

Vegetarianism in I.R.IRAN & Islam:

History and perspective

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Abstract

The Quran teaches compassion and mercy. Each of its 114 chapters ,except one, begins, "Allah is merciful and compassionate." The name of God used most often in the Quran is "al-Rahim," which means "the All-Compassionate ".Mohammed taught love and respect for nature, compassion for animals and condemned the needless suffering and death of other living creatures .Vegetarianism and animal rights are consistent with Islam. And we can see some vegetarian person in Iran history and many advices about vegetarianism and animal rights in Iran's ancient religious.

Key word: *Islam, Iran, vegetarian, history, animal right*

Vegetarian what does it mean?

a person who does not eat or does not believe in eating meat, fish, fowl, or, in some cases¹, any food derived from animals, as eggs or cheese, but subsists on vegetables, fruits, nuts, grain, etc.

In nutrient science we find 9 kind of vegetarian:

- 1- Lacto-Vegetarian: vegetables and milk products.
- 2- OVO-Vegetarian: vegetables and egg.
- 3- Lacto-OVO-Vegetarian: vegetables and milk products and egg.
- 4- Macrobiotic-vegetarian: vegetable, frijol,
- 5- Semi-Vegetarian: they removed red meat from their diet only!
- 6- Vegan: no meat and any animal product
- 7- Pesco-vegetarian: vegetable and fish
- 8- Pollo-Vegetarian: vegetable and chicken
- 9- Fruitarian: fruit, honey, olive oil, nuts.

¹ -in those cases, the person is called vegan, and also doesn't use (or condones the use) of leather and fur.

History of vegetarianism in Iran

Aryans abstain of eating meat. Before Islam coming, Zoroaster promotes veganism in Iran as God messenger. He institution three rules:

Good behaviour, good thought, good saying

He said to his followers that they mustn't kill poor animals, because they are God creature and he know killing objectionable.

We can read from Avesta (holy book of Zoroaster) that the first job of humans was farming, and so neat feed was vegetables and fruit that gave to mans by earth.

Accursed anyone who kill animals (Avesta)

We can read also in Dabestan book:

"But God man's never eat meat because it isn't a human kind character, and whenever you killed an animal for your nourishment, your will going to be voracity"

We have several poems about animal's right and the human behaviour, sa'di and molana are two poets; for example:

"I heard a man survived a sheep from wolf hunting, But at the night he took knife on sheep neck, The soul of sheep became sad and said: Although you released me from wolf teeth but I saw that you are my killer!"

If humankind wants to reach evolution, it must be in a natural environment with natural food².

Famous Iran Vegetarians

We could found this famous person in Iran's history; they were ovo-lacto-vegetarist almost:

Zoroaster, Mazdak, Mani, Avcina, sheikh Najm-al-din Razi, Sheikh attar, Sadeq Hedayat, Naser Khosro, Abol ala Moari, Molavi, Mokhber Alsoltan, Pejman, dr. Baski, etc.,.

History of vegetarianism in Islam

Islam teaches that in Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed, no creature can be slaughtered and that perfect harmony should exist between all living beings. Muslim pilgrims approach Mecca wearing a shroud") ihram"). From the moment they wear this religious cloth, absolutely no killing is allowed. Mosquitoes, lice, grasshoppers, and other living creatures must also be protected. If a pilgrim sees an insect on the ground, he will motion to stop his comrades from accidentally stepping on it. Islam teaches respect for animals and nature; the Islamic tradition has much to say about humanity's relationship with the animal world.

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of God is kind to himself---".the Prophet Mohammed

² -sadeq hidayat (father of vegetarianism in Iran)

Prophet Mohammad like vegan nutrient, he loves animals and observe animals right. Mohammed's earliest biographers wrote that he preferred vegetarian foods. The Prophet enjoyed milk diluted with water, yogurt with butter or nuts, and cucumbers with dates. His favourite fruits, which he would often subsist on for weeks at a time, were pomegranates, grapes and figs .He liked soaked, crushed dates as a morning drink. Islamic tradition has much to say about humanity's relationship with the animal world.

"Whoever is kind to the creatures of god is kind to him."

He and their follower eat many kind of vegetables as their mainly food. We have a lot of logion that advise us to treat by vegan diet.

Mohammed did not directly forbid the killing of animals for food, but he taught that such killing should be done as humanely as possible. "If you must kill," he conceded, "kill without torture." The laws governing the "humane slaughter" of animals for food in Islam are similar to those found in Judaism.

- The knife must be "razor sharp," to cause as little pain to the animal as possible ;
- The knife should not be sharpened in the presence of the animal about to be killed ;
- An animal must not be slaughtered in the presence of other animals ;
- In order to prevent harm to an animal that may still be alive, it is forbidden to skin or slice an animal carcass until it is cold, i.e., when rigor mortis has set in ;

There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature flying on two wings, but they are all peoples like unto you.³

The first leader after prophet, imam ali, said: **“Don’t put your stoma as animal's cemetery”**

We know that meat avoid our souls to develop, so in Islam philosophic we must not eat any kind of meat to study our souls. We can see in Holy Quran the story of sons of Israel that they avoided from fishing.

Islam teaches that in Mecca no creature can be slaughtered and that perfect harmony should exist between all living beings.

The Koran (Quran 55:10-12) teaches that God assigned the earth "to all living creatures," and humanity is ordered not to "spread corruption on earth, after it has been put in order." (Quran 7:56)

Mohammed is recorded as having told his followers, "It behoves you to treat the animals gently." (Quran 4:118-19, 5:103)

About Mohammed, the English Arabic scholar, David Margoliouth (1858-1940), has written: "His humanity extended itself to the lower creation. He forbade the employment of towing birds as targets for marksmen and remonstrated those who ill-treated their camels. When some of his followers had set fire to an anthill, he compelled them to extinguish it. Acts of cruelty were swept away by him."

³ - Quran 6:38

Providing food and drink for animals, Mohammed explained, "are among those virtuous gestures which draw us one step nearer to God," and "everyone who shows clemency, even towards a mere bird under the knife, will find God's clemency towards him on Doomsday."

Awakening from rest one afternoon, Mohammed found a small, sick cat sound asleep on the fringe of his cloak. The Prophet cut off his garment, allowing the cat to sleep undisturbed.

A man once robbed some eggs from the nest of a bird, whereupon the Prophet had them restored to the nest. "Fear God in these dumb animals," said the Prophet, "and ride them when they are fit to be ridden—and get off them when they are tired."

The Prophet spoke of the rewards and punishments one would receive depending on one's treatment of animals. He once told his companions he had a vision of a woman being punished in hell because she had starved a cat to death. "A good deed done to an animal is as meritorious as a good deed done to a human being," taught Mohammed, "while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being."

All kinds of animal fights are strictly forbidden in Islam." Mohammed forbade using living creatures as targets, and went so far as to condemn putting animals in cages, calling it "a great sin for man to imprison those animals which are in his power". Many of the experiments that are being done on animals in the name of scientific research and education are not really necessary and are sheer cruelty. Such experiments are a contradiction in terms of the Islamic teachings...According to Islam; all life is sacrosanct and has a right to protection and preservation".

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Mohammed even classified the unnecessary slaughter of animals as one of the seven deadly sins. "Avoid the seven abominations," he said, then referring to a verse from the Koran, "And kill not a living creature, which Allah has made sacrosanct, except for a justifiable reason."

The Prophet passed by certain people who were shooting arrows at a ram and hated that, saying, "Maim not the brute beasts".

The Prophet, seen wiping the face of his horse with his wrapper, said, "At night I received a reprimand from God in regard to my horse".

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"Verily, are there rewards for our doing good to quadrupeds and giving them water to drink?" Asked the disciples. And the Prophet answered, "There are rewards for benefitting every animal having a moist liver ".[i.e., everyone alive]

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Humankind's ability to use natural resources:

By giving to humankind the ability to gain the knowledge of the secrets of nature, God gave human being the power to take advantage of nature's Resources:

"Do you not see that Allah has made what is in the heaven and what is in the earth subservient to you, and made complete to you his favours outwardly and inwardly?..(31:20)"

Humankind's responsibility:

As a trustee of God, each person must act responsibly:

"So, by our Lord, we would certainly question them all, as to what they did. (15:92-93)"

Earth, in accordance with the purposes prescribed by God, discharging his duties with sincerity and justice and avoiding any kind of mischief in the earth:

"And do not make any mischief in the earth after its reformation, and call on him, fearing and hoping. (7:56)"

Iran's current vegetarian societies

Current, There are two vegetarian societies in Iran.

- Iranian vegetarian society
- Iranian vegan's

But there are many NGO that work on animal's rights and on human's health who focused on diet without meat. And there are some group who work on web by weblogs and sites. We can estimate that in Iran we can found around 2000 people who is use vegan as their mainly diet. But we can certainly say that a big numerous of Iranian's believe in vegan's rules and they perform that s as regular. Iranian, I think, almost has a Lacto-OVO-vegetarian diet.

Vegetarian Iran Cuisine

Iran has a depended cuisine that you cannot find similar to it. But it isn't introduced to world. Iran cuisine involve Iran's neighbour country cook. Iran have an empire in past.

Xorosht sabzi is a famous meal that contains green vegetable and frijol. It's delicate and popular. But unfortunately now we can see meat in it!

Buffets was always included at the hotels, But it was only partially vegetarian friendly. Most Iran's buffets include Dogh, safaran, eggs, cereals, fruit, cheeses, yogurt, juice, tea and bread.

Vegetables are usually served in the form of vegetable soups or stews. Cabbages, carrots, turnips, peas, beans, are very common. Fried onions are a common addition to many meat dishes throughout the country, and potatoes, while a major part of the diet, are usually not counted among vegetables by Iranians.

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