

The Information Beyond Matter & Lawh-i Mahfuz

H A R U N Y A H Y A

Information... This concept today means a lot more than it did even a half century ago. Scientists are developing theories to define information. Social scientists speak of "the information age." Information is becoming a very important concept for humanity.

The discovery of information in the origin of both the universe and life itself is what makes this concept so important in the modern world. Scientists today are realizing that the universe is formed by "**matter, energy and information**," and this is replacing the materialistic philosophy of the nineteenth century that defined the universe as being made up entirely of "**matter and energy**."

So, what does this all mean?

Let's explain through an example, that of DNA. All living cells function according to the genetic information in the double helix structure of DNA. Our bodies are also formed by trillions of cells each with its own DNA, and all the functions of our bodies are registered in this giant molecule. Our cells use protein codes inscribed in the DNA to produce new proteins. The information that our DNA possesses is so large that if you wanted to write it down, it would fill up 900 volumes of encyclopedias, cover-to-cover!

So **what is DNA made up of**? Fifty years ago, scientists would have replied that DNA is formed by nucleic acids called nucleotides and the chemical bonds holding these nucleotides together. In other words, they used to list only the material elements of the DNA. But today, scientists have a different answer: DNA is composed of atoms, molecules, chemical bonds and, most importantly, information.

It's just like a book. We would be quite mistaken to say that a book is only made up of paper, ink and binding for, alongside these materials, it is the information that truly makes it a book. It is information which separates a volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from a "book" formed by randomly arranged letters like ABICLDIXXGGSDLL. Both have paper, ink and binding, but one has information while the other does not. The source of information is the author of that book, a mind with consciousness. Therefore we can't deny that the information in DNA was placed there by an intelligent being.

THE INFORMATION DEAD END OF EVOLUTIONARY THEORY AND MATERIALISM

The discovery of this fact has sent materialist philosophy and Darwinism, its application to the natural sciences, into a dead end, because materialist philosophy claims that all living things are formed by matter alone and that genetic information appeared somehow by "chance." This is like saying that a book could be formed from a random assemblage of paper and ink.

Materialism subscribes to the theory of "reductionism," which claims that information can ultimately be reduced to matter. For this reason, materialists say that there's no need to look for any source of information besides matter. But this assertion has been proven to be in error, and even materialists have started to owe up to this truth.

One of the leading defenders of the theory of evolution, George C. Williams, pointed in a 1995 essay to the mistake of materialism (reductionism), that is, assuming everything to consist of materials:

Evolutionary biologists have failed to realize that they work with two more or less incommensurable domains: that of information and that of matter... These two domains will never be brought together in any kind of the sense usually implied by the term "reductionism." ...The gene is a package of information, not an object... In biology, when you're talking about things like genes and genotypes and gene pools, you're talking about information, not

physical objective reality... This dearth of shared descriptors makes matter and information two separate domains of existence, which have to be discussed separately, in their own terms. 1

Stephen C. Meyer, a philosopher of science from the Cambridge University and who is critical of the theory of evolution as well as materialism, says in an interview:

One thing I do in classes to get this idea across the students is that I hold up two computer disks. One is loaded with software, the other one is blank. And I ask, "What is the difference in mass between these two computer disks as a result of the difference in the information content that they possess"? And of course the answer is zero, none, there is no difference as a result of the information. That is because information is a massless quantity. Information is not a material entity.

Then how can any materialistic explanation explain its origin? How can any material cause explain its origin?... This creates a fundamental challenge to the materialistic evolutionary scenarios.

In the 19th century, we thought that there were two fundamental entities of science: Matter and energy. At the beginning of the 21st century, **we now recognize that there is a third fundamental entity, and it is information.** It is not reducible to matter; it is not reducible to energy. 2

All theories put forward in the twentieth century to reduce information to matter-like the random origin of life, self-organization of matter, the biological theory of evolution that has tried to explain species' genetic information through the mechanism of mutation and natural selection-have failed. Professor Phillip Johnson, a leading critic of Darwinism, wrote:

The real duality at every level of biology is the duality of matter and information. The philosophers of mind-science fail to understand the true nature of information because they assume that it is produced by a material (i.e. Darwinian) process and hence is not something fundamentally different from matter. But this is merely a prejudice that would be swept away by unbiased thinking. 3

As Johnson states, "**information is not matter, although it is imprinted on matter. It comes from elsewhere, from an intelligence....**" Dr. Werner Gitt, a director and professor at the German Federal Institute of Physics and Technology, expressed much the same thought:

A coding system always entails a nonmaterial intellectual process. A physical matter cannot produce an information code. All experiences show that every piece of creative information represents some mental effort and can be traced to a personal idea-giver who exercised his own free will, and who is endowed with an intelligent mind.... **There is no known law of nature, no known process and no known sequence of events which can cause information to originate by itself in matter... 4**

As we discussed above, a book is formed by paper, ink and the information it includes. The source of this information is the mind of the author.

And there is one more important point: This mind comes prior to the material elements and it decides how to use them. A book first appears in the mind of the person who will write that book. The author makes logical connections and comes up with sentences. Later, in the second stage, he gives these ideas a material form. By using a typewriter or computer, he turns the information contained within his mind into letters. Later these letters go to a printing house and they make up a book.

So here, we can reach the following conclusion: "If matter includes information, then that material has been pre-organized by a mind possessing that information. First there was a mind, and then the owner of that mind turned that information into matter and thus created a design."

THE MIND THAT EXISTED BEFORE MATTER

Therefore, the source of the information in nature cannot be the matter itself, as the materialists claim. The source of information is not matter, but rather a supra-material Mind. This Mind existed before matter. The Mind created, shaped and organized the whole material universe.

Biology isn't the only branch of science leading us to this conclusion. Twentieth century astronomy and physics also demonstrated the existence of an astonishing harmony and design, pointing to the existence of a Mind that

existed before the universe and created it.

Israeli scientist Gerald Schroeder who studied physics and biology in universities like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and the author of the book *The Science of God*, makes some important remarks on this subject. In his new book entitled *The Hidden Face of God: Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth*, he explains the conclusion reached by molecular biology and quantum physics as follows:

A single consciousness, a universal wisdom, pervades the universe. The discoveries of science, those that search the quantum nature of subatomic matter, have moved us to the brink of a startling realization: **all existence is the expression of this wisdom.** In the laboratories we experience it as information that first physically articulated as energy and then condensed into the form of matter. Every particle, every being, from atom to human, appears to represent a level of information, of wisdom. 5

According to Schroeder, the scientific results of our age lead science and theology to meet at a common truth. This is the truth of Creation. Science is now re-discovering this truth that divine religions have actually taught to humanity for millennia.

THE LAWH-Ī MAHFUZ (THE PRESERVED TABLET)

So far, we have looked at science's conclusions about the universe and the origin of living things. The conclusion is that the entire universe and life itself were created using a blueprint of magnificent information that existed before.

This conclusion reached by modern science is strikingly in agreement with a secret that was laid out in the Qur'an some 14 centuries ago. In the Qur'an, a book sent to people as a guide, God announced that the Lawh-i Mahfuz (the Preserved Tablet) existed before the creation of the universe and that it furthermore explained all creation and events in the universe.

The Lawh-i Mahfuz was "guarded" (mahfuz) so the things written there were not changed or spoiled. In the Qur'an, this is called "Ommu al-Kitabi" (The Mother of the Book), "Kitabun Hafeethun" (All-Preserving Book), "Kitabin Maknoonin" (Well-Protected Book) or just the book. It is also called Kitabin min Qabli (The Book of Decrees) since it also tells of the events that humanity will face.

In many verses, God tells about the characteristics of the Lawh-i Mahfuz. First of all, there is nothing missing from this book:

The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it. There is no seed in the darkness of the earth, and nothing moist or dry which is not in a Clear Book. (Qur'an, 6: 59)

One verse says that all life in the world is recorded in the Lawh-i Mahfuz:

There is no creature crawling on the earth or flying creature, flying on its wings, who are not communities just like yourselves —We have not omitted anything from the Book— then they will be gathered to their Lord. (Qur'an, 6: 38)

In another verse, it is stated that "on earth and in the heavens," in the entire universe, all creatures and things, including the smallest speck, are known by God and recorded in the Lawh-i Mahfuz:

You do not engage in any matter or recite any of the Qur'an or do any action without Our witnessing you while you are occupied with it. Not even the smallest speck eludes your Lord, either on earth or in heaven. Nor is there anything smaller than that, or larger, which is not in a Clear Book. (Qur'an, 10: 61)

All information concerning humanity is in the Lawh-i Mahfuz, and this includes the genetic code of all people and their destinies:

Nonetheless they are amazed that a warner should have come to them from among themselves and those who disbelieve say, "What an extraordinary thing! When we are dead and turned to dust? That would be a most unlikely return!" We know exactly how the earth eats them away. We possess an all-preserving

Book. (Qur'an, 50: 2-4)

The following verse states that God's words in the Lawh-i Mahfuz are endless, and this is explained through an example:

If all the trees on earth were pens and all the sea, with seven more seas besides, was ink God's words still would not run dry. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Qur'an, 31: 27)

CONCLUSION

The facts that we explored in this article prove yet again that the findings of modern science confirm what religion teaches to people. The materialist dogmatism that has been imposed on science is in fact rejected by science itself.

The conclusions of modern science about information serve to objectively demonstrate who is right in a dispute that has been raging for thousands of years. This dispute has been waged between materialist thought and religion. Materialist thought claims that matter is without beginning and that nothing existed before matter. Religion, on the other hand, states that God existed before matter, and that matter is created and ruled by God's endless knowledge.

The fact that this truth, which has been taught by divine religions - like Judaism, Christianity and Islam - since the dawn of history, has been proved by the findings of science, is an indication of the impending post-atheist age. Humanity is getting closer to realizing that God truly exists and He is the "All-Knowing." Just as reminded to people in the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

Do you not know that God knows everything in heaven and earth? That is in a Book. That is easy for God. (Qur'an, 22: 70)

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- (1) George C. Williams. The Third Culture: Beyond the Scientific Revolution. (ed. John Brockman). New York, Simon & Schuster, 1995, pp. 42-43
 - (2) Stephen Meyer, "Why Can't Biological Information Originate Through a Materialistic Process", Unlocking the Mystery of Life, DVD, Produced by Illustra Media, 2002
 - (3) Phillip Johnson, The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism, Intervarsity Press, Illinois, 2000, p. 123
 - (4) Werner Gitt. In the Beginning Was Information. CLV, Bielefeld, Germany, pp. 107, 141
 - (5) Gerald Schroeder, The Hidden Face of God, Touchstone, New York, 2001, p. xi