

Quest for a Creatorless Origin of Life - 20

Those actively searching for a spontaneous origin of life believe that natural selection of molecules was a key driver in the emergence of increasingly complex chemicals. They assume that after a very long time a primordial soup of chemicals formed. From further chemical activity among these sugars, bases, amino acids, etc, they believe molecules formed which were capable of making copies of themselves.

Over long periods of time these molecules would have grown in concentration, and also begun to develop into groups with differing properties. This would have caused, they believe, differing groups of them to begin competing for the same resources. This view comes with a belief that the laws of nature tend toward emergence - the spontaneous production of complexity by the action of energy on a collection of simpler ingredients. Lifeless combinations of atoms were seen to behave like living things - molecular evolution by natural selection.

In chapter 40 of *The Ancestor's Tale*, the author, after pages of suggestions, adds that there are many other theories not mentioned. "Maybe one day we shall reach some sort of definite consensus on the origin of life. If so, I doubt if it will be supported by direct evidence ... rather it will be accepted because somebody produces a theory so elegant that ... we will grasp the central idea of it all as so simple ... If that isn't how we finally realize we know the answer to the riddle of life's origin, I don't think we shall ever know it."

In other words, this leading prophet of atheism has no expectation of science ever being able to duplicate in the lab the process which lead to the fabled spontaneous generation of life. The Scientific Method involves not only the formulating of a hypothesis, but also the testing of deductions which have been drawn from the hypothesis. Since the physical superstructure of living things is chemical, then that testing can be performed in chemical lab experiments.

If the hypothesis is based on a correct understanding of a chemical process which leads to the formation of a living thing, then it will be possible to produce the results experimentally. Another team of scientists can replicate the experiment to produce the same results. Also, a peer review for evaluation of the experiment can confirm the validity of the work - that it does indeed properly test the hypothesis.

The above-mentioned book, whose subtitle is "A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Life," states in the introduction, "As things stand, it appears that all known life forms can be traced to a single ancestor which lived more than three billion years ago ... This book will be cast in the form of an epic pilgrimage from the present to the past. All roads lead to the origin of life" - pp. 7-8.

The mode of the "pilgrimage" is shown in stating that "The DNA information in all living creatures has been handed down from remote ancestors with prodigious fidelity ... We can read this record directly using the arts of modern molecular biology to spell out the actual DNA letter sequences" - pp. 19-20.

The differences which are seen in the DNA sequences between various organisms are interpreted to indicate the evolving of one species to another, over a construed period of time. And so the authors' "Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Life" is based on the modern belief that changes in the genes gradually produced all the species of life. These have been read from a molecular phylogeny, or diagram of evolutionary development of a group of organisms.