

THE CREATION OF ADAM AND EVE IN THE BIBLE AND THE QUR'ĀN: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

*Wan Sabri bin Wan Yusof**
*Norakmal binti Abdul Hamid***

1. Introduction

The human race shares a common parenthood in Adam and Eve. Their creation and life accounts are recorded in the Bible and the Qur'ān, the scripture of three important world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Though these accounts are not only strikingly similar in that they share important common themes about Adam and Eve, they are different in terms of the details of the account and their function. Thus, their purpose and the manner in which they may be interpreted have far-reaching religious and theological implications. More often than not, the same narrative reported in different scriptures may result in different theological implications for each religion. The study of the history of religions has revealed that scriptural legitimacy is needed for religious beliefs and practices to be accepted as religious doctrine. Religious theologians have normally provided the link between the scripture and the doctrine. Knowing different interpretations of these accounts will enlighten us about the origin of certain religious doctrines. It is, therefore, the focus of this study to probe the religious implications of the accounts of creation and lives of Adam and Eve and their fall from heaven in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These implications will be studied through analyzing the following concepts: the creation of man and the purpose of his existence; the concept of knowledge; gender relations; the concept of God; the fall of man; the original sin

* Dr. Wan Sabri Wan Yusof is currently an Assistant Professor at the Department of Uşuluddīn and Comparative Religion, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM, Malaysia.

** Sr. Norakmal binti Abdul Hamid is currently a lecturer at the Centre for Islamic Thought and Understanding Institution, UiTM Pahang.

and salvation; as well as other related doctrinal issues in these three religions.

2. *The Creation of Man and the Purpose of his Existence*

The creation of mankind is an essential element in cosmogony and the purpose of human existence is intensified in the theological theme. Nevertheless, it is relatively difficult to gain some insights into what the Bible has to say on the purpose of human creation. Unlike the Qur'ān, this subject is rather implicit in the Bible and it is therefore left to readers to draw their own meanings and implications from the story of creation.

The depiction of human creation in the Bible is stated in two accounts: in *Genesis* 1, the Priestly account, and the other is in *Genesis* 2, the Yahwist narrative of creation. This human creature is called "man" (in Hebrew *'ādām*, then Adam) by virtue of the fact that he has been created from "earth" (in Hebrew *'ādāmah*).¹

In *Genesis* 1, God created man on the sixth day after completing the creation of the universe. The verses of *Genesis* 1:26-30, deal specifically with the creation of humanity and man is the last creature mentioned in the Priestly account. The creation of man was important since he is the crown of God's grand design. For that reason, God made a man in his own "image".² The statement of this plan is evident in the following verse:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image,
according to Our likeness." (Genesis 1:26)

One of the distinctive elements in the story of man's creation is that of his being created in the image and likeness of God. The "*image of God*" which Biblical scholars viewed as "image and likeness" which cannot mean likeness in the physical form with God

¹ *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd edn., "Adam."

² *Ibid.*, 29; Lee Haines, "Genesis and Exodus" in *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles W. Carter, vol.1 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), 29.