

Competition for Evolution?

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We tend to explain by the theory of evolution how animals came to be what they are. We also easily extend this theory to explain the evolution of humans, but not without losing some details. Among these details are the moral principles or ethics.

In the animal kingdom, only the first biological evolution is a matter of fact. This is exactly what Spencer, the great thinker, did. He made the following observations: (i) Because of the evolutionary process, the animal kingdom separates the biologically fit from those who are unfit. (ii) This process also separates the biologically successful from the unsuccessful in the human kingdom. (iii) Again, this process also separates the good from the bad in the moral world.

Now, this concept raises a serious problem for the modern man. Why? Because in human society, the biologically fit, the economically successful and the morally good—these three are all one and the same group of people. The opposite is also true. Those who are biologically unfit, economically unsuccessful and morally bad are all one and belong to the same group. Thus the wicked and the pure are separated categorically. It clearly means that those who are fit will survive, flourish and will become morally upright. It is true when competition is allowed to function freely. In other words, those who are unfit and weak

are lost because there is no mechanism or process to protect their interest. The cruel competition thus reigns supreme and produces inevitable consequences that lead to the survival of the fittest.

Spencer would justify that everybody shall develop competence to adapt himself to the surrounding conditions in order to be most productive and therefore happy. So far so good. But what is the guarantee that the fit will grow fitter and the benefit will not grow worse over time? It is a fact that the wealth of the affluent and the power of the powerful depend upon the poverty of the poor and the weakness of the weak. The rich have it that the evolution is a good thing. But it is good to them so long as they can extract profits from the poor employees. The paradox is that the rich will have to struggle hard to survive by preventing evolution from happening to the weaker beings. This is their struggle. So, the fit always need the unfit as 'a parasite needs its host' in order to survive. A big question that clamours for an answer is: 'Do the unfit conversely really need the fit'? The answer is, 'No'; the unfit can do without the fit.

It is, therefore, held that the fit would do it better for their survival if they make rooms for the process of evolution to take place unhindered. The unfit has to be made stronger. Even in the animal society, we see that the predators do not profit from the extinction of the unfit members of the forest.

This analogy is a truism for human kingdom as well.

An interesting story

An interesting story is told by way of illustration. If a tiger cannot catch a deer he becomes an unfit tiger. In the great struggle for survival the losers are the tigers that cannot catch their prey and ought to perish. Thus in such a situation the fit becomes unfit and the unfit fit.

Not only that. Over generations both the predators and the preys improve upon their quality of life and speed following the trend of evolution. Thus, the evolutionary process moves along great perfection in the midst of great insecurity on the part of both. None of them is better off if such evolutionary process is applied (since the general opinion is so).

The picture is similarly horrible in human kingdom also. Here some will be rich, some will be bankrupt; some work, some enjoy leisure; some rule, others are ruled; some are free, some are slaves. Starvation and disease would eventually remove the unsuccessful members leaving a few conquerors only to flourish.

This goes on if we do not interfere to slow down the process. This slowing down is an antidote to the pernicious evolutionary process. We recognize the culprit as *competition* and its antidote is *cooperation*. The former leads to destruction, the latter to life and joy perpetual. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda teaches us how to live a happy life by helping all who are in need of our help, thus avoiding the way of evolution that competition entails. He exhorts: ‘. . . the true secret of evolution is the manifestation of the perfection which is already in every being. . . . Even when all competition has

ceased this perfect nature behind will make us go forward until everyone has become perfect. Therefore there is no reason to believe that competition is necessary to progress.’ This is Swamiji’s view which he expressed while commenting on the aphorism 3 of chapter IV of *Rāja Yoga*.

Stress on cooperation is a must

Unfortunately we hardly have any world thinkers to support cooperation as an effective way to evolution in human kingdom. As Swamiji has put it in *Rāja Yoga*, it is not the (i) sexual selection and (ii) survival of the fittest that are sufficient to explain the process of evolution. These two causes may be advanced to explain evolution as process in the animal kingdom; but in respect of evolution of human body and mind, we need cooperation. We need to protect the weak. We cannot neglect them, hate them and just kill them simply because they cannot face competition. This is sheer barbarism.

This is unjust in that this makes the oppressors’ hands stronger. Since all progress and power are already in every man, strong or weak no matter, our duty as human beings endowed with conscience will be to remove the barriers in their path and when the barriers are gone, ‘in rushes nature’ to fill in the gap. Swamiji says, ‘Those we call wicked become saints, as soon as the bar is broken and nature rushes in’ (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 292). We have to help the unfit by opening the doors to the perfection which is the birthright of all. In fact, all religious people preach cooperation for the evolution to become complete. Our Yoga teacher of ancient times had laid stress on cooperation and not on competition. Swamiji was aware of human

beings, inflicting atrocities of various degrees on humanity. We also come across people in large numbers who, posing as philosophers, want to kill out all wicked and incompetent persons. According to them, this is the only way to preserve the human race.

Swamiji takes his stand against this claim. We know his package of programmes for humanity through service. He asserts that even when all competition has gone, man flourishes and steadily moves towards progress, ultimately attaining divinity. Ignorant as we are, we take to struggle and competitions. Swamiji explained the great Patanjali saying, 'These struggles and competitions are but the results of our ignorance, because we do not know the proper way to unlock the gate and let the water in. This infinite tide behind must express itself; it is the cause of all manifestation (Ibid.)' He said this by way of discussing Patanjali's aphorisms.

- i) *Jātyantaraparināmah prakṛtyāpurāt* (2)
- ii) *Nimittamaprayojakam prakṛitinām varanabhedastu tatah kshetrikavat* (3)

The first aphorism means: The change into another species is by the filling in of nature. What is the cause of the change of the body into another species? The answer given by Patanjali is simple. He says, it is done by the filling in of nature. How? The second aphorism explains this. Good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in the transformations of nature, but they act as breakers of obstacles to the evolutions of nature: as a farmer breaks the obstacles to the course of water, which then runs down by its own nature. The farmer has to open

the gates of the bridge of the canal; the water flows in by itself.

Swamiji says that all progress and power are already in every man. Only it is prevented from taking its proper course. If anyone can take the bar off, in rushes nature. Exactly in the same way we manifest infinite power in us and we do it not through competitions and struggles. We, out of our ignorance, feel that competitions help us in the evolution of our manifestation. The truth is that when the competition ceases to work, the power in us moves us forward until everyone has become perfect. Therefore we must help those who are trying to go forward by all means.

In spiritual world, we are all for all and all for everybody else. The same Ātman or Spirit pervades everything that exists. Therefore, we have to avoid and eliminate competition from our life altogether and promote cooperation and help. This is absolutely necessary because we have to protect all beings from being tortured, killed and discriminated against. It is simply brutal that in the name of evolution theory, one could release so much of hatred and perpetrate atrocities in the world. For the sake of this scientific theory do we have to kill out all wicked and incompetent persons and thus preserve the human race? Our answer is an emphatic 'No'. It is a wrong theory for humanity. The true secret of evolution is the manifestation of the perfection already within us. We are the source of all power. We simply do not know that. Someone must spell out that information and give guidance to us. Others' help to grow towards perfection is a must, says Swami Vivekananda. ■

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