



The Quran's Merciful Perspective on Women in the Three Dimensions of Individual, Familial, and Social Life



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Received: 2024/05/20 • Revised: 2024/07/29 • Accepted: 2024/10/05 • Available Online: 2025/01/10

Abstract

This article aims to demonstrate the dominance and prevalence of mercy and compassion over all principles and rulings related to women in the Holy Qur'an. The Qur'anic view of women has always been subject to criticism and evaluation. Numerous verses in the Qur'an address the status of women in Islam. An overall review of these verses shows that mercy and compassion are two overarching principles that permeate all these principles and rulings. This article examines the supremacy of the

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* Roodgar, N.; Zahed, Z. (2025). The Quran's Merciful Perspective on Women in the Three Dimensions of Individual, Familial, and Social Life. *Theosophia Islamica*, 5(2), pp. 345-401.

<https://doi.org/10.22081/JTI.2025.72154.1092>

Article Type: Research; **Publisher:** Islamic Sciences and Culture Research Institute, Qom, Iran

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<http://jti.isca.ac.ir>

principle of mercy in the Qur'anic perspective on women. This examination is conducted across three dimensions of a woman's life: the individual, familial, and social dimensions. In the individual dimension, the Qur'anic merciful view of women is manifested in the following principles: 1- Equality of men and women in the essence and substance of creation. 2- Shared participation of both genders in the balance of creation, a common human identity, shared servitude as the purpose of creation, similarity in the Divine nature, and shared fundamental human dignity with its various aspects and forms. 3- The value of women's deeds in the Qur'an and their equal status in attaining spiritual ranks are other facets of the Qur'anic merciful view regarding the individual dimension of a woman's personality. In familial roles, the dominance of mercy manifests itself in a different, and perhaps more explicit, way. Examples of the Qur'anic merciful view of women in the familial dimension include: The principle of living together amicably. The introduction of affection and mercy as the fundamental pillars of the family. Emphasis on kindness and the invitation to good even in the most critical of marital relationships. The supremacy of mercy in the social sphere can be clearly seen in the presentation of women as role models for the community of believers. This is demonstrated by women such as Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh, who is introduced as an example of faith, resistance against tyranny, and steadfastness against oppression, and Mary, who is introduced as a model of chastity, purity, and innocence. The totality of these cases indicates that the overall and overarching view of the Qur'an regarding women is a perspective founded on mercy, and all other specific issues must be explained and interpreted in light of this perspective.

Keywords

Status of Women in the Quran, Principle of Mercy (Raḥmah), Mu'āsharah Bi-l-ma'rūf (Kind Companionship), Affection (Mawaddah), and Beneficence (Iḥsān).

Introduction

The concept of Mercy (Raḥmah) in the Qur'an, especially from the perspective of its connection to women, is a multifaceted and deeply rooted concept in Islamic teachings. Mercy or "Al-Raḥmān" (The Most Merciful) is a central theme in Islam that influences interpretations of gender roles and relationships. The Qur'an emphasizes mercy, introducing it as a Divine attribute and a guiding principle for human interactions, including those related to women. This perspective is reflected in both traditional and contemporary interpretations of the Qur'an, and it emphasizes the importance of compassion and mutual understanding in gender dynamics.

Mercy is a foundational and constitutive aspect of Islam that underscores all the teachings and practices of the religion. The concept of Raḥmah possesses key characteristics that define its scope and application within Islamic teachings, especially concerning women: Trans-temporal and Trans-spatial: This concept is not limited to specific historical or social contexts; rather, it is a universal principle that serves as a guide for understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the Prophet's tradition/life). Comprehensiveness (Inclusiveness): The concept of mercy extends to all aspects of life. Emphasis on the Status of Women: This principle also includes the treatment and roles of women, emphasizing compassion, pity/tenderness, and benevolence in interactions related to them

Traditional interpretations of the Qur'an have often been criticized for their patriarchal biases. In contrast, contemporary Muslim feminist interpreters argue for the necessity of achieving a more egalitarian understanding of the Qur'an. These interpreters emphasize that the intrinsic message of the Qur'an, especially the concept of Mercy and equality, must be the main guide in interpreting the status of women.

The Qur'an's teachings on marital relationships highlight the importance of affection and mercy, with women playing a crucial role in providing emotional support and tenderness within the family structure. Scholars interpret the Qur'an's message of mercy as encompassing all creation, advocating for a broad and inclusive understanding that transcends narrow interpretations. "Konsep dan makna islam rahmat .

In marital contexts, the Qur'an encourages mutual respect and understanding, with mercy being a key element in fostering harmonious relationships. While mercy is a central theme in the Qur'an, interpretations of its application to women's roles can vary. Traditional views have often been challenged by modern scholars seeking to align Islamic teachings with contemporary understandings of gender equality. This ongoing dialogue reflects the dynamic nature of Qur'anic interpretation and the enduring relevance of mercy as a guiding principle.

This article investigates the diverse dimensions of the Qur'anic perspective on women, grounded in the concept of *Rahmah* (divine mercy), across three distinct spheres: individual, familial, and social. It demonstrates the pervasive influence of this merciful perspective on all rules, principles, and injunctions governing various aspects of women's lives. Furthermore, the study elucidates the foundational principles governing the lives of both genders, all of which are derived and understood through the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an.

Furthermore, these established rules and principles address the fundamental question of whether Islam's perspective on the two genders is one of absolute equality or nuanced differentiation. It explores whether justice is solely defined by strict parity and, if not, how the inherent differences between the sexes should be addressed.

The significance and necessity of this research are further underscored by the fact that the majority of critiques leveled against Islamic laws concerning women are often framed within the discourse of violence. Islamic laws pertaining to women are frequently condemned as being inherently violent. This accusation is made despite the fact that the rules and principles articulated by the Holy Qur'an regarding women and the various facets of their lives are imbued with the qualities of mercy (*Rahmah*) and compassion (*Rahmaniyyat*). The perception of violence attributed to certain of these injunctions stems from a fragmented and isolated interpretation, neglecting the overarching principles governing these laws. Therefore, it is essential to consider and understand Islamic injunctions concerning women within the framework of these comprehensive rules and principles. Conversely, many engagements addressing these critiques of Islamic laws have focused on defending and explaining the specific points of contention on a case-by-case basis. This approach often leads to a defensive and reactive discourse surrounding the topic of women's status in Islam. Explaining and elucidating Islam's *Rahmani* (merciful) perspective on women offers a different paradigm for thinkers and audiences engaging with Islamic thought. This alternative framework allows for a more impartial and equitable assessment of the perspective on women in Islam and the Holy Qur'an.

1. Conceptualization of *Rahmah* :*Rahmah* in Lexicography

The term "Rahmah" is derived from the root "r-ḥ-m" and encompasses various meanings such as kindness, compassion, tenderness, and empathy, which lead to benevolence and bestowal upon others. Two principal meanings inherent within it are, specifically, tenderness of heart and beneficence (al-Rāzī, 2002, vol. 2, p. 498). Given that attributing "tenderness" to God is not appropriate, it has been stated that *Rahmah*

from God signifies bestowment and grace. That is, divine Rahmah denotes bestowal and favor, while human Rahmah implies tenderness and affection. Another meaning employed for it is kindness. "Rahmah" signifies the susceptibility of the heart, particularly in the face of harm and deficiencies of others. This feeling motivates an individual to undertake compensatory action. However, when this term is attributed to God, it does not signify a susceptibility of the heart, but rather the effect of that susceptibility. In this sense, when we say that God is Rahman (Most Gracious) or Rahim (Most Merciful), it means that He is the one who compensates for the needs and deficiencies of humankind.

1-1. *Rahmah* in the Terminology of Islamic Scholars

The term "Rahmah" is used in 500 verses of the Holy Qur'an; as God states: "My mercy encompasses all things" and "Our Lord, you have encompassed all things in mercy" (Qur'an, 7:156). This demonstrates the vastness of divine mercy. Scholars and scientists have not usually provided a separate definition for "Rahmah." Jurjānī defined Rahmah as the will to deliver good. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī defined it as the effusion of blessings and offering everything to its deserved felicity (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995, vol. 7, p. 27).

"In the Almighty God, there is mercy, not riqqat al-qalb (tenderness of heart), which is a specific conscious effect in humans that causes a benevolent person to treat the object of mercy with goodness and love. This [tenderness of heart] is a physical and material quality from which the Almighty God is transcendent—exalted is God far above that. But mercy in the Almighty God means the emanation (bestowal) of good upon one who deserves good, and to the extent of their desert. And for this reason, it often happens that we perceive punishment as God's mercy and, conversely, His mercy as punishment." (Tabataba'i, 1984, Vol. 5, p. 301).

2. Qur'an's *Rahmani* Perspective on Women in the Individual Sphere

2-1. The Unity of Man and Woman in Creation

The Holy Qur'an, adopting a perspective rooted in Divine Mercy towards both men and women, emphasizes their unity in creation and expresses this subject using influential and respectful language. In contrast to some religions that have presented differences in the creation of man and woman, the Qur'an maintains that both genders were created from a single nature (or essence) and from a single soul. This fundamental unity negates any inherent ontological superiority of one gender over the other, establishing a basis for equality in human dignity and origin.

One of the prominent verses in this regard is verse 1 of Surah An-Nisa (4), which states: "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." (An-Nisa, 4: 1):

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً.

This verse clearly emphasizes the identical nature of women and men and demonstrates the Qur'an's indifference towards derogatory views on the creation of women. In fact, this uniform view of human creation not only fosters respect for women but also emphasizes shared human foundations.

"[He] created you from one soul; then made from it its mate..."
(Az-Zumar , 39:6) He created you from one soul and from that one soul made its mate.

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا ...

"It is He who created you from one soul and made from it its mate that he might dwell in security with her..." (Al-A'raf, 7: 189)

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.

2-2. Key Points from the Qur'anic Verses Regarding the Creation of Women and Men

The Oneness of the Material and Type of Creation: The Qur'an emphasizes that women and men were created from a single soul and that neither has inherent superiority over the other. This unity in creation forms the basis of human equality in the Qur'an's view. All human beings, both men and women, were created from one soul, and neither is superior to the other. There is no difference in the initial creation of women and men, and only acquired qualities and morals give them distinction.

Negation of Degrading Differences: The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the negation of unfair views regarding the creation of women. These verses, contrary to theories such as the creation of woman from man's left rib, are not considered correct from the Qur'anic perspective.

The Creation of Woman from the Same Human Substance, Not from an Inferior Material: The Qur'an believes that woman was created from the same substance from which man was created. This point is mentioned in numerous verses, which indicates respect for the status and dignity of women.

A Shared Purpose of Creation: The ultimate purpose of the creation of women and men is to attain the divine station through servitude and obedience to God. This theme is evident in various verses that speak of the creation of humankind.

3. Emphasis on Affection and Mercy in Marital Relationships

3-1. Unity of Man and Woman in Creation: View of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli

The contemporary Muslim exegete, Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, in his commentary on a verse from Surah An-Nisa (The Women), addresses various views regarding the nature and origin of woman's creation. He specifically confronts perspectives that: 1- Consider a woman's nature to be different from a man's. 2- Suggest a woman was created from a part of a man's body. 3- Deem woman's creation to be secondary or derivative. In rejecting these views, he emphasizes that perspectives holding the creation of men and women to be from two independent essences (or substances) lack Qur'anic evidence. Ayatollah Javadi Amoli asserts that only hypotheses related to the single essence (or substance) of man and woman are considered valid (Javadi Amoli, 2007a, Vol. 5, p. 313). This position aligns with the Qur'anic emphasis on both genders being created from a single soul.

The eminent contemporary exegete, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his commentary on this verse, also emphasizes the axis of humanity and the shared nature of woman and man, stating that neither of the two has superiority over the other, and both should act according to human principles and in the light of *taqwā* (God-consciousness) (Tabataba'i, 1995, vol. 2, p. 406). Allamah Tabataba'i, in his exegesis of the verse referring to the "Single Soul" (*Nafs Wahidah*), states that the verse refers to Adam and Eve as the parents of humankind, emphasizing that all human beings branched from a single root. He explicitly declares that no difference exists in the status of humanity between man and woman:

“In this verse, [God] intends to invite people to piety (*taqwa*/God-consciousness) and fear of their Lord; people who are united in the original human nature and the reality of being human, and in this

reality, there is no difference between their women and men, their youth and elders, their weak and strong. [God] invites people to perceive this equality regarding themselves so that men do not oppress women, and elders do not tyrannize the youth.” (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 404).

3-2. Shared Substance of Creation

According to the verses of the Qur'an, human beings, both women and men, are created from a single primordial substance, namely clay and mud. Verses such as “Indeed, I am going to create a human being from clay” «أَني خَالِقُ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ» (Surah S, (38:71)) and “the best of creators” «أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ» (Al momenin(Believers): 23:14) clearly indicate that God created both from the same substance, introducing them as a “source of goodness and blessing.” This oneness of the primordial substance of creation reinforces equality and avoids discrimination and injustice, addressing human relationships based on respect and affection.

Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an has referred to “water” (mā') and “sperm-drop” (nuṭfah) as the primary substance of human creation. Terms such as "mā' mahīn" (despised water) «أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ» (Messages(Morsalat) 77: 20), "mā' dāfiq" (gushing fluid) «خُلِقَ مِنْ مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ» (Tariq: 6), and "nuṭfah amshāj" (mingled sperm-drop) «إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا» (Human: 2) are examples of these expressions that refer to the formation of human beings. In various verses, the Qur'an has used the terms “water”, “sperm-drop” , "mā' mahīn" , "mā' dāfiq" , and "nuṭfah amshāj" , «ماء مهين» ، «ماء دافق» و «نطفه امشاج» . Additionally, it uses the term "maniyy" (semen), as stated in the verse: “Was he not a sperm-drop from emitted semen?” «أَلَمْ يَكُنْ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُُمْنَى» (Qiyameh: 37.) However, in some verses, a sequence is observed, as God states: “It is He who created you from dust and then

from a sperm-drop and then from a clinging clot” هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ «تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ» (Momin: 67). This statement clearly shows that all human beings are formed from a common sperm-drop.

Shaykh Tusi (Shaykh al-Ta'ifa), in his exegesis, refers to the initial creation of humanity from clay and the subsequent creation of his progeny from semen. He explains that the term "sulālah" (essence or extract) refers to the drops of fluid that originated from that initial semen and formed Adam's descendants (Tusi, n.d., Vol. 8, p. 297). Allamah Tabataba'i also emphasizes that the entire human race originated from Adam and his wife, and that there is no difference in the primordial essence of creation between men and women. Both exegetes reinforce the Qur'anic principle that humanity derives from a unified source, affirming the essential equality and shared nature of men and women at the moment of creation.

The contemporary Muslim exegete, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, in his commentary, refers to two main perspectives on the origin of human creation: Some believe the creation of the first human (Prophet Adam, peace be upon him) was from "clay" or a mixture of water and earth. Another group holds that the "water" mentioned in the Qur'an refers to the seminal fluid from which subsequent generations of humans come into being. He states that these two views are, in a sense, complementary, as both emphasize the role of water in creation (whether as a combination of earth and water for the primordial creation, or as seminal fluid for later generations). He also points out that the male sperm (spermatozoa) and the female egg play a vital role in the formation of the first living cell of a human being, which underscores the importance of water (seminal fluid) and the shared origin of creation (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1991, Vol. 15, p. 27).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in his interpretation of the verses concerning the stages of human creation, points out that the creation

of Adam was from clay, and his progeny is from the sperm-drop. He believes that the comprehensiveness of the verses includes Adam and all his descendants, and this indicates the close connection between human beings in creation and nature (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995, vol. 15, p. 24).

Therefore, Muslim exegetes emphasize the principle that the primordial substance of human creation is one. This matter clearly emphasizes equality in the creation of women and men, because in this regard, there is no statement that considers the sperm-drop or the creation of women to be different. From the perspective of the Holy Qur'an and the statements of exegetes, it can be concluded that God, in His wisdom and mercy, created the progeny of Adam from a single substance, and this indicates the human equality of women and men. Therefore, one must realize this truth: that the human status of each individual should be measured based on moral and human values, and not based on gender.

3-3. Balance and Proportion in Human Creation

The Holy Qur'an presents the concept of balance and proportion (taswiyah) as one of the main characteristics of human creation, including women. This concept shows that God, in the creation of human beings, both male and female, has acted with precision and harmony, creating each in a balanced and appropriate manner. In the verses "then He formed [him] and proportioned [him]" «ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظَامًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ» (The Believers: 14). and "Who created and proportioned" «الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى» (Supreme: 2). emphasis is placed on the fact that God created man and perfected him. "Sawwā" (He proportioned) means establishing balance in the structure and form of man; in the sense that the various parts of the human body are placed in their best possible positions.

Allamah Tabataba'i explains that the stability and consistency in creation means that every single member of the body of both man and woman has been created in a suitable and commensurate manner (in proportion to its purpose). This responsibility and precision in creation demonstrates the value and coherence of both genders within the created order. In addition, Shaykh Tabarsi (Fadl ibn Hasan al-Tabrisi) points to further dimensions of the concept of "Taswiyah" (giving proportion). He states that the phrase "fa-sawwā" (then He proportioned/balanced) indicates the creation of equilibrium among the different parts of the human body, such as the hands, eyes, and feet, signifying a state of completeness and proper arrangement (Tabarsi, 1993, Vol. 10, p. 720).

4. Proportion and Order in Creation: View of Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, by extending the concept of "Taswiyah" (proportion/balance) to the entire cosmic order, especially within the structures of creation, explains that this concept goes beyond the balance of bodily parts. It encompasses the precise order and system in the creation of all beings, particularly human beings.

He states that this comprehensive order can include: 1- The laws governing the cosmos (celestial mechanics). 2- The minute and precise details in human creation, such as the unique fingerprint, which signifies Divine perfection and wisdom in establishing proportion. This interpretation posits Taswiyah as a universal cosmic principle that guarantees harmony in the creation of humanity and the world, and points to God's precise and responsible care in creating every part of existence (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1991, Vol. 26, p. 385).

It is not only the Holy Qur'an that raises the issue of taswiyah and balance; it also employs the expression *aḥsan al-taqwīm* (the best

of forms/perfect constitution), which applies to both women and men, signifying the finest mode of formation, as stated: “We have certainly created man in the best of forms *لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا*” (Qur'an, 95:4). The Muslim exegete Ṭabarsī, in his *Majma' al-Bayān*, interprets *aḥsan al-taqwīm* as the best formation and shaping in terms of the potential for receiving wisdom and intellect (Ṭabarsī, 1993, vol. 10, p. 448).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī examines the concept of “beauty of form” (*ḥusn al-ṣūrah*) and explains that this beauty is related to the proportionality of parts and the purpose of creation. From his perspective, this beauty does not denote mere outward appearance; rather, it signifies the suitability of the various bodily organs and parts for performing their specific functions. In fact, he emphasizes that human characteristics must be consistent with the existential goals and missions of humankind (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, vol. 19, p. 497).

It is noteworthy that these verses demonstrate that the aforementioned characteristics of creation are not exclusive to a specific group but are applicable to all human beings, both men and women. In other words, what is mentioned regarding creation constitutes gifts and blessings for all of humanity, and there is no documented or definitive superiority between the two human sexes. These noble verses point to the fact that both man and woman are on the same level in terms of balance, proportion, and the beauty of form. Thus, this proportion and balance in creation establishes a foundation for defining the rights and status of men and women in various societies.

5. Shared Human Identity from the Perspective of the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the unity and equality of man and woman in human identity, stating that both sexes were created

from a single "Soul" or essence. This concept is reflected not only in the Qur'anic verses but also in the prominent exegeses of Islamic scholars. The main points addressing this issue are discussed below: According to Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, the equality of men and women in humanity does not mean that the soul is divided into male and female halves that are equal; rather, it means that the soul is fundamentally neither masculine nor feminine.

He states: "The human soul is an immaterial reality, and all moral virtues are attributed to the human soul. Therefore, being male is neither a source of honor nor is being female an impediment to dignity. Likewise, affiliation to clans, tribes, and races is neither an impediment to nor a source of [human] dignity" (Javadi Amoli, 2007b, p. 79).

Similarly, Shahid Motahhari writes in his notes: "However, the identity of a woman, like that of a man, is a complete human being. Every human being, whether male or female, shares in their existence two other beings, one male and one female".

The contemporary Islamic scholar, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, writes: "Men and women are equal in terms of human nature and its requirements; that is, they are both 'human.' Ultimately, while having a unity of species, they belong to two logical categories or (in common parlance) two sexes. From ancient times, there has been a (albeit rare) theory that did not consider women human and attributed a different nature to them. Islam completely rejects this theory" (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012, p. 269).

The great Qur'anic exegete, Allamah Tabataba'i, affirms this point, stating: "Observation and experience have established that man and woman are two individuals of a single kind and a single essence, an essence that is called 'human.' This is because all the effects that have been observed of humanity in the masculine group have also

been observed in the feminine group (if virtues like generosity, courage, self-restraint, and the like have been seen in men, they have also been seen in women without any difference). Assuredly, the manifestation of the effects of a kind is proof of the realization of that very kind. Therefore, the feminine group is also human. Yes, these two groups differ in terms of intensity and weakness in some shared effects (not in exclusive effects like pregnancy and the like), but the mere intensity and weakness in some human attributes does not invalidate the essential kind in the weaker group, nor does it mean they are no longer human." (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 140).

5-1. Islam's Rejection of Discriminatory Theories and Shared Human Attributes

Islam explicitly rejects the outdated theories that did not consider women comparable to human beings and attributed a different nature to them. These views are not only contrary to the teachings of the Qur'an but also contradict the empirical and historical evidence found in various societies, which demonstrates the opposition to such unjust perspectives (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012, p. 269).

5-2. Shared Characteristics and Minor Differences

While men and women share in common fruits, including moral virtues and human characteristics, there may be differences in certain aspects. However, these differences do not signify a difference in human essence. Abilities, weaknesses, and strengths naturally vary, but this variation can by no means lead to the diminution of the human identity or the inherent worth of either sex (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 140).

In summary, based on philosophical and religious arguments, it can be stated that man and woman are equal and identical in human essence. This equality holds true in terms of both the soul and human

characteristics, as well as moral virtues. Therefore, any claim of superiority or inequality between them is not only incorrect but contradicts the fundamental principle and basis of human creation. Recognizing this truth will contribute to a better understanding of human rights and respect for the dignity of both men and women in society.

5-3. Shared Purpose of Creation Between Women and Men

The issue of the common goal of creation between man and woman is one of the fundamental points in Islamic teachings, providing a fresh foundation for a deeper understanding of human existence. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an constantly emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of human creation—for both men and women—is the worship and servitude of God. This topic will be examined in detail further on:

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6. The Qur'an and the Purpose of Creation

The well-known verse, “And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me” «وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ» (Dhariyat: 56) clearly indicates that the primary purpose of human creation is worship (‘ibādah). This verse not only refers to both jinn and humankind but also signifies the unity of purpose between genders. It is important to understand here that worship can be of two forms: on the one hand, obedience to God's commands, and on the other hand, the expression of humility and submission before God. These two dimensions of worship affect both genders equally.

6-1. Servitude (‘Ubūdiyyah) and Human Perfection

According to Muslim exegetes, complete servitude worship) means that a human being should think of nothing but God and

Absolute Perfection, and in all their actions, should step only on His path. The ultimate goal of humanity is to immerse oneself in the ocean of Divine Mercy, and this path is shared between both sexes (man and woman) (Makarem Shirazi et al., 1991, Vol. 27, p. 12).

Men and women achieve perfection equally through the path of servitude and the performance of Divine duties. Neither is deprived of specific perfections due to their gender, nor does one possess superiority over the other. This point implies an equality in rights and opportunities provided for the advancement and growth of both sexes.

Sharing the ultimate goal is of paramount importance in judging superiority and inferiority among God's creatures. This judgment can be a basis not only for rights and duties but also for natural and developmental capacities. Men and women have equal responsibilities in the worship of God and the following of Divine commands.

However, the balance (or equilibrium) of rights and duties between man and woman differs from the equality (or identicalness) of rights and duties between man and woman. The Holy Qur'an, based on the first part of the verse [referring to the general principle of creation], accepts the balance of rights and duties, and based on the latter part of the verse [referring to specific distributions], rejects the identicalness of rights and duties for men and women.

"If, due to the greater strengths and capabilities that man possesses by nature, he is assigned heavier duties and responsibilities, there is certainly no injustice done in assigning this duty to him. And if, commensurate with man's heavier duties and responsibilities, greater rights and privileges are allocated to him, then again, there is certainly no injustice done in his position of duty, because the balance between rights and duties has been fully observed in his case." (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012, p. 250).

7. Correspondence of Creation (Takwīn) and Divine Law (Tashrī') as a Governing Principle of Gender Rights

7-1. Women's Rights in Islam

According to the verses of the Qur'an, women's rights in Islam are based on several foundations. The first of these is the correspondence of creation and divine law. This means that within the Islamic worldview, since creation is purposeful and the work of a Wise God, it inherently contains a specific plan. Divine law) is designed in accordance with this existing plan of creation. According to this principle, any difference or similarity that exists between the two genders in their creation ultimately plays a role in the established laws and regulations governing their lives. The laws are thus a mirror of the realities established in creation.

According to Muslim thinkers, the rights of men and women are based on two distinct, yet complementary, principles: 1. Equality in Human Rights: From the perspective of human rights, there is no difference between men and women. Both have the fundamental right to participate in determining their own destiny and must participate in various societal fields. This principle affirms the inherent, essential dignity and equality of both genders, rooted in their shared origin (the *Nafs Wahidah*). 2. Difference in Specific Rights (Based on Natural Wisdom) :In some areas, however, natural and biological differences exist which cannot be ignored. Consequently, the establishment of different rights in certain domains is solely a result of Divine wisdom and excellent planning. This differentiation is intended for balance and suitability (similar to *Taswiyah*) corresponding to their distinct natural roles, and does not imply inequality in overall human worth. (Khosropanah, 2017, p. 35).

7-2. Balance in Rights and Duties

Another principle in human rights, including the rights of the two genders, is the balance of rights and duties. This means that if, due to natural abilities and characteristics, heavier responsibilities are placed on men, this does not mean injustice to them and helps to balance rights and duties. Islam does not emphasize absolute equality in rights but emphasizes the necessity of a kind of balance and proportionality in responsibilities and benefits (Mesbah Yazdi, 2012, p. 250).

7-3 The Rights of Women and Men in the Light of Divine Nature (Fiṭrah)

According to the view of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, the great Qur’anic commentator, the legal and ethical principles of women in the Holy Qur’an are organized in such a way that they consider all aspects of social life. He emphasizes that in the Islamic legal system, equality among individuals is established, but preserving social positions and the influence of each individual in society is also important. In other words, each individual should have rights and benefits commensurate with their influence on the growth and perfection of society.

7-4. The Balance of Rights and Duties in Islamic Law

Islamic laws are structured to distribute the rights of men and women in a balanced and just manner. This principle is codified in the noble verse:

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَ دَرَجَةٌ (Surah Al-Baqarah: 228).

"And due to them [the women] is what is similar to that which is upon them [of duties] according to what is reasonable, but the men have over them a degree [of responsibility]."

The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes the reciprocity (near-equality) of rights for women while simultaneously referring to the different degrees and roles of men (due to responsibility).

Allamah Tabataba'i considers this verse a sign of respect for the rights of both groups and explains the meaning of social justice and equality: "What social justice requires and what interprets the meaning of equality is that in society, every right-holder should receive their due right, and everyone should advance to the extent of their capacity and ability, not beyond it.

Therefore, equality among individuals and among classes is solely for the reason that every right-holder receives their specific right, without one right interfering with another, or being neglected or unknown altogether, or being explicitly invalidated due to hostility, domination, or any other motive.

And this is what the phrase: 'And due to them [the women] is what is similar to that which is upon them [of duties] according to what is reasonable, but the men have over them a degree...' refers to, with the explanation just given, as this phrase, while accepting the natural difference between man and woman, explicitly emphasizes their legal equality as well." (Tabataba'i, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 414).

Therefore, social justice means that every right holder receives their due right, and no right should be violated due to power, oppression, or any other negative motive. This concept is well expressed in the verse that emphasizes the rights of women and men. He believes that the difference in rights and duties between women and men is not only unfair but also considers social and natural necessities.¹

7-5. Marital Rights

Continuing the discussion, 'Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī elaborates on

marital rights and emphasizes that the wife's rights over the husband are not limited to the dowry (mahr) but also include the right to maintenance (nafaqah), clothing, housing, and other necessities of life. He also emphasizes the necessity of the husband providing for the wife's financial and social needs and states that even in some matters, such as childcare and breastfeeding, if the wife wishes, she can receive compensation for these services (Tayyeb, 1999, vol. 2, p. 458).

Ultimately, the Qur'anic view of the rights of women and men considers both equality and pays attention to natural and social differences.¹ This approach leads to the establishment of social justice and correctly shows that women's rights are also fully defined within the framework of divine nature (fiṭrah) and social norms. From this perspective, the rights and responsibilities of both parties should be duly considered.

8. Abundance of Similarities and the Superiority of Human Standing

Despite the fact that Islam acknowledges real and fundamental differences between the two sexes, this does not mean that similarities are insignificant. The similarities between the two sexes, and specifically their shared human status, form the basis for many common human rules, laws, and ordinances. The contemporary Muslim exegete, Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, emphasizes that the Holy Qur'an assesses intellectual and practical virtues and perfections based on the status of humanity, and this status transcends gender. Therefore, every human being, whether man or woman, can achieve high spiritual and intellectual degrees if they are on the path of attaining virtues based on human perfections, and in this path, physical differences should not be considered (Javadi Amoli, 2007b, p. 126). In other words, none of the existing reasons can definitively show that

man is superior to woman based on his natural structure, because human values lie in the soul and spirit; therefore, they cannot be attributed solely to physical differences.

8-1. The Primacy of the Soul and Humanity

The central discussion regarding the equality of men and women revolves around the soul (al-naḥs/al-rūḥ) and human essence (māhiyyat al-insān), not the physical body (al-jism) and natural factors (al-‘awāmil al-ṭabī‘iyyah). Based on the emphasis of Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, the human soul is transcendent of masculinity (dhukūrah) and femininity (unūthah). This truth is clearly established through reflection upon the verses of the Qur'an (āyāt al-Qur’ān) and the traditions of the Infallible Imams (riwāyāt al-ma‘šūmīn). In fact, all human virtues (faḍā’il) and perfections (kamālāt) are bestowed upon both genders, as human beings (kawnuhum bashar), and God Almighty has granted both genders the possibility of growth (numūw) and advancement (taqaddum).

While the provided text doesn't explicitly cite a specific work, Ayatollah Javadi Amoli has extensively written and lectured on the topic of women in Islam. Some potential sources for further research include:

Zan dar Ayeneh-ye Jalal va Jamal (Woman in the Mirror of Majesty and Beauty): This book is likely the most relevant source for his views on this topic.

His various commentaries on the Qur'an (Tafsir-e Tasnim is his most extensive Qur'anic commentary).

His lectures and other published works on philosophical and theological topics.

9. Divine Mercy and Shared Human Perfections

God Almighty, in His act of creating humankind (*khalq al-insān*), establishes the foundation for human virtues (*faḍā'il*) and perfections (*kamālāt insāniyyah*) without any regard for gender distinctions (*al-tafāwut al-jinsī*). In every perfection and virtue (*kamāl wa faḍīla*) mentioned in the Islamic faith (*dīn al-Islām*), the emphasis is on humanity (*al-insāniyyah*) and not on gender (*al-jins*). This demonstrates the vastness of divine mercy (*raḥmat Allāh al-wāsi'a*), which allows human beings to utilize all available means (*al-imkānāt al-mutāḥa*) for the attainment of perfection (*al-kamāl*).

Belief in equality in humanity (*al-īmān bi-l-musāwāt fī al-insāniyyah*) does not mean disregarding physical differences (*al-furūq al-jismiyyah*); rather, it means that no one can claim superiority (*al-tafḍīl*) or merit (*al-faḍl*) for themselves based merely on physical differences (*mujarrad al-furūq al-jismiyyah*). In reality, any discussion regarding superiority (*al-tafawwuq*) or inequality (*'adam al-musāwāt*) from a material and physical perspective (*min manẓar mādḍī wa jismānī*) is an error (*khaṭa'*) and should originate from spiritual and metaphysical foundations (*al-mabānī al-rūḥāniyya wa al-ma'nawīyya*). This aligns with the Islamic theological concept of *tawḥīd* (divine unity), which emphasizes the oneness of God and the equal standing of all human beings before Him.

9-1. The Shared Human Fiṭrah of Women and Men in the Qur'an

The theme of human fiṭrah (primordial nature) and its influence on the roles and positions of women and men within Islamic culture is a fundamental aspect of the Islamic perspective on women's human identity. The Qur'an explicitly emphasizes that all human beings are created according to a single divine fiṭrah, indicating a fundamental

equality in the human constitution of both women and men.

The term *fiṭrah* refers to the original, pure, and innate disposition or nature upon which God created humanity. It is the intrinsic inclination toward *Tawhīd* (the Oneness of God) and inherent moral truth. Surah Ar-Rum (30:30) states regarding *fiṭrah*:

«فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا»...

"So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the {*fiṭrah*} of Allah upon which He has created [all] people..."

This verse establishes that the core spiritual and ethical nature is universal among all people (*al-nās*), confirming that the essential human identity and inherent dignity are shared by both genders. This common, untainted *fiṭrah* serves as the ultimate source of equality, transcending secondary biological or social distinctions.

This verse clearly articulates that all human beings, both women and men, are created according to a single, divinely ordained nature. Contemporary Islamic scholar, Martyr Murtada Mutahhari, describes *fiṭrah* as an inherent disposition with which an individual is born at the beginning of their creation, before being influenced by the environment and external factors. This principle of a shared divine *fiṭrah* for both women and men provides an important basis for addressing certain misconceptions regarding the nature of women, such as the notions of inherent sinfulness or being an agent of temptation.

The Holy Qur'an, in narrating the story of human creation and life in Paradise, explicitly states that both Adam and Eve had equal participation in the act and decision to eat from the forbidden tree. The Qur'anic verses use a dual form, indicating both were tempted, such as:

«فَوَسْوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ»... (Surah Al-A'raf: 20).

"The Satan tempted them both..." (Surah Ta-Ha: 120)

This wording shows that Satan tempted both individuals (Adam and Eve), not just one. This view challenges traditional interpretations that customarily place the blame solely on the woman (as found in some other religious texts) and emphasizes the shared responsibility of both (Mutahhari, 2018, p. 33).

Contemporary Islamic scholars critique theories that portray women as the "source of sin." This view is not only incorrect but also leads to the degradation of women's status. Instead of assigning blame to one party, the Qur'an holds both responsible, emphasizing their equality and shared responsibility within their human fiṭrah.

10. The Qur'anic Principle of Karāmah as a Basis for the Status of Women in Islam

Al-Farahidi, a prominent lexicographer, defines karāmah as purity and freedom from ugliness and vices. Ibn Manzur defines karāmah as honor and nobility, referring to individuals who embody all forms of goodness and virtue as karīm (noble/generous).

Raghib al-Isfahani defines karāmah as good and praiseworthy morals and actions, stating that anything possessing honor can be described as possessing karāmah. (Raghib Al-Isfahani, 1996, p. 707).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in explaining the difference between takrīm (honoring/venerating) and tafḍīl (preferring/giving precedence), defines takrīm as bestowing a favor and honor that others do not possess, while tafḍīl means superiority over others. (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, vol. 13, p. 214).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī further categorizes karāmah into two types: inherent (dhātī) and acquired (iktisābī). Both inherent and acquired karāmah are divine gifts, but this gift is sometimes obtained without acquisition, such as the karāmah that angels possess, and

sometimes through acquisition, such as some of the acquired human karāmāt. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995, vol. 13, p. 219).

10-1. Inherent and Acquired Karāmah and its Transcendent Nature in the Qur'an

This text delves into the concept of karāmah (dignity/nobility) in the Qur'an, distinguishing between its inherent (dhātī) and acquired (iktisābī) dimensions. It emphasizes the transcendent nature of karāmah, arguing that it is a quality bestowed upon all human beings regardless of gender.

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10-2. Inherent Human Karāmah

Inherent karāmah refers to the dignity that is naturally and innately bestowed upon human beings. This type of karāmah is not within an individual's control and is independent of their actions and efforts. The Qur'an explicitly states: "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam..." (Al-Isrā': 70), which refers to the concept of inherent human karāmah.

Inherent karāmah refers to characteristics and attributes that are inherently and involuntarily embedded in human creation from the beginning. These attributes include: Reason and Speech (‘aql wa nuṭq): The existence of the faculty of reason (quwwat al-‘aql), which distinguishes human beings from other creatures. Various Talents (isti‘dādāt mukhtalifa): Human beings possess diverse capacities for learning and understanding.

Proportionate Form and Upright Stature (qāmat mustawiya wa qawām mu‘tadil): These physical characteristics contribute to the balance and efficiency of the body.

The Quran's Merciful Perspective on Women in the Three Dimensions of Individual ...

10-3. Acquired Human Karāmah

In contrast, acquired karāmah refers to characteristics and values that a person gains through their choices, faith (īmān), and good deeds (a‘māl ṣāliḥa).

10-4. The Transcendent Nature of Karāmah in the Qur'an

Human karāmah in the Qur'an is a transcendent quality (amr fārijinsiyyatī) and is not specific to any particular gender. The source of human karāmah, according to the Qur'an and its commentators (mufasssīrīn), is attributed to various human characteristics, such as reason (‘aql), material blessings (ni‘am māddiyya), and the social environment (al-bī‘a al-ijtimā‘iyya), which elevate human beings above other creatures. The station of human vicegerency (maqām khilāfat al-insān) is among the implications of their karāmah, as expressed in the verse: "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority" (Al-Baqarah: 30).

Some commentators, including ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, believe that human karāmah is formed through reason and the ability to think and reason, thus giving humans superiority over other creatures (Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1995, vol. 13, p. 217).

10-5. The Role of Reason, Material Blessings, and Piety in Karāmah

Allamah Tabataba'i emphasizes that if intellect ('Aql) is the source of dignity (Karāmah), then man and woman equally share in this dimension of dignity, and therefore, women also possess inherent dignity .

Another perspective in this regard is that material blessings (ni‘am māddiyya) are an important source of human karāmah (Ṭabarsī,

1993, vol. 6, p. 262). Specifically, humans differ from other beings in the food chain and life resources. Humans naturally possess the ability to understand and utilize food and can creatively provide for their food and needs. This capacity, compared to other beings that rely on limited resources to meet their basic needs, demonstrates human excellence (faḍl) (Ṭabarsī, 1993, vol. 6, p. 262). These material blessings help humans meet their needs and form social and cultural life. Shaykh Ṭabarsī, in *Majma' al-Bayān*, considers all of these factors as sources of human karāmah. From 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's viewpoint, the behavior and actions of a woman or man can determine their karāmah based on their piety (taqwā) and faith (īmān).

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, in *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, states that these characteristics and gifts collectively exist in human beings, and none of them alone can represent human greatness and karāmah. He emphasizes that God's karāmah toward humans is due to the combination of these gifts, and the possibility that "karamnā" (We have honored) refers to material blessings and "faḍḍalnā" (We have preferred) refers to spiritual gifts is close to reality.

10-6. Conclusion: The Synthesis of Inherent and Acquired Karāmah

In fact, human karāmah stems both from their inherent origin, which is bestowed upon them, and from their actions and choices. By utilizing their reason and knowledge, humans can achieve such karāmah. These two dimensions, in the form of a comprehensive image of human karāmah, create a special place for them in human societies.

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī states: "So, when according to these verses, the actions of each of the two genders, man and woman (whether good or bad), are recorded for them, and there is no advantage for anyone except through piety (taqwā), and considering

that one of the stages of piety is excellent morals (such as faith with its various degrees, and such as beneficial action, sound and mature reason, good morals, patience, and forbearance), then a woman who has a high degree of faith, or is full of knowledge, or has a mature and weighty reason, or possesses a greater share of moral virtues, such a woman in Islam is inherently more honorable and of a higher rank than a man who is not her equal, whoever that man may be. So there is no karāmah or advantage except only through piety and virtue" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995, vol. 2, p. 407).

Therefore, the most important divine blessing is inherent karāmah and nobility (sharāfat dhātī), which creates the capacity for transformation and a better life in human beings. However, this matter is of greater importance for women because the birth and upbringing of humans take place in their laps, and the sense of karāmah and worth is also transmitted from mothers to children. Islam, as a merciful school of thought (maktab raḥmānī), has combated gender discrimination and has honored women as respected human beings, and all the rules and laws concerning humans and women are based on the principle of karāmah.

11. The Value of Women's Actions in the Quran

The verses of the Quran clearly indicate the equal value of actions performed by both men and women before God. This principle of equality is emphasized in several verses, highlighting that the reward for righteous deeds is based on faith and good intentions, not gender.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاتًا طَيِّبَةً (النحل، ٩٧).

“Whoever does righteous work, male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] for the best of what they used to do.” (An-Nahl: 97).

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا (النساء ١٢٤).

“And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer - those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged at all.” (An-Nisa 4:124).

The Quran emphasizes that the criterion for divine reward is *iman* (faith) and righteous conduct, regardless of gender. This concept directly challenges pre-Islamic Arabian social norms that often devalued women. ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, in his renowned exegesis *Tafsir al-Mizan*, underscores this point, stating that there is no difference between men and women in receiving the reward for good deeds. He criticizes the superstitious beliefs of past societies that considered women inferior to men, asserting that Islam explicitly considers both genders equal and rejects pre-Islamic cultural misconceptions. He cites the following verse:

لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ (آل عمران، ١٩٥).

“...I will not allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another.” (Aal Imran: 195).

This verse emphasizes that God does not disregard any good deed, whether performed by a man or a woman. (Tabataba’i, 1986, Vol. 5, p. 143).

11-1. The Promise of Paradise and Equality in Reward

The Quran promises Paradise to both believing men and women, emphasizing their equality in divine reward.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسَاكِينٍ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (التوبة: ٧٢).

“Allah has promised the believing men and believing women

gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and good residences in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allah is greater. That is what is the great attainment.” (At-Tawbah: 72).

This verse explicitly states that both believing men and women are promised gardens of Paradise, emphasizing the principle of equality in divine reward. This point is further reinforced by the following verse:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (النحل: ٩٧).

“Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] for the best of what they used to do.” (An-Nahl: 97).

This verse clarifies that both believing men and women are promised eternal gardens and a good life, demonstrating divine justice toward both genders by ensuring equality in reward. Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, in his *Tafsir-e-Nemune*, comments on the value of men's and women's actions, stating:

“This verse, like many other verses in the Glorious Quran, considers men and women equal before God in attaining spiritual stations under similar conditions. It never considers the difference in gender, the difference in physical constitution, and consequently some differences in social responsibilities as a reason for difference between the two in terms of achieving human perfection. Rather, it places both of them completely on the same level in this regard, and therefore mentions them together. This is exactly like the fact that in terms of administrative discipline, one

person is chosen as the head, and another as the deputy or a member. The head must have more ability or more experience and information in his work, but this difference and hierarchy is never a reason that the human personality and existential value of the head is greater than his deputy or employees... These verses and many other verses were revealed at a time when many nations of the world doubted the humanity of the female gender and considered it a cursed being, and the source of sin, deviation, and death! Many previous nations even believed that women's worship was not accepted before God. Many Greeks considered women an impure being and the work of Satan. Romans and some Greeks believed that women did not have a human soul at all, and therefore the human soul was exclusively for men..." (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, Vol. 3 p. 223).

12. Equality of Men and Women in Islamic Teachings

Islam presents men and women as equal, as stated in the Quran: *مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى* "...whether male or female..." This phrase, used in various contexts, emphasizes that gender is not a determining factor in one's relationship with God or in receiving divine reward. The verse:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا (نساء: ١٢٤) (Al-nisa: 124).

translated as "And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer - those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged¹ at all," further reinforces this equality. The addition of "وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا" (and they will not be wronged at all) after "فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ" (those will enter Paradise) is significant. The first part indicates that women, like men, will receive reward, while the second part clarifies that there will be no difference between them in

the amount of reward. This concept is reiterated in another verse:

فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ
بَعْضٍ (آل عمران: ١٩٥).

“So their Lord responded to them, "Indeed, I will not allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another.” (Al Imran: 195).

This verse explicitly states that God does not waste the deeds of anyone, whether male or female, emphasizing their shared humanity and equal standing before God. ‘Allamah Tabataba’i, in his *Tafsir al-Mizan*, explains this concept, stating that the purpose behind adding "وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ تَفَرُّدًا" is to emphasize that just as women are entitled to reward, they will also not experience any injustice in the distribution of that reward. He further elaborates on the meaning of "بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ" (you are of one another) in verse 3:195, indicating the shared origin and essence of men and women.

Therefore, according to Muslim commentators, virtue and superiority in Islam are determined solely by *taqwa* (God-consciousness/piety) and righteous deeds. A believing woman with higher moral virtues is considered superior to a man who lacks these qualities. This demonstrates the equality of human value in Islam.

13. Women's Attainment of Spiritual Perfection in the Qur'an

This text addresses the possibility of women achieving spiritual perfection (*kamāl ma‘nawī*) from the Qur'an and Islamic teachings perspective, critiquing traditional views that suggest women are inherently incapable of reaching high spiritual levels.

13-1. The Islamic Understanding of Spirituality

In Islam, spirituality refers to the existence of a superior and

influential force in human life. Without accepting such a reality, Islamic spirituality does not begin. Although there is no specific term for spirituality in religious texts, keywords such as faith (īmān), piety (parhīzgārī/taqwā), and adherence to religious precepts (pāybandī be aḥkām dīnī) constitute the spirit of spirituality, and separating them is not possible.

Religion, servitude, and tawḥīd play a fundamental role in the formation of spirituality and enable a person to achieve "ḥayāt ṭayyiba" (good life). According to 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the concept of "ḥayāt ṭayyiba" means granting a real and meaningful life to the believing person. He states that God honors believing people who perform righteous deeds with a new life, which is distinct from the ordinary life of human beings. This type of life is accompanied by knowledge ('ilm) and power (qudra) and helps the believing person to clearly distinguish between right and wrong. Such a person is freed from attachment to the adornments and deceptive appearances of the world, and their relationship with God becomes lasting and eternal. They seek only God's nearness and pleasure and fear God's distance and wrath, which in turn creates a feeling of a pure and eternal life within them. On the other hand, the lack of spirituality and ḥayāt ṭayyiba can make human life meaningless and empty. In this regard, studying religious texts confirms that God has not made any distinction between women and men in providing opportunities to reach ḥayāt ṭayyiba.

13-2. Refuting Traditional Misconceptions about Women's Spirituality

Martyr Mutahhari, in this context, refers to historically degrading theories that specifically target women's spiritual and metaphysical abilities. Some believe that women will not go to

paradise or cannot reach spiritual and divine stations. In contrast, the Qur'an explicitly states that the reward in the hereafter and nearness to God depend on a person's faith and righteous deeds, not their gender. In this regard, the Qur'an, alongside great and holy men, also introduces distinguished and holy women, which is an example of the spiritual greatness of revelation.

Specifically, in various surahs, the mother of Moses is mentioned as an example of sacrifice and faith, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, is mentioned as a woman who was at a high spiritual level. In Islamic history, we also witness the existence of great and holy women, which demonstrates their spiritual power. These Qur'anic and religious emphases on the equality of women's and men's spiritual abilities demonstrate the importance and high religious values in shaping the spiritual identity of human beings and can be a source for improving social understanding of women's role in religion (Motahhari, 2011b, p. 149).

13-3. Equality of Women and Men in Spiritual Journey

In the spiritual journey (sulūk ma'nawī), there is no difference between women and men. As some scholars have expressed, "Islam in the journey 'from creation to the Truth'—that is, in the movement towards God—does not differentiate between women and men." The differences observed in Islamic teachings are mostly in the field of "the journey 'from the Truth to creation'" and the return from truth to the world of people, in which men, due to some characteristics, have been considered more suitable for performing prophetic duties (Motahhari, 2011b, p. 149).

Despite the existence of differences in some Islamic rules and laws regarding women and men, there is no distinction in achieving spiritual stations. Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi says in this regard: "In

general, if in some Islamic laws, due to physical and emotional differences between women and men, differences are seen in terms of social responsibilities, this does not in any way harm the spiritual value of women, and in this regard, women and men are on the same level. The doors of happiness are equally open to both" (Makarem Shirazi et al., 2003, p. 234).

The Holy Qur'an considers women and men in similar conditions before God and in reaching spiritual stations and does not consider gender difference and physical differences as a reason for difference in achieving human perfection. This view was presented at a time when many nations of the world questioned the human values of women and considered them a hateful being and the source of sin (Makarem Shirazi et al., 2003).

13-4. Views of Contemporary Scholars on Women's Spiritual Potential

Contemporary Islamic scholar, Mutahhari, also points out that "women are worthy of attaining the highest spiritual station and can, in this regard, be ranked alongside men; gender is not an obstacle" (Mutahhari, 2011a, Vol. 5, p. 260). 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also explicitly states that there is no difference between women and men in reaching spirituality, and the Qur'an has rejected the view that women cannot reach a station of nearness to God like men. This is stated in numerous verses that the reward in the hereafter and nearness to God are not related to gender but depend on faith (īmān) and righteous deeds ('amal ṣāliḥ). For example, if the Qur'an introduces the wives of Noah and Lot as unworthy women, it, in turn, mentions the wife of Pharaoh as a great and high-ranking individual (Mutahhari, 2011a, Vol. 19, pp. 131-133).

These verses and measures show that Islam emphasizes the

equality of women's and men's spiritual rights and responsibilities, and its spiritual consequences are significant and decisive.

13-5. Equality of Women and Men in Spiritual Stations from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Scholars

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in his commentary on verse 97 of Surah An-Nahl , "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer—We will surely cause him to live a good life...", clearly emphasizes the equality of women and men in achieving spiritual stations. In this verse, a beautiful promise is given to believers who perform righteous deeds, and God has not differentiated between women and men (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, Vol. 12, p. 421). ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī considers this verse as evidence for refuting the incorrect ideas of various peoples and nations who traditionally disregard the value and reward of women's actions. For example, in Hindu culture, women's actions are not counted, and in the religious corners of Judaism and Christianity, honor and dignity are attributed to men, and women are introduced as imperfect beings (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, Vol. 5, p. 88).

Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, regarding the journey of spiritual stations (sayr maqāmāt ma‘nawī), states: "In this movement (the journey towards God), there is no privilege between women and men, because the true journey in the stages of tawḥīd (divine unity) is the responsibility of humanity, which is free from gender." Even regarding the issue of prophethood (nubūwwah), which is generally specific to men, Mr. Javadi clarifies that although there is a difference between women and men in prophethood and legislative messengership (risālat tashrī‘ī), after the end of prophethood and messengership, both genders are equal from this perspective, and there is no advantage for anyone. Therefore, efforts to exclude women from political, social,

cultural, and economic arenas are not justifiable. He points out that if deprivation from prophethood is considered a deficiency, men, like women, are also deprived of it after the end of prophethood, and this does not mean disregarding women's capacities in other areas (Javadi Amoli, 2007 b, p. 187).

According to Mr. Javadi Amoli, although the division of labor and responsibilities, in terms of implementation, requires observing religious points and necessary precautions, from a spiritual perspective, women are fully alongside men, and there is no superiority in this regard. Women, like men, have the right and competence to participate in social and economic fields (Javadi Amoli, 2007, p. 189).

In conclusion, what is derived from the verses of the Qur'an and the statements of scholars is that there is no difference between women and men in achieving spiritual stations and mystical conduct (sulūk 'irfānī). The main criterion is acting upon Islamic laws and precepts and pursuing the paths of spiritual journeying. Moreover, some theories, especially from Mr. Javadi Amoli, point to the fact that women have more grounds in the path of mystical conduct. He believes that "the ways of human progress and transcendence are different; one is the path of thought (fikr) and the other is the path of remembrance (dhikr). Women in the path of dhikr and supplication (munājāt), which means heartfelt and emotional connection, if they are not more successful than men, are certainly their equals, and this path is considered a fundamental path." Thus, it can be concluded that in the discussion of spirituality and spiritual stations, not only is the equality of women and men emphasized, but in some mystical approaches, the special abilities of women are also worthy of attention and study.

Contemporary Islamic scholar, Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi,

especially mentions the wife of Pharaoh as a practical example of achieving spirituality. He writes that from the biographies of great women, such as the wife of Pharaoh and Mary (peace be upon her), it can be learned that women can also reach the highest degrees of human perfection. This station may even be higher than some prophets. The Qur'an introduces the wife of Pharaoh as a model of the people of faith and emphasizes her perfection and progress in spiritual positions. With high ambition and a unique perspective, she has no interest in heavenly blessings, and the only thing she asks of God is to be close to Him and dwell in the divine vicinity. She abhors the oppression of her husband and the Pharaohs and tries to be safe from the consequences of their actions (Mesbah Yazdi, 2009, Vol. 1, p. 196).

14. Principles of Divine Mercy Governing Women's Family Roles in Islam

14-1. A Compassionate View of Women in Light of the Principle of *Mu'āsharah bi-l-Ma'rūf*

The Holy Qur'an has an ethical view towards women, and all social and family relationships are based on this. In family relationships, the principle of *mu'āsharah bi-l-ma'rūf* is enjoined upon husbands as the managers of the family. This principle plays a significant role in strengthening family relationships in challenging situations.

14-2. The Importance of *Mu'āsharah Bi-l-Ma'rūf*

The Qur'an has limited any abuse and harassment, and according to the verses, *mu'āsharah bi-l-ma'rūf* must be observed in the behavior and speech of spouses. This is especially important during the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, when some views regarding women were challenging. Even in the present era, perceptions such as male guardianship (*qiwāmah*) and the complexities

of polygamy have created serious challenges.

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in his commentary on the verses related to *mu‘āsharah bi-l-ma‘rūf*, considers the concept of "*ma‘rūf*" to be an action that is accepted in public opinion and is compatible with social culture. He states that this principle is not only an ethical principle but also a legal principle. Especially the verse "And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable" (Al-Baqarah: 228).

عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي (البقرة: ٢٢٨).

expresses the legitimate rights of wives over their husbands (Al-Baqarah: 228) (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 348).

According to him, the word "*ma‘rūf*" includes the guidance of reason (‘aql), the ruling of Islamic law (ḥukm shar‘ī), moral virtue (faḍīlat akhlāqī), and literary and human traditions: "That action is *ma‘rūf* which is both in accordance with the guidance of reason and consistent with the ruling of Islamic law or the prevailing law in society, and is not contrary to moral virtues, and literary traditions do not consider it contrary to etiquette" (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1995, Vol. 2, p. 349).

14-3. The Universality of Mu‘āsharah Bi-l-Ma‘rūf in Women's Legal and Ethical Matters

This section emphasizes the importance and scope of the principle of *mu‘āsharah bi-l-ma‘rūf* (kind and equitable companionship) in women's family and social relationships from the perspective of Islam and ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī.

The Application of Mu‘āsharah bi-l-Ma‘rūf in All Aspects of Women's Lives. The principle of *mu‘āsharah bi-l-ma‘rūf* also applies to all legal and ethical issues concerning women. In other words, Islamic rulings are based on human nature, and "*ma‘rūf*" means that

which is in accordance with *fiṭrah*, the guidance of reason, the ruling of Islamic law (*ḥukm sharʿī*), and moral values.

Muʿāsharah bi-l-maʿrūf, as a fundamental principle in family relationships, not only helps preserve women's rights but also leads to the creation of health and balance in relationships. The importance of this principle is evident in achieving justice and equality in society and ultimately realizing family well-being.

According to the teachings of the Qur'an, women in the social structure, and especially in the family, enjoy a special position and rights. The Holy Qur'an, by stating the principle of "maʿrūf", provides a specific framework for social relations in which women's rights are emphasized and violence is neutralized. ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī clearly states that the position and rights that Islam has granted to women are unparalleled in history, and this remarkably empowers women in society. The term "maʿrūf" in the Qur'an is mentioned as one of the key principles of social relations, especially in family and marital contexts. This means that any action that is recognized as a good and commendable action in society should be considered in these relationships. This being bound by "maʿrūf" in fact states that human relations should be based on ethics and fairness, and any disrespectful or violent behavior within the framework of this principle is unacceptable.

Therefore, according to ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī, noble Islam "gave a position to women that you will not find such a position for women in any corner of any page of human history, and you will not find a declaration on women's rights like the Qur'an's declaration that says: '...then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable way...'" (Al-Baqarah: 228).

[1] Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 415. (The provided verse

reference (البقره: 234) is not the most direct verse related to mu'āsharah bi-l-ma'rūf between spouses, although it does address appropriate conduct. Verse البقره: 228 is more directly relevant.)

« إِمَّا يَبْلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا وَخَفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا » (اسراء، آيات ٢٣-٢٤).

"If one or both of them reach old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them but speak to them a generous word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.'" (Al-Isra', verses 23-24).

15. Qiwāmah (Male Headship)

Qiwāmah in the Holy Qur'an means guardianship and management of family life, and this role is naturally placed upon men. This is while women are equal to men in human rights and benefits, and this equality is defined extensively and beautifully by the Qur'an. In other words, common rights in the principle of creation are an important foundation for marital relations, but the roles and responsibilities of men, due to heavier duties in the family and headship, reach a different degree. This is what has caused differences in marital rights and a degree of advantage for men, and "But men have a degree [of responsibility] over them [women]" (Al-Baqarah: 228).

وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (بقره: ٢٢٨).

In conclusion, the Qur'an, by emphasizing "ma'rūf" (what is good and recognized) and establishing human rights for women, not only values their position and status but also explains social justice and respect for mutual rights. These teachings, along with the recognition of natural roles and social responsibilities, clarify the non-

contradiction and simultaneity of women's and men's rights in family life.

The Qur'anic Principles of Raḥmah (Mercy) and Mawaddah (Affection) as Two Pillars of the Family
The foundation of the family is strengthened by two strong and firm principles: mawaddah and raḥmah. The Holy Qur'an says in this regard:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (روم: ٢١).

"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. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought." (Rom: 21).

This means that God created spouses for you from yourselves so that you may incline towards them and they may be a source of tranquility and peace for you, and for this purpose, He placed two important and vital principles, mawaddah and raḥmah, between you, one meaning sincere friendship towards each other and the other meaning flexibility, mercy, and forgiveness of each other's mistakes, both of which play a significant role in creating a strong relationship and an unbreakable bond between husband and wife (Javadi Amoli, 2019, Vol. 5, p. 675).

Mawaddah means a wise friendship towards each other, and raḥmah means merciful forgiveness of each other's mistakes. A family without these two principles and pillars does not become a family and does not become strong. Therefore, it is a false assumption that other material factors besides mawaddah and raḥmah can strengthen the foundation of the family. The principle of mawaddah and raḥmah each have their own specific meaning. The principle of raḥmah in the Qur'an is introduced as a major factor in the establishment and

continuation of the family. This rahmah includes two important dimensions: 1) Addressing emotional and natural needs: Spouses should pay attention to each other's emotional needs and respond to these needs with love and kindness. Such behavior strengthens the sense of security and peace in the family. 2) Merciful forgiveness: Because humans are fallible beings, it is necessary for family members to forgive each other's mistakes. This forgiveness, especially in Islamic families, is known as a sign of mercy and compassion in family relationships.

The principle of mawaddah is based on the fact that the formation of a family will not be stable and lasting as long as it is based on instinct. In fact, love and friendship are sometimes based on logic, reasoning, and reason, and sometimes on emotions and instinctive feelings. The strength of these two types of mawaddah is not the same; one is stable, and the other is unstable. Love that is accompanied by the criteria of reason and logic has a strong foundation, but if its criterion is emotion and instinctive feeling, its foundation is weak and shaky. The older the spouses get, the weaker the instinct becomes and the weaker the instinctive mawaddah becomes. As a result, if the family relies solely on it, it will collapse, but if the friendship is based on reason, with the increase of the spouses' age, rational experiences become stronger, and the foundation of rational life becomes stronger. As a result, family members become more intimate and kind to each other (Javadi Amoli, 2019). Therefore, the family intended by the Qur'an is formed based on the two principles of mawaddah and rahmah. In such a family, children grow up who have been nourished by two sources of mawaddah and rahmah, and as a result, they return this upbringing to their parents. Such children become capable of being addressed by such a Qur'anic address that God Almighty says to them: "Whether one or both of

them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small" (Isra: 23-24).

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُتْلَعَنَّ عَلَيْكَ الْكِبَرُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا * وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (الاسراء: ٢٣-٢٤).

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, "My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small" (Isra: 23-24).

A child who is the foundation of the family is one who does not say "uff" to his parents but treats them with noble words and spreads the wing of humility, kindness, and mercy for them.

15-1. The Role of *Rahmah* (Mercy) in Child Upbringing and the Impact of *Mawaddah* (Affection) and *Rahmah* on Family Dynamics

This section examines the role of *rahmah* (mercy) in child upbringing and the impact of the principles of *mawaddah* (affection) and *rahmah* on marital relations and family cohesion from the perspective of the Qur'an.

In a family built on *mawaddah* and *rahmah*, children are nourished by these two sources. Therefore, this type of upbringing leads to the raising of children who can respect their parents in the future and behave with love and courtesy when their parents reach old age.

The Qur'an, in a verse from Surah Al-Isra 23, emphasizes that people should treat their parents well, especially in old age:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۚ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (الاسراء: ٢٣).

"And your Lord has decreed that you not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], "uff," and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word." (Al-Isra 23).

This verse points to the importance of respectful behavior towards parents and attention to them in old age and teaches children how they should treat their parents with love and courtesy.

All laws and regulations between spouses are also based on these two principles. In the Qur'an, God commands men to treat their wives well: "وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ" And live with them in kindness." (Al nisa :19). This command means positive, loving behavior and respecting the rights and needs of the other party and is based on the concepts of mawaddah and rahmah.

15-2. The Impact of Mawaddah and Rahmah on Family Cohesion

In general, the principle of *rahmah* and *mawaddah*, as fundamental pillars of the family, provide the necessary spiritual and emotional space for the survival of the family. By emphasizing these principles, the Qur'an creates a practical model for family relationships that not only strengthens families but also helps raise children with positive and respectful characteristics.

Based on these teachings, the family is recognized as a dynamic

and powerful unit in society whose power lies in interpersonal and emotional relationships.

حکم من اهله و حکم من اهلها» (النساء: ۱۹).

“A judge from his family and a judge from her family” (An-Nisa’: 19).

الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ» (البقرة: ۲۲۹).

“Divorce is twice. Then either keep her in an acceptable manner or release her with good treatment.” (Al-Baqarah: 229).

16. The Principles of Iḥsān and Ma‘rūf in Marital Relations

The principles of ma‘rūf and iḥsān are presented as expressions of methods for dealing with crises in marital relationships. These principles not only help improve relationships in difficult situations but are also considered a correct path for managing separations and divorce. In critical situations where the continuation of married life is impossible, the Qur'an especially advises husbands that in this case, "God's command to husbands is that either live together in perfect benevolence and keep the wife, or release her in perfect courtesy and benevolence": (البقرة: ۲۲۹) "الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَانٍ فَإِمْسَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ". "Divorce is [permitted] twice; then either retain [them] in an acceptable manner or release [them] with good treatment. (Al-Baqarah: 229)"

This verse states that divorce is only permitted twice, and in this case, either they should keep the wife with good character and kindness or release her in a proper and courteous manner. This concept demonstrates the importance of preserving the dignity and individual rights of both parties.

The principles of ma‘rūf and iḥsān are based on the general principle of human dignity (karāmat insānī). In the Qur'an and Islamic teachings, both genders (male and female) enjoy equal human status. Therefore, in all stages of marriage, whether union or separation,

attention to the human dignity of women is essential.

This principle contains two policy guidelines: Non-Abusive Behavior: The Qur'an does not allow a man to treat his wife disrespectfully. This includes behaviors that damage the woman's dignity and self-esteem. Preserving Dignity During Separation: According to this principle, even during separation, respect and dignity for the other party must be observed. This point not only emphasizes the strengthening of the family but also indicates ethical and humane behavior.

16-1. The Principle of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding in Marital Relations

In crisis situations, the use of dialogue and mutual understanding as a method for resolving problems and conflicts is also noteworthy. This method allows spouses to discuss matters with each other and reach mutual understanding. For this reason, the Holy Qur'an suggests the principle of arbitration (ḥakamiyyah): "an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people " (Surah An-Nisa (The Women), Verse 35).

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا (النساء: ٣٥).

In general, the principles of preserving the family as a divine covenant, mawaddah (affection) and rahmah (mercy), mu'āsharah bi-l-ma'rūf (kind companionship) and iḥsān (benevolence), and fair dialogue influence various aspects of marital relations. The Holy Qur'an introduces these principles as solutions for achieving a healthy and respectful married life and emphasizes the value of human dignity and ethics in relationships. As a result, by observing these principles, a stronger foundation for families can be achieved, and in times of

crisis, instead of destruction, steps can be taken to build and repair relationships.

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَانٍ ۖ فَإِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَشْرِيحٌ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ وَلَا يَجِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا بِمَا
آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ سِتْرًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (البقرة: ٢٢٩).

"Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them, unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah – it is those who are the wrongdoers." (Al baqareh: 229).

17. A Compassionate Perspective of the Quran on Women's Social Roles

17-1. Women as Role Models in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, the concept of a "role model" (الْقُدْوَة) "al-qudwah or الأُسوة al-uswah (is presented as a key component in education and upbringing. Women who are recognized as positive role models in Islamic and human history play a decisive and central role not only in the arenas of faith and practice but also in the social sphere.

The words al-qudwah (الْقُدْوَة) and al-uswah (الأُسوة) in Arabic mean "model," "example," and "leader." In fact, uswah (أُسوة) refers to a state in which a person chooses to follow another, whether in good behavior or bad behavior. The Holy Qur'an says in a verse:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (الأحزاب: ٢١).

"There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern". (Al-Ahzab, 33:21).

This verse means that the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him) is an example to follow in behavior and speech. This concept also applies to women, because in Islamic history, worthy women with unique characteristics have been role models for others. Mr. Subhani writes about the importance of the Qur'an's role modeling: "In every subject that the Qur'an speaks about, it tries to introduce the greatest hero of that subject, a hero who can be the best role model for that subject" (Subhani, 2005, Vol. 13, p. 345).

Similarly, Mr. Makarem writes: "We know that the selection of God's messengers from among human beings is so that they can be role models for nations, because the most important and effective part of the prophets' preaching and invitation is their practical invitations. They must be *أُسْوَةُ النَّاسِ* *uswat al-nas*) [role models for people] and (*qudwat al-khalq*) [exemplars for creation]" (Makarem Shirazi, 1991, Vol. 1, p. 263).

17-2. Exemplary Women in the Qur'an

The Qur'an refers to influential women in history who, with their good deeds and strong faith, have become role models for future generations. Just as the Holy Qur'an introduces the prophets (peace be upon them) as role models for humanity and considers acting according to their methods and traditions necessary, it has also declared some women as human role models and examples. As Mr. Javadi Amoli writes in this regard: "If a person becomes virtuous, he/she is a role model for other people. If he is a man, he is a role model for people, not just men, and if she is a woman, she is again a role model for people, not just women. The Holy Qur'an has clearly stated this point" (Javadi Amoli, 2007 b, p. 153).

Some of these exemplary women include: Mary (peace be upon her): The mother of Jesus (peace be upon him), she is known as a symbol of purity, faith, and submission to the divine will. Her story in the Qur'an is introduced as a model of faith and devotion for Muslim women. As it is stated in the Qur'an:

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ
(آل عمران: ٤٢).

"And [mention] when the angels said, 'O Mary, indeed Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the worlds.'" (Al 'Imran, 3:42).

God Almighty states three advantages for Mary in this example: A: The first advantage is chastity and purity... In the third example, it speaks of a chaste and pure woman who enjoys both the privilege of a high relationship and respects divine rules to the utmost, and for this reason, she is introduced as a role model (Makarem Shirazi, 1999, Vol. 2, p. 308).

The Wife of Pharaoh: Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh, is an example of resistance and faith who made courageous choices in difficult living conditions. She stood against the oppression and cruelty of her husband and believed in God. As it is stated 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 مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (الترجم: ١١).

"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.'" (At-Tarheem: 11).

The wife of Pharaoh is a name that has become proverbial in

history in defense of God's religion and God's messenger and in the fight against the oppression and tyranny of Pharaoh. This woman, despite enjoying material blessings, has become a "model for women" in spirituality and anti-oppression.

Khadija (peace be upon her): The wife of the Prophet of Islam, she was one of the first people to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and played an important role in supporting him and promoting the religion of Islam. Khadija is known as a symbol of loyalty and standing by her husband in the most difficult circumstances.

17-3. The Social Impact of Female Role Models

These women were influential not only in individual and spiritual realms but also in the social sphere. Female role models in the Qur'an are presented as symbols of contentment (*qanā'at*), sacrifice (*fidākārī*), courage (*shajā'at*), and resistance against oppression and corruption (*ẓulm va fasād*). Through their behavior and actions, they not only influenced their own society but are also recognized as pioneers and social leaders.

Conclusion

Based on the provided text, the key lessons and principles extracted from the Holy Qur'an regarding the status of women are summarized across three main domains: Creation and Human Identity, Family, and Social Roles. These principles emphasize equality, dignity, and the importance of women's agency in both individual and social spheres.

1. Creation, Identity, and Human Dignity (The Theory of Foundational Equality)

The Qur'an, by emphasizing the "Single Soul" (Nafs

Wahidah), presents a fundamental view of gender equality that bases all human worth and rights on a shared humanity.

A) Unity in Creation and Human Essence: Unity in Origin: Both man and woman were created from a single soul (Nafs), which is the basis for inherent equality and mutual respect, and refutes any inherent superiority of one sex over the other. Identical Primordial Essence: The creation of both sexes was from the same primary matter, explicitly rejecting theories that undermine women's status (such as creation from the left rib). Soul Transcends Gender: According to Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, the human soul is an immaterial reality that is neither masculine nor feminine. Moral perfections are dependent solely on human status, not on gender.

B) Shared Spiritual Dignity and Perfection: Equality Before God: Men and women have equal worth in the eyes of God. Only moral attributes determine ultimate dignity and superiority. Shared Purpose of Creation: Both sexes share the ultimate goal of creation, which is the worship and servitude of God, ensuring equal opportunities for spiritual growth. Shared Responsibility in Fall: In the Qur'anic narrative of the fall, the responsibility for the temptation and the decision to eat from the forbidden tree rested equally upon both Adam and Eve.

C) Justice and Balance of Rights: Balance of Rights and Duties: Islam emphasizes the balance and proportionality of rights and responsibilities based on differing gender capabilities, rather than absolute equality (identicalness). This balance is enacted for Divine Justice, not for inequality. Balance and Proportion in Creation: The concept of *Taswiyah* (proportion and balance) in creation demonstrates the equal importance and honor of both sexes in the Divine design.

2. Dimensions of the Family: Islamic ethical principles establish a foundation for the family institution rooted in affection and respect. Association with Goodness: This principle establishes kindness and just treatment as the cornerstone of marital relations, guaranteeing the observance of women's rights within the family. Affection and Mercy: These two concepts are vital for creating a nurturing family dynamic where love, compassion, and forgiveness flourish, positively influencing the upbringing of future generations. Dialogue in Conflicts: In times of dispute, the Qur'an calls upon both parties to engage in mutual dialogue and understanding so that challenges are managed with dignity and respect.

3. Social Roles: The Qur'an considers the social role of women highly important and presents them as key actors in the moral and social arena. Exemplarity: The concept of taking individuals with outstanding moral conduct as models applies equally to women. Exemplary Women: Figures like Mary (symbol of purity and devotion), Asiya (symbol of courage and resistance against oppression), and Khadijah (symbol of loyalty, perseverance, and support) are introduced as prominent examples of faith and social activism. Social Impact: These exemplary women demonstrate courage, sacrifice, and resistance to injustice, highlighting the vital role of women in the development of ethical values and social change.

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