

**HIRANMAY  
KARLEKAR**

**SAVAGE  
HUMANS**

**AND STRAY  
DOGS**

**A STUDY IN AGGRESSION**



Savage Humans  
and  
Stray Dogs

God has given different forms of livelihood to different creatures. Some of these may go against the interest of man. But man should not retaliate against these creatures for two reasons. They are not endowed with the capacity to know that they are doing injury to man; and next, man knows that they will be injured if he retaliates. A person who injures lower creatures for selfish reasons goes to the purgatory called *Andhakupa* (Dark Well) and there he will have to live in a low type of body, attacked by the creatures he had injured. In darkness, without sleep, and restless, he will have to drag on wretched existence.

—*Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God*,  
Skandha V, Chapter 26 in English translation  
by Swami Tapasyananda

There are one hundred and ninety-three living species of monkeys and apes. One hundred and ninety-two of them are covered with hair. The exception is a naked ape self-named *Homo sapiens*. This unusual and highly successful species spends a great deal of time examining his higher motives and an equal amount of time studiously ignoring his fundamental ones.

—Desmond Morris in *The Naked Ape*

# **Savage Humans and Stray Dogs**

*A Study in Aggression*

Hiranmay Karlekar

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*In memory of Zorba and Lara,  
my constant companions while  
this book was being written  
and for Bijli  
who keeps vigil*



Source: Three stray dogs protecting a new-born baby abandoned in Kolkata on the evening of 23 May 1996. They guarded it throughout the night of 23–24 May and followed it all the way as it was being taken to a police station. As reported in the Bengali language daily, *Aajkaal*, on 25 May 1996, the dogs slowly walked back to their beat only after the baby was put in a car to be taken to a home for foundlings (see page 25). Photograph by Tapan Mukherjee, courtesy *Aajkaal*.

# Contents

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<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Killing Fields of Karnataka	15
Chapter 3: The Games People Play	53
Chapter 4: A Divide That Isn't	107
Chapter 5: The Moral Universe of the Soul	161
Chapter 6: The Wages of Exclusion	195
Chapter 7: Eradicating the Roots of Aggression	243
<i>Postscript</i>	267
<i>Index</i>	271
<i>About the Author</i>	277





## Preface

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I have a special affection for Bangalore and Karnataka. In February 1986, my adoptive father, Govind Vinayak Karlekar, suffered a cerebral stroke at a conference in Bangalore. He was removed to the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). We were nervous about his undergoing a brain surgery. He was 74 and had suffered a severe heart attack 12 years earlier. Yet the surgery had to be done. It was, and we soon brought him back to Kolkata, where he lived, with all his faculties intact, until another stroke robbed him of his eyesight years later.

I will never forget what four persons—Nupur Basu, then my colleague at *The Indian Express*, and her husband, Sanjeev Jain, a psychiatrist at NIMHANS, and Tapan Roy of Bengal Lamps and his wife—did at that time. I had then only a nodding acquaintance with Nupur and had not met Sanjeev at all. I met Tapan-da<sup>1</sup> (as I subsequently came to call him) on the flight to Bangalore where I rushed from Delhi on hearing about my father's stroke. Yet, they pulled all the stops out to ensure that we were provided with everything we needed. While my brother, Abhijay, stayed with Nupur and Sanjeev, my mother, Kalyani, and I stayed with Tapan-da and Boudi<sup>2</sup>. I do not know what we would have done without them.

Apart from the kindness we received from them, what struck me was the civility and helpfulness of the people everywhere. I was, therefore, horrified when the mass killing of stray dogs started in Bangalore in January 2007. I found it most difficult to reconcile the disjunct between the city as I knew it and what was happening. My anguish increased after the second, and more extensive and savage, round of slaughter began in March. The search for an explanation led to this book.

I realized as I probed that it was a small minority that advocated the killing and formed mobs that cheered lustily as municipal employees cornered and brutalized stray dogs—even those sterilized

and immunized against rabies—before hurling them into vans with vicious force for taking them to the killing grounds. Even 500 people make a mob—most of the ones that cheered municipal employees had even fewer people—but constitute an infinitesimal part of Bangalore’s population.

The bulk of the people, stunned by the sheer horror and tragedy of the killing of eight-year-old Sridevi on 5 January and four-year-old Manjunath on 28 February, allegedly by stray dogs in Bangalore, watched passively as anger seemed to have the better of compassion. Animal activists and NGOs were numbed by both the enormity of what had happened and baseless but vitriolic accusations hurled at them by a section of politicians and Bangalore’s kill-stray-dogs lobby.

Animal rights activists, however, willed themselves into action as the macabre dance of death continued and protest rallies against it were held in cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. Ordinary men and women began resisting as neighbourhood dogs they loved and cared for were forcibly taken away and not heard of any more. Most of the newspapers and television channels, which, swayed by anger, had initially gone overboard, regained their balance, as the savagery and pointlessness of the slaughter became patent. The then Governor of Karnataka, Mr T.N. Chaturvedi, spoke out, with great dignity and firmness, against the action of the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike or Bangalore Municipal Corporation—which is now Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) or Greater Bangalore Municipal Corporation—which led the killing spree. Maneka Gandhi, who has perhaps done more than anyone else to give to the issue of animal rights its present salience in the country’s public sphere, played an active, albeit unobtrusive, role in interacting with important political figures in Karnataka to ensure that the slaughter came to a halt.

Slowly, painfully, the innate compassion and civility of the people of Karnataka, began to reassert themselves. The BBMP returned to implementing the sterilization programme for stray dogs in cooperation with NGOs, though surreptitious killings continued until August 2007. There is no killing as I write. Nothing, however, will obliterate the memory of what happened. It will remain a part of the stream of savagery that flows through history. One can only atone for it by working toward a world in which all forms of life—plants and animals (including humans)—are a part of a common universe

of compassion and morality and where swords have been beaten into ploughshares.

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## Notes

1. Dada in Bengali means an elder brother. The term, however, is loosely applied to elder cousins or any other persons, even though not a relative, as a mark of respect. Often 'dada' is shortened to 'da' and added to the name of a person as a hyphenated prefix. Hence 'Tapan-da'.
2. 'Boudi' in Bengali means the wife of an elder brother. But like 'dada' it is used not only for the wives of elder cousins but any other woman of roughly one's own generation whom one seeks to address respectfully.

## Acknowledgements

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Like my other books, this one could not have been written without the unstinted support of my family. My wife Malavika, whose own academic and other commitments are considerable, made sure that I had the time and space to work uninterruptedly, besides helping me to access several important books. Like her, my son Indraneel and daughter Kamini provided both encouragement and books from abroad. My nephew Adit sent me a number of useful clippings of animal-related articles from the United States. All of them, as well as my niece Tilottama and members of my extended family like Saroj, Ranjan, Tarini, Mallika, Priya, SP, Emily and Sheikh Ahmed Hossain, love animals, particularly dogs.

I grew up among people who loved dogs—my grandparents Punyalata and Arun Nath Chakravorti, mother Kalyani, my adoptive father, Govind Vinayak, whom she married after being widowed, and my two brothers, Ranajay and Abhijay. Jombu, a Bhutanese canine of indeterminate breed, was our first dog. He was followed by Junie, Moti, Koko, Pinka, and many offsprings of the last two. Some of the latter had rather unusual names like Princess Polanegri, Memsahab, and Mata Hari, all given by my mother. All of them were natives of Calcutta (now Kolkata) and belonged to a breed of mongrels occasionally referred to as Calcatians. All of them, except Chhutki who just refused to leave us, were given away after my mother had carefully scrutinized the credentials of prospective adopters. The lives of my parents underlined the indivisibility of compassion and the spuriousness of attempts to project compassion for humans and animals as mutually exclusive emotional states. While being deeply fond of animals, they worked tirelessly for Kolkata's disprivileged and set up the Calcutta Social Project, an NGO well-known in the city.

Our house in Kolkata and our apartment in Delhi have always had family members with four legs and a tail each. Of these, Putli and Zeus died young. Zorba, a puppy from the streets of Delhi who grew

up to be an alpha male, left for the hereafter on 20 January 2008, at the ripe old age of 16 years. Lara, whom we brought home from the Lodhi Gardens, followed him almost six months later—18 June. Both of them, as well as Bijli, who is still with us, were around most of the time when I worked on the book, often throwing me glances which seemed to ask, ‘Don’t you feel bored sitting like this for such long stretches?’

Going beyond the family, I must mention the constant support I have received from Chandan Mitra, Editor of *The Pioneer*, and Member of Parliament, who and whose wife, Shobori Ganguly, share a deep love for animals. Thanks to him, and the markedly pro-animal stand of *The Pioneer*, I had no trouble in carrying animal-related articles even on the editorial page, which is reserved in most papers for political and economic pieces, whenever I wanted.

I am also grateful to Asoke Dasgupta, Editor of *Aajkaal*, Kolkata, for permission to use the photograph by Tapan Mukherjee.

I received valuable help and information from a number of people while writing this book. Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M. Kharb, Chairman Animal Welfare Board of India, a distinguished veterinarian, and a former head of Indian Army’s Remount and Veterinary Corps, helped in accessing important World Health Organization (WHO) and World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) documents and securing permission to quote from them. Dr F-X Meslin extended the permission on behalf of WHO and Dr Elly Hiby on the part of WSPA. I am grateful to both of them.

Suparna Ganguly, Founder Trustee and Honorary Vice President of Compulsion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), was a major help, as was Poornima Harish of Krupa Loving Animals. Dr Sheila Rao, Brindha Nandakumar, Aparna Gulvady and Gopi Shankar, all of CUPA, provided critical inputs and documents, as did Sneha Maiya and Dilip Bafna. All of them live in Bangalore as does the animal rights activist, L. Srinivasan. He and Savitha Nagabhushan, who has now shifted to Mysore, did outstanding work in recording and circulating video images of the killings of stray dogs that drove home to animal lovers the world over, the horror of what was happening in Karnataka. Dr Chinny Krishna of Blue Cross, Chennai, has been most helpful, as ever.

But for them and people like Levin and Radhika and Amaravati, the clandestine killing of stray dogs might have continued in India's Information Technology capital and elsewhere in Karnataka. I must also mention here the help I received from Dr B.C. Ramakrishna of Bangalore during my visit there and Dr Shiranee Pereira of Chennai for answering several of my questions regarding animal experimentation.

My encounter with the works of authors like Konrad Lorenz, Peter Singer, Steven M. Wise, Charles Patterson, Paul Waldau, Desmond Morris, Paul Shepard, Robert Wright, Jane Goodall, Frans de Waal, Barbara Smuts, Kieth Thomas, W.C. McGrew and Raimond Gaita provided me with valuable new references and insights into ways of non-human living beings, the richness and diversity of their lives and the religious and philosophical attitudes toward them as evolving through history. I have also benefited immensely from reading Swami Tapasyananda's learned introduction to his translation of *Srimad Bhagavata* in four volumes. Ramesh Menon's excellent modern rendering of the *Mahabharata* in two volumes made referencing the epic a pleasure.

There are many who have helped me in innumerable ways. Debarun Roy of *Aajkaal* helped in securing the report about three dogs protecting a new born baby that appeared in the paper on 25 May 1996; Debashis Mukhopadhyaya, the librarian, very kindly ferreted it out. Santanu Banerjee reminded me of the story about the stray dog in Krittibas Ojha's *Ramayana*. And of, course, my friend Colvin Massey at *The Pioneer* library walked, as always, that extra mile to help out.

Last and by no means the least, I am deeply grateful to Sugata Ghosh, Sunanda Ghosh, Payal Kumar and Rachna Sinha and others at Sage for the special effort they have put in to ensure that the book was produced well and published in time.

Indeed, I would not have been able to write this book but for the help and inspiration I have received from many quarters, and I apologise to anyone whose name I may have left out through inadvertence.

## List of Acronyms

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AASEC	American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations
ABA	American Breeders Association
ABC	Animal Birth Control
AGV	American Glaucoma Valves
APCRI	Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India
ARF	Animal Rights Fund
ARV	Anti-Rabies Vaccine
ASV	Anti-Snake Venom
AWBI	Animal Welfare Board of India
AWO	Animal Welfare Organization
BBMP	Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike
BMP	Bangalore Mahanagara Palike
CPCSEA	Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals
CUPA	Compassion Unlimited Plus Action
HIS	Humane Society International
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States
ICMR	Indian Council of Medical Research
KIMS	Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences
NIMHANS	National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences
NTV	Nerve Tissue Vaccine
PII	Pasteur Institute of India
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
SDFB	Stray Dog Free Bangalore
SPCA	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
VMSRF	Vittal Mallya Scientific Research Foundation
WHO	World Health Organization
WSPA	World Society for the Protection of Animals





# Chapter One

## Introduction

---

Shortly after the publication of my book, *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?*, I started thinking of writing one on peoples' attitude toward stray dogs in India. I have grown up in the midst of dogs—not of the pedigreed variety but sons and daughters of the soil, or rather streets. There were five—Jombu, Moti, Koko, Pinka, and Chhutki—who lived their lives with us in our Kolkata home. As I said, their progenies stayed till homes were found for them. It wasn't easy. My mother was very particular about whom she gave them to. They too were very particular about who they agreed to be adopted by.

There was another one, Gypsie, who came after I had moved to Delhi, and whom I met whenever I visited my native city.

Each of them had full citizenship rights with veto power on policy matters which, to the best of my knowledge, no constitution in the world bestows on human citizens. But then dogs are special, and we are reminded of this constantly and without fail by those of the species who are now members of our family in Delhi. Bijli runs our lives, as did Lara, Nisha and Bali (who came from Kolkata with us) earlier. Zorba too lived pretty much the way he wanted until he left for the hereafter.

I was thinking of writing a chatty, meandering book starting from when Moti came into the house on a newspaper that my mother held lovingly in her hands. He looked like a rather large brown-and-white powder puff. His eyes hadn't opened yet. Someone had tried to palm him off as an Alsatian pup. Mother knew he was not and told the man so. But she liked him, paid the man two rupees and brought him home.

Then, one by one, the others came.

I was thinking about them and the other dogs who are my friends and who live on the streets when, suddenly, the killings started in

India's information technology capital and its environs. As I followed from a distance in deep and intense horror and wrote about it in scalding anger, I was once again struck by the savage cruelty that lurked so close to the surface of the human skin, almost waiting to explode in violence at the slightest provocation. My plan changed. I thought I would explore the entire cultural and psychological territory of human aggression in the light of our attitude toward stray dogs, perhaps the most vulnerable yet loyal, friendly and immensely courageous of all urban species of canines. It was not entirely an unknown area. I had traversed it often as a journalist writing, among other things, on violence, insurgency and terrorism. But then my focus was *Homo sapiens*. It would now have to be street canines—loyal to death, loving, sensitive, intelligent and very easy to please. Anyone who has had the privilege of having one of them as a friend would know what I mean; others would not. It is as simple as that.

But, then, where would I begin? Pat came the answer: At the beginning. Why are they called stray dogs?

They are called strays to distinguish them from pet dogs that live in houses and because they 'stray' or roam freely. Stray dogs live on roads and in public spaces. Not all dogs found in these places are, however, strays. Some are pet dogs out for a lark—sniffing around or having a gala time with the members of the opposite sex—taking advantage of fits of absentmindedness on the part of their owners.<sup>1</sup>

Many dogs living on the streets in India are fed and looked after by local people or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that vaccinate them against rabies, get them treated when they fall ill and often have them neutered. They are not taken into homes because of various reasons including lack of space and opposition from family members. As the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management (Guidelines)*, jointly brought out by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) in May 1990 state, 'In general there are very few areas where dogs have no referral household and no attachment to at least one person; but the level of supervision may be very variable....'<sup>2</sup>

On the basis of this criterion, the *Guidelines* place dogs into four categories—restricted or supervised dogs that are fully dependent and fully restricted or supervised; family dogs that are fully dependent and semi-restricted; neighbourhood<sup>3</sup> dogs which are semi-dependent and

semi-restricted or unrestricted; and feral dogs that are independent and unrestricted, perhaps dependent on human waste for sustenance but without anybody accepting responsibility for them.<sup>4</sup>

Under this classification, Indian stray dogs would belong to the category of neighbourhood dogs. I will, however, continue to use the word 'stray' because it is used to describe them in common, administrative and legal parlance in India. They belong to two main breeds. The first and constituting by far the larger segment, is the Pariah or Pie Dog. According to the website of The Welfare of Stray Dogs, Mumbai, which sterilizes and looks after stray dogs and promotes their adoption, the Pariahs belong to an ancient breed related to the Spitz family and the Australian Dingo. Theirs is older than any other breed, with its origins dating back 12,000 to 15,000 years. Friendly, highly intelligent and adaptable, and often good-looking and well-proportioned, Pariahs are very alert and excellent watchdogs. Usually with a strong constitution, they are particularly suited to India's climatic conditions.<sup>5</sup> The ranks of stray dogs also include mongrels or mixed breeds descended from pure-breed dogs that have been abandoned or allowed by their owners to interbreed with Pariahs.<sup>6</sup>

Generally stray dogs, co-existing with humans for between 12 to 14 millennia, dependent on human beings for food, water and shelter, and often bound to them with ties of deep affection, do not attack humans. Besides, given the cruel treatment they often receive, they tend to keep away from unfamiliar persons. They generally bite only when they perceive a threat to themselves or their puppies or during mating seasons when the aggression of male dogs fighting over bitches is sometimes directed toward human beings. As a look at statistics will show later, in a substantial number of cases, dogs biting human beings are pets.

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## The Real Killer

There are, no doubt, stray dogs that are aggressive. But this is by no means a characteristic of the specie as such. Many human beings display worse cruelty. No dog has ever been responsible for the slaughter of six million Jews, which Adolf Hitler was during the days

of the Third Reich. Nor has any been instrumental in perpetrating the kind of mass slaughter that accompanied the partition of India in 1947, particularly communal carnages like the Great Calcutta (now Kolkata) killings of August 1946. Not surprisingly, Erich Fromm writes in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, which, despite the years, remains a classic, 'Man is the only mammal who is a large-scale killer and a sadist'.<sup>7</sup> He says elsewhere in the book:

If human aggression were more or less at the same level as that of other mammals—particularly that of our nearest relative, the Chimpanzee—human society would be rather peaceful and non-violent. But this is not so. Man's history is a record of extraordinary destructiveness and cruelty, and human aggression, it seems, far surpasses that of man's animal ancestors, and man is in contrast to most animals, a real 'killer'.<sup>8</sup>

Fromm adds that indulgence in destruction and cruelty can always cause a man to feel 'intense satisfaction; masses of men can suddenly be seized by lust for blood. Individuals and groups may have a character structure that makes them eagerly wait for—or create—situations that permit the expression of destructiveness'.<sup>9</sup> Animals, on the other hand, says Fromm:

...do not enjoy inflicting pain and suffering on other animals, nor do they 'kill for nothing'. Sometimes an animal seems to display sadistic behaviour—for instance, a cat playing with a mouse; but it is an anthropomorphic interpretation to assume that the cat enjoys the suffering of the mouse; any fast moving object can serve as a plaything, whether it is a mouse or a ball of wool.<sup>10</sup>

Fromm distinguishes between 'biologically adaptive, life-serving benign aggression' and 'biologically non-adaptive, malignant aggression'. The former 'is a response to threats to vital interests; it is phylogenetically programmed' and common to animals and men. It is 'not spontaneous or self-increasing but reactive and defensive; it aims at the removal of the threat, either by destroying or removing its source'.<sup>11</sup>

Biologically non-adaptive, malignant aggression is not phylogenetically programmed. Not a defensive response to a threat, it is:

...characteristic only of man; it is biologically harmful because it is socially disruptive; its main manifestations—killing and cruelty—are pleasurable

without needing any other purpose... . Malignant aggression, though not an instinct, is a human potential rooted in the very conditions of human existence.<sup>12</sup>

We will dwell on these conditions in the last chapter while discussing the phenomena of sadism and masochism. Suffice it to say here that I was reminded of Fromm by the cruelty attending the Karnataka killings, which followed the tragic death of two children who had been mauled by stray dogs. While the savagery was stomach-turning, the cynicism with which both rounds of slaughter were orchestrated was revolting and revealing. Some people in the State might have indulged in the mass killings—or advocated, applauded or endorsed them—because of ignorance. But the authorities of the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP) or Bangalore Municipal Corporation, which became Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) or Greater Bangalore Municipal Corporation on 1 February 2007 with the incorporation of areas earlier peripheral to it, could not have been unaware of the facts. They had been officially implementing the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme for stray dogs in cooperation with NGOs like Compassion Unlimited Plus Action (CÚPA), Animal Rights Foundation (ARF), and Krupa Loving Animals and Karuna since 1 April 2003, and should certainly have known that the WHO had repeatedly stated that killing stray dogs had never ended their presence on the streets. Not only that, it had made it abundantly clear that the only way of controlling dog population was the implementation of the ABC programme and proper garbage disposal in cities and villages.

Dr K. Bogel, Chief, Veterinary Public Health, Division of Communicable Diseases, WHO in Switzerland and John Hoyt, then President, World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), as well as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), clearly stated in their joint preface to the *Guidelines* referred to above: 'All too often, authorities confronted by problems caused by these [stray] dogs have turned to mass destruction in the hope of finding a quick solution, only to discover that the destruction had to continue, year after year with no end in sight.'<sup>13</sup> According to the *Guidelines*, killing was practised in the past to a large extent 'simply because knowledge of the composition and dynamics of dog population' as well as 'crucial data on the density, composition and turnover of dog population'

were lacking. These emphatically add, 'Removal and killing of dogs should never be considered as the most effective way of dealing with the problem of surplus dogs in the community: it has no effect on the root cause of the problem, which is the over-production of dogs.'<sup>14</sup>

In its Eighth Report (*WHO Technical Report Series 824*), the WHO's Expert Committee on Rabies, which met in Geneva from 24 to 30 September 1991, stated:

The committee expressed its appreciation of the long-term engagement of the WHO in developing methodologies related to dog ecology and dog population management. Considerable experience has been gained in projects coordinated by the WHO in Ecuador, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Tunisia and other ecological studies conducted in South America and Asia. However, data collection, health systems and operational research need to be continued in other areas and countries with different social and ecological conditions.<sup>15</sup>

On the basis of the results obtained so far in these studies, the committee recommended drastic changes in rabies control policies as compared to those previously adopted and practised by most national authorities and communities. There is no evidence that the removal of dogs has ever had a significant impact on dog population densities or the spread of rabies. The population turnover of dogs may be so high that even the highest recorded removal rates (about 15 per cent of the dog population) are easily compensated by survival rates. In addition, dog removal may be unacceptable to local communities. Therefore, this approach should not be used in large-scale control programmes unless ecological and sociological studies show it is feasible.<sup>16</sup>

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### Three Practical Methods

In its report (*Technical Report Series 931*), WHO's Expert Consultation on Rabies, held in Geneva from 5 to 8 October 2004, identified three practical methods of dog population management. These were 'movement restriction, habitat control and reproduction control'.<sup>17</sup> As pointed out in the *Guidelines*, movement control involves prevention of restricted or supervised dogs or family dogs from cutting loose to either mate and return or merge into the stray dog population.<sup>18</sup> As for habitat control, each habitat has a specific carrying capacity for each species, including higher vertebrates like dogs. This capacity is determined by the 'availability, distribution and the quality of

resources (shelter, food, water) for the species concerned'.<sup>19</sup> Effective removal of garbage would, for example, eliminate an important source of food for stray dogs. The *Guidelines* recommend fencing of dumps and enforcement of regulations where waste and garbage are concentrated in locations like markets, dumps and camping grounds. These also recommend organization of garbage disposal, education of people and enforcement of regulations,<sup>20</sup> where the presence of waste and garbage is widespread over the entire human habitation area. Reproduction control can only be ensured through a serious, nationwide implementation of the ABC programme, which is hampered in India by the lack both of funds and a determined effort. Emphasizing the importance of its implementation, the *Technical Report Series 931* says:

Since the 1960s, ABC programmes coupled with rabies vaccination have been advocated as a method to control urban street male and female dog populations and ultimately human rabies in Asia. The rationale is to reduce the dog population turnover as well as the number of dogs susceptible to rabies and limit aspects of male dog behaviour (such as dispersal and fighting) that facilitate the spread of rabies. Culling of dogs during these programmes may be counterproductive as sterilized, vaccinated dogs may be destroyed.<sup>21</sup>

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## BBMP's Strange Decision

Yet, despite the specific observation about culling and the statement that ABC programmes yielded encouraging results in several countries with a reported reduction in the size of street dog populations and the number of human rabies cases, BBMP authorities did exactly what the organizations fanning the hate campaign against stray dogs and NGOs working for their welfare, the lynch mobs and a section of the media in Bangalore, demanded in the aftermath of the deaths of the two children. Even in the most unlikely event of their having been unaware of the WHO recommendations earlier, they must surely have become aware of these after Dr F-X Meslin, the well-known WHO expert on rabies, had met BBMP Commissioner, K. Jairaj, along with the chairman of the Animal Welfare Board of



India (AWBI), Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M. Kharb, on 3 March 2007. Both of them had pointed out to the Commissioner the futility of mass slaughter and the need to follow the 1990 *Guidelines*. Nor can the BBMP authorities take refuge behind the report's observation, 'However, data are limited and independent evaluation of projects has not yet been undertaken.' Bangalore provides one of the most successful instances of the implementation of the ABC programme in India—perhaps anywhere in the world. The BBMP could certainly not have been unaware of this or of the fact that the programme has produced startling results wherever it has been seriously implemented.

The success of the ABC programme in Bangalore both in bringing down the stray dog population and the incidence of rabies among human beings invariably raises the question: Why then the killings? Is there more here than meets the eye? Was there a deliberate attempt to scuttle the ABC programme in the city and elsewhere? Before trying to find an answer one must examine—as Chapter 2 does—what actually happened in Bangalore in the months of January, February, March and the first half of April. Chapter 2 examines how a section of the media, Karnataka's political leadership, Lokayukta and municipal authorities reacted to the killings of the two children and the position they adopted vis-à-vis stray dogs. It dwells on protests by animal lovers against the indiscriminate and savage capture of stray dogs by the BBMP (BMP until 1 February 2007) and its duplicitous claims of not killing the captured stray dogs despite doing so. It also focuses on BBMP's (then BMP) appointment of a committee to conduct a performance audit of the implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore. The chapter shows that the committee's report is seriously flawed and utterly shoddy and its implementation would completely undermine the implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore. It contends that the BBMP should have rejected it out of hand, or at least have scrutinized it carefully instead of accepting it with alacrity and ordering immediate action on some of its key recommendations.

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## Pressure, Counter-pressure

Chapter 3 analyzes whether the BBMP and particularly its Commissioner, K. Jairaj, accepted the report promptly and without question because they were under pressure. It shows that the pressure that

existed was by no means unbearable and that there was strong counter-pressure too from the Governor of Karnataka, animal lovers and the national media. It describes the ruthlessness and cruelty with which the second and accelerated round of dog-catching and slaughter, which followed Manjunath's death, was conducted. It explains how the ABC programme is the only effective way of controlling the population of stray dogs and shows how the then Lokayukta, Justice D. Venkatachala's trashing of it in a report released on 6 March 2003 was entirely unwarranted. Referring to his observation that, as stated by Dr Krishnamurthy<sup>22</sup> that one could not avoid the impression that animal activists 'who are preferring the killing of human beings of our country than the killing of stray and ownerless dogs' must 'have been working for the benefit of MNC rabies vaccine manufacturing companies', it points out that, in retrospect, the boot may well seem to fit another leg, if any at all. Some of the members of the performance audit team, which severely criticized the implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore in 2007, had close links with the Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APCRI) which in turn had received financial support from firms manufacturing anti-rabies vaccines. If this does not warrant their being dubbed as agents and manufacturers of anti-rabies vaccines, there was, in retrospect, no justification for Justice Venkatachala's allegation that animal activists were working for 'the benefit of MNC rabies Manufacturing Companies'.

As will be seen in Chapter 3, there are other aspects in Justice Venkatachala's report that deserve comment. The chapter also notes that since the ABC programme has sharply reduced the incidence of rabies in humans, wherever it has been successfully implemented, and since this has obvious implications in terms of the use of anti-rabies vaccines, there is an element of conflict of interest which severely undermines the credibility of the APCRI's survey in 2003 entitled *Assessing the Burden of Rabies in India: WHO Sponsored Multi-Centric Rabies Survey 2003* which put the annual incidence of dog bites and rabies in India at 17.4 million and 20,565 respectively. It also calls for an immediate end to the implementation of the recommendations by the team headed by Dr M.K. Sudarshan, Principal and head of the Department of Community Medicine in Kempe Gowda Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), which did the performance audit of

the ABC programme in Bangalore. Finally, the chapter poses the question whether the killing of stray dogs in Bangalore could have been orchestrated to scuttle the ABC programme.

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## Divide and Kill

Four other chapters take off from there. Seen in isolation, the slaughters in Bangalore and elsewhere in Karnataka were episodic in character. Seen in the wider historical-cultural context—as they must be—they were a result of the exclusion of all non-human living beings from the moral universe humans have constructed and the protection it offers. This has been the result of the profound influence of the Judaeo-Christian as well as the humanist traditions. Both owed much to the Greeks. The former took from them ‘reason’ and used it, among other things, in the ordering of the scholastic epistemology, arranging knowledge hierarchically with God blessing the entire structure from above. The humanists worshipped reason and evolved an anthropocentric *weltanschauung* that put *Homo sapiens* at the centre of the universe and of a creed whose essence has been best summed up by Protagorus’ aphorism: ‘Man is the measure of all things’.

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the exclusion of non-human beings followed the Genesis—which depicts God giving man dominion over the creatures of the earth, water and air—and the celebration of reason, which runs as a deep dividing line between creatures that have it and those that are perceived not to have it.

The Vedantic tradition—as enshrined in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*—is very different. The monist philosophy of the *Upanishads*, its spiritual spine, views the whole universe as the manifestation of the Supreme Being or the Universal Spirit, the *Brahman*, that pervades everything and remains in all beings as the *Atman*, the individual soul, which is qualitatively the same as the *Brahman*. In the Vedantic tradition, an animal, including a stray dog, has—as we shall see later—as much claim to justice as a Brahmin, even when he is pitted against the latter.

In the Vedantic tradition as well as Buddhism, non-human living beings are, like humans, subject to the law of *Karma*. Buddhism’s

First Precept forbids the killing of animals. Jainism forbids the maltreatment of all non-human forms of life and, in certain situations, puts compassion and non-violence even above Truth. Yet, both Hinduism and Buddhism permitted instrumental use of animals which bred its own logic of exclusion, domination, enslavement, violence and slaughter.

The rest is history. The evolution of human civilization on the basis of the use of animals for agriculture, transportation, warfare and as food in the form of their flesh, has widened the gap. Economic and technological progress has made for the rise of cities in which human beings, evolving over millions of years as tribal hunters, are ill at ease. The result is tension and a proneness to violence, of which non-human living beings are the easiest targets. Things have been made worse by the growing feeling of insecurity that has always assailed the individual and that has become particularly acute in a globalizing world where intensifying competition is leading to the closure of factories and business establishments and loss of jobs, and the emphasis on success in terms of money is leading to a feeling of insecurity which is also aggravated by a fear of failure in an increasingly success-oriented society. Insecurity leads people to seeking refuge in sadism and masochism, which in turn can trigger both individual and group violence, of which too animals are the easiest and worst targets.

The rise of organized meat and animal products industries, technological progress and increasing bio-medical research which involves horrendously painful experiments on animals, have made things worse.

Animals are not the only victims. The enslavement and exploitation of animals has provided the mental analog for the enslavement and exploitation of humans. The mass slaughter of animals has a parallel in human genocide. For aggression, like compassion and love, is indivisible and can envelop any object or being. Human survival would, therefore, require the elimination of the roots of aggression and a very different way of living. And the process must begin by demolishing the wall that has kept all non-human living beings outside the moral universe that humans have built for themselves. It will be difficult and there will be bitter opposition from those whose interests would be hurt. There was, however, bitter opposition in Britain, the US and

other countries to the abolition of slavery which, it was claimed, would bring ruin to thousands. The abolitionists stayed the course, slavery was abolished and the world is a much better place for it. It will be the same in the case of animals.

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## Notes

1. I would rather have used the word 'guardians' but for the fact that in legal terminology people in whose names pet dogs are registered by municipal authorities are called 'owners'.
2. WHO. 1990. *Guidelines for Dog Population Management*, p.7. Geneva: WHO. Accessed at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/\\_2OON\\_90.166.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/_2OON_90.166.pdf)
3. Ibid., p. 6.
4. Ibid., p. 6.
5. <http://www.wsdindia.org/WSDPariahClub/pets.htm> (accessed on 18 May 2007).
6. <http://www.wsdindia.org/StrayDogJussue/stray.htm> (accessed on 20 May 2007).
7. Fromm, Erich. 1973. *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, p. 126. New York: Fawcett Crest.
8. Ibid., p. 210.
9. Ibid., p. 211.
10. Ibid., p. 211.
11. Ibid., p. 212.
12. Ibid., p. 212.
13. WHO. 1990. *Guidelines for Dog Population Management*, p.1. Geneva: WHO. Accessed at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/\\_2OON\\_90.166.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/_2OON_90.166.pdf)
14. Ibid., p. 74.
15. WHO. 1992. *WHO Technical Report Series 824*. WHO Expert Committee on Rabies, Eighth Report, p. 30. Geneva: WHO. Accessed at [http://www.who.int/rabies/en/WHO\\_Expert\\_Committee\\_8th\\_report.pdf](http://www.who.int/rabies/en/WHO_Expert_Committee_8th_report.pdf)
16. Ibid., p. 31.
17. WHO. 2005. *WHO Technical Report Series 931*; WHO Expert Consultation on Rabies: First Report, p. 34. Geneva: WHO.
18. WHO. 1990. *Guidelines for Dog Population Management*, p.7. Geneva: WHO. Accessed at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/\\_2OON\\_90.166.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/_2OON_90.166.pdf). See the part about Nepal and the feral dog colony on the Nile Delta islands.
19. WHO. 1990. *Guidelines for Dog Population Management*, p. 9. Geneva: WHO. Accessed at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/\\_2OON\\_90.166.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/1990/_2OON_90.166.pdf). See the part about Nepal and the feral dog colony on the Nile Delta islands.

20. Ibid., p. 29.
21. Ibid., p. 34.
22. Earlier, in his report directing the BMP to abandon implementing the ABC programme and resume the destruction of stray dogs, Justice Venkatachala had attributed the remark to Dr S. Krishnaswamy, Professor of Microbiology, Veterinary College, Tirupati. Professor Krishnaswamy had stated that 'The future generation should know who are the people responsible for very high incidence of rabies in India, whose only beneficiaries are perhaps animal activists and MNC rabies manufacturing companies.' (p. 32 of certified true copy of the report.)



## ***Chapter Two***

### **The Killing Fields of Karnataka**

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One of the most shameful chapters in the history of institutional cruelty to animals was scripted in Karnataka between January and April 2007. The victims were stray dogs. It would be wrong to view the episode, as well as the slaughter that continues in Kerala at the time of writing, as constituting no more than yet another prolonged exercise in savagery by human beings. The roles a section of the media, of the State's population, politicians and officials played in it have serious and wider implications and require more than a passing attention.

The entire train of events was marked by four particularly shocking bursts of mass slaughter and intermittent killings. Of the four, two had separate but almost identical causes. The two others, to be dealt with later, can be considered offshoots of the second one. The first was triggered by an incident in the Chandra Layout area in Bangalore on 5 January 2007, in which an eight-year-old girl, Sridevi, the daughter of a construction worker, was, according to reports, mauled to death by stray dogs at around 7.30 a.m. when she was reportedly on her way to fetch her father home for breakfast.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to study what followed in some detail as it set the stage for the bigger massacres that began on 2 March 2007. The first reaction was local in nature and took the form of mobs killing scores of stray dogs in the area. Shortly thereafter, the demand for a mass killing of stray dogs and the scuttling of the ABC programme, was voiced in several quarters. On 9 January, an organization called Stray Dog Free Bangalore (SDFB) submitted a memorandum to the BMP stating that the ABC (2001) Rules<sup>2</sup> had merely been gazetted and not tabled in Parliament and that there had been no independent monitoring and reviewing of the programme. The report in the *Deccan Herald* which stated this, further added that Vatsala Dhananjay, an advocate



and a member of the SDFB, had argued that the ABC programme was 'never scientific; it had no estimate of the stray dog population to begin with and there has not been an open tender system for selecting the Non-Government Organization partners of the BMP'.<sup>3</sup>

The *Deccan Herald* report cited above also stated that the SDFB had claimed that under the Karnataka Police Act, 1963, the Commissioner of Police and a Sub-Inspector of Police could order the elimination of stray dogs within their jurisdiction when found necessary. It had further pointed out that the Karnataka Municipal Corporation (KMC) Act, 1976, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, contained a sufficient number of clauses enabling a municipal body like the BMP to take extreme action.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no doubt that the SDFB wanted mass killing of stray dogs. Dr S. Krishnaswamy, a retired professor of a veterinary college leading the group, stated on 2 February 2007, 'A stray dog is a vector for rabies as mosquitoes are for malaria. Stray dog control means total elimination of the vector. There is no way you can kill a few and leave others to breed and proliferate.'<sup>5</sup> He and other members of the group had very clear views on the ABC programme, which, they said at a press conference, had 'inherent loopholes' and, contrary to claims by animal lovers, was not backed by the WHO.

Nor did the organization make any bones about its attitude toward animal welfare NGOs. Vatsala Dhananjay demanded that the BBMP should hold locality-wise consultation with citizens before renewing its contracts with its NGO partners running ABC programmes. She wondered: Was there a system of identifying a rabid or ferocious dog before it bit? While she said that there was no projection as to when the city would be rid of stray dogs, the organization demanded that NGOs should accept responsibility for every dog bite in the city since the BBMP was spending Rs 1.7 crore per year on the project.<sup>6</sup>

The efficacy of the ABC programme will be examined in detail in Chapter Three. It will suffice to point out here that if the contents of the *Deccan Herald* reports referred to above are correct then SDFB and Vatsala Dhananjay were wrong on several important points. First, a survey by the Karnataka Government's Animal Husbandry Department in 2003 put the number of stray dogs in the 100 wards of the BMP covered by the ABC programmes implemented by NGOs at 56,154. One can argue about the accuracy of the survey but the fact

of the survey having been done cannot be denied. Second, Section 43 of the Karnataka Police Act empowers the Commissioner of Police and Superintendents of Police, and not the Commissioners of Police and Sub-Inspectors of Police as claimed by SDFB, to destroy ownerless dogs in their respective jurisdictions. Besides, Rule 13 of the ABC rules clearly states:

If there is in force in any area to which these rules extend, any Act, rule, regulation or bye-law made under any law for the time being in force by the State or the Local Authority in respect of any of the matters for which provision is made in these rules, such rule, regulation or bye-law shall to the extent to which:

- (a) it contains provisions less irksome to the animal than those contained in these rules, shall prevail;
- (b) it contains provisions more irksome to the animal than those contained in these rules, be of no effect.

Clearly, the ABC Rules prevail in case of any contradiction in laws.

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## Two Tags: 'Ferocious' and 'Rabid'

Again, it is not difficult to answer Vatsala Dhananjay's question: Was there a system of identifying a rabid or ferocious dog before it bit? Here there is a need to ask a counter question: What is a ferocious dog? A dog that bites is not necessarily ferocious. It may have bitten a person who had kicked and hurt it—which many people do just for fun, as they tie crackers to the tails of dogs and set these off during festive occasions. And of course the dog is then proclaimed ferocious and either beaten to death on the spot or becomes the subject of a petition demanding an end to the 'stray dog menace' in the locality concerned.

One can consider a dog to be ferocious if it is bad tempered by disposition and chases and bites without provocation. But who is to decide whether there was a provocation or not? A child who gets bitten by a bitch after it had kicked and broken the ribs of one of its puppies is unlikely to admit to its own role in the incident. Nor will its parents. But while all of them can loudly claim that the bitch bit

without provocation, the bitch cannot present its version in a petition to the Commissioner, BBMP, any other municipal dignitary or a functionary of the SDFB.

Not to take into account the element of provocation while judging whether a dog is ferocious is to assume that all humans are angels who never torment, enslave or torture other living beings while all dogs are wantonly aggressive and are only looking for an opportunity to pounce upon people and tear them apart. Such an assumption will not stand the test of reality. The only way of judging whether a dog is ferocious is to capture and take it to a dog pound or shelter and observe its conduct for several days before deciding on its nature. Most municipalities and animal welfare organizations have arrangements for doing this, which, of course, are often not utilized.

There are clear symptoms by which a rabid dog can be identified before it bites anyone. First, it tends to get excited suddenly and behave aggressively. Second, its barking assumes an abnormal tone, it salivates in the mouth and is unable to swallow or drink. Third (and this can be easily noticed), its gait becomes uncoordinated and it has difficulty in walking. Symptoms like aggressive behaviour and excitement are absent in cases of dumb rabies. The dog loses appetite, becomes lethargic and finds it difficult to close its mouth. In cases of rabies, dogs become paralyzed and generally die within 10 days.

A pamphlet entitled *Understanding & Control of Rabies*, issued by Health Department, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), provides the above information for the benefit of the public, and also states what people should do after seeing what appears to be a rabid dog. They should neither approach nor provoke the dog nor throw sticks or stones at it. Also they should, to reduce stress on the dog and the risk of people of being bitten, disperse any crowd that might have gathered. Finally, they should contact the municipal authority (Palika Animal Birth Control Society in the case of the area under the NDMC) or NGOs dealing with stray dogs.

It is not difficult for people to identify a rabid dog by the symptoms it shows and the aggression it displays, and have it isolated or killed before it bites anyone. The BMP and its reincarnation, BBMP, could not have been unaware of it. Nor could either have been unaware of the fact that an effective implementation of the ABC programme alone could end the presence of stray dogs on streets. Yet, it neither rebutted

such statements as the ones by Dhananjay and Dr Krishnaswamy nor defended the ABC programme. This, in retrospect, is hardly surprising since its conduct was, to put it mildly, shocking and shameful in the extreme from the very beginning.

The BMP did not even think it was necessary to examine the findings of the inquiry into the Chandra Layout incident, which its Commissioner, K. Jairaj, had ordered on 6 January,<sup>7</sup> before deciding on its course of action. To be conducted by the Joint Commissioner (South Bangalore), the inquiry was to take into account depositions by witnesses, examine the muster roll for garbage clearance, the sprouting of illegal meat shops and the aggression displayed by stray dogs which experts believed was unnatural.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it had launched an 'Operation Dog Hunt' even before the SDFB had submitted its petition on 9 January. Led by the Deputy Commissioner Health, Manu Baligar, it had been flagged off from the Dasappa Hospital near the Town Hall at 9 p.m. on Saturday 6 January. Its stated purpose was to capture and kill across the city dogs that fitted the description of being ferocious and diseased.

The BMP was clearly under severe pressure from a section of the public and politicians following Sridevi's death when it was roundly condemned for its failure to control what was described as the stray dog 'menace'. Among politicians, Karnataka's Health Minister, R. Ashok, had played a leading role. As early as 6 January, he had handed over a cheque for Rs 100,000 to Sridevi's parents. Special squads, he had then said, would catch and euthanize dogs that were found to have a 'tendency to bite', adding that BMP health officials had been asked to act quickly on 'citizens' complaints of dog menace'.

Minister Ashok's statement was bound to encourage those who wanted stray dogs out of their neighbourhoods and who felt that they now had an opportunity that was not to be missed. Besides, it was tantamount to an open invitation to people to settle scores with those whom they disliked and who cared for stray dogs. All they now needed to do was to get such dogs picked up by the BBMP on the plea that they were 'ferocious'. Also, Sridevi's death had spread panic even among those who had not so long been hostile to stray dogs; many of them now viewed every one of the latter as a threat. The result was a rising flood of telephone calls to the BMP as well as NGOs running dog shelters and involved in the ABC programme, to

remove dogs that were described as ferocious. Representatives of the ARF stated that their organization was deluged with panicky citizens describing every stray dog as rabid and animal lovers questioning the basis on which dogs were being rounded up.<sup>9</sup>

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## Panic and Frenzy

The panic calls reflected the frenzy of hatred that was being whipped up against stray dogs. Suparna Ganguly, founder trustee and honorary vice president of CUPA spoke up. 'We must stop mass hysteria over dogs. We are flooded with hundreds of calls from people who want NGOs to pick up every dog. At least 30 per cent of these calls are from outside the management programme.'<sup>10</sup>

In their haste—or perhaps their exercise in sadism—the BMP dog-catchers did not seem to have bothered whether they were catching strays or pet dogs. Many people were asking the authorities on Sunday about their missing pets. One of them was Udaysimha, a resident of Nagarbhavi, an area adjacent to Chandra Layout. He told a *Deccan Herald* reporter, 'My dog is missing since the morning the incident (Sridevi's death) occurred. It was a beautiful brown coloured mongrel; I had adopted it from Krupa eight months ago.'<sup>11</sup> There was opposition at many places. A woman in Jayanagar 9th Block wept and pleaded with V. Shivakumar, a member of BMP's dog catching squad, that the dogs there be left alone. He told *MiD DAY*, 'I was moved. But we had to take the dogs away.'<sup>12</sup>

There were protests at many places. A group of animal lovers arrived at the Girinagar dog pound on Sunday afternoon and demanded that the dogs that had been caught in the overnight operation be released.

Thanks to pressure from panicky citizens, organizations demanding mass slaughter of stray dogs and remarks from politicians like Minister Ashok, the catching of dogs continued despite the protests. One hundred and twenty stray dogs were picked up during Saturday night's drive and were put into dog pounds.<sup>13</sup> By Wednesday 10 January, the figure had reportedly risen to at least 556.<sup>14</sup> From the beginning concern was expressed as to how and where the dogs would be housed. Bangalore had five enclosures with a total capacity to accommodate about 500 dogs.<sup>15</sup> It was whispered from the beginning

that the dogs that had been caught were being killed. Manu Baligar, Deputy Commissioner (Health), tried to allay the fears of animal lovers by saying that in accordance with the rules, the dogs would be examined by veterinary doctors. Whether they should be euthanized or sterilized and taken back to their localities would be decided upon later.<sup>16</sup>

He, however, could not maintain the position for long and said on 15 January that over 550 stray dogs 'with a tendency to bite had been culled in the city' since the BMP had launched its 'Operation Dog Hunt'.<sup>17</sup> Close to 200 of these, said Dr Prakash Reddy, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry, Karnataka Government (on deputation with the BBMP at the time of writing) on 18 January, had been culled in Chandra Layout but added that only those which were in the habit of biting were identified and put to sleep.<sup>18</sup>

Given the trauma of the savage capture they had suffered and the circumstance of being incarcerated in an unfamiliar area and in grossly over-crowded cages and enclosures, most of the dogs brought to the pounds were in a state of acute nervous tension which, in many cases, found release in frenzied barking. This could easily have been mistaken as a sign of aggression with serious consequences for the dogs. Given the large numbers captured and the short span of time in which decisions had been taken, veterinary doctors involved could not have had the opportunity to examine each case carefully and conclude whether the dog in question was aggressive and had a tendency to bite or not. Since the number of dogs killed (over 550, as stated by Baligar) and the number of dogs caught (556) were remarkably close, it is difficult to shed the suggestion that the captured dogs were killed *en masse* after what can only be described as mockery of a clinical examination. As it turned out, the number of dogs killed was much higher. In reply to a question by Jayaprakash Hegde, an independent member, Health Minister Ashok told the Karnataka Assembly on 1 February 2007 that 1,574 dogs had been picked up and killed following Sridevi's death.<sup>19</sup>

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## Blatant Violation

The BMP's mass slaughter was in blatant violation of the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules 2001 which provide that stray dogs

should be caught, sterilized, vaccinated against rabies and returned to where they had been picked up from. Those actually perpetrating it and those issuing administrative orders for the same, however, got away unpunished for their crime. This must have emboldened them—whether working for the BMP or for the Karnataka Government—to carry out a slaughter on a much wider scale after it was reported that stray dogs had mauled to death a four-year-old child, Manjunath, at the Bharat Earth Movers Limited’s colony on 28 February 2007. The stage was set for them by the sustained campaign for the mass killing of all stray dogs by organised lobbies and a section of the media ever since Sridevi’s death on 5 January 2007.

Events unfolded along lines similar to those following Sridevi’s killing but on a higher level of intensity and with new elements joining the fray. Watching the process, particularly the actions of the coalition government, comprising the Janata Dal (U) and the Bharatiya Janata Party ruling the State, one could hardly help wondering whether it was just a knee-jerk reaction triggered by pressure or there was much more to it than met the eye.

The Karnataka Government and the BBMP had doubtless to contend with a much bigger explosion of public anger than over Sridevi’s killing. On 4 March 2007, people formed a human chain and lit candles to express solidarity with Manjunath’s family. A leader of the SDFB told the gathering, ‘We had filed a case on dog menace with Lokayukta four years ago and a judgement was given by the Lokayukta, Justice N. Venkatachala. But the BBMP took no action, and we are suffering now.’<sup>20</sup> Alleging that the ABC was a money-making programme, he said that if animal activists said that dogs had a right to live, then mosquitoes and cockroaches also had the same right. He added, ‘If animal activists love strays so much, let them keep them in their house.’<sup>21</sup>

There was also intense pressure from the media. Some of the Kannada-language newspapers lashed out at the NGOs, severely denigrating the ABC programme as ineffective and money guzzling, and calling for drastic steps to end the ‘stray dog menace’. Thus on 4 March 2007, *Vijaya Karnataka* carried a news report under the heading ‘Misusing money by NGO’. It read in English translation:

The Lok Ayukta’s offices have collected information about four NGOs misusing grants of Rs. 2 crore given to them every year for use in the ABC

programme, and that the NGOs were violating rules and regulations while performing ABC operations.

The management of stray dogs has been handed over to these great NGOs. Crores of rupees are being released for these NGOs and these dacoits are presenting figures and accounts which the Corporation is, in turn, exhibiting.

In some cases, no attempt was made even to cross-check figures. Thus a piece published in the *Kannada Prabha* on the same day put the amount spent on ABC programme at over Rs 628 crore!

The English-language media demanded drastic action against the 'dog menace'. They tried to strike a balance but hostility toward NGOs and stray dogs frequently showed up. The *Deccan Herald* declared in an editorial published on 3 March 2007:

It is time that the civic authorities, NGOs and animal lovers did some serious soul searching and formulated a comprehensive action plan to catch and completely eradicate the predatory and ferocious stray dogs in the city. Let us not wait for another innocent life to be lost before we take action.

Located in the body of the text was the picture of a ferociously snarling dog with the caption, 'It is time to rid the city of its marauding stray dogs'.<sup>22</sup>

Newspapers began reporting dog bites with much greater regularity than earlier. Thus a report in *The Times of India's* Bangalore edition informed on 4 March, 'After Bangalore, it is the turn of Mysore and Shimoga children to fall victim to rabid stray dogs.' It added, 'Three days after dogs mauled a four-and-a-half year old boy to death in Bangalore, four children were attacked by canines at Sunnadakari at Satgulli on Saturday [3 March]. The injured children were Younis (7), Preethu (4), Manoj (7) and Nanjunda (12).' It further stated, 'In Shimoga, 10-year-old Shivu...was injured when a stray dog pounced on him. He is out of danger.' The attack, it stated, led to protests by residents who blocked the Narayan Shastri Road for over 30 minutes and forced the Mysore City Corporation to vow that it would go after stray dogs from Sunday.<sup>23</sup>

The same day's edition of the *Deccan Herald* reported that four children were bitten in Mysore and carried a photograph showing three of them with their fathers.<sup>24</sup>



A significant aspect of *The Times of India* report is the expression ‘rabid stray dogs’ featuring in the first paragraph. This reflects a tendency, displayed by many, to regard all dogs that bite as rabid when this is by no means the case. This, in turn, shows the alarming level of ignorance about stray dogs that prevails, and that, coupled with their sustained demonization by dog haters, accounts for the paranoia that grips people whenever an incident like Sridevi’s or Manjunath’s death occurs.

There were many other instances of media bias against stray dogs and animal NGOs. On 4 March 2007, the *Deccan Herald* reported reasoned opposition to indiscriminate killings by Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M. Kharb and Dr F-X Meslin of WHO. But it did so under the heading ‘Culling no solution, scream NGOs’. What was particularly remarkable is that the report did not carry any comment by the NGOs!

On 7 March 2007 the *Deccan Herald* reported that stray dogs bit two persons in the HAL<sup>25</sup> area. It quoted sources as saying that a labourer was bitten by canines at noon. He was taken to the Vibhutipura Health Centre and was discharged after being treated as an outpatient. Within hours, an airport employee was bitten while she was shopping. She was rushed to a private hospital. The residents claimed that they could not use the BBMP’s dog helpline as it was constantly engaged.<sup>26</sup>

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## Attempt at Even-handedness

As pointed out earlier, the English-language media—as compared to a section of the Kannada-language media—did try to be even handed after an angry and shrill initial response. Thus the 7 March 2007 issue of the *Deccan Herald* presented the views of Poornima Harish of Krupa, Dilip Bafna of ARF, Dr H.M. Nanjappa of Karuna and Dr K. Sreenivasan of CUPA, all of whom opposed BBMP’s indiscriminate killing of stray dogs. It, however, did so under the heading ‘ABC is fine, why whine, ask NGOs’. The sarcasm of the heading—or was it merely an attempt to be clever?—hardly requires any elaboration.

On the following day *Deccan Herald* reported the views of several concerned citizens opposed to the indiscriminate killing—Aparnaa Gulvady, Geetha Dasgupta, Kum Kum Malhotra and Rajeshwari

Ramachandran—under the appropriate heading, ‘Eye for an eye policy wouldn’t work’. Bias, however, came through in the very first paragraph when the report stated, ‘Protests against the culling of stray dogs by the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is getting shriller by the day with “concerned” Bangaloreans demanding that the civic body be more “humane” while capturing dogs.’ The pejorative undertone of the expression ‘shriller by the day’ and the putting of ‘concerned’ and ‘humane’ within quotes were clearly reflective of the reporter’s predilection.

The trouble, however, was not just with reporters but with people at higher editorial levels as well. Thus while newspapers and television channels regularly played up reports of dogs biting people, most of them gave comparatively little space to an incident near Tumkur in which three village dogs had saved the life of a new-born baby that had been deserted by its unwed mother at the Devarayanadurga reserve forest. According to a report in the Bangalore edition of the *New Indian Express* of 10 March 2007, the mother, a young girl, had been made pregnant by an employee of the Forest Department engaged on a daily wage basis. He refused to marry her. Fearing social ostracization because she was single she had decided to deliver the baby secretly.

She went to the forest accompanied by a person whom the report described as ‘caretaker’ and was followed by three dogs from her village. Having delivered by the evening, she returned to the village accompanied by the ‘caretaker’. The three dogs, however, stayed back guarding the new-born baby from possible attack by wild animals. Next morning, their barking attracted the attention of a man who had gone to the forest to gather tamarind. He brought the baby back to the village and returned it to the mother after finding her.

The report had a happy ending. The villagers, it said, patted the dogs profusely for saving a human life and resolved to get the woman married to the man who had made her pregnant.<sup>27</sup>

The *New Indian Express* carried the bulk of the report on page seven with a brief mention on page one. The report merited prominent front-page display as such incidents do not occur every day. On 25 May 1996, the Bengali-language daily, *Aajkaal*, published from Kolkata, had carried on its front page a report by Pinaki Majumdar of three dogs guarding a new-born baby near a dustbin. The first paragraph, which summed up the essence of the report, reads in English translation:

A bright, new-born baby by the side of a dustbin. Sitting around her are three street mongrels. The same unchanging picture throughout the night. This unbelievable and inconceivable incident is not a scene from a screenplay. Nor is it the background to a story causing a sensation throughout the world. It is real—as unalloyedly real as light and air, life and death. This incident stretched at Hartokibagan Lane under Burtolla police station from Thursday [23 May] night to Friday [24 May] morning. Not just that, the three dogs followed like responsible guardians when some people of the locality rescued the new-born baby girl and took her to the Burtolla police station. They had, unnoticed by all, arrived at the door of the office of the Burtolla police station's OC [Officer-in-Charge] I.K. Hossain as people were busy watching the baby, who had been put on his table, move her hands and feet. This scene did not elude the eyes of the policemen and the curious people present at the police station.<sup>28</sup>

The report states that it was only around 2 p.m., when the baby was put in a car for being taken to a home, that the three dogs went back to their old neighbourhood, walking slowly. Dramatically written, the report was accompanied by a photograph, by Tapan Mukherjee, of the three guarding the baby. Here is an example of sensitive journalism, marked by remarkable news sense, at its best. The report from Tumkur merited similar treatment, and not only for its intrinsic news value. It might have helped to calm down the hysteria that had affected a section of the public and helped to halt the savage killing of stray dogs under way in Bangalore. The *New Indian Express* at least briefly mentioned the story on the front page and reported it at some length inside. Some newspapers did not carry it and some buried it deep inside, which at best reflected poor news sense. At worst, it reflected a deliberate playing down of the incident because prominent display might have caused the frenzy against stray dogs among a section of the public to subside a little. That the second possibility cannot be ruled out entirely is suggested by the sustained hostility that a section of the media had been showing toward stray dogs and animal NGOs. Indeed, even the more responsible section of the media was severely critical of the ABC programme and skeptical about its ability to deliver. The *Deccan Herald* editorial mentioned earlier had this to say:

Obviously, the Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme, launched in 2000, which the NGOs and animal activists have been touting as a sure fire method to cure the aggressiveness of stray dogs, is not effective. In

any case it is not even implemented properly. Anti rabies vaccine was administered to only a few scores of dogs in the six-month period from April to December 2006. The NGOs which flaunt compassion for dogs are as much to blame as the BMP for the continuing stray dog menace.<sup>29</sup>

Coming in the wake of Sridevi's and Manjunath's deaths, prominent display of reports of people, particularly children, being bitten by dogs, helped to spread panic and stoked intense hostility toward animal welfare NGOs, the BBMP, and the Karnataka Government besides stray dogs. Media's failure to roundly condemn the killing of stray dogs encouraged those aggressively demanding their mass slaughter to call for the barbaric practice's revival in Bangalore. Media's expression of skepticism and worse about the efficacy of the ABC programme tended to undermine its credibility in the state.

Karnataka's Lokayukta (Ombudsman) Justice Santosh Hegde also lent his voice against the ABC programme. Justice Hegde, who had called for and met Municipal Commissioner K. Jairaj earlier in the day, told the *Deccan Herald* on 2 March:

The BBMP officers told me that each of these NGOs gets an annual fund of Rs. 50 lakh for their ABC programme. The organizations told me that the dog population in the last three years has reduced. One of them said, it has gone down by 21 per cent.

Saying that he was not convinced by their statistics, he further stated, "They also insisted that the same procedure of catching the stray dogs, sterilizing them and leaving them in their areas be followed."<sup>30</sup> And, finally, he said:

I feel that the dogs should be eliminated and the streets be cleared of them. Mr. Jairaj told me that legally this is not permissible. To start with, I have told him to take some steps to curb the menace and instill confidence in people's minds regarding the safety of their children. They should first clear the streets of dog packs, neuter them, and leave them in different areas, initiate action against meat shops and vendors, who throw raw meat and food items on the roads, and start late night garbage collection.<sup>31</sup>

The report indicates that the Lokayukta was referring to a conversation he had with NGOs during which he had said that he was not convinced by their claim that the population of stray dogs

had declined in Bangalore. This being the case, he should have asked Jairaj to hold a census of stray dogs, waited for the findings and compared these with the figures provided by NGOs before making a public pronouncement. Justice Hegde had a distinguished tenure at the Supreme Court. Since a statement by him was bound to have a strong impact both on public opinion and executive action given his personal stature and the office of the Lokayukta he held, he should have postponed making it until he had tangible evidence in his hands. Being 'convinced' is a subjective process which is frequently conditioned by one's predilection and may not reflect the realities on the ground.

The importance of a person like him making a public pronouncement on a sensitive issue only after he had evidence and weighed it with due application of mind, becomes clear from his statement that the BBMP should 'first clear the streets of dog packs, neuter them and leave them in different areas....'. The expression 'different areas' is vague. Since the NGOs had 'insisted on' following the procedure of leaving sterilized dogs in 'their areas' and Justice Hegde was critical of them, one can hardly be blamed for interpreting the expression 'different areas' to mean areas other than their own. Why sterilized and vaccinated dogs need to be released in their own areas will be discussed along with the rest of the ABC programme, of which it is a critical component, later in the chapter. Suffice it to say here, if sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs are considered such a 'menace' that their removal from their own areas is warranted, then their relocation would mean inflicting the 'menace' on a different area.

As it turned out the BBMP did precisely that and with disastrous consequences. On 11 May 2007, stray dogs mauled a four-year-old child, Yasin Khan, to death around 6 a.m. in the morning in Ramanagaram, the Assembly constituency of Chief Minister Kumaraswamy. A local social worker, Aslam, said after the incident, that he had information that dogs caught in Bangalore were being released in the nearby suburban areas, and that they eventually wandered into Ramanagaram. He, however, said that he could not substantiate the allegation. *The Times of India* report, which carried his remark also quoted the Ramanagaram Town Municipal Councillor, Shivanna, as saying, 'I had information that dogs were being caught in Bangalore and let loose here. I told the BBMP Commissioner

to stop this practice if the information was true.' The report further quoted him as saying, 'We have taken all measures to see that this does not continue.'<sup>32</sup>

One can doubtless argue that Justice Hegde wanted stray dogs sterilized, vaccinated and then released in forest areas or in the outskirts of cities. In that case, the consequences would not only have been most cruel to the dogs, who, dumped in areas in which they were not familiar with sources of food and were hounded by local dogs protecting their territory, would have died slowly of hunger and injury, but dangerous for human beings as well. For the dogs that survive in such situations can do so only by forming packs that can turn aggressive over a period of time. Besides, as will be seen later, the removal of sterilized and immunized dogs from their habitats will sound the ABC's programme's death knell.

In case Justice Hegde had been quoted wrongly or incompletely, he should have subsequently made it unambiguously clear, and issued a contradiction/clarification. Whatever it was, his statement added to the pressure on the Karnataka Government from a section of the media, political parties and organizations like the SDFB to follow a course of action that would, in effect, scuttle the ABC programme.

Two questions arise here: Did the BBMP act under pressure to go in for mass capture and killing of stray dogs? Or would it be too simplistic to assume that this was the case and ignore the serious questions raised by the savagery of its action and the stridency of ministerial pronouncements?

In terms of the stridency of rhetoric, three ministers led the way. Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy thundered on 2 March, 'BBMP should find a solution within a week. BBMP Commissioner must initiate disciplinary action against officials responsible for this act.'<sup>33</sup> Power Minister, H.D. Revanna, said on the same day, 'Officials who are not capable of tackling stray dogs should go and graze donkeys. It is time these officials showed commitment in saving lives. Otherwise, they deserve to be caged in dog pounds.' Alleging that officials had become fearless and thick-skinned, he suggested criminal action against them.<sup>34</sup>

The Health Minister, R. Ashok, said while addressing a crowded press conference at the Vidhana Soudha on 2 March that all stray dogs would be euthanized within a month. He added:

We'll intensify the culling and killing operations without any mercy. As Health Minister, I'm not happy with NGOs' work. A committee formed under Dr Sudarshan's leadership will submit a report, within a fortnight, on whether the NGOs have served the purpose. Based on the report, I'll decide if we need the services of animal rights activists or not.<sup>35</sup>

According to the report, the Minister promised criminal action against NGOs based on the committee's report and kept on repeating that stray dogs would be 'killed mercilessly in a month'.<sup>36</sup>

Minister Ashok's repeated emphasis on the merciless killing of all stray dogs within a month, sanctioned action that was violative of the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. It was also violative of the spirit of Article 51A(g) of the Constitution of India which states that it shall be the fundamental duty of every citizen 'to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife and have compassion for living creatures'. Minister Ashok seemed to have forgotten that stray dogs were also living beings. The sanctioning of 'culling and killing operations without mercy' and the killing (euthanasia is a euphemism one can do without here) of all stray dogs—most of whom had never bitten anyone—did not reflect compassion of the kind required by the Constitution which he had sworn to uphold.

Worse, it was bound to convey to the BBMP's dog catchers and other personnel entrusted with killing stray dogs that they now had a licence to catch and eliminate them in the most savage manner. Also significant was his reference, with obvious approval, to the decision to appoint a committee to audit the performance of NGOs. Municipal Commissioner Jairaj had ordered the audit on 23 January 2007 and entrusted the task to Dr M.K. Sudarshan, Principal and Head of the Department of Community Medicine at the Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Bangalore.

It will be interesting to have a look at the members of the audit team who were appointed by Dr Sudarshan, and whose names feature in the report, 'Performance Audit of Animal Birth Control (ABC) Programme in Bangalore City: A Report, May 2007', submitted to the BBMP. Besides being the Principal and Professor of Community Medicine at KIMS and a former President of the Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APCRI) from 1998 to 2003, Dr M.K. Sudarshan was then the President of Rabies in Asia

Foundation. The other members were Dr D.H. Ashwath Narayana, Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, of the KIMS and Dr Gangaboriah, Associate Professor of Statistics, at the same institution. It also included Dr S. Yathiraj, Professor and Head, Department of Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary College and Hospital, Hebbal, Bangalore, and Dr S.N. Madhusudana, Additional Professor, Department of Neurovirology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore.

Of the members, Dr Ashwath Narayana (whose name is sometimes also spelt as Ashwathnarayan in the APCRI's journal) and Dr Gangaboriah were Associate Professors in the department as well as the institution (KIMS) headed by Dr Sudarshan. On the date of accessing (12 May 2007) Dr Ashwath Narayana features in the APCRI's website<sup>37</sup> as the organization's Treasurer. He has co-authored with Dr Sudarshan and Dr B.J. Mahendra, an article—'A cost-accounting analysis of production of semple (sheep brain) vaccine in India'—in Volume 4 Issue 1 and 2 (January–July 2002) of the APCRI's Journal.<sup>38</sup> He had also co-authored with Dr M.K. Sudarshan, Dr B.J. Mahendra and Dr K. Rohit, an article entitled 'A case series report on successful post-exposure treatment of proven rabid animal bites', in Volume 2, Issue 1 and 2 (January–July 2001) of the APCRI's Journal. He was also a member of the Core Group of the survey team involved in the preparation of the report *Assessing the Burden of Rabies in India: WHO-Sponsored National Multi-Centric Rabies Survey 2003*. APCRI was the WHO appointed agency for conducting the survey and Dr Sudarshan was the Chief Investigator.

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## Fellow Travellers

Here is, therefore, a team of people with close links with one another and of which the leader was Dr Sudarshan. Dr Madhusudana, a former editor of APCRI's Journal, can clearly be considered the second most important person in the team by virtue of his position and seniority. It would be most interesting and relevant to see what Dr Sudarshan said in the 'President's Message' appearing in Volume 1, Issue 1, of the APCRI newsletter under the heading, 'Rabies Death and ABC Programme: Whose life it is anyway?':



Recently, the municipal authorities [of Bangalore] have launched an Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme for street dogs in urban areas which envisages their capture, vaccination, sterilization and releasing back in their original vicinity. This programme is implemented by animal welfare organizations with the support of municipal and central authorities. As yet, the programme is not well organized and lacks full public support. Presently, the programme seems to be an aristocratic animal welfare activists tyranny on the ignorant urban poor people, particularly the children. Compassion and sympathy for the dogs is unquestionable and is dear to every human soul, but unleashing terror by the authorities and the elite by promoting ABC programme and propagating stray dog menace is a clear case of misplaced zeal for dogs at the expense of humans.

The above passage merits some attention. The observation that the programme was not yet effective and lacked public support, could be taken as a genuine assessment if some of Dr Sudarshan's other remarks did not reflect intense bias against it and hostility toward those implementing it. The first was his description of the programme as 'an aristocratic animal activists tyranny on the ignorant urban poor people, particularly the children'. The second was his equation of its implementation with 'unleashing terror by the authorities and the elites' and 'propagating stray dog menace'. The clear implications were that the implementation of the programme was tantamount to 'propagating the stray dog menace' and those implementing it were aristocrats and members of the elites tyrannizing 'the ignorant urban poor people, particularly children'.

Dr Sudarshan continued to be highly critical of the implementation of the ABC programme as late as a little over two weeks before being entrusted with its performance audit. A report in the Bangalore edition of *The Hindu* dated 8 January 2007, quotes him as saying, 'The Bangalore Mahanagara Palike should do a critical appraisal of the animal birth control programme and take corrective action on dealing with the dog menace.' The report added, 'According to him [Sudarshan], the programme has not shown the desired result since its launch in 2000 as its strategies have not eliminated the threat to the lives of the people, especially street children.'<sup>39</sup>

Equally worthy of attention is what Dr Madhusudana wrote in his editorial under the heading 'Yes, We mean business now', in Volume 2, Issue 2 of the APCRI's Newsletter:

A recent noteworthy development is the launching of a unique NGO called Stray Dog Free Bangalore. The Association, which is an year old, is actively engaged in collecting public support for making the environment of Bangalore free of stray dogs. Though the association has to face lot of hurdles and threats from the so-called animal welfare organisations, it is marching ahead with its meaningful activities. It is very essential that such bodies are created in other cities of India with the active participation of general public. This will go a long way in the ultimate control of rabies in India, as the one and the only important animal transmitting the disease to humans is the dog.

It would have been most surprising if the team, given its composition, the known view of its leader, and Dr S.N. Madhusudana's effusive welcoming of the formation of the SDFB, had proclaimed that the ABC programme had been a phenomenal success and recorded findings which had left the leaders of SDFB red in the face. In the event, the report surprised no one. It said in paragraph 2 of Section 4 entitled 'Conclusions':

The ABC programme was implemented without a proper plan, strategy, monitoring and supervision particularly at the field level. A single veterinary officer is responsible for the programme, which is a stupendous task. Consequently, there was no cross check/ verification of reports of AWOs at the field level leading to various doubts about the activity itself. As there has been no proper count/estimate of stray dog population before and during the implementation of ABC programme its impact on the stray dog population is not measurable.<sup>40</sup>

It is most important to note here that the criticism of the implementation of the ABC programme featuring in the above paragraph echoes the major allegations levelled by the SDFB on 9 January and reported in the *Deccan Herald* of 10 January 2007. The latter had stated that there had been no independent monitoring or reviewing of the programme. The report also quoted Vatsala Dhananjay as saying that the programme was never scientific. It had no estimation of the stray dog population to begin with.<sup>41</sup>

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## Breathtaking Similarity

The remarkable similarity between the criticism of the ABC programme in the audit team's report and SDFB's memorandum and

public statements, is breathtaking. In fact, the paragraph from the audit team's report cited above could well have been drafted by the SDFB! Not surprisingly, the recommendations of the audit team appear almost calculated to destroy the ABC programme while appearing to favour its continuation with certain conditions and after certain modifications. This becomes clear on recalling that central to the programme's success is the release of sterilized and vaccinated dogs from where they had been picked up. The rationale behind this prescribed practice is simple and compelling. Dogs being territorial, these keep out unsterilized and unvaccinated dogs from their areas. Except in rare cases where they have to deal with subsequent infiltrators, those engaged in neutering and vaccinating stray dogs can carry on with their work in other areas after having taken care of all dogs in a particular area, say A. On the other hand, if sterilized and vaccinated dogs from A are deposited somewhere else, then dogs from elsewhere will move into A which is no longer protected. Hence by the time, dogs in several other areas have been attended to under the ABC programme, the team/teams conducting it will have to come back to A and do its/their work all over again. Indeed, the experience with A will be repeated in other areas as well and the exercise of sterilizing and vaccinating stray dogs will have to be continued endlessly with no end in sight. On the other hand, a systematic area by area approach, in which sterilized and vaccinated dogs return to their own territories and guard these, enables teams implementing the ABC programme to progressively move into new areas without having to return to old areas to catch, sterilize and vaccinate a new set of dogs. This area-by-area approach ensures the gradual sterilization and vaccination of all stray dogs in a city or a country within a pre-fixed period. The pace of work would depend on the number of people deployed and the infrastructure available.

It will be clear from the above why mass killing of stray dogs does not bring down their population. Stray dogs from other areas move in as those from a particular area are despatched. And the killing continues indefinitely with teams of killers moving from area to area while increase in the population of stray dogs—which breed very fast—neutralizes the decline caused by killing.

This point will be elaborated in greater detail in Chapter Three while dealing with the question whether the implementation of the

ABC programme or mass killing is the way to end the presence of stray dogs on streets and in neighbourhoods and wipe out the incidence of rabies in India. What needs to be noted here is that the implementation of the performance audit team's recommendations will undermine the very strategy of returning sterilized and vaccinated dogs to their own areas. It states in paragraph 1.e in Section 5 entitled 'Recommendations':

The stray dogs after neutering shall be released as 'guardian dogs' by handing them over to AWOs, Resident Welfare Associations or individuals who shall adopt and take care of them. These dogs shall be collared and implanted with microchip and they shall be recognisable and countable in an area.<sup>42</sup>

What happens to neutered and vaccinated stray dogs that do not have anyone to 'take care of them'? Are they to be released somewhere else? Kept in shelters? Who will run these shelters? The audit team's report contains no answer to these questions. Hence one can hardly avoid the conclusion that not all stray dogs picked up from an area will be returned to it. While reserving the question of the fate of stray dogs that do not find a place in their habitats as guardian dogs for discussion later, it will be important to recall here that the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management* clearly state:

Each habitat has a specific carrying capacity for each species. This specific carrying capacity essentially depends on the availability, distribution, and the quality of the resources (shelter, food, water) for the species concerned. The density of population of higher vertebrates (including dogs) is almost always near the carrying capacity of the environment. Any reduction in the population density through additional mortality is rapidly compensated by better reproduction and survival. In other words, when dogs are removed, the survivors' life expectancy increases because they have better access to resources.<sup>43</sup>

In Bangalore's case, the gap between the population of the reduced number of stray dogs (sterilized and vaccinated) returning as guardian dogs and the carrying capacity of the environment—which supported a higher number of dogs earlier—will be filled up by inward migration of unsterilized and unvaccinated dogs which will proliferate rapidly given their better access to resources. Teams engaged in sterilizing strays will therefore have to keep on coming back to areas they had

already visited and the implementation of the ABC programme will be seriously impaired. The argument that this will not happen as the carrying capacity of the environment of each area in question will be reduced through improved garbage removal, is an assumption and not a fact. Given the record of municipal administration in Bangalore, it is dangerous to frame policy on assumptions of this nature.

Equally damaging in its implications to the success of the ABC programme is Recommendation 2 in the same section. It states, 'BMP should create stray dog free zones/lanes viz. at Vidhana Soudha, High Court, Airport, Major bus stands, Railway station, Parks, Tourist spots, Commercial street, Brigade Road, MG Road and other important places.'<sup>44</sup>

The recommendation says nothing about the fate of the dogs shifted from the above areas. Are they to be killed? If so, how? Are they to be housed in shelters? If so, where and how? The audit team had a moral responsibility to spell out in its report how its recommendation was to be implemented. Its shirking of it prompts one to recall the demand by the SDFB for the mass extermination of all stray dogs. Given the fact that Dr Madhusudana had warmly welcomed the organization's advent in the APCRI's Newsletter when he was its editor—and when Dr Sudarshan was the organization's President—one can hardly be blamed for concluding that the recommendation might constitute the first step towards returning to the practice of killing of stray dogs which was followed in Bangalore until 1999 to no effect at all.

As a close look would reveal clearly, the recommendation virtually enables the BBMP to clear the whole of Bangalore of stray dogs. The expressions 'major bus stands', 'parks', 'tourist spots', and 'other important places' are highly elastic. What are 'other important places'? What are 'major bus stands' as opposed to 'minor bus stands'? Who should decide what these are? BBMP? What would happen if the SDFB declares a place as 'important' and demands that the BBMP clears it of all stray dogs? Or if it demands that a bus stand be declared 'major'?

We have seen that the BBMP, then BMP, chose Dr Sudarshan to conduct a performance audit of the implementation of the ABC programme and that the team included Dr Madhusudana. We have also seen that the team, to the surprise of none who knew the background of its leader and members, produced a report trashing

the implementation of the ABC programme. We have also seen that two of the basic criticisms it levelled are, in essence, same as those the SDFB has been making. Given this background and—as we shall see—BBMP’s prompt and total acceptance of the Performance Audit Team’s shoddy, vague and biased report, one can hardly be blamed for thinking that it was quietly preparing the ground for the mass killing of stray dogs to continue surreptitiously under various guises. Significant in this context is the performance audit team’s Recommendation 5 under Section 5 entitled ‘Recommendations’, which reads:

BMP may consider appealing to court to bring about suitable changes/amendments to ABC rules in the interest of public safety and to protect the lives of people who walk on the streets. This is particularly needed to stop the indiscriminate release of dogs after sterilization under the ABC programme.<sup>45</sup>

Why did the audit team not specify the ‘suitable amendments’ to be made? What did it mean by ‘indiscriminate release of dogs after sterilization under the ABC programme’? ‘Indiscriminate’, according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary (COD)*, means, among other things, ‘confused, promiscuous; making no distinction’. In the present context, ‘confusion’ can only mean confusion leading to the release of a sterilized dog in an area other than the one from which it had been caught. ‘Promiscuous’, pace *COD* again, means ‘of mixed and indiscriminate composition or kinds; indiscriminate; (of person) having sexual relations not limited by marriage or cohabitation, (of sexual relations) of this kind.’

I do not think that the sexual dimension of ‘promiscuous’ conduct is of great relevance here. Hence we are left with the third meaning of the word ‘indiscriminate’, which is, ‘making no distinction’. The question arises: Making no distinction among or between whom? It has obviously to be among sterilized dogs. This in turn implies that one should distinguish between sterilized dogs which are to be released where they live and which are not to be so released. The audit committee does not indicate what it wants done in respect of dogs that are not to be so released. Any amendment to this effect will destroy the ABC programme by disabling one of the most critical components of the underlying strategy—the return of sterilized dogs to places from where they had been picked up. Besides, since

this is central to the success of the ABC programme, the creation of arbitrarily expandable 'stray dog free zones/lanes' and return of only 'guardian dogs' to their habitats, will mean its de facto liquidation while sterilizations continue as an eye wash.

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## Figures Suspect: Opinion Sacred

Indeed, it seems that the performance audit team was so bent upon denigrating the ABC programme and its implementation that it was even prepared to go to the extent of giving precedence to opinion over figures. The first paragraph of Section 4, entitled 'Conclusions' reads:

A valid and reliable estimate of stray dog population in BMP area was not available for the ABC programme. There were no precapture surveys done by AWOs in their allotted areas. Consequently the AWOs and BMP largely depended upon the 16th (1997) and the 17th (2003) live stock census figures, which do not correlate with the ABC programme. However, a serial community opinion survey done by KIMs during 2001 and 2007 shows that the presence and menace of stray dogs in the BMP area has remained the same.<sup>46</sup>

How was the serial community opinion survey done? In the second section entitled 'Methodology', paragraph 2.3 entitled 'Community Survey' reads:

The opinion of the community regarding the dog menace, awareness of ABC programme, about continuation of the ABC programme, etc were assessed by a community survey done during 19-24th February 2007. The survey was done using 30 cluster random sampling technique. The trained medical investigators interviewed 10 households randomly in each cluster using a pre-structured partly open-ended interview schedule and thus covered 300 households with a population of 1497 persons. Besides 30 public places (markets, parks, places of worship, etc) and 29 meat (mutton/ chicken/fish) shops were covered in the survey by a 20-member team from the Department of Community Medicine, KIMS, Bangalore.<sup>47</sup>

According to the performance audit team's report, Bangalore has a surface area of 225 square kilometre and a population of 6.8 million. An interview base of 1,497 persons from 300 households together with 150<sup>48</sup> interviewed at public places and 145 at meat shops make a

total of 1,792. This is arguably too small a sample to faithfully reflect the entire city's opinion on the issues the survey covered. Besides, nowhere above does one get a clear idea of the geographical scatter of the survey indicating whether it adequately covered the entire city. This can hardly be overlooked. One can by no means assume that all parts of Bangalore were equally favourably or unfavourably disposed toward stray dogs. According to a report in the *Deccan Herald* of 7 January 2007, 'On Friday<sup>49</sup> night, NGO volunteers were attacked by slum dwellers trying to pick up ferocious dogs claiming that they were "pet dogs".<sup>50</sup> Obviously, the slum dwellers did not consider the dogs as ferocious—and they should know, living, as they do, cheek-by-jowl with such dogs. This, again, underlines the need for extreme caution in labelling dogs as ferocious and killing them.

Nor does the survey say anything about the social class, income and educational background of those interviewed. The first two kinds of information would have been important in judging whether the ABC programme has been an 'aristocratic animal welfare activists tyranny on the ignorant urban poor people, particularly the children', as Dr Sudarshan had claimed in Volume 1, Issue 1, of the APCRI's newsletter. The third information would have indicated whether those interviewed understood the rationale behind the ABC programme and the principles on the basis of which it worked. The sample for such a survey should be representative of all parts of the city, all social and economic classes and people of various educational levels. The interview schedule is seriously flawed on this count.

Even otherwise, it provides no more than the opinions of the people interviewed. Opinion is not fact. If it could be taken as fact, then whether a person was guilty of murdering a neighbour could be decided by holding an opinion survey, based on the cluster random sampling technique, in his neighbourhood. One would then have avoided going through the elaborate and time-consuming process of a police investigation and a criminal trial. In fact, one could then well have done away with the entire criminal justice system and set up an elaborate network of teams versed in the cluster random sampling technique to decide cases on the basis of local opinion as to whether a person was guilty of a crime or not.

In the present case, the need to distinguish between opinion and fact is particularly important because the survey was conducted at a time when a large section of Bangalore's population was in the grip



of panic following Sridevi's death on 5 January. It was a time when the media had played up the 'stray dog menace' and had prominently reported dog bite cases. Many, therefore, may have expressed views they might not have in a calmer and less charged atmosphere.

In such a situation, only people with very little understanding of mass psychology would hold an opinion survey to assess the seriousness of dog menace and claim that the findings indicate that the 'dog menace' had not diminished in Bangalore. It is necessary to remember this. Besides, as important as the comprehensiveness of an interview schedule and the size of the sample, is the question whether the atmosphere in which the survey was conducted conducted to objectivity. Equally important is the question of the investigators conducting a survey. Investigators who start with preconceived notions or regard a survey as a device to validate a particular strategy or viewpoint, should automatically be regarded as partisan. In this case, the survey was conducted by 'a 20-member team from the Department of Community Medicine, KIMS, Bangalore'. One needs hardly be reminded here that Dr Sudarshan is the Principal and Head of the Department of Community Medicine, KIMS Bangalore.

Remarkably, while projecting the outcome of an opinion survey by a KIMS team as an authentic indication that 'the presence and menace of stray dogs in the BMP area has remained the same' during the period 2001 and 2007, the audit team dismissed the figures provided by the 16th and 17th livestock census, conducted by the Karnataka Government's Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services. The reason cited was that these did not 'correlate with the ABC programme'. Of course the report did not bother to explain how these did not correlate and how this mattered. The fact is that the 16th and 17th surveys, conducted in 1997 and 2003 respectively, did provide figures giving an idea of the size of Bangalore's stray dog population. Interestingly, the 16th census put the population of stray dogs at 29,118 and the 17th at 56,154. The survey conducted by the KIMS in September 2001, however, put the number at 200,000.

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## Inconvenient Numbers

Now, the implementation of the ABC programme started in Bangalore in October 2000. Initially, CUPA and Karuna were involved. ARF

came on board in January 2001. The targets for sterilization were 300 per month for Karuna, 600 per month for CUPA, and 500 per month for ARF. If the figure provided by the 17th survey is viewed alongside that by the KIMS survey, it would become clear that the population of stray dogs in Bangalore had declined from 200,000 in 2001 to 56,154 in 2003! The decline could certainly have been cited as an indication of the ABC programme's successful implementation in the city, something that would have flown in the face of the performance audit team's highly critical remarks on the subject and its claim—made on the basis of its opinion survey!—that the presence and menace of stray dogs in the BMP area remained the same during the period 2001–2007. Nor would the acceptance of the 17th census figures have enabled it to proclaim—as it did in paragraph 2 of Section 4 entitled 'Conclusions'—that 'as there has been no proper count/estimate of stray dog population before and during the implementation of the ABC programme its impact on stray dog population is not measurable'.

There are indications of a further decline in stray dog population since the 17th survey. A report in the Bangalore edition of *The Hindu* dated 3 April 2006, quotes animal rights activists as claiming that the ABC programme has reduced the number of stray dogs in the city to 47,000 from two lakh five years ago.<sup>51</sup> Needless to say, the performance audit team's report makes no mention of it though it carries a full-page collage of press reports, including photographs, as Annexure IX on page 66. Featured under the heading, 'Press collage about dog menace and the ABC programme', most of the reports, particularly the headlines, are critical of what is claimed to be the Karnataka Government's lack of any policy to cope with the 'stray dog menace'.

This is not to argue that the 17th Livestock Survey was flawless. But by dismissing it without elaborating the reasons and choosing to depend on KIMS' opinion survey, whose credibility is suspect on several counts, the performance audit team has only shown a tendency to reject anything that reflects favourably on the implementation of the ABC programme and accept anything that goes to denigrate it. The tendency is also manifest in its explanation of the decline in the number of human beings dying of rabies. Thus in paragraph 3.7 in Section 3 entitled 'Results and Observations', it attributes the decline

in number largely to the ‘discontinuation of NTV and improved availability and use of modern rabies vaccines and RIGs (Table 17)’.<sup>52</sup> Table 17 gives the number of human rabies cases admitted to the Epidemic Diseases Hospital and, separately, those from BMP areas, annually from 1997 to 2006, but not statistics showing ‘improved availability and use of modern rabies vaccines and RIGs’. It does not mention what kind of vaccine was used! The lapse is significant because paragraph 2.1.c in Section 2 under the heading ‘Methodology’ states, ‘Decadal incidence of human rabies cases due to dog bites was obtained from Epidemic Diseases Hospital (EDH) Bangalore’. If so, records from this hospital—and not any other—should have been cited to indicate how the use of more effective modern vaccines in place of the old NTV had led to a decline in human deaths from rabies.

If the failure to do so is surprising, so is the fact that details of the different kinds of vaccine used are given, year-wise, in respect of the BBMP’s hospitals and the Government-run Victoria Hospital whose records are used to provide statistics relating to dog bites and not rabies deaths! The question inexorably arises: What explains this strange approach?

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## In Short Supply

The legitimacy of the question becomes clear on recalling that the performance audit team’s report repeatedly points out that anti-rabies vaccines have been in short supply both in the BMP’s hospitals and the Victoria Hospital. Thus, one learns in paragraph 3.5 in Section 3 entitled ‘Results and Observations’:

The BMP started procuring modern rabies vaccine from 2001 and an effort was made to use rabies immunoglobulin from 2000. However, anti rabies vaccines are in short supply at BMP health centres and more importantly there are periods of ‘stock outs’ even at the main BMP store itself. The BMP has purchased life saving RIGs only on two occasions.<sup>53</sup>

The report says further down in the same paragraph:

Victoria Hospital, a tertiary referral government hospital, situated in the center of the city caters to very large numbers of poor people. The Victoria Hospital had inadequate supply of anti-rabies vaccines as compared to

large number of dog bite cases attending OPD. Moreover, it was surprising that the hospital had not procured or used life saving RIG.<sup>54</sup>

Again, paragraph 9 in Section 4 states, ‘There is a continuous shortage of anti-rabies vaccines for dog bite victims (human) in BMP hospitals and the availability and use of immunoglobulin is scarce and limited.’ RIG is the acronym for Rabies immunoglobulin. Mostly, it is the poor who die of rabies. And it is the poor who go to municipal and government hospitals (such as the Victoria Hospital mentioned above) for treatment. If their ‘availability and use’ is ‘scarce and limited’ in ‘BMP hospitals’—note the plural—how can the ‘improved availability and use of modern anti-rabies vaccines and RIGs’ largely explain the decline in rabies in humans? The report’s description of the conditions prevailing in the BBMP’s health centres, main store and the Karnataka Government’s Victoria Hospital, further underlines the relevance and urgency of the question.

The matter is far from simple. The marked decline in the number of human deaths from rabies in the BMP area began in 2002 which saw three deaths against 11 in 2001. The figures for 2003 and 2004 were 1 and 2 respectively. These figures are from Table 17, which, as seen earlier, does not mention the vaccines used. Hence these do not indicate that the decline was due to abandonment of NTV and use of improved vaccines. Victoria Hospital used NTV until 2003 and began switching over to Purified Chick Embryo Cell Vaccine (PCECV) from 2004—two years after the marked decline began. Table 16 shows BMP hospitals using Purified Vero Cell Vaccine (PVRV) from 2001–02 onward and PCECV from 2004–05. The commonsense argument that this must have reduced fatalities to some extent runs against the fact that the performance audit report does not cite even one instance of a person dying of rabies despite full course treatment by NTV.

One must further note that according to Table 15, RIG was available at the Victoria Hospital only for 19 days in 2005–06 and 39 days in 2006–07. It would, therefore, be stretching things a bit too far to attribute any decline in the number of human deaths from rabies—at least in this hospital—to its use. Given all these factors in the report’s marked bias against the implementation of the ABC programme, it would be unwise to draw the sweeping conclusion that improved vaccines have been largely responsible for the decline in the incidence of human rabies deaths.

This underlines the need to view the report's observations with extreme caution. So does the assertion in paragraph 3.5 entitled 'Results and Observations', 'It is evident from the number of dog bite cases reported at BMP hospitals and Victoria hospital, [that] the incidence of dog bites has remained the same over years'. Table 15 in the report gives dog bite and human ARV usage figures 'in the last decade' in respect of BMP hospitals. According to it, the annual figures of dog bite cases were not available until 2001–02 when 22,905 cases were reported. The figure for 2006–07 was 17,798, which shows a decline of 5,107. Table 16 gives the figures of dog bites and human ARV usage in Victoria Hospital from 1997. Since the implementation of the ABC programme began in October 2000, its impact on the number of dog bites should be judged with reference to the year 2001 when the number of dog bite cases recorded at the Victoria Hospital was 5,126. The number of cases recorded in 2006 being 7,201, the increase comes to 2,075 cases (7,201 minus 5,126). Setting off the figures of the BMP and Victoria hospitals against each other, one gets a decline of 3,032 (5,107 minus 2,075) cases.

In fact, the impact would seem to have been more dramatic if one considers the fact that any programme needs time to show results, and that it could not have been different in the case of the ABC programme in Bangalore. Its impact, which should have been marginal at the end of 2001, must have become significant only by the end of 2003. Given this, it is significant that, as shown in Table 15 in the report, the number of dog bite cases recorded at BMP hospitals declined from 32,967 in 2004–05 to 27,657 in 2005–06 and 17,798 in 2006–07. Hence the total decline in numbers from 2004–05 to 2006–07 has been 15,169 (32,967 minus 17,798). In the case of Victoria Hospital, the increase has been from 4,210 in 2004 to 7,201 in 2006, that is, 2,991 (7,201 minus 4,210). Offsetting the two figures (15,169 minus 2,991) against each other, one gets a total of 12,178 as representing the decline in the incidence of dog bites in Bangalore.

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## Glaring Omissions

It is because of the report's strange omissions and biased nature that one tends to treat with reservation even criticism that relates to matters like the maintenance of log reports. What is most intriguing,

the report does not give a break up of the number of cases in which people had been bitten by pet and stray dogs respectively. This cannot be because the incidence of pet dogs biting people was negligible. According to information provided by BBMP in response to an application under the Right to Information (RTI) Act (RIA/PR/27c/07-08 dated 30-04-07) by Gopi Shankar, pet and stray dogs bit 10,146 and 12,794 persons respectively between April 2003 and March 2004. Between April 2004 and March 2005, pet and stray dogs bit 16,220 and 16,747 persons respectively. The figures for the two categories were 12,294 and 15,363 in 2005-06 and 7,147 and 10,651 respectively between April 2006 and March 2007. Though stray dogs accounted for a higher proportion of bites in 2006-07, the number of bites was the lowest since 2003-04.

The omission of a break-up is glaring because the performance audit team was evaluating the implementation of the ABC programme, which is meant for stray dogs, in Bangalore. By not mentioning the number of cases in which pet dogs had bitten people, it had not only given an incomplete picture but, at a time of intense demonization of stray dogs, conduced to the impression that they alone had been biting people. This in turn could not but have given a further boost to the process of demonization.

Also, the omission tended to obscure the success of the ABC programme in Bangalore, one of the benefits of which is the lowering of the aggression level in dogs and bitches. Since sterilized bitches do not come on heat, fights among dogs over bitches, which raise their aggression levels, do not occur during mating seasons when they are most frequent. This drastically reduces the number of instances in which a higher level of aggression leads to a greater intolerance of provocation and biting of people. Also, since sterilized bitches do not litter, one does not witness the rise in their aggression level that occurs when they are guarding their puppies against threats—which are many in a city like Bangalore. Significantly, many get bitten when they are either teasing, hitting or trying to take away puppies.

The failure to provide statistics of pet and stray dogs biting people delivers yet another, and severe, blow to the credibility of the performance audit committee's report and reinforces the impression of its being an utterly partisan document undeserving of serious attention.

There are other aspects that raise serious questions. Table 6 on page 19 of the report, dealing with CUPA's performance in implementing the ABC programme, puts the number of cases of euthanasia performed between 2000 and 2007 at 30,302, amounting to 149 per cent target fulfillment. This is totally wrong. CUPA performs two distinct functions at two distinct establishments. It runs a BMP-CUPA Animal Birth Control Centre, commonly called the Dog Pound, at Koramangala on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered with the BBMP (BMP when it was signed in 2003). It also runs a dog shelter on the campus of the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University (KVAFSU) next door where street animals that are ill or have been injured in road accidents are brought for treatment.

The number of dogs euthanized between 2000 and 2007 under the ABC/ARV programme was 20,261 whereas 10,041 dogs were euthanized at the shelter on the advice of veterinary doctors. This was because they had been brought there with such serious accident injuries or illnesses that they had no chance to live and not putting them down would only have prolonged their misery.

The performance audit team had requested that the two figures be given separately. CUPA had done so. Yet the two were clubbed together and the figure of 30,302 was shown both in Table 6 on page 19 and as a part of Annexure VII on page 60. If this was a genuine mistake, then it was yet another example of the utterly shoddy piece of work that the report represents. This was all the more reprehensible because it caused acute embarrassment to CUPA, which came under severe criticism from a section of animal lovers for conducting large-scale euthanasia—far in excess of what was required under the MOU with BMP.

At worst, the report suggests selective use and omission of facts to substantiate conclusions decided upon before the performance audit team began its work. At best, it reflects shocking and persistent non-application of mind. Thus it says in paragraph 1.e of Section 5, that neutered stray dogs that are released as 'guardian dogs', 'shall be collared or implanted with microchip [sic] and they shall be recognisable and countable in an area'. Paragraph 3.1.5, subtitled 'Identification of dogs for revaccination', in Section 3, reads:

The stray dogs that are sterilised, vaccinated and dewormed were released into the area from where they were brought after clipping their left ear in 'U' shape as an indication of sterilisation under ABC programme. Subsequently for revaccination every year, there is no system or method of identification of these sterilised dogs (year wise, at least) in the field.

When a dog's left ear carries a 'U' shaped clip as an indication that it has been sterilized, what is the need to put a collar round its neck or implant it with a microchip for serving the same purpose? Also, a clipped left ear should be good enough an identification for a sterilized and vaccinated dog for revaccination against rabies. It is doubtless important to record the date of the first vaccination. That is the date by which revaccination has to be done every year to ensure that the gap between two vaccinations does not exceed a year. That date, however, can be tattooed inside the clipped ear after the first vaccination following sterilization.

The recommendation, which would doubtless be like music to the ears of microchip and dog collar manufacturers, was totally unnecessary.

Given the bias against the ABC programme that the report so clearly reflects, it is difficult to accept at face value its observation in paragraph 3.1.8 in Section 3 that 'there was a faulty system of recording of data in the registers maintained at the AWO hospitals (dog capture and release register, sterilization and vaccination register), which led to faulty reporting of data to BMP, which was used for release of payment.'

Nor can one accept at face value the contents of paragraphs 4 and 5 in Section 4 under the heading 'Conclusions'. Paragraph 4 reads:

The maintenance of records pertaining to dog catching, sterilisation and release at the AWO level was faulty and defective. The release of payments by BMP was made on these data/records. Importantly, there is no method/system of identification of ABC dogs in the community after their release with respect to even the month of sterilisation and vaccination status.

What about the U-shaped clip in the left ear, which is supposed to be the identification mark of a sterilized dog? Why not tattoo the date of release under the ear?

Paragraph 5 reads:



The facilities and manpower (veterinary) was found to be deficient at Animal Rights Fund and Krupa Loving Animals and consequently the quality of surgeries done is doubtful. Besides, ARF and Krupa share the common facilities for ABC surgeries. The dogs neutered and released from veterinary hospital, Department of AH and VS did not have any programme for revaccination.

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## Dilip Bafna's Letter

It is possible that some of these criticisms are correct. But given what Dr Sudarshan had said about the ABC programme both in the APCRI's newsletter and in conversation with *The Hindu* as late as 7 January 2007, Dr Madhusudana's views on the SDFB, and the close link that all but one member of the team had with them, these criticisms cannot be accepted without an independent investigation into their validity by a team that includes representatives of AWOs and is led by a person whose impartiality is above question. Specifically, to be fair, the audit team's adverse observations against the functioning of Animal Rights Fund need to be seen alongside the fact that Dilip Bafna, one of its trustees, had written to the Commissioner BMP on 31 January 2007, protesting against the performance audit being done by Dr Sudarshan. In his letter, he had quoted from Dr Sudarshan's 'President's Message' published in Volume 1, Issue 1, of the APCRI Newsletter denigrating the ABC programme and animal welfare activists.

Given the many omissions, unsubstantiated generalizations and contradictions in the report and its manifest bias, the BBMP should have rejected it out of hand. Or it should at least have scrutinized it most carefully before deciding to implement any of its recommendations. It did just the opposite. At a meeting of its 'Monitoring Committee on Dog Menace', held at its Meeting Hall Number One on 15 May 2007, and presided over by its Commissioner, K. Jairaj, it decided to implement virtually every recommendation made by the performance audit team in its report. Of the 13 instructions the Commissioner issued, the fifth one was for the creation of 'Stray dog free zones in some identified areas, like public through fares [thoroughfares ?], City Market, Vidhana Soudha, Vikasa Soudha, High

Court etc'. It further stated, 'JC (Health) should take appropriate action to strictly implement this before 30.6.2007.'

Instruction 9 was for filing an affidavit in the High Court for amending the ABC rules, and instruction 13 for putting up 'a collar to the vaccinated dog for easy identification and for revaccination'.

And finally, as records of the proceedings of the committee dated 18 May 2007 put it:

Commissioner thanked Dr Sudarshan and his team for all the initiative and efforts taken to study the subject and to present an excellent report by giving good and valuable suggestions. Special Commissioner concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks to the chair and to the members present in the said meeting.

Being a senior and responsible officer, Commissioner Jairaj had a responsibility to read the report carefully before initiating action on it. If he had read it, then it is most surprising that he had failed to note its totally one-sided character and many glaring defects that raise serious questions. If he had not read it, then it was a grievous lapse on his part. What was particularly shocking was his instruction to create a 'stray dog free zone' by 30 June 2007. This was in clear violation of Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules of 2001 which was in force in Karnataka when the meeting was being held. As has been seen, the rules have the same force as law. His action was therefore tantamount to issuing an official instruction for the violation of the law.

The question is: Why did he act thus?

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## Notes

1. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Stray dogs maul girl to death', *Deccan Herald*, 6 January (Internet edition).
2. The reference is to the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001, issued in exercise of powers conferred by subsections (1) and (2) of Section 38 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. It was the subject of Gazette Notification No. 929 dated 24 December 2001.
3. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'BMP hounded over euthanising stray dogs', *Deccan Herald*, 10 January (Internet edition).
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'It's public health vs animal welfare', *Deccan Herald*, 3 February (Internet edition).

6. One US dollar is valued at a little above Rs 40 at the time of writing (June 2007) and a crore is ten million.
7. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'BMP launches "operation dog hunt"', *Deccan Herald*, 7 January (Internet edition).
8. Ibid.
9. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Angry people, dog lovers corner BMP', *Deccan Herald*, 8 January (Internet edition).
10. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'CMCs adding to BMP's stray woes', *Deccan Herald*, 11 January (Internet edition).
11. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Angry people, dog lovers corner BMP', *Deccan Herald*, 8 January (Internet edition).
12. Savie Karnel. 2007. 'Leave our dogs alone! Bangaloreans who have adopted strays want BMP to stop rounding up street dogs', *MiD DAY*, Bangalore, 9 January.
13. Ibid.
14. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'CMCs adding to BMP's stray woes', *Deccan Herald*, 11 January (Internet edition).
15. Another estimate puts the total at 400.
16. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Drive to continue', *Deccan Herald*, 8 January (Bangalore edition).
17. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Doctors in bind over quick-fix solution', *Deccan Herald*, 16 January (Internet edition).
18. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Dog menace continues in Chandra Layout', *Deccan Herald*, 19 January (Internet edition).
19. *The Hindu*. 2007. 'Dog menace in Bangalore finds echo in Assembly', *The Hindu*, 2 February (Bangalore edition).
20. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'To pledge their solidarity', *The Times of India*, 5 March (Bangalore edition).
21. Ibid.
22. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Enough is enough', *Deccan Herald*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
23. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'Canines attack five in Mysore, Shimoga', *The Times of India*, 4 March (Bangalore edition).
24. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Dog bites four kids in Mysore', *Deccan Herald*, 4 March (Bangalore edition).
25. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. It is a Defence Ministry undertaking.
26. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Two more bitten', *Deccan Herald*, 7 March (Bangalore edition).
27. *New Indian Express*. 2007. 'Here dogs save a human life' and 'Even as stray dogs maul', *New Indian Express*, 10 March (Bangalore edition).
28. Pinaki Majumdar. 1996. 'Pathe ratbhor sadyojata, kada pahara tin kukurer' ('New-born on the road the whole night: strict watch by three dogs'), *Aajkaal*, 25 May. English Translation by Hiranmay Karlekar.

29. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Enough is enough', *Deccan Herald*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
30. *Deccan Herald*. 2007. 'Administration/Karnataka High Court likely to be moved for the culling of dogs: Punish domestic garbage dumpers: Lokayakuta', *Deccan Herald*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
31. Ibid.
32. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'Are dogs being let loose in suburbs? 4-yr-old mauled to death in Ramanagaram', *The Times of India*, 14 May (Bangalore edition).
33. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'Biting Remarks', *The Times of India*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
34. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'Send lax officers to dog pound, says Revanna', *The Times of India*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
35. *The Times of India*. 2007. 'Strays will be culled in a month: Expert Committee's Report to Guide Action Against NGOs', *The Times of India*, 3 March (Bangalore edition).
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37. <http://apcri.org> (accessed on 15 May 2007).
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45. Ibid., p. 44.
46. Ibid., p. 39.
47. Ibid., p. 11.
48. Ibid., p. 29.
49. 6 January 2007.
50. Prathima Nandakumar. 2007. 'Lack of civic sense dogging city: NGOs', *Deccan Herald*, 7 January (Bangalore edition).
51. *The Hindu*. 2006. 'Fewer stray dogs in Bangalore now', *The Hindu*, 3 April (Bangalore edition). Two lakh is two hundred thousand.
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53. Ibid., p. 35.
54. Ibid., p. 36.

## Chapter Three

### The Games People Play

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An examination of BBMP Commissioner Jairaj's prompt acceptance of the performance audit report presented by Dr M.K. Sudarshan must begin with the question: Why did he assign the task to the latter? The plea that he did not know of the latter's hostility toward animal rights activists and acidulously expressed view of the implementation of the ABC programme, does not wash. It was his duty to find out about Dr Sudarshan's background before entrusting him with the task. Even if he was not aware of the latter's scathing remarks on both subjects and Dr Madhusudana's effusive welcoming of the SDFB's formation in an APCRI newsletter, he must certainly have read Dr Sudarshan's uncomplimentary observations on the programme published in the Bangalore edition of *The Hindu* of 8 January 2007. Even if he had not read it, the public relations department of the BBMP, which is supposed to scan newspapers every day, should have brought it to his notice.

The argument that it had not been brought to his notice does not help. Even if it had not been, he must have read Dilip Bafna's letter of 31 January 2007 protesting against Dr Sudarshan's appointment. One can no doubt argue that it was too late by then, as he had already announced the appointment, and its rescission would have sparked a controversy. He should, however, have at least had the sense of responsibility not to rush into implementing it with such alacrity.

One naturally wonders why he did it. He was no doubt under intense pressure. We have seen in the previous chapter the kind of vicious threats the Chief Minister and the Power Minister held out against BBMP officers. It is understandable that many of them would succumb. M.F. Saldanha, a respected former judge of the Karnataka High Court, told *The Hindu* that BBMP officials were forced to pick up friendly and sterilized dogs as they had no choice.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, a distinction between an ordinary official and the Commissioner of BBMP. That latter had a responsibility not only to stand up for his staff but also to refrain from issuing instructions of questionable legality. He failed to do both. Those who know Jairaj say that he is a good officer who tried his best to resist political pressure but had to give in at the end. The question is whether this was really the case or whether he willingly led the onslaught on stray dogs from the front?

This leads to another question: Was Jairaj under the kind of political pressure that was impossible to resist? It is difficult to get an answer because people's ability to withstand pressure varies. There are, however, indications that he might not have been against the killing of stray dogs as such and did not rule out opting for it. According to a report in the *Deccan Herald* of 4 March of 2007, he had written to the State Government urging it to issue a 'specific direction' for killing stray dogs in violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960.<sup>2</sup>

One can perhaps argue that Jairaj wanted to send the message—albeit indirectly—to the Government that mass killing of stray dogs violated the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and that it should take the responsibility for it. One can further argue that the message reflected both the unstated hope that this would dissuade the Government from going in for mass killing and his effort to distance himself from such action. Such a view would have been acceptable, had he not expressed in the same letter, the BBMP's helplessness in acting tough to protect the public from stray dogs.<sup>3</sup> The report does not say what Jairaj meant by being tough. But whatever it meant, it certainly did not reflect an inflexible resolve to oppose the mass killing of stray dogs.

Besides, he had stated as early as 5 January 2007, the day Sridevi was killed and much before political pressure for the killing of stray dogs had intensified following Manjunath's death on 28 February:

Despite our efforts to sterilize dogs (ABC programme), we are unable to find a solution to the aggressiveness of these dogs. I personally think that it is time to build public consensus over the issue and decide on the elimination or confinement of these dogs.<sup>4</sup>

Significantly, a report in the *MiD DAY* of 15 March quotes Health Minister Ashok as saying, 'I sympathise with you over the killing of

innocent dogs, and over dogs being left out to die. But I cannot do anything as the BBMP is now in charge of the drive.<sup>55</sup> This could indicate two things—first that the BBMP was actually responsible for the drive and Ashok was just making that clear; and second, that Ashok was trying to shift the blame for the killing of stray dogs from politicians like himself to BBMP.

Prima facie, it is difficult to believe that the BBMP could have carried out the kind of vicious and cruel capture and killing of stray dogs that it did without the State Government's approval. Besides, Jairaj's letter makes it clear that the Karnataka Government knew about the illegality of the mass killings—a fact that must have also been conveyed to it by others, particularly its law officers. Nor could the killings continue without a directive, written or verbal, from it. That the direction for the BBMP's savage campaign against stray dogs came from the highest level of the State Government is further indicated by the absence of any punitive action against those who had violated both the ABC (Dog) Rules and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, without the slightest hesitation. It has also been alleged that FIRs lodged by animal activists had been altered to prevent arrest and punishment.

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## Under Pressure?

The question arises: Did the Karnataka Government do all this under intense pressure from its political opponents, the public and the media? Pressure there was. Not surprisingly, opposition parties tried to put the Government on the mat. Reporting the proceedings of Karnataka's Legislative Assembly, *The Hindu* stated on 2 February 2007, 'Several members including R. Ramalinga Reddy, R. Roshan Beg, V. Somanna, Narendra Babu (all Congress), G.V. Sriramareddy (CPI-M) and Vatal Nagaraj (Kannada Chaluvali Vatal Paksha) expressed displeasure over the Government's failure to check the menace of stray dogs.'<sup>56</sup>

The pressure intensified after Manjunath's death on 28 February 2007. On Friday, 2 March 2007, activists of the Indian National Congress and several NGOs as well as some members of the public demonstrated in front of the BBMP's office in Bangalore. They



demanded both Ashok and Jairaj's resignation. Jairaj, who was forced to meet the demonstrators, promised that measures would be taken. Ashok declared, 'The city will be rid of dog menace in a month's time.'<sup>7</sup>

The media was harshly critical of the Government and Ashok seemed to have been a special target. A news report in the *Vijaya Times* of 5 March 2007 read:

Guess which area in Bangalore is particularly infested with stray dogs? None other than Jalahalli the backyard of Health Minister R Ashok.

If you happen to visit the place, scores of dogs patrolling every road, welcome you. Residents complain that the problem is worst at night when the dogs virtually take over the streets. And though the Health Minister resides in the area, they have no relief.

The worst affected are the kids. Akash, a seventh standard student, shows a scar in his hand. 'I was bitten by a stray dog right in front of my house while I was riding a bicycle. We find it difficult to play in the streets too,' he says. His friends, according to the report, were afraid to move at night as they were worried about dogs attacking them.<sup>8</sup>

The pressure was, however, by no means unbearable. The fear that the two tragic incidents would collectively have a severely adverse political fallout, was highly exaggerated. There was no mammoth gathering, no massive procession calling for the Government's resignation. The demonstration in front of the BBMP's office on 2 March, was by no means large. Even while the participants demanded that Karnataka's Health Minister, R. Ashok, and BBMP's Commissioner, K. Jairaj, resign, it was clear that neither was going to lose his perch. There was, of course, pressure from a section of the media. Not all sections of the latter, however, behaved irrationally. Lapses notwithstanding, the English-language print media, as we have seen, tried to be fair. Even in the midst of the hysteria that was being whipped up in the aftermath of Manjunath's death, they did report the views of animal lovers, representatives of animal NGOs, the savagery with which stray dogs were treated, and the awful conditions prevailing in the overcrowded animal shelters. Madhumitha B. wrote in the *Deccan Herald* of 12 March 2007:

This reporter from *Metrolife*<sup>9</sup> visited one of the Animal Welfare Organisations in the city and found the condition the dogs are in, quite

appalling. With over four-five dogs in one cage, they hardly have any room to move. There's enough food and water to survive but no way to get out of the cages at all. The rest are kept in cramped cages in vans under the sweltering heat.<sup>10</sup>

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## Rap from Media

The national media reacted sharply with the *Hindustan Times*, *The Indian Express* and *The Pioneer* publishing strong, condemnatory editorials against the horrific way in which stray dogs were being caught, kept and then killed. The *Hindustan Times* editorial, 'Animal Vengeance', published on 15 March 2007, read:

American inventor Thomas Edison had thrown light on the nature of civilization when he once said. 'Until we stop harming all other living beings, we are still savages'. This savagery is being played out in the streets of Bangalore. The brutality with which street dogs in the city are being captured, tortured and culled since last fortnight is shocking. The frenzy is a retaliation to the mauling of two children, in separate incidents by a pack of street dogs. While the grief of the families of the deceased is great, what is worrying is that the outrage against all stray dogs has the total backing of the Karnataka government. In fact, it has been the chief instigator of the pogrom against the animals.<sup>11</sup>

The editorial ended by declaring:

Even though this [the implementation of animal birth control rules] has been done only in a haphazard manner, let us at least not stoop to become fiends who, because of two instances of tragic anomaly, go on a bout of blood-lust against animals that are not collectively guilty.

An editorial, 'Beastly behaviour', published in *The Indian Express* of 12 March 2007, had stated:

What is it with Bangalore's politicians? A city whose substantive and symbolic contribution to remaking India is so great is host to a political culture that often seems to draw inspiration from primitive illogic. The latest and grotesque example is the politically inspired mob frenzy about killing the city's stray dogs. A minister issued a public call for a 'final

solution' after an incident of a child dying from dog bites. Who argues that the death of a child is not a terrible tragedy? But who argues that blood for blood revenge is effective civic policy? ....

Those championing the appallingly misdirected, disorganized and cruel pogrom should know the city authorities had tried killing as a population control solution for six decades—electrocution was the preferred method—and failed.

Pointing out that results of the implementation of the ABC programme following a court direction a few years ago 'were starting to be visible', the editorial stated that it would have had a 'greater impact had Bangalore's frenetic growth been better managed municipally'. It ended by saying, 'The mobs, as mobs do, will go away after some time. Bangalore's authorities would hopefully then resume giving precedence to scientific and humane solutions. You can't solve anything if beastly behaviour starts right at the top.'<sup>12</sup>

*The Pioneer* had even earlier declared in an editorial published on 9 March 2007:

It [BMP] has invited teams of 'expert' dog catchers from Kerala and Gujarat who have launched an 'operation canine-hunt. The target of rounding up 1,000 stray dogs per day has been announced for the first month in a city with an estimated population of two lakh stray dogs. This seems a solution worse than the problem simply because it solves nothing. There can be no dispute that people in Bangalore, as everywhere else, have to be protected against attack by stray animals, and that there could indeed be a problem of stray dogs in that city. Yet it is not clear as to what the BCC [Bangalore City Corporation] has in mind for the stray dogs it rounds up; nor is it clear whether they will be provided humane treatment or proper care and shelter after they are caught. Indeed, going by past experience with administrations in different parts of the country, it is possible that the canines will meet with a gory end. This is as unacceptable as the strays biting or mauling people.<sup>13</sup>

*The Pioneer* also carried a number of editorial page articles condemning the killings. One of these, entitled 'Dog who did India proud', was by Maj.-Gen. (Retd) Ashok Mehta, who wrote about Krupa, a Backerwal puppy, who was picked up in 1963 and lovingly reared by a unit of the Gorkha Battalion serving on the Ceasefire Line (now called the Line of Control). Krupa did yeoman service not only with it but also with the Sikh and Garhwal regiments that

followed. He perished at the age of eight following a viral affliction. Gen. Mehta concluded his article with the words:

The Bangalore slaughter of stray dogs, whatever the provocation, is an insult to globalising India on the threshold of becoming a world power. We should treat the disease, not kill the patient. We need not replicate China's brutal destruction of dogs recently. It would be a slur on Krupa who served his country so honourably.<sup>14</sup>

Among the television news channels, NDTV 24X7, CNN-IBN, and India TV carried clips showing in the starkest possible manner the way in which the killings were effected in Mandya and Anekal, which will be covered later in the chapter. National print media and television news channels reported demonstrations in Delhi on 10, 16 and 31 March, and in Kolkata on 30 March against the Karnataka killings.

Opposition to the capture and slaughter of stray dogs reared its head in Bangalore as soon as both started to the full-throated support of pro-mass killing groups and lynch mobs. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that on 6 January 2007 slum-dwellers attacked NGOs trying to pick up their dogs.<sup>15</sup> At a press conference on 9 January, Leelavati, an actress of yesteryear, and her actor son, Vindoraj, declared, 'We are against the government's move to cull stray dogs. It is inhuman.' They pointed out how they, as animal lovers, had been feeding them for 30 years.<sup>16</sup>

Horror over the unspeakable cruelty with which stray dogs were treated sparked widespread anger immediately after the second and more efficient and brutal bout of killings began following Manjunath's death on 28 February. Animal lovers and the saner elements of society began to assert themselves. On 8 March 2007, animal lovers and activists not connected with any NGO demonstrated on Bangalore's M.G. Road along with their dogs. The latter had placards hanging from their necks with slogans like, 'Why should we be punished for someone else's fault. Live and let live!' One of the protesters, Sneha, stated:

On Wednesday (6 March) over 50 dogs were packed in vans and taken to dog pounds. When they realised that the dog pounds were overflowing,

they just left the vans there. Later, on the way to Agrahara, they decided to kill the dogs right there. This is not a humane way of doing things.<sup>17</sup>

On 9 March, around 50 members of the Stray Dogs' Welfare Organisation requested Karnataka's then Governor, T.N. Chaturvedi, to act against the way in which stray dogs were being treated. Accompanied by 15 dogs, they stood in front of Raj Bhavan until the Governor came out to hear them. The association's members pointed out that extremely crude methods were used to catch the dogs, which were singed with fire and burnt with acid and spoke in favour of implementing the ABC programme. One of the members, Jayashree, stated the BBMP was treating stray dogs in the most inhumane manner.<sup>18</sup>

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## Governor Stands Tall

Eminent citizens began protesting. M.F. Saldanha, former judge of the Karnataka High Court, had in a letter to Health Minister Ashok said that the killing of dogs was a 'knee-jerk' reaction that had set back the anti-rabies programme in Bangalore which had been doing so well.<sup>19</sup> A person who was deeply shocked and upset was none other than Governor T.N. Chaturvedi, whose outstanding career in the Indian Administrative Service has been followed by entry into public life where he has conducted himself with distinction. In a rare gesture, he sent CUPA a donation of Rs 5,000, obviously as an indication of his support to the cause of animals. On 6 March, he wrote to Chief Minister Kumaraswamy expressing dismay over the way in which the authorities were handling the issue of stray dogs and bringing to the Chief Minister's notice media reports highlighting the killing of stray dogs and careless disposal of the carcasses.<sup>20</sup>

The letter stated:

It is churlish to call the entire matter as 'what is more valuable; the life of a human being or of a dog?' All life is precious. There is harmony and balance in nature. It is nobody's case that there should be unchecked breeding of dogs so as to increase menace to human beings whose friends they have traditionally been called.

Pointing out that according to the WHO and many other authorities the population of stray dogs could not be controlled by the methods the authorities had adopted in Bangalore and Mysore, he added, 'As in the case of human beings, population control is a long-term process, but the beginning has to be imaginative, steady, sustained and adequately monitored.'

The letter clearly reflected the Governor's disapproval of the savage manner in which the entire operation extermination was conducted when it stated:

I find from Press reports that even when citizens in certain areas oppose the dogs being caught in a reckless and ruthless manner and even after they plead that the dogs were friendly ones, no heed is paid. There is a report that even a Pomeranian of a citizen, which was probably out of the house, was trapped and the authorities do not tell what happened to it though he has complained that his two children have taken ill since their dog has been made to disappear.

Referring to the 'much more effective and advanced ways even of sterilisation' available, he stated that one had to 'take the trouble to know about them, to pursue them, implement them and do the follow-up. Even some citizens have written that after this campaign of sterilization started, they do not find many pups around'. Nor did he leave the Chief Minister in doubt about what he thought of the savage way in which stray dogs were being killed. He wrote:

People know how painful the entire process of trapping and electrocution, asphyxiation, strangulation or suffocation, etc, is. One need not talk of the grisly details involved. There are more humane ways even to put to sleep the rabid and the ferocious dogs. But naturally, we are heedless to their misery and pathetic cries. According to the Press, even bitches have been trapped with litter in their wombs. And to salvage our conscience, we pose it as a question of the safety of man versus dogs.

Finally, Mr Chaturvedi made a telling point when he wrote:

I share the concern of people about human suffering. People ask the question whether the municipal authorities have ever thought as to why these children should be roaming in the streets when they are supposed to be in schools; why are they playing on the dung-heaps and doing some

scavenging there. Why have unauthorized meatshops been allowed to exist? Who is responsible? What about the officials who are responsible for this messy situation?

He again wrote to the Chief Minister on 12 March:

We cannot also afford to be oblivious to the Central Act about prevention of cruelty to animals that exist and even the Hon'ble High Court in PIL has recently mentioned about it. Now I find that the Forest Minister gave the same kind of order for culling dogs in Tumkur. As regards Mandya photos show that dogs have been caught in a very barbaric and cruel manner and immediately given poisonous injections. We ourselves should not fall prey to dog-phobia. This kind of brutal and inhuman way of dealing with the animals, dogs at this moment, does not behove the administrative authorities... They must keep their balance and try to achieve the basic objectives and not get panicky or get hustled through completely abdicating their mental equilibrium.

Reacting to the first letter Chief Minister Kumaraswamy said in Hassan that he had asked the BBMP Commissioner to meet the Governor and discuss the matter.<sup>21</sup> On the same day, the *Deccan Herald* reported that the BBMP had put its dog hunt on hold until permanent shelters for dogs that were being constructed in Seegehalli, Kanahalli and Banashankari had been completed.<sup>22</sup> Any comfort this might have brought to animal lovers perished almost immediately. The very day the BBMP announced its decision, the killings in Mandya near Mysore occurred with municipal authorities using methods that were unspeakably cruel and illegal. Video clips of the massacre, brought back by two dedicated animal rights activists, Savitha Nagabhushan and L. Srinivasan, who gained access to the killing grounds by pretending to be dog-haters who deeply appreciated the work of the killers and wanted to show it to the public, left even the most hardened people shellshocked.

They had hardly recovered when there occurred another ghastly incident of mass murder—this time at Anekal. A report in the *Deccan Herald* of 26 March 2007 quoted animal activists as stating that over 50 stray dogs had been killed in Anekal taluka in Bangalore rural district by being injected with poison. The activists, Savitha Nagabhushan and L. Srinivasan (in this case as well), released to the media a CD showing stray dogs being caught, injected with poison and dumped in a lorry. They alleged that Bangalore rural health

officials were mercilessly killing dogs in Narayanapura in violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. According to Srinivasan, the carcasses were taken away in a garbage collection tractor and dumped in the vicinity of Doddakere. He added that the killing was not only illegal but also that the entire biodiversity of the lake was being harmed by the dumping of the carcasses of poisoned dogs. Another activist, Radhika, alleged that 'local health officials had been killing dogs in Anekal for the past one week'.<sup>23</sup> According to the report, health official Iqbal Ahmed refused to comment when contacted.

Shown on television, the Anekal video clips sent shockwaves throughout the country. About two weeks later, Chief Minister Kumaraswamy issued a public statement that there would be no more killing of stray dogs in Karnataka. Animal lovers, however, remained wary in Bangalore and elsewhere in the State. Stray dogs had started disappearing mysteriously from Bangalore even before Jairaj issued instructions at the Monitoring Committee's meeting on 15 May 2007 for Joint Commissioner (Health) to strictly take appropriate action for the creation of 'stray dog free' zones in the city.

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## Poison and Electrocuting

Nor was the Karnataka Government or the BBMP's record such as to inspire confidence. As has been seen, assurances by officials like Manu Baligar, BBMP's Deputy Commissioner (Health), held out in January 2007, that stray dogs were not being killed indiscriminately, carried little credence. So did the denial by the BBMP's Chief Health Officer, L.T. Gayathri Devi, in March that captured dogs were not being killed. Afshan Yasmeen, who reported her denial in *The Hindu* of 9 March 2007, stated in the same piece, 'According to sources in the dog pounds, the canines [that had been caught] were being electrocuted or injected with poison.'<sup>24</sup> The report was accompanied by a photograph showing carcasses of stray dogs lying in a heap in one of the BBMP sites on Thursday 8 March. Indeed, Health Minister Ashok's observation, quoted earlier from the *MiD DAY* of 15 March 2007, confirmed that innocent dogs were being killed or 'left out to die'.



With the Government in the denial mode in respect of the killings, disposal of the carcasses had to be clandestine. In the report quoted above, Afshan Yasmeen also wrote, 'It may not be a surprise to learn that most of the stray dogs caught by the BBMP these days are being put to sleep. They are being clandestinely loaded in garbage lorries and dumped in the city's outskirts along with solid waste.' The report added that with 'private garbage contractors refusing to transport the carcasses, the civic body is using its own garbage lorries for the purpose'.

Sneaking into the BBMP's dysfunctional hot-mix plant across the road from the dog pound, *The Hindu* team of which Yasmeen was clearly a part, found heaps of dog carcasses. They were pushed into large plastic bags and loaded into closed garbage lorries. The entire process involved subterfuge at every stage. *The Hindu* report quoted one of the lorry drivers at the hot-mix plant as saying that the carcasses were put into trucks half laden with garbage and were then covered with garbage from another truck. This was to hide the carcasses even as the waste was unloaded in the dumping yards.

The driver refused to reveal the destination of the trucks. According to *The Hindu* report, however, residents of Haalnayakanahalli and Churasandra on Sarjapur Road and Garudacharpalya near Budigere crossing on Hospet Road, who noticed carcasses being dumped with solid waste, stopped it. The report further pointed out that the method of disposal, which was posing a health hazard to villages near the dumping yards, drew protests from the villagers who had always complained of the unbearable stench of the dumped garbage.

The BBMP's constant prevarication on the fate of captured stray dogs understandably led to questions about what was being done to them. In a front page indicator to a story by Sunayana Suresh on page 4, *MiD DAY* of 15 March 2007 stated under the prominent heading, 'LIES', 'They promised you ONLY diseased and violent dogs will be killed. But with the dog pounds packed, the BBMP is letting hundreds of healthy strays loose in Banerghatta Park—to face certain death.'

The deceitfulness and prevarication characterizing the BBMP's pronouncements on its campaign against stray dogs, were only matched by the relentlessness and savagery with which it was carried out. The administration put its entire might behind it. Municipal

Commissioner Jairaj announced on 3 March 2007 that 30 more dog-catching vans would be added to the existing vans on Sunday 4 March. Each of the new vans would have three dog catchers, a policeman and a health inspector and would be sent to 30 different zones to catch stray dogs.<sup>25</sup>

‘Operation Stray Dog’, as the accelerated drive launched after Manjunath’s death on February 28 was called, began at 11.45 a.m. on the morning of 4 March 2007. Commissioner Jairaj flagged off the first van. The report in *The Times of India* which stated this, added that the BBMP had identified 48 vulnerable places with the stray dog populations of ‘Chandra Layout, BEML, Banaswadi, Jeevan Beemanagar, Yeshwantpur Yard, Ganga and Gangodanahalli [being] on the hit list first’.<sup>26</sup>

The rate of capture of stray dogs picked up further on Tuesday, 6 March, when a 12-member team of expert dog catchers from Kerala’s Malabar region joined the drive. Arriving in Bangalore in the morning, they began work at 3 p.m. and caught over 100 dogs in just three hours! The total number of dogs caught during the day, including those caught by 30 special teams of the BBMP, came to 500.<sup>27</sup>

All opposition was ruthlessly brushed aside. According to a report in the *Deccan Herald*, residents of Rajajinagar, who fed stray dogs and were fond of them, opposed their capture on 5 March. Under the ABC (Dog) Rules, sterilized and vaccinated stray dogs could be picked up only if specific complaints against them had been investigated and found justified. At Rajajinagar, far from complaining against them, the residents were opposing their capture. As for non-sterilized dogs, they could be taken away only for sterilization and vaccination and brought back to their habitats. Had the BBMP not been bent on mass killing of stray dogs, its health officials conducting the drive would have explained the legal aspect of the matter to the residents. They would also have told the residents the locations where they were taking the dogs so that people could, if they wished, regularly visit the dogs until they had been sterilized, vaccinated against rabies, and brought back to where they lived. The health officials did nothing of the sort. According to the report in the *Deccan Herald*, BBMP health officers silenced the residents with the answer, ‘Show license and take away “your” dog.’<sup>28</sup>

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## Lynch Law

In some areas, lynch mobs joined dog-catching teams, intimidating anyone who tried to protect stray dogs. The law was given the go by, and not only in respect of the ABC Rules. The sanctity of private homes was trampled upon. To cite an example from Rajajinagar, when BBMP's gangmen went to catch a stray dog near the Modi Hospital Road, a resident immediately came to its rescue and allowed it inside her house. She did not yield even when the gangmen demanded that it be handed over to them. A group of residents of Manjunathanagar, who were for catching stray dogs, immediately stepped in and conducted a signature campaign 'empowering' BBMP personnel to take the dog away. The helpless lady had to give in.<sup>29</sup>

The entire incident was shockingly disgraceful. The Manjunathnagar mob had absolutely no legal authority to 'empower' BBMP to enter the lady's residence. BBMP employees—certainly the health officials and policemen accompanying them—who ought to have had at least an elementary idea of the legal provisions governing their actions, had no business to act under the authority of the mob. Thwarted by the lady, they should have procured a warrant for entering her home. That they promptly—and illegally—acted under the mob's authority, showed that they were ready to clutch at any pretext to enter the house and take the hapless dog away. It also indicated that they were sure that they had complete immunity for their action.

According to a report in *The Hindu* of 7 January 2007, 'The BMP teams were catching all dogs irrespective of whether they had "biting habits"'. Apparently, there was no instruction to catch any particular kind of dogs. Earlier in the day, it was announced that only dogs with 'biting habits' would be captured.<sup>30</sup>

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that BMP teams caught dogs in any manner they pleased, heedless of the cruelty it involved. The report in *The Hindu* under the heading 'BBMP teams go scouting for dogs' was accompanied by a photograph showing two dogs being captured in the most brutal manner. One was being raised to a van, choking, by a piece of rope coiled around its neck and throat; the other was being shoved upward, its body pinned against the truck, with a cleft stick pressed against its right ear.<sup>31</sup>

Describing the conditions of captured dogs at an animal shelter, Madhumita B. wrote in the *Deccan Herald* of 12 March, 'One of the dogs was brought with a large tear in his eye...and the open wound is aggravating. A pregnant dog was ruthlessly picked up but thankfully she is safe and has littered in the shelter.' 'But the pound is overcrowded and the chance of infection "looms large",' said Dilip Bafna of Animal Rights Fund (ARF).<sup>32</sup> Madhumita B. added that one witnessed at the shelters dogs with 'acid wounds, cuts and bruises' that, NGOs claimed, were caused when 'experts' from Malabar picked them up.

Several eyewitnesses told this writer that dogs were not only caught brutally but were also poked and hit with sticks, kicked and savagely hurled on the floor of the vehicles after being caught—much to the delight of the mobs accompanying the dog catching teams.

The trauma of the dogs did not end even at the shelters. As seen in Madhumita B.'s report above, conditions in the dog pounds were horrible. The *Deccan Herald* reported on 8 March, that 'all four NGO-run pounds were crammed with captured dogs and they could not accommodate any more'. It added that continuous whining and barking, 'accompanied by foul smell emanating from the vomit and animal waste indicate the plight of the dogs'. It quoted workers from one of the dog pounds as stating that the situation was so bad that even tame and friendly dogs were turning violent. As a result, they had started biting one another. Despite being given food at the required time, none of the dogs was eating because of the heat and the feeling of suffocation.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, things had started becoming impossible at the shelters from as early as 5 March when Suparna Ganguly of CUPA said, 'We told the BBMP that we cannot take more dogs as the shelter has 234 dogs at present, while the BBMP is bringing them in hundreds.'<sup>34</sup> With the NGOs refusing to take more dogs, the *Deccan Herald* found on 6 March that many BBMP vehicles, packed with captured dogs, were parked outside them. The dogs remained caged for several hours. The paper quoted K. Sreenivasan of CUPA as saying that it was cruel to keep dogs caged for long hours. They were not provided with food and water. Puppies, caught during the drive, were dying without their mothers' milk.<sup>35</sup>

One important consequence of such exercises in savagery was that the cruelty inflicted on stray dogs became the principal focus of the debate that followed in the media, and a couple of critical questions remained unasked. Did the alacrity with which the BBMP switched to mass killing indicate that it actually wanted to do it and the killing of the two children provided it with the excuse it needed? Did its officials continue to deny the fact of the mass killing to escape punishment for it, as it was patently illegal under the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules 2001, in force at that time as it continues to be at the time of writing? Neither question can be brushed aside. The cruelty with which the dog catchers—particularly those from Malabar—caught the dogs suggested that they knew that they would not have to account for their actions and that the dogs were going to die anyway. As has been seen, they were killed, and in most brutal ways, which would not have been possible if the BBMP and the government did not want it.

The government was doubtless under pressure. But the pressure, as has been seen, was not that intense and there was a considerable and growing body of opinion against killing as well. Besides, at least a part of the pressure was the government's own creation. Health Minister Ashok's statement on 2 March that all stray dogs would be euthanized in a month and that the 'killing and culling operations' would be intensified 'without mercy',<sup>36</sup> lent credence to the view that the presence of stray dogs could only be ended through mass killing and the ABC programme was not the answer. Chief Minister Kumaraswamy's fiat that the BBMP should find a solution within a week,<sup>37</sup> which ignored the complexities and legalities connected with the issue, was bound to create the impression that these did not exist and that the problem was capable of immediate solution. All that was needed was for the BBMP's employees to work as they should. Ashok's statement that he was not satisfied with the NGOs' work was liable to encourage those who had been accusing them of making money and not doing what they should have been.

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## Encouraging Slaughter

Kumaraswamy and Ashok's remarks encouraged those demanding the mass killing of stray dogs, strong action against the NGOs and

the scuttling of the ABC programme. These also tended to convince the general public that these demands were justified, particularly since these were raised at a time when the death of the two children had created a general mood of shock, grief and anger in which many demanded quick and drastic measures against stray dogs, the ensuring of the safety of their children and punishment to the guilty. The result was vociferous airing of these views in the media and other public fora, which in turn intensified the pressure on the government to berate the NGOs and go in for mass killing of stray dogs, thus undermining the ABC programme.

Minatory ministerial statements also had the effect of silencing all voices of sanity and dissent in the Government and the BBMP. Not many could be expected to voice a critical view after Power Minister Revanna had thundered, 'Negligent BMP officials should be sent to the dog pound. Officials incapable of tackling strays should go and graze donkeys.'<sup>38</sup> The result? There were few internal brakes and a general tendency to succumb to pressure.

One can argue that these remarks were spontaneous outbursts caused by sorrow and anger over the death of the two children. Any such plea would overlook the fact that people holding high constitutional positions have a responsibility to be restrained in their speech. Besides, the fact that a part of the pressure one has to contend with is the result of one's own intemperate pronouncements, does not immunize one—or the government of which one is an important part—against the consequences. In this case, the Government of Karnataka had a responsibility to act in accordance with the Constitution of India and the laws framed under it. This means that it was obligatory on its part to abide by the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules 2001 and enforce the Prevention of Cruelty Act, 1960. It failed on both counts.

This was particularly reprehensible because the government could have dealt with pressure in other ways instead of pursuing the course it followed. It could have pointed out that it had no option but to abide by its legal and constitutional obligations particularly since the Karnataka High Court had upheld the ABC rules. If it did not want to go in for mass capture and killing of stray dogs, it could have publicized the fact that the well-known WHO expert, Dr F-X Meslin, who met Municipal Commissioner Jairaj on 3 March 2007, along with the Chairman of the Animal Welfare Board of India,

Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M. Kharb, had pointed out that indiscriminate killing of stray dogs had not proved effective in dealing with the issue of their presence.<sup>39</sup>

General Kharb, a distinguished veterinarian who had been the head of the Indian Army's Remount and Veterinary Corps, dealt with the whole issue at considerable length before the media. Stating that killing was an 'ineffectual' way of controlling canine populations, he pointed out that even if 50 to 80 per cent were killed, the population would reach its original number in three to four years. He also made it clear that the NGOs were being unfairly targeted and the charges of their misusing the BBMP's money were baseless. He told reporters that NGOs were asking as to why were they being blamed for Manjunath's death when they had no role to play in a BEML township, where it occurred. Asked how the AWBI or the NGOs would deal with the situation, he explained that such attacks were the work of packs of dogs alone. The answer lay in catching the leader of the pack, neutering it and keeping it under observation and euthanizing it if it continued to be aggressive. 'If the leader is tackled, then the rest of the group will automatically disperse.'<sup>40</sup>

Had the government and BBMP been against mass killing, they would have quoted his opinion and announced a new plan to contain the population of stray dogs. It should have involved an accelerated implementation of the ABC programme, proper management of solid waste and the dispersal of packs of dogs through the removal of their leaders, and mass vaccination of stray dogs as dogs are considered to be the main causes of rabies in humans. As the Ninth Report of WHO Expert Consultation on Rabies (Geneva, 5–8 October 2004) states:

Mass canine vaccination campaigns have been the most effective measures for controlling canine rabies. Since the 1980s, national mass canine vaccination campaigns have been conducted generally on an annual basis in Latin America, with high coverage (around 80%) in a short period of time (no more than 1 week). Over the region, approximately 45 million dogs a year have been vaccinated, resulting in a significant decline in canine and human rabies. The organisation of the campaigns is based on intersectoral collaboration, community participation and strong media support. Three committees (national, subregional and local) have been established to deal with technical and logistical aspects of the campaigns. The success and sustainability of these campaigns in

Latin America have been due to political commitment, acquisition and supply of canine vaccines by ministries of health, free delivery of these vaccines, local level commitment in the planning and execution of the campaigns and effective coordination and supervision of the campaigns by the health services.<sup>41</sup>

If Latin America can vaccinate approximately 45 million dogs a year, there is no reason why India cannot vaccinate 70 per cent of its stray dog population, estimated (!) around 22 to 25 million. The key element here is political will and this precisely has been glaringly lacking in this country, and this was sadly manifest in Karnataka during the crisis over stray dogs. Neither the State Government nor the BBMP announced that it was determined to accelerate the ABC programme's implementation, and that this was the only way to end the presence of stray dogs in neighbourhoods. This, the BBMP's persistence with the killings, the misleading and deceitful statements by its officials to conceal this fact, and the secrecy that marked its actions, clearly suggested that the ghastly course of action followed was of its own choosing and had the State Government's approval.

That this was, indeed, the case is further suggested by the fact that the killing and arbitrary relocation of stray dogs continued secretly even after Chief Minister Kumaraswamy had stated in April that he had asked for an end to these, and the BBMP, and the Karnataka Government had, after the orgy of killings, decided to implement the ABC programme. Matters came to light when people started noticing privately-owned vehicles, and not those of the BBMP and animal NGOs, catching and removing stray dogs from various localities.

Savie Karnel reported in the *MiD DAY* of 2 August 2007 an incident on 25 July 2007 in which a resident of Cox Town, Levy, was looking for his pet dog when his neighbours told him that a van had come and removed all stray dogs from the locality.<sup>42</sup> They gave him the mobile telephone number painted on the van. The resident located the van and asked the driver as to who authorized him to round up strays. The driver, who said it was the BBMP, could produce neither an authorization letter nor an identity card. Nor was there any professional dog-catcher in the van. The resident learnt that the dogs had been taken to the veterinary hospital at Queens' Road, Bangalore (run by Karnataka Government's Animal Husbandry Department). He found his dog there but was not allowed to take it back. Karnel quotes him as saying:



But the doctor insisted that it could not be my dog as it was picked up from Bommanahalli, not from Cox Town. After much persuasion, he agreed to return my pet to me on Sunday [July 29]; but when I went there, he told me that my dog had escaped. I suspect they have either killed my dog or released him in another area.

The resident then called Savitha Nagabhushan, the animal rights activist, who came and cornered a man who was catching dogs.<sup>43</sup> She told Karnel:

The van was a private vehicle. It had sterilized as well as unsterilised dogs. All sterilized dogs have a cut mark on their ears. The dog-catcher didn't even know that. According to the agreement signed between NGOs in the city and the BBMP, only NGOs were allowed to catch dogs in BBMP vans. The van driver did not seem to be from any NGO.

The driver then called up a BBMP health officer, Chikkanna, who rushed to the spot and asserted that the BBMP had authorized the use of the van for capturing dogs. He, however, could not produce any official letter from the municipal body to that effect.

There were several similar instances. According to a report by Madhumita B. in the *Deccan Herald* of 30 July 2007, a resident of Rajarajeshwari Nagar, who had spotted yet another privately-owned vehicle picking up dogs some weeks earlier, told her, 'When I stopped the vehicle and questioned the driver, he claimed to be working for Animal Rights Fund (ARF) but it turned out to be false.'<sup>44</sup> The resident added:

And most dogs in the van were sterilized....Dogs picked up this way are released in another area or killed and dumped in the outskirts of the city. It's common knowledge that relocating a dog is a major cause for increase in dog bites. But the BBMP's arbitrary methods appear to suggest that their purpose is to increase dog bites.<sup>45</sup>

Given the BBMP's record of sustained duplicitousness, it is hardly surprising that people should attribute such sinister intentions to it. If anything, its conduct after being caught removing stray dogs clandestinely by using privately-owned vans, raised further disturbing questions. As we have seen above, Chikkanna, a BBMP health officer, who arrived on the scene after being called by the driver of the van

whom Savitha Nagabhushan had challenged, confirmed that the municipal authorities had authorized the van's use. Contacted by *MiD DAY*, B.V. Kulkarni, Chief Health Officer, BBMP, however, said that the latter had not authorized anyone to round up stray dogs.<sup>46</sup> If this suggests that the boss was unaware of what his subordinates were up to, Madhumita B.'s report, 'No private matter, this', indicates that even if Mr Kulkarni was in the dark, others were not. She writes:

The question is—Who is running these vehicles and is the BBMP aware of it? According to a few footages in the video [shot by Savitha Nagabhushan at Cooke Town], some medical health officers are aware of these vehicles and are instructing drivers to pick up dogs on a regular basis. The NGOs allege that a senior official of the BBMP recently admitted to being aware of private vehicles plying in the city [and catching dogs] but did nothing to stop them.<sup>47</sup>

Who was the senior official? If Madhumita B.'s report is any indication, it was not Commissioner S. Subramanya, who had succeeded K. Jairaj, in the office. According to her:

When asked, BBMP Commissioner S. Subramanya said he will take necessary action if such claims [of the use of privately-owned vehicles] exist. 'We will need to track down the vehicles, if any, find out who is running them. If officials from the BBMP are involved, they will be pulled up as well.'<sup>48</sup>

In the end, BBMP had to own up its culpability and call off the clandestine killing and relocation. B.V. Kulkarni told Madhumita B.:

I have drafted an order stating all private vehicles must stop catching dogs and it has been sent to all Medical Officers of Health (MOH). Last week, I have verbally instructed the officers to stop sending the vehicles on BBMP's work. All complaints will be diverted to the NGOs and it is their responsibility to act.

Kulkarni, however, said that it was not possible to show either a copy of the earlier order for hiring private vehicles or the one for their withdrawal. The question then arises: Was an order at all issued for hiring privately-owned vehicles? It is all the more necessary to raise this question because, asked about such vehicles, Sanober Bharucha, honorary secretary, CUPA, said that her NGO had not received any

notification.<sup>49</sup> Concerned officials of the BBMP and the Karnataka Government's Animal Husbandry Department also claimed that they were unaware of any such order.<sup>50</sup>

If no formal order was issued, did the Medical Officers of Health (MOH) hire privately-owned vans at their own initiative? If so, why? Who paid for their use? The other possibility, of course, is that the instructions were sent from the top but verbally because the intention was not to keep any record. If this, indeed, is the case, then the explanation is simple: The authorities at the highest level knew that the killing and relocation of stray dogs was illegal under the provisions of the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001, framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960. The Rules were then—and are at the time of writing—a part of the country's law. It would then mean that the authorities were deliberately violating the law but were unwilling to be seen as doing it. The question is: Why were they doing something which was bound to scuttle the ABC programme in Bangalore? Were they, indeed, trying to scuttle it? From this, it is a short step to another question: Did they appoint Dr Sudarshan to do the performance audit, and allow him the latitude of choosing his own team, in the hope that he would produce a report vindicating such a course?

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## Undermining ABC?

As we have seen, the argument that Commissioner Jairaj did not know of Dr Sudarshan's prejudiced view of the programme and those implementing it, does not wash. Further, it has been seen in Chapter 2 that Dr Sudarshan and his team produced an utterly shoddy report marked by contradictions, questionable use and interpretation of statistics, the equation of opinion with facts, and reliance on an opinion survey of dubious validity. It has also been seen in Chapter 2 that acceptance of some of the measures recommended by Dr Sudarshan and his team would mean paving the way for the undermining of the ABC programme and that the creation of 'stray dog free zones' in Bangalore was one of these. It has also been seen that Jairaj not only accepted the report with alacrity but also asked Joint Commissioner of Health to 'take appropriate action' to create 'stray dog free zones' in specified areas.

The possibility that the Karnataka Government and the BBMP wanted to scuttle the ABC programme and hoped that Dr Sudarshan and his team would provide the justification for it, is also underlined by the fact that the vast majority of the dogs caught and killed had been sterilized and vaccinated. Justice M.F. Saldanha, in his letter to Health Minister R. Ashok cited earlier, had stated that those killed were community dogs that were sterilized and friendly and were important for the survival of Bangalore, and that this had administered a setback to the ABC programme, which had been doing so well. Dr H.M. Nanjappa, officer-in-charge of the Karuna shelter, said on 5 March that most of the dogs brought in were sterilized but had to be removed because they were from areas where complaints had been lodged.<sup>51</sup> Suparna Ganguly of CUPA also said on the same day that most of the dogs brought in had been covered under the ABC programme.<sup>52</sup>

The killing of sterilized dogs—and that too on a large scale—is calculated to undermine any ABC programme. As seen in Chapter One, the Ninth Report of the WHO's Expert Consultation on Rabies, also quoted earlier in this chapter, stated that the killing of dogs during the implementation of the ABC programme, 'may be counterproductive as sterilized, vaccinated dogs may be destroyed'.<sup>53</sup> This clearly underlines the importance of not killing sterilized and vaccinated dogs whose presence in their areas is central to the success of the ABC programme.

Why would the Karnataka Government and the BBMP want to scuttle the ABC programme? Was it because it had failed to deliver? The answer to the second question is an emphatic 'no'. According to statistics provided by the performance audit team—which could certainly not be accused of being biased in favour of the programme and the NGOs!—Karuna, CUPA, ARF, Krupa and the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services performed 160,156 sterilizations between October 2000 and February 2007.<sup>54</sup> Now, as we have seen, a survey conducted by no other institution than the KIMS in September 2001, estimated the number of stray dogs in Bangalore at 200,000.<sup>55</sup> Even assuming that this very high estimate is reliable, the neutering of 160,156 represents an extremely creditable performance!

The performance audit team's report itself stated that the five NGOs together had achieved 97 per cent of their sterilization targets. It, however, also stated in para 3.2 in Section 3 entitled 'Results and Observations' that the 'targets set by the BMP during October 2000 and March 2003 to AWOs were very low for sterilization and vaccination. Hence, there is a very high performance level by AWOs when compared to set targets by the BMP which were arbitrary'.<sup>56</sup> But even if one accepts its version, the performance of the NGOs post-2003 has been impressive according to the statistics provided in its own report. Except for 2003 when it fulfilled 54 per cent of the target, Karuna's record was 86, 96 and 89 per cent during 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively.<sup>57</sup> CUPA achieved 100, 101, 100 and 104 per cent of its sterilization target in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively.<sup>58</sup> No doubt the figure for January and February 2007 was 42 per cent. But this was a difficult and stressful period following Sridevi's death when it had to cope with dogs being indiscriminately dumped on it by the BMP.

ARF achieved 101, 113, 148 and 116 per cent of its sterilization target in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively. Despite the difficult time it had to face, the figure for January and February 2007 was 84 per cent.<sup>59</sup> Krupa achieved 65 per cent of its target in 2003 when it started its ABC programme in the month of April. It achieved 84, 97 and 121 per cent of its target in 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively. The figure for January and February 2007 was 169 per cent.<sup>60</sup> Karnataka Government's Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services achieved only 16 per cent of its target in 2003 when it began participating in the ABC programme from the month of April. Its performance, however, soon picked up. It achieved 90, 102 and 83 per cent of its target in 2004, 2005 and 2006 respectively and 66 per cent in January and February 2007.<sup>61</sup>

If the above statistics are not considered indicative of the successful implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore, then what can be? The audit team itself paid the NGOs a left-handed compliment when it wrote in paragraph 3 of Section 4 entitled 'Conclusions':

The performance of five AWOs viz. Karuna, CUPA, ARF, Krupa and the Department of AH and VS is satisfactory as they achieved over 75% coverage of the set targets. However, the targets set were arbitrary and the coverage cannot be verifiable at the field level.<sup>62</sup>

It was a left-handed compliment because of the last sentence which put a question mark against the impact of their work. It did the same when it stated in paragraph 2 of the same section, 'As there has been no proper count/estimate of stray dog population before and during the implementation of the ABC programme its impact on stray dog population is not measurable.'<sup>63</sup>

Contrary to the audit team's contention, the ABC programme's impact on the stray dog population may not have been felt even if there had been proper count/estimates of the stray dog population before and during its implementation. This is for the simple fact that it sterilizes and does not kill dogs, and sterilized dogs live out their normal biological life spans. Its implementation first leads to a stabilization and then a gradual decline in the population of stray dogs.

Nor does the audit team carry any conviction when it states in paragraph 3.1.1 in Section 3 under the heading 'Results and Observations', 'AWOs have not done pre capture survey in their packages/areas before starting of ABC programme. The BMP without a proper estimate of stray dog population set targets to AWO without any rational.'<sup>64</sup>

The message this conveys is that the targets were fixed arbitrarily and without any 'rational' (rationale?) because they had been set 'without a proper estimate of stray dog population'. It would doubtless have been ideal if animal welfare NGOs had started implementing the ABC programme by conducting surveys of stray dog population in their respective areas according to the procedure laid down in the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management* and followed it up by periodic surveys to assess the programme's impact with precision. That they did not do this, however, does not necessarily mean that one cannot have a rough idea of the programme's impact. There was the September 2001 survey by the KIMS. As we have seen, it put the strength of whole of Bangalore's stray dog population at 200,000. This as well as the fact that the animal welfare NGOs performed, according to the audit team itself, 160,156 sterilizations between October 2000 and February 2007, prima facie suggests that there must have been substantial decline. Or did the audit team think that the KIMS survey was unreliable? In that case it was only fair on its part to put this on record along with its dismissive comments on the 2003 livestock survey by the Karnataka Government's Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.

If the audit team was really interested in measuring the ABC programme's impact, then it should not have conducted an opinion survey of dubious validity by a 20-member team<sup>65</sup> from the Department of Community Medicine of the KIMS. Dr Sudarshan is the Principal of the institution as well as the Head of its Department of Community Medicine. Instead, it should have asked the BBMP to have a stray dog population census conducted by an independent professional organization strictly following the procedure laid down in the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management*. And it should have waited for the outcome of the census to be known before declaring that the impact of the ABC programme could not be measured. Also, it should have told the BBMP not to disturb the city's existing stray dog population as that would vitiate the survey's findings.

While it is not generally possible in the short run to measure the success of an ABC programme in terms of the decline in an area's stray dog population, one can always do so in terms of the incidence of rabies in human beings for which data is available. Even according to the audit team's statistics, the number of human rabies cases admitted into the Epidemic Diseases Hospital, Bangalore, from the city, declined from 20 in 2000 when the ABC programme was launched, to nil each in 2005 and 2006 respectively.<sup>66</sup> The audit team has doubtless attributed this not to the success of the ABC programmes but the discontinuation of NTV and the use of more effective modern vaccines and life-saving Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG). We have seen in Chapter 2 that its claim does not stand scrutiny. In fact if financial and not calendar years are considered then it will be seen that no rabies case has been reported from the 100 wards of the erstwhile BMP, in which the ABC programme was being implemented, during 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 (upto 28 February).

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## Success and its Blood Price

In sharp contrast to the scathing view of the audit team, the ABC programme has been remarkably—and not just merely—successful in Bangalore. And this has happened despite its having to contend with the most adverse circumstances. Until the creation of the BBMP, the

100 wards of the old BMP in which it operated, were surrounded by areas under local bodies and city municipal corporations which did not implement the ABC programme, and in which there had been a sharp increase in the population of stray dogs thanks to the proliferation of meat shops which dumped their animal and chicken waste material on roadsides and open spaces. These areas which, Suparna Ganguly of CUPA told the *Deccan Herald* on 10 January 2007, were breeding grounds of stray dogs, were putting pressure on protected BMP areas and their resources.<sup>67</sup>

Since illegal meat shops proliferated in the BMP areas, particularly the peripheral ones, stray dogs moved into these from adjoining areas outside the BMP's limits. Significantly, the very day Sridevi was killed, a distraught Shivalingaiah, her father, blamed the five mutton shops in the area (Chandra Layout) for the presence of stray dogs.<sup>68</sup> Talking to *Vijaya Times* on 4 March, Ramu, a young resident of Jalahalli, said that unauthorized mutton shops in the area were attracting scores of stray dogs.<sup>69</sup>

The severely adverse impact of the mushrooming of illegal meat shops on the ABC programme hardly requires any elaboration. As has been seen in Chapter 1, the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management* and WHO's *Technical Report Series 931* both underline the importance of garbage management and disposal in the success of the ABC programme. Unfortunately, instead of improving, garbage management as well as other aspects of Bangalore's civic life have been deteriorating sharply during the past several years when the city has been growing enormously to become an important global centre of the Information Technology industry. That the stray dog population has not soared along with the increase in human population is yet another indication of the success of the ABC programme.

Again, those seeking to run down the ABC programme have used every opportunity, however unwarranted, to do so. Thus the death of four-year-old Manjunath, which sparked the second round of slaughter, occurred in BEML's township where the ABC programme was not being implemented at all. Indeed, it had its own administrative set-up and, even the BBMP—to say nothing of NGOs—had no access to it. This was, however, conveniently ignored and organizations like the SDFB renewed their assault on the programme and the NGOs implementing it, immediately after the tragic incident, which was also



followed by some of the most minatory and vituperative ministerial pronouncements.

A tendency to run down the ABC programme can also be seen in the performance audit team's claim that there has been no decline in the incidence of dog bites in Bangalore which, we have seen in Chapter 2, is not correct. In fact the implementation of the ABC programme helps to reduce the incidence of dog bites in two ways. Sterilization prevents fights among dogs over bitches during mating seasons, thus preventing an increase in their aggression levels during such periods. It also prevents the increase in the aggression level of bitches which occurs when they have littered and are protective about their puppies and are prone to attack anyone who, they feel, is threatening the latter. Also, neutering often causes hormonal changes that reduce aggression.

Even otherwise, stray dogs which are familiar with their surroundings, know who is a friend and who is not, what spells danger, where to find food and shelter, and have referral households that support them, are at peace with their environment. In contrast, stray dogs moving into new areas are often aggressive because they are under attack from local dogs, cannot distinguish between friend and foe, do not know where to find food and shelter and are hence always on the edge.

Any killing/removal of stray dogs from an area creates a vacuum there, which is filled in by inward migration of dogs from other parts—dogs that are unfamiliar with their new environment and are, therefore, prone to be aggressive. Significantly, Dr J.F. Reece and S.K. Chawla write in 'Control of rabies in Jaipur, India by sterilization and vaccination of neighbourhood dogs', 'Any action that causes instability in dog population encourages an increase in transmission of rabies.' The BBMP's unleashing of a savage pogrom on stray dogs has completely destabilized Bangalore's stray dog population and the consequences will be felt sooner than later. In fact, a trend suggesting an increase in cases of rabies in humans may soon be manifest in Bangalore.

This is an absolute shame. A sharp decline in the incidence of rabies has occurred wherever the ABC programme has been successfully implemented—and it has been successful wherever it has been undertaken seriously. As Dr Chinny Krishna has pointed out,

the incidence of rabies in Chennai declined from 120 in 1996, the year in which the programme was launched in the city, to five in 2003.<sup>70</sup> In Kalimpong, the decline was from 10 in 2000 to nil in 2002. In Jaipur's walled city, the number declined from 10 in 1994, the year the ABC programme was started as a pilot project, to nil in 2001 and 2002 respectively. The population of stray dogs also declined following the implementation of the ABC programme, which was expanded in 1996 to cover a wider area of the city by Help in Suffering, an animal welfare NGO. Dwelling on its experience, J.F. Reece and S.K. Chawla write, 'During the eight-year study period [1994 to 2002] a decline in the neighbourhood [read stray] dog population of 28 per cent was recorded between the peak and the last survey, an average annual decline of 3.5 per cent.'<sup>71</sup>

In sharp contrast, mass killing has never served to reduce the population of stray dogs. J.F. Reece writes in 'Dogs and Dog Control in Developing Countries', 'In Delhi, a concerted effort at dog removal killed a third of the straying dogs with no reduction in dog population.'<sup>72</sup> It has been the same elsewhere in India. In his paper mentioned above, Dr Chinny Krishna, co-founder and Chairman, Blue Cross Society of India, at the time of writing, cites the instance of Madras Corporation's 'catch-and-kill' programme that began in 1860. He quotes Dr Theodore Bhaskaran, a former Post Master General of Madras, as stating in an article, 'In the 1970s, the number of stray dogs destroyed by the Corporation was so high that the Central Leather Institute, Madras, designed products—such as neckties and wallets—from dog skins.' Dr Krishna has pointed out elsewhere that the number of dogs killed by the Corporation had gone up to 30,000 per year by 1995. Yet the city's stray dog population and the incidence of human rabies continued to rise. It has been the same experience all over the world. Dr Reece writes in 'Dogs and Dog Control in Developing countries':

In Hong Kong approximately 20,000 dogs were killed by the government and another 13,000 by welfare organisations every year...with little impact on the free-roaming dog population. In Equador, the elimination of 12–25 per cent of the dog population every year for five years did not reduce the dog population (WHO 1988). In rural Australia a 76 per cent reduction in the free roaming dog population failed to drastically reduce their population, and the number of free-roaming dogs returned to their

pre-cull levels within a year (Beck 2005). In Kathmandu, street dogs have been poisoned for at least 50 years with little long-term effect on the population.<sup>73</sup>

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## Riot of Rhetoric

Remarkably, critics of the ABC programme in Bangalore seem never to have taken cognizance of such facts. The criticisms they level against it are marked by sweeping generalizations and hyperbole as well as emotive and populist attacks on the programme and those implementing it. One finds several instances of this in the then Karnataka Lokayukta, Justice N. Venkatachala's report of 6 March 2003, in which the complainant was C. Dhananjaya, and the respondents the Commissioner and the Chief Health Officer, Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, and the Commissioner of Police, Bangalore City. In section 1, which calls for the scrapping of the ABC programme and the destruction of stray dogs, Justice Venkatachala speaks of 'young riders of two-wheelers on roads of Bangalore who being chased by stray and ownerless dogs, are becoming victims of innumerable fatal accidents, which ensue as natural consequences of such chasing'.<sup>74</sup> According to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 'innumerable' means 'too many to count'. The number of fatal road accidents in Bangalore was, to cite a few examples, 528 in 1991, 681 in 1996, 659 in 2001 and 792 in 2002. How many of these might have involved trucks, buses, private cars, auto rickshaws, vans, and so on, and how many two-wheelers? And how many fatal accidents involving two-wheelers were caused by their being chased by stray dogs? Certainly, it was not innumerable!

The above is not the only occasion when one runs into the word 'innumerable' in the report. One finds it in section 14 which states, 'The innumerable deaths and suffering of poor people in Bangalore, to which I have adverted earlier, as those caused by stray dogs' bites, appeared to be of no consequence to the Corporation Commissioner ....'<sup>75</sup> The performance audit team's report describes—paragraph 1.2.3. in Section 1 titled 'Introduction'—the Epidemic Diseases Hospital, Bangalore, as 'the sentinel centre for rabies cases' and 'the referral hospital for many districts surrounding Bangalore including the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu'.<sup>76</sup> As shown in Table 17 of its report, the number of human rabies cases admitted

into it from BMP areas was 20 in 2000, 11 in 2001 and 03 in 2002.<sup>77</sup> Innumerable?

The above statistics also constitute a telling commentary on the adverse observation in Justice Venkatachala's report against the Municipal Commissioner for showing 'utter disregard for the increasing deaths of the citizens of Bangalore caused by Stray dogs' bites'.<sup>78</sup>

Referring to the time when municipal laws of State legislatures made the destruction of stray and ownerless dogs an obligatory function of municipal bodies, Justice Venkatachala states in Section 5 that the stray dog population then was 'not even one hundredth of what it is today'.<sup>79</sup> The hyperbolic nature of the statement speaks for itself, particularly when Justice Venkatachala does not provide any comparative statistical data.

Again, one reads in Section 5(d) that 'virtually no one bitten anywhere in the world by a dog with Rabies is said to have survived'.<sup>80</sup> The Lokayukta obviously overlooked the fact that rabies is a preventable disease and people, bitten by rabid dogs, have not been afflicted by it, to say nothing of dying, by undergoing timely and complete treatment!

If error and inaccuracy inexorably accompany sweeping and emotive generalizations, resorting to populism and statements indicating class prejudice or an attempt to whip it up has a tendency to backfire. We have seen in Chapter 2 Dr M. K. Sudarshan's labelling of Bangalore's ABC programme as seemingly 'an aristocratic animal welfare activists tyranny on the ignorant urban poor people, particularly the children'. Experience points to the contrary. A very large section of people belonging to the upper and middle classes loathes stray dogs and wants to have them removed, and for reasons which speak for themselves. Thus Alka Dalmia writes in *The Times of India* of 24 March 2007:

Imagine this: After years of hard work you've finally managed to get yourself a gorgeous new car. You're driving down one of the new expressways, feeling the wind rustling through your hair. Life couldn't be better. Then Bam! A stray dog appears from nowhere, and the next thing you know your new car is nothing more than a hunk of metal wrapped round the nearest wall.<sup>81</sup>

I admire Alka Dalmia's honesty and straightforwardness. Unlike most of those urging the slaughter of stray dogs, she does not speak

about the 'terrible threat' these pose to the underprivileged. Her concern, as expressed here, is for the kind of people who finally manage to own a gorgeous new car. She, however, has obviously not thought of a couple of things. A child darting in front of the 'gorgeous new car' can also cause the kind of accident she talks about. Also, how many accidents are caused by stray dogs and how many by spoilt brats of the rich driving under the influence of liquor and/or drugs?

Alka Dalmia states later in the same piece:

On the one hand we speak of industrialisation and pat ourselves on the back over how adept we are over technology, and on the other our main roads are blocked by animals, monkeys share space with hospital patients, and our neighbourhoods are lined by animal waste.

Then she adds, 'If this is allowed to continue, India will never be able to call itself a First World Nation. Which western developed countries have cows causing mile-long jams?' One wonders whether Alka Dalmia is aware of the fact that the basic cause of traffic jams in India is a rapid increase in the volume of traffic, which includes an explosive increase in the number of privately-owned cars, which have to use narrow roads. How many jams are caused on Delhi's Ring Road, Mathura Road, Aurobinda Marg or Palam Marg by cattle? How many on Chowringhee Road, Chittarajan Avenue, Upper Circular Road, and or Shyamaprasad Mookerjee Road in Kolkata? And how many on Marine Drive, Bhulabhai Desai Road or Peddar Road or around the Kemps Corner in Mumbai? Finally Dalmia does not seem to be aware of the fact that there are horrendous traffic jams in cities like Los Angeles, and that traffic moves very slowly, bumper-to-bumper in peak hours in cities like New York and Boston in the United States. The same applies to cities like London, Paris and Tokyo. There are certainly no stray dog, cattle or monkeys in these!

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## The Caring Poor

Compared to those in the upper and middle classes, a much larger section of the poor cherish and protect stray dogs. Living close to them, they understand their character, recognize their innately friendly and loyal nature, and the fact that they feel sorrow, joy and

pain in essentially the same manner in which human beings do. Being vulnerable themselves, they recognize the vulnerability of stray dogs and empathize with them. We have seen in Chapter 2 how on 6 January 2007, slum dwellers beat up volunteers from NGO's who came to capture 'ferocious dogs', which they claimed were pets. The report that mentioned the incident also stated, 'Slum dwellers maintain a battalion of stray dogs as "pets" (mostly for breeding).' While indicating that slum-dwellers loved and protected a large number of stray dogs, the report tended to reflect middle class bias against them by putting the word 'pets' within inverted commas. Also, the suggestion that they were kept for breeding is a bit puzzling in that there are not many takers for stray dogs and that anyone wanting to adopt one has just to get one from the streets.

Many other instances of the poor caring for stray dogs came up during Bangalore's savage drive against them. Savie Karnel wrote in the *MiD DAY* of 9 January 2007, about a domestic help in J.P. Nagar who took care of 30 stray dogs and had not slept for three nights to protect them. He quoted her as saying, 'If they pick up even one of my dogs, my daughter and I will commit suicide in front of the Vidhan Soudha. We have no one but these dogs.' She further told him, 'Whenever the squad comes to take away any of my dogs, I give the driver Rs 100 and another Rs 100 when he returns after vaccination.' She was angry with the drive and said, 'Let the government first kill child kidnappers and murderers and then go after the dogs.'<sup>82</sup> At the first public consultation held by the BBMP on 2 February 2007 on the stray dogs issue, a slum-dweller said, 'I am taking care of 45 dogs in my slum and not one is ferocious. We cannot afford a watchman like the rich. Stop culling dogs.'<sup>83</sup>

Even those among the poor who are not as attached to stray dogs as the domestic help and the slum-dweller above, have other and more pressing priorities than their removal. These include securing regular and better livelihood, respite from price rise and the availability of essential commodities at prices within their reach, better and more caring treatment at government dispensaries and hospitals, supply of clean drinking water, drains that do not overflow, regular removal of garbage and an end to harassment by petty local authorities and policemen. Many of them wonder why the 'Babus' who go hoarse demanding mass slaughter of stray dogs, do not show the same enthusiasm in taking up these issues. Significantly, people who want

such slaughter are overwhelmingly from the upper and middle classes and come from among sections of lawyers, doctors, retired and serving bureaucrats, and so on, and are ruled more by prejudice than reason.

Here, one needs to return to Justice N. Venkatachala who wrote in his report:

When I have seen these sophisticated people who are interested in saving stray and ownerless dogs and not interested in saving thousands of their own people (fellow beings) annually dieing [sic] on account of the bites of such dogs, when they had appeared before me, they did not appear to be people who could have gone on any day close to such dogs and seen them in close proximity, for the very close look at them would have probably made them realise the imminent danger posed by them to the lives of our people. I do not think that the sophisticated people, who are against the destruction of stray and ownerless dogs could thrive on the supposed compassion they have for the lives of stray and ownerless dogs, if the poor people of our country, who are mostly the victims of such stray and ownerless dogs give up their blind belief that nobody could save them, if their fate was to die by being bitten by stray and ownerless dogs.<sup>84</sup>

Implicit in Justice Venkatachala's opening sentence in the above quote is the assumption that 'sophisticated people who are interested in saving stray and ownerless dogs' are 'not interested in saving thousands of their own people (fellow beings)' dying annually after being bitten by stray/ownerless dogs. It ignores the fact that animal welfare NGOs implementing the ABC programme, which alone can bring down the population of stray dogs and the incidence of dog bites and rabies, are also working for their fellow human beings who are bound to benefit from their efforts, often thankless. Even if he had a different view about the effectiveness of the ABC programme, he ought not to have concluded without evidence that those implementing it seemed to lack concern for fellow human beings, to say nothing of recording it in his report. Worse, he seemed to have judged them by their appearance. This is clear from his remark that when they appeared before him, 'they did not appear to be people who could have gone on any day close to such (stray) dogs and seen them in close proximity'.

The above—as well as some statements by Dr Sudarshan—reflects the prejudice and unwarranted assumptions that lie behind the allegations that opponents of animal welfare NGOs level against

them and their functionaries. Indeed, Justice Venkatachala went to the extent of referring to the views of Dr S. Krishnaswamy, Professor of Microbiology at the Veterinary College, Tirupati—whom, of course, he calls Dr Krishnamurthy the second time round!—and observing:

When Dr. Krishnamurthy, in his write-up adverted to earlier has stated that he has given a write up to be put on record for posterity, so that if no action is taken now, the future generation should know who are the people responsible for very high incidence of rabies in India, whose only beneficiaries are perhaps Animal activists and MNC Rabies Vaccine Manufacturing Companies, it carries conviction and appears to be the whole truth. As told by him, the animal activists who are preferring the killing of human beings of our country than of the killing of stray and ownerless dogs, one cannot avoid the impression that they must be working for the benefit of MNC Rabies Vaccine Manufacturing Companies, in as much as, they are doing so with utter regard [disregard?] to the fact that annually 30,000 people of our country are dying [sic] on account of rabies and 10,00,000 people are undergoing Post Exposure Treatment annually for fear of having been bitten by rabies infected dogs.<sup>85</sup>

Justice Venkatachala's wholehearted endorsement of Dr Krishnaswamy's views on the basis of his 'impression' is breathtaking and totally at variance with reality. Far from furthering the interests of multi-national companies manufacturing anti-rabies vaccines, animal activists are in effect working against them as the successful implementation of the ABC programme throughout the country will eliminate the presence of stray dogs and the incidence of rabies over a period of time. This will lead to a steep decline in the stockpiling and use of both human and canine anti-rabies vaccines which will certainly not please their manufacturers.

It is hardly surprising then, that in a judgement delivered on 14 December 2006, Justice H.V.G. Ramesh of Karnataka High Court rendered Justice Venkatachala's order for the discontinuance of the ABC programme inoperative and expunged his observations against animal activists and animal NGOs.

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## Conflict of Interest

In fact, the boot is on the other leg. It is the APCRI, whose then President Dr Sudarshan, who had described the ABC programme as



it was being implemented as ‘an aristocratic animal welfare activists tyranny on the ignorant urban poor people, particularly the children’, which has close links with the makers of anti-rabies vaccines. As accessed on 22 March 2007, its website (<http://apcri.org>) carried the announcement that it was hosted with financial support from Ranbaxy. Volume IV, Issues 1 and 2, of the *APCRI Journal* (January–July 2002) carries the announcement that it has been published with financial assistance from Aventis Pharma Ltd, Mumbai.

In his Foreward to Volume I, Issue 2, of the APCRI’s journal Dr M.K. Sudarshan (head of the team that did the performance audit of the ABC programme in Bangalore), who was then President of the APCRI and Chairman of the APRICON 2000 (APCRI’s second national conference on rabies), wrote:

Besides, special thanks are due to Aventis Pasteur India Limited, New Delhi for supporting the editorial committee and for publication of this issue in time for release on July 8, at APRICON 2000 in Bangalore. It is planned to send the journal to scientists, professionals and institutions working on rabies within country and on request even to scientists abroad.

Under the heading ‘From the Editor’s Desk’, Dr S.N. Madhusudana writes in the same volume:

Many people have helped me in bringing out this journal. Aventis Pasteur has been kind enough to bear the financial burden of this publication in an excellent format.

I am thankful to Dr Anil Dutta, Medical Director, Aventis Pasteur Lyon France who has laid a sound foundation as the editor of the first issue of the journal, Dr Ramananda Nadig, Medical Director, Aventis Pasteur South Asia, New Delhi for his keen interest, timely suggestions and cooperation. I am also thankful to Mr R.K. Suri, Director, Marketing and Mr Sreeraj Roy, Product Manager, South Asia, Aventis Pasteur for their keen interest and help in bringing out this journal.

The above is datelined ‘Bangalore 6-7-2000’.

In his Foreward—datelined KIMS Bangalore, 1 July 2003—to Volume V, Issues 1 and 2 of the journal, Dr Sudarshan writes as President, APCRI:

Lastly, APCRI is extremely thankful to M/S Aventis Pharma, Mumbai for supporting this publication and Mr Ripan Puri deserves all praise from the Association. We plan to ensure that this Journal reaches all the institutions

and key persons working on Rabies in India and complimentary copies are sent to scientists and professionals abroad. The readers are requested to send their comments and feedback to the editor/authors.

In a piece under the heading 'From the Editor's Desk', in Volume 1, Issue 1 of the APCRI's Newsletter, Dr S.N. Madhusudana wrote on 31 March 2001, 'I take this opportunity to wish all members a happy and prosperous New Year. I thank Mr Shusheel Umesh, Senior Product Manager, HMR, Mumbai, for readily agreeing to support the publication of this Newsletter.' Dated 1 February 2003, he wrote under the same heading in Volume 3, Issues 1 and 2, of the same Newsletter, 'I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from corporate sectors, particularly Mr Masood Alam, Mr Brad Jennings, and Mr H.B. Vakil of Chiron Vaccines without whose continued support many of my activities would not have been possible.' He further stated, 'Lastly, I want to thank Mr Ripan Puri of Aventis Pharma for supporting financially the publication of this News Letter.'

All this raises a serious question of conflict of interest in respect of APCRI's report, *Assessing the burden of rabies in India: WHO-sponsored national multi-centric rabies survey 2003*. A distinguished authority like Dr F-X Meslin has doubtless expressed his satisfaction over the way the survey has been conducted in accordance with guidelines set by the WHO. It is, however, one thing to conform to guidelines and quite another to conduct actual interviews on the ground. Even rigid formal compliance with the prescribed procedures may produce misleading results if data collection leaves much to be desired.

One needs to be particularly sensitive about the conflict of interest issue because there is a huge difference between the estimated and actual number of confirmed dog bite cases and human deaths. As cited in the APCRI's survey report itself, the number of those who were bitten and those who died were 11,529 and 386, 1,250 and 365, and 6,610 and 483 in 1997, 1998 and 1999 respectively.<sup>86</sup> The number of dog bites and human rabies deaths were 7,248 and 412 respectively in 2000. Table I in the report, which gives these figures, puts the number of human rabies death at 488 in 2001 but does not give figures of dog bites. Against this, the survey puts the annual number of dog bite cases and cases of human deaths from rabies at 17.4 million and 20,565 respectively as projected estimates!<sup>87</sup>

The survey report attributes the difference between the number of confirmed cases of dog bites and human rabies deaths and the projected estimates of both to gross under-reporting. It, however, does not offer any evidence in support of its attribution. Instead it states, 'there is no organized system of surveillance of rabies cases, and there is hence a lack of reliable data', which is neither here nor there. A lack of 'reliable data' does not automatically mean under-reporting of the massive order claimed by the APCRI.

A more breathtaking observation follows, 'However from 1985 India continues to report every year 25,000 to 30,000 human rabies deaths, which today accounts for 60% of the global report of 50,000 (WHO 2002).' We have seen above the actual number of cases of dog bites and human deaths from rabies reported in 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000, and deaths reported in 2001. Also, the survey report gives the figures of decadal hospital incidence of human rabies during 1992–02 based on statistics from 22 infectious diseases hospitals/medical college hospitals of 18 States. According to the survey, the highest number of deaths, 413 occurred in 1992 and the lowest, 297, in 2001. The number of patients leaving against medical advice was 456 and 405 in 1992 and 2001 when the number of cases admitted were 876 and 707 respectively.<sup>88</sup>

While one is prepared to accept a certain measure of under-reporting in respect of both dog bites and human rabies deaths, it is difficult to believe that it can be of the order suggested by the figures of 25,000 and 30,000 human deaths per annum—and this when the communication revolution has spread to almost every corner of India thanks to mobile telephony, and local and regional media have become forces to reckon with. Nor can one be cavalierly dismissive of the figures of dog bites and human deaths from rabies as recorded by the CBHI. It is the sole organization dealing with the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of information on health conditions in the country. The figures from the 22 hospitals have been collected by those conducting the survey.

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## Statistical Fiction

From where do the figures of 25,000 and 30,000 deaths annually come? Pat comes the answer for the first one. 'The above figure of 25,000 was an estimate worked out based on projected statistics of

isolation hospitals in the country in 1985... .' What we have here then is not an actual figure but an estimate and that too based not on actual but 'projected' statistics. The estimate needs to be rejected for another reason too. WHO's *World Survey of Rabies No. 34 for the Year 1998*<sup>89</sup> puts the number of rabies deaths in India at 30,000 for that year. The Survey's Annexure 3, showing 'Rabies trends and geographical distribution by country and continent', had the entry 'most parts' against India in the column under the heading 'Geographical distribution'. The space against India in the column under the heading 'Trend' was left blank. WHO's *World Survey of Rabies No. 35 for the Year 1999*<sup>90</sup> describes the geographical distribution of the incidence of rabies in India as being confined to 'limited areas'. The entry in the column under the heading 'Trend' is 'decrease'. How can, in the course of one year, the incidence of rabies in India contract from 'most parts' to 'limited areas'? As glaring is the fact that the 1999 survey does not give figures of human deaths from rabies in India during the year!

How does one reconcile 1999 survey's assertion that rabies prevailed in 'limited areas' in India with the claim in the introduction to the APCRI's Survey that 'rabies is present throughout the country [India] except in the islands of Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar'? Any possible explanation that the cases of human rabies occurred throughout India before and after 1999 but contracted to 'limited areas' during that year alone, will make a horse laugh.

What credibility can one then attach to the figures of 25,000 and 30,000 and the process by which these have been estimated? Not much. How can one then argue that there is massive under-reporting in India of human deaths from rabies every year? Not only that, all this completely erodes the credibility of the APCRI survey's estimate of there being annually 17.4 million dog bite cases and 20,565 cases of human deaths from rabies every year. Both figures are not only projected estimates but are also based on statistical exercises relying upon critical inputs which are themselves no more than estimates or projections of dubious validity. The survey, for instance, says that:

For estimating human rabies incidence the current reported incidence of 3 cases for 100,000 population (or 30,000 per 1 billion population of the country, WHO 2002) was considered. Based on this as per the planned survey precision of 90% confidence level and 10% permissible error,

about 9.1 million or 10 million (round figure) population coverage from 21 medical colleges with marginal coverage variations due to local factors was envisaged.<sup>91</sup>

We have already shown why one should view the projected annual figure of 30,000 human rabies deaths in India with serious reservations. It is at best an estimate of uncertain validity. Any survey that makes it a pivotal component of its calculations is itself bound to be, to put in mildly, a statistical fiction.

This, however, is not the only factor that seriously undermines the survey's credibility. Data collection, which is of critical, defining importance in any survey, involved three distinct exercises. The first was a 'Household Survey' to obtain data on 'animal bites, anti-rabies treatment, pet dog population and their management'. The second was the collection of 'decadal data of annual hospital admissions of human rabies cases during 1992–2001/2002' from '22 isolation/District hospitals'. The third was an 'extended community search for human rabies incidence'.

According to the survey report, the data yielded by the second venture '...served two purposes. First, it showed the overall trends of human rabies incidence and its endemicity over a decade. Second, the most recent human rabies death information was used to activate a community based search by the medical college team subsequently'.

The community survey, with a recall of three years in urban areas and five years in rural areas, was done on a 1:3 urban:rural ratio with survey teams visiting 100 rural and 300 urban households. Each team had to begin by identifying 'at least about' [!] three most recent human rabies cases/deaths from urban areas and five from rural areas, occurring 'preferably' during 2002–2003 'with complete address'. These were to act as 'index cases'. Each team then visited the households of the victims in the 'index cases' and interviewed a 'reliable responsible adult (>18 years) respondent viz. surviving spouse, parent, sibling and others' to 'authenticate the data for its better validity'. The survey report describes the process as 'verbal autopsy'.<sup>92</sup>

This was followed by a community search for 'other rabies cases, deaths in the community/health centre area over six weeks period (March–May 2003)'. It was activated by Medical Officers of health centres and involved the participation of a wide range of 'community informants'. The medical teams visited all households from which the

rabies cases were reported and ‘after verification (mostly on clinico-epidemiological basis) viz., verbal autopsy exercise, recorded the information and enclosed all possible records’. The basic weakness here lies in the critical absence of laboratory verification in all ‘other rabies cases’ mentioned above. In simple language, all we have here is identification on verbal evidence in relation to cases, which could be five years old in rural areas and three in urban areas. Even in the most recent cases there was no guarantee that the verbal evidence given—by people who were not medical practitioners—was enough to attribute death to rabies.

The survey investigated 235 human deaths (56 urban and 179 rural) from rabies in the period from 1998 to 2003, both years included—with the figures for 2003 (urban and rural) relating to the period from January to April, both months included. Out of the 235 deaths, 53.5 per cent or 126 occurred in the last 16 months of the survey (2001 and 2002). This, according to the report, ‘led to the assumption that there was possibility of a factor of memory recall, attrition or migration of affected families which was influencing the number of cases detected by this kind of a search’. This assumption led to the restriction of the cases taken up for estimating the incidence of rabies to 126.<sup>93</sup> From this, three cases from Delhi were deleted on the ground the ‘area had an abnormally large population base and could lead to errors in actual estimation’. Hence the number of cases finally considered was 123.<sup>94</sup>

The number of human rabies deaths a year was estimated on the basis of the number of man days of exposure of these 123 cases to rabies. The number of man days of exposure—2,619,731,250—was itself an estimate arrived at statistically on the basis of several inputs which themselves were estimates or projections!

The survey report doubtless acknowledges its more important limitations. Referring to the Medical Survey, it says that in all bites cases the victims were really ‘possibly exposed’ to rabies in the absence of ‘laboratory confirmation of rabies in the biting animal’. It further says, ‘pet dog numbers are informed by household informants’. Then it makes perhaps the most important admission.

- Human rabies deaths are mostly ‘probable cases’ (96.6%); 8 (3.4%) ‘suspected cases’ and none ‘confirmed’ by laboratory evidence. However, atypical and paralytical forms of the disease might have been missed.

- Human rabies cases are detected by 'community informant search' and not by door-to-door search of medical college teams.
- Memory recall lapses/attrition and population migration has been an influence in the community surveys.<sup>95</sup>

Its veterinary survey, it says, was mostly an institutional and not a community survey and that the confirmation of rabies in most animals was based on the demonstration of 'negri bodies'.<sup>96</sup>

The mere acknowledgement of limitations, however, does not mean that questions about their impact on the report's credibility can be ignored. The point needs to be made emphatically because the report asserts, 'Despite all these above limitations, which are made explicit, the results of the survey are adequate to form the basis for initiating prevention and control of rabies in India.' This assertion in turn needs to be viewed with serious reservations because the report's first recommendation reads, 'The coverage and usage of modern rabies vaccines and rabies immunoglobulins need to be improved. There is an urgent need to phase out NTV and phase in cost-effective intradermal TCV to prevent human rabies deaths'.<sup>97</sup>

The changeover is doubtless necessary. But that is common knowledge. The question is how much vaccines should the government and municipal hospitals, which treat rabies cases free, store? It will be higher if the projected annual incidence of human deaths from rabies is high and the lower in the case of the opposite. It is in this context that the APCRI's predictive estimate of the disease's annual incidence raises the issue of conflict of interest because the recommendation's implementation would not be without an impact on the fortunes of pharmaceutical companies manufacturing anti-rabies vaccines with whom APCRI has close links.

Even without the serious issue of conflict of interest, the survey provides figures of dog bites and human rabies deaths that are not only projected estimates but are also based on sample surveys. However adequate the sample size, inefficiency on part of those conducting the survey can yield completely misleading findings. It is therefore unwise to fashion policies on the basis of such surveys.

Opinion survey organizations in India and elsewhere forecast election results through predictive statistical interpretation of data yielded by questionnaire-based sample surveys. Sometimes, they prove

right, sometimes they do not. That, however, does not mean that the Election Commission should not hold elections to the Lok Sabha and the State legislatures, which are expensive and time-consuming processes, but declare the results on the basis of opinion surveys conducted in each constituency. The argument that the analogy is faulty because the APCRI's survey was done far more soundly and comprehensively than any by a public opinion survey company predicting election results merits summary rejection given the glaring limitation the organization itself has acknowledged.

This is not to deny that the incidence of human deaths from rabies in India needs to be viewed with utmost concern and its extent accurately determined. Hence there is an urgent need for another survey recording cases of the disease and the number of dog bites occurring in the country. It should, however, be done by an organization that does not need to be grateful to manufacturers of anti-rabies vaccines. The need for such a survey is all the greater because the slaughter-stray-dogs lobby has been tirelessly using the estimated high incidence of dog bites and rabies to whip up mass hysteria against stray dogs and animal welfare NGOs and demand the scrapping of the ABC programme.

Here, it is important to note that the question of conflict of interest also arises in the case of the performance audit team's report on the implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore. The programme's implementation brings down the incidence of rabies and, therefore, the consumption of anti-rabies vaccines. We have seen it had reduced the number of cases of rabies in Bangalore to nil for three consecutive years and—as we will see later in the chapter—greatly reduced the consumption of anti-rabies vaccine between April 2006 and February end 2007. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the successful implementation of the ABC programme would not be in the interest of the manufacturers of anti-rabies vaccines. Now, the team, led and chosen by Dr M.K. Sudarshan, comprised Dr S.N. Madhusudana, Dr Ashwath Narayana, Dr Gangaboriah and Dr S. Yathiraj. Dr Sudarshan, who was President of the APCRI from 1998 to 2003, and Chief Investigator in the APCRI Survey, wrote the foreward to the latter. Dr D.H. Ashwath Narayana was a member of the core group of the survey team and prepared the final report. Dr Gangaboriah, along with Dr N.S.N. Rao was a consultant to the



survey team's core group. And we have seen that the APCRI has close links with the manufacturers of anti-rabies vaccines.

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## Stop Implementation

Without casting any personal aspersion on any of the individuals above, one must say that the issue of conflict of interest cannot be ignored as a matter of principle. To conform to the highest standards of transparency in public life, it is imperative to stop the implementation of the performance audit team's report immediately and reverse the decisions already taken. This is particularly so because of three important questions which one can hardly ignore: Why is it that incidents like the mauling of children to death had not been reported earlier? Why should these happen now? Why should there have been a sudden surge in the number of dog bites?

That there is something new here is clear from the report under the heading 'Dog menace continues in Chandra Layout' which appeared in the *Deccan Herald* of 19 January 2007. It quotes G. Srinivas, a builder and father of four-and-a-half-year old Vishnu, who was attacked by stray dogs in the Chandra Layout area on 17 January 2007, as saying, 'dog bite incidents, which had started a month ago, have become almost everyday occurrence.'<sup>98</sup> Srinivas said this on 17 January. It follows that the dog bites had started in Chandra Layout, where young Sridevi was killed on 5 January, from the middle of December 2006. Significantly, the judgement by Justice H.V.G Ramesh of Karnataka High Court, rendering Justice Venkatachala's report demanding the discontinuance of the ABC programme inoperative, was delivered on 14 December 2006.

One needs to find out whether there was a similar surge of dog bites around the time in other areas of Bangalore. Or could Chandra Layout have been chosen as a testing ground by such diabolical forces as may have engineered Sridevi's killing, as also that of young Manjunath on 28 February?

Packs of dogs can be let loose on people. It is important to find out whether something like this had happened in the cases of Sridevi and Manjunath and, if so, who might have been involved. Until the beginning of 2007, one rarely heard of dogs mauling children or

adults to death. Then, suddenly, a clutch of such incidents began occurring. On 4 January 2007, stray dogs reportedly killed a man in Sangli village near Chandigarh. Sridevi was killed on 5 January, and Manjunath on 28 February. On March 28 morning, a six-month-old infant died after being bitten by stray dogs in Jaiguda in the outskirts of Hyderabad.<sup>99</sup> Then on 23 April, stray dogs reportedly mauled a woman and her daughter near Shimla in Himachal Pradesh.

The argument that such killings had occurred in the past too but it is only recently that the media have started reporting them prominently, does not wash. Indian media have been playing an active watchdog role, covering even remote parts of the country, for several decades now. The reach and importance of local channels and publications have also been growing in recent years. If incidents of dogs killing human beings had occurred during this period, these would certainly have been reported. It is hard to believe that after ignoring such incidents for decades, they had suddenly woken up to their importance from the end of 2006.

One cannot, therefore, dismiss out of hand the possibility that these killings were organized. In this context, it is important to recall that we have seen that the tragic death of the two children was followed by a mass slaughter of stray dogs in Karnataka. We have also concluded that this could not have happened if the government and the BBMP had not wanted it. We have also seen that we cannot rule out the possibility that the BBMP had appointed Dr Sudarshan to do the performance audit because it hoped to have a report that could be instrumental to scuttling the ABC programme. Equally, we have also seen that the mass killings and the measures implemented in the wake of the acceptance of the performance audit team's report, have administered a severe setback to the implementation of the ABC programme in Bangalore.

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## Killing on the Sly

We have seen that the BBMP persisted with the clandestine killing and relocation of stray dogs—even of those neutered and vaccinated—at least till the first week of August 2007. We have also seen that this, and the BBMP's duplicitous conduct throughout, could well warrant

the question whether it wanted to scuttle the ABC programme. Apart from strengthening the case for asking whether the killing of the two children was organized, this raises a similar question in respect of the deaths in other parts of India as well. Considering the importance of issue, I had in my column in *The Pioneer* of 8 March 2007<sup>100</sup> asked whether those who were orchestrating the killings of stray dogs in Bangalore and elsewhere were trying to scuttle the ABC programme and, if so, whose interests they were serving. I had further stated:

The argument that they are doing it out of ignorance and are unaware of the WHO's findings, raise the question, why are the State Government and the municipal authorities siding with them? Surely they cannot be unaware of the facts?

This makes it imperative to ask whether the circumstances in which the two fatal and five non-fatal attacks took place, have been thoroughly investigated. Did the children throw stones at the dogs? Tease them? Or were they trying to snatch puppies from a bitch? Or, did someone unleash the dogs on them? If the State Government is not utterly perverse, it would stop the killing and order a judicial inquiry into the whole train of events.

The government ordered no such inquiry and the BBMP persisted with its savage and illegal campaign and the implementation of the performance audit team's report.

If all this makes the Karnataka Government and the BBMP's intention to slaughter stray dogs without appearing to do so, clear, both have got away with it because there are people who want stray dogs killed *en masse* and the ABC programme scuttled. Their ranks include many—otherwise decent and honourable men and women—who do not like stray dogs or are afraid of them. Unaware of the logic of the ABC programme, they consider it ineffective because they find the dogs back in their areas following sterilization and vaccination. They want a quick solution in the form of mass killing, not knowing that this has not worked anywhere and will mean perpetuation of the presence of stray dogs in the streets.

Such people fall easy prey to those who want to sabotage the ABC programme and use every occasion to demonize stray dogs by invoking the fear of dog bites and rabies. Among the foremost of those in the latter category are municipalities. One reason is, of course, political opportunism. For a municipal councillor, one of the easiest ways

of diverting criticism for piles of garbage on roadsides, inadequate and contaminated water supply—and showing people that he or she delivers—is by getting stray dogs removed and killed whenever there is a complaint. He or she cannot do so when the ABC programme is being implemented and dogs are brought back after sterilization and vaccination to the places from which they had been lifted.

A number of officials do not want it because of the bureaucratic predilection for empire building. Under the ABC programme animal welfare NGOs vaccinate and neuter dogs and run dog shelters with funds from municipalities and/or AWBI or both. This is anathema to many municipal administrators who are cast in the antediluvian mould, who believe that everything pertaining to the life of a city must be under their control, and anything that is not must be inefficiently run. Besides, given the gargantuan level of municipal corruption—affecting every hierarchical level—in the country, the possibility of some of the senior officials being bribed by those who might be wanting to scuttle the ABC programme cannot be ignored.

Some senior officials can also be persuaded by corrupt subordinate municipal employees whose opportunities for having their palms greased have been abridged considerably by the introduction of the ABC programme. When dogs were being caught to kill, they released captured canines for a consideration since people fond of specific stray dogs would part with money than with the dogs. This actually happened in several instances in Bangalore. In her report in the *Deccan Herald* of 30 July 2007, Madhumita B. quotes a resident of BTM Layout as stating that a private vehicle picked up over 20 dogs in the preceding week but the driver agreed to release them after the local residents agreed to pay him.<sup>101</sup>

Equally, a ‘little something’ often ensured that the dogs that one wanted killed were caught. Since captured dogs were kept in pounds for specified periods to permit an owner, whose pet dog had been mistakenly caught, to claim it, a great deal of the money, meant for their maintenance, went into the pockets of people supposed to run the pound. The dogs, of course, starved. And, of course, the owner had to slip in a ‘little something’ in their hands for getting his or her wrongly caught pet released.

In Delhi, one sometimes heard in the 1980s—and the word is around again at the time of writing—that the flesh of some of the

dogs killed by the municipal authorities found their way into the meat shops in the outlying areas, with the employees concerned making a little money on the side. No one could, of course, prove this. Similarly, there has been talk of dogs from Karnataka being taken to other states for being slaughtered for meat. That there is a basis to this is suggested by a report by Savie Karnel that appeared in the *MiD DAY* of 13 December 2007.<sup>102</sup> According to it, residents of Hebbal caught four men trying to smuggle ten dogs to Ananthpur in Andhra Pradesh for being sold to butchers. The report quotes R. Shantakumar, Animal Welfare Officer, AWBI, as stating that lorry drivers in Hebbal had told him that they took dogs to Ananthpur every fortnight. 'They', he added, 'say it's a common practice. According to them, these dogs were sold to butchers and their meat is generally sold after mixing it with mutton. Each dog is sold for Rs. 300–400.'

The four men, of course, said that they were taking the dogs to guard their cattle. Sujaya Jagadish, a CUPA volunteer, however, stated, 'The residents [of Hebbal] did not believe a word of that and started thrashing them. After a few minutes, they confessed they were selling the dogs to butchers.' The men were handed over to the police with whom CUPA members lodged a complaint before taking the dogs to their shelter. Shantakumar alleged, 'We have caught truck drivers ferrying dogs and handed them over to the police. But the police don't care.' Hence, the grisly business continued.

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## Big Brothers at Work?

Municipal employees, and even their bosses, are however, small fries compared to some of the other elements that may want the ABC programme scrapped. In this context, it is interesting to read a report in the Bangalore edition of *The Hindu* of 11 March 2007 by Sahana Charan and Afshan Yasmeen. They said that only 1,980 cases of dog bites were reported in January and 942 in February within city limits in Bangalore while medical experts put the number in the city every month at 6,000. The report quoted a doctor at the BBMP's referral hospital at Banashankari as saying, 'We used up more than 55,000 vials of ARV vaccine from April 2005 to March 2006. But from April 2006 till date, we have used only 30,000 vials. This means that the number of cases are less this time and this is the only consolation.'<sup>103</sup>

According to a reply to an application by Gopi Shankar under the Right to Information Act (RIA/PR/31/07-08 dated 11/04/07) by the Chief Health Officer BBMP, BMP hospitals used Rabipur anti-rabies vaccine during 2005–06 and Rabipur and Verorab were used in 2006–07. The same reply puts the cost of a Rabipur vaccine at Rs 207.40 and Verorab vaccine at Rs 286. Since the reply does not mention the number of Rabipur and Verorab vaccines respectively were in 2006–07, it is not possible to calculate accurately the actual reduction in expenditure caused by the decline in the use of anti-rabies vaccines by 25,000 vials as indicated in *The Hindu* report. The reply, however, states that the annual expenditure on anti-rabies vaccine declined from Rs 116,57,660 in 2005–06 to 7,784,347 in 2006–07. The decline works out at Rs 3,873,313, which is substantial.

Besides, even if one questions the figures of the decline in use at the Banashankari referral hospital in the report in *The Hindu* cited above, the quantity was substantial. This is clearly indicated by the reply to the query under the RTI Act which puts the number of vials used at 50,590 and 35,640 in 2005–06 and 2006–07 respectively. In fact, the decline was even more impressive if one considers the figure of 67,759 (7,480 and 60,270) vials used in 2004–05 when both Abhay-arab and Rabipur vaccines were used.

There is, of course, no nothing to indicate that pharmaceutical companies manufacturing anti-rabies vaccines have been behind any attempt to scuttle the ABC programme through the killings. The fact, however, remains that organizations and people close—and indebted—to them have been spearheading the campaign against the ABC programme or, while suggesting that it should continue, have recommend measures that would cripple it. I would have reiterated my demand for a judicial inquiry if too much time had not passed since the killing of Sridevi and Manjunath, enabling those who might have been culpable to cover their tracks. There, however, is a pressing need for vigilance. for preventing further loss of the lives of innocent children in nothing else.

One can legitimately ask here: Why should there suddenly be an attempt to scuttle the ABC programme now when nothing of the sort had been attempted for so long? One has to look back a little for an answer. The WHO and the WSPA announced the *Guidelines for Dog Population Management* in 1990. While the ABC programme was introduced on a local basis in cities like Delhi in 1991, Jaipur in 1994, Chennai in 1996, Mumbai in 1999 and Bangalore in 2000,

there was nothing approaching a national policy to implement it. It was as late as December 2001 that the Government of India put in place a mandatory legal basis for it by promulgating the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules. This too might not have happened but for Maneka Gandhi who was then a Union Minister. She was, however, dropped from the Council of Ministers in the following year and very little was done after that until 2006 when Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M. Kharb took over as Chairman of the AWBI in July. On 21 and 22 September that year, he played a key role in the holding of a national workshop on rabies which resolved to achieve a rabies free India by 2020, and prescribed an accelerated, nationwide implementation of the ABC programme.

This and the remarkable success of the ABC programme in cities like Bangalore, might well have alarmed those whose vested interests demanded the continued presence of stray dogs on India's streets so that orchestrated fears of dog bites and rabies cases led hospitals to stockpile anti-rabies vaccines. This is no doubt only a suspicion and no more, but given the circumstances and what is at stake, it cannot be brushed aside.

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## ***Chapter Four***

### **A Divide That Isn't**

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The wantonness, irrationality, brutality and savagery characterizing the Bangalore killings raise a few fundamental questions. Would there have been a demand for killing all human beings, to say nothing of the BBMP acceding to it with alacrity, had the two children been killed by two men? The answer would, of course, be an emphatic 'No'. There have been murders of children and serial killings in Bangalore and elsewhere. But in no case has there been a demand for a mass killing of all human beings in the area or their confinement in concentration camps under the most inhuman conditions.

I doubtless run the risk of being dubbed stupid for asking this question, and of being told that the lives of human beings are far more important than those of animals and that the two can under no circumstance be equated. I have often wondered whether people making such statements have thought over the implications of what they are saying. The statement needs to be viewed both as it stands by itself, and with reference to the mass killing of stray dogs in Karnataka in the context of which it is made.

As it stands by itself, it means in its fullest connotation that the lives of all human beings collectively are more important than the lives of all animals collectively. As of now, such a formulation is of purely academic interest. Though the danger of all non-human living beings being wiped out if 'progress' continues the way it is doing now, is real—human activities are wiping out three animal or plant species every hour, according to one report<sup>1</sup>—the world has yet to face a situation in which it has had to choose between the lives of all human beings on the one hand and those of all animals on the other. One has faced situations in which some animals and birds—such as cattle afflicted with the Mad Cow disease and poultry with bird

flu—have threatened some human beings. They have been summarily dispatched. The question is: what happens if the choice is between the lives of all animals and the life of one human being, particularly if that human being has been found guilty of genocide or is a contract killer? Equally, what happens if the choice is between one human being and an entire species of animals or a large number of animals of a particular species, say barking deer?

I would, of course, be accused of splitting hair and told that these are purely hypothetical questions which should be unceremoniously ignored. These, however, need to be asked because sweeping generalizations, made without their implications being thought through, have helped to create ill-informed, hate-filled mindsets that have played havoc with the lives of both humans and other living beings. This will become clear if one considers the statement in the specific context of Karnataka in which it has been made. It is one thing to contend that a stray dog that has mauled a child to death should be euthanized and quite another to say that all stray dogs should be killed because one of them has killed a child. It needs to be remembered here that the death penalty is awarded to humans only in the 'rarest of rare' cases where the charge of murder has been proved beyond all reasonable scope for doubt and where the crime is particularly heinous in nature. What is sought here is not just that a stray dog that has killed a child should be executed but that all such dogs—even those who have never harmed any human being—should be slaughtered because one of them 'may' kill a person. This means that two very different yardsticks of justice are applied to human beings and stray dogs respectively, and that the latter does not belong to the moral universe to which humans do—a subject that will be dealt with later.

Meanwhile, one will have to deal with the possible retort—the substance of which has been conveyed in various forms before—that anything that threatens the life of even one human being should be eliminated because the Indian Constitution enshrines the right to life as a fundamental right. All stray dogs, it is further argued, should be killed as they are carriers of rabies and thus threaten the lives of human beings.

The possible retort and the underlying argument show the relevance of one of the two questions I had raised, 'What happens if the choice is between one human being and an entire species of animals or a

large number of animals of a particular species, say barking deer?' Only, for barking deer read stray dogs here. And given the paranoia and worse that had gripped a section of Karnataka's population when the authorities declared open season on all stray dogs, a time may well come when they will assert that all animals in the world should be killed because they threaten the life of one man!

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## Why Not Trucks, Buses and Cars?

The retort also raises a further set of questions even if we ignore the fact that humans pose the greatest threat to the lives of other members of their species. One of these is: Why should there not be a ban on all trucks, buses, motor cars, motor bikes and scooters? According to a report in the *Hindustan Times* of 31 August 2007, the number of people killed in road accidents in India was 81,966 in 1999, 78,911 in 2000, 80,888 in 2001, 84,674 in 2002, 85,998 in 2003, 92,618 in 2004 and 94,968 in 2005.<sup>2</sup> The figures speak for themselves even when viewed against the APCRI's questionable estimate of there being 20,565 human deaths from rabies annually in India.

One runs into two answers to this. First, motor vehicles do not *per se* threaten the lives of human beings and the danger they pose can be progressively eliminated through better traffic management and training of drivers. But stray dogs also do not *per se* threaten the lives of human beings. A very small percentage of them bite human beings. Instances like the ones in which two children were allegedly mauled to death by them in Bangalore are very, very rare, and the circumstances in which both had occurred raise many questions which have remained unanswered.

Besides, people do not die merely because they have been bitten by stray dogs. Rabies can doubtless cause death. We, however, have seen that it is eminently preventable both among humans and dogs. There is, besides, no reliable estimate of the number of stray dogs that become rabid and spread the disease. Nor is there any definitive statistics about the incidence of rabies deaths in India. We have seen that there is a huge gulf between the actual number of cases of human rabies reported every year and the estimated figure put out by the APCRI. The latter's estimate needs to be taken with serious reservations for

two reasons. First, the gulf between it and the actual number of cases reported cannot be explained by under-reporting, which the APCRI cites as the cause, at a time when people are highly aware of their rights, including that to medical attention, and the spread of the communication revolution has opened up even remote parts of the country. The second is the conflict of interest that arises from APCRI's close links with pharmaceutical companies manufacturing anti-rabies vaccines for humans, and whose sales are closely linked to the incidence of rabies cases among humans.

It would seem that the real explanation for the absence of any demand for banning cars, buses and trucks from the roads despite the very large number of deaths they cause every year lies in the fact that it would, if conceded, gravely inconvenience humans. Raw material will not come to—and manufactured products will not move from—factories, except by hand, horse or bullock carts. Supplies will stop coming to shops, people will have to walk or cycle to office. Doctors will have to cycle to their clinics and hospitals. In short, life will become miserable for members of India's pampered middle and upper classes, many of whom do not think—and totally wrongly, as will be seen later—that they would in any way be put out if stray dogs are slaughtered *en masse*.

There is, besides, a fundamental philosophical and moral question. Who decides whether the lives of human beings are more important than those of stray dogs or, for that matter, any other species of animals? I am sure that stray dogs and other animals have a view on the matter that is very different from, say, those of the functionaries of SDFB and would have articulated it had they the capacity for rational verbal communication. Unfortunately for them, they cannot do so. Nor can they embark on a mass, organized killing of human beings in the same way humans ruthlessly slaughtered them in Karnataka.

The fact is that all life is precious—human, animal and plant—and the survival of each category depends on that of the other two. We have to approach the question whether the lives of human beings or stray dogs—or for that matter of all animals—were more important, at two levels—the pragmatic-empirical and the philosophical-historical. At the pragmatic-empirical level, the question, as we have seen, has arisen in the context of the demand by a section of people in Karnataka that all stray dogs must be killed on the ground that they

threaten the lives of humans. They might have had a point if all stray dogs threatened all human beings. They do not. In fact most stray dogs do not; otherwise the number of cases of their biting people would have been much higher than what we have seen. Besides, as noticed earlier, pet, and not stray, dogs have bitten people in a very large number of cases. Apart from the figures given in Chapter 2 of pet dogs biting people in Bangalore, a report from Pune makes interesting reading:

From 5,600 dog-bite cases in 2001 (reported at Sassoon Hospital), the figure has (had?) gone up to an alarming 8,751 in 2002.

Till May 2003, the hospital had a total of 3,815 dog-bite patients. However, according to the hospital medical officer, Namdeo Patil, 70 per cent of dog-bite cases were from pet dogs.<sup>3</sup>

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## Dogs That Save

Besides, while some dogs bite and spread rabies, some other dogs save the lives and properties of humans. We have noted in Chapter 2 two instances, one near Tumkur in Karnataka and one in Kolkata, of stray dogs guarding throughout the night, foregoing even their search for food, two new-born babies that had been abandoned.

I still remember an incident I had witnessed nearly 50 years ago in Kolkata. A little girl, a toddler, who had got separated from her parents, had moved very close to the northern shores of the Dhakuria Lake and seemed to be in danger of falling into the water. Before any human being could react, a brown mongrel that had been sitting under a tree rushed toward her and, barking, turned her back. As we watched with admiration, the parents, who had not noticed the girl slipping away, but had been attracted to the scene by the barking, attacked the dog with stones, thinking that it was about to bite her. Several passers-by and I intervened and told them that far from attacking the child, the dog had actually saved her. They stopped stoning but walked away without the slightest appreciation of what the dog—which was limping after being hit by a stone—had done.

What the dog did above was not out of character with the innate nature of dogs. It was very much in keeping with it. *The Times of India*



reported on 30 March 2008, of a stray dog, Julie, regularly jumping into the sea and chasing away people bathing off the Marina Beach in Chennai. Bathing is banned along the entire stretch of the latter where, as well as in the adjoining beaches, drowning has been a regular feature. The report quoted Inspector S. Sekar of Anna Nagar Police Station as saying, 'A fortnight ago we were shouting at the youngsters swimming in the sea. When Julie joined us she watched our movements and started barking at them. Later, she jumped into the sea and chased them away. Now it has become her routine.' Julie began regularly accompanying police teams patrolling the beach.<sup>4</sup>

There have been many examples of dogs protecting human beings at grave risk to their own lives. J.N. Gupta, a member of the Indian Civil Service, was Commissioner of Burdwan Division in pre-Independence<sup>5</sup> undivided Bengal in India in the 1920s. His official residence at Chinsurah was on the Ganga and he used to bathe in the river every day. One day a crocodile appeared suddenly and moved straight toward him. While others watched in horror, a stray dog, whom he fed occasionally and who sat every day on the river bank while he bathed, jumped on the head of the crocodile. The crocodile was so disoriented by something strange landing suddenly on its head that Gupta had the time to wade back to safety, and the dog to jump ashore. From that day onward, the dog became a much loved-member of the Gupta family.

The Delhi edition of *The Tribune* reported on 21 February 2006 an incident in which a three-year-old child, Satindar, was abducted on 19 February by two men on a bike as he was playing with other children in front of his house in Ghaziabad. Two dogs, companions of his grandfather Mohindar Singh, chased them, jumping on them and attacking them, and forced them to abandon the child and flee after about a kilometre.<sup>6</sup>

There are numerous accounts of dogs' loyalty and devotion to humans. In *Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights*, Steven M. Wise cites the instance of primatologist Roger Fout's dog, Brownie, diving under the family pick up truck which was about to hit his nine-year-old brother Ed. He quotes Fout, who was then four years old, as writing subsequently that not a family-member 'doubted for a while that Brownie had sacrificed her own life to save my brother's'.<sup>7</sup>

Chhatrapati Shivaji had a dog called Waghya who was at his side in every battle he fought and who jumped on to his funeral pyre as he was being cremated after his death. There are two memorials, next to each other, at the Raigad fort. The larger one is for Shivaji and the smaller one for Waghya.

Not surprisingly, fiction and mythology contain many accounts of dogs' loyalty to their masters. In *Odyssey*, there is a most touching account of how Odysseus, returning to Ithaca in disguise after 19 years of warfare and travel, was instantly recognized by his dog as he stood talking to the swineherd Eumaeus. Homer writes:

Stretched on the ground close to where they stood talking, there lay a dog, who now pricked his ears and raised his head. Argus was his name. Odysseus himself had owned and trained him, though he had sailed for holy Ilium before he could reap the rewards of his patience. In years gone by, the young hunters had often taken him out after wild goats, deer and hares. But now, in his owner's absence, he lay abandoned on the heaps of dung from the mules and cattle that lay in profusion at the gate, awaiting removal by Odysseus' servants as manure for his great estate. There, full of vermin, lay Argus the hound. But directly he became aware of Odysseus' presence, he wagged his tail and dropped his ears, though he lacked the strength now to come any nearer to his master. Yet Odysseus saw him from the corner of his eyes, and brushed a tear away without showing any sign of emotion to the swineherd, whom he now proceeded to sound:

'Eumaeus, it is very odd to see a hound like this lying on the dung. He is a beauty, though one cannot fully tell whether his looks were matched by his pace, or whether he was just one of those dogs whom their masters feed at table and keep them for show'.

Eumaeus told Odysseus:

...[that this was] a dog whose master has met his death abroad. If you could see him in the heyday of his looks and form, as Odysseus left him when he sailed for Troy, you'd be astonished at his speed and power... But now he is in a bad way; his master far away from home has come to grief, and the women are too careless to groom him.<sup>8</sup>

Odysseus then moved into his palace to confront the hordes of suitors who had gathered there for the hand of his wife Penelope who, they thought, had become a widow. Argus 'succumbed to the black hand of death' no sooner had he 'set eyes on Odysseus after

those nineteen years'. He was the only living being who recognized Odysseus at first sight on his return. Neither Telemachus, his son, nor Penelope who had waited for him patiently, nor Eumaeus, who had been his faithful and hard-working servant, could do so.

There are, of course, some dogs that are aggressive and bite humans, sometimes severely. Those that are found, after careful observation, to do that, habitually and without provocation, can be euthanized if their aggression levels cannot be brought down. One, however, has to exercise extreme caution in such cases. Unless trained to attack or to guard property or persons aggressively, dogs generally bite only when they feel that they or human and non-human animals dear to them have been attacked or threatened. Wise, a distinguished animal protection lawyer, writes that he had tried several court cases in which a dog broke out of her enclosure and raced past numerous pedestrians to pounce upon an eight-or-ten-year-old boy. The parents always demanded that the dog be killed. Investigation, however, revealed that the boy had been throwing rocks at the dog or hitting her with a stick over a fence for months.<sup>9</sup> One can give numerous other examples of people falsely accusing dogs of being ferocious and demanding their death. Besides, as seen earlier, the fact that some dogs are aggressive does not warrant the conclusion that all stray dogs threaten human survival and, hence, have to be killed ruthlessly.

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## The Making of a Mindset

At the philosophical-historical level, the mindset behind the claim that the lives of humans are more important than those of animals, including stray dogs, reflects the influence of dominant Western view that animals—for that matter all non-human living beings—were distinct from and inferior to humans and existed for the benefit of humans. This view, in turn, has arisen from the Judaeo-Christian theological tradition and the anthropocentric world view rooted in humanist philosophy of the classical Greeks as revived during the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment. As we shall see, the spiritual tradition originating from the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, the *Puranas*, and epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, is very different.

Christianity emerged in a cultural and intellectual environment created by the classical humanism of the Greeks—as expounded by

philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, as well as the Stoics, who belonged to a school founded by the philosopher Zeno, and Sophists, wandering intellectuals skilled in the use of rhetoric. Christianity's religious background comprised the world of the Old Testament and the sayings of Jewish prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Pythagoras, the philosopher and mathematician who lived in the sixth century BC, was an exception as he urged respect for animals. He advocated vegetarianism and opposed animal sacrifice on religious occasions. A believer in the transmigration of souls, he held that in killing an animal, a person might be killing an ancestor. His, however, was a solitary voice. His epoch was dominated by classical Greek humanism whose essence has been most comprehensively encapsulated in Protagoras' famous aphorism, 'Man is the measure of all things', and all of whose principal exponents held that the attribute that set humans apart from, and above, all other living beings, was reason. Non-human living beings and not even all human beings had it. Aristotle maintained that animals belonged to the same category as inanimate objects because they lacked reason. Plato held that all different beings in the world formed a great hierarchical chain 'that descended from the immortal gods on the high down through humans to animals, plants, stones to dust at the very bottom. The human part of the chain was likewise ranked hierarchically from the Greeks at the top to slaves at the bottom'.<sup>10</sup>

In *Politics*, Aristotle stated that nature made all animals for the sake of man and that it was as permissible to enslave people who did not possess reason as it was to enslave animals. According to him slaves and animals did little for the 'common good' and lived 'at random'.<sup>11</sup> According to E.F. Osborne, Stoics held that 'plants and animals live for their use by man'.<sup>12</sup> Protagoras was a Sophist and his famous aphorism, quoted above, gives a clear idea of the orientation of the school of thought to which he belonged.

Romans had little regard for the lives of slaves as well as those of animals. Recall the savage gladiatorial combats between animals and humans, and between humans, in the Coliseum. According to Matt Carmill, 'animals were routinely treated with a mixture of brutal indifference and sadism', in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>13</sup> Cicero, the Roman orator and statesman, maintained that 'the corn and fruits produced by the earth were created for the sake of animals, and

animals for the sake of man'. In his haunting work, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, Charles Patterson quotes him as saying:

We are absolute masters of what the earth produces. We enjoy the mountains and plains. The rivers are ours. We sow the seeds and plant the trees. We fertilise the earth. We stop, direct and turn the rivers; in short, by our hands and various operations in this world we endeavour to make it as it were another nature.<sup>14</sup>

One finds the same anthropocentric orientation in the Jewish tradition, religious texts and the Hebrew Bible.<sup>15</sup> Paul Waldau writes, 'Members of human species are seen in the Hebrew Bible as a single, distinct group of animals that has been specially created and given dominion in Genesis 1:26 over all other animals' such as the 'fish of the sea...the birds of the air...the cattle...and every creeping thing'.<sup>16</sup> He adds, 'Since all humans were conceived of as descended from the same two ancestors, Adam and Eve, each of them had a special status from which even human slaves were not exempted.... There was, then, a sense that all humans constituted a single group in a most important sense, *especially* in relation to other animals.'<sup>17</sup>

Charles Patterson points out that the laws of the Jews 'against causing animals physical and psychological pain and suffering' and their disapproval of cruelty to animals moderated in some degree the principle of human supremacy the Hebrew Bible proclaimed.<sup>18</sup> Patterson further points out that the Jewish tradition of compassion for animals is rooted in the *Torah* 'which requires animals to rest on Sabbath, prohibits the yoking of strong and weak animals together, requires that threshing animals be allowed to graze, and so forth'. He further quotes Isaiah as saying bluntly that 'He who slaughters an ox is like him who kills a man.'<sup>19</sup> The later Talmud and Responsa banned blood sports, including hunting for 'pleasure' and laid down that Jews should feed their animals before eating themselves. The *Code of Jewish Law* declared, 'It is forbidden, according to the law of the Torah, to inflict pain upon any living creature. On the contrary, it is our duty to relieve the pain of any creature.'<sup>20</sup>

As a result of the dispersal of the Jews from Palestine and the persecution to which they had been subjected for centuries, such views had little influence on the mainstream Western theological

attitude toward animals. It is the Christian tradition and morality that dominated and, as Waldau points out:

...even though the early Christians altered morality and even occasionally developed a new vocabulary, the new features of Christian morality did not pertain to the status of other animals. Christian morality was, in this regard, another version of why it is that humans are special relative to the rest of the animal kingdom...In both Christian and non-Christian communities, the general method of describing other animals was reliance on traditional generic discourse in expressing a dismissive attitude.<sup>21</sup>

This is clearly seen in the writings of early Christian scholars like Justin, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria and Origen and, of course, St Augustine, who towered over all of them. In his famous *City of God*, Augustine states while interpreting the implications of the Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill':

[S]ome try to extend this commandment even to wild and domestic animals [*bestias apocora*] and maintain that it is wrong to kill any one of them. Why not then extend it to plants....Hence, putting aside these ravings, if when we read 'Thou shalt not kill', we do not understand this phrase to apply to bushes, because they have no sensation, nor to unreasoning animals [*irrationalibus animantibus*] that fly, walk or crawl, because they are not partners with us in the faculty of reason.<sup>22</sup>

Charles Patterson doubtless points out that despite the church's support for the human/animal divide:

...there has always been a pro-animal undercurrent in Christianity from the early apocryphal literature on. It includes the fourth-century church fathers Basil and Ambrose, the Celtic saints, St Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Bonaventure, C.S. Lewis and many contemporary theologians and scholars like Andrew Linzey, John Cobb and others.<sup>23</sup>

There was also St. Philip of Neri. Though Linzey maintains the 'theological superiority' of human beings relative to animals, he argues that since God suffers in all suffering creatures, there are fundamental theological and moral issues involved in human interaction with other creatures. He argues, 'The inner logic of Christ's lordship is the sacrifice of the higher for the lower; not the reverse. If the humility of God in Christ is costly and essential, why should ours be less?'<sup>24</sup> Waldau quotes J. Moltmann as arguing that an 'animal is not a person

in the human sense, but is not a “thing” or a product either. It is a living being, with rights of its own, and it needs the protection of public law.<sup>25</sup>

Such views, however, have remained at the margins of Christian theology. One reason for this has been the profound impact that St. Augustine’s ideas have had on the evolution of Christian religious doctrine. There may be a point in Waldau’s argument that St. Augustine’s views on animals were clearly more positive than those of many others found in the Hellenic-Roman environment.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, his basic position remained uncompromisingly anthropocentric, no doubt to a large extent due to the influence of Greek thought on him. Richard Sorabji observes:

The stoic view of animals, with the stress on irrationality, became embedded in Western, Latin-speaking Christianity above all through St. Augustine. Western Christians concentrated on one-half, the anti-animal half, of the much more evenly balanced ancient debate.<sup>27</sup>

Thomas Aquinas, perhaps the greatest exponent of medieval scholasticism<sup>28</sup>:

...justified the killing of animals on the ground that the lives of animals were preserved ‘not for themselves but for man’. Not only did he deny rationality to animals, but he denied them an afterlife as well. Aquinas believed that only the reasoning part of the soul survived after death. Since animals lacked the capacity to reason, he claimed that their souls, unlike human souls, did not survive their death.<sup>29</sup>

Patterson writes, ‘By the early modern period the notion that man was the apex of creation was the prevailing view.’<sup>30</sup> The validity of his statement becomes clear on considering the fact that the Renaissance, that stretched from the late fourteenth to the early seventeenth century, contributed, more than any other development, to the rise, in Europe, of modernity as we understand it today. It was characterized by a revival of interest in classical Greek humanism which had in the medieval period been subjected to the Church’s theocratic scholastic epistemology which ascribed to reason a position subordinate to faith. According to it, reason was not the sovereign arbiter of all claims of validity and the instrument of humankind’s understanding of the world and creativity. Its role was limited to a hierarchical arrangement of

knowledge from the perspective of Christian theology that celebrated God's sovereignty over all creation which He brought into existence.

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## The Kingdom of Reason

The Renaissance changed all that. The revival of humanist thought restored to reason its sovereign status. The most celebrated Humanist scholar of the period, Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), wielded enormous moral and intellectual influence on his time. As indicated in his *Education of a Christian Prince*, which was meant for the benefit of King—and later Emperor Charles V—of Spain, he stood for virtue and righteousness and believed that a ruler must be loved by his subjects. His best-known work was doubtless *The Praise of Folly*, a satirical attack on the traditions of the Catholic Church. He, however, stood not for the destruction of the institutions of the Church but for their liberalization. Equally, he did not challenge the basic doctrines of Christianity but worked for their purification. Nevertheless, his use of reason to examine the doctrines and institutions of the Church helped to lend to it an autonomous status it had lacked under the scholastic dispensation.

A more strident proponent of Humanism was Pico Della Mirandola (1463–94), who declared in his famous *Oration on the Dignity of Man*:

We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth; neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honour, as though the maker and moulder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of the soul's judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms.<sup>31</sup>

One should note here that Mirandola describes 'the lower forms of life' as 'brutish' and that one of the meanings of the word 'brute' is, according to the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 'beastlike'. Mirandola's tract, therefore, heralds not only the restoration of the supremacy of the anthropocentric worldview of the Greeks, but its allocation to animals a position subordinate to humans, which, in turn, involved the sanctioning of their use and abuse in the service of the latter. Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), one of the most prominent Renaissance



figures, was more explicit. He justified the killing of animals on the ground that their lives were preserved 'not for themselves but for man'. He even denied afterlife to animals and held that people had no moral obligation to animals whatsoever.<sup>32</sup>

The Renaissance also reinforced the anthropocentric worldview through its many achievements. The unchaining of the spirit of inquiry, that was its other major contribution, lent a limitless expanse to the human mind and a tremendous fillip to scientific speculation and technological inventions. Humankind's belief in its central position in the universe and confidence in its omnipotent powers tended to be further confirmed as progress in astronomy and physics—spearheaded by men like Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe and Newton—began to unlock the mysteries of the universe. If the great geographical discoveries, that led to the charting of sea routes to India and America, affirmed human domination over the oceans, Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe put paid to the ancient clerical and classical idea of the earth being flat.

The ending of the Church's all-comprehensive domination over the human mind, liberated the arts and literature from its censorial superintendence stemming from its association of the corporal body with sin. Literature came to focus on secular subjects and the passions and emotions of human beings. An example is Francesco Petrararch's (1304–74) poems to his beloved Laura, the vast majority of them in the form of sonnets, which were put together in the *Canzoniere* (Song Book). The central theme here is love for a woman and not for God. Not surprisingly, Petrarch is regarded not only as a great humanist but as the main inspiration behind the romantic poetry of the Renaissance.

Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75) was a friend of Petrarch. His best-known work, *Decameron*, is about seven women and three men who leave their town for a villa in the countryside where they amuse themselves by telling stories to one another. A hundred in number, these stories are based on popular fiction of the time, and are remarkable not only for Boccaccio's great narrative skill but their secular character and the central position they accord to the human condition in the scheme of things.

Renaissance literature, however, reached its apogee in the works of William Shakespeare (1564–1616), who has come to be regarded as the greatest writer ever in English literature. His plays and sonnets

bring to life almost every aspect of human nature and life, the dark and the bright, the altruistic and the sinister, the tragic and the comic, that leaves one breathless. No less talented perhaps was Christopher Marlowe (1564–93), whom many consider to have been the author of the plays—some of them, at least—attributed to Shakespeare, and who would perhaps have left as distinguished a literary footprint as the Bard of Avon had he not died under somewhat mysterious circumstances at the age of 29. His too was a world ruled by consuming passions—as in *Doctor Faustus*—and bitter conflicts and the eternal tug-of-war between good and evil in the mirrors both of quotidian life and dramatic human ventures.

If literature explored the human psyche and the world, of which it was in many ways a product, in all its complexity, Renaissance painting and sculpture celebrated the human body in all its exquisitely reproduced splendour. It was no longer regarded as the despised repository of carnal desires that led one to evil but something glorious and fascinating. Human beings were no longer sinners cringing in the fear of a terrible hereafter but proud and confident shapers of their own destiny. Nothing perhaps underlines the change more dramatically than Michelangelo's (1475–1564) 16-foot marble statue of David, standing tall and erect, proud of himself and looking confidently at the world. One sees the same self-assurance in the posture and gaze in Donatello's (1386–1466) statue of Saint George at Florence, and the manner in which the condottiero Erasmo da Narni is shown riding a horse in his statue, which is better known as the Equestrian Statue of Guattamelata.

Donatello's most famous work, however, is perhaps the bronze statue of David which shows the latter completely in the nude. It was a part of the trend in Renaissance art of not shying away from showing the human body in the nude as in Benevenuto Cellini's (1500–1571) bronze statue of Perseus with the head of Medusa, and ornamental piece, Gold Salt Celler. One sees its influence on painting as well. Men and women appear in diaphanous clothes and engage in festivities in Boticelli's (1444 or 1445–1510) *Primavera*. In his *Birth of Venus*, the Roman goddess associated with love and fertility, appears without clothes. Titian's (1485–1576) paintings entitled *Danae*, *The Rape of Europa* and *Venus of Urbino* reflect the same tendency to display the human body without inhibition. Even where the human body was not represented bare or nearly so, the paintings displayed a

vividness and reach of the imagination, a daring in dealing with space and form and colour, and a strength of the lines, that celebrated the power of human creativity and reinforced humankind's confidence in itself and its central place in the world. One can see this most clearly in Tintoretto's (1518–94) three famous paintings—*Finding of the body of Saint Mark in Alexandria*, *Saint Mark's body brought to Venice* and the *Miracle of the Slave*—and other works.

Raphael (1483–1520) was influenced by both Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Michelangelo with both of whom he had difficult relationships. His paintings are marked by the boldness of their contours, balance, the careful interplay of light and darkness and sensitive and accurate depiction of the human form. Among his many paintings, mention may be made of *La Formarina*, the portrait of a young lady, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Holy Family of Francis* and the *School at Athens*. He was also appointed the architect of St. Peter's in Rome.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), often described as the archetypal Renaissance person, was certainly one of the most diversely talented individuals who has ever lived. As a painter, he has left his mark in a number of works of which the most famous are entitled *Mona Lisa* and the *Last Supper*. An engineer, he had conceptualized the tank and the helicopter and had made major contributions in the areas of geology, anatomy, civil engineering, optics and hydro-dynamics.

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## Revolution and Relegation

The depiction of the grace and beauty of the human form in painting and sculpture further enhanced the self-esteem of humans, as did Renaissance literature with its focus on human relationships and love. The Renaissance revolutionized the way in which humankind looked at itself and the world. In the process the tendency to ascribe a subordinate and instrumental status to all non-human forms of life, including that of animals, was further strengthened. There was a tendency even to deny that they experienced pain and emotions. Rene Descartes, the French positivist philosopher, regarded the bodies of men and animals as machines. He regarded animals as automata, governed by the laws of physics and devoid of feeling and consciousness. Men

were different. They had souls that resided in their pineal glands and, there, it came into contact with 'vital spirits' and through this contact, there was interaction between soul and body.<sup>33</sup>

According to James Serpell, the early Christian belief that animals were created solely for the benefit of man, combined with the Cartesian view that they were incapable of suffering, gave human beings the permission to 'use or abuse other life-forms with total impunity'.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting here to see the Catholic church's stand on animals as reflected in paragraphs 2,415–18, the contents of which were summarized in paragraph 2,457, of the 1994 Catholic Catechism. Paragraph 2,415 sets the tone when it states, 'Animals, like plants and inanimate things, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity.' There are doubtless sentences that enjoin kindness. One reads in paragraph 2,416, '*Animals* are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness.' The document, however, allows instrumental use of animals. Thus, one finds in paragraph 2,417:

God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image. Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing. They may be domesticated to help man in his work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals, if it remains within reasonable limits, is a morally acceptable practice since it contributes to caring for or saving human lives.

Again, paragraph 2,418 states:

It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons.<sup>35</sup>

The 1994 Catholic Catechism makes clear that human beings, made in God's own image, form a distinct and superior category and cannot be equated with any other living beings, specifically animals. Thus one should not direct to animals, 'the affection due only to persons'. Also, it is 'unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery'. It permits scientific experimentation

on animals and the qualifying clause of 'within reasonable limits' is too vague to be of any practical use. Waldau, therefore, rightly states that:

...mainline Christian tradition has historically asserted, as part of its basic message, not only a fundamental, radical division between human animals and all other animals but also the *exclusion* of all other animals' interests when they are in conflict with even minor, unnecessary human interests.<sup>36</sup>

According to Waldau the exclusion is based not merely on the claim that membership of the human species entails that each human is made in God's image and 'is "unique-better" relative to all animals outside the human species' but also that when the realities of all animals are 'measured relative to one another, it is only human realities that are morally considerable' and hence 'deserve advancement at the expense of the realities and even lives of all other animals'.<sup>37</sup>

Two questions arise at this stage. To what extent is the exclusivist Christian view as well as the humanist *weltanschauung* that places human welfare at the top of everything, warranted? What has the impact of such views been on the lives of humans and animals?

As to the first question, the argument in favour of man's primacy rests on his being created in God's own image, on his being 'unique-better' relative to all non-human animals, and on his possession of reason. Now, nobody could have seen God make man in His own image because no man or woman could have existed before the first man came into this world. And the first man, who was brought into this world by the act of creation, could not possibly have witnessed his own making. Faith, and not empirical evidence, thus accounts for the acceptance of the version of creation as contained in the Genesis and the dominance it grants human beings over all other forms of life. It is also the basis for the acceptance of afterlife for humans and the denial of the same to non-human animals. If there is no scientific proof that animals have afterlife, there is none that humans have either.

There is, besides, overwhelming scientific evidence to support Charles Darwin's theory of evolution which goes totally against the Genesis' version of creation and which has been accepted almost universally except by a small fringe. While one is doubtless entitled to one's faith, the latter cannot be regarded as correct when contradicted by a mass of scientific evidence.

This leaves us with the second criterion for proclaiming the supremacy of human beings over animals and placing the latter beyond the protection of the rules of morality—reason, an important mechanism through which the intellect functions. It is claimed that human beings have it, animals do not. St. Augustine said in the *City of God*, ‘...when man was created he received in addition a rational soul not produced from water and earth like the souls of other animals.’<sup>38</sup> Implicit in making the possession of reason the criterion for proclaiming humankind supreme among all living beings is a belief in its omniscience reflected in making almost every human activity and achievement possible. It has enabled the structuring of language as a medium of both verbal and written communication, the importance of which in defining human identity is clearly seen in Aristotle’s remark in *Politics*, ‘man is the only animal which has the gift of speech’.

Language, of which speech is the verbal expression, has in turn become an instrument for drawing rational conclusions, of articulating the latter, and the matrix in which the methodology of discourse has evolved. Through the instrumentality of language, reason has accounted for humankind’s ability to resolve many of the mysteries of nature, act as an instrument of philosophical, ideological and theological speculation and scientific inquiry, of technological progress and economic organization and, of course, the construction of political systems.

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## Neither Universe nor God

While the faculty of reasoning has produced truly staggering results in almost every sphere of human life, it is not co-terminous with life. It is a process—albeit a vital one—through which the mind works. Elizabeth Costello, the main protagonist in J.M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals*, puts things in perspective when she says:

Both reason and seven decades of life experience tell me that reason is neither the being of the universe nor the being of God. On the contrary, reason looks to me suspiciously like the being of human thought; worse than that, like the being of one tendency in human thought. Reason is the being of a certain spectrum in human thinking.<sup>39</sup>

Some people are more adept at reasoning than others. That, however, does not mean that those who are less capable are lesser human beings. If it were so, a sportsperson should have been regarded as inferior to a logician. Nor can the possession of reason be the ground for giving human beings the authority to do what they please with the rest of nature. Reason is an instrument for analyzing and assessing information and integrating it in consciousness. Equally, it is an instrument for solving problems and coping with the world through deduction and the establishment of causal relationships. The conclusions it has yielded have, however, often proved wrong, particularly when the process of reasoning has been based on incorrect premises.

Besides, reason is not the only instrument for coping with the world. Sometimes intuition works when reason fails and decisions taken on its basis have proved correct. Also, reason is value neutral. It can be used to construct arguments in defence of crimes like genocide. The possession of reason makes human beings the most powerful, but by no means the most moral, of all living beings. Power needs to be exercised according to the canons of morality. It is important here to consider what Waldau has written:

...any ethical system that includes the provision that moral agents are responsible for the consequences of their intentional acts implies that the agents should know the consequences of their acts. Knowledge of the impact of one's acts on other beings can only be determined with reference to *those beings' interests*. This implies that one must know something of the being that is impacted rather than simply assuming the problem away on the basis of uninformed preconceptions. Thus no ethical system can systematically ignore the natural world's factual realities, or the processes by which consensus about the relative factual realities is achieved, because ethics purports to be about relations of natural world entities as they are.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately the attitudes of a very large number of people toward animals continue to be shaped by that of mainstream Christianity and post-Renaissance humanism. I will not go in any detail into the question of their ability to experience pain—denied in animals by Descartes—because that has now been conclusively demonstrated by progress in zoological and veterinary sciences. I will dwell on some length on the question whether animals can be abused at will on the

ground that they lack intelligence and rationality. To begin with: What is intelligence? What criteria must animals satisfy for being called intelligent? R. Byrne points out that to be deemed intelligent, an animal must be able to gain knowledge from its interaction with its environment and other individuals, use knowledge to organize effective behaviour in familiar and new contexts, and use the processes of 'thinking', 'reasoning' and 'planning'—in fact the ability to put together 'separate pieces of knowledge to create novel action—to deal with problems'.<sup>41</sup> In his seminal book *Thinking Animals: Animals and the Development of Human Intelligence*, Paul Shepard writes:

...intelligence is the way in which this keenly gleaned and alertly searched information [through consciousness, vigilance and attention] is used in the context of previous experience. Consciousness links past attention to the present. It helps tie signs and possibilities together, past and present, manipulating the world by first attending to images from memory, causal chains, and the integration of details with perceived ends and purposes.<sup>42</sup>

Shepard points out that man has capabilities that other species of animals do not have, but that does not detach him from the animal world. He writes:

Man is a unique combination of qualities and organs like those of other animals. They are the framework in which his thought is given and in which it works. The history of nature is the history of what to think, what conclusions the probing mind can arrive at, what questions it can raise. We do not graduate from animality but, in our most prized capacity [intelligence], into it and through it.<sup>43</sup>

Intelligence has evolved through the physical development of the brain and its actual functioning—the latter conducted to the progressive increase in the size and the capabilities of the brain, which in turn conducted to higher, more complex levels of functioning. The entire process is very closely related to ecology. According to Shepard, the 'era of reptiles, played out in the vast swamps and the low-lying forests of evergreen: conifers, horsetails, algae, mosses, and ferns'<sup>44</sup> constituted the background to the evolution of the mind. The advent of plants, particularly flowers, and the insects that the latter hosted, marked an important turning point. The plant-insect symbiosis created soil and humus, which held soil together. This in turn led



to the emergence of the deep, dark forests as well as the grasslands stretching over vast tracts. These in turn created the food chains and the nutritional environments necessary for the emergence of birds, and both land and water-dwelling mammals, predator and prey, carnivores, herbivores and omnivores.

The insects have remarkable perceptual systems capable of identifying and distinguishing between colour, smell, number, symmetry and even sound. They are attuned 'to the pigments, oils, vitamins and other special compounds of plants to a degree beyond our experience and understanding'.<sup>45</sup> We shall see later in this chapter, the remarkable capabilities of honeybees. The same, as we shall also see, goes for birds.

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## Pursuit and Escape

In the grasslands, the dynamics of pursuit by the predators and escape by prey, involving continuous improvement in strategies of capture and escape respectively, has been the 'great sculptor of brains',<sup>46</sup> enhancing their capacity in response to more exacting demands. Attention defines the kind of intelligence favoured in the interplay between 'smart catchers' and 'keener escapees'. It is:

...that aspect of the mind carrying consciousness forward from one moment to the next. It ranges from a passive, free-floating awareness to a theta or slow-wave rhythm which is investigatory, and to a highly focused, active fixation. The range through these stages is mediated by the brainstem structure, the limbic or arousal system, a network of tracts converging from the sensory systems to the integrating centres.<sup>47</sup>

Through their interaction, progressive predator and prey improve the part of attention that is vigilance. 'It is sensitive to signals from the surroundings. Prompted by these signals, ever so subtle with more vigilance, the process of arousal and concentration give attention its tone and direction.' The response mechanism of reptiles and frogs is triggered by images fleeting across the eyes. Anything that appears edible is promptly swallowed. The filtering device is located in the eye (not the brain) which is linked to brain and muscles.<sup>48</sup> The emergence

of nocturnal mammals living in deep, dark forests, led to another important stage of development. In the case of the nocturnal animals, sound and smell rather than vision became sources of information. Sound indicates the distance and the direction in which another creature is located as well as its movement. So does smell when the distance is relatively short. The stimuli from the senses are analyzed and integrated deep inside the brain—in the cortex. In the case of sound, successive auditory signals are perceived as a pattern and arranged in a spatial map that is located in time rather than vision. The perception of a pattern involves holding on to signals that had gone before and putting them ‘in a spatial code’. ‘Though hearing and smell are not basically spatial, their temporal analysis creates a kind of analogue to space.’<sup>49</sup> Since we have descended from ‘sniffers and smellers’, the first step toward the development of human-like intelligence was the encephalization or deep-brain elaboration of tissues for storing information.<sup>50</sup>

The encephalization of the brain provided the capacity for memory and the cortical integration of visual images into a continuous visual world flowing from the past into the present. The transcendence of the present enabled the extension of the process into the future. The ground was prepared for imagination to take flight and the emergence of a historical vision tracing the evolution of the past to the present.

Imagination found expression in speech and language. Both were the results of evolution, with the first emerging in the proto-human line after its separation from other primates.<sup>51</sup> The ground was prepared by two important developments. The first was an increase in the size of brains. Shepard quotes the anthropologist Grover S. Krantz as holding that:

...a threshold of brain size at about 750 cubic centimeters (a little more than half the size of the average human brain) is necessary to contain all the circuits and substance required for speech. This size in pre-humans could have been achieved by adding one additional round of cell division in an embryonic growth to a chimpanzee-sized brain, and it would add slightly to the gestation time...A brain of this size already makes a very substantial mind possible and the crossing into verbal representation would certainly not be going from a shadowy world of reflexive animality into a reflective sunshine of humanity. The beginning of speech was no great breakthrough....<sup>52</sup>

The truth of Shepard's observation becomes clear on analyzing the intellectual capabilities of animals, marine mammals, birds and insects later in this chapter. At this juncture, it will be important to find out what brought about the breakthrough leading to the emergence of speech. The clue lies in two distinct phenomena of primate life. The first is its intensely social character. Monkeys and other apes are constantly engaged in intense and subtle personal interaction over almost every issue in life ranging from one's position in the group's hierarchical order, quest for, access to, and sharing of food to playing and mating.

In fact, in an article in *The New York Times* of 9 October 2007, Nicholas Wade points out that according to Dr Dorothy Cheney and Dr Robert Seyfarth of the University of Pennsylvania in the United States, 'baboons minds are specialized for social interaction, for understanding the structure of their complex society and for navigating their way within it'.<sup>53</sup> Wade, who has quoted extensively Dr Cheney and Dr Seyfarth, wife and husband, who have spent 14 years observing baboons in Botswana's Moremi Game Sanctuary, writes, 'The shaper of a baboon's mind is natural selection. Those with the best social skill leave the most offspring.'<sup>54</sup> Not just that, Wade quotes Seyfarth as saying, 'Human language seems unique because no other species is capable of anything like speech. But when it comes to perceiving and deconstructing sounds, as opposed to making them, baboons' ability seems much more language-like.'<sup>55</sup>

The second phenomenon leading to the evolution of language was the hunt, particularly the hunting of large mammals which were an important source of food like roots and grain. The non-primate predators also interacted among themselves. But preoccupation with the hunt turned their attention outward on the prey rather than inward on themselves. Primate predators being much more—indeed, almost obsessively—social, their preoccupation with their own relations remained even on the occasion of a hunt which became a social event in which they constantly communicated among themselves—a social event of which the prey itself perhaps became a part. The two distinct streams of experience, linked by the social character of the primate predator, required two kinds of communication. The first was aimed at maintaining intra-group cohesion in a situation where tensions generated by status related issues and access to food and

mates were aggravated by the tensions and rivalries created by the hunt as a collective, social event. The second was the conduct of the hunt itself which required communication concerning the cornering and killing of the prey. Speech was a faculty required for both; song and mythology for maintaining group harmony and incorporating the wider world, including the environment and animals, into the group's universe.

Mythology, transmitted before the invention of writing through singing and chanting, often celebrated a common, glorious past, emphasized a common group identity, and preached a morality that made harmonious social existence possible. Language was the instrument for dissecting and analyzing experience and integrating it into consciousness. Over time, language came to be expressed through writing which initiated a shift from oral to written culture. Another important leap came with the invention of printing with moveable types. Each of these transitions had a remarkable epistemic impact.

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## In Cold Print

The print medium, for example, gave a new range and dimension to the written culture in the form of what Alvin W. Gouldner calls the 'elaborated discourse'. Observing that writing confers, and is believed to confer, a permanence which a verbal statement ordinarily does not, he states, 'To that extent writing may evoke careful thought in writer and reader. It establishes that the topic is taken with a certain seriousness, not having the fleeting quality of speech.'<sup>56</sup>

Besides, one's writing acquires an element of finality when printed. A mistake made during a conversation can be corrected while one is still talking. But a printed work cannot be easily recalled for correction once it is widely circulated. One is, therefore, very careful to avoid not only mistakes but embarrassing statements and faulty arguments. This contributes to careful, reasoned writing; so does the absence of direct communication between the writer and the reader. 'Face to face conversation', Gouldner observes:

...is multi-modal, allowing persons to see and hear speakers. Force, tone, pronunciation, dress, manner, gesture, and movement, all convey information providing a context for interpreting talk. Sometimes such

multi-modality facilitates interpretation, providing necessary information not conveyed linguistically. Sometimes, however, it might distract the listener from the speech itself or overload him with irrelevant or useless information, thereby impairing the interpretation of talk.<sup>57</sup>

By separating talk from the talker, printing enables it to be understood without the writer's presence and the additional non-verbal information it provides. Gouldner argues that printing makes for more rigorous appraisal of the validity of arguments by making the process more deliberative and impersonal, released from the compulsion of coping with rebuttals arising from conversations which assume the character of contests. It also makes for more careful preparation of texts and arguments. Since readers cannot ask questions and may not share the writer's assumptions and references, the latter has to develop his arguments by anticipating and answering such questions as might arise in the readers' mind during the text's unfolding, and elaborating his assumptions and references with which a reader in another time and country may not be familiar. The writer has also to carry his argument to its logical conclusion since he cannot, unlike in direct conversation, abandon it mid-way with the intention of resuming it later.

Such careful reading and writing has given rise to the elaborate logical discourse—mentioned earlier—flowing smoothly from premise to conclusion. The forming of complex chains of reasoning implicit in the process is facilitated by the fact that a written text may be read repeatedly for comprehension. The development of the powers of classification, reasoning, and the drawing of inferences required in following a distinct line of thought, reasoned texts and complex formulations, has also helped to create their readership by sharpening and deepening comprehension.

The purpose of dwelling at some length on the emergence of speech and language and the development of rational thought in the matrix, and through the instrumentality, of both, is to show that these are the results of the process of evolution that links human beings with their non-human predecessors. Human beings did not emerge on this earth, complete in their present form, like a fully-armed Minerva from the head of Zeus. They have evolved over millions of years, as have their attributes. The process of evolution, understood as continued enhancement of the capacity of human intelligence and

communication skills, continues. Yet, humans still retain many of their basic animal and avian attributes.

This is reflected in the remarkable parallels that exist in the social and personal conduct of human beings on the one hand and birds and animals on the other. All of them are creatures of habit. Konrad Lorenz writes in his landmark work, *On Aggression*, 'Indubitably, it is habit which, in its tenacious grip on the already acquired, plays a similar part in culture as heredity does in the phylogenetic origin of rites.'<sup>58</sup> Lorenz cites the example of a greylag goose, Martina, whom he had reared virtually from the time she burst out of the egg. She had got into the habit of entering his house with him and first making her way across the hall to the window on the wall facing the entrance. She then returned and climbed the staircase which rose to the first floor. Gradually, she did not go all the way to the window but turned back to the staircase after moving a part of the way in its direction. One evening, entering in a hurry, she had taken a short-cut and began climbing the stairs from the side different from the one she took every day. She panicked after climbing five steps and, walking back to the window, returned to the staircase. She stopped again at the fifth step but relaxed almost immediately after realizing that no danger threatened her.<sup>59</sup>

Lorenz shows how children, even adults, cling to habits and the familiar. An 'undeniable anxiety' impels a person to observe a habit even when he or she is aware of its 'purely fortuitous origin' and knows that 'breaking it does not portend danger'.<sup>60</sup> Gradually, the 'ingrained behaviour becomes a custom'.<sup>61</sup> According to Lorenz, 'so far the situation is the same in animals and in man'. 'A new and significant note', however is struck 'the moment a human being no longer acquires the habit' by himself but learns it from his parents. He or she is then often not aware of the reasons behind the prohibition. Besides, 'the revered father-figure of the lawmaker, remote in time as in mythology, undergoes an apotheosis, making all his laws seem godly, and their infringement a sin'.<sup>62</sup>

Lorenz's observation, explaining why certain taboos and habits become inviolable with certain sections of human beings, does not alter the basic fact that humans and other living beings find habits difficult to shed. This, however, is not the only character trait they share. Status-consciousness is another important one.

In *The Moral Animal: Why We are the Way We are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology*, Robert Wright states:

Throw a bunch of hens together and after a time of turmoil, including much combat, things will settle down. Disputes (over say, food), will now be brief and decisive, as one hen simply pecks the other, bringing quick deferral. The deferrals form a pattern. There is a simple linear hierarchy, and every hen knows his place.<sup>63</sup>

The term pecking order, given to this phenomenon by the Norwegian biologist Thorleif Schelderup-Ebbe, in the 1920s, is now widely used with reference to hierarchical deference patterns among humans.

Referring to similarities in the behaviour of baboons and human beings, Nicholas Wade quotes Dr Cheney and Dr Seyfarth as writing, 'Monkey society is governed by the same two general rules that governed the behaviour of women in so many 19th-century novels.'<sup>64</sup> The two, who have summed up their research in a book entitled *Baboon Metaphysics*, add elaborating the features of such behaviour, 'Stay loyal to your relatives (though perhaps at a distance, if they are an impediment), but also try to ingratiate yourself with members of high ranking families.'<sup>65</sup>

Wade points out that baboon families are matrilineal; each troop contains eight or nine matrilineal lines, each with a hierarchical order. Rank among female baboons is hereditary, with a daughter assuming her mother's rank. The hereditary character of the ranking system gave, as Wade puts it, 'great satisfaction' to a member of the British royal family, Princess Michael of Kent, who visited Dr Cheney and Dr Seyfarth. They quoted her as saying that there was now evolutionary proof that people who claimed that hereditary rank was 'no part of human nature', were wrong.<sup>66</sup>

There is also a remarkable parallel in human beings and chimpanzees' search for status. Much of the attention that chimpanzees pay to status is doubtless ritualistic in character. They not only greet their social superiors with great humility but literally kiss their master's feet in some areas.<sup>67</sup> The ranking order, however, is always a result of fierce struggle and remains unstable as chimpanzees constantly fight for status, which is often the case with humans as well.

In fact, fight for status often leads to aggression and fighting not only among chimpanzees but other animals as well. Like humans, they also fight on other issues like territory. Desmond Morris writes in *The Naked Ape: A Zoologist's Study of the Human Animal*, 'Animals fight among themselves for two very good reasons: either to establish their dominance in a social hierarchy, or to establish their territorial rights over a particular piece of ground.'<sup>68</sup> Humans are both hierarchical and territorial. They also have families, pair-bonding being necessary given the prolonged dependence of the young on their parents.<sup>69</sup> They had, therefore, three things to defend—their status, territories and homes. The other difference was that since both hunting and defence of their territories had become cooperative efforts, and the cooperation of even the weaker elements was needed for their success, the tyranny of the alpha male that characterizes monkey communities 'had to be modified considerably'. It could, however, not be 'abolished altogether'. There had to be 'a mild hierarchy, with stronger members and a top leader, if firm decisions were to be taken, even if this leader was obliged to take the feelings of his inferiors more into account than his hairy, forest-dwelling equivalent would have to do'.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, despite the differences, the fact that humans and non-human animals share the causes that make them fight is significant; so are the similarities in the manner in which they approach fighting. A basic physiological change comes over the whole body of a mammal when it becomes aggressively aroused, and gears it up for the attack. The autonomic nervous system that brings this about, has two sub-systems—the sympathetic which prepares the body for violent activity, and the para-sympathetic which seeks to preserve and restore bodily reserves and urges caution.<sup>71</sup> The realization that victory, even if it is achieved, will be at the cost of severe physical damage, produces 'an intense state of inner conflict'. Typically, 'the animal that is aroused to fight, does not go straight into an all-out attack. It begins by threatening to attack'<sup>72</sup> and tries to appear so intimidating that the enemy slinks away.

The posturing and the effort to send intimidatory messages, have 'enriched the communication systems of animals and rendered their mood-language subtle and informative. They make the threatening behaviour of the aroused animal more "readable" in more precise



terms'.<sup>73</sup> Many animal species have each developed a wide range of stylized movements and actions indicating aggressive intentions and aimed at arousing fear that, in their entirety, resemble war dances and constitute elaborate systems of threat rituals. Apart from the signals belonging to the communicational category, there are those arising from a 'category of behaviour that has been named displacement activity'.<sup>74</sup> As a side-effect of intense internal conflict:

...an animal sometimes exhibits strange and seemingly irrelevant pieces of behaviour. It is as if the tensed up creature, unable to perform either of the things it is desperate to do, finds an outlet for its pent-up energy in some other, totally unrelated activity....Threatening rivals can be seen suddenly to perform curiously stilted and incomplete feeding movements, and then return instantly to full-threat postures. Or they may scratch or clean themselves in some way, interspersing these movements with the typical threat manoeuvring. Some species perform displacement nest-building action, picking up pieces of nest material that happen to lie nearby and dropping them on to imaginary nests.<sup>75</sup>

Animals that realize that discretion is the better part of valour convey submission through gestures and signals that appease the would-be attackers and reduce his aggression level. Actual fighting occurs only when such gestures and intimidation fail. Even then, an animal that has the worst of it can signal the acceptance of defeat by performing 'certain characteristic submissive displays' which 'appease the attacker and rapidly reduce his aggression, speeding up the settlement of the dispute'.<sup>76</sup> Such signals often fetch dividends because animals generally do not continue attacking an enemy that has accepted defeat.

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## Posturing on the Brink

Morris gives a detailed account of the kind of ritualized aggressive posturing that non-human animals perform, including displacement activities, and their equivalent among human beings. He also describes the submissive gestures that both human and non-human animals perform to avoid conflict or accept defeat.<sup>77</sup> In the case of humans these operate at the collective level as well. Attempts to ensure a high level of efficiency in cooperative activity in relation to

the protection of their territories and families and also in hunting and food gathering, has led to the formation of States. In addition to fights between individuals and groups, we now have wars between States that command huge armies and arsenals. Here too, one witnesses an interplay of aggression and fear leading to posturised intimidatory behaviour meant to win without fighting a battle or waging a war.

An example of this is the phenomenon that came to be known as brinkmanship during the Cold War. The events following the Anglo-French invasion of Suez after an Israeli attack in the Sinai Peninsula in October 1956 provides an example. The Soviet Union threatened to intervene on the side of Egypt with Nikita Khrushchev, then the all-powerful First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), threatening to attack London and Paris with 'all kinds of weapons of destruction'. This prompted the United States, which had its hands full with the Soviet intervention in Hungary, which had occurred earlier in the month, to press Britain and France to withdraw, which followed after the UN had passed a resolution calling for a ceasefire.

The second example is the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Its immediate cause was the Soviet Union's move to install SS-4 and SS-5 missiles, both capable of launching nuclear warheads, in Cuba. The former had a range of 2,080 kilometres, and the latter 4,000 kilometres. Alarmed by intelligence reports, President John Kennedy of the United States announced a naval 'quarantine' (an euphemism for a blockade) of Cuba on 22 October 1962 and stated that the US would regard the launching of any nuclear missile from Cuba at any country of the Western hemisphere as an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States. The Soviet Union described the 'quarantine' a blockade, which came into force at 10.00 a.m. on 24 October, declared it illegal and stated that it would defy it. Diplomacy, both open and secret, however, continued while the world trembled under the shadow of a nuclear holocaust. Finally, a deal defused the crisis following a pact between President Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, now Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, besides being First Secretary, CPSU, on 28 October 1962. Under its terms the Soviet Union agreed to stop work on the missile sites under construction and dismantle and withdraw from Cuba weapons the United States considered offensive. In return, the United States

undertook not to invade Cuba and withdraw the Jupiter Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles it had placed on Turkey's border with the Soviet Union.

During both the Suez and Cuban crises, the world retreated from the brink of disaster no doubt because all concerned were acutely conscious of the consequences of a nuclear war. Describing its aftermath, Khrushchev had once said, 'the living would envy the dead'. The world, however, continues to witness conventional wars between non-nuclear powers, such as the one between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s. These end when either the UN enforces a ceasefire or one country signals that it does not want to continue with the hostilities. Thus the Pakistani Army in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) formally surrendered to Indian forces on 16 December 1971, after it found that it could not fight any more. Pakistan's acceptance of defeat was signalled by President Yahya Khan's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire. Japan, pushed back on all fronts and devastated by nuclear strikes against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 August and 8 August 1945, respectively, surrendered to United States General Douglas MacArthur at a formal ceremony on 2 September 1945.

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## More Humane Than Humans

The discussion till now clearly shows that the human urge, both at the individual and collective levels, to avoid conflict and to surrender when defeated to avoid further damage, is an extension of the same urge in animals and, as in the case of the latter, translates itself into elaborate systems of action and signals. This, as well as the fact that disputes over status and territory are two primary causes of conflict common to both, further underline the fact that humans cannot be regarded as a biological category totally different from animals with the right to use and abuse the latter at will. They happen at the moment to be the most evolved and powerful among all animals and share with the latter not only patterns of behaviour but, albeit at different levels of sophistication, intellectual and emotional attributes. This will be clear to those who are familiar with scientific studies of the emotions, intelligence and behaviour patterns of non-human animals, birds and aquatic mammals. In an article in *The New York Times*

of 8 March 2007, Nicholas Wade cites instances of animal behaviour which, according to the noted primatologist, Frans de Waal, 'are the precursors of human morality'.<sup>78</sup> Wade writes:

Some animals are surprisingly sensitive to the plight of others. Chimpanzees, who cannot swim, have drowned in zoo moats trying to save others. Given the chance to get food by pulling a chain that would also deliver an electric shock to a companion, rhesus monkeys will starve themselves for several days.

Wade adds:

Dr. de Waal, who is director of the Living Links Center at Emory University, argues that all social animals have had to constrain or alter their behavior in various ways for group living to be worthwhile. These constraints, evident in monkeys and even more so in chimpanzees, are part of human inheritance, too, and in his view form the set of behaviors from which human morality has been shaped.

De Waal, who argued in his *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals*<sup>79</sup> that morality was firmly grounded in neurobiology, holds that human morality would be impossible without certain emotional building blocks that are clearly at work in chimpanzee and monkey societies. Chimpanzees console one another, which indicates that they have the capability for empathy and a certain measure of self-awareness. Mentioning such facts, Wade writes:

Social living requires empathy, which is especially evident in chimpanzees, as well as ways of bringing internal hostilities to an end. Every species of ape and monkey has its own protocol for reconciliation after fights, Dr. de Waal has found. If two males fail to make up, female chimpanzees will often bring the rivals together, as if sensing that discord makes their community worse off and more vulnerable to attack by neighbors. Or they will head off a fight by taking stones out of the males' hands.

De Waal, Wade points out, believes that these actions are undertaken for the greater good of the community, as distinct from person-to-person relationships, and are a significant precursor of morality in human societies which consists of a sense of right and wrong that

is born out of groupwide systems of conflict management in which shared values constrain individual behaviour through a system of approval and disapproval. Chimpanzees, in de Waal's view, do possess some of the behavioural capacities built in our moral systems. Quoting de Waal as saying that the beginnings of human morality are to be found in concern for others and the understanding of social rules as to how they should be treated, Wade writes that, 'At this lower level, primatologists have shown, there is what they consider to be a sizable overlap between the behavior of people and other social primates.'

This will be clear to all who are familiar with scientific studies of the emotions, intelligence and behaviour patterns of non-human animals, birds and aquatic mammals. I will refer to just a couple of observations. Barbara Smuts, a highly respected primatologist and author of the definitive work *Sex and Friendship in Baboons*, writes in her commentary on *The Lives of Animals*, which Coetzee delivered as the 1997–98 Tanner Lectures at Princeton University, 'Like the rest of us, Baboons get grouchy, go hungry, feel fear and pain and loss.'<sup>80</sup>

The philosopher, Raimond Gaita, writes about his family's dog, Gypsy:

When I stand on Gypsy's paw [accidentally, of course] and she howls, I have no doubt that she is in pain. Nor do I doubt that when I cuddle her and apologise she is comforted, relieved that I expressed no hostile intent. Sometimes she thinks that her food is coming when it is not. She hopes to go for walks and plays games in which she tries to trick me into thinking she will run this way when she intends to run the other. Occasionally she sulks when I reprimand her. An intelligent dog, she is not a wise one. She has both character and personality....She is sensitive (though not to the degree that Zac was) to our moods and feelings and is herself sometimes joyful, miserable, depressed and bored. She is also mischievous, cheeky, stubborn, a bit of a princess and always on the lookout for opportunities to get her way with strangers who come to the house.<sup>81</sup>

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## Not a Human Monopoly

Those who claim that animals do not experience or feel emotion have never known or seen animals at close quarters. Nor are they—indeed, all who believe that humans can legitimately do whatever

they want with animals and that the latter do not possess reason and intelligence—aware of what modern research has revealed about the mental capability of animals and the emotions they experience. It has now shown that intelligence and rationality, in some form and at some level at least, is not a human monopoly.

It would be interesting to look at the mental capabilities of several species of animals. Steven M. Wise writes, that the ‘developmental and comparative psychologist Michael Tomasello, who has spent most of two decades studying apes, finds chimpanzees “very sophisticated creatures cognitively”. A mountain of evidence supports him’. He then adds:

Chimpanzees are probably self-conscious. They use insight, not just trial and error to solve problems. They have complex mental representations, understand cause and effect, imitate and cooperate. They compare objects and relationships between objects. They use and make tools. Given appropriate opportunity and motivation, they may teach, deceive, self-motivate and empathize. They transmit culture between generations.<sup>82</sup>

One learns from McGrew that ‘chimpanzees in all settings use tools regularly’.<sup>83</sup> According to Wise, captive chimpanzees:

...raised nearly as humans have learned thousands of English words at the sophisticated level of a human three-year-old and understand that word order is vital to sentence meaning. In the manner of a human two-year-old they produce hundreds of words and use simple grammar. They point and mentally share the world with humans and other apes. They use symbols in play. They count, perhaps to ten, and add simple numbers and the occasional fraction.<sup>84</sup>

Chimpanzees, Gorillas and Orangutans are among primates very close to humans in the evolutionary hierarchy. They can communicate with humans in sign language and can make their intentions known. They can also dissemble and deceive. In *Chimpanzees of Gombe: Patterns of Behaviour*, Jane Goodall cites several instances of deliberate deception by the primates. Two of them, Evered and Figan, had learnt to unscrew boxes which Goodall had designed and which could be opened by remote control, to get at the bananas she had placed in them. Evered used to do it openly but, on each occasion, higher-ranking male chimpanzees, who had been watching while he was unscrewing, took the bananas away. Figan, after suffering the same

fate on several occasions, resorted to disassembling. Walking toward the opening device almost nonchalantly, almost as if without any purpose, he performed the entire unscrewing operation with one hand, 'never so much as glancing at what he was doing. Thereafter, he simply sat, gazing anywhere but at the box, one hand or one foot resting on the handle. There he outwaited the big males, sometimes for as long as thirty minutes, until the last one had gone. Only then did he release the handle and (silently) run to claim the well-earned reward.'<sup>85</sup>

Given such capabilities, it is hardly surprising that Wise writes, 'In 1980s, Charles Sibley and Jon Alquist found that human and chimpanzee DNA was 98.4 per cent identical; human and gorilla, 97.7 per cent; and human/orangutan 97.4 per cent. Many scientists are sure that some DNA is "junk" and that the working DNA for humans and Chimpanzees is perhaps 99.5 per cent the same.'<sup>86</sup> In fact, human beings' genetic relationship with other apes is so close that Jared Diamond argues that according to the canons of taxonomy applied to other animals, they should be labelled 'the third chimpanzee' along with chimpanzees and bonobos.<sup>87</sup>

Elephants show a number of features associated with intelligence, such as complex cognitive skills, the ability to deceive and perhaps self awareness. They have knowledge of medicinal plants, can use tools, use mirrors to locate hidden objects, play and feel bored. They also have moods.<sup>88</sup> Elephants communicate with sub-sonic sounds that humans cannot hear. Besides, as Douglas Hamiltons point out, 'Although their faces were relatively immobile, the infinite variety of trunk postures and movements lent the elephants all the expressiveness of a primate's visage.'<sup>89</sup> E.O. Wilson points out that elephants have 'one of the most advanced social organisations in which family groups display a 'degree of cooperation and altruism' that is 'extraordinary'.<sup>90</sup>

Louis Herman, who has worked with dolphins for years at University of Hawaii's Kewalo Basin Marine Mammal Laboratory, has shown that some of them can handle concepts, generalize, harbour beliefs about their world, follow inferences, and so on. Dolphins almost certainly have self awareness. Some of them have passed the Mirror Self Recognition (MSR) test.<sup>91</sup> They communicate with one another, cooperate in herding fish for eating, live in complex societies and male dolphins form tactical coalitions. There have been reports of dolphins helping humans to catch fish.

While the mental capabilities of primates, elephants and dolphins have been known for some time, those of dogs had been—and still are—relatively less explored. Antonio Damasio says in *The Feeling of What Happens*, that dogs have an autobiographical sense of self. Wise, who cites him, also says that Frans de Waal and his colleagues feel that it is hard to imagine that a dog who marks his territory with urine and can find its way home, can do either without a self to understand where he is in the world.<sup>92</sup>

Wise says:

Evidence is converging from several directions that dogs mentally represent. They probably carry cognitive maps in their brains of the sort that honeybees have, internal representations of the spatial relationships between external sites. We know they take shortcuts that require them to perform mental calculations.<sup>93</sup>

A team of Hungarian researchers, which began a continuing set of experiments on the cognitive skills of canines, found that dogs were capable of 'intentional, functionally referential communication'.<sup>94</sup>

The most surprising, however, have been the findings about Alex, a Grey African Parrot which Professor Irene M. Pepperberg, then a doctoral student of Chemistry at Harvard, bought from a pet store in 1977. Professor Pepperberg, a comparative psychologist at Harvard and Brandeis Universities, used novel methods of teaching to prompt Alex to learn scores of words, which he could put into categories, and to count small numbers of items, as well as recognize colors and shapes. Stating all this in an article in *The New York Times* of 12 September 2007, Benedict Carey says that Alex 'knew his colors and shapes, he learned more than 100 English words, and with his own brand of one-liners he established himself in television shows, scientific reports and news articles as perhaps the world's most famous talking bird'.<sup>95</sup> According to Carey:

Alex showed surprising facility. For example, when shown a blue paper triangle, he could tell an experimenter what color the paper was, what shape it was, and—after touching it—what it was made of. He demonstrated some of his skills on nature shows, including programs on PBS and the BBC. He shared scenes with the actor Alan Alda on the PBS series 'Look Who's Talking'.



Pepperberg's work, 'revolutionized the way we think of bird brains,' said Diana Reiss, a psychologist at Hunter College, New York City, who works with dolphins and elephants. 'That used to be a pejorative, but now we look at those brains—at least Alex's—with some awe.'<sup>96</sup> Alex died on the night of 6 September 2007 at the age of 31. Carey writes, 'As she [Pepperberg] put him into his cage for the night last Thursday, she recalled, Alex looked at her and said: "You be good, see you tomorrow. I love you."' "

Steven M. Wise states that in 1998, the *Boston Globe* reported Pepperberg expressing the opinion that Alex and other Grey African Parrots 'have cognitive abilities comparable to a four-or-five-year-old child'. Two and a half years later, it quoted her saying that 'parrots reason, comprehend and calculate at the level of a four-year-old child'. He further states that the ornithologist Joanna Burger, who has studied parrots for years, writes in the *Parrot Who Owns Me* that, the behaviour and intelligence of Tiko, a red-lored Amazonian parrot she shares her life with, 'were remarkably alike a precocious three-year-old's'.<sup>97</sup> Not surprisingly, Wise states that 'Alex has demonstrated extraordinary mental abilities for an animal with a walnut-sized brain'.<sup>98</sup>

Parrots, however, are not the only birds with remarkable intelligence. Robin McKie says in a report which appeared in the *Guardian* with the dateline of 1 May 2007<sup>99</sup>, that the raven is 'an unexpected candidate for the title of the world's second smartest creature'. According to him, researchers Bernd Heinrich and Thomas Bugnyar of Vermont University in Canada and St. Andrews University in Scotland, have revealed in the *Scientific American* that 'ravens are the brainboxes of the natural world'. He quotes Heinrich as saying, 'These birds use logic to solve problems and some of their abilities even surpass those of the great apes.' He further quotes both researchers as saying, 'Ravens have the ability to test actions in their minds.' That capacity is probably lacking, or present only to a limited extent, in most animals.

McKie further writes:

Other experiments show that ravens often let other animals do the work for them. They have been known to make calls that bring wolves and foxes to dead animals so that these large carnivores can break the carcass apart, making meat accessible to the birds.

Even more striking are the facts about honeybees whose brains are on an average one cubic millimetre in volume. Wise says that, according to many, they possess a mental ability that falls strictly in 'the domain of primates: the ability to recognise "sameness" and "difference"'.<sup>100</sup> He cites the view of Professor Randolph Menzel at the Institute of Neurobiology at Germany's Free Institute, that honeybees collected nectar and pollen from flowers with a systematic search approach and not randomly. Karl von Frisch won a Nobel Prize in 1973 primarily for his discovery that they possessed by far the most sophisticated system of communication in the animal world, after human language. They communicate through a form of dancing.

Donald Griffin, whom Wise describes as the 'father of the scientific discipline of "cognitive ethology" which investigates and compares mental phenomena among animals'<sup>101</sup>, writes, 'If we accept communication as evidence of rational thinking, we must certainly grant consciousness to honeybees.'

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## Not So Special

What we have seen above clearly indicates that non-human animals display mental capabilities which reach a much higher level of development in humans. The human brain is the result of an evolutionary continuum in which the brains of animals, birds and aquatic mammals like whales and dolphins constitute critically important stages. It is quite possible that human brains too will one day be surpassed by the brains of another species that may evolve or that humans may become extinct, as many species have so far. It will be sobering to read what Desmond Morris has written:

We tend to suffer from a strange complacency that this can never happen, that there is something special about us, that we are somehow above biological control. But we are not. Many exciting species have become extinct in the past and we are no exception. Sooner or later we shall go, and make way for something else.<sup>102</sup>

It is important, therefore, not to adopt an anthropocentric approach while discussing animal intelligence and communication skills. Intelligence, as we have seen, is a complex and multi-dimensional

faculty that manifests itself in many ways. Its main value lies in its usefulness in solving problems, which animals may well do in ways very different from how humans do. Their capabilities and needs are very different. Bernd Heinrich, who has been mentioned a couple of paragraphs earlier, states, 'We can't credibly claim that one species is more intelligent than another unless we specify intelligent in respect to what, since each animal lives in a different world of its own sensory inputs and decoding mechanisms of those inputs.'<sup>103</sup>

Elizabeth Costello makes the point far more bluntly in Coetzee's *The Lives of Animals* when she says:

...scientific experimentation that leads you to conclude that animals are imbeciles is profoundly anthropocentric. It values being able to find your way out of a sterile maze, ignoring the fact that if the researcher who designed the maze were to be parachuted into the jungles of Borneo, he or she would be dead of starvation in a week. If I as a human being were told that the standards by which the animals are measured are human standards, I would be insulted. It is experiments themselves that are imbecile.<sup>104</sup>

Again, as we have noted, reason and intelligence are not the only means of understanding and analyzing the world, integrating experience in consciousness, anticipating and escaping from danger. Intuition and sensory perceptions play a critically important role. J.H. Williams, who spent a large part of his life in the company of elephants in Burma, writes in *Bandoola*, which is about a remarkable male elephant:

I found that Susan [Williams' wife] shared with me the envy of the animals for something they have which man has lost, an understanding of their environment so acute that they seem able to foresee what is going to happen. How is it that the barking deer always barks that familiar call of the jungle when the river is going to reach the full spate that night? I came to know it as a certain forecast. How did it know so surely? And anyway why should it bark? I asked the jungle Burmans, but none of them had an answer. It was years before I noticed that, following the bark, there would be what seemed like ghosts of this lovely little animal fleeting across the river-bed and out of sight. It was merely the male calling his harem to the safe side of the bank before the frightening, thunderous flood poured down. I believed in the forecast of the deer so strongly that I often struck

camp immediately and crossed to the other bank, if that would suit me better for starting in the morning.<sup>105</sup>

Williams further writes that elephants, while not so sensitive to the threat of water, were quick to react in the case of fire. 'They knew even better than men that forest streams were God's fire lines, and hearing the crackle of a forest fire they would put a stream between them and it as soon as possible, yet it seemed with no hurry.'<sup>106</sup> He also tells us how elephants would avoid forest canopies and move to open ground, well away from trees, and stand still before tropical storms.<sup>107</sup> In another incident he relates, a group of pack elephants, who had come a long way bearing loads and had gone into a thick forest to eat, hurried out and stood in an open field totally still, just before an enormous earthquake occurred.<sup>108</sup>

There have been other instances of elephants' ability to sense the coming of a natural calamity. Thus, according to a report in *The Pioneer* of 3 January 2005, at first light on the day the Tsunami waves devastated several countries of Asia, elephants in Thailand's Khao Lak beach started trumpeting, in a manner which, according to *mahout* Dang Salangam, and his wife, Kulada, could only be described as crying. This was about the time when an earthquake, measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale cracked open the sea bed off Indonesia's Sumatra island. They were calmed down but began wailing again about an hour later. This time all the efforts of the *mahouts* failed and the elephants just kept running for the hills. Elephants that were not working broke their massive chains and began running. Almost immediately after that, the big waves started sweeping ashore, carrying everything before them.

The elephants, which saved the lives of dozens of tourists by picking them by their trunks and placing them on their own backs, made their way through the jungles on the hillside before finally stopping. The Tsunami waves, which swept one kilometre inshore, stopped short of where the elephants stood.<sup>109</sup>

Birds can also anticipate danger in a way humans cannot. Tanya Bagchi writes in the *Hindustan Times*:

Every time a worker senses danger in the dark depths of Kothagudem's coal mines, he strains his ears for the *munia* or the canary. The little bird's song may gladden weary souls across the country but for the miners, it's

the *munia's* ability to sniff out poisonous gases like carbon monoxide that reassures them, even more than state-of-the art safety gadgets.

If the bird detects the slightest trace of the gas, the otherwise melodious creature sets up a loud clatter, alerting the workers, and doesn't stop the racket until it is taken out of the mine. No wonder, then, that the birds have been used to sniff danger in the south for 300 years now.<sup>110</sup>

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## Grief and Remorse

Much of what has appeared above makes it clear that if human beings have the advantage of reason, speech and language, and the tremendous power that these faculties have given them, non-human living beings are far closer to nature and far more sensitive to changes in its dynamics that can spell disaster. Besides, they are not without intelligence, the capacity for communication and cooperation, a sense of right and wrong, compassion, and feeling. Animals grieve the death of their young ones or separation from them, and feel pain the same way the human beings do. Besides, Konrad Lorenz points out in *Man Meets Dog*<sup>111</sup>, that highly developed social animals experience something akin to the feeling of remorse that human beings do upon doing something they feel is wrong. Lorenz, who knew a little more about animals than those who demand mass slaughter of stray dogs says that a kind of behaviour he had observed in dogs has led him to this conclusion.

Lorenz mentions an incident in which his French bulldog, Bully, got into a terrible fight with a Hanovarian Schweisshund which he had brought home from a ski-ing tour and of whom Bully was intensely jealous. While he was separating the two, Bully accidentally bit him 'deep in the ball' of his 'right little finger'. Lorenz writes:

That was the end of the fight, but poor Bully had incurred the severest shock to the nervous system that a dog can ever receive: he broke down completely and although I did not admonish him and indeed stroked and coaxed him, he lay on the carpet as though paralysed, a little bundle of unhappiness, unable to get up. He shivered as in a fever and every few seconds a great tremor ran through his body. His breathing was quite superficial but from time to time a deep sigh escaped from his tortured

breast, and large tears overflowed his eyes. As he was virtually unable to rise, I had to carry him down on to the road several times a day....It was several more days before he would eat and even then he would only be cajoled into taking food from my hands.<sup>112</sup>

Lorenz recalls another incident in which an English bulldog, Bonzo, who belonged to a neighbouring family, and who knew him well, had bitten him because the clothes he wore had made him unrecognizable. As he yelled out Bonzo's name in agonized tones, the latter fell 'as though shot by a gun' and grovelled before him on the ground. 'As there had obviously been a misunderstanding' and his 'outfit had prevented serious injury', Lorenz 'spoke encouragingly to Bonzo, caressed him and was ready to forget it. But not so the bulldog'. He followed Lorenz the whole afternoon and, at tea, leaned against his leg. The rest is best described in Lorenz's own words:

Every time I looked at him, he sat up very straight, fixed me on his protruding bulldog eyes and pleaded forgiveness by frantically offering his paw. When we met in the road some days later, he did not greet me in his usual boisterous fashion but in the same attitude of humility, giving me his paw which I shook heartily.<sup>113</sup>

Not just dogs, other animals too feel remorse and apologize in their own ways, which clearly shows that they have some idea of what they should or should not do. This further erodes the artificial dividing line between animals and human beings drawn in the Judaeo-Christian and Renaissance-Humanist traditions respectively. One may argue that while remorse in human beings stems from rational reflection on the nature of their actions and their consequences, it is instinctive in the case of animals. Reason doubtless plays an important role in human beings' retrospective evaluation of their actions, as it has played in the evolution of moral codes, which are constantly redefined or extended to apply to new areas of life and/or aspects of old areas these had earlier ignored. This has been a result both of the extension of human activity to new areas—the cyber world and its segments, for example—and new awareness of some implications of old moral issues which had escaped attention—for example, an exploitative dimension of marital relationships that might have remained hidden.

While moral codes have expanded and become more nuanced and refined to deal with more complex issues and challenges, their basic injunctions against acts like killing, maiming, stealing, robbing, lying, harming of the weak and the vulnerable and betrayal of friends and family members, have remained unchanged since the time when human beings appeared on earth, and when rationality was a faculty which was yet to realize its potential in symbiosis with its own creation and the world. The sense of right and wrong, and also that of the wider phenomenon of morality of which it is a part, was, therefore, in that early stage of development, instinctive, as it has been with animals. Even now, one's reaction to situations that raise moral issues, is often instinctive. Thus, a man who springs to the defence of a woman attacked by a man with a knife, does so instinctively and not after rationally debating what he should do. The same applies in the case of a person who jumps into a swollen river to save a drowning child. In both instances, a rational analysis of the consequences of what one was about to do would perhaps have prevented them from doing what they did by underlining the hazards involved.

Even when a moral injunction is the product of reasoning—prohibiting something which, if allowed, will make peaceful and orderly social life impossible—it often becomes, over a period of time, or over generations, internalized in the form of a taboo which comes to be obeyed instinctively. Thus, in stable societies, an ordinary citizen will not murder someone except in special circumstances.

All this indicates that as one cannot draw a line between human beings and animals on the ground that the latter do not have rationality and intelligence, one can also not do so on the ground that the latter do not have a sense of morality. Human and animal moralities share a common instinctive base though human morality has acquired—with reason acting as its principal instrument—an evolutionary character, to cope with the requirements of increasingly complex and technological societies. Hence there is little warrant for excluding—as the Judaeo-Christian and Renaissance-Humanist traditions tend to do—animals from the moral universe inhabited by humans. The conception of such a moral universe, based on the ideas of a period when science had not revealed the human dimension of the psychological and moral lives of animals and other non-human living beings, is completely untenable.

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## Inconvenient Morality

While saying all this, one must, however, also mention that though Judaeo-Christian and Renaissance-Humanist views on animals helped to create the intellectual and moral ground for excluding non-human living beings from the moral universe created by humans, these did not prescribe their brutal treatment. On the other hand, there have been, as we have seen, elements in the Judaeo-Christian tradition making for kindness toward them. The compassionate injunctions, however, were relegated because it was inconvenient to obey them. One could not have used horses and elephants in war or transporting goods, or bulls and horses in ploughing land, without enslaving them. Besides, new ways of abusing animals became 'necessary' as 'civilisation' proceeded. While the use of animals in warfare and agriculture has declined thanks to the advent respectively of armoured vehicles like tanks and armoured personnel carriers replacing cavalry and elephant corps, and tractors and combined harvesters replacing bulls and horses used for ploughing, the most savage, and in most cases totally unnecessary, torture is inflicted on animals in the name of scientific and medical experiments and even for testing cosmetics! The slaughter of animals for food has increased manifold as meat processing has become a gigantic, organized industry to meet the culinary demands of a rapidly growing global consuming class. Animals, particularly cattle and primates, are now bred and kept in captivity under the most terrible conditions specifically for being slaughtered or used in biomedical experiments. The growing demand for food has also led to the emergence of fishing and poultry farming as organized industries. While fish, pulled out of water, die gasping for breath, hens are kept in coops where they have little room for movement. Industrial use of animal body parts has increased phenomenally. Use of animals in entertainment—in circuses, horse and greyhound racing, bull fights and cock fights, for example—involve the most savage methods of training and their being kept in captivity in small cages where they are utterly cramped.

Theoretically, one can argue that such horrible abuse of animals could have been drastically reduced, if not entirely avoided, had the Judaeo-Christian and Renaissance-Humanist attitudes towards non-human living beings not provided a legitimizing rationale. There



is certainly a point in this and things might have been different if both attitudes had included non-living human beings in the moral universe as conceived by human beings. It would, however, be salutary to remember what has happened on the economic front.

Christianity has always emphasized the importance of faith and piety, and regarded salvation of the soul far more important than power, riches and possessions. Thus one finds in the New Testament, Jesus asking his disciples rhetorically, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'<sup>114</sup> Economic activity has its place but subject to the rules of Christian morality. The New Testament records an incident in which Jesus, arriving in Jerusalem shortly before Passover, entered the temple area, and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. While doing so, he said, 'Is it not written that my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.'<sup>115</sup>

Renunciation and sacrifice were critically important. Jesus told a rich young man who persisted in asking him about the 'goods things' he must do to attain eternal life, 'If you want to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'<sup>116</sup> He told his disciples after the man had left, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'<sup>117</sup> He also said on another occasion, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.'<sup>118</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal'<sup>119</sup> For where your treasure is, your heart will be also.'<sup>120</sup> Jesus further said, 'No man can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and Mammon.'<sup>121</sup>

Christianity's suspicion of economic activity and its belief that powerful economic interests should be kept under strict control, stemmed from a worldview that dominated Christendom until the end of the medieval period, and that made every aspect of life the business of religion. Tawney writes in his classical work, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, that the economic writings of medieval schoolmen rested on two fundamental assumptions: that economic

interests were subordinate to the real business of life, which was salvation, and that economic conduct was one aspect of life upon which, as on other parts, the rules of morality were binding.<sup>122</sup> He further adds, 'There is no place in medieval theory for economic activity that is not related to a moral end...'<sup>123</sup>

Such a view prevailed until at least the first half of the fifteenth century. Tawney writes:

When the age of Reformation begins [in the 16<sup>th</sup> century], economics is still a branch of ethics, and ethics of theology; all human activities are treated as falling within a single scheme, whose character is determined by the spiritual destiny of mankind; the appeal of theorists is to natural law, not to utility; the legitimacy of economic transactions is tried by reference, less to the movements of the market, than to the moral standards derived from the traditional teachings of the Christian Church; the Church itself is a society wielding theoretical, and sometimes practical, authority in social affairs.<sup>124</sup>

All that changed dramatically by the middle of the seventeenth century thanks to the Reformation, which divided the Church between the Roman Catholic and various denominations of the Protestant faith and undermined its authority, the secularization of the State and the attribution of the latter's legitimacy to social contract and not the divine right of kings. The conflict between the new social and economic forces clamouring for the recognition of their legitimacy, and the traditional doctrines of the Church, were suspended by a truce. Under the latter, politics, business and spiritual exercises each assumed 'a separate and independent vitality' and obeyed the laws of its own being. The social functions matured within the Church, and long identified with it, were 'transferred to the State' which in turn was 'idolized as the dispenser of prosperity and the guardian of civilisation'.<sup>125</sup> Religion took 'as its province the individual soul', while economic ambitions claimed the domain 'of the intercourse of man with his fellows in the activities of business and affairs of society'. Peace was assured provided each kept to its territory.<sup>126</sup> Non-human living beings are enslaved and exploited for promoting economic activity. They themselves and their flesh and blood are sold as items of commerce. Thus, even if Christianity's moral laws applied to animals, these would have been made non-applicable and flouted in practice.

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## Precept and Practice

Indeed, Christianity's conception of morality in economic matters was often contemptuously brushed aside. Worse, the Church itself was perhaps the principle offender. R.H. Tawney writes:

...its teaching was violated in practice, and violated grossly in the very citadel of Christendom which promulgated it. Contemporaries were under no illusion as to the reality of economic motives in the Age of Faith. They had only to look at Rome. From the middle of the thirteenth century a continuous wail arises against the inequities of the church, and the burden may be summed up in one word, 'avarice'. At Rome, everything is for sale. What followed is the gospel, not according to St. Mark, but according to the marks of silver.<sup>127</sup>

Things got worse with time. Tawney writes:

The abuses, which were a trickle in the thirteenth century were a torrent in the fifteenth. And the frailties of Rome, if exceptional in their notoriety, can hardly be regarded as unique. Priests, it is from time to time complained, engage in trade and take usury. Cathedral chapters lend money at high rates of interest.<sup>128</sup>

Failure on the part of the faithful—including those ordained to lead them—to conform to doctrinal injunctions is not unique to Christianity. For, the flesh is weak even when the spirit is willing. And the spirit, too, is not always willing. This holds good also for believers in religions that promise eternal life in the hereafter and/or release from the *karmic* cycle of births and rebirths, and even atheists. Corruption was rampant among officials of the communist party and the government functionaries in the erstwhile Soviet Union. It continues to be ubiquitous in the Russia and persistent in China, both of which have long jettisoned the teachings of Marx and Lenin, to say nothing of Mao. In India, the merciless slaughter of stray dogs in Karnataka is emblematic of the unspeakable atrocities that are perpetrated on animals though the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* include them in the moral universe that encompasses all beings—mortal and immortal, animate and inanimate—and regards the creation in its entirety as the

manifestation of the Supreme Being, the Universal Consciousness, Brahman, that is lodged in all beings as the individual consciousness, *Atman*. The next chapter deals with this philosophy and its flouting in practice.

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## Notes

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## Chapter Five

### The Moral Universe of the Soul

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The *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Brahma Sutras* constitute the scriptural architecture of the monotheistic philosophy and monist spirituality of the Vedantic way of life. The *Puranas* and the Great Epics, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* illustrate its application in a physical and moral universe that includes Gods, humans and non-human living beings. Its two cardinal pillars are *dharma* and *karma*.

The term *dharma* is generally defined for the sake of simplicity as 'right conduct'. The latter, however, is determined by criteria rooted in a complex totality that includes in its domain 'law, religion, morality, righteousness, duty, benevolence', and so on. According to T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Dharma* is considered to be the 'primary virtue in Indian culture' and is defined as 'that which sustains society' and is regarded as 'the highest social value on which are to be based the other two social values of *artha* [wealth] and *kama* [desire/pleasure] and the trans-social value of *moksha* [salvation]'.<sup>1</sup>

According to C.S. Venkataswaran, the *Puranas* 'recognize two kinds of *dharma*—*Sadbarana* (general) *Dharma* and *Vishesha* (specific). The latter is also known as *Swadharma*'.<sup>2</sup> *Sadbarana Dharma* is universal in scope and eternal in nature. The *Padma*, *Kurma*, *Agni* and *Garuda Puranas* enumerate the virtues it prescribes as non-injury, forbearance, self-control, compassion, charity, purity, truth and wisdom.<sup>3</sup> Among others, it 'forms the basis of *Swadharma* and prescribes the limits within which the latter is to be observed'.<sup>4</sup> *Swadharma*, as comprehended in the scheme of *Varna* and *Asbrama Dharma*, holds a prominent place in Puranic ethics. The former divides society into four castes [Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra, comprising the priestly, warrior, trading and cultivating castes respectively] each of which has its specific duties.<sup>5</sup>

The *Ashrama Dharmas* are specific duties to be performed by aspirants after spiritual evolution in the specific stages in life. They are *brahmacharya*, *grahastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*. During each of these stages one has to discharge the respective duties of a student, householder, recluse, and an ascetic. These are like four halting stations in the path of life or four rungs in the ladder leading to spiritual progress.<sup>6</sup>

A person's role and position in society determines his or her *dharma*. Lying on his bed of arrows at the end of the epic battle of Kurukshetra, ready to leave his mortal body, finally free of pain and his mind clear, Bhishma told Yudhishtira who had come to learn about *dharma* from him:

A king's first dharma is to worship the Gods, and honour brahmanas who are illumined men. But he himself should always be a karma yogin, a man of deeds....The King's second dharma is to be truthful. If you are a man of truth, your subject will honour you, trust you. A king must be above reproach. He must be restrained, humble and righteous. He must be a master of his passions....Justice must be like breathing to him; it must come naturally. As for his weaknesses, he must know how to conceal them, to be perfectly secretive about them. He must know his enemies' weaknesses, and hardly let them know he does.<sup>7</sup>

Bhishma, who gives a long list of qualities that a King must have and the things he must do, states:

The noblest king is the one in whose country the subjects are like children in their father's house. They are contented, because it is their own home they are living in. There is no deceit or pretence among them, no envy or dishonesty....The essence of a king's dharma is to secure his subjects' prosperity, their happiness. There is no harder task on earth, and he must use varied methods to achieve his ends. Most important are the men he appoints to positions of power.<sup>8</sup>

People too have their *dharma*. Bhishma tells Yudhishtira:

Their first task is to choose a king, and crown him. For his treasury, they must give up a fiftieth part of their livestock and gold, and a tenth part of their grain. They should help him choose from among them men that are proficient at arms, so the kingdom can have an army....<sup>9</sup>

Different categories of people—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Sudras, teachers, students, messengers, and so on—have different sets of *dharmas*. A person must perform his own *dharma* and not of another. The *Bhagavadgita* states, ‘For better is one’s own law though imperfectly carried out than the law of another carried out perfectly. Better is death in (the fulfillment of) one’s own law for to follow another’s is perilous.’<sup>10</sup>

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## The Law of *Karma*

*Karma* is both action and the work that results from it. Given human nature, one is bound to it by the very fact of being born. As the *Bhagavadgita* puts it, ‘For no one can remain for even one moment without doing work: everyone is made to work helplessly by the impulses born of nature.’<sup>11</sup> Each action has consequences according to its nature. Jagnyavalka says in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*:

As a man’s desire is, so is his destiny. For as his desire is, so is his will; as his will is, so is his deed; and as his deed is, so is his reward, whether good or bad.

A man acts according to the desires to which he clings. After death he goes to the next world bearing in his mind the subtle impressions of his deeds; and after reaping there the harvest of his deeds, he returns again to this world of action. Thus he who has desires continues subject to rebirth.<sup>12</sup>

A person’s *karma* determines his or her soul’s journey through a succession of births and rebirths. This doctrine is a corollary of Vedanta’s monist philosophy which sees the universe as a manifestation of *Brahman*, the Universal Soul, which has created the universe and everything in it from itself and pervades each one of them. The *Mundaka Upanishad* says:

Self-luminous is that Being, and formless. He dwells within all and without all. He is unborn, pure, greater than the greatest, without breath, without mind.

From him are born breath, mind, the organs of sense, ether, air, fire, water, and the earth, and he binds all these together.<sup>13</sup>

The *Brahman* is present in all beings as the *Atman* or the individual self (some use the word soul). The two are qualitatively identical. Like the *Brahman*, the *Atman* is unborn, deathless, eternal. It does not die when the body dies. The *Bhagavadgita* states, ‘He is never born, nor does he die at any time, nor having (once) come to be will he cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, permanent and perennial. He is not slain when the body is slain.’<sup>14</sup> Again, ‘Weapons do not cleave this self, fire does not burn him; waters do not make him wet; nor does the wind make him dry.’<sup>15</sup>

The body is left behind as the soul or the *Atman* begins its travels to the next birth in its *karmic* destiny. The *Bhagavadgita* provides a vivid imagery of this when it states, ‘Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and takes on others that are new.’<sup>16</sup>

The doctrine of *karma*, therefore, is rooted in the transcendental, monist metaphysics of the *Upanishads* with its inevitable corollary of transmigration of souls. This in turn is a part of a wider cosmic worldview encompassing a moral universe embracing in its fold the *Brahman*, the divine trinity of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva* (*Maheshwara*), the gods, human beings and the entire world, including all species of living beings and all objects, in it.

The essence of all beings is the same. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, Svetaketu wants to know about the Self from the sage Uddaloka Aruni. The latter tells him, ‘The body dies when the Self leaves it—but the Self dies not.’ He then adds, ‘All that is has its self in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.’<sup>17</sup>

When Svetaketu wanted to know more about the Self, Uddaloka Aruni pointed at a Nyagrodha (Banyan) tree and asked him to bring one of its fruits. He then asked Svetaketu to break it and, that done, he initiated a dialogue that unfolded thus:

What do you see?  
 Some seeds, extremely small, sir.  
 Break one of them.  
 It is broken, sir.  
 What do you see?  
 Nothing, sir.

Uddaloka Aruni continues:

The subtle essence you do not see, in that is the whole essence of the Nyagrodha tree. Believe, my son, that that which is the subtle essence—in that all things have their existence. That is the Truth. That is the Self. And that, Svetaketu, THAT ART THOU.<sup>18</sup>

Since the subtle essence of all is the same, and all are manifestations of *Brahman*, the Supreme Being, the Universal Consciousness, all things and beings are *Brahman*. Thus one learns from the *Sevtaṅsatara Upanishad*:

O Brahman Supreme!  
Formless art thou, and yet  
(Though the reason none knows)  
Thou bringest forth many forms;  
Thou bringest them forth, and then  
Withdraws them to thyself.  
Fill us with thoughts of thee!

Thou art the fire,  
Thou art the sun,  
Thou art the air,  
Thou art the moon,  
Thou art the starry firmament,  
Thou art Brahman Supreme:  
Thou art the waters—thou,  
The creator of all.

Thou art woman, thou art man,  
Thou art the youth, thou art the maiden,  
Thou art the old man tottering with his staff;  
Thou faces everywhere.

Thou art the dark butterfly,  
Thou art the green parrot with red eyes,  
Thou art the thunder cloud, the seasons, the seas,  
Without beginning art thou,  
Without time, without space,  
Thou art he from whom sprang  
The three worlds.<sup>19</sup>

Mountains are regarded as having souls and emotions. They could converse with human beings, *rishis* (a wise ascetic, a sage who is also

a saint) and gods. The *Shiva Purana*, for example, records a conversation between the Vindhya mountain and Narada *muni* (an ascetic sage; a hermit engaged in meditation and spiritual pursuits in seclusion) in which the former tells the latter that he was contented because everything on earth lived on it. As Narada just sighed sympathetically in response, the mountain asked the reason for it. The *muni* replied that while it was true that everything abided in the Vindhyas, Meru mountain was loftier and was counted among the *devas*, which Vindhya was not. As Narada left, Vindhya decided to worship Shiva and began a *tapasya* (austere prayer) in front of an earthen idol of the god. Shiva arrived after six months and asked him to name the boon he wanted. Vindhya said that he wanted an intellect powerful enough to enable him to achieve whatever he wanted.

Shiva was hesitant because he knew that the arrogant mountain could misuse his boon. But he could not refuse as he had already committed himself to a boon of the mountain's choice. So he granted the boon, but at the request of a host of *devas* and *munis* including Narada, which Vindhya too repeated, stayed on as Jyotirlinga Parameshwara (the Supreme Lord as the Refulgent Phallic Symbols), so that his presence had a restraining effect on the mountain.<sup>20</sup>

The monist philosophy of the Upanishads is closely linked with the Puranic theory of creation, which is very different from the Biblical one, a fact which, in a very large measure, explains the different ways the Vedantic-Puranic and Judaeo-Christian traditions view animals. The Genesis starts by saying, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.'<sup>21</sup> Then follows an account of the creation of everything on heaven and earth—light, darkness, day, night, land, water, plants and vegetation, the stars and the sun and the moon, all creatures that live on the earth or in water or the sky (1:25). 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our own image, in our likeness".... So he created man in his own image...in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.'<sup>22</sup>

It was an act of creation from above and from outside. God was—and is—distinct from all that he had created. This becomes clear when one reads, 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, there was morning—the sixth day (1: 31).'<sup>23</sup> It is important to note here that God saw the world he had made and

was not a part of it. Creation was his work—as a building that of the architect and a builder. This becomes clear as one proceeds further:

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (2:2 and 2:3).<sup>24</sup>

Heaven and earth, and everything in both, were God's creation. He viewed them from outside and was not inside them. He was not present in human beings and other living beings as *Atman* or the individual self. God was not man; nor did God create the latter from his own essence. The Genesis says, the Lord God 'formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostril the breath of life, and the man became a living being'. Then a suitable helper had to be found for man. 'So the Lord caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman out of the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man (2: 21-22).'<sup>25</sup>

Underlining the difference between the above account of the creation and the Puranic-Vedantic, T.M.P. Mahadeven writes:

Brahman, in the view of Upanisadic thinkers, is not a demiurge or a *dues ex machina*, standing outside the world while creating it and making it run. There is no extraneous matter out of which Brahman creates the universe. Were God to fashion the world out of a matrix which is 'out there', he would necessarily be limited by that matrix; and a limited and finite God is a contradiction in terms. The Upanisadic view is that there is nothing other than the Brahman; that the world is but a manifestation of a part of Brahman, that Brahman is both the material and efficient cause of the world (*abhinya-nimitta-upadana-karana*).<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the *Taittiriya Upanishad* states:

The Cosmic Self thought to himself, 'I will become many. I will be born.' He then practised austerities. In his case, he only thought. He then created the whole world of living and non-living things. He created them and then entered into them. Having entered into them, he in some cases assumed forms and in some other cases remained formless. In some cases he was characterized by distinct time and place, and in other cases time and



place were not distinct. In some cases he had a shelter [he needed it] and in other cases he had none [he needed none—because he was formless]. Also, in some cases he was conscious and in other cases unconscious. Brahman, the Truth, also manifested itself as the relative truth, as untruth, and so on. Because Brahman manifested itself in all things around us, those who know Brahman call it 'Truth'.<sup>27</sup>

Again:

At first there was no world. There was only Brahman. The world was then in Brahman, who was unmanifested. The world, with all its names and forms, then manifested itself. It was as if Brahman created himself this way. Because Brahman created himself, he came to be known as *Sukrta* [i.e., 'Well-created' or 'Self-created'].<sup>28</sup>

One finds a detailed account of the creation, which occurred in two stages, in the second *Skandha* of *Srimad Bhagavata* or *Bhagavata Purana*. The first stage, *Sarga*, is marked by the emergence of 24 categories from *Prakriti* (root matter). The process started when Mahavishnu, the Supreme Lord, 'took up *Kala* (Time), *Karma* (efficiencies of work) and *Swabhava* (Nature)' which approached him without any effort on his part. 'Associated with the Supreme Being, time became capable of disturbing the equilibrium of the *Gunas*; *Swabhava* of evolving into categories; and *Karma* of effecting the emergence of *Mahattattva* [the cosmic mind].'<sup>29</sup> From the latter, acted upon by the preponderant urges of *Rajas* (forces of passion and activity) and *Tamas* (forces of darkness and inertia) emerged *Abankara* (egoity) which is dominated by *Tamas* which carries with it the sense of substantiality, sentiency and movement. *Abankara* was transformed into its three aspects with the dominance of *Sattva* (forces of purity, peace and enlightenment) *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The first, also known as *Vaikarika*, has the power of knowledge; the second *Taijasa* (as *Rajas* is also called) has the power of action (*Kriya-sakti*); and the third, the egoity of *Tamas*, the power of substantiality (*Drabya-sakti*).<sup>30</sup>

The second *Skandha* describes the emergence of space, sound, wind, breath, energy, mind, fire, water, taste, form, touch, the organs of knowledge—ears, tactile organs, nose, eyes, tongue—and the five organs of action which enable people to speak, hold, walk, excrete and generate. All these categories required for creation, however, remained separate, unable to produce bodies and world systems, until

the Lord entered into them and made them combine in the form of the Cosmic Shell or *Hiranyagarbha*, which is identified with Brahma, the creator. Indeed, according to *Srimad Bhagavata*, Brahma emerged from the Cosmic Shell to initiate the secondary creation, *Visarga*, and aided by Time and latent Karmic tendencies, diversified the various spheres and species of beings.

The spheres, called *Lokas*, are 14 in number, seven of them subterranean and seven above. Swami Tapasyananda points out:

We have to conceive of them as co-existing spheres of varying subtlety, as different dimensions in the Cosmic Mind, without any mutual impact or contradiction which we experience with regard to objects in one and the same space. The conception of these *Lokas* is relevant here, because unlike in the modern view, it conceives [of] consciousness as having embodiment in different spheres. These bodies are subtler and subtler according to the stages of evolution or purification of the *Jivas*, and are adapted to the vibration of *Prakriti* in different dimensions. Our earth consciousness is one such dimension and all that are perceived by our earthly senses, including what the pointer-reading instruments reveal, have to be taken as *Bhuh*, Earth, which will include all the celestial luminaries known or knowable to astronomy. All that is 'earth' and it represents a particular vibration perceivable by beings who have got the required receivers, the senses suited for catching such vibration.<sup>31</sup>

The 13 other *Lokas* are each of subtler or different vibrations, which beings acclimatised to those vibrations and possessing suitable senses, can grasp. The 14 spheres are listed as *Atala*, *Vitala*, *Sutala*, *Talatala*, *Mahatala*, *Rasatala* and *Patala* considered as nether realms, and *Bhuloka*, *Bhuvvarloka*, *Svarloka*, *Maharloka*, *Janaloka*, *Tapaloka* and *Satyaloka*, considered as subtler realms. Each *Loka* has beings of different stages of spiritual evolution.<sup>32</sup> There are more species of beings than those with which people are acquainted with in their quotidian lives on the earth. Their ranks include *Devas*, *Asuras*, *Rakshasas*, *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras*, *Charanas*, *Kinnaras*, and so on.

The *Brahman*, the Supreme Being, pervades every thing that exists, living and non-living. Everything is Him. This becomes clear when Brahma says in the second *Skandha* of the *Srimad Bhagavata* that in his universal cosmic form, Vishnu has the rivers as his blood vessels and the mountain ranges as his bones. His abdomen 'is the indiscrete state of matter, as well as the ocean and the place of dissolution of creatures'. His heart is the mind of creatures. Brahma adds:

The chitta (mind stuff) of that Supreme Person is represented by Dharma, by myself (Brahma), by yourself (Narada), by the eternal sages like Sanaka, by Rudra and by Vijnana (special knowledge). All these and the Rishis, Devas, Asuras, men, elephants, birds, animals, serpents, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakshas, Rakshashas, Bhutas, reptiles, cattle, Pitris, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Charanas, trees, creatures living in water, earth and sky, all the various planets and galaxies, comets, lightning, thunder clouds—in short all things that are, that existed, or will exist, from the Purusha himself. (For, just as all objects that have been made out of gold are only gold, so all these, having come out of Him, are He Himself.<sup>33</sup>)

Therefore, everything deserves respect according to the laws of *dharmā*. Gods and other immortals like the *Gandharvas*, humans, and animals are equally subject to the laws of both *karmic* and temporal justice. This is clearly brought out by an incident mentioned in the *Uttarakanda* (the subsequent chapter) of Krittibas Ojha's Bengali rendition of *Saptakanda Ramayana* (The Ramayana in Seven Kandas or chapters) commonly known as *Krittibas Ramayana*.<sup>34</sup>

One day, while Rama was holding court after returning to Ayodhya and sending Sita to Sage Valmiki's hermitage, and Lakshmana was guarding the entrance, a white dog with red eyes, tired and hungry after a long journey, lame in one leg and limping on three, with thick patches of congealed blood on its head indicating that it was hit by a stick, arrived. Weeping, he came and touched Lakshmana's feet. On being asked about the reason for his coming, he said he would relate his sorrow to Rama if the latter permitted him to do so.

Hearing of the dog's request from Lakshmana, Rama asked it to be brought before him forthwith. Arriving in Rama's presence, the dog began singing his praise with folded hands and head bowed. Rama asked him the reason why he had come. Weeping, he said, 'A *sanyasin* (an ascetic mendicant who has renounced the world) has hit me for no fault of mine. Distressed and hurt after being hit, I have come to your court after starving for three days. The court should please ask the *sanyasin* what was my fault that he should have hit me with a stick. Rama said that the *sanyasin* should be brought immediately to his presence so that the court could judge. How could a *sanyasin* be cruel to an animal?'

The dog accompanied Rama's messenger and identified the *sanyasin* who was brought before Rama who asked:

Why have you abandoned your *dharma* and are cruel to animals? One who perpetrates *adharma* has to live in hell. What kind of renunciation is yours when your body is so full of anger? Castigation of others and malevolence toward others are grave sins. A terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanyasin*. A *sanyasin* who has given up greed, illusion, desire and anger is respected in this world. And, though a *sanyasin*, you suddenly burst into anger! What was the fault of the dog that you hit him with a stick?

The *sanyasin* replied:

I went to the town for alms after reciting prayers on the banks of the Ganga during the whole day. Begging for alms, my whole body burning with hunger, I found the dog lying in front occupying the whole road. I loudly asked him to give way but he pretended not to hear. He was asleep with one eye and looking at me with the other. I became angry and hit him on the head with a stick. Now that I have said all this in the court, you decide what punishment to give me.<sup>35</sup>

On Rama asking the courtiers to decide, they said with folded hands:

Our wisdom says this: nobody has a royal right over a public thoroughfare. The good, the bad, the whole world moves through it. If a person has an urgent work, he should walk on one side. The *sanyasin* is guilty.<sup>36</sup>

Rama asked the court to tell him what should the *sanyasin's* punishment be. The courtiers replied that he should be barred from bathing in the Ganga. At this, the dog said that the *sanyasin* should not be punished but put at the head of the kingdom of Kalinjar. The courtiers laughed as Rama made the *sanyasin* the king of Kalinjar. Climbing on elephant back, his splendour enhanced by the royal sceptre, the *sanyasin* began travelling happily toward Kalinjar as people laughed at his attire—a loincloth—with the royal umbrella above his head.

The courtiers asked Rama: Why had a kingdom been given to the *sanyasin* when he was brought to be punished? Rama said, 'I have given him the kingdom at the instance of the dog. He knows all the details.' The dog then told Rama that he was the king of Kalinjar in his previous birth and:

There is a curse by Shiva under which death does not alter the king's destiny to be reborn as a dog. Shiva is very harsh in Kalinjar. I was the king in my previous birth and now I have been reborn as a dog and suffered much. But having seen you, I will now escape from my torment.<sup>37</sup>

While everyone said that the *sanyasin's* worldly possessions have now increased, the dog said, 'Have no doubt, whoever becomes the king of Kalinjar, becomes a dog in the next birth.' Having said this, the dog did *namaskar* to Rama and travelled slowly to Varanasi where he fasted to death and attained heaven because he had seen Rama.

The episode underlined four important things. First, the dog and humans could speak and make themselves understood to one another without any difficulty. Second, Rama, an *avatara* (incarnation) of Vishnu, recognized that the dog, obviously a stray that lived on the road, was entitled to justice. Third, he was not only prepared to punish even a *sanyasin* who had unjustly hit the dog with a stick but ultimately agreed to do what the dog had requested. This clearly indicates that in the eyes of Rama, whose reign has been held up in the Hindu tradition, as an example of the best form of governance there could ever be, a stray dog and a *sanyasin* had the same claim to justice. Fourth, the incident showed that while one's *karmic* destiny was inexorable as far as a person's fate in the next birth was in question, what a person did in the latter determined his or her fate thereafter. In this case, the dog could break his chain of successive births and deaths because he had seen Rama and embraced death through fasting as an act of penance. This in turn indicated that the law of *karma* applied even to animals like stray dogs who could attain *moksha* or salvation through penance and good deeds.

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## Equally to All

In fact, the law of *Karma* applied even to Gods and other immortals, to say nothing of human beings. Several incidents in the *Mahabharata* clearly underline this. The *Adi Parva* (Ancient Chapter) of the epic describes how, while out on a hunt, Shantanu, father of Bhishma and King of Hastinapura, met a beautiful young woman on the banks of the river Ganga and fell desperately in love with her. She agreed to

marry him on two conditions. He was never to ask her who she was nor question any of her actions, however terrible these might seem to be. She would leave him for ever if he did either.<sup>38</sup>

He agreed and she became the Queen of Hastinapura and they lived happily until the first child was born. Almost immediately after birth, she took him to the Ganga and drowned him. Shantanu felt deeply hurt and surprised but, true to his oath, did not question her about what she had done. This happened with seven sons she bore and the King's grief and distress, growing progressively intense and turning into anger and yielding to dark suspicions about her nature, finally became uncontrollable when the eighth son was born. Knowing that she would go to the Ganga to drown him, he waited for her and, when she came, angrily asked how she could do such a terrible thing and shouted that she could not kill his child.

Hurt, she handed over his son to him saying that he needed the child more than her and that the curse had ended. Revealing herself to be the holy river Ganga, she explained what accounted for her conduct. In an earlier birth, when heaven and earth were closer and Gods, other immortals and humans moved easily between the two worlds, Shantanu, as King Mahabhishek, was present in Indra's court. Ganga arrived there, as she often did, and the two were powerfully and visibly attracted toward each other. As the Devas saw this forbidden attraction between an immortal and a mere mortal, they cursed both to a human life in which they would be king and queen for a while and satisfy their desires.

The seven sons she drowned, and the eighth one she handed over to Shantanu, were eight immortal *vasus* (minor deities of the Hindu pantheon). The sage Vasishta had cursed them to human birth for stealing his beloved cow Nandini. As they begged for mercy, he told seven of them that they would have to spend nine months in the darkness of their mother's womb but would be free almost immediately after they were born. The eighth, Prabhasha, who actually stole the cow, would, however, have to live out the full span of his life as a human. He then asked the eight to find a woman who would be their mother.

They begged Ganga to be so. Knowing that the other curse was hanging over her and longing for Mahabhishek, she agreed. On hearing all this, Shantanu begged her to forgive him and handed over the son to her. The child, with whom Ganga then disappeared, grew

up to be Devavrata, who, years later, became known as Bhishma for his resolve to give up his claim to the throne of Hastinapura, and vow of remaining celibate throughout his life, both pronounced to enable his father to marry Satyawati, a fisherman's daughter with whom Shantanu had become infatuated.<sup>39</sup>

Before going into that story, which is significant from another aspect, it is important to note that Ganga, a divine Goddess manifest in the world as a holy river that washes away the sins of all who bathe in it, had to be born as a human for her *karma* of being physically attracted to a mortal king, Mahabhishek. The eight *vasus* had also to be reborn as punishment for stealing a cow. What is particularly remarkable, Vasishtha whose curse consigned them to a mortal life, was himself a mortal though he was a great sage whose meditation and penances had earned him cosmic powers. He was not the only one. In the world of the epics and the *Puranas*, human sages could acquire powers that could halt Gods in their tracks.

They could, like the gods, also assume the form of animals. Thus, one finds in the *Adi Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, the story of an old sage and his wife, who, after a long spell of abstinence, were swept by passion and, assuming the form of a deer and a hind, lay locked in passion for several days. One evening Pandu, son of Satyawati's daughter Ambalika and Ved Vyasa (the creator of *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* [from ancient revelations], and the man who separated the four Vedas), found them so locked while out on a hunt. Flushed with his victories far and wide and caught in the excitement of the hunt, he forgot the old hunting rule not to shoot mating animals. His arrow went through the sage's heart. Becoming a man again, dying in pain as his wife also lay dying because of her love for him, the sage first reprimanded Pandu for his cruel act and then cursed him that he would die the next time he made love to a woman.<sup>40</sup> And Pandu did die when he forced himself upon his wife Madri—who, aware of the curse, resisted, though unsuccessfully—in a moment of uncontrollable passion.

Noting here that the rule that hunters could not kill mating animals showed that the latter too had rights even when it came to hunting, one needs to go back to the story of Devavrata's renunciation and vow, and the background to both of these. Sixteen years after they parted, Shantanu again met Ganga on the edge of her flowing

waters and she brought to him their son Devavrata who, she said, was trained in every aspect to be king. Shantanu brought him back and he was duly made *Yvvaraja* or crown prince. But then one day on a hunt, Shantanu went to the river Yamuna and saw Satyavati who sat dipping her feet in water, a heavenly scent emanating from her body. He was at once besotted and wanted to marry her. Her father agreed to give her in marriage but on condition that her son would be king.

Thinking of Devavrata, Shantanu refused and returning to his capital, spent his days pining for her.<sup>41</sup> To cut the story short, learning the cause of his suffering, Devavrata visited the fisherman and pronounced the two vows (mentioned earlier) that enabled his father to marry Satyavati. While the development is very important in terms of the unfolding of the *Mahabharata's* narrative, what is significant in terms of the epic's inclusive worldview relating to all living beings, is, however, the manner of Satyavati's birth. She was born Matsyagandhi and thereby hangs a tale.

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### From the Womb of a Fish

It begins with king Uparichara Vasu of Chedi who, while on a hunt, remembered his wife's beautiful body and ejaculated onto a banyan leaf.<sup>42</sup> Folding it and chanting a potent *mantra*, he asked his hunting falcon to take it to his wife Girika as soon as it could. While on its flight, the falcon was attacked by a fishing eagle and, as they fought, the banyan leaf fell into the river. There the seed was swallowed by a large fish with golden scales who became pregnant at once. In 10 months she became so big that she could hardly move and mostly lay on the bed of the river. One day, she was caught by a fisherman who cut open her stomach and was momentarily blinded as an *apsara* (a beautiful nymph of paradise skilled in music and dancing) emerged from it and journeyed heavenward. Regaining his vision he found two human babies, a boy and a girl, lying next to each other inside her.<sup>43</sup>

The account of a fish giving birth to two human babies is important here as it clearly shows that the great epic did not draw an insurmountable line between human and non-human forms of life. Second, the fish was really an *apsara* named Adrika who had come down from heaven to Yamuna for a swim and who, irresistibly



attracted to a meditating *rishi*, had pulled him playfully by the ankle. Instead of finding her irresistible and making love to her, the *rishi*, furious that she had disturbed his meditation, turned her into a fish by a curse.<sup>44</sup> This account further underlines the fact that in the worldview of the *Mahabharata*, a *rishi*'s curse could make an immortal creature of the heavens undergo a life on the earth as a fish.

One has to return to the original narrative here because the girl child born of the fish played a major role both in the writing of the *Mahabharata* and the epical course of events it describes. The fisherman took both the babies to King Uparichara Vasu. The king, who could guess how these were conceived, kept the boy whom he christened Matsaraja who later ruled his father's kingdom as ably as his father had done. He allowed the fisherman to take the girl. The fisherman called her Matsyagandhi (one who smelt like a fish) because of the way she smelled. Her son, a fortune teller told him, would some day be king.

One day, the great *rishi* Parashara, whom Matsyagandhi had been ferrying across the Yamuna at her father's behest, and who was greatly attracted toward her as she led him to the boat, persuaded her to make love to him. She laid down four conditions—neither her father nor anyone else should come to know about the incident, her virginity would remain intact, the son born of their love would be a 'magician' like Parashara and that she would always smell as sweetly as she had come to under Parashara's spell. He agreed and they made love in an island in the Yamuna.<sup>45</sup>

Born in an island or a *dwip*, their son came to be called Dwaipayana, who subsequently became famous as Veda Vyasa. Later, Matsyagandhi, renamed Satyavati, married Shantanu. Their two sons, Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya, died young, the first in a duel with a Gandharva (a demi-god proficient in music and warfare),<sup>46</sup> and the second, of consumption.<sup>47</sup> Vichitraveerya left behind two young widows, Ambika and Ambalika, and the kingdom without an heir. After mourning her second son's death for a month, Satyavati requested Bhishma to marry Ambika and Ambalika. Bhishma, never forgetful of his vow of celibacy, refused.

Bhishma, who was then ruling the kingdom as regent, told her one day that, according to custom, when a royal house was in danger of becoming extinct, it might call a brahmin to sire an heir by a woman

of the family. Satyavati thought of her son Veda Vyasa, often referred to as Vyasa, whom she had not met in years but who, taking leave of her, had promised to be with her if she ever wanted him to be. Vyasa came and Ambika and Ambalika both had sons by him. Ambika, however, had kept her eyes closed throughout their union so terrified was she by Vyasa's wild looks, the result of years of penance and forest dwelling. As a result, her son, who grew up to be Dhritarashtra, the head of the Kuru clan, was born blind. Satyavati, whom Vyasa had told what had happened and what the unborn child's fate would be, had warned Ambalika to keep her eyes open. So she kept her eyes open but became pale with fear. Hence, Ved Vyasa told Satyavati, her child would be white in colour. That child was named Pandu (pale) because of the colour of his skin, and came to be the head of the Pandavas.<sup>48</sup>

Thus the two great royal houses, around the story of whose rivalry the theme of the *Mahabharata* unfolds, leading to the great battle of Kurukshetra, had, as their maternal grandmother, a woman who was born in the womb of an *apsara* turned into a fish. There is another similar example in *Mahabharata* in which a *rishi's* anger had turned five *apsaras* into huge, deadly crocodiles for disturbing his meditation. They were to remain crocodiles for a hundred years each and then a *kshatriya* (a member of the warrior caste) would liberate them.

Arjuna, the third of the five Pandava brothers, did this while on his 12-year pilgrimage tour of India following his breach of a rule that Narada had laid down: that each of the Pandava's would keep Draupadi<sup>49</sup> for a year as Queen, and that any other Pandava who intruded into their privacy during this period would have to go on pilgrimage for 12 years during which he could not see Draupadi. Once Arjuna had to pass through Yudhishtira's private apartment when the latter, the eldest Pandava, was alone with Draupadi, to get his bow and arrow to rescue a brahmin's cattle from thieves. He rescued the cattle but having broken the rule insisted on going on the prescribed pilgrimage despite Yudhishtira's remonstrances.<sup>50</sup>

During his wanderings, he was told by sages that five deadly crocodiles lived in five of the holiest rivers and devoured all who went to bathe in them. Wading into one of them, he subdued the great crocodile and brought her to the shallows near the shore where she became a shining *apsara*, told him of the curse, and requested him to

liberate the other four too, which he did the same way he had set her free.<sup>51</sup>

Arjuna could do this because he had received from Ulupi, daughter of the snake king Naga Kaurava, the boon that no harm would ever come to him while he was in water—sea, lake or river. He had met her when in the course of the same pilgrimage, he had gone to bathe in the Bindusaras lake in the Himalayas by whose shore he had lived contentedly for several months. One day, while entering the water to bathe, he was pulled irresistibly to the bed of the lake, and there, through a magic opening, into a jewelled chamber. There Ulupi, who had been watching him worshipping the Sun and bathing every day, spoke of her irresistible attraction for him. They made love for a long time and, parting in the midst of deep mutual sadness, she conferred the boon on him.<sup>52</sup>

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## Sons of Gods

Clearly, not only could an *apsara* be turned into a fish but be made to bear human babies too. Arjuna could make love to a snake who had assumed the form of a beautiful woman. Gods could have children by both humans and animals. We have seen how a dying *rishi* had cursed Pandu that he would die whenever he made love to a woman again. From this followed developments, narrated in the *Mahabharata* and pertaining to an aspect of inter-species relations mentioned above. Gods could have children by humans. After Pandu had told his two wives, Kunti and Madri, of the old *rishi*'s curse, they decided not to have sex any more—until the fatal occasion which caused his death. They had settled down to a life of continence when Pandu, who had repeatedly been told by his grandmother, Satyawati, that a man who died without children was accursed and ended in hell, began to long for them.

To skip several narrative steps, it was decided that Kunti should chant the *mantra* (incantation) that the sage Durvasa, pleased with the way she had looked after him when he was visiting her father, King Kuntibhoja, had taught her. Its recitation could bring to her presence any god whom she thought of while reciting it. Thus Kunti had Yudhishtira, Bheema and Arjuna by the gods *Dharma*, *Vayu* and *Indra* respectively. This made Madri envious and resentful of

Kunti, who, at Pandu's instance, recited the *mantra* for her and she had Nakula and Sahadeva by the two *Aswins* (brothers who were physicians in heaven).<sup>53</sup>

This was, however, not the first time that Kunti had a son by a god. She had, before her marriage, chanted the *mantra* on a beautiful morning and Surya Deva, the sun god, had arrived in her presence and impregnated her. Their resplendent son, born almost immediately after the event, came with a golden *Kavacha* (armour) and golden *Kundala* (ear ornament). Though Surya Deva had repaired Kunti's breached virginity, she was still left with the baby and did not know how to explain its presence. Panicking at the thought of the consequences, she wrapped the baby in silk, put it in a sandalwood box and set it afloat in the river that flowed by her palace. Found by a charioteer, Adhiratha, the baby was brought up by him and his wife, Radha, and grew up to be Karna, Arjuna's bitter rival, half-brother to the Pandavas and a tragic, star-crossed figure.

Gods could impregnate not only human beings but non-human animals as well. Hanumana, a pivotal figure in *Ramayana*, who set fire to Lanka, the capital of Ravana, and who has been revered through the ages for his unflinching devotion to Rama, was the son of the wind god, *Pavana* (synonym for *Vayu*), by a beautiful monkey, Anjana.<sup>54</sup> This made him Bheema's half brother and the *Vana Parva* (Forest Chapter) of the *Mahabharata* describes an amusing encounter between the two in a forest on Mount Gandhadana near Badarikasrama where the Pandavas, consigned to 12 years of exile in forests and another year of *Ajnatavasa* (living incognito), had been staying.

Moving deep into the forest to fetch *Saugandhika* flowers, whose heavenly fragrance had enchanted Draupadi, Bheema heard the heavy sound of something falling and felt the earth tremble. Trying to find out who made the noise, he saw an old monkey with a tail, longer and finer than any he had ever seen, lying on his path. It was Hanumana, who had come specifically to meet him. He knew neither this nor the identity of the old monkey, who, as Bheema growled threateningly to scare him away, said in chaste human language of another age that he was too old to move. He engaged in a conversation with Bheema who was increasingly impatient of delay and would not agree to his suggestion of leaping over him as he was older than the second Pandava.<sup>55</sup> Finally, he agreed to the monkey's suggestion that he should push

the latter's tail out of the way and move forward. He could not move the tail even a little bit however hard he tried. He collapsed with the effort and, regaining consciousness, found that the old monkey had vanished and, in its place, a magnificent, resplendent one stood over him. As a chastened and bewildered Bheema asked him who he was, he laughed and revealed his identity as Hanumana. They had a joyous meeting and a long and pleasant conversation before Hanumana left and Bheema moved forward in quest of the flowers.<sup>56</sup>

Hanuman, however, was not the only monkey born of gods. A number of other monkeys who helped Rama and Lakshmana to build the bridge to Lanka to rescue Sita, and fought alongside them against Ravana, the demon king who had abducted her, were of similar origin. Sugriva was born of the Sun, Hemkut of Varuna the god of the oceans, Kesari of Shiva, Neel, the general, of Agni, the god of fire, Pramathi of Kubera, the god of wealth, Sushena of Dhanantvari, the divine physician, and so on.<sup>57</sup>

These births were, of course, not accidental, but part of a well-laid plan by gods to defeat Ravana, the king of demons who ruled Lanka. Under a boon from Brahma, that neither a *Yakshya*, nor a demon, nor a *Gandharva* nor an *apsara* nor any being on earth and the sky, nor any *Pisacha* (a necrophagous evil spirit or a ghoul) nor any poisonous snake could kill him,<sup>58</sup> he had become invincible and tyrannized even the gods. Since this meant that only humans and monkeys could kill him, Vishnu reincarnated himself as Rama.<sup>59</sup> Sita was a reincarnation of Lakshmi (goddess of wealth and fortune).<sup>60</sup> The day Rama was born as a reincarnation of Vishnu, Ravana's throne shook in Lanka and his crown suddenly fell on the ground. His brother, the pious Vibhisana, told him that Lord Narayana (another name of Vishnu) had been born to kill him. Deciding to kill the new-born before it could grow up and harm him, Ravana sent two spies, Suka and Sarana to find out. Devout worshippers of Vishnu, they recognized Rama as the latter's incarnation, did *pranam* (reverential salutation done by touching a person's feet) to him and decided not to tell Ravana the truth. Instead, they told him they had searched the three worlds<sup>61</sup> but could not find any enemy of his. Any evil arising from the crown falling down could be offset by bathing in the waters of all holy places and distributing gold among the poor and Brahmins. Ravana did both, with the Ocean fetching the waters of all the holy places at his command.<sup>62</sup>

To rid the world of evil, Vishnu had also reincarnated himself in the form of *Varaha* (Boar), *Matsya* (fish), *Kurma* (tortoise) and *Nrisimha* (Man-Lion, whose upper half was like a man's and lower, like a lion's). Brahma mentions these reincarnations in *Srimad Bhagavata* (or *Bhagavata Purana*). According to him:

When the primeval demon Hiranyakashipu buried the earth at the bottom of the ocean, the Lord took the form of a Cosmic Boar, the embodiment of all *Yagnas*, in order to lift up the earth. He tore the *asura* (demon) to pieces with His tusk, as Indra split the mountains with his thunderbolt.<sup>63</sup>

Vishnu reincarnated Himself as a fish, that supported the earth and all living beings, and sported in the waters of the fierce deluge that occurred at the end of a cosmic era, carrying the Vedas that fell from Brahma's mouth.<sup>64</sup> He appeared as a huge tortoise when *Devas* and *Asuras* started churning the ocean of milk and supported Mount Mandara, which was being used as the churning rod. The 'whirling of the enormous mountain on his back' created only a pleasant feeling of scratching that that put him to sleep.<sup>65</sup> Again, assuming:

...the form of a Man-Lion, whose terrible laughter caused great fear even among the denizens of heavens, and whose face was fierce with quivering eyebrows and protruding fangs—he threw down on the ground the advancing demon Hiranyakashipu, powerful and armed with a mace, put him on his lap, and tore off his chest with His claws.<sup>66</sup>

Nanditha Krishna's *Sacred Animals of India* carries a colour reproduction of Raja Ravi Varma's painting showing Lord Dattatreya with four dogs representing the four Vedas.<sup>67</sup> She points out, 'Lord Dattatreya, looked upon as the incarnation of the holy trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, is usually accompanied by four faithful dogs, which symbolically represent the four Vedas and his complete mastery over them.'<sup>68</sup> Lord Shiva is often associated with dogs. Krishna further points out that in his wrathful form as Lord Bhairava, he is usually accompanied by a dog or seen as riding a dog as his *vahana* (carrier). Feeding and caring for dogs is believed to be a special way of showing affection to Lord Bhairava.<sup>69</sup> Khandoba, a form of Lord Shiva and the patron deity of Marathas, she adds, is accompanied by a dog. Also, many *bairagis* (same as *sanyasis*: ascetic meditants who have renounced the world and taken to religious ways) keep dogs as their

companions in imitation of Lord Bhairava who is generally depicted as a *bairagi*.<sup>70</sup>

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## A Little Brown Dog

If the reincarnation of gods as humans and animals provides yet another indication of the inclusive worldview of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* which regards all beings in the universe as belonging to a single community without rigid biological and moral boundaries among species, another is offered by the depiction of members of one species being turned into another by a *rishi* or a god. According to this worldview, human beings had toward animals the same responsibility as they had toward other human beings. This is most tellingly underlined by an account in the *Mahaprasthanika Parva* (chapter of Great Departure, that is, to hereafter) of the *Mahabharata*. A small, brown dog appeared from nowhere and began following the five Pandavas and Draupadi as they started on their final journey out of this world after crowning Parikshita, Abhimanyu's son by Uttara, king in Hastinapura. It followed them to Dwarka and then through the plains of Bharatvarsha, to the Himalaya mountain, which they began to climb.

Finally, they arrived on the slopes of majestic Meru, the mountain at the heart of the earth. One by one, Draupadi, Sahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna and Bheema fell and died. Yudhishtira walked on, followed by the dog. Suddenly, Indra (the king of the deities of the Hindu pantheon) appeared in his flying chariot and said that he had come to take Yudhishtira to heaven. The latter replied that he did not want to go to heaven without his wife and brothers who had died during the journey. Indra replied that they were already in heaven, but Yudhishtira, being king of *dharmā*, would have the privilege of entering heaven in mortal body. Saying that he would go to heaven if Indra assured him that his wife and brothers were already there, Yudhishtira pleaded that he be allowed to take the dog, which had followed him all the way from Hastinapura, to heaven.

Indra laughed at Yudhishtira for wanting to take the dog to heaven with him when he was being offered immortality and equality with the gods. There was, he said, no place for a dog in heaven. As Indra persisted in refusing to take the dog in his flying chariot, Yudhishtira

said, 'All my punya [virtue; also fruits of virtuous deeds] will vanish if I abandon the dog now. He is dependent on me, I cannot leave him. It would be a worse sin than killing a brahmana.'<sup>71</sup>

Indra replied 'You left your brothers and your queen. Does the dog mean more to you than they did?'<sup>72</sup>

Yudhishtira said, 'My brothers and my wife were dead when I left them. I could do nothing for them any more. The dog is alive and is helpless. I cannot abandon him. I will not go to *swarga* (heaven) unless he comes with me.'<sup>73</sup>

Finding Indra smiling mysteriously and looking beyond him, Yudhishtira turned round. The dog had vanished. Yudhishtira's father, Dharma Deva, the god of *dharmā*, stood in his place. Said Dharma, 'I tried you once in Dwaitavana, and you asked for Nakula's life to be restored. Now I have tested you again and you have earned heaven for yourself by your mercy.'<sup>74</sup>

It is important to note two things here apart from the fact that Yudhishtira's refusal to enter heaven without the dog showed his strong sense of morality. First, he said that abandoning the dog would 'be worse than killing a brahmana'. The killing of a brahmin was considered a particularly heinous crime in the age of the *Mahabharata* and Yudhishtira considered that abandoning the dog to its fate would be a crime worse than that. Second, Dharma Deva chose to follow the five Pandavas and Draupadi in the form of a dog. Apart from the fact that this provides one more instance showing that the gods and *rishis* can assume the form of any living being, it suggests recognition of the qualities of loyalty and devotion that characterize dogs which make their ties with humans very special. That the nature of these ties sometimes assumes almost a spiritual character is clear from the testimony of none other than Konrad Lorenz. He writes, 'The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of friendship and the strength of the spiritual ties with which he has bound himself to man...'<sup>75</sup>

Here we have an example of the great epic, *Mahabharata*, relating an incident that underlines the inclusion of animals in the common moral universe encompassing all beings, mortal and immortal, animate and inanimate, implicit in the monist philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the *Vedas* that affirm the presence of the Universal Consciousness, *Brahman*, in all beings as the individual consciousness, *Atman*. Everything in the universe is a manifestation of the Universal



Consciousness, or the Supreme Being, and is, therefore, sacred. No living being can be regarded as evil or accursed as long as he or she does not violate the laws either of *Swadharma* or *Sadharana Dharma*.

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## Perceptions of the Snake

The difference between the Vedantic and Judaeo-Christian approaches to animals is most clearly reflected in their respective attitudes toward serpents. In the Old Testament, a serpent persuaded Eve to eat a fruit of the Tree of Knowledge which God had forbidden her—and Adam—to eat. She in turn persuaded Adam to do the same.<sup>76</sup> When God found out what had happened, he said to the serpent:

Cursed are you above all the livestock  
and all the wild animals!  
You will crawl on your belly  
and you will eat dust  
all the days of your life.  
And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman  
and between your offspring and  
hers;  
he will crush your head,  
and you will strike his heels.<sup>77</sup>

He told Eve that He would ‘greatly increase’ her ‘pain at childbearing’, that childbirth would be painful and her husband would rule over her.<sup>78</sup> He told Adam that throughout his life he would have to secure his food through painful toil. The soil would produce thorns and thistle for him and that he would eat the plants of the fields and procure his food with the sweat of his brow, until he returned to the dust that he was.<sup>79</sup>

Christians traditionally identify serpents with the Satan. The *Revelation* talks of a great war in heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels and says that the great dragon, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the world astray, was hurled to the earth with his angels. Hence the heavens and those who live in them should rejoice and woe to earth and sea because the devil has come down to both.<sup>80</sup>

One finds a very different view of serpents in the *Puranas* and the great epics. In the *Srimad Bhagavata*, Adishesha, the thousand-headed serpent who represents Eternal Time or unmodified *Prakriti*, constitutes the bed on which Vishnu reclines at the beginning of the creative cycle.<sup>81</sup> Snakes hang from the neck of Shiva.

The *Mahabharata* indicates that snakes could be protectors, benefactors, friends and lovers of human beings. We have seen how Ulupi and Arjuna made love. The *Adi Parva* of the epic describes an incident in which Duryodhana, with the connivance of Shakuni, organized an outing for the princes of the Kuru court, at a place called Pramankoti on the Ganga. He built there a massive pavilion and a kitchen that rivalled the one at Hastinapura. The Pandavas, whom he had earlier disarmed by a show of friendliness, and the Kaurvas gorged themselves on the sumptuous food served, after playing and wrestling boisterously in the sun. While they were eating and feeding one another, Bheema consumed the deadly, slow-acting night-shade poison, which Shakuni had procured from gypsies, with his food.

The princes swam after they ate and, coming out of the water, Bheema sighed and flopped on the sand. On Arjuna asking him whether he was all right, he said he was fine and would join them after sleeping for a while. As all of them became busy with another round of eating, Duryodhana slipped out, tied Bheema's hands and feet with vine and rolled him down into the river. As Bheema sank like a stone, Ganga, who had been the wife of Shantanu, whose daughter-in-law Ambalika was Pandu's mother and Bheema's grandmother, warned the serpents who had their nests in the deepest bed of the river, that a dangerous enemy had arrived in their midst. They attacked him relentlessly as he sank through the sand into the world of the *nagas* (snakes). As Ganga had expected, snake venom cured the effect of nightshade, and freeing himself, Bheema began killing the snakes who ran to their king, the great Vasuki, the lord of all serpents, seeking deliverance.

Vasuki, who was then seated in his human form, and who could guess from their descriptions who the young man was, went to see him along with his minister, Aryaka, an aged serpent who was the grand father of Kunti's father, Kuntibhoja. Aryaka threw his arms around Bheema and addressed him as 'My little son!'. Vasuki embraced him and told him who they were. They blessed him as the Second Pandava knelt before them. Vasuki then touched him on the shoulder, leaving a

mark that glowed like blue jade. Declaring Bheema as a friend of the *nagas* everywhere, he said that his subjects will identify Bheema by the mark and help him whenever necessary. Vasuki then had brought for Bheema *Nagamrita*, elixir of the *nagas*, made of snake essences and venom, crushed jewels and other rare substances, according to mysterious recipes handed down generations. He told Bheema that each draught of it that he swallowed would give him the strength of a hundred elephants. The Second Pandava had eight chalices of it and slept uninterrupted for eight days—one for each chalice—at the end of which he felt enormously powerful.

After Bheema had eaten a huge meal and put on the clothes the *nagas* had brought for him, Vasuki told Bheema that he was now stronger than a thousand elephants. Bheema knelt and thanked him. Vasuki blessed him, as did Aryaka. Then they had him escorted to the river bank by several *nagas*.<sup>82</sup>

There are no doubt snakes that are malevolent and poisonous. That, however, does not make the entire species an object of hate. They have to be punished whenever necessary and forgiven if they repent. Thus one finds the story of Kaliya, the black serpent, in *Skandha Ten of Srimad Bhagavata*.<sup>83</sup> He had fled from the island of Ramanaka in the seas to escape the wrath of Garuda, the mythical prince of birds who was Vishnu's vehicle, whom he had provoked by eating up the food other snakes offered him every day of a full moon night and daring to take him on in a fight. He had come to live in the river Yamuna along with his wives and friends. So strong was the poison he had injected into the water that birds who flew over it fell dead. All plants, birds and animals on the banks of the river in that region died following contact with the poisonous particles of the water wafted by the breeze.

One day, Krishna, his brother Balarama, and his friends and their cattle had gone to the river. The friends and the cattle died after drinking the water. Reviving them by looking into them—his eyes shed the nectar of immortality—and realizing that the waters had been poisoned, Krishna decided to purify them by killing the serpent and jumped into the river. Kaliya bit Krishna all over and coiled himself around Krishna's body, immobilizing him. As all the *gopas* and *gopis* as well as Krishna's mother rushed to the riverside hearing of this and watching the frightening omens that had appeared on the land and sky, Krishna, who had so long been behaving like a human being,

forced Kaliya to relax his coils. Freeing himself, he began to dance on Kaliya's hoods, kicking, bruising and putting down whichever one he raised.

His umbrella-shaped head bruised, and wounded all over the body, Kaliya began vomiting blood and thinking of the Lord of all moving and unmoving beings in whom all living beings must ultimately return. Seeing his state, Kaliya's wives began singing Krishna's praise, saying that he had conferred a great boon by dancing on his head and imploring that he be pardoned. Reviving slowly after Krishna had stopped, Kaliya repented and said that Krishna alone could help serpents overcome their aggressive nature. Krishna, who spared him, asked him to leave the Yamuna and return to Ramanaka island as Garuda would not harm him as he bore the marks of the Blue God's (Krishna's) feet on his head. Worshipping him, offering him gifts and, securing his blessings, Kaliya left for Ramanaka along with his wives and friends.<sup>84</sup>

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## In the Heart of Nature

The emphasis on including all living beings in the same universe of morality and compassion as humans, is perhaps a result of the fact that the philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads evolved in forest hermitages in the heart of pristine nature, in the midst of trees and animals. The *rishis* whose reflections lent that philosophy its content, had developed deep understanding and empathy for animals, trees, birds, snakes and all other living beings that inhabited the forests. They realized that animals, even those regarded as ferocious and bloodthirsty, were neither vicious nor evil and that their violence was related to their survival needs and not of the malignant variety found among humans. On the other hand the Judaeo-Christian tradition evolved in cities, many of which were set in the midst of wilderness. The region had nothing like the dense forests and the wide, powerful rivers of India and, as Paul Waldau points out, *The Old Testament* revealed that the ancient Hebrews regarded wilderness as accursed land and they associated its forbidding character with a lack of water.<sup>85</sup>

That what I have said does not represent epical imagination run amok, becomes clear on reading what people who ought to know about wildlife have written in the last century. One of the tallest of

them, Jim Corbett, writes in his celebrated work, the *Man Eaters of Kumaon*:

The author who first used the words 'as cruel as a tiger' and 'as blood-thirsty as a tiger'—not only showed a lamentable ignorance of the animal he defamed, but coined phrases which have come into universal circulation, and which are mainly responsible for the wrong opinion of tigers held by all except that small proportion of the public who have the opportunity of forming their own opinions.<sup>86</sup>

Corbett then writes about the time when he, as a small boy, wandered 'through the jungles of Terai and *Bhabar*' when 'there were ten tigers to every one that now exists'. 'Sleeping anywhere he happened to be when the night came on, with a small fire to give him company and warmth, he was awakened at intervals by the calling of tigers, sometimes in the distance, and other times near at hand.' Throwing 'another stick on the fire and turning over', he 'continued his uninterrupted sleep without one thought of unease, knowing from his own short experience and from others, who like himself had spent their days in the jungle... that a tiger, unless molested, would do him no harm.'<sup>87</sup>

In the same context, Corbett recalls another occasion when, again as a young boy, he had run into a tiger in a plum bush. Walking out of the latter, it had turned round and looked at him with an expression on its face 'which said as clearly as any words, "hello kid what are you doing here?" and receiving no answer', walked 'away very slowly without even once looking back'.<sup>88</sup> Corbett further writes, that half a century had passed since the incident, 32 years of which he had spent in the more or less regular pursuit of man-eaters, and he had seen sights 'which would have caused a stone to weep', yet he 'had not seen a case where a tiger has been deliberately cruel or where it had been bloodthirsty to the extent that it has killed, without provocation, more than it has needed to satisfy its hunger or the hunger of its cubs'.<sup>89</sup>

Corbett is eloquent in his defence of the tiger:

A tiger's function in the scheme of things is to help maintain the balance in nature and if, on rare occasions when driven by dire necessity, he kills a human being, or when his natural food has been ruthlessly exterminated by man he kills two per cent of the cattle he is alleged to have killed, it is

not fair that for these acts a whole species should be branded as being cruel and bloodthirsty.<sup>90</sup>

Not surprisingly, he writes that ‘a tiger is a large-hearted gentleman with boundless courage and that when he is exterminated—as exterminated he will be if public opinion does not rally to his support—India will be the poorer for having lost the finest of her fauna.’<sup>91</sup>

The prophetic nature of the words becomes clear when one thinks of the tragic ways in which India’s tiger population is being exterminated through systematic and organized poaching and relentless destruction of its forest habitat in the name of ‘development’ and tourism!

In this context it would be instructive to recall an incident which Corbett mentioned in the chapter entitled ‘Law of the Jungle’ in *My India*. It concerns two children, brother and sister, two and three years old respectively, who were lost for 77 hours in a forest which, ‘to his certain knowledge’, had apart from other wild animals:

...five tigers; eight leopards; a family of four sloth bears; two Himalayan black bears...a number of hyenas who had their burrows in grasslands five miles away and who visited the forest nightly to feed on the discarded portions of the tigers’ and leopards’ kills; a pair of wild dogs; numerous jackals and foxes and pine martens; and a variety of civet and other cats.<sup>92</sup>

Among other wildlife in the forest, Corbett lists ‘two pythons, many kinds of snakes, crested and tawny eagles, and hundreds of vultures’.<sup>93</sup> He adds that ‘it would be unreasonable to assume that none of the animals or birds saw, heard or smelt the children.’ Yet ‘there was not a single mark of tooth and claw on them’ when they were brought home by a herdsman who had found them.

While the tiger is undoubtedly a gentleman, other wild animals and birds are not far behind. The *Asian Age* of 14 May 2003 reports the remarkable friendship between a leopard and a cow in Antoli village in Baroda’s Waghodia taluka.<sup>94</sup> The report quotes a honorary Wildlife Warden, Rohit Vyas, as saying, ‘the leopard has been visiting the cow from October last year [2002].’ He added that following reports from villagers about its visits, a team comprising the Conservator of Forests, H. S. Singh and others, including wildlife activists Manoj Thakkar and Kartik Upadhyay, visited the village for verification. ‘It

is inconceivable,' Vyas further added, 'they approached each other at very close proximity and the fearless cow would lick the leopard on its face and neck.'

According to Vyas, the leopard came to meet the cow between 9.30 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. every night. Forest department officers stopped trying to capture it after learning of its friendship with the cow. The leopard, the report stated, did not harm other animals in the village. Rather, its visits benefited the villagers as the other animals that damaged crops kept away and the yield went up by 30 per cent.

One, of course, rarely hears of such a friendship. But then one has heard of bitches suckling orphaned leopard cubs and cats and dogs living in harmony. Many lovers of wildlife have seen barking deer venturing within close striking distance of a tiger that had fed on one of its species and lay asleep. It is only when the tiger is up and on the prowl that alarm calls sound in forests. The message is simple: nature is not red in tooth and claw. If anything, human society is. There is no reason that the laws of morality and justice that apply to humans should not apply to animals as well, whether regarded as wild or domesticated.

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## Notes

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3. Ibid., p. 288.
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6. Ibid., p. 293.
7. Menon, Ramesh (translation). 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, p. 589, Vol. II. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
8. Ibid., p. 590.
9. Ibid., p. 593.
10. Radhakrishnan, S. 1971. *Bhagavadgita*, pp. 146–47, first Indian reprint, with an introductory essay, Sanskrit text, English translation and notes. Mumbai: George Allen and Unwin (India), Private Limited. Here 'law' stands for

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  15. Ibid., p. 108.
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  18. Ibid., p. 70.
  19. Ibid., pp. 123–24.
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  21. International Bible Society. 1984. *Holy Bible: New International Version*, p. 1. Zondervan: Grand Rapids.
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  23. Ibid., p. 2.
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  35. Ibid., p. 491.
  36. Ibid., p. 491.
  37. Ibid., p. 491.



38. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, p. 4, Vol. I. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
39. Ibid., see pp. 5–14 for a full account of the events from Ganga's killing of her seven sons and her return of Devavrata to Shantanu.
40. For a full account of the incident see *ibid.*, pp. 73–74, Vol. I.
41. Ibid., pp. 15–17.
42. Ibid., p. xvii.
43. Ibid., pp. xvii–xviii.
44. Ibid., p. xviii.
45. Ibid., pp. xx–xxi.
46. Ibid., p. 27.
47. Ibid., p. 28.
48. Ibid., p. 58.
49. Draupadi was the daughter of King Drupada of Panchala. Arjuna performed a virtually impossible feat of archery to win her hand at an assembly of suitors from where she was to choose her husband. Pandavas, who were then in exile and had come disguised as Brahmins, fought off the Kshatriya princes who felt humiliated and attacked them. When they returned home with her, Kunti, who generally asked them to divide among themselves whatever alms they had collected during the day, asked them to do the same, unaware that Arjuna had brought her with him and not alms. To honour her word, all the five Pandavas accepted her as their common wife.
50. Ibid., p. 312.
51. Ibid., pp. 320–24.
52. Ibid., pp. 312–16.
53. Ibid., pp. 80–89.
54. Ojha, Kritibas. 1995. *Shachitra Saptakanda Ramayana* (illustrated Ramayana in seven parts), p. 479. Kolkata: De's Publishing.
55. Bheema, who was the second eldest among the five Pandavas, was also sometimes referred to as the Second Pandava, and Arjuna as the Third Pandava.
56. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, Vol. I, pp. 603–11. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
57. Ojha, Kritibas. 1995. *Shachitra Saptakanda Ramayana* (illustrated Ramayana in seven parts), p. 54. Kolkata: De's Publishing.
58. Ibid., p. 442.
59. Ibid., pp. 50–51.
60. Ibid., p. 50.
61. The three worlds are *Swarga* (Heaven), *Martya* (earth or the temporal world) and *Patala* (netherworld).
62. Ibid., p. 54.
63. Swami Tapasyananda. *Srimad Bhagavata*, Vol. I, Skandhas I–IV, p. 117. Chennai: The Ramakrishna Math.

64. Ibid., p. 119.
65. Ibid., p. 119.
66. Ibid., pp. 119–20.
67. Krishna, Nanditha. 2008. *Sacred Animals of India*, p. 105. Chennai: C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre.
68. Ibid., p. 104.
69. Ibid., p. 104.
70. Ibid., p. 204.
71. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, Vol. II, p. 664.
72. Ibid., p. 664.
73. Ibid., p. 665.
74. Ibid., p. 665.
75. Lorenze, Konrad. 2002. *Man Meets Dog*, p. ix. London and New York: Routledge.
76. Genesis, 3:1–7, *Holy Bible: New International Version*, p. 3, International Bible Society.
77. Genesis, 3:14–15, *ibid.*, p. 2–3.
78. Genesis, 3:16, *ibid.*, p. 3.
79. Genesis, 3:17–19, *ibid.*, p. 3.
80. Revelation 12: 7–12, *ibid.*, p. 1026.
81. Swami Tapasyananda. *Srimad Bhagavata*, Vol. I, p. XXXI. Chennai: The Ramakrishna Math.
82. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, Vol. I. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. For a full account of the episode, see pp. 112–23.
83. For details of the incident, see: Swami Tapasyananda (trs). *Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God* (Vol. III, pp. 109–18). Chennai: Ramakrishna Math.
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85. Waldau, Paul. 2002. *The Spectre of Speceisism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, p. 116. New York: Oxford University Press.
86. Corbett, Jim. 1954. *Man Eaters of Kumaon*, p. xiii. London: Oxford University Press.
87. Ibid., p. xiii.
88. Ibid., p. xiv.
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90. Ibid., p. xiv.
91. Ibid., p. xiv.
92. Corbett, Jim. 2006 (20th impression). *My India*, p. 68. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
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## Chapter Six

### The Wages of Exclusion

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The *Puranas* belong to the *genre* of mythologies. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are epics. Whatever the truth of their content, which is a matter of feverish controversy, none of them falls in the category of historical writing. They, however, reflect evolving contemporary culture, including peoples' attitude towards non-human living beings. Hence their importance in the present discourse.

One finds accounts of ties, relationships and interaction between gods and humans in the mythologies of other countries as well. The Greek pantheon is an example. Gods married mortals—or had liaisons with them—and begot children. 'Amorous Zeus [king of the gods of Mount Olympus], lay with numerous nymphs, descended from the Titans or the gods and, after the creation of man, with mortal women too; no less than four great Olympian deities were born to him out of wedlock.'<sup>1</sup>

Heracles (Hercules in Latin accounts) was the son of Zeus and Alcamene, a mortal. Zeus appeared before her in the guise of her husband, King Amphitryon of Troezen, who was away avenging the killing of her eight brothers by Pterelaus, a claimant to the Mycenaean throne, a task which she said he had to perform before he would sleep with her. Assuring her that her brothers had been avenged—as indeed they had been as Amphitryon had inflicted a crushing defeat on Pterelaus that very morning—and giving a vivid account of the battle, he had deceived her into making love with him for 'the whole of thirty-six hours'.<sup>2</sup>

The mother of Zeus's son, Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry, 'is variously identified: some say that she was Demeter, or Io; some name her Dione; some Persephone, with whom Zeus coupled in the likeness of a serpent; and some Lethe'.<sup>3</sup> The common story, however,

has it that Zeus, 'disguised as a mortal, had a secret love affair with Semele ("moon"), daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes'. Six months into her pregnancy, she had, at the instance of Zeus' jealous wife Hera who had disguised herself as an old neighbour, refused him access to her bed unless he revealed his true identity. Angry, he appeared as thunder and lightning and consumed her. The six-month-old embryo, however, was saved by Hermes,<sup>4</sup> who sewed him inside Zeus's thighs. The infant, born three months later, was Dionysus, also called the 'twice-born' or the 'child of the double door'.<sup>5</sup>

Zeus also had a child by Leda, the wife of king Tyndareus of Sparta. According to the 'most usual account', Leda, 'whom Zeus accompanied in the form a swan beside the river Eurotus', laid an egg from which were hatched Helen of Troy, Castor and Polydeuces.<sup>6</sup> According to another version, Zeus pursued Nemesis<sup>7</sup> with whom he had fallen in love. Nemesis sought to flee from him by jumping into water and becoming a fish. Zeus transformed himself into a beaver and pursued her. Leaping ashore she transformed herself into various wild beasts but could not shake him off as he 'borrowed the forms of even fiercer and swifter wild beasts'. Her last transformation was as a wild goose, but Zeus, becoming a swan, overtook and raped her at Rhamnus in Attica. Nemesis then went to Sparta and laid an egg which was picked up by Leda who kept it in a chest. Helen was born from it.<sup>8</sup> Another account has it that Zeus, pretending to be a swan pursued by an eagle, took refuge in Nemesis' bosom where he ravished her. Hermes threw the egg she produced between Leda's thighs as she sat on a stool with her legs apart, and Leda gave birth to Helen.<sup>9</sup>

Greek mythology is replete with stories of sexual relationships and marriages between Gods and humans. Apollo, the god of music and prophecy, fathered a son, Asclepius, by a mortal, Coronis, daughter of Phegylas, king of Lapiths.<sup>10</sup> Sysiphus, son of Acolus and founder of Ephyra, which later came to be known as Corinth, married Atlas's daughter, Merope, the pleiad. Also, gods could transform themselves into animals and return to their original forms. They could also change humans into animals and make them humans again. We have just seen how Nemesis assumed different forms in fleeing from Zeus and how the latter assumed different forms to pursue her. Again, instructed by Zeus, Hermes had turned Dionysus temporarily into a kid or a ram to protect him from Hera's wrath.<sup>11</sup> When he reached

manhood, Hera recognized him as Zeus' son and turned him mad.<sup>12</sup> He recovered in course of time, and his grandmother Rhea 'purified him of the many murders he had committed during his madness and initiated him into her mysteries'.<sup>13</sup> A couple of adventures later, he successfully changed his form, appearing successively as a lion, a bull and a panther and turned the three daughters of Miniyas, who had refused to join his revelries despite his inviting them by appearing before them as a girl, insane.<sup>14</sup>

On another occasion, when a group of pirates, whose ship he had hired mistaking them for sailors, tried to take him to Asia and sell him as a slave, Dionysus:

...made a vine grow from the deck and enfold the mast, while ivy twined around the rigging; he also turned the oars into serpents, and became a lion himself, filling the vessel with phantom beasts and the sound of flutes, so that the terrified pirates jumped overboard and became dolphins.<sup>15</sup>

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## Different Strokes

There are, however, certain fundamental differences in the approach and orientation of the Indian mythologies and epics on the one hand, and the Greek ones on the other. The Greek narratives show non-human living beings as acting or not acting in a certain manner mostly as commanded by humans and gods, or as assuming forms that gods have assumed themselves or had made others assume. They by no means shared the same metaphysical and moral universe with gods and humans. There is no overt condemnation of evil and praise of virtue, no effort to promote a moral way of life and condemn immorality. One has descriptions of acts which grossly violate the norms of morality but without these being condemned or any effort being made to show that these recoil on their perpetrators.

The gods of Mount Olympus are a savage, treacherous, violent and brutal lot without many qualms. Thus Zeus threatened to violate his mother, Rhea, when she, 'foreseeing what trouble his lust could cause forbade him to marry'. When she turned at once into a menacing serpent, he turned himself into a male serpent and, twining around her in an indissoluble knot, carried out his threat.<sup>16</sup> After unsuccessfully

courting Hera, his twin sister, Zeus assumed the form of a bedraggled cuckoo on whom she took pity and tenderly warmed in her bosom. “There he at once assumed his true form and ravished her, so that she was shamed into marrying him.”<sup>17</sup> Greek gods often resorted to unspeakable cruelty. Thus Apollo took the most cruel revenge on the Satyr Marsyas who had offended him by contradicting people who said Apollo could not make better music than him. Defeating him in a music contest in which, it was agreed, the winner could inflict whatever punishment he pleased on the loser, he flayed the Satyr alive and nailed his skin to a pine (or, some say, to a plane-tree), near the source of the river that now bears his name.<sup>18</sup>

The *Puranas*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* doubtless describe acts of grave immorality and viciousness. The circumstances leading to Rama’s and Lakshmana’s exile from Ayodhya and Ravana’s abduction of Sita illustrate the point. But both Rama’s half-mother Kaikeyi and her maid Manthara, who conspired to have him and Lakshmana exiled, as well as Ravana, have been widely condemned. In the end, Rama returns to Ayodhya in triumph; Ravana is vanquished, killed along with most of his male kin except his brother Bibhisana who joins Rama in the fight against him. His capital, Lanka, is destroyed. In the *Mahabharata*, the great battle of Kurukshetra is between the forces of *dharma* and *adharma*. The Pandavas, who represent the cause of *dharma*, win.

That *dharma* is the central concern of the *Puranas*, and the two epics, becomes clear from the *Bhagavadgita* in which Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, says:

For whenever Right declines and wrong prevails, then O  
Bharata, I come to birth.  
To save the righteous, to destroy the wicked, and to reestablish  
Right I am born from age to age.<sup>19</sup>

The concept of *dharma*, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is rooted in the transcendental monist philosophy of the *Upanishads* which perceives the entire universe, including its divine, human and non-human segments, as a manifestation of the Supreme Being or the Universal Consciousness and, therefore, deserving of respect. We have seen in the previous chapter how, in Dwaitavana, Bheema, on an errand to fetch *Saugandhika* flowers for Draupadi, refused to leap over an old monkey—who later revealed himself as his half-brother

Hanumana—who lay on his path as that would signify disrespect for someone older.

Gods and human and non-human living beings belonged to the same moral and emotional universe with common values. Thus in the *Ramayana*, Jatayu, a son of Garuda, the divine bird that is Indra's carrier, fought with Ravana as he was flying away with Sita after abducting her. Mortally wounded, he died and went to heaven after telling Rama and Lakshmana about Sita's abduction.<sup>20</sup>

Non-injury to and compassion for all living beings was an important part of *Sadharana Dharma*. This is clearly brought out in the episode in the *Vana Parva* of the *Mahabharata* in which Dharma, in the guise of a *Yaksha*, posed certain questions to Yudhishtira which the latter answered.<sup>21</sup> Asked what was the highest form of *dharma*, Yudhishtira replied that it was not to injure any of the living. Again, asked what was mercy, he said it was the desire for the happiness of all. Three of his other answers were that an honest man desired the happiness of all the living, a dishonest man was one without mercy, and charity was protecting all creatures.

Jainism also emphasizes compassion for all living beings. Jain ethics prescribe five *vratas* or abstinences—*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asatya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*—abstention from cruelty (also violence), untruth, theft, unchaste behaviour, and avarice and unnecessary luxury.<sup>22</sup> They are called *anuvratas*, minor codes of morals, which are of limited application, and, 'when they are applied without limitation, they are called *mahavratas*, the major code of morals, which are for the *yatis* or homeless ascetics'. Each householder is expected to practice the five *vratas* according to his capacity.

The idea of the first *vrata*, *Ahimsa*, deserves particular attention. It means not hurting or injuring in any way any living being, an animal and even an insect, by thought, word or action. Appaswami Chakravarti writes:

It includes forbearing from binding them cruelly with ropes, thus preventing free movement, compelling them to carry burdens beyond their capacity, and not feeding them properly. It is not enough; if he [any man] does not himself directly injure; he should neither cause injury through an agent, nor indirectly approve of the conduct of others when they indulge in such an act of cruelty. The second *vrata*, not to utter falsehood, is quite obvious. But it is interesting to note that even speaking truth which results in injury to others should be avoided. Thus it is clear



that this principle is subordinated to the principle of *Ahimsa*, which is the primary principle.<sup>23</sup>

Jainism, therefore, is categorically for the treatment of all living beings with compassion and care. Authors like Aanagarika Priyadarshi Sugatananda (Francis Story), Martine Batchelor, and Peter Singer have written appreciatively of the attitude of the other great Indian religion, Buddhism, toward non-human living beings. According to them, it is characterized by a greater feeling of kinship with, and compassion for, non-human living beings as Buddhism regards nature as sacred and all living beings equally sacred and important as humans.

Paul Waldau, however, has reservations about these claims. He begins by pointing out that certain features of the Buddhist tradition reflect an attitude toward non-human animals that are healthier than the semitic attitude. He identifies these as Buddhist recognition of the continuity between human and other animal forms of life, the prominence accorded to compassion as the primary ethical value, the existence of the moral guideline known as the First Precept, and the high profile of animals in that tradition.<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note here that the theory of *karma*, a central element in the Buddhist doctrine, subjects both humans and non-humans to the same process. Hence 'continuities among all karmic forms of life are implied'.<sup>25</sup> Also significant in terms of the continuity and link between human and non-human life is a passage from a Korean *Mahayana* text entitled *Bodhisatta Precepts* that Waldau cites. It reads:

Since all male creatures have at one time been our father, they should be regarded as our father. Since all female creatures have at one time been our mother, they should be regarded as our mother...all living beings throughout the six realms can be considered as our father and mother. So to catch and eat any living creature is surely equivalent to killing our parents and eating our own body.<sup>26</sup>

Waldau, however, has reservations about the Buddhist attitude to animals. He makes the point that the First Precept<sup>27</sup> forbids killing but is silent about the infliction of serious injury short of that. If the injunction against killing indicated that the lives of non-human animals were valuable, there should have been in the Buddhist

tradition indications of respect for the freedom and integrity of all living beings. The mere prohibition of killing cannot be regarded as a conclusive indication of 'the substance of Buddhist attitude toward other living beings if Buddhism sanctions or authorizes the handling or treatment of animals in ways that involve important harm or obvious suffering'.<sup>28</sup>

According to Waldau, the First Precept, in its standard formulations, is simply not explicit in condemning non-lethal harm. Though earlier Buddhists recognized that injuries short of death also constituted harm to, for example, elephants, there was both an acceptance, and at times, promotion of some instrumental use.<sup>29</sup> He states, 'Bluntly stated, Buddhists simply coexisted with daily, obvious harm to non-humans. Therefore, though the First precept may legitimately be read as prohibition of *some* instrumental harms short of murder, the tradition must also be read as allowing *other* harms to exist.'<sup>30</sup>

One can, of course, argue that if the Buddha was not more specific than he was on the issue of the treatment of animals, it was perhaps because he did not do so in respect of any sphere of human existence. Satkari Mukherjee holds that attention to 'the intermediate problems of social values, family affiliations or political and economic betterment of the conditions of human life' was not compatible with Buddhism's 'attitude of unrelieved condemnation of biological existence'.<sup>31</sup> The Buddha, therefore:

...did not think it fit or necessary to prescribe the laws of conduct for the inevitable transactions in the sphere of the family and in sound political and national interest. He did not consider it worthwhile to lay down laws or rules for the regulation of such important events in human life as the birth of a child, marriage, inheritance or property, death or duties to the departed spirits. He took them for granted.<sup>32</sup>

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## Sanctioned Slaughter

Waldau, however, has a point and what he has said about Buddhism applies to Hinduism as well. Even *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, which include non-human beings in their universes of morality and compassion, do not prohibit the subjugation and use of animals, and their killing on ritual occasions and during wars. The *Puranas* and the

epics, often describe the killing and injuring of animals without adverse comment. The *Adi Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, tells the story of Bhishma carrying off, for his half-brother Vichitraveerya, the three daughters of the King of Kasi, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika, from the assembly of kings and princes from which each of them had to choose a husband. While he easily dealt with all the kings and princes who pursued him, King Salva of Matsya, whom Amba had already chosen as her husband, attacked with particular ferocity and struck him with three arrows. In a flash, Bhishma cut down his chariot and killed the king's horses and charioteer.<sup>33</sup>

One frequently finds in the *Mahabharata* kings and renowned warriors called *Rathis*<sup>34</sup> and *Maharathis* fighting on horse-drawn chariots or riding elephants. Thus on the first day of the battle of Kurukshetra, King Virata's son fights a duel with Shalya, an uncle of the Pandavas, and shoots down the horses of his chariot. On the second day, the battle field is strewn with the corpses of men and animals in one hour of fighting. Yudhishtira fights along with an army of elephants on the third day while Shakuni smashes Satyaki's chariot and kills his horses. On the fourth day, the king of Magadha fights on elephant back, as does Ghatotkacha, Bheema's son by the demon, Hidimbi. At the end of the fifth day, corpses of horses and elephants lie on the battlefield along with broken chariots. On the sixth day, Bheema smashes down horses, elephants and men. The carnage continues till the end of the war. Apart from the epics, recorded history shows the use of animals in warfare even in the first half of the twentieth century.

Hinduism also did not disapprove of hunting; one lay oneself open to retribution, as Pandu did, only upon violating the laws governing it. Animals like goats and buffaloes and birds like hen and cocks were—and are—killed as sacrificial offerings to gods and goddesses in temples during *pujas* and special occasions like a king's coronation or a ceremonial affirmation of a king's might. An example is the *Asvamedha Yagna* or the horse sacrifice in which a king desirous of establishing his imperial suzerainty far and wide, sent out a horse with a military escort. Kings who accepted his suzerainty allowed the horse to pass through their kingdom, offered presents for the king holding the sacrifice, and accepted an invitation to attend it. Those who were not willing to accept the suzerainty of the monarch holding

the sacrifice, held the horse captive and the latter had to try to get his horse released by waging war. On its return, the horse was killed in a sacrificial act.

Of course, there were tall critics of rituals and sacrificial killings. Sankaracharyya disfavoured *vedic* rituals as irrelevant; what mattered, according to him, was the realization that entire creation was a manifestation of *Brahman* and all else was unreal. Many feel that the stand of the other great Indian religion, Buddhism, is no less categorical. According to Satkari Mukherjee, ‘The Buddha condemned the ritualistic religion of the Vedas not only because it was bound up with injury to animal life but also on the ground of its failure to bring about the ultimate good.’<sup>35</sup> Mukherjee further writes that Buddhism ‘condemned Vedic sacrifice, involving animal slaughter, and extreme asceticism with equally unabating vigour’.<sup>36</sup> Such exhortations however, did not seem to have any lasting impact. An important reason has been that priests headed a strong school emphasizing the importance of sacrifices and rituals to bring home the doctrine of their religion to those without the ability to comprehend Sankaracharyya’s metaphysics. Of course, their stand also stemmed from the fact that their status and a significant part of their earning depended on their role in the performance of rituals.

Hence the practice of Hindus, who claim to believe in the religious philosophy of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* and the way of life and value system reflected in the *Puranas* and the epics, has diverged radically from their precepts. If the horse sacrifice has not been held for centuries it is because there has been no king powerful enough to attempt one. The sacrifice of animals in temples, on religious occasions like Durga Puja,<sup>37</sup> and during special ceremonial worships organized by people seeking boons, continues.

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## Chained and Tortured

The plight of domesticated elephants—India had between 3,400 and 3,600 of them in captivity in 2000<sup>38</sup>—is pathetic. Psychologically captivity itself is agonizing as elephants are, unlike cattle or horses, not domestic but wild animals. As Rhea Ghosh puts it, ‘Captive elephants are wild animals in captivity, not domestic animals that have

adapted to a new environment. The elephants have never been domesticated the way that cattle, dogs and horses have been.' Elephants almost never breed in captivity. Most of them are brought from the wild and most cruelly 'broken'.<sup>39</sup>

They are treated with the utmost savagery. Rhea Ghosh writes, 'The standard way to manage captive elephants in India is to chain them at one place for as long as twenty hours a day and to force compliance to a mahout's will by a systematic use of physical pain to establish dominance.'<sup>40</sup>

Frequently, the chain is no longer than about 12 inches, which provides the elephant no room for movement. This, however, is only one aspect of the torture they have to suffer. The plight of most of them will be clear on reading a complaint filed by Ms Suparna Ganguly with the police for the manner in which the authorities of Sri Ayappan Temple Trust were treating a male elephant, Girija Prasad, kept in the temple premises in Bangalore.

Suparna Ganguly, Vice President of CUPA, said in her complaint that visiting the premises along with senior veterinarians Dr Basavane Gowda and Dr Sheila Rao, she found that Girija Prasad was tied in the middle of a tiled courtyard in the hot, scorching sun with absolutely no shelter or protection. 'The ground was burning hot and the elephant was trying to lift his legs from one position to another, unable to bear the heat on the ground.'<sup>41</sup> Its four legs tied tightly night and day with an extremely short and heavy chain providing no opportunity for movement, it was practically imprisoned in a stationary position for life.

Worse, it was continuously and brutally assaulted throughout the inspection that Suparna Ganguly and her colleagues carried out. She wrote in her complaint that one of the mahouts was sitting on the elephant and constantly piercing its trunk with an *ankush* (rod with an iron hook). The other was constantly hitting it with a stick. She and her colleagues were told that this merciless beating—carried on for nearly half-an-hour—would continue thereafter and it was a routine practised every day. The elephant, she wrote, 'was squealing and making sounds of distress and constantly urinating and defecating during this torture session'.<sup>42</sup>

Seeing Girija Prasad's plight, CUPA officials called upon the Karnataka Government's Forest Department to cancel the ownership/possession licence of the temple authorities. After seeing the report

filed by CUPA and the photographs, the Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka had the elephant confiscated and sent for rehabilitation to the Dubare Elephant Camp in the Madikeri forest division. The temple authorities tried to bring political pressure to get Girija Prasad back. The matter came before the Karnataka High Court which rejected all contentions of the temple authorities and dismissed their petition. While agreeing with CUPA's contention, it held that it could not grant the prayer of cancelling the certificate of ownership as it was not in a position to examine whether the requirements of housing, and so on, were met. It directed the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest to look into the matter in the light of the amended Section 42 of the Wild Life Protection Act 1972, keeping in mind the welfare of the animal and not that of the owner.<sup>43</sup>

The plight of Girija Prasad and other elephants would have been miserable even without the torture. Ghosh says, 'They are intrinsically unsuited for captivity no matter how well they are taken care of.'<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, she points out that some of the more glaring problems connected with captivity can be solved, thereby at least minimizing the stress and suffering of the animals. No effort, however, is made in this direction.

Ghosh adds that few owners:

...bother to make the changes and the fate of the captive animals is governed by the owners' desire to make as much money out of them as possible. Their fate is further compounded by mahouts who lack the skill and experience necessary to take care of them and an indifferent government which fails to enforce even the existing laws for their care and welfare.<sup>45</sup>

Mostly kept in isolation, and virtually immobilized by being chained, they miss not only the forests and the wide open spaces that constitute their natural habitat but also the rich social life they have among themselves.

They suffer particularly during the time of temple festivals when their owners have only one thing in their mind: Making the maximum profit out of them and, for this purpose, renting them out as many times as possible without long intervals. Temple administrations add their bit. Each temple wants to have more elephants at their ceremonies than the one in the neighbouring village. This means a very hard time for the elephants who are made to walk from one event

to another, often during the same day, walking 30 to 40 kilometres, and to stand for sometimes as long as 16 to 24 hours at a stretch during each ceremony.

Their agony is increased by the fact that they have to walk under a burning tropical sun and on hot tar roads.<sup>46</sup> As Ghosh points out:

Elephants are very sensitive to heat and often fall victim to heat strokes or dehydration when exposed to the sun for long periods. Excessive exposure to the sun is even more agonizing because elephants possess no sweat glands. They have, therefore, no internal mechanism to cool themselves.

Also, an elephant's feet are very sensitive and akin to those of humans and to no other creature's. They do not have hooves as horses and antelopes have. Their feet have thick cushions for walking over marshy and swampy ground and are not designed for walking on tar roads. Their physiology does not provide them adequate protection when they walk on sun-baked city streets under a hot, noon-day sun.<sup>47</sup>

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## Growing Horror

The abuse, torture and killing of animals for entertainment and commerce has become progressively more horrible and widespread in recent decades. Methods that inflict unbearable pain on a cow are used to maximize the yield of milk. Cattle are often left to fend for themselves or sent to slaughterhouses once they stop yielding milk. Vast numbers are smuggled into Bangladesh from all over India. Transported either by road for several days, packed tightly in trucks where they have no room to move, or driven mercilessly on foot—and always without food or water—they are most cruelly slaughtered on reaching their destination across the India-Bangladesh border. Even within India, they are transported and killed in the most horrific manner.

The emergence of criminal syndicates involved in the smuggling of live animals, animal skins and animal body parts, has made things worse. Poaching is rampant, thanks to gangs with international links and powerful interlocutors in the domestic corridors of power. Elephants are poisoned to death or shot or trapped and killed brutally for the ivory of their tusks. Rhinos are killed for their horns which are

used for making aphrodisiacs. Tigers and leopards are killed for their skins and body parts. Thanks to poaching, India's tiger population is declining steeply—making a mockery of the loudly-proclaimed measures for their protection. At this rate, Jim Corbett's apprehension of tigers becoming extinct in India may well turn out to have been prophetic.

All this is particularly reprehensible because India has laws like the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 (59 of 1960). Both are flouted merrily, and frequently by those tasked with enforcing them. State Governments and municipal bodies often have shocking records. The mass and savage slaughter of stray dogs in Bangalore and elsewhere in Karnataka were, overtly or covertly, organized by the BBMP in gross violation of the Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules 2001, which was law, with the political leadership either encouraging it or at least turning a blind eye. The same goes for brutal killing of stray dogs in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and some parts of Mumbai and Pune. In all these cases, as in dealing with what is generally described as the 'monkey menace', one finds a mixture of wanton cruelty and ignorance of genuine solutions combining to lead to mass slaughter and imposition of great suffering on living beings by municipal and government functionaries, who have invariably escaped unscathed.

As shocking as the conduct of many State Governments and municipal bodies is the fact that most of those treating animals savagely in India are Hindus, a fact once again underlined by the composition of the crowds in Bangalore and elsewhere in Karnataka, who demanded the mass killing of stray dogs and cheered lustily as they were cornered, brutalized, and savagely hurled into jampacked vans, which took them away. Similarly, among those who treat cattle most cruelly are Hindu milkmen and dairy owners who are supposed to venerate and worship the cow! To some extent, this perhaps reflects the fact that Hindus constitute the overwhelming majority of India's population and, hence, are likely to be by far the largest component of any group except those linked to other religions or non-Hindu interests or affairs. It, however, also shows how a very large section of Hindus have been—and are—the least bothered by the fact that their conduct has been, and is, in gross violation of the philosophy of *Vedas* and *Upanishads* and the worldview of the *Puranas* and the



epics. Clearly, they either have no knowledge of the tenets of their faith or only pay lip service to it.

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## Savagery of Science

Maneka Gandhi has done much, as an individual, a Member of Parliament (MP) and a Minister in the Government of India, to improve matters. She created the Department of Animal Welfare, which travelled with her as she moved from one ministry to another—from Environment and Forests to Social Justice and Empowerment to Culture and from the latter to Statistics and Programme Implementation. As a Union Minister, she enacted a number of rules and regulations to end, among other things, the terrible atrocities perpetrated on cattle in transit, circus animals, and animals used for entertainment.

While all this led to resistance and abuse, it was her attempt to alleviate wanton and acute suffering of animals used in biomedical experiments, that led to a storm. Her efforts began shortly after she, then an MP, assumed office as the Chairperson of the Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA), on 23 February 1996. The Committee, constituted in September 1964 under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 (59 of 1960), was meant to ensure that experiments on animals were carried out by qualified individuals, with due care and humanity and under adequate anaesthesia in cases of surgery. The latter, and also experiments on animal in general, were to be undertaken only when necessary and, as far as possible, not just for the sake of acquiring manual skill. It also provided that animals should be looked after well before and after experiments and suitable records of experiments kept.

Besides breathing a new life into the CPCSEA she, as minister, ensured the promulgation of the Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Amendment Rules, 1998, which made changes in the Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Rules of 1968. She also ensured the promulgation of the Breeding and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Amendment Rules 2001, which amended the Breeding and Experiments on Animals (Control

and Supervision) Rules 1998. The combined purpose was to achieve the objectives behind the CPCSEA's establishment in 1964 and drastically improve—if not altogether end—the horrible conditions under which animals used in biomedical research were often bred or (illegally) procured, housed, and kept without adequate food, water and veterinary care before and after experiments on them. An attempt to ensure a measure of transparency, accountability and efficiency in the functioning of research institutions and laboratories of pharmaceutical corporations hitched to profit making, was integral to the effort.

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## Ethics Overboard

Inspections began and the most horrific conditions were found to exist in the animal houses of a number of research institutions. For example, none of the eight institutes using horses for producing primarily anti-snake venom seemed bothered in the least about the ethical use of animals in experimentation. Blind and lame animals were regularly bled for 12 to 18 litres of blood every alternate month, and often in the most savage manner. Pregnant mares were injected with venom and bled, and foals were born blind and deformed. Animals died painfully in large numbers, due to liver rupture, unnoticed and uncared for. Veterinarians were found to be ignorant of equine care and practice. Bleeding was done in open sheds and stables with crude instruments that caused open wounds and abscesses.<sup>48</sup>

Besides, 90 per cent of the large animal laboratories did not have scientifically planned animal houses in keeping with scientific/ethical norms of experimentation, for non-human primates, canines, sheep, goats, buffaloes, horses, and so on. Ad hoc arrangements prevailed. Several laboratories were found holding surplus animals and designing research projects specifically to use them. It was also found that the principle that large animals with high levels of sentience should be experimented upon only if experiments on small animals had indicated the need for it, was not strictly adhered to and that most laboratories in India that used non-human primates simultaneously worked on both small and large animals, despite the fact that Rule 17(e) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 makes mandatory working with small animals first.<sup>49</sup>

Large animals with diseases were found to have been procured by institutes from open markets and small farmers, without ascertaining their health status, before using them for experiments. Several laboratories subjected ill and old dogs, horses, sheep and monkeys to severe and invasive research processes. Large animals used in experiments were neglected in terms of their health, hygiene and basic medical attention because research project proposals involving them did not include expenses for their maintenance, housing and care.<sup>50</sup>

It is a long and sordid tale. A report by Chitra Swaminathan in *The Hindu* of 22 May 2003, quotes Prema Veeraraghavan, a former expert consultant to the CPCSEA as saying:

Research institutions and pharmaceutical companies spend a fortune on swank offices, but pay little attention to the upkeep of animal houses. To save on cost, sometimes multiple tests are performed on a single animal. Neither is responsibility taken to rehabilitate the animals after tests, nor is treatment generally provided to the sick ones. Hence, most of them die because of post-operative negligence. For the institutes, it just means more space in the animal house. Can science justify unethical laboratory practices, disrespect of law and an inhuman approach?<sup>51</sup>

The report quotes her as adding, 'Instead of using anaesthetics or analgesics, many laboratories resort to bullying the animals to submit or cut their heads off during experiments. The lame excuse given is anaesthesia may interfere with the efficacy of the tests.' She further said:

As part of the CPCSEA inspection team, I have been witness to the most horrid sights of horses with maggot-infested wounds, being bled to make vaccine against snake bite, monkeys kept in small cages for almost 10 years, rabbits turning blind after tests, the tales of torture are endless.

No less shocking, an Expert Sub-committee for Scrutiny and Approval of Research Projects on Large Animals, headed by the internationally-respected scientist, Dr Ranjit Roy Chaudhury, found, less than 30 per cent of the proposals were worthy of approval in the course of eight meetings in two years.<sup>52</sup>

The CPCSEA implemented a number of measures to set things right. It enforced the mandatory legal provision for the registration

of every institution using animals for education, biomedical research and/or regulatory purposes, and for the production of vaccines and immunobiological substances. Registered laboratories were required to be constantly monitored, and their animal housing facilities inspected. The Expert Sub-committee for Scrutiny and Approval of Research Projects on Large Animals, mentioned above, was constituted. Every research project on large animals had to be submitted to it for prior approval. Steps were also taken for the constitution of eight-member Internal Animal Ethics Committees (IAEC), which had to include a nominee of the CPCSEA, in every research institute. Its approval had to be received before commencing any experiment using small animals like rats, mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, and so on. For experiments on large animals such as dogs, cats, non-human primates, cattle, goats, sheep, and so forth, approval had to be taken from the expert sub-committee on the scrutiny and approval of research projects on them.<sup>53</sup>

Six-hundred and sixty-five laboratories were registered before Maneka Gandhi was removed from the Union Council of Ministers. Earlier in 2002, the CPCSEA's national committee ratified the *Guidelines for Laboratory Animal Facility*. It made it mandatory for all research laboratories that use animals, to follow these, which covered aspects of veterinary care, animal procurement, quarantine, stabilization and separation, surveillance, diagnosis, treatment and control of disease, animal care and working of technical personnel. It is a comprehensive document which also covers the Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines, the administration of anaesthesia (including euthanasia), the durations for which animals can be used in experiments, the question of physical restraint as well as every aspect of laboratory maintenance including care of animals during weekends and holidays, record-keeping, provision of food, and the ensuring of adequate sanitation and cleanliness, waste disposal, pest control, emergency care and recordkeeping, and a section on transgenic animals.

As important, the CPCSEA constituted a Sub-Committee for Alternatives (SCA) to recommend the use of alternatives to animal experiments in research and education. At its initiative, the regulatory authorities and the Ministry of Health of the Government of India took steps to introduce alternatives like Tissue Culture Anti-Rabies Vaccine (TCARV) instead of the old sheep brain neural tissue

vaccine which is less effective and can cause paralysis. The Supreme Court of India played a significant role in this context by issuing an interim order on 15 February 2002 asking the government to consider banning the neurogenic anti-rabies (sheep brain) vaccine. Also, on SCA's recommendation the Registration Committee of the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage, Ministry of Agriculture, agreed in principle to replace the guidelines as given by the Gaitonde Committee for the acute oral LD50 test in rats and mice with the alternatives as suggested by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). An Expert Group was constituted to examine alternative methods and to suggest appropriate amendments in the Insecticides Rules 1971. A representative of the CPCSEA was to be a member of this group.<sup>54</sup>

The above are some of the steps taken by the CPCSEA to rationalize, humanize and reduce experiments on animals. They are in keeping with the '3 Rs'—Replacement, Reduction and Refinement—of animal research propounded by William Russell and Rex Burch in their path-breaking book *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique* published in 1959.<sup>55</sup> They proposed that if animals were to be used in experiments, every effort should be made to replace them with non-sentient alternatives, to reduce the number of animals used to a minimum, and to refine experiments which used animals so that they caused the minimum pain and distress. Initially paid little attention, these have become the basis of the concept of alternatives, which is now enshrined in various national and international laws, and the focus of attention of organizations all over the world, including the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing (CAAT) at Johns Hopkins University in the US, the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME) in UK, and the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) in Italy. These have also influenced new legislation seeking to control the use of experimental animals, and, in the United Kingdom, become formally incorporated into the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

The CPCSEA has also rescued and rehabilitated, with the help of NGOs like People for Animals, animals that have been most severely abused and tortured in the name of experimentation. The rescued include beagles and mixed-breed dogs, horses, non-human primates, sheep, chickens, rabbits, cobras, birds, mice and frogs.<sup>56</sup>

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## The Empire Strikes Back

Used to a system which in effect meant very little independent control and supervision over their work, and very little accountability on their part, scientists belonging to government and government-funded research institutions and commercial biomedical corporations burst out in a chorus of protest against the CPCSEA's initiatives. The merits or otherwise of their case will be discussed later when dealing with the question of hurdles in the way of treating non-human living beings with the respect, dignity and humanity we owe them. What needs to be noted here is that their high-decibel protests were accompanied by a vicious personal attack on Maneka Gandhi and a loud nation-wide cry that science was in danger. Carefully orchestrated, it found ready champions within the government then headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Maneka Gandhi was first dropped from the Council of Ministers in July 2002 and then removed from the chairpersonship of the CPSEA in December of that year.

Following her removal as a minister, the Animal Welfare Division was shifted back to the Ministry of Environment and Forests. A reconstitution of the CPCSEA followed her removal as its head. The purpose, it was stated, was to give it a leaner, more professional look! If there could be any doubt as to what this meant, it was removed when the Ministry of Environment and Forests reconstituted the CPCSEA in October 2006, making it a body exclusively of bureaucrats and retired and serving heads and senior functionaries of science establishments. Not even one animal welfare activist was included. Not surprisingly, many now believe that research institutions and pharmaceutical companies can now do whatever they please without the fear of any retribution for the violation of norms.

This is a most deplorable state of affairs, particularly when one considers that the testing of cosmetic and household products accounts for a substantial number of the instances of animal abuse in laboratories. The chilling cruelty involved in these experiments become clear on recalling just one of the numerous instances that can be cited—animal safety tests for eye irritancy. As revealed by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), it involves the dripping of chemicals into the eyes of albino rabbits which are usually held

immobile in stocks with just their heads protruding and eyelids held open with clips. Often the tests are done without anaesthesia and some rabbits break their backs while trying to escape the unbearable pain. The damage to their eye tissues includes inflamed irises, ulceration, bleeding, massive deterioration and blindness.<sup>57</sup>

It is a matter of national shame that cosmetic testing on animals not only continues but is set to increase in India to which many companies abroad are outsourcing animal trials to evade the stringent laws of their own countries. Indian companies are also testing on animals in the belief that it would be easier to exploit the growing market for their products if the latter are sold with the assurance that these have been tested on animals and found safe.

What makes all this unpardonable is that animal testing is neither legally necessary for cosmetics nor clinically reliable. As to the first, in 1996, the Bureau of Indian Standards made the use of animal tests for cosmetics optional. As to the second, claims of safety on the basis of experiments on animals are, to put it starkly, fraudulent. Eye irritancy tests, for example, hardly prove anything, as the results vary from laboratory to laboratory—and even from rabbit to rabbit. Besides, given the differences in human and animal anatomy a question mark remains against the safety aspect of products tested on animals. Drugs like Thalidomide, Zomax and DES were all tested on animals and declared safe. The disastrous consequences that followed require no elaboration.

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## Shame on Four Counts

India's shame is all the greater for four reasons. First, cosmetics are not life saving drugs that their testing on animals should be permitted. Second their testing does not add to knowledge critical to the survival or progress of human beings. Third, there are enough of cosmetics going around. There is absolutely no need for new ones based on the infliction of indescribable cruelty on living beings. Fourth, all this is happening in India when the movement for a rigorous implementation of the Three R's of humane experimentation on animals is growing stronger in Europe and the United States and animal experiments are being subjected to strict control.

The Netherlands, Belgium and the UK led the way in banning the use of animals for cosmetic testing. In 2003, the European Parliament not only totally banned the use of animals for cosmetic testing in Europe effective as of 2009, but also demanded a total ban on all cosmetic products tested on animals. The import ban has been delayed until 2013 for products for which no alternative to animal testing has yet been discovered. The successful implementation of the EU ban could compel cosmetic manufacturers to adopt alternative testing methods or be shut out of the EU market. In the US, neither the U.S. Food and Drug Administration nor the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, requires the use of animals for safety testing. Not only that, the New York Assembly has passed a law prohibiting eye and skin irritancy tests on animals.

It is not just cosmetic testing. Directive No. 86/609/EEC, issued on 24 November 1986 by the Council of the European Communities, seeks to ensure that the number of animals used in scientific and other experiments is reduced to the minimum, that those used are adequately cared for, that no pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm is inflicted unnecessarily and unnecessary duplication of experiments is avoided. United Kingdom's Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, enacted to implement the European Council's directive, provides for the grant of project licenses only for specified permissible purposes where there are no non-animal alternatives, and when the benefits expected from the programmes of work are judged to outweigh the likely adverse effects on the animals concerned, and on condition that the number of animals used and their suffering are minimized.

Those who violate the law are punished. In 1997, a film secretly recorded inside laboratories of Huntingdon Life Sciences—the largest contract animal testing firm in Europe—in the UK by PETA showed serious violations of animal-protection laws, including a beagle puppy being held up by the scruff of the neck and repeatedly punched in the face, and animals being taunted. The investigation led, in April 1997, to the revocation of the company's Home Office licence for animal testing for six months.

In July 2007 a court in Britain ordered the British Government to review the assessment system for classifying and granting permission for animal experiments. The court's ruling followed a plea by the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV), accusing



the government of failure in implementing the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 when granting experimental licenses. The plea in turn followed a ten-month under cover investigation by BUAV between 2000 and 2001 in Cambridge University's primate research facility where it found marmosets (monkeys) subjected to highly invasive brain surgery—including the inducing of strokes by the removal of the top of their heads—either without or with very minimal doses of painkillers. It also challenged the British Home Office's labelling of such experiments as 'moderate'.<sup>58</sup> Agreeing with the BUAV, the judge ruled that the Home Office acted 'unlawfully' in the licensing of brain experiments on marmosets at the University, based on their classification of these as causing moderate rather than substantial pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm.<sup>59</sup>

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## Switching to Alternatives

Institutions in the West are also switching on to using alternatives to animal experiments. Physiome Sciences in Britain uses computer models to show the biophysical properties of normal and diseased mammalian cells. It uses these single-cell models to build anatomically precise, three dimensional organ models. These virtual organs can accurately predict the effects of drug therapies for a variety of diseases.<sup>60</sup>

The UK has banned the use of live animals in medical training. Over half the medical schools in the US, including Stanford, Columbia, Duke, Harvard and Yale, have adopted more humane and superior methods. Harvard Medical School brings students directly into human operation theatres to learn by watching surgeons, perfusionists, and anesthesiologists during actual cardiac bypass surgery. CD ROMS, such as 'Physiology Labs' by SimBioSys, let students navigate through respiratory, cardiovascular and renal physiology and experiment with many different parameters in a truly interactive programme.<sup>61</sup>

In many countries, the use of animals for educational purposes in the veterinary curriculum requires approval by the Animal Ethics Committees. Many alternatives have been developed such as interactive videos and computer simulations, in vitro cell cultures, slaughterhouse material, plastinated organs, dead animals from a humane/ethical source and clinical case-based practice, and are already in use in veterinary education.

## The Blighted Life of Jerom

It is a long list. Yet, despite the substantial gains made in protecting animals, unspeakable pain and psychological trauma are inflicted on them in the name of conducting biomedical research—and even testing cosmetics. In his other path-breaking book, *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*, Steven M. Wise writes of the pathetic life and death of a young chimpanzee at Emory University's Yerkes Regional Primate Research Centre in Atlanta, Georgia, in the United States:

Jerom died on February 13, 1996, ten days shy of his fourteenth birthday. The teenager was dull, bloated, depressed, sapped, anaemic and plagued with diarrhea. He had not played in fresh air for eleven years. As a thirty-month old infant, he had been intentionally infected with HIV virus SF2. At the age of four, he was infected with another HIV strain, LAV-1. A month short of five, he had been infected with another strain NDK.<sup>62</sup>

Jerom was first housed in a 'small, windowless cinder-block Infectious Diseases Building'. He was then shifted a little distance to a 'large, windowless, gray concrete box, one of eleven bleak steel-and-concrete cells 9 feet by 11 feet by 8.5 feet'.<sup>63</sup> Although Jerom lived alone in his cell for the last four months of his life, twelve other chimpanzees filled the bleak cells.

...living in twos and threes, each with access to two of the cells. None of them knew whether it was day or night. Each slowly rotted in that humid and sunless gray concrete box. Nearly all of them had been intentionally infected with HIV. Just five months before Jerom died of AIDS born of an amalgam of two or three strains injected into his blood. Nathan [a chimpanzee] was injected with Jerom's HIV-infested blood.<sup>64</sup>

There are many Jeroms all over the world, and their suffering is as—in some cases perhaps even more—acute. The statistics are chilling. Wise points out in *Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights*, that in the 'United States, more than 10 billion [animals] are slaughtered annually just for food. Tens of millions are annually consumed in biomedical research, hundreds of millions more by hunting and entertainment, for clothing, fur, leather, and through numerous other human activities.'<sup>65</sup> Charles Patterson points out that

Chicago emerged as the 'slaughter capital of America' with the formal inauguration of the Union Stock Yards, a gigantic complex for accommodating slaughter houses, ancillary industries processing animal body parts and all other activities connected with the meat industry, in 1865. The total number of livestock slaughtered between then and 1990 was 400,000,000. He adds, 'Today, American slaughterhouses kill that number of animals in less than two weeks.'<sup>66</sup>

If the statistics are numbing, so are the accounts of cruelty involved in the process. Upton Sinclair gives a graphic account of the horror of the Chicago slaughterhouses in his novel *The Jungle*, which, first published in 1906, has come to be regarded as a classic. In a narrow room, with a gallery for visitors, each hog was chained by a leg to a great iron wheel, about twenty feet in circumference, with rings and, on both sides, a narrow space into which came the hogs at the end of their journey. As 'the wheel turned, a hog was suddenly yanked off its feet and borne aloft'. Sinclair continues:

At the same instant the ear was assailed by the most terrifying shriek; the visitors started in alarm, the women turned pale and shrank back. The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon the journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was strung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and tears starting in their eyes.<sup>67</sup>

At the end of it, the hogs had their throats slit and then thrown into a huge vat of boiling water. Saying that even the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking about the hogs, Sinclair writes:

It was pork-making by machinery, pork-making by applied mathematics. And yet somehow the most matter-of-fact person could not help thinking of the hogs; they were so innocent, they came so very trustingly; and they were so very human in their protests—and so perfectly within their rights!

They had done nothing to deserve it; and it was adding insult to injury, as the things were done here, swinging them up in this cold-blooded, impersonal way, without a pretence at apology, without the homage of a tear.

Sinclair's work, which includes an equally heart-rending description of the mass slaughter of cattle, was, of course, fictional. But it was an outstanding case of art holding up a mirror to life. He had been commissioned by a socialist weekly newspaper, *The Appeal to Reason*, to investigate the meat-packing industry. Spending seven weeks in Chicago, learning about the Union Stock Yards, he repaired for nine months to an eight feet by ten feet room in Princeton, New Jersey, and wrote *The Jungle* which appeared in the weekly in installments. Five publishers, who had expressed an interest in the novel backed off—intimidated by the power of the meat industry. Finally, Doubleday published it—but after making sure about the strict authenticity of the descriptions. Charles Patterson, who provides all this information, also tells us that the basics of assembly-line slaughter today 'is not all that different from what it was 100 years ago'.<sup>68</sup>

As bad is the scene in large-scale poultry farms. A five-year investigation by PETA India found gruesome abuse including live scalding, starvation and mutilation of the birds and conditions that could lead to diseases like E-Coli infection, salmonella poisoning and bird flu.<sup>69</sup>

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## Cruelty as Fun

The excuse that poultry and meat industries provide food neither condones the cruelty that Sinclair describes nor obscures the fact that its basic goal is making profit. It also does not absolve the public of the guilt of not doing anything to ensure more humane forms of killing and that slaughter is kept to the minimum required for food and not increased to meet demands artificially hiked up through advertising to boost profits. Besides, the excuse of providing food does not apply to other forms of cruelty to non-human living beings such as hunting. In most countries, not the latter but the slaughter industry is the source of meat. In most cases—except in rare ones where animals that kill people are involved or hunters are tribal people in search of

food—hunting is murder masquerading as sport, a way of displaying counterfeit masculinity by killing from a safe distance. Most countries allow it except in cases of species declared endangered. Even countries which boast of their human rights record and hector others for not doing enough are guilty. Canada, for example, allows seals—one of the most friendly and harmless species of animals possible—to be hunted, knowing full well that it is mostly done in the most inhuman manner, such as clubbing young seals to death. According to one report the permissible limit was 270,000 seals for 2007, when this book was being written.

As unpardonable is the use of non-human living beings in other forms of entertainment. Cockfights (in which steel claws are attached to the feet of the combatants) and dogfights that often lead to death, are exercises in depraved savagery. The same applies in perhaps a greater measure to bull fights staged in our time and the fights between gladiators and animals like lions in the Coliseum in ancient Rome. No less cruel perhaps is the use of animals in street performances and circuses. The methods of training are unspeakably cruel and involve regular infliction of severe pain. Besides, the very fact that they are forced to live and perform in completely alien environments itself causes great discomfort and stress—as in the case of bears who find the heat of the plains unbearable. Things are made worse by the fact that individual owners cannot, or do not, provide performing animals with adequate food and medical treatment and keep them in cramped places. In circuses large animals like tigers and lions are not only kept in very small cages but made to travel in them from place to place.

In many countries animals continue to be used to pull carriages with human passengers and carry impossibly heavy loads. Farm animals—particularly those used for ploughing—are most shabbily treated when they grow old. Cattle and horses are often branded for identification. Herders use the most cruel methods—Patterson's descriptions<sup>70</sup> leave one numb with horror—to castrate most of their animals except those they keep for breeding, and maximize the yield of milk for sale by starving calves.

As the example of gladiatorial combat cited above reminds one, the abuse of animals has a long history. As we have seen, warfare in which elephants, horses and even dogs have been used in most parts of the world and throughout history, is a conspicuous example. It had

nothing to do with the interests or well being of the animals used. We have seen the carnage inflicted on them in the battle of Kurukshetra. Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a novel which unfolds as a first person narrative by its principal protagonist, Paul Baumer, contains a graphic account of the agony of wounded horses in World War I. Describing their screams, Baumer soliloquies:

I have never heard a horse scream and I can hardly believe it. There is a whole world of pain in that sound, creation itself under torture, a wild and horrifying agony. We go pale. Detering sits up, 'Bastards, Bastards! For Christ's sake shoot them!'

He is a farmer and used to handling horses. It really gets to him. As if on purpose the firing dies away almost completely. The screams of animals become that much clearer. You can't tell where it is coming from any more in the quiet, silver landscape, it is invisible, ghostly, it is everywhere, between the earth and the heavens, and it swells out immeasurably. Detering is going crazy and roars out, 'Shoot them, for Christ's sake, shoot them!'

'They've got to get the wounded men out first,' says Kat.

We stand up and try to see where they are. If we can actually see the animals, it will be easier to cope with. Meyer has some field glasses with him. We can make out a dark group of orderlies with stretchers, and then some bigger things, black mounds that are moving. Those are the wounded horses. But not all of them. Some gallop off a little way, collapse, and then run on again. The belly of one of the horses has been ripped open and its guts are trailing out. It gets its feet caught up in them and falls, but it gets to its feet again.<sup>71</sup>

This is only a part of the description. The rest is even more horrifying. Finally, he writes:

Detering walks about cursing. 'What have they done to deserve that, that's what I want to know?' And later on comes back to it again. His voice is agitated and he sounds as if he is making a speech when he says, 'I tell you this: it is the most despicable thing of all to drag animals into a war.'<sup>72</sup>

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## The Two Edges of Technology

Technological progress has improved matters in certain areas. The use of tanks, armoured personnel carriers, other armoured vehicles and self-propelled artillery has almost done away with the use of horses,

mules and elephants in wars. The advent of railways, trucks, buses, and light and heavy motor vehicles has put an end in many countries to their use in transporting goods and human passengers. In many parts tractors have replaced horses and bullock in ploughing.

The advent of technology, however, has also led to mass slaughter in the most painful manner. The kind of killing of hogs and cattle which Sinclair describes, would not have been possible without the utilization of a number of mechanical inventions arranged, according to the technology of organization, in slaughter lines to facilitate large-scale killing. Besides, technology has made many animals redundant. When machines replace human beings, there is frequently a public demand, often accompanied by collective trade union action, that those rendered jobless be provided with alternative means of livelihood and, if necessary, retrained at public or the employer's expense. Such demands are mostly conceded or those replaced are sent off with retirement benefits generous enough to be readily accepted. Unfortunately, animals cannot engage in trade union activity nor can they claim retirement benefits. They are mostly either put to even more irksome use than earlier or are abandoned to their fate—which means slow death by starvation, disease and neglect—or sent to the butcher. Chances of their being treated in a humane manner are slim unless there is compulsion in the nature of State action for doing so.

Clearly, the subject of technology and animals raises complex issues and needs to be carefully studied from two perspectives—the impact of individual machines and that of what has been known as technology. The need for this becomes clear on considering some of the observations made by Jacques Ellul in his pioneering and path-breaking work, *The Technological Society*.<sup>73</sup> First published in English translation in 1964, it still remains the benchmark for analysis, though other significant works have been published since then.

Ellul uses the terms 'technique' and 'technology' almost synonymously. This is clear from the sentence, 'Whenever we see the word *technology* or *technique*, we automatically think of machines.'<sup>74</sup> Technique or technology certainly began with machines and it is true that 'without the machine the world of technique would not exist'.<sup>75</sup> Things, however, have changed. Ellul states, 'It is the machine that is now entirely dependent upon technique, and the machine represents only a small part of technique.'<sup>76</sup> One has to understand the nature of technology to understand how this has happened.

Technology, according to Ellul, 'is nothing more than *means* and the *ensemble of means*'.<sup>77</sup> 'The technical operation', he adds:

...includes every operation carried out in accordance with a certain method in order to attain a particular end. It can be as rudimentary as splintering a flint or as complicated as programming an electronic brain. In every case it is the method which characterizes the operation.<sup>78</sup>

We have seen that chimpanzees are capable of using simple tools; so are elephants who often use branches to scratch their backs. The primitive tools that humans use are not qualitatively different from those used by superior primates and mammals. They, and the technologies of which they are the products, have no substance or reality of their own and are capable only of immediate instrumental use. Then there are the techniques that are the results of applied science and that date from the late eighteenth century. These characterize our civilization. Machines, created by these techniques, derive their salience from their use in a social context. Each one of them would have been ignored and forgotten had it no social use. Herein lies the importance of technique which, as Ellul puts it:

...integrates the machine into society. It constructs the kind of world the machine needs and introduces order where the incoherent banging of machinery heaped up ruins; it does in the domain of the abstract what the machine did in the domain of labour. It is efficient and brings efficiency into everything.<sup>79</sup>

The progressive and proliferating introduction of machines has led to major changes in society and the environment. Machines consume power—muscle, fossil fuel, nuclear, and so on. They are used singly or in combination with other machines of the same type or different types to secure certain results. Not only have they to be arranged to ensure smooth and efficient functioning but space has to be created for their installation. Large factories, housing them, are often spread over acres. Forests and agricultural land or even built up urban land, have to be cleared for establishing factories and for accommodating people who work in them and who, in some instances, number in thousands. Roads, railway lines and bridges have to be built to convey raw material to—and transport manufactured items from—them.



Technological progress is the result of continuing inventions in disparate areas mutually facilitating the use of one another. The construction of factories has been made possible by advances in architecture, civil engineering, and construction machinery and material. The power for operating factories often comes from another technological phenomenon—the generation, transmission and harnessing of electricity. Large-scale transportation of raw material and products to and from factories has been made possible by the advent of trucks and railways, the technology of manufacturing them, the roads and train tracks needed for their movement, and the extraction and refinement of the coal and oil on which they run.

How the emergence of large-scale production and distribution, and the requirement of managerial and governmental activity to ensure the functioning of industrial behemoths, have led to urbanization is a story well known and requires no reiteration here.

The entire phenomenon has been the result of three developments interacting with one another and the wider society. The first of these is the emergence of technologies for the manufacture and use of specific kinds of machines—technologies which produce not one particular machine but all machines of the same kind. The second is the emergence of technologies that combine the use of machines produced by different technologies in the same productive process—for example, boilers and conveyer belts supplying coal to these. The third is the emergence of a complex of technologies for the integration of various technologies and systems of technologies in society and managing the environmental and other consequences—for example, techniques<sup>80</sup> of urban administration integrating systems of power generation and distribution with traffic management with the use of illuminated traffic signals, and supply of domestic power. Another example would be the meshing of an underground subway system and surface bus services to ensure the best urban mass transportation.

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## A Separate Reality

The result has been the emergence of technology as a separate entity with an autonomous dynamics, creating a world in accordance with its own logic. Ellul writes:

The new factor is that the multiplicity of these techniques has caused them literally to change their character. Certainly, they derive from the old principles and appear to be the fruit of normal and logical evolution. However, they no longer represent the same phenomenon. In fact, technique has taken substance, has become a reality in itself. It is no longer merely a means and an intermediary. It is an object in itself, an independent reality with which we must reckon.<sup>81</sup>

At the intellectual level, technology is a product both of reason and consciousness. Reason makes people aware of the possibility of devising newer and more efficient technologies. The result is a massive proliferation and diversification of the latter. Reason also leads to a comparative study of technologies and the final choice of one that is the most efficient in terms of achieving the end in view. While this tends to narrow down the use of technology to one (the best) in each field, consciousness makes people aware of what technology can achieve, which, in turn, makes people aware of alternative possibilities, leading to the application of new technologies in areas where things had earlier been left to chance, pragmatism and instinct.<sup>82</sup>

Today, technology, the science of means, extends to greatly diverse areas; it ranges from the act of shaving to the act of organizing the landing in Normandy, or to cremating thousands of deportees. Today no human activity escapes the technical imperative. There is a technique of organization just as there is a technique of friendship and a technique of swimming.<sup>83</sup>

The world is increasingly defined by technologies, which, arising as discrete efforts to meet the needs emerging from humankind's interaction with nature, are now almost the sole creator of needs. It has created its own environment which has little to do with nature and which is increasingly urban. This has had important consequences. As Ellul puts it:

Technique has penetrated the deepest recesses of the human being. The machine tends not only to create a new human environment, but also modify man's very essence. The milieu in which he lives is no longer his. He must adapt himself, as though the world was new, to a universe for which he was not created.<sup>84</sup>

This has had important consequences in terms of its influence on human behaviour toward animals. As we have seen, reason and consciousness have led to the choice of the most efficient technology

in each field. A society defined by technology, which puts the highest premium on order, systems and efficiency, has an inherent tendency to summarily dispense with anything that appears—rightly or wrongly—to stand in the way of utilizing the most efficient technology. This tendency, again, is further sharpened by the fact that the machine ‘represents the ideal toward which technique strives. The machine is solely, exclusively technique; it is pure technique, one might say’.<sup>85</sup> Technology leads inevitably to mechanization; it ‘transforms everything it touches into a machine’.<sup>86</sup>

Machines do not have emotions. A technological world in which the machine is the ideal has little place for feelings like love and compassion outside one’s immediate circle. What happens to non-human living beings like animals, birds, fish and other beings living in land, air and water in such a world? The savage mass butchery of stray dogs in Bangalore, one of the high-profile global hubs of information technology, is a spine-chilling indication. Bangalore, however, does not provide the only example of savagery. That technology tends to produce societies that are short on emotion and high on aggression is further underlined by the brutal killing of stray dogs by Hyderabad and Trivandrum’s municipal authorities in 2007, and the sharp incidence of individual and collective violence in other emerging hubs of information technology.

Indeed, all cities—even those that are not the seats of technology-based industries—are prone to violence. All of them are products of technologies that have created roads, buildings, drainage, sewerage and water-supply systems, and that lie behind systems of urban and police administration, and so on. They are, therefore, inhospitable to emotions as distinct from psychoses born of stress and strain. The latter, as well as the potential for violence inherent in them has been enhanced by the fact that the city is not a natural habitat of human beings. The latter, as Desmond Morris points out, ‘had evolved as a tribal animal and the basic characteristic of a tribe is that it operates on a localized, inter-personal basis.’<sup>87</sup> Not only that, men, grouped in small tribes, had become ‘both physically and mentally, both structurally and behaviourally’ increasingly adapted to the ‘hunting way of life’ during ‘the hundreds and thousands of years of human evolution’.<sup>88</sup> Cities have come up during the last 8,000 years or so and they are inhabited by what Morris calls ‘super-tribes’ formed through

the continuous expansion of tribes. The fundamental social pattern of cities goes against the human grain. For, as 'a species we were not biologically equipped to cope with a mass of strangers masquerading as members of our tribe. It was something we had to learn to do, but it was not easy'.<sup>89</sup>

During the centuries that followed Rome's emergence as the greatest city of its time with nearly half-a-million inhabitants:

...the frustrations and stresses of social life became greater. Super-tribal clashes became bloodier. There were too many people and that meant there were people to spare, people to waste. As human relationships, lost in crowds, became more impersonal, so man's inhumanity to man increased to horrible proportions.<sup>90</sup>

Needless to say, cruelty to animals became even more horrible.

Institutions, authorities and a whole host of rules and regulations have been devised to contain the tension arising from humankind's unnatural existence in cities. Also, people have formed 'tribe-sized sub-groups, or pseudo-tribes, within the main body of the super-tribe' comprising 'social or professional companions' enabling members to establish with one another relationships of the old, biological type.<sup>91</sup> This, however, has also made it possible for them to regard 'more comfortably' other sub-groups as outsiders beyond the scope of their protection.<sup>92</sup> From this, it has often been a short step to regarding the latter as enemies and unleashing violence on them.

The potential for violence inherent in such a situation is increased by the fact that the sub-groups or pseudo tribes do not always comprise 'social and professional companions' but people of the same political conviction, religious belief, ethnic stock, linguistic background or colour of skin. It may also include those who believe in terrorism and a revolutionary overthrow of the existing order. Equally, these may comprise criminals involved in extortion, kidnapping for ransom, drug smuggling or robbery.

Frequently, there is conflict among these groups, many of which try to cement their cohesion by recalling or conjuring up images, symbols and accounts of past greatness. As Stanley J. Tambiah points out:

When any group or community constructs its own myths of origin, stories of victories and conquests, and the lives of exemplary culture heroes, it

also directly or indirectly denigrates and blackens the traditions of the opponent neighbours and contestants against whom its accomplishments are measured.<sup>93</sup>

The propensity toward violence is aggravated by the fact that the quest for identity plays an important role in the formation of such sub-groups as well as violent mass movements of the kind represented by the Nazis in Germany and Fascists in Italy, both raised on a diet of hatred. Most such mass movements not only pour hatred against an identified enemy but also call for united action and self-sacrifice, a dissolution of one's own identity into that of the collective, for a millennial reordering of the world. Erich Hoffer writes in *The True Believer*, an incisive study of mass movements:

To ripen a person for self-sacrifice he must be stripped of his individual identity and distinctiveness. He must cease to be George, Hans, Ivan, or Tadao—a human atom with an existence bounded by birth and death. The most drastic way to achieve this end is by the complete assimilation of the individual into a collective body. The fully assimilated individual does not see himself or others as human beings. When asked who he is, his automatic response is that he is a German, a Russian, a Japanese, a Christian, a Moslem, a member of a certain tribe or family. He has no purpose, worth or destiny apart from his collective body: and as long as that body lives he cannot really die.<sup>94</sup>

An obscure, unemployed person has an identity that hardly registers and, in India, everybody in authority kicks him around. But his identity as a member of a militant or altruistic subgroup is immediately recognized and he is treated with the show of deference that fear of the group evokes. At the individual level it encourages him to strut about intimidating people, assaulting those who he feels is not showing him due respect, or just flaunting his power.

The consequences are much more serious at the collective level. As Amartya Sen writes:

...actively promoted sectarian hatreds can spread like wildfire, as we have seen recently in Kosovo, Bosnia, Rwanda, Timor, Israel, Palestine, Sudan, and many other places in the world. With suitable instigation, a fostered sense of identity with one group of people can be made into a powerful weapon to brutalize another.<sup>95</sup>

It has been made into such a weapon in the instances that Sen cites. As he further points out, 'Violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror.'<sup>96</sup>

Though it tends to spread rapidly over entire countries, large-scale or genocidal violence (the two may not always be identical) is inspired by ideologies of identity—communal, ethnic, political, class or other economic categories or whatever else it may be—which are mostly of urban origin. This becomes clear when one realizes that much of the terrorist/insurgent violence springs from ideologies which were propounded in the cities by urban intellectuals like Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao. Nazism was an urban phenomenon. Hitler had an urban middle class background and the rank-and-file of the *Sturm Abteilung* (SA) was predominantly made up of urban lumpens. Most people who resort to violence in the name of religion or race, and the organizations that unleash it, are based in cities, towns and urbanized villages.

Identity-crisis, leading to participation in sub-groups, tends to occur more in impersonal urban communities where the identities of only the rich, the powerful and the famous matter and the bulk of the population constitutes an anonymous mass. Frequently, people do not have any ties even with their next door neighbours in their multi-storied housing complexes, whether for the rich or not so rich. Village communities are smaller where people are known by name and families and recognized.

This is not to deny the existence of rural violence. Insurgency, terrorism, caste and communal riots, murders, armed robberies, rape and poaching have continued in the countryside for centuries because of circumstances that have nothing to do with cities and towns. The latter, however, are increasingly becoming spawning grounds of violence with the presence of growing groups of floating, migrant populations that are anonymous—without roots, and without the social and familial restraints to which they were subject in the villages—and whose members tend to be drawn to the city-based political/ethnic/communal sub-groups or pseudo tribes or mass movements.

Besides, as Desmond Morris points out, even if the rate of population growth remains constant (at 150,000 every 24 hours)—which he said was unlikely, 'the population densities we now experience (the book

was first published in 1967) in our major cities would exist in every corner of the globe' in 260 years time. Morris adds, 'The consequences of this for all forms of wild life is obvious. The effect it would have on our own species is equally depressing.'<sup>97</sup> Morris suggests that such a situation may not come to pass because we may have, long before its advent, collapsed as a dominant species because of our violation of 'so many of the rules that govern our biological nature'.<sup>98</sup>

We will discuss the issue in the last chapter. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the anonymity of cities encourage crime and acts of violence by reducing the chances of detection as criminals and rioters have greater opportunities of melting into the general mass of population. Equally, the collection of huge masses of people at one place enhances the opportunities for crime, and syndicates specializing in drug smuggling and distribution or extortion find it easy to operate. Of course, the fact that Bangalore has become a massive urban technological hub does not alone explain the rise in the incidence of violence and crime in the city. The influx of a vast number of people from outside—from other parts of Karnataka as well as other States of India—with the city's economic growth, has lent a sharp edge to the issue of identity. Those from outside the State fear the loss of their original identity while those from the State fear being swamped by outsiders. The dispute over the sharing of the waters of the Cauvery river with Tamil Nadu has further aggravated matters by creating a feeling of Kannadiga victimhood.<sup>99</sup>

A technological society's inherent tendency toward cruelty, particularly in an urban environment, is enhanced by the advent of a globalized market economy which worships success in monetary terms as the highest value, glorifies the competitive spirit and stigmatizes failure. This, as well as the rapidly rising expectations caused by the booming advertizing industry, the cutting edge of the market economy, has created an ambience in which failing to achieve the objectives one has set for oneself, can create an acute sense of insecurity about one's own abilities. It is not just an individual phenomenon. A feeling of insecurity, often intense, comes to grip substantial sections of a society as the deluge of branded foreign products push domestic ones out of the market, leading to closure of units and loss of jobs, and, as the entry of large corporations into the retail market deprives millions of small shopkeepers of their livelihood following the closure

of their establishments. All this further aggravates other insecurities caused by crime, the fear of traffic accidents, and so on.

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## Two Mechanisms of Escape

A growing feeling of insecurity feeds two psychoses—sadism and masochism—which contribute significantly to the rise of mass movements and sub-groups and lead to violence by them as well as individuals. As Erich Fromm shows in his seminal work *Fear of Freedom*, both sadism and masochism are the products of people's efforts to cope with a feeling of insecurity which comes upon them as they emerge from their mothers' worlds and become individuals through a process which he calls 'individuation'.

According to Fromm, despite the biological separation caused by birth, 'the child remains functionally one with mother for a considerable period'.<sup>100</sup> He is linked to her by what he calls 'primary ties', which imply a lack of freedom but which give him security and a feeling of belonging and of being rooted somewhere.<sup>101</sup> Slowly, with neurological and general physical development, the child develops the ability to grasp and master objects and entities and comes to regard these as well as his mother as apart from himself.<sup>102</sup> 'The more the child grows and the extent to which the primary ties are cut off the more he develops a quest for freedom and independence.'<sup>103</sup> This process—that of individuation, of becoming an individual—has two aspects. One is that the child 'grows stronger physically, emotionally and mentally' and, with the development of the individual's will and reason, the spheres of physical, emotional and mental activity become integrated into an organized structure or the self.<sup>104</sup>

Fromm points out that '*one side of the growing process of individuation is the growth of self-strength*' [Italics Fromm's]. The 'other aspect of the process of individuation is *growing aloneness*' [Italics Fromm's]. The more a child emerges from the primary ties, the more he or she loses the feeling of security these offered. The more people are aware of their separate existence from the world, the more they become aware of the latter's often threatening and menacing nature which they did not perceive when they were a part of it. As Fromm puts it, 'When one has become an individual, one stands alone and faces the world



in all its perilous and overpowering aspects.’ This creates a feeling of ‘powerlessness and anxiety.’<sup>105</sup> The only effective way of overcoming this feeling is for a man to:

...progress to ‘positive freedom’; he can relate himself spontaneously to the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of his emotional, sensuous, and intellectual capacities; he can thus become one again with man, nature and himself, without giving up the independence and integrity of his individual self. The other course open to it is to fall back, to give up his freedom, and to try to overcome his aloneness by eliminating the gap that has arisen between his individual self and the world.<sup>106</sup>

The second course involves recourse to two mechanisms of escape. The first is characterized by ‘the more or less complete surrender of individuality and the integrity of the self’.<sup>107</sup> It involves fusing ‘one’s self with somebody or something outside oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking.... The more distinctive form of this mechanism is to be found in the striving for submission or domination’ or ‘in masochistic and sadistic striving’. According to Fromm:

The annihilation of the individual self and the attempt to overcome thereby the unbearable feeling of powerlessness are only one side of the masochistic strivings. The other side is the attempt to become a part of a bigger and more powerful whole outside of oneself, to submerge and participate in it. This power can be a person, an institution, God, the nation, conscience or a psychic compulsion.... One surrenders one’s self and renounces all strength and pride connected with it, one loses one’s integrity as an individual and surrenders freedom; but one gets a new security and a new pride in the participation in the power in which one submerges. One also gets security against the torture of doubt.<sup>108</sup>

All the different forms of sadism, Fromm points out, ‘go back to one essential impulse, namely, to have complete mastery over another person, to make him a helpless object of our will, to become the absolute ruler over him, to become his God, to deal with him as one pleases’.<sup>109</sup> More often than not, he points out, sadistic and masochistic trends coexist in the same person. Psychologically:

...both tendencies are outcomes of the one basic need, springing from the inability to bear the isolation and weakness of one’s own self.... The

sadistic person needs his object just as much as the masochistic needs his. Only, instead of seeking security in being swallowed, he gains it by swallowing somebody else....People are not sadistic or masochistic, but there is a constant oscillation between the active [sadistic] and passive [masochistic] side of the symbiotic complex, so that it is often difficult to determine which side of it is operating at a given moment.<sup>110</sup>

Humiliating and enslaving a person are means of achieving such domination. The most important aim is making one suffer, as the most absolute form of exercising power over another person is inflicting pain on him, forcing him to suffer without his being able to defend himself. Pleasure in the complete domination over another person (or other animate objects) is the very essence of the sadistic drive.<sup>111</sup>

Both masochism and sadism incline people to join sub-groups or pseudo tribes—the former by inducing submission to their leaders and the latter by prompting people to dominate others by becoming leaders. Sometimes the same person exercises dictatorial power over one set of people and surrenders his or her self to another group or person or an institution. Thus a bureaucrat, a police officer, a corporate executive, a cleric in a religious order, the functionary of a political party or a member of a mafia-type criminal outfit can be a masochist in respect of those above him or her and a sadist in relation to those below.

The urge for sadistic domination leads to violence not only against the person or persons sought to be dominated but also from an effort to extend the following of the group under one's domination. More frighteningly, the ultimate power a sadist exercises over another person or a group is that of the denial of life which makes murder and genocide the ultimate sadistic acts. Masochistic surrender by followers to the leader ensures the unquestioning implementation of his orders in the same manner in which members of the SA carried out Hitler's dictates.

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## The Specious Divide

Individual and collective violence engendered by sadist as well as identity-related aggression has taken a huge toll of human life throughout history. While these have by and large been recorded

and condemned—the most comprehensively till date being the case of the holocaust—the loss of non-human life in sadist and identity-related violence, has hardly received any attention. This has largely been the result of ‘speciesism’, a term first used by Richard D. Ryder in a privately-funded pamphlet entitled *Speciesism* and distributed in Oxford, England, in 1970. In it, Ryder strongly criticized the contemporary moral position that excludes all non-human living beings from the morality-based protections extended to human beings. The position implies that membership of the species *Homo sapiens* is the critical criterion. It entitles one to protection which is denied to non-humans.

As one can see, the speciest position is a result of the Judaeo-Christian and the Renaissance-Humanist tradition which not only excludes non-human living beings from the protection of the moral universe constructed by humans but permits their use and exploitation to further human interests. It is also a result of the abandonment by the bulk of the Hindus of the inclusive worldview of the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and by the Buddhists and Jains of the compassionate message of their faiths.

The speciest position is used to justify the most savage torture of non-human beings in laboratory tests and experiments on the excuse of protecting the vital interests of human beings. Even cases where this is patently false—such as the testing of cosmetics that serve no critical human interest at all—had for a long time led to virtually no protest because many had not questioned the morality of these. Thanks to the dominant societal attitude steeped in speciesism, people had taken it for granted that animals had to be sacrificed for and used by humans and, hence, there was no point in agonizing over what they suffered.

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## Saints and Scientists

Laboratory animals are particularly vulnerable to sadist violence, the most important aim of which, as we have seen above, is forcing a human being or any other animate object to suffer helplessly, to derive pleasure from complete dominance and infliction of pain and suffering. Any argument that this cannot happen because scientists

cannot be sadists, would stretch one's credibility a bit too far. The underlying assumption, that scientists as well as all those who work in laboratories are a superior breed without the failings that afflict lesser mortals, is, to put it mildly, not quite warranted. The incident in which a beagles puppy was held by the scruff of its neck and punched repeatedly in the face, instances of animals being taunted and other violations of animal protection law inside the laboratories of Huntingdon Life Sciences, which were secretly filmed by PETA in 1997, underline this fact. PETA has done similar outstanding investigative work elsewhere as well, showing that abuse and torture of laboratory animals is common. As we have seen, its investigation led, in April 1997, to revocation of the company's UK Home Office licence for animal experimentation for six months.

The circumstances that drive people to sadism operate in the case of scientists as well. The feeling of insecurity that is born of the fear of a colleague scoring over one professionally or misappropriating the fruits of one's research, haunts them as it does others. Nor will it be safe to assume that, by some miracle, scientific establishments are free from the corruption, no-holds-barred competition and internal politics one finds elsewhere. Nor are scientists immune to the influence of the economic, societal and personal factors that lead to a feeling of insecurity. There is, besides, a very special reason integral to the nature of conducting experiments on non-human animals that can produce a strong tendency toward dehumanizing one and making one a sadist.

Scientists and laboratory workers cannot be unaware of the pain they are causing to animals while conducting experiments on them or the gross cruelty involved in keeping them imprisoned in small, sunless cages for years on end. To be able to go about their business they must cauterise the part of their consciousness that makes them sensitive to the suffering of the animals. In so doing, they also tend to cauterise their ability to experience compassion.

The instruments used are reason and will. The first enables one to persuade oneself into believing that the terrible things one is doing to animals are for a higher good. The need to persuade oneself arises particularly in the case of tests which one knows—as in the area of cosmetics or a routine research project for a degree or a paper to be read at a conference—do not contribute profoundly to human

knowledge. Will is used both to blot out of one's consciousness the line of reasoning that might prompt one to question the morality and/or necessity of what one is doing and to implement the gruesome acts of torture involved in experimenting and testing. The latter often involves the mental process of demonization—attributing to a living being the horrendous and hateful characteristics ascribed to a demon. Here speciesism can play a very important role in dividing human and non-human living beings into an 'us-they' identity confrontation and labelling all non-human beings—whether a beagles puppy or a man-eating tiger—as posing a vicious threat to humanity. In this, a scientist carries inside a laboratory a process often in evidence outside, such as the demonization of stray dogs used to justify their mass slaughter in Karnataka, Kerala and Hyderabad.

This is not to say that all scientists are sadists but to argue that there is reason to believe that some are. Animals need protection from them, particularly since the nature of experimentation on living being requires the suppression of one's feelings of compassion for the subject of the experiments. It is, therefore, necessary that those engaged in animal experimentation should undergo periodic psychiatric counselling and testing and that there is total transparency in the functioning of laboratories including public listing of the nature of experiments undertaken, the animals used and the benefits that would follow. It is equally necessary that there are regular visits to animal houses of laboratories, whether corporate or publicly funded, by credible teams of the CPCSEA which must—repeat must—include people from animal welfare organizations. Finally, each and every institution engaged in animal experimentation must rigorously implement the three Rs—Replacement, Reduction and Refinement.

Whether in a laboratory or outside, animals are everywhere easy targets of cruelty and violence rooted in sadism. Pets are often victims of the latter and the incidence of their abuse is increasing in many places. Equally, one can call for the mass murder of an entire animal category—stray dogs, for example—on the ground that it constitutes a major health hazard, without provoking even a thousandth of the kind of protest a call for a mass killing of the members of a human group—ethnic, religious, political, or political—would trigger. On the other hand, one might even hope to be acclaimed by a section as a public-spirited citizen.

A call for a mass killing of stray dogs or their wholesale deportation can thus be a device both for becoming a community or political leader and for acting out one's genocidal impulse—the ultimate expression of sadism—by directing it against them. All this once again underlines the fact that violence against animals is the outcome of aggression spawned by a clutch of religious, cultural, historical, economic, social, technological and psychological factors evolving through history. These have been discussed in this and the preceding chapters. We have seen what the savagery resulting from them has done to animals. What it has been doing to human beings has often not been sufficiently realized. The next chapter will dwell on this and also of the possibility of things changing.

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## Notes

1. Graves, Robert. 1955. *The Greek Myths*, Volume I, p. 53. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 84. For a full account of the birth of Heracles, see pp. 84–90.
3. Graves, Robert. 1955. *The Greek Myths*, Vol. I, p. 56. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
4. Hermes: Zues' son by Maia, the daughter of Atlas, a Titan and a brother of Prometheus.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
7. Nemesis: the moon goddess as a nymph.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–75 for a full account.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
19. Gandhi, M.K. *The Bhagavadgita*, pp. 114–15. Delhi: Orient Paperbacks. Here 'right' seems to have been used synonymously with 'virtue' as the English counterpart of the word *dharma*.

20. Ojha, Krittibas. 1995. *Shachitra Saptakanda Ramayana* (illustrated Ramayana in seven parts), pp. 138–39 and 144–45. Kolkata: De's Publishing.
21. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, Vol. I, pp. 716–20. New Delhi: Rupa & Co. There is a story behind the episode. The five Pandavas had ventured into a forest near Dwaitavana to recover the incense sticks which a Brahmin used for worship. These were attached to a string which had got entangled into the antlers of a stag which had fled into the forest. As they were overcome with thirst, Nakula, asked by Yudhishtira, climbed a tall tree to see if there was any water nearby. He saw a lake that was not far away and went to fetch water for all the brothers. Finding the water inviting, he knelt down to drink. Suddenly, a thunderous voice said, 'You may not drink water from my lake until you have answered my riddles.' Seeing no one around, he started to drink and lost consciousness the moment the water touched his lips. Sahadeva, who came looking for him, as he was missing for a long time, met the same fate as he started to drink without answering the questions. The same thing happened to Arjuna and Bheema who came looking for their brothers and ignored the demand that they first answer the questions. Finally, Yudhishtira arrived and answered the questions. At the end of it, the *Yakshya* revealed himself to be his father Dharma who had come in disguise to test him.
22. Chakravarti, Appaswami. 1958. 'Jainism: Its Philosophy and Ethos', in Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Nalinaksha Dutt, A.D. Pusalker and Nirmal Kumar Bose (eds), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 431. Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 431.
24. Waldau, Paul. 2002. *The Spectre of Speceisism: Buddhist and Christian Views of Animals*, p. 138. New York: Oxford University Press.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
27. Here Waldau refers to the First of the Five Precepts (Panchashila) of Buddhism which enjoin one to refrain from (i) taking the life of (killing) any living being; (ii) stealing (taking that which is not offered); (iii) sexual misconduct (adultery, rape, exploitation, and so on); (iv) false speech (lying) and (v) consumption of intoxicants.
28. Paul Waldau, *The Spectre of Speceisism*, p. 143.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
31. Mukherjee, Satkari. 'Buddhism in Indian Life and Thought', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 576. Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 576.
33. Menon, Ramesh. 2004. *Mahabharata: A Modern Rendering*, Vol. I, p. 30. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

34. A *Rath* is a chariot. *Rathi* is a warrior—and a *Maharathi*, great warrior—who fights from a chariot.
35. Mukherjee, Satkari. 'Buddhism in Indian Life and Thought', *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 577. Kolkata: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 582.
37. Worship of Goddess Durga, Mother Goddess, wife of Shiva and the slayer of the demon Mahishashura.
38. Ghosh, Rhea. 2005. *Gods in Chains*, p. 140. New Delhi: Foundation Books. The figure is quoted from the proceedings of the International Workshop on Domesticated Asian Elephants, 5–10 February 2001.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 178. The text of the complaint is carried as Appendix D of Rhea Ghosh's book.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
43. Section 42 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 lays down that the Chief Wildlife Warden may issue a certificate of ownership for the purposes of Section 40 (which makes the possession of a certificate mandatory for anyone owning a listed species of wild life or trophies, parts or uncured trophies. It also provides that before issuing the certificate in respect of a captive animal, the Chief Wild Life Warden shall ensure that the applicant has adequate facilities for the housing, maintenance and upkeep of the animal.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60. Ghosh attributes much of the information here to Dr Chanduvarath Pythal.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 36–37.
48. Pereira, Shiranee, Prema Veeraraghavan, Sonya Ghosh and Maneka Gandhi. 2002. 'Animal Experimentation and Ethics in India: The CPCSEA Makes a Difference', paper presented at the Fourth Congress on Alternatives and Animal Experiments in the Life Sciences, New Orleans, USA, 11–15 August 2002. Available at <http://www.worldcongress.net2002/proceedings/c6%2Fpereira.pdf> (downloaded on 23 April 2007).
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Swaminathan, Chitra. 2003. 'Voiceless Victims of Science', *The Hindu*, Metro Plus, Kochi, 22 May. Available at [www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2003/05/22/stories/2003052201180200.htm](http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mp/2003/05/22/stories/2003052201180200.htm) - 23k.
52. Pereira, Shiranee, Prema Veeraraghavan, Sonya Ghosh and Maneka Gandhi. 2002. 'Animal Experimentation and Ethics in India: The CPCSEA Makes a Difference', paper presented at the Fourth Congress on Alternatives and



- Animal Experiments in the Life Sciences, New Orleans, USA, 11–15 August 2002. Available at <http://www.worldcongress.net2002/proceedings/c6%perreira.pdf> (downloaded on 23 April 2007).
53. Ibid.
  54. Ibid.
  55. Russell, W.M.S. and R.L. Burch. 1959. *The Principles of Humane Experimental Techniques*. London: Methuen.
  56. Pereira, Shiranee, Prema Veeraraghavan, Sonya Ghosh and Maneka Gandhi. 2002. 'Animal Experimentation and Ethics in India: The CPCSEA Makes a Difference', paper presented at the Fourth Congress on Alternatives and Animal Experiments in the Life Sciences, New Orleans, USA, 11–15 August 2002. Available at <http://www.worldcongress.net2002/proceedings/c6%perreira.pdf> (downloaded on 23 April 2007).
  57. See <http://www.petaindia.com/caring.html> (downloaded on 24 February 2008).
  58. Under Britain's Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, every experiment involving animals has to secure permission from the Home Office and has to follow strict guidelines to minimize pain and suffering to the animals.
  59. Barnes, Kirsty. 'UK Ordered to Review Animal Testing Approval System.' Accessed on [www.labTechnologist.com/news/ng.asp?n=78609=covance=huntingdon\\_lifesciences\\_animal\\_testing\\_uk](http://www.labTechnologist.com/news/ng.asp?n=78609=covance=huntingdon_lifesciences_animal_testing_uk) (downloaded on 10 June 2007).
  60. Gandhi, Maneka, Minister of State for Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, speaking at the first seminar on 'The State of Animal Houses in India', text released by Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 10 June 2002. [http://pib.nic/archive/ireleng/yr\\_2002/rjun\\_2002/100620022/html.com](http://pib.nic/archive/ireleng/yr_2002/rjun_2002/100620022/html.com) (downloaded on 14 June 2007).
  61. Ibid.
  62. Wise, Steven M. 2000. *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*, p. 1. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Perseus Publishing.
  63. Ibid., pp. 1–2.
  64. Ibid., p. 2.
  65. Wise, Steven M. 2002. *Drawing the Line: Science and the Case for Animal Rights*, p. 9. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Books.
  66. Patterson, Charles. 2002. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, p. 58. New York: Lantern Books.
  67. Sinclair, Upton. 2003. *The Jungle*, pp. 33–34. Border Classics by special arrangement with Ann Arbor Media Group LLC, Ann Arbor Media, Michigan, USA, 2003.
  68. Patterson, Charles. 2002. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, p. 59–60 and also p. 65. New York: Lantern Books.
  69. PETA leaflet, *PETA India's chicken industry investigation reveals filth, disease and abuse*. Available at [www.PETAIndia.com](http://www.PETAIndia.com).
  70. Patterson, Charles. 2002. *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, p. 6–10. New York: Lantern Books.

71. Remarque, Erich Maria. 1996. *All Quiet on the Western Front*, pp. 44–45. London: Vintage Classics.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
73. Ellul, Jacques. 1964. *The Technological Society*. New York: Vintage Books.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
80. Here the word ‘technique’ sounds much better and more appropriate than the word ‘technology’ which is more commonly used in respect of things mechanical. This underlines Ellul’s wisdom in using the two words synonymously depending on the context.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
87. Morris, Desmond. 1994. *The Human Zoo*, p. 5. London: Vintage.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
93. Tambiah, Stanley J. 1997. *Leveling Crowds: Ethnonationalist Conflicts and Collective Violence in South Asia*, p. 290. New Delhi: Sage, Vistaar Publications.
94. Hoffer, Erich. 1989. *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, p. 62. New York: Harper Perennial.
95. Sen, Amartya. 2006. *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, p. xv. London: Allen Lane.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
97. Morris, Desmond. 2005. *The Naked Ape*, pp. 162–63. London: Vintage.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
99. The sharing of the waters of the Kaveri river has been the source of a major dispute whose roots go back to the nineteenth century. It has led to several riots during the recent decades and Karnataka strongly resents the final verdict of the Cauvery Waters Dispute Tribunal, which, delivered on 5 February 2007, gave Tamil Nadu more water than Karnataka.
100. Fromm, Erich. 1966 (Reprint). *Fear of Freedom*, p. 19. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 20.



102. Ibid., p. 20.
103. Ibid., p. 23
104. Ibid., p. 23
105. Ibid., p. 23.
106. Ibid., pp. 120–21.
107. Ibid., p. 121.
108. Ibid., pp. 133–34.
109. Ibid., p. 135.
110. Ibid., p. 136.
111. Ibid., p. 135.

## ***Chapter Seven***

### **Eradicating the Roots of Aggression**

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We have so far analyzed the factors that have led to the mental divide that has excluded non-human living beings from the moral universe that humans have constructed for themselves and how this has led to the most savage enslavement, torture and mass killing of non-human living beings. We have also seen how factors like technological progress, urbanization and the advent of globalization have led to rising levels of human aggression and violence and how animals have been easy victims of it. Aggression is a psychological state that can lead to acts of physical violence like shooting or knifing or striking a person or a non-human living being following a sudden provocation. It can also lead to prolonged physical violence in the form of continued torture as in a laboratory or as on captive non-human beings like elephants or pets like dogs or on human beings incarcerated in concentration camps. It can also be psychological aggression in the form of denial of freedom and happiness (the most acute form of which is slavery), the use of abusive language or manipulative behaviour that undermines a living being's happiness, confidence and self-esteem.

Aggression can escape being noticed as long as an individual or group concerned does not act in a manner that reflects it. It can be directed both against humans and non-human living beings. A man can vent his aggression on his wife as well as his pet dog. Violent criminals tend to be cruel toward animals as well. This becomes clear on considering research work done on serial killers. In their paper, 'From Animal Cruelty to Serial Murder: Applying the Graduation Hypothesis', Jeremy Wright and Christopher Hensley write:

Since the late 1970s, the FBI has considered animal cruelty to be a possible indicator of future serial murder. The FBI documented the connection between cruelty to animals and serial murder following a study of 35

imprisoned serial murderers. The convicted murderers were asked questions regarding their childhood cruelty toward animals. More than half of the serial murderers admitted to hurting or torturing animals as children or adolescents (Humane Society of the United States, 2001).<sup>1</sup>

In another paper entitled 'Childhood Cruelty to Animals and Subsequent Violence Against Humans', Linda Merz-Perez, Kathleen M. Heide, and Ira J. Silverman, who interviewed 45 violent and 45 non-violent offenders in a maximum security facility at Sumter County, Florida, USA, wrote:

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of cruelty to animals and later violence against humans. Cruelty to animals has long served as a red flag in law enforcement circles with respect to extremely violent offenders. For example, the expansive literature with respect to serial killers has often cited cruelty to animals as a precursor to the violence later targeted against human victims (Lockwood & Church, 1998).<sup>2</sup>

They conclude:

The overall results of the study support previous research efforts indicating a relationship between cruelty to animals committed during childhood and later violence perpetuated against humans. The findings indicate that offenders who committed violent crimes as adults were significantly more likely than adult nonviolent offenders as children to have committed acts of cruelty against animals in general and pet and stray animals in particular.<sup>3</sup>

Merz-Perez, Heide and Silverman note that cruelty to animals is a complex phenomenon and that any meaningful inquiry into its dynamics requires the application of rigorous methodological standards and conceptual precision. The results of their study indicate that cruelty to animals committed by children can provide insights into violent behaviour that may or may not translate later into violence against humans. Meanwhile, of particular significance here is their observation that cruelty committed against animals often reveals insightful analogies with respect to violence committed against humans by humans. Stating that past acts of cruelty to animals resembling either the participants' instant or most serious offence, were reported only by violent offenders, they write:

One violent offender, a repeat sex offender, had been convicted while an adolescent of a crime against nature for sodomizing a reformatory pig. Another participant, convicted of sexual battery on a person 65 years or older, described how he would throw stones and bricks at stray animals 'to beat and hurt them like my parents hurt me.' According to the police report, the victim's face had been severely beaten.<sup>4</sup>

According to Wright and Hensley,

In 1987, animal cruelty was added to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-III (R) (DSM-III-R)* as a symptom of conduct disorder and was later kept in the 1994 DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association 1987, 1994). According to *DSM-III-R* and *DSM-IV's*, description of conduct disorders, physical violence and harm to humans and animals is common.<sup>5</sup>

In this context, it is significant to note some observations by John Dollard and Neal Miller in their book *Personality and Psychotherapy*. According to them, individuals, who are frustrated in their efforts to seek affection and approval from people they love, transfer the anger born of their frustration to people who cannot retaliate. Serial murderers may be inhibited from retaliating against individuals who first caused their frustration and who may exercise a degree of control over them. They, therefore, vent their anger on weaker creatures, including animals.<sup>6</sup>

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## The Road to the Holocaust

We have mentioned that the psychosis of sadism in its ultimate form can lead to the urge for genocide and mass killing of animals. In *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, Charles Patterson shows the common roots of Nazi genocide and the contemporary world's enslavement and slaughter of non-human animals in disturbing detail. James Barrett writes, 'Historians have deprived the [Chicago meat] packers of their rightful title of mass-production pioneers, for it was not Henry Ford but Gustavus Swift and Philip Armour who developed the assembly-line technique that continues to symbolize the rationalized organization of work.'<sup>7</sup> Henry Ford was profoundly impressed by the system in Chicago. Patterson quotes

him as saying in his autobiography that he believed 'that this was the first moving line ever installed', and that the idea of the assembly line came 'in a general way from the overhead trolley that the Chicago packers use in dressing beef'.<sup>8</sup> He further shows how Ford not only developed the assembly line method that the Germans used to kill Jews, but launched a 'vicious anti-Semitic campaign that helped the Holocaust happen'.<sup>9</sup> Needless to say, Ford was highly popular in Germany and Hitler kept his picture in his office.

If the organizational model of the mass slaughter of six million Jews during the Holocaust was provided by Chicago and Henry Ford, the Nazi ideology was reinforced by eugenics, which played an important role in the shaping and justification of the Nazi theory of racial superiority, which was at the heart of the doctrine that led to the brutal mass killings. The term eugenics was coined in 1881 by Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin who had transferred his interest from meteorology to the study of human heredity. From early beginnings in the 1860s, genetic doctrines, which rested on the assumption that heredity was the sole determining factor in shaping a person's character, and social environment had little influence on the process, received increasing attention in the UK and the US. By the end of that century, these dominated scientific thought in both Europe and North America. By the twentieth century, the principal agenda of the advocates of eugenics in the US and Germany, was 'sterilisation to control the reproduction of people regarded as a burden to society and a threat to civilization'.<sup>10</sup>

The eugenics movement received a major boost in the US when the American Breeders' Association (ABA) was formed at a session of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (AASCES) in 1903. Charles B. Davenport, who emerged as the movement's leader in the US, described Eugenics as 'the science of the improvement of the human race by better breeding'.<sup>11</sup> He and other eugenicists believed that 'social deviation was genetically determined and that criminality was the result of bad genes. Their proposed solution to social problems was to keep people who deviate from acceptable social norms from reproducing'.<sup>12</sup>

According to Patterson, many of the US eugenicists were openly anti-Semitic. Their influence led to the passage of the immigration restriction laws of 1920s. As a result, many Jews who, apprehensive

of Hitler's policies, wanted to emigrate to the US, found their entry barred.<sup>13</sup> Within the US, sterilization as a means of curbing the proliferation of people considered undesirable and controlling crime, continued to gain ground. As many as 12,000 forced sterilizations had been conducted by 1930.<sup>14</sup>

The strides taken by eugenics in the US had deeply influenced German scientists even before World War I. In the years following the latter, eugenics became deeply entrenched in the country's medical and scientific circles where it came to be known as 'race hygiene'<sup>15</sup> and ties of close cooperation had been forged between German and American scientists. Even before the Nazis came to power, Germany had more than 20 institutes of 'racial hygiene'. The latter's goal was to prevent inferior life and genetic degeneration through the 'targeted selection and promotion of superior life' and eradication of 'undesirable' sections of the population.<sup>16</sup>

Understandably, sterilization featured at the top of the Nazi government's agenda of 'ethnic cleansing'. The Law on Preventing Hereditarily Ill Progeny, requiring the sterilization of patients suffering from specified mental disorders in state hospitals and nursing homes, was passed in July 1933.<sup>17</sup> Soon, one heard the demand that the law be made applicable to Jews as an ethnic category. Nothing came of it. As Patterson puts it, 'the plan soon became unnecessary when the Nazis moved beyond it to their more radical solution to the "Jewish problem".'<sup>18</sup>

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## Demonize and Damn

The world now knows, as it did then, what the more radical 'final solution' was. It involved the unleashing of several processes which recall some of the worst instances of human being's treatment of non-human beings—only, it was now applied to humans. Thus, the demonization of Jews as a means of justifying the holocaust had a parallel in the demonization of animals as a conscious or subconscious justification for their slaughter and abuse. Of particular significance is the use of animal adjectives in respect of Jews. Patterson cites the instance of the Nazi propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, describing as 'animals' and 'no longer human beings' the Jews he saw



during his visit to the Ledz ghetto early in World War II.<sup>19</sup> He quotes Gendarmerie chief, Fritz Jacob, as writing in a letter home in 1942, of seeing ‘frightful Jewish types’ in Poland. He said, ‘These were not human beings but ape people.’<sup>20</sup> Heinrich Himmler regarded Jews as ‘spiritually and mentally much lower than any animal’ and saw World War II as a racial struggle to the death against hordes of ‘Asiatic animals’ controlled by Jewish Bolshevism.<sup>21</sup>

Hitler, in Patterson’s words, used in respect of Jews ‘bacterial language with genocidal overtones’.<sup>22</sup> He also described Jews as the spider that slowly sucked people’s blood, a band of rats that fought each other until they drew blood and as ‘the eternal leech’.<sup>23</sup> The use of animal adjectives to describe Jews and the conditions in concentration camps where they were treated as worse than animals, enabled their exterminators and tormentors to view them, through a process of association, as animals. As the latter are generally regarded as being outside the protection of the moral universe constructed by humans, this made it mentally easier for them to kill and torture their victims.

One of the things they did with Jews, as they and others had been doing with animals for decades, was using them in medical experiments. Inmates of the women’s concentration camp at Ravensbruck were subjected to gas gangrene wounds and bone-grafting experiments. Those so used were called ‘rabbit girls’. Patterson, who mentions this, quotes a prisoner-doctor at Auschwitz, Magda V., as saying that Josef Mengele<sup>24</sup> treated Jews like ‘laboratory animals’ since ‘we were really biologically inferior in his eyes’.<sup>25</sup>

Not just Jews. Slavic people, William L. Shirer writes, were also considered the *Untermenschen*—subhumans:

To Hitler, they had no right to live, except that some of them, among the Slavs, might be needed to toil in the fields and mines as slaves of their German masters. Not only were the great cities of the East, Moscow, Leningrad and Warsaw, to be permanently erased but the culture of the Russians and Poles and other Slavs was to be stamped out and formal education denied to them.<sup>26</sup>

This is precisely what humans have done with non-human living beings like various species of primates, elephants, tigers, panthers, lions, deer, wild boars, bears, hyenas, snakes, and so on: Destroy their

habitats through the extension of agriculture and/or urbanization, kill them when they have, per force, tried to enter areas which humans have taken away from them, and enslave them for work or amusement and, of course, medical experimentation.

Some of the medical experiments that Nazis performed, not only on Jews but Slavs as well, were as inhuman and savage as the ones humans regularly perform on animals. What Shirer writes is chillingly significant in the context of what we have noted about experiments on animals. Labelling the Nazi experiments as examples of sadism, he writes, ‘...for in the use of concentration camp inmates and prisoners of war as human guinea pigs very little, if any, benefit to science was achieved. It is a tale of horror of which the German medical profession cannot be proud.’<sup>27</sup> He adds:

In the murders in this field the Jews were not the only victims. The Nazi doctors also used Russian prisoners of war, Polish concentration camp inmates, women as well as men, and even Germans. The ‘experiments’ were quite varied. Prisoners were placed in pressure chambers and subjected to high-altitude tests until they ceased breathing. They were injected with lethal doses of typhus and jaundice. They were subjected to ‘freezing’ experiments in icy water or exposed naked in the snow outdoors until they froze to death. Poison bullets were tried on them as was mustard gas....At Dachau and Buchenwald gypsies were selected to see how long, and in what manner, they could live on salt water.<sup>28</sup>

Most people would seethe in anger after reading about the above experiments. How many of them reacted similarly to the account of what was done to Jerom and Nathan, or the marmosets the crowns of whose heads were removed, or of the albino rabbits who broke their spines writhing in agony in their stocks while being administered eye irritancy tests? How many, again, would react with rage on hearing of the plight of an adult male chimpanzee, Jojo, described by Jane Goodall, in her foreword to Steven M Wise’s *Rattling the Cage: Toward Legal Rights for Animals*. She writes:

Jojo was the first adult male chimpanzee whom I met in a medical research laboratory—which was, of course, in the basement, with no windows. Jojo was, like the nine other adult males who shared the space with him, confined in a five-foot-by-five-foot cage. There were thick steel bars between Jojo and me. And there were bars on either side of him,

and above and below. His view of the world was utterly distorted by thick steel bars. He had one motor tyre in his cell, and a drinking spout. He had been born in the African forest; he had spent more than ten years in the lab.<sup>29</sup>

Significantly, Jojo's plight is not very different from that of human political prisoners in savage dictatorships who are kept in solitary confinement in lightless dungeons and tortured regularly. Yet it has not led to demonstrations in the streets in the way these have been staged to demand the release of political prisoners. The difference lies in the fact that he is a chimpanzee and not a human being. Apart from the unfairness of the whole thing, which is no doubt a result of speciesism, Jojo's as well as the other examples cited above show that precisely the same kind of atrocities can be perpetrated on humans as well as non-human living beings. This is because these spring from the same roots. Project a category of human beings as animals, and, over a period of time, the protection that extends to them as a part of the moral universe constructed by human beings, gets eroded as people subconsciously perceive them as animals. They are then open to the same kind of slaughter, abuse and torture that animals suffer routinely.

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## Dump the Divide

The safety and well-being of human beings themselves, therefore, demand that the social, cultural and psychological spawning grounds of such transferable aggression are eradicated. The first step toward this must be the elimination of the divide that puts non-human living beings outside the moral universe that governs and protects human beings. Anger that leads to violence is indivisible. So is compassion. The divide's removal, however, would not be an easy thing. Powerful elements—captains of industry and heads of biomedical empires and scientists working in these—have a vested interest in perpetuating it. The former have huge profits to protect and increase; the latter must have absolute power over their establishments. Both will fight to the last to safeguard their interests.

The offensive launched against Maneka Gandhi and the CPCSEA by industrialists and scientists indicates how bitter the fight will be. An article by 'Satya', which appears to be a pseudonym, in *People's*

*Democracy* of 14 July 2002, begins on a note that is remarkable for its shrillness:

The media gave wide publicity recently to an apparently trivial little item. The well-known 'animal-rights' activist and Hollywood bimbo of yesteryear, Brigitte Bardot, as a mouthpiece of the militantly extremist animal rights organization, PETA, had offered gratuitous advice to a then-union cabinet minister in India to 'look after' the animals being used in biomedical research. This happened on the background of a publicized quarrel (or 'disagreement' if you prefer euphemisms) between two union ministers, C P Thakur and Maneka Gandhi, on who is to regulate animal experimentation in India, and how this is to be done. Thakur was, then, the cabinet minister for health and family welfare, while Gandhi was in charge of statistics and programme implementation, although both have resigned since then, in the recent most famous reshuffle of the union cabinet.

It is curious (and amusing) enough that a minister (of state) for statistics and programme implementation should have been arguing about animal experimentation. Upper-class 'celebrities' such as actresses turned candle makers also keep putting in their own two bits on Maneka Gandhi's behalf from time to time on the matter. But then when such notorious international players as PETA and Bardot enter the fray, it is time to sit up and take more serious notice.

There are several things about the article that are significant. First, *People's Democracy* is the English-language weekly organ of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which does not normally concern itself with animal issues. It can be argued that it published the article out of concern for the future of India's science. Whatever it is, the fact that the article has appeared in *The People's Democracy*, indicates a certain politicization of the issue and once again underlines the fact that efforts to end cruelty to laboratory animals will have to contend with strong political opposition. The second is the intemperate and sarcastic language used. An example is Bardot's description as 'Hollywood Bimbo of yesteryear'. Another is the description of her and PETA as 'notorious international players' and 'tools of transnational corporations anxiously eyeing their emerging Indian competitors'. What 'Satya' does not seem to know is that far from being a tool of transnational corporations, PETA has relentlessly fought for the cause of animals experimented upon in the laboratories of drugs and cosmetics contract research companies like Huntingdon

Life Sciences and Covance Inc and is generally regarded as the *bete noir* of the corporate biomedical world.

The third aspect is the article's partial presentation of the truth. 'Satya' writes that in India Bardot and PETA:

...are best known for their campaign to block the international purchase of Indian leather on the charge (quite possibly correct in itself) that cattle being taken to the slaughterhouse are treated inhumanely. The result of their campaign, however, does not seem to have been any great deal of improvement in the conditions of the unfortunate cattle, but a loss of substantial revenue and the livelihood of workers involved in the leather industry.

What 'Satya' does not mention is that it has led to a fall in the profits of the owners of tanneries and leather product factories as well! Second, should revenue be considered an end in itself without any reference to the manner in which it is earned? If morality is considered irrelevant and revenue the most important thing, then what is wrong in earning it through smuggling or running illegal gambling dens? What was wrong with conditions in the early phase of capitalism in countries like Britain where workers—including children—were made to work long hours on a pittance and with little security of livelihood? Finally, it is strange that instead of condemning those transporting cattle to slaughterhouses in the most brutal manner, 'Satya'—even though admitting the possibility of it—criticizes PETA for launching a campaign against it!

The other arguments advanced and allegations levelled by 'Satya' deserve some attention, particularly since these have also been advanced by scientists. The first relates to the justification of animal experiments in the interest of 'scientific understanding of ourselves and our world, without which we have no enduring basis to improve our material condition'. We would not be quite human without curiosity about 'ourselves and the world around us'. Second, it is necessary to conduct experiments in schools and colleges to further education. The third and fourth reasons are respectively that experiments are needed for 'diagnosing some diseases' and 'checking whether certain products are safe for use or not, quite a bit of which is legally mandatory'.

The argument that animal experiments are necessary for a 'scientific understanding of our world', as stated by 'Satya', raises interesting

questions. In what category does the testing of cosmetics fall, particularly since it is not only not mandatory but there is also absolutely no need to test new products given that there are already so many of them in the market? As for experiments for teaching in schools and colleges, the tendency the world over is for effective computer-based alternative methods. In the case of surgery, medical students can be taken straight into the operation theatre—as is being done at the Harvard Medical School—for a first-hand view of the proceedings. Third, this writer at least has never heard of any procedure of diagnosing diseases through experiments on animals; diagnosis is made on the basis of physical symptoms, pathological tests and the use of X-Ray images, sonograms, brain and body scans, and so on. Finally, safety tests can be most misleading because though similar, there are major differences between the bodies of human beings and their closest primate cousins, chimpanzees. As we have seen, drugs like Thalidomide, Zomax and DES were all tested on animals and declared safe. The result in each case was disastrous. Not only that, according to one report, 150 years of testing drugs on animals has produced 25 drugs to combat strokes, none of which works on humans! Not surprisingly, European and American companies have committed themselves to the use of ingredients from the Generally Recognised as Safe (GRAS) list rather than use animals for product testing.

Some of the other observations by ‘Satya’ are equally interesting. According to him ‘recent events’ had reinforced the notion that the AWD/CPCSEA was treating scientists as ‘de facto criminals’, that experimentation by scientists was in danger, and that the ‘prejudiced activities of the AWD, had led either to a withdrawal of the Indian biotech and pharma sector industry from animal system-based drug trials, or an exodus of such centres to overseas sites’. A number of distinguished scientists were members of the CPCSEA when the article was published and they did not seem to have much difficulty in functioning. On the other hand, some scientists must have deserved harsh treatment given the fact that biomedical research has very little to show for itself in India and even prestigious research institutions have been plagued by non-performance, lack of accountability and questionable financial practices.

Nothing underlines this more than the state of affairs at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, one of India’s showpieces, as reflected in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India

for the financial year ended March 2000. Referring to the research done in it, the report states:

Since 1995–96, the Institute claimed to have completed 185 projects/schemes (March 2000). In 86 of these, final reports were submitted by the principal investigator and in remaining 99 projects/schemes, though stated to have been completed, the final reports were not submitted by the principal investigators. None of the research findings were got patented/commercialized. It was further observed that out of 154 projects/schemes undertaken during 1991–95, [though] 54 projects/schemes [were] stated to have been completed, no final report has been submitted by the Principal Investigators until March 2001. There is a real risk that the research projects output would go waste after the lapse of such a long period. The Institute does not seem to be concerned on [sic] such lapses.<sup>30</sup>

Worse, there had been many instances in which money received as advance for research projects, were not accounted for. The report states:

A test check of records of research section revealed that investigators of projects were given advances to undertake the projects and amounts were posted in the ledgers. In certain cases, the investigators did not render the accounts even after completion of projects resulting in the accumulation of money in the hands of the investigators. There were cases where the investigators had either retired or had left the Institute without clearing the advances.<sup>31</sup>

The report shows that at the end of the period from 1990–91 to 1999–2000, both years included, Rs 41.86 lakh were outstanding with investigators in respect of 110 projects, and ‘Rs. 5.42 lakh were outstanding in respect of 42 projects which were closed four to ten years ago’.<sup>32</sup> Given this state of affairs in India’s premier medical institute, it is hardly surprising that from 1956 to 2002, only 14 medicines invented by Indian scientists had been approved and released by the Drug Controller of India.<sup>33</sup>

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## Hardly Any Better

Hardly any better is the record of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). According to a report by the Comptroller and

Auditor General of India, it approved in June 1977, the construction of a high security laboratory, the Microbial Container Complex (MCC), as an infrastructural facility for one of its constituent units, the National Institute of Virology, at Pune for handling hazardous viruses. The project was to be completed in two phases—the first by March 1985 and the second by March 1990 at a cost of Rs 11.67 crore. The purpose was to protect its workers from laboratory infections and, apart from enabling the country to diagnose a possible attack through an introduced pathogen, serve as a strong deterrent against biological warfare. The project, however, remained uncompleted even 23 years later, and after the expenditure of Rs 12.87 crore. The CAG's report observed that the entrusting of the Central Public Works Department with the task of building the complex without ensuring that it had the necessary capacity, inordinate delay in finalizing the design, improper estimation of the scope of the work, omission of important items in the original project report, utilization of the facilities for purposes other than those contemplated in the project report, and so on indicated unplanned execution, improper monitoring and haphazard establishment of facilities.<sup>34</sup>

Nor was this the only indictment of the ICMR whose Director-General was one of the main spearheads of the attack on the CPCSEA and Maneka Gandhi in 2002. It undertook a research project, 'Management of Glaucoma Valves under Indian Conditions' to be implemented over three years beginning August 1995. Its main aim was to study the impact of the implantation of American Glaucoma Valves (AGVs), the management procedures followed at various hospitals, and so on, and the long-term and short-term effects of the various therapeutic modalities adopted.

According to the CAG's report, the ICMR imported 1,000 AGVs, costing Rs 70 lakh, from a US-based firm in January 1994. It, however, finalized the list of participating centres only in June and initiated the project as late as August 1995, 20 months after buying the valves. Between November 1995 and May 1998, the ICMR distributed 435 valves among 11 participating centres. Sixty-five, costing Rs 4.55 lakh, remained in its stock as of November 2000. It handed over the other 500 valves to the Guru Nanak Eye Centre (GNEC) in May 1997 following a directive from the Directorate General of Health Services. Their utilization report was awaited as of November 2000. Of the 500



given to it, the GNEC distributed 206 valves, costing Rs 14.42 lakh, as late as 22 October 1998, rendering the chances of their utilization before the expiry date—2 November 1998—rather remote. Of the 435 valves distributed by the ICMR, only 248 were utilized and 187, costing Rs 13.09 lakh remained with the participating centres. The CAG's report observes:

The ICMR injudiciously procured 1000 valves before initiating the project, of which it could utilize only 248 valves and 252 valves remained unutilized with the centres/ICMR as of November 2000. No records are available regarding the utilization of 500 valves distributed free among various hospitals/surgeons as directed by Director General of Health Services. Resultantly, the objective of the project of obtaining information on American Glaucoma Valves (by implanting 1000 valves) for use in National Blindness Control Programme could not be achieved, besides an avoidable loss of Rs 52.64 lakh in procurement of the valves.<sup>35</sup>

All this clearly shows that the tendency to view the confrontation over animal experimentation as being one between dedicated, honest, competent scientists who have no other goal than the advancement of knowledge and the country's good, and abrasive, overbearing, incompetent, animal activists with a sinister anti-science agenda inspired by alien forces inimical to the country, would be a trifle far-fetched. Scientists are not angels. They have their own agendas including those related to career advancement. Maneka Gandhi has repeatedly made clear that she is not for banning experiment on animals but for rigorous implementation of the three Rs, for compassionate treatment and proper maintenance of animals and animal houses attached to laboratories. In her speech at the seminar on 'The State of Animal Houses in India' on 10 June 2002, she praised Pasteur Institute of India (PII), Coonoor, and the Vittal Mallya Scientific Research Foundation (VMSRF), Bangalore, for moving with the times and keeping up with global trends:

The PII took up the challenge of developing new tissue culture vaccine for rabies, and thus saved the lives of excessively large number of sheep used for producing sheep brain-based anti-rabies vaccines. The Institute can be credited with introduction of good practices in breeding, and maintenance of animal premises. I understand that under its R&D projects, new scientific studies have been taken up to develop

Monoclonal Antibody against Tetanus Toxoid and Diphtheria Toxoid which will eliminate the usage of large animals like horses. Studies are also reportedly underway for cell-derived J. E. vaccine. As for VMSRF it is engaged in its efforts for production of snake venom vaccines from chicken egg. Production of diagnostic and therapeutic products in chicken represents a refinement and reduction in animal use, and the collection of blood is replaced by extraction of antibody from egg yolk. As chickens produce larger amounts of antibodies, there is a reduction in the number of animals. Theoretically, 25–50 eggs could yield venom-specific antibody equivalent to that obtained from 1 litre of horse serum, and one bird yields at least 250 eggs. I am told that VMSRF have successfully developed methods to produce anti-snake venom (ASV) in chicken egg for the four common poisonous snakes viz. cobra, krait, saw-scaled, and Russell's Vipers. These antibodies are stated to be six times more potent than the ASV produced in horses.<sup>36</sup>

Besides, if the CPCSEA imposed and enforced rules and norms, so do authorities in countries like Britain (where, as we have seen, these are quite rigorous). And, given the contents of the CAG's report reproduced above, the case for strictly enforcing comprehensive norms is very strong. For, one would have to be singularly naive to believe that the inefficiency and worse witnessed at the AIIMS and the ICMR's Pune and glaucoma projects, will not characterize the functioning of the animals houses, particularly since laboratory animals cannot talk to auditors.

In this context, the insistence of a section of scientists that they want to continue with animal experimentation without interference raises uncomfortable questions. The larger the number of animals, the larger the sums earmarked for their maintenance, and the larger the leakage into private pockets. This is, of course, by no means to imply that all scientists have abandoned the straight and narrow path, but merely to recognize the harsh fact that some have.

Of course, there may be other forces at work. While discussing the use of animals in scientific experiments, one must remember Fromm's statement that the sadist needs very badly the person over whom he rules because 'his own feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone'. He cites as an example of this dependence, which may be entirely unconscious, the case of a man who may treat his wife most sadistically and 'tell her repeatedly that she can leave the house any day and that he would be only too glad if she did'. But 'if she musters up enough courage to declare that

she will leave him, something quite unexpected to both of them can happen; he will become desperate, break down and beg her not to leave him; he will say he cannot live without her, and will declare how much he loves her and so on'.<sup>37</sup>

Since scientists cannot be expected to be immune to the psychoses that afflict all human beings, the question arises whether many of them oppose—subconsciously if not consciously—any attempt to reduce the extent of animal experimentation because letting go of laboratory animals would, as in the case of all sadists, undermine 'his own feeling of strength (that) is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone'. As relevant here is another observation by Fromm that the 'sadist wants to dominate his object and therefore suffers a loss if his object disappears'.<sup>38</sup>

Of course, there are scientists who genuinely believe that they need to experiment on animals, and they may well be right. Transparency, however, demands that neither the inspection of laboratories nor the sanctioning and monitoring of projects involving animal experimentation, be left to an exclusive club of scientists cosy in one another's company. In fact, the entire question of experiments on animals has to be seen in the context not merely of biomedical science but the wider one of human beings' relationship with non-human living beings. What they do to the latter affects them as well since the roots of the violence that affects both are the same.

We have seen that both animals and humans can be subjected to sadism in the name of medical experiments and that both can be kept confined in dark cells in dungeons and tortured.

Keith Thomas has argued that the domestication of animals led to the emergence of a more authoritarian attitude because human rule over 'the lower creatures provided the mental analogue on which many political and social arrangements were based'.<sup>39</sup> Charles Patterson, who has studied almost the entire range of implications of the anthropocentric human attitude toward animals, identifies several specific ways in which it has contributed to violence and cruelty in human society epitomized by the ultimate horror of the holocaust. The institutionalization of animal exploitation and its acceptance 'as a part of the natural order of things', 'opened the door to similar ways of treating other human beings, paving the way for such atrocities as human slavery and the holocaust'.<sup>40</sup> The domestication of animals

provided 'the model and inspiration for human slavery and tyrannical government' and laid 'the groundwork for Western hierarchical thinking and European and American racial theories' calling for 'the conquest and exploitation of the "lower races", and at the same time vilifying them as animals so as to encourage and justify their subjugation'.<sup>41</sup> Slaves and animals were both branded—the former less frequently—for identification. Many male slaves and male animals were neutered.

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## Slaves and Livestock

Patterson points out that Sumer, 'one of the earliest and most powerful of the Mesopotamian city-states managed its slaves the same way it managed its livestock'. They castrated the males and made them work like domesticated animals and put the females in work and breeding camps. They used the word '*amar-kud*' in respect of both castrated slave boys and castrated young donkeys, horses and oxen.<sup>42</sup> During the colonial period the colonizers from the Western countries rationalized their exploitation, enslavement and even mass slaughter of people in Asia, Africa and the Americas by portraying them as savages who were less than human.

Enslavement, torture and killing of human beings and animals, often in very similar ways, have continued along parallel lines throughout history. One cannot be ended without ending the other. Ending both, however, would require a serious look at the fundamental causes of aggression and violence which, in the ultimate sense, stem in a great measure from the anthropocentric way human beings have been regarding themselves and Nature. Changing it, however, would seem to be an impossible goal to achieve, for, it would mean modifying, if not dispensing with, what appears to many as having been the very motive force behind the progress of civilization. Yet, it is absolutely imperative to do this because it is now no longer a question of aggression and violence but human survival. Until recently the world had been facing localized threats to human safety in the form of river water pollution caused by industrial waste, and diminishing availability of vital resources like water through excessive groundwater utilization to supply high-rise buildings, or the deterioration of river

beds through the ill-planned construction of dams. Now dwarfing all such threats, and casting a dark shadow over the future of humankind itself, looms the phenomenon of global warming, the consequences of which are only too well known to require reiteration here.

The glib answer may well be that technology, which has taken care of so many of humanity's problems, would take care of this one too. But then technology will only be able to help if human beings give up their prodigal habits which have led to the alarming increase in the emission of greenhouse gases and the continuing increase in their own numbers which has led to unprecedented expansion of areas they inhabit. A very major exercise in political and social will is required for reversing both trends, or even either.

Those who may still be inclined to dismiss talk of an environmental disaster as doomsaying by Cassandras, will do well to recall Desmond Morris' warning about the danger of humans collapsing as a dominant species even before the current urban population densities spread to every part of the earth in the course of 260 years (obviously he meant it to be from the year of publication of his book, 1967).<sup>43</sup> It will be even more sobering to recall some of the other things he has said:

We tend to suffer from a strange complacency that this [humankind's collapse as a dominant species] can never happen, that there is something special about us, that we are somehow above biological control. But we are not. Many exciting species have become extinct in the past and we are no exception. Sooner or later we shall go, and make way for something else. If it is to be later rather than sooner, then we must take a long, hard look at ourselves as biological specimens and gain understanding of our limitations.<sup>44</sup>

What are we as 'biological specimens'? Morris writes that we are 'despite all our great technological advances, still very much a simple biological phenomenon. Despite our grandiose ideas and lofty self-conceit, we are still humble animals, subject to all the basic laws of animal behaviour.'<sup>45</sup>

The recognition of the fact that we are no more than simple animals makes it morally imperative for us to admit that we cannot consider ourselves as belonging to a category distinct and separate from all other living beings. This in turn means that we must recognize that the moral and legal injunctions against capturing, torturing, enslaving, abusing, imprisoning, killing or mentally traumatizing any human

animal applies to non-human animals as well. It also means that we have no right to exclude non-human living beings—which is what we have done—from the moral universe we have constructed and the protection it offers to all of us.

An important implication of this is that both individual human beings and human societies, will have to stop doing to non-human living beings what they would not do to other human beings. Also, both individuals and societies have to stop using products and processes that involve capturing, torturing, enslaving, abusing, imprisoning, killing or mentally traumatizing any non-human animal. This will be difficult, very, very difficult, as the evolution of our civilization has so far been based on the enslavement and abuse of non-human beings.

Such a major change, however, had to be made for the abolition of slavery. The historian David Brion Davis who, along with two other historians, Hugh Thomas and Philip D. Curtin, ranks among the foremost authorities on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, wrote in an article in *The New York Times*:

Today, it is difficult to understand why slavery was accepted from prebiblical times in virtually every culture and not seriously challenged until the late 1700's. But the institution was so basic that genuine antislavery attitudes required a profound shift in moral perception. This meant fundamental religious and philosophic changes in views of human abilities, responsibilities and rights.<sup>46</sup>

Europe and America, however, abolished both the trans-Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the course of the nineteenth century, but not before much acrimonious debate that, in the US, led to much bloodshed in the civil war (1861–65). The contemporary world also requires a shift of this magnitude, without which it will not be able to turn from its anthropocentric exploitation of Nature to harmonious co-existence with it.

Two objections will be raised the moment we say this. One would hear that the abandonment of the anthropocentric attitude would be impossible because it would require changes that would undermine the basis of our civilization. It would be much safer to depend on technology to cope with the challenges that may emerge in future. One would also hear that anthropocentrism is scripted in human genes and can neither be changed nor scotched.

As to the first, a similar chorus of warnings was heard when the move to abolish slavery gained momentum in Europe and the U.S. To cite just one example, the sailmakers, bakers and gunmakers of Liverpool, which owed its newly acquired wealth to the transportation of slaves from Africa to the Americas in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, petitioned the British Parliament to let enslavers, who bought their sails, biscuits and guns, continue sailing.<sup>47</sup> Hugh Thomas, who mentions this incident in his massive tome *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, further points out that, during the eighteenth century Bristol and Liverpool emerged as key slave-trading cities, and one-third of Manchester's manufactures went to Africa, principally as barter for slaves. By the 1780s, British ships carried half of the around 70,000 slaves transported from Africa every year. Thomas further points out that for much of its duration, the African slave trade was a governmental enterprise with States encouraging the establishment of companies trading in slaves in Africa and transporting them to the New World, and granting or selling them licences to do so. The switchover to private trade occurred later when joint ventures of officials and enslavers proved financial failures.

David Brion Davis, writes in his *The New York Times* article cited:

After decades of research, historians are only now beginning to grasp the complex interdependencies of a society enmeshed in slavery. There were shifting interactions among West African enslavers, sellers and European buyers; European investors in the slave trade, who ranged from small-town merchants to well-known figures like the philosophers John Locke and Voltaire; wealthy Virginian and Brazilian middlemen who purchased large numbers of Africans off the slave ships to sell to planters; New Englanders who shipped foodstuffs, timber, shoes and clothing as supplies for slaves in the South and the West Indies; and, finally, the European and American consumers of slave-produced sugar, rum, rice, cotton, tobacco, indigo (for dyes), hemp (for rope-making) and other goods.<sup>48</sup>

Slavery was abolished despite the vast network of vested interests that supported it and the vast range of economic activities connected with it. Given political will and mass awareness, it should not be impossible to replace the anthropocentric world view with a respectful and sensitive attitude towards Nature. Nor should such a transformation destroy civilization. The abolition of slavery did not lead to any of the frightful consequences that its defenders had

predicted. Nor should one believe that anthropocentrism is written into humankind's genes and, hence, cannot be jettisoned.

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## Mutant of Humanism

Though elements of anthropocentrism have been present in philosophical and scriptural literature since the time of the classical Greeks, it is only during the last three centuries or so, that it began to crystallize and gain in salience as an attitude that regarded the whole of Nature, sentient and insentient, as being meant for use by humans in any manner they pleased. It is a mutant of Humanism which, as we have seen, was liberated by the Renaissance from its scholastic shackles and put at the heart of the discourse that shaped the modern world. As humankind's dominance over Nature grew with the leaps taken by science and technology and the harnessing of their fruits by the social, economic and military institutions of post-industrial-revolution nation states, Humanism's central creed underwent a gradual but distinct change. From Protagorus' oft-quoted encapsulation—'Man is the measure of all things'—it turned into 'Man is the master of all things'.

As masters, human beings regarded all things, indeed, the whole of Nature, as their colony. We have seen the way of life that followed and the havoc it has wrought. The question is: What does one put in its place? Human beings need a value system, and a set of moral coordinates based on it, to navigate through life. It will be disastrous if the ones provided by anthropocentrism are replaced with an ideology or philosophy or a religious orthodoxy that severely curtails freedom. What is needed is an approach that neither negates the importance of freedom and reason nor seeks to depose human beings from their position as the dominant species in the world as it now exists. What is needed is a redefinition of the central creed of Humanism. It should now read, 'Human beings are the preservers and protectors of all things'.

The question arises: What guarantee is there that preservers and protectors would not turn masters again? There is no guarantee; there has never been, in the ultimate sense, any guarantee against anything in history. Otherwise the latter would not have been, in one of its aspects, a story of unending human aberration and savagery.



One can only plant an idea and hope it would strike roots and grow. Equally, one should start with a small step towards a big change and not assault the world with a millennial agenda; such ventures have either collapsed under the weight of ambition or produced dangerous ideological and philosophical mutants. The first small step would be to demand a total and immediate global ban on the testing of cosmetics on animals; the second, an all-out effort to implement the three Rs of animal experimentation. The third should be a complete ban on the killing of stray dogs and a mandatory implementation of the canine birth control programme wherever stray dogs exist.

We have identified three small steps here instead of one. One hopes these will be taken successfully and that this will boost the confidence of those who seek to *defenestrate* anthropocentrism, and spur them to greater effort, which must include a vigorous campaign underlining the need for a change. Whether the latter does come about would depend on the persuasiveness of the campaign and whether circumstances have created a receptive ground for it. The alarm bells that are being rung about the consequences of global warming are, for the first time, making governments worry about the emission of greenhouse gases, and the debate on the subject is beginning to put the environmental issue at the centre-stage of a discourse that promises to encompass the entire question of humankind's relationship with Nature. It is possible that this will make people more receptive toward the idea of a transformation of the current dominant attitude toward Nature. The unfolding of the response to global warming both by governments and people would, therefore, provide an indication of how things would shape in this critical area, as would be a growing acceptance of the position that the rights of non-human living beings to physical integrity, dignity and happiness, need to be respected. They are as integral a part of Nature as human beings, as the latter's savagery toward them is integral to the anthropocentric devastation of Nature.

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15. Ibid., p. 89.
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18. Ibid., p. 91.
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## Postscript

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On 19 June 2008 a Division Bench of the Karnataka High Court comprising Chief Justice Cyriac Joseph and Honourable Justice A.N. Venugopala Gowda admitted Karnataka Lokayukta's<sup>1</sup> petition appealing against Justice H.V.G Ramesh's order of 14 December 2006. Justice Ramesh's order had expunged the remarks against animal NGOs and animal lovers contained in the Lokayukta's order of 6 March 2003 and directed that the Lokayukta's order be implemented in accordance with the ABC (Dog) Rules, 2001. In its interim order of 19 June 2008, the Division Bench stayed Justice Ramesh's order pending the final disposal of the Lokayukta's appeal.

A perusal of the interim order makes it clear that it does not stay the implementation either of the ABC programme or the ABC (Dog) Rules. The Chief Justice and Honourable Justice A.N. Venugopala Gowda have stated in the order, 'We make it clear that it is open to the government to consider the report of the Lokayukta and take appropriate action in accordance with the law.' There is no directive to implement the Lokayukta's order of 6 March 2003 calling for the mass killing of stray dogs. The Division Bench's order further states:

We also make it clear that this stay order will not stand in the way of the Bruhut Bangalore Mahanagara Palike or any other statutory Authority implementing the provisions of the Karnataka's Municipal Corporation Act of 1976 or the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

There is doubtless a conflict between the old law, the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act, 1976, which permits the extermination of stray dogs, and the new law, the ABC (Dog) Rules, 2001 which, framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, provide for their neutering, immunization against rabies and return to their habitats. But the latter shall prevail over the former, in the light of Section 13 of the ABC (Dog) Rules, framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which clearly lays down that any Act,

rule, regulation or bye-law in force in any area shall, in relation to any matter covered by the Rules, prevail only to the extent its provisions are less irksome to the animals than those contained in the Rules. These will be of 'no effect' to the extent to which their provisions are more irksome to animals.

The provisions of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976, which are more irksome to the animals in question (stray dogs), are in conflict with the provisions of the ABC Rules and, therefore, shall have no effect. Besides, the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act is in contravention of the Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution which, under Article 51(A[g]), calls upon all citizens to show compassion to all living creatures.

More importantly, it is a well-settled legal principle that laws dealing specifically with a subject will prevail when there is a conflict between them and laws that are general in nature. The ABC (Dog) Rules being a specific pronouncement concerning stray dogs shall prevail over the Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act.

Meanwhile, there are indications that the BBMP, which continues to implement the ABC programme at the time of writing, is adopting, in the wake of the 19 June order, an enlightened and constructive approach on the issue of stray dogs. Under its aegis, a meeting, attended by animal welfare and other NGOs, animal lovers, citizens and organizations demanding the extermination of stray dogs, was held on 5 July 2008. The meeting achieved a consensus on four issues—the undertaking of an awareness campaign to sensitize people on the issue of stray dogs; intensification of the Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate and Release (CNVR)<sup>2</sup> programme; formation of groups comprising those for and against the presence of stray dogs on roads and in public places; and promotion of the adoption of stray dogs by the public.<sup>3</sup> The meeting also decided that the BBMP will hold meetings with citizens and NGOs on the last Saturday of every month at its head office and the first one would be held on 26 July 2008.

The new approach is most welcome. If implemented steadfastly, it will not only yield results but help to restore the BBMP's image which was badly dented by the mass killings of 2007.

Similarly the new Government in Karnataka and the State's political leadership will avoid the sharp criticism its predecessor had attracted if it steadfastly supports BBMP's new policy and humane

and scientific approach. Unfortunately, the dogs that have been so mercilessly done to death will not come back to life.

*(The author gratefully acknowledges the help he received from Advocate Brindha Nandakumar while writing this chapter.)*

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## Notes

1. The appeal was filed by the present Lokayukta in 2007.
2. It is a method that neuters stray dogs and releases them on the same day. Superior methods of sterilization of operation theatres and instruments and the use of high-quality suturing material and surgical glue are used in the process. Many animal lovers, however, strongly oppose it saying that it is necessary to keep a stray dog in a clinic till it recovers completely from the surgery and its after-effects.
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# Index

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- ABC (*see* Animal Birth Control)
- African slave trade, government encouragement 262
- aggression, elimination of 11
- ahimsa* 199
- Alex, Grey African Parrot 143, 144
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), research on animals 254
- American Glaucoma Valves (AGVs) 255
- animal behaviour 139
- Animal Birth Control (ABC)  
programme 5, 9, 15  
media bias against 26  
success in Bangalore 8
- Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules 2001  
21, 74, 101
- Animal Birth Control programme  
adverse impact on 79  
amendment 37  
criticism of 33, 82, 83  
implementation in Bangalore 40, 44, 95  
resistance 79, 80  
responsibility of audit team 36  
sabotage of 75, 98, 101  
successful implementation 76
- Animal Birth Control performance  
audit 30, 35  
interviews 38-39  
on the programme 38  
timings of survey 40  
omissions and bias 44  
report 35-37, 42, 53, 74, 76
- animal experiments  
alternatives to 216  
confrontation over 256
- animal houses of research institutions 209-211
- animal life, importance 107, 110
- animal safety tests for eye irritancy 213
- animals  
abuse 151, 220  
cruelty and violence against 236, 243, 244  
experiments 208, 212, 258  
experiments, torture during 210  
feelings 148, 149  
hunting 202  
institutional cruelty 15  
Judaean-Christian and Renaissance-Humanist views 151  
killing and injuring 202  
mental capabilities 141  
poaching 206  
sacrificial offerings 202  
smuggling 206  
testing drugs on 253  
torturing and killing  
for commerce 206  
for entertainment 206  
use in warfare 202
- anthropocentrism 261, 263
- anti-rabies vaccines, shortage of 43
- APCRI Journal* 88
- APCRI survey on dog bites 91-93
- Aristotle on animals 115
- Aryaka, Mahabharata 186
- ashrama dharma* 161, 162
- Association for Prevention and Control of Rabies in India (APCRI) 9
- Asvamedha Yagna* 202
- atman* 164
- Baboon Metaphysics* 134
- Bacon, Sir Francis 119
- Bafna, Dilip 48
- Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP), Operation Dog Hunt 19



BBMP (*see* Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike)

*Bhagavadgita* 164

birds, intelligence 147

Boccaccio, Giovanni 120

*Brahman* 164, 169

Breeding and Experiments on

Animals (Control and Supervision)

Amendment Rules 2001 208

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 163

Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) 5, 7

pressure on 29, 53, 56

Buddhism 10, 201

sacrificial killings, criticism 203

Buddhist traditions 200

Bugnyar, Thomas 144

change, campaign for 264

Chaturvedi, Governor T. N., on massacre of stray dogs 60-62

*Cbhandogya Upanishad* 164

Christianity

pro-animal undercurrent 117

religious background 115

suspicion on economic activity 152

Church 120, 153

cities 227, 229

Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) 208, 257

rescue and rehabilitation of animals 212

protests against activities of 213

community survey 92, 93

Compulsion Unlimited Plus Action (CUPA), functions 46

conventional wars 138

Corbett, Jim 188

cosmetic testing, banning of use of animals 215

Costello, Elizabeth 146

CPCSEA (*see* Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals)

creation, detailed account 168

Cuban crisis 137, 138

da Vinci, Leonardo 122

Dalmia, Alka 84

Damasio, Antonio 143

Darwin, Charles, theory of evolution 124

de Waal, Frans 139

*Decameron* 120

*dharma* 161, 162

*dharma*, concept 198

displacement activity 136

dog bites

cases in hospitals 44

increase in 96, 97

media reports 22, 23

public anger against 22

dog carcasses, disposal 64

dog-catching teams 66

dogs

aggressive 114

captured, cruelty inflicted 66-68

categories 2

ferocious 17

loyalty and devotion 183

mental capabilities 143

neighbourhood dogs 3

rabid 18

saving human life 25, 26, 111-113

slaughtered for meat 100

dolphins, intelligence 142

elephants

torturing 204

intelligence 142, 147

Ellul, Jacques 222

enslavement of humans and animals 259

Erasmus Desiderius 119

eugenics movement, Francis Galton 246

evolution process 132

Expert Sub-Committee for Scrutiny and Approval of Research Projects on Large Animals 211

- faith and piety, importance 152  
 Ford, Henry 245, 246  
 Fromm, Erich 4, 231
- Gaita, Raimond 140  
 Galton, Francis, eugenics movement 246  
 Gandhi, Maneka 208, 256  
 genocidal violence 229  
 Girija Prasad, elephant in Karnataka 205  
 global warming, consequences 260  
 gods and humans  
   in Greek mythology 196  
   relationship between 195  
   and animals, equality among 170  
 Goodall, Jane 141  
 Greek humanism 115  
 Greek mythology, gods and humans 196
- Hanuman, born of gods 179  
 Heinrich, Bernd 144  
 Hindus' torturing of animals 207  
 Hoffer, Erich 228  
 Holocaust 245  
 honeybees 145  
 human behaviour towards animals 225  
 human beings  
   and baboons, similarities 134  
   and chimpanzees, similarities 134  
   as preservers and protectors of all things 263  
   supremacy over animals 125  
 human cruelty 3, 4  
 human life, importance 107, 110  
 human rabies cases, decline 78  
 human rabies deaths 90, 95  
 human safety, threat to 259  
 human, self-esteem 122  
 humans  
   and animals, difference 150  
   and non-humans, elimination of divide 250  
   and non-humans, reasons for fighting 135
- as biological specimens 260  
   hunting 220
- Indian and Greek mythologies, differences 197  
 Indian animal protection laws, flouting 207  
 Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) 254, 255  
 insecurity, feeling of 11, 231  
 intelligence 127, 145  
 Internal Animal Ethics Committees (IAEC) 211
- Jagnyavalka 163  
 Jainism 11  
   compassion for living beings 199, 200  
 Jerom, chimpanzee 217  
 Jewish tradition on animals 116  
 Jews  
   medical experiments on 249  
   treatment as animals 248  
 Judaeo-Christian tradition 10, 114, 166
- karma* 163, 164, 172, 200  
 Karnataka killings, stray dogs 5, 10  
 Karnataka Lokayukta, on ABC programme 27, 82  
 Karnataka  
   livestock census 40  
   stray dogs, sterilization 75  
 Kharb, Maj.-Gen. (Retd) R.M., on stray dogs massacre 70  
 Krishna, Nanditha 181  
 Krishnaswamy, Dr S., views of 87  
*Krittibas Ramayana* 170  
 Kunti, sons by gods 179
- laboratory animals 234, 235  
 laboratory practices 210  
 language, evolution 130, 131  
*lokas* 169  
 Lorenz, Konrad 133  
 lynch mobs 66

- machines, introduction 223  
 Madhusudana, Dr S.N. 33  
*Mahabharata* 172-184, 198  
*Mahaprasthanika Parva* 182  
 Management of Glaucoma Valves under  
   Indian Conditions, project 255  
 Marlowe, Christopher 121  
 McKie, Robin 144  
 media bias against ABC programme 26  
 media reports, dog bites 22, 23  
 media, even-handedness 24  
 Mirandola, Pico Della 119  
 morality 150, 154, 190  
 Morris, Desmond 135  
*Mundaka Upanishad* 163  
 municipal corruption 99  
 mythology 131, 195
- naval quarantine, United States 137  
 Nazi theory of racial superiority 246  
 NGOs, performance 30, 76  
 nocturnal animals 129  
 non-human beings  
   for entertainment 220  
   prevention of maltreatment 11  
   relationship with 258  
   ritualized aggressive posturing 136  
   torture 234
- operation stray dog 65  
 opinion and fact, distinction between  
   39
- Patterson, Charles 117  
 People for the Ethical Treatment of  
   Animals (PETA) 251  
*People's Democracy* 251  
 Pepperberg, Professor Irene M. 143,  
   144  
 Petrarch, Francesco 120  
 Plato on animals 115  
 population growth 229  
 power over another person, exercise of  
   233  
 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act,  
   1960 74
- print medium 131  
*Puranas* 198  
 Pythagoras, respect for animals 115
- rabies deaths, statistics 109-110  
 rabies  
   immunoglobulins 94  
   in Bangalore, decline 95  
   incidence in Chennai 81  
   prevention 109  
   vaccines, use 94  
*Ramayana* 179, 198  
 Raphael 122  
 reason, possession of 126  
 reasoning faculty 125  
 Renaissance 119, 120  
 renunciation and sacrifice 152  
 right to life 108  
 Romans on slaves and animals 115  
 rural violence 229
- Sacred Animals of India* 181  
 sacrificial killings, criticism 203  
*sadharana dharma* 161, 199  
 sadistic domination, urge for 233  
 Sankaracharya, sacrificial killings,  
   criticism 203  
 'Satya', article in *People's Democracy* 252  
 scientists, feelings of insecurity 235  
 SDFB (*see* Stray Dog Free Bangalore)  
 Serpell, James 123  
*Sevtaravsatara Upanishad* 165  
 Shakespeare, William 120  
 Shepard, Paul 127  
*Shiv Purana* 166  
 slaughterhouses, cruelty in 218  
 slavery abolition 261  
 slaves and livestock 259  
 Smuts, Barbara 140  
 snakes  
   Christian identification 184  
   in *Mahabharata* 185  
   in *Puranas* 185  
   perceptions 184

- Vedantic and Judaeo-Christian approaches 184
- Speciesism* 234
- sterilized dogs 47, 75
- Stray Dog Free Bangalore (SDFB) 15, 16
- stray dogs massacre
  - government's knowledge 55
  - Hindustan Times* reports 57
  - Indian Express* reports 57
  - national media on 57, 58
  - opposition 59, 60
  - Pioneer* reports 58
  - television news channels reports 59
  - video clips 62, 63
- stray dogs
  - Animal Birth Control programme impact 77
  - area by area approach 34
  - capture rate 65
  - caring by poor 85
  - culling and killing 21, 30 71, 108
  - decline in the number 41
  - definition 2
  - euthanization 46
  - habitat control 6
  - hatred against 20
  - massacre 97, 110, 226, 237
  - media bias against 24
  - movement control 6
  - population 6, 7, 70, 78
  - relocation 28, 71
  - return after sterilization and vaccination 34
  - slaughter 15, 21, 22
  - use of vans for catching 72
  - vaccination 71
- Sub-Committee for Alternatives (SCA) 211
- Sudarshan, Dr M.K. 30, 32
- Suez crisis 138
- Svetaketu 164
- swadharma* 161
- Taittiriya Upanishad* 167
- Tawney, R.H. 153, 154
- technological progress 221–224
- technological society, tendency toward violence 230
- Television news channels on mass killing of dogs 59
- Tintoretto 122
- Uddaloka Aruni 164
- UK, banning of animal for medical training 216
- Union Stock Yards 218
- United Kingdom's Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 215
- Upanishads, monist philosophy 166
- varna* 161
- Vasuki, *Mahabharata* 186
- Vedantic-Puranic view of animals 166
- Vedic tradition 10
- Venkatachala, N., report of 86
- violence
  - individual and collective 233
  - propensity towards 228
- Wade, Nicholas 134, 139
- Waldau 124, 126
- WHO Expert Consultation on Rabies, Report 6, 70, 75
- WHO Technical Report Series 931 79
- Williams, J.H. 146
- Wise, Steven M. 141, 144
- Wright, Robert 134



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A former Nieman Fellow at Harvard (Class of 1967), Mr Karlekar, in his career as a journalist spanning four-and-a-half decades, has been Editor of *Hindustan Times*, Deputy Editor of *The Indian Express*, and Assistant Editor of *The Statesman* and the *Hindusthan Standard*, an erstwhile publication of the Ananda Bazar Patrika group in Kolkata. Starting his journalistic career with *Ananda Bazar Patrika* as a Staff reporter in 1963, Mr Karlekar has also been Associate Editor of *Aajkaal* published from Kolkata.

A member of the Press Council of India in two stints during 1978–80 and 2004–07, Mr Karlekar has been a General Secretary of the Editors Guild of India, a member of the Board of Directors of the Press Trust of India, one of India's two national news agencies, and a nominee of the Editors Guild in the Central Press Accreditation Committee of the Government of India.

Apart from his innumerable journalistic writings, Mr Karlekar's publications include two Bengali Novels, *Bhabisyater Ateet* (1994) and *Mehrunnisa* (1995), the latter based on Bangladesh's Liberation struggle, a socio-political work in English, *In the Mirror of Mandal: Social Justice, Caste, Class and the Individual* (1992), and *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?* (2005). He edited—and contributed two chapters to—*Independent India: The First Fifty Years* (1998), an anthology of essays published to mark 50 years of India's independence. Mr Karlekar is a keen photographer.

**Excerpts from reviews of Hiranmay Karlekar's *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?* (Sage Publications, 2006):**

Bangladesh is going the same way as Pakistan. Take a look at Hiranmay Karlekar's *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?* (Sage). You will understand how serious the menace of religious bigotry has become.

*Khushwant Singh, renowned Indian author  
and columnist, in Hindustan Times*

Mr Karlekar's book is extremely well documented... it is a solid study which deserves to be read by a wide audience, even outside the sub-continent.

*Bertil Lintner in Far Eastern  
Economic Review*

One more credible effort comes from veteran journalist Hiranmay Karlekar, who uncovers what most suspected for years.... The book unravels how the hate matrix has found place in a culturally vibrant society....

*The Hindu*

It is not Pakistan, but Bangladesh which is the new capital of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, says Hiranmay Karlekar in his recently published book.... And he presents a strong and substantive case to prove his thesis....

*The Times of India*

...In *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?*, veteran journalist Hiranmay Karlekar provides wholesome answers to these and many more questions. Meticulously researched and almost entirely based on Bangladeshi sources, the book lifts the veil on the ugly face of a rapidly talibanising Bangladesh.... This book should ring a warning bell for policymakers in South Block. If you do not agree, read Karlekar's chilling tale of the death of Mujibur's dream—and that of many others who naively believed in it.

*India Today*

This lucid, hard-hitting and well-documented book analyses in detail the circumstances—historical, social, cultural and political—which account for the rise of violent Islamist fundamentalism in Bangladesh....

*Hindustan Times*

*Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?* is a useful addition to literature on Bangladesh, especially on issues of fundamentalism and extremism in the country. It is well argued and backed up with evidence and examples....

*Asia Times Online*