, the one who heard his name being mentioned but does not send blessings on him is demeaned in the sight of Allah (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol 6 no 3545, p253). On an occasion, the Prophet noticed a man supplicating to Allah without sending salutation on him. The correct methodology of making supplication, the Prophet says, it is to first praise and glorify Allah, after which salutations is to be made on the Noble Prophet, (Dawud, 2008: vol. 2 no 1481, pp 197-198). On a very serious note, the supplication of a servant remains in between the heaven and the earth and as such nothing is raised up till salutation is made onto the Noble Prophet (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol.1 no.486, p489). This hadith has been authenticated by Ibn Kathir and Al- Banni.

By the virtue of his esteem position, it is an act of contrition for those who gathered and dispersed in a place without mentioning the name of Allah and the Prophet (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 6 no 3380 p109). Dedicating the whole parts of the night in sending blessings on the Noble Prophet accords one the chance of accomplishment of his desires and forgiveness of his sins (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol 4 no 2457, pp462-463). The love of a servant for Allah is acknowledged and accepted, only if one follows the footprint of the Noble Prophet (Al- Imran:31). All these depict the magnitude of love for the Noble Prophet in the sight of Allah and portray his glorified position in His sight.

The magnitude of Allah's love for the Prophet accorded him the position of the best of all Prophets (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 6 no 3615, p 315), given the best of all books (Qur'an) and favoured with a simplified religion though with a much greater reward than what was given to all the past Prophets and their generations. In addition, he was also given the best of all generations (Al-Imran: 110), the best of all months that is Ramadan (Muslim, 2007: vol 2755 p 246), the best of all days that is Friday (Muslim, 2007: vol 2, no 1976, p373) and the best of all nights that is the night of majesty (Qadr:3).

Sanctification of his being and uniqueness of his corporeal formation

To prepare him for the Noblest of all task (a means through which the entire mankind could attain the grace of Allah), Allah perfected his genealogical chain, choosing him from the best lineage. In Tirmidhi, Prophet says:

Indeed, Allah has chosen Ismail from the children of Ibrahim, and He chose Banu Kinānah from the children of Ismā'il, and He chose Quraish from Banu Kinanah, and He chose Banu Hashim from Quraish, and He chose me from Banu Hashim." (Tirmidhi, 2007: vol. 6 no 3605, p308)

Right from childhood, the Noble Prophet was known to be an embodiment of all noblest character. During his childhood, his heart was cleaned with (Zamzam) the purest water (Muslim, 2007: vol 1 no 413, pp 263-264). Prior to his journey to Jerusalem and ascent to Allah, his heart was again cleaned with Zamzam and filled with wisdom and knowledge. (Nasai, 2007: vol 1, no 453, p 270).

As evidence of his sanctification, seeking the pleasure of Allah and that of His Prophet are jointly mentioned and enjoined as a sign of true belief (Taubah :62). In another verse, obedience to Allah and the Prophet are also jointly mentioned, (Al-Imran:132). The distinguish position of the Prophet in the sight of Allah is discernible in the fact that following him (the Prophet) is liken to following Allah (Nisai: 80) while oath taking with him is like oath taking with Allah (Nisai:80). To corroborate the above, the Prophet says:

Whoever obeys me, obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me, disobeys Allah. Whoever obeys the ruler, obeys me, and whoever disobeys the ruler, disobeys me (Ibn. Majah, 2007: vol 4 no 2859 pp100-101)

Although man is enjoined to channel his demands to Allah alone, the Noble Prophet is seen as a great mediator and intercessor between them and Allah. In the Glorious Qur'an Allah says:

We sent not a messenger, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah. If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the

Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful (Nisai:64)

To appreciate this thought, a reflection on the following prophetic tradition is of great important:

While Allah's Messenger was sitting in the mosque with some people, three men came. Two of them came in front of Allah's Messenger and the third one went away. The two persons kept on standing before Allah's Messenger, for a while and then one of them found a place in the circle and sat there while the other sat behind them (the gathering), and the third one went away. When Allah's Messenger finished his preaching, he said, "Shall I tell you about these three persons? One of them betook himself to Allah, so Allah took him into His Grace and Mercy and accommodated him, the second felt shy from Allah, so Allah sheltered Him in His Mercy (and did not punish him), while the third turned his face from Allah and went away, so Allah turned His Face from him likewise (Bukhari, 1997: vol. 1 no 66, pp94-95).

While the first hadith quoted above is self explanatory, the second one mentioned the coming of three persons to the mosque while the Prophet was sitting with some companions. It further stated that two of the persons came in front of the Messenger of Allah and stood for a while. Having stand in front of the Noble Prophet for a while, one of the two found a place in the circle and sat there while the other one sat behind them (the gathering). The third person did not only decline to move forward to the Messenger of Allah, but also went away.

To comprehend the meaning of the hadith, the Prophet explained to the companions that the one who found a place in the circle and sat is the one who betook himself to Allah, so Allah took him into His Grace and Mercy and accommodated him. The second (one who sat behind the gathering) felt shy from Allah, so Allah sheltered Him in His Mercy (and did not punish him), while the third (one did not only refuse to move close to the Prophet but also went away) and by implication turned his face from Allah and went away, so Allah turned His Face from him likewise. This hadith clearly explained how Allah sanctified the Noble Prophet such that he remains the means through which the blessing of Allah reaches the entire mankind. As the first ambassador of Allah in the midst of mankind, he is so venerated in such a way that whatever he approved or does is similitude to the deeds of Allah (Anfal:17).

Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} as a well sanctified being is therefore seen as the true Ambassador of Allah. Whatever he approves or does is liken to Allah's deeds or legislation. Similarly, the above is the deduced message from the following

Prophetic tradition where the Noble Prophet instructed one of his companions (Rabi'ah bin Ka'b Al-Aslam) to ask him whatever he want in life. The hadith says:

Rabi'ah bin Ka'b Al-Aslam - said: "I would spend the night with the Messenger of Allah and would bring him his water for ablution, and (take care of) his needs. Once he said: 'Ask me (what you desire).' I said: 'Your companionship in Paradise.' He said: 'Anything else besides that?' I said: 'No, this is it.' So he said: 'Then help me with your (request) by plentiful prostrations (Dawud, 2008:vol. 2 no 1320, pp108-109)

In the hadith of Abu Hurairah as narrated in Muslim, the Noble Prophet was said to have handed over his two sandals to Abu Hurarah in an occasion. He instructed him to go round the city of Madinah with it such that whoever sees the sandals bearing witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, with certainty in his heart, should be given glad tidings of Paradise (Muslim, vol. 1no 147 pp 128-130, 2007). This hadith further affirm that the authority of Allah bestowed on the Noble Prophet as no one could dream of such thing in life. The high esteem position of the Prophet in the sight of Allah accorded him the status of intercessor between man and the Creator (Ibn Majjah 2007: vol 2, no. 1385, pp329-330).

Another area of interest is that of the uniqueness of the corporeal formation of the Noble Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}. In their derogative approach to the dignity personality of the Noble Prophet, {peace be upon him}, some people often liken him to “human like every other human being”. Their argument lies in the message in Qur'an which says “Say: "I am but a man like yourselves” (Kahf:110). This is a misconstrue idea. The fact remains that the Messenger of Allah is human but not like every other human being. His bodily nature is no doubt unique. It is crucial to clarify that in the history of past Prophets; the unbelievers often use various preposterous expressions in addressing them. For example, in their bid to mock their personality and ridicule their divine message, they do wonder how human being like them could claim to be a messenger of Allah. To this effect, they ludicrously do say: “you are no than human being like us”.

In the Glorious Qur'an the unbelievers of Prophet Nuh, `Ad, and Thamud said: to their Prophets "You are no more than human beings like us!" (Ibrahim:10). In response to these unbelievers, the Qur'an says: “Their Messengers said to them: "We are no more than human beings like you, but Allah bestows His grace to whom He wills of His servants” (Ibrahim:10). Similar thing is said by the Chiefs of the Ad or Thamud who says: "He is no more than a human being like you” (Muminun:33). The unbelievers of the people of Prophet Salih said: "You are but a human being like us” (Shuaraa: 154). While responding

to the warning of Prophet Shu'aib, the unbelievers said: "You are but a human being like us" (Shuaraa :186). As to the narration about the unbelievers of Ad and Hud, they said to their Prophets: "A man, alone among us" (Qamar:24).

As to the message of the Glorious Qur'an (Kahf:110), it was a speech directed to the unbelievers who failed to acknowledge the preeminence of Prophet as explained by Ibn Kathir that "(Say) to these idolaters who reject your message Say: "I am only a man like you" (Ibn Kathir, 2003: vol 6 p222). This is very clear message as the verse further calls upon them to believe in oneness of Allah and by implication shows that Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} is a Messenger of Allah and as such not like them. In addition, the verse is a speech from Allah directed to his Prophet of which no one has the right to address the Prophet the way his creator addressed him.

In various traditions of the Prophet, he made it clear that he is not like every other human being. For example, in Bukhari, he cautioned the companions against *A1-Wisa1* [fasting continuously without breaking it as he says "I am not like any of you for I am given food and drink (by Allah) during the night" (Bukhari, 1997: vol 2 no 1961 p114). Similar response was given to the companions in Bukhari when they attempted *A1-Wisa1* "I am not similar to you, for during night I have One Who makes me eat and drink" (Bukhari, 1997: vol 2 no. 1963 p 115). In a similar situation, Prophet responded saying: "I am not similar to you, for my Lord gives me food and drink" (Bukhari, 1997: vol 2 no 1964 p115). As attestation of uniqueness of his corporeal formation, the Noble Prophet sees what is hidden in the heart of his companions and knows what transpires behind him even when facing the Ka'bah. The following Prophetic tradition corroborates the above:

"Do you consider or see that my face is towards the Qiblah (Ka'bah at Makkah)? By Allah, neither your submissiveness nor your bowing is hidden from me, surely I see you from my back." (Bukhari, 1997: vol 1 no 418, p270)

The Quraish once cautioned Abdullah bn. Amr against writing everything uttered by the Prophet. Their resolution was based on their assumption that, the Prophet is like every other human being and as such predisposed to making mistakes while in state of rage or calmness. His humble response clearly shows that nothing comes out of his mouth except the truth thereby distinguishing him from all other humans. The hadith further exonerated him from sinful act (Dawud, 2008: vol 4 no 3646, p 210). Every human being is often controlled by the Jinn companion attached to each individual with the exemption of the Prophet. This further affirm the sanctified nature of the Prophet and his unique

corporeal formation, (Muslim, 2007: vol, 7 no 7108, p 215, 2007). All these further clear the air that though the Messenger of Allah is a human being but not like every other human being. He is no doubt a sanctified being.

The companions knew the Prophet was human in nature but never did they conceive him as human being like them and Prophet also clearly understand his position as a means to attaining the mercy of Allah. All the bodily structures of the Noble Prophet are humanly structure but not like that of every other human being. It was to his effect that he once distributed his shaved hair among his companions, (Abu-Dawud, 2008: vol 2, no 1981, p 465- 466). In an occasion, Umm Sulaim gathered the sweat of Prophet hoping for blessing of Allah by its virtue for the children (Muslim, 2007: vol. 6, No. 6056, pp180-181). The fact that the companions struggled among themselves to get the spittle fall in the hand of one of them when he spitted so that they could rub it on their faces and skins; clearly shows that the extent of their regard for him cannot be over emphasised (Bukhari, 1997: vol.3 no.2731, pp527-536). All these and many other relevant examples affirm that the companions realised that although the Noble Prophet is human but not like every other human being. The uniqueness of his corporeal formation is indisputable.

Derivable lessons from veneration of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

It is crystal clear that the Noble Prophet {Peace be upon him} is most venerated in the sight of Allah. This position of the Prophet is unquestionable as God Almighty Has demonstrated in various places of Islamic teachings. Beside all the unique favours he enjoyed which are signs of his veneration, God Almighty commanded all human beings to accord him high sense of fondness and regard. The oath of Prophet hood placed before the entire Prophets were initiated into the fold of prophet hood, the act of leading all the Prophets in prayer at *Baitul Maqdis* during his ascent to Allah, his being the only one to bail not only the Prophets but the entire mankind in the sight of Allah on the Day of tribulation and his being the first to enter paradise all attest to how high he is being venerated in the sight of Allah. Muslims therefore are expected to accord him this high sense of respect and as well venerate him accordingly.

Of paramount important is for Muslims to realise that joining Allah and His Prophet together in some of the things does not translate into excessive veneration. This has been a bad notion among some Muslims. With a cursory look at the way and manner God Almighty designed the religion, removing the Noble Prophet from the religion would

amount to an act of disbelief. The statement of testimony of faith is incomplete without glorifying Allah and venerating the Noble Prophet.

To summarise the whole, it is comprehensible from the fact that God Himself Has levitated the fame of the Noble Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him} and as such venerated him by conditioning it that His name and that of the Prophet must be jointly mentioned and remembered together. This is the reason why the name of the Prophet appears in testimony of oneness of Allah, the call for prayer (*Adhan*), commencement of prayer (*Iqamah*) in the midst of prayer (*Tahiyah*), in a gathering, a thing to be asked by Angels in the grave and the one whom all mankind look onto for intercession on the Day of accountability. All these are meant to make man believe in the esteem position of the Noble Prophet so as to accord him his rightful dignity. With this unique level of veneration accorded him by Allah, it is more convincing to affirm that there is nothing like excessive veneration in joining Allah and His Prophet together. Moreover, in (Tawbah :62), Allah joined His name and that of His Prophet together as He says: "...it is more fitting that they should please Allah and His Messenger, if they are Believers".

As the first ambassador of Allah in the midst of mankind, he is so sanctified and venerated by Allah such that whatever he approved or does is liken to the approval of Allah. The legislation of the Prophet is therefore seen as a legislation of Allah. His legislation must therefore be given utmost respect and regard. Learning from how Allah swiftly respond to his demand and His unwavering support for his dignity, it suffices Muslims to note that great precautions must be taken against vilification and denigration of the personality of the Noble Prophet and that of his family. This is highly imperative because the wrath of Allah is very close to one who does so. If great companions like Abubakar and Umar could be threatened with obliteration of their deeds on account of raising their voices in the sight of the Noble Prophet Qur'an (Hujurat:2) and everlasting wrath of Allah (here and the next world) could be sent on those exhibited infuriating act to the Noble Prophet Qur'an (Ahzab :57), the question remains "who then is to be soared. In view of the magnitude of the love of Allah for the Prophet, Muslims are expected to love the Prophet and compliment the love by adhering to his teachings. In addition, Muslims are expected to send much salutation on the Prophet as this is among the sign of his love in the heart of a believer. Furthermore, sending much salutation on the Prophet accords Muslims blessings of Allah, accomplishment of desires and closeness to the Prophet in paradise.

Going by the substantial authentic proof enumerated in the paper, it suffices to say that it is not an act of excessive veneration to affirm that though the Noble Prophet is human being but not like every other human being. He is rather a sanctified being and has a unique corporeal formation. This act could be likened to the act of the unbelievers of the past Messengers who in attempt to denigrate them, often referred to the Prophets as ordinary human being like them. The copious evidences presented in the paper, suffices Muslims to see the Prophet as the most blessed being and a means through which man could attain any of the material favour of Allah and spiritual blessings here and the next world. The paper reiterates that deliberation on the bountiful blessings of Allah on the Prophet and mentioning his high degree of levitation of his name by Allah must not be seen as an act of excessive veneration but rather a great necessity. The love for Prophet and his household, following his footprint and sending much blessing on him, must therefore be seen as a great duty by the Muslims if they are to attain success in this world and salvation in the hereafter.

Of all the creations of Allah, the one who exhibits the highest level of servitude to Allah and occupies the topmost position in His sight is the Noble Prophet Muhammad {peace be upon him}. This accorded him this loftiest status in the sight of Allah. The following Prophetic tradition sheds more light on this.

Narrated Abu Hurairah Allah's Messenger, said, "Allah said 'I will declare war against him who shows hostility to a pious worshipper of Mine. And the most beloved things with which My slave comes nearer to Me, is what I have enjoined upon him; and My slave keeps on coming closer to Me through performing Nawafil (praying or doing extra deeds besides what is obligatory) till I love him, then I become his sense of hearing with which he hears, and his sense of sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks; and if he asks Me, I will give him, and if he asks My Protection (Refuge), I will protect him (i.e., give him My Refuge); and I do not hesitate to do anything as I hesitate to take the soul of the believer, for he hates death, and I hate to disappoint him.'" (Bukhari, 1997: vol 8, no 6502. pp275-276).

From the foregoing, Muslims learn that the more you dedicate yourself to Allah, the more you are honored by Him. Moreover, in the Glorious Qur'an (Baqorah:152), it is affirmed that the more you remember Allah, the more you are remembered by Him.

CONCLUSION

Honoring Prophet Muhammad Saw, is a divine command incumbent upon all humankind. The veneration of the Prophet has no limits, provided that he is not equated with God or regarded as His son. In certain contexts, Allah Himself has associated His

name with that of the Prophet in various teachings, and this should not be perceived as excessive glorification. Ibn Taimiyyah asserts that the rights of Allah and His Messenger are inseparable, as all divine commands, prohibitions, and religious teachings conveyed to humankind are channeled through the Prophet Muhammad Saw. In this regard, Allah has placed him in an exceptionally esteemed position, where obedience to the Prophet equates to obedience to Allah, and harming him is akin to harming Allah.

As a manifestation of true reverence, Muslims are required to understand the rights of the Prophet thoroughly to accord him the honor he deserves. Any action that undermines or diminishes his status and that of his family must be avoided, as it weakens the love and respect due to the noble Prophet. Conversely, Muslims should cultivate genuine love for him by adhering to his teachings, emulating his character, and frequently invoking blessings upon him as an expression of reverence and spiritual closeness. In doing so, the veneration of Prophet Muhammad Saw, is not merely an act of affection but also an integral part of obedience to Allah, bringing divine blessings into the life of a believer.

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