CHAPTER III

THE HUMAN BODY
Moulding of man:

"He hath created ye by stages." (Latif, 1969)

The holy verse cited above reveals the stage by stage creation of man. As ordained by Allah, the beginning of human life is through the mingling of fluids from the two parents. This results in the formation of an embryo to which bones are added at a later stage. The bones are then covered with flesh and in this way a definite shape is prescribed for the human being who becomes alive when spirit is breathed into him. Indeed the awakening of the non-living structure into a living being is according to the will of God. He ordains and there it is:

"Whenever He intendeth a thing, He but sayeth, 'Be' and there it is." (Latif, 1969)

The different steps leading to the moulding of a human being have been revealed in the following verses of Surah Al-Hajj and Surah Al-Muminun:

1. Nooh : 14
2. Al-Baqarah : 117
3. Al-Hajj : 5
"O People! if ye be in doubt in respect of resurrection, mark that, of a truth, have we moulded you first of dust into the form of a moist germ of life, then of a clot of blood, then of flesh, shapen and unshapen, that we might give you proof (of our power); and we cause to settle in the wombs (the germ of one sex or the other) at our pleasure for an appointed period of time; then we bring you forth as babe, then let you reach your state of maturity." (Latif, 1969)

"And surely of an extract of clay, did we start the making of man; Then in the form of a moist-germ did we place him in a safe abode; Then we turned the moist-germ into a clot of blood; then we developed the clotted blood into a piece of flesh; then made we the piece of flesh into bones; then we clothed the bones with flesh; and lastly did we bring him forth in his final form. Blessed be God, the Most Excellent of makers!" (Latif, 1969)

The holy verses cited above reveal the position of human beings and their future in the scheme of things made by Allah. After the absorption of the inorganic constituents into living matter, the living matter started reproducing itself. And since He has created the sexes the sperm gets deposited in the ovum and fertilizes it. The first change in the fertilized ovum is its conversion into a sort of clot of thickly congealed blood. Then the zygote cells grow by segmentation and the mass gradually assumes shape as a foetus. From the lump develop bones and flesh and organs and a nervous system (Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1938). Thus an infant is born who grows, matures, reproduces

1. Al-Muminun : 12-14
and then after a prescribed period of time fades away.

The above described facts of human embryology are exactly what we have been able to gather from modern histological techniques. Indeed birth and death are biological phenomena over which man has no control and never would we have because this is the absolute authority of the Almighty Allah.

(1)

"He it is Who giveth life and He it is Who dealeth death and He it is to whom all shall return." (Latif, 1969)

Structural adaptability of human body: 'Taqwim' as pointed out by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (1938) may mean mould, symmetry, form or constitution whereas 'Ahsan Taqwim' refers to moulding in the best of form and constitution. Glory be to Allah Who is all-designing and Who has not only given us the most adaptable body structure but also the best of qualities of head and heart.

(2)

"Certainly we have created man in the goodliest form." (Latif, 1969)

Skeleton is the frame-work of our body. In fact the entire body is built on a plan of bilateral symmetry having two halves or sides. This external symmetry is exhibited by arrangement of the trunk and head and the axial parts of the body called the limbs. There are two pairs of limbs with a succession of bony arches on each side, and a succession of

1. Yunus : 56
2. Al-Tin : 4
vertebrae in the middle line of the back suggesting thereby that body is not only bilateral in symmetry but is also of a linear type. And as we pass along the neck to the spine, we find an arrangement of bones forming the girdle of shoulder. A little terminal vertebra is located at the other end of the spine. Another girdle having a rather similar arrangement of bones holds the contents of the lower parts of the body. Each of the two girdles bear limbs. In this way we can assume an upright posture which is highly advantageous than that of the lower animals who lack such arrangement and have to walk horizontally.

The backbone is composed of a series of small and very peculiar bones called vertebrae. Altas supports the head in such a way as to provide maximum movement and this is an obvious superiority over other mammals whose head is balanced at only one point on atlas vertebra and has therefore a rather restricted movement. The atlas vertebra rests on the second vertebra which is known as the axis. This enables us to turn our head from side to side and since the head is freely moveable upon the neck we can look up and down and from side to side. This structural feature helps us not only in seeing things but also in hearing and smelling. The ease with which the neck can be moved in all directions is really marvelous. Indeed the atlas and axis vertebrae are a great gift of Allah to His people.

The upper and lower limbs have their own adaptive characteristics. While the knee and elbow help in performing
movement like a ball and the socket joints, fingers and toes are excellent structures for holding purposes and also help in locomotion. Ask a person who has lost a finger or a toe and you will convince you for the great gift of Allah.

The skin of man is extensive and covers the entire body. It is an unique structure in the sense that every person's skin is peculiarly his own and no other person's skin is quite like it. This is why finger prints of a person are his sure identity and the skin from one part of the body can be transplanted to another part of the same person in cases of emergency (Brecher, 1964).

The skin not only protects the organs underneath it but it also serves as a store house. If required, it can provide blood to vital organs and conserves the water content of the body. Being a poor conductor of light the skin shields the body from the harmful effects of light rays. The pigments present in it contribute greatly to the effectiveness of such screening process and it is because of this that people living in tropical countries where sun light is intense possess an unusual abundance of the skin pigment. Another important role of skin is the regulation of body temperature. A person may be exposed to fluctuating temperatures but the temperature of the body remains constant. When the body becomes overheated, the small blood vessels of the dermis get enlarged and carry more blood to the surface of the skin to keep the temperature in check. Evaporation from sweat glands of the skin also aids in getting rid of certain waste products. These glands which consist of a hollow ball
of specialized cells are able to extract water and other material from their surrounding. In addition to these functions, skin also serves as a sensory organ. Nerve fibres which extend out into the skin conduct sensory messages from the surface of the body to the spinal cord and the brain.

The skull of the human being is a unique creation of the Almighty Allah. It consists of a number of strong, hard and compact bones which are firmly and rigidly jointed together to form the base of the skull which holds the brain. The brain stores each item of memory so much so that even after seventy years of activity it may contain as many as fifteen billion separate bits of information. Marvellous indeed are the ways of Allah in protecting our bodies, making us the wisest of His creation and giving us a posture that is just right for us. In this way He ordains us to perform metabolic activities which enable us to keep the fire of life burning according to His will. "If we only care to reflect on the marvellous structure of the atom and on the still more marvellous nature of human mind", we become aware of the truth that Allah is all-designing, all-powerful and infinitely wise". (Abdul Majid Daryabadi, 1957).

\[1\] 1. Al-Zariāt : 20-21