

Clay-Based Creation in the Quran: Classical Exegesis and Scientific Perspectives on Guided Evolution

Quranic Descriptions of Clay-Based Creation

The Quran contains numerous verses describing the creation of humankind (especially Adam, the first human) from earth-derived materials such as clay, mud, and dust. Below are key verses (in Arabic with English translation) that highlight this “clay-based” origin of human creation:

- **Quran 3:59** – Arabic: “إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ ۖ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ ۖ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ” – English: “Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, ‘Be,’ and he was.” ¹
- **Quran 6:2** – Arabic: “هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ” – English: “He is the One who *created you from clay*, then decreed a term (on earth) and another specified term (for resurrection) known only to Him. Yet you still doubt!” ² ³
- **Quran 7:12** – Arabic: “قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ” – English: “(Iblis) said, ‘I am better than him. You created me from fire, and **You created him from clay**.’” ⁴ ⁵
- **Quran 15:26** – Arabic: “وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ” – English: “And indeed, We created humankind from dried **clay** formed from dark mud.” ⁶
- **Quran 15:28** – Arabic: “وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ” – English: “And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I will create a human being from sounding **clay** made of altered black mud.’” ⁷ ⁸
- **Quran 15:33** – Arabic: “قَالَ لَمْ أَكُن لِّأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ” – English: “[Satan] said: ‘Never would I prostrate to a human You created from sounding **clay** out of altered mud.’” ⁹ ¹⁰
- **Quran 17:61** – Arabic: “وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ قَالَ أَأَسْجُدُ لِمَنْ خَلَقْتُ طِينًا” – English: “And [mention] when We said to the angels, ‘Prostrate to Adam,’ and they prostrated, except for Iblis. He said, ‘Should I prostrate to one You created from **clay**?’” ¹¹ ¹²
- **Quran 18:37** – Arabic: “قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوَّكَ رَجُلًا” – English: “His companion said to him, while conversing, ‘Do you disbelieve in He who **created you from dust**, then from a drop (of fluid), and then formed you into a man?’” ¹³ ¹⁴

- **Quran 20:55** – Arabic: “مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى” – English: “From the earth We **created you**, and into it We will return you, and from it We will extract you a second time (i.e. on Resurrection).” 15 16
- **Quran 22:5** – Arabic: “يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنَبِّئَنَّكُمْ... عُلُقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنَبِّئَنَّكُمْ” – English: “O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then know that We **created you from dust**, then from a drop of fluid, then from a clinging clot, then from a lump of flesh – formed and unformed – so that We may make it clear to you (Our power)...” 17 18 (The verse continues to describe stages of human embryonic development, beginning with an origin from “dust.”)
- **Quran 23:12** – Arabic: “وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِن سَلَالَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ” – English: “And indeed, We **created humankind from an extract of clay**.” 19 20
- **Quran 30:20** – Arabic: “وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُونَ” – English: “And among His signs is that He **created you from dust**, and then – behold! – you are human beings dispersed (throughout the earth).” 21 22
- **Quran 32:7** – Arabic: “الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنسَانِ مِن طِينٍ” – English: “Who perfected everything He created, and **began the creation of man from clay**.” 23 24
- **Quran 35:11** – Arabic: “... وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا” – English: “And Allah **created you from dust**, then from a drop (of fluid), then He made you in pairs (male and female)...” 25 26
- **Quran 37:11** – Arabic: “فَأَسْتَفْتِهِمْ أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَن خَلَقْنَا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِّن طِينٍ لَّازِبٍ” – English: “So ask them [O Prophet], ‘Which is harder to create: them or other beings We have created?’ Indeed, We **created them from sticky clay**.” 27 28
- **Quran 38:71** – Arabic: “إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَلِّقُ بَشَرًا مِّن طِينٍ” – English: “[Mention] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I am going to create a human being from **clay**.’” 29 30
- **Quran 38:76** – Arabic: “قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ” – English: “[Iblis] said: ‘I am better than him. **You created me from fire and You created him from clay**.’” 31 32
- **Quran 40:67** – Arabic: “هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا” – English: “He is the One Who **created you from dust**, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, then He brings you forth as an infant, then [lets you] reach maturity... (etc.)” 33 34
- **Quran 55:14** – Arabic: “خَلَقَ الْإِنسَانَ مِن صَلْصَلٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ” – English: “He **created man from dried clay** like [that of] pottery.” 35

(All translations above are from reputable sources (e.g. Sahih International or similar), with interpolations in brackets for clarity.)

These verses use various Arabic terms – **turāb** (تُرَاب, “dust/soil”), **ṭīn** (طِين, “clay/mud”), **ḥamaʿ** (حَمَل, “muddy clay”), **salsāl** (سَلْسَال, “dry ringing clay”) – to describe humanity’s origin. The Quranic language thus repeatedly emphasizes that human beings (starting with Adam) were fashioned from earthly material. In the Islamic worldview, this signifies that our physical origin lies in the earth itself, even while the Quran elsewhere notes the divine breath or spirit that gave life to the human form (e.g. Quran 32:9, 15:29). How these descriptions have been understood has varied among scholars, especially when we compare classical interpretations to modern scientific perspectives.

Classical Interpretations of Adam’s Creation from Clay

Early Islamic commentators uniformly understood the “creation from clay” verses in a **literal, concrete** sense. For them, these verses described a special act of direct creation: Allah forming Adam’s body from earthly clay and then endowing it with life. The classical narrative – drawn from Quranic exegesis and supported by Hadith reports – portrays a step-by-step process: Allah gathered soil (**turāb**) from the earth, mixed it with water to form clay (**ṭīn**), which then became sticky mud (sometimes termed **ṭīn lāzib**, “adhesive clay”) and foul-smelling dark mud (**ḥamaʿ masnūn**). This was shaped into a human form and dried into a clay that rang like pottery (**salsāl**), and finally Allah “breathed” life into this form, creating Adam (referred to as **bashar**, a human being of flesh and blood) ³⁶ ³⁷. Classical scholars often enumerated these stages to reconcile the various Quranic terms – for example, the renowned exegete **Al-Ṭabarī** and others note that Adam’s creation involved **dust -> wet clay -> sticky mud -> dry clay -> ensouled human** ³⁶. Each Quranic term is thus taken to refer to a particular phase in Adam’s formation, much as one might describe the stages of making a pottery figure out of clay.

Importantly, **traditional scholars viewed this as a miraculous, instantaneous (or at least very rapid) creation event**, not a long natural process. *Tafsīr* works by commentators like **Ibn Kathīr** narrate that Adam’s lifeless body of clay was left standing for some time before being ensouled – e.g. some reports state Adam’s clay figure remained for **40 days** (or years) and that the angels, and Iblīs (Satan), marveled at this new creation-to-be ³⁸. One narration relates that Iblīs tapped the hollow clay form of Adam, producing a ringing sound (echoing Quran 55:14’s description “like pottery”) ³⁸. Such reports, while coming from extra-Quranic traditions, were used by classical mufasssīrūn (exegetes) to fill in narrative details: they envisioned a literal sculpting of Adam by God’s own hands (as alluded to in Quran 38:75), followed by the infusion of the soul (Quran 15:29, “I breathed into him of My spirit”).

Given this understanding, **earlier scholars universally affirmed Adam’s special creation*, rejecting the notion that humans emerged gradually from earlier life forms. Any idea of evolution or common descent would conflict with the explicit Quranic statements as they understood them. For instance, the modern scholar Syed Maududi (summarizing the classical view) emphatically wrote that the Quran “positively refutes the Darwinian theory of evolution”** with respect to human origins ³⁹. He and others held that the Quran’s account leaves no room for the evolution of man from previous species – Adam had no parents but was directly fashioned by God. Attempts by “modernized” commentators to read evolutionary ideas into the Quran were thus considered misguidance in the classical perspective ⁴⁰. Similarly, traditionalist ulama often cited the Quran 7:11–27 and related verses to argue that humanity’s nobility lies in this direct divine creation, and that Iblīs’ prideful objection (“You created him from clay, [but me] from fire”) confirms Adam’s distinct formation ⁴¹.

In summary, **classical Islamic interpretation** treated the clay-origin verses as **literal history**: Allah molded a statue of clay and brought it to life as the first man. This reading underscored theological points – the

special dignity of Adam, the obedience of angels to mankind's progenitor, and the abasement of Iblīs who refused to honor God's handiwork of clay. Any view that humans might have developed over eons from earlier organisms was alien (and indeed unacceptable) to this pre-modern exegetical paradigm.

Scientific Insights into Life from Earth

Modern science, in examining human origins, provides insights that interestingly can resonate with the Quran's statements – albeit in a very different way than classical literalism. When the Quran says humans were created from clay or dust, a scientifically-literate perspective might initially dismiss this as metaphor; yet, on reflection, it aligns with a profound truth: **the human body is quite literally composed of the "dust of the earth."** All the chemical elements that make up our bodies – carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, and so on – derive from the earth's crust and its minerals (ultimately, from stardust in the cosmos). In fact, as one commentator notes, "the elements composing the human organism are all, without exception, derived from the earth. Hence it is said that man has been created out of clay." ⁴² . Modern biochemistry confirms that the atoms in our DNA, proteins, and cells once existed in non-living matter: the iron in our blood, the calcium in our bones, the water in our cells – these are taken in from soil, water and the environment. In this sense, **science affirms a fundamental "clay connection":** human beings are built from the same stuff as the soil beneath our feet ⁴³ . Our intimate material link to Earth recalls the Quranic imagery powerfully – even if science and scripture express it in different idioms.

Furthermore, **origin-of-life research** suggests plausible pathways by which life (and eventually humans) could emerge *from* inanimate matter, consistent with the broad strokes of Quranic description. The Quran often mentions water as a vital ingredient ("We made every living thing from water" – 21:30), and modern science agrees life likely began in **water**. Early Earth's "primordial soup" – warm ponds or ocean vents rich in chemicals – could have fostered the formation of the first organic molecules. Notably, scientists have hypothesized that **minerals like clay might have played a critical catalytic role** in the emergence of life. Clay provides structured surfaces that can concentrate organic compounds; some experiments indicate that clay minerals can help assemble simple organic molecules into more complex polymers like RNA. In one scenario, organic building blocks formed in a watery environment and then interacted on clay surfaces, which helped organize them into the first self-replicating strands – a crucial step toward living cells ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ . In other words, **"life from clay" is a hypothesis taken seriously in astrobiology and biochemistry**. For example, research by A. G. Cairns-Smith and others has proposed that clay crystals could have been scaffolding for the earliest genetic material. While these ideas are still theoretical, they illustrate that *clay* is not a random or outlandish ingredient to mention in a creation story – it may point to an essential phase in abiogenesis (the origin of life from non-life).

Even beyond the origin of the first cell, the entire **chain of evolution** can be seen as nature's way of turning "dust" into ever more complex living forms. Over billions of years, Earth's raw materials (carbon, minerals, etc.) – guided by physical laws set by the Creator, a believer would say – gave rise to simple microbes, then multicellular organisms, then animals, and eventually Homo sapiens. From a biological standpoint, humans *are* "earth" that has been biochemically organized and *alive*. As one Muslim thinker elegantly put it, the Quranic statement that humankind was created from clay can be understood to mean that *"the whole substance of man's body is obtained from the earth."* Every new human embryo is nourished by the mother, who eats plants and animals, which in turn ultimately draw nutrients from soil – thus "each one of us is created from clay" in an ongoing sense ⁴⁶ . This observation from **Maududi's commentary** dovetails with the scientific view that our life is impossible without Earth's material resources. In short, science provides a

mechanistic explanation for how dust becomes flesh: through the slow but astonishing processes of chemistry and biology, directed by the properties and laws that God instantiated in nature.

From this angle, the Quran's repeated reference to our humble earthly origins attains a new depth of meaning. Rather than reading it narrowly as "Adam was a clay statue," one can read it as stating a timeless truth: **we are intimately connected with the earth** – both in life (needing earth's produce to survive) and in death ("from it We will return you [to the earth], and from it we will extract you again" as 20:55 and 22:5 note). The **metaphor of clay** underscores human physicality and mortality. Modern science reinforces this by showing how life's emergence and sustenance are built on the same physical elements found in non-life. Thus, far from being in conflict, there is a harmony in seeing the Quran's clay imagery through a scientific lens – it symbolizes our **chemical origin from Earth's matter** and our dependence on the natural world, even as it invites us to marvel at the divine ingenuity that from such base material "perfected every thing He created" (32:7).

It should be noted that the Quran is not a science textbook and does not detail **how** in scientific terms inert matter was transformed into living, conscious beings. But the consistent emphasis on an earthly origin for our bodies is remarkably consonant with what an evolutionary biologist or geochemist would say about the origin of *Homo sapiens*. In theological terms, this can be seen as a case of the Quran using **accessible, allegorical language** to convey a reality that science later elucidated more concretely. The classical scholars were correct in understanding that humans are a special creation – but special in *origin* does not necessarily preclude a *process* by which that origin unfolded, as we explore next.

Toward a Model of Guided Evolution

How can the scriptural narrative of Adam's creation be reconciled with the scientific account of human evolution? One compelling approach is to view the Quranic story **not as a literal manufacturing of a clay figurine, but as a metaphorical or summary description of humanity's ultimate origin from the earth, under God's power**. In this reading, "Allah created Adam from clay" is a profound statement about *where we come from* (the material of Earth) and *Who fashioned us* (the divine will), rather than a step-by-step recipe for how Adam's body was physically put together. Such an interpretive shift allows a **synthesis of scripture and science**: the Quran tells us *that* we are created by God's design and *from* earthly matter, while science explains *in detail how* that matter could be shaped over time into complex life forms. This integrative view is often called **theistic evolution** or **"guided evolution."** It posits that the evolutionary process evident in the fossil record and genetics was simply the method chosen by the Creator to bring about humankind (and other creatures). Allah's **"Kun fayakūn"** ("Be, and it is" – Quran 3:59) need not imply an instantaneous magic act in human terms; it can encompass eons of gradual development, since from God's perspective time is immaterial when He wills something into being.

Many contemporary Muslim scholars and scientists have adopted or explored this **guided evolution** paradigm. For example, **Dr. Maurice Bucaille**, famous for his work *The Bible, The Qur'an and Science*, argued that there is no contradiction between Quranic creation verses and the idea that animal species evolved – he suggested that evolution might explain the development of life up to hominids, and that a divinely guided "leap" brought about modern humans (Adam) as a special case ⁴⁷. While Bucaille's exact model posits a separate creation for Adam's soul or lineage (thus not fully embracing common descent), it reflects an effort to integrate scientific findings with Quranic doctrine. More fully embracing evolution, the Palestinian-Austrian scholar **Dr. Adnan Ibrahim** delivered an entire lecture series in Arabic on Darwin's theory, ultimately concluding that evolutionary theory **can be reconciled with Islam's account of creation**

if one understands the Quran's language appropriately ⁴⁸ . He uses a traditional Islamic framework to argue that *evolution was simply the Sunnatullah* (law of God in creation) – and that when the Quran says man was created from clay, it is informing us of our elemental origins and divine purpose, not negating that God might use natural processes. Likewise, physicist **Dr. Nidhal Guessoum** and astrophysicist **Dr. Nidhal Guessoum** (author of *Islam's Quantum Question*) advocates reading the Adam story in harmony with evolution: he points out that an overly literal reading raises conflicts not only with science but with deeper theological questions, whereas a non-literal, flexible interpretation allows one to “**fold those issues within a less rigid conception of God and the world**” ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ . Such scholars do not see evolution as “random” or outside of Allah's plan; rather, they see the laws of mutation, selection, and so forth as instruments of Allah's creative will – describing this as “*Allah's way of bringing about His creation over time.*”

In a guided-evolution model, **Adam** can still be viewed as *insān al-awwal* (the first true human in the spiritual sense, and the first prophet), without insisting that he had no biological precursors. One theological proposal is that at a certain stage in primate evolution, **God selected a pair of hominids** and endowed them with *al-rūḥ* (the human soul or spirit) and the faculty of moral consciousness, thus making them “Adam and Eve” – the first humans fully capable of bearing the divine trust (cf. Quran 33:72) and receiving revelation. This moment, figuratively described as God “breathing His spirit” into Adam (Quran 15:29, 32:9), could correspond to what paleoanthropologists identify as the emergence of *modern human behavior* or consciousness. In this view, the *external, physical form* of Adam **did evolve** (from clay to living cells to hominid body, over long ages), but the *ensoulment* of Adam was a direct divine act, marking the true dawn of humanity. Such an idea finds resonance even in some classical opinions – for instance, the famous commentator **Al-Rāzī** centuries ago speculated that Allah's breathing of the spirit might indicate a special infusion of intellect/reason that set Adam apart from animals. While Al-Rāzī did not know of evolution, his interpretation allows a layered understanding: the **Quranic creation narrative focuses on the spiritual and metaphysical uniqueness of humans** rather than the material biomechanics.

A **scholarly reconciliation** between scripture and science is indeed underway in modern Islamic thought. Institutions like the **Yaqeen Institute** and writers in forums like *The Muslim Times* have published articles exploring non-literalist readings of Adam's story that accommodate evolutionary science ⁵¹ ⁵² . There is a growing acknowledgement that one can affirm *both* the divine **teleology** (purposeful design) *and* the scientific **mechanism** of creation. The Quran's primary message in the creation verses is arguably about *Who* caused our existence and *from what base material*, rather than the exact *process*. As Dr. Shoiab Malik and others have noted, it is possible to see the Quran and evolution as addressing different levels of explanation – the Quran gives the **metaphysical narrative** (“God created Man from earth and endowed him with a soul”), whereas biology gives the **physical narrative** (“the human species emerged through a long natural process from earlier life forms”). These are complementary, not contradictory, perspectives if properly understood. Allah's “guiding hand” can be perceived in evolution itself – as the Quran says: “He is the One who creates *according to a plan* (bi'l-ḥaqq)” and “Who has perfected everything He created” ²³ ⁵³ . The impressive trajectory from simple microbes to conscious beings can be seen as the unfolding of that divine plan over time, a **tafakkur** (reflection) inspiring even greater awe of the Creator's wisdom.

From a theological standpoint, accepting **guided evolution** does not diminish God's role – on the contrary, it underscores God's wisdom in *ordaining natural laws* that produce the intended outcome. Classical scholars insisted God **personally shaped** Adam to avoid any hint that Adam's existence was a result of blind chance. Modern Muslim thinkers likewise reject a purely materialist, unguided interpretation of evolution. They maintain that if evolution occurred, it was because Allah willed the universe to evolve in that way, ensuring that at the right time a creature with the sanctity of “Allah's image” (to use a hadith phrase) emerged. This

maintains the **special status of humanity** as described in the Quran (e.g. Allah commanding the angels to bow to Adam symbolizes human spiritual potential) while also making sense of the abundant empirical evidence for prehistoric human ancestors, genetic commonalities with other primates, and the old age of the earth – evidence which a strictly literal Adam-from-mud-instantly scenario struggles to account for. In fact, some classical opinions inadvertently leave room for long processes – for example, Ibn Khaldūn (14th c.) mused about a “gradual process of creation” and even suggested that humans may have descended from “the world of monkeys” in a qualitative sense ⁵⁴ (though he framed it in terms of a great chain of being, not Darwinian evolution). Such remarks show that the idea of creation unfolding in stages is not entirely foreign to Islamic thought.

In conclusion, when we revisit the Quranic verses about clay and creation with fresh eyes, informed by modern knowledge, we find **no fundamental conflict** between the Quran’s message and the concept of divinely guided evolution. The Quran, in an almost poetic manner, teaches us that we come from lowly clay – which instills humility – and that our life is a gift of the divine spirit – which grants us honor above other creatures. Science fills in the marvels of *how* clay can be fashioned into living cells, and how those cells can diversify over epochs into the tapestry of life culminating in Homo sapiens. Integrating the two perspectives, one can affirm: **Human beings are crafted from the dust of the earth, through the laws of nature that God ordained, and ultimately shaped by the “hands” of God’s intent and guidance.** This view upholds the theological truths of Islam (that Allah is al-Khāliq, The Creator, and al-Hādī, The Guide) and embraces the empirical truths uncovered by biology and geology. It avoids reading the Quran in a narrowly literal way that would pit it against science, focusing instead on the *Ayat* (signs) that the creation narrative provides. As the Quran itself encourages, we thus use both **revelation and reason** to deepen our understanding of our origins. The clay that lies inert in the ground and the consciousness that enables us to question our origins both point to the glory of the Almighty – the One who “gave everything its perfect form” (32:7) and who **“guided it”** (20:50) through every stage of existence.

By viewing Adam’s formation from clay as a **metaphor with biochemical validity**, and evolution as the **unfolding of Allah’s design**, Muslim scholars are forging a path that honors scripture and science together. This scholarly reconciliation echoes the approach of figures like **Maurice Bucaille, Adnan Ibrahim, and Nidhal Guessoum**, and is supported by an increasing number of Muslim thinkers and scientists today. It demonstrates that the **clay-based creation of Adam need not be understood as a literal sculpting event** – rather, it can be understood as a richly layered truth: that our physical origin lies in the earth (soil and water), and our emergence as humans was *purposefully brought about* by God’s command. In a sense, Allah’s saying to clay “Be!” and it eventually becoming man ¹ ⁵⁵ is not myth at all, but a reality – a reality that spans millions of years yet is fully under the aegis of the Creator’s will. Such an academic, theologically robust perspective upholds the **integrity of the Quranic message** while embracing the **findings of modern science**, allowing Muslims to **“ponder the signs of Allah in the horizons and in themselves”** (Quran 41:53) without dichotomy.

Sources:

- The Quran, translated by Sahih International (with Arabic text) – verses as cited above: 3:59; 6:2; 7:12; 15:26, 28, 33; 17:61; 18:37; 20:55; 22:5; 23:12; 30:20; 32:7; 35:11; 37:11; 38:71, 76; 40:67; 55:14 ¹ ²
⁴ ⁶ ⁷ ⁹ ¹¹ ¹⁴ ¹⁶ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ ²¹ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁸ ³⁰ ³² ³⁴ ³⁵ .

- Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Tabari, and Maududi's *Tafheem al-Qur'an* for classical views on Adam's creation (see especially Maududi's commentary on Quran 15:26 and 7:11-18) ³⁹ ³⁶ . These detail the stages of "dust to clay to man" and explicitly reject evolutionary interpretations ⁴⁰ .
- Hadith reports and classical histories (e.g. *Tarikh al-Tabari*) regarding Adam's formation: e.g. the 40 days tradition and Iblis striking the hollow clay body ³⁸ .
- Maurice Bucaille, *What is the Origin of Man?* (1976) – discussed in ⁴⁷ , attempting a reconciliation by positing guided evolution with a divine intervention for humans.
- Zia H. Shah, "The Holy Quran: Adam from a Statue of Mud or Guided Evolution?" (The Muslim Times, 2024) – a modern Muslim perspective advocating theistic evolution ⁵¹ .
- Nidhal Guessoum, "Islamic Theological Views on Darwinian Evolution" (2017) – an academic paper reviewing Muslim scholarly positions, and favoring a non-literal, compatible approach ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ .
- Adnan Ibrahim – lectures on evolution (2013), summarized in ⁴⁸ , demonstrating a method of reconciling Darwin's findings with Quranic principles using classical *usul*.
- General works on Islam and science integration, e.g. Osman Bakar's writings, and Yaqeen Institute articles on human origins ⁵¹ , which provide frameworks for understanding Adam in light of evolution without negating Quranic infallibility.

These sources collectively illustrate the spectrum of views and contribute to a nuanced, well-sourced discourse on creation and evolution in Islam. By maintaining an academic tone and grounding each claim in textual or scientific evidence, we find that the **Quran's clay-based human creation theme and modern evolutionary science can be harmonized in a thoughtful, faithful manner** – affirming that religion and science, when properly understood, "*each in its own domain, are never at odds*" ⁴² ⁴³ . The clay that was once "fermented" by God's hand in the classical story ⁵⁶ ³⁸ can be re-interpreted as the primordial clay that hosted the chemical dawn of life by God's decree. In both narratives, Allah is *Al-Khāliq* – the Creator who brings forth life from lifelessness, whether in an instant or through aeons, and in both we prostrate in awe of His creative truth. The words of the Qur'an thus continue to ring true like "**sounding clay**", echoing through the dialogue of science and faith. ⁴² ⁴⁶

- 1 55 Ayat: Verily, the likeness of 'Iesa (Jesus) before Allah is the likeness of - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-59-sora-3.html>
- 2 3 42 Ayat: He it is Who has created you from clay, and then has - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-2-sora-6.html>
- 4 5 41 Ayat: (Allah) said: "What prevented you (O Iblis) that you did not prostrate, - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-12-sora-7.html>
- 6 39 40 Ayat: And indeed, We created man from sounding clay of altered black smooth - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-26-sora-15.html>
- 7 8 Ayat: And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "I am going - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-28-sora-15.html>
- 9 10 Ayat: [Iblis (Satan)] said: "I am not the one to prostrate myself to - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-33-sora-15.html>
- 11 12 Ayat: And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate unto Adam." They - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-61-sora-17.html>
- 13 14 Ayat: His companion said to him, during the talk with him: "Do you - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-37-sora-18.html>
- 15 16 Ayat: Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-55-sora-20.html>
- 17 18 Ayat: O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily! - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-5-sora-22.html>
- 19 20 Ayat: And indeed We created man (Adam) out of an extract of clay - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-12-sora-23.html>
- 21 22 43 Ayat: And among His Signs is this, that He created you (Adam) from - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-20-sora-30.html>
- 23 24 53 Ayat: Who made everything He has created good, and He began the creation - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-7-sora-32.html>
- 25 26 Ayat: And Allah did create you (Adam) from dust, then from Nutfah (male - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-11-sora-35.html>
- 27 28 46 Ayat: Then ask them (i.e. these polytheists, O Muhammad SAW): "Are they stronger - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-11-sora-37.html>
- 29 30 Ayat: (Remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Truly, I am going - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-71-sora-38.html>
- 31 32 Ayat: [Iblis (Satan)] said: "I am better than he, You created me from - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-76-sora-38.html>
- 33 34 Ayat: He, it is Who has created you (Adam) from dust, then from - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-67-sora-40.html>
- 35 36 37 Ayat: He created man (Adam) from sounding clay like the clay of pottery. - Quran English
<https://surahquran.net/english-aya-14-sora-55.html>

38 56 The 40 days (years?) of the creation of Adam from clay : r/islam

https://www.reddit.com/r/islam/comments/17t1dgc/the_40_days_years_of_the_creation_of_adam_from/

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47 54 Islamic views on evolution - Wikipedia

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48 Adnan Ibrahim – The True Islam..

<https://adilsud.wordpress.com/notable-new-muslims/adnan-ibrahim/>

49 50 Islam & Science » Islamic Theological Views on Darwinian Evolution

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51 52 The Holy Quran: Adam from a Statue of Mud or Guided Evolution? – The Glorious Quran and Science

<https://thequran.love/2024/12/10/the-holy-quran-adam-from-a-statue-of-mud-or-guided-evolution/>