

TENDERNESS TOWARD ANIMALS

By C. Jinarajadasa

“May happiness be the lot of men, may it be the lot of animals,” is a Hindu prayer consecrated by immemorial usage. That prayer reminds us of the cycle of spiritual and material events, taught us in the Bhagavad Gita, how as the beasts toil for humankind, the crops flourish; how as men and women worship the Gods, the rains come; and how as the rain falls, there is food for man and beast. All old Hindu legends tell us of the kindly relation between humans and animals; cruelty to animals is an un-Indian trait.

This same realization of the spiritual relation between humans and animals has been voiced by one of the most tender of the poets of England. We have in Blake these lines, so startling in the intensity of their significance to all sensitive minds:

A robin redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage.
A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear.
A skylark wounded on the wing
Doth make a cherub cease to sing.

Where people are kind to animals, they are loving towards children, and friendship becomes the keynote of all human relations. For the law of action and reaction binds us all—the Gods, humanity, and animals—in one circle of necessity and of mutual assistance. And so it happens that where all unnecessary suffering among animals is abolished, there people shine out in the beauty of their true humanity.