



In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Submitters Perspective

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Mistakes of the Messengers

[14:11] Their messengers said to them, "We are no more than humans like you..."

God gives us numerous examples in the Quran of mistakes made by the messengers—none are mistakes in the message they delivered, but rather in their personal actions. In fact more than half of the messengers who are discussed at any length in the Quran have at least one mistake recorded there.

Adam directly disobeyed God by eating from the forbidden tree:

We said, "O Adam, live with your wife in Paradise, and eat therefrom generously, as you please, but do not approach this tree, lest you sin." But the devil duped them, and caused their eviction.... (2:35-36)

Noah questioned God when his son was drowned in the flood:

Noah implored his Lord: "My Lord, my son is a member of my family, and Your promise is the truth. You are the wisest of the wise." He said, "O Noah, he is not of your family. It is unrighteous to ask Me for something you do not know. I enlighten you, lest you be like the ignorant." (11:45-46)

Abraham asked for forgiveness for his father who was an enemy of God:

....A mistake was committed by Abraham when he said to his father, "I will pray for your forgiveness, but I possess no power to protect you from **GOD**.... (60:4)

Jonah abandoned his mission thinking that God could not control him:

And Zan-Noon (Jonah, "the one with an 'N' in his name"), abandoned his mission in protest, thinking that we could not control him. He ended up imploring from the darkness (of the big fish's belly (21:87)

Joseph turned to someone other than God for help:

"O my prison mates, one of you will be the wine butler for his lord, while the other will be crucified.... He then said to the one to be saved "Remember me at your lord." Thus, the devil caused him to forget his Lord, and, consequently, he remained in prison a few more years. (12:41-42)

Moses killed a man:

...The one from his people called on him for help against his enemy. Moses punched him, killing him. He said, "This is the work of the devil; he is a real enemy, and a profound misleader." He said, "My Lord, I have wronged my soul. Please forgive me," and He forgave him.... (28:15-16)

Solomon forgot his prayer:

One day he became preoccupied with beautiful horses, until the night fell. He then said, "I enjoyed the material things more than I enjoyed worshiping my Lord, until the sun was gone.... (38:31-33)

David seems to have ruled using his own opinion when the brothers asked for a ruling on combining their sheep:

He said, "He is being unfair to you by asking to combine your sheep with his. Most people who combine their properties treat each other unfairly...."

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Afterwards, David wondered if he made the right judgment. He thought that we were testing him. He then implored his Lord for forgiveness, bowed down, and repented. We forgave him in this matter.... (38:25)

Interestingly the messenger who has the most mistakes mentioned in the Quran is the prophet **Muhammad**. Why should this be? Was God scandalizing him? Of course that does not make any sense, especially when God tells us in 68:4 that he had a great moral character. I can think of some very good reasons. First of all, unlike some of the other messengers his mistakes are of the kind that we are apt to make.

God willing none of us will ever kill anyone like Moses did and we are unlikely to be in a situation where we could issue a judgment like David, but we could easily make the kinds of errors in our personal relationships that Muhammad made and like most of us he was an idol worshiper before he was guided (40:66 and 93:7). So his errors are ones for us to learn from.

He almost leaned towards the disbelievers:

They almost diverted you from the revelations we have given you. They wanted you to fabricate something else, in order to consider you a friend. If it were not that we strengthened you, you almost leaned towards them just a little bit. Had you done that, we would have doubled the retribution for you in this life, and after death, and you would have found no one to help you against us. (17:73-75)

He feared the people rather than God:

Recall that you said to the one who was blessed by GOD, and blessed by you, "Keep your wife and reverence GOD," and you hid inside yourself

what GOD wished to proclaim. Thus, you feared the people, when you were supposed to fear only GOD.... (33:37)

He prohibited something that God made lawful to him in order to please others:

*O you prophet, why do you prohibit what **GOD** has made lawful for you, just to please your wives? **GOD** is Forgiver, Merciful. (66:1)*

He misjudged people, using human standards rather than God's:

He (Muhammad) frowned and turned away. When the blind man came to him. How do you know? He may purify himself. Or he may take heed, and benefit from the message. As for the rich man. You gave him your attention. Even though you could not guarantee his salvation. The one who came to you eagerly. And is really reverent. You ignored him. Indeed, this is a reminder. Whoever wills shall take heed. (80:1-12)

He judged too quickly, before letting God expose the true character of some people:

GOD has pardoned you: why did you give them permission (to stay behind), before you could distinguish those who are truthful from the liars? (9:43)

All of these errors show the same kinds of human weaknesses that we are all subject to, so these verses give us valuable lessons for our own lives. And indeed in verse 18:110 Muhammad is told to say "I am no more than a human like you."

I believe these verses do more, they provide good examples of why we cannot blindly follow the example of another human being, no matter who that person is. We must follow the scripture, the words of God, not the *sunnah* of any human being! (The *sunnah* are practices attributed to a messenger, and usually refer to practices attributed to Prophet Muhammad.)

And finally all of the mistakes of the messengers demonstrate to us how human they were. They make it clear that we can be totally human and still be absolutely devoted to God. We can all strive to be as good in our submission as the messengers:

Those who obey GOD and the messenger belong with those blessed by GOD—the prophets, the saints, the martyrs, and the righteous. These are the best company. (4:69)

Lisa

Experience with Traditional Islam

During my childhood in India, attending Friday sermons was quite an experience. The Imam (priest) would generally shout rhetoric at the top of his voice, to the point that I would sometimes be scared. As I grew up and began understanding and paying more attention, I figured he wasn't mad at me after all.

Even nowadays these sermons can sometimes be a waste of time or worse, they can be nonsense or even incendiary. Most of the people sleep through the sermon and are eager for it to be over. On the average in a mosque if there are a hundred people attending, it is a waste of a 100 man hours. What a criminal waste of time. That time should be used to provide spiritual guidance from the Quran or talk about contemporary issues as they relate to spiritual matters. It would be so nice if at every sermon, they took a few verses from the Quran and talked about that in detail.

Once I was attending a sermon with my daughters and the priest was saying that it is a bad thing to eat or even touch food with your left hand. He went on to say that people who do that are bad; they are shaitan (Satan)! Now both my daughters are left handed and they were shocked, hurt and angry at such a statement. I am sure they lost most of their enthusiasm to attend Friday sermons after that. They were shocked because they didn't expect the Quran to say any such nonsense – which it doesn't. So I had to explain to them it is may be 'weak or fake hadith' or something like that and not from the Quran.

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Maybe I have the wrong impression, but it seems that a lot of mosque dwellers are not sensitive to people's feelings. The Quran and the prophet encourage you to be nice to others. That even a smile is like an act of charity.

Where do you see such compassionate and gracious behavior in mosques nowadays? People don't smile. They are unfriendly almost to the point of being hostile. My wife and daughters complain that they are constantly badgered by someone or the other if even a speck of hair shows from their head cover – even during Salat! This attitude needs to change if our mosques are to be places where our youth go willingly and happily. Right now they are a place to be dreaded!

The other day my family was praying along with another family who are very traditional Muslims. One of the girls constantly kept pushing a single strand of hair back into my wife's head covering (believe it or not – right during prayer!!). It was obviously very annoying to my wife, let alone the fact that this girl was disrupting the prayer. I think she did it because she believes that she is more religious than my wife – a common misconception/prejudice among women who wear the hijab about women who don't.

After the prayer, we got into discussions of Arabic and Quran and Salat. I mentioned that a lot of Muslims don't know what they are saying in prayers. I said for example take the invocation 'Sami Allah huliman hamidah' (means 'God listens to those who praise him') which is said when you get up from after you bow down.

To my surprise, the girl who incessantly bothered my wife about that little speck of hair had no clue about that, nor did anyone in her Muslim family. By the way, they have been praying, and saying 'Sami Allah huliman hamidah' perhaps for the past 30 years or so.

As a kid I used to notice plaques in homes with Arabic calligraphy on them. They are still very popular. One of the most popular of these plaques is a pair of them. One says 'Allah' and there is one set right next to it, same size that says 'Muhammad'. As a kid I used to think they were two divine entities at par with each other.

Why, just recently my father gave me, with good intentions, a piece of printed paper that had drawings of shoes. I asked him what it was. He said it was the drawing of

the prophet's shoes. He recommended me, with good intentions obviously, to hang it in my house. He explained it was to drive away evil spirits. Now then, that is hero worship of the prophet taken to an extreme that could lead to shirk.

Try this. Next time you hear a Friday sermon, count how many times the prophet's name is taken and how many times God's name is taken. In my counts, God always has come second, unfortunately. It may not be so in your case – I hope not. But try it out just the same to test this statement of mine.

R. S.

[5:15] O people of the scripture, our messenger has come to you to proclaim for you many things you have concealed in the scripture, and to pardon many other transgressions you have committed. A beacon has come to you from GOD, and a profound scripture.

[5:16] With it, GOD guides those who seek His approval. He guides them to the paths of peace, leads them out of darkness into the light by His leave, and guides them in a straight path.

[22:54] Those who are blessed with knowledge will recognize the truth from your Lord, then believe in it, and their hearts will readily accept it. Most assuredly, GOD guides the believers in the right path.

* * * * *

What was the Prophet's shahadah?

Undoubtedly, the prophet Muhammad preached: 'There is no god beside God' and it is very clearly mentioned in the Quran:

[37:35] When they were told, 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah [There is no other god beside GOD], they turned arrogant.

Undoubtedly also, the prophet Muhammad never preached the corrupt version of the Shahadah (statement of faith) cherished by the hypocrites:

[63:1] When the hypocrites come to you they say, 'We bear witness that

you are the messenger of GOD. ' GOD knows that you are His messenger, and GOD bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.

Abraham was a messenger of God. Moses was a messenger of God. Jesus was a messenger of God. Muhammad was a messenger of God...

[3:144] Muhammad was no more than a messenger like the messengers before him. Should he die or get killed, would you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels, does not hurt GOD in the least. GOD rewards those who are appreciative.

How can some people still witness the messengership of Muhammad when he died 1400 years ago? Only God is everlasting, there is no god but God:

[18:110] Say, 'I am no more than a human like you, being inspired that your god is one god. Those who hope to meet their Lord shall work righteousness, and never worship any other god beside his Lord.'

Those who love to cherish the corrupt version of Shahadah should reflect on the following verse of the Quran:

[38:65] Say, 'I warn you; there is no other god beside GOD, the One, the Supreme.

Please remember Muhammad never preached himself as god beside God:

[3:79] Never would a human being whom GOD blessed with the scripture and prophethood say to the people, 'Idolize me beside GOD.' Instead, (he would say), 'Devote yourselves absolutely to your Lord alone,' according to the scripture you preach and the teachings you learn.

Despite this Quranic fact, some people will still love to cherish the corrupt version of the Shahadah never preached by Muhammad. Some will even turn arrogant like the Meccan

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disbelievers 1400 years ago if they hear the Quranic Shahadah preached by Muhammad:

[39:45] When GOD ALONE is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion. But when others are mentioned beside Him, they become satisfied.

[37:35] When they were told, 'Laa Elaaha Ella Allah [There is no other god beside GOD], ' they turned arrogant.

[37:36] They said, 'Shall we leave our gods for the sake of a crazy poet?'

M. I.

[33:62] This is GOD's eternal system (sunnah), and you will find that GOD's system is unchangeable.

[39:23] GOD has revealed herein the best Hadith; a book that is consistent, and points out both ways (to Heaven and Hell). The skins of those who reverence their Lord cringe therefrom, then their skins and their hearts soften up for GOD's message. Such is GOD's guidance; He bestows it upon whoever wills (to be guided). As for those sent astray by GOD, nothing can guide them.

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God willing, we are looking forward to seeing you all soon.