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CREATION OF MAN IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QUR'AN AND SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

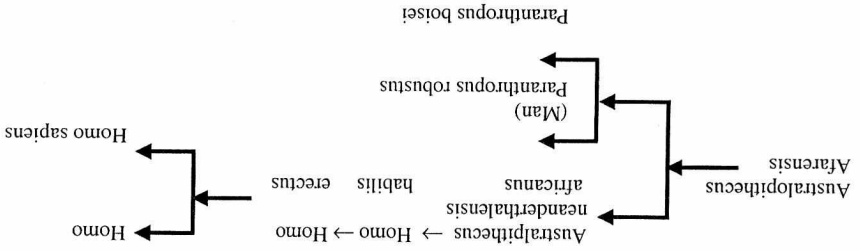
Man has been pondering over his creation since the time immemorial. He endeavoured to know about his origin through philosophy, religion and science. The Holy Qur'an has underlined some facts regarding creation of first human being. In this paper Quranic viewpoint regarding the origin of man and the scientific explanation of the concerned verses have been elucidated. It is concluded that the Holy Qur'an recognizes chemical evolution taken place in the matter from which first man was created. The Holy Qur'an explains seven stages of man's creation. There is a complete harmony between the revealed message and scientifically established knowledge.

The Holy Qur'an does not accept the theory of organic evolution. According to the Qur'an the first human being was created from inorganic matter. This matter underwent some changes which are termed as chemical evolution and man was directly made form it. Not a single verse of the Holy Qur'an can be pointed out which may tell us about the common ancestor of man and ape. Man had never been any other animal. He was created as the human being and had not evolved from ape or monkey. After his physical creation Almighty Allah endowed him with His own spirit (Ruh). The human creation was not merely the arrangement of some substances that accidentally joined each other; it was rather in accordance with the Divine Scheme of Creation.

SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION OF MAN'S CREATION:

According to scientists the evolution of chemical elements in the universe followed the Big Bang. The concept of chemical evolution or chemosynthesis explains how life might have developed or evolved from non-life through the process called abiogenesis. Various experiments have been conducted to show certain aspects of this process. Scientists like Alexander Oparin, Stanley L. Miller Sidney Fox, Melvin Calvin, Cairns-Smith, Cech and Altman, Arthur Kornberg have made scientific contribution in this field. In the beginning organic molecules would have been formed from inorganic substance which gave rise to complex organic molecules. Eventually protocells have been produced¹. The first organism is considered as a unicellular organism that was a common ancestor of both animals and plants. Biologists believe that complex organisms have been formed from simpler type by slow, gradual and orderly changes which are termed as organic evolution. Man is also believed to have been evolved from other animals. It has been postulated that man, apes and monkeys are modified form of some common ancestor. The theory of human evolution is based on fossils excavated by palaeontologists².

Humanity's long march as visualized by palaeontologists can be shown as follows:



However, all biologists do not agree to the concept of common ancestors of man and other animals. There is a

controversy among them over the issue. Fossil record cannot be relied upon because these are only fragments of earlier living organisms. Dr. Abu Bakr, a famous Pakistani palaeontologist does not believe in the idea of organic evolution. He refuted it on the basis of scientific reasons. He observes: "Man stands distinct from the rest of animals. Two of his characters distinguish him from other animals. These are articulate speech and most highly developed brain. Articulate speech is an absolute character. It is not present in any other animal; so much so that animals cannot be arranged in different stages or groups according to this character. The other character is highly developed brain. It is true that other animals also have intelligence, but the gap between the most highly developed animals like ape and man is so wide that this character should be regarded as an absolute one"³.

It can be concluded that the concept of chemical evolution in believed by the scientists unanimously but all of them do not agree over the theory of organic evolution.

SEVEN STAGES OF INORGANIC EVOLUTION AND THE QUR'AN

The Holy Qur'an has underlined seven stages of inorganic evolution regarding creation of man. Using the Qur'anic terminology these stages may be enumerated as follows:-

1. Basic Constituents:

- a. Turab (تراب)
- b. Ma (ماء)

2. Tin (طين)

3. Timilazib (طين لازيب)

4. Salsalin min Hamain Masumun (صالحات من حامين مسومون)

5. Salsalin ka-Fakhkhar (صالحات كالفخار)

6. Sulalatin min Tin (سلاطين من طين)

7. Bashar (بشر)

TURAB

According to Dr. F. Steingass "turab" signifies earth, ground or dust⁴. In E. W. Lane's view "turab" means dust and earth, generally the former; i.e. Fine, dry, particles of earth⁵. Modern Arabs also use this word for dust, earth, dirt, ground and soil⁶. Dr. Abdul Wadud has translated "turab" into inorganic matter⁷. The following verses of the Holy Qur'an tell that man was created from turab:

Among His Signs is this, that He created you from dust.

(Al-Qur'an XXX:20)

It is He Who has created you from dust.

(Al-Qur'an XL:67)

He created him (Adam) from dust

(Al-Qur'an III:59)

Dost thou deny Him Who created thee out of dust

(Al-Qur'an XVIII:37)

And Allah did create you from dust.

(Al-Qur'an XXXV:11)

On the occasion of conquest of Makkah while addressing Makkans, the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

"All human beings are from (the generation of) Adam and Adam was (created) from dust (Turab)."

MA'

Ma' means water. A number of verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that water was also basic constituent of the matter from which man was created e.g.

We made every living thing from water.

(Al-Qur'an XXI:30)

TIN:

It is He Who has created man from water: then has He established relationships of lineage and marriage.
(Al-Qur'an XXV:54)

Imam Raghīb defines it as "the mixture of dust and water is called al-tin"⁹.
It means loam, clay, sealing earth, red chalk, mud, puddle
¹⁰. According to E.W. Lane, Tin refers to clay, earth, soil or mud: it differs in different layers or strata of the earth, the best is the purely unmixed with sand, remaining after the subsiding of the waters.¹¹

The following verses of the Holy Qur'an tell about the creation of man from tin:

It is He Who created you from clay.

(Al-Qur'an VI:2)

He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with clay.

(Al-Qur'an XXXII:7)

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man from clay.

(Al-Qur'an XXXVIII:71)

Iblis said to Almighty Allah:

Thou didst create me from fire, and him from clay.

(Al-Qur'an VII:12)

Shall I fall prostrate before that which Thou hast created of clay?

(Al-Qur'an XVII:61)

Chemically, clays are aluminosilicates and classified according to the relative number of tetrahedral and octahedral layers. Montmorillonite clays could have served as supports and as catalysts for the emergence of the first biomolecules¹². Cairan-Smith is a leading advocate of the idea that life began with clays and argues that first organisms to evolve on earth may have been made of crystals of clays¹³. Some scientists believe that clays are capable of storing information and can replicate. The importance of clays for the origin of life can be traced to Bernal¹⁴ who listed the advantageous features of clays for the origin of life as:

- a) their ordered arrangement;
- b) their large absorption capacity;
- c) their shielding against sunlight (clays protect their reaction products from photodecomposition under intense irradiation from sunlight);
- d) their ability to concentrate organic chemical; and
- e) their ability to serve as polymerization templates. clays can oligomerize simple molecules into bimolecular (porphyrins).

Dr. Shabnam Iqbal states: "Qur'anic concept that "Allah created Adam from clay" becomes a scientific assertion because the constituent parts of clay have all been scientifically identified in the human body"¹⁵.

From the above-mentioned views of scientists it can be concluded that science is advancing to testify the Qur'an view of human creation.

TINILLAZIB:

It means sticky clay¹⁶ or plastic clay¹⁷. Dr. Abdul Wadud¹⁸ considers Tinillazib as adsorption stage in the human creation.¹⁸ According to Dr. Majid Ali, "Sticky clay might be the protein droplets produced in the primeval slime".¹⁹

The following verse of the Holy Qur'an describes human creation from Tinillazib:

We have created them out of sticky clay.

(Al-Qur'an XXXVII:11)

A hundred year ago, it would have been impossible to tell why our Exalted Creator has described Adam's creation from sticky clay but today we can grasp very well the characteristics of such soil. In clay and sticky mud carbon and Nitrogen atoms have negative valencies: C⁻⁴ and N⁻³.

What is the secret that this property conceals? The answer is that oxygen, phosphorous and hydrogen occurring naturally in the soil can combine only with negatively charged carbon and nitrogen to form the basic constituents of the human body. This is the secret that the above verse contains.²⁰

SALSALIN MIN HAMAIM MASNUN

Salsal means dry clay or argillaceous earth²¹ and Hamaim²² MASNUN means black mud altered for the worse in odour. Muhammad Marmaduke Pickethall has rendered 'Salsalin min Hamaim MASNUN into 'Potter's clay of black mud altered'.²⁹ The word 'Hama' actually means 'old mud which with the passage of time had undergone physical and chemical changes; not putrefaction which is a biological phenomenon'.²⁴ According to Dr. Majid Ali, "Salsal' means the clay in suppurated. Hamaim²⁵ mASNUN means the mud which has been Kneaded".

According to Dr. Tahir al-Qadri Salsalin min Hamam Masnun means old physically and chemically altered mud²⁶. The Holy Qur'an has underlined this stage in the following verses:

We created man from sounding clay, from mud moulded into shape.

(Al-Qur'an XV:26)

"Behold"! thy Lord said to the angels! I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape.

Thou hast created him out of potter's clay of black mud altered.

(Al-Qur'an XV:33)

'Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali commenting on these verses writes : I understand the meaning to be: that man's body was formed from wet clay²⁷ moulded into shape and then dried until it could emit sound²⁷.

SALSALIN KAL FAKHHAR

According to E.W. Lane, Salsal is clay not made into pottery; so called because of its making a sound or clay mixed with sand; which, when it becomes dry, makes a sound; and which, when baked, is Fakkhhar or dry clay, that makes a sound by reason of its dryness²⁸. Dr. 'Abdul Wadud' has rendered 'Salsalin kal' Fakkhhar into "mud nearly as dry as pottery"²⁹. The Holy Quran tells about it in the following verse:

He created man from sounding clay like unto pottery.

(Al-Qur'an LV:14)

Dr. Majid 'Ali' is of view, "this, probably points out the polymerization of protein droplets, because polymerisation (i.e. formation of protozooids during the process of origin of life) needs

some heating: Polymerisation (during the process of origin of life)³⁰ is the final stage in the formation of protoplasm, the basis of life³⁰.

SULALATIN MIN TIN:

³¹ Sulah means essence or quintessence³². It may be defined as "extract (essence) of purified clay"³².

It is said in the Qur'an:

We did create man from a quintessence of clay.

(Al-Qur'an XXXIII:12)

According to Maurice Bucaille the Arabic term 'Salat' means 'one thing extracted from another thing' "The 'quintessence of clay'", he thinks, "must refer to the various chemical components which constitute clay, extracted from water, which in terms of weight is its main element"³³.

BASHAR

It means mankind and the human being. It is applied to the male and the female used alike as singular, plural and dual³⁴. The first representative of species "Bashar" was Adam. Maulana Sayed Maududi thinks that Bashar was made from Salsalim min hama'im masnun Ka'l Fakhakhar, in whom Allah breathed of His spirit, to whom the angels were commanded to bow down, and from whose species his mate was created³⁵. The Holy Qur'an has indicated that the purpose of above-mentioned steps of chemical evolution was the creation of man.

The Holy Qur'an tells about the creation of Bashar in the following verses:

Behold! Thy Lord said to angels: "I am about to create man from clay".

(Al-Qur'an XV:28)

Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape.

(Al-Qur'an XV:28)

Actually, Almighty Allah ordered the angels:

And when I have formed him full and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down before-him in prostration.

(Al-Qur'an XV:29)

The Qur'an recognizes Chemical Evolution:

The scientists agree that the living state arose from the non-living through the processes of biogenesis which have now ceased to operate. Laboratory experiments have clearly established that "a pre-biological synthesis of complex compounds was possible"³⁶. So it has been proved that the organic compounds like protein and nucleic acid were produced from the complex interaction of inorganic substances which ultimately gave rise to living organisms on the earth.

Ibn Sa'd has quoted that Allah Almighty fermented the clay for forty days from which Adam was created³⁷.

A great contemporary interpreter of the Holy Qur'an, Justice Pir Mohammad Karam Shah al-Azhari explains the processes of chemical evolution as follows:

First, soil (turab) was taken and mixed with water to make mud which was called tin. Then this mud remained unused until it became sticky which was called Timillazib. Similarly this sticky mud was left for some time in which bad smell was produced and its colour changed blackish that was called Hama'im Masnun. Then this sticky altered mud became clay and began to sound like baked potsherd. Then it was moulded into human and Allah

breathed into it. Now it was Adam before whom angels prostrated³⁸.

Man, according to Mulla Sadra, is the total form of this world of matter and form, for the essence of all the material elements are synthetically integrated in man. Quoting from the Qur'an, Mulla Sadra maintains that God has employed the essence of all the material elements in the constitution of the physical framework of man. God says that He created man out of dust (min turab) which implies the primary material stuff; in another place, he says that He created man out of clay (min tin) which means the mixture of water and dust; in another place, out of an extraction of clay (min Sulatin min tin) which means a clay detached from ordinary clay; in another place, out of clinging clay (min tinillazib) which implies the clay that persists in a moderate condition so as to be able to accept any form; in another place, out of clay of mud moulded (min Salsalim min Hama'im Masnun) which means the clay that is changeable with the air and still in another place, out of a clay like potter's (min Salsalin ka'l Fakhkhar) which means the clay that accepts the effect of fire. God then, proclaims that He completed human body by breathing His spirit into him (Nafakhtu fihi min ruhi)³⁹.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan has also made an attempt to explain the process of creation of man through chemical evolution. Due to lack of scientific knowledge, he is not much successful in this effort. In his Qur'anic exegesis he states:

"The chemical composition is this that whenever two things are mixed (chemically), the constituents cannot be separated and they make a new thing (which is called compound), so when Turab, Tin, Salsal, Hama'im Masnun and water were mixed, the chemical composition of these (constituents) gave rise to a thing, man was created whereof. This is perhaps that thing which accumulates on water surface and it is neither clay nor sand or

mud. A new thing becomes by the combination of all these things, and it seems that it is the matter from which all living organisms either animals or man have been created and it has also been described by the Holy Qur'an⁴⁰.

Sir Sayyid's interpretation is not convincing because the constituents used for the creation of man are only Turab and water. All the words like tin, tinnillazib, Salsalin min Hamam Masnun, Salsalin ka'I Fakhkhar, are different steps of chemical evolution which resulted in man's creation.

Sayyid Amir Ali (1274-1337/1858-1919) has interlinked the different steps of man's creation in the following words:

"The dust (taken for creation) of Adam was in (the form of) separate particles, when water was mixed, it become Tin (Clay). Then it became Tinnillazib (sticky clay) after some time, then it became Hamam Masnun (black mud altered for the worse in odour) and according to many (scholars) same Tinnillazib changed into Salsal after it has dried whereof Adam was created"⁴¹. Sayyid Maududi has also described the order of initial stages of the creation of man as given at different places in the Qur'an⁴².

CONCLUSION

The scientific progress has helped us to explain how life appeared on the earth. Although it is impossible for scientists to repeat all the steps involved in the creation, yet the experiments conducted by biologists about the origin of life elucidate the process of creation. Quranic data clearly explains that the creation of man was not abrupt but he was created gradually. Secondly, a number of changes took place in the inorganic matter man was made whereof. Thirdly, man is made directly from substance taken from earth. He has never passed through any step of organic evolution. Fourthly, man is not the result of any spontaneous process; he is rather created by Almighty Allah to spend a

purposeful life. The facts about the creation of man underlined in the Qur'an have no contradiction with the established facts of science. The verses relating to creation can be interpreted in more convincing manner by applying scientific knowledge.

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