

Dear friends, Assalamo Alaykum,

Our success in this world and the next depends upon our relationship with our Prophet (pbuh). We know Allah only through the prophet and we have been assured of Allah's bounties and mercies only if we are prophet's true followers.

The sad part is that the exalted position of Syedna wa Maulana Muhammad sallalaaho alaihi wasallam is not fully evident to our limited faculties. My endeavor has been to enlighten myself and all those who are close to me about the greatness of the one whom رب العالمين (Rabbul Aalameen- The Sustainer and Cherisher of all the worlds) has sent as رحمة للعالمين (Rahmatul LilAalameen- Mercy to all the worlds).

I am sure this short article about the infallibility of the Prophets (peace and blessings on all of them) will be useful in bringing us closer to the beloved of Allah and hence closer to Allah the Almighty.

Infallibility (Sinless-ness) of the Holy Prophets (Peace and Blessings upon them all)

All the schools of Islamic thoughts (including Shias) do concur on the principle of infallibility of the prophets. Except some insignificant small groups / sects, all schools agree on the basic truth that all prophets have been free from mistakes, errors and sins.

However recently I observed that even amongst our knowledgeable friends, the right concept regarding prophet-hood is not what it should be. The points which are raised to show the fallibility of the prophets are almost similar to the slanders of the anti-Islamic forces. Many of the objections raised from within are just the same as those of the outsiders. I get extremely shocked and stunned.

The deniers of infallibility quote from Hadith books and give examples of some events mentioned in Quran that prophet(s) made such and such mistakes and sins. Their objections are mainly due to misunderstanding of the finer subtleties in the book(s). Sometimes their opinions make me shudder. How can any of the prophets (peace and blessings on them) do wrong or be at fault?

First of all, let us be clear that though all the prophets are human beings, they have many attributes which make them much elevated than other human-beings. They are chosen and selected by the Almighty to guide all other human beings and they are in direct communication with God. Hence the phrase "to err is human" does not fit in case of the prophets. Their mission has been "to change error-prone into error-free beings". Having potential to commit sins and still not being fallible is what makes a human being superior to angels. Prophet's role is to pick from the bottom of the pit and put the mankind to heavens.

Though I am fully aware of my limited knowledge, I have tried in this short article to clarify some misconceptions in this regard. For presenting my views, I am restricting my arguments based only on verses from the Holy Quran. It is the fundamental principle of the science of FIQH (jurisprudence) that if a Hadith contradicts the basic tenets described in Quran, that Hadith should be discarded. Either the Hadith is concocted or if correct, it is not properly understood or interpreted.

I am presenting below only few points hoping they will suffice. Please read them carefully and critically keeping all sorts of bias away from your mind.

Point #1 Committing sins or mistakes can be due to two reasons viz. NAFS or IBLIS:

Due to NAFS (lower self)

Quran says in Verse 12:53: ان النفس لامارة بالسوء الا مارحم ربي

".the (human) nafs certainly incites evil, UNLESS my lord does bestow His Mercy

Does any one think that Allah will not bestow this mercy to HIS most important creations – those who have been specially chosen to be the role models and source of guidance for all mankind?

Due to satanic influences

There is a beautiful conversation between Allah and Iblis in the Quran (verses 15:39 to 15:42)

قال رب بما اغويتني لازين لهم في الارض ولاغوينهم اجمعين - الا عبادك منهم المخلصين

قال هذا صراط علي مستقيم - ان عبادي ليس لك عليهم سلطان الا من اتبعك من الغاوين

*He (Iblis) said: My Lord, Because You have sent me astray, verily I shall adorn the path of error for them on the earth, and shall deceive them all. **Except those of them who are Your perfectly devoted Servants.***

(Allah) said: This (Way of My sincere servants) is indeed a Way that leads straight to Me.

Lo! as for My slaves, you have NO way into them except the wrong-doers who follow you.
Is it not clear from the above conversation that Satan or his off-springs - the whispering evil makers can not disturb or affect the messengers (the true slaves and perfectly devoted servants of Allah) in any way?

Point #2 Now let us see from another angle.

Quran (47:33) says يا ايها الذين امنوا اطيعوا الله واطيعوا الرسول ولا تنقلبوا اعمالكم

"O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and do not ruin your deeds (by disobeying him)."

Another verse (4:80) من يطع الرسول فقد اطاع الله

"Whoever obeys the Messenger, he indeed obeys Allah."

Another verse (76:24): ولا تطع منهم اثما او كفورا

".and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one."

Since the prophets are to be obeyed, and the sinners are NOT to be obeyed, it concludes that prophets were NOT sinners or wrong-doers. In other words, they were infallible (Ma'soom) and sinless.

Point #3 Quran says (59:7) وما اتاكم الرسول فخذوه وما نهاكم عنه فانتهوا

And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it; and from whatever he forbids you, keep back."

This clearly shows that WHATEVER the Prophet (pbuh) offered must be accepted unconditionally and without any doubt. This means that the permission or prohibition of the Holy Prophet was always in accordance with the will of Allah and was always favored by Him. It proves that the Holy Prophet was protected (Ma'soom). Otherwise no follower will obey the commands of a man who is fallible.

Please also note that this verse is not specific ONLY to religious injunctions. This is a basic rule that if no exclusion or condition or particularization has been mentioned in conjunction with a text of Quran, it covers all aspects.

Point #4 Quran says (3:31) قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحببكم الله ويغفر لكم ذنوبكم والله غفور رحيم

(O prophet) tell (people) "If you really love Allah, then follow me (the prophet), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins."

Here the love of Allah is made **dependent** on following the Prophet of Islam. Both sides of love are included in it. If you love Allah follow the Prophet; if you follow the Prophet, Allah will love you. Does it not show that the Prophet is free from any type of blemish?

Not only the commands of the Prophet, but also all his decisions are protected from error.

Another verse (4:65):

فلا وربك لا يؤمنون حتى يحكموك فيما شجر بينهم ثم لا يجدوا في انفسهم حرجا مما قضيت ويسلموا تسليما
*But no by thy Lord! They can have no (real) Faith until they make thee (prophet) judge in ALL disputes between them and find in their souls **no resistance** against thy (prophet's) decisions but **accept them with the fullest conviction.***

If ALL the decisions of the prophet should be accepted unconditionally, then the prophet should be protected from error in ALL his decisions. It is so simple to understand if one keeps his heart and mind open.

Point #5 Quran says (Verses 53:1 to 53:5)

والنجم اذا هوى - ماضل صاحبكم وماغوى - وماينطق عن الهوى - ان هو الا وحي يوحى - علمه شديد القوى

*By the Star when it sets, your companion (i.e., Prophet) **does not err/wander, nor is he deceived, Nor does he speak out of his desire; It is no less than a revelation that is revealed. The Mighty in Power has taught him.***

The above verses not only prove that the Prophet did not err or sin, but also testifies that all his speeches are revelation (either directly or indirectly). These verses unequivocally clear the Messenger of Allah from EVER saying ANYTHING of his own desire. Subhan-a-Allah !

I can go on citing more and more verses from the Holy Quran. Verses if understood correctly can convince any thinking person and make him realize that prophets and messengers are free from mistakes, errors, transgressions, wrongdoings, lapses, slip-ups, flaws, faults and sins. Sin is darkness. The most important contribution of these holy entities - especially our Lord and Patron (pbuh) is to bring the entire humanity from darkness to light. Is it possible that these light-towers, these beacon personalities can ever be wrong, can they ever project darkness at any moment? Until we have very clear concept about our greatest benefactors, we are bound to go astray. May Allah protect us all from all such ill conceived thoughts! Aameen!

Before I conclude, let me answer a serious doubt raised recently by a friend of mine. His comments were that if the Prophet (pbuh) was immune from sin or mistakes, why did he repeatedly seek countless **Istighfar** (pardoning) from Almighty.

This type of apprehension and misconception should not raise its head in any believer's mind. Purpose of **Istighfar** is manifold. For simple clarification, I will request everyone to recite and ponder Verse 128 from **Surah Taubah** on regular basis. This great verse (9:128) describes our great prophet (pbuh) in a very splendid and glorious manner. Allah addresses all human-beings and tells **لقد جاءكم رسول من انفسكم** (Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves). Here Allah puts forward the attribute of Prophet as a human being. Remaining words emphasize how much exalted is he compared to all other human beings. He is then described as **عزيز عليه ما عنتم** (Grievous to him the suffering and distress of you all). Then the Almighty uses the term **حريص عليكم** (anxious over you all). Finally the attributes used for the prophet are **بالمؤمنين رؤوف رحيم** (excessively loving and merciful to the believers). All those who are familiar with Quranic terms know that **Ra'oof** and **Raheem** are attributes of Allah. Here Allah Himself is designating these two attributes to HIS Rasool as well. This verse shows prophet's extreme concern for the betterment of condition and elimination of all distresses (in this world as well as in the next) from believers' lives. Hence it should be very clear that when Syedna wa Maulana (Our Lord and Patron-pbuh) did **Istighfar**, his seeking for pardon is very much for us – we, the wrong-doers, trouble makers, good-for-nothing, cowards, arrogant, greedy for worldly gains and shameless sinners of this Ummah.

May Allah the Almighty make us worthy of being Ummati (true followers) of this great Prophet and Messenger (pbuh)! Aameen!

(Author of this article can be contacted at [sayeed.akhtar@gmail.com](mailto:sayed.akhtar@gmail.com))