

Surah 21. Al-Anbiyaa

Asad: ARE, THEN, they who are bent on denying the truth not aware that the heavens and the earth were [once] one single entity, which We then parted asunder?³⁸ - and [that] We made out of water every living thing? Will they not. then. begin to believe?³⁹

Malik: Have not the unbelievers ever considered that the skies and the earth were once one mass, then We split them asunder? And We have created every living thing from water. Will they still not believe?

Pickthall: Have not those who disbelieve known that the heavens and the earth were of one piece, then We parted them, and We made every living thing of water? Will they not then believe?

Yusuf Ali: Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation) before We clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe? ^{2690 2691}

Transliteration: Awalam yara allatheena kafaroo anna alssamawati waalarda kanata ratqan fafaataqnahuma wajaAAalna mina almai kulla shayin hayyin afala yuminoona

Khatab:

Do the disbelievers not realize that the heavens and earth were ?once? one mass then We split them apart?¹

And We created from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

Author Comments

38 - It is, as a rule, futile to make an explanation of the Qur'an dependent on "scientific findings" which may appear true today, but may equally well be disproved tomorrow by new findings. Nevertheless, the above unmistakable reference to the unitary origin of the universe - metonymically described in the Qur'an as "the heavens and the earth" - strikingly anticipates the view of almost all modern astrophysicists that this universe has originated as one entity from one single element, namely, hydrogen, which became subsequently consolidated through gravity and then separated into individual nebulae, galaxies and solar systems, with further individual parts progressively breaking away to form new entities in the shape of stars, planets and the latter's satellites. (Regarding the Qur'anic reference to the phenomenon described by the term "expanding universe", see [51:47](#) and the corresponding note [31].)

39 - The statement that God "made out of water every living thing" expresses most concisely a truth that is nowadays universally accepted by science. It has a threefold meaning: (1) Water - and, specifically, the sea - was the environment within which the prototype of all living matter originated; (2) among all the innumerable-existing or conceivable-liquids, only water has the peculiar properties necessary for the emergence and development of life; and (3) the protoplasm, which is the physical basis of every living cell -whether in plants or in animals- and represents the only form of matter in which the phenomenon of life are manifested, consists overwhelmingly of water and is, thus, utterly dependent on it. read together with

the preceding statement, which alludes to the unitary origin of the physical universe, the emergence of life from and within equally unitary elements points to the existence of a unitary plan underlying all creation and, hence, to the existence and oneness of the Creator. This accent on the oneness of God and the unity of His creation is taken up again in verse {92} below.

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This probably refers to the event commonly known as the Big Bang.

2690 - The evolution of the ordered worlds as we see them is hinted at. As man's intellectual gaze over the physical world expands, he sees more and more how Unity is the dominating note in Allah's wonderful Universe. Taking the solar system alone, we know that the maximum intensity of sun-spots corresponds with the maximum intensity of magnetic storms on this earth. The universal law of gravitation seems to bind all mass together. Physical facts point to the throwing off of planets from vast quantities of diffused nebular matter, of which the central condensed core is a sun.

2691 - About 72 per cent, of the surface of our Globe is still covered with water, and it has been estimated that if the inequalities on the surface were all levelled, the whole surface would be under water, as the mean elevation of land sphere-level would be 7,000- 10,000 feet below the surface of the ocean. This shows the predominance of water on our Globe. That all life began in the water is also a conclusion to which our latest knowledge in biological science points. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the original basis of living matter, is liquid or semi-liquid and in a state of constant flux and instability, there is the fact that land animals, like the higher vertebrates, including man, show, in their embryological history, organs like those of fishes, indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The constitution of protoplasm is about 80 to 85 per cent of water.

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