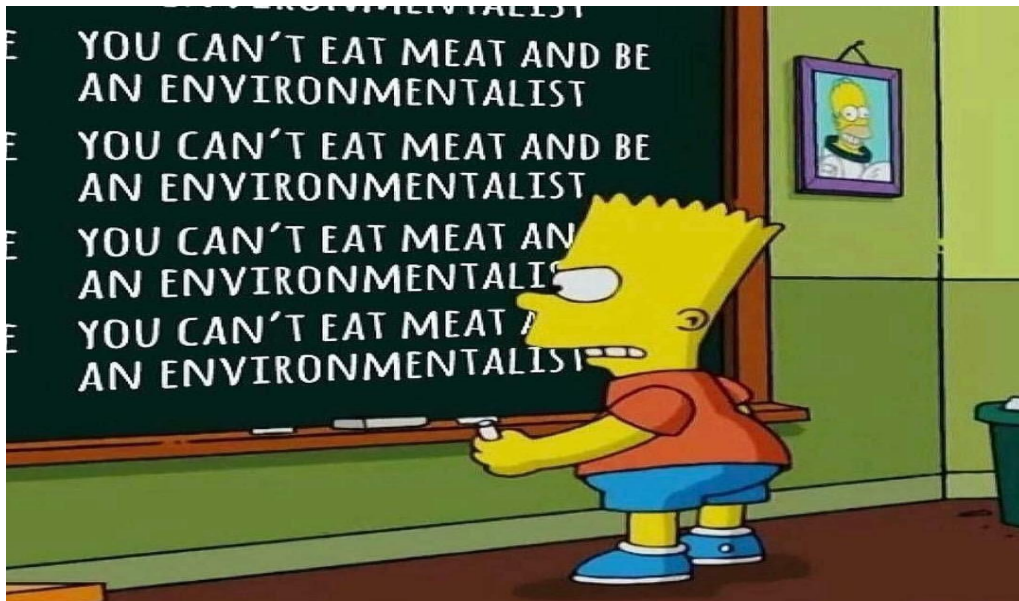


If Not for the Animals, Do it for the Planet

Didem Aydurmus



More and more people go vegan. At least it seems like it. The vegan market grows exponentially, but that doesn't necessarily mean anything. Vegans have known how to make at least some kind of bean burger patty from scratch for decades. Labeling stuff vegan might just have become more popular or maybe vegans have become more visible. Numbers are not reliable. Besides, there is a large group of countries becoming richer and 'catching up' by consuming ever more meat and all kinds of other animal products because meat still signifies status in most places of the world.

That is really bad, animals are suffering in horrendous conditions only to be killed and then consumed within a few minutes or just to become yet another accessory (bag, collar, hat, shoes etc.).

Furthermore, this is not the first article on Veganism here, it will hopefully not be the last. However, given that Veganism has been labeled the [Swiss Army Knife^{\[1\]}](#) by prominent advocates, and it probably is, it cannot be talked about enough. We, vegans, need to expose the animal industrial complex until every ecologist, biologist, philosopher and school kid has heard it: the consumption of animal products ruins our environment and therefore butchers our future.

Veganism for the Win?

I am not a Doctor of Medicine, so arguing about the health benefits should be left to others. [Mounting evidence](#) says there are many advantages to a plant-based diet. It is clear that humans can live very well on a vegan diet. Humans are herbivores, check out our anatomy, look at our stomach acid, intestines and teeth. They are not the one's of a carnivore or even of an omnivore.

As an animal rights advocate, I talk about the endless, illegitimate, unnecessary suffering of animals every day. I am constantly confronted with inconsistent [arguments](#) that allow for the exploitation of other sentient beings simply for pleasure. Animal's lives are nasty, brutish and short. People may say that they love animals, however reality tells a different story. Consequently, vegans have their hearts crushed on a daily basis. But this is not the point here. The point is that we need to go vegan for the planet!

Animal husbandry is NOT sustainable.

The biggest single culprit of climate change IS animal agriculture. A [study](#) by the Worldwatch Institute shows that animal husbandry is the greatest resource destruction machinery imaginable. It trumps war in its global destruction. Traditions of consuming animal products are so deeply ingrained in many cultures, animal products so ubiquitous and animal usage so internalized that it is hard to recognize the facts.

There is a lot to learn by looking at a common example of resource destruction; the (ab)use of cows. In order to gain one calorie of beef, we have to feed 7 calories of plants. At this very moment Amazonian rainforest is burnt in order to make [space for animal feed production](#). Additionally, 1 kilo of beef uses up to 15,000 liters of water. In comparison, 1kg of potatoes needs only 287 liters of water. Needless to say, food and water is needed elsewhere. Cows are also living beings, so they fart, pee and poop, this releases methane emissions which are worse than CO2 emissions. Obviously, one cow's flatulence is not the problem, but there are billions of cows producing emissions in any single day. Obviously, cows outside of factory farms are living beings too, so buying free range does not change the fact that eating meat and other animal products is not ecological. It even creates [dead zones in the oceans](#).

To conclude, when we eat animal products, we destroy calories, water, clean air and lives. Eating fish is not a solution either. The oceans are not only a major source of food, but life on Earth also depends on their oxygen production. Yet, 1.7 trillion fish are taken from the oceans annually, slowly rendering many ecosystems impaired and on their way to collapse.

The End?

Most people are not Inuits and can easily find cruelty-free food sources at local supermarkets. So how can wiping out humanity's chances for survival be justified by our taste buds?

The philosopher [Steven Best commented](#) that animal rights:

"pose a fundamental challenge to human beings in the midst of severe social and ecological crises. Can we grasp how the exploitation of non-human animals is implicated in every aspect of social, mental, and ecological breakdown in our society? Animal rights is a touch stone for measuring the degree to which we are sane and healthy. It is a measure barometer that can tell us whether we as a species are going to survive or not."

Think about it.

It looks like no campaign will succeed against the hegemony of consumerism, apathy, convenience and individualism. However, a full-blown global revolution would be our last chance.

Einstein, who did not consume animals by the way, judged it as stupid to try to solve a problem with the same instruments over and over again. Instead of talking about choice and freedom, it is time to talk loudly about justice, moral duty, responsibility. Institutions need to change dramatically and so do we! Going vegan means rejecting violence against humans, animals and the planet. It is the rejection of all oppression. This will not always be easy, but it is easier than living on a destroyed planet.

The world is ablaze. We all need to fight. The time for easy feel good solutions has passed. It is everybody's responsibility to change the plight of the planet. Get angry and act! Start by acknowledging [contemporary realities](#). The web is full of great organizations, information and inspirational people. Greta Thunberg is vegan! There is no time to waste. Go vegan! If not for the animals, [go vegan for the planet!](#)



Source:
[Liberation Berlin](#)

Didem Aydurmus is a Cultural Anthropologist with a PhD in Political Science and maintains that the latter is a subdiscipline of the former. Her areas of expertise are ethics and environmental politics, though she falls into the category generalist. She is an activist and avid defender of animal rights and the planet, hence vegan. She likes to entertain unconventional ideas and discuss tradeoffs. She works for Stefan Bernhard Eck MEP, a rare idealist amongst politicians.

The [MAHB Blog](#) is a venture of the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to joan@mahbonline.org