

175828 - Is it permissible to use the phrases the “Holy Qur’an” and the “Holy Prophet”?

the question

I recently learned that saying “the Holy Qur’an” and “the Holy Prophet” are phrases that are not valid, because they are not narrated in the Qur’an and Sunnah. The Qur’an describes itself as kareem (noble) and ‘azeem (great), but nowhere in it does it say that it is holy (muqaddas). Is use of this phrase narrated from any of the early generations? Similarly, is saying “the Holy Prophet” an innovation (bid‘ah)? Is this phrase of Sufi origin?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

With regard to the meaning of the word muqaddas (holy) in Arabic, there is no reason at all to disallow using the word holy to describe the Qur’an or the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). The most significant meanings of this word include blessed and purified, both of which are descriptions that may be applied to the Qur’an and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

It says in Lisan al-‘Arab (6/168): Muqaddas (holy) means blessed. Al-Ard al-Muqaddasah (the Holy Land) is purified. Al-Farraa’ said: Al-Ard al-Muqaddasah (the Holy Land) is pure; it is Damascus, Palestine and part of Jordan. It may be said ard muqaddasah (holy land), meaning blessed. This is the view of Qataadah, and was also the view of Ibn al-A‘raabi. End quote.

The Qur’an is more deserving of being called pure and holy than any other speech, for it is pure and free of any faults or shortcomings; it is holy and free of any error or of any resemblance to the speech of humans. Yet despite that, we think that describing it in such terms does not mean that it can be called al-kitaab al-muqaddas (the holy book) as a title or name for it, as the Christians do with their scripture, because we do not know of such a usage from the early

generations, and this way of naming is not known from them. There is also the fear that it may be a kind of imitating or resembling the way in which the people of the Book refer to their book.

See also the answer to question no. [176046](#).

Secondly:

From what we have quoted above, it seems that the word al-muqaddas (holy) is not applicable only to Allah, may He be exalted; rather it may be used to refer to some created things that are deserving of this description.

In al-Furooq al-Lughawiyyah (p. 125), by Abu Hilaal al-‘Askari, the author narrates from someone else concerning the differentiation between tasbeeh (glorifying) and taqdees (sanctifying or declaring holy): To sum up, taqdees is not applicable only to Allah, may He be glorified; rather it may also be used with regard to human beings. So it may be said Fulaan rajul muqaddas (lit. So-and-so is a holy man) if what is meant is to say that he is far removed from anything that may undermine his good character, and to describe him as good, but we cannot say rajul musabbah (from the word tasbeeh). In fact, the word muqaddas may be used also with regard to entities that do not possess reason, so one may say, Qaddasa Allahu rooha fulaan (may Allah sanctify the soul of So-and-so), but one would not say sabbahahu (from the word tasbeeh) in this case.

An example of that is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “enter the Holy Land” [al-Maa’idah 5:21], meaning al-ard al-muqaddasah, which is the land of ash-Shaam (Greater Syria). End quote.

In Tafseer as-Sa’di (p. 449) it says: “Say, [O Muhammad], The Pure Spirit [rooh al-qudus] has brought it down” [an-Nahl 16:102] – namely Jibreel (as), the angelic messenger who is to be declared above any fault, betrayal or ills.

And Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “O my people, enter the Holy Land [al-ard al-muqaddasah] which Allah has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allah 's cause] and [thus] become losers” [al-Maa’idah 5:21].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Here Allah, may He be exalted, tells us that Moosa said: “O my people, enter the Holy Land” that is, the pure [land].

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/75).

Ibn ‘Aashoor (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The holy land is that which is purified and blessed; in other words, it is that which Allah has blessed.

End quote from at-Tahreer wa’t-Tanweer (6/162).

Thirdly:

Both descriptions – blessed and purified – apply to the Qur’an and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

1. “blessed” (mubaarak)

1. With regard to the Qur’an, it is described as blessed (mubaarak) in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“[This is] a blessed [mubaarak] Book which We have revealed to you”

[Saad 38:29].

1. With regard to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he is blessed in his message, his actions, his person and his relics, even after his death.

Shaykh Sa‘eed ibn Wahf al-Qahtaani (may Allah bless him) said: The things that are blessed (mubaarak) are of several types, including the following:

1. The Qur’an is blessed, i.e., there is much blessing and goodness in it, because in it there is that which is good in this world and the hereafter. Seeking blessing (barakah) from the Qur’an is done by reciting it as it should be recited, and acting upon what it says in the manner that is pleasing to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.
2. The Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is blessed. Allah has placed blessing in him, and this blessing is of two types:

1. Intangible blessing, which is what is attained of the blessings of his message in this world and the hereafter, for Allah sent him as a mercy to the worlds, to bring people forth from the depths of darkness to the light; he has permitted to them all that is good and has forbidden to them all that is bad; he is the final Messenger, and his religion is one of ease and tolerance.
2. Tangible blessing, which is of two types:

The first type is blessing in his actions, which is what Allah honoured him with of dazzling miracles which proved that he was speaking the truth.

The second type is blessing in his person and physical relics. This is what Allah blessed him with of blessing in his person. Hence the Sahaabah sought blessing from him during his lifetime and from what remained of relics after his death.

End quote from Noor as-Sunnah wa Zulumaat al-Bid'ah (p. 49, 50).

1. “purified” (mutahhar)

1. The Qur'an is described as purified, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “A Messenger from Allah, reciting purified scriptures’ [al-Bayyinah 98:2].

At-Tabari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This means: he recites scriptures that are purified and free of falsehood. End quote from Tafseer at-Tabari (24/540).

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “purified (mutahharah) means: free of shirk and of any call to reprehensible manners and attitudes, and free of everything bad, because they are sublime and holy.

Tafseer Juz' 'Amma (p. 281).

1. With regard to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he is also purified, because Allah, may He be exalted, purified him inwardly.

Abu'l-Qaasim as-Suhayli (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The correct view regarding the Prophet (peace be upon him), in my opinion, is that he is mutatahhar [purifies himself] and

mutahhar [purified]. As for him being mutatahhar, that is because he was a human being who did ghusl to cleanse himself from janaabah and did wudoo' to cleanse himself after relieving himself and the like. As for him being mutahhar [purified], that is because he was cleansed inwardly, and his heart was opened and filled with wisdom and faith. Therefore he is mutahhar [purified] and mutatahhar [purifies himself].

End quote from ar-Rawd al-Unuf (2/199).

Even though the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is purified and blessed, and far above anything that could be regarded as a fault or character flaw, or could undermine and detract from his status, we do not think that he can be called holy (muqaddas), or that this word should be used in conjunction with his name. We do not know of any of the earlier generations or the scholars and those who know and follow the Sunnah who spoke of him (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in these terms, and we do not know of him being called that in any of the religious texts. There is the fear that this may open the door to exaggerating about him in ways that are contrary to his teachings, and may cause people to fall into what he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade when he said: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only His slave, so say: 'the slave of Allah and His Messenger.'" Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3261).

AL-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: And Ibn at-Teen said: What is meant by his words "do not exaggerate in praising me" is: do not praise me as the Christians praised [the Messiah], to the extent that some of them exaggerated about 'Eesaa and made him a god alongside Allah, and some of them claimed that he is God whilst others claimed that he was the son of God. End quote from Fath al-Baari.

And Allah knows best.