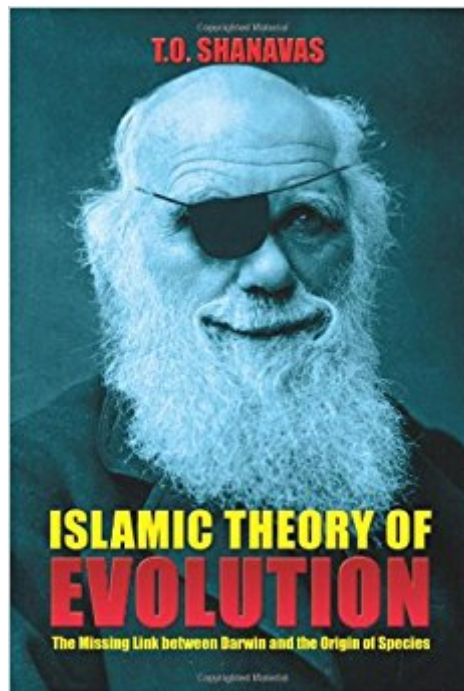




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Islamic Theory Of Evolution: The Missing Link Between Darwin And The Origin Of Species



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

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I've been frustrated with the Muslim communities lack of understanding and blind acceptance of Judeo-Christian's view of creation so I did a quick search on to see if there were any books about the subject written by any Muslims. I was excited to see this book come up so ordered it and went through the whole thing in two sittings. It is easy to read, well written and researched, and does a great job of showing that the Quran does not contradict the theory of evolution, in fact it is what the Quran implies. This is not a modern interpretation of the Quran either as Dr. Shanavas points out as Muslim scientists as early as the 8th century had the view that humans developed over a long period of time. Most Muslims are familiar with the story of Adam being created from clay so they somehow assume that it was an instantaneous creation, although nowhere in the Quran does it say that. They forget to ponder the meaning of all the other verses which describe the creation of man "in stages" and being "grown out of the earth" (71:17). In fact, the Quran describes everything being created in stages: the heavens, the sky, the earth, fruits and vegetation, embryonic development, and yes even humans. The book also covers some other scientific fields of study, such as quantum physics, and how they relate to the message of the Quran. Actually I got much more out of this part of the book than the evolution part of it. The author does a great job explaining how the phrase "God

willing" can be understood through our knowledge of quantum physics. He also responds to famous atheists such as Dawkins by pointing out that reality is not deterministic. Overall I think the book is a starting point for Muslims who are interested in finding out the Quranic view of evolution. There is much more that can be written and researched on the subject, but the one thing this book does is show that evolution is not contradictory to the Quran. Muslims should not be afraid of the theory of evolution thinking that it contradicts the Quran, they should take the Quran's advice and ponder on the creation. I would highly recommend this to all Muslims and definitely Muslim students of science.

I agree with Dr. Shanavas' main thesis that the anti-evolutionary stand promoted by contemporary Sunni and Shiite scholars contradicts the teachings of the Quran, as well as the scientific evidence and many of the prominent Muslim scholars who preceded Darwin. Like every book, this one too should be studied with an open mind and with critical reasoning, a natural epistemology which the Quran reminds us to use at 39:18 and 17:36. This book was previously published under the title Evolution and/or Creation: an Islamic Perspective. We decided to publish the revised version under a new title, Islamic Theory of Evolution: the Missing Link between Darwin and the Origin of Species. The cover picture is not meant to disparage or vilify Darwin, but it is meant to describe the common attitude among the proponents of theory of evolution, as they ignore the important contribution of Muslim scientists and they abuse the theory by associating it with unwarranted philosophical conclusions such as atheism. We consider Darwin as one of the greatest scientists who unknowingly followed the instructions of the Quran in 29:19-20 (See, below). In this book, Dr. Shanavas defends the theory of evolution both scientifically and theologically and provides historical background that has been eradicated from public memory. Though a great majority of people, regardless of their religion, consider Darwin as the originator of the idea of evolution, Shanavas reminds us that Darwin (1809-1882) and his grandfather Erasmus Darwin were influenced by the work of Muslim scientists who lived centuries before them. For instance, Dr. Shanavas quotes from John William Draper (1812-1883), first president of American Chemical Society, a contemporary of Darwin, and a former president of New York University summarizes the deliberately induced academic amnesia in the West. Draper acknowledges the fact that Muslims described the theory of evolution in their schools centuries before the West did: "I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has contrived to put out of sight our scientific obligations to the Muhammadans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancor and national conceit cannot be perpetuated forever." (Draper, John William. The Intellectual Development of Europe, p. 42.) "[Christian] theological authorities were therefore constrained to look

with disfavor on any attempt to carry back the origin of the earth to an epoch indefinitely remote, and on the Muhammadan theory of evolution which declared that human beings developed over a long period of time from lower forms of life to the present condition." "Sometimes, not without surprise, we meet the ideas with which we flatter ourselves with having originated our own times. Thus our modern doctrine of evolution and development were taught their [Muslim] schools. In fact they carried them much farther than we are disposed to do, extending them even inorganic and minerals." (The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science, John William Draper, pp. 118, 187-188.) Ironically, this Western amnesia regarding the scientific contribution of muslims coincided with the decline in Muslim world. By abandoning rational thinking and scientific methodology which is according to Quran is the necessary condition for being a muslim, they followed dogmas and story tellers. Will Durant, an American historian, reminds his readers that medical books authored by Ali Ibn Sina (980-1037) and Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi (844-926) were both used as textbooks in European universities for centuries, and that in 1395 Razi's book Kitab al-Hawi was among the nine textbooks used by the University of Paris. The same book informs the reader that Avicenna's Qanun fil Tibb, a science encyclopedia, was a main textbook at Montpellier and Louvain universities until the mid-17th century. We should mention two important Muslim scientists who had immense impact on scientific enterprise in Europe: Abu Bakr ibn Tufayl, known in the West as Abubacer (1107-1185) and philosopher Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Rusd who became famous in the West by the name Averroes (1126-1298). Muslim scientists and philosophers of the medieval period had no qualms in accepting evolution as a divine system for creation. For instance, the prominent Muslim polymath, philosopher and sociologist Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), after a paragraph about the origin of human species, reminds the reader with a verse describing the deterministic nature of God's system: "You will never find a change in God's system." In his famous book Muqaddimah, Ibn Khaldun proposes a theory of evolution starting from minerals. Minerals, according to Ibn Khaldun, evolve and become seeded and seedless plants. Plants evolve and reach to their zenith with palm trees and vines. The evolution continues with snails and shelled sea animals. The diversification in animal kingdom reaches the zenith of creation by gradual evolution into human beings with consciousness and thinking skills. According to Ibn Khaldun, monkeys are the link between animals and the first stage of humanity. Ibn Khaldun presents the theory of evolution by using scientific language, arguing that the essence of creation (in modern terminology: genetic code) passes through various changes (mutations) generating one species after another. In addition to these, Muhammad al-Haytham (965-1039), who is known in the West by the name Alhazen, defends human evolution starting from minerals, plants, and animals in Kitabal Manazer,

his book on optical science. Prominent leaders of Sufism such as Ibn Arabi (1165-1240) and Jaluluddin Rumi (1207-1273) also had no problem in accepting the idea of creation through evolution, an idea which was commonly held among Muslims. The Muslim Geologist al-Biruni (973-1048) in his book Kitab al-Jamahir also asserts that humans are created after long periods of evolution from simple organisms through natural selection. Unfortunately, violent suppression of free speech and enforcement of anti-Quranic apostasy law by Muslim rulers and their hand-picked Sunni and Shiite scholars plunged the Muslim world into a dark age. Great Muslim scientists and philosophers such as Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd were later condemned as heretics and apostates. At present, Muslims appear to have lost their ability to grasp the fact that they live in a dark age. A crusade similar to the one waged by the Catholic Church against the heliocentric model promoted by Copernicus and Galileo is now being waged against the theory of evolution identified by the western scientist Darwin. Ironically, Sunni and Shiite apologists have established an alliance against science with wrong-wing Evangelical Christians. PS: A frontrunner of the Sunni crusade against the theory of evolution is Adnan Oktar, a Turkish cult leader who puts his brand-name Harun Yahya on dozens of fancy books written, edited, concocted, or plagiarized by his followers who were snatched from their rich families by cult members while they were in high school or college. I have exposed the modus operandi of this character in an article titled, Harun Yahya or Adnan Oktar: the Promised Mahdi?, as he cleverly picked Jews and Evolution as his two main subjects in his ambition to declare himself as a Muslim demagogue. Appealing and provoking the religious and anticlastic emotions of Muslim population, the cult published books and articles on Jews and Masons, spewing misinformation and racist hatred. The cult also published books denouncing evolution. Mr. Oktar became a notoriously loud voice of a reactionary segment of the Muslim population. He owes his success to many factors, which include his cult's vast financial resources, his intoxicated and delusional ego, the zeal of his followers who are brainwashed into believing that they are the chosen few who will assist the Mahdi, and the ignorance endemic among his target audience.

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