

RELATIVENESS OF RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY TO ANIMALS

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ABSTRACT

Animals exist as a wide range of symbols and subjects in almost every significant area of religious expression, including visual arts, scripture and myth, cosmologies, ethical frameworks, and dietary practises. This essay addresses the complex relationship between religion and animals and pays unusual attention to issues involving the morality of both animals and religion. The study discusses religious perspectives from East Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, as well as concern over the mass killing of animals for food and sacrifices as a practised by one of the major world religions. Despite their differences, many religions share several core concepts, one of which is our responsibility to care for animals. Human dominance over animals and other living things must be seen from a compassionate perspective. The moral issues surrounding how we treat animals and our fellow people are interwoven. It is both morally and religiously required to care for animals. A wide variety of references on the study of animals and religions will be offered. In conclusion, animal welfare is regarded as crucial in all facets of human cultures, religious beliefs, and traditions.

Keywords: Ethics, Religion, Tradition, Animal Welfare

INTRODUCTION:

*“WHEREVER THERE IS ANIMAL WORSHIP, THERE IS HUMAN SACRIFICE” ****

Different religions and approaches to animal ethics have garnered much attention lately. This is due to several factors, including rapid population expansion, technological improvement, and the ensuing effects on the environment worldwide. Religions do, in fact, play a significant role in different aspects of communal and individual life, for both superior and inferior. Traditional religions have a lot to contribute in this regard. Religious practises influence the moral inclinations and subconscious conscience of billions of people when it comes to animals (SJ, 2020). In most religious traditions, animals have symbolic meaning. Since animals play a significant role in the natural world, many religious adherents hold them in high regard (UK, 2022). Animal welfare is a multifaceted and intricate topic including elements of ethics, science, economics, society, culture, politics, and religion (OIE, 2022).

It is largely accurate to say that an animal is in good welfare if it is fed properly, healthy, safe, comfortable,

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and free from unpleasant sufferings like pain, anguish, or fear. Additionally, it can act in ways that are vital to both its physical and mental health. A healthy animal welfare depends on a few variables, including disease prevention, sufficient veterinary care, management, shelter, and nutrition, a safe and stimulating environment, humane slaughter or killing, and humane handling. Animal care, humane treatment, and animal husbandry are terms that are used to describe how an animal is treated; in contrast, the term "animal welfare" refers to the condition of the animal (OIE, 2021).

SLAUGHTER AS RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY

One of the religious beliefs involves the sacrifice of animals. The elements of sacrifice have been woven into a variety of religions and communities around the world, some in intricate ways. The manner that sacrificial ceremonies are organised in different cultures and faiths likely depends on several factors. Ancient people's decisions regarding the victim, the time of the sacrifice, whether the victim is consumed or destroyed, and whether the sacrifice is a single person or a group of people, for instance, have surely been impacted by economic considerations. An aspect of sacrifice that needs greater research is the relevance of such situations. However, sacrifice is not a logical phenomenon; historically, it has been a religious act that has been extremely significant for individuals and social groups, a symbolic act that forges a connection between humanity and the heavenly order. For many people around the world, the central aspect of religious life has always been sacrificed (Britannica, 2021).

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

After a brief introduction, the main religions that originated in India and spread throughout East Asia are described in chronological order, starting with the earliest traditions. The Abrahamic religions, which include Islam and Christianity, will be examined secondly after reviewing Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism (SJ, 2020). The document provides a brief overview of how animals are handled in various faiths in accordance with those traditions stated moral principles. The historical perspectives of different religions have been explained below:

BUDDHISM: Siddhartha Gautama, popularly known as the "Buddha," created Buddhism in the late sixth century B.C.E. Buddhism is one of the major religions in Asian nations (Organisation, 2021). Buddhism is an animal-friendly religion, yet other aspects of the culture are startlingly anti-animals. Buddhists aim to treat animals with kindness. Buddhists aim to have compassion for all beings, especially animals. Buddhists are instructed by the philosophy of just livelihood to avoid engaging in any work that involves the killing of animals. Animal cruelty should be avoided since, in the karma theory, any crime will undoubtedly be made up for in a subsequent life. Animals and people have equal value in the eyes of Buddhists. Buddhists occasionally hold ideas and attitudes about animals that are not always nice. The Karma concept states that because of past transgressions, souls frequently have animal rebirths. Reincarnating as an animal would be a serious spiritual error. Early Buddhists (albeit not the Buddha himself) used the notion that animals were spiritually inferior to justify animal abuse and exploitation. Buddhists also hold that experiments should only be carried out for the benefit of the animals and should do them little or no damage (UK, Buddhism: Animals, 2021).

HINDUISM: Hinduism is hardly the only religion where certain animals are revered as such and are said to have a close relationship with God. Hinduism has a wide variety of customs, as a result, it is challenging to describe Hinduism as a whole; nonetheless, many animals in Hinduism have different meanings; holy cows, animal gods, and the Reincarnation system are just a few examples. Hindu mythology holds that Lord Brahma

concealed a different secret in each animal when he created them to symbolise their spiritual worth to humans. Hindus revere all living things, including fish, birds, mammals, and other creatures. We see this respect for life in our love for cows. Both Nepal and India, which both have mostly population of Hindus, have various forms of animal worship. Hindus are primarily vegetarian and regard to cows as the "mother of the land (Organisation A. C., 2021)."

JAINISM: Jainism is a prehistoric religion with Indian roots. In India, Buddhism and Jainism are fierce rivals and have many similarities. Nataputta Mahavira, also known as Vardhamana Jnatiputra and referred to as Jina-Spiritual Conqueror, founded Jainism between 599 and 527 BC (Jainism, 2021). Jainism is founded on the principles of nonattachment, nonviolence, asceticism, and multifacetedness. The Jain community practises vegetarianism and abstains from engaging in any actions that damage humans or animals. The strictest religion in terms of not killing animals is Jainism. All living things have the innate desire to help one another. Killing is forbidden, even while acting in self-defense. According to Jain mythology, following a life of renunciation and harmlessness results in freedom and joy. There is a notion that humans, animals, and plants all possess live souls. Every soul should be treated with care and respect, and cherished equally. Jains are devoted vegetarians who try to use as little of the planet's resources as possible in their daily lives (UK, BBC, 2021).

“Religions that consider Abraham to be their founder are known as Abrahamic religions. The three major Abrahamic religions are Christianity, Judaism, and Islam”.

JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY: Nearly all of Judaism's piety, which is related to some aspects of Greek philosophy and has its own distinctive characteristics, was retained by Christianity (SJ, 2020). In the past, Christians often disregarded animal abuse. Christian philosophers believed that humans were vastly superior to animals. They propagated the idea that people had little moral obligation to treat animals well and could do as they pleased. Christians today tend to be far more pro-animals than they were in the past. They firmly believe that any unnecessary animal abuse is immoral and unethical. Christians today tend to think more sympathetically about animals than they did in the past. Modern Christians approach the topic of animals with animal-friendly views. Churches, specifically The Anglican Church and The Roman Catholic Church, share similar perspectives on animals. Both emphasise that people and animals should be friendly to one another and treated well (BBC UK, 2022).

ISLAM: Islam dates to the period of the Prophet Muhammad, which is much earlier than the seventh century (Islam, 2021). Allah created all living things, and Allah loved all animals, according to Islamic mythology. Animals are here for human benefit, so we should treat them with care and compassion. Muslims are forbidden in Islam from mistreating animals, overworking, and overloading them, engaging in sport hunting or combat, clipping a horse's tail or mane, and factory farming. Islamic law only permits ritual slaughter and humane animal killing, thus hunting for food is also acceptable. Islamic Slaughter Laws and Sharia Law are followed during Muslim ritual slaughter. Animal experimentation is also acceptable. They hold that animals should not be subjected to severe pain or mutilation during tests and that only valid reasons should be used to conduct research (BBC UK, 2021).

WORLDWIDE ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON RELIGIOUS ORTHODOXY

As a religious belief, Islam includes several plans that are focused on the health and welfare of animals, even though international standards do not have a specific set of programmes to avoid cruelty to animals (E. Szucs, 2012).

In the current trend of globalisation, animal health measures are becoming more and more crucial to support secure international movement of animals and animal products while minimising unnecessary trade barriers. As a result, the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) urges WTO countries to base their sanitary measures on existing international standards, suggestions, and guidelines (OIE, 2021).

Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare- UDAW

A planned intergovernmental agreement called the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW) aims to recognise that animals have feelings, to stop cruelty and lessen suffering, and to promote animal welfare standards for, among other things, animals used in scientific research, farm animals, draught animals, companion animals, recreation animals, and wildlife animals (EU, 2021).

World Organisation for Animal Health- OIE

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is the reference organisation for animal health and zoonoses standards within the World Trade Organization (WTO) (EU, 2021). An intergovernmental organisation called the OIE oversees advancing animal health globally (OIE, 2021).

United Nations Convention on Animal Health and Protection- UNCAHP

The UNCAHP (United Nations Convention on Animal Health and Protection) is a ground breaking UN initiative to protect animals all around the world. Take action and assist animals is the UNCAHP's official motto. Global Animal Law (GAL) Association spearheaded the UNCAHP, and specialists in animal law from all over the world participated on the day the draught was released (UNCAHP, 2021).

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, animal welfare is regarded as crucial in all facets of human cultures, religious beliefs, and traditions. The study shows that since prehistoric times, the interaction between animals and humans has fascinated civilization and constituted a moral dilemma. Additionally, it has been discussed how important animals are to various civilizations, faiths, and customs. Every religion has different views, attitudes, and behaviours about animals, and these might evolve through time if people become aware of the problem. There are several religions that contain a set of fundamental beliefs that emphasises our responsibility to animals, which indicates that everyone has a duty to care for animals, either morally or legally. One can use the comparison in perspective toward the wellbeing of animals to make an argument for peace in human cultures.

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