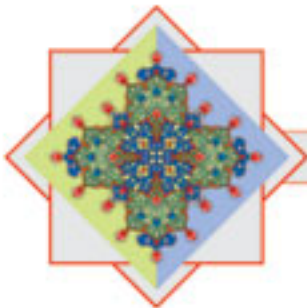


QUR'AN & MODERN SCIENCE

Compatible or Incompatible?



Dr. Zakir Naik





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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ


*In the Name of Allah,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful*



INTRODUCTION



Ever since the dawn of human life on this planet, Man has always tried to understand Nature, his own place in the scheme of Creation and the purpose of Life itself. In this quest for Truth, spanning many centuries and diverse civilizations, organized religion has shaped human life and, to a large extent, has determined the course of history. While some religions have been based on written text, claimed by their followers to be divinely inspired, others have relied solely on human experience.

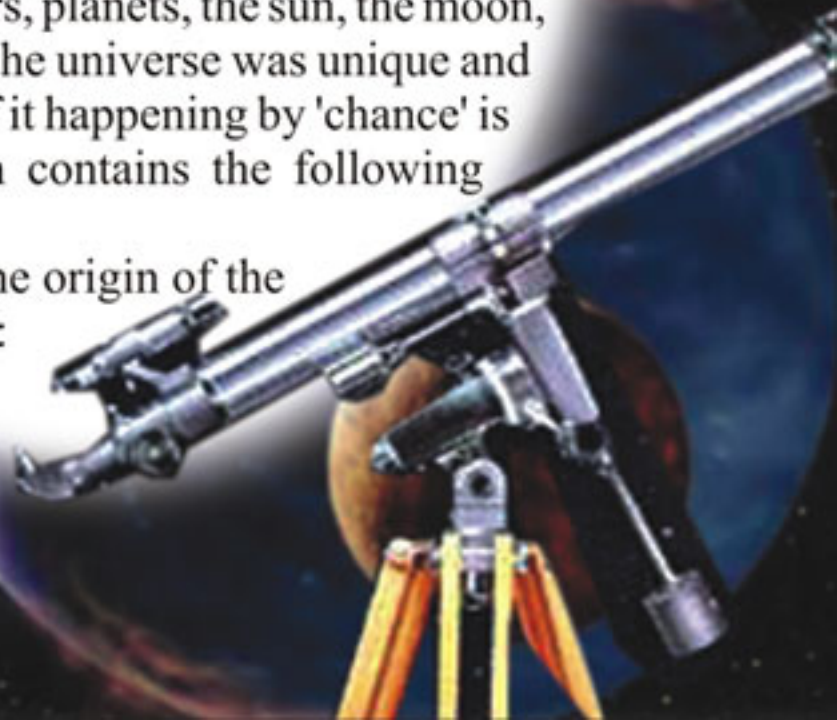


Al-Qur'an, the main source of the Islamic faith, is a book believed by its followers, the Muslims, to be completely of Divine origin. Muslims also believe that it contains guidance for all humankind. Since the message of the Qur'an is believed to be for all times, it should be relevant to every age. But does the Qur'an pass this test?

ASTRONOMY

CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE: 'THE BIG BANG'

The creation of the universe is explained by astrophysicists as a widely accepted phenomenon, popularly known as 'The Big Bang'. It is supported by observational and experimental data gathered by astronomers and astrophysicists for decades. According to 'The Big Bang', the whole universe was initially one big mass (Primary Nebula). Then there was a 'Big Bang' (Secondary Separation) which resulted in the formation of Galaxies. These then divided to form stars, planets, the sun, the moon, etc. The origin of the universe was unique and the probability of it happening by 'chance' is nil. The Qur'an contains the following verse regarding the origin of the universe:



INITIAL GASEOUS MASS BEFORE CREATION OF GALAXIES



Scientists agree that before the galaxies in the universe were formed, celestial matter was initially in the form of gaseous matter. In short, huge gaseous matter or clouds were present before the formation of the galaxies. To describe initial celestial matter, the word 'smoke' is more appropriate than gas. The following Qur'anic verse refers to this state of the universe by the word *dukhaan* which means smoke.

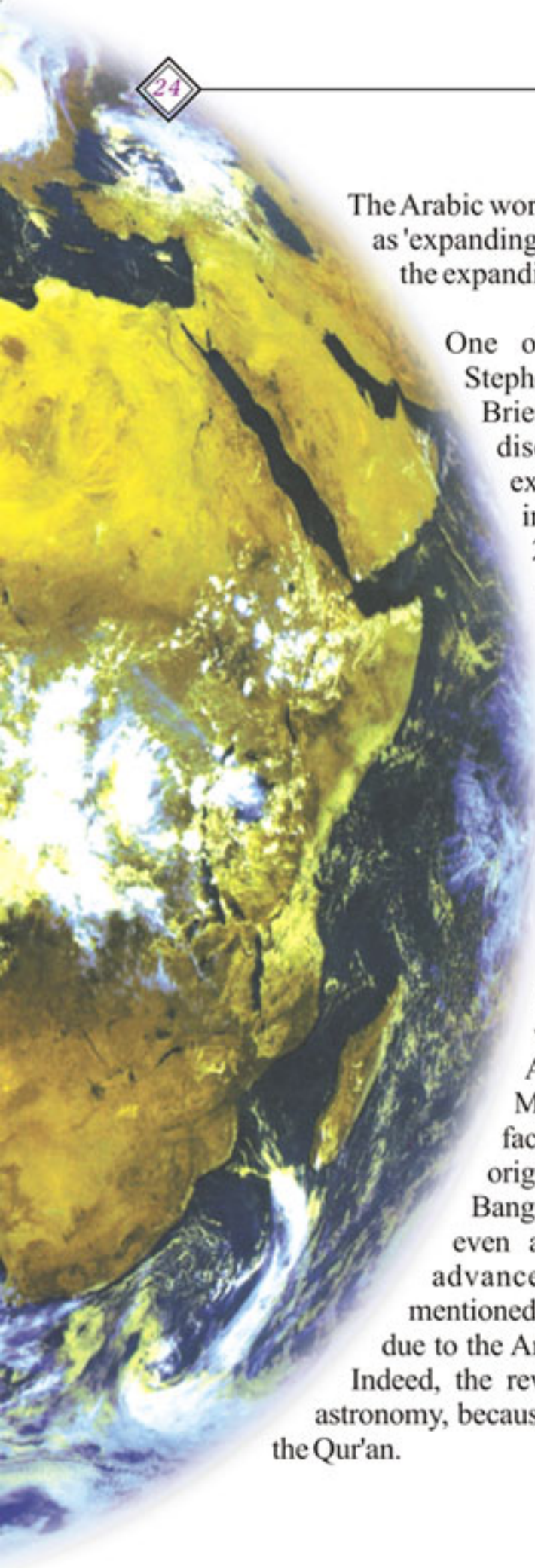
ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَ لِلْأَرْضِ
اِئْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

"Moreover, He Comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke: He said to it and to the earth: 'Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly.' They said: 'We do come (together), in willing obedience.'"

[Al-Qur'an 41:11]

Again, this fact is a corollary to the 'Big Bang' and was not known to anyone before the prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him)¹. What then, could have been the source of this knowledge?

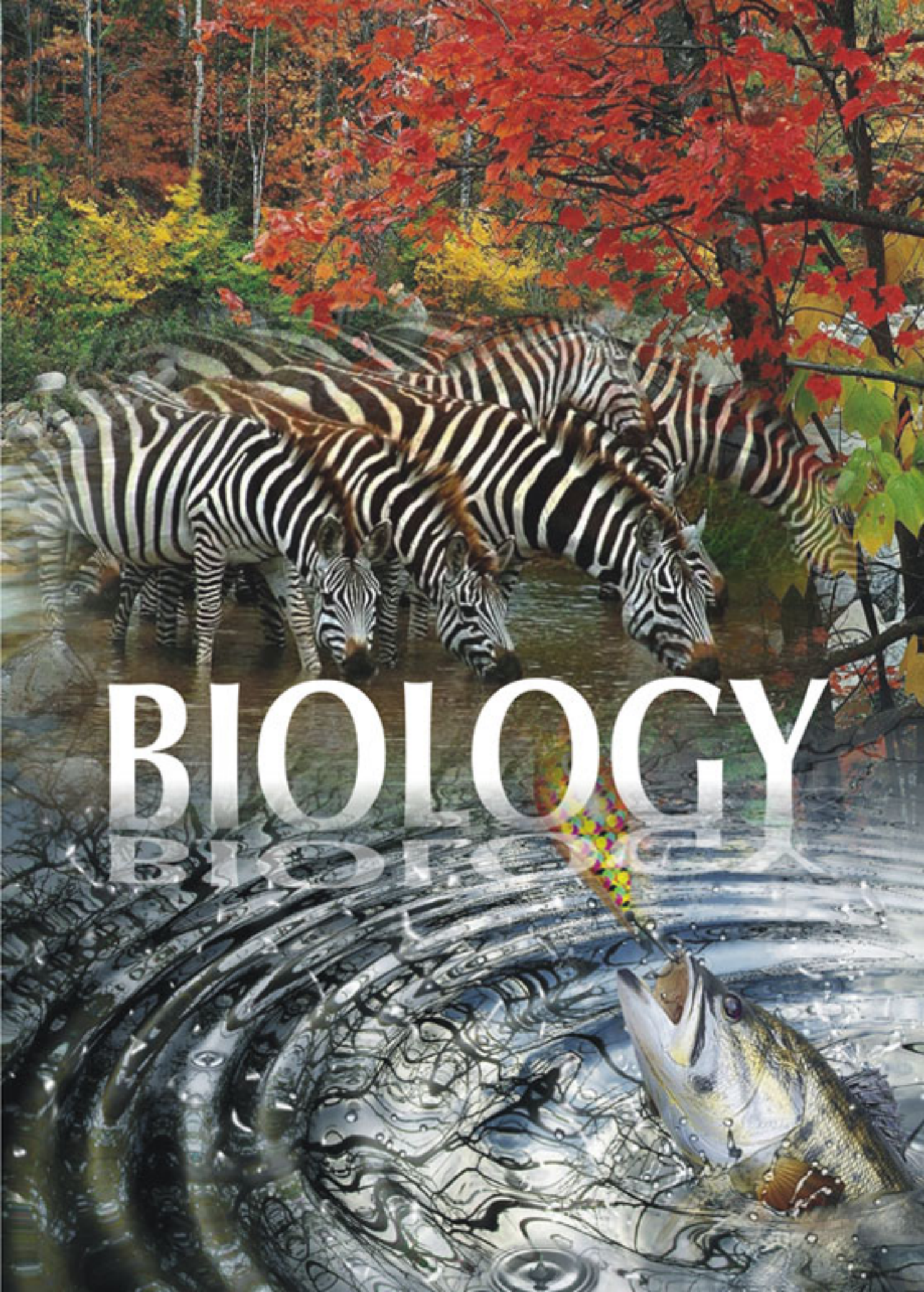
¹ Muslims also send salutations upon all the previous divinely inspired Prophets on taking their names.



The Arabic word *musioon* is correctly translated as 'expanding it', and it refers to the creation of the expanding vastness of the universe.

One of the greatest astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, in his book, 'A Brief History of Time', says, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the 20th century." The Qur'an mentioned the expansion of the universe, before man even learnt to build a telescope!

Some may say that the presence of astronomical facts in the Qur'an is not surprising since the Arabs were advanced in the field of astronomy. They are correct in acknowledging the advancement of the Arabs in the field of astronomy. However they fail to realize that the Qur'an was revealed centuries before the Arabs excelled in astronomy. Moreover many of the scientific facts mentioned above, such as the origin of the universe with a Big Bang, were not known to the Arabs even at the peak of their scientific advancement. The scientific facts mentioned in the Qur'an are therefore not due to the Arabs' advancement in astronomy. Indeed, the reverse is true: they advanced in astronomy, because astronomy occupies a place in the Qur'an.



BIOLOGY