

Issue of Animal Souls (SPARC 22nd July 1996)

Issue regarding hypothetical animal soul kingdom and tree is most interesting. Like some materialists argue against existence of souls, one can build the case whether animal souls exist or not (!?). Dadi Chandermani ji, once in a personal discussion with me, suggested that there may be a separate section for animal souls. She however emphasized that Sakar Baba, would refuse to reply to this issue, which to me in a certain sense suggests that there may not be a soul in animals. Baba's refusal becomes understandable, because the issue "if animals do not have souls, why meat eating is considered violence", would generate complications. So in my opinion Baba wanted to avoid the controversy such a disclosure may generate. Medieval philosopher, Descartes, was of the opinion that while humans have soul which is capable of communicating or communion with God, i.e., Raj Yog, but animals were mere automatons, - machines without soul. Readers may be aware that Descartes had suggested Pineal gland in brain, as seat of soul - which for his time was a radical departure from heart as seat of soul. On the other hand, Bro. Jagdish ji, chief spokes person of Brahma Kumaris, in the book "Eternal Drama, Part I", while trying to reinforce, the idea of reincarnation of human souls as humans only, has quoted an interesting example, taken from a newspaper report, of a dog taking rebirth as dog (!)- which would indirectly suggest that animals have soul. Sis. Sheelu ji, of Brahma Kumaris international HQ, Mount Abu, is of the opinion that animal souls do not go to soul world, but exist in a merged form in physical world's atmosphere only. Thus there exists a division of opinion on this issue, because of lack of clear revelation on this issue by BapDada.

Issue of animal souls is related to whether matter can generate consciousness, under certain conditions, or if consciousness is an exclusive property of soul only. We know that soul in soul world is in a dormant stage and even lacks consciousness (!). Thus one has a new position that consciousness can be regarded as an emergent property of matter, as well as soul, and not an exclusive property of non-material soul! In a nut shell, while, animals have consciousness, which is undeniable, and while this consciousness, under certain extreme cases, can survive, one bodily death, and manifest itself in another baby animal body, (Bro. Jagdish ji's example), nevertheless, the emergent consciousness of animals is not the incorporeal soul, similar to humans. Matter generated animal consciousness, is a category of existence, different from supra-natural consciousness of soul. This animal consciousness may be capable of surviving bodily death, before disintegrating slowly in atmosphere. By contrast plants do not even have consciousness, however, they do have life. Thus if one can have matter generated life, without existence of souls in plants, why not extrapolate one step more and say, that in animals one also has matter generated consciousness, aside from life - and both these qualities manifesting themselves in the animal body and behaviour, without existence of soul. You see the problem is that if one subscribes to theory of existence of soul within in animals, the issue exists at which point in animal kingdom does the soul come in, i.e., is it there in reptile kingdom, or insect kingdom, or unicellular amoeba? Science of Biology ascribes life to all these, but does not concern itself with issue of consciousness! Certain behaviour patterns of amoeba would tend to suggest that even, unicellular amoeba has soul. On the other had, by analogy, behaviour of certain cells within human body, such as macrophages, white blood cells of immune system is similar to that of amoeba, in which case, one would be forced to subscribe to existence of soul for each of those million cells! This would contradict the theory of one soul in human body, controlling the body from brain, near hypothalamus!

Sakar Baba and Older Dadis (Dadi Hridya Pushpa ji, for example) would sometimes refer to another mode of existence called "Jeevra". Jeevra, is supposed to be conscious component of material body, temporarily surviving bodily death, and separating from Soul, (or soul-consciousness) at the time of death. So the animals have "Jeevra", and not the soul. This Jeevra, may be identified with "body-consciousness". In Jagdish Bhai's example, it was the Jeevra which took rebirth, because of peculiar circumstance of mother dog's death occurring because of her reaction to pre-mature death of

her new-born pups, due to exposure to cold, when they were left outside in snow overnight, by mistake of her owners.. Interestingly in the same book, there is a human Cardiac death and revival example which reinforces Jeevra theory. This person reported his death experience, that there were two components of his consciousness A, and B. While B consisted of consciousness of different parts of his body, and which appeared to be dying, he could identify himself with component A, which was a spectator to the whole phenomena. Death seemed to consist of separation of these two components. Component B can be identified with Jeevra. Jeevra is supposed to source of impurity generated in flesh due to death, and the reason why meat eating is prohibited.

In the recently started "Journal of Consciousness Studies", many mechanisms are suggested for creation of consciousness from matter, such as Bose-Einstein condensation in cells etc.. And there is a big debate going on whether consciousness is a non-material phenomena or an emergent material property. However, the debate takes support from a large extent, the evolution theory - where consciousness slowly emerged in a world devoid of consciousness.

One may be aware of "Turing Test", suggested in 1950s by Alan Turing, Artificial Intelligence pioneer, for gauging, whether a machine was capable of completely simulating a human being . "Chess programs", were, and still are, part of Artificial Intelligence, research program. Recently created chess computer "Deep Blue", by IBM, scored 2-4, in a six game match, with World Chess Champion Kasparov - winning the first game, losing three and drawing two. This score is comparable with human challengers to world champion. For example, Vishvanathan Anand of India, in his recent challenge could win only one game against Kasparov. In the previous World Championship, Nigel Short of Great Britain, also could manage only one win. Thus the fact that animals like Chimpanzee, Gorilla, Dolphin etc., can be taught language, and more intelligent behaviour, does not reinforce the idea that they may have soul, because silicon matter based insentient computers, which lack even biological life, can be taught much more! So much more that in certain spheres, they completely exceed their human creators! Next generation of Chess computers is expected to completely outplay World Champion! Definition of Soul as mind, intellect, resolves begins to look dubious or incomplete in light of Turing test, because these aspects are simulated on machines. But lets widen the scope of our investigation a little more.

It has been argued that machines would not be able to simulate human intuition, telepathic and other occult abilities, such as extra-sensory perception! Experiments in various laboratories over the world have established beyond doubt, that human will can influence outcome of random events, such as coin or dice toss experiments. This is another capability, which the machines would not be capable of simulating. Picture of Gamblers in Las Vegas, hypnotically gazing at moving dice and willing a win. The management of these Gambling clubs design the apparatus so that over a large number of runs, the outcome favors the club, rather than the human player. Thus if a human subject is trying to will the outcome 6, in dice toss experiments, it is observed, that number of sixes increases, in a statistically significant way! One such laboratory where these type of experiments are being done is "Laboratory for engineering anomalies", at Princeton University, With Prof. Jahn, and Dunne as among the leading investigators. This is a manifestation of soul-matter interaction, whose physics is as yet obscure, but probably has something to do with quantum mechanics, and how non-material soul interacts with physical matter, and generates Karma in the process! For example, experimental studies using random number generator, based upon white noise from a semiconductor device, by lady physicist Dr.Fotini, of Athens university of Greece, has shown that, over a large number of runs, this capability of human subject is suppressed, by increased resistance of nature! Apparently this nature's back reaction has been observed by other groups also.

It is authors surmise that as physics of soul-matter-interaction matures, with possibility of experimental confirmation of soul, the issue of human and animal souls will find its ultimate solution.