



Unit 2: Lesson 1 - Assessment [Teacher's Edition]

The Islamic Narrative of Creation

Section 1: Multiple Choice - Choose the correct answer for each of the following questions.

1. According to the Quran, what are the possible interpretations of "day" in the context of the creation of the cosmos?
 - a. 24-hour period
 - b. 1,000 years
 - c. 50,000 years
 - d. All of the above.
2. What distinguishes humans from other living beings, according to Islamic belief?
 - a. Rational soul
 - b. Physical appearance
 - c. Ability to walk upright
 - d. None of the above.

Section 2: Short Answer - Write a well-formulated response for each of the following.

3. Explain the following terms for human beings which are mentioned in the Quran, and what differentiates them from each other.
 - Insaan
 - Bashar
 - Banu Adam
 - An-Naas

Insaan: This term primarily refers to the rational soul of human beings, highlighting their cognitive and active powers. It's a gender-neutral term, also derived from "nisyaan," meaning forgetfulness, pointing to the human trait of forgetting.

Bashar: This term emphasizes the physical or bodily aspect of human beings, their anatomical being. It signifies the surface of the skin and is related to how we classify mammals, marking a distinction between humans and animals based on physical and biological nature.

Banu Adam: This term directly translates to "Children of Adam," referring to all human progeny, including both men and women, highlighting the shared lineage from the first humans, Adam and Hawwa (Eve).

An-Naas: Used interchangeably with Banu Adam in certain contexts, it generally refers to mankind or people, underscoring the collective identity of humans.

The differentiation among these terms stems from the aspects they emphasize: "Insaan" focuses on cognitive and spiritual traits, "Bashar" on the physical, "Banu Adam" and "An-Naas" on lineage and collective humanity.

4. If we have unique terms for human beings to separate them from animals, why do we also call human beings Al-Hayawaan un-Naatiq?



Humans are called "Al-Hayawaan un-Naatiq" (the speaking or rational animal) to underscore their unique position as rational beings capable of speech and intellectual activities, setting them apart from other creatures. This term highlights the integration of both biological life (Al-Hayawaan) and the rational, speaking aspect (An-Naatiq), reflecting a comprehensive view of human beings in Islamic thought.

5. What is the Islamic perspective on human exceptionalism in relation to evolution? How does it differ from the concept of human evolution?

The Islamic perspective on human exceptionalism posits that humans are a distinct creation of Allah Almighty, not evolving from other species over time. This view is supported by Quranic texts stating that humans were created in the best form from the outset (Ahsan at-Taqweem) and do not share a common ancestor with other species, contradicting the concept of evolution that suggests humans evolved from other forms of life. The Islamic narrative asserts a special creation for humans, emphasizing their unique status and role in the universe i.e. human exceptionalism.

6. Discussion/Reflection: In a brief essay, discuss the implications of teaching about human origins and evolution from an Islamic perspective. How can these beliefs be integrated with scientific concepts?

Answers will vary but the answer can include that teaching about human origins from an Islamic perspective alongside scientific concepts presents an opportunity to explore the diversity of thought on the origins of life and humanity. Integrating these beliefs with scientific concepts can encourage critical thinking and respect for different viewpoints. It allows students to see the convergence and divergence between the Islamic narrative and scientific theories, fostering a more holistic understanding of human origins.

7. Discuss the potential areas of compatibility and conflict between scientific theories of human evolution and religious beliefs, considering the information presented in the lesson.

Areas of compatibility might include the recognition of the complexity and sophistication of human life, and how both perspectives value the search for understanding our origins. Conflicts arise in the mechanism and timeline of human creation, with scientific theories suggesting a gradual evolution from common ancestors, while Islamic narrative posits a special creation. Addressing these conflicts requires emphasizing the methodological differences between religious criteria and scientific inquiry, and the value of both in human understanding.

8. In the context of biology, explain the term "common ancestry." How does the concept of common ancestry relate to the Quranic account of the creation of Adam?

In biology, "common ancestry" refers to the idea that all life forms on Earth share a common ancestor from which they have diverged over time through the process of evolution. This concept is a cornerstone of evolutionary theory, supported by evidence from various fields like genetics, paleontology, and comparative anatomy. The Quranic account of the creation of Adam suggests a direct creation by Allah, not through a process of evolution from pre-existing forms of life, presenting a distinct narrative from the biological concept of common ancestry.