

You ask of me then for what reason it was that Pythagoras abstained from eating of flesh. I for my part do much admire in what humor, with what soul or reason, the first man with his mouth touched slaughter, and reached to his lips the flesh of a dead animal, and having set before people courses of ghastly corpses and ghosts, could give those parts the names of meat and victuals, that but a little before lowed, cried, moved, and saw; how his sight could endure the blood of slaughtered, flayed, and mangled bodies; how his smell could bear their scent; and how the very nastiness happened not to offend the taste, while it chewed the sores of others, and participated of the saps and juices of deadly wounds.

But we are nothing put out of countenance, either by the beauteous gayety of the colors, or by the charmingness of the musical voices, or by the rare sagacity of the intellects, or by the cleanliness and neatness of diet, or by the rare discretion and prudence of these poor unfortunate animals; but for the sake of some little mouthful of flesh, we deprive a soul of the sun and light, and of that proportion of life and time it had been born into the world to enjoy.^[1]

Plutarch 46 - 120 CE

By having a reverence for life, we enter into a spiritual relation with the world. By practicing reverence for life we become good, deep, and alive.

By respect for life, we become religious in a way that is elementary, profound and alive.

Compassion, in which all ethics must take root, can only attain its full breadth and depth if it embraces all living creatures and does not limit itself to mankind.

If a man loses his reverence for any part of life, he will lose his reverence for all of life.

Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace.

Albert Schweitzer, French philosopher, physician, priest and musician - The Nobel Peace Prize 1952

Whenever people say “We mustn’t be sentimental”, you can take it they are about to do something cruel. And if they add “We must be realistic”, they mean they are going to make money out of it.

Brigid Brophy (1929-1995)

There is no fundamental difference between man and the higher animals in their mental faculties.... The lower animals, like man, manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness, and misery.

Charles Darwin, naturalist and author (1809-1882)

A man can live and be healthy without killing animals for food; therefore, if he eats meat, he participates in taking animal life merely for the sake of his appetite. And to act so is immoral.

Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist (1828-1910)

The beef industry has contributed to more American deaths than all the wars of this century, all natural disasters, and all automobile accidents combined. If beef is your idea of real food for real people, you'd better live real close to a real good hospital.

Neal D. Barnard, MD, President, Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

About 2,000 pounds of grains must be supplied to livestock in order to produce enough meat and other livestock products to support a person for a year, whereas 400 pounds of grain eaten directly will support a person for a year. Thus, a given quantity of grain eaten directly will feed 5 times as many people as it will if it is eaten indirectly by humans in the form of livestock products.

M.E. Ensminger, PhD

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us the Universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest - a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.

Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

What is the meaning of human life, or, for that matter, of the life of any creature? To know an answer to this question means to be religious. You ask: Does it make any sense, then, to pose this question? I answer: The man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life.

Albert Einstein (1879-1955) Mein Weltbild, Amsterdam: Querido Verlag, 1934.

So I am living without fats, without meat, without fish, but am feeling quite well this way. It always seems to me that man was not born to be a carnivore.

Albert Einstein, in a letter to Hans Muehsam, dated March 30, 1954

When a human being kills an animal for food, he is neglecting his own hunger for justice. Man prays for mercy, but is unwilling to extend it to others. Why then should man expect mercy from God? It is unfair to expect something that you are not willing to give.

Isaac Bashevis Singer, writer and Nobel laureate (1902-1991)

A dead cow or sheep lying in the pasture is recognized as carrion. The same sort of carcass dressed and hung up in a butcher's stall passes as food.

J. H. Kellogg, American physician (1852-1943)

It ill becomes us to invoke in our daily prayers the blessings of God, the Compassionate, if we in turn will not practice elementary compassion towards our fellow creatures.

Violence begins with the fork.

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948)

There is nothing more frightful than ignorance in action.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German writer (1749-1832)

The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking.

John Kenneth Galbraith, Canadian-American economist (1908-2006)

Some people think the plant-based, whole-foods diet is extreme. Half a million people a year will have their chests opened up and a vein taken from their leg and sewn onto their coronary artery. Some people would call that extreme.

Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn US Surgeon and plant-based diet advocate since 1984

It is not your right — based on YOUR traditions, YOUR customs and YOUR habits — to deny animals THEIR freedom so you can harm them, enslave them and kill them. That's not what rights are about. That's injustice.

Gary Yourofsky

You have to make a conscious decision to change [eating habits] for your own well-being, that of your family and your country.

Bill Clinton

I decided to pick the diet that I thought would maximize my chances of long-term survival.

Al Gore

I choose not to make a graveyard of my body for the rotting corpses of dead animals.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

A mind of the calibre of mine cannot derive its nutriment from cows.

George Bernard Shaw, The Star, Apr. 5, 1890

We consume the carcasses of creatures of like appetites, passions and organs with our own, and fill the slaughterhouses daily with screams of pain and fear.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

One farmer says to me, 'You cannot live on vegetable food solely, for it furnishes nothing to make the bones with;' and so he religiously devotes a part of his day to supplying himself with the raw material of bones; walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his lumbering plow along in spite of every obstacle.

Henry David Thoreau, author of Walden: Or Life in the Woods (1817-1862)

As long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seeds of murder and pain cannot reap the joy of love.

Pythagoras (570 BC-495 BC)

The greatest wealth is health.

Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil) - Roman Poet (70 BC-19 BC)

Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon.

Doug Larson

Health is not simply the absence of sickness.

Hannah Green (1927-1996)

The best doctor gives you the least medicine.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

But I do not feel obliged to believe that that same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and intellect has intended us to forego their use and by some other means to give us knowledge which we can attain by them. He would not require us to deny sense and reason in physical matters which are set before our eyes and minds by direct experience or necessary demonstrations.

Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina of Tuscany (1615)

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

Footnotes

1. Plutarch (1878) *Plutarch's Morals*. Vol. V. Little, Brown, and Company. [online]. Available from: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1215>.