

Section 2: Creation of Adam and the Defiance of Satan

Adam's creation – Angels were ordered to prostrate before Adam – The defiance of Satan – The Satan cast out – Adam beguiled by the Satan – Adam's seeking Allah's pardon.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 11

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ
يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

11. *"And indeed We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they (all) did prostrate themselves except Iblees; he was not of the prostrating ones."*

The Story of Satan's Disobedience

The creation of man and his being fashioned is referred to in seven Suras of the Qur'an.

In the current verse, Allah says:

"And indeed We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves unto Adam.' So they (all) did prostrate themselves except Iblees; he was not of the prostrating ones."

All angels, including Iblis who was in their row, while he was not from among them, were commanded to prostrate themselves unto Adam, the first ancestor of the whole human beings. They totally accepted and eagerly obeyed the command of Allah, except Iblis.

The prostration of the angels for Adam was not done in the sense of 'prostration of worship', because the act of being worshipped is specific to Allah alone. Then, prostration here is for humility and modesty.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 12

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

12. "He said: 'What prevented you that you did not prostrate when I commanded you?' He said: 'I am better than him. You created me of fire while You created him of clay'."

This verse indicates that Allah called Iblis to account for the disobedience and rebellion he showed, and He asked him about the reason for which he refused prostration when He commanded him to prostrate. The verse says:

"He said: 'What prevented you that you did not prostrate when I commanded you?' ..."

In answer to this question, Iblis resorted to an implausible excuse, as the verse points out:

"... He said: 'I am better than him. You created me of fire while You created him of clay'."

Iblis imagined, as if, fire is superior to clay. This was one of the greatest faults of Iblis. Or, perhaps, he did not make a mistake either, but he told a lie because of his arrogance and selfishness.

But the privilege of Adam was not that he was created of clay. The main superiority of Adam was that very spirit of humanity and the rank of vice-regency of Allah that he was given.

There arises a question here, asking how Satan spoke with Allah, and whether revelation was sent down to him.

The answer to this question is that there is no problem that Allah speaks with another person, not by means of revelation and messengership, but through innate inspiration, or by way of some angels, whether this person is one of the righteous and the purified ones, like Mary and mother of Moses, or one of the dishonest ones, like Satan.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 13

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

13. "(Allah) said: 'Get you down from this (state): it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Therefore, go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones !'"

In view of the fact that Satan's refusal from prostrating for Adam (as) was not an ordinary and simple refusal, nor it was counted – habitual sin, but it was a rebellion accompanied with a protest and denial unto the Glory of Allah, then his opposition found a way to infidelity and negating Allah's knowledge and wisdom.

And, consequently, he had to lose his own positions and personal status in divine portal. So, Allah sent him out from the distinguished situation he had obtained in the standing ranks of angels. The verse says:

"(Allah) said: 'Get you down from this (state).....'"

Then, Allah describes the origin of this getting down to him by the following sentence, and explains that he was not right to pave the path of pride in that rank.

"...it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. ..."

Again, as an additional emphasis, Allah's statement continues to be recited as follows:

"... Therefore, go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones !"

That is, not only Satan did not become magnified by that action, but also, on the contrary, he was entitled as the abject ones.

It is clearly understood from this part of the verse that the entire misfortune and wretchedness of Satan was the effect of his arrogance.

It is also narrated in Usul-i-Kafi from Imam Sadiq (as) who has said:

"The principals of infidelity (and disobedience) are three things: greed, pride, and jealousy. Greed caused Adam to eat from the forbidden tree; pride caused Iblis to disobey the command of Allah when he was ordered to prostrate for Adam; and jealousy caused one of Adam's sons to kill another one."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 14 – 15

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ

14. *"(Instead of repentance, Iblis) said: 'Respite me until the day when they are raised up.'"*

15. *"He (Allah) said: 'Verily you shall be of the respited ones.'"*

But the story of Satan did not conclude to that only happening. When he found that he was banished from the throne of Allah, he increased his rebellion and obstinacy. Instead of repentance, returning toward Allah, and confessing his fault, the only thing Iblis asked for from Allah was that he desired to be respited until the day when all will be raised up. The verse says:

"(Instead of repentance, Iblis) said: 'Respite me until the day when they are raised up.'"

This demand of Satan was somehow accepted by Allah when He (S.w.T.) said that he would be of the respited ones. Here is the statement of the Qur'an:

"He (Allah) said: 'Verily you shall he of the respited ones.'"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 16

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

16. *"He (Satan) said: 'Since You have let me wander off, I will certainly lay wait for (deceiving) them in Your Straight Path '."*

Satan did not want, of course, to have a long life and to be alive in order to compensate the past, but he expressed his aim of this long life that, the same as he was wandered off, he could lay wait on the Straight Path of Allah and deceive them all, so that, the same that he got astray, they might go astray, too.

The verse says:

"He (Satan) said: 'Since You have let me wander off, I will certainly lay wait for (deceiving) them in Your Straight Path '."

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 17

ثُمَّ لآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
شَاكِرِينَ

17. *"Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their*

right and from their left; and You will not find most of them thankful."

In order to confirm and to complete his statement, Satan added that, not only he will lay wait on their way, but also he will come upon them from the sides of four directions to deceive them. The verse says:

"Then I will certainly come upon them from before them, and from behind them, and from their right and from their left; and You will not find most of them thankful."

In a tradition, it is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who, deeply commenting upon the four directions, said:

"The purpose of coming 'from before' is that Satan shows the coming world, which man has in front of him, simple and hollow to him.

The purpose of 'from behind' is that he (Satan) invites people to gathering properties and massing wealth, and to niggardliness concerning the payment of the compulsory alms to be abandon in favor of children ad inheritors.

The purpose of 'right side' is that he spoils the spiritual affairs in man's view by creating doubts and dubious things.

*And, the purpose of 'left side' is to pretend the material pleasures and lusts beautiful in the view of man."*¹

Some Islamic traditions denote that when Satan made an oath that he will lay in wait of man from four sides in order to lead him astray or to bar him, angels, sympathizing with man, said: "O' Allah! how this man will be delivered?" The Lord answered:

"There are two ways open for him, the upward and the downward. Whenever man stretches his hands for supplication, or puts his head on the ground, I will forgive him of the sins of seventy years."²

As soon as Adam was informed of the domination of Satan, he invoked Allah. Then he was addressed (by Him) not to be worried, because He will count a sin one fold and a good deed ten folds. Besides, the gate of repentance is open to him.³

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 18

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لِّمَن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

18. "Said He: 'Get out from this (state), despised, driven away. Whoever of them will follow you, I will surely fill Hell with you all !'"

By this verse, once more the command of dismissing Satan from the position of nearness to Allah and the rank of highness is issued. Here, there is a difference that the command of his dismissal has been issued with a more intensive despise.

Perhaps, this was for the obstinacy that Satan showed later when he insisted on the temptation upon humankind and increased a greater sin to his former sins. Therefore, as the Qur'an points out:

"Said He: 'Get out from this (state), despised, driven away. ...'"

And Allah made an oath that whoever of them follows Satan He will fill Hell with him and them all. The verse says:

"... Whoever of them will follow you, I will surely fill Hell with you all ' . "

Explanations

A moment of having pride and saying **"I am better than ..."**⁴ may bring forth some surprising sequels. For instance:

"Get you down ...go you out. Verily you are of the abject ones."⁵

All these despises and falls are spread upon the proud Satan, since, instead of apology, he decided to lead astray humankind.

The Arabic term /ma'um/ is derived from /a'ima/ in the sense of 'a severe blemish'; and the Arabic term /madhura/ is derived from /dahr/ which means 'to drive away disgracefully'.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 19

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ
فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

19. "And O' Adam! dwell you and your spouse in the Garden, and eat you two from wherever you two desire, but do not approach this tree lest you will be of the unjust. "

The statement of the verse is told Adam (as) saying that he and his wife would dwell in the Garden and that it was permissible for them to eat whatever and wherever they desired, but they should not approach that tree in order to eat from it, because they would deprive themselves from a great reward.

A detailed commentary upon this holy verse was offered under the description of Surah Al-Baqarah.

No.2. verse 35.6

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 20

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءَاتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ

20. "Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) unto the two (Adam and Eve) that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shameful parts, and he said: 'Your Lord has not prohibited you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals.'"

Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the feature of a friend and a benevolent one. He knew that whoever's shameful parts be manifest, the one should not remain in Heaven. The only way by which the private parts of Adam and Eve could become manifest was eating from the forbidden tree. So, Satan planned a plot that they might eat from that tree.

Thus, Satan prepared the necessary things of their banishment from heaven. He told them if they had eaten from that tree, they would have turned into the form of angels and they could remain in Heaven forever. He said that the reason of that prohibition was that they would not become angels, or would not dwell in Heaven for ever.

The verse says:

"Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) unto the two (Adam and Eve) that he might manifest unto them that which was hidden from them of their shameful parts, and he said: 'Your Lord has not prohibited you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals.'"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 21

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

21. "And he swore unto them both: ' Verily I am a sincere adviser to you!'"

Satan made an oath for Adam and Eve that he was an absolute benevolent in inviting them to eating from that tree. Therefore, their delusion was strengthened thereby, because Adam and his wife imagined that no one would swear by Allah falsely.

The verse says:

"And he swore unto them both: ' Verily I am a sincere adviser to you !"

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 22

فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا
مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَن تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلُّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ
الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

22. "Then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit; so when they tasted the (forbidden) tree, their shameful parts became exposed to them and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: 'Did I not forbid you both from that tree and (did I not) say to you that verily Satan is a manifest foe for you?'"

Satan deceived Adam and Eve and caused them to be thrown down into the valley of misfortune so that they were sent away from that exalted rank. As soon as they tasted from the fruit of that tree and ate it, their clothing fell down from their bodies, and they ashamed from each other.

The verse says:

"Then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit; so when they tasted the (forbidden) tree, their shameful parts became exposed to them ..."

The verse continues saying:

"... and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden....."

That is, they took the leaves of the trees and put them over each other in order to cover their private parts therewith. Regarding this matter, it was pointed out in Surah Al-Baqarah that the general interest was so that such a scene would come forth for Adam and Eve, and they should come out from the Garden.

Their banishment from the Garden was not their retribution, because prophets do not commit any sin so that they be deserving of retribution. It was only a 'leaving the better', i.e. if they did not do it, it would be better.

"... and their Lord called out to them: 'Did I not forbid you both from that tree and (did I not) say to you that verily Satan is a manifest foe for you?'"

This was what Allah, addressing Adam and Eve, called out to them both.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verse 23

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

23. "They said: 'Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers' !"

In answer to the reprimand of Allah, they both said that they were unjust to themselves. The verse says:

"They said: 'Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves....."

The objective meaning of 'being unjust', here, is that they abandoned performing a recommendable act and, therefore, they were deprived from its recompense.

Their purpose of their statement may be that as a result of coming down on the ground and being deprived from that peaceful and blissful life, they incurred unjust to themselves.

The verse, from the tongue of Adam and Eve, continues saying:

"... and if You do not forgive us and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers' !"

They invoked Allah that if He did not cover their blemish and did not have mercy on them, and did not bestow His grace and His other favors by means of endowing His blessings and some other rewards upon them, they would be from those people who do not enjoy and benefit of their lives.

Whenever a person causes a loss unto himself, or does not ward off a damage from himself, he has been unjust to himself, without being worthy of bearing retribution.

Surah Al-'A'raf, Verses 24 - 25

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ

24. "He said: 'Get you down, some of you (being) the enemies of others and for you there is in the earth an abode and a provision for a (fixed) time'."

25. "He said: 'Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised'."

It was thus that Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden, and, thereafter, humankind began their adventurous lives on the earth. The Qur'an says:

"He said: 'Get you down, some of you (being) the enemies of others and for you there is in the earth an abode and a provision for a (fixed) time'."

Allah says to human beings that both your lives and deaths perform on the earth, and, on the Resurrection Day you will be raised and come out from inside the ground.

He said: ' Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised'."

It is understood from this verse that, on the Resurrection Day, Allah will raise and bring out human beings from this very ground.

1. Majma'ul-Bayan, Vol. 4, P. 403, – Tafsir-ul-Burhan, tradition. No. 5

2. Fakhr-i-Razi, At- Tafsir-ul-Kabir

3. Tafsir-i-Nur-uth- Thaqaalayn

4. Current Surah, verse 12

5. Current Surah, verse 13

6. The Light of the Holy Qur'an, Part 1, PP. 150–155.