

Veganism and Biblical Customs

Mankind's practices within a predator-prey relationship with animals had its beginnings found in early Bible records.

Listed below are Bible verses which illustrate this with a summary statement of the essence of the verse:

Genesis

1:26 God established that man was to 'rule over' the living creatures. No license was given here to kill and eat.

1:29 Man was given every plant yielding seed and every tree which has fruit yielding seed for food.

1:30 All other living beings were given every green plant for food.

4:4 Abel presents an offering of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. His offering was accepted without rebuke for his having killed an animal in order to provide it. This is the first Biblical record we have of man having killed an animal for food and substance.

8:20 Noah builds an altar and slaughters one of every clean species of animal and bird as an offering to God.

9:2 God instills a sense of terror in all living things of the presence of man. God gives all living things into the hand of man.

9:3 God gives to man every moving that that is alive to man for food.

These biblical events mark the beginning of the predator-prey relationship which exists between man and animals and which resulted in men regarding animals and living creatures as a commodity. In the book of Leviticus it is clearly presented that favor with God is obtainable only if such favor is preceded by the slaughter of an innocent animal and its inward parts distributed in certain ways. Any pain or emotions of the slaughtered animal or being is not considered. It is only to be expected that mankind therefore raises animals for slaughter, hunts and kills them for sport, cages them to look at them, races them for sport, and in general disregards any emotions that they might be undergoing.

If the animals do suffer and have suffered, mankind has suffered *more* because of these traditional practices. *We tend to devalue those whom we exploit or kill for resources.* The overriding theme of the Bible is that God is love, and is merciful. The primary teachings of the New Testament pertain to the extending of mercy. We are taught to love one another and to bear one another's burdens. Yet, we turn right around and slit the throat of a chicken or hog because...after all they are only a commodity. In these practices we are the ones who lose the most. The animal loses its life, but we lose our sensitivity to sentient creatures. Lobsters and crawfish are dropped in boiling water while alive. Chickens are hung on an assembly line conveyor belt and systematically have their throats cut. As an act of kindness to you, the reader of this article, I will relay no more such instances, but believe me, the practices of animal farming are atrocious.

As a young boy I was impressed by a book that I had read entitled The Animal World of Albert Schweitzer. Dr. Schweitzer developed a philosophy called a *reverence for life*. He concluded that every living creature had something which was innate to it which it did not ask to have...*a will to live*. He respected this in every specie regardless of how small. The story is told in this

book of an instance where men had dug a number of post holes for a fence late one afternoon. They waited to put the posts in the holes the next morning. Before they could start, Dr. Schweitzer came running out of the hospital with a flashlight and insisted upon getting on his hands and knees with his flashlight to insure that no creature or insect would be squashed needlessly as a pole was dropped into the hole. He feared that during the night some innocent being might have fallen into the holes. The story stayed with me throughout my life.

I noticed that I almost unconsciously was forever rescuing worms from hot pavement, turning beetles right side up so they could crawl away, and catching lizards and putting them outside lest they die. I, too, had a respect for their life. As I sought to grow spiritually I seemed to reach a plateau beyond which I was unable to go. True enough, I loved God and man, but something seemed to be missing. After much prayer and consideration I determined to extend my love to every living creature. The result of this was my examination of *all* of my practices related to other living creatures. Consequently, what I ate became an issue. I elected to discontinue the practice of eating meat since there was an abundance of alternative foods. In so doing, I was pulling myself out of the predator-prey loop and was no longer part of the demand which needed to be supplied by the demand-supply system. All this I did as a solitary individual without any particular regard to any health advantages which would result from it.

As I searched the Internet, I found that I had not reinvented the wheel at all. Persons around the globe were doing the same things and had been doing so for some time. I had always heard of vegetarians. Now I learned about those who practice *veganism*.

Veganism is not a religion but a philosophy and lifestyle. It chooses to no longer be a consumer of animal derived products for clothing, food, entertainment, or for any other reason. Vegans relate that they do these things in reaction to animal rights, and other concerns. Veganism seeks to discontinue any form of exploitation of, or cruelty to animals for the production of food, clothing or any other purpose.

Below are some interesting quotes given in response to an article that was written pertaining to animal feelings:

"For whatever reasons, we humans tend to draw a charmed ring around ourselves - we suppose we are the only ones that think thoughts and feel feelings."

"We are happy to ascribe emotions to a tiny flailing inarticulate baby, while denying them in a sheep or even a chimpanzee."

"Talk of animal sentience is often brushed off as fluffy and sentimental - not the stuff of science or the real world."

"Humans are so embarrassingly egocentric. So many confuse an animal's inability to communicate in a human way with not having thoughts or emotions at all."

"I am staggered by the colossal arrogance of the majority of the public who regard animals as no more important than table legs."

"We are happy to attribute feelings to our pets, but for the animal we create an entirely new set of rules. After all, *what sort of creatures would we be if we ate animals with feelings?*"

"The question is not, "Can they reason or talk?" but "Can they suffer?"

These quotes serve to show that more than a few persons have developed a *reverence for life* along with a determination to no longer be part of any traditional system which foists misery, cruelty, or premature death on a living creature. Christians are of the belief that they will live throughout eternity. Along with their beliefs is the belief that no other living creature has an extension of life awaiting it. This caused me to one day say, "God forbid that I, who have an eternity to live, deprive another creature of the only life that it will ever have just so my cuisine will be delicious!"

We who are Christians can simply say, "It was good enough for Grandpa, and Grandma..its good enough for me." as we continue to eat the convenient and traditional foods. My Mother made great roast and gravy and fried chicken but that was then and this is now. On the other hand we can elect to more a step further along the way of extending our love. In Jesus' day slavery was rampant and customary and nothing was said to suggest that it be abolished. That doesn't make it either right or the best. It was just the custom. Today slavery is globally decried as an unthinkable practice. Just as we have advanced beyond slavery we can advance further and examine our relationship with all other living creatures.

This article hardly covers the topic of *Veganism* but is intended as an overview. Below are a few urls for your study and consideration. There are many many more but this will get the interested reader started:

[Vegan Values](#) – An excellent article detailing values held dear by most Vegans.

[Vegan & Vegetarian Recipes, Articles, Health Resource](#)

[Slaughterhouse exploitation and inhumane treatment of the animal kingdom..](#)

[The disgusting treatment of dairy cows and their calves on Squidoo](#)

[Animal Concerns Community](#)

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10/29/07