

Surah 39. Az-Zumar

Asad: He has created you [all] out of one living entity, and out of it fashioned its mate;⁷ and he has bestowed upon you four kinds of cattle of either sex;⁸ [and] He creates you in your mothers' wombs, one act of creation after another, in threefold depths of darkness.⁹ Thus is God, your Sustainer: unto Him belongs all dominion: there is no deity save Him: how, then, can you lose sight of the truth?¹⁰

Malik: He created you all from a single person, then from that person He created his mate. He also created for you eight head of cattle in pairs. He creates you in the wombs of your mothers in stages, one after another, in three layers of darkness. This is Allah, your Rabb. To Him belongs the sovereignty. There is no god but Him. How can you then turn away from Him?

Pickthall: He created you from one being, then from that (being) He made its mate; and He hath provided for you of cattle eight kinds. He created you in the wombs of your mothers, creation after creation, in a threefold gloom. Such is Allah, your Lord. His is the Sovereignty. There is no God save Him. How then are ye turned away?

Yusuf Ali: He created you (all) from a single person: then created of like nature his mate; and He sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you in the wombs of your mothers in stages one after another in three veils of darkness. Such is Allah your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Center)? [4249](#) [4250](#) [4251](#) [4252](#) [4253](#)

Khatab:

He created you ?all? from a single soul,¹ then from it He made its mate.² And He produced for you four pairs of cattle.³ He creates you in the wombs of your mothers ?in stages?, one development after another, in three layers of darkness.⁴ That is Allah—your Lord! All authority belongs to Him. There is no god ?worthy of worship? except Him. How can you then be turned away?

Author Comments

7 - See [4:1](#) and the corresponding note [1].

8 - Lit., "eight [in] pairs", i.e., the male and the female of four kinds of cattle (sheep, goats, camels and bovine cattle). For an explanation of my rendering, see note [130] on {6:143-144}, where the same kinds of domesticated cattle are spoken of in connection with certain meaningless, superstitious taboos of pre-Islamic times, whereas here they are mentioned as "bestowed upon you" by God, and therefore lawful. Beyond this, the mention of cattle in this context is meant to remind man that it is God who provides his sustenance and that, therefore, man is utterly dependent on Him.

9 - Lit., "by creation after creation, in three darknesses": an allusion to the successive stages of embryonic development, repeatedly spoken of in the Qur'an (cf. [22:5](#) and {23:12-14}), and to the darkness of the womb, the membrane enveloping the embryo, and its pre-natal blindness.

10 - Lit., "how, then, are you turned away?" - i.e., from the truth.

29745 -

i.e., Adam (?).

29746 -

i.e., Eve.

29747 -

The four pairs (males and females), as listed in 6:143-144, are: a pair of sheep, a pair of goats, a pair of camels, and a pair of oxen.

29748 -

The three layers of darkness are: the belly, the womb, and the amniotic sac.

4249 - Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504.

4250 - See vi. 143-4, where four kinds of cattle are mentioned in pairs in connection with certain Arab superstitions which are there condemned. Here the, same four kinds are mentioned as representative of domesticated cattle given by Allah as useful to man. These are sheep, goats, camels, and oxen. In Arab idiom the horse is not included among "cattle". For the wisdom and goodness of Allah in granting man dominion over cattle, see xxxvi. 71-73.

4251 - See xxii. 5, where the gradual physical growth of man in several successive stages is mentioned as one of the Signs of Allah's creative Power and cherishing care.

4252 - The three veils of darkness which cover the unborn child are: the caul or membrane, the womb, and the hollow in which the womb is enclosed.

4253 - It is clear that you owe your very existence and your maintenance, growth, and preservation, to Allah; How is it that you are turned away by chance things from Him?

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