

## BOOK REVIEW BY HARFIYAH HALEEM

### **CHILDREN! HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT?** by Harun Yahya

1. The World of Animals ISBN 1 842000-40-3 136 pp

3. Wonderful Creatures ISBN 1 842000-47-0 127 pp

Full colour illustrated paperback.

These two books are part of a series for children by the well-known and prolific author Harun Yahya. They are illustrated with beautiful colour photographs, interspersed with a few whimsical drawings and cartoons. Like most of Harun Yahya's books (some others are listed at the end of each book) they deal with science, in this case zoology, and are packed with a miscellany of interesting and amazing facts about animals. He shows how scientists sometimes learn from the way animals are made and interact with their environment (for example from the dragonfly in making Sikorsky helicopters, or the Nautilus in making submarines), and sometimes fail to learn from them (how to make heat-free light like the firefly). The text is in fluent English, pitched at good readers, around 9 years upwards.

The books are designed to reinforce the 'Intelligent Design' or 'Creation science' view of biology from an Islamic point of view, and to discredit the Darwinian Theory of Evolution. This is a subject of much controversy at the moment as the Intelligent Design (ID) theory has the backing of the religious right currently in power in the USA. The Darwinians are complaining loudly that there is no scientific proof of the ID theory and that it amounts only to a religious belief. Harun Yahya pushes home his arguments by relating every section to it, ending many with quotes from the Qur'an. He dismisses the possibility that such amazing features as a cooling blood system in the head of a gazelle to protect its brain, or the multiple survival mechanisms of various other animals could have come about a) by chance, b) by the intention or action of the animal itself or c) by any gradual process such as natural selection.

He argues that ALL such features had to be present at once for the animal to survive, and that they could not have come about in succession (*Wonderful* p.74). So he asserts that 'Allah created the dragonfly perfect with all its systems'. This is a big leap, avoided by the more restrained Intelligent Design theorists, who, slapped down by the Darwinians, say only that an intelligence greater than that of animals or humans must have designed all the things we see around us, and that chance mutations and natural selection are not sufficiently convincing explanations.

Dr Maurice Bucaille pointed out that the Qur'an mentions that Allah creates human beings in 'stages' and Bucaille relates this to the theory of evolution (though it could also refer to the stages of development from the '*alaq*' to the human child as described in the Qur'an in several places, and the changing stages of human form thereafter as aging continues). The Qur'an also mentions that Allah has the power to wipe out whole peoples and replace them with others if He chooses, so the distinction between Evolution Theory

and Creation Science is not quite as clear-cut in the Qur'an as Yahya makes out.

His fourth strategy (d) to discredit Evolution Theory is to print pictures of some animals that have remained the same ever since the earliest fossil records, like the Nautilus and a fish with many fins, implying that if they did not evolve, why should other creatures have done so? A Darwinist could reply that they did not need to evolve, whereas others did.

(e) Yahya mentions how 'Allah teaches' creatures knowledge that, he says, that human scientists with long education and training have only recently discovered by watching them. For example the macaw eats clay to absorb the poisons from some of the seeds it eats (*Wonderful* pp. 44-6), and ants and birds cooperate against microbes (pp. 24-28).

All these arguments are based on the teachings of the Qur'an and made simple for Muslim children. Although they could hardly be described as 'objective', and would thus be unacceptable in secular classrooms, the books are clearly designed as an antidote to prevalent secular theories and as such make an important contribution to the Islamization of Science movement at a vital early level of education.