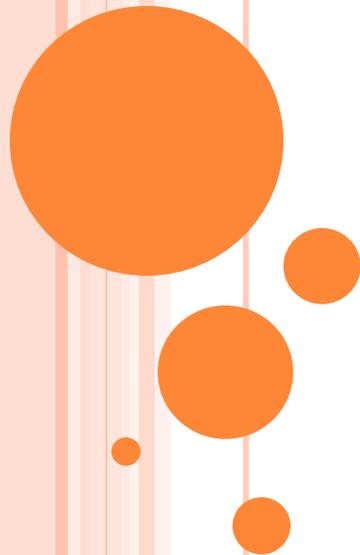


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

ISLAM & THE THEORY/FACT OF EVOLUTION

Usama Hasan

Senior Researcher (Islamic Studies)
Quilliam



SYNOPSIS

- Current Muslim responses to evolution
- Evolution is a “Muslim theory”
- Reconciling Islam & evolutionary ideas
- Answers to common misconceptions
- Religious writings on evolution
- Examples of science opposed by mistaken interpretation of scripture



CURRENT MUSLIM RESPONSES TO EVOLUTION

1. Reject all of biological evolution (Harun Yahya)
 2. Accept all of biological evolution except human evolution (many Muslim theologians)
 3. Accept all of biological evolution (many Muslim biologists + some theologians)
- **Many people go from 1 -> 2 -> 3: where are you?**
 - **Are we part of the web of life, or a special case?**

miraculous birth has a direct consequence on his historical lineage – he is not attributed to the family of any man but rather called “the son of Mary” – but his membership in the broader human family is not in the least way compromised.

Fig. 15.1

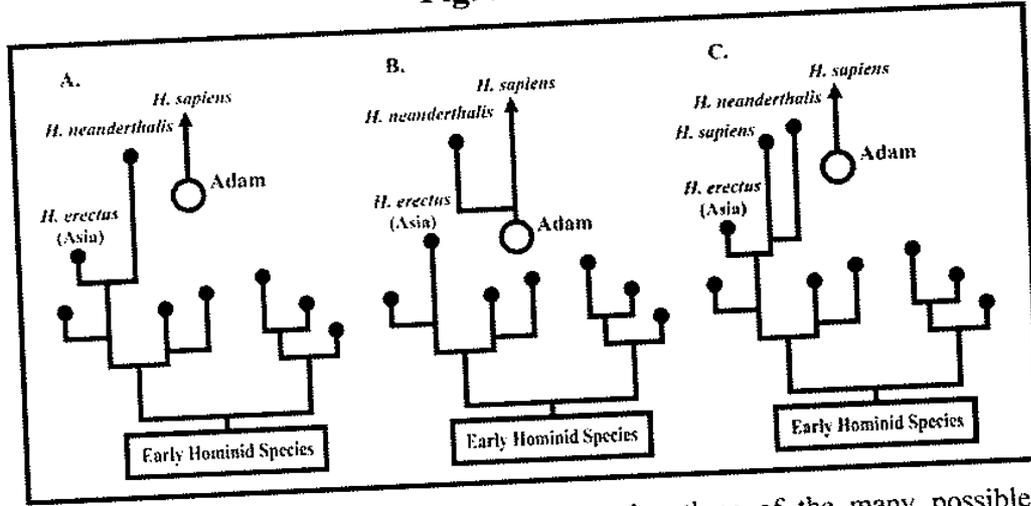


fig 15.1: Imaginary phylogenetic trees representing three of the many possible relationships between Adam, his descendants and *Homo neanderthalis* that are compatible with a literal reading of the account of Adam’s special creation and his status as father of all living humans as understood by classical Islamic scholars from the apparent meaning of the Qur’ān and Sunnah.

A. Adam arrives in a world populated by at least one other member of the genus *Homo* – *Homo neanderthalis* – but no populations of beings that could be classified as *Homo sapiens*. All members of *Homo sapiens* are descendants of Adam.

B. Adam arrives in a world populated by earlier species of the genus *Homo*, but not by the modern species *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalis*. As his descendants spread throughout the Earth, they diversify into *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalis*, with all members of both species belonging to his lineage.

EVIDENCE FOR EVOLUTION (INC. HUMAN)

- Palaeontology (the fossil record)
- Geographical distribution
- Comparative anatomy
- Molecular biology (genetics, DNA, etc.)
- Embryology
- Taxonomy
- We have 46 chromosomes, chimps have 48
 - Human chromosome #2 is a fusion of two chimp chromosomes
- **There is scientific *ijma'* (consensus) on the theory/fact of evolution**



EVOLUTION IS A “MUSLIM THEORY”

“ ... the Mohammedan theory of the evolution of man from lower forms, or his gradual development to his present condition in the long lapse of time.”

***History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* by John William Draper, 1811-1882
Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia
Library, p. 188**



EVOLUTION IS A “MUSLIM THEORY” - 2

“Sometimes, not without surprise, we meet with ideas which we flatter ourselves have originated in our own times. **Thus our modern doctrines of evolution and development were taught in their schools.** In fact, they carried them much farther than we are disposed to do, extending them even to inorganic or mineral things.”

Draper (19th century), p. 118



EARLY MUSLIM SCIENTISTS

- Al-Jahiz (9th century, 776-869) & the “Struggle for Existence”
 - Influence of environment on animal survival in his magnum opus, *Kitab al-Hayawan* (Book of Animals)
 - Came up with a crude Lamarckism, that was later replaced by Darwinian evolution
 - “dogs, foxes & wolves must have descended from a **common ancestor**” (4:23, cf. Jim al-Khalili, *Pathfinders*, p. 76)
 - Understood eco-systems
 - Understood **natural selection**
 - Understood adaptation
- (Rebecca Stott, *Darwin's Ghosts*, Chapter 3)



PRECURSORY IDEAS TO EVOLUTION

- Ibn Miskawayh & the Brethren of Purity
(*Ikhwan al-Safa'*)

(Persia, 10th century)

- Worlds:

Mineral → Plant → Animal → (Monkey) → Human

*Source: Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, famous 20th-
century Hadith scholar*



IBN KHALDUN (14TH CENTURY, D. 1408)

“One should then look at the world of creation. It started out from the minerals and progressed, in an ingenious, gradual manner, to plants and animals. The last stage of minerals is connected with the first stage of plants, such as herbs and seedless plants. The last stage of plants, such as palms and vines, is connected with the first stage of animals, such as snails and shellfish which have only the power of touch. The word ‘connection’ with regard to these created things means that the last stage of each group is fully prepared to become the first stage of the next group ...



IBN KHALDUN (CONT'D)

“ ... The animal world then widens, its species become numerous, and, in a gradual process of creation, it finally leads to man, who is able to think and to reflect. The higher stage of man is reached from the world of the monkeys, in which both sagacity and perception are found, but which has not reached the stage of actual reflection and thinking. At this point we come to the first stage of man. This is as far as our (physical) observation extends.”

The Muqaddimah – An Introduction to History by Ibn Khaldun, trans. Franz Rosenthal, Princeton University Press, 2005, p. 75



RUMI

Low in the earth
I lived in realms of ore and stone;
And then I smiled in many-tinted flowers;
Then roving with the wild and wandering hours,
O'er earth and air and ocean's zone,
 In a new birth,
 I dived and flew,
 And crept and ran,
And all the secret of my essence drew
Within a form that brought them all to view –
 And lo, a Man!



RUMI (CONT'D)

And then my goal,
Beyond the clouds, beyond the sky,
In realms where none may change or die –
In angel form; and then away
Beyond the bounds of night and day,
And Life and Death, unseen or seen,
Where all that is hath ever been,
As One and Whole.

‘Allamah Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of
Religious Thought in Islam*



THE QUR'ANIC ACCOUNT

- Adam was created from earth and water
- God breathed His Spirit into Adam's body
- God taught Adam “all the Names”
 - (the angels did not know them)
- God taught eloquent speech to Man
- Adam was a “Perfect Man”
- No “young earth” teaching



THE QUR'ANIC ACCOUNT - REVISITED

- Adam was created from earth and water
 - Life evolved from earth and water
 - Modern science asks: Did life begin from clay?
(Roberts, Reiss & Monger, Advanced Biology, p. 761)
- God breathed His Spirit into Adam's body
 - Ibn 'Arabi: intellectual and spiritual faculties reached full maturity in humanity
 - cf. Polkinghorne: human self-awareness is the greatest moment of history
- God taught Adam “all (His) Names”
 - Adam was the first human: the creation receptive to receiving full Divine knowledge



OBJECTION 1: MIRACULOUS ADAM

With God, Jesus is like Adam:
He created him from dust, then said
To him, “Be!” - and he was!

Qur'an

Answer:

The Qur'an affirms a gradual, natural process for the (virgin) birth of Christ, so why not a natural process for Adam?



OBJECTION 2: HUMBLE ORIGINS

Surely, the greatest men and women such as Abraham, Moses, Mary, Jesus & Muhammad (pbuh) could not have had common ancestors with apes?

Answer:

The Qur'an repeatedly points to our humble origins, from "despised drops of water" (*ma' mahin*)



OBJECTION 3: THE FALL

In the Qur'anic story, after Adam and Eve ate from the Forbidden Tree, they were expelled from the Garden and sent down to Earth.

Answer:

The Qur'anic Jannah refers to both heavenly and earthly gardens. Some of the early commentators believed that Adam's garden was earthly. E.g. Tabari & Ibn Kathir refer to this difference of opinion.

Evolution implies that the "Garden of Eden" was on earth, not in Paradise.



OBJECTION 4: THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION LEADS TO ATHEISM, DOESN'T IT?

Answer:

Err ... No, it doesn't (necessarily): >99% of US scientists accept human evolution, 40% of US scientists believe in God

Science tells us **how** we were created.

Revelation tells us **why** we were created.



MANY YOUNG MUSLIMS HAVE LOST THEIR FAITH AFTER STUDYING SCIENCE

- Evolution theory is basic biology (GCSE & A-level)
- Thousands of young Muslims have become atheist or agnostic after studying biology, and being told that the Qur'an contradicts modern science
- Many of them have been helped to rediscover their faith by reconciling biology with the Qur'an
- I know some of them personally!
- On the other hand, there are Muslim university students in the UK who walk out of their biology lectures!



POST-DARWIN MUSLIM SCHOLARS WHO ACCEPTED EVOLUTION THEORY FULLY OR PARTIALLY

- Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, *Hadith scholar*
- Allamah Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, *poet & philosopher*
- Prof. Fazlur Rahman
- Dr. Israr Ahmad, *published posthumously*
- Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi
- Sheikh Nadim al-Jisr
- Sheikh Hasan al-Jisr
- Sheikh Dr. Abd al-Sabur Shahin
- Etc.



PARTIAL LIST OF MUSLIM SCIENTISTS WHO ACCEPT EVOLUTION

- Prof. Nidhal Guessoum (UAE), author of *Islam's Quantum Question*
- Dr. T. Shanavas (USA), author of *Islam & Evolution*
- Prof. Fatimah Jackson (USA)
- Prof. Ehab Abouheif (USA)
- Dr. Salman Hameed (USA)
- Prof. Ziauddin Sardar (UK)



ISLAMIC TRADITION ON ADAM (PBUH)

- Muhammad al-Baqir, “Before the Adam who is our father, a million Adams or more had passed from existence.” [*Ruh al-Ma’ani* of Alusi]
- Ja’far al-Sadiq, “Perhaps you think that God never created a human being other than yourselves. Nay, but God created a million Adams and you are the last of those Adams.” [*Ruh al-Ma’ani* of Alusi]
- Ibn ‘Arabi, “Allah created 100,000 Adams ...”
- Ibn ‘Arabi, “At the Ka’bah, I met and spoke to a man who was not from *Bani Adam* (the descendants of Adam) ...” [*Futuhāt Makkiyyah*]



THE HUMAN BEING: ANIMAL & ANGEL

- A basic traditional Muslim belief: the human being is a combination of animal & angel (spirit)
- E.g. Humans may be higher in status than the angels or lower than the animals, according to their actions
- Biology merely deals with the animal side, and our relationship with the animal world
- True religion deals with our spiritual side, and how to nurture our angelic spirits whilst living in the material world e.g. Forgiveness, Love, Mercy.
- “I created Adam with My Two Hands” (Q. 38:75)
 - Refers precisely to the Two Worlds: Material & Spiritual (Ibn ‘Arabi, *Fusus al-Hikam*)



SHEIKH DR. ABD AL-SABUR SHAHIN – EGYPT, BOOK ANALYSING THE CREATION OF HUMANITY

ثقافة
قطاع الثقافة

أبى آدم

قصة الخليفة
بين الأسطورة والحقيقة

د. عبد الصبور شاهين

قطاع الثقافة

الطبعة : العام

سعيد عبده

■ ■ ■

إدارة التسويق

الهاتف : ٢٥٧٦٠٨٨٦

email : thakafa.ad@gmail.com

وكلائنا بالخارج

مركز الإمارات العربية

مكتبة أخبار اليوم

المركز التجاري المسرى بالشارقة

٠٠٩٧١٥٠١٤٩٩٧١٤ - ٠٠٩٧١٢٦٦٠٣٣٧

السعودية ودون الخليج

سلسلة مكتبات العبيكان

٠٠٩٦٥٠٣٢٧٨٧٧ - ٠٠٩٦٥١٤٦٠٠١٨

مكتبة جرير

٠٠٩٦٤٤٣٤٠٠٠ - ٠٠٩٦٥٠٣٧٧٧٠٢



QUR'ANIC VERSES MENTIONING THE CREATION OF *AL-BASHAR* (A PROMINENT CREATION) OR *AL-INSAN* (HUMANITY)

- Sheikh Dr. Shahin analysed the 35 verses in order of revelation
- **The Meccan verses are as follows:**
(96:1-2) (87:1-2) (95:4-5) (75:36-39) (77:20-23)
(50:16) (86:5-7) (7:11) (36:77-78) (35:11) (19:27)
(20:55) (20:115) (56:58-59) (17:61) (15:26) (6:2)
(37:11) (40:67) (18:37) (16:4) (71:13-14) (71:17-18)
(23:12-14) (32:7-9) (82:6-8) (30:40) (30:54)
- **The Medinan verses are as follows:**
(2:30) (4:1) (55:3-4) (55:14) (76:1-2) (22:5) (49:13)



وقد سبقت الإشارة إلى مغزى هذه المرحلة ، واللغة من أخطر مقومات هذا الخلق ، ويبدو أنها بلغت درجة من الكمال فى المرحلة آدمية الحاسمة ، حتى تفوق آدم على الملائكة فى أول اختبار .

لقد كانت ملحمة هائلة !! تلك التى استغرقها خلق البشر وتسويته وتزويده بالملكات العليا التى أصبح بها (إنساناً) تتألق فيه كمالات النبوة ، فاختاره الله واصطفاه كما قال : ﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ .. (١٣) ﴾ [آل عمران] ، فصار آدم نبياً ، كما قال سبحانه : ﴿ ثُمَّ اجْتَبَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ (١٢٢) ﴾ [طه] .

لقد استغرقت هذه الملحمة - كما سبق أن قلنا ملايين السنين ، ولكنها مرت ظلاماً فى ظلام ، أو : غيباً فى غيب ، حتى أذن الله للصبح أن ينبجج - فأشرق الإنسان من سلالة البشر ، واكتمل الخلق ، وجاء آدم !!

ليس غريباً أن نتصور - بناء على هذا - أن آدم جاء مولوداً لأبوين^(١) ، وأن حواء جاءت كذلك ، على الرغم مما سوف يلقي هذا التصور من معارضة تلقائية ، ورفض عنيف !! وبلا تفكير !!

إن هذا التصور لا يتصادم فى رأينا مع حقيقة خلق الإنسان من طين ، ذلك أن الخلق الذى بدأ منذ ملايين السنين بالجسد الطينى - كان هدفه النهائى والوحيد خلق (آدم) ، وكل ما مضى من أحداث بين التاريخين - إن كان ثمة تاريخ - إنما هو وقائع بناء جسد آدم ، وعقله ، وروحه ،

(١) ذكر الشيخ رشيد رضا أن وثى الهند يزعمون أن لآدم أمًا ، ولها فى مدينتهم المقدسة

(بنارس) قبر عليه قبة بجانب قبة قبره (المنار ٢٠٨/٨) .

وملكاته ، وخصائصه ، وقد تم ذلك كله فى غيبوبة الزمان ، حيث استوى الصفر والمليون ، فما هى إلا سنة استمرت بضعة ملايين من السنين حتى استوى الإنسان .. (آدم) الذى نبت فى التراب ، وانبثق من الأرض ، لقد تبددت الأحداث والوقائع ، ولم يبق منها سوى الحقيقة الترابية .

وهو تصور ليس غريباً ، ولا بعيداً عن الواقع الذى قرره القرآن - مثلاً - عن الآخرة حين قال تعالى : ﴿ كَانَهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرُونَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحَاهَا (٤٦) ﴾ [النازعات] .. أى : إن الزمان يكون قد انطوى ، وسقطت فى جبه كل الأحداث مهما تعاضمت ، واستغرقت مئات السنين ، وهو كذلك ما كرره القرآن فى قوله تعالى : ﴿ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ (١١٢) قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَاسْأَلِ الْعَادِينَ (١١٣) قَالَ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (١١٤) ﴾ [المؤمنون] .

وبهذا تكون الحقيقة الترابية أثبت الحقائق وأبرزها فى وجود كل مخلوق يدخل فى مضمون الضمائر (أنا - ونحن - وأنت - وأنتم - وأنتن - وهو - وهى - وهما - وهم - وهن) ، وخبرها جميعاً (من تراب) : ﴿ صَلَّصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَآءٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴾ .

SHEIKH ABD AL-SABUR SHAHIN, PAGE 122:

“This process took millions of years ... Humanity (*insan*) emerged from the essence of *al-bashar*, creation became perfect, and Adam appeared!

“It is not far fetched for us to imagine ... that Adam was born of two parents, as was Eve, even though this concept will meet immediate opposition and violent rejection without thinking!”

FN: Sheikh Rashid Rida mentioned that Hindus believe that Adam had a mother – they have two adjacent, domed shrines in their sacred city of Varanasi (*al-Manar* 8/308)



AL-AZHAR'S FATWA ON SHEIKH DR. ABD AL-SABUR SHAHIN'S CONCLUSION

العلمية الهائلة التي غيرت أساليب معيشة الناس وأوضاعهم خلال القرن الذي توشك (الإنسانية) أن تودعه ، وذلك باجتهاد متصل وفقه متجدد ، وبصر دقيق بحاجات الناس التي صارت تتغير بسرعة هائلة (بتغير الأمكنة والأزمنة والأحوال) ، على أن يتم ذلك كله بطبيعة الحال من خلال منهج عامي أصوالي دقيق ، لا يخالف فيه الباحث شيئاً من ثوابت العقيدة أو الشريعة ، ولا يميل - مهما كانت البواعث - عن قول الحق في تجرد وصدق وشجاعة .

ثالثاً : يوصى المجمع الباحثين - دون حرج على حريتهم في اختيار ما يبحثون أمره وما يكتبون فيه - أن يلاحظوا حاجة الأمة إلى علم العلماء واجتهاد المجتهدين لمواجهة المشاكل الكبرى التي تواجه المسلمين - أفراداً وجماعات وشعوباً - في عصر سقوط الحواجز بين الشعوب ، وتوجه أبناء الحضارات المختلفة إلى التعارف والتواصل ، وفي كل ما يتعرض له الإسلام والمسلمون من سوء فهم بسوء معاملة في كثير من أقطار الأرض ، وأن يتجنبوا - ما وسعهم - شغل عامة الناس بقضايا قد تكون لها - على أهميتها القليلة - آثار جانبية غير نافعة تشغل الناس عما ينبغي أن يتوجهوا إليه ، أو توقعهم في حيرة وسوء فهم وجدال طويل فيما لا يفقههم ..

كما يوصى المجمع الباحثين في أمور العقيدة والشريعة - خصوصاً حين يقتضيهم البحث تناول آيات الكتاب الكريم بالتفسير أو التناول - أن يتخيروا لأراشهم المصطلحات والتعابير التي تناسب مقام الوقوف

ولهذا لا ترى اللجنة فيما كتبه المؤلف محاولة للتوفيق بين العلم والدين بقدر ما ترى فيه اجتهاداً منه في فهم النص القرآني ، وهو اجتهاد لا توافق اللجنة المؤلف على بعض أجزائه ، حيث لا يكنى ما ساقه في هذا التذليل ليقرر النتائج التي انتهى إليها ، وإذا كانت اللجنة قد حددت مهمتها - على ما سبق - بأنها بيان ما إذا كان المؤلف قد تجاوز الحد في تأويلاته للنصوص القرآنية .. تجاوزاً يخالف به ثوابت العقيدة أو يتناقض مع ما هو معلوم من الدين بالضرورة ، فإن الذي تنتهي إليه اللجنة أن المؤلف لم يقع في مثل تلك المخالفة .

وإن كان ذلك لا يعني أن اللجنة تقره على كثير من التأويلات التي أول بها بعض آيات القرآن الكريم والأحاديث النبوية ، وعلى الأخص ما أشار إليه من أن آدم - عليه السلام - يمكن أن يكون قد خلق من أبوين ، وما انتهى إليه في شأن العلاقة بين البشر والإنسان ، كما أنها لا تقره على بعض التعابير التي استخدمها في سياق تدليله ، والتي ترى اللجنة أنها غير لائقة في وصف المشيئة الإلهية في أمر الخلق ..

ونود اللجنة في ختام تقريرها أن تنبه إلى أمور ثلاثة :

أولاً : أن مجمع البحوث الإسلامية لا يحجر على اجتهاد المجتهدين أو فكر المفسرين ؛ إذ هو مجمع للبحث العلمي ، يشجع الاجتهاد ؛ ويحرص على ضبط مناهجه ، ويمارس ذلك الاجتهاد بما يقدمه من دراسات وأبحاث لكبار العلماء المتخصصين في العلوم الإسلامية على اختلافها .

ثانياً : يؤمن المجمع بحاجة هذا الجيل من المسلمين إلى متابعة الاجتهاد وتقليب النار في الأفانق وفي الأنفس ، وإلى مواكبة التطورات

We disagree with his interpretations (*ta'wil*), but these do not exceed the limits.



الخاص بين يدى كتاب الله ، حتى لا يتوهم قارئه أو مستمع أن استخدام بعض المصطلحات الشائعة والجارية بين الناس ينطوى على مساس بقدسية القرآن الكريم ..

والله تعالى نسأل أن يعصمنا من الزلل ، وأن يعيننا على حمل أمانة العلم بحقها ، وهو - سبحانه - يقول الحق وهو يهدى السبيل ..

صادق مجلس مجمع البحوث الإسلامية على هذا التقرير بصيغته هذه فى جلسته يوم الخميس ٢٣ من ربيع الآخر ١٤٢٠ هـ الموافق ٥ من أغسطس ١٩٩٩م التى عقدت برياسة فضيلة الإمام الأكبر شيخ الأزهر الشريف .

الأمين العام

١٤٢٠/٤/٢٥ هـ

لمجمع البحوث الإسلامية

تحريراً فى :- ١٩٩٩/٨/٧ م

(سامى محمد متولى الشعراوى)



Islamic Research Committee meeting of Al-Azhar chaired by Sheikh Al-Azhar, 5/8/1999, fatwa dated 7/8/1999, written by Sheikh Sami Muhammad Mutawalli al-Sha'rawi



SHEIKHS HASAN AL-JISR & NADIM AL-JISR

“What is important and necessary is the belief that God is the creator of the world and of all the species it contains. Beyond this belief, there is no difference between the principle of Creationism and that of Evolution from some original matter created by God from which he made all species, branching them off by way of evolutionary processes in conformity with natural laws that He placed in the universe.”



EXAMPLES OF SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED WRONGLY BY MISTAKEN INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

- Which was created first, the heavens or the earth?
(Sheikh Shanqiti on Q. 2:29)
- Is the earth flat or round? (Imam Suyuti on Q. 88:20)
- Does the earth go round the sun, or vice versa?
(Numerous commentaries on Q. 36:38-40)
- Does the moon really cause the solar eclipse?
(Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in *Fath al-Bari*, Eclipse Prayer)
- Are we created from men & women's fluids, or men's fluids only? (Numerous commentaries on Q. 86:7-8)
- *Cf. Usama Hasan, Article on Moonsighting & Calculations in the Guardian Online*



ADAM (A.S.)'S PARENTS?

- Sheikh Shahin: not far-fetched, based on the Qur'an and the fossil record
- According to evolution, Adam a.s.'s parents would not have been apes, but almost human (hominids, neo-humans, *shibh insan*)
- This is not a matter of belief (*iman / 'aqidah*), but of tafsir and science!
 - Cf. al-Azhar's fatwa
- A Muslim's basic faith and/or chances of salvation are not affected by such disagreement!



A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK COMMENT

Comparing Hallaj, the 10th-century mystic of Baghdad, with Darwin:

Hallaj said, "I am God";

Darwin said, "I was an ape":

Each according to his aspiration!

Akbar of Allahabad, 19th - 20th century



SOME RECOMMENDED READING

- Nidhal Guessoum, *Islam's Quantum Question*, 2010
- Kenneth Miller, *Finding Darwin's God*, 2007
- Richard Leakey, *The Origin of Humankind*
- David Solomon Jalajel, *Islam & Biological Evolution - exploring classical sources & methodologies*, 2009 [cf. review by Guessoum]
- T.O. Shanavas, *Islamic Theory of Evolution*, 2010
- 'Abd al-Sabur Shahin, *Abi Adam (My Father Adam)*, 1998
- Any standard book on Biology, Evolution, Genetics, etc.

