

[The Secret Diary of Charles Darwin](#)

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The Secret Diary of Charles Darwin

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Evolution has never posed a grave philosophical problem for Hindus. While others agonize over whether God created life in the Garden of Eden or whether it emerged fortuitously from a slurry of Primal Soup, Hindus smile wryly and remain mute. They feel both sides have it wrong - the apes-are-our-ancestors evolutionists by taking the Divine out of the loop and the well-maybe-they-are-your-ancestors creationists by insisting on a simplistic interpretation of God's participation in this savagely mysterious process.

Though our readers are among the best informed in the Hindu world, I venture that if someone asked you "What do Hindus believe about the theory of evolution?" you would stammer affably and change the subject. I can say this with confidence, since there is precious little known and less written about the subject.

Here is the bottom line. Evolution in classical Indian thought (and this includes Buddhism) is diametrically opposed to Darwin's theory of evolution (TOE). While Darwin spoke of the ascent of man from lesser life forms, our rishis spoke of the descent of God. I call this the theory of descent and decline (TODD). Our scriptures declare that the Divine descends into the world, and first becomes man, purusha. Humankind is the highest biological form not because he slowly crept up the ladder to that jealous place, but because God willed to become him first. The urge to manifest gradually moves down and down through the tattvas and the lower forms of life. Then, that same One moves up and up through the process of transmigration, finally transcending the need for a physical birth on this plane.

If one wastes human years in instinctive gratification, some scriptures state, one may migrate in the next life to the body of an animal. Thus the soul can inhabit

bodies in a non-evolutionary sequence, depending on karmas, on how we live and think, on what experiences we need to progress. Though it seems a regression, such going back is part of a greater moving forward. Darwin does not conceive of the soul or its elevation to higher, spiritual planes of being.

In modern times, Sri Aurobindo and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan crafted theories of spiritual-physical evolution. While differing radically from the classical TODD stated above, both men spiritualize Darwin's concepts. Behind the physical evolution that biologists study, they saw a movement of spirit. The universe is a progressive becoming. For both, the world process is viewed as essentially an evolution of consciousness, not of matter and force.

Aurobindo said, "The dead mechanism of stones, the unconscious life of plants, the conscious life of animals and the self-conscious life of men are all parts of the Absolute and its expression at different stages. The same Absolute reveals itself in all these. The Ultimate Reality sleeps in the stone, breathes in the plants, feels in the animals and awakes to self-consciousness in man. It progressively manifests itself in and through these particulars."

Is Aurobindo's modern theory right, or is the ancient Hindu view? Is the world not evolving at all, but devolving? Seeking answers to these queries, I stumbled upon Charles Darwin's lost chronicles and discovered, to my utter astonishment, validation of the Indian TODD theory and a verdict against the TOE. Here then, is an excerpt from the authentically spurious and chimerical diary of the father of the theory of evolution.

Charles wrote: "It is a muggy April first day in 1835. This morning the HMS Beagle's prow turned out of Calcutta on a heading for London. I am sore beset this day. All we thought true on the Galapagos Islands has been shattered here in India, like a delicate porcelain doll on a dull stone.

"I am duty-bound to record here what I learned at the feet of a nearly-naked Holy Man. I now see it all so rightly. Everything tells me that biological evolution is wrong. One has only to look about to see that the world is running down, entropy is the fact that urges herself on us so convincingly. Life decays. Energy is lost. Who dares think of the petty probability that all this elegant beauty, all this efficient

complexity, might have fickle chance and unmerciful competition as her parents? Not I. Not any reasonable man.

"I have no doubt that species do adapt and change, and by a force of natural selection become established if strong and wither if weak. But one species transformed into another?

When did human eyes last see a new species originate? And to create 10 billion of them? I fear known time is insufficient.

"Upon my word, that pundit opened these benighted eyes. Who are the great artisans of your civilization?' he asked. I told him of Bach and Mozart, of da Vinci and Michelangelo, of Shakespeare and Plato. And when did they live?' he inquired. Centuries ago. I confided. And what of today's philosophers, artists, architects and composers? Are they not as competent?' Not nearly so, I offered.

"The pundit then spoke at length of the Egyptian pyramids and many wonders of the world and how even today they could hardly be equaled. He told of his own culture, of the wise men, the temple builders, the writers of the Vedas and Upanishads whose achievements stand unrivaled thousands of years later. You see,' his dulcet voice drawing me toward the conclusion like a spider's prey, 'it is the same in all cultures. The masters went before to heights not yet reached.

The purest ages went before, and the darker ages are following. Look about you. Knowledge and skills once common are now lost. Refinement of living once cherished is now scorned. Values our grandfathers fought for have been forsaken, even forgotten. It is clear that the notion of progressive evolution, whether in biology, art, philosophy, language or culture, must be scrutinized with caution and distrust. The Vedic vision accords more with simple observation, and that must be the test of every theory, including your own, which, may I say, is entirely too materialistic.'

"What of science and medicine? I asked. Are these not going forward as never before? 'Yes, there is progress. But let us wait a few centuries before we deem it

the best path. Let us first see what consequences science and medicine bring in their wake, be assured that their knowledge is not turned toward destruction and inequity. Remember karma. Every action has its reaction. The reaction to better railroads or less disease may not be less sorrow in the world.

"I must have appeared ashen, for the pundit assured me, 'Do not fret, Charles. The future is good. The cosmic cycle is leading us to God, each and every one. Though the body may be growing old and weak, the spirit dwelling therein is growing ever stronger. So it is with this world. It dawns, it decays, it disappears. That is the natural cycle. All the while God is nearer than your breath, closer than your hands and feet. All the while Love is lighting your path.'

"I have not slept this night, but mused that if I publish this knowledge in England my career will sink like a capsized brig. Alas, I have determined to publish the evolution idea instead. Britishers are not ready for more, and. I dare not give them less. I trust God, if He exists, to forgive us all."

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