

CHAPTER-5

ANIMAL ETHICS AND RELIGION DEBATE

5.1 Introduction:

Religion is all about beliefs, beliefs about creation, purpose, destiny, life and love, what people believe or disbelieve about God and the world affects all aspects of their being, including their day to day life. Studying religions makes a person to see moral ideas that draws the lines of faith. Religion can also affect our attitudes towards animals and the way in which animals are treated by us. Thus, all major religions of the world acknowledged that humankind depends on nature for its own survival. Thus, religion teaches us compassion and love for all living creatures.

The possibilities and problems of “religion and animals” can be seen in the following comparison. In its revised Catechism, issued in 1994, the Catholic Church proclaimed, “Animals, like plants and inanimate things, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity.” Contrast this assertion with the following from the popular *Metta Sutta* recited by millions of Buddhists every day: “Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind towards all beings, and loving kindness towards the entire world.” It can be said, quite simply, that the record of some religious institutions in defending animals is one of abject failure, often driven by extraordinary arrogance and ignorance. Yet, at other times religious believers have lived out their faith in ways that have been fully in defence of nonhuman lives. So, studying comparative religions allows people to see moral ideas that stretch across the lines of faith traditions.¹³⁴

Engagement with lives outside our species has produced for some religious believers an understanding that other animals are the bringers of blessings into the world. Believers have also held that some nonhuman

¹³⁴ Kimball, Charles. “When Religion Becomes Evil.” Lecture at Rocky Mountain College, Billings. 27 September, 2004

animals are persons in every sense that humans are persons, and even ancestors, family, clan members, or separate nations. Life forms outside the human species have regularly engaged humans' imagination at multiple levels, and thus often energized religious sensibilities dramatically. Because of this, one does not have to look far to uncover positive connections between some forms of religion and concerns for nonhuman animals. The links between these two are, in fact, unfathomably ancient. Our remote ancestors were fascinated with nonhuman lives, and the origins of human dance, musical instruments, art, and even a sense of the sacred have been tied directly to the fascination that our ancestors exhibited regarding the neighbouring, nonhuman members of the earth community. But the prevalence of dismissive views in religious circles cannot be denied. Views like that of the Catholic Catechism which are anchored in a radical subordination of nonhumans to humans - what Mary Midgley called the "absolute dismissal" of nonhuman animals now tragically prevalent in most modern industrialized countries - remain very common in religious circles today.

5.2 Religion and Animals:-

Historically, there has been a link between religious traditions' willingness to demean nonhuman animals and the totality of modern secular societies' subordination of nonhuman animals' lives to human profits, leisure, and "progress". So, fairness and balance in approaching this subject will require any researcher of "religion and animals" to acknowledge that, even if a preoccupation with other animals is an ancient theme in religious traditions, it has not been a prominent part of ethical discussion in modern religious institutions or in academic circles where religion is studied. Those who have championed the cause of nonhuman animals around the world since the resurgence of protective intentions and actions in the 1970s have only rarely consulted religious authorities when seeking communal support

for increased animal protection. And religious authorities haven't often sought to participate in debates over how to defend wildlife, ensure that food animals are not mistreated, and minimize harm to research animals, or honour the special place of companion (nonhuman) animals in humans' lives.

The reluctance of animal advocates to seek the help of religious institutions and authorities alone says much about how "in defence of animals" modern religious traditions have been, or might be, in the world today. We will begin this chapter by considering what various religions have claimed about other animals. To what extent have religious traditions been guilty of what Richard Ryder called "speciesism". As we have discussed in earlier chapter- 1 and 2, Speciesism is the view that any and all human animals, but no nonhuman animals, should get fundamental moral protections? Speciesism makes membership in the human species the criterion of belonging within our moral circle. And to what extent do religious traditions provide resources and support for those seeking to defend animals? If we consider what major religious traditions which are sometimes referred to as the "world religions" have claimed about "animals," it becomes clear that some religious positions serve well to defend nonhuman animals, while others offend profoundly.

At the same time, religious traditions have often been the primary movers of a compassionate engagement with other lives. The possibility of such an engagement has often been thought of as an eminently religious act, although that will sound strange to many modern believers who are heirs to a version of religion that has become virtually autistic about nonhuman realities. Still, religion as a whole has an extraordinarily distinguished record of fostering the ethical abilities that are the means by which humans can and often do care about other animals This first of the central inquiries in the religion and animals field is, thus, about matters we generally call 'ethical'

or 'moral' The second of the central inquiries is embodied in this question what roles have religious traditions had as mediators of views of nonhuman animals. Even a cursory review of rituals, dances, myths, folktales, songs, poetry, iconography, and canons reveals that animal images of many kinds have been and remain central features of religious expression .Hence, the study of images of nonhuman animals found so broadly in religious symbolism must be an essential feature of the study of religion and animals Engaging this issue of images and religions' mediating role regarding views of nonhumans is no simple matter, however. Religious traditions include an extraordinary variety of stories in which nonhuman animals are mentioned in some way, and these have great differences in tenor and purpose. Some are positive and integrating while others demean and distort. Some honor the value of nonhuman lives as fully as others justify human use of any nonhuman animal for any purpose.

Of great importance in the field of religion and animals, then, is that nonhuman animals often have been treated as (others) whose presence was important to religious believers. Various nonhuman animals in religious traditions have signified meaning, mediations may or may not, however, honor those nonhuman animals' own lived realities; they may even obscure or intentionally eclipse those realities. Thus by virtue of an examination of these multiple roles played by images and stories, we can claim, have the realities of nonhuman animals, their daily actualities and "historicity," as it were, been seen well? For those who care to see other animals accurately, what amounts to a subtle but powerful form of violence occurs when worldviews or belief systems promote specific forms of misunderstanding and caricature that mislead about the verifiable realities of nonhuman animals. So, it is quite natural that practitioners within the field of animals and religion ask again and again if religious traditions have, in fact, passed along inadequate caricatures of nonhuman others in, say, a canonical

scripture, such that a religious believer would be in error when relying literally on this information. Relatedly, in sacrificial contexts the use of animals, human and nonhuman alike has resulted in lives being intentionally extinguished for purposes that are not those of the victims involved. Is the intentional, violent killing of the sacrificial victim always and everywhere a denial of that being's importance? Can such killing in a ritual or symbolic act be an affirmation of some kind? What are the values and assumptions that underlie affirmative answers to these questions about sacrifice? If answers on these challenging questions are different for human sacrificial victims than for nonhuman victims, why is that so? Careful work on these basic questions about the transmission of images, as well as the inherently ethical questions raised above, leads to the conclusion that religious traditions have, historically, been the principal vehicle by which the status of nonhuman animals was evaluated by not only believers, but also entire cultures and their institutions. This evaluative role has been taken over in crucial respects, of course, by scientific and political traditions; but the importance of religious traditions as continuing mediators of views and values regarding nonhuman animals remains one of the most obvious features of humans' contemporary assessment of their relationship to the rest of life on this earth.

5.3 Religion and Animals: An Indian Approach:

The ancient religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism have never differentiated between the soul of a human being and the soul of an animal. Thus all life forms are subject to the cycle of birth death and rebirth. All these religions teach us that the liberation of the soul depends on our karmas or actions. For them a person, an animal and an insect have same value of life and they are also part of the cycle of life, death and rebirth. They believe that everything has been created by Supreme Being or

Brahman comes from the Supreme Being and again returns to the Supreme Being.

Thus animals, in the Indian tradition are considered to have the same feelings and passions as human being. And also there are different important role of animals in our tradition. The qualities of the animals were assumed by the associated deities. Say for example lord Vishnu incarnated himself as different animals and perform the role of creator, preserver, and destroyer of the whole universe and re-established *dharma*. Even a small honeybee also played an important role in human life. These small bees are producing and storing honey and constructing colonies of nests out of wax secreted by the workers in the colony. In Indian tradition we can also see that the boar is associated with rain and it is a faith in Hindus that they dig the earth before the onset of the monsoon. Thus their ability to dig up the earth teaches human being to plough, till and fertilize the land.

5.3.1 Hinduism:

By the time Socrates was born people in Indian civilization had accumulated more than one thousand years of spiritual vision. Religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism held nature as sacred and humans are not more significant than any other living things. The Hinduism emerged from the ancient Vedic religion, which took shape in India around 1500 BCE, pulling in elements of Indian religion that had already existed for fifteen hundred years. For Hinduism, animal souls are the same as human souls. Nature remains sacred for the Hindus. Even “all of nature, the entire entire universe is sacred¹³⁵ for a Hindu. With the natural surroundings animals are also important for Hinduism. In the *Mahabharata*, we can see that animals talk and speak like “real animals, sometimes human beings or Gods”¹³⁶. For Hinduism, animals does not seem so far removed from human beings, and

¹³⁵ Kinsley, David. *Ecology and Religion; Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs ; Prentice- Hall, 1995

¹³⁶ *Mahabharata*. Trans. William Buck. Berkeley ; U CA., 1973

animals hold “something of the divine”¹³⁷. Hindus tend to be aware of both holiness and nobleness in other animals. Thus, Hinduism teaches us that animals and humans were once closer and communicated with each other on equal terms. Say for example, the *Ramāyana* has lot of animal characters such as Jāmbavān, the bear, the eagle Jatāyu etc.

Lord says in *Śrīmadbhāgavatam*, “this form is the source and indestructible seed of multifarious incarnations within the universe and from the particle and portion of this form different living entities, like demigods’ animals’ human beings and others are created.”¹³⁸ The ten incarnations¹³⁹ (*Avatāras*) of Lord *Viṣṇu*, in Hinduism, is a recurrent theme in the Vedic history. The *Avatāras* of *Viṣṇu* takes progressively more developed form i.e. from a fish to a human form describe that animals play an important role in God’s creation. The *Matsya Purāṇa* describes that the first incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu* is a fish. The second is a tortoise, then a boar, then *Bāli* - the king of the monkeys. In his *Rām* incarnation Lord killed *Rāvaṇa* in association with the monkeys. The fifth incarnation is *Parśurāma* and the next is *Balarāma*. In *Kṛṣṇa* incarnation He is associated with the cows and forests and terminated demons like *Kansa*. In the *Kali* age He would be born as *Buddha*. At the end of *Kali* age He would take the form of *Kalki* and kill the *mlechhas*.¹⁴⁰

One remarkable feature of the Indian icons of God and Goddess is that each God/Goddess has been permitted an animal inseparable from the divine image. Say for example, the lion is the carrier (*Vāhana*) of Goddess *Durgā*, the swan is that of Goddess *Sarasvati* (Goddess of learning and art), *Lakṣmi* (the Goddess of wealth) has an owl, *Kārtika*, the *Devasenāpati*

¹³⁷ Coomaraswamy, Ananda K and Sister Nivedita. *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*. New York ; Dover, 1967. P.15-16

¹³⁸ Bhaktivedanta, A.C. *Srīmadbhāgavatam* trans. Swami Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1976, 1: iii-5

¹³⁹ Goswami, C. L. and Shastri, M. A. trans. *Srīmatbhāgavata Mahapurana* Gita Press: Gorakhpur, 1982, 1:3-5.

¹⁴⁰ Joshi, K.L. & Trivedi, Bindiya, edit.& trns. *Narasimha Purana* Eastern Book Corporation, Delhi, 2003.

(army commander of the Gods) has the *Mayura* (peacock), even the humble *Muṣika* (mouse) has been allocated as the carrier of Lord *Ganeśa*, (the God of success). Thus, all life forms are treated with dignity and respect as God is manifested in every living organism. The inalienable principle, which comes out from all the studies in Hinduism is “to live and let live”. *Manu Samhitā* describes how there was an integral relationship between man and his environment which is as follows,

Vighāsasi bhavet nitya vāmṛtabhojanāḥ |
*Vighoṣo bhuktā śoṣantu yajña śeṣa tathāmṛtam ||*¹⁴¹

It means feed everyday one *Vighāsa*. (The word *Vighāsa* means what is left over after one’s in-laws, guests and other living beings have been fed.) Ancient Indian texts suggest that human being’s socio-ethical life has been divided into four stages. They are *Brahmacarya* under a teacher, *Grhastya* or family life, *Vānaprastha* or living aloof, and *Sanyāsa* or renunciation. The duty and obligation of a *Grhastya* or householder is not towards his mother, father, wife and children alone rather he has other obligations called *ṛna* or debt towards fellow men and to other living creatures. A *grhi* or householder was under the debt to perform five kinds of *yajña* or act for other’s good. *Manu Samhitā* describes,

Adhyāpanam brmhayajñāḥpitryajñāḥtu tarpaṇam |
*Homo daiva balirbhūto nṛyajño’atithipujanam ||*¹⁴²

This means, teaching and learning is *Brahmayajña*, offering of water with *til* to the ancestors is *pitryajña*, igniting the sacrificial fire in worshipping Gods is *devayajña*, and feeding the animals is *bhutayajña* and serving the guest is *nṛyajña*. The word ‘worship’ in the *śloka* literally means being worshipped or showing high regard to the guests indicates not the acts of charity but paying off debts (*ṛna*) for what a man entitled to his forefathers, to the animals and to his fellow men.

¹⁴¹ Roy, Kumud R. edit. *Manu Samhita* K. Roy Publication, 1968,3:285

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 3:70

The cycle of birth in Hindu theological scriptures describes that a person may come back as an animal or a bird according to the type of merits and demerits one acquires through actions during his life span. This provides respect and noble sentiments towards these species. Also, it justifies non-violence (*Ahiṃsā*) towards animals as well as humans. *Viṣṇupūrāṇa* justifies this position by saying that God *Keśava* is pleased with a person who does not harm or destroy other non-speaking creatures or animals. He who sacrifices, sacrifices to Him: he who murmurs prayers preys to Him: he who injures the living creatures injures to Him: For *Hari* is in all beings¹⁴³. The *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* goes in favor of not eating meat and the practice of giving up meat eating, as we shall see in the following verse.

Ataḥ ścṛudhvam māṅsasya vidhibhaksāṇavarjane |
Vaseṣṭa narake ghore didāni paśuromābhiḥ, ||
*Samitāni durācāro yo hantā bidhinā paśūn |||*¹⁴⁴

This means, the wicked persons who killed the animals, which are protected and domesticated, has to live in hell-fire (*ghora narka*) for the days equal to the number of hairs of the body of that animal. *Manusmṛiti*, the basic law book of Hinduism considers animal killer as a murderer. Those who are also involved in animal killing like, the slaughterer, the butcher, the cook and the one who eats the meat are liable to nature's punishment.¹⁴⁵ In the *Śāntiparva* of *Mahābhārata* it is said that the life of a man and an animal is of equal value and impose the same punishment for the destruction of either of the forms of life. It is said;

Śca-varāhakharānhatvā śoudrameva bratamāret |
Mārjārcās amandukānkākam byala ḥa musikam ||
*Uktaḥ paśusamo doṣa rājanpraṇipātanāt |||*¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Wilson, H.H. *Vishnupurana* trans. H.H. Punthi Publishers : Calcutta, 1981, 3: viii, p. 234.

¹⁴⁴ Acharya, N.R. *Yajnavalkya Smṛiti* edit. Acaradhyaya : Bhaksbhaksaa Prakarnam, Nirnaya Sgar Press :Bombay, 1949, 178-180, P.60.

¹⁴⁵ Shastri, Acarya Jagdishlal. *Manusṛiti* trans. Motilal Banarsidas Publications : New Delhi 1983, 5:51.

¹⁴⁶ Ganguli , Kishori Mohan, *A Translation of Mahbhārata of Vyasa : Shantiparva-165*, Munshira Manoharlal, 2004.

Early seals from the Indus Valley City depict trees as powerful symbol of abundance. India has a long history of forest protection from the literature, epics and from the poetic texts to the edicts of Ashoka and the individual works of various kings. From the *Rig Vedic* period tree worship was very popular and universal in Hindu's life style. Tree symbolizes various attributes of God and therefore plantation of a tree is considered to be a ritual. *Rig Veda* considers trees, as having divine powers in relation to their healing properties. *Rig Veda* describes,

Yā oṣadhī pūrvā jātā devebhya triyugam parā|

*Maneina babhrunāmamaham satam dhāmāni sapta ca ||*¹⁴⁷

This means, herbs that sprung up in time of old, three ages earlier than the Gods - of these whose hue is brown, will I declare the hundred powers and seven.

During the period of *Purāṇas* and epics, concern and respect towards trees was developed through stage by stage. Trees are considered as “being” having consciousness, feel pain and pleasure. In the *Shāntiparva* of *Mahābhārata*, while instructing Bharadvaja, Bhṛgu very minutely analyzes the functions and reactions of plants and declares that plants do possess the sensibilities of hearing, seeing, smelling testing and touching. They have their faculties of sensing, sorrow and joy as mentioned in the following verse.

Sukhaduḥkhayośca gṛahaṇāchirṇasya ca virohaṇāt |

*Jivam paśyāmi br̥kṣāṇām a-çaitanyaṁna vidyate ||*¹⁴⁸

In *Nyāyabindu*, a textbook on Buddhist Logic by Dharmakirti, it is found that there is a controversy raised between the *Digambaras* and the Buddhists, which is solved by Dharmakirti with the presentation of an

¹⁴⁷ Sarswati, Swami S. *Rig Veda* trans. Veda Pratisthana: New Delhi, 1980, 10:97,1-23.

¹⁴⁸ Ganguli, Kishori Mohan, *A Translation of Mahabharata of Vyasa* : Santiparva, chapter-184, Munshira Manoharlal, 2004

argument. He argues that trees are conscious and they die with their removal of their skin.¹⁴⁹

Hinduism is best understood as a complex of diverse sub-traditions, offers an immense range of views about the living beings who share our ecological community. Two general beliefs dominate how these Hindu sub-traditions think of humans' relationship to Earth's other animals. First, humans are clearly recognized to be in a continuum with other life; second, humans are nonetheless considered to be the paradigm of what biological life should be. One thus commonly finds within Hindu sources claims that the status "human" is above the status of any other animal. Both the continuum notion and the separation emphasis are part of the Hindus' belief in reincarnation, which asserts that any living being's current position in the cycle of life is a deserved position determined by the strict law of *karma*. This famous notion, which Hindus understand to reflect the eternal law of the universe, claims that all living beings, human and nonhuman alike, are born and reborn into stations in life determined by their past deeds. This view, which clearly implies that the universe has a fundamental moral structure, works out in ways that subordinate and otherwise demean nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals, which by definition haven't acted in prior lives in ways that surmount their inferior nonhuman status, are denizens of a corrupt, lesser realm. Achieving human status means one has in past lives acted well. Humans who in this life act immorally are, according to Hindu thinking, destined to be reborn as a nonhuman animal, a demeaned status thought of as particularly unhappy compared to human life. These two beliefs - humans' connection, humans' superiority - have resulted in tensions in Hindu views of other animals. A negative set of views, often used to justify dominance or harsh treatment, flows from the claims that earth's numerous nonhuman animals are inferior to any human. A

¹⁴⁹ Malbania, D. edit. *Nyayabindu* Kashiprasad Institute: Patna, 1955.

competing, positive set of views flows from the continuum belief, for other animals, like humans, have souls and thus are worthy of ethical considerations (for example, the notion of non-harming, or *ahimsa*, applies to them). On the positive side of attitudes toward nonhuman animals is the tradition's remarkable claim that other animals should not be killed. Many passages in the Hindu scriptures exhort believers to treat other animals as they would their own children. And central religious texts hold that the earth was created for both humans and nonhumans. These texts allow many contemporary Hindus to argue that all lives have their own interests, their own value, and thus a right to existence. Hence, daily life in India, especially at the village level, provides many examples of coexistence with other animals, the best-known example of which is the sacred cow. The special treatment of some nonhuman animals suggests that Hinduism is not classically specialists, for not all nonhumans are excluded from the moral circle. Relatedly, not all humans were necessarily included, for the inequalities existing within human society (often referred to as the caste system) were also justified as the direct result of good or bad deeds performed in former lives. Beyond the special obligations to all living beings found in the Hindu tradition, one finds close associations of many Hindu deities with specific animal forms. The deities Rama and Krishna are believed to have reincarnated as, respectively, a monkey and a cow. Ganesha, an elephant-headed god, and Hanuman, the monkey god, have long been worshipped widely in India. These close associations provide another basis on which Hindu believers can act in defence of certain nonhuman animals. Hinduism's earliest forms were intimately associated with animal sacrifice, which dominated the ritual life of the nascent tradition. Around 500 BC, this practice was challenged by Buddhists and Jainas as cruel and unethical. This challenge had a great effect on the later Hindu views of the morality of intentionally sacrificing other animals, and

ahimsa, the historically important emphasis on nonviolence, has now become a central feature of the tradition.

Animals also play a very important role in the *Pañcatantra*. *Pañcatantra* contains a chapter of friendship, a crow, pigeon, mouse, tortoise, and deer became friends through a host of engaging occurrences. These colourful stories of *pancatantra* teach us the principles of good government and public policy through animal fables. In this book all “the instructions are carried by animals and the teaching is all about good or wise conduct”¹⁵⁰ These stories tell us that compassion and non-violence not only stop at the human family rather it extends into the larger world of life. And every animal is endowed with personality, personal interest such as not to suffer and to be well fed, desires, and inclinations to be noble or evil, just or unjust. In our popular Hindu epic Ramayana, the monkey hero Hanumana, recognized the great God Vishnu, in the form of Rama.¹⁵¹ And Rama also felt an “instinctive compassion” for the king of the monkeys and his community.¹⁵² Hanumana is thus a model for us that how we should worship our divine lord. Even now a day Hanumana remains one of the main deities in most villages of northern India. In Indian religious tradition we can find lord Vishnu whose incarnation played an important role. Actually our Hindu religious texts are filled with stories of deities who are incarnated as various animals. Vishnu not only our lord but also sometimes a fish, tortoise, boar and a man-lion. And Vishnu as a man- lion best demonstrated that how gods, people and animals can all be one and the same.

As we have already discussed that in the Indian tradition reincarnation and the condition of one’s next life are based on *Karma*. *Karma* is a force of

¹⁵⁰ Rukmani, T.S. “Literary Foundations for an Ecological Aesthetic: *Dharma*, Ayurved, the Arts, and *Abhijnanasakuntalam*.”. *Hinduism and Ecology : The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*. Ed. Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Cambridge: Harvard U, 2000. P.106

¹⁵¹ *Ramayana*. Ed.R.K. Narayan. New York ; Viking,1972. P. 99

¹⁵² *Ibid*

justice because “every act carries with it an inevitable result”.¹⁵³ In Hindu sacred texts which are called the *Shastras*, we can see that a woman who wishes to avoid the realm of hell asks, “What action is it that is good for all creatures?”¹⁵⁴ All the Hindus believe that the “pain a human being causes other living beings.....will have to be suffered by that human being later, either in this life or in a later rebirth.”¹⁵⁵ So the Hindu teachings of reincarnation and *karma* naturally lead us to the practice of *ahimsa* an injunction of “non- injury towards all living beings”.¹⁵⁶ Thus the Hindu concept of *ahimsa* cross the barrier of speciesism and also encouraged us to practice non-violence towards the community of all beings. That is why the ancient Indian laws of Manu warned us that, “A person who kills an animal for meat will die of a violent death as many times as there are hairs of that killed animal.”¹⁵⁷ Thus for Hindus raising and killing animals for food means a profanation of anything holy. The *Upanishad* teaches us that the inner essence of all living being is identical with the inner essence of every other being. “As by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known,” so all things are one in essence.¹⁵⁸ So to know a lump of clay means is to know everything that is made of clay, as to know what it is to be human is to understand what it is to be a flounder. Just as all rivers flow to join one great sea, so do all living beings come from separate bodies, yet we are united by a shared “subtle essence”¹⁵⁹. Similarly the *Mahabharata* also teaches us the oneness of all beings, including the oneness of all beings with the divine.

¹⁵³ Embree, Ainslee T,ed. *The Hindu Tradition; Readings in Oriental Thought*. New York ; Vintage,,1972. P.51

¹⁵⁴ O’ Flaherty, Wendy Doniger, ed. *Textual Sources for the Study of Hinduism*. Chicago; U of Chicago,1988. P.124

¹⁵⁵ Jacobson, Knut. “The Institutionalization of the Ethics of ‘ Non- Injury’ toward All ‘Beings’ in Ancient India”. *Environmental Ethics* 16 (1994) ; P.289

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid* P.287

¹⁵⁷ Dwivedi, O.P. “Dharmic Ecology.” *Hinduism and Ecology ; The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*. Ed. Christopher Key Chapple and Mary Evelyn Tucker. Cambridge; Harvard U. 2000.P.7

¹⁵⁸ *Chandogya Upanishad* Trans. F. Max Muller. *The Upanishads* Part 1. New York ; Dover,1962. P.92

¹⁵⁹ *Chandogya Upanishad*. Trans F. Max Muller. *The Upanishads* Part-1. New York ; Dover, 1962. P.102

When the fire God. Say for example- one day the Lord Agni, is hungry and needs to consume a forest in order to regain his strength, he asks permission from Krishna. Krishna also asks him, if there are any people, animals, birds or trees that will be harmed. Then, Agni replied that the animals will run away, the birds will fly away, and “the trees have their roots beyond my reach”.¹⁶⁰ We are trying to understand the Hindu attitude towards animals one basic truth we have to kept in our mind that the Hindu recommendation to cultivate a particular kind of attitude towards animals. Thus in the Vedas and other scriptures suggested us that the universe itself originated by sacrificing a cosmic animals such as a horse or cow or a cosmic *purusa* (a man). In fact we found that sacrifices are offered daily and also on special occasion. That is why it has been written in *Satpath Brāhmana*, “The sun, the sky, the wind, the dawn, the earth and so forth are all said to come out of the sacrificial horse¹⁶¹. All these sacrificial rituals are happened to serve special purpose. Even sometimes on special purpose a human being also sacrificed. So the entire rituals proceed under the believe that it is not a “deliberate killing” rather just for some religious purposes. And like other ordinary killing, here is no motive or intention we have seen to kill animals. In one sentence we may say that the animal sacrifice in Hinduism never justify killing or torturing animals.

In spite of these, we can see that in Hinduism the cow is regarded as the most sacred of all animals. And also cow dung is considered so pure for most of the Hindu families. They used cow dung not only as fuel and disinfectant but also to wash floors, walls, and even the places of worship. The killing of a cow is considered a sin for Hindus. Even nowadays in certain places of our India we can see that one day is reserved for worshiping cows or deities. So this special feature of Hindu belief and

¹⁶⁰ *Mahabharata*. Trans. William Buck. Berkeley; U CA, 1973 P.81

¹⁶¹ *Satpath Brāhman* in the sacred book of the east translated by Mauria Bloomfield (oxford clarendon press- 1879-90) vol. xliii x-6.4.1 . Hereafter referred to as the sacred book of the east.

practice clearly shows us that the attitude of the Hindus towards animals can be one of the extreme affection rather than selfish attitude. Furthermore, Indians speak of “mother-cow-love” and Indian literature often compared a good mother to a cow, running to those who are in need “as a cow runs to her calf”.¹⁶² Even both in *Mahabharata* and in *Dharmasastras* ahimsa is one of the *yama*. Thus it is clear that Hinduism exalts *ahimsa* as a virtue in one hand but also permit “killing of animals” in certain special circumstances.

Thus in Hinduism we can see that our primary and ultimate concern is *moksa* (salvation), but it is not possible on an individual basis. Really nobody can save unless the whole race is saved. Actually our duties regarding animals are based on the demand of our spiritual quest. That is why the most well known Hindu scripture *Gita* suggested us that we should perform good acts without attainment to their fruits. Thus the most important aspect of Hindu theology is the association of different species with reincarnation. Generally in Hindu mythology the number of incarnations is regarded to be ten.

In Hindu mythology generally *Avatāra* means one who descends. It is believed in every Hindu that whenever *Dharma* or the law of righteousness is in danger, Vishnu incarnated himself to save the world from evil. Thus the first four forms are the fish or *Matsya*, who lives in water, and saves Manu from the flood waters. Then as a tortoise Vishnu helps the gods churn the ocean to obtain a delicious drink of gods of immortality with which they defeat the demons and restore balance and order of the universe. As a boar or *Varaha* the boar, the Vishnu dives to the depth of the ocean to lift up the world which had sunk under the seas. But Vishnu as a man-lion demonstrates the best example of gods, people, and animals can all be one and the same. *Narasimha* the half-man half-lion who manifest himself to protect the Vishnu devotee *Prahlāda*. The rest are *vāmana* the dwarf, who

¹⁶² *Mahabharata*. Trans. William Buck. Berkeley; U.CA, 1973. P.58

tricks the demon Bali into giving away the earth, *Paraśhurāma* the wild man with the axe, who rids the world of its corrupt rules twenty one times. And the *Rama* the religious and perfect mankind, who rescues his wife Sita from the demon Ravana. *Krishna* our lord , who slays the Buddha the man of peace who leads the unorthodox astray and the tenth and last incarnation *Kalki* who rid the world of evil doers and inaugurate the new golden age. Actually by incarnated himself Vishnu reiterates that all creation- animal and people are equal.¹⁶³

Thus, Hinduism offers us a new interpretation of *moksa*. Nobody is really saved unless the whole race is saved. That is why Radhakrishnan once wrote about *sarvamukti* which is the ultimate goal of all religious life. For this reason Ahimsa plays a very vital role in Hinduism. Generally the concept of *ahimsā* or non-violence in thought and deed is India's unique contribution to world culture. It is our *Vedas* and *Upanishads* were the first to speak about *ahimsā*. Although it's true that *Aryāns* were not vegetarians, the concept of non-killing appears in the earliest literature. The *Rig Veda* condemns all forms of killing, even for food, preferring vegans to drinkers of milk. The *Yajur Veda* also tells us that service to animals leads to heaven, "no person should kill animals helpful to all and persons serving them should obtain heaven". Also according to the *Atharvaveda* , the earth was created for the enjoyment of not only human beings but also for bipeds and quadrupeds, birds, animals and all other creatures. Although *Sanatana Dharma* did not require its adherents to be vegetarians, but vegetarianism was recognized as a higher form of living, a belief that continues in contemporary Hinduism where vegetarianism is considered essential for spiritualism. In Hinduism, the concept of ahimsa does not stop at the species

¹⁶³ Jayadeva, a great poet of medieval India , composed the *Gita Govinda* about the ten incarnation . The relevant stanza has been translated and quoted in the sections on the fish, tortoise, boar, and man-lion.

barrier. Every Hindu is tries to practice nonviolence toward the community of all beings.

Another religion of India such as Jainism also talked about the concept of *ahimsa*. Some Jainas even not taking boil water because this process kills tiny life-forms. We can see that from Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu *ahimsā* was not just a way of living but an eternal quality of truth himself. Gandhi once wrote that, “A votary of ahimsa therefore remains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it, and thus incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of *himsā* (violence).¹⁶⁴

In Hinduism the concept we can see which is called *Dāna*. *Dāna* is generally understood as a ritually given gift, donation, offering, transfer or endowment. Some types of Dana are given between kin groups of similar social standing, some are made from higher to lower caste groups, some cannot be return and others cannot be refused. Thus, we can see that in early vedic literature, *dāna* is a materially valued item- such as cattle, horses, gold and women servants also.

5.4 Animal Experimentation in Indian Culture:

We have already discussed about research on animals and its legal and ethical perspective. Let us discuss how animal experimentation was considered from Indian civilization. In ancient Indian society, in the case of animal taxonomies an analogy is often used between the classes of beasts and the classes in the society. There are social and cultural classificatory schemes which are represented as natural, because they reproduce the schemes where by animals are classified. In fact there are several and different methods for classifying animals in Vedic texts, which are as follows.

¹⁶⁴ Gandhi, *An Autobiography ; The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Boston ; Beacon, 1993. p.349

- Animals were anatomically distinguished by their procreational characteristics.
- Animals were classified as either domestic (*gramya*) or wild (*aranya*).
- Animals were categorized as those which were suitable for sacrifice and those which are not. The dynamics behind the “successful illusion” entail the recasting of a cultural decision about how the world’s components are to be categorized as a ‘natural’ fact.

Furthermore, in the case of animal taxonomies an analogy is often posited between the classes of beasts and the classes in society. Thus the social and cultural classificatory schemes can consequently be represented as ‘natural’ because they reproduce the scheme whereby animals are classified. There are several and very different methods for classifying animals in Vedic texts. At first, animals were distinguished by their anatomical characteristics or their mode of procreation. Secondly, animals were classified as either domestic (*grāmya*), or wild (*āraṇya*). Thirdly, ritually based criteria were deployed for categorizing animals into those which were suitable for the sacrifice and those which were not. And lastly, animals were classified as either edible or inedible.

Animals were created by the creator God, *Puruṣa* (the Cosmic Man) or *Prajāpati* (the Lord of Creatures). One story we can find from the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. In the very beginning, there was only the Self (*ātman*) in the form of a *Puruṣa* (*Purusavidhi*). One day he wished for a second because he was not sexually pleased. He was the same size as a man and woman copulating and then became the husband and wife. That is why Yājñavalkya said, “One is like half a piece” and this space is filled with a woman. He then copulated with her. And this way the human race was born. Then she thought that she must hide because, “how does he copulate with her while he given births her from his own self”? She then became a cow; he also became a bull and started to copulate with her. From that cattle were born. Then she became a mare but he became another stallion. After that she

became a she-ass, but again he became another he-ass and copulated with her. The whole-hoofed animals were born from that. Likewise, she became a she-goat but he became another he-goat. When she became a ewe, he again became another ram, and started copulated with her. Goats and sheep were born from that way. Thus through these process he created all, and whatever copulating pairs there are, right down to the ants.¹⁶⁵

In several texts, it can be found that the entire animal kingdom is divisible into two classes on the strength of their footedness, 'Pasupati' rules over the animals (*paśus*), the four-footed (*catuspadām*) and the two-footed (*dvipadām*). Human beings belong to the "two-footed" class, and all other animals comprising the four-footed category. It has been suggested by Manu that, "One should not eat solitary animals, or unknown wild animals or birds, nor any five-clawed animals, not even those listed among the animals to be eaten".¹⁶⁶ Such inedible human-like animals include pseudo-men, and apes, as well as jackals, cats and others are too much like humans due to their peculiar ways. However, text has isolated certain species among the five-clawed animals, which are not like human and therefore edible. Both the Manu and Upanishadic text gives us some clues as to why the classes of cattle and 'goats and sheep' are distinguishable from humans and whole-hoofed animals. Thus the structure of the foot separates the class of humans from all other animals, and then horses and asses (the whole-hoofed) may be distinguished from animals with cloven-hooves-cows, goats, and sheep.¹⁶⁷

According to Manu, cattle, goats, and sheep are distinct from humans and therefore edible and they are also separated from horses and asses (and others in the whole-hoofed class) in that they are cloven-hoofed and have incisors in only the lower jaw (*anyatodanti*) rather than in both jaws

¹⁶⁵ *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4. 1,3-4

¹⁶⁶ *Manu Smṛti* 5.17

¹⁶⁷ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 4.2.4.16; AV 7.5.11 ; 8.5.11 ; 19.39.4 *Sāyana* on AV 3.31.3. and BSS 24.5

(*ubhayadant*). Thus cattle, goats, and sheep are categorically separated from both humans and the class of horses and asses in that they have only lower incisors, as well as cloven hooves.

Goats and sheep are such kind of bests which are “most manifestly” like the creator god, Prajāpati, in that “they bear young three times a year and produce two (offspring) three times (per year).¹⁶⁸ Beside this, in the other formulations the general classificatory principle is the mode of pro-creation characteristic of different types of animals; thus there are three sources of the beings here such as those born from an egg, those born from a living being and those born from sprouts.¹⁶⁹

In addition we can say that each class of animals is ruled by a divine lord- and the creation of four distinct classes of animals such as village, whole-hoofed, small and jungle. A classificatory dichotomy between “village” or domesticated and “jungle” or wild animals found quite frequently in Vedic texts¹⁷⁰ with the genus of “village” animals sub-divided into the species of “whole-hoofed” and “small”. Thus the sub-division has been made on the basis of pedal or dental structure, or the mode of procreation. On the other hand, the other taxonomies make a division between village and jungle animals. Sometimes, the two- fold division is analyzed into three such as animals of the air (*vāyavyas*), jungle, and village.¹⁷¹

The seven village animals are the cow, horse, goat, sheep, man, ass, and camel as the seventh; some say the mule (is the seventh). The seven jungle animals are (wild) cloven-hoofed animals, animals having feet like dogs, birds, crawling animals, elephants, monkeys, and river animals as the seventh.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ *Śatapatha Brāhmana* 4.5.5.6,9 and 5.2.1.24, cf.

¹⁶⁹ *Chandogya Upaniṣad* 6.3.1

¹⁷⁰ *Maitrayani Samhita* 3.2.3. , 3.9.7. ; *Atharva Veda Samhitā* 2.34.4 ; 3.31.3 ; *Śatapatha Brāhmana* 12.7.3.18; The dichotomy is also sometimes indicated by the opposition of wild game (*mriga*) and domesticated animals (*paśu*), e.g. *Atharva Veda Samhitā* 11.2.24, or in at least one passage *Atharva Veda Samhitā* 7.5.11

¹⁷¹ *Rg Veda Samhitā* 10.90.8

¹⁷² *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* 24.5

So the anatomical criteria - as in ‘cloven-hoofed animals’¹⁷³, animals having feet like dogs’, ‘crawling animals’- are put into play within a culturally constituted category of seven undomesticated jungle animals are the opposition of seven domesticated village animals.

Among these (animals) there are fourteen kinds of possessing various forms – seven dwelling in the jungle and seven dwelling in the village. The seven dwelling in the jungle are known to be lions, tigers, wild boars, buffalos, elephants, bears and apes. The cow, goat, human, sheep, horse, mule, and the ass- these seven village animals are enumerated by the wise.¹⁷⁴

After that we are discussing about sacrificial animals. Both the village and jungle animals are greatly sacrificed while dealing with the mammoth animal sacrifice and the most well known *Ashvamedha* or horse sacrifice. In some text we can find that the two types of victims are inclusive of all food as well as all animals.¹⁷⁵ Thus the village is equated with this world and the jungle with the other world.

They sacrifice the village animals for (obtaining) this world, the jungle (animals) for (obtaining) yonder (world). When they sacrifice the sacrifice the village animals, with that he obtains this world, when the jungle (animals are sacrificed) , with that (he obtains) yonder (world). He sacrifices both kinds of animals, village and jungle, for the obtainment of both worlds. He sacrifices both kinds of animals, village and forest, for the obtainment of both kind of food. He sacrifices both kinds of animals, village and forest, for the obtainment of both kinds of animals.¹⁷⁶

Thus the distinction is between those animals that are sacrificable and those that are not. “They bind the village animals to the stakes; they keep the jungle animals in the interstices (of the snakes)-(this) for the distinguishing of the animals (*paśunām vyāvrttyai*). They kill the village animals, the jungle ones they release.’¹⁷⁷

So, the jungle animals or wild game (*mrigas*) are separable from *paśus* . *Pasus* are the kind of animals that get sacrificed, and the *mrigas* are the

¹⁷³ The text obviously refers only to wild animals with cloven hooves, as we have seen above, the term ‘cloven-hoofed animals’ ordinarily refers to one type of village animal (cows, sheep, and goats).

¹⁷⁴ *Mahābhārata* 6.5. 12-14

¹⁷⁵ *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* 20.1

¹⁷⁶ *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.9.3.1 , 3.9.2. 1-2

¹⁷⁷ *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* 3.8.19.2 ; cf. *Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa* 21.4.13

kind of animals that get haunted. So it is clear from the above that the village animals are nothing but the sacrificial victims of the Vedic fire rituals.

Thus, we have discussed three different verities of animal classification. First of all, there is a categorization on the basis of observable anatomical features such as pedal or dental structure or modes of procreation. Secondly, we have isolated another kind of taxonomy, that is whether the animals are domesticated or wild, an inhabitant of the village or of the jungle. Last and finally, we have again analysed a different type of category which entails dividing the animals into those worthy of being sacrificial victims (the *paśus*) and those which lack the sacrificial quality. On ritualistic or cultural ground, animals may be excluded from the category of food and the 'five clawed' animals (apart from man) are most often wild, and these wild animals are basically nonsacrificable, and thus equally inedible

Animals are not only categorized as to anatomical, cultural, ritual and dietary based criteria, they are also classified with reference to *varna*. The animal emitted from the creator god along with the *Brahmin* is the goat, the horse is the *Kshatriya* animal, the bovine is said to be a *Vaishya*; and the *Shūdra* animal is the sheep.¹⁷⁸ So according to the myth from time of beginning, the four animal members of the domesticated, edible, and sacrificial classes thus identifies with the four classes of human society in the course of constructing a network of cosmic connection has existed. So the classifying animal was also a way of classifying people in our ancient India.

5.5 Buddhism

Buddhism mainly based upon a universal idea of compassion for all life. Thus for Buddhism a man is holy if he has pity on all living creatures.

¹⁷⁸ *Taittirīya Samhitā* 7.1.1.4-6, *Viṣṇupurāna* 1.5.45 and *Kūrmapurāna* 1.7.52.

Like Hinduism Buddhism also associated with the key concept of karma, reincarnation, ahimsa, and oneness. Buddhist philosophy holds that other species “are subject to the same process” that human being experience and living with the effects of karma from one birth to next. Just as we wish for “peace, happiness, and joy for ourselves, we know that all beings also wish for these qualities. The Buddhist faith also teaches us that sentient beings and conscious cannot be killed. Buddhism also teaches *ahimsā*, they expressed the universal moral idea such as *metta* (loving-kindness), and *karuna* (compassion). Buddhist writings also warn us that “meat eating in any form or manner and any circumstances is prohibited, unconditionally and for all. Thus it is clear from Buddhist teachings that the aim of moral ideal is to reduce suffering -flesh eating. The *Bodhicharyavatara* of Shantideva described for the Buddhist practitioners that “fellow-creatures are the same as him or herself. ‘All have the same sorrows, the same joys as I, and I must guard them like myself.’”¹⁷⁹

In general, Buddhism represents the way of compassion and Lord Buddha is regarded as the compassionate protector of all being. As for him, the individuals following his path should practice loving kindness which implies not to harm the life of all beings. It is advised always to protect mankind as well as animal’s vegetations. Thus it is his wisdom through which one can see all human beings in the universe as equal in nature. The well-being of all human and non-human being is inter-related and mutual. He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals to stop sacrifice. Once he said to a king, “if the sacrifice of a lamp helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better, and so sacrifice me”¹⁸⁰. We can see that Buddhist thought does not only remain among social beings, rather it remains in mental and environmental world. In our modern society

¹⁷⁹ Burtt, E. A, ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha ; Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*. New York; New American Library,1955. P.139

¹⁸⁰ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, vol-4, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1989, page-136

people often misused their power and destroyed the animals, forests and mountains and creating environmental crisis. Due to the excessive ‘thirst’ (*tanha*) our greedy mind lead to such changes and the destructions of the ecological balance. The thirst (*tanha*) in human mind not only pollutes our mind alone, the whole universe also. So due to the non-fulfilment of desire among people can affect the whole environment. Having the lack of peace in people’s mind the external environment is seriously polluted. In fact, the external pollution is related to our internal mind pollution.

Those who believe in the teaching of Lord Buddha will be able to control their desires and live in harmony with nature keeping the environment in healthy condition. Buddhism shows us that Buddhist monasteries have developed a harmonious living with nature for thousand years. Because of the calm and cool atmosphere of the forest and mountain Buddhist practitioners can develop their inner mind, which ultimately makes them “feel” for the protection of animals. With the loving, kind and tolerant heart the Buddhists live their life with natural vegetation. Even in the *Suttanipata* we can find that a deep appreciation of beauty and diversity of nature. So the follower of Buddhism not only limited their consideration for other individuals as a matter of obligation within the human beings alone but to other species also. Thus the environmental ethics of Buddhism is not totally a matter of identifying and securing rights; rather it is a matter of undertaking a practice of affirming and realizing the trans-human potential for enlightenment as an effect.

A popular and important Buddhist text *Dhammapada* teaches us that those who follow the Buddha will, “ever by night and day,” “find joy in love for all beings”.¹⁸¹ *Dhammapada* also states that those who “hurt no living being” will reach nirvana.¹⁸² Those who follow the Buddhist way of life will

¹⁸¹ *The Dhammapada; The Path of Perfection* trans. Juan Mascaro. New York ; Penguin, 1973 .P.78

¹⁸² *Ibid.* P.68

be filled with mercy, living a life with compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life.¹⁸³ Though we can see that many contemporary Buddhist eat meat today, but one thing is clear from the Buddhist teachings that the meaning of moral ideals is to reduce suffering that is flesh eating as well as drinking the nursing milk of factory-farmed animals which are fosters massive amounts of misery among millions of animals. So, like Hinduism Buddhist philosophy also teaches us that a flesh eater cannot avoid the *karma* that results from the unnecessary harmful actions than one can escape from the dirtying effects of thrown dust into the wind.

The possibilities and problems of “religion and animals” can be seen in the following comparison. In 1994, the Catholic Church proclaimed, Animals, like plants and inanimate things, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity. Contrast this assertion with the following from the popular *Metta Sutta* recited by millions of Buddhists every day: Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind towards all beings, and loving kindness towards the entire world. Religion is a notoriously complex area of human existence. Nevertheless, it can be said, quite simply, that the record of some religious institutions in defending animals is one of abject failure, often driven by extraordinary arrogance and ignorance. Yet at other times religious believers have lived out their faith in ways that have been fully in defence of nonhuman lives. This more positive view has, across place and time, been common. Engagement with lives outside our species has produced for some religious believers an understanding that other animals are the bringers of blessings into the world. Some believers have also held that some nonhuman animals are persons in every sense that humans are persons, and even ancestors, family, clan

¹⁸³ Burtt, E.A, ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha ; Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings*.New York ; New American Library,1955 P.104

members or separate nations. Life forms outside the human species have regularly engaged humans' imagination at multiple levels, and thus often energized religious sensibilities dramatically.

In the *Sutta Pitaka* Buddha said that our moral responsibility is not to cause animals to be slaughtered. He also said that one who does not hurt any creatures by an actions are worthy human being. The *Sutta Pitaka* described that one's actions determine ones future just as "the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage".¹⁸⁴ For many Buddhists individuals and species as mere name and form-outward vestiges wrapped around something less tangible but more enduring, more fundamental, that transcends individual bodies and biological categories. So this view hold the idea that individual human existence, is a mirage, we are only matter in human form, soon to be disbanded and recreated according to our actions in this and past lives.

Thus, the Buddhist *Jataka* is in many ways similar to the Hindu *Pancatantra*, These entertaining stories feature animals of every kind, including humans. We can also find the Buddha's past incarnation in *Jataka* tales. The readers of the *Jataka* are tends to visualise a deeper, closer connection with other life forms. In the *Jataka*, every living being have their own lives, their own karma, tests, purposes and aspirations. We can see that in *Jataka* tales the Buddha offers his body both as rabbit and elephant. The rabbit flung himself into a fire to be cooked while the elephant ran off a cliff to land at the feet of those who needed food. Such stories remind us that there is a difference between those people who have nothing to eat except dead animals, and those who choose to kill for food. Thus the stories of the Buddha's past incarnations, self-sacrificing stories also remind us that the Lord Buddha has been in many form in all living beings, and that is why

¹⁸⁴ Burtt, E.A, ed. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha; Early Discourses, the Dhammapada, and Later Basic Writings* New York; New American Library, 1955, p..52

each living entity is capable of respectful and compassionate actions toward others. So the Buddha's past incarnation as different living beings gives us a message that no animals are insignificant or undesirable in our life.

We can see that like other major faith, Buddhism also is a practical religion which have specific aimed only at salvation. If the devotes are trying to avoid all ill effects in their future lives, then they should follow the Buddhist teachings in their daily life. As we all have aware of the story of famous Buddhist King Ashoka, who was not only concerned with his human subjects, but also with the welfare of animals in his kingdom.¹⁸⁵ His Buddhist compassion was a part of a larger tendency to protect and nurture animals. Even some Buddhists have started to honour "animal day"¹⁸⁶also. Through this annual celebration every people getting encourages to do "work for the liberation of living beings, practice liberation of living beings, and find a cause to make others to do so" because we all are related to every other being through the ongoing process of birth, death, and rebirth.¹⁸⁷ So the co-dependent and radical interdependent attitude of Buddhist philosophy leaves a message for us that each animal was at some point one's parent, and to harm one's parent is a particular base act.

Generally we all know that each and every Hindu scripture preaches non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from theft, lust, anger, greed, and doing what is beneficial to all creatures. A principle of Hinduism is *Ahiṃsā* (harmlessness). According to the various schools of Hinduism, spiritually there is no distinction between human beings and other life forms. All life forms including plants and animals are manifestation of god as limited beings (*jivas*) and possess souls. All beings are children of *prajapati*, and

¹⁸⁵ Harris, Ian. "Buddhism and the Discourse of Environmental Concern ; Some Methodological Problems Considered" *Buddhism and Ecology ; The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*. Ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams. Cambridge, Harvard U, 1997. P.386

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 386

¹⁸⁷ *Bommyoko*. Buddhist Canon, Taisho edition (T.1484,24;997A-1003A)in "Animal Liberation, Death, and the State; Rites to Release Animals in Mediaval Japan".P.150

like humans animals are also subject to the cycle of births, and deaths, karma, triple *gunas*, and aspects of nature, morality and the possibility of salvation.

In *Gītā* our lord Krishna compares the whole of our world with the banyan tree because it is so large and provides a home for many different creatures. It means for our god each and every species has a same value in our world. Moreover there is a myth that ancient Indian people believed that animals had the ability to communicate in their cryptic language and that gods had the natural ability to communicate with them, while human beings needed to develop psychic ability to do so. Someone may raise a question that animals lack the ability to religious thought, but in the Hindu mythology we find animals trying to acquire spiritual knowledge by loitering around them and listening to their discourses. Even if we look in *Manu Samhita* which told that, “he who injures harmless creatures from a wish to give himself pleasure, never finds happiness in this life or the next.

5.6 Islam

Islam generally inherited the Judeo-Christian hierarchy, where people are at the top of the hierarchy but with greater responsibilities. Literally, the word “Islam” means to “surrender to God’s law”¹⁸⁸. Most of the Muslims believed that humankind has no rights, they have only duties, and peoples connect to his Allah just as of slaves to his master.¹⁸⁹ The insistence on “Monotheism” is one of the most fundamental characteristics which are similar in three westerns faiths such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. According to Islam we are just Allah’s caretakers, servants.

Thus Judaism, Christianity and Islam share the same religious teaching that “animals are with us common creatures of the same God. All beings originate with a Creator who loves, just and holy Animals are not

¹⁸⁸ Esposito, John .L. *Islam ; The Straight Path*. Oxford; Oxford U , 1988. P.69

¹⁸⁹ Denny, Frederick M. *Islam and the Muslim Community*. San Francisco ; Harper San Francisco, 1987. P.8

completely separate from us, there is a common ontological basis for all life”.¹⁹⁰ Every Muslims aggress with the view that tending Allah’s creation out of moral obligation is an act of religious devotion and earthly self-sacrifice that bears sweet fruit. Furthermore, Islamic ethics and law teaches us that we are not here for our own sakes, but to serve Allah. So exploiting the earth, satisfying our wants, and dominating nature and animals may provide for us a wealthy worldly existence, but does not testify to one living a life of submission and service to Allah. According to Islam, it is forbidden to be cruel to animals. Under Islamic law, animals kept by human beings must have their basic needs provided, even if they are old or ill. Thus according to Islamic law animals must not be overworked or housed in a way that might cause them injury.

Thus we may see that the six chapters of the *Quran* are named after some species such as cow, bee, ant, spider, cattle, and elephant.¹⁹¹ All the Muslims believe that creation has “intrinsic value” through Allah.¹⁹² To him belongs all that is, in the heavens and in the earth, each and all subservient to his will. He it is who initiates creation and continually renews it” said by *Quran*.¹⁹³ *Quran* also said that *allah* saved a pair of every species from the great flood, and we are called upon to tend, protect, and save creatures that have been driven to the brink of extinction. Actually Muslim thinkers regarded nature as a sacred book. The *Quran* teaches us that earth, and all that exists therein is not merely for human purposes, but for the benefit of all, and each created entity was purposefully designed and brought to life by Allah. Actually animals are not lesser or lower, but separate

¹⁹⁰ Linzey, Andrew. “*Animal Gospel*; A Christian Faith As Though Animals Mattered. London ; Hodder and Stoughton, 1998 P.57

¹⁹¹ Foltz, Richard C. *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures*. Oxford ; Oneworld, 2005. P.11

¹⁹² Ozdemir, Ibrahim. “Toward an Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur’anic Perspective”. *Islam and Ecology ; A Bestowed Trust* Ed. Richard C. Foltz et al . Cambridge; Harvard U, 2003 p.3-38

¹⁹³ *Quran*. Trans. N.J. Dawood. Harmondsworth ; Penguin, 1956 P.30;26-27.

communities, all under the protective power of Allah. We are part of the earthly diversity that Allah intended. In our world all are created by Allah, and all adore the divine-whether or not we understand. Thus Allah receives each entity's praise, as for example we can see how birds praise him as they wing their flight.

5.7 A CRITIQUE OF RELIGION AND ANIMAL DEBATE:

The story of religion and animals is thus a mixed one. But even if careful study of religion and animals can offer prospective defences of nonhuman animals, the existing literature remains surprisingly one-dimensional. For example, entire books that purport to address a religious tradition's views of "animals" fail to refer in any way to the realities of the animals allegedly being discussed. This is increasingly untenable given that much more accurate information has been developed about our nonhuman cousins in the last four decades. These shortcomings reveal that ethical anthropocentrism continues to dominate much of our culture, as when mere images of other animals or those nonhuman animals which have been domesticated animals remain the principal focus because they are, misleadingly, held out as representative or the paradigm of all nonhuman lives. Since ethical anthropocentrism in the form of speciesism is also a defining feature of contemporary legal systems, business values, mainline economic theory, government policy decisions, and educational philosophies and curricula, it will surprise no one that major religious institutions continue to promote this narrow view. Some special challenges for supporters and critics of religion on the issue of nonhuman animals include the role of customary views and symbols, the special place of ethical claims in religion, and prevailing practices regarding nonhuman animals.

Treatment of nonhuman animals is a critical element in assessing any religious tradition's views of other animals. Accounts of the actual, day-to-day treatment of other living beings reveal much about the deepest values

in a religious tradition. Brutal treatment of cattle in the daily world outside a temple where worshippers pay homage to an idol in the shape of a bull or cow would suggest that, on the whole, the religion involved does not respect the harmed animals. And kind treatment of bulls and cows in daily matters, even when there are no images of these animals in the local people's rituals, would suggest something more positive. Which of these two religious communities would we say truly valued the cattle? As carriers of views of the world around us, religious traditions are ancient educators. They profoundly affect the formation of cultural, ethical, social, ecological, intellectual, and political ideas. In this regard, religious traditions quite naturally have had a major role in transmitting views of nonhuman animals from generation to generation.

This transmission role affects virtually everyone's basic ideas about these beings' natures, as well as their place in, or exclusion from, our communities of concern. An essential task in the study of religion and animals is to find the special roles that religious traditions play in developing or retarding views of the life around us. Since the death of Augustine of Hippo almost 1,600 years ago, the vast majority of scholarship in the Western intellectual tradition has been premised on the assumption that humans are the only animals with intellectual ability, emotions, social complexity, and personality development. This dismissal of nonhuman animals, which remains a centerpiece in today's educational institutions, has been challenged by the rich information developed in modern life sciences. The vibrant debates in modern science regarding the specific abilities of nonhuman animals can be used to frame a peculiar irony. We still talk in our schools of "humans and animals," rather than using the far more scientific "humans and nonhumans" or "humans and other animals." But outside academia and even within some religious traditions, many believers have not adhered to the broad dismissal of nonhuman animal's characteristic of the

Western cultural and intellectual traditions. The best-known examples are the Jains, Buddhists, and many indigenous tradition believers who clearly treat other living beings as morally and religiously significant beings.

One may ask, is religion a matter of an individual or a deeply public affair? Generally, people believe that religion is an issue between man and God and no one interferes in individual's privacy, because such interference will go against the individual's fundamental rights. We can see that many people who practice ancient ways of life are sometimes incredibly cruel to animals and destructive attitude towards natural world. So, the religious rituals sometimes are not always conducive to animal welfare. Human being is a social animal and our behaviour can influence others, and peoples' moral-standing closely related to our community. So, on the ground of belief, we should not do senseless practices and criminal activities. Our belief should be rational and scientific. We can see that today religion has become a platform of the "clash of civilization", and because of this we should not separate social life from religious life and we have to make a bridge the gap between the constitutional ideals and our social reality. The main motto of *Dharma* is to uphold, sustain and nurture the all-round harmonious life and growth of the individual along with those of the environment.

God and *Allah* will come in every age like Ram, Christ and Muhammad etc. They are the God in flesh and blood. One may say that we are not contended that Hindus or indigenous peoples are protectionist rather only their sacred lore offers protectionist teachings. In practice sacred teachings are not better than religious practitioners. Each spiritual tradition offers a wealth of protectionist ideals but actual practices may be a different matter. This chapter thus, expresses a firm protectionist core across major religious tradition but cannot demonstrate that adherents of these faiths live a protectionist lifestyle.

It can be said that myth is critical to understanding the ancient ways of life because myth contain the worldview of peoples, and a directive for how one ought to live within these communities. Animal characters are common in mythology and teach indigenous people to maintain reverent relationship with the natural world. Thus, “each story is complex of metaphors that teach the essential important of proper relationship and respect for the natural world. Most of the people in Indian civilization generally believed that humans are just one part of a perpetual sacred life that encompasses the entire cosmos, relationship revealed through myths are life sustaining and therefore critical.

In Western society, there is a tendency in us to romanticize and idealize order, indigenous cultures. No doubt we have much to learn from them. But this should not prevent us from asking critical questions as part of the ongoing debate on animal ethics. As with all communities indigenous peoples do not necessarily follow their spiritual teachings. Furthermore, not all such type of teachings are beneficial to earth or animals. So dedication to the prophet is the only way to universal brotherhood and communal-integration. Acceptance with regard and loving remembrance of forefathers and service of the verities of similar instincts are also essential ingredients of universal *Dharma*. And the humble hope is that the world’s great religions are protectionist at heart.

5.8 Making Religion More Animal-Friendly: Identifying the role of inherited perspectives:

The influence of inherited conceptions causes many religious believers’ perspectives on nonhuman animals to be over determined by something other than a careful engagement with the animals themselves. Inherited preconceptions often take the form of dismissive generalizations found in those documents held to be “revealed.” Too often, one-dimensional sketches of a few local animals have operated as a definitive assessment of

all nonhuman animals' abilities and moral significance. At other times, inaccurate stories, even when positive, obscure the actual realities of the local nonhuman animals. Custom and tradition have all too often underwritten inflexible claims about other animals, frustrating believers who wish to engage readily available, empirically-based evidence that contradicts, in letter or spirit, their religion's inherited views.

Animal images that work as symbols in religious art, writing, dance and oral traditions are only sometimes connected to the animals portrayed. Western scholars have often failed to comprehend other cultures' animal symbols because they have assumed that other cultures read nonhuman animals in the dismissive manner of the western intellectual tradition. Such coarse analytic methods have resulted in serious underestimation of earlier cultures' sophistication regarding nonhuman animals. Caution, then, is critically important in studying animal images, which sometimes work primarily, even exclusively, to convey some feature of human complexity rather than any information about the nonhuman beings whose images are being employed.

Ethical concerns have long been central to religious traditions. As the brief review of religious belief above suggests, humans' ability to exercise concerns for "others" has historically included both humans and nonhumans.

Thus even as mainline religious institutions have participated in dismissals of nonhuman animals from the agenda of "religious ethics," ethical concerns for nonhuman animals' welfare have continued to have a place in many religious believers' lives. This fact makes it misleading to suggest that all religious believers have dismissed nonhuman animals in the manner of the mainline western intellectual and theological traditions that remain dominant today. Even if anthropocentric biases continue to dominate many modern religious institutions' official pronouncements, then, there remains vast potential for emergence of more informed and open-minded

treatment of nonhuman animals in the doctrines, rituals, experiences, ethics, myths, social realities, and ecological perspectives of religious believers. It is quite possible that when a clearer picture of religion and animals is drawn, it will be a rich tapestry of alternatives for interacting with the earth's nonhuman lives.

This potential remains largely unrealized, of course, for it remains overwhelmingly true today that mainline religious institutions have left unchallenged virtually all practices of modern industrialized societies that are harmful to nonhuman animals. This failure arguably violates the ancient consensus which originated in all religious traditions that cruelty to other beings by humans is to be avoided whenever possible. Religions, especially as they are ancient and enduring cultural and ethical traditions, have often been individual believers' primary source for answers to fundamental questions like, "Which living beings really should matter to me?" and "Who and what should be within my community of concern?" As such, religion has had profound impacts on countless humans' actions affecting the other, nonhuman living beings that live within and without our communities. Since religions so characteristically govern day-to-day actions involving our "neighbors," religions will continue to have an obvious role in answering questions about whether we are, or can be, a moral species.

This means that religion generally and specific communities of faith can be challenged with some simple, common sense questions. What place will religions give to discoveries about nonhuman animals that come in the future? How might mainline religious institutions respond to their own sub traditions that become fully informed about other animals' realities and humans' current treatment and uses of other animals? Could individual believers or sub-traditions prompt mainline traditions to respond to the ethics of contemporary practices such as factory farming and decimation of wildlife? These questions drive at a simple question that challenges both

religious and secular outlooks- how can humans, whether within or without religion, see nonhuman animals better?

Because religious institutions have so much influence in cultures across the earth-worldwide, only about one-seventh of people count themselves as non-religious-religions have within their grasp an important leadership role regarding our relationship to the world around us. An increasing number of religious and non-religious humans have echoed some form of insight that “we cannot be truly ourselves in any adequate manner without all our companion beings throughout the earth. This larger community constitutes our greater self.” Whether believers, churches and religious institutions will respond to this challenge remains an unanswered question.