

## CHAPTER TWO

### SYMBOLIC MEANING OF *SHAJARAT AL-KHULD* OR THE ETERNAL TREE

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the views and interpretations of *shajarat* according to Christian scholars, St. Thomas and St. Augustine and *mufasssirūn* scholars, Imām al-Qurṭubī and Imām Sayyid Quṭb. These four scholars were chosen for this discussion based on reasons discussed in the Introductory chapter of this study.

The discussion on *shajarat* among *mufasssirūn* and Christian scholars are quite different. This is because the discussion among *mufasssirūn* is quite brief compared to that by Christian scholars, who widely discussed the topic, because reflecting the emphasis intellectual attention of the era. Moreover, Muslim scholars focused more on knowledge rather than "The Fall of Man".

Although the discussion among *mufasssirūn* is quite brief, their discussion is more specific and thorough on the concept of *shajarat* compared to Christian scholars, who are more general. This is because the Christian scholars emphasize the Fall of Man, as related to *shajarat* rather than *shajarat* itself.

## 2.1 THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS VIEWS

Now we will discuss the views of the Christian scholars, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas.

In talking about the tree, these two scholars refer to several Bible verses in Genesis, used as a main source of reference. Their interpretations were used in order to obtain a clearer picture of *shajarat*. These verses refer to, the time and events after the creation of Adam as well as God's prohibition and God's plan to create Eve, as well as the reason for the creation of man and woman, the death of man as a result of eating or touching the tree, Satan's role and the cause of disobedience of Adam and Eve. In addition to these verses, there is one verse relating to Tree of Life, which was discussed in the Chapter One.

These verses are quite similar to the Qur'anic verses. However, the Christian scholars use the verses only as a surface reference for understanding the meaning of the tree. The Muslim and Christian methodologies are quite different in their use of verses as the main reference. The Christian scholars are more inclined to interpret and explain the meaning of the verses and the relevance of these verses within the context of the Christian doctrine. Indeed, they did slightly interpret *shajarat* in relation to the serpent's role by referring to the Yahwist's interpretations. Furthermore, they believe that the disobedience of Adam and Eve of God's order is the main doctrine of Christianity, which applied the Original Sin to all man and the purpose of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

**Genesis 2:15-17** explains that after the creation of Adam, God placed him in Eden and stressed that he was forbidden to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and explained the consequences of disobedience of His word: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it, you will surely die’.”

**Genesis 2.18** explains God’s plan to create Eve for Adam “The Lord God said: ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’.”

**Genesis 2. 22-25** explains that Eve was created from Adam’s rib and they were from the same soul (from God). She was, at the same time, made Adam’s wife. It also explains the reason for the creation of man and woman: “Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said: ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh’.”

**Genesis 3. 2-3** explains the site of the tree of knowledge in Eden and the God’s prohibition to touch or eat from it, which may cause death: “The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die”.

**Genesis 3.4-5** tells of Satan's seducing, coaxing and tempting of Eve to disobedience of God's word: "You will not surely die, 'The serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will like God, knowing good and evil".

The next explanation is the cause of Adam and Eve's disobedience as in **Genesis 3. 6-7**: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked: so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

## **2.2 ST. AUGUSTINE: THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE**

To explain *shajarat*, St. Augustine focuses on three main subjects, immortality, element of desire or evilness and the fall of Adam and Eve, which is stated in the Bible as the "Fall of Man".<sup>1</sup> He does not comment on the tree of life, as he does not believe that man was punished as a result of the disobedience of God's order.

The debate of these three main subjects indirectly covers the topic of defining *shajarat* and the nature of the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

According to Augustine, man is held in God's blessing, but this diminished when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's order not to eat from the tree. Furthermore, the

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<sup>1</sup> Saint Augustine (1967), translated by Marcus Dods, D.D and introduction by Thomas Merton, *The City of God*. New York: The Modern Library, Book Thirteenth, pp. 412-413

purpose of the creation of Adam was to form a sacred relationship between man and God. This relationship unfortunately failed and sin caused the purity to diminish with the result that man became alienated from God.<sup>2</sup> As a result, man is punished with death. Death comes in two forms, one, “whole death” where the physical body is involved, which separates the body and soul. This death also involves the soul as it is said that the separation of the spirit causes the physical and spiritual death and this is what separates man from the sacredness of God.<sup>3</sup> The second form of death is the “death that has no end” and the soul cannot resurrect as in the former. This is also known as death in Hell.<sup>4</sup> This form of death causes the soul to be tortured, it is left by God and will have to bear the suffering forever.<sup>5</sup>

St. Augustine believes that Satan seduced Adam and Eve to disobey God’s word, which caused death.

### 2.2.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN

The above discussion indirectly explains the consequences of the fall of Adam and Eve referring to the second subject raised by St. Augustine, which is related to the element of desire or evilness. According to St. Augustine, Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience is a result of Satan’s evil work that of manipulating and stimulating man to follow these evil characteristics towards evil characteristics within man.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 423

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*. pp. 423-424; Philip Edgumbe Huges (1989), *The True Image*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 129

<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*. p. 412; H.L. Willington (1983), *Willington Guide to the Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House, p. 722 and refer *Matthew 7: 23*.

<sup>5</sup> Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, p. 425

The elements of desire and pride are found deep within man, and Satan uses these weaknesses to influence Eve to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree. This stimulant from Satan fuels the characteristic within man, which in turn causes the disobedience of God's order.<sup>6</sup> This means that Satan turned the forbidden tree into the main object, which he used to weaken man through evilness. St. Augustine mentioned, "The evil therefore, that is, this transgression, was not done, but by such as were evil before. Such ate the forbidden fruit. There could be no evil fruit, but from an evil tree. The tree was made evil against nature, for it had not become evil but by unnatural viciousness of the will: and no nature can be depraved by vice, but such as is created of nothing. And therefore in that it is nature it has it from God: but in that "Fall" from God, it was made of nothing. Yet man was made nothing upon his fall, but he was lessened in excelling by inclining to himself, after having been most excelling in his adherence to God."<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, for St. Augustine, the serpent, that is the evil, led the woman to motherhood by tempting her, for the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is obviously linked to an awakening of sexual desire and to explicit mention of carnal knowledge in **Genesis 4.1** an act that may have taken place before the expulsion from the Eden.

Following St. Augustine's opinion, it is seen that it is inclined towards the fall that was sparked by Satan's persuasion, which stimulated man's desire, which for so long was hidden. Satan, knowing the weakness of man, used it to convince him that God ordered that prohibition, as He was afraid that man would be like Him

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, Book Twelfth, p.382

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

knowing good and evil. Satan stressed that the tree would not cause death as said by God. **Genesis 3: 4-5** stated, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil".

### **2.2.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM'S AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF GOD'S PROHIBITION**

According to the verse stated above, by looking into the inner self of man, we find that it is filled with the elements of pride (to become better and know just as much as God) and desire (normally towards a better cause) that influenced Eve and followed by Adam to disobey God. This revealed their situation and made them realise that they were naked and they were prompted to cover themselves with the leaves in Eden. Adam and Eve realised that "goodness" had disappeared from them as a result of their disobedience.<sup>8</sup> According to St. Augustine, nakedness refers to the loss of God's blessing to man, which caused them to lose their purity and their ability to fight their inner instincts.<sup>9</sup> This then means that the tree has a different meaning from its reality as a tree. To obtain the true meaning of the tree, St. Augustine refers to the nature of disobedience of Adam and Eve.

Based on the verse in **Genesis 3: 6-7**, it is clearly shown that Adam and Eve did eat and enjoy fruit from the forbidden tree. As soon as they enjoyed the fruit, they realised that there was something attractive about them, since the verb may be

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, Book Thirteenth, p. 422

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

translated as: "Now the man had known Eve, his wife".<sup>10</sup> All that had been so long hidden was revealed and this influenced them to do the prohibited. In other words, this means that Adam and Eve had involved themselves in the forbidden act before obtaining God's permission and that (act) in turn stole the purity of man (their purity).<sup>11</sup>

This means that St. Augustine's opinion refers to Adam's and Eve's relationship, which caused them to lose their purity because Satan tempted them, especially the woman and this led the woman toward motherhood. This could only happen because they were unable to suppress their longing, which resulted in them being able to see their long-hidden secrets. Adam's and Eve's eyes were opened to reveal their biological differences, which attracted them and stimulated their instinct to disobey God's order. This situation caused man to be impure as a result of an unsanctioned and unblessed relationship. St. Augustine does state that the creation of woman is "as a manifestation of the symbol of love between a husband and wife (refers to Adam and Eve), but this love is tarnished because they had an unblessed relationship". This relationship seems to be more one of obeying Satan than of obeying God.<sup>12</sup> This means that the tree of knowledge is obviously linked to an awakening of sexual desire in Adam and Eve.

Thus, the result of this impurity is that man must accept death, which should have never happened. The fall by Adam and Eve is thus inherited by generations and is known as the original sin.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Two under the topic: The Serpent

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, Book Thirteenth, p. 433.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p. 434

<sup>13</sup> Refer *Romans 5:12*

It is from this point that man needed a new life in order to foster a sacred relationship with God. It was because of God's love that he sent the Son of Man and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for the sins of man even though Jesus did no wrong.<sup>14</sup> The result is that Jesus Christ cleansed the impurity of man, the result of Adam's and Eve's relationship. To ensure that Christians continue to receive God's blessing and to protect them in God's kingdom, each Christian must believe in the sacrifice of Christ and follow his teachings, which are based on confidence in the concept of the trinity.

According to St. Augustine, belief in Jesus is important because God bestowed His spiritual purity to the hearts of man through Jesus. This made man sacred, and being reunited with Him is known as justification. This further makes man part of

God and returns to the reason for His original creation as explained in **Genesis 1. 26 and 27**: "Then God said: Let us make man in our image, in our likeness. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them."

This is known as sanctification or holiness, which is achieved by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Meanwhile the Holy Spirit helps ensure that each individual Christian remains in the light of Jesus through their belief in his teachings. It is only in this way that each Christian individual will enjoy eternal life and he will

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Huges (1982), *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 233; and refer also Sifrid Estborn (1958), *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*. The Christian Society, p. 5

not be destroyed for as long as his lives with Jesus in God's kingdom, beginning first on earth and then concluding in living forever to the end of time.<sup>15</sup>

God also promised each individual who believes in the sacrifice of Jesus eternal life in His heaven or external abode, and after death to meet Him.<sup>16</sup> It is a place of living forever, as each Christian will serve Jesus and God.

St. Augustine stresses that God's creation of Eve as the opposite sex for Adam shows clearly that the reason for His creation was to foster a sacred relationship between men. This is because man is the manifestation of God's image of good and nobility. Man is created based on God's image as explained in Chapter Two of this research.<sup>17</sup> Man is created to prosper in the universe as stated in **Genesis 1:26**, then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground". This means that man is responsible to highlight the good of God within himself through relationships with his community, such as social work for another individual, as this reflects the image of God as loving, sacred and holy. This community therefore can only be achieved through the sacred relationship between man and woman. This results in the creation of different genders of man, seen as the best method to expand and to project the noble and supreme image of God.<sup>18</sup> John White supports St. Augustine's opinion, stating that Eve's creation was the main agenda for God to show the importance of a loving and God fearing community. At the same time it

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<sup>15</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book Thirteenth, p. 433 and refer *John 10:28, Romans 6:23*

<sup>16</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book Twelfth, p. 392-393 and refer *2 Corinthians 5:1*

<sup>17</sup> Please refer Chapter Two of this research, pp. 147-151

<sup>18</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book Twelfth, p. 393

explains that Eve is not merely a sexual object but has an important responsibility together with Adam to bring a community towards the projection of a noble and supreme image of God and to realise the creation of man to develop and prosper in the universe.<sup>19</sup>

It is clear that St. Augustine sees Adam and Eve's creation as different genders as a symbol of love between a husband and wife in order to multiply and achieve the reason for their creation, which is to project the noble and supreme image of God and develop and prosper in the universe as one of the best manifestations of God's image.

This indirectly explains that the relation between the creation of man and the confidence of the doctrine of faith towards God is the very root of Christian teachings. Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity believes that the creation of man is based on the image of God. God is community. In God, in His very being, community has its origin. He is a three-in-one God. Each of the three, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, is the Person. Each does not exist in solitary isolation and is not alone. Their oneness is something of a mystery, but a mystery we can have an understanding of. They are one in aim, one in their values and goals, one in a common consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

From the above discussion, we can realise that *shajarat* as found in Genesis and debated by St. Augustine, means sexual desire and the disobedience of Adam and Eve, means having a sexual relationship because of Satan's seducing them before

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<sup>19</sup> Please refer John White (1996), *Eros Redeemed Breaking the Stranglehold of Sexual Sins*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, p. 30

God gave them permission to do so. Though in the beginning God created different genders to expand through such a relationship, for development and to bring forth a conscientious community similar to God's noble image, it was tarnished before God permitted such an act and this caused the future generations to bear the result of Adam's and Eve's deed. In order to cleanse this "tarnish", Jesus was sent to save mankind and at the same time to cleanse and purify man's relationship with God.

Logically, the confidence of the Christian doctrine towards God is closely related to the incident of the fall of man. Without that incident, man may not be able to value the importance of love through the sacred relationship between man and God. It also explains to man the position of Satan as man's main enemy. This is because without this incident, it is definite that man would not have understood the hurdles that he would have to pass through during his lifetime on earth. As such, it can be said that the tree of knowledge is a picture of intelligence, the freedom for man to distinguish the good and bad in the world around him. All these are a result of Adam and Eve's relationship, which is said to be the beginning of the reproduction of mankind.

In short, St Augustine's opinion on the three subjects, touching the question of death as a result of Adam's and Eve's deed, the elements of desire and evil in man and the fall of Adam and Eve is seen as philosophically unique when discussing the link between the Fall of Man and man's belief in the love of God as shown by Jesus Christ. It is from this incident that St. Augustine derives the doctrine of

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31

Original Sin as a result of Adam's and Eve's disobedience causing the sacred relationship between man and God to be severed until Christ was sent as the saviour.

### **2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE**

Thomas Aquinas' writings are similar to the writings of St. Augustine that he also focused on the discussion relating to Christianity. His focus is primarily on the main doctrines. This study however, finds that the debate by all the scholars being based on the Fall of Man, at the same time discusses *shajarat*. Although his discussion is not in-depth compared to the other scholars, it manages to give a picture of the concept of the tree of knowledge.

St. Aquinas has a far different opinion than St. Augustine on the question of the consequences to Adam and Eve, which is death. His concept of the tree however, is almost similar to that of St. Augustine's based on the Biblical verses, especially in Genesis. He also pays attention to the status of the tree and "Tree of Life" in an effort to give an opinion on them. To achieve this, St. Aquinas is more inclined to debate from the aspect of the process of the early creation of the universe and the philosophy behind its creation, especially that of man and its relationship to the "Tree of Knowledge".

According to St. Aquinas, the tree and "Tree of Life" were not created on the third day of the creation of the universe but in a "seminal virtue" environment. This explains that the creation of both these trees only happened on the sixth day.

**Genesis 2:8-9** explains that the tree and other crops were planted only moments before Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden. “Now the Lord had planted the garden in the east, in Eden, and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.”

It is believed that the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge were not created on the seventh day, as it is believed that God rested on that day. **Genesis 2.2-3** substantiates his view: “By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.”

Despite the varying opinions that have been voiced, it is clear that God gave the creation of the tree and the Tree of Life the same treatment as he gave to the creation of man. Indirectly, this implies as if there is a strong link between both the trees and man.

Moreover, St. Aquinas places the Tree of Knowledge as a symbol of Adam’s obedience of God’s order. But, the tree shows that man (Adam) was more obedient to the invitation of a woman (Eve), who Satan had seduced, on the basis of love, rather than towards God’s order.<sup>21</sup> Morally, man places more importance

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<sup>21</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas (1947), *Summa Theologiae A Concise Translation*. Timothy McDermott (ed.), United States of America: Christian Classics & Benziger Brothers, Inc., Book II: Journeying to God, Chapter 8: Living Well and Living Badly, p. 256-257. Here after, this book refers as *Summa Theologiae*.

on feelings and instinct towards mankind than on loyalty towards God. This also shows the close link between the tree of knowledge and the creation of man. As such, it is important to continue with this discussion in order to obtain the true meaning of the tree.

According to St. Aquinas, man has two main elements, the soul and body (physique). This causes men to have both everlasting and non-lasting lives. Everlasting is the nature of soul and non-lasting is the nature of body, which will change from day-to-day and grow old, eventually dying. This means that man is a non-lasting creature and only souls will last until the resurrection.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, St. Aquinas believes that man will continue to live and not be destroyed if his soul continues to live. This is because St. Aquinas sees in the soul a power that is hidden to protect man from destruction. This destruction is caused by internal and external factors. According to him, age is an internal factor, which causes man to undergo changes in his body and thereafter, suffer pain. This can be avoided by proper healthcare and eating habits. The external factor that may cause destruction to the body is the changes going on in the environment.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, the physique and the soul depend on one another. Spiritual care through the intimate relationship between man and God is one of the guarantees of an everlasting soul. This is because the intimate relationship with God through teachings by Jesus is seen as the best solution. Man however, will not be able to avoid death, as it is something that is fixed. Man's death is not a consequence of Adam and Eve's deed as stressed by St. Augustine, but is nature's call. As such,

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Book I: God, Chapter 5: Man's Place in Creation, p. 140-141

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p.142

according to St. Aquinas, man is unsuitable to live his life in Eden. The development of man and the universe would not happen if man were to continue living in Eden. This is definitely in agreement to **Genesis 1.26-28**: "Then God said, "let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

As such, man was created to project God's pure image through goodness and diligence developing and prospering in the universe. This also means that the creation of man leads towards the development of a generation of people in accordance with the reason for God's creation. As a result of this, the creation of the tree and the Tree of Life is in accordance with the creation of man. To obtain the meaning of both trees, this research addresses the opinion of St. Aquinas on the nature of disobedience of Adam and Eve.

### **2.3.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN**

St. Aquinas does not stress the role of Satan. He only mentioned that Satan had seduced Adam and Eve to disobey God's word. According to St. Aquinas, the importance of this topic is to realise the real meaning of the tree, which had close link to the creation of man as well as his relation to God. Moreover, the verses had

already explained the role of Satan in seducing Adam and Eve to disobedience of God's order.

### 2.3.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM'S AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF GOD'S PROHIBITION

St. Aquinas refers to **Genesis 3.6-7**, which pictures Adam and Eve eating and enjoying the forbidden tree, which caused their eyes to open and reveal their hidden beauty, and thus shows being naked.

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that St. Aquinas states that the tree and the Tree of Life are special gift from God to man. The tree is pictured as a tree that can foresee the future. This is based on the incident where Adam and Eve realized and learned from their experience of disobedience. The temptations of physical desire let them to see their naked bodies as shameful. This shows that man is able to have the freedom to want and have inclinations and the power to choose to do or not to do a certain action.<sup>24</sup> This is important because man is responsible for developing and prospering in the universe. St. Aquinas stresses that the creation of man and his relation to the tree shows God's best gift as fulfilling the mission and the reason for the creation of man.<sup>25</sup> This has been strengthened by modern Christian scholars who see the experiences of Adam and Eve as the beginning of acquiring sexual knowledge to guarantee further reproduction of man and agree that it is accurate regarding the mission of God's

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 126-127

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 128.

creation.<sup>26</sup> As such, the relevance of the creation of the tree coinciding with the creation of man is clear. It is said that Adam and Eve were punished because it was not suitable to be done in Eden, which goes against the nature of man's creation for developing and prospering in the universe.<sup>27</sup> As such God forbade Adam and Eve to enjoy the tree because it was not the right time. Man can only live with the nature on earth or in God's created universe. It is unfortunate that Satan seduced Adam and Eve before they received God's permission and before He was able to place man in His universe. The physical death of man is a consequence of Adam's and Eve's disobedience of God's order, but because of the nature of the universe.<sup>28</sup>

In relation to that, the creation of the Tree of Life is the basis of the awarding of everlasting life spiritually.<sup>29</sup> Everlasting life is linked spiritually to the Christian rituals of Mass<sup>30</sup> or Eucharist<sup>31</sup> as a symbol of everlasting life under the blessing of Jesus. As such, the importance of the Tree of Life was revealed after Adam and Eve defied God's order. They were both punished by being sent to achieve His reason for their creation in order to develop and prosper in the universe and, men

<sup>26</sup> Alan F. Alford (1996), *Gods of the New Millennium*, London: New English Library, p. 401

<sup>27</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Book II: Journeying to God, Chapter 8: Living Well and Living Badly, p. 240.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 247.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 274

<sup>30</sup> Mass is a practical aspect of Christianity, which reflects the sincere sacrifice towards God for releasing the sins of Christians because of Adam and Eve's defiance. Mass is also categorised as practical because it reflects a piece of bread and a glass of wine as the body and blood of Jesus who had sacrificed himself to save Christians. The soul of the eater will be one with that of Jesus and his teachings. Refer Michael Keene (1995), *The Catholic Experience Living Faith*, England: Stanley Thornes Publishers Ltd., p. 84.

<sup>31</sup> This is based on the concept of Passover in Jewish beliefs, which sees the sharing of a piece of bread and blessing through wine, which is divided equally. It then was absorbed into Christianity as the Lord's Supper, which records the last day Jesus had a meal with his apostles. It shows that God's giving must be enjoyed with those with genuine relationships, trusting and respecting one another. Christian places this as a sharing of all followers in each aspect of life through the sharing of the bread and wine which reflects the body and blood of Jesus which was destroyed because of

were thereafter made to bear their sins, known as Original Sin. This was later absolved by the sacrifice of Jesus. The link to this incident is said to be as the doctrine of belief for Christianity. The Fall of Man, therefore, is the beginning of the development of many Christian doctrines.

St. Aquinas stresses that the tree is God's special gift to mankind. It is also the beginning of movement towards the manifestation of man's freedom through the achievement of sexual knowledge by Adam and Eve as the guarantee of reproduction. It coincides with the reason for the creation of man. The disobedience of Adam and Eve happened because of the gift in Eden. Moreover, they were both punished because it should not have happened there because of incompatibility with the Eden. Furthermore, it was done after Satan seduced them and hence shows disobedience of God's command. It is clear that the Tree of Knowledge given by St. Aquinas is to mean that sexual intercourse is actually a gift from God to guarantee development of mankind. God created man in pairs to fulfil desires, which is united. This can be seen through the creation of man from one soul, which is Adam. **Genesis 2.23-25** records: "The man said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame."

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his love for mankind. It is done to lift the sins of Adam and Eve. Through his sacrifice, man and God can become one again. *Ibid.*

## 2.4 THE MUFASSIRŪN VIEWS

As mentioned in Chapter Two, there are different interpretations of *shajarat* by various *mufasssir ūn* scholars. As a result of that, several meanings of *shajarat* have been deduced including the *tin* tree and wheat.

There is symbolic interpretation rather than the concrete interpretation as the "earth tree" as well as mentioned by Imām al-Qusyairī "the tree of trial and tribulation" which in Arabic quote as "شجرة المحنة".<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, according to the views of the *mufasssir ūn*, an in-depth study should be made to explain the concept of *shajarat*.

In talking about the *shajarat*, the *mufasssir ūn* particularly referred to the verses relating directly to *shajarat*, the role of Satan who seduced Adam and Eve to disobey Allah's order, the honesty and trustworthy of Satan and the effect of that disobedience. According to the verses, there are six verses related to that *shajarat* and one verse, which shows the claim of Satan as the honest and trustworthy adviser. This is not much text, but indeed, this topic is very important to scholars and in fact among the ordinary Muslim's who figure out or think about and consider about the tree and its relation to the disobedience of Adam and Eve.

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<sup>32</sup> It had been discussed in Chapter One. Please refer to Chapter One, p.

Verses from the Qur'ān detailing the *shajarat* as well as the harm caused to oneself when the tree is approached is found in *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) verse 35 and *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) verse 19:

"وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا

هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ"

Meaning: "We said: "O Adam! Dwell thou And thy wife in the Garden; and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression".<sup>33</sup>

"وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ

الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٩)"

Meaning: "Adam! Dwell thou And thy wife in the Garden, and enjoy (its good things) as ye wish: but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression".

The verse explaining the role of Satan who seduced Adam and Eve into disobedience of Allah's order is found in *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) verse 20 and *sūrah Tāhā* (20) verse 120 as depicted below:

<sup>33</sup> *Zulm* in Arabic implies harm, wrong, injustice or transgression, and may have reference to oneself: when the wrong is done to others it implies tyranny and oppression; the idea of wrong naturally connects itself with darkness, which is another shade of meaning carried with the root word. A. Yūsuf 'Alī, *The Holy Qur'ān*, p.25.

"فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا"

Meaning: " Then began Satan to whisper suggestions to them, bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said: "Your Lord only forbade you this tree, Lets ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever".

"فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا

يَبْلَى"

Meaning: " But Satan whispered evil to him: he said, "O Adam! Shall I lead thee to the tree of eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"

The verse shows the claim of Satan that he is an honest and trustworthy adviser found in *Sūrah al- 'A'rāf* (7) verse 21.

"وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ"

Meaning "And he swore to them both, that he was their sincere adviser".

The explanation on how the disobedience of Adam and Eve to Allah's word resulted in the revealing of Adam's and Eve's biological secrets, is found in *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) verse 22 and *sūrah Tāhā* (20) verse 121:

"فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ  
الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلُّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ  
لَكُمَْا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ"

Meaning: "So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree, their shame became manifest to them, and they began to sew together the leaves of the Garden over their bodies, and their Lord called unto them: "Did I not Forbid you that tree, and tell you that Satan was an avowed enemy unto you?"

"فَأَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ  
وَعَصَى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَى"

Meaning "In the result, they both ate of the tree, and so their nakedness appeared to them: they began to sew together, for their covering, leaves from the Garden: thus did Adam disobey his Lord, and allow himself to be seduced".

## 2.5 IMĀM AL-QURṬUBĪ: SHAJARAT AL-KHULD

Based on the Qur'anic verses and the views of the early Muslims, Imām al-Qurṭubī believes that there is no aim or purpose to define the actual identity of *shajarat*. The main purpose of referring to *shajarat* is to explain Allah's prohibition and the disobedience of Adam and Eve. It is also to remind the human, as well, that Adam as the father of all human beings had to obey Allah's word. There are repayments and rewards from God, whose orders he (Adam) ignored. He cited Ibn 'Atiyah's opinion: "إن قصة الشجرة المخروقة، ووسوسة الشيطان بللذة، ونسيان العهد بالمعصية، والصحوة من بعد السكر، والندم وطلب المغفرة...إنها هي تجربة البشرية المتجددة المكرورة! لقد اقضت رحمه الله بهذا المخلوق أن يهبط إلى مقر خلافته..."

But upon reading the views of several *mufasssirūn*, Imām al-Qurṭubī's understanding of that tree was changed. Apart from that, Imām al-Qurṭubī cited Imām al-Qusyairī's view toward that tree as "the trial and tribulation" or شجرة

المحنة.<sup>34</sup>

The second *mufasssirūn* is al Rabi' ibn Anas says that the tree "if eaten by somebody will cause impurity<sup>35</sup> to that person" which in Arabic: فإذا أكل منها وقع

<sup>34</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi*, Volume 1, p. 305.

<sup>35</sup> The concept of impurity will be greater discussed in Chapter Six.

الحديث.<sup>36</sup> As a result of that, Imām al-Qurṭubī believes that a study had to be done to identify the tree to seek a better understanding as deemed necessary by Islam.

### 2.5.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN

Based on these verses, Imām al-Qurṭubī believes that Satan played the important role of convincing Adam and Eve to approach that tree.<sup>37</sup> Imām al-Qurṭubī contends that Satan had manifested himself as the honest and trustworthy adviser as Satan had claimed in the verse. His appearance as the honest adviser influenced Eve to believe him. Imām al-Qurṭubī said, Allah had reminded Adam and Eve that Satan was an avowed enemy. But yet, that avowed enemy does not appear to them until this tragedy happened. It seems that this tragedy was telling them the reality of Satan.

After the first creation of the first man, Adam, Satan refused to bow down him, but yet Adam does not realise this reality of Satan. Furthermore, Satan also can live in the garden. Imām al-Qurṭubī believes that Adam also thought that Satan was an avowed enemy only because he refused to bow down to him.<sup>38</sup> Then, the tragedy emphasises the reality of Satan.

Imām al-Qurṭubī had sited one of the unnamed ‘*ulamā*’ opinions as saying “that Adam yearns for *khulud* meaning eternity, because he had discovered that angels

<sup>36</sup> al-Fakhr al-Rāzī (1985), *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Volume 2. 3<sup>rd</sup>. edition. al-Qāherah: Dār al-Fikr, p. 6

<sup>37</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi*, Volume 1, p. 305

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

do not die till the end of the world. So the angels can give a better service to Allah".<sup>39</sup> Based on this opinion, Imām al-Qurṭubī also believes that Satan had seduced Adam and Eve by telling them about the eternity of that tree which can give them the long lives and power. The longer that Adam and Eve can live means the longer that they can perform as good caliphates to Allah and human beings. This advice from Satan seduced Adam and Eve to believe him.<sup>40</sup>

The role of Satan had encouraged Adam and Eve to disobedience Allah's order and prohibition. This tragedy also shows the reality of Satan as an avowed enemy to man.

## 2.5.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM'S AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF ALLAH'S PROHIBITION

The *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) verse 35 and *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) verse 19 explains that God's prohibition to Adam and Eve is "approaching the tree" which in Arabic ولا

تقربا Both these verses speak of the forbidden as approaching the tree or لا تقربا.

According to an Arab linguist, Ibn Manẓūr, *qaraba* (قرب) in Arab means

"close".<sup>41</sup> However, Imām al-Qurṭubī quotes Ibn al-'Arabī which states that al-Syāsyī, an expert in *Uṣūl Fiqh*, when meeting with al-Nadr, an Arab linguist and

<sup>39</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi'*, Volume 7, p. 178.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 179-180.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Volume 2, under the word *qaraba*

literati, said that *qaraba* (قرب) can mean “near” which in Arabic quoted as “تون منه” if the letter *ra* (ر) is intonated in front. If *ra* (ر) is intonated as in both verses 35 of *sūrah al-Baqarah* and verse 19 of *sūrah al-‘A‘rāf*, it can mean “actual doing” or تلبس بالفعل. In this instance it seems that Ibn al-‘Arabī believed that Allah’s prohibition to Adam and Eve was not to actually do it <sup>42</sup> and not near to it.

Nevertheless, Imām al-Qurṭubī’s own opinion based on the above discussion is that the meaning of the prohibition is not that of “approaching the tree” but of “eating from it”. This is because the verse prior to that allowed Adam and Eve to eat whatever they desired in heaven except for *shajarat*.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, the nature of disobedience of Adam and Eve as explained in *sūrah al-‘A‘rāf* (7) verse 20 states that they both tasted (*dhazāqa*) and *sūrah Tāhā* (20) verse 121 explains that that they both ate (*akala*). This strengthens Imām al-Qurṭubī’s opinion that *wa lā taqrabā* refers to “the prohibition of eating from the tree”.

This opinion is opposed by Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī who explains that the meaning of *taqraba* (تقربا) need not directly mean “to eat only”. Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī therefore believed that “the prohibited in the verse was not only the prohibition of

<sup>42</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi*, Volume 1, p. 304

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

eating but also included using whatever method possible”<sup>44</sup> which quoted in Arabic as *اى لا تقربا باكال فقط، لان من غير ذلك الاكل، المناهج الاخرى فيها وقعت*

Unfortunately, he did not elaborate what he means by “whatever method possible”.

Anyhow, based on Imām Fakhr al-Rāzī’s opinion, Imām al-Qurṭubī believes the symbolic meaning. Its link to the usage of ( ذاق ) meaning “taste”<sup>45</sup> in verse 22 of

*sūrah al-‘A‘rāf* (7):) as a replacement for the term *akala* ( اكل ) in verse 121 of

*sūrah Tāhā* (20): *فاكلًا منها* meaning “eat”. This means that “taste” is definitely different from the meaning of “eat”.

Accordingly, it seems that the *Mufasssirūn* debate whether the act of eating and tasting was the physical and literal meaning or symbolic meaning. Those who agreed with the symbolic meaning tried to interpret and find the hidden meaning. In general, *sūrah Tāhā* verse 121 and *sūrah al-‘A‘rāf* verse 20 explain the nature of disobedience of Adam and Eve of Allah’s prohibition was by eating from which in Arabic “ اكل ” or by tasting the tree which in Arabic is “ ذاق ”.

Allah says in *sūrah Tāhā* (20) verse 121: *فَاكُلَا مِنْهَا*

<sup>44</sup> al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, Volume 2, p. 5

Allah says in *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) verse 22 : فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ :

This raises further questions on the meaning of “eat” or its Arabic definition *akala* and “taste” and its Arabic definition of *dhāqa* as explained in the verse. Apart from that, it also raises the issue whether the eating or testing was real or merely a methapor with a hidden meaning.

This issue is raised as a result of the various views of the *mufasssirūn* who try to dissect what actually is the forbidden. This is based on verse 35 of *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) and verse 19 of *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7).

Based on the above discussions, which show that the *Mufasssirūn* believe that God's prohibition "ولا تقربا" gives the various meaning, this point raises questions on the link of approaching or *wa lā taqrabā* with the two terms, “eat” or *akala*, and “taste” or *dhāqa*. The different interpretations of the verse thus raise differing opinions and, at the same time influence the meaning of the tree and how the disobedience occurred.

The verse directly explains that as soon as Adam and Eve tasted (in *sūrah al-'A'rāf*) and ate (in *sūrah Tāhā*) the *shajarat*, their long hidden biological secrets were revealed and they had to use the leaves from the trees in heaven to cover themselves.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Volume 8, under the term *dhāqa*

This means that the understanding of “eat” used by *mufasssirrūn* such as Ibn al-ʿArabī is “the actual act of doing it”, Imām al-Fakhr al-Rāzī uses it to mean “not only to eat but by whatever method possible” and Imām al-Qurṭubī used it as “taste and enjoy”; are all closely linked. The “method of disobedience” here is how Adam and Eve disobeyed, enjoyed and tasted their biological secrets and then discovered their disobedience of Allah’s prohibition. Imām al-Qurṭubī also explains that this sparked the realisation of their biological difference and that its attraction is to be enjoyed.<sup>46</sup> This knowledge is gathered by looking at the differences in their biological form and thereafter the difference in their instinct based on the knowledge gathered.

Furthermore, Imām al-Qurṭubī tries to link the idea of the differences between the male and female biological constitution to the reason of their creation. In this instance, Imām al-Qurṭubī tries to place that *shajarat* is the basis of knowledge of the human biology and which attracts Adam and Eve towards the reason of their creation. Quoting an unnamed *ʿulamāʾ*, Imām al-Qurṭubī maintains that Adam had yearns for an eternal life because he had discovered that angels do not die till the end of the world. So the angels can give a better service to God.<sup>47</sup> Therefore Adam believed that possession of that knowledge would bring him the same eternity as possessed by Satan. Adam and Eve only discovered that they had been seduced by Satan’s persuasion when they realised the real reason for their biological differences. They had not yet received Allah’s blessing, but they gained this knowledge earlier as a result of Satan’s seduction. The instinct and knowledge possessed by Adam and Eve made them “impure” which quoted in Arabic as

<sup>46</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, Volume. 7, pp. 178-179

<sup>47</sup> al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmiʿ*, Volume 7, p. 178

"وقوع الحدث" as stressed by al-Rabi' ibn Anas. At the same time, it reinforces

Allah's advice to Adam and Eve that approaching the tree will mean that they would be putting themselves in danger of disobeying Him. This indirectly shows that *shajarat* does not necessary mean tree but is more indicative of the understanding of a type of knowledge, which brings birth to the male and female relationship.

In other words, it explains to us that *shajarat* has different meanings from just a tree and that the disobedience is not just eating the *shajarat*. Imām al-Qurṭubī, however, does not further his analysis on this subject. Imām al-Qurṭubī also does not strongly stress the concept of *shajarat* as the knowledge of man and woman relationships. But these discussions show us that Imām al-Qurṭubī's opinion is quiet "silence" as opposed to that of other *Mufasssirūn* as well as Imām Sayyid Quṭb, a *mufasssir* after the time of Imām al-Qurṭubī, who realised the necessity of a study begun by Imām al-Qurṭubī in order to grasp the real concept of *shajarat*.

## 2.6 IMĀM SAYYID QUṬB: SHAJARAT AL-KHULD

Imām Sayyid Quṭb is seen as more categorical and forceful, yet cautious in explaining the real meaning of *shajarat* including the disobedience of Adam and Eve of God's order, which can be found in his famous composition *Fī Ṣīl al-Qur'ān*. Indeed, his opinion is based on those verses, which are stated above.

Accordingly, Imām Sayyid Quṭb following the opinion of Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Šābūnī, agrees that the Satan’s act is indeed “a trick in the guise of advice,

<sup>48</sup>which quoted in Arabic as " بالخير الصادق وهو وحده المصدر المعتمد - أن إعواء على "

"الشريقع في صورة من الصور

Their conviction is based on the Qur’anic verse referring that the Satan is the honest and trustworthy adviser "وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ".

Imām Sayyid Quṭb believes that Satan seduced Adam and Eve by telling them that the tree was *khulud* which would give them eternity i.e. longevity and strength. The Satan convinced Adam and Eve that they needed these two elements to ensure their performance as the best caliphates and give the best service to Allah.<sup>49</sup>

Imām Sayyid Quṭb is also inclined to accept several of symbolic meanings of the tree. He based his position on the fact that the Qur’ān had mentioned many varieties and kinds of trees which appear to have symbolic meanings for example "شجرة الزقوم"<sup>50</sup> which is horrifying punishment or torture from Allah towards

those defying Him.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Imām Sayyid Quṭb had strong beliefs that the *shajarat* had symbolic meanings too. In order to obtain the real understanding,

<sup>48</sup> Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Šābūnī (1982), *Ṣafwah al-Tafsīr*. Volume 8, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Beirut: Dār al-Qur’ān, p. 74

<sup>49</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur’ān*. Volume 3, p.1267; Refer also Sa’id Hawwā, *al-Asās fī al-Tafsīr*. Volume 7, p. 340

<sup>50</sup>Please refer to *sūrah al-Wāqī’ah* (56) verse 25, *sūrah al-Isrā’* (17) verse 60, *sūrah al-Šaffat* (37) verse 62 and 64 and *sūrah al-Dukhān* (44) verse 43.

Imām Sayyid Quṭb tries to link the nature of Adam and Eve to their disobedience of Allah's prohibition.

### 2.6.1 THE ROLE OF SATAN

Imām Sayyid Quṭb had strong believes that Satan had played the important role of seducing Adam and Eve to disobey Allah's order. The *khulud* issue is the main factor used by Satan to seduce them both. Imām Sayyid Quṭb comments that Satan had seduced Adam and Eve to "release themselves from the knot of death" i.e. death at the predestined hour, and "be like the angels that enjoy *khulud*" meaning eternity. The angels are the good servant or '*abīd*' to Allah<sup>51</sup>. Therefore, man would live forever and be in power. Furthermore, he would prosper on the earth as well as being the best '*abīd*' to Allah.

Imām Sayyid Quṭb believes that power and long life are two of man's natural desires.<sup>52</sup> Imām Sayyid Quṭb's opinion is in line with Ibn 'Abbās who interprets the term "مُلْكٌ" to be read as "مَلِكٌ". This reading, is in agreement with the explanation in verse 120 of *sūrah Ṭāhā* (20) which means "..... O Adam! Shall I lead thee to the tree of eternity and to a kingdom that never decays?"

Imām Sayyid Quṭb also comments that Allah had only mentioned to Adam and Eve that Satan was an avowed enemy to man, without any further explanation about him. But at the same time, Satan was appearing to them as the honest and

<sup>51</sup> Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Volume 10. under the term *shajarat al-zaqqūm*

<sup>52</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl*, Volume 3, p. 1268

trustworthy adviser. Indeed, Satan was the honest and trustworthy adviser before he disobeyed Allah's order to bow down to Adam. But, this incident does not explain enough about Satan's real character. Therefore, Sayyid Quṭb inclined that Adam and Eve's disobedience was a good lesson to them as well as to human beings, so that, they would know more about Satan as the avowed enemy to man.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.6.2 THE NATURE OF ADAM'S AND EVE'S DISOBEDIENCE OF ALLAH'S PROHIBITION

In talking about the disobedience of Adam and Eve of Allah's prohibition, Imām Sayyid Quṭb agrees that Allah had prohibited Adam and Eve from approaching *shajarat* which quoted in Arabic as "ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة". He believes this word

"ولا تقربا" had the symbolic meaning, which means as actual act of doing

something. He had based his opinion indeed in the Qur'anic verses that brought out the several word of "قرب", for an example *Sūrah al-An'ām* (6): 151 "ولا تقربوا

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزُّنَا إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً " *Sūrah al-Isrā'* (17): 32 "الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ " *Sūrah al-An'ām* (6) : 102 "وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

" حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ " which means an example of an actual act of adultery and of

consuming the treasure of *al-Yatīm*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, Volume 3, p. 1269

Based on word "ذاق", Imām Sayyid Quṭb believes that the usage of the term *akala* in verse 22 of *sūrah al- 'A 'rāf* (7) and word *dhāqa* in verse 121 of *sūrah Ṭāhā* (20) are seen as related to each other. The two words also seem to be the same i.e. to eat or taste. This is because if a person is to eat something, he will definitely taste and enjoy what he eats. When the term *dhāqa* is referred to *shajarat*, Imām Sayyid Quṭb found that it leans towards referring to enjoy sex. Imām Sayyid Quṭb refers to the opinions of Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al- 'Arab* which states "وذاقت هي عسيلة كذلك لما خالطها" and "ذاق الرجل عسيلة المرأة إذا أوج فيها"<sup>54</sup> which means, "the man had enjoyed the virgin of the woman" and "the woman also enjoyed the happiness in doing that with man".

Sayyid Quṭb's statement is substantiated with the mention of Adam and Eve's sexual organs or "سؤاتهما" in verse 22 of *sūrah al- 'A 'rāf* (7) and verse 121 of *sūrah Ṭāhā* (20).

Based on both verses, Sayyid Quṭb explains that Adam and Eve both have sexual organs. However before this time, they were covered and could not be seen by either Adam or Eve. Resulting from disobedience of Adam and Eve, it is explained that the sexual organs were visible and needed to be covered either by clothes or otherwise. Even though such is the case, they are not told the reason for

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*. Please refer to the note 29.

<sup>55</sup> Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al- 'Arab*, Volume 8, under the term *dhawuq*

the existence of the sexual genitals.<sup>56</sup> This is further strengthened with the use of "فبدت لهما سواتهما" meaning that the sexual organs were revealed to them both and

"فبدت سواتهما" meaning their sexual organs were revealed. This clearly proves

that neither of them has neither seen nor realised the existence of their sexual organs. It is only after being encouraged by an inner feeling or instinct that they realise the existence of their sexual organs.<sup>57</sup> In other words, Adam and Eve never did realise the real existence and function of their sexual organs; this realization only happened after their disobedience of Allah's word to stay away from *shajarat*. Imām Sayyid Quṭb stresses that the main reason of the revelation is closely linked to the inner sexual instinct within Adam and Eve.<sup>58</sup> In other words, a sexual consciousness happened within them.

The relevance of *shajarat* to mean sex is clear as it is closely linked to the main element of *khuld*, which is eternity and everlasting. The opinion of al-Rabi' ibn Anas's that 'one who eat it will cause himself to be impure', " فإذا اكل منها وقوع "

"الحدث" strengthened the position of *shajarat* to mean sex. All of these are closely related to the main debate, *khuld* i.e. eternity. According to Imām Sayyid Quṭb, this subject is clearly explained in verse 22 of *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) and verse 120 of *sūrah Tāhā* (20). Based on these two verses, Imām Sayyid Quṭb believes that Adam and Eve had been seduced by Satan to become eternal and to be in power. Thus, they both could prosper on the earth and give the best service to all

<sup>56</sup> Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zīlāl*, Volume 3, p. 1267

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* Volume 4, p 2354

creatures in that earth. Furthermore, they could perform as the best servants or in Arabic as *'abd* to God.

As a result of trying to achieve both these elements in man, Imām Sayyid Qutb links them with sex. This is because he stresses that sexual desire is the best method of realizing the two main elements to achieve *khulud*, which is eternity by having a line of descendants.<sup>59</sup> Through this method, man will continue to exist and be in power.

It is also closely linked to the reason Allah created man and sent them to earth as the developing element to lead humanity on the earth and thereafter build and prosper. The mistake here is that Adam and Eve fornicated as the result of forgetting Allah's prohibition after Satan seduced them. Their relationship is considered legitimate, as Adam and Eve are a married couple. This is explained in verses 35 of *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) and verse 19 of *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7).

Nevertheless, the relationship was not yet permitted by Allah but happened because of Satan's seduction. This proves God's warning to Adam and Eve that approaching the forbidden tree would mean to bring harm onto themselves and that disobedience to Allah's orders is "as though" harming themselves. Their fall was however, forgiven by God as explained in *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) verse 37:

"فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ"

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Meaning: "Then learnt Adam from his Lord Words of inspiration<sup>60</sup>, and his Lord turned towards him; for He Is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful".

To fulfil the reason of Allah's creation, Adam and Eve were sent down to prosper on the earth after the failure of the Jinn. Indirectly, this explains that Adam and Eve's fall is the catalyst for both of them to be sent down to earth.

Based on the above discussion, it is clear that Imām Sayyid Quṭb in his first opinion is inclined towards *shajarat* meaning sex and that the nature of disobedience explained as "eating the tree" is actually to mean having a sexual relationship. If that is not the case, there would be no relevance to the term "sexual organs" mentioned in verse 22 of *sūrah al-'A'rāf* (7) and verse 121 of the *sūrah Tāhā* (20).

Nevertheless, Imām Sayyid Quṭb does not stress that subject in his interpretation directly, although he was so forceful. He only categorised *shajarat* as sexual relationship in general. His explanations however do incline towards realising the meaning of *shajarat* as such.

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<sup>60</sup> As "names" in verse 31 of *sūrah al-Baqarah* (2) is used for the "nature of things", so "words" here mean "inspiration", "spiritual knowledge". The Arabic word used for "learn" here implies some effort on his part, to which God's Grace responded. Refer to A. Yūsuf 'Alī, *The Holy Qur'ān*, p. 26.