The Ascent of Adam
Re-Evaluating the First Prophet in Quranic Exegesis

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The Ascent of Adam:

Re-Evaluating the First Prophet in Quranic Exegesis

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Dedicated to the greatest mentor, my father.

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Abstract

Western scholarship on Adam often characterises him as the first sinner of Islam. Adam eating from the prohibited tree is commonly viewed as a "sin" for which God punished him by relocating him from paradise to earth. Such characterisations of Adam are closely linked to common views found in Christian scholarship about Adam and his story. Though Adam is a figure shared across the Abrahamic faiths, in Islam, Adam holds the esteemed position of a prophet. This role has a bearing on how Muslim exegetes interpret Adam's slip (eating from the tree), because there is a development of an underlying notion of prophetic impeccability in Islamic theology. Despite the significance of Adam's story for the history and teachings of Islam, there has been very limited scholarship on Adam's slip and how the doctrine of prophetic impeccability has impacted the way Muslim exegetes interpret Adam's slip and relocation to earth. In order to fill this gap, this thesis examines how Adam's story is interpreted in light of these matters and ultimately concludes that the common notions of "sin" and "disobedience," as well as the view that the relocation is a punishment, are challenged in the works of many Muslim thinkers. In examining the *tafsīr* works in this study, this thesis proves that the dominant views on Adam in Islam within English scholarship are coloured by the biblical associations of Adam's narrative. They do not reflect the shift that occurs in the Arabic canon of Muslim literature which takes into account emerging doctrines on prophethood and prophetic impeccability.

The key research questions addressed in this thesis are: (1) Do the exegetes depict Adam's eating from the tree despite the divine prohibition as having a denigrating effect on Adam's status?; (2) How do the exegetes interpret and present Adam's eating from the tree to the reader?; (3) Is Adam's relocation to earth understood as his punishment for eating from the tree?; and (4) To what extent do exegetes give importance to Adam's esteemed prophetic status in their interpretation of his story? In answering these questions, this thesis offers unique insights into the story of Adam, ranging from the different classifications of God's prohibition, the complex views on Adam's forgetting and finally, different stances about Adam's relocation from paradise to earth.

List of Tables and Figures

A Note on Dates and Transliteration

For transliterating Arabic words, the International Journal of Middle East Studies system has been employed. For any Urdu words and names that are included, I have followed the transliteration system of the Journal of Urdu Studies. All dates are presented in Common Era.

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

Dedicated to the greatest mentor, my father.

Introduction

1. Introduction to Research

The story of Adam is one of the oldest stories known to humankind. It is rooted within the Abrahamic religions but transcends the boundaries of religious discussion. In scholarship, art, music and popular culture, Adam is perceived as the first man who yields to Satan's temptation and abandons paradisical bliss because he eats from a tree God has forbidden him from approaching. As a result, God punishes Adam and his wife, Eve, by banishing them to earth as a punishment for transgressing His command. In the Christian paradigm, Adam's physical relocation from paradise to earth is understood as "the fall of man,"[1] which is also received as a metaphor for the degradation of Adam's status; he transitions from a state of obedience to disobedience. This is the common understanding of the Adam chronicle among readers aware of his story[2] and is supported by the widespread Christian understanding of Adam as the first sinner of humanity.[3]

Whilst the Adam narrative in the Quran follows a similar sequence of events as the biblical account,[4] Adam has the status of a prophet in the Muslim tradition. This means that he is understood within Islam as a paragon of virtue and an exemplary human being. This status challenges the notions of sin and punishment prevalent in the biblical account of

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[1] Several editions of the Bible also use the subheading "The Fall" or "Fall of Man" for the section in Genesis where Adam eats from the tree and is banished by God to earth. See Genesis 3 in the following versions of the Bible: (1) The New King James Version; (2) English Standard Version; (3) Modern English Version; and (4) New American Standard Bible. https://www.biblegateway.com. It is important to mention here that though "the fall of man" is a widely accepted Christian interpretation of Adam's story, it is not a unanimously accepted view. For one of the most prominent criticisms of original sin and "the fall of man" in Christian scholarship, see James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 4-10. Barr's view is critiqued and refuted by the Christian theologian, R.W.L. Moberly. See R.W.L Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 70-87.

[2] According to scholar Elaine Pagels, our culture and worldview of Adam is "indelibly shaped" by the concept of Adam's sin corrupting humankind. This, Pagels argues, is regardless of whether we view Genesis as literature or sacred text, and despite our own religious backgrounds. Pagels's argument emphasizes that even if there are some interpretations of Adam as a non-sinner in the Christian paradigm, the most popular understanding is of Adam being the initiator of original sin. See Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 8-9.

[3] Though the Bible does not explicitly state that Adam sinned, the most popular and widespread understanding is that Adam disobeyed God and was punished for this sin. For further discussion on this, see C. John Collins, "Adam and Eve in the Old Testament" in *Adam, the Fall and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical and Scientific Perspectives*, ed. Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 59-60.

[4] The Quranic account is detailed in ch. 1, section 2. See also Appendix for a side-by-side comparison of the biblical and Quranic narratives of Adam.

Adam and the popular[5] Christian understanding of his life. Furthermore, the doctrine of prophetic impeccability (ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ), which features as a core belief across various denominations and theological schools of Islam, impacts the way Muslim thinkers interpret Adam's story. Turning to Quranic exegesis (tafsīr) from the classical period of Islam, it becomes clear that many exegetes give due consideration to Adam's esteemed status as a prophet of Islam when they interpret Adam's story. As a result, they often consider his eating from the tree and his relocation from paradise to earth as an ascent in status to a prophet and a khalīfa of God on earth. However, despite many of these Muslim interpretations of Adam in pre-modern exegesis, modern scholarship on Adam in Islam is still coloured by the biblical and Christian notions of sin, Adam's punishment and degradation, as well as God's wrath upon Adam and Eve.

In this study, I trace the evolution of Muslim exegesis between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, from considering Adam's eating from the tree as a sinful wrongdoing and his relocation to earth as a punishment to then interpreting his story in light of prophetic impeccability and exculpating Adam. The overarching aim of this study is to present the depth and nuance of discussion in Sunni tafsīr works on the matter of Adam eating from the tree and being relocated to earth. Through textual analysis, I will demonstrate that the common Christian depiction of Adam as a disobedient recipient of God's wrath would distort the position of Adam in Islam as it develops across the classical period. Examining how major Sunni Muslim exegetes interpret Adam's story reveals that Adam's status, his eating from the tree and his relocation to earth is understood in many ways, most of which contradict the biblical and Christian presentation of Adam. This re-evaluation of Adam's position in Islam will show that exegetes who consider the theological doctrine of prophetic impeccability ultimately conclude that Adam's status ascends either to divine vicegerency or prophethood once he is relocated to earth after the slip. In contrast, the standard narrative present in the western scholarship of Adam is that he is a disobedient sinner, but this is not the dominant narrative that develops and is carried forward in classical Muslim literature. This study will also explore the notion of prophetic impeccability (ʿiṣma)—specifically within the Sunni schools of Ashʿarite and Māturīdite theology—and how it leads exegetes to re-interpret Adam's story to absolve him from

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[5] See Philip C. Almond, *Adam, and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 196; 204.

wrongdoing and punishment. Within this study, I also investigate English terms such as "sin" and "disobedience" and their Arabic equivalents so as to assess whether they are suitable English terms for describing Adam and his slip.

The key research questions for this thesis are the following:

1. Do the exegetes depict Adam's eating from the tree despite the divine prohibition (hereafter called "the slip") as having a denigrating effect on Adam's status?

2. How is Adam's eating from the tree interpreted and presented to the reader?

3. Is Adam's relocation to earth understood as his punishment for eating from the tree?

4. To what extent do exegetes give importance to Adam's esteemed prophetic status in their interpretation of his story?

In responding to each of these questions in the following chapters, what I will present in this thesis is a detailed investigation on the topic of Adam's slip. Many scholars have produced similar material related to the subject, but their focus and result are different. The following section is a summary of the most closely related academic works.

2. Literature Review

Although Adam's story in the Quran is brief, it is unlike the narratives of other prophets such as Moses and Joseph in that despite its brevity, it encompasses a wide range of tropes. Many of these tropes feature as individual points of investigation in existing scholarship. For example, the significance and role of a *khalīfa* is touched upon in Adam's story in Q 2:30 and is explored further by scholars such as Wadād al-Qāḍī[6] and Jaafar Sheikh Idris.[7] Another key part of the Quranic narrative of Adam is his creation story and being created in God's image.[8] This is the subject of Montgomery Watt's pioneering study,[9] in which he explores broader theological concepts related to humans being created in the image of God. Another study focusing on a similar subject matter is an insightful article written by Christopher

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[6] Wadād al-Qāḍī, "The Term 'Khalīfa' in Exegetical Literature," *Die Welt des Islams* (1988): 392–411.
[7] Jaafar Sheikh Idris, "Is Man the Vicegerent of God?," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990): 99–110.
[8] See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 79:1.
[9] Montgomery Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 18 (1959–1960) (Leiden: Brill, 1961): 38–49.

Melchert about Adam being created in God's image.[10] Surprisingly, although one of the well-known aspects of Adam's story is his eating from the tree, there currently exists no in-depth or book-length study which examines Adam's error and how it is interpreted by prominent theologians and exegetes of the Islamic tradition.

The general body of English scholarship on Adam in Islam can be classified into three camps. The first camp compares the Quranic narrative with its biblical equivalent; the second camp offers an exegetical overview of the Adam story; and the third camp explores how Sufi sources, such as Sufi *tafsīr*, depict Adam's slip. Whilst these three camps may seem mutually exclusive groups, some works cross over into more than one category. For example, scholars such as Pieter Coppens[11] have written about Adam's story in Sufi exegesis, which undoubtedly places his work in both camp two and camp three. In what follows, I will categorise such works as belonging to a group on the basis of their primary focus. For example, Coppens's work explores Adam's story in Sufi literature, including exegesis, so I have categorised it as belonging to the third camp (on Sufi sources).

There is little scholarship investigating the influence of the doctrine of prophetic impeccability on Muslim interpretations of Adam's slip. One of the first book-length studies that discusses Adam's exact status in Islam is Cornelia Schöck's *Adam im Islam*.[12] In this work, Schöck offers a cursory glance at how classical Muslim scholars present Adam's slip. Her focus, however, is on how Adam's story is presented in different literary genres from Hadith and *tafsīr* to *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (stories of the prophets); Schöck focuses on providing the reader with a general overview of how Adam is received in the Islamic tradition. There are also some notable works on prophets in Islam and impeccability that follow a similar aim, methodology and approach to this thesis. The first is a book entitled *David in the Muslim Tradition: The Bathsheba Affair,* authored by Khaleel Mohammed.[13] This work seeks to vindicate the prophet David from adultery, as suggested by the Bible (2 Samuel: 11-12). Similar to this thesis, Mohammed examines how the doctrine of impeccability (ʿiṣma) impacts the way exegetes interpret David's relationship with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah.

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[10] Christopher Melchert, "God Created Adam in His Image," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011): 113–24.

[11] Pieter Coppens, *Seeing God in Sufi Qur'an Commentaries: Crossings between this World and the Otherworld* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

[12] Cornelia Schöck, *Adam im Islam: ein Beitrag zur Ideengeschichte der Sunna* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1993).

[13] Khaleel Mohammed, *David in the Muslim Tradition: The Bathsheba Affair* (Washington D.C.: Lexington Books, 2014).

The second work is an article by Younus Y. Mirza entitled, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya?: Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience."[14] This article includes a subsection that explores how the doctrine of impeccability impacts the interpretation of Jonah in Islam and focuses on two prominent exegetes, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and his student Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373). The present thesis also aligns with the overall approach of Shahab Ahmed in his work entitled *Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam*.[15] In this work, Ahmed argues that early Muslims accepted the satanic verses incident, despite it being unanimously rejected by thinkers of later centuries.[16] His unfinished work anticipates a study on the theological development and impact of prophetic impeccability on why later Muslim thinkers rejected the incident.[17] Unlike this thesis which is focused on shedding light on how later Muslim thinkers exculpated Adam, Ahmad's work looks at the other side of the spectrum: investigating how and why the satanic verses were accepted before prophetic impeccability became an established theological doctrine. Despite the differences in focus, both this thesis and Ahmad's work investigate how attitudes toward prophetic actions change over time, and how this affects the way we understand prophethood in Islam.

The following survey is by no means an exhaustive list of literature about Adam in Islam. Still, it provides an overview of the general trends and categories of most literature on this topic. We turn now to survey each of the three camps mentioned above to review the main works within them and determine the placement of the present study.

2.1 The First Camp: The Comparative Perspective

The majority of secondary works on Adam in Islam focus on comparing the Quranic narrative with its biblical equivalent, or with texts belonging to the wider Judaeo-Christian literary tradition. For example, Nicolai Sinai examines the story of Adam as it appears in the Quran, the Bible, and also investigates Latin, Syriac and Rabbinic retellings of the narrative.[18]

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[14] Younus Y. Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya?: Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2014): 8-13.

[15] See Shahab Ahmed, *Before Orthodoxy: The Satanic Verses in Early Islam* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2017).

[16] Though this thesis does not focus on narrations and hadith methodology, there is some discussion in ch. 2 on the impact that narrations (like *isrāʾīliyyāt*) can have on an exegete's presentation of Adam. See ch. 2, section 2.1.2.

[17] Ahmed's comments on the development of prophetic impeccability are brief, possibly because his work, anticipated to be three volumes, is unfinished due to his untimely death. See Ahmed, *Before Orthodoxy,* 8-10.

[18] Nicolai Sinai, *The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 145-53.

Muhammad Abdel Haleem's essay, "Adam and Eve in the Qur'an and the Bible,"[19] and Mustansir Mir's essay, "Adam in the Qur'an,"[20] both fall under the category of works that primarily deal with comparing the Adam narrative of the Bible with that of the Quran. These works mostly come to the following three conclusions:

1. The concept of original sin is not a part of Islamic belief. Therefore, the consequences that Adam faces are unique to him as an individual. However, Adam is considered a symbol of humankind, and his error implies that humans are prone to mistakes and weaknesses.

2. The biblical account of Adam offers more details than the Quranic story. In contrast, the Quranic account of Adam's creation, slip and relocation from paradise to earth includes several ambiguous terms and phrases.[21] These require further explanation, which is offered in *tafsīr* literature to create a fuller picture of the Quranic narrative.

3. The Bible has greater character development of Eve than the Quran while highlighting her as the first culprit to eat from the forbidden tree. Many materials from Jewish and Christian sources (termed *isrāʾīliyyāt*) are included in Muslim *tafsīr* literature which depict Eve as the first victim of Satan.

Both Mir and Abdel Haleem's work make little reference to *tafsīr* literature as they focus on the Quranic text. In contrast, Roberto Tottoli's book, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurʾān and Muslim Literature*,[22] examines the Adam narrative in light of early *tafsīr* works and Hadith by prominent Islamic figures of the formative period. The figures Tottoli presents include Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (d. 767) until al-Ṭabarī (d. 923). Tottoli examines *tafsīr* works that rely heavily on *isrāʾīliyyāt* to form narratives on prophets. However, as the title of his book suggests, the discussion is still underpinned by a comparison between the way Adam and other prophets are portrayed across the Abrahamic traditions. Tottoli's approach is similar to Brannon Wheeler's book entitled *Prophets in the Quran*.[23] In this work, Wheeler explores how several prophetic figures are presented in the Quran and dedicates a chapter to Adam. Alongside the presentation of prophets, Wheeler also investigates early exegetical

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[19] Muhammad Abdel Haleem, "Adam and Eve in the Qur'an and the Bible," *The Islamic Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1 Jan 1997): 225–70.

[20] Mustansir Mir, "Adam in the Qur'an," *Islamic Culture* 62, no. 1 (Jan 1988): 1-11.

[21] Presenting the ambiguous aspects of Adam's account in the Quran is the subject of chapter one.

[22] Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qurʾān and Muslim Literature* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002).

[23] Brannon Wheeler, *Prophets of the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

interpretations of these prophets. In presenting these interpretations, Wheeler clarifies that he aims to encourage a comparative study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources regarding the prophets. Whilst a comparative perspective of Adam and other figures is beneficial and can shed light on how different traditions review and assess the same figure, this is not the aim of the present thesis. In fact, one of the core aims of my study is to carve a new image of Adam that is separate from how he is perceived in the biblical tradition and English scholarship. Underlying the investigation in the present thesis is the argument that the widespread Christian perception of Adam as a sinner who suffers punishment taints how he is perceived in modern scholarship as a figure in Islam.

2.2 The Second Camp: Exegetical Interpretations of Adam

The second camp is characterised by its focus on Adam's story in exegesis. Some writers who belong to this camp explore how Adam is perceived in particular genres or types of *tafsīr*. For example, Karel Steenbrink has authored a book entitled *Adam Redivivus,* in which he focuses on Javanese and Malay interpretations of the story.[24] However, in another work, Steenbrink has also investigated how a broader range of exegetes interpret Adam's story. His chapter, "Created Anew: Muslim Interpretations of the Myth of Adam and Eve"[25] (which is part of a more extensive work on Adam and Eve by different contributing authors), offers an overview of the development of exegetical approaches to interpreting Adam's error. Though Steenbrink refers to some classical works of *tafsīr*, his focus is on modern *tafsīr*,[26] and his primary purpose is to identify similar developments about Adam's story across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Like his book *Adam Redivivus*, this chapter ("Created Anew") also explores how the culture and consciousness of Malaysian and Indonesian audiences impact how they understand and interpret Adam's story.[27]

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[24] Karel Steenbrink, *Adam Redivivus* (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 1998), 60; 105-124.
[25] Karel Steenbrink, "Created Anew: Muslim Interpretations of the Myth of Adam and Eve," in *Out of Paradise: Eve and Adam and Their Interpreters*, ed. Bob Becking and Susanne Hennecke (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2010), 174-191.
[26] Steenbrink, "Created Anew," 184.
[27]Streenbrink, *Adam Redivivus*, 1; 5.

Meir Jacob Kister[28] and Ayman Shabana,[29] like Steenbrink, also examine how Adam is presented in *tafsīr*. Their respective works focus on exploring the consequences that Adam experiences after approaching the tree. Both Kister and Shabana reference a range of exegetes including al-Ṭabarī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210). Kister and Shabana's respective works complement this thesis as they explore Adam's error and the notion of sin whilst examining the works of many Quran exegetes of the classical period.[30] However, their discussions are brief due to the nature of their work being in the form of a chapter and not a book-length study. Thus, there are critical elements of the discussion around Adam's action that are yet to be explored, such as Adam's forgetting (in Q 20:115) and the impact that the doctrine of prophetic impeccability has on interpretations of Adam in *tafsīr* works.

2.3 The Third Camp: Sufi Perspectives on Adam's Story

The third camp includes scholars who explore Adam from the perspective of Sufi thinkers. The most prominent scholars of this category are William Chittick, Michael Sells, and Ronald Nettler.[31] They have examined how classical Sufi writers such as Aḥmad Samʿānī (d. 1140)[32] and Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240)[33] explore the story of Adam. In many Sufi sources, Adam is depicted as the first recipient of God's mercy [34] and represents the perfectibility of the human being.[35] From this group of writers, Nettler focuses on the creation of Adam and does not refer to Adam's slip.

Most recently, Pieter Coppens, in his published thesis entitled *Seeing God in Sufi Quran Commentaries: Crossings between This World and the Otherworld*,[36] dedicates a

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[28] M.J. Kister, "Legends in Tafsir and Hadith Literature: The Creation of Adam and Related Stories" in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'an*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[29] Ayman Shabana, "The Concept of Sin in the Quran in Light of the Story of Adam," in *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives,* ed. Lucinda Mosher and David Marshall (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

[30] Kister presents several different exegetical perspectives throughout his work. See, for example, Kister, "Legends in Tafsir," 132. See also Shabana, "The Concept of Sin," 40; 44; 60.

[31] William C. Chittick, "The Myth of Adam's Fall in Ahmad Samʿānī's *Rawḥ al-arwāḥ*," in *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, vol. 1 (Oxford: One World Publications, 1999), 337–360; Michael Anthony Sells and Carl W. Ernst, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Miraj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1996), 30-33; Ronald L. Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'ānic Prophets: Ibn ʿArabī's Thought and Method in the Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 18-24.

[32] Chittick examines this source for his essay, "The Myth of Adam's Fall."

[33] Ibn ʿArabī is the focus of Nettler's, *Sufi Metaphysics*.

[34] Chittick, "The Myth of Adam's Fall," 357.

[35] Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics*, 18. See also Kazuyo Murata, *Beauty in Sufism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017), 102-7.

[36] Coppens, "The First Boundary Crossing: Adam Descending," in *Seeing God in Sufi Qur'an Commentaries*.

chapter to investigating how Sufi exegetes interpret the relocation of Adam from paradise. Coppens surveys critical Sufi *tafsīr*s and texts, including a range of writers from Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896) to Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 1209). Coppens demonstrates that Sufi works focus on characterising Adam as a lover and gnostic, whose slip furthers his status and brings him closer to God.[37] It is surprising that despite examining Sufi sources that present Adam's alternative image as an obedient servant and lover of God (and not a sinner), the scholars in this category still employ terms with theological implications such as "Adam's sin"[38] and "Adam's disobedience"[39] when referring to Adam's slip. This is often contrary to the language used in the sources that they investigate and challenges the widely accepted doctrine of prophetic impeccability embedded in the works they examine.[40] It is for this reason that the present study will critically examine the significance of English terms and analyse how they impact our view of Adam.

2.4 The Present Study

As the above literature review has shown, an in-depth scholarly analysis of Adam's status, slip and relocation in light of the doctrine of impeccability remains a desideratum. Some works such as Schöck's substantial monograph, *Adam im Islam*, as well as the journal articles by Kister and Shabana offer a comprehensive overview of how exegetes interpret these aspects of Adam's story. However, these works do not present the nuanced arguments or contextual details of how and why exegetes interpret Adam's slip and relocation in the way that they do.

The present study is the first to provide detailed coverage on the topic of Adam's slip and will trace the development of interpretations in Sunni *tafsīr* from emphasising Adam's error and punishment to affirming exculpation. This thesis builds upon the above-mentioned body of literature, for example, Schöck's work, which provides an overview of several key facets of the Adam story. However, my work addresses the lacuna in research

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[37] Coppens, *Seeing God*, 170.

[38] Ibid., 163.

[39] Chittick, "The Myth of Adam's Fall," 349.

[40] These terms are employed in the majority of secondary sources about Adam, including the ones listed here. It is interesting that Coppens recognizes the negative terms that are used to refer to Adam (he states they imply "degradation") yet proposes a new, neutral term, "banishment," as a solution (see Coppens, "Seeing God," 51). However, this term also alludes to being exiled and turned away (cf. *OED Online,* s.v. "Banishment") and is thus still a negative term. I propose the word "relocation" as a more neutral phrase.

regarding a detailed exposition on Adam's slip and relocation. This dissertation is also related to Pieter Coppens's seminal research, which sheds light on the view that Adam's relocation elevated his status, but Coppens's focus is on Sufi works. The present study will show that the Muslim understanding of Adam as a non-sinner (someone who does not commit a forbidden act) and his relocation to earth as ennobling and signifying his ascent in status can be found well outside Sufi literature. Although there is Muslim literature dedicated to piecing together the remainder of Adam's life on earth, such as in works belonging to the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (stories of the prophets) and the *tārīkh* (history) genre,[41] this material is not presented in the Quran. Several narrations are attributed to the prophet Muhammad's companions discussing the details of Adam's life on earth, such as where he was relocated to and stories about his children. However, as they do not appear in the Quran and are not related to the themes of this study, they will not be given primary focus in this study.[42]

3. Methodology

As this thesis explores Adam in the Quran, *tafsīr* literature is the primary source of this work. *Tafsīr* is also the genre in which many different sciences intersect, and it offers a holistic view of a particular topic. Analysing the reception history of Adam's story in Muslim exegesis will demonstrate how Adam's story is interpreted by Muslim thinkers, which in turn impacts how he is perceived within the Islamic worldview at large. This is particularly useful for this study as the exegetes under examination operate in various fields; they are historians, grammarians, theologians, and jurists. Whilst all the exegetes authored works belonging to different fields, it is in *tafsīr* that their multi-faceted roles converge and we can

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[41] *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (stories of the prophets) is a genre that details the lives and personalities of the prophets of Islam. This genre does not depend solely on information available from Quran verses or narrations from the canon of Hadith literature, and writers have a more lenient approach toward sources they use to present details of prophetic narrative. As a result, the characterisation of prophets is much more detailed and includes aspects of their lives that do not appear in the Quran or Hadith. It is important to note that works belonging to the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* genre were also considered by early Muslim communities to be an continuum of Quran commentary. Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rizvi, and Farhana Mayer, eds., *An Anthology of Qurʾanic Commentaries. Volume I: On the Nature of the Divine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-2. See also Tilman Nagel, "Kiṣas al-Anbiyāʾ," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed 14 January 2020. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4401. See also ch. 2, sections 3.3 and 3.4.

[42] Furthermore, particular works dedicated to the stories of prophets, such as Ibn Kathīr's *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* rely on *isrāʾīliyyāt* (material from Jewish and Christian sources) to piece together details of the remainder of Adam's life. See Ibn Kathīr's methodology and sources in Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Maʿārif, 1990), 6. A more detailed discussion on *isrāʾīliyyāt* appears in ch. 2, section 2.1.

see an inclusive perspective on their thoughts about Adam, prophethood and related themes. For example, the discussion on God's prohibition to Adam, "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35), lends itself to a judicial and linguistic dialogue on types of prohibitions in the legal framework of Islam. This dialogue could be omitted or condensed in a theological manual. However, it would be included in *tafsīr* works as *tafsīr* is not a genre divided by subject matter, in as much as it is a genre focused on providing the reader with clarity on every possible facet of a verse. Due to the comprehensive nature of the *tafsīr* genre, many *tafsīr* works are lengthy, often spanning over ten volumes. In order to present an accurate depiction of the various discussions surrounding Adam's story, the following methodology has been adopted when approaching the selected *tafsīr* works:

1. The Sunni exegetes chosen for this study[43] have been selected due to the comprehensive nature of their discussions on Adam's story as it appears across the three *sūra*s: al-Baqara (Q 2:30-8)*, al-Aʿrāf* (Q 7:11-25) and *Ṭā Hā* (Q 20:115-123)*.

2. After consulting the exegetes' interpretation of the story in these *sūra*s, related verses in the Quran that mention forgetfulness (for example, Q 2:286; 7:51), prophets being chosen by God (for example, Q 3:33-4) and additional prophetic narratives that follow a similar trajectory to Adam (such as Moses and Jonah) are also consulted. This will ensure that related discussions that are not always directly included in the Adam narrative itself— such as forgetfulness in Islam and types of divine prohibitions—are also consulted in this work. These secondary discussions can offer greater contextual information related to this study, such as the types of forgetting (*nisyān*) in the Quranic paradigm and how this affects Adam.

3. Other works written by the chosen exegetes, such as works on history (*tārikh*), stories of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*), legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), and theology have also been consulted for any related discussion on prophets, impeccability and Adam. Many scholars developed their position on certain topics overtime, and sometimes a position that an exegete took in a theological work could contradict a view that he later (or previously) noted in his *tafsīr*. Where relevant, the views have been compared and noted in this thesis.

It is important to note that despite this rigorous analysis of views on Adam by the exegetes, one of the key limitations of using *tafsīr* as a primary source is the lengthy and

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[43] For further discussion on the choice of exegetes, see section 3.2 of current chapter.

comprehensive nature of *tafsīr* works. Every mention on Adam by each exegete cannot realistically be consulted in this thesis as it may appear under other verses of the Quran. However, by investigating the discussions on Adam's story, related verses, as well as assessing views presented in other works of different genres, the methodology adopted minimizes such limitations, and presents the most prominent views of each thinker on Adam. As this study is focused on the genre of *tafsīr,* it is fitting to provide a brief overview of the *tafsīr* tradition, and also explain the reasoning behind the chosen works. This will clarify the sources for this study and shed light on the importance of the time frame that this study is investigating.

3.1 What is *Tafsīr*?

The Quran states that the first exegete was the prophet Muhammad whom God sent to explain and illuminate the verses of the Quran to his community: "And We sent down to you the reminder [i.e., the Quran] for you to clarify (*tubayyin*) for humankind what has been revealed to them, so that they may reflect" (Q 16:44). Whilst the word *tafsīr* or its verbal equivalent, *fassara* is not used here (instead, we see a verb with a similar meaning – *tubayyin*), it is clear that the prophet Muhammad was to explain and elucidate the verses revealed to him so that his community may understand the words of God. After the prophet Muhammad passed, his companions (*ṣaḥāba*), their followers (*tābiʿūn*) and the generation after them (*tābiʿ tābiʿīn*) expounded upon verses of the Quran, using Hadith narrations to explain Quranic matters. Thus, the genre of *tafsīr* was formed in the early eighth century and was founded upon the canon of Hadith literature. Early *tafsīr* works such as the *tafsīr* of Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 687) and Muqātil ibn Sulaymān[44] focused on compiling all narrations on a verse, many of which are also collated in the *tafsīr* of Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, one of the works under examination in this thesis, which serves as a Hadith compendium for many centuries to come.

    Tafsīr as an Islamic science is commonly translated in English as "exegesis" or "Quran commentary," but analysis of its Arabic root, *f-s-*r, and a closely related word, *taʾwīl*, can reveal some classical Muslim attitudes toward the science of *tafsīr*. A contemporary

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[44] Herbert Berg is sceptical of the Ibn ʿAbbās tradition and concludes that many narrations attributed to Ibn ʿAbbās in the exegetical tradition are fabricated. See Herbert Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam* (Surrey: Routledge-Curzon, 2000), 173-219.

academic within Arabic scholarship, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, who has authored a comprehensive encyclopaedia on *tafsīr* works,[45] entitled *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn* ("Exegesis and The Exegetes"), defines the word *tafsīr* linguistically as follows:

> *Tafsīr* is elucidation (*īḍāḥ*) and clarification (*tabyīn*). Regarding this, God says in *Sūrat al-Furqān,* "They do not come to you with a similitude (*mathal*)[46] except that We bring you the truth and the best *tafsīr* [Q 25:33],"[47] i.e., explanation (*bayān*) and exposition (*tafṣīl*). It is a derivative of *f-s-r* which means extraction (*ibāna*) and uncovering (*kashf*). The dictionary defines [*f-s-r*] as extraction and uncovering [what is] covered, like *tafsīr*.[48]

Al-Dhahabī then defines *tafsīr* as a technical term by providing four definitions from classical scholars such as Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 1344) and al-Zarkashī (d. 1392).[49] Whilst some of these are more comprehensive than others, every definition he presents states that the *tafsīr* of the Quran should include the following aspects: (1) a general sense of the verse (*madlūl*); (2) extraction of the divine rulings from the text; and (3) investigation of the meanings (*maʿnā*) of the verse. Some of the definitions that al-Dhahabī mentions include some additional criteria for *tafsīr*, such as explaining stories of the Quran, discussing the reason for the revelation of verses (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), and discerning the meaning of figurative (*majāzī*) verses. Thinkers belonging to different theological schools also held their own unique hermeneutical systems and methodology for *tafsīr*. For example, early Imāmī Shiite exegetes would prioritise the inclusion of variant readings of Quranic verses in their methodology,[50] which is notably absent in the definitions al-Dhahabi presents from Sunni

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[45] See Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2005), 1:17-33. The first volume of this work provides a comprehensive introduction into *tafsīr* studies. Whilst al-Dhahabī's work is celebrated among traditional Sunni Muslim circles of learning, academic scholarship has criticised his classification and systemisation of *tafsīr*. For example, see Walid A. Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of Tafsīr in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach" *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010): 6-40.

[46] Translators differ on this term, with Abdel Haleem rendering it to mean "argument," Pickthall as "similitude" and *The Study Quran* as "parable." Although the word *mathal* can also refer to "symbol," I have chosen Pickthall's translation of *mathal* as "similitude" here as the wider context of the verse is referring to disbelievers who try to discredit the divine nature of the Quran by creating similar verses.

[47] Though *tafsīr* as an Islamic science is translated as "exegesis" or "commentary," in the context of this verse it is closer to the meaning of "explication."

[48] Al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 17.

[49] Ibid., 18-9.

[50] For a more focused study on this see Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Variant Readings and Additions of the Imāmī-Šīʿa to the Quran" ed. Joel Kraemer, *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993).

scholars.[51] Additionally, the Muʿtazilite exegete Al-Ḥakim al-Jishūmī (d. 1104) who has authored a *tafsīr* included eight categories that *tafsīr* should cover, some of which are absent in the entries al-Dhahabi presents from other Sunni exegetes.[52] Though many theological and denominational schools differ in exegetical methodology and the exact definition of terms like *tafsīr*, most explanations indicate that *tafsīr*, both as an Islamic science and a term refers to explaining something (i.e., the Quran).

Another word related to Quranic interpretation is the word *taʾwīl*, from the root ʾ-w-l. Linguistically, *taʾwīl* refers to tracing a word back to its roots and restoring something to its original purpose, according to the Arabic language specialist, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1108).[53] Its technical definition differs across thinkers. For example, in the Shiite tradition, the word *taʾwīl* and its importance in understanding the Quran is highlighted as it appears in a Hadith relaying that ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the cousin of the prophet Muhammad, would fight for the correct interpretation (i.e., *taʾwīl*) of the Quran.[54] Thus, emphasizing that only ʿAlī and his descendants could offer authentic interpretations of the Quran. This belief contributes to the epistemology of many Shiite intellectual traditions. For many Shiite thinkers, the term *taʾwīl* also refers to the esoteric meaning of the Quran, accessible through narrations attributed to ʿAlī and the imams.[55] However, one of the earliest Sunni exegetes of the Quran, Ibn ʿAbbās, is known to have said that *taʾwīl*, in the context of exegesis, refers to what only God can know,[56] regarding *taʾwīl* as a "purely divine prerogative."[57] Similarly, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān states in his *tafsīr* that *taʾwīl* refers to future events and is known only to God.[58] In contrast, the exegete Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944)

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[51] It is important to note that in *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, al-Dhahabī positions Sunni *tafsīr* as the normative exegetical tradition. As a result, the methodology of other theological denominations are either absent, or criticized for being incorrect.

[52] Suleiman A. Mourad, "Towards a Reconstruction of the Muʿtazilī Tradition of Qur'anic Exegesis: Reading the Introduction to the Tahdhīb of al-Ḥakim al-Jishumī (d. 494/1101) and Its Application," in *Aims, Methods and Contexts of Qur'anic Exegesis (2nd/8th–9th/15th C.)*, ed. Karen Bauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 105-6.

[53] For a more comprehensive discussion on how *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl* are understood in the Sunni exegetical tradition, see al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 22-4.

[54] Meir M. Bar-Asher, "Exegesis ii. Shiism," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, accessed 15 April 2022. https://iranicaonline.org/articles/exegesis-ii.

[55] This is also corroborated by the Ismāʿīlī scholar, Abū Ḥatim al-Rāzī (d. 934-5) who argues that *taʾwīl* refers to hidden meanings. See Ismail Poonawala, "Taʾwīl" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, et al., accessed April 19, 2022. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7457.

[56] See Hamza, Rizvi, and Mayer, eds., *An Anthology of Qur'anic Commentaries*, 5.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, ed. ʿAbdallah Maḥmūd Shaḥāta (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2002), 1:27.

whose *tafsīr* is titled *Taʾwīlāt* [i.e., plural of *taʾwīl*] *al-Qurʾān* states that *taʾwīl* refers to the

all the possibilities of what a verse can refer to.[59] Al-Māturīdī's definition is expounded upon

by scholar Khaleel Mohammad, who argues that according to al-Māturīdī, the process of

taʾwīl seeks to discover all the possible meanings that a verse can convey.[60]

Additionally, Ismail Poonawala has analysed different definitions and usages of the

terms *taʾwīl* and *tafsīr* in exegesis. He concludes that the term *tafsīr* refers to an exegetical

style that is focused on compiling Hadith narrations and reports, a style often called *tafsīr bi-*

l-riwāya (exegesis through the transmission of reports). In contrast, the term *taʾwīl* is often

synonymous with an exegetical style called *tafsīr bi-l- raʾy* (exegesis through personal

opinion), an approach that prioritises reason and independent judgement. Poonawala's

conclusion is an important and interesting insight, as contrastingly, the word *taʾwīl* appears

in the title of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* which is generally considered to belong to the *riwāya* style of

exegesis. This brief analysis of how *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl* are understood and also used by

different thinkers has not only shown that they were understood differently by different

thinkers, but also that their meanings developed over time.[61] Thus, although al-Dhahabī

offers us some important definitions related to exegesis in his work on the *tafsīr* canon, we

must consider that these are not monolithic terms.

In general, al-Dhahabī's work shows his expertise on the *tafsīr* tradition and various

exegetical methodologies, but *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn* positions Sunni *tafsīr* as the

normative exegetical tradition, privileging it over works belonging to different sectarian and

intellectual traditions. Even his methodology when approaching and presenting the

historiography of *tafsīr* has been criticised. For example, similar to many western scholars of

tafsīr such as Ignaz Goldziher, Mahmoud Ayoub and Helmut Gätje,[62] al-Dhahabī categorises

tafsīr according to theological school. He suggests that each school has a distinct style

which contributes to its methodology for approaching the Quran. However, this outlook has

been challenged by scholars such as Andrew J. Lane, Andreas Görke and Johanna Pink, who

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[59] Ibid., 23.
[60] Mohammed, *David in the Muslim Tradition*, 8.
[61] For an in depth discussion and analysis of *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl*, see Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Qurʾanic Exegesis* (London: Routledge 2010), 84-90; 102-8.
[62] See Ignaz Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, trans. Wolfhang H. Behn (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011); Helmut Gätje and Alford T Welch, *The Qurʾan and Its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Muslim Interpretations* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997); Mahmoud M. Ayoub, *The Qurʾan and Its Interpreters* (Albany: State University of New York, 1984).

argue that classifying a *tafsīr* solely according to an exegete's ideological school (i.e., Sunni, Shiite, etc) can lead to a one-dimensional reading of the *tafsīr* work at hand.[63] As an alternative, Walid Saleh offers a more genealogical methodology for exploring the historiography of *tafsīr*. I have adopted elements of Saleh's approach in this thesis by noting how exegetes (belonging to different schools) often build on, reference and echo each other's views (sometimes verbatim) in their respective *tafsīr*s. Despite the apparent limitations of al-Dhahabī's view when approaching the *tafsīr* tradition, his discussions on the terms *tafsīr* and *taʾwīl* offer us an insight into how these terms were viewed mostly in the Sunni canon and by some of the Muslim thinkers included in this study.[64]

3.2 Sources of Study

This research examines prominent Sunni exegetes' views on Adam's story. It is already widely known that the doctrine of impeccability is core to Shiite theology,[65] and the impact this has had on exegesis of prophetic narratives has also been investigated in modern western scholarship.[66] Impeccability is also discussed in several early Shiite Hadith sources.[67] However, there exists a lacuna in research on how Sunni theologians and exegetes explore prophetic impeccability, particularly in the story of Adam which centres on themes of error and consequence. The Sunni exegetes in this thesis have been chosen primarily because of the depth of discussion they offer on Adam's story in comparison to their contemporaries. Furthermore, they have gained widespread popularity among both traditional and academic circles of knowledge for their contributions to the *tafsīr* genre of the classical period.

The works under investigation here are from the tenth to thirteenth centuries. During these four centuries, there is a rapid development of the doctrine of impeccability in

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[63] See Andreas Görke and Johanna Pink, "Introduction," in Andreas Görke and Johanna Pink, eds., *Tafsīr and Islamic Intellectual History: Exploring the Boundaries of a Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 8.; Andrew J. Lane, *A Traditional Muʿtazilite Qurʾān Commentary: The Kashshāf of Jār Allāh al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144)* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 229.

[64] See Claude Gilliot, "Exegesis of the Qurʾān: Classical and Medieval," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, et al., accessed July 31, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00058.

[65] See for example Ahmad Hasan, "Infallibility in Islam," in *Islamic Studies* 11, no. 1 (1972): 7.

[66] For a more comprehensive discussion on prophetic impeccability in Shiite exegesis, see Meir Michael Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis in Early Imami Shiism* (Leiden: Magnes Press, 1999), 159.

[67] There are some key hadith narrations accepted widely in the Shiite tradition which refer to impeccability of the imāms. For example, Abu Jaʿfar al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb Al-Kāfī*, trans. Muhammad Sarwar (n.p.: The Islamic Seminary Inc, 2013), 1:233; and Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, ed. ʿAlī Aḥmad Nāṣiḥ and ʿAbdallah al-Ṭehrānī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Maʿārif al-Islāmiyya, 2004), 16.

works of theology. For example, renowned theological manuals such as Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī's (d. 936) *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn* ("The Theological Opinions of the Muslims"), or *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna* ("Clarification regarding the Origins of Religion"),[68] al-Māturīdī's *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* ("The Book of Affirming Oneness:)[69] and al-Ḥākim al-Samarqandī's (d. 953) *al-Sawād al-aʿẓam ʿalā madhhab al-imām al-aʿẓam Abī Ḥanīfa* ("The Greatest of the Majority of those who follow the School of Thought of the Greatest Imam, Abū Ḥanīfa") do not explicitly discuss prophetic impeccability in light of individual prophets. Instead, they are focused on establishing the need and proofs of prophecy (*dalāʾil al-nubuwwa)* and how these ultimately highlight the prophet Muhammad's significance.[70] However, this does not mean that the doctrine of impeccability was unknown or unrecognised; we see in Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 767) *al-Fiqh al-akbar* ("Major Jurisprudence") a brief mention that prophets are protected from major (*kabīra*) and minor (*ṣaghīra*) wrongdoings. [71]

However, by the early thirteenth century, works such as Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's (d. 1184) *al-Muntaqā fī ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* ("Pure Selection regarding the Impeccability of the Prophets") and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* ("The Impeccability of the Prophets") are written in which individual prophets are explored in light of their errors. Within *tafsīr*, a change in style also emerges during this period (the tenth to thirteenth centuries). The earlier period of *tafsīr* (i.e., the seventh century) was focused on compiling narrations from the Prophet, his companions, and successors.[72] After this phase, characterised by Hussein Abdul-Raof as the "formative phase" of *tafsīr*,[73] came the "recording phase" of *tafsīr,* where commentaries were written and circulated as complete works. Whilst the recording phase began in the eighth century at the beginning of the Abbasid period in history,[74] it is during the tenth century that we see the beginning of an evolution in approaches to exegesis. For

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[68] Kemal Faruki, "*Tawḥīd* and the Doctrine of ʿIṣmah," *Islamic Studies* 4, no. 1 (1965): 31-43.

[69] However, al-Māturīdī is credited for discussing some unique aspects of prophethood. See ch. 3, section 1.

[70] The Arabic term *nubuwwa* can refer to both "prophecy" and "prophethood." I have mostly translated *nubuwwa* in this study as "prophethood," as it is mostly used in the *tafsīr* works to discuss aspects of a prophet's life and status. However, when the faculty of prophets (i.e., prophecy) is the subject of the discussion, I have translated *nubuwwa* as "prophecy."

[71] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Māturīdī, *Kitāb sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, ed. al-Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (Hyderabad: Jamʿiyyāt Dāʾirāt al-Maʿārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1965), 48-9.

[72] There are marked concerns and doubts around the authenticity of early works, such as the famous first *tafsīr* of Ibn ʿAbbās. These are explored in modern scholarship for example, see Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Exegesis*, 14-15.

[73] Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Exegesis*, 112.

[74] Ibid., 136.

example, the *tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī entitled *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* ("The Compilation of Clarifications by way of the Interpretation of Verses of the Quran") focuses on compiling all the Hadith narrations available on each verse. However, during this time, we also see al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr*, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ("The Interpretations of the Quran"), which has a theological slant and relies on critical reasoning and drawing independent conclusions from early source material. These two different approaches (i.e., compiling Hadith narrations versus evaluating sources and drawing conclusions from them) are often referred to as the *riwāya* (transmission of reports) and *raʾy* (personal opinion) categories of *tafsīr* and have been viewed in classical Muslim scholarship as opposing methods of exegesis. However, recent *tafsīr* scholarship seeks to bridge the gap between the two and highlight that there are elements of both approaches in many works of *tafsīr*.[75] Following the tenth century, we see a rise of *tafsīr*s in which additional and multiple sciences like theology, philosophy and Sufism are woven into Quranic interpretation.[76] Naturally, this study cannot consult all the *tafsīr*s during this period and many notable works have only been referenced in a secondary capacity due to the limited scope of this work. For example, exegeses authored by Muʿtazilite thinkers are not presented in detail in the present study.[77] This is because aside from the easily accessible *tafsīr* by the Muʿtazilite exegete al-Zamaksharī (d. 1144), many Muʿtazilite *tafsīr* works exist in either manuscript or fragmented form, and are only beginning to be discovered, published and garner attention in academia.[78] An example of a recently discovered Muʿtazilite exegesis is the *tafsīr* of al-Ḥākim al-Jishūmī (d. 1104) entitled *al-Tahdhīb fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān* ("The Refinement of the Exegesis of the Quran"). In this work, al-Jishūmī compiles some Muʿtazilite opinions and discussions on Adam's slip. However, exploring Muʿtazilite works will require a thorough

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[75] R. Marston Speight, "The Function of Ḥadīth as Commentary on the Qurʾān, as Seen in the Six Authoritative Collections," in *Approaches to the History of the Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2013), 66-68. See also Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks," 23.

[76] See Abdul-Raof, "Evolution of Exegesis," in *Schools of Qur'anic Exegesis*, 111-46. In particular, Raof affirms that the "recording phase" of exegesis exhibited several noteworthy features such as the implementation of various other sciences into *tafsīr* works. Although the "recording phase" is defined by Raof as beginning in the eighth century, the works he presents as examples of interdisciplinary *tafsīr*s are all from the tenth to the thirteenth century.

[77] Though the *tafsīr* by the Muʿtazilite theologian and exegete, al-Zamaksharī (d. 1144) has been consulted, it has not been presented in detail within this thesis due to the lack of comprehensive discussion on the Adam narrative therein.

[78] See Suleiman A. Mourad, "The Survival of the Muʿtazila Tradition of Qur'anic Exegesis in Shīʿī and Sunnī Tafāsīr," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 12 (2010), 1. See also, Mourad, "Tahdhīb of al-Ḥākim al-Jishumī," 105-110.

investigation of the Muʿtazilite doctrines on ʿiṣma and prophethood, and their subsequent impact on both the Sunni and Shiite tradition. This can be presented better as a more focused and independent study,[79] especially in light of more Muʿtazilite *tafsīr* being discovered now. Instead, this thesis offers focused attention to core works of Māturīdite and Ashʿarite *tafsīr* as a starting point of investigation on this topic of Adam and impeccability. It thoroughly consults the sources within this theological genre that have significant discussion on Adam's slip and prophethood.

3.3.1 Chapter Overview

Though this study examines *tafsīr*, chapter one provides an important foundation for the thesis by laying out the Quranic narrative of Adam. It is here that the terms used in Quranic verses are examined closely, and key areas of Adam's story that are interpreted by exegetes in later chapters are first identified. This gives a reader a comprehensive foundation for understanding the arguments that are examined in the subsequent chapters, as well as offering some comparative discussion on some differences between the biblical and Quranic accounts of Adam. Chapter one also presents the narratives of three prophets, Moses, Jonah and David, whose stories follow a similar trajectory to Adam's story. By analysing the language and events of their narratives, we can compare if and how the exegetes in the following chapters treat Adam differently to other prophets whose stories follow a similar course of error and repentance. Furthermore, by analysing key terms in the Quranic account of Adam, such as ʿaṣā (he disobeyed), *nasiya* (he forgot) and *azalla* (he caused them to slip), we would be able to evaluate the accuracy and appropriateness of Arabic terms used by exegetes to refer to Adam's slip. Alongside this discussion, the suitability, and connotations of common English terms such as "disobedience" and their coherency with the Quranic account will also be investigated. The complexities surrounding the Arabic terms used by exegetes and the translation of these terms into English will become clearer as we go through each exegete's works.

Chapter two will start the exegetical analysis of this thesis by looking at the *tafsīr* of the tenth-century exegete, Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. Al-Ṭabarī is one of the earliest authors to compile a *tafsīr* that is based on the narrations of the first three generations. Al-Ṭabarī's

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[79] A more focused study on the impact of Muʿtazilite exegesis on the matter of prophetic impeccability on the Sunni canon at large would be beneficial.

work is helpful in that it offers us a bird's-eye view of how exegetes of the formative (i.e., pre-tenth-century) period interpreted Adam's story. Furthermore, among the vast number of sources that al-Ṭabarī has compiled in his work are *isrāʾīliyyāt* reports. The *isrāʾīliyyāt* are materials from Jewish and/or Christian sources.[80] Though they are used in many Muslim classical works, the inclusion of these reports into *tafsīr* was criticized by some Muslim thinkers as problematic, especially if they are used to illuminate Quranic narratives or prophets such as Adam's story. This is because the tropes in Adam's story in the Bible, though similar, also contain key differences to the Quranic account.[81] In addition to the contextual benefits that al-Ṭabarī's work will provide, his *tafsīr* has sustained academic interest and greatly influenced many Muslim scholars.[82] This chapter will also explore how the genre of writing impacts the depiction of Adam therein; reference is made to al-Ṭabarī's work on history entitled *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* ("The History of the Messengers and Kings") in which Adam's story is also discussed, but includes notable additional details.

Chapter three will explore Māturīdite interpretations of Adam's story by first examining the *tafsīr* of Abū Mansur al-Māturīdī. Al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr*, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ("The Interpretations of the Quran"), is one of the earliest theological *tafsīr*s that is available to us. The majority of secondary, western scholarship on al-Māturīdī has been focused on his theological treatise called *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* ("The Book of Affirming Oneness"). His *tafsīr* has mostly been consulted by western scholars as a source to illuminate parts of his theological work.[83] As al-Māturīdī was also a theologian,[84] his commentary offers us an insight into the stance on prophetic impeccability in the early Māturīdite theological school. This chapter also addresses the works of two later Māturīdite figures, Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī (d. 1142) and Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, to determine any shifts or developments in interpreting Adam's story. Though al-Ṣābūnī is not an exegete, he is a distinguished Māturīdite theologian who authored a work entitled *al-Muntaqā fī ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, which sheds light on how Adam's slip and relocation are interpreted in the later Māturīdite school.

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[80] G Vajda, "Isrāʾīliyyāt," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, et al., accessed 14 July 2019. https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3670.

[81] See Appendix.

[82] C.E. Bosworth, "Al-Ṭabarī," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed., P. Bearman, et al., accessed 14 July 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1133.

[83] See Walid A. Saleh, "Rereading al-Ṭabarī through al-Māturīdī: New Light on the Third Century Hijrī," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 180-1.

[84] Al-Māturīdī is also a contemporary of the theologian al-Ashʿarī. Al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* was authored during the lifetime of al-Ashʿarī, so both of their theological schools were still in their early stages.

In chapter four, we encounter the illustrious theologian and exegete, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. His *tafsīr*, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* ("Keys of the Unseen") captures the various views on prophethood from the eleventh to thirteenth century, a period when Ashʿarite theology greatly developed and became one of the most distinguished schools of Sunni theology, alongside the Māturīdite school. Al-Rāzī has been chosen for analysis because his *tafsīr* includes comprehensive insights into the development of prophetic impeccability as a doctrine, and he also authored a seminal work entitled ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ ("The Impeccability of the Prophets") showing a focused concerned with the topic. Al-Rāzī's works have also had a significant impact on how exegetes and scholars of the Sunni tradition after him interpreted Adam's story.

Chapter five seeks to trace the immediate influence of al-Rāzī's views on the exegete Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286). By analysing his work, we can see the impact of al-Rāzī's view on al-Bayḍāwī's interpretation of Adam's story, but also the departures al-Bayḍāwī makes from al-Rāzī's position on Adam's story. This will shed light on the diversity of views that exist within the Ashʿarite interpretation of Adam's story. Furthermore, this chapter also seeks to demonstrate the widespread impact of the doctrine of prophetic impeccability on interpretations of Adam's story. Therefore, the work of the Andalusian exegete, Abū Bakr al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), is investigated. Al-Qurṭubī and al-Bayḍāwī are contemporaries, and so comparing their works demonstrates how Adam's story is treated in different ways during the same time period, by two thinkers who belong the same theological school, the Ashʿarite school. By looking at al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr*, which relies on different source material to al-Bayḍāwī's, it becomes clear that the interpretation of Adam's story in light of prophetic impeccability becomes a widespread notion by the thirteenth century.

Whilst the answers to the research questions are investigated in each chapter, they will also be summarised in chart-form in the concluding chapter. This will allow us to compare the different views of each Muslim thinker and notice any trends or shifts in the way that Adam's status, slip, and relocation is interpreted by the exegetes of this study.

4. Key Concepts

Adam's unique position in the Islamic worldview is founded upon him being a prophet, which is not the case in Judaism or Christianity. Though Adam is a prophet, he is also

understood to be the first human being to be created and, therefore, a relatable and paradigmatic figure for humankind. However, being a prophet brings into question the notions of sin and punishment prevalent in the common Christian imagination of Adam. To understand the exegetes' interpretations of Adam and the context of why and how Muslim scholars receive his story, the following concepts have been outlined at this stage as they underpin the theological and exegetical discussions about Adam.

4.1 Prophets and Prophethood in Islam

In the Islamic faith, messengers (sing. *rasūl*, pl. *rusul*) and prophets (sing. *nabī*, pl. *anbiyāʾ*) are two titles awarded to the two highest ranks of human beings.[85] Their role is to act as human vicegerents of God and lead their communities toward God's guidance. For example, God instructs the prophet Muhammad on several occasions throughout the Quran to inform his community to obey him (Muhammad) and in turn, this will mean they are obeying God (Q: 3:32; 4:59; 4:80). The term *rasūl* and *nabī* are often used together in the Quran, such as in Q 22:52, "And We did not send before you any messenger (*nabī*) or prophet (*rasūl*)" which can suggest that they refer to separate roles. According to some Muslim thinkers, all messengers are prophets, but not all prophets are messengers. The key distinction, which is still debated within Muslim thought, is that messengers are given a sacred law that is different from the law that a previous messenger came with. Thus, David, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad[86] are considered messengers (and prophets) because a new law in the form of a revealed book was given to each of them to be established among their respective communities. However, it is interesting to note that al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī sometimes refer to Adam as a messenger (*rasūl*) in their respective *tafsīr* works, as they consider Adam to have received a type of physical or intellectual revelation from God.[87] Most classical Muslim thinkers agree that there is a difference between prophets and messengers, with figures like al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī affirming that messengers are more elevated in rank than

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[85] Uri Rubin, "Prophets and Prophethood," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Claude Gilliot, et al., accessed 23 January 2020. **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**. There is a difference between prophets and messengers, with scholars concluding that messengers are more elevated in rank than prophets.

[86] A. J. Wensick also mentions that Adam is a "*rasūl* law giver." See A. J. Wensick, "Rasūl," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, accessed 27 July 2021. http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0911.

[87] According to al-Ṭabarī when God relocated Adam to earth He revealed "scrolls" to him. See ch. 2, section 3.4.1. Al-Māturīdī considers Adam's learning of the "names" from God (Q 2:31) as a type of revelation. See ch. 3, section 3.2.

prophets.[88] Within the rank of prophets, the Quran also distinguishes between specific prophets. For example, some prophets have a pact (*mīthāq*) with God in Q 33:7. Additionally, a group of (unnamed) messengers are referred to as "those with determination" (*ʿazm*) as they were patient when experiencing tribulation (Q 46:35).

One of the key aspects of prophethood that is closely related to the discussions in this study is being selected by God for prophethood.[89] This is repeated several times in the Quran, for example, "Indeed God chose (*iṣṭafā*) Adam and Noah and the house of Abraham and the house of Imrān [i.e., the biblical Amram] above all beings" (Q 3:33-4). Furthermore, many different verbs across the Quran refer to divine selection, such as *ijtabā* and *ikhtāra*.[90] The concept of being selected by God incites discussions about whether prophets are born as prophets or elected into prophethood (perhaps through revelation) at a particular moment in their lives. For example, al-Rāzī notes in his *tafsīr* that Adam's life can be split into a pre-prophetic and prophetic stage. According to al-Rāzī, Adam has different capabilities in each stage of his life, such as being protected from committing *kufr* (disbelief) before he is a prophet and major wrongdoings after he becomes a prophet. Discussions about a prophet's life *before* becoming a prophet also feature in many theological manuals by the twelfth century.[91]

These two stages in a prophet's life—the pre-prophetic and prophetic stages— instigate queries from theologians and philosophers about whether prophets in their pre-prophetic stage are intellectually and spiritually like ordinary human beings. The Quran affirms on many accounts that prophets are human beings who do routine things like eat food and walk in the markets, just like the rest of humankind (Q 25:20). For example, we see in the Quran, "All the messengers We sent before you were men to whom We made revelations, men chosen from the people of their towns" (Q 12:109), and "Say, O Muhammad, 'I am only a human (*bashar*) like you to whom it has been revealed that your

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[88]See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 35:50. Also, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-isrār al-taʾwīl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Murʿashlī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2015), 4:75.

[89] See ch. 1, section 7.

[90] See "*ijtabā*" used for Adam in Q 20:122, Abraham Q 16:121, and Joseph Q 12:6. Also, *ikhtāra* for Moses is used in Q 20:13 and also appears in Q 44:32. Whilst these verbs (*iṣṭafa*, *ijtabā* and *ikhtāra*) do not exclusively denote divine selection for prophethood, most of the time they are employed in the Quran to refer to prophethood. See also Uri Rubin, "Prophets and Prophethood" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*.

[91] For example, see ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid al-nasafiyya* (Karachi: Maktabat al-Madīna, 2012), 306-8; al-Shahrastānī (d. 1158), *Kitāb nihāyat al-iqdām* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Mathn, 1965), 417ff.

God is one God'" (Q 41:6). Whilst the prophets are physiologically the same as human beings who are not destined to become prophets, two renowned Muslim philosophers, al-Fārābī (d. 950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) (also known in the western tradition as Avicenna), carved out the notion of prophets being intellectually extraordinary as they are born with a greater intellectual and imaginative capacity than ordinary human beings.[92] This extraordinary nature of prophets gives rise to discussions about their capabilities before attaining prophethood. For example, in the Ashʿarite theological tradition and as discussed by al-Rāzī in chapter four, prophets cannot commit disbelief (*kufr*) even before becoming prophets. Other scholars argued that prophets are impeccable from birth and therefore are protected from committing wrongdoings entirely.[93]

4.2 Sin

Analysing the English term "sin" is foundational to this research. Adam's story, as it is commonly understood in Christian discourse, is inextricably linked to sin and sinfulness.[94] This has also influenced the terms used (often in passing) within English scholarship about the Adam of Islam. In the chapters of this thesis, the terms that the exegetes use to refer to Adam's slip is examined, and conclusions are drawn about whether or not they consider Adam to be "sinful" i.e., committing a forbidden act and earning the displeasure of God. However, there is no single Arabic term for the word "sin."[95] This means there are several

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[92] David S. Powers, "The Finality of Prophecy," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Abrahamic Religions*, 254-271. For more detail on the views of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, see Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*: *Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 30-6. Also, see Jon McGinnis, *Avicenna (Great Medieval Thinkers)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 211, 214-7. This was also further detailed by the eminent theologian Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) who argues in his *Maʿārij al-quds fī madārij maʿrifat al-nafs* ("The Ascension of the Sacred on the Path to Self-Knowledge") that prophets are a distinct species above the rest of humanity. Al-Ghazālī also argued that whilst prophets are intellectually superior to ordinary human beings, prophecy is still a divine gift. It therefore cannot be acquired by the human being's effort alone, and there must be a divine intervention to elevate a human being to the status of a prophet. For the wider discussion, see al-Ghazālī, *Maʿārij al-quds fī madārij maʿrifat al-nafs* (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1975), 129-147. Also, Frank Griffel, "Al-Gazali's Concept of Prophecy: The Introduction of Avicennan Psychology into Asharite Theology," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 14 (2004): 101–44.

[93] A work dedicated to the different views of Sunni scholars on prophetic impeccability has been authored in Arabic: Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Ghāmidī, "Abū Bakr Ibn Fūrak wa-arāʾuhu al-uṣūliyya" (PhD Diss., Mecca, Umm al-Qura University, 1986), 464-70.

[94] For an alternative perspective of how Adam's story can be understood in Christianity, see Barr, *Garden of Eden*, 4. See also R.W.L Moberly, "Did the Interpreters Get It Right? Genesis 2-3 Reconsidered," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 1 (n.d.): 22–40.

[95] For a wider discussion on sin as it is understood in the Bible, see Ian A. McFarland, "Creation Gone Wrong: Thinking about Sin," in *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 5-11. Here, McFarland explores how there is no single word for "sin" in the Bible (like

complexities that arise when trying to discern if "sin" is a suitable or accurate term to refer to Adam's eating from the tree as it is understood by Muslim thinkers.

The English term "sin" cannot be divorced from theological and judicial associations, as the term relates to human acts in relation to the divine law. Christian culture and biblical allusions still very much imbue the English language, particularly in words such as "sin" and "disobedience," which have religious connotations. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines sin as "an act which is regarded as a transgression of the divine law and an offence against God; a violation (esp. wilful or deliberate) of some religious or moral principle." [96] From an etymological perspective, the word "sin" is derived from the notion of being "truly the one who is guilty."[97] This shows that the word "sin" holds strong connotations of guilt and wilfulness, and its meaning is intertwined with the Christian usage of sinning against God. Both within and outside of the Christian theological paradigm, sin is again connected to notions of wilfulness and rebellion. For example, the *Encyclopaedia of Christianity* includes the following under its discussion on sin:

1. In relation to God, sin is described as rebellion, idolatry, or mistrust, leading to alienation. As an act, it is a violation of divine and community law, leading to division, anger, and fear.

2. [The Adam narrative] nevertheless remains a potent narrative about the nature of sin as autonomy over against the honouring of God's authority. It is significant that such rebellion begins with the first human couple and becomes the prototype of human sinfulness.[98]

This clarifies that "sin" in the Christian worldview, particularly in light of Adam's narrative, refers to intentionally rebelling against God; the genesis of sin is Adam's transgression of God's law which is perceived as a personal rebellion against God. This lends itself to the doctrine of original sin [99] as well as the notion of the "fall of man," both of which are

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the Quran) and argues that sin in the Bible can refer to both intentional and unintentional acts. However, this does not reflect how "sin" is understood as an English term, where it is commonly associated with notions of wilful rebellion, as is discussed further in this section.

[96] *OED*, s.v. "sin," accessed 24 July 2021. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180030.

[97] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "sin," accessed 1 August 2021. https://www.etymonline.com/word/sin.

[98] Foster R. McCurley, Hans Hübner, Peter Schmiechene et al., "Sin" in *Encyclopaedia of Christianity Online*, accessed 24 July 2021. https://doi.org/10.1163/2211-2685_eco_SI.7.

[99] Though there are varying interpretations of "original sin," the term "sin" in light of Adam's story still holds connotations of this widespread and well-known belief. It is important to note that "original sin" is referring to the doctrine formed by the fifth-century theologian, Augustine, who argued that all human beings inherit the sin of Adam and Eve. This definition of "original sin" is not a unanimously accepted belief among all Christian

founded in popular Christian interpretations of Adam's biblical story.[100] Even in a contemporary, non-religious study, Karl Menninger has analysed the word "sin" and argued, "sin traditionally implies guilt, answerability, and, by derivation, responsibility."[101] He also affirms that "sin" is associated with culpability and imperfection. The religious associations of "sin," Menninger argues, are in contrast to more neutral words such as "error" and "mistakes."

One can argue that the word "sin" can be employed with a broader meaning of committing a wrong, evil, or immoral act, regardless of intention. Therefore, it can be used in congruence with the doctrine of prophetic impeccability and the esteemed position of prophets in Islam. However, this analysis has shown that the word "sin" in common English usage holds a stronger association with wilfulness, guilt, and judicial consequence, which, in the religious sense, is to intentionally sin against God. As the investigations in this study will show, these ideas are incompatible with the doctrine of prophetic impeccability, whereby prophets are protected from sin (i.e., intentionally sinning against God), and in some schools, also from making unintentional errors or making mistakes entirely.

To make matters more complex, there is no single Arabic equivalent for "sin." The Quran employs over twenty words to refer to misdeeds and wrongdoings.[102] Each term refers to varying categories and hierarchies of wrongdoings that are dependent on several factors such as intention, persistence and implication. For example, a *khaṭīʾa* —explored in detail in chapter two— refers to intentional and unintentional wrongdoing. Other terms such as *ithm* and *fujūr* refer to wrongdoings committed intentionally and therefore are closer to the English term "sin."[103] Upon analysing the word "sin" and how it can be

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denominations. There have also been several interpretations of this concept, some of which argue that "original sin" does not refer to inherited sin from Adam's mistake, but that it refers to the human's innate predisposition to sin. See Lydia Schumacher, *Theological Philosophy: Rethinking the Rationality of Christian Faith* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 101-102. For a discussion on how the doctrine of original sin has developed in the Christian tradition, see Ian A. McFarland, "Original Sin as Christian Doctrine: Origins, Permutations, Problems," in *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

[100] See Moberly, "Did the Interpreters Get it Right?," 25.

[101] Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin* (New York: Hawthorne, 1974), 19-20; 23-24.

[102] See the following works for discussions on sin in Islam, Ayman Shabana, "The Concept of Sin in the Quran in Light of the Story of Adam," in *Sin, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation: Christian and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. Lucinda Mosher and David Marshall (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 60; Toshiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 246-8.

[103] See Mohamed Abdul Raouf, "The Qur'anic Concept of Sin" (PhD. diss, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1963), 72-ff.

understood within an Islamic paradigm, Muhammad Zaman also argues that "sin" refers to a wrongdoing that is performed with the knowledge that it will entail disapproval from God.[104] He gives the example of two different types of homicide: the first is an intentional homicide which is sinful. The same is not true of unintentional homicide. Both are also dealt with differently in the Shariah.

In light of the above discussion, the word "sin" is rarely used in this study. Words such as "misdeed," "error," "mistake," and "wrongdoing" are applied instead of "sin" to refer to generally wrong acts or acts contrary to the divine law, as they are neutral and do not carry the same historical, etymological and theological associations.[105] Outside of specific terms, the Quran splits the concept of wrong actions into major (sing. *kabīra*, pl. *kabāʾir*) and minor (sing. *ṣaghīra*, pl. *ṣaghaʾir*) ones, although it does not specify which actions belong to each category. Major and minor wrong actions are usually referred to in Islamic scholarship as "major and minor sins," but as I refrain from using the term "sin" in this study, I have adopted "wrongdoing" as an alternative term to "sin" in this context. The English term "wrongdoing" does not have the same theological or historical associations with Adam's action as "sin"; therefore, it is a suitable, neutral alternative. It also refers to the act itself and does not suggest an insolent or defiant attitude. In addition to the category of "major" and "minor" wrongdoing, the Quran also mentions that some wrongdoings are performed out of ignorance (*bi-jahāla*).[106] This category (*bi-jahāla)* has been explored at length by exegetes,[107] and there is no unanimous agreement that it refers specifically to unintentional acts. Yet, it is worth mentioning here as it indicates that within

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[104] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sin, Major and Minor" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, accessed January 20, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00184.

[105] These terms are explored in more detail in ch. 1, section 6.3.

[106] For example, "God only accepts the repentance of those who do wrong (*al-sūʾ*) out of ignorance, and then turn swiftly to repentance" (Q 4:17); "whosoever from among you does wrong in ignorance and thereafter repents and makes amends, He is the most forgiving, most merciful" (Q 6:54); and "those who commit wrong in ignorance, then later repent and make amends, truly your Lord then is most forgiving, most merciful" (Q 16:119).

[107] Al-Rāzī and al-Qurṭubī outline some of the key arguments regarding this verse. They can be summarised as follows: "out of ignorance" refers either to (1) someone committing a wrongdoing knowing that it is wrong, but unaware of the consequences; or (2) someone committing a wrongdoing not knowing that it is wrong. These two categories are then further split up depending on whether that person could have sought knowledge about the action being wrong or not. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 10:2-3. Also, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 2006), 6:151-2.

the Quranic paradigm, there is a further division of wrongdoings based on intention and ignorance.

The classification of wrong acts into major and minor wrongdoings is not unanimously agreed upon either, as they are not stipulated in the Quran. However, they have been discussed and categorised by many Muslim scholars.[108] The most severe major wrongdoing is *kufr* (disbelief). There are many more acts listed by scholars, such as al-Dhahabī, which include murder, performing sorcery and intentionally forsaking prayer.[109] Minor wrongdoings are often classified as those that are not major wrongdoings, although if a minor wrongdoing is committed persistently (and intentionally), it levels up to a major wrongdoing.[110] It is worth noting that many Ashʿarite and Māturīdite scholars address the issue of intention within the categories of major and minor wrongdoings. For example, when al-Rāzī summarises the views of differing theological groups on prophetic impeccability, he notes that according to the Shiites, prophets are impeccable from birth, which means that they cannot commit major or minor wrongdoings either intentionally or unintentionally.[111] In contrast, according to Sunni theologians such as al-Rāzī and al-Qurṭubī, prophets can commit minor wrongdoings unintentionally.[112]

4.3 The Impeccability of the Prophets (ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ)

As mentioned previously, prophethood is an esteemed rank in Islam, and prophets are considered paragons of virtue. Prominent Muslim theologians and philosophers argued that though prophets are human beings, they are not like ordinary people. They are protected from committing grave, sinful acts such as *kufr* (disbelief) and are, therefore, impeccable. Different schools and denominations understood the scope of a prophet's impeccability differently, with some figures arguing that prophets are only protected from intentional wrongdoings and others asserting that prophets do not commit any wrongdoings,

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[108] For an overview on major wrongdoings and a comprehensive summary of what they are according to different thinkers, see al-Dhahabī, *al-Kabāʾir* (Cairo: Dār al-Islām, 2011).

[109] See the table of contents of al-Dhahabī, *al-Kabāʾir* for a list of wrongdoings that he classifies as major wrongdoings (*kabāʾir*).

[110] See ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 254.

[111] See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:9, also Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Hijāzī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfat al-Dīnīyya, 1986), 40.

[112] See ch. 4, section 4.4.1 and 4.4.2. Also ch. 5, section 3.2.

intentionally or unintentionally. [113] Scholars such as Wilfred Madelung and Dwight M. Donaldson,[114] affirm that the doctrine of impeccability was initially formed within the Shiite school, which extended impeccability to include the imams.[115] Madelung also argues that before the doctrine of ʿiṣma was established in the Islamic tradition, there was already an effort to minimise the shortcomings of the prophet Muhammad and to deny that he ever committed *kufr* and worshipped idols.[116] Beliefs on impeccability are challenged by the notion that Adam committed a wrongdoing; therefore, the doctrine of prophetic impeccability (ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ) is one of the crucial concepts investigated in this study.

We will now turn to an examination of both English and Arabic terms related to this key concept. In Arabic, the root letters of ʿiṣma are ʿ-ṣ-m and refer to being protected or safeguarded from something.[117] It appears as a form I verb thrice in the Quran (Q 5:67; 11:43; 33:17) where it conveys the meaning of protection. For example, Q 5:67 reads, "And God will protect (*yaʿṣim*) you [Prophet Muhammad] from the people." It is not exclusively used to refer to God's protection, as we see in the case of Noah's son who says, "I shall take refuge on a mountain; it will protect (*yaʿṣim*) me from the water" (Q 11:43). However, in many classical dictionaries the term ʿiṣma (the gerund of the verb *aʿṣama*, meaning "to protect") is closely associated with divine protection from evil acts. For example, Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. 791) in his *Kitāb al-ʿayn* ("The Book of the Source") writes that the root letters ʿ-

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[113] The doctrine of impeccability is not exclusive to the Islamic tradition. See, for example, a discussion on impeccability within Judaism and Christianity in Donaldson, *The Shiite Religion*, 331-2.

[114] See Dwight M. Donaldson, *The Shiite Religion: A History of Islam in Persia and Iraq* (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 334; and Wilfred Madelung, "ʿiṣma" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, accessed 30 July 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3643.

[115] It is worth noting that one of the earliest Shiite theologians, Hishām ibn Ḥakam (d. 795-6) argued that only the imams were impeccable because if they made an error, they would not be able to correct their behaviour as they cannot receive revelation (unlike prophets). According to Ibn Ḥakam, prophets were not impeccable. Later Shiite theologians such as Ibn Bābūya al-Qummī (d. 991) stated that both prophets and imams are protected from erroneous actions. For further discussion on ʿiṣma in the Shiite school, see Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, 159-162. See also al-Sharīf al-Murtadā, *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ wa-l-aʾimma* (Najaf: al-Matbaʿat al-Hadariyya, 1960), 2-3. Here, al-Murtadā also discusses the similarities between the Muʿtazilite and Shiite positions on ʿiṣma.

[116] Madelung, "ʿiṣma" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, accessed 30 July 2021. This is also investigated and challenged in Shahab Ahmed's seminal work, *Before Orthodoxy*. In this work, Ahmed explores how earlier generations did not find any issue in accepting that the prophet Muhammad mistook incorrect verses to be divine revelation, also known as the satanic verses incident. See Ahmed, *Before Orthodoxy*, 2-3.

[117] See s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-m," in the following modern Arabic-English dictionaries: (1) Hans Wehr, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. James Milton Cowan (n.p.: Snowball Publishing, 2011); (2) Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Libraire du Liban, 1997).

ṣ-m refer to God protecting one from evil (*sharr*).[118] Furthermore, al-Jawharī (d. 1002) notes in his *Tāj al-lugha wa-ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabiyya* ("The Crown of the Language and the Perfection of the Arabic Language") that ʿiṣma refers to a type of prevention (*manʿ*). He gives the example of food being an ʿiṣma against starvation as it protects one from being famished. A notable classical definition of ʿiṣma appears in al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī's (d. 1108) *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān* ("The Vocabulary of Obscure Words in the Quran"). Under the entry for ʿ-ṣ-m, al-Isfahānī includes the phrase, ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ (the impeccability of the prophets). He writes that prophets are protected due to: (1) something distinct and pure in their essence; (2) a physiological (*jismī*) virtue; (3) having victory and firmness upon their path; and (4) a type of tranquillity sent down to them and the firmness of their hearts to be on the successful path.[119] Al-Isfahānī's definition interlaces Ashʿarite theological views on prophetic impeccability,[120] that are discussed later in chapter four, such as the extraordinary intellectual and physiological nature of prophets and how this is a cause (or result) of their prophethood. These definitions indicate that ʿiṣma refers to being divinely protected from wrongdoing, although the definitions do not clarify whether one is protected from committing intentional or unintentional wrongdoings. Within different Islamic denominations and theological schools (and even thinkers within the same school), scholars differ in their views on what types of actions prophets are protected from.

In general, during the classical period there is greater diversity in the Sunni school about impeccability than the Shiite school.[121] This does not mean that theologians of the Shiite school always agreed on the scope of a prophet's ʿiṣma. Through Shiite theologians such as Ibn Bābūya (d. 991) and Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 1022), the discussions in Shiite theology went through early iterations and adjustments on impeccability. For example, Ibn Bābūya and Shaykh al-Mufīd explored nuanced issues such as whether prophets and imams were immune from unintentional wrong actions. Then, the eleventh-century scholar al-Sharīf al-

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[118] See s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-m" in Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, ed. Mahdī al-Makhzūmī, 8 vols (Beirut: Dār wa-maktabat al-hilāl, n.d.).

[119] See s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-m," in the following: (1) al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha wa-ṣiḥaḥ al-ʿarabiyya*; and (2) al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ṣafwān ʿAdnān al-Dāwudī (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1991).
[120] Al-Isfahānī himself followed the Ashʿarite theological creed. For a more comprehensive Ashʿarite definition of impeccability, see al-Ghāmidī, "Abū Bakr Ibn Fūrak wa-arāʾuhu al-uṣūliyya," 460-2.
[121] Several Ashʿarite theologians claim consensus that prophets are protected from major wrongdoings (*kabāʾir*). For example, the eminent theologian, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, claimed consensus that prophets cannot commit *kabāʾir*. See Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *al-Mustaṣfā min ʿilm al-uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Ashqar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1997), 1:188.

Murtadā (d. 1044) concluded and claimed consensus at the time that prophets and imams are immune from committing any wrongdoing both before and during their prophethood or imamate.[122] The Sunni theologians throughout the ages have differed about the extent of the prophets' sinlessness.[123] Goldziher notes that some theologians considered prophets as protected from all wrongdoings (major and minor), whereas others asserted that prophets can still be exposed to slips (zalal).[124] The different stances on impeccability also come to light in the works examined in this thesis. For example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the exegete and theologian examined in chapter four, considers prophets to be protected from major wrongdoings after they have been elected as prophets but argues that they can commit unintentional minor wrongdoings on rare occurrences.[125] This is an example of how intention is considered a subcategory within the overarching category of "major and minor" wrongdoings (kabāʾir wa-ṣaghaʾir). Al-Rāzī's view contrasts with other figures within the same theological school (the Ashʿarite school) like Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ (d. 1149) who believed prophets are protected from major and minor wrongdoings, before and after their prophetic vocation.[126] Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ's view parallels the stance taken by the majority of Shiite scholars, who hold that prophets are born as impeccable beings and are protected from major and minor wrongdoings from birth.

There is thus, a diversity of views on the definition and scope of prophetic ʿiṣma in the Muslim tradition. In English, the three common terms used as English translations of ʿiṣma are (1) infallibility; (2) inerrancy; and (3) impeccability. These terms hold certain theological connotations. The Oxford English Dictionary defines the state of being infallible as, "not liable to be deceived or mistaken; incapable of erring."[127] In the context of Adam's story in the Quran where he is deceived by Satan (Q 7:20-3), this term can thus seem contradictory; how can Adam be "infallible" if he mistook Satan's trickery and deceit for truth and was ultimately, deceived by him? Additionally, the most common usage of the term infallibility in a religious context is in reference to the infallibility of the church, gospels

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[122] See Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis.* 159-162.

[123] See Ignaz Goldziher, *Vorlesungen Über Den Islam*, vol. 1, Religionswissenschaftliche Bibliothek (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1910), 220-5.

[124] Goldziher, *Vorlesungen*, 221.

[125] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8.

[126] Al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *al-Shifāʾ bī-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, ed. ʿAbduh ʿAlī Kawshak (Dubai: Jāʾizat Dubay al-Dawliyya li-l-Qurʾān al-Karīm, 2013), 673.

[127] *OED*, s.v. "infallible," accessed 2 March 2022. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/95180.

or, in the Roman Catholic tradition, the Pope (i.e., papal infallibility). The terms "inerrancy" or "indefectibility" are also often synonymously used in the Christian tradition to refer to the same doctrines. Unlike "infallibility" and "inerrancy" the term "impeccability" is not popularly tied to Christian theology. Though it holds a similar meaning to infallibility and inerrancy (i.e., being free from error), its definition is nuanced by the mention of sin (i.e., transgressing God's law);[128] it is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as a state of being "not capable of, or liable to sin; exempt from the possibility of sinning or doing wrong."[129] As the conclusions drawn from this thesis will show, though Adam's slip is often understood to be a mistake, he comes to be absolved of incurring sin, or committing a punishable wrongdoing. For this reason, the term "impeccability" aligns closely with the overarching findings of this study and has been selected as an accurate English rendition of the Arabic word, ʿiṣma.

The wide range of opinions across theological schools and Muslim denominations about when and what prophets are protected from means that defining ʿiṣma with one definition is a challenging (and almost impossible) task. However, the commonality between most, if not all, schools is that the doctrine of prophetic refers to a prophet's unique trait in which he is exclusively protected by God from committing certain wrong acts. The nuances around the definition of ʿiṣma are what give rise to the varying interpretations of Adam's story that are investigated and presented in this thesis. As the following chapters demonstrate, many of the exegetes interpret Adam's story in light of their own definitions of impeccability. For example, al-Māturīdī argues that because Adam is a prophet, he cannot be intentionally neglectful of God's command. Moreover, al-Qurṭubī, the subject of chapter five, notes that prophets can commit offences (dhunūb), but these are different from the offences committed by ordinary human beings. In this regard, prophets are divinely protected from the errors of ordinary people but can still commit errors that they are punished and blamed for due to their high status.

As this overview has shown, the doctrine of impeccability in the intellectual tradition of Sunni Islam developed over time. It had become a comprehensive and widely accepted

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[128] See section 4.2 of present chapter.
[129] *OED*, s.v. "impeccability," accessed 2 March 2022, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/92177. Also, see *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. "impeccability," accessed 2 March 2022, https://www.etymonline.com/word/impeccable.

doctrine in the Ashʿarite and Māturīdite schools by the twelfth century and greatly impacted how Muslim thinkers interpreted prophetic narratives. By examining how Adam's story is understood in the classical period, we can begin to see how Muslim thinkers challenged the old image of Adam as a sinner who is moved to earth as a punishment, and instead, sought to carve a new image of Adam more fitting of his role in Islam as a prophet.

Chapter 1: An Overview of Adam's Story in the Quran

1. Introduction

The story of Adam is one of the most renowned narratives in the Islamic tradition. Though many of the narratives of prophets are popular topics in Quran scholarship,[130] the story of Adam bears particular significance for several reasons. As Adam is the first human being, scholars can extract broader lessons and discussion points related to humankind from his narrative. These include the nature and creation of humans,[131] the relationship between man and woman,[132] and the purpose of humanity on earth.[133] It is also in Adam's story that the angels and jinns meet the human for the first time: when Adam is created, he is presented to the angels (made from light) and Iblīs (made from fire).[134] From this encounter, scholars have investigated various topics such as the relationship between humans, the angels, and Iblīs. Adam is also a figure who is shared across Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The similarities and differences between the biblical and Quranic account have been investigated at great length, and various conclusions have been drawn from studying Adam's narrative about unique Quranic literary features, such as the coherence and structure of the Quran.[135] Though there are some similarities between the Adam of the Quran and Adam as he appears in the Bible and biblical Apocrypha, Adam's role as the first

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[130] For a comprehensive list of works dedicated to stories in the Quran, see Yehudit Dror, *The Linguistic Features of the Qur'anic Narratives* (Zürich: LIT Verlag, 2016), 11-15.

[131] See Melchert, "God Created Adam in His Image," 113-24.

[132] Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valerie H. Ziegler, eds., *Eve and Adam* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 159-60.

[133] In Māturīdite theology, humankind is created for the *miḥna* (test) on earth, and Adam's test (staying away from the tree) is an example of this. See ch. 3, section 5.1.

[134] There is great discussion in Muslim thought about whether Iblīs is a jinn or an angel. For an overview, see A.J. Wensick, and Gardet, L. "Iblīs" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed., P. Bearman, et al., accessed 25 September 2021. http://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3021.

[135] Ayaz Afsar and Yehudit Dror have analysed the Labovian model of narratives and its applicability to prophetic stories. See (1) Dror, *The Linguistic Features of the Qur'anic Narratives*, 5-11; and (2) Ayaz Afsar, "A Discourse and Linguistic Approach to Biblical and Qur'ānic Narrative" in *Islamic Studies* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 493-517. For an overview of narratives in the Quran, see also Claude Gilliot, "Narratives," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed., Jane Dammen McAuliffe, et al., accessed 1 September 2021. http://doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00132.

prophet of God is unique to the Islamic faith. Various topics related to this role as prophet emerge from his story, such as the purpose and responsibility of prophets, prophets' errors and the doctrine of prophetic impeccability.

Laying the foundations for the analysis in this thesis, the current chapter presents the aspects of Adam story that are discussed by the exegetes of this study. This chapter does not aim to present an independent reading of the Quranic material on Adam. Rather, it will draw attention to the key themes and passages that will feature throughout this thesis. First, it offers a broad outline of Adam's story in the Quran from his creation to his relocation to earth from paradise. Some differences between the biblical text and the Quran will be highlighted here. Thereafter, a close analysis of the following aspects of the narrative that are the focus of this study is offered: Adam as *bashar* (human) and *khalīfa*, God's prohibition to Adam, Satan's temptation, Adam eating from the tree and Adam's relocation and repentance. Whilst the aim of this chapter is to present the reader with information on Adam as it appears in the Quran, I will also critically analyse the Arabic terminology used in Quran verses to refer to Adam's eating from the tree. The terms used in the Quran will then be compared with the English counterparts commonly used by scholars to refer to Adam's action, such as "sin" and "disobedience." From this analysis, a conclusion will be drawn about the appropriate terms to be used within this study when discussing Adam's eating from the tree.

In addition to being a human being, Adam is also considered the first prophet in the Islamic tradition. Thus, further to Adam's narrative, we must also explore the elements of prophethood related to this study that are presented in the Quran. The two common aspects of prophethood that are explored in exegesis on Adam are prophetic errors and the divine election of prophets; these topics relate to how exegetes interpret Adam's story in light of his status as a prophet. Additionally, the Quran includes many other narratives of prophetic errors, such as the story of Moses who commits manslaughter and Jonah who flees his community. Though there are many other prophets that the Quran mentions who make errors (such as Job in Q 38:41 and Solomon in Q 38:34) the narratives of Jonah, David and Moses are presented briefly in this chapter as they follow a similar trajectory to Adam's story, share similar language and so they can be used to closely compare the discussions in exegesis on prophetic errors. This will allow us to identify if and how exegetes treat Adam differently to how they treat other prophets of Islam.

2. Adam's Quranic Narrative

The story of Adam in the Quran is relayed to the reader as a piecemeal narrative. It appears over several *sūra*s, and each passage offers the reader unique details of the story. In chronological order, Adam's story in the Quran runs as follows: [136] first, God announces to the angels that He will create a human (*bashar*) from clay (Q 15:26; 38:71) and that He will also place a *khalīfa* (vicegerent or successor) on earth (Q 2:30). The angels respond with concern about this creation causing bloodshed and mischief, to which God replies, "I know what you do not know" (Q 2:30). God teaches Adam all of the names and asks Adam to present these names to the angels who do not know them (Q 2:31). God commands the angels to prostrate before Adam, but Iblīs refuses (Q 7:12; 15:30-4; 17:61). Iblīs is subsequently banished and is condemned by God as a disgrace (Q 7:18). God informs Adam and Eve that Satan is their clear enemy and warns them against letting him remove them from paradise (referred to as *al-Jannah,* literally meaning "the Garden") (Q 20:117). God also tells Adam and his wife to eat freely wherever they wish but tells them not to come close to "this tree" (Q 2:35). Satan tempts both Adam and his wife, disguising himself as a sincere advisor to them (Q 7:21-3) while enticing them with promises of becoming immortal and angelic if they eat from the tree (Q 7:20). Adam and Eve give in to this temptation which causes them to slip from their paradisiacal state (Q 2:36). Adam approaching the tree is also referred to as Adam forgetting his oath to God (to stay away from the tree and be weary of Satan) (Q 20:115). Adam and Eve realise their nakedness and immediately cover themselves. God reminds Adam and Eve of His warning against Satan and prohibition of the tree (Q 7:22). Adam calls out to God, pleading for His mercy. God instructs Adam, Eve and Satan to descend to earth (Q 2:37; 7:23-5). God also reveals words to Adam and subsequently forgives him (Q 2:36-7).[137] God then "chooses" (*ijtabā*) Adam and guides him (Q 20:122). God also notifies Adam that life on earth will be the place of temporary

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[136] All Quran translations are my own but are based on two translations unless stated otherwise. The first is M.A.S Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008) and the second is *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary*, ed., Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Caner K. Dagli, et al.

[137] The chronology of Adam's descent and repentance to God is ambiguous. In *al-Baqara*, God instructs Adam and Eve (and Satan) to descend, they repent to God and then the command to descend is repeated again. However, in *al-Aʿrāf*, Adam and Eve are only told to descend after they repent to God. This is discussed in further detail below in section 2.6 and also ch. 2, section 3.4.1.

enjoyment (Q 2:36), where he will die and be resurrected (Q 7:25).[138]

There are several key differences between the biblical and Quranic account that emerge from even a surface level reading of both texts.[139] The most noticeable disparity is the absence of detail in the Quranic account when compared with the Bible. The Quranic account does not include details like names, conversations, and locations. This is in contrast to the biblical account which includes the name and location of the Garden (Gen 2:8; 16-17), as well as a detailed conversation between God and Adam once Adam is confronted for eating from the tree.[140] Genesis records the following:

> Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So, he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Gen 3:9-13).

God's wrath toward Adam and Eve is also relayed in the Bible. We are told that God says the following:

> To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you…" (Gen 3:8-19).

Phrases like "multiply your sorrow" and "cursed is the ground for your sake" clearly convey God's anger. Though this is an English translation of the original Hebrew text (and therefore

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[138] For a comprehensive overview of the Adam narrative in the Quran as it appears across all *sūra*s in the Quran in a table format, including patterns of verse length and overlaps in diction, see Nicolai Sinai, "Two Types of Inner Qurʾanic Interpretation," in *Exegetical Crossroads: Understanding Scripture in Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Pre-Modern Orient*, vol. 8, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - Tension, Transmission, Transformation (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), 272-6, table 1-2, and Sinai, *The Quran: A Historical-Critical Introduction*, 144, figure 16.

[139] See Appendix for a side-by-side comparison of the narrative in the Bible and the Quran. For a more focused study on biblical-Quranic textual comparisons of different parts of the story, see Ayaz Afsar, "Speech Acts in the Story of Adam and Eve in the Bible and the Qurʾān," *Islamic Studies* 54, no. 3/4 (Autumn-Winter 2015): 185–202.

[140] See Appendix.

is still somewhat an interpretation of the translator),[141] these excerpts convey notions of punishment and divine fury, all of which feature in Christian theological discourse on Adam. This conversation from the Bible is also relayed in a narration included in al-Ṭabarī's exegesis.[142] Al-Ṭabarī's inclusion of material from Jewish and Christian sources (*isrāʾīliyyāt*) shows that some Muslim thinkers considered *isrāʾīliyyāt* as filling in the gaps of the Quranic narrative on Adam.[143] In contrast, the Quranic retelling of these conversations between God and Adam are brief, and the Arabic verses alone do not convey anger or clarify that descending to earth is a punishment.[144] For example, when God confronts Adam after the slip, the Quran reveals only that God repeats His prior warnings to Adam, "Did I not prohibit you [both] from that tree and tell you that Satan is a clear enemy to you?" (Q 7:22). He then instructs Adam, Eve and Satan to "descend, each of you an enemy to the other" (Q 2:37). In this stage of the story Adam also receives words from his Lord (Q 2:37). This has often been interpreted by exegetes as God revealing instructions on how to repent, which is a divine act of mercy for humankind. It is also interesting to note that when Adam is confronted by God in the Bible, he is not depicted as a repenting servant, but rather, as someone who is focused on blaming Eve: "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Gen 3:12). In contrast, the Adam and Eve of the Quran show immediate contrition, take accountability for their slip and admit that only the forgiveness and mercy of God can save them (Q 7:22-3).

There are thus notable differences in how the Bible and Quran deal with the key themes of Adam's story such as accountability, remorse and punishment. Many elements of the biblical narrative are carried forward into the Muslim textual tradition via *isrāʾīliyyāt* and appears in exegesis and other genres of works such as stories of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*).[145] However, some Muslims thinkers such as al-Māturīdī and al-Rāzī criticize the

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[141] Scholar Julie Faith Parker has explored how translation influences the way biblical figures such as Adam and Eve are perceived in the Christian worldview. For example, see Julie Faith Parker, "Blaming Eve Alone: Translation, Omission, and Implications of עמה in Genesis 3:6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 4 (2013): 729–47.

[142] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān an taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1954), 1:562.

[143] For further discussion of *isrāʾīliyyāt* and to see how this account is relayed in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* and *Tārīkh* see ch. 2, section 2.1.2 and section 3.3.

[144] See section 7 of present chapter for further discussion.

[145] For some examples of works belonging to these genres see Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jumhūriyya al-ʿArabiyya, n.d.), and Al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. Isaac Eisenburg (Leiden: Brill, 1923), 1:40-42. Both of these works are also discussed in ch. 2, section 3.3.1.

authenticity of such reports, seeking to divorce the Quranic text and Quranic figures from the Bible and other religious literature. Reading the Quran independently of previous religious literature allows us to explore unique elements of the Quranic narrative, such as Adam's remorseful characterisation in the Quran and what this means for the Quranic reader, or the general ambiguity around details in the story and the scope that this offers exegetes in their interpretations. This approach (i.e., focusing on how Adam is depicted the Quran and Muslim literature) offers us the opportunity to re-evaluate Adam and explore the significance of his role as the first prophet of Islam.

The majority of Adam's story in the Quran appears across three *suras*: *al-Baqara* (Q 2:30-8)*, al-Aʿrāf* (Q 7:11-25) and *Ṭā Hā* (Q 20:115-123).[146] Each time his story is mentioned in a chapter, a different perspective with unique details is included. details align with the overarching theme of the *sura* and ultimately contribute to the thematic coherence of the *sura*.[147] According to Mustansir Mir, the narratives of the Quran serve to illustrate a theme that is already under discussion.[148] For example, one of the core subject matters in *al-Baqara* is calling people toward guidance and the different reactions to the prophetic message.[149] The Adam narrative in this *sura* aligns with this subject matter by exclusively including verses about Adam being guided and taught by God, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them" (Q 2:31) and "Adam received words from his Lord" (Q 2:37) and depicting the angels who obey God and are taught by Adam as a contrast to Satan who turns away from God. After telling Adam to descend, the theme of guidance is continued as God says to Adam, "If guidance should come to you from Me, then whosoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve" (Q 2:38). Similarly, the verses preceding the Adam narrative in *Ṭā Hā* focus on warning the disbelievers of haste and reassuring the prophet Muhammad that he will not forget the Quran. According to the exegete Amīn Iṣlāḥī, one of the core themes of *Ṭā Hā* is reminding the prophet Muhammad

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[146] The appearance of Adam's story in other *suras* focuses on Satan's pride in not prostrating to Adam. See Q 15:30-34; 1:17:61.

[147] The thematic coherence of the *suras* in the Quran is a subject discussed in great detail by Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī in his Urdu exegesis, *Tadabbur-i-Qurʾān*. For a summary of Iṣlāḥī arguments and the discussion on the theme of a *sura*, see Mustansir Mir, *Coherence in the Qurʾan: A Study of Iṣlāḥī's Concept of Naẓm in Tadabbur-i-Qurʾān* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1986), 38-63.

[148] Mustansir Mir, "Language," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾan*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 100. Also, to see Iṣlāḥī's discussion on how the Adam narrative ties into the overall theme of *Sūrat al-Baqara*, see Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i-Qurʾān* (Lahore: Fārān Foundation, 2009), 1:152; 171-174.

[149] Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i-Qurʾān*, 1:75-77. Also see Mir, "Language," 100.

and his people of patience and warning them about the consequences of hastiness. This *sūra* exclusively mentions that Adam forgot (Q 20:115), perhaps to show the Quranic reader the consequences of turning away from God's command due to haste.[150]

The key parts of Adam's story that are the focus of this thesis are (1) Adam as a *khalīfa* and what this shows about his status and responsibility; (2) Adam's eating from the tree and how this is understood and interpreted by exegetes; (3) Adam being "chosen" by God and what this signifies and finally; (4) Adam's relocation from paradise to earth. Furthermore, as the overview of Adam's narrative shows, the Quran depicts Adam up until he is "chosen" and relocated to earth; it does not disclose details of his time on earth or how he performs in his role as a *khalīfa* and prophet.[151]

3. Adam as a *Bashar* and *Khalīfa*

One of the most significant features of the Quranic depiction of Adam is his tripartite nature: he is a *bashar* (human), *khalīfa* (vicegerent) and a *nabī* (prophet). Additionally, some Muslim thinkers consider Adam also to be a messenger (*rasūl*).[152] It is important to note that Adam is not explicitly titled a prophet in the Quran itself but is considered one according to the mainstream Muslim scholarly consensus. However, scholars such as Karel Steenbrink question whether Adam is the first prophet of Islam[153] even though there are several Quranic verses where Adam is grouped with other prophets such as Noah (Q 3:33). Also, many hadiths certify Adam's status as a prophet. For example, Adam is referenced in a hadith about intercession from prophets on the day of judgement[154] and also features in a famous hadith recording an interaction between Adam and Moses.[155]

The various roles and positions that Adam holds in the Islamic tradition influence the different stances that exegetes take when interpreting Adam's story. For example, al-Ṭabarī

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[150] A verse tied to the theme of warning that follows after the Adam narrative is "Whoever follows my guidance shall not go astray or be wretched. But whoever turns away from remembrance of Me, truly he shall have a miserable life" (Q 20:123-4). See Iṣlāḥī, *Taddabur-i-Quran*, 5:9; 84. For a discussion on the correlation of the Adam narratives with the *sūra*s they appear in, see Marcia. K. Hermansen, "Pattern and Meaning in the Qur'anic Adam Narratives," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 17, no. 1 (1988): 45-50.
[151] These additional parts of Adam's life, not covered in the Quran, are explored in works belonging to other genres such as history (*tārikh*) or stories of the prophets (*qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*).
[152] See ch. 2, section 3.4.1 and ch. 3, section 3.2.
[153] See Karel Steenbrink, "Created Anew," 190.
[154] See l-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 60:3.
[155] See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 60:84.

(d. 923), the first exegete of this study, focuses on the human nature of Adam and employs a more parabolic approach in his interpretation of Adam's story. However, the theologian, al-Māturīdī, and later exegetes like al-Rāzī place emphasis on Adam's prophetic nature and interpret his story in light of this.

3.1 *Bashar*

God informs the angels that he is creating a "*bashar* from clay" (Q 38:71). There are a few meanings that emerge from the root letters of *bashar*, *b-sh-r*. The first is that *b-sh-r* refers to something being exposed, bare or naked.[156] When used about God's creation and human beings, *bashar* refers explicitly to the physiological aspect of the human being; the phrase *ẓāhir al-jild* (outer skin) is used in classical Arabic dictionaries to describe what a *bashar* is associated with.[157] This definition is in contrast to the word *insān* (also translated as "human being"), which more often refers to the spiritual or intellectual prowess of humankind.[158] However, despite the classical definitions and suggested differences between *bashar* and *insān*, Riffat Hassan, a contemporary Muslim theologian and academic, argues that both *bashar* and *insān* are used in the Quran when describing the physical aspect of human beings. Instead, Hassan argues the term "children of Adam" (*banī Ādam*) is used to refer to humankind when referring to the "self-conscious, knowledgeable, and morally autonomous" human.[159] This can be seen in several Quranic examples, such as Q 7:172, which reads, "When your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants and made them testify of themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we have testified'" or, in Q 36:60, which reads, "Did I not command you, O children of Adam, not to serve Satan? Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." Within these two examples that refer to humankind as "children of Adam," we see concepts of self-reflection, knowledge, and consciousness, just as Hassan argues.

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[156] S.v. "b-sh-r" in the following dictionaries: (1) Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*; (2) Zayn al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-ṣiḥāḥ*; and (3) Al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.

[157] S.v. "b-sh-r" in (1) Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān Al-ʿarab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣāder, 1993); and (2) al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.

[158] s.v. "*insān*," in al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-taʿrīfāt* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1983).

[159] Riffat Hassan, "The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition," *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender*, ed. Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S Schearing and Valarie H. Ziegler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 467.

In contrast to Hassan's argument, mentions of *bashar* in the Quran highlight the mortal and biological aspects of the human being. For example, God mentions in the Quran a circumstance when the prophet Muhammad's community challenged his prophethood: "And the leading disbelievers of his people, who denied the meeting of the hereafter while We had given them ease and plenty in this life said, 'He is just a mortal like you (*basharun mithlukum*). He eats from what you eat and drinks from what you drink'" (Q 23:33). Here, the disbelievers question how the prophet Muhammad can have human necessities and qualities like eating and drinking. Another instance of the term *bashar* being used in a similar way is seen in the following verse, "Their messengers said to them, 'We are only *bashar* like you, but God gives favour upon whom He wills of His servants. It has never been for us to bring you evidence except by permission of God'" (Q 14:11). Here, the Quran depicts the limited capacity of messengers (*rusul*) as they are also reliant on God for guidance. The usage of *bashar* here further emphasises that prophets and messengers are mortals like the people of their communities.

In light of Adam being a *bashar*, God states in the Quran that He is creating a *bashar* from clay in Q 38:71. The angels are intrigued, as God has not made a creation like this before. This declaration from God highlights that Adam is the first of his kind and will be made from a unique substance, unlike the angels who are made of light and the jinn who are created from fire. There are further instances in the Quran where Adam's *bashar* quality is emphasised. This demonstrates that Adam's humanness is a critical identifier in the Islamic tradition. For example, as the first *bashar*, Adam is considered the progenitor of humankind. There are numerous examples in the Quran where humanity is referred to as *banī Ādam* (descendants of Adam).[160] Furthermore, Adam is used as a symbol of humanness in the Quran. For example, Jesus is likened to Adam to refute claims that Jesus is an embodiment of the divine, "Indeed the likeness of Jesus in God's eyes is like that of Adam. He said to him, 'Be' and he was" (Q 3:59). Whilst the term *bashar* is not used explicitly here, Adam's createdness is mentioned to refute claims that Jesus is divine. [161]

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[160] For example, Q 7:31; 17:70; 36:60.

[161] See Q 3:60-62 which refers to divinity and the oneness of God. However, according to Gabriel Said Reynolds, this verse uses the example of Adam to venerate Jesus by likening him to Adam, and not dispute claims of the Trinity. See Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Redeeming the Adam of the Qur'an," *Arabische Christen – Christen in Arabien*, ed. Detlev Kreikenbom, Franz Christoph Muth et al. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 75.

From analysing some references of *bashar* in the Quran and seeing the importance that the Quran places on this quality of Adam both explicitly and implicitly, it is clear that being a *bashar* is one of Adam's significant characteristics, more so than any other prophet. As the forthcoming discussions in *tafsīr* will show, Adam's humanness allows for exegetes to highlight the didactic aspects of his story. For example, Adam's repentance to God is commonly interpreted by exegetes from a didactic perspective[162] as his *bashar* quality allows the Quranic readers to relate to and reflect on his story and extract lessons for themselves.

3.2 *Khalīfa*

In addition to creating a *bashar*, God also states in the Quran that He is placing a *khalīfa* on earth (Q 2:30). Much discussion is awarded in *tafsīr* and other Muslim scholarship to the topic of Adam as a *khalīfa* and the question of whether the term *khalīfa* in this verse refers to Adam or his descendants. The Arabic word *khalīfa* stems from the root letters *kh-l-f,* which most commonly refer to (1) taking someone's place as a substitute; or (2) following behind someone/something.[163] While appearing similar at first glance, these two definitions refer to two different concepts, which are also reflected in the two standard English translations of *khalīfa*, "vicegerent" and "successor." A "vicegerent" is someone acting in power on behalf of a greater sovereign.[164] If *khalīfa* is to mean "vicegerent," then the *khalīfa* is the substitute or deputy of God on earth. Exegetes such as al-Qurṭubī hold the opinion that Adam is the substitute of God on earth. In contrast, the word "successor" does not explicitly refer to taking over a position of power or authority and can also be used to mean following or succeeding anyone, such as in the case of progeny or descendants; this is the understanding of *khalīfa* shared by some exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī.[165]

Additionally, exegetical discussions on the word *khalīfa* are also concerned with whether Adam is the *khalīfa* or whether the term refers to his descendants being *khalīfa*s.

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[162] See ch. 2, section 3.4 and ch. 4, section 4.6.

[163] S.v. "kh-l-f" in the following dictionaries: (1) al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*; and (2) Zayn al-Dīn al-Razī, *Mukhtār al-ṣiḥāḥ*, ed. Yūsuf al-Shaykh Muḥammad (Beirut: al-Dār al-Namūdhajīyya, 1999). Also, Wadād al-Qāḍī has presented a more comprehensive list of five possible meanings of these root letters. However, definitions (1) and (2) expressed above are the most common definitions that are used by the exegetes in this study. See Wadād al-Qāḍī, "The Term 'Khalīfa' in Exegetical Literature," *Die Welt des Islams* 28*,* no. 1/4 (1988), 398-404.

[164] *OED Online,* s.v. "vicegerent," accessed 2 July 2021. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223136.

[165] Ibid., s.v. "successor," accessed 2 July 2021. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/193323.

This debate arises because of the angels' concern that the *khalīfa* will spread mischief and bloodshed (Q 2:30) on earth. This brings into question whether Adam, a prophet and therefore a paragon of virtue and goodness, can commit such corruption. The way exegetes interpret this sheds light on their view regarding the nature of prophets and whether they are purified and protected from spreading harm on earth.[166] The Quran does not clarify whether *khalīfa* refers to Adam or his descendants or even whether it refers to a vicegerent or a successor. However, the Quran does shed light on the responsibilities of a *khalīfa* if we understand it to denote a role of vicegerency. David is the only other *khalīfa* who is singled out in the Quran. He is also a king, and it is in his story that the Quranic reader is introduced to the responsibilities of being a *khalīfa*: "O David, indeed We have made you a *khalīfa* on the earth, so rule among people with justice and do not follow desire lest it lead you astray from the way of God" (Q 38:26). By mentioning that a *khalīfa* must rule between people, the Quran indicates that a *khalīfa* can also be a position of rulership and not just a generic role applied to all humans.[167] However, scholar Wadād al-Qāḍī presents a myriad of opinions about the term *khalīfa.* Al-Qāḍī asserts that the meaning of *khalīfa* as a sovereign who undertakes the responsibilities as stipulated for David in Q 38:26 is a restricted interpretation of the word and is exclusive to David only.[168] Subsequently, al-Qāḍī mentions that several exegetes understood *khalīfa* to be synonymous with all of humankind and therefore that its most common meaning is "successor."

From the Quranic narrative, it is also evident that being a *khalīfa* does not only involve responsibility (whether this is responsibility for a community or a human's general responsibility as a citizen on earth) but also that it can involve an ascension of status. God declares that the *khalāʾifa* (*khalāʾifa* and *khulafāʾ* are both plurals of *khalīfa*) are elevated in status when He says, "It is He who has made you *khalāʾifa* upon the earth, and He has raised some of you above others" (Q 6:165) and "Remember when He made you *khulafāʾ* after the people of Noah and increased you in stature extensively" (Q 7:69). These verses emphasise that being a *khalīfa* is a role of reverence and esteem. Therefore, if we are to agree that

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[166] See ch. 3, section 3.1 for al-Māturīdī's view on the angels' concern about the *khalīfa* spreading corruption.
[167] For a thorough analysis, see Jaafar Sheikh Idris, "Is Man the Vicegerent of God?," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1 (1990): 99–110.
[168] Al-Qāḍī, "The Term 'Khalīfa' in Exegetical Literature," 408.

Adam is the *khalīfa* that is mentioned in Q 2:30, then he too would be recognised as having an esteemed status.

Whilst many exegetes held the view that Adam is the *khalīfa* mentioned in Q 2:30 and is exempt from spreading mischief (unlike his descendants),[169] the Quran does not show Adam performing his role as a *khalīfa*. This lack of detail and ambiguity brings about the different interpretations by exegetes as to whether Adam is the intended *khalīfa*. However, what is clear from the verse, "Indeed I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*" (Q 2:30), is that Adam, the first human being, is destined to be on earth and not in paradise. This is regardless of whether Adam is understood to be the *khalīfa* or the progenitor of humankind on earth. Although being a *bashar* gives rise to interpretations that present Adam as a symbol of humankind, the potential of Adam being awarded the role of a *khalīfa* indicates that a degree of responsibility will perhaps be required from him; if he is to take on the role of a *khalīfa*, he must lead people, encompass justice, and remain abstinent from desire as David was instructed to do so by the title of the same role.

4. Adam Teaches the Angels

Once God creates Adam, He also teaches Adam the names. Adam is then instructed to teach these names to the angels (Q 2:31-33). Some exegetes, such as al-Māturīdī and al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), as well as those of the Muʿtazilite school like al-Zamakhsharī and al-Jishumī,[170] interpret Adam receiving knowledge from God as indicative of either his prophetic/messenger[171] status (as only prophets can receive direct knowledge from God) or proof that Adam is an extraordinary human being even before his prophethood who can receive knowledge in a unique way. This is unlike ordinary human beings who are not destined to be prophets. Furthermore, the exchange between the angels and Adam presents Adam as a superior, intellectual being in the Quran, so much so that he becomes a teacher of the angels before his slip. The Quran states:

> And He taught Adam the names, all of them, then He presented them to the angels
> and said, "Tell me the names of these if you are truthful." They said, "Glorified are

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[169] See ch. 3, section 3.1.
[170] See al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl*, ed. ʿĀdil Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Mawjūd (Riyadh: Maktabat al-ʿUbaykan, 1998), 1:254-7, 4:116. Also, al-Jishumī, *al-Tahdhīb fī tafsīr*, 1:319.
[171] See introduction, section 4.1.

you. We have no knowledge except what you have taught us. Indeed, You are all-knowing and all-wise." He said, "O Adam, inform them (*anbiʾhum*) of their names," and when he informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not say to you that indeed I know the unseen of the heavens and the earth, and I know what you conceal?" And when We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," they prostrated except Iblīs. He refused and was arrogant, and he was one of the disbelievers (Q 2:31-4).

It is worth noting a difference here between the Quranic and biblical narratives of Adam. The Bible states that God brings the animals and birds out to Adam, and Adam is given the authority to name them as he wishes (Gen 2:19-20). However, in the Quranic version of these events, Adam does not have the autonomy to name things.[172] Instead, God teaches Adam the names. Then, God orders Adam to inform the angels of his acquired knowledge. Thus, he is positioned as intellectually superior to the angels as he is presenting new information to them.[173] Furthermore, the verb *anbiʾūhum* is translated by Pickthall as "inform them," whereas Abdel Haleem chooses the phrase "tell them." Whilst both translations are similar in meaning, Pickthall's choice emphasises Adam's loftier rank as the verb "informing" refers to relaying information to someone unaware of something. Therefore, it is associated with rank and superiority, as a superior intellectual entity offers information to an inferior intellectual entity. However, "telling" is associated with communication or dialogue between people and is unrelated to the superior/inferior dynamic.[174] The difference in the rank between the angels and Adam is further underlined when the angels bow to Adam. Prostration shows reverence and submission, but it is important to note that the angels are not worshipping Adam, as reiterated throughout *tafsīr* works. Instead, the prostration is a "secular prostration," [175] in that the angels prostrate out of respect to Adam, attesting to his high rank. Thus, Adam's esteemed status when he is

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[172] The Quran does not clarify if the "names" is a reference to naming items or creatures. In fact, some commentators suggest that Adam being taught "the names" refers to Adam being given information about different languages.

[173] The relationship between prophets and angels in terms of hierarchy is a debated issue in theology. See Lutpi Ibrahim, "The Questions of the Superiority of Angels and Prophets between Az-Zamakhsharī and Al-Bayḍāwī," *Arabica* 28, no.1 (Jan 1981): 65-75.

[174] Compare *OED*, s.v. "tell" with "inform." "Tell" is associated with "mention, narrate, relate and communicate" whereas "inform" is associated with "to educate, give instruction, teach, impart knowledge."

[175] Roberto Tottoli, "Muslim Attitudes Towards Prostration (*sujūd*): I. Arabs and Prostration at the Beginning of Islam and in the Qur'ān," *Studia Islamica*, no. 88 (1988): 29. Another work dedicated to this topic is Samuel M. Zwemer, "The Worship of Adam by Angels (With Reference to Hebrews 1:6)," *Muslim World* 27, no. 2 (1937).

created is presented to us in the Quran known to us through the way Adam is depicted in relation to the angels.

5. God's Warning to Adam

Adam eating from the tree is the central point of the narrative related to this study as it marks the moment that error is introduced into his story. However, to understand Adam's error, we must first understand the nature of God's command to Adam. God warns Adam about two things: coming close to the tree (Q 2:35) and the enmity of Satan (Q 20:117). The prohibition against the tree is mentioned twice in the Quran, "And do not come close to this tree, or you will be among the wrongdoers" (Q 2:35; 7:19), indicating its importance in the story.[176] Exegetes present lengthy discussions on the possibilities of the type of tree that was prohibited and explore whether the prohibition was against one tree or all trees of a particular type.[177] This debate gives rise to the notion of Adam's *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) or *taʾwīl* (interpretation), as exegetes such as al-Rāzī argue that Adam misunderstood God's command because he mistook the prohibition as referring to one particular tree as opposed to all trees of the same type.[178] However, as can be seen from the Quranic verses in question, this is not clarified in the text.

The phrase "Do not come close" (*lā taqrabā*) is a prohibition (*nahy*). Within an Islamic legal framework, there are many types of *nahy*, some of which do not refer to prohibitions but instead refer to advisory comments or divine preferences. From this perspective, the English term "prohibition" as a translation of *nahy* can be misleading and restrictive as "prohibition" in English is associated with something forbidden and likely bears consequences if not followed.[179] However, there are different types of prohibitions within the Islamic legal framework, and not all of them relate to forbidden acts.[180] This is explored in detail by exegetes such as al-Māturīdī and al-Rāzī who examine God's prohibition ("Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35)) and question whether it is referring to something

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[176] Repetition in the Quran is considered a linguistic device employed for emphasis and to signify an important concept or moment.

[177] See Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1954), 1:551-6.

[178] See ch. 4, section 4.4.

[179] *OED Online*, s.v. "prohibition," accessed 2 July 2021. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/152258.

[180] See ch. 3, section 4.1.

preferential (*tanzīh*) or proscriptive (*taḥrīm*). The exegetes' interpretations of the command affect how they view the severity of Adam's error.

In *Ṭā Hā*, God also warns Adam and his spouse of Iblīs. He says, "O Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and your wife so do not let him remove you (*lā yukhrijannakumā*) from the garden and make you miserable" (Q 20:117). The verb "to remove" *(yukhrij)* is suffixed with an Arabic particle of emphasis called the *nūn* of emphasis (*nūn al-tawkīd)*. This places emphasis on Satan as a cause of Adam's removal from paradise. Furthermore, the verb *yukhrij* is a causative verb form (verb form IV), drawing attention to the cause of the action (Iblīs), as opposed to the result (being removed). Whilst further interpretation is required to discuss accountability within the story, the causative verb suffixed with the *nūn* undoubtedly underscores Satan's role in the slip. This is further highlighted with another causative verb, "he caused them to slip" (*azalla*) in Q 2:35, which is discussed below. Whilst these causative verbs spotlight Satan's role in Adam's slip, these verses also introduce the notion of accountability into the story. If Satan causes Adam to slip and be removed, to what extent is Adam accountable and consequently punished for his actions? This is a point of discussion and debate within *tafsīr* literature and is explored in greater detail in the following chapters.

5.1 Satan's Temptation

Satan tempts Adam by telling him that he will become immortal and angelic if he eats from the tree that God has forbidden him from approaching (Q 7:20-3). This part of the narrative has been examined by exegetes such as al-Māturīdī with regards to why Adam is drawn to the idea of becoming angelic and what this reveals to us about human nature versus angelic nature. The following hadith sheds light on how and when Satan came to know of Adam's disposition and what would entice him:

> When God fashioned Adam in paradise, He left him as He wished. Then Iblīs roamed around him to see what [Adam] was, and when he found him hollow from within, he recognised that [Adam] had been created with a disposition that he would not have control over himself.[181]

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[181] Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 45:146.

This hadith presents Iblīs as taking advantage of Adam's hollow and unconscious state (before God breathes life into him in Q 15:29). In this unconscious state, Iblīs examines Adam and learns about his human weakness. Al-Nawawī (d. 1233), a renowned Hadith commentator, interprets this hadith to mean that Iblīs knew that Adam would be unable to restrain himself from desires, control himself in anger or defend himself against the power of satanic whispers.[182] Additionally, the phrase "in order to uncover to them" (li-yubdiya) is significant in verse Q 7:20, when we are told that eating from the tree will lead to Adam's awareness of his nakedness. The phase li-yubdiya (in order to uncover to them) is presented as Satan's goal and reveals to the Quran reader that Satan was aware that eating would lead to Adam's nakedness. This highlights that Satan was pursuing a conscious and calculated plan. This is further emphasised when we recall the hadith claiming that Satan was already aware of Adam's lack of self-control.

Finally, the Quran presents Satan's technique of tempting Adam in a way that can further shed light on Adam's nature to the reader. Satan says that the tree will grant immortality to Adam and transform him into an angel (Q 7:20). This verse suggests that immortality is overwhelming enticing to Adam. As Adam eventually gives in to this temptation, does this indicate an innate human desire to become immortal or angelic? This idea is explored further by exegetes who examine what this verse suggests in terms of angelic and human nature and the hierarchy and superiority of creation.[183]

There is also another verse in the Quran that describes how Satan tempts Adam, "So he lured them (dallāhumā) through deception" (Q 7:22). Though Abdel Haleem and editors of The Study Quran have translated dallā as "lured," it is important to address that many other translators have translated dallā to be related to a fall (Sale; Ali; Shakir), rendering the translation of the verse to be "he caused them to fall" (Sale; Shakir) or "he brought about their fall" (Ali). The root letters of dallā are d-l-w,[184] which is associated with something falling from a high place to a lower position, and the example of dropping a bucket from a high ground down to the bottom of a well is cited in classical dictionaries.[185] The exegete Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, who also authored a dictionary, writes under the entry of d-l-w

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[182] al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1987), 401-2.
[183] See al-Māturīdī's discussion on this matter in ch. 3, section 3.2.1.
[184] In some dictionaries dallā also appears under the root letters d-l-a.
[185] For example, see s.v. "d-l-w," in al-Farāhīdī, Kitāb al-ʿayn and Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī al-Gharnāṭī, Tuḥfat al-arīb bi-mā fī l-Qurʾān min al-gharīb, ed. Samīr al-Majdhūb (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983).

that in the context of the verse Q 7:22, it means that Adam and Eve were caused to be removed and descended from paradise. Al-Gharnāṭī here relates the root letters of *dallā* to Adam and Eve's geographical descent from paradise to earth. Another meaning of *dallā* is presented by early Muslim exegetes such as Muqātil ibn Sulaymān and al-Ṭabarī, who conclude that it refers to deception. For example, Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān notes that *dallā* means to "beautify something that is false"[186] and al-Ṭabarī notes that it refers to deception.[187] Ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311) and the author of a more contemporary Arabic dictionary, Aḥmad Mukhtār ʿUmar, also shed light on this aspect of the verb *dallā* by stating that it can refer to encouraging someone to do something[188] and making someone commit an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*).[189]

This analysis has shown that the verb *dallā* is associated with deception and luring, as well as a fall in position (geographical or metaphorical). The English word "fall," particularly in the context of Adam's story, is closely tied to the popular Christian concepts of "the fall of man" or "the fall from grace,"[190] which in turn are associated with original sin.[191] For this reason, the term "fall" is not semantically neutral in English in the context of Adam's story and has been avoided in this study. In line with Abdel Haleem and the translation by *The Study Quran*, as well as classical figures who have analysed the aspect of the verb pertaining to deception, *dallā* has been translated in this study as "lured."

6. Adam's Slip

The Quran uses many expressions to refer to Adam's error, such as "he disobeyed" (Q 20:121) and "he forgot" (Q 20:115). A key aspect of this study involves examining the terms used by exegetes to refer to Adam's error and discerning what these terms reveal about the exegetes' overall interpretation of Adam's eating from the tree and relocation to earth. In

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[186] Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān*, 3:32.

[187] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 10:110. Similar conclusions about *dallā* are also reached by al-Rāzī and al-Qurṭubī. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 14:52, and al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 9: 178.

[188] S.v. "*d-l-a*," Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*. Under this entry, Ibn Manẓūr offers a comprehensive view of the verb *dallā* and how it is understood by many different Muslim thinkers. It is also important to note that the verb *dallā* has disputed root letters, with some lexicographers listing it under the root letters *d-l-a* and others, like al-Farāhīdī and al-Gharnāṭī, under the root letters *d-l-w*.

[189] S.v. "*d-l-a*," Aḥmad Mukhtār ʿUmar, *Muʿjam al-lugha*, 3 vols (Riyadh: ʿĀlim al-Kutub, 2008).

[190] See introductory chapter, section 1. Also, another work which explores the "fall of man" and how it refers to sin and humankind from a contemporary, psychological perspective is Anthony F. Badalmenti, "Freud and the Fall of Man," *Journal of Religion and Health* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 23.

[191] See introductory chapter, section 5.2 for an analysis of sin and its Christian connotations.

order to examine the accuracy of the terms that exegetes use, in addition to the terms used by western academic scholars who write about Adam in English, we must first analyse the Quranic terms employed with regards to Adam's error.

6.1 *Azalla*

The Quran tells us that Satan caused Adam to slip (Q 2:35). The verb *azalla* (to cause to slip, a form IV verb denoting a causative meaning) plays a crucial role in understanding how the Quran depicts Adam's action. God says in the Quran, "And Satan caused them [i.e., Adam and Eve] to slip (*azalla*) and removed them (*fa-akhrajahumā*) from what they were in" (Q 2:36). The verb *azalla* is from the root *z-l-l* and is related to slipping or falling. Al-Farāhīdī, the author of one of the earliest Arabic dictionaries entitled *Kitāb al-ʿayn,* writes that Satan is a common cause of making human beings slip.[192] According to a medieval dictionary, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, the verb *zalla* (in verb form I) is also used when something is sliding off a surface or slipping in mud and generally refers to falling into something inadvertently.[193] It is also a term related to the Quranic story of Adam and its English translation, "slip," is not used within Christian scholarship. This is unlike terms like "disobedience" or "fall of man," which are inextricably tied to common Christian interpretations of Adam in the Bible.

Given the definitions and connotations of the root letters *z-l-l*, the English word "slip" is the most accurate word to describe Adam's action; not only does it convey the literal meaning of *azalla* (to cause to slip), but within the English language it also bears connotations of a sudden and inadvertent action.[194] The usage of this term is discussed by Māturīdite exegetes, such as al-Nasafī, who are particularly selective about the terms they use to describe Adam's action.[195] In addition to causing Adam and Eve to slip, Satan causes them to be removed (*fa-akhrajahumā*) from paradise. Both *azalla* and *akhraja*, the verbs meaning "to cause to slip" and "to cause to be removed," respectively, are preceded by the particle *fa*. This particle means "then," and it conveys the suddenness of action.[196] The use

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[192] S.v. "*z-l-l*," al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.
[193] S.v. "*z-l-l*," Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*.
[194] *OED Online*, s.v. "slip," accessed 29 March 2019. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/181880.
[195] See ch. 3, section 4.3.
[196] This is in contrast to the Arabic particle *thumma* that also means "then" but implies that a longer period of time has been taken between two events.

of this particle presents the slip of Adam as instant and abrupt and not a premeditated action, further highlighting the suitability of the translated word "slip."

6.2 *Nasiya* and *ʿAzm*

Regarding Adam's slip, the Quran states, "And indeed we had a covenant with Adam from before, but he forgot (*nasiya*), and We did not find in him determination (*ʿazm)*" (Q 20:115). The verb *nasiya* is the crux of much complex discussion in *tafsīr* about Adam's slip and forgetting. Its gerund, *nisyān*, is a hypernym that encompasses a broad spectrum of "forgetting," ranging from intentional neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) to inattention (*sahw*). Exegetes debate and discuss at great length whether Adam's forgetting in this verse refers to intentional neglect, in which case he will suffer punishment, or it refers to inadvertently forgetting something, in which case he could be exculpated or pardoned.[197] These are all interpretive suggestions for the verse that are given due consideration in the following chapters.

Although exegetes discuss *nisyān* at great length and unravel different subtypes and categories of "forgetting," the Quran itself offers different context of forgetting, which pertain to various types of forgetting. For example, in *al-Baqara*, Muslims supplicate and ask God not to "impose blame upon us if we have forgotten" (Q 2:286), whereas another verse of the Quran mentions how those who forget God's verses or signs are punished on the Day of Judgment (Q 20:126). The type of forgetting that Adam experiences is unclear from the Quran itself, and reliance on exegetical literature is needed to further explore this.

In addition to forgetting, the Quran states that Adam does not have *ʿazm* (Q 20:115). This word is often translated as "determination," "constancy," or "resoluteness" and has polarised some translators and exegetes of the Quran. What type of "determination" is absent in Adam? On the one hand, Pickthall, Arberry and Abdel Haleem translate the term as "constancy," which implies that Adam cannot stay faithful to his covenant with God. On the other hand, Sale translates the term as "resolution" and *The Study Quran* as "resoluteness." Shakir translates the word as "determination." I have chosen this word as a translation of *ʿazm* as the word "determination" is more strongly associated with intention

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[197] This is discussed in greater detail in ch. 3, section 4.2 and ch. 4, section 4.4.

(than resoluteness or constancy), which complements the exegetical discussions on ʿazm that focus on whether Adam was intentional or unintentional in approaching the tree.

Furthermore, the verse Q 20:115 does not clarify what Adam's lack of ʿazm is about. Does the Quran indicate that Adam was not determined to commit his error or that he was not determined in adhering to God's prohibition? This matter is further discussed in *tafsīr* literature at great length, such as by al-Rāzī when he tries to discern whether Adam was determined to transgress God's command – a topic that will be addressed in the latter part of this thesis.[198]

6.3 ʿAṣā

One of the key verbs related to this study is in the following verse, "And Adam disobeyed (ʿaṣā) his Lord, and he was misguided (ghawā)" (Q 20:121). The verb ʿaṣā is used in the Arabic language to refer to any act that is "the opposite of obedience" (ḍidd al-ṭāʿa)[199] including acts of varying degrees of severity. It can refer to committing heinous crimes such as killing prophets, as well as contravening an order or omitting an obligation.[200] For example, the verb ʿaṣā is used in the Quran to describe the actions of the children of Israel (Q 2:61; 3:112; 5:78) and is used together with the verb iʿtadda (to exceed boundaries). In this context, ʿaṣā refers to killing prophets, transgressing God and His messenger and is related to the severe consequence of eternal hellfire. Similarly, it is employed when discussing the actions of the Pharoah (Q 79:21) who rejects God. However, the verb ʿaṣā is also used when the prophet Moses scolds his brother Aaron—also a prophet— for failing to preserve his community in righteousness ("How could you disobey my orders?" Q 20:93). Similarly, Moses promises Khidr in Q 18:69 that he will not disobey Khidr's orders, which he eventually does end up doing.[201] The usage of ʿaṣā in these two examples indicates that ʿaṣā is not only used for heinous crimes against God and His prophets, but also less severe cases where obedience is expected but not fulfilled. The diverse contexts across which the

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[198] See ch. 4, section 4.4.2.

[199] S.v. "ʿa-ṣ-y," in particular, the gerund ʿiṣyān in the following classical dictionaries: (1) al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*; (2) Zayn al-Dīn al-Razī, *Mukhtār al-ṣiḥāḥ*; (3) al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*. A further discussion on the verb ʿaṣā and term ʿiṣyān is in ch. 3, section 4.3 and ch. 4, section 4.3.

[200] See Mohamed Abdul Raouf, "The Qur'anic Concept of Sin" (London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1963), 76.

[201] Moses does eventually disobey Khiḍr in Q 18:71-8.

verb is employed highlights that ʿaṣā in and of itself does not convey a punishable or severe moment of disobedience, and that context is needed to clarify the degree of the action.

6.3.1 English Terms used for Adam's Slip

Whilst on the topic of Adam's slip, it is crucial to analyse the English terms employed in western scholarship to refer to this part of the narrative. As the Quranic narrative shows, several words are used to critique Adam in the Quran, and each word has its own subtext and connotation. This is what gives rise to interpretations of Adam's action in *tafsīr* literature. Cornelia Schöck offers a brief insight into how Adam's action has been interpreted. She also introduces how the concept of prophetic impeccability affects the way classical writers discussed Adam's action:

> The early commentators do not question that Adam sinned, although his sin was viewed as predetermined (J. van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīt̲ und Theologie,* 161-8). The later commentaries, influenced by the dogma of the prophetic impeccability (ʿiṣma)*,* emphasise that Adam and Eve were made to "slip" by Satan (*azallahumā,* Q 2:36) and Adam forgot (*nasiya,* Q 20:115); or they characterise the disobedience (q.v.) as an error in judgment *(khaṭaʾ fī l-ijtihād)*[202]

Although Schöck is presenting the range of interpretations of Adam's action, in doing so, she employs the English word "disobedience." Schöck's usage of this word is one example among many works of western scholarship that employs terms such as "Adam's disobedience," "sin," and "error" interchangeably, [203] overlooking that these terms do not carry the same connotations in the English language as one another. By examining the subtexts of English terms, the linguistic framework for the present study will be brought to light.

i) Adam's "Disobedience"

As mentioned, the Quran declares, "And Adam disobeyed (ʿaṣā) his Lord" (Q 20:121). Although "he disobeyed" is a literal translation of the verb ʿaṣā, the phrase "Adam's

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[202] Cornelia Schöck, "Adam and Eve," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed., Jane Dammen McAuliffe, et al., accessed 1 August 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00003.
[203] These terms are used in several works about Adam, but for particular examples, see for "sin": Karel Steenbrink, "Created Anew," 190. For "disobedience," see Shabana, "Concept of Sin in the Quran in Light of the Story of Adam," 47. See also Schöck, "Adam" in *Encyclopaedia of the Quran*.

disobedience" is often used in Islamic English scholarship to refer to Adam's eating from the tree. It is thus important to analyse this term in English and compare it with its Arabic equivalent to assess its accuracy and connotations. The verb ʿaṣā literally means "to not obey [an order]."[204] As mentioned above, the Arabic verb alone does not connote the intent of the action, or that it is punishable, or that it will result in severe consequences. In English, the word "disobedience" is defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as:

> a. The fact or condition of being disobedient; the withholding of obedience; neglect or refusal to obey; violation of a command by omitting to conform to it, or of a prohibition by acting in defiance of it; an instance of this.

> b. Non-compliance with a law of nature, an influence or the like.[205]

As the definition shows, "disobedience" can be (although is not explicitly) associated with an attitude of defiance, as suggested by the phrases "refusal to obey" and "acting in defiance." Similarly, the term "disobedient" is defined as, "withholding obedience; refusing or failing to obey; neglectful or not observant of authoritative command; guilty of breach of prescribed duty; refractory, rebellious."[206] "Disobedient" can refer to "withholding obedience," (i.e., dis-obedience at its atomic root) and does not explicitly connote an attitude of disrespect or rebellion. However, as the definition shows, it is also related to being guilty of neglect and refractory behaviour. This is unlike ʿaṣā which refers only to the action and is not imbued with connotations of intent. The range of actions that ʿaṣa implies is in contrast to other Arabic verbs such as *ṭāgha* that convey disregard and defiance.[207] The term "disobedience" in English also connotes a rebellious attitude. In a theological context, disobedience against God—a phrase used particularly in the case of Adam—is associated with consequence and punishment. These evaluations of the terms "disobedience" and "disobedient" align with how exegetes like al-Ṭabarī interpret Adam's action, but not all. Furthermore, when looking at the use of ʿaṣā in the Adam narrative in the context of verbs such as *azalla* and *nasiya*, it is evident that Adam's action was not to defy God, nor was it carried out to be insolent in the way that the English word "disobedience" can suggest.

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[204] S.v. "ʿa-ṣ-y," in: (1) Ibn Sīda al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*; (2) al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*; (3) Zayn al-Dīn al-Razī, *Mukhtār al-ṣiḥāḥ* ; (4) al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.

[205] *OED Online*, s.v. "disobedience," accessed 29 March 2019. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/54822.

[206] Ibid., s.v. "disobedient," accessed 19 April 2022. https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/54824.

[207] Abdul Raouf, "Concept of Sin," 55.

Furthermore, related to the verb ʿaṣā is its gerund, ʿiṣyān (disobeying) which is the topic of much debate and discussion in the *tafsīr* works of this study. The term ʿiṣyān appears once in the Quran, "God has endeared faith to you and beautified it in your hearts and has made hateful to you disbelief (*kufr*), defiance (*fusūq*) and ʿiṣyān" (Q 49:7).[208] Some Muslim thinkers such as al-Rāzī argue against the usage of ʿiṣyān (disobeying) for Adam's slip due to the connotations of recurrence that ʿiṣyān as a gerund of ʿaṣā can hold in Arabic.[209] However, other writers such as al-Ṣābūnī understand ʿiṣyān assert that it can be used to refer to Adam's slip. Another term related to the verb ʿaṣā that refers to wrongdoings and is used by exegetes to refer to Adam's slip is *maʿṣiya* (act of disobeying). The term *maʿṣiya* in classical dictionaries is defined as the act committed out of disobeying.[210] It does not hold any connotations of rebellion, defiance, or insolence because it describes only the act and not the attitude.

ii) Adam's "Sin"

In passing comments on Adam's action, it is common within western scholarship for scholars to refer to Adam's eating from the tree as a "sin."[211] However, although the story of Adam brings forth wider discussions on sin, especially in relation to prophets, the idea of Adam "sinning" is dependent on several interpretations of elements within Adam's story. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this study,[212] sin is linked to the notion of transgressing God's command. In the context of Adam's story, this would be related to how one interprets God's prohibition to Adam "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35). As mentioned previously, many exegetes understand God's prohibition as being preferential, in which case Adam has not transgressed a divine law.[213] Furthermore, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* defines "sin" as a "breach of laws laid down by a religion" that arises from a "wilful"

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[208] It is interesting to note that Yusuf Ali and Pickthall translate ʿiṣyān as "rebellion," associating the term specifically with notions of insolence and defiance.

[209] See, for example, ch. 3. section 4.

[210] For example, see s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-y," al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*. For al-Rāzī's definition of *maʿṣiya* see ch. 4, section 4.3.1.

[211] For one particular example, see Pieter Coppens, "Seeing God in This World and the Otherworld: Crossing Boundaries in Sufi Commentaries on the Quran," (PhD Diss., Quaestiones Infinitae, Utrecht University, 2015), 155.

[212] See Introduction, section 5.2.

[213] See ch. 4, section 4.2.

misuse of one's autonomy.[214] This reveals that "sin" is also related to intention, which is another aspect of Adam's story that is discussed with complex nuance in *tafsīr* works and cannot be discerned from the Quranic text alone.

Additionally, Mohamed Abdul Raouf, in his thesis entitled "Studies in the Quranic Concept of Sin," mentions that "sin" is an English word that describes the attitude of disobedience and not the act itself.[215] These definitions and analyses emphasise that we cannot divorce the English word "sin" from its theological and Christian associations, as well as the notion that it is an action performed with the intent to disobey God or entail disapproval.[216] The notion of "sin" within an Islamic framework is complex, and sins are further split into major (*kabīra*) and minor (*ṣaghīra*).[217] The linguistic complexities and connotations that arise from the English word "sin" are not only incoherent with the Quranic narrative of Adam (which itself bears several ambiguous details regarding Adam's intention and God's prohibition) but are also debated within *tafsīr* literature in connection to the question of prophetic impeccability. To reiterate, the term "sin" is not used in this study to refer to Adam's slip, as I aim to adopt English terms that stay closely in line with the Quranic language used in Adam's story. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the more neutral term "wrongdoing" is used when discussing major and minor (*kabīra* and *ṣaghīra*) wrong actions.

iii) Adam's "Mistake" and "Error"

From what has been presented of Adam's narrative in the Quran, we can see that the Quranic verses give rise to the vast range of interpretations on Adam's slip. For example, although Adam is described as "forgetting," the Arabic verb *nasiya* can refer to intentional or unintentional forgetting.[218] Similarly, the notion of Adam "disobeying" can refer to his act being punishable (as in the case of Pharoah) or a moment of going against God's command without any intention to be defiant.

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[214] Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sin, Major and Minor" in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* 2nd ed., accessed June 4, 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00184.

[215] Raouf, "Concept of Sin," 50.

[216] Zaman, "Sin, Major and Minor."

[217] See Introduction, section 5.2.

[218] For example, on one hand in Q 2:286 we see a plea from the believers to not be taken to account for errors they commit out of (unintentional) forgetting. On the other hand, verses such as Q 7:51 demonstrate how God warns humankind that they will be forgotten (intentionally) for how they forgot (i.e., intentionally) and rejected God's signs.

The Quranic terms are unspecific and neutral, and therefore it is also crucial to use additional neutral terms such as "mistake" or "error" when describing Adam's slip. These two terms, "mistake" and "error"—in addition to "slip"—hold similar connotations to those of *azalla* and *nasiya*, two verbs used in the Quran referring to Adam's actions. The word "error" is defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as "Something incorrectly done through ignorance or inadvertence; a mistake, e.g., in calculation, judgement, speech, writing, action" or "a departure from moral rectitude; a transgression, wrong-doing."[219] Here, "error" primarily refers to actions carried out both intentionally and unintentionally. It does not carry strong, literary, and theological suggestions of defiance or insolence, as in the case of "disobedience" or "sin." Furthermore, the word "mistake" is defined as "a misconception about the meaning of something; a thing incorrectly done or thought; an error of judgment" or, "misapprehension, misunderstanding; error, misjudgement."[220] The words "mistake" and "error" are neutral and can be used in a wide range of contexts for both acts that are intentional or unintentional, and therefore they are suitable terms to use in this study until conclusions are drawn about how exegetes interpret Adam's slip.

7. The Repentance and Relocation of Adam

After the slip occurs, Adam feels remorse and repents to God for his actions. He pleads with God to forgive him and Eve by saying, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If you do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the losers" (Q 7:23). God also commands Adam to descend to earth from paradise (Q 20:123), a moment that is called the "relocation" in this work.[221] I refrain from using terms such as "fall" as this term has strong associations with the mainstream Christian understanding that Adam's nakedness and coming to earth was a "fall from grace."[222] It is important to note that the Quran does not specify whether Adam was relocated to earth before or after his repentance. In *Sūrat al-Aʿrāf*, there is only one command to descend, which occurs after Adam has repented to God

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[219] *OED Online*, s.v. "error," accessed 29 March 2019. www.oed.com/view/Entry/64126.

[220] *OED Online*, s.v. "mistake," accessed 29 March 2019. www.oed.com/view/Entry/120072.

[221] I refrain from using terms such as "fall" as this term has strong associations with the biblical narrative, and mainstream Christian understanding that Adam coming to earth was a "fall from grace."

[222] Many versions of the Bible, such as The New King James and the English Standard Version, also use the phrase "the Fall" as a subheading for Genesis 3 when Adam eats from the tree and is banished by God to earth. Also, see Almond, *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought*, 173-210. See also section 5.1 of present chapter.

(Q 7:23-6). However, in *al-Baqara,* we are told that Adam and Eve are commanded to descend; they repent to God who accepts their repentance and then are instructed again to descend to earth (Q 2:36-9).

Exegetes also explore the repetition of the command to descend. The main arguments around this are that the repetition proves that descending to earth is not a punishment (as it happens after Adam's repentance is accepted) or that the repetitive command refers to two different descents. Al-Rāzī's work includes the opinions of those who argue that these are two separate descents; the first is from paradise to a lower heaven, and the second descent is from a lower heaven to earth. Alternatively, al-Ṭabarī presents Adam's repentance as happening after he has been relocated to earth.[223] The ambiguity around the chronology of events allows exegetes some room to interpret whether Adam's descend to earth is a punishment for his slip or if it is a natural progression of his life and a moment where he can actualise his role as a *khalīfa* on earth (Q 2:30).

Furthermore, common English translations of God's command to descend influence how English audiences perceive Adam's relocation. The Arabic word used for "descend" (Q 2:36) is *iḥbiṭ,*[224] which is in the verbal form of a command (*fiʿl al-amr*). Many English translators of the Quran interpret and translate this command found in Q 20:123 with a punitive undertone, e.g., "Get you all down, one of you a foe unto the other!" (Pickthall); "Get ye down" (Sale); and "Get out, all of you!" (Abdel Haleem). These phrasal choices and exclamation marks can be misunderstood to convey wrath, echoing the sentiments of the biblical verses of Gen 3:8-19, but it is important to note that this attitude is an interpretation and is not present in the Arabic language. In Arabic a command is neutral and does not always allude to frustration or fury. However, exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī who include *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations in their works and depict Adam's relocation as a result of God's wrath, interpret the command to descend in this way. They also show that Adam's life on earth is full of struggle and labour, which starkly contrasts with the abundance and peace he felt in paradise.[225]

After pleading for forgiveness, the Quran stipulates, "Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiver, the Merciful" (Q 2:37). At this

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[223] See ch. 2, section 3.4.
[224] Expressed in the Quran as the plural *iḥbiṭū* (plural) because it refers to Adam, Eve and Satan.
[225] See ch. 2, section 3.3.

moment, as he is the first man, Adam also becomes the first recipient of God's mercy. This moment has been discussed at great length in *tafsīr* literature, with exegetes clarifying what precisely these "words" are and the significance of incorporating these words or supplications into our own pleas for mercy from God.[226] As Adam is also a symbol of humankind and has only been depicted thus far in his story as a *bashar* (and not a prophet or a *khalīfa*), his moment of repentance is interpreted by the majority of exegetes as a didactic moment for the Quranic reader:[227] through Adam's repentance, humankind can also learn what to do when they make errors.

7. Prophethood and Divine Election

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Quranic characterisation of Adam, it is important to examine some aspects of prophethood and how they relate to Adam's status as a prophet of Islam. After accepting Adam's forgiveness, the Quran says, "Then his Lord chose him (*ijtabāhu*) and accepted his forgiveness and guided [him]" (Q 20:122). This verse explicitly mentions that Adam is forgiven, guided, and chosen for something, but there is no further information about what exactly he is chosen for. An analysis of the verb *ijtabā* can shed further light on this. The verb *ijtabā* occurs ten times in the Quran, with seven of these occurrences referring to God electing prophets, and, on four of these seven occasions, it involves God guiding them, too. For example, God declares that He chose Abraham: "He [i.e., Abraham] was thankful for [God's] favours. And He chose him (*ijtabāhu*) and guided him to a straight path" (Q 16:121). The same verb is used for Jonah (Q 68:50), the prophet Muhammad (Q 22:78), and many others.[228] Thus, looking at the verb in its Quranic context reveals that *ijtabā* commonly (although not exclusively) refers to prophets being chosen for guidance by God. Scholar Reuven Firestone argues that *ijtabā,* across all of its usages in the Quran, including when the verb is not explicitly referring to prophets or messengers, is still associated with "the special status of God's earlier messengers and prophets."[229]

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[226] The exegete al-Ṭabarī includes several narrations regarding this moment. One of the opinions he records is from Ibn ʿAbbās, who, in sum, reports that Adam told God he has repented and reformed himself, and God tells Adam that He will return him to paradise. For more narrations, see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 1:586.

[227] Stories in the Quran, such as prophetic narratives, are presented for didactic purposes, keeping in line with the overarching purpose of the Quran which is to guide humankind to God.

[228] See Q 12:6; 16:121; 19:58; 22:78 for prophets, and Q 3:179 for messengers.

[229] Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed., "Is There a Notion of 'Divine Election' in the Qurʾān?," in *New Perspectives on the Qur'an: The Qur'an in Its Historical Context*, by Reuven Firestone, n.d., 393-410, specifically in 398-401.

Furthermore, this verb choice (*ijtabā*) in the verse Q 20:122 has prompted exegetes to interpret Adam's story as one with a fortunate ending as Adam is potentially selected not only to be guided by God but also for prophethood or vicegerency.[230]

Another common verb often used to refer to the election of prophets is the verb *aṣṭafā* (lit. to elect), used fourteen times in the Quran. In all of these occurrences, God is always the subject of the verb, which highlights that it refers to divine election. Five of the fourteen occurrences in the Quran refer to God electing individual prophets, such as Abraham (Q 2:130) and Moses (Q 7:144), who are called God's "elected" ones. The Quran says, "God elected (*iṣṭafā*) Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imrān over the worlds" (Q 3:33). By virtue of association with Noah and Abraham, who are explicitly mentioned as prophets elsewhere in the Quran,[231] Adam's own prophetic status is hereby established according to the majority of Muslim scholars. Whenever the verb is used in reference to prophets and others (such as Mary in Q 3:42 and righteous people in Q 35:32), *iṣṭafā* indicates a high status because one is selected and chosen by God to fulfil a particular purpose.

8. Additional Prophetic Narratives

In addition to Adam's slip, the Quran also mentions the errors made by many other prophets such as Jonah, Moses, and David.[232] The following section is an analysis of some of the narratives that the exegetes of this study frequently refer to. By presenting the narratives of Jonah, Moses and David here at the outset of the study, we can see how they follow a similar pattern to Adam's error, namely, being tempted and being held accountable and then seeking repentance. Also, exegetes often interpret the following narratives on prophetic error differently from how they interpret Adam's story, in which they often draw didactic lessons for the Quranic reader, even though similar themes and language is shared across them.[233] By evaluating key similarities between narratives, or lack thereof, we can

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[230] See ch. 3, section 6; ch. 4, section 4.6; ch. 5, section 3.3.4.
[231] See for Abraham, Q 19:41, and for Noah, Q 4:163; 26:107.
[232] There are additional prophets who have been omitted from the discussion here, even though the Quran mentions that God has forgiven them for a mistake, such as Noah (Q 11:44-46), and Solomon (38:35-6). They have been omitted as the mentioning of their mistakes is not presented in a full narrative form like the ones under discussion. However, it is worth mentioning here that they also ask God for forgiveness (for their error) and God accepts their repentance.
[233] For example, see ch. 2, section 3.2.1.

establish whether other prophetic stories can inform our overall understanding of prophetic errors, repentance and prophethood in such a way that may help us understand the nature of Adam's slip. Examining other prophets who are recorded as having made mistakes will also underpin the discussion on prophetic impeccability, which will follow in more detail in later chapters.

8.1 Jonah

In the Quran, Jonah turns his back on his community after they failed to take heed of his prophetic message. Frustrated with their lack of belief, he decided to sail away from them on a ship. Subsequently, Jonah is cast overboard and swallowed by a giant fish. In the darkness of the fish's stomach, Jonah realises what he has done and exalts God (Q: 21:87-9; 37:139-48.) Jonah's actions are described in the following verse, "And Jonah, when he walked off in anger (*mughādib*) and thought that we would not admonish him. Then he called out in the darkness, 'There is no God except You, exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers'" (Q 21:87). Here, it seems that Jonah makes two mistakes: leaving his community in anger and assuming that God will not admonish him for doing so. The Quran also mentions that Jonah was a *mulīm* (a blameworthy person) (Q 37:142), and when repenting to God, like Adam, Jonah's realisation involves admitting his responsibility in error. While Adam says, "We have wronged ourselves" (Q 7:23), Jonah also declares that he has "been among the wrongdoers" (Q 21:87).

Jonah's anguish is also portrayed as "he called out in distress (*makẓūm*)" (Q 68:48). The root letters of the word *makẓūm*, *k-ẓ-m*, indicate anguish and suffering[234] and reveals the extent of Jonah's sadness and guilt. The Quranic story of Jonah is examined in detail by Ayaz Afsar,[235] who concludes that the Quran depicts Jonah as a modest man who is ready to submit to God's majesty despite his error. Afsar also asserts, "There is no mention of Jonah's open disobedience, but it is a Quranic convention that it places prophets to the highest rank among various virtuous groups of human beings."[236] He maintains that "open disobedience" is contrary to prophetic status. Afsar highlights that Jonah is not wilful or

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[234] S.v. "*k-ẓ-m*," al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*; al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.
[235] Ayaz Afsar, "A Comparative Study of the Art of Jonah/Yūnus Narrative in the Bible and the Qurʾān," *Islamic Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 319-39.
[236] Afsar, "Jonah/Yūnus Narrative in the Bible and the Qurʾān," 326.

defiant in his actions as he is a modest man and a prophet.

Jonah's story as it is presented in the Quran is slightly different from Adam's narrative. In Jonah's story, he is the successful hero[237] who repents for his mistakes and is rescued from the belly of the fish. His community also ultimately reformed and accepted his message. As such, he is depicted as the protagonist of his story. This is unlike Adam's story, which involves other characters such as Satan and the angels. In particular, there are moments in the Adamic narrative where Adam is not the central figure. For example, Adam's creation and the angels' prostration story in Q 7:11-18 focuses on Iblīs' arrogance and refusal to bow to Adam.

Furthermore, the usage of the causative verbs, *azalla* and *akhraja* (Q 2:36)—two verbs that highlight Satan as an active agent in Adam's slip—foreground Satan, the agent of the verb, and offer him a significant role in Adam's slip. The shared spotlight between Adam and Satan has even led some scholars, such as Steenbrink, to assert that Adam's slip is of secondary importance in comparison to the fall of Satan.[238] Jonah's story, however, focuses on Jonah himself, and Satan's temptation is omitted.

8.2 Moses

Moses is one of the most revered prophets in the Islamic tradition, and his story is one of the most recounted narratives in the Quran. As well as being a prophet, he is a messenger (*rasūl*). However, despite this high rank, Moses is recorded as having committed manslaughter:

> He entered the city at a time of ignorance from its people, and he found in it two people fighting, one from his city and the other from his rival city. The man [from the same city as Moses] asked Moses for help, and Moses struck the enemy and killed him. He said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a misguiding enemy" (Q 28:15).

Moses kills an Egyptian hastily and immediately realises his mistake. He declares, "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me" (Q 28:18), and then God forgives him. Moses recognises that he was overcome by a satanic influence, yet he still takes accountability for

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[237] Ibid., 327.
[238] Steenbrink, "Created Anew," 190.

his action. This verse is an example of how prophetic error is followed by acknowledging accountability and repentance, regardless of whether the Quran mentions how and by whom the prophets were tempted. This is also apparent when Adam says that he has wronged himself, despite the Quranic narrative highlighting that Satan causes Adam to slip.

Furthermore, the Quran also shows that Moses lacked patience, which reveals a flaw in his character. Moses takes up the tutelage of an unnamed mystical figure in the Quran, commonly referred to as Khiḍr. [239] Khiḍr is initially uncertain about taking on Moses as a student and declares at the outset, "Indeed you will not be able to have patience with me" (Q 18:67). However, Moses reassures him that he will be patient and will not disobey Khiḍr (Q 18:69). Although Khiḍr instructs Moses not to question any of his actions, Moses cannot hold back and questions Khiḍr three times, demonstrating his impatience. Before leaving Moses and rescinding the tutelage, Khiḍr says, "Did I not tell you that you will not be able to have patience with me?" (Q 18:75). Throughout this encounter, we can see that Moses is not patient with Khidr and does not uphold his pact of not questioning Khidr's actions. This section of Moses's narrative is particularly important. Like Adam's forgetting and Jonah's anger, Moses too exhibits a common, human shortcoming: impatience. By presenting such qualities in prophets, the Quranic narratives emphasise not only that prophets make errors but that their errors are those that the Quranic reader can relate to from personal experience. This highlights the didactic aspect of prophetic narratives in the Quran by showing the human characteristic of prophets; although prophets hold a distinct and high rank in the eyes of God in the spiritual hierarchy, they still exhibit human traits and qualities which are often the reason for their mistakes.

8.3 David

In addition to Adam, David is the only other *khalīfa* mentioned in the Quran. The Quran reveals that David was a king (Q 2:251) and a *khalīfa* (Q 38:26). In his narrative, God emphasises that he must rule with justice between people (Q 38:26). This becomes David's responsibility and test on earth, in the same way that Adam's test is keeping away from the

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[239] A.J. Wensick, "Khiḍr" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second edition*, ed. P. Bearman, et al., accessed 3 July 2019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0483.

prohibited tree and not giving in to Satan.[240] David is given a trial between two people that he judges hastily and unfairly, as he passes a judgement without hearing both sides of the story. The Quran states, "And David thought that indeed We have tried him, and he sought the forgiveness of his Lord, and he fell down in prostration and turned in repentance" (Q 38:24). In the next verse, God declares that He "forgave him for that" (Q 38:25). In these verses, we can see that God tries David, just as He tries other prophets with tests.

Much like the previous narratives of prophetic errors, David's story follows a similar pattern. David falls into error inadvertently, acknowledges his mistake and is rewarded forgiveness from God. Through brief analysis of relevant Quranic verses about prophethood, we can see that the Quran hones in on the *bashar* nature of prophets by revealing their human weaknesses, such as anger, lack of patience, haste, or forgetfulness. These additional prophetic narratives demonstrate that although Adam was the first human being, the first prophet and therefore, also the first to make an error, he is not the only prophet to do so. However, as he is the first *bashar*, *khalīfa*, and subsequently the first prophet, there is additional importance placed on his story and trope of error as he is considered the exemplary figure for these roles. This can also be seen in exegetical works where the narratives of Jonah, David and Moses are interpreted in light of the individual prophet's journey, but Adam's story is commonly interpreted as a parable for humankind.[241]

9. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the aspects of Adam's story central to this study. Through this analysis, we have identified the particular areas of Adam's story that exegetes examine and debate. As the Quran indicates, Adam has a tripartite nature: he is a *bashar,* a *khalīfa* and a prophet. However, the Quranic narrative of Adam only depicts him as a *bashar* and does not reveal to us details of his *khalīfa* role or his prophethood. His story is presented to us in the style of a Bildungsroman*,* and we only see his journey from creation to being relocated to earth.

Linguistic analysis of key terms used in the Quranic story of Adam has revealed the following. First, the Quranic usage of verbs such as *azalla* and *yukhrija* gives Satan

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[240] The concept of humankind's test, or *miḥna* as it is referred to in Māturīdite theology, is explored further in ch. 3, section 5.1.
[241] This is explored further in ch. 2 where a comparison of how al-Ṭabarī interprets Adam's story against the interpretations of other prophetic narratives is offered.

accountability and responsibility for duping and tempting Adam. However, verbs such as ʿaṣā and *nasiya* simultaneously present Adam as an active agent in not obeying God and forgetting His command. This is similar to the narratives of other prophets in the Quran, such as the narrative of Moses, where Satan's influence is acknowledged, but individual responsibility is not waived on account of his prophetic status.

A brief analysis of English terms has also shown that English words often employed in scholarly literature to refer to Adam's action, such as "disobedience" and "sin," hold strong biblical associations related to consequence and are not always coherent with the words used in the Quranic narrative. They are associated with intention and insolence, which are not apparent from the Quranic text alone. Some exegetes employ similar terms, such as ʿiṣyān (disobeying), but the use of these words depends on the exegete's unique definition of the term. Therefore, for the sake of adopting neutral terms throughout this work, the terms "slip," "error," and "mistake" are employed in this study to refer to Adam's eating from the tree. This is because these terms are coherent with the details we are given in the Quranic narrative. Having examined the Quranic presentation of Adam, including important terms and key areas of ambiguity, let us now turn to Muslim exegetes' take on the Adam story in detail.

Chapter 2: Early Views on Adam's Story: The *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī

1. Introduction

The first work of *tafsīr* to be examined in this thesis is by the prominent tenth-century exegete, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923). The work, entitled *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* ("The Compilation of Clarifications on the Interpretation for the Verses of the Quran")[242] is one of the earliest complete works of *tafsīr* available to us. It has been extensively studied and is renowned for its conservation of material from the early formative period of *tafsīr*.[243] Analysing Adam's story in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* work provides a crucial starting and comparative point from which the development of interpretations about Adam in *tafsīr* can be charted. This chapter will examine if the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* portrays the prophet Adam as a paradigmatic figure for humankind who is punished because of his "disobedience" to God. This has remained the dominant and popular view of Adam today despite several later (post-al-Ṭabarī) interpretations that seek to alter and reform this view on the first prophet of Islam.

Al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* presents the Adam narrative using early source materials, such as the *tafsīr*s of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān and Ibn ʿAbbās;[244] these sources give an insight into early Hadith narrations about Adam that were circulating and popularised. Furthermore, many of the narrations al-Ṭabarī includes are also *isrāʾīliyyāt* (material from Jewish and Christian sources). Many Muslim scholars, both classical and modern, have debated about the usage, reliability, and suitability of these sources for prophetic narratives. Some *isrāʾīliyyāt* used in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* of Adam depict the relocation to earth as symbolising a descent from nobility to degradation. This is because many of *isrāʾīliyyāt* parallel (and are sourced from) the narrative of Adam in Genesis.[245] The authenticity of these narrations have

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[242] Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān an taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1954).

[243] This is however disputed by Heribert Horst who argues that al-Ṭabarī's access to material was not as expansive as it has been believed to be. See Claude Gilliot, "La sourate al-Baqara dans le commentaire de Ṭabarī : le dévelopement et le fonctionement des traditions exégétiques à la lumière du commentaire des versets 1 à 40 de la sourate" (PhD Diss., New Sorbonne University, 1982), 395.

[244] Herbert Berg uses al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* to investigate the reliability of the ascription of material to early authorities, such as Ibn ʿAbbās. See Berg, *Exegesis in Early Islam*, 173-219.

[245] See ch. 1, section 2 and also Appendix.

been called into question by exegetes (such as al-Māturīdī) [246] and also deemed incompatible with the emerging doctrine of prophetic impeccability by thinkers like al-Rāzī as they challenge Adam's esteemed status as a prophet of Islam.

The present chapter will examine al-Ṭabarī's stance on Adam's story. This chapter focuses on determining whether al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam as degraded because of his slip and to what extent he considers Adam's prophetic status when interpreting the Adamic narrative. Although al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* is broadly understood to be a compendium of Hadith sources and narrations, al-Ṭabarī still offers his perspective and conclusions on verses. He examines the validity of the narrations presented and often chooses which opinion should be given credence over others. Whilst the focus of this chapter is al-Ṭabarī's work of *tafsīr*, there are significant differences in how al-Ṭabarī presents Adam's narrative in his historical chronicle entitled *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* ("The History of the Messengers and Kings"). This work offers a more dramatised account of Adam's story as it includes unique *isrāʾīliyyāt* material that is not included in the *tafsīr*. Where relevant, a comparative analysis is offered between both works to examine the difference in the portrayal of Adam's status.

2. Al-Ṭabarī: Life and Works

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental *tafsīr* has been awarded much recognition in the sphere of Islamic exegetical studies,[247] yet little is known about the man behind the work. Tarif Khalidi has characterised al-Ṭabarī as a private and "overwhelmingly bookish" scholar,[248] and the focus of scholarship on al-Ṭabarī has remained on his work, in particular, the sources he uses and compiles. More specifically, al-Ṭabarī has been commended for his success in collecting hadiths from the formative period and presenting them in his *tafsīr*.[249] Al-Ṭabarī travelled extensively during his lifetime, including studying in Ray in Iran and Baghdad – the centre of

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[246] See ch. 3, section 4.2.

[247] Al-Ṭabarī's contributions to the field of Quranic exegesis is challenged by Walid. A. Saleh. Saleh argues that native tradition did not rely much on al-Ṭabarī, and that western scholarly works have given him more importance than he was awarded by the native tradition. See Walid A. Saleh, *The Formation of the Classical Tafsīr Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 208.

[248] Tarif Khalidi, "Al-Ṭabarī: An Introduction" in *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and His Work*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Princeton: N.J. Darwin Press, 2008), 1.

[249] Despite the scarcity of material on al-Ṭabarī's personal life, Franz Rosenthal has written a detailed introduction in his English translation of al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*. He discusses al-Ṭabarī's ancestry and other personal information. See al-Ṭabarī, "Introduction" in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

scholarship at the time – in addition to Syria, Palestine and Egypt. He had expressed a desire to study under Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), but Ibn Ḥanbal had died before al-Ṭabarī could become his student. Despite this desire to learn from Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Ṭabarī had a tumultuous relationship with the Ḥanbalites, and he eventually followed the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence before establishing his legal school, the Jarīrī school, which bore several similarities to the Shāfiʿī legal framework.[250] Al-Ṭabarī's theological outlook was loyal to that of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Shafiʿī in that it prioritised textual evidence found in Hadith literature.[251] This outlook is in contrast to the methodology of figures like Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944), a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī (and the subject of the next chapter), whose theological framework relied on independent judgement and reasoning, and paralleled the intellectual methodology of Abū Ḥanīfa.

Although al-Ṭabarī is considered a polymath who excelled in many different fields of study, such as Arabic grammar, poetry, and jurisprudence, his expertise and commitment to scholarship was in sourcing narrations and composing narratives. This is seen in his *tafsīr*, his historical chronicle (the *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*) and other lesser-known works such as *Ṣarīḥ al-sunna* ("The Clear Narrations") and *Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-tafṣīl al-thābit ʿan rasūl Allāh min al-akhbār* ("The Refinement of Sources and the Elaboration of Proofs on the Messenger of God from the Reports"). He studied with Hadith scholars (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) such as Bishr ibn Muʿādh al-ʿAqadī (d. 859 or 860) and Hannād ibn al-Sarī (d. 857),[252] and it is in their company that al-Ṭabarī was exposed to the magnanimous number of narrations he includes in his works. Al-Ṭabarī also authored works of theology, many of which are no longer extant. Although al-Ṭabarī is commonly assumed to have adopted a traditionalist approach—prioritising textualism in his intellectual methodology—his interests in theology and also the theological dimension of his *tafsīr* has recently been examined and brought to light by scholar, Mustafa Shah.[253]

One of the few theological works authored by al-Ṭabarī that is available is the *Tabṣīr fī maʿālim al-dīn* ("An Insight into the Features of Religion"), a work detailing the theological

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[250] Devin J. Stewart, "Muhammad ibn Dawud al-Zahiri's Manual of Jurisprudence," in *Studies in Islamic Law and Society* 15, Ed. Bernard G. Weiss (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2002), 135.

[251] See al-Ṭabarī, *Tabṣīr fī maʿālim al-dīn*, ed. ʿAlī abn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Ibn ʿAlī al-Shibal (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿĀṣima, 1996), 29.

[252] Franz Rosenthal, "General Introduction," in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, 1:20.

[253] See Mustafa Shah, "Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of *Tafsīr*: Theological Dimensions of a Legacy" in *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013), 83-139.

disputes of his time and warning the people of Tabaristan of erroneous doctrines. This work demonstrates that al-Ṭabarī engaged in theological matters and was aware of different beliefs among sects.[254] In this work, al-Ṭabarī criticises the views of the Muʿtazilites, the Khawārij and Jahmiyya sects, among others.[255] It is important to note that this work does not address the notion of prophethood or prophetic impeccability and is more concerned with theological beliefs about God's attributes (ṣifāt).

Another point worth mentioning is that the famous theologian and founder of the Ashʿarite school, Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 936), was a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī. However, there is no information about any exchange between the two figures. Their contemporaneous nature indicates that Ashʿarite theology was still in its early stages of formation and development and that doctrines around prophethood were yet to be crystallised and disseminated widely in any theological school. Even the Shiite exegetical tradition was yet to discuss the story of Adam in light of principles on prophetic impeccability,[256] as can be seen in examples from the *tafsīr* of al-Qummī (d. 940).[257]

2.1 Methodology and Purpose of the *Tafsīr*

In the introduction to his *tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī states that his purpose in composing this work is to clarify the Quran's meanings and present the hadiths transmitted about Quranic verses. He writes:

> We shall state whatever consensus has come down to us where there has been agreement concerning [the Quran], as well as disagreement. . . establishing the reasoning of each of the schools among them. . . and then indicating most succinctly and briefly that which seems to us to be correct.[258]

Al-Ṭabarī's method of discussing a verse in this work is as follows: (1) a Quranic verse is presented and then paraphrased or summarised by him; (2) the verse's philological aspects,

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[254] For an insight into the theological slant of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, see Shah, "Al-Ṭabarī and the Dynamics of *Tafsīr*."

[255] See the index of sects and groups discussed and referenced in al-Ṭabarī, *Tabṣīr*, 262-3.

[256] For an overview of the Shiite tradition of *tafsīr* and principles of prophetic and imamate *ʿiṣma*, see introduction, section 5.3. See also Gabriel Said Reynolds, *The Qurʾān and Its Biblical Subtext* (London: Routledge, 2012), 204.

[257] See ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī* (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Imām al-Mahdī, n.d.), 1:72-ff. Al-Qummī's *tafsīr* is also very Hadith-based, like al-Ṭabarī's work. For an overview on the doctrine of *ʿiṣma* in Shiite exegesis, see Bar-Asher, *Scripture and Exegesis*, 159.

[258] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:7.

including the different readings and how this can affect meaning are discussed; (3) related hadith are presented; (4) finally, al-Ṭabarī does one of the following: (a) leaves the sources as they are without any comment; (b) attempts to harmonise them; or (c) chooses the most valid and suitable opinion. Al-Ṭabarī also mentions in his introduction that a good exegete should rely on reliable sources transmitted through righteous people.[259] Whilst al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* methodology preserved many narrations and hadiths expressed in earlier (and now nonextant) works, his method has also been criticised by some scholars who argue that al-Ṭabarī does not show an independence of thought, and who consider his work to be more of an encyclopaedia than a work of intellectual rigour.[260]

2.1.2 A Brief Introduction to *Isrāʾīliyyāt*

The term *isrāʾīliyyāt* is an Arabic term referring to materials from Jewish and Christian sources, such as the Bible. The term itself holds polemical connotations, as it is the subject of much discussion in scholarship on source authenticity, and the relationship, overlaps and tensions between the Islamic, Jewish and Christian textual traditions.[261] These sources were received into the Muslim tradition through Jewish and Christian narrators, some of whom also converted to Islam; Kaʿab al-Aḥbār (d. 652) and Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. 738),[262] are two of the most popular narrators of *isrāʾīliyyāt*. Regarding the term *isrāʾīliyyāt*, it is widely accepted that it first appeared in the work of the Arab historian, Ibn ʿAlī al-Masʿūdī (d. 956), entitled *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar* ("Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems"). However, Ignaz Goldziher suggests that the term dates further back than al-Masʿūdī's

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[259] Ibid., 1:88-9.

[260] For example, Walid A. Saleh argues in his thesis "The Qurʾān commentary of al-Thaʿlabī" that al-Ṭabarī's method is uncreative and shows no independence of thought or new discussions. See Saleh, "The Qurʾān commentary of al-Thaʿlabī" (PhD. Diss., Yale University, 2001), 100.

[261] For further reading on the term, its emergence and usage in literature, see Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor, Jaffary Awang, and Wan Mohd Fazrul Azdi Wan Razali, "The Fourth Source: Isrāʾīliyyāt and the Use of the Bible in Muslim Scholarship," in *Reading the Bible in Islamic Context*, ed. Daniel J. Crowther et al. (Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 302-338; and Ismail Albayrak, "Reading the Bible in the Light of Muslim Sources: From Isrāʾīliyyāt to Islāmiyyāt," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 23, no. 2 (2012): 113–27; and Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term *Isrāʾīliyyāt* in Muslim Literature," *Arabica* 46, no. 2 (January 1999): 193–210.

[262] There are differences in opinion as to whether or not Wahb ibn Munnabih was a Jewish convert to Islam, and if his extensive knowledge of *isrāʾīliyyāt* traditions stems from studying with Kaʿb al-Aḥbār, a popular narrator. See R. G. Khoury, "Wahb b. Munabbih," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed 2 April 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7818.

discussion on it as it appeared in a treatise by a ninth-century writer called Abū Dulaf (d. 841).[263]

The suitability of using *isrāʾīliyyāt* as a source in exegesis is a much-debated topic within Islamic scholarship. As the *isrāʾīliyyāt* are materials that pre-date the Quran, for some critics this indicates that they cannot be entirely relied on for authenticity. However, many of these materials were received and appropriated by Muslim thinkers in their works; so much so that scholars such as al-Dhahabi even called the *isrāʾīliyyāt* the "fourth source" of Quranic interpretation—the first three being the Quran, Hadith and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*).[264] Gabriel Said Reynolds argues that earlier exegetes used this material extensively because narrative was prioritised over dogma.[265] Early Arabs relied on this material to fill in their gaps of knowledge that were not offered through the Quranic text alone.[266] Al-Ṭabarī uses these sources without hesitation, though he has been criticised for their usage; for example, later scholars such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and his student, Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), were staunchly against the use of *isrāʾīliyyāt* and censured scholars who relied on them.[267] There is also significant modern scholarship authored by writers such as al-Dhahabī, Abū Shahba and one of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* editors, Muhammad Shakir, which criticises al-Ṭabarī's *isrāʾīliyyāt* usage.[268] Their comments are an example of the modern polemics around usage of *isrāʾīliyyāt*. Though some scholars (both classical and contemporary) deem *isrāʾīliyyāt* to be unrepresentative of and contrary to "authentic" Muslim literature, it is important to highlight that *isrāʾīliyyāt* were accepted and used in many Muslim works without issue. It is only when these narrations began to challenge emerging doctrines, such as the doctrine of ʿiṣma, that such criticisms of their usage and reliability gained traction. Jon Hoover writes that Wahb ibn Munabbih and other Jewish converts to Islam were held in high esteem by

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[263] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), 155.

[264] al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 1:47.

[265] Reynolds, *The Qurʾān and Its Biblical Subtext*, 205.

[266] Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor et.al., "The Fourth Source," 312.

[267] See Jane Dammen McAuliffe, "Assessing the Isrāʾīliyyāt: An Exegetical Conundrum," in *Story-Telling in the Framework of Non-Fictional Arabic Literature*, by Stefan Leder (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998), 351. For a view on the modernist rejection of *isrāʾīliyyāt,* see H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 73. Also, on the usage of *isrāʾīliyyāt* for prophetic stories, see Haim Shwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk Literature* (Walldorf: Verlag für Orientkunde, 1982).

[268] See al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 1:154. Also, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Abū Shahba, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt wa-l-mawḍūʿāt fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunna, 1988), 123;179. An edition of al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* edited by Muhammad Shakir also includes the editor's comments in the footnotes critiquing al-Ṭabarī's sources. For example, see al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, ed. Muhammad Shakir (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1969) 1:453-4.

their Muslim communities because of their knowledge of the biblical traditions. Perhaps it is for this reason that writers such as al-Ṭabarī and earlier exegetes saw no issue including these sources in their works; within the Hadith tradition itself, there are contrasting reports about whether narrations from the "People of the Book" (referring to Jews and Christians) should be accepted or rejected.[269]

Many *isrāʾīliyyāt* narrations include information about figures who feature in the Abrahamic tradition, such as Adam, Moses and Jesus. In particular, *isrāʾīliyyāt* are the foundation and source for many interpretations of Adam and Eve and have influenced many stories about Adam in the Islamic Weltanschauung.[270] These narrations are extensively used in the Islamic *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (stories of the prophets) genre,[271] as biblical narratives were used to explain and elaborate on the Quran.[272] In this chapter, al-Ṭabarī's inclusion of some *isrāʾīliyyāt* is discussed, and the impact that this has on al-Ṭabarī's overall presentation of Adam is analysed.

3. The Story of Adam

The extent to which each Muslim exegete uses the *isrāʾīliyyāt* has an impact on how he depicts Adam in his Quran commentary. Al-Ṭabarī's most lengthy discussion on Adam's story appears in his interpretation of the narrative in *Sūrat al-Baqara*. The following sections of this chapter will extract al-Ṭabarī's view from his *tafsīr*, examining how he interprets Adam's slip and whether it is viewed as degrading and tainting Adam's high status as a prophet.

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[269] For a list of these narrations, see Ismail Albayrak, "Quranic Narrative and *Isrāʾīliyyāt* in Western Scholarship and in Classical Exegesis" (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2000), 116-121.

[270] Karen G. Ruffle, "An Even Better Creation: The Role of Adam and Eve in Shiʿi Narratives about Fatimah al-Zahra," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 3 (2013), 793.

[271] Though works belonging to the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* is now categorised as a separate genre of work entirely, during the formative period of Islam, *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* were traditionally seen as an extension of *tafsīr* works. See Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rizvi, and Farhana Mayer, eds., *An Anthology of Qurʾanic Commentaries. Volume I: On the Nature of the Divine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-2.

[272] Jon Hoover, "What Would Ibn Taymiyyah Make of Intertextual Study of the Qur'an?: The Challenge of the Isrāʾīliyyāt," in *The Qur'an's Reformation of Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Hollger M. Zellentin (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 26.

3.1 Adam the *Khalīfa*

We first turn to see how al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam before the slip occurs. This will act as a reference point for how Adam's stature changes throughout the story and whether al-Ṭabarī interprets Adam's slip as comprising his status. Al-Ṭabarī's first discussion about Adam begins with the interpretation of the verse, "And when your Lord said to the angels 'Indeed I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*.' They said, 'Will you place therein he who will spread mischief and bloodshed?'" (Q 2:30). By examining al-Ṭabarī's analysis of this verse, we can determine whether he depicts Adam as the *khalīfa* of God, and by extension, as holding a position of responsibility and esteemed status.

As discussed in chapter one, *khalīfa* can mean either "successor" or "vicegerent."[273] The former refers to someone who succeeds another person in a particular role, whereas the latter refers to acting as God's representative and assuming a venerable position of responsibility and status. Commenting on the meaning of the word *khalīfa* in verse Q 2:30, al-Ṭabarī writes that *khalīfa* means:

> He succeeds so-and-so in this matter if he takes his place in it after him. As God says, "Then We made you their *khalāʾifa* [sing. *khalīfa*] on the earth to see how you would act" [Q 10:14]: by that [the verse] means that [God] put you in place of them and made you successors after them. From this, it is said about the greatest sultan that [he is] a *khalīfa* because he succeeded the one before him; he stands in his [predecessor's] place, and he is a successor from him.[274]

This shows that in explaining the meaning of *khalīfa*, al-Ṭabarī focuses on the meaning of succession; hence, for him, *khalīfa* means successor and not vicegerent. He then presents several opinions about whether the *khalīfa* mentioned in Q 2:30 refers to Adam or his descendants. These opinions are summarised as follows:

1. Adam is a successor of the jinn who existed on earth before humankind was created.[275]

2. The word *khalīfa* denotes successorship (not vicegerency), and in the verse Q 2:30, *khalīfa* refers to Adam's successors. This is the opinion of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī

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[273] See ch. 1, section 3.2
[274] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:476-7
[275] Ibid., 1:477-8.

(d. 728), a distinguished scholar.[276] According to this view, the word *khalīfa* in this verse refers to the descendants of Adam. Al-Ṭabarī writes that proponents of this view take this stance because the angels are concerned about the *khalīfa* spreading corruption on earth (Q 2:30). Al-Ṭabarī asserts that the corruption that the angels are concerned about will be caused by Adam's descendants and not by him.

3. The third opinion is that the word *khalīfa* refers to Adam and means God's vicegerent. Therefore, the *khalīfa*'s responsibility involves acting on God's behalf and ruling between people.[277] Al-Ṭabarī says that those who hold this opinion, such as Ibn ʿAbbās and Ibn Masʿūd (d. 650), regard Adam the *khalīfa* as being purified so as not to spread corruption. Thus, the angels' concern about a creature who will spread harm is explicitly referring to the actions of Adam's descendants.

Al-Ṭabarī agrees with opinion (2), the opinion of al-Baṣrī, asserting that word *khalīfa* refers to Adam's descendants as being successors.[278] However, al-Ṭabarī notes that both al-Baṣrī's opinion and opinion (3) hold that Adam is protected from spreading corruption, whether he is the *khalīfa* or not. According to al-Ṭabarī, the corruption and bloodshed are attributed to the *khalīfa*'s descendants and the community they will rule over.[279] Cornelia Schöck has mentioned that al-Ṭabarī's view on Adam being exempt from spreading corruption is proof that al-Ṭabarī considers the impeccability of the prophets (ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ) in his interpretation of the story.[280] Although al-Ṭabarī does not explicitly mention Adam's prophetic status as a reason why he is exempt from committing corruption, this stance does suggest that al-Ṭabarī holds Adam in high esteem and believes that Adam is distinct from ordinary human beings. Even though, according to al-Ṭabarī, Adam is not the *khalīfa* being referred to in the verse Q 2:30, al-Ṭabarī still regards Adam as being protected from spreading corruption and presents him as having an extraordinary quality. It is also worth noting here another verse which mentions *shirk* (ascribing partners to God) and is often understood by exegetes as an address to Adam and Eve, "then when He gave them a

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[276] Ibid., 1:479.
[277] Ibid., 1:479–80.
[278] Ibid., 1:480–81
[279] Ibid., 1:481.
[280] Schöck, *Adam im Islam*, 38.

healthy child they ascribed partners to Him regarding that which He had given them" (Q 7:190). Al-Ṭabarī does not exculpate Adam here from one of the severest sins in Islam (*shirk*) unlike exegetes such as al-Rāzī.[281] However, he affirms that Adam is accused of *shirk* only because he names his son ʿAbd al-Ḥārith (meaning servant of Ḥārith)[282] not because he has committed *shirk* in its literal form (i.e., ascribing to polytheism). Protecting Adam from committing *shirk* in its literal sense, in addition to affirming that Adam is protected from spreading corruption, can be seen as a subtle nod to Adam's prophetic impeccability. At the least, al-Ṭabarī is suggesting that Adam is protected in some way from major wrongdoings, although this is not mentioned explicitly.

Whilst al-Ṭabarī does not explicitly discuss Adam's status before the slip occurs, there are two instances in which he indicates that Adam is held in high esteem by the angels in the eyes of God. These are only briefly mentioned by al-Ṭabarī, but they tell us how he views Adam's status. When the angels prostrate to Adam, al-Ṭabarī writes, "God honoured Adam" through their prostration.[283] Furthermore, al-Ṭabarī writes in his *Tārīkh*, "God had given [Adam] honour and high rank with Him and allowed him the comforts of life and luxuries of His paradise."[284] Looking at how al-Ṭabarī describes Adam before the slip reveals that before eating from the tree, Adam is an honourable being with a high degree in the eyes of God. This rapidly changes in al-Ṭabarī's view when Adam gives in to Satan's ruses and is lured into eating from the prohibited tree.

3.2 Adam's Slip

When God places Adam in paradise, he is permitted to eat from anything he desires except from the prohibited tree: "Do not come close to this tree or you will be among the wrongdoers" (Q 2:35). Adam's slip is mentioned in the Quran in several different ways: (1) Adam is "caused to slip" (Q 2:36) by Satan; (2) Adam "forgot and [God] did not find in him determination" (Q 20:115); and (3) "Adam disobeyed his Lord and was misguided" (Q 20:121). Each of these instances indicates varying levels of significance and consequence.

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[281] Al-Rāzī argues that the man and woman mentioned in this verse are not Adam and Eve. See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 15:90.
[282] In Muslim culture, a name prefixed with ʿAbd (meaning "servant of") can only be prefixed to a name of God (such as ʿAbd al-Raḥīm meaning "servant of the Ever-Merciful") to stress that human beings can only be servants of God and not other human beings.
[283] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 1:546.
[284] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:106.

The ambiguity of the Quranic verses and terms used therein offers exegetes room to explore various degrees of punishment and accountability in their interpretations. Al-Ṭabarī's stance on Adam's action can be seen in the terminology that he uses, such as *dhanb* and *khaṭīʾa,* which contribute to his later conclusions about Adam's forgetting and relocation from paradise to earth.

3.2.1 *Khaṭīʾa* and *Dhanb*

Al-Ṭabarī frequently uses two terms to refer to Adam's slip: *dhanb* (offence) and *khaṭīʾa* (error). Although these terms are used in other unrelated verses in the Quran, they are not derived from any of the words used in Adam's story within the Quran. This is unlike the words *maʿṣiya* (act of disobeying) and *ʿiṣyān* (disobeying) often used by other exegetes like Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī in describing Adam's action. Both *ʿiṣyān* and *maʿṣiya* are derivatives of the verb *ʿaṣā* (he disobeyed) that is used in the Quran, "Adam disobeyed" (Q 20:121). The words *dhanb* and *khaṭīʾa* have particular subtexts relating to notions of intention and consequence and, therefore, are suggestive of al-Ṭabarī's view of Adam's slip.

Khaṭīʾa is used several times by al-Ṭabarī when referring to Adam's act of eating from the tree,[285] and although he does not mention why he uses this term here, he discusses it further with reference to another Quranic verse. When interpreting the verse, "And whoever earns a *khaṭīʾa* or an *ithm* and places it on an innocent person has burdened himself with slander and a manifest *ithm*" (Q 4:112), al-Ṭabarī states that a *khaṭīʾa* is a wrongdoing that can be either "intentional" or "unintentional,"[286] highlighting that it is a term related to the intent of an action. There is no consensus on the term *khaṭīʾa* that comes to light when examining classical dictionaries. There are some lexicographers who state that *khaṭīʾa* refers specifically to unintentional errors, such as one of the earliest lexicographers, al-Farāhīdī (d. 786).[287] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1108) offers further details in his definition.[288] He notes that a *khaṭīʾa* most commonly refers to a wrong act that is not intended in and of itself but is brought about due to an intentional cause (*sabab*). This cause, he argues, can be either a prohibited action or a permissible action. For example, if

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[285] See for example in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayan*, 1:571; 11:110.
[286] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 7:477-8.
[287] S.v. "*kh-ṭ-ʾ*," al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*.
[288] S.v. "*kh-ṭ-ʾ*," al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*.

someone is intoxicated (which is prohibited in any case) and commits a felony due to his intoxication, the felony is a *khaṭīʾa*. Similarly, if someone intends to shoot game (which is permissible) but ends up injuring a human being, the act of injuring would be considered a *khaṭīʾa*.

A more contemporary analysis of the word *khaṭīʾa* has been carried out by two scholars, Toshiko Izutsu and Mohamed Abdul Raouf. Analysing the Quranic usage of the term, Izutsu notes that *khaṭīʾa* is used in the Quran to refer to heinous crimes such as disbelief (*kufr*) that often warrant punishment.[289] Abdul Raouf, who also assesses al-Ṭabarī's usage of the term, states that a *khaṭīʾa* refers to "missing the mark" or "being away from the right path." [290] After a thorough analysis of how the term is used in the Quran and by exegetes, Raouf concludes that a *khaṭīʾa* is mostly associated with a deliberate offence.[291] This view is also held by the linguist Ibn Sīda al-Mursī (d. 1066) [292] as well as the exegete, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286), both of whom affirm that a *khaṭīʾa* is an intentional *dhanb* (offence).[293] From this analysis of the word *khaṭīʾa* by several scholars, both classical and modern, we can discern that it is a term largely related to the intentions of an action (we recall that al-Ṭabarī himself notes that it can refer to both intentional and unintentional acts).

Whilst al-Ṭabarī does not clarify in which of these two capacities he is using *khaṭīʾa* when referring to Adam's error, based on his use of the term in conjunction with the term *dhanb* (offence), we can presume that it takes on the meaning of an intentional error. The word *dhanb* is used over thirty-five times in the Quran and is predominantly associated with punishment and seeking forgiveness. Examples include: "Ask forgiveness for your *dhanb*" (Q 12:29); "Our Lord, indeed we have believed so forgive our *dhunūb* [sing. *dhanb*] and protect us from the punishment of the fire" (Q 3:16); and "so We seized each for his *dhanb*" (Q 29:40). Turning to a classical Arabic dictionary such as *Tāj al-lugha* authored by al-Jawharī

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[289] Toshiko Izutsu, *Ethico Religious Concepts in the Quran* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2002), 243-7.

[290] Mohamed Mohamed Abdul Raouf, "Quranic Concept of Sin" (PhD Diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 1963), 55-6.

[291] Abdul Raouf, "Quranic Concept of Sin," 55-6.

[292] Al-Mursī defines a *dhanb* as an *ithm*. On his definition of *ithm* he writes "it is said that it is doing what is not permissible." See s.v. "kh-ṭ-ʾ Ibn Sīda al-Mursī, *Al-muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Hindāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2000).

[293] See Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts*, 243-7. Al-Mursī defines a *dhanb* as an *ithm*. On his definition of *ithm* he writes "it is said that it is doing what is not permissible." See al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*, s.v. "ʾa-th-m."

(d. 1003) offers us a deeper insight into the term. Al-Jawharī states that *dhanb* originally referred to an animal's tail or a thing that follows behind something.[294] This suggests that a *dhanb* can be associated with realisation, acknowledgement or consequence as these can follow after committing an action, in the same way that a tail follows behind an animal. Al-Jawharī also notes that a *dhanb* is synonymous with a *jurm* (crime), which is associated with earning punishment.[295] Another classical dictionary, entitled *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*, authored by the linguist al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1109), confirms that a *dhanb* is an action that necessitates a consequence or a punishment.[296] Furthermore, Izutsu analyses the word *dhanb* and also concludes that it refers to an act that warrants heavy punishment.[297] According to Izutsu, *dhanb* is an evaluative term; it relates to the legal value of an error, ascribing an ethical value to an act because it refers to actions that warrant punishment in the Islamic ethical paradigm.[298]

In line with these definitions, al-Ṭabarī's uses the term *dhanb* when God's pardon is required, realisation has occurred, and punishment is nigh. For example, about Adam's asking God for forgiveness in "Our Lord we have wronged ourselves and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us then indeed we will be among the losers" (Q 7:23), al-Ṭabarī writes, "This is God informing us about Adam and Eve. . . their confession to themselves about their *dhanb*, and their request to Him for forgiveness and mercy."[299] Elsewhere when al-Ṭabarī interprets the verse, "Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He accepted his forgiveness. He is the Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful" (Q 2:37) he writes that when Adam repents to God, he is "acknowledging his *dhanb*, pleading to his Lord about his *khaṭīʾa*" and that Adam is regretful (*nādim*) for going against God's command.[300] Again, we see al-Ṭabarī using the word *dhanb* when Adam realises and acknowledges his error. These instances show that al-Ṭabarī uses the term *dhanb* when Adam realises what he has done and pleads for God's forgiveness.

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[294] S.v. "*dh-n-b*," al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.
[295] Ibid.*,* s.v. "*j-r-m.*"
[296] S.v. "*dh-n-b*" al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*.
[297] Izutsu, *Ethico-religious concepts*, 20.
[298] For a more detailed explanation of evaluative and descriptive Quranic terms related to ethics, see Izutsu, *Ethico-religious concepts*, 21-3.
[299] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 10:115.
[300] Ibid., 1:586.

There are similarities between how al-Ṭabarī uses *dhanb* in Adam's story and how he treats the narratives of other prophets such as David and Moses. For example, when David "thought that [God] had tried him, he asked forgiveness of his Lord, fell down prostrating and repented" (Q 38:24), al-Ṭabarī writes, "David asked God to pardon his *dhanb*."[301] Here, al-Ṭabarī uses *dhanb* when David acknowledges his error and repents to seek God's pardon. Similarly, when Moses asks for forgiveness, al-Ṭabarī writes, "God forgave Moses for his *dhanb* and did not punish him for it."[302] Al-Ṭabarī's analogous usage of the word *dhanb* in his interpretation of the stories of Moses, David and Adam further highlights that this term is used when figures recognise the severity of their actions and seek forgiveness from God in a bid to save themselves from facing consequence.

The connection between *dhanb* and consequence is also confirmed by Abdul Raouf. He argues that *dhanb* refers explicitly to an act that brings about shameful consequences.[303] In light of Raouf's work and al-Ṭabarī's usage, we can conclude that *dhanb* in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* refers to an action which is related to consequence, realisation of one's error, regret and seeking God's pardon. Al-Ṭabarī does not explicitly mention that Adam's error is grave or intentional. However, the combined usage of *dhanb* and *khaṭīʾa* imply that al-Ṭabarī considered Adam's eating of the tree to be a severe wrongdoing, associated with wilfulness and consequence. This idea is further emphasized in the way al-Ṭabarī interprets Adam's forgetting and how this contributes to the denigration of his venerated status.

3.2.2 Adam's Forgetting & Lack of Determination

The Quran is clear in mentioning Adam's forgetting and lack of determination: "And indeed We had a covenant with Adam from before, but he forgot (*nasiya*), and We did not find in him determination (*ʿazm*)" (Q 20:115). In the Arabic language, the word *nasiya* encompasses a wide range of categories related to forgetting—these range from intentional neglect to a momentary and unintentional lapse of memory.

Al-Ṭabarī states that several scholars regard *nasiya* in Adam's story to mean "Adam left (*taraka*) the command of God."[304] However, in his comments on a later verse unrelated

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[301] Ibid., 20:86.
[302] Ibid., 10:462; 18:190.
[303] Abdul Raouf, "Quranic Concept of Sin," 68-9.
[304] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 16:182.

to Adam's narrative where believers say to God, "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred" (Q 2:286), al-Ṭabarī examines different types of forgetting and attributes one of these to Adam. He writes:

> It is said that forgetting is of two types. One of them is by way of neglect (taḍyīʿ) or negligence (tafrīṭ) by the servant. The other occurs through the person's inability (ʿajz) to recall what he was entrusted to remember. [This refers to] the weakness of his intellect in not being able to uphold that responsibility.[305]

Thus, al-Ṭabarī presents two types of forgetting. The first, taḍyīʿ (neglect), can be assumed to be intentional because it is posited as the opposite of the second type, ʿajz, the inability to remember, which is unintentional. Furthermore, the Arabic term taḍyīʿ (a verbal noun) is derived from the root letters ḍ-y-ʿ, which refer to something being wasted.[306] In the Arabic verb form II, of which taḍyīʿ is the gerund, the verb refers to letting something go so that one misses the opportunity to take heed of it.[307] Regarding this type of forgetting, al-Ṭabarī writes:

> Neglect (taḍyīʿ) and negligence (tafrīṭ) refer to [the servant] leaving what God had commanded him to do. That is what the servant wants God to pardon him from being blamed for. That [type of] forgetting is what God punished Adam for and why He removed him from paradise. About that, God said, "And indeed We had a covenant with Adam before, and he forgot, and We did not find in him determination" [Q 20:115]. It is the [same] forgetting for which God says, 'so We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this day of theirs and what they rejected from Our verses" [Q 7:51]. [308]

As this extract shows, al-Ṭabarī classifies Adam's forgetting as neglect and not a natural lapse of memory which is unintentional and unavoidable. On the one hand, this portrays

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[305] Ibid., 5:156.
[306] S.v. "ḍ-y-ʿ," in the following dictionaries: (1) Hans Wehr, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary* (2) Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. Also see s.v. "ḍ-y-ʿ" in the following (1) al-Jawhari, *Tāj al-lugha;* (2) Nāṣir Ibn ʿAbd al-Sayyid al-Muṭarrizī, *Al-mughrib fī tartīb al-muʿrib*, ed. Maḥmūd Fākhūrī and ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Mukhtār (Aleppo: Maktabat Usāma ibn Zayd, 1979). The word taḍyīʿ does not appear in the Quran, but there are related terms (that share the same root letters) such as aḍāʿū in, "There came after them successors neglecting (aḍāʿū) prayer" (Q 19:59).
[307] See s.v. "ḍ-y-ʿ," Hans Wehr, *The Hans Wehr Dictionary*. Though this is a modern dictionary, the description of taḍyīʿ complements the entries under ḍ-y-ʿ that are found in the classical Arabic dictionaries.
[308] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 5:156.

Adam as someone who does not have an intellectual deficiency or defect of memory.[309] On the other hand, classifying Adam's forgetting as neglect heightens his blame and accountability as it indicates an intention, as previously mentioned. As suggested by the Arabic word's root letters (ḍ-y-ʿ), taḍyīʿ implies wilfulness, a loss of opportunity, and a failure to maintain a responsibility that one had the intellectual ability to uphold.[310] In this extract, al-Ṭabarī also includes a verse that likens Adam's forgetting to the companions of the Fire who neglected the day of judgement: "so We will forget them just as they forgot the meeting of this day" (Q 7:51). In this verse, the notion of forgetting is related to intention as God says He will punish those who forget Him by, in turn, forgetting them. Whilst in English, the term "forget" alludes to inattention or a mistake, the notion of forgetting in the Arabic language, as can be seen in this verse, also includes intentionally neglecting or leaving something. As this verse implies, God is saying He intends to neglect those who neglected Him. In drawing a comparison between Adam's forgetting and the type of forgetting being referenced in Q 7:51, al-Ṭabarī is implying both that Adam's forgetting is akin to that of those who will be punished severely, and that Adam's forgetting was an intentional neglect of God's command. In classifying Adam's forgetting in this way, al-Ṭabarī heightens the severity of Adam's error and culpability. In light of this analysis, the English term "sin"—indicating an intentional transgression against God[311]—aligns with al-Ṭabarī's views on Adam's forgetting as being intentionally neglectful, and incurring punishment.

The second Quranic critique of Adam's character is when God says, "And We did not find in him determination (ʿazm)" (Q 20:115). As discussed previously,[312] the context of the term "determination" is ambiguous. Does it refer to Adam not being determined in adhering to God's prohibition or in wanting to eat from the tree? Al-Ṭabarī writes the following in his analysis of the term:

> The root of ʿazm is the heart's conviction about something. It is said about [ʿazm],
> "someone is determined upon something if he believes it and intends it. Regarding

[309] Regarding Adam's intellect, al-Ṭabarī writes that if someone was to weigh the intellect of Adam with the intellect of his descendants, Adam's intellect would outweigh that of the masses. See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 16:185.

[310] In the Quran, the verb aḍāʿa (with the same root letters as taḍyīʿ, but in a different verb form) is employed to mean "letting something be lost or wasted." For example, "And their Lord responded to them, 'Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another'"(Q 3:195) and "Indeed, God does not allow to be lost the reward of the doers of good" (Q 9:120).

[311] See "Introduction," section 4.2

[312] See ch. 1, section 6.2.

the conviction of the heart, [it refers to] preserving something and having patience about [it] because a person who worries only does so because of the frailty of his heart and its weakness." So, if that is the case, there is no meaning other than what God has made clear, which is His saying, "And We did not find in him determination" [Q 20:115]. Its interpretation is, "We did not find his heart determined upon [having] loyalty to God through his covenant, or upon preserving what the covenant was about."[313]

Thus, in his interpretation of ʿazm, al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam as a disloyal servant of God who did not uphold the divine covenant. The characterisation of Adam as someone who is disloyal to God contributes to the overall view that Adam is punished for his error and that the slip denigrates his high status. This examination of Adam's forgetting sheds further light on al-Ṭabarī's use of the terms *khaṭīʾa* and *dhanb*. As Adam's forgetting is understood by al-Ṭabarī as being intentional neglect, we can conclude that al-Ṭabarī's usage of *khaṭīʾa*—a term that refers to both intentional and unintentional actions—is referring specifically to an intentional error in the case of Adam's error. This notion is also implied by the use of *dhanb*, which refers to actions that are followed by consequence and punishment

3.3 Adam's Punishment and Relocation

After Adam eats from the tree despite the divine prohibition against it, he realises his nakedness and is commanded by God to descend to earth. The two events which follow after he eats from the tree—the nakedness and relocation from paradise to earth—are interpreted by al-Ṭabarī to be Adam's punishments. For example, regarding the nakedness of Adam, "Their private parts became apparent to them" (Q 7:22), al-Ṭabarī writes, "God exposed them from the cover that had been covering them before their offence (*dhanb*) and error (*khaṭīʾa*). So He stripped them due to the error in which they erred and the act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) which they committed."[314] Furthermore, when discussing Adam's descent onto earth, al-Ṭabarī writes, "it was [Satan] who caused an error (*khaṭīʾa*) from them which led to God punishing both [Adam and Eve] (ʿāqabahumā) by their removal from paradise."[315] In several other instances, al-Ṭabarī uses the word ʿuqūba (punishment) or its

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[313] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 16:185.
[314] Ibid., 10:110.
[315] Ibid., 1:560.

verbal form ʿāqaba in his comments on Adam's story.[316] Al-Ṭabarī also emphasises several times in his *tafsīr* that Adam will experience misery and hardship when he is moved to earth. For example, on God warning Adam about Satan in Q 20:117, al-Ṭabarī writes the following summary before presenting several reports on the matter:

> God is teaching His prophet, Muhammad, what happened regarding Adam neglecting his covenant. . .[God says,] "so We said, 'O Adam, truly this is an enemy to you and your partner [Q 20:117]'". . .do not obey him in what he commands you both to do as [Satan] will remove you from paradise due to your act of disobeying (maʿṣiya) against your Lord and your obedience to [Satan]. God says, "and make you miserable" [Q 20:117], [meaning] that your livelihood will be from your [manual] labour. That is the misery that his Lord warned him about.[317]

Al-Ṭabarī also includes reports in the *tafsīr* which depict Adam as the recipient of God's wrath and curse. For example, the following is part of a narration attributed to Wahb ibn Munabbih, a renowned transmitter of *isrāʾīliyyāt*. It appears in the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* when al-Ṭabarī examines how Satan re-entered paradise after being banished from it after refusing to prostrate to Adam. This hadith (in its complete form) proposes that Satan re-entered paradise in the form of a snake and includes important information about how God treats Adam and Eve after the slip:

> Then Adam ate from it, and their private parts became uncovered. Adam entered the cavity of the tree, and his Lord called out to him, "O Adam, where are you?" [Adam] said, "I am here, my Lord." He said, "Will you not come out?" [Adam] said, "I am ashamed [in front of you], my Lord." And [God] said, "Cursed is the earth from which I created you. May its fruit turn into thorns". . .Then [God] said, "O Eve, you are she who deceived my servant, so indeed you will not give birth except that your pregnancy will be painful, and when you want to give birth to what is in your stomach may you look several times upon death."[318]

This hadith, which parallels the details found in the biblical account of what happens to Adam after he eats from the tree,[319] relays God's wrath toward Adam and also Eve, who is

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[316] Ibid., 1:560; 10:135; 16:182.
[317] Ibid., 16:185-6.
[318] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:562.
[319] See ch. 1, section 2 and also the Appendix under the heading "The aftermath of eating from the forbidden tree" to note the similarities between this narration and how this event is relayed in the Bible.

burdened with pain because she tempted Adam. Al-Ṭabarī mentions that this report, particularly what it says about Satan appearing as a snake to Adam, is sound.[320] Al-Ṭabarī's acceptance of this hadith demonstrates that he does not consider Adam's prophetic status as shielding him from making an error that will result in God's wrath and lead to experiencing misery and hardship.

This narration, transmitted by Wahb ibn Munabbih, has been examined in modern scholarship in Arabic, specifically in a work entitled *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt wa-l-mawḍūʿāt fī kutub al-tafsīr* ("The *Isrāʾīliyyāt* and Fabricated Hadiths in the Books of Exegesis") by Muḥammad Abū Shahba (d. 1983). As the title suggests, the purpose of Abū Shahba's work is to shed light on what he considers to be weak and false *isrāʾīliyyāt* used in exegesis. Abū Shahba concludes that this particular narration (about Satan re-entering paradise in the form of a snake) is not sound and that it is a common *isrāʾīliyyāt* cited not only by al-Ṭabarī but also by later exegetes influenced by al-Ṭabarī such as al-Suyuṭī (d. 1505).[321] This finding suggests that some of al-Ṭabarī's sources that depict Adam as degraded and punished are not unanimously agreed upon to be valid and reliable sources by Muslim thinkers, both classical and modern. Abū Shahba's critique versus al-Ṭabarī's acceptance of the narration shows that the concerns around *isrāʾīliyyāt* usage and inclusion are epistemological and have to do with discerning authentic and authoritative sources of knowledge which changes and develops over time.[322] This narration is just an example of one such *isrāʾīliyyāt* used by al-Ṭabarī that contributes to his view that Adam was degraded and punished. Further studies have been undertaken that have examined more of al-Ṭabarī's *isrāʾīliyyāt* material.[323] Additionally, much of the material used by al-Ṭabarī is rejected by other exegetes who are more selective in their use of *isrāʾīliyyāt*, such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

3.3.1 Different Genres: Adam's Punishment in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*

Al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of Adam's descent as a punishment is apparent in his *tafsīr*.

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[320] See Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:569. Here, al-Ṭabarī validates the hadith when he says, "as for the way [Satan] entered paradise to speak with Adam after he was removed from it and was banished from it, there is nothing from what is narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās and Wahb ibn Munabbih about this which an intelligent person could object to, for it is an opinion for which no intellectual reason or correct tradition proving the opposite refutes; it is something possible."

[321] Abū Shahba, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt*, 178-180.

[322] See Ahmad Yunus Mohd Noor et al., "The Fourth Source," 316.

[323] One work that has analysed the Jewish and Christian material in al-Ṭabarī's work is Āmāl ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Rabīʿ, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt fī tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa al-ʿArabiyya, 2000).

However, he offers a more detailed and dramatised version of Adam after the slip in his work of history entitled *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*. Some scholars have already examined the difference between Adam's depiction in the *tafsīr* versus the *Tārīkh*.[324] For example, Marianna Klar draws comparisons between the differences in how al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam in his *Tārīkh* versus his *tafsīr*. Claude Gilliot offers one reason as to why there is this difference in depiction across both works, arguing that the purpose of the creation story in the *Tārīkh* is to give form and narrative to the historical data available to al-Ṭabarī.[325] This explains the more dramatised account of Adam in al-Ṭabarī's historical chronicle in comparison to his *tafsīr*. Shahab Ahmed also touches on the "positive dramatic function" of different genres of work and uses al-Ṭabarī's *Tarikh* as an example of literature that dramatises accounts.[326]

In the introduction to his *Tārīkh*, al-Ṭabarī clarifies that the sources he uses in this work are not examined for their validity. He writes that his methodology in the *Tārīkh* is simply to report everything he has heard about the people he will write about. He states:

> I rely upon traditions and reports which I have transmitted and which I attribute to their transmitters. I rely only very exceptionally upon what is learned through rational arguments and produced by internal thought processes. . . .This book of mine may contain some information, mentioned by us on the authority of certain men of the past, which the reader may disapprove of. The listener may find [this] detestable because he can find nothing sound and no real meaning in it. In such cases, he should know that it is not our fault that such information comes to him but the fault of someone who transmitted it to us. We have merely reported it as it was reported to us.[327]

This extract reveals that al-Ṭabarī's method for choosing his source material is not based on scrutinising sources for their validity. This is because his purpose in writing the *Tārīkh* is to compile and not selectively analyse the sources. However, the overarching depiction of Adam in the *Tārīkh* does not contradict al-Ṭabarī's depiction of Adam in his *tafsīr*. This is

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[324] See Marianna Klar, "Between History and Tafsīr: Notes on al-Ṭabarī's Methodological Strategies," *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016): 89–129. See also Claude Gilliot, "Al-Ṭabarī and The History of Salvation," in *Al-Ṭabarī: A Medieval Muslim Historian and His Work*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 2008), 132.
[325] Gilliot, "Al-Ṭabarī and The History of Salvation," 137.
[326] Ahmed, *Before Orthodoxy*, 272-3.
[327] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. Muhammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif al-Miṣr, 1976), 1:7.

even though his *tafsīr* has a more stringent methodology[328] in which al-Ṭabarī often draws conclusions from reports or gives credence to the soundest report offered.

In his *Tārīkh*, al-Ṭabarī offers the reader more details about how Adam's slip leads to both a loss in status and his suffering on earth. He writes:

> Now we shall discuss how God tested the obedience of our father Adam and afflicted him, how Adam was disobedient to his Lord after God had given him honour and high rank with Him and allowed him the comforts of life and luxuries of His paradise, and how he lost all of that and went from the luxury and pleasure and abundant life in paradise to the miserable way of life of the inhabitants of the earth: tilling, hoeing and planting the soil.[329]

There is a stark contrast here between the "comforts of life" that Adam experienced when he lived in paradise and the "miserable way of life" consumed with toil and labour that he experiences after his slip. Al-Ṭabarī also highlights that Adam lost what he had before his slip, including his "honour and high rank," indicating that the slip lowered and degraded Adam's honourable status.

In the *Tārīkh*, al-Ṭabarī stresses that Adam's life on earth is devoid of ease. He does this by challenging a narration that reports how the angel Gabriel brought paradisal fruits to Adam when he moved to earth.[330] Al-Ṭabarī rejects this narration because he believes it contradicts the misery and manual labour that God has promised Adam if he approaches the forbidden tree. Al-Ṭabarī writes:

> God mentions that when He approached Adam and his wife, Eve, and forbade them from obeying their enemy [Satan], He said to Adam, "O Adam, indeed this is an enemy for you and your partner, so do not let him remove you from paradise so that you are miserable. In it, you will not go hungry or be naked, nor will you be thirsty or suffer from heat" [Q 20:117-9]. So, it is known that the misery —about which God had already informed Adam that would result from the obedience to his enemy, Iblīs—refers to Adam's difficulty in acquiring something that would remove his

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[328] Whilst al-Ṭabarī is more stringent in the *tafsīr* than he is in the *Tārīkh*, some scholars still criticize his leniency in including *isrāʾīliyyāt* in his *tafsīr* without classifying them as such. He is also generally criticized for including these narrations that some scholars would regard as inauthentic sources and basing his opinion on them. See Abū Shahba, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt*, 123 and al-Dhahabi, *Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 1:154-5.

[329] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:106.

[330] Ibid., 1:128.

hunger and his nakedness. [The misery] refers to how his children obtain food, such as ploughing, sowing, cultivating, irrigating and other difficult and painful tasks. If Gabriel brought [Adam] the food that he [would typically] obtain by sowing, then [Adam would not experience] the misery that his Lord threatened him with for obeying Satan and disobeying the Merciful One.[331]

By challenging narrations that suggest Gabriel having helped Adam when he was relocated to earth, al-Ṭabarī stresses that Adam's life after his slip cannot involve any ease or aid.

The dramatisation of Adam's story is not unique to al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh,* and we see such depictions in works belonging to the literary genre *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*.[332] For example, in al-Kisāʾī's (d. 1100) work entitled *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("Stories of the Prophets"), Adam's clothes curse him as they fall to the ground, and his paradisal crown is stripped from his head,[333] details that are absent in the Quranic account of Adam's story. Though al-Kisāʾī's work is known to have included unique and "strange"[334] narrations that are absent from other works of the genre, the overall image of Adam as having lost his honourable status is an image shared across many similar works. Another famous work depicting Adam as degraded after his slip is entitled *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("The Brides of the Council about the Stories of the Prophets"). It is written by the eleventh-century Persian exegete, Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī (d. 1035). In this work, al-Thaʿlabī notes ten consequences of Adam's slip which can be summarised as follows:[335]

1. Being reprimanded by God when He says, "Did I not warn you that Satan is a clear enemy to you?" (Q 7:22)

2. Being humiliated (*faḍīḥa)* by nakedness*.*

3. Before his slip, Adam was glowing with light. After his slip, his skin changed to darkness.

4. Adam was the neighbour of God, and whoever disobeys (*ʿaṣā*) God cannot be His neighbour. For this reason, Adam had to be relocated to earth.

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[331] Ibid., 1:130.

[332] Al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* is a work of history and therefore not strictly part of the *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* genre, which is more focused on literary and folkloric stories of prophets. However, his methodology and characterisation of prophets in his *Tārīkh* bear similarities to works in this genre.

[333] Al-Kisāʾī, *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. Isaac Eisenburg (Leiden: Brill, 1923), 1:40-42.

[334] See Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, *Arā ʿis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ, or: Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), xxi.

[335] Abū Isḥāq al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Jumhūriyya al-ʿArabiyya, n.d.), 29.

5.   God separated Adam and Eve when they were relocated to earth.

6.   There came to be enmity between Adam, Eve, the snake and the bird.[336]

7.   Adam's act is regarded as an ʿiṣyān (disobeying).

8.   God made Satan a ruler upon Adam's progeny because of Adam's action.

9.   The earth became a jail for Adam.

10. Adam experiences hardship, misfortune and misery on earth.

These points in al-Thaʿlabī's *qiṣaṣ* work, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, portray Adam as degraded and at a loss. They are noticeably absent from al-Thaʿlabī's *tafsīr*, entitled *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ʿan tafsīr al-Qurʾān* ("The Unveiling and Clarification of the Interpretation of the Quran").[337] Like al-Ṭabarī, al-Thaʿlabī depicts Adam differently in his literary work than he does in his *tafsīr*. It can be presumed that the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* genre offers al-Thaʿlabī more room to dramatise Adam's story and add more details to the account than the *tafsīr* genre does. This is similar to how the genre of historical writings gives al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* greater scope to add details to the story which characterise Adam as a disobedient figure who experiences severe punishment.

Works belonging to the genres of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* and history have different purposes and methodologies. Therefore, they characterise and depict Adam's story different to how the story is interpreted in *tafsīr* works. However, the early Muslim community considered *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* works, narrated by popular preachers, to be an extension of narrative exegesis. It was therefore not a genre viewed as completely separate or devoid of a religious framework.[338] In their work on history and stories of the prophets respectively, al-Ṭabarī and-Thaʿlabī depict Adam as being degraded in status and experiencing punishment in a much harsher way in their *tafsīr* works.[339] A likely explanation for this disparity across genres is the source material used by writers, and also the aim of the genre as a whole. If a work is focused on entertainment and information (such as the stories of the prophets

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[336] Some narrations relate that Satan entered paradise in the form of a snake, but that the snake entered paradise on the wings of a bird.

[337] Al-Thaʿlabī's interpretation of Adam's narrative in his *tafsīr* does not offers his stance on Adam's slip. Whilst he includes many narrations that are also founded in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, he rarely draws his own conclusions from the material he presents for Adam's narrative.

[338] Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rizvi, and Farhana Mayer, eds., *An Anthology of Qurʾanic Commentaries. Volume I: On the Nature of the Divine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 2.

[339] Comparing depictions of Adam and other prophetic figures by exegetes who have written both *tafsīr* and *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* works lies outside the scope of this research. However, this can offer great insight into differing methodologies of genres and the leniency this offers writers when discussing prophets.

genre and the history genre) writers exhibited greater leniencies in including narrations and anecdotes that were not analysed for their authenticity and that emphasized the dramatic function of the work.

3.4 Adam's Repentance and Prophethood

The final stage of Adam's narrative in the Quran is when he receives God's words and then repents and is forgiven (Q 2:37). For this part of the story, al-Ṭabarī draws attention to the didactic aspects of Adam's story. Al-Ṭabarī does not explore the effects that repentance has had on Adam's status. For example, when interpreting the verse, "[Adam] received words from his Lord" (Q 2:37), al-Ṭabarī cites several narrations that clarify what these exact "words" are so that humankind can learn how to repent. Then, al-Ṭabarī concludes that Adam's repentance is a precedent for humankind's repentance.[340] He writes, "And this statement from God about Adam—about [Adam] saying the words that He revealed to him and about what [Adam] said while repenting to Him of his *khaṭīʾa*—[is how] God lets the addressees of the Quran know the manner of repentance from error."[341] This shows that here al-Ṭabarī is focusing on the symbolic aspect of Adam's story rather than treating him as an individual character in his own right. Angelika Neuwirth also discusses this focus on symbolism. She writes that the creation stories are "founding stories of the never-changing pattern of divine-human interaction."[342] Thus, it is understood that through the story of Adam, God can communicate to humankind and offer guidance.

Neuwirth's comments particularly ring true in light of al-Ṭabarī's following discussion. When interpreting the verse, "And He relented to [Adam]. Indeed, He is the Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful" (Q 2:37), al-Ṭabarī universalises the message of forgiveness and does not refer back to Adam's slip or even his narrative at large. He writes,

> The interpretation of "Indeed, He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Ever-Merciful" [Q 2:37] is that God—may He be exalted—turns to whoever repents to Him, from among His guilty (*mudhnabīn*) servants, for their offence (*dhanb*). He withdraws His punishment in exchange for the servant returning to obedience to Him after disobeying Him

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[340] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 1:587.
[341] Ibid.*,* 1:587.
[342] Angelika Neuwirth, "Negotiating Justice: A Pre-Canonical Reading of the Qurʾānic Creation Accounts – Part II," in *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2000): 16.

through his previous *dhanb*. . . .He bestows mercy on him with forgiveness and mercy. His mercy toward him is the annulment of his misstep (ʿ*athra*)[343] and His pardoning the punishment for his crime (*jurm*).[344]

As this extract shows, al-Ṭabarī does not mention Adam in his concluding comments of the story. Instead, he focuses on the benefits and methods of forgiveness for humankind. Interestingly, in al-Ṭabarī's discussion on repentance, he mentions that God forgiving someone means that punishment is pardoned and one's error is annulled. This is contrary to how al-Ṭabarī interprets Adam's story. Even though the Quran states that God accepted Adam's repentance, al-Ṭabarī still believes that Adam receives punishment and that his status is degraded due to his slip. Adam's error, according to al-Ṭabarī, is still punishable.

In contrast, when al-Ṭabarī interprets the repentance of Moses, he highlights how God's pardon precludes his punishment. For example, when God forgives Moses for manslaughter, al-Ṭabarī writes, "God pardoned [Moses] for his offence (*dhanb*), and He did not punish him for it."[345] Moreover, when interpreting David's repentance to God, al-Ṭabarī writes that the verse "We forgave David for that" (Q 38:25) refers to God pardoning David for his *dhanb* and *khaṭīʾa.* Whilst al-Ṭabarī does not mention David being saved from punishment here, it is clear that al-Ṭabarī connects the repentance of David and Moses back to their individual stories. This is unlike his interpretation of Adam's repentance which is viewed as a parable for how humankind should repent to God.

After Adam repents, the Quran declares that God "chose him (*ijtabā*), turned to him in forgiveness and guided him" (Q 20:122). About this, al-Ṭabarī writes,

> It is said that then His Lord elected him (*iṣṭafāhu*) after his act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) to Him and granted him to return to what pleases Him and to act in obedience to Him. . . .His saying, "and guided him" [Q 20:122], it is said that [God] guided him to repentance, and He made [repentance] successful for [Adam]. [346]

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[343] The root letters of this word, ʿ*a-th-r* literally mean to fall or stumble. See s.v. "ʿ-*th-r*," in (1) al-Farāhidi, *Kitāb al-ʿayn*; (2) al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī gharīb al-Qurʾān*. Also, al-Jawharī, in his *Tāj al-lugha*, writes that an ʿ*athr* is synonymous with a *zalla* (also a slip). See s.v. "ʿ*a-th-r*" in al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha*.
[344] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* 1:587.
[345] Ibid., 18:191.
[346] Ibid., 16:190.

As presented in chapter one,[347] the word *ijtabā* is commonly used in the Quran to refer to God choosing prophets. In his interpretation above, al-Ṭabarī uses the verb *iṣṭafā*, a verb also used to refer to prophets being elected by God (Q 3:33).

However, it is worth noting that al-Ṭabarī does not mention Adam's prophethood here. There is no suggestion in al-Ṭabarī's interpretation that Adam's slip or repentance has had a constructive effect on his status or that it ultimately allowed Adam to be elected as a prophet. Although the Quran implicitly states that Adam is a prophet alongside Noah and others (Q 3:33), al-Ṭabarī does not refer to Adam as a prophet of Islam in his interpretation of Adam's story from his creation to his relocation from paradise onto earth. The lack of discussion about Adam as a prophet is evident when al-Ṭabarī interprets the word "guided him" (Q 20:122) to mean "guided [Adam] to repentance" and not guided Adam to "prophethood."[348] This is surprising, as the only other two verses of the Quran where the verbs *ijtabā* and *hudā* (He guided) appear together are in narratives about prophets. For example, God says about Abraham, "God chose him and guided him to a straight path" (Q 16:121). Here, al-Ṭabarī interprets *ijtabā* to mean that Abraham is chosen for his close relationship with God (as a friend or *khalīl*, a title that is specific to Abraham).[349] Though this is not an explicit reference to Abraham's prophethood, it indicates that Abraham's "chosenness" raises his degree and status as he attains the role of God's bosom friend. The second verse using both *ijtabā* and *hudā* is about prophets in general: "We chose them and guided them to a straight path" (Q 6:87). Al-Ṭabarī interprets this verse to mean, "[God] said, 'We elected them for Our religion, and to communicate Our message to those whom we sent them to.'"[350] Again, whilst al-Ṭabarī does not explicitly mention an election into prophethood, the responsibility of being chosen to communicate God's message to humankind is suggestive of prophethood or attaining a higher position and greater responsibility in society. These two examples show that al-Ṭabarī interprets *ijtabā* and *hudā* (when they appear together in a verse) as being associated with not only general guidance but also an attainment of a higher and esteemed rank with God. However, in Adam's case, the guidance and chosenness are not interpreted as increasing Adam's rank. Instead, the

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[347] See ch. 1, section 7.
[348] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 16:190.
[349] Ibid., 14:393.
[350] Ibid., 9:386.

guidance and chosenness in the case of Adam are strictly to do with being chosen for and guided by repentance, a part of the story that is emphasised by al-Ṭabarī as a didactic moment for the Quranic reader. Al-Ṭabarī's comments on this part of Adam's story are also brief, unlike his discussion for the other parts of the story which includes several narrations, notable discussions and presentations of many points of view.

3.4.1 Adam's Repentance in the *Tārīkh*

As has been mentioned previously, al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* offers a more detailed and dramatized characterisation of Adam and includes points that are absent from the Quranic narrative and also al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*. In the *Tārīkh*, al-Ṭabarī reorganises the events of Adam's story, and he indicates that Adam is relocated to earth before his repentance.[351] Before presenting reports on the day on which Adam went to earth, al-Ṭabarī offers the following summary:

> The reports on the authority of the Messenger of God reveal that God created Adam on a Friday. On a Friday, he was removed from paradise and descended to earth, and God accepted his repentance. He died on a Friday.[352]

This chronology contrasts with the Quranic narrative where God relents to Adam after he repents (Q 2:36), and thereafter, Adam is instructed to descend onto earth (Q 7:23-4). In *Sūrat al-Baqara* we see the following sequence of events: God instructs Adam to descend, Adam repents, and his repentance is accepted by God. Then, God repeats the command to descend (Q 2:36-8). The repetition of the command suggests that Adam has not yet descended to earth.[353] The *Tārīkh* includes more details about the Adam narrative, such as reports in which Adam gathers food from paradise to take with him to earth. In one particular hadith attributed to Ibn Isḥāq (d. 768), when Adam is relocated to earth, God gives him fruits from paradise.[354] In another report, God teaches Adam how to make things to prepare him for his descent to earth. It is in the *Tārīkh* that al-Ṭabarī includes reports which depict God as a supportive deity[355] who indulges Adam even before Adam's repentance for his slip. This offers a less critical spin to the Adam story; even though Adam goes against God's command and has not yet acknowledged his error, God is supportive and

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[351] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:113. See Gilliot, "Al-Ṭabarī and The History of Salvation," 137-8.
[352] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:113.
[353] See ch. 1, section 2 and Appendix.
[354] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:128.
[355] Klar, "Between History and *Tafsīr*: Notes on al-Ṭabarī's Methodological Strategies," 110-11.

prepares him for his new life on earth with His mercy and love. It is important, however, to note that these are some reports that al-Ṭabarī includes, but they do not reflect his own view. As has been discussed previously, al-Ṭabarī challenges the reports which suggest that Adam received help prior to coming onto earth as it contradicts the divine warning that Adam will suffer difficulty if he does not adhere to God's prohibition.[356]

Although there is an overlap in the material of al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* and *tafsīr*, Marianna Klar argues that in the *Tārīkh*, al-Ṭabarī presents God as more accepting of Adam's slip. This conclusion is partly true. The overall picture created through all the reports compiled in the *Tārīkh* do depict God as more accepting of Adam's slip (than in the *tafsīr*), but it is important to remember that al-Ṭabarī himself does not agree with all the reports he includes. Instead, he explicitly favours the report of Ibn ʿAbbās and Saʿīd ibn Jubayr (d. 714) that stress the wrath of God and the infliction of misery upon Adam.[357] The difference in material between the *Jāmiʿ al-bayān* and the *Tārīkh* is expected as both texts belong to different genres: exegesis and history.[358] Al-Ṭabarī's exegesis seeks to "clarify meanings and significations"[359] of the Quran, illuminate rulings and creedal discussions and ultimately be a guidebook for humankind. In contrast, al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* is not a work focused on offering religious guidance or clarity to the reader. Instead, it aims to provide information on historical characters, giving "form and narrative" to the narrations available to al-Ṭabarī.[360] As a result, more attention is given to Adam as an individual instead of depicting him as a didactic symbol that humankind can learn from.

The discussion on Adam as an individual is notably absent in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* of Adam's repentance. The *Tārīkh,* however, presents a coherent narrative from beginning to end that is focused on Adam, his status, his actions and their consequences. The *Tārīkh* reports, "In addition to making Adam have royal authority and rulership (*malak al-arḍ wa-sulṭān*) on earth, God made him a prophet and a messenger to his children. He revealed to Adam twenty-one scrolls. Adam was taught them through Gabriel and wrote them down with one hand."[361] Here, al-Ṭabarī presents Adam after his slip as having been awarded

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[356] See section 3.3.1 of present chapter.

[357] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:129-130.

[358] Peter Heath, "Creative Hermeneutics: A Comparative Analysis of Three Approaches" in *Arabica* 36, no. 2 (1989): 181.

[359] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:7.

[360] Gilliot, "Al-Ṭabarī and The History of Salvation," 137.

[361] Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, 1:150.

authority, rulership, prophethood and even messengerhood on earth. Though al-Ṭabarī does not specify when Adam becomes a prophet and messenger, this extract indicates that it is likely to have happened after he is sent down to earth and given revelation (in the form of "twenty-one scrolls"). It is important to note that receiving revelation makes one a messenger (*rusul*) as well as a prophet (*nabī*);[362] it is not unanimously agreed upon by Muslim thinkers that Adam was a messenger as well as a prophet, but this extract from al-Ṭabarī reveals that he believes Adam to have been both.

Although the *tafsīr* and the *Tārīkh* belong to different genres and have different purposes, it is striking that al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam at the end of the story so differently in each work. It is not that al-Ṭabarī ignores Adam's prophetic status in the rest of his *tafsīr*, as he refers to it in the interpretations of other verses such as "Indeed God chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of Imran over the worlds" (Q 3:33).[363] Instead, in his interpretations of Adam's narrative in his *tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī creates a separation between the Adam, the first human being and symbol of humankind who is punished for eating from the prohibited tree, and the Adam who is the first prophet of Islam.

4. Conclusion

As the analysis in this chapter has shown, al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of Adam's story depicts Adam's slip as degrading his status and leading to punishment and suffering. According to al-Ṭabarī, Adam's physical descent from paradise to earth parallels a descent and degradation of status. These conclusions are drawn from both explicit and implicit aspects of al-Ṭabarī's work: he explicitly states that Adam has lost his high degree and alludes to Adam's punishment and blame through the usage of the term *dhanb* (offence). Furthermore, Adam's prophetic status is not addressed in al-Ṭabarī's interpretations of Adam's story in his *tafsīr*. Instead, al-Ṭabarī stresses the didactic aspect of Adam's narrative. In this regard, Adam is presented to the reader of the *tafsīr* as a human being (*bashar*), a didactic figure for humankind, and not as the first prophet. His prophetic status is, however, referred to very briefly in the *Tārīkh*, but there are no discussions or details about this role.

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[362] For a brief discussion on the difference between messengers and prophets, see Introduction, section 5.1.
[363] See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 5:329. Here, he includes several narrations that affirm Adam's prophethood, for example, "God preferred them over the worlds for prophethood over people; all of them were pious, disciplined and obedient prophets to their Lord."

Al-Ṭabarī's work reveals how early sources characterised Adam. Some of the sources that al-Ṭabarī relies on to form this image are *isrā ʾīliyyāt*, which are criticised and regarded as unsuitable or inauthentic by other Muslim thinkers (both classical and contemporary). Whilst these sources are not the only reason for al-Ṭabarī's interpretation of Adam's slip as degrading his status, they play a significant role in representing Adam as the first human recipient of God's wrath and punishment. The depiction of Adam in Jewish and Christian material is later rejected by many Muslim thinkers as it contradicts the theological doctrine of ʿiṣma. Despite the shift in presentation of Adam that occurs alongside the development of ʿiṣma, the image of Adam represented in al-Ṭabarī's tenth-century works remains the dominant perception of Adam in Islam in scholarly works to this day. Present-day scholarship does not address in detail how the emerging doctrine of ʿiṣma led to a re-evaluation of Adam's character. Whilst *isrā ʾīliyyāt* play a significant role in the depiction of Adam as a punishable sinner, it is equally important to remember that theology was still in its early stages of development in the tenth century. In particular, the theological importance of prophethood, including the doctrine of impeccability, was still premature in the context and time of al-Ṭabarī. The fact that impeccability was yet to be crystallised as a doctrine would have impacted the language and narrative of how Adam is addressed in *tafsīr* works; as al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* shows, there is a greater focus on Adam's identity as a symbol for humankind as opposed to his identity as an impeccable prophet. As argued by Reynolds, there is no dismay expressed by al-Ṭabarī that a prophet appears less than impeccable in the narrative. This approach is also seen in how prophetic narratives are interpreted by earlier scholars like Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān and other Shiite scholars such as al-Qummī.[364] This is in contrast to the next exegete of this study, Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, who refers to Adam's prophetic status throughout his interpretation of the story. Although al-Māturīdī is a contemporary of al-Ṭabarī, al-Māturīdī's theological context of Transoxiana seems far more developed in its understanding of the notions of prophetic status and impeccability, which contributes to his interpretation of Adam. Additionally, al-Māturīdī engages less with *isrā ʾīliyyāt* in his work in comparison to al-Ṭabarī. As the following chapter will show, al-Māturīdī draws similar conclusions to al-Ṭabarī about Adam's story. However, these conclusions are framed in light of Adam's prophethood and high status, not despite it.

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[364] See al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, 1:72-ff and Reynolds, *The Quran and Its Biblical Subtext,* 204.

Chapter 3: Māturīdite Interpretations of Adam's Story

1. Introduction

The recent publications of the *tafsīr* of Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944), entitled *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* ("Interpretations of the Quran"),[365] have reshaped our understanding of tenth-century Sunni *tafsīr*. Before these publications, al-Ṭabarī's work, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān,* was considered the sole formative *tafsīr* of the tenth-century, with scholars suggesting that no other work of similar significance existed during this period.[366] Al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* reveals that the intersection of exegesis with theology had already begun in the tenth-century. Authored in Transoxiana (a region stretching over present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan), al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* is one of the earliest theological *tafsīr*s accessible to us. It has what has been called a "*kalāmic* mode"[367] or theological framework, through which al-Māturīdī engages with broader theological themes and questions and challenges the views of different sects such as the Muʿtazilites. This style of *tafsīr* presents al-Māturīdī's views on doctrinal topics such as prophethood and prophetic impeccability.

Al-Māturīdī was also the founder of the Māturīdite school of theology. His *tafsīr* discloses the school's early views on prophetic impeccability and topics around prophethood, such as prophetic miracles and the proofs of prophecy. These are seen in his discussions on the Quranic narratives of prophets. The theological concerns on the topic of prophethood are reiterated and further developed by later Māturīdite figures such as the exegete Najm al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī (d. 1142) and the theologian Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 1184). Frequently, al-Nasafī in his *tafsīr*, entitled *al-Taysīr fī al-tafsīr* ("The Facilitation of Quranic Interpretation"), cites al-Māturīdī and presents his view clearly to the reader. Al-Nasafī also offers new perspectives and developments in his interpretation of Adam's

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[365] The *tafsīr* is also referred to as *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*; the edition published in 2004 by Dār al-Kutub in Beirut is entitled *Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*. However, this chapter will address al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* as *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* as the edition being used (Istanbul: Dār al-Mīzān, 2005) is titled as such.

[366] See Ulrich Rudolph*, al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology in Samarqand*, trans. Rodrigo Adem (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 188. See also Gätje *The Qur'an and Its Exegesis*, 34-5.

[367] See Jonathan Allen, "Kalām at the Interstices of Tafsīr: Theology, Contestation, and Exegesis in the Qurʾan: Commentaries of al-Māturīdī and ʿAbd al-Jabbār" (unpublished paper, 11 May 2021), PDF file, https://thicketandthorp.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/kalacc84m-at-the-interstices-of-tafsicc84r.pdf. **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

story.[368] Similarly, the theologian al-Ṣābūnī, who will be examined at the end of this chapter, also offers unique contributions to the interpretation of Adam's story in his work, *al-Muntaqā fī ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* ("Pure Selection Regarding the Impeccability of the Prophets"). Al-Ṣābūnī's work also reveals the development in the Māturīdite treatment of Adam and the prophets.

Keeping to this thesis's overarching aim, this chapter will examine how al-Māturīdī interprets Adam's slip and how he refers to Adam's prophetic status when interpreting the story. This is a difficult task as al-Māturīdī often interlaces his opinion with lengthy theological surveys and discussions, and much of the time only offers possible conclusions instead of affirming his position.[369] For this reason, al-Māturīdī's stance often remains unknown or unclear. However, al-Nasafī's *tafsīr* and al-Ṣābūnī's work on prophetic impeccability (which are founded on al-Māturīdī's views) help to piece together a clearer picture of al-Māturīdī's stance on specific topics such as prophetic impeccability. Their works also shed light on post-al-Māturīdī developments on Adam's story and prophetic impeccability.[370] Key questions to be addressed in this chapter include: (1) Does al-Māturīdī depict Adam's slip as an event that denigrates his status?; (2) what terms are used by Māturīdite scholars to refer to Adam's slip and what do these reveal about their view of Adam's slip?; and (3) do Māturīdites take into account Adam's esteemed status as a prophet when interpreting his story? To answer these questions, aspects of the Adamic narrative,

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[368] Additionally, al-Nasafī is most well-known for his theological work entitled *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya* (The Nasafian Creed) in which he presents many of al-Māturīdī's theological positions (from the *Kitab al-tawḥīd*) in a more concise and accessible manner.

[369] This is not unique to al-Māturīdī and is a style of discussion that can be seen in many *tafsīr* works. For example, the *tafsīr* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who is the subject of chapter four, is known to include complex and lengthy theological discussions which often make it difficult for the reader to extract al-Rāzī's personal stance from the material presented.

[370] Unlike the diversity within Ashʿarism on beliefs around prophetic impeccability (as shown in chapter four and five with the range of stances on Adam's story by al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī), the doctrinal positions of the Māturīdite school are more uniform, especially regarding prophethood and prophetic impeccability. This is also expressed by the scholar Aḥmad al-Bayāḍīzāda (d. 1687), who defends Māturīdite theology from Ashʿarite theology in his *Ishārat al-marām*. According to Yahya Raad Haidar, who has written a thesis on the discussions between the Ashʿarite and Māturīdite schools, al-Bayāḍīzāda argues that Māturīdite doctrines are consistent, uniform and in line with the school of Abū Ḥanīfa. This, as implied by al-Bayāḍīzāda, is the opposite of Ashʿarism which he indicates as having many varying opinions, some of which are more in line with Māturīdite thought than the beliefs of Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī himself. Al-Bayāḍīzāda also notes that according to Māturīdite doctrine, prophets can commit minor wrongdoings but not intentionally, while they are protected from committing major wrongdoings, a position also reinforced earlier by Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Māturīdī as this chapter will show. See Yahya Raad Haidar, "The Debates between Ashʿarism and Māturīdīsm in Ottoman Religious Scholarship: A Historical and Bibliographical Study" (PhD diss., Australian National University, 2016), 164-7.

such as God's prohibition and Adam's forgetting, will be examined.

2. Al-Māturīdī: The Exegete and Theologian

Much of what is known about al-Māturīdī's life is based on possibilities and not confirmed, recorded facts. His name is notably absent from the classical bibliographies and heresiographies such as ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's (d. 1037) *al-Farq bayn al-firaq* ("The Division between Sects"), al-Shahrastānī's (d. 1153) *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-niḥal* ("The Book of Sects and Creeds"), and even the *Muqaddima* ("The Introduction") by the famous historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406). The absence of al-Māturīdī's name and biography in these important works highlights the fact that his significance and contributions to theology were overlooked for several centuries after his death despite being the eponymous founder of the Māturīdite school of theology. Muslim (Māturīdite) theologians in the century following al-Māturīdī's death, like Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī (d. 1114) and Abū al-Yusr al-Bazdawī (d. 1100), considered their theological positions as stemming from Abū Ḥanīfa.[371] They viewed al-Māturīdī as an interpreter of Abū Ḥanīfa's views[372] as opposed to the originator of new views held by Māturīdites. This perception began to change later in the eleventh century as when the Seljuks expanded their territories, advancing toward eastern Iran, they brought with them the theology of al-Māturīdī. In doing so, they began to attribute their theology to al-Māturīdī, and not Abū Ḥanīfa. Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī eventually revived[373] al-Māturīdī's name in his famous work of theological creed entitled *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya* ("The Nasafīan Creed").[374]

While details of al-Māturīdī's life are sparse, we know that he was born in Samarqand and studied under the tutelage of many erudite scholars. His teachers include Muḥammad ibn Muqātil al-Rāzī (d. 863) and the venerable ninth-century theologian Abū Naṣr al-ʿIyāḍī (d. unknown) who was the first Ḥanafī author of a theological treatise in Transoxiana.[375] It is unclear whether al-Māturīdī travelled outside of Transoxiana into areas

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[371] Al-Bazdawī and Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī referred to their theological school as "Aṣḥāb Abī Ḥanīfa" (The Companions of Abū Ḥanīfa). See Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 5.
[372] Ibid., 6.
[373] Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 323.
[374] A recent study suggests that this work is erroneously attributed to Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī and that its correct author is Burhān al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī (d. 1142). See Gibril Fouad Haddad, *The Maturidi School: From Abu Hanifa to al-Kawthari* (Oldham: Beacon Books, 2020), 21.
[375] Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 132.

such as Baghdad and Ray to acquire knowledge or teach, but his teachers, such as Muqātil al-Rāzī, are known to have travelled to these regions. They would have imparted to al-Māturīdī the knowledge of several scholars operating in the centre of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad.[376] As the works of al-Māturīdī and several of his contemporaries show, ideas from other regions of the Islamic world entered the theological milieu of Transoxiana. However, local developments were of little to no interest outside of the region.[377]

Al-Māturīdī allegedly authored several works, including four books specifically on the Quran. However, only two of his works remain: (1) a *tafsīr* entitled *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*[378] and (2) a theological compendium, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*. These two works, especially his *tafsīr*, have received little attention in modern scholarship due to their lack of availability in print until recently.[379] Although there are many manuscripts of the *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*,[380] only two editions have been published. The twentieth- and twenty-first-century publications of the *tafsīr* and the *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* have led to the intensification of research on al-Māturīdī and the Māturīdite school. However, most of this research focuses on his theological work, *Kitab al-tawḥīd*.[381] In this theological work, al-Māturīdī is credited (by the editor) for discussing important aspects of prophethood such as the esteemed status of prophets, before the likes of prominent Ashʿarite theologians such as Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013).[382]

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[376] Muhammad Mustafizur Rahman, "An Edition of the First Two Chapters of Al-Māturīdī's *Taʾwīlāt Ahl al-Sunna*"" (PhD Diss., School of Oriental and African Studies, 1970), 50.

[377] Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 2.

[378] The authorship of al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* has been contested, and many scholars believe it to be a collaborative work authored by several of al-Māturīdī's students. Whether al-Māturīdī or his students authored the work, the views expressed in the *tafsīr* would still be the views of al-Māturīdī himself and will be examined in this chapter as such.

[379] There are two editions of al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* available today: one published in Istanbul by Dār al-Mīzān in 2005 and another published in Beirut by Dār al-Kutub in 2004. The former is the primary source used for this research as it is considered a complete and critical edition by leading scholars in Māturīdite studies such as Ulrich Rudolph. However, both versions have been consulted for quoted passages and any significant differences are noted in footnotes.

[380] For a list of manuscript locations of the *Taʾwīlāt*, see Mustafizur Rahman, "The First Two Chapters of al-Māturīdī's '*Taʾwīlāt ahl al-sunna*,'" 60-2.

[381] The *Kitab al-tawḥīd* has also only recently become available to the public. It first appeared in 1970, and then a new Arabic edition was published in Istanbul in 2003. See Rudolph, al-Māturīdī *and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 14-5. See also three recent works dedicated to the Māturīdite school: Faraz A. Khan (trans.), *An Introduction to Islamic Theology: Imam Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's al-Bidāyah Fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* (California: Zaytuna College, 2020), Gibril Fouad Haddad, *The Maturidi School: From Abu Hanifa to al-Kawthari* (Oldham: Beacon Books, 2020) and Ramon Harvey, *Transcendent God, Rational World: A Māturīdī Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

[382] See al-Māturīdī, *Kitab al-tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu and Muhammad Aruçi (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2007), 38.

Given that al-Māturīdī wrote the *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* during the first half of the tenth-century, the *tafsīr* shows a striking departure from the existing and popular style of *tafsīr* at the time, *tafsīr bi-l-riwāya* (narration-based *tafsīr*) as is seen in the work of al-Ṭabarī. Al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* blends the *riwāya* approach with *tafsīr bi-l-raʾy* (*tafsīr* based on intellectual speculation). This is to say that in his *tafsīr*, al-Māturīdī uses several hadith reports, whilst also presenting theological discussions and offering his theological stance on many topics. As a result, al-Māturīdī's voice is at the centre of his work.[383] Unlike al-Ṭabarī, al-Māturīdī does not extensively use *isrāʾīliyyāt* sources. Instead, he prioritises theological reflections and deductive reasoning in his interpretations of verses. This is evident in the discussions about Adam and is seen in the way al-Māturīdī draws his conclusions about Adam's slip from the story.

2.2 Al-Māturīdī's Theological School

Both the Māturīdite and Ashʿarite theological schools are now widely accepted within the Sunni tradition. However, the relationship between the two schools was not always amicable. In the middle of the eleventh century, when the Seljuks advanced from Transoxiana to the East, they were primarily influenced and informed by a Ḥanafī, Māturīdite intellectual methodology. In Eastern lands like Iran, the Seljuks were met with aggression from the Shāfiʿī Ashʿarites. This turbulence was eventually settled by scholars such as Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 1370), who summarised the differences between the Ashʿarites and Māturīdites and eventually reconciled the beliefs of both schools.[384] Al-Subkī records in his *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyya al-kubrā* ("The Large Biographical Dictionary of Shāfiʿites") that there are thirteen positions that separate Māturīdite beliefs from the Ashʿarite beliefs, only six of which are essentially different.[385] The remaining seven points are merely different articulations and terminologies used by figures from each school. One of the six essential differences noted by al-Subkī is the view of prophetic errors. The two

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[383] Walid A. Saleh, "Rereading al-Ṭabarī through al-Māturīdī: New Light on the Third Century Hijrī," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 18, no. 2 (2016), 183.

[384] Today, both the Māturīdite and Ashʿarite schools sit comfortably within the framework of Sunni Islam due to many of these reconciliations in classical works. However, some scholars still argue that there are no similarities between these two schools. See Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 318.

[385] Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-shāfiʿiyya al-kubrā*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Muḥammad al-Ḥulu and Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, 1964), 3:386-8. See also Rudolph, *al-Māturīdī and the Development of Sunnī Theology*, 2.

prominent positions in the Ashʿarite school are that either (1) prophets can commit minor wrongdoings (ṣaghāʾir) unintentionally; (2) or that minor wrongdoings are impossible for them. In contrast, al-Subkī notes that the Māturīdites categorically deny the possibility of prophets committing minor wrongdoings.[386] Thus, it is interesting to note that al-Māturīdī's interpretation of Adam's slip suggests that he considers it a minor wrongdoing.[387] This view raises the question of whether al-Māturīdī considers Adam not to be a prophet at the time of his slip (in which case he is not yet protected from committing minor wrongdoings), or whether the notion of prophets as protected (maʿṣūm) from committing minor wrongdoings, as noted by al-Subkī, is a later Māturīdite development. These matters are also explored in this chapter.

3. Adam Before the Slip

We will first examine how al-Māturīdī depicts Adam before his slip in *Sūrat al-Baqara.* The beginning of al-Māturīdī's commentary on Adam's story includes several notable discussions on angelic and prophetic impeccability, the purpose of creation and God teaching Adam the names of things (Q 2:31). These discussions are not always explicitly related to Adam, but they shed light on al-Māturīdī's foundational views on themes and topics investigated in this chapter. Another key question to examine is whether al-Māturīdī considers Adam a prophet from the beginning of his life. This impacts the Māturīdite understanding of prophetic impeccability because if Adam is a prophet from the beginning, his error may invalidate or challenge his impeccability.

3.1 Adam the *Khalīfa*

The role of a *khalīfa* and its relation to Adam is an essential aspect of Adam's story. Becoming a *khalīfa* is an undertaking of responsibility and indicates a rank of authority. The roles and responsibilities of a *khalīfa* as a vicegerent of God are stated explicitly in the Quran. When God declares that the prophet David is a *khalīfa*, "O David, indeed We have

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[386] These matters are discussed by al-Nasafī *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya*. Here he mentions his stance on prophetic errors as well as reviewing the opinions of people from other theological schools. He concludes that prophets cannot commit any vile wrongdoings such as maternal fornication or other immoral actions (*fujūr*). See Abū Ḥafṣ Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī and Masʿūd ibn ʿUmar al-Taftazānī, *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya maʿa sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid* (Karachi: Maktabat al-Madīna, 2012), 307-9.

[387] See section 4.3 of the present chapter.

made you a *khalīfa* on earth. Therefore, rule among people with justice and do not follow desire lest it leads astray from God's path" (Q 38:26). Al-Māturīdī concludes that this verse can either mean that David rules over everyone on earth, including messengers, prophets, kings and the general public, or that he is a *khalīfa* specifically for messengers.[388] This highlights that a *khalīfa* can either have a more general role of being God's vicegerent over humanity of all different ranks or have a specific role of being the leader of the prophets on earth.[389] Both roles are still significant in that they indicate that being a vicegerent of God is an undertaking of responsibility, awarded only to specific persons of esteemed status.

In the story of Adam, God declares that He is placing a *khalīfa* on earth. To this, the angels ask, "Will You create therein one who will cause mischief and spread bloodshed?" (Q 2:30). The angels' concern about a destructive *khalīfa* has prompted many views about who the term *khalīfa* in Q 2:30 refers to. Al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, a work that collates most opinions and views on verses of the Quran, has previously shown[390] that there are three main views: the term *khalīfa* refers to (1) Adam; (2) Adam's descendants; or (3) both Adam and his descendants. The possibility of Adam partaking in mischief and bloodshed is what has brought about these various interpretations. Regarding this matter, al-Māturīdī presents the following:

> People have said, "[the *khalīfa*] refers to Adam. He will succeed the angels on earth and whoever preceded him from the jinn." That is far [from the truth] because [the angels] say, "Will You create therein one who will cause mischief and spread bloodshed?" [Q 2:30]. Adam cannot be the one who causes mischief on earth and spreads bloodshed as he praises God and has been purified from it. However, God may want Adam and his [descendants] until the day of judgement to be *khulafāʾ* (plural of *khalīfa*) over each other. As God says, "And He made you *khulafāʾ* of the earth" [Q 27:62]—or "He made them *khulafāʾ*" those who mention [this variation of the verse] if they are correct.[391] They may be on the face of the earth as it was

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[388] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 12:240.
[389] In Islam, several prophets can be on earth at the same time, such as Jacob and Joseph, or Ishmael and Isaac.
[390] See ch. 2, section 3.1
[391] Al-Māturīdī is referencing two different recitations of the verse Q 27:62. The most common recitation is "And He made you *khulafāʾ* of the earth" and the secondary recitation is "And He made them *khulafāʾ* of the earth."

created as an abode for them, a resting place and a place of return.[392] They are

made [the earth's] inhabitants and rulers to become *khulafāʾ* in manifesting God's

rules (*aḥkām*) and His religion. This is like His statement to David, "Indeed We have

made you a *khalīfa* on earth" [Q 38:26]. It is in this way that the sons of Adam were

commanded.[393]

Al-Māturīdī denies that the *khalīfa* mentioned in the verse Q 2:30 refers solely to Adam

because Adam is exempt and purified from committing mischief. He does not explain why

he thinks so, but this distinction from ordinary human beings (who can commit mischief)

suggests that perhaps Adam is already a prophet at this stage, or at the very least, an

extraordinary human being who is protected from spreading corruption. As al-Māturīdī

believes Adam is protected from spreading corruption, he argues that the *khalīfa* in Q 2:30

refers both to Adam and his descendants (who are the ones able to spread mischief and

corruption on earth as the angels predict). Al-Māturīdī does not deny that a *khalīfa* can also

be a ruler or a vicegerent of God, as in the case of David, but he emphasizes that *khalīfa* in

this verse is primarily referring to the notion of successorship. Although al-Māturīdī does

not assign Adam the *khalīfa* role, he still views Adam as holding a special position as he is

protected from corruption. This is like al-Ṭabarī, who also argues that Adam cannot be the

one the angels are concerned about regarding spreading mischief and bloodshed on

earth.[394]

3.2 Adam is Taught the Names by God

Before his slip occurs, Adam receives knowledge of "the names" (Q 2:31) from God and

teaches this to the angels. Al-Māturīdī uses this part of the story to discuss epistemology

and concludes that the way Adam received the knowledge of the names is special and

unique. Al-Māturīdī first analyses the word "taught" in the verse, "He taught Adam the

names, all of them" (Q 2:31). He asserts that "taught" can mean that Adam received the

names either through (1) divine inspiration (*ilhām*), which can only be given to prophets or

God's chosen people such as saints; or (2) through an angel (*waḥy*), which is a mode of

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[392] Abū Manṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ahmet Vanlioğlu and Bekir Topaloğlu (Istanbul: Dār al-Mīzān, 2005), 1:77. In another edition (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub, 2004), the word "resting place" is omitted from the body of the text but is referenced in footnotes.
[393] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:77.
[394] See ch. 2, section 3.1.

receiving knowledge that is specific to prophets.[395] These possible modes of acquiring

knowledge demonstrate two key points. First, that receiving the names can be revelation

(*waḥy*) for Adam, thus awarding him the status of not only a prophet (*nabī*) but also a

messenger (*rasūl*).[396] Secondly, that Adam does not acquire the knowledge of the names

through mental exertion or the five external senses like ordinary people. Al-Māturīdī argues

that the way Adam received knowledge from God is unique and unattainable for the angels.

One edition of al-Māturīdī's *tafsīr* includes the following footnote by the editor to

clarify al-Māturīdī's point about Adam receiving knowledge: "It is unlikely that the

knowledge—when God taught Adam—was the same type [of knowledge] obtained from the

five senses or axiomatic (*badīha*) knowledge. [This is because this type of knowledge] is

shared among Adam and the angels."[397] This editor emphasizes that, according to al-

Māturīdī, Adam receives knowledge through a mode that is unattainable for the angels. The

way God teaches him is different to how the angels and ordinary human beings are taught—

as ordinary human beings cannot receive *waḥy* or *ilhām*, the latter of which is reserved for

prophets, messengers and saints. This suggests that al-Māturīdī considers Adam to hold a

special status from this early stage in his story before the slip occurs. Though he does not

explicitly mention that Adam is a prophet, the conclusions al-Māturīdī draws from Adam

receiving knowledge and being protected from corruption suggest that Adam is held in a

superior rank from the rest of humanity.

Al-Māturīdī then explicitly refers to Adam's prophethood while interpreting the

verse, "Tell Me the names of these" (Q 2:31). Here, God is commanding the angels to inform

Him of something that He is aware they do not know. Al-Māturīdī offers a few possibilities

as to why God does this. First, he suggests that perhaps God is threatening the angels but

then also offers other options, one of which is the following:

> God wanted to show [the angels] a sign indicating [Adam's] prophethood, reminding
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> them of their inability to [inform Him of the names] and obliging them to submit to

[395] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:79. Al-Māturīdī clarifies that if Adam received the knowledge from an angel, then it would have to be an angel who was not tested by God when He previously tested the angels by asking them "Inform me of the names of these if you are truthful" (Q 2:31).

[396] Although receiving revelation indicates that Adam is also a messenger, al-Māturīdī does not explicitly mention Adam being a messenger (*rasūl*). Therefore, I will continue to refer to Adam in al-Māturīdī's interpretation as a prophet (*nabī*), and his status as associated with prophethood (*nubuwwa*) as he is referred to in this capacity.

[397] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* (Istanbul: Dār al-Mizān, 2005), 1:79.

Adam due to the advantage of the knowledge that he had. This is like when God said, "And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?" [Q 20:17]. [God] reminded [Moses] first of his condition and the state of his stick to teach him that what he saw in his hand was one of the signs of his prophethood.[398]

Al-Māturīdī only offers suggestions here and does not come to a firm conclusion about why God asks the angels to tell Him something that He knows they do not know. However, from the reference to Adam's prophethood, we can derive that al-Māturīdī considers that Adam holds prophetic, and even messenger status, from when God taught him the names.

The view that Adam is a prophet from before the slip happens is also indicated by al-Nasafī in his theological work, *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya*. Here, when discussing the first and last prophets of Islam, al-Nasafī notes that Adam is the first prophet. Al-Nasafī argues that one of the proofs of Adam being the first prophet is that he was commanded and prohibited by God (i.e., commanded to live in paradise and prohibited by God to stay away from the tree in Q 2:35).[399] These two events (being commanded and prohibited by God) are, according to al-Nasafī, proofs of Adam's prophethood. According to the chronology of Adam's story, we note that both events occur before the slip happens. This comment by al-Nasafī further highlights that within the Māturīdite understanding of Adam, Adam is a prophet from the beginning of his story, and that the slip happens whilst he is a prophet. While al-Nasafī states being commanded and prohibited by God are some of the signs of Adam's prophethood, al-Māturīdī indicates that Adam is a prophet because he is protected from corruption and is given direct information from God about the names (Q 2:31), which supersedes the ability of the angels.

3.2.1 Humans, Prophets and Angels

When Adam informs the angels of the names that God teaches him (Q 2:33), al-Māturīdī further explores the relationship between humankind and the angels. Al-Māturīdī examines the human (*bashar*) nature of Adam and argues that as a human being, Adam has agency. Human agency means that Adam can commit virtuous acts by choice and, as a result, gain reward and high status. This is in contrast to the angels who are programmed to do good and have no agency; therefore, their virtuous actions (or rather, their virtuous natures) are

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[398] Ibid., 1:80.
[399] See al-Nasafī, *al-ʿAqāʾid al-nasafiyya maʿa sharḥ al-ʿaqāʾid*, 300.

not met with divine reward or an ascension in rank. In this regard, al-Māturīdī explores Adam's human disposition and its benefits over the angels' fixed nature. He discusses this concept further when he writes:

> This is because God made the [angels'] actions as a compulsion (*jabr*). Whoever's actions are a compulsion, their rank cannot be raised, nor can their status be raised. . . . It is possible that Adam may wish to be like the angels [referring to Satan tempting Adam in Q 7:20] in terms of how their actions are protected or that remembering God is sufficient for them and they are obedient against all carnal desires.[400]

Al-Māturīdī thus argues that humans can have their rank and status raised by God according to the choices that they make; actively making virtuous choices allows them to be raised in rank and status. In contrast, the angels are predisposed to obey God. Al-Māturīdī then mentions Satan's speech to Adam, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you would become angels or immortals" (Q 7:20). He argues that though Adam and Eve gave in to Satan's ruses, they did not want to become angels, but rather, they desired the following two angelic qualities: (1) total obedience to God; and (2) freedom from desires. The discussion continues with al-Māturīdī stating that impeccability and obedience are not qualities that are exclusive to angels. He writes that God can make human beings either "protected" or "helpless." Both of these conditions exist within humankind so that we know that one's physiological constitution does not necessitate whether one is protected or not. Instead, it is God who decides who He will protect from committing wrongdoings.[401] While the discussion here is on Adam and the angels, al-Māturīdī is making a macroscopic point about human nature and angelic nature.

Furthermore, al-Māturīdī draws a few comparisons between angels and prophets. He argues that the slips (*zallāt*) of prophets and angels are similar.[402] This similarity between prophets and angels (but not ordinary humans and angels) highlights that the slips of prophets are different to the slips of ordinary human beings. Through this discussion on the similarities and differences between prophets and angels, it can be discerned that al-Māturīdī considers human beings as intrinsically superior to the angels because they have agency—unlike the angels—and therefore the choice to be obedient to God. Within human

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[400] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān,* 1:103.
[401] Ibid., 1:103.
[402] See Ibid., 1:72-4.

beings, the prophets have a further elevated status as they are protected from certain qualities (such as spreading mischief and bloodshed).

From al-Māturīdī's discussion on Adam before the slip happens, we see that he treats Adam as an extraordinary being. Adam receives knowledge in a unique way and subsequently teaches it to the angels. However, al-Māturīdī also considers Adam in light of his humanness; Adam, just like ordinary human beings, has a choice that offers him the ability to ascend (or descend) in rank.

4. Adam's Slip

The difficulty in understanding the nature of Adam's slip is that he is simultaneously a prophet and a universal symbol of humanity. From the previous analysis we can derive that al-Māturīdī considers Adam to hold prophetic status from when he is taught the names by God. Thus, when the slip happens, Adam is a prophet. The depiction of Adam as holding esteemed, prophetic status influences how al-Māturīdī goes on to interpret Adam's slip. In line with his views on prophetic impeccability, al-Māturīdī vindicates Adam from intentional error. The twelfth-century Māturīdite theologian, al-Ṣābūnī, records a narration in his work, *al-Muntaqā min ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, in which al-Māturīdī voices his concern about the idea of prophets committing errors. Al-Ṣābūnī writes:

> Shaykh al-Rustufagnī [d. 956] said, "Someone in the time of Abū Manṣūr [al-Māturīdī] authored a book, and its title was *Maʿāṣī al-anbiyāʾ* ["The Prophet's Acts of Disobeying"]. Shaykh Abū Manṣūr said: 'Indeed, this author, due to his intention of authoring [such a work], has disbelieved because. . . whoever wishes that a believer would commit an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) [should be] fearful. How can anyone take upon [oneself] to prove the existence of an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) from the messengers to the point of publicizing[403] it?'"[404]

This excerpt, recorded in al-Ṣābūnī's *al-Muntaqā*, sheds light on al-Māturīdī's concern for upholding the revered status of prophets. According to al-Māturīdī, any attempt to publicly depict prophets as committing acts of disobeying renders one a disbeliever. Calling

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[403] The verb used here is *nashara* which means "to spread" or "announce," in addition to more modern translations of "publicise" or "publish." However, as al-Ṣābūnī is referring to an authored work, "publicise" or even "publish" is appropriate here.

[404] Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Muntaqā min ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Būlūṭ (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2013), 16.

someone a disbeliever is a severe accusation within Islam and highlights al-Māturīdī's stringent stance against the notion of publicising the errors of prophets. It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that al-Māturīdī considered it impossible for prophets to commit acts of disobeying (pl. *maʿāṣī.* sing. *maʿṣiya*) but rather, that wanting to publicise their errors was reprehensible in al-Māturīdī's opinion. In order to examine al-Māturīdī's view on prophetic errors, we turn now to explore al-Māturīdī's interpretation of God's prohibition to Adam in an attempt to understand how this informs his position on the implications of Adam's error.

4.1 Type of Prohibition

God instructs Adam to stay away from the tree in Q 2:35. This command is interpreted in several different ways by exegetes. As discussed in chapter one,[405] this command is a *nahy*, meaning a prohibition. Though in the English language a prohibition refers to an act that is forbidden, in the Islamic legal framework, there are different types of "prohibitions" and not all of them relate to forbidden acts. As the analysis below will demonstrate,[406] a prohibition (*nahy*) can also express a preference or concern, and it is not limited to conveying forbidden or punishable acts. Al-Māturīdī explores the different types of prohibitions and how these types affect the legal value of Adam's action. He explores whether Adam's slip is a forbidden and punishable act or a disliked act that does not warrant punishment. Al-Māturīdī presents the following options:

1. The prohibition is a preference (*īthār*). In this case, the prohibition is not referring to a forbidden act.

2. The prohibition is a concern and mercy from God. This is because the tree is harmful to Adam (*dāʾin*), so he is prohibited from approaching it. Thus, according to this view, God prohibits the tree for Adam so that he does not become unwell.[407]

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[405] See ch. 1, section 5.
[406] For further analysis of prohibitions, see ch. 4, section 4.2, figure 1.
[407] Al-Māturīdī uses the term *nahy dāʾin* which can be translated as "a prohibition due to harm." However, this phrase refers to the reason why a prohibition exists—the tree is harmful to eat from—and does not specifically classify the category or type of prohibition.

3.	The command is an inviolable prohibition (*nahy ḥurma*) and refers strictly to something that is forbidden. Therefore, the prohibition is obligatory to follow.[408] In this circumstance, approaching the tree would be punishable.

From these options, al-Māturīdī decides that "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35) is an inviolable prohibition (*nahy ḥurma*) and therefore, approaching the tree is a forbidden action. He says:

> [Adam and Eve] did not know that the prohibition is an inviolable prohibition (*nahy ḥurma*) or a prohibition indicating preference (*īthār*) of something else for them, or a prohibition indicating harm (*dāʾin*) [in the tree]. If they knew that this prohibition was inviolable, then they would not have come toward or eat [from the tree].[409]

In this extract, al-Māturīdī highlights that Adam misunderstood God's command, taking it to be a preferential command when in reality, it was inviolable. If al-Māturīdī considered "Do not come close to this tree" as a prohibition indicating preference (*īthār*), then the legal implications of Adam's action would be different. In this case, Adam's action would likely be considered "disliked" and not forbidden, and he would be free from punishment.[410]

Al-Nasafī, a later exegete from within the Māturīdite school who corroborates many of al-Māturīdī's positions, also upholds the view that Adam misunderstood God's command, "Do not come close to this tree," to refer to a preference and not an obligation.[411] Al-Nasafī adds the following to the discussion:

> It is possible that [Adam] remembered the prohibition but thought with his mind that the prohibition is not proscriptive (*taḥrīm*) because it can be of many types. If the prohibition is coupled with "or you will be among the wrongdoers" [Q 7:19], then that is proof that it is proscriptive. [Adam] may have remembered the prohibition, but he forgot this matter ["or you will be among the wrongdoers"].[412]

Although al-Nasafī uses slightly different terminology here by calling the prohibition a *taḥrīm* instead of *nahy ḥurma* as called by al-Māturīdī, both terms[413] mean that God's

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[408] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:90.
[409] Ibid., 1:91.
[410] Disliked actions only warrant punishment if they are committed persistently.
[411] Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr fī al-tafsīr* (Fatih: Dār al-Lubāb, 2019) 2:115.
[412] Al-Nasafī reiterates the same options as al-Māturīdī about the different types of prohibitions. He writes that it can be (1) preferential; (2) for prevention of harm; and (3) proscriptive (*taḥrīm*). Al-Nasafī also adds a fourth option: the prohibition is a merciful prohibition (*nahy raḥma*). See al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr*, 2:116.
[413] Both the terms *taḥrīm* and *ḥurma* also share the same root letters, *ḥ-r-m* and indicate that something is sacred and inviolable.

prohibition was referring to a forbidden act and was obligatory to follow. By concluding that God's prohibition related to something forbidden, al-Māturīdī and al-Nasafī do not exculpate Adam. Instead, they demonstrate that eating from the tree is a forbidden action. This interpretation anticipates that Adam will face consequence and punishment.

Furthermore, in al-Nasafī's analysis of God's command, we also see two possible scenarios relating to Adam's judgement and forgetfulness. The first possibility —which echoes al-Māturīdī's view—is that Adam misunderstood God's prohibition to be preferential when it was not. This points to Adam's *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) being incorrect as he misinterprets God's prohibition. The second possibility, al-Nasafī argues, is that Adam did not forget God's prohibition when he ate from the tree. Instead, Adam forgot the consequences that he had been warned about.[414] With this view, al-Nasafī implies that Adam intentionally ate from the tree knowing it was the wrong thing to do, but he forgot that the consequences would be dire. These views, put forth by al-Nasafī, are discussed in greater detail by al-Māturīdī himself in his analysis of Adam's forgetting.

4.2 The Forgetfulness

Al-Māturīdī explores Adam's forgetting from many different perspectives, including intention, accountability, and reprimand. It is stated in the Quran, "We had a covenant with Adam from before, but he forgot (*nasiya*), and We did not find in him determination" (Q 20:115). The term *nisyān* (forgetting) in Arabic is the gerund of the verb *nasiya*. It refers to forgetting something and is a hypernym; many categories of *nisyān* exist ranging from inattention (such as *sahw*) to neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) and abandonment (*tark*). Al-Māturīdī presents four types of forgetting across his discussions on Adam, which can be summarised in the following way:

1. Types of forgetting pertaining to one's capacity to remember:[415]

    (a) *Ghafla* (heedlessness). This refers to when one falls short of one's responsibility to remember something. This type of forgetting is reprimandable because one has not upheld a responsibility that one has the capability (i.e., mental, intellectual) to uphold.

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[414] See al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:95.
[415] Ibid., 9:242.

(b) Forgetting that occurs without a cause (*ghayr al-sabab*) and cannot be prevented. This type is not reprimandable or punishable.

2. Types of forgetting pertaining to intention: [416]

(a) *tark* (abandonment) refers to intentionally (*ʿamd*) abandoning and leaving a command.

(b) *sahw* (inattention) is presented as the opposite of *tark,* and thus we can derive that it refers to unintentional forgetting.

Between these two different categories, al-Māturīdī concludes that Adam's forgetting is both *ghafla* (heedlessness) (1. a) [417] and *sahw* (inattention) (2. b).[418] To understand how these types relate to blaming and punishment, we turn to the following table, which is a summary of al-Māturīdī's categories:

Table 1. Types of Forgetting according to al-Māturīdī

Type of Forgetting	Is This Blameworthy and Punishable?	Reason Why it is/is not Blameworthy and Punishable
1. a) *Ghafla* (heedlessness)	Yes	One did not uphold a burden or responsibility that one had the intellectual and mental capability to uphold.
1. b) *Ghayr al-sabab* (forgetting that occurs without a cause)	No	Unpreventable type of forgetting, i.e., it is not due to complacency.
2. a) *Tark* (abandonment)	Yes	It relates to intentionally leaving or not adhering to a command.
2. b) *Sahw* (inattention)	No	*Sahw* is unintentional forgetting and cannot be prevented.

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[416] Ibid., 5:310.
[417] Ibid., 9:242.
[418] Ibid., 5:310.

Al-Māturīdī interprets Adam's forgetting as both (1. a) and (2. b), which are opposing in terms of blameworthiness. Adam's *nisyān* is the result of a failure to uphold God's command (1. a., *ghafla*) despite the capability to do so. Thus, the forgetting is deemed blameworthy. However, although Adam is blameworthy, al-Māturīdī maintains that he did not intend to contravene God's command and was not intentional in his erring. He argues, "It is not possible to say that Adam abandoned it (*taraka*) intentionally, so [the forgetting] is due to inattention (2.b., *sahw*)."[419] The opposing aspects of (1. a) and (2. b) in terms of blameworthiness is reconciled by al-Māturīdī as he does not exculpate Adam from blame entirely (as 1.a. is a blameworthy type of forgetting), but he minimizes the accountability of Adam's forgetting by arguing that Satan relentlessly distracted Adam, which lead to inattention (2. b). He writes that the reason Adam became inattentive was because Satan preoccupied him with a frequent back-and-forth exchange. [420] This is to distract Adam so that he would eventually forget God's prohibition entirely (both the command and the consequence). Though al-Māturīdī does not exculpate Adam, he highlights Adam is not solely to blame for approaching the tree.

As has been discussed in chapter two, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī interprets Adam's forgetting as neglect (*taḍyīʿ*), which is also the stance adopted by al-Ṭabarī; al-Baṣrī and al-Ṭabarī suggest that Adam's forgetting (*nisyān*) is intentional neglect, and they argue that Adam is aware of God's prohibition when he approaches the tree.[421] However, al-Māturīdī, who is cautious of Adam's prophetic status, challenges al-Baṣrī's stance. Al-Māturīdī asserts that neglecting God's command does not befit prophets, which include Adam. Al-Māturīdī's rebuttal of al-Baṣrī's stance appears in a few places in the *tafsīr*[422] but is clearly expressed in the following passage:

> Ḥasan and the people of interpretation (*ahl al-taʾwīl*) say, "God's saying *nasiya* [Q 20:115] means he neglected (*ḍayyaʿa*) or he abandoned (*taraka*). It is not inattention (*sahw*) because [Adam] was reprimanded and punished for it. Someone

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[419] See al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān,* 5:310.
[420] Ibid., 1:93.
[421] See ch. 2, section 3.3.2.
[422] See al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:92.

is not reprimanded for something that stems from inattention or forgetting. This indicates that [Adam's slip happens] due to neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) and abandonment (*tark*), and not forgetting and inattentiveness."

This is what they conclude. However, it is disgraceful to say that Adam—or any prophet or messenger—neglected.[423]

According to al-Māturīdī, prophets do not intentionally abandon the divine command, and therefore, Adam's slip cannot have happened out of neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) of God's prohibition. Though al-Māturīdī does not mention explicitly here that he understands *taḍyīʿ* to refer to intentional neglect, al-Nasafī clarifies this in his work. Al-Nasafī writes, "As for the characteristic of Adam's slip (*zalla*), Imam Abū Manṣūr [al-Māturīdī] notes that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said, 'Indeed [Adam] intended it according to God's saying, "He forgot" (*nasiya*) which was neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) not the forgetting of remembrance (*dhikr*).'"[424] He specifies here that al-Māturīdī understood al-Baṣrī's use of *taḍyīʿ* (for Adam's forgetting) as referring to intentional neglect. Al-Nasafī then goes on to argue that:

All of this [referring to al-Baṣrī's view] is unmannerly speech. It is not permitted to characterise prophets in this way. God has knowingly elected and chosen them. God says, "And indeed We knowingly chose them over the worlds" [Q 44:32], and He said, "God knows best where to place His message" [Q 6:124]. Regarding Adam's reality, [God] mentioned distinctness, wonders, ranks and stations, making it obligatory for [Adam] to transcend these characteristics [i.e., characteristics such as the ability to be neglectful].[425]

Al-Nasafī, writing almost two centuries after al-Māturīdī, upholds al-Māturīdī's view that prophets are protected from being neglectful of God's command. Al-Nasafī then states that the literal meaning of *nisyān* in relation to Adam is "the slipping of remembrance"[426] highlighting the inadvertency of Adam's forgetting. This reveals that al-Nasafī, like al-Māturīdī, maintains that as a prophet, Adam is exempt from committing intentional errors (such as neglecting something).

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[423] Ibid., 9:242. Also, al-Baṣrī lists several reasons for this, such as Satan reminding Adam, "Your Lord did not forbid you two this tree lest you become angels or immortal" (Q 7:20). Al-Māturīdī presents al-Baṣrī's view in more detail in *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:96.
[424] Al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr*, 2:112.
[425] Ibid., 2:112
[426] Al-Nasafī also notes that neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) can be metaphorical, but not literal. See Ibid., 2:113.

Al-Māturīdī's discussion on Adam's forgetting has shown that he considers Adam to be blameworthy, even though he is a prophet and does not intentionally neglect divine commands. The conclusions of al-Māturīdī and al-Nasafī highlight that within the Māturīdite school, Adam's forgetting is not pardoned, and he still faces blame and punishment because he fell short of his responsibility to uphold God's command. It is important to remember that, according to al-Māturīdī, Adam is not punished because of any wilful disobeying. He is blamed due to his heedlessness (*ghafla*), and not due to intending to contravene God's command. This is explored further when al-Māturīdī discusses the terminology he uses to refer to Adam's slip.

4.3 Terminology

The Quranic narrative of Adam includes the following verse, "And Adam and his wife ate [of the tree], and their private parts became apparent to them. They began to cover the leaves of paradise over themselves. And Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*) his Lord and was misguided" (Q 20:121). In the Arabic language, the word *ʿiṣyān* is a gerund of the verb *ʿaṣā* and refers to the concept of transgressing God's command. Scholars differ in their definition of the term and whether it can be applied to refer to Adam's slip. *ʿIṣyān* is unlike the word *maʿṣiya* (an act of disobeying)*,* which refers only to the act, not the attitude.[427] In contrast to *maʿṣiya*, *ʿiṣyān* refers to the overarching notion of disobeying an authority. In some classical dictionaries, *ʿiṣyān* is defined as "leaving (*tark*) submission, compliance or obedience"[428] and other classical scholars such as Ibn Sīda al-Mursī liken *ʿiṣyān* to words such as *fisq*,[429] another term referring to transgressing religious boundaries. Though linguistically the word *ʿiṣyān* may appear to be neutral, as it refers to a broader notion of disobeying and is not associated with insolence, its Quranic usage is telling of how it is primarily understood in the Islamic paradigm. *ʿIṣyān* appears once in the Quran: "God has endeared you toward faith and beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief, disobeying (*ʿiṣyān*) and defiance hateful to you. Those are the rightly guided" (Q 49:7). According to Toshiko Izutsu, this verse

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[427] See ch. 4, section 4.3 for a further discussion on *maʿṣiya* and *ʿiṣyān*.
[428] See s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-y, " in the following dictionaries: al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-taʿrīfāt*, Zayn al-Dīn al-Razī, *Mukhtār al-ṣiḥāḥ* and al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-lugha wa ṣiḥāḥ al-ʿarabīya*.
[429] See s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-y," Ibn Sīda al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*."

highlights that ʿiṣyān—when combined with disbelief and defiance—is the antithesis of faith.[430]

Although the Quranic usage of ʿiṣyān associates it with grave wrongdoings such as disbelief, al-Māturīdī argues that Adam's slip is an example of ʿiṣyān. This is in contrast to later Ashʿarite scholars like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the subject of chapter four.[431] Al-Māturīdī offers three explanations as to why he considers the term ʿiṣyān to be suitable when referring to Adam's action:

1. Adam was only tested with one thing by God, which was to stay away from one tree. The tree was also shown to him at the time of the prohibition. As Adam did not have several commands to remember and adhere to, God's (single) command was easy and not difficult to follow.

2. The best ones (akhyār) and messengers are taken to account for light, easy matters that ordinary people are not.

3. Adam was reprimanded with something that began his test (miḥna) on earth.[432] Here, al-Māturīdī indicates that Adam's slip can be considered as disobeying (ʿiṣyān) because Adam was reprimanded for it, as opposed to the slip being pardoned or dismissed. The reprimand and consequence faced by Adam for the slip is what led to the next test of his life, which is to fulfil his role as khalīfa on earth.[433]

Each explanation amplifies Adam's eating from the tree by alluding to notions of consequence, accountability and reprimand. The explanations al-Māturīdī offers also indicate that Adam did not have to think about multiple commands. Thus, adhering to only one prohibition from God was an easy task that he did not fulfil. This also relates to al-Māturīdī's classification of Adam's forgetting as occurring out of heedlessness (ghafla), as he had the intellectual ability to uphold God's command yet failed to do so. All of these reasons put forth by al-Māturīdī suggest that Adam's slip is reprimandable and that he will likely face punishment.

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[430] Toshiko Izutsu argues the verse Q 49:7 places ʿiṣyān as contributing to disbelief (kufr) alongside fusūq and kufr. See Izutsu, *Ethico Religious Concepts*, 188.
[431] See ch. 4, section 4.3.2.
[432] See section 5.1 of present chapter for a discussion on miḥna as a Māturīdite concept.
[433] See al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:93-4.

Additionally, from these explanations we can argue that Adam's action is interpreted by al-Māturīdī as disobeying (ʿiṣyān) because of his esteemed status. Al-Māturīdī mentions, "The best ones are taken to account for light, easy matters that ordinary people are not." From this we can presume that Adam's *ghafla*, for which he is reprimanded, would not be considered *ghafla* if it happened to an ordinary person. As Adam is a prophet, his intellectual burden and capacity is greater than that of ordinary people, so he is blamed for being heedless in a situation where non-prophets would be pardoned. Furthermore, in light of al-Māturīdī's position on God's prohibition relating to something forbidden (*nahy ḥurma*), the usage of ʿiṣyān is fitting; if we regard "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:30) as a divine command that is proscriptive, Adam's eating from the "forbidden" tree is a transgression of divine law and is an example of Adam's "dis"-obedience.

It is worth mentioning here a discussion in Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 767)[434] *al-Fiqh al-akbar* ("Major Jurisprudence") about prophetic actions and terminology. Though Abū Ḥanīfa does not use the term ʿiṣyān, his discussion reveals to us some important points about terms used for prophetic errors. In *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, Abū Ḥanīfa writes that prophets are protected from major and minor wrongdoings (*kabāʾir wa-ṣaghaʾir*), but they can commit a *zalla* (slip) and *khaṭāya* (plural of *khaṭīʾa*, meaning errors).[435] A commentary incorrectly attributed to al-Māturīdī[436] examines the term *zalla* and notes that it can happen in the following circumstances: (1) mistakenly; (2) out of inattention (*sahw*); (3) by leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*). The commentator then notes that Adam's action is a *zalla*. Although it is unclear who the commentary is written by,[437] this explanation indicates that a *zalla* is not related to intentional and wilful disobeying of God. Rather, a *zalla* either refers to unintentional actions (in the case of them happening mistakenly or out of inattention), or disliked actions (i.e., that happen due to *tark al-awlā*). Though they use different terms, al-

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[434] Abū Ḥanīfa is a foundational scholar of jurisprudential matters in the Māturīdite school. ThoughAbū Ḥanīfa states that prophets cannot commit minor wrongdoings, al-Māturīdī concludes that Adam's slip is a minor wrongdoing.

[435] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Ḥanafī al-Māturīdī al-Samarqandī, *Kitāb sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, ed. al-Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (Hyderabad: Jāmiʿāt Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1965), 48-9.

[436] The commentary, called *Kitāb sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, is incorrectly attributed to al Māturīdī. This is evident as there are several references in the commentary to thinkers outside of al-Māturīdī's time such as al-Nasafī. See al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, 48-9. The authorship of the commentaryis discussed further in Van Ess, "The So-Called Fiqh Akbar," in *Theology and Society*, 1:237-42.

[437] There are some suggestions that that commentary is authored by Abū Layth al-Samarqandī (d. 983) (which is also likely inaccurate as there are references to al-Nasafī who died two decades after al-Samarqandī). Another likely contended for the author of the commentary is al-Maghnisāwī (d. 1592/1679?).

Māturīdī and Abū Ḥanīfa's view (as interpreted by the commentator) are similar. The commentator of *al-Fiqh al-akbar* mentions that Abū Ḥanīfa held the opinion that prophets can make slips out of *sahw*. Similarly, according to al-Māturīdī, Adam's slip (which he calls an ʿiṣyān) also occurs out of *sahw* (as well as *ghafla*). Thus, though al-Māturīdī and Abū Ḥanīfa use different terms for prophetic errors that as first glance seem to be entirely opposing, they agree that *sahw* causes prophetic errors.

In contrast to Abū Ḥanīfa's view of *zalla* being an appropriate term to use in reference to Adam's slip, and al-Māturīdī considering Adam's slip as ʿiṣyān, later scholars of Transoxiana are more selective in the use of terms when referring to prophetic actions. This is recorded by al-Nasafī, who states:

> The *imāms* of Samarqand do not use the word slip (*zalla*) for prophets' actions because it is a type of offence (*dhanb*). Instead, they say, "They did a noble act but abandoned (*taraka*) the preferred (*awlā*) option. For this, they are blamed." The *imāms* of Bukhāra use [the term *zalla*] because God says, "So Satan caused them to slip" [Q 2:35], i.e., he made them slip. They extract [from this] that [a slip] is an unintentional act that is in opposition to a command. The person does not know that it opposes a command when he is committing it. He is not insistent on it after the action. This is like when a walking man slips on soil, he does not do so intentionally, and he does not insist on doing it [again].[438]

This extract from al-Nasafī's work records the change in attitudes about terminology for Adam's slip, between the time of al-Māturīdī and Muslim thinkers in Bukhara and Samarkand several centuries later. Whilst al-Māturīdī (writing two decades before al-Nasafī) uses ʿiṣyān, a term associated with transgressing the divine command, as a suitable word for prophetic errors, al-Nasafī in the twelfth-century demonstrates greater sensitivity in his choice of terms. Although al-Nasafī does not use ʿiṣyān in the above passage, he states that words which refer to a lesser wrongdoing such as *zalla* are contested by scholars. Furthermore, an even later exegete called Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 1310) adds in his *tafsīr*,[439] *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl* (The Faculties of Revelation and the Realities of Interpretation), that in addition to *zalla*, the scholars of Samarkand also avoid using the

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[438] Al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr,* 1:116.
[439] Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī and Yūsuf ʿAlī Badīwī, *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib, 1998), 1:81.

word *maʿṣiya* (an act of disobeying). This comparison of excerpts from two al-Nasafīs (who themselves are approximately a century apart) reveals that later Māturīdite scholars were more selective in terminology and demonstrated a greater sensitivity toward the question of prophetic errors.

It is important to note that although al-Māturīdī considers the term *ʿiṣyān* suitable for use in referring to Adam's slip, this is because, among other reasons, he considers Adam to be held to a higher degree of accountability. He explains:

> Taking the best ones to account and blaming the messengers is possible for light, easy matters that others would not be taken to account for. This is due to the abundance of blessings upon them and the greatness of provision that they have. Just like they are promised double the punishment over those who are not from them.[440]

According to this view, Adam's slip is not considered a universally punishable action; if ordinary people committed it, they would not be held to account for it. As al-Māturīdī uses the examples of messengers to shed light on Adam's accountability, he implies that Adam is also a messenger at this stage.[441] Overall, one of the key reasons behind why al-Māturīdī uses the word *ʿiṣyān* is that prophetic actions are judged in a different framework than actions performed by ordinary human beings. Thus, Adam's slip is an *ʿiṣyān* because of his prophetic status, not because he is a sinful person who wilfully transgresses God's command.

Al-Māturīdī's interpretation of Adam's slip shows that he exculpates Adam from wilful neglect and intentional wrongdoing. However, Adam is not exculpated from blame entirely. Despite emphasizing that Adam does not commit intentional wrongdoings, al-Māturīdī maintains that Adam is still blameworthy and that his slip is punishable due to the higher standards that prophets are judged against.

5. Adam After the Slip

Though Adam holds prophetic status, al-Māturīdī still maintains that Adam faces punishment. He writes, "Regardless of whether [Adam's] action was due to forgetting the

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[440] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:94.
[441] See Introduction, section 5.1.

oath or being mindful (*dhākir*) of it,[442] what befell him was punishment (ʿ*uqūba*)."[443] By analysing al-Māturīdī's depiction of Adam after the slip, we can discern if Adam's status and high degree, which are presented at the beginning of his story are degraded and if his relocation is interpreted as his punishment.

5.1 Adam's *Miḥna*

In his interpretation of the events that come after Adam's slip, al-Māturīdī explores the concept of Adam's *miḥna* or test. The *miḥna* is a core Māturīdite concept which centres on the human being's purpose on earth. Al-Māturīdī explains humankind's *miḥna* in his theological treatise, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*. He writes:

> When God created humankind for the *miḥna* (test), he made [humankind] people of distinction, and He informed them of praiseworthy and blameworthy matters. He made the matters that are repulsive be blameworthy, and [he made the matters] that are praiseworthy be beautified. He magnified the effects of [choosing] the repulsive [matters] over the beautified [matters] and desiring [something] blameworthy over [something] praiseworthy. . . .Then he made the *miḥna* into two matters: [times of] adversity and [times of] simplicity; [tasks that are] easy and [tasks that are] difficult. If it were not for the *miḥna*, what follows from both matters [i.e., adversity and simplicity, ease and difficulty] would be equivalent. The outcome [lit. what returns to them] depends on if they undertake something or abstain from it. In that regard, [God] created causes from which they can reach the essence (*aṣl*) which they can be raised in every rank and attain every virtue. It [i.e., the causes] is knowledge of two perspectives: [1] the apparent appearance [of something]' and [2] the concealed hiddenness [of something].[444]

According to al-Māturīdī, God tests humankind through matters of ease and difficulty. The knowledge that God gives the human being (in addition to intellect) allows him to either

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[442] It is important to recall here that al-Māturīdī does not believe that Adam remembered the command (or was mindful of it when he approached the tree). See section 4.2 and 4.3 of current chapter. Al-Māturīdī is referring to the alternative viewpoint here to emphasize that regardless of what opinion is taken about Adam's forgetting, Adam still experiences punishment. Also, see ch. 4, section 4.4.2 for a further discussion on views about Adam being in a state of remembering the prohibition (*dhākir*) when approaching the tree.
[443] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 1:96.
[444] Al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 1:301-2. A word-for-word translation results in the following lengthy and difficult-to-follow sentence: "[God] created reasons with which they can arrive at the root through which they can be raised in every rank and attain every virtue."

increase in status if he performs praiseworthy actions or be degraded in status if he commits blameworthy actions. In a theological work authored by the later Māturīdite theologian al-Ṣābūnī, al-Māturīdī is quoted as discussing the *miḥna* in light of prophetic impeccability:

> Impeccability does not preclude *miḥna*, meaning that it does not force one into obedience or render one incapable of disobeying. Instead, it is subtle benevolence (*luṭf*) from God, the exalted, that incites one to do good and dissuades one from evil, yet with one's [full] volition intact such that the trial and test [of faith] are genuine.[445]

According to al-Māturīdī, a prophet's impeccability does not eradicate their *miḥna*. Therefore, prophets can still experience adversity and tests from God. However, their impeccability means that they are incited to commit virtuous acts and make righteous choices even when faced with difficult challenges. These discussions on the *miḥna* shed light on its duality: God tests humankind with both ease and difficulty, both of which are reflected in how al-Māturīdī interprets Adam's tribulations. About Adam's *miḥna*, al-Māturīdī writes:

> In paradise, there was the first test (*miḥna*) and tribulation (*ibtilā ʾ*) from God to His servant. It was with favours and benevolence to them [i.e., Adam and Eve], then with consequence and justice for the bad (*sū ʾ*) they committed. God tested Adam first with favours and blessings when the angels prostrated to him. When [Adam] lived in paradise, [God] expanded His favours upon [Adam]. Then, He tested [Adam] with severity and types of difficulty because of what he committed [i.e.,] eating from the tree that he was prohibited from coming close.[446]

Here, al-Māturīdī states that Adam's first *miḥna* was the ease and comfort he experienced in paradise before his slip. His second *miḥna* came after his slip, in which God changed Adam's situation from the ease of life in paradise to adversity on earth. Thus, Adam's relocation is the start of his second *miḥna*, it is not a punishment. Al-Māturīdī writes: "It is possible that what Adam was blamed for [is what] began his *miḥna*. This is what he was created for. Thus, God said to the angels, 'Indeed, I am placing on earth a *khalīfa* (Q

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[445] Faraz A. Khan, *al-Bidāyah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, 178.
[446] Al-Māturīdī, *Ta ʾwīlāt al-Qur ʾān*, 5:306.

2:30).'"[447] Al-Māturīdī reminds us that Adam was preordained to be placed on earth, and his slip occurred to actualize this second *miḥna*.

5.2 Adam's Nakedness

Although al-Māturīdī interprets Adam's relocation as unrelated to his punishment, this does not mean that Adam is absolved from experiencing punishment entirely. Al-Māturīdī has already mentioned in passing that Adam faces punishment for his slip.[448] For example, one of the reasons al-Māturīdī concludes that Adam's slip is ʿiṣyān is because prophets are blamed and punished for things that ordinary people are not. So, whilst the relocation is a part of Adam's *miḥna* and is not his punishment, the nakedness that Adam and Eve experience, "their private parts became apparent to them" (Q 7:22; 20:121), is interpreted as a consequence of eating from the tree.

When analysing Adam's nakedness, al-Māturīdī explores a few different opinions. The first enquiry he presents is about why the nakedness is even mentioned in the narrative.[449] Al-Māturīdī includes an opinion here which states that God specifically mentioned Adam's private parts (*sawʾa*) because exposing this is what brings about shame. This is in contrast with the exposure of other non-private parts of the body. Another opinion al-Māturīdī presents is that the nakedness is a metaphor for sexual intercourse[450] or relieving oneself.[451] The final opinion that al-Māturīdī presents is that the private parts are specified in Q 7:22 and Q 20:121, because Satan intended for Adam and Eve's nakedness to be exposed and for them to feel ashamed. Though al-Māturīdī is just presenting different views here and does not give credence to a particular opinion, it is clear from this analysis that al-Māturīdī frames the nakedness as an unfortunate and shameful consequence of the slip. He does not mention that becoming naked degrades Adam's status, but these opinions all indicate that the nakedness (whether it is literal or metaphorical) makes Adam feel ashamed. Thus, the nakedness is a negative consequence and is very different to how al-Māturīdī interprets Adam's relocation, which he views as tied to Adam's greater purpose

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[447] Ibid., 1:175.
[448] See sections 4.2 and 4.3 of present chapter.
[449] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 5:311.
[450] This is the position held by the contemporary Pakistani scholar, Jāwed Aḥmad Ghāmidī as expressed in his *tafsīr*. See Jāwed Aḥmad Ghāmidī, *al-Bayān* (Lahore: al-Mawrid, 2014), 2:137.
[451] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 5:312.

and *miḥna*.

5.3 Adam's Repentance and Chosenness

As has been examined throughout this chapter, al-Māturīdī's various conclusions and comments suggest that he leans toward believing that Adam is already a prophet at the time of the slip. For example, al-Māturīdī's reasoning for Adam being reprimanded for forgetting is built on the argument that prophets are held to a higher standard than ordinary human beings. Thus, when God states in the Quran that Adam is chosen, "Then his Lord chose him, and relented unto him, and guided [him]" (Q 20:122), al-Māturīdī does not refer to God choosing Adam to be a prophet (as he considers Adam to already be a prophet). Instead, al-Māturīdī offers other ideas as to what Adam is "chosen" for after his repentance in this verse. He writes:

> His saying, "Then [his Lord] chose him [Q 20:122]" has several aspects. One of them is that He chose him for repentance and guided him to it. Alternatively, He chose him for the message [*risāla*] and guided him to it. Or He chose His religion for [Adam] and guided him toward affirming the oneness of God.[452]

Although the notion of being chosen to deliver God's message (*risāla*) is mentioned in passing here, al-Māturīdī does not assert a specific viewpoint or give credence to any opinion. Instead, he treats Adam's repentance as an opportunity to challenge Muʿtazilite views on repentance and minor wrongdoings. According to the Muʿtazilites, minor wrongdoings do not require repentance. Al-Māturīdī says:

> The verse [Q 2:37] defies the saying of the Muʿtazilites. This is because they say, "Whoever commits a minor wrongdoing is forgiven for it. He does not need to supplicate, nor does he need to repent." Adam called [to God] with words he had received from Him, and God accepted his repentance. If he were forgiven for what he committed, the supplication [would be] excessive and an exertion [for Adam].[453]

Al-Māturīdī notes here that the Muʿtazilites consider Adam's slip to be a minor wrongdoing. Therefore, from a Muʿtazilite perspective, there is a contradiction here: if Adam repents, then how can his error be a minor wrongdoing? Elsewhere, al-Māturīdī further challenges

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[452] Ibid., 9.244.
[453] Ibid., 1:107.

the Muʿtazilite position on minor and major wrongdoings. He states that the Muʿtazilites assert, "The messengers and prophets are protected from major wrongdoings"[454] but according to the Muʿtazilite framework, Adam must have committed a major wrongdoing because he repented to God. In bringing this up, al-Māturīdī attempts to show the fallacy in their argument regarding major and minor wrongdoings and repentance. He concludes, "There is no doubt that the slip of Adam is a minor wrongdoing, as we have mentioned."[455] Thus, for al-Māturīdī, Adam's repentance signifies that his slip is a minor wrongdoing. A few decades later, Najm al-Dīn al-Nasafī (d. 1142) develops this point and adds the following:

> This verse indicates the falsity of the Muʿtazilites' saying, "Minor wrongdoings are forgiven; punishment is not possible for [prophets], and repentance for them is unnecessary." What was from Adam was a slip (*zalla*), and that is below a minor wrongdoing. He was punished for it and ordered to repent for it.[456]

Comparing al-Nasafī's view on the same point with al-Māturīdī's statement highlights the shift within the Māturīdite school towards Adam's action. For al-Māturīdī, it is a minor wrongdoing, but just a few decades later, al-Nasafī argues that it is a slip. According to al-Nasafī, a slip is lesser in legal value than a minor wrongdoing.

As can be seen from the treatment of Adam's repentance, most of al-Māturīdī's interpretations of post-slip Adam focus on Adam's *miḥna*. Al-Māturīdī offers a nuanced view on this; the relocation indicates Adam's hardship (like al-Ṭabarī's interpretation), but this hardship is due to Adam's vicegerency and attainment of responsibility. It is not due to a degradation in status. Generally, al-Māturīdī does not mention prophetic impeccability explicitly when discussing Adam's action, nor does he exculpate Adam. He maintains that Adam is blameworthy and faces negative consequences because he is a prophet, and his slip is judged to a higher standard. Al-Māturīdī does, however, demonstrate an awareness and sensitivity toward Adam's prophetic status and interprets aspects of Adam's story in light of this status. This places al-Māturīdī's interpretation of Adam's slip and subsequent relocation in a somewhat grey area: he does not explicitly mention that Adam is impeccable, but he argues that though Adam's slip is a minor wrongdoing, it must have been committed unintentionally because he is a prophet. Comparing some of al-Māturīdī's discussion with al-

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[454] Ibid., 5:316.
[455] Al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, 5:316.
[456] Al-Nasafī, *al-Taysīr*, 2:128.

Nasafī's *tafsīr* has shed light on some Māturīdite developments in interpreting Adam's story. Later developments on Māturīdite views of Adam's eating from the tree can be seen in the work of the Māturīdite theologian, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī.

6. A Summary of Māturīdite Views: Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī's *al-Muntaqā fī ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*

We now turn to examine the work of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 1184) entitled *al-Muntaqā fī ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* ("Pure Selection regarding the Impeccability of the Prophets"). This work is focused on the topic of prophetic impeccability, and al-Ṣābūnī builds on the early Māturīdite views on prophetic errors as seen in al-Māturīdī's works. However, as al-Ṣābūnī lived a few centuries after al-Māturīdī, his work also reveals a development in Māturīdite views on Adam's slip, prophetic status, and his relocation from paradise to earth.

6.1 The Importance of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī in the Māturīdī School

Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī was an erudite scholar from Bukhara in Transoxiana, who is known as one of the leading thinkers of the Māturīdite school of theology. His two most notable works are (1) *al-Kifāya fī al-hidāya fī uṣūl al-dīn* ("The Sufficiency in Guidance in the Principles of Religion"), considered his *magnum opus*; and (2) *al-Bidāya fī uṣūl al-dīn* ("The Introduction to the Principles of Religion"), a famous theological manual. This work has recently been translated[457] as part of the surge of publications dedicated to the study of the Māturīdite school of theology. Al-Ṣābūnī's work, which is the focus of this section, is entitled *al-Muntaqā min ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*. This work is dedicated to examining the narratives of prophets in Islam in light of their prophetic impeccability. *Al-Muntaqā* is a summary of a work authored by a discreet figure Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā Abū al-Ḥasan al-Bashāgarī (d. 838?),[458] entitled *Kashf al-ghawāmiḍ fī aḥwāl al-anbiyāʾ* ("Unveiling the Obscurities in the States of the Prophets").

In the few decades between al-Māturīdī and al-Ṣābūnī, the Māturīdite school encountered hostility due to the growing Ashʿarite presence in Transoxiana. As a natural

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[457] See Faraz A. Khan, *An Introduction to Islamic Theology* (Zaytuna College: California, 2020).
[458] Unfortunately, there is currently little research and information on al-Bashāgarī or his work, though he is mentioned in some bibliographies. Hence, al-Ṣābūnī's work, *al-Muntaqā*, serves as one of the only sources we have on al-Bashāgarī.

result of this exchange, Māturīdite positions became more refined and nuanced in matters such as prophetic impeccability. Al-Ṣābūnī also met the eminent Ashʿarite theologian, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī—who is the subject of the next chapter—for theological discussions. Their encounters appear in a book by al-Rāzī[459] that records the discussions al-Rāzī had with scholars from Transoxiana. The recorded differences in view between al-Ṣābūnī and al-Rāzī related to (1) the beatific vision (ruʾya); (2) bringing into being and what is brought into being (takwīn wa-l-mukawwan); and (3) subsistence (baqāʾ).[460] As will come to light after the following analysis and in the next chapter, both Ashʿarite and Māturīdite views on Adam in the thirteenth-century, specifically about Adam's impeccability, are similar.

The purpose of examining al-Ṣābūnī's view here is to discern any significant theological shifts in the interpretation of Adam's action and relocation in Māturīdite theology since the time of its founder. Due to the topic of al-Ṣābūnī's *al-Muntaqā*, which is on prophetic actions, this work offers a more concise and detailed snapshot of Māturīdite perceptions of Adam's status, slip and relocation to earth. In this work, al-Ṣābūnī presents the critical issues in each prophet's narrative, which are commonly misrepresented as "offences" (dhunūb). He writes that this work aims to absolve the prophets of such actions and to reinstate their impeccability, nobility and high status among creatures.[461]

6.2 The Impeccability of Prophets

Before presenting al-Ṣābūnī's interpretation of Adam's story, we first turn to his overarching views on impeccability. In several places, al-Ṣābūnī emphasizes that prophets are protected from major wrongdoings and that their intention is not to commit offences.[462] He also attests to the noble and high status of prophets and messengers.[463] He defines impeccability as "removing whatever disgraces them and nullifies their degree. All of that is a benevolence from God. He distinguishes with it whomever He wills from among His servants."[464] In addition, al-Ṣābūnī emphasizes the high rank of prophets and their difference from ordinary human beings. He writes:

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[459] Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Munāẓarāt Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī bilād mā warāʾ al-nahr*, ed. Fatḥullah Khalīf (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1967).
[460] Al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Muntaqā*, 11.
[461] Ibid., 17.
[462] Ibid., 29.
[463] Ibid., 30.
[464] Ibid., 66-7.

It is obligatory that we do not compare their states with our states and that we do not make them equal to others. If their reprimands from God are mentioned, then it is due to the loftiness of their degree and the distinction of their position with God. It is [also] to emphasize their position regarding impeccability and election and to make it known that ignorance, inability, weakness, deficiency, and limitation are possible for whoever is a created being. God is alone in His splendour and perfection. Election and protection are established upon [the prophets] by God. They are praised and praiseworthy because God placed this [i.e., election and protection] on them, and not of their own accord.[465]

Here he also discusses the reason why a prophet is reprimanded; if a prophet is blamed, it is due to his status and responsibility. Thus, even when a prophet is reprimanded, this is an acknowledgement of his high degree and distinctness from ordinary people. Their impeccability protects them from the errors that ordinary people commit but does not mean that they are protected from committing any and all errors. This is already discussed by al-Māturīdī.[466] Furthermore, whilst maintaining their impeccability, al-Ṣābūnī mentions that prophets are still creations of God and thus, can never be perfect, as perfection is reserved only for God. They are reprimanded as a reminder to humankind that prophets are still human beings and that only God is free of error.

6.3 Al-Ṣābūnī's Interpretation of Adam's Slip and Relocation

There are two critical aspects of Adam's story related to this study that al-Ṣābūnī treats differently than al-Māturīdī: Adam's action and potential disobeying, and the relocation of Adam from paradise to earth.

Like al-Māturīdī, al-Ṣābūnī is not opposed to using the word ʿiṣyān (disobeying) to refer to Adam's slip. He defines ʿiṣyān as "leaving the command and approaching what is forbidden, whether it is done forgetfully or intentionally."[467] Despite referring to Adam's slip as ʿiṣyān, which itself is associated in the Quran with grave wrongdoing,[468] al-Ṣābūnī gives his definition of the term which presents ʿiṣyān as a broad, neutral term that encompasses

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[465] Ibid.
[466] See section 3.4 of the present chapter.
[467] Al-Ṣābūnī, *al-Muntaqā*, 38.
[468] See section 4.3 of the present chapter.

both intentional and unintentional acts. Regarding Adam's slip, al-Ṣābūnī asserts the following:

> God mentions that the chosenness, forgiveness and guidance follow after ʿiṣyān (disobeying). This is to make known that in [Adam's] disobeying, there is a subtlety that points to being chosen afterwards. The disobeying does not reduce Adam's degree, and we have mentioned the meaning of being chosen [previously]. Then [God] decides to accept the repentance, and He declares Adam's steadfastness upon guidance so that it is known that [Adam's] disobeying does not darken the light of guidance. [469]

In this extract, we see al-Ṣābūnī explicitly stressing that Adam's slip does not degrade his status or affect his ability to be "chosen" after his slip. Al-Ṣābūnī adopts a slightly didactic tone here, indicating that Adam being "chosen" after his slip reveals that one's disobeying does not preclude one from being chosen or guided afterwards.

Al-Ṣābūnī also tackles the issue of Adam's relocation. He argues that being relocated is not a punishment by God, nor does it degrade Adam's status. Al-Ṣābūnī writes,

> [Adam's] removal from paradise and his descent to earth was to uncover his knowledge and wisdom and as an ascent and nobility for Adam and his vicegerency (khilāfa), not as a punishment for his slip or a lowering in his rank. Had he been in paradise, he would have been one of the servants. When he descended to earth, he attained the rank of vicegerency (khilāfa). The vicegerency is more significant in value and clearer in nobility than servanthood. God uncovers His servant's nobility in any way He wishes: either by way of a test (miḥna) or by way of blessing. He revealed to Adam this nobility (karāma) via the test by revealing his private parts to him, removing blessings and tranquillity from him and the removal [from paradise] to a place of difficulty and toil.[470]

In al-Ṣābūnī's view, Adam becomes a vicegerent when being relocated to earth, which demonstrates an ascension in status and acquisition of a higher level of responsibility. Although al-Māturīdī argues that the relocation of Adam is already alluded to in the verse "I am placing on earth a khalīfa" (Q 2:30), al-Māturīdī does not explicitly mention that the relocation indicates the raising of Adam's status. However, al-Ṣābūnī places explicit

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[469] Al-Ṣābūnī, al-Muntaqā, 38.
[470] Ibid., 35.

emphasis on the positive aspects of the relocation; he says it "uncovers [Adam's] knowledge and wisdom" and that being a *khalīfa* is "greater in value and clearer in nobility than servanthood." It is only through difficulty that Adam can appropriately carry out the role of responsibility and hardship involved in being God's vicegerent. As the above extract highlights, al-Ṣābūnī glances over the nakedness of Adam and Eve, suggesting that its primary function was to test Adam so that the esteem of being a *khalīfa* could be actualized.

It is clear from al-Ṣābūnī's treatment of Adam's slip and relocation that he is concerned with upholding the noble and esteemed rank of Adam. He maintains that despite the nakedness and relocation, Adam is not degraded. Instead, Adam's slip actualizes the next stage of his life, being a vicegerent on earth, in which he can attain ranks of virtue and responsibility. Comparing al-Ṣābūnī's view (from the thirteenth century) with al-Māturīdī's view (from the tenth century) sheds light on the developments of Māturīdite interpretations of Adam's story across three centuries. Al-Ṣābūnī's writings show that there is a greater inclination to hold Adam in higher regard within the later Māturīdite school. This goes further with later writers in the fourteenth century, such as Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī (d. 1310), who demonstrate an even greater sensitivity than al-Māturīdī and al-Ṣābūnī toward the choice of terms in describing prophetic actions.[471]

7. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the early classical Māturīdite views on Adam's slip. Starting with al-Māturīdī himself, the school's foundational view on prophethood and prophetic error was brought to light. From al-Māturīdī's interpretation of Adam's story, we can see that he gives due concern to Adam's prophetic status in the story and indicates that Adam is a prophet when the slip happens. This is presented in a few ways. First, al-Māturīdī stresses that Adam is protected from spreading mischief and bloodshed on earth, already suggesting Adam's extraordinary status. Secondly, al-Māturīdī highlights that Adam receives knowledge directly from God; this is restricted only to messengers and prophets. As Adam is considered a prophet in the Māturīdite tradition before the slip occurs, he cannot commit intentional wrongdoings. Al-Māturīdī also maintains that Adam is held to a higher standard than

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[471] Abū al-Barakāt al-Nasafī and Yūsuf ʿAlī Badīwī, *Madārik al-tanzīl wa-ḥaqāʾiq al-taʾwīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib, 1998), 1:81.

ordinary people. It is because of this high standard that Adam is held to account for his slip, and therefore he is not exculpated from blame. However, al-Māturīdī affirms that Adam's relocation is not a punishment but rather, a part of his *miḥna* to be on earth. For al-Māturīdī, Adam's punishment came in the form of his awareness of being naked. Though al-Māturīdī reaches similar conclusions to al-Ṭabarī, such as Adam undergoing punishment and his life on earth being a period of hardship, al-Māturīdī argues that these things happen to Adam due to his esteemed position as a prophet of God, and therefore, the higher standard that he is judged against.

Examining the positions of al-Nasafī and al-Ṣābūnī has shown further a development in Māturīdite views on Adam. For example, al-Māturīdī deems the slip to be a minor wrongdoing (*ṣaghīra*), but al-Nasafī concludes that Adam's error is less than a minor wrongdoing because it is a *zalla* (slip). This shows that as we approach the twelfth century, Māturīdite scholars devalue Adam's slip. Al-Ṣābūnī goes a step further by emphasizing the positive effects that Adam's slip had on his status. He argues that Adam's relocation led to the ascent of his status because it allowed him to become a *khalīfa* of God on earth and to spread God's wisdom to others. Al-Ṣābūnī also presents ʿiṣyān as a broad term that encompasses both intentional and unintentional actions. Al-Ṣābūnī then considers Adam's slip to be an example of ʿiṣyān. This is a term contested by some Ashʿarite scholars, but according to al-Ṣābūnī, Adam's disobeying (ʿiṣyān) does not degrade his status or his ability to be guided by God after the slip. Furthermore, the discussion around terms in this chapter has revealed al-Māturīdī's views on ʿiṣyān in relation to prophetic errors. Though al-Māturīdī makes a case for Adam's slip to be considered ʿiṣyān (disobeying), he asserts that it is so because of Adam's high status.

By analysing the views of these three key thinkers of the Māturīdite school, an evolution of Māturīdite treatment of Adam's slip becomes visible. Al-Māturīdī, writing in the tenth century, highlights Adam's nobility and protection from wilful wrongdoings and error but still maintains that Adam's slip was followed by punishment (the awareness of being naked) and that the relocation involved severe hardship for Adam. By the twelfth century, al-Ṣābūnī interprets the relocation as a positive event that represents Adam's elevation in status to being God's vicegerent on earth. However, these views are not exclusive to the Māturīdite school, as the following chapter which explores the views of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, a prominent Ashʿarite theologian, will demonstrate.

Chapter 4: Impeccability and Exculpation: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Interpretation of Adam's Story

1. Introduction

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) is one of the most prolific scholars of the classical period of Islam. He contributed to several different disciplines such as theology, history, jurisprudence and metaphysics, all of which intersect in his *tafsīr* entitled *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* ("Keys of the Unseen"), also referred to as *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* ("The Great Commentary"). Al-Rāzī's commitment to theology shaped the trajectory of Ashʿarism, while his interest in philosophy led to its naturalisation into Quranic discourse.[472] These aspects of his work are also reflected in his *tafsīr*. The *tafsīr* is considered the crest of al-Rāzī's oeuvre, showcasing his unique style, methodology and approach to the Quran.

By the thirteenth century, Sunni prophetology had developed into a nuanced topic comprising multiple complex discussions on matters such as prophetic miracles, the proofs of prophecy and the impeccability of prophets.[473] Several works by Ashʿarite scholars written before al-Rāzī's time in the eleventh and twelfth centuries explore these topics at length. For example, al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ's (d. 1149) *al-Shifāʾ bi-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā* ("The Cure through Recognising the Rights of the Chosen One") discusses the possibility of prophets

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[472] See Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Quranic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 69-70; 133-5. Also, Ayman Shihadeh and Jan Thiele, eds., *Philosophical Theology in Islam: Later Ashʿarism East and West*, vol. 5, Islamicate Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 36.

[473] See A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 218. Comparing some key primary sources that discuss prophethood reveals the development of prophethood and prophecy as an established topic in Islamic theological works. For example, Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 767) *al-Fiqh al-akbar* includes a few lines on prophets being protected from major and minor wrongdoings. See Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Māturīdī, *Kitāb sharḥ al-fiqh al-akbar*, ed. al-Nuʿmān ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (Hyderabad: Jamʿiyāt Dāʾirāt al-Maʿārif al-Uthmāniyya, 1965), 48-9. Comparing this to al-Māturīdī's (d. 944) *Kitab al-tawḥīd* we see that prophethood is discussed in slightly more detail; see al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-tawḥīd*, 1:37. Then, a series of Ashʿarite theological manuals from the eleventh and twelfth centuries comprehensively discuss different aspects of prophetic impeccability. For example, see Ibn Fūrak (d. 1015), *Maqālāt al-shaykh Abī Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyaḥ (Cairo: Maktabat Thaqāfat al-Dīnīyya, 2005), 182. Also, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat al-Dawla, 1968) 167-8; and al-Shahrastānī (d. 1158), *Kitāb nihāyat al-iqdām* (Baghdad: Maktabat al-Mathnā, 1965), 417-ff.

committing wrongdoings and how this affects their impeccability.[474] Works of exegesis before al-Rāzī (including those belonging to different theological doctrines such as Muʿtazilism), have also explored these issues. For example, the *tafsīr* of the eleventh-century jurist, al-Māwardī (d. 1058) entitled *al-Nukut wa-l-ʿuyūn* ("Subtle Meanings and Insights") summarises some theological views on Adam's error. Also, the renowned *tafsīr* of the Muʿtazilite scholar and theologian, al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl* ("The Unveiler of the Realities of Revelation") explores Adam's story from the perspective of his prophetic impeccability.[475]

Whilst al-Rāzī's views are founded upon the many discussions in works produced in the tenth to twelfth centuries, his *tafsīr* offers the greatest amount of detail, reflection and documentation on Adam's slip, his relocation from paradise to earth and how prophetic impeccability ties into these two events. One of the key developments in Muslim scholarly discourse on prophets in the centuries between al-Ṭabarī, al-Māturīdī (in the tenth century) and al-Rāzī (in the thirteenth-century) is subdividing the lives of prophets into two segments: pre-prophethood and post-prophethood. This segmentation of a prophet's life is an integral part of al-Rāzī's interpretation of Adam's story.[476] It is important to note that al-Rāzī does not approach Adam's story from a neutral perspective; it is clear from the discussions in his *tafsīr* that he aims to challenge those who believe that Adam sinned, was denigrated in status and experienced punishment.[477]

As mentioned, al-Rāzī is not the first person to discuss Adam's slip from the perspective of his impeccability. However, his *tafsīr* on Adam's story offers the reader

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[474] See al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *al-Shifāʾ bī-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*, ed. ʿAbduh ʿAlī Kawshak (Dubai: Jāʾizat Dubay al-Dawliyya li-l-Qurʾān al-Karīm, 2013), 667-715. For discussions on Adam, see 603; 893.

[475] See al-Māwardī, *al-Nukut wa-l-ʿuyūn* (Kuwait: Maṭbaʿa Maqhawī, 1986),1:98; 2:18. Also see al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, 1:254-7; 4:116. As al-Zamakhsharī adheres to the Muʿtazilite school of theology, he considers Adam to be a prophet from the beginning of his story in the Quran. This is similar to the Zaydī Muʿtazilite exegete, al-Ḥākim al-Jishūmī (d. 1101) who not only argues that Adam is a prophet from the beginning, but also that Adam's descent to earth is not a punishment. See al-Ḥākim al-Jishūmī, *al-Tahdhīb fī tafsīr,* ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-Sālamī (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣrī, 2018), 1:245.

[476] This segmentation into pre-prophetic and prophetic stages also appears in earlier works of *tafsīr* such as the exegesis of ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī (d. 1075). Al-Wāḥidī states in his *tafsīr* that Adam committed his act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) before becoming a prophet. See ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *al-Tafsīr al-basīṭ*, ed. Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāleḥ (Riyadh: Jāmiʿat Muḥammad Ibn Saʿūd al-Islāmiyya, 2009), 2:382-3.

[477] Whilst many exegetes from the eleventh century onwards explored prophetic impeccability in the narrative of Adam, some still emphasized that Adam committed a wrongdoing and was consequently punished. For example, in al-Wāḥidī's *tafsīr* entitled *al-Wajīz* (which is a summary of his larger work entitled *al-Basīṭ*), al-Wāḥidī writes that Adam's slip led to his decrease in status. See ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Wāḥidī, *al-Tafsīr al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-ʿazīz*, ed. ʿAdil Aḥmad (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994), 1:122.

abundant theological insights and extensive surveys of different viewpoints on Adam and prophetic impeccability. This contrasts with earlier works, such as al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*,[478] where the interpretation of Adam's story involves little to no discussion on prophetic status or prophetic impeccability. Another work by al-Rāzī entitled ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ ("The Impeccability of the Prophets") also shows a focused concern with prophetic impeccability. In this work, he summarises the key arguments presented in his *tafsīr* and examines several prophetic narratives from the perspective of affirming impeccability. Al-Rāzī's prophetology was heavily influenced by the philosopher Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) and his views on prophets. Ibn Sīnā argued that prophets possessed an extraordinary intellectual faculty and attested that they were supreme beings, unlike ordinary men.[479] It is this idea of prophets as distinct from ordinary human beings that we see echoed in al-Rāzī's approach to Adam's story.

The present chapter explores how al-Rāzī discusses and interprets Adam's story and slip in light of his views on prophethood. First, the methodology and style of al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* are presented, after which a critical analysis of his views on prophetic impeccability is offered as a preamble to his discussions on Adam in the *tafsīr*. Thereafter, several key aspects of Adam's story will be examined, including his status both before and after the slip, his forgetting, and the nature of God's prohibition. Exploring these aspects of the story shed light on al-Rāzī's dense discussions, which focus on several important issues such as intention and *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning). These discussions are lengthy enquiries in which al-Rāzī investigates the views of many different theological groups. However, it is important to note that the focus of this chapter is to extract al-Rāzī's position from the arguments that he presents, and not to present all of the different views al-Rāzī includes in his discussions. Also, this chapter will examine how al-Rāzī re-evaluates and reinterprets Adam's story from earlier narratives which depicted Adam as someone who suffered severe punishment. The following are the three core questions to be addressed in this chapter: (1) Does al-Rāzī view Adam's slip as degrading his status?; (2) Does al-Rāzī give consideration to Adam's prophetic status in his interpretation of the story?; and (3) does al-Rāzī conclude

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[478] It has not been confirmed whether al-Rāzī authored the *tafsīr* before his ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ. However, the discussions in the ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ appear to be summaries of the more comprehensive and complex discussions in al-Rāzī's *tafsīr*, and al-Rāzī takes on a more explicit stance on issues such as the status of Adam's prophethood before the slip occurs, which suggest that it was written after the *tafsīr*.

[479] See Jaffer, *Rāzī*, 204-6; Fazlur Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam*: *Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 30-6.

that Adam's slip warranted punishment or that it elevated Adam's status? Exploring these questions in al-Rāzī's work will demonstrate how views on prophets and prophethood held by theologians have shaped the interpretation of Adam in the Ashʿarite theological tradition.

2. Al-Rāzī's Methodology in His *Tafsīr*

Al-Rāzī began writing his *tafsīr, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* around 1199.[480] Some scholars contest his authorship of the *tafsīr* (in particular for the later *sūra*s), arguing that the *tafsīr* was completed from *sūra* thirty onwards by two of al-Rāzī's students, Najm al-Dīn al-Qammūlī (d. 1327) and Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Khalīl (d. 1242).[481] This *tafsīr* is characterised by its lengthiness, detailed nature and rigorous debate. In it, al-Rāzī examines various currents of thought and surveys the proofs of numerous (and often contradicting) positions. As al-Rāzī's analyses many different stances on a verse, his *tafsīr* can be seen as an encyclopaedia of the theological views of his milieu.[482] Al-Rāzī's position in his *tafsīr* is equivocal and buried within lengthy discussions. Often his view is only subtly indicated by phrases such as *qāla aṣḥābunā* ("our companions said"), *naqūl* ("we say") or *jawābunā* ("our response").

The structure of al-Rāzī's discussion of Quranic verses is complex. He employs several different terms for each category of argumentation. First, each verse is split into various enquiries (*masāʾil*, sing. *masʾala*). Then, within each enquiry, there are perspectives (*wajh,* pl. *wujūh)*. According to Tariq Jaffer, the "perspectives" (*wujūh*) record all information about the particular angle of an enquiry (*masʾala*).[483] There are many English translations for the word *masʾala* offered by various academics. For example, Jaffer offers the word "questions" but also uses the term "issue" when he translates parts of al-Rāzī's works. However, Sohaib Saeed translates al-Rāzī's *masāʾil* as "enquiries" in his translation of

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[480] Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr Al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 10.

[481] Yasin Ceylan, *Theology and Tafsīr in the Major Works of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1996), 15.

[482] As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, such categorization of subdivisions within *tafsīr* literature has recently been criticised for polarising the *tafsīr* genre. However, many *tafsīr*s can belong in both *riwāya* and *raʾy* categories simultaneously. See Feras Hamza, Sajjad Rizvi, and Farhana Mayer, eds., *An Anthology of Qurʾanic Commentaries,* 5.

[483] Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Quranic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 29.

al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*.[484] Saeed's translation is coherent with al-Rāzī's own explanation of the usage of *masāʾil* in his *tafsīr*. Al-Rāzī writes "a *masʾala* has no meaning other than [being] the locus of questions *(suʾāl)* and corroboration *(taqrīr)*."[485] This definition aligns with Saeed's translation of *masʾala* as "enquiry," as a *masʾala* appears whenever al-Rāzī interrogates a verse and investigates the several different perspectives of it. Al-Rāzī also frequently uses the terms *aqwāl* (statements) and *baḥth* (discussion) as subheadings in his arguments. These appear under the enquiry (*masʾala*) of a verse, but their usage is not always consistent. Therefore, the meaning and pattern of his usage of these terms requires further research.[486]

3. Views on Prophetic Impeccability

It is useful to first present al-Rāzī's stance on prophetic impeccability as this informs his interpretation of Adam's story. Before beginning his most detailed commentary on Adam's action in *Sūrat al-Baqara,* the second chapter of the Quran, al-Rāzī surveys several theological positions on prophetic impeccability. Al-Rāzī maintains that prophets are impeccable, and many of his arguments in support of this position echo the opinions of several eleventh-century Ashʿarite theologians such as Ibn Fūrak (d. 1015) and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037).[487]

Al-Rāzī begins the discussion on prophetic impeccability when interpreting the verse, "And Satan caused them to slip" (Q 2:36). Under the first enquiry, he explores four categories that are concerned with prophetic impeccability: (1) religious conviction (*iʿtiqād*) of prophets; (2) their conveyance of the divine message (*tablīgh*); (3) legal rulings issued by

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[484] Sohaib Saeed, trans., *The Great Exegesis: al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Cambridge: Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought & The Islamic Texts Society, 2018), xiii.

[485] At first, al-Rāzī discusses the word *masʾala* in an unclear way and synonymises it with other terms that he uses to structure arguments, like perspectives (*wujūh*) and counterarguments (*shubhāt*). However, it is then clarified with this excerpt. See al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb / al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 1:20.

[486] Tariq Jaffer, review of *Les secrets de l'invisible: Essai sur le Grand Commentaire de Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, by Michel Lagarde. *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15, no. 3 (2013): 277-8. In his study of al-Rāzī's *tafsīr*, Lagarde mentions that al-Rāzī's *baḥath* stem from his *masāʾil* and are further points of investigation. But a more in-depth study of al-Rāzī's terms in the structure of his *tafsīr* is required.

[487] See Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī*, ed. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāyaḥ (Cairo: Maktabat Thaqāfat al-Dīnīyya, 2005), 182. Also, ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb uṣūl al-dīn* (Istanbul: Maṭbaʿat al-Dawla, 1968) 167-8.

prophets *(aḥkām wa-l-fatāyā)*; and (4) the actions and manner of conducting themselves *(afʿāl wa-sīratihim)*. The main sections of his argument can be summarised as follows:[488]

1. Religious conviction (*iʿtiqād*): this is concerning whether prophets can disbelieve in God and commit acts of *kufr* (disbelief). Here, al-Rāzī mentions that most schools of theology agree that prophets cannot disbelieve in God or misguide others. Al-Rāzī's position is made clear in his interpretation of the verse, "This is my Lord" (Q 6:76-8) said by Abraham when looking at the stars (Q 6:76), the rising moon (Q 6:77) and sun (Q 6:78). Al-Rāzī first presents the arguments of those who argue that Abraham is committing *kufr* by saying, "This is my Lord" when observing the celestial objects. However, al-Rāzī clarifies that Abraham is not *declaring* that the stars, sun and moon are his Lord; rather, Abraham is questioning *whether* they are his Lord. According to al-Rāzī's stance, "This is my Lord" is better translated as the question, "Is this my Lord?" (Shakir; Ünal). Al-Rāzī's defence of Abraham here, who al-Rāzī believes has not yet been initiated into prophethood, affirms al-Rāzī's position that prophets cannot commit *kufr* even before they are initiated into prophethood.[489] This shows that they are purified and distinct even before they become prophets, a view he also applies in his interpretation of Adam's story.[490]

2. The conveyance of the divine message (*tablīgh*): this is the possibility of prophets erring in their delivery of the divine message. Al-Rāzī mentions that most scholars agree that prophets cannot make errors in this regard, but some groups assert that they can make unintentional mistakes about God's message.[491] Al-Rāzī favours the

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[488] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:7.

[489] According to al-Rāzī, Abraham is not yet a prophet when he says, "Is this my Lord?" in Q 6:76; 6:77;6:78. See al-Rāzī, ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ, 75-6, where he offers some of his views on when Abraham received *waḥy* (revelation) and became a prophet.

[490] See section 4.2 of the present chapter.

[491] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11. The three verses presented from the Quran as proofs for those who believe that prophets can make regarding revelation are: (1) "We will make you [i.e., Muhammad] recite and you will not forget" (Q 87:6), which is further discussed in section 4.4 of this chapter; (2) "And we did not send before you any messenger or prophet except that when he recited, Satan threw into the recitation [some errors]. But God abolishes that which Satan throws in" (Q 22:52). Al-Rāzī goes into detail for this verse in ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ, ed. Muḥammad Ḥijāz (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīnīyya, 1986), 14. Finally, (3) "He does not disclose knowledge of the unseen to anyone, except whom He has approved among messengers, and indeed He sends guards in front of and behind them so that He may know that they have conveyed the message of their Lord" (Q 72:26-8).

stance that prophets cannot make errors intentionally or unintentionally regarding the divine message.[492]

3. Legal rulings issued by prophets (*aḥkām wa-l-fatāyā*): this category is about the legal judgements made by prophets. Most theological groups agree that any errors made by prophets regarding legal judgements are not intentional errors. Al-Rāzī examines Quranic verses on David, Solomon and prophet Muhammad's rulings and concludes that any potential errors in this category are classified as leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*). Leaving the preferred option does not warrant punishment, whereas committing forbidden actions does warrant punishment.[493]

4. The actions and manner of conducting themselves (*afʿāl wa-sīratihim*): this is the most comprehensive section and the one most relevant to the discussion in this chapter. This section explores whether prophets can commit offences (*dhunūb*). According to al-Rāzī, prophets cannot commit major (*kabīra*) or minor (*ṣaghīra*) offences.[494] He presents his reasons for this in sixteen detailed points.[495]

Al-Rāzī's discussions in each of the above four areas show how he minimises the severity and implications of prophetic mistakes and vindicates prophets from wrongdoing and disbelief. One of the most significant findings from al-Rāzī's discussion on impeccability is the different capabilities that a prophet has before and after being elected for prophethood. For example, he argues that Abraham cannot commit *kufr* even before his prophethood, suggesting that there is something distinct and extraordinary about Abraham even before he is a prophet. [496] This is explored in further detail throughout this chapter. Although al-Rāzī developed and sometimes challenged some theological positions of the Ashʿarite

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[492] Al-Rāzī refutes any suggestions that prophets have erred in their conveyance of the divine message, inferring that it is impossible for them to make errors in this regard. See *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11. The divine message is only given to prophets when they attain prophethood; therefore, the question about if they can err or commit wrongdoings before prophethood regarding the divine message does not need to be considered.
[493] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11.
[494] He aligns himself with this view by saying "Our chosen view is," and "This is the view of our companions." See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11.
[495] *Dhanb* refers to actions that necessitate negative consequences and punishment. The word *dhunūb* is the plural of *dhanb*, a word frequently used to describe a wrongdoing that has consequences or punishment. For more detailed discussion on this word and its usage see ch. 2, section 3.2.1.
[496] See section 3.1.1. of this chapter for an overview of when prophets become impeccable.

school, the stances he takes here are in line with the consensus of earlier Ashʿarite theologians. The above has been summarised in the following table:[497]

Table 2. Summary of al-Rāzī's Views on Prophetic Impeccability

Category	Before Becoming Prophets	After Becoming Prophets
1. Religious conviction (iʿtiqād)	They cannot be disbelievers	Cannot be disbelievers and cannot misguide others
2. Conveyance of the divine message (tablīgh)	N/A	Prophets cannot make errors about it intentionally or unintentionally
3. Legal rulings issued by prophets (aḥkām wa-l-fatāyā)	N/A	Any errors concerning these are tark al-awlā (leaving the preferred option)
4. The actions and manner of conducting themselves (afʿāl wa-sīratihim)	Can commit some acts of disobeying[498]	Cannot commit major or minor offences/wrongdoings

3.1 Impeccability Regarding the Actions of Prophets

In what follows, I will analyse category (4) of al-Rāzī's discussion, on the actions and manner of prophets conducting themselves (afʿāl wa-sīratihim) as it lends itself to the attention of this work. Within this section, al-Rāzī presents the following five statements[499] about prophets after they are initiated into prophethood:

1. The Ḥashwiyya opinion holds that prophets can commit major wrongdoings (kabāʾir) intentionally.[500]

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[497] These are also summarised in other works by al-Rāzī. See al-Rāzī, ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ, 39-40 as well as al-Rāzī, al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh, ed. Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1992), 3:225-27.

[498] This is discussed in further detail below. See sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.

[499] Al-Rāzī, Mafātīḥ al-ghayb, 3:9.

[500] As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, al-kabāʾir (the major wrongdoings) are not a defined set of actions. Therefore, schools and scholars differ in their understanding of acts that come under this category. However, it can be said that a consensual understanding of kabāʾir is that it is a category of blameworthy actions that necessitate punishment. See Introduction for a more detailed discussion of kabāʾir.

2. The majority of Muʿtazilite opinion holds that prophets can commit minor wrongdoings (ṣaghāʾir)[501] intentionally.

3. The opinion of al-Jubbāʾī (d. 915), a Muʿtazilite theologian, holds that prophets cannot commit major or minor wrongdoings intentionally but can make errors in their interpretations (jihat al-taʾwīl) of matters such as the divine command.[502]

4. An unattributed opinion holds that prophets can unintentionally commit an offence (dhanb) or error (khaṭīʾa). Ordinary people are not held responsible for unintentional errors, but prophets are accountable. This is because prophets are held to a higher moral standard than ordinary people.

5. The Rawāfiḍ (a term referring to a branch of Shiites) opinion holds that prophets cannot commit major or minor wrongdoings either intentionally or unintentionally.

As is evident, the range of opinions demonstrates the varying nuances of the debate that existed around prophetic errors and impeccability. It is these positions that will be explored and challenged by al-Rāzī when discussing views on Adam's story.

3.1.1 When Do Prophets Become Impeccable?

These previous discussions on impeccability are centred around prophets once they attain prophetic status. However, al-Rāzī also explores the status of prophets before they are initiated into prophethood. He continues his conversation on impeccability by discussing the moment prophets become impeccable (waqt al-ʿiṣma).[503] In this discussion, it is understood that al-Rāzī (and the people whose stances he examines) believes that prophets are granted prophetic status at a particular moment in their lives – possibly when they are given a divine message or revelation from God. However, according to some theological schools listed below, prophets are impeccable even before attaining prophethood. Al-Rāzī presents the following three positions about when prophets are granted impeccability:

1. The Rawāfiḍ believe that prophets are impeccable from birth.

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[501] The types of wrongdoings that are categorised as "al-ṣaghāʾir" are also not unanimously agreed upon. See Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sin, Major and Minor," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, accessed 3 July 2020. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_00184.

[502] The *tafsīr* does not specify the context of the interpretation (*taʾwīl*) that prophets can err in. however I have understood *jihat al-taʾwīl* to mean that prophets can err in their interpretations of many matters such as a divine command or prohibition.

[503] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8.

2. The Muʿtazilites argue that prophets are impeccable from adolescence and cannot commit disbelief or major wrongdoings even before reaching prophethood.

3. The majority of Ashʿarite scholars[504] argue that before prophethood, prophets can commit acts of disobeying[505] (*maʿāṣī*) but not after.[506] This view highlights that prophets have different capabilities depending on whether they are in their pre-prophethood or prophethood stage.

After presenting these three positions, al-Rāzī states, "and our chosen view (*al-mukhtār ʿindanā*) is that prophets cannot commit an offence (*dhanb*) during prophethood, be it major (*kabīra*) or minor (*ṣaghīra*)."[507] Though he does not make a statement here about what prophets can commit before prophethood, we can presume that he agrees with the third position (3) as he is generally in agreement with the majority of Ashʿarite scholars regarding the doctrine of prophetic impeccability. Therefore, we can argue that according to al-Rāzī, prophets can commit acts of disobeying before prophethood. He does not specify whether the acts must be intentional or unintentional.

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[504] Al-Rāzī uses the term *aṣḥābunā* here which literally means "our companions," but is a reference to Ashʿarite scholars.

[505] Plural of *maʿṣiya*. Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8. The phrase "acts of disobeying," or *maʿāṣī* is not used for the third position. Instead, the word used is *dhālika* (lit. that) a demonstrative pronoun. This pronoun is likely pointing to the previous sentence in which "disbelief and major wrongdoings" (*kufr* and *kabāʾir*) are mentioned. This poses a problem, as then position (3) would be stating that prophets can commit disbelief and major wrongdoings before their prophethood which contradicts the majority Ashʿarite opinion. However, when discussing position (3), al-Rāzī aligns his view with that of Abū al-Hudhayl and Abū ʿAlī, two Muʿtazilite scholars. In their respective works, al-Hudhayl and Abū ʿAlī explicitly mention that a *maʿṣiya* (act of disobeying) can occur before prophethood. My understanding and summary above of position (3) assumes that the pronoun *dhālika* in the sentence (*Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8) is pointing to *maʿṣiya* and not disbelief. This is because the Ashʿarite position holds that prophets cannot commit disbelief before or after attaining prophethood. As for the reference to major wrongdoings and whether al-Rāzī believes these can occur before prophethood, I will discuss this in further detail below, see section 3.1.2. For Abū al-Hudhayl and Abū ʿAlī's positions on impeccability, see Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī, *al-ʿIṣma: ḥaqīqatuhā adillatuhā* (n.p.: Markaz al-Risāla, 2005), 26.

[506] This is the position of some of the Muʿtazilites, including one of the more prominent Muʿtazilite theologians, Abū al-Hudhayl al-Allāf (d. 841). Also, for further discussion on the term *maʿṣiya* with regards to Adam's action, see section 4.3 of present chapter.

[507] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8.

Al-Rāzī then continues to present sixteen detailed points[508] as proof of his position that prophets are protected from offences once they are initiated into prophethood.[509] Among these sixteen points are the following:

1. The prophets have the highest and most noble status among all of creation. If they were to commit offences (*dhunūb*), then this would degrade their high status. Also, prophets cannot be of a lower status than their community and must maintain their high rank. This, al-Rāzī says, is the consensual view of the scholars.[510]

2. They cannot commit an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) as this would mean that they deserve punishment.[511] Al-Rāzī writes that the community agrees that prophets are undeserving of torment or curses.[512]

3. By nature of the prophets being chosen and elite (as mentioned in the Quran),[513] they cannot commit an offence (*dhanb*).[514]

4. Prophets are the leaders of their communities, and they must guide their communities. If they commit offences, then their communities will follow in their example and do the same.[515] For this reason, al-Rāzī argues, prophets cannot commit an offence (*dhanb*).

From this discussion, it is clear that al-Rāzī believes prophets (once they are initiated into prophethood) cannot commit offences (*dhunūb*) because they are paragons of virtue and, therefore, are undeserving of torment or punishment.[516] Committing a *dhanb* (offence) which is considered a punishable act, would challenge a prophet's elite position in society and degrade his spiritual status. Despite al-Rāzī's acknowledgement that prophets have an

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[508] The same points are reiterated in al-Rāzī's ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ with the omission of the fifth point included in the *tafsīr*; cf. al-Rāzī, ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ, 41-8. The fifth point omitted in the ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ is: "We know through intuition that nothing ugly (*qabīḥ*) can occur from prophets, as God has raised their status and has made them vicegerents over His servants and cities," as mentioned in, al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8. It is unknown why al-Rāzī omits this point in the ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ.

[509] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:7-10.

[510] Ibid., 3:8.

[511] The term used in the *tafsīr* here is ʿadhāb which, alongside *uqūba* can also mean "punishment."

[512] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:9.

[513] See Q 38:47 and Q 3:33.

[514] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:9.

[515] There is a discrepancy on this point between two editions: In the Cairo 1933 edition published by Maṭbaʿat al-Miṣriyya, the editor includes the "*lā*," rendering the statement, "if the leadership of the imams is not established upon wrongdoers, then prophethood must not be established upon wrongdoers either." This statement is the correct version as it is more coherent with the argument and makes logical sense. However, in the 1981 Beirut version, the "*lā*" has been omitted, rendering the statement "if the leadership of the imams (*imāma*) is not established upon wrongdoers, then prophethood must be established upon wrongdoers."

[516] See ch. 2, section 3.2.1 on how the word *dhanb* refers to actions that warrant punishment.

esteemed status, he still notes that, according to Ashʿarite scholars, prophets are not impeccable from birth and that they can commit acts of disobeying prior to attaining prophethood, though he does not clarify what these are, and whether they are intentional or unintentional.

3.1.2 When Does Adam Become a Prophet?

Al-Rāzī's view on prophetic impeccability indicates that prophets are not born as impeccable beings. They are only impeccable after they are initiated into prophethood. Their capability to commit an act of disobeying (maʿṣiya) in their pre-prophetic stage is key in understanding how al-Rāzī reconciles Adam's slip with his prophetic impeccability. The importance of this pre-prophetic versus prophetic stage and how it ties into prophetic impeccability is seen in a discussion where al-Rāzī presents views that support the notion of Adam being a sinner but then concludes that we must first consider whether or not Adam was a prophet when the slip occurred.

When discussing prophetic actions (afʿāl), al-Rāzī uses Adam's story as a paradigm. He identifies seven points in Adam's story that are used by opponents to refute prophetic impeccability. He writes:

> There are many verses referring to the actions of prophets. First, there
> are seven perspectives related to the story of Adam (may peace be upon
> him):
>
> [1]   Adam was a disobeyer (ʿāṣī), and a disobeyer must be a perpetrator
>   of a major wrongdoing (ṣāḥib al-kabīra). . .we say this according to
>   two perspectives: [a] the first is that the text necessitates that he is
>   punishable according to God saying "As for whoever disobeys
>   (yaʿṣā)[517] God and His messenger indeed to him belongs the fire of
>   hell" [Q 4:14], and this is the sole meaning of someone who
>   commits a kabīra, and [b] that "disobeyer" is a term of degradation
>   (ism al-dhamm), so it is necessary that it is not used unless referring
>   to a perpetrator of a major wrongdoing.

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[517] The verb yaʿṣā meaning "he disobeys" is the present tense verb of the verb ʿaṣā (he disobeyed) used in Q 20:121 about Adam.

[2]   The story of Adam adheres [to the notion that] Adam was

        misguided (*ghāwiyan*), as God says, "and he was misguided" [Q

        20:121].

[3]   [Adam] is a repenter, and a repenter is an offender (*mudhnib*).[518]

[4]   He committed a prohibition, as God says, "Did I not forbid you

        [both] from that tree" [Q 7:22], "and do not come close to this tree"

        [Q 2:35]. Committing something that is prohibited is the essence of

        an offence (*dhanb*).

[5]   He is named a wrongdoer (*ẓālim*) in [the Quran].

[6]   He is aware that if it were not for the pardoning of God, he would

        be one of the losers (*khāsirīn*). . . . This pardoning necessitates that

        he is someone who has committed a major wrongdoing.

[7]   Adam was removed from paradise because of the whispering of

        Satan. His slips are a punishment for how he proceeded to obey

        Satan. This indicates that he committed a major wrongdoing.[519]

These seven points are not the views of al-Rāzī but are his opponents' views. Each of them is

tackled individually in his *tafsīr* of the relevant verses. He concludes this discussion by

mentioning that these points culminate with the opponents asserting that Adam's action is

a major wrongdoing (*kabīra*). Al-Rāzī writes, "then they say, 'consider, that each one of

these perspectives does not indicate that he committed a major wrongdoing (*kabīra*).

However, in the totality [of these perspectives], there is no doubt that it is conclusive in

evidence [that he committed a major wrongdoing].'"[520] Al-Rāzī then presents his view:

The approved[521] answer about these seven perspectives, according to us, is that we

say: Your views are only factual if you provided pieces of evidence that [the seven

proofs] occurred during the prophethood [of Adam]. That [i.e., Adam making the slip

while being a prophet] is forbidden. So why can it not be said that Adam was not a

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[518] The word *mudhnib* is from the root letters *dh-n-b* and is the active participle of a *dhanb*.

[519] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11-12. This section has not been translated in full and points have been
abbreviated.

[520] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11-12.

[521] There is an apparent misspelling here across the Beirut, Dār al-Fikr (1981) and Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-Miṣriyya
(1933) editions. The Beirut edition reads *al-jawāb al-muʿtamil* (the functioning answer), but the Cairo edition
reads *al-jawāb al-muʿtamid* (the approved answer). However, these two readings do not contradict each
other, and indicate that whatever follows is al-Rāzī's stance on the matter. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:12
in both Cairo and Beirut editions.

prophet when he made the slip (*zalla*), and then after that he became a prophet? We have clarified that there is no evidence about this topic. The investigation into the answer of each of these connected perspectives [i.e., the seven proofs] will come later, God willing, during the discussion in the commentary of each of those verses.[522]

According to al-Rāzī, if the seven points (mentioned above) happened whilst Adam was a prophet, then Adam's impeccability is challenged, and we can presume that prophets are not impeccable. However, al-Rāzī proposes the following: what if we are to conclude that the slip happened before Adam became a prophet?[523] Al-Rāzī admits that there is no evidence to support this position, he says, "And we have clarified that there is no evidence for this position," possibly referring to *samʿī* (revealed) evidence in the Quran and Hadith literature.[524] Though he mentions here that there is no evidence confirming that Adam was not a prophet when the slip happened, al-Rāzī still adopts the position that Adam is not a prophet when the slip occurs throughout his *tafsīr*.

The question of when Adam becomes a prophet is explored further in al-Rāzī's *tafsīr*. Al-Rāzī challenges the view held by the Muʿtazilites that Adam is a prophet from the moment when God taught him the names (Q 2:31). According to the Muʿtazilites, Adam receiving knowledge directly from God is an example of a prophetic miracle.[525] Al-Rāzī offers various arguments to challenge this,[526] which can be summarised as follows:

1. If Adam became a prophet when God taught him the names, then Adam committed an act of disobeying (i.e., eating from the tree) whilst being a prophet. This is not theologically possible. Al-Rāzī writes:

> Those who decisively assert that [Adam] was not a prophet at that time allege on the basis of certain perspectives. One of these [perspectives] is that if he was a prophet at that time, then he committed an act of disobeying after [attaining] prophethood, and that is not possible. Therefore, it is necessary that he is not a prophet during that period. As for what pertains [to

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[522] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:12.

[523] Ibid., 3:12.

[524] Later, he offers his opinions through logical and intellectual analyses as will be discussed further in this chapter.

[525] See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:193-4. This view is also held by al-Māturīdī. See ch. 3, section 3.2.

[526] Al-Rāzī does not claim these as his own views, but they bear similarities to his stances that he will offer later.

this argument], it is that the origination of the slip from him was after this incident [of God teaching Adam the names], by agreement. That slip belongs to the category of major wrongdoings — and its explanation will come, God willing. Committing a major wrongdoing necessitates [that one is] deserving of expulsion, disdain and cursing. None of that is possible for prophets. Hence, it must be said that this incident [i.e., the teaching of the names] occurred before prophethood.[527]

2. If Adam was a prophet before the slip, then to what community was he sent to lead? He cannot have been sent to the angels because, according to the Muʿtazilites, angels are better than prophets.

3. The verse "And then his Lord chose him" (Q 20:122) indicates that he was chosen after his slip.

In suggesting that Adam was not a prophet at the time of his slip and that he was "chosen" after his repentance for his error, al-Rāzī reconciles Adam's action with his impeccability. If Adam is not a prophet when he eats from the tree, the notion of prophetic impeccability is not challenged or questioned by his slip.

From this discussion, the chronology of events in Adam's life, according to al-Rāzī, can be summarised in the following table:

Table 3. Chronology of Adam's Story according to al-Rāzī

	Key events in Adam's life	Corresponding Quranic verses
1.	God informs the angels that He is creating a *khalīfa* on earth.	Q 2:30
2.	Adam is taught the names and then teaches these names to the angels.	Q 2:31-33
3.	The angels prostrate to Adam. Iblīs does not.	Q 2:34

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[527] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:193. Even though al-Rāzī agrees that Adam was not a prophet when God taught him the names (see al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:128), this entire excerpt is not explicitly expressed as being his view.

4.	Adam is commanded by God to: 1. live in paradise 2. stay away from the forbidden tree.	Q 2:35
5.	God also warns Adam that Satan is his clear enemy and could remove him from paradise.	Q 20:117
6.	Satan tempts Adam and Eve by telling them that the tree is only forbidden to them because it will give them immortal qualities, and they will become like angels.	Q 2:36; 20:120
7.	Adam and Eve eat from the tree.	Q 2:36; 20:121
8.	Their nakedness becomes apparent to them, and they begin to cover themselves with leaves.	Q 20:121
9.	God reminds them of His warning against Satan and the prohibition against approaching the tree.	Q 7:22
10.	God instructs Adam and Eve to descend.	Q 2:36
11.	Adam receives words from His Lord and asks for forgiveness.	Q 2:37
12.	God accepts Adam's forgiveness and chooses Adam. According to al-Rāzī, this is when Adam becomes a prophet.	Q 2:37; 20:122
13.	God instructs Adam and Eve again to descend to earth.	Q 2:38; 7:24; 20:123

From al-Rāzī's discussions about the verse, "And Satan caused them to slip" (Q 2:36), we can conclude the following with regards to al-Rāzī's position on impeccability and Adam's story:

1. Al-Rāzī believes prophets are not born as prophets. They enter prophethood at a particular time in their lives (possibly when God gives them revelation or a divine message).[528] According to al-Rāzī, in this pre-prophetic stage of their lives, they

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[528] Al-Rāzī does not mention exactly when prophets are initiated into prophethood, except that they receive a revelation or message from God affirming their position as prophets.

are fallible. However, they are still somewhat distinct from the human beings who are not destined to be prophets. This is because prophets (in their pre-prophethood stage) are protected from disbelief (*kufr*),[529] whereas ordinary human beings are not.[530]

2. Prophets are impeccable after entering prophethood and are thereafter protected from committing intentional major and minor wrongdoings. Before prophethood, they can commit acts of disobeying (*maʿāṣī*).[531]

3. Al-Rāzī accepts that parts of Adam's story can suggest that prophets are fallible. However, he argues that these parts of the story can be reconciled with the notion of prophetic impeccability if we understand that Adam's slip happened before he became a prophet. This view is corroborated by many Ashʿarite exegetes and also theologians of the eleventh century, such as Ibn Fūrak.[532]

Through this discussion, al-Rāzī reveals his broad views on impeccability that underpin the interpretation of Adam's story. To summarise, he first categorises the areas that are affected by the doctrine of impeccability: (1) religious conviction; (2) conveyance of the divine message; (3) legal rulings issued by prophets; (4) the actions and manner of conducting themselves. Within these categories, al-Rāzī adopts positions that minimise the errors of prophets. For example, he argues that any mistake they made regarding legal rulings is considered "leaving the preferred option" or *tark al-awlā*. It is not a transgression of divine law. Furthermore, by discussing how prophets are not born prophets hence not impeccable from birth, al-Rāzī indicates that prophets have a pre-prophetic stage where there is an allowance for errors before they become impeccable. In this pre-prophetic stage, al-Rāzī notes that according to the Ashʿarite scholars —with whom he agrees—prophets can commit acts of disobeying (*maʿāṣī*).[533] This term, its connotations and its usage will be explored in greater depth below.[534] As will come to light, even though al-Rāzī allows for these pre-prophethood errors, they are not the same as errors of ordinary human beings. Prophets are thus elite beings from birth and not like ordinary people. We will now turn to

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[529] See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:7.
[530] According to al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, prophets are also protected from shameful acts even in their pre-prophetic stage. See al-Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ, *al-Shifāʾ*, 673.
[531] Al-Rāzī, *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, 40.
[532] See Ibn Fūrak, *Maqālāt al-Ashʿarī*, 182.
[533] Al-Rāzī here uses the term *aṣḥābunā* meaning "our companions," which is an implicit agreement.
[534] See section 4.3 of the present chapter.

al-Rāzī's interpretations of aspects of the Adam story that are related to this research. This will shed light on the nuances of discussion offered by al-Rāzī and demonstrate how al-Rāzī exculpates Adam and absolves him from punishment.

4. Al-Rāzī's Interpretation of Adam's Story

Most of al-Rāzī's interpretation of Adam's story is focused on *Sūrat al-Baqara*. His discussion spans over a hundred pages and consists of lengthy and detailed considerations on topics such as the relationship between Adam and the angels, how knowledge can be received from God, and an examination of the method and virtues of repentance. However, the current section will focus on (1) al-Rāzī's depiction of Adam's status before prophethood; (2) his interpretation of God's prohibition to Adam; (3) Adam's forgetting; (4) terminology used to describe the slip; and (5) the relocation from paradise to earth. Analysing these areas will provide a clear and detailed picture of how al-Rāzī depicts Adam's status before and after the slip and whether he regards the relocation to be a punishment from God.

4.1 Adam Before Prophethood

In his discussion on prophetic impeccability, al-Rāzī makes it clear that when prophets are in their pre-prophetic stage (i.e., have not yet become prophets), they are not impeccable. Only after they are initiated into prophethood do they become impeccable. How then, does al-Rāzī understand the status of prophets when they are in their pre-prophetic stage, and what influence does this have on al-Rāzī's interpretation of Adam's slip? Al-Rāzī holds that from birth, prophets (in their pre-prophetic stage) are still distinct from ordinary men. In his interpretation of the verse, "They are those whom God has blessed among the prophets of the progeny of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Noah, and of the progeny of Abraham and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose" (Q 19:58), he writes that prophets are noble from birth.[535] He also explores how prophets are different from ordinary human beings when he discusses the verse, "Indeed God chose Adam, and Noah and the family of Abraham" (Q 3:33). Here, he quotes the jurist and theologian al-Ḥalīmī (d. 1012),

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[535] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 11: 234-5. Here, al-Rāzī refers to the prophets mentioned in this part of the *sūra* from Enoch to Zachariah. Although only the progeny of Adam is mentioned and not him by name, al-Rāzī here still demonstrates that prophets can be distinct and blessed from birth (*mazīd fī al-faḍl bi-wilādatihim*) unlike ordinary human beings.

who maintained that even before attaining prophethood, prophets-to-be are physically, spiritually and intellectually different from other human beings.[536] The majority of these discussions are expressed in greater detail in al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭalib al-ʿāliyya* ("The Elevated Issues"). This is one of al-Rāzī's lengthiest and most detailed theological works in which he has dedicated a volume to discussing prophethood. In a section of this work where he explores how and when prophets are initiated into prophethood, al-Rāzī notes that before their initiation, prophets are innately, intellectually superior to ordinary people. He notes that when prophets are approached by an angel, their intellectual faculty recognises that the angel is truly an angel and not a devil in angelic disguise.[537] This highlights that according to al-Rāzī, even before prophethood, prophets have a more refined intellectual faculty and awareness than an ordinary person. In contrast, exegetes such as al-Qurṭubī do not hold the same view and instead note that prophets (before and after their initiation into prophethood) are mentally and psychologically the same as ordinary human beings.[538] Although al-Rāzī does not believe that prophets are protected from both major and minor wrongdoings from birth as the Shiites do,[539] he believes that they are extraordinary and distinct from other human beings even before they become prophets.

When al-Rāzī interprets the verse, "Indeed I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*" (Q 2:30), he indicates that Adam is of a high degree despite not yet being a prophet. First, he presents the same two opinions as al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī:[540] either (1) Adam is the *khalīfa*, in which case the angels' concern about spreading mischief and bloodshed would only refer to Adam's descendants; or (2) the word *khalīfa* refers to Adam's descendants and not Adam himself (which is the position of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī).[541] Al-Rāzī's presentation of the same views

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[536] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 8:22-3. Referring to al-Ḥalīmī's view, al-Rāzī says, "This is not unlikely." The concept of prophets being physically, spiritually and intellectually distinct from ordinary human beings is also an Avicennian idea, and al-Rāzī was heavily influenced by Ibn Sīnā's prophetology. For further analyses on al-Rāzī's view on the intellectual and psychological superiority of prophets and Ibn Sīnā's influence on al-Rāzī's ideas of prophethood and miracles, see Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 126; 130-1.

[537] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Maṭalib al-ʿāliyya*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987), 8:85-86

[538] See al-Qurṭubī, *al-Iʿlām mimmā fī dīn al-naṣāra min al-fasād wa-l-awhām*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Cairo: Dār Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1980), 237-8.

[539] In Shiite belief, prophets are impeccable from birth, before they have been awarded prophetic status. See, for example, Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ*, ed. Fāṭima al-Qāḍī al-Ghaffārī (Tehran: Madraseh ʿĀlī Shahīd Muṭahareh, 2002), 24-5.

[540] See ch. 2, section 3.1 and ch. 3, section 3.1.

[541] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:180.

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as al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī shows that over the three centuries between these thinkers, these two opinions about the word *khalīfa* have remained the dominant interpretations of this verse without any significant additions or variations. Al-Rāzī then presents the following two perspectives:

1. When God banished most of the jinn from earth and placed Adam to live in it, Adam became the *khalīfa* of the remaining jinn.

2. God called Adam the *khalīfa* because Adam is a vicegerent of God. He is responsible for instilling God's rulings to those who are held to account (*mukallafūn*) from among God's creation. Al-Rāzī says this opinion is confirmed by the verse where God says to David, "Indeed We have made you a *khalīfa* on earth, so rule among people with justice" (Q 38:26). [542]

Al-Rāzī clarifies whether he considers *khalīfa* to refer to Adam when he interprets the verse, "And when We said to the angels, bow down to Adam" (Q 2:34). Here, al-Rāzī writes:

> God, may He be praised and exalted, made the angels prostrate[543] to our father [Adam]. That is because God, may He be exalted, mentions the designation (*takhṣīṣ*) of Adam with the vicegerency (*khilāfa*) first. Secondly, [God] endowed copious knowledge to [Adam] and increased him in knowledge until the angels became incapable of reaching his level in knowledge.[544]

Although at this point of his life Adam is not yet a prophet (according to al-Rāzī), al-Rāzī depicts Adam as being intellectually superior to the angels. His level of knowledge, al-Rāzī argues, is unattainable for the angels and this is one of the reasons that he is held in high esteem by them.[545]

Furthermore, al-Rāzī writes, "God made Adam a *khalīfa* for Him, and the intention of this is to give him vicegerency of governance (*khilāfat al-wilāya*) as is said to David, 'O David, indeed We have made you a *khalīfa* on the earth. Therefore, rule among people with

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[542] Ibid., 2:180-1.
[543] This verb is written by al-Rāzī in the passive form, rendering the following meaning: "God made Adam prostrated to by the angels." I have adjusted the translation for ease of reading. See *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:230.
[544] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:230. Here, al-Rāzī mentions that the prostration of the angels to Adam is part of the fourth blessing among the general blessings that God has bestowed on mankind. See *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:163-4.
[545] See Ceylan, *Theology and Tafsīr in the Major Words of al-Rāzī*, 230.

justice" (Q 38:26).[546] Al-Rāzī likens Adam's *khalīfa* role with David's *khalīfa* role, which the Quran has specified as having to do with ruling between people and acting as God's vicegerent rather than being a successor of someone else. Al-Rāzī also refers to Adam's prophetic status and how it is an extension of his role as God's vicegerent. He writes, "He was the *khalīfa* for God, and this indicates that Adam was the noblest of creation. . . . Thus, Adam is raised from the position of vicegerency to the highest level." [547] We can presume that the "highest level" here is referring to Adam becoming promoted from vicegerent to prophet, as prophethood is one of the highest attainable ranks[548] in the hierarchy of human beings.

In the above discussion, we see al-Rāzī presenting Adam as someone who is intellectually superior to others and is deserving of vicegerency. It is thus clear that according to al-Rāzī, prophets are distinct from ordinary people even before becoming prophets. This standpoint serves as the foundation of al-Rāzī's argument against the likelihood of Adam committing intentional errors or punishable wrongdoings before prophethood.

4.2 The Prohibition

Al-Rāzī examines God's prohibition to Adam at great length from a jural perspective. He explores whether Adam's slip is a forbidden action and therefore punishable by God, or a disliked action and therefore would not incur punishment from God. In al-Rāzī's discussion of God's prohibition, "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35), he presents two classifications of prohibitions: *nahy al-tanzīh* (preferential) and *nahy al-taḥrīm* (proscriptive).[549] He first presents the view of people who regard God's prohibition as a preferential (*tanzīh*) command.[550] He writes, "[Proponents of this view] say that [*nahy al-tanzīh*] is [a] better [interpretation]. This is because, from this standpoint, Adam committing the act of disobeying returns to being [considered as] leaving the preferred option (*tark al-*

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[546] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:252.
[547] Ibid., 2:251.
[548] The two highest positions awarded to human beings are those of a prophet (*nabī*) and a messenger (*rasūl*). This is explained in the introduction, section 4.1.
[549] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:5.
[550] Ibid.

awlā)."[551] Leaving the preferred option does not mean that one has committed a wrongdoing or a forbidden act, but that one chose the lesser of two acceptable actions.

Al-Rāzī then presents the view of those who interpret the prohibition as proscriptive (*taḥrīm*).[552] He closes this discussion by refuting those who take this position, and he agrees with the stance that God's prohibition is preferential (*tanzīh*).[553] An example of his refutation of the prohibition being proscriptive *(taḥrīm)* is seen in the following example. An opinion that supports the prohibition as *taḥrīm* relies on the Quranic verse where God warns Adam and Eve against becoming wrongdoers (Q 2:35) as proof. However, al-Rāzī interprets the verse Q 2:35 to mean that God is saying:

> You [i.e., Adam and Eve] have wronged yourselves by leaving an action that is preferred (*awlā*) for you. If you do that, you will be removed from paradise in which you will not grieve, nor be hungry, nor sacrifice, nor be naked, to a place in which things will not be like this.[554]

Here, al-Rāzī maintains that the prohibition is preferential (*tanzīh*) because it relates to preferred actions *(awlā)* and not obligatory (*wājib*) actions. Furthermore, al-Rāzī argues that going against God's prohibition here is a *tark al-awlā*. By classifying the command as preferential, al-Rāzī eradicates any penal consequences of the slip, as the slip is no longer a prohibited act. Furthermore, the extract above reveals that even though the prohibition is preferential, Adam will still experience hardship by being removed from paradise. However, this relocation will not be a punishment as Adam does not commit anything forbidden. This is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.[555]

To understand the legal terminology and framework of Adam's slip, categories of prohibitions and how these affect the legal value of Adam's error, we turn to al-Rāzī's work entitled *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm al-uṣūl*[556] ("The Outcomes of the Science of Jurisprudential

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[551] Ibid.

[552] Among these opinions are: (1) the prohibition follows the same linguistic form (*ṣīgha*) as other proscriptive prohibitions in the Quran such as "do not approach [women] unless they are pure" (Q 2:222); (2) the verse "Or you will be among the losers" (Q 2:35) means that "if you eat from it, you will oppress yourselves"(Q 2:35); and (3) Adam was ultimately removed from paradise due to eating from the tree; therefore, it cannot be a preferential command. Al-Rāzī challenges the view (3), and he expands on this later in the *tafsīr*. See section 4.5 of the present chapter.

[553] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:5.

[554] Ibid., 3:5.

[555] See section 4.5 of the present chapter.

[556] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, ed. Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1992), 1:89-91.

Principles"), a work on legal theory. In this work, al-Rāzī presents definitions and a framework of legal terminology. Before approaching this text, it is important to acknowledge that it is a work belonging to a specialised genre, *uṣūl al-fiqh* (legal theory), in which there are several jargonised terms. Particular terms hold specific meanings in different Islamic sciences. For example, the way al-Rāzī uses *maʿṣiya* in the *tafsīr* is different to how he defines and uses it in his *uṣūl* works.[557] Despite this, turning to the *Maḥṣūl* can still shed light on al-Rāzī's understanding of broader concepts that are related to Adam's story.

In the *Maḥṣūl*, al-Rāzī primes the reader with the legal framework of one's obligations to God. He writes that acts can fall under requirements (*iqtiḍāʾ*) or choices (*takhyīr*).[558] Acts that are normatively required are split into various categories, which are summarised in the following flowchart[559] for ease of understanding:

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[557] This is explored further in section 4.3 of the present chapter.
[558] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, 1:89.
[559] Figure 2. This flowchart condenses the information and categories discussed by al-Rāzī in *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, 89-91.

Figure 1. Flowchart of "requirements" (*iqtiḍāʾ*) in *uṣūl al-fiqh*[560]
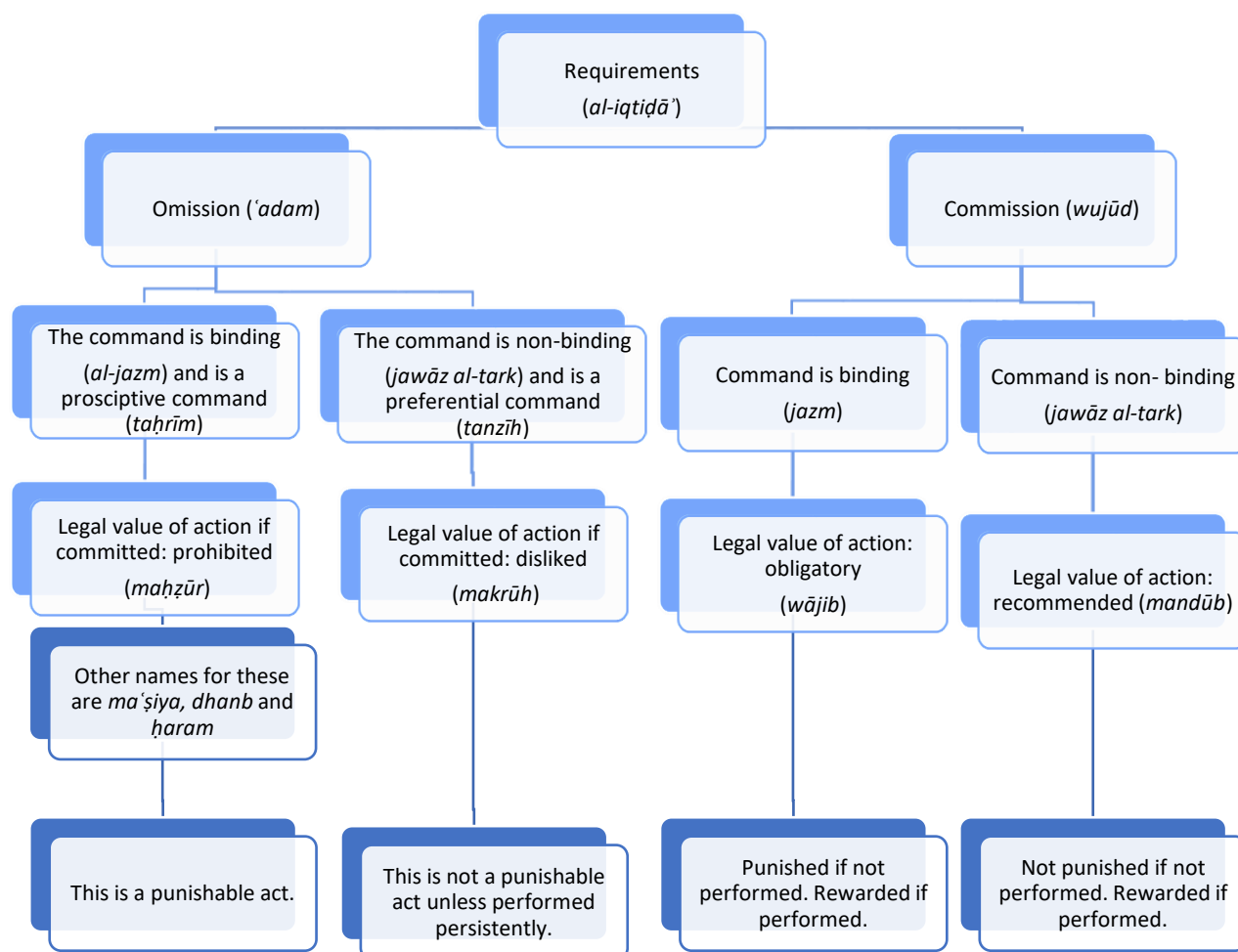
Adhering to a requirement, such as a divine command or prohibition, is classed as a "commission" (*wujūd*). Not adhering to it is an "omission" (ʿ*adam*). As Adam did not observe God's prohibition, his slip is an "omission." The two categories under "omission," (1) "non-binding" and (2) "binding," relate to preferential (*tanzīh*) and proscriptive (*taḥrīm*) commands, respectively. Referring to the table, one can see how the *taḥrīm/tanzīh*, or binding/non-binding classification affects the implications of Adam's action: if the

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[560] We can see here that in al-Rāzī's work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, he classifies an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) as a punishable act. However, this is not how he treats or interprets the *maʿṣiya* that prophets can commit before prophethood. See section 4.3.1 of the present chapter. This is an example of how certain terms can also be defined differently by the same author according to the genre of work they are writing. Alternatively, this can suggest a change in definition and understanding of the term *maʿṣiya*, depending on what work al-Rāzī authored first.

prohibition is proscriptive (*taḥrīm*), then the command from God is binding (*jazm*) and transgressing this command will be punishable. Contravening a binding command results in Adam's action being a prohibited (*maḥẓūr*) act. However, if the prohibition is preferential (*tanzīh*), then it is a non-binding command (*jawāz al-tark)*, and Adam's act is legally considered a disliked action (*makrūh*). Committing a disliked (*makrūh*) action does not lead to punishment, but avoiding it is rewarded by God. From this explanation, it is clear that if the prohibition is preferential (*tanzīh*/non-binding/*jawāz al-tark*), then there are no penal implications for Adam's slip. This is because the slip is then a disliked action (*makrūh*) and not a prohibited one (*maḥẓūr*). Thus, the likelihood or necessity of Adam experiencing punishment is eliminated.

Al-Rāzī states that types of disliked (*makrūh*) actions include (1) contravening preferential prohibitions; and (2) leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*).[561] He writes:

> As for a disliked action, it is in conjunction with one of the following three matters:
>
> [1]   It is what a preferential prohibition prohibits - that is when the person doing the act is told that leaving the act was better than doing it. However, there is no punishment for his action.
>
> [2]   The Shafiʿī opinion of what a prohibited or obligatory act is.
>
> [3]   Leaving the preferred action (*tark al-awlā*), like leaving the *al-ḍuḥā* prayer (voluntary prayer). This is disliked, not because there is a prohibition against leaving it [i.e., the preferred action] but because of the excessive preference in doing it.[562]

As is clear from this analysis, al-Rāzī's view that God's prohibition is a preferential command exculpates Adam from the blame of committing a forbidden action, and therefore, Adam's action does not require punishment.

Despite adopting the stance that the slip happens before Adam's prophethood —a period of time in which Adam could commit an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*)— al-Rāzī shows a predilection for minimising the degree and implications of Adam's slip.

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[561] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, 1:104.
[562] Ibid.

4.3 Terminology: *Maʿṣiya* and *ʿIṣyān*

There are two distinct, yet interlinked, terms used by al-Rāzī that are related to the interpretation of Adam's slip, *maʿṣiya* and *ʿiṣyān*. As discussed in chapter one, these two terms share the same linguistic root as the verb used in Quran, "Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*)" (Q 20:121).[563] Yet, as the discussion in chapter three has shown,[564] there is a wider discussion about the suitability of this term when used in reference to Adam's action, leading to figures such as al-Māturīdī to provide justifications for their use of the term. In this section, we will examine al-Rāzī's position on the terms *maʿṣiya* and *ʿiṣyān*, and whether or not he deems them their suitable terms to describe Adam's slip.

4.3.1 *Maʿṣiya*

Al-Rāzī argues that during the pre-prophethood stage of life, prophets have the potential to commit acts of disobeying (pl. *maʿāṣī*, sing. *maʿṣiya*), but they are protected from kufr.[565] It is crucial to assess what al-Rāzī means by the term *maʿāṣī*. First, it is important to note that al-Rāzī rarely uses this term when he describes Adam's action.[566] In his broader discussions about prophetic impeccability, he uses the word *maʿṣiya* to refer to wrongdoings that prophets can commit before they are elected into prophethood. As discussed in chapter one under the discussion of the verse "And Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*)" (Q 20:121), the most widely accepted definition in classical dictionaries of a *maʿṣiya* is that it refers to the act of "not obeying."[567] It does not connote an attitude of insolence in the way that the English term "disobeying" (its common English translation) does. In English, the word "disobeying" is imbued with notions of insolence and defiance,[568] especially in a context related to the figure of Adam. In contrast to "disobeying," a *maʿṣiya* refers to the act itself and not the attitude. This is further highlighted when al-Rāzī clarifies in his work on jurisprudence, the

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[563] See ch. 1, section 6.
[564] See ch. 3, section 4.3.
[565] See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:8. Here, al-Rāzī indirectly aligns himself with the position of "our companions" (*aṣḥābunā*).
[566] In his *tafsīr*, al-Rāzī only uses *maʿṣiya* once to describe Adam's action. See *Mafātīḥ*, 2:217. Instead, he mainly uses the word *zalla* to refer to Adam's slip, which will also be examined in this section.
[567] See ch. 1, section 6.3. Also, see s.v. "ʿ-ṣ-y," in al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*.
[568] See ch. 1, section 6.3.

Maḥṣūl, that *maʿṣiya* refers to "doing what God has prohibited,"[569] indicating that it is a

term related to actions, not attitudes. He also writes in his *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* that a *maʿṣiya*

can refer both to a *wājib* (obligatory) or a *nadb* (recommended/non-binding) command.[570]

Furthermore, al-Rāzī uses the word *maʿṣiya* in discussions on prophetic impeccability

in his compendium of philosophy entitled *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-*

mutaʾakhkhirīn ("The Collection of the Thoughts of the Previous and Later Generations").[571]

Here, al-Rāzī writes:

> Those who consider that prophets cannot commit[572] major wrongdoings [after
>
> attaining prophethood] disagree regarding the [issue of] minor wrongdoings. Most
>
> of them agree that it is not possible for [prophets] to commit *maʿṣiya*, whether it is a
>
> minor wrongdoing or a major wrongdoing. However, they can commit it [i.e.,
>
> *maʿṣiya*] from one of these three perspectives: the first is through *sahw* (inattention)
>
> or *nisyān* (forgetting); the second is by leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*);
>
> and the third is if the prohibition is similar to something that is neutral (*mubāḥ*).[573]

This passage demonstrates that al-Rāzī considers the word *maʿṣiya* to be a hypernym[574] as it

refers to any act of disobeying and includes acts of varying degrees of severity such as minor

or major wrongdoings (*kabīra*). This is similar to al-Ṣābūnī's definition of *ʿiṣyān* (examined in

chapter three), where he concludes that an *ʿiṣyān* is a hypernym that includes both

intentional and unintentional acts.[575]

Throughout his *tafsīr*, al-Rāzī is mindful of the terms he uses to describe Adam's

action. Although he has used the term *maʿṣiya* on a few occasions, the majority of the time,

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[569] Al-Rāzī, *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*, 1:101. It is worth noting that in this work the term *maʿṣiya* is a prohibited (*maḥẓūr*) action. However, the classification of *maʿṣiya* in this way indicates its significance and understanding within a legal context which is different from the way the term is used by al-Rāzī in the theological discussions of prophetic actions in his *tafsīr*.

[570] Al-Rāzī, *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, 50. This is in contrast to how he defines maʿṣiya in his *al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm uṣūl al-fiqh*. See Figure 1.

[571] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-mutaʾakhkhirīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kullīyāt al-Azhariyya, n.d).

[572] The literal translation of this sentence is, "Those who do not consider that prophets can commit major wrongdoings," but I have adjusted the negatory particle onto the second verb (commit) for ease of reading. See al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn*, 220.

[573] The term *mubāḥ* can be translated in many different ways such as "indifferent" or "permitted." Essentially, the term *mubāḥ* refers to something that does not warrant punishment or reward and is a neutral act. Al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn*, 220.

[574] Similar to al-Ṭabarī's belief that *khaṭīʾa* refers to a range of wrong actions, including intentional and unintentional wrongdoings. See ch. 2., section 3.2.1. This is an incomplete sentence.

[575] See ch. 3, section 6.

he refers to Adam's action using the relatively neutral word *zalla* (slip).[576] He generally

avoids terms such as *dhanb* (offence), *khaṭīʾa* (error) and *maʿṣiya*.[577] This is interesting,

because although al-Rāzī believes a prophet can commit a *maʿṣiya* before his prophethood,

al-Rāzī remains selective of the terms he uses to describe Adam's slip and chooses to use

zalla instead, a term that refers to inadvertent and sudden mistakes.[578] The word *zalla* is

also a derivative of the verb used in the verse, "And Satan caused them to slip (*azalla*)" (Q

2:36). A *zalla* is also, according to the Māturīdite exegete, al-Nasafī, lesser in severity than a

minor wrongdoing, although this is not a unanimously agreed upon definition.[579] The English

translation of *zalla*, "slip," has been adopted in this thesis to refer to Adam's action as it is a

term coherent with the terms of the Quranic narrative.[580] It is also a term that is not

associated with notions of punishment or intent, both of which are absent in the Quranic

verses about Adam. Whilst al-Rāzī does not explain why he chooses *zalla* as the most

frequent term, he does engage in a related discussion where he challenges the suitability of

the term *ʿiṣyān* (disobeying) to refer to Adam's slip—a derivative of another verb used in

Adam's story (*ʿaṣā* as in "He disobeyed" in Q 20:114). [581]

4.3.2 ʿIṣyān

By examining the reasons why al-Rāzī challenges the term *ʿiṣyān*, and avoids using related

terms like *dhanb*, we come closer to understanding why al-Rāzī adopts *zalla* as a term to

refer to Adam's slip.

When al-Rāzī interprets the verse "And Adam disobeyed (*ʿaṣā*) his Lord and was

misguided" (Q 20:121), he challenges the view that *ʿaṣā* refers to Adam committing a major

wrongdoing. To reiterate al-Rāzī's overarching position on impeccability, al-Rāzī rejects the

idea that prophets can commit major wrongdoings after their prophethood, which is the

Ashʿarite scholarly consensus. However, he writes that there are some opinions within the

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[576] *Zalla* is a derivative of *azalla* (to make someone slip) used in "And Satan caused them to slip" (Q 2:36).
[577] For usage of *dhanb* see al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 14:53, and for *maʿṣiya* see *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:217.
[578] See ch. 1, section 6.3.
[579] See ch. 4, section 5.3.
[580] See ch. 1, section 6.3.
[581] *ʿIṣyān* is also related to the term *maʿṣiya* as both share the same root letters *ʿ-ṣ-y*. However, they are different derivations and thus have different connotations and meanings.

Sunni tradition that state prophets can commit major wrongdoings before prophethood.[582]

He writes in his *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn*:

> Regarding whether major wrongdoings are possible for prophets before their
> mission: most of the Sunnis say it is possible. . .but they say it is possible based on
> rarity (*nadra*) whereby [the prophets] repent for it. Their [commission of these acts]
> is concealed from people [so that the prophets are seen as] righteous. However,
> persisting in committing major wrongdoings, so much so that they become known
> for licentiousness (*khalāʿa*), is impossible because their purpose is lost on that
> basis.[583]

Al-Rāzī does not present his stance here but notes that this is the mainstream view within
the Sunni tradition of his time.

Yet, al-Rāzī challenges the idea that Adam's slip, which happens before his
prophethood, is a major wrongdoing. First, he argues for the unsuitability of the term *ʿiṣyān*
(disobeying) to refer to Adam's action. This is because, according to al-Rāzī, it is a term
related specifically to major wrongdoings.[584] Linguistically, the word *ʿiṣyān* is the gerund of
the verb *ʿaṣā*, meaning "he disobeyed" (Q 20:121).[585] Unlike *maʿṣiya* which refers to the act
of disobeying, *ʿiṣyān* refers to an overarching and broader notion of transgressing God's
command. In his work, al-Rāzī offers a dense discussion about the term *ʿiṣyān*, and the term
ʿāṣī (disobeyer) to refer to Adam. The discussion here is based on the classification of God's
prohibition, "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:36), as an obligatory, proscriptive
command. As we have discussed earlier, if God's prohibition is proscriptive (*taḥrīm*) and
therefore obligatory to follow, then eating from the tree is a forbidden action.[586] The
discussion begins as al-Rāzī puts forth the argument that Adam is an *ʿāṣī* (a disobeyer), which
is a term of degradation (*ism al-dhamm*). This term (*ʿāṣī*) refers to someone who commits a
major wrongdoing and is punished for it.[587] Proponents of this view argue that the divine

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[582] Al-Rāzī, *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn*, 219-20.
[583] Ibid.
[584] See ch. 3, section 4.3 for discussion on al-Māturīdī's view on the term *ʿiṣyān* in relation to Adam's slip.
[585] For the meaning and connotations of the word *ʿiṣyān*, see ch. 4, section 4.3.
[586] See Figure 1. It is useful to note here that the discussion in al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* on this point (about *ʿiṣyān*) refers to God's prohibition as *wājib*. Within the Islamic legal framework, calling the prohibition *wājib* is the same as classing it as *nahy al-taḥrīm* or "proscriptive."
[587] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:127. Toshiko Izutsu mentions in his work that an *ʿāṣī* is someone who rebels against God. See Toshiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Quran* (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2002), 114.

prohibition (in Q 2:35) is referring to an obligatory (*wājib*) action and not a recommended (*mandūb*) action. Therefore, Adam's act is an example of disobeying (ʿ*iṣyān*). As he is a disobeyer (ʿ*āṣī*) due to omitting an obligatory action, Adam deserves punishment. Al-Rāzī's rejection of the terms ʿ*āṣī* and ʿ*iṣyān* as suitable words for prophetic errors is hinged on the argument that an ʿ*iṣyān* refers to a transgression of an obligatory command. However, al-Rāzi has already concluded that God's command ("Do not come close to this tree" in Q 2:35) is not referring to an obligatory command. It is a preferential (*tanzīh*) command and therefore, relates to the binary of preferred/disliked actions, not permitted/forbidden ones. Therefore, Adam approaching and eating from the tree is not disobeying (ʿ*iṣyān*) and neither is Adam a disobeyer (ʿ*āṣī*) of God's command.

Within this discussion, al-Rāzī also presents the view that ʿ*iṣyān* can be used in a figurative sense.[588] From this perspective, even if the command is instructing Adam to do a *mandūb* action (recommended), we can class Adam's slip to be a figurative ʿ*iṣyān*. However, al-Rāzī argues that this is not the standard usage of ʿ*iṣyān*, which is only used in its literal sense i.e., in the context of transgressing obligatory commands and not preferential ones. Furthermore, al-Rāzī argues that if we are to consider Adam's act to be ʿ*iṣyān*, then by extension any errors committed by prophets will also be ʿ*iṣyān*. This is because sometimes prophets contravene preferred (*mandūb*) commands. In order to prevent classing all prophetic errors as ʿ*iṣyān*, al-Rāzī concludes, in addition to his previous points, that ʿ*iṣyān* is not an accurate or suitable term to refer to Adam's slip because he did not transgress a proscriptive command.

Thus far, al-Rāzī has not explicitly stated that ʿ*iṣyān* is an unsuitable term for referring to Adam's act; we can only presume this from the way he challenges the arguments that support the use of ʿ*iṣyān* for Adam's slip. However, the following point shows al-Rāzī's clearer refutation of ʿ*iṣyān*. When presenting another discussion about whether or not Adam's act is a major wrongdoing, al-Rāzī puts forth a Muʿtazilite view and concludes that it is "also weak."[589] This indicates that all the perspectives offered that support that Adam's act is a major wrongdoing are weak and not representative of his opinion. Also, al-Rāzī does not include any phrases that support them, such as *jawābunā* (our answer is) or *naqūl* (we say). In addition to regarding these perspectives as weak,

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[588] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:127-8.
[589] Ibid., 22:128.

whenever al-Rāzī discusses Adam's slip, he does not use the word ʿiṣyān, which is another indication that he considered it an unsuitable term for referring to Adam's eating from the tree despite the divine prohibition. [590] Instead, al-Rāzī uses maʿṣiya (albeit infrequently), which does not hold the same negative connotations; maʿṣiya refers to the act, not the attitude of defiance and unlike ʿiṣyān, which, in the Quran, is associated with the attitude insolence and grave wrongdoings.

Furthermore, al-Rāzī also contests the appropriateness of Adam being called a disobeyer (ʿāṣī).[591] He writes, "The Quran indicates that Adam disobeyed (ʿaṣā) and was misguided, but it is not for anyone to say that Adam was an ʿāṣī or a ghāwī (one who is misguided)."[592] He corroborates his position with the following points. [593] First, al-Rāzī mentions the opinion of al-ʿUtba (d. 843), a linguist and poet, who maintained that the linguistic form of ʿāṣī (an active participle) must indicate recurrent activity. However, al-Rāzī notes, "The slip only occurred once from Adam, so it is necessary to disallow applying this term to him."[594] Secondly, the term ʿāṣī cannot apply to someone whose repentance has been accepted by God. As God accepted Adam's repentance, he cannot be called an ʿāṣī. Here al-Rāzī also mentions that Adam was "honoured [by God] with messengerhood and prophethood"[595] after repentance, which will be discussed below. Thirdly, the phrases ʿāṣī and ghāwī are misleading, as ʿāṣī suggests that Adam disobeyed God in many matters, while ghāwī implies that Adam was misguided from gnosis (maʿrifat Allāh). Al-Rāzī also states that the verbs ʿaṣā and ghawā (in Q 20:121) used in Adam's Quranic narrative should only be used when quoting the verses themselves and not as general terms to refer to Adam's actions. Lastly, al-Rāzī writes that it is permissible for God to use terms that are impermissible for others to use. He uses an example here of a master who can use particular words or phrases for his slave or son if they disobey him, but those same words cannot be used by anyone other than the master.

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[590] This is in contrast to al-Māturīdī who makes the case in his work for the suitability of the word ʿiṣyān to refer to Adam. See ch. 3, section 4.3.

[591] This is also the position of al-Rāzī's contemporary, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201), who authored a *tafsīr* entitled *Zād al-masīr fī ʿilm al-tafsīr*. He quotes the ninth-century scholar Ibn Qutayba who asserts that Adam cannot be called an ʿāṣī (disobeyer). See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-masīr fī ʿilm al-tafsīr* (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-Islāmiyya, 2002). 5:329-30.

[592] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb,* 22:128.

[593] Ibid.

[594] Ibid.

[595] Ibid.

Al-Rāzī's discussions on the term ʿāṣī and ʿiṣyān reveal several important points. First, it reveals that al-Rāzī does not consider Adam's slip to be a major wrongdoing (kabīra).[596] Secondly, the discussion demonstrates that al-Rāzī acknowledges how repentance saves Adam from having to undergo punishment. Al-Rāzī has already minimised the severity of the slip from prior conclusions, such as classing God's command as a preferential prohibition. But here, he argues that Adam's error no longer holds value because God has accepted his repentance. Therefore, Adam will not suffer any consequences. Thirdly, although al-Rāzī does not explain why he chooses the word zalla for Adam's slip, we can see that it stands in contrast to ʿiṣyān. Zalla alludes to a one-off mistake. Grammatically it is an ism al-marra, which means a noun referring to a single instance of occurrence, unlike the connotation of recurrence implied by ʿāṣī or ʿiṣyān. Zalla is not imbued with notions of intention or punishment.[597] Furthermore, through al-Rāzī's discussion, the term ʿiṣyān can also be seen to refer to habitual disobeying, especially when we consider al-ʿUtba's definition of the term. This contrasts with zalla, which suggests an accidental and momentary lapse.[598]

The majority of Sunni scholars, according to al-Rāzī, hold that prophets can commit unintentional and "non-habitual" acts of disobeying (maʿāṣī) before their prophethood. Yet, al-Rāzī is still keen to emphasise that Adam's slip is not an ʿiṣyān (disobeying), nor is he a disobeyer (ʿāṣī). Thus, al-Rāzī emphasizes Adam's esteemed status and indicates that he does not commit a major wrongdoing in his pre-prophetic stage—even though this is theologically possible according to some Ashʿarite positions.[599] Al-Rāzī adopts a similar approach (vindicating Adam and minimising any error) when he examines Adam's forgetting.

4.4 Adam's Forgetting (Nisyān)

This is the most detailed and nuanced area of al-Rāzī's discussion of the Adam story. Within this section, I will explore the intention and independent legal reasoning (ijtihād) of

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[596] These major wrongdoings are not on the same as major wrongdoings committed by ordinary people such as murder or adultery. The discussion on al-Rāzī's views about prophets and major wrongdoings requires further research with a more focused analysis of his positions on prophetic actions in his other works.

[597] See ch. 3, section 4.3 under the discussion of zalla as it appears in a commentary of Abū Ḥanīfa's al-Fiqh al-akbar.

[598] See ch. 1, section 6.1.

[599] Ibn Ṣafiyya Sulaymān, "al-Ibṭāl li-mā nasaba ilā al-anbiyāʾ min shabh al-shirk wa-l-ḍalāl," 19-20.

prophets and several categories of forgetting. In the English language, the concept of forgetting is related to an accidental error or a lapse of memory.[600] However, the Arabic word *nisyān* encompasses actions ranging from intentional to unintentional forgetting. Within this area lies a complex debate that relies on Arabic terms and definitions. However, al-Rāzī himself does not always differentiate between terms, and there is sometimes an overlap between the different types of forgetting he presents.

4.4.1 Types of Forgetting

Al-Rāzī's discussion about forgetting revolves around notions of complacency, caution and intention.[601] First, it is crucial to understand the different terms al-Rāzī's uses when discussing this topic. The following verse is where he examines the different types of forgetting, "God does not burden a soul except to its capacity. It has whatever it has earned, and against it is whatever it has acquired. 'Our Lord do not take us to task if we forget (*nasīnā*) or err (*akhṭaʾnā*)'" (Q 2:286). In commenting on this verse, al-Rāzī divides forgetting into two categories: *ḍidd al-dhikr* (the opposite of remembrance) and *tark* (leaving). Al-Rāzī says that *ḍidd al-dhikr* is forgetfulness in and of itself. He subdivides *ḍidd al-dhikr* into two categories: (a) pardonable; and (b) non-pardonable. To differentiate between (a) and (b), al-Rāzī offers several examples. He writes:

> Do you not see that for the person who sees blood on his clothes and delays its removal until he forgets, then prays whilst [the blood] is on his clothes, [his prayer] is deemed deficient (*muqaṣṣir*)? If he takes the initiative to remove [the blood] and if he does not see it on his clothes, then he is pardoned for [praying with blood]. . . . Similarly, when a person neglects (*taghāfala*) study and persistence (*tikrār*) until he forgets the Quran, he will be blameworthy. But when he persists in recitation yet still forgets, then he is pardoned.[602]

This example highlights that the difference between pardonable and non-pardonable forgetting is complacency. A person who is complacent of his responsibility to remove the drop of blood from his clothes before prayer is blameworthy and must repent to be

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[600] *OED Online*, s.v. "forget," accessed 1 July 2020, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/73319.
[601] In al-Rāzī's work, 'sahw" is posed as the antonym of "intent" (ʿamd), and thus I have chosen the term "inattention" as its translation.
[602] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 7:157.

pardoned for his forgetting. However, even though he is complacent, he does not intend to pray with the blood on his clothes, i.e., he does not intend to perform a deficient prayer. Similarly, the student who neglects his studying and revision of the Quran is a complacent student, even if it is not his intention to forget the Quran. The complacent student must repent in order to be forgiven. However, if a student is cautious and persistent in his study yet still forgets, his forgetting is pardoned and does not require repentance. Both types of *ḍidd al-dhikr*, pardonable and non-pardonable, are unintentional. What differentiates the two are the complacency of the person. The pardonable type is unpreventable as caution and effort were taken, but despite this, forgetting still happened. The non-pardonable type is reprimandable because one did not exercise caution.

The types of forgetting relating to *ḍidd al-dhikr* are contextualised when al-Rāzī discusses the possibility of the prophet Muhammad forgetting revealed verses in Q 87:6-7: "And We will teach you to recite, and you will not forget (*lā tansā*) except what God wills." In commenting on this verse, al-Rāzī discusses *ḍidd al-dhikr* (the opposite of remembrance) in the context of prophetic actions. Whenever revelation would come to the prophet Muhammad, he would exercise caution and recite verses repeatedly in fear of forgetting them. However, God assures the prophet Muhammad that he can only forget a verse if God wills it. This forgetting will not be a fault of his memory. Explaining the type of forgetting addressed here, al-Rāzī writes, "The prohibition [referring to *lā tansā*][603] is not regarded as *ḍidd al-dhikr*, because that [*ḍidd al-dhikr*] is not within [one's] ability [or reach]. However, it is [about] leaving (*tark*), so we take it to mean 'leaving the preferred option [*tark al-awlā*].'"[604] Here, al-Rāzī mentions that *ḍidd al-dhikr* cannot be controlled or avoided by one's human capacity; this can also be seen in al-Rāzī's example of the cautious student who takes precaution and revises, yet still forgets the Quran. Although in the discussion about the prophet Muhammad al-Rāzī does not refer explicitly to the pardonable and non-pardonable categories of *ḍidd al-dhikr*, Muhammad's forgetting would be the pardonable type of *ḍidd al-dhikr*. This is because the context of the verse suggests that the prophet Muhammad was not complacent as he exercised caution and effort by repeatedly reciting

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[603] Al-Rāzī explores whether the *lā* in the phrase *lā tansā* refers to a prohibition ("do not forget") or a negatory particle ("you will not forget"). However, in the above discussion about forgetting, al-Rāzī refers to *lā tansā* as a *nahy* (prohibition). For the discussion on whether *lā tansā* is a prohibition or not, see al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 31:142.
[604] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11.

the verses when they were revealed to him. As this discussion involves the prophet Muhammad, we can see that al-Rāzī believes prophetic impeccability does not preclude pardonable forgetting.[605]

The second category of forgetting is *tark* (leaving, omission). Within this category, al-Rāzī mentions Adam's forgetting, "And [Adam] forgot" (Q 20:115). He defines *tark* as "leaving an action due to a corrupt interpretation (*taʾwīl fāsid*). The purpose (*murād*) of an error (*khaṭaʾa*) is to commit an action due to an incorrect interpretation."[606] *Tark* is presented as a type of forgetting. It involves intention, as it is to do with interpreting a command, but not malintent. *Tark* is different from *ḍidd al-dhikr* in that *tark* includes actions that happen due to a misunderstanding or wrong interpretation. In contrast, *ḍidd al-dhikr*, in both of its sub-types (pardonable and non-pardonable), is unintentional and does not involve conscious decision making.

Another key term used by al-Rāzī when discussing prophets forgetting is *sahw* (inattention). Lexicographers use the term *nisyān* (forgetting) in their explanations of *sahw*, indicating that *nisyān* and *sahw* are closely related in meaning. Some classical dictionaries also list *ghafla* (heedlessness) as a synonym of *sahw*.[607] For example, Ibn Sīda al-Mursī defines *sahw* as "forgetting (*nisyān*) something, being heedless (*ghafla*) of it,[608] and the turning away of the heart to something else."[609] However, a later definition appearing in the dictionary of al-Fayyūmi (d. 1368) states that *sahw* refers to being intentionally neglectful of something, and al-Fayyūmi attempts to separate *sahw* from *nisyān* (forgetting). Al-Fayyūmī writes, "There is a difference between a *sāhī* (active participle of *sahw*) and a *nāsī*

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[605] The prophet Muhammad is treated by Muslim thinkers in the most distinct and unique category as he holds the highest rank among all prophets and messengers. Therefore, not all conclusions that Muslim thinkers draw about Muhammad can be applied to the remaining prophets and messengers. However, al-Rāzī specifically treats this point (about forgetting and the prophet Muhammad's conveyance of the divine message) as an example for what all prophets are capable or incapable of. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:7.

[606] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 7:157.

[607] Al-Mursī suggests in his definition of "*ghafla*" that it is a term that can be used for both intentional neglect and unintentional forgetting. See s.v. "*gh-f-l*," in al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam.* Further discussion on "*ghafla*" in Q 28:15, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr (ed.), *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 949.

[608] It is interesting to note that in contrast to al-Mursī's definition, al-Māturīdī separates *ghafla* and *sahw* and attributes different levels of blame and implication to each one. This sheds light on the complexities around terminology and demonstrates that terms can be understood differently from thinker to thinker. See ch. 3, section 4.2.

[609] S.v. "*s-h-w*." Ibn Sīda al-Mursī, *al-Muḥkam wa-l-muḥīṭ al-aʿẓam*.

(forgetter) in that when a *nāsī* is reminded, he remembers. This is in contrast to a *sāhī*."[610] According to al-Fayyūmī, when a *sāhī* is reminded, he still does not change his course of action and continues to be neglectful.[611] Al-Mursī's definition suggests that *sahw* is inattention, whereas al-Fayyūmī's example suggests that *sahw* refers to intentional or continuous neglect. These are definitions offered by medieval Arabic lexicographers, but we must consider al-Rāzī's usage of the term. He uses *sahw* when presenting his opinion on prophetic impeccability at the beginning of his *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*. Here he writes that prophets, due to their impeccability, do not commit intentional major or minor wrongdoings, but it is possible for them to commit errors out of *sahw*.[612] From this we can derive that *sahw* is an unintentional type of forgetting.

Al-Rāzī then explores the aspects in which a prophet can err out of inattention (*sahw*), such as his rulings (*aḥkām*) and conveyance of the divine message (*tablīgh*). Regarding the rulings issues by prophets (*aḥkām wa-l-fatāyā*), there is a difference of opinion about whether prophets can err out of inattention (*sahw*). Al-Rāzī concludes that any mistakes prophets make about rulings are considered as leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*).[613] Leaving the preferred option essentially means that one is inattentive due to not being cautious. By connecting this to al-Rāzī's original definition of *tark* —"leaving an action due to a corrupt interpretation"[614]— we can argue that prophets can choose a less-preferred option due to a corrupt interpretation (*taʾwīl fāsid*) of a ruling. This corrupt interpretation is a result of inattention (*sahw*). Regarding the conveyance of the divine message (*tablīgh*), al-Rāzī argues that it is unanimously agreed upon that prophets cannot make any type of errors about the revelation. He brings the example of Q 87:6-7 when God assures the prophet Muhammad that he will not forget the verses of the Quran. Al-Rāzī interprets this verse to mean that no prophet can forget or err in conveying God's message. A prophet's inattention (*sahw*) in conveying the divine message would mean that their communities are presented with either a flawed message or no message at all. *Tablīgh*

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[610] S.v. "s-*h-w*" in Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Fayyūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-munīr fī gharīb al-sharḥ al-kabīr* (Beirut: Maktabat al-ʿIlmiyya, n.d).

[611] This idea can be read into the story of Adam as when Satan reminded Adam of God's prohibition and said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you would become angels or immoral" (Q 7:20), Adam still ate from the tree despite being reminded that it was prohibited to do so. However, al-Rāzī does not mention this. See section 4.4.2 of the present chapter.

[612] Al-Rāzī, *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, 40.

[613] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:11.

[614] Ibid., 7:157.

remains the only category in which prophets are impeccable without any nuanced exceptions.[615]

As al-Rāzī's usage of the term *sahw* has shown, it is a type of forgetting which occurs due to a lack of caution. We see this in the cases of prophets who leave the preferred option or make an incorrect interpretation of a command. *Sahw* leads to a cognised and intentional action. However, it is not an intentionally malicious action.

4.4.2 Adam's Forgetting

It is with the knowledge of these terms that al-Rāzī's discussion of Adam's forgetting can be understood with greater depth. The majority of al-Rāzī's discussion on Adam forgetting God's prohibition revolves around questions of intent (expressed in Arabic as ʿamd or *qaṣd*) or inattention (*sahw*). Al-Rāzī also examines whether Adam's action can be considered as leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*) or "leaving" God's prohibition (*tark*). Whilst leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*) is a type of *tark* (leaving), it is a more specific category and indicates that Adam eating from the tree is not a forbidden action because it is related to preference and not obligation. These matters are explored in his interpretation of, "And Satan caused them to slip from what they were in" (Q 2:36). Here, al-Rāzī begins by saying, "Let us suppose that the slip occurred after prophethood."[616] The phrase "let us suppose" (*li-nafriḍ*) is crucial to highlight as it indicates that the discussion that follows is a supposition, it not al-Rāzī's opinion.[617] He is entertaining the opposing view. However, in the discussion based on this supposition, al-Rāzī integrates his arguments, which reveal elements of his view. The discussions that follow allow us to draw conclusions about al-Rāzī's understanding of Adam's forgetting.

Al-Rāzī presents two possibilities about the state in which Adam approached the prohibited tree: either Adam was forgetful (*nāsī*, lit. one who forgets) of God's command, or he remembered it (*dhākir*, lit. one who remembers) but approached the tree anyway.[618] The term *dhākir* refers to a person who is mindful or in a state of remembering. In the context of Adam approaching the tree, *dhākir* describes Adam as remembering God's

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[615] Ibid., 3:7.

[616] Ibid., 3:12.

[617] Also, we know that what follows is a supposition because al-Rāzī believes Adam was not a prophet at the time of his slip. See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:128 and section 3.1.2 of the present chapter.

[618] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:12

prohibition, "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35), as he approached the tree.

1. Adam Forgot the Prohibition (He Was a *Nāsī*)

This position holds that Adam had forgotten God's prohibition when he approached the

tree. Al-Rāzī attributes this position to a group of theologians. He writes:

> As for the first [perspective. i.e., that Adam was a *nāsī* (one who forgets)]: it is that
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> he committed the act as one who forgets [God's prohibition]. That is the saying of a
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> group of the theologians and they use the following as proof: "And We did not find
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> in him determination" [Q 20:115]. They give an example of a fasting person, who is
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> occupied with a matter and becomes deeply involved in it so it overpowers him, so
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> he becomes inattentive (*sāhiyan*) of his fast. He then eats during that period of
>
> inattention (not)[619] on purpose.[620]

Opponents of the view that Adam approached the tree as a *nāsī* (one who forgets) argue

that when Satan tempted Adam, he reminded Adam of God's prohibition when he said,

"Your Lord only forbade you from this tree lest you become like angels. And [Satan]

promised them, 'To you I am a sincere advisor'" (Q 7:20-21).[621] They argue that if Adam was

reminded, then how can we say that he approached the tree in a state of forgetting? Al-Rāzī

affirms that Adam and Eve were forgetful, and they did not trust Satan nor intentionally

follow his advice to approach the tree. Al-Rāzī argues that if they intentionally succumbed to

Satan, their act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) would be graver than just eating from the tree. It

would be understood as them obeying Satan and holding a bad opinion of God by assuming

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[619] These parentheses are added into the text by the editors of several different editions: I have cross checked the following versions: (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981); (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1999); (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Miṣriyya, 1933); and (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2012). It is important to note that the following points (that come after this quote) are counterarguments of the point presented —that Adam is a *nāsī*—yet the following sentence reads, "It is not said that these are false," which imply that the following points are in agreement with the view that Adam is a *nāsī*. Thus, the "not" (*lā*) in "it is not said that these are false" seems to be an error. The following sentence should read, "It is said that these are false." Furthermore, the phrasing "it is not said that these are false" (*lā yuqālu hādha bāṭil*) is not a common style used by al-Rāzī when he presents counterarguments in a discussion. He mostly uses phrases such as "these are said to be false because. . ." (*yuqālu hādha bāṭil*) or "and the correct version is. . ." among others. Further research and comparing manuscripts are required to confirm if the *lā* in the following sentence is indeed an error, and to examine the reasoning behind why the parenthesis is included by editors, and if it is to replace the "*lā*" which follows in the next sentence (in *lā yuqālu hādha bāṭil*).
[620] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:12.
[621] Ibid.

that He deceived them about why they should stay away from the tree. Al-Rāzī explains his position when he writes:

> The correct perspective is that they ate [from the tree] due to being overcome with carnal appetite and not because they believed (ṣaddaqā) [Satan] [to be true] out of knowledge or opinion (ʿilman wa-dhannan). This is like when we find ourselves [experiencing] desire [and] approach the action when someone beautifies what we desire. We do not think that the command is as it was said.[622]

Al-Rāzī argues that Adam was inattentive of God's command —and was therefore forgetful— because he was overcome with a desire to eat from the forbidden tree. He indicates that when we are in a state of desire, we often (perhaps, subconsciously) misunderstand a command to fulfil our desire. This same concept is also mentioned in passing by al-Rāzī earlier in his *tafsīr.* He writes that Adam slips due to carnal appetite (*shahwa*) and not ignorance (*jahl*).[623] On account of this desire, Adam made an *ijtihādī* (interpretative) error. This shows that al-Rāzī considers Adam's slip as happening out of inattention (*sahw*) and misinterpretation. The slip is not an intentional act of neglect carried out whilst Adam is mindful (*dhākir*) of God's command. Furthermore, al-Rāzī has already alluded to this conclusion when he wrote, "he erred in a matter regarding independent legal reasoning (*ijtihādiyya*)."[624] Therefore, he aligns himself with the view that Adam was one who forgot (*nāsī*) rather than someone who was mindful and remembered the command (*dhākir*).

Al-Rāzī also includes a hadith narrated by Ibn ʿAbbās in which Adam is questioned by God about why he ate from the tree. Adam responds, "I did not know that anyone [referring to Satan] could swear a false oath in Your name."[625] This hadith implies that Adam believed and trusted Satan and intentionally followed his advice. In response to this hadith, al-Rāzī notes that Ibn ʿAbbās is a narrator of *aḥād* (singular)[626] hadith, dismissing the account as an unreliable narration.

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[622] Ibid., 14:52.
[623] Al-Rāzī mentions this in his discussion on Q 2:31. See *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:210.
[624] Find reference in al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:15.
[625] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:12. This same hadith is also included in al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 10:114, but he does not include any comment here on accepting or rejecting this hadith.
[626] In Hadith studies, an *aḥād* narration refers to a hadith that is transmitted by one narrator. It is not widely transmitted (*mutawātir*) by several narrators which would indicate a higher level of reliability.

The second objection to the argument that Adam does not approach the tree in a state of forgetting is that he faces consequences. Proponents of this view argue that a forgetter (*nāsī*) should not be held to account for their actions. From an evidentiary perspective, a hadith informs us: "The pens have been lifted regarding three [things]."[627] Thus, when Adam is reprimanded, this serves as proof that what he did was not forgetful. In response to this, al-Rāzī asserts that Adam faces consequences for his action because he is held to a higher standard than ordinary people who are being addressed in the Prophet's hadith.

This whole discussion is based on the supposition that Adam was already a prophet when he ate from the tree, a view which al-Rāzī has clarified he is not a proponent of. It is also important to clarify here a key difference between *nāsī* and *dhākir* in light of making incorrect interpretations. Someone who misunderstands a command and then misinterprets it must initially be able to remember the command to be able to interpret it. Al-Rāzī's argument (that Adam is a *nāsī*) is based on the position that Adam remembers the command when approaching the tree, but he is overcome by desire which causes inattention (*sahw*) —a type of forgetting— which impedes his ability to make the correct judgement about the command. As a result of this desire and subsequent inattention (*sahw*), Adam's makes the wrong judgement of God's prohibition.

2. Adam Remembered the Prohibition (He Was a *Dhākir*)

We now turn to examine the alternative opinion that Adam ate from the tree whilst he remembered (i.e., was a *dhākir*) of God's prohibition. To reiterate, this is not al-Rāzī's position, and he is presenting the views of others. However, through his analysis of each argument, we can further understand nuanced elements of his view on Adam's forgetting. When beginning to examine this perspective, he writes, "As for the second statement, and that is that Adam committed it intentionally (*ʿāmid*), there are four perspectives."[628] We

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[627] This hadith is only quoted by al-Rāzī partially as "The pens have been lifted regarding three [things]." The full hadith is "The pens have been lifted regarding three [things]: a sleeping person until he awakes, a young boy until he becomes an adult and an insane person until he regains consciousness" (*Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* 1423). There is no mention here of a forgetful person, but there are related hadiths which state that forgetting means that one is pardoned from accountability. For example, it is reported by Ibn ʿAbbās that the prophet Muhammad said, "Verily, God has overlooked for my nation their honest mistakes, forgetting (*nisyān*), and what they are forced into doing" (*Sunan Ibn Mājah* 2045).

[628] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:13.

draw our attention here to al-Rāzī's use of the word ʿāmid (intentionally) as a synonym of dhākir.[629] This indicates that al-Rāzī believes being a dhākir refers to intentionally erring.

First, al-Rāzī presents the view of those who argue that Adam can intentionally approach the tree without being punished because the prohibition is preferential.[630] Adam's eating is not considered a forbidden act, and his impeccability as a prophet is kept intact. The second position is that Adam's slip was intentional, and therefore, he committed a major wrongdoing. This position refers to Adam being intentional in erring itself, i.e., knowing that approaching the tree was wrong. Al-Rāzī rejects this view. The third position holds that Adam ate from the tree intentionally (like in the second position), but he was fearful, anxious, and worried. Due to these feelings, his act is considered a minor wrongdoing. Al-Rāzī rejects this view, asserting that even if one feels fear, intentionally contravening God's prohibition makes one disobedient and deserving of punishment. Al-Rāzī asserts that prophets can never intentionally contravene God's command. Furthermore, al-Rāzī emphasises that the verse, "So Adam forgot, and We did not find in him determination" (Q 20:115), discards the notion that Adam was intentional in his erring when he approached the tree.

The underlying argument that al-Rāzī is rejecting in these three positions is that Adam intentionally erred, i.e., he approached the tree whilst remembering God's prohibition (i.e., being a dhākir) and, thus, was intentional in his transgression. The fourth position approaches Adam's ijtihād from a slightly different and nuanced perspective. According to the Muʿtazilites, Adam's slip is a result of an error in his ijtihād; Adam misunderstood the demonstrative pronoun hādhihi (meaning "this") in God's prohibition to Adam, "Do not come close to this (hādhihi) tree" (Q 2:35). The word hādhihi can be used to mean a "type" or "species" (nawʿ), as well as referring to a "particular" (shakṣ or muʿayyan). According to the Muʿtazilites, Adam took hādhihi to refer to a particular tree and not a type of tree. [631] Al-Rāzī further details the Muʿtazilites' argument:

> When Adam heard the saying of God, "Do not come close to this tree" [Q 2:35], he
> thought that the prohibition is about eating from [only] that specific tree. So, he left
> [that particular tree] and ate from another tree from that species (nawʿ), but he was

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[629] Ibid.
[630] Ibid.
[631] Ibid., 3:14.

erroneous (*mukhṭiʾan*)[632] in that reasoning (*ijtihād*). This is because God means the "type" of tree [when He said] *hādhihi* and not one specific [tree].[633]

Essentially, the Muʿtazilites argue that doing *ijtihād* is an example of consciously and intentionally examining a command in order to come to an interpretation of it. According to the Muʿtazilites, Adam remembered the command (*dhākir*) as he was trying to interpret it, although it was an incorrect interpretation. This is because when one makes *ijtihād*, one does not become a forgetter (*nāsī*) nor an inattentive person (*sāhī*) but is mindful of what one is doing as one is trying to interpret God's command. Al-Rāzī concludes this argument by stating that the Muʿtazilites classify Adam's action as a mindful but pardonable minor wrongdoing that happened whilst he was a prophet.

Al-Rāzī's response to this[634] is that although Adam erred in his *ijtihād*, it was due to his inattention (*sahw*).[635] In contrast, the Muʿtazilites regard Adam's *ijtihād* as proof that Adam remembered God's prohibition in order to interpret it, and therefore, no *sahw* was involved. It seems that al-Rāzī and the Muʿtazilites agree in principle that Adam made the wrong *ijtihād* and that he was unintentional in his erring, but al-Rāzī's conclusion emphasizes the forgetting aspect of Adam's slip. This is because al-Rāzī emphasizes *why* the *ijtihād* happened —it happened due to desire, which led to inattention (*sahw*), which is a type of forgetting. In contrast, the Muʿtazilite position holds that Adam's *ijtihād* is not related to forgetting the command or being a forgetter (*nāsī*). Instead, Adam's *ijtihād* proves that Adam remembered God's command because he had to interpret it. He, therefore, was a *dhākir* (one who remembers).

Overall, when discussing the possible scenarios of Adam eating whilst remembering God's prohibition, al-Rāzī explores the concept of Adam's *ijtihād* in great detail. He disagrees with the Muʿtazilite view that *ijtihād* —be it correct or incorrect—means that one remembers the prohibition (*dhākir*). According to al-Rāzī, if one makes an incorrect interpretation, one has not remembered the command as it was relayed. Thus, the misinterpretation is because of one's inattention and forgetting. In the case of Adam, al-Rāzī holds that Adam's carnal appetite leads to his inattention. It seems al-Rāzī understands

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[632] Someone who commits a *khaṭīʾa*.
[633] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:14.
[634] In its entirety, al-Rāzī's response to the Muʿtazilite view has four parts and four perspectives. This one mentioned in the body of the text is the third perspective.
[635] See section 4.4 of the present chapter for a discussion on inattention. Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:14.

dhākir to mean that Adam remembered the command as it is, and therefore was intentional in his erring. Al-Rāzī also uses the word ʿāmid as a synonym of *dhākir* to further highlight this. Al-Rāzī's rejection of the Muʿtazilite stance complements his view that prophets cannot disobey God intentionally. This forms the basis of his refutation of the Muʿtazilite view: remembering God's command as it is, yet transgressing it is sinful because it indicates wilful wrongdoing.

Furthermore, al-Rāzī emphasizes that Adam's *ijtihād* highlights that he did not have the malintent to disobey God as he believed his *ijtihad* was sound. Al-Rāzī also suggests that perhaps Adam initially knew that the prohibition referred to a "type" and not a "specific" tree, but that he eventually forgot this information (about the "type" versus the "particular"). Thus, the verse "He forgot, and We did not find in him determination" (Q 20:115) could refer to Adam forgetting that the command was referring to the type of tree, and not that Adam forgot the prohibition entirely.[636] A final and passing position that al-Rāzī presents is that perhaps Adam understood God's command as prohibiting both him and Eve from approaching the tree together. According to this view, it would not be prohibited for Adam to approach the tree by himself. In this circumstance, Adam's (mis)interpretation of God's prohibition is not about the pronoun *hādhihi*, but rather about the addressees of the command.

The entire discussion on Adam either forgetting (being a *nāsī*) or remembering God's command (*dhākir*) is based on the supposition that Adam is a prophet when the slip occurs.[637] Underpinning both stances is al-Rāzī's belief that God's prohibition is preferential and disregarding this type of prohibition won't lead to punishment anyway. This means that Adam's slip is an example of leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*).

4.5 Is Adam's Relocation a Punishment?

The discussions around Adam's forgetting inform us how al-Rāzī will interpret the consequences of Adam's action. Throughout his discussion of Adam's story thus far, al-Rāzī interprets Adam's action in a way that absolves him from deserving punishment. For

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[636] Al-Māturīdī suggests that significant time had passed between God prohibiting Adam from approaching the tree, Satan tempting Adam and Adam finally approaching the tree. During this time, Satan distracted Adam heavily with conversation which led to him forgetting God's prohibition. See ch. 3, section 3.4.
[637] See section 4.4.2 of the present chapter.

example, he challenges the suitability of terms like ʿāṣī (disobeyer) and ʿiṣyān (disobeying) in speaking about Adam. Furthermore, he argues that Adam forgets God's prohibition. He does not eat from the tree intentionally, knowing that God has prohibited it for him. By examining al-Rāzī's arguments, it becomes clear that he is adamant in challenging and refuting views that depict Adam's slip as an event that denigrates his status. It thus comes as no surprise that al-Rāzī maintains that the relocation from paradise to earth is not a punishment from God. He writes, "They [i.e., Muslim thinkers] differ upon God's saying 'descend' [Q 2:38], whether it is a command or permission (ibāḥa). It is more likely that it is a command because [the relocation involves] immense difficulty. [Moving from] paradise to a place where livelihood can only be attained through difficulty and toil is among the most intense burdens."[638] Despite al-Rāzī interpreting the relocation as a difficult change in environment for Adam, he writes, "Whoever thinks it is a punishment is wrong. This is because the intense burden is the cause of reward, so how can [the potential of] great benefit be regarded as a punishment?"[639] Thus, al-Rāzī understands the relocation as an opportunity for Adam to gain reward and spiritual benefit through toil. It is interesting to note that both al-Rāzī and al-Ṭabarī have the same understanding of Adam's descent: it is a relocation to a new place in which Adam will struggle.[640] However, they differ in their interpretation of why Adam undertakes struggle. For al-Ṭabarī, the relocation is a punishment, but for al-Rāzī, the relocation gives Adam an opportunity to gain reward from God.

Al-Rāzī further challenges the view that the relocation is a punishment for Adam when he examines the repetition of God's command for Adam to "descend" (Q 2:38). The command is mentioned twice in *Sūrat al-Baqara*, once before Adam repents and once thereafter (Q 2:36-8). After presenting a few perspectives, al-Rāzī writes, "When the slip occurred, Adam and Eve were commanded to descend. They repented after the [first] command to descend."[641] Al-Rāzī argues that if the descent were a punishment, then it would not be repeated by God after Adam and Eve repented. This is because Adam's repentance was accepted by God, which would eliminate any impending punishment. Al-

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[638] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:18.
[639] Ibid.
[640] See ch. 2, section 3.3.
[641] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:28.

Rāzī says that the reason behind the repetition of the command was "to let [Adam and Eve] know that it was not a recompense (*jazāʾ*) for their slip."[642] Al-Rāzī dissociates Adam's slip from his subsequent relocation, highlighting that the latter is not a result of the former. Instead, al-Rāzī believes that the descent from paradise must have occurred anyway due to God's prior promise that a *khalīfa* will be put on earth, "Indeed I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*" (Q 2:30). This view is also corroborated in *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* when al-Rāzī states that Adam's descent is part of his fulfilment of being a vicegerent of God.[643] Both of these extracts from al-Rāzī's works highlight that he re-evaluates Adam's relocation from being a punishment to being a beneficial progression for Adam through which he can reap a reward from God. This position corresponds with al-Rāzī's prior conclusions that *ʿāṣī* and *ʿiṣyān* are unsuitable terms for Adam's action because they warrant punishment. Al-Rāzī also discusses Adam's nakedness after he eats from the tree. He writes,

> If it is said, "Is the appearance of their private parts like a punishment for their disobeying?" We say without a doubt that it is connected to the eating [from the tree], but it is likely that it is not punishment for it. [The nakedness] is connected to [the eating] for another benefit."[644]

Al-Rāzī does not offer a definitive conclusion here about why Adam's nakedness is revealed in the story, but he appears to side with the response that claims it is not a punishment.

However, this is in contrast to al-Rāzī's examination of the verse, "O Children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he caused your parents to be removed from paradise, stripping them of their clothes to make their private parts appear (*li-yubdiya*)" (Q 7:27). This verse is clear in its didactic tone, and al-Rāzī mentions that the *lām* in *li-yubdiya* is a *lām* of consequence (*lām al-ʿāqiba*). This type of *lām* in the Arabic language indicates that an action —in this case, the nakedness of Adam— is a consequence of something. This point implies that the nakedness could be a consequence of Adam's slip and is presented by al-Rāzī under the category of a *baḥth* (discussion). This category of enquiry often appears in his *tafsīr* as brief points that are not developed in the way that *wujūh* (perspectives) are.[645] Al-

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[642] Ibid.
[643] Al-Rāzī, *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*, 53.
[644] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:127.
[645] More research is required on the terms and categories used by al-Rāzī for his argumentation, in particular, any patterns and significations of each term.

Rāzī presents another discussion (also categorised as a *baḥth*) on the same verse Q 7:27 where he quickly attempts to reconcile two opposing views:

> This verse indicates that when God removed Adam and Eve from paradise
> [it was] a punishment for the slip. Clearly, His saying, "Indeed I am placing
> on earth a *khalīfa"* [Q 2:30] indicates that God created them[646] for the
> vicegerency on earth and caused them to descend from paradise to earth
> for this purpose. Can there be a resolution between both perspectives?
> The answer is that perhaps it can be said a resolution is attained between
> the two matters.[647]

Al-Rāzī seems unconcerned with reconciling these opposing perspectives, as suggested with the phrase "perhaps it can be said" when presenting a conclusion here. His view is offered nonchalantly. This suggests that his dominant view is the more detailed discussion of the Adam story in *Sūrat al-Baqara*, where he clearly states that the relocation is not a punishment. Overall, al-Rāzī's interpretation of the descent as an opportunity for Adam reveals that the slip did not denigrate Adam's status, nor was it his punishment from God.

4.6 Repentance and Guidance

The final part of Adam's story is his repentance and guidance from God. This section will examine whether al-Rāzī connects Adam's repentance with his investiture into prophethood. As has been discussed in this thesis, many *tafsīr*s such as those by al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī that are examined in this thesis do not discuss Adam's repentance as a result of his slip. Exegetes usually focus this final part of the narrative, where Adam is forgiven and guided by God, on the didactics of Adam's story for the Quranic reader. It is at this point of the narrative that the Quranic reader is expected to draw lessons from Adam's story. Al-Rāzī follows a similar pattern as other exegetes as he focuses here on the stages and methods of repentance.[648] Even the verse "And his Lord chose (*ijtabā*) him and guided

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[646] It is interesting to note here that al-Rāzī refers to the vicegerency in the dual form here, relating it both to Adam and Eve.

[647] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 14:57.

[648] The first enquiry is about the medium with which Adam received these "words"; the second enquiry is presented above; the third enquiry is about the contents of the words; the fourth enquiry surveys al-Ghazālī's discussion on repentance and its methods; the fifth enquiry explores the Muʿtazilite understanding of major and minor wrongdoings with repentance; the sixth enquiry focuses on understanding repentance as a "return"; the seventh enquiry examines the characterisation of God as a pardoning entity; and the eighth enquiry presents three benefits of this verse, focusing on their didactic elements for mankind.

him" (Q 20:122), which explicitly includes a verb frequently used in the Quran to allude to prophethood, is not examined in depth by al-Rāzī. However, al-Rāzī refers to this verse when interpreting an earlier verse in the Adam story, "And He taught Adam the names" (Q 2:30). In the discussion of this verse, al-Rāzī refutes the Muʿtazilites who believed Adam was a prophet when the slip happened. Al-Rāzī challenges their stance by stating that the verb *ijtabā* (Q 20:122) refers to Adam being chosen to become a prophet, and this happens after the slip when he repents to God. For al-Rāzī, the verb *ijtabā* is evidence that Adam becomes a prophet after his slip. Al-Rāzī writes:

> God's saying, "Then his Lord chose (*ijtabā)* him" [Q 20:122] indicates that God chose [Adam] after the slip. It must be said that before the slip, [Adam] was not chosen. If [Adam] was not chosen [before the slip], he must not have been a messenger because the message (*risāla*) and being chosen (*ijtibā*) are interconnected. Being chosen means specifying [someone] with a type of honouring (*tashrīfāt*), and God specifically uses that [verb] for all of those whom He has made messengers.[649]

It is important to note that al-Rāzī does not specify that this is his view, and we do not see the common phrases such as *naqūl* ("we say") or *jawābunā* ("our answer is") that are often used to affirm his position. However, al-Rāzī does not argue against the above stance in his *tafsīr*. Instead, his conclusion that the slip happens before Adam's prophethood affirms that *ijtabā* (being chosen), which happens after the slip, could refer to Adam being selected for prophethood. In the above excerpt, al-Rāzī emphasises that Adam becomes a prophet after his repentance, as that is when he is divinely elected.[650] The majority of times where the verb *ijtabā* is used in the Quran, al-Rāzī interprets it as referring to prophethood. For example, regarding the verse, "[Abraham] was thankful for [God's] favours, and He chose him (*ijtabāhu*) and guided him to a straight path" (Q 16:121), al-Rāzī writes that *ijtabā* means "being elected [*iṣṭafā*] for prophethood."[651]

Although al-Rāzī's view implies that prophetic election happens after repentance, al-Rāzī does not mention Adam's prophethood again in his interpretation of the final part of Adam's story. He does not discuss at the end of Adam's narrative that Adam's prophethood

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[649] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 2:194.
[650] See figure 1.
[651] Al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 20:137.

is related to his repentance to God. However, there are moments in the rest of his *tafsīr* where al-Rāzī refers to Adam's election into prophethood in a passing comment. For example, when discussing the unsuitability of calling Adam an ʿāṣī (disobeyer), al-Rāzī states, "God accepted his repentance and honoured him with the prophetic mission and prophethood."[652] This demonstrates that al-Rāzī considers Adam's status to be elevated after he repents to God, indicating that no degradation of status has happened as a result of the slip.

5. Conclusion

In analysing al-Rāzī's *tafsīr*, we encounter the theological discussions on prophetic infallibility that developed from the eleventh century onwards. As has been explored in this chapter, al-Rāzī presents the story of Adam from the Ashʿarite stance on prophetic impeccability. In order to reconcile Adam's prophethood with his mistake, al-Rāzī concurs that the slip occurred before prophethood. According to al-Rāzī, prophets are not born prophets, and they are not impeccable until they are elected by God to become prophets. However, at every junction of Adam's narrative before he is elected, al-Rāzī reconsiders Adam from the perspective of being an elite creation, a "prophet-to-be" and not an ordinary man. This echoes his view on prophets being spiritually and intellectually different from ordinary human beings even before their prophethood. Al-Rāzī demonstrates his commitment to upholding the esteemed status of prophets, even if they are not impeccable from birth. This is evident in the way al-Rāzī depicts Adam as a noble and eminent being from the beginning of his life until he is awarded the high rank of prophethood after his repentance.

As the analysis in the present chapter has shown, al-Rāzī does not depict Adam's slip as compromising his status and exculpates Adam. First, al-Rāzī lays the foundation of his entire argument by highlighting that God's prohibition to Adam is not a proscriptive command. Classing the prohibition as preferential (*tanzīh*) is the foundation of al-Rāzī's stance on exculpating Adam, as this means any notions of Adam undergoing punishment or committing a wrongdoing are eradicated. Additionally, by using the term *zall*a and rejecting terms like ʿiṣyān, al-Rāzī stresses that the slip does not warrant punishment. Al-Rāzī also

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[652] Ibid., 22:128.

goes into detail in his examination of Adam's forgetting, presenting categories and subcategories of it to the reader. He concludes that Adam's slip happened as a result of inattention (*sahw*) and that it was an error of Adam's *ijtihād*. He thus highlights that Adam's slip is not intentional. In doing so, he maintains the reputation of Adam as a noble being. Secondly, by interpreting the relocation of Adam as an opportunity for him to gain reward from God, al-Rāzī depicts the life journey of Adam as being one of progression and enhancement, not of regression. Finally, al-Rāzī explicitly mentions that Adam ascends to the status of a prophet after his repentance, as this is when he is elected by God. Throughout his interpretation of the story, al-Rāzī minimises Adam's error and ultimately offers esteemed treatment of Adam throughout the *tafsīr*.

Al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* and works have had a significant impact on later exegetes and the Ashʿarite theological tradition. As the next chapter will demonstrate, many of al-Rāzī's positions and arguments about Adam's slip and relocation are echoed by exegetes who were influenced directly by his work, such as al-Bayḍāwī. Though al-Rāzī had a huge influence and direct impact on later generations, exegetes from different regions such as al-Andalus may not have had direct access to al-Rāzī's works, yet they come to similar conclusions about Adam's story. They, too, exculpate Adam and give his prophetic status due significance when interpreting his story. This can be seen in the case of the Andalusian exegete, al-Qurṭubī, who will also be analysed next.

Chapter 5: Al-Bayḍāwī and Al-Qurṭubī: Post-Rāzī Interpretations of Adam's Slip

1. Introduction

The dense and encyclopaedic nature of al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* led many subsequent scholars and exegetes to use it as a key source for their works. These scholars do not always quote al-Rāzī or cite the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* directly, but al-Rāzī's unique examples and analogies, as well as the conclusions he draws from Adam's story, are often repeated verbatim. Despite the monumental impact al-Rāzī's work has had on the post-classical *tafsīr* tradition, it is surprising that there is not much literature on the influence of his exegesis on later writers.[653] One scholar who was greatly influenced by al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* and adopted many of his positions on Adam's story is Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286).[654] In al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* entitled *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl* ("The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation"), al-Bayḍāwī reaches similar conclusions to al-Rāzī about Adam's story; there is a large crossover in material on several points, some of which are brought to light in this chapter.

The present chapter will first examine al-Bayḍāwī's interpretations of Adam's status, slip and relocation in comparison to al-Rāzī's positions. This will offer a way for us to trace the impact that al-Rāzī's conclusions had on al-Bayḍāwī's views on prophetic impeccability and prophetic errors. Whilst al-Rāzī's works have influenced later works of *tafsīr* and Ashʿarite theology, his work built on an existing bedrock of literature. This literature includes the philosophical works of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1047)[655] and the theological works of earlier Ashʿarite theologians like al-Juwaynī (d. 1085) and al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013). The works of these Muslim thinkers were widely transmitted across Persia and Arabia, but also in regions further away like al-Andalus.[656]

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[653] See Tariq Jaffer, *Razi: Master of Quranic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2-8.

[654] There is some debate around the accuracy of al-Bayḍāwī's death date. See Walid Saleh "Al-Bayḍāwī" in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed, Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, et al., accessed June 25 2021. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25267.

[655] See Jaffer, *Razi: Master of Quranic Interpretation*, 101-144; 205.

[656] Many of al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwaynī's works were transmitted in al-Andalus through their students. See Jan Theile, "Between Cordoba and Nīsābūr: The Emergence and Consolidation of Ashʿarism (fourth-fifth/tenth-eleventh century)" in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology,* ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 233-5.

Another key exegete of the thirteenth century who discusses Adam's story with respect to the question of prophetic impeccability is Abū Bakr al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273), an Andalusian scholar and jurist. His most well-known work is a comprehensive *tafsīr* entitled *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* ("The Compilation of the Rulings of the Quran"), which is discussed in the second part of this chapter. Although al-Qurṭubī is a contemporary of al-Bayḍāwī, his intellectual milieu and primary influences were Andalusian exegetes and scholars. It is likely that al-Qurṭubī had heard of and perhaps even read al-Rāzī's works,[657] but he relies heavily on the *tafsīr* and thought of two influential Andalusian scholars, Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1148) and Ibn ʿAṭiyya al-Andalusī (d. 1146). As the examination of al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr* in this chapter will show, al-Qurṭubī parallels several positions on Adam's slip and relocation that are discussed in the works of al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī. The adherence to such views highlights that discussing Adam's story in light of his prophetic status was a widespread stance and was becoming popular in works of Muslim thinkers across the Islamic world. Whilst al-Qurṭubī reaches some different conclusions to al-Bayḍāwī for particular aspects of Adam's story, he still rejects the notion that Adam's slip was a grave disobedience that deserved punishment. As the following analysis will show, the thirteenth-century interpretations of al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī are marked by a clear concern to uphold Adam's esteemed status as a prophet.

2. Al-Bayḍāwī: His Life, Works and the Influence of al-Rāzī

Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī was born in a small town called al-Bayḍā in Persia, north of Shiraz. His birth year is unknown, but scholars have estimated it to be between the years 1231 and 1260 CE. Al-Bayḍāwī spent his life within the province of Persia, and his education was founded upon his father's learning who was a devout Ashʿarite Shāfiite scholar. These were also the theological and legal schools that al-Bayḍāwī adopted.

Al-Bayḍāwī's three well-known works are:

1. The *tafsīr* entitled *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl*. According to the scholar Muḥammad al-Fāḍil ibn ʿĀshūr, al-Bayḍāwī authored this exegesis in the later years

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[657] Al-Qurṭubī does not cite al-Rāzī's work in his discussions about Adam, although there are instances in his *tafsīr* that parallel al-Rāzī's positions. The present chapter is not a study on source material and does not investigate whether al-Qurṭubī had access to al-Rāzī's work. Perhaps al-Qurṭubī quoted al-Rāzī in other parts of his *tafsīr*, but there is no explicit mention of al-Rāzī in the sections on Adam's story.

of his life.[658] It is thus the culmination of al-Bayḍāwī's theological, grammatical and legal work. In addition, al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* is also the subject of many commentaries, one of which is written by Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykh Zāda (d. 1442), entitled *Ḥāshiyya Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykh Zāda ʿalā Tafsīr al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī* ("The Commentary of Shaykh Zāda of the *Tafsīr* of al-Bayḍāwī"). Reference is made to this work in the present chapter to shed light on particular arguments expressed by al-Bayḍāwī.

2. A work on scholastic theology entitled *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min maṭāliʿ al-anẓār* ("The Rays of Light from the Horizon of Logical Reasoning") which was developed further by a commentary written by Shams al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1348).

3. A book on legal theory entitled *Minhāj al-uṣūl ilā ʿilm al-uṣūl* ("The Path of the Principles toward the Science of Legal Theory").

Al-Bayḍāwī authored several more books, including works of grammar and history. In addition, he also wrote commentaries on al-Rāzī's works of jurisprudence and theology such as *Sharḥ al-maḥṣūl* ("The Commentary of The Outcomes [of the Science of Jurisprudential Principles]"), which are unfortunately no longer extant.[659] Al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* is indebted to many previous works, most notably the exegeses of al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144) entitled *al-Kashshāf ʿan ḥaqāʾiq al-tanzīl* ("The Revealer of the Realities of Revelation") and al-Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.[660] Like al-Zamakhsharī, al-Bayḍāwī dedicated himself to the study of Arabic philology, and this features heavily in al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*. Despite borrowing from many different exegetes, al-Bayḍāwī does not cite his sources or reference different scholars (unless he is explaining the position of a particular school) and has been criticized for this.[661] Although al-Bayḍāwī relied heavily on al-Zamakhsharī's work (so much so that some have said that al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* is an amended edition of al-Zamakhsharī's *tafsīr*),[662] al-Bayḍāwī disregarded and challenged many of al-Zamakhsharī's Muʿtazilite views. He defended the Ashʿarite position for theological matters, extracting many of al-Rāzī's positions to support his conclusions.[663] It is interesting to note that in Shaykh Zāda's

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[658] Muḥammad al-Fāḍil ibn ʿĀshūr, *al-Tafsīr wa rijāluhu* (Cairo: Majmaʿat al-Buhūth al-Islāmiyya, 1970), 90.

[659] Lutpi Ibrahim, "The Theological Questions at Issue between Az-Zamakhsharī and Al-Bayḍāwī with Special Reference to al-Kashāf and Anwār al-tanzīl" (University of Edinburgh, 1977), 46.

[660] Al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa-l-mufassirūn*, 1:258.

[661] Yusuf Rahman, "Hermeneutics of al-Bayḍawi in His Anwār al Tanzīl," *Islamic Culture*, no. 71 (1997): 1–14, 6-7.

[662] J. Robson, "Al-Bayḍāwī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, 24 April 2012. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1310.

[663] Rahman, "Hermeneutics of al Bayḍawi," 1.

commentary of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*, Shaykh Zāda uses al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* often verbatim[664] to shed light on al-Bayḍāwī's comments. Although al-Bayḍāwī's work shows close adherence to his source material, his *tafsīr* also demonstrates clear independence of thought and he also adopts positions that are contrary to al-Rāzī's opinion. This is an example of the diversity of views about Adam's story that existed within the Ashʿarite school.

2.2. Al-Bayḍāwī's views on Prophetic Impeccability

Before analysing his interpretation of Adam's story, we turn to al-Bayḍāwī's general stance on the impeccability of prophets. This provides the overarching framework from which he interprets Adam's slip and subsequent relocation to earth. In the theological treatise entitled *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, al-Bayḍāwī presents different positions on impeccability, reiterating much of al-Rāzī's material.[665] Then, al-Bayḍāwī offers his definition of impeccability:

> Impeccability is a psychological property that prevents one from immorality (*fujūr*). It is based on the knowledge of the vices of bad actions and the merits of obedience. Impeccability is verified in the prophets by [1] the revelation [to them] that reminds [them of this knowledge]; [2] objection to what they commit out of inattention (*sahw*); and [3] a reprimand for leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*).[666]

His definition of infallibility brings attention to the mental capacity of prophets. He expresses that they have a greater knowledge of the value of virtuous and bad actions, and it is due to this greater intellectual knowledge and capacity (than that of ordinary people) that they are reprimanded for leaving the preferred option. This shows that prophets face reprimand for actions that ordinary people would not be blamed or held to account for. In

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[664] Compare Shaykh Zāda's commentary on the Abode of Reward (*dār al-thawāb*) in *Ḥāshiya*, 1:537-8 with al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 3:3-4. Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykh Zādah, *Ḥāshiyya Muḥyī al-Dīn Shaykh Zāda ʿalā tafsīr al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1999).

[665] Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min maṭāliʿ al-anẓār*, ed. ʿAbbās Sulaymān (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 214-6. Al-Bayḍāwī also briefly discusses the stories of the prophet Muhammad, Adam, Abraham, Joseph and David, absolving them from punishment and major wrongdoing in a similar way to how al-Rāzī discusses prophetic narratives in his *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ*. A commentary on al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār* has been authored by Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1348) who adds significant detail to al-Bayḍāwī's views on impeccability. Where relevant, these are noted in this chapter. It is worth mentioning that in al-Iṣfahānī's commentary of al-Bayḍāwī's *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, al-Iṣfahānī adds greater detail to the story of Adam in relation to prophetic impeccability. See E. E. Calverley et al., *Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam: Abd Allah Baydawi's Text, Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār min maṭāliʿ al-anẓār,* and Mahmūd al-Iṣfahānī, *Maṭāliʿ al-anẓar sharḥ ṭawāliʿ al-anwār* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:1003-1017.

[666] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, 216.

the commentary by al-Iṣfahānī on al-Bayḍāwī's work of theology, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, al-Iṣfahānī builds on al-Bayḍāwī's stance that a prophet's infallibility does not preclude him from committing wrongdoings.[667] According to al-Bayḍāwī, a prophet is praised for doing virtuous acts because infallibility does not mean that it is impossible for prophets to commit wrongdoings. A prophet's superior knowledge of good and bad is what prevents them from committing wrongdoings. Therefore, prophets are not exactly protected from evil and immoral actions. Rather, they make a conscious, intellectual choice to refrain from committing them.

Al-Bayḍāwī also discusses the status of prophets in their pre-prophetic period. When interpreting the verse, "My covenant does not include wrongdoers" (Q 2:124), which comes from a conversation between God and Abraham, al-Bayḍāwī states that prophets are protected from major wrongdoings (*kabāʾir*) even before their initiation into prophethood.[668] This is also repeated in his theological work entitled *Miṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ* ("The Lamp of the Souls"). In this work, al-Bayḍāwī writes that before receiving revelation (i.e., before prophethood), prophets cannot (1) commit *kufr* or (2) decide to commit an offence (*dhanb*) and persist in it.[669] This view echoes al-Rāzī's opinion that whilst prophets are not impeccable in the pre-prophetic period of their lives, they are protected from committing any intentional major wrongdoings and *kufr*.[670]

In summary, al-Bayḍāwī maintains that prophetic impeccability must be upheld and that prophets are different from ordinary people even in their pre-prophetic stage. Where al-Rāzī unpicks nuanced topics such as intentional versus unintentional actions, al-Bayḍāwī offers a more general overview of prophetic impeccability. He also parallels the existing views expressed by al-Rāzī that prophets are protected from certain wrong acts such as disbelief (*kufr*) or committing offences (*dhunūb*) before attaining prophethood. These beliefs underpin his interpretation of Adam's story.

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[667] E. E. Calverley, *Nature, Man and God in Medieval Islam*, 1016-7.
[668] Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-taʾwīl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Murʿashlī (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 2015), 1:104.
[669] Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī, *Miṣbāḥ al-arwāḥ fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Saʿīd Fūda (Amman: Dār al-Rāzī, 2007), 184. Al-Bayḍāwī adds at the end that prophets can commit offences (*dhunūb*) on rare occasions, such as in the case of Joseph's brothers.
[670] See ch. 4, section 3.

2.3. Al-Bayḍāwī's Interpretation of Adam's Story

Al-Bayḍāwī's views on Adam's narrative echoes many aspects of al-Rāzī's discussions. Like al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī splits Adam's life into two stages, a pre-prophetic and prophetic stage. This split ensures that Adam's slip does not challenge the notion of prophetic impeccability, as Adam is not a prophet when the slip happens. He also examines God's prohibition in the same way that al-Rāzī does, analysing the difference between preferential (*tanzīh*) and proscriptive (*taḥrīm*) prohibitions. However, despite echoing al-Rāzī's stance on Adam's story, al-Bayḍāwī also departs from al-Rāzī's views on several significant aspects of the narrative. For example, his views on Adam's relocation to earth and the terminology he uses to discuss Adam's slip are different to what al-Rāzī asserts in the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.

2.3.1 Adam before the Slip

Al-Bayḍāwī's discussion on Adam before his slip is centred on two main questions:
(1) Is Adam already a prophet before he eats from the tree?; and (2) what does the role of *khalīfa* entail? The question of Adam's prophetic status is discussed when al-Bayḍāwī refutes the Ḥashwiyya, who believe that Adam's story is proof that prophets are not infallible. One of the proofs used by the Ḥashwiyya to disprove the doctrine of prophetic infallibility is that Adam is a prophet at the time of his slip, yet he commits a prohibited act. He is, therefore, a disobeyer (*ʿāṣī*) which contradicts an infallible status. [671] However, al-Bayḍāwī responds to this by maintain al-Rāzī's view that Adam was not a prophet at the time of the slip and therefore, his slip does not invalidate the doctrine of prophetic infallibility. [672] Furthermore, al-Bayḍāwī states in the *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, "Regarding Adam's incident, it happened before his prophethood because at that time he did not have leadership (*imāma*) as God says, 'Then his Lord chose him'" (Q 20:122). [673] Here, al-Bayḍāwī highlights that Adam being "chosen" after his slip refers to being chosen for leadership, which we can assume is a reference to prophethood and/or vicegerency. This shows that al-

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[671] See ch. 4, section 4.3.2 on why the word *ʿāṣi* is unsuitable to use in reference to Adam.

[672] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:84. It is important to note that al-Bayḍāwī mentions this as a rebuttal of Ḥashwiyya view that Adam committed a major wrong action whilst he was a prophet. Often when challenging other theological groups, many exegetes would put forth opinions that they did not necessarily uphold themselves. In this instance, I am assuming that al-Bayḍāwī adopts this view as it is coherent with the remainder of his interpretation on Adam. It is also a view held by al-Rāzī from whom al-Bayḍāwī took significant inspiration, particularly on the topic of prophetic impeccability.

[673] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, 215.

Bayḍāwī's understanding of the chronology of Adam's story follows al-Rāzī's interpretation.[674]

Al-Bayḍāwī further discusses prophethood in relation to Adam's story when he examines the word *khalīfa*. According to al-Bayḍāwī, the roles of *khalīfa* and prophet are interlinked. Al-Bayḍāwī writes:

> The *khalīfa* is the successor of someone else and is representative of a deputy. The *hāʾ* is for emphasis,[675] and [*khalīfa*] refers to Adam. This is because he was the *khalīfa* of God on His earth. Similarly, all prophets are appointed by God to build the land, manage the people, perfect [people's] souls, and implement His commands in [the people], not because God needs someone to be a deputy for Him. Rather, it is due to [the people's] incapacity to accept revelation and their incapability in receiving God's commands without an intermediary. For that reason, [God] did not appoint the angels as messengers.[676]

In this extract, al-Bayḍāwī states that all prophets have the role of a *khalīfa* in establishing life on earth by managing and ruling over people and carrying the responsibility to perfect their souls. Furthermore, al-Bayḍāwī suggests that Adam's *khalīfa* role will be actualised on earth where he can be a representative of God to a community and implement God's commands on earth. By referring to prophethood and vicegerency together, al-Bayḍāwī affirms that Adam will eventually become both a *khalīfa* and a prophet. Al-Bayḍāwī's references to Adam's impending prophethood contrasts with earlier interpretations such as that by al-Ṭabarī, where Adam's prophethood is rarely mentioned.

Examining al-Bayḍāwī's discussions on Adam at the beginning of the narrative reveals the alignment of his views with al-Rāzī's stance. First, al-Bayḍāwī adheres to the notion that prophets have a pre-prophetic stage in their life and that it is during this stage that Adam ate from the tree. Adam's slip—that is, eating from the tree—therefore, does not invalidate or challenge his prophetic impeccability, which is granted to him when God "chooses" him after he repents (Q 20:122). Furthermore, in his analysis of the word *khalīfa*,

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[674] See ch. 4, section 3, table 2.

[675] The *hāʾ* is referring to the *tāʾ marbūṭa* in the spelling of the world "*khalīfa*." In classical works of Arabic grammar, the *tāʾ marbūṭa* is referred to as a *hāʾ*. Al-Bayḍāwī is emphasizing that the word *khalīfa* refers to Adam, even though it ends in the grammatical feminine ending with a *tāʾ marbūṭa*. Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:68.

[676] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:68.

al-Bayḍāwī suggests that Adam will become a vicegerent on earth where he will manage communities and implement God's laws. This sets the tone for a re-evaluation of Adam's relocation from being considered as punishment to being an opportunity for him to become God's vicegerent.

2.3.2 God's Prohibition to Adam

One of the main discussions in exegesis on Adam's story is about the type of prohibition mentioned in the verse "Do not approach this tree" (Q 2:35). It is upon this discussion that exegetes begin to lay the foundation of exculpating Adam, as it relates to the implications of Adam's slip and whether or not his eating is a forbidden act. As discussed in chapter four, al-Rāzī explores several views about God's prohibition and concludes that it is a preferential command, *nahy al-tanzīh*.[677] This type of command means that Adam's action is not a forbidden act (*ḥarām* or *maḥẓūr*) but that it can be considered as leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*). Al-Bayḍāwī adopts the same view, asserting that the prohibition is preferential. He argues that the words "wrongdoer" in Q 2:34 and "the one at a loss" in Q 7:23—used in reference to the consequences of eating from the tree—refer to Adam wronging himself and being at a loss of his own fortune by leaving the preferred option.[678] Al-Bayḍāwī's explanation, which echoes the argument of al-Rāzī,[679] shows that terms relating to reprimand (like "wrongdoer") have a different meaning when addressing prophets than they do when referring to ordinary people. In contrast, when the term "wrongdoer" is applied to non-prophets in the Quran, it means people who commit major wrongdoings such as *kufr* as seen in Q 14:27 and Q 25:27. The term "wrongdoer" is also associated with the punishment of the hellfire such as in verses Q 76:31 and Q 71:28. However, when used in reference to Adam who becomes a prophet, "wrongdoer" takes on a different meaning and denotes someone who has lost an opportunity and therefore wronged himself from leaving the best course of action.

Although al-Bayḍāwī asserts that God's prohibition to Adam is preferential (*tanzīh*), it is important to examine a statement that al-Bayḍāwī makes elsewhere about prohibitions in general to avoid misunderstanding his view. For the interpretation of the verse, "And

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[677] See ch. 4, section 4.2.
[678] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:74.
[679] See ch. 4, section 4.2.

their Lord called to them both, 'Did I not prohibit you [both] from that tree and tell you that Satan is a clear enemy to you?'" (Q 7:21), al-Bayḍāwī writes, "[This] is blame for going against the prohibition and rebuke for being deceived by the speech of the enemy. There is evidence that the root of the prohibition is proscriptive (taḥrīm)."[680] When he uses the term "root of the prohibition" (aṣl al-nahy), al-Bayḍāwī is referring to the modus operandi of a prohibition, i.e., the essence of a prohibition in the Islamic framework is to forbid something, much like the English meaning of the word "prohibition."[681] It is important to note that in saying this, al-Bayḍāwī is not suggesting that God's specific prohibition to Adam is a proscriptive (taḥrīm) one. As al-Rāzī has presented previously, a prohibition can be transformed from proscriptive (taḥrīm) to preferential (tanzīh) if there is a cause (sabab). According to al-Rāzī, the cause that transforms God's prohibition from taḥrīm to tanzīh is that the addressee of the command is Adam, who, despite not being a prophet at this stage, is still not an ordinary human being. Al-Bayḍāwī takes a stance similar to al-Rāzī on this matter, concluding that God's prohibition is a preferential command, but he does not explain the reasoning for this, nor does he present or examine the different views about this point in detail as al-Rāzī does. Furthermore, this extract also highlights that al-Bayḍāwī does not exculpate Adam from blame entirely as Adam still faces "rebuke" and "blame" for his slip.

2.3.3 Adam's Slip:

Like al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī does not regard Adam to be a prophet when the slip occurs. However, al-Bayḍāwī treats Adam's slip in a different way to al-Rāzī. Whilst al-Rāzī rejects the word ʿiṣyān (disobeying) and works toward minimizing the implications of Adam's error, al-Bayḍāwī concludes that the slip is Adam disobeying (ʿiṣyān) God. He also focuses on the accountability, reprimand and blame of Adam. This demonstrates that completely exculpating Adam from blame is not a unanimous stance taken by Ashʿarite thinkers. The extent to which Adam is blamed varies from thinker to thinker.

In his refutation of the Ḥashwiyya sect who reject prophetic impeccability, al-Bayḍāwī discusses the consequences that Adam faces as a result of his action. He writes the following:

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[680] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 3:9.
[681] See ch. 1, section 5.

[Adam] was commanded to repent to correct what he did. [The nakedness] happened as a reprimand (*muʿātaba*) because he left the preferred option. [The descent happened] to align with what God said to the angels before [Adam's] creation [i.e., that he was created to be a *khalīfa* on earth].[682]

Al-Bayḍāwī categorises the slip as "leaving the preferred option" (*tark al-awlā*) which, as we know from al-Rāzī's detailed discussion on the matter, is a type of forgetting. To reiterate, al-Rāzī exculpates Adam by highlighting that he does not commit the slip intentionally and does not face any punishment. In contrast, al-Bayḍāwī states that Adam faces reprimand and consequence. This will be discussed in further detail below, but we first need to draw our attention to the idea of Adam being held responsible for leaving the preferred option. Recalling al-Bayḍāwī's definition of impeccability, we are reminded that he believes "prophetic impeccability is established as prophets are punished for leaving the preferred option."[683] This raises an important question: if al-Bayḍāwī believes that Adam had not been a prophet at the time of his slip,[684] why was Adam reprimanded for leaving the preferred option? A potential response is that before Adam's prophethood, al-Bayḍāwī has already indicated that Adam is not like an ordinary person.[685] His actions, even in his pre-prophetic stage, are judged against a higher standard than the actions of ordinary people. This may be the reason why Adam experiences reprimand and consequence for leaving the preferred option. If an ordinary person (i.e., someone not destined to become a prophet) were to leave the preferred option, their act would not be reprimanded or punished by God.

As al-Bayḍāwī has already indicated that Adam is innately distinct from ordinary human beings, it becomes clear that Adam is held to a higher standard in his pre-prophetic stage and due to this, he is held to account for his slip.

i) *ʿIṣyān*

As Adam is held to a higher standard than ordinary people, he faces consequences for his slip. When interpreting the verse, "So [Satan] lured them (*dallā*) through deception" (Q

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[682] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:74.
[683] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, 216.
[684] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 1:74.
[685] See section 4 of the current chapter.

7:22), al-Bayḍāwī interprets the verb *dallā*[686] as referring to Adam and Eve being lowered from a high position to a low level. He writes, "[Satan] lead them down to eat from the tree. It is known that he brought them down due to that [i.e., eating] from a high position to a low level; lowering (*tadliya*) and dangling (*idlāʾ*) [is to] send something from a high rank to a lower position."[687] Al-Bayḍāwī's explanation indicates that he is referring to a geographical descent; in examining theroot letters of *dallā* and relating them to moving from a high place to a low place, perhaps al-Bayḍāwī is making a reference here to earlier verses such as, "let [Satan] not remove you from Paradise" (Q 20:117) and then the later verses when God commands Adam and Eve to descend. However, a classical commentator of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*, Shaykh Zāda, interprets al-Bayḍāwī's analysis of *dallā* differently. He argues that al-Bayḍāwī's mention of Satan making Adam move from a high place to a low place is figurative and refers to the shift from a high state of obedience to a lower status of disobedience: "[the high level] is the level of obedience and restraintfrom what they were prohibited from, to a lower level which being in a state of having committed an act of disobeying (*ḥālat al-maʿṣiya*) due to contravening God's prohibition. Here, it is metaphorical and not literal."[688] From this interpretation of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*, Adam is depicted as being degraded in status due to his slip, a view that echoes the early interpretations of Adam that we find in al-Ṭabarī's works. However, these are secondary interpretations, and al-Bayḍāwī's text itself does not reveal whether he views *dallā* to be a figurative or literal descent.

An instance where al-Bayḍāwī departs from the view of al-Rāzī is in his usage of the term *ʿiṣyān* to refer to Adam's slip, and the emphasis he places on Adam's reprimand. He writes that "It is described as an *ʿiṣyān* and misguidance, the smallness of the slip (*ṣighar al-zalla*) is amplified, and the rebuke of it is emphasized for the sake of his descendants."[689] Here, we see an opposing duality; Adam's action described as a small *zalla* (slip), yet it leads to Adam's reprimand and blame, and is called an *ʿiṣyān*. Al-Bayḍāwī touches on the two aspects of Adam's slip: though it is a slip—which suggests that it is an inadvertent mistake—

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[686] See introduction, section 5.1 for a more detailed discussion on how *dallā* can refer both "to fall" or "lower," and "to lure."

[687] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 3:9. It is interesting to note that al-Rāzī and al-Qurṭubī interpret *dallā* to mean that Adam is deceived by Satan, and they do not associate this verb with the notion of "going down" either literally or metaphorically (i.e., in status). See al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 14:52-3, and al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla), 9:178-9.

[688] Zāda, *Ḥāshiya ʿalā Tafsīr al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī*, 4:204.

[689] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 4:41

it is magnified. Al-Bayḍāwī argues that because Adam's story is given as a lesson for humanity, the slip becomes reprimandable and is presented as an example of disobeying. Thus, because of the nature of Adam's position as the first human being and example for his descendants,the implications of his small slip are amplified. Shaykh Zādah then analyses al-Bayḍāwī's usage of the term ʿiṣyān and zalla in the above passage and concludes thus:

> Disobeying (ʿiṣyān) is leaving the command and committing the prohibited act. If an ʿiṣyān is intentional, it is called an offence (dhanb), and if it is mistaken, it is called a zalla. The verse indicates that Adam committed an intentional (ʿamd) act of disobeying (maʿṣiya), and [al-Bayḍāwī] calls it a zalla based on the fact that when Adam left the command to eat from the tree, he did so out of ijtihād (independent legal reasoning) and not because the act of disobeying was intentional.[690]

It is worth noting here that Shaykh Zādah defines ʿiṣyān as committing a prohibited act, but we know from al-Bayḍāwī's stance on God's prohibition to Adam,that Adam's slip is not a prohibited act—it is a disliked action as it contravenes a preferential command. Still, Shaykh Zāda's interpretation presumes that al-Bayḍāwī considered the slip to be a result of Adam's ijtihād. According to Shaykh Zāda, al-Bayḍāwī considered Adam to be intentional in his action, but not intentional in his disobeying of God. This is similar to al-Rāzī's position about Adam's slip being the result of a taʾwīl fāsid (corrupt interpretation), but at the same time, not being an instance of intentional erring.

Unlike al-Rāzī who is adamant in avoiding terms like ʿiṣyān in reference to Adam's action, Shaykh Zāda's comments suggest that ʿiṣyān is used by al-Bayḍāwī as a hypernym as it is a term referring both to unintentional and intentional disobeying. This is similar to the Māturīdite theologian al-Ṣābūnī's definition of ʿiṣyān.[691] The fact that al-Bayḍāwī uses the word ʿiṣyān for Adam's slip whereas al-Rāzī does not sheds light on the complexity surrounding the usage of certain terms for Adam's slip. For al-Rāzī, ʿiṣyān is closely associated with ʿāṣī (disobeyer) and is, therefore, an unsuitable term,[692] whereas for al-Bayḍāwī (according to his commentator, Shaykh Zāda) ʿiṣyān does not hold the same severe connotations and can refer to a range of acts.

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[690] Shaykh Zāda, Ḥāshiya al-Bayḍāwī, 5:666.
[691] See ch. 3, section 6.
[692] See ch. 4, section 4.3.2.

Al-Bayḍāwī writes that Adam's repentance proves that even minor wrongdoings are punishable.[693] This view is echoed by the later Andalusian Ashʿarite exegete, Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī (d. 1344). Al-Gharnāṭī writes that the Quran specifically uses the verb "he disobeyed" (ʿaṣā) and not "he slipped"[694] to highlight that Adam's action has a grave consequence.[695] Ultimately, al-Bayḍāwī's argument is that Adam is rebuked for the sake of humanity and not due to any implications of the slip itself. Al-Bayḍāwī shows that although Adam is distinguished and protected from offences (dhunūb) and disbelief (kufr), the core purpose of Adam's story is to be a parable for humankind. In doing so, al-Bayḍāwī draws attention to Adam's bashar (human) identity. As a result, God holds Adam to account even for minor errors so that humanity can learn about the importance of repenting after an error.

2.3.4 The Aftermath: Punishment & Relocation

Al-Rāzī is adamant in his tafsīr that Adam does not face punishment and that Adam's relocation from paradise to earth is an opportunity for Adam to gain reward. This is despite al-Rāzī asserting that the nakedness is a result (and not a negative consequence) of eating from the tree. However, al-Bayḍāwī adopts a different stance. About the relocation to earth, he writes, "When they found [the tree's] food and took from it to eat, they were seized by the punishment (ʿuqūba) and calamity of the act of disobeying. Their clothes came off, and their nakedness became apparent to them."[696] Here, al-Bayḍāwī departs from al-Rāzī's view as he considers Adam's nakedness to be a punishment, and it is only after recognising that he is naked that Adam repents to God.

Whilst the nakedness is interpreted by al-Bayḍāwī as Adam's punishment, he depicts the relocation differently. Al-Bayḍāwī notes that moving to earth involves Adam experiencing hardship. When discussing the repetition of the command "descend" in Q 2:36 and 2:38, he writes that the repetition can either be:

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[693] Al-Bayḍāwī, Anwār al-tanzīl, 3:9.
[694] It is important to note here that in Q 2:35 we see the verb "caused them to slip" (azalla) which highlights Satan as the cause of Adam's slip.
[695] Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, al-Baḥr al-muḥīt, ed. Ṣidqī Muḥammad Jamīl (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2010), 7:392.
[696] Al-Bayḍāwī, Anwār al-tanzīl, 3:9.

[1] for emphasis or [2] for two different purposes. The first [i.e., emphasis] refers to the descent [of Adam and Eve] to an abode of tribulation in which there will be enmity, but they will not be there eternally. The second [i.e., that the repetition is for two different purposes] would refer to their descent for the purpose of accountability and burden. Therefore, whoever is guided by the guidance will be successful, and whoever is misguided will perish.[697]

Al-Bayḍāwī does not clarify which position he prefers. Either way, the descent is still linked to accountability and burden, although it is not specified as a punishment for Adam.

Like al-Rāzī, al-Bayḍāwī considers Adam to receive prophetic status after God accepts his repentance and "chooses" him as in "Then His Lord chose him" (Q 20:122).[698] However, in his *tafsīr*, al-Bayḍāwī does not put forth a definitive interpretation for the verb *ijtabā* (chose) or state that it refers to Adam being chosen for prophethood. Instead, he writes, "[God] chose him (*iṣṭafā*) and brought him close by the encouragement of repentance and the acceptance of it. . . . 'and He guided him' [Q 20:122] to establishing repentance and adherence to the causes of impeccability."[699] In a somewhat cryptic manner, al-Bayḍāwī refers to impeccability but does not explicitly connect the "chosenness" to prophethood. However, in his theological work, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*, al-Bayḍāwī uses the verse "Then his Lord chose him" (Q 20:122) as proof that Adam is not a prophet before the slip and becomes one after it.[700] This demonstrates that al-Bayḍāwī does consider *ijtabā* to refer to election to prophethood.[701] It is unclear why al-Bayḍāwī does not make this clear in his *tafsīr*. In contrast, whenever *ijtabā* is used about other prophets in the Quran, al-Bayḍāwī interprets the verb to refer to initiation into prophethood. For example, when God chooses Jonah in Q 68:50, al-Bayḍāwī writes, "God returned the revelation to him, or he made him a prophet if he was not a prophet at that time."[702] Similarly, when Joseph's father says to him, "Thus shall thy Lord choose thee" (Q 12:6), al-Bayḍāwī adds, "for prophethood

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[697] Ibid., 1:73.
[698] See ch. 4, section 3.1.2 in particular, figure 1.
[699] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl,* 4:41.
[700] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār,* 215
[701] It has not yet been discovered whether al-Bayḍāwī wrote his *tafsīr*, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, before his theological compendium, *Ṭawāliʿ al-anwār*. Therefore, it is difficult to discern which position (about Adam's chosenness referring to prophethood) al-Bayḍāwī took as his final position. However, as al-Bayḍāwī often follows the same stance as al-Rāzī, and on this occasion, agrees that Adam was not a prophet when the slip happened, we can presume that he, too, considered *ajtaba* to refer to Adam being initiated into prophethood.
[702] Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl*, 5:237.

and kingship, or for a great task."[703] Although in the *tafsīr* al-Bayḍāwī does not interpret Adam's chosenness to refer to his election into prophethood, it is clear from earlier discussions, such as his refutation of Ḥashwiyya denial of prophetic impeccability,[704] that he believes that Adam becomes a prophet after the slip. Additionally, al-Bayḍāwī's understanding of *khalīfa* as God's earthly vicegerent highlights that Adam's responsibility and esteem is increased after he is relocated as he must establish God's law on earth. Al-Bayḍāwī's interpretation of Adam's story corresponds to many of the conclusions al-Rāzī draws in the *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*. However, there are some instances where al-Bayḍāwī departs from al-Rāzī's view. For example, al-Bayḍāwī maintains that Adam's nakedness is a punishment. Though Adam is punished, he asserts that Adam faces this punishment only due to his high status and the more stringent standard that his actions are judged against by God. Thus, Adam is punished, according to al-Bayḍāwī, because of his high degree. This parallels al-Māturīdī's stance on Adam's slip; according to al-Māturīdī, Adam faces punishment and hardship because he is held to a higher standard than ordinary people. However, in al-Māturīdī's view, Adam is already a prophet when the slip happens. Whilst both al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī, alongside many other thinkers, consider Adam's slip to have occurred before his prophethood, they do not depict Adam as degraded in status or as a sinner. Even in their pre-prophetic stage, al-Bayḍāwī highlights that prophets are distinct from ordinary humankind and that their stories and events should be understood in light of this esteemed status. Though al-Bayḍāwī's view is an extension of al-Rāzī's stance, demonstrating the latter's influence on the former, there are other exegetes and thinkers who reached similar conclusions when interpreting Adam's story without al-Rāzī's direct influence.

3. Al-Qurṭubī: Life, Works and Primary Influence

A *tafsīr* authored in a region outside of Persia and Arabia that interprets Adam's story in light of his esteemed prophetic status is by the Andalusian scholar, Abū ʿAbdallāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273). Born in Cordoba shortly after the intellectual and cultural renaissance of the Almohad period, al-Qurṭubī is a scholar whose exegesis has been described as representing

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[703] Ibid., 3:155.
[704] See section 2.3.3 of the present chapter.

the maturation of Andalusian *tafsīr*.[705] His work of *tafsīr* is entitled *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* ("The Compilation of the Rulings of the Quran"), in which he draws significant influence from two of his Andalusian predecessors, Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1148) and Ibn ʿAṭiyya (d. 1146).

As al-Qurṭubī was based in al-Andalus and only travelled to Egypt in his later life, his source material was very different from al-Bayḍāwī's work. However, as the following examination will show, the concept of prophetic infallibility had already been developed and presented in al-Andalus by the exegetes Ibn al-ʿArabī and Ibn ʿAṭiyya, in addition to other works that al-Qurṭubī studied and had access to. The foundational Ashʿarite works of al-Bāqillānī and Ibn Fūrak were widespread in al-Andalus by the thirteenth century, and al-Qurṭubī's overarching views on prophethood and infallibility are an extension of these Ashʿarite beliefs. This second part of the chapter will explore al-Qurṭubī's presentation of prophetic infallibility andAdam's story, drawing attention to the similarities and differences between his interpretation and that by his contemporary, al-Bayḍāwī. Al-Qurṭubī's interpretation demonstrates a key difference from al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī's position regarding when Adam becomes a prophet; according to al-Qurṭubī, Adam is a prophet when the slip happens. Despite this fundamental difference, his *tafsīr* and overarching views parallel those of al-Rāzī and mainstream Ashʿarite discourse on prophetic infallibility, and al-Qurṭubī gives great significance to Adam's status as a prophet while interpreting his slip.

3.1. A Brief Summary of the Andalusian School of *Tafsīr*

Al-Qurṭubī travelled to Egypt where he remained until his death, but the intellectual milieu of al-Andalus is still considered his primary context. As the region came under Muslim rule only after 711 CE, *tafsīr* as a genre of writing developed slightly later in al-Andalus than in the Eastern regions of the Islamic world such as Persia. The first few works of Andalusian *tafsīr* were authored in the ninth century by Baqī ibn Makhlad (d. 889) and Abū Mūsā al-Hawwārī (d. 852), which is approximately two centuries after the first known work of *tafsīr* by ʿAbd Allāh b. al-ʿAbbās (d. 687) in the Islamic East. Although the Andalusian exegetes were born and raised oceans apart from the intellectually vibrant regions of Baghdad, Iraq

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[705] Delfina Serrano Ruano, "Al-Qurṭubī," *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 1 November 2016. http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1875-3922_q3_EQCOM_050504.

and Transoxiana, many notable figures such as Ibn Makhlad travelled to Baghdad and Iraq and returned to Cordoba with the works and ideas of Eastern scholars.[706] Bio-bibliographical catalogues such as the HATA online catalogue[707] now offer a detailed view of the circulation of texts between the Islamic East and Spain. According to research founded on data from this catalogue, al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* was transmitted in al-Andalus from the tenth to the beginning of the twelfth century.[708] Thus, al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* was one of the key works of exegesis that Andalusian scholars borrowed from in this period. From the HATA catalogue we can discern that the period between the tenth and eleventh centuries is when significant *tafsīr* transmission and development in al-Andalus took place.

Studying the difference between the works and methodologies of Eastern exegetes, such as al-Rāzī, and Andalusian exegetes reveal key differences and patterns, so much so that Andalusian exegesis is often also a separate category in *tafsīr* studies.[709] Exegetes from al-Andalus such as al-Qurṭubī are noted for their loyalty to traditional methods of interpreting the Quran; they demonstrate a primary focus on interpreting the Quran intra-textually with notable dependence on Hadith.[710] Al-Qurṭubī states at the outset of his *tafsīr* that one of the core aims of his work is to attribute narrators to their narrations.[711] Furthermore, Andalusian exegetes were noted for their early critiques of Judaeo-Christian sources in contrast to major exegetes in the East.[712] For example, Ibn al-ʿArabī challenges the *isrāʾīliyyāt* used by al-Ṭabarī that depict the prophet Solomon as having reprehensible qualities; Ibn al-ʿArabī concludes that prophets cannot commit major wrongdoings.[713] Even though the *tafsīr* works of key Andalusian scholars such as al-Qurṭubī still include *isrāʾīliyyāt*, they criticize and challenge this material. Thus, *isrāʾīliyyāt* are rarely woven into *tafsīr* works without any comment.[714]

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[706] See A.N.M. Raisuddin, "Baqī B. Makhlad Al-Qurṭubī (201-276/816-889) and his Contribution to the Study of Ḥadīth Literature in Spain," *Islamic Studies* 27, no. 2 (1988): 161–68.

[707] Abbreviated form for *Historia de los autores y transmisores Andalusíes*/History of the Authors and Transmitters of al-Andalus. See Adday Hernández López, "Qurʾanic Studies in al-Andalus: An Overview of the State of Research on Qirāʾāt and Tafsīr," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 19, no. 3 (2017), 74–102.

[708] Ibid., 88.

[709] For example, see Abdul-Raof, *Schools of Quranic Exegesis*, 142.

[710] Al-Mashnī, *Madrasāt al-tafsīr fī-l-Andalus*, 114; 730.

[711] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān,* ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla), 1:8.

[712] See al-Mashnī, *Madrasāt al-tafsīr*, 529.

[713] Ibid., 540-1.

[714] Ibid.,, 560-78.

In addition to *tafsīr*, equally important to the present investigation is recognising the theological development of the Andalusian school of Ashʿarism. From excerpts of al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr* where he surveys the different positions on impeccability, it is evident that the developments and views of the Andalusian Ashʿarite school mirrored the views and positions of scholars in the Islamic East. From the time of the philosopher-theologian Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064),[715] Ashʿarism was beginning to thrive in al-Andalus.[716] The widespread circulation of works in the region that were authored by the theologian Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, contributed to the spread and discussion of Ashʿarite theology and eventually curbed the Muʿtazilite doctrines in the region.[717] Treatises on prophetic impeccability had been written by scholars from al-Andalus and the Maghreb, such as Ibn Khumayr al-Sabtī al-Amawī (d. 1217). Al-Amawī was a thirteenth-century scholar from Ceuta, a city in the northern region of Morocco. He moved to al-Andalus to study where he wrote many of his works. Ibn Khumayr's works, in particular, *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ ʿan mā nasaba ilayhim ḥathālat al-aghbiyāʾ* (The Transcendence of Prophets from What Has Been Attributed to Them by the Extremely Stupid People) and *al-Muqadimmāt al-murāshid ilā ʿilm al-aqāʾid* (The Introductions for the Student to the Science of Creed) mirror the ideas expressed by al-Rāzī in his *tafsīr* and theological works.[718] The existence of such works and the similarities they share with works of authors in Eastern regions demonstrate that the Ashʿarite theological milieu of al-Andalus paralleled the theological discussions and beliefs held by Eastern Ashʿarite scholars.

3.2 Views on Prophetic Impeccability

Turning first to the works of two of al-Qurṭubī's predecessors—Ibn al-ʿArabī and Ibn ʿAṭiyya—reveals how prophetic impeccability is explored earlier in eleventh-century Andalusian *tafsīr* and allows us to track any influences on al-Qurṭubī's views on the matter.

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[715] Ibn Hazm was a staunch critic of Ashʿarism.

[716] Camilla Adang, Maribel Fierro, and Sabine Schmidtke, eds., *Ibn Ḥazm of Cordoba: The Life and Works of a Controversial Thinker* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 383-88.

[717] See Sarah Stroumsa, *Andalus and Sefarad: On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2019) 67-70.

[718] See Ibn Khumayr al-Sabtī al-Amawī, ed. Jamāl ʿAlāl al-Bakhtī, *al-Muqadimmāt al-murāshid ilā ʿilm al-aqāʾid*, 307-20 and *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ ʿan mā nasaba ilayhim ḥathālat al-aghbiyāʾ* ed. Muḥammad Riḍwān al-Dāya (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Maʿāṣir, 1990). Al-Amawī echoes many of al-Rāzī's conclusions, such as God's prohibition being guidance (*irshād*) rather than obligation, and also that Adam was in his pre-prophetic stage when the slip occurred. See Ibn Khumayr, *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ*, 66-68.

The discussions on the interaction between the prophet Yusuf and Potiphar's wife (Zulaykha) in Q 12:24 demonstrate the clearest differences in approach toward prophetic impeccability between al-Qurṭubī and the two aforementioned exegetes, whose views al-Qurṭubī otherwise often parallels.

The Quran states, "Indeed she [Zulaykha] inclined to him, and he [Yusuf] would have inclined to her if he had not seen the proof of his Lord" (Q 12:24). Ibn al-ʿArabī quotes the Sufis who argue that God endowed Yusuf with wisdom and knowledge and that these were the cause of his protection (ʿiṣma)[719] from feeling desire toward Zulaykha.[720] He also refutes those who believe that Yusuf desired and inclined to Zulaykha, Potiphar's wife. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, Yusuf *would have* inclined toward Zulaykha "if he had not seen the proof of his Lord" (Q 12:24). In contrast, Ibn ʿAṭiyya and al-Qurṭubī do not vindicate Yusuf from inclining toward and desiring Zulaykha. Ibn ʿAṭiyya argues Yusuf can incline (*hamma*) toward Zulaykha because he is not yet a prophet at the time of this incident. Impeccability, according to Ibn ʿAṭiyya, only comes with prophethood; therefore, Yusuf can incline toward Zulaykha, as an inclination (*hamm*) is a feeling and not an action.[721] Al-Qurṭubī disagrees with Ibn ʿAṭiyya's view on Yusuf being in his pre-prophetic stage during this time. He argues that Yusuf is a prophet when the incident between Yusuf and Zulaykha occurs, as is suggested by the verse "But We inspired him" (Q 12:15). According to al-Qurṭubī, an inclination (*hamm*) refers to something "that comes to the soul but is not established in one's heart"[722] and therefore, even though Yusuf is a prophet, he does not commit a wrongdoing because an inclination is a fleeting and temporary emotion. Al-Qurṭubī's conclusion shows a departure from the views of Ibn al-ʿArabī and Ibn ʿAṭiyya. It also reveals that he does not believe that a natural urge, such as desiring something, invalidates or challenges a prophet's impeccability because no immoral action has taken place. From this, we can assert that according to al-Qurṭubī, impeccability does not preclude trials from God that relate to desire and inclination. This notion is similar to al-Māturīdī's stance on the *miḥna* of prophets, including Adam.[723]

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[719] I have translated ʿiṣma here as protection because it appears here as a lone term (as al-ʿiṣma). However, ʿiṣmat al-anbiyāʾ as a compound phrase refers to the theological concept of prophetic impeccability.
[720] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 3:47.
[721] ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn ʿAṭiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz fī tafsīr al-kitāb al-ʿazīz*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2001), 3:233-4.
[722] See al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 11:314.
[723] See ch. 3, section 5.1.

Turning now to al-Qurṭubī's more general view on impeccability, we see that he presents the views of Ashʿarite theologians such as Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, as well as opinions belonging to the legal schools of Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), and al-Shafiʿī (d. 820). Al-Qurṭubī opens his discussion on prophetic impeccability with the following:

> The scholars disagree about whether or not prophets commit minor wrongdoings for which they are taken to account for and blamed. This is after [the scholarly] consensus that [prophets] are protected from major wrongdoings and from all vices (*radhīla*) in which there is degradation and deficiency, according to al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī].[724]

This clarifies the consensual opinion in the Ashʿarite school about the infallibility ofthe prophets. He then presents a summary of the different viewpoints of scholars about the topic of prophetic faults and infallibility. These can be summarised as follows:[725]

1. The first saying is that al-Ṭabarī and other jurists, theologians and hadith scholars hold that prophets can commit minor wrongdoings. According to this view:

    > These matters [i.e., the minor wrongdoings] that occur from them occur on the side of rarity, mistakenness, forgetting, ortheir independent reasoning calls them to it. These matters are virtuous actions for non-prophets, but due to [the prophets'] realities, the actions are bad actions. This is because of their rank and their high degree. A vizier is held to account for what a horseman is rewarded for. So, they feared [the errors they made] on the day of judgement because of their knowledge of safety, security and protection.[726]

2. The majority of the jurists from the companions of Mālik, Abū Ḥanīfa, and al-Shafiʿī believe that prophets are protected from minor wrongdoings in the same way that they are protected from major wrongdoings. This is because human beings are unequivocally commanded to follow prophets in their

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actions, their influences, and their practices. If prophets were allowed to commit minor wrongdoings, humankind could not emulate them because we would not be able to differentiate between the virtuous actions and disobedient actions.

3.   Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāyīnī (d. 1027) is cited as saying that most scholars differ regarding prophets committing minor wrongdoings. Most people argue that it is not possible for prophets to commit minor wrongdoings, and some of them deem minor wrongdoings to be permissible.

The range of views presented by al-Qurṭubī are similar, although not identical, to the views that are presented by al-Rāzī in his *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*.[727] This demonstrates that al-Qurṭubī's theological context drew on similar sources to al-Rāzī's work and highlights that the discussions on prophetic impeccability were similar across the two regions. Al-Qurṭubī then presents his conclusion on prophetic impeccability:[728]

Junayd [al-Baghdādī] was correct when he said, "The good actions of the pious are the bad actions of those who are close [to God]." As for the prophets, upon them be peace, even if the texts confirm that offences (*dhunūb*) occurred from them, this does not damage their position nor is their degree ruined. Rather, God corrected, chose, guided, praised, purified, selected (*ikhtāra*) and, elected (*iṣṭafā*) them, may prayers of God be upon them.[729]

There are some key points that can be drawn from this excerpt that present al-Qurṭubī's stance on prophetic impeccability. First, al-Qurṭubī agrees with the renowned saying by Junayd al-Baghdādī that is echoed throughout many of the works in this study. According to this saying, prophets are held to a higher standard than ordinary people, and on this basis their actions may be deemed as "offences." However, these are not the same as the offences committed by ordinary people. Secondly, al-Qurṭubī holds that these offences do not affect the degree of prophets. Finally, al-Qurṭubī's sentence about God correcting and choosing prophets after they commit an error, highlights that any errors that prophets commit do not affect their spiritual rank as they are still chosen by God afterward. This is

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[727] See ch. 4, section 3.
[728] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:460.
[729] Ibid., 1:458-60.

because the prophet is subsequently corrected by God, which implies that their offences are nullified due to their correction and purification by God when attaining prophethood.

Moreover, al-Qurṭubī's usage of the word *dhunūb* (offences) requires attention as it demonstrates the complexities surrounding terms used by exegetes to refer to prophetic errors. The Arabic word *dhanb* means "offence" and most commonly refers to actions that bear negative consequences.[730] The Ashʿarite consensus—which al-Qurṭubī is in agreement with—holds that prophets can only commit minor wrongdoings. This must mean that al-Qurṭubī's understand of *dhanb* is that it can refer to actions that are classed as minor wrongdoings. It is worth noting that neither al-Bayḍāwī nor al-Rāzī use the term *dhanb* to refer to prophetic errors in this way. Furthermore, the later Andalusian exegete, Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī argues that prophets cannot commit *dhunūb*.[731] We can also recall that the imāms of Samarkand reject terms like *zalla* (slip) because it is a type of *dhanb* which prophets cannot commit.[732] This shows that the term *dhanb* is generally a contested term to use for prophetic errors among many Muslim thinkers. Though al-Qurṭubī argues that prophets can commit *dhanb*, from his view on prophetic impeccability it is clear that he agrees in principle that prophets hold an esteemed rank and are impeccable. He emphasizes that even though they can commit offences (*dhunūb*) or minor wrongdoings, this does not affect their status (i.e., either before or after becoming prophets). In fact, al-Qurṭubī highlights that God corrects and reforms them, indicating that any fault they might have does not degrade their rank. Thus, though al-Qurṭubī differs in the terms that he uses to refer to prophetic errors, we can see that he agrees in principle with the rest of the Muslim thinkers in this study who uphold prophetic impeccability. This must mean that al-Qurṭubī holds a different definition and understanding of the term *dhanb*. This is explored in further detail below when we examine how he applies the term *dhanb* in his interpretation of Adam's story.

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[730] For a detailed explanation, see ch. 2, section 4.2.1.

[731] Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, *al-Baḥr al-muḥīt*, ed. Ṣidqī Muḥammad Jamīl (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2010), 1:262. Although here al-Gharnāṭī may be referring to "prophetic offences"—i.e., actions that would not be classed as an offence if committed by an ordinary person—it is still significant that he avoids using the term altogether, suggesting that he believes *dhanb* to be unsuitable in reference to prophets' actions due to its connotations of consequence and punishment.

[732] See ch. 3, section 4.3.

3.3. Al-Qurṭubī's Interpretation of Adam's Story

There is one distinct factor that separates al-Qurṭubī's interpretation of Adam's story from the views of al-Bayḍāwī and al-Rāzī: the status of Adam when the slip occurs. According to al-Qurṭubī, Adam is already a prophet at the time of his slip. However, this view does not challenge his impeccability; al-Qurṭubī interprets Adam's slip around the parameters of Adam's impeccability. The majority of al-Qurṭubī's interpretation is related to tropes of accountability and blame, and he asserts that Adam's slip is judged differently than the errors committed by ordinary people. This comes as no surprise as al-Qurṭubī, most famous in his role as a jurist, titles his Quran commentary *al-Jāmiʿ li-aḥkām al-Qurʾān* ("The Compendium of the Rulings of the Quran"), which alludes to the legal slant that the *tafsīr* will adopt. Al-Qurṭubī maintains that Adam's prophethood and noble rank is the reason for his reprimand, and therefore, he interprets Adam's slip in light of his high status.

3.3.1 Adam's Status at the Beginning of His Life

Al-Qurṭubī believes that Adam is the vicegerent of God on earth. He writes,

The meaning of *khalīfa* —according to Ibn Masʿūd and Ibn ʿAbbās and many of the people of interpretation—is that Adam, peace be upon him, is the vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*) in carrying out [God's] rulings and commands, because he is the first messenger to [be sent to] earth.[733]

This indicates that Adam becomes a vicegerent of God one he is relocated from paradise, and that it is a position involving responsibility and establishing God's commands among humankind. Continuing in his interpretation of the word *khalīfa,* al-Qurṭubī is more concerned with the historical reality of the caliphate[734] and he engages in a thorough discussion about how the verse Q 2:30 is proof for establishing a Muslim caliph. This course of discussion aligns with al-Qurṭubī's methodology and overarching purpose of the *tafsīr*, which is to clarify and shed light on rulings of the Quran and how they apply to society.[735]

One of the core differences between al-Qurṭubī and the views of al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī is that al-Qurṭubī suggests that Adam is a prophet at the time of the slip. He does

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[733] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān,* 1:394-5.
[734] This term is used by Wadād al-Qāḍī when examining to al-Ṭabarī's understanding of the term khalīfa. See al-Qāḍī, "The Term 'Khalīfa' in Exegetical Literature," *Die Welt des Islams* (1988): 395.
[735] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:8.

not state this explicitly, but as his interpretation of Adam's story unfolds, his view seems more inclined toward this position. First, al-Qurṭubī indicates that Adam has a prophetic quality when he interprets the verse, "He taught Adam the names, all of them" (Q 2:31). When examining the transmission of knowledge from God to Adam, al-Qurṭubī mentions that Adam received knowledge through divine inspiration (ilhām)[736] and writes, "Potentially [God taught Adam] through the medium of an angel, and he is Gabriel."[737] Within the Islamic tradition, the angel Gabriel appears specifically to prophets to give them divine revelation or inspiration. Gabriel also appears to Mary in the Quran,[738] and this encounter is used as proof by al-Qurṭubī that Mary is a female prophet. Regarding Mary, al-Qurṭubī argues, "It is correct that Mary is a prophet because God inspired her through the medium of an angel."[739] Furthermore, al-Qurṭubī writes, "I say: some of the scholars have established the prophethood of Adam before he lived in paradise due to God saying, 'And when he told them the names of things' [Q 2:33]. So, God commanded [Adam] to inform the angels about the knowledge they had not been given from God."[740] Although al-Qurṭubī does not explicitly agree with this view, he does not reject or challenge it. As will be discussed toward the end of this chapter, al-Qurṭubī does not consider the verse "Then His Lord chose him (ijtabā)" (Q 20:122) as a reference to Adam's attainment of prophethood, which is another indication that al-Qurṭubī deems it probable that Adam is already a prophet at the time of his slip. It is interesting to note that the later Andalusian exegete, Abū Ḥayyān al-Gharnāṭī, disagrees that Adam is a prophet when the slip occurs. Al-Gharnāṭī ascribes the view that Adam is a prophet before the slip to the Muʿtazilites.[741]

Analysing al-Qurṭubī's views on Adam before the slip shows that he departs from the view of al-Bayḍāwī and those of several other Eastern, Ashʿarite thinkers, such as Ibn Fūrak (d. 1015) al-Rāzī and al-Māwardī (d. 1058). This is a fundamental difference that will shape how we understand al-Qurṭubī's views on Adam's story because it affects his definition of prophetic impeccability. Whereas al-Bayḍāwī considers Adam to be in his pre-prophetic

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[736] Also used by Ibn ʿAṭiyya in his interpretation of the same verse. See Ibn ʿAṭiyya, al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz, 1:119.
[737] Al-Qurṭubī, Aḥkām al-Qurʾān, 1:416. This position parallels al-Māturīdī's view on God teaching Adam the names. See ch. 3, section 3.2.
[738] "Then We sent to her our Spirit [Gabriel] appearing before her as a perfectly formed man" (Q 19:17).
[739] Al-Qurṭubī, Aḥkām al-Qurʾān, 5:127.
[740] Ibid., 1:456.
[741] Al-Gharnāṭī argues that according to the Muʿtazilites, Adam's acquisition of knowledge directly from God and teaching it to the angels are proofs of prophetic miracles. See al-Gharnāṭī, al-Baḥr al-muḥīṭ, 1:261.

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stage at the time of his slip (therefore Adam is not impeccable when the slip happens), al-Qurṭubī's view requires reconciliation between Adam's slip and his status as an impeccable prophet of Islam. For example, if Adam is already an impeccable prophet when the slip happens, then how can he commit a *dhanb* (offence)? One way we can reconcile this dilemma is presuming that al-Qurṭubī's use of the term *dhanb* (offence) does not refer to the same punishable offences committed by ordinary people. Instead, a *dhanb* committed by a prophet is categorised and judged in a different framework and is unlike a *dhanb* that ordinary people commit, such as murder or *kufr*. We recall here the aforementioned saying of Junayd al-Baghdādī, quoted by al-Qurṭubī himself,[742] that is also repeated across many exegetical works, "The good actions of pious people are the bad actions of those close [to God]."[743] We can extend this also to mean the reverse, that the offences committed by those close to God (i.e., prophets) would be classed as virtuous actions if done by ordinary people. Thus, al-Qurṭubī's use of *dhanb* when discussing prophetic actions points toward his individual and unique understanding of the term itself and cannot be compared to instances where other Muslim thinkers reject the suitability of the term for prophetic actions.[744]

3.3.2 Adam and Eve: Shared Accountability

Many exegetes focus on analysing the classification of God's prohibition, "Do not come close to this tree" (Q 2:35), and how this affects the implications of Adam's action. However, al-Qurṭubī focuses his discussion about God's prohibition on balancing the accountability of eating from the tree between Adam and Eve. He writes, "They are both included in the prohibition, and for that reason, the punishment did not descend upon them until they both did what they were prohibited from, and this matter was unknown to Adam."[745] This brings attention to the significance of Eve's actions and depicts her, as well as Adam, as being accountable for approaching the tree. Al-Qurṭubī is consistent in including Eve in his interpretation of the story. He also refers to Eve when discussing Adam's forgetting: "It is said that, 'He ate from it forgetfully, and it is probable that they both forgot the threat

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[742] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:460
[743] Ibid.
[744] For example, al-Qurṭubī understands *kh-ṭ-ʾ* as root letters referring to an intentional error. This is unlike the majority classical view of the root letters *kh-ṭ-ʾ* referring to unintentional errors. See al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 4:492 and ch. 2, section 3.2.1 for an analysis of the related verb, *akhtaʾnā* (we err) in the verse Q 2:286.
[745] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:458.

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(*wa ʿīd*).'"[746] In considering Eve's responsibility, al-Qurṭubī balances the accountability of the action between Adam and Eve, much like his predecessor Ibn Aṭiyya did.[747] Offering Eve significance and accountability in the story is not unique, and we see earlier works of tafsīr such as al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, examining the role and responsibility of Eve in Adam's story. Al-Ṭabarī includes narrations that depict Eve as a temptress who convinces Adam to eat from the tree.[748] In al-Ṭabarī's work Eve is blamed and depicted in a much more negative light than Adam, whereas al-Qurṭubī shares out the culpability of the nakedness with both Adam and Eve, offering them equal accountability in approaching the forbidden tree. This shows that he does not exculpate Adam, but he also does not solely place the blame of the slip onto Adam either.

3.3.3 Adam's Forgetfulness and Disobeying

Al-Rāzī, as well as earlier exegetes like al-Māturīdī, have analysed several interpretations about Adam's forgetting and have demonstrated that different classifications affect the understanding of Adam's accountability. For example, al-Rāzī suggests that Adam's forgetting was inattention (*sahw*) and leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*) and[749] al-Māturīdī challenges the opinion that Adam's forgetting was neglect (*taḍyīʿ*).[750] The exegete Ibn al-ʿArabī, whose view al-Qurṭubī often parallels, also explores types of forgetting in his *tafsīr*. He concludes that Adam's forgetting is both "deliberate and forgetful" (*mutaʿammid wa-nāsī*). Whilst this seems oxymoronic, Ibn al-ʿArabī clarifies what he means by this. He argues that whilst Adam forgot God's command, he intentionally ate from the tree. This is the same way in which a man who is prohibited from entering a house forgets the prohibition and then enters the house in a state of being aware and mindful of the act of entering. Yet, he is not aware of the prohibition at that time.[751] Ibn al-ʿArabī's view is similar to al-Rāzī's conclusions on Adam's forgetting: al-Rāzī asserts that Adam was intentional in his eating but not intentional in his erring.[752]

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[746] Ibid., 1:456. Al-Qurṭubī's word "threat" can refer to two things that he has earlier called the "threats" of God. Either it is referring to "do not let Satan remove you from paradise and make you miserable" (Q 20:115) or "you will be among the wrongdoers" (Q 2:35). See Ibid., 1:455-6.
[747] See Ibn ʿAṭiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 1:131.
[748] For example, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān*, 1:562. See also Appendix for how Eve's role is depicted in the Bible.
[749] See ch. 4. section 4.4.2.
[750] See ch. 3, section 4.2.
[751] Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān,* 3:259.
[752] See ch. 4, section 4.4.2.

However, unlike al-Rāzī or Ibn al-ʿArabī, al-Qurṭubī does not delve into a discussion about different terms and types of forgetting. Instead, he focuses on Adam's culpability in relation to his forgetting. First, al-Qurṭubī echoes Ibn ʿAṭiyya's stance that Adam's forgetting cannot be *nisyān al-dhuhūl* (forgetting due to absent-mindedness) because he experiences punishment; someone who forgets because of his absent-mindedness is not punished by God.[753] Furthermore, he writes,

> God says, "Indeed We had a covenant with Adam from before, but he forgot, and We did not find in him determination" (Q 20:115). However, prophets are required to be cautious and vigilant due to the abundance of their knowledge and the greatness of their rank for what ordinary people are not required to do. [Adam's] concern to remember the prohibition was neglected. He became a disobeyer (*ʿāṣī*), that is, a transgressor (*mukhālif*).[754]

Here, al-Qurṭubī recalls that prophets have a greater responsibility than ordinary people due to their knowledge and esteemed rank. He highlights that Adam is held accountable for the act even if it occurred out of forgetting God's command. If this happened to an ordinary person, they would not have been held accountable because they would not have the same abundance of knowledge as prophets do to deter them from committing an error. By calling Adam a disobeyer,[755] as well as a transgressor while referring to his forgetting as neglect, al-Qurṭubī judges Adam's forgetting to bear a greater moral significance in accordance with the standard to which prophets should adhere.[756] Judging Adam's action in this way and adopting these terms whereby forgetting God's command means Adam is an *ʿāṣī* (disobeyer), indicates that al-Qurṭubī believes Adam to have already been a prophet already at this time, as the implications of his actions are amplified, so he is already being judged to a high (prophetic) standard. This is a stance refuted by al-Bayḍāwī and al-Rāzī but is still a perspective that is accepted within the Ashʿarite theological school because it does not challenge the doctrine of prophetic impeccability. This is because prophets are protected from committing the same offences and wrongdoings as ordinary human beings. The errors

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[753] See al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 14:146-7, and Ibn ʿAṭiyya, *al-Muḥarrar al-wajīz*, 4:66.
[754] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:456.
[755] Al-Rāzī argues that terms such as "disobeyer" (*ʿāṣī*) are unsuitable to use in reference to prophets even before they are initiated into prophethood. See ch. 4, section 4.3.
[756] It is important to remember that the concept of disobeying here is referring to prophetic disobeying which is different to the disobeying of ordinary people.

and offences that prophets do commit would be considered neutral or even good actions if committed by ordinary people. Such actions are only considered offences for prophets because of their responsibility, greater knowledge, and higher degree over ordinary people.

From al-Qurṭubī's use of ʿāṣī (disobeyer) to describe Adam, we can see that he differs greatly from the terms al-Rāzī uses for Adam's slip. As the following analysis will show, al-Qurṭubī does not find the terms ʿiṣyān (disobeying) or ʿāṣī (disobeyer) unsuitable or inappropriate to be applied to Adam, unlike al-Rāzī who is staunchly against such usage. The discussion on Adam disobeying starts when al-Qurṭubī makes six points regarding the verb ʿaṣā (he disobeyed). There are five points from his discussion[757] that are relevant to this study.

First, al-Qurṭubī reminds the reader of his interpretation of Q 2:35 where he discusses the offences (dhunūb) of prophets. He states that some of the scholars mention that prophetic errors are noted in the Quran; they are rare incidents and happen mistakenly and forgetfully or as a result of ijtihād. All of these acts would beconsidered good acts if they were committed by ordinary people.[758] From this argument we can tell that al-Qurṭubī's usage of ʿāṣī (disobeyer) for Adam is foundedon the position that prophetic errors are different from the errors of ordinary people. This suggests that when he is referring to Adam as an ʿāṣī (disobeyer), he does not mean that Adam is the same type of disobeyer that an ordinary person could be. But rather, that Adam's act is amplified to the status of disobeying (ʿiṣyān) only because of the high standard he is held to.

Secondly, al-Qurṭubī presents Ibn al-ʿArabī's view. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, it is not permissible for someone to say that Adam disobeyed unless the Quranic verse, "And Adam disobeyed" (Q 20:121), or a related hadith is being directly quoted. This is also al-Rāzī's stance on the unsuitability of such terms and when it is appropriate to use them. Al-Qurṭubī responds to this view by saying, "if this is not permissible for humankind, then talking of the attributes of God such as the hand, the legs. . .should be prevented first."[759] Essentially, al-Qurṭubī is suggesting that this level of stringency when discussing the appropriate terminology to describe prophetic mistakes should first be applied to how one talks about

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[757] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 14:152-6.
[758] See section 3.2 in present chapter.
[759] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 14:153.

God's attributes. This comment suggests that he disagrees with Ibn al-ʿArabī's view about ʿaṣā or its linguistic derivatives only being appropriate for use if one is directly quoting the Quran or Hadith, and not if one is making judgements or interpretations about Adam and his slip.

Thirdly, Al-Qurṭubī discusses the verb *ghawā* (to be misguided) and presents a few opinions. He agrees[760] with the interpretation of a renowned Hadith transmitter from Cordoba, Abū Jaʿfar al-Qurṭubī (d. 1245), who argues that *ghawā* refers to Adam spoiling his living situation (as *ghawā* can also refer to something being spoiled) and that it does not mean Adam was "misguided." The fourth point is that Abū Naṣr al-Qushayrī (d. 1120)[761] narrates a view that Adam is not a disobeyer, nor is he misguided because the slip only occurred once.[762] Al-Qurṭubī does not show explicit agreement or rejection of al-Qushayrī's narration, but as al-Qurṭubī does call Adam a disobeyer, we can presume that he did not support al-Qushayrī's position. Finally, al-Qurṭubī presents the position of Ibn Fūrak. Ibn Fūrak asserts that "it was [i.e., the slip was] from Adam before his prophethood" because prophets cannot commit offences after their prophethood. Ibn Fūrak also uses the verse, "then his Lord chose him and relented unto him and guided him" (Q 20:122) as proof that Adam is not a prophet when the slip happens. Ibn Fūrak's view is also echoed in the works of al-Rāzī and al-Bayḍāwī. Though al-Qurṭubī does not adopt Ibn Fūrak's stance in his interpretation of Adam, he still notes that this is a valuable (*nafīs*) opinion to consider.

From these different views related to the verb ʿaṣā and *ghawā*, we can extract the following as al-Qurṭubī's positions on the matter. Al-Qurṭubī prefers the view that *ghawā* refers to Adam's way of life being spoiled, not that he was misguided. He also does not show support for Ibn al-ʿArabī's argument about the unsuitability of calling Adam a disobeyer (ʿāṣī). Instead, he challenges Ibn al-ʿArabī's stance by saying if this were true, then it would also not befit us to discuss anthropomorphic qualities of God. Finally, al-Qurṭubī agrees that prophets cannot commit an act of disobeying (*maʿṣiya*) unless it occurs before their prophethood when there is no sacred law to be judged against.

The views of other people that al-Qurṭubī presents in his *tafsīr* are relayed in the works of al-Rāzī, which demonstrates some shared source material. However, al-Qurṭubī's

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[760] Ibid., 155.
[761] This is the fourth son of the famous Sufi scholar and exegete, Abū Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1072).
[762] The same point is also mentioned in al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, 22:128, and ch. 3, section 4.3.

conclusion about the use of the term ʿiṣyān differs from al-Rāzī's stance. For example, al-Qurṭubī calls Adam a disobeyer (ʿāṣī) and does not raise any issues about the unsuitability of this term. Al-Qurṭubī argues that prophets cannot disobey God after attaining prophethood, yet he considers Adam, a prophet, to have disobeyed God. This poses a significant dilemma: how can al-Qurṭubī, who defends prophetic impeccability, call Adam a disobeyer and simultaneously a prophet? This can be reconciled by understanding that the following terms al-Qurṭubī uses when referring to Adam, such as *dhanb* and ʿāṣī, do not have the same meaning or significance as they do when used about the actions of ordinary human beings.[763] Thus, although Adam is considered an ʿāṣī (a disobeyer), as he is a prophet, his act of disobeying is different from the disobeying of a non-prophet. We can also presume that Adam's *dhanb* is understood by al-Qurṭubī to be a type of *ṣaghīra* (minor wrongdoing), or *tark al-awlā* (leaving the preferred option) as this is in coherence with the conclusions he draws from the opinions on prophet's errors.[764]

3.3.4 Punishment and Relocation

Like his predecessor Ibn ʿAṭiyya, al-Qurṭubī considers Adam to have experienced punishment. This is not surprising, as al-Qurṭubī has described Adam as a disobeyer, a transgressor and has also characterised Adam's forgetting as neglect (taḍyīʿ).[765] This type of forgetting, which is also accepted by al-Ṭabarī, is rejected by al-Māturīdī who argues that prophets do not neglect God's command.[766] As al-Qurṭubī upholds the doctrine of prophetic impeccability, we can presume that these terms—"disobeyer," "neglect," and "transgressor"—do not refer to the general meanings of the terms i.e., Adam as a disobeyer is not the same as an ordinary person who is a disobeyer. However, these terms still anticipate that according to al-Qurṭubī, Adam will face consequences. The punishment is explicitly mentioned when al-Qurṭubī writes, "Eve ate from the tree first, and nothing happened to her, but the punishment unfolded when Adam ate because the prohibition was addressed to the two of them."[767] However, the punishment referred to here is Adam and Eve becoming aware of their nakedness (Q 7:22), it is not referring to the relocation from

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[763] This is similar to al-Bayḍāwī's usage of terms such as ʿiṣyān. See section 2.3.3. i of the present chapter.
[764] Al-Qurṭubī does not explicitly state whether he considers Adam's slip to be a minor wrongdoing or an instance of leaving the preferred option.
[765] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 1:456.
[766] See ch. 3, section 4.2.
[767] Al-Qurṭubī, *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, 9:179.

paradise to earth.

In contrast to the nakedness in Q 20:121, al-Qurṭubī believes that Adam and Eve's relocation to earth is a positive and progressive outcome. He writes:

> God removing Adam from paradise and his descent from it were not a punishment for him. However, He made him descend after He relented to Adam and accepted his repentance. He made [Adam] descend perhaps didactically or to toughen his test. The correct view of his descent and dwelling on earth is that which is apparent from eternal wisdom: this is the propagation of [Adam's] descendants therein to make them accountable, to test them and to arrange, according to this, their final reward and their final punishment. This is because paradise and Hellfire are not the abodes of responsibility. The eating was the cause (*sabab*) for his descent from paradise, and God does as He wills. God says, "Indeed I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*" [Q 2:30], and this is a great path and a noble, honourable virtue. The verse indicates that he was created for earth. We also say, "Indeed he was made to descend after God relented unto him, as He says again, 'We said "descend"' [Q 2:38].[768]

Al-Qurṭubī states that Adam's eating is the cause for the descent, in that it actualises the descent, but that does not mean that it is a punishment or a negative consequence. Al-Qurṭubī also highlights that God instructs Adam to descend after accepting Adam's repentance. This proves that relocating cannot be a punishment; if one's repentance is accepted, then one's punishment is eradicated. This view was also explored previously by al-Rāzī. Al-Qurṭubī does not eradicate the notion of punishment from Adam's story entirely; like al-Bayḍāwī, Adam is not completely exculpated and suffers punishment in the form of nakedness and feeling ashamed. However, the relocation which occurs after Adam has repented is an opportunity for him to further progress in status.

It is interesting to note that al-Gharnāṭī, the fourteenth-century exegete, completely challenges the idea that Adam faces punishment. Like al-Rāzī, al-Gharnāṭī does not view Adam's nakedness as a punishment and adopts the same stance as al-Rāzī: the relocation is an opportunity to increase in reward as opposed to it signifying a duty involving hardship

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[768] Ibid., 1:476.

and labour.[769] These differences in views about Adam's nakedness being a punishment emphasize the diversity within the Ashʿarite school about prophets facing punishment. For al-Rāzī and al-Gharnāṭī, Adam's esteemed status (even in his pre-prophetic stage) precludes any punishment, whereas for thinkers like al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī, Adam still faces punishment in the form of being made aware of his nakedness. Finally, al-Qurṭubī emphasises that Adam's role as a vicegerent on earth is an undertaking of great value which can only occur if Adam is relocated to earth. His explanation proves that Adam is not degraded or at a loss by a "fall." Instead, Adam gains responsibility, and as a result, his rank is elevated. Whilst al-Qurṭubī indicates that Adam is already a prophet at this stage, he argues that coming to earth awards Adam the venerated status of a vicegerent among humankind to lead the rest of humanity.

4. Conclusion

Al-Qurṭubī's and al-Bayḍāwī's interpretations clearly demonstrate the diversity in Ashʿarite views about Adam's story. Though they both give significant importance to Adam's prophetic status in their presentation of his story, they use terms like disobeyer (ʿāṣī) and disobeying (ʿiṣyān) and conclude that Adam faces punishment. However, their usage of these terms is based on the view that prophetic errors are not like the errors of ordinary human beings. Thus, when al-Qurṭubī and al-Bayḍāwī discuss the offences and punishment of Adam, they are dealing with Adam's slip in a unique framework that considers his esteemed status as the reason for his reprimand. This is in contrast to the framework in which wrongdoings committed by ordinary human beings such as *kufr* or adultery, are dealt with; such acts (which prophets are protected from) are universally punishable, regardless of who they are committed by.

In contrast to al-Bayḍāwī, al-Qurṭubī seems to maintain that Adam is already a prophet when his slip happens. This is not stated explicitly, but after examining several of his other stances, we can conclude that he leans toward this view, especially as he considers the moment when God teaches Adam the names (in Q 2:30) to be via Gabriel, an angel who appears only to prophets. Analysing al-Qurṭubī's interpretation of Adam's story further

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[769] Al-Gharnāṭī does not reference al-Rāzī in his interpretations of Adam but cites a work entitled *al-Muntakhab* by Abū Faḍl al-Mursī (d. 1352?), his contemporary Spanish scholar.

reveals the complexities and nuances surrounding terms that exegetes use for Adam's slip. Al-Qurṭubī's usage of the term *dhanb* (offence) when discussing prophetic errors highlights that he defines *dhanb* differently from the standard understanding of the term as a word associated with major wrongdoings. Furthermore, al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī consider Adam's slip to be an example of ʿiṣyān (disobeying), in contrast to al-Rāzī who is staunchly against this term. This demonstrates the complex issues around terminology and highlights that even though Muslim thinkers agree on main principles, such as Adam's esteemed status, they differ in the particularities of their interpretations, such as the terms they use. Additionally, al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī both interpret the nakedness of Adam as a punishment and do not exculpate Adam to the extent that al-Rāzī does. However, all three thinkers agree that Adam's relocation is an opportunity to ascend in status and is not a punishment for the slip.

As this chapter demonstrates, al-Rāzī and the Ashʿarite theologians by whom al-Rāzī himself was influenced cause a significant shift in the interpretation of Adam's story. Whilst al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī follow in the century immediately after al-Rāzī, the Ashʿarite polemic on prophetic impeccability continued to affect and transform the way exegetes interpreted Adam's slip. Even scholars who were highly critical of Ashʿarite theology, such as Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350), went on to incorporate prophetic impeccability in their interpretations of Adam's story.[770]

The findings in this chapter reveal how similar views to al-Rāzī's conclusions on Adam's story surpassed the geographical borders of the Eastern Islamic world. After al-Rāzī's lengthy and complex discussions on Adam's story, the doctrine of impeccability becomes a widespread notion featuring not only in works in Persia, such as in the case of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr* but also in *tafsīr* from the western regions of al-Andalus. The theological doctrine of prophetic impeccability came to lead Muslim writers to interpret Adam's

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[770] For example, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya notes that Adam's descent was not entirely misfortunate and that there are elements of blessings and progression in status when Adam comes to Earth. See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-karīm*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ramaḍān (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl,1990), 1:135-6. See also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ dār al saʿāda wa manshūr wilāyat al-ʿilm wa-l irāda* (Cairo: Dār al Ḥadīth 1994), 12-17. Also, Ibn Taymiyya was influenced by the Ashʿarites notions of infallibilityand concludes that Adam was not a sinner. See Younus Y. Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'Spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya? Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2014): 1– 19.

narrative in light of his high and noble status as a prophet. Though interpretations of minute details of Adam's story differ from exegete to exegete, the exegetical discussions of al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī are underpinned by a sensitivity toward Adam's prophetic and esteemed status.

Conclusion

This study has examined the interpretation of Adam's story by prominent Sunni exegetes of the classical period of Islam. In doing so, the nuance and complexity of debate about Adam eating from the tree and his relocation from paradise to earth have been brought to light. Through exploring the range of exegetical opinions about Adam's status, slip, and relocation, it has been demonstrated that imposing the dominant notions in western English scholarship of "sin" and "the fall of man" onto the Adam of Islam are incoherent with how exegesis on Adam develops over time. This comes to light when considering the doctrine of prophetic impeccability and how it shapes the interpretations of Adam. In fact, many classical works —including theological, philosophical, and mystical works outside of this study— emphasise that Adam, the first prophet of Islam, was not a sinner. These works seek to exculpate Adam and reinstate his status as a prophet of Islam into the interpretation of his story. As this study has shown, the notions of Adam's relocation being a punishment appear in the early narrations (recorded in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*),[771] and within specific literary genres, such as *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* works. However, as the doctrine of impeccability (ʿiṣma) becomes more established within the Sunni school, depictions of Adam as a sinner come to be relentlessly challenged in exegesis. In particular, the works of al-Ṣābūnī (explored in chapter three) and al-Rāzī (explored in chapter four) reveal the scholarly efforts to incorporate the doctrine of ʿiṣma into the interpretation of Adam's story. Re-evaluating Adam's story in light of the doctrine of ʿiṣma, we come to see that Adam experiences an ascent in status in his story as he becomes a prophet and/or *khalīfa* of God, instead of descending into degradation and experiencing divine punishment.

In order to accurately depict how Adam is presented in Muslim scholarship, the English and Arabic terms used to refer to Adam's action were examined. We investigated how the exegetes from al-Māturīdī onward show a significant concern regarding the Arabic terms they use to talk about Adam and his slip. As shown in this thesis, the standard terms used in modern English scholarship, such as "disobedience," "sin," and "fall," are incoherent and incompatible with the widely accepted theological doctrine of impeccability among

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[771] See ch. 2, section 3.

Muslim scholars. These English terms are not neutral, hold connotations of defiance and intent, and are closer to the common Christian perception of Adam than they are to the position of Adam as a prophet. In contrast, the English term "slip" is a more suitable, neutral alternative and is the primary word used to refer to Adam's eating from the tree, despite the divine prohibition against it. The term "slip," suggestive of a one-off mistake, also complements the conclusions Adam's eating from the tree reached by the main body of classical Muslim exegesis.

One of the most significant findings to arise from this study is how Muslim exegetes also demonstrate sensitivity towards the language used for discussing Adam's slip. The exegetes in chapters three, four and five make a case for the choice of terms that they use to refer to Adam's slip. They argue either for or against the use of words such as a ʿiṣyān (disobeying), ʿāṣī (disobeyer) and zalla (slip). What these findings have shown us is that the discussion around terminology is incredibly nuanced and complex, and there is no unanimous stance reached by Muslim thinkers on what terms are suitable or not. Whilst all the exegetes agree in principle that Adam is distinct from ordinary human beings and is protected from spreading corruption (as indicated in Q 2:30), the terms they use to refer to his slip depend on their own understanding and unique definitions of the Arabic terms such as dhanb (offence) and ʿiṣyān (disobeying). Even exegetes who hold the same view on Adam's impeccability, such as al-Māturīdī, al-Nasafī and al-Ṣābūnī, differ in the terms they use to refer to Adam's slip.

Furthermore, as examined in the main chapters of this study, exegetes other than al-Ṭabarī either (1) exculpate Adam and reject that his relocation was a punishment;[772] or (2) argue that he experienced punishment (in the form of becoming aware of his nakedness) only due to being held to a higher standard than ordinary people.[773] Both conclusions give importance to Adam's high degree in the Islamic worldview due to his unique status as a prophet. In reaching these conclusions, exegetes stress that Adam's story must be interpreted in light of his prophetic position and in coherence with the doctrine of prophetic impeccability.

By examining how impeccability is incorporated into interpretations of Adam's story, this thesis has offered a deeper and clearer insight into how exegetes understand particular

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[772] This view is held by al-Rāzī and Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī. See ch. 3, section 6; ch. 4, section 4.3 and 4.5.

[773] This view is held by al-Māturīdī, al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī. See ch. 3, section 5 and ch. 5 section 3.3.4.

aspects of the Quranic narrative of Adam's life, such as his status, his forgetting and his relocation to earth. We turn now to revisit the core research questions raised at the outset of this study to recap our findings in direct response to them.

1.   Do the exegetes depict Adam's eating from the tree as having a denigrating effect on Adam's status?

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, many secondary works that discuss Adam's position in the Islamic tradition depict him as a figure who has been denigrated in status because of his error. Adam is often first perceived as an ennobled being who then disobeys God and, as a result, is banished to earth as a punishment for his wrongdoing. This image of Adam, heavily influenced by the biblical account of Adam's story, has impacted the perception of Adam in the Islamic tradition. Chapter two examined some *isrāʾīliyyāt* material used by al-Ṭabarī which contribute to depicting Adam's status as tainted and degraded due to his eating from the tree. The chapter also explored how other Muslim scholars who rely on *isrāʾīliyyāt*, such as al-Thaʿlabī, depict Adam in the same way. However, this study has shown that the *tafsīr* works that have a theological slant in their methodology or that are written with the doctrine of impeccability in mind, such as the *tafsīr* of al-Rāzī, reject the view that Adam's status has been denigrated due the slip. Instead, many exegetes—both within and outside of this study—challenge the view that Adam is degraded, indicating that the slip led to Adam's ascension in status. This is regardless of whether or not they believe Adam is already a prophet when the slip happens.

2.   How do the exegetes present Adam's slip?

This work has shed light on the Muslim exegetes' range of ideas and opinions on Adam's slip, both from a linguistic and a theological perspective. As examined in chapter two, al-Ṭabarī uses the terms *khaṭīʾa* (error) and *dhanb* (offence) to refer to Adam's slip. These words allude to consequence and anticipate al-Ṭabarī's conclusion that Adam experiences punishment. According to al-Ṭabarī's views, Adam's slip is understood as a "sin" as it is the result of intentional neglect of God's command. Other exegetes such as al-Māturīdī, al-Bayḍāwī and al-Qurṭubī refer to Adam's slip as *ʿiṣyān* (disobeying). They argue that we can call the slip *ʿiṣyān* because Adam is held to a higher standard than ordinary human, so any errors he makes are amplified. In contrast, al-Rāzī rejects the word *ʿiṣyān* and refers to

Adam's slip as a *zalla*, a term that earlier scholars such as Abū Ḥanifa also used to refer to prophetic errors.

Another critical element explored in this study is the classification of God's prohibition. Exegetes such as al-Bayḍāwī conclude that Adam's slip is not a forbidden action because God's prohibition is not proscriptive or obligatory to follow. This in turn means that the slip is an unfavourable option—or leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*)—a view that protects Adam from having committed a forbidden action and having to undergo punishment.

The exegetes' interpretations of Adam's forgetting in Q 20:115 also impacts how they present Adam's slip. We examined the many different types and categories of *nisyān* and how they are related to Adam's culpability. For example, al-Ṭabarī argues that Adam's forgetting is neglect (*taḍyīʿ*), but this position is challenged by exegetes such as al-Māturīdī and al-Rāzī who consider Adam's slip to be the result of inattention (*sahw*) due to being distracted by Satan.

These three aspects of how the slip is presented in the works examined in this thesis have been summarised in the table below for clarity:

Table 4. Summary of Views on Adam's Slip

Muslim Thinker	Language Used to Refer to the Slip	Analysis of God's Prohibition	Type of Forgetting Experienced by Adam
Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923)	The most common words used are *khaṭīʾa* (error) and *dhanb* (offense). Also occasionally uses *maʿṣiya* (an act of disobeying).	He does not specify but likely to be *taḥrīm* (proscriptive) as Adam faces punishment.	*Taḍyīʿ* (intentional neglect).
Al-Māturīdī (d. 944)	Argues that *ʿiṣyān* (disobeying) is a suitable term	It is a *nahy ḥurma* (inviolable prohibition).	Rejects *taḍyīʿ* due to Adam's prophetic status. Instead, the

	because Adam is held to a higher standard than ordinary people.	Therefore, Adam's slip is a forbidden act.	forgetting is *ghafla* (heedlessness) and *sahw* (inattention).
Al-Nasafī (d. 1142)	Uses the term *zalla*. Mentions that this term is used by the majority of scholars in Bukhara but is rejected by scholars in Samarkand.	It is a *nahy al-taḥrīm* (proscriptive prohibition). Therefore, Adam's slip is a forbidden act.	Rejects *taḍyīʿ* due to Adam's prophetic status. Argues that it can be figurative neglect (*taḍyīʿ*) or the "slipping of remembrance" (*zawāl al-dhikr*).
Al-Ṣābūnī (d. 1184)	Uses *ʿiṣyān*, defining it as an unintentional or intentional act.	N/A	N/A
Al-Rāzī (d. 1210)	Rejects *ʿiṣyān* and mostly uses *zalla* (slip). The slip is an interpretative (*ijtihādī*) error.	It is a preferential command (*nahy al-tanzīh*) and therefore, Adam's slip is not a forbidden act.	Adam's forgetting is *sahw* (inattention). Also, he argues that the slip is Adam leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*), which is a further category of forgetting.
Al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286)	Argues that *ʿiṣyān* is a suitable term because Adam is held to a higher standard.	It is a preferential command (*nahy al-tanzīh*), and therefore, Adam's slip is not a forbidden act.	Adam's forgetting is an example of leaving the preferred option (*tark al-awlā*).

	The slip is also an example of Adam leaving the preferred option.		
Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273)	Argues that ʿiṣyān is a suitable term because Adam is held to a higher standard.	Does not specify a type. Argues that the prohibition refers to *both* Adam and Eve, and so the punishment (nakedness) happens only after they have both eaten from the tree.	N/A

3. Is Adam's relocation to earth interpreted as his punishment for eating from the forbidden tree?

Associating Adam's relocation with the concept of the "fall of man," as it is referred to in many editions of the Bible, can be seen in early works authored by Muslim thinkers, such as works of *tafsīr* and also *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* writings. Furthermore, several *isrāʾīliyyāt* found in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* also corroborate the belief that Adam's relocation is a punishment. The notion of the relocation being associated with God's anger is also alluded to in popular translations of the Quran. For example, as explored in chapter one, God's command to Adam, "descend" (Q 2:38), is commonly interpreted by modern translators to be an expression of the divine wrath—e.g., "get you down!" (Abdel-Haleem)—contributing to the notion that the relocation is a punishment.

In contrast, the remaining figures in this study either reform or reject this view. Al-Māturīdī and al-Bayḍāwī argue that whilst coming to earth is an experience of hardship and *miḥna* (test) for Adam, it is not a punishment. Al-Rāzī and al-Ṣābūnī present the relocation as an opportunity for Adam to earn reward from God due to the hardship involved in life on earth. Al-Ṣābūnī and al-Qurṭubī argue that coming to earth awards Adam the role of God's

vicegerent (one of the meanings of *khalīfa)*, and therefore Adam ascends in status through acquiring this role of responsibility. By reviewing all the exegetical opinions on the relocation, it becomes apparent that the earlier exegetes, al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī, view Adam's relocation as a punishment. Though al-Māturīdī emphasizes the hardship involved in Adam's relocation and ties it to the notion of the *miḥna*, he does not consider it to be Adam's punishment. Later generations moved away from this idea, in coherence with the doctrine of prophetic impeccability.

The views on Adam's relocation have been summarised below:

Table 5. Summary of Views on Adam's Relocation

Muslim Thinker	Is Adam's Relocation a Punishment?	Reasons or Additional Comments
Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923)	Yes	As a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience, God punishes Adam and Eve by sending them to earth, where they will experience hardship.
Al-Māturīdī (d. 944)	No	The relocation constitutes Adam's second *miḥna* (tribulation), so it will involve difficulty and hardship. However, being relocated allows Adam to become God's vicegerent and take on further responsibility. Al-Māturīdī considers Adam's nakedness to be a punishment.
Al-Ṣābūnī (d. 1184)	No	Adam's relocation allows him to become a vicegerent of God. Therefore, coming to earth is an ascension of Adam's status.
Al-Rāzī (d. 1210)	No	Coming to earth gives Adam the opportunity to gain reward from God

		because of the hardship involved in being relocated. Any opportunity to gain a reward cannot be a punishment.
Al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286)	Likely no, although not explicitly stated.	The relocation involves hardship, but he does not explicitly mention that it is a punishment. Instead, al-Bayḍāwī considers Adam's nakedness to be a punishment.
Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273)	No	Adam's eating from the tree is linked to the relocation, but this does not mean that the relocation is a punishment. Coming to earth means that Adam can become a vicegerent of God and that his descendants can be held accountable for their actions, as paradise is not an abode of accountability. Al-Qurṭubī views the nakedness as a punishment for Adam's eating from the tree.

Several exegetes who do not class the relocation as a punishment do not absolve Adam from punishment entirely. They argue that the shame Adam and Eve felt when their nakedness became apparent to them was their punishment for eating from the tree. Al-Rāzī and al-Ṣābūnī remain the only two thinkers who exculpate Adam entirely and assert that he did not face punishment of any kind.

4.   To what extent do exegetes give importance to Adam's status as a prophet in their interpretation of his story?

The conclusions that exegetes draw about Adam's status, slip and relocation are underpinned by the extent to which they give significance to Adam's prophetic

status. While none of the exegetes challenge that Adam is the first prophet in Islam,
they differ about when Adam attains prophethood. Al-Ṭabarī makes minimal reference to
Adam's prophetic status in his interpretation of the story. While he gives credence to the
view that Adam is purified from spreading corruption, this is the extent of al-Ṭabarī
awarding Adam any type of unique or extraordinary status. Instead, al-Ṭabarī depicts Adam
as a paradigmatic figure for humankind and focuses on Adam's *bashar* (human) nature
instead of his prophetic status. In contrast to al-Ṭabarī, the remainder of the exegetes
interpret Adam's story with due respect to his prophetic status. Al-Māturīdī rejects opinions
that present Adam in a negative light. For example, he challenges the view that Adam is
neglectful (upheld by al-Ṭabarī) because this is an unprophetic characteristic. Taking this
notion further are al-Nasafī and al-Ṣābūnī, who give significant attention to Adam's
prophetic status. Al-Nasafī evaluates the terms that scholars in Bukhara and Samarkand use
to refer to Adam's slip, highlighting their sensitivity toward maintaining the high esteem
associated with prophethood. Al-Ṣābūnī vindicates Adam due to his prophetic status and
argues that the slip and relocation contribute to ascension of Adam's status as a prophet
and then a vicegerent of God.

Furthermore, al-Rāzī's entire interpretation of Adam's story is framed by Adam's
prophetic status. He approaches the Adam story from a defensive perspective, challenging
claims that Adam was disobedient and underwent punishment. Al-Rāzī argues that Adam
only became a prophet after the slip, when God "chose" (Q 20:122) him, and therefore, the
slip occurred before Adam attained prophethood. However, despite being in his pre-
prophetic stage, Adam was still extraordinary and protected from some wrongdoings as he
was destined to become a prophet.

Table 6. Adam's Prophethood according to the Exegetes

Muslim Thinker	When Does Adam Become a Prophet?	How Does Adam's Prophethood Affect the Interpretation of Adam's story?
Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923)	Does not clarify. Likely to be before the slip, as he does	No significance or attention was awarded to Adam's prophetic status. Instead, al-Ṭabarī focuses

	not make any reference to Adam being elected for prophethood any time after the slip or relocation.	on Adam as a symbol of humankind.
Al-Māturīdī (d. 944)	Before the slip. Likely to be when Adam is taught the names by God.	Interprets the story in light of Adam's esteemed prophetic status. Rejects defamatory views, such as Adam being neglectful.
Al-Rāzī (d. 1210)	After the slip.	The entire interpretation is framed around Adam's esteemed prophetic status. Al-Rāzī argues the slip happened before Adam was a prophet yet he minimizes Adam's error that happens in the pre-prophetic stage. This is because prophets are extraordinary beings and protected from certain wrongdoings (such as *kufr*) even before their election into prophethood.
Al-Bayḍāwī (d. 1286)	After the slip.	Same as al-Rāzī.
Al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273)	Before the slip.	Adam is judged to a higher standard because he is a prophet. Adam's slip is judged in a different and more stringent

		framework than the errors of ordinary human beings because of his prophetic status.

This study has positioned Adam in his unique role as a prophet of Islam and has re-evaluated the common themes and terms related to him in scholarship, such as disobedience, sin, and punishment. In doing so, this study has shown that according to influential Sunni exegetes and the developing canon of *tafsīr* and theology—which has impacted how modern-day theologians and exegetes also view Adam—Adam's eating from the tree shifted from being a sinful act to being a non-preferential act. According to prominent classical Muslim interpretations, Adam's esteemed status as a prophet (or prophet-to-be) is kept intact after his slip and his relocation from paradise to earth is viewed as the attainment of opportunity and ascension of rank. This view is held by later scholars such as al-Rāzī and al-Ṣābūnī, who sought to interpret Adam's story in light of the doctrine of prophetic impeccability. In contrast, the interpretations of earlier scholars like al-Ṭabarī are coloured by *isrāʾīliyyāt* and depict Adam as a disobedient servant of God, who intentionally transgresses God's command and experiences punishment.

Like some of the conclusions drawn by Ahmed in *Before Orthodoxy* (which focuses on the prophet Muhammad and the satanic verses incident), this thesis shows that there is not a monolithic view of Adam in the Islamic tradition; the interpretations of his story and character differ from thinker to thinker though they are guided by the developments in theology. Though early writers did not find issue in Adam committing a sin and experiencing punishment, the majority of writers in the eleventh century onward sought to rectify this image of Adam, the first prophet. In light of the doctrine of impeccability, a crucial aspect of this study was also examining the terms used to refer to Adam across English and Arabic scholarship. This study has both shed light on the issues of Arabic and English terms and offered precise words to be used when discussing Adam. By employing terms like "slip" and "error" instead of "sin" and "disobedience, we can explore Adam's story using language that is not coloured by the common Christian perspective of his biblical account, and instead, re-evaluate Adam in his own right as a man who is both the first human but also the first prophet of the Islamic tradition.

By exploring Adam's dual status as a prophet and a didactic figure for humankind, we have re-evaluated how Adam is perceived in exegesis. According to most of the exegetes in this study, Adam commits a slip—not a sin—and he is relocated to earth for a new opportunity, not as a punishment. This reveals that he undergoes an ascent, not a "fall" in line with the theological developments and the emerging doctrine of ʿiṣma. The findings of this study have various implications for further research on Adam and prophets in Islam. First, this study highlights that developments in theological doctrine impact and shift how exegetes interpret the Quran. This should be taken into account when investigating the stories of other prophets in Islam, especially the figures that are shared across the Abrahamic religions. Secondly, this study has also shown that there is not a monolithic perception of Adam in Islam. Though the notion of Adam sinning and experiencing punishment is rejected by many exegetes and theologians after al-Ṭabarī, each exegete's scope for Adam's exculpation and ascension in status is different. A third and important element of this study was examining terminology, both in Arabic and English. We discovered that popular English terms do not align with the majority of conclusions drawn from Adam's story. Future research should adopt more neutral terms like "mistake," "slip" and "relocation" in order to avoid colouring Adam with biblical associations, before drawing conclusions about perceptions of Adam in Islam.

Due to the focused nature and, therefore, the limited scope of this thesis, there were many avenues of research that were identified but could not be fully explored. While many of these areas have been noted in respective chapters, some broader topics have also been identified that will benefit from focused research. One of the purposes of this thesis was to present Adam's story in its individual right and to divorce it from the perceptions that are carried over and imposed onto Adam's story from Jewish and Christian sources. In chapter one, the impact of *isrāʾīliyyāt* on al-Ṭabarī's view was briefly examined. It was concluded that the usage of *isrāʾīliyyāt* contributes to the belief that Adam is a sinner and deserves punishment. Whilst some modern scholarship in Arabic has already explored al-Ṭabarī's use of *isrāʾīliyyāt*,[774] a more focused examination to establish the correlation

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[774] An example of some works focusing on this topic are Amāl ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Rabīʿ, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt fī tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* (Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfat al-ʿArabiyya, 2000), and Muḥammad Abū Shahba, *al-Isrāʾīliyyāt wa-l-mawḍūʿāt fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunna, 1988).

between the use of such source material and the image of Adam as a sinner would be beneficial.

This thesis has also identified that the views on prophetic impeccability culminate in the late twelfth/early thirteenth century, as can be seen in the works of the Ashʿarite theologian, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) and the Māturīdite theologian, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 1184). Chapter five attempted to chart the influence of al-Rāzī's views in al-Bayḍāwī's thirteenth-century work and recognised significant parallels in the thirteenth-century scholar, al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr*. However, there is little scholarship on the mark al-Rāzī's *tafsīr* has had on later writers, particularly regarding the notion of prophetic impeccability. In addition to al-Rāzī's impact, some obscure, early works on prophetic impeccability have received little to no attention in modern scholarship. These include: (1) the work entitled *Ithbāt al-ḥujja fī bayān al-ʿiṣma* (The Establishment of Proofs in Explaining Impeccability) authored by a tenth-century scholar from the Maghreb, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Labād (d. 944) and (2) another work on prophetic impeccability called *Tanzīh al-anbiyāʾ* (Exoneration of the Prophets) by Abū al-Faḍl al-Qushayrī (d. 955). These works are authored in the same era as al-Māturīdī and al-Ṭabarī. They can provide significant insight into how prophetic impeccability was viewed in the tenth century, and perhaps also further contextualise the views held by al-Ṭabarī and al-Māturīdī.

We have explored impeccability from the perspective of the Ashʿarite and Māturīdite theological traditions. However, exploring works of *tafsīr* belonging to the Muʿtazilite and Shiite traditions will shed further light on how Adam's story is interpreted across theological denominations and may also reveal significant influences, overlaps and differences on the doctrine of prophetic impeccability. Furthermore, adherents of the Atharī creed, also known as the traditionalist methodology, follow the same pattern of exculpating Adam and clearing him from requiring punishment. For example, Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) refer to impeccability in their interpretation of Jonah's story and reach similar conclusions to those of the exegetes examined in this study about Adam.[775] It is worth noting that adherents of the Atharī school reject *kalām* and prioritise a more textual methodology. Therefore, exploring how this school presents Adam's slip could

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[775] See Younus Y. Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'Spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya? Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 16, no. 1 (2014): 1–19. See also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Miftāḥ dār al-saʿāda wa manshūr wilāyat al-ʿilm wa-l irāda* (Cairo: Dār al Ḥadīth 1994), 12-17.

offer a further detailed picture of how Adam is exonerated in Islam, even if from a different methodological perspective, and how he has his prophetic status reinstated.

This thesis has offered insights into the story of Adam, ranging from the different classifications of God's prohibition, the complex views on Adam's forgetting and finally, different stances about Adam's relocation from paradise to earth. The research has shown the ascension of Adam's transformation in exegesis from a sinner whose relocation is a punishment, to an impeccable and esteemed prophet whose relocation is an opportunity to increase in degree and status. The depth of discussion that has been presented in this research, and the re-evaluation of Adam as a result of it, has cast a wider insight into Adam's story as it is understood within Islam and has shown that views about Adam shift in accordance with emerging doctrine.

Appendix

Below is a table comparing the events of Adam's story which appear in both the Quran and the Bible. There are some parts of Adam's narrative in the Quran that do not appear in the Bible (and vice versa) such as the refusal of Iblīs to prostate to Adam (Q 2:34), and Adam teaching the names to the angels (Q 2:32-33). Such events have been omitted from the table below as they are not shared material between both texts.

Adam's Story (according to the Quranic chronology of events)	Quran verses	Correlating Bible verses (New King James Version)
The creation of Adam	1. And We indeed created man from dried clay, made of moulded mud (Q 15:26; 38:71). 2. And when your Lord said to the angels "I am placing on earth a *khalīfa*" (Q 2:30).	1. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen 2:7).
God teaches Adam the names (in the Bible, Adam is taught the names after he is placed in paradise and commanded by God to stay away from the tree).	1. And He taught Adam the names, all of them (Q 2:31)	1. Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him (Gen 2:19-20).
Adam is placed in paradise and God mentions His prohibition and warning.	1. We said, "O Adam, dwell you and your partner in paradise and eat freely from it whatever you will. But do not come close to this tree or you will be among the wrongdoers" (Q 2:35).	1. The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed (Gen 2:8). 2. Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying,

	2. "O Adam, dwell you and your partner in paradise, and eat from it whatever you wish and do not come close to this tree or you will be among the wrongdoers" (Q 7:19) 3. We said, "O Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and your partner, so let him not remove you from paradise and make you miserable" (Q 20:117).	"Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Gen 2:16-17).
Satan's temptation	1. He whispered suggestions to them in order to uncover to them what had been concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you would become angels or immortals." And he swore to them, "Indeed to you both I am a sincere advisor." So he lured them through deception (Q 7:20-2). 2. Then Satan whispered to him. He said, "O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and a kingdom that never decays?" (Q 20:120).	1. Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:1-4).
Adam and Eve eat from the tree and realise their nakedness.	1. Then Satan caused them to slip and removed them from what they were in (Q 2:36). 2. And Indeed We had a covenant with Adam from before, but he forgot and We did not find in him determination (Q 20:115).	1. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and

	3. So they both ate from it. Then their private parts became apparent to them and they began to cover themselves with leaves from paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord, and he was misguided (Q 20:121).	made themselves coverings (Gen 3:6-7).

2. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner (1 Tim 2:14). |
| God speaks to Adam and Eve about their eating from the tree, and Adam acknowledges his error. | 1. And their Lord called out to them, "Did I not prohibit you [both] from that tree and tell you that Satan is a clear enemy to you?" They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us then indeed we will be among the losers" (Q 7:22). | 1. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Gen 3:9-13). |
| The aftermath of eating from the forbidden tree. | 1. And we said "descend, each of you an enemy to the other. On earth a dwelling place shall be yours, and enjoyment for a while." Then Adam received words from his Lord, and He relented to him. Indeed He is the Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Merciful (Q 2:37).

2. He said, "Descend, each of you an enemy to the other. There will be for you on earth a dwelling place and temporary enjoyment." | 1. To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of |

	He said, "In it you shall live, in it you shall die and from it you shall be resurrected" (Q 7:23-5). 3. Then his Lord chose him and relented unto him and guided [him]. He said, "descend from it, both of you together, each of you an enemy to the other. And if guidance comes to you from Me then whoever follows my guidance shall not go astray or be miserable" (Q 20:122-3).	the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (Gen 3:8-19)

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