

The Story of Adam (part 2 of 5): The Creation of Eve and the Role of Satan

Description: The creation of the first woman, the tranquil dwelling in Paradise and the beginning of enmity between Satan and mankind.

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Adam opened his eyes and looked into the beautiful face of a woman gazing down at him. Adam was surprised and asked the woman why she had been created. She revealed that she was to ease his loneliness and bring tranquillity to him. The Angels questioned Adam. They knew that Adam possessed knowledge of things they did not know about and the knowledge mankind would need to occupy the earth. They said 'who is this?' and Adam replied 'this is Eve'.

Eve is *Hawwa* in Arabic; it comes from the root word *hay*, meaning *living*. Eve is also an English variant of the old Hebrew word *Havva*, also deriving from *hay*. Adam informed the Angels that Eve was so named because she was made from a part of him and he, Adam, was a living being.

Both Jewish and Christian traditions also maintain that Eve was created from Adam's rib, although in a literal translation of the Jewish tradition, *rib* is sometimes referred to as *side*.

"And God said: 'O Mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam) and from Him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women.'" (Quran 4:1)

The traditions of Prophet Muhammad relate that Eve was created while Adam was sleeping from his shortest left rib and that, after sometime, she was clothed with flesh. He (Prophet Muhammad) used the story of Eve's creation from Adam's rib as a basis for imploring people to be gentle and kind to women. **"O Muslims! I advise you to be gentle with women, for they are created from a rib, and the most crooked portion of the rib is its upper part. If you try to straighten it, it will break, and if you leave it, it will remain crooked; so I urge you to take care of the women."** (*Saheeh Al-Bukhari*)

Dwelling in Paradise

Adam and Eve dwelt in tranquillity in Paradise. This, too, is agreed upon by Islamic, Christian and Jewish traditions. Islam tells us that all of Paradise was theirs to enjoy and God said to Adam, "eat both of you freely with pleasure and delight of things therein as wherever you will..." (Quran 2:35) The Quran does not reveal the exact location of where

this Paradise was; however, commentators agree that it is not on the earth, and that the knowledge of the location is of no benefit to mankind. The benefit is in understanding the lesson from the events that took place there.

God continued his instructions to Adam and Eve by warning them **"...come not near this tree or you both will be of the wrongdoers." (Quran 2:35)** The Quran does not reveal what type of tree it was; we have no details and seeking such knowledge also produces no benefit. What is understood is that Adam and Eve lived a tranquil existence and understood that they were forbidden to eat from the tree. However, Satan was waiting to exploit the weakness of mankind.

Who is Satan?

Satan is a creature from the world of the *Jinn*. The *Jinn* are a creation of God made from fire. They are separate and different from both the Angels and mankind; however, like mankind, they possess the power of reason and can choose between good and evil. The *Jinn* existed before the creation of Adam^[1] and Satan was the most righteous among them, so much so that he was elevated to a high position amongst the Angels.

"The Angels prostrated themselves all of them together. Except Satan, he refused to be among the prostrators. God said: 'O Satan! What is your reason for not being among the prostrators?' Satan said: 'I am not the one to prostrate myself to a human being, whom You created from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud.' God said: 'Then get out from Here for verily you are an outcast or cursed one. Verily the curse shall be upon you till the Day of Resurrection.'" (Quran 15:30-35)

The Role of Satan

Satan was there in the Paradise of Adam and Eve and his vow was to misguide and deceive them and their descendents. Satan said: **"...surely I will sit in wait against them (human beings) on Your Straight Path. Then I will come to them from before them and behind them, from their right and from their left..." (Quran 7:16-17)** Satan is arrogant, and considered himself better than Adam, and thus mankind. He is crafty and cunning, but ultimately understands the weakness of human beings; he recognises their loves and desires.^[2]

Satan did not say to Adam and Eve "go eat from that tree" nor did he outright tell them to disobey God. He whispered into their hearts and planted disquieting thoughts and desires. Satan said to Adam and Eve, **"...Your Lord did not forbid you this tree save that you should become Angels or become of the immortals." (Quran 7:20)** Their minds became filled with thoughts of the tree, and one day they decided to eat from it. Adam and Eve behaved as all human beings do; they became preoccupied with their own thoughts and the whisperings of Satan and they forgot the warning from God.

It is at this point that the Jewish and Christian traditions differ greatly from Islam. At no point do the words of God - the Quran, or the traditions and sayings of Prophet

Muhammad - indicate that Satan came to Adam and Eve in the form of a snake or serpent.

Islam in no way indicates that Eve was the weaker of the two, or that she tempted Adam to disobey God. Eating the fruit of the tree was a mistake committed by both Adam and Eve. They bear equal responsibility. It was **not** the original sin spoken about in Christian traditions. The descendents of Adam are not being punished for the sins of their original parents. It was a mistake, and God, in His infinite Wisdom and Mercy, forgave them both.

Endnotes:

[1] Al Ashqar, U. (2003). *The World of Jinn and Devils*. Islamic Creed Series. International Islamic Publishing House: Riyadh.

[2] Sheikh ibn Al Qayyim in *Ighaathat al Lahfaan*.

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