Evidence for hominid evolution

Science, Anthropology

Question one Charles Darwin presented information that show that natural species including the humans have evolved over a number of years. Over thousands of generations, one form of life has evolved to another kind of life. The earliest hominids are dated five and two million years ago with evidence pointing to Africa as the point of origin. Starting from the modern human skull, our ancestors showed resemblance in terms of physical and genetic characteristics. Humans (hominids) belong to order Primates that has more than 23o species of apes, monkey and lemurs. The human social system has been shared by other primates, for instance, chimpanzee groom, hunt, feed and form family bonds. This was the probable lifestyle of early man. Scientifically, nearly 98% of human genes and chimpanzees are identical showing the biological closeness to humans. The cardinal difference between the two is the human brain size that is larger and complex. This makes man to communicate through speech, walk upright among others (Ruse, p. 23). About five million years ago, australopithecines evolved from the apes. It had small canine and was bipedal. This was the earliest human species. There were two major australopithecine groups; robust and gracile. The main difference was the jaw and teeth size. From australopithecine, the next probable evolution was the Homo habilis. This represented the modern man and Louis and Mary Leaky in Tanzania found the evidence. The primate was bipedal, upright and would use forearm to handle tools and weapons. It had increased brain size than the former and climbed ability suppressed. They had opposable thumbs (Ruse, p. 43).

From the Homo habilis, there came the Homo ergaster that led to Homo erectus. This then led to Homo sapiens. The changes in the humans also

showed changes in other primates such as the Chimpanzee. However the primary characters of the family bond, use of hand remained. The Chimpanzees just like humans are in the ape family. The differences in brain size, fur and eyes demonstrate the evolution that has occurred. Many similarities point to a similar origin. The similarities include the family bonding, the use of facial gestures such as surprise and comfort, omnivorous in nature, bipedal (Ruse, p. 69).

Question two

Neolithic revolution lead to a widespread change in human lifestyle from the era of hunting and gathering to agriculture and settlement era. This enabled the humans support the fast growing population. This Neolithic revolution has led to improved health and longevity as well as morbidity. With Neolithic revolution, more food was produced, and industrialization made this possible. Therefore, the increasing population would now get healthy food in enough supply. Probably one of the reasons for the humans to shift into agriculture was the fear of death. Food assured them longevity and better health. Thus, the humans would not succumb to hunger and death (Simmons, p. 45).

On the contrast, the Neolithic revolution leads to disease era. After the development of sedentary societies diseases spread, more rapidly compared to the hunter and gatherer societies. The rise in illness and death is associated with inadequate sanitary practices and animal domestication. The diseases were transmitted from animals to humans. Examples of diseases that were transmitted from animals to humans include the Influenza, measles and smallpox. Small pox pandemic led to a lot of persons losing

their life. With colonial error, more diseases even emerged such as cholera, malaria and tuberculosis. Therefore, the change can be linked to increased diseases and death (Simmons, p. 49).

In conclusion, the Neolithic Revolution had both the positive and negative effects on the humans. The humans had enough supply of food in the time the high population threatened them of hunger. Sufficient food was a guarantee of good health hence longevity of life. On the other hand, the Revolution leads to widespread of diseases. This would be linked with the domestication of animals that lead to spread of disease from animals to humans, a good example being smallpox that swept away many lives.

Cited work

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Simmons, Alan H. The Neolithic Revolution in the Near East: Transforming the Human Landscape. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007. Internet resource.