

EVOLUTION AND ANGELS

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Even though he had studied all the specimens and reached his conclusions, Darwin delayed publishing of *on the Origin of Species* for twenty years, possibly fearing the inescapable wrath of the Church that befell Bruno and Galileo earlier. In 1600 Giordano Bruno was burned alive for his audacious heliocentric views—that the sun is in the center and not the earth, but some say it was for his other heretical views. Galileo held similar views and decided to bow down to the decision of the church and in 1633 he retracted his statements and spent rest of his life in prison, thus saving his life.

Among other reasons for delaying the publication of *on the Origin of Species* might be the reason that Darwin was concerned about the storm, his idea of evolution would raise. He was right in his concern. Even two hundred years later that storm shows no signs of settling down. Religion and Science have never seen eye to eye in the long history of Christianity. We find several incidences where scientists were persecuted and harassed for their views not conforming to those of the Bible. Islam, on the other hand, allowed full freedom to the flow of free ideas with rare exceptions.

The idea of evolution is perceived differently by all: The Holy Quran not only proposes it but confirms it, the Bible negates it, the Priest (and mullah) is fuelled by it, the atheist believes in it, the scientist builds upon it, and the uninformed misinterprets it. The theory of evolution has hit mankind like no other scientific theory, proving to be the greatest breakthrough in science for some and blasphemy for others, earning for Darwin both respect and ridicule at the same time.

EVOLUTION IS A DANGEROUS IDEA

The Atheist movement has profited the most from Evolution:

Although atheism might have been *logically* tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist. (Richard Dawkins)

Darwin's idea of evolution is a powerful one for many. This is how a philosopher Daniel Dennett describes it:

Let me lay my cards on the table, if I were to give an award for the single best idea anyone has ever had, I'd give it to Darwin, ahead of Newton and Einstein and everyone else. In a single stroke, the idea of evolution by natural selection unifies the realm of life, meaning, and purpose with the realm of space and time, cause and effect, mechanical and physical law. But it is not just a wonderful scientific idea. **It is a dangerous idea.**

CREATIONISM INTELLIGENT DESIGN AND DARWINISM

This powerful and dangerous idea became a challenge for Christianity. **Creationism, spontaneous generation** and then **young earth creationism** were just the products of reaction to the idea. Briefly, these ideas promote that the earth was created few thousand years ago and Darwin and evolution are wrong. When confronted by irrefutable scientific arguments (e.g. fossils records) Creationism metamorphosed into **Intelligent Design** movement.

Creationism is Christian religious belief that humanity, life, the Earth, and the universe were created in their current form by God. A complete, literal and non-interpretational belief in words as written in the book of Genesis. Hazrat Khalifatul Masih^{ra} the 4th calls it Spontaneity of creation and as such rejects it:

The Quran speaks of creation only in step by step progressive stages which are well provided for, categorically rejecting the concept of spontaneous generation.¹

It is a complete misunderstanding on the part of naturalists that the divide between them and the creationists is the real contention. The religious clergy they often allude to is the extremist faction among the Christian scholars who deny evolution at all levels and believe in spontaneity instead. Spontaneity means that each animal was created separately in its finished form with all the organs it contains. This is certainly not the Quranic concept of creation which we have been explaining throughout the book. It is completely different from the creationist's view found among the Christians.²

Intelligent Design movement (ID) started with a claim that it is science, a claim they tried to prove in court of law in 2005. In his decision about the famous and well publicized *Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District* case Judge John E. Jones III wrote:

In making this determination, we have addressed the seminal question of whether ID is science, we have concluded that it is not, and moreover that ID cannot uncouple itself from its creationist, and thus religious, antecedents.

The Holy Quran supports the idea of a gradual evolutionary process, not agreeing with all aspects of evolution as described by Darwin, and certainly not with the idea of the naturalists. As Ahmadi Muslims we believe that God Almighty is the **Creator**, He is **Intelligent** and the best of **Designers**, and He created and **evolved** the universe by stages. As such, we are believers in *Creation, Intelligent Design*, and *Evolution*. But these words are understood differently and carry implied meanings that we must not agree with. Like many other English words, these words carry inherent 'labels' that we must avoid. The word 'Democrat' refers to one who belongs to The Democratic Party and believes in Democratic agenda, and it has nothing to do with its English meaning—belief in Democracy; the word 'Intelligent Design' refers to one who belong to the Intelligent Design Movement and not one who thinks God to be an Intelligent Designer. Similarly, being *Leftist* does not refer to being left-handed. Darwinism, Young Earth Creationism, Creationism and Intelligent Design are all loaded terms and labels with additional connotations and agendas. It is very important for Ahmadies and particularly those involved in communicating the message to others (*Da'een Illullahs*) to completely understand the implied connotations of these labels. While it must be emphasized that The Holy Quran proposes evolution and there are several verses describing creation of life in stages and over a long periods of time, it does not support Darwinism and its implied Atheism, Creationism, or Intelligent Design.

All this has been extensively discussed by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad^{ra} in his book *Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth* and one should refer to this book for further study on this topic. This book describes the Quranic concept of unique evolution, not the evolution proposed by Darwin, and demolishes the sand-castles of Natural Selection and survival of fittest when used by atheists to support their views. In the scientist arena and with pertinent scientific examples forceful arguments are made against Naturalists views: views unchecked surely leading to atheism.

HOW DO THE BIRDS FLY?

If you ask someone a question, "How do the birds fly? How do they stay up in the air?"

The answers might be a good lecture on aerodynamic and laws of physics and shape of the wing of the bird and the act of flapping of the wings and its interaction with the currents of the air stream.

The explanations are all scientifically accurate. However, The Holy Quran gives a different answer:

Do they not see the birds held under subjection in the vault of heaven? None keeps them back save Allah. Verily, in that are Signs for a people who believe. (Al Quran 16:80)

This verse forcefully states that it is Allah who holds the bird in air, preventing it from a free fall. It does not deny the existence of gravity and laws of physics in operation, but only as a system totally in control of Allah. It is very interesting to note that none of us have any problem in believing in Allah's power to hold the bird against gravity while knowing very well it is due to laws of physics. No one has thought of a need for the word like 'Guided Gravity,' or 'All-powerful Aerodynamics?' Then why do we need an expression like, 'Guided Evolution?'

Among innumerable rules and laws of Allah which operate the universe, evolution is, like physics, chemistry, astronomy, a rule of Allah. No reputable scientist will deny evolution; many observe it daily under their microscope, seeing one form of bacteria evolving into another form. Actions of Allah pertaining to laws of nature are not guided but in fact totally and completely controlled minute to minute, second to second and nanosecond to nanosecond: which is much more than mere guidance. It is not as if evolution goes on by itself and only needs tweaking here and there! It is a full time job and Allah is doing it and Angels have a role to play:

And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; and Allah encompasses all things. (Al Quran 4:127)

LAWS OF ALLAH AND ANGELS

How does the universe operate according to Islam? And what role do the **Angles** play in the general scheme of things? To answer such questions and more about the topic, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad^{aa} gave a speech on December 28, 1920 entitled *Mallaekatullah*. The speech is printed in Urdu in *Anwarul aaloom* in the fifth volume. Anyone who will read this speech in its originality will be rewarded with an exhilarating experience, an experience leading to unique knowledge about angels. I can only make a humble attempt to translate parts of it. Hazur said:

They (Angels) are the last "link" for the fulfillment of Laws of Nature. All that happens around us; the rain falling, wind blowing, the rays of sun reaching earth, the poisons having its poisonous effects, antidote working against poisonous effects, are all due to acts of angels. Nothing can work on its own. It does not mean that poison is not poison itself, it is, but unless the angel permits it cannot do its work. Similarly, the antidote will not work unless permitted by the angel. It is abundantly clear from The Holy Quran and about the functions assigned to angels.³

Explaining it further, he goes on:

It is proven that all that is physical and visible to us is divisible into smaller and yet smaller particles, leading into (*Lateef*) ethereal, incomprehensible, and imperceptible world. Obviously, it gets its energy from a source not easily visible because of its size, and size of particles it is comprised of. There is hidden wisdom in all of this system. It is at those smallest of the smallest and ethereal (*lateef*) places where angels operate to fulfill their duties.⁴

He elaborates upon it more:

When we study physical world and its causes and effects, we find observations leading to a world small in size, particles leading to sub-particles, all of it invisible to our eyes. Solid matter changing to gases and even more ethereal in nature, and finally, it is said, **the matter changing to energy**, and sources of these energies are the angels.⁵

(We should note here that the famous matter-energy relationship $E=mc^2$ was suggested by Albert Einstein in 1905.)

Hazur said:

I am not saying that the immediate cause of rain is an Angel, nor am I saying that it is the Angel who carries water from the ocean to cause rain. What I am saying is this: those clouds that cause rain are in control of Angels. The Angels operate as the final link in the chain of cause and effect, while there are other causes in

operation as well. Angels do not possess any power of their own. They merely manifest the properties inherently present in the objects possessing those properties. If something is the cause for fever and someone uses that something; then the Angel responsible for that cause to be manifested makes the fever to be manifested. When the remedy is used for the fever then the Angel responsible for that remedy causes that to work and fever gets cured. Not having any power of their own, they are the last link in the chain of cause and effect.⁶

And explaining it further:

All those who believe in God to be the creator, also must believe that He created all properties of the material things. These properties are inherently present and get manifested through the agency of Angels. Matter is dense and Allah is *Lateef* (Incomprehensible). When we look at laws of nature we see that Allah's rules work upon visible things with forces working upon the finest and invisible. Human body is controlled by Mind, Soul, spirit, whatever we call it, it is invisible and ethereal. Once it departs from the physical body, the physical body becomes useless and lifeless.⁷

Before the advent of The Promised Messiah (as), Muslim scholars had contributed very little to knowledge of The Angels. It was the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him and after him, the Promised Messiah who extensively and eloquently elaborated upon this topic. Following are some of the excerpts from Promised Messiah's (as) writings:

The All-Powerful One has not confined the events of the world to a visible system, but there is also an invisible system which is in operation all the time. The sun and the moon and the earth, and the vapors that become rain, and the winds that blow fiercely, and the hail that descends upon the earth and the shooting stars have physical causes for all their actions and changes and revolutions and occurrences which are set out in books on astronomy and physics, yet those who possess insight know that behind these causes there are other causes which regulate them and which are called angels. Whatever they are connected with, they carry it to its goal and in their functions they keep in mind the spiritual objects that God Almighty has committed to them.^{8,9}

Angels safeguard against physical calamities also, but this safeguarding is in a spiritual manner. For instance, if a person is standing at a place where a wall is about to fall down, no angel will lift him up with his hands and take him away from the place. If that person is destined to be saved, an angel would convey to him the warning that he should move away. But the protection of stars and elements, etc., is physical.¹⁰

The Holy Quran nowhere says that God is changeable, but it does say that man is changeable. Therefore, God carries out changes appropriate to him. When a child is in the womb it is nourished on blood, and when it is born, for a time it is nourished on milk and thereafter takes other food. God Almighty makes appropriate provision for it from time to time. When a child is in the womb God Almighty commands the internal particles to manufacture blood for it. When it is born that command is canceled. The angels of the mother's breasts, which are their particles, are commanded to produce milk. When a child finishes its nurture through milk, that command is also canceled and the angels of the earth, who are its particles, are commanded to produce food and water for it till the end. We admit, therefore, that there are such changes in God's commandments....God has taught us in the Holy Quran that this natural system does not run by itself and that all the particles of these things hear the voice of God and are His angels, who are appointed by Him to carry out certain functions and they do so according to His will. The particles of gold manufacture gold, and the particles of silver manufacture silver, and the particles of pearls manufacture pearls, and the particles of the human body prepare the human child in the womb. These particles do not function on their own, but hear God's voice and act in accordance with it That is why they are called His angels. Angels are of many types These are angels of the earth. The angels of heaven exercise their influence from heaven as the heat of the Sun is an angel of God which ripens the fruits and performs other functions. The winds are God's angels which assemble the clouds and influence the fields in different ways, and then above them there are other angels which exercise their influence Physics bears witness that angels are essential beings We observe them with our own eyes.¹¹

The manner in which the Holy Quran has expounded the subject of angels is straightforward and reasonable and there is no escape from accepting it. Deep reflection over the Holy Quran discloses that for the development of man, and indeed for the external and internal development of the whole universe, some

intermediaries are needed. It appears clearly from certain indications in the Quran that some of the pure beings that are called angels have distinct relationship with heavenly bodies. Some of them drive the wind and some cause the rain to descend and some others cause other influences to descend upon the earth.¹²

Angels are the agency for manifestation of Allah's powers. They are responsible for maintenance of the universe and the laws that govern it. Angels are responsible for evolution to take place. The Angels hold the bird up in the air. This can be understood only by those who have faith and *Imaan*. Non-believers cannot understand it. This is exactly what The Promised Messiah^{as} explained:

A philosopher, as I have said already, contemplating the heavens and earth reflecting on the perfect orderliness of universe, merely states that there ought to be a creator. But I lead to a higher stage and affirm on the basis of my personal experience that God is present. (Malfuzat, Vol 3, p. 16)

As the operation of reason is defective, incomplete and doubtful, a philosopher cannot recognize God purely through reason. Most people who try to determine the existence of God Almighty purely through the existence of reason, in the end become atheists.^{13 14}

In summary, evolution is a law of Allah, and like other laws of Allah, Angels are the last link in its manifestation. Creationism, Intelligent Design and Darwinian evolution will never be able to completely explain the physical and spiritual basis for evolution, and for us the concept of evolution is beautifully explained by the Holy Quran.

¹ Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. *Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 1998. P:340.

² Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. *Revelation Rationality Knowledge and Truth*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 1998. P:491.

³ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU5-17.pdf#page=28>

⁴ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU5-17.pdf#page=36>

⁵ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU5-17.pdf#page=37>

⁶ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU5-17.pdf#page=44>

⁷ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/au/AU5-17.pdf#page=57>

⁸ <http://www.alislam.org/books/essence2/Essence-2.pdf>

⁹ Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. *Essence of Islam Vol. 2*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 2004. Page 158.

¹⁰ Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. *Essence of Islam Vol. 2*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 2004. Page 158.

¹¹ Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. *Essence of Islam Vol. 2*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 2004. Page 148.

¹² Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. *Essence of Islam Vol. 2*. Islam International Publications Ltd., 2004. Page 151.

¹³ Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. *Roohani khazaen vol 22 p. 120*, in the book *Hakeekatul Wahee*.

¹⁴ <http://www.alislam.org/urdu/rk/rk-22-80.pdf#page=120>