

Religious Inquiries  
Volume 10, Issue 20, 2021, pp. 71-106  
DOI: 10.22034/RI.2022.258738.1454  
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## Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's Personality Model for Muslim Women

Hamideh Tabei<sup>1</sup>  
Mansoureh Zarean<sup>2</sup>

(Received: 2020/11/23; Accepted: 2022/01/15)

### Abstract

With the Western World's interactions with the Islamic thought, Muslim intellectuals faced new challenges regarding women and human rights. Committed Muslim scholars have always attempted to draw a clear accurate picture of a pure Islamic attitude towards women in family and society. Bint al-Huda al-Sadr amalgamated theoretical thinking with sociopolitical pragmatism. This study attempts to provide a clear picture of the theoretical and conceptual framework of her thought and her view of the role and position of women by analyzing the themes of her articles on women and their challenges in the contemporary society. The analysis first yielded 270 basic themes and 53 organizing themes; after comparing, integrating, and processing them, three inclusive themes and 26 organizing themes were finally extracted. A Muslim woman, Bint al-Huda al-Sadr believes, is first and foremost identified with her husband and children at home. With an independent and, indeed, distinctive identity from men, the woman shoulders specific familial responsibilities. Her most important duty is to appropriately and purposefully rear children. A successful discharge of this duty requires her social presence and life. A Muslim woman must discern the authentic Islamic culture and teachings, according to which she should impede and resist the spread of Western culture.

**Keywords:** Bint al-Huda al-Sadr, thematic analysis, woman in Islam, religious ijtihadism, civilization

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1. Researcher at Women and Family Studies Research Center and Ph. D. Candidate, Faculty of Woman and Family, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran, (Corresponding Author) Email: h.tabei@urd.ac.ir

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Science and Development Studies, Women Research Center Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran, Email: m.zarean@alzahra.ac.ir

### **Statement of the Problem**

An exemplar or role model (regardless of their differences) is a figure who provides intellectual and practical guidelines and is historically followed by many people. The Quran has mentioned Prophet Muhammad as a role model (Quran 33:21) and a perfect human who can be regarded as a peerless, fully-qualified model for the people. Finding an ideal model is of more importance at the present age given the excessive abundance of data and information. Half of the society consists of women who feel the increased need to find a role model due to their different roles, tasks, and responsibilities. Looking for their ideal position, many women attempt to find a unique and perfect role model for their development and perfection. An ideal model is one who embodies women's individual and social personality and takes into account their problems in different aspects.

Many thinkers and experts of different stripes and times have taken up the topic of women and their position in moral and social systems. Several figures have considered this issue from different viewpoints.

The 1980s was the beginning of an extensive awakening of fundamentalism in the Muslim world. In this period, Islamic thought encountered a totally changing reality, and thereby underwent different intellectual and cognitive challenges resulting from the Western World's interaction with Islamic views on women, freedom, and human rights (Pezeshgi 2005, 79).

Muslim scholars have always pointed out these issues in various works at different junctures, and have attempted to draw a clear accurate picture of a pure Islamic attitude towards women and different aspects of their participation and activity in family and society. For example, in his book, *Olguyeh sevom: olguyeh raftari zan dar khanevadeh va jame'e* (The Third Paradigm: Women's Behavioral Pattern in the Family and Society), Hedayatnia identified

three general approaches to women and their roles: 1) woman, as a precious object with no role, held by the husband and children like a treasured object with no direct role in society, 2) woman, as a worthless person with a direct role in society but no value due to violation of her privacy and her dishonorable relationship with men, and 3) woman, as a valuable person endeavoring to lead the family, yet playing a constructive role in society; she is esteemed as she is loyal to her husband and protects her privacy in social interactions with men (Hedayatnia 2017, 31).

A consideration of these scholars' views on different subjects could lead to an understanding of the fundamental aspects of Islamic thought regarding these topics, including women's issues. Islamic Civilization scholars trace women's current problems to, on the one hand, an inconsistency between Islamic culture and modernity, and on the other, a contradiction between social traditions of Islamic communities and Western models of development (Sobhani 2011, 30). A systematic approach to women's issues has also been discussed by the respective intellectuals. With regard to "civilization," women's affairs should be considered not only as having different subcategories, but also as part of a total social and historical structure interacting with other categories (Sobhani 2011, 32).

David Riesman sees social character as a personality pattern shared by community members, and considers modernity as an important factor causing changes in the social character (Azdanlou 2009, 397). In his structural functionalism, the American sociologist Parsons points out pattern maintenance as one of the four basic prerequisites of all systems. He believes that any system must create, maintain, and/or revise individuals' motivations and those cultural paradigms that create and maintain these motivations (Ritzer 1998, 131). Finding and accepting a model, on the one hand, has a direct relationship with

thought, and on the other, interprets socialization. Sociologists focus on socialization, taking it to be a highly dynamic process enabling individuals to improve their ability to think and contemplate in distinctively human ways. They believe that socialization is not a one-way process in which the actor merely receives information; it is rather a dynamic one in which the individual reconstructs the obtained information and adapts it to her/his needs (Ritzer 1998, 283). In model-finding, humans are active agents who can identify a path for themselves through thinking and envisioning, and thus move in compliance with an ideal model.

As a shahidah (martyr) and a pioneer of contemporary Islamic movement, Amina (Bint al-Huda) al-Sadr has combined theoretical thinking with sociopolitical pragmatism. Her intellectual and practical characteristics distinguish her from others, and her written works can be utilized as a source and basis for achieving a strong, pure example of Muslim women's social activity and participation. Bint al-Huda al-Sadr is one of the few prominent contemporary figures of the Muslim world who has taken into account both the exigency of sociopolitical pragmatic participation of women in the society and the foundations of theoretical thought. Such an integration of theory and practice has made her a role model worthy of studying as her works have not been sufficiently examined by Iranian researchers. This, along with a serious lack of recognition and introduction of prime epistemological models to the scientific society, highlights the need to investigate this figure.

There are major deficiencies in our academic community to the extent that we often have to rely on Western sources concerning women and family affairs. The fact is that by presenting, processing, and addressing the views of figures such as Bint al-Huda al-Sadr, we can not only offer our own intellectual and academic advantages to the

modern world, but also provide researchers and truth-seekers with a pure, authentic source.

This study seeks to provide a clear picture of the theoretical and conceptual framework of her view of the role and position of women by analyzing the themes of her essays on women and their challenges in the contemporary society. It also intends to clarify how Muslim women's role model is explained in Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's intellectual framework.

### **Literature Review**

There is a scant number of books and papers written about Bint al-Huda al-Sadr; and these have largely addressed her biography, activities, and influence in her time, and a very few have studied her thoughts. Examples of the former include the following.

In her book, *Bint al-Huda: al-sayyida al-shahida Amina al-Sadr*, Mahmoudabadi (2016) attempts to introduce Bint al-Huda's life and character according to the available sources. In "Bint al-Huda al-Sadr, a Didactic Girl," Taftian (2014) has only addressed her biography. Sohrabi (2005) has written, in her paper "Al-Shahida Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's Role in Teaching and Learning," about her biography as well as her true inspiration from her brother, Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. "The Messenger of Awakening," translated by Zanjani (2007), is an article on stories about Bint al-Huda narrated by her family, which only records her biography. As the name suggests, "Martyrdom of Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and His Sister Bint al-Huda," written by Narges Kameli (2007), is an account of the life and martyrdom of the sister and brother. In his paper, "The Last Chapter of Defiant Life of al-Shahida Amina al-Sadr," Neamani (2007) has almost comprehensively recounted how Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and Bint al-Huda al-Sadr were arrested and

martyred. In his Arabic book, *Al-Shahida Bint al-Huda: Siratuha wa Masiratuha*, Neamani (1999) studied parts of her life. Umm Ali Qabanji (2013) has collected the original texts of her essays and lectures in *Al-Mar'ah fi al-mujtama' al-Islami al-mu'asira: Bint al-Huda unmu dhajan*.

On the other hand, the most important works dealing with Bint al-Huda's thoughts and works include the following. In "A Comparative Study of Faithlessness and Faithfulness in Sadegh Hedayat and Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's Stories," Heydarian (2012) extracted and analyzed some parts of their stories in order to examine their approach to faith. In her M.A. thesis entitled *Al-Uslub al-qisasi li Bint al-Huda*, Jazayerirad (2014) examined and analyzed the literary and structural pattern of her storytelling.

The most similar work to the present article is Ali Asghar Habibi's "Analysis of Women Characters in Narratives of 'Had I but Known' and 'The Lost Aunt' by Bint al-Huda al-Sadr" (2014), which surveys women's representation in Bint al-Huda's stories. The most considerable difference between this study and Habibi's is its focus on essays and memoir, rather than stories, and its attempt to extract an ideal model for Muslim women.

### **Research Questions**

- Main question
  - What are the ideal characteristics of Muslim women from Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's viewpoint?
- Secondary questions
  - What are the general requirements of a womanly life according to Bint al-Huda al-Sadr?
  - What are women's familial life requirements according to Bint al-Huda al-Sadr?

- What are women's social life requirements according to Bint al-Huda al-Sadr?

### **Methodology**

This study aims to present a model of the dimensions of the Muslim woman's character through an examination of Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's works. Given the exploratory nature of this research, thematic analysis was used as a qualitative method to analyze the data. This analysis can be well used to identify the patterns within qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. It analyzes textual data and converts diversified scattered data into rich detailed data (Braun and Clarke 2016, 84).

*Memories on the Hills of Mecca* (2007), which includes a translation of a collection of Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's memoir published by *Al-Adwa Journal*, is the primary source of thematic analysis in this article. To answer our research questions, statements and interpretations within the book were processed as three types of themes, namely basic (key textual codes and notes), organizing (themes obtained from combining and summarizing basic themes), and comprehensive (great themes encompassing principles governing the text as a whole). Relations between these three levels were then plotted as a network of themes.

### **Research Validity Criteria**

- **Validity:** Validation of research refers to a conscious attempt to ensure the accuracy of correct data interpretation. This is also known as the internal validity of the research, in the sense of the extent to which the research findings are actual, reflecting the research purpose and the participants'

social reality. To meet this criterion, Holloway and Wheeler (2014) suggest that, in addition to expert reviews, the findings can be shared with those experienced at qualitative research, a method they call peer analysis. Accordingly, the findings of this study were shared with two experts in culture and family affairs and their corrective feedback was applied.

- **Reliability:** This criterion refers to the reliability of findings, meaning that the results must be consistent, logical, and coherent. In other words, the reader should be able to evaluate the adequacy of the analysis through tracing the researcher's decision-making processes (Holloway and Wheeler 2014). If the credibility of research is confirmed, its reliability is also confirmed (Abaszadeh 2010). In this study, the researcher took several measures such as comparing the data obtained from the first part of the study with those of the previous studies as well as collaborating with an experienced qualitative researcher in order to ensure reliability. During the course of research, it is better to collaborate with a limited number of researchers as much as possible to achieve human homogeneity and minimize the subjective bias or deviation (Saroukhani 2003, 288).

- **Confirmability:** This criterion indicates that research findings and results do not stem from the researcher's own hypotheses and prior knowledge (Holloway and Wheeler 2002). Confirmability indicates the relationship between data and resources and the derivation of the results and interpretations from these resources. To ensure confirmability, a traceable research process can be useful (Abaszadeh 2010). Moreover, an insightful honesty and openness on the side of the researcher and his/her sensitivity to the phenomenon in

question are also required to ensure confirmability (Holloway and Wheeler 2002). Keeping the documents in each phase of the research, the researcher helps ensure its confirmability. Other factors consist in the researcher's interest in the phenomenon in question, long-term investigation into the subject, and an attempt to receive feedback from others.

### **About Amina (Bint al-Huda) al-Sadr**

As stated previously, Amina (Bint al-Huda) al-Sadr was a pioneering figure of the contemporary Islamic movement, particularly in Iraq (Wikifeqh theological sciences encyclopedia). She was Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's sister and the records of her activity show she was aware of women's role in different classes and participated in various activities such as women's in-home meetings, supervision of Hajj [Pilgrimage to Mecca] caravans, story writing, and even public political activity and defiance.

Al-Sadr has plenty of published works and many girls and women in Arabic countries have been influenced by her books, essays, and memoir. She used to write for *Al-Adwa Journal*, a publication dedicated to Iraqi and Arab girls. Her writings typically addressed women's commitment to religious teachings and refusal of Western models and slogans (Shahrabi and Mehraeen 2005, 3).

She wrote profusely in a new style, and it can be claimed that she was the first contemporary Shiite woman engaged in writing stories for young and adolescent girls. Her stories are of particular importance in her cultural activities. Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's essays and stories cover themes such as family, women's employment, dressing and wearing makeup, women's beauty, hijab [veil], and other critical concerns of contemporary women. She used Quranic and hadith-based

teachings to provide insights in order to resolve problems in these issues (Mousavi 2007, 88).

She was also the administrator of al-Zahra schools in Najaf and Kadhimiya, schools affiliated with the Islamic Relief, which aimed to foster the religious culture in children in different cities of Iraq. Bint al-Huda added two courses to the conventional subject-matters in these schools and employed teachers truly bound to Islamic ethics (Islamic encyclopedia, n.d.). She held teacher training courses and devoted some time to answer the students' questions.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, Bint al-Huda al-Sadr and her brother, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, started their activities in Iraq with great enthusiasm in line with the goals of the Islamic Revolution, which were strongly opposed by the Iraqi government of the time (Islamic encyclopedia, n.d.). Bint al-Huda's fervent speeches after the arrest of her brother were among the memorable events of public campaigns in Iraq. Afterwards, she was arrested as well, and, along with her brother, she was tortured by the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and martyred in 1980 (Islamic encyclopedia, n.d.).

The importance of Bint al-Huda's position in the Islamic community was to the extent that Ayatollah Khamenei referred to her as follows:

My sisters! My daughters! Women of the Islamic country! Be aware, any woman who is trained by such [Islamic model of] upbringing at any time and at any small community or any family, she will be as dignified as those [great women]. It was not peculiar to the early Islamic period. It is possible even at periods of repression and under the rule of kufr [unbelievers]. If parents manage to raise their daughters as morally right, they will become great women. We know such women in Iran, too, in our own period, and even outside of Iran. In the

contemporary age, a young, brave, knowledgeable, thoughtful, talented woman, Bint al-Huda, Shahid Sadr's sister, was able to influence history and play a significant role in the oppressed Iraq. She was martyred. Her magnificence is no less than any great, brave man. Her action was womanly; those men's actions are manly. However, both were progressive, indicating human dignity of personality and brilliance of spirit. Such women must be trained. (Ayatollah Khamenei 1997).

### **Results**

Extracted themes were obtained using thematic analysis of 28 papers and memoirs by Bint al-Huda al-Sadr published in *Al-Adwa Journal* in different periods. First, there were 270 basic and 53 organizing themes; after comparing, integrating, and processing them, three comprehensive and 26 organizing themes were extracted. All themes are interconnected and help readers to obtain a better understanding of the characteristics of Muslim women. The themes are described in detail in the following table:

<b>Comprehensive theme: General requirements of a womanly life</b>	
<b>Organizing themes</b>	<b>Basic themes and meaning propositions</b>
<b>Human equality of men and women</b>	<p>Islam ... regards men and women as equal in terms of humanity since both are equal as to human grandeur and dignity (Woman and Civilization, 137).</p> <p>All human beings are valued equally in Islam, and natural human traits do not affect it (Women's Position and Status, 214).</p> <p>Islam considers women as equal with men, with equal rights and duties (Women in the Prophet's Viewpoint, 211).</p> <p>Islam was the only doctrine that considered both men and women as having the right to life. While emphasizing the ability of reason in both genders, it proposed the concept of women's human rights and protection of their dignity and identity (Women in the Prophet's Viewpoint, 211).</p>
<b>Developmental differences between men and women</b>	<p>Given their physical features, [women] are influenced by conditions ... and this situation is one of the necessities of genesis, resulting from division of duties among humans (Woman as Wife, 229).</p> <p>Based on their circumstances and natural differences, each of them (man and woman) is subject to exclusive jurisprudential rulings and rights in Islam. ... Differences in jurisprudential rulings of men and women also stem from this fact (Woman and Civilization, 137).</p> <p>The ranking of men according to this verse (Quran 2:228) is based on developmental differences between men and women. Given the characteristics of her creation, woman is more delicate and fairer than man (Woman as Wife, 228)</p>

<p><b>Attention to the demands of femininity</b></p>	<p>A woman can in no way recede from her femininity since womanly features are essential in her existence. Femininity means delicateness and fairness which requires a force that can remedy her inability (Woman as Wife, 230).                  Woman is an emotional being, and her effervescent emotions help her bear the burden of problems and difficulties of this important task (Woman as Mother, 232).                  Due to their natural characteristics and affections, mothers treat their children more kindly than fathers do (Woman as Mother, 234).                  A Muslim woman fulfills her duties and tasks in accordance with her womanly nature and identity (Woman, from Pre-Islamic to Islamic Period, 104).                  Many demanding jobs are not consistent with women's delicateness and fairness and prevent them from doing their primary duties (Woman and Employment, 133).                  In fact, Islam is the only social system that recognizes women's natural characteristics and does not view womanhood as a shame (Woman, from Pre-Islamic to Islamic Period, 105).                  The woman's delicate nature requires her to seek a solid refuge to feel secured and comfortable beside him (Woman as Wife, 229).</p>
<p><b>Necessity of observing Islamic principles and criteria in activities</b></p>	<p>Muslim women ... shall embrace and perceive Islam as their religion, doctrine, principle, and social system so as to recognize that all manifestations of progress and prosperity are laid out in Islam (Women's Rights in Islam, 73).                  It seems that we have neglected the fact that the exalted principles and basics of our religion help us avoid dependency and imitation (O Daughters of the Quran, 81).                  Women's personal and individual righteousness</p>

	<p>means that they must observe Islamic rulings and teachings in their behaviors (Position and Status of a Pious Woman in Imam Sadiq's Viewpoint, 86)</p> <p>I have complained about this grievous situation, which never satisfies God, and results from our negligence of wise Islamic teachings (Asking Woman for Her Opinion on Marriage, 92).</p> <p>Islam is the only ever-lasting, peerless doctrine that can secure women's happiness and preserve their dignity (Asking the Woman for Her Opinion on Marriage, 92).</p> <p>A brilliant future is welcoming us with open arms, while we hold the Quran with one hand and "la ilaha illallah" [there is no god except Allah] flag with the other (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p>
<p><b>Woman's elevated position in Islam</b></p>	<p>Among Muslim women are those who can overcome a world by their strong, firm character (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>Islam ... has no other objective than to guide women to esteem, grandeur, and a decent position (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 89).</p> <p>Meanwhile, women based their characteristics on exalted Islamic concepts such as virtue, chastity, and morality (Woman, from the Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Period, 103).</p> <p>Islam ... proposed the concept of women's human rights and protection of their dignity and identity (Women in the Prophet's Viewpoint, 212).</p> <p>Islam provided women with a new position in creation, emphasized their position and status among Muslims, and spiritually elevated them to the extent that they could participate in wars and take part in jihad (Women's Rights in Islam, 73).</p>

<p><b>Necessity of learning</b></p>	<p>How great it would be if we also attempted to keep the invitation to Islam alive and if we drew upon the knowledge we have gained, along with the valuable wisdom and kind advice, to invite people to Islam (Women’s Rights in Islam, 73).                  Women must learn sciences to prepare themselves for a better future and to bear the burden of primary responsibilities of life since the woman is the first cradle and school of life. Therefore, Muslim women deserve to learn sciences and make great efforts accordingly (O Daughters of the Quran, 82).                  They rendered our enthusiasm to learn and obey Prophet Muhammad’s command impossible since they believed that learning and unveiling are inseparable (Woman, Science, Culture, 107).                  Islam paved the way for women to learn sciences and allowed them to learn different sciences such as reading and interpreting the Quran as much as possible (Women in the Prophet’s Viewpoint, 212).</p>
<p><b>Rejection of objectifying women</b></p>	<p>Women are not objects available to men or a means of satisfying men’s needs (Woman as Wife, 230).                  [Excessive mahr] is a subject whose overvaluation renders Muslim girls worthless commodities to be traded like bondmaids in slave markets (Excessive Mahr, 115).                  In these [Western] societies, women have played roles only based on their femininity and what they have to attract men rather than on humanity and the power to improve and advance the society (Woman and Civilization, 139).                  Does a woman’s humanity mean objectifying her so that she can take possession of a part of her property? (Woman and Veil, 217).</p>
<p><b>Importance and</b></p>	<p>I do not recognize people by their name and</p>

<p><b>priority thinking</b></p>	<p>of appearance, but by their spirit, soul, and attitude (Identity, 69).</p> <p>All I wish is that you share a part of your heart and thought with me (Identity, 70).</p> <p>Always try to rely on your genuine ideas and pure feelings to enrich them (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 87).</p> <p>The nature of dhikr [remembrance of God] is to purify our souls from evils and refine our intentions and motivations (Remembering God All Day Long, 100).</p> <p>A pious woman is the one whose spirit is purified and actualized by Islamic teachings and whose mind is cleared of evil intentions (Woman's Position and Status, 215).</p>
<p><b>Hope for the future</b></p>	<p>One who embraces Islam will never be disappointed (Women's Rights in Islam, 74).</p> <p>We can ... be sure of our success (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>I ask you not to be affected by despair (Victim of Society, 80).</p> <p>We are with God, and the divine light never goes away. We move forward in God's way to embrace peace and tranquility (O Daughters of the Quran, 81).</p> <p>The brilliant future welcomes us with open arms (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p> <p>Our glory will blossom tomorrow (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p> <p>The future is ours (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p> <p>God willing, future will be yours, and obvious signs of this truth have manifested in the world thanks to God (Cherished Souls, 120).</p> <p>Quranic rulings excel, though the spiteful are not pleased (Divorce in Islam, 125).</p>

	<p>Currently, we must endeavor on this path more optimistically and hopefully (A Muslim Woman's Unbosoming, 126)</p>
<p><b><i>Tawakkul</i> [trust] in God and relying on divine victory</b></p>	<p>We are with God, and the divine light never goes away. We move forward in God's way to embrace peace and tranquility (O Daughters of the Quran, 81).</p> <p>God has promised us victory and assistance, and He does not breach His promise (Asking the Woman for Her Opinion on Marriage, 92).</p> <p>We still move forwards in this way to ensure the victory promised by God. If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet steady (A Meeting at the Hospital, 96).</p> <p>Trust in God and keep on; keep away languor as tomorrow is yours and is not much far away (Cherished Souls, 121).</p> <p>God has promised us assistance, and does not breach His promise (Cherished Souls, 121).</p>

<b>Comprehensive theme: women's social life requirements</b>	
<b>Organizing themes</b>	<b>Basic themes and meaning propositions</b>
<b>Necessity of women's social presence</b>	<p>O Muslim sisters! Move towards piety and reformation of the society, reform in different areas to excel thousands of unrighteous men and thousands of unrighteous women (Position and Status of a Pious Woman in Imam Sadiq's Viewpoint, 86).</p> <p>Islam ... shall prepare women, the same as men, to protect its holy mission (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 88).</p> <p>Islam wants women to be the leaders of humanity (Women's Rights in Islam, 74).</p> <p>The woman ... perfectly undertakes household chores, and this provides the context for her presence in a broader field called society (Woman as Wife, 231).</p> <p>Woman has a decent position in the Islamic community, she contributes to inviting and guiding others to religion and regards herself as an active member of the community (Woman, from the Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Period, 104).</p>
<b>Social conception of veil</b>	<p>Considering that women's physical attraction is greater and more impressive than men's, they are more fully veiled than men. If a woman as a human, regardless of her feminine features, appears in the society, she will be deemed equal with men (Woman and Veil, 217).</p> <p>Obviously, women can participate in many social activities provided the compliance with sharia laws, and Islam does not expect anything from women but wearing hijab and observing sharia rulings. This is because veil can protect women against deviation and corruption, and prevent the encroachment of greedy, evil-</p>

	<p>minded men (Woman and Employment, 134).</p>
<p><b>An empathic, generous view with mutual understanding</b></p>	<p>I have come to you to talk with you as a kind sister and benevolent friend (Preface, 70).</p> <p>All I wish is that ... you read these pages enthusiastically, and be aware that these phrases are a kind of a sisterly and friendly message from a sister who knows your feelings and has experienced your emotions (Preface, 70).</p> <p>These writings ... are from a sister who ... has come to share her soul and thought with you on papers — a soul full of love and sincerity for you, and a thought filled with respect and appreciation to you (Preface, 71).</p> <p>I am your younger sister (Identity, 69).</p>
<p><b>Focusing on conversation</b></p>	<p>Writing these notes and lines, I have come to you ... to talk with you and have a conversation (Preface, 70).</p> <p>I am glad that we have gathered together once again and we have the chance to talk (Women's Rights in Islam).</p> <p>It is a great pleasure for me to talk with you once again (Excessive Mahr, 114).</p>
<p><b>Recognizing, containing, and confronting enemies</b></p>	<p>Your revolutionary uprising ... was a holy wrath on the path to find the truth, establish exalted Islamic values, and fight with tyrants deviating from the right path of Islam, violating divine limitations, and trampling on people's rights (Woman, from the Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Period, 104).</p> <p>Such a society will not be reformed unless they return to the divine call of Islam, resort to its sublime teachings, and cease dependency on and obedience of foreigners (A Meeting at the Hospital, 96).</p> <p>Alas! Different ways of thinking and civilizations took us away, and blind imitation</p>

of foreign manifestations led us to the middle of nowhere. It seems we have forgotten that dignified principles and basics of our religion inhibit us from dependency and imitation, and our own reformative perspectives can help prevent us from bogging down in a morass of alien ideas and reverse reforms instilled into us in different forms by the colonial world — ideas whose promotion only aims to take down the Islamic community and provides the context for penetration into the gaps created in the Ummah (O Daughters of the Quran, 82).

Is there any other reason for those girls' words than delinquency of Muslim women, neglecting the increasing number of Christian propaganda while we are busy with our own concerns? (We Are to Blame, 75).

I had promised ... to point out the dangers of foreigners' cultural invasion to Islamic territories and their dominance on long-established Islamic concepts and values in order to influence Islamic thought through colonialism (Woman, Science, Culture, 106).

Unfortunately, some of our scholars ... unwittingly beat the drum for the glory of their enemies and reflect their sinister thoughts (Woman, Science, Culture, 107).

Be aware that some people are lurking to invade you and your behavior in any possible way to distort your ideas and actions (Cherished Souls, 120).

Misunderstanding Islam and avoiding Islamic concepts and teachings on the one hand, and being influenced by corrupt colonialist cultures contradicting Islam, on the other, deviated women from their primary position and made them neglect the fact that the foreign culture

	<p>merely aims to destroy women's identity, nobility, and dignity (Woman, from the Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Period, 104).</p> <p>Future is ours, not for enemies and their false thoughts (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p> <p>Blind imitation and benighted customs have distanced girls from Islam and its teachings (Excessive Mahr, 116).</p> <p>They intend to dominate us through deceptive and specious disguise of civilization and make us obey them on the pretext of modernism and transformationalism (O Daughters of the Quran, 82).</p> <p>A foreign culture that has unjustly and oppressively conquered our territories, and its followers have no choice but to eschew Islam and Islamic teachings. This is the concern and problem of our intellectual and social life (O Daughters of the Quran, 83).</p> <p>Deviants who have surrendered to a beast of prey called modern civilization are not aware what disasters await them and their society (A Muslim Woman's Unbosoming, 128).</p>
<p><b>Unity and organizational activity</b></p>	<p>If we were not divided, disunited, negligent, and ignorant and if our ideas and thoughts were not in conflict, we could undoubtedly protect our identity and nature as the example of a Muslim woman committed to Islam (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>Nuns have coherent organizations and specific responsibilities and their appearance affirms their duty and personality. Quite contrary to us (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>How can our daughters distinguish these people among Muslim women while we are disunited and divided and have no orderly organization?</p>

	<p>(We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>How can a single voice overcome the hellish uproar of words that have fascinated our youth and engaged their ignorant, deceived hearts? How can words of a person resist against the deviant path that has immersed many of our innocent daughters? (A Meeting at the Hospital, 96).</p> <p>Future is ours if we stop the languor, disorder, and schism to be united as a whole (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).</p> <p>How beautiful and pleasant it is when Muslim women are united, and whenever one of them speaks or writes, they are assured that it represents the thoughts and ideas of all of them while they all are ready to strongly resist against divergent paths. I certainly do not mean to have a one-way discourse Rather, I hope to unify thoughts and opinions (A Muslim Woman's Unbosoming, 129).</p>
<p><b>Voluntary, untiring, and sincere effort</b></p>	<p>I volunteered to assiduously go on the path of Islam (Identity, 65).</p> <p>I spend most of my time with you. I have denied myself and I am concerned about you. So I have forgotten the letters of my name which have little to do with my path and goal per se ... Yes! My name has only five letters. What does it matter and what is its position in relation to the goal I pursue? You can call me by any name you like (Identity, 67).</p> <p>Muslim women in early Islam... underestimated all their invaluable properties for the sake of defending their divine belief and school; they sacrificed their brothers and children with great pride and honor (Woman and Civilization, 151).</p> <p>Future is ours if we stop the languor, disorder,</p>

	and schism to be united as a whole (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 113).
<b>A universal, Ummah-oriented view</b>	<p>To dear Muslim girls... and my dear sisters all over the world, I offer this insignificant, trivial potential (Identity, 66).</p> <p>O Muslim girls! O grandchildren of Khadija and Zahra, and daughters of Sakinah and Howra! (Women's Rights in Islam, 74).</p> <p>Today I have a message only for you, dear sister ... We have a bond, my faithful sister, under the light of Islam and la ilaha illallah [there is god except Allah] (Cherished Souls, 118).</p> <p>I want to remind you that Islam's mission is all-inclusive and universal, and humans are deemed equal in Islam (A Muslim Woman's Unbosoming, 127).</p>
<b>Role models</b>	<p>How should our daughters distinguish these many people among Muslim women? (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>If we were not disorderly, disunited, negligent, and ignorant... we could undoubtedly protect our identity and nature as the example of a Muslim woman bound to Islam and we could guide the girls in our society (We Are to Blame, 76).</p> <p>She was indeed an example of a pious, kind, and kind-hearted girl (Victim of Society, 77).</p> <p>Is it not about time Muslim women proved that they could be role models for other women? (Victim of Society, 79).</p> <p>Prophet Muhammad and his respectful daughter are the best role models for Muslims, are they not? (Excessive Mahr, 116).</p> <p>We had better consider her [Zaynab bint Ali's] exalted soul as our role model (Muslim Woman's Role in the Battle of Karbala, 112).</p>

	<p>Be a worthy role model, rather than an imitating plaything. Make others follow you instead of you following and obeying them (Cherished Souls, 121).</p>
<p><b>Patience, foresight, and endurance</b></p>	<p>If you failed in a meritorious task, keep doing benevolent deeds and attempt to gain insight about your failure (Victim of Society, 80).</p> <p>Be aware not to allow these insults and evil talks to prevent you from moving forward; rather, make them reinforce your will, strength, and resolution (A Meeting at the Hospital, 97).</p> <p>Be aware that in the direction you have chosen, there are bottlenecks full of difficulties. But it is a shame if you get discouraged and withdraw (Cherished Souls, 121).</p> <p>We are not far from our destiny. Our path is very simple and smooth. Only an endurance and stability similar to that of our ancestors is required to invite everyone to our valuable doctrine (O Daughters of the Quran, 81).</p> <p>Future is ours if we resist and do not give up to deniers (Cherished Souls, 121).</p>
<p><b>Moderation and avoidance of extremes</b></p>	<p>You supporters of so-called free women! What has made you cause such a turmoil? I also address those extremist and stern people: why do you impose constraints and limitations not prescribed by God on women? Do you not know that oppression and limitation are like fire under the ashes, and strictness and extremism lead to escape from everything, even obvious sharia laws? (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 89).</p> <p>Muslim brothers! For God's sake, I beg you not to treat your daughters in a way that they feel they will be imprisoned if they follow Islam and comply with Prophet Muhammad's teachings. This will make them look at those</p>

	<p>aberrant, profligate girls as a captive looks at the free. Extremism is as harmful as delinquency. Extremism is as dangerous as delinquency (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 89).</p> <p>Do not adhere to passions. Do not justify extremism on the pretext of applying Islam (Why Have We Distanced Ourselves from Islam, 89).</p> <p>We are not appointed to glorify, praise, and recite prayers to God all day long ... In contrast to what you and some superficial people see, remembering and serving God is not limited to only recite dhikr (Remembering God All Day Long, 99).</p>
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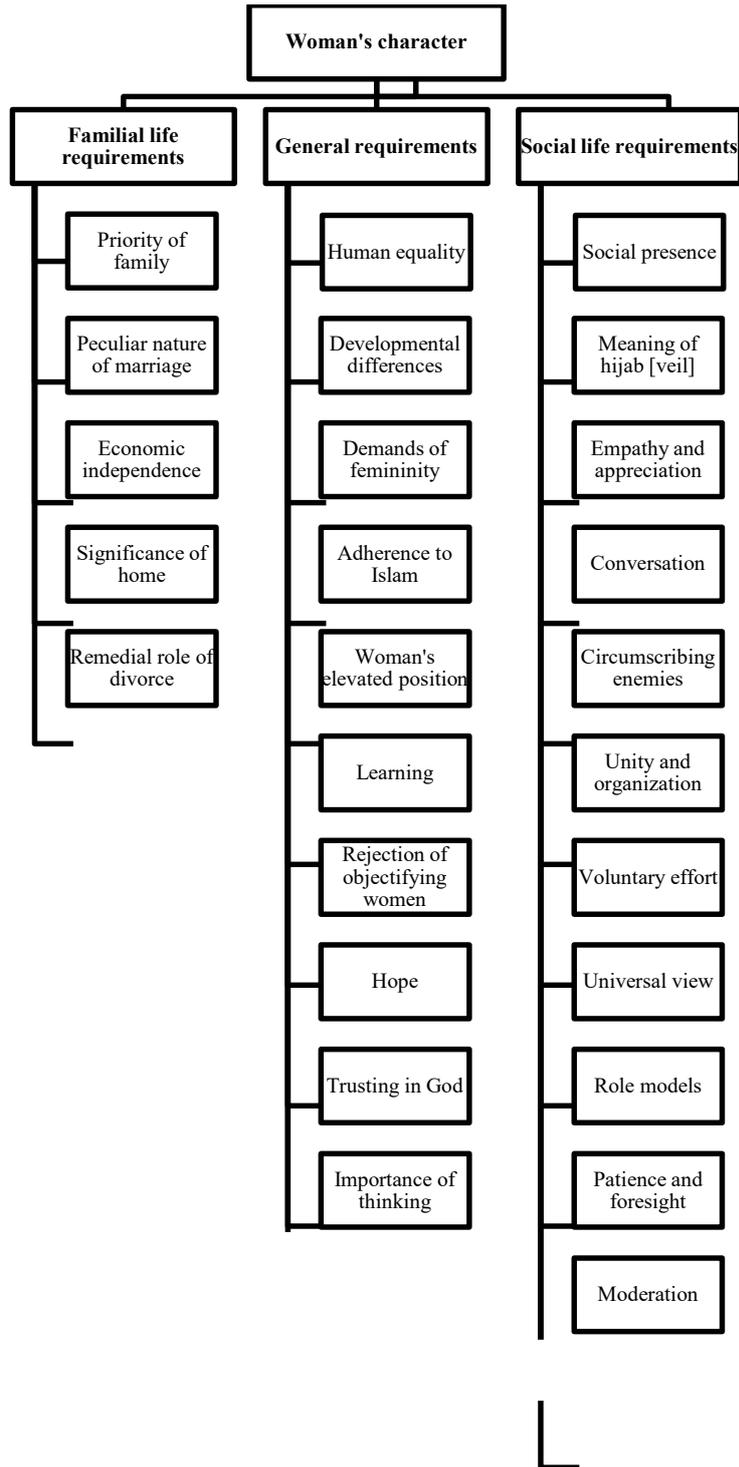
<b>Comprehensive theme: Women's familial life requirements</b>	
<b>Organizing themes</b>	<b>Basic themes and meaning propositions</b>
<b>Priority of family and motherhood</b>	<p>Islam pays attention to the fact that difficulties and burdens a mother bears to nurture her child make her worthy of going to heaven, and her satisfaction is the essential requirement of faith and real Islam (Woman as Mother, 233).</p> <p>If a woman tries to be a decent wife doing housework perfectly, she will thereby be remembering and obeying God at all times (Remembering God All Day Long, 192).</p> <p>We should not forget that children also have rights over parents, and the mother is responsible to rear her child perfectly ... She must be aware of the importance of her responsibility, serve as a mother, and realize that she has undertaken to foster generations in the society and in the presence of God (Woman as Mother, 235).</p>

	<p>The woman is the first cradle and school of humans and one of the two main factors of shaping communities. Taking into account the woman's role, it is evident that she is the school and mentor of generations (Women in the Prophet's Viewpoint, 211).</p> <p>Motherhood is a holy mission delegated to women (Woman as Mother, 232).</p> <p>We acknowledged that the woman is the creator of generations and the mentor of communities; her emotionality is an important factor in continuity of life and survival of humans (Woman and Employment, 132).</p>
<p><b>The peculiar and mutual nature of marriage</b></p>	<p>Marriage is considered a holy bond in Islam, a family is formed by loyalty, love, and sincerity (Woman as Wife, 228)</p> <p>It can therefore be stated that marriage in Islam is a mutual, reciprocal relationship, and women have both duties and rights (Woman as Wife, 228)</p> <p>On the Islamic view, women, in their marital life, have as many duties as rights. Islam considers marriage as a strong bond that involves fixed, inviolable regulations and terms and is not a temporary joy and pleasure (Woman as Wife, 230).</p> <p>Men should regard women as their life partner, not a profitable business partner. They should not follow a creed that strips marriage of humane merits and considers it as a profitable corporation for the benefit of men, in which the man is the owner of everything and the woman has nothing but the right to leave, which itself requires the man's permission (Woman and the Right to Property, 223).</p> <p>Women always need someone to support them at all situations, and that is why they consider men</p>

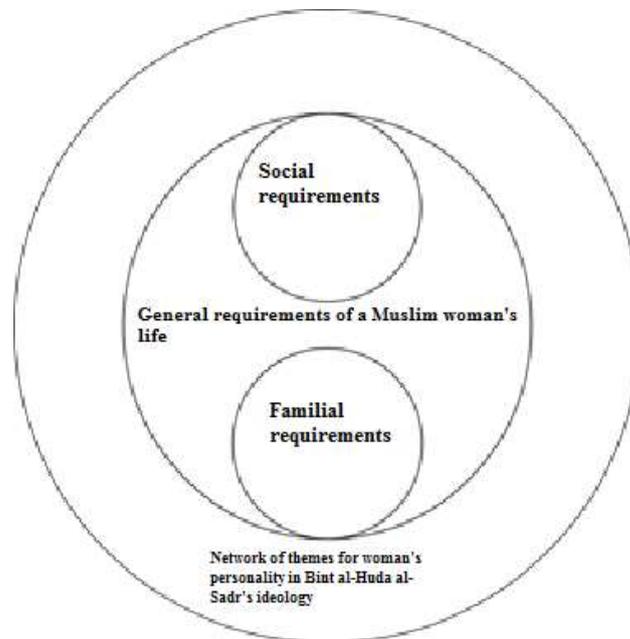
	<p>as their support and accept them as their other half (Woman as Wife, 229).</p>
<p><b>Woman's economic independence</b></p>	<p>A Muslim woman is fully entitled to own property and to take possession of her movable and immovable properties whether she is single or a wife and mother. The husband is not justified to take possession of her exclusive properties without her consent (Woman and the Right to Property, 220).</p> <p>According to Islamic rulings, neither spouse is entitled to take possession of movable and immovable properties of the other party ... The woman is free to trade, chattel mortgage, and sub-delegate her properties (Woman and the Right to Property, 221).</p>
<p><b>Significance of home</b></p>	<p>Since home is the woman's special territory and cradle of prosperity, she obviously handles and takes care of the home more than the husband. When a woman feels that she is the foundation of the home, she experiences a unique tranquility and peace and takes the responsibility of housework in the best way possible. This paves the way for her presence in a broader field called society (Woman as Wife, 231).</p>
<p><b>Remedial role of divorce</b></p>	<p>Islam has allowed divorce to protect people's rights and as the last bitter pill for the sick and unhealthy families. Divorce must be granted only when all rational, wise solutions to marital gaps and conflicts have failed (Divorce in Islam, 122).</p>

### **Summary and data analysis**

In the first step, in order to have a better understanding of the themes of Bint al-Huda al-Sadr's works, a summarized chart of the three above-mentioned comprehensive themes is presented below:



Interconnection of comprehensive themes



**Conclusion**

It is evident that at first glance, Bint al-Huda al-Sadr explicitly considers family and motherhood as the top priority of women's career and life; moreover, social themes are also of remarkable importance in her view. This emphasis may result from the attempts to reform the inappropriate attitude and practice governing women's activities in the Islamic community of her time in general, and Iraq in particular, where women were more or less deprived of social presence and participation. This unacceptable practice, still existing in an extensive part of the Muslim world, particularly where tribal culture (for example) is preserved, has led to setbacks in women's

literacy, capabilities, and competence as well as a lack of efficient educational mechanisms.

Given the previous research on women in Islamic studies, there are two primary approaches in the last decade, namely fundamentalism and dissidence. The first is influenced by modernist Islamic thinkers, who are divided by two attitudes: neo-Salafism and ijthadism. Bint al-Huda al-Sadr can be definitely subsumed under the second group, i.e. ijthadist fundamentalists. Similar to her peers, she addressed women's issues by validating the achievements of human reason in interpreting God's words, distinguishing Salafist legacy from Quranic teachings, and presenting an analytic framework based on the Quran and by resorting to the laws of nature (Pezeshgi 2010, 75-163).

Critical social conditions of the time in which Bint al-Huda lived and the inflamed atmosphere of Iraq at that time, which was highly exposed to penetration and influence of Western culture after the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate, intensified the need for women to understand and appreciate social issues. Its importance lies in the fact that Bint al-Huda believed motherhood is vital for women, and mothers are mentors of future generations. In her view, if Muslim women fail to identify the dangers of Western cultural invasion and do not resort to the noble legacy of Islamic culture, future men will also lack such merits.

These have altogether highlighted the social equality governing Bint al-Huda's essays and memoirs. However, as pointed out earlier, she views being a spouse and mother as the top priority of women, and prevents falling into the trap of modern thought such as feminism through embracing developmental differences of men and women.

Bint al-Huda strongly emphasizes Muslim women's otherization of the West. This otherization, which can be known as the manifestation of "renunciation" in religious sources, was frequently cited in her

essays and memoirs. It is clear that mentioning the West as the main enemy is only due to the West's more hostile presence. As she repeatedly emphasizes the necessity of return and commitment to pure Islamic models, she rejects any non-Islamic approach and attitude. She believes that the Islamic community must address women's rights in a demanding and questioning way, and must declare its right and just position instead of abiding by the Western cultural criteria and expectations.

It should not be forgotten that she does not see many of current behaviors and assumptions among Muslims to be noble and proper, and recommends avoiding extremism and pursuing moderation. Bint al-Huda holds that the Islamic community should return to its proper foundations and sources and oppose the West accordingly.

Bint al-Huda considers the observance of sharia laws and Islamic criteria as women's redline in both familial/social and personal context. As a consequence of this, she adopted a universal Ummah-centered attitude, rather than focusing on geographical and national boundaries, thereby addressing all Muslim women. She has also introduced valid models by infallible Imams to provide her audience with Islamic teachings.

Bint al-Huda regards men and women as equal in terms of humanity, but explicitly accepts their developmental differences. She believes that femininity has various requirements and conditions, to which planners of women's affairs must pay particular attention. It appears that this is the origin of her unique promotional practice, using literature, storytelling, and written conversation with an emphasis on empathy and benevolence in her writings, which all are the requisites to address women.

Another aspect of Bint al-Huda's works is that rather than remedying and examining the effects, she attempts to prevent harms

through suggesting suitable models, directing her audience's attention to Islamic foundations, warning them against Western influences, and giving hope and motivation.

Ultimately, it seems that in Bint al-Huda's opinion, a Muslim woman is first and foremost identified with her husband and children at home. With an independent and, indeed, distinctive identity from men, the woman shoulders specific familial responsibilities. Her most important duty is to appropriately and purposefully rear children. Successfully performing this duty requires her social presence and life. A Muslim woman must discern the authentic Islamic culture and teachings, according to which she should hinder and resist the spread of Western culture.

In terms of mastering sciences such as exegesis of the Quran and history of Islam, Bint al-Huda al-Sadr outperforms figures such as Fatima Mernissi and has a wiser reading and narration. Given all her characteristics and distinction in promotional content, practice, and scope of social effectiveness compared to other prominent figures of the Muslim world, such as Amina Wadud and Fatima Mernissi, further studies of her work are highly recommended as she has been ignored in Islamic and Shiite academic and theological domains in recent years.

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