

Institute for Christian Teaching
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**TWO VIEWS ON CREATION:
THE BIBLE AND THE QURAN**

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Introduction

There are many views about the creation of this world. It is important to make our students and teachers understand the true biblical view of the creation. The knowledge that is given to the students through the books of social studies and science is in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Bible. Our teachers have no other choice but to use the books which are provided by the curriculum of the educational system in our country. However, when extending the scientific knowledge about the creation, the truth should not be held back from the students.

The views of the Holy Quran about the creation are more closely linked to the evolutionists views. This will be discussed in more detail later in the essay. We are located in a Muslim country. Therefore, it is important for our Christian teachers to understand the concepts of the Quran regarding creation. If our teachers understand these concepts they can intelligently compare the teachings of the holy Quran and The teachings of the holy Bible. For a Muslim to accept and believe the knowledge given in our statutory textbooks is not difficult but for a Christian who understands the teachings of the Bible regarding creation is difficult to comprehend and believe the knowledge given in our statutory textbooks.

Pakistan Adventist Seminary is the only Christian institution in the country of Pakistan which is dedicated to Christian education. I am responsible for the academics of our college. This lays a heavy responsibility on my shoulders that the truth about the origins of this world and life on this world is revealed to the students accurately. We are operating only for the Christian young people. Since all our students and faculty and staff are Christians it is easier to reveal the truth about the origins of this world and beginning of life on this world in our academic setting. But, I am sure there are many of our Seventh-day Adventist institutions which accept students in their institutions regardless of their religion. In these institutions it is even more important for the teachers to be familiar with the true biblical account of creation and origin of life, so that they can teach the students truth about these subjects. This has been the most vital factor for me in developing this essay.

However this essay will not address all the views there might be about creation. I have limited this essay to the prevailing religion of our country and the biblical account and their differences and similarities. I am sure this essay will be useful to other institutions in many other countries where the major religion is Islam.

Beginnings of this world

Two major views about creation will be discussed in this essay. They are the Biblical view and the view according to the Holy Quran. Evolutionist's views about the creation and nature will be discussed to make a comparison as to which of the two views is more closely linked to the theory of evolution.

Creation according to the Bible

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:1-2

Thus begins the account of creation. How did God perform His creative acts? The Holy Scriptures say that He spoke the world and its living forms into existence, according to the plan that already existed in His mind. Bible writers declare emphatically that God spoke as He carried forward the work of creation. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth--- for he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps33:6-9)

God declares that, “Mine hands also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together” (Isa 48:13)

The apostle John declares: “All things were made by Him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3)

In the creation of the earth, God was not indebted to pre-existing matter. He spoke and it was, He commanded, and it stood fast.” Ps 33:9

Genesis 1:1 affirms that God is before all else and that He is the one and only cause of all else”

Biblical account of the beginning of this world

“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” “For he spoke, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.” Ps 33:6,9. He “laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved forever.”

According to White (1977) as the earth came forth from the hand of its Maker, it was exceedingly beautiful. Its surface was diversified with mountains, hills, and plains, spread with noble rivers and lovely lakes; but the hills and mountains were not abrupt and rugged, abounding steeps and frightful chasms, as they now do; the sharp ragged edges of earth’s rocky framework were buried beneath the fruitful soil, which everywhere produced a luxuriant growth of greenness. There were no loathsome swamps nor barren deserts. The angelic host viewed the scene with delight, and rejoiced at the wonderful works of God.

Brand (1997) states that faith is built on evidence. Does any evidence lead us to take seriously the first books of the Bible, including the creation story.

The Bible says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. According to Enoch (1968) both to the casual observer and to the student of details, the universe speaks of a design. For instance, the size of the universe as revealed by the 200-inch telescope reaching out to a distance of two billion light years, with its billions of stars and their planets, all moving in their own orbits with such clock-like precision, without any confusion, speaks of an All-Wise and Almighty Creator who not only created them, but also keeps them going. The amazing accuracy with which the earth revolves round the sun year after year, taking exactly 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 48 seconds like the flawless machine, speak of the master Engineer, and His perfect design. The earth hanging upon nothing (Job 26:7). The earth is kept at the right distance from the sun to be neither too cold nor too hot. The moon is kept at the right distance, lest the

earth be overcome by the waves of the sea. The Bible says, “the heavens declare the glory of God and firmament showeth his handiwork”.

The evidence of his handiwork can be seen in the animals and the plants. The human eye is another wonderful piece of his handiwork. It would take volumes to describe the marvels of design in the bee and her hive, in the spider and his web, and thousands of such designed adaptation in nature. These could not have been developed by the accumulation of mere hit and miss chance variations, (Enoch, 1968). My purpose to discuss these concepts is to review Seventh-day Adventist thinking on the subject.

Seventh-day Adventist views on creation

Seventh-Day Adventist believe that God has made matter without depending on previously created material since creation week. God is not dependant on matter to produce anything. God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. The following experiences reveal that Jesus created new material.

Jesus fed 5000 persons from five loaves and two fishes. (Matthew 14:17)

He converted water into wine. (John 2:3)

Jesus gave sight to the blind beggar. (Luke 18:35)

God created the fish Peter caught when he cast his net on the other side of the boat. (Luke 5:9)

When the lepers were healed, they received back their missing fingers, toes, and noses. (Luke 17:12)

There could be many other experiences that could be shared in this context.

The phrase Seventh-day implies belief in creation, and the word Adventist, in the promise of Christ’s return. The denominational name stands as a witness against all who scoff at the Bible account of creation at the beginning of the world, and at our Lord’s promised return at the end of the world. The fact that Seventh-day Adventists reject the

evolutionary philosophy does not mean that they are opposed to science. They believe in scientific investigation and the careful collection of data.

Creation according to The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran does not give a sequence of the creation. However, it does say that God is the creator. It also declares the facts given to us in the Holy Bible. Let's see how the Holy Quran portrays the creation story.

Beginnings of this world according to The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran reveals that God (Allah) has the only creative power to whom all beings belong. God relates to all creation as the Absolute Being, the immortal, omnipotent and the indivisible. He is unique as there is nothing like Him.

Man is made of soul and matter. Both soul and matter are created but cannot create, while God is their creator.

In the view of Muslims God has the absolute will to create what ever He chooses. This will is expressed by the word. If God ordains anything to be, it becomes. Thus whatever is in existence is the manifestation and the realization of His will and the response to His command. This will is the basis of the relationship between Allah, The Creator and all his creation.

In Surah Hud Text 7 (11:7) It is written. "And He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days—and His Throne was upon the water—that He might try you, which of you is best in conduct. Yet if thou sayest, Lo! Ye will be raised again after death! Those who dislike will surely say: this is naught but mere magic."

To many people the description of the creation in The Holy Quran is very similar to the one in The Holy Bible. I believe this concept is mistaken because there are very obvious differences.

The Creation of the World

God is the One who has raised the Heavens up without any visible support. Then He mounted the throne and regulated the sun and moon; each runs along on a specific course. He directs matter; He manifests signs so that you may be convinced about meeting your Lord. Here are some of the verses from the Holy Quran that relate to us about the creation and nature.

He is the One Who has spread out the earth and placed mountains and rivers on it, and has placed two pairs for every kind of fruit on it. He merges day light into night. In that are signs for those who reflect. (Thunder 13:2-3)?

O Mankind a parable has been set forth, so listen to it! Those to whom you appeal other than God can never create a fly, even though they combined together to do so.

If the fly should snatch anything away from them, they would not even know how to recover it from it. How weak the seeker is and anything he seeks! Pilgrimage 22:73

God is the one who created heaven and earth as well as whatever lies between them, in six days. Then He mounted the Throne. You have no patron nor any intercessor besides Him. Will you not bear this in mind?

He began by creating man from clay; then He made his progeny from an extract of discarded water; next He completed him and breathed some of his own spirit into him. He has granted you hearing, sight and intellect. Yet little thanks do you give for it. (Worship 32:4-9)

He created man from ringing clay as baked pottery is, while He created jinn (devils, aside from angles) from the glow in the fire. So which of your Lord's blessings will both of you deny? (The Merciful 55:14-15)

We created man from an extract of clay; then We placed him as a drop of semen in a safe resting-place. Then We turned the semen into a clot; next We turned the clot into

tissue; and then We turned the tissue into bones and clothed the bones with flesh. Then We made it a new creation. Blessed be God, the Best of creators! (Believers 23: 12-14)

The Origins of Life

This question has always preoccupied man, both for himself and for the living around him. It will be examined here from a general point of view. When the Quran describes the origins of Life on a very broad basis, it is extremely concise. It does so in a verse that also mentions the process of the formation of the Universe.

Sura 21, verse 30:

“Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together, then We clove them asunder and We got every living thing out of the water. Will they then not believe?”

The notion of getting something out of something does not give rise to any doubts. The phrase can equally mean that every living thing was made of water (as its essential component) or that every living thing originated in water. These two possible meanings are strictly in accordance with scientific belief of the origin of life. That life in fact is of aquatic origin and water is the major component of all living cells. Without water life is not possible according to the scientific data.

Sura 20, Verse 53

“(God is the One Who) sent water down from the sky and thereby we brought forth pairs of plants each separate from the other”

Sura 24, verse 45:

“God created every animal from water.”

According to the statement given above God has created every animal out of water. Some of them move on their belly, while others walk on two legs, and still others walk on four. God creates anything He wills. God is able to do anything.

Whether it deals with the origins of life in general, or the element that gives birth to plants in the soil, or the seed of animals, all the statements contained in the Quran on the origin of life can be interpreted in harmony with modern scientific data. It tells us that every occurrence or phenomenon must have a cause that made it happen or that gave it its being.

Similarities about Creation in The Bible and The Quran

When we study the Holy Quran, obviously it appears as though there are many similarities with the Holy Bible regarding the topic of the essay. There are no obvious differences that stand out but when a deeper study is conducted of the verses from the Holy Quran some differences could be observed. Below you will find some of the obvious similarities about the creation and nature in the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran. But this does not mean that the meanings of the verses in the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran are the same.

God is the Creator

According to Samaddar (1994) All human beings of all the world of any country, of any colour, of any cast and creed of any structure, speaking any language are created by God. Created things are the proof that God is the Creator. It is the sole duty of a man to obey the order of God without any question and doubt. People should worship only the creator till death.

Related verses about creation

The Holy Bible	The Holy Quran
1. God is the Creator of this Universe	1. God is the Creator of this Universe
2. God made everything in six days-Exodus 20:11	2. And He it is who created the heavens and the earth in six days-Surah Hud Text 7 (11:7)

3. Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters-Genesis 1:2	3. And His Throne was upon the water-Surah Hud Text 7 (11:7)
4. God made Sun, Moon, and Stars by His command-Genesis 1:14-18	4. Hath made the sun, the moon, and the stars subservient by His command-Surah Height Text 54-55 (7:54-55)
5. The Day and the Night-Genesis 1:14-18	5. God made the Day and the Night-Surah Jonah 6-7 (10:6-7)
6. God formed man of the dust of the ground-Genesis 2:7	6. Lo! I am creating a mortal out of potter's clay black mud altered-Al-Hijr Texts 28-29 (15:28-29)
7. God breathed in to his nostrils the breath of life-Genesis 2:7	7. Then He fashioned him and breathed into him of His spirit- Surah Prostration Texts 7-9 (32:7-9)
8. The rib taken from man, God made him a woman-Genesis 2:21-23	8. Allah took out a piece of bone from his left side-God created Eve out of that bone-Surah Woman Text 1 (4:1)
9. God gave every tree to Adam but told him not to eat from one tree-Genesis 2:15-17	9. Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat-But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it-Surah The Family of Imran Text 47 (3:47)
10. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made-Psalms 33:6-9	10. Allah, it is Who raised up the heavens without visible supports-Surah The Thunder Text 2-3 (13:2-3)
11. God is Alpha and Omega-Revelation 22:13	11. He is the First and the Last-Surah Iron Text 3 (57:3)

Contrasting views about creation in the Bible and the Holy Quran

The Bible and the Holy Quran does not provide a unified description of the creation. In The Holy Quran there is not a sura which talks about the creation story as a whole. In fact verses are scattered all over the Holy Quran about creation and one has to study these verses and bring them together to understand the concept of the creation according to the Holy Quran.

Differences from the Biblical Description

One of the obvious resemblances is the time period given for the creation both in The Holy Bible and The Holy Quran. The number of days given for the creation are six. The Bible talks about the literal six days of evenings and mornings. The way the Bible interprets it, the word “day” means the interval of time between two successive sunsets. When defined in this way, the day is conditioned by the rotation of the earth on its own axis.

According to The Holy Quran even though the translation has been “six days” this actually refers to long periods of time, or ages or eons (Bucaille, ND).

Sequence of the creation of this world.

According to Bucaille (N.D) the Holy Quran does not appear to lay a sequence for the creation of the heavens and the earth. The number of verses in which the earth is mentioned first is quite small. The number of verses where the heavens are mentioned before the earth is on the other hand much larger.

There appears to be only one passage in the Holy Quran where a definite sequence is plainly established between the events of creation. In actual fact apart from sura 79 there is not a single passage in The Holy Quran that lays down a definite sequence.?

Evolution and Origin of life

Evolutionists cannot offer any satisfactory explanation for the origin of life. In today's world various attempts have been made by organic chemists and biochemists to produce life in the laboratory. All such attempts have proved failures. The fact remains, that only life can produce life.

Human efforts and hope of producing life dwindle as his knowledge of cell chemistry advances. Life suddenly appeared on earth not as a tiny speck of protoplasm, as evolutionists tell us, but as the Bible tells us, as different kinds of animals and plants capable of variation within limits, but always reproducing only "after their kind". (Genesis 1:24)

Evolutionists view of the beginning of this Universe

Evolution in its unrefined state is also a very old philosophy based on ancient speculations not too closely related to facts given to us in The Bible. By the term Evolution we mean the continuous development of living creatures from less complex to more complex organisms, with development not necessarily always in the same direction. Nevertheless, the implication is that by selecting from the complete range of the animate kingdom, living and fossil, it would be possible to present a continuous series of creatures, each one more highly developed than its predecessor, the end of the series being man himself, (Attenborough, 1979)

The evolutionary philosophy states that this process is one of the inevitable laws of nature, a viewpoint absolutely opposed to the doctrine of creation, which is affirmed in the scriptures to be an immediate act that produced a wide variety of living forms virtually instantaneously (Coffin, 1969).

According to Moss (1998) no one knows how or when the universe and the world began. The Earth is only a small planet of one of the smaller stars, the Sun. And our Sun is only one of millions of other stars in the universe. Some scientists say that the earth itself was formed about 4.6 billion years ago from white-hot gases pulled out from the Sun by a passing star. These took 2000 million years to cool down and for the rocks and

water to be formed before any life could appear. The first living thing seems to have been similar to the green slime we see on stagnant water. And this was the only life there was for another 3000 million years when tiny creatures began to appear in the warm waters. About 300 million years ago amphibians which could live on land and in water appeared, as well as some simple insects. About 250 million years ago came reptiles, at first small, but after a long time developing into the mighty dinosaurs. Simple mammals appeared about 200 million years ago, and 50 million years after that, the first clumsy birds. The first animal resembling a human being did not come about until only 2 to 3 million years ago. If we imagine that the Earth began 24 hours ago, then the first ape-men appeared only 54 seconds ago.

Attempts have been made to reconcile the evolution theory with the Bible story of creation by calling each day of creation a long period of time. The Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White clearly indicate that the organic features of the earth are not hundreds of thousands or millions of years old. Nor are they exactly 6000 years old. According to Coffin (1983) one point is clear-that earth is only a few thousand years old-very young indeed in contrast to the great eons of time given in geological literature.

Science and Faith in the classroom

According to Coffin (1969) a child neatly dressed and with Bible in hand, runs up the steps of the Church, turns for a quick wave, and disappears inside for a Sabbath school. He learns many Bible stories, including that of the creation of the world. In simple faith he accepts this account of the origin of the earth and living things. As time passes he enrolls in elementary school. The books he studies describe the origin of matter and life, and the subsequent development of animals and plants in a way much different from what he learned in Sabbath School. The child makes comments about how the lesson is so different than what he had learned in the Sabbath School. The teacher puts him off by saying that Bible is a book of good morals, but it is not scientifically accurate. In high school, science and social studies classes, the theory of evolution is presented in greater detail and as unquestionable fact. His teachers may openly discredit the Bible. All medias programs he watches support the idea of evolution. As a teenager if there is anything he fears it is to be different from the crowd. In college and graduate education

the faith that has been lost is actively replaced by another, with the continued and more intensive exposure to an evolutionary and atheistic philosophy. At this stage the teachers do not hesitate to state their own anti-biblical sentiments. A young man then enters his career, strongly satisfied that the Bible may be a good book for children, but that evolution is an undeniable fact, and that if God exists He is not a personal being. Slowly, unconsciously perhaps, faith in God and His Word has given way to faith in a theory.

The whole idea of the teachings of the Seventh-Day Adventist is to provide opportunity for students (children), not to lose consciously or unconsciously the faith in God and his creation. Creation came out of God's own hand and it came out perfect. This is the whole concept of this essay. This needs to be uplifted in every classroom and school activity whether indoor or outdoor. By faith I accept the biblical account of creation as a correct history of the earth.

Conclusion

When the “Two Views about Creation” are viewed in the light of the Theory of evolution, it is easy for a Muslim to believe in that theory. Because, the theory of evolution is based on the fact that life is of the aquatic origin. The Holy Quran also says that life came from the water. The concepts of creation becomes clear to both the believers of the Holy Quran and the Evolutionists.

However, for a creationist to believe on these forms of creation, would be going against the Holy Bible. To a creationist, life was brought by God Almighty on this earth and He is the Sustainer of life on this earth.

The Author of nature is the author of the Bible. Creation and Christianity have one God. All who engage in the acquisition of knowledge should aim to reach the highest round of progress. (Coffin, 1969).

The Christian teachers in the classroom must always make facts about the life and origins of life on this earth very clear to the students. Because, it is very easy for the young minds to believe what the world has to teach them about the life and origin of life on this earth. If we as Christian educators fall short of our duty, God is going to hold us responsible. My wish and prayer is that we stay faithful to our duty as we integrate faith and learning in our classrooms.

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The Holy Bible

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