



**Points to Remember-**

1. The poet is turning from mankind and feels that he could possibly live with animals, birds, and nature.
2. The three things that humans do and animals don't are as follows:
  - Humans worry and complain about their condition and are never satisfied with what they have.
  - Humans tend to think too much about their wrongdoings by lying awake and weeping in the dark.
  - Humans also keep telling each other about their duties and obligations to God.
3. Yes, humans kneel and worship other humans who lived thousands of years ago. Many people worship their ancestors who lived years ago. They pray to them, observe fasts for them and hold religious services and ceremonies in their honour. Humans also worship other humans who preached years ago. Some believe they are reincarnations of God. They kneel before them and worship them. They also follow their teachings and their way of life.
4. The 'tokens' that the poet says have been dropped are virtues that the human race once had, that made it superior to the other species. Through the ages, materialism has conquered humanity and end has become more important than means. Mankind seems to have lost humility, mutual respect and contentment in a race to possess everything than it lay its hand on. Animals on the other hand, display commendable characteristics by respecting each other's territory and space, and being content when their basic necessities have been fulfilled. In a way, they seem to have picked up the virtues abandoned by humans and come across and more civilized than humans.

**Plot/ Theme / Central Idea of the Lesson/ Literary Analysis of Animals/ Main Idea Central Idea of the Poem**

The poet Walt Whitman tells frankly that he feels more comfortable at home with animals rather than his fellow human beings. He has lost so much faith in the race of man that he wants to 'turn' and change his position with animals. Human beings have become mad running after material possessions. They are a bundle of complications, contradictions and confusions. Their conscience is not clear and so they suffer from nightmares and weep for their sins. Animals, on the other hand, are calm, self-contained and contented. They don't run after material things other than their food. They don't need to worship God as they never suffer from any sense of guilt or sin. Ancestors of human beings shared those tokens of love and understanding in the remote past. Unfortunately, humans have lost those virtues and tokens of love and understanding completely forever.

**MESSAGE-**

The message of the poem Animals is that humans have lost innocence, fraternity and peace. They always commit sins, have greed for worldly things and also discriminate on the basis of class, religion, caste, colour etc. On the other hand, animals have retained the good qualities.

They are satisfied with their condition. They are not greedy and do not have any lust for materialistic things. There is no discrimination among animals.

### **Animals Summary**

The poem 'Animals' is from Walt Whitman's work, 'Song of Myself' in the Leaves of grass. In this poem, Walt Whitman admires animals for being better than human beings. The poet wishes to live with animals and to experience a life where no one complains, and where everyone is free of sins and sorrows. The most important theme of the poem is not to admire how good animals are, but to compare humans with them in order to focus on the flaws of their nature. The poet believes that probably a very long time ago, humans possessed all the qualities such as calmness, the lack of greed and the ability to stay happy, but they have now lost them. So, in this poem, Walt Whitman has given a pedagogic point before human beings.

Walt Whitman, the great American poet, believes animals are better than men. The poet appreciated some qualities in animals which man don't have. He expressed his observation about animals and man through his poem "Animals".

Walt Whitman is very fond of the company of animals. The poet desires to live among the animals because according to him animals are calm and self-contained. They do not whine and weep about their conditions. They are always satisfied and do their duty towards God. Animals always express their love and respect for human beings. Animals spend a life of satisfaction and peace. They do not possess an obsession with possessing things. They do not show respect for others. Also, they even do not respect their thousand old descendants. Sorrow and happiness are equal to them.

Whereas humans are crazy about material things. Humans lie awake at night. They cry for the wrong that they have done. At last, they lose their temper over trifles. Animals are quite happy. They don't idle away their time for discussing their duties to God like human beings. He observes that humans don't have those qualities which animals possess such as signs of love, quietness, kindness, selflessness, honesty, patience, sympathy, etc. These qualities are absolutely essential for a glossy life.

The poet has a deep aspiration to learn from the animals since they express their deep concern with them. They do not possess any kind of falsehood. The poet is much amazed at their quality. He desires to earn them though he had left them carelessly. He feels that the life of a man is full of stress, depression, anxiety, unhappy. So, he desires to turn away from living with other humans. He wants to live in the company of animals for good because he thinks that he will get real happiness among animals. After all, he desires to make a relationship with animals. Thus, this is the summary of the poem "Animals" written by Walt Whitman.

### **Conclusion of Animals**

In the poem 'Animals', the poet Walt Whitman admires the animals for being better than human beings. He praises them also for possessing all such qualities that humans lack or have forgotten.

## DETAILED SUMMARY: -

**1. Comfortable with Animals:** The poet wishes that he would switch over his loyalty and faith from human beings to animals. He wants to live with them as he feels more comfortable in their company. Animals appear to be very peaceful, independent, self-sufficient and self-contained. He is fascinated by them. He stands and looks at them for a long time.

**2. Animals don't Sweat and Whine:** Human beings are never satisfied with their condition. They are always demanding. Animals never worry themselves about their condition. Nor do they ever complain. They have a clear conscience. They enjoy a sound sleep at night. They never have to weep for their sins. On the other hand, humans suffer from a guilty conscience. Their misdeeds trouble their souls and they never enjoy a sound sleep at night. They weep over their sins and misdeeds and shed tears on them at night. Human beings pretend to show their love, faith and duty to God. Such pretentious and false worship make the poet sick. Animals never do such pretensions. They never display their love and duty to God. Actually, such issues are meaningless to them.

**3. Animals Don't Suffer from Mania of Owning Things:** The poet doesn't find even a single animal that may appear to be dissatisfied. There is no animal which suffers from the madness of possessing things. On the other hand, humans are never satisfied. They are competing with one another in the mad race for material possessions.

**4. No Respect for Ancestors:** No animal shows respect by kneeling down to another animal. Nor do they show any respect to the ancestors of their race. These are the pretensions of human beings and not that of animals. No one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth for them.

**5. Poet Accepts Animals:** Animals are straight forward. They show their relations to the poet. The poet responds to them positively too. He accepts them as they are. They have retained all those virtues which the ancestors of the human race shared with them in the past. Animals show those 'tokens' still in their possession. Unfortunately, humans had lost those virtues much earlier. The poet wonders how animals still retain them.

## Animals Poem and Explanation

**I think I could turn and live with animals, they are  
so placid and self-contain'd,  
I stand and look at them long and long.**

*The poet says that he wants to live in the world of animals. Here we can say that the poet finds the world of animals better than that of human beings. He further says that he finds animals more peaceful than humans. He says so because animals are not running after worldly things like human beings. They are calm and have no greed for worldly things or any kind of achievements. They are self-contained means they are happy with life and never interfere in the lives of others. Humans have the habit of interfering in the lives of others. So, poet thinks that animals are better than humans for being calm and not interfering in the matters of others. The poet further says that these are the reasons why he stands still and looks at the animals for a very long time.*

### **Literary Devices:**

Assonance: use of vowel sound 'I' (I, think, I, live, with, animals)

Repetition: use of the word 'long'

Anaphora: 'I' word used at the start of two consecutive lines

**They do not sweat and whine about their condition,  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,  
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with  
the mania of owning things,**

*The poet says that unlike humans, animals don't complain of any misery. They never cry out loud like humans do, to show what they have lost. They never stay awake in the night, crying in repentance for their wrongdoings. This means that animals are different from human beings because they don't show anger or grief if something wrong happens with them. He further says that animals are very truthful because they never boast of their good deeds done in the name of god. He says so because most of the human beings do this. They try to show their good deeds and religiousness to others. They do so in order to gain popularity among their fellows. So, the poet thinks that animals never irritate him by doing such things just to gain some praise from their fellow people. He feels that the animals are not dissatisfied like humans. They stay happy with whatever they have. They never run behind worldly things. They never try to possess things of comfort or luxury. He says that none of them is mad behind owning the worldly things.*

**Literary Devices:**

Anaphora: use of repeated words at the beginning of two or more consecutive lines (use of "they do not")

Metaphor: sweat and whine refer to the cries and complaints of human beings

**Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that  
lived thousands of years ago,  
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.  
So they show their relations to me and I accept them,  
They bring me tokens of myself, they evince  
them plainly in their possession**

*Here the poet says that he has never seen any animal showing his devotion to anyone by bowing down in front of the person. They never do so even for their ancestors. They do not show devotion towards God like humans do. No one among them is more respectable or important as we have in human society. In human beings, rich people are generally given more importance and are treated with more respect as compared to the poor. But in the society of animals, they never do so. They never give more or less importance to any other animal. Everyone in the animal world is happy. They are not like human beings who find themselves the happiest or the saddest person on earth. Further the poet says that animals are more honest in showing their relations with other animals. Here he wants to say that animals use other animals as their food and they never try to hide this. Whereas human beings show that they have nice and friendly relations with others, though the reality is opposite. The poet says that he accepts the fact that animals are true towards showing their relation with other animals.*

**Literary Devices:**

Metaphor: The inner qualities of humans are referred to as tokens

**I wonder where they get those tokens,  
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?**

*So, at last the poet introspects himself and says that from where the animals got those good qualities. He further questions himself that where his own good qualities are gone? Did he leave*

*them or had carelessly lost them somewhere. The qualities that were found in human beings in the past, like innocence, kindness, truthfulness are now seen in animals. He wonders that humans gave up these qualities and they have been passed on to the animals.*

### MCQ'S

1. I stand and look at them long and long.  
They do not sweat and whine about their condition

a. 'They' in the above lines are .....

- (i) human beings
- (ii) animals
- (iii) the poets
- (iv) the audience

Answer:

(ii) animals.

b. The author keeps looking at them for long because he .....

- (i) never finds them unhappy or dissatisfied
- (ii) finds them calm and peaceful
- (iii) feels more at home with them
- (iv) all of the above

Answer:

(iv) all of the above.

c. They are unlike human beings who are .....

- (i) always complaining
- (ii) calm and quiet
- (iii) contented
- (iv) not prone to anger

Answer:

(i) always complaining.

2. So they show their relations to me and I accept them.

They bring me tokens of myself, they evince  
them plainly in their possession.

a. In the above lines 'they' stand for .....

- (i) listeners
- (ii) audience
- (iii) animals
- (iv) viewers

Answer:

(iii) animals.

b. The author feels related to them as they remind him of .....

- (i) his ego.
- (ii) the basic qualities of his nature.
- (iii) inhuman characteristics.
- (iv) his greed.

Answer:

(ii) the basic qualities of his nature.

c. They seem to possess those qualities which man has chosen to .....

(i) ignore

(ii) deny

(iii) drop

(iv) All of the above

Answer:

(iv) All of the above.

3. So they show their relations to me and I accept them,  
They bring me tokens of myself they evince  
them plainly in their possession.

a. The speaker accepts that

(i) animals are better than men.

(ii) animals are his best friends.

(iii) there is a close relation between man and animal.

(iv) all of the above.

Answer:

(iv) all of the above.

b. By 'tokens of myself the speaker means

(i) animals are like men.

(ii) coins dropped by the speaker.

(iii) they remind him of the basic values of the human beings.

(iv) the marks of animal's goodness.

Answer:

(iii) they remind him of the basic values of the human beings.

c. Animals have the 'tokens' dropped by man.

(i) retained and preserved

(ii) searched

(iii) robbed

(iv) lost

Answer:

(i) retained and preserved.

4. I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained,  
I stand and look at them long and long.

a. The poet wants to live with the animals because they are .....

- (i) calm
  - (ii) self-contained
  - (iii) satisfied
  - (iv) all of the above
- Answer:
- (iv) all of the above.

b. The poet feels more at home with animals than

- (i) birds and insects
- (ii) human beings
- (iii) natural things
- (iv) all of the above

Answer:

- (ii) human beings

c. The word which means 'calm and quiet' is

- (i) placid
- (ii) complex
- (iii) groan
- (iv) contented

Answer:

- (i) placid

### **RTC'S**

Question 1.

They do not lie awake in the dark and

Weep for their sin .....

Who are 'they'? How are they different from human beings?

Answer:

'They' here refers to the animals. They are different from human beings as they do not sweat and whine about their pathetic condition. Animals do not feel guilty for their actions so they need not awake in the dark and weep for their sins.

Question 2.

'Not one is respectable or unhappy Over the whole earth.'

Who is the poet talking about? What is their state of mind?

Answer:

The poet is talking about the animals. They are placid and self-contained. They are not worried about getting respect or disrespect as they have no ego.

Question 3.

'They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God'

Who are 'they'? What makes him sick?

Answer:

'They' are here the animals. The discussions about subjects of philosophy or religion which the animals do not indulge in make him sick.

## LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. “Human beings are called the most civilized species in the entire world. But sometimes they lack the values which are better exhibited by the animals.” Elucidate the statement with reference to the poem, ‘Animals’.

**Ans.** Human beings are called the most civilized species in the entire world. But sometimes, they lack the values which are better exhibited by the animals. Human beings lack the qualities of being respectable, happy, contented and peace-loving which is still reflected in animals. Animals do not grumble about their lives, lie awake at night, cry over their sins or discuss their duty towards God as humans do. Animals do not have a mania for “owning things”, nor do they kneel before others like humans. Moreover, the tokens of goodness, love, respect and happiness have been dropped by human beings.

2. The poem, ‘Animals’ tells us that civilization has made humans false to their own true nature. Which values will help you revive your basic nature?

Humans have lost their innate goodness over the years. They have become selfish, jealous, restless, unhappy, cribbing and grumbling creatures. They grumble about their lives, lie awake at night, cry over their sins and discuss their duty towards God. In a race to earn more luxuries and comfort. they have lost their sound sleep. They have become unhappy and most of the time unable to enjoy even small joys and happiness in life. On the contrary, animals are peaceful, self-contained, thankful and happy creatures. They are not unhappy and indeed bring out tokens of man’s good nature lost long ago, when he possessed qualities like love, respect, contentment and happiness.

3. How is the poem, ‘Animals’, a contrast between humans and animals?

Humans can be described as selfish, jealous, restless, unhappy, cribbing, and grumbling creatures. In contrast, animals are peaceful, self-contained, thankful and happy creatures. They do not grumble about their lives, lie awake at night, cry over their sins or discuss their duty towards God as humans do. Also, they don’t have a mania for “owning things”; nor do they kneel before others. Animals, on the whole, are not unhappy and indeed bring out tokens of man’s good nature lost long ago, when he possessed qualities like love, respect, contentment and happiness.

4. “The more I know of humans the more I love my pet.” With reference to the poem, ‘Animals’, elaborate the statement.

Whenever the poet thinks about animals, he has a feeling of being one among them. The lost human qualities of being respectable, happy, contented, and peace-loving could be still found reflected in animals. They don’t whine about their condition; nor do they cry for their sins. They don’t make others sick by discussing their duty to God, are not dissatisfied nor have the craze to own things. They may not be respectable, but they definitely do not kneel before others or be unhappy as a whole. For the poet, they bring the tokens of human qualities like love, respect, contentment and happiness, which they themselves exhibit plainly. He thinks that perhaps the animals possessed these qualities naturally. The poet also wonders whether these tokens could have been negligently dropped by humans long ago. Whatever the case may be, while thinking about the overwhelming negativity of human beings, anyone may start loving his pet all the more



Q5. Why is the poet so much impressed with animals that he wants to change sides and wishes to live with them?

The poet feels that humans have degraded themselves beyond redemption. Nothing great has been left with human beings. He is fed up with their behaviour and wants to escape from the world of humans. No doubt, humans were not so bad at one time. They shared 'tokens' of love, sympathy, contentment and innocence with animals. However, the spirit of greed, over-ambition, and arrogance overpowered them. They gave up the path of virtue and the 'tokens' of love and sympathy. They are confused. The burden of their sins and misdeeds lies heavy on their hearts and souls. On the other hand, animals still maintain the old virtues left by man long ago. They are contented, self-sufficient, simple and free from confusions and the burden of sins and misdeeds. So, the poet wants to change sides and wants to be a part of the animal world.

Q6. What are those 'tokens' and how animals have maintained them while humans have left them long ago?

The poet says that animals bring to him the tokens of himself. Actually, these tokens stand for all that is good in behaviour and mutual relationships. These are the tokens of love, sympathy, contentment, honesty and innocence. There was a time when both animals, as well as humans, possessed those tokens of noble virtues. But then humans degraded themselves. While animals continued walking on the road leading to those tokens of noble virtues. Humans have led astray and followed the wrong path of life. They gave up contentment, innocence, simplicity and love. Dissatisfaction, unrest, the burden of sins and misdeeds, greed, over ambition and arrogance overpowered humans. Sadly enough, humans have left the virtuous path of life. On the other hand, animals have not corrupted and degraded themselves to that extent. Their 'tokens' of virtuous living reminds the poet that he must arouse those lost values again. For this, he will have to change sides and join the world of animals.