ACADEMY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Critical Thinking Student Artifact

Vegan: A Moral Dilemma

Reasons for becoming vegetarian or vegan are varied and numerous. Animal rights seem the obvious front runner swaying many refusing to eat meat as a protest of cruel factory farming. Some may draw the line at meat as vegetarians but others view the milk and egg industries as equally inhumane and become vegans. To clarify for those who may not be totally familiar with the standard of each, vegetarians typically do not consume meat but may eat eggs, dairy, or anything that does not require the death of an animal to be produced. Vegans, on the other hand, typically do not consume ANY animal products at all. This can include everything from honey to leather.

Health is another considerable factor. Studies have proven that a meat-free diet can reduce many health risks including high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Many people report feeling detoxified or cleansed as a result of eliminating meat from their diets. But just because one does not eat meat for reasons of animal death, can it be argued that the plants being consumed are living things as well.

More and more peer reviewed scientific studies are showing bona fide examples of plant consciousness. An article in the New York Times documented how pea plants, for example, communicate the onset of a drought to other plant species allowing them to take preparatory and precautionary actions. This would support that not only are plants living, but able to talk to each other in a sense of preserving their life and that of neighboring plants. There are some plants that are specifically designed to be eaten though, like cherries, apples, oranges and grapes, so that their seeds can be taken from the site of the parent plant and disbursed to further the "plant species" elsewhere.

So, perhaps all creatures have intelligence and all creatures have a soul… so what do we eat? We don't have different compartment divided stomachs designed to eat grasses like a cow, neither do we have flat teeth designed for grinding plants. We don't have massive jaw muscles made for ripping apart raw flesh, and we don't have bone crushing strength (at least most of us anyway). We, biologically as human beings, are omnivores. That's what would seem the natural assumption drawn by physical design. The extent of our body properties would suggest a happy median between eating a pure Carnivore or meat diet vs. pure Herbivore or plant diet. By design we can choose our own moral stance on whether consuming animals is a moral act and why not partaking of any animal products can be a sustainable lifestyle. If one wants to eat nothing but meat and pure animal products, are they just as justified? Choice of food consumption prove moral or immoral is a perspective each individual has the chance of choosing.

Work Cited

Marder, Michael. "If Peas Can Talk, Should We Eat Them?" The New York Times April 28, 2012.
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/04/28/if-peas-can-talk-shoul d-we-eat-them/

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