



ARE HUMANS MORE VALUABLE THAN ANIMALS?

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Are you more valuable than a dog or a cat or, for that matter, a tree?

One of the biggest differences between Judeo-Christian values and secular values concerns this very issue: the worth of the human being. According to the Judeo-Christian value system, human beings are infinitely valuable.

On the other hand, secular humanism devalues the worth of humans. As ironic as it may sound, the God-based Judeo-Christian value system renders humans infinitely more valuable than any humanistic value system.

The reason is simple: if there is no God, human beings are only material beings – and therefore not worth anything beyond the matter of which they are composed. But in the Judeo-Christian system human beings are created in “the image of God,” meaning that human life is sacred. In other words, we are either created in the image of carbon atoms – and therefore not worth much more than carbon – or we are created in the image of God and therefore infinitely valuable.

Our secular, post-Judeo-Christian society has rendered human beings less significant than at any time in Western history.

First, the secular denial that human beings are created in God’s image has led to humans increasingly being equated with animals. That’s why over the course of 30 years of asking high school and college students if they would first try to save their dog or a stranger, two-thirds have always voted against the person. They either don’t know what they would do or they actually vote for the dog. Many adults now vote similarly.

Why? There are two reasons. One is that with the denial of the authority of higher values such as religious teachings, people increasingly make moral decisions on the basis of how they feel. And since just about everybody feels more for their dog than for a stranger, many people simply choose the dog.

The other reason is that, once you get rid of Judeo-Christian values, there is no reason for elevating human worth over that of an animal.

That’s why people estranged from Judeo-Christian values (including many Jews and Christians) support programs such as “Holocaust on Your Plate.” “Holocaust on Your Plate” is a campaign developed by the animal-rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) that teaches that there is no difference between the barbecuing of chickens in America and the

burning of Jews in the Holocaust. Why? Because a human and a chicken are of equal worth.

So, too, in a notorious Tucson, Arizona case, a woman screamed to firefighters that her three “babies” were in the burning house. Thinking that the woman’s children were trapped inside, the firefighters risked their lives to save the woman’s three cats.

If you think these two examples are either just theoretical (the dog-stranger question) or extreme (the Tucson mother of cats), here’s an issue that is neither theoretical nor extreme: More and more people believe, as PETA does, that even if it would lead to a cure for cancer or AIDS, it would be wrong to experiment on animals. In fact, many animal rights advocates believe that even to save a human life, it would be wrong to kill a pig to obtain a heart valve.

The twentieth century showed vividly what happens to human worth when Judeo-Christian values are abandoned.

Nazi Germany and the various Communist regimes all rejected Judeo-Christian values and ended up slaughtering the largest number of people in human history.

For Nazism, Jews and members of other “non-Aryan” groups were declared worthless and murdered in the millions. For Communists, human worth was determined solely by Communist parties, which murdered tens of millions of people.

Only by rejecting Judeo-Christian values could Nazis declare Jews, Slavs, and others “sub-human.” And only by rejecting Judeo-Christian values could Communist regimes slaughter those they call “class enemies.” Individual human life meant nothing.

Meanwhile, human slavery was abolished only in the Judeo-Christian world.

And, of course, for nearly all those who reject Judeo-Christian values, the human fetus is worthless if its mother deems it so.

Finally, there is an increasingly vocal part of the environmentalist movement that also denigrates human worth. For these individuals, the human being is not infinitely precious; trees, and rivers, and mountains are.

So, are you more valuable than a dog, or a cat, or a tree? That depends on your value system.

I’m Dennis Prager.