

The Two Sons Of Adam and their Story of Jealousy

Adam's Life on Earth

Adam knew he had to bid farewell to peace when he left Paradise. On earth he had to face conflicts and struggles. No sooner had one ended than another began. He also had to work hard to sustain himself. He had to protect himself with clothes and weapons and protect his wife and children from the wild beasts.

Above all, he had to struggle with the spirit of evil. Shaytan, the cause of his expulsion from Paradise, continued to try to lead him and his children astray to have them thrown into the eternal hellfire. The battle between good and evil is continuous, but those who follow Allah's guidance should fear nothing while those who disobey Allah and follow Shaytan will be cursed along with him.

Adam understood all of this and with the knowledge of this suffering he started his life on the earth. He had a very great responsibility on the earth. He was the one who had to advance, cultivate, construct and populate the earth. He was also the one who had to procreate and raise children who would change and improve the world.

The First Four Children

It was a very happy moment when Adam and Hawwa witnessed the birth of their first children, a set of twins. Adam was a devoted father and Hawwa a contented mother. The twins were Cain (Qaabil) and his sister. Later Hawwa gave birth to a second set of twins, Abel (Haabil) and his sister. The family enjoyed the bounties and fruits of the earth provided by their Lord. The children grew up to be strong and healthy young adults. Qaabil tilled the land while Haabil raised cattle.

Qaabil's Disobedience

The time arrived when the two young men desired to get married. This was part of Allah's plan for mankind, to multiply and form nations with different cultures and colors. Allah revealed to Adam that he should marry each son to their appropriate partner. Adam instructed his children according to Allah's command, but Qaabil was displeased with the partner chosen for him.

Qaabil's Jealousy of Abel

Adam was in a dilemma. He wanted peace and harmony in his family, so he asked Allah for help. Allah commanded that each son offer a sacrifice, and he whose offering was accepted would marry the partner he wished. Haabil offered his best sheep while Qaabil offered his worst grain.

His sacrifice was not accepted by Allah because of his disobedience to his father and the insincerity in his offering. This enraged Qaabil even further. Realizing that his hopes in marrying who he wanted have now faded, he threatened his brother. "I will kill you! I refuse to see you happy while I remain unhappy!"

Haabil feeling sorry for his brother, replied, "It would be more proper for you my brother to search for the cause of your unhappiness. Allah accepts the deeds only from those who serve and fear Him, not from those who reject His Commands."

The First Death in the World

Haabil was intelligent, obedient, and always ready to obey the will of Allah. This was totally opposite to his brother who was arrogant, selfish and disobedient to his Lord. Haabil did not fear his brother's threats, but neither did he want his brother to be hurt, Allah had blessed Haabil with purity and compassion.

Hoping to ward away the evil intentions he saw in his brother, Haabil said, "My brother, you are deviating from the right path and are sinful in your decisions. It is better that you repent to Allah and forget about your threats. But if you do not then I will leave the matter in the hands of Allah. You alone will bear the consequence of your sin, for the Fire is the reward of the wrong-doers."

This brotherly plea did nothing to lessen the hatred in Qaabil's heart, nor did he show fear of Allah's punishment. Even family considerations were cast aside. One day, while Haabil was sleeping, Qaabil struck his brother on the head with a stone killing him instantly. This was the first death and the first criminal act committed by man on earth.

When Haabil had not appeared for some time, Adam began to search for him but found no trace of his beloved son. He asked Qaabil about Haabil's whereabouts. Qaabil insolently replied that he was not his brother's keeper nor his protector. From these words his father felt that Haabil was dead and Adam was filled with grief.

The First Burial

Meanwhile Qaabil did not know what to do with his brother's corpse. He carried it on his back wandering from place to place trying to hide it. His anger had now ended and his heart was filled with guilt. He was tiring under the burden of the corpse which had started to have a stench. As a mercy, and for the honor of the dead body, Allah sent two crows that began fighting, causing the death of one. The bird used its beak and claws to dig a hole in the ground, rolled its victim into it and covered it with sand.

Witnessing this, Qaabil was overcome with shame and remorse. "Woe unto me!" he exclaimed. "I was unable to do what this crow has done, that is to hide my brother's corpse." Qaabil then buried his brother. This was also the first burial of man. Allah mentions in the Noble Qur'an:

"And (O Muhammad) recite to them the story of the two sons of Adam (Haabil and Qaabil) in truth; when each offered a sacrifice to Allah, it was accepted from the one but not from the other. The latter said to the former; "I will surely kill you."

The former said: "Verily Allah accepts only from those who are Muttaqeen (pious and Allah-fearing). If you do stretch your hand against me to kill me I shall never stretch my hand against you to kill you, for I fear Allah; the Lord of the worlds (mankind, jinn, and all that exists). Verily I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours then you will be one of the dwellers of the Fire, and that is the recompense of the wrongdoers."

So his evil self encouraged him and made fair seeming to him the murder of his brother; he murdered him and became one of the losers. Allah sent a crow who scratched the ground to show him to hide the dead body of his brother. He (the murderer) said: "Woe to me!"

Am I not even able to be as this crow and to hide the dead body of my brother?" Then he became one of those who regretted.

(Surah al-Ma'idah; 5:27-31).

Adam Preaches to His Children

Adam was utterly grief stricken by the loss of his two sons. One was dead, the other was won over by Shaytan. Adam prayed for his son and went back to his worldly needs for he had to toil for his sustenance.

At the same time he was a prophet advising his children and grandchildren, telling them about Allah and calling them to believe in Him. He told them about Shaytan and warned them by recounting his own experience with the Shaytan and of how the Shaytan had tempted Qaabil to kill his brother. (*Stories of the Prophets by Ibn Kathir*)

Rasulullah (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: **"Anyone who kills another person unjustly then the punishment of that sin will go to the son of Adam (Qaabil). This will continue till the Day of Judgement because he was the first one to bring about the sin of murder in the world."**

(Narrated by Bukhari, Muslim, and Ahmad)

Questions on Lesson:

- 1.) What were the names of the two sons of Adam?

- 2.) What was the first crime committed on the face of the earth and who committed it?

- 3.) How did Qaabil learn about what to do with the body of Haabil?

- 4.) Who gets a portion of the punishment of every murder committed on the face of the earth? Why?

- 5.) What important lesson(s) did you learn from the story of Haabil and Qaabil?