



## A Comparative Study of Human Creation and the Continuation of Progeny with an Emphasis on the Concept of 'Nafs Wahida' in the Quran and the Bible

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### **Abstract**

The creation of humankind has always been a fundamental topic in religious texts, with "Nafs Wahida" (a single soul) being one of the key concepts in this regard. This study, employing a comparative approach and content analysis method, examines the perspectives of the Qur'an, the Torah, and the Gospels on the creation of humans and the concept of "Nafs Wahida." The primary objective of this research is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the sacred texts of the Abrahamic religions (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) to identify the similarities and differences in their interpretations of human creation, the position of men and women, and the semantics of "Nafs Wahida." The Qur'an, in four verses (Surah An-Nisa 4:1, Al-An'am 6:98, Al-A'raf 7:189, and Az-Zumar 39:6), introduces "Nafs Wahida" as the origin of human creation, indicating the unity of human origin and the commonality of all humankind in a single fundamental essence. This perspective emphasizes the equality of men and women in creation and affirms that both were brought into existence from the same essential source. In contrast, the Torah portrays Adam as a male individual and the representative of humankind, stating that Eve was created from one of his ribs. This suggests a lower status for women compared to men in this sacred text. Likewise, the Gospels reference the creation story but emphasize that Eve was created for Adam rather than vice versa. These texts present various theories regarding Eve's creation, including the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, the creation of Eve from the remaining clay of Adam's formation, and the theory of the first human being as an androgynous entity. The findings of this study reveal that while the Qur'an underscores the creation of both men and women from a single essence, the Torah and the Gospels offer differing perspectives on the distinct creation of men and women. Nonetheless, all these texts affirm the unity of human origin and the complementary role of men and women in the continuation of human lineage.

**Keywords:** *Nafs Wahida; Origin of Human Creation; Continuation of Human Lineage; Creation of Adam and Eve; Quran; Biblical Scriptures*

## 1. Statement of the Problem

The question of human creation has long preoccupied the human mind and remains a central theme in the sacred texts of Abrahamic religions. The concept of *Nafs Wahida* (a single soul) signifies the shared origin of humanity in creation. This study, adopting a comparative approach, examines this concept in the Quran and the Bible, aiming to elucidate the similarities and differences between these two sources in their depiction of human creation. The primary objective of this research is to attain a deeper understanding of the common origin of humanity and to explore the impact of this belief on human worldview.

The study of human creation in the sacred texts of the Quran and the Bible has always been fraught with challenges. Two principal perspectives emerge from these texts:

1. The *Nafs Wahida* perspective, which emphasizes the unity of the essence of man and woman at the inception of creation and considers them as originating from a single soul.
2. The *Adam and Eve* perspective, which refers to the distinct and sequential creation of man and woman, signifying that the woman (Eve) was created from the man (Adam).

The apparent contradiction between these two views raises numerous questions regarding the precise interpretation of human creation and the continuation of human progeny.

The ambiguities in the interpretations of verses related to human creation highlight the necessity of a thorough examination of this subject from the perspectives of both the Quran and the Bible. This research seeks to address a fundamental question: Is the creation and continuation of human progeny based on the unity and concept of *Nafs Wahida*, or does it emphasize the duality of Adam and Eve? On the one hand, the Quran refers to the creation of humans from *Nafs Wahida*, indicating a singular origin for all humankind. On the other hand, the Bible underscores the dual role of Adam and Eve, which may lead to interpretations suggesting a division and multiplication of human lineage. Consequently, if humanity's origin is attributed to two individuals, a critical question arises: Why does the Quran state, "*We created you from a single soul*"? A comparative and exegetical analysis of this apparent contradiction can contribute to a more comprehensive and scholarly understanding of the origin and continuity of the human race.

This research employs a comparative approach and a descriptive-analytical methodology. The data has been collected from primary sources, including the Quran, the Torah, and the Gospels, along with authoritative commentaries and religious texts. The study involves an analysis and comparison of the statements found in these sources concerning human creation and the concept of *Nafs Wahida* to identify their similarities and differences. Additionally, historical narratives, Islamic exegeses, and contemporary scholars' perspectives in the field of religious anthropology have been utilized. Content analysis of these texts and the application of a comparative method serve as the primary tools in this research to achieve a deeper understanding of the various perspectives on human creation, the initial status of man and woman, and the mechanism of human progeny's continuity through *Nafs Wahida* or the duality of man and woman.

## 2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have been conducted on the topic of human creation, making it unnecessary to list them all. Some of the most significant studies in this field include:

- "An Analysis of the Independent Creation of Eve (the Wife of Adam, Peace Be Upon Him) Based on the First Verse of Surah al-Nisa", authored by Sosan Aghajanbegu and Homeira Alavi, published in the International Congress on Culture and Religious Thought (2014). This article

analyzes the first verse of Surah al-Nisa concerning the independent creation of Eve from Adam, exploring its spiritual and symbolic dimensions within the framework of the human creation narrative.

- "The Creation of Eve from the Perspective of the Quran", authored by Elahi Vakili and Mohammad Mohammadrezaei, published in the Journal of Religious Thought (2009), Vol. 9, No. 32. This study examines and analyzes the creation of Eve based on Quranic verses, explaining her role in the completion of human creation.
- "Explaining the Relationship Between 'Nafs Wahida' and 'Adam' Based on an Analysis of the Concept of 'Nafs' in the System of Quranic Verses", authored by Farzaneh Rouhani Mashhadi, published in the Journal of Quranic and Hadith Sciences (2020), No. 104. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the concept of *Nafs Wahida* and the existence of Adam in Quranic verses.
- "A Study of Eve's Creation from the Perspective of the Authors of *al-Mizan* and *al-Furqan*", authored by Sheida Karimi and Rabab Halabouabad, published in the Proceedings of the Conference on Quranic Awakening (2013). This article examines the exegetical perspectives of Allameh Tabatabai in *al-Mizan* and Mohammad Sadeqi Tehrani in *al-Furqan* regarding the creation of Eve, highlighting their interpretive differences.
- "An Analysis of the Creation of Woman from the Rib of Man in the Torah and Its Relationship with the First Verse of Surah al-Nisa", authored by Mahmoud Makvand, published in the Journal of Quranic and Hadith Sciences (2021), Vol. 53, No. 2. This study compares the Torah's narrative of woman's creation from a man's rib with the concept of *Nafs Wahida* in the Quran, examining their interpretative and theological implications.
- "The Creation of Eve (Woman) in the Quran and Narrations", authored by Azam Farjami, published in the Journal of Women in Development and Prosperity (2006), Vol. 4, No. 4. This article explores the creation of Eve based on Quranic verses and Islamic narrations, analyzing various exegetical perspectives on the subject.

The distinguishing feature of this study compared to previous research is its examination of the concept of *Nafs Wahida* and the beginning of human creation with reference to this concept in both the Quran and the Bible.

### 3. The Concept of *Nafs Wahida*

Given the necessity of this study, the concept of *Nafs Wahida* is examined from both linguistic and Quranic perspectives.

#### 3.1. The Linguistic Meaning of *Nafs Wahida*

The Arabic term "nafs" has multiple meanings, including soul, blood, eye, body, and a small piece of leather (Johari, 1987, Vol. 3, p. 984; Ibn Manzur, 1993, Vol. 6, p. 233; Al-Azhari, 2000, Vol. 8, p. 13). Additionally, *nafs* has been used to refer to the air inhaled and exhaled from the lungs (Raghib, 1991, p. 818). In some lexicons, this term is applied to refer to human beings in general (Farahidi, 1988, Vol. 7, p. 270).

Some linguistic sources consider *nafs* to be feminine, especially when it signifies *soul*. A notable example is found in the Quranic verse "He created you from a single soul (*nafs wahida*)" (Surah An-Nisa, 4:1), where *nafs* can be interpreted as either "soul" or "human" (Fayoumi, 1977, Vol. 2, p. 617). Therefore, *nafs* is a multifaceted term with various meanings, the exact interpretation of which depends on its contextual usage (Amuli, 2001, Vol. 8, p. 525).

Additionally, Dehkhoda defines *nafs* as soul, spirit, psyche, and an indication of life itself (Dehkhoda, 1994, "Nafs").

### 3.2. The Concept of Nafs Wahida in the Quran

Studies indicate that the term "nafs" in the Quran carries both a general and a specific meaning:

#### 1. General and Practical Meaning

Some scholars believe that *nafs*, in its broadest sense, refers to the fundamental and shared characteristics of human beings and is used in various contexts in the Quran, such as "the Divine Essence," "an individual human being," "humanity as a collective entity," "the primordial nature of man," "intellect," "heart," and "the intermediate existence of humans in the afterlife" (Shakir, 2000, p. 7). In this sense, *nafs* represents a foundational essence that shapes human identity, adopting different meanings and applications depending on the Quranic context.

#### 2. Technical and Specific Meaning

A meticulous analysis of all occurrences of this term in the Quran suggests that *nafs*, when referring to humans, has two levels of meaning:

- A broad meaning, which encompasses the entirety of human existence.
- A more specific meaning, which pertains to spiritual and cognitive dimensions such as intellect (*'aql*) and heart (*qalb*) (Johari, 1987, Vol. 2, p. 828).

This interpretation indicates that *nafs* is not only considered the existential reality of a human being but also a force connected to metaphysical and spiritual dimensions.

In Islamic sciences and Quranic exegesis, *nafs* is regarded as the guiding force behind human movement and thought, with many human actions and behaviors being influenced by one's *nafs* (Montazeri, 2008, pp. 314-316).

## 4. Human Creation from the Perspective of the Quran

This section examines the creation of humans, followed by the creation of Eve.

### 4.1. Human Creation: Analyzing Three Perspectives

#### A) Human Creation from Clay

The Quran explicitly states that humans were created from clay, which was first an undefined substance and then refined from another form of clay. Additionally, it mentions that the subsequent generations of humanity continued from a despised fluid (semen) (Surah As-Sajdah 32:7-8). Similarly, Surah Al-Mu'minun refers to the initial creation of humans from clay, followed by their transition into a drop of fluid placed in a secure location (the womb) (Surah Al-Mu'minun 23:12-13). Based on various Quranic verses (Surah Al-An'am 6:2, As-Saffat 37:11, Al-Hajj 22:5, Aal-e-Imran 3:59), it can be inferred that all human beings were originally created from clay. This means that each individual was first formed from soil before being created from sperm and embryonic stages.

According to these verses, the only conceivable place for this initial creation was the primordial paradise (Razavi, 2012, pp. 45-46). Furthermore, Surah Al-Hajj states: "O people! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then know that We created you from dust." (Surah Al-Hajj 22:5).

An analysis of other Quranic verses suggests that after being created from clay, humans were carried in the loins of men and then placed in the secure environment of a woman's womb as a sperm drop. They subsequently underwent developmental changes until they became fully formed humans.

However, at the stage of creation from clay, humans did not possess individual identity; rather, they existed as unrecognized microscopic particles, all collectively present within the body of Adam (peace be upon him) in Paradise. This phenomenon can be compared to the countless seeds inside a fig fruit (Razavi, 2012, p. 47).

Following this, human beings were created in two sexes: male and female (Surah Fatir 35:11).

Key Question: How Was Humanity First Created from Clay and Then from Sperm?

The Quran provides an analogy between the first creation of humans and their resurrection on the Day of Judgment (Surah Ar-Rum 30:20). Just as God revives the dead earth with rain, He will bring forth humans from the earth (Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:11).

Additionally, some Quranic verses (Surah Nuh 71:17-18) indicate that God brought forth humans from the earth and will return them to it again. These verses explicitly liken human resurrection to the growth of plants: just as rain falls from the sky, moistens the soil, and brings buried seeds to life, humans will also be resurrected in a similar manner.

#### B) The Creation of Humanity from Nafs Wahida

In four verses of the Quran, God introduces *Nafs Wahida* (a single soul) as the origin of human creation. These verses emphasize the unity of human origin and the shared essence of all humankind in a single foundational entity.

In Surah An-Nisa (4:1), God states:

"O mankind! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women..."

This verse highlights that all humans were created from one soul and its mate, and that the human lineage expanded from these two (Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 3, p. 4).

Similarly, Surah Al-An'am (6:98) states:

"And He is the One who produced you from a single soul, then (appointed for you) a dwelling place and a repository..."

This verse signifies the existential unity of humanity and its designated role in the divine order of creation (Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 7, p. 227).

In Surah Al-A'raf (7:189), the Quran declares:

"It is He who created you from a single soul and made from it its mate, that he might find tranquility in her..."

This verse affirms that both men and women originate from the same source, with the purpose of their creation being mutual comfort and completion (Fakhr al-Razi, 1999, Vol. 1, p. 30).

Finally, Surah Az-Zumar (39:6) states:

"He created you from a single soul, then made from it its mate..."

This verse not only reinforces the unity of human nature but also emphasizes the divine wisdom and purpose behind the creation of pairs (Qurtubi, 1993, Vol. 15, p. 251).

#### The Thematic Significance of These Verses

This collection of verses conveys a profound message of equality, solidarity, and the shared divine origin of all human beings. Quranic exegetes have emphasized that this concept rejects any notion

of racial or class-based superiority, reinforcing the unity of humankind before God (Tabari, 1999, Vol. 9, p. 143).

This Quranic teaching serves as a foundation for social justice, peaceful coexistence, and the shared responsibility of all humans toward one another and their Creator.

### C) The Unity, Duality, and Multiplicity of Adam

In the Quran, before the command for the angels to prostrate before Adam (peace be upon him), pronouns referring to Adam appear in the singular form. However, whenever his dwelling in Paradise is mentioned, the pronouns shift to the dual form (Surah Ta-Ha 20:115-123). Then, after the descent (hubūṭ) and the expansion of human progeny, the pronouns are used in the plural form, referring to humanity collectively.

In *Tafsir al-Mizan*, it is explained that humans initially originated from *Nafs Wahida*. However, after the descent of Adam and Eve, their progeny multiplied, and the Quran thereafter refers to humanity in the plural form (Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 146).

From this analysis, it can be inferred that Adam was created as a single being at the beginning of creation and initially lived alone. Later, Eve was created alongside him, making them two individuals. However, they were still perceived as a single unit, until after their descent, when their offspring multiplied (Razavi, 2012, p. 166).

## 4.2. The Creation of Eve

### A) The Theory of Eve's Creation from Adam's Rib

Allameh Majlisi, in *Bihar al-Anwar*, narrates reports regarding the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, yet he neither explicitly confirms nor rejects them. He presents these narrations alongside other reports that require further examination. His approach is primarily to collect and present narrations without issuing a definitive judgment.

For instance, it has been narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) that he said:

“Woman was created from Adam's rib. If you try to straighten her, you will break her; but if you leave her as she is—with a natural curve—you will benefit from her.” (Majlisi, 1403 AH, Vol. 11, p. 99).

Additionally, a narration from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (AS) states:

“When Adam fell asleep, God created from the left rib of his side what appears as the lower ribs, which is a curved rib. From it, He created Eve, and she was named *Hawwa* because she was created from a living being (*Hay*). This is the meaning of God's statement: ‘O mankind! Fear your Lord, who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate...’” (Bahrani, 1415 AH, Vol. 3, p. 374).

However, Shaykh Tusi, in *Tafsir al-Tibyan*, criticizes these narrations, considering them to be of Israelite origin (Isra'iliyyat). He argues that such reports are inconsistent with rational principles and the doctrine of prophetic infallibility (Tusi, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 158; see also Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 2, p. 2).

### B) The Theory of Creation from a Single Essence

Various interpretations have been proposed regarding the meaning of "Nafs Wahida" in Quranic verses, which can be categorized into three main perspectives:

#### 1. Personal Unity (Interpretation as a Single Seed or Nutfah)

Many exegetes interpret "Nafs Wahida" as referring to a single seed (nutfah), namely Adam, while "Zawj" (mate) is understood to be Eve. This interpretation is mainly derived from Surah An-Nisa (4:1) and Surah Az-Zumar (39:6) (Alusi, 1415 AH, Vol. 2, p. 391; Tusi, n.d., Vol. 3, p. 99, Vol. 2, p. 391;

Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol. 3, p. 245; Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 135; Ibn Ashur, 1999, Vol. 4, p. 9; Qomi Mashhadi, 1989, Vol. 3, p. 307; Tayyib, 1999, Vol. 15, p. 286; Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 211; Al-Bahr Al-Muhit, 1999, Vol. 4, p. 234).

According to this view, both men and women originate from the same single nutfah (Adam), which forms the foundation of their intrinsic equality. Therefore, in the context of Surah Az-Zumar and Surah An-Nisa, "Nafs Wahida" is identified as Adam, the progenitor of humankind.

At first glance, these verses suggest that Adam was created first, and later his wife, Eve, was created from him, making them the parents of all human beings. However, as some exegetes have pointed out, the claim that Eve was created from Adam's rib, as mentioned in certain narrations, cannot be definitively established through these verses (Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 136). Therefore, although the Quran does not explicitly confirm the creation of Eve from Adam's ribs, this interpretation does not fundamentally contradict Quranic teachings either.

## 2. Generic Unity (Interpretation as a Single Soul or Spirit)

Some scholars interpret "Nafs Wahida" as referring to a single soul (ruh), meaning that both men and women originate from the same fundamental spiritual essence. This perspective underscores the inherent spiritual and natural equality between men and women. According to this interpretation, the verse does not refer to a specific individual, such as Adam, but rather to humanity as a species.

In the exegetical work "Parto'i az Qur'an", it is stated that "Nafs Wahida" refers to a living being in its primordial state, even before it fully developed into a complete human form, as the term "nafs" can be applied to any living entity (Taleqani, 1983, Vol. 6, p. 16).

Additionally, a narration from Imam Ali (AS) states that both Adam (AS) and Eve (SA) were created from a single soul (Majlisi, 1403 AH, Vol. 6, p. 23). Therefore, "Nafs Wahida" signifies a singular spirit that manifests within two human beings—one male and one female (Tabari, 1991, Vol. 2, p. 156).

Moreover, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (AS) affirms: "Men and women are equal in their creation and innate nature." (Majlisi, 1403 AH, Vol. 16, p. 24).

## 3. The Objective Reality of Being

Allameh Tabatabai offers a distinct perspective:

"The meaning of 'Nafs Wahida' in these Quranic verses refers to the essence, origin, and objective reality of existence. It does not signify merely the soul, spirit, or mind of a man. For instance, when one says, 'So-and-so came himself (*ja'ani fulanun binafsihi*),' it implies that the person himself came, meaning his very being or essence. Thus, 'nafs' in these verses is synonymous with 'ayn,' denoting the fundamental nature and reality of existence." (Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 16).

### Interpretations of "Min" in the Related Quranic Expressions

In the phrases "wa khalaqa minha zawjaha" or "wa ja'ala minha zawjaha", the Arabic preposition "min" has been interpreted in various ways:

- "Min" as *Min Taba'idiyyah* (denoting partiality): Eve was created from a part of Adam's being.
- "Min" as *Min Bayaniyyah* (denoting explanation): Eve was created from the same essence as Adam (Najafi, 2019, Vol. 3, p. 126).
- "Min" as *Min Nash'iyyah* (denoting origination): Eve was of the same species as Adam, and all human beings originate from these two individuals (Tabatabai, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 140).

- "Min" as *Min Ibtida' al-Ghaya* (denoting inception): The creation of Eve or woman began from Adam's being or the male species (Najafi, 2019, Vol. 3, p. 124).
- "Min" as *Min Liqlihi* (denoting purpose): Eve or woman was created for the sake of Adam to provide companionship and tranquility.

### C) The Theory of Eve's Creation Alongside Adam

The discussion regarding how Eve was created from Adam can be categorized into two main perspectives:

#### 1. The Creation of Eve from Adam

Most contemporary Shi'a exegetes, including Allameh Tabatabai, believe that Eve was created from the same type and essence as Adam, rather than being formed directly from his body (Tabatabai, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 143; Balaghi, Vol. 2, p. 6; Maghniyyah, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 84).

A narration attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) states:

"Adam did not engage in marital relations with his wife in Paradise until he was expelled from it..." (Razavi, 2012, p. 100, quoting Suyuti, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 57).

In this narration, the verb "هبط" (expelled/descended) appears in the singular form, which suggests their apparent unity and bodily connection, as if they were perceived as a single entity, and their descent from Paradise occurred as a unified event.

The concept of the apparent unity of Adam and Eve is also found in ancient Hindu scriptures. The Upanishads state:

"Adam and Eve in Paradise were like two halves of a chickpea resting within a single covering." (Razavi, 2012, p. 101, quoting Upanishad, p. 14).

A fitting analogy for the connection between Adam and Eve and their lack of marital relations in Paradise is that of an unplanted fig seed—a seed that has not been sown, has not consumed earthly sustenance, and has not yet sprouted roots, stems, or leaves. At this stage, its male and female attributes are indistinguishable and latent (Razavi, 2012, p. 101).

#### 2. The Creation of Eve from the Remaining Clay of Adam

A narration from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS) states:

"God created Eve from the excess clay left over after the creation of Adam (AS)." (Tabarsi, 1994, Vol. 2, p. 8; Ayyashi, n.d., p. 261).

The phrase "Then He made from it its mate" in Surah An-Nisa (4:1) has been interpreted to mean that God first created Adam and then created his wife from the remaining clay used for Adam's creation. According to this interpretation, Eve was created after Adam (Makarem Shirazi, 2013, Vol. 19, p. 380).

#### Critique and Analysis of This Perspective

Two key points must be considered in evaluating this theory:

##### 1. The Contradiction Between These Narrations and Quranic Verses

Although these narrations are numerous, they contradict the Quranic verses, which explicitly describe the material of human creation as follows:

- "From clay" (Surah Aal-e-Imran 3:59),



- "From clay" (Surah As-Sajdah 32:7),
- "From sticky clay" (Surah As-Saffat 37:11),
- "From dry clay made of black and aged mud" (Surah Al-Hijr 15:26),
- "From dried clay like pottery" (Surah Ar-Rahman 55:14).

In these verses, the term 'human' is used in a general sense, encompassing both men and women (Tabatabai, 2011, Vol. 16, p. 263; Vol. 12, p. 158).

## 2. Opposing Narrations in Shi'a Sources

Many authentic Shi'a narrations strongly reject the claim that Eve was created from Adam's body or provide an alternative perspective.

First Narration:

Zurara ibn A'yan reports that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (AS) was asked about the creation of Eve, and he was told that some people believe God created her from the lowest rib on Adam's left side.

Imam al-Sadiq (AS) responded:

"God is far above such attributions! Does the one who holds this belief think that God was incapable of creating a spouse for Adam from something other than his ribs, so that there would be no confusion or misconception that Adam married a part of his own body? What kind of belief is this? May God judge between us and them!" (Sadouq, 2007, Vol. 3, p. 379).

Second Narration:

'Amr ibn Abi al-Muqdam reports from his father that he asked Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (AS):

"How did God create Eve?"

The Imam (AS) replied:

"What do people say about this matter?"

I said: "They say God created her from Adam's ribs."

The Imam (AS) responded:

"They are lying! Was God incapable of creating her from anything other than Adam's ribs?"

I asked: "May I be sacrificed for you, then from what did He create her?"

The Imam (AS) replied:

"My father narrated from the Messenger of God (PBUH) that God, the Almighty and Majestic, took a handful of clay and mixed it with His right hand—both of His hands are right (a metaphorical expression of divine power, not physicality). From this clay, He created Adam, and from the remaining excess, He created Eve." (Ayyashi, n.d., Vol. 1, p. 216).

Conclusion: Allameh Majlisi, in reconciling these conflicting narrations, states that the reports suggesting Eve's creation from Adam's ribs were either transmitted under the influence of taqiyyah (precautionary dissimulation) to avoid opposition with prevalent beliefs at the time, or they actually meant that Eve was created from the remaining clay used for Adam's creation rather than directly from his body (Majlisi, 1403 AH, Vol. 11, p. 116).

Thematic Insights from the Verses on *Nafs Wahida*

Two fundamental conclusions can be drawn from these discussions:

1. All human beings, regardless of gender, share the same essence and nature. This is supported by the word "An-Nas" (mankind) at the beginning of Surah An-Nisa (4:1), which includes both men and women.
2. The first man was Adam (AS), and the first woman was Eve (SA), who are the parents of humankind.

Given the various perspectives on the creation of Adam and Eve, the final understanding is that the Quran explicitly states that all humans were created from *Nafs Wahida* (a single soul), but there are differing views on how the creation of woman relates to this concept.

The Quran establishes a single shared origin for all humans and, in multiple verses (Surah An-Nisa 4:1, Surah Al-An'am 6:98, Surah Al-A'raf 7:189, and Surah Az-Zumar 39:6), emphasizes the unity of humankind.

These verses affirm that men and women were created from the same fundamental reality and share the same intrinsic human nature. This forms a basis for social justice, peaceful coexistence, and the rejection of any racial or gender-based superiority.

Furthermore, the various interpretations of Eve's creation indicate that she was either created from the same type and essence as Adam or from the remaining clay used to form him. However, the Quran does not explicitly state that she was created from Adam's rib; rather, it underscores the existential unity of men and women.

## 5. The Creation of Humans in the Bible

The **creation of humans** can be examined in the **Torah and the New Testament**.

### 5.1. The Torah

The story of creation in the Book of Genesis presents three key perspectives:

#### 1. The Primacy and Central Role of Adam

Adam, a male figure, is depicted as the symbol and representative of humankind.

- Adam is created first, and God (YHWH) entrusts him with the Garden of Eden, saying:
  - "Work in it and live in it, but do not approach these two trees." (Genesis 2:15-17).
  - These two trees are "the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" and "the Tree of Life" (Genesis 2:9).
- At this stage, no mention of Adam's wife (Eve) is made.
- God's first interaction with Adam occurs before Eve's creation.

#### 2. The Creation of Eve Due to Adam's Loneliness

- Later in the story, YHWH states, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18).
- This verse highlights Adam's loneliness, and Eve's creation is intended to alleviate his solitude.

#### 3. The Creation of Eve from Adam's Rib – A Companion or a Derivative?

- The story then describes how Eve was created:

"So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man." (Genesis 2:21-22).

- The Hebrew word "צֵלָע" (*Tzela*), translated as "rib," has broader meanings:
  - It is similar to the Arabic word "ضلع" (*Dhil*), meaning "side, corner, or part of a structure."
  - Some Jewish commentators interpret this word metaphorically, suggesting that Eve was created from a part of Adam's essence rather than a literal rib. (Alijani, 2011, p. 82).

### **Jewish Perspectives on the Creation of Humans in Rabbinic Literature**

The Torah and Rabbinic commentaries present two primary views on the creation of humans and Eve:

#### **A) Eve's Creation from Adam's Rib (Majority View)**

- The dominant Jewish view holds that the first human was a man, created in God's image, and that the woman was later formed from his body.
- The Bible states that Eve was created after Adam and from his left rib (Genesis 2:22).
- The Biblical narrative reads:

18. The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19. Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

20. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals. But for Adam, no suitable helper was found.

21. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

22. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man.

23. 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."

24. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Genesis 2:18-24)

- Regarding the role of women after the Fall, the Bible states:

"To the woman He said, 'I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.'" (Genesis 3:16).

- After this event, Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden:

"So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life." (Genesis 3:24).

- Then, Adam and Eve's first children are born:

"Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, 'With the help of the Lord, I have brought forth a man.' Later she gave birth to his brother Abel." (Genesis 4:1-2).

- Additionally, regarding the continuation of human lineage, the Bible states:

"Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and named them 'Man' (Adam) when they were created." (Genesis 5:2).

"And reference is made to marriage and human procreation." (Genesis 6:1-4).

### **B) Genderless Creation (Minority View)**

- Some Rabbinic interpretations propose that the first human was androgynous (having both male and female characteristics).
- Later, God separated this being into two distinct individuals: one male and one female (Baskin, p. 71).
- This interpretation is influenced by Genesis 1:27:
- "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."
- The phrase "male and female He created them" led some Jewish scholars to believe that the first human was originally a dual-gendered being, later divided into two separate sexes.
- In Midrash (Genesis Rabbah 8:1), the first human is described as a single entity with both male and female physical traits, which was later divided into a male and a female being (Heger, p. 18; Baskin, p. 71).

## **5.2. The New Testament's Perspective on Human Creation**

In the New Testament, there is no independent account of the creation of humankind. Instead, it refers back to the creation narrative in the Old Testament. The focus is not on the detailed process of human creation but rather on the idea that woman was created from man.

In Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, he states:

"For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." (1 Corinthians 11:7-12)

Additionally, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, it is written:

"For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior." (Ephesians 5:23)

This perspective on the relationship between man and woman and their creation can align with the concept of "Nafs Wahida", in that man and woman are portrayed as parts of a unified whole, inherently connected to one another.

## **6. Commonalities Between the Qur'anic and Biblical Views on Human Creation**

The Qur'an and the Bible share a fundamental agreement: both men and women are creations of God. However, after the creation of the first man (Adam) and the first woman (Eve), differences emerge in their narratives and interpretations.

In the Qur'an, based on the phrase "*Nafs Wahida*" (a single soul), woman is created from the same essence as man. Various interpretations exist regarding this concept. However, in Judaism and consequently in Christianity, Adam is introduced as the symbol of humanity, and Eve is created after him, from his rib, to alleviate his loneliness.

Both sources indicate that the occurrence of marital union and gender differentiation took place after leaving the Garden of Eden.

### 1. The Qur'anic Perspective

- Multiple verses refer to the creation of humans (Adam and Eve) from a single soul (*Nafs Wahida*).
- God created Adam from a single soul and then created his spouse from the same soul.
- As a result, both men and women are created from the same essence and origin, with no difference in their fundamental nature or human identity.
- 2. The Biblical Perspective
- The story of the creation of woman is elaborated in the second chapter of Genesis in the Torah.
- In this account, God first creates Adam, then puts him into a deep sleep, and creates Eve from one of his ribs.
- The Bible does not explicitly mention the concept of *Nafs Wahida*, but its narration of Adam and Eve's creation suggests a form of unity and shared origin among humans.
- In Genesis, Chapter 2, it is stated that God created man "in His own image" and breathed into him the "breath of life".
- In Genesis, Chapter 5, it is affirmed that all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve.

### Commonalities Between the Qur'anic and Biblical Accounts of Human Creation:

#### 1. Creation by a Single Creator

- **Emphasis on God's Creative Power:** Both the Qur'an and the Bible introduce God as the Creator of both men and women.
- **Shared Purpose of Creation:** In both sources, the development of humanity and the formation of family through Adam and Eve are emphasized. The ultimate purpose of human creation is stated as worshiping God and achieving spiritual growth.

#### 2. A Single Origin of Creation

- Men and women are equal in terms of their creation and inherent nature.
- In the Qur'an:
  - The term "*Nafs Wahida*" signifies that both men and women originate from the same essence.
- In the Bible:
  - A singular act of creation is first mentioned, followed by the differentiation into male and female.
  - The creation of Eve from Adam's rib symbolically represents their shared origin and existential unity.

### 3. Essential Equality

- **Equal Dignity and Value:** The Qur'an and the Bible both affirm that men and women originate from a single essence and emphasize the intrinsic dignity and worth of humanity.
- **Shared Responsibility:** In both traditions, men and women are held accountable for their actions and are equally subject to reward and punishment.
- **4. Formation of Family and Continuation of Human Lineage**
- Both sources regard family as the cornerstone of society, playing a fundamental role in human development.
- Both narratives emphasize that the first marital union and the emergence of gender differentiation occurred after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden.

### The Most Significant Commonalities Between the Qur'an and the Bible Regarding Human Creation

Key Aspects of Commonalities	Qur'anic Perspective	Biblical Perspective
Creation by a Single Creator	God is the Creator of both men and women.	God is the Creator of both men and women.
Purpose of Creation	Worshiping God, spiritual growth, and the formation of family and human society.	The development of humanity, the formation of family and human society, and adherence to divine will.
A Single Origin of Creation	Men and women are created from <i>Nafs Wahida</i> (a single soul).	Woman was created from man's rib, symbolizing their shared origin.
Intrinsic Equality of Men and Women	Men and women are equal in their human essence.	Woman is introduced as a suitable companion for man.
Significance of Family	The family is the foundation of society and the basis of human development.	The family is the foundation of society and the basis of human development.
Occurrence of Marital Union	After leaving the Garden of Eden.	After leaving the Garden of Eden.
Continuation of Human Lineage	Human lineage began with Adam and Eve.	Human lineage began with Adam and Eve.

### 7. Differences Between the Qur'anic and Biblical Views on Human Creation

Based on the analysis, fundamental differences exist between the Qur'an and the Bible regarding the concept of *Nafs Wahida*, the method of Eve's creation, the chronological order of Adam and Eve's creation, and the position of women in relation to men. The Torah and the Bible do not explicitly mention the concept of *Nafs Wahida* and primarily present the separate creation of Adam and Eve.

#### 1. The Role of Adam and Eve

- **In the Qur'an:** Adam and Eve are introduced as the first humans and God's vicegerents on Earth. After being expelled from the Garden of Eden, they are responsible for worshiping God, reproducing, and developing civilization.
- **In the Bible:** Adam is depicted as the first human and is held responsible for "original sin". He and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden and must struggle for survival.

#### 2. The Creation of Men and Women

- In the Qur'an: Woman was created from *Nafs Wahida* (a single soul), emphasizing that men and women share the same essence and are inherently equal.
- In the Bible: Woman is described as a "suitable helper" for man, with a position considered secondary to him.

### 3. The Method of Creation

- In the Qur'an: Woman was created from the same material as man—earth (clay or dust).
- In the Bible: Woman was created from man's rib.

### 4. The Status of Women

- In the Qur'an: Woman is portrayed as an integral part of man's existence and is equal to him in creation and human development.
- In the Bible: Woman is created from man's rib and is considered to have a lower status than him.

### 5. The Fate of Humanity

- In the Qur'an: Humans are autonomous beings, responsible for their own actions.
- In the Bible: Humans are largely subject to original sin and divine will.

### 6. The Responsibilities of Men and Women

- In the Qur'an: Men and women are equally accountable for their actions and will be judged accordingly.
- In the Bible: Woman is largely placed under man's authority and is held responsible for original sin.

## The Most Significant Differences Between the Qur'an and the Bible Regarding Human Creation

Aspect of Comparison	Qur'anic Perspective	Biblical Perspective
Role of Adam and Eve	Vicegerent on Earth, responsible for worship, civilization, and reproduction.	Responsible for original sin, expelled from the Garden of Eden.
Creation from <i>Nafs Wahida</i>	Explicitly mentioned, signifying the spiritual equality of men and women.	Not explicitly mentioned, with an emphasis on gender distinctions.
Chronological Order of Adam and Eve's Creation	Exact chronological order is not specified.	The chronological order is specified: Adam was created first, and then Eve was made to alleviate his loneliness.
Method of Woman's Creation	Woman was created from clay, like man.	Woman was created from man's rib.
Status of Women in Relation to Men	The Qur'an does not give preference to either men or women.	Woman is introduced as a "suitable helper" for man.
Responsibilities	Men and women are equally accountable for their actions.	Man has authority over woman, and she is held responsible for original sin.
Role of Women	Woman is equal to man in creation.	Woman was created from man's rib and has a lower status.
Fate of Women	Woman is an autonomous being, responsible for her own actions.	Woman is subject to the consequences of original sin and divine will.

## 8. Conclusion

A comparative study of the creation of humans in the Qur'an and the Bible reveals that both sources emphasize the unity of human origin. However, differences in the details of the narratives arise due to interpretative variations as well as historical, cultural, and social contexts of different eras.

The concept of "Nafs Wahida" in the Qur'an underscores the equality of men and women in creation, the continuity of human lineage, and human dignity. The creation of humanity from a single soul signifies a profound and inseparable bond between men and women, highlighting the necessity of solidarity and cooperation in life.

The Biblical narrative of Eve's creation from Adam's rib has been interpreted by some Jewish commentators as evidence of the inferiority of women to men. However, this interpretation seems inconsistent with the broader teachings of the Torah and the Gospels, which emphasize human equality and intrinsic dignity. Some scholars argue that this account merely explains the manner of Eve's creation and does not imply male superiority over women, as both Adam and Eve were created from a single origin and share the same human dignity and value.

The Qur'an, as the only unaltered divine scripture, is considered the most complete revelation and a criterion (Muhaimin) over previous scriptures. Various interpretations of sacred texts, particularly regarding the shared human essence of men and women, have led to diverse perspectives on the role, rights, and societal status of women. The narrations suggesting that Eve (woman) was created from a part of Adam's body contain multiple textual and transmission flaws and appear to be influenced by Jewish thought, reflecting a particular viewpoint on women. Therefore, these narrations cannot be considered authoritative in interpreting the Qur'anic verses concerning the creation of Adam and Eve.

An examination of the Biblical phrase "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" in the Old Testament, as well as the concept of "Nafs Wahida" in the Qur'an, reveals fundamental differences in how the origin of men and women is explained. While the Bible explicitly describes Eve as being created from Adam's body, the Qur'an emphasizes that both men and women were created from a shared origin, without suggesting that woman's creation is subordinate to or dependent on man. Thus, these two narratives cannot be considered entirely equivalent, as each reflects a distinct perspective on the role and position of men and women in the divine order of creation.

Ultimately, both texts stress the necessity of solidarity and cooperation between men and women for the formation of families and the continuation of human lineage. The interpretative differences in sacred texts are rooted in historical, cultural, and social contexts and require thorough analysis. This study demonstrates that, despite variations in narratives and interpretations, both the Qur'an and the Bible emphasize the unity of human origin and the essential interaction between men and women within the social order.

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