

## RESOURCE 8.5

## Some arguments against veganism as the new kashrut for 21st Century

**To explore different viewpoints in the students' debate about Jews and veganism, here are some arguments *against* the idea that it represents dietary laws for the twenty-first century.**

Many Jewish people believe that it is God's intention for humans to eat and use animals. Some may argue that the list of plant-based foods that God prescribes to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:29 was only a partial list of what they were allowed to eat, and with no command from God *not* to eat animals, they could eat meat if they wished to.

The Torah gives detailed dietary rules, which includes the eating of meat. The argument that Genesis 1 models a kind of ideal diet is speculative, and if that single verse is to cancel out the many instructions on eating of meat it needs to be given a great deal of weight.

Being vegan entails not using animals for any purpose. This would make it difficult – some might say impossible – to fully participate in certain forms of worship, customs and celebrations e.g. wearing tefillin which are made of leather, blowing the shofar which is a ram's horn, or reading from the Torah scrolls which are made from animal skins.

Some Jewish people may see eating meat as obligatory, as part of certain celebrations and religious observances. This is reflected in the writings of many Jewish scholars and rabbis, such as Rambam (Maimonides), an influential scholar who wrote in medieval times. He recommended that meat be treated as a special food for occasions such as Shabbat and Passover, and excessive restriction or consumption of meat was not good.