media orchestrated by Satanic forces bent on the deception of thinking minds, the Qur’ân gives a light to walk by, enabling the faithful human being to see facts through the apparently impenetrable curtains of deceit and disinformation” (p. xiv). It is a great pity, however, that Qarā’i shies away from bringing out the above universal, life-giving Qur’ânic message in his commentary on the Qur’ân. He rests content with providing only a few notes and these too are restricted to explaining the titles of Sūrah. Other notes, again few in number, betray his sectarian zeal. For, as illustrated above, these unabashedly seek to vindicate peculiar Shī‘ah beliefs. That he is widely familiar with things Qur’ānic is borne out also by his impressive “Index” (pp. 877–938), identifying Qur’ānic subjects, names and terms. Had he elucidated these in his notes on relevant Qur’ānic verses, it would have enhanced the academic value of his work.

Qarā’i deserves credit for his pious commitment to Qur’ānic scholarship. His erudition, it is to be regretted, is, however, misplaced with a marked sectarian, bias.

A.R. Kidwai


Several scientists in Europe in the 19th century came close to the discovery of the laws of heredity, but they got bogged down because of the inclusion of too many characteristics in their study. Ultimately it was the Austrian monk, Johann Gregor Mendel (1822–1884), who succeeded in discovering the laws governing heredity in 1865 and his epoch-making research paper, “Experiments in Plant Hybridisation” was published in 1866. He enunciated the three laws of heredity which formed the backbone of all subsequent studies in genetics, viz. the non-blending nature of hereditary characteristics, segregation of these characteristics in the gametes, and independent assortment of the gametes to form the next generation of offspring (p. 1).

Mendel’s research paper remained in oblivion for 35 years because of the spell of the dominating influence of the French scientist, Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), who had articulated the theory of evolution through
transmission of acquired characteristics and survival of the fittest. Charles Darwin (1809–1882) was also influenced by Lamarck’s views, and his book, *The Origin of Species* published in 1859, in spite of its controversial nature and Darwin’s lack of understanding of the laws of heredity, played an important role in minimizing the significance of Mendel’s research (p. 3).

At the beginning of the 20th century Hugo de Vries (1848–1935) in Holland, Carl Erich Correns (1864–1933) in Germany and Erich Tschemark von Seysenegg (1871–1962) in Austria rediscovered the Mendelian laws of heredity independently and almost simultaneously. The introduction of the term ‘Genetics’ for the new science of heredity is the contribution of William Bateson (1861–1926) in 1906 (p. 3).

The breaking of the DNA (Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid) code by two scientists, James Dewey Watson and Francis Harry C. Crick in 1953 marked the entry of mankind in the Genetic Engineering era, which has also been designated as “the new genetics” (p. 7). By the late 1950s, techniques for the scientific study of human chromosomes had been developed, and researchers had begun to explore the role of chromosomes in sexual development and had studied the abnormality of reproductive development. Further advancement, starting in mid 1970s, with the aid of new technologies for the manipulation and analysis of DNA, enabled scientists to locate and identify the genes responsible for essential proteins, to characterize their mutations, and to learn about the nature of their protein products. A deeper understanding of the previously unknown causes of many diseases was thus achieved (p. 7). These discoveries have brought about a revolution in the fields of medicine and biotechnology.

The authors of the work under review are of the opinion that there is an urgent need for the Muslims to keep themselves abreast of the fast changing developments in the emerging S&T [Science and Technology] fields, for if the Muslims do not play an active role in these world-wide movements they will miss the biotechnology revolution of the 21st century as they had missed the industrial revolution in the 18th century (p. 33).

These advances in genetic engineering, however, have raised several ethical controversies, such as Artificially Assisted Fertilization in Man, Genetic Screening of Embryo for Genetic and Congenital Diseases, Cloning and Stem Cell Research, and Organ Development for Transplant and Donation, etc. There has been no properly coordinated attempt so far to study these scientific problems in depth from the Islamic point of view. On a few occasions, meetings were organized in some countries, and the ‘ulamā’ expressed their opinions on problems relating to Cloning, Donation of Body- organs, Blood Transfusion, Grafting of Organs, etc. The reviewer agrees with
the authors that, “it is not sufficient to declare an act or object as ‘halal’ or ‘haram’, and then adopt a complacent attitude after issuing a ‘Fatwa’” (p. 33).

Realizing that much more is needed to be done, the Higher Education Commission and the Pakistan Academy of Sciences arranged a generous grant for the Pakistan Association for History and Philosophy of Science, enabling it to undertake a project entitled “Problems Created by S&T Innovations.” Accordingly, a multidisciplinary group, composed of scientists, engineers, Islamic scholars, and social scientists held various discussion meetings spread over a year to develop the ground rules and priority areas for promoting gainful interaction between science and religion. In their adopted methodology and action plan, they decided to initially publish seven monographs, each co-authored by a scientist and a scholar of Islamic studies. The work under review is the first monograph in that series.

The monograph begins with an Introduction to the Series (pp. v–xii) followed by a brief introduction to the Laws of Heredity and their discovery in chapter one (pp. 1–6). The second chapter deals with Genetic Engineering in just ten pages (pp. 7–16). Chapter three skims through the Conflicting Philosophies of Darwinism, Lamarckianism and and Mendelism in seven pages (pp. 17–23). Chapter four presents the Implications of Some Qur’anic Ayāt and ahādīth of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be on him) on Heredity in six pages (pp. 24–29). Chapter five is entitled “Some Controversial Issues and Lines for future Studies in The Light of Islamic injunctions” (pp. 30–37) and chapter six contains the References (pp. 38–39).

The monograph is a welcome addition to the literature on Islam and science interface. However, it has some shortcomings. First, while dealing with multifaceted issues brevity only leads one to compromise thoroughness. Secondly, quoting Ayāt right after presenting the “findings of science” without any qualifying remarks (see pp. 4, 16, 19) does not seem appropriate. It would have been better had the authors presented the Ayāt and ahādīth which, according to their understanding, provide guidance in the field of genetics, only in chapter four, for others to reflect.

The fact that the Qurʾān and Sunnah are not the books of science but of guidance must always be kept in mind. Consequently, the objective of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah is not so much to describe the modalities of creation as to guide mankind to right belief and righteous conduct. However, while emphasizing its objective to guide mankind to the right path it invites mankind to reflect upon the signs in the creation, the process of creation and the intricacies of its functioning in order to reach to the reality of the existence and the oneness of the Creator in His Being (dhāt), Attributes (ṣifāt), Doings (afʿāl) and Rights (buqūq).
Since the Qur’ān and Sunnah are revelation from the Creator of the heavens and the earth and whatever is in between them, whenever a reference is made to any of the aspects of the creation it is based on the infinite knowledge of the Creator. Thus it states an established fact and reality which provides humans with a clear guidance for a solid foundation and a right direction for research and development. However, one must keep in mind while searching for the guidance of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah regarding an issue related to the creation of the universe, life, man or any other aspect of the natural phenomenon, that one can reach to the proper understanding only by studying all the aspects of an issue which are described in the various āyāt of the Qur’ān and the Sayings of the Prophet (peace be on him). A conclusion should not and cannot be drawn by just looking at one or a few āyāt of the Qur’ān or a few abādith, which might have described just one or two aspects of an issue. The Qur’ān and the Sunnah essentially use the references to the creation for achieving the objective of guiding mankind. Therefore, to bring home a clear message and to motivate humans to follow the right path, the Qur’ān at one place points to one aspect of an issue and then drawing a lesson from it leaves the other aspects untouched. At some other place, it points to another aspect of the same issue and then drawing a lesson from it leaves the other aspects untouched, and so on. Thus unless one combines all these aspects together, a right conclusion cannot be drawn.

Therefore, to draw the much needed guidance from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah much more serious effort is needed than the previously held seminars and workshops (upon the failure of which the authors also agree [pp. 35–36]) or the working groups and the production of a few monographs. It requires, in the opinion of the reviewer, a serious and mature discourse undertaken by scholars well versed in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah and the related branches of learning as well as in the basic rational and experimental sciences. Moreover, they should excel, at least, in one branch of rational/experimental sciences enabling them to understand the various dimensions and aspects of a scientific issue. Such scholars, if they are imbued with fear of God, will be the ones who can have a fresh look into the various problems at hand and confidently propose alternatives to the current solutions propounded by the western science. Producing a whole line of such scholars requires the introduction of a scheme of courses in which revealed, rational and experimental sciences are integrated, not only in the madāris usually which attract the youth very few of whom are brilliant, but also in the modern schools, colleges and the universities which attract the best brains. It is a long and tedious course but there is no short cut for a long-term solution of this serious issue. Meanwhile, the suggested "inter-disciplinary groups of scientists, scholars and technologists
to study and resolve these important issues” (p. 37) should continue to do the necessary groundwork. However, as suggested by the authors “Experts in the working groups should include, as far as possible, outstanding individuals from all over the world” (p. 33).

I hope the future monographs that the Pakistan Association for History and Philosophy of Science will publish will be an improvement on the present one, and that they will also take the necessary steps for the development of an appropriate strategy to promote scientific activity in the ummah informed by the Islamic worldview.

Abdurrahmaan Saaleh


It would have been a tactical mistake to devote an entire volume to the topic of *hijab* had Western media not already turned this marginal issue into a veritable cause célèbre by projecting each and every one of their anti-Islamic prejudices on to a little piece of cloth that covers the hair of Muslim women.

Given this rather absurd situation, it was high time indeed for a thorough, scientific Muslim analysis of the *hijab* phenomenon. Hardly anyone else could have done a better job of it than the author of the present work: an Australian academic revert to Islam (1999), who herself wears *hijab* (and was victimized for that), one who devoted her doctoral thesis at Toronto University to the emerging “Politics of the Veil.”

Indeed, it is not only a pleasure to see that Muslim women like Lois Lamya al-Faruqi, Fatima Heeren Grimm, Maryam Jameela, Aisha Lemu, Ruqayyah Waris Maqsood, Soumaya Pernilla Ouis, Anne Sofie Roald, Amina Wadud and Katherine Bullock are increasingly speaking out, defending themselves more effectively than men possibly could.

Alas, Western critics are not the worst enemies that these women encounter; ultra-orthodox Muslims and ultra-“liberal” Muslims for whom Islam is more a matter of cultural identification than a set of principles that they are committed to live by.