

Explaining the Natural Position of Women and Men with Each Other Based on the Verses of Creation in the Holy Quran (With a Glance at the Holy Bible)

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Abstract

The present research was conducted to explain the natural position of men and women using thematic analysis and conceptual analysis methods. For this purpose, books and research articles published in the years after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, which examined the creation of men and women in the Quran, Torah, and Bible, were studied. Based on investigations, it is observed that there was no research in which the topic of the present study is discussed. The findings of the current research indicate that men and women share the same components in terms of: the material of creation, the purpose of creation, the stages of creation, the best creation, and so on. Nevertheless, there are points in the same verses that express the unique characteristics of men and women and establish the nobility and independence of men and women. In addition, after reviewing the manner of creation of humans in the Holy Quran (and a glance at the Holy Bible), it confirms the nobility and essential independence of women and men despite their uniformity in the origin of creation.

Keywords: Holy Quran, creation of humans, commonalities and differences in nature, men, women

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Introduction

The manner of human creation is one of the wonders of the world of creation. The creation of Adam from insignificant clay (Quran 32: 7) but reaching a position to deserve the prostration of the angels, such greatness is hidden in his creation that he became a source of divine pride and surpassed other creatures in honor, and even the angels were unable to understand his greatness (Quran 2: 30). Human being is created in two genders as male and female; the two genders that have both differences and similarities at least in appearance. Where is the starting point of this difference? Were women created differently from men from the beginning of creation? One of the points of investigating the relationship between men and women is the discussion about the manner of their creation; in the sense that, the status of men and women is examined in terms of creation. Were they both created in the same way and in terms of the initial creation, there is no difference between them or they were created in two different forms and different genders? The type of response to each of these questions will have different consequences. If it is said that men and women were created in two different forms and from two different materials, this difference can lead to the superiority of one gender over the other and create special values for that gender.

However, if it is said that men and women were created in the same form and both are created from the same materials and in the same manner, it can provide the basis for gender equality and the equality of rights and duties, etc. It seems that a third mode could also be considered; that is, the similarity [of men and women] in the creation, but the originality of existence and independence of men and women at the same time. That is, men and women, are created from a single essence and in the same manner, but with different backgrounds and special developmental features of this person, which makes clear the necessity of individual responsibility and separate roles.

It seems that the debates about the difference between men and women started from religious Books, and the most common and controversial sayings about the creation of men and women can be seen in the Holy Bible, which has extended its influence to the views of today's society. And it has even permeated the viewpoint of Scripture interpreters of other religions, including Islam. (cf. 'Arābī, 1887 SH)

Research Method

Based on the nature and topic discussed in the current research, the thematic analysis method was used to examine the verses related to creation. In the analysis of a verse, a word or phrases are used that highlight the debatable issues about the phenomenon under investigation. At this stage of the research, the search for words, phrases, and similar terms about the creation of men and women in the verses in question has been done. Thereafter, the separation of phrases and even the words was done, and in the next step, phrases and themes were arranged in a table. In the end, by focusing on one theme as the main theme collecting data, and extracting points related to creation in the Holy Quran, a network of themes was formed. The collected data were analyzed in an inferential or reasoning manner. Through meditation, rationalization, and reflection on the verses and the narrations and consultation of the Quranic exegeses in an attempt to search for answers to the research questions, the necessary inferences were made thereafter based on rational arguments to achieve the educational outcomes.

The Natural Position of men and women in the Quran and the Bible

The Manner of Creation of Men and Women in the Torah and the Bible

It is stated in the Torah that the creation of Adam was after God created the sky, the earth, the seas, the moon, and the stars and He therefore created him in the form and similar to Himself so that he can rule over all creatures. (cf. The Holy Bible, 1978, Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, Number 26)

Adam was created from dust and he placed him in the Garden of Eden: *"God created Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul."* (The Holy Bible, 1978, Book of Genesis, Chapter 2, Number 7) On the creation of Eve, it is mentioned as follows: *"God created a woman from the rib that He took from Adam and brought her to Adam. Adam said: Indeed, this is a bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, for this reason, it is called a woman; because it was derived from man"* (The Holy Bible, 1978, Book of Genesis, Chapter 1, Numbers 21-24).

According to these texts, God first created Adam and thereafter Eve was created based on Adam's needs. Some exegetes considered the creation of Adam in the first place as a sign that kingship and sovereignty belong to that man. Man is the ruler and Eve, as she was created in the second phase, must be submissive to man (cf. Mazāhirī 1392 SH). This same thing, that is, the priority of the creation of man over woman, is also stated in the New Testament: *"And I do not allow a woman to teach or dominate her husband, but must remain silent; because Adam was created first and then Eve"* (The Holy Bible, 1978).

Although the author of the book, "A Treasure of the Talmud" believes that in the Talmud, women have been given a proper position and dignity, nevertheless the view of the superiority of men can be seen in it. In the Talmud, the reason for the creation of women from the ribs of men is stated in such a way that God took this point [superiority] into consideration, from which parts of the man should He create the woman? He said: *"I do not create a woman from Adam's head so that she is not light-headed and does not raise her head out of arrogance and pride; not from the eyes, so that she is not very curious; not from the ears so that she does not eavesdrop and does not speak; not from the mouth so that words do not rain, and not from the heart so that she does not become jealous, and not from the hand so that she does not become harlot, and not from the foot so that she is not stray. I created a woman from a part of Adam's body that is always covered and hidden so that a modest and chaste creature is born."* (Kohen 1350).

According to this, a man's maintenance is upon himself, but a woman's maintenance is not with herself but upon a man. The approach of the superiority of men over women is still observed in the continuation of the story of creation narrated in the Talmud, whereby the girls are attributed to humans, but the boys are attributed to God: *"And it happened that when people began to multiply on the earth, daughters were born to them. The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were good-looking, and they took any of them as wives for themselves. In those days, there were strong men on the earth, and after the sons of God (married) the daughters of men and they gave birth to them, they were mighty men who became famous during the time of the*

predecessors of men." (The Holy Bible, 1978, The Book of Genesis, Chapter 6, Numbers 1-5)

Even in the story of the first sin [Original sin], Eve was considered the cause of the sin; Satan went to her and tempted her to eat from the forbidden tree and told her thus: *"On the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil"* (The Holy Bible, 1978, Chapter 3, Number 5).

When being questioned by God, Adam is presented as a pure and innocent person, while the blame is put on Eve, and consequently, the women are blamed, and the suffering of pregnancy and obedience to their husbands are given to the women as punishment: *"He said to the woman that I will greatly increase your pain and burden, you will give birth to children with pain and your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."* (The Holy Bible, 1978, Chapter 3, Number 17).

In the story of creation, God only blew into Adam's nose, from which the Christians concluded that Satan does not have access to Adam, also because Adam is the son of God, his soul is therefore protected from evil, but Eve does not have these two bounties, so she rebelled and was on the path of evil. According to the belief of adherents of the Bible [i.e., The Christians], Eve was punished as the first sinner who was not only a sinner but also the cause of Adam's deception, so her sin was doubled. The women are introduced as a creature with a weak soul, the gate of corruption in the world, the agent of destruction and the destroyer of purity, and the cause of the downfall of humanity, as all subsequent generations were corrupted because of her original sin. (cf. Mazāhirī, 1392 SH)

According to the Holy Bible, a woman [Eve] became an avenue for Satan to dominate Adam. Such a view towards a woman seriously harms her position and character and will have destructive effects, the result of which is the oppression of the women and then the family, to the point of ignoring the valuable position of women throughout history. Consequently, extreme feminist approaches were formed, which first called for women's equality with men, and thereafter, the freedom of women from the role of motherhood. (cf. Bāqirī, 1382 SH)

In contrast to these two perspectives, there is a third viewpoint

in which the position of women and their fundamentals of existence are explained differently; this viewpoint belongs to Islam. Concerning the comparison of the viewpoints of Islam and the Holy Bible, several articles have been written, among which was the research carried out by Tājri Nasab and Bahadrī (1389 SH) can be mentioned, which, while discussing the verses about "a single soul", examines the lexical analysis of the two Arabic terms "Zawj" [i.e., a mate] and "Nafs" [i.e., a soul] and then criticizes the Israiliyat traditions. In addition, Alavinejad (1380 SH) while examining the similarities and differences in Islamic texts and the verses of the Holy Bible and the Talmud, analyzed how Israiliyat traditions entered Islamic sources. In addition to the fact that these researchers have examined the issue of creation in the case of one gender, they have been more diligent in showing the difference between the two viewpoints of the two Testaments and the Quran, to arrive at the mysteries in the Quranic account of the creation of men and women but the natural position of women and men to each other has not been examined.

Therefore, the present research seeks to explain the Islamic narrative of how men and women are created and the similarities and the existential independence of men and women from each other. In this study, in addition to the method and detailed search on the verses of the creation of men and women, a new study has been done, the verses of the Quran have been studied and analyzed to clarify how Islam has explained the natural position of men and women concerning each other. Based on this, questions such as, 'How does the Quran describe the creation of men and women?'; 'What are the natural similarities of men and women in the verses of creation?'; 'How is the originality of man and woman in the verses of creation?' 'What is the difference between the view of the Quran and the view of the Torah and the Gospel on how men and women are created were investigated?

Manner of Creation of Men and Women in the Quran

Several Quranic verses have been revealed regarding the creation of man in general and the creation of men and women in particular. Because the creation of men and women has been examined in the present study, only the verses related to the creation of men and women were analyzed.

Table 1: Themes and key expressions of the creation of men and women according to the verses of the Quran

Theme	Key expressions	Indicator (Verse)
The best creation	We certainly created man in the best of forms	Quran 95: 4
	Who perfected everything that He created?	Quran 32: 7
	He formed you and perfected your forms,	Quran 40: 64
	So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!	Quran 23: 14
The substance of creation	Certainly, We created man out of dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud,	Quran 15: 26
	Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid.	Quran 32: 8
	He created and commenced man's creation from clay.	Quran 32: 7
	'Indeed, I am about to create a human being out of clay.	Quran 38: 71
	He created him from a drop of [seminal] fluid	Quran 80: 19
	He was created from an effusing fluid	Quran 86: 6
	[He] created man from a clinging mass.	Quran 96: 2
	Indeed, We created man from the drop of a mixed fluid	Quran 76: 2
The stages of creation	Certainly, We created man from an extract of clay. Then We made him a drop of [seminal] fluid [lodged] in a secure abode. Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature.	Quran 23: 12-14
	We created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then from a clinging mass, then from a fleshy tissue,	Quran 22: 5
	Was he not a drop of emitted semen, and then a clinging mass? Whereat He created and proportioned [him],	Quran 75: 37-38
	He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a threefold darkness.	Quran 39: 6
The objectives of the creation of men and women	"...that you may identify yourselves with one another". Objective: Identification	Quran 49: 13
	"...that he might find comfort with her". Objective: Comfort	Quran 7: 189; 30: 21
	"In all things, We have created pairs so that you may take admonition." Objective: Reminder	Quran 51: 49

	Who created you from a single soul, and created its mate from it, and from the two of them scattered numerous men and women. Be wary of Allah, in whose Name you adjure one another and [of severing ties with] blood relations. Objectives: Increase of population; fear of God, protecting blood relation	Quran 4: 1
Existential commonalities	“Then where are you being led away?” (Possibility of erring in both genders)	Quran 39: 6
	“He formed you and perfected your forms, and provided you with all the good things.” (Inclination to supreme affairs)	Quran 40: 46
	“... so that We may put him to test” (Both genders have will and discretion)	Quran 76: 2
	“That is Allah, your Lord! To Him belongs all sovereignty. There is no god except Him. Then where are you being led away?” (Power of reason and identification)	Quran 39: 6
	“We certainly created man in the best of forms” (Inclination to supreme affairs)	Quran 95: 4
	“...they both invoked Allah, their Lord: ‘If You give us a healthy [child], we will be surely grateful.’” (Feeling of responsibility)	Quran 7: 189
	“In all things, We have created pairs so that you may take admonition”. (Power of reason and recognition of the truth)	Quran 51: 49
	Was he not a drop of emitted semen, and then a clinging mass? Whereat He created and proportioned [him] (Feeling of arrogance and forgetfulness)	Quran 75: 37-38
	“...and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age, such that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge”. (Old age and forgetfulness for both genders))	Quran 22: 5
	“We created you from a male and a female and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godwary among you”. (Superiority)	Quran 49: 13
	“...but do not approach this tree, lest you should be among the wrongdoers”. (Possibility of deviating, desire for immortality, perfection, and progress)	Quran 2: 35
	“O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We created you from dust” (The power of reason and understanding of reasoning)	Quran 22: 5

Another creation (spirit creation)	“Creation after creation”	Quran 39: 6
	“Then We produced him as [yet] another creature”	Quran 23: 14
	“Whereat He created and proportioned [him]”	Quran 75: 38
	He created him from a drop of [seminal] fluid; then proportioned him.	Quran 80: 19
	“Then He proportioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit”	Quran 32: 9
Common Enemy	“Then Satan caused them to stumble from it”	Quran 2: 36
	“O Adam! This is indeed an enemy of yours and your mate’s”.	Quran 20: 117

From Table 1, the contents and keywords explaining the creation of men and women in the Quranic verses include:

The Best Creation

In four of the Quranic verses related to the creation of human beings, the best creation is mentioned. (Quran 23: 21-14; 95: 4: 32: 7; 40: 64). In the fourth verse of Surah Tin, the word "*Ahsan*" [i.e., the best] is mentioned along with the "*Taqwīm*" [i.e., form]. It means that God has given the best structure and organization to man. Firmness means to make something in a proper way and with a decent quality. That is, God gave man not only the proper structure and shape but also the best of it.

The important point is that the term "human being" in this verse refers to the human race, so the human race has firmness in its creation (cf: Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385 SH, 20/510), and since form comes along with the word creation, it shows that human has an innate potential and concerning their creation, they are the best both physically and mentally.

In verse 64 of Quran 40 [Surah Ghāfir], the term "*Ahsan*" [i.e., the best] is mentioned along with "*Ṣuwar*" [i.e., forms]; which indicates the giving of the best forms to human beings. The contents of the verse indicate that man is full of needs, he needs a place to live, shelter for security, sustenance to satisfy hunger and thirst, and the need for the best outlook that is superior to all creatures. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī says in this regard: "*Almighty God equipped the human structure with a very precise device, with which he can do all kinds of strange things; the works that other living beings are unable to do and also benefit from the benefits*

of life that are not available to non-humans." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385 SH, 17/524)

The gifts and blessings that are mentioned in this verse do not belong to a specific group of people, and no peculiar indication can be found for it so that the superiority of a certain category of people, (i.e., men or women) can be extracted based on that. The arrangements and benefits are for everyone so that they can develop. In the mentioned verse, an excellent position has been such that God has glorified Himself with it.

In verse 14 of Quran 23 [Surah Mu'minīn], the phrase "*Ahsan al-Khāliqīn*" [i.e., the best of creators] is used. In verses 12-14 of this Chapter, the mystery of human creation is discussed. Human Beings with all the superiority were created from dirt and worthless sperm and this is a sign of God being the best of Creator.

When human beings are considered the best of all creatures, then God, the Almighty is also the 'Best of all creators' (Javādi Āmoli, 1389 SH). His creation is superior to other creations that need a substance for their creation. After the creation of humans, God referred to Himself as the "Best of all creators". In view of this, He was and still is the "Best Creator" for both men and women. In verse 7 of Quran 32 [Surah Sajdah], it is emphasized in the same sense that everything created by God is good/beautiful.

According to the aforementioned verses, "the best" either as an act of God or as an attribute of creation, refers to the creation of human beings, but in the seventh verse of Quran 32 [Surah Sajdah], it also refers to the creation of human being separately, which indicates the status and place of human beings in relation to other creatures. Human beings, whether in the form of a man or a woman form, the purpose and goal of their creation, the attribute of "blessed is Allah" have been said unto Him.

The Substance of Creation

In many Quranic verses, different substances are mentioned as the origin of man, which includes the earth (cf. Quran 53: 32; 71: 17); dust (cf. Quran 22: 15; 30: 20; 35: 11); dry clay (cf. Quran 15: 26, 28, 33; 55: 14); clay (cf. Quran 6: 12; 7: 12); water (cf. Quran 24: 45; 25: 54); (cf. Quran 21: 30, 77: 20; Quran 32: 18; 87: 5-6); semen (cf., Quran 16: 14; 36: 77; 76: 2) and semen and dust together. (cf. Quran 35: 11; 22: 5)

Based on the above verses, the question arises as to why the creation of man is mentioned from different substances. Does each material refer to a specific issue? Are the men and the women created from different substances? Some of the above verses are not general, that is, they are not applied to the creation of all humans. The verses that specify the semen in the creation of humans do not apply to Jesus and Adam, as they were not created from semen. Therefore, these aforementioned verses only explain the natural course of human creation, while the exceptional people are out of the context of the verses.

In the verses that mention dust and semen together, there are two aspects in mind: First, the stages of creation are different for each person; it means that dust transforms into food and food transforms into semen. Therefore, the dust is the origin of the semen while the semen is the origin of the human being. The soil is the far-distance origin and the semen is the near origin. Second, since Adam is from the soil and every human being is indirectly from the soil. Thus, the source of Adam's creation will also be the source of others' creation. (cf. Miṣbāḥ Yazdi, 1388 SH)

Except for the exceptional cases in the creation, there is no other evidence based on which a category or group of human beings are excluded from the substance of creation, otherwise, for the birth of every human being, whether male or female, semen or a womb is needed, which is expressed and indicated as "a secure abode." (Quran 23: 13)

In fact, if the Quran is considered to be only a definite proof about the manner of creation (regardless of the traditions and statements of the scholars), the claimants of the difference between the creation of the two genders must provide evidence for their claim, otherwise, the clear text of the Quranic verses shows a definite commonality. By studying all the Quranic verses that were revealed in this regard, it is understood that the purpose of most of these verses is to remind a person who only sees himself and is immersed in his abilities and power and has forgotten the origin of his creation (cf. Quran 75: 37; 96: 2) and he is oblivious to his Creator and thinks that he will be forever (cf. Quran 22: 5). Therefore, according to these verses, the substance of the creation of man and woman is the same. The verses that discuss the substance of creation can be divided into two general categories:

Verses related to the substance of creation (i.e., the verses in which only one substance is mentioned) and verses about the course of creation (in which several substances are mentioned consecutively that refer to the stages and course of creation)

The Stages of Creation

The verses that refer to the stages of creation are: Quran 23: 12-14; 22: 5; 75: 37-40, and Quran 39: 6. The presence of different substances in several verses and likewise different substances that are mentioned next to one another in a verse are an indication of the stages and course of creation. Ayatollah Javādi Āmoli says this: *"The usage of different expressions in this creation shows different stages of human creation. The first origin of the human body is dust and earth, and when water is added to it, it becomes mud. Over time, the mud turns into smelly and stinky mud, which is called 'ageing mud'. When it is baked like raw clay, it is called 'dry clay'. In any case, at this stage, God has attributed the human body to soil and mud with the expression (from clay)".* (Javādi Āmoli, 1389 SH)

In addition, the two different substances: semen and dust are the primary materials of creation, which are explained while mentioning the difference between the creation of human beings and Hazrat Adam (PBUH); especially verses 7 and 8 of Quran 32, which refers to the creation of Adam and his descendants. Ayatollah Makārim Shīrāzī says this: *"It can be derived from all the verses, that the creation of Hazrat Adam was an independent creation that was created from soil and clay... The next verse refers to the creation of the human race and how the offspring of Adam reproduced in the next stages as He says: 'Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid' The term 'Ja'ala' [i.e., made] here means create and 'Nasl' [i.e., progeny] means children and grandchildren in all stages."* (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH, 17/126)

It is clear from the mentioned verses that the Holy Quran sometimes states the origin of human creation in the form of the creation of each person, stating that it is from semen and has stages until it reaches a full embryo, and sometimes it specifically refers to the creation of the first human [i.e., Hazrat Adam] and sometimes it refers to the two. (Mişbāḥ Yazdī, 1388 SH) In any

case, whether some verses are interpreted as referring to Adam or the human being as a whole, the substance of creation cannot be limited to a specific gender. Even if in some cases it is limited to a specific person, it is not possible to get from the personal to the general proposition. In passing through the seven stages (dust, semen, clinging mass, fleshy tissue, infancy, maturity, old age), rising from the soil until reaching the "come of age" stage, and even descending until reaching the stage of being "relegated to the nethermost age", there is no difference between men and women. Concerning knowledge, awareness, and intellect, which are the essence of human life, men and women are the same. Apart from the origin of creation, they are also the same concerning their return [death].

According to verses from the Quran, human beings were nothing at a stage of creation (cf. Quran 19: 67), and at another stage, he was something not worth mentioning (cf. Quran 76: 1). Other verses have spoken about the existence in God's knowledge (existential knowledge) which transform into real existence by divine command (cf. Quran 36: 82). In all these stages, as well as in the place where the Quran is referred to as "a reminder" (cf. Quran 73: 19), a human being is addressed and his forgetfulness is mentioned, but no specific gender is not mentioned to be reminded.

The Objective of creation of men and women in the Quran

Concerning the purpose of the creation of men and women, two situations are imagined: the purpose of the creation of the human species and the purpose of the creation of men and women. The verses in which the purpose of the creation of men and women is stated are an indication that the existence of differences in men and women and the creation of humans from two genders (male and female) is based on wisdom. In verse 49 of Quran 51 [Surah Dhariyāt], it refers not only to the creation of humans in pairs: male and female, but it also refers to all natural phenomena, whose creation is a guide and an indication to be remembered. (cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385, 18/573) In verse 13 of Quran 49 [Surah Hujurāt], the purpose of creating male and female and making them in different nations and tribes is stated to be identification [of one another and piety. The existence of differences is for identification and not for boasting. This verse categorically states

that superiority is based on piety and not on being male or female (i.e., gender): *"Therefore, each of you is a human being, born from two human beings, and for this reason, you have no difference from one another, and the difference that exists between you and makes you nations and tribes is a difference related to divine making, not because of dignity and virtue of some of you over others, but to identify each other and perfect your social system."* (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385 SH, 18/488)

Chapter 4 [Surah Nisā] begins with a call to piety, and respecting the rights of people and orphans are among the provisions of Surah Nisā, and piety is a requirement for observing these rights. After the explanation of piety, the concept of creation from a single soul, and the expansion of generations from this single soul, it has been stated that the meaning of this, is the reproduction of the generation of children of Adam through Adam and Hawwa [Eve]. Therefore, it can be said that one of the goals of the creation of men and women is reproduction and population growth. Keeping family ties is one of the fundamental concepts mentioned in these verses. After mentioning the uniformity of the origin of all human beings, the keeping of the relationships between the family ties is mentioned. Brotherhood, rendering assistance towards relatives and other human beings, friendship, and altruism in human societies is not possible except with divine piety.

Comfort is another important objective that is discussed in verse 189 of Quran 7 [Surah Al-Arāf] and verse 21 of Quran 30 [Surah Rūm]. In both verses, after the expression *"That he might find comfort"* and *"That you may take comfort"*, the phrases *"With her"* and *"In them"* are used respectively. That is, it refers to the man's comfort under the shadow of the existence of a woman. According to these verses, one of the goals of the woman's creation is to be a source of peace and comfort for the man.

Comforting can be considered a woman's duty, but not in the sense that women were created for men. If it is assumed that each man and woman is responsible for certain duties that are not the responsibility of the opposite gender, then this difference [in duties] means the difference in the path of each of the two genders in reaching the common goal (Zibainejad, 1383 SH).

In verse 21 of Quran 30 [Surah Rūm], after mentioning the comforting nature of the women, the expression *"And He ordained*

affection and mercy between you" is mentioned. Based on this context, it can be said that both men and women are a source of peace and comfort for each other. However, according to verse 189 of Quran 7 [Surah A'rāf], it only considers a woman to be a source of comfort for a man, and it is as if a man was in turmoil and anxiety before that. Therefore, it can be deduced that the comforting nature of a woman to a man is more than the comforting nature of a man to a woman, and this is one of the divine blessings that women and men are a source of comfort to each other. Ayatollah Makārim says in this regard: "This comfort comes from the fact that these two sexes are complementary to each other and a source of prosperity and vitality to each other, so that each is incomplete without the other, and it is natural that there is such a strong attraction between a being and the complement of his existence." (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH, 16/391)

The role of a spouse is to create comfort for his/her partner, in which kindness and mercy are among the tools for fulfilling this role. Therefore, even though men and women are created with the same purpose but they can take various paths to reach the common goal of excellence and servitude, while the difference in the types of paths taken does not reduce their value.

Existential Commonalities of Men and Women in the Quran

In the verses related to the creation of men and women, there are features that both men and women have in common. Some features are clearly extracted from the Quranic verses, but others have been derived by contemplation and analysis and even by referring to the Quranic exegeses.

In verse 6 of Quran 39 [Surah Zumar], God Almighty reminds us of the creation of man and the mysteries of creation. It also mentions God's power and His oneness. Only a person who has the power of reasoning and knowledge can understand such greatness. A Reminder is meaningful only when a person has intellect and can reach the meaning from the signs and discover the existence of the incomparable God. In verse 189 of Quran 7 [Surah A'rāf], both the man and the woman solicited God for a worthy child. Soliciting for a worthy child shows that they both felt responsible. In the verses that discuss the best creation, being best means that man is inclined towards greater and sublime things that God is proud of.

In verse 13 of Quran 49 [Surah Hujurāt], the purpose of the existence of different races and ethnicities is mentioned, that is, to identify one another. Thereafter, piety is stated as the criterion of superiority. It is as if God has introduced this standard of excellence, knowing the characteristic of human superiority concept, so that humans do not make mistakes. Satan's deception and temptation have been discussed in several verses; warning about deception can be an indication of human ability to deviate. The fact that the devil told Adam that the result of consuming the forbidden fruit is immortality indicates the human desire for eternal life and attaining eternal power. Satan was fully aware of this desire and characteristic of humans and thus, he deceived both of them [i.e., Adam and Eve]. Men and women share all these characteristics, and these characteristics are inherently present in both men and women.

Common Enemy

In verses of the Holy Quran, Satan is categorically mentioned as the common enemy of both men and women. (cf. Quran 2: 36) Both of them have been warned about the enmity of Satan to them (cf. Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH, 13/318) Ayatollah Javādi Āmoli while explaining the reason for the usage of singular pronoun in verse 117 of Quran 20 [Surah Ṭaha] as follows: *"The representative [of entire human being] is just a person, that is, God Almighty addresses Adam on behalf of entire humans, and the enmity of Satan is to the entire humankind."* (Javādi Āmoli, 1389 SH) Thus, Satan is a manifest enemy of entire human beings: *"Satan is indeed man's manifest enemy."* (Quran 12: 5)

Satan's enmity was with Adam, Eve, and his children and God's warning about his enmity was for everyone: *"O children of Adam, do not worship Satan. He is indeed your manifest enemy."* (Quran 36: 60) Ayatollah Javādi Āmoli says in this regard: *"In the Holy Quran and regarding the biography of Prophet Adam, the command to descend [from the Garden] is sometimes mentioned in dual and sometimes in plural forms. This is also an indication that humanity is the axis of God's vicegerent and Satan's enmity is also against the humanity of humans."* (Javādi Āmoli, 1389 SH).

The Quran has never introduced the woman as the initiator of the original sin, although she has neither been considered

blameless. However, in the Bible, the first woman [Eve] is considered to be the cause of sin, and all corruption [on the earth] is caused by her existence; because she caused Adam to be withdrawn from the Garden and consequently, the destruction of human sanctity began.

Another Creation

In a group of Quranic verses, after the description of the stages of human creation, there is a mention of re-creation. In the expressions such as *"And [He] breathed into him of His Spirit"* (Quran 32: 9); *"We produced him as [yet] another creature"* (Quran 23: 14) and *"Creation after creation"* (Quran 39: 6), it seems as if the verses discuss a kind of creation different from the original creation from blood and bones, which are only used concerning humans.

The breathing of the Spirit encompasses the human species; as it is stated in verses 7 to 9 of Surah Quran 32: "[He] who perfected everything that He created and commenced man's creation from clay. Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid. Then He proportioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit, and made for you hearing, sight, and hearts. Little do you thank." The pronoun "him" in "He proportioned him" refers to the human species, not the first human creation, which is the manifestation of the expression "He commenced man's creation from clay" because it is more appropriate based on the context of the verse. In the verse "Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid", the discussion here is about the progeny of Adam, and this includes both men and women. In the expression "Then He proportioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit", the creation of the first man is initially explained but thereafter, the creation of the entire human race from "a base fluid" and thereafter the general ruling including the first man [Hazrat Adam] and his descendants is mentioned: "He proportioned him" which means that "He made man balanced and according to the norm, be it the first man or his progeny". Similarly, verse 12 of Quran 23: "Certainly, We created man from an extract of clay" refers to human creation in general. In the continuation of the verse, it is stated: "Then We produced him as [yet] another creature", so men and women are equal in enjoying this divine ecstasy. The essence of the human is his soul,

and his part, which always obeys this essence, is his body. (Javādi Āmoli, 1391 SH, 14/77)

The body is a tool for attaining perfection. The reproachable attributes of humans that are mentioned in the Quran refer to human nature. The essential part of humans [that is, the soul] has characteristics whose basis is dignity, and it is with this essential part that humans can attain a good life and salvation: *"Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he be faithful, We shall revive him with a good life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do"; "But the faithful, men and women, are comrades of one another: they bid what is right and forbid what is wrong and maintain the prayer, give the zakat, and obey Allah and His Apostle. It is they to whom Allah will soon grant His mercy. Indeed, Allah is all-mighty, all-wise."*

It is categorically stated in these two verses that both women and men can attain a good life [a pure life] and enjoy divine reward because this potential is related to something beyond nature, that is, the soul. Therefore, both men and women benefit from creation beyond nature. According to Table 1, men and women share the mentioned themes, so they have the same creation.

A Single Soul

The phrase "a single soul" is used in verse 98 of Quran 6, verse 6 of Quran 39, verse 189 of Quran 7, and verse 1 of Quran 4.

Table 2: Themes and key points according to the verses related to a single soul

Primary themes	Secondary themes	Key expressions	Indication (The verse)
A single soul	Individual "one"	Your Lord who created you from a single soul	Quran 4: 1
		He created you from a single soul	Quran 39: 6
	Specific "one"	It is He who created you from a single soul,	Quran 7: 189

What is meant by a single soul? Is it referring to an Individual "one" or a Specific "one"? According to the answers to these questions, there are two points of view on this matter, which are:

First: Individual "one"

According to the evidence and context of these verses, the

meaning of a single soul in verses 6 and 1 of Quran 39 [Surah Zumar] and Quran 4 [Nisa] respectively is Hazrat Adam, the ancestor of human beings. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī says in this regard: *"And from the appearance of the context, it is clear that the meaning of "a single soul" is Adam, and the meaning of "his mate" is Hawwa [Eve] who are both the parents of the human race, and we are also from that generation. As it appears from the manifest of the Holy Quran, all human beings are traced back to these two persons, as the same meaning appears from the following verse: "He created you from a single soul, then made from it its mate" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385 SH, 4/214).*

It is stated in Tafṣīr Nemuneh that: *"The creation of all human beings from a single soul refers to the issue of the creation of Adam, our first ancestor, that all these human beings with a variety of creations and different temperaments and talents and tastes all go back to one root, which is Adam."* (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH, 19/380)

If the meaning of a single soul in verse 1 of Quran 4 [Surah Nisā] refers to the entire human species, then the meaning of the verse is that each of you was created from one parent, which is the same theme as verse 13 of Quran 49 [Surah Hujurāt], whereas, these two verses explain two different meanings and the expression *"And from the two of them scattered numerous men and women"* in the verse is more compatible with the Individual "one", meaning that Adam's wife was of Adam's own type and was a human being like him and that the uncountable human beings that have spread on the surface of the earth, all originated from the two human beings who are the same and similar. (cf. Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1385 SH, 4/215) Therefore, the first woman [i.e., Hawwa], who is the wife of the first man [Hazrat Adam] was created from the same essence and gem in which the man was created.

Second: Specific "one"

In verse 189 of Quran 7 [Surah Al-A'rāf], the meaning of a single soul is a general one. In this verse, the discussion is about the human species, not about a specific person (like Hazrat Adam, the human ancestor). The term *"righteous"* in this verse, which was the request of both the husband and the wife of a righteous child, is an indication that they must have lived in society before, seen righteous and

unrighteous children, and understood the consequences, thereby making them make such a request from God.

In addition, the collective pronouns at the end of the second verse and the subsequent verses show that the dual pronoun was meant to refer to two groups (human species) and not two persons. (cf. Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH, 7/52) Therefore, based on the concept of a single soul, all human beings, whether male or female are created from the same gem and essence, and the origin of creation of all human beings is one.

These verses inform about the specific unity of a man and a woman, indicating that both are of the same species and are considered as a personal "one"; although in the verses under discussion, the meaning of a single soul could be Hazrat Adam, while the entire human generations go back to him.

God created human beings from one essence and reality. The creation of Prophet Adam (PBUH) was from a special essence and his wife was also created from the same special essence: *"And made from it its mate"* Therefore, the essence of man and woman is the same. (Javādi Āmoli 1392 SH, 31/486)

Referring to Hazrat Adam (PBUH) as a single soul means that the first person who was created from this essence was Hazrat Adam. The soul is a reality in which Adam himself is a part of this reality. The phrase *"O mankind!"* in Quran 4 [Surah Nisā] indicates a general address and that the principle of equality is for everyone. Prophet Adam (PBUH) is also a part of mankind, and the ruling of the verse [that is, being conscious of God] also applied to him. The usage of the term "single" along with the "soul" so that one should not think that "a soul" is of a low or intermediate one, under which there are types and forms, and that everyone is created from a special type so that a substantive distinction is created. Therefore, human beings are created from a single essence, and there is no substantial difference between them. (cf. Javādi Āmoli, 1392 SH, 17/105)

The result is that what is meant by "a single soul" in verses 189, 6, and 1 of Quran 7, 39, and Quran 4 respectively is the essence of man, and the first person who emerged from this essence was Prophet Adam (PBUH), and these two are not contradictory to each other and it can therefore be concluded that both men and women are the same in humanity and they have a rational soul and

a specific “one”. Therefore, in the expression *"And made from it its mate"* that the wife was created from you, the pronoun *"it"* [in the verse] refers to the essence of humanity, not that it was created from a part of the body or a left rib bone, etc. This is also the opinion of Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and he considered men and women to be of the same species, which are considered as a genus. Mullah Sadra also believed that human souls have a kind of unity at the beginning of their existence, which is humanity. Thereafter, by transforming from potentiality to reality, we could see different types like angels, devils, beasts, and animals. Therefore, the soul is created being and it is after the creation of a body that gender and personal differences come in. (Miṣbāḥ Yazdi and Fayyāzi, 1391 SH)

Table 3: Themes and key points according to the verses relating to "from your mates"

Themes	Key expressions	Indication (The verse)
Creation of men and women from the same soul	Allah made for you mates from your own selves	Quran 16: 72
	He made for you mates from your own selves,	Quran 42: 11
	And of His signs is that He created for you mates from your own selves	Quran 30: 21

Another group of Quranic verses relating to the creation of men and women is the same as a single soul. That is, an indication that the creation of a wife is from the same genus [as that of the husband]. In the discussion about the purpose of the creation of a wife, it was said that one of the purposes of her creation is to comfort her husband.

According to the proverb *"birds of a feather flock together"*¹ (Ras'ani, 1429 AH, 1/354), this comfort is only where there is harmony between two beings. Therefore, husbands and wives are of the same genera, and not that the wife is created from a section of the husband's body. The creation of husband and wife from the same genus does not interfere with each other's nature, rather the husbands and wives are created from the same essence. The first woman and the first man share the same

1 . This is just English equivalent of the proverb.

essence. Adam's wife and, accordingly, women are similar to their husbands in terms of genus and type.

According to the themes extracted from the verses related to the creation of men and women, it can be concluded that they are the same in terms of the essence of creation and they are both created from a single soul. Therefore, all human beings share a single axis, that is, the origin and source.

Contrary to the Biblical viewpoint that a noble man is created from a special gem and a woman is created from the redundant part of man. According to Quranic evidence, both men and women are from the same gem and there is no superiority over each other in terms of an existential gem (the essence of existence). Therefore, the Quran rejects all the theories that consider women as inferior creatures and dependent on men. The commonality in the essence creation of men and women in terms of genus and form, which is established in the Islamic viewpoint is proof of God's grace towards both men and women.

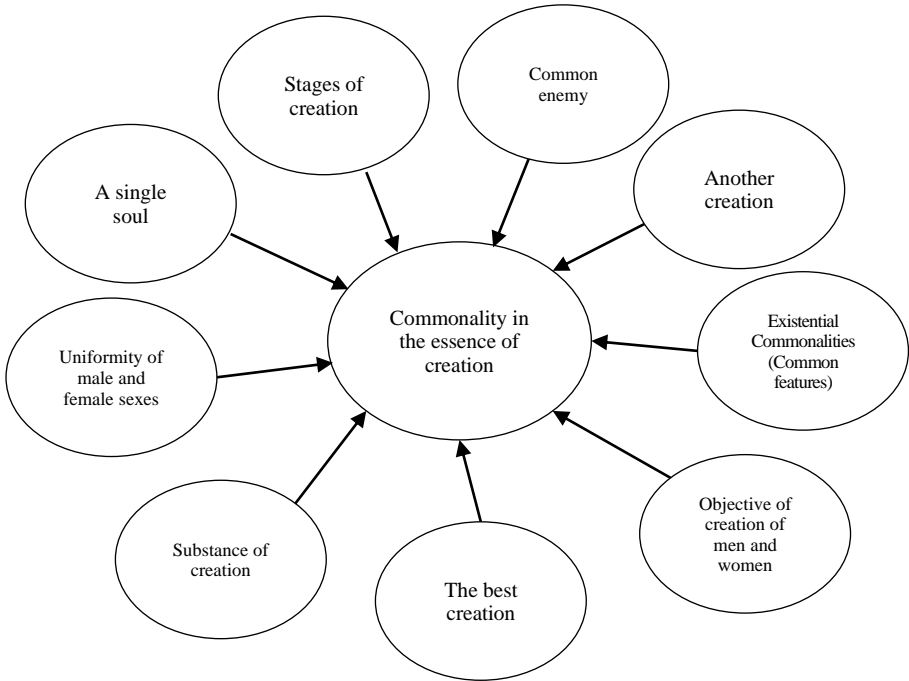


Figure 1: Manner of creation of men and women in the form of a themed network

Figure 1 shows the results of the theme analysis concerning how men and women are created. Therefore, based on the Quranic verses, the uniformity of the gem of creation for the man and woman is established. Men and women are created with the same gem in two different genders to fulfill their duties in two different roles. Although there is a difference in the portion of each of them from this gem, but there is no distinction in their souls; because the soul is the basis for superiority, which is free from being male or female. The soul is created being and it is after the creation of the body that gender, typical, and personal differences come in. (Mişbāḥ Yazdi and Fayyazi, 1391 SH) Therefore, the formation of gender is after the creation of the body and has caused men and women to be placed in two different positions in the family system; a unique position that cannot be replaced. Differences in position do not mean the superiority or inferiority [of one to another]; as the difference is undisputable and undeniable and it is wrong to use it to evaluate the human position. The difference in tasks and roles is due to the difference in developmental characteristics and the need for coordination in social affairs, and these differences should not be considered the primary criterion for valuing the personality of men and women. (Zibāinejad & Subhāni, 1383 SH) This is because real values are moral values that cause human happiness or misery. According to Islamic thought, these values are higher than the material and social factors and shall be a means of gaining proximity to God. Therefore, the differences that can be seen in the Islamic rulings and duties are related to external and social issues, and based on them, it cannot be said that a woman or a man is closer to God.

Even though men and women are created from a single soul, but each of them still has unique characteristics and abilities that make them different from the other, as if they had a different benefit from this unity. The presence of potentials that are different causes disparities and defects in each of them without the other partner and finally, it causes them to find comfort together. The natural tendency of men and women toward each other is due to the unity and completeness of the single soul and the imperfection that men and women have toward each other. (Rostami Nasab, 1388 SH)

In view of this, the process of individual perfection and

excellence takes place by being in the family set-up and being placed in their roles. The existence of specific gender characteristics leads to differences in family roles. For proper education and growth to be achieved, harmonious communication and sharing between men and women is necessary so that with their support a good interaction is formed and the ground for the development of men and women and their children is provided. Unity is a pillar for the coexistence and growth of both men and women.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, the verses of the Holy Quran and traditions about the creation of men and women were examined, and in a brief comparison with the type of narration of the creation of men and women in the Bible, it was found that in the view of Islam, contrary to the Bible, men and women are like each other in the creation and some characteristics. In creation, God's grace included Adam and Eve, and this grace extended to human beings as well. Hazrat Adam (PBUH) came to life by the blowing of the divine breath: *"So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit"* (Quran 15: 29). And this mercy flowed in his children and generation as well: *"Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid. Then He proportioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit"* (Quran 32: 8-9), *"Certainly We have honoured the Children of Adam"* (Quran 17: 70) which encompasses all human beings, both men and women. Becoming a vicegerent of God implies qualities that both men and women can achieve, and it is a characteristic shared by men and women; because its basis is the soul of a person which is free from being a male or female.

Based on the analysis of the themes of the numerous verses about the creation of men and women, it was observed that men and women are the same in themes such as *'the best creation'*, *'purpose of creation'*, *'existential traits'* and *'the common enemy'*, and *'material of creation'*, etc., and this commonality reaches its peak with regards to *'a single soul'*, which indicates that men and women are created from the same species and the same genus, and besides these commonalities, they also have differences. These differences are not proof of the superiority or inferiority of one

gender over the other, but they are necessary for different roles and duties to be played by each of them. The male and female gender is formed and come into play after humanity. Therefore, humanity is a concept outside being a male and a female; because it is an attribute of the soul, just like the attribute of being a servant of God is for everyone. Achieving human perfection is possible in various ways, and differences [in gender] can make the way and intermediate goals different, but the ultimate goal is the same. Therefore, the ability to achieve happiness and gain proximity to Almighty God is the same for both men and women. The existence of gender differences is not proof that one gender is inferior to another gender in terms of value status.

Platforms have been placed in the parents and children, which are effective in educating each one and progressing the course of perfection. The father, mother, and child have mutual effects; by being placed in a suitable educational environment such as a family based on kindness and mercy, both the personality of the child is formed well and it also causes the development of the parents.

The consequence of the view of the equality of men and women, along with acceptance of differences, is the acceptance of responsibilities and distinct functions with special abilities, which in addition to building self-esteem in a person and accepting one's gender identity, is also influential in the attitude and expectations of others. In view of this, it is suggested that, along with education and training based on the same values of men and women, efforts should also be made to educate and train the two genders differently. The specific features and foundations of each species that were mentioned in the 'Verses of Creation' have been discussed more widely in other verses of the Holy Quran, which requires further and precise investigation and more detailed research.

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