

Human Origins: Theological Conclusions and Empirical Limitations	
Authors	<p>Nazir Khan - BA in Health Sciences (McMaster University), Doctor of Medicine (McMaster University), received ijazah in the study of the Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic theology</p> <p>Yasir Qadhi - B.Sc. in Chem. Engineering (University of Houston), B.A. in Hadith and MA in Islamic Theology (Islamic University of Madinah), PhD in Religious Studies (Yale University)</p>
Modern scientists	Emphatically state that humans share a common ancestry with other primates, resulting from a gradual evolution of biological organisms on this planet over the course of millions of years
Muslim theologians	Believe in humankind's descent from Adam and Eve, who had no parents
Extreme approaches	<p>1) Abandoning all traditional theological commitments in favor of a wholesale embrace of the conclusions of evolutionists by claiming to unearth specific Qur'anic passages that allegedly discuss natural selection, abiogenesis, and other similar concepts</p> <p>2) Rejecting all evolutionary science as falsehood, attempting to dispute every piece of data in genetics, population dynamics, and paleontology, essentially believing that the entire scientific community is participating in a massive conspiracy</p>
Moderate approach	<p>Acknowledging the credibility of scientific research while criticizing pseudoscientific excesses in the public domain, and deriving precise theological conclusions from Islamic scripture on humanity's origins</p> <p>Method</p> <p>Distinguishing those key elements that are non-negotiable fundamentals of creed that are beyond the empirical lens from other aspects within the natural realm upon which scripture does not comment and leaves open to further empirical exploration</p>
Adam and Eve	The entirety of the Muslim ummah in every generation since the beginning of Islam has understood that humankind is descended from Adam and Eve, who were created directly by God
Qur'an	"O Humankind, be mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single person, and made from him his mate, and from the both of them He created many men and women"
Figurative interpretations	<p>Allah describes the creation of Adam in such intricate detail and with an abundance of physical descriptions that it becomes impossible to dismiss the entire narrative as figurative</p> <p>- "He began the creation of man from clay, and then made his offspring through an extract of a contemptible fluid." This is particularly</p>
وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسِنِ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَّةٍ مَّنْ مَاءٌ مَّوِينٌ	

Hadith	<p>explicit in that it claims that the first man was created from clay (tīn), and then his offspring emerged through ordinary procreation</p> <p>Narrations mention that Allah took a handful of soil from the earth and He fashioned the shape of Adam and allowed the lifeless body to remain for a period of time before the rūh (soul) was blown into it</p>
Approaches to reconciling reason and revelation	<p>1) Ibn Sina - religious texts that conflict with philosophical truth are to be interpreted as allegorical and symbolic i.e. accounts of physical resurrection, Paradise and Hell, are symbolic descriptions for common people to imagine realities beyond their comprehension</p> <p>- Rejected by mainstream Muslim scholarship</p> <p>2) Al-Ghazali - default presumption with regards to scripture is to affirm that it describes things as they actually are. It is only when this level of interpretation conflicts with a logical deductive argument that one resorts to metaphorical interpretation (ta'wīl). Primarily applied to texts pertaining to the attributes of God</p> <p>3) Ibn Taymiyyah - if logic establishes the veracity of the scripture, then the only logical conclusion is to accept what the scripture states unconditionally. When it comes to instances of textual evidence which are explicit and unequivocal, there can be no recourse to re-interpretation. However, if revelation provides us with a lone text that is ambiguous or subject to interpretation, and has several plausible readings while reason is conclusive on a matter, then we have no qualms adopting the linguistically plausible reading of the text that is concordant with the dictates of reason and modern science</p> <p>- What is relevant is the definitive (qat'i) nature of a proof, regardless of whether it is scriptural or rational</p>
Scope for reconciliation	<p>There is nothing in Islamic scripture that explicitly negates the concepts of abiogenesis, genetic mutation and diversification, natural selection, the existence of hominid species, or a common ancestor for all biological life on earth, excluding only the descendants of Adam</p>
Philosophy of science	<p>School of scientific realism - sees science as an enterprise involved in deriving literally true descriptions about what reality is and what we should believe</p> <p>School of scientific anti-realism - maintains that the point of a scientific theory is to fit existing data and observations. The objective of science is to arrive at theories that are empirically adequate i.e., theories that fit with our observations. When it comes to things that are directly observable, then empirical adequacy becomes the same as truth. As for matters that are unobservable, then we rely on interpretations, inferences, models, extrapolations, and postulations that aim only to be empirically adequate</p>

Ghayb	We cannot observe what happened at the time of Adam and Eve, and thus it constitutes something empirically unobservable, a matter of the unseen (ghayb)
Qur'an	"I did not make them witnesses to the creation of the heavens and earth, nor to their own creation" مَا أَشْهَدْنَاهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَا خَلْقَ أَنفُسِهِمْ
Human limitations	We can only make inferences based on interpretations of the data that have survived about what took place at an unseen time hundreds of thousands of years ago
Evolutionary science	It is not a Western hegemonic anti-religious conspiracy, rather it fits the criterion of proper science, but it also has the limitations that any scientific theory has

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