

ANIMAL WELFARE: FOOT and MOUTH

by Margi Ross

I wrote this article in April 2001, during the worst part of the Foot and Mouth crisis. It is dedicated to every animal and human being who suffered.

During the foot and mouth outbreak, the lack of support for feminine values was visible for all to see. One aspect of life governed by the Feminine is relationship. Where was the acknowledgement of relationship and inter-relationship between human and animal, between animal and animal, and how did the government hold this reality during the crisis? It wasn't. If Feminine Consciousness were a part of our culture, the animals would not have been killed, except when they were in so much pain and suffering that it was the kindest thing to do. In a land without Feminine Consciousness there is no voice and no confidence to hold an opposing view with power against the practice of putting material considerations first, so animals were treated as commodities, or they were old friends whom you feel powerless to defend in the face of government solutions to illnesses like foot and mouth.

One of the saddest things with the crisis is that the farmers and RSPCA inspectors did not break the law in a good way, and use their common sense to allow pregnant sheep and ewes and their lambs to move into nearby fields when the fields the animals were in became so muddy. Why didn't they have the confidence to *show* the government what to do and to act on what they knew?

One aspect of the Conscious Feminine is about connecting into feeling values and the Feeling Function*. 'I will not let you put this animal to sleep because she is my friend, because he has a right to life, because he hasn't got foot and mouth. If I did, I would be betraying relationship.' There *are* good men, but I've seen how the good men, even at their best, do not have the will or the language to fight for the cause of relationship and love. And the women, I remember some of the farmer's wives I saw on television, did not have the voice to speak up for the animals and their own sense of what was right. (There were exceptions to this from both men and women).

There are feminine spiritual laws and one of them is that you do not treat any living being as a 'thing', as a commodity, as an 'it'. If women do not speak for the reality of kindness and love, who will? When we don't speak, we betray the animals. Every living being is sacred and has a right to live. I have been a vegetarian for 33 years. If some people *do* want to eat meat, then treat the death of that animal as something very serious. A living being has given up his/her life, so you can be fed. We have lost the reverence for life and we have to re-find it. We have to fight for these values.

With the Conscious Feminine comes a middle ground for earth and water, for the first time. Without it, terrible things happen. Solutions come from the head, rather the wisdom of the earth and the sensitivity of feeling. The policy of culling did eventually stop the disease, but in the wrong way. If we let masculine solutions rule, things are done through the use of will, rather than the laws of love. Homeopathy has been

around for years. Why weren't animals treated homoeopathically during this outbreak and after the 1967 outbreak, as a precaution? Because homeopathy is about the laws of matter, it is not respected, and drug companies will not make lots of money from homeopathy. Where are the boundaries and laws to stop sheep being herded into several lorries in a day, to make money? Why do animals have to watch their friends and relatives being killed in front of them while they wait for their own death? So many women know that this is wrong: we have got to stop these things happening.

Why do people go into supermarkets and buy food which comes from animals which have never seen the light of day and who have been given feed made from other animals? Because there is not the deeper connection to how animals *feel* and what happens if you rear animals away from the light of day and feed them on ground-up animals. If you do this, the immune system is weakened and terrible things happen like BSE and foot and mouth: the laws of life are being abused in the most fundamental way.

Evil does not only come into life through big wars like the world wars. It is easier to see what is happening when this occurs. It can come in through the realm of ideas: through the idea that it is OK to treat animals the way they are treated because they are 'only animals'. Through the idea that people are more important than other living creatures. We are all part of a web of inter-relatedness and inter-dependence. Evil comes in if we do not include and consider how living creatures feel: it happened in the last war. It comes through materialism and greed and putting profit before life. It says that the ends justify the means: they don't.

Monty Robert's work with horses, discovering how they relate, can be extended to every living being, if we seek to understand another creature's reality and needs and language.

In a land without Feminine Consciousness there is no responsibility coming from the government for the ruin of people's lives. Where was the financial support for the people that were going under? Everyone should have been contacted and money put in their bank by central government, so that the network of support for life could be kept going. *The Feminine is sometimes the totally essential attention to small detail, which feeds the heart and ensures survival.* It is not right to let people die of despair or go under financially in a crisis: we are all dependent on each other. Any conscious woman could have managed the crisis of foot and mouth in a sane and human way. It would have prevented the mass murder of so many animals and the despair. And, for the purely materialistic, it would also work out better financially. Money will always be found for a war, why not for love?

How do we organise ourselves so we can fight on behalf of kindness and gentleness, on behalf of love and relationship and caring? Feminine and masculine laws are different. At present there is no upholding of feminine law within the institutions, so in a crisis, feminine laws are not obeyed. So, we either have to bring feminine law into masculine institutions, or form our own institutions, which uphold feminine law, and reality and can stand in relationship to the current structures. **We have to define our own reality and give this reality a language and a conceptual framework. It is the only way to bring love and relationship into life as a conscious value.**

*In the Jungian concept of the Four Functions or Types, a feeling type is someone who has skill in ordering relationship and inter-relationship and who puts the value of relationship first in any situation.

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