Islamic Perspective On Atheistic Fragment Of Darwinism

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Abstract
Traditionally, atheists have refuted the existence of God using philosophical arguments mainly. At present, new atheists deny the existence of God using scientific, moral and historical arguments. This addition in argumentation has given a slight rise to atheism in different parts of world as well as in Muslim countries. Muslim scholars have responded the atheistic thoughts but the response is still unknown in academic community. The study compares new atheist thinkers to Muslim scholars and analyzes the differences, especially with respect to evolution theory by Charles Darwin. With the aid of this theory, atheist scientists and intellectuals claim that science is enough for the explanation about the creation of our universe. According to them, modern man is not dependent anymore on any divine scripture. Darwinian scientists claim that universe has come into existence accidently without the interference of any divine power. Atheist writers like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Deniel C. Dennett argue that atheism has got scientific basis with the evolutionary theory. Muslim scholars have differences in their views, some reject it completely and some partially accept it as working scientific model. However, they unanimously refute the atheistic part of theory that shows the non-existence of God and purposeless universe.
Keywords: Evolution; Post-Darwinian; Muslim responses; Islam; Charles Darwin; Qur’an; Science; New atheism

1. Introduction

Views of Charles Darwin on religion got much attention from different religions. His main work on evolution of species caused of debates between religion and science in the twentieth century. In result, creation and evolution debates started between religion and atheism.

In 1859, Darwin’s book ‘On the Origin of Species’, trembled the theological view that God is managing the universe from a remote heaven. As stated by Darwin, there is sufficient evidence that the life has evolved from other forms of ancestral matter. He describes human are descendants of hairy tailed quadrupeds and arboreal in their habits (Darwin, 1859, P. 21). By this shocking statement he removed human as the centre of all living beings which is described by religious scriptures. Moreover he discovered mechanisms for the working of evolution in animals and plants. He proposed three facts; first the ‘exponential growth’ the inclination of living beings to increase in their numbers, second the ‘variation’ every specie exists a little variation from one to another, third the ‘inheritance’ the fact that all living beings inherit traits of parents (Darwin, 1859, P.31). Darwin concludes that our population will increase till it gains the limits of its available resources. The individual struggle for the existence with their traits helps them to succeed in dealing with the adverse circumstance is more likely to have the chances of survival and offspring. Some of offspring inherit new traits and pass them to other generations. The offspring with least favorable traits slowly diminishes over the period of time and this procedure preserves some traits as well as reduces others, slowly transforming species (Darwin, 1859, P.43).

The idea of natural selection became an alternative to God, which challenged the belief about life’s origin in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Foremost adverse reaction to Darwin came from Christian scholars; it was twenty years before the parts of evolution theory of Darwin began accessible in Arabic world. Arab Christians made the first translation of Darwin’s work. A large percentage of Middle Eastern Christians and Muslims were unaware with the Darwin’s ideas about creation and other scientific developments in Europe until the latter half of the nineteenth century (Varisco, 2015). The study compares and analyses the thoughts of new atheists and Muslim scholars about the Darwin’s theory of evolution.

2. New Atheism

At present, atheism is rising in different parts of world rapidly. The reason behind this rise is the aggressive campaign of new atheists such as Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Christopher Hitchens. New atheism in form of an organized movement begins from the first decade of 21st century.

Sam Harris is considered as the initiator writer and public speaker of the campaign. He published the book ‘The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason’ in 2004. After the incident of 9/11, Harris criticized all the world’s religions especially Islam. He portrayed Islam as the religion of terror and violence. The second most influential academic writer of this campaign
is Richard Dawkins who published his bestselling book ‘The God Delusion’ in 2006. He takes active part in the debates and discourses with religious scholars and leads different campaigns against religious beliefs worldwide. Third influential writer is Daniel Dennett, who is basically a philosopher. He wrote his bestselling book, ‘Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon’ in 2007. Another most renowned new atheist writer is Christopher Hitchens. He wrote the book, ‘God is not Great: How Religions Poisons everything’ in 2007. These four books are considered as the foundation of new atheism. These new atheist added scientific explanation of universe and struggled for establishing scientific moralities to remove religion from all walks of life.

In addition to these new atheists, some other atheists like Lawrence M. Krauss, Polly Toynbee, Philip Pullman, Martin Amis, Jerry Coyne, P.Z. Myers, Larry Moran, Victor J. Stenger, Bill Maher, Robert L. Park, Stewen Weinberg, Ian McEvan, Peter Sloterdijk, Philip Moller, A. C. Grayling, Michael Smidt-Saloman, Piergiorgio Osifreddi, Michael Onfray, Zizek, and ex-Muslim atheists Salman Rushdie, Ayyan Hirsri Ali and Ibn e Warraq, Armin Nawabi has also become the part of new atheist campaign and considered the proponents and supporters of new atheism.

3. New Atheists’ Argumentation

Sam Harris argues that natural selection theory by Charles Darwin is adequate to describe the beginning of universe and its functioning. He argues that, “Biologists say that DNA is the molecular basis for sexual reproduction. Each of us resembles our parents because we inherit a complement of their DNA. Each of us has arms and legs because our DNA coded for the proteins that produced them during our early development” (Harris, 2004, P.82). New atheists believe that science can explain better about human origin and physical working.

Richard Dawkins promotes the theory of evolution for the scientific explanation of the origin of universe and working. According to him evolution theory basically has provided scientific basis to atheism. Evolutionary theory provides an explanation for the existing entities (Dawkins, 2006, P. 68). He expounds that evolution by natural selection provides thorough explanation of universe design and complexity (Dawkins, 2006, P.79). He expresses that natural selection elaborates the whole life and raises human consciousness and capability of science to describe the most complicated questions of our universe (Dawkins, 2006, P.116). He illustrates that:

The most powerful and ingenious crane which has discovered so far is Darwin’s theory of evolution. Darwin has shown how living species, having their significant statistical improbability and design have evolved by gradual degrees from simple start. Now it can be argued safely that the illusion of design in living species is just that – an illusion (Dawkins, 2006, P.155).

Dawkins favors natural selection theory and he argues that in case neuroscientists discover a God centre in human brain, evolutionary scientists will still want to know the pressure of natural
selection that favored it (Dawkins, 2006, PP.168-169). He considers the theory as the beginning of science to explain natural phenomena without any divine guidance.

Denial Dennett argues that the understanding of evolutionary theory can make our world a peaceful and better place (Dennett, 2006, P. 268). He discusses that human have soul which is made of lot of tinny robots. He explains that our brain is unlike the brain of chimpanzees, dolphins, dogs and cats in regard that human can predict about future. He discusses that no other brain can understand his future and this special feature of understanding the world and future remains only with Homo sapiens. He claims that we can explain the operation and structure of the soul whereas concept of immaterial soul can give us just embarrassment instead of any scientific explanation (Dennett, 2013).

Dennett argues that human minds are the creations of memes which have played a great role in order to determine what and who we are? (Dennett, 1995). Similar to Dawkins, he believes that the God’s existence is a scientific hypothesis which is not beyond reason. Dennett narrates that scientific methods should continue to test the existence of God and truth of faiths (Dennett, 1995). He adds that the fundamental concepts of Darwinism, DNA based reproduction and evolution is now beyond any dispute among the scientists and getting strength every passing day. He illustrates that evolution is playing role while contributing in different scientific fields like geology, cosmology, meteorology, ecology and agronomy (Dennett, 1995). He argues that Charles Darwin’s idea of natural selection gets opposition of religious faiths because it reverses the traditional way of thinking about the universe. Moreover he represents that natural selection does not talk about only biology and genes but it explains that our comprehending brains are in result of fast growing cultural evolution.

Christopher Hitchens also recounts Darwin’s theories in order to explain the origins of humanity. He discusses that, “the real “miracle” is that we, who share genes with the original bacteria that began life on the planet, have evolved as much as we have. Other creatures did not develop eyes at all, or developed extremely weak ones. There is an intriguing paradox here: evolution does not have eyes but it can create them” (Hitchens, 2007, P.84). All the new atheists have firm belief on theory of evolution that is a way to explain the origin of universe and human scientifically. Dennett declares theory of evolution as atheistic miracle. He seems capable to nature itself for the origin and development of human and animals’ body parts. Hitchens explains that fossil records highlights that around 98 percents of the species which have created on earth have been ended (Hitchens, 2007, P.88).

New atheists believe that universe is pre-eternal and self existent and there is no God. Moreover, they argue that universe is purposeless; however, individual life can be spent purposefully. According to them, there is no life after death, no reward and no punishment.

4. Muslim Scholars’ Argumentation
Darwin’s theory of evolution considered as the first attempt to explain the origin of universe scientifically. New debates and discourses started in religious and intellectual circles across the world. Muslim scholars responded the theory in religious and scientific terms.

Charles Darwin began to read in Muslim world from almost 1860. Arab world provided a textual, institutional and political analysis of Darwin’s arguments as well as other contemporary American, British, German and French renowned and academic works on the theory of evolution, including Herbert Spencer to Ludwig Buchner (Alshakry, 2014, P.23). Darwin’s global appeal from the perspective of several generations of Arabs intellectuals and the impact of evolutionary thought on ideas of religion, science and state, provided new dimensions to atheistic argumentation. The politics of evolution initiated debates of progress, pedagogy, and other aspects of Arab past and future. With this propagation of Darwin’s ideology, he turned into a vehicle for debates and discourses about the conditions of belief, scriptural exegesis and cosmological views in general. Darwin’s influence intellectual and public level in the Arab world after World War I caused of new discourses in Christian and Muslim intellectual circles (Alshakry, 2014, P.14).

Initially Muslim intellectuals treated most of Darwin’s ideas as their own. Critics and supporters argued that Muslim scholars long ago presented the theory that “kinds” or species (which is ‘anwa’ in Arabic) could change with the passage of time. The idea of transmutation also brought back in these discourses, and early Muslim intellectuals and cosmological texts cited at any occasion Darwin was argued in Farsi, Arabic or Urdu (Alshakry, 2014, P.21). Comparisons were drawn with initial ideas of structures of beings, from minerals and matter to fauna and flora and ultimately to humanity. Some medieval scholar’s works also described that apes were earlier forms of humans. More evidences were provided by nineteenth-century Muslims scholars that there was nothing new in Charles Darwin’s theory (Alshakry, 2014, P.31).

Al-Jisr states the rules of literal interpretation (tafsir) and embedded or metaphoric ones (taʾwil). Relying on this distinction argued that the discourses about the earth’s age, for example, the adaptation, variation, and transformation of species with the passage of time, is found by scripture. The extended or metaphoric reading of the word for “days” in “days of creation” by many monotheists’ medieval scholars and notions of a “progression toward perfection” also put forth this trend (Alshakry, 2014, P.13).

Abduh is known among the initial of the Islamic scholars to support a reconciliation of religious texts with modern science. For instance, he propagated the notions of interpretation that in the Qur’an evidences of evolution and present scientific principles could be found. In the discourses with European orientalists and Christian critics Abduh argued that Islam and science were compatible and argued, in contrary, to the evidence of Christianity’s own comparatively difficult historical relationship with science. According to Abduh, Islam and modern science were necessarily sharing along the same path which is the development of civilization (Alshakry, 2014, P.165). Abduh seemed to signify the compatibility between ideas of evolution and Qur’an. He primarily did that by appealing to a wide range of flexible hermeneutic traditions and interpretive strategies of Islamic scriptural exegesis. For instance, his interpretation about the verse, “O men fear your Lord who has created you of one soul (soul) and from this many men and women” (The
Qur’an, 4/1). The meaning of ‘one soul’, he argued, did not refer precisely to Adam. Because all peoples were being addressed, many of them know nothing about Adam and Eve, how could such a specific reference be intended? He argued that “God has left this subject indefinite, so let us leave it in its indefiniteness” (Alshakry, 2014, P.175). The meaning of ‘one soul’ should be taken to refer to the concept of humanity itself. Abduh argued “Men are created from one soul, which is humanity, and all men are brothers in humanity, which is why it matters little if they claim their father is Adam or a monkey or something else” (Alshakry, 2014, P.175). Ibn e Rushd as well as Aristotle claimed that while individuals live and die, come and go, species do not: “they remain as they evolve” (Alshakry, 2014, P.176).

Abduh discussed that Islam was a friend of knowledge and science and a stimulus ideology for research about the secrets of natural phenomena. He joined this suitability to the specific rationality of the belief. The Qur’an frequently directs the use of reason and intellect in matters of faith. The methodology of science is seen as an important part of the Islamic directive of logical inquiry. He described that ‘al-naql wa al-‘aql’, revelation and reason were indeed united in Islam and argued that those contemporary Muslim scholars who believe that reason and science should have no business with religion were unknown to the actual understanding of Islam (Alshakry, 2014, P.177).

According to Ibrahim Kalin, the first confront with evolutionary theory in the Islamic world did not appear because of the translation of the book ‘On the Origin of Species’, which published in 1859 (Kalin, 2014, P.19). Instead, evolutionary theory came into the Islamic world by particular ideological channels. The evolution theory was mingled with materialism in the period of Ottoman Empire, and it was promoted through a specific segment of scholars, who established ‘Young Turk Movement’ and initiated a revolt in opposition of Sultan Abd al-Ḥamid II (d. 1918). In the subcontinent Muslims, the modernist thinker Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), renowned due to pro-British political posture, was among the earliest Islamic intellectuals to advocate and address theory of evolution (Kalin, 2014, P.34).

Nidhal Guessoum (professor of physics and astronomy), a supporter of the evolution theory carried out a survey among hundred faculty members and hundred students at the American university of Sharjah. The supposition that evolution theory is an unproved theory, was selected by sixty two percent respondents, however twenty five percent selected that it is a correct theory but not for humans and thirteen percent answered that the theory is verified through evidence (Kalin, 2014, P.54).

Islamic creationist scholar Adnan Oktar, who is renowned with pen name Harun Yahya, is known for promoting the anti-Darwin atmosphere. Harun Yahya made a network in the Muslims and cooperated with American Christian creationists as well. He published more than one hundred books to educate the Muslim world as well as the Western world. The Muslim students of the Netherlands and United Kingdom who refused the evolution theory religiously and its prohibition in class teaching is linked with the Harun Yahya’s influence on the Muslims in Western countries (Kalin, 2014, P.71).
In the book ‘al-Radd’ alā al-dahriyyīn’, printed in Persian language in 1878, was translated in Arabic language in 1885, the renowned Muslim scholar Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (d. 1897) embarked an anti-evolutionary theory and presented logical and scientific claims. He argued about the theory that “A group (of those materialists) claimed that the germs of all species, and in particular the animals, are in fact identical and there is no difference between the species in essence” (Kalin, 2014, P.129-131). Consequently, they believed that germs have ability to change from one species to other relying on needs, time, place as well as outer factors. Al-Afghānī further argues that Darwin tried to demonstrate that man is descendent from apes. As per Darwin’s claim, it seems practicable that fleas could turn into elephants over the periods of time, or an elephants could turn into fleas (Kalin, 2014, P.142).

Al-Afghānī also addressed the theory of evolution in the book ‘al-Khāṭīrāt’ (Ideas); he analyzed the Darwin’s theory of evolution and the thoughts of intellectuals like Spencer, Buchner and Shiblī Shumayyil. According to Al-Afghānī these philosophers indefensibly used evolution theory for promoting atheism and materialism. He described that the evolutionary theory is compatible with Islamic doctrines and Muslim Al-chemist Abu Bakr ibn Bishrun had already discussed its basics (Kalin, 2014, P.155).

Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī (d. 1954), an Egyptian scholar responded that Darwin theory of evolution, in general, is related solely with the ideas to the science of nature, for the reason that Darwin’s theory discussed the subject of the creation of human. Wajdī described that its inferences developed in supplementary branches of science like ethics, politics and philosophy. Wajdī recommended that the theory must be understood in the understanding that one’s beliefs and preconceptions must not be the scale in which Darwin’s theory is assessed. Rather the theory must be assessed according to its merits and demerits. Wajdī argued that it is the best way to approach the theory which should be adopted by every Muslim (Kalin, 2014, P.182-185).

The response of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who is a professor at George Washington University, resembles with Al-Afghānī’s strict stance. Nasr described the evolution theory as logically absurd and metaphysically impossible. He argues that much anthropological and biological evidence has been presented against evolution theory by some prominent European biologists. Nasr argues criticism against the theory was always ignored because evolution theory is considered as one of the pillars in modern thought. According to him, in case of the rejection of evolutionism the whole basis of the modern world would collapse and there would be no choice except to believe the existence of creator (Kalin, 2014, P.212). Nasr discusses that the view presented by evolution theory remained instrumental in order to destroying the spiritual sense and meaning of God’s creation, as described in divine scriptures (Kalin, 2014, P.233).

Nidhal Guessoum confirms the scientific foundations of the evolution theory. According to him, the evolutionary procedure is accepted fact of nature and people need to differentiate between evolution and the adverse theories. Guessoum added that non-literal comprehension of the Qur’an can entertain the scientific facts of Darwin theory (Kalin, 2014, P.213).

Ḥusayn al-Jisr (1845–1909), a Lebanese Muslim scholar wrote the book ‘al-Risala al-Hamidiyya. He argued that Darwin’s theory, if it is scientific fact, does not refute the belief of
God’s existence, the Creator of universe. The purpose of al-Jîsr’s book was to establish that Islamic teachings can be compatible with reason and rationality as well as with natural sciences. Hussain Al-Jisr was deep knowledgeable about the theory of evolution. He was well familiar of the debates and discourses between the evolutionists and anti-evolutionists, specifically regarding missing fossils and mutations. In result of these debates none of the two groups could get final victory (Kalin, 2014, p.84).

Rashîd Riḍa (d. 1935) guarded al-Jîsr’s perspective; this discourse also got the agreement of Islamic theologians in Turkey and Syria as well as the Muslim scholars of al-Âzhar University in Egypt. According to Kalin, several contemporary Islamic scholars hold the views like al-Jîsr on evolution theory, similar the Egyptian scholar Yûsuf al-Qarađâwî. Although opposing views remained in the history of these debates and discourses (Kalin, 2014, P.149-151).

A fatwâ by Maḥmud Shaltût (d. 1963), is a good example regarding evolutionary discourses. A man asked him: “Do Muslim religious scholars oppose the evolution theory on the basis of well-founded religious arguments or just out of stubbornness?” (Kalin, 2014, P.223). In reply, Shaltût responded that according to Islam there are three most important sources of Islamic knowledge, the first is the sound perception (al-ḥiss al-salîm), second is correct rational enquiry (al-naẓar al-‘aqlî al-ṣâhiḥ), and third is authentic revealed tradition (al-khabar al-ṣâdiq). Shaltût described that evolutionary theory says that man is descendent of other animal species through progress and evolution, is not acceptable by described knowledge’s sources. Shaltût concluded according to several verses of Qur’an (The Qur’an 15:28–29, 49:13, 86:05–07, 22:05) regarding the Adam’s creation and his descendent that evolution’s theory contradicts the revelation. Moreover, Shaltût described, the issue was out of the scope of perception and cannot be verified by experiment. To Him, the subject relates to the unseen (ghayb), for that only Allah has complete knowledge. Therefore, anti-evolutionary views of Muslim intellectuals were based on rational arguments and not from stubbornness (Kalin, 2014, P.198). Same anti-evolutionary views were given by the Jordanian Muslim scholar Umar Sulaymân al-Ashqar. He also rejected the theory of evolution in it atheistic and materialistic form. Kalin argues that evolutionary debate in Islam can be developed as far as it does not derogate the belief in God (Kalin, 2014, P.108). Kalin quotes Muslim evolutionalist Salman Hameed who said: “Efforts that link evolution with atheism will cut short the dialogue, and a vast majority of Muslims will reject evolution” (Kalin, 2014, P.133).

Abdul Majid argues that after evolution theory Muslim theologians and scholars responded in three ways. One group is in view that theory of evolution is completely incompatible and contradictory and with the teachings of Islam. Second group accepts the theory whereas third group relates some part of theory with Islam (Majid, 2015). The propagators of first viewpoint take literal meaning of the Qur’an and Hadith. They say that Allah created all living creations and then these God’s created animal and plants spread their generations in the world. Regarding creation of human, they argue with the several verses from the Qur’an in those it is said that God created the father of mankind “Adam” from the clay and from rib of Adam, his wife Hawwa (Eve), who is the mother of human. Then from this pair, all races of mankind sprang in the earth. The prominent figures who maintained this point of view are
Wahiduddin Khan, Shihabud Din Nadvi and Harun Yahya (Majid, 2015). Majid discusses that some recent prominent traditionalist figures like Frithjof Shuan, Abu-Bakr-Siraj-ud-Din and Sayyed Hossein Nasr clearly and lucidly condemned the evolution’s theory in the current form. Shuan describes that the theory of evolution is a personal whim rather than a fact. Sayyed Hussain Nasr elaborates the core cause for the acceptance of theory of evolution in the West: “rather in a world in which the Divinity had been either denied or neglected the theory of evolution seemed the best way of providing a background for the study of the amazing diversity of life forms without having to have recourse to the creation power of God” (Majid, 2015). Nasr adds that the evolution’s theory became a dogma because it had replaced religious belief and provided a ‘scientific’ aid to man to enable him to forget creator God (Majid, 2015). Jamal-ul-Din Afghani also rejected evolutionary theory through his essay ‘Al-Radd ala al Dahriyyah’ in 1881 (Majid, 2015).

The second group of Muslim theologians and intellectuals includes on mainly Ghulam Ahmad Pervez and Dr. Abdul Wadood. Wadood completely accepts evolutionary theory and described Darwin’s ideology in his book, ‘The Phenomena of Nature in the Quran and Sunnah’. He describes the stages of evolution from several Qur’anic verses (Majid, 2015).

The third group of Muslims theologians and intellectuals can be counted as a moderate Muslim response because relate some features of evolutionary theory compatible with the Islamic teachings (specifically the Qur’an). The prominent scholars, of this group are Mohammad Iqbal, Hossein al-Jisr, Dr. Ahman Afzal, Dr. Inayatullah Mashriqi, al-Asfahani, Dr. Israr Ahmed and Dr. Absar Ahmad (Majid, 2015).

Hossein al-Jisr defended theory of evolution and quotes the verse of Qur’an: “We made every living thing from water, will they not believe?” (The Qur’an 21:30) and then he acceded with evolutionary theory. He added that there is no evidence in the Quran, he writes, “to suggest whether all species, each of which exists by the grace of God, were created all at once or gradually” (Majid, 2015).

Dr. Inayatullah Khan al-Mashraqi also seemed to defend the evolutionary theory in a book ‘Tazkira’. As claimed by him, evolution is ingrained in natural world as a well calculated program of God; it is going on since the creation of universe and it will go on till continuous years up till the achievement of the objective of God’s creation. He seems at disagreement with Charles Darwin who was disinclined to believe in the existence of God, and also disagreed with his structure of ‘fitness’ whatever in case of applying to human is found deficient (Majid, 2015).

Dr. Muhammad Iqbal described in the book, ‘Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam’ that evolutionary idea was firstly described by Muslim scientists before Lamarck or Darwin. Iqbal described that Al-Jahiz (776-869 CE), the writer of ‘Kitab-al-Haiwanat’, initially described about the changes in animals induced by environment and migrations in some cases. Similarly Ibn Maskawaih (942-1032 CE), the writer of ‘Fauz al-Asghar’, presented a thorough and clear features similar to the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin. Iqbal adds that, “The discoveries of Newton in the sphere of matter and those of Darwin in the sphere of natural history reveal a mechanism” (Majid, 2015). He describes that “though natural science can produce a verifiable data about matter, life and mind it generates a sectional view of reality” (Majid, 2015).
He elaborates the limits of natural sciences: “the moment you ask the question how matter, life and mind are mutually related, you begin to see the sectional character of the various sciences that deal with them and the inability of those sciences, taken singly, to furnish a complete answer to your question” (Majid, 2015).

Dr. Hamidullah accommodated the evolutionary as well as evolution’s process. In a question-answer session, Dr. Hamidullah was asked: Is Darwin’s theory correct scientifically or is there any conflict between Islam and science? He replied it is assumed that theory of evolution has been refuted by Islam. This idea brings complications for Muslim because mostly Muslims assume that Charles Darwin was an Atheist, even though if we study thoroughly about his biography and education it is easy to derive the conclusion that Darwin himself was a believer in the existence of God. In his life Darwin interested in God and studied Christianity at the University of Cambridge and also learned Arabic to get deeper understanding of Islam. He has written a number of letters to his Arabic teachers in very revering and respectful language (Majid, 2015).

Nidhal Guessoum wrote the book, ‘Islam’s Quantum Question’. Guessoum advocates in support of Darwinian evolution. He says that Qur’an and science are compatible and reconciling (Guessoum, 2011, P.127). He argues that Rushdian (Averroes’s) presented the ‘principle of no possible conflict’ (in the word and work of God) and his hermeneutical elaboration. In general this principle is a no-opposition or no-objection approach. He argues, “one can convince the Muslim public of a given idea (say the theory of biological evolution), not by proving that it can be found in the Qur’an but rather by showing that at least one intelligent reading and interpretation of various passages of the Holy book is fully consistent with that theory” (Guessoum, 2011, P.174).

Guessoum describes about features of the science argues that holding a theistic approach about science does not raze science. He says this is misconception to assume about science that it exclusively materialistic, and to understand that a theistic approach razes science. He describes different views of Muslim theologians and intellectuals about religion and science both contemporaneously and historically. He argues some of early Muslim scholars presented variations of the evolution’s theory and theses were not understood as a threat for Islam. The problem originated when some Muslim scholars because of lack of knowledge presented the posture of specific Christian churches adverse to evolutionary theory that was a reply to the specific atheistic view on evolution in the United States and Europe. He argues that some populace of the West thinks that if someone has belief in evolution, then he is an atheist, and if someone does not belief in evolution, he is a believer. This is not the expression in Islam (Guessoum, 2011, P.45).

The evolutionary theory presents a list of the evidences in support of it from the perspective of comparative anatomy, fossil evidence and genetic evidence. Moreover, Guessoum describes the historical evidence which purposes a theory similar to evolutionary theory which described an elaboration for the evolution of different species (Guessoum, 2011, P.155). He draws that theory of evolution is extremely significant in the science/Islam discourses and debates, because one can discern the precise dissimilarity on either side who takes a literalistic understanding of the Holy Scriptures or who uses the principles of hermeneutics of the Holy Texts (Guessoum, 2011, P.324).
Shabir Ally argues that Allah has made different kinds of humans and has asked them to interact with each other but this is the evolution and it does counter with the Darwin’s theory of natural selection. With the evolution we cannot say that the change is occurring itself. All this change is the work of a higher supervisor (Ally, 2016). He describes the argument from Qur’an that Allah has addressed people and said that he has created people into different tribes and in different colors and creeds so that they can interact with each other and can get to know each other better. All the creations we have encountered today and all what we are today is the blessing of God upon us because if it is not his will we wouldn’t be able to move a finger (Ally, 2016). He concludes that everything that surrounds us has a specific purpose. And all this points us towards a designer who designed all these purposeful things. From a wooden stick to the solar system, all the systems are created by a creator that is Allah (Ally, 2016).

Yasir Qadhi argues that Allah created each and every human being with a soul, a spiritual DNA, a fitrah. When the fitrah is pure, it examines everything beyond the sensory observations and observes the signs of the God (Qadhi, 2017). According to him, nothing exists on its own. Every single thing has a creator and that is how we work in our day to day lives. The thing that the things came into existence itself is irrational. Every single thing around us is the evidence of the creation of the God. It is the people that do not acknowledge them because of the perception that has been blinded by arrogance hence ignoring the presence of Allah (Qadhi, 2017).

God has not shown his presence up to now and shown heaven or hell because the ones who do not want to believe in God will claim it to be the delusion or the magic and claim it false. Therefore, it is concluded that anyone who has shut his eyes, ears and heart will always reject the presence of God and will never acknowledge it and for others who are inclined towards God, only their surroundings are important to claim his presence (Qadhi, 2017).

According to Qadhi, in Qur’an only a few verses discusses about the existence of God. This shows that there is definitely a creator which is ingrained in the mind of every person. He says the first proof of the existence of God is the creation itself; the fact we exist. The sun, moon and planets around us are the signs of a creator. These all cannot come from nothing and there must be a cause for them (Qadhi, 2008).

Abul Feda Bin Masood describes that science is unable to discover how the universe came into existence. He explains that science is a method of explanation and examination of already created things by analogy. Science can tell us about what we see, hear, feel, experience and the elements of universe surrounding us. At this point to ask science to tell us that how universe came into existence is a rational mistake. The way a car is manufactured cannot be explained by any of method that works in car itself. To considering upon the analogy that how internal combustion engine works and how spark plug works cannot tell us about the manufacturing of car. Science is naturally limited by its input to already created things. He adds that the death of any planet or birth of any star and the fact that our universe is expanding can never tell us how precisely the universe came into existence. The reason is that rationally the prior something is must be different from
what we see and feel here. Something which is not related to this universe is not bound by our scientific rules (Masood, P.47, 2016). He concludes that the process consisted of no universe to universe cannot be analogized to anything what we comprehend and see in this universe.

Masood describes that Darwin’s theory only describes a process of change rather origination of universe. The atheist scientists used the theory and considered the observations of the procedure how natural life changes because of adaptation and other scientific reasons and claimed that that how life has originated in this world. The mere evidence for this evolution and natural selection is that apes look like men and they both species have evolved from a common ancestor (Masood, P.50, 2016).

He argues that we see new species emerge by interbreeding and re-adaptation, and it is also observable that these species are variably proximal in structure and form, after that we make a huge tree of all species, we draw a conclusion that all the species must have single origin by the way of those specific phenomena, which starts from unicellular organism. But from that explanation we cannot prove that earlier point of life was a primordial life or a unicellular being. In this regard atheist scientists have failed to prove any hypothesis (Masood, P.61, 2016).

He rejects the Darwin’s conclusion rhetorically,

The fact that you have seen species ranging in morphological proximity from pretty much looking like man, coupled with the fact that a certain species mutations take place and gradual changes may occur and new strands of species may emerge, this does not give you any rational right to take that as proof for the claim that all descended from a common ancestry, and without any willful creator. Darwin came out from the study of fossils and specimens of birds and mammals that he interbred, with the striking conclusion that all species descended from a single organism. If this is not pure fiction; I don’t know what fiction is. (Masood, P. 73, 2016)

Masood adds the rhetoric while saying “the story of the ancestry tree is no better a myth that the belief that some African God created all species by vomiting them on earth after a fit of stomach pain” (Masood, P.74, 2016). Masood shows contradiction with the evolutionary theory and gives evidences against its scientific validity.

5. Analysis

1. Science only tells us “how” things happen and not “why”. Through evolution, we can analyze the natural phenomena and the working of universe but to attach the claim that universe is self-existent is a rational mistake.

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7 Analogy: The author defines analogy as the process includes in mathematical expression and formulation and equations in mathematical physics which are attached with the expression of philosophical assumptions and theories.
2. Some Muslim scholars accept all of evolution except where it applies to human. The maximum we can go from an Islamic theological perspective is to say that God inserted Adam in the natural order. Adam was the last domino placed directly by God. From this perspective, religious people would see this last domino as a miracle of God. None-religious people would see a causal connection from all the other dominos. This way, the miracle of Adam is preserved theologically.

3. Fossil evidences show that species have never changed in history as well as DNA. In this perspective, an individual of one species cannot turn into another species. So to it is scientifically impossible of turning apes into people over time. Modern monkeys did not turn into humans, but rather humans and modern monkeys share some similarities.

4. It is widely acknowledged by philosophers of science that scientific method cannot adjudicate on the God question. So, new atheists’ assumption on the basis of evolution theory that there is no God is fundamentally wrong. Some scientists argue that the scientific evidences encourage a predisposition towards the existence of God. Others argue the opposite. In result, science cannot prove the matter one way or the other.

5. Neo-Darwinism asserted that evolution took place due to mutations, while Hermann Joseph Muller showed that mutations don’t show constructive traits but result in gene destruction; result was impaired traits not better trait. According to the evolutionary theory at least ten intermediate links should exist. However none of the transition forms has been found to exist in the fossil records. The theory claimed that the organs become useless or lose its functionality in the human body if they are not used for a long time, however, modern science studies proves that none of the body organs is useless. So the theory is not fully accepted in science.

6. It is in the Qur’an that Adam was created in the best of moulds and was fashioned by God Himself and He made man a vicegerent on earth. This shows that Adam and his offspring have an elevated status above the other creations. How can such noble and honored entity have been created from imperfect and random processes?

7. The Qur’an does not predetermine the conclusions of scientific study; however, it calls for honest and earnest analysis of data, rather dogmatic speculation. To the extent that such factual analysis is found in evolutionary science, it can have no censure from the perspective of Qur’an. The baseless claims of the theory such as life being the result of un-purposeful factors and things acting out of selfish impulses, emergence of life by blind physical processes and randomness clash with the Qur’anic perspective.

6. Conclusion

Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution not only affected the Western life socially and politically but it also left deep impacts in the Muslim countries. Theory presented scientific explanation about the origins of life in the universe and challenged the existence of God. Muslim scholars have normally adopted a positive attitude towards science historically irrespective of Christianity.

Muslim theologians and intellectuals have described different views in response of evolution theory by Charles Darwin. Arguments and views represent either total acceptance or
total rejection or partial acceptance of the theory. Those scholars who support the theory have exploited Qur’anic verses like those describing creation of all living things from water and creation of man in stages to verify the theory. While other Muslim scholars find difficulty to reconcile the evolutionary theory with Islam and they have given different interpretations of the verses which are used to support the theory. Opposing the theory of evolution does not negate science as the theory has also been refuted scientifically by some scientists.

Darwin’s theory is in sharp contrast not only with Islam but with all divine religions by the claim that man has evolved from non human species. The theory negates the Adam’s direct creation which has been described in Qur’an. Hence the theory of evolution is not acceptable by logical scientists or religious scholars. Question is why some Muslim scholars supported the theory, when it is not fully accepted in science and religion? It is due to their lack of training in philosophy of modern sciences and the religion. They were very much impressed by the development of modern sciences and also thought that the scientific theories are all true. So in an effort to make religion close to science they interpreted the Qur’anic verses in the support of this theory.

It should be understood clearly that opposing any the theory of science (like evolution theory) does not negate science as no theory in science is a final word. Science is in continuous process of development. In a sense, the theory of evolution is a stepping stone to invite Muslims to reflect more deeply about the universe, purpose of life and the meaning of God’s guidance for our lives.

References


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