

QS 2 Q 2:30 – 39

2.30 And remember when God said to the angels: "I shall appoint a deputy on earth", and they answered: "Will you place therein one who sows discord and sheds blood while we chant Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?" God said: "I know what you do not."

2.31 He taught Adam the names of all things. Then He displayed them to the angels and said: "Tell me the names of these things, if you are truthful."

2.32.They said: "Glory be to You! We have no knowledge except what You taught us. You! You are All-Knowing, All-Wise."

2.33 God said: "O Adam, reveal to them their names". When Adam revealed their names, God said: "Did I not tell you that I know the Unseen of the heavens and the earth? That I know what you make public and what you hide?"

2.34 And remember when God said to the angels: "Kneel before Adam"; they knelt, all except Satan, who disdained, grew proud and became an unbeliever.

2.35 We said: "O Adam, inhabit the Garden, you and your wife. Eat of it in comfort and ease, wherever you wish. But do not come near this tree, or else you will transgress."

2.36 Satan seduced them from it, and caused them to leave their earlier abode. We said: "Go down, an enemy each to each! On earth you will find habitation and a certain term of life."

2.37 And Adam obeyed the words of his Lord, and his Lord pardoned him.

He is Ever-ready to pardon; He is Compassionate to each.

2.38 We said: "Go down from it, all of you. And when My guidance comes to you, whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall fall upon them, nor shall they grieve.

2.39 But those who disbelieve and call Our wonders lies, these are the people of the Fire, in which they shall abide for ever."

2.30 Lorsque Ton Seigneur confia aux Anges: «Je vais établir sur la terre un vicaire «Khalifa». Ils dirent: «Vas-Tu y désigner un qui y mettra le désordre et répandra le sang, quand nous sommes là à Te sanctifier et à Te glorifier?» – Il dit: «En vérité, Je sais ce que vous ne savez pas!».

2.31 Et Il apprit à Adam tous les noms (de toutes choses), puis Il les présenta aux Anges et dit: «Informez-Moi des noms de ceux-là, si vous êtes véridiques!» (dans votre prétention que vous êtes plus méritants qu'Adam).

2.32 – Ils dirent: «Gloire à Toi! Nous n'avons de savoir que ce que Tu nous a appris. Certes c'est Toi l'Omniscient, le Sage».

2.33 Il dit: «O Adam, informe-les de ces noms ;» Puis quand celui-ci les eut informés de ces noms, Allah dit: «Ne vous ai-je pas dit que Je connais les mystères des cieus et de la terre, et que Je sais ce que vous divulguez et ce que vous cachez?»

2.34 Et lorsque Nous demandâmes aux Anges de se prosterner devant Adam, ils se prosternèrent à l'exception d'Iblis qui refusa, s'enfla d'orgueil et fut parmi les infidèles.

2.35 Et Nous dîmes: «O Adam, habite le Paradis toi et ton épouse, et nourrissez-vous-en de partout à votre guise; mais n'approchez pas de l'arbre que voici: sinon vous seriez du nombre des injustes».

2.36 Peu de temps après, Satan les fit glisser de là et les fit sortir du lieu où ils étaient. Et Nous dîmes: «Descendez (du Paradis); ennemis les uns des autres. Et pour vous il y aura une demeure sur la terre, et un usufruit pour un temps.

2.37 Puis Adam reçut de son Seigneur des paroles, et Allah agréa son repentir car c'est Lui certes, le Repentant, le Miséricordieux.

2.38 – Nous dîmes: «Descendez d'ici, vous tous! Toutes les fois que Je vous enverrai un guide, ceux qui [le] suivront n'auront rien à craindre et ne seront point affligés».

2.39.Et ceux qui ne croient pas (à nos messages) et traitent de mensonge Nos révélations, ceux-là sont les gens du Feu où ils demeureront éternellement.

سورة البقرة

وَأَدَّ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (30) وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (31) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (32) قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ (33) وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (34) وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (35) فَازْلَمَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَى حِينٍ (36) فَتَلَقَى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (37) قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنْي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (38) وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (39)

Azaiez

Ce passage illustre la dimension polyphonique de l'énonciation coranique. La polyphonie désigne comme le suggère l'étymologie grecque la pluralité des voix qui se font entendre dans une énonciation (Larcher 1998: 203–224). Cette pluralité de voix est notamment introduite par la présence du verbe *qāla* qui demeure le verbe le plus usité du Coran ('Abd al-Bāqī: 663–684). Ainsi, la présence de discours rapportés, d'échanges de paroles, d'indications quant à l'attitude des protagonistes de ces mêmes dialogues (qui s'apparentent à des didascalies) permet de rapprocher ce court récit à une forme scénique et théâtrale (Ben Taïbi 2009: 155). Or cette polyphonie et cette "mise en scène" dialoguée sont en l'occurrence le cadre privilégié où peuvent s'exprimer des « voix » qui s'affrontent ou qui sont en désaccords. Ces confrontations dialoguées sont l'un des aspects les plus marquants à la fois de l'argumentation et de la polémique dans le Coran (Larcher 2000: 453–454) mais aussi de la narration dans le Coran (Azaiez: QS21). Ce style dialogique est sans doute à rapprocher des *soghyata* (sing. *soghita*) ou poèmes religieux syriaques.

Dye

Ce passage combine trois péripécies : vv. 30–33 ; v. 34 ; vv. 35–38. Les versets 30–33 ont de fortes affinités avec les traditions rabbiniques (qui pouvaient facilement circuler entre les différentes communautés de l'époque) : dialogue entre Dieu et les anges, et enseignement des noms des êtres à Adam (comparer Gen 2:20, où c'est l'homme qui nomme les êtres).

Le v. 34 fait allusion à l'histoire de la prostration des anges, que l'on trouve dans plusieurs apocryphes chrétiens. L'épisode est narré moins allusivement ailleurs dans le Coran (Q 7:11–24; 15:26–43; 17:61–65; 18:50–51; 20:115–124; 38:71–85). La question centrale est celle de la hiérarchie entre l'homme et les anges. S'y ajoutent deux autres questions: comment Dieu a-t-il permis à Satan de tenter l'homme et de conduire à la chute d'Adam? Quelle est l'origine des différents noms du diable? Ces

questions, à des degrés divers, se retrouvent dans le Coran. La première pose toutefois un problème.

Logiquement, les anges devraient être supérieurs à l'homme (ils ont été créés avant, d'une matière plus éminente). Si Adam est supérieur, c'est parce qu'il a été créé à l'image de Dieu. Les récits chrétiens reposent ainsi sur l'idée que l'homme est créé à l'image de Dieu et sur une typologie Adam/Christ. Cette typologie est présente dans le Coran, même si ce n'est pas dans le cadre d'une christologie chrétienne « orthodoxe » (cf. Van der Velden 2007 et Reynolds 2010: 46–54). Mais comment comprendre la prosternation des anges, si aucune explication de la supériorité de l'homme n'est donnée, et si la thèse de la création de l'homme à l'image de Dieu n'est pas affirmée ? Le Coran, et l'islam à ses débuts, ne sont pas clairs sur ce point (cf. Q 42:11 et le *ḥadīṭ ḥalaqa llāhu Ādama 'alā ṣūratihī*). Les destinataires du message coranique étaient sans doute familiers des récits chrétiens et savaient pourquoi les anges devaient se prosterner. Il se pourrait cependant que Q 2:30–33 (récit unique dans le Coran) entende donner une explication *différente* : les anges ne savent pas répondre à la question posée par Dieu, Adam si – pour des raisons qui relèvent, non des capacités naturelles de l'homme, mais seulement de la décision divine. Le texte insiste ainsi sur le fossé qui sépare Dieu et Adam, qui tient son savoir uniquement de Dieu.

Grodzki

Typical of the Qur'ānic narrative is the re-telling and elaborating on well-known old Jewish-Christian topoi circulating in the Middle East at that time. Here – the story of creation, prostration, fall of angels and the original sin of man. A question arises: if Adam was not created in God's image, why would the angels of the Qur'ān bow to him? Would the answer lie in the here enigmatic term *ḥalīfa*? Or simply a test of obedience? Or knowledge of something that the angels wouldn't know, but which was revealed to Adam or inscribed into his nature (perhaps as a task for him to fulfill through his creation and life)?

Hilali

In the core of this passage there is the element of the test given both to Adam, to the Angels and to Iblis and by extension, to human beings. The test is a leitmotiv in religious literature and in the ancient Arabic narratives. Knowledge about the Prophets, their mission and their access to legitimacy is often introduced by the “theatralisation” of the test. We find the same structure in *ḥadīṭ* literature especially in the narratives about the dialogues between the Prophet Muḥammad and non-Muslims. The function of this argumentation is related to the faith issue often presented in Qur'ānic discourse to a matter of knowledge (Those who know and those who do not).

Imbert

Commentaire concernant le verset 33. La question d'Adam est rarement évoquée dans les inscriptions arabes anciennes. À notre connaissance, en épigraphie arabo-islamique, jamais Dieu n'est appelé *rabb Ādam* ("Seigneur d'Adam"), alors qu'il est maintes fois qualifié de *rabb Ibrāhīm*, *rabb Mūsā wa-Hārūn*, *rabb ʿĪsā*, *rabb ʿUzayr* et bien sûr *rabb Muḥammad* (cf. Imbert 2001: 73). Plus rarement, il est assimilé à un Seigneur des anges: *rabb Ġibrīl*, *Mikāʿil wa-Isrāfil* (cf. al-Ṣandūq 1955: 213–17). En ce qui concerne l'extrait à proprement parler, il s'agit d'un bref extrait du v. 33, un texte d'inspiration coranique cité dans un graffiti du ii^e siècle, relevé dans le nord-est de la Jordanie (site du Wādī Salmā. Cf. al-Ḥisān 2006: 23–4, n. 6). C'est avant tout la question du *ġayb* qui semble avoir intéressé le lapicide et non la nature ou le statut d'Adam. L'extrait de verset se trouve réintroduit dans une formule de *ṣahāda* développée: *lā ilāha illā anta taʿlam ġayb al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ* ([...] tu connais le mystère des cieux et de la terre). Immédiatement après cette citation, nous trouvons un second extrait de verset sous la forme d'une simple mention de *ilayka l-maṣīr* (Q 2:285 ou Q 60:4). L'ensemble forme ce qu'il est convenu de nommer une construction ou amalgame coranique : il s'agit d'une reformulation de verset produite à partir d'un montage de plusieurs extraits coraniques. Cet usage rappelle l'extrême souplesse du texte coranique dans les deux premiers siècles de l'Hégire.

Madigan

The Midrash often recounts discussions between God and the angels, for example, about the creation of humanity. The context is the question of why the plural is used in the Genesis account: "Let us make man." Is God perhaps addressing the elements that will provide the physical aspects of the human being? Or is God consulting the angels? In *Genesis Rabbah* 8 we find, "Rabbi Simon said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create man, the ministering angels were divided into camps and factions. Some said, 'Let Him create man;' others said, 'Let Him not create man.'"

Another midrash (*Sanhedrin* 38b) has God creating angels and asking them whether he should create man. They ask God what man will do, whereas the angels in this passage seem already to know what man will do. When the midrashic angels opposed the creation of man after learning from God what the creature will do, God burns them up and creates a second set of angels—with the same outcome. Finally, a third set of angels reply to God's question by asking what purpose the first two sets of angels served. The world is God's, they say, and so God should do with the world whatever he wishes.

It is interesting to note the doubly negative reaction of the midrashic angels as in the Qur'ānic passage. At the same time, the positive evaluation of Adam in both is left to God.

There is a stark difference between the understanding of knowledge of names here (vv. 31–33) and in the Biblical narrative (Gen 2:19–23). There God brings each

animal to the man to see whether it will be a fit mate; the text stresses that whatever the man called it, that was its name. With the creation of woman God eventually succeeds in eliciting from the man a cry of recognition (v. 23). It is the first time the human being speaks.

One sees in the Qur'ānic passage a different approach to the first sin—though perhaps the first sin is really Iblis's refusal to bow—from that in Genesis. In the Biblical scene humans allow themselves to be convinced by the serpent that God is a rival trying to keep them away from something that could easily be theirs—divinity! Precisely in that lies the drama and the tragedy of the human person in relationship to God. The Qur'ān does not tell us what specifically the sin of Adam and his wife was. Yet there seems a strange imbalance between, on the one hand the banishment from *al-ġanna* (v. 38) and the life of mutual enmity (v. 36) that are the punishment for the crime, and on the other the relative ease with which Adam is pardoned (v. 37).

Pregill

A superlative example of Qur'ān as rewritten Torah: a Biblical narrative is drawn out of its original context and reshaped according to both the larger exegetical tendencies of the day and the predominant thematic concerns and theological outlook of Qur'ānic discourse. The direct parallels in wording between vv. 35–39 and the narrative of the Fall in Genesis 2–3 suggest a close relationship with the canonical precursor, but combined with certain well-established mythemes that circulated widely in Late Antiquity, knitted together into a coherent whole and reshaped to advance the Qur'ān's particular viewpoint and agenda.

In Second Temple and late antique Jewish literature, the mytheme of angelic opposition to the creation of humanity overlaps with that of angelic opposition to the revelation of the Torah. Here it is synthesized with two other narrative complexes, the fall of Adam and the fall of Iblis; the latter conspicuously draws on still other well-established mythemes, especially Enochic traditions on the fallen angels as well as the prostration story, which unlike most of the other narrative components here seems to be distinctively Christian (see Reynolds 2010: 39–54). The symmetry between Iblis' sin and that of Adam is largely implicit here, but more developed elsewhere in the Qur'ān.

The major theme of the story is not the perversion of human will or the inevitability of ruptures in the divine-human relationship (the abiding themes of Christian and Jewish exegesis of the story respectively) but rather that of God's overwhelming sovereignty, which is here asserted over the angels, Adam, and Iblis alike. The *ḥalīfa* reference (v. 30) highlights the theme of delegation of authority; cf. David (Q 38:26) and Aaron (Q 7:142). Notably, in all three cases the *ḥalīfa* sins and is forgiven after sincere repentance or intercession.

V. 34: A verse which features the ubiquitous root *K-F-R*, forms of which are deployed more than five hundred times in the Qur'ān. The centrality of this root links the Qur'ān both linguistically and conceptually with a rich array of late antique

precursors, both Jewish and Christian. In particular, the overlap between the semantic range of extremely significant terms in Syriac discourse (e.g., *sāhdā*, *dehltā*, *kāfūrā*) and their Arabic cognates or correspondents (e.g., *šahīd*, *taqwā*, *kāfir*) – often utilized together in similar configurations – compels us to take the Qur’ān’s links to the various monotheisms of Late Antiquity very seriously (see Becker 2009: 333–334).

Reynolds

The tradition of the prostration of the angels before Adam, which the Qur’ān develops here, is distinctly Christian. The Jewish midrash *Genesis Rabbah* (8:10) explains that the angels desired to worship Adam when they saw in him the image of God. However, God (in order to save them from a sacrilege) made Adam fall asleep so that the angels would know that he is not divine. To Christian sources such as the Syriac *Cave of Treasures* (*La caverne des trésors* 1987, 17–21), however, there is nothing sacrilegious in the prostration of the angels before Adam. To them Adam (who bore the perfect image of God until his sin) is a prototype of Christ, the divine (and sinless) son of God. For Syriac Christian authors the prostration of the angels before Adam at the beginning of human history anticipates the prostration of the angels at the end of human history referred to in Phil 2:10 (“So that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus”). The Qur’ān evidently does not share this Christological concern. It transforms this story to make a point about the debt of gratitude which humans owe God, who made them even greater than the angels.

Sirry

This passage illustrates perfectly how the Qur’ān uses what we may call “Biblical materials” for its own purpose. This narrative certainly relates to the Bible’s account of creation in Genesis 1–3, however, the Qur’ān does not present the creation of Adam and his eventual expulsion in one continuous narrative but rather it is recounted in several places (Q 2:30–39; 7:11–27; 15:26–45; 20:115–123). The Qur’ān does not offer a single sustained narrative concerning the creation of Adam, but instead, in each narrative the Qur’ān puts emphasis on certain moral lessons. It seems clear that the purpose here is somehow related to the immediate concern of its audience and the internal differences in the way the Qur’ān recasts the story should be understood as such. In addition, there are striking differences between the Qur’ānic account and the Biblical account, which lead modern Muslim scholars like Ziauddin Sardar to argue that “this is not the Biblical story of Adam and Eve” (Sardar, 2011:90). The Qur’ān is silent on many details that are important to Jewish and Christian interpretations. For instance, there is no mention of the creation of Eve from a rib, though the Qur’ān states in many places that “God has created you [plural] from a single soul” (e.g. Q. 7:189). In fact, even the word “*ḥawwā*” (Eve) does not

occur in the Qur'ān. Moreover, she is never presented as the cause for Adam's disobedience and their subsequent downfall. Thus, Adam's companion is not blamed for leading him astray. To reiterate my point, these differences between the Qur'ānic and Biblical accounts can best be explained as a rhetorical creativity of the Qur'ān to recast the Biblical stories for its own theological purpose. The Qur'ān does not support the idea of "Original Sin" and it is, therefore, understandable that its emphasis is not on the drama of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise, but rather on the disobedience of *Iblīs*. While the etymological debate of the term *Iblīs* has not been resolved, in the passage under discussion *Iblīs* is described as an angel in origin. The Qur'ān describes *Iblīs*, otherwise known as *Šayṭān*, as the main source of evil from which human beings are commanded to take refuge to God.

Stefanidis

One function of this passage, and others parallel to it, is to present arrogance as the primordial sin. Since the condemnation of arrogance (*istikbār, takabbur*) is a topos in Qur'ānic polemics, this narrative not only retells a foundational myth, but also serves a function in the Qur'ānic attempt to persuade its immediate interlocutors of the truth of its message.

The interweaving of polemics and theology can also be seen in the way the particular '*mise en scène*' (to use Azaiez's expression) of this passage introduces the characteristic belief that God saves humanity through the sending of guidance (*hudā*, v. 38). In Christian understanding, Adam's fall is only redeemed by the sending of Jesus and his death on the cross. The Qur'ān follows a similar narrative pattern where Adam's fall brings about a divine rescue, but the means to salvation is different: to follow God's guidance whenever it reaches humanity, as is the case through this *Qur'ān*.

Tesei

The story of *Iblīs*' rebellion is related to Enochic mythemes on the fallen angels, which as in other late antique sources are "retroprojected" to the beginning of time (cf. Forsyth 1998: 222–5; Reed 2005: 220–1; Crone 2013: 32–3). A main point of interest of the account (I include in the discussion also parallel passages found in other *sūras*) is the simultaneous representation of *Iblīs* as both an angel and a *ḡinn* (cf. esp. Q 18:50). It is suitable to address this issue in light of the parallel motif of Satan's fall in the *Cave of Treasures* (1987; henceforth referred to as *CoT*). Here Satan is first described as the chief of the lesser order (*tegmā tahtāyā*, rec. II 3:1–4) which rebelled against God. We are also informed that this is "the order of demons (*tegmā d-šidē*) who fell from heaven" (recs. I&II, 7:4). The latter information is though made ambiguous by the successive description of Satan as "one of the Cherubins who fell [from heaven]" (rec. II, 18:15). Thus, the character of Satan in *CoT* is ambiguously represented as "angelic and demoniacal" at once just as *Iblīs*

in the Qur'ān. *CoT* and Qur'ān also agree on the fact that Satan/Iblīs and the demons/*ǧinns* are made of fire. But again, this is a characteristic that late antique sources credit angels with as well.

Another interesting point of convergence between the two texts concerns the etiology on the origins of evil and evil beings. What we can understand from *CoT* is that a lesser order of beings rebelled against God and, presumably as a consequence, fell from heaven. While there is confusion between its angelic or demoniacal character, the lesser order appears as a distinguished category of beings already before its rebellion. In some Qur'ānic passages we find much the same conception. In Q 18:50 Iblīs is presented as being one of the *ǧinns* already at the moment of his rebellion and not as becoming such after refusing to bow. Furthermore, in Q 15:26–27 the creation of the *ǧinns* is said to happen before the creation of humankind and thus before Iblīs' rebellion (which is noticeably referred to in the following verses). It seems that as the lesser order of *CoT*, *ǧinns* are conceived of as a separate category of beings already before their rebellion. Furthermore, as the author of *CoT*, the Qur'ān rejects the alternative myth on the origins of demons enrooted in Enochic traditions on the fallen angels (cf. Tesei QS 33, 41).

Winitzer

The description of Allah's instruction to Adam concerning the names of all things in v. 33 builds on Gen 2:19–20, which, significantly, ascribes to humanity, and not to Israel's deity (cf. Gen 1–2:4), what is the seminal role in many among the ancient Near Eastern creation accounts: delineation by naming. The current passage, it seems, downgrades Adam's role some, even as it retains for him a special status. The passage continues in v. 35 with further recognition of materials reflected in Gen 2–3; see, e.g., v. 35 and Gen 2:17; v. 36 and Gen 3:15. In this respect one interesting question involves what might stand behind the “companions of the fire” in v. 39: should this be connected to Gen 3:24 with its Cherubs and “fiery, whirling sword”?

Younes

Three comments:

[1] The word *ḥalifa* in v. 30 is probably a misreading of *ḥaliqa* (creation, things created), which shares the same *rasm* with it. Creation or created beings makes better sense in this context than “viceroys” (Pickthall's trans.).

[2] According to the standard syntactic rules of Classical Arabic, nouns with a non-human reference behave as feminine singular nouns for purposes of agreement and noun-pronoun substitution. But in v. 31, instead of the feminine singular pronoun *hā*, the plural masculine pronoun *hum* appears attached to the verb *'araḍa*: *'araḍahum* instead of *'araḍaha*: “He showed them, i.e., the names.” The same verse, in fact, includes one form that follows the rule (*kullaha*: “all of them”) side by side with the word that violates it. This suggests that the rules of Arabic syntax

as found in the Qur’ān were more flexible than they were later made to be by the Arab grammarians.

[3] It is interesting that there were differences among the canonical readers in v. 37 *fa-talaqqā ’ādamu min rabbihi kalimātin*, with Ibn Kaṭīr reading it as *fa talaqqā Ādama min rabbihi kalimātun* (Ibn Muğahid 1972: 153). It is clear from the structure that “Adam” received “words” and hence Adam is the subject and should be assigned the nominative case, while *kalimāt* is the object and should be assigned the accusative case. The fact that both readings were accepted is a strong indication of an unstable case system or a case system that was in a state of development.

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The Biblical basis of this narrative details the creation, the temptation, and the fall of Adam, yet the Qur’ān here presumes and creates knowledge of a much richer oral tradition. The Biblical story inspired centuries of vivid debate among Jews and Christians, who richly added to the story. I read this Qur’ānic passage as seeking to calibrate its own view of Adam, on the one hand created in God’s image and superior to all other beings, yet on the other hand not as holy or as knowledgeable as God Himself, as intimated to a degree by the Syriac and the rabbinic tradition—the Qur’ān counters both. The Syriac *Cave of Treasures*, to begin with, retells the story of Satan’s refusal to worship Adam, Satan’s fall, and the ensuing strife between the two, a story also known from Greek, Latin, Ge’ez and other Christian literature some (oral) knowledge of which the Qur’ān presupposes (see Reynolds). Here, Adam is presented as “king, priest, prophet, lord, and head, and ruler,” having been given the rule (*šwltn’*) over everything God has made (Bezold 1883:14–7 of the Syriac and Arabic edition). The Qur’ān aptly summarizes such a list when calling Adam God’s *ḥalifa*, “viceroys” (see *ḥlp*, “to substitute,” in Jewish and Christian Aramaic). Yet the Qur’ān back-pedals a bit when compared to the Christian tradition, and stops short of making Adam God’s full equal and the subject of worship: whereas the Christian Adam seemingly knows all the names of the animals by himself, the Qur’ān specifies that God first has to *teach* the names to Adam. This detail seems weighty in light of the Qur’ān’s view of God as the fountain of all knowledge, and a close dialogical reading of the respective rabbinic tradition emphasizes this aspect even more.

In the Palestinian rabbinic tradition (*Genesis Rabbah* 8.5), we find an account of the reaction of the *ml’ky hšrt*, “the ministering angels,” addressing God as *rbwn h’wlmym*, “Lord of the Universe,” to the impending creation of Adam, some of them favouring, some of them opposing it. Notably, the Midrash points, on the one hand, to the *šdqwt*, the “righteous deeds,” humans will commit, and on the other hand to the lies and the strife they will cause. Moreover, the rabbis portray Adam as inferior to God, yet superior to the angels. Once Adam is created, the angels initially mistake him for God and want to say *qdwš*, “holy,” whereupon God corrects their mistake (ibid. 8.10). Unlike the angels, however, Adam *by himself* knows the *šm*,

“the name,” of each animal God shows him, while the angels do not (ibid. 174). The Qur’ān recasts the story by emphasising Adam’s dependence on God for learning the names. Intriguingly, it repeats and amplifies the rabbinic tradition, slightly transposing many of the rabbinic themes while making use of (admittedly common) similar lexemes. Like the rabbis’ angels, the Qur’ān’s *malā’ika*, “angels” invoke the strife humans will cause. Yet in the Qur’ān they do so by juxtaposing the destruction and bloodshed in which humans engage with the praise and sanctity in which they themselves engage: here, they want to *nuqaddisu* “sanctify” God, not Adam, effectively toning down Adam’s exalted status in the rabbinic tradition. Furthermore, like in the rabbinic text, the Qur’ān names God *rabbuka*, “your Lord,” and also has him challenge the angels to tell, *al-asmā’a*, “the names” (likely also of animals), if they are *ṣādiqīna*, “truthful”—a root (with a different meaning) applied to Adam in the rabbinic text. The Qur’ān hence combines the theme of the naming competition between Adam and the angels with the Syriac theme of the refusal and fall of a chief angel, all the while widening the gap between Adam and God in both contemporary traditions.