

Animal Abuse as a Sign of Psychopathology

Unfortunately, all forms of violence, including animal abuse, have risen in recent years in Iran. Sometimes, we see videos published in cyberspace in which people try to torture and kill various animals, including dogs and cats. Animal abuse, especially in childhood and adolescence, is one of the symptoms of conduct disorder that can predict antisocial personality disorder in adulthood. Research has shown that most criminals enjoy harassing animals in childhood.^[1,2]

A healthy person has not feel the pleasure of killing and taking the life of a living being; There are many evident in the behavior of serial killers have a history of animal abuse. A person who harms an animal is dangerous not only to wildlife and animals but also to human society.^[3] Animal abuse has two forms: active and passive, in the active form of animal abuse, the person is harassing animal and creates a feeling of pain and suffering in the animal and enjoy watching it.^[4] Sexual harassment of animals is also one of these types of harassment. On the other hand in the inactive form of animal abuse, the person does not directly inflict suffering on the animal. But he/she neglects to take care of the animal and causes the animal to suffer for a long time.^[5] In fact, the animal is treated in a way that gradually gets hurt. For example, not feeding the animal, putting it in a difficult situation, and not caring the animal's health are among these cases.

The causes of animal harassment are varied. Usually, people who are animal harassers themselves have the experience of being harassed. Often the parenting styles experienced by these people were mostly authoritarian and these people have been generally punished by parents. Also, there is no specific educational and behavioral program governing the actions of these people. Besides these people may have other personality problems comorbid to these behaviors. Even at home, they harass family members differently. They want to show themselves as strong people, and has not mature coping strategies with their low self-esteem.^[6]

Originally animals are our neighbors on this planet. The mother of a cat or the mother of a dog is also a mother with the same emotions and worries, so a mentally healthy person never thinks of harassing a kitten or puppy or killing other animals.

Animal abuse can be a sign of the onset of other abusive and antisocial behaviors. The behavioral pattern of this personality disorder is aggression, devaluing, and violation, and may begin in childhood and continue to adulthood. Some diagnostic criteria for conduct disorder include: violence and beatings of another person to control the relationship such as sex, lying, theft and extortion, bullying, dropping out of school and academic problems, as well as inclination to arson. These people are considered unsuitable for marriage and usually have

many family problems. Treatment of behavioral disorders, as well as antisocial personality disorder and animal abuse, is the responsibility of psychologists and specialists.^[7] To treat animal abuse, one should consult a specialist and a psychologist. The first step in treatment is to find out the reasons for this behavior. The psychologist then tries to reduce the destructive attitudes and emotions as well as the behavioral problems of these people.^[8] In addition, it may be a comorbid disorder with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in childhood or adulthood that requires treatment.^[9] Sometimes observational learning causes such behaviors that treatment is done by changing attitudes and modifying people's behavior. However, in some cases, the person may need deeper psychotherapy. In many countries, animal abuse is one of the first category crimes, and animal abusers are punished severely or at least animal abusers are classified as social criminals, but in our country until recently, there was no judicial law regarding animal abuse, but recently, fortunately, it has been noticed by the authorities.^[7-10]

Animal abuse should be considered a crime because it is a sign and alarm of very violent behaviors and if left untreated, it can cause severe insecurity and human catastrophes.

Animals, like humans, live and have pain, we need empathy for understanding animal beings. But there is no simple solution to overcoming animal abuse, especially in childhood.^[11,12] Most children learn antisocial behavior from the environment, and the best way to prevent through social education, so parents play a key role.^[13] Their behavior toward animals has a key impact on children's behavior, such as rescuing spiders in the bath, feeding birds, and treating animals as if they were part of a family. The content of elementary and high school textbooks should emphasize the aspects of friendship with animals. Animals have feelings and perceptions, they have pain, they know fear, and instead of living alone, in cold laboratory cages, in fear of torture, they have to live in their natural environment. Instead of doing research on laboratory animals, we must use new scientific methods and models.^[14,15] There are simulators that show the human response to drugs is much better than the animal response. The test results of new drugs on human tissues are much more reliable. Vaccines obtained from cultures of human tissues not only are more effective and cheaper than vaccines made from monkey tissue but also do not pose the risk of infection with animal viruses. Micro dosing has revolutionized pharmacy, it is based on the belief that the best model for man is man himself. In this method, values below one percent of the normal dose of the new drug are used and its effects on the human body are examined. This method has been shown to be very accurate and will replace misleading and unreliable animal tests.^[16,17]

Based on the thought of the ancient Iranians, man is known alongside nature and in cooperation and harmony with plant and animal phenomena. In the history and culture of Iran, there have been points of caring and praising animal rights, based on philosophical-legal support. The bodies of animals and humans are made up of similar elements. That is, we have no superiority in the type of materials used in our body over them. Most of them grow and develop faster and become independent than we do, that is we are under the laws of a biological realm. Animals are not extravagant at all. But we have provided them with a terrible hell because we have the ability to accumulate information and make tools. So it is better not to impose suffering on them.^[18,19]

The great art of human being is to realize that humans and animals all have a common destiny. Wise human beings must educate and train their fellow human beings to have a useful relationship with other creatures. This valuable effort can show and manifest human intelligence in the light of wisdom.

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Rouhullah Dehghani¹, Abdollah Omid², Masoumeh Varzandeh³

¹Department of Environmental Health, Social Determinants Research Center of Health and Engineering, Medical Science University of Kashan, ²Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Medicine, Kashan University of Medical Sciences, Kashan, ³Forensic Medicine & Clinical Toxicology Specialist, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Afzalipour Hospital, Kerman, Iran

ORCID:

Rouhullah Dehghani: 0000-0001-5949-4859
Abdollah Omid: 0000-0001-5538-7693

Address for correspondence: Dr. Abdollah Omid,
Department of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Medicine, Kashan University of
Medical Sciences, Kashan, Iran.
E-mail: abomidi20@yahoo.com

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