

The Story of Adam in the Quran: Its Application Surah 7

7:11:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ
لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

And We have certainly created you, [O Mankind], and given you [human] form. Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated.

In the Message of the Quran, Asad writes:

"The sequence of these two statements - "We have created you [i.e., "brought you into being as living organisms"] and then formed you" [or "given you your shape", i.e., as human beings] is meant to bring out the fact of man's gradual development, in the individual sense, from the embryonic stage to full-fledged existence, as well as of the evolution of the human race as such.

As regards God's allegorical command to the angels to "prostrate themselves" before Adam, see 2:30-34, and the corresponding notes. The reference to all mankind which precedes the story of Adam in this surah makes it clear that his name symbolizes, in this context, the whole human race".

Surah 7 Verse 12:

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

[Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."

According to the "Study Quran", under the commentary of the above verse,

"Iblīs explains his refusal to prostrate before Adam by asserting his superiority over Adam on the basis of the argument that he was created from fire, which he perceives as a more powerful and nobler substance than clay, from which Adam was created. This argument also appears explicitly in 38:76 and is

implicit in Iblīs’s dismissive remarks about Adam being made of clay in 15:33. Iblīs’s claim to have been created from fire lends some support to the view that Iblīs was a jinn, since God created jinn from smokeless fire (55:15). Iblīs’s argument, however, is self-serving and partial, in both senses of the term. Although fire may be luminous, subtle, and characterized by levity and lightness (Q,R, Ṭ), it is also associated with fickleness, recklessness, restlessness, and destructiveness—with grandeur, but also haughtiness, qualities consistent with the arrogance (see v. 13) that ultimately leads to Iblīs’s perdition (Q, Ṭ). By contrast, clay or earth is base, heavy, dark, and lowly (R), but also has the properties of gravity, forbearance, humility, and stability. It is these latter qualities in Adam that lead him to seek and receive God’s forgiveness after his disobedience (Q, Ṭ; see v. 23). Clay or earth can also serve as a place of prayer. Moreover, in the Islamic context it is the constituent elements of clay—namely, water and earth—that serve as a means of ritual purification (see 4:43; 5:6), not fire (unlike in Zoroastrianism, for example); and it is fire rather than clay that is a means of Divine punishment in the Hereafter (Q).”

‘As well, it is patently clear that there was no real reasoning which Iblis could have made towards Allah’s command to prostrate to Adam, since the superiority of Adam was proved through his contest with the angels (as well as Iblis) to imitate the names which were taught to Adam. Through clear observation, Iblis also could not imitate the names. The angels proclaimed “Glory be to You, no knowledge do we have save what you have Taught Us”; however, Iblis’ refusal also serves as the same proclamation. Thus, the only real reason the Satans oppose this command to prostrate to mankind is their great hatred towards the latter. It is why Iblis and his comrades are the absolute enemies of humankind, and there is no friendship between the two. Iblis’ comrades also include human satans who are the enemies of good human beings. ‘

Surah 7 Verse 13

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

[Allah] said, "Descend from Paradise, for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased.

Surah 7 Verse 14

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يَبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

[Satan] said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected."

Surah 7 Verse 15

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

[Allah] said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved."

Surah 7 Verse 16

قَالَ فِيمَا آغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾

[Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path."

Surah 7 Verse 17

ثُمَّ لَأَتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You]."

Surah 7 Verse 18

قَالَ أَخْرِجْ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

[Allah] said, "Get out of Paradise, reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together."

Surah 7 Verse 19

وَيَتَّعِدُمْ أَسْكُنَ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."

Surah 7 Verse 20

فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِ تَيْهَمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal."

"An allegory of the nature of Satan's deception through which he deceives the children of Adam"

Surah 7 Verse 21

وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

And he swore [by Allah] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors."

Surah 7 Verse 22

فَدَلَّهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَاتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وُرْقٍ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلَّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

So he made them fall, through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"

"Another allegorical statement, this time describing the 'shame' (with all its types and varieties) a human being is exposed to upon sinning against God"

Surah 7 Verse 23

قَالَ رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers."

Surah 7 Verse 24

قَالَ أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

[Allah] said, "Descend, being to one another enemies. And for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment for a time."

Surah 7 Verse 25

قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

He said, "Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth."

Surah 7 Verse 26

يَبْنَیْءَ آدَمَ قَدْ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُورِي سَوَءَاتِكُمْ وَرِيشًا وَلِبَاسُ النُّقْوَىٰ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ
ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايَاتِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as adornment. But the clothing of righteousness - that is best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.

Surah 7 Verse 27

يَبْنِيءَ آدَمَ لَا يَفْنِنَنَّكُمْ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا
لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَٰتِهِمَا ۗ إِنَّهُ يَرِنَكُمْ هُوَ وَقَبِيلُهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ
لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from Paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies to those who do not believe.