

Instincts, Science, and Religion

(part 1 of 2): Self-Sacrifice in Animals



Living beings have to reproduce to continue their species. However, reproduction by itself often proves insufficient because, if living things fail to provide adequate care for their offspring, the newborn cannot survive. In other words, if living things did not feel the need to protect and look after their offspring and did not do this successfully, newborn creatures would not be able to look after themselves and would soon die.

When we look at nature, we see the majority of living things display amazing self-sacrifice in order to protect and provide the best of care for their offspring. Sometimes it is in a selfless form, incomparable to any form of sacrifice shown by human beings. Furthermore, these living things risk their lives for their young without a moment's hesitation. So, how did such self-sacrifice in animals develop?

Evolutionists claim that self-sacrifice displayed by living things, especially that shown towards their offspring, is instinctive behavior. What then does the word instinct mean?

Evolutionists define instinct as a sense of intuition inherent in living things. They claim that an inner voice whispers to a spider, a bird, a lion or a tiny insect to practice self-sacrifice to keep the generations going. In reply to a question regarding the source of this voice, they desperately say “mother nature”. In the view of evolutionists, every phenomenon in nature is a miracle of nature.

However, it is evident that this claim is futile and meaningless, because nature, itself, is already a created entity consisting of the stones, flowers, trees, rivers and mountains familiar to all of us. It is obvious that these entities cannot come together to furnish a living being with a new trait, which is a product of intelligence.

As a matter of fact, even Darwin himself was aware of this logical failure from the very beginning. In his book *The Origin of Species*, which he wrote in 1859, he expressed his self-doubt about his own theory in the following words:

“I have thought that it would be more convenient to treat the subject separately, especially as so wonderful an instinct as that of the hive-bee making its cells will probably have occurred to many readers, as a difficulty sufficient to overthrow my whole theory.” (Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, p. 233)

Research conducted by scientists on living things has revealed that they live in astounding harmony, coordination and collaboration with one another. Wherever one turns in nature, one is likely to see examples of this. For instance, some little birds utter a shrill alarm call when they see a bird of prey like a hawk or eagle approaching their flock, to warn their companions of the danger. In doing so, they attract the attention of the attacker to themselves. This behavior considerably reduces the chance of survival for the bird who sounded the alarm. But despite this, the bird puts its own life at risk for the hundreds of other birds in the flock.

A majority of animals undertake all kind of self-sacrifice for their young. For example the incubation period of penguins is during the polar winter. Female penguins lay only one egg, leave incubation to the males, and return to the sea. During the four months of incubation, the male penguin has to resist violent polar storms at times reaching speeds of 120 kilometers per hour. Making great sacrifices for four full months without leaving the egg, the male penguin loses half of its body weight through lack of food. Although it goes without for months, it does not go hunting, and resists the violent storms without ever leaving the egg. After the end of the four months, the female penguin shows up with a huge store of food. She has not wasted time in the meantime, but has worked for her

young and stored food for it. She empties her stomach and takes over the job of caring for the young.

(part 2 of 2): An Islamic View

The care provided by the crocodile, a particularly savage animal, for its offspring is also quite astounding. First, the crocodile digs a hole for the incubation of its eggs. The temperature of the hole must never rise above 30°C. A slight rise in temperature would threaten the lives of the offspring in the eggs. The crocodile takes care that the holes in which it places its eggs are located in rather shady places and goes to extraordinary efforts to keep the eggs at a constant temperature. Some crocodile species build nests of weeds on cold water. If the temperature of the nest still rises despite these measures, then the crocodile cools the nest by sprinkling urea on it.

The time when the eggs hatch is most important, because, in the event the crocodile failed to hear the noises coming from the nest, the young would be suffocated. The mother crocodile brings the eggs out and helps the offspring out of their eggs by using her teeth as tweezers. The crocodile, with her razor-sharp teeth, avoids the slightest movement likely to injure her young. The safest place for the newly born is the protective pouch in its mother's mouth which is specially designed to shelter half a dozen newly born crocodiles.

The meticulous care and concern a wild animal like the crocodile shows its offspring is only one of the examples proving the invalidity of the evolutionist claim of the struggle for life which maintains that the strong survive while the others are defeated and disappear.

The dolphin is another animal known for its self-sacrificing behavior. Dolphins raise their offspring with great care from the moment they are born. As soon as the newborn dolphin is born, it has to go up to the surface of the water for oxygen. To provide this, the mother dolphin shows amazingly conscious behavior and, using the tip of her nose, gently pushes the offspring above the surface of the water.

Just before birth, the movements of the mother dolphin slow down considerably. For this reason, two other females always accompany the mother dolphin during birth. Always remaining on either side of the mother, the assistant dolphins assume the responsibility of protecting her from possible attacks by sharks that might be attracted by the smell of blood.

How can this instinct, defined by evolutionists as “a drive observed in animals but not completely understood”, guide animals to become civil engineers while building their nests, perfect soldiers while protecting their young or colonies, and

turn even the most aggressive species into compassionate and gentle creatures towards their young?

Indeed, Darwin also had difficulties in answering this query, which he, himself, put forward. He often left related questions unanswered too. In his book *The Origin of Species*, he asks the following questions:

Thirdly, can instincts be acquired and modified through natural selection? What shall we say to so marvelous an instinct as that which leads the bee to make cells, which have practically anticipated the discoveries of profound mathematicians? (Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, p.205)

As seen, Darwin's doubts on "Natural Selection" are quite precise. Although Darwin himself confesses that Natural Selection is not a reasonable explanation, the majority of evolutionists still insist on adhering to this fallacy.

Yet, every human being who observes nature with clear consciousness sees that living things are not brutal, tough or uncompassionate because of the so-called struggle for life. On the contrary, living beings are self-sacrificing because of the "inspiration" their Creator bestowed upon them.

As expressed in the 68th verse of the 16th chapter, which says:

"Your Lord revealed to bees..."

"God" the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything in between, the Infinitely Compassionate and Oft-Forgiving has control over all living things. Their instincts, which Darwin was unable to explain within the scope of evolution, are actually the inspiration given by God to all living things.

All life in nature is created by God. All living things come into being by the Will of God and behave in compliance with His inspiration. The self-sacrificing behavior, kindness and care living beings display towards their young are merely the reflection of God's name, the "Compassionate". This is revealed in the 7th verse of the 16th chapter:

"Your Lord is All-Gentle, Most Merciful."

The Prophet himself stated:

"Indeed God specified one portion of His Mercy to the world, and with that a mother cares for her young, and wild animals and birds care for each other."
(*Saheeh Muslim*)