


ALI 311: Reflections on the Infallibility of Prophet Muhammad (s):

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- Is 'Infallibility' the same as the Islamic Concept of Isma?
 - What are the logical proofs for the 'infallibility' of the Prophet?
 - Do all Muslims agree on the absolute infallibility of Rasullah or is there disagreements?
 - What about the many Quranic verses that seemingly contradict the Infallibility of Prophet?



Infallibility vs. Isma

- ‘The State of being incapable of committing errors or mistakes.
- A mas’som is a human being who can theoretically err if they wish, but in reality will never do so due to the divine knowledge and spiritual grace they enjoy

Can they sin?

• لَوْ تَقَوَّلَ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضَ الْأَقَاوِيلِ [٦٩:٤٤]

- And if the messenger were to invent any sayings in Our name,

• لَا أَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ [٦٩:٤٥]

- We should certainly seize him by his right hand,

• ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ [٦٩:٤٦]

- And We should certainly then cut off the artery of his heart: (49:44-46)



Do all Muslims agree on the Isma of all Prophets?

- Difference of opinion is based on the 2 'T's:
- TIME and TYPE
- Time: After receiving revelation
- Type: Depending on task

The Bi'that of the Prophet

- Problems in historical texts
- What the School of Ahlulbayt (as) says



The degrees (types) of Isma

1. Sinning and Disobedience
2. Receiving, preservation and propagation of revelation
3. Application of faith
4. Behavior and Conduct

Infallibility from sin and disobedience

- Trust
- Self-contradiction
- Misleading
- Many quranic verifications:

• مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ ۖ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ [٦:٨٧]

• (To them) and to their fathers, and progeny and brethren: We chose them, and we guided them to a straight way.

- دُلِّكَ هُدًى اللَّهُ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ [٦:٨٨]
- This is the guidance of Allah: He gives that guidance to whom He wishes, of His worshippers. If they were to join other gods with Him, all that they did would count for nothing. (6:87-88)

What about the 'error' verses?

• إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا [٤٨:١]

- Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory: **(48:1)**

• لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَبِئْسَ نِعْمَتُهُ عَلَيْكَ
وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا [٤٨:٢]

- That Allah may 'forgive' thee thy 'faults' of the past and those to follow; fulfil His favour to thee; and guide thee on the Straight Way; (48:1-2)

Protection of Revelation

- Purpose of revelation: Guidance for Mankind
 - عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا [٧٢:٢٦]
- He (alone) knows the Unseen, nor does He make any one acquainted with His Mysteries,-(72:26)
 - إِلَّا مَن ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ٧٢:٢٧
- Except a messenger whom He has chosen: and then He protects him from front and behind
 - لِّيَعْلَمَ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَخْصَىٰ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ٧٢:٢٨
- That He may know that they have (truly) brought and delivered the Messages of their Lord: and He surrounds (all the mysteries) that are with them, and takes account of every single thing.”(72:26-28)

What about the Gharanic story?

• أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ [٥٣:١٩]

- Have ye seen Lat. and 'Uzza, (53:19)

• وَمَنَاةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْأُخْرَىٰ [٥٣:٢٠]

- And another, the third (goddess), Manat?

How can this story be accepted? •

• قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ [٣٨:٨٢]

- (Iblis) said: "Then, by Thy power, I will put them all in the wrong

• إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ [٣٨:٨٣]

- Except Thy Servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy Grace).(38:82-83)



Application of faith

- ‘The Prophet making mistakes in prayers’
Sahih Bukhari, Vol 8, page 20 (published by Dar Al-jeel, Beirut)
Sahih Muslim, Vol 5, page 72 (dar al-qalam)
The Prophet forgets to pray salat Al-Asr
Sahih Bukhari, Vol 1, p154
The Prophet forgets to ritually cleanse himself
Sahih Al-Bukhari, Vol 1 p77
The Prophet prays with no ablution
Sahih Bukhari, vol1, p179. Muslim vol 6,p295

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- قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۚ ۳۳:۲۱

You have indeed in the Messenger of Allah
a the best exemplar for any one whose
hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and
who engages much in the Praise of
Allah.(33:21)

- فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ [۱۰۷:۴]
- So woe to the worshippers (107:4)
- الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ [۱۰۷:۵]
- Who take their prayers lightly (107:4-5)

Mannerism and Conduct

- The story of fertilization

Sahih Muslim Vol 7 hadith 2363

- وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ [٥٣:٣]
- Nor does he say (aught) of (his own) Desire.
[٥٣:٤] إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ
- It is no less than inspiration sent down to him (53:3-4)

• مَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

- Whatever the messenger brings to you adhere to and whatever he forbids deny (yourselves)
- فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٥﴾ النساء
- But no, by the Lord, they can have no (real) Faith, until they make thee judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against Thy decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction. (4:65)

So who frowned and turned away?

• عَبَسَ وَتَوَلَّى [٨٠:١]

• He frowned and turned away, (80:1)

• أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمَى [٨٠:٢]

• Because there came to him the blind man
(interrupting).

• وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَكَّى [٨٠:٣]

• But what could tell thee but that perchance he
might grow (in spiritual understanding)?

• أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرَى [٨٠:٤]

• Or that he might receive admonition, and the
teaching might profit him?