

Essay on The Human-Animal

Science classifies human beings as mammals. It means to say that we are very similar to monkeys, dogs, and whales.

A human being has four limbs, not unlike what a lizard has. He has a tongue. So has a snake. He has two eyes, so has a rat. The fact is that a human being is physically very much an animal.

Besides physical aspects, human beings behave very much like some animals too.

Horses, zebras, elephants, and wildebeests are pretty much herd animals. They congregate in large numbers and are ruled by one or more dominant animals. We, humans, behave similarly too. We live together in large numbers and are governed by a handful of people.

In a herd of horses, for example, the strongest stallions fight for control. They use guile and strength to compete with one another. Humans too fight for control. They also use guile and strength to win. However, humans are by far more cunning and will resort to all sorts of methods to get what they want. The so-called lower animals like horses and dogs do not purposely kill one another in a fight. They cease when they know that one of them has lost. Humans have no such qualms. Murder is a predominantly human activity.

Dogs mark out their territory with their natural secretions. So do monkeys, deers and a whole lot of other animals. Similarly, humans mark out their territory by declaring nations and forming governments. They claim ownership of land, sea, and air and will resort to arms if their claim is threatened. On a lesser level, ownership of land or house is also an expression of territorial control. An average man feels secure in his house and that he has a

right to it. Others do not simply trespass into his house. To do so is to reap his wrath. Dogs do not simply trespass into another dog's established territory unless it wants to take over. Nations do not invade other nations unless they want to claim the invaded nations for their own.

Numerous territories exist in the jungle. Only the animals living there know which is which. Numerous countries exist on this earth. We know which country belongs to whom.

Sexual drive is very strong in animals. In fact, territorial advantage has largely to do with the mating instinct.

The leader of a pack of wolves does not like other wolves getting into his family. So it is- true also for human beings. The sexual drive is very strong, so much so that sexual crimes are very common. Marriages are meant to allow humans to satisfy their sexual needs without causing problems to others. However, they do not often work. The animal instinct is stronger than moral laws.

Another strong natural instinct among animals is that of food. Animals eat one another in order to stay alive. The jungle is a long food chain where an animal preys on another and in turn is preyed upon by another. Right at the top of the heap is the man. Man preys on everything. There is no other animal that can match him. So as man's population explodes, the rest of the animal kingdom faces the real possibility of extinction. Already many species are extinct. There appears to be no reversal to the trend.

The human-animal has evolved far beyond any other spaces. While his basic instincts for survival; sex and territorial advantage remain, he has also developed his mind to a high level. Spiritual matters now become important. He does not merely go through life filling his

basic needs. He now ponders on the meaning of life. In this respect, he is very different from other animals. How much will this spiritual progress take him further away from his animal nature is left to be seen?