

## HUMAN/ANIMAL KINSHIP

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It may be appropriate to ask ourselves – just what do we mean by the word "*animals*" – *just what do we know about them?* Some of them have faculties that humans don't have, don't understand, and can only admire. Dr. Rhine at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, has hundreds of cases recorded of what he calls "**psi-trailing**". This refers to the observed ability of some animals, cats, dogs, pigeons -- to travel long distances to an area previously unknown to them, and then to locate the person or home they care about. Here is only one example:

In 1940 the 12 year old son of a county sheriff in West Virginia was taken 120 miles to the Myers Memorial Hospital at Philippi for an operation. One dark, snowy night, about a week after his arrival, he heard a fluttering at the window of his hospital room. He called a nurse, who opened the window, and a pigeon flew in. It had a ring on its leg carrying the number 167. It was his pet.

When his parents came to visit a few days later, they confirmed that it was his pet and that it had been seen around the house for several days after he was admitted to the hospital. So it hadn't been brought with him or simply followed the family car. The pigeon had travelled a hundred and twenty miles, and located the correct window, in the right building, in a strange town, at night, in a snowstorm.

Apart from the question of how the bird was able to locate its human companion, and how it survived such a long winter journey, finding food and shelter and staying alive, the question biologist **Dr. Lyall Watson** asks is: Why should the pigeon have gone through such hardship to find its human companion? Was it love? Was it something else? *What was the connection here?* [Ref. A]

**Intelligent, co-operative, goal-oriented, and altruistic behaviour** is demonstrated by both animals and birds.

Dick Van Dyke well-known actor of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," "Mary Poppins" and other films is now 84. He told the following story on a U.S. chat show. [Ref./Note 5]

He used to be a keen surfer, using a 10 ft. "long board" off Virginia Beach on the U.S. east coast. He went out once, and fell asleep on the board. When he woke, there was no land in sight. Without land as a reference, someone floating at sea can become disoriented and very likely swim in the wrong direction. He said he looked around "and started paddling with the swells, and started seeing fins swimming around me. I thought, 'I'm dead'. But they turned out to be **porpoises! They pushed me all the way to shore!** I'm not kidding!"

That porpoises and dolphins protect each other and also protect humans and whales has been known and recorded since antiquity.

How about sea turtles? [Ref. 8]

The Malaysian cargo ship, *MV Genius Star VI*, sank in rough seas on April 13, 2004, 280 miles southeast of Haldia, West Bengal. Indian Coast Guard Commander P. K. Mishra told of three Chinese crew members who fell overboard – Gao and Wuxun with life jackets, and Zhu clutching a plank. For the next 34 hours they were in the water.

The men described **how two turtles tried to help them**. Gao told of a turtle which tried to help him lift a floating box which Gao hoped to wave in the air to signal aircraft and other vessels. "When the turtle failed, he pushed me up to the box so that I could hold on to it." Later, when Zhu lost his plank, a turtle swam with him for hours and brought the wood plank back to him. The three men were rescued by Mishra's vessel. Twelve others were picked up by merchant ships, and two were never found.

This story, and others like it demonstrate an **understanding** by the turtles that the humans needed the box and the plank – although they themselves don't need these things. Staying with the men for hours indicates concern and a recognition that they are in trouble. And it **demonstrates altruism** -- a desire on the part of dolphins and turtles to help the distressed humans.

Gorillas have demonstrated **concern for human children**. August 31, 1986, in a widely publicized event, a five-year old boy fell into the gorilla enclosure at Jersey Zoo. A gorilla named Jambo placed himself between the boy and other gorillas, and stood guard over the unconscious child, in what ethologists analyze as a protective gesture. At one point he stroked the boy.

In a more recent case, August 1996, a three-year old boy fell 18 feet into a "gorilla exhibit" at the Brookfield Zoo, about 10 miles west of downtown Chicago. Binti, a female with a baby gorilla on her back picked up the boy, cradled him in her arms, and placed him near a door where zoo keepers could retrieve him. Binti demonstrated **concern and intelligence** in placing the child near this door.

These and similar stories indicate that some animals, just like some people, recognize and feel a **kinship** between our different species. *Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson* says: "We must rediscover our kin – the other animals and plants with whom we share this planet. We are related to them through our DNA and evolution."

The epithet "bird brain" indicates that humans don't think highly of bird intelligence. But what do we really know about that?

**Alex, the African grey parrot** who died Sept. 6, 2007 was studied for 30 years by animal psychologist Dr. Irene Pepperberg at University of Arizona, Harvard, and Brandeis University. The studies showed that Alex was able to reason at a basic level, and use words creatively.

Dr. Pepperberg's study showed that **Alex's intelligence was on a par with dolphins, great apes, and a five-year old child. He had not yet reached his full potential when he died. Emotionally he was at the level of a two-year old child.**

Why do we even mention Alex's emotional development? What does it matter? Those who experiment invasively on animals, and those who exploit animals to make profit from them have long denigrated the value of emotions. To be accused of being emotional is tantamount to being told one is unreasonable.

But **Dr. Nathaniel Branden**, Consultant in Psychology to the Neurophysiology-Biophysics Research Unit at the VA Hospital, Boston, shows that this is not at all true. It is a self-serving position taken by perpetrators of animal misery to divert criticism from themselves. They want to persuade healthy, properly emotional humans that it is right to join in their unfeeling, psychopathic behaviour. But it is not right at all, as we shall see. [Ref. C]

Many of us feel the desire to love and help animals. We wish them well as they continue their evolution, with us, on this planet.

**Dr. Nathaniel Branden** writes: [slightly paraphrased:]

"Man is an integrated organism. His nature does not contain contradictory elements. Reason and emotion – thinking and feeling -- are not mutually inimical faculties. But they perform radically different functions, and their functions are not interchangeable. *The content of our emotions is the product of our rational faculty; our emotions are a derivative and a consequence. ... I do not wish to leave any implication of a reason/emotion dichotomy: either they function in harmony – or both faculties are sabotaged.*

"Our emotions may be trying to tell us something we need to know – something our conscious mind has overlooked. *Repression of emotions ... has disastrous effects on the clarity and efficiency of our thinking. ... Our mind ... is not free to consider all possibly relevant facts; it is denied access to crucial information. As a consequence ... the conclusions we reach are unreliable.*" ... [Ref. C]

Reason and Emotion need each other; neither can function well without the other.

**Physicist Max Planck**, the father of quantum theory, wrote:

"Science ... means ... continually progressing development *toward an aim which the poetic intuition may apprehend, but which the intellect can never fully grasp.*"

*Like Reason and Emotion --  
Human Rights AND Animal Rights Go Together*

**Philosopher Tom Regan** says:

[paraphrased] "*.. animal rights theory shows that the animal rights movement is a part of, not antagonistic to, the human rights movement.*"... *those involved in the animal rights movement are partners in the struggle to secure respect for human rights.*

... All who have inherent value have it equally, whether they be humans or animals. ... Our enjoyment and suffering, our pleasure and pain, ... make a difference to the quality of life of both humans and animals. Therefore animals must be viewed as the experiencing subjects of a life, with inherent value of their own." [*In Defense of Animals*, Peter Singer, 1985]

In addition to Henry Spira and others who have fought in our time for both animal rights and civil rights for blacks in the U.S.A., leaders who have struggled for **both** human and animal rights are **William Wilberforce** in Britain (1759 – 1833) who helped establish the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to *Animals* and was also a leading abolitionist *against slavery*, -- **Henry Bergh** in 1866 founded the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to *Animals*, and in 1874 founded the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty *to Children*.

**Frederick Douglass**, black leader to abolish slavery said:

"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Power concedes nothing without a demand – it never did and it never will." The same is true about rights for animals.

**Philosopher Tom Regan** says:

"The whole creation groans under the weight of the evil we humans visit upon these mute, powerless creatures. It is our hearts, not just our heads, that call for an end to it all, that demand of us that we overcome, for them, the habits and forces behind their systematic oppression. ... The fate of animals is in our hands. God grant we are equal to the task."

## REFERENCES

**Ref. A:**

*Lifetide, A Biology of the Unconscious*, 1980,

**Dr. Lyall Watson**

Hodder & Stoughton Paperbacks

London WC1 3DP, England

**Naturalist Henry Beston** says:

"Animals cannot be measured by humans; they are gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never had. They live by voices we shall never hear. They are ... caught with ourselves in the net of life and time – fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth " [edited]

**Ref. B:**

From *Animal People*, June 2004

[www.animalpeoplenews.org](http://www.animalpeoplenews.org)

**Ref./Note C:**

*The Disowned Self*, 1980, Nathaniel Branden, Bantam Books, New York, N.Y.

**Dr. Nathaniel Branden**, Consultant in Psychology to the Neurophysiology-Biophysics Research Unit at the VA Hospital in Boston. Lectures on the philosophical foundations of the biological and psychological sciences at the School of Philosophy at University of Southern California. Guest lecturer at major Canadian and American colleges and universities.

**Philosopher P. E. More:** *"...emotions are the inherited product of countless experiences in an immeasurable past."* [ADLC: We say, therefore, that emotions carry the essential wisdom of the ages, and that the emotions of normal people are worthy of respectful attention.]

**Physicist Max Planck ...**

[*The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, by Gary Zukav p. 313]

For a more comprehensive discussion about the importance and function of emotions see **pp. 46-50** of :

**Considerations and Recommendations**

**Concerning Disposition of Health Canada's Primates**

**at Tunney's Pasture and Sir Frederick Banting Research Facility**

in Ottawa, ON

Submitted by **the Animal Defence League of Canada** to  
*The Expert Panel on the Primate Colony, Sept. 1997*