

The Diversity of Mutual Superiority and Excellence in the World of Creation: An Analysis of Significance According to Islam

Muhammad Abu Sayeed Khan*

*Muhammad Abu Sayeed Khan, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Bangladesh Islami University, Email: askhan.dcs@gmail.com

Abstract

The Almighty Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all the things between these two. He has made a wonderful manifestation of His great creativity in it. He has beautified the entire world of creation through people, animals, hills, mountains, plants, oceans, rivers, planets, stars, etc. and managed it smoothly. He prefers one over the other in respect of status, dignity and merit. He made some loyal to someone and made someone an influencer of someone. Even this principle of Almighty Allah is effective in material things. Sometimes it is His exclusive selection and sometimes it takes place in consideration of the excellence achieved by the person or the animal. It is a part of His brilliant style of creation and extraordinary principles of control over His management. Almighty Allah has mentioned various aspects about this in the Holy Quran and the Prophet ﷺ described it in the texts of hadith. This is an immense mystery of the creation of Allah Almighty, a wise method of bridging the gap between one and another in every aspect of the created world, a way of cooperating with one another, and a way of keeping the created world engaged in the competition for excellence. Analyzing the configuration and significance of these diverse differences and excellences declared by Almighty Allah is the theme of this article. This is a theoretical study prepared by collecting information from primary and secondary sources and referenced using the Chicago Method.

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1.0 Introduction

Almighty Allah is the sole creator of the heavens, earth, planets, stars, plants, water, wind, human beings,

jinns, angels, etc. He creates whatever he wills. He is fully aware of His creation. The different structures of His creations, the variety of colors and shapes, the movement of the animals, the variety of food consumptions and activities are all extraordinary manifestations of His creative craft. He governs the entire creation world. In addition to the human and animal worlds, the plants and the material worlds are also changed by Him skillfully. There are various disparities in all of His creations. One of them is given by Him comparative advantage and excellence over the others in terms of power, ability and status. Moreover, some of the creations are excelled only in their own race. These divisions and mutual

superiorities among His created clans is governed by specific rules and principles, which He maintains Himself. He has given superiority to some creations by His own will and has chosen them as the best. Again, he mentioned the standards and criteria of excellence in some respects in front of people, so that people try to achieve it. People should think and research about it. Because He Himself inspired to research the mystery of His creation. Such research of the world of creation discloses new horizons of knowledge in human life through the discovery of various secrecies of the world of creation. The present article is a part of such an effort.

2.0 Review of Books and Articles

Imam Ibnu Taymiyyah (*Rahimahullah*), one of the ancient writers on the differences and superiority of status in the world of creation, has mentioned in his *Majmul Fatwa* in different contexts about the superiority of relative status of Prophets, Messengers, Angels, etc. Imam Ibnul Qayyim (*Rahimahullah*) has discussed the relative qualities and differences of time and periods etc. in his famous book *Jadul Ma'ad*. Imam Qurafi (*Rahimahullah*) in his book *Al-Furuq* has mentioned some principles of different rules of superiority of status among the created world of Almighty Allah. Imam Ibn Hazam (*Rahimahullah*) also mentioned some aspects in his book *Alfaslu Fil Milale Wal Ahwai Wan Nihale*. Imam Ibn Hajar Asqalani has cited something on this matter in his interpretation of various hadiths in his book *Fathul Bari*. In this way, the ancient writers have revealed some scattered matters in their texts in this regard. In modern age Muhammad bin Abdur Rahman Yusuf Sazifi in his book *Mabahisul Mufadalati Fil Aqeedah* discusses the comparative superiority of the status of Prophet, Rasul and Companions among humans; angels, humans and angels especially among believers. In his book he also mentions the relative superiority of Allah's attributed names and His words, but he does not highlight the superiority that arises in the world of creation, especially in the animal world, in the material world, and in man's acquisition of the various materials of earthly life. There are many dispersed small writings has shown about the comparative excellence of such people, angels or prophets, or different periods of time etc. in online platform. To my knowledge, no article has yet been written on this topic that has reviewed overall comparative excellence and superiority in the creations of Allah.

3.0 Diversity of Mutual Superiority in the World of Creation

There is a lot of diversity in the world created by Allah and on the basis of this, different mutual superiority and status are also created. It pervades all spheres irrespective of the Human beings, material world, flora and fauna. Such variation in mutual superiority and status is a statutory rule of Almighty Allah in His creations. This is explained below-

i. Variations of status in the material world

By material world we usually mean inanimate objects.ⁱ Such as sky, soil, water, air, rocks, mountains, etc. There are many variations in all these material worlds. And all these differences become reasons for superiority and dignity over each other. As Almighty Allah says about the variety of stones: وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ

‘For there are some rocks from which rivers gush out, and there are some which break asunder and water comes out of them, and there are some which fall down with the fear of Allah.’ⁱⁱ

Allah says about the variety of mountains: وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيَضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا وَعَرَايِبُ سُودٌ ‘And in the mountains there are streaks of various shades including white, red, jet-black rocks.’ⁱⁱⁱ

Among these rocks, ‘Hajre Aswad’ is the most prestigious. Among the mountains, the status of Ohud Hill is recognized in Islam. And the water of Zamzam well is the best among the waters.^{iv} Earth, stone, iron, fire, water, air, etc. also have a status of successive superiority. It is mentioned in the hadith:

عن أنس بن مالك عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لما خلق الله الأرض جعلت تميد فخلق الجبال فعاد بها عليها فاستقرت فعببت الملائكة من شدة الجبال قالوا يا رب هل من خلقك شيء أشد من الجبال قال نعم الحديد قالوا يا رب فهل من خلقك شيء أشد من الحديد قال نعم النار قالوا يا رب فهل من خلقك شيء أشد من النار قال نعم الماء قالوا يا رب فهل من خلقك شيء أشد من الماء قال نعم الريح قالوا يا رب فهل من خلقك شيء أشد من الريح قال نعم ابن آدم تصدق بصدقة يمينه يخفيها من شماله

On the authority of Anas bin Malik (RadiyAllahu ‘Anhu), on the authority of the Prophet ﷺ, He says: “When God created the earth, it began to sway, so He created the mountains and returned them to it, so they became stable. The angels were amazed at the strength of the mountains. They said, ‘O Lord, is there anything among your creations stronger than the mountains?’ He said, ‘Yes, iron.’ They said, ‘O Lord, is there anything among your creation stronger than Iron. He said, ‘Yes, fire.’ They said, “O Lord, is there anything among your creation stronger than fire?” He said, “Yes, water.” They said, “O Lord, is there anything among your creation stronger than water?” They said, “Yes, wind.” They said, “O Lord, is there anything among your creation stronger than wind?” He said, “Yes.” The son of Adam gives alms (*sadaqa*) with his right hand, which he hides from his left.^v

ii. Differences of superiority among times and spaces

The different periods of the time such as days, weeks, months, years, etc. are also the creations of Allah. Among them, Allah Ta'ala has given some superiority over others. Among the days of the week, Friday has been preferred by Allah over

other days. Similarly, among all the days of the year, the day of *Arafah*, the day of sacrifice (Qurbani) and the first 10 days of the month of Zilhaj are ranked as the greatest. Among the months of the year, Shawwal, Zilqada, Jhilhaj and Rajab have been honoured by Almighty Allah. And among 12 months, Ramadan has been ranked as the best. Equally, among the nights, the nights of the last ten days of Ramadan have been ranked, but the night of Qadr has been ranked as the best. Moreover, there are different opinions among the scholars regarding the mutual superiority of these days and nights.^{vi}

In this way, Allah has given superiority to the life of the hereafter over the life of this world. He says: *بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأُنْبَغَىٰ* ‘But O men! You prefer the life of this world; while the Hereafter is better and everlasting.’^{vii}

On the other hand, Allah Ta'ala has declared the place of mosque as the best among all the places in the world. Rasul ﷺ said: *أَحَبُّ الْبِلَادِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَسَاجِدُهَا، وَأَبْغَضُ الْبِلَادِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَسْوَاقُهَا* ‘The parts of land dearest to Allah are its mosques, and the parts most hateful to Allah are markets.’^{viii}

However, among all the mosques in the world, the three greatest mosques are Masjid Haram, Masjid al-Nabawi and Masjid Aqsa or Baitul Maqdis. But there is a gap among these three mosques in terms of mutual superiority. Masjid Haram is the greatest, followed by Masjid al-Nabawi and then Masjid Aqsa i.e. Baitul Maqdis.^{ix}

In addition, the area of Masjid Haram, the Haram area of Madinah, Safa & Marwa hills etc. are more prestigious places than other places in Islam.^x

iii. Aspects of diversity and excellence in the plant world

Allah's creation also has diversity in plants and crops. Almighty Allah says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَنُهُ.

‘Do you not see how Allah sends down rain from the sky which penetrates the earth and come out through springs? With it He brings forth a variety of crops with various colours?’^{xi}

However, among these different types of plants and crops Allah has given superiority one over others. He says: *وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُتَجَاوِرَتٌ وَجَنَّتْ مِنْ أَعْنَبٍ وَزَرْعٍ وَنَخِيلٍ صِنْوَانٌ* ‘And in the earth are tracts (diverse though) neighbouring and gardens of grapes and fields sown with corn and palm trees growing out of single roots or otherwise: watered with the same water yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat.’^{xii}

Besides, In Islam the palm tree is recognized as having a higher status than other trees. In the Holy Qur'an Almighty Allah have been compared good words to

good trees. According to Mufasssirin the comparable good tree is the palm tree.^{xiii} And in hadith compares a palm tree to a Muslim as blessed person.^{xiv}

iv. Diversity and excellence in animal world

Almighty Allah has created different types of animals in this world. Among them, there are many variations in terms of shape, movement, food consumption, reproduction etc. Almighty Allah says:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَّاءٍ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَىٰ أَرْبَعٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۚ

‘And Allah has created every animal from water: of them there are some that creep upon their bellies, some that walk on two legs, and yet some that walk on four; Allah creates what He pleases.’^{xv}

Allah also says: ‘Likewise men, crawling creatures and cattle have their various colours.’^{xvi}

Among these animals, Almighty Allah has mentioned the camel in various places in the Holy Qur'an from the viewpoint of praise. It indicates its superiority over other animals. Allah mentions the camel sacrificed to Qurbani as His sign and called it auspicious. And also drew people's attention to the creation of the camel, so that they think about it.^{xvii}

On the other hand, camels, sheep and horses are mentioned in the hadith as symbols of honour, blessing and welfare. Which means that these animals have a higher status than other animals.^{xviii}

4.0 The dignity and superiority of man over all other creations

Almighty Allah first created the jinn race on this earth and then they have been replaced with humans. Besides, He created numerous other animals, insects, plants and other things. He enthroned mankind in the seat of excellence, naming him as the *Khilafah*, and calling him the greatest in dignity over the many others creation. This is discussed below-

4.1 Excellence of Mankind on others creations:

Almighty Allah has given superiority and dignity to mankind over his other numerous creations. In this regard He says: وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ

الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا ‘We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours above a great part of our creation.’^{xix}

Allah's creation is generally of four types-

i. Inorganic substances like soil air water etc.

ii. Plants such as grasses, crops etc. The before mentioned first class is engaged in the welfare of the second class i.e. the plants. The plants are superior to inanimate matter in terms of dignity.

iii. Non-sentient animals such as cows, goats, poultry etc. Animals survive with the help of the above mentioned second class. Generally, herbivores survive by eating these plants, although some of these animals survive by eating non-sentient animals. So they are superior to the second class.

iv. Sentient beings. Human beings, jinn and angels are notable among sentient beings. Human beings and jinn survive with the help of the three mentioned categories and even they use as food the mentioned three categories. Therefore, humans and jinn are superior to above mentioned three categories. Angels do not need such help, rather they do not need food. So angels are also superior to the three categories mentioned above.

Man's superiority over the jinn and all other creations is proved by giving man superiority over numerous creations by Allah's declaration. It is accepted by all the Islamic scholars that humans are better than jinn.^{xx}

But whether Humans are superior to angels is a matter of different opinions.^{xxi}

4.2 Status of *Khilafah*

Almighty Allah has given man the status of *khilafah* in this world. In this regard He says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Behold thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said "Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not."^{xxii}

According to Ibn Abbas (RadiyAllahu ‘Anhu) Allah has replaced humans as *Khalifah* on the earth, he basically replaced them by removing the wandering jinn who roamed in the earth from before.^{xxiii} In this respect too, humans are superior to the jinn because they have been replaced by humans.

4.3 Creation of everything for them and Subject to them:

He created all the other creations of the earth for their welfare and benefit and even subjected to them everything that is in the heavens and the earth. So that they can benefit from them all. Almighty Allah says: هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ 'It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens for He

gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things he hath perfect knowledge.’^{xxiv}

He also says:

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَهَرَ وَبَاطِنًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ

‘Do ye not see that Allah has subjected to your (use) all things in the heavens and on earth and has made His bounties flow to you in exceeding measure (both) seen and unseen? Yet there are among men those who dispute about Allah without knowledge and without guidance and without a Book to enlighten them!’^{xxv}

Subjecting a thing to someone can have two meanings, one is to subject him to his obedience so that he can freely use it according to his needs and the other is to subject him to a rule by which the person concerned can get benefit from it. Among the creations of Allah fire, water, soil, air, animals, etc. are firstly loyal to humans and the sky, planets, stars, sun, moon, constellations, etc. secondly loyal to humans and devoted to human welfare.^{xxvi}

4.4 Excellence in shape:

In terms of form and shape in the world of creation, Almighty Allah bestows human superiority over all creations. He has created man in a beautiful shape and in His words this is the best shape of the creature. He says: لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ‘We have indeed created man in the best of stature.’^{xxvii}

5.0 Form of Mutual Superiority and Variation among mankind:

Almighty Allah created the human race in pairs, after creating the first human Adam (*Alaihis Salam*), He created his pair Hawa (*Alaihas Salam*). Thus, the stability of the world humanity continues. Then this pair of man and woman exists in the entire human race. This includes many other variations and comparative superiority such as-

5.1 Differences in language and caste:

He has created numerous languages among mankind in the world. People of one country speak different languages than people of other countries. Even linguistic differences can be seen between people of different regions of the same country. He has introduced different species of white, black, and brown among people. All this is one of the signs of his creative style. He says:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعٰلَمِينَ

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are signs for those who know.^{xxviii}

5.2 Division of groups and clans:

He has divided the human race into different tribes, clans and groups for the purpose of getting to know each other in the world. Besides, through the different kinship relationships between people, different aspects of identity are reflected in them. Such as some are sons, some are fathers, some are grandfathers, some are sons-in-law etc. All these aspects are a part of mutual identity. He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other).^{xxix}

He also says: ‘وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ’^{xxx} And Allah has made for you mates (and companions) of your own nature. And made for you out of them sons and daughters and grandchildren and provided for you sustenance of the best.’^{xxx}

5.3 Variations in human shape and nature:

At the beginning of creation, when man was created, his shape was 60 cubits long. In the course of time, that length decreased until the age of the Prophet ﷺ. It is stated in the hadith that the average length of man during his time will remain in force until the end of the world, i.e. the doomsday. The Prophet ﷺ says:

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ عَلَىٰ صُورَتِهِ، طُولُهُ سِتُونَ ذِرَاعًا، فَلَمَّا خَلَقَهُ قَالَ أَذْهَبَ فَسَلِّمْ عَلَىٰ أَوْلِيكَ النَّفَرِ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ جُلُوسًا، فَاسْتَمِعَ مَا يُحْيُونَكَ، فَإِنَّمَا تَحِيَّتُكَ وَنَحِيَّةُ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ. فَقَالَ السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ. فَقَالُوا السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ. فَزَادُوهُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ، فَكُلُّ مَنْ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلَىٰ صُورَةِ آدَمَ، فَلَمْ يَزَلِ الْخَلْقُ يَنْقُصُ بَعْدَ حَتَّى الْآنَ

God created Adam in his image, his height being sixty cubits, and when he created him he said, “Go and greet that group of angels sitting down, and listen as they greet you.” It is your greeting and the greeting of your descendants. He said, “Peace be upon you.” They said, “Peace and God’s mercy be upon you.” So they added, “May God’s mercy be upon you.” Everyone who enters Paradise is in the image of Adam, and creation has continued to diminish until now.^{xxxi}

Apart from the colour of a person, his nature also depends on the qualities and characteristics of the soil from which he was created. If someone is made of hard clay, then luckily he is of hard character and if someone is made of soft clay, he is of soft and gentle nature in character. The Prophet ﷺ says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْضَةٍ قَبْضَتِهَا مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَرْضِ، فَجَاءَ بَنُو آدَمَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرِ الْأَرْضِ: جَاءَ مِنْهُمْ الْأَحْمَرُ، وَالْأَبْيَضُ، وَالْأَسْوَدُ، وَبَيْنَ ذَلِكَ، وَالسَّهْلُ، وَالْحَزْنُ، وَالْحَبِيثُ، وَالطَّيِّبُ

‘God created Adam from a fist that He took from all the earth, so the sons of Adam came as much as the earth: from them came the Red, white, black, and something in between, and the simple, and the sad, and the bad, and the good.’^{xxxii}

Among all these diversity of people, Allah Ta’ala has determined different types of superiority and status from different perspectives. Such as-

i. Superiority is considered by Taqwa:

The identity of all these castes, languages, tribes, groups, etc., is not a measure of the mutual integrity of people, but mutual superiority is considered by *Taqwa* or the fear of Allah. The better a person conducts his life with the fear of Allah in his heart, the more he will be considered superior and dignified by Allah. Almighty Allah says: إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ‘Indeed, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.’^{xxxiii}

It is also mentioned in the hadith:

عن جابر بن عبد الله (رضي الله عنهما) قال، قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) يا أيها الناس إن ربكم واحد ألا لا فضل لعربي على عجمي ولا لعجمي على عربي ولا لأحمر على أسود ولا لأسود على أحمر إلا بالتقوى إن أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم

Jaber bin Abdullah (Radiyallahu ‘Anhu) narrated that the Messenger of Allah, ﷺ said, ‘O people, your Lord is One. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a red over a black, nor of a black over a red except through piety. Indeed, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you.’^{xxxiv}

ii. Believers are the best of all people:

Among all people, the believers have been given superiority over others because of their faith. Almighty Allah says: يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ (suitable) ranks (and degrees) those of you who believe.’^{xxxv}

However, there may be differences in status among believers with an increase and decrease in their faith.^{xxxvi}

For this reason among believers, faith increases by doing good deeds and dignity decreases by committing sins or lagging behind in good deeds. Such as:

a. Allah has made a distinction between the believers those who make jihad and those who do not make jihad. Almighty Allah says:

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِّ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۚ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ۚ وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَى ۚ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

‘Those believers who sit (at home) - having no physical disability - are not equal to those who make Jihad (struggle) in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their persons. Allah has granted a higher rank to those who make Jihad with their

wealth and their persons than to those who sit (at home). Though Allah has promised a good reward for all, Allah has prepared a much richer reward for those who make Jihad for Him than for those who sit (at home).^{'xxxvii}

b. He who is the best in character among the believers has been given the status of the best person in the hadith. The Prophet ﷺ said: *إِنَّ مِنْ خَيْرِكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا* 'The best of you are those who have the best manners and character.'^{xxxviii}

Thus, in terms of the excellence of good deeds, the distinction of excellence and status among believers has been mentioned from different perspectives. From this point of view, Allah divided the believers into three stages. He says: *ثُمَّ أَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتَابَ*

الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مُقْتَصِدٌ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌ بِالْخَيْرَاتِ يُؤْتِنَا اللَّهُ 'Then We have given the Book for inheritance to such of our servants as we have chosen: Among them there are some who wrong their own souls, some follow a middle course and some, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds.'^{xxxix}

iii. Generally wise people are the best:

Among the people, the knowledgeable person have been appointed by Allah to the status of excellence. Almighty Allah says: *قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ* 'Say: "Are those equal those who know and those who do not know?"'^{xl}

Moreover, due to the difference in knowledge, the status varies among the wise. As Allah says: *نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ* 'We raise in ranks whom We please, He is the one whose knowledge is far greater than the knowledge of all others.'^{xli}

And among the wise, those who believe have been specially given superiority over others. Almighty Allah says: *وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ* 'And 'raise' those gifted with knowledge in rank.'^{xlii}

iv. Superiority of men over women:

Human beings are divided into male and female by creation of Allah. Among them, Allah has given superiority to men over women. He says: *الرِّجَالُ قَوُّمُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ*

بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ

'Men are in charge of women, as men have been provisioned by Allah over women and because they spend of their property (for the support of women).'^{xliii}

v. Prophets are chosen as the greatest:

Among the creations of Allah, those whom He has chosen as Prophets or Messengers are the best. He says: *وَكِبَّلًا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ* 'And We exalted every one of them over the worlds.'^{xliv}

However, Allah Ta'ala usually chooses only Prophets from among humans and angels. He says: **اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ**, 'Allah chooses His messengers from angels and from human beings, for surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.'^{xlv}

However, there are differences among the Prophets and Messengers in terms of their relative status and Muhammad ﷺ is the greatest among them, even among the world's humanity. Although comparison of such differences is prohibited in the hadith.^{xlvi}

vi. After the prophet ﷺ the status of his Companions^{xlvii} (صحابي) is the highest:

The unanimous belief of *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah* is that those who have attained the status of being companions of the Rasul ﷺ, after the Rasul ﷺ, their status is at the highest level among the *Ummah*.^{xlviii} However, there are differences of mutual status among them. In the Holy Qur'an such a distinction is made between the Companions who accepted Islam before the conquest of Mecca and those who became Companions after it. Allah says:

لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَتْلٍ أُولَئِكَ أَعْظَمُ دَرَجَةً مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدُ وَقَتْلُوا وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ

'Those of you who spent and fought in the Cause of Allah before the victory, shall receive higher ranks of honor than the others who spent and fought thereafter. Yet Allah has promised you all a good reward.'^{xlix}

From this point of view Abu Bakr (RadiAllah 'Anhu) is the greatest Companion, then Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali ibn Abu Taleb are recognized as the greatest Companions. Then the status of the 10 Companions who received the good news of Paradise ('Ashara Mubassarah) on earth.¹ In this way, the status of the Companions has been determined subsequently who participated in the Battle of Badr, who participated in the Battle of Uhud, and the Companions who participated in the *Bayatir Ridwan*, followed by the status of the other Companions.^{li}

vii. After the generation of prophet ﷺ the age of His Companions is the best:

In terms of the perspective of eras, the era of the Prophet ﷺ the best, followed by the era of the His Companions, then the era of the Tabi'yin. The Prophet ﷺ said: **خَيْرُ أُمَّتِي قَرْنِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلَوْهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يُلَوْهُمْ**, 'The best of my nation are my generation, then those after them, then those who will follow the latter.'^{lii}

viii. The Ummah of the Prophet ﷺ is the greatest of all the Ummah of the world:

The status of the *Ummah* of Muhammad ﷺ is higher than the *Ummah* of all the Prophets who came to the world from Adam (alaihis salam) to the last prophet Muhammad ﷺ, even they are superior in terms of dignity and rewards to all *Ummah*. Allah says: *كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ* 'You are the best nation which has ever been raised for the guidance of mankind. You enjoin good, forbid evil, and believe in Allah.'^{liii}

However, according to the Mufassirin, the declaration of the superiority of the Bani Israel over all nations in the Holy Qur'an is only an acknowledgment of their superiority over all the nations of their time.^{liv}

4. Mutual diversity and superiority in terms of resources:

Allah has created diversity among people in terms of their worldly means of life and has recognized superiority in terms of richness of wealth and abundance of sustenance. Almighty Allah says: *قُلْ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ* 'Say: 'Verily my Lord enlarges and restricts the provision to whom He pleases but most men understand not.'^{lv}

He also says: *وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ* 'Allah has bestowed His gifts of sustenance more freely on some of you than on others.'^{lvi}

6.0 Significance of Mutual Superiority and Variation:

There is a great significance in the diversity of superiority and variation of status in the world of Allah's creation. None of Allah's works is devoid of wisdom, so there is a great wisdom in this diversity of status in his creation. It is discussed below-

i. Mutual superiority in creation is a sign of Allah:

The principle of mutual superiority in the world of creation is a great sign of Almighty Allah. it is an expression of His power. It contains signs of his creative craftsmanship and the variation of the world of creation. As Allah says: *وَنُفِضْنَا بَعْضَهَا* 'Some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Behold verily in these things there are Signs for those who understand!'^{lvii}

ii. Some of this excellence is Allah's choice and some is earned:

The proceed of mutual superiority in creation is two types. Some of these are ordained and selected by Allah such as- To choose someone as a prophet and giving superiority over others, to give human superiority over all other creations, to prioritize man over women, to provide superiority to the *Ummah* of Muhammad ﷺ over other nations etc. These all are His own selection. Besides, excellence in knowledge, excellence through virtue and piety and good deeds etc.

are under the control of man. People can establish themselves as the best in the society by achieving these if they want.^{lviii}

There are also many principles of Almighty Allah in recognizing such mutual superiority in the entire creation world which he applied to his creation.^{lix}

iii. Attempt or expect to achieve Allah's selection of excellence are prohibited:

In cases where the mutual superiority of the world of creation is directly determined by the selection of Allah, it is forbidden to expect or to try to achieve it. Almighty Allah has forbidden to do so, He said: وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى

‘And do not envy that Allah has bestowed His gifts on some of you more than the others. Men will be rewarded according to their deeds and women will be rewarded according to theirs.’^{lx}

iv. The diversity of mutual superiority in the creation is the subject of research:

Allah has instructed mankind to focus on how, from what point of view, He has given superiority to one over the other in His creation. It means they should think about it, research it, and try to learn about it. Almighty Allah says: أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ فَضَّلْنَا

‘Behold how We have exalted some over others, and certainly the hereafter is more exalted and greater in excellence.’^{lxi}

v. Excellence in mankind in terms of wealth and sustenance is very significant:

The mutual superiority that exists between people in terms of worldly provision, property, children, sustenance, facilities, etc. has great significance in Islam. Such as-

a. It is medium of social mutual cooperation:

As people are mutually superior and dignified in terms of earthly means, every person in the society gets the opportunity to connect with each other. Rich people take the services of the poor through money. Again, the poor provide services to the rich in the hope of money. In this way, the social activities continue with mutual cooperation, otherwise human life would stop. Almighty Allah says: أَهُمْ

يُقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ يُقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ

‘Is it they who distribute the blessings of your Rabb? It is We Who distribute the means of their livelihood in the life of this world, raising some in rank above others, so that one may take others into his service.’^{lxii}

b. Through it Allah removed the mischief of the world:

If Allah had not divided the people in the world into different levels of superiority, then the people would have become disobedient. Allah says: وَلَوْ أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقُ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَعَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاءُ ‘Had Allah bestowed abundance upon His servants, they would have transgressed beyond all bounds in the earth; that's why He sends down in due measure as He pleases.’^{lxiii}

c. The difference in wealth between people is a sign of Allah:

The creation of differences between high and low, rich and poor among people is also one of the signs of Almighty Allah. Allah says: أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ ‘See they not that Allah enlarges the provision and limits it to whomsoever He pleases? Verily in that are signs for those who believe.’^{lxiv}

d. Through this the servant gets a chance to get close to Allah:

By Allah's provision of sustenance to the servant, the servant gets the wide opportunity to spend money on his way and to do other good deeds. Thereby the servant gets close to Allah. And those who have not been provided with sustenance or have been given less will concentrate on worshipping Allah by expecting to seek sustenance from Allah. Almighty Allah says: إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُم رِزْقًا فَاتَّبِعُوا عِندَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ‘Those whom you worship besides Allah have no power to give you your sustenance, therefore seek your sustenance from Allah, and worship Him. And be grateful to Him, for to Him you shall be returned.’^{lxv}

e. The variation of superiority in terms of sustenance is test from Allah:

Almighty Allah tests the people in the world with the variation of abundance between them. He wants to see, who does righteous deeds and who disobeys Him. Through this, Allah honours some and humiliates others. Allah says: فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ ‘As for man, when his Rabb tests him through giving him honor and gifts, he says: ‘My Rabb has honored to me.’ But when He tests him by restricting his subsistence, he says: ‘My Rabb has humiliated me.’^{lxvi}

7.0 Conclusion:

Researching about the creation of Almighty Allah is very important and one of the fruitful activities of human life. Only those who have keen vision and who remember Allah are able to attain the good fortune of this research. And it was discovered to them that Almighty Allah has not created anything in vain. He says: إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُوعًا وَعَلَىٰ جُوهِهِمْ

‘Behold, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men of understanding. Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and meditate on the creation of the heavens and the earth. Then cry out: “Our Rabb! You have not created this in vain. Glory to You! Give us salvation from the punishment of Fire.”^{lxvii}

ⁱ Although we consider inanimate objects, sky, water, air, soil, etc. as the material world, they are all alive in the eyes of the great creator Allah. They have the ability to laugh, cry and speak. Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an: *لَسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ خَلِيقًا عَظِيمًا* ‘The seven heavens, the earth and all beings therein declare His glory. There is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification. The fact is that He is very Forbearing, Forgiving.’ (Surah Al Isra, Verse: 44).

ⁱⁱ Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 74.

ⁱⁱⁱ Surah Al Fatir, Verse: 27.

^{iv} The prophet ﷺ said about Black Stone: *الْبَلَدُ بِيضًا مِمَّا كَانَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَسَوَّدَتْهُ خَطَايَا بَنِي آدَمَ* ‘The Black Stone came down from Paradise and was whiter than milk, so the sins of the children of Adam blackened it.’ (Tirmidhi, Abu Isa Muhammad bin Isa, **Jami'ut Tirmidhi** (Riyadh: Baitul Afkarid Dawliyyah, Undated), Hadith no-877.) *عن ابن عباسٍ، عن أبيه، عن النبي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: أُخِذَ جَبَلٌ يُحِبُّنَا وَنُحِبُّهُ،* he said: ‘Uhud is a mountain that loves us and we love it.’ (Bukhari, Muhammad bin Ismail, **As Sahih** (Riyadh: Darus Salam, 1417 H.), Chapter: Zakat, Hadith no- 1481.) *خَيْرُ مَاءٍ عَلَى وَجْهِ الْأَرْضِ مَاءُ زَمْزَمَ، فِيهِ طَعَامٌ مِنَ الطَّعْمِ، وَ* The prophet ﷺ said about Zamzam well: ‘The best water on the face of the earth is the water of Zamzam, in which there is food and a cure for sickness.’ (Tabarani, Abul Qasim Sulaiman Ibn Ahmad, **Al Mu'jamul Kabir** (Cairo: Maktabatu Ibn Taymiyyah, 1983 A.D.), Volume 11, P. 98, Hadith no- 11167; Albani, Muhammad Nasiruddin, **Sahih al-Jamius Saghir wa Ziadatuh** (Beirut: Al Maktabul Islami, 1988 A.D.), Hadith no- 3322.

^v Tirmidhi, ibid, Hadith no-3369.

^{vi} Ibnul Qayyim, Shamsuddin Abu Abdullah, **Jadul Ma'ad** (Beirut: Muassasatur Risalah, 2009 A.D.), P. 17-19.

^{vii} Surah Al I'la, Verses: 16-17.

^{viii} Muslim, Ibn Hajjaj Al Qusayri, **As Sahih** (Beirut: Darul Fikr, 2003 A.D.), Hadith no- 671.

^{ix} Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Virtues of prayer at Masjid of Makkah and Madinah, Hadith no- 1190; Asqalani, Ahmad bin Ali ibn Hajar, **Fathul Bari** (Beirut: Al Maktabatus Salafiyyah, Undated), Volume 3, P. 63-68.

^x Allah Ta'ala mentions the mountains of Safa and Marwa as His signs. (Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 158.); There are hadiths about the Haram area of Makkah and Madinah. (Albani, ibid, Hadith no- 1521.)

^{xi} Surah Az Zumar, Verse: 21.

^{xii} Surah Ar R'ad, Verse: 04.

^{xiii} Surah Ibrahim, Verse: 24; Bayzavi, Nasir uddin Abul Khair Abdullah, **Anwarut Tanzil wa Asrarut Ta'beel** (Beirut: Daru Ehiya Atturasil Arabi, Undated), Volume 3, P. 198.

^{xiv} Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Food, Hadith no- 5444.

^{xv} Surah An Noor, Verse: 45.

^{xvi} Surah Al Fatir, Verse: 28.

^{xvii} Surah Al Hajj, Verse: 36; Surah Al Gashiah, Verse: 17.

^{xviii} Rasul ﷺ says: *والخَيْرُ مَعْقُودٌ فِي نَوَاصِي الْخَيْلِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ* ‘Camels are a source of honor for their owners, sheep are a blessing, and goodness is tied to the forelocks of horses until the Day of Resurrection.’ (Ibn Majah, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazid, **Sunanu Ibn Majah**, Riyadh: Baitul Afkarid Dawliyyah, Undated.), Hadith no- 2305.

^{ix} Surah Al Isra, Verse: 70.

^{xx} Qurtubi, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ahmad, **Al Jami' li Ahkamil Qur'an (Tafsir e Qurtubi)** (Beirut: Muassasatur Risalah, 2006 A.D.), Volume 13, P. 127.

^{xxi} According to a group of scholars, angels are superior to humans. Because it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an that- *لَيْسَ عِبَادٌ* (Angles) they are (but) servants raised to honour.’ (Surah Ambiah, Verse: 26). In this verse, Allah Ta'ala mentions the angels as honorable. They have no faults; they do what Allah says. As Allah says: *لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ* ‘who never disobey Allah's command and who promptly do what they are commanded to do.’ (Surah At Tahrir, Verse: 6). In addition, it is mentioned in the hadith, the group of angels who remember Allah is better than the people who remember Allah. (Allah says) *وَأَنْ دَكَّرْنِي فِي مَلَأِ دَكَّرْتُهُ فِي مَلَأِ خَيْرٍ مِنْهُمْ*.

better than they.’ (Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Tawheed, Hadith no- 7405). Through all the verses and hadiths, they prove that angels are superior to humans.

According to another group of scholars, Humans are better than angels, especially righteous believers are better than angels. Because they are mentioned as the best of creation in the Holy Qur’an. Almighty Allah says: *إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ* ‘Those who have faith and do righteous deeds they are the best of creatures.’ (Surah Al Bayinah, Verse: 7).

Besides, it is mentioned in the hadith that angels spread wings for students who acquire knowledge. Rasul ﷺ says: *وَأَنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَهْتَأُونَ لِمَنْ يَلْتَمِسُ عِلْمَهُ وَأَنْ يَبْصُرَ* ‘And the angels lower their wings to the seeker of knowledge, satisfied with what he does.’ (Sijistani, Abu Dawud, Sulaiman Ibn Ashas, *As Sunan* (Beirut: Darul Fikr, 2005 A.D., Hadith no- 3641). All these verse and hadith prove that humans are better than angels, especially believers and righteous people. However, according to another group of scholars, these comparisons are fragmentary, in many aspects humans are superior, and in many aspects angels are superior. Neither can be said to be better than the other in a specific way and overall sense. (Qurtubi, ibid, Volume 1, P. 430-432)

^{xxii} Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 30. The Prophet said All these verses and hadiths prove that people are better than angels, especially people who believe and do good deeds.

^{xxiii} Ibn Kasir, Imaduddin Abul Fida Ismail, *Tafsirul Qur'anil Azim, (Tafsir Ibn Kasir)* (Karachi: Qadimi Qutubkhana, Undated), Volume 1, P. 97.

^{xxiv} Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 29.

^{xxv} Surah Luqman, Verse: 20.

^{xxvi} Maududi, Abul A'la, Translated by Abdul Mannan Talib, *Tafhimul Qur'an* (Dhaka: Adunik Publications, 2006 A.D.), Volume 11, P. 123-124.

^{xxvii} Surah At Teen, Verse: 04

^{xxviii} Surah Ar Rum, Verse: 22.

^{xxix} Surah Al Hujurat, Verse: 13.

^{xxx} Surah An Nahl, Verse: 72.

^{xxxi} Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Beginning of Salam, Hadith no- 6227.

^{xxxii} Sijistani, Abu Dawud, ibid, Chapter: Sunnah, Hadith no- 4693.

^{xxxiii} Surah Al Hujurat, Verse: 13.

^{xxxiv} Baihaqi, Abu Bakar Ahmad Bin Hussain, *Al Jame li shuabil Iman* (Riyadh: Maktabatur Rushd, 2003 A.D.), Volume 07, P. 132, Hadith no- 4774. The hadith is Sahih. Albani, Nasir Uddin, *Gayatul Maram fi Takhriji Hadisil Halal and Haram* (Beirut: Al Maktubul Islami, 1980 A.D.), P. 190, Hadith no- 313.

^{xxxv} Surah Al Mujadalah, Verse: 11.

^{xxxvi} Although there is considerable disagreement about whether faith increases or decreases. Imam Bukhari R. and Most of others scholars are of the opinion that one's faith increases due to good deeds and that one's faith decreases due to sins. According to Imam malik R. and others some scholars, faith only increases due to good deeds, faith does not decrease. According to Imam Abu Hanifah R. and others some scholars, fundamentally, there is no deficiency or increase in faith. Rather, due to good deeds and sins, the strength of faith increases and decreases. (Al 'Ainy, Badruddin, Abu Muhammad Mahmud bin Ahmad, *Umdatul Qari*, (Beirut: Darul Fikr, Undated), Volume 1, P. 107-108.)

^{xxxvii} Surah An Nisa, Verse: 95.

^{xxxviii} Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Dignity and Status, Hadith no- 3559.

^{xxxix} Surah Al Fatir, Verse: 32.

^{xl} Surah Az Zumar, Verse: 09.

^{xli} Surah Yousuf, Verse: 76.

^{xlii} Surah Al Mujadalah, Verse: 11.

^{xliii} Surah An Nisa, Verse: 34.

^{xliv} Surah Al An'am, Verse: 86.

^{xlv} Surah Al Hajj, Verse: 75.

^{xlvi} Allah says about the comparative superiority of the prophets and messengers: *بَلِّغْ الرِّسَالَاتِ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخُ فِي سُفُوفِهِمْ مِنْ كَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ وَرَفَعْنَا* ‘These are the messengers, We have exalted some above others. To some Allah spoke directly; others He raised high in ranks.’ (Surah Al Baqara, Verse: 253).

Allah says about the superiority of Muhammad ﷺ: *وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا* ‘And great indeed is the grace of Allah upon you.’ (Surah An Nisa, Verse: 113.). There is a hadith about the excellence of Muhammad ﷺ. Rasul ﷺ says: *أَنَا سَيِّدُ وَلَدِ آدَمَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَأَوَّلُ شَافِعٍ وَأَوَّلُ مُشَفِّعٍ* ‘I am the master of the children of Adam on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first for whom the grave will open, and the first to intercede and the first to be accepted.’ Muslim, ibid, Hadith no- 2278.

However, discussion of such mutual comparative superiority is prohibited in the hadith. (Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: Conflict, Hadith no- 2412; Chapter: Tafseer, Hadith no- 4604.) There are different opinions among the Muhaddithin regarding its legality and illegality. Asqalani, ibid, Volume 6, P. 452.

^{xvii}Company is the translation of the Arabic word Sahabi (صحابي). The word sahabi (صحابي) is derived from the Arabic word suhbah (صحبة), which literally means to be associated with, to get close to, to take companionship etc. (Umar, Ahmad Mokhtar, *M'ujamul Lugatil Arabiyyah*, Cairo: Alamal Kutub, 2008 A.D., Volume 1, P. 1268.) Terminologically Companions (صحابي) are defined as those who saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the state with faith and died on faith. In this case, it does not matter whether the period of meeting and companionship with the Prophet ﷺ was short or long, participating in battle with him or not, even if one could not see him with his own eyes for any logical reason such as blindness, he would be considered a companion. This is the definition accepted by most Islamic scholars. (Asqalani, Ahmad bin Ali ibn Hajar, *Al Isabatu Fi Tamizis Sahaba*, Cairo: Daru Sadir, 1328 H., Volume 1, P. 08.)

^{xviii}Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqi Uddin Ahmad, *Mazm'ul Fatwa* (Riyadh: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, 2004 A.D.), Volume 4, P. 527.

^{xlix} Surah Al Hadid, Verse: 10.

ⁱ Tahavi, Abu Jafar Ahmad, *Aqidatut Tahavi* (India: Darul Ulum Deoband, Undated), P. 145-146.

ⁱⁱ Qurtubi, ibid, Volume 10, P. 344.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bukhari, ibid, Chapter: The virtues of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, Hadith no- 3650.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Surah Ale 'Imran, Verse: 110.

^{lv} Surah Al Baqarah, Verse: 47; Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir, *Jami'ul Bayan an Tafseer Ail Qur'an, (Tafseer Tabari)*, (Cairo: Markazul Buhus wad Dirasatul 'Arabiyyah wal Islamiyyah, 2001 A.D.), Volume 1, P. 629.

^{lv} Surah Saba, Verse: 36.

^{lvi} Surah An Nahl, Verse: 71.

^{lvii} Surah Ar R'ad, Verse: 04.

^{lviii} Shazify, Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rahman Yousuf, *Mabahithul Mufadalati fil Aqidah* (Cairo: Daru Ibn Affan, Undated), P. 20-24.

^{lix} Qurafi, Shihabuddin Abu Abbas, *Al Furuq* (Beirut: Resalah Publishers, 2003 A.D.), Volume 2. P. 371-402.

^{lx} Surah An Nisa, Verse: 32.

^{lxi} Surah Al Isra, Verse: 21.

^{lxii} Surah Az Zukhruf, Verse: 32.

^{lxiii} Surah Ash Shura, Verse: 27.

^{lxiv} Surah Ar Rum, Verse: 37.

^{lxv} Surah Al Ankabut, Verse: 17.

^{lxvi} Surah Al Fajr, Verses: 15-16.

^{lxvii} Surah Ale 'Imran, Verses: 190-191.