

Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight *Albert Schweitzer*

Views on vegetarian/veganism have changed in the past few years, in fact the American philosopher Tom Regan said that more research has been done on animal rights in the last 30 years than has taken place in the previous 3000. Perhaps this goes some way to explaining why levels of vegetarianism, at least in the UK, have only recently started to grow – it's a rarely considered subject which has, relatively, just been touched on.

This leads us to the reason why leaflets like this and the information contained within, has to be spread. The reasoning behind animal rights, and vegetarianism has got to a stage where it is becoming complete:

'Honourable men may honourably disagree about some details of human treatment of the non-human, but vegetarianism is now as necessary a pledge of moral devotion as was the refusal of emperor-worship in the early Church.'

Stephen R. L. Clark

So why is it necessary now? Well the relevant research has now becoming available. We know other animals feel pain and pleasure, and can suffer just as we can:

'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

Darwin's evolutionary theory is now widely scientifically accepted – we are all related, and humans aren't the only one's with pain sensors, or the ability to suffer...etc.

But it isn't just the scientific research which has surfaced. As important as it is, the real development has come in the way we think. Some great minds foresaw it:

'I have from an early age abjured the use of meat, and the time will come when men such as I will look upon the murder of animals as they now look upon the murder of men.'

Leonardo Da Vinci

'One day the absurdity of the almost universal human belief in the slavery of other animals will be palpable. We shall then have discovered our souls and become worthier of sharing this planet with them.'

Martin Luther King Jr.

And now the great thinkers of our modern age have reasoned the arguments to support why animals are just as deserving of a right to life as humans:

'Because one species is more clever than another, does it give it the right to imprison or torture the less clever species? Does one exceptionally clever individual have a right to exploit the less clever individuals of his own species? To say that he does is to say with the Fascists that the strong have a right to abuse and exploit the weak - might is right, and the strong and ruthless shall inherit the earth.'

Richard Ryder

'It is wrong to treat weaker human beings, especially those who are lacking in normal human intelligence, as "tools" or "renewable resources"...It cannot be right, therefore, to treat other animals as if they were "tools," "models" and the like, if their psychology is as rich as (or richer than) these humans. To think otherwise is irrational.'

Tom Regan

So now we are at a place of transformation in human history. Just as the women and blacks movements to gain independence from discrimination were set in reason, so is this one. The only difference is this isn't about the right to freedom, or to vote, this is about a basic right to life – the very least that we dominant humans can offer our fellow creatures. Similarly like these other great social movements, one day we will look back in disgust – not at racism or sexism this time, but at 'speciesism'.

'Our Grandchildren will ask us one day: Where were you during the holocaust of the animals? What did you do against these horrifying crimes? We won't be able to offer the same excuse the second time, that we didn't know.'

Helmut. F. Kaplan

Good people won't continue to do nothing. It's time to go vegan.