

Without Satan, Allah's Universal Plan would have failed.

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Allah blamed Satan for causing Adam and his wife's expulsion from heaven. But without his alleged participation, Allah could not have fulfilled His Universal Plan. This we can conclude from reading the following verses of Quran's Sura The Cow, or The Heifer.

Verse 31: And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels, and said: Tell me the nature of these if ye are right.

The word sadeqiin, which appears in the Arabic text, has been translated as right, but generally it is understood to mean truthful.[\[1\]](#) The translation of the Arabic word sadeqiin into right is significant, for it helps the Muslim translators to keep the angels outside the category of those beings who are untruthful, or liars.

Nevertheless, after creating Adam, against the angels' opposition, Allah is said to have decided to prove them wrong by having Adam exhibit his human capabilities, with which the angels are not at all equipped. To achieve His objective, Allah is believed to have created certain things and taught Adam their nature, intentionally excluding the angels from His coaching. Thereafter, He placed those things before the angels, challenging them to elucidate their nature, specifically, to prove that they were untruthful in their comments that they had made earlier about Adam and his progeny.

Verse 32: They said: Glory to Thee: of knowledge we have none, save what Thou hast taught us: in truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom.

Faced with the dilemma, angels conceded their ignorance about the nature of the divinely selected things, telling Allah, at the same time, that they failed the test because, unlike Adam, He had not taught them the nature of those things beforehand. They confessed that it was He who alone had perfect knowledge of all things - -a calculated move on the part of the angels, which they had designed to prevent Allah from calling them untruthful and liars.

Verse 33: He said: O Adam! Tell them their nature. When he had told them, Allah said: Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heavens and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?

To impress the angels with the ken of Adam's knowledge, Allah is alleged to have placed the same things before Adam and asked him to describe their nature. When he did it successfully, Allah felt stimulated to taunt the angels on their ignorance, as well as to accuse them of concealing things from His knowledge. What matters or information angels concealed from Allah, He did not elaborate in the Quran.

Verse 34: And behold, We said to the angels, "Bow down to Adam:" and they bowed down: not so Iblis: he refused and was haughty: he was of those who reject Faith.

After the angels had been thoroughly humiliated through Adam's superior, albeit couched knowledge, and after accusing them of concealing things or information from Him, thereby creating in them a sense of inferiority, Allah ordered the angels to bow down before Adam in recognition of his knowledge and, perhaps, his abilities as well. All the angels bowed down, except Iblis. Allah did not take Iblis's alleged disobedience seriously. He merely called him haughty and a rejecter of faith. Iblis was not punished for the sin he is alleged to have committed by refusing to carry out Allah's command.

According to what we read in the Quran, Allah never required Adam and his wife to bow down before Him, their Creator. Abraham, who came into being long after Adam, was, perhaps, the first person who, upon being asked by Allah, had bowed down to the Lord and Cherisher of the Universe.[\[2\]](#)

In order to understand why Iblis allegedly refused to comply with Allah's order, we need to resolve the following questions:

1. Who was Iblis?
2. What was or is the difference between Iblis and the angels?
3. Did or did not Allah know beforehand that Iblis was going to disobey His command?

Answers to these questions can be culled from Allah's own statements recorded in the Quran. According to Him, the Arabs believed in the existence of Jinns, who they believed, lived in the deserts. They also subscribed to the belief that some among the Jinns were good in nature, others were evil and capricious. The latter category of Jinns caused men to turn *majnoon* or mad, together with causing them other troubles. The Arabs also thought that Jinns were more powerful than men because they believed, and as Allah has confirmed, these invisible creatures were made of fire.[\[3\]](#) Iblis was one of the evil Jinns, not an angel, worshipped by the Arabs as their protectors.[\[4\]](#)

Unlike Iblis, the Arabs held the belief that the angels were made of a gentler substance. Worshipping them as well, the Arabs sought their intercession with Allah for bestowing His kindness and mercy on them.

Allah spoke of the same Iblis, one of the desert spirits, which occupied Muhammad and his compatriots' minds from their childhood.

The identity of Iblis established, we now find ourselves in a quandary, mindful of the time when Adam was created, and especially when he had no opportunity to know who Iblis was and what were his abilities and power. Frankly speaking, we are puzzled and confused by Allah's following incongruous question, addressed to Adam:

. . . Would you then serve him[\[5\]](#) and his offspring as your masters rather than Myself, despite their enmity towards you.[\[6\]](#)

Could it be, we wonder, that Allah was subconsciously referring in the quoted statement to the practices of the Arabs and somehow tried to link the earthly Iblis to the time in which Allah is supposed to have created Adam in heaven?

Moreover, we are prompted to deduce from the very nature of the event that, in spite of Allah's being omniscient, He did not have prior knowledge of Iblis's intention; otherwise He would not have asked him the reason of his disobedience.[\[7\]](#)

Additionally, if we take Allah's statement at its face value, it would lead us to believe that by ordering the angels to bow down before Adam, Allah Himself committed a great sin, which is called *shirk* in Arabic. Allah castigated the pagans for worshipping the idols, and forbade the Muslims from bowing down to any deity or to any human being. If anyone bowed before anyone but Allah, the sinner would be consigned to the fire of hell

on the Day of Judgment. Knowing His own commandment, why Allah ordered the angels to bow down before Adam-a human being- is beyond our comprehension.

Before concluding our brief argument on the contents of the subject statement, we can say that the contributory factor for the expulsion of Iblis by Allah from heaven was not his alleged disobedience of His order. Allah had commanded only the angels to bow down to Adam. Iblis, a Jinn, being present among the angels, had every right to refuse the order. As we have seen, Iblis did not do what the angles were asked to do, knowing well that the order did not apply to him. He also knew that Allah would not punish him for a sin he did not commit. Indeed, he was not punished by Allah for his alleged sin. Faced with Iblis's legitimate accusation, it appears from Allah's narrations that He came up instantaneously with another scheme to hold His Universal Plan on its course, and to implement it without delay. The Quran does not tell us how Adam's wife (it has not given her a name) came into being. For her story, we need to refer to the Torah, which tells us that Allah created her from one of Adam's ribs. Mindful of the pain that the surgery was going to cause, Allah is said to have caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and when he was fast asleep, He extracted one of his ribs from his body. He made a woman out of the rib and then presented her to Adam. Adam lost no time in recognizing her; he also remembered it was he who had contributed his bone for her making.[\[8\]](#) Knowing that she was going to be the mother of all living, Adam called her Eve.[\[9\]](#)

After creating Adam and his mate, Allah drew a plan for tackling the insolent angels. The plan envisioned a learned Adam to prove that what they had told Allah about the humans' conduct on earth was based on falsehood. To implement his plan, Allah needed to prepare Adam in all respects.

He taught Adam the nature of all things. The angels were not at all involved in the learning process. When Adam became fully prepared, Allah placed all things before the angels and demanded that they tell Him the nature of those things, if they were truthful.[\[10\]](#) Realizing how angry Allah was at them, the angels adopted a diplomatic posture that they believed was going to soothe His injured ego. They told him: Glory to thee. Of knowledge we have none, save what Thou hast taught us: in truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom.[\[11\]](#)

Forcing the angels to admit ignorance, Allah asked Adam to narrate the nature of the things. Since Allah had prepared him for the occasion, Adam had no difficulty in describing what Allah wanted him to describe. Pleased by His disciple's performance, He thundered to the angels: Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heavens and earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?[\[12\]](#)

The fact that the angels concealed things from Allah infuriated him immensely. In a rage, He ordered the angels to bow down before Adam, His protégé.[\[13\]](#) This order was to humiliate the angels. Sensing risk to their existence, all the angels bowed down. A Jinn who, it seems, was, at the time, in the angels' company did not bow down before Adam. Since Allah had ordered only the angels to bow down before Adam, the Jinn rightfully believed that the order did not apply to him[\[14\]](#) and as such, he did not bow down before Adam. Allah felt insulted by the Jinn's sense of righteousness, honor and dignity.

We understand that it was Allah's plan to have mankind bow down before Him and His authority. Therefore, this ritual should have begun with the first humans He created in heaven. But instead of having them bowing down before Him, He made all angels bow down before a human. If He did not want humans to bow down before Him until after Muhammad had arrived, the only conclusion one can draw from His action is this: He forced the angels to bow down before Adam not only to humiliate them, but also to press them into mankind's service.

The ways in which Allah is said to have been conducting Himself appears to defy common sense. Strictly speaking from the viewpoint of a master, it is inconceivable that he would ever let his servant ride on his shoulders. Allah does not appear to have understood the delicate and difficult relationship that a servant is required to maintain with his master. Had He understood the difference between a servant and a master, He would not have decided to post two angels on each of their master's shoulders to record their acts and deeds. The issue of the servants watching over their masters becomes more demeaning for the latter; it emanates from the fact that their guards have the habit of distorting facts through lying and concealment.

Realizing that the Jinn was right, Allah controlled Himself and passed off the event by calling him haughty. He dared not punish Iblis for a crime he did not commit. Allah was

also afraid of the Jinn's retaliatory nature, hence His retrained reaction toward his alleged disobedience of His command.

Regrettably, ordinary Muslims as well as their scholars have failed to accept the fact that Allah had not required Iblis to bow down before Adam. Their failure stems from the fact that accepting the truth will nullify the Quranic story on Adam and Eve's expulsion from heaven. To defend their position, Muslim scholars overlook the contents of the relevant statements of the Quran and insist that Allah's order applied equally to the lone Jinn who, as we have said earlier, was in the company of the angels. Allah's alleged order was specific; He used the specific Arabic word *malaikati* in His order,[\[15\]](#) which means angels, and not the Jinn.

Denying the truth, one reputed Muslim scholar took issue with Iblis's accusation against Allah.[\[16\]](#) Trying to explain the Arabic word *agwaitani* that appears in verse 15:39, he stated: ... Satan as the Power of Evil cannot be straight or truthful even before Allah. By his own arrogance and rebellion he {Iblis} fell; he attributes this to Allah. ...[\[17\]](#)

The learned scholar is malicious, to say the least, for there is no verse in the Quran that supports his allegations against the so-called devil.

Verse 35: We said: O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.

Verse 36: Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden), and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. We said "Get ye down, all (ye people), with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood-for a time.

Verse 37: Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration, and his Lord turned towards him; for He Is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

Verse 38: We said: Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

Having simply rebuked Iblis for his alleged disobedience, Allah asked Adam and his wife to dwell in Paradise and to eat anything and everything out of His bounty, but not the fruit of a particular tree. If they ate from that tree, Allah warned, it would cause them harm and they would become transgressors. Other related statements from Allah tell us that Iblis, later called fiend by Him had, after his expulsion from heaven, returned to it[18] without His knowledge and was, apparently, listening to the instruction He was giving Adam and his wife over their dietary restrictions. After Allah departed, Iblis approached Adam and began to persuade him to eat the forbidden fruit, with the assurance that eating of it would turn him into an eternal being.[19] Adam, unable to resist the enticement, ate the fruit. He also coerced his wife into following his footstep.[20]

After they ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes opened up, and they found themselves in a state of nakedness.[21] While they were sewing leaves together to cover them up, Allah returned and ordered Adam and his wife[22] to get out of the Paradise and to live on earth in enmity with each other, bearing the sin they had committed in heaven by eating the forbidden fruit. Iblis was, again, not punished for the reason we already know, and was allowed, once again, to live in Paradise. From the statements we read in the Quran, we can draw the following conclusions:

At the time Allah is supposed to have directed Adam and Eve's attention to the forbidden tree, both of them were blind. Their inability to see afforded Allah the opportunity to entangle them in His net of treachery and fraud.

Impersonating Iblis, Allah Himself led the blind couple to the forbidden tree and induced them to eat its fruit. While they were eating the fruit, He disappeared from their midst. Eating over, their eyes opened up and Adam and his wife found themselves naked. Seeing their discomfort, Allah called unto them and asked: Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?[23] (The Quran does not say that Adam and Eve had ever seen Iblis with their own eyes, nor does it say that they had seen him in their midst after their eyes opened up).

Acting in the manner of a dictator, Allah asked Adam to seek his forgiveness for the sin He accused him of committing. Adam, having realized, in a short period of time, how vindictive and ruthless Allah could be, felt compelled to repent and seek His forgiveness, which He granted.[\[24\]](#) But when his wife joined him in seeking the forgiveness,[\[25\]](#) He refused, causing her descendents to live till doomsday with the sin, she, their female progenitor had committed in Paradise.[\[26\]](#)

His objective achieved, Allah ordered Adam, his wife and Iblis to get out of Paradise and to live on earth, following the guidance He would give them from time to time. They were, at the same time, given assurance that if they lived by His guidance, they would have no fear, nor would they grieve on the soon-to-come Day of Resurrection. To what extent the promise of condonation will be applicable to Iblis on doomsday is not known. However, it is said that Allah, in fulfillment of His promise, sent 124,000 to 240,000 apostles and prophets to earth to guide mankind from the time of Adam to the time of Muhammad. Apostles were also sent to the Jinns,[\[27\]](#) but we do not know their number.

It seems that all the apostles sent to the Jinns had failed in their missions, causing Allah to assign their charge to Muhammad together with that of the human race.

According to Allah's narrative, Iblis was upset with His order of expulsion, and he protested loudly. Pleading his innocence, he accused Allah of putting him in the wrong way[\[28\]](#) and doing him injustice. Since Iblis did not have the ability to retaliate against Allah's might, he asked him, instead, to grant him power to misguide and disorient mankind on earth by making wrong seem right and fair.[\[29\]](#) Allah could not refute Iblis's accusation; rather, to appease him, He conceded to his demand with confidence that Iblis would be able to exercise his authority only over those human beings who would become his followers.[\[30\]](#)

Armed with his covenant with Allah, Iblis, also known as Satan, descended on earth to take revenge on the human race for injustice done to him by Allah, his creator. Here, he multiplied his race with his progeny,[\[31\]](#) joined by a mysterious female Jinn from nowhere, with the frightening result that he and his issues can wreak havoc on any human being they chose for the purpose.

At this stage, we again need to reflect briefly on the concept of predestination as propounded by Allah, and also on the so-called "Universal Plan" that He is supposed to

have conceived for the Planet Earth and its inhabitants. We are told that before the birth of a child, his destiny is predetermined. Whatever Allah willed for him or her, he or she would have to live with that Will throughout his or her entire life. If a child were predestined to follow Satan, he would have to do so, because, we are told, nobody can ever go against Allah's Will. Therefore, in a situation where a person is predisposed to the commission of sins, one may wonder, what role Satan can play in such a person's life.

We are further told by Allah that before the inception of the universe, He had planned to have the earth inhabited by the human race, together with all faunas and floras. To execute His scheme, He had prepared the earth to be hospitable to its occupants. For this purpose, He needed to send down to it a pair of human beings, as well as pairs of all animals so that the earth could be replete with their respective procreation. Of course, Allah could have created all beings in the same fashion, in which He had created Adam and his wife in heaven, but in keeping with His Universal Plan, He chose to create them, instead, on earth itself. It is on account of the successful fruition of His Universal Plan that we find ourselves on earth on which, we must live till the end of our lives, braving multiple of weal and woes as He determined for us at the time of our creation.

Our travails do not end with our death. We will be confronted in our grave by angels, and if we fail to satisfy them with answers to their questions, we will be subjected to various torments, which will continue up to the time of our resurrection on the Day of Judgment.

Muslims claim that the first man that Allah created was Muhammad. Having created him in His own image, Allah preserved his soul in the felicity of Paradise. When his presence on earth became necessary, he arrived in the form of a human being, having been given birth to naturally by a woman, his mother. By sending him to earth, both as a Prophet and an Apostle, Allah achieved the ultimate goal that He had conceived before creating the Universe. With what material Muhammad was created, however, has never been divulged.

We now turn to the expulsion of Adam, his wife and Iblis from Paradise. Allah did not tell us when and where on earth the three had landed. The Bible, however, says that Adam was placed at the east of the Garden of Eden.[\[32\]](#) Neither the Bible nor the Quran says where his wife, Eve, was deposited on earth. Some Muslim commentators, however,

surmise that she had descended on the island of Sri Lanka, and after wandering all over the earth for an unknown period of time, she found Adam at the plains of Arafat, in Mecca. Muslim pilgrims now congregate at Arafat every year to commemorate the union of our original parents.

Eve was never married to Adam, though they are claimed to have been Muslims from the time of their creation.

Furthermore, Allah did not tell us how and with which material Adam's wife was fashioned. The Bible, of course, has described the process of her creation and the material with which she was formed into a human being.

The episode, which took place in heaven and which involved Adam, his wife and Iblis was in accordance with Allah's scheme. He needed to send those humans to earth, but He could not do so without placing some kind of blame on their shoulders so that He could rule over them with ease. In His game plan, Iblis was used as a tool. Allah deceitfully involved him in two pre-conceived acts of disobedience, thus facilitating Adam and his wife's expulsion from heaven. It was through this process that Allah had been able to materialize an important part of His Universal Plan.

[1] Cf. Quran; 2:111 et al.

[2] Quran; 2:131.

[3] Quran; 7:12, 15:27. Also see Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, p. 216.

[4] Quran; 18:50.

[5] Iblis, the Satan.

[6] Quran; 18:50.

[7] Quran; 15:32.

[8] Genesis; 2:21-23.

[9] Genesis; 3:20.

[10] Quran; 2:31.

[11] Quran; 2:32.

[12] Quran; 2:33.

[13] Quran; 2:34.

[14] Quran; 18:50. It states clearly that Iblis was a Jinn.

[15] Quran; 2:34 et al.

[16] Quran; 7:16 & 15:39.

[17] Abdullah Yusuf Ali, op. cit. p. 644.

[18] Quran; 7:13 & 18.

[19] Quran; 20:120.

[20] Cf. Genesis; 3:6.

[21] Quran; 7:22.

[22] Quran; 7:24.

[23] Quran; 7:22.

[24] Quran; 20:122.

[25] Quran; 7:23.

[\[26\]](#) See Quran; 20:122 for confirmation.

[\[27\]](#) Quran; 6:130.

[\[28\]](#) Quran; 7:16 & 15:39.

[\[29\]](#) Quran; 15:39.

[\[30\]](#) Quran; 15:41 & 42.

[\[31\]](#) Quran; 18:50.

[\[32\]](#) Genesis; 3:24.