

## CHAPTER-6 CONCLUSION

Philosophy begins as pure thought, but finds its meaning in concrete action that affects our lives and our world. Applied philosophy has been fundamental to Western thought at least since the time of Socrates:

Here is one picture of philosophy. It goes on in an ivory tower pursued by cloistered academics who endlessly dispute the contemporary equivalents of questions like “how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?” It is far removed from the “real world,” even when philosophers spin theories about what is “real.” (In the real world, everyone knows what’s real, without needing philosophers to inform or misinform them.) Here is another picture of philosophy. Socrates is hauled into court and sentenced to death—not for anything he might have done, such as sell state secrets to the Lacedaimonians or assassinate Kleon—but for questioning religious ideas and moral ideals, thus bringing about the precipitous transformation of Athenian society. In the first picture, philosophy seems socially irrelevant. In the second it seems to be the most potent force of social change imaginable.<sup>1</sup>

Animal ethics is a field of study within environmental philosophy. Animals often have been classified as beings of nature, and in contemporary terminology they form an integral part of concepts central to environmental philosophy, such as ecosystems, biodiversity, species, and environments. However, the link between animal ethics and environmental philosophy is complex: Animal ethics concentrates on individual animals and their value, whereas environmental philosophy traditionally has had more comprehensive (soils, waters, and plants as well as animals) and holistic (species, not specimens; biotic communities; ecosystems) concerns. Many animal ethicists, by contrast, maintain that animals should not be valued only as members of species or communities.

Moral standing indicates those individuals that moral agents must respect in certain separately determined ways. All human beings are assumed to have moral standing. Moral standing distinguishes entities that moral agents must treat with “minimum standards of acceptable behaviour”. Entities who hold moral standing gain a certain moral status— their interests

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<sup>1</sup> Callicott, J. Baird. “Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair.” *Environmental Ethics* 2 (1980): 311–38.

must be taken into consideration and this moral status carries ethical obligations. Moral agents, those of us capable of acting either morally or immorally, must respect those who have moral standing because entities with moral standing warrant, deserve, or merit moral consideration. Moral standing does not determine how an individual ought to be handled, only that there are guidelines that must be followed.

Kenneth Goodpaster introduced the notion of moral considerability which is commonly referred to as moral standing in his 1978 article “On Being Morally Considerable.” He did not discuss moral behaviour, but focused on the requirements with regard to a particular entity that afford that entity moral standing, or moral considerability. According to Goodpaster, moral status may be analyzed in the following ways.

- First, moral considerability is not dependent on, and does not imply, moral rights. Moral rights are separate, narrower, and ancillary. In short, one cannot have *any* moral rights unless assessed as morally considerable. In order to be granted the right to life, for instance, an individual must first be deemed morally considerable.
- Second, the issue of moral considerability does not involve moral significance or the weight of that moral standing. Adjudicating competing moral claims is separate and ancillary. Moral considerability is all or none and determines but one thing: the presence of a privileged moral status - that of being morally considerable.
- Goodpaster distinguishes between what we are accustomed to (normative ethics) and what we are able to accomplish (practical ethics), as opposed to what we can ideally conceptualize. He defines “regulative” moral considerability as a situation in which an entity is morally considerable, but where that entity’s moral status is overlooked, or overridden, for practical reasons.

The concept of moral standing has become central to environmental and protectionist ethics, but specific requirements for this heightened moral status remain unclear so far as our studies is concerned. In Regan's theory, "subjects-of-a-life" have moral standing; Singer's theory reserves this privilege for "sentient beings." In Linzey's theory, all of creation has moral standing; Taylor's theory offers moral standing to natural teleological entities. In the field of protectionism, there is no definitive category of entities that have moral standing.

In the past, philosophers have commonly listed mental faculties such as understanding, intending, suffering, and consciousness as primary requirements for moral standing. A more rudimentary and all-encompassing requirement for moral standing is having interests is found in Bernard Rollin. A number of philosophers argue that merely to have interest's warrants moral standing because any being with interests prefers that those interests be honoured rather than thwarted. This is an extension of personal human understanding: we prefer to have our interests respected and fulfilled rather than ignored and neglected.

Thus, what we found in our study is that moral standing is central to the debate surrounding ethics and animals. Questions like do beluga whales or white-eared hummingbirds have moral standing? If so why? If not, why not? Do all human beings have moral standing? Moral philosophers thus, are grappled with whether the interests of animals are sufficient to grant them full moral standing - on a par with the human animal-and if so, what that moral standing will entail for an olingo or a black colobus? Some thinkers argue that their moral standing is lesser than that of human beings, or that they have no moral standing whatsoever. There are others who differ.

As we have seen philosophical discussion of moral status of animals has a long history. Many ancient Greeks, including Pythagoras and Plutarch, were vegetarians on primarily ethical grounds, and many later philosophers,

such as Michel de Montaigne, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Stuart Mill, contemplated the normative dimensions of the human-animal relationship. In the nineteenth century, Henry Salt published a thesis on that topic in which he defended moral vegetarianism. In addition, serious discussion of moral status of animals and the normative elements of the human-animal relationship long existed on the margins of philosophy.

There is an ethical dilemma and inconsistency in applied ethics with regard to our treatment of human life as opposed to our treatment of all other life-forms. In the traditional Western moral philosophy human's despot like attitude or human chauvinism (what Ryder, and Singer called speciesism) is prevalent. Traditionalist claims that animals are inferior to humans in power, intelligence and evolutionary status. They are neither moral agent, nor rational, neither possessed with free will, nor are they capable of linguistic expressions thus, they are not bounded by social contract to humans and so on. Philosophers from Plato to Rawls have shown their preferences for human chauvinism, which make human and only human to be worthy of moral consideration.

From our discussions in this dissertation we must say that non-human species also have rationality, self-consciousness, and moreover dignity likes normal human being. In this connection Peter Singer's thought is relevant here. Basically his theory does not demand equal consideration of interest. In fact, he focused only on the quality of suffering and sentient, and from his perspective only sentient creatures have wants and desires. Although Descartes liked to treat non-human species simply as a machine, but we don't think so. Because, if we go with Bentham then we found that animals have the capacity to feel pain, and for this reason they ought to be morally considerable. We also see that Taylor wants to protect every species from being exploited by human being. For him, that if an entity has inherent worth, then that being is worth of moral consideration from moral agents.

That is why in our contemporary modern society peoples are already engaged in a serious debate about the rights and wrongs of animal use.

According to the pragmatic utilitarian, in the case of laboratory animals, researchers requires to replace existing live-animals experiment with alternatives, and have to reduce number of animals used, and also invented a new type of method that cause animals less sufferings. Actually, efforts to reduce the harm done to animals during the research are generally important for us. Certain levels of pain and suffering imposed on animals in the name of sciences are regarded intolerable for some people. That is why the 3RS principles like Reduction, Refinement and Replacement are approached by Russell and Burch in 1959. Now days, experiments are refined in various ways. In some experiments appropriate anesthesia plays a vital role in pain management. Treatment of animals in research projects is usually delegated to an ethics or animal care and use committee. These committees act in a more flexible way. They are able to discuss with scientists proposing experimental project and their way. These ethics committees and other similar bodies are often looking in detail at research projects. However, it is true that not every aspect of animal research can be under the control of ethics committees and the ultimate responsibility for the way animals are used rests with individual researchers. Therefore, those scientists performing animal - based research must ask themselves whether their work prompt ethical concern. But not only in scientific research, if we accept that animals have rights then killing animals for food is also morally wrong.

The *Mahābhārata* carries a spiritual message of oneness: all that exists is God. This message is heightened in the most famous portion of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Gītā*, where Krishna reveals himself to a worthy and needy human being, saying “I am the life of all living beings. All beings have their rest in me. In all living beings I am the light of consciousness”

(*Gītā*-74, 80, 86). The *Gītā* reminds us: “I am not lost to one who sees me in all things and sees all things in me,” and those who love God must have “love for all creation”. God *is* the *life* of *all* that exists - not just the life of humanity, and Hindus are instructed to extend the same love to a human being, or a cow, “or an elephant, or a dog”. A holy person sees himself in the heart of all beings and he sees all beings in his heart. And when he sees me in all and he sees all in me, then I never leave him and he never leaves me. He who in this oneness of love loves me in whatever he sees, wherever this man may live, in truth this man lives in me. And he is the greatest *Yogi* he whose vision is ever one: when the pleasure and pain of others is his own pleasure and pain. In the *Gītā*, by definition, a pundit is one who “treats a cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste” with the same high regard because God is all, and those who are spiritually advanced, those who are true devotees, find “in all creation the presence of God” .

Hinduism contains much in its philosophy that is protectionist, including the philosophies and spiritual teachings of transmigration, *karma*, oneness, and *ahimsā*. Additionally, the sacred literature in Hinduism provides a wealth of animal characters that bring these many species to the forefront of spiritual consciousness - often as equals. Many stories exemplify *ahimsā*, encouraging us to show compassion for all living beings.

In chapter four we have already suggested that a man was not born as a carnivorous animal, but born to live on the fruits and herbs that the earth grows. Various scriptures contain thousand of passages recommending vegetarianism which is based on the profound link between *ahimsā* and spirituality. Even *Yajurveda* recommended us that “you must not use your God given body for killing God’s creation, whether they be human, animal or whatever. We no longer want to hear the bleating of sheep, the bellowing of bullocks, as when they are cutting to pieces in slaughter house. The day may come when we live in a society where we shall no longer see butcher’s

shop full of dead - bodies side by side. We need an environment pleasant to the eye and in harmony with beauty. Our duties regarding animals are based on the demands of our spiritual quest in the human form. No one is really saved unless the whole race is saved. It is a belief in us that whenever *dharma* or the law of righteousness is in danger, Vishnu incarnated himself to save the world from evil.

In the *Vedas* it is widely said that animals and birds are part of nature. It is natural, therefore, that Vedic seers have mentioned about their characteristics and activities and have desired their welfare. *Rigveda* classifies them in three groups - sky animals like birds, forest animals and animals in human habitation. All the three types found in the universe have a distance environment and every living creature has an environment of its own. But when we look from man's perspective all of them constitute his environment. There is a general feeling in the *Vedic* texts that animals should be safe, protected and healthy. Domestic animals, as well as wild animals along with human beings should live in peace under the control of certain deities like *Rudra*, *Pushan* etc. Vedic people have shown anxious solicitude for welfare of their cattle, cows, horses etc. The cow as the symbol of wealth and prosperity, occupied a very prominent place in the life of the people in Vedic times. In this dissertation some light is thrown on the awareness of our ancient seers about the environment, and its constituents. It is clear that the *Vedic* vision to live in harmony with environment was not merely physical but was far wider and much comprehensive. The Vedic people desired to live a life of hundred years and this wish can be fulfilled only when environment will be unpolluted, clean and peaceful. The knowledge of *Vedic* sciences is meant to save the human beings from falling into an utter darkness of ignorance. The unity in diversity is the message of *Vedic* physical and metaphysical sciences. Essence of the environmental studies in the *Vedas* can be put here by quoting a partial *Mantra* of the

*Iṣavāśya Upanishad* 'One should enjoy with renouncing or giving up others part. *Vedic* message is clear that environment belongs to all living beings, so it needs protection by all, for the welfare of all.

What we have found from our research and in the same time believe that animal ethics is a relatively new discipline that consists of three broad schools. It emphasizes freedom from anthropocentric bias and wishes to investigate the value of and norms concerning animals in a direct sense by taking the animal itself as the object of study. There are lots of arguments in animal ethics that have been met with some criticism, but often that criticism faces problems. It can be argued that animal ethics has presented important approaches to the study of human-animal relations and offered strong reasons to rethink the human understanding of the value of animals and current practices of using animals, in research and entertainment.

Our moral responsibility towards non human nature is of unprecedented significance and urgency, and it is a responsibility that we cannot escape. The natural environment, species and the generations that will succeed us lie in the fate of our hand. In this respect, environmental ethics represents a kind of ethical approach, which considers intrinsic value not only in the interest of individual sentient creature, but also living creatures in the world. We need to understand that we humans are complex beings and we make decisions about what to do, about what is right and wrong through thoughts and feelings, rational arguments and intuitions, head and heart, data and gut instinct. These varieties in human nature compel us to think and do accordingly in a responsible manner. Human's beings need to understand that they live in one world along with the rest of nonhuman nature. On the one hand, uncontrolled human behavior and absolute despot like attitude might lead to the destruction of environment and thus lead to the extinction of human beings. Absolute preservation on the other hand, is impossible.

Morality requires that our sentiments be balanced with relevant facts and reason. Philosophy is a “human product”; each individual philosophizes with more than just reason - we use our will, feelings, “flesh and blood,” our “whole soul and whole body”. We might wish moral philosophy to be a clean and neat process, predictable and dependable, with absolute answers to complex moral dilemmas, but nothing could be farther from the truth.

This is not to say that people do not have answers. Answers are provided by almost anyone confronted with delicate questions about complicated moral matters. From abortion and addiction to capital punishment and war, people often believe they know what is right for themselves and for those around them. However, neither personal preference nor majority opinion makes a *sound* moral decision, though these definitely can and do determine a *dominant* (popular or common) morality. In fact, the definition of morals conflicts with the idea that what the majority approves is “right” and what the majority disapproves is “wrong.” While we are all familiar with the dominant morality of our time and place, the majority is much less aware of whether or not their common moral opinions are rooted in reason and empirical evidence.

Collectively, we participate in an outrageous moral inconsistency. We accept without question the discrepancy between our moral regard for human beings and our lack of moral regard for all other living entities. Lisa Kemmerer in *In Search of Consistency: Ethics and Animals* cites an example which may be significant to mention here. “When returning by car from my parent’s home some years back, I came upon a medic unit and a police car. A man was sitting on the bumper of one of the medic cars, with skinned knees. Two medics were attending him. He had gone around a corner too fast and had tipped his motorcycle in the street. I drove on, and within half an hour I watched a truck slam into the hind end of a doe. She was bounding, and as if in slow motion she flew from the front of the truck, spun

in the air, and landed in a crumpled heap in the ditch. The truck kept going. The three cars behind the truck kept going. I was the fourth car behind the truck. I watched her try to stand up, her hind end destroyed. There were no medics, no police, not even a pause in the rushing of cars, though she was in shock and terribly wounded. How could a young man with skinned knees receive so much attention, while a doe who had been hit by a truck received no more than the passing glance as the people who had run over her rushed on their way? How many deer were hit that same night; how many of them died slowly in ditches? And what of snakes, opossums, robins, raccoons, swallows, salamanders, and domestic cats and dogs? Can such a morality, where only human life is held to be worthy of preservation and protection, possibly be defensible?