

Can deeply religious Muslim students be taught the theory of evolution?

Certain problematic attitudes towards science have been imported into Muslim societies as a part of rapid globalization and modernization — the rejection of the theory of evolution, for example. But this also offers an opportunity.

I teach evolution to university students in Jordan. Almost all of them are hostile to the idea at first. Their schoolteachers are likely to have ignored or glossed over it. Still, most students are willing to discuss evolution, and by the end of the course, the majority accept the idea. If Muslim students can challenge ideas on such a controversial academic topic, then they can also approach other aspects of their lives by questioning — and not just blindly accepting — the status quo. These tools and attitudes are crucial to the development of their personalities and to becoming responsible citizens.

In teaching, I offer a detailed explanation of the natural evolution of plants and artificial breeding. Later, we discuss antibiotic resistance, influenza vaccines and the development of HIV drugs. After these discussions, most students are willing to accept evolution as a mechanism for the emergence of all species except humans. Many quote evidence from the Koran that is interpreted to mean that Adam — and so humans — were created spontaneously. Human evolution remains taboo because the students are not ready to relinquish the concept that humans were created differently. I remind them that Muslims are warned against arrogance, and that humans are only part of creation.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Why I teach evolution to Muslim students](#)