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The World of Animals

Cover picture:
Sketch by the Mother

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The World of Animals

(The Mother on Animals)

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

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Editorial note: The human species has a very human-centric view towards life. We believe that we are the highest and the best species with an almost exclusive right over the earth's resources. We believe all other things and creatures upon earth are only for our service and our pleasure. We believe that we are the center and even God must only cater and pander to our wishes and desires. This ignorance and arrogance have led to much ransacking of the earth, much man-made imbalances and ugliness which Nature has to correct from time to time through rather extreme measures. Perhaps it is time to realise that animals and trees and plants too have a right to exist and treat them as creatures who are as much loved by the Divine if not more. This issue is dedicated to a truer understanding of animal life as well as inspirational stories about the Divine Mother's love for animals.



Mahalakshmi — lover of all beings

Sweet Mother, I didn't understand this: "This is the power of Mahalakshmi and there is no aspect of the Divine Shakti more attractive to the heart of embodied beings."

That means men. It is another way of saying human beings upon the earth, beings upon earth. There are also... it means animals also. She is very, very loving towards animals and animals love her very much; even the most ferocious ones become very gentle with her, and that is why instead of using the words "human beings", he has used "embodied beings", beings with a body upon earth.

CWM 6:282

The Mother

The Animal Species

Psychic element

Sri Aurobindo: It is again man's ignorance that makes him think that he is the greatest being in creation. Many dogs have got a much finer psychic being than many men!

Would you believe if I were to tell you that there is a psychic element in the love-making of animals ? Take our cat. Big-boy. When he makes love to Bite-bite he is physical; when he makes love to Baby, he is vital; when he makes love to Mimi, he is emotional and sentimental ; and when he makes love to Girly, he is psychic !

Disciple : Then how is it that man is regarded as the highest being in creation ?

Sri Aurobindo: It is the egoistic ignorance of man that makes him think so. He is high because there is in him the possibility of evolving a divine life. You can say also that he is high because he has developed a mind and the mind gives him a chance of conscious evolution. But it does not necessarily follow that because man is a mental being he has used his mind for his evolution. Exactly because he has a mind, man has an infinite capacity to be devilish. He brings to the help of his devil a mind, and the devil himself can't be so bad as man with his mind when he puts it at the service of his vital being.

Disciple : But then there is the great difference between man's body and the animals.

Sri Aurobindo : That is all; and even that is not so much as you try to make it out to be.

After all, what is the difference between the animal body and the human ? If you see carefully, you will see you have discarded the tail, and instead of walking on four legs you have been using two, and the other two you have changed into hands. There have been slight but very important changes in the brain and some details here and there. You have cast off your fur and horns.

Disciple : Not all men ! K. has a lot of fur yet (Laughter)

Sri Aurobindo : You see, after all it is not so great a change in the physical as would create a gulf between animal and man!

(A B Purani, Evening Talks With Sri Aurobindo, Second Series, Psychology, Page 238-239)

Animal Communication

Sri Aurobindo : People say animals can't think or reason. It is not at all true. Their intelligence has evolved to act only within the narrow limits of life, according to their own needs. But they have latent faculties which have not been developed.

Cats have a language of their own. They utter different kinds of mews for different purposes. For instance, when the mother cat mews in a particular tone and rhythm after leaving her kittens behind a box, the little ones understand that they are not to move from that place until she comes back and repeats that mew. It is through the tone and the rhythm through the tone and the rhythm that cats express themselves.

Even donkeys, which are supposed to be very stupid, are sometimes unusually clever. Once some horses and donkeys were confined together, with the gate shut, to

see if they could get out. While the horses were helpless, a donkey got out by lifting idle latch and opening the gate.

Why go so far? Even in our Ashram the Mother's cat Chikoo was extraordinarily clever. One day she was confined in a room. It was discovered that she was trying to open the window in exactly same way as the Mother used to do. Evidently Chikoo had watched the Mother carefully.

We had a dog, a bitch left by somebody in the first house we rented. One day she was locked out. Finding it impossible to push the door open, she just sat in front of it and began to think, "How to get in?" The way she sat and the attitude of her head and eyes showed clearly that she was thinking. Then suddenly she got up, as saying to herself, "Ah, there is the bathroom door. Let me try it. And she went in that direction. The door was open and she got in.

It is the Europeans who make a big difference between man and animal. The only difference is that animals can't form concepts and can't read or write or philosophise.

N: They can't do Yoga, either.

Sri Aurobindo : I don't know about that. Once, while the Mother and I were meditating, a cat happened to be present. We found that she was behaving oddly. She passed into a trance and was almost on the point of leaving her body and dying, when suddenly she recovered. Evidently she was trying to receive something.

Talks with Sri Aurobindo, pp. 223-224

Divine spark

Of course one cannot say that every man has got a psychic being, just as one cannot refuse to grant it to every animal. Many animals that have lived near man have some beginnings of it, while so often one comes across people who do not seem to be anything else than brutes. Here, too, there has been a good deal of levelling. But on the whole, the psychic in the true sense starts at the human stage: that is also why the Catholic religion declares that only man has a soul. In man alone there is the possibility of the psychic being growing to its full stature even so far as to be able in the end to join and unite with a descending being, a godhead from above.

CWM 3: 151

Most people say there is “consciousness” when they begin to think—when one doesn’t think one is not conscious. But plants are perfectly conscious and yet they do not think. They have very precise sensations which are the expression of a consciousness, but they do not think. Animals begin to think and their reactions are much more complex. But both plants and animals are conscious. One can be conscious of a sensation without having the least thought.

CWM 4: 240-241

Genus of the species

In animals there is sometimes a very intense psychic truth. Naturally, I believe that the psychic being is a little more formed, a little more conscious in a child than in an animal. But I have experimented with animals, just to know; well, I assure you that in human beings I have

rarely come across some of the virtues which I have seen in animals, very simple, unpretentious virtues. As in cats, for example: I have studied cats a lot; if one knows them well they are marvellous creatures. I have known mother-cats which have sacrificed themselves entirely for their babies — people speak of maternal love with such admiration, as though it were purely a human privilege, but I have seen this love manifested by mother-cats to a degree far surpassing ordinary humanity. I have seen a mother-cat which would never touch her food until her babies had taken all they needed. I have seen another cat which stayed eight days beside her kittens, without satisfying any of her needs because she was afraid to leave them alone; and a cat which repeated more than fifty times the same movement to teach her young one how to jump from a wall on to a window, and I may add, with a care, an intelligence, a skill which many uneducated women do not have. And why is it thus? — since there was no mental intervention. It was altogether spontaneous instinct. But what is instinct? — it is the presence of the Divine in the genus of the species, and that, that is the psychic of animals; a collective, not an individual psychic. I have seen in animals all the reactions, emotional, affective, sentimental, all the feelings of which men are so proud. The only difference is that animals cannot speak of them and write about them, so we consider them inferior beings because they cannot flood us with books on what they have felt.

CWM 4:27-28

The Mother

Spirit of the Species

Animals have much more perfect senses than those of men. I challenge you to track a man as a dog does, for instance!

This means that in the curve or rather the spiral of evolution, animals (and more so those we call “higher” animals, because they resemble us more closely) are governed by the spirit of the species which is a highly conscious consciousness. Bees, ants, obey this spirit of the species which is of quite a special quality. And what is called “instinct” in animals is simply obedience to the spirit of the species which always knows what ought and ought not to be done. There are so many examples, you know. You put a cow in a meadow; it roams around, sniffs, and suddenly puts out its tongue and snatches a tuft of grass. Then it wanders about again, sniffs and gets another tuft of grass, and so it goes on. Has anyone ever known a cow under these conditions to eat poisonous grass? But shut this poor animal up in a cow-shed, gather and put some grass before it, and the poor creature which has lost its instinct because it now obeys man (excuse me), eats the poisonous grass along with the rest of it. We have already had three such cases here, three cows which died from having eaten poisonous grass. And these unfortunate animals, like all animals, have a kind of respect (which I could call unjustifiable) for the superiority of man — if he puts poisonous grass before the cow and tells it to eat, it eats it! But left to itself, that is, without anything interfering between it and the spirit of the species, it would never do so. All animals which live close to man lose their instinct because they have a kind of admiration full of devotion for this being who can give them shelter and food without the least difficulty — and

a little fear too, for they know that if they don't do what man wants they will be beaten!

It is quite strange, they lose their ability. Dogs, for instance the sheep-dog which lives far away from men with the flocks and has a very independent nature (it comes home from time to time and knows its master well, but often does not see him), if it is bitten by a snake, it will remain in a corner, lick itself and do all that is necessary till it gets cured. The same dog, if it stays with you and is bitten by a snake, dies quietly like man.

CWM 4:236-237

Instinct of the species

There is an instinct of the species which is an extremely reasonable instinct that regulates all their activities for their own good, and automatically, without knowing it, they are subject to this instinct of the species which is altogether reasonable from the point of view of that species, of each species. And those animals which for some reason or other become free of it — as I was saying just a while ago, those which live near man and begin to obey man instead of obeying the instinct of the species—are perverted and lose the qualities of their species. But an animal left to its natural life and free from human influence is an extremely reasonable being from its own point of view, for it only does things which are in conformity with its nature and its own good. Naturally, it meets with disasters, for it is constantly at war with all the other species, but it does not itself act foolishly. Stupidities and perversion begin with conscious mind and the human species.

CWM 9: 102

The missing Ape that walked like man

The first animals, yes, it is difficult to distinguish them from plants, there is almost no consciousness. But there you see all the animal species, you know them, don't you, right up to the higher animals which, indeed, are *very* conscious. They have their own completely independent will. They are very conscious and marvellously intelligent, like the elephant, for instance; you know all the stories about elephants and their wonderful intelligence. Therefore, it is already a very perceptible appearance of mind. And through this progressive development, we suddenly pass on to a species which has probably disappeared — traces of which have been found — an intermediate animal like a monkey or of the same line as the monkey — something close to it, similar, if not the monkey as we know it—but already an animal that walks on two legs. And from there we come to man.

CWM 9:212

The Mother

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious.

CWM 4:26

The Mother



The Force in her drew earth's subhuman broods;
And to her spirit's large and free delight
She joined the ardent-hued magnificent lives
Of animal and bird and flower and tree.
They answered to her with the simple heart.
In man a dim disturbing somewhat lives;
It knows but turns away from divine Light
Preferring the dark ignorance of the fall.

Savitri: 366

Sri Aurobindo

Man and Animals

Constant enigma

Sometime ago, I had the experience of identification with animal life, and it is a fact that animals do not understand us; their consciousness is so constituted that we elude them almost entirely. And yet I have known domestic animals — cats and dogs, but especially cats — who made an almost yogic effort of consciousness to understand us. But generally, when they watch us living and acting, they don't understand, they don't see us as we are and they suffer because of us. We are a constant enigma to them. Only a very tiny part of their consciousness is linked to us. And it is the same for us when we try to look at the supramental world. Only when the link of consciousness has been built shall we see it — and even then, only that part of our being which has undergone the transformation will be capable of seeing it as it is — otherwise the two worlds would remain as separate as the animal world and the human world.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple: February 3, 1958

Dealing with tragedy

Recently, I have been looking at this carefully. I looked at the difference between similar incidents when they happen to men and when they happen to animals. If you identify yourself with the animals you see quite clearly that they do not take it tragically at all — except the ones which have come into contact with man; but then it is not their natural state, it is a transitional state. They become transitional beings between animal and man.... And the first things they naturally learn from man are his defects — they are

always the easiest things to learn! And so they make themselves unhappy – for nothing.

CWM 10: 147

Seeking harmony

The true animals are better off. And they are also more harmonious among themselves. They do not quarrel as human beings do. They do not put on airs, they do not consider some as inferiors and keep them at a distance.

CWM 14: 272

Animals are not unhappy in the way we are, not at all, not at all, except, as Sri Aurobindo says, those that have been corrupted. The corrupted ones are those that live with men. Dogs have the sense of sin and guilt. It is because their whole aspiration is to become like man—man is god – and then, dissimulation, falsehood. Dogs do lie. Men admire that; they say, “Oh! How intelligent they are!”

They have lost their divinity.

CWM 15:347-48

Perversion is a human disease

Perversion is a human disease, it occurs only very rarely in animals, and then only in animals which have come close to man and therefore have been contaminated by his perversion.

There is a story about some officers in North Africa – in Algeria – who had adopted a monkey. The monkey lived with them and one day at dinner they had a grotesque idea and gave the monkey something to drink. They gave it alcohol. The monkey first saw the others drink, this seemed to it something quite interesting, and it drank a glass, a full glass of wine. Afterwards it was ill,

as ill as could be, it rolled under the table with all kinds of pains and was really in a very bad way, that is, it gave the men an example of the spontaneous effect of alcohol when the physical nature is not already perverted. It nearly died of poisoning. It recovered. And some time later it was again allowed to come for dinner as it was all right, and somebody placed a glass of wine in front of it. It picked it up in a terrible rage and flung it at the head of the man who had given the glass to it.... By that it showed that it was much wiser than the men!

CWM 9: 101

Love in animals

What kind of love do animals have for men?

It is almost the same as that of rather unintellectual men for the Divine. It is made of admiration, trust and a sense of security. Admiration: it seems to you something really very beautiful. And it is not reasoned out: an admiration from the heart, so to speak, spontaneous. For instance, dogs have this in a very high degree. And then, trust—naturally this is sometimes mixed with other things: with the feeling of some need and dependence, for it is that person who will give me to eat when I am hungry, give me shelter when it is rough weather, who will look after me. This is not the most beautiful side. And then, unfortunately, it gets mixed up (and I believe — I consider it entirely man's fault) with a kind of fear; a feeling of dependence and a kind of fear of something which is much stronger, much more conscious, much more... which can harm you, and you have no strength to defend yourself. It is a pity, but I believe it is altogether man's fault.

But if men really deserved the love of animals, it would be made of a feeling of wonder and of the sense of security. It is something very fine, this sense of security; something that's able to protect you, to give you all that you need, and near which you can always find shelter.

Animals have an altogether rudimentary mind. They are not tormented by incessant thoughts like human beings. For example, they feel a spontaneous gratitude for an act of kindness towards them, whilst men, ninety-eight times out of a hundred, begin to reason and ask themselves what interest one could have in being good. This is one of the great miseries of mental activity. Animals are free from this and when you are kind to them they are grateful to you, spontaneously. And they have trust. So their love is made of that, and it turns into a very strong attachment, an irresistible need to be near you.

There is something else. If the master is really a good one and the animal faithful, there is an exchange of psychic and vital forces, an exchange which becomes for the animal something wonderful, giving it an intense joy. When they like to be quite close to you in that way, when you hold them, it is that they vibrate internally. The force one gives them — the strength of affection, of tenderness, protection, all that — they feel it, and it creates a deep attachment in them. Even fairly easily, in some of the higher animals like dogs, elephants, and even horses, it creates quite a remarkable need for devotion (which indeed is not thwarted by all the reasonings and arguments of the mind), which is spontaneous and very pure in its essence, something that's very beautiful.

The working of the mind in man in its rudimentary form, its first manifestation has spoilt many things which

were much finer before.

Naturally, if man rises to a higher level and makes good use of his intelligence, then things can take on a much greater value. But between the two, there is a passage where man makes the most vulgar and low use of his intelligence; he makes it an instrument for calculation, domination, deception, and there it becomes very ugly. I have known in my life animals I considered much higher than many people, for that sordid calculation, that wish to cheat and profit was precisely not there in them. There are others that catch it—through contact with man they catch it—but there are those who don't have it.

CWM 5: 238-40

Motherly love

I assure you that except for the capacity of speaking about the subject in flowery phrases, the love of the higher animals like the... well, the mammals for their children is exactly of the same nature: the same devotion, the same self-forgetfulness, the same self-denial, the same care for education, the same patience, the same... I have seen absolutely marvellous things, and if they had been written down and applied to a woman instead of to a cat, superb novels would have been made, people would have said: "What a person! How marvellously devoted are these women in their maternal love!" Exactly the same thing. Only, cats could not use flowery language. That's all. They could not write books and make speeches, that is the only difference. But I have seen absolutely astonishing things. And that kind of self-giving and self-oblivion — as soon as there is the beginning of love, it comes. But men... I sincerely believe, from all that I have studied, that there is perhaps a greater purity in animals for they do

not think, while human beings with their mental power, their capacity of reflecting, reasoning, analysing, studying, all that, oh! They spoil the most lovely movement. They begin to calculate, reason, doubt, organise.

CWM 6:106

Receptivity in animals and human beings

It is likely that the greatest resistance will be in the most conscious beings due to a lack of mental receptivity, due to the mind itself which wants things to continue (as Sri Aurobindo has written) according to its own mode of ignorance. So-called inert matter is much more easily responsive, much more — it does not resist. And I am convinced that among plants, for example, or among animals, the response will be much quicker than among men. It will be more difficult to act upon a very organised mind; beings who live in an entirely crystallised, organised mental consciousness are as hard as stone! It resists. According to my experience, what is unconscious will certainly follow more easily. It was a delight to see the water from the tap, the mouthwash in the bottle, the glass, the sponge — it all had such an air of joy and consent! There is much less ego, you see, it is not a conscious ego.

The ego becomes more and more conscious and resistant as the being develops. Very primitive, very simple beings, little children will respond first, because they don't have an organised ego. But these big people! People who have worked on themselves, who have mastered themselves, who are organised, who have an ego made of steel, it will be difficult for them.

Unless they go beyond all this and have enough spiritual knowledge to be able to make the ego surrender ... in which case the realisation will naturally be much greater — it will be more difficult to accomplish, but the result will be far more complete. *The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: June 6, 1958*



I am the Mother

The Mother was talking to us in the Playground one day about different things. She told us:

“I used to go almost every evening for a drive some distance away. Pavitra would drive and when we reached the chosen place he would stop the car, open the door of the car and go out to walk by himself. On one such occasion I was sitting in the car. The air was very peaceful and I could see many beautiful scenes from the car. Suddenly from somewhere a huge cobra got into the car. he came straight towards me and swaying his large hood stood near my lap. I watched him for sometime. Then I told him:

“All right, now you can go.”

At once the cobra lowered his hood and slithered out.”

I did not like the Mother playing with the snake in this way. I blurted out:

“You really should not have encouraged that snake like that. You should have killed it straight away.:

The Mother was taken aback and said:

“No, that can't be. How can I kill? I am the Mother.”

Priti Das Gupta, Moments Eternal, p. 248

Man has corrupted everything

It is man's mental consciousness that has filled all Nature with the idea of sin and all the misery it brings. Animals are not at all unhappy in the way we are. Not at all, not at all, except — as Sri Aurobindo says — those that are corrupted. Those that are corrupted are those that live with men. Dogs have the sense of sin and guilt, for their whole aspiration is to resemble man. Man is the god. Hence there is dissimulation, hypocrisy: dogs lie. But men admire that. They say, 'Oh! How intelligent they are!'

They have lost their divinity.

Truly, the human species is at a point in the spiral which is not very pretty.

But isn't a dog more conscious, more evolved than a tiger, or higher in the spiral — that is, nearer the Divine?

It's not a question of being conscious. There is no doubt that man is more evolved than the tiger, but the tiger is more divine than man. One shouldn't confuse things. These are two entirely different things.

The Divine is everywhere, in everything. We should never forget it — not for a second should we forget it. He is everywhere, in everything; and in an unconscious but spontaneous, therefore sincere, way, all that exists below the mental manifestation is divine, without mixture; in other words, it exists spontaneously and in harmony with its nature. It is man with his mind who has introduced the idea of guilt. Naturally, he is much more conscious! There's no question about it, it's a fact, although what we call consciousness (what 'we' call it, that is, what man calls consciousness) is the power to objec-

tify and mentalise things. It is not the true consciousness, but it's what men call consciousness. So according to the human mode, it is obvious that man is much more conscious than the animal, but the human brings in sin and perversion which do not exist outside of this state we call 'conscious' — which in fact is not conscious but merely consists in mentalising things and in having the ability to objectify them.

It is an ascending curve, but a curve that swerves away from the Divine. So naturally, one has to climb much higher to find a higher Divine, since it is a conscious Divine, whereas the others are divine spontaneously and instinctively, without being conscious of it. All our moral notions of good and evil, all of that, are what we have thrown over the creation with our distorted and perverted consciousness. It is we who have invented it.

We are the distorting intermediary between the purity of the animal and the divine purity of the gods.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: July 1958

Man is to a certain extent a synthesis of several animals; he might even be said to synthesize all, from the worm and the skink, to the elephant and the lion; but as an animal he is terribly imperfect.

CWSA 12: 229

Sri Aurobindo

Dealing with Animals

Perfect equanimity

What is the ground of the repulsion that one instinctively feels towards certain animals, such as snakes and scorpions?

It is not an inevitable necessity that one should feel this or any other repulsion. To have no repulsion at all is one of the fundamental achievements of Yoga.

The repulsion you speak of comes from fear; if there were no fear, it would not exist. This fear is not based on reason, it is instinctive; it is not individual, but racial; it is a general suggestion and belongs to the consciousness of humanity as a whole. When one takes up the human body, one accepts along with it a mass of these general suggestions, race ideas, race feelings of mankind, associations, attractions, repulsions, fears.

But from another viewpoint there is something very personal in the nature of an attraction or repulsion; for these movements are not the same for everybody and depend mostly on the quality of vibration of the vital being in different people. There are men who not only do not feel any repulsion for creatures like snakes, but have even a liking for them, a vital attraction and preference.

The world is full of things that are not pleasing or beautiful, but that is no reason why one should live in a constant feeling of repulsion for these things. All feelings of shrinking and disgust and fear that disturb and weaken the human mind can be overcome. A Yogi has to overcome these reactions; for almost the very first step in Yoga demands that you must keep a perfect equanimity in the presence of all beings and things and happenings.

Always you must remain calm, untouched and unmoved; the strength of the Yogi lies there. An entire calmness and quietness will disarm even dangerous and ferocious animals when they confront you.

CWM 3: 100-101

Mastery over animals

You have no idea of the almost magical effect of staring fearlessly into the eyes of a vital being. Even on earth, if you deal in this way with all those incarnations of the vital powers which we ordinarily call animals, you are assured of easy mastery. A physical tiger will also flee from you, if without the least tremor you look him straight in the eyes. A snake will never be able to bite you if you manage to rivet its gaze to yours without feeling the slightest dread. Merely staring at it with shaking knees will not help. There must be no disturbance in you: you must be calm and collected when you catch its gaze as it keeps swaying its head in order to fascinate you into abject fear. Animals are aware of a light in the human eyes which they are unable to bear if it is properly directed towards them. Man's look carries a power which nullifies them, provided it is steady and unafraid.

So, to sum up, remember two things: never, never be afraid, and in all circumstances call for the right help to make your strength a hundredfold stronger.

CWM 3:166

Not to be agitated or fidgety

But I say, and also people who have observed animals, for example, animals which are very strong: how quiet they are. Naturally, when they run after their prey

they put out all their energy; but it is not violence, it is energy. But if you have ever seen a lion — when it has nothing to do, it does not fidget. If it is ill, it is restless. But if it is well, in good health, if it has nothing to do, it will not move, it will be quite still. It will look like a sage.

CWM 6: 372

I don't know if you have observed animals like lions, tigers, elephants, but it is a fact that when they are not in action, they are always so perfectly still. A lion sitting and looking at you always seems to be telling you, "Oh, how fidgety you are!" It looks at you with such a peaceful air of wisdom! And all its power, energy, physical strength are there, gathered, collected, concentrated and — without a shadow of agitation — ready for action when the order is given.

CWM 8: 329-30

In our yoga, what attitude should we take towards animals?

One can have the true attitude only when one has attained the consciousness of the divine Oneness; meanwhile it is good always to treat animals with respect, love and compassion.

CWM 17:103

The Mother

Love does not manifest in human beings alone; it is everywhere. Its movement is there in plants, perhaps in the very stones; in the animals it is easy to detect its presence. All the deformations of this great and divine Power come from the obscurity and ignorance and selfishness of the limited instrument.

CWM 3: 69-70

The Mother

Love of man, love of woman, love of things, love of thy neighbour, love of thy country, love of animals, love of humanity are all the love of God reflected in these living images. So love & grow mighty to enjoy all, to help all and to love for ever.

CWSA 12:491

... the lion in its majesty and strength, the tiger in its splendid and formidable energy, the antelope in its grace and swiftness, the bird of paradise, the peacock with its plumes, the birds with their calls and their voices of song, have all the perfection that Life can create and thinking man cannot better that; he is inferior to the animals in their own qualities, superior only in his mind, his thought, his power of reflection and creation: but his thought does not make him stronger than the lion and the tiger or swifter than the antelope, more splendid to the sight than the bird of paradise or the human beauty of the most beautiful man and woman superior to the beauty of the animal in its own kind and perfect form.

CWSA 27: 72

Sri Aurobindo

A beast like a tiger or a lion kills only when it's hungry. But to make money — this is to make money ... With the women, it's unconsciousness; I am sure the vast majority of those who wear that, if they were told, "You're wearing on you the skin torn from a living and shrieking animal," it would give them nightmares — the vast majority. Very few would say, "Why should I care!" Very few.

But the brutes are the ones who're getting rich.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: Oct 11, 1969

The Mother and Animals

Pact with cats

(The disciple asks for permission to poison some cats who have been disturbing him every night. Mother replies.)

I once had a cat with almost a child's consciousness, and someone poisoned it. And when he came back poisoned, dying, I cursed all people who poison cats. And that's serious, so you mustn't do it. It was a real curse — I was with Sri Aurobindo, so it was serious — so don't do it. But there is a way....

You know, I made a pact with cats, with the King of the Cats — it goes back very, very far. And it's extraordinary extraordinary! For certain reasons, the King of the Cats gave me a power over these creatures — and it's true. Only I have to see them.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: April 12, 1961

Big boy

I had another cat I called Big Boy. Oh, how beautiful he was! Enormous! A tail like the train of a gown. He was beautiful! Since there were all kinds of cats prowling around, including a big fierce tomcat who was extremely vicious, I was very afraid for this one when he was little and I got him used to spending his nights inside (which is hard for a cat to do). I forbade him to go out. So he spent his nights inside and when I got up in the morning, he got up too and came and sat down in front of me. Then I would say, 'All right, Big Boy, you can go,' and he would jump out the window and go off — but never before. And this is the one who was poisoned.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple: April 12, 1961

Browny

Before that, I lost another one from that kind of typhoid cats get. He was called Browny and he was so beautiful, so nice, such a marvelous cat! Even when utterly sick, he wouldn't make a mess, except in a corner prepared just for that; he would call me to carry him to his box, with such a soft and mournful voice. He was so nice, with something sweeter and more trusting than a child. There is a trust in animals which doesn't exist in humans (even children already have too much of a questioning mind). But with him, there was a kind of worship, an adoration, as soon as I took him in my arms — if he could have smiled, he would have. As soon as I held him, he became blissful.

That one too was beautiful, with such a color! Golden chestnut, I have never seen a cat like him. He is buried here beneath the tree I named 'Service.' I put him beneath the roots myself. There had been an old mango tree there that was withering away. We replaced it with a little copper pod tree with yellow flowers.

These animals are so nice when you know how to handle them.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple: April 12, 1961

Kiki

I had a very sweet little cat, absolutely civilised, a marvellous cat. It was born in the house and it had the habit all cats have, that is to say, if something moved, it played with that. Just then there was in the house a huge scorpion; as was its habit, the cat started playing with the scorpion. And the scorpion stung it. But it was an exceptional cat; it came to me, it was almost dying, but it showed me its paw where it was bitten — it was

already swollen and in a terrible state. I took my little cat — it was really sweet — and put it on a table and called Sri Aurobindo. I told him, “Kiki has been stung by a scorpion, it must be cured.” The cat stretched its neck and looked at Sri Aurobindo, its eyes already a little glassy. Sri Aurobindo sat before it and looked at it also. Then we saw this little cat gradually beginning to recover, to come around, and an hour later it jumped to its feet and went away completely healed.... In those days, I had the habit of holding a meditation in the room where Sri Aurobindo slept (the room A uses now) and it was regularly the same people who came; everything was arranged. But there was an armchair in which this very cat always settled beforehand—it did not wait for anyone to get into the chair, it got in first itself! And regularly it went into a trance! It was not sleeping, it was not in the pose cats take when sleeping: it was in a trance, it used to start up, it certainly had visions. And it let out little sounds. It was in a profound trance. It remained thus for hours together. And when it came out from that state, it refused to eat. It was awakened and given food, but it refused: it went back to its chair and fell again into a trance! This was becoming very dangerous for a little cat.... But this was not an ordinary cat.

Experiment with animals

To finish my story, if you leave an animal in its normal state, far from man, it obeys the spirit of the species, it has a very sure instinct and it will never commit any stupidities. But if you take it and keep it with you, it loses its instinct, and it is then you who must look after it, for it no longer knows what should or should not be done. I was interested in cats to make an experiment, a sort of

inverse metempsychosis, if one can call it that, that is, to see if this could be their last incarnation as animals, if they were ready to enter a human body in the next life. The experiment succeeded fully, I had three absolutely flagrant instances; they left with a psychic being sufficiently conscious to enter a human body. But this is not what men ordinarily do; what they usually do is to spoil the consciousness or rather the instinct of animals.

CWM 4: 237-39

Self-giving in animals

And in animals it is often even purer than in human beings. There are instances of the devotion, care, self-forgetfulness of animals for their young, which are absolutely wonderful. Only, it is spontaneous, not thought out, not reflected upon; the animal does not think about what it is doing. Man thinks. At times this spoils the movement (at times — most often), sometimes it can give it a higher worth but that is rare. There is less spontaneity in man's movements than in an animal's.

I had a puss, the first time it had its kittens it did not want to move from there. It did not eat, did not satisfy any call of nature. It remained there, stuck to her kittens, shielding them, feeding them; it was so afraid that something would happen to them. And that was quite unthought out, spontaneous. It refused to move, so frightened it was that some harm might come to them — just through instinct. And then, when they were bigger, the trouble it took to educate them — it was marvellous. And what patience! And how it taught them to jump from wall to wall, to catch their food; how, with what care, it repeated once, ten times, a hundred times if necessary. It was never tired until the little one had done what it want-

ed. An extraordinary education. It taught them how to skirt houses following the edge of walls, how to walk so as not to fall, what had to be done when there was much space between one wall and another, in order to cross over. The little ones were quite afraid when they saw the gap and refused to jump because they were frightened (it was not too far for them, but there was the gap and they did not dare) and then the mother jumped, it went over to the other side, it called them: come, come along. They did not move, they were trembling. It jumped back and then gave them a speech, it gave them little blows with its paw and licked them, and yet they did not move. It jumped. I saw it do this for over half an hour. But after half an hour it found that they had learnt enough, so it went behind the one it evidently considered the most ready, the most capable, and gave it a hard knock with its head. Then the little one, instinctively, jumped. Once it had jumped, it jumped again and again and again....

There are few mothers who have this patience.

CWM 5: 242-243

Animals reaction to The Mother

....the other day, the doctor brought some canaries, a cage of canaries to show me. All over the world, canaries whistle, they come and go and are very active ... but here, nothing at all! The doctor put the cage on the window sill and I came near to see them — they were absolutely dumb, huddled at the bottom of their cage as though paralysed. I tried to whistle (I could whistle very well in the past): not a sound! Then I was kindly told, "You can't whistle any more, you can't sing any more, and soon you won't be able to speak any more." Voilà.

I must have a funny effect on animals, because the

other day, little M. came to see me with a tiny squirrel in a padded box (it was a very tiny thing). He took it out of its box and showed it to me; I stroked it — gone! Asleep in trance!

Oh, they don't feel unhappy, they're very happy (!) but it's too strong for them. So they fall asleep or are immobilised like those canaries. At the end, the doctor began to worry about his birds and asked me, "But what's happening? At home, they whistle all day long!" I answered (*laughing*), "Yes, here it's something else!"

He took his cage, and just as he was going, the canaries shook themselves, whistled a few little notes and off they went! Anyhow we'll see. I hear all manner of things.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: September 21, 1963

Thoth — the orangutan

(Y., a disciple, asks for Mother's permission to bring an orangutan to make it "participate in the education.")

Some have already protested against Thoth [the disciple's first ape], if now there's an orangutan they'll reproach me! ... Because, naturally, the servants were afraid, even the neighbors, anyway it wasn't to their liking. Once Thoth walked into the bedroom, so the maid started howling; the neighbor came (luckily he has enough sense), he remained calm, just staring at Thoth, with some severity, probably. Then Thoth left without anything happening. But at other times when Thoth is upset, he tears bedsheets to pieces or whatever. Finally the neighbor came and told me the incident (that was long ago). I said to him, "You don't know the first thing about animals! You are lucky enough to have a peaceful nature, but animals are extremely sensitive to your

feelings or sensation: if you are afraid, they instantly get afraid; if you are angry, they instantly get angry; and if you are gentle, kind, affable, they become gentle, kind, affable." He understood quite well, and ever since all has been well. But he isn't alone in the house.... An orangutan is a big thing, you know!

That Thoth is really remarkable. Did I tell you what happened when I first saw him? (And I asked Y. very insistently whether she had taught him, but she hadn't said anything at all to him — not taught or said anything.) He came with her, and as soon as he saw me (he was on Y.'s arm), he folded his hands! And then he gave me a speech: his mouth moved; there weren't any sounds, but his mouth was moving. And an expression ... Then I complimented him, and he immediately leapt onto my knees, curled up in my arms, and ... went off into a semitrance — stopped moving, kept still. It lasted at least five minutes. After five minutes, I thought, "He can't just stay here forever, he should go now!" — then he opened his eyes and went away! ... The receptivity is far more remarkable than in human beings. Then he looked around, looked out of the window, well, took interest in the place. Then he again looked towards me, came back on my knees, and rested against my shoulder....

But animals really have a lot of charm. I must say we are on very good terms. The whole perversion brought into the human consciousness by mental activity isn't there (except in those that have lived with man), but those that came straight from outside have a simplicity, a sort of ingenuousness which is very charming. And an uncanny receptivity, you know, much more spontaneous than human receptivity.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: May 13, 1967

They really listen...

In Paris there is a garden called "The Garden of Plants": there are animals there also, as well as plants. They had just received a magnificent lion. It was of course in a cage. And it was furious. There was a door in the cage behind which it could hide. And it would hide itself just when the visitors came to see it! I saw that and one day I went up to the cage and began speaking to it (animals are very sensitive to spoken language, they really listen). I began speaking softly to my lion, I said to it, "Oh! How handsome you are, what a pity that you are hiding yourself like this, how much we would like to see you...." Well, it listened. Then, little by little, it looked at me askance, slowly stretched its neck to see me better; later it brought out its paw and, finally, put the tip of its nose against the bars as if saying, "At last, here's someone who understands me!"

CWM 4: 30

The hooded cobra

There were centuries-old olive trees in Théon's estate. I would sit under one of them every day at noon to meditate. Yes, it was hot at high noon, but the heat never bothered me. Quite the contrary. Now, one day, I was deep in my meditation when I began to feel uneasy. So then I open my eyes. And what do I see? About two metres away in front of me, standing erect and swaying its hood, is a Naja, hissing furiously at me. You know 'Naja'? They are like the Nagas here, the Hooded Cobra, and so poisonous! Their poison is deadly. So there was this Naja, swaying its expanded hood and hissing for all it was worth. At first I didn't understand why the serpent was so enraged. Then I remembered that just behind me there was a hole in the tree. 'I must be sitting here barring its way to its hole,' I thought. 'But what's to be done now?' I was in a quandary. Any movement, be it ever so

slight, would instantly make it strike me." Théon's counsel leapt to her mind. "Mark you, I didn't have any fear. I just sat still and stared fixedly at its eyes, and exerted my will-force to the utmost. Gradually the hissing softened, then stopped altogether. After some time, slowly, very slowly I drew away my legs, first one then the other. But all the while I kept my fixed stare on it and steadily exerted my will. At last the venomous snake suddenly lowered its hood, and quickly turning round jumped into the nearby pool."

The Mother's Chronicles, Vol 3

King of serpents

One could almost say that of all animals, the serpent is the most sensitive to hypnotic or magnetic power. If you have it (magnetic power comes from the most material vital), you can easily gain a mastery over snakes; all the people who like snakes have it and use it to make snakes obey them.... That's how I got out of my encounter with the cobra at Tlemcen — do you know the story? Theon had told me about this power and I was aware of it in myself, so I was able to make the cobra obey and he left. Afterwards (I've told this story, too), I was visited by the King of Serpents — I mean the spirit of the species. He came to me in Tlemcen after this and another incident when I helped a cat overpower a little asp (there are asps over there like Cleopatra's, very dangerous) — a big russet angora cat. At first it started to play with the asp, but then naturally grew furious. The asp struck at the cat, but the cat leapt aside with such swiftness that the asp missed it (I watched this going on for more than ten minutes, it was extraordinary). Just as the snake darted by, the cat would swat at it with all his claws out — and the asp got scratched each time, so that little by little it ran out of energy, and at the end.... I stopped the cat from eating it — that part was disgusting!

Then after these two incidents, I received a visit one night from the King of Serpents. He was wearing a superb crown on his head — symbolic, of course, but anyway, he was the spirit of the species. He had the appearance of a cobra, and he was wonderful! A formidable beast, and ... wonderful! He said he had come to make a pact with me: I had demonstrated my power over his species, so he wanted to come to an understanding. 'All right,' I said, 'what do you propose?' 'I not only promise that serpents won't harm you,' he replied, 'but that they will obey you. But you must promise me something in return: never to kill one of them.' I thought it over and said, 'No, I can't make this promise, because if ever one of yours attacks one of mine (a being that depends upon me), my pact with you could not stop me from protecting him. I can assure you that I have no bad feelings and no intention of killing — killing is not on my program! But I can't commit myself, because it would restrict my freedom of decision.' He left without replying, so it remains status quo.

The Mother: Conversations with a disciple: Feb 4, 1961

Seals

Oh, a few days ago I was told a frightful story — what depths humanity has sunk to ... it's unbelievable. Have you heard this story of the slaughter of baby seals?

When seals are born (a certain species of seals), they're all white, and they remain so for a few weeks, then they lose their hair and turn gray-gray or yellowish, like their fathers and mothers. And as it's the fashion to wear all-white fur coats, some people ... It's organised by some trader or other: seals gather at the time of giving birth, there's a place there, in the North, on an island, where they gather in their thousands, and each mother gives birth to a single child. So those people go there in boats, fully equipped, and when

the seals are born, they kill them — thousands of them at one go. It takes ten or fifteen skins to make a coat And they slaughter them. But then, for the carnage to be cheap (you understand, it shouldn't cost too much), they club the animals on their heads, then with big butchers' knives they skin them on the spot-skin them while they're still alive

That is to say ... it seems they shriek, you know, they aren't dumb. It seems it's ...

What happened is that a television reporter went there without knowing what was happening (he went there for something else), and he came upon that. He was so horrified, you know, so disgusted that he resolved to make it stop. And for maybe two years, he has been campaigning all over the world — through television and all sorts of means — for people to intervene. There was a strong pressure on the prime minister (it's in nor-them Canada and northern Norway, I think, on perpetually frozen islands), and they obtained from Canada's prime minister (charming people!) that instead of clubbing the baby seals supposedly to death, they would throw diesel oil on them, because that asphyxiates them fast But people found it too costly (such unbelievably low depths, you know!), so they went to the prime minister and asked him to lift his ban — and he did it! He allowed them to be slaughtered like that It seems the mothers (they've just given birth, you see, they're suckling the pups) try to defend them — so to prevent them from seeing what goes on, they put out their eyes Well, when I was told that, I saw a humanity sinking into ... an abyss of ignominy.

The Mother signs a petition for the seals

Then they brought cards to me (they're preparing a new movement), cards with big photos — those little ones, if you knew how sweet they are! And intelligent! They're first-

rate. And I saw the photo before knowing anything of the story; I looked and said, "Oh, what a lovely little one!" I instantly saw: receptive, admirable, an admirable kid! So there are photos of those little ones, there's a portrait of the crook who arranges the whole thing, a portrait of the reporter, and cards with the portrait of one of those little ones, with at the top, in French and in English, "Let baby seals live." Like that. And a place for one's name and signature. And at the back, a place to add something if one wants to. They asked me if I wanted to sign. I said yes. There was one card addressed to Norway's fisheries minister, one to Canada's fisheries minister, and one to Canada's prime minister. So I put my stamp: "The Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram." I didn't add anything, I left the sentence and signed. And we'll send them.

But when I was told that ... Why, why? ... And those women who wear that ... all those animals' suffering, all those animals' horror, their terror-they wear all that on their backs. And it doesn't give them nightmares! ... Unbelievable.

It seems the fashion is to go dancing wearing a stole made of two or three skins of those poor beasts

People are getting insane!

Of course, up there [in the North], that [kind of savagery] is there. It's only one example, one sort of epitome. But this ignoble consciousness is everywhere on earth I saw it like that. But it's one thing that has as if crystallised to awaken the reaction.

Oh, those little ones ...

Seals are highly evolved animals, they aren't among the unconscious ones. There was one on the cover, with eyes staring at you like that, it was delightful! ...

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple: October 11, 1969

Ashram Animals Tales

None were left out

The Ashram was Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's laboratory. All creatures great and small were part of it. Yes, not only humans. Cats and dogs, cows and bullocks, Blackie the crow, Richard's donkey, none were left out.

Dilip Kumar Roy: *Sri Aurobindo to Dilip*, vol. 3, page 11

The Puma

Although within my actual knowledge the Mother had only to do with cats and dogs and the Ashram's bulls and once a small donkey bought by Udar, she was interested in many other animals. She has referred to horses as well as to birds, which, like some cats and dogs known to her, had an aspiration to become human beings. But perhaps the animal she most fancied is the puma. I remember her telling us in the Prosperity Room with a very appreciative smile that the puma had a natural affinity with human beings and could make close friends with them. Of course, the dog is best known for such an affinity but the dog has been a domesticated animal for millennia, while the puma is still a denizen of the wild. The *New American Encyclopedia*¹ has the entry on page 1135: "Puma (or Cougar), a large species of the cat-family found in America, where it ranges from Canada to Patagonia. The puma, sometimes called the American lion, from its tawny color, is about the size of a leopard, which it resembles in habit, preying upon animals up to the size of deer, but rarely attacking man. It is now scarce in North America, but in South America is found both in the tropical forests of Brazil and up in the snow on the Andes." It is surprising that no book comparable to Judy Adamson's series on a lioness and on its young has come out on this carnivore about which the Mother spoke so enthusiastically.

Sri Aurobindo and the peacock

Sri Aurobindo too is known to have dealt with animals. During the years of his association with the Mother he came most into touch with cats. Once Purani found him busy arranging a plate of fish for some cat of the Mother's. It is said that if a cat came and sat on his chair he would not allow anyone to disturb it. A certain dog also used to go to his room and lick his toes. When the cat Big Boy was about to die, Sri Aurobindo came down from his room and kept caressing it with his right hand. Very few people, however, have heard of his doings with animals prior to his association with the Mother, though there is a clear evidence of a most unexpected kind. In the course of reading the proofs of the Centenary Edition of his works I came across an early writing, entitled "Some Selected Notes", on an epic by Kalidasa. Sri Aurobindo quotes a commentator on Kalidasa's mention of peacocks. The commentator gives an interpretation which says that peacocks are not attached to their environment. Sri Aurobindo rules out this interpretation and remarks: "I have reared peacocks myself and I can assure the reader that they have as much attachment as any other creature." Sri Aurobindo rearing peacocks is indeed a revelation!

K D Sethna, *Our Light and Delight*, pp. 159-166)

Goldie

Sri Aurobindo's compassion was as limitless as his consciousness. Even cats and dogs of the Ashram had their share in it. A puppy called by the Mother "Goldie" was given to a sadhika at her request and, when grown up, it carried in its mouth a basket of flowers every day from her garden into the Mother's room and then would pass into Sri Aurobindo's Presence to receive pats and caresses. Often it would lie down below the Master's bed.

Narayan Prasad - *Life in Sri Aurobindo Ashram*, p.340

Baudet — The Donkey

Sometime during 1945-46, Udar appeared with a young donkey from God knows where. On Christmas day he dressed it up nicely, placed a conical cap on its head and brought it to Mother.

In French a donkey is called 'Ie baudet'. Mother was happy to see it and named it 'Baudet' and asked that it be kept in the Ashram. And so Baudet became the Ashram donkey.

Now who was to look after it? Richard was a young boy then aged about thirteen or fourteen and had just arrived from England. Richard was put in charge of the donkey.

Richard was young and so was the donkey and both grew up together. Slowly Richard became very friendly with the whole community of donkeys. Once Richard got to know that a donkey had been found on the road bleeding profusely with its ear sliced off. No sooner had this news reached him than he dashed towards the donkey. He took it to the hospital and did not return until it was properly treated and dressed. That is how he began to be called 'Richard the Donkey-Hearted'.

July 14th is the French national day. In Pondicherry, the festivities start on the previous day. They used to also organise a donkey-race.

Richard appeared for the race with his donkey.

The rule for the race was that each rider must ride on his donkey and race till the finishing line.

Richard got ready on his donkey. It was a strong animal and if any other animal came near it would lunge to bite it. Another problem was that it would not respect the starting line. So it was decided that it would be placed behind all the other donkeys. Like that both the problems were solved in one shot.

The race started. Richard's donkey being very strong caught up with the rest. After taking the lead it would rush

to bite whichever donkey tried to come in front.

Richard's donkey was running ahead of the others but a couple of yards before the finishing line it suddenly stopped and stayed put and no one could make it move.

At this impasse Richard got off its back and literally pushed it across the finishing line. And this is how he won the race.

Pranab Bhattacharya, *I Remember Part 1*, pp. 104-06

Compassion for a sparrow

It was about 5 in the morning. As usual, I had gone to the holy house in which the Master and the Mother lived. I had been graciously granted the work of cleaning part of the house and the Mother herself used to open her door for me to enter and start my delightful work.

But one day, after opening the door, the Mother stood there and in Sri Aurobindo's name asked me to be more careful and quiet that day so as not to disturb a sparrow that was resting on the top of the big middle door.

I took it as a divine command and promised to be cautious. Then I stepped in and the Mother retired. Without making a stir or a sound, I passed by the aforesaid door and to my wonder and delight saw the sparrow sitting motionless on its topmost part.

I was moved. How compassionate was our divine Master! He used to be walking at night in the hall there and had observed this tiny creature taking its night-rest in the peaceful atmosphere always prevailing there. We human beings were not the only creatures for His compassion to look after, but all beings, big and small had a place of love in His more than universal heart.

Blessed, indeed, are we all and blessed the earth for having Him, the divine Master, the living embodiment of the Lord of the universe, for ever leaning over us from His

heights and housing us in the depths of His heart of love.

Pujalal, *A Few Reminiscences*, pp. 80-82

Ojas — The Bullock

No wonder that Ojas [a bullock] gave some trouble. These bullocks are quite intelligent enough to feel the change of people. This new man is not an expert and moreover he has something of a brute around him. You will have to look carefully after him, for I do not like his way of dealing with the bullocks.

I object strongly to his way of twisting the tails of the beasts. If somebody twisted one of his limbs like that, what would he say? And I am pretty sure that our bullocks are more sensitive than he is.

I can tell you this to finish with the subject, that from the roof I concentrated the power on the bullocks ordering them to yield and obey and I found them *quite receptive*. To use a *quiet, steady, unwavering conscious will*, that is the way, the only true way really effective and worthy of an aspirant for Divine Life.

CWM 16: 106-07

Panther

Mother studied the ways and movements of animals, birds and insects very keenly. She was able to exchange her feelings with them. She said: "Even among animals the tendencies of envy, hate, of dominating others are visible."

Mother recounted an amusing story about this. Once she went to a zoological garden somewhere in France. She saw there a pair of black panthers in a cage; a cave-like place had been got ready in which the two panthers were sitting with their tails curled in.

Mother felt the male to be more open and as she approached the cage she gazed at him and called him with

great affection: "You're so beautiful and so good!"

I have mentioned before that Mother was able to exchange feelings with animals. They too in their own way could understand Mother's feelings.

While Mother was speaking so affectionately to the panther he got up stretching his limbs with a big yawn and looking at Mother rather docilely began wagging his tail. Then with a strange rattling noise in his throat he came toward Mother near the railing.

Mother said: "How gentle you are. How beautiful and how good."

The panther, feeling flattered, began to wag his tail.

On the other hand the female panther who was observing all this began to growl in anger. After some time she could not stand it any more. She shook herself and growling angrily came to the male panther and whipped him hard with her tail. It was amply clear that she had had enough of this and she sat down at a distance and continued to growl.

A little confused the male kept glancing once at her and then at Mother. A little later he too removed himself from the proximity of the railing and quietly went and sat down beside his partner.

Hunting or killing animals was utterly distasteful to Mother.

Pranab Bhattacharya, *I Remember Part 1*, pp. 24-25

A cat's burial

That one too was beautiful, with such a color! Golden chestnut, I have never seen a cat like him. He is buried here beneath the tree I named 'Service.' I put him beneath the roots myself. There had been an old mango tree there that was withering away. We replaced it with a little copper pod tree with yellow flowers.

These animals are so nice when you know how to

handle them.

When I moved here to the Ashram, I said, 'We can't bring any cats into this house, it's quite impossible.' This was after Big Boy's death, and we had had enough of cats. I gave away the others, but the first one, the mother of the whole line, was old and didn't want to leave, so I felt her behind. She stayed in a house over there, within the Ashram compound. And one day — she was very old and could no longer move — I saw her come dragging in and sit down on that terrace on the other side. (Now you can't see it any more — the Service Tree has hidden it completely — but in those days you could see it very clearly.) She came and sat down over there where she could watch me ... until she died. Quietly, without moving, she died watching me.

The Mother: Conversation with a disciple: April 12, 1961

I am the Mother

The Mother was talking to us in the Playground one day about different things. She told us:

"I used to go almost every evening for a drive some distance away. Pavitra would drive and when we reached the chosen place he would stop the car, open the door of the car and go out to walk by himself. On one such occasion I was sitting in the car. The air was very peaceful and I could see many beautiful scenes from the car. Suddenly from somewhere a huge cobra got into the car. he came straight towards me and swaying his large hood stood near my lap. I watched him for sometime. Then I told him:

"All right, now you can go."

At once the cobra lowered his hood and slithered out."

I did not like the Mother playing with the snake in this way. I blurted out:

“You really should not have encouraged that snake like that. You should have killed it straight away.:

The Mother was taken aback and said:

“No, that can’t be. How can I kill? I am the Mother.”

Priti Das Gupta, *Moments Eternal*, p. 248

Of course, those animals – all animal – feel it if one is afraid, even if one doesn’t show it. They feel it extraordinarily, with an instinct which human beings don’t have. They feel that you are afraid, your body produces a vibration which arouses an extremely unpleasant sensation in them. If they are strong animals this makes them furious; if they are weak animals, this gives them a panic. But if you have no fear at all, you see, if you go with an absolute trustfulness, a great trust, if you go in a friendly way to them, you will see that they have no fear; they are not afraid, they do not fear you and don’t detest you; also, they are very trusting.

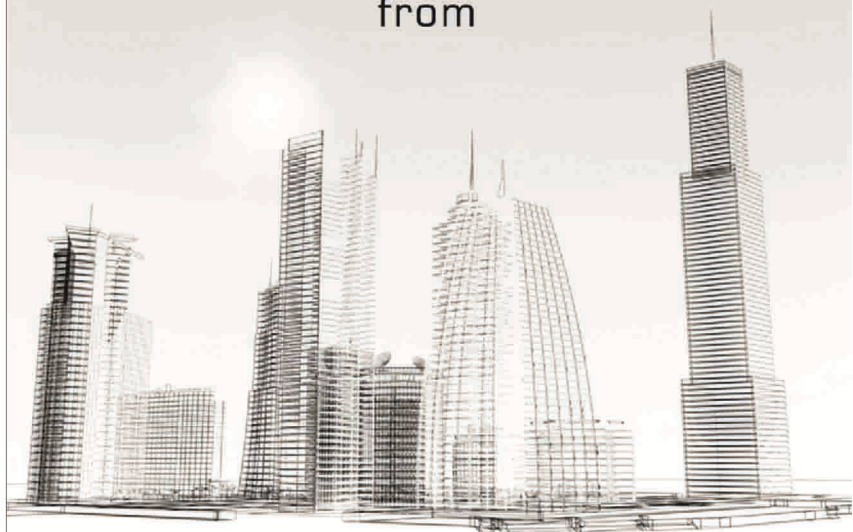
It is not to encourage you to enter the cages of all the lions you go to see, but still it is like that. When you meet a barking dog, if you are afraid, it will bite you, if you aren’t, it will go away. But you must really not be afraid, not only appear unafraid, because it is not the appearance but the vibration that counts.

CWM 7:26-29

The Mother



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