

The Story of Human Creation in the Qur'an and the Old Testament: A Linguistic-Narrative Approach for Reconstructing the Dominant Gender Discourse

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ABSTRACT:

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The application of the gender approach to the holy books has expanded with the rise of feminism in the modern era. The study and extraction of the gender discourses that dominate these books can help in the reconstruction and understanding of relevant historical features. Comparing the gender approach of these books can also introduce us to paradigm shifts in different historical periods. For this purpose, firstly, we have shown in this study that the Qur'an employs a moderate, complex, and hybrid form of all the three discourses: feminine, masculine, and egalitarian. Secondly, the linguistic/narrative approach to the pre-Qur'anic scriptures and its comparison with the Qur'anic approach shows the extent of the masculine and sometimes misogynistic approach of these books. A review of some post-Qur'anic exegesis and hadith books also shows that their gender discourse is more compatible with the masculine approach of pre-Qur'anic books than the moderate Qur'anic approach. Due to the large number of sources required for this research, only the gender discourse in the creation story was chosen as a case study.

KEYWORDS: The story of human creation; the Qur'an; Torah; Old Testament; gender discourses.

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1. Introduction

The Qur'an is the most important source that has survived from the early Arab period. Thus, this text, in addition to being a sacred text and a book of Shari'ah, can be considered a source for extracting historical events. The application of a systematic method to study this book allows us to deduce the approaches and discourses that govern it, thereby reconstructing the historical approaches of the time.

Gender discourse(s) are one of the discourses that can appear in a text, reflecting the historical contexts around it. Three gender discourses that generally interest researchers in this field are masculine, feminine, and egalitarian. Indeed, societies play an important role in constructing and directing the use of these gender discourses within a text. However, power relations are complex, and their emergence is not necessarily discernible in a linear fashion, especially in a text such as the Qur'an, which has been consolidated over the course of 22 years, passing through tumultuous times. For this reason, a discursive analysis of its text would help to better clarify the gender relations within it and to extract historical evidence related to gender.

It seems that the quality of the application of these discourses does not follow a simple and linear model, but rather a non-linear and complex one (Darzi, et al. 2021). The initial analysis of this noticeable and apparent difference in the Qur'an can lead to the discovery of gendered layers and different discursive levels. This is a perspective that has not been taken into account in Qur'anic studies.

This analysis also shows that the historical context(s) of gender do not necessarily follow a completely masculine approach. Numerous studies show that masculine discourse was prominent in Arab society about a century or two after the revelation of the Qur'an. This would be complemented by our research because we could show that the Qur'an is not misogynistic at all. On the contrary, the existence of numerous verses in which egalitarian or feminine discourse is embedded demonstrates a moderate view of gender. Thus, the Qur'an, as the most important source in the Prophet's time, does not have a purely masculine approach. Not only is there ample evidence of an egalitarian approach, but there are also verses that show a feminine view.

The linguistic-narrative examination of other texts from that period seems to enable us to better understand the significance of this analysis in historical reconstruction of gender discourses and further to complete this research. Also, comparing the text of the Qur'an with other texts

written in later centuries can further clarify the discursive distinction of the Qur'an from those texts, revealing the impact of anti-woman historical contexts on the written collections of those times.

Here we will attempt in particular to compare the Qur'an with respect to its gender approach to the Torah and various Islamic texts. Given the fact that the story of creation is very gender-based and for this reason, it has been the focus of scholars of holy texts, we have focused solely on the story of Genesis. This comparative study shows that in this story, the Qur'an has a much more moderate approach to gender than its predecessor religious texts, especially the Torah, and that gender equality is more prevalent in it. Comparing these two different approaches to gender in the holy texts with the Hadith books compiled two or three centuries after the Qur'an also shows that they followed the pre-Qur'anic texts, especially the Torah, rather than the Qur'an.

The methodology used in this scientific article is a linguistic/narrative approach. The concept of narration is defined as "any sequence of clauses containing at least one temporal juncture" (Labov and Waletzky, 1967: 28). Through narrative analysis and a gender-focused lens, we examine the creation story in the Qur'an. Previous research has emphasised the relationship between "language and gender", such as Lazar's (2005) discourse analysis of gender in linguistic applications. In this study, we will also evaluate the use of narration in the Qur'an and Torah with a focus on gender. Therefore, it is important for us to emphasise gender in the use of terms in the creation narrative. The creation narrative is important for this research in two ways: first, it is used in a similar way in the Qur'an and the Torah, and the sequence of clauses is well seen in it; second, there is a clear distinction between these two narratives in terms of gender propositions, and thus, the comparison between the two is significant. It should be noted that although there have been many works that claim to extract the Qur'anic discourse on gender or the status of women in the Qur'an (e.g., see Barlas 2001; Barlas 2006: 255-273; Vahiduddin 1956: 1-6; Faruqi 1984: 36-49; Lamchichi 1995: 97-111; Awde, 2000), the focus of these studies has generally been on the common patriarchal readings of the Qur'an and not on what the text of the Qur'an indicates. Moreover, the gendered approach of the Qur'an has rarely been compared with other texts such as the Old and New Testaments and Hadith books. Smith and Haddad (1982), in one of the most important studies on the subject, have presented the Islamic image of women. This work, which has less of a linguistic-narrative approach, aims to show that in the Qur'an and some other Islamic sources women

are not secondary and subordinate to men. On the contrary, a subordinate and sometimes misogynistic approach to women is visible. Roded (2012) has also recently conducted an important research on human creation in the Qur'an and the Hebrew Bible. This research also focuses on feminist exegesis of the Qur'an, rather than focusing on the sentences and phrases of the Qur'an and the Torah. As a continuation of these two valuable studies, in this article we will take a linguistic-narrative look at the story of creation in the Qur'an, and by comparing the gendered approach of the Qur'an in this story with that of the Torah and some of the Hadith books, we will show the extent of intertextual interactions. We will also show a more moderate view of the Qur'an on gender than ever before.

2. Moderate and Multivalent Approach of the Qur'an to Gender

All three discourses of gender are found in the Qur'an, including masculine, feminine and egalitarian discourses (Darzi et al, 2021). Although the masculine discourse is more prominent than the other two discourses in this context, the linguistic applications of the text show that the feminist and egalitarian discourses are also relatively visible.

Regarding the egalitarian approach in the Qur'an, we can see two different patterns:

1. The use of gender-neutral devices like *man*¹ (who), *mā*² (what), *kull*³ (every), *nafs*⁴ (person), etc. Using such devices in the text could reduce the masculinity of the sentences (Darzi et al. 2021: a6228). There are many examples of this type (e.g., see Q. 57:4; 10:31) in the following verses, among which the following verse is a prominent example:

(Q.4:126) *وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا*

And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And ever is Allah, of all things, encompassing.

.1 مَن

.2 مَا

.3 كُلِّ

.4 نَفْس

2. Simultaneous use of masculine and feminine gender indicators within a context (Darzi et al. 2021: a6228). Here the user of the language deals with a single subject or content in both its masculine and feminine forms. The following verses are significant examples of this type:

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ (Q.4:7)

For men is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it little or much - an obligatory share.

لَا تَسْمَوْنَ مَا فُضِّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ (Q.4:32)

And do not wish for that by which Allah has made some of you exceed others. For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا خَبِيرًا (Q.4:35)

And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allah will cause it between them. Indeed, Allah is ever Knowing and Acquainted [with all things].

Another set of Qur'anic verses deals with the *dominant feminine approach*. There are two models of this kind.

1. Direct address to women in the Qur'an:

يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ (Q.3:43)

O Mary, be devoutly obedient to your Lord and prostrate and bow with those who bow [in prayer].

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا (Q.33:30)

O wives of the Prophet, whoever of you should commit a clear immorality - for her the punishment would be doubled two-fold, and ever is that, for Allah, easy.

Addressing the audience directly shows the importance we attach to the audience. This form of addressing women in Qur'anic verses has the effect of largely eliminating the dominance of the masculine approach.

2. Women representatives in the Qur'an:

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِي مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (Q. 66:11)

And Allah presents an example of those who believed: the wife of Pharaoh, when she said, "My Lord, build for me near You a house in Paradise and save me from Pharaoh and his deeds and save me from the wrongdoing people".

وَمَرْيَمَ ابْنَتَ عِمْرَانَ الَّتِي أَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنفَخْنَا فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِنَا وَصَدَّقَتْ بِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّهَا وَكُتِبَ لَهَا مِنَّا زَكَاةً وَمَكَانًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (Q. 66:12)

And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity, so We blew into [her garment] through Our angel, and she believed in the words of her Lord and His scriptures and was of the devoutly obedient.

Such verses can be considered a good model for demonstrating the Qur'an's affirmation on the issue of women's leadership and thus provide us with good evidence of its supportive approach towards the feminine discourse. In these verses, women are seen as role models for people and even men. In some of these verses, women's leadership is also affirmed and viewed positively.

إِنِّي وَجَدتُ امْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ (Q. 27:23)

Indeed, I found [there] a woman ruling them, and she has been given of all things, and she has a great throne.

These verses are only a limited part of the verses in the Qur'an that have a feminine approach. In the continuation of the article, and specifically in the narrative analysis of the story of human creation, we will show how egalitarian the Qur'an's view of women is.

According to what has been said in the previous section, and what is shown in full detail in the research of Darzi et al. (2021), it is clear that firstly, in its approach to gender, the Qur'an has focused on all forms: masculine, feminine, and egalitarian. Secondly, in the masculine

approach, the misogynist view can never be seen. This approach seems to be very advanced and moderate compared to other texts written before and after the Qur'an. To prove this hypothesis, we compare the Qur'an, the Torah, and some other Islamic texts in the narrative style of human creation. It seems that in contrast to the moderate gender approach to women in the Qur'an, the masculine and sometimes misogynist approach in the Torah and other pre-Qur'anic texts is explicit and transparent.

This study also shows that the Hadith books compiled after the Qur'an, instead of adopting a moderate Qur'anic discourse on gender, in some parts followed the historical-cultural context of their time and also the purely masculine approach of the Torah in their narrative style.

3. Creation Story in the Torah and Some Islamic Resources: A Gender Attitude

The story in the Torah begins with the creation of Adam from the ground. God then placed the man whom He had formed (created) in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) to cultivate and keep it (Genesis 2:15), and told him:

You may freely (unconditionally) eat [the fruit] from every tree of the garden; but [only] from the tree of the knowledge (recognition) of good and evil you shall not eat, otherwise on the day that you eat from it, you shall most certainly die [because of your disobedience]. (Genesis 2:16-17)

The problem of man's loneliness is at the centre of the discussion, and God wants to bring man out of his loneliness (Genesis 2:18). So, first, the animals and birds were created to find a helper for him, but none of them were suitable for the job (Genesis 2:19-20). Then, it explains that woman was created from man, and her creation is seen as a subsidiary and branch of human creation. This narrative style states in the naming of Eve that woman is a subsidiary and subordinate of man:

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man He made (fashioned, formed) into a woman, and He brought her and presented her to the man. Then Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." (Genesis 2:21-23)

The Hebrew text of the last verse is as follows.

שִׂימָא יָכּ, הַשָּׂא אֶרְקִי תֹאזֵל?; יִרְשָׁבְכֶם רְשָׁבוּ, 'יִמְצָעֶם מִצָּעַ מֵעַפְפֵּה תֹאזֵל, מְדָאָהּ, רְמָאִין תֹּאזֵל-הַתְּקִלָּהּ.

In this phrase, הַשָּׂא (*Īshah*) means female and שִׂימָא (*Īsh*) means male (Gesenius 1939, 1030, 35). In this designation, as in the terminology, the word woman is a subordinate for man. There are many traditions in Islamic sources that deal with the naming of women in a similar way. The following quotations may serve as good examples:

... He said to Abu Ja‘far, peace be upon him, “Do you allow me to ask?” He said, “So, I will let you ask!” ... He said, “Why was Ḥawwā called ‘Ḥawwā’?” He said, “because it was created from a living rib, i.e., Adam’s rib” (al-Ṭabarsī 1966, 2:64-65; Barqī 1953, 336).

In another hadith, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, in response to a Jewish question about the reason for naming Ḥawwā, says that she was so named because she was created from animal (*al-ḥaywān*) (Ibn Bābawayh 1966: 1:1-2).

Therefore, it seems that some Islamic sources, just like the Torah, have taken a masculine approach in telling the story of Adam and Eve’s creation. In addition to what we have said about the naming of Eve, these hadiths, generally quoted by Ibn ‘Abbās and Ibn Mas‘ūd (Māwardī 1987: 78; Ibn ‘Asākir 1995: 69:102), contain the main components of the Torah narrative. These components are: (1) Eve was created to dwell with Adam; (2) The creation of Eve occurred when Adam was asleep and God created Eve from his rib (al-Rāzī 1935: 3:2, Ibn Kathīr: 1:80; al-Ṭabarsī 1994: 1:194).

3.1. *Woman Driving Man Out of the Garden*

One of the most important parts of the creation story from a gender perspective is the part in which Eve is presented as the cause of the expulsion of man from the Garden of Eden. Islamic narratives, both Shi‘a and Sunni, are closest in theme and narrative style to the narratives of the Torah and are therefore far removed from the discourse of the Qur’an in this story. Throughout the story, the woman is a deceived creature who succumbs to the serenity of the serpent and provides Adam with disobedience to God’s command:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order

to make one wise and insightful, she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate (Genesis 3:6).

In the continuation of Adam and Eve's conversation with God, Adam blames Eve for the disobedience and Eve blames the serpent:

God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten [fruit] from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me—she gave me [fruit] from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent beguiled and deceived me, and I ate [from the forbidden tree]" (Genesis 3:11-13).

A very similar theme to this passage can be found in Islamic sources:

[God asked Adam] 'Why did you eat the tree I had forbidden?' He answered: 'Eve made me eat of that tree'. Then God asked Eve, 'Why did you give Adam the forbidden fruit?' Eve said, 'The snake gave me this order'. So, the Lord asked the serpent, 'Why did you give him this command?' The snake replied, 'The satan ordered me' (al-Ṭabarī 1960, 1:160).

Like the Torah narrative, here Adam is not the main culprit, and a series of causes have been considered, starting with Eve. In the following, it is therefore intended with a more specific emphasis on Eve's punishment. The pain of childbirth, her interest in her husband, and her husband's domination are identified as punishments for woman's disobedience. With regard to the punishment of Adam, the masculine approach is also quite evident; it is said that believing his wife's word is a cause for his punishment:

To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth; In pain you will give birth to children; Yet your desire and longing will be for your husband, And he will rule [with authority] over you and be responsible for you. Then to Adam the Lord God said, "Because you have listened [attentively] to the voice of your wife, and have eaten [fruit] from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it'" (Genesis 3:16-17).

In Islamic sources, too, the main blame is explicitly attributed to Eve, and she is removed because of her conduct:

... [But Adam] said to Ḥawwā, “Depart from me and the messengers of my Lord. What happened to me only happened because of you, and whatever has befallen me has done so through you” (al-Ṭabarī 1960, 1:160).

4. *Creation Story in the Qur'an: A Gender Attitude*

Unlike the Torah, where the story of creation is considered in a specific chapter, the Qur'an has dealt with it in various *sūrah*s. The creation of man and other related issues is mentioned in the following stages in the Qur'an:

1. Human is created and then angels are commanded to prostrate to his but Iblīs disobeys.
2. Adam and Eve are created from a single soul.
3. Adam and Eve begin their life in heaven.
4. Satan deceived them both (or just Adam) and they both disobeyed the command of God.
5. God accepts man's repentance.
6. God sends both to earth at the end.

Here we will first consider all these stages in terms of gender approach and finally we will compare the Qur'an with the Torah.

4.1. *Human Creation*

On the contrary to the Torah, where the creation of human begins in a masculine way and is dedicated to Adam, in the Qur'an, the story begins with the creation of human being. In some verses, humans are referred to as a species:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ (Q.7:11)

And We have certainly created you, [O Mankind], and given you [human] form. Then We said to the angels, “Prostrate to Adam”; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He was not of those who prostrated.

Elsewhere, given the ambiguity in the verse, this creation may be related to the human species or to Adam:

إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ (Q.38:71)

[So mention] when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay.

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ (Q.15:26)

And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud.

These verses use words such as *basbar* and *al-insān* that have a general meaning and can include all human beings. As stated in the previous verses, after the creation of man, the angels were commanded to prostrate to him, but Iblīs refused to do so.

4.2. Creation of Eve

As we have seen in the Torah verses, the creation of Eve has completely a masculine aspect and the woman is introduced as a subsidiary of man. The Qur’an does not discuss the creation of Eve in a coherent narrative of human creation, but in other passages and in the dispersed form of the subject. These verses never explicitly refer to the creation of woman as a subsidiary of man’s creation. In some verses, the creation of human beings is considered from one soul and instead of emphasizing the male gender. The creation from a single soul devoid of any specific gender is addressed in the following verses:

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا (Q.39:6)

He created you from one soul. Then He made from it its mate, ...

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا (Q.4:1)

O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.

In another verse, by using the word “couple,” the cause of such creation is considered the comfort for both sides:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (Q.30:21)

And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy.

4.3. *Living in the Heaven*

The issue of the prostration of angels to man and the disobedience of Iblīs (Satan) has no place in the Torah narrative of human creation. However, this debate plays a central role in the story of the creation and expulsion of Adam and Eve from heaven. Exactly after that, God warns Adam and Eve that Satan is their enemy and to be beware of him not letting themselves down. Addressing both men and women represents the balanced approach of the Qur'an to gender in this story.

فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَذَا عَدُوٌّ لَكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكَمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَى (Q.20:117)

So We said, "O Adam, indeed this is an enemy to you and to your wife. Then let him not remove you from Paradise so you would suffer.

Afterwards both are told to live in Paradise. According to the Torah, Eve is created after living in Paradise, but in the Qur'anic narration both are created before living in Paradise:

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (Q.2:35; see also Q. 7:19)

And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."

However, Eve has no place in the Torah narrative, until Adam was in paradise. As it is seen in two verses above, all the pronouns and verbs are addressed to both Adam and Eve. The form of address that is followed in the Qur'an is further evident in the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience about eating of the forbidden fruit.

4.4. Adam and Eve's Disobedience and Acceptance of Their Repentance

In the Qur'anic narrative, the story of the creation goes as if Satan's expulsion from the Divine grace was a cause for him to deceive Adam and Eve and to expel them from Paradise. Therefore, in all related verses, Satan is introduced as the agent and the cause of deception. However, the important question to be answered is who the devil has deceived primarily? In the masculine narrative of the Torah, it is Eve who is deceived by the serpent, and by her suggestion to Adam causes him to disobey God. Nevertheless, in the Qur'an, the narrative form of the story is quite different. Often the addresses are general and include both Adam and Eve simultaneously:

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ (Q.2:36)

But Satan caused them to slip out of it and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time."

The verse above speaks in general terms of deceiving Adam and Eve, but the verses Q. 7:20-22 elaborate that both Adam and Eve were present in all conversations:

فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيُبْدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْآتِهِمَا وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا عَنْ
هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَكَتَيْنِ أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ * وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِيَّيَّيْ لَكُمْ لِمَنِ النَّاصِحِينَ
* فَدَلَّاهُمَا بِغُرُورٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْآتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَرَقِ
الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا عَنْ تِلْكَمَا الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلَّ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ
(Q. 7:20-22)

But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal." And he swore [by Allah] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors." So he made them fall, through deception. And when they tasted of the tree, their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten together over themselves from the leaves of Paradise.

And their Lord called to them, “Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan is to you a clear enemy?”

The words and phrases outlined illustrate the gender-equality approach to Adam and Eve in these verses. This egalitarian approach is evident from the beginning of the verses up to the end. The use of pronouns such as *humā* (dual form of ‘them’) and *kumā* (dual form of ‘you’) instead of directly addressing one of them, Adam or Eve, is very effective in applying this approach.

It is only in the verse Q. 20:120 that, unlike in the Torah where Eve is the addressee of Satan, Adam is the main addressee:

فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَى شَجَرَةِ الْجَنَّةِ وَمُلْكٍ لَا يَبْتَلِي

Then Satan whispered to him; he said, “O Adam, shall I direct you to the tree of eternity and possession that will not deteriorate?”

However, in the following verses, the address is re-generalized and involves both Adam and Eve:

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

(Q.20:121)

And Adam and his wife ate of it, and their private parts became apparent to them, and they began to fasten over themselves from the leaves of Paradise. And Adam disobeyed his Lord and erred.

The crucial point in this verse is that although at the beginning of the verse Adam and Eve are both tempted by Satan, at the end it is Adam who is guilty. Here too, there is a clear distinction between the Qur'an and the Torah on the gender perspective because in the Torah, Eve is considered the main disobedient and Adam's sin is consequent of her disobedience. Accordingly, in most verses of the Qur'an, it is Adam who repents before God and God accepts his repentance:

فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (Q.2:37)

Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.

ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَى (Q. 20:122)

Then his Lord chose him and turned to him in forgiveness and guided [him].

In a similar text but different application, the demand for repentance has been attributed to both Adam and Eve. Such an application is consistent with the generalization of the addressees that has already occurred much in the verses above:

قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِنْ لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (Q. 7:23)

They said, “Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”

4.5. *Sending Both to the Earth*

The story of creation in the Qur’an ends with the fall of Adam and Eve to the earth. All the addresses in this section are general, including both Adam and Eve. The emphasis on the plural pronouns here also demonstrates the egalitarian approach of the Qur’an to gender.

قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

(Q. 2:38)

We said, “Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

قَالَ اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ (Q. 7:24)

[Allah] said, “Descend, being to one another enemies. And for you on the earth is a place of settlement and enjoyment for a time.”

5. *Conclusion*

As discussed at the beginning of the article, the Qur’an has a moderate approach to gender, including all three gender discourses of masculine, feminine, and egalitarian. A comparative approach to the Qur’an and the Torah can reveal this moderate approach of the Qur’an to gender. The following findings indicate that the Qur’an has an egalitarian approach to gender in the creation story, in contrast to the Torah, which has a completely masculine and sometimes misogynistic approach.

According to the Qur'an, Adam and Eve were created before they were sent to heaven, but in the Torah, the creation of Eve takes place after Adam's dwelling in heaven.

The creation of Eve in the Torah has a completely masculine approach, i.e., Eve is a subsidiary of Adam; since no helper could be found for Adam among the animals, Eve was created from Adam's rib while he was asleep. However, there is a much more moderate approach in the Qur'an, so that the Qur'anic narrative in this regard is ambiguous in such a way that the creation of Eve can be like that of Adam.

Another way in which the Torah's approach to gender differs from the Qur'an is in the story of human disobedience. The Torah's approach in this respect is purely masculine, whereas many linguistic indications point to the Qur'an's egalitarian approach. In the Torah, it is Eve who is the main addressee of the serpent (the representative of Satan). She is deceived by him and misleads Adam with false advice. In the Qur'an, however, Satan speaks to both Adam and Eve together in heaven. The use of plural pronouns in the Qur'anic narration of this story is remarkable and significant, indicating the egalitarian approach of the text. In a few instances, Satan's main target in heaven is Adam. In contrast to the Torah, in the Qur'anic narrative, Adam is the main culprit, and it is he who commits disobedience.

In the Torah, Eve is the main culprit of disobedience to God, so the pain of childbirth is considered a punishment for her conduct, whereas in the Qur'an, it is Adam who is the main culprit of disobedience, and repentance is also done by him. It is important to note that although in the Qur'anic context of the verses about Satan's dialogue with Adam and Eve, the verbs are always used in the plural, in the story of repentance only Adam is present; he repents and God accepts his repentance.

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