
Morality Does Not Require Vegetarianism

There has been a great debate about the relationship between vegetarianism and morality. While the arguments against eating meat are quite convincing, there were only a few researches to justify the morality of consuming animal product. However, I believe that morality does not require vegetarianism since it is not the only choice to live life towards the good and show mercy to animals. In this essay, we will consider: 1) the condition in which animals were raised and slaughtered, 2) alternatives to animal factory farming and 3) the effect of vegetarian and omnivorous diet on the environment and human's life.

To begin, though sounded unfamiliar, factory farming industry is not as cruel and inhumane as we thought it had always been. Usually, the most common reason to argue for or against eating meat is the way farming factories raise and slaughter animals for food and other products. It is widely known that animals raised for meat are living in poor and miserable conditions. Then after a short lifetime, they suffer from great pain in the process of cruel slaughter. However, these had only happened in the past. Nowadays, technology thrives, and there are more sustainable and humane farming solutions invented and put into practice. They are ways of consuming meat while still caring about animal welfare and honouring their sacrifices. For example, an animal raising process suggested by Humaneitarian (2018): "Pasture-raised animals are allowed to live outdoors for a significant portion of their lives. They get fresh air, room to move around, and sunlight." and "If they're indoor animals, their lives will be greatly enhanced by the presence of 'enrichments' - objects such as perches and nest boxes (for poultry) and hay nests or wallowing pits (for pigs) that allow them to engage in natural behaviours.". These solutions bring about a better life for livestock, reduce stress and sufferings for animals while they are living. Also, in the slaughter process, animals are shot in the forehead with a "captive bolt" pistol or electrocuted to render their unconscious before their throats are slit, minimize the sufferings. Besides, it is not only food that matters. Instead of refrain from eating meat, people should consider stopping using animal products which require unnecessarily cruel produces, such as dear musk, fur or skin bag, coat or clothing, etc,...

Besides factory farming, there are other sources of meat for humans that do not require intensive farming, which is from hunting, road kill, natural disaster, and lab meat. Firstly, since our ancestor's time, people have hunted wild animal as a primary source of food. The advantage of hunting compared to factory farming is that it does not involve the process of caging and causing continuous suffering to animals. Killing animals with one gun or arrow shot leads to immediate death without animals' stress and pain. However, hunting which is supported in this case, is only pure for the purpose of getting meat, but not as a kind of sport or entertainment. Secondly, according to a recent study by Guimarães (2015), 15 animals are killed per second, or 1.3 million per day and up to 475 million per year by road accidents in Brazil. We can consume these animals without considering morality, as we did not intentionally cause death to them. Death is inevitable for all animals, including human, therefore, it is not wrong to eat meat which is both available and does not involve immoral cultivation. Thirdly, lab meat, or cultured meat, is no longer a fiction. It eliminates the cruel and unethical treatment of animals that are raised for food and also reduce the considerable environmental costs of meat production. According to Scientific American (2018), in 2013, a burger made with lab-meat cost \$300,000, however, this year, it has decreased down to \$600. It might not be reasonable in

daily use, but is still a promising alternative to factory farming. Besides, there are many kinds of animals, for example, oyster, does not have a central nervous system, therefore unlikely to feel any pain. We can consume these animals without concerning the ethical problems. All alternatives listed above, though can not be absolutely sustainable choices of consuming meat, still remain as potential ways of morally consuming meat. To live life towards the good, it is suggested that we should consume less meat and get them from either a humane factory or these three alternatives.

Last but not least, we will consider the impact of vegetarian and omnivorous diets on the environment and humans. Firstly, there are a lot of misunderstandings about farming factory, for example, The Böll Foundation (2014) points out that these factories contribute up to 32% of the greenhouse emissions. This is much more than the amount produced by traffic and transportation. However, this research was conducted with the wrong method of analyzing that led to misconception. According to Mottet and Steinfeld's correction, the amount of gas emission from livestock is just 1/3 compared to transportation. In contrast, it is a fact that when using more land for agriculture, more animals would be harmed or killed through this process. Loss of habitats, sprayed chemicals, and genetically modified food would result in unnecessary deaths to animals. This would be such a waste of food sources and would decrease the diversity of the ecosystem. Moreover, the proficient agriculture we have nowadays bases a lot on the contribution of livestock's manure. If farming factories no longer existed, vegetable cultivation would end up with more toxic chemicals and pesticides. Vegetarian will end up not only accidentally killing as many animals as other people but also struggling with balancing their diet. This is because vegan or vegetarian are more likely to lack nutrition if not paying enough attention to their diet. Though most kind of nutrition can be found in vegetables, nuts, etc,... they might not function or be absorbed as well as ones found in animal products. Moreover, some special nutrition can only be found in meat and animal products, like Vitamin B-12. To maintain fit and healthy, vegetarians would have to use costly but ineffective functional food. However, not everyone can afford this lifestyle in order to live morally. There are many places on Earth where people can not even have the chance to choose what to eat and have poor food supplies. Therefore, they can not be considered as immoral.

In this essay, we have look through the condition of farming factories, alternatives to intensive factory farming and the impact of vegetarian and omnivorous diets on the environment and on human. After carefully considering the evidence and researches, I believe that we can still be ethical while consuming meat or animal products. Though vegetarianism is a way to live towards the good, it is not the only and ultimate choice. As long as we take action to improve the practice of animal raising and slaughtering, control the waste of meat, appreciate the death of livestock that gives us food, and conduct a healthy diet with both animal and plant product, we can still live life towards the good.

Reference list:

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