



A comparative Analysis of Oliver Leaman’s encyclopedia of the Quran with ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s *al-Mīzān* on the topic of the creation of man



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Abstract

Research Article

The Quran: An Encyclopedia, edited by Oliver Leaman, is the second research work in the form of a Quranic encyclopedia in the Western world. In this encyclopedia, under the entry, “Insan/Nas,” (Human) the author of this entry, Ahmet Albayrak, addresses topics such as the creation of human beings, the psychological nature of the human, and the mission of humanity. This article aims to evaluate this entry through a comparative study with the views of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī in *tafsīr* of *al-Mīzān* on the same topic. Based on the comparative analysis, it is evident that the author of the entry on “Insan” in Leaman’s encyclopedia has presented the discussions in a broad and imprecise manner, lacking a detailed and in-depth examination of the issue, and has failed to provide a sufficient explanation of the topic of the creation of human being. In contrast, the author of *al-Mīzān* has meticulously addressed all physical and spiritual dimensions of the creation of man from the perspective of the Quran and has offered a well-structured classification of the creation of man in the Quran, its roots and origins, as well as the manner and stages of human creation in the Quran.

Keywords: Creation of man, Oliver Leaman, *The Quran: An Encyclopedia*, ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *al-Mīzān*.

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Introduction

The second Quranic encyclopedia, called “The Quran: An Encyclopedia,” has been written by a group of Western researchers under the editorship of Oliver Leaman. Generally, the views of Orientalists regarding the topics discussed in the Quran are not comprehensive and contain deficiencies. One of the entries in this encyclopedia pertains to human beings and the creation of man. This article aims to evaluate the section on the creation of man in Oliver Leaman’s encyclopedia and the perspective of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī in his Quranic exegesis, *al-Mīzān*, regarding the creation of man, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of this encyclopedia. Therefore, the central issue of this article is to explore the similarities and deficiencies in the views of Leaman’s encyclopedia on the creation of man compared to the perspective of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī as a Muslim Quran scholar in *al-Mīzān*. Additionally, it seeks to understand the roots of Leaman’s perspective on the creation of man. Given the significance of the Quran as a book of revelation, conducting such research is essential to convey a correct and comprehensive understanding of the Quran’s views on the creation of man to its audience, thereby preventing misunderstandings or a lack of deep and accurate comprehension regarding the creation of man.

The book “The Quran: An Encyclopedia” is the second encyclopedia written by Orientalists regarding the Holy Quran. It was edited by Professor Oliver Leaman and published in a single volume in 2005 in the United States (see Riḍā’ī Iṣfahānī and I’tiṣāmī 2009, pp. 67-72). About this encyclopedia, Leaman states: “It is the aim of this book to bridge that gap between the highly scholarly and technical text and the rather skimpy elementary books. Even a cursory glimpse at the contents will reveal that we have not eschewed scholarship” (Leaman 2006, *Introduction*). The entry “Insan/Nas” is authored by Ahmet Albayrak and includes an introduction and three sections on “the creation of human beings,” “the psychological nature of the human,” and “the mission of humanity.”

Several articles have been published critiquing specific entries in Oliver Leaman's encyclopedia. However, to date, no research has been conducted specifically critiquing the entry "Insan/Nas" (human being) in Leaman's encyclopedia and comparing it with the views of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī. Therefore, this topic represents a new study area lacking a specific background.

1. Critique of the Introductory part of the Entry "Insan/Nas"

The first critique pertains to the ambiguous statements in the introductory section of this entry. The author states, "It is difficult to describe human beings. This is because there is much more to a person than meets the eye" (Leaman 2006, 300). However, if something is complex and it is not evident on the surface, then describing it will also inherently be complex. The author's subsequent claim is that a complete understanding of the nature of man is equivalent to grasping the inner dimensions of humanity. The author does not elaborate further on this assertion and then proceeds to examine the word "*insan*" (human being) in Arabic and its various derivatives in the Quran.

An additional literary flaw in the initial part of the entry on "*insan*" is that the author takes "*insan*" in a colloquial sense, equating it merely with "humanity," without distinguishing between "*insan*" and "*bashar*." In Islamic sources, "*insan*" is not used to refer to a collective; rather, it is a term of an individual genus (see 'Abd al-Bāqī 1985, 93; Dāmghānī 1982, 94). In contrast, "*bashar*" can be used both as an individual genus and as a collective genus, as in the phrase: "Say, I am just a human being like you"³ (*Quran* 18:110) (Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, pp. 124-125). For instance, in verse "When your Lord said to the angels, Indeed I am going to create a human out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud"⁴ (*Quran* 15:28), it

³. ﴿انما انا بشر مثلکم﴾ (الکہف/ ۱۱۰)

⁴. ﴿وَ اِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّیْ خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَآءٍ مَّسْنُونٍ﴾ (الحجر/ ۲۸)



refers to an individual, while in verse “*then, behold, you are humans scattering [all over]*”⁵ (*Quran 30:20*), it is used in a collective sense. However, this distinction ultimately pertains to grammatical usage and is merely conventional.

In addition to the aforementioned critique, the author has not referred to other terms used in the Quran to describe humans. The Holy Quran employs various words such as “إنسان” (*insān*), “بشر” (*bashar*), “ناس” (*nās*), “أناس” (*unās*), “إنس” (*ins*), “إنسى” (*insī*), “أناسى” (*unāsī*), and “بنی آدم” (*banī Ādam*) to refer to humanity, each carrying subtle, albeit significant, differences in meaning. Sometimes, the text’s eloquence and rhetoric necessitate using such synonyms. These nuances are often appreciated by those with refined and elevated tastes, while at other times, they may not be easily explicable. However, since we believe that the Quran was revealed at the pinnacle of eloquence and rhetoric, we assert that in certain contexts, one term is more suitable than another (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2009, 37).

The terms “ناس” (*nās*), “أناس” (*unās*), and “إنس” (*ins*) are all plural nouns (see ‘Abd al-Bāqī 1985, 93-94; Rāghib Iṣfahānī 1991, 94), but they have differences in usage: “ناس” (*nās*) refers to all human beings collectively, while “أناس” (*unās*) is typically used to refer to a specific group of people. In the story of Lot, his people said about him and the believers: “*They are indeed a puritanical lot*”⁶ (*Quran 27:56*). This distinction is also a matter of grammatical and conventional usage (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī 2009, 38). “إنس” (*ins*) refers to the entirety of humans, similar to how “جن” (*jinn*) refers to the entire category of jinn. In this sense, it is akin to “بشر” (*bashar*), which applies to all human beings (ibid).

This entry contains some ambiguous phrases while possessing a fluent and articulate expression. For instance, it refers to humans as “the

⁵ . ﴿ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُونَ﴾ (الروم/ ٢٠)

⁶ . ﴿إِنَّهُمْ أَنْاسٌ يَتَطَهَّرُونَ﴾ (النمل/ ٥٦)



quintessence (*zubda*) of the universe” (Leaman 2006, 300) but does not clarify the meaning of this designation for humans or provide justification for it. Additionally, it initially states that describing humans is not difficult, only to later assert that this is because humans are more complex than they appear. It is evident that something that is not visible is more challenging to understand; however, the author of this entry seems to interpret this the other way around. As a result, the reader is left in a haze of ambiguity regarding whether describing humans is difficult or not. Furthermore, this ambiguity is not resolved by reading the rest of the entry, as the subsequent content is not presented comprehensively and in detail.

The author states: “*insan* can mean ‘pupil of the eye’ (*insanu-l-‘ayn*)” (Leaman 2006, 300). This interpretation, aside from lacking any scientific citation, is unnecessary to include in this entry even if it were accurate. In scholarly discussions, the content should progress logically and systematically, establishing a coherent relationship between the literal and technical meanings of terms. However, the interpretation of “pupil of the eye” as presented by the author has no connection to the etymology given for “*insan*,” which is derived from “انس” (*ins*) or “نسى” (*nasī*). In Islamic texts, the analogy of the pupil of the eye to humans is derived from the term “إنسان العين” (human of the eye), meaning that, in terms of proximity to God through performing religious duties, a human is to God as the pupil is to the eye; that is, God perceives the world through the human (the perfect human), just as the eye sees through the pupil (Qayṣarī 2020, pp. 348-350). Based on Islamic texts, the author’s interpretation of “human” as the pupil of the eye is correct; however, this assertion is presented without any explanation.

The author of this entry claims that “The religious view of the nature of man is entirely different from the modern scientific view, both in content and appearance” (Leaman 2006, 300). In fact, the author posits a separation between religion and science concerning humanity. However, the author does not elaborate on this statement and leaves it ambiguous. Subsequently, the author refers to the Quran’s description of humans,



enumerating two characteristics: “cruel and ignorant” and “the most honourable of all creatures” (*ashraf-i makhlūqāt*) (Leaman 2006, 301), directly linking these traits to human creation. The author states that humans were created “from mud but in the image of God,” which reflects a perspective on human creation that asserts the corporeality of God. According to the author, the human described in the Quran simultaneously possesses the characteristics of being “cruel and ignorant” as well as “the most honourable of all creatures;” furthermore, it is stated that humans can recognize and control these conflicting tendencies within themselves (Leaman 2006, 301).

The problems in the introductory section of this entry on human beings are as follows:

1. Ambiguity in the initial sentences of the human entry.
2. Lack of elaboration and development of the author’s statements and claims regarding humans.
3. Separation of the religious perspective and the contemporary scientific view on humans and human nature.
4. Assertion of the simultaneous existence of the characteristics “cruel and ignorant” as well as “the most honourable of all creatures” in humans, and the connection of these two traits to human creation.
5. Application of common beliefs to human creation (creation from mud but in the image of God).

After this section, the author addresses humans from three dimensions: the creation of human beings, the psychological nature of humans, and the mission of humanity. The author does not explain the overall reason for focusing solely on these three aspects while neglecting other dimensions of humans from the Quranic perspective. This article only critiques the section on the creation of humans in this encyclopedia, and other aspects should be examined in further research.

2. Critique of the section on “The creation of human beings”

By studying the section on the creation of humans in Oliver Leaman's encyclopedia entry, the reader becomes aware of the author's lack of coherence, as some sentences lack semantic unity, and the disconnection between sentences is evident. The author states, “The foundation of existence for human beings is their belief in Allah,” and only references belief, while in the Quran, belief is always mentioned alongside righteous deeds, and these two are coupled together. Furthermore, the author refrains from elaborating on the concept of faith in the Quran, merely stating that “this belief is described in great detail in the Quran” (Leaman 2006, 300), without referring to any verses that elaborate on the author's intended understanding of belief.

The author then refers to the first two verses revealed in chronological order, namely verses 1 and 2 of *Sūrat al-‘Alaq*,⁷ stating that these verses address creation and the description of humans. However, verse 2 of *Sūrat al-‘Alaq* merely states that humans are created from a clinging mass and does not provide further details about the creation of humans.

The author does not refer to the *Sūras al-Mu‘minūn* and *al-Ḥajj*,⁸ which provide a more comprehensive and detailed account of the various stages

⁷. ﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ * خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ﴾ (علق ١/ ٢)

“Read in the Name of your Lord who created; created man from a clinging mass” (Quran 96:1-2)

⁸. ﴿ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا ءَاخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٤)

“Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature.



of human creation. The author overlooks these two Sūras, which detail the stages of creation, including “*‘alaqah*” (a clinging mass) “*muḍghah*” (fleshy tissue), bones, and flesh, and instead focuses on verses that refer to creation from clay. Even in *Sūrat al-‘Alaq*, which is cited in the entry, the author does not delve into a more detailed discussion of human creation and merely touches upon it, whereas a Quranic encyclopedia would necessitate more thorough explanations.

The stages of “*‘alaqah*” (a clinging mass), “*muḍghah*” (fleshy tissue), bones, and flesh among others, reflect the Quran’s incorporation of contemporary scientific concepts. Modern genetic research aligns with the verses of the Quran, demonstrating the timeless nature of the Holy Quran. The existence of accurate scientific information in the Quran, which has only been recognized by contemporary science after centuries, underscores that the Quran is a guide for humanity rather than a scientific textbook. This is a significant honor for the Muslim community. This encyclopedia

So blessed is Allah, the best of creators” (Quran 23:14)

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تُّرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِّن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِّن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نَخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنكُمْ مَّن يُّتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِن بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ﴾ (الحج/٥)

“O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We indeed created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then from a clinging mass, then from a fleshy tissue, partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may manifest [Our power] to you. We establish in the wombs whatever We wish for a specified term, then We bring you forth as infants, then [We rear you] so that you may come of age. [Then] there are some of you who are taken away, and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age, so that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge. And you see the earth torpid, yet when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells, and grows every delightful kind [of plant]” (Quran 22:5)

has overlooked these points, which may indicate either a deliberate omission or a lack of attention and adequate understanding on the part of the author of this entry. Furthermore, the detailed account of human creation in the Quran is a testament to the greatness of God, Who is all-able and all-wise, and one of His titles is “*Aḥsan al-Khālīqīn*” (the best of creators) (Quran 23:14), as He has created humanity with precision and delicacy in “*aḥsan-i taqwīm*” (the best of forms) (Quran 95:4).

The author, then, mentions *Sūrat al-Insān*, stating that “this sura emphasizes that point that human beings have been sent into the world to be tested” (Leaman 2006, 301). Firstly, exegetes have not identified the purpose of this Sūra as the testing of humans. Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his commentary on verse 2 of *Sūrat al-Insān*, where the term “*نبتليہ*” (*nabtalih*) is mentioned, rejects the notion of humans being tested, citing the subsequent phrase of the verse, which states: “...So We made him endowed with hearing and sight”⁹ (Quran 76:2). The word “*ibtilā*” from the phrase “*nabtalih*” means to transfer something from one state to another and in different forms. For example, gold is subjected to a process of testing (*ibtilā*) so that it melts and takes the desired shape. Similarly, God Almighty tests humans, meaning He creates them from a drop of seminal fluid, then transforms that sperm into a clinging mass (*'alaqah*), and then into a fleshy tissue (*mudghah*), continuing through the various stages of creation until He brings them to their final form. The meaning of the verse is that We created humans from a mixed and blended drop of fluid, while we transition them from one state to another and from one form to another. For this purpose, We made them hear and see, so they may hear the divine call that reaches them and see the signs of God that indicate His Oneness, prophethood, and the Day of Resurrection (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 20:121-122).

Assuming that *Sūrat al-Insān* pertains to the testing of humans, the author should have also mentioned the concept of “human will” after

⁹ ﴿إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾ (الانسان / 2)



referring to the testing of humans in this world. However, this aspect has been overlooked. Without addressing these points, this encyclopedia raises numerous questions and ambiguities for an audience unfamiliar with the Quran's teachings. Merely mentioning that humans are tested without acknowledging their free will promotes a notion of determinism and carries an implicit layer of compulsion. The summary provided in this encyclopedia regarding God's creation of humans from clay to test them lacks details about human creation and fails to mention human volition and the right to choose.

The perception gained from studying this section of the entry on humans differs significantly from that derived from reading the Quranic verses concerning humanity. A comprehensive reading of the Quran, considering all verses related to humans, emphasizes the meaningfulness of human creation, the anticipation of the Day of Judgment (*Sūrat al-Mu'minūn*/115),¹⁰ the attribute of God as "*Aḥsan al-Khāliqīn*" (the best of creators) (*Sūrat al-Mu'minūn*/14),¹¹ and the idea that human creation is in "*aḥsan-i taqwīm*" (the best of forms) (*Sūrat al-Tīn*/4).¹² However, these

10. ﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ﴾ (المؤمنون/١١٥)

"Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?" (Quran 23:115)

11. ﴿ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النَّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٤)

"Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators" (Quran 23:14)

12. ﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾ (التين/٤)

important themes are not conveyed through the study of this entry. The lack of comprehensiveness in the content of this entry, coupled with the author's apparent lack of expertise regarding all relevant verses about humans, results in a disjointed and incoherent presentation. It seems that the author began writing this entry without gathering comprehensive information about humans and their creation, processing their thoughts, or referring to the works of Muslim scholars in this field.

The author states, "The Quran is not concerned with anything else to as great an extent as it is with human beings" (Leaman 2006, 300). However, it is important to note that one-third of the Quran discusses the concept of the Hereafter (*Ma'ād*), not solely humanity. While the hereafter relates to humans, the Quran's perspective on the hereafter primarily emphasizes its inevitability and the accountability of human actions. Furthermore, the author refers to verse 13 of *Sūrat al-Hujurāt*,¹³ which states that the most honored individuals in the sight of God are the most God-wary. However, the author does not elaborate on this verse. It would have been beneficial for the author to connect this verse to the section discussing faith as the foundation of human existence, thereby reducing the disjointedness of the content.

"We certainly created man in the best of forms" (Quran 95:4)

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ﴾ (الحجرات/١)¹³

"O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify yourselves with one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God wary among you. Indeed Allah is all-knowing, all-aware" (Quran 49:13)



The author, citing verse 70 of *Sūrat al-Isrā'*¹⁴ states that humans hold a high and distinguished position in the universe, but does not provide further explanation of this verse. In the following sentence, which concludes the section on the creation of humans, the author states, “According to the Quran, the first man was also the first prophet” (Leaman 2006, 301), but refrains from elaborating on this point and merely leaves it at that, without mentioning the name of that prophet or providing additional details. Furthermore, there is a noticeable lack of coherence and organization in the final section.

The entry on “Insan/Nas” in the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia lacks a comprehensive perspective, which is its greatest shortcoming. In contrast, the Quran addresses all dimensions of humanity, including both material and spiritual aspects, and explores these topics in detail (see *Sūras al-Hijr/29; Šād/72; al-Sajdah/9; al-Mu'minūn/14*).

In the Quran, humans possess both a material and a spiritual creation. The verses that refer to the stages of the material creation of humans can be divided into four categories:

1. Verses that describe the creation of humans from soil, clay, or earth:

“Of His signs is that He created you from dust, then, behold, you are humans scattering [all over]”¹⁵ (Quran 30:20); “It is He Who created you from clay”¹⁶ (Quran 6:2); “He who made the earth for you a cradle ...

¹⁴ . «وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا» (الاسراء/٧٠)

“Certainly We have honoured the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference” (Quran 17:70)

¹⁵ . «وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ» (الروم/٢٠)

¹⁶ . «هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ» (الانعام/٢)

*From it did We create you ...*¹⁷ (Quran 20:53&55). Although these verses primarily refer to the beginning of human creation and the creation of Adam (a), since the creation of all humans ultimately traces back to Adam, this ruling can be considered applicable to the realm of humanity (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 16:165; 7:8; 14:172).

2. Verses that refer to the creation of humans from water include:

*‘It is He who created the human being from water’*¹⁸ (Quran 25:54). Sometimes, this water is described as insignificant and lowly: *‘Have We not created you from a base fluid’*¹⁹ (Quran 77:20). At times, it is referred to as a gushing water that emerges from between the backbone and the ribs (see Ṭūsī 1988, 10:715; Ma‘lūf 2004, 60 “*Tarb*”): *‘So let man consider from what he was created. He was created from an effusing fluid, which issues from between the loins and the breast-bones’*²⁰ (Quran 86:5-7).

3. Verses that describe a more advanced stage (the sperm drop) include:

*‘He created man from a drop of [seminal] fluid’*²¹ (Quran 16:4); *‘Does not man see that We created him from a drop of [seminal] fluid’*²² (Quran 36:77); *‘He has created him from a drop of [seminal] fluid’*²³ (Quran 80:17); *‘Allah created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid’*²⁴ (Quran 35:11).

17. ﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا ... مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ...﴾ (طه/٥٣-٥٥)

18. ﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا﴾ (الفرقان/٥٤)

19. ﴿أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ﴾ (المرسلات/٢٠)

20. ﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ * خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ * يَخْرُجُ مِنَ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ﴾ (الطارق/٥-٧)

21. ﴿خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (نحل/٤)

22. ﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (يس/٧٧)

23. ﴿مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ خَلَقَهُ﴾ (عبس/١٧)

24. ﴿وَإِلَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (فاطر/١١)



4. Verses that discuss the developmental stages of the drop of [seminal] fluid include the first stage, which is the clinging mass (‘*alaqah*):

“created man from a clinging mass”²⁵ (Quran 96:2); “Does man suppose that he would be abandoned to futility? Was he not a drop of emitted semen? Then he became a clinging mass; then He created [him] and proportioned [him]”²⁶ (Quran 75:36-38). “Does man suppose that he would be abandoned to futility? Was he not a drop of emitted semen? Then he became a clinging mass; then He created [him] and proportioned [him]” (Quran 75:36-38). Following the stage of the drop of [seminal] fluid (*nutfah*), the stages include the fleshy tissue (*mudghah*), the formation of bones, and subsequently the growth of flesh. These stages are sometimes mentioned briefly, with the description of creation following the creation in the three layers of darkness (the mother’s womb, the uterus, and the placenta) (Ṭabrasī 1959, 8:766; Makārim Shīrāzī 1995, 384:19): “He creates you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a threefold darkness”²⁷ (Quran 39:6). Sometimes, these stages are elaborated upon in detail, with the most explicit references in *Sūrat al-Mu’minūn*. This sūra first mentions the creation of Adam and the manner of that creation (*al-Mu’minūn/12*)²⁸ and then discusses how Adam’s progeny is created (*al-Mu’minūn/ 13-14*).²⁹ Based on this, it can be said

²⁵ ﴿ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴾ (علق/٢)

²⁶ ﴿ أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى * أَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُُمْنَى * ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ﴾
(القيامة/٣٦-٣٨)

²⁷ ﴿ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ﴾ (الزمر/٦)

²⁸ ﴿ وَ لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سَلَالَةٍ مِّنْ طِينٍ ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٢)

“Certainly We created man from an extract of clay” (Quran 23:12)

²⁹ ﴿ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ * ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٣ و ١٤)



that humans, in their natural developmental process, progress from dust to the vegetative stage in the forms of the drop of [seminal] fluid, clinging mass, fleshy tissue, bone formation, and the growth of flesh. Ultimately, in the mother's womb, they reach the stage of animal perfection through the formation of organs, muscles, and an extensive network of nerves and blood vessels, preparing for entry into the realm of another creation (*al-Mu'minūn*/14).

The Holy Quran, regarding the spiritual creation of humans, mentions Adam after referring to the “fashioning” that pertains to his material aspect, with the expression “*breathed into him of My Spirit*”³⁰ (*Sūras al-Hijr*/29; *Ṣād*/72) (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 12:154-155). Concerning his descendants, after outlining the stages of material creation (the drop of [seminal] fluid, clinging mass, fleshy tissue, etc.), the tone shifts from creation to production (*anṣha'nāhu*/أَنْشَأْنَاهُ), indicating a new stage that is distinct from the previous ones. This stage speaks of human life, knowledge, and power. While the earlier stages varied in descriptions, characteristics, color, taste, and form, they were all of the same kind. In contrast, this stage does not belong to the same category as the previous ones. In this stage, just as God endowed humans with knowledge, life, and power, He granted them an essential essence (personal identity) that was not present in the earlier stages (ibid, 15:19 & 21).

In the Holy Quran, various aspects of human creation are addressed, including the innovation in human creation, the balance of human creation,

“Then We made him a drop of [seminal] fluid [lodged] in a secure abode. Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!” (Quran 13-14)

³⁰. ﴿نَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾ (الحجر/ ٢٩؛ ص/ ٧٢)



the history of human creation, the comparison to human creation, the destiny of human creation, the creation of human organs, and the elements of human creation (see *Sūras al-Mu'minūn/14*;³¹ *al-Hajj/5*;³² *al-Hijr/26*;³³ etc.). The elements of human creation include spirit, dust, clay, and a drop of [seminal] fluid. The philosophy of human creation encompasses

31. ﴿ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٤)

“Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators!” (Quran 13-14)

32. ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقَرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نَخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَمُوتُ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَرُدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا وَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأْتَبَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ﴾ (الحج/٥)

“O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We indeed created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then from a clinging mass, then from a fleshy tissue, partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may manifest [Our power] to you. We establish in the wombs whatever We wish for a specified term, then We bring you forth as infants, then [We rear you] so that you may come of age. [Then] there are some of you who are taken away, and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age, so that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge. And you see the earth torpid, yet when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells, and grows every delightful kind [of plant]” (Quran 22:5)

33. ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ﴾ (حجر/٢٦)

“Certainly We created man out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud” (Quran 15:26)

benefiting from mercy, reasoning, stewardship, and worship. The stages of human creation include a drop of [seminal] fluid, the clinging mass (*'alaqah*), the fleshy tissue (*mudghah*), the formation of bones, and subsequently the growth of flesh, shaping of features, and the breathing of the spirit. All of these points are discussed in the Quran; however, in the entry on humans in this encyclopedia, they are either not addressed at all or are mentioned very briefly without comprehensive explanations.

If we do not have a correct understanding of human creation, the fact that humans consist of both physical and spiritual dimensions diminishes their value to mere materialism and a tendency towards material possessions. This reduction in human values leads to neglect of other aspects of humanity. In light of a precise understanding of human creation, the status of God as the best of creators becomes evident.

The focus of an encyclopedia entry solely on the creation of humans from clay, without addressing other aspects and stages of human creation, undermines the perception of God's status in people's minds. The author of this entry, in contrast to the respected Quranic exegete 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, either neglects to explore the details of human creation, lacks a sufficient understanding of the subject, or intends to diminish the perception of God as the Creator and the best of creators. Alternatively, the author may simply not consider the creation of humans to be a significant topic, and as a result, seeks to convey its perceived insignificance to the audience.

3. The perspective of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī on the creation of man in his Quranic exegesis, "*Al-Mīzān*"

The verses of the Holy Quran about human creation can be classified into three groups, considering both the audience and the topic of creation. Some verses pertain to the initial creation of the first humans (Prophet Adam and Eve). For instance, 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his commentary on the noble verse, "*who perfected everything that He created, and commenced man's*



creation from clay”³⁴ (Quran 32:7), states that the term “man” does not refer to each person, such that one could argue that the creation of each individual was not from clay. Rather, it refers to the human species as a whole, and God intends to convey that the origin of this species was clay, from which all individuals ultimately descend. In essence, all members of this species have emerged from a single individual who was created from clay. Since his descendants come into being through reproduction and birth from their parents, the individuals referred to as being created from clay are Adam and Eve. The evidence for our assertion is found in the following verse: “Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid”³⁵ (Quran 32:8). This indicates that the origin of human creation refers to the very first individual created from clay, not to each human, who was created from a lowly fluid (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 250; Heydarī Chinārī & Mahdavi Āzādbinī 2012, pp. 126-127).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s views in *al-Mizān* regarding the creation of humans can be categorized into specific and coherent sections:

1. Subject of Human Creation in the Quran.
2. Roots and Origins of Human Creation in the Quran (including: Earth, dust, Clay, Lowly water, a drop of [seminal] fluid).
3. Method and Stages of Human Creation in the Quran (including: The first humans (Adam and Eve), Other humans (descendants of Adam and Eve), All humans are descendants of Adam and Eve. (see Heydarī Chinārī & Mahdavi Āzādbinī 2012, pp. 127-138)

The aspects of human creation in the Quran can be derived from the following:

³⁴. «الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ» (السجدة/٧)

³⁵. «ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ» (السجدة/٨)



1. Earth

﴿هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ﴾ (Hūd/61): “He brought you forth from the earth”
(Quran 11:61).

﴿هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ﴾ (al-Najm/32): “He knows you best since [the
time] He produced you from the earth” (Quran 53:32).

﴿وَاللَّهُ أَنبَتَكُمْ مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا﴾ (Nūḥ/17): “Allah made you grow from the earth,
with a [vegetable] growth” (Quran 71:17).

This expression is metaphorical, suggesting that just as a plant grows from earthly materials and develops into a living organism, so too were you formed from the same earthly materials that God granted life. Initially, you were “a drop of [seminal fluid,” and God created you as a complete human. Alternatively, you were like clay, and when God breathed spirit into that clay, it transformed into the Prophet Adam. This process can also be seen as a form of growth from the earth (Kāshānī 1965, 10:22).

2. Dust (*Turāb*)

﴿فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ﴾ (al-Hajj/5): “Indeed, We created you from dust”
(Quran 22:5)

﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ﴾ (al-Rūm/20): “Of His signs is that He created
you from dust” (Quran 30:20).

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ﴾ (Fāṭir/11): “Allah created you from dust” (Quran
35:11) (see Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 16:164; Ṭūsī 1988, 8:238).

3. Dry Clay (*Ṣalṣāl*)

﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ﴾ (al-Hijr/26): “Certainly We created
man out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud” (Quran 15:26).



﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ﴾ (al-Hijr/28): “When your Lord said to the angels, Indeed I am going to create a human out of a dry clay[drawn]from an aging mud” (Quran 15:28).

﴿خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ﴾ (al-Rahmān/14): “He created man out of dry clay, like the potter’s” (Quran 55:14).

Exegetes have conducted extensive discussions regarding “clay,” but no definitive conclusion has emerged. What can be stated with certainty is that “clay” refers to dry clay. The evidence for this is that the Quran in *Sūrat al-Rahmān* likens it to “*fakhkhār*,” which means pottery and baked clay. Thus, from this collection of verses, it can be inferred that a mixture of clay that is dried was the primary material in the creation of man (Ṭabrisī 1959, 3:335; Fayḍ Kāshānī 1994, 3:106; Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 12:151).

4. Clay (Ṭīn)

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ طِينٍ﴾ (al-An‘ām/2): “It is He who created you from clay” (Quran 6:2) (see Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 7:8; Ḥuwayzī 1415AH/1994, 1:702).

﴿خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ﴾ (al-A‘rāf/12): “You created me from fire and You created him from clay” (Quran 7:12).

5. Water

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا﴾ (al-Furqān/54): “It is He who created the human being from water, then invested him with ties of blood and marriage” (Quran 25:54).

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ﴾ (al-Anbiyā’/30): “and We made every living thing out of water” (Quran 21:30) (Also see *al-Mursalāt*/20; *al-Ṭāriq*/5-6).

6. A Drop of [seminal] Fluid (Nutfah)

﴿خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (al-Naḥl/4): “He created man from a drop of [seminal] fluid” (Quran 16:4).

﴿أَنَا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (Yā-Sīn/77): “We created him from a drop of [seminal] fluid” (Quran 36:77).

﴿إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ﴾ (al-Insān/2): “Indeed We created man from the drop of a mixed fluid” (Quran 76:2).

Various interpretations have been presented regarding “*nutfah amshāj*” (see Riḍā Nūr Muḥammadī 2014, 56).

7. Dust & a Drop of [seminal] Fluid

﴿يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ وَنُقِرُّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ﴾ (الحج/٥)

“O people! If you are in doubt about the resurrection, [consider that] We indeed created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid, then from a clinging mass, then from a fleshy tissue, partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may manifest [Our power] to you. We establish in the wombs whatever We wish for a specified term, then We bring you forth as infants, then [We rear you] so that you may come of age” (Quran 22:5)

﴿وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن تَرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ﴾ (Fāṭir/11): “Allah created you from dust, then from a drop of [seminal] fluid” (Quran 35:11).

In addition to the aforementioned verses, the stages of human creation are also described in *Sūrat al-Mu'minūn* as follows:

﴿ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظَامَ لَحْمًا
ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ﴾ (المؤمنون/١٤)



“Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators” (Quran 23:14)

This verse outlines the sequential stages of human development, emphasizing the transformation from a drop of [seminal] fluid to a fully formed human, highlighting the intricate process of creation and the divine power behind it.

4. References from the Encyclopedia and their Comparison with the Views of ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī

According to ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, verse 12 of *Sūrat al-A‘rāf* does not pertain to the creation of man, but rather addresses the dispute between the creation of Iblis from fire and the creation of man from clay; however, encyclopedias have cited this verse about the creation of man (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 8:24; Leaman 2006, 300).

‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, in the commentary on verse 14 of *Sūrat al-Mu‘minūn*, about the verse, “*Certainly We created man from an extract of clay*” (*Quran 23:12*)³⁶ has indicated that the apparent context suggests that the term “man” (*insān*) refers to the human species, which includes Adam (a) and all his descendants. The term “creation” refers to the initial creation in which Adam (a) was made from clay, and then his progeny was established from a drop of [seminal] fluid. The word “creation” originally means estimation and measurement; for example, when it is said: “*خلفت الثوب*,” (*khalāqtu al-thawb*) it means that I measured the fabric for cutting. Therefore, the meaning of the verse is as follows: We initially measured humans from a distilled essence of the elements of the earth mixed with water. While ‘Allāmah’s view on creation as initial and from clay is similar

³⁶. «وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ» (المؤمنون/ ١٢)

to that of the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia, he considers the meaning of creation to involve estimation and measurement, a nuance not addressed in the encyclopedia (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 15:19-20; Leaman 2006, 300).

'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, in his commentary on the verses that describe the stages of creation, has examined and defined the individual terms such as “*nutfah*” (a drop of [seminal] fluid) and “*alaqah*” (clinging mass). However, these definitions are not only absent in the encyclopedia, but there is also no reference to these stages. Given the verses, “*and commenced man's creation from clay. Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid*”³⁷ (Quran 32:7-8), Man's existence is limited; it originates from clay, which marks the beginning of his creation. The continuation of his lineage occurs through marriage and reproduction (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 16:250). While 'Allāmah considers clay to be the beginning of human creation and views the continuation of the lineage as resulting from marriage and reproduction, Oliver Leaman only mentions creation from clay without providing any commentary on the continuation of creation.

In the verse, “*Certainly We created man out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud*”³⁸ (Quran 15:26) the phrase “*وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ*” (*Certainly We created man*) refers to the beginning of human creation. This is supported by other verses that discuss the creation of man from clay: “*and commenced man's creation from clay. Then He made his progeny from an extract of a base fluid*”³⁹ (Quran 32:7-8). Therefore, this noble verse describes the creation of the human species, as creating the first being from which all others are derived is, in essence, the creation of all of them.

³⁷. «وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ» (السجدة/٧-٨)

³⁸. «وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِنْ حَمَإٍ مَسْنُونٍ» (الحجر/٢٤)

³⁹. «وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ * ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ مَهِينٍ» (السجدة/٧-٨)



In *Majma' al-Bayān*, it is stated that the origin of Adam is from dust (Ṭabrasī 1959, 6:335). The Quran says: “He created him from dust” (*Quran* 3:59). What happens is that this dust was turned into clay, as mentioned in the verse: “You created him from clay” (*Quran* 7:12). Then, that clay was left to become putrid, as indicated by the verse: “Certainly We created man out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud” (*Quran* 15:26). After that, the clay was left to dry, as described in the verse: “out of a dry clay” (*Quran* 15:26). Therefore, there is no contradiction in these various expressions in the Quran, as they describe the different states of the origin of human creation (Ṭabrasī 1959, 6:335; Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 12:151). ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī has thoroughly explained and elucidated the various expressions regarding the creation of man in the Quran. However, these interpretations and explanations are not found in the encyclopedia, which only mentions creation from dust and clay without providing further details or context.

In verse 71 of *Sūra Ṣād*: “Indeed I am about to create a human being out of clay”⁴⁰ (*Quran* 38:71), the origin of human creation is identified as “clay” (*tīn*) while in *Sūrat al-Rūm*, it is referred to as “dust” (*turāb*), and in *Sūrat al-Ḥijr*, it is described as “a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud” (*ṣalṣāl-in min ḥama-in masnūn*). In *Sūrat al-Raḥmān*, it is mentioned as “dry clay like the potter’s” (*ṣalṣāl-in ka-l-fakḥkhār*). This variation in expression does not create any contradiction, as it reflects different states of the same singular origin, with the Quran naming one of these states in each instance (Ṭabāṭabā’ī 1996, 17:225).

Regarding the verses “So when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down in prostration before him”⁴¹ (*Quran* 15:29; 38:72), “to proportion man” refers to the adjustment of his limbs,

40. «إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ» (ص/٧١)

41. «فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتَهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ» (الحجر/٢٩؛ ص/٧٢)



meaning that his bodily parts are combined and perfected to become a complete human being. The “breathing of the spirit into him” signifies making him a living being. The reference to the spirit as “My spirit” is intended to honor that spirit. The command “فَقَعُّوْا” (fall down) is an imperative derived from “وَقَوْع” (to fall), indicating that this command follows the formation and the breathing of the spirit, instructing the angels to prostrate to him since He has breathed His spirit into him (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1996, 17:225). However, the encyclopedia does not mention the prostration of the angels to man after his creation.

Aside from the shared topics and the omission of certain aspects concerning human creation in the encyclopedia, there is a fundamental difference in the underlying thought systems of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī and the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia. This difference is manifested in the entry on human creation.

Conclusion

Considering the points mentioned, it becomes clear that the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia lacks a proper categorization of human creation and its stages, as it does not account for all the relevant verses on the subject. This results in a lack of coherence in the content of this entry and leads to a scattered presentation of information. It would have been more effective to first compile all verses related to human creation and then provide an explanation through a well-organized categorization, similar to what 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī has done. He did not overlook any verse regarding creation. The encyclopedia does not present 'Allāmah's tripartite categorization of human creation, which includes the subject of human creation in the Quran, the roots and origins of human creation in the Quran, and the manner and stages of human creation in the Quran. The absence of this categorization contributes to a disjointed presentation of information and a lack of comprehensiveness regarding human creation in this entry.

From a comparative analysis between the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia and 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *Tafsīr al-Mizān* regarding human creation, it



can be inferred that the author of the entry on humans in the encyclopedia has presented the discussions in a general and imprecise manner, lacking a detailed and in-depth exploration of the topic. Some of the author's statements are ambiguous, and the lack of coherence and scattered presentation are other weaknesses of this entry, resulting in a lack of logical categorization. This may indicate that the author does not possess the necessary expertise or mastery over the discussions surrounding human creation and has encountered difficulties in understanding the subject's fundamentals. The information provided in this entry does not comprehensively address the Quranic explanations regarding human creation. The perspective of the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia on human creation is quite weak. In contrast, the views of Islamic scholars like 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, rooted in the true Islamic school of thought, offer a genuine and comprehensive Quranic approach to this subject. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī has considered all physical and spiritual dimensions of human creation from the Quranic perspective. In the comparative analysis of human creation in the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia and the opinions of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, it was found that while there are similarities in their views, 'Allāmah's insights are characterized by comprehensiveness and coherence, unlike those of the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia.

Furthermore, it can be inferred that the author of the entry on humans in the Oliver Leaman encyclopedia lacks specialization in Quranic studies and has hastily presented information about human creation without adequate processing and depth. Additionally, the content provided in this entry does not encompass the comprehensive explanations of the Quran regarding human creation.

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