According to the Qur'an and science, the human embryo is created in stages, starting with the conception of the sperm cell and the egg cell (nutfatan amshaj), then the stages of alaqah and mudgha up to the stages of bones and flesh. The Qur'an asserts, “Then We developed him into another creation” (al-Mu'minoon, 23:14).

The scientific explanation is, “At this stage it has distinctive human characteristics and possesses the primordia of all the internal and external organs and parts. After the eighth week, the human embryo is called a fetus. This may be the new creature to which the ayah refers.” The sunnatic or prophetic explanation is that after the mudgha stage, Allah (SWT) sends an angel to breathe into it the spirit (ruh).

This is where science and revelation diverge. Science will never be able to probe the supernatural realm. However, all the stages and accurate descriptions of the human embryo mentioned in the Qur’an were eventually discovered recently, in the latter part of the 20th century by modern science, centuries after these statements were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The question is, how could Muhammad (SAW) in seventh century Arabia, who himself was unlettered and was sent to the unlettered people obtain such detailed knowledge of the microscopic development of the human embryo without scientific instruments and tools and technical skills? The only logical conclusion is that it came from exactly where he claimed it did, from the one who created mankind, God Almighty. “So blessed be Allah, the best of creators” (al-Mu’minoon, 23:14).

In one of his lectures, Dr. Keith Moore, professor emeritus in the division of anatomy, in the Faculty of Surgery, at the University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, said: “It is clear to me that these statements must have come to Muhammad from God, or Allah, because most of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later. This proves to me that Muhammad must have been a messenger of God, or Allah.” When he was asked, “How do you explain this information in the Qur’an?” Dr. Moore replied, “It could only have been divinely revealed.”

Here is another testimony from Dr. T.V.N. Persuad. Professor Persaud is the Head of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada. In 1991 he received the most distinguished award presented in the field of anatomy in Canada, the J.C.B. Grant Award from the Canadian Association of Anatomists.

Dr. Persaud states, “Muhammad was a very ordinary man, he couldn't read, didn't know how to write, in fact he was an illiterate... we're talking about 1,400 years ago, you have some illiterate person making profound statements that are amazingly accurate, of a scientific nature... I personally can't see how this could be mere chance,
there are too many accuracies and like Dr. Moore, I have no difficulty in my mind reconciling that this is a divine inspiration or revelation which lead him to these statements.”

Prof. Moore was so impressed with the Qur’anic terminology and classification of the stages of development of the human embryo, that he suggested the adoption of the Qur’anic system of classification in place of the system currently in use by scientists today.

Prof. Moore proposed, “Because the staging of the human embryo is complex owing to the continuous process of change during development. It is therefore suggested that a new system of classification could be developed using the terms mentioned in the Qur’an and the Sunnah. The proposed system is simple, comprehensive, and conforms with present embryological knowledge.”

The famous French physician Dr. Maurice Bucaille after many years of research and study expressed the compatibility of the Qur’an and established findings of modern science. While addressing the French Academy of Medicine in 1976, he said, “Our knowledge of these disciplines is such, that it is impossible to explain how a text produced at the time of the Qur’an could have contained ideas that have only been discovered in modern times.” Based upon his extensive study of many disciplines of scientific nature, Dr. Bucaille later converted to Islam. ‘Such is the guidance of Allah, He guides with it whom He wills of His servants” (al-An’am, 6:88).

The three above mentioned scientists among literally dozens of scientists confirmed the accuracies of the scientific statements in the Qur’an. They were all surprised, speechless and amazed at the scientific accuracies found in the Qur’an many centuries before mankind discovered them to be scientific truths.

Science has brilliantly explained to us the process and stages of our development in the wombs of our mothers and how we are brought into this world through our biological parents. What science could not do and will not be able to do is explain to us the spirit, its nature and its connection with the human body. Such knowledge or metaphysical truths comes only from the revealed word of God through His agents who are identified as prophets and messengers.

The embryological discourse may lead to the following conclusion: if science concurs with the ayat; statements made in the Qur’an regarding the biological creation of man, no one on earth can then deny the validity of the meaning of such ayat. They are irrefutable. The inevitable conclusion is that we must then believe that the Qur’an is the true word of God, that His word is the absolute truth and that it alone can explain to us our purpose, role and position here on earth.

As previously mentioned, the spirit (ruh) came by the command (amr) of Allah (SWT). Paradoxically, the same two words are used in the Qur’an to denote revelation (wahi). Therefore, one may assert that there is a connection between the spirit of man and revelation.

“He sends the ruh (spirit) by His amr (command) upon whomever He wills of His servants” (Ghafir, 40:15).

“And thus We have, by Our command, inspired you (O Prophet) with a spirit (revelation). You had no idea what the Book was nor the faith. But, We made it (the Qur’an) a Light (nur) by which We guide whomever We will of Our servants. And you shall surely guide to the straight path” (al-Shura, 42:52).

Here, the Qur’an (the revealed word of God) is referred to as spirit (ruh) as well as light or spiritual light (nur). Surprisingly, according to the Qur’an, angel Jibril (Gabriel), the angel of revelation, is the holy and trustworthy spirit. It was angel Jibril, the trustworthy spirit (al-Ruh al-Amin), who brought God’s word, revelation (ruh) upon the spirit (ruh) of Muhammad (SAW).

“And most surely this (Qur’an) is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The Trustworthy Spirit (Jibril) brought it down upon your heart (O Prophet), so that you may give warning” (al-Shu’ara’, 26:192-194). Similarly one finds, ‘Say (O Prophet), ‘the Holy Spirit (Jibril) brought the revelation from your Lord in Truth, in
order to strengthen those who believe, and as a guide and glad tidings to those who submit” (al-Nahl,16:102).

The quoted ayat are a clear indication that there is a correlation between the spirit (ruh) of man and revelation. It is believed that the heart is the abode of the spirit. When the heart is devoid of spiritual guidance (revelation), it rusts.

In a narration, the Prophet (SAW) said, “Verily, the hearts rust (spiritually tarnished) just like iron exposed to water (and moisture).” The companions inquired, “How do we polish it, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied, “Remember death frequently and recite the Qur’an.”

In this profound statement, the Prophet (SAW) was quite aware of the link between the Qur’an and the heart. Regarding, “Remember death frequently,” it is to remind us that we don’t belong to this world. In other words, prepare your soul for the hereafter, the eternal abode before you depart this temporal world.

In a similar fashion, the Prophet (SAW) once said, “Be in this world as if you are a stranger or a traveler.” The fact is; we are on a journey and each one of us will one day return to where he or she came from. We are strangers in this world. We may recall the famous 1982 sci-fi movie, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, E.T. for short. It is about a lonely boy who befriends an extra-terrestrial alien E.T. who is stranded on earth. All E.T. could say is Go Home. So the boy and his siblings help him return home.

The E.T. concept tells our story. We, humans, are aliens in this world. We don’t belong here. We must be yearning to go home. This is a transitory period. We came from Allah (SWT) and to Him is our return. Remembering death will motivate us to achieve what is required of us here in order to return home safe and sound so we may enjoy the eternal bliss of the real abode, Paradise.

Sins and misdeeds tarnish the hearts. The Prophet (SAW) once said, “Surely, when the believer commits a sin a black spot appears upon his heart. If he repents and abandons the sin and seeks forgiveness, then his heart will be polished. If he increases in sin, then the black spot increases. That is the covering which Allah has mentioned in His Book, ‘Nay, but on their hearts is a covering because of what they have earned’ (al-Mutaffifeen, 83:14).”

The Qur’an is the cure for the diseases of the heart. The Qur’an is the agent that will polish our hearts. The Qur’an will remove all the particles and obstacles that obstruct its light from penetrating and illuminating our hearts. The Qur’an is the other form of spirit and nourishment that will keep our spirits alive. The Qur’an is our vehicle in our journey.

We must take pride in God’s last Book and Revelation. Indeed, it is guidance for all mankind. We are fortunate to claim it. We must also be grateful to Allah (SWT) for sending us His last and final Messenger Muhammad (SAW), who is considered to be the best of humanity. The Prophet (SAW) truly cared about us, taught and guided us to live a good, virtuous and righteous life so that our souls may return to Allah (SWT) as a contented soul.

Upon the birth of a newborn as he/she enters the lower world, the Prophet (SAW) taught us to recite the call to prayer (azan) in his/her right ear. This is the first welcoming station in this transient world. The baby may not be aware of what is happening. However, the soul is fully aware.

The azan which begins with “Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest, I bear witness that there is no god except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah,” is recited in the ear of the baby so as to awaken the spirit inside the newborn that has been in deep slumber for a very long time. It is to remind the soul of the first covenant it made with its Creator in the first creation in the world of command confirming the divine unity.

The azan is concluded with, “Allah is the Greatest (Allahu Akbar)! There is no god except Allah (la ilaha illa
"Allah).” It is a reminder to the soul that Allah is our only Master and Lord worthy of worship in truth, so serve Him according to the pledge.

The statement, “La ilaha illa Allah,” is something our souls recognize. The truth of “La ilaha illa Allah” is imbedded in the spirit. It needs to be awakened. The azan awakens the soul and the Qur’an nourishes it.

Only through the teachings of the last divine gift and final uncorrupted scripture, the Qur’an and the guidance of Muhammad (SAW), will one achieve the soul’s objective. May the Qur’an purify our hearts and help our souls return home as contented, not wretched, souls, ameen.