

Beyond Evolution

Scott W. Moore
September 4, 2012

Survival of the fittest determines evolution. Evolution is defined by the survival of the fittest.

Survival of the fittest and evolution. These are professed to be what have propelled the animal kingdom and humans to their lofty stature.

Charles Darwin purports these theories to be the explanation of life. What is survival? Evolution? Are these the whole of life? Is life a mere existence of survival against an ever changing environment?

In Webster's New World Dictionary, the word "survive" is defined as,

1. To live or exist longer than or beyond the life or existence of; outlive
2. To continue to live after or in spite of.

Often, survival is deemed successful when one is still alive with the passing of a season or a year; sometimes, just living day to day means success. Survival is based upon three aspects of life.

1. Obtaining enough food to sustain one's life,
2. Not becoming food to sustain another's life and
3. Shelter from the environment, which one cannot control.

The definition of "evolution" is,

1. An unfolding, opening out, or working out; process of development, as from a simple to a complex form, or of gradual, progressive change, as in a social and economic structure

Scientifically, evolution is normally considered to be a change that occurs over a period of time that is much longer than an individual life. If the environment suddenly changes, then evolution, adaptation, can happen in very short time spans and even be considered an abrupt change.

It is factual that survival of the fittest affects evolution but it is neither the primary nor the all encompassing factor. It is often claimed that life in the animal kingdom is based upon overcoming the less fit: only the fittest survive. However, there seems to be the proverbial "fine print", when the animal kingdom exhibits a suspension of this "survival of the fittest"; animals exhibit future considerations: hope. Evolution, the miraculous unfolding, is evidenced in human achievements that are far beyond the individual or community day to day survival.

Consider a mother bear. Initially, her cubs are incapable of caring for or defending themselves. Their mother shelters and protects them from predators and other harm; she provides them with the necessary nourishment. She supports their growth, until they can manage on their own. Why is her instinctive “survival of the fittest” set aside? Does she recognize or, at least, hope for their “fittest” future? Does she foresee something beyond her lifespan?

Geese, in flight, form a “V” pattern. This allows less effort for flying long distances, except for the lead goose; after a time, the lead goose will take a different position in the formation and another goose will take the lead. Technology explains the advantage of this cooperation but why do they cooperate? Isn’t the sharing of the lead a contradiction of “survival of the fittest?”

Further, geese are very protective of their young and provide ample nourishment. A fascinating scene is to watch the parents teach the youngsters how to fly. Again, why? These young ones are not the “fittest”, yet the adults care for and support them.

What about people? Do people exhibit traits that contradict “survival of the fittest”? The answer is a definitive yes. There are innumerable examples of living beyond not just the fittest but evolution.

Albert Einstein presented the Theory of Relativity and other mind boggling concepts. What vision, in this comparatively mundane world, prompted him to think these thoughts of vast expanses of light and space, then define it mathematically? Within his environment, what promoted the mathematically incredible work of his mind and hands? His work is not related to day to day survival, as gathering food or defenses; his thoughts and comprehension were at least a giant leap ahead of the humanity of his day.

The medical profession presents a multitude of contradictions to “survival of the fittest.” Heart failure, cancer and broken bones are examples of medical conditions that doctors routinely address. Nurses, in hospitals, serve to help the ill recover health; in convalescent hospitals, nurses care for people who are no longer able to care for themselves. Much of the medical community is for the purpose of rehabilitating people to be physically fit. It is contradictory to proclaim “survival of the fittest”, yet strive to restore another’s life, health and fitness.

Everyday, police and military defend the lives and honor of people who are unable to defend themselves and, often, are the victims of attack. Firemen risk their lives to save others. Many people devote their lives to the care of special needs children and adults. When a natural disaster occurs, thousands of people go to the stricken region to aid the injured and survivors, while thousands more donate the materials that are needed. Are these natural progressions from eons of natural selection of the fittest?

Why do farmers provide food to millions of people? Isn’t this act in opposition to “survival of the fittest?”

It is not credible to claim “survival of the fittest” has caused world travel via airplanes, the moon walk and the space station. Unmanned exploration of our solar system is not the commonplace result of being fit!

Beyond Evolution

Listen carefully to the voice of great singers. Consider the talent of great composers. These incredible abilities have no relation to survival. Are these talents dismissed as the result of eons of evolution?

Human evolution cannot be based upon “survival of the fittest” because so much of the society devotes care, compassion and support to those deemed less fit. Yes, people are evolving but “survival of the fittest” is not the guiding or driving force. The evolution of humanity is based upon the fitness and success of one or a few being used to benefit all. Human evolution is about the community of individuals being as one. Life is living beyond evolution.