



Pleroma Design, Qur'ānic Approach to God Intervention in Nature

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ARTICLE INFO

Article type:
Research Article

Article History:
Received 09 September 2023
Revised 05 December 2023
Accepted 10 December 2023
Published Online 10 January 2024

Keywords:
Evolution Theory,
Evolutionism,
Pleroma Design,
Divine Realm,
Kingdom of God.

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the Holy Qur'an is not in line with any of the three common beliefs about God's intervention in nature, including evolutionism, creationism, and intelligent design, and instead proposes a fourth approach and refers to it as the pleroma design. The pleroma design theory posits that God directly intervenes in the creation of life, while at the same time allowing evolutionary changes with the mechanism of natural selection. This theory provides an explanation that is both metaphysical and empirical in a way that is not contradicting. Unlike creationism, the pleroma design theory is unique in aligning with theological and philosophical principles without denying the evolution theory as the main contemporary scientific paradigm. It is also not committed to the naturalistic requirements imposed by evolutionists or relying on scientific and experimental evidence or pseudoscientific explanations advocated by intelligent design proponents. Ultimately, the theory of pleroma design illustrates that from one point of view, there is at the very least a complementary relationship between science and religion rather than conflict, and the other view would point to a compatible relationship between science and religion.

Cite this article: Rohani Mashhadi, F. & Sadatmansouri, M. (2024). Pleroma Design, Qur'ānic Approach to God Intervention in Nature. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies (JCIS)*, 6 (1), 115-125. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2023.366410.1347>



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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcis.2023.366410.1347>

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

1. Introduction

Upon studying the verses of the Qur'an, it becomes evident that the Qur'an emphasizes the active involvement of God in all events of the universe, including the creation of the natural world and human beings. Therefore, the theory of evolutionism, which denies the existence of an intelligent creator and emphasizes on the sufficiency of natural mechanisms to cause changes in organisms, is incompatible with the Qur'an. However, does this mean we should acknowledge the theory of creationism which stresses the direct involvement of a transcendental cause? While some scholars accept the theory, creationism as a pseudo-scientific theory is flawed and is deficient in providing accurate philosophical analysis and scientific explanations. On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an does not entirely disregard natural processes and the mediation of material causes in the events of the natural world and validates it. Therefore, evolution can be compatible with the Qur'an (but not evolutionism which will be explained further in the article) and some researchers consider the transformation of living beings to be in line with the teachings of the Qur'an. One group, who are referred to as intelligent design theorists, seeks to reconcile belief in God as the Creator of the universe with scientific facts. This article aims to examine these theories from a Qur'anic perspective by comprehensively studying relevant verses of the Qur'an about creation and therefore reaching Qur'an's view on God's Intervention in Nature. The main point of contention between these groups is the role of God the Creator as a transcendent and supernatural being in the natural world, and how to justify God's intervention in the universe.

In criticizing creationism and intelligent design, three points are worth noting:

First: Opposing scientific theories solely based on them appearing to contradict the teachings of holy books, without considering the possibility of interpreting those texts, is not a logical solution. Science and religion examine the world from two different perspectives, as demonstrated by a Qur'anic example presented in this article.

Second: The history of science demonstrates that the defects of human theories have been remedied by discovering more robust evidence or the emergence of more accurate theories. Relying on gaps in scientific knowledge to prove God is not a sound approach, as the only outcome would be the retreat of the God of gaps.

Third: The complexity of phenomena does not necessarily serve as evidence of the intervention of an intelligent agent, especially when scientific explanations for such complexity exist.

Now the main question is "According to the Qur'an, how can the conflict between science and religion that arises from "evolutionism" be resolved?" We claim that the Qur'an has its special approach toward creation, and therefore propose a fourth theory, and call it the pleroma design approach. The theory of pleroma design illustrates that from one point of view, there is at the very least a complementary relationship between science and religion rather than conflict and the other view would point to a compatible relationship between science and religion.

1.1. Methodology

To examine the compatibility of the above theories with the Qur'an, we first extracted the main components of evolutionism, which are "mechanisms of natural selection, universal common ancestry, the involvement of an intelligent agent". Next, we analyzed all the verses containing key concepts in the conceptual network of "Creation", such as "Creation: (الخلق), Spirit: (الروح), Soul: نفس, Human: (الانسان, البشر, آدم), Divine command: (الامر), Divine kingdom: (ملكوت)" based on the principle of "no differences in the Qur'an".

Finally, we conceptually matched these words with these components for each theory, to show the compatibility or incompatibility of the Qur'an with each of them.

1.2. Literature

To avoid any confusion caused by the vagueness of words, we will start this article by defining the keywords and terms we will use. We will refer to authentic literature in this field to clarify their meaning. The terms we will define are as follows:

A) Evolutionism and Evolution Theory

From the standpoint of this article, an evolutionist is not simply someone who accepts evolution as a scientific theory and defends it. Rather, an evolutionist is someone who besides “evolution” is committed to other principles that will be explained further in the article. However, since the term "evolution" may be ambiguous, it is essential to clarify its meaning first.

Evolution has been defined in various ways (Millstein, 2021; Futuyma, 2005: 2; Endler, 1986: 5; Van Valen, 1973: 488). The definition highlights the association between "evolution" and diversity, which, according to Roberta Millstein's interpretation, is not compatible with the vast amount of literature produced in the philosophy of evolution (Millstein, 2021).

Based on the definitions, it seems that evolutionists should adhere to evolution matching Millstein's definition stating "any change in the frequency of variants in a population from one generation to another". However since this definition is a post-Darwinian view on evolution, it will exclude Darwin himself from being an evolutionist!

As for this article, we will consider Millstein's definition of "evolution". An "evolutionist" will be defined as someone who adheres to the following:

1. Reconstructs a series of past events to tell the story of natural history (Bowler, 1975: 99).
2. Bounded by the concept of common universal ancestry (Darwin, 1964: 484).
3. Natural mechanisms are sufficient for changes in organisms (Thomson 1982).
4. The natural selection/random variation (or mutation) process is able to explain the appearance of design in living systems without invoking the existence of an intelligent designer (Moreland, 2017: 217).

Evolutionary biologists, following in Darwin's footsteps, have confirmed that the mechanism of natural selection/random variation not only explains the origin of all new biological forms and traits but can also account for their apparent design. Darwin (and Neo-Darwinists) claim that this design can simply be seen as the product of an undirected mechanism, specifically the mechanism of natural selection. In fact, since 1859, most evolutionary biologists have considered apparent design in living organisms to be an illusion. Therefore, if the apparent design is believed to be an illusion, then any mechanism that creates that appearance must be completely unguided (Moreland, 2017: 234).

B) Creationism

At a broad level, a Creationist is someone who believes in a god who is the absolute creator of heaven and earth, out of nothing, by an act of free will. Such a deity is generally thought to be “transcendent” meaning beyond human experience, and constantly involved (*immanent*) in the creation, ready to intervene as necessary, and without whose constant concern the creation would cease or disappear (Ruse, 2022).

This point is particularly emphasized about the creation of human beings, as creationists believe that humans were created exactly as described in the Bible. Among commentators of the Holy Qur'an and Muslim theologians, many hold a similar view to creationists. They interpret verses of the Holy Qur'an and verses about the creation of humans literally and believe that Adam was created specifically of foul-smelling mud and then God gave him life by breathing his spirit into him (with differing interpretations of how the spirit was breathed into Adam). As a result, they reject evolutionary mechanisms and natural selection at least about human creation.

As a result, creationists disagree with evolutionists, at least in three of the four tenets of evolutionism (points 2 to 4).

C) Intelligent Design

Intelligent design (I.D.) proposes that non-evolutionary intelligence is necessary to explain the origins of life. According to I.D. natural causes and material mechanisms alone cannot account for the complexity of organisms (Dembski and Ruse, 2004).

Two key propositions of the intelligent design theory are:

- The existence of observable signs in nature that suggest the involvement of an intelligent agent.
- Certain complexities in nature cannot be explained without invoking the intervention of an intelligent agent.

Note that although most proponents of intelligent design believe in some form of theism, belief in intelligent design does not necessarily require a commitment to a personal god or a deity accepted by the world's major religions (such as theists) (Dembski and Ruse, 2004).

I.D. theory can adhere to the first and second clauses of evolutionists' commitments, but it does not accept the third clause, which considers the mechanism of natural selection or mutation as sufficient to produce fundamental innovations in the history of life, and as a result, intelligent design does not accept the fourth case either.

D) Pleroma Design

The theory of “Pleroma¹ Design” (P.D.) asserts that the creation of beings in the material world in general and the creation of humans on earth in particular occurred through the direct causal intervention of God and divine planning. However, this intervention does not contradict or invalidate empirical knowledge.

The word ‘pleroma’ is derived from Gnosticism and refers to the spiritual universe as the abode of God and all divine powers and emanations. In this article, pleroma is used as an appropriate equivalent for the term “Malakut” in the Qur’an. Malakut appears in four Qur’anic verses and denotes God’s rule over the universe.

P.D. differs from creationism in that it fully accepts the first and second commitments of evolutionism. It accepts the third commitment within a non-naturalistic framework but rejects the fourth commitment entirely.

In contrast, on the surface, P.D. does not seem different from I.D. However, P.D. does have some critical and fundamental differences from I.D.:

First, P.D. insists on the existence of one and only God who controls the entire universe, whereas I.D., is compatible with the existence of one or more gods including impersonal gods, or even a creator with limited knowledge and power.

Second, P.D. unlike I.D., does not rely on empirical reasoning to identify signs of intelligent design in the gradual evolution of living organisms.

Third and most importantly, P.D. acknowledges the correctness of empirical science and its sufficiency in explaining the natural world at the same level but denies the true causality of natural agents (Or any other than God) arguing that the role of natural causes in the evolution of beings is only limited to providing physical conditions for the realization of divine causality (divine command) and believes that the true cause of creation is exclusive to God and His command. In contrast, I.D. overlooks this point and unintentionally falls into the trap of shirk in lordship leaving room for criticism that I.D. reduces the role of the Creator to that of a God of gaps.

4.1. Background

The theory of I.D. has been criticized by some researchers who rejected the scientific nature of this theory (Aviezer, 2010; Abdullahirad, 2016), and others have shown that the theory of I.D. has not been successful in solving the challenge of the conflict between science and religion (Peyrowjaafari and Enayatirad, 2017). No well-known works have been presented on the critique of I.D. from the perspective of the Qur’an.

5. Analysis of the compatibility of evolutionism with the Qur'an

It is important to explore the Qur’an’s perspective on several fundamental issues regarding the creation of the universe and life. These include “**natural mechanisms**” and the existence of a “**common universal ancestry**”, the role of “**natural selection**” in the origin of life, and the evidence of the “**involvement of God**” in the universe.

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5.1. Natural mechanisms and God's intervention in nature

Considering the position of the two concepts of “creation” and “command” in the verses describing God's action in the world, the meaning of these two Qur'anic terms are analyzed in the text of the Qur'an, concerning the role of natural mechanisms.

5.1.1. Creation in Qur'an and natural mechanisms

The Qur'anic concept of creation revealed in the verses on the subject does not conflict with the idea of natural mechanisms and processes. The Arabic term "Khalq", which is used in the Qur'an to refer to creation (Ibn Manzoor, 2005, vol. 10: 85) has a range of meanings beyond its literal definition of creation, including determination, measurement (Farahidi, 1988, vol. 10: 85; Qur'an 25:2; Qur'an 87:3), and natural development (Rohani, 2021).

The various constructions of the term in the 218 verses of the Qur'an suggest that creation is a natural process attributed to God, rather than a supernatural event that defies scientific explanation.

The Qur'anic verses on creation emphasize several key points that align with scientific understanding:

- 1) Everything is God's creation (Qur'an 25:2; Qur'an 39:62)
- 2) Creation has a starting point (Qur'an 10:4; Qur'an 10:34; Qur'an 29:19-20)
- 3) It starts from the existing primary material (Qur'an 55:15; Qur'an 25:54; Qur'an 32:7; Qur'an 18:37; Qur'an 16:4)
- 4) It is a time-consuming process (Qur'an 7:54) and it is a step-by-step process (Qur'an 39:6; Qur'an 23:14)
- 5) Everything's creation is based on measurements (Qur'an 25:2; Qur'an 54:49; Qur'an 80:19), which requires dependence on objects in their existence (Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 15: 176)
- 6) Some creatures are the cause of other phenomena (Qur'an 30:48; Qur'an 35:9)
- 7) Creation is ongoing (Qur'an 16:8)

Based on the propositions outlined above, it can be argued that the Qur'an describes the process of creation of beings (Tag2) by the transformation of existing materials (Tag3) which are measured according to natural limits (Tag5) gradually (Tag4) and with the interaction of natural materials (Tag6) as "creation". This process ultimately, relies on God's will and command (Tag1)" (Rohani, 2021)

While the Qur'an considers the involvement of natural causes and the measured and calculated interaction between these factors as valid and effective in the emergence of phenomena, it mentions God's will or command as the main cause on which the effect of all causes relies (Qur'an 7:54; Qur'an 14:32; Qur'an 16:12; Qur'an 21:81; Qur'an 30:25; Qur'an 8:44; Qur'an 35: 68). For instance when describing the creation of humans, the Qur'an emphasizes both on the natural origin of human creation using terms such as water and soil, and also on the blowing of the spirit of God, which arose by God's command (Qur'an 38:71-72). In this sense, the Qur'an emphasizes both "natural creation and divine command" in the creation of humans. Moreover, the Qur'an acknowledges the role of natural causes and the interaction between them in the occurrence of phenomena, including the occurrence of unusual things, expressing "from where there is no expectation" and emphasizes the natural role of values and quantities as a means of maturity and fulfillment of God's command (Qur'an 65:2-3). Referring to this verse, it can be argued that if it is impossible to achieve something in a normal way, and at the same time God's will is to do that unusual thing, then God will bring it to his desired end; since God has set a way for everything, and these ways are mentioned in the verse as “Qadr”. In other words, the influence of quantities in extraordinary affairs is such that it makes it possible for God to adjust the causes and relationships between things in such a way that the effects and results He desires occur (Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 1: 76-77). Therefore, the existence of natural causes and natural mechanisms is necessary; which means God never intervenes in the creation of creatures in the natural world without the mediation of natural causes. Therefore, it seems that the approach of the Qur'an is not compatible with creationism (at least with some of its meanings). This is because according to the concept of creation in the Qur'an, natural mechanisms along with God's command and will, caused the creation of creatures. The relationship between God's command and will with natural mechanisms requires further examination and attention.

5.1.2. Divine command in Qur'ān and natural mechanisms

The Qur'an uses the expression "Kon Fayakun" eight times, which denotes the definite and immediate fulfillment of God's command (Razi, 1999, vol. 4: 26). It is used to refer to the creation of the heavens and the earth (Qur'ān 2:117), the creation of Jesus (Qur'ān 3:47; Qur'ān 19:35), the establishment of the Day of Resurrection (Qur'ān 6:73), the raising of the dead (Qur'ān 16:40; Qur'ān 36:82), and the revival and the death of all humans (Qur'ān 40:68). According to the Qur'an, all events in the universe are influenced by God's command and the expression "Kon Fayakun" highlights the immediacy and effectiveness of God's command in bringing about any event or phenomenon. The study of these verses does not suggest that God intervenes directly without the mediation of natural causes in all of these phenomena. Even in other verses, the natural causes that are effective in creating these phenomena have been mentioned. For example, the verses that emphasize the role of water in creating live beings (Qur'ān 21:30; Qur'ān 25:54; Qur'ān 24:45) and the role of wind in fertilizing clouds (Qur'ān 15:22) and causing rain (Qur'ān 7:57).

To examine the relationship between "God's command and will" with natural mechanisms, we need to observe the contexts in which the word "Amr": "Command" is used in the Qur'an.

In the verses that mention the "Kingdom" of God (Qur'ān 6:75; Qur'ān 23:88), the Qur'an refers to the great dominion and rulership of God (Zamakhshari, 1986, vol. 2: 182), whose existence is dependent on "God's command" and is integrated with the natural realm existing beyond it. From the Qur'an's perspective all phenomena such as night and day, the sea, planets, stars, nature, and the scientific laws that cause and govern the creation of the universe, have a kingdom aspect because they are the result of God's command and dependent on it (Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 17: 367).

In the final verses of Surah Yasin (Qur'ān 36) the Qur'an eliminates any doubts about the possibility of re-creation and compares the creation of the world with the re-creation of human and considers both as manifestations of God's creativity (Qur'ān 36:81); the following verse talks about the definite and immediate fulfillment of God's command concluding the universality of His "kingdom" and the monopoly of His rule over everything (Qur'ān 36:83; Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 17: 116).

This represents the natural or physical dimension of the divine kingdom realm in which the creation of phenomena occurs over some time and does not occur instantaneously, but it is dependent on God's command at any moment.

It appears that God's command serves as the means of connecting all beings with God's essence.

The relationship between God and nature, according to our understanding of the Qur'an, is consistent with the view of philosophers such as Herbert McCabe (1926-2001).

"McCabe observes that, strangely enough, creationism itself is opposed to creation, because it makes God an agent inside the universe and thus a replacement of science, whereas a correct philosophical theology permits a science that is freed from mental prejudices and, therefore, as true as it can be. God is not a causal explanation of the world; to explain the world's events, it is enough to have sciences. "One who thinks of God as the explanation of the world has not grasped the absolute transcendence of God" and has not grasped either God's freedom as the creator. McCabe quotes Aquinas: "All depend on God's will as the primary cause, a cause which transcends the distinction between must and might not". (Manni, 2019: 99)

5.1.3. Divine command, and universal consciousness in Qur'ān

This connection is also a sign of the consciousness of beings because the Qur'an states that God communicates His command to creatures through revelation. The reception of revelation is the result or introduction to the consciousness of the entity that receives it (Qur'ān 41:12; Qur'ān 42:52). These verses mention the revelation of something as a "command" to all beings at levels: inanimate, animate, and human being, which can be a sign of a special consciousness in all beings and the entirety of existence. For instance, the revelation of the unique command of each heaven (Qur'ān 41:12) and the creation of a system that governs each heaven (Tabari, 1991, vol. 24: 64; Shazeli, 2004, vol. 5: 3115; Alousi, 1994, vol. 12: 356) and the conscious obedience of the heavens to God's command, the revelation of the command to the bee, resulting in its natural awareness of how to construct a hive and produce honey (Qur'ān 16:68-69), the revelation of the solution to Prophet Moses (pbuh)'s mother to save her son's life (Qur'ān 28:7), and the revelation of the spirit to the prophets as a divine command

and the Prophets' possession of superior understanding (Qur'ān 42:52). Therefore, it seems that the term revelation refers to the interaction between the "Natural World" and the "Pleroma" and is a sign of the existence of consciousness in creation.

The universal glorification and worship of all beings in the world is another indication of this universal awareness (Tabari, 1991, vol. 65: 15); That is, all things in the universe are submissive, worshipping, obedient, prostrating, glorifying God and submitting to His command (Qur'ān 22:18; Qur'ān 3:44; Qur'ān 3:83; Tabari, 1991, vol. 15: 65; Ibn Kathir 1998, vol. 5: 75). This universal submission to God's command further emphasizes, the link between the divine command and the consciousness of creatures. Even the creation of the heavens and the earth in the Qur'an is portrayed as a result of God's command and their humble response to God as conscious beings (Qur'ān 41:11).

The exceptional creation of Jesus and Yahya emphasizes the absolute power of God with the word "command". However, the presence of God's command plays the main role in the creation of all phenomena. Thus, the expression "Kon Fayakun" for God's command does not only mean the extraordinary creation of things, but it also signifies a kind of consciousness in creatures and their submission to God's order, highlighting the dominion of the divine kingdom over the entire universe. In other words, the divine command "Be" to the beings only has real meaning if they are sentient.

In the creation of all human beings, the spirit, which is divine and from the realm of command (Qur'ān 17:85), was breathed into the naturally created soul by God's command "Do" (Qur'ān 3:59; Qur'ān 91:7-8; Qur'ān 15:29; Qur'ān 38:79).

Due to their soul i.e. "nafs", humans are the highest natural creation that God called Himself "the best of creators" after their creation (Qur'ān 23:14). The spirit is the highest divine being, and therefore, among natural creatures, human benefits from the divine spirit.

Traditions state that the spirit has a special place among the divine beings (angels) (Koleiny, 1983, vol. 1: 273) and the rank of each person's possession of the spirit is different (Koleiny, 1983, vol. 1: 272) and depends on their physical ability to think. The origin of this ability is the brain. Thus, the soul i.e. "nafs", as a natural creature is inspired by both the divine spirit from heaven and the natural brain from the earth.

5.2. Universal common ancestry

As mentioned in the introduction, creationists do not accept the principle of universal common descent as part of evolution. However, in the Qur'an, there are references from which the common ancestry of humans, living beings, and all creatures can be deduced. It seems that in the Qur'an, the term "soil" refers to the common ancestry of all creatures, "water" refers to the common ancestry of all living beings, and "soul" refers to the common ancestry of all humans.

According to the Qur'an, there are five basic stages in human creation: 1- creation from soil, 2- creation from water or sperm, 3- creation from the soul and breathing of the spirit, 4- aging and death, and 5- re-creation and revival. It seems that stages 1 to 3 can be applied to three categories inanimate, animate, and human nature. That is, all beings have their roots in the soil for their inanimate existence (Qur'ān 71:17) and all animate beings, have their life beginning from water or sperm (Qur'ān 24:45) and all human beings, along with their inanimate and animate existence, have a single essence called the human soul. (Qur'ān 4:1)

A) Creation from soil and water

The process of the transition from the inanimate stage (soil) to the animate stage (water) and then to the human being stage (soul) is not described in the Qur'an. Therefore, commentators have provided their explanations based on their understanding of the Qur'an, narratives, or scientific knowledge. Consequently, three explanations have been proposed for the stages of human creation: explaining the birth process, explaining the miraculous creation, and explaining the evolutionary process.

The first explanation suggests that the **soil** is the source of human food, and the embryo in the mother's womb is formed and nourished by substances derived from the soil finally the embryo is blessed with a **spirit** by the command of God, and then it is born as a human with a **soul**.

On the other hand, the second and third explanations propose that the **soil** is the origin of the human species. However, two different interpretations have emerged regarding how the transformation of this soil into humans occurred: the miraculous and the evolutionary interpretation. In

the miraculous interpretation, the soil transforms into the **statue** of Adam by the will of God surprisingly and unusually, then the divine spirit is breathed into the statue, and the **soul** and the breath of Adam emerge; Similarly, Adam's wife was created from the surplus of his soil, and afterwards, human life continues from the sperm of these two.

In the evolutionary interpretation, it is believed that the first living organism is created from **soil** or mud in backwaters, and over time, and during the evolutionary process, more complex life forms appeared which also included organisms with gender features capable of producing **sperm**. The evolutionary process then led to the emergence of diverse animals in different shapes and forms which include all kinds of reptiles, birds, quadrupeds, etc. (Qur'ān 24:45) Ultimately, the human form has emerged, and with the perfection of the human species and their mental maturity, the ability to receive the divine spirit was bestowed upon them. The first example of an evolved human being is Adam, who became the owner of a soul inspired by the spirit, and then his wife was blessed with the same soul as human nature, making them the origin of today's intelligent human (homosapien).

Examining the opinions of commentators under the contexts of the stages of human creation in the Qur'an (table 1) reveals that the process of birth is not a suitable interpretation in all related contexts (Qur'ān 15:26-29; Qur'ān 38:71-12). However, both miraculous creation and the evolutionary process can be proposed in all contexts, except for Surah Sajdah (Qur'ān 32:7-9), where only the evolutionary process is compatible (Rohani, 2022). This is because the miraculous creation interpretation disrupts the logical order in the verse (soil-water-spirit). In the miraculous creation interpretation, after the creation of Adam from the clay statue and the spirit breathed into it, the human race continues from the sperm(water) of Adam and his wife (soil-spirit-water). However, in the evolutionary reading of the same verses, the creation of a human from soil and the reproduction of his generation from the sperm(water) of intermediate animals, is followed by the stage of settlement and breathing of the spirit (soil-water-spirit). As a result, the miraculous explanation is different from the sequence of creation in Surah Sajdah. As a result, the evolutionary interpretation is considered the most powerful interpretation as a comprehensive explanation of all statements of the Qur'an regarding the stages of human creation. This interpretation reveals the existence of a common universal descent by deciphering the two elements of soil and water in the expression of the Qur'an.

Table 1. Three readings of the creation stages of human

Qur'ānic Context	Evolutionary Process	Miraculous Creation	Birth Process
3: 59	+	+	-
18: 37	+	+	+
22: 5	+	+	+
30: 20	+	+	+
35: 11	+	+	+
40: 67	+	+	+
6: 2	+	+	+
23: 12-13	+	+	+
32: 7-9	+	-	+
38: 71-72	+	+	-
15: 26-28	+	+	-

B) Creation from a single soul

The Qur'an refers to the origin of people as a "single soul" in four verses and mentions the creation of "his couple" from the single soul (Qur'ān 4:1; Qur'ān 6:98; Qur'ān 7:189; Qur'ān 39:6). Most commentators interpret the "single soul" as Adam's person (Alusi, 1994, vol. 2: 391; Tusi n.d., vol. 3: 99; vol. 2: 391; Makarem, 1992, vol. 3: 245; Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 4: 135; Ibn Ashur, 1999, vol. 4: 9; Qomi Mashhadi 1989, vol. 3: 307) and some commentators have stated that there is consensus on the interpretation of the "single soul" as Adam (Tusi n.d., vol. 3: 99; Tabrasi, 1993, vol. 5: 3). Some like

Zamakhshari interpret it more precisely as Adam's soul (Zamakhshari, 1986, vol. 1: 461). Sayyid Qutb, speaks of the unity of the human race despite gender and racial differences, without mentioning Adam (Shazeli, 2004, vol. 1: 574). Some commentators while interpreting the verse (Qur'an 7:189), consider the unity of the human species as a possible and strong meaning for the verse (Makarem, 1992, vol. 7: 52; Fazlullah, 1998, vol. 10: 305; Shazeli, 2004, vol. 3: 1411). Based on these views, it can be accepted that the "single soul" may refer to the common nature of men and women of any race and color, while Adam is the first human with a soul, and the first father of modern humans. Thus, the verses of "single soul" indicate both the unity of human nature and their common ancestry.

To confirm this view, it is necessary to pay attention to the difference between soul and spirit in the Qur'an. The soul is the essence and existential nature of today's human beings, which is physical and natural, while the spirit is the divine aspect of the human soul. Therefore, as human creation becomes more complex, the soul appears naturally (Qur'an 23:14) and along with the appearance of the soul, the conditions for breathing the spirit into the human soul were provided (Sahabi, 2008; Meshkini, 1987; Rohani, 2020).

5.3. Natural selection

The Qur'anic concept of "istifa" could be interpreted as referring to the mechanism of natural selection as a fate, established by God in the world. However, this process would be guided selection rather than random selection. "istifa" literally means to choose and separate everything from the impurities that make it cloudy (Tabatabai 2011, 3:164). In the Qur'an, it is stated that Adam - like Noah, the family of Imran and the family of Abraham - was chosen and reached a high position among all people in the world (Qur'an 3:33); It seems that Adam was a chosen person from among the human beings of his time was probably more perfect in terms of creation and was chosen to have a divine spirit and a special human understanding (Sahabi, 2008; Meshkini, 1987). In this case, "Istifa" is a natural event that is expressed as a legislative event.

However, if the meaning of the verse in question is Adam's preference over all people at all times (Makarem, 1992, 521) or his preference over his children (Tabatabai, 2011, vol. 16: 259), it is not possible to match the concept of "Istifa" with the mechanism of natural selection. These perceptions are inconsistent with the collection of verses related to the concept of "Istifa" for the following reasons:

- a) The meaning of "Alamin" cannot refer to all people in all eras because it is not acceptable to say that Adam was superior to all humans of all ages. The only acceptable point is that Adam was chosen from among all people of all times because the new human race was created and was expanded from him.
- b) "Istifa" cannot indicate Adam's selection from among his contemporaries, i.e., his children. This is because, in Surah Al-e-Imran, some special people are mentioned as being selected as a great blessing, and the universality and glory of the word 'Alamin' is not compatible with Adam's superiority over his children.

Therefore, the hypothesis of Adam being chosen from among the people before him and during his time should be examined.

The kinship ties among God's chosen servants are emphasized in the Qur'an by using the words "family" and "children" in the verse of Istifa. The story of some of them is told in this context, highlighting their family relationships (Qur'an 3:33-47).

Additionally, the Qur'an mentions that some of the chosen servants are cruel (Qur'an 35:32) These examples demonstrate that "Istifa" in the Qur'an not only refers to selection for divine positions but also implies the concept of genetic and natural selection. This means that the chosen people have been cleansed of physical defects, and their natural superiority has enhanced their physical and mental talents (Qur'an 2:248), making them possess the necessary conditions for carrying out divine missions and receiving prophetic revelation. However, the condition will not be sufficient.

The textual and contextual reasons for this adaptation are briefly explained below:

- The existence of "kinship" among the chosen ones
- The conceptual link between being chosen and "inheritance"
- The tyranny of some chosen ones

- The relationship between "being chosen" and the increase of mental and physical powers
- The production of technology by the "sons of Adam" as a consequence of being chosen
- The selection of Noah and as a result the survival of his descendants (Rohanimashhadi, 2020)

Therefore, it can be claimed that "Istifa" is compatible with "natural selection" in the theory of evolution. From the Qur'an's perspective, natural selection is a "divine selection" and the verse states: "the selection was made by God" since this natural process follows the divine command and is carried out according to the predetermined plan of the divine kingdom (according to the theory of pleroma design). Although Darwin's theory implies that the process of natural selection is based on nothing but chance.

The Qur'an supports the mechanism of natural selection through the concept of "Adam's selection", emphasizing the role of God, at least in the creation of humans. To support the universality of the mechanism of natural selection in the creation of all creatures, it is necessary to look for other evidence in the Qur'an. The opening verses of Surah Al-Aala (Qur'ān 87), which talk about the general guidance of all beings, maybe one of such examples.

6. Conclusion

After examining the Qur'anic texts on "creation", it is evident that the Qur'an is incompatible with the three existing theories of evolutionism, creationism, and intelligent design. This research proposes a Qur'ānic approach named "Pleroma Design Theory", that explains God is always involved in the interior and kingdom levels of all beings without exception.

The Qur'anic concept of "creation and command" or "natural face and divine face of beings", leads to the components of the Qur'anic theory of pleroma design. These components are as follows:

- The mechanisms of natural selection are the natural face of God's creation.
- God's direct intervention in nature is referred to as "command" from "Malakut".
- God's rule or "Malakut" never conflicts with natural mechanisms and causes, rather, it is always directly related to all natural causes dominating them moment by moment.

In explaining the Quranic theory of "Pleroma Design" we delineated its divergences and convergences with the other three mentioned theories (Table 2).

Table 2. Conflicts and similarities between theories of the origin of the universe

Component ----- Theory	Natural Selection Mechanisms	Universal Common Ancestry	The intervention of God in Nature
Evolutionism	+	+	-
Creationism	-	-	+
Intelligent Design	-	+	+
Pleroma Design	+	+	+

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