

Thought Short Report

Compatibility of the holy Qur'an with sciences: anthropological concepts as an example

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Abstract - In holy Qur'an countless verses are related to topics on the nature and the universe. In this report I try to show how these verses carry scientific concepts taking as examples some of those relating to anthropological sciences. In one of these verses God "Allah", speaking to scientists, presents signs to what we designate currently the coupled Cultural and Biological Anthropology using eloquent terms which represent a distinct abridgement "*.....variations of your languages and your colors....*". In another verse "*..., Roam the earth and find out the origin of life...*" Allah urges us to roam the earth looking for the origin of life. This is possible by the research then the analysis of remains and fossils hidden in the earth. Thus Allah has encouraged us since more than 14 centuries; to study the past of beings included that of humans and, therefore to found the two other anthropological specialities: the Archaeology and the Paleoanthropology. In other verses Allah designates other important anthropological concepts compatible with the most recent scientific conclusions as that relating to our unique and recent origin or that concerned our genus definition. The latter is presented in a dazzling abridgment coupled at the height of the accuracy in the verse: "*We have created Homo in the best elegant and upright form*".

Key word: The holy Qur'an, Major specialities of Anthropology, Modern human origin, Human genus, Modern human species.

Although the Qur'an is mainly considered as being a religious book of Islam, it contains countless verses relating to the nature and the universe. Here I try to show how these verses carry scientific concepts taking as examples some of those relating to anthropological topics. In fact these concepts are often more and less masked within Arabic rhetorical modes. Thus, generally it is not possible to reveal the correct scientific meaning of these verses before corresponding scientific discoveries. I will present in next papers some examples of verses, relating to scientific subjects, where these Arabic rhetorical modes reach unusual creativity summits (Chaabani, 2006). For a best understanding of this study it is useful to begin by presenting a brief definition of the anthropological science.

Anthropological science groups multiple specialties with as ambition to study and understand the humankind in all its aspects. Although the majority of anthropological specialties are clearly developed during the previous century, initial important grounding had been existed among some ancient writings particularly those of some Islamic Renaissance scholars as Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, considered as the first anthropologist (Persian scholar, 973-1048) and Ibn Khaldoun, (Tunisian scholar, 1332-1406).

Despite their differences, anthropological specialties offer a broad perspective focuses on two major axes. The first axis connects the present to the past of humans. The second axis presents the interrelation between their biology and their culture. Combining one and other of these two axes poles, it gets the four major specialties of anthropology. Two specialties intended for the study of humans in the past: the Archaeology relating to the cultural product left by humans during different stages of their existence and the Paleoanthropology encompassed studies of ancient human biological characteristics deduced from fossil analysis. Two other specialties allow the study of humans in the present, depending on the socio-cultural angle is the Cultural Anthropology or depending on the biological angle is the Biological Anthropology. Anthropological data of these major specialties with their various branches could converge, diverge or complement each other. The great synthesis between these data has become a necessity for better research in the field of anthropology. Thus, anthropological science must be synthetically as well as analytical because it studies man in his entirety.

Reference to the major specialties of Anthropology in the holy Qur'an

In His holy Koran Allah alludes to what we designate currently the coupled Cultural and Biological Anthropology using eloquent terms which represent a distinct abridgement, *variations in your languages and your colors*, in the verse <Among His proofs are the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors. In these, there are signs for scientists> [Sura Al-Room (The Romans) 30, verse 22], where He notes that among His creations the variation of our languages and our colors. By these two types of variation Allah gave sign to the Biological Anthropology through the terms “variation of your colors”. In fact, the skin color is the most visible and attractive human character, therefore it could be considered as the representative of all other various physical and molecular characters whose variations represents the human biodiversity that is the main subject of what we name currently Biological Anthropology. Besides, by this distinct abridgement “*variations in your languages and your colors*” Allah brought out the link between Biological Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology symbolizing the latter by language diversity because language is the pillar of human culture. Moreover Allah clarifies by the last expression of the verse that what He presents in such unusual distinct abridgement are signs addressed to scientists “*In these, there are signs for scientists*”.

In another verse Allah said < ..., Roam the earth and find out the origin of life..... > [Sura Al-Ankaboot (The Spider)29, verse 20]. Namely He urges us to roam the earth looking for the origin of life. This is possible by the research then the analysis of remains and fossils hidden in the earth. Thus Allah has encouraged us since more than 14 centuries; to study the past of beings included that of humans and, therefore to found the two other anthropological specialties: the Archaeology and the Paleoanthropology

Our unique and recent origin was announced in the Qur'an

Broadly speaking, two opposing models have been proposed to explain the origin of modern humans: the “single origin” model and the “multiregional origin” model. The former suggests that all present human populations descend from a single ancestral population of modern humans who, spread throughout the earth, having completely replaced the preceding archaic populations. Whereas the latter assumes that there was no single origin for modern humans, but there was a continuous transition among regional populations. Namely, there was independent appearance of modern traits in different areas at different times.

Genetic data have shown a surprisingly small amount of genetic variation, noted throughout all present human populations (e.g., Denaro et al. 1981; Hammer et al., 1995; Knight et al., 1996). These important genetic data support strongly the “single origin” model adding that this single origin was relatively recent. Consequently, this model is expanded in a general theory, the theory of the unique and recent origin of all modern humans. Although this theory is based mainly on genetic data, it is in accordance with linguistic data that put forward the view that all actual languages have very likely originated from a unique and recent ancestral one (Ruhlen M., 1998; Shevoshkin V., 1989; 1990). This theory could be considered within the most precious scientific conclusions reported in the last 20th century. In fact, it comes to support the human unity notion, which has been advanced, since the 18th century, by Buffon, the founder of human natural history. I can here present his expression translated from French as follows: « The man, white in Europe, black in Africa, yellow in Asia and red in America, is only the same man dyed by the climate color ». But Allah had preceded all, since the early seventh century, in his Holy Qur'an by clarifying the unique and recent origin for all of us as a fact and not an idea or a theory. This is clearly announced in his distinct abridgement in the verse *<All peoples were one nation.....>* [Sura Al-Baqarah (The Cow)2, verse 213]. Then Allah give more details in other verse *< Oh people, fear your Lord; the One who created you from one being, and created from it its mate, then spread from the two many men and women.... >* [Sura Al-Nisa (Women) 4, verse1].

A verse provides a definition of our genus exceeds in accuracy and in the wonderment of its abridgement the latest scientific definitions

Since more than a century, classic human paleontologists have begun the research of hominid fossils for deducing from their examination possible explanations on our origin. Unfortunately, these fossils are very scarce and often discovered at sparsely periods in incomplete states. Thus, each of these scarce incomplete fossils has been often analyzed in separated studies subject to mistake and imagination. I can summarize the main considerations emanating from these classic studies and concerning the principal steps of the human evolutionary history as follows:

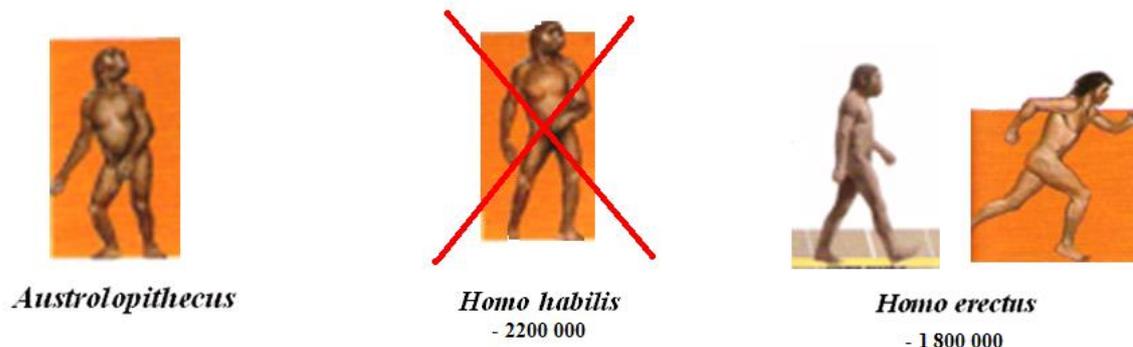
Australopithecus < *Homo habilis* < *Homo erectus* < *Homo Heidelbergensis* < *Homo sapien*

New observations and rigorous analyses contrast these classic considerations:

First, the so called, *habilis* does not belong to the human lineage. Second, the disappearance of a species just after given a more evolved species is not categorical. In fact the age of some *erectus* specimens show that *erectus* had seen life until about - 30 000 years. Third, such classification of species within *Homo* genus established on the basis of morphological features could not be maintained. In fact, Wood and Collard, two eminent modern paleo-anthropologists, have presented in 1999 a meticulous general revision of anatomical features of hominid fossils. From rigorous comparative analyses they concluded strongly that the two fossils called *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis* do not in fact belong to the genus *Homo*, but they belong to the non-human ape species and considered as australopithecines. Thus, they consider that early individuals belonging to the genus *Homo* are those who, designated *Homo erectus*, had emerged in sub-Saharan Africa at about 1 800 000 years ago.

This conclusion is strongly supported otherwise by two other eminent modern paleo-anthropologists Bramble and Lieberman (2004). They have shown that *Homo erectus* is the first who have the anatomical features responsible to the possession of the endurance running ability and that of the real upright body form. These anatomical features (about 26 features) absent in all predecessors of *Homo erectus* differentiate *Homo peoples*. Consequently, the bipedal gait restricted to walking, classically considered as a humanization criterion, would not be supported any more.

In fact, this criterion could be an ancient adaptation, which probably existed even before the divergence between apes and humans at about 5 million years ago. The case of the fossil *Orrorin tugenensi*, 6 million years old and that of "Toumai" *Sahelanthropus tchadensis*, 7 million years old, already adapted to the bipedal gait agree with this view.



Considering all these recent data, I have defined in my paper (Chaabani , 2008) our genus as follows : " Peoples belonged to the genus *Homo* are those who possess the principal anatomical features of actual humans particularly those responsible to the real upright body form associated to the endurance running ability ". After seeing the Qur'an I found a concordant definition but in a dazzling abridgment coupled at the height of the accuracy in the verse < *We have created Homo in the best elegant and upright form*> [Sura Al-Teen (The Fig) 95, verse4]. I believe that this definition will remain a reference to scientists forever.

Accurate scientific difference between two words relating to our genus and our species deduced from the Qur'an

As I have just explained the results of the latest and the most accurate studies show that since 1800 000 years appeared the first beings having our principal morphological characteristics and consequently belonged to our genus but not to our species. Owing that they are the first who acquired the perfect erect posture, their species is designated « erectus », and therefore, their complete scientific name is "*Homo erectus*". In the other hand the first group appeared more lately and genetically more closely to us are named "*Homo sapiens*". Sapiens, Latin word, means wise and represents our species characterised by the development of the degree of brain biological complexity

responsible of intellectual aptitudes. This development reached a superior level in a more recent group that represent our sub-species *sapiens* and therefore named *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

The Arabic word “Inssane” means the human kind and has its equivalent in all languages. For example: “Homme” in French, “Man” in English and “Homo” in Latin. The Latin term “*Homo*” is conventionally used as the international scientific term. To the best of my knowledge, unlike the other languages, the Arabic language is the only one in which the Man is designated by two words “Inssan” and “Bachar”. Although the two words are generally considered as synonyms, the rigorous interpretation of the Qur’an verses relating to these two words shows that the second “Bachar” represents our species and sub-species while the first represents our genus (for more explanation see Chaabani 2006).

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