

I S S U E S

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2009 marked the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his key work, *On the Origin of Species*. In this edition, we look at the theories of evolution and intelligent design. While these are not exclusively Jewish issues, the very first line of the Hebrew Scriptures declares, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). That simple yet challenging concept has enormous implications for how we as Jews live our lives, and for our ultimate destiny. Read on!

Evolution: Fact or Theory?

By Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld

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“There are so many flaws in Darwinism that one can wonder why it swept so completely through the scientific world, and why it is still endemic today.” —Sir Fred Hoyle¹

Back in 1987 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 1981 Louisiana law which mandated a balanced treatment in teaching evolution and creation in the public schools. The court decided that the intent of the law “was clearly to advance the religious viewpoint that a supernatural being created humankind,”² and therefore violated the First Amendment’s prohibition on a government establishment of religion.

In speaking for the majority, Justice William J. Brennan wrote, “. . . the Act’s primary purpose was to change the science curriculum of public schools in order to provide persuasive advantage to a particular religious doctrine that rejects the factual basis of evolution in its entirety.”³

It is surprising that no one on the Louisiana side informed the Justice that evolution is a theory, not a fact. It is important for us to do what the court failed to do: review the theory of evolution and determine exactly what are the facts.

First, what exactly is the theory of evolution? For the answer, we must go to the source: Charles Darwin’s famous book, *On the Origin of Species*, published in 1859. Darwin claimed that the thousands of different species of animals, insects and plants that exist on earth were not the works of a divine Creator who made each species in its present immutable form, as described in Genesis, but were the products of a very long natural process of development from simpler organic forms to more complex organic forms.

Thus, according to Darwin, species continue to change, or “evolve,” through a process of natural selection in which nature’s harsh conditions permit only the fittest to survive in more adaptable forms.

MORAL IMPLICATIONS

Ronald Clark, in his biography of Darwin, writes, “While Darwin was proud of his theory of natural selection . . . he saw as one of its main virtues the fact that it provided a counterblow to the idea of creation.”⁴

Darwin also believed that all life originated from a single source—a kind of primeval slime in which the first living organisms formed spontaneously out of non-living matter through a random process. These organisms are supposed to have branched off into different forms—plants, insects and animals.

Evolutionists have worked out all sorts of fascinating genealogical diagrams purporting to show the descent and relationship of one species to another. But what they don’t tell the public is that all of the connections in these family trees are hypothesis rather than fact. Astronomer Fred Hoyle writes,

It has been through the device of presenting such diagrams with the presumed connections drawn in firm solid lines that the general scientific world has been bamboozled into believing that evolution has been proved. Nothing could be further from the truth. . . . The absence from the fossil record of the intermediate forms required by the usual evolutionary theory shows that if terrestrial life-forms have evolved from a common stock, the major branchings must have developed very quickly. And the major branchings, if they occurred, were accompanied by genetic changes that were not small.⁵

NO MISSING LINK

Probably the most controversial aspect of Darwin’s theory concerns man’s place in the evolutionary scheme. In his book, *The Descent of Man*, published in 1870, Darwin contended that man and ape were evolutionary cousins with a common ancestor. When it came to intelligence, the gap between man and the other animals, Darwin believed, was one of degree.

But the fossil record, revealing the different stages of man’s evolution from apelike creature to *Homo sapiens*, has not been found. Paleoanthropologists have hunted high and low for the missing link or links. Not only have they not found them, they are now pretty sure that such links do not exist. Renowned anthropologist and evolutionist

Richard Leakey commented on Eugene Dubois's 1891 discovery of Java Man:

Dubois was convinced that [Java Man's] skull and thigh bone belonged to the long-sought-after "missing link" between modern humans and apes. Today we know that there is no such "link" between modern humans and modern apes but in the nineteenth century those that believed in human evolution thought that a direct link would be found.⁶

Instead of admitting defeat, the evolutionists have proclaimed victory! Harvard paleoanthropologist David Pilbeam stated, "We should no longer say that we are descended from apes; we are apes."⁷ Evolutionary biologist and popular author Richard Dawkins echoed that thought.⁸

Apparently, to some scientists, any hypothesis is preferable to accepting the possibility that a Creator had something to do with everything that exists.

For example, Nobel prize-winning biologist George Wald stated:

Most modern biologists, having reviewed with satisfaction the downfall of the spontaneous generation hypothesis, yet unwilling to accept the alternative belief in special creation, are left with nothing. I think a scientist has no choice but to approach the origin of life through a hypothesis of spontaneous generation.⁹

LIFE IS NO ACCIDENT

The simple fact is that no proof whatsoever has been found indicating that one species evolves into another. The fossil record is simply a series of still pictures of species that existed at one time. Transitional fossils have not been found. The fossil record shows new species appearing suddenly without any ancestors. Scientific investigation indicates that the species are immutable and that when mutations occur they do not become new species. For example, evolutionists

have been experimenting with fruit flies for years in the hope of demonstrating evolution at work. But the fruit flies have stubbornly refused to develop into anything but more fruit flies, despite all kinds of stimuli, including radiation. Some mutations have occurred, but nothing to suggest the beginnings of a new species.

Even Dr. Stephen Jay Gould, a passionate defender of evolution, has written, "The fossil record with its abrupt transitions offers no support for gradual change."¹⁰ As Darwin wrote:

[T]he geological record is extremely imperfect . . . and (this fact) will to a large extent explain why we do not find interminable varieties, connecting together all the extinct and existing forms of life by the finest graduated steps. He who rejects these views on the nature of the geological record, will rightly reject my whole theory.¹¹

As for the theory that life originated by accident in some sort of chemical soup, Louis Pasteur proved that spontaneous generation is impossible. The spontaneous generation-of-life idea is just wishful thinking on the part of evolutionists. Dr. Fred Hoyle has calculated that such an accident had one chance in $10^{40,000}$ of occurring. The DNA genetic code is so complex that the information content of a simple cell has been estimated at six billion bits.¹² In short, the more we learn about the complexity of life, the less is the likelihood that it all came about by accident, with no purpose, and no Creator.

Nevertheless, French biologist Jacques Monod said, "Man has to understand that he is a mere accident. Not only is man not the center of creation; he is not even the heir to a sort of predetermined evolution that would have produced either man or something very like him."¹³ Note, incidentally, how similar Monod's classification of man is to Darwin's view that man should be brought down to the animal level where he belongs.

Consider this fact: there are two thousand complex enzymes required for a living organism,¹⁴ but not a single

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one of them could have formed accidentally. As Fred Hoyle has put it, the chance that higher life forms might have emerged in this accidental way is comparable with the chance that “a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein.”¹⁵

To sum it up: the fossil record does not support the idea of gradual evolution. Nor does it support the idea of a common ancestry or accidental source of all life.

WHEN MYTH BECOMES TRUTH

The *theory* of evolution has been integrated as fact into our popular culture. For example, we read in the *Standard Family Reference Encyclopedia*:

Life probably first evolved from the primeval soup some 3000-4000 million years ago when the first organic chemicals were synthesized due to the effects of lightning. Primitive algae capable of synthesizing their own food material have been found in geological formations some 2000 million years old. Simple forms of animals and fungi then evolved. From that time there has been a slow evolution of multicellular organisms.¹⁶

Someday the average educated American will be able to read that paragraph and understand it for what it is: hypothesis presented as fact. In the first place, spontaneous generation is impossible even with such primitive forms as viruses. Second, because of the enormous complexity of living matter, the random, accidental self-creation of life is mathematically inconceivable. Third, there are no simple forms of animals and fungi; they are all pretty complex.

Endnotes

1. Sir Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Evolution from Space: A Theory of Cosmic Creationism* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p. 133.
2. Justice Brennan, opinion of the Court, Supreme Court of the United States, 482 U.S. 578, *Edwards v. Aguillard*, June 19, 1987.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Ronald Clark, *The Survival of Charles Darwin: A Biography of a Man and an Idea* (New York, NY: Random House, 1984), p. 123.
5. Hoyle, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
6. Richard E. Leakey, *Human Origins* (London: The Rainbird Publishing Group Limited, 1982), p. 48.
7. David Pilbeam, *Discover*, July 1983, p. 23.
8. Dawkins wrote, “We are not, then, merely like apes or descended from apes; we are apes.” Richard Dawkins, book review of *Blueprints: Solving the Mystery of Evolution*, in *The New York Times*, April 9, 1989.
9. George Wald, “Origin of Life,” *Scientific American*, August 1954, p. 46.

The DNA of an amoeba is anything but simple. Indeed, this same encyclopedia’s article on fungi indicates that they are quite complicated organisms. As for “slow evolution,” even some prominent evolutionists, like Gould and Niles Eldredge, don’t believe in that. In order to explain the sudden appearance of species without ancestors, they believe in “punctuated equilibrium,” the theory that the great majority of species originate in rare, rapid moments (punctuations), rather than through gradual transformation. And fourth, matter tends to go from order to disorder, which implies the existence of a creative force that could reverse that tendency.

But some of the world’s most intelligent people take Darwin’s theory of evolution as fact. For example, former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett once said in an interview: “I believe there is good scientific evidence for evolution.”¹⁷ Similarly, George F. Will wrote in a recent column: “Evolution is a fact, and its mechanism is natural selection.”¹⁸

If evolution is a fact, someone has yet to prove it! The problem with Mr. Will is that he is probably confusing evolution with breeding. Breeding, or variety of breeds within a species, is a function of genetics, not evolution.

Is evolution fact or theory? You be the judge. ■

After reading John Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion, Samuel L. Blumenfeld became convinced that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah, and that he had been sent to earth to extend the covenant to non-Jews in fulfillment of God’s promise that through Abraham “all the nations shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:18). Blumenfeld is the author of ten books on education and literacy. His latest book, The Marlowe-Shakespeare Connection, presents a new view of the authorship controversy.

10. Stephen Jay Gould, “The Return of Hopeful Monsters,” *Natural History*, June-July 1977, pp. 22-25.
11. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, A Facsimile of the First Edition, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 341-342.
12. William Dembski, quoted in Joe Woodward, “Design or Darwin” *Calgary Herald*, August 28, 2005.
13. Jacques Monod, quoted in Horace Freeland Judson’s *The Eighth Day of Creation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), p. 217.
14. “A Response to Richard Dawkins’ *The Blind Watchmaker*,” Creation Ministries International, 2006.
15. Sir Fred Hoyle, “Hoyle on the Evolution,” *Nature*, November 12, 1981, p. 105.
16. *Standard Family Reference Encyclopedia*, 1977, p. 391.
17. Interview with William Bennett by John Lofton, *The Washington Times*, January 2, 1986, transcribed in the *Congressional Record*, March 7, 1986.
18. George F. Will, “How Congress Trumps Darwin,” *The Washington Post*, February 8, 2009.