

## Suratul Baqarah: Verses 35-39

(٣٥) وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

(٣٦) فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

(٣٧) فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

(٣٨) قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

(٣٩) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

*And We said: "O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) from it (freely) a plenteous (food) wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust" (35).*

*But the Satan made them both slip from it and drove them out of what they were in; and We said:*

***“Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time” (36).***

***Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully; surely He is Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful (37) .***

***We said: “Get down you there—from all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve (38) .***

***And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide” (39).***

## **Commentary**

**Qur'an: *And We said: “O Adam! Dwell you and your wife. . . ”:*** Although the story of the angels' prostration before Adam has been repeated several times in the Qur'an, that of his placement in the Garden has been given in three places only:

**First:** The verses given above, from Chapter 2 (the Cow).

**Second:** In Chapter 7 (the Elevated Places):

● ***And (We said): “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden; so eat from where you desire, but do not go near this tree, for then you will be of the unjust” (19).***

● ***But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them what was hidden from them of their nakedness, and he said: “Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may(not) become of the immortals” (20).***

● ***And he swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you” (21).***

● ***Then he caused them to fall by deceit; so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?” (22).***

● ***They said: “Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers” (23).***

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

● **He (also) said: “Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised” (25).**

**Third:** In Chapter 20 (Ta-Ha):

● **And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination (115).**

● **And when We said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam”, they did prostrate, but Iblis (did it not); he refused (116).**

● **So We said: “O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife; therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil (117);**

● **Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein nor bare of clothing (118);**

● **and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun” (119).**

● **But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to him; he said: “O Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?” (120).**

● **Then they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them, and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden, and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray(121).**

● **Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him) (122).**

● **He said: “Get down you two therefrom, all (of you), one of you(is) enemy to another. So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy (123).**

● **And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind” (124).**

● **He shall say: “My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?” (125)**

● **He will say: “Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken this day” (126).**

● **And thus do We recompense him who is extravagant and does not believe in the signs of his Lord; and certainly the chastisement of the hereafter is severer and more lasting” (127).**

The context, and particularly the opening words of the story, “Verily I am going to make in the earth a vicegerent”, clearly show that it was for the earth that Adam was created; it was the original plan that he should live and die in the earth. Allah had temporarily placed the couple in the Garden to test them in

order that their nakedness might be uncovered to them.

Also the context in all three places shows that the order to the angels to prostrate before Adam, and then to Adam to stay in the Garden is a single, continuous, story. It all shows that Adam (a. s.) was created specifically for the earth, and the way to send him down was through the Garden as mentioned in the Qur'an:

It was shown that he was superior to the angels and, therefore, more qualified for the vicegerency of Allah; then they were told to prostrate before him, in acknowledgement of his superiority; then he was placed in the Garden but forbidden to go near a particular tree; so that on eating from it they should become aware of their nakedness and then be sent down to the earth.

It means that the last link in this chain was their becoming aware of their private parts – it was this factor which irrevocably showed that they were fit for this earth, ready for this life. "as-Saw 'ah", (السَّوْءَةُ) literally means shame, disgrace, private part of the body.

In this story it has been used in the last meaning, as may be seen from the words, "and they both began to cover themselves with leaves of the Garden". That is why we have translated it as "nakedness". )

However, their awareness of their pudenda proved that in addition to their spiritual qualities, they had also animal instincts and desires ingrained in them. It naturally made them dependent on nutrition and growth. Iblīs wanted them to become aware of their nakedness.

Adam and his wife were given earthly, human existence and were at once placed in the Garden without any delay; they were not given time to perceive and understand their nakedness or its concomitants; they had not yet comprehended the life of this earth and its necessities.

When they were sent to the Garden their connection with the spiritual world, including the angels, was strong; their link with it was not weakened. It should be noted that Allah has said, "what was hidden from them"; He has not said, "what had been hidden from them"; it may be inferred from the expression used that their nakedness could not remain hidden for ever in this life; it was hidden for only a short period when they were placed in the Garden.

The uncovering of their nakedness with all its concomitants was a predetermined fact and it depended upon their eating from that tree. That is why Allah had told them: "therefore let him not drive you both forth from the Garden so that you should be put to toil"; thereafter, the Satan "drove them out of what they were in".

It should not be overlooked that even when Allah pardoned them after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden – they were sent down to the earth to live therein. If their eating of the tree, the uncovering of their private parts and the life of this world were not a confirmed divine plan, an irrevocable predetermined decree, they would have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon

as they were forgiven their mistake.

In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend sometime in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allah, depended on their eating from the tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and it happened because they listened to the whispering of the Satan.

Allah says: “And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot”. Which covenant does this verse allude to? Does it refer to the admonition, “and do not approach (you two) this tree, for then you (two) will be of the unjust”?

Or to the warning, “surely this (i.e., the Satan) is an enemy to you and to your wife”? Or does it refer to the general covenant made with all human beings in general and with the prophets in particular?

The first possibility is out of question altogether. Allah says: “But the Satan whispered an evil suggestion to them . . . and he said: 'Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals . . . '”

Obviously, when Adam and his wife committed the error and tasted of the tree they were aware of the prohibition – even the evil suggestion of the Satan had begun with a reference to it. And Allah says in this verse that “We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.” It, therefore, could not refer to that prohibition, because Adam had not forgotten it at all.

The second suggestion – that the covenant might refer to the warning against the Satan – is not so wide of mark; still it is not supported by apparent meaning of the verses. The said warning was given to both Adam and his wife, while this verse refers to a covenant made especially with Adam.

It leaves us with the last alternative that the covenant means the general covenant which was made with the whole mankind and more particularly with the prophets. This verse (about the covenant with Adam and his forgetting it) occurs at the beginning of the story in the chapter of Ta-Ha; and the story concludes with the words, “So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy.

And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind. He shall say: 'My Lord! why hast Thou raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?' He will say: 'Even so: Our signs came to you, but you forgot them; even thus shall you be forsaken (literally: forgotten) today.’”

These concluding verses perfectly fit that opening one. To turn away from the remembrance of Allah is not different from forgetting the covenant of Allah. Add to it the use of the same verb (*you forgot them*) in the next verse. All these references are perfectly compatible with the covenant made with the souls of the human beings about the Mastership of Allah and their own servitude.

That covenant obliged the man that he should never forget that Allah is his Lord, the Ruler and Master of his affairs; nor should he lose sight of the fact that he is a wholly owned slave of Allah; that he has no authority whatsoever over his benefit or harm; nor does he has any control over his life, death or resurrection; in short he owns neither his person, his characteristics nor his actions.

The error that stands opposite to this remembrance is forgetfulness – man forgets his Lord and His All-encompassing Mastership; he becomes engrossed in his own self, getting bogged down more and more in the mire of this world's attractions.

Look at this world's life, with all its diversity; and see how it spreads its tentacles in all directions. Note how it is shared by the believer and the unbeliever both. And then find out how the two groups respond to its joy and sorrow. How different is their respective attitude towards this life's success and failure, happiness and unhappiness, content and discontent, relief and suffering.

These factors affect the two groups – the believers and the unbelievers – in entirely different ways. The believer has the knowledge of Allah and the unbeliever lacks this knowledge. And it causes all the differences in their respective behaviour.

Every man looks at this world; a world that is submerged in all types of misfortunes and disasters: a life followed by death, a health ruined by disease, a prosperity eaten away by poverty, a comfort destroyed by discomfort, a gain nullified by loss – this is, in a nutshell, the life of this world.

The believer knows that everything and every affair belongs to Allah; nothing is independent of God, the Lord. Every thing and every affair emanates from Him; and all that originates from Him is good and beautiful; nothing but beauty and splendour, goodness and excellence, can come from Him.

And because all things and all affairs issue forth from his Lord and Master, he thinks that all is elegant and fine; he dislikes nothing and fears nothing; everything in his eyes is likeable, except that which his Master tells him to dislike. He subjugates his likes and dislikes to those of his Master. In short, all his attention is fixed to the pleasure of his Master.

He knows that everything is the sole property of God; none else has any share in anything. That being the case, why should he worry how the Master manages His own property? He does not think that he is competent to meddle in the affairs of his Lord.

This submission to Allah creates a perfect tranquillity, a truly happy life, untarnished by unhappiness; a light without darkness, a joy without sorrow, a benefit without harm, and a riches without want. It all happens because he believes in Allah and in His mastership.

On the other hand is the unbeliever who does not know Allah. By cutting himself off from the one and only Master, he has to bow his head before every creature. He believes that everything is independent in its actions – that it has a power of its own to benefit or to harm, to do good or evil.

Consequently, he remains in constant fear of everything; he is ever apprehensive of every real or imagined danger. He is always grieving for what has befallen him, longing for the opportunities he has missed. He feels nostalgia for the prestige or wealth that is gone; breaks his heart for the children, relatives or friends who have left him.

He is inextricably trapped by the attractions of the world; he relies on them and has trust in them; and when any thing goes wrong, he sinks into despair. Then as soon as he makes a virtue of necessity and is resigned to that misfortune, a new calamity overwhelms him.

In this way, he is always driven from pillar to post, with a heavy heart and a gloomy countenance; “thus does Allah lay uncleanness on those who do not believe”.

It can be seen, in the light of the above discourse, that forgetting the covenant and unhappiness of this world's life, both are interrelated – the later springs from the former. This fact becomes clearer if we compare the wordings of the verse 20: 123–124 with those used in the verse under discussion. The former says:

***So if there comes to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the Day of Resurrection, blind.***

And the same idea has been expressed in this verse in the following words:

***. . . then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.***

It may be inferred from these verses that the forbidden tree was of such a nature that if one ate from it he would certainly be entangled in the troubles and misfortunes of this life – he would spend his life in this world, heedless of his own place, forgetting his Lord.

Probably Adam (a. s.) wanted to combine the fruit of that tree with the covenant that he had entered into with his Lord. But he could not succeed; the fruit had its effect, he forgot the covenant and fell into the troubles and toils of this world. Then he was saved when he repented before Allah and Allah turned to him with mercy.

**Qur'an: and eat (you two) from it (freely) a plenteous (food)** “ar-Raghad” (الرَّغَدُ) literally means happiness, well-being, good life and affluence *arghada 'l -qawmu mawashiyahum* (أَرغَدَ القومُ مواشيهم) means, “the people left their cattle to graze wherever it liked. “Qawmun raghad” (قومٌ رَغَدٌ) and “nisa'un raghad” (نساءٌ رَغَدٌ) means people (or women) having a life of plenty and opulence.

**Qur'an: and do not approach (you two) this tree;** The context shows that actual prohibition was of eating from it; but they were told not even to approach it; the prohibition was couched in these terms for emphasis. What was really forbidden is seen from the verse:

**so when they tasted of the tree, their nakedness became manifest to them (7:22),**

and

**. . . they both ate of it, so their nakedness appeared unto them (20: 121) .**

**Qur'an: for then you (two) will be of the unjust:** “*az-Zalimīn*” (الظالمين) is the *nomen agentis* of *az-zulm* (الظلم = injustice, to do wrong). It is not from *az-zulmah* (darkness), as has been suggested by someone. Adam and his wife acknowledged their wrong-doing, and the Qur'an quotes them as saying:

**“Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers” (7:23).**

This clause has been changed in Chapter 20 to “so that you should be put to toil”; and the toil has further been explained in these words:

***Surely it is (ordained) for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e. in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun (20: 118–119).***

Clearly, the injustice and wrong-doing, mentioned in the verse 2:25, was to bring in its wake the toil of this world – hunger, thirst, nakedness and other discomforts. The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was neither a sin (as this term is used in the *shar'ah*) nor an injustice against Allah.

It shows that the prohibition was in the nature of an advice pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force of an ordained law. Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard to that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. an offence, from the *shar'ah* point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely waived off, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all.

If Adam and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only an advice.

Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to come out of the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a punishment for any sin or crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves. (We shall write again on this subject, God willing.)

**Qur'an: *But the Satan made them both slip from it:*** The Satan could have misled them by creating evil thoughts in their hearts, in the same way as he misleads other human beings. But many verses, in



the three narratives quoted at the beginning of this commentary, show that the Satan had appeared before Adam and his wife, and had talked to them face to face:

***So We said: “O Adam! surely this is an enemy to you and to your wife” (20:117).***

Allah had pointed out the Satan to Adam, not by any verbal description but by showing to him the person of the said enemy. (Note the demonstrative pronoun, “this is”.)

***(The Satan) said: “O Adam! Shall I guide you to the tree of immortality. . . “ (20:120).***

The speaker, that is, the Satan, must have talked to Adam face to face.

***And he (i.e. the Satan) swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you” (7:21).***

Obviously, he was visible to Adam and his wife and swore during his talk with them .

***. . . And their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?” (7:22)***

It indicates that the Satan was visible to Adam and his wife. If the Satan had misled them by creating evil thoughts into their minds without appearing before them, they could have said to Allah that they were not aware that that thought was put into their minds by the Satan; that they mistook it to be their own thought because the Satan had not appeared before them.

They used to see and recognize the Satan. Likewise, other prophets – all of them covered by Allah's protection – used to see and recognize him if and when he came to them. Many Tradition mention such encounters in the stories of Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā, Yahya, Ayyūb, Isma'īl and Muhammad (may Allah bless him and his progeny as well as the prophets).

The above–quoted verses as well as the verse 7:20:

***and he said: “Your Lord has not forbidden from this tree except that . . .”***

also show that the Satan had visited them near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden, talked to them and put evil suggestion before them. He was able to do so because the Garden was not the Garden of eternal abode.

The Qur'an also says that Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together. (Of course, Allah had said to the Satan:

***“Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein” (7:13).***

But the pronouns “this” and “therein” may refer to the angels or to the heaven. It may mean: Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven as it is a place of honour.)

**Qur'an: and We said: "Get down, some of you being the enemies of others. . . .":** The second person pronouns, used in this verse, are plural, which denote at least three persons. Clearly, it was addressed to Adam, his wife and the Satan. The Satan was turned out of the heaven and/or the company of the angels before (as described above).

This verse combines in itself that previous order too; and manifests the firm decree of Allah establishing enmity between Iblīs on one side and Adam and his wife and their descendants on the other. It also promulgates another decree that they shall live in the earth, die therein, and be raised again from it.

It may safely be said that the whole human race (Adam together with his descendants) is covered by the last mentioned decree:

***Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised (7:25).***

This verse comes at the end of the story (in Chapter 7) which begins with the following words:

***And certainly We created you, then We fashioned you, then We said to the angels: "Prostrate before Adam". . . (7:11).***

In both verses plural pronouns have been used; and it is an indication that the creation and the decree to live and die in the earth includes more than two, that is, other human beings too besides Adam and his wife.

The story of Adam may have been used by Allah to represent the rise, fall and rise again of the whole mankind. Adam was the first representative of humanity, and his life was a symbol, a miniature, of the human beings life-span in this world.

The angels were told to prostrate before Adam, because he was the vicegerent of Allah in the earth. It has been mentioned earlier that this vicegerency was bestowed on the whole mankind. The angels prostrated before Adam, as he was the symbol of humanity, the representative of his race.

Adam and his wife were placed in the Garden and then were sent down from there because they had eaten of the forbidden tree. Every man may see his own face in this mirror. His soul, before coming to this world, enjoyed the sublime and lofty existence; his abode was spiritually near to his Lord – a place of joy and happiness, of splendour and light; in the company of purified companions and spiritual friends, near to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Then he opted for this transient life, and was at once entangled in the troubles and toils of this world; leaving that purified existence, he was attracted to this tedious and odious life.

Adam at once repented and prayed for the mercy of Allah. In the same way, man may return to Allah and consequently to the eternal abode of honour and bliss. But if he took the wrong turning, did not try to return to Allah, and, in short, followed his base desires, he would change the bounty of Allah into dis-

belief and ungratefulness, would direct himself to the place of disgrace – to the hell; and how evil that resting place is!

**Qur'an: Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so He returned to him mercifully: "at-Talaqq" (التَّلَقَّى = to receive) signifies "to learn". It was this learning of the words that paved the way for the repentance of Adam.**

"at-Tawbah" (التَّوْبَةُ) literally means to return; generally it is used for repentance, because when a man repents, he returns to his Lord. This verb is at times ascribed to Allah (as in this verse), and signifies that Allah returns or restores the servant to His grace and mercy.

In other words, He accepts the plea of the servant and forgives his sins. At other times it is attributed to the servant; then it signifies the servant's return to Allah, that is, his repentance from his sins.

*at-Tawbah* (repentance) of man is flanked on both sides by two *tawbahs* (mercies) of Allah. Man can never do without the mercy of Allah. He needs mercy and help of Allah to turn away from sins; only then he may return to Allah, may repent from his sins; then again the mercy of Allah comes forward, and his repentance is accepted.

Therefore, an accepted repentance of man issues forth from the mercy of Allah, and also ends on His mercy. The verse 9:118 clearly mentions this fact:

**then He returned to them (mercifully) so that they might return** (i.e. might repent).

What were the words which Adam received from his Lord? Some people think that it refers to their invocation reported in Chapter 7:

**They said: "Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers"(7:23).**

But this view is not supported by the sequence of the events. Adam and his wife had addressed that invocation before they were told to get down from the Garden (7:24); and it was after getting that order that he "received some words" from Allah, as is clear from the verse 2:36-37. Therefore, "some words" cannot refer to that previously uttered invocation.

There may, however, be another explanation: When Allah announced to the angels that He was going to make a vicegerent in the earth, they said: "Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness?" Allah did not say that their accusation against the wouldbe vicegerent was wrong; His only answer was that He taught Adam all the names.

There must have been something deep, meaningful and relevant in this teaching of the names; otherwise, the angels could not be satisfied, their objection could not be answered. The names taught to

Adam must have contained some such thing that would come to the rescue of man if he sinned, would save him from disgrace if he erred.

Probably, the words received at the time of repentance were related to the names taught to him in the beginning.

It cannot be denied that Adam (a.s.) did wrong to himself by placing himself in this world – a crossroads of happiness and unhappiness; had he been ensnared by it he would have perished; but he chose to return to his original place of spiritual bliss and was saved; he had to undergo, in this process, untold miseries and unbearable hardships.

In any case, he put himself in so much trouble that he became “unjust” to himself. The question arises as to why Allah selected this hard way to send him from the Garden to the earth. The fact, however, remains that in this process he attained to such heights of eternal bliss and spiritual perfection as would have been impossible to reach without coming down to the earth – and that too with a stigma of mistake.

The events leading to his removal from the Garden and, later, to the acceptance of his repentance showed to him his true reality – how humble, dependent, deficient and servile he was; and at the same time he came to realize that every difficulty of this world leads to manifold ease in the next life; every unpleasantness here results in enhanced pleasantness there; every trouble in the obedience to Allah brings in its wake the pleasure of Allah and His unlimited reward; the process continues until the servant reaches the sublime presence of his Lord.

Adam knew, through his own experience, taste of many of the beautiful attributes of Allah: His forgiveness, turning mercifully to the servants, covering their mistakes, bestowing mercy on them, putting them in the shadow of His compassion and grace – these are some of the divine attributes which He has especially reserved for the sinners.

Adam could not know and understand them without passing through the stages which Allah had decreed for him.

This, however, was his repentance; it made ordination of *asharā'ah* essential. It was necessary for Adam and his descendants to know which path they should take so as to reach their destination, the abode of bliss and happiness. His repentance brought him to the stage where promulgation of religion and ordination of the *sharā'ah* was inevitable.

That is why Allah frequently mentions the repentance before the belief:

***Stand fast then (in the right path) as you are commanded, as also he who has turned (to Allah) with you. . . (11:112);***

***And most surely I am most forgiving to him who repents and believes and does good. . . (20:82).***

There are many such verses in the Qur'an.

**Qur'an: We said: "Get down you therefore all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide".**

This is the essence of religion ordained, for the first time, for Adam (a.s.) and his descendants. Allah has condensed the whole religion in these two sentences; nothing has been added, nor can be added to it upto the Day of Resurrection.

Ponder on this story and particularly the narrative of Chapter 20. You will see that Allah had issued two decrees in respect of Adam and his descendants. When he ate from the tree, it was decreed that he should get down to the earth and spend his life therein – a life of trouble and toil.

And when he repented, it was ordained that he and his descendants should be honoured with divine guidance. The first decree initiated the earthly life for him; the second, issued after his repentance, bestowed dignity and grace to that life, by providing it with divine guidance.

From then on, man's life is composed of two lives: A material, earthly life and a spiritual, heavenly one. It may be inferred from repetition of the order to "get down" in this narrative:

**"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time" (2:36).**

**"Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you guidance from Me. . ." (2:38).**

Repentance of Adam (2:37) occurred between these two orders. The sequence shows that Adam had repented before their departing from the Garden, although he had slipped from his earlier position of honour. It may also be, inferred from the change in the styles of the following verses: Allah said to Adam, when placing him in the Garden,

**"do not go near this tree" (7:19);**

but when they ate from it,

**their Lord called out to them: "Did I not forbid you both from that tree. . ." (7:22).**

Note the demonstrative pronoun, "this", (for a nearer object) in the former speech, and "that" (for a farther one) in the latter. Also contrast the verb, "said", (showing proximity) of the former with "called out" (showing distance) of the latter. All this together supports the above-given explanation that at the time of the second order Adam was still in the Garden but not in his earlier honoured place.

**"Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode**

***and a provision for a time” (2:36; 7:24).***

***“Therein shall you live, and therein shall you die, and from it shall you be raised” (7:25).***

The verses indicate that the life on the earth was very different from that in the Garden. This life is firmly connected with the earth, full of difficulties and hardships. Man, in this life, is created from the earth, then after death is returned into it, and will, on the Day of Resurrection, be raised from it. This life is different from that of the Garden. It follows that Adam had lived a heavenly – and not earthly – life in the Garden.

This observation gives us a certainty that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, although it was not the Garden of eternal abode from which one is never turned out.

What is meant by “the heaven”? We shall, God willing explain it somewhere else.

Now, we come to the mistake of Adam. The explanation given under various verses throws sufficient light on this subject. But the importance of the topic justifies its recapitulation in a systematic way:

The verses obviously say that he had committed a mistake and disobeyed the divine command: “. . . for then you (two) will be of the unjust”; “and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray”; and they too acknowledged their error: “Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.”

But on meditating on the verses, and particularly on the admonition not to eat of the tree, we come to a definite conclusion that the said prohibition was not in the nature of an authoritative command; it was rather like an advice to guide Adam to his good and comfort. The following proof irresistibly leads us to this conclusion:

First: Allah said in this, as well as in Chapter 7, that eating of the tree would be an injustice, a wrongdoing (***for then you two will be of the unjust***). The same result has been described as “toil” (***so that you should be put to toil***); and the “toil” has been explained in the terms of worldly needs and troubles, because it was ordained “for you that you shall not be hungry therein (i.e., as long as you remained in the Garden) nor bare of clothing; and that you shall not be thirsty therein nor shall you feel the heat of the sun”.

It seems clear that it was to protect them from these worldly troubles and toils that they were told not to go near that tree. The prohibition, therefore, was not more than an advice; certainly it was not an authoritative command. Going against an advice does not entail a sin, does not involve rebellion against the adviser.

The injustice, mentioned in this story, therefore, means their doing wrong against their own selves, putting themselves in this world's hardship and toil; but it cannot mean the sin committed by a servant against his master.

Second: When a servant repents, that is, returns to Allah, his Lord, and the Lord accepts that repentance, all the effects of the sin are erased, as though he had not committed any sin at all.

If the prohibition against eating from the tree had the force of an authoritative command, an ordained law, Adam and his wife should have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as their repentance was accepted. But they were not.

It decisively proves that the prohibition was of advisory nature like telling someone not to put his hand in a fire; if he does not listen to the advice, his hand would certainly burn, and the subsequent apology would not unburn it, even if the apology was accepted.

Likewise, Adam and his wife disregarded the advice, and as a result of eating from the tree, had to go out of the Garden and live in the earth a life of trial and hardship. Their repentance could not take them back to the Garden as their coming to the earth was the natural and inevitable result of that action.

The prohibition, in short, was not a law ordained by the Master – like the announcement that a man who neglects to pray would enter the Fire; or the one who disobeys the rules of the *shari'ah* would be punished. If it were like such a command, the repentance would have rubbed out the effect of disobedience and they would have been sent back to the Garden straight away.

Third: ***We said: "Get down you therefrom all together; and if there comes to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in, and belie, Our signs, they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide."***

These verses have put in a nutshell all the detailed laws, rules, and regulations sent by Allah for the mankind, through His angels, books and apostles. And it was the first *shari'ah* which Allah ordained for the world, the world of Adam and his descendants. It was ordained after the second order to "get down" – and the order to "get down" was not a legislative, but a creative, command, resulting from his eating of the tree.

It means that at the time when Adam partook of the tree, no *shari'ah* was ordained yet, and no law was promulgated. Therefore, whatever Adam did was not a transgression against any law of the *shari'ah*, nor was there any sin or crime involved in acting against that advice.

Question: The order to the angels and Iblis to prostrate before Adam was an authoritative command, and it was given before the order to Adam not to go near that tree. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that at that time there was no obligatory law.

Reply: We are talking about Adam and his descendants, and not about the angels and Iblis. It is irrelevant whether the angels and Iblis were given a compulsory order before Adam was placed in the Garden.

Question: If the prohibition were of an advisory nature, Allah would not have described its disregard in the terms of “injustice”, “disobedience”, and “going astray”.

Reply: We have already explained that the “injustice” done by Adam and his wife was against their own selves; it was not a sin against Allah.

“*al-’Isyan*” (العصيان = disobedience ) literally means to resist, or to yield with difficulty. The Arabs say: I broke it and it was broken; I broke it *fa-’asa* (فَعَصَى =) but it resisted, or yielded to my pressure with difficulty.

Not heeding an order is called *al-’Isyan*, because one does not yield to that enjoinder or prohibition. This resistance may occur against an advice as much as against a compulsory order. The word in itself does not imply sinning; it all depends on the nature of the order that was disregarded.

Of course, nowadays we, the Muslims, use this word as synonymous to sinning. And now it has become a terminology of the *shar’ah* (or of the Muslims), used for disobedience to an authoritative command. But this later transference cannot effect its original or literal meaning for which it was used in the Qur’an.

“*al-Ghawayah*” (الغَوَايَةَ = to go astray) literally means inability of a man to look after his interests; not managing one’s affairs properly. This word by itself does not indicate committing a sin or crime. It is the context that determines its value. Its emphasis changes depending on whether the neglected order was an advice or an authoritative command.

**Question:** Then why did they repent? Why did they say, “and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers?”

**Reply:** *at-Tawbah* (repentance) means to turn to. And the word can be used in various meanings, depending on context.

A servant rebels against his master, and thereafter returns to him and asks for his forgiveness; the master, if he so wishes, pardons him, and gives him his previous rank and position.

A doctor tells a patient not to eat certain fruits, lest his illness be prolonged or the disease be complicated. The patient disregards the prohibition and, as a result, puts his life in danger. Now he feels embarrassed and repents before the doctor, asking for his forgiveness, begging him to prescribe for him a medicine to enable him to regain his health and vigour.

The doctor may tell him that now it will be necessary for him to undergo a long and difficult treatment, adding that if he persevered in the prescribed regimen his health would be much better than before.

The significance of the other words used in the narrative, like forgiveness, mercy and loss, may likewise change with the context.



# Tradition

Al-Qummī ('Alī) narrates, in his *at-Tafsīr*, from his father (Ibrāhīm ibn Hashim) who narrates, from as-Sādiq (a.s.) (omitting the chain of intervening narrators, although it was fully described by his Shaykh). He said: “as-Sādiq (a. s.) was asked about the Garden of Adam whether it was a garden of this world or one of the hereafter's.

He (a.s.) said: 'It was a garden of this world, wherein the sun and the moon rose. Had it been a Garden of the hereafter, he would have not come out of it.' He (a.s.) further said: 'Allah placed him in the Garden and allowed him its freedom with exception of the tree.

(It was done) because here was a creature of Allah who could not survive without (some) enjoinder and prohibition, nor (could it continue) without food, cloth, shelter and marriage; nor could he know, without divine help, what was beneficial to him from what was harmful.

Then came to him Iblīs and told him: “If you (two) ate from this tree, which Allah has forbidden you, you (two) would become two angels and would abide in the Garden for ever; and if you (two) did not eat from it, Allah would turn you out from the Garden;” and he swore to them that he was a sincere adviser to them; as Allah quotes his words:

***Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals. And he swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you.”***

Adam believed in his words, and they (i.e. Adam and his wife) ate from the tree; and they became as Allah says: ***their nakedness became manifest to them***; what Allah had clothed them with of the (attires of the) Garden dropped away from them, and they both began to cover themselves with the leaves of the Garden; and their Lord called out to them:

***Did I not forbid you both from that tree and say to you that the Satan is your open enemy?***

They said, as Allah quotes them:

***“Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves; and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers.”***

Thereupon Allah said to them:

***“Get down, some of you being the enemies of others; and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time.”***

“He (the Imam) said: “that (time) is the Day of Resurrection”. He further said: “Then Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa – and it got this name because *Safīyū 'llah* (صَفِيُّ اللَّهِ = the sincere friend of Allah,

i.e. Adam) came down on it; and Hawwa' (Eve) descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah – and it was named al-Mar-wah because *al-mar'ah* (المرءة) the woman descended on it. The Adam remained in prostration for forty days, weeping for the Garden.

So Jibrīl (Gabriel) came to him and said: 'Did Allah not create you with His hand, and (did He not) breath into you from His spirit, and (did He not) made His angels prostrate before you?' He said: 'Certainly.' (Then Jibrīl said:) 'and He ordered you not to eat from the tree and you disobeyed Him?' Adam said: 'Iblīs swore to me falsely.'”

The author says: There are other Tradition too from *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a. s.) to the effect that the Garden of Adam was of this world; although some of them are from the same Ibrahim ibn Hashim.

The phrase, “a garden of this world”, has been used in contrast to the Garden of everlasting abode. It indicates a state between this world and the hereafter. Adam's garden was not the Garden of everlasting abode, but neither was it a garden like is the state, place and time that of ours *al-Barzakh* (البرزخ) between one's death and the Day of Resurrection.

The said Garden may be called a Garden of al-Barzakh, and it may well have been situated in this world. The sentences, “Adam descended on the (hill of) as-Safa”, and “Hawwa' descended on the (hill of) al-Marwah”, indicate that, before it, they were somewhere above this world.

The interpretation of “a time” with the “Day of Resurrection” is also revealing. Man remains in al-Barzakh after his death, and at the same time he remains in the earth. Many Qur'anic verses use these expressions interchangeably.

For example:

***He will say: “How many years did you tarry in the earth?” They will say: “We tarried a day or part of a day”, but ask those who keep account. He will say: “You did tarry but a little – had you but known (it)” (23: 112–114).***

***And at the time when the Hour shall come, the guilty shall swear (that) they did not tarry but an hour; thus they used to utter lies. And those who are given knowledge and faith will say: “Certainly you tarried according to the decree of Allah till the Day of Resurrection, but you did not know” (30:55–56).***

Apart from that, many Tradition of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) show that the Garden of Adam was in the heaven, and that he and his wife descended from the heaven. For the one who is familiar with the language of Tradition, it is not difficult to believe that the said Garden was in the heaven and that they had descended from the heaven to the earth, even if they were created in the earth itself and live therein all along.

These expressions are not any different from those which say that the Garden is in the heaven, and yet

say that the grave is an orchard from the orchards of the Garden or a pit from the pits of the Fire. Many similar expressions are found in the Tradition. Any lingering doubt will be removed when we shall write about the heaven, God willing.

There is no mention in the correct and reliable Tradition as to how Iblīs found his way to Adam and his wife, or as to what means he adopted for this purpose. Some Tradition mention the serpent and peacock as the two helpers of Iblīs in his endeavour to mislead Adam and his wife; but they are extremely unreliable.

Obviously, such Tradition were interpolated under the influence of Judaism. This story has been taken from the Jews, and to make this point clear, we are quoting it from the Bible (King James version). The story is given in the book of Genesis:

*“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

*And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*

*The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth towards the east of Assyria.*

*And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.*

*And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*

*And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

*And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

*And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.*

*And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

*And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; –upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of the life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it, bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*

*Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

*Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”*

*(Genesis, ch.2: vs. 7 to ch.3: vs. 24)*

Compare the narrative of the Qur'an with that of the Bible, then ponder on various Tradition narrated in the Shi'ah or Sunnī books; you will come to know many revealing differences. But we are not going into it because it is beyond the scope of this book.

Question: How could Iblīs enter the Garden and mislead Adam therein? The question arises because:

i) the Garden is a place of cleanliness and purity,

***wherein there shall be nothing vain nor any sin (52:23);***

ii) The garden is in the heaven, and Iblīs was already turned out therefrom when he refused to prostrate before Adam.

***Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away (15:34).***

***Then get down from this, for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein (7:13).***

Reply: (i) The Qur'an disallows vain and sinful acts in the Garden of eternal abode (in which the believers shall be placed after resurrection) and the Garden of al-Barzakh wherein they are placed after death. But it is silent about the Garden of Adam, in which he was placed together with his wife before man was sent to this world and given any authoritative law.

Rather, it may be said that it shows not only possibility of disobedience therein, but also its occurrence.

Proof: This very disobedience of Adam and his wife.

Moreover, vanity and sin are relative terms; and they do not occur until man comes into this world, and is given some authoritative laws to follow.

(ii) The argument may be replied as follows:

a. It cannot be definitely said that the clauses, “get down of it” and “get down from this” were meant to turn Iblīs out of the heaven, because “the heaven” has not been mentioned in preceding sentences. The order, therefore, could mean, 'get out of the ranks of the angels', or 'get down from the honour and dignity given to thee'.

b. May be, the order to get down or to get out meant only that he could not live or stay in the heaven with the angels. If so, then it was not a prohibition against occasionally going or ascending thereto. This interpretation is supported by the verses which describe the Satans' occasional goings upto the heaven to eavesdrop the conversations of the angels. 1

Also, it has been narrated that before the time of 'Īsā (a.s.), the Satans were going upto the seventh heaven; when he was born they were barred from the fourth heaven and above; then after the birth of the Prophet they were barred from all the heavens.

c. There is no mention in the Book of Allah that Iblīs had entered the Garden. Therefore, the question does not arise at all. It has, of course, been narrated in the Tradition; but they are not *al-mutawatir*; and possibly the narrators have described the story in their own words, and not exactly as the Imam said.

Utmost that may be put as evidence that Iblīs had entered the Garden is the verse: *and he* (i.e. the Satan) *said*:

***“Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not become two angels. . . ”(7:19),***

as he had used the pronoun, “this”, (“this tree”) which denotes nearness. But if it is taken to mean nearness in place, it would give the same meaning in Allah's command,

***. . . do not go near this tree (7:18).***

Surely it, cannot be said that the pronoun indicates that Allah was in that place near the tree.2

'Abdu 's-Salam al-Harawī3 said: “I said to ar-Rida (a.s.): 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! tell me about the tree from which Adam and Hawwa' ate, what was it? Because people do have different views about it; some have narrated that it was a wheat-plant, and others have reported that it was the tree of envy.' He said: 'All this is true.'

I said: 'Then what do these explanations, with their differences, mean?' He said: 'O son of as-Salt! Verily the tree of the Garden bears (fruits of) many kinds; and it was a wheat-plant and (yet) it bore grapes; and it was not like a tree of this world. And when Allah raised the status of Adam by making the angels prostrate before him and by placing him in the Garden, he said:

“Has Allah created any man superior than me?” And Allah knew what had come into his mind; so He called out to him: “Raise your head, O Adam! and look at the pillar of the Throne.” So, he looked at the pillar of the Throne and found written on it:

“There is no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; 'Alī ibn Abī Talib is the Leader of the faithful, and his wife, Fatimah is the Chief of the women of the worlds, and al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the Chiefs of the youths of the people of the Garden.” Adam said:

“O my Lord! who are they?” He, Mighty and Great is He said: “O Adam! they are (from) your off-springs; and they are better than you and all My creation; and if it were not (for) them, I would have not created you, nor the Garden, nor the fire, nor the heaven, nor the earth. So be careful not to look at them with envious eyes; otherwise, I will turn you out of My nearness.”

But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank. So, the Satan got the better of him, until he ate from the forbidden tree; and got the better of Hawwa', and she looked at Fatimah with envious eyes until she too, like Adam, ate from the tree. Thereupon, Allah turned them out of His Garden, and got them down from His nearness to the earth.”<sup>4</sup>

The author says: This matter has been described in many Tradition, some more detailed than this; others, more concise. In this tradition, the Imam has confirmed that the tree was the wheat-plant, and also that it was the tree of envy.

The former implies that the tree was not worthy of attention of the people of the Garden; the later indicates that it was too lofty to come within the grasp of Adam and his wife (as a tradition says that it was the tree of the knowledge of Muhammad and his progeny).

Apparently, the two interpretations are totally different from each other, and the tradition seems a problematic one. But if you ponder on the covenant referred to earlier, you will see that both meanings are complementary, and not mutually exclusive.

Adam (a.s.) wanted to combine the pleasures of the Garden – a place of nearness to Allah, where it was necessary to always keep the covenant before one's eyes, and not to let one's attention divert to anyone or anything else – with the forbidden tree – which would bring all the world's troubles in its wake; but he failed in his endeavour, was sent down to the earth because he had been heedless of the said covenant and of its demands.

It was reserved for the Prophet to combine these two seemingly apposite factors; it was he who, for the first time, harmonized this world with the next, synchronized the matter with the spirit, and brought into being a whole man.

However, Allah again guided Adam aright, chose him for His vicegerency, and as a result of his repentance, raised him above the worldly desires and made him remember again the forgotten covenant.

“But he looked at them with envious eyes and entertained the hope of (attaining to) their rank”: The second clause explains the first; Adam wanted that he too should attain to that status; it was not that he was envious (i.e., had any ill will) against them. Envy is a vice, while aspiring to raise one's status is not.

Now let us look at the following two Tradition:

1. ath-Thumalī narrates from Abū Ja'far (a. s.) that he said: “Allah made a covenant with Adam that he

should not go near the tree. But when the time came when, according to the knowledge of Allah, he was to eat of it, he forgot (the covenant) and ate from it.

And that is (the meaning of) the words of Allah:

***And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot; and We did not find in him any determination.***"<sup>5</sup>

2. al-'Ayyash<sup>6</sup> narrated in his *at-Tafsīr* from one of the two (i.e., the fifth or the sixth) Imams, that he was asked as to why Allah punished Adam for his forgetfulness. He said: "He had not forgotten; and how could he forget when he had remembered it (very well) and (even) Iblīs had told him:

***Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals.***"

The way to harmonize these seemingly conflicting Tradition is clear if one applies to them the foregoing explanation.

Abū 's-Salt al-Harawī said: "al-Ma'mūn gathered for 'Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Rida (a.s.) people of various sects from among the Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, the Magians, the Sabaeans and all other religions. Nobody stood (for religious discussion with the Imam) but that he was forced to accept his (Imam's) arguments and was put to silence.

Then stood before him 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm and said to him: 'Do you believe in sinlessness of the prophets? O son of the Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Yes.' He ('Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm) said: 'Then what would you do with the words of Allah: ***and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray? . . .***'

Then said our master, ar-Rida (a. s.): 'Woe unto you! O 'Alī! ! Have fear of Allah (in your heart) and do not ascribe indecencies to the prophets of Allah, and do not interpret by your own opinion the Book of Allah (Mighty and Great is He!)

Verily Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) says:

***. . . but none knows its interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge (3:7).***

As for the words of Allah,

***and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray,***

(the fact is that) Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) had created Adam (to be) His proof in His earth and (to be) His vicegerent in His towns; He had not created him for the Garden; and the disobedience was (done) by Adam in the Garden, and not in the earth; (and it came to pass) so that the measures of the



decree of Allah (Mighty and Great is He) might be fulfilled.

So when he was sent down to the earth and was made (Allah's) proof and vicegerent, he was protected (i.e. became sinless), as Allah says:

***Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūḥ and the descendants of Ibrāḥīm and the descendants of 'Imran above all the worlds.***” (3:33) 6

The author says: The sentence, “and the disobedience was . . . in the Garden”, points to what we have already mentioned that there was no religious law ordained in the Garden; and that Adam (a.s.) even before his creation, was destined to live in the earth; and, therefore, the disobedience was of an advice, and not of an ordained law. In this context, there appears no reason why anyone should try (as someone has done) to explain away this tradition in a round-about way.

'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm said: “I was present in the court of al-Ma'mūn; and 'Alī ibn Mūsā was there with him. And al-Ma'mūn said to him: 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! Is it not your belief that the prophets are sinless?’

He said: 'Yes.' (al-Ma'mūn) said: 'Then what is the meaning of the words of Allah, the High: ***and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so he got astray?***' (The Imam) said: 'Verily Allah said to Adam: ***Dwell you and your wife in the Garden and eat (you both) freely wherever you (two) wish and do not approach (you two) this tree, (pointing to a tree) for then you (two) will be of the unjust.***

Allah did not say to him: Do not eat from this tree nor from another tree of its kind. And they did not eat from it; they ate from another (similar) tree because the Satan whispered evil suggestion to them and said:

***“Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may not become of the immortals.” And he swore to them both: “Most surely I am a sincere adviser to you.”***

And Adam and Hawwa' had not seen before that anyone swearing falsely in the name of Allah; thus he caused them to fall by deceit and they ate from that (tree) because they believed in his oath in the name of Allah.

And it all happened before Adam was made a prophet, and it was not a big sin leading 'one to the fire; it was only a forgiven minor (sin) that is permissible to the prophets before they begin receiving revelation.

But when Allah chose him and made him prophet he became sinless, not committing any minor or major sin. Allah (Mighty and Great is He!) has said: ***Surely Allah chose Adam and Nūḥ and the descendants of Ibrāḥīm and the descendants of 'Imran above all the worlds. . . .***” ('Uyūnu '1-akhbar)

The author says: as-Sad<sup>q</sup> (may Allah have mercy on him!) after narrating the tradition in full, has commented as follows:

“Strange that 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, in spite of his open hostility towards, and enmity and hatred of, *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.), should narrate this tradition.”

This comment only looks at the belief of the sinlessness of the prophets which this tradition purportedly proves; but as-Sad<sup>q</sup> (may Allah have mercy on him!) did not look deep into its implications.

The reported reply is not in accord with the well-known belief of the Imams of *Ahlu 'l-bayt*, that all the prophets were fully protected from all major and minor sins before as well as after getting the prophethood.

Moreover, the reply presumes that the verse does not mean what it apparently says. According to this tradition, the verse, “Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels . . .”, should be read as follows:

“Your Lord has not forbidden you from this (i.e. the other similar) tree; He has only forbidden you from approaching that one; and He has not forbidden you from that tree except that you may not both become two angels . . .”

Such deletions are against the norms of eloquence. The quoted speech of the Satan clearly shows that he was instigating them to eat from the very tree that was forbidden, holding out to them the hope of becoming angels or immortals:

***“Your Lord has not forbidden you from this tree except that you may not both become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals.” “O Adam! shall I guide you to the tree of immortality and a kingdom which decays not?”***

The narrator, that is, 'Alī ibn Muhammad ibn al-Jahm, had himself been given the correct and complete answer in the court of al-Ma'mūn, as the preceding tradition shows; therefore, there is something wrong in this narration of his, although some parts may be somehow interpreted correctly.

As-Sad<sup>q</sup> has narrated (through his chain) from al-Baqir (a.s.) , through his forefathers, from 'Alī (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.) said: “Adam and Hawwa' stayed in the Garden, (till they were sent out of it) for seven hours according to the (counting of the) days of the world, until Allah sent them down on the same day.”

'Abdullah ibn Sinan said: “Abū 'Abdillah (a.s.) was asked – and I was present there: 'How long did Adam and his wife stay in the Garden until their mistake removed them from it?' He said: 'Verily Allah breathed His spirit into Adam after the midday on Friday; then created his wife from his lowest rib; then He made His angels prostrate before him and placed him in His Garden the same day.

And by God! he did not stay therein but six hours of the same day until he disobeyed Allah. Thereupon, Allah removed them both from it after the sunset, and they were put into the courtyard of the Garden till the morning; then their nakedness became manifest to them; and their Lord called out to them:

**“Did I not forbid you both from that tree?”** Adam felt ashamed and bowed (his head) and said: **“Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves and we confess our sins; therefore, forgive us** (our sins).” Allah said to them: **“Get down you both from My heavens to the earth; because no sinner shall remain in My nearness – neither in My Garden nor in My heavens. ”** <sup>1</sup> (at-Tafsīr, al-‘Ayyash<sup>2</sup>)

The author says: The tradition gives a new detail, that Adam and Hawwa<sup>1</sup> were removed first from the Garden to its courtyard and then from the courtyard to the earth. There are some indications in the Qur’an to support this information:

First: They were twice told to “get down” (vide vs. 2:36 and 2:38). It was a creative, and not a legislative, order, and a creative order takes effect the instant it is given.

If the first order told them to get down to the earth, there was no question of their not getting down to the earth at once; and, therefore, the second order would be superfluous. But in the light of this tradition the two commands would be perfectly in order.

Second: As mentioned in the commentary, this idea may be inferred from the changed verbs and pronouns of the verses. Allah describes in these words his talk with Adam when he was being placed in the Garden:

**And We said: “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden . . . and do not approach (you two) this tree. . . .”**

But after they had eaten from the tree, **their Lord called out to them: “Did I not forbid you both from that tree?”** The verb, “We said” of the former has been changed to “called out to them” in the latter; as the demonstrative pronoun, “this tree” (showing nearness) was replaced by “that tree” (showing distance).

These changes show that Adam had been removed, by the time of the second address, from his original place of nearness in the Garden to a distant place – which the tradition describes as the courtyard.

But this tradition says that Hawwa<sup>1</sup> was created from the lowest rib of Adam; it is a Biblical story which has been totally rejected by the Imams of *Ahlu l-bayt*, (as will be seen from the Tradition which will be quoted under the verses of the creation of Adam). This tradition, therefore, is unacceptable unless this expression is taken to mean that Hawwa<sup>1</sup> was created from the clay left over from the creation of Adam and which was lying near his lowest rib.

Whether he stayed in the Garden for six hours (as this tradition says) or seven (as the former says) is not very important, because such things are mere approximation.

It is reported from the fifth or the sixth Imam (peace be on them both) that he said about the verse, **then Adam received (some) words from his Lord**, that (the words were as follows):

“There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and Thou art the best of the forgivers.

There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of the forgivers. There is no god except Thee; Glory to Thee, O Allah! and praise!

I have committed evil and been unjust to myself; therefore, have mercy on me, and Thou art the best of those who have mercy. There is no god except Thee; Glory be to Thee, O Allah! and praise! I have done wrong and been unjust to myself; therefore, forgive me (my sin) and turn to me (with mercy); surely Thou, Thou alone, art oftreturning (with mercy), the Merciful.”<sup>7</sup>

The author says: This theme has been narrated also by as-Sad<sup>q</sup>, al-'Ayyash<sup>q</sup>, al-Qumm<sup>q</sup> and others; nearly the same thing has been narrated through the Sunn<sup>q</sup> chains; and it may possibly be inferred from the apparent meaning, of the verses.

al-Kulayn<sup>q</sup> has written in *al-Kaf<sup>q</sup>*: “And another tradition says in respect of this verse: (Adam) had asked from (Allah) by the right of Muhammad and 'Al<sup>q</sup> and Fatimah and al-Hasan and al-Husayn.”

The author says: This explanation too has been narrated by as-Sad<sup>q</sup>, al-'Ayyash<sup>q</sup>, al-Qumm<sup>q</sup> and others. A nearly similar tradition has been narrated through the Sunn<sup>q</sup> chains. It is reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manth<sup>q</sup>* that the Prophet said: “When Adam committed the sin that he committed, he raised his head towards the heaven and said:

'I beseech Thee, by the right of Muhammad, to forgive me.' Allah revealed to him (i.e., asked him through revelation): 'And who is Muhammad?' He said: 'Blessed is Thy name! When Thou created me, I raised my head towards Thy Throne and saw written therein: There is no god except Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.

Thus I knew that no one could be more honoured in Thy presence than him whose name Thou hadst placed with Thy name.' Thereupon, Allah revealed to him: 'O Adam! Verily he is the last of the prophets, from thy descendants; and if it were not for him, I would have not created thee.' ”

The author says: Although these Tradition seem not to be in accord with the apparent meaning of the verse, on deeper consideration this explanation does not look so far-fetched. The sentence, “Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord”, shows that he was taught those words by the Lord, and that he had got that knowledge before his repentance.

Also, it is known that Allah had taught him all the names. Allah told the angels that He was going to make in the earth a vicegerent; **they said:**

***“Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief in it and shed blood, while we celebrate Thy praise and extol Thy holiness? He said: “Surely I know what you do not know” . And He taught Adam the names, all of them.***

There must have been something in those names to wipe out every injustice, to erase every sin and to cure every spiritual and moral disease; otherwise, the objection of the angels could not be answered – Allah did not say a single word to refute the angels' assertion; all He did was to teach Adam all the names.

It means that those names could cure all the ills of humanity; the angels understood it and surrendered to the knowledge and wisdom of Allah. We have earlier explained that those names were sublime creations, hidden from the heavens and the earth; they were intermediaries to convey the grace and bounties of Allah to His creation; and no creature would be able to attain to its perfection without their assistance.

At this stage, we may refer to some Tradition which say that Adam saw the figures of Muhammad and his *Ahlu 'l-bayt*, and also their light at the time he was taught the names; and the ones which mention that he saw them when Allah took out his offspring from his back; and the others which describe his seeing them in the Garden.

However, Allah has not identified those words, and has used it as a common noun, “(some) words”; nevertheless, the Qur'an has clearly used the expression, “word”, for an individual being, as for example, in the verse 3:45:

***. . . Allah gives you good news of a word from Him whose name is the Messiah, 'Īsā son of Maryam . . .***

Some exegetes have written that the “words”, mentioned in this verse, refer to the plea of Adam and his wife reported in Chapter 7:

***They said: “Our Lord! We have been unjust to ourselves, and if Thou forgive us not, and have (not) mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers. ”***

But the sequence of events does not support this view. The repentance of Adam, according to the narrative of Chapter 2, had occurred after his coming to the earth. The verse (2:37) describing the repentance comes after the verse (2:36) that mentions his descent to the earth.<sup>8</sup>

But they had uttered that plea while they were still in the Garden, before coming down to the earth. The plea is given in verse 7:23; and the order to “get down” comes after that in verse 7:24. Apparently, this plea was in response to their admonition by Allah:

***“Did I not forbid you both from that tree . . . ?”***; they wanted to declare their servitude and to surrender themselves to Allah; acknowledging that all the authority was in the hands of Allah and He

might do what He pleased; He was their Lord, and they had put themselves in danger of loss by being unjust to themselves.

as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Verily, Mūsā asked his Lord to let him meet Adam; and he was joined with him (i.e., Adam). Mūsā said to him: 'O father! Did Allah not create you with His hand, and breathe into you of His spirit; and make the angels prostrate before you, and order you not to eat of the tree?

Then why did you disobey Him?' (Adam) said: 'O Mūsā! How long before my creation did you find my mistake (mentioned) in the Torah?' He said: 'Thirty thousand years before.' (Adam) said: 'That is it.'” as-Sadiq (a.s.) said: “Thus refuted Adam the argument of Mūsā.”<sup>9</sup>

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* approximately similar Tradition, through various chains, from the Prophet.

Al-Baqir (a.s.) said: “By God, Allah had surely created Adam for the world, and He gave him place in the Garden, in order that he might disobey Him and thus He might return him to that for which He had created him.”<sup>10</sup>

The author says: A tradition of the same theme, narrated by al-'Ayyash from as-Sadiq (a.s.), concerning an angel friend of Adam, has been quoted earlier.

A Syrian asked 'Alī (a.s.) as to which valley in the earth was the most honoured. He (a.s.) said: “The valley called Sarandīb wherein Adam descended from the heaven.”<sup>11</sup>

The author says: In contrast to it, there are numerous Tradition showing that he had descended at Mecca (and some of them have been quoted above). May be, he first came down to Sarandīb and then got down to Mecca.

It has been reported by at-Tabaranī, Abu 'sh-Shaykh (in his *al-'Azamah*) and Ibn Marduwayh, from Abū Dharr, that he said: “I said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What do you say, was Adam a prophet?' He said: 'Yes. He was a prophet (and) an apostle; Allah talked to him before; He had told him: “O Adam! dwell you and your wife in the Garden.”

The author says: The Sunnīs have narrated almost similar Tradition through various chains.

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1. For example:

And We have guarded it (i.e. the heaven) against every accursed Satan, but he who steals a hearing; so there follows him a visible flame (15:17-18).

2. The first and third replies seem strange, to say the least. The author himself has said (while commenting on the phrase, “. . . the Satan made them both slip from it”) that the order to “get down” or to “get out” may mean, “Get down from the company of the angels; or, get down from the heaven”.

But here he rejects the second alternative altogether! The third reply is based on القياس مع الفارق an unacceptable analogy – that which overlooks the important differences between the two sides. If the Satan is governed by time and space how does it imply that Allah too should be governed by them?

Moreover, in the same commentary the author has proved on the strength of this same verse that “the Satan had visited them near that tree in the Garden. He entered the Garden . . . (and) Adam, his wife and the Satan all were removed from the Garden together.” This leaves us with the second reply, which is doubtlessly without any flaw and is supported by the Qur’an. (tr.)

3. That is, Abu 's–Salt Abdu 's–Salam ibn Salih al –Harawī.

4. 'Uyaynu 'l–akhbar

5. Kamalu 'd–dīn

6. al–Amalī, as–Sadīq

7. al–Kafī

8. It is not in accord with the author's earlier assertion that the verse 2:36 describes Adam's removal from the earlier-held place of honour to the courtyard of the Garden; after which he learned “some words” from Allah and repented (2:37); and it was later that he was sent down from the courtyard to the Garden (2:38). (tr)

9. at–Tafsīr, al–Qummī

10. 'Ilalu 'sh–shara' i

11. al–Ihtijaj

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