



# Radical Vegetarianism: A Dialectic of Diet and Ethic (Flashpoint)

*Mark Braunstein*

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*“This is the vegetarian dialectic of diet and ethic: not coincidentally, but absolutely essentially, those foods that deprive the fewest lives of others contribute to the longest lives for ourselves.”*  
(from the preface)

“Vegetarians are not a better sort of people, just a better sort of carnivore,” writes Braunstein in **Radical Vegetarianism**, “and carnivores are just a better sort of cannibal.” In this updated edition of the 1981 classic, Braunstein courageously takes on the canned canards, sacred cows, and wooly thinking of carnivores and vegetarians alike, and proposes a vegetarianism that goes beyond the stereotypes of pot-lucks and Birkenstocks to one that embraces contradiction and candor, or, as Braunstein says (channeling the Ancients), “Gnaw Thyself.”

## Contents

### • Part One: Diet

#### ◦ Nutrition in the Light of Vegetarianism:

Why not to eat flesh?The body has two healths: the physical and the spiritual. Mere nutrition fails which tends only to the former. Not only is physical health possible through vegetarianism, spiritual health actually demands such a diet.

#### ◦ Ashes to Ashes, Life to Life:

Why not to eat flesh, and why to eat fruit?We grow on fruits; fruits grow on trees; trees grow on us. What comes out depends on what goes in. Everything gotten must be given back.

#### ◦ Letter to a Young Vegetarian:

What to eat, and how to eat it?The simplest approach to nutrition is the best. The raw facts of a nourishing vegetarian diet are as simple as they are sensible, as delicious as they are nutritious.

#### ◦ Traveling Fast:

What not to eat, and how not to eat it?Away from home, maintaining a healthful diet may prove difficult. At such times it may be better not to eat at all. At the right time and place, the silence between the sounds makes the music.

#### ◦ The Milky Way:

Why not to drink milk?Lacto-vegetarianism is only a modified carnivorism. Complete vegetarians, also called vegans, abstain not just from animal flesh but from all animal products. What comes from an animal is animal.

### • Part Two: Ethic

#### ◦ Animals and Infidels:

Why animals have a right to live?The religions of the West have turned their backs on animals, so we must turn to either the philosophies of the West or the religions of the East. Yet all we really need do is turn to the animals.

#### ◦ Carnivorous Death and Karmic Debt:

Why whoever lets animals live will live longer?The less suffering we cause to others, the less we ourselves will suffer. Eater and eaten, killer and killed, are one.

- **The Illogic of the Ecologic:**

How to kill less by eating fruits and eating raw?The less we kill, the more that humans and animals have to eat. The human population can grow so long as its proportion of vegetarians increases. Yet such an alternative to world catastrophe may be only a postponement.

- **The Problem of Being a Flesh Eater:**

How animals have been denied the right to live?Humans have persisted in carnivorism partially because they fail to acknowledge that eating flesh means killing animals. Our ignorance causes their deaths.

- **An Apologetic Addendum:**

Why humans also have rights, and how one of those rights just may be to eat animals?We do not know all the answers; we do not even know all the questions. The butcher is no less a human being than the baker or the candlestick-maker.

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