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Evolution and the Genre of Scripture: Why Evolution Shouldn't Bother Jewish Theology

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ABSTRACT

I outline a Jewish response to theological problems emerging from Darwinian biology and contemporary cosmology. This response is rooted in an argument from genre, regarding the relationship between divine revelation and fiction. I then bring this Jewish response into conversation with Shoaib Ahmed Malik's *Islam and Evolution*.

KEYWORDS

Evolution; Judaism; Islam; genre; fiction; history

1. Introduction

In his thorough and thoroughly engaging, *Islam and Evolution*, Shoaib Ahmed Malik concludes that the theory of evolution is compatible with Orthodox Ash'arite Islam.¹ He allows that *Homo sapiens* were, for the most part, the product of evolution from older hominid species. For the most part, because his conclusion is qualified by the following caveat: the Quranic characters of Adam and Eve cannot, by the lights of Islamic orthodoxy, have been the product of biological evolution. They had no parents and were created miraculously. Other *Homo sapiens*, perhaps even prior to the creation of Adam and Eve, may have evolved from earlier hominids; but not the historical characters of Adam and Eve, to whose non-biological and miraculous creation the Quran testifies. We modern human beings likely descend both from Adam and Eve *and* from these other *Homo sapiens*. In that way, we may be largely, but not entirely, the product of evolution by natural selection.

In the Jewish context, I think the reconciliation between faith and Darwin is easier to make. Moreover, I think that some of the considerations that emerge in a Jewish context may be of use to an Islamic theologian, working within the doctrinal confines of Orthodox Ash'arite Islam. These considerations may allow such a theologian to adopt fewer caveats than Malik, and even to the position that Adam and Eve, for all that we know, were the product of evolution themselves.

In section 2, I will outline the problem posed by evolution as it emerges in a Jewish context. In section 3, I will outline what I take to be the best way to circumnavigate any such problem, which emerges from what I call *the argument from genre*. In section 4, I will argue that my favoured circumnavigation fits perfectly naturally with mainstream Jewish theological thought. In section 5, I will try to explain why some elements of the Jewish community are unwilling to endorse my favoured response, despite its fit with traditional sources. In section 6, I return to Malik, and try to draw lessons from our journey, in this paper, for Malik's own project and conclusions.

2. The Problem as it Emerges in a Jewish Context

The Hebrew Bible begins with a description of the creation of the world. It concludes with the return from Babylon of the Jewish exiles, who had been granted permission, in the year 539 BCE, to return to their homeland, and to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. Given the various genealogies presented in the Hebrew Bible, which note the lifespan of the people it names, stretching all the way back to Adam and Eve, and given our knowledge, attested to by archaeological consensus, of the date of King Cyrus' edict, allowing the Jews to return, it's relatively easy to calculate, at least roughly, the age of the universe according to the Hebrew Bible. Following such traditional calculations, the first human beings are said to have been created by God, 5783 years ago. Moreover, they had no ancestors. Adam was created from the mud. Eve, his mate, was created from his rib.

The story of the Hebrew Bible is in deep conflict with the findings of contemporary natural sciences. Among the first recognisable human beings, according to contemporary biology and archaeology, were the *Homo habilis*, who lived 2.4–1.4 million years ago, having evolved from hominid ancestors. According to these sciences, the modern human form emerged from inter-breeding between a number of such species, and first started to emigrate out of Africa roughly 100,000 years ago; long before the Hebrew Bible tells us that the universe was created. Consequently, evolutionary biology renders the Hebrew Bible a wildly inaccurate history of mankind. This is before we think to mention contemporary cosmology, which dates the universe at roughly 14 billion years old.

Despite the incongruence of the Hebrew Bible's history of the world and the history that emerges from the natural sciences, I shall argue that the theory of evolution, and the Big Bang Theory of contemporary cosmology, and indeed, any scientific theory that conflicts with the natural history and cosmology of the Hebrew Bible, poses no special problem for Jewish theology. As I said, and as I shall seek to demonstrate at the end of this paper, the ways in which Jewish theology made relatively light work of the putative conflict between evolution and tradition may be instructive for Malik's project in an Islamic context.

3. The Argument from Genre

We regularly rely upon works of fiction to teach us things about the world, and its history. I learnt several facts about the French invasion of Russia when I read *War and Peace*. I learnt several things about the first world war, when I watched the fourth series of the British sit-com, *Blackadder*. If fiction were defined as a species of untruth, then I wouldn't be able to rely upon fictions in this way. The relationship between fiction and untruth is more complicated than that.

Some have argued that true assertions can only occur in a fiction in an accidental way, such that, had the facts been otherwise, the story could still have been the same.² That doesn't seem right. Had the facts of the French invasion of Russia been different, we assume that Tolstoy would have written a correspondingly different novel; the same could be said about the relationship between *Blackadder* and the basic contours of first world war history. This is what allows us to rely upon works of fiction when it seems to us that their settings are supposed to be historical.

Others have argued that true assertions are never included in a fiction *primarily* because they're true, but because their inclusion is essential to the plot of the story (even if their truth is a *secondary* reason for their inclusion).³ This view is open to criticism too. It's hard to argue that the excruciating detail into which Victor Hugo delves, when presenting the history of the Parisian sewer system, was a function of his desire to move the plot of *Les Misérables* forward. Similar things could be said about Melville's inclusion of state-of-the-art research about whales and whaling in his *Moby Dick*.

For our purposes, we needn't settle the thorny question as to how we should define fiction. What we need to note is merely that fictions *can* include true claims in a non-accidental, and relatively stable way, such that, in certain circumstances, fictions can be relied upon to teach us about certain *facts*. Indeed, there's a somewhat systematic way in which fiction, far from being wholly false, is (as we shall see) parasitic upon truth.

To the extent that a fiction describes a sequence of non-actual states of affairs, no fiction can hope to be maximally specific. For example, we might be told that a fictional character is walking in a field, but it's unlikely that we'll be told exactly how many blades of grass are growing in that field. To avoid being cumbersomely long, fictions have gaps in them. We're not told how many hairs are on Sherlock Holmes's head, when Harry Potter's first-cousin once removed learnt to ride a bicycle, or how regular were Elizabeth Bennet's bowel movements.

So far, we've seen examples of gaps in a story where we—as readers—have no clue how to fill them in. It doesn't matter, for the purposes of the stories in which he appears, how many hairs Holmes has. It could be any number, within a reasonable range. And that's why, as readers, we don't feel compelled to fill such gaps in. But there are some gaps that we do feel compelled to fill in. For example, if Holmes were to travel from London to Birmingham, we're going to assume that he got there by train or horse-drawn carriage. We don't assume that he got there by helicopter. But if the narrative is silent about his mode of transportation, why is that we assume it wasn't a helicopter? Why do we assume that it was a train or horse-drawn carriage? Moreover, why do we assume that the distance between London and Birmingham, for Sherlock Holmes, is roughly 100 miles? If Holmes is living in a fictional world, perhaps the distances are totally different.

What we do in such cases is to use our knowledge of the real world, as it was in the days that Sherlock Holmes was said to be active, to fill in certain gaps in the story. In using our knowledge of the real world to fill in gaps in fictional stories, we are applying a hermeneutical principle that Kendall Walton dubs *the reality principle*, according to which the fictional worlds that we imagine, as we read a story, are supposed to be as much like the actual world as is reasonable, given what the story has told us.⁴

When we read a story, it seems that we must open up, in our mind, what can be called a comparison class.⁵ What goes into that class are all of the sentences that we take to be both true in the story and true in the actual world. The more realistic the genre of the fiction, the bigger the comparison class is supposed to be. In other words, the more realistic the genre, the more similar the world of the fiction is supposed to be to the actual world. The overlap between our world and the world of a historical drama, for example, is much larger than the overlap between our world and a fantasy novel.

But, what is the *function* of this comparison class? Why do we go to such trouble to build it (or, more accurately, find it)? Well, as we've already noted, the text itself leaves out many details that we're supposed to fill in. We are supposed to assume, for

example, that, even for Sherlock Holmes, London is roughly 100 miles from Birmingham, and that he can't get there by teletransportation. If the genre of the Sherlock Holmes novel were science-fiction, then perhaps we couldn't rule out teletransportation, but as things are, we can. In other words, once we've properly calibrated the comparison class of the Sherlock Holmes stories, we'll see that the distance between London and Birmingham is one of the things in that class. And thus, even if the text doesn't mention it, and to use the terminology of Tamar Gendler,⁶ we can *import* the claim that Birmingham is roughly 100 miles from London, into the story itself.

Another function of the comparison class is to license *export*. If you're reading a well-researched historical novel, and it says that there was a war in North America in 1812, then—given the relevant conventions for this genre—you'll know that that claim should be placed into the comparison class. And because it's there in the comparison class, you can trust (if you trust that the author did her research) that there really was a war in the real world, in North America, in 1812. Just as you import things from the real world, into the world of the story, via the comparison class, you also *export* things from the story, into the real world, through the comparison class. And that is one of the key ways in which fictions are able to communicate facts about the actual world.

Even genres that invite us to have very selective and small comparison classes—stories about magical worlds, for example—still have a lot to teach us about the real world. If, for instance, the psychology of the main characters is supposed to be sufficiently similar to the psychology of human beings, then all sorts of claims about how hobbits or elves or wizards might act in certain situations will translate straightforwardly into claims about the psychology of intelligent and emotional beings in general. Those claims will thereby find their way into the comparison class, and we will be licensed to export them to the real world. We will take the story, even though it's a fantasy, to be teaching us something about the real world.

To summarise what we've established so far:

1. To say that a text is fictional, or contains fictional parts, isn't to say that the text or the parts in question fail to communicate facts about the real world.
2. To figure out exactly what a story might be telling us about the real world, it's crucial to establish the genre of the fiction, since only if we know the genre of the fiction can we appropriately calibrate the size of the relevant comparison class.

In the Star Wars franchise, you might notice that there seem to be sounds in space. This is in blatant tension with the laws of physics, since sound waves cannot propagate in a vacuum. Does this mean that the creators of Star Wars were contradicting the discoveries of physics? No. Star Wars isn't telling us to export the claim that one can hear explosions in space, any more than it is telling us to export the notion that people gifted in the manipulation of some mysterious force can *really* perform acts of telekinesis. That's because Star Wars belongs to a genre sufficiently removed from realism that it doesn't license any exports from its fiction, if those exports would conflict with the findings of natural science.

As David Lewis points out, the same cannot be said for Arthur Conan Doyle's story, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band."⁷ That story, given the relevant genre conventions, seems to suggest that its readers can export a claim about a certain type of snake, namely

a Russell's Viper; that it can climb up and down a rope. But that isn't true. Doyle hadn't done his research properly. Accordingly, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" can be criticised for contradicting zoology in a way that Star Wars cannot be accused of contradicting physics. Contradictions only emerge, between a science and a story, when the story, given the relevant genre conventions, licences an export that contradicts a science.

We now have in place all of the notions that we need for the argument from genre. But first, I want to make a disclaimer. I'm not interested in classifying the genre of the Hebrew Bible as a unified text. Accordingly, I'm not interested in the question as to whether we should think of the Hebrew Bible as a work of fiction, or as a work of non-fiction, or as some *sui generis* category that isn't at all captured by the distinction between works of fiction and non-fiction.⁸ Rather, what matters for my argument is that the Hebrew Bible might *contain* some fiction. Many works of non-fiction contain fictive elements. For example, a work of philosophy will often contain thought experiments which could be thought of as miniature works of fictions that are subsumed by the non-fictional philosophy text. So, whether the Bible is fictional or not, it might still *contain* some fictions.

Moreover, it seems almost self-evident that different passages, and indeed different books, of the Hebrew Bible have different formal properties, such that it almost seems as if the genre might be changing from book to book, or even section to section—indeed, the Hebrew Bible moves between lists of laws, genealogies, narratives, aetiologies, parables, aphorisms, apparent history, poetry, and more. Furthermore: even if the Hebrew Bible *is* a work of fiction (which is something I don't claim), it still doesn't follow that it wasn't written by God, or that it isn't a repository of sacred and supremely important truths. With these disclaimers in place, we can sketch an argument, all of whose premises are plausible, and which undermines the *prima facie* tension between the Hebrew Bible and the natural history that emerges from Darwinian biology and contemporary cosmology.

The argument looks like this.

1. If a fictional work, or a fictional part of a non-fictional work, says that P (or says things that entail that P), it shouldn't be taken to be asserting P to be true, unless P (or propositions that entail P) belong (or belongs) to the relevant comparison class.
 2. The Hebrew Bible says (or says things that entail) that the universe is 5783 years old.
 3. The parts of the Hebrew Bible that say (or entail) that the universe is 5783 years old are (in whole or in part) fictional.
 4. Claims about the age of the universe do not belong to the comparison class required to interpret Biblical fictions.
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5. If a fictional work, or a fictional part of a non-fictional work, says that the universe is 5783 years old, it shouldn't be taken to be asserting that the universe really is 5783 years old, unless the claim (or propositions that entail the claim) that the universe really is 5783 years old belong (or belongs) to the relevant comparison class. (Follows from 1)
 6. If the Hebrew Bible says (or says things that entail) that the universe is 5783 years old, it shouldn't be taken to be asserting that the universe really is 5783 years old, unless that claim belongs to the relevant comparison class. (Follows from 5 and 3)
 7. The Hebrew Bible shouldn't be taken to be asserting that the universe really is 5783 years old, unless that claim belongs to the relevant comparison class. (Follows from 6 and 2)

8. The Hebrew Bible shouldn't be taken to be asserting that the universe really is 5783 years old. (Follows from 7 and 4).

Here we have a valid argument with four undischarged assumptions (which appear above the line). If those four assumptions are true, then the argument is sound. If the argument is sound, then we must accept the conclusion, according to which the Hebrew Bible shouldn't be taken to be asserting that the universe really is 5783 years old. If that's the case, then the conflict between contemporary natural sciences and the Bible, regarding the age of the universe, evaporates. The argument can be amended, by replacing the claim that *humans didn't evolve from earlier hominids* for the claim that *the universe is 5783 years old*. This amendment yields a parallel argument, with four undischarged assumptions, that would relieve any tensions between Darwinian biology and the Hebrew Bible, if sound. Should a religious Jew accept all four of the assumptions of these two parallel arguments? I would argue that they should.

The first assumption follows from what we've said so far about fiction in general. The second assumption is granted even by opponents of the argument, as a simple reading of the text seems to give rise to the impression that the universe is 5783 years old. The parallel assumption, according to which the Hebrew Bible denies that humans evolved from older hominids, is also accepted, even by opponents of the parallel argument, and also seems to fall out of a simple reading of the Hebrew Bible. Clearly, things start to get controversial when we confront the third assumption (and its parallel) according to which the parts of the Bible that suggest that the universe is 5783 years old, and the parts of the Bible that suggest that humans didn't evolve from older hominids, are *fictional*.

Why would this assumption (and its parallel) be so controversial? You might think that to label parts of the Bible as fiction is to be dismissive of them, and that to be dismissive of scripture is to deny its sanctity. But that seems wrong. To say that *Anna Karenina* is a work of fiction isn't to dismiss it. In fact, if we were to claim that *Anna Karenina* were a true to life biography of a real woman, we would be seriously undermining the creativity of its author. To label something a fiction isn't *ipso facto* to be dismissive of it. Of course, if somebody sought to write an accurate history, and you called it a fiction, you *would* be acting dismissively. But it would be begging the question to assume, without argument that, when God wrote the Hebrew Bible, he intended all of it to be read as history, and that to call any of it fictional would thereby be dismissive.

You might think that assumption three (and its parallel) suggest that God, if He authored the parts of the Bible that imply that the universe is 5783 years old, and that humans didn't evolve from earlier hominids, is deceitful or a liar. But that only follows if you wrongly assume that fiction is equivalent to falsehood, and that a fiction should be taken to be asserting everything that it says (when it fact, it only asserts the part of its content that lies within the relevant comparison class).

Next, you might say that assumption three (and its parallel) is false because you already take yourself to have reason to believe that the Hebrew Bible is a natural history, and so it doesn't include any fictions about the age of the universe or the evolution of species. A history, especially one written by a perfect God, can contain no historical inaccuracy. But I think we have very good reason to *deny* that this classification of the Hebrew Bible, as a work of natural history, is appropriate.

Jewish tradition certainly contends that the Hebrew Bible is divinely inspired, and that its first five books were divinely authored. But that doesn't settle the question of what genre it is, or which genres it includes. Jewish tradition never makes it explicit that all of the Hebrew Bible is to be taken as non-fiction; or that it should be classified, wholly, as natural history. In fact, to claim otherwise would be hugely anachronistic. When did the genre of natural history emerge as a literary genre to begin with? Surely not before Thucydides. And even then, history didn't evolve to become a *scientific* discipline that prizes accuracy above other literary merits until very recently indeed. We have to distinguish between what we call "history" in the modern age, and what was called "history" in pre-modern times. The two genres share very little other than a name.

In the pre-modern world, works of history were primarily written in order to instruct and inspire its contemporary readers. For that reason, Jon E. Lendon advises us not to confuse the modern genre of history with what was called "history" in the ancient world. In fact, he writes:

We have no useful category for the realm inhabited by ancient historical texts: rather than being "literature," the works of ancient historians came far closer to the modern genres of non-fiction novel or popular, non-academic history, where a degree of embroidery and imagination is layered upon a basis of fact.⁹

And thus, even if the Hebrew Bible was intended as a "history" of sorts, it would have been a contribution to a genre whose readers expected there to be plenty of "embroidery and imagination." They wouldn't have been expecting or demanding unadulterated historical accuracy. To think otherwise is to misunderstand the context in which the Hebrew Bible was revealed and would thus collapse into anachronism.

Joshua Berman documents that ancient histories were palpably more interested in ethical instruction and inspiring their readers than they were in historical accuracy:

It is only with the rise of the academic discipline of history in the nineteenth century that the practice of annotation and citation of sources becomes *de rigueur*. These pre-modern writers were authorities not on account of their mastery of sources or extensive training in the methodology of historiography. Instead, the authority of these writers stemmed from their standing in the community. The stature and status of the historian in classical Rome was gained by dint of the offices he held, or the armies he commanded. Practical experience was what made one worthy of writing of the deeds of the past, not the mastery of research methodology. Their mandate was not to sift sources and to paint as accurate a picture of the past as possible, but rather to use what was known about the past to inspire and instruct.¹⁰

It's crucially important to understand that, according to Berman, the Bible's combining fact and fiction, and its tendency to add embroidery and imagination upon a basis of fact, is totally unremarkable for a text revealed when it was. It was, if Berman is right, equally unremarkable to the ancient Rabbis. That's why the ancient Rabbis never provided any sort of guidelines for figuring out which bits were fact and which bits were fiction. It's not a question they would have thought to have asked:

They certainly believed that the events reported in the [Scripture] had occurred. But they could not envision writing about the past in a way that aimed solely for factual representation and not exhortation and instruction. They had no notion of a writer trained in the methodology of sifting sources. They had no notion of a reader reading an authorized

text and then judging its meaning for him- or herself. To foist these categories on these earlier generations of our Sages is to insist that they conceptualize in a way entirely foreign to them.¹¹

Thus, even if the first two chapters of Genesis are history, they are not “history” as we understand the term. They are history that aims to exhort, instruct, and inspire, and therefore they have a freedom to embellish and to deviate from the details of historical events. As Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook, the Chief Rabbi of British Mandate Palestine, was to write:

Sometimes when a story is told according to the bare facts, we may not properly grasp its full message and the inner fundamental that it is meant to impress on the soul. In such cases, the Almighty, in his great discernment, embellishes the story so that we can fully appreciate the values it needs to impart to us.¹²

This practice would be deceptive if the ancient genre of “history” were to be confused with the modern genre that goes by the same name. But not otherwise.

And thus, if the first two chapters of Genesis are taken as a contribution to the ancient genre of history, we might have to assume that Adam and Eve were real people. That might be the basis of fact upon which the story is based, and upon which embellishments were added. But we needn’t believe that everything that the Bible says of them is accurate. It depends upon what God may have wanted us to learn from the story, and to internalise about ourselves and our place in the world. As Berman puts the point, “Viewing the Torah in ancient context allows us to appreciate the fine line between ‘history’ and the recording of a real event adapted for the purpose of hortatory writing.”¹³

But, once we recognise that the Hebrew Bible spans many genres, we needn’t accept that every passage was intended even as what the ancients would have called “history.” Some of the Bible trades in allegory, some in aphorism. And the first two chapters of the Hebrew Bible have many of the literary marks of an entirely different type of genre, even to ancient-history. Its style and presentation almost beg for *allegorical* interpretation. Taken literally, what’s so bad about eating fruit? What does that fruit actually symbolize? Could snakes *really* talk? Is that what the text is asserting? Did snakes really once have legs? Or, is the snake a *symbol* for something? Shorn of the modern and pejorative associations that have attached to the word, “myth,” and even when we recognise that the Hebrew Bible was, in general, very different to ancient myths, the first two chapters of Genesis are unmistakably myth-like. As Berman points out:

The Garden of Eden takes place at the beginning of time in a place that is difficult to identify geographically. It focuses on such basic issues as obedience to God, relationships between the sexes, and temptation. It features a small number of characters, including a talking serpent and a God who “walks” in the Garden.

These details all point us away from classifying the story even as what the ancients called history. Berman concludes:

It is no wonder that figures such as [Maimonides] and Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook ascribed enormous importance to this account, but read it as a metaphor and not as history, seeking out its instruction on that basis.¹⁴

If the story of the Garden of Eden isn’t intended as what the Bible understands as “history,” then we don’t even have any reason to believe that Adam and Eve existed.

Under the assumption of our third premise (and its parallel), the Hebrew Bible can't be accused of being deceptive for implying falsehoods about the age of the universe, or the origins of species. Those implications only arise when we approach the text with anachronism (mistaking modern-history for pre-modern-history) and naively (mistaking Biblical passages that were intended as allegory or myth as something else). That's our fault. It's not the fault of the text.

Of course, it's going to be of central importance to Jewish theology to think that the Bible can be trusted as reporting certain historical facts without embellishment. In other work, I have suggested one tool for figuring out when and how these "historically accurate" elements can be isolated. Faced with a narrative or a story putatively about the distant past, an ancient audience would have been unlikely to evaluate it in terms of its historical accuracy. Faced with a story about the genesis of humanity, for example, there were no conceivable tools for verifying the story, and thus historical accuracy simply wouldn't have been an available measure of evaluation:

[B]ut faced with a story about *them*, in their own times, we can be more confident that a story wouldn't be widely received unless it was verifiable, or, at least, didn't make wildly inaccurate claims that could easily be repudiated. Consequently, nobody would have accepted that the entire nation witnessed a theophany, and continuously passed down its memory in an unbroken chain, such that their parents had already told it to them, unless that story was true.¹⁵

This is just one of many interpretative strategies that we might adopt to figure out when the Hebrew Bible is presenting us with Divinely authored allegory, or embellished historical tales, and when the Hebrew Bible is presenting us with accurate history. After all, it's a work that spans many different genres.

What about the fourth assumption (and its parallel) according to which claims about the age of the universe, and the historical origin of species, are not part of the comparison class of any of the fictions of the Bible? As we might expect, we can only know whether to exclude these things from the relevant comparison classes, if we have some idea of the narrative *purpose* of the relevant narrative sections of the Bible. To that end, witness the following words of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks:

Torah is not a book of history, even though it includes history. It is not a book of science, even though the first chapter of Genesis – as the nineteenth century sociologist Max Weber points out – is the necessary prelude to science: it represents the first time people saw the universe as the product of a single creative will, and therefore as intelligible rather than capricious and mysterious.¹⁶

The first chapter of Genesis might have helped people to think scientifically for the first time, but it wasn't a science textbook. So, what was it? Rabbi Sacks continues:

Rather, it is, first and last, a book about how to live. Everything it contains – not only [laws] but also narratives, including the narrative of creation itself – is there solely for the sake of ethical and spiritual instruction.¹⁷

Indeed, the word, *Torah*, literally means instruction. It doesn't mean history. In fact, there is no Hebrew word for *history*. It doesn't mean testament, as if it's designed to testify to a sequence of events as a witness might in court. It is, rather, an instruction manual for life. It is intended to shape our conduct. If that's to be our guiding principle

in interpreting its narratives, it follows that the fourth assumption (and its parallel) are true. After all, how is the age of the universe or the origin of species *relevant* to the task of instructing us how to live?

The four assumptions of our argument (and the parallel assumptions of our parallel argument), turn out to be eminently plausible. And thus, we have reason to think that the argument (and its parallel) is sound. And thus, we have no reason to think that there's any real tension between the Hebrew Bible and the teachings of natural science, regarding the age of the universe and the origin of species.

There are other options for the believing Jew, in the face of the alleged conflict between the Hebrew Bible and the findings of contemporary science. One route is to deny the science. For all we know, the world was created 5783 years ago but it was created with deceptive signs of antiquity, such as the buried remains of dinosaurs that never really lived. This sort of response, which takes the Hebrew Bible as an accurate natural history, and dismisses the science, on the assumption that God created the universe with false signs of antiquity, has been endorsed, in recent times, by some (although very few) prominent Jewish thinkers, most notably, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.¹⁸

But why would God place us in a world full of misleading signs of antiquity? To test our faith? Are there not enough tests of faith waiting to ensnare us, that God needed to put deceptive fossils under the ground? And, how does it test our faith, since countless religious people have had faith in God, and the Bible, and continue to do so, whilst also believing that the universe is ancient, and was once host to dinosaurs? Did God place us in a world where we can't trust the evidence of our senses, only to correct the record by revealing the book of Genesis to us? But, if we can't trust the evidence of our senses, then why do we trust that the ancient Israelites heard and saw a theophany at Sinai? Why would we trust that we received the Torah, and the book of Genesis, from God? If God is that deceptive, doesn't the entire edifice of Judaism come crashing down?

Hud Hudson has demonstrated that with sufficient metaphysical ingenuity one can find ways to reconcile the narrative of the Hebrew Bible and the narrative of contemporary natural science, even if one insists in relating to them both as literal historical descriptions of the genesis of the universe and the origin of species.¹⁹ The natural sciences could be a description of history, and the Hebrew Bible might be a description of hyper-history (*i.e.* the way that history used to be before God, for some reason or other, changed it).

Hudson's proposed reconciliation requires the assumption that God can change the past and had reason to do so. I'm very happy to assume that God can change the past; a claim I defend elsewhere.²⁰ It's less obvious to me that God would have had reason to create the universe in one week, hyper-before changing His mind and making it the case that it took 14 billion years. Though I accept the (controversial) coherence of such a suggestion, it seems to me that the four premises of my own argument (and its parallel) are so plausible, that there's no reason to reach for a more philosophically involved solution. Indeed, even Hudson doubts that the book of Genesis is best understood as an accurate hyper-history.

4. The Fidelity of my Argument to Orthodox Judaism

I have argued in the previous section that before the rise of the literary genres of modern-history and natural history, it would be anachronistic to think that Jewish readers of the

Hebrew Bible were assuming it to be, from start to finish, an accurate natural history. But what about later Rabbinic authorities?

In Medieval times, and perhaps unsurprisingly, given the rise of the genres of historical and scientific literature, a number of Rabbis began to think that our default interpretative lens, when reading the Hebrew Bible, should be to read it as an accurate history. For example, Saadya Gaon, the first Rabbinic philosopher, argues that if the simple, literal, reading of a Biblical verse is found to conflict with empirical findings, we should first go back to the empirical findings and scrutinise them better, in case we've made a mistake.²¹ This procedure operates on the assumption that, as a default, the literal reading of any Biblical verse should be thought to be historically and scientifically accurate. But, having said that, he conceded that:

[E]very statement found in the Bible is to be understood in its literal sense except for those that cannot be so construed for one of the following four reasons ...

The first is when the Bible says something that conflicts with empirical observation. For example, the Bible describes Eve as the mother of all that lives (Genesis 3:20). This has to be taken as some sort of hyperbole, since we observe that humans don't give birth to oxen and donkeys. The second category is when the simple meaning of the verse conflicts with the findings of logic. The third category is when a Rabbinic tradition passed down over the generations teaches us to read the verse non-literally. The final category is when one verse contradicts another, and we have to find a non-literal reading of the more ambiguous of the two verses, in order to relieve the conflict. He therefore concludes that there exists "only these four possible reasons for a non-literal interpretation of the verses of Sacred Writ."²²

In other words: it is more important to preserve the truth of the text than to preserve its default classification as a literal history, or as a literal work of science. And thus, even when Rabbinic thinkers start to adopt this default stance of taking any given passage of the Hebrew Bible as a contribution to natural history, there was still a willingness to go back to the drawing board, and to reclassify verses, as allegory, or metaphor, or perhaps as instructive fiction, when that was the only way to preserve the truth of Scripture in the face of overwhelming evidence.

We see that Maimonides adopts a similar strategy when he says that, had he been convinced by the attempts of Aristotle and others, to prove the eternity of the universe, then, given certain provisos, he would simply have gone back to Scripture and found a new way to read any verse that seems to say otherwise. As a matter of fact, he wasn't convinced by their proofs, so he resorted to the medieval default of taking the literal meaning of the text as historically and scientifically accurate. But he makes it clear that he would have been willing to adopt a different attitude to the text had the empirical evidence forced his hand.²³

On the more mystical side of the Jewish map, you can find thinkers who were convinced that every single scientific truth is somehow encoded into the Torah. After all, the Mishnaic Rabbi, Ben Bag Bag, encouraged us to turn the Torah "over and over, for everything is in it" (Avot 5:26). Having said that, the general consensus was that most of the Torah's scientific wisdom was encoded into the text in ways that weren't accessible to most readers and were not part of the content of its narratives. For example, Moses Nachmanides taught, in the introduction to his commentary to the Pentateuch, that if we hadn't lost the wisdom that Solomon had, which would have helped us

to decode the mysteries carried by the shape of the Biblical letters, and the crowns that adorn those letters, we would have access to all sorts of scientific knowledge, including the

activity of the constellations; ... the intersections of stellar orbits; ... the vitality of the animals and the rage of the wild beasts; the might of the winds; the thoughts of man; ... [and] the potential properties of various roots ...²⁴

This is consistent with Rabbi Sack's claim that the primary intention behind the narratives, and their explicit content, has nothing to do with the communication of scientific fact, and everything to do with the ethical and spiritual instruction of the Jewish people. The science, if it's there, is hidden. So central is the idea that the Torah's agenda is ethical (rather than scientific or historic) that the first comment of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (known as Rashi), in his centrally influential commentary to the Torah, asks the question, why doesn't the Torah start with the first Jewish law? The operative assumption here is that every passage of the Torah must be geared towards instruction. And thus, we see that the main medieval traditions of Biblical interpretation are consistent with the four assumptions of my argument (and its parallel) in the previous section. It should thus come as no surprise that Rabbi Schneerson's approach seems to be a minority view among the great Jewish philosopher-theologians.

Accordingly, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch wrote in 1873 that, if Darwin's account of the origin of species should turn out to be true, then:

Judaism ... would call upon its adherents to give even greater reverence than ever before to the one, sole God Who, in His boundless creative wisdom and eternal omnipotence, needed to bring into existence no more than one single, amorphous nucleus, and one single law of 'adaptation and heredity,' in order to bring forth, out of what seemed to be chaos but was in fact a very definite order, the infinite variety of species we know today.²⁵

In short, the theory wasn't a threat to him. Similarly, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook wrote:

Even if it were clear to us that the order of creation was through the evolution of the species, there would still be no contradiction. We calculate time according to the literal sense of the biblical verses, which is far more relevant to us than is ancient history ... The Torah obviously obscures the account of creation and speaks in allusions and parables. Everyone knows that the account of creation is part of the secrets of the Torah. And if all these statements were taken literally, what secrets would there be? ... The essence [of the Genesis narrative] is the knowledge of God and the truly moral life.²⁶

Given what I've written thus far, one might assume that contemporary biology and cosmology simply wouldn't pose a problem for Jewish religious thought. The question hinges not on the divinity, but on the genre of the Hebrew Bible, and the Jewish tradition never uncritically related to the Torah as a work of natural history, or as a science textbook. Indeed, I would wager that (with very few exceptions) every major Jewish philosopher of faith working today accepts the basic Darwinian account of the origin of species, and the basic contours of contemporary cosmology too.

And yet, in recent times, among Rabbis with little expertise in theology or science, but widely recognised authority in Jewish law, have presided over a surge in young earth creationism among the wider ultra-Orthodox community. And thus, in 2004, the writings of a young ultra-Orthodox scholar, Rabbi Nosson Slifkin, were placed under a

ban by 23 prominent ultra-Orthodox Rabbis for, among other things, his belief that “the world is millions of years old.”²⁷ This, even though Hasdai Crescas, an undisputed Rabbinic authority of medieval Barcelona, on the basis of a well-known Midrash, was willing to entertain the idea that the universe had no beginning in time whatsoever, but was subject to an infinite cycle of Divine destruction and recreation.²⁸

So why, given this, and given all that I’ve argued so far, and given the fact that the vice president of the American Orthodox Union, Rabbi Tzvi Weinreb was able to say that Rabbi Slifkin had “impeccable traditional Jewish sources to back up his views,” were 23 major Rabbis willing to excommunicate him for propagating belief in evolution?²⁹ In answer to that question, I can only offer some disjointed speculations, before I return to Shoaib Malik and his project in Islamic theology.

5. Some Speculations

Struck by the same puzzle, regarding the emergence of Jewish young earth creationism, Carl Feit suggests that:

‘Jewish creationism’ sprouted after World War II in the Western World. A large part of it is that the observant Jewish community couldn’t see itself as being less religious than the Christians. And if the Christians are opposed to evolution, then obviously religious Jews must be opposed to it as well. Therefore they constructed a Jewish creationism that is not in any way consistent with our tradition.³⁰

I’m not sure that mimicry of Christian fundamentalism is the key here, although it may be a factor. More central, I think, is a general opposition to anything new, and anything thought to come from outside of the ultra-Orthodox community. This inward attitude has mushroomed since the end of World War II, although its roots lie in the emancipation of Jews in the late nineteenth century, a process that saw Jews admitted, for the first time, as free and equal citizens of gentile States. The reaction to this emancipation, typical of contemporary ultra-Orthodoxy, was a tremendous fear of assimilation and intermarriage that could put an end to the transmission of sacred traditions. This fear generated a general suspicion of anything new, and anything, including the theories of contemporary science, that are seen to come from outside, or to add legitimacy to non-Jewish ways of thinking.

Journalist, Jennie Rothenberg, interviewed the spokesperson for the world’s largest ultra-Orthodox coalition, *Agudath Israel*, about Rabbi Slifkin’s case. The spokesperson in question, Rabbi Avi Shafran, acknowledged that, in the past, “it was perfectly acceptable for a great rabbi like Samson Raphael Hirsch to embrace science.”³¹ But this approach, he adds, “has generally fallen into disfavor—largely, I think, because science in recent times has become a religion of its own, a secular one.”

What Rabbi Shafran is suggesting is that the rabid scientism of some secular critics of religion has created an equal and opposite reaction among a community who, given their intellectual tradition, should have been quite open to the findings of evolutionary biology and cosmology, but who, in rejection of the extremism of scientism, have retreated to an extremism of their own. In his words:

For better or for worse—worse, I’d say—society has set science up as the enemy of religious thought. And so many Orthodox Jewish leaders have deemphasized, if not outright rejected, the study of the sciences as a means of religious devotion.³²

There is, I would claim, no great philosophical puzzle posed by contemporary biology and physics for believers in traditional Judaism. Rabbi Hirsch, Rabbi Kook, Rabbi Soloveitchik, and Rabbi Sacks saw no problem.³³ It's hard to imagine that Saadya Gaon, Maimonides, or Nachmanides would have seen a problem. The problem that exists, I would wager, is more sociological than philosophical or theological.

6. Orthodox Islam

Malik is very charitable to those Muslim thinkers who totally reject the theory of evolution. He goes to great lengths to represent their claim that they're not motivated purely by Quranic literalism, but that they also have scientific, metaphysical, and theological reasons for their rejection of Darwinism. Consequently, he argues that literalism shouldn't carry the:

entire blame for [Muslim] creationism as it could be a means or an end. In other words, Muslim creationists can reject evolution for non-scriptural reasons and then use literal readings of scripture to justify their position (the means), or they can reject evolution because of their literal readings of scripture (the end).³⁴

I can only report that I find this very hard to believe. If there were no scriptural obstacles to accepting the basic tenets of Darwinian biology which, in one form or another, constitute the overwhelming consensus of all scientists qualified to form an informed opinion on the matter, I find it hard to imagine that Muslim theologians would be lining up to question that consensus.

Indeed, this suspicion is heightened when one sees the content of the metaphysical and theological considerations in question. Nobody who understands essentialism, or the basic contours of Darwinian biology, could think that the two come into conflict. And yet Osman Bakar and Seyyed Nasr both argue that since the essences of each species are fixed, and not subject to change, that the evolution of species is impossible.³⁵ But the fact that the essence of a horse is fixed doesn't mean that it can't give birth to a mutant, that isn't a horse. So, essences can be fixed, and mutations can occur, and an instance of one species can give rise to the emergence, in the material realm, of another. There's not even a whiff of a contradiction here. I can only imagine that Quranic literalism (or some other sort of ideological scruple) was leading them into these metaphysical confusions.

Other Muslim theologians have worried that Darwinism threatens the qualitative spiritual supremacy of humanity among God's terrestrial creatures.³⁶ But Darwinism informs us about the genesis of our genetic code, and our physical attributes, as a biological species. It says nothing about the nature of our souls. There is no reason for a thinker who believes in God, and in souls, to think that a Darwinian account of the origin of *Homo sapiens* threatens the claim that God has gifted this one species with a privileged or indeed superior form of soul.

In addition to unhinged literalism, and just as we've seen with ultra-Orthodox Jewish opposition to Darwinism, it's likely that various sociological factors, including a modern antinomy to all things Western, in some pockets of contemporary Islamic thought, is leading Muslim thinkers to anti-intellectual conclusions; conclusions that are totally out of kilter with the intellectual fibre of their own tradition. Indeed, Malik cites the

anti-Semitic screed of Mohammed Nadvi, according to whom the Jewish people tirelessly seek to uproot “religious and ethical values” and promote “secular atheistic beliefs, materialistic philosophies and ‘isms.’”³⁷ Indeed, as far as Nadvi is concerned, the Jews measure their success in terms of how well they’ve managed to strike at the “moral foundations of each nation.” Though Darwin wasn’t a Jew, his theory of evolution apparently “fitted ideally into the Jewish scheme of things.” And so, Jews became “its chief propagators.”³⁸ Such anti-Semitic considerations sully the great intellectual tradition of Islamic theology. They don’t deserve a hearing at all.

Outside of hermeneutics, Malik identifies five problems that Islamic theology has with Darwinism. The first problem is that Darwinism is often confused, in contemporary Muslim discourse, with naturalism. This is much like Rabbi Shafran’s admission that evolution is rejected by contemporary ultra-Orthodoxy more because of what it’s associated with (i.e. rampant anti-religious scientism) than because of what it actually *says*. In fact, Alvin Plantinga has argued that the theory of evolution is ultimately *incompatible* with naturalism and is much more philosophically attractive on the assumption of the existence of *God*.³⁹ So, the problem of naturalism isn’t *really* a problem that emerges at the intersection between Islamic theology and Darwinism. It’s more of a pseudo-problem created by ignorance and reactionary social forces, rather than theological scruples. That leaves only four problems. I concentrate, in what follows, on two of them, since they receive especially satisfying resolution in a Jewish context, but—constrained by word limits—my hope is that by sampling half of the non-hermeneutical problems that Malik identifies, I will at least arouse your suspicion that the real problem is *purely* hermeneutical. The problems I sample, Malik calls the problem of inefficiency and the problem of chance.

The problem of inefficiency notes that the process of creation, if we’re to accept the theory of evolution, took many millions of years, rather than a few days. This makes God look much less efficient than he does in Scripture. But is that really a problem? In actual fact, Jewish thought might claim that a creation that took God 14 billion years to bring about, other things being equal, is inherently more *valuable* than one that took six days. A famous Mishna (Avot 5:1) argues that God created the world in ten utterances rather than doing it all in one instant. The multiplication of utterances, according to the Mishna, was God’s way of adding more value to the world, since a world created in ten Divine utterances was thought to be more valuable than an identical world created in just one such utterance. How much more valuable would they have thought the world to be, upon learning that it took God 14 billion years to fashion it into its current form? This is not the sort of problem that should cripple a theologian looking to accommodate the robust findings of empirical science.

Take also the problem of chance, according to which the random mechanisms of Darwinian biology stand at odds with belief in God’s providence. This problem is heightened in the worldview of Al-Ghazālī, and his strict occasionalism. Nothing happens by chance if occasionalism is true. Malik has his own ways of addressing this concern, but I might add a Hassidic response to the same problem. According to Hassidism, God’s relationship to the world has to be understood very much in terms of the relationship between a story and its author.

In the movie, *The Shawshank Redemption*, when Andy Dufresne emerges from the tunnel and sewage pipes that took him out of prison, and he finds himself in a wide

expanse under the pouring rain, you could ask, why was it raining? And, in the story, the only explanation that would be appropriate, would have to do with meteorology. It was raining because of the clouds, and the air pressure, and the weather systems, etc. In other words, it was purely by chance that it was raining. But that doesn't undermine the fact that it was also raining because the film makers had made a creative decision that the pounding pouring rain would be a fitting symbol for the spirit of freedom, in that very moment. Likewise, whenever anything happens in the story of our world, there will be explanations that are relative to the story, that will explain why those events have occurred. Those explanations might appeal to chance or to fluke. But, at the very same time, those very same events can be explained in terms of the purposes of the author, namely, God.

The background metaphysics of this Hassidic worldview is complicated and beyond the scope of this paper,⁴⁰ but the authorial analogy should help to illustrate the way in which Hassidic theology sees little tensions between something being, in one sense, purely by chance, and in another sense, wholly determined by the providential will of God, the author of our story.

Though I don't have space to assess all five of the initial non-hermeneutical worries that Malik raises (which include a new version of the problem of evil, and a problem that concerns the notion of intelligent design), I hope that I've illustrated that theological creativity tends to be able to circumnavigate the sorts of worries we're dealing with here. This should lead us back to the basic suspicion that Quranic literalism really is, alongside some wholly unworthy prejudices, in the driving seat. The problem, to the extent that there is a problem worth taking seriously, is primarily one of Quranic hermeneutics.

Consequently, what I most want to point out to Malik is the extent to which what one can say about the genre of the Hebrew Bible translates *mutatis mutandis* to the Quran. Malik seems sympathetic to the concern that we shouldn't approach the Quranic text in ways that "go against Muslims' widely held beliefs for the past 1400 years."⁴¹ But what if their attitude to the text has been changing imperceptibly over that time? In that case, Malik wants to be guided by Al-Ghazālī's hermeneutical approach to the Quran, which dictates, among other things, that "the language and culture of the Arabs at the time of the Prophet Muhammed limit the scope of interpretation."⁴² And thus, the 1400 years of reception, however important it might be, should be secondary to the way that the text would have originally been received. The first generation have the casting vote.

My point is this: if we really want to take that message to heart, then we need to heed what Joshua Berman urges us to recognise about the genre of "history" before the modern era, and how Mohammed's pre-modern audiences would have most likely related to putatively "historical" texts. They would not have expected unadulterated historical accuracy. They would have expected embellishment for the sake of exhortation.

If that's true, then even by Al-Ghazālī's lights, Malik should be more open to the claim that Adam and Eve, even if they must have existed, needn't have been created in exactly the way the Quran presents them as having been created. Yasir Qadhi and Nazir Khan argue that:

In the case of the story of human origins, we have such an explicit narrative, one that is deeply rooted in countless passages throughout the entire Qur'an and numerous prophetic statements, that there is no choice other than to accept that this is what Allah intended for us to believe.⁴³

But Qadhi and Khan are here making demonstrably anachronistic claims about how Muhammed's original audiences would have understood the genre of his writing. If

we really take to heart the claim that our Quranic interpretations should be limited by “the language and culture of the Arabs at the time of the Prophet Muhammed,” we might not get as far as the claim that Adam and Eve were mythological characters that never existed, but you might get as far as the claim that, though they existed, the Quran was more interested in embellishing their stories for our edification than in reporting a purely accurate account of their genesis and life. At the very least, we would have room for agnosticism regarding how, exactly, Adam and Eve came to be.

Notes

1. Shoaib Ahmed Malik, *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).
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3. David Davies, “Fictive utterance and the fictionality of narratives and works,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 55 (2015), 39–55.
4. Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).
5. Allan Hazlett and Christy Mag Uidhir, “Unrealistic Fictions,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 48:1 (2001), 33–46.
6. Tamar Szabó Gendler, “The Puzzle of Imaginative Resistance,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 97:2 (2000), 55–81.
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8. For an interesting discussion of this topic, see Stefan Goltzberg, “Is the Bible Fiction?” *Faith and Philosophy* 21:3 (2014), 325–336.
9. Jon E. Lendon, “Historians without History: Against Roman Historiography,” in *Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians*, ed. Andrew Feldherr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). I owe this reference to Joshua Berman, *Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2020).
10. *Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith*, 23.
11. *Ibid.*, 25.
12. *Ein Aya*, Shabbat, chapter 2, s.v. *kol ha-omer Reuven chata*, as translated in *Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith*, 42.
13. *Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith*, 42.
14. *Ibid.*, 40.
15. Samuel Lebens, *A Guide for the Jewish Undecided: A Philosopher Makes the Case for Orthodox Judaism* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2002), 230.
16. Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant and Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible; Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books and The Orthodox Union, 2009), 16.
17. *Ibid.* I highly recommend readers consult Rabbi Sacks’s own response to evolution in *The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search for Meaning* (New York: Schocken, 2012), 209–232, 351–370.
18. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, “A Letter on Science and Religion,” in *Challenge: Torah Views on Science and its Problems*, eds. A. Carmell and C. Domb (New York: The Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists in conjunction with Feldheim Publishers, 2000), 142–149.
19. Hud Hudson, *The Fall and Hypertime* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
20. Samuel Lebens, and Tyron Goldschmidt, “The Promise of a New Past,” *Philosophers’ Imprint* 17:18 (2017): 1–25; Samuel Lebens, *The Principles of Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
21. I attribute this procedure to Saadya Gaon because of the various sources of mistake he thinks our empirical speculations are prone to, which he lists in *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, trans. Samuel Rosenblatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

22. *The Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, 267.
23. Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2000), II.25.
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27. Jennie Rothenberg, "The Heresy of Nosson Slifkin," *Moment Magazine*, October 2005, 37–72.
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30. *Ibid.*, 45.
31. *Ibid.*, 58.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc, 1997), 7; *The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search for Meaning*, 209–232, 351–370.
34. *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm*, 298.
35. Osman Bakar, "The Nature and Extent of Criticism of Evolutionary Theory," in *Critique of Evolutionary Theory: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Osman Bakar (Kuala Lumpur: The Islamic Academy of Science and Nurin Enterprise, 1984), 123–152; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "On the Question of Biological Origins," *Islam and Science* 4:2 (2006), 181–197.
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37. *Ibid.*, 119.
38. Muhammad Shahabuddin Nadvi, *Evolution or Creation?* (Bangalore: Furqania Academy Trust, 1998), 24.
39. Alvin Plantinga, *Where the conflict really lies: science, religion, and naturalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).
40. But see Tyron Goldschmidt and Samuel Lebens, "Judaism and Providence," in *Abrahamic Reflections on Randomness and Providence*, eds. Kelly Clark and Jeffrey Koperski (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 147–169; and *The Principles of Judaism*.
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42. *Ibid.*, 286.
43. *Ibid.*, 127.

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