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Abstract

When we think about the theory of evolution, one thought creeps into every thoughtful mind for sure that if we have evolved through apes (like beings), this evolvement will not stop here? At *Homo sapiens* being the most modern, most developed, strongest, wisest version. For evolution seems to be a continuous process and definitely in future as per the survival of the fittest, and ironically even the most powerful as well, we will evolve into some other, even better species! Well without a doubt it sounds immensely positive and hopeful.

Till now we look at the sequence of evolution as (beings similar to) apes which have evolved into Homo Sapiens and will continue to do so until perfection. Hypothetically we can have a look at this sequence through exactly the opposite perspective, which leads us from being the most developed Humans to present day Homo-Sapiens through devolution and if this devolution keeps occurring with the passage of time Homo-Sapiens will devolve into (beings similar to) apes. In either case evolution and devolution do not seem to be stagnant or permanent processes and even if the pinnacle of either of these will be achieved, it won't stop even then, for change is the only constant in the universe. This thought/idea leads to a cyclic pattern of occurrences, which provides base for further research.

Modern science has only analysed the previous scenario whereas it should have been looked at both ways; for the present day scenario of exploitation of domesticated animals, unethical use of armaments and finances, man's hunger to attain power and quest to intrude into the workings of nature through experimentations of Artificial Intelligence etc. portray a different, fearful scene in front of our eyes. Also, if survival of the fittest is valid and right, due to the increasing population of human race and enhanced disparity, that day does not seem far when the more powerful humans start to massacre the less powerful ones in order to maintain the population of their beloved planet.

In this paper an attempt has been made to reflect this theory through adding consciousness and then by trying to analyse the same through the glass of time cycle in Jain philosophy, which indicates that what we understand as evolution, is actually devolution. We may hope that something very interesting and worth noticing is found.

Introduction

If we say that religious philosophies have washed our brains and conditioned our minds, we must include modern science too into the same thinking. For it is not about science or a particular philosophy but the innate human quest to know the secrets of the universe, to remove the layers of ignorance, and through them to find its bliss. To keep exploring, to keep analysing, to keep failing and to keep succeeding again. Ironically, both – science and philosophy can do blunders if fallen in wrong hands and in already conditioned minds.

Why and how humans have become extremely self-centred that they only ponder over their desires, their rights and their existence? Are humans the centre of the universe? If yes, what is the role of other beings in this cosmic scene? And if they have any role, how are they important? ‘Taking just insects alone, the number of living species has been estimated around three million, and the number of individual insects may be a million million million.’¹ Contemplation may lead one to a state of thoughts that if there will be no humans, the planet will flourish at its best whereas if we remove other beings from this scenario, some working, or the other, of the planet will be negatively influenced. For example – even “termites are important decomposers”² and even “parasites are integral components on shaping community and ecosystem structure”³. We all know how humans have harmed the ecosystem, yet being human is the most significant in context of finding the bigger purpose of existence.

No matter what, a living being is a living being, which grows, feels, reproduces and dies. The definition of life is – “The property or quality that distinguishes living organisms from dead organisms and inanimate matter, manifested in functions such as metabolism, growth, reproduction, and response to stimuli or adaptation to the environment originating from within the organism.”⁴ Which can be further divided into different groups like animal kingdom, plant kingdom, marine life etc.

“An octopus is nothing like a mouse, and both are quite different from an oak tree. Yet in their fundamental chemistry they are rather uniform”⁵. And in terms of being alive all three of these share the same consciousness, the same spark that makes life, life.

One of the ancient philosophers “Parmenides (c. 540-480 B.C.) thought that everything that exists had always existed. Nothing can come out of nothing and nothing that exists can become nothing. Parmenides took the idea even further and thought that nothing could become anything other than it was”⁶. These philosophical thoughts do not gel well with the theory of evolution because they make one believe that humane-intuition is the most reliable and it does not call for having absolute faith in the rationale.

Only by having an attempt to understand the same theory through inserting the consciousness in all beings, and trying to understand its journey towards infinity; not only we find a base of our existence but also a pinnacle of our future. Also seeing the evolution through the eye of consciousness we observe that evolution indeed happens but not only in physical appearance of a being but also in the level of its consciousness. We can have a look at it by peeping into the concept of soul in Jain philosophical text – ‘*Tattvārtha Sūtra*’ and by taking a description of our future as mentioned in one of the ancient texts of Jainism named ‘*Tiloypannatti*’, that describes the cosmology of the universe in detail. And to justify the same we can analyse our current day situations which motivate us to ask ourselves if we are on the right track?

On The Path of Self-Destruction

We seek for that which has origination and eventually goes towards destruction, how can we seek that which has always been and will forever be. That must be kept hidden, for that has the ability to get the lost race back on track.

Though the concept of time is extensive beyond limits and observation of few hundred or even thousand years cannot tell us the exact fate of the mankind however we can get a glimpse. Keeping the phrase ‘obvious does not need evidence’ in consideration, let’s not take the researches done by the renowned industries. Let’s talk to someone who is 60+ at present and ask him/her how they have seen the world changed in the past forty years? Morally, ethically, in terms of simplicity, stability in relationships, peace of mind and happiness. One can be assured that they will have volumes to speak; be it the decreasing age of becoming sexually active, increased divorce rate, rapidly growing consumerism, unhealthy and unethical eating choices and so on... But of course research is not something based on one’s personal observations hence let’s consider few well researched examples.

Though immortality has lured humans since time immemorial. However at present the human race is desperately preparing to defeat death. It appears that soon death will be the talk of the past as a metaphysical happening, rather it would be treated as a disease, cure to which could be found if tried. The famous search engine company Google is working in this direction. Very recently they have launched “a sub-company called Calico, whose stated mission is ‘**to solve death**’⁷. Without a doubt being curious is commendable and being humans we are blessed with this trait immensely but would it be fair for an inquisitive mind if it tries to play with the laws of nature?

Experiments in **genetic engineering** are at a pace where the aim is to engineer the most efficient and fittest possible children through the best DNA of both the parents but the scary truth is that “if the DNA test discovers the dreaded mutations – the embryo will be destroyed”⁸. Even this thought has the ability to fill one up with dread.

Uncontrolled boost of **animal agriculture** indicates a threatening future too. From the sugar we use in our cup of tea to the soaps we use, the medicines we eat, the food we eat, everything is derived from the animals through violent means. Vegetarianism may become a word to be found in dictionaries in a few hundred years (or even sooner) from now. For despite of the so called animal saving campaigns the population of wild animals is at a continuous decrease. Humans have very smartly managed to increase the populace of domesticated animals, be it pets they love the most or the cattle they love to eat or use for other means. This is scary indeed that “the world is populated mainly by humans and their domesticated animals”⁹.

Today “livestock systems occupy about 30 per cent of the planet's ice-free terrestrial surface area and are a significant global asset with a value of at least \$1.4 trillion.”¹⁰ In this scenario how could humans pay attention to the petty truth that even animals have souls or even they are the equally loved children of mother earth hence possess the equal right to live.

Ironically having the most developed brain has lead us to manipulate things, events, and use of other less developed beings in our favour. Modified and contorted view of few religions have played a vital role into the same. Where it has been directed in the adherents’ subconscious that only humans have souls and hence only they exist in context of development, suffering, growth

and so on... Whereas Harari writes, “there is zero scientific evidence that in contrast to pigs (or any other animals), Sapiens have souls”¹¹.

Hence it is not only fair but also wise to rule over them. Indeed it appears ethical to use the animals the way we want and not like living beings. “Homo Sapiens likes to think that it enjoys a superior moral status, and that human life has much greater value than the lives of pigs, elephants or wolves”¹². They have concluded on their own that might is always right, however they have completely ignored that nature is continuously observing them.

Greed of human race has no leaps and bounds rather it is increasing immensely with each passing day. “Over 150 million animals are killed for food around the world every day—just on land. That comes out to 56 billion land animals killed per year in the U.S. alone. Including wild caught and farmed fishes, we get a daily total closer to 3 billion animals killed.”¹³ Above all this hullabaloo we pretend that we care for mother earth and we are worried about the harm global warming has caused to our planet. It is like killing someone on one hand and pretending to be a saviour on the other. Humans seem to have forgotten completely that they are in the shelter of the planet and not vice versa.

The three rapidly growing industries that are attracting huge investments of finances indicate a scary future of mankind. Besides the one mentioned above, **armaments** is another trade in which unbelievable shoot up has been occurred in the past few years. “In 2018, the world's military spending amounted to 1.78 trillion U.S. dollars, compared to 1.1 trillion U.S. dollars in 2001.”¹⁴

The third rapidly growing fearful economy is the medicine industry. “The global **pharmaceutical** market has experienced significant growth in recent years. As of 2018 the total global pharmaceutical market is valued at about 1.2 trillion U.S. dollars. This is a significant increase from 2001 when the market was valued at just 390 billion (0.39 trillion) U.S. dollars.”¹⁵ This statistic depicts that even that day is not far when humans will be used as puppets at the hands of pharmaceutical companies. However smaller patterns of this can be easily seen in our day to day lives.

Besides these challenges **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is going to be another big challenge for the mankind in the near future. Russia’s president Vladimir Putin said: “Artificial intelligence is the future, not only for Russia, but for all humankind. It comes with enormous opportunities, but also threats that are difficult to predict. Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world.”¹⁶ Need not to say that most of the nations are working vigorously in applying AI in different fields like automated weapons, personas like virtual news readers, robotic aids instead of human labourer etc. Which will eat up millions’ employment in the long run. That will eventually lead to other challenges worldwide. According to a research by a U.S. think tank, “Artificial Intelligence (AI) could potentially result in a nuclear war by 2040”¹⁷.

Cyber-crime is yet another concern that will surely cause mass destruction in near future and there are many predictions that the next world war will not be a man to man war which causes bloodshed but a cyber war.

Seeing the **Corona Pandemic** at present, which has not affected only one nation or society but the whole world, killing 218,770¹⁸ people around the globe in mere four months. There are many conspiracy theories¹⁹ about how the big events of the world take place, effecting millions

of people, either by brainwashing or influencing them negatively. Microsoft Founder Bill Gates warned the world much ahead of the COVID-19 pandemic saying, “It’s instructive to compare our preparations for epidemics with our preparations of another sort of global threat – war because of all the things that could kill more than 10 million people around the world, the most likely is an epidemic stemming from either natural causes or bioterrorism.”²⁰

Besides all this hullabaloo and manmade or natural disasters we must understand and know, as author Paulo Coelho writes in his book ‘The Winner Stands Alone’ – “The planet is, was, and always will be stronger than us. We can't destroy it; if we overstep the mark, the planet will simply erase us from its surface and carry on existing.”²¹

On this note we can say that the very inventions done for the benefit of mankind, serve like an obedient servant but if not controlled efficiently, have the ability to engulf the whole or parts of human race because we have removed ‘that’ from it which caused this whole action possible at first place. We must awake before it’s too late but ironically we won’t and we cannot for we are destined to deteriorate.

Evolution and Possible Transformation of it

If present day humans are a result of evolution, we will keep evolving for sure and will stand at the pinnacle of being human in perhaps few thousand years from now. On the contrary we cannot and we should not deny the possibility of devolution.

“Charles Darwin (1809–1882) stated that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce.”²² Kudos to Darwin for discovering the theory of evolution through sheer use of his brain. He gave the world an immensely important link to proceed onto the path to know the history of mankind, of truth. But unfortunately, as Harari wrote in his well-researched work – Homo Deus, “Darwin has deprived us of our souls. If you really understand the theory of evolution, you understand that there is no soul. This is a terrifying thought”²³.

“Survival of the fittest is a phrase that originated from Darwinian evolutionary theory. In Darwinian terms the phrase is best understood as "survival of the form that will leave the most copies of itself in successive generations.”²⁴ If survival of the fittest is the only way to take one’s race further then we must ask this question to ourselves – what will we do when the world’s current population of 7.7 billion will reach “9.7 billion in 2050, which could peak at nearly 11 billion around 2100?”²⁵ Will the more powerful humans start the mass killing of the less powerful ones? Well, according to survival of the fittest, it seems so. Will it be the answer? If yes, what about human emotions like love, compassion, pain etc.?

Adding consciousness into the theory of evolution is like not only invigorating the inanimate but also erasing the discriminatory boundary that divides all beings, be it humans (from poorest to the richest, from weakest to the most strongest) or any other animals and keeping them all on the same stratum.

We cannot measure the amount of love we feel for our off-springs or to someone we love the most. We are unable to weigh knowledge someone has gained during his/her lifetime. We are still quite young in decoding the workings of mind. But we need proof that the soul exists. “The life sciences doubt the existence of soul not just due to lack of evidence, but rather because the very idea of soul contradicts the most fundamental principles of evolution”.²⁶ Sometimes truth

is that faded mirror of belief which we do not want to clear, for clearing it may cause discomfort to our way of life. In which we have moulded everything according to our wish and comfort.

It is rather tough to depict our exact history merely on the basis of fossils? Whereas “palaeontologist, Edward Forbes, remarked that very many fossil species are known and named from single and often broken specimens, or from a few specimens collected on some one spot. Only a small portion of the surface of the earth has been geologically explored, and no part with sufficient care.”²⁷ Surely there are many other possibilities which may not be proven but can give an altogether new direction to search for the history of mankind.

“Less than 1 percent of the universe is visible. More than 99 percent is invisible.”²⁸ There are possibilities that invisible is supposed to be understood through other than sensory perceptions may be through assumptions which can be full of possibilities.

The famous Indian scientist Jagdish Chandra Bose (November 1858-November 1937)²⁹ known for many inventions including the Crescograph, a device to measure the growth in plants, wrote that, “he believed plants ‘feel pain and understand affection’ just as much as humans do”³⁰.

If we start to believe that “consciousness is first, and is in no way the result of chemical complexity, but is cause of it, according to the purpose and will-power and developed intelligence of the *jiva*”³¹. We can surely take the researches meant for the betterment of mankind in positive direction where there will be space for compassion, feelings and respect for each life form. We can definitely do so by adding the essence of consciousness, with an effort to expand the process of evolution in all three directions of time i.e. past, present and future.

The Journey of Soul in Jain Philosophical Texts

Where there is acceptance for the existence of the consciousness, lies answers which are untold by the modern technique by far. Here begins the treasure hunt to dive deeper into the immemorial marriage of consciousness and karma. Which goes far in understanding of why does one go through emotions. What role knowledge plays in one’s life? How important are ethics in one’s journey and how does evolution take place?

From time to time eminent thinkers around the globe have tried to discover the meaning of substance and have interpreted the same. Aristotle described substance as, “that which is neither predicable of anything nor present in anything as an aspect or property of it”³². This indicates that substance exists individually. “He also held that only substances can remain self-identical through change”³³, which means it does not lose its individuality. It is there, it was there and it will be there no matter what.

“For Locke, a substance is that part of an individual thing in which its properties inhere”³⁴, so the qualities a visible object expresses are actually the qualities of that substance of which that object is made of. “Substance may also be conceived as that which is capable of existing independently of anything else”³⁵, reveals that irrespective of the visibility of an object substance still exists.

However keeping the above descriptions of substance in mind, which are absolutely right but seem to lack some essence; Jain philosophy goes much subtler in describing the attributes of the substance³⁶ as, “existence is the character of a substance”³⁷ and defining it³⁸ as, “that which

possess qualities and modes is a substance”³⁹. Not only that substance is not one but are six in number⁴⁰ (that constitute the universe) and soul is one and only of them with the unique characteristic to possess consciousness⁴¹. In *Tattvārtha Sūtra*⁴² Acarya Umasvati writes, “Sentience is the defining characteristic of the soul⁴³”. All of the six substances are eternal⁴⁴ and “constantly changing but without losing their identity⁴⁵”.

“Souls are independent entities”⁴⁶ that “do not possess the material qualities of touch, taste, smell and colour.”⁴⁷ This is interesting indeed that it is not necessary to have a physical existence and yet being able to be accepted as a substance. Not only that but also the most prominent and the most observable substance in context of being able to perform actions. Clear examples of which we see within and without, ironically at all times.

As each substance is unique in itself and never leaves its own nature. “The soul is never bereft of sentience, however feeble and indistinct this may be in undeveloped organisms.”⁴⁸ Be it a virus, a bacteria, a tiny plant of grass or each of the living cell that accommodates a being. *Tattvārtha Sūtra*⁴⁹ mentions, “the worldly souls are classified as mobile and immobile beings⁵⁰”. Here worldly means souls that are bound in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth because of their continuous karma.

All of us have heard the phrase, “what goes around, comes around”, innumerable times. We’ve heard of Newton’s finding in form of the law of the universe, also called as Newton’s third law “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”⁵¹. We connect these phrases with karma but little do we contemplate further and in detail about them. However ancient Jain thinkers have done this for us with quite subtlety. According to whom, “directed by the various processes of karma, the soul passes through different states which generate changes in its nature⁵²”. So basically the consciousness decides its own destiny. For “the soul has an inherent capacity which can affect how the bondage is ended, thereby affecting its own fate.”⁵³ At first how the bondage starts and then how it ends, all decided by the soul under the compulsion of karma.

There are many examples in which we are unable to predict the exact time of beginning of an event; for example – is it possible to predict exactly since when the gold particles are alloyed with the sand particles or for that matter when did gold come into existence? It was there in one form or the other but it was gold since time immemorial and no matter what we do to it, it will stay so. Similarly in context of the journey of the soul Jain thinkers have mentioned that, “there is no beginning to the transmigration of souls from birth to birth⁵⁴”. Whether this journey has an end or not, is a separate point of discussion.

Time-Cycle in Jain Philosophy

There is a cycle hidden in each linear occurrence and a linear pattern in each cyclic one.

Concept of evolution takes an interesting twist when we see it through the lens of time cycle in Jain philosophy. In Jain philosophy, the cosmic time is cyclic (please see image given in reference 47), with no beginning or end. It is divided into two *kāla* namely: *Utsarpini* and *Avasarpini*. Each one of these is again subdivided into six time periods. Whereas *Utsarpini* refers to the increase of height, age, beauty, wealth, happiness, knowledge, wisdom and all the other positive traits, with each passing *kāla*, *Avasarpini* is opposite to that, i.e. all the mentioned traits decrease with the passing of time. Currently we are in the fifth era (*āra*) of *Avasarpini*

kāla. The duration of first three time periods seems beyond our understanding as it is in trillions and trillions of years. But the fourth era is 42,000 years long and fifth and sixth *kāla* are of 21,000 years each, almost 2700 years have been passed of the current time period which is *duśmā kāla* or *pancama kāla*. After this *Duśmāduśmā kāla* of the same length will be left, which will be the time of extreme grief. Abstract translated from Jainendra Siddhanta Kosha of description of humans in *Duśmāduśmā kāla* as mentioned in the text *Tiloypannati*⁵⁵ is as under:

Body: The height at entering into this time period is three or three and a half hand (i.e. 3 to 4 feet approximately).

Appearance: Their appearance is similar to apes and their bodies smell badly.

Age: The maximum age span is 20 years.

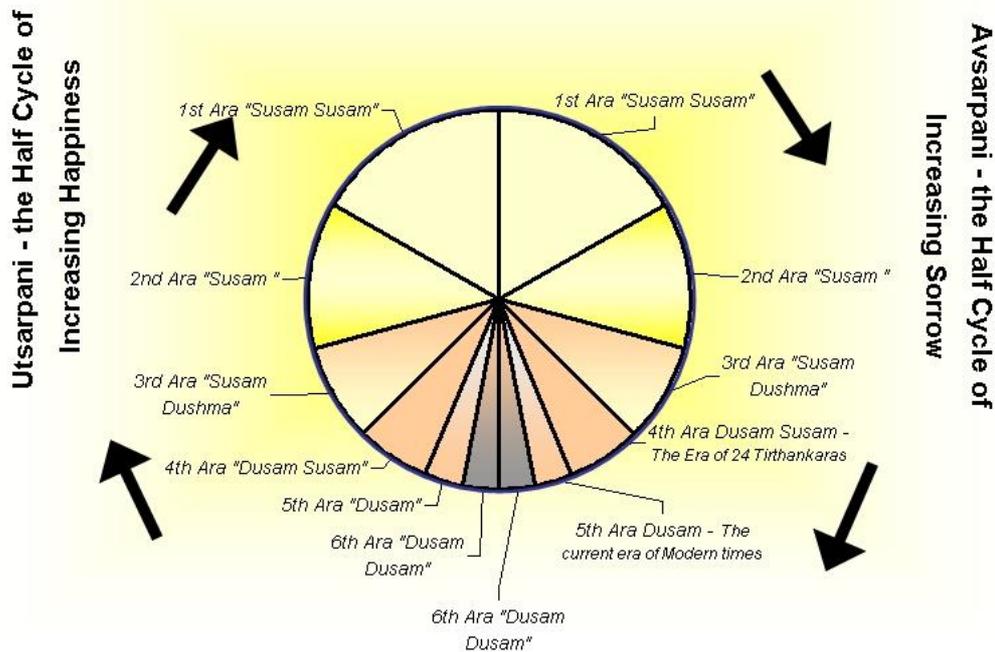
Residence: They do not have houses, they are homeless and wander naked in the forests. There are no trees, nor they have livestock.

Physiological miseries: Often the demeanour of humans is beastly, ruthless, deaf, blind, dumb, impoverished, and short tempered. Their bodies are filled with diseases. They do not have families.

As the time passes their height, age and strength keep decreasing.

(Please note that due to the difference of the author and publisher the *gāthā* numbers have been changed in Jainendra Siddhant Kosha as *gāthā* 1535 to 1542⁵⁶ also the chapter has been mentioned as chapter-4.)

The Jain Cosmic Wheel of time



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Whether time is linear or cyclic that is another topic of discussion but after analysing evolution through considering the time cyclic we see that even evolution is kind of devolution and that devolution becomes evolution in the long run. Because according to the time cycle in Jain philosophy the next *utsarpini kāla* (the half cycle of increasing happiness) will start with the sixth time zone i.e. *duśmāduśmā kāla* (time of extreme grief), it will proceed towards *duśmā kāla* (time similar to the current times) and eventually, till the first time zone which is *Suśmasuśmā kāla* (time of extreme happiness), it will lead the human beings to the apex of being human who will be the most spiritually and intellectually evolved.

Indeed we cannot prove it right but at least we can give a serious thought to the same that life is about the journey from survival of the fittest to existence of harmonious living of the most spiritually, intellectually and compassionately evolved human beings and vice versa.

To strengthen this scenario we can surely pay heed to what the eminent leaders and thinkers of the world have to say. In Another interview Putin stated, “A third world war could be the end of civilization⁵⁸”. The renowned genius Albert Einstein has also predicted, “I don’t know what weapons will be used in the Third World War. But I can tell you what they will use in the Fourth – rocks!⁵⁹”

Conclusion

In modern times the world has been ruled by the west. We are highly influenced by them, we tend to eat what they eat. We love to wear what they propagate. We use products promoted by them. We look up to them to teach us how to live? On this insecurity of ours consumerism flourishes, animal agriculture is at its peak and we are traveling afar from our culture that has been teaching us to be spiritually evolved all this while.

Ironically, now the restlessness is reversing itself i.e. the west is seeking shelter of the east for peace of mind, spirituality and simple living which can be seen in the increased spiritual tourism in India and other eastern countries. All our queries, our quest for peace of mind, moments of inner bliss and keen interest in gaining knowledge indicate towards our genius self which is not satisfied by the shallow answers of the modern world because these answers can only be found within.

With time our inner turbulence is increasing and it will keep inflating if soon we won't try to seek the shelter of the 'self'. The phrase in the end of the fairy tales 'and they lived happily ever after' needs to be rewritten as 'and they departed on a journey of struggles' for having the most developed brain has not only lead us to the peak of materialistic enjoyments but also to the worst of mental and emotional dilemmas. Hence it is necessary to find a source of peace that requires no outer cause, no information, no technology, but only a feeling of being, a realisation of the self along with an emotion of gratitude that whoever I am, I am thankful for that, just like that.

The Theory of Evolution and modern science play the role of strengthening the thought of alien-ness in our subconscious. For it is easier to believe that we are some random existences in this universe without a bigger purpose who have emerged from nothing and will fade into the same. This belief keeps our conscience in an ever sleeping mode and what else can be better than comfortable ignorance?

By misusing the natural resources tremendously we have abused our mother earth in irreparable ways. Understanding the true essence of religious philosophies may play an important role in this as they not only help in understanding the ethics but also in strengthening them. Not only that, religious philosophies also provide us with the logical answers about the cosmology of the universe, space, time, metaphysics, consciousness and what not but only if we try to understand them with an open and analytical mind. It's true that, till now most of the times, they have been fallen in not so right hands but it is the responsibility of the present day creed to come ahead and take charge to grasp the same with a fresher mind, with a newer approach that provides nothing but freedom from mind and answers to the long sought questions.

Observing the present scenario of the Covid-19 pandemic and the chaos it has caused around the globe, India is emerging as the wisest warrior against Corona virus, amongst the most powerful. We may expect that from now on most of our people will look forward to their own country and its ancient teachings which have taught us to be minimalists, to use the natural resources with respect and to keep enhancing our intellect through peeping within and not vice versa.

Theory of evolution is a huge success that can eventually provide the answers one seeks for but only if we add consciousness in the recipe. There is surely a possibility that whom we are considering as the first man will turn out to be the last one.

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