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Animal Welfare in Different Human Cultures, Traditions and Religious Faiths

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ABSTRACT: Animal welfare has become a growing concern affecting acceptability of agricultural systems in many countries around the world. An earlier Judeo-Christian interpretation of the Bible (1982) that dominion over animals meant that any degree of exploitation was acceptable has changed for most people to mean that each person has responsibility for animal welfare. This view was evident in some ancient Greek writings and has parallels in Islamic teaching. A minority view of Christians, which is a widespread view of Jains, Buddhists and many Hindus, is that animals should not be used by humans as food or for other purposes. The commonest philosophical positions now, concerning how animals should be treated, are a blend of deontological and utilitarian approaches. Most people think that extremes of poor welfare in animals are unacceptable and that those who keep animals should strive for good welfare. Hence animal welfare science, which allows the evaluation of welfare, has developed rapidly. (**Key Words:** Animal Welfare, Ancient and Modern Philosophies, Religious Faiths, Ethics)

INTRODUCTION

Parallel with changes in production efficiency, farm phenotypes, herd structure, housing management, there have been great changes in consumers' attitudes towards domestic animals. Nowadays, animal husbandry may well be questioned, not only as regards efficiency of organization, ownership, production, health and economy but also ethically. It is quite clear that there is a strong link between animal welfare and overall efficiency in the production chain and that public concerns about ethics of production have an important role in modern animal husbandry (Szűcs, 1999; Szűcs et al., 2006). Animal welfare has become a growing factor affecting acceptability of agricultural systems in many countries around the world (Broom, 2001, 2010). The public view is that the meaning

Human attitudes towards animals have been influenced by the ancient Greek philosophies addressing the formulation of such terms as *ethos* (ἦθος, ἕθος), *ethics* (δέον) and *moral* (ευδαιμονία). *Ethos* is defined as character, sentiment, or disposition of a community or people, considered as a natural endowment; the spirit which

of: dominion over animals is responsibility for animal welfare, including minimizing pain, stress, suffering, and deprivation while providing for needs (Broom, 2003). The general public, livestock producers and research scientists have shown an increasing interest in assuring proper animal care in the production chain. There is a corresponding increase in efforts by research and educational institutions, government agencies, enterprises, health care organizations and others in developing and accessing information that assists in creating appropriate housing environments, management procedures and humane conditions for the production of foods of animal origin. Most of the developed countries have guidelines in which these minimal requirements or information on the care and use of agricultural animals are given. Regularly updated handbooks on management and husbandry practices for the proper care of farm animals are issued by producer organizations and commodity groups. These guidelines are usually not legally binding but attempt to represent the state of the art on production practices.

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actuates manners and customs; also, the characteristic tone of an institution or social organization. *Ethos* is a Greek word corresponding roughly to "ethics". Something is moral if it pertains to right rather than wrong and ethics is the study of moral issues (Broom, 2003). Moral principles may be viewed either as the standard of conduct that individuals have constructed for themselves or as the body of obligations and duties that a particular society requires of its members. Moral behaviour is a necessity for stable social groups, including those of humans, so the basis for it has evolved (Ridley, 1996; de Waal, 1996; Broom, 2003; 2006).

A major factor affecting animal welfare issues in many parts of the world is the Judeo-Christian concept of human dominion over animals. Differing attitudes and beliefs regarding the relationship of humankind to other creatures has been a topic of interest for civilizations. The ancient societies of Greece and Rome also played an important role in the formation of attitudes towards animals. There were four basic schools of thought in ancient Greece regarding human-animal relationships: animism, mechanism, vitalism, and anthropocentrism. The teachings of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and Francis of Assisi (1181 or 1182-1226) are a cornerstone in western philosophical consideration of relationships. human-animal The anthropocentric philosophy professed by Aquinas continues to influence Christian attitudes on the subject still today. In their development Eastern religions (Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism) abandoned animal sacrifice. Each religion emphasizes two concepts with regard to human-animal relationships: non-injury to living beings and a repeated, cyclical embodiment of all living beings. The doctrine of non-violence or non-killing is taken from Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist philosophies.

Muslims are taught that Allah has given people power over animals, yet to treat them badly is disobey his will (see review by Broom, 2003).

In the period of renaissance and enlightenment, the basics of modern philosophy developed. Descartes (1596-1650) was a major figure in these changes in philosophy. More recently, Regan (1983), Singer (1975) and others have presented the view that pain and suffering of any animal, or at least of certain complex animals, are bad and should be prevented or minimized. It is important to consider a range of opinions in an attempt to determine the truth (Rohr, 1989).

DISCUSSION

Ancient attitudes related to animal ethics

Like many documents centred on human economics, the statements formulated in the Code of Hammurabi (1728 to

1686 BC, Susa, Iraq) do not seem to cover issues of animal welfare or livestock ethics, for example:

- If any one hire oxen, and kill them by bad treatment or blows, he shall compensate the owner, oxen for oxen.
- If a man hire an ox, and he breaks its leg or cut the ligament of its neck, he shall compensate the owner with ox for ox.
- If any one hire an ox, and put out its eye, he shall pay the owner one-half of its value.
- If any one hire an ox, and break off a horn, or cut off its tail, or hurt its muzzle, he shall pay one-fourth of its value in money.

Even at that time sick animals were already treated:

• If a veterinary surgeon perform a serious operation on an ass or an ox, and cure it, the owner shall pay the surgeon one-sixth of a shekel as a fee.

However, veterinary treatment was not free of risks:

• If he perform a serious operation on an ass or ox, and kill it, he shall pay the owner one-fourth of its value.

The Code does not mention anything about pain, suffering or injury of animals.

Religious perspectives

Judeo-Christian faith: The great religions have had a profound impact on the attitudes of humans toward animals. For example, The Bible (Genesis 1:26 to 28, 1982), states:

"Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Thus, the biblical concept of God's dominion over man and man's dominion over animals is still the foundation of the attitudes of many toward human beings and animals (Gatward, 2001). That is why ancient Hebrew writings in the Old Testament give rise to humane treatment of animals (Proverbs 12:10):

"A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

The verse refers to how kindness to animals is equated with the legality of righteousness and the very characteristic of God himself. The writer suggests that the individual who behaves in a caring way towards his stock is reflecting an attribute of the Divine. This one verse expresses an important aspect of biblical teaching with regard to the human-animal relationship. The relationship should be based on responsibility, care and use allied to sympathy and kindness (Gatward, 2001). The idea means that, dominion over animals implies responsibility and obligation to them, rather than exploitation alone (Broom, 2003).

There is reference to care for and obligation to domestic animals in a number of biblical commandments (Exodus 20:10):

"... but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates."

Other laws in relation to animal welfare explain that cattle should not to be muzzled when threshing cereals (Deuteronomy 25:4), should be allowed to eat when hungry and that a hen laying eggs or young is not to be taken (Deuteronomy 22:6):

• "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." and "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young."

In spite of the Jewish and early Christian view that animals had no souls to be respected, it was stated that they should be rescued if trapped, treated if they are hurt and have water and food provided when they are hungry or thirsty (Luke 13:15; 14:15):

- "Then He answered them, saying, which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" and
- "The Lord then answered him and said, Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it?"

In Wade's (2004) view, the traditional Christian ethic concerning the kind of respect that is due to animals can be summed up as follows: avoid cruelty to animals and treat them with kindness. However, for many people in the past and now, animal lives are not considered sacred, they have no significant right to life and, as they lack reason, animals may be used for human benefit (food, companionship, transport, work, recreation and so on). The architect of this ethic was Thomas Aquinas who argued that cruelty to animals was wrong because it encouraged people to behave in a similarly cruel fashion towards others. In addition, if

people practiced pity or compassion towards animals, they would be disposed to do the same towards humans. Aquinas' theology, which was greatly influenced by Aristotle (384 to 322 BC), has a major flaw in his hierarchical model of creation. Human beings are at the top of the pyramid because they are rational beings ("imago Dei"). Animals are lower down the pyramid since they lack rationality. As lower forms of life, irrational animals were under the dominion of and subject to rational beings. Hence, animals could be killed for food and used for human benefit (Linzey, 1987). Ryder (1989) describes this view as "speciesist". He explains this as the "arbitrary favouring of one species' interests over another". The manner in which human beings relate to animals and take constructive responsibility for them is a fundamental dimension of our relationship with God. Linzey (1996) advocates a Christian ethic of vegetarianism. However, Singer (1975) and many others have affections for animals that do not appear to result in ceasing to eat them. Aquinas's (1963, 1969) teaching of avoiding cruelty to animals and treating them with kindness, although human centred, has the seeds of the development of a Theo-centric animal ethic whose growth is encouraged by current world attitudes (Wade, 2004).

Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism: Concern for the welfare of other animals arose as a system of thought in the Indus Valley Civilization as the religious belief that ancestors return in animal form, and that animals must therefore be treated with the respect due to a human. This belief is exemplified in Jainism, and in several other South East Asian religions. Abandonment of animal sacrifice in Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism resulted in a substantial dislike of unnecessary destruction of life and widespread vegetarianism. Eastern religions emphasize two aspects of human-animal relationships: non-injury to living beings cyclical a repeated, (ahisma) and embodiment (reincarnation) of all living beings (samsara). Ahisma, a doctrine of non-violence or non-killing is taken from Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist views. Ahisma (Sanskrit) means that all Jains and almost all Buddhists are strict vegetarians. The second concept allows for the souls of people to be reborn as non-human animals, and vice versa. Followers of those religions do not believe in a god as a creator. Buddha taught that it is a sin to kill any living being (Kyokai, 1966) saying that the key to civilization is the spirit of Maitri, friendliness toward all living things (Ryder, 1989). Eastern philosophies emphasize that man is equal to others, for example:

"Combine the internal and the external into one and regard things and self as equal."

Ch'eng brothers and Chu Hsi (1976) suggest that Hinduism is not as strict concerning ahisma as Jainism or Buddhism. It allows animal sacrifice to a limited extent in

religious ceremonies. Proper treatment of animals is considered as the Hindu passes toward salvation. However, for Hindus, there is much emphasis on conduct and the doctrine is a general guide (Broom, 2003). Nowadays Hindus are still taught that the human soul can be reborn into other forms such as insects or mammals. The belief that all life should be respected, because the body is an outer shell for the spirit within, forms the basis of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism is the oldest of all Eastern religions. The Vedas, India's ancient scriptures in which Hinduism has its roots, set out the principle of nonviolence, called Ahimsa. Ahimsa, "non-injury" or the absence of the desire to harm is regarded by Indian thinkers as one of the keystones of their ethics. Hindus generally accept the doctrine of transmigration and rebirth and the complementary belief in karma, or previous acts as the factor that determines the condition into which a being, after a stay in heaven or hell, is reborn in one form or another. The whole process of rebirths is called samsara. This concept allows for the souls of people to be reborn perhaps as animals and vice versa. In karma, the previous life acts as the factor that determines the condition into which a being, after a stay in heaven or hell, is reborn in one form or another. Causing unnecessary pain and death produces bad karma with ill-effects on oneself as a consequence of ill-treatment of others. The Vedas set out the code of sarva-bhuta-hita (devotion to the good of all creatures), which says that people should see the same life in all creatures regardless of their outer dress or bodies. In fact the Vedas go so far as to say that those who cannot understand the principle of life in lesser beings are missing the meaning of life altogether and risk losing their sense of humanity. Killing of an animal is seen as a violation of ahimsa and causes bad karma so vegetarianism is widespread among Hindus. Hinduism is not as strict concerning ahimsa as Jainism or Buddhism as Hindus at many times in history have eaten meat. Hinduism allows animal sacrifice to a limited extend in religious ceremonies. Dada J P Vaswani, Spiritual Head of the Sadhu Vaswani Mission said (Vaswani, 2003):

• "It is the duty of man to protect his younger brothers and sisters in the one family of creation. And I believe animals should be given their rights. Today wherever I go, they talk of animal welfare. Animal welfare is not the answer - animal rights are needed. Every animal has certain fundamental rights and the first right of every animal is the right to live; for you must not take away what you cannot give. And since you cannot give life to a dead creature, you have no right to take away the life of a living one. The 18th century gave rights to man, the 19th century gave rights to slaves, and the 20th century gave rights to women. The 21st century, I

verily believe, will give rights to animals, and that will be a glorious day in the history of humanity. I believe there will be no peace on Earth unless we stop all killing."

According to Jain beliefs, the universe was never created, nor will it ever cease to exist. It is eternal but not unchangeable, because it passes through an endless series of cycles. Jains believe that reality is made up of two eternal principles, jiva and ajiva. Jiva consists of an infinite number of identical spiritual units; ajiva (that is, non-jiva) is matter in all its forms and the conditions under which matter exists: time, space, and movement. The whole world is made up of jivas trapped in ajiva; there are jivas in rocks, plants, insects, animals, human beings, spirits, etc. Karma and transmigration keep the jiva trapped in ajiva. The consequence of evil actions is a heavy karma, which weighs the jiva down, forcing it to enter its new life at a lower level in the scale of existence. The consequence of good deeds, on the other hand, is a light karma, which allows the jiva to rise in its next life to a higher level in the scale of existence, where there is less suffering to be endured. The Jain ethic is a direct consequence of the philosophy of soul and karma. Jains are animists, for them, everything natural is living, and all life is sacred. Any kind of harm to any form of life is to be avoided or minimized. Of course, the sustenance of one form of life depends upon the death of another, yet the followers of Jainism are required to limit the taking of life even for survival. Jains are strict vegetarians and practice ahimsa very strictly, they literally will not harm a fly. Some Jains will sweep the path before them and wear gauze masks over their mouths to make sure they will not harm small insects by unintentionally treading them or breathing them in. Jains build refuges and rest houses for old and diseased animals, where they are kept and fed until they die a natural death. The welfare of animals and the continued survival of individuals are considered to be of great value.

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy that developed from the teachings of the Buddha Gautama, who lived in the 6th century BC. Buddha Gautama taught the four noble truths: that there is suffering, that suffering has a cause, that suffering has an end and that there is a path which leads to the end of suffering. In Buddhist teaching, the law of karma, says that for every event that occurs, there will follow another event whose existence was caused by the first, and this second event will be pleasant or unpleasant according as its cause was skilful or unskilful. So Buddhist law says that those who cause violence and suffering to living things will experience that same pain at some time in the future. The Buddhist view on animals is illustrated in the Jakata stories (Buddhist lessons). Buddha is born as different animals in previous births, so killing animals is equated with killing humans. Most Buddhists do not eat farm

animals, hence they place high value on a better life and hence to good welfare in animals, including good health. Buddhists should get no companionship from animals, there should be no hunting of animals and many Buddhists buy and release wildlife as a way to reduce suffering.

The Islamic religion: The Islamic religion teaches that Allah has given people power over animals. Therefore to treat animals in a bad manner is to disobey Allah's will. They believe that the world belongs to Allah and people are responsible to Him for their behaviour towards animals. As in Christianity and Judaism, it is taught that whatever an individual does will be known to God/Allah. Consequently, it is wrong to hunt merely for pleasure, to use its skin, to cause animals to fight each other, to incite them to act unnaturally, or to molest them unnecessarily. The Prophet Muhammad taught that animals should be killed only out of necessity and that doing otherwise is a sin. In the Qu'ran the creation of certain elements of the animal kingdom is described with the purpose of making humans reflect upon the divine Beneficence they receive. It is quoted to provide an example of the way in which the *Our'an* (1997) describes the adaptation of creation to man's needs (Sura 16, verses 5 to 8):

"(Allah) created cattle for you and (you find) in them warmth, useful services and food, sense of beauty when you bring them home when you take them to pasture. They bear your heavy loads to lands you could not reach except with great personal effort. Verily, your Lord is Compassionate and Merciful; (He created) horses, mules and donkeys for you to ride and ornament. And He created what you do not know."

The *Qur'an* (1997) underlines that the world has been created for the benefit of man (*Sura 2*, *verse 29*):

"(Allah) is the One Who created for you all that is on the earth."

Islam apparently does not have any doctrine about what happens to animals after their death. The *Qur'an* (1997) highlights animals' submission to Allah's Power (*Sura 16, verse 79*):

"Do they not look at the birds subjected in the atmosphere of the sky? None can hold them up (in His Power) except Allah."

Philosophies concerning animals

Ancient history: Additionally to the influence of religions on human and animal relationships, the ancient societies of Greece and Rome also played an important role in the formation of attitudes towards animals (Staller, 1995; Broom, 2003). The societies seemed to differ in their views on humans and animals. There were four schools of thought

in ancient Greece on human-animal relationships: animism, mechanism, vitalism, and anthropocentrism. Animism's central personality was Pythagoras (569 to 475 BC) the mathematician stating that animals and people have souls similar in kind. He professed that the souls are indestructible and composed of fire or air, and move from human to animal or human in succeeding incarnations. Vitalism recognized the difference between organic and inorganic entities. Vitalists such as Aristotle (382 to 322 BC) emphasized the interdependence of soul and body (Ryder, 1989). A scale or ladder of nature has been recognized in which higher forms of life shared simple functions with lower forms resulting in complex behaviour. This scheme of continuity could have been combined with the theory of evolution. The view of mechanism professes that humans and animals are mere machines and such as they are essentially the same without soul differentiating them from inanimate matter. Anthropocentrism regarded humankind being in the centre of the world, and existence, welfare, and well-being as the ultimate aim of the universe. Everything in the universe was interpreted in term of humans and their values.

Renaissance and enlightenment: The father of modern philosophy René Descartes (1596-1650) reinforced the separation between humans and animals with the assertion that the body is a machine, and what sets humans apart from the animal machines would be the lack of true speech, reason and feeling pain (Descartes, 1649). In fact, the modern philosophy has been started with the period of enlightenment and renaissance. Friend (1990) reported that Descartes' followers were known to kick their dogs just to hear the machine creak. At that time vivisection was a common practice when studying how animal organisms work. The eighteenth century was an age of enlightenment as notable figures of that time such as Voltaire (1694 to 1778), Hume (1711 to 1776), and Rousseau (1712 to 1778) questioned the popular idea that animals feel no pain and that they are ours to do with as we please (Singer, 1975). The enlightenment, however, did not affect all thinkers equally in the matter.

Kant (1724 to 1804), in his lectures on ethics, still stated that:

"If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals."

What is Kant saying here? Effectively, Kant is taking the view here that animals have only instrumental value, morally speaking:

"... so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct

duties. Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity."

So, for instance in vivisectionists' view

"Who use living animals for their experiments, certainly act cruelly, although their aim is praiseworthy, and they can justify their cruelty, since animals must be regarded as man's instruments."

As mentioned above, Singer (1979) objects strenuously to this view.

In the modern period the utilitarianists' views are discussed at length by Broom (2003). Bentham (1789) in a definitive answer to Kant stated that:

"the question is not, Can they reason? Nor Can they talk?, but Can they suffer?"

He was perhaps the first Christian philosopher to denounce "men's dominion" as tyranny rather than legitimate government. The sentence cited is widely quoted by those concerns about animals. Thus, the concept of utilitarianism was first explicitly articulated by Jeremy Bentham (1748-832) and further developed by John Stuart Mill (1806 to 1873). In deciding whether an action is morally right, the total amount of good the action will bring about is weighed against the total amount of harm that will be caused (Mill, 1863). Singer's book (1975) on Animal Liberation led to many philosophical conversions. Although a lot of people may think that Singer supports a rights-based view, he bases vegetarian lifestyle on an animal welfarist and a hedonistic utilitarian position rather than on any claim about of killing animals being wrong. He justifies his position with what he calls the replaceability argument stating:

"Given that an animal belongs to a species incapable of self-consciousness, it follows that it is not wrong to rear and kill it for food, provided that it lives a pleasant life and, after being killed, will be replaced by another animal which will lead a similarly pleasant life and would have not existed if the first animal had been killed."

This view mirrors a utilitarian philosophy that if an animal has no sense of the future and lives a relatively contented life, the animal's premature but humane death is acceptable if it improves the welfare of others and if the animal is replaced.

Simply defined the concept of *speciesism* (Ryder, 1989), discussed in general terms by (Singer, 1975), is a prejudice or attitude bias in favour of the interest of members of one's own species and against those of members of another one. In the authors' view, pain and suffering are bad and should be prevented or minimized, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the being that suffers.

CONCLUSIONS

Duties, obligations, rights and welfare

Those advocating rights have as one aim to prevent human beings as well as other animals from unnecessary suffering. They want to protect the weak from the strong and the few from the many. Some of those advocating animal rights think that using animals for food production, clothing, research, entertainment, recreation or any other human benefit is unacceptable. Problems associated with claiming human or animal rights and the advantages of referring instead to the obligations of each of us are discussed by Broom (2003).

Deontological positions involve each individual considering their duties when deciding what action to take. Most people who are asked "what was the right course of action in relation to animal treatment" will say that some actions should never occur but other decisions should be taken according to the balance of costs and benefits. The first part of this view uses a deontological argument whilst the second part is consequentialist or utilitarian. Wholly deontological and wholly utilitarian positions lead to some untenable situations. Advocacy for good welfare in animals may arise from deontological or utilitarian arguments, or from combinations of the two. The deontological position often includes the idea that animals have a quality or telos that is of value and means that they should be treated with compassion and dignity (Naconecy, 2006). Once the view that animal welfare, a characteristic of an individual which ranges from very positive to very negative, is important. Its precise definition and measurement becomes necessary (Dawkins, 1980; Duncan, 1981; Broom, 1986; 1991). The concept includes the adaptive responses, feelings and health of the individual and its history is described by Broom (2011).

The concept of human dominion over animals has two interpretations such as (a) humans treat animals however they wish or (b) responsible and compassionate use of animals for the betterment of society is acceptable. Regan (1983) believes in the inherent value of individuals and that the interests of all animals should be weighed equally whatever their form. Sociological and philosophical educational efforts can be seen in the work of Rollin (1990) who points out that science is driven and guided by social values. Hence husbandry can be considered historically as at the root of animal production and animal science.

Some philosophers take no notice of the writings of scientists and those who analyze social attitudes but others advocate contact with current thinking, for example Rohr's (1989) opinion "the best way to become informed is to analyze the positions of those who are regarded as experts and well-studied on issues. It is important to consider every

variety of opinion in an attempt to determine the truth". We should bear in mind the average view of the public and take account of influential thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi's thought:

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."

However, many ethical dilemmas still remain. For example, Pascalev (2004) asked:

"What are the main ethical challenges that animal agriculture faces today? Is it moral to genetically engineer farm animals and can the need for greater productivity justify the genetic modification of such animals? Should we change the natural capacities of animals e.g. to reduce their ability to feel pain and increase their resistance to disease? What is the moral status of animals with human genes or genes from other animal species? What is involved in respecting animals?"

In conclusion the analysis of the study implications reveal that from prehistoric time until the modern era human-animal relationships have been a focus of interest of society and an ethical issue. As this paper explains the roles of animals in cultures, traditions and religions, it has implications for all people. Ways of thinking, ideas and behaviour of human beings may be changed by having an awareness of this subject. The similarities in attitudes to animal welfare can be used as an argument for harmony in human societies in the subject matter.

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