



"The road to perdition has ever been accompanied by lip service to an ideal."

—Albert Einstein

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And, Today's Word Is . . . Speciesism

There is a new "ism" about—speciesism. Peter Singer, the Australian-born ethicist currently of Princeton University, and writer of the book *Animal Liberation*, affirms that speciesism manifests itself in any action or language that discriminates against "nonhuman animals." Laws that do not give equal rights to animals are speciesist. (Incidentally, the traditional legal approach has been to afford animals protection from brutalization and abuse, without granting them the same "rights" *homo sapiens* have.)

In an essay recently appearing in the *New York Review of Books*, Singer asks, "Should all and only human beings be protected by rights, when some nonhuman animals are superior in their intellectual capacities, and have richer emotional lives, than human beings?" No, is Singer's answer, and the answer of the animal-rights activists whom his essay extols.

God's law proscribes brutality to animals (for instance, [Proverbs 12:10](#)). It also protects humans. However, animal rightists are more one-sided; they defend animals' lives and welfare, while often disregarding the lives and welfare of human beings. For instance, Singer, animal-rights activist par excellence, advocates parents' "rights" to euthanize "defective" children.

Defective means children who might lead inferior "emotional lives" due to autism, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, congenital brain defects, and other such ailments. In the past, Singer gave parents a "trial period" (dare we call it that?) of 28 days, after the birth of the child, to make the life-and-death decision. More recently, he has lengthened the decision-period to "somewhat short of one year." So, the same person who wants to "save the whales" supports killing children.

Singer's paramount goal is to minimize pain—no matter what! For him, the taking of human life is not murder if its aim is to reduce suffering. This thinking legitimizes abortion, infanticide, geriatric euthanasia, with or without the consent of the victim. In reality, though, what Singer's thinking minimizes is the sanctity of human life. Lacking belief in God's Word, which reveals that [God](#) created human beings in His own image ([Genesis 1: 26](#)), Singer is unable to understand the value of people—their potential to become God beings. He does not believe [the gospel](#) of the [Kingdom of God](#), which Christ and we His servants, preach.

Euthanasia is now legal in the Netherlands. How long before other Israelite nations show their disregard for God's law by enacting legislation to make murder acceptable in the name of reducing pain? The sixth commandment is under attack by today's postmodern ethicists.

Do not forget, also, that speciesism will require an elephantine (whoops!) change in our language. If the adverb *niggardly* is dead, *doggedly* has one paw in the grave and the other paw on a banana peel. Be careful around whom you use such terms as *pig out*, *pigtails*, *horseflies*, *catnap*, *dog-eared*, *pigeon-toed*, *foxtrot*, *bear hug*, or *monkey business*. Expunge *squirrelly*, *chickenhearted*, and *ratfink* from your vocabulary today. Check your dictionary before you utter "slothful" or "Robin Hood." And certainly that militaristic hawk/dove dichotomy has to go now!

At all cost, avoid terms that members of the animal kingdom (Singer calls them "nonhuman animals") might find demeaning to their character. Most non-humanoid life forms would accept "busy as beavers," "strong as an ox," or "industrious as ants" as inoffensive, despite their subtle hints of capitalist bias. But forget about morally, socially, or physically denigrating terms like "loan shark," "snake in the grass," "slow as a snail," "stubborn as a mule,"

"mule- (or pig-) headed," "low as a worm," "dumb as a horse," "fish story," "fat as an elephant," "sly as a fox." You get the picture.

Finally, what about biblical terms? That is a horse of a different color! It will take a wise old owl to figure out what to do with terms like "that serpent of old, called the Devil. . ." ([Revelation 12:9](#)). Will those dogged secularists never tire of monkeying around with our language?

- Charles Whitaker

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Lessons From the Animals](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Mankind, created after the God-kind, has been given dominion or responsibility for the care of animal life, preserving and embellishing their environment, as God would take care of them. Our well-being is inextricably connected to our care of animals (Proverbs 12:20). By having Adam name the animals, God evidently wanted him to become acquainted with their characteristics, enabling him to learn commonsense wisdom from observing their behavior and traits, either for the purpose of emulating particular behaviors, such as diligence and self-discipline from the ant (Proverbs 6:6), affection and motherliness from a deer (Proverbs 5:19), or avoiding negative behaviors such as gossip or slander by observing the behavior of an adder or asp (Psalm 140), aimless willfulness or stubbornness, as in a wild ass (Jeremiah 2:24) or a goat (Matthew 25:32).

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Animal Idolatry](#)

by Mike Ford

Have the animal rights groups gone too far? Mike Ford argues that their movement borders on—if not transgresses—the line between concern and idolatry.

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