

## **Title: The Animal Self | What Characteristics Do We Share with Animals?**

### **H1 What Is the Origin of Animal Traits (Animal Self) in Human Personality?**

Let us close our eyes for a moment and imagine the world without humans. It is a strange feeling! Everything loses its primary meaning when human beings are removed from the map of the world. So the presence of human beings is what gives the world its significance.

We humans struggle with many questions and doubts in life because we do not know ourselves. These doubts are intellectually challenging, leaving us with no convincing answers. For example, some of us consider religious rules as irrational dos and don'ts, which limit and burden us. We view our problems and failures as a kind of oppressive compulsion and wonder why we must endure so much pressure.

We often feel inadequate if we have physical disabilities, are unmarried, lack higher education, or do not have a suitable social status. We tend to see those who have such assets as superior to us. While we may consider 'ourselves' the source of these questions and uncertainties, it is not true. This dissatisfied 'me' that we attribute to ourselves is not our '**true self**,' but rather our **animal self** or the **animal dimension** of our existence.

What is the animal self? What is its origin? What are its attributes? What role does it play in our lives ?

The answer to these questions takes us one step closer to self-knowledge.

## H2 Introducing the Animal Dimension of Human Existence

If you remember, in the article [“Vegetative Dimension of the Human, Our Status in This Dimension”](#) we introduced an immaterial essence called the ‘soul,’ which is the source of life in living beings. We mentioned the kinds of soul in living entities. We stated that each soul is responsible for manifesting certain existential qualities and effects in living beings. One of these forms of soul is the ‘**animal soul,**’ which we are going to address in this article.

After the sperm is put in the mother's uterus (the inanimate stage), the vegetative soul becomes active. After going through several stages of growth and cell division, the embryo is formed. Around the age of four months, the spirit is breathed into the fetus. After the state of vegetative life, the soul enters the stage of animal life.

A child has no perception of the material world at birth. But with the activation of the sensory faculties of the soul, the new dimensions of human existence are gradually activated. A human being is an actualized animal at birth, but what sets him apart from other animals is that the ultimate perfection for animals is developing their animal qualities, while humans have intellect in addition to animal qualities. They also possess an unknown dimension within them, known as the spiritual (human) dimension. Unfortunately, many people remain at the stage of animality throughout their lives and never reach spiritual perfection.

So far, we have learned about the animal self as well as its origin. Now we need to see what the existential qualities of animals are and what characteristics humans share with animals.

The answer to this question is very important because we often consider certain qualities as existential qualities of humans and take pride in them, while in

reality they have nothing to do with our humanity. Although they are positive, sacred, and respectable, they are still nothing more than an animalistic quality.

## H2 The Human Being IS and IS NOT an Animal!

We discussed animalistic existential qualities in the article "[What Is an Inherent Quality? What Does Achieving Perfection Mean?](#)" We will review them once again.

We have already stated that animals have inanimate as well as vegetative qualities. They mate and are committed to their families. They are responsible and work hard to continue their lives. They have social life and can move from the position of a simple group member to that of a group leader. They have positive traits such as loyalty, modesty, decency, and kindness, and they help their own kind as well as other species.

Animals do all of these activities through the **animal faculty of the soul**, such as the faculty of lust and anger, the five senses, and so on. All of these faculties also exist in humans. Some of them, such as lust and anger, may be more developed and complex in humans. However, this advancement does not elevate them above the level of animals.

What conclusion can we draw from this comparison? The answer is clear. Many of the qualities that we consider to be uniquely human are actually the existential qualities of animals. We often suffer when we lack them and feel pride when we have them, but in reality, they are not nothing but animal qualities.

Marriage is an animal perfection, so if someone does not get married until the end of her life, she has only failed to actualize an animal potential, and this does

not affect her humanity. Social status, position, and rank are animal perfections. A person who becomes a leader, manager, or minister is not a better human being but a stronger animal.

Even serving fellow human beings is not a human perfection. Animals help their own kind and other species. Sometimes they are superior to many human beings in this regard since they provide help without expecting anything in return. You can see many examples of these animal behaviors in wildlife documentaries. In fact, while helping others is a value, it is not considered a human value. If someone does humanitarian activities, supports animal rights, and cares for the environment but neglects her human (spiritual) dimension, she is at best a good animal and has not yet entered the valley of humanity. Our humanity is related to our **true self**, which we will address in detail in the following articles. Now we can easily answer the questions that we posed in the introduction.

Religious dos and don'ts; fundamental principles like monotheism, prophethood, imamate, resurrection; obligatory, recommended, disliked and permitted rulings, all address our '**self**,' our **true self**, and not our inanimate, vegetative, or animal aspects. Religion does not formulate dos and don'ts for inanimate objects, plants, and animals.

You would never tell an animal to pray, fast, or control its low desires. That is because the capacity to receive these messages has not been given to animals. But the story is different for humans. The human soul has the ability to develop, and this quality has been given to us from the beginning. All we need to do is to start moving on the path of human (spiritual) perfection. This will not happen unless we first know our **true self**.

Someone who does not know who she is, why she was created, and who her true beloved is, wastes all her human potentials on the pursuit of inanimate,

vegetative, and animal perfections. She is like a gifted child who is unaware of her potentials, so she spends her entire school years playing around and wastes the talents that could have shaken the world.

Another important point to mention is that the attainment of spiritual perfection is dependent on the limitation of our animal dimension. Our animal self is wild and predatory. If we indulge it beyond its real needs, it takes control and crushes our true self under its whims and desires. No wise person would let loose the reins of a predatory animal!

All moral and religious restrictions have been designed to control our animal self rather than our human dimension. Now a few basic questions arise:

- Is having inanimate, vegetative, and animal qualities bad?
- Should we give up on having them?
- If these qualities are not bad, then why have they been given to us?

You may have already found the answers to these questions yourself. But we recommend that you read the next articles for a complete conclusion on this topic.