

السَّلَامُ عَلَى آدَمَ صَفْوَةِ اللَّهِ

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS:

ADAM [A.S]

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 3

Lesson 1: Prophet Adam (as)

PROPHETS WERE SENT BY GOD

Prophets were sent by God to guide mankind. After being questioned by an atheist with regards to the logic behind sending prophets, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has been narrated to have said that, firstly there is a Maker and Creator who is also Wise and thus, if mankind cannot converse with Him, thus He will send Prophets as guides to communicate His laws to the people. It is also narrated that Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) has said that the Prophets were sent to be links between the people and God.

PROPHETS ARE SINLESS

Prophets had something called 'iṣma or divine protection so that they never sinned. It must be noted that the Prophets are ma'ṣūm or sinless, not because they could not sin, but chose not to, due to this 'iṣma. Thus they were protected all their lives from birth till their death, in all aspects of their life.

PROPHETS WERE ROLE MODELS

The Prophets had to be of flawless character so as to serve as role models. We have discussed this issue in previous lessons. This issue is proven in the following āyah:

“And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain words, he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make you an Imam of men. Abraham said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the unjust, said He.”

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be introduced to the role of Prophets
- Discuss the creation of Prophet Adam (as)
- Discuss Iblīs's reaction to Prophet Adam's creation
- Discuss the creation of Eve (as)
- Understand the fact that Prophet Adam's mistake was not a sin.

CREATION OF PROPHET ADAM (AS)

Prophet Adam was the first Prophet in Islam. He was created from dust and was given life by Allah (SWT).

“Surely the likeness of Jesus is with Allah as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, Be, and he was.” (3:59)

Allah told the angels that He intended to create man and put him on the earth as His representative. The angels had a question about this:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place in the earth a khalif, they said: What! Will You place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, and we celebrate Your praise and extol Your Holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know.”

The angels could not understand why Allah (SWT) was choosing as His representative a creature with free will—a creature who would cause problems on Earth. However, Allah (SWT) assured them that He had special knowledge which the angels did not have.

THE REACTION OF SATAN

When Allah (SWT) introduced Prophet Adam to all His creation, He asked all His creatures to prostrate before Prophet Adam. All obeyed Allah (SWT), with the exception of Iblīs:

"And when We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam., They all prostrated themselves except Iblīs; he refused and was full of pride, ..."

Allah (SWT) questioned Iblīs as to why he refused to prostrate:

“[And God] said: "What has kept you from prostrating yourself when I commanded you?" Iblī answered: "I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas You created him from clay.”

This clearly showed the arrogance of Satan and his defiance of Allah’s command. This was all because of his pride.

This was a major turning point as from this point onwards Satan was now an open enemy and a rebel. He became arrogant and thus was expelled from Paradise.

He wanted to prove that he was superior to Prophet Adam (as) and thus behaved this way.

However, before being expelled from Allah’s Kingdom, Satan asked for respite from Allah (SWT) and was granted this. Thus he remains trying to deceive people into disobeying Allah.

The important lesson from this story is that it was Satan’s pride that led to his downfall. He confined himself to being damned and cursed by His Lord forever because of his pride. We must remember to never have pride in ourselves as this may cause our destruction.

THE CREATION OF EVE

After the creation of Prophet Adam (as) and the episode with Iblīs, Allah (SWT) created a woman by the name of Eve (Ḥawwā’). She was to be Adam’s wife. There is a misconception that Eve was created from the rib of Adam. According to the teachings of the Ahlul Bayt (as), this is not true. Rather, Eve and Adam were both created from ‘the human soul’ and from the same clay. Imam al-Bāqir (as) says:

“The Almighty took a handful of dust and by His power created Adam and from the leftover of the same dust He created Eve”.

Allah then ordered Prophet Adam (as) and his wife to dwell in a garden and to enjoy all the pleasures therein. They could live happily in that garden, as long as they stayed from one particular tree.

“And We said, O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish and do not approach this tree or you will be of the unjust?”

THE MISTAKE OF PROPHET ADAM (AS)

Prophet Adam (as) and his wife were living quite peacefully and were successfully avoiding the forbidden tree. However, Satan wanted to deceive them, and he was successful in doing so. He told them that the reason God had forbidden them from that tree is because they might become angels and they might live forever. Prophet Adam and his wife listened to Satan and tasted from the fruit of the forbidden tree. At this point, Allah (SWT) admonished them:

“Did I not forbid that tree unto you and tell you, verily Satan in your open enemy?” (7:22).

MISTAKE OR SIN?

It is common for many to think that Prophet Adam (as) committed a sin. The commands given by Allah (SWT) are of two types, obligatory commands or guiding commands. Obligatory commands are those that we must follow. If we disobey them, we are sinning. Guiding commands are more like recommendations for how to best live our lives. If we disobey them, we are not sinning, but we are choosing the lesser option.

The command that Allah (SWT) gave to Adam and Eve to not eat from the tree was a guiding command. By disobeying the command of God they made a mistake and made their own lives harder. However, they did not commit a sin in doing this.

OBEDIENCE TO GOD

We clearly saw that giving into temptation can have consequences and the example of Prophet Adam (as) was that he had to give up his comfortable life for a life of full of difficulty and hard work. If Adam had not been tempted by Satan, he would have remained in the comfortable life in the garden of pleasures.

We should apply this lesson to our life. We should realise that if we obey Allah (SWT), He will help us to lead good and healthy lives. If, however, we give in to the temptations of Satan, we will have a hard life full of difficulty.

Review Questions

Q1. Did Prophets ever commit a sin?

- Sometimes
- Never
- They couldn't

Q2. Why was Prophet Adam (as) created?

- To make Iblīs angry
- To be a link between mankind and Allah (SWT)
- To challenge the angels.

Q3. Prophet Adam's eating from the tree was a mistake and NOT a sin because:

- The commands from God to not eat from the tree was a guiding command
- Prophet Adam was tempted by Satan
- Prophet Adam did not understand God's command

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