

### **Be a friend to animals**

Many animal species such as dolphins feel pain as acutely as humans do and seem capable of suffering. This is what science has shown. Despite the fact that observation by non-scientists senses that nearly all animals suffer like us even though scientists say it only looks that way we are still very neglectful and cold and even cruel. Science can tell us that an animal is tortured but not if it is right or wrong to do so. Religion typically ignores the torture and does not show the respect due to a suffering animal that a suffering person would get.

Animals suffer the loss of life and they may have pain when we kill them "humanely" for food. Humane does not mean harmless killing. It cannot mean that. We are warped if we see taking an animal's life as harmless. Humane is us boasting that we can do that to animals and feel smug about our good intention. The animal does not care about our intention.

It is impossible to deny that our treatment of animals is evil. Killing an animal even painlessly is using a conscious being for our benefit. It is taking away its happiness and its opportunity to be happy. It implies that we cannot object if some alien being comes along and eats us on the grounds that it is a being better than us. The atheist may eat meat and even kill animals. That is evil. But the atheist does not make the situation worse by acting and feeling as if God approves of his behaviour. Religion deepens vice.

Gary Francione author of Introduction to Animal Rights deals us how "death is the greatest harm for any sentient being and...merely being sentient logically implies an interest in continued existence and some awareness of that interest.... Sentience is not an end in itself—it is a means to the end of staying alive. Sentient beings use sensations of pain and suffering to escape situation that threaten their lives and sensations of pleasure to pursue situations that enhance their lives.... Sentience is what evolution has produced in order to ensure the survival of certain complex organisms."

Religion, especially Christianity, says that without the right to life no other right matters or exists. But what about animals? Theologians and philosophers say animals do not have a right to life but they do have a right to be free from suffering. Contradictions galore! If animals have no right to life then it must be morally neutral or even good to torment them. If unborn babies have no right to life then the Church should urge those who believe this to torment them if they wish to. For religion to say that "Without the right to life no other right matters or exists" applies only to humans is advocating the killing of animals as murder. If you think you murder by killing an animal it will be the lamb today and the toddler tomorrow.

We must do all in our power to make animals happy for the more happiness the better. Nature is red in tooth and claw and we must bring joy into the lives of animals.

We must try to get away from eating animals. We know that nature is cruel. The poor animals that it makes into predators don't understand. They have enough to suffer. The higher the consciousness in an animal the more wrong it is to kill and eat the animal.

We cannot stop animals being cruel to each other. But we know better. We cannot start being cruel to animals ourselves.

Meat-eating must be reserved for cases of necessity, when people will starve. Animals that need flesh to eat must not be deprived of it. We cannot starve our own animals so that other ones might live. We can look after our animals and we produce more animal happiness by putting their well-being before the life of the animals killed for their food.

Do your research and make sure that any animal killed for food has been killed as humanely as possible and has had a comfortable life.

If it is wrong to be cruel to an animal then the happier we can make the animal the better. We are not making it any happier by killing it.

Animals have the power that dwells in us that makes them aware of what their senses tell them.

For practical reasons, though they are equal to us in value we cannot treat them as such. We have to treat people as equals.

If we have to kill an animal, we must do it as kindly as possible and for grave reasons. We must not take pleasure in it.

To love an animal and to bless it provides an opportunity to exalt its spirit so that it can become a human being in its next life. A human being can never return as an animal.

There is a lot of barbarism against animals in the name of religion. Jesus said that he didn't come to do away with the Jewish law but to have it fulfilled better. He claimed responsibility for inspiring that law. And it often commands that animals be bled slowly cruelly to death to get all the blood out. That command was retained by Jesus' followers according to the Acts of the Apostles. If any Christians read this, I'd ask them to become aware of their own hypocrisy before they condemn the barbarism in Jewish and Muslim slaughterhouses. Their hypocrisy enables the problem. You need to have a credible voice before you can challenge the evil done by others.

Even if we do have to kill animals for food, it should be seen as a necessary and regrettable evil. It is not something to be celebrated as a sacrifice. And Jesus would have worshipped at such sacrifices in the Temple. He revered evil scriptures that commanded such sacrifices. The Islamic and Jewish stress on making meat somehow holy by killing the animal according to their rules is based on a similar refusal to look at evil and admit what it is. It is denial: killing animals is never good. It is never something to be happy about.