

# How Should We Treat Animals?



Throughout history, humans have relied on animals for food, clothing, work and entertainment. At the same time, many people have argued that animals deserve **compassion & respect**.

Today, more and more people are questioning whether it is fair to harm animals when we don't need to. As a result, many people choose a **lifestyle that avoids using animals altogether**.

**What do you think?**



Jeff the dog makes friends with rescued cows Annabelle and Ginger.

## Religious views about animals

In **Christianity** and **Judaism**, humans are granted dominion over other animals. The concept of dominion has been interpreted both as granting humans supremacy over animals and as a call for responsible stewardship or care for them.

**"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the animals." - Genesis 1:26**

HOW SHOULD WE USE OUR POWER OVER OTHER ANIMALS? SHOULD WE USE IT TO EXPLOIT THEM OR TO CARE FOR THEM?

**Islam** teaches that humans are caretakers (Khalifah) of the Earth who should show compassion to animals.

**"A good deed done to an animal is as a good deed done to a human being, while an act of cruelty to an animal is as bad as an act of cruelty to a human being."**  
- **The Prophet Muhammad: Hadith**

Religions such as **Hinduism**, **Buddhism**, **Sikhism** and **Jainism** teach the concept of ahimsa - nonviolence to all living beings. Many followers of these religions avoid eating animals.

## Non-religious views about animals

### Utilitarianism

According to utilitarianism, the best action is the one that results in the most happiness and least suffering.

Philosopher Jeremy Bentham was a utilitarian who argued that animals should be given moral consideration because they can feel pain, just like humans.

**"The question is not, 'Can they reason?' nor, 'Can they talk?' but, 'Can they suffer?'" - Jeremy Bentham**

Modern philosopher, Peter Singer, argues that treating animals differently just because of their species is unfair. He argues that industries which cause unnecessary suffering to animals, such as factory farms and animal testing, should be avoided where possible.



DO YOU AGREE WITH THE IDEA THAT TREATING ANIMALS DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THEIR SPECIES IS UNFAIR?

### Animal rights

Many people believe that animals have rights which should not be ignored, even if it benefits others. They argue that animals experience the world and value their lives just like humans do. For all the reasons that it is wrong to harm, exploit or kill humans, the same is true of other animals.

**"It is not an act of kindness to treat animals respectfully. It is an act of justice."** - Tom Regan

DO YOU AGREE THAT ANIMALS HAVE RIGHTS?



A beagle rescued from a laboratory. The ID tattoo marks them as a test subject for experimentation.



A chimpanzee and her baby in a zoo.

CAN THEY REASON?  
CAN THEY TALK?  
CAN THEY SUFFER?



Most chickens are crammed into factory farms like this one. They are slaughtered at just 6 weeks old.



These animals have been rescued from slaughter. They now live safe, happy and free at a sanctuary.

