

BOOK SIX IN A SERIES OF ELEVEN

The Story of Creation Before Adam

The Nasnas and Earlier Worlds
in Shi'i Sources

In the Light of the Holy Qur'an and the Narrations
of the Ahl al-Bayt, Peace Be upon Them



By

**Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha
Al-Sarraf Al-Husseini**

Original authorship: 2 July 2023
14 Dhu al-Hijjah 1444 AH

Designated revision: 17 April 2026
29 Shawwal 1447 AH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Story of Creation Before Adam

The Nasnas and Earlier Worlds in Shi'i Sources

In the Light of the Holy Qur'an and the Narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt, Peace
Be upon Them

Book Six in a Series of Eleven Books

English translation

By

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al-Sarraf Al-Husseini

Original authorship: 2 July 2023 / 14 Dhu al-Hijjah 1444 AH

Designated revision: 17 April 2026 / 29 Shawwal 1447 AH

ISBN of the Arabic original: 978-1-7642390-8-0

Contents

Contents	Page
Dedication	4
Acknowledgements	5
Author's Note: Why The Story of Creation Before Adam?	6
The Book's Place in the Series	8
Introduction: Earth Before Our Story	9
Method and Guide to Reading	11
Part One: How Do We Read Earth's Story Before Adam?	12
Chapter One: Before Adam, Peace Be upon Him: Beginnings and the Limits of Knowledge	12
Chapter Two: Earlier Creation in the Light of the Holy Qur'an	14
Chapter Three: Humanity, Human Beings, Adam and the World: Keys to Words and Meanings	18
Chapter Four: From Sources to Narrations: Faithful Transmission	20
Part Two: Reports of Worlds and Earlier Creation	22
Chapter Five: Were There Worlds Before Ours?	22
Chapter Six: Reports of Multiple Adams: Text and Meaning	24
Chapter Seven: Earth's Inhabitants Before the Children of Adam	26
Chapter Eight: Successive Worlds or Reports of Different Creations?	28
Chapter Nine: Time in Reports of Earlier Creation	30
Part Three: The Story of the Nasnas in the Sources	32
Chapter Ten: Nasnas: The Story of a Name and Its Different Uses	32
Chapter Eleven: The Nasnas in Narrations: Transmission Routes and Wording	34
Chapter Twelve: What Is the Nature of the Nasnas?	36
Chapter Thirteen: Their Life on Earth: Between Report and Silence	37
Chapter Fourteen: Understanding and Moral Responsibility in the Nasnas Reports	38
Chapter Fifteen: Reports of Corruption and Bloodshed	39
Chapter Sixteen: The End of the Nasnas: Disappearance and Afterwards	40
Part Four: Comparison and Disputed Questions	41
Chapter Seventeen: Are the Nasnas the Earlier Human Beings?	41
Chapter Eighteen: Did Earlier Beings Coexist with the Beginning of Adam's Era?	43
Chapter Nineteen: Names, Individuals and Communities	44

Contents	Page
Chapter Twenty: The Nasnas Between Narration and Popular Tale	45
Chapter Twenty-One: Differences Between Reports and the Results of Comparison	46
Part Five: From Earlier Creation to the Beginning of Our Story	47
Chapter Twenty-Two: Earlier Creation, Neanderthals and Scientific Research	47
Chapter Twenty-Three: The Beginning of Adam's Era, Peace Be upon Him	52
Chapter Twenty-Four: What Have We Learned from Creation Before Adam?	53
Conclusion: What Was Established, What Was Possible and What Remains Open	54
Appendices	56
Appendix One: Qur'anic Verses Cited	56
Appendix Two: Record of the Central Narrative Texts	58
Appendix Three: Record of Transmission and Its Limits	62
Appendix Four: Significant Textual Differences	64
Appendix Five: Comparative Record of the Reports	65
Appendix Six: Glossary	66
Appendix Seven: Limits of the Material Transmitted	67
Sources and References	68
I. The Holy Qur'an	68
II. Narrative Sources and Their Quotations	68
III. Exegesis, Narrator Studies and Language	69
IV. References for Scientific Comparison	70
Indices	72
Index One: Qur'anic Verses	72
Index Two: Reports and Narrations	72
Index Three: Names	72
Index Four: Books	73
Index Five: Terms	74
Index Six: Subjects	74
Index Seven: Transmission and Sources	74
Index Eight: Appendices	75

Dedication

To my father and mother:

Before I learned to ask about the first human being, I learned from you the first meaning of safety. However far I travel through the pages of creation, my heart returns to a beginning I need not excavate: your names in my prayers, and your kindness in everything I try to become. I dedicate this effort to you. Some debts cannot be repaid with words, yet words refuse to forget them.

To my wife:

You have a place in this book that no one counting its chapters can see: between a question and its answer, between the weariness of research and the strength to return to it. I offer you these pages with love and gratitude for our shared life. May the quiet of these words convey something worthy of your place in my heart.

To my two sons and my daughter:

When I look towards the future, I see your faces before I see the years. I place in your hands a book about a distant past, hoping it may help you with a life much nearer: to love knowledge, safeguard the right to question, and recognise the courage in turning away from error. I do not ask you to inherit my answers. I hope you will inherit the honesty with which to seek them.

To my students and the young people who bring questions to life:

You share in the hope behind this work. One sincere question can open a window that habit has long kept closed. May you find here a language that accompanies your curiosity, and discover that careful verification does not extinguish wonder: it gives wonder ground on which to stand.

And to the reader who contemplates an ancient trace while honouring the human being alive today:

I dedicate this story of those whose names we do not know. May the absence of their voices teach us to be fair in what we say about them, and may we leave whoever reads our own traces one day a word worth preserving.

Acknowledgements

Praise belongs to God, who grants us time in which to learn and minds with which to reconsider what we thought we knew. Blessings and peace be upon Muhammad and his pure family. I turn towards their guidance seeking knowledge that improves understanding and conduct, and a heart that does not reject the truth when it comes in a word that corrects its understanding.

This book concerns a subject distant in time, yet the hands that help me write it are close, with faces and names. When I remember those from whom I learned, I recall places along the road that I could not have crossed alone. The knowledge carried beneath one name on a cover rests upon gifts that name cannot count.

I remember my teacher Umm Du'a, who taught me the Holy Qur'an and Islamic education at primary school. She holds a place among those beginnings whose influence outlasts the lesson itself. I thank her as a pupil who understands that introducing a child to a letter and its meaning can have consequences the teacher may never live to see.

I also remember Shaykh 'Abd al-Rasul al-Sudani al-Nasiri, under whom I studied for a very short time in the seminary of Najaf al-Ashraf. I retain a truthful sense of that experience's scale while preserving his full right to gratitude. A period of learning may be brief while thankfulness lasts a lifetime. May God convey my loyalty to him and reward his teaching.

To Mr Kamil, my biology teacher at al-Hamza Secondary School, and my teachers in the Department of Community Health at the Medical Technical Institute in Diwaniyah, I offer thanks for what I learned in their classrooms. Questions about texts and questions about nature meet in this book. At that meeting, I remember that listening well to the specialists in each discipline is a path to understanding.

I pray for mercy upon the esteemed Shaykh Ahmad al-Wa'ili. His talks left a lasting mark on my interest in knowledge and religion, and on my appreciation of speech that combines clarity with respect for the listener. May God reward him for the knowledge and eloquence from which people benefited.

I thank those who served these texts before they reached my hands: those who preserved a copy, established a name, compared a narration, disclosed a variant, or made an index that leads readers to the relevant passage. I also value the work of researchers who study fossils, geological strata and ancient DNA. The evidence each discipline offers deserves to be understood within its own field and attributed to those responsible for it.

For my father and mother, my wife, my two sons and my daughter, my love extends beyond this page. For my students, and those whose questions teach me, I hope this book will be a useful companion. I thank every reader who draws my attention to an oversight, a source, or a phrase needing greater precision. Correction serves both the book and those who will read it.

I acknowledge each person's contribution and accept responsibility for what I understand, infer and write. May God make our gratitude practical: accuracy in transmission, fairness in disagreement, and readiness to improve today what we did not write well yesterday.

Author's Note: Why The Story of Creation Before Adam?

Sometimes a single word opens into a whole book. The word “before” in this title does just that: before Adam, peace be upon him, meaning before the beginning familiar to us from the human story, rather than before every beginning of existence. The word stands at the edge of a past our brief lives cannot encompass, then invites us to ask what has reached us from it.

What was on Earth? What do the texts actually say about its earlier inhabitants? How did the name *nasnas* become so familiar, when its image changes between a narration, a dictionary and a tale? And what are we to do with what palaeoanthropology reveals about Neanderthals and others? Each question deserves to be heard separately before we combine them into a single answer.

My work in these pages is to transmit, collect and arrange material scattered through the books, and bring it to readers in clear language. For the chains of transmission and scholarly assessment of the narrations, I rely on the findings of the scholars who authored the sources, their editors and the specialists whose works I have consulted, attributing their statements to them. I do not present myself as an independent specialist in narrator criticism, nor do I repeat their work from the beginning. My responsibility is faithful transmission, accurate references, and a clear distinction between the material quoted and the explanation or reflection I add.

I began writing this series in 2017, hoping its books would share a thread readers could follow: from reflection on creation to understanding the human being, human responsibility and the path of guidance. Each book has its own question and a place connecting it with what comes before and after. Their sequence arranges subjects; it does not by itself establish the order in which those subjects came into existence or the date on which each body of material was written.

I brought to this book the questions of children and students, with their natural wish to understand an unfamiliar name. Readers deserve an accessible explanation. They also deserve something no less important: to know where the evidence stops. Sometimes the most honest service is to explain why a question remains open and provide the source from which they can continue reading.

I chose the word “story” because I want knowledge to have a continuity that allows readers to remember the beginning as they move towards the end. I draw upon imagination in presenting that path: the image of an incomplete record, a window onto a distant age, or a reflection on a name that survived the disappearance of its bearers. Facts, however, have their sources. I do not add a city, conversation or person that the report does not contain.

This book's particular character emerges in its attention to seemingly small details: a letter that changes the meaning of a community's end, a narrator's name that affects the appraisal of a transmission route, or the word “world,” which cannot simply be transferred to the modern

meaning of a galaxy or biological species. These details form the larger picture I hope to present faithfully.

I write as someone seeking understanding, and I hope readers will accompany me in that spirit. I shall identify what I transmit, what I explain and what I propose, leaving room for correction plainly visible. If readers leave this story better able to read a report and assess a comparison, and with deeper wonder at the breadth of creation, they will have found some of what I hope it offers.

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al-Sarraf Al-Husseini

The Book's Place in the Series

This is the sixth book in a series of eleven. It follows The Story of the Universe, The Story of Plants, The Story of Animals, The Story of Angels and The Story of the Jinn. It is followed by The Story of the Human Being, The Story of Guidance, The Story of the Soul, The Story of Paradise and The Story of the Creation We Do Not Know.

This is a reading sequence based on the relationship between subjects. It is neither a chronology of authorship nor a timetable for the creation of beings. A book's earlier place in the series therefore means neither that it was written earlier nor that its subject existed before everything discussed afterwards.

The Story of the Universe supplies the broad setting, while the books on plants and animals address their respective subjects. Here I examine reports concerning earthly creation before Adam, particularly those about the nasnas, and consider which narrations of earlier worlds can be connected with that scope.

Angels and jinn appear here only where they concern precedence and the scene of Adam's creation, including the Qur'an's explicit statement that the jann were created earlier. Detailed accounts of their nature and circumstances belong in their own books. Natural history and Neanderthals are discussed insofar as they clarify the limits of comparison; fuller treatment of the universe, plants, animals and humanity belongs elsewhere in the series.

This story stops at the beginning of Adam's era, peace be upon him. It does not repeat detailed discussions of his body, his spirit and the stages of life, nor encompass the histories of prophets and their successors. The Story of the Human Being takes up some of those questions, while The Story of Guidance follows the path of revelation across the generations.

Introduction: Earth Before Our Story

If Earth could open all its pages to us at once, our eyes would be unable to follow the lines. Today we see a stone where it lies, then learn that it was once a seabed. We read a name in a report, then discover that the images surrounding it are more numerous than anything its words actually carried. Between trace and word stretches a past from which only scattered witnesses reach us. Each carries part of the story and leaves questions around it.

At one end of the path is a text passed down by narrators; at the other is a trace preserved in the soil. A statement has a transmission chain, a language and a context. A bone has a geological layer, an age and examinable characteristics. Error begins when we transfer the label of one to the other before finding evidence of a connection. The antiquity of a text and the greater antiquity of a fossil do not make them witnesses to the same creature.

This is where the book begins. It brings together questions about creation before Adam, peace be upon him; about the *nasnas* in the reports; and about the worlds and Adams mentioned in some narrations. It then accompanies the reader towards what science tells us about ancient humans, particularly Neanderthals. These questions may stand alongside one another without their answers being identical.

We begin with the Holy Qur'an. It describes the creation of humanity, explicitly states that the *jann* were created earlier, presents the angels' response to the announcement of Adam's creation, and speaks of the heavens, Earth, water and the diversity of living creatures. It also recalls writers to their responsibility for what they say. The name *nasnas*, the numbers of worlds in the reports and modern names for fossil species cannot be extracted from a verse that does not name them.

We then read the material in Imami hadith sources, distinguishing the narration's wording from a scholar's explanation or an editor's note. We read a report naming the *nasnas*, another concerning seven worlds, another speaking of many Adams, and another about an unnamed creation. We rely on what specialists have explained about these reports while preserving their different wording and contexts. A central question is whether a passage concerns an earthly past, the breadth of creation, or a creation to come after our world.

The term *nasnas* itself calls for careful reading. It may occur in an account of earlier creation, in a lexical explanation, or as a descriptive expression applied to some people. Dictionary descriptions do not become the anatomy of an ancient creature merely because they appear under one word. Nor may a moral judgement be turned into a classification that deprives human beings of their humanity.

When we reach Neanderthals, we enter a different field with its own evidence: bodily remains, tools, sites and genetic material that has made it possible to study relatedness and interbreeding. That evidence deserves a clear and respectful presentation. A religious report does not gain authority by calling every fossil a *nasnas*, and a fossil cannot identify a religious name merely

because we seek it. I shall set out what each field says and then explain where comparison is possible.

By Adam I mean the Adam to whom present humanity is traced in the religious discourse studied by this book. “Prehistory,” by contrast, is a scholarly term concerned principally with the absence of written records; it is not a synonym for “before Adam.” Nor do I assign Adam a Gregorian date of my own in order to divide ancient species into those who lived before him and those who lived afterwards.

The book proceeds through five parts: tools for reading, reports of earlier worlds, the story of the nasnas, comparison between texts and usages, and finally scientific research and the transition to Adam’s era. The appendices assemble verses, narrative passages, variants and the limits of the material collected. The indices help readers return to particular questions.

Throughout, I hope to keep wonder alive. Verification does not reduce the breadth of creation to what we already know. It preserves our right to wonder at what we know and to question what we do not. Understanding why two readings differ, or how a genetic trace can survive a vanished population, may be more profound than a marvellous image that lodges in the mind but has no identifiable source.

This book does not promise to count everything God has created, or to encompass every report and trace in the repositories of tradition and science. It aims to present a substantial, organised body of material within its subject and to make possible additions identifiable. Completing the book’s structure does not close the inquiry it serves.

Let us begin with the witness we can read. We open the text and attend to its words; we examine the trace and the methods used to study it; then we give each conclusion its proper weight. Whatever remains blank on the page should remain visibly so, allowing a later reader to add knowledge rather than dismantle an illusion inherited from our excessive certainty.

Method and Guide to Reading

Note on the English text: Qur'anic quotations render the meanings of the complete verses cited in the Arabic original. Hadith quotations are likewise translations; source references and distinctions between readings are retained.

God Most High says: “Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Hearing, sight and the heart: each of these will be called to account.” Surah al-Isra', 17:36.

I take this verse as a rule for the work, rather than an ornament to its introduction. A report is attributed to its source, what is unestablished is not expressed with certainty, and personal reflection does not take on the appearance of a narration.

When quoting a verse, I give it in full and identify its surah and verse number. I record the source and location of each report as far as I have been able to verify them, without electronic links in the text. Codes [R1–R8] refer to the report records in Appendix Two; codes [M1–M20] identify references in exegesis, narrator studies, lexicography and scientific comparison in the bibliography.

When I say “it occurs” or “it is narrated,” I establish the presence of the text in the named source. For transmission chains and scholarly assessment I rely on what I have quoted from the source authors, editors and specialists, without undertaking a fresh independent authentication after them. Where they expressly judge a report sound or weak, I report that judgement as theirs, preserve their disagreements where present, and never attribute to a scholar a judgement that scholar did not make. My explanation and reflection remain distinct from their words.

I distinguish the source of a narration from a later compilation that quotes it, and the wording of a report from editorial notes. Repetition in several books does not create independent transmission routes when those books derive from one original source.

The study addresses the directly relevant verses and eight records of central and comparative reports. These include passages on the nasnas and earlier worlds, the report about water and the beginning of creation, and the evaluative use of the word nasnas. The scientific comparison chapter discusses Neanderthals, Denisovans and evidence from the history of life and humanity. Appendix Three explains the scope of source checking and distinguishes comparison with images of printed editions from consultation of electronic texts. The collected material should therefore not be understood as an exhaustive survey of every narration or fossil species.

Writing of the series began in 2017. The authorship date recorded for this book, 2 July 2023 / 14 Dhu al-Hijjah 1444 AH, remains separate. The designated revision and update date for this edition is 17 April 2026 / 29 Shawwal 1447 AH. These details distinguish the book's date, the beginning of the series project and the edition's information; subsequent scientific additions are not attributed to 2023.

Part One: How Do We Read Earth's Story Before Adam?

The path may begin with an unfamiliar name, but understanding it requires familiar questions: Who said this? Where does the statement occur? What meanings can its wording bear? In this part we place these questions before us as we approach accounts of earlier beings. We read the verses concerning creation and distinguish humanity from Adam, a world from Earth, and the presence of a narration from the soundness of its attribution. These tools accompany the story from its first step.

Chapter One: Before Adam, Peace Be upon Him: Beginnings and the Limits of Knowledge

When There Is More Than One Beginning

Not every question about the beginning has the same answer, because the same words may ask about different things. Earth's beginning differs from the beginning of life upon it; the beginning of a group of living beings differs from that of the human being addressed by revelation; and the beginning of our knowledge of something differs from the beginning of its existence.

Saying "before Adam" does not automatically tell us Earth's age, the names of its inhabitants or the number of worlds preceding ours. We identify the direction of the question, then seek evidence capable of answering it. It is a mistake to begin with a broad expression and load it with the details we hope to find.

I therefore do not treat our ignorance of part of history as empty ground that we are free to fill. The page may be blank to its reader, but reality is not empty of events we do not know. We respect those events by refusing to invent them.

The Path to Knowledge

God Most High says: "Say: Travel through the earth and observe how He began creation. Then God will bring forth the later creation. God has power over all things." Surah al-'Ankabut, 29:20.

The verse invites observation and connects the beginning with renewal and God's power. It does not name the nasnas or provide a list of Earth's earlier inhabitants. I therefore draw upon it as a foundation for examining creation, without treating it as detailed testimony for a narration it does not mention.

Reports attributed to the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, are studied through their transmission and meaning. It may be established that an old book records a report without its attribution yet being established as sound. Its attribution may also be established while the implications of particular words remain under discussion. Neither stage dispenses with the other.

Material remains require appropriate methods. A question about an ancient bone calls for knowledge of its discovery context, characteristics and dating methods; a question about a word in a narration calls for its source, transmission routes and language. Sound comparison begins after both kinds of work, rather than before them.

What Is Possible and What Is Known

Reason can conceive of beings before us, but that conception does not establish their names or forms. A report about them may exist, but its existence alone does not make every detail certain. “It is possible,” “it happened” and “we know how it happened” occupy different levels that must not be confused.

Similarly, failing to find a name or detail in the collection studied does not prove its absence from every book. I therefore use a qualified expression: it has not been established in the texts examined in this study. That is more truthful than a universal denial by someone who has not surveyed every source.

We shall need this distinction when reading the reports in the next part. A report may answer whether earlier beings existed while remaining silent about their name or nature. We record the answer it provides, then move to the remaining question. We neither dismiss its value because it does not answer everything nor complete it with what it never said.

Chapter Two: Earlier Creation in the Light of the Holy Qur'an

What Does the Verse about a Successor Say?

God Most High says: "And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am placing a successor on Earth,' they said, 'Will You place there one who causes corruption and sheds blood, while we glorify You with praise and proclaim Your holiness?' He said, 'I know what you do not know.'" Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30.

The question about corruption and bloodshed occurs in the context of placing a successor on Earth. The verse does not mention the *nasnas*, how many years they lived, or the appearance of their bodies. Simple though this observation is, overlooking it can turn a narrative explanation into words mistakenly thought to belong to the Qur'an.

Some reports may direct readers' understanding towards earlier beings. The source of that additional information, however, is the report that supplies it. We should say that a particular narration connects the question with earlier creation, rather than that the Qur'an names those beings or describes them with the narration's details.

The word *khalifah*, or successor, alone does not identify who was succeeded or name an earlier kind of being. Its meaning requires the context of the verses and their exegesis. The whole question of earlier creation cannot be reduced to the isolated lexical meaning of the verb "to succeed."

This passage does not examine the nature of angels or their circumstances in detail. Here we read the verse in relation to the question about Earth and remain within that scope.

The Creation of the Jann Before Humanity

God Most High says: "And the jann We created before, from the fire of scorching wind." Surah al-Hijr, 15:27.

This verse concerns precedence more directly than attempts to extract creatures' names from the angels' question alone. The preceding verse mentions the creation of the human being, and "before" contrasts the two creations. Al-Tabataba'i explains it here as the creation of the jann preceding that of humanity. Yet the verse does not name the *nasnas*, quantify the interval in years, or classify every earlier creation as jinn. [M1]

God Most High says: "And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblis. He was of the jinn and departed from his Lord's command. Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors instead of Me, though they are enemies to you? What an evil exchange for the wrongdoers!" Surah al-Kahf, 18:50.

Iblis is explicitly identified as belonging to the jinn, and the angels' presence at Adam's creation is evident in the verses. These are two foundations within this study's scope. Details of the order

of creation and the time when each category was created cannot be derived merely from their appearance together in the scene of prostration. Iblis cannot be made the name of a fossil population, nor does the nasnas' earlier existence necessarily place them among the jinn.

Heavens, Earth and Water Before the Question of Inhabitants

God Most High says: "He is the One who created the heavens and Earth in six days, and His Throne was upon the water, that He might test you as to which of you is best in conduct. Yet if you say, 'You will surely be raised after death,' those who disbelieve will say, 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery.'" Surah Hud, 11:7.

The verse connects the creation of the heavens and Earth with testing, good conduct and resurrection. The Throne and water appear in the context of creation, but the verse does not name Earth's inhabitants at those stages. Likewise, Fussilat 41:9–12 requires reading in the context of the formation of Earth, its provisions and the heavens; the days of creation must not be converted into calculated periods for the nasnas.

God Most High says: "Have those who disbelieve not seen that the heavens and Earth were joined together, and We parted them, and made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe?" Surah al-Anbiya', 21:30.

God Most High says: "God created every moving creature from water. Among them are those that move upon their bellies, those that walk upon two legs and those that walk upon four. God creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things." Surah al-Nur, 24:45.

These verses indicate life's connection with water and the diversity of creatures. The ways of moving in al-Nur do not provide a chronological sequence in which one species changes into another, nor a list of biological species as understood by modern science. We therefore draw upon these verses within their meaning and investigate Earth's age and its species through the scientific methods relevant to those questions.

The Breadth of Creation Does Not Identify Every World

God Most High says: "Among His signs are the creation of the heavens and Earth and the living creatures He has dispersed throughout them. He has power to gather them whenever He wills." Surah al-Shura, 42:29.

God Most High says: "God is the One who created seven heavens, and of Earth their like. The command descends among them so that you may know that God has power over all things and that God encompasses all things in knowledge." Surah al-Talaq, 65:12.

The two verses invite reflection on the breadth of creation and the all-encompassing nature of divine knowledge. They do not name inhabited planets in the modern astronomical sense, or civilisations we can depict. The seven heavens and their earthly counterparts are not, simply because the number matches, the seven successive worlds in another report. Identifying what is counted requires evidence beyond the numeral.

God Most High says: “And horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and for adornment; and He creates what you do not know.” Surah al-Nahl, 16:8.

The verse names familiar animals before opening knowledge towards what we do not know. This supports humility about the limits of our understanding. It does not establish every creature proposed by stories merely because some creation remains unknown to us.

God Most High says: “Has there come upon the human being a period of time when he was not a thing mentioned?” Surah al-Insan, 76:1.

The verse directs attention to humanity’s condition and existence after not having been a thing mentioned. The word “period” does not specify millions of years or the extinction date of a fossil species. It should be read alongside the verses on the beginning of humanity and its progeny in al-Sajdah 32:7–9 and the creation of Adam in Sad 38:71–76, without turning these passages into a timetable of fossil strata.

The First Creation and a New Creation

God Most High says: “Were We wearied by the first creation? Rather, they are in confusion about a new creation.” Surah Qaf, 50:15.

The verse contrasts the first creation with a new creation while challenging disbelief in renewal. A report attributed to Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him, offers a reading connected with the renewal of worlds; we shall read it in its place [R3]. That narrative reading does not permit us to extract a number of worlds or Adams from the verse’s wording alone.

God Most High also says: “On the day when Earth is changed into another Earth, and the heavens likewise, and they appear before God, the One, the All-Subduing.” Surah Ibrahim, 14:48.

The verse concerns a coming scene, rather than an explicit account of an earlier Earth. Its appearance at the end of a report discussing worlds past and worlds to come requires us to preserve the direction of time in each part. What follows the Resurrection must not be turned into a description of what preceded Adam.

Succession and Replacement: Power Does Not Identify a Community

God Most High says: “Your Lord is the Self-Sufficient, the Possessor of mercy. If He wills, He can remove you and cause whatever He wills to succeed you, just as He brought you forth from the descendants of other people.” Surah al-An‘am, 6:133.

Al-Mizan explains this passage in the context of God’s self-sufficiency, mercy and power to remove one creation and bring another. The verse describes its audience as descendants of other people, but does not call those people nasnas or describe anatomical differences between them and their descendants. The word “other” alone does not turn generational succession into a transition between biological species. These are limits I draw from the wording and context, leaving the detailed exegesis in its proper place. [M1]

God Most High says: “We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outstripped.” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:60.

God Most High says: “In replacing you with your like and bringing you forth in a form you do not know.” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:61.

God Most High says: “You have already known the first creation; why, then, do you not take heed?” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:62.

These verses should be read together, since verse 61 completes the meaning of the preceding verse. They invoke death, the power to replace and create, and knowledge of the first creation in an argument for resurrection. Bringing people forth in what they do not know does not name particular ancient species, nor say that the audience were *nasnas* in a previous life. This book preserves the distinction between the Creator’s expansive power and our knowledge of a particular event in creation.

A Shared Origin Does Not Deny Every Other Creation

God Most High says: “O humanity, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and spread from the two many men and women. Be mindful of God, in whose name you ask one another, and honour the bonds of kinship. God is ever watchful over you.” Surah al-Nisa’, 4:1.

The address concerns people, their origin, relationships and responsibility. Al-Tabataba’i reads the verse in connection with the descent of present humanity from Adam and his spouse, while discussing reports of earlier cycles [M1]. This shared origin should not become a claim that the verse details the history of every form of life preceding that lineage.

The verses therefore concern distinct matters: the prior creation of the *jann* in al-Hijr; the presence of angels and Iblis at Adam’s creation; humanity’s origin and descendants; the breadth and diversity of creation; resurrection; and responsibility in speech. The *nasnas*, the numbers of earlier worlds and their durations belong to the reports that mention them. None of these verses names Neanderthals or supplies a description identifying them scientifically.

Chapter Three: Humanity, Human Beings, Adam and the World: Keys to Words and Meanings

A Name Is Not a Ready-Made Picture

We may encounter a familiar word in an ancient report and assume that we understand everything it means. Familiarity can conceal differences in usage. “World” may suggest an independent universe to a modern reader, whereas its meaning in a particular narration requires attention to the words before and after it.

The report of seven worlds mentions Earth, then the placement of beings upon it one after another [R4]. These clues give the report an earthly and successive dimension. The wording of “a thousand thousand worlds” is broader and provides no geographical description of each world [R3]. We should not transfer the first report’s specifications to the second without evidence.

Likewise, “human beings” in a religious context does not automatically equal the name of a species in modern biological classification. Religious questions about lineage and revelation do not necessarily use the boundaries of scientific terms distinguishing species by bodily and genetic characteristics.

Adam and the Adams

Adam in the human story is a particular person. The report of multiple Adams, however, raises another linguistic and interpretive question: does it speak of multiple beginnings bearing this name, and how much does it explain about them?

The answer is neither to erase the wording’s apparent sense because it is unfamiliar nor to fill it with the biographies of millions. We read the expression as it stands, set out its possible meanings, and acknowledge that detailed names, genealogies and dates for each beginning are absent from the text before us.

The distinction between “the expression referring to Adams occurs” and “the history of every one of them is established” is the distinction between reading a document and inventing what lies beyond it. A word may exceed a reader’s knowledge without granting a researcher permission to enlarge that knowledge without a source.

Words of Kinship and Creation

Progeny, descendants and the children of Adam imply a connection that mere resemblance cannot establish. When a report describes beings who are not Adam’s offspring, it addresses lineage within that report. The expression alone does not determine how physically similar those beings were to humanity.

If a dictionary describes a creature as resembling people, resemblance does not mean descent from them. Two creatures may look alike while having different origins, just as members of one lineage may differ in appearance.

A nation, a community and a world do not become equivalent counting units merely because they appear together in our discussion. We cannot divide the number of worlds by the number of Adams and derive a duration or population. Arithmetic cannot repair an error of definition made beforehand.

Consider the effect of context within the texts themselves. “They are not of Adam’s offspring” denies a particular genealogical connection, while “one after another” establishes an order. Neither substitutes for the other. Together they provide two descriptions within one report, but still give neither the name of those beings nor their degree of similarity to us. Meaning thus accumulates from the words themselves, rather than from the images they call to mind.

Chapter Four: From Sources to Narrations: Faithful Transmission

Four Layers That Must Not Be Confused

Several distinct layers lie between the book we read and the statement we attribute to an infallible authority. First is the work that records the report; second, its route of transmission; third, its wording; and fourth, the explanation added by scholars or editors. These layers may sit together on a page, but they do not share the same attribution.

In Bihar al-Anwar, for example, we find the report, al-Majlisi's explanation and then notes belonging to the edition. Someone who extracts an entire page and attributes everything on it to the Imam may inadvertently place a lexical definition or an annotator's suggestion inside the narration. In discussing the nasnas' form, I shall therefore identify the text and the commentary separately [M2].

Some reports recur in al-Burhan and Bihar al-Anwar as quotations from older sources. Repetition helps comparison and the tracing of readings, but alone does not establish multiple independent transmission routes.

This Book's Core Collection

The narrative study rests on eight records: the nasnas report through Tafsir al-Qummi and through 'Ilal al-Shara'i' [R1, R2]; the worlds and Adams report in al-Tawhid and al-Khisal [R3]; the seven-worlds report in al-Khisal and al-'Ayyashi [R4]; the periods and unnamed-creation report in al-'Ayyashi [R5]; the twelve-thousand-worlds report in al-Khisal [R6]; the water and beginning-of-creation report in al-Kafi [R7]; and the evaluative use of nasnas in al-Kafi and its quotation in al-Bihar [R8]. These do not all concern one community. Some are central to the question of precedence; others clarify comparisons and usage. The appendices identify what was compared with printed images and what was read electronically.

I draw on Tafsir al-Mizan when discussing present humanity and earlier cycles, al-Burhan and al-Bihar when tracing transmission and differences, and lexicography to understand the name rather than establish the creature's reality. The appendices specify the limits of direct comparison and material consulted through an intermediary.

This definition protects the book from an extensive bibliography unsupported by identifiable work. Not every respected work in our tradition is a source for a particular report, and listing a book does not establish that every chapter has been examined.

An Example of Reporting a Scholar's Judgement

‘Amr ibn Shimr appears in the transmission of the “thousand thousand worlds” report. The electronic text of Rijal al-Najashi, p. 287, entry 765, describes him as “very weak,” a judgement al-Khu’i quotes in his entry [M3]. The reference here therefore points to al-Najashi’s statement and the scholar quoting it, while preserving the distinction between reading an electronic text and comparing an image of the printed edition.

I attribute this criticism to its author and retain its scope: the narrator and route concerned. I do not turn it into my own judgement on every report addressing the same subject. Including the report here identifies what the source contains and explains what I have quoted from specialists about it. Collecting material does not require concealing their judgements, and explaining it does not make me an independent authenticator.

In the nasnas report, the image of Tafsir al-Qummi gives “Amr ibn Miqdam,” whereas ‘Ilal al-Shara’i’ and the quotation in al-Burhan give “Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam.” Al-Khu’i favoured the latter form in his entry on Thabit al-Hadhdha’ and identified al-Hadhdha’ as Thabit al-Haddad. Chapter Eleven explains this preference and its limits. Criticism of ‘Amr ibn Shimr must not be transferred to a different narrator merely because both names contain ‘Amr. [M3]

My Role in Collecting and Recording the Material

I collected the principal passages from al-Qummi, al-‘Ilal, al-Khisal and al-‘Ayyashi, checking quotations against their locations to correct references and preserve wording. I reported scholars’ statements in the sources used concerning ‘Amr ibn Shimr, ‘Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, Thabit al-Hadhdha’, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Hilal and ‘Isa ibn Hamzah, as well as al-Majlisi’s judgement on the report about people, their likenesses and the nasnas. This checks the faithfulness of transmission from those scholars, benefits from their research and explains their views; it does not reauthenticate the chains.

Readers may turn to Appendix Two. Each report has a code, a specified source, a transmission route presented as the source records it, and a note identifying a wording variant or an attributed scholarly judgement. As we approach the reports, we shall refer to these records instead of repeating their bibliographical details each time.

Part Two: Reports of Worlds and Earlier Creation

When first heard, the numbers of distant worlds may seem like doors opening onto the same scene. Closer reading reveals a different direction behind each: a report of Earth and succession, another of creation's breadth, and a third connecting the past with what will follow our world. We shall read them individually, preserve their wording and transmission routes, and then consider what can be connected. Our wonder does not excuse us from asking what witness brought them to us.

Chapter Five: Were There Worlds Before Ours?

When Our Story Is Not the Whole Story

In Shaykh al-Saduq's *al-Tawhid* we read a report attributed to Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him, mentioning many worlds and Adams. In *al-Khisal* and *Tafsir al-'Ayyashi* we read another concerning seven worlds before Adam, the father of this humanity [R3, R4]. These texts supply narrative material for the question, but do not turn every possibility into an established fact.

It helps to distinguish three matters: the report's presence in a source, what its wording means, and the judgement concerning its attribution to the Imam. I establish the first by reference to its location, explain the second through context and commentators' statements, and rely for the third on specialists' judgements, attributing them to their authors. Readers can thus identify the quotation, the explanation and the reported scholarly judgement.

Earth and World

The seven-worlds report expressly connects its subject with Earth. *Al-Tawhid*'s report speaks more broadly of worlds, creation and renewed worship. I therefore do not equate their scope, assume that every world mentioned is a separate universe, or confine all worlds to this Earth.

The heading "earlier worlds" does not establish that these worlds are identical. It gathers reports requiring comparison. Some of their subject matter may lie outside this book's defined earthly scope. Where a connection with Earth is unclear, a report remains available for comparison rather than becoming a detailed chapter about an unknown universe.

This distinguishes the book from speculative tales. We do not draw skies, cities and seas for each world, or assign inhabitants bodies, names and religious laws the text does not mention. Broad wording cannot compensate for an absent description.

What Came Before and What Comes Afterwards

Some reports combine a past creation with one mentioned after scenes of the Resurrection. We must not take a feature from the latter section and transfer it to the former. A description of beings not created from males and females, for example, appears in a future context; it does not establish that every earlier creation was of that kind.

The part's subject is therefore clear before we enter its details. The seven-worlds report expressly concerns Earth and succession. Al-Tawhid's report extends the discussion to worlds, Adams and renewed creation. We shall read the first for the order of Earth's inhabitants and the second for the expressions of multiplicity and their context, then consider what can be brought together and what remains separate.

Twelve Thousand Worlds: Multiplicity Is Not Succession

In al-Khisal, al-Saduq transmits a report from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, mentioning twelve thousand worlds. I read its location in the image of the al-Haydariyyah edition, Najaf, 1391 AH/1971, p. 602, report 14 in the sections on numbers above one thousand. Its chain includes "from someone who narrated to him," referring to a transmitter unnamed in this context. That cannot be passed over by describing the report as sound without qualification. [R6]

This report serves a different purpose from the seven-worlds report. It describes an expanse of worlds without expressly stating in the relevant passage that they succeeded one another on our Earth before Adam. I therefore neither add nor multiply the two numbers, and do not treat the report as a list of earlier communities. Establishing that multiplicity is mentioned in a source differs from identifying each world's location and time.

Reports on the Universe's Beginning and the Limits of Their Use

Another comparative text is Muhammad ibn Muslim's report from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him, in Rawdat al-Kafi. It begins with water and the Throne, then mentions fire, smoke and the formation of the heavens and Earth. Its text was read in the presentation of the Dar al-Hadith edition, vol. 15, p. 235, report 14883/68, including the edition's reference to its repeated occurrence. [R7]

This report concerns the beginning of creation; it does not describe a community named nasnas. Water, fire, smoke and the Throne require their own interpretive discussion. Readers must not substitute the names of modern cosmological stages and then announce a match. Here the report helps us understand the breadth of subjects in the narrations, while its detailed study belongs in the volume on the universe.

Chapter Six: Reports of Multiple Adams: Text and Meaning

Al-Tawhid's Report in Context

In al-Tawhid's chapter "On the Greatness of God, Majestic Is His Majesty," al-Saduq transmits from his father, from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allah, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from 'Amr ibn Shimr, from Jabir ibn Yazid, a report from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him. It begins with a question about Qaf 50:15, discusses renewed creation and then mentions worlds and Adams [R3].

I compared this route with the image of al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, 1391 AH/1971, p. 615, report 54 in the sections on numbers above one thousand. It presents the same chain from al-Saduq's father to Jabir, with agreement on the number in the relevant passage. Appearance in two books by the same author does not remove the reservation about their shared narrator or automatically create two independent routes.

The relevant passage includes: "Yes, by God, God has created a thousand thousand worlds and a thousand thousand Adams. You belong to the last of those worlds and those Adams." This is a quotation from the report, not a Qur'anic verse or a statement that can properly be detached from its chain.

Read in its apparent sense, the wording conveys extensive multiplicity without naming individuals or recounting their lives. Nor does it state how many Adams belong to each world or explain how those worlds are connected or separated.

What Does the Number Do?

A thousand multiplied by a thousand is a million. Moving from arithmetic to history, however, requires identifying what is being counted and establishing the report's authority. Calculation alone does not mean that we know a million biographies or a million earthly cycles of equal duration.

A literal reading of the number and a reading expressing great abundance are possibilities that a writer's taste cannot decide. I do not choose one because it is more exciting or easier to reconcile with a prior idea. I remain with the text and the scholarly explanations I have found, without constructing a historical calendar of my own.

The report also does not say that all those Adams are the nasnas. The absence of that equivalence matters: it prevents the chapter on multiple Adams from becoming simply another name for the chapter on the nasnas.

The Transmission Route and the Meaning of Caution

This chain contains ‘Amr ibn Shimr, whose weakness al-Najashi judged and al-Khu’i reported, as noted above [M3]. I present the report as al-Saduq transmitted it and attribute that judgement to its author. The number remains part of the transmitted report’s content. I do not present it as an indisputable historical fact, or attribute to scholars an allegation that its wording was fabricated when I have not quoted such a judgement from them.

At the same time, I do not infer from weakness in this route that every earlier creation is disproved. The seven-worlds report has its own route and wording requiring their own consideration. A judgement cannot be transferred between different chains without examination.

Faithful reading also requires attention to the different kinds of statement within the report. Renewed creation after the fate of the inhabitants of Paradise and Hell points towards the future; the mention of Adams concerns earlier creation. Transferring the absence of males and females from the former context to the latter would change the report in our presentation, even if every quoted word occurred in it. Faithful quotation preserves a statement’s location as carefully as its letters.

Chapter Seven: Earth's Inhabitants Before the Children of Adam

The Narration of Seven Worlds

Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi records from Muhammad ibn Muslim, from Imam al-Baqir, peace be upon him: “Since creating Earth, God has created upon it seven worlds whose inhabitants are not of Adam’s offspring; He created them from the surface of the earth.” The report describes settling them there one after another, followed by the creation of Adam, the father of this humanity, and his descendants [R4].

This passage concerns Earth more clearly than the word “world” alone would. It names Earth and an earlier creation, denies that creation’s descent from Adam, and then moves to the Adam with whom our story is connected.

Clarity on this point does not settle every other question. The relevant passage does not name the seven worlds, their leaders or their inhabitants’ language, or explain how each ended. Missing information cannot be borrowed from another story merely to fill a gap.

The Origin of Creation and the Limits of Comparison

Adim al-ard, the surface of the earth, refers in general lexical usage to Earth’s surface and what is taken from it. It is not a laboratory description of cellular or genetic composition, or a statement of fossil classification. The expression alone cannot establish skull shape, locomotion or chromosome number.

Similarly, the narration’s denial that these beings are Adam’s offspring concerns the lineage stated in the text. It is neither a moral judgement on every individual nor a measure of their ability to learn. The study of origin thus differs from the study of characteristics.

The Routes in al-Khisal and al-‘Ayyashi

The seven-worlds report was compared with the image of al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, p. 328, report 45. Its chain includes Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Hilal, from al-‘Ala’ ibn Razin, from Muhammad ibn Muslim. It was also compared with Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi, al-A‘lami edition, vol. 2, p. 255, report 57, where transmission begins with Muhammad ibn Muslim without displaying the compiler’s full route to him. Al-Tabataba’i’s introduction to volume 1, p. 7, explains that the circulating text is an abridgement from which chains were removed. This omission cannot be attributed solely to a website’s display. [R4]

Careful reading requires following a footnote marker to its proper location rather than attaching it to the nearest heading. In the electronic presentation of al-Khisal, p. 358, a note on narrator criticism concerns Ahmad ibn Hilal in report 44. The seven-worlds report then begins as number 45, its chain continuing on the next page with Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Hilal. The note’s judgement cannot be transferred to this narrator because their names both contain Hilal

or because the reports are adjacent. This observation removes a possible confusion; it does not itself establish the other chain's reliability or soundness. [R4]

In the scanned edition of al-Khisal, the full chain appears on p. 328. I do not direct readers of that edition to the preceding electronic footnote with different pagination. The matching report number and chapter connect the two locations despite their different page numbers.

In Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith, vol. 17, pp. 266–267, entry 11153, al-Khu'i records Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal's transmission from al-'Ala' ibn Razin and Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Abi al-Khattab's transmission from him, and notes his occurrence in Kamil al-Ziyarat. I reproduce these details as given. I do not attribute to this entry an explicit individual declaration of reliability absent from the text consulted. [M3]

In Kamil al-Ziyarat, edited by Jawad al-Qayyumi, p. 63, report 48/4, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal appears in a route in which he transmits from 'Uqbah and Muhammad ibn al-Husayn transmits from him. Named intermediaries stand between Ibn Qulawayh and him. I record this location to identify the source cited by al-Khu'i, keeping transmission details distinct from scholars' judgements on narrators.

Among al-Khu'i's statements concerning the reliability of Kamil al-Ziyarat's narrators is his answer in Sirat al-Najat, vol. 2, p. 457, question 1427. There he explains that his final view restricts this attestation to those from whom Ibn Qulawayh narrates directly. I attribute the view to al-Khu'i rather than present it as a consensus of all scholars. [M3]

My reliance is on what scholars expressly state in their books, referring readers to their words and preserving their scope. I therefore present the seven-worlds report from its source and set out the narrator information and relevant specialist opinions I have quoted, without issuing an independent judgement on the chain. These references belong to faithful collection and explanation; renewed chain authentication is not this book's task.

The report adds something definite to our discussion: the earthly succession expressly stated in its wording. It leaves something else unspecified: the name of each of the seven worlds. When we turn to the nasnas report, we cannot place it first or last in that succession without evidence. This is the question the next chapter's comparison will examine.

Chapter Eight: Successive Worlds or Reports of Different Creations?

We Do Not Begin by Combining Them

Placed together, the reports of seven worlds, numerous worlds and Adams, and the nasnas may tempt us to build one story: names for successive stages, and numbers for subdivisions within those stages. Such a construction does not become valid simply because it satisfies the reader.

We must first ask whether the reports concern the same place, the same kind of being and the same period, and whether they explicitly connect themselves to one another. Until these elements become clear, combining them remains a possibility rather than a conclusion.

I therefore treat “one after another” in the seven-worlds report as a marker of succession within that report. It does not automatically become a rule linking every other report found in the sources.

The Unnamed Creation

Tafsir al-‘Ayyashi contains a report from ‘Isa ibn Hamzah about a question put to Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, concerning the world’s age. It mentions an earlier creation without calling it nasnas, describes it as distinct from the categories named in the passage, and then speaks of periods of emptiness, creation and corruption [R5].

This report was compared with images of pp. 49–50 of volume 1 of the al-A‘lami edition, report 8. The images establish the wording and durations in this edition but do not recover the chain removed from the circulating abridgement. The passage begins with ‘Isa ibn Hamzah recounting a man’s question to the Imam; I do not replace that presentation with a continuous chain absent from the text.

Mu‘jam Rijal al-Hadith, vol. 14, pp. 200–201, entry 9186, identifies ‘Isa ibn Hamzah al-Mada’ini al-Thaqafi and reports that he had a book and narrated from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. I present this identification as the dictionary gives it, without adding a judgement that the report is sound or details of its source absent from the quoted text. [M3]

The absence of a name matters as much as the mention of these beings. “Unnamed creation” describes the text before us. It does not mean that a name has fallen out of the text or that these beings had no names. Replacing the unspecified name with “nasnas” would add an interpretation requiring evidence; it would not restore a missing word proven to belong to the original.

How Do We Read an Exegete’s View?

In his commentary on Surah al-Nisa’, al-Tabataba’i discusses the possibility of earlier human cycles, distinguishing present humanity’s lineage from the question of what preceded it [M1]. I use this discussion to keep possibilities separate, rather than turn every explanatory suggestion by an exegete into an infallible report or a contemporary scientific finding.

Scientific information in an old or modern commentary should be read in the context of its time and then checked against specialist sources. Respect for an exegete does not require freezing knowledge at the information available in that scholar's era.

The comparison leaves us with a map of questions: explicit succession in one report, extensive multiplicity in another, a named creation in a third and an unnamed creation in a fourth. A single line joining all of them has not been established in the texts read.

Chapter Nine: Time in Reports of Earlier Creation

Every Number Has a Question Before It

Understanding a number begins with knowing what it counts, rather than adding and subtracting it. Seven worlds do not mean seven thousand years, and a thousand thousand worlds do not determine Earth's age. Nor is the lifespan of a community the age of all life.

The nasnas report mentions seven thousand years in a context before Adam's creation [R1, R2]. Even if that expression were established as authoritative, it would not say that the entire universe began that many years before Adam or specify the lifespans of the individuals within the period.

If the text does not tell us whether the period begins with that community's first creation or with another event in its history, we must preserve that uncertainty rather than write an absolute chronology the report itself did not provide.

The Report of Fifty Thousand Years

Al-'Ayyashi's report from 'Isa ibn Hamzah addresses a question about people saying the world is seven thousand years old, presenting fifty thousand years instead. In the images of pp. 49–50 of the al-A'lami edition, report 8, its account contains five periods of ten thousand years each: initial emptiness; a creation explicitly described as neither jinn, angels nor humans; emptiness after its disappearance; the creation of jinn; and Adam's era. It states that seven thousand two hundred years of the final period had elapsed. This sets out the sequence of numbers in the passage read; it does not adopt them as a calendar for Earth. [R5]

Reducing the narration to “a creation fifty thousand years before Adam” loses its structure, since the stated total includes Adam's own era rather than only what preceded it. Calculating the periods also establishes neither the chain's soundness nor a Gregorian date for the statement. I therefore do not calculate the end of the world from the reported remainder, or confuse this context with the seven thousand years in the nasnas report.

Nor is the difficulty resolved by replacing “year” with a geological age whenever reconciliation requires it. That interpretation needs evidence. Otherwise a writer could match any number to any duration simply by changing the unit without justification.

The Limits of a Chronology

A temporal relationship answers which event came first. A duration answers how long something lasted. An absolute date places it on a known calendar. Some reports read here say that beings preceded Adam; others mention a period in a community's history. Alone, they do not provide a Gregorian date. Confusing these three questions makes a limited sequence look like a complete calendar.

Comparison between transmitted material and science remains an inquiry into kinds of evidence, rather than a contest between isolated numbers. Scientific estimates rest on methods and

evidence open to criticism; a report rests on transmission and meaning. Where an apparent conflict arises, we must identify its precise location before proposing a solution.

We leave this part with reports that have sources and differences that must not be erased. We now turn to the name most prominent in the book's title: the nasnas. Our purpose is to learn what has actually been said about them, rather than supply descriptions that are absent.

Part Three: The Story of the Nasnas in the Sources

Sometimes a name survives after the image of its bearer has disappeared. Nasnas illustrates the difficulty of moving from a word to a creature: we encounter it in a report, then a dictionary, then an expression describing some people. We shall follow the name through these settings and ask what each says about nature, life, moral responsibility and the end. Whenever an image tempts us to complete the scene, we return to the text to distinguish what came from it from what our imagination supplied.

Chapter Ten: Nasnas: The Story of a Name and Its Different Uses

Before We Draw the Creature

Names sometimes reach our minds before their images. We hear “nasnas,” recall a shape seen in a picture or tale, and then return to the text looking for confirmation. A more faithful approach reverses the journey: begin with the source, then see how much of an image it permits.

Under the root n-s-s in *Lisan al-‘Arab*, different explanations are collected, including a creature resembling humans and accounts of a marvellous character [M4]. This material tells us what has been said using the word. It does not itself establish that all the descriptions concern one historical creature.

It is also important not to make the word’s vocalisation evidence for the reality of the being named. Pronunciation may vary and meanings may multiply, while the main question remains: which usage belongs to the narration under study?

Three Contexts

The first is earlier creation, where the name occurs in a report connected with Adam’s beginning. The second is lexical, describing a creature’s reported form or the word’s meaning. The third is comparison or criticism directed at some people. A figurative usage cannot establish that those addressed belong to a nonhuman species.

One useful example is the report about “people, those resembling people, and the nasnas.” I read it in *Rawdat al-Kafi*, vol. 8, report 339 in the electronic division consulted, and compared it with *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 24, pp. 95–96, chapter 35, report 2. Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn recounts a man’s question to the Commander of the Faithful and Imam al-Husayn’s answer, peace be upon them. The context concerns groups of people and religious evaluation, rather than the anatomy of beings before Adam. Al-Majlisi judged the report “unknown” (*majhul*) in *Mir’at al-‘Uqul*, vol. 26, p. 210; I therefore do not present it as having a sound chain. Analysing a word’s use in the text remains distinct from establishing the report’s authoritative origin. [R8]

This usage must be studied within its interpretive context. It does not establish that the people described belong to another biological species, and must not be used to dehumanise a community or equate it with an extinct creature. Al-Majlisi's subsequent comments and quotations from lexicographers must also be separated from the report; dictionary descriptions do not belong inside the Imam's answer.

Likewise, using the name for an animal in a later age does not automatically identify its meaning in an older report. Names move between general language, local naming and technical terminology. Identical letters do not establish identical referents.

The Definition Used Here

In the chapters on narrations, I use *nasnas* for the creation that these reports call by that name, without adding an unestablished biological definition. When moving to dictionaries or tales, I say so explicitly.

This modest definition prevents three images from merging: a being mentioned in a report, a creature described in works of language, and an animal or comparison in later usage. With that distinction, we can follow the text rather than an image that reached it before us.

Chapter Eleven: The Nasnas in Narrations: Transmission Routes and Wording

The Route in Tafsir al-Qummi

The report occurs in Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, pp. 36–37, Maktabat al-Huda edition. Its chain includes al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, then a name printed as “Amr ibn Miqdam,” followed by Thabit al-Hadhdha’ and Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju’fi, from Imam al-Baqir, from his father, from his forefathers, from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them. Al-Burhan’s quotation gives “Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam.” I preserve both forms as they appear and distinguish establishing the name from judging its bearer. [R1]

The name has a clear entry in narrator literature. Al-Najashi discusses ‘Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam on p. 290, entry 777, identifying Abu al-Miqdam as Thabit ibn Hurmuz al-Haddad and stating that ‘Amr had a book. This entry, however, does not contain an explicit declaration of ‘Amr’s reliability; nothing absent from it should be attributed to it. [M3]

In Mu’jam Rijal al-Hadith’s entry on Thabit al-Hadhdha’, vol. 4, p. 307, entry 1983, al-Khu’i mentions his transmission from Jabir and ‘Amr’s transmission from him in Tafsir al-Qummi. Referring to an older edition, he favours “Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam” as the correct form and identifies Thabit al-Hadhdha’ with Thabit al-Haddad. I adopt this preference as al-Khu’i’s, while preserving the wording of the edition from which I quoted. [M3]

In his entry on ‘Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, vol. 14, pp. 80–83, entry 8863, al-Khu’i judges ‘Amr ibn Thabit Abi al-Miqdam trustworthy. He then judges al-Saduq’s route to him through al-Hakam ibn Miskin weak because he finds no attestation of al-Hakam’s reliability. These are distinct judgements: one concerns the narrator, the other a particular route to him. Al-Hakam ibn Miskin does not occur in either nasnas route presented here. The criticism of that route must not be borrowed to judge these two; nor does ‘Amr’s reliability alone authenticate all their narrators. [M3]

The report begins with a period before Adam’s creation in which the nasnas are mentioned alongside another creation. It then describes corruption, announces the placement of a successor, and discusses what will come from the new creation’s descendants. Here we limit ourselves to the relevant material, without reproducing shared passages that would repeat the books on angels and jinn.

The report also appears in al-Majlisi’s quotations, including the location cited in volume 60, p. 273. His quotation from al-Qummi does not create a third independent route; it provides a witness for comparing and tracing the wording.

The Route in ‘Ilal al-Shara’i’

The report appears in ‘Ilal al-Shara’i’, chapter 96, report 1, through Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Isa, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from ‘Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, from Jabir, from Imam al-Baqir, who says that the Commander of the Faithful said it, peace be upon them. This location was compared with p. 139 of the second edition, corrected and annotated by Sayyid Fadl Allah al-Tabataba’i al-Yazdi, and its wording with the quotation in al-Bihar. [R2]

Thabit al-Hadhdha’ appears in the printed chain in Tafsir al-Qummi but not in the printed chain of the ‘Ilal al-Shara’i’ edition used here. I record this difference as the editions present it and report al-Khu’i’s explanation of the names in its place. I do not add my own explanation of how the difference arose or judge the routes independent. My purpose is to preserve the transmission and explain what specialists have stated.

Presenting both routes prevents “it appears in two books” from becoming a phrase detached from its meaning. The degree of independence, the point at which the chains meet and the significance of wording differences all enter into assessment.

One Word Can Change the Extent of a Conclusion

The image of Tafsir al-Qummi, p. 37, reads “and I shall destroy the nasnas from My earth” (wa-ubidu). The image of ‘Ilal al-Shara’i’, p. 141, reads “and I shall separate the nasnas from My earth and cleanse it of them” (wa-ubinu). Al-Burhan gives the latter verb with “away from My earth,” while its footnote notes “wa-ubidu” in the source. [R1, R2]

The difference matters: separation or removal does not carry exactly the same implications as destruction. I preserve each edition’s wording and explanation without independently deciding which reading is original. I therefore do not select the stronger reading as the basis for depicting total annihilation.

Attribution and Interpretation

The report’s expressions concerning creation and the hand should be read within the principle that God is beyond body and organs. They must not become a sensory description of the Creator. This principle is not peculiar to the nasnas, but protects the report from projecting a creature’s image onto its Creator.

These pages collect particular judgements about narrators and attribute them to their authors; they do not create an independent verdict on the two routes. I distinguish “the source narrates” from “the scholar judged sound” or “judged weak,” presenting each statement according to its author and subject. As for historical details, I explain what the report contains without expanding it beyond the text or the explanation relied upon.

Chapter Twelve: What Is the Nature of the Nasnas?

What the Principal Report Does Not Say

The relevant passage of the nasnas report does not give an anatomy of their bodies. It specifies neither their bones, height, brain size nor the structure of eyes and limbs. A writer therefore cannot present a detailed drawing and claim it derives from the principal narration.

Where, then, did images of one eye, one hand and one leg originate? Such descriptions occur in lexical material and in some commentaries and quotations from works explaining unusual words. Their location matters as much as their content: they are not automatically part of the report attributed to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him.

Text, Commentary and Footnote

In Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 11, p. 106, the report is followed by an “explanation” discussing terms, including nasnas. A footnote on the page also quotes lexicographical statements [M2]. When reproducing a description, we must identify it as commentary or an editorial footnote, rather than place it inside quotation marks as the Imam’s words.

In al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 171, the footnote on nasnas refers to al-Sihah and al-Nihayah [R1, M4]. This shows that dictionaries were used to explain the word. It does not mean the explanation itself appeared with a chain in the narration.

We can see how a story expands: a text begins with a name; a footnote explains it through a reported image; and repeated retelling removes the boundaries until name and image become one report in popular memory.

Resemblance Does Not Establish Identity

Even where a lexical source contains a description of human resemblance, resemblance alone does not identify origin, lineage or species. The collection studied here contains no specifications sufficient to match the name to a particular fossil individual or scientific species.

A responsible answer about appearance is therefore not a definitive drawing. We may present descriptions circulating in the sources with their attribution and status, but cannot adopt them as the final image of that earlier creation.

Accordingly, this book does not present an imagined form of the nasnas as fact. If an expressive illustration is used in a later design, its imaginative nature must be declared and it must not serve as evidence for what the text has not established.

Chapter Thirteen: Their Life on Earth: Between Report and Silence

A Life Whose Daily Record We Do Not Have

The principal report connects the nasnas with Earth and places them before Adam. This establishes a general setting within the narration, rather than a particular village, known continent or named city.

Readers may want to know their food, their homes and their language. These are understandable questions: people approach the unknown through the details of their own lives. Yet a question's imaginability does not mean its answer survives in the source.

The principal texts studied here do not provide enough material to reconstruct a documented daily life for the nasnas. I therefore do not write a scene of a family sharing a meal or a community building a dwelling and leave readers to believe they are reading transmitted history.

Descendants and Lifespans

The seven thousand years mentioned in the report cannot determine an individual's lifespan. It may be a period concerning a community, without every member living throughout it. Nor can we calculate generations without knowing reproductive ages, modes of reproduction and population numbers.

A collective name does not establish a family system identical in every detail to today's human system. The existence of a community differs from a description of its relationships and reproduction. Nor may the description of a future creation at the end of another report be transferred to the earlier nasnas.

Regarding males and females, daughters and sons, absent names in the principal texts justify neither invention nor categorical denial. This remains among the matters not explained to us.

Place and Settlement

Some lexical material reports creatures called nasnas in later regions [M2, M4]. We cannot derive from this a map of Earth's inhabitants before Adam. The name may refer to something else, and the account may be a tale rather than a documented observation.

The same applies to tools, fire, language and settlement. We cannot transfer the achievements of a fossil species to the nasnas without first establishing identity, the missing link in this comparison.

Nor should limited reporting become a negative description of these beings. Our lack of knowledge about their tools, language or settlements does not prove they had none, just as it does not prove the opposite. This separates a description of our knowledge from a judgement about creatures whose daily lives are not recorded for us.

Chapter Fourteen: Understanding and Moral Responsibility in the Nasnas Reports

What Does the Language of Responsibility Mean?

The principal report uses words of disobedience, corruption and bloodshed. Within their religious context, these are more than descriptions of bodily movement: they concern conduct and responsibility. Moving from that language to a detailed account of religious obligation, however, requires steps that cannot be skipped.

I rely on specialists for judgement of the report, while taking care in explanation to identify whom its descriptions concern, since it mentions more than one community. A description may be general at the beginning, followed by sentences referring to a particular group. Faithful explanation keeps each detail in its own context.

If a description of disobedience is established as applying to the nasnas, we may consider what understanding and responsibility it implies within the wording's limits. It does not itself disclose a religious law, a number of obligations or a form of worship.

Divine Proof Must Not Be Filled with Invented Names

As the report turns to the new creation, it mentions prophets, messengers, righteous people and guides among the descendants. This belongs to the new context. It cannot be transferred backwards to construct a list of prophets of the nasnas.

I read within the Imami approach, which places justice and divine proof among the foundations of moral obligation. A general doctrinal principle, however, supplies no name for an earlier prophet or successor absent from the evidence. Belief that God does not act unjustly differs from knowledge of how divine proof was established for a particular creation.

I therefore neither invent messengers or successors for the nasnas nor deny them universally. I say that the core collection read here does not provide a sequence of names from which to construct their history of guidance.

Understanding Is Not an Anatomical Classification

Even if the report permits discussion of religious obligation, it does not determine brain measurements, spoken language or tool types. Inferring moral capacity from religious language differs from an archaeologist's inference of tool use from physical evidence.

We should not make the opposite mistake by denying understanding because a popular image depicts an oddly shaped creature. An unestablished image cannot support a judgement about reason and responsibility.

The report's language thus raises the question of moral obligation without presenting its full system. Our ignorance of that system permits neither invention nor its use as a reason to deny God's justice or wisdom.

Chapter Fifteen: Reports of Corruption and Bloodshed

From General Description to Particular Event

The word corruption may suggest great battles, ruined cities and tyrannical kings. The word alone narrates none of these events. The principal report names no nasnas wars, weapons or political alliances.

Distinguishing description from event preserves the report's boundaries. We may say that the narration describes corruption on Earth; we may not give that corruption detailed events never transmitted. Literary interpretation does not become historical testimony.

Pronouns Make a Difference

The quotation from al-Qummi includes a description encompassing the mentioned inhabitants of Earth, then refers specifically to "the children of the jann" in some details [R1]. Attributing every sentence exclusively to the nasnas is therefore inaccurate.

This does not remove the nasnas from the report's opening. It means preserving the later specifications rather than erasing them. Attributing envy or a particular action to a community requires reading the sentence that assigns it, rather than relying on the story's familiar title.

Nor do I infer from a collective description that every individual at every time performed the same act. Establishing the extent of a general statement requires evidence; it is not faithful to fill silence with universal condemnation.

The Lesson and Its Limits

If established as authoritative, reports of corruption may remind us that long existence confers no moral immunity. A lesson, however, neither authenticates a chain nor establishes an unreported event. I can reflect on the danger of injustice without treating that reflection as evidence of past details.

The purpose is not to look down upon an earlier creation, recounting others' errors while exempting ourselves. What we know securely from our own lives already brings corruption close to our own conduct. What we do not know about earlier beings remains a question.

Chapter Sixteen: The End of the Nasnas: Disappearance and Afterwards

A Word at the Threshold of the End

The scanned Tafsir al-Qummi edition, p. 37, gives “wa-ubidu,” whereas the scanned ‘Ilal al-Shara’i‘ edition, p. 141, gives “wa-ubinu.” A footnote in the latter explains this as “that is, I shall remove them.” This is the annotator’s explanation, not an additional word in the report. Al-Burhan’s footnote likewise explains separation and removal. [R1, R2]

The reading expressing destruction strongly conveys annihilation; the other foregrounds separation and expulsion. I establish the difference between the two editions used and mention their explanations where present. I do not independently decide the original reading: the purpose is to let readers know what was transmitted and how the variation affects understanding.

How Did Their Existence End?

The relevant passage gives no detailed mechanism: no named flood, meteorite, described epidemic, or war with a commander and date. Identifying any one of these requires independent evidence.

Nor can the nasnas’ end be matched with a known extinction event in life’s history without evidence establishing the beings’ identity, the time and the event. Similarity in the idea of an ending does not achieve such a match.

Even under the reading conveying destruction, questions of extent, duration and detail still require evidence. I do not assign their end a single day, narrate the death of the last individual, or name survivors.

Did Any Survive?

Later lexical tales concern creatures bearing the name. Its later use does not prove the survival of the beings mentioned before Adam. We would first need to establish the same referent, then the soundness and connection of the survival account.

Likewise, the absence of subsequent reports is not independent proof of total extinction. Missing reports describe what reached us, not necessarily everything that happened.

The distinction matters when reading a later account with the same name. We must first ask what the writer means by it, then examine the account’s transmission, before using it to answer a question about survival. The chapter thus ends with two independent matters: reading the wording of the end, and establishing the identity of whatever is mentioned afterwards, rather than combining them into an artificial conclusion.

Part Four: Comparison and Disputed Questions

Having read the reports separately, we approach the space between them. Here the most attractive conclusions arise, and here the writer must be particularly careful. Do two names refer to one thing? Are two periods connected? Is a resemblance described in the source, or supplied by the reader? This part brings the strands of comparison together and tests them before calling them a conclusion. Connecting witnesses well matters as much as transmitting each faithfully.

Chapter Seventeen: Are the Nasnas the Earlier Human Beings?

A Question Bringing Different Texts Together

After reading the nasnas report, the seven-worlds report and the report of many Adams, we may feel that all three names indicate one community. That impression comes from our combination of the texts rather than a shared explicit statement. The first names a particular creation before Adam; the second concerns worlds whose inhabitants are not Adam's offspring; al-Tawhid uses the language of human beings and Adams in a broader context. Shared precedence alone does not establish a shared identity.

We can distinguish three levels: a text naming the nasnas; a text mentioning earlier beings without that name; and an explanation of their relationship. The first two belong to the narration; the third is the researcher's work. Without an explicit bridge, the connection remains a possibility needing independent evidence, rather than a heading imposed on all the texts.

What Does "Human Beings" Mean?

We should not transfer the modern scientific definition of a biological species into every narrative use of "human beings." Nor should we assume that every rational creation or inhabited earthly world belongs to our species in the scientific sense. A word draws its meaning from its context, which may be narrower than we wish or broader than the classification familiar to us.

I therefore cannot write that "the nasnas are all earlier human beings," or present its opposite as an established judgement. What I can say is that these reports differ in wording and subject, and, within what has been established here, do not provide a comprehensive and exclusive definition of Earth's inhabitants before Adam.

What the Distinction Achieves

This distinction does not empty the inquiry of substance. It prevents a complete story from being built on one word. Each report retains its own meaning: the name where it occurs, succession where it is mentioned, and creation's breadth where that is the purpose. Sound comparison begins here, rather than with a conclusion assumed before the texts are read.

[R1–R5]

Chapter Eighteen: Did Earlier Beings Coexist with the Beginning of Adam's Era?

Precedence Is Not Coexistence

Saying that beings preceded Adam differs from saying that they survived into his time, and the gap requires a text. A narrator may order events without specifying their interval, or describe a creation's removal from Earth without explaining every individual's fate. "Before" alone implies neither an immediate break nor a prolonged overlap.

In the nasnas text presented here, separation or destruction appears within the announcement of a new creation. We preserve the order of the account without deriving years of overlap or numbers of survivors from its silence. The wording difference itself calls for care before reaching a conclusion about survival or extinction.

Three Questions, Not One

Coexistence differs from encounter, and both differ from reproduction. Even if a reliable report established that two communities existed simultaneously, that would not establish that they met, still less that they intermarried or entered one another's lineage. These are successive levels of claim, each requiring its own evidence.

The principal texts used here contain no documented account of a meeting between a particular descendant of Adam and a named nasnas individual. We cannot fill the gap with literary dialogue and present it as history. Declared fiction may create such a scene; source-based inquiry has no such licence.

The Limits of the Conclusion

I do not assert that the nasnas coexisted with Adam on the basis of the material transmitted here, or derive unmentioned details from the variants concerning their end. This does not declare coexistence inherently impossible; it observes the limits of the sources used. The origin of present humanity has its own evidence and context, and cannot be settled merely by an earlier name appearing in another report. [R1, R2; M1]

Chapter Nineteen: Names, Individuals and Communities

When a Narration Preserves No Name

Names make a story feel close, so their absence can easily tempt a writer to invent them. Our central reports supply no list of nasnas kings, continuous genealogies, named cities or capitals. They generally speak of a community, a world or a creation. What these texts do not preserve does not become known because a narrative needs it.

We must also distinguish narrators' names from the people described in a narration. Jabir, Muhammad ibn Muslim and 'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam belong to the transmission route; they are not people who lived through the earlier world's events. Their inclusion in the index of names places them in the history of the report's transmission, not in the history of the nasnas.

Names Circulating Outside the Central Texts

Readers may encounter unusual names on popular pages or in books of marvels. Acceptance begins with questions rather than familiarity: What is the earliest location that can be established for the name? Is there a chain? Does the passage actually concern the nasnas? Has the name changed through a copying error or movement between languages?

This study has not exhaustively surveyed names in every work of marvels, so I do not claim their absence from the entire tradition. I have refrained from incorporating them as established history because the core material does not support those lists, and a history of marvellous literature requires a separate study.

The Value of Preserving a Gap

The index of names therefore distinguishes people in transmission routes from the subjects of reports. Jabir and Muhammad ibn Muslim appear as transmitters; their names do not fill the category of earlier inhabitants. Kings and cities unspecified by the principal texts receive no imaginary entries merely because familiar stories usually contain a king and a city.

Chapter Twenty: The Nasnas Between Narration and Popular Tale

How Does the Image Expand?

Some inherited images begin with a brief expression, accumulate lexical explanations, and then enter tales as visible creatures with limbs, movement and habitats. Repetition can obscure the image's different layers. What a lexicographer said or a writer of marvels narrated begins to sound like part of the Imam's statement.

Dictionary entries under n-s-s contain varied descriptions and tales. They help us study usage and the history of imagination, but presence in a dictionary does not make them a report with a chain about earlier creation. Al-Majlisi's explanation or quotation from lexicographers must likewise be read as commentary, distinct also from a modern editor's footnote. [M2, M4]

Different Times Can Reveal Different Stories

If a lexical tale places a group called nasnas among people living after Adam, it cannot automatically be merged with a report about what preceded him. The name may have several referents, its use may be figurative, or the tale may be unestablished. We need not choose one explanation without evidence. It is enough to refuse to combine contradictory accounts into one biography solely because the name matches.

Among the most dangerous effects of this confusion is projecting such descriptions onto present human communities. Differences in colour, livelihood or culture do not turn a person into a remnant of an inferior creation. Marvellous lore cannot support attacks on people's dignity or doubts about their humanity.

The Tale's Proper Place

A tale has value in cultural history; specialists explain a narration's chain and text; natural science has methods for examining physical remains. Here I keep tales within their context and transmit narrations with their sources and the scholarly judgements I have found. A powerful mental image substitutes neither for faithful transmission nor for a judgement its qualified authors never made.

Chapter Twenty-One: Differences Between Reports and the Results of Comparison

Not Every Difference Is a Contradiction

Two reports may differ because one concerns the past and the other a creation after the Resurrection. They may use “world” differently, or one may be general while another supplies a particular example. Before declaring contradiction, we must establish each report’s subject, time and kind of claim.

These possibilities do not authorise reconciliation at any cost. Claiming that the seven are subdivisions of the thousand thousand, or that each Adam leads one of seven stages, requires evidence. Such constructions are conceivable, but conceivability does not make them established explanations. Forced reconciliation can invent a third narration found in neither source.

The Course of Comparison

Comparison began by locating the text, separating transmission from explanation, identifying wording differences and reporting scholars’ judgements in their proper places. Explanation then addressed the text’s implications while keeping repeated quotation from one source distinct from multiple routes.

These witnesses provide material about creation’s breadth, successive worlds and the name *nasnas*, while revealing the limits of constructing a unified history. In presenting them, I quoted al-Najashi’s judgement of ‘Amr ibn Shimr, al-Tabataba’i’s explanation of the abridgement of al-‘Ayyashi’s chains, and al-Khu’i’s information and views discussed in Chapter Seven. Each statement has its author and location. I rely on these quotations within their scope without combining them into a new chain judgement of my own. [R3–R5; M3]

What This Part Has Established

The result can be expressed as a practical question: has the evidence changed, or only its presentation? Moving the same report from its source into a later compilation increases the number of places where it appears without establishing a new route. Comparing different routes creates a real question about independence and connection that requires study. This distinction makes comparison an examination of evidence rather than a count of book titles repeating a statement.

Part Five: From Earlier Creation to the Beginning of Our Story

We now reach the meeting place between questions from the tradition and the earthly traces studied by science: Neanderthals, Denisovans, other human species, and ages measured through what rocks and bones preserve. I shall explain what these lines of evidence can teach us, then return to the question in the title: what may we properly say about creation before Adam? From that comparison we pass to our responsibility for the knowledge we transmit and the lives we lead.

Chapter Twenty-Two: Earlier Creation, Neanderthals and Scientific Research

Reading Earth through Its Traces

In a museum lies a bone that cannot speak; in a hadith book is a report reached through the names of its transmitters. Silence does not mean the absence of all knowledge. A trace tells us what its study permits, just as a text tells us what its wording and transmission permit. We begin by respecting these two paths, then ask what may connect them.

Palaeoanthropology examines bones, tools, sites and strata, using dating methods and ancient genetic material where it survives and is available. Assessing a narration involves its source, chain, wording and context. Different methods do not make every conclusion equivalent to every other; they require us to identify the evidence supporting each claim.

How Do We Know a Remain's Age?

Relative dating begins with a find's position and its relationship to geological layers and what cuts through or overlies them. It establishes earlier and later, after which appropriate numerical methods assist the study. The Smithsonian presents Lucy as an example: her later estimate of approximately 3.18 million years agreed with the range suggested by comparison of fossils from the layer. [M19]

Radiocarbon dating ordinarily applies to organic samples up to about fifty thousand years old; it does not date Earth or every ancient fossil. Volcanic materials can be dated through methods such as potassium–argon and argon–argon, helping estimate the ages of layers associated with fossil sites. Researchers choose a method according to the material and expected age, rather than a preferred result. [M19]

The measured age may belong to material associated with a find rather than to the bone itself. The sample, its relationship to the site and the measurement's limits must therefore be explained. Revising an estimate after further examination does not make all estimates equally valid. [M19]

Deep Time: Earth and Life Before Our Present Species

Science estimates Earth's age at about 4.54 billion years, drawing on radiometric evidence and the Solar System's history. The United States Geological Survey explains the transition from assumptions about Earth's cooling to isotope measurements and comparisons with meteorites. Geological time has its own methods of estimation; it is not derived by adding the durations in transmitted reports. [M14]

The fossil record reveals extensive diversity before the human genus appeared. Non-avian dinosaurs, for example, disappeared in an extinction about 66 million years ago, while birds survived as a dinosaur branch. Evidence supports an asteroid impact's role, alongside study of other environmental factors. That extinction cannot be identified with the nasnas' disappearance simply because both descriptions concern an ending. [M15]

These examples indicate the scale of the natural past. Life's history cannot be reduced to dinosaurs or its earlier inhabitants confined to one creature. The verses and reports studied here do not place Adam on this scale through an agreed numerical date.

Early Life Before the Human Scene

Before Earth hosted large bodies and bones preserved in museums, microscopic life existed over immense periods. London's Natural History Museum presents accepted fossil evidence for life around 3.5 billion years ago, while some older evidence remains disputed. Stromatolites are layered structures associated with microbial activity; evidence of life need not be the skeleton of a large animal. [M20]

Later records include multicellular organisms and animal diversification during the Ediacaran and Cambrian, followed by the expansion of terrestrial habitats occupied by plants and animals. This picture shows that life's history begins neither with humanity nor with dinosaurs, and that environmental and biological changes have been intertwined over long periods. [M20]

Early evidence of life does not itself identify the first moment life began or settle every step from chemistry to cells. Research into life's origin examines hypotheses and evidence distinct from the study of diversification after life existed. An unresolved origin question therefore does not negate what fossils and genetics support concerning evolution. [M20]

Homo sapiens and Evolutionary Relatedness

All living humans belong to the species *Homo sapiens*. In the scientific account used here, its earliest known evidence dates to around three hundred thousand years ago in Africa. This defines a biological species and estimates the age of its evidence; it does not identify Adam or date his creation. [M6]

Fossil and genetic evidence presents human history as related branches, rather than a line of beings each waiting for its predecessor to disappear. Populations differing in some traits may coexist. Debate over particular species boundaries or relationships between individual branches does not erase the evidence of evolution and common ancestry. [M5]

Neanderthals: Name, Place and Time

Neanderthal is a modern name for an extinct human species, *Homo neanderthalensis*. Its remains occur in Europe and western and central Asia. The Smithsonian's introductory account places its approximate existence between four hundred thousand and forty thousand years ago. These boundaries concern evidence and classification, rather than one date for the birth or death of every individual. [M7]

Their remains show robust bodies, relatively short limbs, and skull and facial features differing from the average in *Homo sapiens*. Some traits relate to cold adaptation. Their sites provide evidence of stone tools, fire use and food acquisition. Multiple lines of evidence reconstruct these lives; different features alone justify no judgement of stupidity or savagery. [M7]

Brain size alone is not a complete measure of mental ability, and a skull does not disclose an entire language or detailed belief system. Planning, symbolic behaviour and speech are studied through multiple clues of varying strength. Discussions from London's Natural History Museum show that the attribution and dating of some symbolic evidence remain under investigation. [M8]

Shanidar: Iraqi Evidence and Questions about Treatment of the Dead

Shanidar Cave in Iraqi Kurdistan is an important Neanderthal site. Recent research has re-examined the arrangement and position of remains, including the skeleton known as Shanidar Z. The University of Cambridge team presents evidence favouring the placement of bodies in selected locations, while investigating whether the site was repeatedly used for that purpose. [M9]

Evidence favouring deliberate placement does not by itself settle every religious or ritual meaning of the act. The "flower burial" illustrates why reassessment matters. A pollen study published in 2023 suggested that solitary bees may have deposited some pollen clusters, while the concentration of skeletons in a particular place remains significant. We therefore distinguish treatment of the dead from the flower story, and both from any claim to know their beliefs in detail. [M10]

What Has Ancient DNA Added?

Ancient DNA has enabled comparison between genetic material from Neanderthal remains and ancient and present human genomes. Findings indicate interbreeding and genetic admixture between Neanderthal populations and ancestors of our species. Max Planck Institute research reports that most people with ancestry outside Africa carry approximately one to two per cent Neanderthal ancestry. This statistical proportion varies between individuals and populations; it does not define human worth or standing. [M11]

A study presented by the institute in December 2024 linked most shared Neanderthal ancestry to an extended period of admixture centred around forty-seven thousand years ago and lasting several thousand years. This indicates a history of interaction rather than simple replacement

without encounters. A genetic segment present today is not evidence of a recent encounter or of a surviving independent Neanderthal population. [M11]

The Smithsonian's account of ancient DNA also discusses Neanderthal ancestry reaching African populations through histories of migration and return. We should therefore not divide humanity by a rigid popular rule into an entirely "unmixed" group and a "mixed" one. All belong to present humanity, and genetic differences justify no hierarchy of dignity or rights. [M12]

Denisovans: Another Branch, Not Another Name for Neanderthals

Genetic material from Denisova Cave in Siberia revealed an ancient human population genetically distinct from Neanderthals and Homo sapiens, while evolutionarily related to both. Research presented by the Max Planck Institute in 2010 identified a Denisovan contribution to the ancestors of some Oceanian populations. Different evidence can thus reveal a branch not previously recognised from appearance alone. [M13]

Discovering another branch does not turn the human family tree into a translation of a narration's number of worlds. A genetically identified population is not necessarily a "world" in narrative terminology, and changes in scientific classification do not rewrite the report each time.

Other Species Showing the Breadth of Comparison

Homo erectus has an approximate introductory range from 1.89 million to 110,000 years ago. Its broad distribution and evidence of variation between populations cannot be reduced to one drawing placed beside the name nasnas and declared a match. [M16]

The accepted Homo floresiensis fossils from Flores in Indonesia date to approximately 100,000–60,000 years ago, with attributed tools extending to around 50,000 years ago. Small stature does not establish the descriptions of a one-sided creature found in some tales: a measured anatomical feature differs from a literary image. [M17]

In South Africa, Homo naledi remains have been dated to approximately 335,000–236,000 years ago. Their features form a varied combination, and their precise position in the family tree remains under study. These selected examples illustrate the diversity of evidence; they are not a complete list of proposed palaeoanthropological species. [M18]

Why Did Neanderthals Disappear?

Research examines interacting factors including climate fluctuations, small and scattered populations, competition for resources, interbreeding and assimilation. The record does not provide one answer establishing each factor's contribution in every region. Local disappearance may have occurred at different times, without the last individuals everywhere dying in one event. [M8]

Extinction here means the end of a distinguishable population as an independent group in the known record. It does not mean the loss of every genetic trace it left in other humans. This

matters when comparing it with reports of destruction or removal, whose wording and meaning must first be established.

Are Neanderthals the Nasnas, or Humans Before Adam?

The central texts read here contain no scientific description connecting nasnas with a particular Neanderthal skull, genome or site. Nor does fossil evidence carry a label bearing that narrative name. Antiquity, general human resemblance and genetic traces in some living people do not establish identity.

Neanderthal coexistence with *Homo sapiens* populations also does not settle their relationship to Adam in religious inquiry. That depends on understanding texts about Adam and lineage, and how those concepts relate to biological classification. The material studied supplies no numerical date for Adam that can be placed within the scientific chronology to judge every species.

I distinguish investigating possibility from establishing a claim. A reader may propose a reconciling hypothesis, but must identify its evidence and what could disprove it. Changing the meaning of nasnas with each discovery to match the newest scientific name supplies no proof; it merely moves the gap.

The Outcome of Comparison

Scientific evidence establishes ancient human diversity, relationships and admixture through material and genetic findings. Within our work's scope, particular reports are established as present in their sources, with differing transmission statuses and meanings. An equivalence between a community in a narration and a particular fossil species has not been demonstrated in this book.

This chapter belongs to the scientific revision material. Later discoveries and conclusions drawn from them must not be attributed to the recorded authorship date of 2023. I hope it helps readers approach a scientific account with the same care they bring to a transmitted report: attention to its source and a distinction between evidence, interpretation and the limits of the conclusion.

Chapter Twenty-Three: The Beginning of Adam's Era, Peace Be upon Him

The Boundary at Which This Book Stops

We have reached the threshold of another subject: Adam and the descendants of present humanity. I do not wish to repeat the series' volume on humanity or anticipate its discussions of his creation, instruction and responsibility. It is enough to see that examining what came before does not make Adam incidental. It helps distinguish the beginning of our era from everything that may have existed before it.

The verse concerning succession announces a successor on Earth and presents a question whose answer ends with God's knowledge of what the questioners do not know. Throughout this book it has invited reflection without becoming a list of earlier inhabitants. At the end, what arrests my attention is not a claim to know everything absent, but the breadth of divine knowledge beyond the picture we encompass. [Al-Baqarah 2:30]

A Beginning Is Responsibility, Not Privilege without Obligation

Reading creation's history solely as ranks of existence can make us forget conduct. For a human being who receives knowledge and chooses actions, Earth's past alone cannot establish personal worth. Moral value rests neither on contempt for earlier beings nor on living later, but appears in justice, mercy and truthfulness.

I offer this as ethical reflection by a reader, rather than historical detail extracted from the nasnas report. Reading these accounts has taught me that vigilance against corruption begins with the self that reads, rather than distant creatures unable to answer what we attribute to them.

From Questions about Others to Questions about Ourselves

We have long asked who was here before us. At this boundary we may also ask what we do with our own presence here. The second question does not cancel the first; it gives it a human direction. Knowledge that increases curiosity without increasing honesty has an incomplete effect upon our lives.

This book's scope therefore ends at the beginning of Adam's era. His descendants, their history and their paths of guidance belong elsewhere in the series. The books' order provides a reading thread, rather than evidence for the sequence of every cosmic detail or a substitute for proof in any question.

Chapter Twenty-Four: What Have We Learned from Creation Before Adam?

Creation's Breadth and Our Limited Information

My first lesson is that the breadth of divine power does not automatically give me knowledge of its effects in detail. I may believe that no creation is beyond God's power, but cannot fill Earth's history with everything I can imagine and attribute it to religion. Possibility exceeds what occurred; what occurred exceeds what has been reported to us; and what has been reported exceeds what is securely attributed.

The second lesson is that preserving a question can be more useful than answering hastily. Questions of form, names, daily life and endings remain open in many places. That is not a failure of reading. Failure comes when a writer closes a question with an unsupported answer, leaving readers false confidence that may later be difficult to reconsider.

Faithfulness Is Part of Worship

I honour the narrations by transmitting them in their proper places, distinguishing words attributed to an infallible authority from commentary, and attributing judgements of transmission and textual assessment to the scholars on whom I rely. I disclose variants without hiding them or independently judging them. I likewise preserve science's limits by presenting what specialist sources say and what they do not answer.

I have tried to combine love of knowledge with fear of speaking without it. If I am right, it is through God's enabling; if mistaken, neither the sources nor the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, should bear my misunderstanding or inadequate expression. Good intentions do not remove responsibility; they make revision more pressing.

A Book That Opens a Path

I do not want readers to leave with one fixed picture of the nasnas, but with a way of reading that tests the images offered to them. Ask about the source, then the route, wording, context and extent of the conclusion. Doing so takes something from this book more lasting than a marvellous tale.

If these pages lead readers back to the Qur'an, to care when reading hadith, and to greater humility before creation's history, they will have achieved what I hope for them. The remaining path promises no knowledge of every unseen thing. It invites inquiry that preserves the mind's activity, faith's sincerity and human dignity.

Conclusion: What Was Established, What Was Possible and What Remains Open

When we began, the space before our beginning seemed a distant page crowded with images. At the end, not all its blankness has become writing, but we understand better where it lies. Here is a verse explicitly stating an earlier creation; here a report transmitted with scholarly explanation; here a word read differently in two sources; here a physical trace examined by scientific methods. With these markers I leave the page to the reader.

Our inquiry began with the Holy Qur'an. We preserved its explicit statement that the jann were created before, read the angels' scene at Adam's creation, and considered verses on water, living creatures, the breadth of the heavens and Earth, and resurrection. We did not make *nasnas* a Qur'anic term or impose narrative numbers on a verse that does not state them. Every witness deserves to retain the standing its own meaning permits.

We then compared reports of the *nasnas* and earlier worlds in specified sources. We found a consequential difference between *ubinu* and *ubidu*, distinguished one route from another and a later compilation from its source, and read seven, a thousand thousand and twelve thousand in different contexts. We neither constructed an Earth-creation calendar by combining these numbers nor mistook many books repeating a report for many independent routes.

We preserved the distinction between a text's presence in a book and scholars' judgements about it. We reported explanations of names, attestations of some narrators' reliability, and judgements of weakness or unknown status attributed to specialists, recording chains as the sources presented them. This honours both the text and those who transmitted and explained it. Reliance on their scholarship is accompanied by care not to add what they never said.

The central witnesses gave us no detailed *nasnas* history of named individuals, cities and livelihoods. The word moves between earlier creation, lexical usage and descriptive evaluation. These differences themselves form part of the result: not everything said under one name describes a single community, and assembling scattered images does not establish its history.

Neanderthals opened another window. We saw fossils, tools and ancient DNA reveal extinct human populations, coexistence, relationships and admixture. Shanidar taught us that evidence can remain significant even when a familiar explanatory story changes. Reconsidering the flower hypothesis does not erase the remains or the question of treatment of the dead.

This evidence did not establish that Neanderthals are the *nasnas*, and the texts studied supplied no numerical date for Adam by which to divide every fossil species into before and after. A proposed connection therefore still needs its own argument. Respect for knowledge requires stating that gap clearly while acknowledging what each field establishes within its limits.

The journey also teaches that different appearance does not justify contempt, and limited information about a community does not make it a blank page on which we may write whatever

we wish. If we seek justice for beings unable to object to our descriptions, justice towards the people we meet today is still more immediate and more directly tests us.

Perhaps the hardest lesson is that a beautiful sentence sometimes needs to step back. Imagination may complete the picture of a vanished community's last morning, but I possess no report of that morning. I can describe my wonder before absence and the questions it awakens; I have no right to turn that wonder into events.

When I began writing the series in 2017, I hoped readers could connect fields of knowledge without losing each field's particular character. This sixth volume leaves them at the beginning of Adam's era, peace be upon him, to continue with *The Story of the Human Being* on human creation and life, and *The Story of Guidance* on the path of revelation. A desire for understanding unites these books, rather than a claim that one volume can exhaust creation.

My responsibility in these pages is collection, faithful transmission and clear explanation. I accept responsibility for the understanding I express, credit the investigation of narrations to the scholars whose books I rely upon, and attribute their views to them. May the records and references assist readers; may anyone identifying an error in quotation or citation find an open door and a statement whose location can be identified and corrected.

At the journey's end I return to those whose presence gives beginning its meaning in my life: my father and mother, my wife, my two sons and my daughter, my teachers and students. You have my love and gratitude. Every reader who patiently followed a question, corrected a word or identified a source shares in my prayers. Some books finish their pages while the companionship of those who helped them remains.

My Lord, grant us knowledge that brings humility, honesty that welcomes correction, and hearts that find greater thankfulness in the breadth of Your creation. Let our desire to complete an account never make us speak of You without knowledge. Make the good in these pages beneficial, and their errors visible to those who can correct them.

We leave blank spaces in the record, but place keys to reading beside it. What we do not know of Earth's past need not prevent an honest line in its present, or the opportunity for those after us to know more than we did.

Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha Al-Sarraf Al-Husseini

Date of authorship: 2 July 2023 / 14 Dhu al-Hijjah 1444 AH.

Designated revision and update date: 17 April 2026 / 29 Shawwal 1447 AH.

The dates of the book, series and edition remain separate information. Later scientific additions are not attributed to the original authorship year.

Appendices

Appendix One: Qur'anic Verses Cited

This appendix gathers the nineteen complete verses quoted in the main text and identifies their use. A verse's indication of a general principle does not imply that it establishes every narrative detail compared with it.

God Most High says: "Do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Hearing, sight and the heart: each of these will be called to account." Surah al-Isra', 17:36.

God Most High says: "Say: Travel through the earth and observe how He began creation. Then God will bring forth the later creation. God has power over all things." Surah al-'Ankabut, 29:20.

God Most High says: "And when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am placing a successor on Earth,' they said, 'Will You place there one who causes corruption and sheds blood, while we glorify You with praise and proclaim Your holiness?' He said, 'I know what you do not know.'" Surah al-Baqarah, 2:30.

God Most High says: "Were We wearied by the first creation? Rather, they are in confusion about a new creation." Surah Qaf, 50:15.

God Most High also says: "On the day when Earth is changed into another Earth, and the heavens likewise, and they appear before God, the One, the All-Subduing." Surah Ibrahim, 14:48.

God Most High says: "O humanity, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and spread from the two many men and women. Be mindful of God, in whose name you ask one another, and honour the bonds of kinship. God is ever watchful over you." Surah al-Nisa', 4:1.

God Most High says: "And the jann We created before, from the fire of scorching wind." Surah al-Hijr, 15:27.

God Most High says: "And when We said to the angels, 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam,' they prostrated, except Iblis. He was of the jinn and departed from his Lord's command. Will you then take him and his offspring as protectors instead of Me, though they are enemies to you? What an evil exchange for the wrongdoers!" Surah al-Kahf, 18:50.

God Most High says: "He is the One who created the heavens and Earth in six days, and His Throne was upon the water, that He might test you as to which of you is best in conduct. Yet if you say, 'You will surely be raised after death,' those who disbelieve will say, 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery.'" Surah Hud, 11:7.

God Most High says: “Have those who disbelieve not seen that the heavens and Earth were joined together, and We parted them, and made from water every living thing? Will they not then believe?” Surah al-Anbiya’, 21:30.

God Most High says: “God created every moving creature from water. Among them are those that move upon their bellies, those that walk upon two legs and those that walk upon four. God creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things.” Surah al-Nur, 24:45.

God Most High says: “Among His signs are the creation of the heavens and Earth and the living creatures He has dispersed throughout them. He has power to gather them whenever He wills.” Surah al-Shura, 42:29.

God Most High says: “God is the One who created seven heavens, and of Earth their like. The command descends among them so that you may know that God has power over all things and that God encompasses all things in knowledge.” Surah al-Talaq, 65:12.

God Most High says: “And horses, mules and donkeys, for you to ride and for adornment; and He creates what you do not know.” Surah al-Nahl, 16:8.

God Most High says: “Has there come upon the human being a period of time when he was not a thing mentioned?” Surah al-Insan, 76:1.

God Most High says: “Your Lord is the Self-Sufficient, the Possessor of mercy. If He wills, He can remove you and cause whatever He wills to succeed you, just as He brought you forth from the descendants of other people.” Surah al-An‘am, 6:133.

God Most High says: “We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outstripped.” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:60.

God Most High says: “In replacing you with your like and bringing you forth in a form you do not know.” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:61.

God Most High says: “You have already known the first creation; why, then, do you not take heed?” Surah al-Waqi‘ah, 56:62.

Locations: al-Isra’ 17:36 in the method section; al-‘Ankabut 29:20 in Chapter One; the remaining verses in Chapter Two and related discussions. Contextual references also occur to Fussilat 41:9–12, al-Sajdah 32:7–9 and Sad 38:71–76. Chapter Twenty-Three returns to the meaning of the succession verse without repeating its text.

Appendix Two: Record of the Central Narrative Texts

The following passages are selections rather than complete texts of the longer reports. Each passage in quotation marks is a limited quotation; the remaining text is editorial description. Selecting a passage does not imply that the rest is absent from its source.

[R1] The Nasnas Report through Tafsir al-Qummi

Source compared directly: Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, Maktabat al-Huda publications, Matba‘at al-Najaf, 1386 AH as stated on the title page, corrected, annotated and introduced by Sayyid Tayyib al-Musawi al-Jaza‘iri; pp. 36–37, with the continuing context on p. 38, from the scan preserved by New York University Library. Compared with al-Burhan, vol. 1, p. 171, report 386/[5], and Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, p. 273, report 161.

From the opening in al-Burhan: “God, Blessed and Exalted, wished to create a creation with His hand, after seven thousand years had passed for the jinn and the nasnas on Earth.”

From the ending in al-Burhan: “And I shall separate the nasnas away from My earth and cleanse it of them.” The scanned Tafsir al-Qummi edition, p. 37, reads: “And I shall destroy the nasnas from My earth.” The reading wa-ubidu also occurs in the compared quotation in al-Bihar. The variants have not been combined into a single quotation.

The route displayed in al-Burhan, in catalogue form: ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim, from his father, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from ‘Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, from Thabit al-Hadhdha’, from Jabir ibn Yazid, from Abu Ja‘far, from his father, from his forefathers, from the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon them. The image of Tafsir al-Qummi, p. 36, reads: “from ‘Amr ibn Miqdam, from Thabit al-Hadhdha’, from Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju‘fi.” Al-Khu‘i’s explanation of the name is attributed to him in Chapter Eleven, while each source’s form is preserved in its place.

For al-Khu‘i’s explanation of ‘Amr’s name and identification of Thabit al-Hadhdha’, and scholarly statements about narrators and routes, see Chapter Eleven and [M3].

Meaning examined: the name’s occurrence in a report before Adam’s creation. Transmission note: the sources’ wording and scholars’ judgements retain their proper locations. Descriptions concerning the children of the jann within the report are not automatically transferred to the nasnas.

[R2] The Nasnas Report through ‘Ilal al-Shara’i‘

Source compared directly: ‘Ilal al-Shara’i‘, vol. 1, chapter 96, “The Cause of Natures, Desires and Affections,” report 1, second edition corrected and annotated by Sayyid Fadl Allah al-Tabataba‘i al-Yazdi, al-Matba‘ah al-‘Ilmiyyah, Qum; the passages used occur on pp. 139–141. These correspond to pp. 104–105 in the digital text identifying the al-Maktabah al-Haydariyyah edition of 1385 AH/1966. Compared with Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, pp. 82–83, report 38.

The printed opening reads: “When He wished to create a creation with His hand, after seven thousand years had passed for the jinn and the nasnas on Earth.” The al-Bihar quotation conveys the same opening but has li-l-jinn, “for the jinn,” where the printed passage has min al-jinn. The difference between min al-jinn and li-l-jinn is preserved according to each witness.

The image of p. 141 reads: “And I shall separate the nasnas from My earth and cleanse it of them.” The corresponding passage consulted in al-Bihar agrees.

The scanned edition's route, in catalogue form: Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from 'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, from Jabir, from Abu Ja'far, who said that the Commander of the Faithful said it, peace be upon them. Catalogue form abbreviates transmission formulas; it does not replace the report's text.

The notable difference from [R1] is the absence of Thabit al-Hadhdha' from the 'Ilal al-Shara'i' route in the image of p. 139. Each route is recorded according to its source. For the narrator's name, I refer to al-Khu'i's statement in Chapter Eleven without independently judging the origin of this difference.

[R3] A Thousand Thousand Worlds and a Thousand Thousand Adams

Source read electronically: al-Saduq, al-Tawhid, chapter 38, "On the Greatness of God, Majestic Is His Majesty," report 2, p. 277. Source compared in an image: al-Khisal, al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyyah edition, Najaf, 1391 AH/1971, p. 615, report 54 in the sections on numbers above one thousand.

The relevant passage: "Perhaps you think that God created only this one world, and that He created no human beings other than you. Yes, by God, God has created a thousand thousand worlds and a thousand thousand Adams. You belong to the last of those worlds and those Adams."

The preceding passage concerns a creation renewed after this world's disappearance and the fate of the inhabitants of Paradise and Hell. Its future description must not be transferred to the past without evidence.

The route in the electronic al-Tawhid text and scanned al-Khisal, in catalogue form: al-Saduq's father, from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allah, from Muhammad ibn 'Isa, from al-Hasan ibn Mahbub, from 'Amr ibn Shimr, from Jabir ibn Yazid, from Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him. The displayed chains agree. Their presence in two works does not alone create independent multiplicity that removes the significance of the shared narrator.

Narrator-related reservation: 'Amr ibn Shimr. Al-Najashi describes him as very weak in entry 765, p. 287; al-Khu'i quotes this in entry 8938. Al-Najashi's passage was read electronically. The route is therefore not described here as sound, and its narrator must not be confused with 'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam in the nasnas report. [M3]

[R4] The Seven Worlds

Text compared in an image: Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, corrected and annotated by Hashim al-Rasuli al-Mahallati, first edited al-A'jami edition, Beirut, 1411 AH/1991, vol. 2, p. 255, report 57. This corresponds to p. 238 in the electronic presentation used.

The passage concerning the past in the al-'Ayyashi image: "Since creating Earth, God has created upon it seven worlds whose inhabitants are not of Adam's offspring. He created them from the surface of the earth, and they inhabited it one after another, each with its world. Then God created Adam, the father of this humanity, and created his descendants from him." Hamzah forms were normalised in the Arabic spelling without changing the words.

The text continues with the final destiny and a new creation, not quoted here. It was compared with al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, p. 328, the chapter on seven, report 45. That edition has "they are not of Adam's offspring" and "He settled them in it," whereas al-'Ayyashi has "they inhabited it." The electronic al-Khisal presentation numbers the location pp. 358–359.

Al-Khisal's route read in the image, in catalogue form: Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn al-Walid, from Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Saffar, from Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn Abi al-Khattab, from Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal, from al-'Ala' ibn Razin, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, from Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him.

Transmission notes: al-Khu'i's entry on Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal records his transmission from al-'Ala', Ibn Abi al-Khattab's transmission from him and his presence in Kamil al-Ziyarat, without an explicit individual attestation of reliability in the text used. His view on the scope of Kamil al-Ziyarat's narrator attestation is cited from Sirat al-Najat, vol. 2, p. 457, question 1427, as his attributed opinion. Chapter Seven gathers these statements without issuing an independent narrator-critical judgement on the report. Al-Tabataba'i's introduction to Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 7, explains the abridgement of its chains. [M3]

[R5] The Unnamed Creation

Location compared in an image: Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, first edited al-A'lami edition, 1411 AH/1991, vol. 1, pp. 49–50, report 8; corresponding to pp. 31–32 in the electronic text used. It begins with 'Isa ibn Hamzah recounting a man's question to Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him.

The passage defining our subject: "a creation that was neither of the jinn, nor of the angels, nor of humankind."

The context presents fifty thousand years in five periods of ten thousand: initial emptiness; an unnamed creation explicitly distinct from the three categories mentioned; subsequent emptiness; the jinn; and Adam's era. It states that seven thousand two hundred years of the last period had elapsed. These are details of the report read on pp. 49–50, not an adopted timetable of Earth's age or the world's end. The second period's earlier creation is not named nasnas; assigning that name adds an interpretation beyond the wording.

Transmission notes: the passage and durations were established from pp. 49–50. The compiler's route is not displayed in the abridged text, as explained in the account of its abridgement. Reference is made to 'Isa ibn Hamzah's identification in the Mu'jam without attributing to al-Khu'i a judgement absent from his entry. The numbers remain part of the transmitted report rather than a settled historical calendar. [M3]

[R6] Twelve Thousand Worlds

Source compared: al-Saduq, al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, Najaf, 1391 AH/1971, p. 602, report 14, under "Those Who Narrated That God, Mighty and Majestic, Has Twelve Thousand Worlds." This corresponds to p. 639 in other editions.

From the text read in the image: "God, Mighty and Majestic, has twelve thousand worlds, each greater than seven heavens and seven earths." The passage ends: "And I am the proof over them." The wording is recorded according to this edition and is not generalised to every electronic presentation or edition.

Route, in catalogue form: al-Saduq's father, from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allah, from al-Husayn ibn 'Abd al-Samad, from al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Abi 'Uthman, from al-'Abbad ibn 'Abd al-Khaliq, from someone who narrated to him, from Abu 'Abd Allah, peace be upon him. "From someone who narrated to him" visibly leaves an intermediary unnamed. No independent authentication of the complete chain has been undertaken here.

Use: Chapter Five, distinguishing many worlds from successive worlds. The relevant passage does not expressly identify these as earthly communities before Adam and does not mention the nasnas.

[R7] Water and the Beginning of Creation

Source read: al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, Dar al-Hadith edition, electronic presentation of vol. 15, p. 235, report 14883/68. Its footnote refers to repetition as report 14957. Another division of Rawdat al-Kafi presents it in vol. 8 as report 68, with another occurrence numbered 142. Edition and division numbering must not be mixed.

Opening passage: “Everything was water, and His Throne was upon the water.” Fire, smoke and the formation of the heavens and Earth follow. The report was read for thematic comparison, rather than to establish a match with a scientific cosmological model.

The displayed route begins with Muhammad, from Ahmad ibn Muhammad, branching through Ibn Mahbub, from al-‘Ala’ ibn Razin, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, and through al-Hajjal, from al-‘Ala’, from Muhammad ibn Muslim, from Abu Ja‘far, peace be upon him. The edition’s note explains the point where the chain branches. I rely on that explanation in presenting the route without creating an independent narrator-critical judgement.

[R8] People, Those Resembling People and the Nasnas

Source read directly: al-Kafi, vol. 8, Rawdat al-Kafi, report 339 in the electronic numbering consulted. Compared with al-Majlisi’s quotation in Bihar al-Anwar, Mu’assasat al-Wafa’, second edition, 1403 AH, vol. 24, pp. 95–96, chapter 35, “They, Peace Be upon Them, Are the People,” report 2. Al-Bihar’s footnote refers to Rawdat al-Kafi, pp. 244–245.

Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn recounts a man’s question to the Commander of the Faithful, followed by Imam al-Husayn’s answer concerning people, their likenesses and the nasnas, peace be upon them. The relevant passage refers to a group of people. Chapter Ten uses it to distinguish contexts, without converting it into anatomical classification or the history of Earth’s inhabitants before Adam.

At the beginning of the electronic unit consulted, the route is Ibn Mahbub, from ‘Abd Allah ibn Ghalib, from his father, from Sa‘id ibn al-Musayyab, who says he heard ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon him. Al-Bihar’s quotation precedes this with the route of the group through Sahl and the route of ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim through his father, both reaching Ibn Mahbub. I record what appears at each location and rely on al-Majlisi’s attributed judgement below, keeping the later lexical explanation in al-Bihar distinct from the report.

Al-Majlisi’s judgement in Mir‘at al-‘Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul, vol. 26, p. 210, at report 339, is “unknown” (majhul). It was read in the commentary’s own electronic text; the reference is to volume twenty-six. I transmit the grade as he records it, rather than treat it as a judgement of fabrication or independently identify the narrator whose unknown status he intended. The word’s usage remains contextual evidence within the limits of that attribution.

Appendix Three: Record of Transmission and Its Limits

The Qur'anic material includes the earlier creation of the jann, the heavens and Earth, water, diverse living creatures and creation's breadth, together with succession in al-An'am 6:133 and creation in al-Waqi'ah 56:60–62. Narrative witnesses include twelve thousand worlds in al-Khisal, p. 602; water in al-Kafi; and people, their likenesses and the nasnas in Rawdat al-Kafi and Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 24. Records [R6–R8] identify these locations and distinguish edition images, electronic texts and comparative quotations.

Chapter Twenty-Two uses specialist references on Neanderthals, Shanidar, ancient DNA, Denisovans, Homo erectus, Homo floresiensis and Homo naledi, alongside relative and radiometric dating and early life. These sources illuminate natural history and comparison; they supply no judgement on a narration's chain and do not identify the nasnas without evidence connecting the fields.

The worlds-and-Adams report occurs in al-Tawhid's chapter "On the Greatness of God, Majestic Is His Majesty," with a witness in al-Khisal, p. 615, report 54. The former location was established from an electronic text and the latter from an edition image. Their displayed routes agree. Al-Najashi's judgement of 'Amr ibn Shimr is quoted from his entry and al-Khu'i's quotation of it.

Reports are arranged by subject and temporal context. Visible differences between the nasnas report's two routes are presented, and original sources are distinguished from books quoting them.

I composed the introductions, dedication, acknowledgements and conclusion in the series' language and the spirit of this book's subject, while attributing verses, narrations and scholarly statements to their sources. Quotation is distinguished from my commentary so readers know who is speaking and where explanation begins.

The seven-worlds locations used are al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, p. 328, report 45, and Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, al-A'jami edition, vol. 2, p. 255, report 57. Both include "they are not of Adam's offspring," while differing between "He settled them in it" and "they inhabited it." References keep each edition's pagination distinct from the electronic presentation.

The nasnas quotations rely on images of Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, pp. 36–38, and 'Ilal al-Shara'i, vol. 1, pp. 139–142, second edition corrected and annotated by al-Tabataba'i al-Yazdi. Endings, name forms and Thabit al-Hadhdha's position are preserved as these locations show them, with al-Khu'i's explanation in Chapter Eleven. Al-Majlisi's judgement on [R8] is taken from the electronic Mir'at al-'Uqul, vol. 26, p. 210.

The collection includes the unnamed-creation report in Tafsir al-'Ayyashi, al-A'jami edition, vol. 1, pp. 49–50, report 8, and al-Tabataba'i's explanation of abbreviated chains in his introduction, p. 7. It also includes al-Khu'i's entries on Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal and 'Isa ibn Hamzah in Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith, and his explanation of Kamil al-Ziyarat's reliability attestation in Sirat al-Najat, answer 1427. I attribute this information and these opinions to their authors and rely upon them in transmission and explanation.

Scope: the book uses the locations and editions identified in its references, against which quotations were checked for wording and page numbers. It did not aim to collect every edition and manuscript

or every occurrence of nasnas in the tradition. Judgements of narrators and chains remain quotations from the scholars relied upon, according to their express statements in the cited locations.

Nature of the book: transmission, collection, arrangement and explanation, drawing upon source authors, editors and specialists and attributing their views to them. Repeating chain authentication after them is neither its task nor a condition of its completion. Nor does it attribute to them a general judgement they did not expressly make.

My responsibility concerns accurate transmission, clear attribution, precise references and explanations consistent with the material used. If an error in a name, word or page is found, it is corrected in place and in the related indices, while the quoted scholarly judgement remains attributed to its author.

Appendix Four: Significant Textual Differences

First difference: the nasnas' end. The scanned Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, p. 37, has wa-ubidu; the scanned 'Ilal al-Shara'i', vol. 1, p. 141, has wa-ubinu. Al-Burhan gives wa-ubinu while noting wa-ubidu in its source, and al-Bihar's quotation from al-Qummi agrees with wa-ubidu. Comparison preserves both readings in their places and explains their effect without an independent preference of my own.

Second difference: preposition and cleansing formula. Selected passages vary between "away from My earth" and "from My earth," and between "and cleanse it" and "then cleanse it." Small as they are, these differences reinforce the need not to construct a composite quotation and attribute it to one source.

Third difference: the route. Thabit al-Hadhdha' appears in the scanned al-Qummi page and is absent from the scanned 'Ilal page. Each route is preserved as its source displays it, without adding an explanation of the difference not transmitted from specialists. Al-Khu'i's identification of Thabit is attributed to him, while the quotations retain their wording.

Fourth difference: temporal scope. Al-Tawhid combines renewed creation in the future with earlier worlds and Adams. Descriptions from one context must not be transferred to the other.

Fifth difference: wording and commentary. Lexical descriptions of bodily form do not become part of the central narrative merely because they sit beside it on a page. A dictionary image is not attributed to the Imam without an independent text.

Sixth difference: the seven-worlds wording. The image of al-Khisal, al-Haydariyyah edition, p. 328, confirms "they are not of Adam's offspring," agreeing with al-'Ayyashi, vol. 2, p. 255. I therefore do not treat the electronic omission of min, "of," as an established difference between the books. The settlement verb does differ: al-Khisal has "He settled them in it," and al-'Ayyashi "they inhabited it." Each witness retains its attribution; no third text has been assembled from the two. [R4]

Seventh difference: the footnote's location. The note about Ahmad ibn Hilal on electronic al-Khisal p. 358 belongs to report 44, not the seven-worlds report beginning afterwards as number 45. This keeps the scholar's judgement in place and prevents transfer to another narrator because of a similar name or page arrangement. [R4]

Eighth difference: the narrator's name. The scanned al-Qummi page gives "Amr ibn Miqdam," while al-Burhan's quotation and the 'Ilal edition give "Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam." Abi must not be inserted into a quotation from the image without notice. Chapter Eleven explains al-Khu'i's preference for the latter form, distinguishing a witness's spelling from the preferred identification. [R1, R2, M3]

Appendix Five: Comparative Record of the Reports

Report	Scope of Meaning	Limits of Inference
[R1, R2]	The nasnas before Adam's creation; a duration and wording concerning their end.	No detailed cultural history or anatomy. Chapter Eleven sets out differences of route and wording.
[R3]	Earlier worlds, Adams and human beings, within a report also addressing future creation.	Does not name those worlds nasnas or assign them geological ages. Its record gives al-Najashi's judgement of 'Amr ibn Shimr.
[R4]	Seven worlds whose inhabitants are not Adam's offspring; earthly succession before Adam, father of this humanity.	Does not name the seven or connect any one to the nasnas. Chapter Seven reports its route details and scholarly statements.
[R5]	Beings explicitly described as neither jinn, angels nor humans; periods and succession.	Does not name them nasnas or connect them to a fossil species. The compiler's route is absent from the abridged version.
[R6]	Twelve thousand worlds; the subject is creation's breadth.	Does not explicitly establish earthly succession before Adam. Its route includes an unnamed intermediary.
[R7]	Water and the beginning of the world's formation.	Does not name the nasnas or by itself establish a match with a scientific cosmological model.
[R8]	Evaluative use of nasnas in a discussion of groups of people.	Does not describe a fossil population or an earthly creation before Adam.

Comparative outcome: collecting reports in one study does not establish that their subjects are identical. Their differences alone do not establish contradiction before each report's scope, transmission and meaning are examined.

Appendix Six: Glossary

Nasnas: a term with several inherited usages, whose meaning depends on source and context. A single definition is not assumed for every occurrence.

World ('alam): a group or domain of creation according to context; not automatically a separate planet or geological epoch.

Adam: the name of humanity's father in its familiar context; the report studied also speaks of multiple Adams. Shared terminology alone does not scientifically identify a species or date.

Matn: the wording transmitted in a narration, as distinct from its route of transmission.

Isnad: the chain of transmitters as recorded by the source. This book relies on specialists' judgements of it, attributing them to their authors.

Takhrij: identifying a report's locations, routes and wording in sources; distinct from judging it sound.

Narrator criticism (rijal): study of narrators' identities, circumstances and specialist judgements concerning them.

Indication or meaning (dalalah): what wording and context permit us to understand, distinguished from possibilities added by a reader.

Establishing a text's presence in a source: verifying that the book contains it; distinct from establishing that it originated with the person to whom it is attributed.

Mediated transmission: reading a report in a book quoting an older source whose copy has not been directly compared.

Ibanah: separation or removal according to usage. A detailed meaning in the report should not be selected apart from comparison and context.

Ibādah (destruction): annihilation; its presence in one reading alone does not establish which reading is earlier or better attested.

Homo sapiens: the scientific species designation for all living humans; not used here as an automatic synonym for nasnas.

Neanderthal: an extinct human species studied through fossils, archaeological traces and genetic material; not an established synonym for nasnas.

Denisovans: an ancient human population distinguished genetically from Neanderthals and Homo sapiens, with relationships and admixture among them.

Ancient DNA: genetic material preserved in old remains, extracted and examined under controls addressing damage and contamination; not available from every fossil.

Genetic admixture: the transfer of genetic material between populations through reproduction; it does not mean an extinct population survives independently today.

Extinction: the end of a species or distinct population; some genetic inheritance may persist in another population if interbreeding occurred.

Relative dating: establishing earlier and later from relationships between strata and evidence.

Radiometric dating: estimating age through radioactive isotopes and their decay products within the conditions of a particular method.

Stromatolites: layered structures associated with microbial activity, included among evidence for early life.

Appendix Seven: Limits of the Material Transmitted

Ending variants: the editions used give ubidu in Tafsir al-Qummi and ubinu in 'Ilal al-Shara'i'. The book presents both and their explanations, without attributing an unquoted preference to scholars or undertaking an independent manuscript-based choice.

The two nasnas routes: each is recorded according to its source, with differences in names and intermediaries and scholarly explanations where available. Many books quoting a report do not alone constitute a specialist judgement that its routes are independent.

Narrator judgements: scholars' statements are quoted in place, including Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal's details in Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith and al-Khu'i's view on Kamil al-Ziyarat's attestation. Identification is distinguished from an explicit judgement, and every statement retains its author and source. I add no independent narrator-critical verdict.

Numbers of worlds and Adams: the book presents the reports and their explanations without deriving from a number alone a cosmic map or years for Earth's history absent from the sources used.

The nasnas' form and livelihood: presentation is limited to the sources used, separating narration, lexical description and popular tale. A detail's absence from this material does not deny its occurrence anywhere in the tradition.

Comparison with extinct species: scientific information is presented from specialist references. Neanderthals or other species are not offered as an established interpretation of nasnas when the transmitted material does not state that connection.

This collection aims to bring scattered material within readers' reach and identify each source and speaker. The book is complete when it faithfully performs that task, relying on scholars' investigations, reporting their differences where present, and leaving unelaborated matters within the limits of what the sources tell us.

Sources and References

This list contains sources actually used in constructing the book. References distinguish scanned pages, electronic texts and quotations through other books, giving edition details where verifiable. Locations and pagination may vary between editions, so chapter and report numbers are also supplied where available.

I. The Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an: al-Baqarah 2:30; al-Nisa' 4:1; al-An'am 6:133; Hud 11:7; Ibrahim 14:48; al-Hijr 15:27; al-Nahl 16:8; al-Isra' 17:36; al-Kahf 18:50; al-Anbiya' 21:30; al-Nur 24:45; al-Ankabut 29:20; al-Shura 42:29; Qaf 50:15; al-Waqi'ah 56:60–62; al-Talaq 65:12; al-Insan 76:1. Contextual references: Fussilat 41:9–12; al-Sajdah 32:7–9; Sad 38:71–76.

II. Narrative Sources and Their Quotations

ʿAli ibn Ibrahim al-Qummi, Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1; corrected, annotated and introduced by Sayyid Tayyib al-Musawi al-Jaza'iri; Maktabat al-Huda publications, Matba'at al-Najaf, 1386 AH as on the title page. Pages 36–38 of the scan preserved at New York University Library were compared with quotations in al-Burhan and al-Bihar. Code: [R1].

Muhammad ibn ʿAli ibn Babawayh al-Saduq, ʿIlal al-Shara'i, vol. 1; corrected and annotated by Sayyid Fadl Allah al-Tabataba'i al-Yazdi, second edition, al-Matba'ah al-ʿIlmiyyah, Qum; chapter 96, report 1, passages read on pp. 139–142. Compared with pp. 104–105 of a digital text identifying al-Maktabah al-Haydariyyah, Najaf, 1385 AH/1966, and with Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 60, pp. 82–83, report 38. Code: [R2].

Al-Saduq, al-Tawhid; corrected and annotated by Sayyid Hashim al-Husayni al-Tihrani, Jama'at al-Mudarrisin publications, Qum; chapter 38, "On the Greatness of God, Majestic Is His Majesty," heading on p. 275, report 2 on p. 277. The electronic text was read; its route and numerical passage were compared with the scanned al-Khisal witness. Code: [R3].

Al-Saduq, al-Khisal; introduction by Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi al-Sayyid Hasan al-Khursan, al-Matba'ah al-Haydariyyah, Najaf, 1391 AH/1971. Page 328, chapter on seven, report 45 [R4]; p. 615, sections on numbers above one thousand, report 54 [R3]; p. 602, report 14, twelve thousand worlds [R6]. Images were compared from the copy available through Arabic Collections Online. Pagination differs from other editions.

Muhammad ibn Mas'ud al-ʿAyyashi, Tafsir al-ʿAyyashi; corrected and annotated by Sayyid Hashim al-Rasuli al-Mahallati, Mu'assasat al-A'jami li-l-Matbu'at, Beirut, first edited edition, 1411 AH/1991. Scanned locations: vol. 2, p. 255, report 57 [R4]; vol. 1, pp. 49–50, report 8 [R5]; vol. 1, p. 7, Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i's introduction explaining chain abridgement. The two reports correspond to electronic references vol. 2, p. 238, and vol. 1, pp. 31–32.

Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, vol. 1, p. 171, report 386/[5], quoting *Tafsir al-Qummi*. An intermediary source for comparison, rather than an independent route merely because the text is repeated.

Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 60, pp. 82–83, report 38, and p. 273, report 161; vol. 11, p. 106, the explanation and footnote concerning *nasnas*. References distinguish quotation, commentary and editorial footnote.

Al-Kulayni, al-Kafi, *Dar al-Hadith*, vol. 15, p. 235, report 14883/68, with the footnote's reference to report 14957: electronic text read for the water report [R7]. The report of people, their likenesses and the *nasnas* was read electronically in al-Kafi, vol. 8, report 339, and compared with *Bihar al-Anwar*, *Mu'assasat al-Wafa'*, second edition, 1403 AH, vol. 24, pp. 95–96, chapter 35, report 2, referring to *Rawdat al-Kafi*, pp. 244–245 [R8]. Repeated quotation is not treated as an independent route.

Al-Majlisi, *Mir'at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul*, *Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah*, vol. 26, p. 210, commentary on report 339: his judgement is *majhul*, “unknown.” The electronic commentary was read in *Maktabat Madrasat al-Faqahah*. The reference does not claim comparison with a printed-page image. Code: [R8].

Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Qulawayh, *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, edited by Jawad al-Qayyumi and the editorial committee, *Mu'assasat Nashr al-Faqahah*, p. 63, report 48/4. Electronic text read to locate Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal in the chain, together with the compiler's introduction. This is a comparative narrator reference relevant to [R4], rather than another source of the seven-worlds report.

III. Exegesis, Narrator Studies and Language

[M1] Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*: commentary on *al-Nisa'* 4:1, concerning the age of humanity, early humanity and present lineage reaching Adam and his spouse; *al-Hijr* 15:26–48, comparing the creation of humans and *jann* and explaining “before”; and *al-An'am* 6:133 on self-sufficiency, mercy and succession. Used as exegetical discussion, rather than a source of current fossil knowledge.

[M2] Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 11, p. 106: explanation of the term and the adjacent footnote. An annotator's words are not attributed to the Imam or the book's author without identification.

[M3] Sources of scholarly statements about narrators: al-Najashi, *Fihrist Asma' Musannifi al-Shi'ah*, known as *Rijal al-Najashi*, *Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islami* affiliated with *Jama'at al-Mudarrisin*, Qum: p. 287, entry 765, 'Amr ibn Shimr; p. 290, entry 777, 'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam. Al-Khu'i, *Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith*: vol. 4, p. 307, entry 1983, Thabit al-Hadhdha'; vol. 14, pp. 80–83, entry 8863, 'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam, particularly the judgement and distinction between narrator and route on p. 82; vol. 14, p. 116, entry 8938, 'Amr ibn Shimr; vol. 17, pp. 266–267, entry 11153, Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal; vol. 14, pp. 200–201, entry 9186, 'Isa ibn Hamzah. These locations were read electronically. Entry numbers stabilise references where website interfaces arrange volumes differently. Al-Najashi's words are separated from al-Khu'i's comments, and judgements on narrators from those on particular routes.

Continuation of [M3]: Abu al-Qasim al-Khu'i, *Sirat al-Najat*, with comments by Mirza Jawad al-Tabrizi, vol. 2, p. 457, narrator-related questions, question 1427. Reliance is on al-Khu'i's own answer about the scope of Kamil al-Ziyarat's narrator attestation. The electronic text was read; no image of this edition was compared. The conclusion is attributed to the respondent and not generalised to all opinions.

[M4] Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-ʿArab*, root n-s-s. A source for multiple lexical usages and associated tales, rather than proof of every tale's authenticity.

Al-Jawhari's *al-Sihah* and Ibn al-Athir's *al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa-l-Athar* appear within quotations and explanations. No independent examination of their editions was built upon here. Their mention must not imply complete reading or comparison of all their texts.

IV. References for Scientific Comparison

[M5] Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Human Origins Program, "Human Fossils." Used to explain the fossil record and the branching history of human evolution.

[M6] The same institution, "Homo sapiens." Used for the species definition and approximate emergence, without arbitrarily connecting it to a narrative name.

[M7] Smithsonian Institution, Human Origins Program, "Homo neanderthalensis": species introduction, approximate temporal and geographical range, and selected characteristics and archaeological traces.

[M8] Natural History Museum, London, "Who were the Neanderthals?": relationships, behaviour, varying evidence and explanations of disappearance.

[M9] University of Cambridge, Shanidar research team, "Revealed: face of 75,000-year-old female Neanderthal from cave where species buried their dead," 2024; together with Pomeroy and colleagues, "New Neanderthal remains associated with the 'flower burial' at Shanidar Cave," *Antiquity* 94 (373), 2020, pp. 11–26; DOI: 10.15184/aqy.2019.207. Used for the site and placement of remains, without assigning beliefs to its inhabitants.

[M10] Hunt, Pomeroy, Reynolds, Tilby and Barker, "Shanidar et ses fleurs? Reflections on the palynology of the Neanderthal 'Flower Burial' hypothesis," *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 2023; DOI: 10.1016/j.jas.2023.105822. The abstract was read in the University of Cambridge repository and used to distinguish pollen interpretation from the placement of bodies.

[M11] Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, "New timeline for Neandertal gene flow event," 12 December 2024, presenting Iasi and colleagues, "Neanderthal ancestry through time: Insights from genomes of ancient and present-day humans," *Science*, 2024. The institutional account was used for ancestry estimates and the admixture period.

[M12] Smithsonian Institution, Human Origins Program, "Ancient DNA and Neanderthals": genetic evidence, admixture and migration history.

[M13] Max Planck Society, "Neither Neandertal nor modern human," 23 December 2010: Denisovan research, relationships and genetic contributions to the ancestors of some Oceanian populations.

[M14] United States Geological Survey, “Powell Expedition—Geologic Time. Then and Now.,” 2 August 2019: Earth’s age and radiometric dating foundations.

[M15] Natural History Museum, London, Sam Rae and Lisa Hendry, “What killed the dinosaurs?”: non-avian dinosaur extinction, bird survival and asteroid-impact evidence.

[M16] Smithsonian Institution, “Homo erectus.” Used for approximate ages and diversity of evidence.

[M17] The same institution, “Homo floresiensis.” Fossil and tool ages are distinguished; the older age remaining in a website image caption was not adopted.

[M18] The same institution, “Homo naledi.” Used for dating the remains and the unresolved precise position of the species in the family tree.

[M19] Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Human Origins Program, “Dating,” by Kim Foecke, with contributions by Kevin Takashita-Bynum, edited by Rick Potts, Briana Pobiner and Jennifer Clark. Used to explain dating strata and fossils and the limits of radiocarbon.

[M20] Hayley Dunning, Natural History Museum, London, “The origin of life on Earth: From basic chemicals to complex organisms.” Used for early-life evidence, stromatolites and the distinction between life’s origin and diversification.

These scientific references serve introduction and comparison, not hadith authentication. The actual electronic consultation date for the material used in this revision is 18 October 2026, separate from the edition date on the title page. Information subject to change should be revisited for a later edition.

Indices

The specialised indices point to chapters and appendices addressing each question. The opening contents list gives their page numbers. These selective guides identify the principal discussions and help readers follow a subject back to its evidence.

Index One: Qur'anic Verses

Al-Baqarah 2:30: Chapters Two and Twenty-Three; Appendix One.

Al-Nisa' 4:1; al-An'am 6:133: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Hud 11:7; Ibrahim 14:48; al-Hijr 15:27; al-Nahl 16:8: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Al-Isra' 17:36: Method and Guide to Reading; Appendix One.

Al-Kahf 18:50; al-Anbiya' 21:30; al-Nur 24:45: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Al-'Ankabut 29:20: Chapter One; Appendix One.

Al-Sajdah 32:7–9; Sad 38:71–76; Fussilat 41:9–12: contextual references in Chapter Two.

Al-Shura 42:29: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Qaf 50:15: Chapters Two and Six; Appendix One.

Al-Waqi'ah 56:60–62; al-Talaq 65:12; al-Insan 76:1: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Index Two: Reports and Narrations

Nasnas through al-Qummi [R1]: Chapters Eleven and Sixteen; Appendices Two and Four.

Nasnas through al-'Ilal [R2]: Chapters Eleven and Sixteen; Appendices Two and Four.

A thousand thousand worlds and Adams [R3]: Chapters Six and Nine; Appendix Two.

Seven worlds [R4]: Chapters Seven and Eight; Appendix Two.

Unnamed creation [R5]: Chapters Eight and Nine; Appendix Two.

Comparing reports and limits of combination: Chapters Seventeen and Twenty-One; Appendix Five.

Twelve thousand worlds [R6]: Chapter Five; Appendix Two.

Water and the beginning of creation [R7]: Chapter Five; Appendix Two.

People, those resembling people and the nasnas [R8]: Chapter Ten; Appendix Two.

Index Three: Names

Adam, peace be upon him: Chapters Two, Three, Six, Seven, Eighteen and Twenty-Three.

The Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, peace be upon him: Chapters Ten and Eleven; Appendix Two, [R1, R2, R8].

Abu Ja'far al-Baqir, peace be upon him: Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eleven; Appendix Two, [R1–R4, R7].

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq, peace be upon him: Chapters Five and Eight; Appendix Two, [R5, R6].

Imam al-Husayn and Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon them: Chapter Ten; Appendix Two, [R8].

Jabir ibn Yazid: Appendix Two, routes [R1–R3].

Muhammad ibn Muslim: Chapters Five and Seven; Appendix Two, [R4, R7].

'Amr ibn Shimr: Chapters Four and Six; Appendix Two, [R3].

Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Hilal: Chapter Seven; Appendix Two, [R4]; bibliography, [M3].

'Isa ibn Hamzah: Chapters Eight and Nine; Appendix Two, [R5]; bibliography, [M3].

'Amr ibn Abi al-Miqdam and Thabit al-Hadhdha': Chapters Four and Eleven; Appendices Two and Four; bibliography, [M3].

Al-Saduq, al-'Ayyashi and al-Qummi: Chapter Four; Appendix Two; bibliography.

Al-Bahrani and al-Majlisi: Chapters Four, Ten and Eleven; Appendix Two; bibliography.

Al-Tabataba'i: Chapters Two and Eight; bibliography, [M1].

Al-Khu'i and al-Najashi: Chapters Four, Seven, Eight and Eleven; bibliography, [M3].

Ibn Manzur: Chapter Ten; bibliography, [M4].

Index Four: Books

The Holy Qur'an: Chapter Two; Appendix One.

Tafsir al-Qummi and 'Ilal al-Shara'i': Chapter Eleven; Appendix Two.

Al-Tawhid: Chapter Six; Appendix Two.

Al-Khisal and Tafsir al-'Ayyashi: Chapters Seven and Eight; Appendix Two.

Al-Burhan and Bihar al-Anwar: Chapters Four and Eleven; Appendix Four.

Al-Mizan: Chapters Two and Eight.

Mu'jam Rijal al-Hadith and Rijal al-Najashi: Chapters Four, Seven, Eight and Eleven; bibliography, [M3].

Lisan al-'Arab: Chapters Ten and Twenty.

Al-Kafi: Chapters Five and Ten; Appendix Two, [R7, R8], distinguishing electronic consultation from comparative quotation.

Mir'at al-'Uqul: Chapter Ten; Appendix Two, [R8]; bibliography.

Kamil al-Ziyarat: Chapter Seven; Appendix Two, [R4]; bibliography.

Sirat al-Najat: Chapter Seven; Appendices Two and Seven; bibliography, [M3].

Index Five: Terms

Adam, human beings, humanity and world: Chapters Three and Seventeen; Appendix Six.

Nasnas and multiple usages: Chapters Ten and Twenty; Appendix Six.

Isnad, matn and takhrij: Chapter Four; Appendices Three and Six.

Separation and destruction, ibanah and ibadah: Chapter Sixteen; Appendix Four.

Homo sapiens: Chapter Twenty-Two; Appendix Six.

Neanderthals, Denisovans, ancient DNA and genetic admixture: Chapter Twenty-Two; Appendix Six.

Homo erectus, Homo floresiensis and Homo naledi: Chapter Twenty-Two.

Relative and radiometric dating, radiocarbon and stromatolites: Chapter Twenty-Two; Appendix Six.

Index Six: Subjects

Limits of knowledge: Chapters One and Twenty-Four.

Multiple worlds and Adams: Chapters Five to Eight.

Time and numbers: Chapter Nine.

The nasnas' form and livelihood: Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

Understanding and moral responsibility: Chapter Fourteen.

Corruption and bloodshed: Chapter Fifteen.

The end and possible survival: Chapter Sixteen.

Coexistence, encounter and lineages: Chapter Eighteen.

Missing names: Chapter Nineteen.

Popular tales and human dignity: Chapter Twenty.

Science, fossils and evolution: Chapter Twenty-Two.

Shanidar, burial and pollen interpretation: Chapter Twenty-Two.

Earlier creation of the jann, the angels' scene, and creation of the heavens and Earth: Chapter Two.

Earth's age, early life, dinosaurs and the limits of comparison: Chapter Twenty-Two.

Fossil dating methods and measurement limits: Chapter Twenty-Two.

Index Seven: Transmission and Sources

A report's presence in a book and its authoritative origin: Chapters Four and Twenty-One;
Conclusion.

Distinguishing explanation, text and footnote: Chapters Four and Twelve; Appendix Four.

Repeated quotation does not establish independence: Chapter Twenty-One; Appendix Three.

Differences between routes: Chapter Eleven; Appendix Two.

Readings ubinu and ubidu: Chapter Sixteen; Appendix Four.

Method of collection and limits of the material: Method and Guide to Reading; Appendices Three and Seven.

Multiplicity and succession distinguished: Chapter Five; Appendix Two, [R6].

The nasnas' identity and limits of a Neanderthal connection: Chapters Ten and Twenty-Two.

Index Eight: Appendices

Appendix One: Qur'anic Verses Cited.

Appendix Two: Record of the Central Narrative Texts.

Appendix Three: Record of Transmission and Its Limits.

Appendix Four: Significant Textual Differences.

Appendix Five: Comparative Record of the Reports.

Appendix Six: Glossary.

Appendix Seven: Limits of the Material Transmitted.

The Story of Creation Before Adam

A journey through texts and the horizons of knowledge

**What do the sources tell us about creation before Adam?
What do we know about the nasnas and earlier worlds?**

This book gathers material scattered through works of Qur'anic interpretation and hadith. Across five parts, it moves from the tools of reading to earlier worlds and Adams, the nasnas, questions of comparison, and the beginning of Adam's era.

Alongside these texts, it presents specialist research on Neanderthals, Denisovans and the history of life, explaining the limits of comparison without claiming that the nasnas are any particular ancient human species.

My work is collection, faithful transmission and clear explanation. For the assessment of chains and narrations, I rely on the source authors, editors and specialists, attributing their judgements to them and keeping every statement connected to its source.



By

**Sayyid Hussam Zahaa Murtadha
Al-Sarraf Al-Husseini**

Original authorship: 2 July 2023
14 Dhu al-Hijjah 1444 AH

Designated revision: 17 April 2026
29 Shawwal 1447 AH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION