

Exchange of Greetings

دَخَلَ عَلِيٌّ أَبِي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) فِي بَعْضِ الْأَيَّامِ فَقَالَ : أَسَلَامٌ عَلَيْكِ يَا فَاطِمَةُ ، فَقُلْتُ : وَ عَلَيْكَ ، السَّلَامُ ،

One day, my father the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his Household, visited me, "Peace be upon you, O Fatimah!" he said. "Peace be upon you, too." I answered.

When one of us meet a friend or neighbor, we typically exchange hellos and convey our greetings to that person. And the other person usually replies back with a 'good morning' or 'Walaykum asalam' (Peace be upon you). But what really is the extent and degree of that 'salam' (peace) that is extended between two different people? And is there any guarantee that two Muslims who are exchanging greetings of peace will actually achieve the practical and spiritual peace with each other? Often times, we find two individuals exchanging expressions of greetings or peace in the morning, yet in the afternoon they are busy fighting with each other over petty issues or otherwise. Thus, we may agree that it is not necessarily the case that all the words and actions of the layperson or common Muslim is always true and/or achieved.

However, when we speak about an infallible personality, we must recognize that all their words and actions are exactly on the dot and at the highest level of accuracy without exaggeration or underestimation. So, if they make a judgment, it is a just verdict, and if they make a decision, it is a wise course of action. Along the same lines, if an infallible guide who has been purified and divinely appointed as a guide for mankind, performs a simple action such as greet or convey 'salam' to another person, then we should not interpret that greeting as 'routine' or trivial. Rather, the peace which an infallible personality conveys to another person is to be interpreted as glad tidings and a guarantee for exceptional peace at all levels. Surely, those who represent Allah (SWT) cannot exchange peace with a person whom Allah (SWT) is displeased with or has committed injustice to others.

Furthermore, one can logically deduce that if the two individuals exchanging peace and greetings are *both* infallible and divinely chosen for the guidance of mankind, then the product of such greetings must

be at a grand level which one cannot comprehend. The degree of peace, the percent of guarantee, and the secrets behind that greeting is beyond our ability to fathom or reason.

In the *Tradition of the Cloak*, the narration begins with greeting of peace by the Holy Prophet (SA) after he has entered the presence of his daughter Fatima Al Zahra (AS) who replies back affirming the peace to her father.

As discussed, this exchange of peace by two holy and exceptional personalities, the Seal of Messengers and the best of Creation, Muhammad, along with the Master Lady of the universe, Fatima, yields nothing but unbreakable unity between two purified souls which carries with it all the meanings of peace, tranquility, attachment, love, and devotion, etc. Such feeling of peace is not bound by time or place nor is it conditional on mundane factors. This expression of peace by the Prophet (SA) to Fatima (AS) and vice versa is in fact an act of worship that is blessed by Allah (SWT) as He (SWT) instructed the believers in Surat Al Ahzaab, Verse 56:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation. (33:56)

In this verse, it is interesting to note that Allah the Almighty Creator first announces that He Himself along with the angels are praying on the Prophet. Then He (SWT) conveys His order to those who believe (hence excluding nonbelievers) to call for the blessings upon him and to salute him. This action of benediction and salutation to the Holy Messenger (SA) is an act of worship and obedience and is in fact obligatory upon all believers.

Furthermore, the verse highlights that only a true believer is given the permission to share in this blessed action of salutations and the servant is the one honored by having the ability and success in delivering these greetings to the beloved one.

If this is the grand station of Prophet Muhammad (SA) as depicted by verse 33:56, what about the station of Lady Fatima? Besides recognizing the fact that she is the Master Lady of the universe, we are to recall the authentic and well-known narration in all schools of thought where the Prophet (SA) emphasizes, *“Fatima is a part of me, whoever harms her harms me, and whatever pleases her pleases me.”*

So, if Lady Fatima (AS) is from the self of the Prophet (SA), then by the rules of logical correlation, we can deduce that when Allah (SWT) and the angels are sending their blessings on the Prophet (SA) as mentioned in verse 33:56, they are *also* sending their blessings and salutations to his daughter Fatima! That is not surprising as the angels are known to accompany Lady Fatima in numerous occasions and descend upon her home regularly.

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