

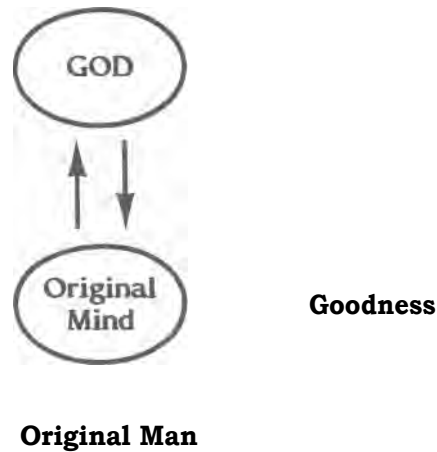
CHAPTER TWO

THE FALL OF MAN

INTRODUCTION

All of us experience conflict in our lives. We have the desire to do good but also a tendency to do evil — that which separates us from God and our fellow men. The real nature and origin of that which makes us do evil has never been clearly identified or understood. Until it is, it cannot be effectively overcome and eliminated from **our** nature or from the world.

God is a being of absolute goodness whose only desire in creating man must have been good. Therefore, the original mind of man must have the same purpose of goodness.



The fact that we experience a purpose contrary to this original purpose indicates that at some point in time after man's creation an element was introduced into his nature which compelled him to do evil. We call this element "evil mind".



The internal conflict between these two opposed forces within us is the source of our personal imperfection and suffering, and multiplies outward as the conflict is experienced in families, societies, nations, and the world.

The key to solving the problems of man and the world can be found in discovering the root cause of "evil mind", and in applying this knowledge to our lives.

Clues pointing to the origin of evil are to be found in all religions. While these clues are usually vague, they are most clear in the holy books of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For the man who cannot believe these explanations literally, there is yet to be found in their interpretation an important truth of universal significance. In this chapter, we will show how the Koran reveals an understanding of the Fall of man and the origin of evil.

I. THE STORY

Adam and Eve were created by God to live in Eden, the garden of His creation prepared for them. Once man was created, God ordered all the angels to bow down before him.

We created you, then We shaped you,
 then We said to the angels: 'Bow yourselves
 to Adam,' so they bowed themselves,
 save Iblis — he was not of those
 that bowed themselves.
 Said He, 'What prevented thee to
 bow thyself, when I commanded thee?'
 Said he, 'I am better than he; Thou
 createdst me of fire, and him Thou
 createdst of clay.'

(VII 10-11)

They all obeyed except one called Iblis, who complained that Adam had only been created of clay while he had been made of fire. God, in anger, ordered Iblis out of heaven and foretold that all who would follow him would be inhabitants of hell.

Said He, 'Go thou forth from it, despised
 and banished. Those of them that follow
 thee — I shall assuredly fill Gehenna
 with all of you.'

(VII 17)

God gave Adam and Eve full freedom in the garden, but commanded them not to eat of the fruit of one tree, the Tree of Eternity (XX 117). He warned them not to listen to Satan who would tempt them to eat, but they disobeyed His command, and ate the "forbidden fruit". They became aware of their sexual parts and covered them with leaves, and God ordered them out of the garden.

'Get you down, each of you an enemy to each.'

(VII 23)

There must be more at the root of all human evil than merely the eating of a fruit. Who and what was really involved in the Fall of man?

II. SYMBOLS, SATAN, AND ANGELS

A. The Fruit

Man fell when he ate the "forbidden fruit" of the Tree of Eternity. No botany book can help us understand this. For several reasons we must interpret "the fruit" as symbolic, not literal:

1. God loves mankind as children of His own creation and could not possibly want to poison them.
2. Man himself always avoids poisons, because he desires life above all else. Even animals avoid those things harmful to them.
3. No fruit is mentioned in the Koran as being forbidden.
4. No poison is inherited from generation to generation, yet we all have inherited evil elements from our ancestors.
5. Man always seeks happiness. It is impossible to imagine the desire for a fruit (especially when there is no hunger) to be greater than the desire for happiness. (Adam and Eve were warned of their destruction and spiritual death if they tasted the fruit.)
6. It is a popular theory that God wanted to test Adam and Eve, and allow them to overcome evil and to choose the straight path to Him. Three points in particular should be considered in response to this: (i) God is Omnipotent and Omniscient, and therefore has no need to test or prove anything. (ii) God would not destroy His beloved creation for having failed a test. (iii) If Adam and Eve were innocent before their fall and yet failed the test, what chance is there for the rest of us ever passing such a test, considering that none of us is free of the desire to do evil? Yet throughout history God has repeated His promise of perfection to us.

We conclude that the fruit was not literal, but symbolic of something else.

B. The Tree

Then Satan whispered to him
saying, 'Adam, shall I point thee to
the Tree of Eternity, and a Kingdom
that decays not?'

(XX 117)

Since the fruit is symbolic, certainly the tree from which it comes must also be symbolic. The tree represents the fulfillment and the perfection of man, and the full enjoyment of God's gifts of life in a state of perfect joy and harmony with God and with his fellow man. The tree symbolizes what Adam was intended to be — a perfect man. He was only to "taste of its fruit" with God's permission, and on the foundation of his own growth and maturity.

The fruit of fulfillment and perfection is true and perfect love. Adam and Eve were to enjoy this once they had received God's blessing.

Since God certainly wants His children to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Adam and Eve must not have been ready to receive His blessing.

So the two of them ate of it and
their shameful parts revealed to them,
and they took to stitching upon
themselves leaves of the Garden.

(XX 119)

It is human nature to hide that which causes us shame. By covering their sexual parts they revealed the source of their guilt.

C. Satan

Different theories exist as to the origin of Satan. There are three main points of view:

- (1) God created Satan to test man.
- (2) Satan has always co-existed with God.
- (3) One of God's good creations became evil.

Let us now briefly examine the validity of these main views.

The first view contradicts the fact that God is only good, and therefore has nothing within Him that could produce something evil.

The second view is not tenable, because God has promised to forgive man and has shown this throughout history. If Satan were co-creator with God, evil would be an intrinsic part of all men, thus eliminating any possibility of perfection or ultimate freedom from sin.

The third view is possible, because we know that all things must grow to perfection in stages, and therefore have the potential to deviate from the will of God before reaching a state of oneness with God.

The Koran points to the third view as the correct one:

And when We said to the angels 'Bow yourselves to Adam'; so they bowed themselves, save Iblis; he refused. Then We said, 'Adam surely this is an enemy to thee and thy wife. So let him not expel you both from the Garden, so that thou art unprosperous.'

(XX 115, 116)

One of God's angels, Iblis, is here identified as the spiritual being who disobeyed God, and as a result became the originator of evil. It was he who led Adam and Eve to sin as well.

D. Angels

What then are angels? From the picture of the spirit world given in the first chapter, we can understand angels to be spiritual beings that differ from man in two essential ways:

Firstly, they are spiritual beings without a physical existence.

Secondly, their relationship to God is different than that of man's to God, since God ordered the angels to bow down to man. We can see that angels relate to God as servants relate to their master, while men relate to God as children to their father.

Angels have a spiritual shape which is similar to a man's and have appeared as men throughout history.

We can see then that the misuse of love by Adam and Eve, that caused the Fall, was instigated by the disobedient angel Iblis.

With this knowledge, we can discover a new depth of meaning and significance in the story of the Fall.

III. THE REAL CAUSE AND MOTIVATION OF THE FALL

Adam and Eve had to pass through three stages of growth before they could fulfill the Three Blessings and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. As they grew, their spiritual beauty increased.

Before the creation of Adam and Eve, the angels, as the only spiritual beings, had been the chief recipients of God's love and attention. Man, however, was created as the fulfillment of God's creative work, and therefore was intended to be the object of God's deepest love.

We have honoured the children of Adam. ..
And preferred them greatly over many of
those We created.

(XVII 72)

God's command for the angels to bow down to Adam represents His desire for them to accept man's position as vicegerent of His Creation.

The basis of all spiritual life is love; therefore, no one desires to lose love. The refusal of Iblis to bow down to Adam shows his jealousy of the position of Adam and Eve and his fear of losing God's love.

The fear of loss of love compels us to seek love from other sources. The only source of love for Iblis, other than God, was Adam and Eve. Iblis did not trust the sufficiency of God's love and sought to replace it with love from Adam and Eve.

¹ For example, angels appeared to Abraham as men to inform him that his wife, Sarah, would have a son (XI 72-78).

Because of the masculine nature of Iblis, Eve was particularly attractive to him. It must have been through her that Iblis tempted them to immorality. His love for Eve was not restrained, and he finally seduced her.²

This union was contrary to God's Will, and therefore God could not bless it at all. Iblis and Eve cut themselves off from the source of true love and experienced spiritual death. We call this the spiritual fall. It was the point of the origin of evil.

Eve, in her shame, only wanted to return to her former position of innocence. Since Adam had not fallen, he had the purity of nature to be able to guide Eve back to God. However, Eve sought to share her situation and her shame by drawing Adam into a relationship which was meant to be consummated on the foundation of the First Blessing — their individual maturity. Adam ignored God's warning and responded to Eve as though he were already her husband.

As they were not qualified to fulfill the Second Blessing, God could not recognize their union, and Adam fell from his position of purity instead of Eve regaining that position. This second stage of the Fall is called the physical fall. In their shame, Adam and Eve confessed:

"Lord we have wronged ourselves."

(VII 22)

By disobeying God, Iblis, Adam and Eve had cut themselves off from the source of love and life, and created hell on earth instead of Heaven. Rather than their children multiplying as reflections of the goodness of God, they came to reflect the rebellious nature of Satan. (See diagram opposite.)

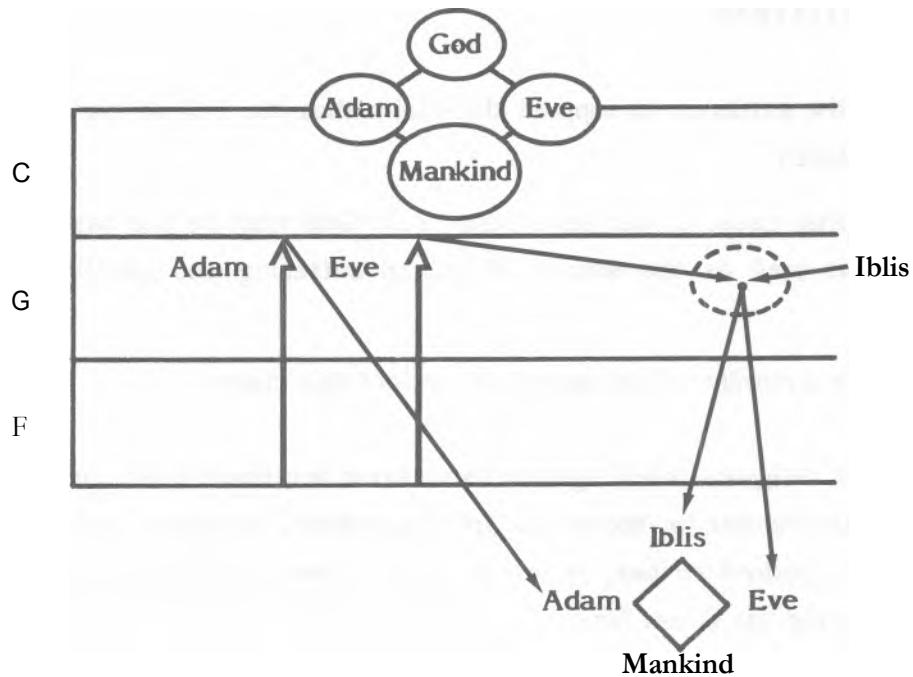
What then could have motivated Iblis, Adam and Eve to disobey God's instructions and consequently lose what was most precious to them?

The only force more powerful than that of the law or The Principle is the force of love. It must be so since God created man with the ability to fully express

² It is possible for a discarnate spiritual being to have a sexual relationship with someone on earth. Eve's spiritual senses would have been quite open such that Iblis would have been completely real and tangible to her. The following passage shows the possibility of sexual intercourse with spiritual beings:

... therein maidens restraining their glances,
untouched before them by any man or Jinn.

(LV 56)



and experience love through relationship with Him. If love were limited by law, it could never be the ultimate force in the cosmos, and God's Purpose in creating man could never be fulfilled. How angry and grieved God must have been when He witnessed His greatest gift of love being misused!

God had given the command not to taste of the fruit so that obedience to His command, along with the force of The Principle, would be greater than any temptation to misdirect the force of love. At the moment the command was set aside, however, the force of love became too great to control.

Before the Fall, man had a pure mind and could have grown to completion in a short time, guided by the one command of God. After disobeying that command, man lost the purity of his nature and hence his ability to perceive God's Truth clearly. Therefore, God has had to give man numerous rules to guide him in his growth to maturity, where eventually he will be ruled by love, and not by the law.

IV. SUBSTANTIATION

What is the evidence to support this claim that the Fall of man was rooted in the misuse of love?

The original cause of our separation from God must be the basis for our own state of sin as well as the source of human suffering and conflict throughout history.

There are a number of things which support this claim:

1. All major religions teach against fornication and usually recommend the most severe punishment for those who are disobedient. In Islam, stoning, scourging with one hundred stripes, or drowning have been traditional punishments. It is also called the Great Sin:

The Companions of the Left (O Companions of the Left!)
 mid burning winds and boiling waters
 and the shadow of a smoking blaze
 neither cool, neither goodly;
 and before that they lived at ease,
 and persisted in the Great Sin, . . .

(L VI 40-45)

and the offenders are warned of a double punishment:

... neither fornicate
 for whosoever does that shall meet
 the price of sin —
 doubled shall be the chastisement for him
 on the Resurrection Day, ...

(XXV 68,69)

2. We obviously inherit characteristics of our parents both physically and spiritually. We are the product of their love first, and of our environment second. Only a sin in the union of a man and a woman can be inherited by blood. Therefore, only a sexual sin committed by Adam and Eve could be transmitted through their descendants to us.

3. A sure sign of spiritual decay in society is the rise of sexual immorality. It has been the downfall of many great men and civilizations.
4. Where man is spiritually weakest, Satan's greatest strength is manifest. In weak and decadent societies one of the most striking features of deterioration is pornography. Pornography represents the fulfillment of Satan's desire for man. It mocks and debases the most beautiful aspect of human relationships — the love between husband and wife.
5. The love between man and woman is focused in the relationship between husband and wife. The offspring of their love relationship form society, indicating that the family is the source of either good or evil in society. The quality of love shared between man and wife is actually the basis for determining the nature of society.
6. Public crimes in society can be controlled because of their visibility. Crimes of morality cannot, because they are committed in private. Immorality is the most difficult evil to eliminate from society and, as the first evil, will be the last to be destroyed.

From these points we can see that the misuse of love is really the root of all evil. Fallen man, because of his impurity, cannot solve the problem of his own sin, but needs the guidance of a completely pure man, a perfected Adam.

V. RESULTS OF THE FALL

Mankind, fear your Lord, who created
you of a single soul, and from it
created its mate, and from the pair
of them scattered abroad many men
and women;

(IV 1)

If Adam and Eve had not fallen they would have multiplied children of goodness and realized an ideal world, and fulfilled God's intention and hope in creating them. Looking at the world around us, we see that it is filled with problems and suffering. But nowhere is there the manifestation of the beauty and pure life endowed in man at the creation.

In spite of great human endeavor at various places and times in history, not one point in time has been an era of true fulfillment. Mankind is like a tree distorted by a disease originating in its roots.

We have been examining the cause of this disease, now we must look at its results.

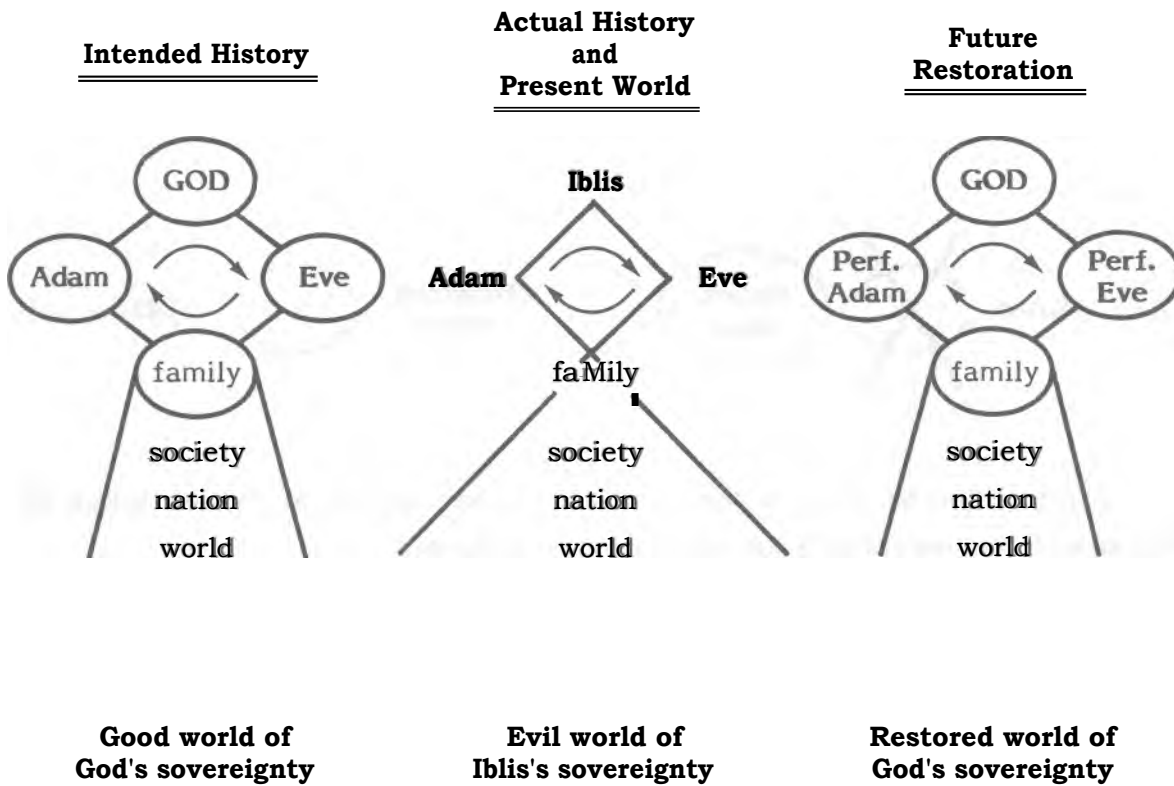
A. Satan's Dominion of the World

Said he (Iblis), 'My Lord, for Thy perverting me,
I shall deck out all fair to them
in the earth, and I shall pervert
them. . .'

(XV 38)

Because the original human ancestors turned from God and let themselves be dominated by Satan, he has controlled man's life on earth. Although many fallen men have tried to free themselves from the influence of Satan, none have been able to succeed completely because of their fallen nature. All prophets and messengers of God were ultimately working to prepare for a man, born free of sin, who could restore fallen Adam, who would in turn restore fallen Eve. Through them, mankind could be spiritually reborn and freed from Satan's influence

completely. This restored couple would fulfill the Three Blessings and establish a true world of God's dominion.



B. Satan's activity in Human Society

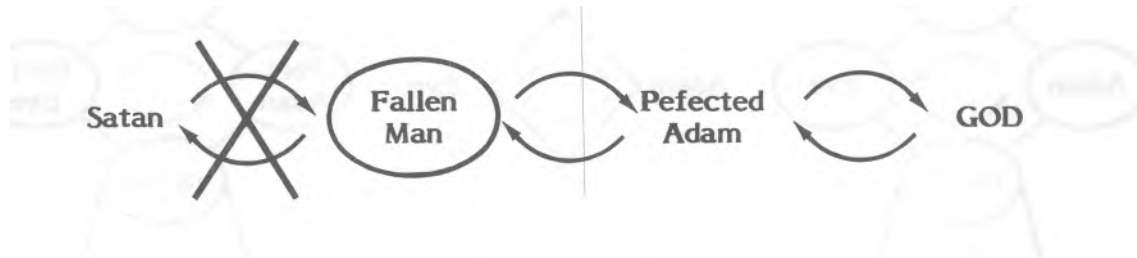
How does Satan actually have dominion over man?

To have power as a subject one must have responding objects. Satan has power because man gives him power by responding to him. His objects, in particular, are evil spirits and evil men on earth.



To eliminate the power of Satan Give and Take with him must be cut off completely. Because, as fallen men, we are receptive to Satan, the perfected Adam is needed to establish true oneness with God and pioneer the way of sinless, unselfish life.

Simplifying the diagram on bottom of the previous page we can add to it to show the importance of perfected Adam:



Since perfected Adam is one with God and has nothing to do with Satan, by uniting with him we can end our relationship with Satan.

God used Muhammad as His messenger to show pagan Arabia the evils of their way of life and to give them a means for approaching God by cutting off their ties with Satan.

C. Good and Evil

In history and in the world today, there are many confusing concepts and standards of good and evil. To overcome the problem of evil we must come to understand good and evil from God's point of view.

We must first recognize that man is not intrinsically bad, but that he produces evil when he acts in contradiction to God's Will as expressed through His Word. Desire is not evil in itself. It is inherited from the Creator who created desire to be fulfilled. The fulfillment of desire produces good or evil depending on its direction. The starting point for both is the same.

Man must exercise his free will in accordance with God's Will in order to create goodness.

Then what is the standard of good and evil?

The standard of the fallen world is not the same as that of the perfect world. The first is a relative standard, and the second is an absolute standard.



In the fallen world, when man acts according to his imperfect knowledge of God's Will and moves in the direction of God, the result of his action is good. If, from the same starting point, he moves in the direction of Satan through disobedience to God's Word, the result is evil. Because of our impurity, even our sincerest efforts to do good fall short of God's real desire for us.

It is sinless, perfected Adam who is qualified to know and to respond to the Will of God perfectly. His standard of goodness is the same as God's, enabling him to set up the pattern for a life of absolute goodness. This is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

D. Good and Evil Spirits

The Koran makes many references to jinn and angels. They act on the side of both good and evil. We can make a general statement as follows:

The work of evil spirits is the manifestation of Satan, evil spirit men, or fallen angels.

The work of good spirits is the manifestation of God, good spirit men, or good angels.

The Jinn are spirit men that have a good or evil effect on man depending on their distance from God or on their belief or non-belief.

Because of our fallen nature and our inclination toward good or evil, we are easy targets for the influence of evil spirits. When man is spiritually weak, he can easily be influenced to do evil, but a good spiritual leader can guide him to do good.

E. Sin

Sin is any thought or action that makes a condition for Give and Take with Satan, and it is separation from God.

There are four different kinds of sin:

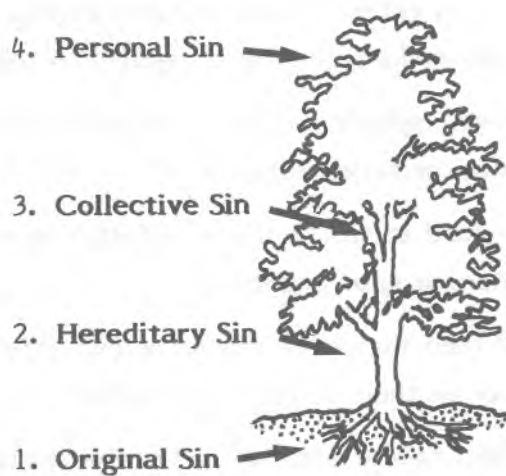
1. Original Sin: Although Islam does not teach Original Sin, we have already shown that the Koran itself shows us to be the inheritors of our original ancestors' sin. The imperfection of our parents is inherited from their parents, and so on, back to Adam and Eve. Everyone is born with some impurity and a base for doing evil.

2. Hereditary Sin: This is the sin inherited from one's own ancestors through their blood lineage.

3. Collective Sin: This is the sin for which all members of a particular group share responsibility.

4. Personal Sin: This is the sin committed by each person in his life. It is initiated by the individual himself, and he is therefore held responsible for it.

Because Original' Sin is the root sin, no one can finally rid himself of other sins until he is free from Original Sin. This can only take place through supporting and following the already sinless, perfected Adam. Spiritually fallen, sinful man must be reborn as a child of sinless parents.



F. The Fallen Nature

There are several fundamental aspects of our imperfect, fallen nature. These are inherited from the fallen angel, Iblis. There are four primary characteristics that are at the root of our sinful nature:

1. Failure to Take the same Standpoint as God

Iblis was created to be the servant of God and man, therefore he had to love Adam as God loved Adam, taking the same standpoint as God. But he did not love him, and he stood apart from God and Adam, feeling jealousy towards Adam. This became the first characteristic of the fallen nature of man. It still marks the beginning of all human sin and suffering.

2. Leaving his Proper Position

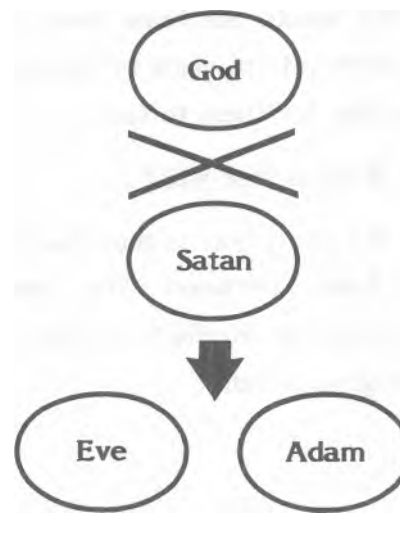
Iblis left his original position in order to fulfill his unrighteous desire. By doing this, he violated the order that God had intended. Fallen man wants to dominate others too, imitating Satan's unrighteous desire to dominate mankind.

3. Reversal of Dominion

Iblis was to attend Adam and Eve as their servant, or helper. However, Iblis dominated immature and imperfect Adam and Eve by tempting them to go against God's Word. Iblis took Adam's position behaving as the mate of Eve, thereby reversing the rightful order of dominion. The fallen world is the world begun with the reversal of dominion.

Man was separated from God because he allowed Satan to assume God's position. God could not reach man through His fallen servants.

Fallen man has the tendency to control others who are not supposed to be controlled by him. Arrogance is an expression of this nature.



Reversal of Dominion

4. Multiplication of Evil

Iblis made Eve disobey God by his unrighteous desire and their sinful act together. Eve, after falling, continued to have give and take with Adam, but centered on this evil desire instead of on God's Words. Adam responded and thus evil was multiplied.

Fallen man always tries to draw others into sharing his crimes and sins. We are always tempted to repeat the wrong things done by our society rather than to take a stand for goodness.

VI. FREEDOM AND THE FALL

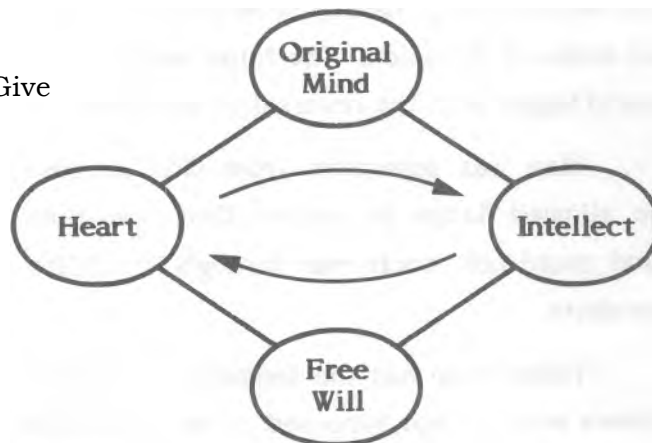
We offered the trust to the heavens
and the earth and the mountains,
but they refused to carry it and
were afraid of it; and man carried it.

(XXXIII 72)

Man differs from the rest of Creation because of his free will. To reach perfection, man must fulfill his portion of responsibility. If it were not so, Adam and Eve would not have been instructed to obey God's commandment, but would have been left to grow by the natural power of The Principle. Their free will made it possible for them to fall.

What is free will?

We can say it is the result of Give and Take between the heart (emotion) and intellect within the original mind:



God has perfect freedom. His own perfect principles are the paradigms for the expression and exercise of His freedom.

For man to be God's child, he must have a similar capacity of freedom. It is man's responsibility to exercise his freedom in accordance with God's. When we do so, we also inherit creativity from God.

The result of free will is free action. Everybody wants to be free in thought and action, but because of our fallen nature we frequently lose our real freedom by using our free will in violation of God's principles. Only when we become one with God can we experience absolute freedom with unlimited opportunity to do good. In this state there is no desire to separate from God.

Was free will the cause of the Fall?

We have shown that free will is essential for man to fulfill his purpose. At the same time, responsibility is required of man. Through it we can reach perfection and true harmony with God. The first ancestors did not obey God's command when their free will brought them to the point of decision. They let the force of unprincipled love dominate them. It was this force that caused their fall, not free will.

We can illustrate the point with an analogy:

A child is told by his parents that he can play on a cliff. He is also warned that if he goes too near the edge he will fall and be killed. He can safely go up to the edge of the cliff, but if he goes any further the force of gravity will dominate him and force him to fall. His freedom allows him to go to the cliff edge, but gravity itself makes him fall.

VII. WHY GOD DIDN'T PREVENT THE FALL

The fact that God did not intervene to prevent the Fall is often used as an argument to support the thesis that the Fall was part of the original plan for His creation.

However, the fact that God is a God of perfect love, who would not want a single part of His creation to suffer unwarrantedly, precludes this interpretation and forces us to look more deeply for substantial reasons.

Based on what we already know, we can indicate the primary reasons for God's not intervening in the Fall:

A. The Inviolability and Perfection of the Principle

Since God is Perfect, the principles of His making must be perfect. These principles require that man grow through three stages before entering the direct dominion of God's love. For God to intervene in order to control Adam, Eve, or Iblis before they matured completely would mean the denial of the perfection of His own law.

B. God Alone is Creator

God can only have Give and Take with things of His own creation. The Fall was the product of Satan's work and not God's. For God to intervene would be for Him to recognize the Fall as part of His creation, thus making evil eternally part of the domain of good. God could never do that, because if He did, His purpose in creating a pure, sinless world would never be fulfilled.

C. Man's Qualification to be Lord of All the Creation

Man must be perfect to qualify as the lord of all the perfected Creation. If God were to intervene as though man were perfect before he had actually qualified, He would be accepting imperfect man as qualified to be lord over His perfect Creation. God could never do that. Only man can fulfill his own 5% portion of responsibility.

CONCLUSION

A. We have seen that God's great hope for man was shattered at the very beginning of human existence. Before reaching maturity and perfection, Adam and Eve engaged in an illicit relationship of love that violated God's command, and therefore separated them from Him. Instead of following God, they followed Satan.

All their descendents have been bound by Satan, and therefore have suffered greatly. To solve this problem of sin there must come a sinless man who can restore Adam, and a sinless woman who can restore Eve. Together they can become parents of sinless children (new spiritual parents to all mankind), and all people who accept them can be reborn and freed from sin.

For God and man, the appearance of this restored and perfected Adam is the most important event in history. In the following chapter, we will discuss the mission of the perfected Adam. Then we will discuss the lives of Jesus and Muhammad, showing that they came to fulfill specific roles in God's Dispensation.

B. With our understanding of the Fall of man and its results, we are in the position to be able to deal with our own problems and confront Satan with the Truth. He has always accused us and made us feel guilty, but now we know his crime and can rightly accuse him. We have the weapon with which to defeat Satan.