

Animal Corner / Who's top dog?

By Rivi Ronen

Dog owners consider their pets soul mates entitled to equal rights. They look for human characteristics in their dogs and they find them. Some owners think their dogs are babies; they hold them in their laps and wait for them to grow up. But what does the dog think of all this?

"All dogs - from chihuahuas to St. Bernards - are descended from wolves," says Dr. Eli Geffen, a zoologist at Tel Aviv University. During the domestication process, which began about 100,000 years ago, man carefully promoted attractive and obedient traits through selection and breeding. Traits like aggression and even intelligence were not necessarily desirable. Many dogs are less intelligent than wolves," he says.

In Israel, there are still a few lone wolves that survive on leftover food and small animals, but most wolves live in packs, of five to seven adults, that hunt larger animals. Dogs, which are actually domesticated wolves, maintain a pattern of behavior in which they are members of a pack with a clear hierarchy. Lacking any choice, they adopted humans as members of their new pack. And who is leading this pack?

"There is no democracy in the canine world," says Yossi Samuel, a veteran dog trainer who runs an obedience school for dogs at Moshav Bazra in the Sharon region. "As far as the dog is concerned, the leader of the pack must be human - its master." And what is the dog's status?

"It is supposed to have the lowest status in the home. Even when there are small children in the home, obedience training should be practiced with the dog, offering positive reinforcement that clarifies the children's higher rung on the ladder." A dog does not think it is human, but its human pack is supposed to provide it with affection and partnership. If humans ignore its social needs, it will become frustrated and may destroy objects. If clear limits are set for it, it will ultimately become a loyal friend.

Is the human pack an adequate replacement?

Most people raise only one dog, and dogs are usually happy to meet other dogs on their daily walks. "A dog does not need many other dogs," says Samuel. "It is much more important to expose it to different sights, new smells, lots of stimuli, and run with it outside. Work dogs, like those used by the police or the army, have the most fun working in their jobs. In my opinion, dogs enjoy running after a ball more than they enjoy playing with members of their species."

Owners- בעלים	Veteran- בעל ותק (גם יוצא צבא/חייל משוחרר)
Consider- מחשיבים	Dog trainer- מאמן כלבים
Pets- חיות מחמד	Obedience- משמעת
Soul mates- נשמות תאומות	Region- אזור, תחום
Entitled- זכאים	Concerned- מודאג (גם מעוניין)
Equal- שוות	Master- בעלים, אדון
Rights- זכויות	Status- סטטוס
Characteristics- מאפיינים	Offering- מציע, מספק
Laps- חיק (גם הקפות, ליפופים)	Positive- חיובי
Grow- לגדול	Reinforcement- חיזוק
Descended- צאצאים (בטקסט- מקורם מ...)	Clarifies- מבהיר
Domestication- ביות	Rung- שלב, מדרגה
Process- תהליך (גם לעבד)	Ladder- סולם
Promoted- קידמו	Affection- חיבה
Attractive- נאים, מושכים	Partnership- שותפות
Obedient- צייתנים	Ignore- מתעלמים
Traits- תכונות, מאפיינים	Social needs- צרכים חברתיים
Breeding- הכלאה (גם הרבעה, חינוך)	Frustrated- מתוסכל
Aggression- תוקפנות	destroy objects- יהרוס חפצים
Desirable- נחשקות, רצויות	Limits- גבולות
Lone wolves- זאבים בודדים (זאב בודד הוא גם ביטוי לאדם המתבדל מהשאר)	Ultimately- בסופו של דבר ...
Survive- שורדים	A loyal friend- חבר נאמן
Leftover food- שאריות אוכל	Adequate- מספיקה, מספקת
Live in packs- חיים בלהקות	Replacement- תחליף
Hunt- צודת	Expose- לחשוף
Actually- למעשה, לאמיתו של דבר	Different sights- מראות שונים
Pattern- תבנית (שטנץ)	Smells- ריחות, ניחוחות
Behavior- התנהגות	Stimuli- גירויים (גם תמריצים)
Hierarchy- היררכיה, מדרג	Species- זנים (גם טיפוסים)
Adopted- אימצו (גם מאמצים)	
canine world- עולם כלבי	