

Section 7: Satan, a Declared Enemy of Mankind

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 115 – 116

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ

115. “And We had made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no constancy.”

116. “And when We said to the angels: ‘Prostrate to Adam’, they (all) prostrated except Iblis; he refused.”

From the beginning of the Qur'an up to here, this is the sixth occurrence where we recite about the story of Adam and Iblis. Before this, there have also been some remarks mentioned in Suras Al-Baqarah, Al-'Araf, Al-Hijr, Al-'Isra', and Al-Kahf.

The purpose of ‘covenant’, mentioned in this verse, is the command of Allah saying not to eat from that particular plant; and the objective meaning of ‘forgot’ is the lack of care in fulfilling the command of Allah (s.w.t.), otherwise, an absolute forgetfulness does not deserve warning and criticism.

The purpose of ‘constancy’, mentioned in the above, is ‘a firm will’ before the temptations of Iblis.

Imam Kazem (as) says:

“The command of prostration and then the disobedience of Satan is a kind of solace for the Prophet of Islam (S) meaning that if his command was not obeyed, he would not be worried since Iblis did not obey

His command, either.”¹

As it was mentioned before, the struggle of ‘right and wrong’ is not limited to the present time and past time, or to Moses (as) and Pharaoh. It has existed since the time of the creation of Adam and it continues forever.

At first, the Qur’an refers to the covenant of Adam with Allah.

It says:

“And We had made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no constancy.”

The purpose of this covenant cited in the abovementioned verse, is the command of Allah meaning that they would not approach the prohibited tree.

No doubt Adam did not commit any sin, but what he did was ‘leaving the better’. The course of dwelling Adam inside Heaven, in principle, was an experimental course for him to be prepared for the life of the present world and accepting the responsibility of duties.

Then, the Qur’an has pointed to another part of this story, when the verse says:

“And when We said to the angels: ‘Prostrate to Adam’, they (all) prostrated except Iblis; he refused.”

Here, by this statement, the great rank and position of Adam is made manifest, Adam whom all angels prostrated for. Moreover, the enmity of Iblis against him, from very beginning, is also manifested.

There is no doubt that prostration, in the sense of worship, is allocated to Allah (s.w.t.), and besides Allah no one and nothing can be worshipped. Thus, the prostration of angels was done before Allah (s.w.t.), but for the sake of the creation of this great creature, Adam, who was eligible of the praise of that Creator.

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 117 – 119

فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى

إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَى

وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَصْحَى

117. “Then We said: ‘O Adam! Verily this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Therefore let him not expel you both from the Garden so that you come to toil.’”

118. “(For) verily you will be neither hungry therein, nor naked.”

119. “And that you shall not be thirsty therein nor suffer (the beat of) the sun.”

Here, Satan has been introduced as the enemy of Adam and Eve alone, but in some other occurrences of the Qur'an his enmity unto all humankind has been warned.

For example, Surah Al-'Isra', No. 17, verse 53 says:

“... Verily the Satan is an open enemy to man.”

The objective meaning of the word /tašqa/ (you come to toil), mentioned here, is the toils of the material life, which is understood from the next verses, where it says that there is not any hanger or thirst or nakedness in Heaven. This statement means that if you be sent out from Heaven, you will surely be involved with toil.

However, this verse indicates that Adam (as) was warned by Allah (s.w.t.) to be careful of the enmity of Satan.

The holy verse says:

“Then We said: ‘O Adam! Verily this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Therefore let him not expel you both from the Garden so that you come to toil.’”

Then Allah explains for Adam the comfort of Heaven and the toil and pain of the outside of it, as follows:

“(For) verily you will be neither hungry therein, nor naked.”

“And that you shall not be thirsty therein nor suffer (the beat of) the sun.”

In the abovementioned couple of verses, the Qur'an has pointed to four elementary and essential necessities of man, i.e. the necessity of food, water, clothing, and housing (a cover against the heat of the sun).

Surah Ta Ha – Verse 120 – 121

فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَى

فَاَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَصَى
ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى

120. “Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him, saying: ‘O Adam! Shall I guide you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?’”

121. “So they both ate of it (the forbidden tree), then their shameful parts became exposed to them, and they both took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden. And (thus) Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went astray.”

Another name of Iblis is Satan, as the holy Qur’an says:

“...They all prostrated except Iblis...”

and

“Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him...”

It was before the rank of prophethood that Adam was whispered evil suggestions to. 2

Sayyid-ibn-Tawus in a delicate statement says that, at first, Satan came to Adam with the claim of guidance and said:

“O Adam! Shall I guide you...?”,

and then he (Satan) caused them both to fall by deceit.³

Now, woe unto us! For, Satan comes to us from the beginning with the intention of deceiving us.

The Qur’an says:

“He said: ‘Then by Your Might I will surely make them live an evil life, all’.”⁴

However, Satan had decided to be an enemy of Adam, therefore he did not sit still, and, as the verse says:

“Then Satan whispered (evil suggestions) to him, saying: ‘O Adam! Shall I guide you to the Tree of Eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?’”

In fact, Satan thought to what the willing of Adam was and he found that he wished an eternal life and reaching to an imperishable power. Therefore, in order to drive him to disobeying the command of Allah, he makes use of these two factors.

Finally, what should not be done was done.

The verse in this regard, and that why their heavenly clothes wholly collapsed, says:

“So they both ate of it (the forbidden tree), then their shameful parts became exposed to them...”

When Adam and Eve saw that event, they immediately made clothes for themselves out of the leaves of the trees of Heaven to cover the shameful parts of their bodies.

The verse continues saying:

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

Yes, at last, Adam disobeyed his Lord and was deprived from His reward.

The verse says:

“...And (thus) Adam disobeyed his Lord, and went astray.”

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 122 – 123

ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ

قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ
هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَىٰ

122. “Then his Lord chose him, so He turned unto him (mercifully) and guided him.”

123. “(Allah) said: ‘Get you down, both of you, all together, from it (the Garden), with enmity one to another. So if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then (be sure) whoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way nor fall into misery.’”

The Arabic term /’ijtiba/ is derived from /jibayah/ in the sense of: ‘picking out, selection, and choice’.

The Qur’anic word /taba/ means ‘a person’s penitence’ when it is accompanied with /’ila/, like /tubtu’ilayka/ (I repented to you), but if it is said with /’ala/ it is considered the repentance and return of Allah, like what is recited in the abovementioned holy verse, which means ‘Allah (s.w.t.) returned His Grace to the servant’.

But since Adam was essentially pure and faithful, and acted along the path of Allah’s pleasure, and that this fault which encompassed him as a result of Satan’s temptation was an exceptional happening, Allah

did deprive him from His Grace forever; but after this event, Allah accepted his repentance and guided him.

The verse says:

“Then his Lord chose him, so He turned unto him (mercifully) and guided him.”

Yes, the repentance of Adam was accepted, but he had performed something that his return to the early position was impossible. Therefore, Allah commanded him and Eve both to come down from Heaven on to the earth, together with Satan, while they would be enemy with each other.

The holy verse says:

“(Allah) said: ‘Get you down, both of you, all together, from it (the Garden), with enmity one to another...”

Yet, they should know that the way of prosperity and salvation is always open to them.

Then Allah says:

“...So if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then (be sure) whoever follows My guidance, will not lose his way nor fall into misery.”

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 124 – 125

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكاً وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى

قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِي أَعْمَى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيراً

124. “And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened, and the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind.”

125. “He will say: ‘My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?”

The previous verse was a glad tidings to the followers of the Truth, while this verse is a warning to those who turn away from the Truth. This is because dread and encouragement might be mentioned beside each other and become fruitful.

Some Islamic literatures indicate that leaving the path of mastership of Ahlul-Bayt (as), as well as

leaving the duty of Hajj, have been counted as the denotation expansion of aversion the remembrance of Allah (s.w.t.).⁵

The purpose of 'straits of life' is not lack of money and straitened circumstances, while many of the rich, because of greed, fear, and anxiety, live in hardship and straits.

And, in order to make clear the circumstance of those who neglect the command of Allah, too, the Qur'an adds:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance verily for him is a life straitened, and the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind."

In principle, the straits of life are often for the spiritual deficiencies and the absence of the soul's nutrition. This status is for the uncertainty of man due to the future and the fear of annihilation of the existing material potentialities, and too much dependence on the material world. Therefore, he who has faith in Allah, and is hopeful to His Pure Essence, is safe from all these anxieties.

In Hereafter, such a neglectful person may ask Allah this question, as the verse says:

"He will say: 'My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?"

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 126 – 127

قَالَ كَذَلِكَ أَتَتْكَ آيَاتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَا وَكَذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسَى

وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ أَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَبْقَى

126. "(Allah) will say: 'Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day'."

127. "And thus We recompense him who is prodigal and does not believe in the Signs of his Lord and certainly the chastisement of the Hereafter is more grievous and more lasting."

Prayer is one of the clear expansions of the remembrance of Allah.

Allah in the Qur'an says;

"...established prayer for My remembrance"⁶,

and it is evident that whoever remembers Allah, He will remember him, too.

This is the promise of Allah Who says:

“...remember Me, and I will remember you”⁷

And, naturally, those who forget Allah, He may also leave them alone.

The verse says:

“(Allah) will say: ‘Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day’.”

The holy Prophet (S) said:

*“He who recites the Qur’an and does not act accordingly, Allah will muster him blind. That servant may Ask Allah why he is raised blind, and then there comes a voice commanding the angels to take him into Hell”.*⁸

Concerning the Qur’anic phrase /’atatka’ayatuna/

“Even so, Our Signs came to you”,

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

*“The Immaculate Imams are the signs of Allah and he who abandon them will be left in Fire on the Day of Hereafter”.*⁹

However, on the Day of Resurrection, a guilty person will say:

“...My Lord! Why have you raised me blind, whereas indeed I was a seeing one (in the world)?”

In answer to him, immediately it will be said to such a guilty person:

“Even so, Our Signs came to you, but you neglected them; in like manner you are forgotten this Day”,

and your eye is blind to see the bounties of Allah and the station of His nearness.

Finally, as a conclusion, the Qur’an says:

“And thus We recompense him who is prodigal and does not believe in the Signs of his Lord and certainly the chastisement of the Hereafter is more grievous and more lasting.”

Surah Ta Ha – Verses 128 – 129

أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي مَسَاكِينِهِمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّأُولِي النُّهَى

وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى

128. “Does it not then guide such men (to call to mind) how many of the generations We did destroy before them, amid whose dwellings they (today) walk about? Verily there are signs in this for those (endowed) with understanding.”

129. “And had there not been a decree that went forth before from your Lord and an appointed term, (their punishment) would necessarily have come.”

The Arabic term /nuha/ is the plural form of /nuhyah/ which means something that prohibits man from doing some indecent things. In Arabic, the ‘intellect’ is called /nuhyah/ since it dissuades man from the low desires. Therefore, the true intellect, besides thinking and understanding, causes man to ward off some dangers and vices.

The Qur’anic word /qarn/ means a nation or a group of people who live in the same time. It is sometimes used for the time itself, too. The Arabic term /lizam/ means ‘a necessary and firm affair’.

And, in view of the fact that in the previous verses several matters concerning the sinners were discussed, this verse has pointed to one of the best and the most effective ways of awareness, i.e. the careful study of the history of the former generations.

It says:

“Does it not then guide such men (to call to mind) how many of the generations We did destroy before them...”

Those men are the same people who were involved with the painful punishment of Allah and, now, these people haunt their ruined houses.

In their different travels to Yemen, travelers may see the houses of the people of ‘Ad, and in their way to Syria they confront the ruined dwellings of the people of Thamud, and in their voyage to Palestine they pass by the houses of the people of Lot, which had been destroyed upside down. They usually see their trucks but they do not take an example.

Yes, in this regard the verse says:

“...amid whose dwellings they (today) walk about? Verily there are signs in this for those (endowed) with understanding.”

The matter of ‘taking an example’ from the history of the former nations is one of the subjects on which the Qur’an and Islamic traditions have emphasized very much.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that the Messenger of Allah said:

“The most neglectful people is he who takes no admonition from the change of the world.”

And he does not contemplate on the turns of days and nights.

The next verse, indeed, is an answer to the question which may arise here, asking why Allah does not arrange the same thing upon this group of sinners that He arranged for the former sinners.

The holy Qur’an says:

“And had there not been a decree that went forth before from your Lord and an appointed term, (their punishment) would necessarily have come.”

This ‘Divine decree’ is an indication to the command of creation containing the freedom of human kind.

Since, if any guilty person immediately and without any respite be punished, faith and righteous deeds may become nearly constrained and compelling, and they will often be done because of fear and terror of immediate punishment. Thus, in this case, it will not be a means of development, which is the main goal.

Moreover, if it were judged that all wrong doers should be punished at once, there would remain no one alive on the earth.¹⁰

Therefore, there should be a respite for the sinners until they might be aware and pave the path of improvement, and all the travelers of the path of truth also find an opportunity for self-improvement.

1. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 412

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

3. Surah Al-A’raf, No. 7, verse 22

4. Surah Suad, No. 38, verse 82

5. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, the Commentary

6. The current Surah, verse 14

7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 152

8. Wasa’il-ush-Shi’ah, vol. 6, p. 184

9. Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 436

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