

OMNIVORISM AND HUMANITY

Animals, like humans, must enjoy the basic benefits and features of life that has been given to them naturally, such as the right to be and live free, and protection against profit-hungry people. It must be accepted that, like us humans, they are residents of planet earth and this world belongs to them also. In the case of animals, similarly, until there is a universal rule put in place to protect them, the majority of people will continue to abuse them.

Unfortunately in today's world, wealth and technology are way ahead of humanity. On one hand human travel to other planets, but on the other hand they abuse animals, kill them, eat their flesh, and wear their skin, which are the style of living from the caveman's era. We see that everyday violence, war, and all kinds of new problems, both in families and in societies, continue to increase and the advancement of technology not only has not solved any problems but has added to their intensity. After inventing tools like spears and knives, man first killed animals and then slowly plundered and killed his fellow men. We see that everyday people go to war with each other with more advanced weaponry, build atomic bombs, call each other enemy based on differences in belief, race or region, put on different masks in order to cover their rebellious faces and commit fraud - even legal fraud – in order to kill the weak. The powerful and the cruel wealthy grab the reins and in abusing the name of law, create different rules to benefit themselves and to hold people's thoughts and possessions captive to their own needs in some ways that people do not have the time or opportunity to do other things besides working and earning money - **civilized slavery without the ball and chain.**

Why killing, eating, and wearing animals is not against the law? Are all laws created by fair legislators who are free of all financial benefits and bodily pleasures? In some countries according to law (mixed with religious beliefs), hands and feet of thieves and other criminals are cut. These punishments are considered inhumane and terrible in many seemingly civilized countries. These seemingly civilized countries have forgotten about their own terrible actions of cutting the beaks, tows, horns and tails of domesticated animals with complete cruelty, skinning them alive, and eating their meat. Therefore it cannot be said that if in a country it is not against the law to kill animals, it is right.

Many people think that kindness and humanity are for humans only, and they only interpret and accept them to the point that benefits them personally, and call animals (that do not have the ability to talk, express their feelings, or defend their rights) stupid, apathetic, and worthless, just like in the past when girls were considered slaves and worthless, inferior creatures. Unfortunately in our world, kindness has completely lost its meaning, what remains of it is only a word, and humans rarely do anything kind. The real meaning of this word is unselfishness and having high regard for other living creatures. Many people know kindness only as showing one another gentle faces along a forced, false smile, but if you look inside these people, or if they come upon a situation where they get the chance to make profits, their real and rebellious faces appear. The word kindness should be looking at more extensively - beyond the limits that today's humanity has set for personal gain - and its true meaning understood. Some see kindness only in doing well for member of the family, some a bit more encompassing; in doing good for neighbors, friends, or fellow country humans, and some even more inclusive, in doing good for all humanity and other sentient beings.

If you pay attention you will notice that images of animals, especially domesticated animals with smiling faces, are used in cartoons, clothes, and other children products. Using these animal images

indicates that children like animals and cheer up upon seeing their pure and innocent faces. Unfortunately such images are only found in cartoons and on clothes, and **poor cheated children do not know what humans do to these animals behind the closed doors. Growing up in a cruel society changes the way they used to feel about animals!**

*Carnivore and predatory animals pay more attention to pity than humans do, because they hunt only when they are hungry and other times they play with their prey and are compassionate. Also naturally and instinctually, they choke and kill their prey first, so that it does not feel pain, and then start to eat it. But man rips apart, not only animals but also his fellow humans, alive. This predatory nature is not just physical but also includes inhumane actions such as hypocrisy, treason, fraud, abuse, discrimination, etc.

Heads of states spend a lot of money on weaponry and security forces to combat violence and terror but fail to eradicate crime. They forget the real reason behind terror is “ killing ”. As long as we allow exceptions for murder and kill animals, we cannot eradicate human murder. Murdering humans (considered big crime) is the result of ignoring the abuse and murder of animals (which most people consider it small crime). If we can not take care of small crimes, how can we fight big crimes?

Animals are like the roots and humans are like the branches and leaves of a tree. Unfortunately, people do not notice the roots hidden underneath the soil and only see the branches and leaves of a tree.

If the roots are not taken care of and left to rot, the branches and leaves will soon die too. In order to destroy violence in society, the heart of humanity needs to be awakened in people, the roots of violence, which are harming and killing of innocent animals, must be dried, and the murder of all living sentient creatures must be banned. Can an individual who believes in humanity, justice, and true kindness, hold a knife, put away pity, become a source of fear and terror, assault an innocent animal, destroy its home, rip apart its body, suck on its blood and eat its meat? Is such an act a sign of justice, peace, and kindness?

The relationship between humans and animals is the same as the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Cruelty toward animals is not natural, but it is a human factor. It is natural if an animal that lives in nature is hunted and eaten by another animal, or if it gets sick and dies. But it is not natural if a human, whose body has no need for animal products, traps animals for personal pleasure, breeds them in inhumane conditions, and then kills them. That is oppression and domination of weaker creatures. If all people oppress the weak and do not stop material and inhumane pleasures, how can they expect those in charge of the country and the world, who benefit financially and hierarchically from oppressing people, to follow justice?

Also, how can be a hand polluted by the blood of the innocent animals be extended to God for prayer and ask for forgiveness, when we cannot show compassion and mercy toward weak and innocent animals? What is scarier than being a bloodthirsty predator but to consider oneself civilized, thoughtful and supporters of justice, freedom and peace in the world at the same time? How can we humans reach world peace when we cannot reach tranquility and peace within ourselves and are still slaves to our own imperialistic hegemonic egos?

We do not have to be the living graves of murdered animals.

Most people hate terrorists (human murderers), but if they look at their own true faces in treating innocent animals, they will see they cause violence and murder just like terrorists, either directly or indirectly. We only name those who murder humans terrorists and have closed our eyes on the crimes that are committed daily against animals in industrial farmhouses, slaughterhouses, and other places producing animal products, and we do not want to think a bit more humanely and step away from our destructive physical and material pleasures. The whole world may mourn for the death of one person but ignores thousands of animals being tortured and killed every day!

Did you know that terrorists are thankful of meat eaters? Because if there is no meat eating, there will be no violence and murder of animals, and as a result, murder of humans. It can be said that users of animal products are the main supporters of terror, violence, war, and destruction in the world.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere (Martin Luther King's.)

A popular symbol of fear on **Halloween** is a personality that is feared among many people because it drinks blood: **Vampire**. I do not find this personality scary. Have you dear meat eaters not drunk blood yet? Is a major portion of the meat you consume every day not formed from blood? Is the blood that exists in the meat that you eat different than the blood a vampire drinks? Only in one occasion can a omnivore claim she/he is not a vampire, and that is when she/he, like a talking parrot, eats meat but escapes from what meat is and where it comes from, and even more interesting, escapes from facing the bitter realities and watching the pictures of slaughterhouses, fearing that she/he might find out



Blood From Slaughter-house

her/his mistake and be forced to abandon these physical pleasures. If an individual cannot watch the process of producing meat and skin from animals, how does she/he dare to eat and wear them? If you think a bit without prejudice, you will realize that there is no difference between an omnivore and a vampire.

A vampire drinks blood directly but a meat-eater mixes it with spices, cooks it a little to give it better taste, and then drinks it. Of course in some parts of the world people drink animal blood fresh and raw, and then claim they fear vampires! In some European countries blood sausage and soup and also in some Asian countries blood tofu is used. Even some people slash the throat of a snake, pour its blood in a cup, and drink it like pomegranate juice because they believe it helps their physical health, but they do nothing for the health of their soul and strengthening human values.

Living in culture of horror

I was born in Iran, which is a meat-lover country like all other countries. From a very young age I was surprised to learn how people were so indifferent toward humanitarian issues, why harming and killing innocent animals were so normal to them, why they followed the ancient traditions whatever they were, why they looked at meat only as delicious food, why they did not look at the source of this product, and why they were so stone hearted and unfair? From that age I started opposing eating meat and wearing animal skin, and what my family and other people said in order to discourage me had no effect on me because I had faith that my belief was true and humane and that **meat is not a food of peace**. Because harming animals is normal, and especially in third-world countries it is in plain view of the public, I have always lived in the anxiety of facing such scenes. In Iran, I was always anxious going to ceremonies like weddings and I was careful not to lay eyes upon the sheep that, according to old traditions, was to be sacrificed (so that her death and blood would bring blessing to the life of the bride and groom!). But a couple of times without wanting to, and sometimes because of curiosity, I was a witness to the killing of birds and sheep, and their shouts and struggles while their throats were being slashed and blood was flowing. The human world always turns dark and scary in my eyes by remembering such scenes. Often in the streets I saw cruelty to animals such as dogs and cats, and also animals that were bought and sold alive (like chickens and sheep) and pitied the destiny that was awaiting them.

One horrible traditional dish which is common in Iran and many other countries is called Pacha made from sheep head. In some restaurants which are called Kalle Pazi (head cooking) the animal's head is cooked and sold and the head includes the whole parts even the tongue and the eyes. Each time that I passed in front of these restaurants, I saw severed heads, open mouths, and staring eyes of the murdered animal which caused strange fear inside of me. Even in USA, some of the middle eastern supermarkets sell the body parts of these. I can not imagine how people dare to eat and enjoy the head and even eyes of these animals who witnessed their own murder in fear! May be this is why they are called omnivores!

Iran is an Islamic country and among Muslims there is a day called **Qurban "Festival of Sacrifice."** On this day domestic animals like cows and sheep are killed and their meat is distributed and eaten by family and neighbors. People who do not have a large backyard, kill these animals on the side of the street in plain view. I remember when I was in turkey (this festival is even more customary there than it is in Iran and almost all families need to sacrifice) on this day I looked out the window for a second out of curiosity and I saw captive animals confused, waiting for their grim fate, and also animals that had been killed and their blood was flowing in the streets. Fortunately in the United States, buying and selling of animals, the way it is customary in third-world countries, is not seen and killing of animals in plain view is illegal and is considered strange and unethical.

Another interesting point that shows disconnecting with the power of thought is to see the killing of

animals in front of the omnivores' eyes is obscene and bizarre, but torturing and killing of animals behind the scenes (slaughterhouses) is acceptable!

From the moment I learned the meaning of words such as chicken, cow, sheep, and fish, and realized the dish called "Chick Barbeque," is made of the same little and beautiful yellow chicks that are killed to be transformed to food, I avoided and escaped from all meat dishes, meaning from the age of about four. I could not understand how a human can bring the carcass of a tortured and killed animal inside her/his house and keep it in refrigerator. By seeing the grilled chicken breast on the food table, unconsciously I saw the picture of a live chicken, a creature that is alive, can understand, has eyes like ours, observes and records what happens around her, eats and drinks like us, creates a family and has children. **If this chicken was asked, before being trapped by humans, if she likes to be captured by humans and leave her family and natural life, be farmed in order to become a delicious bite, and at the end her throat slashed and be eaten, what would she say? No.**

I was always looking for a chance to get rid of the piece of meat on my plate. Sometimes I hid it in the trash bag under other garbage, and sometimes I gave it to my grandfather who lived with us, so he could eat it. But eventually my father and mother found out and because they saw I was determined, they did not insist on eating meat much.



At first my mom and others tried to secretly add the juice of meat to my food and thought they were doing me a favor by preventing me from becoming deficient, based on popular superstitions in the society. Fortunately this plan did not work because I found out, and even when there was no juice from meat added to my food but I had my doubts, I refused to eat and stayed hungry, until they decided to stop doing me this favor. Regarding the physical health and strength, I always had higher energy and active in sports and was one of the top students (unlike what most omnivores expected). When I say meat, I mean any living sentient creature that has been captured and killed, including animals, birds, and fish. Many people think fish is not meat and often ask me why I do not eat fish. Fish, like other living creatures can understand and feel pain. They have been created to live and swim in the sea, not to have their tender mouths be torn apart by the hook of fishermen and become food on our table.

Many people ask me how I can avoid eating delicious animal dishes like grilled meat! This point needs

to be considered that different people look at life from different points of view. One person thinks of a gazelle as a symbol of beauty and looking at this animals brings her peace and joy but a hunter does not find the beauty and peace in this beautiful animal and therefore enjoys torturing and killing the animal. Omnivores look at food made by meat as delicious food and therefore enjoy eating it, but I look at it as a crime, and as delicious and flavorful as this crime might be, I still cannot eat it. **Can you eat a delicious grilled meat made from human flesh?** I know with high probability, and of course with consideration to ethical values, that your answer is no.



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Fortunately I was aware of these obvious injustices from childhood and knew that meat and skin were products of harming and killing animals, and a product named meat or skin cannot be produced until an animal is killed. But I was unaware of the hidden cruelties and from a very young age I was lied to and told that animals produce a lot of milk and eggs daily and naturally and if these products are not consumed by humans they must be thrown away. As a result by consuming milk and egg there is no harm done to animals and they are treated humanely, because otherwise a sad and upset animal cannot produce milk and/or eggs! I also faced problems when consuming milk and eggs. For example the smell of milk and eggs was not pleasant for me, and also whenever I thought about the creators of such products, meaning cows and chickens, and that my food had come out of their body, I avoided drinking milk and eating eggs. One day accidentally on a website I saw a video about milking cows. Slowly I became aware of the cruelty to animals and hidden faces of the animal products industries, and decided to put aside all products made from milk and eggs (like cake and pastries), become a vegan, and become completely free of the trap of the animal products industries, found more power and energy in me to be a voice for those who do not have a voice, and have a part in informing misguided people and saving the world from the bloody, tyrant, and destructive hands of the animal products industries.

I was the first independent Iranian animal right activist to produce and launch the first vegan commercial aimed at Persians through an international Iranian satellite television (Andisheh TV) starting in 04/01/2010.

The wound that the animal product industry has left on my body and soul will never disappear. I will always get an unclean feeling and strengthen my motivation to oppose this inhumane trade by remembering my childhood, when, based on bloody traditions, I was given meat and also the time that, based on lack of awareness, I consumed non meat products that included animal body parts.

Unfortunately in today's world most products, whether edible or not, are made from animals. I usually go to a vegetarian/vegan market that fortunately exists in the city that I live to buy my food because it is only in such a store that I can shop in peace and with a clear conscience, and not see or smell meat (a big problem that vegans face and can not avoid is the smell of animal products). Also in stores which sell animal products such as raw flesh and egg, other products could also be contaminated with bacteria from these animal products.

What bothers me is the silence of those who are aware of cruelty but sit silently. **We should not be silent against oppression because this silence causes the oppression to continue. If we do not oppose oppression and do not try to battle and destroy it, we are also considered criminals.** The experiences I have gained since my childhood is evidence that being human, respecting the minimum of human traits, and not abusing the oppressed (whether human or animal) in this power hungry and pleasure seeking world that has captivated the eyes, hearts, and dignity of humans, is the most difficult of tasks.

If there was a miracle and animals could talk, they would speak of man as the most terrible beast.

If humans only imitated animals in life, their being and their world would not be so dark and turbulent. If today there are no rules to protect animals from becoming food, this is not reason that harming, abusing, and killing animals is normal and is not counted as sin. In not so far away future when meat eating is gone and humans get close to ethical and humanitarian growth, they will look upon our period with fear, thinking how we so easily and with brutality killed, ate, and wore animals and there was no rule to protect them. **The fact that an action is common practice in society does not prove it right. Slavery and cruelty to women were prevalent and normal until a while ago** and there was no law to protect them. But slowly with increasing protests, human rights organizations were formed until today when today observable slavery (meaning chaining people down) is banned and is considered inhumane but **legal slavery**, like creating laws for the benefit of the wealthy and the powerful, still exists. Discriminating against women has not ended yet, but it has been reduced. But animal slavery and cruelty against them still continue . . .