

Home > Ultimate Questions in Philosophy of Religion > Chapter 9: The Blueprint of Life > Conclusions to be drawn from this discussion

Chapter 9: The Blueprint of Life

Evolution or/and Creation

Throughout history, philosophers, religious thinkers and scientists have attempted to explain the history and variety of life on Earth. During the rise of modern science in Western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, a predominant view held among Christians was that God created every organism on Earth more or less as it now exists.

But in that time the study of fossils and natural history, a modern evolutionary theory began to take shape. Early evolutionary theories proposed that all of life on Earth evolved gradually from simple organisms. Today this has become the cornerstone of modern biology.

Since ancient time man has been trying to develop explanations for the origins of life. Different cultures have attempted this in different ways. These are some of the mysterious questions that have been asked:

- 1) Does life exist elsewhere in the universe?
- 2) Is earth the only planet where life has developed?
- 3) Is the present human evolved from the Chimpanzee?

Evolution; the Cornerstone of Modern Biology

Today, evolution is recognized as the cornerstone of modern biology. Usually every student who chooses a unit in biology at high school is taught about the theory of evolution. It is also assumed that evolution is in conflict with believing in God as a creator.

The objective of this chapter is to unmask this myth and to show to you that:

- 1) Evolution is nothing more than a theory not a scientific fact.

2) It stands in no conflict with the Islamic conception of creation.

Historical background

The Greek philosopher Anaximander, who lived in the 500s BC, is generally credited as the earliest evolutionist. He believed that humans evolved from fishlike aquatic beings that left the water once they had developed sufficiently to survive on land.

Nonetheless, the modern concept of evolution is credited to Darwin and Wallace; the British scientists of 19th century. Charles Darwin by publishing his book 'On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection' on November 24, 1859, set off a storm of controversy. According to Darwin:

"All living organisms, from microscopic bacteria to plants, insects, birds, and mammals, share a common ancestor".

The animal most closely related to humans, for example, is the chimpanzee. The common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees is believed to have lived approximately 6 million to 7 million years ago. On the other hand an ancestor common to humans and reptiles lived some 300 million years ago.

Fossil records suggest that the modern groups of vertebrates appeared in the following order:

Jawless fish: 500 million years ago

Bony fish: 400 million years ago

Amphibians: 360 million years ago

Reptiles: 300 million years ago

Birds: 190 million years ago

Mammals: 150 million years ago

(Ref: "Biology" pp275. Kate Mudie & Judith Brotherton)

The Roots of the Theory of Evolution

1. Paleontology (the study of fossils)

Fossils are ant preserved remains or traces of past life found in rocks of different ages. Biologists by measuring radioactivity in the rocks in which a fossil is embedded, can determine the age of that fossil.

2. Distribution of Species

Scientists also learn about evolution by studying how different species of plants and animals are geographically distributed in nature, and how they relate to their environment and to each other. Darwin visited New South Wales, staying in Sydney in 1836 and took examples of plants and animals to compare how they are related to animals and plants in the rest of the world.

3. Anatomical Similarities

4. Molecular Similarities

That almost all living organisms have DNA.

5. Direct Observation

Insects have short life spans and therefore enable the biologists to observe their reproduction in the laboratory. Fruit flies are the example of such observation for evolutionary process.

6. Determining Life's Origins

In 1953 two American chemists Miller and Urey attempted to produce the atmosphere of primitive Earth nearly 4 billion years previously. With the mixture of hydrogen, methane, ammonia and water vapour they managed to produce amino acids, which are the basic components for life.

Comments on the roots of the theory of evolution

1. Similarities between species do not necessarily prove they are evolved from each other. It rather suggests their unique Source of Creation as well as their unique design in the cosmos. After visiting Australia, Darwin writes the following in his diary:

“Earlier in the evening I had been lying on a sunny bank reflecting on the strange character of the Animals in this country as compared to the rest of the World.”

A Disbeliever in everything beyond his own reason, might exclaim, *‘Surely two distinct creators must have been at work; their object however has been the same and certainly in each case the end is complete .’* 1

2. ‘Darwin's Black Box’. ‘Darwin's Black Box’ is the name of a book written by Michael J. Behe, a biochemist at Lehigh University in the USA . Black box refers to a device that functions but whose inner workings are a mystery. This book is a biochemical challenge to evolution. In his book, Behe argues that the idea of Darwinism is being pushed to its limits by discoveries in biochemistry.

Behe asserts that research has shown that life is based on machines, and machines on molecules. He

claims that molecule machines cannot be explained by random mutation or natural selection. Thus, he says, in ancient times, all biology was a black box; that is none of the workings of life were known. Later on, scientific experimentation and observation led to greater understanding. But this greater understanding led to even more black boxes on a smaller scale.

“The Question of how life works still remains– it is the ultimate black box.”

3. ‘ Not By Chance’

‘Not By Chance’ is the name of a book written by Dr. Lee Spetner in which he shatters the modern theory of evolution. Unlike Darwin, neo–Darwinism claims that evolution works by accumulating random mutations. For example, according to a neo–Darwinist called Stebbins, it is estimated that to get to a new species would take about 500 steps (point mutations).

Dr. Spetner shattering this theory, calculates the probability of this and concludes that it is impossible for a new species to ever originate in this way for the available time (of the Earth) is not enough to produce new species. He further adds that the only way to explain evolution without a trial or error process, is magic ‘set up’ of the genome, or as theists say ‘designing’!

4. Conflict with the second law of thermodynamics

The second law is a straightforward law of physics with the consequence that, in a closed system, one cannot finish any real physical process with as much useful energy as you had to start with — some is always wasted. This means that a perpetual motion machine is an impossibility.

Life is organization. From prokaryotic cells, eukaryotic cells, tissues, and organs, to plants and animals, families, communities, ecosystems, and living planets, life is organization, at every scale. The evolution of life is the increase of biological organization, if it is anything.

Clearly, if life originates and makes evolutionary progress without any *external organizing input* , then something has organized itself. This is in conflict with the second law of thermodynamics.

There is a well documented, well illustrated on line article about two types of entropy and their relation with evolution. The article is ‘The Second Law of Thermodynamics’ by Brig Klyce and can be found online at: <http://www.panspermia.org/seconlaw.htm> [1]

Conclusions to be drawn from this discussion

1. Evolution is not a scientific law as it is taught to us at school.
2. Evolution, even as a theory, is another proof for the existence of a unique Designer and Creator of the universe.

3. There is no evidence that life has developed, or even could have developed, by a purely natural process. Even Miller and Urey could never produce a living organism.
4. The question of the origin of life is still an ultimate 'black box ' for contemporary scientists.

1. Ibid, p. 176

2. A quantity expressing how much of a system's thermal energy is unavailable for conversion into mechanical work.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/ultimate-questions-philosophy-religion-shaykh-mansour-leghaei/chapter-9-blueprint-life>

Links

[1] <http://www.panspermia.org/seconlaw.htm>