We live in an age of globalization, modernization, transnational social movements, and secularization. In years past, many scholars and others have argued that the role of religion would drastically diminish or that religion itself would become obsolete, that the public space would be emptied and expunged of God’s presence or any reference to a transcendent reality. Consequently, the public would be disenchanted with and distanced from religion. Many who had prepared eulogies for this anticipated event, however, have had to retract their words,¹ for religion remains a core element in many people’s lives and formulations of selfhood and identity.

Given this fact and given the continued relevance of religious traditions in validating ethical responses, many who engage in discussions on bioethics tend to look toward religion. So, what is religion’s role in the framing of a transhumanist discourse? The research areas of transhumanism and posthumanism are so provocative and radical, as compared to the more mainstream bioethical and medical domains, that Muslims must undertake a careful and diligent reflection from the Islamic perspective to determine whether such technologies would transgress their religion’s ethical and moral boundaries. Abd al-Hakim Murad (Timothy Winter) argues that the most pressing issue for the world now is not the “clash of civilizations” or religious extremism, but the scientific excesses that could potentially end traditional humanity and replace it with a new species that could edit and alter its own genetic code.²
The Human Being: God’s Deputy on Earth

Islam proclaims that each human being enjoys the highest status in the cosmic order as the noblest of creation (*ashraf al-makhluqat*) and is therefore referred to as God’s vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth: “I am putting a successor [*khalifah*] on earth” (Q. 2:30). Each person has been commissioned to actualize the divine purpose: to obey God and have an intense and profound sense of His cognizance (*ma’rifah*), love Him, and establish an egalitarian and moral-ethical public order without transgressing the boundaries set out by Him. This honor was not bestowed upon the angels (although they protested that they were worthier and therefore more entitled to it), because only humans possess free will and intellect. Thus, only they can deliberate and make sound decisions on the basis of free volition. After fashioning them with His own Hands, God inspired His divine breath into them and subsequently gave all people life, dignity, and trusteeship over their bodies.

According to the Qur’an, humans are composed of two contradictory elements: a divine spirit and mud or clay. The divine breath and primordial nature (*fitrah*) generate motivation toward that which is lofty and sublime, whereas the mud or clay turns them toward that which is low and the unbridled fulfillment of base desires. The knowledge of good and evil has been transmitted to humans by way of “revealed books” in the form of prophets, scriptures, one’s primordial nature, and the “book of nature,” all of which point toward the existence of God, who is worthy of adoration, worship, and submission. The freedom of choice enjoyed by humans raises them higher than the angels. Accordingly, nobility is contingent upon the bestowal of free will, knowledge, and discernment, as opposed to natural and racial characteristics. God summons each person to develop a bond with Him and perform noble deeds so that they can reap the rewards of their works in the afterlife. This conforms to the pretemporal pact that God made with humanity in preexistential time to worship only Him and to not associate partners with Him in His divinity. The scriptural passage describing this episode says: “[O Prophet], when your Lord took out the offspring from the loins of the Children of Adam and made them bear witness about themselves, He said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ and they replied, ‘Yes we bear witness.’ So you cannot say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘We were not aware of this’” (Q. 7:172).

The Christian doctrine of original sin is alien to Islam. On the contrary, one can make a case that there is a concept of original purity, because every human being is born with an unadulterated conscience and a primordial disposition to abide by universal moral and ethical values. In a prophetic tradition, Muhammad says: “Every child is born in his natural state of good