

Comparative Study Between *Dashavatara* (Incarnation) and Darwinian Theory of Evolution

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Abstract

The word *Dashavatara* derives from *Dasha*, meaning “Ten”, and *Avatara*, roughly equivalent to “Incarnation”. Lord Vishnu manifested in various avatars to safeguard the universe and reinstate “peace and dharma” during the four distinct yugas, or cosmic cycles. The Hindu text *Dashavatara*, which describes ten forms of Lord Vishnu, has a better developed theory of evolution than the hypothesis put out by English scientist Charles Darwin in the 17th century. Objective is to make a comparative study between *Dashavatara* (incarnations) and Darwinian Theory of evolution. Based on secondary sources of historical knowledge, this study is descriptive in nature. Darwin's evolutionary theory is comparable to Lord Vishnu's *Dashavatara*, who has ten avatars. All avatars are interconnected, and according to Darwin, all plants, animals, and people have common ancestor. How could they correctly predict the entire evolutionary theory if the *Dashavatara* was merely a fabrication of someone's imagination? Darwin's theory is straightforward; he discovered that life evolved in water in the Galapagos Islands (Latin America) between 1830 and 1835. All species on earth, including fish, flowers, bananas, and birds have common ancestors. But there is not only same opinion existed in *Dashavatara* but also there are more advances after Darwin's theory of evolution. Though the evolution theory in Hinduism is described through story. There is a clear striking similarity with first seven avatars of Vishnu and Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin's theory has been stopped up to 7th number of evaluation but *Dashavatara* went steps further. The scientific resemblance between *Dashavatara* and Charles Darwinian Theory of Evolution bears same meaning but the way of explanation is different, which means old wine in new bottles. It indicates that an idea that already exists is presented as though it were brand-new. Vedic science was so sophisticated that it could be contrasted with modern scientific discoveries.

Keywords: *Dashavatara*, incarnation, Darwin's evolutionary theory, plants, animals, Hinduism

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INTRODUCTION

The term “*Dashavatara*” (Sanskrit: दशवतार, *Dashavatara*) refers to Lord Vishnu's ten principal avatars. The word “*Dashavatara*” or “*Dasha-Avatara*” denotes the most famous list of 10 avatars. In Sanskrit “*Dasha*” is equal to “10”. We can find this list as per *Garuda Purana*. There are other lists as well, like 25 avatars in *Bhagavata Purana* but these ten are the most popular ones. It is believed that Lord Vishnu descends into the world as an avatar in order to bring back cosmic order. The term *Dashavatara* comes from the Sanskrit words *Dasha* (meaning “Ten”) and *avatāra* (meaning “Incarnation”). Lord Vishnu incarnated in different forms to preserve the universe and restore “peace and dharma” in the

four *yugas* (era or cycle). Bhagavata Purana is one of the most well-known Puranic stories. It is among the most revered scriptures in Vaishnavism.

It contains 335 chapters and approximately 14,100 to 14,400 verses. The term *Bhagavan* (God) appears in the earth for different reasons, may be to restore the religion among the people mentioned in both Bhagavata Purana and Bhagavad Gita, which are the most famous religious text in Hinduism. In general, Bhagavata Purana is considered as authoritative as Upanishads within Vaishnavas. According to *Vaishnavism* theology, Vishnu is the immediate source of the divinity of this world, and his avatars are the means of bringing divinity into this world. There is a fundamental principle in Vaishnava theology that encourages the development of the avatar theme. Such a theological source has its roots in the Bhagavad Gita, where two famous verses provide the earliest account of Krishna's many births. In *Vaishnavism*, Vishnu is the ultimate and supreme "*Bhagavan*" (God) who periodically incarnates into the world in various forms (avatars) to protect *dharma* (religion) [1].

Vice-chancellor of Andhra University, Prof. G. Nageshwar Rao asserted that the Hindu text *Dashavatara*, which describes ten forms of Lord Vishnu, has a better developed theory of evolution than the hypothesis put out by English scientist Charles Darwin in the 17th century. Darwin's Theory described how life evolved from a sea animal to a man, but Prof. Rao claimed that *Dashavatara* went farther by illustrating a metamorphosis from "Ram" to "politically nuanced" Krishna. During his talk at the 106th Indian Science Congress, he asserted this. "The first of the *Dashavatara* is "Matsya avatar," a marine creature [2, 3].

Motives Behind Lord Vishnu's Avatars

The cycles of creation and destruction are an integral part of Hindu philosophy, which also reiterate the notion of the ten avatars. This concept of the avatars re-establishes the idea that God took a human form repeatedly to free the world from her suffering and evil. The avatar comes in a situation when the world is in a crisis where evil, injustice and inequality rule. He removes these negativities from this world and anchors in a positive new change creating a new world. The ten incarnations, the Supreme Beings are not only generated respect for all beings living together but also for cosmic unity and equilibrium. The reasons are mentioned in Bhagavad Gita in Chapter No. 4, Shloka No.7 and 8 shown below.

यदायदाहिधर्मस्यग्लानिर्भवतिभारता
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्यतदात्मानंसृजाम्यहम्॥ 4:7
*yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham*

परित्राणायसाधूनांविनाशायचदुष्कृताम्
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थायसम्भवामियुगेयुगे॥4:8
*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya cha duṣkṛtām bh
dharma-samsthapanarthāya sambhavami yuge yuge*

Interpretation: O descendant of *Bharata*, whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practise and a predominate rise in irreligion, that is the moment when I descend.

I myself appear, millennium after millennium, to save the righteous and destroy the wicked, and to restore the true meaning of religion.

Justification: As a result, every avatar—that is, every manifestation of the Lord—has a distinct purpose, and the revealed texts detail them all. The idea that the Lord only manifests himself in India is untrue. He possesses the capability to manifest at will, anywhere, and at any time. He talks about religion as much as the specific people under the specific circumstances can understand in each and

every incarnation. However, the goal remains the same: to guide individuals towards religious observance and consciousness of God. Occasionally, he comes down in person, and other times, He sends a legitimate emissary in the guise of his son, servant, or even himself.

The avatar, or Godhead incarnation, leaves the kingdom of God to take on a material form. An incarnation, also known as an avatar, is the specific form of the personality of Godhead that descends in this way. These incarnations take place in the kingdom of God, which is the spiritual realm. They take on the name avatar when they make their way down to the material creation.

Avatars come in a variety of forms and appear on schedule throughout the universe. However, Lord Krishna is the primordial deity and the source of all avatars. Lord Krishna specifically descends to allay the fears of the pure devotees, who are eager to witness him in his authentic Vindivana pastime. Consequently, the fulfilment of the desires of his unwavering devotees is the main goal of the Lord Krishna avatar. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord claims to incarnate himself every millennium [4].

Objective

The objective of the study is to explore a comparative study between *Dashavatara* (incarnations) of Lord Vishnu and Darwinian Theory of evolution.

Treta, derived from Sanskrit, signifies 'a grouping of three elements.' This era, known as Treta Yuga, is named as such due to the manifestation of three avatars of Vishnu—Vamana, Parashurama, and Rama—as the fifth, sixth, and seventh incarnations, respectively

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Basis for the Investigation

Lord Vishnu incarnated in different forms to preserve the universe and restore peace and *dharma* (religion) in the four *yugas* (era or cycle). Hindu mythology states that Lord Vishnu has ten avatars, or incarnations, collectively referred to as *Dashavatara*. They are Varaha, Matsya, Narasimha, Kurma, Vamana, Parasurama, Sree Rama, Buddha, Sree Krishna avatar. Every one of these virtual beings that emerge in the world has distinct goals and objectives. Hindu mythology states that the first four manifestations of Lord Vishnu—Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, and Narasimha—occurred during the *Satya yuga*, also known as the golden age. The following three Vishnu avatars—Vamana, Parasurama, and Sree Ram—appeared during the *Treta Yuga*. The *Dwapara Yuga* is where the next two, Balarama and Sree Krishna have emerged. Kalki is the final personification of Lord Vishnu. At the end of *Kali Yuga*, Kalki will make an appearance as the tenth avatar [5].

Among *Dashavatara*, Kalki is the only avatar who has not yet taken on human form till date in the earth. However, there is something very unique and remarkable about each of the major avatars. Rama avatar and Krishna avatar have a long history. The oral traditions appear to discriminate between which avatars are principle ones and which ones are subs. But all the avatars are equally important and appeared either for the existence of human beings or to wipe out of wicked persons for stabilization of religion. Lord Vishnu has only four complete hymns, and his name has been mentioned only about a hundred times in the *Vedas*. In the myths of the Brahmanas, the role of Vishnu becomes bold and somewhat central.

Every form in the *Dashavatara* confirms what Darwin has said. How could they accurately predict the entire evolutionary theory? This study has tried to discuss on this ground.

Study Type

By its very nature, this research is descriptive in nature. Secondary sources of ancient Indian knowledge, such as books such as the Bhagavata Purana, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Garur Puran,

Vaishnavas, articles, websites, and online journals published at various points in time, are used to collect the data.

Analysis of the Study

The various materials gathered from the various sources have been examined, validated, and methodically arranged under the relevant headings in order to hold the necessary presentation and conclusion. To bolster the wisdom of ancient India, I've referenced statements made by contemporary scientists in the fields of both natural and social sciences from around the globe.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To make the difficult theories easier for kids to understand, our sages conveyed the complete evolutionary theory as short fables. When Lord Vishnu descends one of his *Dashavatara*, he vanquishes the wicked, defends the righteous, and protects the environment and the land. Every form in the *Dashavatara* confirms what Darwin has said. How could they accurately predict the entire evolutionary theory if the *Dashavatara* was only a fabrication of someone's imagination? Does this not imply that our forefathers were aware of things that we are only now learning? Our forefathers presented evolutionary theory as straightforward, accessible tales. Charles Darwin introduced the concept of natural selection as the foundation of modern evolutionary theory. The theory was described in the landmark book 'The Origin of Species' by Charles Darwin, which was released in 1859 [6].

Scientific Analogy of Vishnu's *Dashavatara* versus Darwin's Theory of Evolution

While there are numerous justifications offered for each of Vishnu's ten incarnations, there is a startling similarity between these tales and the notion of life's evolution. There is an obvious, glaring resemblance to the first seven avatars of Vishnu. Some contemporary interpreters arrange Vishnu's ten primary avatars in a clear hierarchy, going from simpler to more sophisticated life forms. The present theory of evolution is reflected in or foreshadowed by the *Dashavatara*. Theosophist Helena Blavatsky first suggested this interpretation in 1877, when she suggested the *Dashavatara* be arranged as follows in Table 1.

The Darwin's Theory of Evolution has also showed the evolution of life in the same line of *Dashavatara*. Both the theories start the evolution of life from the fish in water. Below given Table 1 shows incarnations of Vishnu-Darwin's theory of evolution.

History Behind Charles Darwin

On February 12, 1809, in a little English village named Mount, Charles Darwin was born. His father, a well-liked physician, encouraged him to become a doctor. On March 27, 1831, Darwin embarked on the HMS Beagle (name of the ship), which was sailing from England to Latin America. Over the course of five years, the ship travelled nonstop between islands, where he researched the men, plants, animals, fossils, fruits, and flowers. From the Galapagos Islands and Falkland Island, he collected numerous fossils, animals, and flowers. He also conducted diligent research and meticulously recorded every observation in his notebooks.

He returned to England on October 2nd and shared all of his findings and fossils with his esteemed scientific colleagues, including geologists, botany professors, zoology professors, and nature scientists. "Life evolved in water in the form of simple single cell creatures, over hundreds of years, this single cell evolved into complex multi-cellular organisms," he and all of his companions concluded. All species on earth, including fish, flowers, bananas, and birds, share a common ancestry. The aquatic animals gradually began to change their body types, body colors, and eating habits as they transitioned from the water to the land. At first, they had evolved into 100s feet tall animals like centipedes, then into four legged animals, and finally into two feet human beings. In other words, life began in the water and gradually developed into amphibians before becoming fully terrestrial animals.

Table 1. Incarnations of Vishnu-Darwin's theory of evolution.

Type of Life of Evolution	Duration of Life in each Type
Matsya (Fish)	Life starts in water (600 million–400 million years ago)
Kurma (Turtle)	The first amphibians emerge (100 million years ago)
Varaha (Boar)	The first mammals evolve (60 million years ago)
Narasimha (half man-half lion)	Half man-half animal appears (30 million years ago)
Vamana (short man)	Homo Erectus, Upright, yet short and weaponless (5 million–2 million years ago)
Parashurama (parashu=axe, Rama=name of God)	The Bronze Age marked the arrival of Ramapithecus and the advancement of initial tools like axes. Homo sapiens emerged between 350,000 and 100,000 years ago
Source: http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000829IC/P001497/M015114/ET/146001247033ET.pdf	

On Earth, it took thousands of years for humans to evolve from apes to early man to modern people. They fought constantly, began changing their DNA, shapes, sizes, eating habits, and selective mating, and eventually they produced completely new offspring who looked entirely different. That is, they constantly compete for survival, and the strongest survive. Darwin's thesis is hence referred to as “Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest” in short. Throughout the process of evolution, the only creatures that endure in this World are those that go from being good to better, from better to best, and that continue to bear children [7].

Similarities Between *Dashavatara* of Lord Vishnu and Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Humans have undergone numerous transformations from the dwarf man to the man with weapons and to the intelligent human. Only those animals that progress from good to great, and who bear offspring continue to exist in our world during the course of evolution. Lord Vishnu has assumed *Dashavatara* (10 avatars), according to the Garuda Purana and the Bhagavata Purana. Every avatar is connected to every other avatar. *Dashavatara* of Lord Vishnu is similar to Darwin's theory of evolution. Our ancestors used short, easily comprehensible stories to explain evolutionary theory [8].

How could they correctly predict the entire evolutionary theory if the *Dashavatara* was merely a fabrication of someone's imagination? Darwin's evolutionary theory is comparable to Lord Vishnu's *Dashavatara*, who has ten avatars. All avatars are interconnected, and according to Darwin, all plants, animals, and people have common ancestor. How could they correctly predict the entire evolutionary theory if the *Dashavatara* was merely a fabrication of someone's imagination? Darwin's theory is straightforward; he discovered that life evolved in water in the Galapagos Islands (Latin America) between 1830 and 1835. All species on earth, including fish, flowers, bananas, and birds have common ancestors. But there is not only same opinion existed in *Dashavatara* but also there are more advances after Darwin's theory of evolution. That is, next change in humans will be their intelligence and they will develop themselves into super humans with cutting-edge technology and deadly weaponry. They may use these weapons to destroy this lovely world.

We can show the similarities between Darwin's Theory of Evolution and in Vishnu's *Dashavatara* in the following Figure 1, where we see each evolution of the theories is same.

After ‘Matsya avatar’, then comes “Kurma avatar,” an amphibian that can live both on land and in water. In the third incarnation, known as the “Varaha avatar,” Vishnu becomes a boar in order to preserve the earth. The fourth incarnation, “Narsimha avatar,” is a half-lion and half-human. The fifth avatar is “Vaman avatar” a fully developed yet immature human being represented by the dwarf. The sixth avatar is ‘Parshuram avatar,’ a complete matured man lived in jungle with axe in hand. Finally, a flawless human being named Rama appears as Ram avatar, followed by Krishna as Krishna avatar, who is more intelligent and logical. He resembles a politician more. We think Rama is not a politician, but Krishna is. The evolution continues. The evolution of man was at the center of western thought. But in science, we went above and beyond. Our saints and sages had expansive minds. That is why; they suggested *Dashavatara*, a superior opinion. The entire evolution in both the concepts is shown below in Table 2.

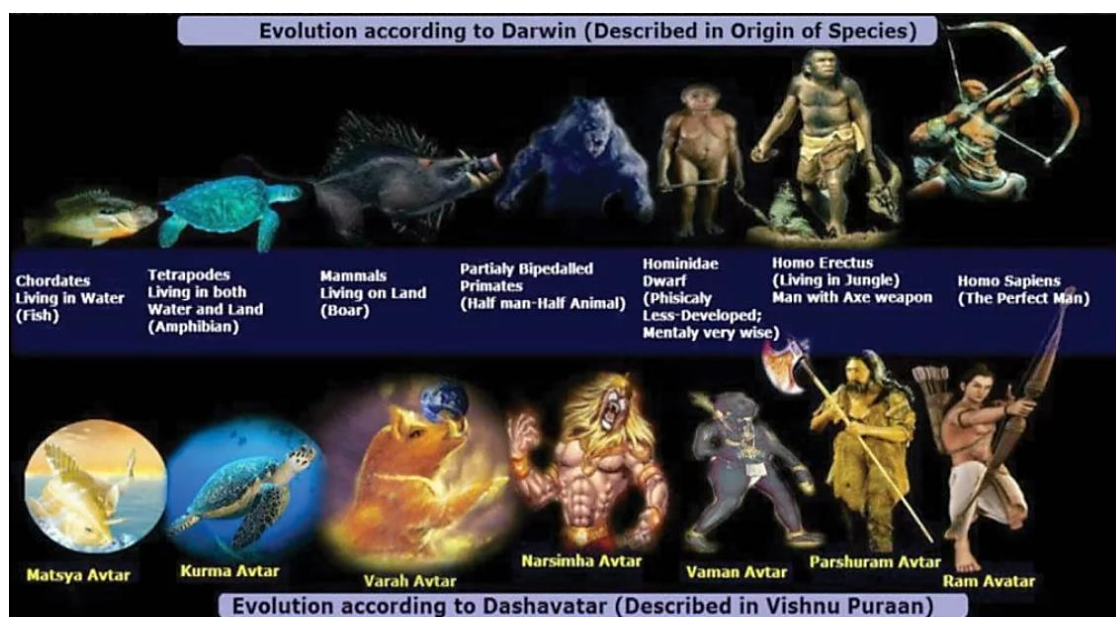


Figure 1. Darwin's theory of evolution versus incarnations of Vishnu's *dashavatara*.

Source: <https://healthvision.in/darwins-theory-of-evolution-resembles-lord-vishnus-dashavatara/>

Table 2. Stages and differences between traditional indigenous science and modern science, according to Darwin's theory of evolution.

Stage	Differences between Traditional Indigenous Science and Modern Science, according to Darwin's Theory of Evolution	
	In Traditional Indigenous Science, The <i>Dashavatara</i> of Lord Bishnu appears Chronologically:	In Modern Science, according to Darwin's Theory of Evolution Chronologically:
I	Matsya avatar ↓	Chordates Living in water (Fish) ↓
II	Kurma avatar ↓	Tetrapodes Living in both water and land (Amphibian) ↓
III	Varaha avatar ↓	Mammals Living on Land (Boar) ↓
IV	Narsimha avatar ↓	Partially Bipedalled Primates (Half Man-Half Animal) ↓
V	Vaman avatar ↓	Hominidae Dwarf (Physically Less Developed but Mentally very wise) ↓
VI	Parshuram avatar ↓	Homo Erectus (Living in Forest) ↓
VII	Ram avatar ↓	Homo Sapiens (Perfect Man) ↓
VIII	Krishna avatar ↓	Nil
IX	Buddha avatar ↓	Nil
X	Kalki avatar (Yet to be)	Nil

Source: From the study of Traditional Indigenous Science and Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Stage-wise Comparison Between The *Dashavatara* of Lord Bishnu and Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Stage-1: (Fish)

In modern science, the initial stage of life consisted of Chordates. Example was fish. However, in Hinduism, Matsya avatar is the name given to Lord Vishnu's first incarnation, also known as his avatar, which was a fish. It has a definite relationship to the scientific viewpoint.

Stage 2: (Tortoise)

In modern science, at the second stage, tortoises were the examples that eventually emerged from the water to become reptiles and can live both on land and in water. This could be viewed as the continuation of life. However, Kurma is believed to be Lord Vishnu's second avatar in Hinduism. The term "Kurma" designates the tortoise, an animal with four legs. It symbolizes the transition from aquatic to terrestrial existence. It is a clear link with scientific thinking.

Stage 3: (Boar)

In modern science, at this stage, reptiles evolved from amphibian to mammals that lived only in swamps and slush on land that could bear children. However, in Hinduism, the boar represents the birth of the mammal and is Lord Vishnu's third avatar. The same scientific perspective applies.

Stage 4: (Half ape)

In modern science, at this stage, mammals were evolving into species of the partially bipedalled primates (Half Man-Half Animal) family that resembled humans more and were partially bipedal (walk on legs), but their brains had not fully matured. They can be conceptualized as having an animal-like upper body and a partially human lower body. Lord Vishnu's Narasimha avatar, the fourth incarnation in Hinduism, symbolizes a unique blend of human and animal attributes, depicting the transition from animal to human form. It clearly parallels with the scientific view of Darwin.

Stage 5: (Dwarf)

In modern science, at this stage, finally partially bipedalled primates converted into Hominidae family (Dwarf, physically less developed but mentally very wise). They resembled humans more, despite being very small (dwarf). They had highly developed brains. In Hinduism, the fifth avatar of Lord Vishnu is Vamana avatar (dwarf). The Vamana avatar is an exceedingly little entity that is quite similar to humans. It denotes the full transformation into human form as well as the emergence of human intelligence. It clearly parallels with the scientific view of Darwin.

Stage 6: (Forest Dweller)

According to contemporary science, at this stage, Hominidae family converted into *Homo erectus* (Living in Forest) i.e., *Homo erectus* was evolved, which was about as tall as modern humans and had the ability to use tools. The current stage of human evolution, *Homo sapiens*, marks the conclusion of biological evolution. At this point, humans may be irrational, unmanageable, and act without thought. In Hinduism, Parasuram, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, was a forest dweller who carried an axe as a means of survival. This was the first avatar of Vishnu that had no animal characteristics and wielded an axe. In other words, Parashuram represented modern humans, or *Homo sapiens*, with the ability to use tools. It clearly parallels with the scientific view of Darwin.

Stage 7: (Hunter)

According to modern science, at this stage, humanity had reached the state of perfection and had begun to place more value on penance than on pleasure as well as showing respect for one another. Here, the idea of the fittest surviving created mutinies among humans. The seventh manifestation of Lord Vishnu in Hinduism was Lord Rama, a well-known figure among Hindus and he is worshipped in temples as God. He became civilized and created better weapons like the bow and arrow. He cleared the forests and built villages or tiny settlements. He guarded his villages and communities

with great vigilance. Rama was an extremely decent person who showed great respect for his parents. This demonstrates the simplicity and psychology of early human beings. It clearly parallels with the scientific view.

At this stage, humans get their perfection and the modern theory i.e., the Darwin's Theory of Evolution ends. But our sages and saints thought beyond. They thought up to the end of humans. That is why; they proposed *Dashavatara* i.e., another three avatars remained. We can conclude that the *Dashavatara* theory outperforms Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. We discuss now the three avatars below.

There are several different lists of Vishnu's avatars. Several lists place Balarama as the eighth avatar and Krishna as the ninth; while other lists place the Buddha as the ninth avatar and Krishna as the eighth. But contemporary philosophers and sculptors have entirely replaced Balarama (the Farmer) with Lord Buddha. Hinduism surpasses the modern theory of evolution and makes future predictions for the tenth avatar of Lord Vishnu and last form of life. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Vishnu's tenth avatar, known as Kalki, is yet to come and this occurs when whole life on Earth comes to an end. He would be present to bring everything back to a fresh start. There will be an extinction of species and the end of the world [9].

It is extremely enlightening to note that Hinduism has such profound knowledge thousands of years ago. Therefore, the objective of each avatar of Lord Vishnu cited above is either to save the world or to restore the lost balance in the world. Depending on the circumstances, there were several reasons why this balance was upset. Lord Vishnu's role and presence in each situation was different. According to modern sciences, the Big Bang theory and other current theories suggest that the universe is not stable. The life of the world must eventually come to an end, and creation must begin anew. This entire cycle continues infinite times [10].

FINDINGS

How many years old the *Dashavatara* theory is exactly, none can say. It may be guessed that the theory is more than 5000 years old. But the Charles Darwin's theory of evolution was published in 1859. Though the evolution in Hinduism is described through story, but serial of the evolution is same. There is a clear striking similarity with first seven avatars of Vishnu. Darwin's theory of evolution has been stopped up to 7th number of evaluation. *Dashavatara* went steps further by showing a transformation from "Ram" to "politically nuanced" Krishna and then Buddha avatar after that Kalki avatar is yet to appear when this lovely world will be full of unruly and wicked persons. The *Dashavatara* theory is more credential than Charles Darwin's theory of evolution though the former is older than later.

CONCLUSION

The scientific resemblance between *Dashavatara* and Charles Darwinian Theory of Evolution bears same meaning but the way of explanation is different, which means old wine in new bottles. It indicates that an idea that already exists is presented as though it were novel [10].

The *Dashavatara* of Lord Vishnu was described by our ancient sages in such detail that it practically matches Darwin's theory of evolution. The appraisal, which has been extensively studied in Hinduism, complies with Darwin's evolutionary theory exactly. What makes it possible? There could be two causes: (1) Darwin acquired all of his knowledge from Hindu religious texts, or (2) Our ancient sages were so knowledgeable and learned that they could describe precisely what took place throughout time in the evaluation of creatures. Thousands of years in advance, they made precise predictions about the solar and lunar eclipses. It implies that our sages were intelligent; therefore, we ought to appreciate them. We should respect our religion and our tradition. Our past holds the key to our glory, and innovative ideas could unveil and restore our lost position. Vedic science was so

sophisticated that it could be contrasted with modern scientific discoveries. Albert Einstein concluded this article with the following remarks: The renowned scientist of the 20th century shared his favorable opinions on ancient Indian knowledge. “We owe a lot to the Indians, who taught us how to count, without which no worthwhile scientific discovery could have been made.” - Albert Einstein, German scientist and humanist, 1879–1955.

Everything else seems unnecessary when I read the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita and consider how God created this universe. - German scientist and humanist Albert Einstein, 1879–1955.

Dedication: I dedicate this article to Lord Sri Krishna, the cosmic governor who illuminates the entire world through His wisdom.

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