

## Vegetarianism/Veganism

The English word “**vegetarian**” comes from the word “**vegetus**” which means fresh, healthy, intact, and alive, and its true meaning has root in ethics and a balanced philosophy on life that I referred to in earlier sections. In the eyes of some people vegetarianism might be a modern phrase and an invention of this century but it goes back to a long time ago. The first vegetarian society was established in 1847 in England. It included the followers of Pythagoras and in addition to promoting the diet it was accompanied by a higher level of cleanliness and ethical values. The first vegetarian message was published in a magazine in 1849:

**“Live and let live.”**

India has the most number of vegetarian people. About 20 to 40 percent of people in this country are vegetarians and this type of food is found in almost all Indian restaurants. In the United States the first vegetarian society was established in 1850, and the first international vegetarian society was established in 1908 in Germany. Today about 4 percent of Americans are vegetarians.

**Types of vegetarianism:** The word vegetarian means only consuming vegetables but it has gotten a bit away from its true meaning and some branches have grown from it. In the future all these branches will be merged in a main branch, meaning vegan or pure vegetarian.

- Those who avoid eating the meat of earth animals, sea animals, and birds: **Vegetarians**.
- Those who avoid meat products and eggs but consume honey, milk and dairies: **Loco-vegetarians**.
- Those who avoid meat products, milk and dairies but consume honey and eggs: **Ovo-vegetarians**.
- Those who avoid all animal products: **Vegans**.

**Veganism (the green belief):** Veganism is a belief that affects all stages of life such as relationship with animals, people, nature, and daily choices. It condemns arrogance, violence, betrayal, and any kind of abuse. I consider this belief the foundation of humanity. Its followers avoid using meat, milk, dairies, eggs, honey, animal skin, and other animal products, or products that have been tested on animals, and in general anything that leads to cruelty and denial of liberty to animals. They believe that:

- \* Animal products are a product of cruelty, denial of liberty, and assaulting their rights.
- \* Animals are created to live and be free just like human beings.
- \* Violence against any sentient being is against human values.
- \* Human beings do not own other animals, cannot hold weaker animals captive based on having more physical and intellectual power, cannot abuse them for personal pleasures, or cause them trouble and death. Human beings do not need to consume animal products to survive. Therefore if an individual hurts and kills animals, this is an inhumane act.

### **Inventor of the word vegan:**

The word “vegan”, invented by an English man named **Donald Watson**, is short for vegetarian. He was

the founder of the vegan society in 1944, was a vegetarian for 80 years and a vegan for 60 years, and died at age of 95 in full health.

It is said that most vegans are found in the United Kingdom and then in the United States. They are considered to be part of intellectual minorities, and like other minorities are faced with cruelty from opposition, and the supporters and owners of the animal products industry. Some of their thoughts are ridiculed because many people still cannot believe in such humane thoughts and way of life.

**Vegans do not claim to be the most complete and humane people on earth, but they try to live with humane values and reduce the injustice in the world, especially the kind that takes place consciously and unnecessarily.**

## What is the symbol of veganism? V

### Going Vegetarian

In today's world due to advances in industry and agriculture, there are more varieties of vegetarian foods compared to earlier centuries and as a result becoming a vegetarian is very easy. If a group of people and scholars were vegetarians and had healthy lives a long time ago, why should we be scared of becoming a vegetarian in today's modern world, with the abundance of different kinds of plants, vegetables, fruits, seeds, and alternative foods?

If you were a meat eater and have recently decided to stop consuming meat products, you must be faced with anxiety and many questions. You might ask yourself, "how can I say goodbye to meat, cook non-meat foods, and will I be faced with lack of vitamins and proteins?"

Unfortunately we forget that our body is designed to consume plant based diet and if humans are not omnivores, then why they should worry about becoming vegetarians? In today's world, especially in the United States, consumption of animal products has increased because these products are very inexpensive and people are very happy to eat cheap foods like hamburgers. Do not forget that cheap animal products are low in value and quality. In the past when people had hard lives which involved a lot of physical activity, they consumed simple foods in small portions. You see that nowadays the rate of obesity and various diseases have increased significantly, because with advancements in technology, people's physical activity has diminished but unhealthy animal foods full of fat, calories, and protein have found many fans and are consumed more than recommended.

Success in anything depends on the individual's goals and efforts. If you have goals, which here in this case are being a humanitarian, having physical and moral health, and also protecting the nature and the environment, you can easily remove all obstacles in the way. Not everyone around the world can become a pure vegetarian in one night, but if such a goal is in sight, the society will advance toward it slowly and will pave the way to reach this goal. The first step is to avoid killing and eating animals. Being a vegetarian is very easy because you only eliminate meat from your food. If you have a strong will you can put away all meat products at once, but if not, you can do this slowly. First decide to consume only vegetarian foods one day a week and try to cook this food yourself in order to familiarize yourself with vegetarian cooking. You can then abandon cooking red meat and after a while, when you are used to this diet and see that avoiding red meat creates no danger for you and in fact makes you healthier, take the next step and stop eating bird meat. Continue this process to finally see that there is no meat in your food and you have now become a vegetarian. If you stop using animal products such as meat and milk for a short period (like a month) and then attempt to eat them, they will feel fatty and unhealthy to you and your body will not have any desire for them. A

good way to avoid meat is to watch scenes from animal slaughter houses and to remember them when you intend to eat meat.

**A very important point for you vegetarians to remember is that you should turn away your eyes from all reactions from people, whether family members, nutritional specialists, or doctors who are against this diet.**

From a young age, when I had stopped eating meat and had no supporter or role model in this area, I was always faced with opposing views (and I still face them), but because I had faith in what I believed, no negative force could distract me from the path that I had taken on. Many doctors, in order to avoid financial loss or decrease in number of patients, do not give healthy advice to their patients, because after all, if all people live healthy lives, doctors and hospitals will face financial problems.

**Many people ask: how should we cook without meat?** It is not possible! Just continue your daily cooking, but don't add meat. It is that simple. Meat is an element used in cooking; it is not the whole food itself. For people who find it painful to leave the taste of kabob, there are many substitutes that even taste and smell like meat and you would not believe what you are eating is made of plants. A famous plant which is used in making substitute products is **Soybean**, found almost every where around the world. **It has very little fat, and has many of the necessary minerals for the body such as amino acids, omega, and large amounts of protein.** It is seen that consuming soybeans reduces body fat, regulates body hormones (older women should take note), and protects the body from cancer, heart diseases and osteoporosis. Soy products are produced in a variety of forms and are used in producing meat, milk and dairy substitutes. A popular example is **tofu**, which looks like a piece of cheese and is sold in simple or spicy, and soft or hard, varieties. Tofu cooks in a short amount of time. If you have not access to products such as tofu, vegetarian meat or vegan yogurt and cheese, there is no need to worry because this kind of products are considered luxuries. The Foods you need to eat are fruits, vegetables and seeds which are found in all parts of the world.

**Taste of food** is the most important reason behind choosing and combining different cooking elements and techniques. Try to improve your cooking skills by trying different varieties of foods. If you try a certain food for the first time, it might have a strange or unpleasant taste because you are not used to it and that is natural. When I first tried KHORESHT FESENJAN (famous persian food), it had a very strange and unpleasant taste and I decided to avoid it after that. About a year later, I tried a bite of it again but this time it had a very pleasant taste for me, so much so that it became one of my favorite dishes. If you cook tofu by itself, it might not have an interesting taste for you, but if you mix it with other vegetables, it becomes very tasty and pleasant. If you like eating at restaurants, first search on the internet to find a vegetarian restaurant close to where you live. Always try to have diversity in whatever you do and try the different varieties of vegetarian dishes that you have not tasted to find your favorites and have a larger set of options.

## **Going Vegan**

Vegan diet needs a stronger belief and will, because unfortunately milk and eggs are used in most foods. If you live in the United States or European countries, you can easily use dairy substitutes that are tasty and have high nutritional value. Usually food markets that sell natural and organic products also have more vegetarian and vegan products. I recommend you buy different brands and flavors

and try them all to find your favorites. Popular substitutes for milk are soy drink, almond drink, wheat drink, and rice drink. These drinks are available in a variety of flavors. I recommend you buy the kind that has vitamins added to it (**fortified**) as these added vitamins are all herbal. Did you know vegan cheese, even for pizza, is produced with amazing flavor and taste? Other products such as egg substitutes, vegan cakes, yogurt, ice cream, and mayonnaise are also available. Many people imagine that milk and eggs have to be used in order to make cake. However there is no need for these products and instead of milk, soy drink or water can be used. In the past cake was made without milk and eggs, and these products were added later. If you do not have access to egg substitutes you can use potato starch or corn starch instead when making food.

**A huge point for vegan diet is its nutritional variety.** Learn new recipes using the internet or cook books and enjoy them. Try to preserve this variety and use different vegetables for cooking, especially leafy greens that have a dark green color. These vegetables have high amounts of calcium, iron and other minerals. Many people peel fruits before eating them. By doing this a large portions of the vitamins are thrown away because vitamins are found in large amounts under the skin. Fruit and vegetable fiber and carbohydrates are absorbed slowly into the body and regulate the amount of sugar in blood. It is recommended to eat three walnuts and ten almonds every day. Nuts have good fats and a lot of calories, and their moderate consumption is necessary for the body.



Vegan Sausage

### **The benefits of raw veganism**

Humans are the only animals who cook and then eat food in order to reach a better taste. After becoming omnivores and cooking flesh, they started cooking fruits and vegetables too and moving away from healthy eating. Raw fruits and vegetables have more benefits, help in prevention of diseases and have large amounts of enzymes which can help with absorption and digestion of food. As opposed to dry and fried foods, raw foods can be absorbed faster, using less energy. In high temperatures (118 degrees) enzymes start to break down, which then put pressure on the body to produce the necessary enzymes to absorb the food. Cooking food can also easily destroy vitamins. Try to steam vegetables instead and eat them half-cooked. Keeping food warm or reheating it can also destroy vitamins. Try to consume at least one-third of your food raw. The best and easiest way to eat fruits and vegetables raw is to juice them and drink it fresh. Vegetables that fight cancer are: carrot, beet, cabbage, cauliflower, and asparagus.

## Veganic Farming

The same way animals are given hormones and drugs to keep them healthy and antibiotics to keep them alive, plants are given toxins and are manipulated genetically to make them bigger and fatter and more resilient to insects and pests. Products that are sprayed with anti-pest toxins harm the environment, insects, animals, and human beings. They affect the brain, the nervous system, and the immune system, and cause headache, depression, loss of energy, and cancers such as breast cancer. These toxins do not go away even after the products are washed. Some people may believe that organic produce is safer and healthier than conventional produce because it uses less chemicals but organic farming also uses pesticides, chemicals, herbicides that may be derived from natural ingredients and can be harmful. They also use more animal waste product as fertilizer (manure, blood, bone, fish slurry) and can contain a higher risk of fecal contamination and greater chance of getting bacteria on the produce, bacteria such as salmonella and e.coli that exist in animal waste (including humans) and can contaminate crops especially crops that are in direct contact with the soil. With the vegan belief spreading among people, **veganic farms** are on the rise. These farms do not use chemicals and also avoid animal fertilizers because they are a product of the imprisoned animals of cruel and dirty factory farms and contain bacteria.

## In ambush

The profiteering owners of the animal products use different tricks to influence the public and distance them from humanitarian issues, and they have been very successful so far. They use false advertising in the media and give wrong and contradicting information on websites to brainwash people, especially those who are not informed about vegetarianism and the vegan belief, to make them confused and keep them away from vegetarianism because if people turn vegetarian, it will hurt their industry. As an example many articles are presented on the internet about consuming foods and drinks made of vegetables, most popular of them being Soy drinks. These articles claim that drinking too much soy drinks will cause illnesses and consuming them is like taking hormone tablets, which can cause problems in the body. Such claims result from inaccurate, false experiments and feeding too much soy drinks to animals such as mice or birds. Is consuming soy drinks in large proportions a healthy diet for a mouse or a bird? Should a human body be compared to a mouse's body? It has been seen that consuming soy drinks does not have such a negative reaction in human body (another reason to stop conducting experiments on animals). Isoflavone in soy is not a hormone and does not cause an increase in hormones in body. In fact it regulates hormones, but those against soy drinks interpret that differently to benefit themselves.

**They never speak of the harms of animal milk.** Cow milk is a product of slaving of animals, pummeling human values, torturing and hurting innocent animals, and feeding a whole variety of drugs, hormones, and antibiotics to them, which can cause many problems for the human body and the environment.

**More interesting of all is that the owners of animal products have forgotten that they themselves have injected chemical hormones to lactating cows, and then claim that soy drinks have hormones!**

In western countries, soy drink is considered a new product and has been introduced as a substitute to animal products. But consuming soy (especially in the form of tofu) has been common for centuries in countries like China. Consuming soy drink in moderation has no harms, and is known as a healthy product. Like other products, try to use organic soy drink because it is healthier and has a higher nutritional value. Using other soy products like vegetarian sausage and kabob, which are used as

substitutes to meat, have no harm. There are many vegan people who consume such products daily with no health problems. Of course it is very obvious that consuming fresh food is better than the food that has been sitting in a supermarket aisle for a couple of days. Moderation and diversification should be applied in all cases and vegan people are not forced to use only soy products. They should use other grains and non-soy products also, because each plant has its own benefits and nutritional values. For example we cannot eat one apple a day and avoid eating other fruits, believing that the apple will fulfill all the body's needs and vitamins. We should also pay attention to the fact that the human body is sensitive to some foods and if an individual gets physically ill after consuming a certain product, she/he should not assume that the product is unhealthy. Many people are allergic to wheat and there are those who are sensitive to soybeans or animal milk. **About 70% of people around the world are allergic to a substance called lactose, found in animal milk**, and cannot absorb it and have to purchase lactose-free milk.

**But we hardly heard that animal milk is unhealthy and harmful because the owners of this industry are very powerful and their constant media advertising has closed the eyes and the ears of people and prevents them from paying attention to the harms of these products.** It is the world order that new thoughts that can bring financial harm to the profiteers are faced with opposition, similar to any new religion that deals with bloody fights, rumors, and spreading of false claims by those opposed.

## **Misleading names**

When shopping you should make sure what you buy is produced in a humane way without any testing on animals. Try to make a habit of reading the ingredients table on the products. Do not use products that have artificial colors or preservatives. If you do not see a vegetarian or vegan label on it, make sure you go through the ingredients to see that it does not come from animals. If you are still unsure, call the number on the label. You can also find more information about the product and specific ingredients using the internet.

Since human beings only eat the desirable parts of an animal, a large portion of the remains of the animals are left untouched in slaughterhouses and the owner of this industry needs to find a way to use them and feed them to people. As a result they add fat, skin, bones, and other body parts of the animals to food products and use strange names so that the consumers do not realize what the source of the products is. Did you know that many pastries have animal meat, skin, and fat in them? For example gelatin which is used in many pastries (like jelly) is made from the skin, bones, and tendons of animals such as cows and pigs (vegetable gelatin also exists but because animal gelatin is more available and less expensive, it is used more commonly.)

### **Here are some of the strange names that vegetarians should look out for:**

**Lard, Gelatin, Carmine, Glycerin, Tallow acid, Collagen, Cystine, Keratin, Lipase, Bone char, Adrenaline, Alanine, Elastin.**

Such ingredients are made from animal fat, skin, muscle, bone, urine, and hair. Carmine is made from insects and is added to some foods or drinks. Cystine is made from animal urine. Bone char is made from animal bones and is used as a filter to make sugar white, but it is said that it does not mix with sugar. Many vegetarians and vegans avoid using white sugar and use natural and brown sugar which is not filtered.

### **Products that vegans should look out for when shopping:**

If you do not see the vegan symbol on a product, in addition to the ingredients mentioned above, you

should also look out for ingredients that are usually made from egg or animal milk:  
**Lactose, Whey, Casein, and Lactic acid.**