

Prophet Adam: Beginning of Humankind (part 1 of 2)

Description: A two-part lesson on the creation of Adam and the events that followed. Part 1 discusses how Adam was honored and created.

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Objectives

- To learn about the distinction and honors of Adam.
- To understand that all prophets came with the same universal message and are brothers.
- To learn about the story of Adam and Eve's creation and related events.
- To learn the etiquette of sneezing and *salam*.

Arabic Terms

- *Khalifah* (plural: *Khulafa'*) - Caliph. Sometimes spelled Khalif. He is the chief Muslim religious and civil ruler, regarded as the successor of Prophet Muhammad. A Caliph is not a monarch.
- *Salam* - The Islamic greeting such as '*As-Salamu Alaikum*'.

Honors of Adam

Allah favored Adam (Quran 3:33) over other people with some great qualities:



1. Adam was the father of all human beings. Allah chose him to be the father of all human beings as the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, said, "All of you are the children of Adam and Adam was created from soil."[\[1\]](#)

2. Allah created Adam with His Hands. Addressing Satan, Allah said, “What prevented you from prostrating yourself to the one whom I created with both My hands?” (Quran 38:75).
3. Allah created the soul breathed into Adam. Allah had His angel, Gabriel, breathe life into him (Quran 15:29, 38:72).
4. Allah had the angels prostrate to Adam (Quran 15:29, 38:72).
5. Allah gave him great amount of knowledge, surpassing what He gave to the angels (Quran 2:31).
6. Allah gave him residence in Paradise along with his wife, Eve, and allowed them to enjoy there (Quran 2:35).
7. Adam was the first Prophet to human beings. Prophet Muhammad said, “...Adam was a Prophet and received revelation.”[\[2\]](#)
8. Adam shared one religion with all other Prophets and called to the same religion, Islam. They all invited to belief in Allah and worshipping Allah alone (Quran 21:25, 16:36).

Creation of Adam

Allah told the angels that He was planning to establish a ‘khalifah’[\[3\]](#) on Earth. ‘Khalifah’ is a person who is succeeded by others. They immediately understood that it would not be Adam alone who will live on Earth, but rather, it would be a long chain of human beings, many of them will be wicked:

“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.’” (Quran 2:31)

The question by the angels was not meant to question Allah’s wisdom or a result of envy or hatred for humans. They simply wanted to understand the purpose of Adam’s creation. Allah’s response tells us that in His perfect knowledge, He knew things about Adam that the angels could not imagine.

The angels feared that Adam was unworthy of becoming a *khalifah* on Earth, Allah proved to them that it was incorrect and the new creation can surpass them in knowledge. The Quran 2:31-33 recounts that Allah taught Adam names of all created things that the angels did not know. Allah emphasized to them that their knowledge is limited and they could only know what He taught them. When Adam defeated the angels in the ‘contest of knowledge,’ he earned their respect. Thus, they rushed to prostrate to Adam when commanded by Allah.

More On the Creation of Adam

Allah tells us in the Quran 20:55 and 30:20 that He created us from soil. Allah gathered different types and colors of soil from which Adam was to be created. The Prophet said, 'Indeed, Adam was created from three types of solids: black, white, and red.'[\[4\]](#)

The soil gathered for Adam's creation was then turned into clay as mentioned in the Quran 6:2. The clay was sticky (Quran 37:11). After Adam's clay dried, it became sort of like pottery, making a sound when tapped (Quran 15:26).

After forming Adam's clay, Allah fashioned it and set it in Paradise for a certain duration before He gave it life. "Satan started circling the clay, examining its nature. When he realized it was hollow, he thought, 'I'll conquer this, for it is a creation that cannot hold together.' 'Cannot hold together' means that he cannot control himself against desires.

Adam was much larger in size than what human beings are today. The Prophet said, 'Allah created Adam sixty cubits tall, then mankind kept getting shorter until (it reached a stable height) now.' (Bukhari, Muslim) Thus, human beings did not go through stages of evolution.

In several verses of the Quran (2:117, 3:47, 6:73, 16:40, 19:35, 36:82, 40:68), Allah indicates that He brings into existence with a mere word or command. Sometimes, instead of fulfilling His command directly, Allah creates means for fulfilling them. For people, Allah sends angels to breathe life into them. In the case of Adam and Jesus, Allah sent Gabriel to breathe life into them (Quran 15:29, 38:72).

Life was blown into Adam on Friday. The Prophet said, 'Indeed, among your best days is Friday. On it, Adam was created, and on it he died. Also, on it will be the Blow of the Horn and the Shock causing everyone to die.'[\[5\]](#)

Adam was expelled from Paradise and sent down to Earth on a Friday. This marked the beginning of accountability for human beings. Adam's sin was forgiven on a Friday. From that time on, he and his descendants would start living their lives with blank records that they would fill with whatever deeds they do, good or bad.

Etiquette of Sneezing and *Salam*

Soon after Allah breathed the soul into Adam, He taught Adam the manners of sneezing and greeting. Immediately after his soul entered his body, Adam sneezed and said, *Alhamdu-lillah Rabbil-'Alameen* (Praise be to the Lord of creation). Allah responded, *Yarhamu-kallah* (May Allah have mercy on you)[\[6\]](#).

Allah told Adam to go to a group of angels sitting far away from him and to greet them by saying, '*As-Salamu Alaikum*' (peace be on you). They responded, '*Alaykas-Salam wa-Rahmatullah*' (and peace be on you and Allah's mercy)[\[7\]](#).

Endnotes:

[1] *Bazzar*

[2] *Ibn Hibban, Tabarani*

[3] The word *khalifah* used in this lesson holds a different meaning that what is explained in the Arabic Terms above.

[4] *Bazzar*

[5] *Abu Daud*

[6] *Ibn Hibban*

[7] *Tirmidhi*

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