

The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

PBUH (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

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It is often noted throughout my articles that the abbreviation (pbuh) is usually added as a suffix after the name of the noble messengers of God. When referred to as a group, then the suffix (pbut) is often substituted (peace be upon them). For the purposes of this article only, given the theme and to allow for the flow of the discussion, the usual appendages will not be utilised.

It is also quite commonly understood that the acronym 'pbuh' is an English translation of the more usual Arabic suffix 'Sal-Allahu-alayhi-wa-salam'.

This is not entirely correct.

The more usual English transliteration abbreviation of the Arabic 'Sal-Allahu-alayhi-wa-salam' is 's.a.w'. The Arabic word 'Salu' inherently carries the meaning of commendation, honour, to magnify, to bless.

Therefore a more literal rendition of the phrase 'Sal-Allahu-alayhi-wa-salam' would be:

"May God commend / honour / magnify him and grant him peace'. It is usual to translate such variety of expressions as 'blessings'

On the other hand, the Arabic phrase for 'peace be upon him (pbuh)' is 'alayhi-salam' which is not used for Prophet Muhammad. Rather, it is an expression that is reserved for Prophets other than him, such as Prophet's Abraham, Moses and Jesus (etc).

Traditional Muslim thought usually relies on verse 33:56 to argue for the support of the specific appendage "'Sal-Allahu-alayhi-wa-salam'" for Prophet Muhammad. It is asserted that such a requirement is necessary given the exclusive address to the Prophet in the following verse which confers such commendation and salutations of peace on the Prophet.

033.056

"Indeed, God and His angels send blessings (Arabic: Yusalluna) on the Prophet: O you that believe! Send blessings on him and greet him with respect / greetings (Arabic: salimu tasliman)"

However, we note a few verses earlier that similar blessings are also conferred on believers in much the same manner **challenging the notion of exclusivity based on the above verse**. God and His angels also bless the believers.

033.041-43

"O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of God , and do this often; And glorify Him morning and evening. He is the One Who sends **His blessings (Arabic: Yusalli)** on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers"

Furthermore, what is often not appreciated, is the categorical prohibition to show any distinctions whatsoever between any of God's messengers.

002:285

"The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in God and His angels and His books and His messengers; **We make no difference (Arabic: Nufarriqu) between any of His messengers; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course"**

This matter is so fundamental that it cited in the above verse as an article of faith for true believers. Any expression or sentiment that displays a sense of marked preferment or exclusivity to a specific prophet or messenger, is arguably a violation of verse 2:285. This verse categorically denounces any 'nufarriqu' (no distinctions / difference) whatsoever between God's messengers.

What is unknown to many Muslims is the fact that the use of 'peace' for messengers of God is a tradition well supported by the Quran and arguably encouraged.

Salutations of 'peace' were conferred on Prophet Abraham by later generations. He is cited as the 'father in faith' (22:78), a 'khaleel' (friend) of God (4:125) and one whose ways Prophet Muhammad was instructed to follow (16.123). The Quran makes absolutely no distinctions between the usages of the terms when applying the salutations left in later generations for other messengers of God.

037:108-111

"And We left for him among generations (to come) in later times: **"Peace be upon Abraham!" (Arabic: Salamun ala Ibraheem)** Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. Indeed, he was one of Our believing Servants"

With respect to Prophet Noah:

037:078-80

"And We left for him among generations (to come) in later times: **Peace be upon Noah! (Arabic: Salamun ala Nuhin)** among the worlds. Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. Indeed, he was one of Our believing Servants"

Prophets Moses and Aaron:

037.119-122

"And We left for both of them among generations (to come) in later times: **"Peace be upon Moses and Aaron!" (Arabic: Salamun ala Musa wa Haruna)**. Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. Indeed, both of them (were) of Our believing Servants"

Prophet Elias:

037:129-132

"And We left for him among generations (to come) in later times: **"Peace be upon Elias!" (Arabic: Salamun ala Il-Yaseen)**. Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. Indeed, he was one of Our believing Servants"

Another verse captures the salutations of peace to all messengers of God.

037:181

"**And Peace be upon the messengers!**" (Arabic: Salamun ala-l mursaleen)

Therefore, in keeping with verse 2:285, no distinctions are made in the terminology used when citing the salutations of 'peace' with respect to the messengers. Ranks or any distinctions are only with God (2:253).

Furthermore, there is no support for asserting any exclusivity for any Prophetic mission. Every messenger of God was faced with his own difficulties given his own set of circumstances. To make comparisons between messengers of God or their missions is not an approach taught by the Quran and is in fact, an approach clearly discouraged. (Please see related article below)

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is no absolute requirement to offer any suffixes to the names of messengers as long as the noble prophets are held in high esteem befitting of their noble status. It is also perfectly acceptable (and recommended if examples cited above are taken into account) to make use of the salutations of 'peace' on the messengers of God. However, whatever method of respect is chosen, any distinctions between messengers should be avoided.

It is also for this reason that I too have made use of 'Peace' on all the messengers of God without drawing any distinctions between them and in line with the Quranic tradition (Peace be upon him / them).

Related Articles:

- (1) [Do Not Make Any Distinctions Between the Messengers of God](#)
- (2) [God and the Angels Bless the Prophet Muhammad ^{\(pbuh\)}](#)
- (3) [The Superiority of Prophet Muhammad's ^{\(pbuh\)} Mission](#)

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