

DUDLEY GIEHL, VEGTARIANISM: A WAY OF LIFE,  
(FOREWORD BY ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER), (HARPER  
AND ROW, 1979) \$10.95.

Vegetarianism: A Way of Life is a thoroughly documented appeal to reason for the vegetarian diet. In the foreword, the Nobel Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer forcefully expresses his feelings on the ethical issue: "What gives man the right to kill an animal, often torture it, so that he can fill his belly with its flesh? We know now, as we have always known instinctively, that animals suffer as much as human beings."

If we, as human beings, do not possess the "killer instinct," how do we cope with the realization that innocent animals are killed for our food? Giehl gives us numerous examples of subterfuges that have been used by various societies throughout history to "assuage these feelings of guilt," including ritual, semantics (double standards, euphemisms), repression, and a wide variety of rationalizations.

After dispelling the notion that meat is necessary for a well-balanced diet (Chap. 2, "The Protein Myth"), Giehl proceeds to demonstrate that flesh eating is harmful to our well being by documenting the relationship between meat consumption and heart disease and colon cancer.

In addition to matters of health and the wrongfulness of killing innocent animals to "tickle our taste buds," the very survival of millions of starving people is at stake. Giehl shows us that the world's cattle population consumes a quantity of food equivalent to the calorie needs of 3.7 billion people--a fact of no little consequence in view of a recent Food and Agriculture Organization report which noted that 400 million people suffer from serious malnutrition.

Henry Spira