

Orthodox Muslim Scholars on Darwinism and the Theory of Evolution

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The Permanent Committee for Islāmic Research and Verdicts,¹ a board comprising of some of the leading Islāmic authorities in the world today, was asked, “There are those who say that long ago man was an ape and then he evolved (into a man). So is this correct and if so, what is the proof?”

So the committee of scholars answered as follows:

“This statement is not correct and the proof for that is what Allāh has explained in the *Qur‘ān* with regards to the evolutionary phases in the creation of Ādam. Allāh the Exalted has said,

**“Indeed, the example of Īsā (i.e. Jesus) to Allāh is like that of Ādam.
He created Him from dust.”** [Qur‘ān 3:59]

Then, this dust was moistened until it became firm and clinging clay that could be molded through manipulation. So Allāh the Exalted said,

“And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay.” [Qur‘ān 23:12]

And Allāh the Exalted said,

“Indeed, We created men from sticky clay.” [Qur‘ān 37:11]

Then it became altered black mud. Allāh the Exalted said,

“And We did certainly create man out of clay from an altered black mud.” [Qur‘ān 15:26]

Then, when it had dried, it became clay like that of pottery.

“He created man from clay like that of pottery.” [Qur‘ān 55:14]

And Allāh formed man in the form that He wanted and He blew into him from His spirit. Allāh the Exalted said,

“And when your Lord said to the angels: I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud.” [Qur‘ān 15:28]

¹ **Permanent Committee for Islāmic Research and Verdicts:** This committee of some of the top scholars in the Muslim world was established in Saudi Arabia by royal decree no. 137/1 and dated 07/08/1391 A.H. / (08/29/1971 C.E.). Among its roles are to prepare research papers ready for discussion amongst the Council of Senior Scholars and deliver religious edicts for individual issues.

Allāh the Exalted said,

“And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My (created) soul, then fall down to him in prostration.” [Qur‘ān 15:29]

These are the evolutionary stages that have passed over the creation of Ādam (may peace be upon him) according to the *Qur‘ān*.

As for the evolutionary stages that have passed over the progeny of Ādam, then Allāh the Exalted said,

“And certainly did We create man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a sperm-drop in a firm lodging. Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump (of flesh), and We made (from) the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allāh, the best of creators.” [Qur‘ān 23:12-14]

As for the wife of Ādam, Hawā‘ (Eve), then Allāh the Exalted has clarified that he created her from him. So Allāh the Exalted said,

“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.” [Qur‘ān 4:1]

And the success is with Allāh.”²

The renowned Muslim scholar, Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-’Uthaymīn³ was asked about the Islāmic view on the theory of evolution and man’s origin, so he answered,

“This statement, that the origin of mankind is an ape is not correct. And to believe in it is disbelief, because it is a rejection of the *Qur‘ān*. Since, Allāh the Exalted has clarified that origin of mankind was from dust when He explained the creation of Ādam (may peace be upon him) and he was the father of mankind. Then Allāh made his progeny out of clay and muddy water. And those creatures that are known as apes or monkeys are from another created species. So they are creatures that have naturally come into existence in this form. Allāh the Blessed and Exalted brought them into existence in this form, just as He did with the donkeys, the dogs, the female mules, the bees, the camels, the cows, the sheep, the gazelles, the chickens and other creatures.

² See *Fatāwā al-Lajnah al-Dā‘imah* (Riyadh: Dār al-Nuhā, 1996C. E./1412 A. H.) vol. 1; no. 5167. It was signed by: **President:** ‘Abd al-’Azīz b. ‘Abdullāh b. Bāz; **Vice President:** ‘Abd al-Razzāq ‘Affī; **Member:** ‘Abdullāh b. al-Ghudayyān; **Member:** ‘Abdullāh b. al-Qu’ūd.

³ **Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-’Uthaymīn:** He taught religious fundamentals at the *Sharī‘ah* (Islamic law) Faculty of Imām Muḥammad b. Sa’ūd Islāmic University, Qasīm Branch. He was also a member of the Council of Senior Scholars of Saudi Arabia, and the Imām and lecturer at the grand mosque of ‘Unayzah city. He passed away on Wednesday, the 10th January, 2001 C. E. He was 74 years of age.

And it is not permissible for anyone... Rather, it is not permissible for a Muslim state that ascribes itself to Islām to accept this theory in its schools. Rather, it is obligatory upon the Muslim state to remove that from its schools, because if the student is raised upon such a belief from a young age, it will be very difficult for him to abandon it. Rather, I do not hold it permissible to affirm this in the schools, even if it be to refute it and to declare it false. It must be declared false without affirming it within the school system, because establishing something and then trying to deny it is corruption. Rather, it must not be affirmed as truth firstly, then they must endeavour to show its falsehood.

And it is obligatory upon the Islāmic state to take another look at its curricula and its syllabuses and to make them loyal to the Book of Allāh (i.e. the *Qur'ān*) and the *Sunnah* (traditions) of His Messenger (may the peace and salutations of Allāh be upon him) so that Allāh will return the Islāmic nation to its previous magnificence and honour.”⁴

In refuting al-Qasīmī, who attempted to justify the theory of evolution, the late scholar, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Sa'dī⁵ said,

“So this man is bold and he has abandoned what the Messengers and the divinely revealed Books informed about. And he has followed the way of the naturalist atheists who have formed a fictitious theory called the western Darwinist theory. It inclines towards the contention that man evolved from an ape...

And even other people (scientists) have found fault with them, let alone their contradiction to the Messengers and their followers...

And this theory – along with what it contains from rejection of all the divinely revealed Books and the Messengers – is the wickedest of slanders and the farthest from the true realities.

So what path has led them to this false slander? And how do they corroborate such boldness? However, Allāh has refused, except to disgrace those who spurn His Religion by rejecting Him and His Messengers.”⁶

⁴ See Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, *Nūr alā al-Darb* (no. 55).

⁵ **'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Sa'dī:** He memorized the *Qur'ān* and mastered the science of its recitation before he reached the age of 11 years. He then engaged himself in seeking Islamic knowledge, studying with the scholars of his city and those who visited it. He has written books on various Islāmic sciences, including a critically acclaimed exegesis of the *Qur'ān*. He passed away in 1955.

⁶ See 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Nāṣir al-Sa'dī, *Tanzīh al-Dīn wa Ḥamalatuḥu* (Riyadh: al-Maktabah al-Rushd, 2001C. E./1422 A. H.) pp. 131.