

Did the Messengers or Prophets fall into minor sins?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Questioner: Did the Messengers fall into minor sins?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ): Before answering this question right away, [I'd like to say that] I believe it is a non-issue as they say today, because it is not connected to methodology or to the rectification of our 'Aqeedah or actions. It is only something connected to those Messengers or Prophets who preceded the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)¹, so I do not hold that questions like this should be given much notice, but [having said that] we have to answer it to disclose the knowledge we have regarding this issue.

We believe that the unequivocal infallibility of the Prophets and Messenger is, firstly, regarding conveying the da'wah, and, secondly, from knowingly falling into major sins.

As for falling into minor sins which do not result in anything except [to show] an absence of absolute perfection then there is no harm in some of that occurring by the Prophets and Messengers—and this is so that it remains established in the hearts of the believers that absolute perfection is for Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, Alone, Who has no partner.

And there are many parts and proofs in the Qur'aan establishing this reality concerning more than one Prophet or Messenger. [For example] the story of Aadam (عليه السلام)² when the Lord of the Worlds prohibited him from eating from the tree, and His Saying, **“And Aadam disobeyed his Lord and erred.”**³, and the Noble Qur'aan saying concerning our Prophet (عليه السلام), **“He frowned and turned away,”**⁴ **“May Allaah pardon you, [O Muhammad]. Why did you give them permission [to remain behind]?”**⁵ All of this proves that it is possible that a Prophet may be susceptible to minor sins which do not befit the rank of Prophethood—but are they blemished by that? The answer is no, because these are human traits.

[For example]: is a Prophet or Messenger criticised for being susceptible to that which people in general are susceptible to, like making an unintentional mistake or forgetting? We say no, there is nothing preventing the fact that a Messenger or Prophet may be susceptible to such things, because such things do not affect the station of da'wah which the Messengers were sent to all mankind with.

So his saying (عليه السلام) reported by the two Shaykhs from Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood, may Allaah be pleased with them both, [in which he stated that] the Prophet prayed five rak'ahs for the midday

¹ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

² (عليه السلام) (alaihis-salaam) Peace be upon him

³ سورة طه - Soorah Taa Haa [20:121]

⁴ سورة عبس - Soorah Abasa [80:1]

⁵ سورة التوبة - Soorah at-Tawbah [9:43]

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prayer, so when he gave salaam they said, 'You prayed five,' so he performed two prostrations of forgetfulness and then said (عليه السلام), 'I am only a man like you, I forget as you do, so when I forget, remind me.'⁶

So it does not harm the status of Prophethood or that of being a Messenger that something should transpire from them which had it not would have been more perfect—but absolute perfection is for Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic.

It would be more perfect if the Messenger (عليه السلام) did not forget, but Allaah's Wisdom necessitated that he did, but this forgetting does not affect the da'wah because he does not forget that which is connected to conveying the message [da'wah], and our Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, points to this reality by His Saying, the Most High, "We will make you recite and you will not forget, except what Allaah should will,"⁷ like [for example] an aayah which he had conveyed to the people which he might forget, i.e., he has conveyed the Message and fulfilled the trust [that was upon him] ... it is possible that after performing this obligatory conveyance [of the Message] the Messenger (عليه السلام) may forget something which he had [previously] conveyed to them, as occurs in Saheeh Bukhaaree where he entered the mosque one day and heard a person reciting the Qur'aan and so said, 'May Allaah have mercy on so and so, he reminded me of an aayah I had been made to forget.'⁸

So the Prophet's forgetting (عليه السلام) an aayah like this does not harm that which is connected to conveying it—because he already has—and that is why that person was able to recite it, and when he did, the Messenger (عليه السلام) remembered it.

So such forgetfulness does not harm him.

Likewise, some of the Prophets and Messengers falling into some minor sins does not harm them, because it does not turn those who are being called away from their call in opposition to falling into major sins, and for this reason, they are too exalted from falling into major sins to the exclusion of minor sins.

Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 188.

⁶ Bukhaaree and Muslim

⁷ سورة الأعلى - Soorah al-A'laa [87:6-7]

⁸ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree