

# Examination of Doubts of Woman's Character from the Viewpoint of Orientalists

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**Abstract---** *God has chosen man as his own deputy on earth and the noblest of all creatures and dignified him. According to the verses of Holy Quran, man has been created in two sexes, i.e. male and female. Quranic verses insist on the idea that no one of the two sexes has any essential nobility and dignity over the other and God-wariness is introduced as the measure of human value. However, some orientalists by a superficial reading of the Quran underline such issues as the guardianship of man, divorce and etc., and consider the woman to be of a second degree human value and a weak creature in Quran. Having said these, they seek to challenge the authority of Quran and describe it as a book written by a man. The present essay by a descriptive-analytic method and by the study and criticism of doubts and objections casted by the orientalists, based on the divine verses and Islamic doctrines has proceeded to defend the place of woman and truthfulness of Quran. It is concluded that the doubts casted by the orientalists are due to the lack of awareness or misunderstanding and lack of comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of Quran and Islam or in some cases, out of animosity and fight with Islam.*

**Keywords---** *Verses, Women, Orientalists, Men, Leiden Encyclopedia*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of woman and the specific vision of Islam of her is one of the important and controversial domains of Islamic thought. The critics of Islam believe that the religious doctrines have a low vision of woman and consider her a grade 2 creature. They ignore the decisive principles and clear verses of Quran regarding the status of woman. In past centuries, many orientalists and non-Muslim Islamologists have studied the doctrines and content of Quran. Such issues as the guardianship of man over woman, deficiency of reason, religion and share of woman, difference of woman in beliefs, ethics and jurisprudence with man, secondary status of woman, seeing the woman as the source of corruption and sin for man have been continuously repeated by the orientalists in order to challenge the beliefs of Islamic society. By discussing the aforementioned issues, the orientalists pursue their own goals and seek to criticize Quran. They believe that given the existing discussions and verses in Quran, Islamic religion has exercised a great oppression against many women and neglected the dignity of this human group.

Then, demonstration of truthfulness of Quran and denial of every type of doubt as to the women, addressing the character doubts raised by the orientalists as regards the verses of women, uncovering the problems of the doubts casted by the orientalists and prevention from their negative effects and presentation of a correct picture of Quran and prophetic traditions on the character of woman are among the key goals of the present research.

As to the present subject matter, no independent book has been authored and the existing studies are in the form of essay and paper. Among the works that have been devoted to the criticism and evaluation of the doubts of the orientalists one can refer to the essay entitled "criticism of ideas of orientalists concerning the social rights of women in Quran" by Masoud Souhani. Here are the papers published in this regard: "critical review of the paper

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‘women and Quran’ by Mohammad Javad Eskandarlou and Maryam Noushin; “analysis of the entry of women and Quran in Leiden Encyclopedia” by Soheila Jalali and Sajedah Nabaei; “critical review of the entry of sex from Leiden Encyclopedia of Quran” by Fathyyah Fattahizadeh and Hossein Afsardir. Only one of the aforementioned works has dealt with the criticism of social doubts of women casted by orientalist and the rest of the works have just challenged the entries of women and sex in Leiden Encyclopedia; but in the present essay, we seek to approach this issue from another perspective and critically assay all doubts of the woman character in a consistent and comprehensive fashion relying on Quranic verses and Islamic principles. These doubts are divided into two types:

#### 1- **Doubts concerning Creation of Woman:**

The discussion of woman in Islam has been considered by the proponents and opponents of Islam. Among the opponents of Islam, orientalist have insisted on the idea of the oppression of women and violation of their rights as the underlying leitmotif of Quran. One of these orientalist in Ruth Roded who in his essay entitled “women and Quran” in Leiden Encyclopedia has thoroughly discussed some verses that address the problems of women. Nabia Abbott, Clara Rice, Rousseau, Margot Badran are the other orientalist who believe that in Quran some laws have been adopted against women. On the other hand, such figures as Ayatollah Fazlullah, Fatemeh Hoda Naja, and exegetes of Quran in their works have answered the raised doubts.

##### 1-1- **Menstruation the Source of Existential Illness and Weakness of Woman:**

Roded argues that woman’s monthly menstruation has been considered an illness and impurity in Quran (Roded, n.: 524). He has referred to two verses of Quran in this regard:

A: *“And they ask you about menstruation. Say, “It is harm, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are pure”* (Baqara: 222).

B: *“And if you are ill or on a journey or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself or you have contacted women and find no water, then seek clean earth and wipe over your faces and your hands [with it]”* (Nisa: 43).

#### **Critical Review:**

1- Roded refers to the verse 222 of Baqara in which menstruation is allegedly described as a sign of illness and impurity while he suffices to the surface of this verse in raising this claim and neglects the word combination of this verse and also the rhetorical issues hidden in it. he does not pay attention to authorized sources and reliable lexical references.

Moreover, he has also been neglectful of the context in which the verse has been revealed; because the exegetes have suggested that this verse has been revealed to refer to the tough measures adopted by the Jews of the issue of menstruation (Torah, Book of Leviticus, chapter 15); when the women had their period, the Jews kept away even from the food, water and residence and bed of women; but the Christians were negligent in this regard and they even slept with the women who were menstruating. The Muslims asked the Prophet of the quality of sexual intercourse and this verse was revealed indeed as an answer to their question (Tabarsi, 1993, 2: 562; Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 208; Ibn Kathir, 1999, 2: 400; Nesaei, 1990, 1: 252).

2- In the verse 222 of Baqara, menstruation refers to the blood that is discharged from the woman’s uterus within a special period of time (Azhari, 2001, 5: 103; Ibn Manzoor, 1994, 7: 142). Although the phrase “keep away from

the wives during menstruation” externally suggests the absolute avoidance. However, given the content of the phrase *“And when they have purified themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you”*, ban of approaching should be understood as the prohibition of approaching from the place of blood discharge not the absolute ban of speaking to them and chatting and even not the absolute abstinence from getting pleasure from them (Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 208).

Therefore, Islam has chosen the middle path as regards the issue of women’s menstruation. The men should avoid having vaginal intercourse while the women are bleeding. Of course, they are allowed to take pleasure via other possible ways.

Moreover, the verse 43 of Surah Al Nisa, does not have anything to do with menstruation. There is no indication of the impurity and illness of women in the phrase “do not touch the women” is a beautiful metaphor of having sexual intercourse with the women (Tabarsi, 1992, 1: 258).

3- Roded refers to the word “Adha” in the verse 222 of Surah Al Baqara and considers the monthly menstruation as a sign of illness and impurity according to Quran while the word “Adha” with which the woman during her menstruation has been described refers to what is avoidable and undesirable (Ibn Fars, 2008: 51; Mostafavi, 1996, 1: 66) not to illness. So have stated that the word “Adha” in this context refers to the damage caused by the impurity (Mughnyyah, 1994, 1” 336). The description of “menstruating woman” as “Adha” is due to the fact that during menstruation the woman is involved with the purification of the uterus and preparation for pregnancy and sexual intercourse in this moment can cause damage this action and destroy the uterus (Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 207). Therefore, monthly period is not essentially bad and undesirable and purity in this context refers to purity as the permission of sexual intercourse (Jorjani, 1983, 1: 72; Alusi, 1995, 1: 515; Fazlullah, 1995, 4: 244).

On the other hand, Islam not only does not consider menstruation a sign of weakness and illness in woman; rather during menstruation it exempts her from religious obligations like daily prayer and fasting in order to ease the conditions and this permission is indeed a sign of respect and praise of woman.

#### **1-2- Likening the Woman to the Farm as a Sign of Her Weakness and State of Being a Property:**

Comparing the woman with a farm is among those cases which Roded considers to be a reason for lowering the status of woman and her dependence on the man. He resorts to the verse: *“Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers”* (Baqara, 223) in which the women are likened to the farm which can be owned as a property by the men and he claims that here Quran turns the woman into a property (Roded, n.: 524).

#### **Critical Review:**

1- Describing the woman as a farm where the seeds are sown by men cannot be a ground for lowering the status of woman; because the unique similes used by Quran are one of the most beautiful manifestations of the expressive miracle of this great book. In this verse, God has noted subtle points including the fact that reproduction is one of the key goals of the marriage and the most prominent function of family.

Roded has offered this claim based on the superficial meaning of the verse and turned a blind eye towards the combination of words and the rhetorical points hidden in it (goal of simile). This simile is supposed to convey the meaning that in the same way that the farmer should take care of his own land in order to have a good harvest, the

man is also responsible before his wife and should pay sufficient attention to her and he must be cautious not to have intercourse with his wife in inappropriate time (e.g. menstruation) so that he can have righteous children.

2- Neither the exegesis of the verse 223 of Baqara nor its revelation ground refer to dependency of woman or her being a property. This verse has been revealed concerning the incorrect beliefs of Jews regarding sexual intercourse's quality and outlined the codes of different forms of sexual relationship.

Malek, Nafe and Zeyd Ibn Aslam have argued for the permissibility of non-vaginal sex with the women in the time of menstruation based on this verse. However, many jurists are against this exegesis and suggest that here Quran has spoken of "sowing" and this is possible only through vaginal sex (Tabarsi, 1992, 2: 564). A group of exegetes have argued that the association of "place of cultivation" and "sowing the seed" in this context is in contradiction with the possibility of anal sex. Because anal sex cannot result in reproduction. Moreover, anal sex harasses the woman (Rashid Reza, 1994, 2: 362; Sultan Ali Shah, 1988, 1: 199; Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 218), although prophetic traditions endorse this idea (Horre Ameli, 1989, 20: 144).

Then, the aforementioned verse is not an expression of the weakness of woman and her being a place for carrying the sperm of man; rather according to Allama Tabatabaei, "women are the like the place of cultivation and farms where the seeds of human society has the opportunity to sustain. In other words, without women, human race would collapse (Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 213).

### **1-3- Superiority of Man over the Woman and Women as the Second Sex and Their Humiliation:**

Violation of women's rights in many human societies is a result of the thought of superiority of the men over the women. Roded believes that according to the verse 228 of Surah Al Baqara, man is superior than woman. He contends that the verse 34 of the Surah Al Nisa has been used in the course of centuries for the support of superiority of the men over the women. Setting the women along with the orphans, children and weak men who do not have the capability to take part in the war reflects their lower situation (Roded, n.: 524). Moreover, according to the verse 16 of Surah Al Shuara, women have been created for their husbands (Roded, n.: 526).

Nabia Abbott also believes that Quran based on the verses 228 of Surah Al Baqara and 34 of Surah Al Nisa has set the woman one step away from the man and in this way she is presented as a lower creature as compared to man and the revelation of these verses has paved the ground for the humiliation of the women (Abbott, n.: 107).

Rousseau the French orientalist believes that the men are the first sex and the women are the second sex. The women are supposed to provide the perfection of man and his interests (Mortazavi, Pakzad, 2016: 49-74). The creation of woman is for the man and satisfaction of his needs. Accordingly, he refers to the superiority of the men over the women (Rousseau, 2014: 333).

### **Critical Review:**

1- Roded and Abbott do not pay any attention to the lexical sense of the term "guardianship" and interpret it as the nobility of man as compared to woman. "Guardian" is the person who is in charge of handling the woman's affairs and providing her needs (Mostafavi, 1996, 9: 344). Furthermore, it has been used in the sense of protection and reform (Ibn Manzoor, 1997: 11; Shartuni, 2006).

On the other hand, Roded has not referred to different exegetical sources in discussing some issues and remained neglectful of the ideas of some religious scholars. This has caused him not to have a correct understanding of some discussions. A group of exegetes and jurists believe that in this verse, "men" are in the sense of husbands and "women" refer to the wives. Therefore, the content of this verse is that the husbands only have the right of

guardianship over their own wives and this is in turn due to paying the costs of life. Then, no man has any guardianship over a woman who is not his wife; because he does not pay her life's costs (Fazlullah, 1999, 7: 161). It is very likely that "nobility" in this verse is an indication of having double shares of the heritage (Qortabi, 1985, 5: 169). For in previous verses, the Lord has spoken of inheritance and its division. Here it may refer to the further physical capability of the woman (Fazlullah, 1999, 7: 237). It never refers to the superiority and domination of the husband over the woman. Although some have had the understanding of Roded thought of it this way (Tabarsi, 1992, 3: 68; Zamakhshari, 1987, 1: 505). Roded should have reflected different ideas instead of sufficing to the thoughts of a special group.

2- Quran does not accept the claim of superiority of man over the woman; because according to the verse: *"Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand."* (Al Nisa, 34).

Firstly: when man and woman are discussed as two different classes of human being, there is no word of guardianship and one being in charge of the other; rather the guardianship and obedience are the case where the woman is the wife for the man.

Secondly: being in charge in this context is not an indication of perfection and nearness to Allah; in the same way that in ministries, communities and societies, there are some individuals who are in charge of the others, i.e. lead them; but this management is not a spiritual pride; rather it is just an executive responsibility and labor division.

Thirdly: Being in charge and guardianship is a responsibility, if this verse is considered to be an explanation of responsibility not the endowment of any privilege. Here the men are addressed to be accountable for their wives (Al Nisa, 135).

Therefore, the guardianship of man is not an insult to the woman's character. The aforementioned verse does not suggest that all humans are equal in all conditions, tasks and responsibilities; rather human society is like the members of human body. Each one of the members are in charge of a responsibility that is not undertaken by another; Imam Ali states: "Men sustain thanks to their differences and when they are equal they get destroyed" (Majlesi, 1983, 74: 383). Then, these differences are in the interest of the humans.

3- The aforementioned orientalists had been neglectful of the context of the verse 228 of Surah Al Baqara. The mentioned degree in the verse is in the sense of nobility and status (Tabatabaei, 1997, 2: 233). This verse is the case with the family relations and the nobility of the husband over his wife. In this verse the issues of divorce and the post-divorce period are discussed. Therefore, here "degree" does not refer to the human superiority; rather it speaks of the superiority of the man in administration of executive affairs of the house and his guardianship in family life and includes the right of divorce and other specific rights of the husband (Qortabi, 1985, 5: 168).

According to Dr. Naja, when God states: *"And due to the wives is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]"*, the number of the possible wives was determined to be 4. This was an action to put an end to the excess of the ignorant Arabs and others nations in marrying infinite women (Naja, 1991: 9).

As to the verse 166 of Surah Al Shuara, Roded has claimed that the women have been created for their husbands. Again here Roded does not pay attention to the context of the verses and the ground of their revelation. The truth is

that this verse addresses Lute's people due to their promiscuous action of homosexuality; for this reason, God reproaches them and reminds that they have wives to satisfy their sexual needs with them (Tabatabaei, 1997, 15: 309-310). Therefore, one cannot infer the idea that indication of women's creation for their husbands bespeaks of the lower status of the woman and her being dominated by the man; because the context of this verse refers to another point.

4- Status and place of orphans is not lower in Quran. Then, indication of women along with them is not necessarily referring to their lower status. Moreover, study of the context of verses and attention to the ground of revelation as well as the relationship between the opening verse and the final verses underlines the observation of fairness as regards the share of the orphans as well as the marriage with women. Islam insists on the observation of the fairness and rights of children and orphans (Anaam, 152; Zoha, 9; Baqara, 177); but the Arab elders married the orphan girls who have inherited a lot of properties and mixed their properties with the orphan's properties. In this verse, God recommends the observation of the rights of orphans even if it is the spouse of that person. Therefore, the opening and end of the verse are totally in harmony; but the author without paying attention to the context of the verses and the ground of revelation has claimed the women's lower status in Quran.

On the other hand, in Quran the orphans have special place and rights and by no means are lower and secondary before the divine presence. God has reminded the rights of the orphans and the tasks of the believers as regards them in several occasions: "*So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]*" (Al Zoha, 9). As to the old people, Quran states: "*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.'*" (Asra, 24). Therefore, woman's alignment with these groups is not a disgrace or insult rather it is a token of her subtlety and fragility; then the verses suggest that the woman also has special conditions and one should take care of her. These verses bespeak of the Lord's attention to the woman and Roded seems to have been negligent of this.

Quran and its verses insist on the equality of man and woman in moral, devotional and human issues and suggest that the reward of the man and woman is equal (Fazlullah, n.: 106-107). Then, not only one cannot see any sign of disrespect of woman in Quran rather according to some verses, the superiority of the woman over the man is accepted (Tahrim: 11-12). In some verses, Asiya the wife of Pharaoh and Maryam the daughter of Emran and mother of Jesus have been introduced as the example of chastity and resistance before hardships. Authentic traditions have considered Khadijeh and Fatemeh to be of an equal status as compared to Maryam and Asiya (Majlesi, 1983: 21; 43; Alusi, 1995, 2: 149-151).

In the course of history, there were many women in all domains of life who have shown their talent and competency. Therefore, ideas of some orientalist and Muslim traditionalists concerning the humility of woman do not have anything to do with the Islamic teachings rather they are a sign of ignorance and lack of information of these radical groups of the truths of Islam.

Nowhere in Quran, woman has not been reproached for her being a woman. In some cases, woman is criticized but not because of her being a woman rather on account of her action just like the man who is reproached based on his action.

5- Among the reasons of the lack of superiority of the man over the woman, one can refer to the following divine words of Surah Al Alaq: "*Read (Prophet Muhammad) in the Name of your Lord who created, created the human from a (blood) clot, Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught the human what he did not know*" (Alaq, 1-5). The invitation of humanity to knowledge is the greatest reason for the complete equality of

the woman and man in their creation (Naja, 1991: 30-31). Islam has encouraged the women just like the men to learn knowledge. Insofar as the Holy Prophet states: "Seeking knowledge is a task for every Muslim" (Majlesi, 1983, 1: 177).

Then, in none of the general and particular regulations as well as religious principles and beliefs, there is any difference between woman and man neither from the point of view of quantity nor from the perspective of quality or in no single issue of the religious beliefs.

#### **1-4- Woman's Dependency on Man:**

Some orientalist believe that woman is the ground of the existence of man and has been created for the man. Of course, the dependency of woman on man from their perspective can be deemed in two forms: A: Existential Dependency; B: Dependency in view of destiny.

In his essay, Roded writes: "Women's dependency not only is revealed in this reality that there is no name of them in Quran rather the women have been attributed to men as mother or wife. Naturally, women are dependent on men" (Roded, n.: 524). He continues: "The women's destiny in their afterlife is dependent on the destiny of their husband and the verses 55-56 of Surah Al Yasin and the verse 22 of Surah Al Safat underline this" (Roded, n.: 524).

Also Rousseau believes that woman exists for the sake of man; the dependency of women on the men for continuation of their life is more than the men's dependency on the women (Rousseau, 2010: 337).

#### **Critical Review:**

1- The understanding of Roded of the aforementioned verses has its origin in the failure of paying sufficient attention to Arabic language and its features; because in Arabic masculine pronouns and verbs are of more use than the female ones and usually the plural of women and men is mentioned by the masculine plural but this should not be considered a sign of the dependency of the woman.

Moreover, Roded suggests that in these verses the men are attributed to the women and these double standards have been considered to be assign of dual description of the woman in Quran. If this writer had paid sufficient attention to the features of the Arabic language and the context of the verses, he had been led to the truth that why in some occasions men and women have been interchangeably addressed with the names and titles of the other. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that Maryam and the indication of her name in Quran is itself an evidence for the falsehood of the latter author's claim (cf. Eskandarlou, Noushin, 2008: 96-120).

On the other hand, since a major part of Quran is devoted to the social problems, these themes are concerned with the men which are in charge of the social responsibility. Moreover, to avoid repetition, only the masculine pronoun to be used; otherwise both masculine and feminine should be mentioned again; most verses address the men on behalf of the prophet of Islam (Javadi Amoli, 2002: 91).

2- As to the dependency of the destiny, after mentioning the spiritual equality of men and women in Quran, Roded refers to the verses 55 and 56 of Yasin, verse 22 of Safat, verse 70 of Zokhrof, he concludes that the destiny of women in the afterlife depends on the destiny of their husband (Roded, n.: 525). Nevertheless, these verses do not show the dependency; rather God states that the disciples of paradise, men of paradise and their wives were believers and lived in the paradise; contrary to the men who betrayed themselves and their wives and both belonged to the inferno. Also there are some verses in Holy Quran according to which the vicious woman is separated from her husband whose abode is paradise and has a totally different destiny, e.g. "*So We saved him and his family, except for his wife; she was of those who remained [with the evildoers]*" (Araf, 83).

3- Quranic verses suggest that woman is not the preface of the existence of man and she has not been created for him; rather each one of the man and woman complement each other: *"They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them"* (Baqara, 187). Also from the first verse of the Surah Al Nisa, it is not inferred that Eve has been created from the body of Adam. God 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. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an Observer"* (Nisa, 1). Thus, this verse and other similar verses (Zomar, 6; Araf, 189) suggest that Eve has been created from the same truth from which Adam and his children have been created and this verse shows that all humans including Eve have the same reality, i.e. humanity and despite the existing diversity, they are the branches of the same root. Therefore, what is noted in some exegeses (Hawizi, 1995, 1: 429-430), i.e. Adam's wife has been created from his own body, is not correct. This exegesis has been considered to be false by the immaculate Imams (Ibn Babuyah, 1994, 3: 379-380).

On the other hand, Quran has refuted the claims of some orientalists based on the creation of Eve from Adam and states: *"O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed - that We may show you."* (Hajj, 5). In another verse, it is stated: *"Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was"* (Ale Emran, 59). These verses express that God has created human body first from the soil and then created Adam and Eve. Fazlullah states: "Human first creation was directly from the dust and then God breathed from His own Spirit into it and this is the story of Adam and Eve (Fazlullah, 1999, 9: 22). He has also referred to the following verses: "He is the one who has created you from the mud" (Anaam, 2) and *"I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud"* (Hajar, 28). Then, it is noted that human race is indirect: *"He was created from a fluid, ejected Emerging from between the backbone and the ribs"* (Tareq, 6-7) (Fazlullah, 1999, 24: 182-183).

Therefore, according to Fazlullah, in Islam there is no difference between the mankind from the perspective of their nature and their existential matter is directly and indirectly one, first the dust and the second is the impure water. Although they have different appearances (Fazlullah, 1999, 7: 26; Fazlullah, 2005: 75).

#### **1-5- Women's Lesser Share of Reason:**

Rousseau believes that the women cannot achieve true moral virtue; because they have a lesser share of reason as compared to the men. Then, man's being reasonable has caused him to control the public area (politics and social life) while the lesser reasonable women are more appropriate for the emotional life (private sector) (Mortazavi, Pakzad, 2016: 53). According to Rousseau, it is the men who cultivate the women's reason. The women do not understand the theoretical sciences and they should not have practical education (Rousseau, 2014: 346).

#### **Critical Review:**

1- According to Quranic teachings, woman does not have a lesser share of reason; because humanity is a type from which the man and woman have an equal share. In this regard, Quran 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"* (Zomar, 6). Moreover, as to the most important feature of humanity, i.e. intellectual and rationality, women and men have an equal share of reason. *"Say, "It is He who has produced you and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful"* (Molk, 23). The exegetes and Muslim scholars distinguish between the "heart" in the sense of human thought from the heart as used for other creatures (Ibn Khaldun, 2014, 2: 86).



On the other hand, Quran invites all humans including the man and woman to think, contemplate and reflect and no one of the verses suggest that man and woman are different in having a share of reason. Quran states: *“Do they not contemplate within themselves? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term. And indeed, many of the people, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, are disbelievers”* (Roma, 8). This verse along with many other verses suggest that man and woman are equal in having a share of the faculty of reason and no one is superior to the other. Of course, it should be noted that the reason from which the man has more share is not the reason in the sense of thinking and the power of proof presentation; rather it is an extra virtue not a measure of righteousness; because the reason that is different in woman and man is the social reason, i.e. the mode of management of political, economic and administrative issues; but the reason that is the measure of nobility is the very reason which is the touchstone of nearness to Allah.

2- There are prophetic traditions which underline the partiality of woman's reason and consider the women to be rationally weak. Firstly, these traditions are not popular and even their number is less than ten; secondly, they are disputable both in respect of their implication and document. The traditions that exist of the women due to their lack of popularity and decisiveness cannot be a basis for considering the women some rationally weak creatures. Such great women as Fatemeh, Khadijeh, Zeynab, Maryam and Asiya and many others whose reason was comparatively stronger than that of the men had been of numerous effects and one cannot call them rationally and ideologically weak. Then, this judgement is wholly disputable. If someone wants to have a correct judgement, he should say that there some women who have weak belief and reason just like the men (cf. Amini, 2009: 153-160).

On the other hand, Seyed Fazlullah refers to the reasons of the rational force of woman:

- 1- Domination of the reason over the emotion
- 2- Competence of the woman for being a religious authority
- 3- Competence of woman for religiosity, preaching and obligation
- 4- Accountability before the otherworldly actions (reward and punishment) by woman
- 5- The woman's competence for the judgement of the Doomsday
- 6- Accountability before the atonement of honor by woman
- 7- Reasons of registration of Islamic Sharia based marriage (cf. Fazlullah, n.: 119-129).

According to the aforementioned reasons, he concludes that woman in above cases is equal with the man and Islam does not believe in any difference between the man and woman.

#### **1-6- Temptation of Man by the Woman as a Source of Sin:**

Roded in the article “Women and Quran” after the indication of ideas regarding the story of creation in Quran has referred to the exegeses and prophetic traditions and considered the role of Eve to be negative in them insofar as Eve is responsible for the intentional deception of Adam. Roded in addition to the expression of all negative and insulting ideas as to Eve contends that Even not only is a danger for her husband rather a threat for all human society (Roded, n.: 528). Moreover, he believes that uncontrollable sexual desires of the woman and her deception have been expressed in the Islamic events and stories of prophets with all details (Roded, n.: 530).

#### **Critical Review:**

1- The claim of temptation of women is false. Quran has related the story of Adam at paradise but it never referred either to Satan or Serpent or Eve and deception of Adam by Eve. Quran introduces neither Eve as responsible for this deception nor reproaches her. Wherever Quran speaks of the deception, both Eve and Adam are

together subject to the deception. Quran states: “But Satan whispered them” (Araaf: 20); “Satan guided the two with arrogance” (Araaf: 22); “and Satan promised them that I am guiding you towards goodness” (Araaf: 21). Even in some verses, it is noted that Satan has just tempted Adam (Taha: 120). But there is no word of deception of Adam by Eve let alone any punishment following this (Motahari, 2003: 118).

There is no word in Quran speaking of Eve as the one who is responsible for the deception of Adam; because there is nothing of their sexual relationship. When they followed the Satan each one undertook the responsibility of the other and when they faced the divine punishment they asked for repentance. Quran does not consider Eve to be accountable for the fall of Adam; rather it attaches an equal responsibility to Adam and Eve and considers them to have had an equal access to freedom of choice. Particularly it is noted that they both have been created with reason and free will and are equally exposed to responsibility (Fazlullah, n.: 111).

2- As to the temptation of woman, one can see many contradictions in Roded's paper. Roded has referred to the creation of Adam and Eve before alluding to the temptation of Eve and stated that some Quranic stories concerning the creation do not mention the wife of the First Man but other verses suggest that God created the man and his spouse from one single spirit and endowed Adam with an exceptional status among the angels and other creatures. But it seems that this was due to his prophecy not his manhood. Adam and Eve were ordered to reside in the garden of heaven of both were enjoined not to approach the tree of eternity and more importantly according to the Quranic verses, Satan deceived both of them. In one verse (Taha: 120), Adam is said to have been deceived alone.

Moreover, Adam in many places of Quran repents from his sin. God forgives and guides him. Only in one verse (Araaf: 23), Adam and Eve confess to their sin and ask forgiveness from God. In short, Eve is not responsible for the temptation of Adam and if there was an inequality of sin, it would be Adam who should be blamed more. Moreover, the problem of sex in the story of Adam and his wife is an insignificant issue before the main message of Quran which insists on the forgiveness of the ignorant actions of the servants based on the eternal divine word (Ahzab, 72-73; Araaf: 172). Roded intentionally highlights the role of Eve in the deception of Adam and this has led to the accusation of the women as a source of temptation by the exegetes of Quran. Even Adam in the moment of his death accuses Eve of being responsible for his sin and punishment. Roded has approached Eve with a negative view and concludes that contrary to the text of Quran, the classic Muslim scholars have described Eve not only as a danger for her husband rather a threat for all human society (Roded, n.: 528). Roded writes: “But in prophetic traditions the role of woman in creation is totally negative”. It is not clear how Roded has found verses in Quran that could be matched with the negative view of the Bible of the women.

3- Referring to the word “plan” in the verse “*So when her husband saw his shirt torn from the back, he said, 'Indeed, it is of the women's plan. Indeed, your plan is great'*” (Yusuf: 28), Roded has claimed that the women's plan has been shown in a colorful way as compared to the adventurous life of Joseph. According to this verse, the Egypt's Aziz when he knows the innocence of Joseph, turns to his wife and says: this is the plan of you women and your plans are greater.

In fact, Roded has been very hasty in raising this claim concerning the appearance of the verse and is negligent of their combination and rhetorical points hidden in it. This phrase appears to be not the word of God and would be the relation of the word of Egypt's Aziz or the witness. Contrary to the belief of some people, in such verses, there is no sign of the domination of the diabolic plans over the reason in women. The story of this divine verse in which the greatness of the plan of the women is noted at the house of Egypt's Aziz is as regards the story of Zuleikha and

Joseph and it was the Egypt's Aziz or his companion who said the statement; "Your plans are greater" (Tusi, n., 6: 127).

Anyway, the sentence "your plans are greater" does not suggest that the deception and temptation of women is stronger than their reason and they have a lower share of reason; because such statements are not limited to the women; rather this sentence in Quran has been used as regards some men; insofar as God states: "*And they had planned their plan, but with Allah is [recorded] their plan, even if their plan had been [sufficient] to do away with the mountains*" (Ibrahim, 46).

## **2- Doubts of Existential Value of Woman:**

Despite the development of civilization and science in the long course of history, there are still people who criticize the woman's character and insist on the existential weakness and highlight the negligence of the value of her character in Quranic verses. It is needless to say that there still baseless thoughts among the seemingly civilized people and they have their origin in their ignorance of Quran and Islamic teachings. The orientalist have raised doubts in this regard, e.g.:

### **2-1- Woman's Deprivation of Character and Value:**

Ruth Roded considers the woman a weak and passive creature (Roded, n.: 524). On the other hand, Clara Colliver Rice, the British orientalist has called the woman as conceived by Quran, a secluded, humiliated and illiterate creature (Rice, 1987: 77-78). Rousseau the French orientalist has also described the woman as a weak, dependent creature who is the property of man and at the service of her family insofar as she is not even a citizen (Rousseau, 2010: 364).

### **Critical Review:**

1- The verses of Holy Quran have openly criticized the inattention to women and state: "*And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief*" (Al Nahl: 58).

Holy Quran pays a special attention to the woman's character and this is because wherever Quran faces a danger insists on that issue more than ever and since in the time of revelation of Quran, the woman's dignity was not observed, an unprecedented emphasis is laid on the respect of woman and in all aspects a share is allocated for her and the equality is underlined (Javadi Amoli, 2002: 123).

2- According to Quran, the woman not only is not a weak and valueless creature rather she provides a pattern. Woman according to Quran and Islam has a high human character and she should not be used as a means for the pleasure of men. The woman should reach the perfection that can serve as a model not only for the other women rather the faithful men too (Javadi Amoli, 2002: 159). Insofar as God has introduced the pure and resisting women like Asiya, the wife of Pharaoh as the model of the faithful men: "*An Allah referred to the wife of Pharaoh as an example for those who believe*" (Tahrim: 11). According to Quran, Jesus is not the only example for men in society rather Maryam can also be an example for the believer: "*And [the example of] Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who guarded her chastity*" (Tahrim: 12).

In addition to the verses of Quran, prophetic traditions refer to the value and respect of the human character of woman too. The Prophet of Islam states: "My brother Gabriel recommended me to respect the women so much that I thought that it is forbidden even to say any ill word to them" (Broujerdi, 2007, 25: 532; Noori, 1988, 14: 253). Moreover, Imam Ali has referred to the necessity of the respect of women as follows: "Women are God's trusted

one by you and you must keep them in high regard (Noori, 1988, 14: 251; Bahrani, 1995, 3: 347). These two traditions insist on the respect and existential value of the woman.

3- The claim of seclusionism and weakness of the woman as suggested by some orientalists is false; because the woman is the a complement of the creation and the woman and man complement each other and provide the ground for flourishing and cultivation of each other insofar as one without the other is partial; thus, one of the philosophies of creation suggests that two sexes of woman and man bring peace for each other (Tabatabaei, 1997, 16: 166; Fazlullah, 1999, 18: 114).

Moreover, among the rational reasons of the respect of woman, one can refer to the fact that soul and spirit is the identity and character of body not the other way round. The soul or spirit does not have any sex; rather it is incorporeal and includes both the man and woman. The problems are concerned with the body not the spirit (Mansournezhad, 2002: 54).

## **2-2- Allocation of Paradise to Men and Ban of Women from Entering It:**

In addition to the opponents of Quran and Islam, the orientalists consider the paradise to be exclusively for the men and from their perspective, the women do not have any place in paradise.

Lord Byron the British renowned poet claims that the paradise introduced by Quran and Prophet of Islam is exclusively for the men and no share is allocated for the women; rather it is only the men who are supposed to have the beautiful angels beside themselves (Samimi, 2003: 390).

### **Critical Review:**

1- This claim not only is not consistent with the reason, it is refuted by other orientalists. For example, Ruth Roded has claimed that righteous women will go to paradise, according to Quran. Insofar as Asiya the wife of Pharaoh is one of the four women in paradise (Roded, n. : 528). Moreover, Margot Badran in her contribution of sex, based on the verse 124 of Surah Al Nisa, believes that the women will enter the paradise (Fattahizadeh, Afsardir, 2003: 7-28).

Now if the paradise is exclusively for the men, then the claims of the Quran have faced challenges. On the other hand, the aforementioned claim is not in line with the content of verses and prophetic traditions as regards the women in paradise. Quran in many verses has insisted that the otherworldly reward and divine nearness are not dealing with sex; rather they are concerned with belief and practice whether of woman or of the man. Quran reminds a great woman along with every great man. In the history of Islam, there are numerous righteous and respectful women. There are few men who can be as great as Khadijeh and no man except the prophet and Imam Ali can be compared with Zahra (Motahari, 2003: 119).

In Islamic sources and traditions, four great women have been mentioned as the noblest women of paradise and worthy of praise. Prophet states: "The great women in paradise are Maryam the daughter of Emran, Khadijeh the daughter of Khowalid, Fatemeh the daughter of Mohammad and Asiya the daughter of Mozahem and the wife of Pharaoh" (Majlesi, 1983, 14: 201; Ibn Babuyeh, 1983: 206).

In fact, the prophet's tradition implies that only four women have reached the apex of perfection and no other woman can reach that position. This tradition wants to remind the women of his age the nobility of these four women. On the other hand, some verses of Holy Quran (almost 25 verses of different chapters of Quran) and the religious traditions express the features and beauties of the women in paradise and this suggests the entrance of the

women into the paradise. Despite the statements of the verses and prophetic traditions on the features of women in paradise, there is no room for veracity of the above claim.

2- Quran has delineated the paradise bounties for persuasion of the humans for action and the paradise belongs to all righteous men and women. God does not distinguish between woman and man. What has been offered as a description of the paradise spouses in Quranic verse is not exclusively for men. According to revealed teachings, in paradise each one of the man and woman enjoy of the bounties and pleasures including pure spouses. Insofar as the Quran states: *“And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous”* (Ale Emran: 133). Then, as to the reward, there is no difference between the man and woman. In the verse 97 of Surah Al Nahl, the name of woman is mentioned in an independent form along with man as the residents of the paradise. Thus, there is no further room for any doubt. However, it is surprising that after so many stipulations there is still claims of the exclusive belonging of the paradise to the men.

## II. CONCLUSION:

Holy Quran has described the creation of woman along with that of the man and claimed that they share the same essence. Thus, it has refuted all theories that have considered the woman to be a secondary creature as compared to man. Having God-wariness is introduced as the only measure for nobility in Quran. Then if a woman has higher God-wariness, she will have a higher value in Quranic vision even than a man. Quranic verses show that there is no deficiency in the creation of the appearance and the essence of the woman. She is able to reach the highest degrees of spiritual perfection by means of her capacity, primordial nature, spirit and reason.

Nevertheless, some issues raised in the works of the orientalist are in line with the Quranic verses; but some others are inconsistent with the Quranic verses and Islamic doctrines. In some occasions, the orientalist have sufficed to the appearance of the verses and this has caused them to have an incorrect view in this regard; moreover, the restriction of the presented interpretations and inattention to lexical meanings and their confusion with the terminological senses have caused them to suffer a serious weakness.

On the other hand, most of the sources and works by orientalist belong to the western authors which would be strange with the spirit of Islam like themselves. They would have not been interested in getting familiar with Islam. They do not pay attention to the contextual meaning of Quranic verses. Then their conclusions are superficial. They read the Quranic verses in an ambiguous way while these verses are clear and this is due to their lack of knowledge of these contexts.

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