

Sources: This is based using the earliest and most widely accepted Islamic sources: the Hadith from Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. The Hadith can be found in: www.searchtruth.com

Many Muslims claim that Muhammad was sinless:

One scholar says: “The Prophet’s nature was pure through which came to him the word of God, meaning that the divine system of thought was alive in his own thought; the idea of divinity manifested itself in his thoughts because he was pure and holy.”¹

Another commentator says that “the belief that Prophets of Allah are not sinless poses a major problem for the majority of the Muslims. The Qur’an we have today came to us through the very mouth of the last Prophet of Allah, Muhammad (pbuh). If the Prophet is not sinless, the authenticity of the Qur’an is questionable. From a logical point of view and from the support of the Qur’anic texts, Prophets of Allah have to be sinless – free from sins, errors and mistakes, otherwise the Divine Plan would be defeated in its purpose!”²

But what did Muhammad himself say in the authentic traditions, the Hadith, about this?

a) Abu Huraira reported: “I heard Allah's Apostle saying, "By Allah! I ask for forgiveness from Allah and turn to Him in repentance more than seventy times a day." (Sahih alBukhari 8:319)

b) Muhammad prayed: “O Allah! Forgive me my sins that I did in the past or will do in the future, and also the sins I did in secret or in public.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari 9:482)

c) Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said: “There is (at times) some sort of shade upon my heart, and I seek forgiveness from Allah a hundred times a day.” (Sahih Muslim bk 35 no. 6522)

d) The Prophet used to invoke Allah at night, saying, "O Allah! ... Forgive me my sins that I did in the past or will do in the future, and also the sins I did in secret or in public." (Sahih Al Bukhari 9:482, 534, 590; 2:221)

e) The Prophet used to say in his bowing and prostrations, "(I honor Allah from all what (unsuitable things) is ascribed to Him. O Allah Our Lord! And all the praises are for You. O Allah! Forgive me)." (Sahih Al Bukhari 1:760)

f) Muhammad prayed: “O Allah! Wash away my sins with the water of snow and

hail, and cleanse my heart from all the sins as a white garment is cleansed from the filth, and let there be a long distance between me and my sins, as You made East and West far from each other.” (Sahih Al Bukhari 8:379 also 8:386, 388)

g) "When the Surat-An-Nasr, ‘When comes the Help of Allah and the conquest’, had been revealed to the Prophet he did not offer any prayer except that he said therein: ‘I testify the Uniqueness of our Lord, and all the praises are for Him: O Allah, forgive me!" (Sahih Al Bukhari 6:491, 492, 490)

h) The Prophet used to invoke Allah with the following invocation: “My Lord, forgive me my sins and my ignorance and my immoderation in all my matters, and what you know is in me. O Allah, forgive me my sins and my intention and my ignorance and my joking, and all that I have. O Allah, forgive me what I did before, and what I did after, and what I did secretly and what I did openly. You are the one who comes before and who comes after, and you are able to do all things.” (Sahih Al-Bukhari 8:407)

i) “The Prophet used to invoke Allah, saying, “O Allah, forgive me my sins and my ignorance and my immoderation in my matters, and what you know is in me. O Allah, forgive me my immoderation and my eagerness and my fault and my intention, and all that I have.” (alBukhari 8:408)

¹ Allamah Sayyid M.H. Tabataba'i *The Qur'an in Islam: Its Impact and Influence on the Life of Muslims* (London: Zahra Publications, 1987), 65

² Ali A. Khalfan “Are Prophets of Allah not Sinless?” <http://www.almujtaba.com/articles/qaed/000018.html>

j) On the day of judgement, the people will come to Muhammad and say: “O Muhammad! You are Allah's Apostle and the last of the prophets, and Allah forgave your early and late sins. (alBukhari 6:236; also 9:532.3, 601; 6:3; 8:570; 9:507)

Some Muslim scholars recognise that Muhammad was not sinless:

Commenting on Q.40:55, where Muhammad is told by Allah to ask forgiveness for his sin, Yusuf Ali states that “every mortal according to his nature and degree of spiritual enlightenment falls short of the perfect standard of Allah ... and should therefore ask Allah for forgiveness.”³

The former head of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Dr Ameer Ali admitted that Muhammad was not the “perfect model” as most Muslims believed. Asked if the prophet had character flaws, he replied: “Of course - you must look at him as a human being also.”⁴

Following outcries from other Muslim leaders, Dr Ali issued a statement two days later explaining his comments: “there are two dimensions to the Prophet's life; a human dimension and a prophetic dimension. The human dimension is the model of reality while the prophetic

dimension is a model for reality... I alluded to the incident about the blind man who came to visit the Prophet and was ignored by him because the Prophet was engaged with other matters. Later, Allah rebuked the Prophet for this behaviour. [Q.80:1-12]. I said that this was a manifestation of the human element of the Prophet which was later corrected by Allah. And I said humans are fallible, and only Allah is infallible. If we ignore the human dimension of the Prophet, we are in danger of elevating him as equal to Allah in terms of infallibility, which is shirk.”⁵

The Muslim scholar Ali Dashti said: “The Prophet Mohammad, far from claiming the infallibility and superhuman rank later attributed to him by others, knew himself to be prone to sin.”⁶

CONCLUSION:

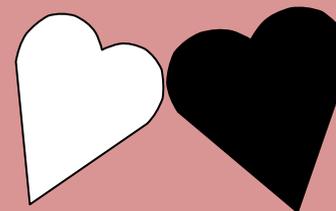
It is clear from these passages in the Hadith that Muhammad never was and never claimed to be sinless. He needed God's forgiveness for his sins, just like you and I do.

According to the Hadith, only Isa al-Masih (Jesus Christ) is sinless (see al-Bukhari 6:236) Jesus alone can save you from your sin. You can learn more about Jesus from www.mylanguage.net.au

⁵ <http://islamicsydney.com/story.php?id=2909>

⁶ Ali Dashti, *Twenty Three Years: A Study of the Prophetic Career of Mohammad* (London: George, Allen & Unwin, 1985), 50

Was Muhammad^{pbuh} Sinless?



What Muhammad^{pbuh} said about himself in the Hadith (traditions)

“Ask forgiveness for your sins, and also for the believing men and the believing women.”

(The Qur'an: Sura Muhammad 47:19)

وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدَنبِكَ

وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

³ CD The Alim on Q.40:55

⁴ In *The Australian* October 4, 2006.

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,20521646-601,00.html>