

Human Characteristics in the Quran: Cultivating the Virtue of Humility Through an Environmental Reading of the Quran Exegesis

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v21i1.20343>

Masoud Shavarani

International University of Islamic Denominations, Iran
Corresponding Author: shavarani@mazaheb.ac.ir

Article History

Received: 23 March 2023, Revised: 30 May 2025, Accepted: 30 June 2025

Abstract

Environmental advocates have challenged and criticized the anthropocentric doctrines present in Abrahamic religions, including Islamic theology. The term "human" ("al-*insān*" in Arabic) holds significance in defining the human's place in nature, as depicted in various Quranic verses where it is frequently associated with blameworthy characteristics. In these verses, the Quran always reminds human weaknesses and powerlessness. The characteristics used to describe humans in the Quran include: weak (*ḍa'īf*), despondent (*ya'ūs*), ungrateful (*kafūr*), vain (*fariḥ*), braggart (*fakhūr*), hopeless (*qanūt*), niggardly (*qatūr*), covetous (*halū*), apprehensive (*jazū*), grudging (*manū*), in loss (*khusr*), unthankful (*kanūd*), disputatious (*jadal*), rebellious (*ṭughyān*), overhasty (*'ajūl*), in delusion (*ghurūr*), laborious (*kādih*), in travail (*kabad*), the lowest of the low (*asfal sāfilin*), dry clay (*ṣalṣāl*), aging mud (*ḥama' masnūn*), and denier of the resurrection. The word "*insān*" in the Quran is never associated with praiseworthy human characteristics. The negative attributes associated with this term imply the significance of humility, humbleness, and discourage arrogance and grandiosity. These teachings serve as an invitation for individuals to refrain from asserting dominance or superiority over others, including other beings in nature. Instead, the emphasis is placed on embracing the ethics of servitude and humility.

Keywords: Qur'an, Environment, Human Characteristic, Tafsir, Humility.

Introduction

According to Lynn White, Abrahamic religions promote the idea of human superiority over other creatures, resulting in an anthropocentric doctrine. He argues that the current environmental crisis is a consequence of the emergence of an anthropocentric culture influenced by modern science, which, in turn, stems from natural theology. Furthermore, modern technology can be seen as a Western voluntarist manifestation of the Christian belief that humans hold superiority over nature and are entitled to exert dominance over it. Christianity, particularly in its Western form, is one of the most anthropocentric religions worldwide, where humans are believed to share a considerable degree of divine transcendence over nature. Christianity has insisted on the idea that God wants humans to

utilize and exploit nature in alignment with their objectives.¹ Following White's critique of anthropocentrism, the environmentalist approach was developed, shifting the focus from humans to a network of reciprocal relations between humans and nature. In the pre-modern perspective, the world is perceived as a vast organic interconnected system known as the "great chain of being". This system is comprised of various animate and inanimate creatures, all organized in a hierarchical relationship. Within this chain, humans and other creatures share an intimate connection and are equally vital for the integrity of the entire hierarchical structure. Any destruction of a link within this chain poses a threat to the survival of the entire system. This "great chain of being" has two significant characteristics: animism and human humility in relationship with nature. In the great chain of being, humans are not necessarily superior to other "lower" entities, creating a sense of humility in humans and their respect for nature. Moreover, animism implies that animals, plants, and other concrete natural creatures such as mountains and rivers are animate and possess souls.² Lynn White believes that the key to solving the environmental crisis is for humans to cultivate humility toward creatures in the world and relinquish the position of dominion over the world. A reference to the Quran reveals that God's approach to humans is not by way of honoring and praising their status, but by reproaching and reminding their weaknesses and abominable characteristics, preventing them from being arrogance and superiority. Taking into account the moral and pedagogical perspective presented in the Quran, humans are encouraged to refrain from grandiosity and arrogance, fostering instead a sense of humility and humbleness toward God and all of His creations. This perspective guides individuals to view themselves as equal members within the broader environment, without harboring a desire for dominion or superiority over it. According to the Quranic perspective, servitude is regarded as a rightful role for humans, which inherently encompasses the virtue of humility.

Unjust and Ignorant

The Quran [33:72] characterizes humans as "unjust" (*ẓālūm*) and "ignorant" (*jahūl*). The terms *ẓālūm* and *jahūl* are both Arabic adjective constructions with the form of *fa'ūl*, which is an intensive (or hyperbole) subject form, referring to something that has an excessive of something.³ In addition to this formal hyperbole, the term *inna* is also utilized to emphasize to state that humans are excessively unjust and ignorant. Hence, *ẓālūm* means highly unjust, and *jahūl* refers to highly ignorant.⁴ Quranic exegetes believe that the term *insān* refers to the human species or humans in general.⁵ This verse is said to be reprehensive in tone. It mentions that the heavens, the earth, and the mountains refused to undertake the trust presented to them by God, denoting the reprimand of the one undertaking it, as God describes him as unjust and ignorant. It means that the earth, the mountains, and the heavens are wiser than man, and so they do not do injustice to themselves. Thus, their creation is "greater" in status than the creation of "humans". The Quranic verse "Indeed Allah commands you to deliver the trust to their [rightful] owners" [4:58] pertains to the time when man

¹ Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 149-52.

² Linda Hajjar Leib, *Human Rights and the Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical and Legal Perspectives* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011), 28-29.

³ Rashid al-Shartuni, *Foundations of Arabic Grammar: A Parallel English-Arabic Textbook* (London: ICAS Press, 2021), 149-52.

⁴ Ahmad Mustafa al-Maraghi, *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, vol. 22 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1974), 46.

⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Zād al-ma'ād fī hady khayr al-'ibād*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), 488; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li aḥkām al-qur'ān*, vol. 14 (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Risālah, 2006), 258.

undertook the trust.⁶ However, since he was weak, God said, "For man was created weak."⁷ In this light, verse 72 of Surah al-Ahzab emphasizes that the human species is unjust and ignorant.

Weak

In the Quran verse [4:28], the human species is described as "weak" as opposed to "strong".⁸ Quranic exegetes believe that the verse refers to the human weakness of the will and impatience toward personal desires, lusts, and appetites.⁹ Some exegetes believe that a phrase like "*min shay'*" (from something)" is elliptical in this verse; that is, it means "human is created from something weak," for example, from water. On this construal, the weakness goes back to the origin or the primitive stuff of the human creation.¹⁰ Other verses, such as verse 75 of Surah al-'isrā' and verse 54 of Surah al-rūm, refer to human weakness.

Despondent

In verse 9 of Surah Hūd, the human is described as *ya'ūs*, which is an intensive adjective form of *ya's*, illustrating disappointment and despondency. It is in contrast to greed and covetousness¹¹ as well as hope.¹² Some exegetes believe that this verse refers to specific individuals, such as Walīd b. Muḡhīra and 'Abd Allāh b. Umayya al-Makhzūmī.¹³ However, most exegetes believe that "human" in this verse is a generic noun, referring to all human beings.¹⁴ Accordingly, *ya'ūs* (the intensive adjective form of *fā'ūl*) indicates intensively disappointed¹⁵ or despondent or lacking hope in the divine grace.¹⁶ The characteristic finds mention in other verses [17:83 and 41:49] as well. Overall, these verses refer to an abominable attribute in the human species, to the effect that humans become despondent and disappointed when they lose their well-being and blessings and are involved in difficulties. Under these circumstances, they pray to God to help them overcome their troubles.

Ungrateful

In verse 9 of Surah Hūd, another characteristic is attributed to humans: *kafūr* (ungrateful), derived from "*kuff*" that originally means coverage and concealment.¹⁷ Moreover, "*kuff*" also means disbelief and lack of faith.¹⁸ It also means ungratefulness toward blessings or kindness, which is in contrast to *shukr* (gratefulness or thankfulness).¹⁹ All these meanings are related to the original meaning of coverage and concealment, since ungratefulness is to conceal or neglect the blessings by failing to be thankful.²⁰ Further, a disbeliever (*kāfir*) is ungrateful toward God. The word *kafūr* is an

⁶ Aḥmad al-Ḥatīmī al-Ṭā'ī Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr Ibn 'Arabī*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2011), 418-19.

⁷ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, vol. 25 (Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012), 188.

⁸ al-Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2020), 506.

⁹ Imām Abd al-Raḥmān Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr al-ma'thūr*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993), 143.

¹⁰ Ḥusayn b. 'Alī Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, *Rawḍ al-jinān wa rūḥ al-janān fī tafsīr al-qur'ān*, vol. 5 (Mashhad, Iran: Bunyad-i pizhuhishha-yi Islāmī, 1986), 329; Abū Hayyān al-Andalusī, *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīth*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-'Ālamīyah, 2015), 605.

¹¹ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 892; Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dar al-Ṣādir, 1990), 239.

¹² Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Sādir, 1990), 259.

¹³ Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Shawkānī, *Faṭḥ al-Qodīr*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Darul al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2007), 552.

¹⁴ Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988), 12.

¹⁵ Abī al-Qāsim Jārallāh Maḥmūd b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 2009), 381.

¹⁶ Abī Sa'īd Abdullāh b. Umar b. Muḥammad al-Shīrazī al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta'wīl*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2011), 129.

¹⁷ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2005), 786. Ibn Duraid, vol. 2, p. 786

¹⁸ Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2002), 356.

¹⁹ Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī, *Jawāhir fī tafsīr al-qur'ān al-karīm*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004), 807.

²⁰ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 714.

intense form of *kufṛ*, meaning a highly ungrateful person.²¹ Some scholars believe that this verse refers to Walīd b. Muḡhīra or ‘Abd Allāh b. Umayya al-Makhzūmī.²² However, most exegetes argue that *insān* (human) in this verse is a genus referring to all humans or human nature.²³ Thus, verse 9 of Surah Hūd suggests that humans are characteristically ungrateful. This human flaw is mentioned in other Quranic verses as well, including 17:67, 22:66, 42:48. Moreover, in other verses, humans are also described as ungrateful [43:15]. Additionally, the term *kaffār*, another intense form of *kufṛ* meaning extremely ungrateful, is employed to describe humans in verse 14:34. As pointed out before, “human” in these verses is deployed as a genus or general noun, referring to an abominable human characteristic.

Vain

Verse 10 of Surah Hūd describes humans as *fariḥ* (vain). This term is an adjective form of *farah*, which is a delight or joy as a result of a transient pleasure, physical pleasures.²⁴ Its antonym is *ḥuzn* (remorse).²⁵ Exegetes of the Quran believe that this is a blameworthy characteristic of human nature, meaning excessive joy and indulgence.²⁶ It is blameworthy²⁷ because it goes back to exultation and arrogance toward God.²⁸ There are other Quranic verses pertaining to human vanity as well, such as verse 42:48.

Braggart

Verse 10 of Surah Hūd further describes humans as *fakhūr*, which is an intense adjective form of *fakhr*, implying a highly boastful or braggart person.²⁹ It refers to excessive pride in external things such as money and position.³⁰ *Fakhūr* is also interpreted as arrogant.³¹ According to Quranic exegetes, it is a general characteristic of humans.³² The phrase “vain braggart” in this verse refers to human exultance and bragging when enjoying blessings, accompanied by a failure to thank God.³³ Moreover, the surah makes an exception to those who have such abominable characteristics and flaws: the ones who show patience and do righteous deeds [11:11]. These human characteristics are blamed in other Quranic verses as well [4:36, 31:18, 57:23]. The cause of boasting is arrogance and forgetting God, and for this reason, it is condemned. Moreover, in other verses, the word “human” is mentioned in reference to his “arrogance” attribute [17:83, 41:51]. The adjective “arrogant” in the phrase modifies the term *insān* (human), and the term *na’ā* in the verse means avoidance or turning away,³⁴ and the phrase “*na’ā bi-jānibihī*” is interpreted as arrogance.³⁵ Quranic exegetes suggest that this verse refers to human haughtiness.³⁶

²¹ Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, 2, 786.

²² Abū Faḍlī Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma’ānī fī tafsīr qur’ān al-‘aẓīm wa al-sab’at al-mathānī*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), 216.

²³ Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-nasafī*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2008), 261.

²⁴ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 628. Raghib, p. 628

²⁵ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2005), 518.

²⁶ Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003), 273.

²⁷ Imād al-dīn Abī Fidā’ Ismā’il b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: tafsīr al-qur’ān al-aẓīm*, vol. 4 (Beirut: al-Kitāb al-Ilmi, 2007), 268.

²⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Zād al-ma’ād fī hady khayr al-‘ibād*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), 360.

²⁹ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 627..

³⁰ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 627.

³¹ Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990), 49.

³² al-Shawkānī, *Fath al-Qodīr*, 2, 551.

³³ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān fī ta’wīl al-qur’ān*, 6, 12.

³⁴ Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, 1, 249.

³⁵ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*.

³⁶ al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-nasafī*, 2, 471.

Hopeless

In verse 49 of Surah Fuṣṣilat, the term *qanūṭ* is utilized to describe humans, referring to hopeless³⁷ or disappointed in the divine mercy.³⁸ Although both *qunūt* and *ya 's* in Arabic mean hopelessness, the former denotes a more substantial degree of disappointment.³⁹ It should be noted that *qanūṭ* is an intense adjective form, implying an extremely hopeless person.⁴⁰ In addition, the intensity of human hopelessness finds further support in the verse through the juxtaposition of the term *ya 'ūs* (despondent). *Ya 's* is a heartfelt despair, while *qunūt* is the manifestation of despair in one's facial expressions.⁴¹ Moreover, the latter also implies a suspicion about God's kindness.⁴²

Niggardly

Another human characteristic mentioned in verse [17:100] is *qatūr*, derived from *qatr*, meaning excessive parsimony, as opposed to extravagance. Both of these are blameworthy.⁴³ *Qatūr* is often interpreted as stingy.⁴⁴ According to most Quranic exegetes, the term *insān* (human) in this verse is employed as a general noun.⁴⁵ These exegetes have interpreted this term as ungenerous and miserly.⁴⁶ *Qatūr* is an intense adjective form of *qatr*, meaning a highly niggardly person.⁴⁷ Humans are characteristically niggardly; that is, it is an inherent human flaw.

Covetous

Verse 19 of Surah al-Ma'arij mentions humans as *halū '*, derived from *hala '*, meaning intense greed or cupidity.⁴⁸ It is more intense than mere greed.⁴⁹ Moreover, the word is also interpreted as impatience.⁵⁰ *Halū '* means covetous,⁵¹ as well as impatient or apprehensive.⁵² It is an intense adjective form.⁵³ Some Quranic exegetes believe that "human" in the verse refers to specific persons such as Umayya b. Khalaf al-Jumaḥī⁵⁴ or Abū Jahl b. Hishām.⁵⁵ Others believe that it translates to disbelievers or faithless individuals.⁵⁶ However, most exegetes have interpreted "human" in this verse as a general noun, encompassing all humans.⁵⁷ Moreover, they construe *halū '* in the verse as a covetous acquisitive person. In addition to the terms *qatūr* and *halū '*, the term *shuḥḥ* is employed in

³⁷ al-Aṣḥānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 685.

³⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 6, 30.

³⁹ Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Askari, *Tafsīr al-Imām Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Askari* (Beirut: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2001), 240.

⁴⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: tafsīr al-qur'ān al-aẓīm*, 4, 113.

⁴¹ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, vol. 27 (Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012), 572.

⁴² Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li aḥkām al-qur'ān*, vol. 15 (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Risālah, 2006), 372.

⁴³ al-Aṣḥānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 655.

⁴⁴ al-Aṣḥānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 655.

⁴⁵ Abu Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, vol. 15 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999), 114.

⁴⁶ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 2, 553.

⁴⁷ Abū Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), 171.

⁴⁸ al-Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād, *Al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Lughah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub, 2010), 114. Sahib, vol. 1, p. 114

⁴⁹ Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002), 107.

⁵⁰ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 8, 374.

⁵¹ al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, 1, 107.

⁵² Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 8, 375.

⁵³ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Muqri' al-Fayyūmī, *Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000), 639.

⁵⁴ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 2, 437.

⁵⁵ Abū Faḍl Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, vol. 15 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994), 69.

⁵⁶ Abu Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, vol. 29 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999), 49.

⁵⁷ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, 15, 69.

the Quran to denote a similar human characteristic, implying that humans are inherently flawed in this regard [59:9, 64:16].

Apprehensive

Verse 20 of Surah al-Ma‘arij describes humans as *jazū‘*, derived from *jaza‘*, meaning impatience or apprehension, as opposed to patience.⁵⁸ *Jazū‘* is indeed an antonym of *ṣabūr* (forbearing or patient).⁵⁹ It is an intense adjective form, meaning a highly apprehensive individual.⁶⁰ The term *al-sharr* (evil) in the verse is interpreted as encompassing all kinds of hardships and difficulties, since the definite article (*al*) refers to evils in general,⁶¹ denoting all kinds of evil. *Jazū‘* is an intense adjective form, meaning excessive impatience and apprehension when suffering from illness, poverty, and the like.

Grudging

Verse 21 of Surah al-Ma‘arij attributes another characteristic to humans: *manū‘*, derived from *man‘*, depicting the refusal to give or donate.⁶² The term means ungenerous and unwilling to help others. The term *khayr* in the verse is interpreted as money, wealth, or health.⁶³ *Manū‘* is an intense adjective form, meaning highly ungenerous or grudging.⁶⁴ The verse refers to a condition when a person refrains from donation while having enough wealth. In Surah al-Ma‘arij, humans are successively described as covetous, apprehensive, and grudging.

In Loss

Surah al-‘Asr defines humans as being in *khusr*. In Arabic, *khusr* and *khusrān* mean loss or deficiency.⁶⁵ Moreover, they also refer to the loss of the main capital.⁶⁶ At the beginning of the surah, an oath is made to the “time” (*‘aṣr*), and then it is affirmed that humans are in loss. The emphasis is achieved by the term *inna* (indeed) and the definite article (*al*).⁶⁷ This verse is a response to the oath.⁶⁸ In contrast, some exegetes believe that “human” in this verse refers to particular people, such as Abū Jahl or Walīd b. Muḡhīra,⁶⁹ most of them argue that it is a general noun, encompassing all humans.⁷⁰ It finds further confirmation by an exception made in the subsequent verse, excluding those who have faith.⁷¹ *Khusr*, meaning loss, is adopted in the verse in an indefinite form to imply its greatness⁷² and arouse fears about it.⁷³ According to al-Fakhr al-Rāzī, humans are in a constant state of loss. The verse suggests that humans are surrounded by loss on all sides. Human life, as their main capital, is lost if spent on sins and permissible acts. If one lives in obedience to God, then the degree

⁵⁸ al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, 1, 217.

⁵⁹ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 8, 47.

⁶⁰ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 8, 47.

⁶¹ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī fī tafsīr qur’ān al-‘azīm wa al-sab‘at al-mathānī*, 15, 69.

⁶² al-Aṣḡahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 779.

⁶³ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī fī tafsīr qur’ān al-‘azīm wa al-sab‘at al-mathānī*, 15, 70.

⁶⁴ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma‘ānī fī tafsīr qur’ān al-‘azīm wa al-sab‘at al-mathānī*, 15, 70.

⁶⁵ Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990), 239.

⁶⁶ al-Aṣḡahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 281.

⁶⁷ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātīḥ al-ghayb)*, vol. 32 (Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012), 280.

⁶⁸ Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-Nasafī*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2008), 555.

⁶⁹ Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-Nasafī*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2008), 555.

⁷⁰ Abu Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, vol. 30 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999), 158.

⁷¹ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātīḥ al-ghayb)*, 32, 279.

⁷² Abī Sa‘īd Abdullāh b. Umar b. Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta’wīl*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2011), 336.

⁷³ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātīḥ al-ghayb)*, 32, 279.

of divine glory and dominion is infinite. Therefore, the degree of humility toward God is also infinite; abandonment of the higher degree still counts as a loss. It turns out that humans are constantly in loss.⁷⁴ Accordingly, verse 2 of Surah al-‘Asr refers to a fundamental human flaw: inherent constant loss, except if they have faith and do righteous actions.

Unthankful

In verse 6 of Surah al-‘Adiyat, humans are described as *kanūd*, meaning ungrateful about the blessings,⁷⁵ failing to exhibit thankfulness.⁷⁶ Accordingly, *kanūd* and *kafūr* are almost synonymous.⁷⁷ In the preceding verses, oaths are made: “by the snorting chargers,” “by the strikers of the sparks,” and “by the riders.” Then, they are followed by “Indeed, man is ungrateful to his Lord,” serving as the purpose for which those oaths were made; that is, humans are definitely ungrateful toward God’s blessings. While some exegetes hold that “man” here refers to disbelievers⁷⁸ or particular individuals such as Quraṭ b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. Nūfal al-Qurashī⁷⁹ and Walīd b. Mughīra,⁸⁰ the majority of exegetes believe that it is a general noun, encompassing all humans, since unthankfulness is a natural trait of humans.⁸¹ Verse 7 of Surah al-‘Adiyat reaffirms this point, and verse 8 says: and indeed he is an avid lover of wealth, and *Khayr* is interpreted as wealth.⁸² Hence, humans are by nature eager for worldly wealth and property, having intense greed and cupidity. These verses also reprehend humans.

Disputatious

Another characteristic attributed to humans in verse 54 of Surah al-Kahf is their *jadal* (disputatious nature). *Jadal* means dispute and hostility,⁸³ or intense enmity.⁸⁴ Moreover, *jadal* also means presentation of an argument against an argument or debate. In discourses, *jadal* means to argue for falsehoods for the purpose of overcoming one’s interlocutor, instead of discovering the truth.⁸⁵ The majority of exegetes believe that “man” in this verse is a general noun, encompassing all human beings.⁸⁶ Moreover, they interpret *jadal* as a quarrel and dispute over falsehoods. The verse implies that most human affairs tend to be matters of dispute due to their disputatious nature. Disputation in humans is more vigorous than disputation in any other entity, including angels and jinnee.⁸⁷ Overall, *jadal* in humans can be construed as obstinacy in accepting the truth and arguing against it. Thus, another blameworthy human characteristic is their disputatious, stubborn nature.

Rebellious

The Quran describes humans with the verb *yatghā* (become rebellious) in verse 6 of Surah al-‘Alaq. This word implies transgression of one’s limits and boundaries.⁸⁸ It is why a river’s overflow is described in Arabic as *ṭughyān*.⁸⁹ Disbelief is also described as an instance of *ṭaghā*, as it is a

⁷⁴ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātīḥ al-ghayb)*, 32, 280.

⁷⁵ Jawharī, *Jawāhir fī tafsīr al-qur’ān al-karīm*, 2, 532.

⁷⁶ al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, 2, 125.

⁷⁷ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur’ān*, 727.

⁷⁸ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-ma’ād fī ḥady khayr al-‘ibād*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019), 481.

⁷⁹ Muqātil b. Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003), 803.

⁸⁰ al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-ma’ād fī ḥady khayr al-‘ibād*, 4, 481.

⁸¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān fī ta’wīl al-qur’ān*, 30, 181.

⁸² al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma’ānī fī tafsīr qur’ān al-‘azīm wa al-sab’at al-mathānī*, 15, 445.

⁸³ Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002), 79.

⁸⁴ Ṭantāwī Jawharī, *Jawāhir fī tafsīr al-qur’ān al-karīm*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2004), 1653.

⁸⁵ Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 11 (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990), 105.

⁸⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi’ al-bayān fī ta’wīl al-qur’ān*, 15, 173.

⁸⁷ al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, 2, 729.

⁸⁸ Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 15 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1990), 8.

⁸⁹ Aḥmad Ibn Fāris, *Tafsīr Aḥmad ibn Fāris*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Bayt al-‘Ilm lil-Ṭibā’ah wa-al-Nashr, 2008), 412.

transgression beyond one's boundaries.⁹⁰ Some Quranic exegetes believe that verse 6 of Surah al-ʿAlaq was revealed to tell about Abū Jahl,⁹¹ but the majority of exegetes interpret the "human" in this verse as a general noun, encompassing many humans.⁹² Furthermore, they interpret *ṭughyān* as overstepping one's limits toward God and compliance with one's desires. The following verse [96:7] asserts that the reason why humans become rebellious is that they consider themselves without a need or their feeling of selfishness. It suggests that when humans feel powerful and independent of everything, they become rebellious against God. Rebellion against the truth (*ḥaqq*) is a human characteristic in times of affluence.

Overhasty

Another human characteristic mentioned in the Quran [17:11, 21:37] is that they are *ʿajūl*, derived from *ʿajala*, meaning haste.⁹³ *ʿAjala* means to ask for something before its due time, which is a consequence of excessive lust. For this reason, it is reprehended in the Quran.⁹⁴ Its antonym is *buṭ*⁹⁵ or *mahaṭ*⁹⁶, which means slowness and patience. Some exegetes have interpreted verse 11 of Surah al-Isra' as referring to Prophet Adam.⁹⁷ Others interpret it as referring to disbelievers.⁹⁸ However, most exegetes take "human" here to be a general noun, encompassing all humans. Hastiness is thus a natural characteristic of humans.⁹⁹ Haste is contrasted to patience or forbearance, which is a praiseworthy attribute in the Quran. However, in verses 11 of Surah al-Isra' and 37 of Surah al-Anbiya', humans are characterized as impatient or overhasty, which is blamed as a fundamental human flaw.

In Delusion

The Quran [82:6] characterizes humans as being in *ghurūr*, implying deception or delusion.¹⁰⁰ *Ghirra*, a cognate of this term, means ignorance and oblivion during waking hours.¹⁰¹ Moreover, *ghurūr* refers to deceit and negligence.¹⁰² Some Quranic exegetes believe that the verse was revealed about particular individuals, such as Akhnas b. Sharīq,¹⁰³ Ubayy b. Khalaf,¹⁰⁴ Walīd b. Mughīra,¹⁰⁵ Umayya b. Khalaf¹⁰⁶ and Usayd (Aswad) b. Kalda.¹⁰⁷ However, most of them consider "human" in this verse to encompass all humans,¹⁰⁸ asserting that humans are in delusion and deception because of their ignorance.¹⁰⁹ This verse describes God as "all-generous" to refer to divine blessings bestowed upon

⁹⁰ Imād al-dīn Abī Fidā' Ismā'il b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: tafsīr al-qur'ān al-aẓīm*, vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Kitāb al-Ilmi, 2007), 128.

⁹¹ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 4, 762.

⁹² al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 163.

⁹³ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 11, 425.

⁹⁴ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 548.

⁹⁵ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 11, 425.

⁹⁶ Ibn Durayd, *Jamharat al-Lughah*, 2, 988.

⁹⁷ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 2, 524.

⁹⁸ al-Zamakhsharī, *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, 2, 651.

⁹⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 15, 37.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 15, 443.

¹⁰¹ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 603.

¹⁰² al-'Askarī, *Tafsīr al-Imām Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-'Askarī*, 254.

¹⁰³ Imād al-dīn Abī Fidā' Ismā'il b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: tafsīr al-qur'ān al-aẓīm*, vol. 8 (Beirut: al-Kitāb al-Ilmi, 2007), 339.

¹⁰⁴ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, 15, 269.

¹⁰⁵ Ismā'il Haqqī Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, vol. 10 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003), 357.

¹⁰⁶ Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 10, 357.

¹⁰⁷ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 2, 613.

¹⁰⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 55.

¹⁰⁹ al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-nasafī*, 4, 494.

humans.¹¹⁰ This description adds to the reprehension of humans, complaining that despite God's generosity and blessings, humans are in delusion and ignorant of God. The next verse [82:7] mentions the blessing of the perfect human creation to emphasize their ungratefulness. Overall, verses 6-8 of Surah al-Infitar express reprehensions of human nature.

Laborious

Verse 6 of Surah al-Inshiqaq describes humans as *kādiḥ*, derived from *kadḥ*, meaning laborious work and hardship.¹¹¹ Moreover, it refers to the acquisition of something through much suffering and greed.¹¹² *Kadḥ* is synonymous with *naṣb*, denoting discomfort.¹¹³ Thus, *kādiḥ* means a laborious individual. Some exegetes have interpreted this verse as addressing Prophet Muhammad, who went through hardships and labors to convey God's message and guide people. Since disbelievers had inflicted much suffering upon him, God promises that he will meet the Lord.¹¹⁴ In contrast, some exegetes make a negative interpretation of the verse, considering it to refer to people such as Ubayy b. Khalaf¹¹⁵ and Aswad b. 'Abd al-Asad.¹¹⁶ Some have pointed out that human in this verse refers to disbelievers.

Nevertheless, the majority of exegetes maintain that the human here is a general noun, referring to all human beings.¹¹⁷ The latter interpretation seems more consistent with the context of the verses, since the generality of this occurrence of "human" finds support in verses 7 and 10 of al-Inshiqaq, where reference is made to two states.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, Quranic exegetes construe *kadḥ* as labor, effort, hardship, and suffering. Thus, another human characteristic in this verse is constant hardship and suffering, stated in the Quran as an inherent human flaw.

In Travail

In verse 4 of Surah *al-Balad*, humans are described as being created in travail. In verses 1 and 3 of the surah, God makes an emphatic oath for verse 4, highlighting the human creation in hardship and suffering. The term "*kabad*" signifies the act of ascending a thick sand or similar challenging terrain, implying arduous tasks. Metaphorically, it is employed to depict hardship and suffering.¹¹⁹ The verse reminds that God has created humans in an inevitably burdensome, complex condition.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, some exegetical books interpret the verse as referring to particular individuals, such as al-Ḥārith b. 'Āmir b. Nūfal,¹²¹ most of them construe human in this verse to encompass all human persons.¹²² Moreover, Quranic exegetes take "*kabad*" to be synonymous with weariness (*naṣab*), fatigue (*ta'ab*), hardship, labor, and suffering. They identify instances of suffering in human life, such as the hardships in the darkness of the womb,¹²³ the hardship of being carried in the mother's

¹¹⁰ Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 10, 357.

¹¹¹ al-Aṣḥānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 704.

¹¹² Aḥmad Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1990), 569.

¹¹³ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 2, 569.

¹¹⁴ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, vol. 31 (Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012), 98.

¹¹⁵ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'azīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, 15, 288.

¹¹⁶ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 4, 634.

¹¹⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 73.

¹¹⁸ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 31, 98.

¹¹⁹ al-Farāhidī, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, 5, 333.

¹²⁰ al-Aṣḥānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 695.

¹²¹ Ibn al-Jawzi, vol. 4, p. 447.

¹²² Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 4, 701.

¹²³ Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 10, 434.

womb,¹²⁴ the hardships of birth,¹²⁵ the period of being breastfed,¹²⁶ the pain of growing teeth,¹²⁷ and walking on two legs, unlike other creatures.¹²⁸ Other examples mentioned by the exegetes are the sufferings of having to work for a living,¹²⁹ hunger and being fed up,¹³⁰ obligations and worship,¹³¹ and the pain of the time of death.¹³² Overall, the exegetes maintain that God has not created a being that suffers more than humans do. They count as the weakest creatures.¹³³ Obviously, humans seek the purest forms of each blessing, in the sense of being pure from pains, but everything they finally obtain is mixed with displeasures that darken their lives. Every blessing is mingled with pain and suffering, in addition to the unfortunate incidents of life. Human life is surrounded by pain and difficulties, as every wise person knows.¹³⁴ As this verse indicates, humans are always accompanied by sufferings, and this is a human weakness, reminding humans of God to alert and caution against arrogance and vanity.

The Lowest of the Low

The Quran in verse 4 of Surah al-Tin asserts that humans are created in *aḥsan taqwīm*, where *taqwīm* means to moderate¹³⁵ or straighten something.¹³⁶ Almost all exegetes take human in this verse as a general noun, encompassing all humans.¹³⁷ Moreover, they interpret *taqwīm* as moderation, straightness, composition, and constitution, construing the whole phrase *aḥsan taqwīm* as the best proportionality and balance of human bodily parts and straight stature, unlike other animals that walk on four legs. They also interpret it as a pleasing countenance, youth, and intelligence. Thus, human creation in *aḥsan taqwīm* (the best of form) refers to human physical and intellectual power as well as beauty and bodily harmony. It is confirmed by the subsequent verse [95:5]. *Asfal* is derived from *sifl*, and *sāfil* (low) is the antonym of *ālī* (high),¹³⁸ with *asfal* (lowest) being its superlative form, in contrast to *a 'lā*.¹³⁹ The phrase *asfal sāfilīn* (lowest of the low) is interpreted as the final years of life, senility, loss of intelligence, loss of juvenile power, and frailty of physical power.¹⁴⁰ Accordingly, this verse is close in meaning to some other verses, such as 70 of al-naḥl, 5 of al-ḥaj, and 68 of yāsīn.¹⁴¹ The occasion of the revelation of verses 4 and 5 of Surah al-Tin was a group of senile people during the period of the Prophet Muhammad, who inquired of him about agedness.¹⁴² On this view, verses 4 and 5 of Surah al-Tin, "We certainly created man in the best of forms; then We relegated him to the lowest of the low," imply that human life begins from perfection and ends in decline, as far as the body is concerned.¹⁴³ Some exegetes offer an alternative interpretation for the verse "then We relegated him

¹²⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 126.

¹²⁵ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li aḥkām al-qur'ān*, vol. 20 (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Risālah, 2006), 62.

¹²⁶ al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li aḥkām al-qur'ān*, 20, 62.

¹²⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 126.

¹²⁸ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 4, 701.

¹²⁹ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 31, 166.

¹³⁰ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 31, 166.

¹³¹ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 31, 166.

¹³² al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 31, 166.

¹³³ Bursawī, *Rūḥ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 10, 434.

¹³⁴ Muḥammad Husayn al-Ṭabaṭabaī, *Al-Mīzān fī tafsīr al-qur'ān*, vol. 20 (Beirut: Muassasat al-A'lam li al-Maṭbu'āt, 1991), 291.

¹³⁵ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 11, 432.

¹³⁶ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 693.

¹³⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 157.

¹³⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, 11, 337.

¹³⁹ al-Aṣfahānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qur'ān*, 413.

¹⁴⁰ Sulaymān, *Tafsīr Muqātil b. Sulaymān*, 4, 751.

¹⁴¹ al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-ma'ānī fī tafsīr qur'ān al-'aẓīm wa al-sab'at al-mathānī*, 15, 396.

¹⁴² al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-qur'ān*, 30, 156.

¹⁴³ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-kabīr (Mafātiḥ al-ghayb)*, 32, 280.

to the lowest of the low," stating that the verse is concerned not with this world but with the hereafter. Thus, the verse refers to Hell and its punishment.¹⁴⁴ Overall, verses 4 and 5 of Surah al-Tin are about human physical and mental power and harmony during youth and then the loss of such power during old age. First, verse 4, "We certainly created man in the best of forms," suggests that human creation is in the best form, and then verse 5, "We relegated him to the lowest of the low," indicates that humans turn into the worst form, which is the period of senility and frailty. Hence, verse 4 does not suggest absolute human perfection; otherwise, it would not be followed by talk of human weakness. The final point in this section is stated in verse 6 of Surah al-Tin, since after referring to "the lowest of the low," it is asserted that the only exception to this is those who have faith and do righteous deeds.

Dry Clay and Aging Mud

The Quran says about the human creation, "Certainly We created man out of a dry clay [drawn] from an aging mud" [15:26]. *Ṣaṣāl* is derived from *ṣall*, meaning dry clay. Some have interpreted it as foul mud.¹⁴⁵ *Ḥama* refers to black foul mud.¹⁴⁶ The term *masnūn* means aging and changing.¹⁴⁷ The exegetes believe that this verse refers to Adam, which finds further support in the subsequent verses. The statement that Adam was created from black, foul, and aging mud counts as a reprehension of all human beings, as it reminds them of the origin of their creation. The same idea recurs in several other verses, 28 and 33 of Surah Al-ḥijr. It is reiterated in verse 14 of Surah al-Raḥman as well. Given the subsequent verses, such as 16 and 18, the reference to the original matter of Adam's creation is intended as a reprimand of all of his descendants, preventing them from being arrogance. Numerous other verses underline the human creation from mud or clay [23:12, 38:71, 37:11]. In verse 5 of Surah al-Tariq, humans are asked what they are created from, followed by this answer: "He was created from an effusing fluid," and *Dāfiq* means that which is effused or ejected, or runs fast.¹⁴⁸ It refers to the seminal fluid. Just as the context of verses 4-8 clearly displays, most exegetes believe that human in this verse refers to all humans, particularly those who deny the resurrection. Hence, they may take a lesson from how humans are created from an effusing fluid; that is, semen, which is ejaculated.¹⁴⁹ The phrase "effusing fluid" is reprehensive, since in Arabic, sometimes the subject noun is utilized instead of an object noun to convey blame.¹⁵⁰ Continuing with such blames, the next verse says "which issues from between the loins and the breast-bones". There are other similar reprehensive verses, 4 of al-Naḥl, 77 of Yāsin, 2 of al-ʿAlaq, 2 of al-Insān, 14 of al-Muminūn, and 19 of ʿAbasa, which remind that from which humans are created.

Denier of the Resurrection

In other verses, the term *insān* (human) is deployed to describe those who deny human resurrection. The Quran reprimands these people, in verses 66 and 67 of Surah Maryam: "Man says, 'What? Shall I be brought forth alive [from the grave], when I have been dead?' and "Does not man remember that We created him before when he was nothing?". It is mentioned in other verses [75:3 and 4] as well. The same theme recurs in verse 1 of Surah al-Insān: "Has there been a period for man when he was not anything worthy of mention?".

¹⁴⁴ al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-nasafī*, 4, 539.

¹⁴⁵ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qurʿān*, 489.

¹⁴⁶ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qurʿān*, 259.

¹⁴⁷ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qurʿān*, 429.

¹⁴⁸ al-Aṣḥāhānī, *Mufradāt al-fāz al-qurʿān*, 316.

¹⁴⁹ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmiʿ li aḥkām al-qurʿān*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Mu'assat al-Risālah, 2006), 20; al-Nasafī, *Tafsīr al-nasafī*, 4, 509.

¹⁵⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān fī taʾwīl al-qurʿān*, 29, 39.

Conclusion

Critics of anthropocentrism argue that this doctrine, prevalent in Abrahamic religions, has fostered a mindset of human domination, superiority, and exploitation of the environment. Consequently, this perspective has led to the degradation and destruction of nature and other living beings. The arrogant nature of humans, underpinned by anthropocentrism, tends to diminish the value of other creatures and disregard their significance, thereby infringing upon their rights. When the Quran addresses the human species, it consistently highlights their flaws and weaknesses rather than praising them. It portrays humanity with abominable characteristics such as weakness, hopelessness, ungratefulness, exultance and vanity, bragging and pride, despondency, cupidity, impatience and apprehension, stinginess, being in loss, unthankfulness, disputation, rebellion, and haste. It serves as a reminder of human flaws and deficiencies, aiming to discourage arrogance and the desire for dominance. The ethical approach of the Quran aims to train and educate humans in cultivating humility toward other creatures and the environment, recognizing and honoring their inherent value. By doing so, individuals are encouraged to shift their focus away from selfishness and toward a mindset that prioritizes the well-being of all beings.

References

- al-Alūsī, Abū Faḍlī Shihāb al-Dīn al-Sayyid Maḥmūd. *Rūḥ Al-Ma‘ānī Fī Tafsīr Qur’ān Al-‘aẓīm Wa Al-Sab‘at Al-Mathānī*. Vol. 6, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994.
- . *Rūḥ Al-Ma‘ānī Fī Tafsīr Qur’ān Al-‘aẓīm Wa Al-Sab‘at Al-Mathānī*. Vol. 15, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1994.
- . *Rūḥ Al-Ma‘ānī Fī Tafsīr Qur’ān Al-‘aẓīm Wa Al-Sab‘at Al-Mathānī*. Vol. 8, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1994.
- al-Andalusī, Abū Hayyān *Al-Baḥr Al-Muḥīth*. Vol. 3, Beirut: Dār al-Risālah al-‘Ālamīyah, 2015.
- al-Aṣḥānī, al-Rāghib. *Mufradāt Al-Fāz Al-Qur’ān*. Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2020.
- al-‘Askarī, Ḥasan b. ‘Alī. *Tafsīr Al-Imām Abī Muḥammad Al-Ḥasan B. ‘alī Al-‘askarī*. Beirut: Dār Ihya’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2001.
- al-Bayḍāwī, Abī Sa‘īd Abdullīh b. Umar b. Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī. *Anwār Al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār Al-Ta’wīl*. Vol. 5, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2011.
- . *Anwār Al-Tanzīl Wa Asrār Al-Ta’wīl*. Vol. 3, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2011.
- al-Farāhidī, Al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad *Kitāb Al-‘ayn*. Vol. 6, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002.
- . *Kitāb Al-‘ayn*. Vol. 5, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002.
- . *Kitāb Al-‘ayn*. Vol. 1, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2002.
- al-Fayyūmī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Muqrī. *Al-Miṣbāḥ Al-Munīr*. Beirut: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000.
- al-Jawzīyah, Ibn Qayyim *Zād Al-Ma‘ād Fī Hady Khayr Al-‘ibād*. Vol. 3, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019.
- . *Zād Al-Ma‘ād Fī Hady Khayr Al-‘ibād*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019.
- . *Zād Al-Ma‘ād Fī Hady Khayr Al-‘ibād*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2019.
- al-Maraghī, Ahmad Mustafa. *Tafsīr Al-Maraghī*. Vol. 22, Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 1974.
- al-Nasafī, Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd. *Tafsīr Al-Nasafī*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2008.
- . *Tafsīr Al-Nasafī*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2008.
- al-Qurṭubī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr. *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 20, Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risālah, 2006.
- . *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 14, Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risālah, 2006.
- . *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 19, Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risālah, 2006.

- . *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risālah, 2006.
- . *Al-Jāmi‘ Li Aḥkām Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 15, Beirut: Mu’assat al-Risālah, 2006.
- al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr (Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb)*. Vol. 25, Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012.
- . *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr (Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb)*. Vol. 31, Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012.
- . *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr (Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb)*. Vol. 32, Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012.
- . *Tafsīr Al-Kabīr (Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb)*. Vol. 27, Cairo: Dar al-Ḥadīth, 2012.
- al-Rāzī, Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī Abū al-Futūḥ. *Rawḍ Al-Jinān Wa Rūḥ Al-Janān Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 5, Mashhad, Iran: Bunyad-i pizhuhishha-yi Islami, 1986.
- al-Shartuni, Rashid. *Foundations of Arabic Grammar: A Parallel English-Arabic Textbook*. London: ICAS Press, 2021.
- al-Shawkānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī *Fatḥ Al-Qodīr*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Darul al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2007.
- al-Suyūṭī, Imām Abd al-Raḥmān Jalāl al-Dīn *Al-Durr Al-Manthūr Fī Al-Tafsīr Al-Ma’tḥūr*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993.
- al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr. *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān Fī Ta’wīl Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 15, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999.
- . *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān Fī Ta’wīl Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 29, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999.
- . *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān Fī Ta’wīl Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 30, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999.
- al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr *Jāmi‘ Al-Bayān Fī Ta’wīl Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 6, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1988.
- al-Ṭabaṭabaṭī, Muḥammad Husayn. *Al-Mizān Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 20, Beirut: Muassasat al-A‘lam li al-Maṭbu‘āt, 1991.
- al-Zamakhsharī, Abī al-Qāsim Jārallāh Maḥmūd b. ‘Umar b. Muhammad. *Tafsīr Al-Kashshāf*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah, 2009.
- Bursawī, Ismā‘īl Haqqī. *Rūḥ Al-Bayān Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān*. Vol. 10, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003.
- Ibn ‘Abbād, al-Ṣāhib. *Al-Muḥīṭ Fī Al-Lughah*. Vol. 1, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub, 2010.
- Ibn ‘Arabī, Aḥmad al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭā‘ī *Tafsīr Ibn ‘arabī*. Vol. 3, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 2011.
- Ibn Durayd, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan *Jamharat Al-Lughah*. Vol. 1, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2005.
- . *Jamharat Al-Lughah*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2005.
- Ibn Fāris, Aḥmad. *Tafsīr Aḥmad Ibn Fāris*. Vol. 3, Beirut: Bayt al-‘Ilm lil-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Nashr, 2008.
- Ibn Kathīr, Imād al-dīn Abī Fidā’ Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar. *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Aẓīm*. Vol. 4, Beirut: al-Kitab al-Ilmi, 2007.
- . *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Aẓīm*. Vol. 3, Beirut: al-Kitab al-Ilmi, 2007.
- . *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Aẓīm*. Vol. 8, Beirut: al-Kitab al-Ilmi, 2007.
- Ibn Manẓūr, Aḥmad. *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 5, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 6, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 8, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 11, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 15, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1990.
- . *Lisān Al-‘Arab*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1990.
- Jawharī, Ṭantāwī. *Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Karīm*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2004.
- . *Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Karīm*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2004.
- Jr., Lynn White. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203-07.

- Leib, Linda Hajjar. *Human Rights and the Environment: Philosophical, Theoretical and Legal Perspectives*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2011.
- Sulaymān, Muqātil b. *Tafsīr Muqātil B. Sulaymān*. Vol. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003.
- . *Tafsīr Muqātil B. Sulaymān*. Vol. 4, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2003.