

ADAM'S STORY IN THE QUR'ĀN

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ABSTRACT

The Qur'ān contains only fragments of Adam's story in six different sūras, apart from several minor references. These may be arranged into five thematic chapters: (1) the creation of man; (2) adoration by angels; (3) Satan's disobedience; (4) the fall of Adam; (5) Adam's genealogy. The aim of the present study is to name the essentials of the Qur'ānic notion of man as a creature endowed with reason. Adam as the specimen of the human race is bound to obey God's prescriptions. He fails, repents, and is received back and guided. In this way he is considered as the first in the row of prophets of God's unicity.

Key words

the Qur'ān, Adam, creation of man, rationality, repentance, prophets

The biblical portrait of Adam is generally well-known: the first created of dust of the earth and the breath of God, his body serving for the making of the woman, his mind caught in her pleasant illusion, the fallen one from the Paradise and the father of the created mankind.

The Islamic Qur'ān presents the same story though its sense and interpretation substantially differs from the Christian exegesis of sin and salvation. The primary source for considering the fundamentals of Islamic teaching on Adam is naturally the Arabic Qur'ān.¹ The source

¹ The Qur'ānic text will be presented here in the translation of Muhammad Abdel Haleem. *The Qur'an. A New Translation*. 2nd ed. Oxford: University Press 2008. The Egyptian ḥāfiẓ Abdel Haleem teaches Islamic studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His English version is easy to understand for the modern non-Muslim reader, which is the reason for my choice. The more traditional explanatory rendering by the Moroccan imam M. Taqī al-Dīn al-Hilālī is offered in the

of my study was the standard Arabic text.² For difficulties, I have consulted specific dictionaries of the Qur'ānic terms³ and commentaries, especially Ibn Kathīr's anthology of classical tafsīr,⁴ and al-Ṭabarī;⁵ both are accepted authorities in explaining the Qur'ān. Adam is the first in the row of the prophetic figures whose stories are scattered throughout the Qur'ān. These fragments, supplemented with further biblical and apocryphal details of Jewish and Christian origin (*'isrā'iliyāt*, *naṣ rāniyāt*), were collected as the Stories of the Prophets (*Qīṣaṣ al-'anbiyā'*).⁶ Adam's portrait in the *Qīṣaṣ* is a subject of another study of mine, as well as the comparison of its four versions – that in the Qur'ān and in the *Qīṣa* – to the Genesis narrative and the Christian story in *The Cave of Treasures*.⁷ In this study, my primary interest is to analyze the story of Adam as conveyed by the Qur'ān, with the aim to refresh its meaning within the Christian mental milieu. I will not delve into the complex matter of theological anthropology as is discussed in modern Islamic studies, but I will attempt to consider the literary and religious values of the Qur'ānic story from its primary source in the manner of direct exegesis. The topic will complement my broader research in

footnotes in case of differences. Muḥammad Taqī ud-Dīn al-Hilālī – Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān. *The Noble Qur'an. English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*. Madina Munawwarah: King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Book 1419 AH. Another widely accepted translation into English is that by Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī. *The Holy Qur'an. Text, Translation and Commentary*. Rev. ed. Brentwood, MD: Amana Corporation 1958. A popular Egyptian Azhar translation was made by Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ghālī. *Towards Understanding the Ever-glorious Qur'an*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Nashr li'l-Ġāmī' at 2009.

² Cf. *Al-Qur'ān al-karīm: bi'l rasm al-'uthmānī*. Dimashq: Dār al-ma'rifa 2005.

³ Cf. 'Ashraf Ṭāhā 'Abū al-Dahab. *Al-Mu'ḡam al-'islāmī*. Al-Qāhira: Dār al-shurūq 2002; Friedrich H. Dieterici. *Arabisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch zum Koran*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichschs'sche Buchhandlung 1894; Rudi Paret. *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1977.

⁴ Cf. 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'il b. 'Umar ibn Kathīr. *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm*. 15 vols. Ed. Muṣṭafa al-Sayyid Muḥammad et al. Ġiza: Mu'assasat Qurṭuba 2000.

⁵ Cf. 'Abū Ġa'far Muḥammad b. Ġarīr al-Ṭabarī. *Ġāmī' al-bayān fī ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*. 26 vols. Eds. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī et al. Al-Qāhira: Dār Ḥaġar 2001.

⁶ A widely known version of the narratives was composed by Ibn Kathīr and has been often reprinted as, e.g., *Qīṣaṣ al-'anbiyā'*. Bairūt: Dār Sādir 2003.

⁷ Cf. Mlada Mikulicová. Adam. Příběh prvního člověka v knize Genesis a v Koránu [Adam. The Story of the First Man in Genesis and in the Qur'ān]. *AUC Theologica* 4, 1 (2014), pp. 135–151; Mlada Mikulicová. Vyhnaní z ráje podle Jeskyně pokladů [Eviction from Paradise according to The Cave of Treasures]. *Parrésia* 1 (2014), pp. 229–243; Mlada Mikulicová. The Life of Adam and Eve in the Medieval Arabic Traditions: The Cave of Treasures, the Qur'ānic Fragments, and the Ḥadīth. *Quatrième colloque international des littératures apocryphes juive et chrétienne: La Vie d'Adam et Ève et les traditions adamiques* Geneva – Lausanne, 10th January 2014.

the biblical and apocryphal literature on Adam. The most significant passages of Adam's story will be quoted in translation or paraphrased if repeating and supplied with commentary notes on key terms and events. The topics treated in the Qur'ān, such as the creation of man, the disobedience of Satan, the fall of man and Adam's genealogy, provide background for outlining the Islamic idea of Adam and of man in general.

1. The Qur'ānic Fragments in Survey

The Qur'ān does not tell the full story of Adam and Eve as known from the Bible. In twelve of the 114 sūras, however, we find fragments or allusions that echo either the narrative of Genesis 2:7–3:23 or its apocryphal versions. The appearance of Adam in the mentioned sūra does not follow a story-telling pattern: it has no beginning and usually no end. Most of the allusions repeat within the context of several sūras. The purpose of introducing the iconic first man is to document dogmatic articles of faith, as we shall observe. The aim and rhetoric is exhortative.

The occurrence of Adam in the sūras, their chronological order and the contents can be seen in the following chart. Eight fragments are found in the Meccan sūras (c. 610–622) and four are integrated into the more consistent teaching of the Medīna period (622–632).⁸ The names of sūras as well as of persons and places are taken from Abdel Haleem's translation.

2. The Creation of Man

A brief note of how man was created can be gathered from several Qur'ānic stories. Most of them are epic, and they portray a dialogue between the Creator and the angels in which God conveys his intention to create a human body.

The earliest rendering appears in the sūra of Ḥiġr, which dates back to the second Meccan period: "We created man out of dried clay formed

⁸ Some of the western scholars have introduced chronological rearrangement of the sūras: Theodor Nöldeke (1860), John Medows Rodwell, (1861), Friedrich Schwally (1909), Richard Bell (1937), Nessim Joseph Dawood (1956), Ivan Hrbek (1972). This arrangement is considered non-canonical by Muslim teachers. In brackets is given Ivan Hrbek's numbering of the sūras. Cf. Ivan Hrbek. *Korān*. Praha: Odeon 1972.

Name of sūra	Q number and verses	Chronology	Contents
Ṭāhā	20:115–123	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 55)	story of Adam's sin
Ḥiġr (<i>al-Ḥiġr</i>)	15:26–44	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 57)	story of creation of man and Satan's disobedience
Ṣād	38:71–85	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 59)	story of creation of man and Satan's disobedience
The Night Journey (<i>al-'Isrā'</i>)	17:61–65	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 67)	fragment of Satan's disobedience and his damnation
The Ants (<i>al-Naml</i>)	27:62	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 68)	allusion to human successorship on the earth
The Cave (<i>al-Kahf</i>)	18:50	Meccan 2 (Hrbek 69)	allusion to Satan's disobedience
The Heights (<i>al-'A'rāf</i>)	7:11–27 7:31;189	Meccan 3 (Hrbek 87)	story of Satan's disobedience and of seducing Adam which results in his expulsion from the Garden
Livestock (<i>al-'An'ām</i>)	6:165	Meccan 3 (Hrbek 89)	allusion to human successorship on earth
The Cow (<i>al-Baqara</i>)	2:30–39	Medinan (Hrbek 91)	story of Adam's creation, his successorship, naming of created things, angels versus Satan, Adam's sin and his repentance
The Family of 'Imrān (<i>Al-'Imrān</i>)	3:59	Medinan (Hrbek 97)	allusion to the createdness of Jesus as of Adam
Women (<i>al-Nisā'</i>)	4:1	Medinan (Hrbek 100)	allusion to creation of the first human pair
The Private Rooms (<i>al-Ḥuġurāt</i>)	49:13	Medinan (Hrbek 112)	allusion to creation of the first human pair

from dark mud [...] Your⁹ Lord said to the angels, 'I will create a mortal out of dry clay, formed from dark mud. When I have finished him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him'" (15:26–29).

⁹ The addressee is Muḥammad.

The making of man is expressed in the dialogue by active principle that presents one of God's essential attributes – the Creator.¹⁰ It implies the fundamental relationship between the originator and master and the obedient creature. Man is referred to either as *insān* – human male, or *bashar* – the physical, material body.¹¹ Making man of dry clay formed from mud refers to potter's work: First he takes raw mud,¹² which he moulds in smoothing movements,¹³ then he leaves it to dry. Then God blows some of his spirit into the clay figure,¹⁴ which is the reason for the other, non-bodily creatures to bow down before the *bashar*.

In the sūra of Ṣād, the description of forming man is repeated word for word, except that for clay a proper pottery term is used (*tīn*) and the unpleasant *ḥamā' masnūn* is omitted (38:71–72). A short passage in the late Meccan sūra of the Heights (*al-'A'rāf*) quotes God's reproach to mankind: “We established you on the earth and provided you with a means of livelihood there – small thanks you give. We created you, We gave you shape,¹⁵ and then we said to angels, ‘Bow down before Adam,’ and they did” (7:10–11a). Close connection is pointed at between the particular creation of the first man and the createdness of all humankind.

3. Satan's Disobedience

The creation of man is connected to the crucial point of Satan's disobedience, which eventually results in the disobedience of Adam. The Qur'ān presents the dialogue between the Creator and the angels in several sūras without much alteration. A relatively consistent narrative

¹⁰ *'Innī khāliqun*: I am creating. In Verse 26, a perfect verb form is used (*khalaqnā*) in majestic plural (We) while in the dialogue God speaks to the angels in singular (I).

¹¹ The word *insān* is translated as “man” while *bashar* is rendered somewhat freely as “a mortal” though it is not related to dying. Rather, it corresponds to the Hebrew *bāšār* meaning body, flesh, meat.

¹² *Ṣaṣāl* (derived from *ṢLṢL* to rattle) refers to the dried out clay while the parallel *ḥamā'* means wet mud from which an object can be shaped (*masnūn* from *SNV* shape). *SNV* also bears an element of uncleanness and smell. “Dry (sounding) clay of altered mud” (al-Hilālī). 15:26.

¹³ *Sawwaituhu*: I fashioned him (al-Hilālī). I molded him (Ghālī). 15:29; 38:72. *SWY* II also means to make even or smoothe.

¹⁴ *Nafakhtu fīhī min rūḥī*. I breathed into him the soul, which I created for him (al-Hilālī). 15:29; 38:72.

¹⁵ *Ṣawwarnākum* (*SWR* II): We gave you form. The verb is a factitive of noun (*sūra*), which in Arabic philosophical terminology is the opposite to matter (*hayūlā*).

is found in the *sūra* of *Ḥiğr*, which dates back to the second Meccan period, conveying Satan's reluctance to accept his clay rival.

Your Lord¹⁶ said to the angels, "I will create a mortal out of dry clay, formed from dark mud. When I have finished him and breathed My spirit into him, bow down before him,"¹⁷ and the angels all did so.¹⁸ But not Iblīs; he refused to bow down like the others.¹⁹ God said, "Iblīs, why did you not bow down like the others?" and he answered, "I will not bow to a mortal you created from dry clay, formed from dark mud." "Get out of here!"²⁰ said God. "You are an outcast, rejected until the Day of Judgment." Iblīs said, "My Lord, give me respite until the Day when they are raised from the dead." "You have respite," said God, "until the Day of the Appointed Time." Iblīs then said to God, "Because you have put me in the wrong, I will lure mankind on earth and put them in the wrong all except your devoted servants." (15:28–40)

While the angels obeyed to acknowledge the qualities of the *bashar*, Iblīs refused, referring to mud as something unfitting. In verse 27, we learn that Iblīs was a jinny, previously created from fire.²¹ The Arabic words related to him suggest a dark essence of scorching heat.²² The *sūra* of the Cave (*al-Kahf*) gives a succinct characterization of Iblīs: "He was of the jinn and he disobeyed his Lord's command" (18:50). The name *'Iblīs* comes from the Greek *diabolos* and is identified with the biblical Satan. In the narrative of *sūra al-Ḥiğr*, Satan is consequently cast out from the Garden. The act of expulsion is verbally related to having stones thrown at him (*rağīm*),²³ as reflected in the hajj prac-

¹⁶ God's word to Muḥammad.

¹⁷ *Qa'ū lahu sāğidin*: Fall down to him prostrating yourselves unto him (al-Hilālī). 15:29.

¹⁸ *Sāğada* (*SĠD*): Prostrated themselves (al-Hilālī).

¹⁹ *Abā 'an yakūna ma' al-sāğidin*: He refused to be among the prostrators (al-Hilālī).

²⁰ *Ukhruğ minhā*: Get out from here (al-Hilālī). Get out of it (Ghālī, literally). "It" represents either singular feminine or plural of non-persons, thus relating either to the Garden or to the angels (*al-malā'ika*).

²¹ The jinn We created before from the fire of scorching wind (*nār al-samūm*) (Abdel Haleem). [...] from the smokeless flame of fire (al-Hilālī). 15:27.

²² Jinny (*ğinnī*, pl. *ğānn*) is related to *ĠNN* meaning hide, become dark. Other derivatives are *ğanān*: heart, or *ğanin*: embryo, and also *ğanna*: garden as a place of shady hiding from the sun. *Samūm*: scorching, poisoning (*SMM* poison).

²³ *RĠM*: throw stone. Both "outcast" (*rağīm*) and "rejected" (*'alaika al-la'na*) are interpretations of Ṭabarī for the literal "stoned" and "curse upon you". Verily you are *Rajīm* and verily the curse shall be upon you (al-Hilālī). 15:34–35.

tise of stoning the Iblīs stela. Damnation (*la'na*) is laid on him until the Day of Judgment (*yawm al-dīn*), the time when people are raised from the dead.²⁴ The day has been appointed by God and is known (*ma'lūm*) to Him. “Give me time” (*'anzīrni*), Satan requests, so he can mislead²⁵ the humans as a retaliation for the harm he feels done to him by God.²⁶ The way in which Satan plans to mislead humans is one of luring or creating beautiful illusions,²⁷ but he will avoid those who are devoted to God (*mukhlaṣīn*).²⁸

In the sūra of the Night Journey (*al-ʾIsrāʾ*), Satan's threat for the mankind is aptly defined: Satan sows discord among the servants of God; – he is the obvious enemy of man (17:53). Satan describes his way with the mankind as entangling them into material bonds (17:62).²⁹ God permits the temptation until the Day of Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāma*): “Rouse whichever of them you can with your voice, muster your cavalry and infantry against them, share their wealth and their children with them, and make promises to them – Satan promises them nothing but delusion – but you will have no authority (*sultān*) over My servants [...]” (17:64–65a). From here, it is assumed that Satan has his army participating in the project of seduction, which involves riches, progeny, prospects of good fortune, yet all these are but illusion.

The story of Satan should illustrate the origin of human illusion as described elsewhere in the sūra: “Even if we opened a gateway into Heaven for them and they rose through it, higher and higher, they would still say, ‘Our eyes are hallucinating. We are bewitched’” (15:14–15). As the final verse of the passage points up, Satan admits no power over those who are dedicated to God. This ensues the central Qur'ānic message and refrain in many sūras: those who follow Satan

²⁴ Sent for to be judged (*yub'athūn*, *B'Th* send).

²⁵ *'Ughwiyannahum* (*GhWYIV* to make err, misguide). I shall mislead them (al-Hilālī). Abdel Haleem translates as “lure”. 15:39.

²⁶ *'Aghwaitani*: You misled me (al-Hilālī). You misguided me (Ghālī). You have put me in the wrong (Abdel Haleem). 15:39. Referring to Satan's expulsion: “you have sent me away”.

²⁷ *'Uzayyinanna* (*ZYN* II to embellish).

²⁸ *'Illā'ibādaka minhum al-mukhlaṣīn*: Except your devoted servants (Abdel Haleem). Except your chosen slaves among them (al-Hilālī). Except your bondmen among them, who are most faithful (Ghālī).

²⁹ *'Ahtanikanna*: I will entangle (*HNK* VIII to make worldly experience). I will seize and mislead (al-Hilālī). I will bring his offspring under my subjection (Ghālī). I will lead all but a few of his descendants by the nose (Abdel Haleem).

will receive the fire of hell for their portion, while the righteous will enjoy rest in gardens with springs (cf. 15:43–45).

A slightly modified version of the same story is included in another Meccan sūra – Ṣād (38:71–85). Satan is a central figure portrayed as proud and defiant: “The angels all bowed down together, but not Iblīs, who was too proud; He became a rebel”³⁰ (38:74). The narrative develops in a brusque exchange between God and Iblīs:

- Iblīs, what prevents you from bowing down to the man I have made with My own hands? Are you too high and mighty?
- I am better than him: You made me from fire, and him from clay.
- Get out of here! You are rejected. My rejection will follow you till the Day of Judgment! – My Lord, grant me respite until the Day when they are raised from the dead.
- You have respite till the Appointed day.
- I swear by Your might! I will tempt³¹ all but your true servants.
- This is the truth, I speak only the truth, I will fill Hell with you and all those that follow you (38:75–85).³²

The angels bow, Iblīs does not for his mindset hinders him: He is proud (*istakbara*), and so he becomes a *kāfir*, one who does not respect God in the proper way. In the Qur’ānic terminology, *kāfir* is contrasted against *mu’min*, the rightly believing. Iblīs feels to be one of the exalted (*al-’ālīn*), who are of the angelic rank and have part in the divine goodness (*khair*). Iblīs mistakenly considers himself to have more of the *khair* than man (*khairun minhu*). The story of damnation repeats here with Iblīs’ decision to tempt or mislead humankind. He is then predicted the fate of Hell.³³

In the late Meccan sūra of the Heights (*al-’A’rāf*), Satan’s defiance and God’s successive anger are presented in a dramatic sequence. Transcribed in roles, it might read:

- What prevented you from bowing down as I commanded you?
- I am better than him. You created me from fire and him from clay.
- Get down from here. This is no place for your arrogance. Get out! You are contemptible!
- Give me respite until the Day people are raised from the dead.

³⁰ *Kāna min al-kāfirīn*: He was of the disbelievers (al-Hilālī).

³¹ Mislead (al-Hilālī).

³² The play-script form is mine.

³³ A biblical, Hebrew term is used here (*ḡahannam*), not the usual Qur’ānic Fire (*nār*).

- You have respite.
- Because you have put me in the wrong, I will lie in wait³⁴ for them all on your straight path.
- I will come at them – from their front and their back, from their right and their left – and you will find that most of them are ungrateful.³⁵
- Get out! You are disgraced and banished!³⁶ I swear I shall fill Hell with you and all who follow you! (7:12–18).

Other characteristic features of Satan's lure are specified here: waiting in ambush on the path of religion, jumping at his victims from any side unexpected. The result of his handling is the loss of human piety; the misguided man will be proud and self-sufficient, unaware of God's benevolence to him, a *kāfir*. The story of Satan's disobedience is essential for understanding the Qur'ānic concept of human sin; it is not a result of man's free will and responsibility but of an outer cause represented by Satan, who is prior to him in creation and rebellion.

4. The Fall of Adam

The story of Adam's sin is found in several sūras. The first in the chronological order appears in the Meccan sūra of Ṭahā, where it is related to Muḥammad as an example of human failure in keeping God's command. The story is told in nine verses.

We also commanded Adam³⁷ before you (Prophet), but he forgot and We found him lacking in constancy. When We said to the angels, "Bow down before Adam," they did. But Iblīs refused, so We said, "Adam, this is your enemy, yours and your wife's: do not let him drive you out of the garden and make you miserable. In the garden you will never go hungry, feel naked, be thirsty or suffer the heat of the sun." But Satan whispered to Adam saying, "Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and power that never decays?" and they both ate from it. They became conscious of their nakedness and began to cover themselves with leaves from the gar-

³⁴ *ʾAqʿadanna* (Q'D sit): Indeed I will sit in wait (al-Hilālī). 7:16.

³⁵ *Shākirīn*: thankful. You will not find most of them as thankful ones (al-Hilālī). 7:17. Meaning "not many pay respect to God".

³⁶ *Madh'ūm, madhūr*: disgraced, expelled (al-Hilālī); reproved, rejected (Ghālī). 7:18.

³⁷ Adam is a loanword from the Hebrew of Genesis (*ādām*, the one of the earth), where it has a general meaning of "man".

den. Adam disobeyed his Lord and was led astray – later his Lord brought him close, accepted his repentance, and guided him – God said, “Get out of the garden as each other’s enemy.” (20:115–125)

Adam’s failure was caused by forgetfulness and lack of strong will. He did not keep in mind God’s command, which is called covenant (‘*ahd*’), neither did he have the constancy (‘*azm*’) to keep it. Satan’s disobedience is recalled here in order to underline God’s warning against him; he is the fatal enemy to human happiness and may cause the loss of the Garden. The Garden is characterized as a blissful place where there is no hunger or thirst, no feeling of nakedness, no suffering from the sun. Being driven out of the Garden brings distress (*shaqwa*). The devil (*al-shaiṭān*), implicitly identified with Iblīs,³⁸ whispered (*was-wasa*) to Adam the secret of the tree of eternity (*shaḡarat al-khuld*) although this particular fragment does not mention any prohibition; that is known from another version in the sūra of the Cow. The devil offers information or even guiding³⁹ to the tree which has a power (*mulk*) that never decreases (*lā yablā*). Upon eating of its fruit their naked parts⁴⁰ become visible to them and they try to cover them.⁴¹ An inserted commentary connects Adam’s disobedience to his consequent error. Adam’s salvation is described in purely Qur’ānic terms: God “picked him back” (*iḡtabā*), turned (*tāba*) to him and gave him good leading (*hadā*).⁴² The story ends in God’s verdict of fall down (*ihbiṭā*) from the Garden of all three trespassers, who are mutual enemies from now on.

The other sūras pick certain elements of the story as a documentation of the central message of human failure to obey God due to the lures of the devil. The most consistent explanatory rendering appears

³⁸ *Al-shaiṭān* corresponds to the Hebrew *ha-sātān* while *ʾIblīs* is a phono-semantic match of the Greek *diabolos*. In the Qur’ān, *ʾIblīs* is understood as a proper name and *shaiṭān* is a common noun (plural *shayāṭīn*). In general understanding, there is no real difference between *ʾIblīs*, Satan, and Devil, all representing the evil tempter.

³⁹ *ʾAdulluka*: Shall I lead you? (al-Hilālī). I shall indicate to you (Ghālī). Shall I show you? (Abdel Haleem).

⁴⁰ *Sau’ātuhumā*: their shameful parts (Ghālī); their private parts (al-Hilālī); their nakedness (Abdel Haleem).

⁴¹ Weaving leaves to cover themselves. The verb *khaṣaḡa* normally describes basket-making, implying a kind of textile.

⁴² His Lord chose him, and turned to him with forgiveness, and gave him guidance (al-Hilālī); [...] brought him close, accepted his repentance, and guided him (Abdel Haleem). 20:122.

in the Medīnan sūra of the Cow (*al-Baqara*), the second and the longest in the Qur'ān. This sūra represents a summa of Qur'ānic teaching. The story of Adam is related in ten verses (2:30–39).

When your Lord told the angels, “I am putting a successor on earth,” they said, “How can You put someone there⁴³ who will cause damage⁴⁴ and bloodshed when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?” but He said, “I know things you do not.” He taught Adam all the names [of things], then He showed them to the angels and said, “Tell me the names of these if you truly think you can.”⁴⁵ They said, “May You be glorified! We have knowledge only of what You have taught us. You are the All Knowing and All Wise!” Then He said, “Adam, tell them the names of these.” When he told them their names, God said, “Did I not tell you that I know what is hidden⁴⁶ in the heavens and the earth, and that I know what you reveal and what you conceal?” When We told the angels, “Bow down before Adam,” they all bowed. But not Iblīs, who refused and was arrogant:⁴⁷ he was one of the disobedient.⁴⁸

We said, “Adam, live with your wife in this garden. Both of you eat freely there as you will,⁴⁹ but do not go near this tree, or you will both become wrongdoers.” But Satan (*al-shaiṭān*) made them slip,⁵⁰ and removed them

⁴³ *A-taḡ'alu fihā*: Will You place therein (al-Hilālī). 2:30. The orthodox rendering implies a simple question without a tone of surprise or disapproval on part of the angels. According to al-Qurṭubī, “the statement the angels uttered was not a form of disputing with Allah's, nor out of envy for the Children of Adam, as some mistakenly thought.” Ibn Kathīr adds: “This is only a question for the sake of learning about the wisdom of that [...] if the wisdom behind this action is that You be worshipped, we praise and glorify You (meaning we pray to You) we never indulge in mischief, so why create other creatures?” Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr 2:30 (2014-06-30) <<http://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=7&tSoraNo=2&tAyahNo=30&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1>>.

⁴⁴ *Yufsidu*: make mischief (al-Hilālī); will corrupt (Ghālī).

⁴⁵ *In kuntum ṣādiqīn*: if you are truthful (al-Hilālī); you are sincere (Ghālī). 2:31. Abdel Haleem's translation makes the sense plain.

⁴⁶ *Ghaib*: the Unseen (al-Hilālī). 2:33.

⁴⁷ *Istakbara*: was proud (al-Hilālī). 2:34.

⁴⁸ *Min al-kāfirīn*: of the disbelievers (al-Hilālī). 2:34.

⁴⁹ *Raghdan*: freely with pleasure and delight (al-Hilālī); opulently (Ghālī). 2:35.

⁵⁰ *Azalahunā 'anhā*: made them slip therefrom (al-Hilālī), meaning from the Garden. 2:36.

from the state they were in.⁵¹ We said, “Get out,⁵² all of you! You are each other’s enemy. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood⁵³ for a time.” Then Adam received some words from his Lord and He accepted his repentance.⁵⁴ He is the Ever Relenting, the Most Merciful. We said, “Get out, all of you! But when guidance comes from Me, as it certainly will, there will be no fear for those who follow My guidance nor will they grieve – those who disbelieve and deny Our messages⁵⁵ shall be the inhabitants of the Fire, and there they will remain.”(2:30–39)

The narrative follows a certain chronology of events although there are gaps in the flow breaking it into three parts. In the first one, Adam is announced as a successor or a regent (*khalīfa*) on the earth⁵⁶ despite his acts of damage and violence in it. The logic of precedence and consequence is neglected in order to support the characterization of man as a wrongdoer. In fact, his behaviour is shown as opposite to that of the angels, who respect and praise God. Yet God reveals a specific intention he has with man: to have him relate to all creature and control it, as the act of God’s teaching Adam all the names of things indicates.⁵⁷ The angels are commanded to bow before this particular product of God’s plan in praise of God’s knowledge of “what is hidden” to them. As Ibn Kathīr comments on the verse, God meant to show them Adam’s superiority over them in knowledge.

⁵¹ *Akhraġa-humā mim mā kānā fīhī*: got them out from that in which they were (al-Hilālī); drove them out of what they were in (Ghālī). Here the meaning is he caused their loss of the Garden. 2:36.

⁵² *Ihbiṭū*: Get down (al-Hilālī, Ghālī). The verb *HBT* implies a downward movement. 2:36.

⁵³ *Mustaqarr wa-matā’*: dwelling place (al-Hilālī); a repository and an enjoyment (Ghālī). 2:36.

⁵⁴ *Tāba ‘alaihi*: pardoned him (al-Hilālī); relented towards him (Ghālī) meaning God relented towards Adam. 2:37.

⁵⁵ *Kaḡarū*: *kuḡr* (*KFR*) is understood as disbelief in the prophetic message of the unicity of God. The same idea is also expressed by the following *kadhhabū bi-āyātīnā*: belie Our āyāt (al-Hilālī). 2:39.

⁵⁶ The term is reflected in the sūra of the Livestock (*al-ʿAnʿām*), where the title of successor/vicegerent applies to all mankind and contains temptation of power: “It is He who made you successors on the earth (*khalāʾifa al-ʿarḍ*) and raises some of you above others in rank (*daraġāt*), to test you through what He gives you” (6:165).

⁵⁷ Ibn Kathīr quotes al-Daḡḡāk’s explanation: “the names that people use, such as human, animal, sky, earth, land, sea, horse, donkey, and so forth, including the names of the other species” (Tafsīr to 2:31).

The second part begins immediately with God's command to Adam to live in the Garden⁵⁸ with his companion. *Zauğ* actually means the other in a pair. Her name is not given. A tree is forbidden and the trespassing is named *zulm*, which is understood as a crime of disobedience to God's command. The story is implicit in putting blame on Satan who lured them into the disobedience and deprived them of the happiness in the Garden. All are driven out down to the earth as a temporary home, while proclaimed each other's enemies. Without any context, Adam is credited with some unidentified words from God (*kalimāt*), which makes him acceptable again.

The third part seems to be an exhortative supplement repeating the fact of expulsion from the Garden as a setting for the promise of guidance (*al-hudā*) from God. The followers will then live without fear while those who distrust (*kafarū*) the teaching (*āyāt*) are "the friends of the Fire" (*'aṣḥāb al-nār*).

The late Meccan sūra of the Heights (*al-'A'rāf*) complements the whole story with important details for understanding and contains elements that are present in the biblical narrative. The vocabulary also echoes the biblical tradition. Adam and his wife are invited to live in the Garden and eat whatever they wish, but they are prohibited to come near an unspecified tree, so they would not transgress the given limit (*ḡālīmīn*) (7:19). A dialogue between the Devil (*al-shaiṭān*) and the human couple follows: "Satan whispered to them: so as to expose their nakedness,⁵⁹ which had been hidden from them; he said: 'Your Lord only forbade you this tree to prevent you becoming angels or immortals,'⁶⁰ and he swore to them, 'I am giving you sincere advice'"⁶¹ (7:19–21). The result of the Devil's intervention⁶² is the same as stated in the previous sūra. After they cover their bodies with leaves, they hear God's voice calling them.

⁵⁸ *Ġanna*. No story is told to explain how it came into being, but the notion reappears throughout the Qur'ān referring to the future place of bliss for the faithful described as a lushful garden with trees, plenty of fruits, water springs and streams, luxurious clothes and dishes, beautiful, angelic women. The opposite of *ġanna* is the fire of hell (*nār*).

⁵⁹ Literally: so it would appear to them (*yubdiya*) what was hidden (*mā wūriya*) of their "evil things" (*min sau'ātihimā*). 7:20.

⁶⁰ *Khālīdīn*: the everlasting ones. 7:20.

⁶¹ *Nāsiḥ*: sincere well-wisher (al-Hilālī). 7:21.

⁶² He misled them with deception (al-Hilālī). 7:22. He lured (*dalla*) them with lies (*ghurūr*). The verb *dalla* really means "he guided them" to his aim.

Their Lord called to them, “Did I not forbid you to approach that tree? Did I not warn you that Satan was your sworn enemy?” They replied, “Our Lord, we have wronged our souls;⁶⁵ if You do not forgive us and have mercy, we shall be lost.” He said, “All of you get out! You are each other’s enemies. On earth you will have a place to stay and livelihood – for a time.” He said, “There you will live; there you will die; from there you will be brought out.” (7:22–25)

The following verses are a homiletic *tafsīr*, an explanation of the story directed at contemporary listeners as the sons of Adam in a triple address. Adam is thus identified with all mankind in line of descendance: “Children of Adam, We have given you garments⁶⁴ to cover your nakedness and as adornment for you; the garment of God-consciousness⁶⁵ is the best of all garments – this is one of God’s signs, so that people may take heed” (7:26). The garment mentioned here does not refer to the woven textile that the couple actually made for themselves to cover their nakedness after their trespass but rather to the primeval God-given veil of innocence that had initially made their “evil parts” unseen to them, as the verse suggests. The garment of God-consciousness that had adorned them in their original state of happiness should be kept in memory as a reminder or sign of piety.

An exhortative warning of Satan’s lure that deprived them of the blessed garment follows: “Children of Adam, do not let Satan seduce you, as he did your parents, causing them to leave the Garden, stripping them of their garments to expose their nakedness to them: he and his forces⁶⁶ can see you from where you cannot see them. We have made evil ones allies⁶⁷ to those who do not believe” (7:27). The garment here relates to the original garment of piety of the previous verse. Here again, Adam and his wife are referred to as parents of the human race, so their story is the story of mankind and concerns each individ-

⁶⁵ *Zalamnā ‘anfusanā*: we have wronged ourselves (al-Hilālī). 7:23. Although Abdel Haleem’s translation is accurate here, his idiom is not lucid meaning. The meaning is: it was a wrong thing to do.

⁶⁴ *‘Anzalnā ‘alaikum libāsān yuwārī sau’ātikum*: We sent upon you a garment that covers your evils. Al-Hilālī: We have bestowed raiment upon you to screen your private parts. Ghālī: We have sent down a garment to overlay your shameful parts.

⁶⁵ *Libās al-taqwā*: the garment of piety (Ghālī); raiment of righteousness (al-Hilālī).

⁶⁶ *Qabīluhu*: his tribe (Ghālī).

⁶⁷ *‘Innā ‘a’alnā al-shayātīn ‘awliyā’a li’lladhīna lā yu’minūna*: We made devils masters of those who do not believe.

ual. Satan is introduced as a commander of invisible troops though their stratagems are controlled by God who put the unbelievers in their power.

The sermon is concluded by the third address, which applies to practical matters: “Children of Adam, dress well whenever you are at worship,⁶⁸ and eat and drink as we have permitted but do not be extravagant: God does not like extravagant people”⁶⁹ (7:31). The story of Adam’s blessed state in the Garden is translated into a simple general instruction for proper dressing and nutrition.

5. Adam’s Genealogy

The Qur’ān briefly mentions the creation of humankind from one pair in several sūras of the Medīnan period where a consistent Islamic teaching was produced. An early Meccan remark in the Heights (*al-ʿAʿrāf*) states that human reproduction began with the creation of a companion (*zaug*) from the single original soul: “It is He who created you all from one soul,⁷⁰ and from it made its mate⁷¹ so that he might find comfort in her”⁷² (7:189). The statement has no other reason than to document God’s supremacy against the human error of worshipping other than God (*shirk*), and is based on an example from Meccan life. Though the Qur’ānic teaching does not name any hereditary sin, the initial disrespect of Adam towards God and his obedience to Satan’s advice repeats and develops in a polytheistic, progeny-oriented religion.

The first verse in the Medīnan sūra of Women (*al-Nisā*) repeats the plea of the unicity of the Creator and his authorship of the first pair: “People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread⁷³ countless men and women far and wide [...]”(4:1). The axiom stands at head

⁶⁸ *Khudhū zīnatakum ʿinda kulli maṣḡid*: Take your adornment at every mosque (Ghālī); [...] while praying (al-Hilālī). Though explained as “clean clothes” by tafsīr, the adornment (*zīna*) proper for prayer could, nevertheless, mean the garment of piety from above as indicated by the previous context.

⁶⁹ *Al-musrifūn* (SRF IV): those who exceed a limit, “who waste by extravagance” (tafsīr in al-Hilālī).

⁷⁰ *Min naḥs wāḥida*: from one soul. Ghālī: of one self; al-Hilālī: from a single person (Adam).

⁷¹ *Zaug*: companion. Ghālī: spouse; al-Hilālī: wife.

⁷² *Li-yaskuna ʿilaihā*: that he might enjoy the pleasure of living with her (al-Hilālī).

⁷³ *Baththa*: unrolled, or disseminated. Al-Hilālī has “He created [...]”.

of a lengthy list of social duties that proceed from this brotherhood of men in terms of kinship ties (*'arhām*).

The late Medīnan sūra Private Rooms (*al-Ḥuḡurāt*) also treats the mutual relationships in the umma promulgating the idea of mutual respect which is based on the brotherhood of all believers. The verse is a variation of that in the sūra of Women though there are significant alterations. Here it reads: "People, we created you all from a single man and a single woman,⁷⁴ and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize⁷⁵ one another" (49:13). Soul is here substituted with the flatly biological "male" and "female", leaving the proclamation without stress on the unique act of the Creator. "The single soul" of 7:189, a more difficult term echoing philosophical and theological reflexion, was acceptable in the Meccan sūras that have stronger bearing to biblical diction, but the practical, law-oriented Medīna would probably not bother to grasp its speculative, enigmatic character.⁷⁶

The idea of generations unrolling (*baththa*) from the first pair is connected with the ambiguous term of caliph (*khalīfa*, pl. *khulafā'*) used paradigmatically of Adam in the sūra of the Cow: "Your Lord told the angels, 'I am putting a successor on earth'" (2:30). The formula is repeated as referring to mankind in God's rhetoric question to Muḥammad's people: "Who makes you successors in the earth?" (27:62) and in Muḥammad's assertion: "It is He who makes you successors on the earth" (6:165). The term *khalīfa* is usually understood as deputy or vicegerent. Derived from *KhLF* (to be behind, to follow), it covers the meaning of caliph, the one "following" God, representing Him in ruling, as well as the meaning of the one succeeding the other, in generation, as Ibn Kathīr makes clear: "Meaning people reproducing generation after generation, century after century, just as Allāh said." (Tafsīr 2:30). Ibn Kathīr also refutes understanding Adam as God's deputy in governing creation: "It appears that Allāh was not referring to Adam specifically as *khalīfa*, otherwise he would not have allowed the

⁷⁴ *Min dhakarīn wa 'unthā*: (We created you) of a male and a female (Ghālī). The expressions reflect the Hebrew Genesis: *zākhār u-nqēvā^h bārā ōlām*: he created them male and female (Gen 1:27b).

⁷⁵ *Li-ta'ārafū*: that you may know one another (al-Hilālī); [...] go mutually acquainted (Ghālī).

⁷⁶ *Nafs* relates to the immaterial essence of man (*NFS* puff, breathe), comparable to *dhāt* (essence, subject of properties). The Oxford professor Abdel Haleem chose "soul" for translation while the Easterners prefer the more tangible "person" or "self" (al-Hilālī, Ghālī).

angels' statement: 'Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood?'" Yet Ibn Kathīr admits the validity of al-Qurṭubī's notion that a caliph is the one to "pass judgements on matters of dispute between people, to aid the oppressed against the oppressor, to implement the Islamic penal code and to forbid evil," and that succession of such *imāms* is beneficent for the human society.

Conclusion: The Qur'ānic View of Adam

Without any etymological key, the name of Adam in the Arabic Qur'ān remains an enigma. While in the Hebrew Genesis the relation is made plain between *ādām* and *ādāmā^h* – the soil, and throughout the biblical context *ādām* allows being understood as an appellative for man,⁷⁷ the name transcribed in Arabic does not convey the sense although the story does explain that he was made of clay or dust. Aside the biblical context, *Ādām* in the Qur'ān is simply taken as the first man's name. The Qiṣṣa, however, includes many biblical details, so the Islamic image of Adam is not as enigmatic as it might seem from the Qur'ān fragments.

The brief allusion of God creating man from clay echoes the verse in Genesis 2:7: "The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil (*ādāmā^h*). Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being."⁷⁸ The biblical axiom of man created in the image of God⁷⁹ is altogether missing in the Qur'ān and throughout the Islamic tradition; indeed, the statement sounds like *shirk* since no creation can be assimilated to God. Yet, as a reflexion of the extraordinary status of Adam, there is the allusion to his superior rationality, a particular gift of God, in which he can give names to all things. The motive bears on Genesis 2:20: "The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts." In the Qur'ānic fragments, this particular capacity makes Adam exalted over the angels, and God demands an act of humiliation from them. The

⁷⁷ *Na'ase^h ādām*: Let us make man [...] (Gen 1:26a). In some of 580 occurrences in the Hebrew Old Testament, *ādām* is understood generically except in the paradise story of Gen 2–5.

⁷⁸ English translations are taken from *The CTS New Catholic Bible*. London: Catholic Truth Society 2007.

⁷⁹ *Na'ase^h ādām b^e-ṣalmēnū ki-d^emutēnū*: Let us make man as our image, according to our likeness (Gen 1:26).

Qur'ān exposes Satan's act as archetypal for the disobedience of man to God's commandment.

Adam is taken as a representative model of all mankind. All he is and does applies to his posterity; he was created from clay – all mankind is created from clay; he neglects God's laws – all mankind tends to do the same. Adam dies and his clay body decomposes, which is the fate of all men. Yet, all will be brought in their bodies before their Lord on the Day of Judgment as the verse in Ṭahā succinctly puts it: "From it (the earth) we created you and to it we will return you, from it we will raise you one day" (20:55).

A particular feature of the Qur'ānic image of Adam is his status of *khalīfa*, a term known from later Islamic history as caliph, or successor of Muḥammad in leading the umma. Adam is a prototype of this patriarchal function, being the father of the human community although in the Qur'ān the term has a more general meaning of a "following" of generations succeeding one another. Moreover, successorship of prophets is essential in the Qur'ānic ideology as of those who repeat the same pattern of monotheist insistence and warning of the final punishment.

Adam's trespassing God's prohibition is explained in a Qur'ānic verse as forgetfulness (*nisyān*): "He forgot and We found him lacking in constancy" (20:115). Adam forgot that God had bound him by a covenant ('*ahd*) of sustenance provided that Adam does not cross the given limit represented by a tree. Adam is also described as lacking firm will ('*azm*). Adam is essentially endowed with instable, changing character, which makes God's intervention to repair necessary. God punished Adam along with the first transgressor – Satan, but, in the man's case, he offered "some words" (*kalimāt*) of repentance (*tūba*)⁸⁰ and reintroduction onto the right path. A future guidance (*al-hudā*) is promised for human tribes to support their failing faith in God's unicity: "When guidance comes from Me, as it certainly will, there will be no fear for those who follow My guidance" (2:38, also 20:123). God's guidance

⁸⁰ Understood from Adam's story as departure from disobedience and revolt and repentance for the act of transgression. God's merciful acceptance follows, echoing the *shūvā*^b postulate of the Israeli prophets (Hos 14:2 and elsewhere). "Turn us, Lord, to yourself (*h^ashūv^{nū} ēlēkhā*) and we will return to you" (*niuvāshē'ā*^b Lam 5:21 and elsewhere). The Medinan sūra of Tūba develops the message into practical prescriptions of *ḡihād*, including pure monotheistic faith, prayer, alms, obedience and purity.

through the message of a successorship of prophets,⁸¹ Muḥammad proclaimed the last,⁸² is, according to the Qur'ānic teaching, the only means of salvation in human failure. An equivalent of the Hebrew *yeshā'* or *yeshū'āh* in the sense of salvation from death is absent.⁸³

The concept of Adam is that of an exemplary man, a model of one who is subdued to God (*muslim*), repentant when erred, expecting mercy from his Lord. Despite the story of exaltation over the angels, Adam is not an object of cult. The Qur'ān makes it explicit that any prophet was a created human, successor of Adam. So is understood Jesus – 'Isā, given an explicit statement in the Medīnan sūra of the Family of Imrān (*Āl-Imrān*): "In God's eyes Jesus is just like Adam: He created him from dust, said to him, 'Be', and he was" (3:59).⁸⁴ Though Jesus is titled the Christ (*al-Masīh*) and endowed with supernatural signs as the virgin conception and birth, he is credited with prophethood and discredited as the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind through his death. Indeed, his death on the cross is denied in yet another miraculous sign of assumption to heaven (4:157–158). So is, by effect, his resurrection. The Qur'ān develops a teaching on Christ that is consistent with the doctrine of prophetic succession in which the permanent, identical message of God's exclusive unicity (*tauḥīd*) is repeated and a punishment for idolatry (*shirk*) is proclaimed. In that sense, Jesus is an *alter Adam*, another witness to God's unicity, not the "new Adam" who brought life instead of death.⁸⁵ The sin of rebellion against God is ever persistent in human generations and will only be treated on the day of final judgment. Needless to say, Muḥammad is

⁸¹ As explicitly stated in the sūra of the Heights, "Children of Adam, when messengers come to you from among yourselves, reciting My revelations to you, for those who are conscious of God and live righteously, there will be no fear, nor will they grieve" (7:35).

⁸² Muḥammad [...] is God's Messenger and the seal of the prophets (*khātam al-nabīyīn* 33:40).

⁸³ The corresponding *WS'* has the meaning of loose, broad space, which might have a common connotation with some Psalmody, in "letting loose" one that has been captured (*MLT*), or the freedom (*merḥāv*, *RHB*) given for previous anxiety. Cf. Ps 124:7, 118:5 and elsewhere. The name of Jesus (*Yeshū'āh*/ *Yeshā'*) is rendered in the Qur'ān as 'Isā without any correspondence to the Hebrew stem *YSh'*, and without the meaning of salvation.

⁸⁴ "Verily the likeness (*mathal*) of 'Isā before Allāh (*ind Allāh*) is the likeness of Adam (*ka-mathal Adam*). He created him of dust, then said to him 'Be' – and he was (*kun fa-yakun*)" (al-Hilālī).

⁸⁵ Cf. the teaching of Apostle Paul (Rom 5:12–17).

also *alter Adam* with the same task to repeat the ever identical claim of *tauḥīd*.

In the Qur'ānic theology, Adam's sin of disobedience to God did cause his expulsion from Paradise, but the wrong path of ungrateful distrust (*kufṛ*) can be transformed by God's mercy into the correct belief by means of the prophetic insistence on refutation of false idols and adoption of the faith in the absolute unicity of God. In that sense, Adam is the first of the prophets of God.

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ABSTRACT

MLADA MIKULICOVÁ
Adamův příběh v Koránu

Korán obsahuje pouze fragmenty Adamova příběhu v šesti různých súrách kromě několika dalších drobných zmínek. Sestaveny do pěti tematických kapitol, představují následující náměty: (1) stvoření člověka; (2) klanění andělů; (3) Sata-nova neposlušnost; (4) Adamův pád; (5) Adamův rod. Cílem článku je pojmenovat základní prvky koránského pojetí člověka jako tvora obdařeného rozumností, prvního z lidských pokolení, vázaného poslušností Božím limitům, selhávajícího, litujícího, proto znovu přijatého a vedeného Bohem – v tom smyslu prvního v řadě proroků Boží jednotosti.

Klíčová slova

Korán, Adam, stvoření člověka, racionalita, pokání, proroci