

3. Ibn al-Qayyim and a Naturalist's Self-Dialogue

In the preceding chapters we focused upon the saying of the evolutionists at the highest conceptual level. The naturalists and atheist evolutionists cryptically conceal their attribution of “**choice with intent**” or “**will, power and wisdom**” to nature—implicitly or explicitly—through the clever use of language (choice of words) and creative definitions of terms. They are effectively trying to bridge the gap between **a)** the randomness of physico-chemical interactions [which is what they have reduced creation to upon prior conviction in materialism and naturalism] and which is not sufficient to explain the origin of biological life and the great diversity therein and **b)** purposefulness, goal-orientation, final-causes and so on, which are empirically proven to exist, indicating a world of **teleology** [having purposes, ends and wisdoms]. They have *philosophically* and *religiously* dismissed teleology from the outset, through mere definition—a sign of pure sophistry and arrogance—even though it is impossible for them not to use language that presupposes teleology as we have demonstrated in the previous chapters.

Then they take empirical observations which show:

a) that biological organisms possess a pre-configured and in-built capacity for adaptation in response to environmental stimuli—there is nothing within this that supports their naturalist religion,

b) that gene frequencies in populations change over generations, no controversy there at all—there is nothing within this that supports their materialist religion,

c) that changes in genetic information [via mutations] or biochemical pathways in organisms can be achieved in laboratory settings by investigator-induced interventions that are not random, but purposeful, by design with desired outcomes.

Then, through extrapolation, they inject their naturalists beliefs into interpretations of the data that do not meet the standards of scientific reasoning.

Basically, they have developed **a complex layer** of smoke and mirrors in between empirical observations and their naturalist

atheist beliefs, the aim of which is to prevent anyone from grasping, at the simplest conceptual level, what they are really saying. What they are really saying is **that nature creates through foreknowledge, intent, power and purpose**. They differ from the primitives in that the primitives explicitly gave divine qualities to nature and worshipped it. However, they, the moderns, use sophistry to hide their attribution of divine attributes to nature. While they extol and eulogize *nature* and *natural selection* in their writings they do not offer physical devotion to it as do the primitives.

In his work *Dār Miftāḥ al-Sa'ādah*, Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1350) shares a wide range of reflections upon natural phenomena and creatures of various kinds. In a chapter pertaining to self-reflection, he directs the reader to ponder over his physical constitution and to discover how every limb and organ is perfectly suited to serve its purpose and the various wisdoms therein.⁵⁸ Then he addresses the claims of the naturalists. He says:

“It is as if I am with you, O pauper, whilst you say: ‘All of this is the work of nature, and within nature are wonders and secrets.’ Had Allāh desired to guide you, you would have questioned your soul and said: ‘Inform me about this nature. Is it a standalone essence (*dhāt qā'imah binafsihā*) possessing the knowledge and power to perform these amazing works? Or is not so? [Or] rather, it is an accidental attribute (*araḍ*) established as a property [of matter], following on from it and being carried by it?’

If your soul says to you: ‘It is a standalone essence possessing complete knowledge (*ilm*), power (*qudrah*), will (*irādah*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*).’ Then say to it: ‘This is the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner. So why have you called it *nature*?... If only you named Him with what He named himself upon the tongues of His Messengers and entered the ranks of the fortunate intelligent ones. For the attribute with which you have described nature is His attribute.’

And if it says to you: ‘Rather, nature is an accidental attribute in need of [an essence] which carries it, and all [that we see] is its handiwork, performed in the absence of knowledge, will, power and

⁵⁸ *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa'ādah*. Dār Ibn 'Affān (1996), 2/194-198.

awareness. And such is witnessed of its effects that is witnessed! Then say to it: 'This is not believed by a person of sound intellect. How can these amazing, precise actions that render the intellects of intelligent people unable to grasp them and unable to produce them emanate from one that has no power, no wisdom and no awareness? And is not believing the likes of this but entering the ranks of the mad and the diseased [of chest]?'

Thereafter say to it: 'If what you had said was proven, it is known that this accidental attribute [which you have called *nature*] is not its own creator and nor its own originator. Who then is its lord, originator and creator? Who gave its inherent properties and made it do that? This, then, is the most evident of evidences for its maker and originator and the perfection of His power, knowledge and wisdom.'

If we were to prosecute you by returning to [the law of] nature [itself], we would have shown you that you have departed from what it necessitates. Thus, you are not [in agreement] with what intellect necessitates, nor innate disposition, nor nature and not even humanity itself, fundamentally. Sufficient as ignorance and misguidance is that for you.

If you returned to reason and said: 'No wisdom is found but from a wise, able, knowing being, and there is no skilful administration but from an able, choosing, controlling maker, knowledgeable of what he wants, capable of it without it being difficult for him, or rendering him unable and fatigued.' It would be said to you: 'If you have affirmed—woe be to you—the Mighty Creator besides whom there is no deity worthy of worship and no Lord other than him, then leave alone naming him with 'nature' (*ṭabī'ah*) or 'active intellect' (*al-'aql al-fā'āl*) or 'self-necessitating' (*mūjib bidhātihī*). And say [instead]: 'This is Allāh, the Creator, Maker, Fashioner, Lord of the Worlds, Maintainer of the Heavens and Earth, Lord of the Easts and Wests, the one who made good all that He created and perfected all things.' So why have you rejected His names and attributes, nay His very essence? And you have ascribed His handiwork and creation to others, despite that you are compelled to affirm His [existence] and to ascribe creation, lordship and regulation to Him without escape. So all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of the Worlds.

Futher, if you reflected upon your statement ‘nature’ and the meaning of this word, it would direct you to the Creator and Maker just as intellects direct to Him. This is because ‘nature’ (ṭabī‘ah) is of the morphological noun-form fa‘lāh, which has the meaning of mafūlah, meaning that which has been moulded, imprinted. It does not carry any other meaning besides this at all. This is because it is upon the morphological form taken by ingrained traits (*gharā‘iz*) which have been built into bodies and have been placed in them. Such words as *sajjīyah*, *gharīzah*, *bahīrah*, *salīqah* [terms referring to inborn traits and dispositions] and ṭabī‘ah (nature). Thus, these are the [traits] with which they are moulded and which are imprinted in them.

And Muslims say: ‘Nature’ is simply a creation from the creation(s) of Allāh that has been implanted [within things] and subjected [for purposes]. It is the law (*sunnah*) of Allāh upon which He made His creation to operate. Thereafter, He governs it however He wills and as He wills. Thus, he may divest it of its effect when He wishes and turn it to an opposite [effect] when He wills in order to show His servants that He alone is the Maker and Fashioner and that He creates whatever He wills, as He wills:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

‘Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, Be! and it is!’ (36:82).

The limit, in ‘nature’, of the vision of bats is but a creation from His creation(s), similar to all His other creations. How is it befitting then for one who has a share of humanity or reason to forget the one who created it and gave it its nature and then ascribe its origination and manufacture to itself?!”

From the above the following benefits are taken:

1. When naturalists and atheists use the word “nature”, then it must be clarified exactly what is meant. This word can refer to a **standalone entity**, meaning, something having its own essence that distinguishes it from other physical essences such that it can be pointed to, just like any object can be pointed to. If this is what the naturalist, atheist means—and this we know not to be the case—then it would be said in this instance that this is none but the Maker and Creator, you have just given His names to other than Him. He has a

true, real existence, outside of the mind, in external reality, save that He cannot be seen in this life, though the effects and traces (āthār) of His names, attributes and actions are readily observed and studied.⁵⁹ So if you assert that “nature” is a standalone entity, then you have simply named the creator by other than His actual name.

2. If however, by “nature”—and this is the actual case with the naturalists— you refer to a quality or property present in essences, in physical, material matter, and assert that everything which is observed in creation is but the work of this accidental property of matter and that such work is done without knowledge, awareness, wisdom and power, then this is the statement of the insane who are absent of rationality and have lost their minds and intellects.

This is **the actual statement of doctrine** of the modern naturalists and atheists, save that they present this belief with levels of cunning, sophistication, complexity, ambiguity and linguistic ingenuity that surpasses that of the primitives by a great deal. Earlier in this work we cited from Samir Okasha, presenting at the November 2016 “*New Trends In Evolutionary Biology*” conference at London’s prestigious Royal Society, wherein he speaks about the “**agential thinking**” that is strikingly present in evolutionary biology and almost inescapable. By “agential thinking” he means that *nature*, *natural selection* and biological entities are spoken of as agents, within a teleological and psychological framework. He made the interesting remark that “*attributions of agency presuppose a ‘unity of purpose’.*” In other words, by employing such way of thinking and the language that necessary follows, evolutionary biologists presuppose a unity of purpose, a

⁵⁹ One should note that scientists—especially in cosmology--routinely invent **unobservable and undetectable** forces, fields and particles in an ad hoc manner to patch up flaws in their theories. Then, they hypothesize—having assumed the existence of what they imagined—about the detectable effects that should be exhibited by these forces, fields and particles. Then they devise experiments to detect these effects. This is belief in the unseen through what is seen. This line of argument and reasoning is no different to arguing that an unseen Creator exists and that signs of His existence should be detectable. The observable phenomena are clear signs of His attributes and thus His essence and thus belief is justified and warranted.

grand design, an architecture. This clashes directly with their religious, philosophical naturalistic beliefs.

This shows that naturalists, atheists and evolutionists are unable to escape teleological language because **the design inference is automatic, subconscious and hard-wired**. It is unavoidable. Even when naturalists and atheists assert their absurd religious beliefs, they are unable to speak with language that is consistent with their beliefs.

3. “*Nature*” then is *endowed* upon matter. Nature did not and does not create itself. Accidental attributes do not create themselves nor the matter in which they reside and manifest. Rather, the properties and qualities of matter, the intertwined systems of cause and effect, all of them have been placed by an originator and maker with knowledge, will, power and wisdom. Ibn al-Qayyim sarcastically jibes at the naturalist by saying that if he was to be judged and tried by the laws of nature, the laws of nature would convict him and his absurd claim because the laws of nature demonstrate the very opposite of his claim. Thus, such a person is not in agreement with reason or with nature. *Nature*, *Mother Nature* and *Natural Selection* [in the way that evolutionists intend it] are pretty much equivalent within the context of our discussion. Whereas the primitives speak of *Mother Nature* as a living deity and worship it, the modern sophists speak of *Natural Selection* as the “blind watchmaker”, injecting agency into it—to use the words of Samir Okasha—but concealing it with deceptive language so that they are not put on a par with the primitives.

4. Ibn al-Qayyim discussed the linguistic meaning of the word “nature” with respect to morphology [of the Arabic language]. The essence of which is that it carries no other meaning except that which is implanted within a thing of traits, features and qualities. Thus, by definition, ‘nature’ does not create, but is itself created. It has no power in its own right, but is implanted and endued with powers and strengths. Essences and elements have been given their own unique properties which—through cause-effect mechanisms and intertwined systems—are able to manifest creative power, whilst

having no creative power as single essences or entities. “Nature” has no volition or will of itself, but behaves in accordance with the volition and will of an external agent. “Nature” does not have any goal-direction, purposes or end-objectives as a conscious entity, but there is goal-direction and purpose within it because it has been placed there.

5. Finally, Ibn al-Qayyim mentions the Muslim belief in this regard. Muslims believe that the nature and its laws are a creation amongst the creations of Allāh. The universe operates through them and never violates them as they are the laws of Allāh, except as He wills, for He can change and overturn these laws at will.

Every empirically confirmed, unbiased, neutral, non-theory laden, purely materialistic explanation of cause-effect mechanisms is accepted by Muslims by default since all causes (*asbāb*) and effects (*musabbabāt*) are tied together and made law-like through an external agent (*musabbib*) possessing will, knowledge and power by necessity, to whom independent creative power is assigned.

Thus, the language of Muslims used in describing nature and phenomena is consistent with their beliefs. As for the naturalists, it is impossible for them to *honestly* use language in describing nature and phenomena without clashing and contradicting their beliefs, as we have established in what has preceded.