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# Exploring Moral Status of Animals in Indian Philosophical Thought

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**Abstract:** The paper intends to expound the philosophical perspectives of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism on non-human animals and analyze their implication on the moral standing of animals. Until 17<sup>th</sup> Century, deliberations concerning the moral worth of animals were largely absent from the western philosophical debates. The then prevailing western religio-philosophical discourses subscribed to the view that animals differed greatly from humans and thus were not moral beings. It was only with Bentham's recognition of animals' capacity of sentience and later on the 1970s environmental crisis which escalated the animal question into an ethical question. Acknowledging Animal Ethics as a branch of philosophical study necessitated the issue surrounding the moral standing of animals to be extensively debated in the stream of western philosophical thought. Today, so much so is the animal issue percolated in the mainstream of Western philosophy that there exist utilitarian and deontological approaches to resolve the same. Indian Philosophical traditions, unlike their Western counterpart, do not propound any animal specific ethical theories. However, it does not imply that they view animals outside the moral sphere. Indian philosophical thought instead hold that animals are interconnected to humans life-forms given their identical pure *Jivas*, each going through endless re-birth cycles (*samsara*) and also being manifestation of One, Absolute Monistic reality. This philosophical insight of Indian traditions to establish commonality between human and an animal not only does away with human/animal binary postulated by west but also forms ground for asserting the moral status of animals wherein animals are regarded as moral beings deserving equality, reverence, compassion and empathy.

**Keywords:** *Non-human Animals, Moral Status, Utilitarianism, Deontology, Jainism, Jiva, Buddhism, Compassion, Hinduism, Monism*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Non-human animals have occupied a place of cultural and material significance since the very onset of human civilization. The depiction of animals in diverse mythologies, rituals, national symbols, various art forms etc shows the important role played by animals in articulation of cultures worldwide. Materially also, animals contribute immensely to the quality of lives of mankind. Through the process of domesticating wild animals, predecessors have transformed animals into beings available for satisfaction of human needs. Animals are utilized as a source of food for providing nutrition to human body. The raw-materials such as wool, furs or leather required in the clothing industry are majorly derived from animals. They are also used as entertainers in circuses, zoos, marine parks, movies, exotic animal encounters, and other forms of entertainment. Further, it is animals which are viewed as research subjects appropriate for drugs and vaccine testing and also for testing the safety of products such as cosmetics. This innateness of animals in the lives of humans wherein the former is utilized as a means to the latter's ends necessitates one to ponder over the moral worth of animals.

## 2 WESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON NON-HUMAN ANIMALS

The domain of Western philosophy was largely antithetical to the idea of animals deserving any moral consideration. Only human beings were thought to have moral standing whose interests ought to be taken into account for its own sake. Both religious views and philosophical views subscribed to the view that animals differed greatly from humans and thus were not moral beings. The Bible which lies at the heart of Christianity asserted that human beings have a unique position in the entire cosmos and thus possess the right to dominate over every living thing (including animals). Given their supreme position in the cosmos, it is humans who are the sole subject of moral consideration and not non-human animals that are created simply to serve mankind.

Various philosophers also shared the notion that animals did not deserve any moral standing. This was because they were of the notion that the capacity to reason had moral value and consequently those who possessed this capacity, were only eligible for moral consideration. Thus supposing rationality to be the criteria of moral standing qualified only humans for moral status as they possessed the ability to reason. On the other hand, animals lacking rationality were viewed as morally worthless entities (things) that were simply meant for advancing the interests and well-being of rational humans. This notion is evident in the thinking of philosophers like Aristotle, Descartes and Immanuel Kant.

- **Aristotle's Hierarchical view of life:** As per Greek philosopher Aristotle, three categories of living beings i.e. plants, animals and humans are arranged in a hierarchical structure. Animals, according to Aristotle, are primarily concerned with physical needs and desires, which places them closer to plants in their capacities. In this sense, Aristotle believes that animals lack the higher faculties of rationality and self-reflection, which he considers

necessary for true moral agency. Whereas, humans possessing rationality rank foremost in the Great Chain of Being or *scala naturae*. As per him,

“Nature is essentially a hierarchy in which those with less reasoning ability exist for the sake of those with more: Plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beasts for the sake of man-domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (or at any rate most of them) for food and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools.”<sup>1</sup>

Given they occupy a lower place than humans; animals do not possess any moral worth rather they simply exist for the benefit of those that are more rational.

- **Descartes' Mechanistic view of animals:** Similarly for 17th Century French Philosopher Rene Descartes, animals are not eligible for moral consideration because they are mere automata or mechanisms. He held that unlike humans who possessed both material body and immaterial mind, animals possessed only material bodies. As a consequence of lacking mind, animals were just physical machines without any experiences involving that of pain and suffering. The reaction of animals to the various kinds of suffering that was meted out upon them by humans was dismissed as the noise of a worn out machinery. “A crying dog, Descartes maintained, is no different from a whining gear that needs oil.”<sup>2</sup> Thus for him, there is no ethical issue involved in using animals for human purposes, including scientific experimentation.
- **Kant's Indirect duty to Animals:** Just like Aristotle and Descartes treated animals as morally worthless entities with the sole purpose to advance the interests of humans, German philosopher Immanuel Kant too perceived animals in a similar vein. According to him, there was nothing wrong in using animals as a means to human ends given that animals lack rationality and therefore should be treated as “things” having worth merely as a means to the ends of rational beings. While Kant did not believe animals possess intrinsic moral worth, he maintained that humans have indirect duties toward them. For Kant, the mistreatment of animals could diminish human moral character and disrupt human relationships. Thus, while animals do not have moral rights, Kant suggested that humans have a duty to treat animals humanely, not because they deserve moral consideration per se, but because cruelty to animals undermines human dignity and ethical behavior.
- **Bentham's Equal consideration of Interests:** Such a tendency to think of non-human animals in terms of morally worthless entities gave legitimacy to humans to use animals as they thought fit, to satisfy their own needs and desires without regard to animals' interests. It was only humans whose interests were to be taken into account and not that of animals as they were thought to be without any interest. Thus for instance even if a trivial human

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle 1905:1256b

<sup>2</sup> Francione,2008:29

interest required the practice of killing of animals in large numbers, the practice was not viewed as being immoral but rather moral as it aimed to satisfy a human interest. However, thinking about animals as being devoid of moral status did not survive for long. The numerous scientific experiments carried out on animals revealed their similarity to humans in terms of physiology. This similarity brought to light that animals also suffer and thus should be entitled to some consideration. David Hume, recognizing the suffering of animals urged for a gentle usage to these creatures. That is to say, humans are entitled to use animals for fulfilling their interests, but they ought to do so gently. Though there were gradual changes in perspectives regarding animals, it was Jeremy Bentham who embarked upon the case for including animals within the category of moral beings. The English philosopher Jeremy Bentham who worked out the principle of Utilitarianism, stated that to degrade animals into a class of things on the basis of lacking intelligence is unsatisfactory. This is because human infants being less rational than many animals are still ascribed moral worth. Thus to leave animals outside the scope of moral consideration on the basis of alleged irrationality is unjustified. All that is required for deciding who/what to be counted as a moral being is only its capacity of sentience. Sentience refers to the capacity to suffer or experience enjoyment and happiness.<sup>3</sup> In other words, “the question is not, Can they reason? Nor, Can they talk? But, Can they suffer?” that should be asked while entitling an entity as being worthy of moral standing. This capacity of sentience initially recognized by Bentham has gained enough popularity among those advocating for animals who employ it to speak out against any practice that contributes to their pain and suffering.

Building on Bentham's philosophical view on animals, Western philosophy has propounded approaches based on utilitarian and deontological framework to deliberate on the moral status of animals, which are as follows:

## A. UTILITARIAN APPROACH TO MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS

Australian moral philosopher Peter Singer in his ground-breaking work *Animal Liberation* (1975) argues for moral consideration of non-human animals based on the utilitarian principle of equal consideration of interests. It is the principle of moral equality which asserts that the interests of every being who is affected by a particular act must be given equal consideration while calculating the consequences of the very action. It is through this principle that “we are able to say all humans are equal irrespective of their factual or actual inequality (i.e. being unequal in terms of race, sex, sexual orientation, intellectual or physical abilities, and so on)”<sup>4</sup>. It obliges mankind to cease themselves from exploiting any human or discounting his/her interests just because the person belongs to a category that they hold as undesirable. In addition this principle also obliges mankind to take into account the interests of non-human animals. This is because non-human animals being sentient have interests in avoiding pain and

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<sup>3</sup> Singer, 1975:173

<sup>4</sup> Singer, 1975: 181

therefore be given equal consideration in decision-making. Just as it is wrong to disregard the interests of human infants, disabled and so on who lack characteristics of a personhood, similarly it is wrong to disregard the interests of sentient animals which probably lack in terms of higher cognitive capacities equivalent to human. Thus, according to Singer, in order to decide the rightness of an action that affects the interests of both humans and animals, one should give equal weightage to the interests of both the species because an interest is an interest. In order to demonstrate the above-point, he puts forward the following instances:

- To decide whether using animals for testing cosmetics is right or wrong, one should impartially weigh the animal's interest in not suffering with human's interest in bodily beautification. Since the animal's interest in not suffering is more serious in comparison to trivial human interest in bodily beautification, the practice cannot be termed as a right one.
- On the other hand, if animal experimentation would directly lead to a cure of disease that affects many humans, then the practice can be termed as the right one.

## **B. DEONTOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS**

The American philosopher Tom Regan in his monumental work entitled *The Case For Animal Rights* (1983) adopted the deontological stand to argue for moral consideration of animals. He endorses deontological stand by stating that animals are subjects-of-a-life which possess inherent value. Adopting Kantian approach, Regan asserts that all those who possess inherent value demands respect and therefore cannot be treated as things or means. Those individuals who have inherent value must be treated in ways that respect their inherent value. Respecting inherent value of a subject-of-a-life requires, for Regan, bestowing them with a basic right to respectful treatment. The right to respectful treatment is a natural right in the sense that it is neither an outcome of social contract nor something that is voluntarily given by humans to other humans and animals. This natural right is rather an outcome of subjects-of-a-life criterion. In other words, the right exist because of the very nature of being subject-of-a-life. All subjects-of-a-life are equal holder of this right to basic treatment.

By including animals within the subjects-of-a-life category, he does away with the hierarchy that is widely assumed while distinguishing between a moral agent and moral patient. Moral agents refer to normal adult humans who are able to act morally and take moral decisions. Whereas human babies, mentally retarded, comatose patients, nonhuman animals, and so on who are not able to act morally fall under the category of moral patients. Unlike moral agents who are able to decide what is morally right or wrong, moral patients owing to their inability to act morally cannot be said to do any wrong. This limited moral capacity of moral patients places them at a level lower than what is occupied by moral agents. To be precise, a moral patient is seen as someone with a moral status below than that of moral agent. It is Regan, who by recognizing animals as being subjects-of-a-life, not only does away with their status of being only moral patients but also locates them on a moral status with a basic right of respectful treatment.

The above-mentioned well-nuanced animal specific ethical theories show the untiring philosophical endeavor of the west to deliberate upon the moral standing of animals. A critical analysis however reveals that their ascribing moral status to animals is based on recognition of attributes that are similar to that possessed by humans such as capacity to sentience, interest in not being harmed, subjects-of-a-life. Though these attributes attempt to place animals in a system of moral standing, however this human articulated criterion of moral hierarchy limit animal kingdom merely at the lower rungs, thus reinforcing the human-animal divide. These 'humans are distinctive' type thoughts prevalent in western philosophical tradition continue to place humans at the peak of moral consideration leaving animals without a worthwhile moral standing which bestows reverence upon them. Rather, contemporary ethical theories like Ethics of Care are more inclusive in their philosophical approach towards animals.

### **C. ETHICS OF CARE AND MORAL WORTH OF ANIMALS**

Feminist ethics of care recognizes society as consisting of heterogeneity of human life-forms wherein each individual is embedded in social relationships with a moral duty to care about and responsibility to respond to needs of others. By placing emphasis on emotions, it provides an alternative way of looking at the moral status of non-human animals. As per Care ethics, humans have a moral duty to care for one another by virtue of being dependent for survival and development on each other. 'Caring' here does not intend that one should care for animals as mothers (human and nonhuman) care for their infants but rather, it emphasizes on listening to animals, paying emotional attention and heeding to what they are telling. This act of caring humanizes mankind and makes them sensitive enough to acknowledge that animals also possess moral standing without taking recourse to abstract principles of Utilitarianism or Rights theory. However, Care ethics limits moral obligation towards animals which are made dependent by humans for their survival. Thus, as moral obligation to care is rooted in dependency, humans do not have moral obligation to care for animals that are not dependent upon humans. An obligation to care for animals is established when humans make them dependent by providing food or shelter. Humans have a duty to provide at least a minimum of decent care to all animals that they have made dependent on them. Thus, humans are obligated to care for their pets or certain animal with which they share physical or emotional proximity and not to those such as wild animals that are remotely situated. This in turn creates a hierarchy between pets and wild animals, thus fostering an attitude of neglect towards latter, as their care might not be as immediately perceived as a moral responsibility.

This limitation of care ethics makes it essential for one to explore the Indian philosophical ideals of Monism, *Jiva*, compassion, and reverence towards all life-forms so as to promote equality, protection and respect among all sentient beings.

### **3. INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ANIMALS**

Just like any other human civilization of the world, animals play an important role in Indian

civilization as well. But here their role is not limited to merely being a cultural symbol or a materialistic asset. Rather animals are held as divine entities as evident from various Hindu gods and goddesses incarnated in animal forms such as *Hanuman* (monkey God), *Naga* (the snake God) and *Ganesh* (the elephant God). The stories found in classical fables such as *Panchatantra*, showcase animal characters in the main role where the instruction/teachings about good conduct are carried out by animals. Animals in *Panchatantra* are shown sharing the world equally with their human counterparts and also being governed by the same natural laws. Various Hindu mythological stories likewise depict that animals and humans communicated freely with one another on equal terms. One of the great Indian epics, the Ramayana one of the primary characters in the form of *Jatayu* (the eagle). The eagle Jatayu is shown nobly fighting for the good, and losing his life in the very process. By an “effort of will” he stays alive long enough to inform Rama of what has happened, which begins the main storyline of searching the latter's wife, Sita. Jatayu's older brother, also a gigantic and noble bird, later joins the search and battle to recover Sita. Similarly, a dog accompanying Prince Yudhistira in another great epic *Mahabharata* and later not abandoning former on his way to heaven depicts the reverence attached to animals. Animals forming an inescapable part of human lives in Indian tradition is also evident from yet another great Indian epic *Mahabharata* with King Yudhistira proclaiming “I do not turn away my dog, I turn away you” when insisted by Lord Indra to abandon Dog before undertaking final journey to heaven.

Drawing from traditional Indian mythologies and classical Indian literatures, Indian philosophical tradition too acknowledges that animals form an inescapable part of human life world. The Indian philosophical traditions of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism adopt an approach different from that of western thought to ascribe moral worth to animals in their own right. Indian Philosophical traditions do not propound any such animal specific ethical theories as contemplated by the western ethicists. Rather driven by the principle of underlying unity of all beings, they strive for unraveling commonality between the two. Unlike Western philosophical perspectives be it utilitarian or deontological approaches which only emphasize about fundamental difference existing between human and animals, Indian philosophy driven by the idea of unity do not differentiate between a human being and an animal. They hold the view that all life forms are subjected to the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Every being be it human, an animal or even an insect possess same value of life. The only difference lies in one's *karmas* which can either transform a human being into an animal or vice-versa. It is this thinking about animals and humans in terms of their being located in the same moral continuum that makes Indian philosophy more appealing to ascribe moral worth to animals than western philosophy which afflicted by speciesism presumes starking contrast between the two.

#### A. HINDUISM: ROLE OF VEDANTIC MONISM ON MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS

The Hindu philosophical tradition grounded in Upanishads upholds diverse life-forms be it humans or animals to be a part of One, an Absolute Divine reality. In other words, *Aham Brahmasmi* i.e. everything is Brahman. It is precisely due to which no demarcation exist

among human beings, gods, and animals. This immanent divinity residing in diverse life forms links all forms of life, diminishing the sense of individual self and strengthening links with every other living being. Earth with all its elements is thus sacred for Hinduism. Divinity in a hybrid form of human and non-human animal are revered in popular theological culture. Hindu religious texts are filled with stories of divinities such as Hanuman being represented in an animal form. The gods are demonstrated taking animal form in the course of performing their godly duties. In most cases, animals have been worshipped since they have been vehicles of divine deities. It is due to which Hindu temples often contain not only human representations but also deities with animal heads and animal bodies.

This Vedic vision of unity as ratified in the philosophy of the Vedanta serves as a better approach to honour the entire animal world as part of divine reality as it makes one to realize about the oneness with animals and thus cultivate within oneself the practice of non-violence towards animal kingdom and promote peaceful co-existence with the non-human animals species.

## **B. JAINISM: ROLE OF *JIVA* ON MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS**

Jainism, one of the ancient religio-philosophical traditions offers a profound perspective on moral consideration of non-human animals. Animals have been placed at high regard in the ethical teachings of Jainism. It is the strictest religion as regards avoiding injury to animals. Killing of animals is prohibited, even in self-defense. This is evident from Svetambara monk named Hiraavijaya who convinced the Mughal emperor Akbar to pass an ordinance on the prohibition of the killing of animals around the sacred places and on festive days of the Jains. Likewise Prince Nemikumar's noble act of renouncing worldly life after witnessing the anguished cries of caged animals destined for his wedding feast shows the crucial role played by animals in the Jain tradition. This prime importance placed towards animals is grounded in the idea of non-violence, which Jains consider as the highest moral duty. This centrality of non-violence is reflected in the aphorism "*ahimsa paramo dharma*"<sup>5</sup> which translates as "nonviolence is the supreme path/duty."

As per Jainism teachings, *Jiva* which Western thinkers call consciousness or soul is present everywhere, in gods, humans, animals, plants and even in inert matter. Unlike western ethicists which hold humans as being exceptional and unique from animal species, Jainism subscribes to egalitarian view. According to Jainism, in their pure and pristine state, all beings are equal. All beings ranging from complex souls like humans to the smallest unperceived like microbes are entitled to equal treatment by virtue of each possessing *Jiva*. Equality, according to Jains is natural to all beings. Inherently both human and animals are equal, their perceived differences

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<sup>5</sup> Srivastava, C., Dhingra, V., Bhardwaj, A., & Srivastava, A. (2013). Morality and moral development: Traditional Hindu concepts. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 55(Suppl 2), S283–S287. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.105552>



is due to their temporary embodiments as a result of good/bad karmas. All souls are equal, though they variously advantaged and disadvantaged in the cycle of birth and death. In other words,

“The jivas of this universe play varieties of roles on this stage of worldly life. Sometimes born as a Brahman well versed in vedas, a slave, a god, or an insect. As a consequence of karmas, what category of life, like a rented abode, is left unvisited by living beings?”<sup>6</sup>

Just like human soul, an animal is also inherently capable of spiritual release and possess the “Four Infinities” of unlimited power, knowledge, perception and bliss. Animals are spiritual beings endowed with a soul which, given the right circumstance, can attain its full capacity for moral agency and self-realization. Thus ahimsa is to be followed and violence towards animals to be shunned away. For this reason, Vegetarianism is considered to be the hallmark of Jaina food ethics.

This soul (*jiva*)-centric philosophy has ethical ramifications on the moral consideration of animals. Animals, which remain bereft of worthy moral status due to presumed human/animal binary rooted in human exceptionalism of the west, are revered in Jaina tradition. Grounded in recognition of unity of all beings, Jains advocate adopting empathetic attitude towards animals. This positively impacts animal human relationship as it not only propagates compassion towards all living species but also cultivates *maître*- or the feeling of friendliness between human and animal.

### C. BUDDHISM: ROLE OF COMPASSION ON MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS

Widely acclaimed as a religion of peace, Buddhism is known for its ethical teachings. So much so is ethics deeply intertwined in the Teachings of Buddha that Albert Schweitzer, a leading Western philosopher has called Buddha 'the creator of the ethic of inner perfection'. The theory of Buddhist ethics finds its practical expression in the various precepts. These precepts or disciplines are nothing but general guides to show the direction in which the Buddhist ought to turn to on his or her way to liberation. (Pali: *pañcasīla*; Sanskrit: *pañcaśīla*) Constituting the basic code of ethics which governs the moral conduct of Buddhist laymen, these five-fold precepts are as follows:

1. Refrain from taking life
2. Refrain from taking what is not given
3. Refrain from sexual misconduct

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<sup>6</sup> Gopani, 1989, 4:67

4. Refrain from harmful speech
5. Refrain from intoxicants that cloud the mind

They are essential for ensuring a harmonious way of life and peaceful functioning of society. These five teachings binding on Buddhist laity provide an ethical criterion on how to conduct oneself in relation to others. Among the five Percepts, it is the First Percept which showcase the wider moral circle of Buddhism as it goes beyond humans to include non-human animals also in moral realm. The first percept of non-killing or ahimsa endorses that non-human animals are too sentient creatures capable of conscious experiences and thus deserve moral standing like that of humans. The first Buddhist monarch of India, Ashoka, subscribing to ideal of ahimsa expresses concern for the number of animals killed for his meals, and expresses an intention to put an end to this killing.

This recognition of animal suffering on the part of Buddhism reflects their belief in interconnectedness of all life-forms. Human and animals are connected with another via concept of re-birth. Any human could be reborn as animal, and any animal could be reborn as a human. An animal might be a reborn as a dead ancestor, and anybody who looked far enough back through their series of lives might come to discover that every animal to being a distant relative. The Buddha expound that sentient beings currently living in the animal realm have been one's mothers, brothers, sisters, fathers, children, friends in the past lives. In the Mahayana school of Buddhism, animals are regarded as having a Buddha nature, just as humans do, and this gives them the potential to also become enlightened. This is demonstrated in Jātaka stories which narrate the past lives of the Buddha in folktale fashion, where Bodhisattva (the past-life Buddha) appears in an animal form.

It is precisely due to which Buddhists advocate compassionate attitude is to be adopted towards animals. In Buddhism, compassion is known as *Karuna*. Compassion refers to the sincere wish for all beings to be freed from endless suffering. It is an active practice that involves understanding the suffering of others and taking action to relieve it. Through the cultivation of compassion, individuals are encouraged to develop empathy, kindness, and a deep sense of connectedness with all living beings. Buddhist ideal of compassion has ethical implication on the moral standing of animals. By exercising compassion, animals' moral worth is realized and a sense of reverence is developed for the latter resulting in just state of affairs for non-human species.

#### **4. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT ON ANIMAL WELFARE IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

Though Indian philosophical ideas of Monism, Compassion and *Jiva* provide a profound ethical foundation to acknowledge reverence and moral worth towards animals, yet they fall short of practically addressing the many instances of animal abuse in contemporary times. Traditional practices such as animal sacrifices in religious rituals or complex modern day

abuse of animals in factory farms, scientific experiments, entertainment etc pose a severe challenge to Indian philosophical ideals. Tantric and Vedic traditions performing animal sacrifice is a clear contradiction to the ethical ideal of ahimsa (non-violence). Additionally, the spike in population of stray animals as a result of rapid urbanization has contributed to their being abused. Animals such as cow, which are regarded as 'Sacred Mother Goddess' in Hindu culture often face neglect, malnourishment, and abuse, despite the philosophical foundations of *Ahimsa* that call for their protection. Modern industrial farming practices, particularly in the dairy and poultry industries, also involve cruel confinement, inhumane slaughtering, and poor living conditions for animals all which run counter to the Indian philosophical idea of sanctity of all life-forms. Animal testing is also a controversial issue that raises the question whether traditional principles are enough equipped to challenge the practical demands of technology and medicine. Given these prevalent animal abuse issues, there is need to re-interpret the Indian philosophical ideals of compassion, ahimsa etc in form of promoting animal welfarism legislation, advocating for their rights and educating society on ethical alternatives to harmful practices like animal sacrifice, industrial farming and animal testing.

## CONCLUSION

Indian philosophical thought duly recognizes the aspect of interconnectedness with animals. By emphasizing on ideal of ahimsa, underlying unity principle among diverse life-forms, virtue of compassion etc it upgrades an animal with an adequate moral standing which has potential to establish an amicable human-animal relationship based on equality, reverence, non-violence, empathy and companionship in the long run. However, to address traditional practices of animal sacrifices or modern day abuse of animals in factory farms, scientific experiments etc, there are need to re-interpret the Indian philosophical ideals so that the current society evolves into one being a more just, compassionate and ethical towards animal beings.

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