

# Adnan Oktar: "10 Pages Of My Book Can Defeat Dawkins"



The Wall Street Journal, the New York-based international financial and current affairs daily, carried a report titled **"An Islamic Creationist Stirs a New Kind of Darwinian Struggle"** in its 18 March, 2009, issue in its Europe and Asia edition. In the report of the paper, which has a daily readership of 2 million, carried extracts from Andrew Higgins' interview with Mr. Adnan Oktar.

The report stated that Mr. Oktar had [challenged Dawkins, as a pagan priest, to a debate](#), and that he had offered [a prize of 10 million Turkish lira](#) to anyone producing a single fossil proving evolution. The report also carried a picture of the cover of the Atlas. The principle passages in the article read as follows:

**Mr. Oktar Has Plenty of Fans in Turkey...** Adnan Oktar ... is working on the fifth volume of a 14-part masterwork that he says will bury Darwinism once and for all.

**"Darwin and his theory are dead,"** says Mr. Oktar, founder and honorary president of the Science Research Foundation, an Istanbul outfit dedicated to debunking the Victorian-era English naturalist. Darwin[ism], says [Mr. Oktar], is **"SATAN'S BIGGEST TRICK ON HUMANITY."**

... The physical weight of Mr. Oktar's work ... is considerable. Each volume of his anti-Darwin magnum opus, *"Atlas of Creation,"* weighs more than 13 pounds. ... His *"Atlas of Creation"* produces thousands of pictures of fossils of birds, snakes and other creatures side by side with what he says are their identical modern kin. ... Mr. Oktar ... believes that **"JUST 10 PAGES OF MY BOOK CAN DEFEAT DAWKINS."**

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ON OTHER FRONTS

Dispatch / By Andrew Higgins

## An Islamic creationist stirs Darwinian struggle

**A**S SCIENTISTS around the world celebrate the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's seminal work on evolution, Adnan Oktar, a college dropout turned theorist of Islamic creationism, is working on the fifth volume of a 14-part masterpiece that he says will bury Darwinism once and for all.

"Darwin and his theory are dead," says Mr. Oktar, founder and honorary president of the Science Research Foundation, an Istanbul outfit dedicated to debunking the Victorian-era English naturalist. Darwin, says his 42-year-old Turkish scourge, is "Satan's biggest trick on humanity."

Mr. Oktar, who briefly studied architecture design, hasn't had much success convincing scientists with the weight of his research. "He is incomplete and utterly ignorant," says Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist and Oxford University professor.

The physical weight of Mr. Oktar's work, however, is considerable. Each volume of his anti-Darwin magnum opus, "Atlas of Creation," weighs more than 13 pounds. Also weighing in on his side are very aggressive lawyers. They've repeatedly gone to court in Turkey to silence critics whom Mr. Oktar accuses of spreading "lies and insults." Scores of Web sites have been banned at his behest.

These include the site of Oxford's Prof. Dawkins, which Mr. Oktar—who writes under the pen name Harun Yahya—got blocked last fall after it posted an article entitled "Venomous Snakes, Slippery Fish and

Harun Yahya." Prof. Dawkins responded to the ban by posting a Turkish translation of the article. Mr. Oktar derides Prof. Dawkins, an outpoker at best, as "a pagan monk."

Mr. Oktar's combative post has put him at the center of what some would consider a dangerous phenomenon: a retreat from science into religious dogma. "We are trying to turn the trend back, but I'm not sure we'll be successful," says Aykut Kocak, a biology professor at Ankara's Middle East Technical University.

Prof. Kocak has worked with like-minded scholars on a series of conferences and other events marking Darwin's birth, 200 years ago on the publication, in 1859, of "On the Origin of Species." He last week joined a chorus of secular outrage over a decision by the official journal of Turkey's state scientific research council to pull a page from its Darwin issue. "If people can't accept science, they can't think," he says.

A recent survey found that only a quarter of students entering Turkish universities accept Darwin's theory of evolution and that the proportion is much the same when they graduate. The findings, says Prof. Kocak, are "very depressing."

Islam, like Christianity, holds that God created the world and its creatures. But the Quran leaves more room for acceptance of evolution than does the Old Testament, which states that the world was created in six days. Creationism, says Prof. Kocak, was originally a "Christian import," but has gained traction among Muslims, thanks in part to Mr. Oktar.

Mr. Oktar's message has won support across a widely disparate, mostly

tably among educated, wealthy Turks from secular families. Enur Calkoglu, a businessman in the construction industry, says he was "not interested in religious things before" he met Mr. Oktar but is now a devoted believer.

His construction firm has been hit hard by the economic crisis, but he welcomes predictions by Mr. Oktar that capitalism will soon be replaced by a new, good free system. In his spare time, Mr. Calkoglu works for Global Publishing, the publisher of Mr. Oktar's *"Atlas of Creation."* It has translated Mr. Oktar's works into 17 languages, including Swedish and Albanian.

Mr. Oktar's website and often multilingual fans serve as missionaries abroad. At a Vatican sponsored conference on evolution earlier this month in Rome, a Turk who introduced himself as a brain surgeon took the floor to respond—in fluent English—on Mr. Oktar's views on fossils. Organizers switched away the microphone.

How Mr. Oktar funds his global campaign is a mystery. He says only that he has various "transmedia activities" and many businessmen friends. "My friends are mostly rich people."

Over the years, Mr. Oktar has also gathered many foes. He's a megalo-maniac. He worships the mirror, says Edip Yiksel, a Turkish writer who got to know Mr. Oktar in the 1980s when he first began developing his idiosyncratic take on Islam. How a bitter critic, Mr. Yiksel has written a Turkish language book on Mr. Oktar—"The Call of the Antichrist"—but says he hasn't found a publisher willing to leave Mr. Oktar's lawyers. His Web site is banned in Turkey.

The 1990s were a period of political turmoil and also Islamic awakening in Turkey. A military coup at the start of the decade led to the arrest of many left wingers but left Muslim activists mostly unscathed. Under



A volume of Adnan Oktar's anti-Darwin magnum opus, "Atlas of Creation." He is working on the fifth volume of a 14-part work.

their influence, the Ministry of Education in 2004 revised textbooks to include creationism alongside Darwinism.

In 1986, Mr. Oktar published his first book, "Freemasonry and Judaism," a tirade against the period of atheism. He then spent 20 months in a mental hospital. Mr. Oktar says he was never mentally ill but was institutionalized to stifle his views. Military doctors later declared him mentally sound, he says, but he complains that Turkish media "propagated the idea that I was a fanatic."

Mr. Oktar has had various brushes with the law, including a 1991 drug possession case in which, he says, security agents planted cocaine in his food. He was acquitted. A glamorous model then accused him of blackmail. The case collapsed. Mr. Oktar is now fighting to reverse a conviction last year of himself and co-defenders for forming an unlicensed illegal organization that Mr. Oktar says does not exist. "I have a great number of enemies," says Mr. Oktar, who blames his troubles on a "Turkish dictatorship."

Unlike strict Christian creationists, who assert the world was created in six days around 10,000 years ago, Mr. Oktar allows for a far longer time period stretching back billions of

years. But he agrees with these Christians who insist life didn't evolve, asserting that animals and plants now are exactly as they were at the dawn of time.

His *"Atlas of Creation"* produces thousands of pictures of fossils of birds, snakes and other creatures side by side with what he says are their identical modern kin. Prof. Dawkins decides the exercise is "total insanity" and says Mr. Oktar confuses snakes with birds and snakes with other elementary blunders.

One of the pictures in the first volume of Mr. Oktar's work features what is labeled as acodile. It is in fact a man-made fishing fly with a metal hook clearly visible. Mr. Oktar says this is a "little detail" and believes that "not 10 pages of my book can defeat Dawkins."

He's offered a reward of 10 million Turkish liras (around \$1 million) to anyone who can produce a fossil that proves evolution. He has also invited his Oxford foe to a debate. Prof. Dawkins says he has no intention of accepting, as that would only "give legitimacy" to "his weird phenomenon," Mr. Oktar, he says, "doesn't know anything about biology. He knows nothing about what he is attempting to refute."

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/adnan-oktar10-pages-of-my-book-can-defeat-dawkins>