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HUMANITY'S TERRESTRIAL BEGINNING IN THE QURAN: ADAM, THE FIRST HUMAN

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Abstract

The inauguration of the making of the first human, Adam, and the covenant all humans took with God are the two defining events in human biography as vicegerent on earth, the former informing the Islamic worldview in all its disciplines and personal behaviours, from politics to ecology,[1] the latter depicting the belief system.[2] Although these events form complementary parts of a single Quranic narrative, each warrants detailed treatment in its own right. The present study is confined to the events surrounding Adam's inauguration, while the covenant of Banī Ādam is examined separately. The events surrounding Adam were categorically celebrated in the Divine presence, their narrations found at several places in the Quran, though piecemeal, each part resonant with its context. As expected, it is customary for the parts to be pieced together in the Quranic exegeses; however, a few turns in the story remain in shade such as to demand it be retold. By reconstructing the account primarily through the Quran's own discourse, this study offers a fresh reading of Adam's inauguration, presenting several findings—some novel, others departing from conventional interpretations—that bear significantly on the understanding of human vicegerency and the lessons drawn from the narrative.

Keywords: Human Vicegerency (Khilāfah) , Prophet Adam , Qur'anic Narrative , Divine Covenant , Islamic Worldview

[1] Idris, Jaafar Sheikh. "IS MAN THE VICEGERENT OF GOD?" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990): 99–110. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26195669.
[2] Gwynne, RW. (2004). "Logic, Rhetoric and Legal Reasoning the Quran." Routledge, New York. Pp 1-24

Introduction

The Quranic account of Adam's creation and inauguration stands at the foundation of the Quranic conception of humanity. It encompasses the cosmic announcement of a new vicegerent and the ensuing dialogue with the angels; the formation of Adam from clay and the Divine Insufflation; the command to prostrate and Iblis' refusal; Adam and Eve's residence in Paradise and their trial of obedience; their exit from Paradise; the test of their knowledge, and the events that culminate in Adam's repentance and restoration. Together, these episodes establish the framework within which the Quran explains the origin, nature, and vocation of humankind.

Rather than presenting these events as a continuous historical narrative, the Quran recounts them through a series of passages dispersed across at least seven surahs: al-Baqarah (2:30–39), al-Aʿrāf (7:11–27), al-Ḥijr (15:26–43), al-Isrāʾ (17:61–65), al-Kahf (18:50), Ṭā Hā (20:116–124), and Ṣād (38:71–85). Each passage emphasizes aspects most relevant to its immediate context, requiring the reader to synthesize them into a coherent narrative. This dispersed mode of narration has given rise to diverse exegetical traditions, differing not only in the sequencing of events but also in their characterization of the protagonists, the setting of Paradise, the nature of Adam's creation, the scope of his knowledge, and the role of Iblis. In many instances, these reconstructions have also been shaped by extra-Quranic materials, including Isrāʾīliyyāt, popular traditions, and mythological motifs.

Beyond its narrative form, the story functions as the Quran's foundational paradigm for understanding the human condition. It introduces the concepts of vicegerency, knowledge, freedom, temptation, repentance, and Divine guidance that underpin the Islamic worldview. Consequently, variations in reconstructing the narrative inevitably influence the lessons derived from it. While a comprehensive critique of earlier exegetical traditions lies beyond the scope of this study, the present article seeks to reconstruct the narrative primarily from the Quran's own discourse, allowing its internal coherence to illuminate the events surrounding Adam's inauguration and the establishment of human vicegerency.

Although the Quranic account continues beyond Adam's inauguration to the universal covenant taken by the children of Adam, that event constitutes a distinct stage in the Quranic account of humanity and is examined separately. The present study is therefore confined to the narrative from the Divine announcement of Adam's creation to the establishment of his vicegerency and the events immediately surrounding it.

Methodology and Constraints

This work offers a contemporary re-narration of the Quranic references, grounded in the methodology of thematic exegesis—known in Arabic as *al-Tafsir al-Mawdu'i* (التفسير الموضوعي). It addresses some of the points of exegetical divergence in the narrative based on the core principle of *Tafseer al-Quran bil-Quran* (interpreting the Quran by the Quran).[3]

It conforms to the inherent logic and theological consistency of classical *tafsīr* traditions, while simultaneously renewing the narrative's empirical contents to improve structural coherence. In doing so, this approach fundamentally re-evaluates the story's broader ethical and theological implications.

Because several elements of the synthesis presented here are novel—introducing previously untold or fundamentally reinterpreted perspectives—this work is offered as a framework for academic dialogue and debate rather than a definitive, immutable storyline. Consequently, direct comparative referencing to the vast and varied body of existing literature has largely been intentionally omitted, leaving that critical dimension of analysis to individual academic critique.

The Launch

The one-liner would have Adam showcased to the existing intelligent species, the angels.

[3] bn Taymiyya, *Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir* [An Introduction to the Principles of Exegesis], ed. Adnan Zarzour (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 1994), 93.

The human nomination as the vicegerent to God was supposed to be a ceremonial event, though the atmosphere got sensational even before the proceedings. The news of the arrival of a new brand of creation, humans, and their assignment to the high office of vicegerency was felt as a challenge to the status quo, causing widespread anxiety among the present.

On the day, everything had been styled at high key. The body of Adam was in the making as a clay-model. The plan had the model, when ready, to be quickened with life, and no sooner had it been enlivened than the angels should bow to it, a Divine ruling that troubled some more than the others. The matter was settled in some ways, but in some other ways, it was not, with profound lingering effects, most felt even today.

The references fetched from the above passages have been organised in Table 2-5, each depicting a particular event in the story.

Announcement

The story began with the Divine announcement of humans, a new creation, to live on earth as His viceregent (2:30; 15:28; 38:71). The announcement seemed to have unsettled all present. The ranks of the angels, also Iblis, a non-angelic presence.

Angels' Response

The angels straightaway raised their concern about the plan (Table 2).

Table 2. Angels' anxiety

Announcement	Angels' concern	God's response	Angels' obedience	Angels' admission
2:30	2:30	2:30		2:32
15:28-29			15:30	
7:11			17:61	
			18:50	
			20:117	
38:71-72			38:73	

The angels proclaimed that humans would corrupt the earth and shed blood in it. Such a cast-iron certainty in a statement, there being no ifs and buts about it, shows as if they knew this outcome for certain. Traditional exegeses consider this certainty as their attempt at extrapolation of their earlier knowledge of Jinn misbehaving on earth. Jinn's performance on Earth must have been disastrous, possibly explaining their being out of the race for

vicegerency, but a mere extrapolation does not justify certainty in the statement: a failure in a step does not necessarily dictate the outcome of the next. Anything less than certain, the angels would not have dared to present in Divine presence as a certainty. However, what they had said, God did not disallow, which means the information was correct. If it were correct, its only infallible source was God Himself. It must have been a part of the Divine speech on the inauguration, indicating that humans were going to go berserk on earth, though its direct reference in the speech is omitted in the Quranic record. That this is the case was confirmed by the angels confessing in a later scene that they only knew what God had told them (Q.2:32).

In addition to listing the problems of corruption on land and bloodshed, the inaugural speech would also have stipulated the job description of the appointees. The contents of the Divine speech profiling humans as such are missing in the incident report, albeit found elsewhere in the Quran, for example, in Q.91:7-8, where God pronounces the makeup of their character from both the benevolent and malevolent elements.

Below, we shall learn how Iblis threatened to exploit the malevolent elements of the human makeup. Again, how would he have known about these elements built into humans except from the Divine speech itself? He also asked God for a respite till the Day of Judgement, the day of which he would have learnt, yet again, only from the Divine speech.

Though the angels concluded their pleadings by reaffirming that they praised God as being devoid of any shortcoming, their initial attempt could be construed as their offering themselves for the status. In voicing their question, the angels maintained the mannerism of servitude to God by showing that, whatsoever the ultimate Divine verdict was, they had complete trust in the Divine wisdom. The Divine response to the angels' concerns was brief, its tone dismissive: Q.2:30: "*Indeed, I know that which you do not know.*"

Iblis' Response

So far, Iblis had kept his cool with a wait-and-see attitude. With what happened next, Iblis had to let his veil slip. God instructed all those present at the scene to bow to Adam. Accordingly, all those present bowed, except one, who did not: Iblis. Rebellion against God! This must have shocked the ranks. Adam would not know what was going on around him; he had just come into being. But Iblis' comrade angels must be dreading the

consequence of his defiance. This epic part of the story is shared at all seven passages quoted above (Table 3).

Table 3. Iblis' Response

Spirit (Ruh) breathed into Adam's clay mould	**All Bowed to Adam except Iblis***	**The Dialogue between God and Iblis**	**Iblis was asked to leave**	**Iblis' Plan**	**Allah's Counterplan**
	2:34				
	7:11	7:12-15	7:13, 18	7:16-17	7:18
15:29	15:30-31	15:32-38	15:34	15:39-40	15:41-43
	17:61	17:62	17:63	17:62-64	17:65
	18:50 (Jinn)				
	20:116				
38:72	38:73-74	38:75-81	38:77	38:82-83	38:84-85

Quite obviously, Iblis' attitude straightaway prompted interrogation. Things went awry. Iblis' response is copied here:

- *15:32: Never would I prostrate to a human whom You created out of clay from an altered black mud."*
- *17:61-2: He said, "Should I prostrate to one You created from clay? "Do You see this one whom You have honored above me?*
- 7:12 *"I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."*
- *38:76: "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay."*

Of these statements, the former two identify Iblis as a staid, stubborn, disgusting, and spiteful figure; the latter two appear to contain a rational argument, needing analysis. To justify his defiance, Iblis produced a reason that the grander was not supposed to bow to the meeker and inferior. He had assumed that he must be greater because he was made of fire while Adam was made of mud; hence, he did not think he should bow to Adam.

Although in its form, the argument can be seen as valid, in soundness it fails on all accounts.[4] At the foremost, Iblees discounted the fact that an order derives legitimacy from its issuing authority, not from its implicit reasons. Further, he took for granted that fire, of which he was made, was superior to mud, the substance of Adam. Superiority of fire over mud aside, his attribution of greatness to the substance of which someone is made, if admitted, would have legitimised materialism, racism and all other types of prejudices. The true measure of greatness lies in personal character,[5] which in the case of Adam was at the time not available for comparison.

Apart from being bad at manners, Iblis also came across as corrupt in intellect. It looks like that God as such did not show Iblis how his argument was improper, apart from asking him to leave as cursed. However, careful reading of the ayahs reveals that Iblis also received a new title – 'one of the *Kafireen'* (Q.38:74). It is in this title is shown how he got things wrong.

Kufr is usually taken in the Quran to mean denial of the existence of God. But Iblis obviously did not have that problem; if anything, he was conversing with God right there. He also admitted God as his Provider (*Rabb*). Shockingly, after all the contentions, Iblis, a real tongue-in-cheek, also asked God for a favour (Q.38:79). In this sense, he did not disbelieve, only rebelled.

The term *Kufr* more precisely means 'covering '; in matters of belief, covering the truth evident to the self – self-deception. How the mind works in this crooked state is a subject of human psychology (*cognitive dissonance*). How Iblis' mind worked at the time, we cannot know for sure, for he is not even a human for a start. Notwithstanding, the term '*Kufr'* reveals how, in his claim of being better than humans, Iblis actually tricked himself. Thoughts are shaped by reason or by desires, the two potentially antagonistic motivations. His desire for himself becoming the viceregent overpowered his reason, causing him to act like an arrogant idiot and a

[4]. Ghazali, Imam. "The Just Balance." *DP Brewster (Translator*). Ashraf Printing Press, 1978. Lahore

[5] Al-Qurʾān, 49:13

mendacious liar. Not surprisingly, the Quran equates *Kufr* to arrogance *(takabbur*)[6] and lying (*takzeeb*).[7]

Iblis could have been chastised, but he got a chance to return by God asking him this question: 'Why did you not follow the orders?' He could have said, 'Sorry, I misunderstood; I did not think that I was asked to bow; of course, I am not even an angel;' or, 'Sorry, can I prostrate to Adam now?' Instead, he dared to accuse God of tricking him (Q.15:39).

Defiant, he was asked to leave Paradise. The Quran uses three terms to qualify the manner of his leaving: derivatives of triliteral roots *hā bā ṭā* (**ه ب ط**), *khā rā jīm* (**خ ر ج**), and *dhāl hā bā* (**ذ ه ب**), correspondingly meaning 'to descend', 'to leave' and 'to be separated' (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Lexical Distinctions of the triliteral roots ه ب ط (*Ha-Ba-Ta*), خ ر ج(*Kha-Ra-Ja*), and ذ ه ب(*Dha-Ha-Ba*) in standard Arabic lexicography and classical dictionaries. [8]

Triliteral Root Reference	**Antonym /Opposite**	**Primary Focus**	**Narrative Application to Iblis**
ه ب ط (*Ha-Ba-Ta*) Q.7:13	**الصعود** (Ascending)	Loss of high vertical altitude **coupled with a destruction of status/dignity**.	Kicked **down** from the high elite ranks.
خ ر ج (*Kha-Ra-Ja*) Q.7:13; 7:18; 15:34; 38:77	**الدخول** (Entering)	Moving across a boundary from **inside an enclosure to the outside**.	Kicked **out** of the physical jurisdiction.

[6] Al-Qurʾān,.2:34
[7] Al-Qurʾān,.85:19
[8] Al-Raghib al-Isphahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an* [Vocabulary of the Qur'an], ed. Safwan Adnan Dawudi (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 1992), entries under roots "ه ب ط", " خ ر ج", and "ذ ه ب".

ذ ه ب **(*Dha-Ha-Ba*)** **Q.17:63**	المجيء / الإياب (Returning)	**Walking a path or passing through a trajectory** toward a destination.	Sent **away** to roam the earth and initiate his trial against humanity.

The emphasis of 'down', 'out' and 'away' in each context elegantly transcribes the demand and intensity of the situations. Particularly to be noted is the milder tone of Dha-Ha-Ba in Q.17:63, where God Himself allowed Iblis a strategy for how he could try humans. (Derivatives of *Kha-Ra-Ja* and *Ha-Ba-Ta* were also used for Adam and Eve, though the former (meaning their expelling) was attributed to Iblis, now designated as Satan, while the latter to God Himself.)

Angry, and now cursed too, he would not know how to handle his free-fall demotion and where to go from here. Though like a gangster, just before leaving the scene, he threatened to sway humans from the right path. Revenge against humans he undertook as a reaction, as if it was all Adam's fault. Taking it further, to meet this end, he sought respite for the whole period of humans in office - till the Day of Judgment, a plea which was acceded. The respite comprised a super-comprehensive policy: a full and free access of Iblis to humans, wherever they can be, including in Paradise. He could now access their minds (*Sadoor*; Singular: *Sadr*),[9] including those of Prophets (PBUT).[10] The access was afforded from all sides[11] to be mediated with all kinds of tools to use in corrupting the minds.[12]

It has mistakenly been taken that had Iblis behaved properly on this occasion, humans would not have gone wrong in their lives. Human profile had both malevolent and benevolent potentialities incorporated in its drawing even before this incident; having this knowledge, Iblis promised to exploit the malevolent. However, it is possible that God added forgiveness for human mistakes to balance out the 'Iblis factor.' Despite the possibility

[9] Al-Qurʾān,.114:5-6

[10] Al-Qurʾān,.6:112: ***And thus We have made for every prophet an enemy - devils from mankind and jinn, inspiring to one another decorative speech in delusion. But if your Lord had willed, they would not have done it, so leave them and that which they invent***

[11] Al-Qurʾān,.7:17

[12] Al-Qurʾān,.17:64

of forgiveness, what God said in response to Iblis' challenge should worry us all: "*Whoever follows you [Iblis] among them [humans] - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together*" (Q.7:18).

From this scene onward, Iblis took the title of Satan along with his job of whispering into human minds (sadr). His first target was going to be Adam himself.

Adam's Mistake and Response

Iblis soon was out on the hunt for Adam and his wife Eve (Table 5).

Table 5. Adam's response

Adam and Eve offered a place in Paradise	**God warned Adam about Iblis**	**Iblis approached them**	**Couple's shame manifested**	**Couple Ousted from Paradise**	**Couple Prayed and Pardoned**
2:35		2:36		2:36*	2:37
7:19		7:20-22	7:22	7:27	7:23
20:118-119	20:117	20:120	20:122		20:122

Eve was born of Adam,[13] but how without a mother is not given in the Quran;[14] although it is mentioned in Hadith,[15] yet again, the information

[13] *"O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate..."* (Surah An-Nisa, 4:1)

[14] Wheeler BM (2001). Introduction to the Quran: Stories of the prophets. New York. Continuum. ISBN 0-8264-4957-3.

[15] *"Treat women nicely, for a woman is created from a rib, and the most curved portion of the rib is its upper portion... so treat women nicely."* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 60, Hadith 6)

might have metaphorical overtones. [16]Adam and Eve were offered a sojourn in Paradise before taking the vicegerency on earth. In Paradise, they were taken around to familiarise themselves, shown the supplies ample for satiating hunger and quenching thirst, and assured of the arrangements to shield their dignity and themselves from heat,[17] altogether depicting the core human requirements. However, they were also forbidden from approaching 'a tree' in the Garden. Jeffery Lang in his important work the 'Purpose of Life'[18] elaborates to this exception being symbolic, afforded merely for the purpose of testing the couple, the tree itself having inhered nothing special, although its fruit if eaten would reveal the body parts of the diner, as turned up to be the case. Blending of enabling provisions with a prohibition indeed modelled the test mankind was about to take.

In due course, Iblis must have overheard them talking about the standoffish 'tree'. He did not invite Adam and Eve to openly rebel against God or commit an act of evil for its own sake. Instead, he conducted a brilliant psychological deception by exploiting two core existential motivations that are deeply hardcoded into human nature. Having access to their minds, he must also have discovered their advancing aspirations of eternal stay in Paradise.

Q.20:120: ***Then Satan whispered to him; he said, 'O Adam, shall I direct you to the Tree of Eternity and a kingdom that will not deteriorate.***

Q.7:20-21***: And he [Satan] said, 'Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except lest you become angels or become of the immortals. He swore unto them: "Indeed, I [Iblis] am to you a sincere advisor"***

From now onward 'Satan' was the newly granted designation for Iblis. His access to the couple while still in the gardens of Eden was granted on the basis of the earlier agreement to be applicable till Judgement Day.

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[16] *"The woman is **like a rib**; if you try to straighten her, she will break. So if you want to get benefit from her, do so while she still has some crookedness."* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book 67, Hadith 119)

[17] Al-Qurʾān,.20:118-119

[18] Jeffery Lang. "The purpose of Life." *Islam on Demand*. YouTube (2011) Found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifllgTA2pmY.

Psychology must find it fascinating to study how Satan played this game. [19] The choice of contents and delivery method was part of his strategy. He took advantage of the unease brought on by the thought that Adam and Eve would eventually leave for Earth. He employed the power of "Gradualism" (dallāhumā, Q 7:22): a gradual, dishonest weakening of their will by repeated assurances. He was successful in his trap by manipulating their motivation against the limitations they were subject to. Crucially, Iblis decided to deceive Adam rather than Eve.[20] Cunning in planning, Iblis must have done so for a reason, seeing Adam in control; our poor mum utterly relying on her husband for all the decisions – at least till that time. This is against the Biblical stance holding Eve responsible for the fiasco.[21]

Eventually, they ate from the tree. No sooner had they done so than their private body parts were exposed, so was Iblis' trap. However, having an epiphany, they quickly restored decency by covering their naked bodies with leaves from the neighbouring trees. Later, on questioning by God, they kept low rather than randomly trying to justify their mistake. Consequently, only Adam was admonished, though the couple was asked to leave Paradise to proceed to another location, which as such is not specified in the Quran. To describe their leaving Paradise, the Quran employs a derivative of triliteral roots *khā rā jīm* (خ ر ج), meaning pejoratively 'vacating' Paradise; the term is also used for Iblis' leaving the Divine court.

[19] A psychological analysis of the story of Adam and Eve. By Murad, Published in **Ponderland** (2020), found at: https://medium.com/physics-psychology-philosophy-and-promiscuous/a-psychological-analysis-of-the-story-of-adam-and-eve-91756cf111dd?

[20] Al-Qurʾān,.20:120

[21] In Genesis 3:6, 12-13:

- The Temptation**:** The serpent tempts Eve, convincing her that eating the fruit will make her like God, knowing good and evil. She eats it and then gives some to Adam, who is with her, and he eats it too.
- The Confrontation**:** When God confronts them, **Adam blames Eve** (and implicitly God): *"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."* Eve then shifts the blame to the serpent.

Three Mindsets, Several Lessons

The responses of the angels, Iblis, and Adam in the above story depict three different mindsets (Table 6), with different consequences, leaving us with important lessons.

Table 6: Comparison of characters in the story

	Angels	**Iblis**	**Adam**
Felt uneasy on the Announcement	Open; asked a question	Dubious; kept quiet	
Attitude	Respectful	Boorish	Humble
Divine Command	Obeyed	Defied (Did not do what he was asked to do)	Disobeyed (Did what he was asked not to do)
Sinned		Own initiative	Got tempted
Reaction	Patient	Argumentative	Embarrassed
God's resolution	Explained to the angels	Expelled Iblis	Moved Adam to another location
Ending	Inconsequential	Cursed	Forgiven

The angels felt disquiet about the situation and raised questions about it, though simultaneously admitting God's impeccability. Even though their question was shelved by God, they trusted God and obeyed His instructions. This conformed to the Quranic recipe for the believers:

وَقَالُواْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا[22]

… And they [believers] say, "We hear, and we obey….

The other person unhappy with the proceedings was Iblis, but, in its showing, he deviated from the angelic path. Initially, he was chafing at his rage, which he internalised; then he defied the Divine command in the open; finally, he stood out as loudmouthed, asking for respite. Even then, he could

[22] Al-Qurʾān,.2:285

have returned to God, surrendering his respite, with an apology. Instead, he recklessly spiralled out. He and his agents have copiously been profiled in the Quran, a profile of arrogance, coarseness and bad reasoning. While resisting his temptations, humans must also shun his disguise.

Like Iblis, Adam disobeyed God, too, in a way even more serious, for he did what he was asked not to do, while Iblis did not do what he was asked to do. It was more serious in Adam's case because the action once done cannot be reversed, while the fumbling in compliance can be redressed, at least, initially.

Eating from the tree, Adam and Eve turned naked, something of which they had no experience of how it should feel. Feeling shame, they rushed for tree leaves to cover their nakedness. Shame from nakedness is, therefore, inherent to humans from the beginning; losing this trait, widely witnessed, must be a feature fostered sometimes later in the human biography. Later in the story, God would attend to them[23] and grant them, naïve in language, the words for apology,[24] which meant that they had suffered also with the subjective internal experience of guilt. As a result, they concealed the shame but sought to reveal the guilt. This has likely been reversed in recent times, as people now freely announce the matters bringing shame.

Adam and Eve were unable to express these experiences since they were unfamiliar to them. It resembles someone who is imprisoned in a black-and-white room for eternity and is unable to adequately describe the red rose she first sees upon her freedom.[25]

Psychoanalytic treatment of the story can resolve another extremely important point. Adam's psyche is depicted in God's comments:

> ***And We had already taken a promise from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination.[26]***

The disappointing lack of resolve in Adam, of which the ayah is critical, at another level, epitomises human free will. This was the first test of Adam, as God's new creation, to whom God had made His other creations to

[23] Al-Qurʾān,.20:122
[24] Al-Qurʾān,.7:23
[25] Jackson F. (1986). "What Mary Didn't Know." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83:5; 291-295. URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2026143
[26] Al-Qurʾān, 20:115

prostrate, and the first chance for Iblis to show what he could do with his newly granted respite. On all accounts, God would have liked Adam to resist Iblis but, to realise it, He did not interfere in Iblis' privilege or in Adam's free will. He returned to the incident scene only to declare Iblis as one-up in the first round, and, as the Teacher, reminded the couple of the strategy for the future.

And their Lord called to them [Adam and Eve], "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?"[27]

This meant that the world that Adam's progeny was about to enter would be contingent, being subject to their free will, a world Divinely controlled mainly for administrative reasons, to provide an enabling environment for free will.

The story also sets the coordinates of the '*philosophy of obedience.'* Both the Divine commands, the one to the angels about prostrating to Adam and the other to humans about not approaching the tree, could not be rationalised with standard human reason. It is in the arena lacking reason that the obedience is tested in full, an arena which Iblis entered wearing the guise of reason and failed. There could be some space for a question - decently placed – like in the case of angels, but defiance is unacceptable. Complete surrender is sought, whether reason holds or it does not. Failing this condition, our parents were expelled from Paradise; failing it, surely, we will not be allowed back:

I [God] will surely fill Hell with you [Iblis] and those of them [humans] that follow you all together."[28]

Discussion and Conclusions

The human condition is remarkably elucidated by the Quranic narrative, which includes Adam's creation from clay, the Divine Insufflation, the prostration of the angels, Iblis' refusal, the trial in Paradise, Adam's repentance, his appointment as God's vicegerent, and the teaching of the names. It establishes the Quranic foundations of anthropology, ethics, ecology, education, and moral responsibility, rather than merely providing an account of humanity's origins. As a cohesive narrative, these separate

[27] Al-Qurʾān,7:22
[28]. Al-Qurʾān, 38:85

passages depict the initiation of humanity as a meticulously orchestrated Divine endeavour, rather than a collection of disjointed episodes.

The current reconstruction generally aligns with the conventional understanding of Adam as a direct creation from clay, despite the fact that it has not endeavoured to defend this position against competing models, including the chemical-composition metaphor, theistic evolution, exceptionalist creation, and historical evolutionary interpretations. Since they pertain to the mechanism of creation rather than the narrative structure that is the subject of this investigation, these critical enquiries warrant separate consideration.

The chronology of events is reconstructed from the Quran in this study, which suggests a slight refinement. The arrangement of the narrative across multiple surahs appears to be deliberate, encouraging readers to synthesise dispersed passages into a coherent whole rather than relying on a single continuous account. While simultaneously diminishing dependence on extra-Quranic traditions, this method resolves numerous apparent inconsistencies.

The primary discovery of this investigation is that humanity's earthly existence was not the result of an unexpected failure but rather the realisation of a Divine plan. Thus, Adam's descent to Earth signifies the beginning of humanity's mission of governance, rather than a punitive exile. In this regard, the Quranic narrative is fundamentally different from doctrines that depict humanity's history as stemming from an inherited guilt or "original sin".

Additionally, the story lays out fundamental rules that govern interpersonal relationships. The significance and sanctity of the relationship of Adam and Eve as husband and wife were demonstrated by the fact that it was the first to be established between members of human civilisation. Adam and Eve are depicted as partners in the Quran, where they reside in Paradise, encounter temptation, commit errors, repent, and receive Divine forgiveness collaboratively. The transgression is not exclusively attributed to Eve in the Quran, and responsibility is shared rather than gendered. In the same vein, Iblis' condemnation demolishes any assertion of superiority that is based on origin, race, status, or material distinction, portraying arrogance as the greatest spiritual threat to humanity, rather than weakness.

The Quran's enduring psychology of redemption and temptation is derived from the contrast between Adam and Iblis. The techniques used by Iblis—deceit, gradualism, false promises, and manipulation of desire—

remain characteristics of moral temptation. In contrast, Adam showcases that while humans are capable of error, they are also capable of repentance, learning, and restoration. Consequently, the narrative does not depict human perfection or inescapable corruption; rather, it emphasises accountable freedom under Divine guidance.

In the end, the angelic dialogue is resolved through knowledge, rather than through dogma. Adam's distinctiveness is rooted in his ability to responsibly apply reason and the knowledge that God bestowed upon him. Human excellence is, therefore, not derived from biological origins but rather from knowledge, moral discernment, and obedience to Divine guidance. The Quran's comprehension of civilisation, ethics, and the human vocation on Earth is based on the constitutional principles of human vicegerency, which are established by Adam's inauguration.

Appendix

Passages of the Quran narrating the events

Translations of the relevant passages from the Quran are copied below.

"Q.2:30-39: *30: "And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."31: And He taught Adam the names – all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." 32: They said, "Exalted are You; we do not know what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who are the Knowing, the Wise." 33: He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed." 34: And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam;" so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers. 35: And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers." 36: But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they*

had been. And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time." 37: Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. 38: We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. 39: And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally." [29]

"Q.7:11-25: *11: And We have certainly created you, [O Mankind], and given you [human] form. Then We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated. 12: [Allah] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [Satan] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay." 13: [Allah] said, "Descend from Paradise, for it is not for you to be arrogant therein. So get out; indeed, you are of the debased. 14: [Satan] said, "Reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." 15: [Allah] said, "Indeed, you are of those reprieved." 16: [Satan] said, "Because You have put me in error, I will surely sit in wait for them on Your straight path. 17: Then I will come to them from before them and from behind them and on their right and on their left, and You will not find most of them grateful [to You]." 18: [Allah] said, "Get out of Paradise, reproached and expelled. Whoever follows you among them - I will surely fill Hell with you, all together." 19: "And 'O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers." 20: But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal." 21: And he swore [by Allah] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors." 22: So*

[29] Quran, Surah Baqra: ayahs 30-39. Translations by "Sahih International". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation:,

he made them fall, through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And their Lord called to them, "Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?" 23: They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." 24: [Allah] said, "Descend, being to one another enemies. And for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment for a time." 25: He said, "Therein you will live, and therein you will die, and from it you will be brought forth." [30]

"Q.15:26-43: *26: And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud. 27: And the jinn We created before from scorching fire. 28: And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. 29: And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall to him in prostration." 30: So the angels prostrated - all of them entirely, 31: Except Iblees, he refused to be with those who prostrated. 32: [Allah] said, O Iblees, what is [the matter] with you that you are not with those who prostrate?" 33: He said, "Never would I prostrate to a human whom You created out of clay from an altered black mud." 34: [Allah] said, "Then get out of it, for indeed, you are expelled. 35: And indeed, upon you is the curse until the Day of Recompense." 36: He said, "My Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." 37: [Allah] said, "So indeed, you are of those reprieved. 38: Until the Day of the time well-known." 39: [Iblees] said, "My Lord, because You have put me in error, I will surely make [disobedience] attractive to them on earth, and I will mislead them all. 40: Except among them, Your chosen servants." 41: [Allah] said, "This is a path [of return] to Me [that is] straight. 42: Indeed, My servants -*

[30] Quran, Surah Araf: ayahs 11-27. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation

no authority will you have over them, except those who follow you of the deviators. 43: And indeed, Hell is the promised place for them all." [31]

"Q.17:61-66: *61: And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except for Iblees. He said, "Should I prostrate to one You created from clay?" 62: [Iblees] said, "Do You see this one whom You have honored above me? If You delay me until the Day of Resurrection, I will surely destroy his descendants, except for a few." 63: [Allah] said, "Go, for whoever of them follows you, indeed Hell will be the recompense of you - an ample recompense. 64: And incite [to senselessness] whomever you can among them with your voice and assault them with your horses and foot soldiers and become a partner in their wealth and their children and promise them." But Satan does not promise them except delusion. 65: Indeed, over My [believing] servants there is for you no authority. And sufficient is your Lord as Disposer of affairs."* [32]

"Q.18:50: *50: And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was of the jinn and departed from the command of his Lord. Then will you take him and his descendants as allies other than Me while they are enemies to you? Wretched it is for the wrongdoers as an exchange."* [33]

"Q.20:116-125: *116: And We had already taken a promise from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination.* ***117:*** *And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate to Adam," and they prostrated, except Iblees; he refused. 118: So We said, "O Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you*

[31] Quran, Surah Hijr: ayahs 26-43. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation

[32] Quran, Surah Isra: ayahs 61-65. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation

[33] Quran, Surah Kahf: ayah 50. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation

from Paradise so you would suffer. 119: Indeed, it is [promised] for you not to be hungry therein or be unclothed. 120: And indeed, you will not be thirsty therein or be hot from the sun." 121: Then Satan whispered to him; he said, "O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?" 122: And Adam and his wife ate of it, and their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred. 123: Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him]. 124: [Allah] said, "Descend [both of you] from Paradise - all, [your descendants] being enemies to one another. And if there should come to you guidance from Me - then whoever follows My guidance will neither go astray [in the world] nor suffer [in the Hereafter]. 125: And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We will gather him on the Day of Resurrection blind." [34]

"Q.38:71-85: *71: [So mention] when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay. 72: So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall to him in prostration." 73: So the angels prostrated - all of them entirely. 74: Except Iblees; he was arrogant and became among the disbelievers. 74: [Allah] said, "O Iblees, what prevented you from prostrating to that which I created with My hands? Were you arrogant [then], or were you [already] among the haughty? 75: He said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay." 76: [Allah] said, "Then get out of Paradise, for indeed, you are expelled. 77: And indeed, upon you is My curse until the Day of Recompense." 78: He said, "My Lord, then reprieve me until the Day they are resurrected." 79: [Allah] said, "So indeed, you are of those reprieved. 80: Until the Day of the time well-known." 80: [Iblees] said, "By your might, I will surely mislead them all. 81: Except, among them, Your chosen servants." 82: [Allah] said, "The truth [is My oath], and the truth I say – 83: [That] I*

[34] Quran, Surah Taha: ayahs 116-125. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation

will surely fill Hell with you and those of them that follow you all together." [35]



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[35] Quran, Surah Sad: ayahs 71-85. Translations by "*Sahih International*". Source: Language Research Group, University of Leeds "The Quranic Arabic Corpus.' (no date). Available at: https://corpus.quran.com/translation