

# RELIGION AND FACTORY FARMING

A briefing by Compassion in World Farming



Joyce D'Silva, D. Litt. (Hon)  
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## INTRODUCTION

Religions preach love, compassion, charity. Yet when we look at the state of animals kept in factory farms, we can well ask, "Who, among our religious teachers and leaders, is speaking up for farm animals?"

Of course the main religions of the world were founded hundreds, often thousands of years ago. The largely rural context in which founders lived or their holy texts were written was drastically different from the massive industrial animal complexes we see today. So although all the major religions speak to us about animals and our relationship with them, their traditional teachings do not address the farming practices which have developed over the last 80 years or so. Therefore we have to infer from the holy books what they might say about factory farming. We can also look to modern religious leaders and see if they are providing leadership in this area.

Globally, 70 billion animals are slaughtered for our food each year.<sup>1</sup> The majority of these animals are bred for unnaturally high productivity and reared in factory farms. Their quality of life is poor and many may live in a state of physical and/or psychological misery. This kind of factory farming is the biggest cause of animal suffering on the planet.

Yet each one of these farmed animals is, in scientific terms, a sentient being and in the eyes of religion, they are surely "creatures of god"? Compassion in World Farming's founder, Peter Roberts, a deeply spiritual man, was once asked to define "factory farming". His response: "Factory farming begins where the individuality of the animal ends."

## ANIMAL SACRIFICE

Ancient religions from Greece to the Middle East, India and China sacrificed animals to their gods. There must have been a multitude of reasons for sacrifice – fear of the god's anger which might manifest as flood, drought or famine, supplication or thanksgiving for a good harvest or victory in a battle perhaps. But why animals? Perhaps because animals were seen as valuable, precious. To sacrifice a favourite sheep or horse would surely be seen by the god(s) in a favourable light. The Biblical story tells how Abraham (Ibrahim) was told by god to slaughter a lamb rather than sacrifice his son. Muslims have long held a commemorative sacrifice at the feast of Eid-ul-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) to commemorate this event. Interestingly, the Qur'an makes it clear that "Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you" (Qur'an 22:37). One third of the meat from the sacrificed animal is meant to be distributed to the poor.

In many religions we see a shift away from animal sacrifice over the centuries, and even a condemnation of it. In Christian belief Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice of his life, so no further sacrifice was deemed necessary.

In India, by the 8-9<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Bhagavata Purana says:

*"Seeing someone about to sacrifice with material offerings, beings are filled with dread, fearing 'This self-indulgent (human), having no compassion, will slay me.'" (Bhagavata Purana, 7.15.10).*

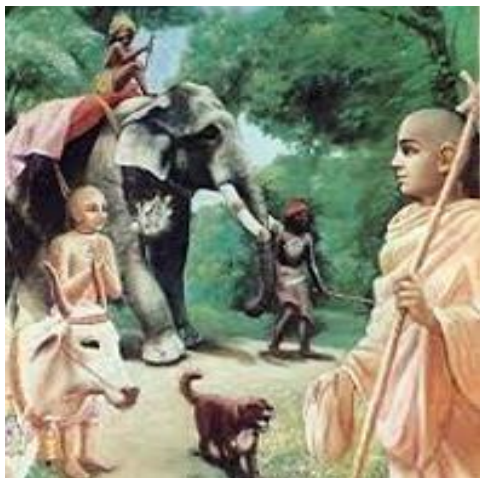
Today, the majority of Hindus reject sacrifice, although some local temples still operate occasional small-scale sacrifice and a temple in Kolkata sacrifices animals on a daily basis to appease the goddess Kali. In 2015, the Gadhimai Temple Trust declared a ban on the notorious Gadhimai festival, a five-yearly mass sacrifice in Nepal of buffalo, goats and sheep. It is now hoped that the Nepalese Government will enforce an outright ban of all slaughter at festivals in the country.

## ANIMALS AND GODS

Many religions held certain animals to be sacred and as representations of their gods and goddesses. Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, is still one of the most popular Hindu gods. Yet devotees know that these animal-like gods are not real everyday animals.

## WHAT OF THE REAL ANIMALS?

**Hindu belief** came to see the same self, soul or Atman in all beings. In order to attain liberation, a human being must realize that one's true self (Ātman) is identical with the transcendent self, or cosmic soul, Brahman. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad (3.7) explains this:



“You are the supreme Brahman, infinite,  
Yet hidden in the hearts of all creatures.  
You pervade everything. Realising you,  
We attain immortality.”

Hindus see animals as fellow beings in different bodies. They can be reincarnated as humans, or vice versa. All have the potential for liberation (moksha) from the cycle of rebirth. In one of the most sacred books, the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says:

“The wise see the same (reality) in a Brahmin endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog and an outcaste.” (Bhagavad Gita 5.18)

**Buddhists** also believe in rebirth and regard all animals as sentient beings.

The great Hindu teacher Swami Vivekananda said in a speech at Jaffna in 1897:

“In every man and in every animal, however weak or wicked, great or small, resides the same Omnipresent, Omniscient soul. The difference is not in the soul, but in the manifestation. Between me and the smallest animal, the difference is only in manifestation, but as a principle he is the same as I am, he is my brother, he has the same soul as I have. This is the greatest principle that India has preached. The talk of the brotherhood of man becomes in India the brotherhood of universal life, of animals, and of all life down to the little ants — all these are our bodies.”<sup>2</sup>

**Chinese beliefs** saw animals as intrinsic parts of nature. The Tao Te Ching, the basic book of Taoism (pronounced ‘Daoism’), says that the Tao, the essence and process of the universe, “is merged with all things and hidden in their hearts” and “the Tao gives birth to all beings, nourishes them and maintains them” (Tao Te Ching). Confucians believe that Tian-li or the Principle of Heaven, permeates all beings.

In the **Qur’an**, animals are seen as worshipping Allah and are rated as having communities like humans:

“And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you” (Qur’an 6:38)

One wonders how animals can develop natural communities when kept in the isolation or overcrowding of the factory farm.



In the **Hebrew-Christian Bible**, after the Flood, God establishes a Covenant, not just with humans: “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark” (Genesis 9: 9-10).

In the **New Testament**, Jesus says, “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight” (Luke 12:6). Yet the animals in the factory farms seem to be out-of-sight, forgotten.

Judeo-Islamic and Christian thought came to be greatly influenced by Aristotle. He emphasised that only humans possess a rational soul and are capable of thought and reflection. Animals are there for our use. He wrote: "Since Nature makes nothing without some end in view, nothing to no purpose, it must be that nature has made them (plants and animals) for the sake of man."<sup>3</sup> The highly influential theologian St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) inherited the Aristotelian view of animals as here for our benefit and that idea persists to this day in much Christian thinking.

Many of the early Christian saints and hermits felt a close affinity with animals. St Isaac the Syrian, who lived in the 7th century CE, wrote passionately about love for animals:

"What is a merciful [compassionate] heart? ... It is a heart on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, for the birds, for the animals ... As a result of His deep mercy or compassion the heart shrinks and cannot bear to look upon any injury or the slightest suffering of anything in creation."<sup>4</sup>

## ANIMALS AS SENTIENT, EMOTIONAL BEINGS

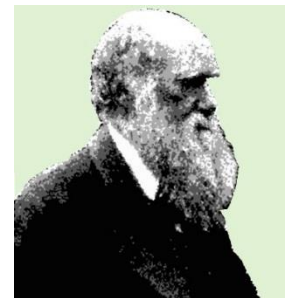
Although religions often viewed animals as lacking rational thought, and therefore as inferior to humans, they were almost universally recognised as sentient, a belief now substantiated by science.<sup>5</sup>

One of the Hadiths (which record the life and teachings of the prophet Muhammad) records that the Prophet Muhammad came across a camel in such a poor state that he "felt compassion and his eyes shed tears." When he discovered the owner of the camel he said: "Don't you fear God with regard to this animal, whom God has given to you? For the camel complained to me that you starve him and work him endlessly." (Sunan Abu Dawud 2186. Musnad Ahmad 1654 and 1662 (similar)).

The 12<sup>th</sup> century Jewish teacher, Moses Maimonides, reiterated the prohibition (Lev. 22: 28) on killing a mother animal and her offspring in sight of each other on the same day and went on to say, "There is no difference in this case between the pain of humans and the pain of other living beings, since the love and tenderness of the mother for her young ones is not produced by reasoning, but by imagination, and this faculty exists not only in humans but in most living beings."<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, one of the most useful advocates for animal sentience is the scientist Charles Darwin, (also a troubled Christian), who totally accepted that animals could experience a range of emotions:

"We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention and curiosity, imitation, reason etc, of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes a well-developed condition, in the lower animals."<sup>7</sup>



## HUMAN RELATIONSHIP TO ANIMALS

Most of the major faiths teach kindness to animals, but for some faiths it is a major part of their belief system.

Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the three main religions/philosophies of China, all emphasize *husheng* - protection for living beings.<sup>8</sup>

There is a very important Jewish principle of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* which prohibits causing unnecessary pain to animals. This concept was accepted by the Talmud as being a Biblical mandate (Talmud (2)).

Buddhist teaching is strong on metta or loving kindness to all, including animals. The Buddha is recorded as teaching: "All beings tremble before violence. All fear death, all love life. Then whom can you hurt? What harm can you do?" (Dhammapada 129/30).

Islam teaches that humans should act as Allah's vice-regents (*khalifa*) on earth (Qur'an 2:30 and 6:165). The earth itself is not just for man but also for God's creatures (Qur'an 55:10) and Allah cares for them all: "And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allah is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage" (Qur'an 11:6).

One Hadith is related by a disciple of Muhammad. When they were travelling, Muhammad left the others, who took two young birds away from their mother in the nest. The mother bird hovered above with fluttering wings and when Muhammad returned, he said, "Who has injured this bird by taking its young? Return them to her" (Muslim).

In the Hindu scriptures, the ideal of ahimsa or non-violence began to be developed. One of the ancient holy books, the Vedas, says: "Those noble souls who practice meditation and other yogic ways, who are ever careful about all beings, who protect all animals, are the ones who are actually serious about spiritual practices" (Atharva Veda 19.48.5).

Daya or compassion is regarded as the highest virtue in Sikhism. The Sikh Holy Book and ultimate teacher, the Guru Granth Sahib, says: "The merit of pilgrimages to the sixty-eight holy places, and that of other virtues besides, do not equal having compassion for other living beings" (Guru Granth, 136).

Jainism developed in India around the same time as Buddhism. Jains believe strongly in compassion for all living beings. They ask other creatures for forgiveness as in the prayer: "I ask pardon of all living creatures, may all of them pardon me, may I have friendship with all beings and enmity with none" (Pratikramana-sutra).

The Karaniya Metta Sutta of Buddhism says:

"Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,  
So with a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings  
Radiating kindness over the entire world,  
Spreading upwards to the skies, and downwards to the depths"

## DIETARY VIEWS

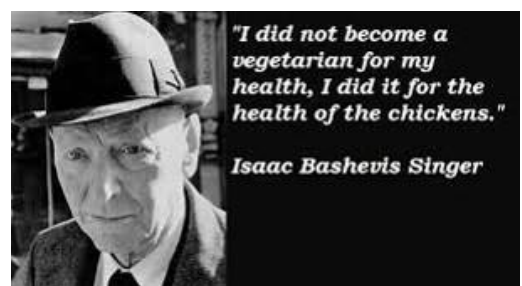
One logical conclusion of teachings on non-violence and compassion would seem to be the advocating of a vegetarian diet. But this has not been the case in all religions.

In the first chapter of the Bible, God appears to advocate a vegan diet: "God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.'" (Genesis 1:29). However, after the Flood, in spite of the new covenant between God and his creatures, meat eating was allowed. "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and just as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything" (Genesis 9:3).

In Judaism it is customary to serve meat on both the Sabbath and festivals, although there is a considerable group of Jews who practise vegetarianism. Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg has said "Jews will move increasingly to vegetarianism out of their own deepening knowledge of what their tradition commands as they understand it in this age".<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish Nobel prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer (1902–1991) wrote:

"We are all God's creatures--that we pray to God for mercy and justice while we continue to eat the flesh of animals that are slaughtered on our account is not consistent."<sup>10</sup>



The Qur'an expressly allows meat eating: "And the grazing livestock He has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat" (Qur'an 16:5).

In Hinduism, by the time of the epic holy book, the Mahabharata, (c 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE), the theme is still being developed: "He who desires to augment his own flesh by eating the flesh of other creatures, lives in misery in whatever species he may take his [next] birth" (Mahabharata, Anu.115.47).

The first Precept of Buddhism is to refrain from killing any living being. Many Buddhists are vegetarian, and Buddhists will not slaughter animals themselves. In modern times generally speaking the Mahayana tradition of Buddhists are vegetarian and Theravadin Buddhists (more common in south-east Asia) are not. Recently many Buddhist leaders have spoken out in favour of vegetarianism and veganism and some have deplored factory farming.<sup>11</sup>

Sikhs are divided on the subject of vegetarianism, with some groups adopting it.

Jains are dedicated vegetarians and many of their religious teachings emphasise it. They are also very involved in cow rescue and the establishment of goshalas, where worn-out cows can live out their lives and are saved from slaughter. Many young Jains are adopting a vegan diet.

Although there is no tradition of vegetarianism in Christianity, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Sir/Saint Thomas More (1478 –1535), who was beheaded by King Henry VIII of England, wrote in his 'Utopia': "The Utopians feel that slaughtering our fellow creatures gradually destroys the sense of compassion which is the finest sentiment of which our nature is capable."<sup>12</sup>

## FACTORY FARMING?

A logical conclusion of the almost universal teachings on compassion would be that religions would condemn factory farming of animals in the modern age. But few have done so.

The Jewish rule of complete rest on the Sabbath includes rest for farm animals (Exodus 20:8-10). One can only wonder how a hen caged with 4 or 40 others or a broiler chicken in a shed of 20,000 birds, can possibly achieve a state of rest one day a week.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986), a respected Jewish authority in the US, ruled that raising calves in narrow veal crates transgresses the Biblical prohibition against cruelty to animals, although he accepted the farming of animals for food.

The newest Catechism of the Catholic Church declares: "Animals are God's creatures. He surrounds them with his providential care. By their mere existence they bless him and give him glory. Thus men owe them kindness." But it goes on to say: "it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing" and: "It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons" (Catholic Catechism 2003).

If this sounds like a passage written by a group of theologians with widely differing views – that is probably correct!

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) wrote in his encyclical 'Gospel of Life': "Human beings may be merciful to their neighbours, but the compassion of the Lord extends to every living creature" ('Evangelium Vitae', 1995). Again we read beautiful sentiments, but a lack of detail as to how to interpret them. (This Pope was canonised by Pope Francis I in 2014 and is now also known as Saint John Paul the Great.) One can only wonder how this fine sentiment could be applied to farm animals – could the "compassion of the Lord" possibly be compatible with factory farming? Almost certainly not!

Worryingly, some more fundamentalist Christians regard animals as having no intrinsic value. One well-read website, Gospelway, declares: "So the Bible teaches that men have dominion over animals, including the right to control them, confine them, and require them to obey us. We have the right to possess them as property, use them, and make them work for us. They are required to serve our purposes to meet our needs. God did not "liberate" them as if they have the "right" to act as they please."<sup>13</sup> No doubt Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas would be pleased to read these words!

The Christian theologian and missionary Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) developed a philosophy which he called "Reverence for Life", for which he received the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize. He wrote: "Only by means of reverence for life can we establish a spiritual and humane relationship with both people and all living creatures within our reach. Only in this fashion can we avoid harming others, and, within the limits of our capacity, go to their aid whenever they need us."<sup>14</sup> Factory farming is obviously incompatible with true reverence for life.

The famous environmentalist Rachel Carson dedicated her ground-breaking book, *Silent Spring*, to Albert Schweitzer.

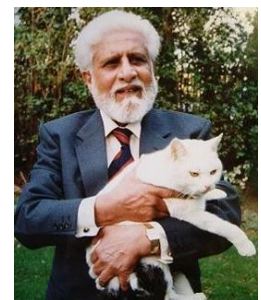
Leading Lutheran theologian, Professor Jurgen Moltmann, says: "Nature is not our property...All living beings must be respected by humans as God's partners in the Covenant...Whoever injures the dignity of animals, injures God."<sup>15</sup> Moltmann has also called for a Universal Declaration of Animal Rights which "should be part of the constitutions of modern states and international agreements". These rights would include a prohibition on factory farming and genetic modification of animals.<sup>15,16</sup>

After a conference in 1988, the World Council of Churches issued a non-official report which recommends: "Avoid meat and animal products that have been produced on factory farms. Instead purchase meat and animal products from sources where the animals have been treated with respect, or abstain from these products altogether".<sup>17</sup> Sadly this report has not been officially adopted.



One of the few outspoken Anglican bishops has been the late Right Reverend John Austin Baker, former Bishop of Salisbury (who died in 2014), possibly the only Bishop who has spoken out against factory farming from the pulpit. He said that when taken round some local farms he was "disgusted" with the farrowing pens for pigs and found the battery hen unit "harrowing". He described the breeding and factory farming of turkeys for Christmas as "absolutely scandalous". He said "it is wrong to exploit animals or be cruel to them in order to feed ourselves." The Right Revd Bishop Baker was an active Patron of Compassion in World Farming.

One pioneer within Islam was the late Al-Hafiz B A Masri, who roundly condemned factory farming. He said: "Like human beings, animals too have a sense of individuality... how right is it to deny these creatures of God their natural instincts so that we may eat the end product?" Masri believed that the animal sacrifice at Eid-ul-Adha could be replaced by financial donations to the poor.

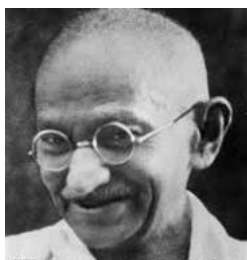


Al-Hafiz B A Masri

This view has been shared by some other Muslim theologians like Gamal al-Banna (1920-2013), a prominent Egyptian Islamic scholar, who said: "In today's modern world, ideas and religion change and Islam is no different. We must not remain rigid in our understanding of faith to mean the blind acceptance of anything, killing living beings included. There is no obligation to kill."<sup>18</sup> However the majority view is still that an actual sacrifice should take place.

Within Islam there are the well-known concepts of halal or allowed/permissible and haram, forbidden. Not so well known is the concept of Taysib. The Qur'an is explicit: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful (halal) and good (taysib) and do not follow the footsteps of Satan" (Qur'an 2:168). If animal foods are meant to be good and wholesome (Taysib), then surely they can never originate in factory farms, where animals suffer so routinely? If the large global

Muslim population accepted this interpretation of Tayyib, then it might bring to an end or at least reduce the vast numbers of laying hens and meat chickens reared in factory farms.



The great Indian leader MK Gandhi, a devout Hindu, was a vegetarian and believed in applying *ahimsa* universally, saying:

["I do feel that spiritual progress does demand at some stage that we should cease to kill our fellow creatures for the satisfaction of our bodily wants. It ill becomes us to invoke in our daily prayers the blessings of God, the compassionate, if we in turn will not practice elementary compassion towards our fellow creatures."](#) (MK Gandhi).

The contemporary theologian Reverend Professor Andrew Linzey is one of the very few outspoken voices within the Christian community (Anglican in his case) speaking out clearly about the horrors of factory farming: "Does the Church really see the suffering of farm animals? Does it have any appreciation of what they have to endure in intensive farming – debeaking, castration, tail-docking without anaesthetics, battery cages – to take only a few examples? ... Has it really grasped that now, as never before, we have turned God's creatures into meat machines?"<sup>19</sup> Linzey believes in the theos-rights (god-rights) of animals, in other words they have rights based on the right of the Creator to have his creation treated with respect.

In June 2015 Pope Francis issued a radical encyclical, 'Laudato Si' – on care for our common home', in which he proposes an "ecological conversion", which is based on "attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness" and which ["entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion."](#)



The encyclical lists the actions which individuals can take in their own lives, from avoiding waste and using less water to ["showing care for other living beings"](#). Although factory farming is not condemned as such, the issue of our relationship with the other creatures in the world is constantly referred to in the encyclical. The Pope quotes from the most recent edition of the Catechism which he says "clearly and forcefully criticizes a distorted anthropocentrism: ['Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things'."](#)

This is the most radical official pronouncement within Christianity this century, and hopefully will be expanded and built on in the future.

## CONCLUSION

The major religions of the world have many elements in their teaching which offer possibilities for dialogue: having compassion, ahimsa (non-violence), not causing unnecessary suffering, sharing in a process of reincarnation, regarding animals as creatures of God, even as worshippers of God, animals as having communities like us, perhaps sharing in an end of the world resurrection – the possibilities are there.

How wonderful it would be if every priest, pastor, swami, imam, rabbi and religious leader spoke out against factory farming. How wonderful if every official religious authority developed a policy which discouraged their adherents from purchasing factory farmed products.

Factory farming is the biggest source of animal cruelty on this planet. So much religious teaching stresses the importance of compassion for animals. Our hope is that this will lead to condemnation of factory farming. Compassion in World Farming is committed to seeking dialogue and agreement with the major faiths in order to further the wellbeing of all farm animals.



## GLOSSARY

### Holy Books

All the main religions have holy books, some said to be the actual word of God, others seen as divinely inspired teachings, often given by a religious leader.

### Hinduism

*The Vedas*: The oldest sacred books, some dating to 1700 BC. Written in Sanskrit and regarded by many as divinely inspired. There are 4 main Vedas: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Arthavaveda.

*The Upanishads*: Collections of Sanskrit texts containing revealed truth. Focus on the ultimate reality, Brahman, and the Atman, the soul or self of the individual, which seeks to merge with Brahman. Some date from 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, others date from the Common Era. Many western philosophers have been influenced by the Upanishads.

*The Puranas*: Ancient texts describing the origins of the universe, genealogy of the gods etc.

*The Bhagavata Purana*: Especially revered devotional text.

*The Bhagavad Gita*: A major devotional book, part of a larger epic, the Mahabharata. Tells of the warrior Arjuna and his teacher, the god Krishna. Describes various ways to achieve moksha, liberation: via knowledge, devotion, action or spiritual practice such as meditation.

### Taoism

*The Tao Te Ching*: dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and believed to be written by the philosopher Laozi. Short poetic text describing the Tao or "Way" or mystical process of the universe and our relationship with it.

*The Zhuangzi*: Written by Zhuangzi in 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE. Pithy, amusing parables.

### Confucianism

*The Analects*: Collection of the teachings of the philosopher Confucius. Moral teaching, much about achieving a harmonious state, still influential in China today.

### Buddhism

*The Sutras* (Pali: Suttas): Texts regarded as the words of the Buddha.

*The Tripitaka* or *Pali Canon*: Huge collection of teachings written in Pali. Especially revered by Theravadan Buddhists. Includes the Dahammmapada or sayings of the Buddha.

*The Mahayana Sutras*: additional texts revered by Mahayana Buddhists. Includes the Lotus sutra and Heart sutra.

### Judaism

*The Hebrew or Jewish Bible*: Includes the Torah and other writings, mostly in Hebrew.

*The Torah*: Strictly speaking the first 5 books of the Bible, containing the history of the people of Israel up to the death of Moses. The term is also used to mean the whole of the teachings of Judaism.

*Talmud*: The central text of Judaism and the basis for all codes of Jewish law.

### Christianity

*The Bible*: Collection of texts, divided into the Old Testament, written in Hebrew, and New Testament, which contains the gospels and early writings of the followers of Jesus, written in Greek. Regarded as divinely inspired.

### Islam

*Qur'an*: The main holy book of Islam. Believed to have been directly transmitted to the Prophet Mohammed by the angel Gabriel and written down by Mohammed's followers.

*Hadith* (pl. *aHadith*): Collections of the teachings and actions of the prophet Mohammed, compiled after his death.

### Sikhism

*The Guru Granth Sahib*: Regarded as the teachings of the ten gurus of Sikhism, and the final teaching. Dates from 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. Regarded as divinely inspired.

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[democratic-world-law-and-the-holistic-moral-demand-for-an-earth-constitution/](http://wgresearch.org/the-presuppositional-status-of-democratic-world-law-and-the-holistic-moral-demand-for-an-earth-constitution/)

<sup>17</sup> World Council of Churches, September 1988. 'Liberation of Life'. Excerpt from report from meeting at Anney, France, referenced in The Fellowship

of Life, 1990s edition, 'Calling All Christians and People of Goodwill'. [www.all-creatures.org/fof/lit-calling.html](http://www.all-creatures.org/fof/lit-calling.html)

<sup>18</sup> Mayton, M., 26/08/10. Eating less meat is more Islamic. Interview with Gamal al-Banna.

[www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/aug/26/meat-islam-vegetarianism-ramadan](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2010/aug/26/meat-islam-vegetarianism-ramadan)

<sup>19</sup> Linzey, A, 2007. Creatures of the Same God. Winchester University Press



Rainbow over cows. © Fir0002/Flagstaffotos

## RELIGIONS AND ATTITUDES TO ANIMALS: A SUMMARY

	<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>Christianity</b>	<b>Hinduism</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>God</b>	No god as such. Liberation, nirvana, is just that – the end! Buddha is an enlightened being, not a god.	One God. Trinity of 3 persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the one God. Jesus seen as the incarnation of the Son.	Brahman, the one behind many deities, is in all living beings. Three main Gods: Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer). Thousands of lesser/local gods and goddesses.	One god. The word used is Allah, derived from the same root as the Hebrew Elohim. Muhammad is only a man, although he is the last of the Prophets. Jesus is regarded as a prophet.	One God. The word for the creator is Elohim. Non-Jews often use the word Jaweh or Jehovah but Jews use only the consonants YHVH when describing God.	Sikhs regard their holy book the Guru Granth Sahib as their Teacher.
<b>Animal sacrifice</b>	No. Buddha condemned sacrifice.	No. Jesus sacrificed his life – that is seen as the ultimate sacrifice.	Some local sacrifice, e.g. Gadhimai, festival in Nepal. Many Indian states have banned sacrifice. Most Hindus abhor animal sacrifice.	Yes, at Eid-ul-Adha festival, which takes place at the end of the hajj (annual pilgrimage to Mecca).	Not any more. Orthodox Jews say when the temple in Jerusalem is restored, then animal sacrifice can start again.	Some tribal customs allow sacrifice.
<b>Place of animals, their destiny</b>	Seen as sentient beings. All have Buddha-nature. They may re-incarnate as human beings.	God's creatures, inferior to humans as not rational. Minority see them as being resurrected along with humans.	Most see the same divine presence in all animals. They may re-incarnate as humans and ultimately achieve moksha, liberation..	God's creatures, who worship him. They will be resurrected along with humans.	God's creatures, God's covenant was also with animals.	Confucianists believe that Tian-li, the principle of heaven, permeates all beings.
<b>Human relationship to animals</b>	We should not harm or kill animals and practise <i>metta</i> or loving kindness to all sentient beings and cherish all life.	We are superior but should be kind. Some fundamentalists say we can treat them as we like.	Principle of ahimsa, non-violence means we should be kind to them. If not, we may be reborn as the animal species we have harmed.	We should protect them. Heavenly reward likely for kindness to animals.	<i>tsa'ar ba'alei chayim</i> : prohibits causing unnecessary pain to animals	Hu-sheng, protection of living beings, important in China: Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Sikhs believe in daya or compassion for animals. Jains ask for forgiveness from animals.
<b>Eating animals</b>	Some are vegetarian, especially in China. Most will not kill an animal. Meat-eating more common in southern Asian Theravada Buddhists.	Yes, eating animals is accepted. Some voluntary food restrictions eg in Lent. Orthodox Christians give up meat for many days in the year.	Majority are vegetarian. Do not eat beef as cow regarded as sacred.	Yes, but must be halal (lawful) and tayyib (good). Do not eat pigmeat or carrion.	Yes, but must be kosher. Blood must be drained out of carcase. Do not eat pigmeat. No meat and dairy at the same meal.	Some Sikhs and some Taoist monks are vegetarian. Jains definitely vegetarian, some becoming vegan.
<b>Factory Farming</b>	No official view. Logically against it as causing "harm".	No official view.	No official view.	No official view.	No official view.	
<b>Voices for animals 1: historic</b>	The Indian Emperor Ashoka.	St Basil, St Isaac the Syrian & other early saints. St Francis of Assisi, St Philip Neri, St Martin de Porres.	Swami Vivekananda.	The Prophet Muhammad. Some Sufi mystics like Sofyan al-Thauri, Hazrat Rabia Basri, Abu l'Ala.	Moses Maimonides.	
<b>Voices for animals 2: modern, 20-21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>	The Dalai Lama, Roshi Philip Kapleau, Thich Nhat Hanh. Dharma Voices for Animals group of Buddhist leaders.	Rev John Austin Baker, Rev Andrew Linzey, Prof. Jurgen Moltmann, Dr Albert Schweitzer, Pope Francis I.	Ramana Maharshi, Mahatma Gandhi.	Al-Hafiz BA Masri, Nadeem Haque (Mr Masri's grandson).	Isaac Bashevis Singer, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein.	Nitin Mehta (Jain).

# RELIGION AND FACTORY FARMING

A briefing by Compassion in World Farming  
Joyce D'Silva, D. Litt. (Hon) 2015



Compassion in World Farming  
River Court, Mill Lane, Godalming GU7 1EZ, UK  
T. +44 1483 521 950 | E. [research@ciwf.org](mailto:research@ciwf.org)  
[ciwf.org](http://ciwf.org)

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