

Vegetarianism and Sanatan Dharma

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Vegetarianism cannot be dated. It goes back to ancient times when the saint and sages lived and practiced the teachings of Sanatan Dharma or "a way of life".

While most religions are traceable to one particular founder, Sanatan Dharma has its beginnings in such remote antiquity that it cannot be traced to any one individual. Its roots, however, are firmly planted in the ancient Vedic texts.

On the other hand, Hinduism is considered a modern day terminology for individuals who attempt to practice Sanatan Dharma but somehow many have strayed away from the path of Sanatan Dharma and have adapted meat eating in the process. Interestingly enough, the word "Hindu" is not found anywhere in Vedic scriptures. The term "Hindu" is vague, and is actually a misnomer. It has been suggested that Muslims introduced the term Hindu referring to the people who lived across the Indus River, hence their term Hindu and the religion Hinduism. Today there is no one "Hindu religion" as "Hindu" practice their religion based on a vast array of beliefs.

The original Vedic system is actually quite different from contemporary Hinduism. Both the old and the new, however, converge harmoniously in regard to vegetarianism. Here are some quotes from the Vedas and other scriptures.

Having considered the origin of flesh-foods and the cruelty, fetter and slaying of corporeal beings, let man entirely abstain from eating flesh. - [Manusmriti 5.49](#)

"By abstaining from killing any living being, one becomes fit for salvation." - [Manusmriti, 6.60](#)

"You must not use your God-given body for killing God's creatures, whether they are human, animal or whatever" [Yajur Veda, 12.32](#)

"The Purchaser of flesh performs himsa (violence) by his wealth; the who eats flesh does so by enjoying its taste; the killer does himsa by actually tying and killing the animal. There are three forms of killing. He who brings flesh or send for it, he who cuts of the limbs of an animal, and he who purchases, sells, cooks or consumes flesh. They are all considered to be meat-eaters." [Mahabharata, Anu. 115:40](#)

In the Manusmriti, it is stated that one should refrain from eating all kinds of meat, for such eating involves killing and leads to karmic bondage(bandha).

Elsewhere in the Vedas, the last of the great Vedic Kings, Maharaja Pariksit, is quoted as saying that " only the animal killera cannot relish the message of the Absolute Truth." Therefore, the Vedas informs us that ot obtain spiritual knowledge; one must begin with being a vegetarian.