

السَّلَامُ عَلَى آدَمَ صَفْوَةَ اللَّهِ

PROPHETS AND MESSENGERS:

ADAM ^[A.S]

Objectives >>>

Students should:

- Be reminded that Prophet Ādam (as) is the first prophet and the first human being that Allah (SWT) created.
- Know that the creation of Eve was from the 'human soul' not from Adam's rib
- Know the exact Qur'anic wording for the process of creation
- Understand the reaction of the angels and why God ordered them to prostrate to Adam and how this is related to free will.
- Understand and analyse the reaction of Satan and its basis in pride and the dangers of this
- Understand the mistake of Adam and why it was not a sin with a clear understanding of the difference between obligatory and guiding commands

FUNDAMENTALS OF ISLAM

LEVEL 4

PROPHET ĀDAM^(AS) - THE FIRST HUMAN BEING

All Abrahamic religions (including Muslims) believe that Prophet Ādam (as) was the very first human being created. The details of his creation and the resulting beliefs that come out of this have influenced the core of many religions. For instance, it is the story of Ādam and Eve that makes the Christians believe in the "original sin" or the inferior status of women. Fortunately, from the incredible miracle of the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an, as Muslims we do not believe in these concepts. This lesson shall attempt to give an overview of the story of Ādam (as) from the perspective for the Qur'an and we will learn the most significant message from this story which is the evils of pride.

THE CREATION OF ĀDAM AND EVE ^(AS)

Allah (SWT) in the Holy Qur'an in various places describes the creation of human beings:

"We created man of an extraction of clay, then We set him, a drop, in a receptacle secure, then We created of the drop a clot, then We created of the clot a tissue, then We created of the tissue bones, then We garmented the bones in flesh; thereafter We produced him as another creature. So blessed be God, the fairest of creators!" (23:12-14)

Allah (SWT) has created human Beings in an extremely precise manner with each stage a wondrous miracle. We believe that human beings were created from clay as Allah (SWT) says about the creation of Prophet Ādam (as)

"And when your Lord said to the angels 'See, I am creating a mortal of clay of mud moulded. When I have shaped him, and breathed My spirit in him, fall you down, bowing before him!" (16:28-29)

We have to remember that many of these words of the Qur'an cannot be interpreted literally. Allah (SWT) does not have a mouth to blow for instance but because of the limited nature of our language Allah (SWT) in His wisdom has explained it as such. We also believe that all human beings were created in this manner and that Eve, was *not* created from the rib of Ādam like the Christians believe.

THE ANGELS PROSTRATE TO ĀDAM (AS)

As we read in the last verse, the angels were commanded to prostrate to Ādam (as). Let us read the story from the Holy Qur'an:

“And [after creating Ādam] Allah taught Ādam all the names. Then He presented those to the angels and said, “Tell me the names of these if you are true. They said, “Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You have taught us. You are surely the All-Knowing, the Wise.” [Then] He said, “O Ādam! Tell them the names of those [persons].” When Ādam told them those names, Allah said [to the angels], “Didn't I say to you that I know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you manifest and what you hide.”

And when We said to the angels, “Prostrate before Ādam.” All of them prostrated except Iblīs, who refused and was haughty, and [thus] he became one of the unbelievers.

“[After creating Eve], We said, “O Ādam, Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat from it [freely] as many [things] as you wish; but do not approach this tree, otherwise you will become one of the dhalimīn الظَّالِمِينَ.”

“But the Satan made them slip (أَزَلَّهُمَا) from that [Garden by luring them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree] and thus got them out from the state [of felicity] in which they had been.”

So We said [to Ādam, Eve, and the Satan that, “All of you] get down [from the Garden to the earth] some of you being the enemies of the other, and there is on the earth your abode and the necessities [of life] for a [fixed period of] time.” [Ādam felt ashamed and intended to ask Allah's forgiveness.] So Ādam learnt some words from his Lord, and Allah turned to him mercifully (تَابَ عَلَيْهِ). Surely He is the Most-Forgiving, the Merciful. We said, “All of you get down from the Garden. [Once you are on the earth], a guidance will certainly come to you from Me: whosoever follows My guidance, there will be no fear for them nor shall they grieve. But those who disbelieve and reject Our revelation, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide.”

We learn several things from this story

1. Allah (SWT) created Ādam (as) with a special knowledge. The angles thought they knew everything but were embarrassed when Allah (SWT) informed them that Ādam (as) knew more than them. We have

to remember that we cannot become haughty and proud about what we know and even if we do we have to become humble when the truth is shown to us.

2. Iblīs refused to concede to the truth because of his arrogance and pride. Even though all the others prostrated, he did not. Later in this lesson we shall discuss the evils of pride.
3. Allah (SWT) created Eve (*not* from the rib of Ādam) and they lived in a Garden (*not* in heaven) but on Earth. They were asked not to approach a tree. This was a recommendation not an order. In Islam, there are two types of commands Allah (SWT) gives to His creation:ⁱ
 - a. **Legislative command** (Al-‘amr al-mawlawi,): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command which has to be fulfilled and failure to do so results in punishment. (eg. Ṣalāt)
 - b. **Guiding command** (Al-‘amr al-‘irshādi): Where Allah (SWT) decrees a command but the action to be done is not Wājib, rather the command is simply a guiding command which is meant to make life for that person easier. Not doing that action does not result in sin but may have natural consequences. This is the kind of order Prophet Ādam (as) got regarding the tree.
4. The natural consequence of Prophet Ādam (as) making that mistake was that him and his wife had to leave the garden and now had to face the normal difficulties of life.
5. Prophet Ādam (as) sought forgiveness for his mistake and Allah (SWT) forgave him and gave him the great news of guidance.

Memorisation Activity

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

“And when We said to the angels: Prostrate to Ādam, and so they prostrated, but Iblīs (did it not). He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers.” (2:34)

IBLĪS (SATAN) WAS PROUD AND ARROGANT

As we have just read the story of Prophet Ādam (as), we learn that the most significant message to come out of this story was the deception and pride of Iblīs. Imam ‘Alī (as) says:

“You should take a lesson from what Allah did with Satan; namely He nullified his great acts and extensive efforts on account of the vanity of one moment, although Satan had worshipped Allah for six thousand years - whether by the reckoning of this world or of the next world is not known. Who now can remain safe from Allah after Satan by committing a similar disobedience? None at all. Allah, the Glorified, cannot let a human being enter Paradise if he does the same thing for which Allah turned out from it an angel. His command for the inhabitants in the sky and of the earth is the same. There is no friendship between Allah and any individual out of His creation so as to give him licence for an undesirable thing which He has held unlawful for all the worlds.” (That is pride and arrogance).ⁱⁱ

Satan thought he was better than Prophet Ādam (as) and despite being shown the truth he was stubborn and arrogant. If we show any such characteristics in our lives, we can be put in the same category as Satan on the day of judgement.

There are three main types of pride

1. **Arrogance against Allah (SWT):** this is disbelief (kufr). It is like what Satan did. We can be arrogant against Allah (SWT) when we do not follow Allah’s (SWT) command purposefully or when we question His laws and commands, because we think we know better.
2. **Arrogance against the Holy Prophet (SAW) and the Imams (as):** Where we think we know more than them and accuse them of making wrong decisions for instance. This applies also to the Ālim (scholar).
3. **Arrogance against other people:** This is where we think we are better than others for any reason whether it be nationalistic, due to our wealth, our possessions, our knowledge etc.

Each of these types of arrogance is forbidden in Islam and would cause us to be associated with Satan in Hell. Allah has kept a simple law as a punishment for those who are arrogant. The Holy Prophet has said:

“One who humbles himself before Allah is raised by Him in status; and the one who is arrogant will be degraded by Allah.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Let’s see an example of this.

A scholar narrated: “I was at the sacred Mecca, between Şafa and Marwah when I saw a stranger on a camel. His slaves were preventing the people from coming near him. After sometime I happened to be in Baghdad. There I saw a man in a dishevelled condition with his hair awry. I stared at him in surprise. He asked as to why I was

staring at him. I said that I find a great resemblance between him and an arrogant person whom I had seen at Mecca between Şafa and Marwah. At that time he behaved very arrogantly. The man said, “I am the same person! I had behaved arrogantly at a place where people exhibit humility, that is why the Almighty has made me lowly in Baghdad where people achieve great honours. And thus these people behave arrogantly towards me.”

SIGNS OF PRIDE

- 1) If in gatherings and social events a person dislikes not being in a position of leadership or being the centre of attention.
- 2) If one finds it difficult to say salām or show humility a person lower than him in social status, he is proud.
- 3) If it is difficult for one to accept the invitation of poor people or to sit with beggars it is a sign of pride.
- 4) If he feels it is below his dignity to perform physical and unclean work such as sweeping the floor or cleaning a bathroom or something similar

The punishment of those who are proud is, as promised by Allah (SWT), very severe. We have to always remember the story of Prophet Ādam (as) and always be humble and not arrogant and haughty.

Class Activity

Can you identify other types of arrogance and pride you have experienced in your life?

Review Questions

Q1. Prophet Ādam (as) disobeyed a command of Allah that was:

- a. Legislative
- b. A guiding command
- c. Both of the above

Q2. Eve was created:

- a. By Allah (SWT) from the human soul as all humans are created
- b. From the Rib of Ādam (as)
- c. From an angel

Q3. Pride is bad because:

- a. It is the source of all other evil acts
- b. Satan was proud
- c. It destroys all good actions
- d. All the above

^eHawza – Ancient Prophets for the Modern World- Prophet Adam (as) – Sem 2
ⁱⁱ Nahjul Balagha Sermon 192
ⁱⁱⁱ Greater Sins (Dastagahaib Shirazi) chapter 3- Pride