

The World Peace Diet

By Will Tuttle, Ph.D.

Dr. Will Tuttle is an award-winning speaker, educator, author, and musician. His music, writings, and presentations focus on creativity, intuition, and compassion. On his website, you can find out more about Dr. Tuttle's book, [The World Peace Diet](#).

The World Peace Diet has been called one of the most important books of the 21st century: the foundation of a new society based on the truth of the interconnectedness of all life.

Would you like to understand the hidden roots of the dilemmas we face as individuals. Do you feel called to contribute to creating a positive future for our children and world?

Dr. Tuttle's book as a guide will empower yourselves and others in making dietary choices that are powerful beyond what you can possibly imagine. It reveals crucial and incredibly empowering information that has been--until now--almost completely concealed.

It has been heralded as the harbinger of a new world where peace, freedom, justice, harmony and love are actually possible, and reveals the secrets to positive individual and social transformation.

Eating For Spiritual Health And Social Harmony

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Collection of Thoughts from Dr. Will Tuttle

Are we Indoctrinated?

Most of us resist being told we've been indoctrinated. After all, we live in the land of the free, and we like to think we've arrived freely at the belief that we need to eat animal products and that it's natural and right to do so. In fact, we have inherited this belief. We've been indoctrinated in the most deeply rooted and potent way possible, as vulnerable infants, yet because our culture denies the existence of indoctrination, the reality of the process is invisible, making it difficult for most of us to realize or admit the truth.

Those who Abstain from Eating Animals

Geniuses like Pythagoras, Leonardo da Vinci, and Mahatma Gandhi abstained from eating animals. Plutarch wrote,

“When we clog and cloy our body with flesh, we also render our mind and intellect coarse. When the body's clogged with unnatural food, the mind becomes confused and dull and loses its cheerfulness. Such minds engage in trivial pursuits, because they lack the clearness and vigor for higher thinking.”

Celebrate, Honor, & Appreciate

Instead of reducing our intelligence and compassion by denying and destroying the intelligence and purpose of animals, we could celebrate, honor, and appreciate the immense diversity of intelligences, beauties, abilities, and gifts that animals possess and contribute to our world. We could liberate ourselves by liberating them and allowing them to fulfill the purposes that their particular intelligences yearn for. We could respect their lives and treat them with kindness. Our awareness and compassion would flourish,

bringing more love and wisdom into our relationships with each other. We could live in far greater harmony with the universal intelligence that is the source of our life. To do so, however, we would have to stop viewing animals as commodities, and this means we would have to stop viewing them as food.

Love All

In our churches, ministers often speak about the tragedy of loving things and using people, when we must instead love people and use things. After the services, people eat meals in which animals have become things to be used, not loved. This action, ritually repeated, propels us into using people just as we use animals—as things.

Infinite Love is the Only Truth, Everything Else is Illusion.

“The greatest gift we got is not Life, but Love. Life without love would be just an existence. The gift of Love enriches everyone beyond imagination. Love does nurture, heal and make us to be the reflection of the Divine. What would our existence without love, kindness, healing or Divinity be? It would simply be an empty circle, nonsensical and dry. One could not care to live or die. Love and kindness will makes us to live in joy and happiness. With Love in our hearts we cannot hate or lie. To live this way we will have no hate, no anger, no suffering. Without love life is loneliness and misery, but with Love we will definitely change the World. Love alone lifts our Soul and Spirit to the Divine. To love truly and living lovingly, we will live the reflection of kindness. With love and kindness the Earth will be converted to a beautiful place. What more could one want or ask? If we all live in Love truly, all of us will experience life beyond imagination. Love is the greatest Gift to you and to me. No wonder that Infinite Love is the Only Truth, Everything Else is Illusion. “ *Steve Dudas*

Transformation requires Change!

It's funny how we want transformation without having to change! Yet the fundamental transformation called for today requires the most fundamental change—a change in our relationship to food and to animals, which will cause a change in our behavior.

The Vegan Movement

The contemporary vegan movement is founded on loving-kindness and mindfulness of our effects on others. It is revolutionary because it transcends and renounces the violent core of the herding culture in which we live. It is founded on living the truth of interconnectedness and thereby consciously minimizing the suffering we impose on animals, humans, and biosystems; it frees us all from the slavery of becoming mere commodities.

It signifies the birth of a new consciousness, the resurrection of intelligence and compassion, and the basic rejection of cruelty and domination. It is our only real hope for the future of our species because it addresses the cause rather than being concerned merely with effects.

“As long as men massacre animals, they will kill each other. Indeed, he who sows the seeds of murder and pain cannot reap joy and love.”

Pythagoras

Mindful Awareness

When we cultivate mindful awareness of the consequences of our food choices and conscientiously adopt a plant-based way of eating, refusing to participate in the domination of animals and the dulling of awareness this requires, we make a profound statement that both flows from and reinforces our ability to make connections. We become a force of sensitivity, healing, and compassion. We become a revolution of one, contributing to the foundation of a new world with every meal we eat. As we share our ideas with others, we promote what may be the most uplifting and healing revolution our culture has ever experienced

Life Affirming

Two types of agriculture emerged plant and animal and the distinction between them is significant. Growing plants and gardening is more feminine work; plants are tended and nurtured, and as we work with the cycles of nature, we are part of a process that enhances and amplifies life. It is life-

affirming and humble (from humus, earth) work that supports our place in the web of life. On the other hand, large animal agriculture or husbandry was always men's work and required violent force from the beginning, to contain powerful animals, and control them, guard them, castrate them. In the end, kill them.

Cultivate Awareness

Making the effort to cultivate our awareness and see beyond the powerful acculturation we endured brings understanding. Healing, grace and freedom come from understanding. Love understands. From understanding, we can embrace our responsibility and become a force for blessing the world with our lives, rather than perpetuating disconnectedness and cruelty by proxy.

Ethical Intelligence

Compassion is ethical intelligence: it is the capacity to make connections and the consequent urge to act to relieve the suffering of others.

Born into this

None of us ever consciously and freely chose to eat animals. We have all inherited this from our culture and upbringing. Going into the baby food department of any grocery store today, we see it immediately: beef-flavored baby food, chicken, veal, and lamb baby food, and even cheese lasagna baby food. Well-meaning parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors have forced the flesh and secretions of animals upon us from before we can remember.

Marine Wildlife

“Seafood is simply a socially acceptable form of bush meat. We condemn Africans for hunting monkeys and mammalian and bird species from the jungle yet the developed world thinks nothing of hauling in magnificent wild creatures like swordfish, tuna, halibut, shark, and salmon for our meals. The fact is that the global slaughter of marine wildlife is simply the largest massacre of wildlife on the planet.” Paul Watson

You have just Dined...

Emerson's "You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughterhouse is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity," shows the esteemed Concord sage's ability to make the connections that elude most. Bronson Alcott's daughter, Louisa May, wrote,

"Vegetable diet and sweet repose. Animal food and nightmare. Pluck your body from the orchard; do not snatch it from the shambles. Without flesh diet there could be no blood-shedding war."

She makes explicit the connection between the violence inherent in eating animals, nightmares, and the nightmare of human violence turned against ourselves.

What we Ignore

The more forcefully we ignore something, the more power it has over us and the more strongly it influences us.

Uproot Exclusion

When we uproot exclusion and domination from our plates, seeds of compassion can finally freely blossom, and this process depends primarily on us watering the seeds and fully contributing our unique journey. We depend on each other, and as we free the beings we call animals, we will regain our freedom. Loving them, we will learn to love each other and be fully loved.

Plant Seeds of Compassion

Within us lie seeds of awakening and compassion that may be already sprouting. Our individual journeys of transformation and spiritual evolution call us to question who and what we've been told we and others are, to discover and cultivate the seeds of insight and clarity within us, and to realize the connections we've been taught to ignore. As we do this and as our web of journeys interweaves within our culture, cross-fertilizing and planting seeds,

we can continue the transformation that is now well underway, and transcend the obsolete old paradigm that generates cycles of violence.

Desensitizing Millions of Children

The desensitizing of millions of children and adults—on the massive scale that consuming millions of tortured animals daily requires—sows countless seeds of human violence, war, poverty, and despair. These outcomes are unavoidable, for we can never reap joy, peace, and freedom for ourselves while sowing the seeds of harming and enslaving others.

Leave off eating animals

The American roots of deeply questioning food and developing the philosophical foundation for a more compassionate relationship with animals can be traced to the progressive writers clustered around Emerson in Concord in the mid-nineteenth century.

Thoreau wrote, “I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other when they came into contact with the more civilized.”

A Compassionate Life

“First, live a compassionate life. Then you will know.” —Buddha

We are Neighbors

So what are we, and what are animals? Our concepts only reveal our impeding conditioning. We are neighbors, mysteries, and we are all manifestations of the eternal light of the infinite consciousness that has birthed and maintains what we call the universe. The intuitive knowing that would reveal this to us, though, is mostly unavailable because as a culture we are outer-directed and fail to cultivate the inner resources and discipline that would allow us to access this deeper wisdom.

Begin to Understand

By ceasing to eat animal foods and thus causing misery to our neighbors, and by practicing meditation and quiet reflection, which can eventually extract our consciousness out of the brambles of compulsive thinking, we can begin to understand what consciousness actually is. We will see that to the degree we can be open to the present moment and dwell in inner spacious silence, beyond the ceaseless internal dialogue of the busy mind, we can experience the radiant, joy-filled serenity of pure consciousness.

Our Role on Earth

Who are we? What is our proper role on this earth? I submit we can only begin to discover these answers if we first take the vegan imperative seriously and live compassionately toward other creatures. Then peace with each other will at least be possible, as well as a deeper understanding of the mysteries of healing, freedom, and love.

Truth of Compassion

By living the truth of compassion in our meals and daily lives, we can create a field of peace, love, and freedom that can radiate into our world and bless others by silently and subtly encouraging the same in them.

Cruelty to Animals

“Cruelty to animals is as if man did not love God...there is something so dreadful, so satanic, in tormenting those who have never harmed us, and who cannot defend themselves, who are utterly in our power.”—Cardinal John Henry Newman

Our Sacred Connection

Because of our herding orientation and our unassuaged guilt complex due to the misery in our daily meals, we have warped our sacred connection with the infinite loving source of our life to an ultimate irony: comparing ourselves to sheep, we beg our shepherd for mercy, but since we show no mercy, we fear

deep down we'll not be shown mercy either and live in dread of our inevitable death. We bargain and may proclaim overconfidently that we're saved and our sins are forgiven (no matter what atrocities we mete out to animals and people outside our in-group), or we may reject the whole conventional religious dogma as so much absurd pabulum and rely on the shallow materialism of science. However it happens, our spiritual impulse is inevitably repressed and distorted by the fear, guilt, violence, hardness, competitiveness, and shallow reductionism that herding and eating animals always demands.

Animal Communication

We can argue that animals are largely unconscious, decreeing that because animals seem to lack the complex language that allows them to formulate thoughts in words as we do, their experience of suffering must therefore be less significant or intense for them. This same thinking, however, could be used to justify harming human infants and senile elderly people. If anything, beings who lack the ability to analyze their circumstances may suffer at our hands more intensely than we would because they are unable to put the distance of internal dialogue between themselves and their suffering.

Buckminster Fuller

Buckminster Fuller often emphasized that the way of cultural transformation is not so much in fighting against destructive attitudes and practices, but in recognizing them as being obsolete and offering positive, higher-level alternatives. The competitive, violent, commodifying mentality of the ancient herding cultures is, in our age of nuclear weapons and global interconnectedness, profoundly obsolete, as is eating the animal foods of these old cultures, which are unhealthy in the extreme both to our body-minds and to our precious planetary ecology.

The Golden Rule

All the world's major religions have their own form of the Golden Rule that teaches kindness to others as the essence of their message. They all recognize animals as sentient and vulnerable to us, and include them within the moral

sphere of our behavior. There are also strong voices in all the traditions emphasizing that our kindness to other beings should be based on compassion. This is more than merely being open to the suffering of others; it also explicitly includes the urge to act to relieve their suffering. We are thus responsible not just to refrain from harming animals and humans, but also to do what we can to stop others from harming them, and to create conditions that educate, inspire, and help others to live in ways that show kindness and respect for all life. This is the high purpose to which the core teachings of the world's wisdom traditions call us. It is an evolutionary imperative, a spiritual imperative, an imperative of compassion, and, in reality, a vegan imperative.

Donald Watson

The motivation behind vegan living is the universal spiritual principle of compassion that has been articulated both secularly and through the world's religious traditions; the difference lies in veganism's insistence that this compassion be actually practiced.

The words of Donald Watson, who created the term “vegan” in 1944, reveal this practical orientation and bear repeating: Veganism denotes a philosophy and way of living which seeks to exclude, as far as is possible and practical, all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose; and by extension promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of humans, animals, and the environment.

Shojin

Shojin is “religious abstention from animal foods” and is based on the core religious teaching of ahimsa, or harmlessness, the practice of refraining from causing harm to other sentient beings. Shojin and samadhi are seen to work together, with shojin purifying the body-mind and allowing, though certainly not guaranteeing, access to the spiritually enriching experience of samadhi. Outer compassion and inner stillness feed each other. Shojin and veganism are essential to our spiritual health because they remove a fundamental hindrance on our path.

Scarcity of Meditation

We can see that in general, the more a culture oppresses animals, the greater its inner agitation and numbness, and the more extroverted and dominating it tends to be. This is related to the scarcity of meditation in Western cultures, where people are uncomfortable with sitting still.

Quiet, open contemplation would allow the repressed guilt and violence of the animal cruelty in meals to emerge to be healed and released. Instead, the very activities that would be most beneficial to people of our herding culture are the activities that are the most studiously avoided. We have become a culture that craves noise, distraction, busyness, and entertainment at all costs. This allows our eaten violence to remain buried, blocked, denied, and righteously projected.

Loving-Kindness

Authentic spiritual teachings must necessarily teach an ethics of loving-kindness, because this reflects our interconnectedness and the truth that what we give out comes back to us. It leads to the harmony in relationships that is necessary not just for social progress, but also for our individual inner peace and spiritual progress.

We are not Predatory!

We are not predatory by nature, but we've been taught that we are, in the most potent way possible: we've been raised from birth to eat like predators. We've thus been initiated into a predatory culture and been forced to see ourselves at the deepest levels as predators. Farming animals is simply a refined and perverse form of predation in which the animals are confined before being attacked and killed. It doesn't stop with animals, however.

Intuition Liberates

Intuition liberates, connects, illumines—and threatens our herding culture's underlying paradigm of violent oppression of animals and of the feminine. Intuition sees the shadow clearly, and disarms it by embracing it and not

feeding it. It sees the animal hidden in the hot dog, ice cream, and omelette, feels her misery and fear, and embraces her with love.

Spiritual Consciousness

The lesson is quite basic. If we can't stop the cruelty of eating animal foods, how can we presume to develop the sensitivity, the spiritual consciousness, the joy, peace, and creative freedom that are our potential?

To be Love

Our love, to actually be love, must be acted upon and lived. Developing our capacity for love is not only the means of evolution; it is the end as well, and when we fully embody love, we will know the truth of our oneness with all life. This makes us free.

Survive and Thrive

We will only survive and thrive if we recognize the central power of our meals to shape our consciousness. Food is eaten and becomes the physical vehicle of consciousness, and consciousness chooses what to incorporate into itself from itself. Do we cultivate and eat fear or love? Terrorized animals or nurtured plants? We cannot build a tower of love with bricks of cruelty.

Spiritually Free

We become spiritually and psychologically free only as we are able to see and integrate the shadow aspects of ourselves, and this will only be possible when we stop eating animal foods, relaxing and releasing the irresistible need to block our awareness. In unchaining animals, we unchain ourselves.

Undeniable Force

The shadow is a vital and undeniable force that cannot, in the end, be repressed. The tremendous psychological forces required to confine, mutilate, and kill millions of animals every day, and to keep the whole bloody slaughter repressed and invisible, work in two ways. One way is to numb, desensitize, and armor us, which decreases our intelligence and ability to

make connections. The other is to force us to act out exactly what we are repressing. This is done through projection. We create an acceptable target to loathe for being violent, cruel, and tyrannical—the very qualities that we refuse to acknowledge in ourselves—and then we attack it.

The Shadow Archetype

The shadow archetype represents those aspects of ourselves that we refuse to acknowledge, the part of ourselves that we have disowned. To itself, the shadow is what the self is not, and in this case it is our own cruelty and violence that we deny and repress. We tell ourselves that we are good, just, upright, kind and gentle people. We just happen to enjoy eating animals, which is okay because they were put here for us to use and we need the protein. Yet the extreme cruelty and violence underlying our meals is undeniable, and so our collective shadow looms larger and more menacing the more we deny its existence, sabotaging our efforts to grow spiritually and to collectively evolve a more awakened culture.

God's Creatures

“If you have men who will exclude any of God’s creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, then you have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men. “—St. Francis of Assisi

Hindrance to Happiness

Of itself, veganism is not a panacea, but it effectively removes a basic hindrance to our happiness, freedom, and unfoldment. As a living and ongoing expression of nonviolence, it is an enormously powerful agent of transformation in our individual lives, especially since our culture opposes it so vehemently.

Mindful Eating

An interesting objection to adopting a plant-based way of eating that many Christians rely on is the saying by Jesus that “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a

man” (Matthew 15:11). This is often interpreted as giving us permission to eat anything we like and instructing us instead to be mindful of our speech. By now it should be clear that this objection misses the point entirely. When we order a chicken or a cheeseburger at a deli, restaurant, or market, that is the moment that we engage in violence and cause “murders,” “thefts,” and suffering to defenseless animals and disadvantaged people. At that moment we are like the general who gives an order to kill someone in a faraway country; though he never sees the blood or hears the scream, he is nevertheless responsible for the killing.

Responsibility for Our Actions

Taking responsibility for the violence we are causing others and ourselves through our actions, words, and thoughts is never as easy as blaming others for the violence in our world.

Seeing, Caring, Connecting.

Religion’s turning away has allowed the atrocities to continue and legitimized the turning away of the general population. This turning away is the paradigmatic learning that our culture specializes in, particularly with regard to the plight of the animals we eat and use; it is the everyday teaching of not seeing, not caring, disconnecting, and ignoring.

The Animal Spirit

As omnivores, we may resent vegans for reminding us of the suffering we cause, for we’d rather be comfortable and keep all the ugliness hidden, but our comfort has nothing to do with justice or with authentic inner peace. It is the comfort of blocking out and disconnecting, and it comes with a terrible price.

We may rationalize our meals by saying that we always thank the animal’s spirit for offering her body to nourish us. If someone were to lock us up, torture us, steal our children, and then stab us to death, would we acquiesce as long as they thanked our spirit?

No Religion without Love

“There is no religion without love, and people may talk as much as they like about their religion, but if it does not teach them to be good and kind to beasts as well as man it is all a sham.”

Anna Sewell, Black Beauty

Infinite Spirit

All of us are celebrations of infinite mysterious Spirit, deserving of honor and respect. If our religions don't emphasize this and include all of us, it's time to replace them with spiritual teachings and traditions that do.

Love & Mercy For All

Jesus' message was intolerably radical, for it was the revolutionary vegan message of mercy and love for all creatures that strikes directly at the mentality of domination and exclusion that underlies both the herding culture we live in today and the culture of Jesus' time.

Was Jesus A Vegan?

The vegan ideals of mercy and justice for animals have been articulated for centuries, often from within the religious establishment, and it is fascinating and instructive to see how these voices have been almost completely silenced or marginalized by the herding culture. It seems to be an unconscious reflex action. For example, if we read Jesus' teachings, we find a passionate exhortation to mercy and love, yet the possibility that the historical Jesus may have been a vegan is a radical idea for most Christians.

The Inner Eye

The Buddha says in the *Mahaparinirvana-sutra*, “Eating meat destroys the attitude of great compassion.” The ninth-century Islamic Sufi saint Misri says, “Never think of anyone as inferior to you. Open the inner Eye and you will see the One Glory shining in all creatures.”

Circle of Life

Rather than relying on science to validate veganism and our basic herbivore physiology, we may do better by calling attention to universal truths: animals are undeniably capable of suffering; our physical bodies are strongly affected by thoughts, feelings, and aspirations; and we cannot reap happiness for ourselves by sowing seeds of misery for others. Nor may we be free while unnaturally enslaving others.

We are all connected. These are knowings of the heart and veganism is, ultimately, a choice to listen to the wisdom in our heart as it opens to understanding the interconnectedness and essential unity of all life.

Light Of Truth

It is the height of irony that eating a diet based on animal foods, which are complicated, wasteful, cruel, and expensive to produce, is seen as simple in our culture, and that eating a vegan diet based on plant foods, which are simple, efficient, inexpensive, and free of cruelty to produce, is seen as complicated and difficult. Nevertheless, the truth is slowly coming to light, and the pressures within the old paradigm are building as more of us refuse to see animals as objects to be eaten or used for our purposes.

Remove The Arrow; Treat The Wound

Confronted with the problems that characterize our herding culture, we are perhaps like the metaphorical man wounded by an arrow that the Buddha discussed with his students. He said that the man would be foolish if he tried to discover who shot the arrow, why he shot it, where he was when he shot it, and so forth, before having the arrow removed and the wound treated, lest he bleed to death attempting to get his questions answered. We, likewise, can all remove the arrow and treat the wound of eating animal foods right now. We don't need to know the whole history. We can easily see it is cruel and that it is unnecessary; whatever people have done in the past, we are not obligated to imitate them if it is based on delusion.

The Awakening

When we look deeply we see that understanding brings and awakens love, and that love brings and awakens understanding. If our so-called understanding of animals does not ignite within us a loving urge to allow them to fulfill their lives and purposes, to honor, respect and appreciate them, then it is not true understanding. Our science is in many ways incapable of this authentic understanding, and, because it is also often a vehicle of corporate power, it is best not to rely on it too heavily in our quest for wisdom or healing.

Conscious Harmony

We have not begun to scratch the surface of understanding animals. How can we know what it is to swim as whales, at home in the ocean depths and migrating thousands of miles, speaking in underwater songs and breathing together in conscious harmony, or to fly in a flock of sandpipers, whirling in an effortless synchronicity, fifty birds as one, or to burrow as prairie dogs, creating complex underground communities with virtually endless chambers, passageways, and interactions?

Vegans Unite!

Marx's "Workers of the world, unite!" never questioned the underlying ethic of dominating animals and nature, and hence was not truly revolutionary. It operated within the human supremacist framework and never challenged the mentality that sees living beings as commodities. Veganism is a call for us to unite in seeing that as long as we oppress other living beings, we will inevitably create and live in a culture of oppression. Class struggle is a result of the herding culture's mentality of domination and exclusion, and is just part of the misery that is inevitably connected with eating animal foods.

Alice Walker

"Animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than blacks were made for whites or women for men."

Plant Peace

Switching to a plant-based diet, we could reduce petroleum usage and imports enormously, and slash the amount of hydrocarbons and carbon dioxide that contribute to air pollution and global warming. We could save hundreds of billions of dollars per year in medical, drug, and insurance expenses, which would boost personal savings and thus reinvigorate the economy, providing fresh funds for creative projects and environmental restoration.

Desolate monocropped fields devoted to livestock feed could be planted with trees, bringing back forests, streams, and wildlife. Marine ecosystems could rebuild, rain forests could begin healing, and with our demand for resources of all kinds dramatically reduced, environmental and military tension could ease.

Symbol of Intimacy

Once we realize that preparing and eating food is humanity's fundamental symbol of intimacy and spiritual transformation, we can begin to understand why sacred feasts are essential to every culture's religious and social life.

Albert Schweitzer

“We must fight against the spirit of unconscious cruelty with which we treat the animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. . . . It is our duty to make the whole world recognize it.”—Albert Schweitzer

Save the Earth

The military-industrial-meat-medical-media complex has and offers no incentive to reduce animal food consumption. Poisoning the earth with massive doses of toxic chemicals and petroleum-based fertilizers is highly profitable for the petroleum and chemical industries. These toxins cause cancer, which is highly profitable to the chemical-pharmaceutical-medical complex. While the world's rich omnivores waste precious supplies of grain, petroleum, water, and land feeding fattened animals, the world's poor have

little grain to eat or clean water to drink, and their chronic hunger, thirst, and misery create conditions for war, terrorism, and drug addiction, which are extremely profitable industries as well. The richest fifth of the world's population gets obesity, heart disease, and diabetes, also highly profitable for industry.

Plant Based Diets

If we all ate a plant-based diet, we could feed ourselves on a small fraction of the land and grains that eating an animal-based diet requires. For example, researchers estimate that 2.5 acres of land can meet the food energy needs of twenty-two people eating potatoes, nineteen people eating corn, twenty-three people eating cabbage, fifteen people eating wheat, or two people eating chicken or dairy products, and only one person eating beef or eggs.

John Wesley

John Wesley, the eighteenth-century founder of Methodism, has written, "I believe in my heart that faith in Jesus Christ can and will lead us beyond an exclusive concern for the well-being of other human beings to the broader concern for the well-being of the birds in our backyards, the fish in our rivers, and every living creature on the face of the earth."

When it Comes to Animals

We universally condemn supremacism, elitism, and exclusivism for destroying peace and social justice, yet we unquestioningly and even proudly adopt precisely these attitudes when it comes to animals.

Field of Compassion

As we cultivate awareness and question the death orientation that stares at us from our plates, we create a field of freedom and compassion, and as we move to plant-based meals, we can become agents of life, breathing a new spirit of protecting and including into our world that, by blessing the animals who are at our mercy, will bless us a hundredfold. This is a radical transformation because it goes, as the word radical implies, to the essential

root of our unyielding dilemmas, the commodification of animals for food.

A Charitable Heart

The seventh-century Christian mystic Saint Isaac the Syrian asks,

“What is a charitable heart? It is a heart which is burning with love for the whole creation, for men, for the birds, for the beasts . . . for all creatures. He who has such a heart cannot see or call to mind a creature without his eyes being filled with tears by reason of the immense compassion which seizes his heart; a heart which is softened and can no longer bear to see or learn from others of any suffering, even the smallest pain being inflicted upon a creature. That is why such a man never ceases to pray for the animals . . . moved by the infinite pity which reigns in the hearts of those who are becoming united with God.”

Joy, Love, Abundance

Joy, love, and abundance are always available to us, and will manifest in our lives to the degree that we understand that they are given to us as we give them to others. The price we must pay for love and freedom is the ice cream cone, the steak, and the eggnog we casually consume.

Live Our Prayers

Until we live our prayers for peace and freedom by granting peace and freedom to those who are vulnerable in our hands, we will find neither peace nor freedom.

Joining Together

Joining together to pray for and visualize world peace is certainly a noble idea, but if we continue to dine on the misery of our fellow neighbors we are creating a monumental and ongoing prayer for violence, terror, and slavery. It is the prayer of our actions, and it is the experienced reality of billions of sensitive creatures who are at our mercy and to whom we show no mercy.

Everybody!

“Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

Cultivate Awareness

If we are sincere in our quest for human peace, freedom, and dignity, we have no choice but to offer this to our neighbors, the animals of this earth. Cultivating awareness, we can transcend the imposed view that animals are mere food objects. With this, we will see consumerism, pornography, and the disconnectedness that leads inexorably to slavery and self-destruction evaporate.

Achieving Peace

Achieving peace between human beings, from the household to the international battlefields, depends upon treating each other with respect and kindness. This will be possible when we first extend that respect and kindness to those who are at our mercy and who cannot retaliate against us.

Look Deeply

When we look enough, we discover a disturbing force that is fundamental in generating our dilemmas and crises, a force that is not actually hidden at all, but is staring up at us every day from our plates! It has been lying undiscovered all along in the most obvious of places: It is our food.

Our Natural Place

Honoring our natural place in the web of life by eating the foods intended for us will plant seeds of abundance, love, and freedom, whatever our religion may be. Our prayers for peace will bear fruit when we are living the prayer for peace and, most importantly, when we offer peace to those who are at our mercy and who also long for peace and the freedom to live their lives and fulfill their purposes.

Encouraging Others

Our welfare is ultimately dependent on the welfare of others. By freeing and encouraging others we are liberated and encouraged. We can never sever our connection to all beings, but we can ignore and violate it, planting seeds of tragedy and suffering.

The Inner Feminine

The inner feminine is our intuition, our sensitivity, and our ability to sense the profound interconnectedness of events and beings, and it is vital to peace, wisdom, joy, intelligence, creativity, and spiritual awakening. With every baby calf stolen from her mother and killed, with every gallon of milk stolen from enslaved and broken mothers, with every thrust of the raping sperm gun, with every egg stolen from a helpless, frantic hen, and with every baby chick killed or locked for life in a hellish nightmare cage, we kill the sacred feminine within ourselves.

The Feminine Principle

Liberating and honoring the feminine principle is perhaps the most pressing task in our culture's evolution toward peace, sustainability, and spiritual maturity. The feminine principle, cross-culturally, is concerned fundamentally with nurturing, receptivity, making connections, intuition, and bringing forth new life.

Harming Ourselves

Many spiritual teachers have pointed out that when we harm others, we harm ourselves even more severely. The hard-heartedness of the killer and exploiter is in itself a terrible punishment because it is a loss of sensitivity to the beauty and sacredness of life. That loss may go unrecognized, but the life itself, armored, violent, and competitive, is lived as a struggle of separateness and underlying fear, and its relations with others are poisoned.

Uproot Exclusion

When we uproot exclusion and domination from our plates, seeds of

compassion can finally freely blossom, and this process depends primarily on us watering the seeds and fully contributing our unique journey.

We depend on each other, and as we free the beings we call animals, we will regain our freedom. Loving them, we will learn to love each other and be fully loved.

Born Into This

We have all been born into a herding culture that commodifies animals, and we have all been affected by the cruelty, violence, and predatory competitiveness that our meals require and that our culture embodies.

We've also been taught to be loyal to our culture and relatively uncritical of it, to disconnect from the monumental horror we needlessly perpetuate, and to be oblivious to the disastrous effects this has on every level of our shared and private lives.

Our Profoundest Apologies

We owe the animals our profoundest apologies. Defenseless and unable to retaliate, they have suffered immense agonies under our domination that most of us have never witnessed or acknowledged. Now knowing better, we can act better, and acting better, we can live better, and give the animals, our children, and ourselves a true reason for hope and celebration.

Higher Knowing

Looking behind the curtain to the horrific suffering inherent in animal foods, asking questions, contemplating spiritual teachings, cultivating the higher knowing of intuition, and observing the example of other vegans all contribute to the ripening process. Once we can clearly see the universal law or principle underlying veganism, we can experience a spiritual transformation that allows greater possibilities of freedom and happiness.

Intuitive Heart

Becoming vegan is not so much a decision made with our intellect as it is a

natural consequence of inner ripening. While it's certainly helpful to comprehend intellectually the vast mandala of negative consequences of eating animal foods, we find that we are propelled into veganism by our intuition. As our intuitive heart opens, it opens to understanding our connection with others and to including them within the sphere of our concern

Sense of Peace

Veganism kindles a deep sense of peace in nature and of kinship, fellowship, and harmony with all life. It encourages a sense of inner richness that keeps growing and deepening as years go by, a sense of gentleness and of purpose.

Most Powerful Antidote

The most powerful antidotes to cruelty, abuse, and indifference are not anger and sadness, but love, peace, joy, and openhearted creative enthusiasm for this precious gift of a human life. Just as Thich Nhat Hanh has wisely said that without inner peace, we cannot contribute to the peace movement, so it is also that without inner freedom, we cannot contribute to the liberation of animals, which is the essential prerequisite to meaningful human freedom.

Human Spiritual Evolution

Our human spiritual evolution is a calling to liberate ourselves and the animals we hold in bondage. It's founded upon recognizing the unity of cause and effect: whatever seeds we sow in our consciousness we will reap in our lives. The ancient teaching holds true: "Hatred ceases not by hatred, but by love. This is the everlasting law." In the end, as Mahatma Gandhi emphasized, we must be the change we want to see in the world.

Eternal Consciousness

The spiritual connection between animals and humans grows out of understanding that we are all expressions of eternal benevolent consciousness, and as we acknowledge this interconnection and live in

harmony with it, our lives become prayers of compassion and healing.

The Truth of Being

As we hold steadfastly to the truth of being, knowing that compassion is irresistible and that it encircles the earth through us and many others, and as we live this understanding in our daily lives and share it with others, we create a field of kindness and sow seeds of cultural transformation. There are no enemies because we are all related.

Inner Field of Peace

By creating an inner field of peace, kindness, joy, and unity, we contribute to building a planetary field of compassion that reflects this consciousness.

Our True Purpose

As we realize our interconnectedness with all living beings, our purpose naturally becomes to help and bless others, and it is a role we can carry without burnout or anger. The terrible suffering we see may certainly disturb and outrage us, but the outrage turns to compassion and creativity rather than to anger, despair, or vindictiveness.

Heal Our Wounds

As we heal our wounds and stop eating animal foods we become better able to contribute to the healing of our culture. We see that we need less to be the hands of judgment and punishment—for pain willfully inflicted is unavoidably received again in the fullness of time—but rather to be the hands of mercy, help, and healing.

A Product of Our Thoughts

The world we see is a product of our thoughts and way of seeing. Looking deeply into the animal-derived food on our plates, we see enormous suffering, abusive hands, and hardened hearts. Looking more deeply, we see that these hands and hearts have themselves been abused and wounded but yearn to be comforted and loved, and to comfort and love. As we see that

abusers have always been abused themselves, we seek less to judge and more to understand, and to protect the vulnerable from abuse.

This Breakthrough

In our culture, which is so permeated by the mentality of domination and exclusion, veganism requires a spiritual breakthrough. This breakthrough cannot be forced in any way by others, but it can definitely be encouraged

The Greatest Blessing

Recognizing that we are all profoundly related, the greatest blessing we can give others, both animal and human, is to see their beauty, innocence, and uprightness, and address that in them.

This Light is Consciousness

Metaphorically, we are all part of the movie of life on earth, and while we may appear to be the images on the screen, at a deeper level we share a common heritage—we are all also the light that makes the movie possible. This light is consciousness, and it is our fundamental nature, emanating from an infinite and inconceivable source.

Free the Animals

To free the animals we are abusing, we must free ourselves from the delusion of essential separateness, doing both the outer work of educating, sharing, and helping others, and the inner work of uncovering our true nature.

Plant Based Way

When we are drawn toward a plant-based way of eating, it is in no way a limitation on us; rather it is the harmonious fulfillment of our own inner seeing. At first we think it's an option we can choose, but with time we realize that it's not a choice at all but the free expression of the truth that we are. It is not an ethic that we have to police from outside, but our own radiant love spontaneously expressing, both for ourselves and for our world. Caring

is born on this earth and lives through us, as us, and it's not anything for which we can personally take credit. It is nothing to be proud of.

The Cultural Trance

To awaken from the cultural trance of omnivorism we need only remember who we are. We have neither the psychology nor the physiology for predation and killing, but due to the culturally indoctrinated mentality required by our daily meals, we eat like predators. We become desensitized, exclusivist and materialistic, forgetting that we are essentially consciousness manifesting in time and space. As consciousness, we are eternal, free, and benevolent.

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Last Days of Eating Animals

While it's easy to become discouraged in the face of the immense cultural inertia that propels the continued practice of eating animal foods, it's helpful to realize that it carries within it the seeds of its own destruction. At the rate it's ravaging our planet's ecosystems and resources—and our sanity and intelligence—it cannot last much longer. These may very well turn out to be humanity's last days of eating animals.

Meditate for World Peace

To meditate for world peace, to pray for a better world, and to work for social justice and environmental protection while continuing to purchase the flesh, milk, and eggs of horribly abused animals exposes a disconnect that is so fundamental that it renders our efforts absurd, hypocritical, and doomed to certain failure.

Essential Connections

By refusing to dominate animals, we make the essential connections and open inner doorways to understanding and deconstructing the abuse of privilege in our own lives. Justice, equality, veganism, freedom, spiritual evolution, and universal compassion are inextricably connected.

Attention Deficit

The wealthy elite exerts its privilege and authority through all our social institutions, using food as a method of maintaining control. By controlling food and disseminating junk food and food sourced from animals, those with the most privilege can confuse and sicken our entire population, especially those who are most vulnerable and uninformed. There are well-documented connections, for example, between the deterioration of our food supply and certain newly invented pathologies like attention deficit disorder.

Culturally Mandated Meals

The message ritually injected into us by our culturally mandated meals is, at a fundamental level, the message of privilege. As humans, we see ourselves as superior to animals, whom we view as objects to be enslaved and killed for our use and pleasure, and with this herder mentality of our special and privileged position over animals, we inevitably create other categories of privilege

Unity with all Life

As our culture adopts veganism, the change in our consciousness will usher in the first revolution since the herding revolution began with the domestication of sheep and goats 10000 years ago. That revolution propelled us out of the garden into an existential sense of separateness, promoting competition and the cultivation of disconnected reductionism and materialistic technology. The evolutionary thrust is obviously now in a completely different direction, toward integration, cooperation, compassion, inclusiveness, and discovering our basic unity with all life.

Freeing Animals

Freeing animals, we humans will be able to rejoin the celebration and contribute to it with our love and creativity. Competition and exploitation of other people can melt away as we regain our natural sensitivity. Our earth will naturally heal when we stop killing fish and sea life and polluting and wasting water in such unsustainable ways. Forests and wildlife will return because we'll need far less farmland to feed everyone a plant-based diet, and

the whole earth will be relieved of the unbearable pressure exerted by omnivorous humans. We will be released from the paralysis that prevents us from creatively addressing the looming depletion of fossil fuels and the other challenges we face.

Macrobiotic Perspective

There is the macrobiotic perspective that animal foods are extremely yang in their energetic impact on the body, contracting the energy field, and that the body will then naturally and inevitably crave foods and substances that are extremely yin and expansive. These extreme yin foods are alcohol, white sugar, drugs of most every kind, tobacco, and caffeine. Grains, legumes, and vegetables tend to be neither excessively yin nor yang, but are more balanced, and so create few cravings. Eating extreme foods forces the body to gyrate continuously between the two poles, alternatively craving contracting foods like meat, cheese, eggs, and salt, and then expansive substances like sweets, coffee, alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, ad nauseam.

VegInspiration.

When we look with a relaxed eye at nature, we see an absolutely irrepressible celebration of living beauty. Animals in nature are both celebratory and inscrutable. They play, sing, run, soar, leap, call, dance, swim, hang out together, and relate in endlessly mysterious ways.

Including Animals

By including animals within the circle of relevant beings that we harm with our actions, we can get to the root of the destructive addictions that plague people in our culture.

This is not to imply that all patterns of addictive behavior will necessarily disappear with the adoption of a vegan orientation to living, but it is a powerful start; inner weeding, mindfulness, and cultivating inner silence, patience, generosity, and gratitude are also essential dimensions of spiritual health.

Reap Health

One particularly glaring inconsistency that should be further investigated is the underlying assumption of vivisection, that we can become healthier by destroying the health of other living beings. Our welfare is tied to the welfare of all beings; we cannot reap health in ourselves by sowing seeds of disease and death in others.

Commodifying Animals

Wealth, gender, and race determine the extent of our privilege in a human hierarchy between rich white men on one end and impoverished non-white women and children on the other. Even poor humans have some privilege compared to animals, however, and it is this hierarchical, authoritarian social structure—pervasive, transparent, and taken for granted—that is the unavoidable outcome of commodifying animals and eating them.

A New Mythos

A positive momentum is unquestionably building in spite of the established forces of domination and violent control that would suppress it. Like a birth or metamorphosis, a new mythos is struggling through us to arise and replace the obsolete herding mythos, and the changes occurring may be far larger and more significant than they appear to be.

They are ignored and discounted by the mass media, but what may seem to be small changes can suddenly mushroom when critical mass is reached. It is vital that we all contribute to the positive revolution for which our future is calling.

Reducing Cruelty

The worldwide followers of Ching Hai, a noted Vietnamese spiritual teacher with students numbering in the hundreds of thousands, have set up vegan restaurants in many cities and contribute vegan food, clothing, shelter, and aid to disaster victims, prisoners, children, and the elderly in countries around the world. Though she requires students to meditate two and a half hours per

day, vow to eat no flesh or egg products, refrain from alcohol and non-prescription drugs, and not work in jobs that promote the exploitation of animals or people, her movement continues to spread. It shows the effectiveness of a spiritual approach, because in less than twenty years she has been the proximate cause of hundreds of thousands of people's transition to veganism. Rather than impede her movement, her insistence that her students reduce the cruelty in their meals may paradoxically promote it.

Spiritual & Ethical Connection

As non-vegans, we are challenged by our spiritual and ethical disconnection to slow down, stop, pay attention, reconnect, embrace our disowned shadow, and begin the healing process. As vegans, we are challenged by our inconsistencies and fear of reprisal to pay attention and deepen our healing and awakening process by making the effort to align our thoughts, words, and actions with our understanding of interbeing and to ever more fully embody peace and courageous love.

Cultural Sanity

The underlying assumptions of the culture into which we have been born are faulty and obsolete. If not questioned and changed, they will continue to drive us into deeper cultural insanity, just as they do the animals we mercilessly dominate. Recognizing the insanity of our actions and beliefs is the first and essential step to healing and awakening.

In Time and Space

Albert Einstein articulates it in this way: "A human being is a part of the whole, called by us the 'Universe,' a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

Reductionism and Materialism

Heavens and hells are of our own sowing. We live in a culture that mindlessly exploits animals and encourages the domination of those who are vulnerable by the strong, the male, the wealthy, and the privileged. This culture has naturally created political, economic, legal, religious, educational, and other institutional vehicles to shield those in power from the effects of their actions, and to legitimize the violence and inequities required to maintain the system. Over the centuries it has developed an elaborate scientific and religious framework that in its reductionism and materialism denies the continuity of consequences in many ways.

Refrain from Violence

It seems we're still so benighted as a culture that we'll refrain from committing violence only if we fear punishment or retaliation—and since animals are incapable of either, they have no protection from us at all.

Losing Biological Integrity

As food production industries brought their herds and flocks indoors into concentration camps, the extreme form of herding known as factory farming emerged. A new extreme form of factory farming is now emerging through genetic engineering, in which the animals are being tampered with at the genetic level, thus losing their biological integrity and identity. This is coupled with unparalleled destruction of habitat for wild animals and decimation of their populations for bush meat, pharmaceuticals, research, entertainment, and other human uses. Animals have thus gone from being free from human interference to being occasionally hunted, to being herded, to being imprisoned, and finally to being either forced into extinction or genetically mutated and confined as mere patentable property objects for human use.

Vulnerability of Mortality

Besides sharing a common home on this beautiful planet here in outer space,

animals share with us the vulnerability of mortality and all that entails.

Our Higher Emotions

It's illustrative to watch how the attributes we have proclaimed make us unique, such as using tools, making art, experiencing "higher" emotions, having a sense of the ludicrous, using language, and so forth, have all collapsed under the evidence as we get to know animals better. Of course, we have certain unique attributes and abilities. Every species has certain unique attributes and abilities. Eating animals makes us so subconsciously nervous that we neurotically overemphasize our uniqueness and our separateness from them. This allows us to exclude them from our circle of concern.

The Truth Field

As perpetrators, we are thus profoundly challenged by the truth-field established by attentive and articulate bystanders. Eventually, we may respond to the challenge, examine our attitudes and, recognizing our behavior as morally indefensible, cease it and join the ranks of the bystanders. As bystanders, we are also deeply challenged to respond creatively to the situation with love, understanding, and skillful means, and to strive to live in ever more complete alignment with the values of compassion, honesty, and integrity.

Please Stop the Violence

The bystander offers an example of nonviolence and speaks on behalf of the victims who have no voice (and, on a subtler level, on behalf of the perpetrators who are also victimized by their own actions). Perpetrators may condemn bystanders for judging them and making them feel bad or guilty, but the bystanders are merely acting as the perpetrators' conscience, asking them to please become more aware and stop their violence, for everyone's sake.

Our True Nature

Besides the enormous amount of anecdotal evidence that animals behave

altruistically, both toward members of their own species and also to animals outside their species, there is clinical evidence as well, such as the typically cruel experiments in which monkeys were given food if they administered painful shocks to other monkeys. Researchers found that the monkeys would rather go hungry than shock other monkeys, especially if they had received shocks earlier themselves. The researchers were surprised (and perhaps somewhat ashamed?) by the monkeys' altruism. Though it is our true nature, one wonders if we humans would be so noble.

Cultivating Awareness

Cultivating awareness is essential to realizing happiness, peace, and freedom.

Guilt and Shame

The guilt and shame perpetrators feel for their violent actions stem from their natural sense of kindness and caring, which they have blocked and are violating. Their attitude toward bystanders may even be indignation: "If you want to be a vegetarian, that's fine, but don't tell us what to do." While at first blush this seems reasonable, we quickly see that it is only because of the disconnections and bias inherent in our culture. Perpetrators wouldn't dare say, "If you don't want to beat and stab your pet dog, that's fine, but don't tell me not to beat and stab mine." We all recognize that we aren't entitled to treat others, especially those who are defenseless, however we like, and that if we are responsible for doing harm, people have every right to ask us to stop.

Companion Animals We Love

Though we are born into a culture that emphasizes our differences from other animals, our actual experience tells us differently. Those of us with companion animals, for example, know without doubt that they have distinct personalities and preferences, emotions and drives, and that they feel and avoid psychological and physical pain

Meditate for World Peace

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justice and environmental protection while continuing to purchase the flesh, milk, and eggs of horribly abused animals exposes a disconnect that is so fundamental that it renders our efforts absurd, hypocritical, and doomed to certain failure.

Spiritual Revolution

Are we ready for a spiritual revolution? If we refuse, the strife, stress, and destruction will almost certainly intensify due to our ascending numbers and exploitive technology. When is a caterpillar ready to transform? The most obvious sign is the passing of its voracious appetite because an inner urge turns its attention to new directions.

Bystanders Speak Up

In violent crimes committed publicly, there are three roles acted out: that of the perpetrator, that of the victim, and that of the bystander. It is well known that perpetrators hope bystanders will be silent and look the other way so they can successfully continue their hurtful actions, and that victims hope the bystanders will speak up, act, get involved, and do something to stop or discourage perpetrators from their harmful actions. With regard to eating animal foods, there are many perpetrators and victims and just a few bystanders. The perpetrators always encourage each other and regard the bystanders with suspicion and hostility, and the victims' voices cannot be heard.

Violence in the Food System

When, as vegans, we become sensitized to the violence of the food system, we can also see that omnivores are victims of this food system as well.

Our Spiritual Potential

We all have unique gifts we can bring to the most urgent task we face at this point in our human evolution: transforming our inherited dominator mentality by liberating those we have enslaved for food. The crucial elements are adopting a vegan lifestyle, educating ourselves, cultivating our spiritual

potential, and plugging in to help educate others.

Lightness of Being

“True human goodness, in all its purity and freedom, can come to the fore only when its recipient has no power. Humanity’s true moral test, its fundamental test, consists of its attitude towards those who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect humankind has suffered a fundamental debacle, a debacle so fundamental that all others stem from it.”—Milan Kundera, author, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

Becoming a Voice

A primary danger is that we might leave home but not return; that is, we could awaken to the harmfulness inherent in our culture’s commodification of living beings but fail to bring this awakening to our culture by becoming a voice for these beings.

If our understanding isn’t articulated in ways that are meaningful for us, it can become imprisoned within us and turn sour, becoming cynicism, anger, despair, and disease. This doesn’t serve us or anyone else.

Lift the Veil

The opposite of love is not hate but indifference. When we lift the veil and see the suffering our food habits cause, when we connect with the reality of the defenseless beings who suffer so terribly because of our food choices, our indifference dissolves and compassion—its opposite—arises, urging us to act on behalf of those who are suffering.

Love Propels Us

The more we connect, the more we understand and the more we love, and this love propels us not only to leave home, questioning our culture’s attitude of domination and exclusion, but also to return home, speaking on behalf of those who are vulnerable.

Show Mercy

The urge to show mercy and to protect those who are vulnerable is rooted deeply in us, and though it has been repressed by our herding culture, there is enormous evidence that it longs to be expressed by virtually all of us. We will collectively donate millions of dollars, for example, to help just one animal if we know the animal's story and our intelligence and compassion have been awakened by our connecting with this animal.

Questionable Pleasure

Actually, the taste that we prize in animal foods is more like the sex we would have as rapists, for the prostitute may at least consent and profit from our cravings, but the animal is always forced against her will to be tortured and killed for our taste and questionable pleasure.

Once a Vegan

Once a vegan, we are always so, because our motivation is not personal and self-oriented, but is based on concern for others and on our undeniable interconnectedness with other living beings.

Spiritual Breakthrough

The inner action of leaving home necessitates in many ways a spiritual breakthrough. The essential action is to stop turning away and disconnecting from the suffering we impose on others by our food choices.

Benumbed to the Suffering

Even if we are benumbed to the degree that we are not concerned about the suffering of animals, and we are only able to care about other humans, we soon realize that the human anguish caused by eating foods of animal origin requires us to choose a plant-based diet. Human starvation, the emotional devastation required to kill and confine animals, the pollution and waste of water, land, petroleum, and other vital resources, and the injustice and

violence underlying our animal food production complex all compel us to abandon our acculturated eating habits.

Spiritual and Cultural Revolution

The spiritual and cultural revolution that calls us must begin with our food. Food is our primary connection with the earth and her mysteries, and with our culture. It is the foundation of economy and is the central inner spiritual metaphor of our lives.

Ripples that Radiate

The ripples that radiate from our choices to eat foods from animal sources are incredibly far-reaching and complex. They extend deeply into our essential orientation and belief system, and into our relationships with each other and the created order. From every perspective we can possibly take, we discover that our culturally imposed eating habits are numbing, blinding, and confining us.

We Who Overeat

“Every day forty thousand children die in the world for lack of food. We who overeat in the West, who are feeding grains to animals to make meat, are eating the flesh of these children.”—Thich Nhat Hanh

Compelling our children to eat animal foods gives birth to the “hurt people” syndrome. Hurt people hurt animals without compunction in daily food rituals. We will always be violent toward each other as long as we are violent toward animals—how could we not be? We carry the violence in our stomachs, in our blood, and in our consciousness. Covering it up and ignoring it doesn’t make it disappear. The more we pretend and hide it, the more, like a shadow, it clings to us and haunts us. The human cycle of violence is the ongoing projection of this shadow.

The Wounds Persist

Our actions condition our consciousness; therefore forcing our children to eat

animal foods wounds them deeply. It requires them to disconnect from the food on their plates, from their feelings, from animals and nature, and sets up conditions of disease and psychological armoring. The wounds persist and are passed on to the next generation.

The Underlying Violence

The human cycle of violence will not stop until we stop the underlying violence, the remorseless violence we commit against animals for food. We teach this behavior and this insensitivity to all our children in a subtle, unintentional, but powerful form of culturally approved child abuse.

In the Name of Gluttony

“How can you say you're trying to spiritually evolve, without even a thought about what happens to the animals whose lives are sacrificed in the name of gluttony?” –Oprah Winfrey

Wisdom Traditions

Perpetrators and victims are known to exchange roles over and over again in countless subtle and obvious ways. The cycle of violence may span larger dimensions than we in our herding culture would like to admit, and there are many wisdom traditions that affirm that it does. Until we see from the highest level, we had best heed the counsel of every enlightened spiritual teacher from every time: be ye kind to one another.

Under Our Skin

The fat we carry around under our skin is mainly the fat of miserable and terrified animals—it's not surprising we're anxious to be rid of it! If we based our diet on the whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes for which we are designed, we would find the obesity problem in our culture evaporating, along with many other problems.

Most Violent Weapon

“The most violent weapon on earth is the table fork.” —Mahatma Gandhi

Challenged by Truth

If we fail to make the connection between our daily meals and our cultural predicament, we will inevitably fail as a species to survive on this earth. By refusing to make this essential connection, we condemn others and ourselves to enormous suffering, without ever comprehending why.

Memorial Day for Animals

By Dr. Will Tuttle

Here's an ironic 3-way conjunction: Memorial Day; the recent release of the undercover Conklin Dairy video footage; and the spewing volcano of oil deep in the Gulf. Memorial Day is a time to honor those serving in war, harmed by war, killed by war. It's become increasingly obvious that war has always been a tool of oppression and of wealth and power accumulation by a small elite, and Memorial Day is one of many ways war is legitimized in the public stories that are told to us from birth. The real war, again becoming increasingly obvious, is against the capacities for wisdom and compassion that are inherent within us, and the ultimate victims of this war are the most vulnerable: animals, ecosystems, children, women, hungry people, and future generations. Especially animals.

How many animals are we killing daily in the U.S. for food? Roughly seventy-five million! How many is that? Basically ungraspable, at least by me. For example, if we take just part of the ongoing slaughter of animals—the slaughter of four species: cows, pigs, chickens, and turkeys—and leave out all fish, sheep, goats, ducks, geese, and other animals killed by us daily in the U.S., and do the relatively simple math, we realize that we are causing a daily flow of blood that amounts to about 8.5 million gallons! This is many times more than the estimates of the Gulf oil gusher, which we have all been praying will be finally plugged up. This oil gusher is devastating! Every day that goes by brings greater destruction, so we yearn to have it stopped, and blame routine corporate greed and government corruption for the [breakdown](#)

[in safety standards](#) that caused it to happen. Some estimates run as high as a million gallons per day of oil polluting the ocean.

And yet we continue with our ongoing daily 8-million gallon blood gusher without any remorse or sense of urgency to stop. Disconnected from the terrible repercussions, unaware of and in denial about the pollution and suffering gushing forth, we go on devastating every level of our health: physiological, psychological, cultural, spiritual, ethical, and environmental.

Who is accountable for this relentless blood gusher? It rings hollow to blame corporations and politicians, though we might be tempted, but that is just part of it. Ultimately, every drop of blood, misery, feces, and pollution spewing from the industrial meat grinder is generated because of personal choices by responsible individuals who pay for meat, dairy products, and eggs. Without these millions of daily choices, the blood gusher would dry up instantly and the ongoing war against animals for food would cease. The healing, joy, and celebration when this gusher is finally plugged is barely imaginable. Its stopping is inevitable, for whatever has a beginning has an ending. The question is: how will it be stopped – voluntarily or involuntarily?

The crucial question in all this has to do with accountability. Why are the overwhelming majority of us—who are responsible for this carnage because of making choices to buy and consume the flesh and secretions of animals—not accountable for our actions? How can we evade responsibility so easily and blithely? Or do we? And what about vegans who don't make these choices to kill and cause others to kill? How are they accountable? And what about the producers and workers who do the killing on behalf of the consumers?

In the Conklin Dairy video footage, we see about three minutes of shockingly cruel abuse of dairy cows and small calves by about three different men, including Mr. Conklin himself. There is violent and repeated hitting with metal bars, kicking, stomping, stabbing with a pitchfork, punching of calves, and it's even bragged about by one of the workers. I absolutely did not want to watch this footage, and procrastinated about five days because it is an ordeal to witness such violence inflicted on helpless animals. I finally decided

that if these animals were forced by fellow humans to endure such abuse, the least I could do would be to bear witness to their suffering, informing myself, and holding them in my heart in love, mercy, and tenderness. The three minutes seemed like an eternity, and I felt the ordeal deepened my understanding and resolve, and I have recommended to many people that they [see it also](#).

We are all wired for compassion, and so this is why eating animal foods is so devastating to our self-respect and wisdom. Due to our innate empathy, we now see a flurry of media exposure and a universal call to hold this Ohio dairy accountable, and especially that the perpetrators be punished in order to send a strong message that such cruelty is not acceptable. This is fine as far as it goes, but it doesn't go nearly far enough, and reveals our blindness to our cultural indoctrination. Besides feeling compassion for the brutalized animals, can we feel compassion for the workers—the perpetrators? How quickly we tar them with a black brush, and make them the scapegoats for our broader cultural violence.

We want inexpensive ice cream, cheese, and yogurt, and have as an entire culture created systems that provide that remarkably well, complete with economies of scale, government subsidies, technologies of enslavement and profit maximization, and an underlying story that animals are inferior to us and to be used as we please. From its beginnings eight thousand years ago, animal agriculture brought out the worst in people. It is the same today. These workers are in terrible situations that bring out the worst in them. Cows are powerful animals who naturally don't automatically cooperate with having their babies and milk relentlessly stolen from them. Violent force must be used, and always has been. Cows are innately silent when pain is inflicted on them, from millions of years of living in the wild when this was advantageous to avoid detection by predators. This fact unfortunately seems to encourage workers to beat them more brutally to move them or punish them.

The entire system of reducing animals to mere commodities brings out the worst in both workers and consumers, and as Gene Baur of Farm Sanctuary

emphasized recently—with his 30 years of experience rescuing farmed animals and investigating meat, dairy, and egg operations—what was videotaped at Conklin Dairy is standard procedure on all dairy operations. Nathan Runkle, founder of Mercy For Animals, the group that obtained the video footage, recently told reporters that whenever they send an undercover worker into an animal agriculture facility, they obtain footage of shocking violence to the animals there. When we reduce an animal to an “it,” how will we not degenerate into violence toward that animal? Owning animals and stealing their sovereignty is inherently violent. The workers are put in an ethically devastating position in which they are not accountable for venting their frustration and anger on these animals (unless a pesky vegan undercover operative with a video camera happens to sneak in), and as we understand well, the more anger and violence are expressed in an individual or culture, the stronger and more virulent they become. We become what we practice. What consumer of cheese, ice cream, milk, or yogurt, watching this video, would want to eat products coming from the kicked and stabbed udders and bodies of these poor animals? The thought is revolting, but eating violence, death, and despair is inescapable in eating dairy products, including so-called organic, free-range, and other industry-sponsored propaganda labels.

We are all ultimately accountable for the violence we see in the Conklin Dairy video – anyone who purchases dairy products is obviously directly responsible, because, like the person demanding the assassination of someone, they are the motivating cause of the violence, while the workers are less culpable, being the hired guns who do the bidding of their superiors. It’s difficult to refuse, because those who desire dairy products, and the corporations serving them, are constantly repeating, “Dominate, inseminate, steal from, and kill these animals for us, and if you don’t, we’ll find someone who will.”

As a 30-year vegan, I am not absolved of responsibility in this, because it is only those who are not perpetrators who can and must offer solutions, guidance, clarity, and a positive example to break the cycle of violence that is engulfing our world in so many ways. As vegans, we are called to cultivate hearts and minds of all-inclusive kindness, including both the victimized

animals and the perpetrators in our compassion, and understanding that the perpetrators—consumers and providers of animal foods—are both victimized unwittingly by their violence and numbness. We are all connected. Veganism is radical inclusion—love in action—and requires of vegans a deep commitment to complete personal transformation, and an awakening from all dimensions of the cultural insanity required by eating animal foods.

Who knows what terrible abuse the Conklin Dairy workers experienced as infants and children? Birth in our culture is a violent affair, like it is on a dairy. Babies are routinely separated from their mothers at birth, and their bodies are flooded with pernicious injections and harsh sounds and toxic chemicals. Like on dairies, less than four percent of the human babies born in the U.S. today get their mothers' milk. Whatever we do to animals, we end up doing to ourselves. Sending anger and judgment to Mr. Conklin and the workers only adds to the problem, and shows we are not looking deeply and are not free of the culturally indoctrinated mentality of exclusion required by eating animal foods. Personally, I yearn to send love and tenderness not just to the cows and calves in the video, but to Mr. Conklin and the workers as well, and to the masses of consumers blind to the effects of their actions, and to the millions of fish killed yearly to be fed to the dairy cows to boost their milk production, and to the starving people who could be fed the grain and beans fed to these cows, and to the whole interconnected web of life on this beautiful planet being devastated by animal agriculture.

Not buying animal-sourced foods, products, and services for ethical reasons, while it is a fantastic, healing leap for anyone to make in this culture, is just a small first step on the great vegan journey of love and awakening, and for us to be successful in helping our culture evolve to nonviolence, freedom, respect for life, justice, and peace, we are called to cultivate and embody these qualities in all our relationships, and practice inclusivity, kindness, and respect for both human and non-human animals.

The calls that are going forth from the larger animal protection organizations for stronger laws and regulations to protect dairy cows, pigs, chickens, and other animals will never succeed in stopping our violence toward animals for

food, or free us from it. They may even legitimize it. What is called for is committed, resourceful, creative, and grass-roots vegan education. We must reduce and stop the demand for dairy products and meat by respectfully educating people that with whole, organic, plant foods we can feed ourselves and free ourselves. There is nothing more important today than each of us practicing and sharing these ideas of love for all living beings.

The relentless blood gusher must, like the oil gusher, be stopped quickly and soon, or humanity and most life forms will be destroyed. Our violence toward animals and the Earth is a boomerang that is increasingly ferocious. We absolutely do not have the right or luxury to eat animal foods, or to think in the exclusivist ways that eating animal foods requires. This is the message underlying all the news headlines, if we can see it. Our future is beckoning and drawing us ever onward. What kind of future will it be? We cannot build a tower of love and harmony with bricks of cruelty and indifference. Our bodies, our lives, and our relationships are the towers we build daily and inhabit.

May we have a Memorial Day for Animals, whose bodies, minds, and spirits bear the full fury of our culture's indoctrinated cravings and numbness. Their blood, gushing relentlessly in the hidden gulf of agribusiness machinery, is devastating the heath of our entire world.

Remembering animals every day, let's be and spread the vegan message of love and compassion for all with, as JFK used to say, renewed vigor. We have no other choice. I propose a Memorial Day for Animals, which is a Memorial Day for all of us, and is the next step in our cultural evolution.

Human Limitations

Even those who acknowledge that our treatment of animals is indeed a great evil may feel that it is, like the other evils in our world, simply a product of human limitations, such as ignorance, pride, selfishness, fear, and so forth.

According to this view, the horror we inflict on animals is a problem, but not a fundamental cause of our problems—and, because it's a problem for

animals, who are less important than us humans, it's a lesser problem.

The Repercussions

Looking from a variety of perspectives at our animal-based meals, we discover that eating animals has consequences far beyond what we would at first suspect. Like a little boy caught tormenting frogs, our culture mumbles, "It's no big deal," and looks away. And yet the repercussions of our animal-based diet are a very big deal indeed, not only for the unfortunate creatures in our hands, but for us as well. Our actions reinforce attitudes, in us and in others, that amplify the ripples of those actions until they become the devastating waves of insensitivity, conflict, injustice, brutality, disease, and exploitation that rock our world today.

Solving Problems

Albert Einstein was correct in saying that no problem can be solved at the level on which it was created. As omnivores, we must go to another level to solve our problem with excess fat, a level where we no longer kill and confine animals by proxy and consume their fat-laden remains.

Ending Obesity

Ending obesity will remain difficult, mysterious, complex, and a losing battle as long as we continue to eat diets rich in high-fat animal flesh, eggs, and dairy products.

To Be Free

To be free, we must practice freeing others. To feel loved, we must practice loving others. To have true self-respect, we must respect others. The animals and other voiceless beings, the starving humans and future generations, are pleading with us to see: it's on our plate.

Our Survival

We can see that the three reasons that we eat animal foods—infant

indoctrination, social and market pressure, and taste—reinforce each other and create a force field around our food choices that, like a sturdy fortress, resists any incursions. The walls of the fortress are built of cruelty, denial, ignorance, force, conditioning, and selfishness. Most importantly, they are not of our choosing. They have been, and are being, forced upon us. Our well-being—and our survival—depend on our seeing this clearly and throwing off our chains of domination and unawareness. By harming and exploiting billions of animals, we confine ourselves spiritually, morally, emotionally, and cognitively, and blind ourselves to the poignant, heart-touching beauty of nature, animals, and each other.

Animals are Not Commodities

Since our culture denies animals used for food any inherent value in their own right, limiting their worth simply to their value as commodities to those who own them, animals have no protection. Ordering a steak earns us approving nods, and our friends rave over the barbecued ribs at the office picnic. The actual confinement, raping, mutilating, and killing are kept carefully hidden as shameful secrets that would make us profoundly uncomfortable if we had to witness them or, worse, perform them ourselves.

Contemplate Taste

When we contemplate our tastes, we can see how conditioned they actually are. More importantly, though, we can see how utterly unsupportable they are as reasons to commit violence against defenseless, feeling beings. Self-centered craving for pleasure and fulfillment at the expense of others is the antithesis of the Golden Rule and of every standard of morality.

The War on Terra

As environmental devastation continues to escalate, it's essential to look at the roots of our abuse of the Earth and her complex and fragile ecosystems. Why do we allow industries to pollute and destroy with such impunity?

The latest disaster, the massive underwater oil geyser in the Gulf, may be a far more destructive and malevolent onslaught than the media is letting on,

and it is but another in a long and accelerating series of attacks we are mounting against our home planet. What underlying force drives this machinery of violence? Why do we insist on stabbing, burning, and cutting our precious mother Earth instead of cooperating with her miraculous bounty, respecting and loving her? Why are we ripping apart the fabric of living creation, destroying the beautiful interconnected life that is celebrating through the communities of birds, fish, animals and plants around us.

I believe we have to look much more deeply than mere economic and political forces to the underlying, driving mentality that is ritually injected into all of us by our cultural upbringing, and more specifically, by the foods we are indoctrinated to eat by all the institutions in this culture. What we need more than anything now are conversations and discussions about the irresistible consequences of our routine violence toward billions of enslaved animals for food.

The mentality that is required to hyperconfine, mutilate, kill, and eat hundreds of millions of animals daily is precisely the mentality that ruthlessly destroys ecosystems without remorse. It is the mentality that is injected into all of us from birth by powerful cultural forces that indoctrinate us into seeing beings as mere commodities to be used. Our innate inner landscape of compassion and wisdom is devastated by relentlessly eating the flesh and secretions of enslaved animals, just as the outer landscape is devastated by the same behavior.

The hidden and mostly ungrieved tragedy is that all the devastation caused by eating animal foods—diabetes, cancer, arthritis, heart disease, osteoporosis; dementia, depression, insomnia, anxiety; air and water pollution, global climate change, massive species extinction, soil erosion; starvation, malnutrition, war, inequity; and the inconceivably vast enslavement, torture, and killing of billions of fully sentient animals for food—is utterly unnecessary. There are no nutrients in animal foods that we cannot get directly from eating plants. The door is open! Each and every one of us can walk out of the prison of misery of eating animal foods, right now! There is nothing holding us except the bone-deep disconnectedness that we don't

realize we're in a prison. We are forced by our culture to forget the truth that we are all connected, and that as we harm and imprison others for some supposed benefit, we actually harm and imprison ourselves even more. Our violence toward animals for food is ultimately violence toward ourselves. It inevitably and elegantly boomerangs. We are so obtuse as a culture that we don't realize it.

As I write this, I sit in our rolling home, parked for a few days here at a sanctuary for some abused goats, sheep, cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and other animals who have miraculously escaped the giant industrial meat grinder they were destined for from birth. Caressing them behind the ears, rubbing their bellies, looking into their eyes, feeling the warm subjectivity of their presence, is all deeply sobering. They respond when their names are called. They are subjects of lives that are to them as important as mine is to me, and their interests are to them as important as mine are to me. Yet most of us participate in destroying them by the billions without remorse. Stealing their purposes, we lose our own, and become unwittingly enslaved ourselves in a heartless system that is devastating our Earth.

What we do to ourselves, we do to the Earth, and what we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves. We are not essentially separate from this beautiful Earth, from beautiful animals, and from each other. Like the cows born into a system that forces them to eat meat to produce more milk, and get fat for slaughter, we are similarly forced to eat meat, and as we reduce beings to things, we ourselves are reduced to mere objects without abiding self-respect. Animals, the Earth, future generations, and starving people all suffer directly because of this.

The way out is straightforward: Do not do to others what you wouldn't want done to you. The ancient universal principles are infinitely wiser than our science's latest theories and concoctions. All we need to know is in our basic human sanity, which has been relentlessly polluted like the clear Gulf waters by toxic cultural effluent.

The great metaphor of our culture is the knife. We use knives to stab and dismember 75 million animals every day in the U.S. for food. We carve up

forests, we stab and maul millions of acres of land for monocropped grains for animal feed, and cut and splice the genes themselves into unnatural abominations, and stab the living body of the Earth for oil, gas, and minerals. Just as we don't see cows and pigs as being alive, but as merely hot dogs and burgers, we don't see the Earth as being alive, but as a mere resource, and go on stabbing ourselves in the hearts and brains, laying waste our wisdom and compassion, suffering heart attacks, strokes, and endless war.

It is now absolutely clear. Our culture must go vegan or perish. Those who live by the sword will die by the sword. I see a great awakening on the horizon. We are not essentially condemned to slavery and oblivion. We are here to awaken from the nightmare of delusory separateness and celebrate our lives as manifestations of benevolence, joy, creativity, and love. This is the core teaching of veganism: we are all connected and love is our true nature. As we live this more deeply, we can transform our world.

Miraculous Beauty of Plants

We grow to appreciate the nearly miraculous beauty of cabbages and cauliflower, the fragrance of roasted sesame seeds, sliced oranges, chopped cilantro, and baked kabocha squash, and the wondrous textures of avocado, persimmon, steamed quinoa, and sautéed tempeh.

We are grateful for the connection we feel with the earth, the clouds, the nurturing gardeners, and the seasons, and the tastes are delicious gifts we naturally enjoy opening to, as we would open to our beloved in making love and appreciating the beloved fully. In contrast, eating animal foods is often done quickly, without feeling deeply into the source of the food—for who would want to contemplate the utter hells that produce our factory-farmed fish, chicken, eggs, cheese, steaks, bacon, hot dogs, or burgers?

The Repercussions

Another reason plant-based foods taste better is that we feel better eating them and contemplating their origins. Eating slowly, we enjoy contemplating

the organic orchards and gardens that supply the delicious vegetables, fruits, and grains we're eating.

Inner Attitudes

Eating food is a lot like sex in that the inner images and attitudes we have are more important to our enjoyment than the physical or objective reality of which or of whom we partake. Our taste is determined, ultimately, by our mind.

Celebrations of Peace

Our lives flow from our beliefs, and our beliefs are conditioned by our daily actions. As we act, so we build our character and so we become. By consciously making our meals celebrations of peace, compassion, and freedom, we can sow seeds in the most powerful way possible to contribute to the healing of our world.

A Spiritual Disease

Billions are spent searching for drugs and other material means to cure what is actually an ethical and spiritual disease. Sowing disease and death in animals at our mercy, we reap the same in ourselves. Much of medical research today is actually an apparently desperate quest to find ways to continue eating animal foods and to escape the consequences of our cruel and unnatural practices. Do we really want to be successful in this?

The Plant Based Diet

A plant-based diet cannot be patented, so it is of absolutely no interest to the pharmaceutical complex.

It is an enormous threat, in fact, and huge campaigns are waged to keep us distracted and believing that complex carbohydrates are bad for us while animal protein is absolutely necessary, and that science can save us from diabetes, cancer, and the other diseases brought on by our callous domination of animals for food.

Prevent Suffering.

Animal-based meals are the source of the complacency and sense of disempowerment that permit the environmental and social holocaust that our media prevents us from seeing and comprehending. Eating animal foods diminishes our sensitivity, paralyzing us by reducing our ability to respond—our response-ability. Eating the violence on our plates requires an evasion of responsibility so that we come to believe our actions don't make much difference. This erroneous belief is actually rooted in our semi-conscious understanding that with every meal we cause exactly the kind of suffering and pollution that we would naturally want to prevent.

A Primary Symbol

Food is not only a fundamental necessity; it is also a primary symbol in the shared inner life of every human culture, including our own. It is not hard to see that food is a source and metaphor of life, love, generosity, celebration, pleasure, reassurance, acquisition, and consumption. And yet it is also, ironically, a source and metaphor of control, domination, cruelty, and death, for we often kill to eat. Every day, from the cradle to the grave, we all make food choices, or they are made for us. The quality of awareness from which these inevitable food choices arise—and whether we are making them ourselves or they are being made for us—greatly influences our ability to make connections. This ability to make meaningful connections determines whether we are and become lovers and protectors of life or unwitting perpetrators of cruelty and death.

The Inner Feminine

The inner feminine is our intuition, our sensitivity, and our ability to sense the profound interconnectedness of events and beings, and it is vital to peace, wisdom, joy, intelligence, creativity, and spiritual awakening. With every baby calf stolen from her mother and killed, with every gallon of milk stolen from enslaved and broken mothers, with every thrust of the raping sperm gun, with every egg stolen from a helpless, frantic hen, and with every baby chick killed or locked for life in a hellish nightmare cage, we kill the sacred

feminine within ourselves. By ordering and eating products from the industrial herding complex that dominates the feminine with an iron fist, we squelch our opportunities for maturing to higher levels of understanding, sensitivity, and compassion. We remain merely ironic in our quests.

Song of the New Mythos

The song of the new mythos that yearns to be born through us requires our spirits to be loving and alive enough to hear and recognize the pain we are causing through our obsolete food orientation. We are called to allow our innate mercy and kindness to shine forth and to confront the indoctrinated assumptions that promote cruelty.

While we are granted varying degrees of privilege depending on our species, race, class, and gender, we are all harmed when any is harmed; suffering is ultimately completely interconnected because we are all interconnected, and socially-constructed privilege only serves to disconnect us from this truth of our interdependence.

Natural Compassion

In order to confine and kill animals for food, we must repress our natural compassion, warping us away from intuition and toward materialism, violence, and disconnectedness.

Behavior reflects Understanding

Our behavior invariably reflects our understanding, and yet our behavior also determines what level of understanding we are able to attain.

Call to Evolve

The calling we hear today is the persistent call to evolve. It is part of a larger song to which we all contribute and that lives in our cells and in the essential nature of the universe that gives rise to our being. It is a song, ultimately, of healing, joy, and celebration because all of us, humans and non-humans alike,

are expressions of a beautiful and benevolent universe. It is also a song of darkest pain and violation, due to our accepted practices of dominating, commodifying, and killing animals and people.

Peace & Freedom

Eating animal foods is a fundamental cause of our dilemmas, but we will squirm every which way to avoid confronting this. It is our defining blind spot and is the essential missing piece to the puzzle of human peace and freedom.

Because of our culturally inherited behavior of abusing the animals we use for food and ignoring this abuse, we are exceedingly hesitant to look behind the curtain of our denial, talk with each other about the consequences of our meals, and change our behavior to reflect what we see and know. This unwillingness is socially supported and continually reinforced.

In Harmony

As children, through constant exposure to the complex patterns of belief surrounding our most elaborate group ritual, eating food, we ingested our culture's values and invisible assumptions. Like sponges, we learned, we noticed, we partook, and we became acculturated. Now, as adults, finding our lives beset with stress and a range of daunting problems of our own making, we rightly yearn to understand the source of our frustrating inability to live in harmony on this earth.

Stone Blind Custom

“The world is his who can see through its pretensions. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold, is there only by sufferance—your sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it a mortal blow.”

Our Most Intimate Connection

Food is actually our most intimate and telling connection both with the natural order and with our living cultural heritage. Through eating the plants and animals of this earth we literally incorporate them, and it is also through this act of eating that we partake of our culture's values and paradigms at the most primal and unconscious levels.

Call of Our Spirit

Seeing our eating habits for what they are, and answering the call of our spirit to understand the consequences of our actions, we become open to compassion, intelligence, freedom, and to living the truth of our interconnectedness with all life. There is an enormously positive revolution implicit in this, a spiritual transformation that can potentially launch our culture into a quantum evolutionary leap, from emphasizing consumption, domination, and self-preoccupation to nurturing creativity, liberation, inclusion, and cooperation.

The End of Predatory Behavior

By confining and killing animals for food, we have brought violence into our bodies and minds and disturbed the physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of our selves in deep and intractable ways. Our meals require us to eat like predators and thus to see ourselves as such, cultivating and justifying predatory behaviors and institutions that are the antithesis of the inclusiveness and kindness that accompany spiritual growth.

A Choice at Every Meal

Because of herding animals, we have cast ourselves out of the garden into the rat race of competition and consumerism, ashamed of ourselves. It is this low self-esteem that drives the profits of corporations enriching themselves on our

insatiable craving for gadgets, drugs, and entertainment to help us forget what we know in our hearts, and to cover over the moans of the animals entombed in our flesh. The choice is set before us at every meal between the garden of life or the altar of death and as we choose life and eat grains and vegetables rather than flesh, milk, and eggs, we find our joy rising, our health increasing, our spirit deepening, our mind quickening, our feelings softening, and our creativity flourishing.

Wonder & Joy in a Garden

From one grain spring hundreds, thousands, and millions of grains, each of which has the same potential. How do we respond to this existential exuberance of life bursting with more life? Our response depends on our food!

Universally, we feel a sense of wonder and joy upon entering a lovingly tended organic garden. It exudes beauty, magic, delight, and blessedness, and we instinctively feel grateful and blessed in the presence of the gifts we receive so freely from forces that accomplish what we can never do: bring forth new life from seeds, roots, and stems. And universally, we are repulsed by the violence and sheer horror and ugliness that are always required to kill animals for food, and at a deep cultural level, we feel ashamed of our relentless violence against animals for our meals.

Transforming Motivations

We can transform this culture we live in, and which lives in us, by transforming our own motivations and exemplifying this to others. We owe this to the animals. In the end, we are not separate from others, and we each have a critical piece to the great puzzle of cultural awakening to contribute, and our success and fulfillment depend on each of us discovering this piece and presenting it persistently. As Albert Schweitzer said, “One thing I know. The only ones among you who will find happiness are those who have sought, and found, how to serve.

Thou shalt not Kill!

“We need never look for universal peace on this earth until men stop killing animals for food. The lust for blood has permeated the race thought and the destruction of life will continue to repeat its psychology, the world round, until men willingly observe the law in all phases of life, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’” – Charles Fillmore, “The Vegetarian,” May 1920

Transforming Culture!

This is the wonderful news! Each and every one of us can help transform our culture in the most effective way possible: by switching to a plant-based diet for ethical reasons and encouraging others to do the same.

This is veganism, which is a mentality and lifestyle of radical inclusion and compassion, and it is the antidote to our culture’s sickness, going to the hidden root of our dilemmas. It is the beckoning revolution that will make peace, sustainability, and heaven actually possible on this Earth. It’s wonderful, because it is not difficult! Anyone can go vegan today and help transform our world with every meal. We can each be the change we want to see in the world and bring forth the benevolent transformation we all yearn for in our hearts.

Violence begets Violence

The ancient wisdom ever holds: Violence begets violence. As we sow, so shall we reap. Now is the time to sow seeds of understanding, patience, and inner reflection, and to truly live more simply, encourage a more plant-based diet, and work to transform our culture, with a view toward caring for all the humans on this beautiful earth, all the precious creatures here, and all those of the future generations who depend upon us to be responsible for our actions. As Gandhi said, “There is enough for everyone’s need, but not for everyone’s greed.”

Food Not Bombs

As people learn more about the consequences of eating animal foods, we see increasing numbers of individuals and groups acting creatively to raise consciousness about this, thus helping to eliminate the roots of hunger, cruelty, pollution, and exploitation.

Food Not Bombs, for example, organizes volunteers and food donations to feed disadvantaged hungry people organic vegan food in over 175 cities throughout the Americas, Europe, and Australia. It is intentionally decentralized and web-like in its approach, with autonomous local units organizing their own compassionate operations.

The worldwide followers of Ching Hai, a noted Vietnamese spiritual teacher with students numbering in the hundreds of thousands, have set up vegan restaurants in many cities and contribute vegan food, clothing, shelter, and aid to disaster victims, prisoners, children, and the elderly in countries around the world.

These are but two encouraging examples of the vegan revolution of compassion, justice and equality taking firmer root in our culture and in the world.

Mindful Eating

As far as taste goes, those of us who follow a plant-based diet invariably report that we discover new vistas of delicious foods that we hardly knew existed. Plant-based cuisines from the Mediterranean, Africa, India, East Asia, Mexico, and South America all offer delicious and nutritious possibilities. As our taste buds come back to life, we discover more subtle nuances of flavor, and as our hearts and minds relax and rejoice in supporting more cruelty-free foods, the foods become increasingly delicious. Due to the mind-body connection, they also become more nutritious as we begin to enjoy partaking of the attractive and regenerating fruits and herbs of our

earth. Mindful eating is the essential foundation of happiness and peace.

Wasted Grain

Eighty percent of grain grown in the U.S. and about half the fish hauled in are wasted to grow billions of animals big and fat enough to be profitably slaughtered, or to produce dairy products and eggs at the high levels demanded by consumers. And over ninety percent of the protein in this grain turns into the methane, ammonia, urea, and manure that pollutes our air and water. A conservative estimate is that the amount of land, grain, water, petroleum, and pollution required to feed one of us the Standard American Diet could feed fifteen of us eating a plant-based diet.

Lactic Acid

Chefs know that fish who die with great resistance, struggling against the net or the hook and line, have a more bitter taste because of the lactic acid that remains in their muscles. In eating fish, we eat the lactic acid the fish produce in their death throes, and the fear-induced adrenalin and other hormones. We can all get ample high-quality protein from plant sources without causing unnecessary misery and trauma to other living creatures.

Vegan Revolution

We are all in this together. The vegan revolution will never include violence; it is a celebration of the joy and beauty of life, and an awakening to the beauty and potential of our shared life on this planet. The only strategy for each of us is how to love and give more deeply, fully, and authentically, and in harmony with our unique talents and gifts. Together, we are transforming our world!

Caring for Others

The most solid and enduring motivations for action are ultimately based on

caring for others—in this case imprisoned animals, wildlife, starving people, slaughterhouse workers, and future generations, to name some of those damaged by our desire for animal foods. The health advantages of a plant-based diet are the perquisites of loving-kindness and awareness, and the diseases and discomfort caused by animal foods are some of the consequences that follow from breaking natural laws.

In the Family

It's actually quite obvious why heart disease and cancer “run in the family.” Everyone in the family has their legs under the same dinner table! As children we not only eat like our family but also soak up our inner attitudes from them. Unless we metaphorically leave home and question our culture's food mentality and the enslaving propaganda of the meat-medical complex, we will find it difficult to discern our unique mission and grow spiritually. Spiritual health, like physical and mental health, urges us to take responsibility for our lives, and to dedicate ourselves to a cause that is higher than our self-preoccupations.

Our Body

Our body is our most precious friend. It works ceaselessly to maintain health and harmony and is our vehicle for expression and experience in this world. What could be more valuable and worthy of care and protection? It never works against us, but always does its best with whatever it has to work with.

It is a shame that so many of these immeasurably valuable gifts from the loving source of all life, beautiful expressions of spiritual creativity, are distracted and harmed unnecessarily, saddled with heavy burdens that were never intended or foreseen by nature, and tragically destroyed by ignorance, fear, and a lack of caring. Radiant physical health is such a treasure; yet how rare it is today, particularly among those of us who abuse animals for food.

Fossil Fuel Calories

Animal foods require immense quantities of petroleum to produce. For example, while it takes only two calories of fossil fuel to produce one calorie of protein from soybeans, and three calories for wheat and corn, it takes fifty-four calories of petroleum to produce one calorie of protein from beef! Animal agriculture contributes disproportionately to our consumption of petroleum and thus to air and water pollution, global warming, and the wars driven by conflict over dwindling petroleum reserves.

Eating Flesh

Eating the flesh and secretions of animals is so fundamentally repulsive to us as humans that these animal foods make especially powerful placebos. We find vultures repulsive because they eat carrion, but we eat exactly the same thing! Sometimes it's euphemized as aged beef. And yet, because we've been taught to attribute strength and energy to eating animal foods, that expectation helps our quite miraculous and flexible psychophysiology to partially overcome the essentially disturbing and toxic nature of these foods so we can survive and function. As children, we had no other choice.

The China Study

“Our study suggests that the closer one approaches a total plant food diet, the greater the health benefit.... It turns out that animal protein, when consumed, exhibits a variety of undesirable health effects. Whether it is the immune system, various enzyme systems, the uptake of carcinogens into the cells, or hormonal activities, animal protein generally only causes mischief.” – Dr. T. Colin Campbell, Author, *The China Study*

VegInspiration.

The roots of our crises lie in our dinner plates. Our inherited food choices

bind us to an obsolete mentality that inexorably undermines our happiness, intelligence, and freedom. Turning away is no longer an option. We are all related.

A Pet Story by Shanti Urreta

The following text is a speech written by Shanti Urreta, a certified WPD facilitator, that she recently gave and won a prize for in her native New Jersey.

How many of you had a pet when you were young? I'm going to tell you a story about a little girl named Sara who had a pet named Rosie. And as all little girls, Sara loved her pet. When she got out of school she would run home as fast as she could, put a leash on Rosie and parade her up and down, and up and down the streets. Then she would invite her friends over and they would dress Rosie up in doll clothes and sit her down and have a tea party. Rosie was very smart and she loved the attention she got from the little girls. Rosie was truly loved.

One day Sara found out that Rosie was pregnant and she was so excited to have more babies to love and care for. Two neighborhood boys also found out that Rosie was pregnant and they decided to steal Rosie and make some money by selling her babies. So they put her in a cage in their basement. No longer did Rosie go for walks, no more tea parties, and no little girls to dote after her. Day after day Sara would fall to her knees and pray that one day she would have her beloved pet back, but it was to no avail.

The money making business was going really well for the boys and they decided to keep her and all the females pregnant. The basement turned into a roomful of caged animals.

About a year later, Sara was walking pass this house and she heard a lot of noise coming from the back, so she walked quietly to the back of the house, bent down and looked through the basement window. What she saw stunned her. In this room were animals packed tightly in cages wall to wall. Now, I

really need you to see what Sara saw, really put this picture in your head. In each and every cage are animals, crying, screaming, and some too sick to move. They lay there in piles of feces and urine. Do you see it? Do you really see it? And as she scans the room she notices the two boys coming in the side door wearing masks. As they walk past some animals on the floor, they kick them as though they are garbage. The boys go to some cages and grab some babies from their mothers without a care in the world, as the cries and screams of the mothers and babies echo in Sara's ears.

And as she takes a deep breath, she notices the sickly stench coming from the closed window of urine and feces, of death and of dying. Then more to her horror she sees a pile of dead and dying animals heaped up on the side of room - bloody, wounded, and infected. Some of the animals were still barely alive as they rocked their heads in their last attempt at life. Did you see it?

How many of you are thinking that Rosie is a dog? Well, Rosie was a pig. And for billions of animals some call food – this was not some made up story. This is reality. Billions of food animals are confined, never to see the light of day, abused psychologically and physically. We eat some animals, yet others we call pets. Rosie was both.

By their food choices, people unknowingly are supporting a system that allows unimaginable cruelty to animals. Paul McCartney said, “If slaughterhouses had glass walls, we would all be vegetarian.” Each of us has a choice as to what we eat and what we support. You may think that you cannot make a difference, but I want you to consider this: Each snowflake in an avalanche pleads not guilty, but together they could have stopped it.

The Food in Heaven

We all have our story of awakening. When I was about seven years old, I remember asking my mother, “The kind of food we eat—is that what everybody eats?” She answered, “Yes.” Then she added, “Well, there are vegetarians...” in a way that made me think they must live on another planet.

At thirteen, I went away to a Vermont summer camp affiliated with an organic dairy and participated in killing my own chicken, and never questioned it in the least. After thirteen years in our culture, I knew that chickens are put on Earth for us to eat, that they don't have souls, they taste good, and if we didn't eat them and certain other animals, we would all soon die of a protein deficiency. Later in the summer, when we all witnessed and participated in killing a 2,000-pound dairy cow because she wasn't giving enough milk any more, I have to say that though I was shocked by the sheer terror, bloodiness and agonized death convulsions of the cow, I didn't question the rightness of our actions for a moment. Everyone in my world—relatives, neighbors, doctors, ministers, teachers, leaders, media—assumed that animals used for food are mere commodities.

As fate would have it, after graduating from Colby College in Maine in 1975, I went on a spiritual pilgrimage, heading west and then south, meditating, walking, and attempting to deepen my understanding of the world and myself. After several months of walking, I reached The Farm in Tennessee, a community of about a thousand hippies, mainly from California, who were living conscientiously on the land to be an example of peace and sustainability. They ate no animal foods, and their delicious meals, combined with my deepening understanding of how animals are routinely mistreated for food, made becoming a vegetarian a no-brainer. I've never eaten meat since.

Several years later, after moving to California, I went to Korea to live as a Zen monk, and found myself in a monastery that had been practicing vegan living for 650 years. No animal foods, wool, leather, or silk had been used there for centuries. For me it was a bit like heaven on earth—a deeply satisfying opportunity for sustained, undistracted introspection, and I found my consciousness relaxing into a sense of abiding peace as I was able to gradually extricate it from the brambles of multiple layers of programming, memory, and cultural indoctrination. The joy and freedom this brought were profound.

I have discovered that all of us raised in this culture have been ritually injected with an unrecognized mentality that renders our efforts for peace, freedom, justice, equality, and sustainability merely ironic. We want for ourselves what we refuse to give to others. Our massive and routine violence toward animals for food is our culture's defining blind spot, and when we look deeply enough, we realize that this is the situation in a nutshell: We are all beings of light and awareness and love, born into a culture of violence and exclusion.

We take on its darkness and fear, and the core ritual used by our culture to effect this is our daily meals, where we are forced to participate in routine killing by eating and buying the flesh and secretions of imprisoned, terrified animals.

Our path to freedom lies in freeing these animals. Veganism is the spiritual and practical key to happiness and peace. It is the stark and liberating solution to the omnivore's dilemma, and to the unyielding conundrum bearing down on our culture as our relentless violence toward animals, people, and the Earth ripens before our eyes. As the lived expression of nonviolence, veganism is the path to heaven.

This beautiful Earth is a celebration of joy. As we understand and act in harmony with the universal teachings of compassion and nonviolence, we will discover that our Earth can be transformed into heaven. Each of us can be an angel in our heaven, here to love and serve the magnificent creation.

Food is the key: our most essential, intimate, and significant connection with the larger order. The food of heaven is available now, and together we can create a new dream every day on this Earth. I invite all of us to vividly imagine our culture's vegan future in all its details, and to act to help create it. Sharing vegan recipes and spreading the word in our own unique ways, we are transforming our world. Imagining our culture as a vegan culture is imagining an utterly different culture, a beautiful world to which our future selves are ever beckoning us.

Inherent Compassion

We are taught as children to practice certain ways of seeing the world and of relating to others, and we gradually become adept in these practices. In our culture, we are taught to practice disconnecting the reality of animal flesh and secretions in our meals from the actual reality of the animal cruelty required to get them onto our plates.

Going vegan is a commitment to practice something else, to practice in a completely different way than we were taught by our culture. Instead of practicing desensitizing, disconnecting, and reducing others, we practice reconnecting, resensitizing ourselves, and respecting others. This commitment comes from deep within us, from our inherent compassion and our inner urge to evolve spiritually and to live with awareness, kindness, freedom, and joy.

Sowing Obesity

It is illuminating to look at our treatment of animals and see how our mistreatment of them has painful repercussions for us. The ironies involved are remarkable. For example, animals in the wild are never fat, but animals raised for food are severely confined and fed special diets and given drugs and hormones in order to make them unnaturally fat. They're sold by the pound, after all. Sowing obesity in billions of animals we reap it in ourselves.

Transform Anger into Compassion

The essence of the mentality that allows us to confine and kill animals for food is the mentality of exclusion. We are all taught by our culture from infancy to exclude certain beings from the sphere of our compassion.

Veganism is a radical response to this: it is a mentality of utter inclusion: we consciously practice including all living beings within our circle of caring; we exclude no one.

Anger is an expression of exclusion. It destroys veganism and compassion.

We are called, as vegans, to transform our anger toward those who are harming animals, people, the Earth, and future generations into compassion and understanding for them.

The Seafood Industry

Fish absorb and intensely concentrate toxins like PCBs, dioxins, radioactive substances, and heavy metals like mercury, lead, cadmium, and arsenic, all of which are linked to cancer as well as nervous system disorders, kidney damage, and impaired mental functioning. They contain excessive amounts of cholesterol, animal protein, and hazardous, blood-altering oils. Besides contributing directly to human disease and suffering through the toxicity of its products, the seafood industry causes enormous damage to marine ecosystems throughout the world.

Bring Your Lovingkindness

Stay open and sensitive to the suffering of both animals and humans, and bring as much loving-kindness as you can to all your relationships with others, including yourself. We are all connected, and your joy brings joy to others and makes your veganism more appealing and contagious to others.

Energy of Joy

The revolution implicit in veganism is a revolution of universal love and inclusiveness and its energy of joy can wash the planet clean and transform ugly human folly. Give thanks every day for the joy in your heart and that you see reflected in the birds, flowers, trees, and in the whole web of celebrating life, for that is what you are.

Force for Revolution

The foundation of our culture's systemic violence against animals for food is a mentality of exclusion. For us as vegans to be a force for the revolution of compassion that is called for if our culture is to survive, we must heal the mentality of exclusion within ourselves, and exclude no one from our understanding and compassion.

We don't have the luxury to cultivate anger, or allow it to be a motivation, because anger is a poison that is inherently exclusionary. We are called, as Gandhi said, to be the change we want to see. There is no motivation more revolutionary than joy-filled loving-kindness.

Healing the World

The act of regularly eating foods derived from confined and brutalized animals forces us to become somewhat emotionally desensitized, and this numbing and inner armoring make it possible for us as a culture to devastate the earth, slaughter people in wars, and support oppressive social structures without feeling remorse.

By going vegan, we're taking responsibility for the effects of our actions on vulnerable beings and we're resensitizing ourselves. We're becoming more alive, and more able to feel both grief and joy. Kahlil Gibran points out in *The Prophet* that unless we are able to feel our grief and weep our tears, we will not be able to laugh our laughter, either. Turning our pain and outrage into action on behalf of vulnerable beings will bring healing to us and to our world.

A Force for Healing

As vegans, we're a force for healing and compassion every day and at every meal. Our way of living exemplifies mercy and promotes freedom, and offers opportunities to unfold wisdom and help heal our world. These are true causes for an abiding sense of joy. Even in the midst of grief and outrage at our culture's cruelty, we can be glad that our ability to feel is reawakening.

A Sense of Joy

As vegans, we may feel sad, bitter, misunderstood, and isolated by the apparently oblivious attitudes of our culture, friends, and families. What can we do?

In a few words, we can cultivate a sense of joy and thankfulness. In the face of our culture's unrelenting pressure to view animals as mere food commodities, going vegan is a victory for peace, a real spiritual breakthrough.

Condemn Animal Slavery

From the viewpoint of its deepest and most eternal and universal teachings—to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourself—the Bible unequivocally condemns animal slavery just as it condemns human slavery. We must stop using the Bible to justify animal abuse, but rather use it to guide us in our quest for peace and justice for all beings.

Stop the Violence!

What goes around comes around. We must as a species stop the violence that is inherent in our meat habit. This should be of paramount importance for all religious movements and teachers. It is the call of spirituality. If our religions don't hear this call, we must revitalize them or create new ones that do.

The Spiritual Element

Since the decision to become a vegan is at its core an ethical one, spirituality, which is the foundation of ethics, must be the foundation of veganism as well.

The spiritual element within us encourages us not to harm others, but to express love and practice compassion. Compassion brings the intuition of spiritual awareness into daily life as actions that serve to help and bless others. Veganism is clearly a vital expression of this compassion that springs

from our felt sense of connectedness with others. While it may not necessarily be religious, at its core, veganism is spiritual, and it is an expression of love. It is a concrete way that we can all be lovers.

A Litmus Test

Veganism is, I've found, a litmus test of religious teachings and religious teachers. To the degree that religious teachings do not explicitly encourage veganism, which is the practice of nonviolence and lovingkindness, to that same degree these teachings are hypocritical and disconnected from their spiritual source.

Shining Compassion

Each of us is radically and profoundly interconnected with all other living beings, and by blessing and encouraging and seeing the best in others, we help everyone, and by condemning or turning away from others, we harm everyone, including ourselves. Shining compassion to everyone, even our apparent opponents, is the essence of the benevolent revolution that is veganism.

And not only that, going vegan's a practical contribution to the energy crisis, hunger, and climate change. So keep building that connection to the inner sun and shine!

Our Inner Lives

Looking around, we can see the tremendous urgency in the task required of us: to do all we can to influence our culture to evolve and embrace the vegan ideals of interconnectedness, freedom, and caring.

The same urgency is required in our inner lives as well. Going vegan is much more than minimizing the cruelty and suffering we cause others; it is awakening the heart of loving inclusiveness and realizing that there are, ultimately, no separate selves. We are all connected.

Born Into This

When we come to this earth, we find ourselves in a culture that is at its very core organized around confining and killing animals for food. We are forced virtually from birth to look at beings as mere commodities and to treat them as such by eating them in the most powerful daily rituals we engage in: our meals.

All cultures naturally propagate themselves through their various institutions, and ours is no different. Our scientific, religious, governmental, educational, and economic institutions all reflect the same underlying mentality and reinforce it, which is why veganism is so strenuously resisted, and also why it is so urgently needed as well.

Fortunately, as we awaken and stop disconnecting from the suffering we cause others by our choices, we resensitize ourselves and begin to be a force for kindness and respect that can impact others, and we can work through our culture's institutions to raise consciousness and spread the light of inclusiveness. The more clearly the inner light shines in us, the more clearly we can shine it into the world.

Personal & Planetary Peace

The real secret to personal and planetary peace and happiness is veganism rightly understood as the ancient and timeless teaching to include all living beings within the sphere of our kindness and respect, and never to treat any being as a mere object to be used or abused. This is the awakening of our true human heart, not for a self-centered happiness, but for a happiness that includes everyone. This is positive thinking beyond mere positive thinking; it's living the truth that we are, and being the transformation we long to see in our world.

Now let's imagine that!—and live it.

Our Vibrational Level

The secret to happiness and inner peace is thus not just the Law of Attraction and being mindful of our thoughts, although this is certainly important. The secret is being mindful of our actions as well, because just as our thoughts condition our behavior, our behavior conditions our thoughts, and regular daily actions of instigating violence and eating the results of that violence keep our consciousness and thoughts confined to a relatively low vibrational level.

The Essential Healing Force

Veganism is the essential healing force that our culture desperately needs, because the mentality of domination that starts on our plates reverberates through our various cultural institutions as authoritarianism, oppression, and violence. Healing this mentality requires cultivating vegan values: concern and caring for others weaker than us, and refusing to exploit them. As vegans, the improved health we naturally experience is a side-benefit; it's not the main focus because we sense there's a higher purpose in life than just being physically healthy.

Compassion: The Hidden Key to Healing

Can you remember times in your life when you've been blessed by someone's compassion? I remember times when I was under the weather or stressed out and received the compassion of a loving touch; when I've been on stage in front of a large crowd and received the compassion of an encouraging smile. And, I think we all know we would never survive our early months and years without the loving compassion of our parents.

What is compassion? Compassion is an inherent potential within us all. It is not simply a sense of caring and kindness toward the being before us. It isn't merely a warm-hearted feeling of empathy for the suffering of others...it is the determined and practical resolve to do whatever is possible to relieve

their suffering; the sustained urge to eliminate suffering.

For this reason, compassion is often referred to as the highest form of love. It flows out of the truth of our interconnectedness with others. Not confined merely to the realm of feeling, compassion rouses us to action, in much the same way we are instinctively roused to action to defend our own lives, well-being, and interests. Compassion is a blessed miracle, and though it's virtually inexplicable by our culture's materialistic orientation, it is a vital and unrecognized key to social harmony, spiritual growth, fulfilling relationships, living a meaningful life, and healing of all kinds.

The natural development of compassion in children is unfortunately short-circuited by forcing them to participate in meat-based meals. The subtext of these meals is one of systematically excluding certain animals from the sphere of our compassion and moral concern. In our daily food rituals, beings are systematically reduced to things, and these rituals instill in all of us the mentality of exclusion and reductionism that is the antithesis of compassion. I believe this is the hidden root of disease, the underlying disaster churning at the core of our culture that causes so much of the physical, social, psychological, and environmental illness that we see proliferating around us.

Compassion brings healing. Whenever we wake up from this acculturated consensus trance that sees beings merely as things to be used, we become more alive, more aware, and more filled with what the ancients called Sophia: the wisdom of knowing the interconnectedness that underlies the apparent outward separateness. This is a wisdom that is actually lived, not merely intellectualized. There is a pithy and illuminating proverb: “To know, and not to do, is not to know.”

As Sophia awakens in us, bringing wisdom, compassion, and healing; and we are relentlessly confronted with our acculturated food habits—eating more living, plant-based foods and less of the inherently cruel animal-based foods—we experience healing, both physically and on the deeper causal levels of our being. Our bodies function better and begin to cleanse and purify, our

mind is clearer, our emotions are more positive, our relationships become more harmonious, our buying patterns are more ecologically responsible. We begin to care more deeply about the Earth, others, and ourselves, and we evolve to spiritual awareness that there is much more to life than our cultural programming has revealed. In short, we become a threat to the established order!

We might find people saying to us, “Hey, you can eat how you like, but don’t tell me what to eat!” We realize how ironic this is. The only reason anyone in our culture eats animal-based foods is because they’ve been told to do so since birth by every institution in our culture: family, media, religion, government, education, and business. It’s never a freely-arrived-at choice: we’ve all been, and continue to be, inundated with messages that eating animal-derived foods is a natural, normal, and essential characteristic of human behavior.

I don’t remember my parents telling me that I could freely choose whether to eat the first little blobs of meat they presented to me...or explaining that they were the flesh of pigs and turkeys who had been confined their entire lives and killed in terror and pain. I don’t remember my schoolteachers helping me to understand that fish are highly intelligent, social creatures with the same pain receptors we have. I don’t remember my minister pontificating about the suffering of dairy cows, whose babies are serially stolen from them so we can steal their milk, or the TV informing me of the nightmarish conditions endured by chickens at egg-production facilities. I was never given a choice and was forced into complicity, completely oblivious to the repercussions of my actions. Without knowing the truth, how could I ever practice compassion?

The exquisite beauty and potential of our brief adventure on this Earth are that we can grow, evolve, and awaken to greater capacities of love and wisdom. We can become a force for spreading freedom, peace, and healing. With any inner healing, there will be outer healing, and with healing comes change. With any meaningful change, there will be risk. We may find ourselves alone, losing cherished relationships because we no longer eat the

same way and no longer respond unquestioningly to pervasive social conditioning.

We find, though, that we are connected to a deeper source of joy and inner peace. As we bring our lives into alignment with the truth we have discovered, and the compassion that has grown in our heart, we realize that the rewards are worth infinitely more than what we risked. At a deep level, our self-esteem returns, and we realize how participating in the violence pervading our culture's meals had reduced our awareness and sense of self-worth. Newfound joyfulness blossoms in our heart and we intuit it all directly—truth, compassion, healing—these three are inseparable sisters. Cultivating one cultivates the others. We are all connected, and the more deeply we heal ourselves, the more we bless others. Cultivating compassion is an essential and often unrecognized key to authentic healing. It's never too late to begin practicing it! The more we bless others, the more we are blessed.

A Committed Effort

Veganism, which is a committed effort to live the ideals of mercy and kindness to others, is indispensable to all spiritual paths, because it emerges from and deepens the understanding that all beings are completely interconnected and interdependent. It is an inclusive movement that advocates a plant-based diet because it includes all sentient creatures within its sphere of concern. The towering spiritual geniuses who have blessed this earth have typically been vegan but have been little concerned whether their foods were cooked or not. For example, when we look at the great Zen masters of China and East Asia of the last 1,500 years, we find people who invariably ate a vegan diet of both cooked and uncooked foods. The desert fathers of the Christian tradition are similar.

Root of the Problem

Corporations were created for one reason: to avoid responsibility; spirituality and veganism, if they are expressions of anything, are expressions of taking

responsibility. In the big picture, we are all responsible for our treatment of others, as well as for our failures to act to help others. To finally solve the dilemma we see reflected in political corruption, we must cut the root of the problem, which is the herding mentality that commodifies animals and the weak and gives rise to the corporate worldview. Veganism is the only lasting solution.

Natural Flowering

Veganism is the natural flowering of consciousness freed from the continuous programming of the inherent violence in our culture. The word vegan is precious, inspiring, and demanding, because it questions the core mentality of our culture and it is the key to our culture's transformation and to its very survival.

So please, let's love, defend, respect, understand, and propagate this word and what it stands for as if all our lives depended upon it; they very well may.

Psychospiritual Development

Veganism is actually a spectrum of psychospiritual development, and the most basic level of veganism is refraining from buying foods and products that cause suffering to animals. As our veganism deepens, we realize that veganism is radical inclusion, and that it calls us to act with respect and kindness in all our relations with everyone, all the time. A tall order! In short, veganism is an ideal that is perhaps ultimately unattainable, but that draws us ever onward to greater love and compassion in every dimension of our lives.

To Know Is Not Enough

Every person who authentically goes vegan is a person who is rediscovering the lost chalice of intuitive wisdom, and by refusing to participate in the killing and enslaving of mothers and babies, and honoring the sacred dimension and reclaiming intuitive wisdom, is helping to transform our culture in profound and significant ways. As Goethe said, "To know is not

enough. You must apply.” Spiritual teachings emphasize that whatever we deeply desire we must first give to others. To recover the lost chalice, we are called to give the female animals we exploit the opportunity to express their maternal wisdom again.

As we practice leaving home by examining our own societal indoctrination and questioning all the propaganda continually spewed forth by the military-industrial-meat-medical complex, we can liberate ourselves and live a life of greater compassion based on vegan ethics and a plant-based diet, and be a voice for those vulnerable sentient creatures who have no voice. In this we fulfill the universal teachings that promote spiritual living.

We are practicing compassion and making connections, and our life can become a field of freedom and love as we continually affirm our interdependence with all life, and practice non-cooperation with those forces that see beings as mere commodities.

Compassionate Living

We will hopefully be able to create more and more opportunities for people to experience vegan community in North America and elsewhere. Practicing compassionate living together can send boundless waves of healing energy into our world and help awaken the slumbering conscience of our species.

Vegan Community

I hope that all vegans or aspiring vegans have the opportunity at some point in our lives to live in a vegan community for a while. I have had this opportunity a few times and it's been transformative. Many of the difficulties we encounter in living a vegan lifestyle, for our families and ourselves, arise because we are basically alone in a culture that is hostile to our values. I found when I was immersed in large-scale vegan communities, contradictions and complications evaporated in a remarkable feeling of inner wholeness.

Our Own True Nature

Veganism is not “veganism.” That’s all looking from the outside. We live, serve, and give thanks for this precious life arising through All of Us. It may look like and be called veganism, but it is not an option. It is simply the expression of our own true nature: seeing beings to be respected rather than things to be used.

The Highest Form of Love

When love is born in our hearts, we want only the best for others, for we directly see them as ourselves. The imprisoning illusion of a fundamentally separate self, struggling against other selves for its own rewards, is transcended, and our life becomes dedicated to bringing peace, joy, and fulfillment to others. This brings us our greatest joy, and is the flowering of the highest form of love, which is compassion.

We must, if this process is actually happening in us, be drawn toward veganism, and it is in no way a limitation on us, but the harmonious fulfillment of our own inner seeing.

The Truth of Interbeing

As we evolve spiritually, we become more awake to the truth of interbeing, that all living beings are profoundly interconnected, and that by harming

World Peace Diet by Dr. Will Tuttle

Working to bring the vegan message of compassion to our culture has been like climbing a huge and daunting mountain. For many years I toiled, collecting information, reflecting, and sharing. Then I decided to write a comprehensive book and undertook writing *The World Peace Diet*, which took another five years of full-time, nearly continuous labor. Since then has been another four years of scheduling an unending speaking tour, living on the road, putting on over 150 events annually in order to help move the

message of The World Peace Diet into whatever receptive communities I could find in our culture. Then about 8 months ago, I decided to fashion a campaign that would hopefully catapult The World Peace Diet into the mainstream. Its message is so intensely transformational that I knew I'd have to rely upon the vegan communities to be successful in the endeavor.

For years and years I worked and worked and worked and worked.

The mountain so enormous, all I could do was just keep putting one foot in front of another, and never stop. My spouse Madeleine was an angel, and so were huge numbers of beautiful friends and colleagues who have provided others, I harm myself because the life in that apparent 'other' is the same life that lives in this apparent 'me.' As our hearts open to deeper understanding, our circle of compassion thus automatically enlarges, and spontaneously begins to include more and more 'others.' Not just our own tribe, sect, nation, or race, but all human beings, and not just humans, but other mammals, and birds, fish, forests, and the whole beautifully-interwoven tapestry of living, pulsing creation. All of Us.

Five Universal Taboos

Anthropologists refer to the five prohibitions as the five universal taboos, which cross-culturally prohibit, against other humans, the actions of killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and forcing drugs or toxic substances on others. In our culture today, we are evolving toward an understanding of these prohibitions that includes animals as well: seeing that just as it is a violation to harmfully interfere with Spirit's experience of being a human, it is also a violation to harmfully interfere with Spirit's experience of being an animal.

Awareness and Truth

It seems there are three main reasons why people continue to eat animals in spite of the horror and tragedy this behavior generates. The first and essential reason is that eating animals is not a behavior people have ever chosen freely. It has, instead, been forced upon them, starting at an early age. People have

been indoctrinated to do it. The second reason is because of social pressure. Being so gregarious, we humans like to fit in and be part of the group, and this militates strongly against questioning the eating of animal foods.

The third big reason is that people like the taste: they get a certain pleasure that they are loath to give up. Fortunately, these three fundamental reasons for eating animal foods are all ultimately invalid and indefensible. Indoctrination, social pressure, and the self-centered pursuit of pleasure have been behind all the atrocities we humans have committed, and when we shine the light of our awareness and truth on them, they are seen for the weak, erroneous delusions that they truly are.

The Eternal Essence

The great philosopher Schopenhauer, in criticizing how some Christians treat animals, wrote, “Shame on such a morality that fails to recognize the eternal essence that exists in every living thing, and shines forth with inscrutable significance from all eyes that see the sun.” All of us are celebrations of infinite mysterious Spirit, deserving of honor and respect.

The Cardinal Precept

In the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, the Buddha says to the assembled monks, “If one sees that there is much meat, one must not accept such a meal. One must never take the meat itself. One who takes it infringes the rule.” This is very clear, and as another example, in the Brahma’s Net Sutra, he says, “Disciples of the Buddha, should you willingly and knowingly eat flesh, you defile yourself.”

These teachings are repeated strongly in many other sutras, including the Lankavatara Sutra and the Surangama Sutra, both of which are foundational Mahayana Buddhist scriptures. The cardinal precept in Buddhism is not to kill, and animals are always explicitly included in this injunction.

Question Everything

Each and every one of us makes our world.

Question everything this culture says, throw off the chains of harming and stealing from fish, birds, and other mammals, and join the vegan celebration! We will love this world and each other so deeply that we will all be transformed.

No Greater Act of Love

There is no greater act of love and freedom than to question the core of violence and disconnectedness churning unrecognized in the belly of our culture, and to switch to a plant-based diet because of compassion for the countless animals, humans, and future generations to whom we are related. All life is interconnected, and as we bless others, we are blessed. As we allow others to be free and healthy, we become free and healthy. Photo: Rinalia

Gift of Bodies

When we realize that we've all been given the gift of bodies that require no nutrients we cannot get from plant sources, we can become, ourselves, the change we want to see in the world. This is the heart and soul of the vegan revolution of love, joy, and peace that is beckoning and to which we are all called to contribute.

Lab Grown Meat

If lab-grown “meat” becomes available, that will reduce our killing and waste of resources. And it may help us move toward veganism, since our meals will no longer require us to disconnect from the suffering we're causing animals. However, there are countless ways we oppress and abuse animals besides eating them, and if our culture doesn't evolve to the vegan ethic of compassion to all beings, and continues to use and prey on animals, our technology will magnify our violence and we'll do the same to each other.

Inclusiveness & Nonviolence

Veganism is the essence of inclusiveness and nonviolence: seeing sacred beings when we see others, never reducing them to objects or commodities for our use. It is the ancient wisdom of the interconnectedness of the welfare of all, and is also the dawning mentality that is foundational to sustainability, freedom, and lasting peace. Our children's world will be vegan, or the alternative is unpleasant to contemplate.

Our Meals and Institutions

Our meals and institutions reflect each other and reinforce the delusion that we are violent and competitive by nature. Spiritual and religious teachings say otherwise. The Bodhisattva ideal that Buddhists emulate, for example, embodies the understanding that our true nature is wisdom, loving-kindness and cooperativeness. Our greatest joy comes in helping others and blessing them, and we hurt ourselves the most when we harm others for our own gain.

Protection of Animals

“When we turn to the protection of animals, we sometimes hear it said that we ought to protect men first and animals afterwards. By condoning cruelty to animals, we perpetuate the very spirit which condones cruelty to men.” – Henry Salt

Cultural Predicament

Our cultural predicament—the array of seemingly intractable problems that beset us, such as chronic war, terrorism, genocide, starvation, the proliferation of disease, environmental degradation, species extinction, animal abuse, consumerism, drug addiction, alienation, stress, racism, oppression of women, child abuse, corporate exploitation, materialism, poverty, injustice, and social malaise—is rooted in an essential cause that is so obvious that it has managed to remain almost completely overlooked.

Pollution of a Shared Consciousness

The pollution of our shared consciousness-field by the dark agonies endured by billions of animals killed for food is an unrecognized fact that impedes our social progress and contributes gigantically to human violence and the warfare that is constantly erupting around the world.

Love Animals

“Love animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble their joy, don’t harass them, don’t deprive them of their happiness, don’t work against God’s intent.” – Fyodor Dostoevsky

With Awareness

With awareness, our behavior naturally changes, and individual changes in behavior, rippling through the web of relationships, can lead to social transformation and bring new dimensions of freedom, joy, and creativity to everyone. It all begins with our most intimate and far-reaching connection with the natural order, our most primary spiritual symbol, and our most fundamental social ritual: eating.

Every Creature

“Women should be protected from anyone’s exercise of unrighteous power... but then, so should every other living creature.” -- George Eliot

Looking Deeply

Looking deeply, we see that the perpetrators are themselves victims of violence—that’s why they’ve become perpetrators—and their violence hurts not only the animals but themselves and the bystanders as well. All three are locked in a painful embrace, and it is the bystanders who have the real power.

They can either turn and look away, thus giving their tacit approval, or they can witness and bring a third dimension of consciousness and awareness to the cycle of violence that has the victims and perpetrators hopelessly enmeshed.

Motivation based on Compassion

If our only motivation for not eating animal foods is our own health, it's easy to “cheat” a little here and there and pretty soon go back to eating them again. When our motivation is based on compassion, it is deep and lasting, because we understand that our actions have direct consequences on others who are vulnerable.

A Mystical View of Animals

“We need another and a wiser and perhaps a more mystical concept of animals. Remote from universal nature, and living by complicated artifice, man in civilization surveys the creatures through the glass of his knowledge and sees thereby a feather magnified and the whole image in distortion. We patronize them for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err.

For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.”

What is Compassion?

What is compassion? It is not simply a sense of caring and kindness toward the being before you. It isn't merely a warm-hearted feeling of empathy for the suffering of others. It is also the determined and practical resolve to do whatever is possible to relieve their suffering, the sustained urge to reduce and eliminate the suffering they are experiencing.

Veganism is Rare

Veganism is still exceedingly rare even among people who consider themselves spiritual aspirants because the forces of early social conditioning are so difficult to transform. We are called to this, nevertheless; otherwise our culture will accomplish nothing but further devastation and eventual suicide.

Look Deeply at Our Food

Looking undistractedly into the animal-derived foods produced by modern methods, we inescapably find misery, cruelty, and exploitation. We therefore avoid looking deeply at our food if it is of animal origin, and this practice of avoidance and denial, applied to eating, our most basic activity and vital ritual, carries over automatically into our entire public and private life.

We know, deep down, that we cannot look deeply anywhere, for if we do, we will have to look deeply into the enormous suffering our food choices directly cause.

Pursuit of Moral Perfection

“Vegetarianism serves as a criterion by which we know that the pursuit of moral perfection on the part of humanity is genuine and sincere.” – Count Leo Tolstoy

A New Consciousness

From this new consciousness we can accomplish virtually anything; it represents the fundamental positive personal and cultural transformation that we yearn for, and it requires that we change something basic: our eating habits.

Authentic Vegan

To some, simply becoming vegan looks like a superficial step—can something so simple really change us? Yes! Given the power of childhood

programming and of our culture's inertia and insensitivity to violence against animals, authentically becoming a committed vegan can only be the result of a genuine spiritual breakthrough. This breakthrough is the fruit of ripening and effort; however, it is not the end but the beginning of further spiritual and moral development.

Animals feel and suffer

We all know in our bones that other animals feel and suffer as we do. If we use them as things, we will inevitably use other humans as things. This is an impersonal universal principle, and ignoring it doesn't make it go away. It operates with mathematical regularity as Pythagoras taught: what we sow in our treatment of animals, we eventually reap in our lives. Because it is a taboo to say this or make this fundamental connection in our herding culture, we can go to church assured that we will not be confronted by the discomfiting entreaty to love all living beings and to use none of them as things.

Our Old Herding Culture

We may become irate that someone would even suggest that our mother's loving meals and our father's barbecues were a form of indoctrination. Our mother and father didn't intend to indoctrinate us, just as their parents didn't intend to indoctrinate them. Nevertheless, our old herding culture, primarily through the family and secondarily through religious, educational, economic, and governmental institutions, enforces the indoctrination process in order to replicate itself in each generation and continue on.

Field of Freedom

By recognizing and understanding the violence inherent in our culture's meal rituals and consciously adopting a plant-based diet, becoming a voice for those who have no voice, we can attain greater compassion and happiness and live more fully the truth of our interconnectedness with all life. In this we fulfill the universal teachings that promote intelligence, harmony, and

spiritual awakening. Our life can become a field of freedom and peace as we deepen our understanding of the sacredness and interdependence of all living beings, and practice non-cooperation with those forces that see creatures as mere commodities.

In Harmony

We can realize that we are meant to live in harmony with the other animals of this earth because we've been given bodies that actually function better without killing and stealing from them. What a liberating gift! No animal need ever fear us, because there is no nutrient that we need that we cannot get from non-animal sources.

Bodies Reflect

Our bodies reflect our consciousness, which yearns to unfold higher dimensions of creativity, compassion, joy, and awareness, and longs to serve the larger wholes—our culture, our earth, and the benevolent source of all life—by blessing and helping others and by sharing, caring, and celebrating. We have, appropriately, a physiology of peace.

Our True Nature

As we prey upon and “harvest” animals, we use and prey upon people, employing euphemisms according to the situation as “foreign aid,” “privatization,” “advertising,” “spreading the gospel,” “capitalism,” “education,” “free trade,” “lending,” “fighting terrorism,” “development,” and countless other agreeable expressions. The tender loving heart of our true nonpredatory nature is troubled by all this, but it shines unceasingly, and though it's perhaps covered over by our conditioning, it nevertheless inspires the selfless giving, compassion, and enlightenment that our spiritual traditions expound.

Intuition

Intuition opens the door to healing. It never sees any living being as an object

to be used but sees all beings as unique and complete expressions of an infinite universal presence, to be honored, respected, learned from, and celebrated. Intuition is Sophia, the beloved wisdom we yearn for and seek.

Predatory Culture

As we all know in our bones, there is a predatory quality to our economic system, and competition underlies all our institutions. We prey upon each other. It may not be obvious from within our planet's dominant society, but our culture and our corporations and other institutions act in ways that can only be described as predatory vis-à-vis those who are less industrialized, less wealthy, and less able to protect themselves.

Indefensible Holdover

Eating animal foods is an indefensible holdover from another era beyond which we must evolve, and with the ever-increasing profusion of vegan and vegetarian cookbooks and vegan foods like soy milk, soy ice cream, rice syrup, tofu, veggie burgers, and so forth, as well as fresh organically grown vegetables, legumes, fruits, grains, nuts, pastas, and cereals, we see alternatives proliferating. Books, videos, websites, vegetarian/vegan restaurants and menu options, animal rights groups, and vegan organizations are also multiplying as we respond to the vegan imperative.

Do Not Discount Suffering

As long as we remain imprisoned in the maze of self-oriented thinking, we can easily justify our cruelty to others, excuse our hard eyes and supremacist position, discount the suffering we impose on others, and continue on, rationalizing our actions and blocking awareness of the reality of our feelings and of our fundamental oneness with other beings.

Think with our Hearts

We may discover that we can “think” with our hearts, without words, and we may learn to appreciate the consciousness of animals and begin to humbly explore their mysteries. There is perhaps much we can learn from animals.

Not only do they have many powers completely unexplainable by contemporary science, but they are fellow pilgrims with us on this earth who contribute their presence to our lives and enrich our living world in countless essential ways. In fact, without the humble earthworms, bees, and ants whom we relentlessly kill and dominate, the living ecosystems of our earth would break down and collapse—something we certainly cannot say about ourselves!

Post-rational Intuitive

Post-rational intuitive knowing can be born as a sense of being connected with all beings. No longer being merely a parade of conditioned thoughts revolving around a sense of being a separate self, we can sense more deeply into the nature of being and begin to know outside the limitations of linear thinking. With this comes an understanding that our essential nature is not evil, confined, selfish, or petty, but is eternal, free, pure, and is of the essence of love.

Meditate for World Peace

To meditate for world peace, to pray for a better world, and to work for social justice and environmental protection while continuing to purchase the flesh, milk, and eggs of horribly abused animals exposes a disconnect that is so fundamental that it renders our efforts absurd, hypocritical, and doomed to certain failure.

Minds and Consciousness

Our minds and consciousness are almost completely unexplored territory because we have been raised in a herding culture that is fundamentally

uncomfortable with introspection. Our science blatantly ignores consciousness as an unapproachable, unquantifiable and unopenable “black box” and distracts us with focusing solely on measurable phenomena. Our religions discourage meditation and reduce prayer to a dualistic caricature of asking and beseeching an outside, enigmatic, and projected male entity.

Inner Peace

Disconnecting and desensitizing in comfort is not the same as inner peace, which is the fruit of awareness and of living in alignment with the understanding that comes from this awareness.

Spiritual Teachings of Interconnectedness

Spiritual teachings of our interconnectedness and the vegan ethic of universal compassion, besides being vital and transformative, are in profound alignment with the core instruction of the world’s religions, which is to love others.

Spiritual Evolution

Learning to look the other way brings spiritual death in everyone who practices it. In encouraging it, religious institutions show how far they have strayed from the passionate mercy and all-seeing kindness taught and lived by those whose spiritual evolution and illumination inspired the institutions themselves.

Domination & Exclusion

Judging by the generally small numbers who have actually gone vegan in our culture, it appears that this commitment requires a certain breakthrough that has been generally elusive because of the mentality of domination and exclusion we’ve all been steeped in since birth. There is something about veganism that is not easy, but the difficulty is not inherent in veganism, but in our culture.

Living a Vegan Life

Living a consequent vegan life naturally encourages us to awaken from the consensus trance that brings unquestioning conformity and allows cruelty and slavery to continue. Refusing to see animals as commodities, we are able to see through countless other pretenses. And, as transformative as this is for an individual to experience, it would be infinitely more transformative for our culture to do so, and to evolve beyond the obsolete orientation that sees animals as mere food commodities.

Transforms & Awaken

Every one of us, as representatives of our culture, is an essential part of the fundamental transformation and awakening. It is exciting to contemplate educational, economic, governmental, religious, medical, and other institutions based on honoring and protecting the rights and interests of both animals and humans. When as a culture we stop commodifying creatures, a new world of kindness, fairness, cooperation, peace, and freedom will naturally unfold in human relations as well

Feeding the Shadow

Every day, we cause over thirty million birds and mammals and forty-five million fish to be fatally attacked so we can eat them, and it's universally considered to be good food for good people. With these meals, we feed our shadow, which grows strong and bold as it gorges itself on our repressed grief, guilt, and revulsion.

Compassion Expands

With love and understanding awakening in us, compassion expands to include ever-larger circles of beings. Compassion may be seen as the highest form of love, for it is the love of the divine whole for all its parts and is

reflected in the love of the parts for each other. It includes the urge to act to relieve the suffering of apparent others, and this urge requires us to evolve greater wisdom and inner freedom to relieve suffering more effectively. Compassion is thus both the fruit of evolution and the driving force behind it. Love yearns for greater love.

Love brings Freedom

Love brings freedom, joy, power, grace, peace, and the blessed fulfillment of selfless service. Our true nature, our future self, beckons irresistibly as an inner calling to awaken our capacity for love, which is understanding.

Embrace the Evolutionary Urge Within

We must shake the old stagnation and comfortable disconnections out of our minds and bodies, embrace the evolutionary urge within us to awaken compassion and intuitive wisdom, and live our lives in accord with the truth that we are connected intimately with all living beings. Achieving this transformation means living the truth of love and authentically comprehending our interconnectedness, and not merely talking about it.

It means changing our thinking and our behavior—how we view animals and what we eat. As we recognize our shadow and become free of it, compassion returns and we naturally stop feeding it with our diet of hidden terror.

Knowledge and Understanding

Our knowledge and understanding of nonhuman animals is polluted far more than we acknowledge by our belief in our own superiority, our unrecognized cultural programming, and our separation from nature. Our theories about animals will be seen in the future as quaint balderdash, as we now view the medieval theories of healing through bleeding and leeches and of an earth-centered solar system.

A Positive Approach

A positive approach is essential because it mobilizes our spiritual resources, generates enthusiasm, and brings more joy and love into our world.

Evolve Spiritually to Discover

Perhaps in the past people thought they needed to enslave animals and people to survive, and that the cruelty involved in it was somehow allowed them. It's obviously not necessary for us today, as we can plainly see by walking into any grocery store, and the sooner we can awaken from the thrall of the obsolete mythos that we are predatory by nature, the sooner we'll be able to evolve spiritually and discover and fulfill our purpose on this earth.

War and Oppression

Jesus questioned the foundation of war and oppression, which was then, as it is now, the killing and eating of animals. Back then it was animal sacrifice performed by priests at the temple, which was the main source of wealth and prestige for the Jewish religious power structure, as well as being the source of meat for the populace.

Jesus' confrontation at the temple in which he drove out those selling animals for slaughter was a bold attack on the fundamental herding paradigm of viewing animals merely as property, sacrifice objects, and food.

Stop the Atrocities.

To stop the atrocities, we must awaken from the absurd belief that animals are insentient, trivial, soulless property objects and challenge our religious institutions to extend ethical protection to animals. This of course will mean challenging the meals at the center of social and religious life and the atrocities "hidden in plain sight" within those meals.

Love One Another

If we believe absurdities, we will commit atrocities, and we pass it on to our children, generation upon generation. Our violent actions speak so much more loudly than our peaceful words, and this is the unyielding dilemma of the herding culture we call home. The only way to solve this dilemma is to evolve cognitively and ethically to a higher level where our actions do not belie our words and force us into unconsciousness and denial, but rather align with and reinforce our words and the universal spiritual teachings that instruct us to love one another, and to have mercy on the weak and vulnerable rather than exploiting and dominating them.

Healing of Our Children

As we look more deeply at our food, the healing of our children can begin, and our work can be resurrected as an instrument for blessing and bringing joy and caring to our world.

Connect with Your Food

We are conditioned mentally to disconnect our food from the animal who was mindlessly abused to provide it, but the vibrational fields created by our food choices impact us profoundly whether we pretend to ignore them or not. Practicing mindful eating illuminates these hidden connections, cleanses our mind, heart, and actions, and removes inner masks and armor so that it becomes quite plain to see.

The Lesson is Plain

The lesson is plain: when we harden ourselves to the suffering we inflict on animals in our own interest, and justify it by proclaiming our superiority or specialness, it is but a short and unavoidable step to justifying and inflicting the same kind of suffering on other humans in our own interest while

likewise proclaiming our supremacy or specialness.

Remove the Violence

As we remove the violence from our daily meals, we will naturally increase our ability to heal our divisions, nurture our creativity and joy, restore beauty and gentleness, and be role models of sensitivity and compassion for our children.

Fossil Fuels & Food

It's easier to see the gallons of fossil fuel poured directly into our cars than it is to see the gallons of fossil fuel poured into our cheese, eggs, fish sticks, hot dogs, and steaks

Chronic Malnutrition

Everyone on earth could be fed easily because we currently grow more than enough grain to feed ten billion people; our current practice of feeding this grain to untold billions of animals and eating them forces over a billion of us to endure chronic malnutrition and starvation while another billion suffer from the obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer linked with eating diets high in animal foods.

Ecosystems Destroyed

The transnational corporations profit from animal food consumption, as do the big banks, which have made the loans that have built the whole complex and demand a healthy return on their investments. The system spreads relentlessly and globally, and while corporate and bank returns may be healthy, people, animals, and ecosystems throughout the world fall ill and are exploited and destroyed.

Spiritual Communion

The metaphor of eating is central to spiritual communion with the divine presence. It is universally recognized that eating food is both a literally and symbolically sacred action: it is directly partaking of the infinite order that transcends our finite lives.

We are Blessed

As we bless others, we are blessed, and seeing beings rather than things, our own being is liberated and enriched.

Relieve Their Suffering

Glimpsing this essential nature that we share with all beings not only deepens our yearning to relieve their suffering but also strengthens our ability to work effectively to do so. Seeing victims and perpetrators not merely in these roles but in their spiritual perfection and completeness is profoundly healing. We see that there are no enemies—no essentially evil people or completely hopeless or destructive situations. There are, rather, opportunities to grow, learn, serve, and work together to raise consciousness and bring compassion and understanding to the painful and unjust situations we may see unfolding around us.

Linked to the Eternal Truth

Rising above anger and despair while still keeping our hearts open to the ocean of cruelty, indifference, and suffering on this earth is not easy. It requires cultivating wisdom and compassion—both the inner silent receptivity that links us to the eternal truth of our being and the outer actions of serving and helping others that give meaning to our life.

Jesus' Exhortation...Vegan Ethic

Jesus' exhortation that we love one another and not do to others what we

wouldn't want done to us is the essence of the vegan ethic, which is a boundless compassion that includes all who can suffer by our actions.

Mercy and Justice

We are all presented with the same evidence and hear the same call for mercy and justice.

Quality of Food

Because the quality of our food is directly connected to our mental and physiological health and to our quality of life, diminishing the quality of our food can make us sicker, weaker, and more distracted, violent, stressed, drugged, confused, and disempowered. This is perhaps the real agenda behind the vicious efforts to weaken the standards for organic foods and to introduce highly toxic foods through irradiation, genetic engineering, addition of artificial dyes, noxious flavor-enhancers like MSG, chemical preservatives, known carcinogens like NutraSweet, and dangerous genetically engineered hormones like rBGH and carcinogenic growth hormones. This is in addition to promoting animal-based meals, which concentrate the largest variety and intensity of toxins and are inherently confusing and disempowering.

Mind-Body Connection

As we research, discuss, and deepen our understanding of the mind-body connection, of the human-animal connection, and of our connection with all the larger wholes in which we are embedded, our spiritual purpose will become manifest.

In the Name of Health

We exhibit not only hubris but remarkable obtuseness in caging, torturing, and infecting animals in the name of improving our health. We can see the

outcome of our actions already, as new diseases continue to arise and old ones spread, often becoming impervious to our increasingly devastating drugs.

Spiritual Growth

People who are serious about spiritual growth are apparently capable of embracing fundamental change in their lives, and may even welcome the opportunity.

Innocence

None of us is completely innocent, because to some degree we all are, and have been, in all three roles as victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. Photo

Animals Deteriorated

It is problematic to determine whether our lives as humans have actually improved over the centuries and millennia, for all our valiant efforts. Although we have comforts and possibilities undreamt of by our forebears, we also have stresses, diseases, and frustrations that they could not possibly have imagined. For animals, however, the situation has plainly deteriorated, especially over the more recent human generations.

Veganism is not Extreme

In fact, veganism is not extreme from the point of view of our innate nature, which longs for love, creativity, and spiritual evolution.

Conscientious Orientation

The new extremes to which animals are now subjected without remorse or awareness require that we adopt a more radically conscientious orientation that addresses the roots of our violent mentality.

While it may seem extreme to our mainstream culture to advocate for a vegan revolution that utterly rejects our commodification of animals, it is only such an apparently extreme position that can be an antidote to the extreme abuse we now force upon animals.

Align Our Values

The more we live in alignment with our values, the stronger the truth-field we emanate will be, and the more our words, gestures, and actions will carry weight with perpetrators.

Eating Habits

We are only comfortable eating animals when we exclude them from the categories we use to define ourselves, but our differences from animals are far less than our eating habits force us to believe they are.

Spiritual Revolution

The spiritual revolution needs all of us, whatever our religious beliefs, ethnicity, class, or other variables may be. Every one of us has a piece of the puzzle to contribute, and our overall success depends on each of us discovering our talents and passion and persistently contributing them.

Love Propels Us

The more we connect, the more we understand and the more we love, and this love propels us not only to leave home, questioning our culture's attitude of domination and exclusion, but also to return home, speaking on behalf of those who are vulnerable.

Voice for the Voiceless

Being willing to look, see, respond, and reconnect with all our neighbors and

live this interconnectedness inspires us naturally to choose food, entertainment, clothing, and products that cause a minimum of unnecessary cruelty to vulnerable living beings. As we do this, we become more mindful of the ripples our actions cause in the world. Our spiritual transformation deepens, and as our sensitivity increases we yearn to bless others more and to be a voice for the voiceless.

Making Connections

As we make connections and become open to feedback, it will be increasingly obvious that one of the greatest gifts any of us can give to the world, to the human family, to future generations, to animals, to ourselves, and to our loved ones is to go vegan and dedicate our lives to encouraging others to do the same.

Key to Veganism

The key to veganism is that it is lived. No one can be a vegetarian in theory only! Unlike many religious teachings that are primarily theoretical and internal, veganism is solidly practical. The motivation of veganism is compassion. It is not at all about personal purity or individual health or salvation, except as these bless others. It is a concrete, visible way of living that flows from, and reinforces, a sense of caring and connectedness.

Magnitude of the Collective

There is no way to overstate the magnitude of the collective spiritual transformation that will occur when we shift from food of violent oppression to food of gentleness and compassion.

Mental & Bodily Pollution

Enslaving and eating animals is relentlessly polluting our mental and bodily environments, hardening our hearts and blocking feelings and awareness,

instigating fear, violence, and repression in our relationships, laying waste our precious planet, gruesomely torturing and killing billions of terrorized beings, deadening us spiritually, and profoundly disempowering us by impeding our innate intelligence and our ability to make essential connections.

Price to Pay

The unrelenting conflict and oppression of history are unavoidable byproducts of confining and killing animals for food, as is the male role model of macho toughness that is required of both the professional animal killer (herder) and the soldier. If we desire to eat animal foods, this suffering is the unavoidable price we must pay.

Sir Arthur Doyle

“At the moment our human world is based on the suffering and destruction of millions of non-humans. To perceive this and to do something to change it in personal and public ways is to undergo a change of perception akin to a religious conversion. Nothing can ever be seen in quite the same way again because once you have admitted the terror and pain of other species you will, unless you resist conversion, be always aware of the endless permutations of suffering that support our society.” --Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Dear WPD friends

We're seeing some fantastic momentum building for what I call in The World Peace Diet the Vegan Revolution. A profound transformation of our culture is necessary, and people seem to be slowly awakening to the cruelty in our meals and how devastating it is to animals, the Earth, hungry people, and to all of us.

We are planning on coordinating a major internet promotion to help support this important momentum toward compassion for all life, and could frankly

use a little help. The campaign is scheduled for the end of January, which is not far away, and one of the aims is to cause a leap in the public awareness and readership of The World Peace Diet, and more public discussion of its central ideas. As you know, many people go vegan or move significantly in that direction when they read (or listen to) the WPD, which was recently called, "The quintessential book on veganism" by WVKR Radio.

The other helpful thing would be to let us know of any groups you know of whose members might be open to the vegan ideas that are presented in The World Peace Diet. We're looking for many groups to partner with to increase the impact of the campaign, so some possibilities might be progressive church groups, environmental groups, peace and social justice groups, yoga, spirituality, and alternative health groups, and of course veg and animal rights groups. If you know of any contact people at these groups, that would be helpful, too.

Thanks so much, and I'm sure there are thanks from animals, hungry people, future generations, and our precious Earth as well--for all you're doing to increase consciousness and compassion in our world. We have been traveling full time putting on lectures for the past several years since The World Peace Diet came out - 150-200 events annually, and we're letting our tour run out in the next week or so. We're hoping to focus on some other projects and strategies for a few months, but we fully expect to continue to make public presentations in 2010 and beyond, so keep us posted of possibilities in your area. We're heading for southern AZ and CA soon. Thanks again for contributing to the healing and awakening of our culture. Dr. W. Tuttle

Protein in Milk?

The protein in milk, particularly casein, while perfect for baby cows, is too large and difficult for us to digest. Calves have a particular enzyme, rennin, not present in humans, that coagulates and helps break down casein. According to renowned nutrition researcher T. Colin Campbell, "Cows' milk protein may be the single most significant chemical carcinogen to which

humans are exposed.”

Exploitation of the Feminine

All four of the possible paths that a calf born on a dairy may take are paths of abuse and early death. Since cows in the wild easily live twenty to thirty years, the industry, in killing calves, steers, and dairy cows at the ages of several months to several years, is really killing infants and children. In this it is the same as the industries that confine and kill lambs, pigs, chickens, turkeys, and fish: all are pushed to grow abnormally quickly and are slaughtered young.

Similarly, in the wars we inflict upon each other, children suffer and die the most, and more than ever they are even forced to do the killing. The animal food culture promotes domination and exploitation of the female and the feminine, which are full of life-giving and nurturing powers, and of infants and children, who are full of the powers of innocence and growth.

Fellow Creature

“Can one regard a fellow creature as a property item, an investment, a piece of meat, an ‘it,’ without degenerating into cruelty towards that creature?” — Karen Davis

Animal Suffering

The suffering that food animals undergo, the suffering of those who eat them and profit by them, the suffering of starving people who could be fed with the grain that feeds these animals, and the suffering we thoughtlessly impose on the ecosystem, other creatures, and future generations are all interconnected. It is this interconnectedness of suffering, and its reverse, of love, caring, and awareness, that calls out for our understanding.

Nutritional Deficiencies?

It's ironic that the burden of justifying possible nutritional deficiencies rests on vegans ("where do you get your protein/vitamin B-12/etc.?"), because research shows that vegans typically have twice the fruit and vegetable intake of people eating the standard American diet. In recent studies, vegans had higher intakes of sixteen out of the nineteen nutrients studied, including three times more vitamin C, vitamin E, and fiber, twice the folate, magnesium, copper, and manganese, and more calcium and plenty of protein.

Vegans also had half the saturated fat intake, one-sixth the rate of being overweight, and, while vegans were shown to be at risk for deficiencies in three nutrients (calcium, iodine, and vitamin B-12), people eating the standard American diet were at risk for deficiencies in seven nutrients (calcium, iodine, vitamin C, vitamin E, fiber, folate, and magnesium).

Buying organically grown produce, grains, beans, and nuts is important not just because they're higher in vitamins and minerals, but also because the toxic runoff from conventional agriculture poisons streams and people, and kills birds, fish, insects, and wildlife.

The amount of toxins used to produce a head of lettuce or bowl of rice is still, however, far less than that used to produce a hot dog, cheese omelet, or piece of catfish because animal foods require enormous quantities of pesticide-laden feed grain to produce.

John McDougall

"It is no coincidence that the same diet that helps prevent or cure diabetes also causes effortless weight loss, lowers cholesterol and triglycerides, cleans out the arteries, and returns the body to excellent function. But no matter how much research appears saying the same thing over and over again, the tide is unlikely to change because of the economic incentives for the medical

establishment of continued illness and profitable treatments.” - John McDougall, MD

Like all Animals

Like all animals, we are essentially spiritual beings, manifestations of a universal, loving intelligence that has given us bodies designed to thrive on the abundant foods that we can peacefully nourish and gather in orchards, fields, and gardens.

Simplicity of Life

“All ancient philosophy was oriented toward the simplicity of life and taught a certain kind of modesty in one’s need. In light of this, the few philosophic vegetarians have done more for mankind than all new philosophers, and as long as philosophers do not take courage to seek out a totally changed way of life and to demonstrate it by their example, they are worth nothing.” – Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

Confinement and Slaughter

A basic reason that billions of animals suffer confinement and slaughter is our cultural belief that we need to eat animal-derived foods to be healthy, yet one of the most common motivations many of us have to reduce or eliminate animal food consumption is improving our health! Illuminating this paradox requires us to investigate our human physiology and the animal foods we eat, and to reconnect with the perennial understanding that cultivating kindness and awareness improves physical and mental health, while harmfulness and unconsciousness lead ultimately to physical and mental disease.

Herbivore Humans

“Human beings are not natural carnivores. When we kill animals to eat them, they end up killing us because their flesh, which contains cholesterol and

saturated fat, was never intended for human beings, who are natural herbivores.”- W . C Roberts, M.D

Take the Greatest Step

By questioning our inherited cultural conditioning to commodify, abuse, and eat animals, we are taking the greatest step we can to leave home, become responsible adults, and mature spiritually, and by actively helping others do the same, we return home with a liberating message of compassion and truth that can inspire and bless others. By leaving home we can find our true home, contribute to social progress, and help the animals with whom we share this precious earth have a chance to be at home again as well.

Questioning Culture

In questioning our culture’s most fundamental and defining practice, that of imprisoning and brutalizing animals for food, we practice leaving home and embark on a spiritual journey that will put us fundamentally at odds with our culture’s values, but that at the same time makes it possible for us to be heroes who can help uplift and transform our ailing culture.

Leo Tolstoy

“This is dreadful! Not only the suffering and death of the animals, but that man suppresses in himself, unnecessarily, the highest spiritual capacity—that of sympathy and pity towards living creatures like himself—and by violating his own feelings becomes cruel.” —Leo Tolstoy

Celebrate, Honor, & Appreciate

Instead of reducing our intelligence and compassion by denying and destroying the intelligence and purpose of animals, we could celebrate, honor, and appreciate the immense diversity of intelligences, beauties,

abilities, and gifts that animals possess and contribute to our world. We could liberate ourselves by liberating them and allowing them to fulfill the purposes that their particular intelligences yearn for.

We could respect their lives and treat them with kindness. Our awareness and compassion would flourish, bringing more love and wisdom into our relationships with each other. We could live in far greater harmony with the universal intelligence that is the source of our life. To do so, however, we would have to stop viewing animals as commodities, and this means we would have to stop viewing them as food.

In our churches

In our churches, ministers often speak about the tragedy of loving things and using people, when we must instead love people and use things. After the services, people eat meals in which animals have become things to be used, not loved. This action, ritually repeated, propels us into using people just as we use animals—as things.

Maimonides

“It should not be believed that all beings exist for the sake of the existence of man. On the contrary, all the other beings too have been intended for their own sakes and not for the sake of anything else.”

Change in Behavior

It’s funny how we want transformation without having to change! Yet the fundamental transformation called for today requires the most fundamental change—a change in our relationship to food and to animals, which will cause a change in our behavior.

Contemporary Vegan Movement

The contemporary vegan movement is founded on loving-kindness and

mindfulness of our effects on others. It is revolutionary because it transcends and renounces the violent core of the herding culture in which we live. It is founded on living the truth of interconnectedness and thereby consciously minimizing the suffering we impose on animals, humans, and biosystems; it frees us all from the slavery of becoming mere commodities. It signifies the birth of a new consciousness, the resurrection of intelligence and compassion, and the basic rejection of cruelty and domination. It is our only real hope for the future of our species because it addresses the cause rather than being concerned merely with effects.

Our Food Choices

When we cultivate mindful awareness of the consequences of our food choices and conscientiously adopt a plant-based way of eating, refusing to participate in the domination of animals and the dulling of awareness this requires, we make a profound statement that both flows from and reinforces our ability to make connections. We become a force of sensitivity, healing, and compassion. We become a revolution of one, contributing to the foundation of a new world with every meal we eat. As we share our ideas with others, we promote what may be the most uplifting and healing revolution our culture has ever experienced.

Cycles of Nature

Two types of agriculture emerged—plant and animal—and the distinction between them is significant. Growing plants and gardening is more feminine work; plants are tended and nurtured, and as we work with the cycles of nature, we are part of a process that enhances and amplifies life. It is life-affirming and humble (from humus, earth) work that supports our place in the web of life. On the other hand, large animal agriculture or husbandry was always men's work and required violent force from the beginning, to contain powerful animals, control them, guard them, castrate them and, in the end, kill them.

Cultivate Awareness

Making the effort to cultivate our awareness and see beyond the powerful acculturation we endured brings understanding. Healing, grace and freedom come from understanding. Love understands. From understanding, we can embrace our responsibility and become a force for blessing the world with our lives, rather than perpetuating disconnectedness and cruelty by proxy.

Ethical Intelligence

Compassion is ethical intelligence: it is the capacity to make connections and the consequent urge to act to relieve the suffering of others.

Inherited Eating Habits

None of us ever consciously and freely chose to eat animals. We have all inherited this from our culture and upbringing. Going into the baby food department of any grocery store today, we see it immediately: beef-flavored baby food, chicken, veal, and lamb baby food, and even cheese lasagna baby food. Well-meaning parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors have forced the flesh and secretions of animals upon us from before we can remember.

Largest Massacre of Wildlife

“Seafood is simply a socially acceptable form of bush meat. We condemn Africans for hunting monkeys and mammalian and bird species from the jungle yet the developed world thinks nothing of hauling in magnificent wild creatures like swordfish, tuna, halibut, shark, and salmon for our meals. The fact is that the global slaughter of marine wildlife is simply the largest massacre of wildlife on the planet.” – Paul Watson

Slaughterhouse Revealed

Emerson's "You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughterhouse is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity," shows the esteemed Concord sage's ability to make the connections that elude most. Bronson Alcott's daughter, Louisa May, wrote, "Vegetable diet and sweet repose. Animal food and nightmare.

Pluck your body from the orchard; do not snatch it from the shambles. Without flesh diet there could be no bloodshedding war." She makes explicit the connection between the violence inherent in eating animals, nightmares, and the nightmare of human violence turned against ourselves.

Our Influences

The more forcefully we ignore something, the more power it has over us and the more strongly it influences us.

Uproot Exclusion

When we uproot exclusion and domination from our plates, seeds of compassion can finally freely blossom, and this process depends primarily on us watering the seeds and fully contributing our unique journey. We depend on each other, and as we free the beings we call animals, we will regain our freedom. Loving them, we will learn to love each other and be fully loved.

American Roots

The American roots of deeply questioning food and developing the philosophical foundation for a more compassionate relationship with animals can be traced to the progressive writers clustered around Emerson in Concord in the mid-nineteenth century. Thoreau wrote, "I have no doubt that it is a part of the destiny of the human race in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals as surely as the savage tribes have left off eating each other when they came into contact with the more civilized."

The desensitizing of millions of children and adults—on the massive scale that consuming millions of tortured animals daily requires—sows countless seeds of human violence, war, poverty, and despair.

These outcomes are unavoidable, for we can never reap joy, peace, and freedom for ourselves while sowing the seeds of harming and enslaving others.

What are animals?

So what are we, and what are animals? Our concepts only reveal our impeding conditioning. We are neighbors, mysteries, and we are all manifestations of the eternal light of the infinite consciousness that has birthed and maintains what we call the universe. The intuitive knowing that would reveal this to us, though, is mostly unavailable because as a culture we are outer-directed and fail to cultivate the inner resources and discipline that would allow us to access this deeper wisdom.

Pure Consciousness

By ceasing to eat animal foods and thus causing misery to our neighbors, and by practicing meditation and quiet reflection, which can eventually extract our consciousness out of the brambles of compulsive thinking, we can begin to understand what consciousness actually is. We will see that to the degree we can be open to the present moment and dwell in inner spacious silence, beyond the ceaseless internal dialogue of the busy mind, we can experience the radiant, joy-filled serenity of pure consciousness.

Who are we?

Who are we? What is our proper role on this earth? I submit we can only begin to discover these answers if we first take the vegan imperative seriously and live compassionately toward other creatures. Then peace with each other

will at least be possible, as well as a deeper understanding of the mysteries of healing, freedom, and love.

Truth of Compassion

By living the truth of compassion in our meals and daily lives, we can create a field of peace, love, and freedom that can radiate into our world and bless others by silently and subtly encouraging the same in them.

Our Spiritual Impulse

Because of our herding orientation and our unassuaged guilt complex due to the misery in our daily meals, we have warped our sacred connection with the infinite loving source of our life to an ultimate irony: comparing ourselves to sheep, we beg our shepherd for mercy, but since we show no mercy, we fear deep down we'll not be shown mercy either and live in dread of our inevitable death. We bargain and may proclaim overconfidently that we're saved and our sins are forgiven (no matter what atrocities we mete out to animals and people outside our in-group), or we may reject the whole conventional religious dogma as so much absurd pabulum and rely on the shallow materialism of science. However it happens, our spiritual impulse is inevitably repressed and distorted by the fear, guilt, violence, hardness, competitiveness, and shallow reductionism that herding and eating animals always demands.

Animals are Conscious!

We can argue that animals are largely unconscious, decreeing that because animals seem to lack the complex language that allows them to formulate thoughts in words as we do, their experience of suffering must therefore be less significant or intense for them. This same thinking, however, could be used to justify harming human infants and senile elderly people. If anything, beings who lack the ability to analyze their circumstances may suffer at our hands more intensely than we would because they are unable to put the

distance of internal dialogue between themselves and their suffering.

Universal Compassion

All the world's major religions have their own form of the Golden Rule that teaches kindness to others as the essence of their message. They all recognize animals as sentient and vulnerable to us, and include them within the moral sphere of our behavior. There are also strong voices in all the traditions emphasizing that our kindness to other beings should be based on compassion. This is more than merely being open to the suffering of others; it also explicitly includes the urge to act to relieve their suffering.

We are thus responsible not just to refrain from harming animals and humans, but also to do what we can to stop others from harming them, and to create conditions that educate, inspire, and help others to live in ways that show kindness and respect for all life. This is the high purpose to which the core teachings of the world's wisdom traditions call us. It is an evolutionary imperative, a spiritual imperative, an imperative of compassion, and, in reality, a vegan imperative.

Contemplation

We can see that in general, the more a culture oppresses animals, the greater its inner agitation and numbness, and the more extroverted and dominating it tends to be. This is related to the scarcity of meditation in Western cultures, where people are uncomfortable with sitting still.

Quiet, open contemplation would allow the repressed guilt and violence of the animal cruelty in meals to emerge to be healed and released. Instead, the very activities that would be most beneficial to people of our herding culture are the activities that are the most studiously avoided. We have become a culture that craves noise, distraction, busyness, and entertainment at all costs.

This allows our eaten violence to remain buried, blocked, denied, and righteously projected.

Authentic Spiritual Teachings

Authentic spiritual teachings must necessarily teach an ethics of loving-kindness, because this reflects our interconnectedness and the truth that what we give out comes back to us. It leads to the harmony in relationships that is necessary not just for social progress, but also for our individual inner peace and spiritual progress.

We are not predatory by nature

We are not predatory by nature, but we've been taught that we are, in the most potent way possible: we've been raised from birth to eat like predators. We've thus been initiated into a predatory culture and been forced to see ourselves at the deepest levels as predators.

Farming animals is simply a refined and perverse form of predation in which the animals are confined before being attacked and killed. It doesn't stop with animals, however.

Intuition

Intuition liberates, connects, illumines—and threatens our herding culture's underlying paradigm of violent oppression of animals and of the feminine. Intuition sees the shadow clearly, and disarms it by embracing it and not feeding it. It sees the animal hidden in the hot dog, ice cream, and omelette, feels her misery and fear, and embraces her with love.

The Evolutionary Journey

Evolution implies not only change but transformation. In world mythology, when heroes refuse the call to leave home to take the evolutionary journey, they become sick. For us as a culture it is the same.

To Be Love

Our love, to actually be love, must be acted upon and lived. Developing our capacity for love is not only the means of evolution; it is the end as well, and when we fully embody love, we will know the truth of our oneness with all life. This makes us free.

Seeds of Awakening

*Within us lie seeds of awakening
and compassion that may be already sprouting.
Our individual journeys of transformation
and spiritual evolution call us to question
who and what we've been told we and others are,
to discover and cultivate the seeds of insight
and clarity within us, and to realize the connections
we've been taught to ignore.*

*As we do this and as our web of journeys interweaves within our culture,
cross-fertilizing and planting seeds,
we can continue the transformation that is now well underway,*

and transcend the obsolete old paradigm that generates cycles of violence.

Vehicle of Consciousness

We will only survive and thrive if we recognize the central power of our

meals to shape our consciousness.

Food is eaten and becomes the physical vehicle of consciousness, and

consciousness chooses what to incorporate into itself from itself.

Do we cultivate and eat fear or love?

Terrorized animals or nurtured plants?

We cannot build a tower of love with bricks of cruelty.

We become spiritually and psychologically free only

as we are able to see

and integrate the shadow aspects of ourselves, and this will only be possible

when we stop eating animal foods, relaxing and releasing the irresistible

need to block our awareness.

In unchaining animals, we unchain ourselves.

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

from Bulgaria

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"You will understand what love truly is when you stop thinking of it as a feeling. Feeling is necessarily subject to variation, depending on who it is meant for, while genuine love is a state of consciousness independent of beings and circumstances. To love is not to have a feeling for someone but to live in love and do everything with love - speak, walk, eat, breathe, study with love... Love arises when we have brought all our organs, cells and faculties into a state of harmony, so that they vibrate in unison in light and peace. So love is a permanent state of consciousness. Those who have attained this state of consciousness feel their whole being imbued with divine fluids, and everything they do is a melody."

"Human beings were created to develop perfectly in the three worlds - the physical, the spiritual and the divine; they were created to live in love, wisdom and truth. If they find this so difficult to achieve, it is because they have not understood how necessary it is to have only one direction and one goal in life. You will say, 'But one direction, one goal - it's impossible; we have so many different responsibilities and obligations!' But it is possible."

Whatever responsibilities and obligations you may have, your every concern, your every thought and wish, right down to every movement of your cells, must be directed to the same end: the kingdom of God and his righteousness. When this happens, all your energies are mobilized and take part in developing the perfect being you will one day become."

"What pleasure can some people find in recounting the most negative and least appetizing details of their life? And then they are surprised when their friends avoid them or leave them. It's a really stupid attitude; it's better to hide those kinds of detail. You'll say you are unhappy, that you are suffering and need to confide in someone... I can believe it. But understand that others cannot be of much help in finding solutions to your problems; they already have trouble solving their own. So, why lay yours out for them as well? Not only are you wasting your time but you go down in your friends' esteem. They value you less: they realize you have neither wisdom nor self-control, and they are disappointed and withdraw from you. If you do not wish to lose your friends, don't go telling them your troubles, and don't complain. Just learn to connect with all the heavenly powers, with all the luminous entities, which are ready to help you and really will help you."

"Musicians know this phenomenon well. Take two absolutely identical tuning-forks: you touch one of them, it vibrates, and the other one, which hasn't been touched at all, also starts vibrating. This is known as resonance. Well, a similar phenomenon takes place in human beings: if they can attune their physical being and their psychic being to the universe's subtlest vibrations, they can make contact with celestial powers and exchange with them, thus receiving help and comfort. Yes, it is a way of communicating: you speak, and you are heard; you can even contact certain currents of force in space to draw them to you.

Once you know this law, you understand how important it is to go beyond yourself, to surpass yourself, so that you can touch the subtlest cords of your being and make them vibrate, for there are bound to be forces, entities and regions which will respond and allow you to benefit from their riches. "

"Would you like to have a life that is rich and full? Then accept the idea that nature is alive and intelligent. Yes, not only alive but intelligent, for intelligence is not peculiar to human beings. Of course, some people may find this difficult to accept, but it is important they know that as we change our opinion about nature, so we alter our destiny. Nature is the body of God, and this body is alive and intelligent. This is why we must be extremely careful and respectful towards it and approach it with a sense of the sacred. By considering stones, plants, animals or stars as cells of this living, intelligent body, we also allow ourselves to become more alive and intelligent."

"Be patient, and you will live a long life. You'll say, 'But that's not possible; I have to expend so much energy putting up with difficult situations and difficult people.' No, on the contrary, you waste most energy when you are impatient. Calmness and patience strengthen vitality and prolong life. People who explode and then say, 'Ah! That feels better!' do not realize that what they consider to be better is actually a great loss. They should analyze themselves to find out what it is in them that feels better - is it their higher nature or their lower nature?

And when they reflect on their explosion some time later, do they really feel pleased with themselves? Don't they tell themselves it would have been better if they had known how to control themselves? Try experimenting inside yourself to see how effective the virtue of patience is. Instead of resorting to all sorts of syrups, potions, elixirs and other beverages, drink patience!"

"It is the custom in all countries to take something for the people you are visiting - some flowers, cakes, sweets, and so on. This tradition, which is very old, is based on a law: you should not visit someone empty-handed. And not only should you not arrive empty-handed, but it is desirable that when you go to meet people you always do so with the wish to offer them something of the goodness of your heart and soul. So it is very important to be careful not to greet anyone while holding an empty container, so as not to bring emptiness to them for the rest of the day. When you are going to meet a friend, never hold an empty basket, bucket or bottle.

If you absolutely have to hold a container, fill it up. It doesn't have to contain anything really valuable - it can just be water, which anyway is one of the most valuable things in the eyes of the Creator. And come before this friend with the thought that you are bringing him or her health, joy, fulfillment and every blessing."

"It is generally believed that only adult humans really possess intelligence. They do, of course, and in a way that is particularly obvious, but actually there is already intelligence in new-borns, even in animals, although in a way that still remains a mystery to science. Intelligence exists in a variety of forms throughout the universe. The earth is intelligent, and the sun is also intelligent, even the most intelligent being of all, yes, because it is the most alive of all beings. You will say, 'More alive than we are?' In a way, yes, more alive than we are.

Obviously, if you go around telling people the sun is the most intelligent created being, you'll be laughed at. And yet, the proof is there: since it is the sun that gives humans life, it must be more alive than they are. If the sun were not there to give out its warmth and light, there would be no life on earth and, therefore, no intelligence or love."

"It is not enough to be motivated by an ideal of fairness, honesty and kindness and to want this ideal to be realized in the world. If you do not know how to behave, you continually clash with others and end up discouraged. So, what should you do? Quite simply, let others be, and continue to improve yourself. In this way, little by little, whenever you happen to meet them, you will impress them with your light; when they see you, they will understand that they have strayed onto muddled paths.

As long as you insist on showing people they are on the wrong path, you sink into the mud with them. Work only to become full of light, and when they meet you, without your even saying anything, they will understand you are in the right, and they will try to imitate you."

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