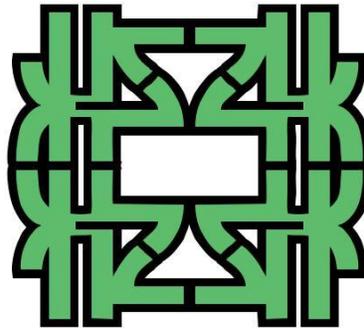


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Norbidayat

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COMMENTARY**

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Hajriansyah

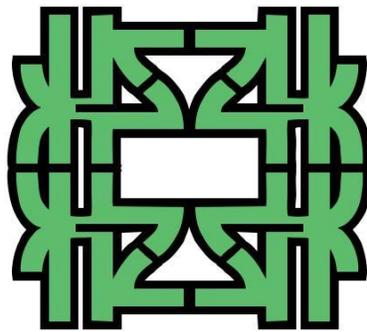
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KHAZANAH

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THE ORIGIN OF WOMEN CREATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUFİ COMMENTARY

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Abstract: *If some Muslim feminists reject the tradition that argues that the Prophet Adam's ribs as the origin of the first female event for it indirectly symbolizes the subordinate positions for women, some Sufis instead use the narratives in their explanations and positively interpret them. The Sufis judged the notion as a symbol of interdependence, love, and belonging between men and women. The writer in this paper concludes that in the view of the Sufis, women, since the beginning of their creation, have been destined to become a partner for men, so that between the two become complementary and interdependent. This view, of course, dismisses the notion of women's subordination. The Sufi's view in this case is in line with what contemporary Muslim feminists have argued. However, in contrast to the steps taken by some contemporary Muslim feminists, Sufis generally prefer to use the ta'wıl to provide a positive meaning in understanding the traditions which mention the origin of women's creation rather than to suspect their narrators or even annul The Prophet hadiths considered valid (sahih) by the majority of scholars.*

Keywords: *Subordination, Sufi Interpretation, Adam's Ribs*

Abstrak: *Jika sebagian kalangan feminis muslim menolak riwayat hadis yang menyebutkan tulang rusuk sebagai asal-usul kejadian perempuan pertama kali karena secara tidak langsung menyimbolkan posisi sub-ordinasi bagi perempuan, sebagian kaum sufi, justru memanfaatkan riwayat tersebut dalam penjelasan mereka dan memaknainya secara positif. Kaum sufi justru menilainya sebagai simbol saling ketergantungan, cinta kasih, dan keberpasangan antara laki-laki dan perempuan. Penulis dalam tulisan ini menyimpulkan bahwa dalam pandangan kaum sufi, perempuan semenjak awal penciptaannya telah ditakdirkan untuk menjadi pasangan bagi laki-laki, sehingga antara keduanya jadi saling melengkapi dan saling ketergantungan. Pandangan ini, tentu saja menepis anggapan tentang subordinasi bagi perempuan. Pandangan kaum sufi dalam kasus ini sejalan dengan apa yang dikemukakan oleh kaum feminis muslim kontemporer. Namun demikian, berbeda dengan langkah yang diambil sebagian feminis muslim kontemporer, kaum sufi pada umumnya lebih memilih menggunakan ta'wıl sehingga memberi makna positif ketika memahami hadis-hadis yang menyebutkan asal usul penciptaan perempuan ketimbang mereka harus mencurigai para periwatnya atau bahkan menganulir hadis-hadis Nabi yang dinilai sahih oleh mayoritas ulama.*

Kata kunci: *Sub-Ordinasi, Tafsir Sufi, dan Tulang Rusuk*

Introduction

The discussions on the concept of the origin of women creation have been considered significant since it is believed that the issue of gender inequality, or more specifically concerning equality and inequality between men and women, stems from this early concept of creation. If from the beginning of their creation, women are believed to have come from different sources with men, it will be difficult to argue that women are indeed creatures equal to men.

Some Muslim feminists strongly disagree all beliefs that they consider may discredit women, including an understanding of the origins of women creation that place women as men's sub-ordinate. With such an attitude, inevitably, the hadith narratives that mention the origin of the first female creation of the Adam's rib is regarded as an early form of women subordination and becoming one of the topics rejected by some of them.

The hadith narrative which mentions the origin of the first female creation of the Adam's rib is actually listed in the very popular and authoritative Hadith writings among the hadith scholars.¹ The captions that are aligned with the hadith are also quoted in the famous *tafsir* books which have become the reference for Muslims since the classical era²; including in Sufi *tafsir* books.

By some circles, the Sufis, at the moment, are regarded as the most appreciative group of women.³ Therefore, it becomes interesting to find out how the Sufi perspective in explaining the origin of women's creation. Is there something different from what the exegetes understand in general? Or even the understanding of the Sufis did not escape the criticism and rejection of some feminists of Muslims? This paper, will further explain the views of some Sufi figures related to the origin of the creation of women.

Ribs as the Origin of Creation: Sub-Ordination for Women?

Before expounding the Sufi's views on the origins of the creation of women, the following outlines the debate growing on this issue among Muslim scholars, both among commentators and Muslim feminist scholars. The debate on this issue, in fact, focuses on the interpretation of Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1 which reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

'O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a watcher over you.'
(Q.s. al-Nisâ'/4:1)

The keywords in the verse that trigger the differences of interpretation are namely: '*nafs wâhidah*', '*minhâ*' and '*zaujâhâ*'.⁴ Most *mufasir* referred by the conservatives interpret the term "nafs

¹See *Shahîb al-Bukhârî, Bâb Khalq Âdam shalawât Allâh 'alaih wa Dburriyyatih*, hadith no. 3326 and *Chapter of al-Wushât bi al-Nisâ'*, hadith nomor 5186; *Shahîb Muslim, Bâb al-Washîyyât bi al-Nisâ'*, hadith no. 3719.

²See Abû Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarîr bin Yazîd al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân 'an Ta'wîl Ay al-Qur'ân* (Kairo: Markaz al-Buhûts wa al-Dirâsât al-'Arabîyah wa al-Islâmîyah, 2001), part VI, 339-342; Abû 'Abd al-Rahmân Muhammad bin al-Husain bin Mûsâ al-Azdî al-Sulamî, *Haqâ'iq al-Tafsîr* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), chapter I, 140; Jâr Allâh Abû al-Qâsim Mahmûd bin 'Umar al-Zamakhsyarî, *al-Kayyâf 'an Haqâ'iq Ghamâmidh al-Tanzîl wa 'Uyûn al-Aqâwîl fi Wujûh al-Ta'wîl* (Riyâdh: Maktabah al-'Ubaikan, 1998), part II, 5; Abû Muhammad 'Abd al-Haqq bin Ghâlib bin 'Athîyah al-Andalûsî, *al-Muharrar al-Wajîz fi Tafsîr al-Kitâb al-'Aẓîz* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), part II, 3; Abû 'Alî al-Fâdhil bin al-Hasan al-Thabarsî, *Majma' al-Bayân fi Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Qum: Maktabah Ayât Allâh al-Mar'asyî, 1333 H), chapter II, 2; Abû 'Abd Allâh Muhammad bin al-Husain al-Thabaristânî al-Râzî, *Mafâih al-Ghaib* (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1981), part IX, 166-167; Abû 'Abd Allâh Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abû Bakr al-Qurthubî, *al-Jâmi' li Abkâm al-Qur'ân* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risâlah, 2006), part VI, 6; Abû al-Fidâ' Ismâ'îl bin al-Khathîb Abî Hafsh 'Umar bin Katsîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Aẓhîm* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Tsaqâfî, 2001), Chapter I, 438; Abû al-Fadhl Syihâb al-Dîn al-Sayyîd Mahmûd al-Alûsî, *Rûh al-Ma'âmî fi Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Aẓîm wa al-Sab'i al-Matsânî* (Beirut: Dâr Ihyâ al-Turâts al-'Arabî, t.th.), part IV, 181-182.

³Read the paper of Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationship in Islamic Thought* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 3, see also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 426-428; *My Soul Is a Woman The Feminine in Islam* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1997), 180-181.

⁴The same terms are also mentioned in Q.s. *al-A'râf*/7:189, and Q.s. *al-Zumar*/39:6.

wâhidah" in the sense of "Adam". The word "minhâ," is interpreted as from Âdam and the word "zaujahâ", is interpreted as his wife, namely: Hawwâ'.⁵

Those *mufasir* interpretations are full of meaning. Their interpretation refers to the history of *bi al-ma'thûr tafsîr* which is the main trend of interpretation at the beginning of its development.⁶ Just for example, Shaykh al-Mufasssîrîn, Ibn Jarîr al-Thabarî (d.310/922), when interpreting *Q.s. Al-Nisâ* ' / 4: 1, quotes a number of commentaries from authoritative *mufasir* of the tabi'în, such as: Mujâhid (w. 104/722)⁷ and Qatadah (w. 117/735).⁸ Both figures of the *tâbi'in mufasir* quoted by al-Thabarî interpret "nafs wâhidah" in the sense of Âdam. Then the word "zaujahâ", is interpreted as his wife is Hawwâ', which they call created from the ribs of Âdam when he fell asleep.⁹ Al-Thabarî, has even mentioned that one of his narrations was derived from a highly authoritative figure of the Companions—Ibn 'Abbâs (68/687).¹⁰

In addition to some of the tafsir histories of tâbi'în and companions, the account of the creation of women from the ribs mentioned earlier is also found in a number of traditions recorded in the two most authoritative hadith writings among the Sunnis; namely the book of *Shabîh al-Bukhârî* and *Shabîh Muslim*. One of the texts of the hadith in the compilation of Imâm al-Bukhârî (w.256/870), is presented with the following editor:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ - ﷺ - اسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ ، فَإِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ خُلِقَتْ مِنْ ضِلْعٍ ، وَإِنَّ أَعْوَجَ شَيْءٍ فِي الضِّلَعِ أَعْلَاهُ ، فَإِنْ ذَهَبَتْ تَقِيمُهُ كَسَرْتَهُ ، وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهُ لَمْ يَزَلْ أَعْوَجَ ، فَاسْتَوْصُوا بِالنِّسَاءِ .¹¹

From Abu Hurairah ra. He said, Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: "Give each of you (to do good) to the women, because the woman is created from the ribs and the most crooked part of the rib is the top. If you try to straighten it out, you will break it, and if you leave it then it will remain in a crooked state. So tell each of you (to do good) to the women.

In other narrations, the following editorial is presented:

⁵See again Abû Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarîr bin Yazîd al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân 'an Ta'wîl Ay al-Qur'ân* (Kairo: Markaz al-Buhûts wa al-Dirâsât al-'Arabîyah wa al-Islâmîyah, 2001), part VI, 339-342; Abû 'Abd al-Rahmân Muhammad bin al-Husain bin Mûsâ al-Azdî al-Sulamî, *Haqâ'iq al-Tafsîr* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), chapter I, 140; Jâr Allâh Abû al-Qâsim Mahmûd bin 'Umar al-Zamakhsharî, *al-Kasysyâf 'an Haqâ'iq Ghabâmid al-Tanzîl wa 'Uyûn al-Aqânîl fî Wujuh al-Ta'wîl* (Riyâd: Maktabah al-'Ubaikan, 1998), part II, 5; Abû Muhammad 'Abd al-Haqq bin Ghâlib bin 'Atîyah al-Andalûsî, *al-Muharrar al-Wajîz fî Tafsîr al-Kitâb al-'Azîz* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2001), part II, 3; Abû 'Alî al-Fâdhil bin al- Hasan al-Thabarsî, *Majma' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Qum: Maktabah Ayât Allâh al-Mar'asyî, 1333 H), chapter II, 2; Abû 'Abd Allâh Muhammad bin al-Husain al-Thabaristânî al-Râzî, *Mafââtîh al-Ghaib* (Beirut: Dâr al-Fîkr, 1981), part IX, 166-167; Abû 'Abd Allâh Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Abû Bakr al-Qurthubî, *al-Jâmi' li Abkâm al-Qur'ân* (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risâlah, 2006), part VI, 6; Abû al-Fidâ' Ismâ'îl bin al-Khathîb Abî Hafsh 'Umar bin Kathîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Tsaqâfî, 2001), chapter I, 438; Abû al-Fadhil Syihâb al-Dîn al-Sayyid Mahmûd al-Alûsî, *Rûb al-Ma'ânî fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm wa al-Sab'i al-Matsânî* (Beirut: Dâr Ihyâ al-Turâts al-'Arabî, t.th.), part IV, 181-182.

⁶See the perspective of Ibn Kathîr (w. 774/1372) that is in accordance with the teacher's, Ibn Taimiyah (w. 728/1327) concerning the best way of interpreting the Qur'an, then the Qur'an *tafsir* and the *Sunnah* with *ijtihad*. Read "*muqaddimah tafsîr Ibn Katsîr*" in Ibn Katsîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm*, chapter I, 6-7.

⁷Mujâhid bin Jabr al-Makkî (w. 104/722) is a *tabi'in* who belongs to Mecca's networking *mufasir* and also the student of Ibn ' Abbas (w. 68/687). Read al-Dzahabî, *al-Tafsîr*, part I, 95-98.

⁸Qatadah bin Di'âmah al-Sadûsî (w. 117/735) is a well known Iraq's networking *mufasir* and also the student of Ibn Mas'ûd (w. 32/653). Baca al-Dzahabî, *al-Tafsîr*, part I, 114-115.

⁹Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, part VI, 340-342.

¹⁰Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, part VI, 342.

¹¹Can be seen in *Shabîh al-Bukhârî*, *Bâb Khalq Âdam shalawât Allâh 'alaih wa Dzurrîyyatih*, hadith no. 3326 and *Bâb al-Wushât bi al-Nisâ*, hadith no. 5186; *Shabîh Muslim*, *Bâb al-Washiyât bi al-Nisâ*, hadith no. 3719.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ - إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ كَالصِّلَاعِ إِذَا ذَهَبَتْ تُقِيمُهَا كَسَرْتَهَا وَإِنْ تَرَكْتَهَا اسْتَمْتَعْتَ بِهَا وَفِيهَا عَوَجٌ.¹²

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) said: "The woman is like a rib, when you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it you will benefit from it while he is crooked."

Apparently, with reference to these narrations, from the 4th century to the 13th century Hijri or the 10th century through the nineteenth century AD, without noticing any problem, the *mufasir*, ranging from Shaykh al-Mufassirîn (Professor of al-Mufassirîn), Ibn Jarîr al-Thabarî (w 310/922), al-Sulamî (w.412/1021), al-Qusyairî (465/1073), al-Zamakhsharî (d. 538/1144), Ibn 'Athiyyah al-Andalîsî (d. 546/1151), al-Thabarsî (548/1153), Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzi (d.606/1210), al-Qurthubî (w 671/1273), Ibn Katsîr (w.774/1372), to al-Alîsî (d 1270/1854), understood that the first woman, Hawwa, 'was created from the rib of Âdam.¹³

In contrast to the current conditions, along with the increasing awareness of equality of status between men and women, the understanding of the majority of the above *mufasir* is unacceptable especially among Muslim feminists. According to them, such an understanding is detrimental to the image of women because it has placed them as a second creation after men and in a subordinate position for men.¹⁴

The rejection of Muslim feminists against the interpretation of the majority of *mufasir*, seems to be inspired by the views of a handful of modern *mufasir* who have a different understanding of the majority. Muhammad Rasyîd Ridhâ for example, expressly states that the idea of the women creation from the ribs arises from the ideas set forth in the Old Testament. Had it not been recorded the story of the events of Âdam and Hawwâ 'in the Old Testament with the editorial leading to such textual understanding, undoubtedly the false opinion would never have occurred to a Muslim.¹⁵

¹²See in *Shabîh al-Bukhârî, Bâb al-Mudhârâh ma'a al-Nisâ'*, hadith no. 5184; *Shabîh Muslim, Bâb al-Washîyyât bi al-Nisâ'*, hadith no. 3717.

¹³Al-Thabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, part VI, 339-342; al-Sulamî, *Haqâ'iq al-Tafsîr*, chapter I, 140; al-Zamakhsharî, *al-Kasyîf*, part II, 5; ibn 'Athiyyah, *al-Mubarrar al-Wajîz*, part II, 3; al-Thabarsî, *Majma' al-Bayân*, chapter II, 2; al-Râzî, *Mafâih al-Ghaib*, part IX, 165-167; al-Qurthubî, *al-Jâmi' li Ahkâm al-Qur'ân*, part VI, 6; ibn Katsîr, *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azhîm*, chapter I, 438; al-Alûsî, *Rûh al-Ma'ânî*, part IV, 181-182.

¹⁴Read Asma Barlas, "Women's Readings of the Qur'ân," in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to The Qur'ân* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 259; Theologically, according to Nasaruddin Umar, there are four notions that have the potential to form stereotypes and create misogynic views that is detrimental to harm women's image. *First*, the purpose of the women creation is as a complement to the desires of Âdam in heaven; thus, it can be understood that women only a complement to men's desires. *Second*, the place of the first human creation in heaven; thus it brings up various myths that discourage women. *Thirdly*, the origin of female incidents comes from the Âdam's rib; thus, in this case women are admitted as the male subordinate. Fourth, the cause of the fall of Âdam from heaven to earth in cosmic drama is due to female temptation. This narration has given birth to the concept of inherited sin that was imposed on women. Read Nasaruddin Umar, *Paradigma Baru Teologi Perempuan* (Jakarta: Fikahati Aneska, 2000), 11; see also Etin Anwar, *Gender and Self in Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 56; Toeti Heraty Noerhadi, 'Dilema Budaya Wanita Islam Masa Kini,' in Johan Hendrik Meuleman dan Lies M. Marcoes-Natsir (editor), *Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual: Kumpulan Makalah Seminar* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 227-228.

¹⁵Muhammad Rasyîd Ridhâ, *Tafsîr al-Manâr* (Mesir: al-Hai'ah al-Mishriyyah li al-Kitâb, 1973), jilid IV, 330. In Indonesia, the statement of Muhammad Rasyîd Ridhâ, seems to be first cited by Dr. M. Quraish Shihab (at that time his academic title was not Professor) in his paper presented at the seminar forum with the theme '*Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual*,' organized by the Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation in Islamic Studies (INIS) at the Dutch cultural center "Erasmushuis" Jakarta, December 2-5, 1991. See Muhammad Quraish Shihab, '*Konsep Wanita Menurut Quran, Hadîts, dan Sumber-Sumber Ajaran Islam*,' in Johan Hendrik Meuleman and Lies

In the Old Testament, Genesis 2, verses 21-23, the intended event is stated as follows:

Then the LORD God caused the man to sleep soundly; when he slept, the LORD God took one of the ribs thereof, and shut the place with flesh. And from the ribs that the LORD God took from man, he built a woman, and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "Here it is, bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. He will be called a woman, for she is taken out of men." (Genesis 2, verses 21-23)¹⁶

The information derived from the Old Testament book, then by a number of modern commentators is considered as *isrâ'liyyât*—contrary to the Qur'ân.¹⁷ A number of modern *mufasir*¹⁸, especially the disciples of Muhammad 'Abduh (d.1323/1905), such as Muhammad Jamâl al-Dîn al-Qâsimî (w.1332/1914), Muhammad Rasyîd Ridhâ (w. 1354/1935),¹⁹ Ahmad Mushthafa Al-Marâghî (w 1371/1952),²⁰ put forward an understanding that affirms that the first woman, was not created from the male rib, but was created of the same kind as the male. The word "khalaqa minhâ" in Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1, are interpreted with "khalaqa min jinsihâ" (creating of the same kind as it). Their interpretation refers to an opinion once expressed by a mu'tazilah, Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni (322/934),²¹ which is quoted by Imâm Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî (d.606/1210), an Asy'ariah's *mufasir* in his tafsir—*Mafâtih al-Ghaib*.²²

Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî (w.606/1210)²³ in his book of *tafsir* put forward a number of discourses related to the meaning of the phrase '*khalaqa minhâ zaujâ*' in Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1. The first discourse, as written by al-Râzî, the meaning of the word '*al-zauj*' (pair) in the verse is *Hawwâ*'. Then, al-Râzî has written that there are two opinions in the case of *Hawwâ* 'created from Âdam. The first opinion, as suggested by the majority of *mufasir*, is based on a textually understood Hadith concluding that *Hawwâ* was created from the rib of Âdam.²⁴ While the

M. Marcoes-Natsir (redactor), *Wanita Islam Indonesia dalam Kajian Tekstual dan Kontekstual: Kumpulan Makalah Seminar* (Jakarta: INIS, 1993), 6.

¹⁶See the Bible, Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia Jakarta 2001, 2.

¹⁷The term *isrâ'liyyât* comes from Hebrew from the root of the word *Isrâ* meaning "servant" and *El* meaning "God", so *Isrâel* means the servant of God. Read Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender*, 97. Furthermore the term *isrâ'liyyât*, which is the plural form of *isrâ'liyyah*, is understood as a story or event which is narrated from *isrâ'ili* sources. *Isrâ'liyyât* is attributed to the 12 sons of Prophet Ya'qûb bin Ishâq bin Ibrâhîm as., which is then called *Banî Isrâ'îl*. According to Muhammad Husayn al-Dzahabî, although it refers to the stories or events that come from Jewish sources, scholars of *tafsir* and hadith use the term for a wider scope. According to them, *isrâ'liyyât* are all classical tales attributed to his origin to Jewish, Christian and other sources. It includes unfounded stories and unclear sources deliberately made by the enemies of Islam to disrupt the teachings of Islam. Muhammad Husain al-Dzahabî, *al-Isrâ'liyyât fî at-Tafsîr wa al-Hadis* (Kairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1986), 13-14. Indeed, the sources of the narrations of *Isrâ'liyyât* which are introduced in the commentaries, are more predominantly Jewish than those of the Nazarenes. Read Ibrâhîm 'Abd al-Rahmân Muhammad Khalîfah, *Dirâsât fî Manâbij al-Mufasssîrîn* (Kairo: Maktabah al-Azhariyah, 1979), 220.

¹⁸Muhammad Jamâl al-Dîn al-Qâsimî, *Mabâsin al-Ta'nîl* (Kairo: Dâr Ihyâ' al-Kutub al-'Arabîyah, 1957), part V, 1095.

¹⁹Muhammad Rashîd bin 'Alî Ridâ, *al-Manâr Tafsîr* (Kairo: al-Hay'ah al-Misrîyah al-'Âmmah li al-Kuttâb, 1990), chapter IV, 265-271.

²⁰Al-Marâghî, seems to have unclear stance because in addition to expressing the opinion of *jumbur mufasir* who interpret the *nafs wâbidah* as Âdam, he also expressed the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Asfihîni. See Ahmad Mustafâ al-Marâghî, *al-Marâghî Tafsîr* (Mesir: Mustafâ al-Bâbî al-Halabî wa Awlâduh, 1946), part IV, 175-177.

²¹Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni (254-322 H / 868-934 AD), his name is Muhammad bin Bahr al-Ashfihîni, a mu'tazilah, great writer, master of *tafsir* and some other branches of Islamic sciences. See his short biography in Khair al-Dîn Mahmûd al-Ziriklî, *al-A'lâm* (Beirut: Dâr al-'Ilmi li al-Malâ'yîn, 2002), part VI, 50.

²²Al-Râzî, *Mafâtih al-Ghaib*, part IX, 167.

²³Al-Râzî, *Mafâtih al-Ghaib*, juz IX, 167.

²⁴Al-Râzî, *Mafâtih al-Ghaib*, part IX, 167.

second opinion, quoted from the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni (322/934), who understands the meaning of the phrase "*kbalaqa minhâ zaajahâ*" with "*kbalaqa min jinsihâ*" (creating of its kind) as the word "*min anfusihim*" in Q.s. Âli 'Imrân / 3: 164,

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

“Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who recited unto them His revelations, and caused them to grow, and taught them the Scripture and wisdom; although before (he came to them) they were in flagrant error.” (Q.s. Âli 'Imrân/3:164)

Then, the phrase "*min anfusikum*" in Q.s. al-Taubah/9:128,

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

“There hath come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves, unto whom aught that ye are overburdened is grievous, full of concern for you, for the believers full of pity, merciful.” (Q.s. al-Taubah/9:128)

And the phrase "*min anfusikum*" in Q.s. al-Nahl/16:72,

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ بَنِينَ وَحَفَدَةً وَزَوَّجَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ هُمْ يَكْفُرُونَ

“And Allah hath given you wives of your own kind, and hath given you, from your wives, sons and grandsons, and hath made provision of good things for you. Is it then in vanity that they believe and in the grace of Allah that they disbelieve?” (Q.s. al-Nahl/16:72)

Furthermore, there is indeed an indication that al-Râzi did not reject the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni. For, although al-Râzi has written that according to al-Qâdhî the first opinion of the *jumhur* is stronger, al-Râzi has also suggested that the "*min*" in the phrase "*kbalaqa minhâ zaajahâ*," means "*ibtidâ 'al-ghâyah*" (beginning), does not mean "*al-tab'îd*" (part) as understood by the majority. In addition, al-Râzi also raises an argumentative question that seems to support the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni, namely that when it is believed that Allah Almighty is able to create Âdam from the soil, surely Allah Almighty is also capable of creating Hawwa' from the soil as well. If so, he wrote, what is the use of Allah Swt creating Hawwa' from the ribs?²⁵

At the beginning of the modern century or exactly in the mid-nineteenth century AD, the argument proposed by al-Râzi was actually denied by al-Alusî (d 1270/1854). In his tafsir, *Rûh al-Ma'ânî*, al-Alusî posed a number of rebuttals against the view of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni ever quoted by al-Râzi. For the question of what the benefit of Allah Almighty creates Hawwa' from the ribs of Âdam, if it is believed that Allah Almighty was able to create them directly from the soil as He created Âdam. Al-Alusî has stated that the benefits are in addition to the hidden wisdom for mankind, this is to show that Allah Almighty is omnipotent of creating something alive from the living without the birth process, as Allah Almighty creates something alive from inanimate objects. Likewise, logically, as al-Alusî continued that if the ability of Allah Almighty to

²⁵Al-Râzi, *Mafâhîb al-Ghaib*, part IX, 167.

create something from the soil is considered to be a barrier for Allah Almighty to create something from other than the soil because it is considered to be of no benefit; Allah Almighty will create all the offspring of men from the soil without intercession as He created Âdam. So what is your answer, al-Alûsî continues, to the question why Allah created the son of man not as He created Âdam directly (from the soil), when He was able to do it. That is our answer why Allah swt created Hawwâ 'from the ribs of Âdam when He was able to create them directly from the soil.²⁶

Although the argument written by al-Râzi on the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni has been broken by al-Alûsî,²⁷ a number of modern mufasir as already mentioned, still cite the opinion of Abû Muslim al-Ashfihâni about the origin of the creation of women. This opinion is then popularized by Muslim feminists to this day. So in their view, the first woman was not created from the male rib, but was created of the same kind as the male.

A Muslim feminist, Amina Wadud-Muhsin in his book, *Qur'an and Woman*, asserted that in the Qur'anic account of creation, God never planned to begin the creation of man with a man; Allah, according to Amina Wadud, also never referred to the origin of humans in Âdam. The Qur'an does not even mention that God started the creation of man by the Âdam *nafs*—man. The Qur'anic version of the creation of man, asserted Amina, is not expressed in terms of gender.²⁸

In line with that view, another Muslim feminist, Riffat Hassan, as quoted by Asma Barlas, argues that the word 'Âdam' used 21 times out of 25 times of its use in the Qur'ân refers more to the symbol for the meaning of humanity than The meaning of Âdam himself as a man. Riffat Hassan emphatically rejects the theological assumptions on which men's superiority is based, including in this case, Muslim beliefs in general that women are created from male ribs.²⁹

Another argument that reaffirms the views of a number of Muslim feminist figures above is put forward by Nasaruddin Umar in his book *Gender Equality Argument*. He asserted that if carefully examined, the use of the word "nafs" is repeated 295 times with its various forms in the Qur'ân, and none of them strongly point to Âdam. The word "nafs" sometimes means 'soul' (Qs al-Mâ'idah / 5: 32), 'lust' (Qs al-Fajr / 89: 27), and 'soul / spirit' (Qs al-'Ankabût / 29:57). The word "nafs wâhidah" as the 'origin of the incident' is repeated five times but it does not necessarily mean Âdam, because in another verse, the word "nafs" is also the origin of the beast, as in Q.s. Al-Shârah / 42: 1.³⁰

In addition, according to Nasaruddin, the word "*nafs wâhidah*" in the context of Q.s. Al-Nisâ / 4: 1, has the form of *nakirah* / indefinite, not the form *ma'rifah* / definite, which means showing the specificity. This is reinforced by the word "*wâhidah*" (the one) as the nature of "*min nafs*". In fact, without the word "*wâhidah*" is enough to show the meaning of 'one self'. All of this, firmly Nasaruddin, pointed out to the 'first substance' (the first resource) of the incident of

²⁶Al-Alûsî, *Rûb al-Ma'ânî*, part IV, 182. The argument about the omnipotence of God in the context of creation is also found in al-Futûhât al-Makkiyah, when Ibn 'Arabî wrote about the division of the human body. According to him, there are four human bodies that are similar from the physical aspect and the spiritual, but different from the aspect of the way of creation. The four bodies are the bodies of Âdam, the bodies of Hawwâ', the bodies of Isâ, and the bodies of son of Âdam. The difference in the way of creation shows that Allah Almighty and All-knowing of all things. Read Muhy al-Dîn Ibn 'Arabî, *al-Futûhât al-Makkiyah* (Beirut: Dâr Shâdir, 2004), chapter I, 158.

²⁷Some of the answers of al-Alûsî are recalled by the contemporary mufasir. See in Wahbah bin Mushthafâ al-Zuhailî, *al-Tafsîr al-Munîr fî al-'Aqîdah wa al-Syarî'ah wa al-Manhaj* (Damaskus: Dâr al-Fikr al-Mu'âshir, 1418 H), part IV, 224.

²⁸Amina Wadud-Muhsin, *Qur'an and Woman* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1992), 19-20.

²⁹Read Asma Barlas, "Women's Readings of the Qur'ân", 259.

³⁰Nasaruddin Umar, *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender*, 241.

Âdam, not his own as a second substance. Furthermore, writes Nasaruddin, if the meaning of the word "*nafs*" is Âdam, why not using the word "*nâhid*" (*mudzakkar* form), instead of "*wâhidah*" (*mu'annats* form).³¹

Some Muslim feminists reject the authenticity and validity of the narrations of the Prophet's hadith which speaks of the origins of the women creation from the ribs though these narrations are listed in the two most authoritative hadith traditions among Sunnis, namely in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.³² In her book, Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Islam: A Historical and Theological Inquiry*, even expressed her criticism of Abû Hurairah, one of the companions of the hadith of creation of the 'rib',³³ as one of the companions who narrated many misogynist traditions. Mernissi reveals a number of historical records that show how *Umm al-Mu'minîn*, 'A'ishah, on several occasions opposed the narrated history of Abû Hurairah.³⁴

Again in the case of Zaitunah Subhan, in the Book of '*Tafsir Kebencian*', she states that the history of the creation of women from the ribs contained in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, despite its quality of *sanad is valid*, the contents of the hadith is not necessarily *qat'î al-dalâlah*, so that this tradition could be rejected. According to her, rationally, the hadith on the creation of women from the ribs cannot be understood merely by the literal meaning. The hadith must be understood metaphorically as a warning to men to deal with women wisely, not with violently and harshly.³⁵

Different with Muslim feminists that generally reject the hadith about the creation of women from the ribs, some contemporary commentators mufasir, such as M. Quraish Shihab, Sheikh Muhammad Mutawalli al-Sya'râwî, and Wahbah al-Zuhailî can still accept the hadith,³⁶ yet they understand it metaphorically. In *Tafsîr al-Mishbâh*, Quraish Shihab writes that the hadith about the creation of women from the ribs by the earlier scholars is understood in a literal sense. However, according to him, not a few contemporary scholars who understand it in the sense of metaphor, and some even reject it.³⁷

According to Quraish, the scholars who understand metaphorically argue that the hadith reminds men to face women wisely because their inherent nature is different from men so that, if neglected, it would lead men to be unnatural. It should be noted, asserted Quraish, that the pair of Âdam was created from the ribs of Âdam, so that it does not mean that the positions of

³¹Nasaruddin Umar, '*Argumen Kesetaraan Jender*', 241-242. This last argument from Nasaruddin has actually been answered by classical mufasir, even by Ibn Jarîr al-Thabarî (d 310/922). Related to the use of the *lafaz* of the word '*mu'annats*' for men, al-Thabarî reveals the equivalent of its use in an Arabic *sya'ir* as follows: "*abûka khalîfah waladathû ukehrâ wa anta khalîfah, dâka al-kamâlu.*" In this case, the *lafaz* of the word '*Khalîfah*' in which takes the form of *mu'annath* is also used for men. See in al-Tabarî, *Jâmi' al-Bayân*, part VI, 340.

³²See in Fatima Mernissi and Riffat Hassan, *Setara di Hadapan Allah, Relasi Laki-laki dan Perempuan dalam Tradisi Islam Pasca Patriarki*, translated by LSPPA (Yogyakarta: LSPPA, 1995), 44.

³³The hadith that speaks of the creation of women from the ribs, is actually not narrated by only Abû Hurairah. There are other names of friends who are also recorded narrated this hadith, such as Samurah, Abû Dhar al-Ghiffârî, and even 'A'ishah. Read in Agus Moh. Najib, '*Penciptaan Perempuan dari Tulang Rusuk Laki-laki?*', in Hamim Ilyas et al., *Perempuan Tertindas? Kajian Hadis-badis "Misoginis"* (Yogyakarta: eLSAQ Press & PSW UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2008), 35.

³⁴Read Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 70-81.

³⁵Zaitunah Subhan, *Tafsir Kebencian: Studi Bias Gender dalam Tafsir Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Lkis, 1999), 50.

³⁶M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsîr al-Mishbâh: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), vol. 2, 399-400; al-Zuhailî, *al-Tafsîr al-Munîr*, part IV, 224.

³⁷Quraish Shihab quotes al-Thabâthabâ'î, a contemporary shi'ah mufasir, who in his commentary writes that Q.s. Al-Nisâ ' / 4: 1 affirms that women (the wife of Âdam) were created of the same kind as Âdam, and the verse did not in any way support the notion that women were created from the ribs of Âdam. See M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsîr al-Mishbâh*, vol. 2, 399; compare directly with Muhammad Husain al-Thabâthabâ'î, *Tafsîr al-Mîzân*, (Teheran: Dâr al-Kutub al-Islâmiyyah, t.th.), part IV, 145.

women other than Hawwâ 'likewise or inferior to men. Both men and women were born from male and female couples. Therefore, there is no difference in terms of humanity between the two. Men strength is needed by women and weaknesses of women coveted by men. Quraish further illustrates that the needle must be stronger than the cloth, and the cloth should be softer than the needle. Otherwise, the needle will not work and the cloth will not be sewn. Paired will create beautiful harmonious and comfortable clothes.³⁸

The last illustration put forward by Quraish Shihab seems to be unacceptable to those using a gender perspective. According to them, Quraish Shihab in this case has given a gender biased image. The tenderness of the women he describes as the cloth and the power of the men he describes as a needle, which complement each other, is clearly a matter of gender. This is because, strength and tenderness are not two things that are natural, but rather as a potential of imaging construction resulted in socio-cultural areas. Sexually, the needle is not identical with the men, and the fabric is also not identical with the female.³⁹

Quraish Shihab, in this respect, is also judged to hide the basic problems of men and women relation. Although in his commentary, he asserted that all men and women of grandchildren of Âdam were born from a combination of men and women. Therefore, there was no difference in terms of the humanity between the two. The point, however, does not stop at this kind of consciousness. For, the story of Hawwâ's creation of the rib of Âdam, has psychologically constructed reasoning thinking and even made a worldview, that women are a second-class human being because of the origin of Hawwâ's creation.⁴⁰

The negative image attributed to women regarding the origins of the creation, textually can be traced in the Holy Bible, Genesis 2: 18-24. However, that does not mean that there is no attempt to understand the text more positively by Christian scholars themselves. For example, Mary J. Evans in her book "Woman in the Bible" affirms that the argument that women were created from men does not show that women are inferior, but instead indicates that women are equal to men. Without women, men will not be complete.⁴¹ Similarly, Phyllis Bird, in his article "Images of Women in the Old Testament", as quoted by Etin Anwar, states that, the same as men, women also have the same identity and are essential as human.⁴²

The response of Muslim feminists to the classical interpretation of the origin of the first female creation of the ribs; accompanied by their accusation that traditional *tafsir*, for quoting many of the narrations of *isrâ'îliyyât*, have placed women as second-class creatures after men, can be overestimated. In fact, as Hamka Hasan pointed out, the allegations actually arise from partial and narrow Qur'an understanding. Their worries (read Muslim feminist), for believing that it is one of the theological factors of discrimination against women, have actually been answered by numerous books essentially explaining that Hawwâ's creation of the Âdam's rib does not mean that men have a degree higher than women.⁴³

Apparently, however the explanations of the commentators on this matter is, if according to the *mufasir* the origin of the creation of women are not the same as men, it will never be accepted by Muslim feminists. What about the perspective of sufi *mufasir* on the issue of the origin of women's creation?

³⁸M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsîr al-Mishbâb*, vol. 2, 400.

³⁹Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003), 308.

⁴⁰Islah Gusmian, *Khazanah Tafsir Indonesia*, 308.

⁴¹"The equal importance of men and woman in human cretion invalidates the argument of male superiority over female. Similarly, the argument that woman is derived from man does not imply that woman is inferior, but that she is his equal, without whom he would be incomplete." Read more in Etin Anwar, *Gender and Self in Islam*, 56.

⁴²Etin Anwar, *Gender and Self in Islam*, 56.

⁴³Read Hamka Hasan, *Tafsir Jender: Studi Perbandingan antara Tokoh Indonesia dan Mesir* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang & Diklat Departemen Agama RI, 2009), 196.

Symbol of Pairing between Women and Men

In contrast to the majority of the *mufasir*, a famous Sufi figure, Imâm al-Qusyairî, when explaining Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1, Q.s. Al-A'râf / 7: 189, al-Rûm / 30: 21, and Q.s. Al-Zumar / 39: 6 which has the same theme, that is, about the origin of the creation of women, does not even mention the history of the origin of the female creation of the ribs. He, with a straightforward expression, precisely emphasized the attachment and belonging between men and women.⁴⁴

In his commentary, *Lathâ'if al-Isyârât*, al-Qusyairî interprets the Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1, which reads, **الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ** by writing as follows:

وهو آدم عليه السلام، وإذا كنا مخلوقين منه وهو مخلوق باليد فنحن أيضاً كذلك، لما ظهرت مزية آدم عليه السلام به على جميع المخلوقين والمخلوقات فكذلك وصفنا، قال تعالى: **أُولَئِكَ هُمْ خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ [البينة: 7]**.⁴⁵

He is Âdam as., if we were all created from him, and he was created with HIS hands then we are too, when the privilege of Âdam As. appears above all other creatures, so we are too. Allah swt says: "(And) lo! those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings." (Q.s. al-Bayyinah/98:7).

When interpreting the word "*min nafs wâhidah*" in Q.s. Al-Nisâ' / 4: 1, al-Qusyairî is similarly in line with the majority of other classical *mufasir*, mentioning that the intended is Adam as. However, in the next description, he emphasizes the privilege of all the descendants of the descendants of Âdam. According to him, if we were all created from Adam, while Âdam was created by His hand then we are too, when the privilege of Âdam as is above all creatures, then so is our nature as his descendants. Al-Qusyairî, then refers to the word of God in Q.s. Al-Bayyinah / 98: 7, which states that "they are the best of created beings."

While the following verse which reads **وخلق منها زوجها**, by al-Qusyairî is interpreted as follows:

حَكَمَ الْحَقُّ - سبحانه - بمساكنة الخلق مع الخلق لبقاء النسل، ولردِّ المثل إلى المثل فربطَ الشكلَ بالشكل.⁴⁶

Here, al-Qusyairî emphasizes that Allah Almighty has set the goal of the creation of a spouse for Âdam, that is, in order to preserve his offspring and unite this creature with his partner to create an attachment between the two.

Hence, the concise interpretation expressed by this one Sufi figure concerning this verse is put forward by Eva F. Amrullah in "Beyond Equity: Discourse of Sufism, Women, and the Qur'ân". She considers that there is not much information to be derived from al-Qusyairî's concerning the creation of women. Eva criticizes the opinion of Alexander D. Kynsh in the Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ân who says that al-Qusyairî is famous for his al-Qur'ân approach which is very attentive to all the words of the Qur'ân in detail.⁴⁷ In fact, Eva writes, not so when al-Qusyairî interprets some verses relating to women. Al-Qusyairî, according to Eva, does not elaborate further on whether Âdam is a man of a particular gender or tends to refer to a form of

⁴⁴See the interpretation in 'Abd al-Karîm bin Hawâzan bin 'Abd al-Malik al-Naisâbûrî al-Qusyairî (selanjutnya ditulis al-Qusyairî), *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî al-Musammâ Lathâ'if al-Isyârât* (Kairo: al-Maktabah al-Taufiqiyyah, 1999), part II, 3-5, 281; part V, 114-115, 274-275.

⁴⁵Al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, part II, 5.

⁴⁶Al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, part II, 5.

⁴⁷See the comment of Alexander D. Kynsh on the commentary of al-Qusyairî in "Sufism and the Qur'an" in *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ân*, Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), (Leiden: Brill, 2001-2006), vol. V, h. 144.

On the other hand, the repetition of an interpretive editorial by al-Qusyairî in his commentary book, as mentioned above, shows that he also observes the interrelationship between one verse and another with the same theme. Thus, the accusation of some Muslim feminists that the classical interpretation has used the method of atomistic (partial) interpretation, especially for this case, cannot be addressed to al-Qusyairî.

Meanwhile, the 'absence' of the discourse on the ribs in the *Latâ'if al-Ishârât al-Qusyair* interpretation, does not necessarily conclude that he is inconsistent with the interpretation in his other book, or even disagree with the myth of ribs such as Alleged by Eva F. Amrullah. For, as it has been pointed out, that when al-Qusyairî explains the meaning of Q.s. Al-Shûrâ / 42: 11 in *Latâ'if al-Ishârât*, he clearly states as follows,

خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ «أزواجا» أَي أَشْكَالاً؛ فَخَلَقَ حَوَاءَ مِنْ آدَمِ.⁵⁶

"He has created for you spouses of (your kind)": that is, He has created Hawwa' from Âdam.

This statement of al-Qusyair, indicates that he, as the majority of mufasir, understands that Hawwa' is created from Âdam. However, in his commentary, *Latâ'if al-Ishârât*, he does not cite a history that reveals in detail how the process occurred. Al-Qusyairî is consistent with what he has written on the *muqaddimah* of his *tafsir*,

سَلَكْنَا فِيهِ طَرِيقَ الْإِقْلَالِ خَشِيَةَ الْمَلَالِ⁵⁷

To avoid boredom, the explanation in the book is deliberately expressed in brief and concisely in discussing a particular topic.

The interpretation that emphasizes the pairing between Âdam and Hawwâ' as revealed by al-Qusyairî,⁵⁸ cannot be found in the two earlier Sufî commentary, namely *Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-'Azîm*, the work of Imâm al-Tustarî (w.283/896) and *Haqâ'iq al-Tafsîr* by Abû 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Sulamî (d.1212/1021). These two books of the last so-called Sufî commentary do not contain the entire interpretation of the Qur'anic verse. However, although it cannot be traced in the interpretation of the two previous Sufî mufasir, it does not mean that what al-Qusyair has emphasized has no origin of reference.

The pairing between Âdam and Hawwâ 'or between men and women; the similarity between the two have been hinted at in the hadith of the Prophet which states,

إِنَّمَا التِّسَاءُ شَقَائِقُ الرَّجَالِ⁵⁹

⁵⁵Al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, part V, 114.

⁵⁶Al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, part V, 343.

⁵⁷"We (express these symbols) with plain (language) for it is feared boring." See in Muni' 'Abd al-Halîm Mahmûd, "Muqaddimah" in *Latâ'if al-Ishârât*, which is edited by 'Abd al-Samî Qatîfah (Kairo: al-Maktabah al-Taufiqiyyah, t.th.), part I, d.

⁵⁸Besides repeatedly expressing the unity between Âdam and Hawwâ ', what was highlighted by al-Qusyairî when interpreting Q.s. Al-Nisâ ' / 4: 1 and other verses that have a common theme are the nature of God's omnipotence. All sensible people, al-Qusyairî writes, will realize how perfect the power of Allah Almighty who has created all mankind with different faces and characters different from the descendants of one man. One aspect that receives further attention in the Sufî's interpretation of al-Qusyairî is an explanation of the attributes of God, such as the nature of *Qudrat* (power) and *Irâdat* (will). The defense of al-Qusyairî against the Ash'ariy theology is very evident in the explanation of these traits. See Q.s. Al-Nisâ ' / 4: 1 and Q.s. Al-A'râf / 7: 189 in al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, volumes II, 3-5 and 281.

⁵⁹The text of the hadith can be seen, among others, completely in *Sunan Abî Dâud, Bâb fi al-rajul yajid al-billah fi manâmihi*, the hadith no. 236; *Sunan al-Tirmidzi, Bâb mâ jâ'u fi man yastaiqizhu fa yarâ balâlan wa lâ yadzûkuru ihtilâman*,

The meaning of this hadith, according to Ibn al-Athîr as quoted in *Sharh Sunan Abî Daud*, is that women are in proportion to men, as if they were part of their spouses, since Hawwâ 'has been created from Âdam.⁶⁰ The explanation of this hadith is in line with what al-Qusyairî later has expressed in his commentary and it is quite possible that it is the content of the hadith that inspires al-Qusyairî in this matter.

Al-Qusyairî in this case, has chosen a different way from that of some contemporary Muslim feminists. If some contemporary Muslim feminist annulled the validity of misogynist hadith histories, even suspect its narrators, al-Qusyairî in this case prefers not to mention the history while presenting another history which is judged to be more aligned to women.

After the death of al-Qusyairî (d.465/1072 AD), another famous Sufi who has a distinctive view of women is Muhyî al-Dîn, Ibn al-'Arabî (w.638H / 1240 AD). However, different from al-Qusyairî, in commenting on the origins of the creation of women, Ibn al-'Arabî repeatedly make use of the history of the creation of women from the ribs. Once upon a time, he seemed to give a negative meaning to the position of women based on the origins of his creation from this rib, but on other occasions he expresses a positive meaning for women according to the origins of his creation. Once, he seemed to give a negative meaning to the position of women based on the origins of his creation from this rib, but on other occasions he expresses a positive meaning for women according to the origins of his creation.

Once, Ibn al-'Arabî refers to the process of creating Haww " from Âdam to explain the ontological roots of men's superiority over women. He said:

"The first human body to be created is Âdam. He was the first father of this kind of creature ... Then God separated from him a second father to us, whom He called mother. So it is true to say that this first father had one degree higher than the mother, because the father is the root (the mother)."⁶¹

"So He took out Hawwâ 'from the short ribs of Âdam. Thus Hawwâ 'does not have the same level as Âdam, as the Lord said, "Men have a higher rank than women." Therefore, women can never reach men's."⁶²

From the above statement, it appears that Ibn al-'Arabî as other majority scholars understands that Hawwâ is created from the rib of Âdam. Thus, Hawwâ 'comes from Âdam and Âdam before Hawwâ'. This notion of the origin of the creation process results in men, then believed to be superior to women. A belief that, as expressed, is rejected by Muslim feminist thinkers.⁶³

On another occasion, Ibn al-'Arabî compared the relationship between Âdam and Hawwâ 'with the relationship between Maryam and' Îsâ. Ibn al-'Arabî said:

the hadith no. 113; dan *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, Hadîts al-Sayyidah Â'isyah Radhiya Allâhu 'anhâ*, the hadith no. 26949.

⁶⁰Abî al-Thayyib Muhammad Shams al-Haq al-'Azhîm Âbâdî, *'Aun al-Ma'bûd Syarh Sunan Abî Dâud* (Madinah: al-Maktabah al-Salfiyah, 1968), part I, 400.

⁶¹Muhy al-Dîn Ibn al-'Arabî, *al-Futûhât al-Makkiyyah* (Beirut: Dâr Şâdir, 2004), juz I, 158.

⁶²Ibn al-'Arabî, *al-Futûhât*, part I, 158.

⁶³Ibn al-'Arabî also explains the superiority of men over women by cosmological comparison; as the superiority of heaven and earth above man or the superiority of the macrocosm on the microcosm. Due to the fact that the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of man and also that man receives the activity of the heavens and the earth, lies between them and comes from both. The party performing the activity is higher than the receiving party. The originating party is higher than the party from it. Similarly, hawwâ ', received activity from Âdam and was created from his ribs so that Âdam was superior to hawwâ. Read in Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial: Kearifan Kritis Kaum Sufi* (Jakarta: PT Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2003), 73-74.

"God creates 'Îsâ from Maryam. So, Maryam occupies the position of Âdam, while 'Îsâ occupies the position of Hawwâ'. Because just as a woman is created from a man, then a man is created from a woman. So God completes in the same way that He began, by creating a fatherless man as Hawwa' was created without a mother. So, 'Îsâ and Hawwâ' are siblings while Âdam and Maryam are two fathers of both of them. "

The "parable" of 'Îsâ, in God's view, is like the parable of Âdam (Q.s. Âli 'Imrân / 3: 59). God compares both with the notion of the absence of a father. God poses this as a proof to show for 'Îsâ that his mother is free from mistakes. God does not compare it to Hawwâ ', though the situation justifies it, for the woman is a place of suspicion due to her pregnancy. She is the place of birth, whereas men are not the place for it. The purpose of the evidence is to eliminate any doubts."

"The parable includes a way to explain the meaning that 'Îsâ is like Hawwâ'. However, the opposing group may attack with doubt about it, because women are, as we have said, the place of what comes out of them, and therefore suspicion may arise. Thus, it was made that resemblance to Âdam that Maryam would be found free of something that usually happened. Thus, the appearance of 'Îsâ from Maryam without a father is like the appearance of Hawwâ' from Âdam without a mother and she is the second 'father'.⁶⁴

From the comparison between the creation of Hawwa' from Âdam and the creation of 'Îsâ from Maryam, as mentioned in this last quotation, it is clear that Ibn al-'Arabî also regards the position of a woman (Maryam) may occupy the position of a man (Âdam), as A man ('Îsâ) may occupy a woman's position (Hawwâ'). Thus, the position of men cannot be said to be higher than women. Men and women occupy an equal position and in this case, can even exchange positions.

On another occasion, Ibn al-'Arabî expresses the positive meaning of the relationship between men and women based on the origin of his creation. He made use of the myth of Hawwa's creation of the Âdam's ribs as a rational basis for the love that arises between a man and a woman. The scholars usually claim that it is one of the human nature to have a sense of mutual interest. The sense of mutual interest between the two is already a law of nature that has been established by God, so denying the mutual interest, longing for each other and mutual love between them is a denial of the law of the nature. For Ibn al-'Arabî, this information is further confirmed by providing a rational basis that he relates to the myth of the creation of Hawwâ 'from the rib of Âdam. According to the *Sheikh al-Akbar*,

"When the body of Âdam materializes, he has no desire for marriage. But the Almighty knows that reproduction, procreation, and marriage will be raised in his life. And marriage in this life is to continue the continuity of its species. So, He took out Hawwâ' from the short ribs."

"Hawwâ 'comes from the crooked rib of Adam. Because of the bent, she will tend her heart to her children and her partner. The tendency of a man's heart to a woman is a tendency toward himself, for she is a part of him. The tendency of a woman's heart towards a man is because a woman is created from the rib of a man, and in that bent bone there is self-surrender and tendency."

"When Hawwâ 'is taken from Âdam, God fills the empty space with lust for her, for existence does not allow a void. When God fills the void with "air", Âdam tends to Hawwâ 'as he tends to himself, for Hawwâ' is a part of himself. Then, Hawwâ 'tends to

⁶⁴Ibn al-'Arabî, *al-Futûhât*, part I, 171-172.

Âdam because Âdam is the place of origin of its configuration. So the love of Hawwâ 'is the love of the land of origin, while the love of Âdam is the love to himself. That is why the love of men for women is real, for the woman (Hawwa') is a part of the man (Adam). Yet, in the love of women for men, there is a force called "shame" (*baya'*), so he has the power to hide it for the land of origin does not fuse with himself in the same way as Adam's union with himself."⁶⁵

From the long quotation above, it appears that Ibn al-'Arabî's interpretation is clearly different from those of the majority of classical commentators. He gives a positive meaning for a crooked or curved rib. For him, "crooked" or "curved" - which is the nature, character of Hawwa'- means the tendency of the heart or the sense of longing, which in this case is Hawwa's sense of longing for Âdam. If the tendency of Hawwâ 'to Âdam is the nature, the character or the innate originated from the crooked or curved form of the rib of Âdam, then the lust of Âdam to Hawwâ' is placed by God in the empty space previously occupied by the rib from which the origin of Hawwâ's creation. While, the classical mufasir, generally interpret the word "crooked" or "curved" in the sense of being "not straight on the right path," or "deviate from the right path." This 'crookedness' in the woman cannot or is difficult to 'straighten out'. Any attempt to change it, may cause harm. Because of that, men should be cautious and wise in dealing with and treating women. If for the classical commentators in general, "crooked" in this context means negative, then for Ibn al-'Arabî, "crooked" in the same context has a positive meaning.⁶⁶

Noting the statements of Ibn al-'Arabî, according to Kautsar Azhari Noer, one can not draw a single conclusion that the sufi puts the position of men superior to women. On the contrary, one will be compelled to pay attention to other parts of his writings that place men and women in equal positions from certain points of view or aspects.⁶⁷

In the case of humanity (*insâniyyah*) for example, Ibn al-'Arabî views that men and women are not different. According to him, "Humanity is a reality that includes men and women, so men do not have a higher level than women in terms of humanity. Similarly, human beings share the same quality of depth (*âlamîyyah*) with the macrocosm. Thus, the cosmos does not have a higher level than the humans in this respect. This chapter, however, demands a character in which women and men are united. It is in what we call as the fact that they are in the receiving place of activity. All this is seen in terms of the realities."⁶⁸

Sachiko Murata in *The Tao of Islam* recognizes that it would be impossible to assert that there is no inconsistency in the passages of Ibn al-'Arabî. Yet, according to Murata, whenever Ibn al-'Arabî takes a perspective on a trait in men or women, he reaches a worthy conclusion for that trait. In his final analysis, there will appear to be unpredictable factors of the divine form, which push to infinity. Here God does what He wills. Then in that case there is no difference between men and women.⁶⁹

In line with Sachiko Murata, according to Kautsar Azhari Noer, Ibn al-'Arabî's writings on men and women do often seem inconsistent. In certain parts of his writings, it is stated that men are superior to women. While in other passages, it is stated that women are equal to, or even, sometimes superior to men. Ibn al-'Arabî's seemingly contradictory statements or conclusions, according to Kautsar, must be seen in the principle of "unity of contradictions" (al-

⁶⁵Ibn al-'Arabî, *al-Futûhât*, part I, 158.

⁶⁶Read Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial*, 85-86.

⁶⁷Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial*, 77-78.

⁶⁸Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial*, 78.

⁶⁹Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 183.

jam 'baina al-addâd). If parts of the conflicting text are understood in accordance with the context or point of view taken to see them, then the inconsistencies of Ibn al-'Arabî's contradictory conclusions will be correctly understood. According to Kautsar, Ibn al-'Arabî's statements or conclusions which are seemingly contradictory must be seen in the principle of "unity of contradictions" (*al-jam 'baina al-addâd*). If parts of the conflicting text are understood in accordance with the context or point of view taken to see them, then the inconsistencies of Ibn al-'Arabî's contradictory conclusions will be correctly understood.⁷⁰

In addition to Ibn al-'Arabî, another Sufi who also emphasized the side of pairs between men and women were Jalâluddîn Rûmî (1207-1273). In his monumental work, *Mathnawi*, as quoted by Kautsar Azhari Noer, Rûmî put forward a view almost similar to that of Ibn al-'Arabî. He also compares the relationship between men and women as the relationship between heaven and earth. He does not see one party as superior to the other. In that relationship, the two parties are mutually beneficial and each needs each other. Rûmî says, "In the eyes of reason, the heavens are men and the earth is women. Anything dropped by that one, will be preserved by another."⁷¹

For Rûmî, the heavens that are considered to be men equivalents are active parties "dropping" everything, while the earth that is considered the equivalent of women is the party who "accepts" the activity of the heavens. If asked the question, which one is superior or more perfect to the other? So the answer cannot be given as simple as that, considering at some level, each has advantages and disadvantages. The sky, on the one hand, is the source of what God has sent down to the earth. Thus, qualitatively, the sky is high, active and creative, while the earth is low, receptive and fertile. On the other hand, borrowing the logic used by Ibn al-'Arabî, Kautsar Azhari Noer writes that the sky as a "Master" would not exist as the master without the earth as its "slave." In other words, the active party (men) are able to act against the receptive party (women), is because the receptive party also acts on the active.⁷²

Therefore, the most appropriate answer to the above question may be to say that men and women share the same advantages, as well as the shortcomings of each. However, each of them finds satisfaction and completeness of each from others for that reason, so in the end they are interdependent. An answer that can be assessed confirms what al-Qusyairî emphasizes about the existence of the pairing and the interconnectedness between Âdam and his partner Hawwâ '. As has been pointed out that when al-Qusyairî interprets Q.s. Al-Nisâ ' / 4: 1, al-A'râf / 7: 189, and al-Rûm / 30: 21, He repeatedly states,

رَدِّ الْمِثْلِ إِلَى الْمِثْلِ فَرِيضَ الشَّكْلِ بِالشَّكْلِ

In this case, there is indeed a similarity between al-Qusyairî (465 H / 1073 CE), Ibn al-'Arabî (w: 638 H / 1240 CE) and Jalâluddîn Rûmî (w 671 H / 1273 CE). They all use *ta'wîl* to understand the expression contained in the symbolically disputed verse. Nevertheless, in spite of the alignment of their view of the unity of men and women, it cannot be clearly stated that the view of the latter two Sufis is influenced by the Sufi interpretations that lived in prior. Ibn al-'Arabî (w. 638 H/1240 M) dan Jalâluddîn Rûmî (w. 671 H/1273 M), yaitu sama-sama.

A sufi figure who is clearly influenced by the interpretation of al-Qusyairî, precisely those living in the mid-18th century, namely Sheikh Ahmad bin Muhammad ibn al-Mahdi bin 'Ajîbah al-Hasanî al-Maghribî or better known as Ibn' Ajîbah (1160-1224 H / 1747-1809 M). In his book of *tafsir*, *al-Bahr al-Madîd fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Majîd*, when interpreting Q.s. Al-Rûm / 30: 21,

⁷⁰Kautsar Azhari Noer, *Tasawuf Perennial*, 70-71.

⁷¹Read Kautsar Azhari Noer and Oman Fathurrahman, "Pria-Wanita sebagai Korespondensi Kosmis: Perempuan dalam Literatur Tasawuf", in Ali Munhanif (ed.), *Mutiara Terpendam: Perempuan dalam Literatur Islam Klasik* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2002), 246-247.

⁷²Kautsar Azhari Noer and Oman Fathurrahman, "Pria-Wanita sebagai Korespondensi Kosmis", 247-248.

explicitly mentions the name of al-Qusyairî and cites his interpretation that affirms the pairing and interdependence of men and women.⁷³

The pairing of men and women and the interdependence of each side, according to al-Qusyairî and later followed by Ibn 'Ajbah, is in the physical dimension; not on the level of *nûb* (soul) and *asrâr* (hidden secrets). In this case, Al-Qusyairî writes:

رَدَّ الْمَثَلُ إِلَى الْمَثَلِ، وَرَبَطَ الشَّكْلَ بِالشَّكْلِ، وَجَعَلَ سَكُونَ الْبَعْضِ إِلَى الْبَعْضِ، وَلَكِنَّ ذَلِكَ لِلْأَشْبَاحِ وَالصُّوَرِ، أَمَّا الْأَرْوَاحُ فَصُخِّبَتْهَا لِلْأَشْبَاحِ كَرَّةً لَا طَوْعًا . وَأَمَّا الْأَسْرَارُ فَمُعْتَقَّةٌ لَا تَسَاكِنُ الْأَطْلَالَ وَلَا تَتَدَنَسُ بِالْأَعْلَالِ.⁷⁴

Before quoting the above statement of al-Qusyair, Ibn 'Ajbah in his tafsir, describes the relationship between the body and the spirit. According to him,

أَصْلُ النِّشْأَةِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ مِنَ الطِّينِ، وَأَصْلُ الرُّوحِ مِنْ نُورِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. فَإِذَا غَلَبَتِ الطِّينَةُ عَلَى الرُّوحِ جَذَبَتْهَا إِلَى عَالَمِ الطِّينِ، فَكَانَ هِمُّهَا الطِّينَ، وَهَوَتْ إِلَى أَسْفَلِ سَافِلِينَ، فَلَا تَجِدُ فِكْرَتَهَا وَحَدِيثَهَا، فِي الْغَالِبِ، إِلَّا فِي عَالَمِ الْحَسِّ، وَيَكُونُ عَمَلُهَا كُلُّهُ عَمَلُ الْجَوَارِحِ، يَفْنَى بِفَنَائِهَا. وَإِذَا غَلَبَتِ الرُّوحُ عَلَى الطِّينَةِ؛ وَذَلِكَ بِدُخُولِ مَقَامِ الْفَنَاءِ، حَتَّى تَسْتَوِيَ الْمَعَانِي عَلَى الْحَسِّيَّاتِ. وَتَتَخَنَسُ الْبَشَرِيَّةُ تَحْتَ سُلْطَانِ أَنْوَارِ الْحَقِيقَةِ، جَذَبَتْهَا إِلَى عَالَمِ الْأَنْوَارِ وَالْأَسْرَارِ، فَلَا تَجِدُ فِكْرَتَهَا إِلَّا فِي أَنْوَارِ التَّوْحِيدِ وَأَسْرَارِ التَّفْرِيدِ، وَعَمَلُهَا كُلُّهُ قَلْبِي وَسْرِي. بَيْنَ فِكْرَةٍ وَاعْتِبَارٍ، وَشُهُودٍ وَاسْتِبْصَارٍ، يَبْقَى مَعَ الرُّوحِ بِبِقَائِهَا، يَجْرِي عَلَيْهَا بَعْدَ مَوْتِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ، وَيَبْعَثُ مَعَهَا، كَمَا تَقْدُمُ فِي الْحَدِيثِ: «يَمُوتُ الْمَرْءُ . . .» إلخ.⁷⁵

The origin of the human body's creation is from the soil whereas the spirit comes from the light of God, the Creator of nature. If the soil has taken possession of the spirit then the spirit will be drawn to the world of the ground (below), so that its will is fully to the ground until it falls into the lowest layer. If so, then the majority of thought and speech, no other than the physical form so that his actions. Whereas if the soul has taken possession of the land, - and that can happen if a person has reached the mortal *maqam* - so that his physical world has been dominated by the *ma'âni* world and his body has been able to be tamed under the control of the true lights, the soil or physical will be drawn to The world of light and secrets, so that no thought will be found except for the lights of monotheism and the secrets of *tajfîd*, as well as his deeds, all of them will have the properties of *qalbî* and *sirrî*; between thinking and taking *i'tibar*, and between *shubûd* and *istibsâr*. (Influence) His actions will last forever with the eternal soul and continue to flow (the reward) after the death of the body and its resurrection. Ibn 'Ajbah, then quotes a hadith narration which states that a person will die according to his life's habits and will be raised in the manner in which he died.

After quoting al-Qusyairi's statement directly, Ibn 'Ajbah states that with that statement al-Qusyairî seems to imply that the affectionate relationship (*mawaddah*) between the couple is only physical, without having the property of *ruhîyyah* and *sirrîyyah*. Because, the spirit and the *sirr* cannot be imagined to incline other than the secrets of the high "dhat"—*asrâr al-dhât al-'aliyyah*, for their love of God has pulled them from their inclination to something low. Among the Sufis, continued Ibn 'Ajbah there are different opinions on whether a loving relationship (*mawaddah*)

⁷³Ahmad bin Muhammad bin al-Mahdî Ibn 'Ajbah al-Hasanî, *al-Babr al-Madîd fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân al-Majîd* (Beirut: Dâr al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2005), chapter V, 338.

⁷⁴Al-Qusyairî, *Tafsîr al-Qusyairî*, chapter V, 114.

⁷⁵Ibn 'Ajbah al-Hasanî, *al-Babr al-Madîd*, chapter V, 338.

between husband and wife could harm the love of God or not. According to Sahl al-Tustarî, continued Ibn 'Ajbah, (it) did not bring any negative impacts for the soul. Based on the words of the Holy Prophet who declared, "I am made to love three things that exist in this world, namely: women, perfumery, and made my eyes clean in prayer." Then of course, here, the relationship with women here is the one done on the basis of grace and love, not on the basis of lust. The proof that the relationship is based on compassion is no disappointment or sadness when one is gone. This is the correct opinion according to Ibn 'Ajbah.⁷⁶

The above view of Ibn 'Ajbah, of course, is not considered to annul the opinion of al-Qusyairî, but rather it is understood as an explanation of the general Sufi view of the relation of love to something physical to the love of something spiritual. Furthermore, if it is related to the context of the matter being debated, i.e., whether from the beginning of its creation, women were in a subordinate position to men, then from the expression of al-Qusyairî quoted above, it can be understood that on the physical level, women are couples for men, these two types of creatures are a bond that is complementary and needy for each other's serenity.

What the above Sufi figures have expressed are in line with the views of a psychologist as well as a researcher and practitioner of Sufism, Lynn Wilcox, who asserted that the debate over the disagreement between men and women is actually on the material physical dimension. While on the spiritual dimension, there is absolutely no gender difference. Even the debate on gender differences is irrelevant on this level. In her book, "*Women and the Holy Quran: A Sufi Perspective*," Lynn Wilcox states, "a variety of subtle qualities, roles struggles, conflicts, and social definitions of women and men in the material world are physical and secularism nuanced. All these change with time, culture, and geographic location. The debate about what women should and should not be, is usually at this low level and is often associated with political or socio-economic issues, and also deals with efforts to control power. Though a person may be able to control others physically, but he can never control the souls of others. Even Pharaoh, with all his might, was unable to do so. *Ruh*, Wilcox asserted, is unreachable, because it is at a higher level. In the spirit realm, gender is meaningless. Spiritually, gender - male or female - does not matter. In short, the gender debate is irrelevant on this level"⁷⁷

Closing

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that in the view of the Sufis, women since the beginning of its creation have been destined to become a partner for men, so that between these two types of creatures become complementary and interdependent. This view, of course, dismisses the notion of subordination for women.⁷⁸ The Sufis' view in this case is consistent with that of contemporary Muslim feminists.

However, in contrast to the method taken by some contemporary Muslim feminists,⁷⁹ the Sufis generally prefer to use *ta'wîl* to give a positive meaning when understanding the traditions

⁷⁶Ibn 'Ajbah al-Hasanî, *al-Babr al-Madîd*, chapter V, 338.

⁷⁷Lynn Wilcox, *Wanita dan Alquran dalam Perspektif Sufi*, translated by DICTIA from the original title, *Women and the Holy Quran: A Sufi Perspective* (Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah, 1998), 123.

⁷⁸The theological conception which assumes Hawwa's origins from the Âdam's ribs brings about negative implications for women psychologically, socially, culturally, economically, and politically. Read Nasaruddin Umar, *Paradigma Baru Teologi Perempuan* (Jakarta: PT. Fikahati Aneska, 2000), 45.

⁷⁹ Fatimah Mernissi, for example, gives criticism from the perspective of the chain of transmission (sanad), the material (matan), and origins (sabab al-wurûd) against some hadith that are considered to corner women or misogynist hadith. She also conducted semantic and *sabab al-nuzûl* studies on several verses of the Qur'an relating to women. Meanwhile, Aminah Wadud-Muhsin paid special attention to the general concept of the Qur'an about women. She seeks to promote central themes in the Qur'an which are oriented towards the improvement of human dignity in general, without discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnicity, even religion. According to her, God has given equality between men and women since the beginning of the creation of man, that is, both created from the

that mention the origin of women's creation from the ribs rather than suspect their narrators or even annul the hadiths of the Prophet considered valid (*sahih*) by the majority of scholars.

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same element, then both got the same credentials as the Caliph on earth, and equally the opportunity to achieve happiness in heaven. On the other hand, some Jewish and Christian feminists seem to have an attitude that is not much different from the Sufi, i.e. tend to understand the story of the origin of the woman creation symbolically so that it displays another meaning from the explicit. See Nasaruddin Umar, *Paradigma Baru Teologi Perempuan*, page 45-46.

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