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believes that for a rational being, rationality has intrinsic value, and thus is a goal worth seeking in itself. Since rationality is the same for all rational beings, all rational beings work for a common goal, which is to achieve a rational world. Kant argues that rational beings cannot achieve a rational world if they compete with or hinder each other for personal gain such as wealth or power. Thus, morally correct behavior for rational beings entails helping other rational beings, because this contributes to their common goal of achieving a rational world. Kant asserts that only rational beings contribute directly to achieving the intrinsic good of a rational world. He maintains that since nonrational beings do not contribute directly, their treatment by rational beings does not affect the effort to achieve a rational world. Consequently, it is proper for nonrational beings to be used as means to an end (that is, a rational world).

Kant defines rationality as the ability to universalize details into broader, general concepts. He recognizes that many animals can communicate by signs, but believes that animals do not use symbols. Since the symbolic structure of language is necessary to express general concepts, beings without language cannot express general concepts, and hence are not rational. Since nonhuman animals and natural entities are not rational, they do not merit moral concern. Kant concludes that human beings have little or no responsibility toward animals or the natural world.

Baumgarten speaks of duties towards beings which are beneath us and beings which are above us. But so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask, “Why do animals exist?” But to ask, “Why does man exist?” is a meaningless question. Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity. Animal nature has analogies to human nature, and by doing our duties to animals in respect of manifestations of human nature, we indirectly do our duty towards humanity. Thus, if a dog has served his master long and faithfully, his service, on the analogy of human service, deserves reward, and when the dog has grown too old to serve, his master ought to keep him until he dies. Such action helps to support us in our duties towards human beings, where they are

Duties to Animals

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), a German philosopher during the Age of Enlightenment is considered to be one of the great philosophical thinkers of all time. Kant asserts that only rational beings merit moral concern. He

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bounden duties. If then any acts of animals are analogous to human acts and spring from the same principles, we have duties towards the animals because thus we cultivate the corresponding duties towards human beings. If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer capable of service, he does not fail in his duty to the dog, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practise kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealing with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals. Hogarth depicts this in his engravings. He shows how cruelty grows and develops. He shows the child's cruelty to animals, pinch the tail of a dog or a cat; he then depicts the grown man in his cart running over a child; and lastly, the culmination of cruelty in murder. He thus brings home to us in a terrible fashion the rewards of cruelty, and this should be an impressive lesson to children. The more we come in contact with animals and observe their behaviour, the more we love them, for we see how great is their care for their young. It is then difficult for us to be cruel in thought even to a wolf. Leibnitz used a tiny worm for purposes of observation, and then carefully replaced it with its leaf on the tree so that it should not come to harm through any act of his. He would have been sorry—a natural feeling for a humane man—to destroy such a creature for no reason. Tender feelings towards dumb animals develop humane feelings towards mankind. In England butchers and doctors do not sit on a jury because they are accustomed to the sight of death and hardened. Vivisectionists, who use living animals for their experiments, certainly act cruelly, although their aim is praiseworthy, and they can justify their cruelty, since animals must be regarded as man's instruments; but any such cruelty for sport cannot be justified. A master who turns out his ass or his dog because the animal can no longer earn its keep manifests a small mind. The Greeks' ideas in this respect were highminded, as can be seen from the fable of the ass and the bell of ingratitude. Our duties towards animals, then, are indirect duties towards mankind.



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