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Fatwa no. 642

Q: First issue: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was not a human being like us.

A: This is a too brief statement that bears truth and falsehood. If what is meant is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a human, but not similar to humans in all aspects; for he shared with them their common characteristics of eating, drinking, health, sickness, remembrance, forgetfulness, living, dying, marriage and so on, but he had characteristics particular to him, especially bestowed upon him by Allah such as receiving Divine Revelation and being sent to mankind as a bearer of glad tidings, a warner, a caller to Allah (by His leave), and a lamp spreading light - then this is true, and confirmed by reality and informed of by the Qur'an. Allah the Exalted says (what means): **﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilâh (God) is One Ilâh (God - i.e. Allâh). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.﴾** (Surah Al-Kahf, 18: 110). Allah ordered him to inform his Ummah (nation) that he was a human being just like them. However, Allah chose him to bear the responsibility of conveying the Message and revealed to him the Law of Tawhid (monotheism) and guidance. Allah the Exalted informs of the dialogues that took place between the Messengers and their nations, saying (what means): **﴿Their Messengers said: "What! Can there be a doubt about Allâh, the Creator of the heavens and the earth? He calls you (to Monotheism and to be obedient to Allâh) that He may forgive you of your sins and give you respite for a term appointed." They said: "You are no more than human beings like us! You wish to turn us away from what our fathers used to worship. Then bring us a clear authority (i.e. a clear proof of what you say).﴾** **﴿Their Messengers said to them: "We are no more than human beings like you, but Allâh bestows His Grace to whom He wills of His slaves. It is not ours to bring you an authority (proof) except by the Permission of Allâh. And in Allâh (Alone) let the believers put their trust.﴾** (Surah Ibrahim, 14: 10-11).

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The Messengers acknowledged that they were human beings like us, but Allah favored them with the revealed Message, as Allah bestows His Grace upon whom He wills of His servants and chooses from among them Whom He pleases to guide mankind from darkness to light. There are numerous examples for this in the Qur'an.

If what is meant is that the Messenger (peace be upon him) was not human at all, or he was a human yet different from humans in all aspects, even totally different from them in all their characteristics, this is falsehood denied by reality and considered blatant Kufr (disbelief), as it contradicts what the Qur'an asserts about the humanity of the Messengers and their similarity to humans in all aspects, except the special endowments of receiving Wahy (Revelation), Prophethood, the Message, and the miracles that Allah has honored them with.

If it is meant that the Messenger is not like other humans from the aspect of knowing the Ghayb (the Unseen) or being perfect in power, this is answered in the reply to the second and the third issues.

If some other meaning is intended, those who make such statements should be explicit and clarify what they mean, so that it can be discussed properly.

In any case, it is not right to make such a statement whether in the affirmative or in the negative except with a detailed explanation, for its ambiguity and brevity. Therefore, the Qur'an did not expressly or affirmatively state that except with mentioning the characteristics especially bestowed upon the Messengers, as in the previously mentioned Ayahs.

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Allah also says (what means): ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I am only a human being like you. It is revealed to me that your Ilâh (God) is One Ilâh (God - Allâh), therefore take Straight Path to Him (with true Faith - Islâmic Monotheism) and obedience to Him, and seek forgiveness of Him. And woe to Al-Mushrikûn (the polytheists, idolaters, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allâh).﴾ (Those who give not the Zakât and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.) (Surah Fussilat, 41: 6-7).

Yet, it is feared that expressing an absolute similarity between the Messengers and other humans may detract from their status as Prophets, taking it as a pretext for denying their message. It is also feared that an absolute negation of similarity may lead to exaggeration in honoring the Messengers to the extent of attributing to them what belongs to Allah alone. Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims to detail and clarify their intention, so that truth is distinguished from falsehood, and guidance from misguidance.

Second issue: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) knew the Ghayb (the Unseen).

A: Allah alone possesses the knowledge of Ghayb, as He says (what means): ﴿Say: "None in the heavens and the earth knows the Ghaib (Unseen) except Allâh, nor can they perceive when they shall be resurrected."﴾ (Surah Al-Naml, 27: 65). Allah also states (what means): ﴿And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record.﴾ (Surah Al-An'am, 6: 59). Allah also states (what means): ﴿Verily Allâh, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allâh is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things).﴾ (Surah Luqman, 31: 34).

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Allah also states (what means): ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I possess no power over benefit or harm to myself except as Allâh wills. If I had the knowledge of the Ghaib (Unseen), I should have secured for myself an abundance of wealth, and no evil should have touched me. I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings unto people who believe."﴾ (Surah Al-A'raf, 7: 188). Allah also states (what means): ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I am not a new thing among the Messengers (of Allâh i.e. I am not the first Messenger) nor do I know what will be done with me or with you. I only follow that which is revealed to me, and I am but a plain warner."﴾ (Surah Al-Ahqaf, 46: 9) Other Ayahs also indicate that Allah the Exalted alone knows the Ghayb. However, Allah may inform some of His servants, such as Messengers and angels, about certain future events, so they learn about them only as much as He has told them. Allah the Exalted says (what means): ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "I know not whether (the punishment) which you are promised is near or whether my Lord will appoint for it a distant term.﴾ (He Alone is) the All-Knower of the

Ghaib (Unseen), and He reveals to none His Ghaib (Unseen).” ﴿Except to a Messenger (from mankind) whom He has chosen (He informs him of unseen as much as He likes), and then He makes a band of watching guards (angels) to march before him and behind him.﴾ (Surah Al-Jinn, 72: 25-27). Allah also mentions how the angels swoon upon hearing His Words and how they respond after they recover: ﴿So much so that when fear is banished from their (angels’) hearts, they (angels) say: “What is it that your Lord has said?” They say: “The truth. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.”﴾ (Surah Saba’, 34: 23). Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith from `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ﴿The keys of the Ghayb are five, none knows them but Allah: ﴿Verily Allâh, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allâh is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things).﴾ (Surah Luqman, 31: 34).﴾

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Muslim related a Hadith from `Umar ibn Al-Khattab which states that Jibril (Gabriel, peace be upon him) asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about Islam, Iman (Faith) and Ihsan (perfection and sincerity in worship). Then, he asked him about the Hour (of Doom), so the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: ﴿The one who is asked about it does not know more than the one who is asking, but I will tell you its portents: when the slave woman gives birth to her mistress - that is one of its portents; and when the barefoot and the naked become the chiefs of the people - that is one of its portents. (The Hour) is one of the five matters which no one knows but Allah: ﴿Verily Allâh, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allâh is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things).﴾ (Surah Luqman, 31: 34).﴾

It is also mentioned in a Sahih (authentic) Hadith that Um Al-`Ala’ Al-Ansariyyah, who was one of those who pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), narrated that `Uthman ibn Mazh`un was chosen in the lot drawn by the Ansar (Helpers, inhabitants of Madinah who supported the Prophet) to host the Muhajirun (Emigrants from Makkah to Madinah). Um Al-`Ala’ said, “`Uthman fell ill while he was staying with us, so I nursed him until he died. When we had shrouded him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered and I said, ‘May Allah be merciful to you, O Abu Al-Sa’ib ! I testify that Allah has honored you.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

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﴿How do you know that Allah has honored him? I replied, ‘I do not know, let my father and my mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah! But who else (is worthy of it if not `Uthman)?’ He said, ‘As for him, by Allah, certainty (death) has come to him; by Allah I hope the best for him. By Allah, I do not know, although I am the Messenger of Allah, what shall be done with me.’”﴾ In another narration, ﴿By Allah, I do not know, although I am the Messenger of Allah, what shall be done with him.﴾ It is narrated in the Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from Ibn `Abbas that he said, ﴿The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was asked about the children of Mushrikun (those who associate others with Allah in worship). He (peace be upon him) replied, ‘Since Allah created them, He knows best what (deeds) they would have done.’”﴾ There are numerous texts in the Qur’an and the Sunnah which refer to the same meaning. They explicitly state that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) knows nothing of the Ghayb except what Allah has revealed to him.

Third issue: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was perfect in power.

A: If what is meant by "being perfect in power" is the relative perfection of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) in comparison with the rest of humans, this is acknowledged. But if what is meant is absolute perfection, this is false and is an exaggeration in praising the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and likening a creature to the Creator. Absolute perfection in power and the like are a characteristic of Allah alone; whereas the power of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was limited, given to him by Allah, not self-given. Thus, he varied between being strong and weak, healthy and sick. When the disbelievers asked him to bring them miracles, Allah commanded him to tell the disbelievers (what means): [﴿Signs are but with Allâh﴾](#) (Surah Al-An'am, 6: 109).

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Also, when the disbelievers asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) to hasten their punishment, Allah ordered him to tell them (what means): [﴿Say: "If I had that which you are asking for impatiently \(the torment\), the matter would have been settled at once between me and you"﴾](#) (Surah Al-An'am, 6: 58), in addition to other instances which prove that he (peace be upon him) was neither absolutely perfect nor omnipotent. This is particular to Allah alone. Included among the evidence is the Sahih (authentic) Hadith which states that: [﴿He \(peace be upon him\) fell off his horse and one side of his body was injured, so much so that he led the people in Salah \(Prayer\) while sitting.﴾](#) There is also a Hadith which informs that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) was injured during the Battle of Uhud, and also in his journey to Al-Ta'if before Hijrah (the Prophet's migration to Madinah) to call people to Tawhid (monotheism). It is narrated in Sahih Al-Bukhari on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, [﴿The Anger of Allah has flared up against a people who bloodied the face of the Prophet of Allah.﴾](#) It is also narrated that Sahl ibn Sa'd inquired about the injury of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, [﴿By Allah, I know who used to wash the wound of the Messenger of Allah \(peace be upon him\), who used to pour water on it, and how the wound was treated.﴾](#) He said, 'Fatimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would wash the wound and 'Aly would pour the water. When Fatimah saw that the water only increased the bleeding, she took a piece of coarse fabric, burned it and put it on the wound, so the bleeding stopped.' On that day, his canine tooth was broken, his face was wounded and the helmet on his head was smashed. If he (peace be upon him) had perfect power, none of his enemies would have been able to injure his face, break his tooth, or smash his helmet on his head.

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May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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