

A Fight for Life by Maria Sztybel

~ excerpts from a Holocaust memoir ~

Compiled by Dr. David Sztybel, Jr.
with kind permission from translator, Lola Drach

1. Background

In 2006, my article – “Can the Treatment of Nonhuman Animals Be Compared to the Holocaust?” – was published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Ethics and the Environment*. Later, based on extending that research, I created the Holocaust Comparison Project at davidszybel.info/16.html. Maria Sztybel – who changed her name to “Maria Rok” after marrying – is my aunt, now long deceased. Maria was the eldest of my father’s siblings, all children of David Sztybel, Senior. Many individuals object to comparing the treatment of nonhuman animals to the Holocaust partly because it is put forward by non-Jews, non-Holocaust-survivors, or people who do not take seriously the egregious death and suffering that occurred during this historical phenomenon. This compilation belies these logically off-base attempts to discredit the comparison.

I, David Sztybel, Jr., consider myself to be an indirect Holocaust survivor. After all, first and most obviously, the Nazi death-mechanisms of deportation to killing camps – and associated horrors – very nearly consumed my grandparents’ whole family, but for a rather strange historical contingency that I will detail below. Second, there were also threats from a near-pogrom (or massacre of Jews – recounted below). Third, there was the Nazi military invasion of Poland. The latter killed many of my father’s fellow townspeople. And fourth and fifth, more particularly, my father, Bernard Sztybel, almost died during this period, as narrated in two childhood incidents documented below. Maria’s obtaining of extra food rations may well have saved Bernard’s life, and therefore permitted my own life to come to be.

In outline, my family fled from Poland after the Nazis invaded in 1939. David Sztybel, Sr., and family, weathered out the war, for the most part, in Soviet Russia. That is, with the exception of my Uncle Jankiele, who perished as an infant from malnutrition-related illness. Really, this was a poverty-induced fatality. Aunt Maria wrote her memoir at age 49, in the summer of 1972. To avoid confusion, I will refer to Maria by her maiden name of “Sztybel”, since the story concerns a period of her life during which that was her surname. *A Fight for Life* was translated from Polish into English by Maria’s daughter, Lola Drach, in 2012 – all rights reserved. I appreciate her kindness in giving me permission to use her translation.

2. Kindnesses

To many, the Holocaust represents the ultimate evil by humans against humans in history. It helps to consider the positive though. Conceiving of the Holocaust in relation to **liberation** permits a sense of upliftment and perhaps eventual human redemption. That is, a going beyond the negative into the positive as a hoped-for path in humanity's evolution.

At a more concrete level, my family benefited from several documented acts of beneficence during the Holocaust, including:

1. The chance to evacuate from Poland to the Soviet Union
2. Soviet soldiers lent their coats – and dashes of vodka – to cold families waiting on the trucks for transport to the Soviet Union from the town of Josefow, Poland
3. One of Maria's co-workers, a cobbler's wife, told my aunt that the latter came to work practically barefoot, so the fellow worker gave my aunt a new pair of shoes next morning crafted out of charity, since they could not be afforded
4. A group of unknown men saw that the family shack's windows were shattered by hoodlums, causing much open grieving, and the good samaritans came back with tools and repaired the damage, free of charge
5. A stranger paid for Maria's train ticket after her money was stolen from her purse, which had been cut open by a thief using a razor blade
6. Some unnamed Russians brought Maria *kasha* (buckwheat) when she was very ill in hospital, and she wrote that it most certainly saved her life

In the midst of harrowing hardships, the shining light of human kindness can often yet be detected.

3. The Excerpts

(Note: in the following, comments by the compiler of the excerpts appear in red italics.)

1.

What is recounted as positive about Maria's home town of Josefow, Poland, is – strikingly – a love of nature:

I feel the air – redolent with forest smells, the gardens and trees in spring and summer. Josefow has a reputation for having a wonderfully fragrant air due to a rich source of trees in the forests – both deciduous and evergreen. The neighbouring forests were as thick as jungles and full of beautiful grasses and small fruit such as raspberries, currants, blueberries and various mushrooms. In

fact, blueberries were famous throughout the county and in the summer, besides having local citizens enjoying this delicious fruit, it was also exported abroad. (pp. 1-2)

2.

David Sztybel, Sr. is lovingly described by his daughter:

...he became a master tailor. He was a handsome, dark-haired man of medium height and had a nice physique. He also had a nice personality; always smiling and ready to tell a joke. He worked very hard. (p. 3)

3.

Maria loved her hometown because of cherished nature, people, and other aspects, but also hated Josefow mainly because of the extensive anti-Semitism. Much of the town's poverty was occasioned by hatred of the Jews and resulting economic conditions of unemployment, underemployment, underpayment, and boycotting of Jewish businesses.

At the beginning, I wrote the reason for loving Josefow. Now I will write why I hated it. It was because of the awful poverty, dirt, misery and the intolerance and anti-Semitism directed towards us at every step: You have to admit that Jews comprised the majority in the town and slaved just to have a piece of bread. (p. 4)

4.

Oppressive prejudice often knows no boundaries that stop short at children:

No matter...[that] many gifted and talented Jewish children existed, in school they were not considered children but "rabble". (p. 5)

5.

In modern North America and other parts of the world, it is difficult to imagine the sort of radical, racialized hatred which heated Jewish-to-non-Jewish relations to the boiling point, well before the Holocaust officially began:

'One Jewish bastard less means nothing when there are so many. It would be good to murder all of them and then we will have some peace.' This was the order of the day, we heard this all the time and had to live with it. Could you call this living? (p. 6)

6.

Socially, the Jewish people were known for taking care of each other in a spirit of community –more than some other cultures, it is fair to say – with whatever spare resources they could muster:

Groups of beggars go from house to house and receive very little charity [mainly because there was little to give]. This happened not only in Josefow, but also in surrounding towns. At first, the beggars found this very demeaning, but soon accepted this function in life as normal. (p. 12)

7.

The murderousness and rapaciousness of the Holocaust were foreshadowed by isolated events in Poland before the Nazi conquest. Even the law-enforcers sometimes are lawless, corrupted by anti-Semitism:

You...hear of murders committed against helpless Jews in nearby towns. There are robberies committed against small Jewish businesses in Josefow, but the police does not intervene. (p. 14)

8.

The first sight of Nazis in her Polish town startled Maria into a spell of standing stock-still:

My mother asked me to bring some fresh water from the pump. I took the pail and quickly ran for the water. Going on Pilsudski Street I became startled and I couldn't move another step. It was because a military jeep with four Germans wearing swastikas on their shoulders and skulls on their hats [denoting officers of the notorious S.S. – DS]. Each German carried a machine gun ready to be fired. I stood still for a long time... (p. 14)

9.

During the fighting of Polish forces against the invading Nazis, history recalls that Polish cavalymen mobilized haplessly on their horses against German planes, tanks, and ground assault forces. Poland subsequently proved to be at the mercy – or lack of it – of both Nazi and then later Soviet conquerors, as well.

All citizens ran in their night-clothes out of town to save themselves from the fire and death. When the shooting began Mrs. Hilf...opened a window and became the first victim. She got killed instantly. The second victim was the daughter of

my father's client...who was taking a cow to the meadow. My family and many other families lay down in the valley of the mountain and over our heads bullets flew like hail. The sun was mercilessly hot, fires were burning around us and sand was falling on our heads. This was virtual hell on earth. Older people were fainting from exhaustion, children screamed from hunger and thirst. Near us, corpses of people known to us, both adults and children lay...
(p. 28)

10.

After the Nazi takeover of Josefow:

The Germans grabbed young, Jewish girls on the street to make them pump water from the city well and deliver the water to them. Once I fell into this 'action'. I delivered water for them all day long. The Germans smiled at me in gratitude. One of them, somewhat older than the rest, clapped me on the back, called me 'good girl' and gave me two pieces of chocolate. My uncle threw it in the garbage explaining that it could be poisoned. (pp. 32-33)

11.

That staple atrocity of anti-Semitic Europe – the pogrom – very nearly swept through Maria's home town and threatened both Jewish lives and livelihoods.

I went for a little walk to get some fresh air. When it started to get dark, there was a big commotion in front of the town hall. There were about fifty peasants carrying shovels, scythes, axes, pitchforks and spoke loudly as to where and whom they should attack first. The town mayor...tried to calm the mob down; tried to explain and persuade them to stop, but the more he tried the more rebellious they became and the more they shouted, 'Beat the Jews' and 'Death to the Jews'. On their red faces you could figure out that they were ready for a pogrom against the helpless Jews. (p. 39)

12.

The Soviets may have saved my family not only by later offering them safe passage into the U.S.S.R., but also by seemingly halting a fierce pogrom that, as we saw with the case of the helpless mayor, local authorities could not control. Here a little history is needed to understand subsequent events, although my aunt does not explain matters. The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, signed on August 23, 1939, meant that parts of Poland were seized by the Soviet Union, with other parts falling under the rule of Germany. Inevitably, there was some necessarily arbitrary shuffling of borders. This passage of history was commonly referred to as Hitler and Stalin "carving up Poland", to using a meat-eater's

image. One form of violence is used as a metaphor for another here. Although the Soviet Union saved my family from Nazi violence, they practiced totalitarian violence of their own. But here they are portrayed halting anti-Semitic townspeoples' violence:

...the Red Army entered Josefow warning the peasants with volleys of shooting not to start up with the Jews as they were posed to...(p. 39)

13.

The gross lies in the propaganda of the soldier mentioned below are soon exposed as false later in the narrative.

[A] soldier [who visited the Sztybels] praised his country and the Soviet rule. He called it paradise on earth. A worker lives like a proverbial king....My father listened with an ironic smile the whole time and finally stated in Yiddish that when there is a lot of praise – there is no truth. (p. 40)

14.

Nonetheless, there is no denying my family's debt of gratitude to the Soviets during this tense period:

The soldier...informed us his commander will make a speech in Yiddish in the town square. The speech will be about the eventual evacuation of Jews from Josefow because the next day the Germans will come back to take over their previous positions. (p. 40)

15.

It is to be wondered if the last-minute evacuation described below was organized by the commander because he was Jewish – and therefore more sympathetic? It was no doubt his remarkably timely commands which led to the breaking up of the pogrom. Upon reflection, the evacuation seems even more like some sort of special case because certainly, the vast majority of Polish Jews never made it to the Soviet Union in order to escape the Holocaust. No less than 72% of European Jews were murdered in that mega-tragedy, as I document in my above-mentioned essay. As well, not every position in Poland could have been once held by the Nazis, then the Soviets, and then the Nazis again, as was evidently the case with Josefow. The Soviets must have wanted to offer certain territories, including Josefow, as some sort of concession to the Nazis for some reason(s) we may never know. Polish territory conquered by Nazis and never relinquished would certainly have been dangerous for Jewish people – indeed, likely fatally so. The parts of Poland conceded to the U.S.S.R. may have seemed comparatively safe for Jews at the time. However, the Nazis eventually did force their way east into Russia a few years later – breaking the Pact with Stalin's people, and dooming most of

those Polish Jews. It must have been unusual, then, for my family to be shuttled much deeper into Soviet territory than then-Soviet Poland – the latter being only a temporary holding, as stated above, although that could not be foreknown at the time. One of the cities my family inhabited is right in the middle of Russia. Now the Soviets would not have had the option of entering Nazi-conquered Poland to rescue Jews, presumably, and also, it is assumed that Soviets would not have felt the need to evacuate Jews from the other half of claimed territory: parts of Poland that were conquered at that time by the Soviet empire. So this particular evacuation event seems historically anomalous, partly caused by territorial shifting. Indeed, my family is fortunate that they were not simply moved to Soviet-occupied Poland, which might well have doomed them in the long run. As is recounted later, those who did not take advantage of this special evacuation opportunity were virtually wiped off the face of the planet. In summary, the looming threat of Nazi reoccupation the next day – and this particular Soviet commander's response to that impending circumstance – played a peculiar historical role concerning the fate of my family.

An officer stepped up to the podium, introduced himself as a Red Army captain....He tried to convince Jews to leave Poland because the returning Germans have a goal to destroy the entire Jewish race. 'This is a plan outlined by Hitler', said the speaker. He emphatically advised us that [we should load – DS] all our belongings unto their trucks and they will happily transport us to the Soviet Union where we can expect jobs, peace and prosperity. (p. 41)

16.

Here is my aunt's own wording concerning one of the kindnesses listed above in Part 2.:

My mother's entire family with [six] children occupied spaces in the cars. The trucks filled up quickly. The evening was cold. We all started shaking from it. The soldiers noticing this took off their own jackets...and covered us. Before starting out they gave out to each person some vodka to warm up. This noble gesture brought tears to my eyes. (p. 42)

17.

Actually, I can't quite imagine the following, Auntie:

...you can imagine how it is to live in one room with 18 people. We had no fuel to warm up the place and we suffered because it was very cold. (p. 46)

18.

The conditions of poverty in Soviet Russia were extremely trying, though not so levelling as the mass murders that my family barely escaped:

You can imagine what kind of laundering it was when afterwards lice were still crawling on our linens. (p 49)

Other conditions reported in the memoir:

- *rats as big as cats and not afraid of people – or cats*
- *bed bugs and lice crawling on the walls*
- *bread lines: a family member can stand all day – for several days - and be given no bread, or receive inferior loaves made from many leaves and bran*
- *dirt, for lack of resources for cleaning – they used to be keen on keeping house in Josefow*
- *no or few shoes*
- *cramped living quarters*
- *no heating*
- *intermittent famine*

19.

Maria's simple eloquence concerning a time now lost brings that painful era to life once again:

Eli and Chana don't grow. They have nothing to grow on. No food, being chronically cold and insects that suck their blood. All the children are pale, depressed, miserable. What a terrible childhood! (pp. 162-163)

20.

My aunt was heroic. She worked all night and day, on very little food, and under other hardships, in order to fend for herself and her kin, many of whom might well have perished but for her efforts:

One day, when standing in line for a newspaper, I saw a poster [advertising for] young women to go to a nursing school.... I stand under the poster and I debate with myself. The lessons cost 145 rubles per year. Where will I get the money? I can't ask my father since he makes so little. I have to get a night job and attend school during the day. Since I don't have a choice, I buy a newspaper and look at the ads. A miracle!...Kitchen help is needed in a factory for a night shift from

11pm – 7am. Isn't that a miracle? I'll have work and be able to study; everything is falling into place. (pp. 93-94)

21.

My family did not altogether escape the Holocaust's shadow of death. The Nazis in effect swept my kin into a nightmare of poverty in the Soviet Union. And such impoverished life was deeply insecure, as the following story only too plainly reveals concerning my Uncle Jankiele. Rightfully, he should have been able to feed from mother's milk. I argue that properly, ALL sentient beings should have fundamental rights respected. In dire desperation, the baby is offered other food:

Little Jankiele starved along with us since my mother's breasts had no milk. He ate greedily some of the *mamalyga* [a porridge made of yellow maize flour – DS] and got very sick. He got diarrhea and he vomited a lot – the worst illness for little children. I took him to a children's clinic where he received medicine and gruel in bottles, but the doctor said his condition is hopeless. After three days he died at his mother's breast without a sound. We ordered a little coffin...and...took him to the cemetery. It rained hard – as if the whole world cried for this poor child. There were a lot of graves in Kuznieck of children who died of starvation. (p. 96)

22.

There is an historical irony here, since my Uncle Morris [referred to as "Moshe" in A Fight for Life and by others in the family], during his retirement years, loved as family a canine named "Oreo".

...all the time the lament of my brother Moshe, 'We will drop dead like dogs'. (p. 98)

23.

But when Moshe's sister Maria brought home some much-needed food:

Moche jumped on the kitchen table and danced as people do on Simcha Tora. (p. 100)

24.

The Soviet Union was indeed a refuge, but still a place where protection from locals was sometimes required:

When the evening comes, it is forbidden to go outside lest the criminals will steal your clothes on your body and possibly murder you. (p. 166)

25.

Bernard Szybel, my father, almost died of something as simple as diarrhea complicated by famine. Maria brought home some rice given her by a co-worker in the hospital, and this is said to have saved him:

He was thin – just skin and bones and very pale. He didn't complain, he sat bent over because he was so cold. He wasn't getting any fresh air because we wouldn't let him out [due to] the unusually freezing weather. (p. 101)

26.

Bernard is reported to be in danger again due to famine, and once more is saved by rations provided by Maria:

Even a bitter piece of bread is unavailable with a ration card. I'm very worried about Bernard – he's just skin and bones. He is pale as linen and apathetic. (p. 131)

27.

Lamentation is an unavoidable theme from the Holocaust:

My mother's pillow is always soaked with tears. She doesn't sleep at night, the poor woman; she just cries over our fate. (p. 169)

4. Maria Szybel and Animal Liberation

The family's first place of refuge was a communal pig farm in Soviet Russia. Maria describes how hogs starved and died at times because no one tended to them. However, she also described how many people were slackers. They truly resented the Szybels for their hard work, and some even mooned her once to show their obnoxious contempt. So pigs starved to death while workers relaxed. Easy entitlement is a recipe for undermining hard work, I believe, although I can see that capitalism is not the answer either. But that goes far beyond the scope of this work. Maria wrote that Ms. Fichtberg "...raised pigs privately, and looked after the pigs like a mother after her children." (p. 68) Yet people do not normally slaughter their children unlike the case of pigs under speciesist rule.

Maria's Holocaust memoir is distinguished not only by the admirable clarity and detailing of the writing, but also because of its substance. She was witness to so many aspects of the Holocaust: murderous Nazis who took over continental Europe, pogrom-related activities, anti-Semitism, deaths caused directly by Nazi guns and indirectly by the harrowing cruelties, and deprivations that the Third Reich occasioned. And there is more.

It is noteworthy that she also features, without meaning to, of course, two standard ways in which animals become referenced in thinking about the Holocaust. First of all, "animal" is often a term of contempt when applied to humans, and it is clear that the Nazis thought of the Jews as being a corrupt kind of animal. Second, Jews often lament that they were treated like animals, as I note in my essay referred to above. There I essentially say that "animal" quietly means "a being who can be harmed by humans without a second thought". Both of these key sorts of references are to be found in Maria's diary. She wrote of a man, whose identity is not important here: "This man had no brain, no heart and no human feelings – he was simply like an animal." (p. 49) And she asked, "Are we treated any better than cattle?" (p. 170) Recall the recurrent lament of Moshe that his family will "drop dead like dogs", implying that the death of dogs is not something that people much cared about.

Now Maria was a great person, so far as I'm concerned. As said, she is a heroine who played a key role in saving much of her family from death by starvation, although that was due to others too. Many of the other siblings, she reports, also worked when they could, even though they were only children. Maria was also idealistic:

I suddenly remember what the Soviet soldier spoke to the group of people in the town square in Josefow 1939, 'Hitler had a sentence passed on all Jews on the planet – death.' I asked, 'Are we to perish just because we are Jews?' I asked this to myself a lot. Are we worse than others? Don't we possess good brains, hands to work hard? Am I not slaving for a piece of bread? We are not criminals, thieves, and committers of other crimes. Even if we have to run to the end of the planet, even to Siberia facing polar bears, we will not give in to Hitler. We will work like slaves just so we can beat this formidable foe. (p. 112)

Sometimes people do need to fend off polar bears, and it is not necessarily speciesist to do so. Maria was a perfectly ordinary speciesist in a time at least two-and-a-half decades before the term "speciesism" had even been invented in 1970 by Richard Ryder. Maria is not to be singled out for blame in all of this. Speciesism – unnamed though it was – is a social condition in which many participated. And that is still the case today.

Now in the passage just quoted, Maria uses common patterns of thought in resisting anti-Semitism:

1. condemning the degradation of Jews just because they are Jews
2. pointing out that Jews are no worse really than non-Jews
3. pointing to Jewish intelligence, or "brains" as Maria colloquially put it

4. indicating that Jews work hard, and thus obviously contribute to society
5. noting that persecuted Jews are generally not criminals

This is a sophisticated bunch of reasons. I will comment on them in the order given. As for her first rebuttal to the Anti-Semites, no, we should not hate Jews just because they are Jews. But in my essay referenced earlier, I point out that we should not harm *anyone* just because they are different, including if the difference is one of species, or indeed level of intelligence. In the article I refer to what I term “the classist fallacy” whenever people imply that we have a “license to harm” any class of beings – as animals are *routinely* harmed – just because someone is different in some way from a privileged group such as normal, adult humans. It is somehow not enough for speciesists that animals are acutely sensitive to harms. Yet this is not the place to offer any kind of sustained argument for animal rights. Still, it is remarkable how my reasoning mirrored hers, even though I did not have the privilege of reading her diary when writing the essay in question – I had to wait for a translation. The latter did not emerge until some seven years after my essay was published.

Her second reason – that Jews are no worse than others – is very general, and of course not believed by racists, even if their oppressive beliefs are without any real basis besides ignorance and hatred. Thirdly, it is commonplace for her to plead for Jews counting morally because they have “brains”. As I report elsewhere, the #1 rationalization in speciesist philosophy is that animals are supposedly mentally inferior to humans, as a generality, and therefore lack moral status either wholly or by degrees. I might add that mentally disabled humans have rights too. In a speciesist society that reveres more “intelligent” creatures, her “brains” remark is socially relevant. That is, given the context of the society in which she lived, her reasoning might well have had power of persuasion for the racists – and speciesists – of that era. Fourthly, Maria does refer to Jews’ general propensity for hard work. Yet the disabled, insofar as they are unable to work, also have rights. I agree though that fully able people who are too lazy to work and do their part, such as some of the commune members whom she described, are rather contemptible. As for 5., criminals should also have rights. But she is correct that criminals do end up with restricted rights in most societies – at least for a time – and so that is of course relevant.

Her idealism is evident in several places:

We are entirely convinced that the Second Front will open, all humanity will mobilize against the world’s greatest foe – Hitler – and give him a fatal blow. We have no doubt this will happen. There is no doubt that the number who die will be astronomical but civilization will return to a new era – era of peace, prosperity and justice for the public. Every human being will be free from any kind of discrimination, racial, religious or political. (p. 155)

I wonder if I had a chance really to dialogue with Auntie, if I could have convinced her to extend “peace” and “justice” to animals? Other animals, that is. And whether she might have found it agreeable for animals to enjoy their own simple kinds of “prosperity” on animal sanctuaries? Who knows? She wrote: “Maybe after the war the world will change

enormously? Maybe a love for a fellow man will exist among people as well as respect and care for his very life?” (p. 183) Animals can also use “love”, “respect”, and “caring” for *their* very lives. Yet she wrote: “Why should I be afraid to be a nurse? It is a needed profession, responsible for **human** lives and even noble...” (p. 94, emphasis added) I myself gave little thought to nonhuman lives, or at least not until long after my aunt passed away. So again, I think it would be inappropriate to be any more blaming towards my aunt than I now reproach myself for my former speciesist ways and days. In asking if Jews were being treated better than cattle, there is a hierarchy of suffering that is implied. Treatment of nonhuman animals is at a much lower tier than that of various privileged humans. Is such a hierarchy of treatment “noble”, to use her last-quoted word? I will not argue the point on this occasion. But it is not so “noble” to accord basic non-violence to fellow humans, and the same idea may one day be extended to nonhuman animals.

5. Afterword

Aunt Maria, the diary reveals, read about the concentration camps and associated atrocities from the Soviet Union’s official newspaper, *Pravda*. She also learned from the same source about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Following the Second World War, she wrote to the Josefov city council to inquire about her fellow townspeople. She learned from officials that the Jews who remained there were all, as was so usual for that time, “herded” away at gunpoint and murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices.

The Sztybels who survived what Maria termed “a fight for life” made it to a relocation camp in Germany after the war. The rigours were not over yet. My father tells me that there were explosions constantly all around the camp as mine-sweepers did their duty. The latrines were open pits with planks over them and some refugees – who were often severely weakened from their tribulations – fell in, drowned in human waste. Once those at the encampment found a crate of soap made from human tallow, and gave it a burial according to traditional Jewish rites. Events, nevertheless, brightened after the war.

Some of the Sztybel children went to Israel. Helen married and went to Canada, eventually sponsoring Bernard, Morris [called “Moshe” in the memoirs], and Maria, as well as their parents, David and Sarah. By far, most of the siblings started successful families. The Canadian branch had initially landed in poverty in “the New World” – or *Naivelt* in Yiddish – as it was then called. Gradually, however, they climbed out, applying the family *ethos* of hard work in a land of much greater opportunities. Given their lived backgrounds, they did not take for granted things so basic as good health, as well as hard-earned necessities and niceties. One of them became a millionaire virtually from scratch – sheer business achievement in the retail sector. Today, Bernard Sztybel and his wife, Doris, are vegetarian, and two of their three children are vegan, expanding Maria’s idealistic themes from *A Fight for Life* to nonhuman sentient lives as well.

D.S.

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